



Monitoring and Evaluating Regional Networks against Violence

A thinkpiece for Partners for Prevention, GBV Prevention Network and Intercambios

By Kalyani Menon-Sen

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In September 2010, three regional networks focused on the prevention of violence against women - Intercambios (Latin America), GBV Prevention Network (Africa), and Partners for Prevention (Asia Pacific) participated in a cross-regional exchange meeting in Kampala, Uganda.

A set of common concerns emerged around the issue of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of their work. The usual set of strategies and tools were unable to accurately capture the overall impact and added value of their work at the regional level.

This is compounded by confusion on the part of donors and other partners about what regional networks can and should deliver. In addition, many of the results that have emerged over time were not anticipated and therefore not built into the regular monitoring strategy. As a result, an complete and accurate picture of the impact of regional networks is not yet available to network members, partners and donors.

Intercambios, GBV Prevention Network and P4P have therefore agreed to collaborate to develop a conceptual framework and methodology that is appropriate for tracking and measuring the impacts of their work, and that will facilitate an understanding of the potentials and limitations of regional networking and alliances. The expectation is that an approach that is tailor-made to address the specificities of regional interventions will lead to better programming and more effective networking for ending violence against women, and could also be of use to other regional formations working on issues of social justice and social change.

This paper is the first product of this collaboration. It is an effort to establish a conceptual framework, principles and guidelines for impact evaluation of regional initiatives on violence against women. It is grounded in the experiences of the three participants in the process – Intercambios in Latin America, the GBV Prevention Network in Africa and Partners for Prevention in Asia - which are located in the larger context of ongoing debates on tracking and measuring social change.

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Regional networks on violence against women: experiences and concerns

While all three of the regional initiatives involved in this exercise share a focus on violence against women, they operate in very different socio-political contexts and have different goals and approaches.

The **GBV Prevention Network** describes itself as “a network of activists and practitioners committed to preventing gender-based violence in the Horn, Eastern and Southern Africa.”¹ It was established in 2003 and was a response to discussions at a regional dialogue on violence prevention. The initiative aims at increasing regional exchange of resources and information, building skills for prevention of gender-based violence and raising the visibility of the growing movement for prevention of violence against women. The goal is movement-building, through linking up local, national and regional initiatives for violence prevention to create a groundswell of activism across the region. The GBV Prevention Network is coordinated by an NGO (Raising Voices, with support from HIVOS and NORAD) and currently has 350 organisational and individual members from 18 countries. Network activities include campaigns, information sharing, exchange visits, capacity-building and special events.

The Intercambios Alliance² was formed in 2004 and has a presence in 16 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The network links organisations, government agencies, bilaterals and multilaterals, and donors around a public health and human rights approach to violence against women. The focus is on strengthening health-sector responses to the issue. Activities include research, capacity-building, dissemination of information and best practices, public communication campaigns and policy advocacy. The technical secretariat of Intercambios is coordinated by PATH, an international NGO with offices in Washington and Nicaragua.

Partners for Prevention (P4P)³ is an interagency regional programme of UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV in the Asia-Pacific. The programme is directed at engaging men in primary prevention of violence, and aims at reducing the prevalence of violence in the long term, through attitudinal and behavioural change among boys and men, building institutional knowledge and capacity to involve boys and men, and enhanced policy responses for violence prevention. The programme is coordinated by a team based in Bangkok, and has three components – communication for social change, capacity development and networking, and evidence-based policy advocacy. While P4P is not itself a network, it has established relationships and partnerships with existing networks in the countries where it is working.

A key question: What are we trying to change?

To kick off the present exercise, GBV Prevention Network, Intercambios and P4P were asked to revisit, re-articulate and re-prioritise their long-term goals and the impacts they would like to see at regional and national/local levels. Unanticipated impacts that have emerged over time were also identified. The key points are summarised in Table 1 below.

All three initiatives have the long-term goal of preventing or ending violence against women. While this implies changes in specific contexts at the local level, the impacts of their work are mediated through local actors – network members or programme partners - and linear causality is difficult if not impossible to establish.

1 Information in this paragraph from <http://www.preventgbvafrica.org/> (accessed 24 April 2011)

2 Information in this paragraph from <http://www.alianzaintercambios.org/> (accessed 24 April 2011)

3 Information in this paragraph from <http://www.partners4prevention.org/> (accessed 24 April 2011)

As is evident from the table, all three initiatives make a clear differentiation between impacts at the regional level and the national level. “Increased sharing of resources, knowledge and information” is identified as the most critical impact at the regional level by all three, followed by “increased collaboration across borders”, “collective theory-building” and “sharpening of members’ political perspectives”. At the national level, expected impacts include “more effective local action” and “more effective policy engagement by members”, “increased commitment and credibility of members as spokespersons for the issue”, and “increased public support for violence prevention approaches”.

As expected, results framed in terms of immediate outputs (such as materials, methodologies, policy documents and exchange platforms) were identified as the easiest to claim credit for. Higher order results such as changes in organisational and personal practice, policy change and improved quality of programming were identified as far more difficult to measure and attribute.

Table 1. Intercambios, GBV Prevention Network and P4P

Long-term goals, expected impacts and unintended consequences

	Intercambios	GBV Prevention Network	P4P
Long-term goals	Creating visibility for the issue. Building capacities of members. Influencing institutional structures and practices.	Creating visibility for the issue. Building capacities of members. Building solidarity among members. Influencing organisational structures and practices	Influencing policy responses. Creating visibility for the issue. Influencing institutional structures and practices.
Desired regional impacts	Increased sharing of information, knowledge, resources. Theory-building through collective analysis. Increased collaboration across borders.	Increased sharing of information, knowledge, resources. Strengthened feminist analysis of gender-based violence and violence prevention Increased visibility of network as credible regional voice.	Increased sharing of information, knowledge, resources. Increased collaboration across borders. Theory-building through collective analysis.
Desired national impacts	More effective local-level actions by members. More effective engagement by members in national policy arena. Recognition of capacity and credibility of members by key actors.	Increased public recognition of members as spokespersons for the issue. Increased public support for primary prevention approaches. More effective interventions by members in local-level actions.	More effective engagement by members in national policy arena. Increased public support for primary prevention approaches. More effective local-level actions by members.
Unexpected	Recognition as a credible	Movement-building has gone	Mutual learning among

positive impacts	technical voice in the region has helped to facilitate political engagement between governments, donors and civil society.	beyond strengthening concepts to strengthening organisational practice. Independent relationships and collaboration between members. Infusion of new perspectives into 16 Days Campaign (from punitive to benefit-based approaches).	partners exceeded expectations. Formation of dynamic sub-regional networks. Field researchers, participants in events are becoming activists. Interest, outreach goes beyond Asia-Pacific.
Unintended negative impacts	Intercambios might be the 'visible face' rather than local partners. Regional work may not have relevance at local level.	Members expect help with funding, donor contacts. Name ('GBV') might create a confusion around the issue. Over-dependence of members on network for 16 Days Campaign. Members make demands, less willing to take on responsibility. 'Focal NGOs' strategy was meant to ground work at local level, but created conflicts.	Original tagline ("working with boys and men") shifted focus away from violence prevention. Competitions, conflict among partners. Some still see P4P as a donor. Selective outreach/partnership strategy created an impression of deliberate exclusion.
Easiest to attribute	Development of policy and action plan for Honduras health services. Production of quality training methodologies and materials.	Increased recognition of actors other than INGOs. Increased exchange of information and resources. Increased consistency in campaign themes and materials. Increased skills of members.	Creation of a common platform. Enhanced capacities of participants in trainings. Access to resources via Engagingmen/net portal. Outreach through global experts.
Most difficult to attribute	Policy change	Changes in discourses and quality of programming.	Energy and dedication that partners bring to their work. Quality of relationships between members.

Tracking and measuring social change: challenges and dilemmas

The questions being raised by GBV Prevention Network, Intercambios and P4P highlight the special challenges involved in impact assessment of new forms of organisation such as regional networks.

The inherent narrowness and inappropriateness of current M&E systems for multi-layered formations, such as transnational or regional networks, coalitions, membership-based organisations, and re-granting organisations like women's funds, are being increasingly critiqued.(...) In these complex architectures, social change initiatives involve multiple actors working at different levels and locations. The agency responsible for assessing and reporting progress and impact to their donor has to collate and synthesize information from all these levels and present them as though they were part of one single change intervention. The entity receiving the grant is also required to tease out and establish its own contribution to the change process, using tools that are simply not designed to handle this level of complexity. Many of these "INGO" (international or transnational NGOs) structures are facing serious funding challenges because it is harder for them to prove their value given current assessment tools.

from **AWID** ("**Capturing change in women's realities**")⁴

Similar challenges are faced by other complex, multi-system interventions that work horizontally across sectors as well as vertically across different levels of social systems, are mediated by a range of contextual factors and involve a range of stakeholders in dynamic relationships with each other.

The basic question an evaluation seeks to address is whether the activities consciously undertaken in the community-wide initiative generated a change in the outcomes of interest. The problem in this case, as in virtually all evaluation cases, is to establish what would have happened in the absence of the program initiative. This is often referred to as the counterfactual (...)

To those who have not steeped themselves in this type of evaluation, it often appears that this is a trivial problem, and simple solutions are usually proposed. For example, we might look at the situation before and after the initiative is implemented in the given community. The counterfactual, in this case, would be the situation before the initiative. Or, we might find another community that initially looks very much like our target community, and then see how the two compare on desired outcome measures after the initiative is in place. In this case, the comparison community would provide the counterfactual - what would have happened in the absence of the program.

(...) These simple solutions are not adequate to the problem-primarily because individuals and communities are changing all the time with respect to the measured outcome even in the absence of any intentional intervention. Therefore, measures of the situation before the initiative or with comparison communities are not secure counterfactuals - they may not represent well what the community would have looked like in the absence of the program.

. from "**Problems in the evaluation of community-wide initiatives**"⁵.

4 Batliwala, Srilatha and Alexandra Pitman. 2010. "Capturing change in women's realities: A critical overview of current monitoring and evaluation frameworks". Association for Women's Rights in Development. June 2010. Page 7.

5 Hollister, Robinson G. and Jennifer Hill. 1995. In James I. Connel, Anne C. Kubisch, Lisbeth B.Schorr and Carol H Weiss (eds). *New approaches to evaluating community initiatives: Concepts, methods and concepts*.

Others have critiqued concepts of ‘attribution’ and ‘impact’ as currently applied, given the methodological challenges of isolating the key factors that caused the desired results and attributing them to a particular agency or set of activities⁶.

Women's groups who contributed to a recent review by AWID of current M&E frameworks and their relevance to initiatives for women's rights⁷ were of the view that very few frameworks actually explain how gender relations have changed – the only thing one can say at the end of a project cycle is whether goals have been achieved and not whether change happened. The survey suggested that measurement is being used more as a tool of enforcement and accountability to the donor than a means of learning what works. Most tools measure performance rather than impact or change. Short-term shifts are often conflated with sustainable change. Tools such as the log frame flatten change processes into linear cause-and-effect relationships and create misleading models of how social change actually happens. Most importantly perhaps, standard frameworks and tools do not allow for tracking negative change, backlash and reversals that can push back or deflect a trajectory of positive change, whereas in reality, the process of change on the ground involves “one step forward, two steps back” and backlash may even be a sign that the process is working.

“Capturing” social change: Alternative theories and approaches

Ideally, M&E should not be 'external' to the intervention – a technical requirement that must be fulfilled to secure funding – but an intrinsic activity that supports critical reflection, learning and change in ways of working.

Unfortunately however, this is not the norm. Mainstream M&E processes and tools are usually directed to managing the intervention rather than understanding change. Commonly used tools such as RBM matrices fail to engage with complexity and are limited to measuring performance. Notions such as “efficiency”, “effectiveness” and “objectivity” are defined in ways that privilege quantitative data and assume linear causality, and delegitimise the views and perspectives of the subjects of change. The focus is on assessment of individual outcomes rather than assessing change across a complex system.

Patton (2008)⁸ pointed out that traditional evaluation is primarily directed to identifying intervention models that can be generalised and replicated across time and space. A formative evaluation is done at the beginning of a program to develop a model, and a summative evaluation is done at the end to assess whether the model worked. Static data collection models focusing on individual outcomes are not suited to complex interventions (such as capacity-building and public advocacy) that are continuously innovating rather than working to some predetermined recipe for change.

Roundtable on comprehensive community initiatives for children and families. The Aspen Institute. Washington DC. Page 146–48.

6 Smutylo, Terry. 2001. “Crouching impact, hidden attribution: Overcoming threats to learning in development programmes”. Draft Learning Methodology Paper, Block Island Workshop on Across Portfolio Learning . 22–24 May 2001 . International Development Research Centre. Ottawa, Canada. Page 4.

7 Batliwala, Srilatha and Alexandra Pitman. 2010. “Capturing change in women’s realities: A critical overview of current monitoring and evaluation frameworks”. Association for Women’s Rights in Development. June 2010.

8 Patton, Michael Q. 2008. “Getting to Maybe: Presentation at 21st Annual RTC Conference, Tampa Florida, February 2008.

<http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtcconference/handouts/pdf/21/Plenary%2001/MQPMondayPlenary.pdf>

The **Stacey Matrix**⁹ draws on complexity theory to analyse complex processes involving multiple actors. It focuses on two key dimensions of complexity – degrees of certainty or predictability of events, and levels of agreement – and proposes five “zones of complexity” as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Stacey Matrix

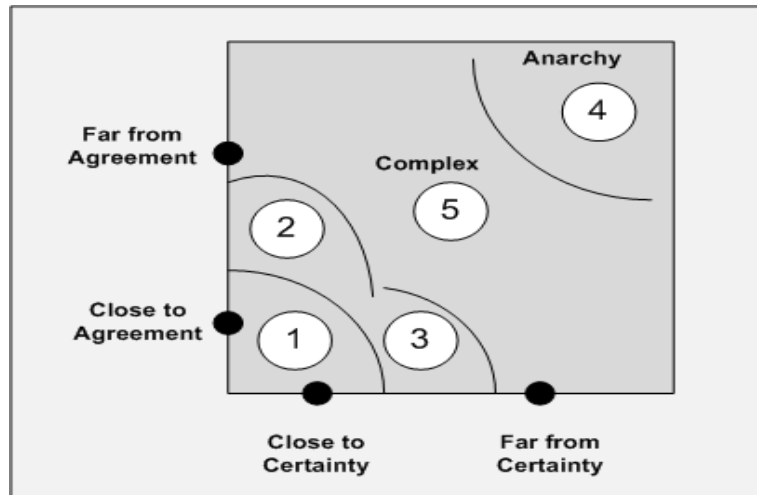
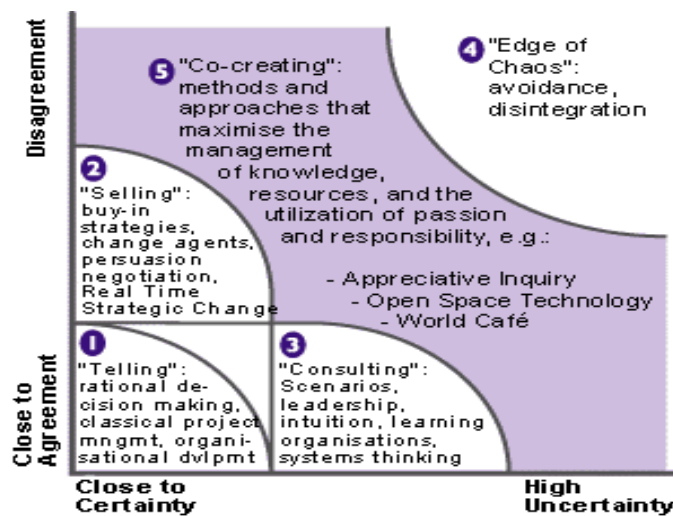


Figure 2. Implications of Stacey matrix for M&E strategies



The implications of this model for management and evaluation of complex programs are depicted in Figure 2 and summarised below.¹⁰

9 Stacey, Ralph. 2002. *Strategic management and organisational dynamics: the challenge of complexity*. 3rd ed. Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2002.

10 JD Meier. 2010. Blog entry on JD Meier’s Blog, 4 April 2010

<<http://blogs.msdn.com/b/jmeier/archive/2010/04/04/rick-stacey-s-agreement-and-certainty-matrix.aspx>>

Zone	Implications for M&E strategies
Zone One Close to agreement, close to certainty	Agreement on the outcomes and certainty on how to get there. Plan actions to achieve outcomes and monitor the results against the plans. Repeat what works. Useful metaphor: following a recipe to bake a cake.
Zone Two Far from agreement, close to certainty	Certainty on how to achieve outcomes, but no agreement on the outcomes desired. Plans and shared missions don't work. Power politics brought into play. Coalition building, negotiation, and compromise are used for agendas and direction. Useful metaphor: designing a space programme.
Zone Three Close to agreement, far from certainty	Agreement on the desired outcomes but no certainty on how to get there. Monitoring against a plan won't work. A shared mission or vision might work. The goal is to head towards the end-in-mind, even though the specific route to get there is not completely clear. Useful metaphor: designing a solar-powered moon rocket.
Zone Four Far from agreement, far from certainty (= anarchy)	High levels of uncertainty and disagreement. Traditional methods of planning, visioning and negotiation are ineffective. These are often dealt with through avoidance (avoiding the issues where there is disagreement and uncertainty.) Useful metaphor: responding to an unexpected catastrophe.
Zone Five Zone of Complexity	Traditional management approaches are ineffective, but innovation and creativity can be used to break with the past to create new modes of operating. Useful metaphor: raising a child.

Patton (2008)¹¹ proposed “**developmental evaluation**” as an approach to tracking and measuring the complex processes within the Zone of Complexity. Developmental evaluation differs from formative or summative evaluations in that the aim is not to establish or test a model or to demonstrate its impact at the end of the process. Instead, developmental evaluation is an integral leadership function, and is a results- and learning-oriented approach to testing realities. Developmental evaluation has been characterised as follows.¹²

- Complexity-based, supporting innovation and adaptation
- Provides feedback, generating learning and direction changes in real time
- Evolves as new measures and monitoring mechanisms are developed as goals emerge and change
- Captures system dynamics, interdependencies, and emergent interconnections
- Aims to develop context-specific understandings to inform ongoing innovations
- Draws from innovators’ values and commitment to learning as a key to accountability
- Enhances ability to respond to things out of program control, stay in touch with developments on the ground, and to respond strategically.

11 Patton, Michael Q. 2008. Op. cit.

12 <<http://awidme.pbworks.com/w/page/36195153/Overview-of-Evaluation-Types>>

Weiss (1995)¹³ suggested that a key reason complex programs are so difficult to evaluate is that the assumptions that inspire them are not clearly articulated, Stakeholders of complex initiatives typically lack clarity about how the change process will unfold and are therefore not focused on the early and mid-term changes that need to happen in order for a longer term goal to be reached. This lack of clarity about the “mini-steps” that must be taken to reach a long term outcome not only makes the task of evaluating a complex initiative challenging, but reduces the likelihood that all of the important factors related to the long term goal will be addressed.

Weiss used the term “**Theory of Change**” to describe the set of assumptions that explain both the intermediate steps that lead to the long term goal, and the connections between program activities and outcomes that occur at each step. Testing the theories of change in which the programme is based thus becomes a means of assessing progress and impact of the intervention. Theories of change are often not clearly articulated or based on consensus among stakeholders, but once brought to the surface and made visible, they can provide the foundation for data collection and analysis that tracks unfolding events. Evaluation would then be based on whether these theories are validated in the course of the programme.

It has been pointed out¹⁴ that a theory-based approach will also make attribution easier. A theory of change specifies how activities will lead to intermediate and longer-term outcomes and identifies the contextual conditions that may affect the process. This helps in strengthening the scientific case for attribution. A theory of change approach would seek agreement from all stakeholders that a particular set of activities, if properly implemented and given the presence of a defined set of supporting contextual factors, should lead to a specified set of outcomes. Although this strategy cannot eliminate all alternative explanations for a particular outcome, it aligns the major actors in the initiative with evidence that will be convincing to them.

A theory-based approach also allows the unpacking of complex interventions in a way that the most important elements are identified and spelt out. A well-articulated theory of change is also likely to be useful in predicting impacts that would otherwise not be anticipated.

The Theory of Change approach makes explicit the assumptions – or theories – about why and how a program should create social change. The Theory of Change maps the relationships and steps between program activities, interim goals, and short-term and long-term outcomes, while also accounting for context, key allies, as well as unintended consequences. The organisation develops their vision of what “success” looks like and highlights the social changes they desire.

This mapping helps an organisation to understand where they presently are and how they aim to achieve their vision, paying particular attention to identifying who will help them achieve their specific goals as well as outlining what is needed in order to maintain desired changes. They also consider what kinds of working relationships with specific constituents are needed in order to achieve their vision more effectively. The preconditions for achieving change are also mapped according to each constituent group in order to ensure solid assessment of the links between processes and outcomes.

13 Weiss, Carol. 1995. “Nothing as practical as good theory: Exploring theory-based evaluation for comprehensive community initiatives for children and families”. In James I. Connel, Anne C. Kubisch, Lisbeth B.Schorr and Carol H Weiss (eds). *New approaches to evaluating community initiatives: Concepts, methods and concepts. Roundtable on comprehensive community initiatives for children and families.* The Aspen Institute. Washington DC.

14 Hollister, Robinson G. and Jennifer Hill. 1995. Op.cit.

In addition to developing a strong theory of how change happens, we must also develop strong "theories of constraints." Finally, the method emphasizes the role of the organisation's constituency and their role in developing the Theory of Change

From the AWID M&E Wiki

<<http://www.awid.org/Library/AWID-s-Wiki-on-Monitoring-and-Evaluation>>

Klugman (2009)¹⁵ argues that in order to understand the complexity of change, M&E models must identify **contributions to change** rather than attributions. This is particularly relevant for policy change initiatives, that are always unpredictable and depend on a wide range of contextual factors and diversity of stakeholders. Evaluation of policy advocacy therefore needs to focus on strengthened capacity in the factors most likely to ensure readiness and creativity in policy engagement. Theory of Change models can be integrated with other tools to effectively track specific social justice and advocacy outcomes.

Klugman identifies seven such outcomes, based on a meta-analysis of successful policy initiatives. These are

- Strengthened organizational capacity
- Strengthened base of support
- Strengthened alliances
- Increased data and analysis from a social justice perspective
- Improved policies
- Shifts in social norms
- Changes in population-level impact

Klugman cautions that shifts in social norms and population level impacts such as reduction in levels of violence against women are long-term and cannot be attributed to a particular grant or programme.

Unique tools that Klugman has identified include Appreciative Enquiry and the Action Learning Cycle.

Appreciative Inquiry asks questions in ways that build trust and look at what has worked well, rather than what is not working – 'think of a time when you were collaborating with another group and felt excited and it went well...' Good process evaluation questions include:

- What was a peak moment when you felt best about the campaign/activity?
- What have you learned that you would share with others doing similar work?
- Did anything surprise you?
- What would help you to be more successful?
- One wild idea you have for improving the campaign?

The premise is that asking questions influences thinking and behavior. The process provides information on outcomes that have been achieved while building bonds among stakeholders. Information is often qualitative and in story form, but can be quite compelling.

The Action Learning Cycle from Barefoot Collective uses the following questions to simulate organisational learning and assessment. This methodology gives attention to actions within and outside the alliance/coalition, which fosters or constrains strategies or change processes.

15 Klugman, Barbara, 2009. "Less is more: Thoughts on evaluating social justice advocacy".

<<http://barbaraklugmanevaluatingadvocacy.blogspot.com/>>

- *Action*: What significant things happened? Describe the events. Who was involved, what did they do, what picture emerges? How did I/we feel?
- *Reflection*: Why did it happen, what caused it? What helped, what hindered? What did we expect? What assumptions did we make? What really struck us? Do we know of any other experiences or thinking that might help us look at this experience differently?
- *Learning*: What would we have done differently? What did we learn, what new insights? What was confirmed? What new questions have emerged? What other theories help us to deepen these learnings? What guidance do we get for the future?
- *Planning*: So what does this mean for practice? What do we want? What do we want to do, to happen? How? What are we going to do differently? What do we have to let go of or stop doing? How will we not repeat the same mistake? What steps will we use to build these new insights into our practice?

From the AWID M&E Wiki

<http://www.awid.org/Library/AWID-s-Wiki-on-Monitoring-and-Evaluation>

Towards an M&E strategy for regional networks

Given the issues with using traditional M&E approaches and tools to capture the impacts of regional networks working for social change, it would seem logical for such formations to draw on the concepts and frameworks discussed above, and develop a methodology suited to their specific requirements.

Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. Alternative approaches to M&E are not easy to implement. They require careful facilitation to ensure that all levels of actors participate in building theories of change and translating them into evaluation designs. They also involve adapting or developing multiple measures of activities and outcomes and ascertaining linkages between activities and outcomes on a continuous basis. They require committed leadership and strong advocacy to convince sceptics of the rigour and reliability of the results, and to use them to influence the future trajectory of interventions in the concerned sector.

For regional networks such as Intercambios, GBV Prevention Network and P4P, the geographically dispersed and heterogenous mix of partners pose an additional methodological challenge. Even if the resources could be found to mount an intensive process, partners may perceive evaluation as the responsibility of the secretariat and be unable or unwilling to put in the time required for collective reflection and analysis. Given the above, it is not surprising that the pool of knowledge and experience on evaluation of networks is very small, while that concerned specifically with regional networks is practically non-existent. According to a 2010 review “the field of network monitoring and evaluation is still, in theory and even more so in practice, in its infancy”¹⁶.

Possibly the most sustained and significant work on network evaluation has come from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)¹⁷ and its studies of knowledge networks, and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)¹⁸ through meta-evaluations of its own support to research and capacity-development networks. The material generated through these exercises, as well as through the

16 Innovations for Scaling Impact and Keystone Accountability. 2010. Next Generation Network Evaluation.

<http://www.scalingimpact.net/files/IDRC_Network_IPARL_Paper_Final_0.pdf>

17 <<http://www.iisd.org/networks/evaluation/>>

18 <http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-26266-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html>

praxis of organisations such as Keystone Accountability¹⁹ and iScale (Innovations for Scaling Impact)²⁰ can be a starting point for developing a strategic framework for monitoring and evaluation of regional networks such as Intercambios, GBV Prevention Network and P4P.

The following sections of this paper draw heavily on these materials, in particular the IPARL²¹ (Integrated Planning, Assessment, Reporting and Learning) methodology developed by iScale specifically for use by networks.

Integrating an M&E strategy into the network life-cycle

An M&E system should ideally link evaluation to strategy development and implementation as well as promote real-time learning, sharing and course-correction. In the case of networks, the system also needs to harvest consistent and comparable data at multiple levels and across various activities. A **theory-based and learning-focused M&E system** should include the following elements.

- ⤴ A clearly articulated **theory of change**. This is the overall framework that describes what the network plans to achieve and how it plans to achieve it. It provides a comprehensive and flexible learning framework for understanding how change happens and how individual members can best contribute to impact.
- ⤴ Clearly articulated **theories of action** for partners/members. While the theory of change articulates the collective network approach, theories of action elucidate the specific impact pathways that are guiding the work of each member of the network.
- ⤴ An **integrated assessment framework** that links monitoring to impact assessment and includes baseline data at multiple levels, data collection and monitoring procedures, and periodic evaluation of outcomes and impacts.
- ⤴ **Open reporting** so that claims regarding results can be debated, verified and/or refuted by key stakeholders. Creating space for a “**constituency voice**” through ongoing consultations and dialogues not only empowers partners and provides opportunities for course correction, it also increases the legitimacy of the network by demonstrating its accountability to its constituents.
- ⤴ **Learning and sharing mechanisms**. Structured activities for collective reflection and analysis of monitoring and evaluation findings are necessary for building on lessons learnt and maximising impact.
- ⤴ A **communications platform** that supports the collection of monitoring and evaluation data, constituency feedback and reporting as well as learning and course correction.

The M&E system can be integrated into the “life cycle” of the network as shown in the diagram below²².

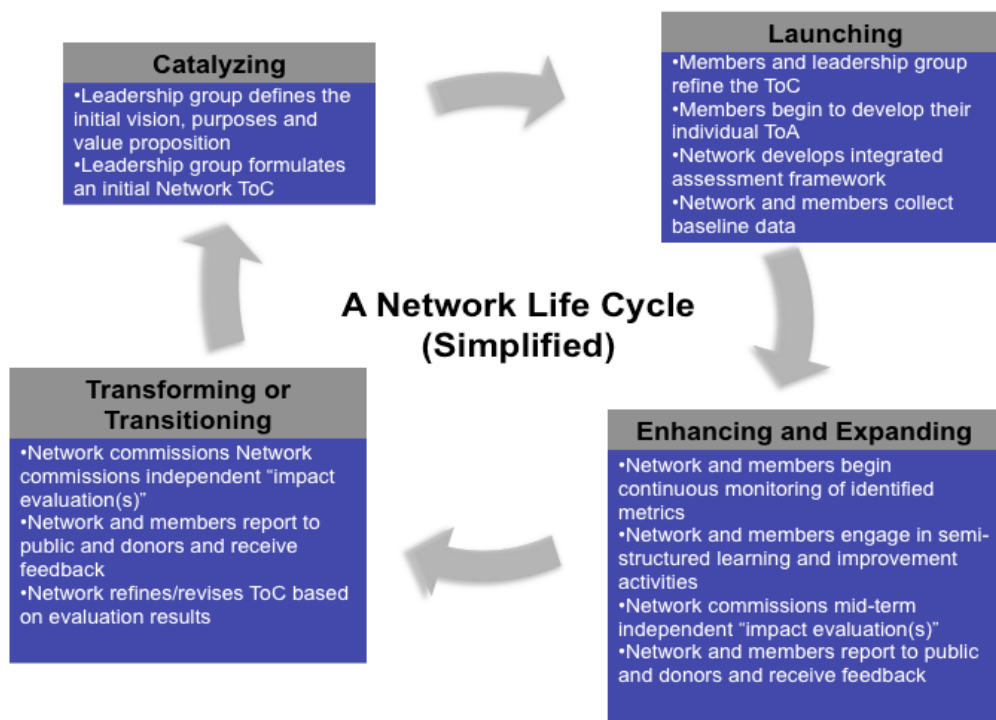
19 <<http://www.keystoneaccountability.org>>

20 <<http://www.scalingimpact.net>>

21 <www.scalingimpact.net/resources>

22 From iScale “Network life cycle and IPARL”

<http://www.scalingimpact.net/files/iScale_Network_Life_Cycle_and_IPARL_Overview.pdf>



A route map for an M&E pilot

Given their experience and the fact that they have already initiated a dialogue on the issue, Intercambios, GBV Prevention Network and P4P could consider piloting the development of an integrated M&E strategy that addresses the specific priorities and concerns of regional networks.

The following steps are suggested.

1. The network secretariat (or a core group of active members who can contribute the necessary time and effort) undertakes an initial **mapping** of the issues and key stakeholders around gender-based violence to set out the current **landscape, gaps** and **potential opportunities**. This map is the basis for a preliminary articulation of the **goal or vision** of the network. The map and the statement of the theory of change are then shared with network members for their suggestions and endorsement.
2. The initial goal statement is sharpened and refined in the light of comments from members and partners. The **intermediate outcomes** that are necessary for achieving the goal/vision and the general set of **strategies** for reaching these outcomes are set out by the secretariat and validated by the members. This provides the broad framework of the **network theory of change**.

A **network level theory of change** identifies high-level strategies and impacts. It is not an implementation plan, but rather it **describes how change happens** and the **progress markers** to look for along the way. It is a comprehensive and flexible learning framework that, at the network level:

Identifies desirable results (“What”)

- a. Describes network level impacts
- b. Indicates which outcomes the network will be held accountable for
- c. Identifies categories for monitoring and measurement

Articulates the multiple and often interacting strategies for affecting change (under what conditions, through what mechanisms and why?)

- a. Describes the process for achieving outcomes
- b. Shows the relationships between activities/outputs and expected results/outcomes

Maps out the actors that contribute to various strategies (who) and **locates a specific individual strategy or set of strategies** (theory of action)

- a. Provides a summary of how the various members contribute toward the network as a whole

From “Next Generation Network Evaluation” (iScale and Keystone Accountability, 2010)

3. Network members explicate and articulate their individual **theories of action** by identifying the specific strategies they will focus on and detailing how their actions will contribute to achievement of the intermediate outcomes.
4. The network secretariat and members work together to identify **indicators** at each level of the members' theories of action (activities, outputs, outcomes and intermediate outcomes).
5. Each member is responsible for defining a **baseline** and for regular **monitoring** of the agreed-upon indicators for the outputs/outcomes that they are focusing on.
6. The secretariat compiles and aggregates data from individual members to create an overall picture of progress towards each of the intermediate outcomes identified in the initial step.
7. Periodic review and reflection on lessons from the collated data and insights from the monitoring process. These discussions are geared to further **sharpening indicators** and monitoring mechanisms, **fine-tuning strategies** and undertaking **mid-course corrections**. Space for this kind of reflection can be created within every regular network meeting.

Given the limited amount of time available to bring members together, and given that, for the most part, members want to discuss in depth the substantive work and financial matters, it is unlikely that most networks will ever be inclined to allocate a full day to a day and a half for either Outcome Mapping or Appreciative Inquiry approaches for putting monitoring and evaluation frameworks in place. We have therefore drafted a planning session that is responsive to how members normally behave in a network meeting.

The key to our approach is the insinuation into the substantive discussion the four questions which are often overlooked at network meetings:

- **what can members contribute to, as well as receive from, the network;**
- **what will success look like for the network as a whole;**
- **for each activity, who is going to benefit, be changed or influenced by the work;**
- **what will be the indicators of success for each activity.**

When the network meets, the first item on the agenda should be a review of the goals of the network as stated in the project documents. Members should then consider their own views for the vision, mission and objectives of the network as a whole. Objectives for their participation should include what they hope to contribute to the network (to other members and to the network as a whole). The chair/ facilitator/network coordinator should ask members for their views on what success will look like for the network as a whole. The refined views on **goals, objectives and measures of success** for the network as a whole are recorded by the coordinator, for revisiting at the time of network evaluation.

When members begin to discuss individual projects, they are asked by the chair/facilitator/network coordinator:

- a. how they see themselves benefiting from the project, what they expect to learn or gain from it; and
- b. who else will benefit from the project, be changed or influenced by the work

At the end of the substantive discussion of the project, members are asked for indicators of success. Again, the beneficiaries and indicators are recorded by the coordinator, for revisiting as part of monitoring and evaluating the network.

From **“Measuring while you manage:Planning, monitoring and evaluating knowledge networks”**²³

8. Once a robust set of monitoring data is in place, a formal **external evaluation** is carried out to assess the **vibrancy, effectiveness** and **impact** of the network.
9. The evaluation findings should feed into a **strategic rethinking** of the network vision, purposes and values. These changes may lead to a revised network theory of change and corresponding changes in member theories of action, thus setting in motion another **cycle of learning** from practice.

A menu of **generalised indicators**²⁴ for measuring three key metrics of network performance - vibrancy, connectivity and impact - is given below.

Components	Questions	Possible measures/Data sources
Network vibrancy	A network is more than connections. What are the essential characteristics that a network must achieve so that its efforts will be successful and sustainable?	
Trust	Do network members hold a set of shared values?	Degree of congruence in network members explicit/formal organisational principles, vision and mission.
	Are network members committed to a set of shared norms or operating principles?	Existence of written charter of principles or MoU between network members.

23 Creech, Heather. 2001. Measuring while you manage:Planning, monitoring and evaluating knowledge networks. International Institute for Sustainable Development.

<http://www.sparc.bc.ca/index.php?option=com_rubberdoc&view=doc&id=364:measuring-while-you-manage&format=raw&type=pdf>

24 Adapted from *Next Generation Network Evaluation*. IScale and Keystone Accountability. 2010.

<http://www.scalingimpact.net/files/IDRC_Network_IPARL_Paper_Final_0.pdf>

Structure and governance	How is the network organised?	Review of strategy documents. Stakeholder perceptions (interviews).
	How does the network take decisions?	
	Are there any structural and governance issues impeding the network's effectiveness?	
	Is control of the network centralised or distributed among members?	
Core/periphery issues	How large is the core? Does the core contain different but overlapping structures? How large is the periphery?	Network maps.
Ownership	Do network members see themselves as working "in" the network or "for" the network?	Stakeholder perceptions (data from interviews and perception surveys).
Changes in knowledge base	To what degree has the network changed the knowledge base or contributed to framing the debate on issues?	Interviews with key people whom the network is trying to influence. Website traffic and user feedback. Journal indexes and citation indexes (number of references to the network in academic and professional literature).
Capacity development	Did network members get opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills?	Number of training sessions organised by the network. Structured opportunities for exchange of information and ideas. Availability of funding for capacity building of members.
	Were efforts made to include young researchers/professionals in network activities?	Number and nature of involvement of young researchers/professionals in network activities.
	Was customised information provided to members to support research?	Stakeholder surveys.
Life cycle	How is the network performing in comparison to other networks of a similar nature and stage of development?	Stakeholder interviews and perception surveys.
	Is the network maintaining its momentum or is it slowing down?	
Diversity	To what extent does the network reflect and accommodate diversity?	Membership breakdown by region/sector/special interest groups.
	Are individual members interacting with "unlike others"?	Demographics of interaction (meeting records, joint projects)
Resilience	Is the network overly dependent on a few individuals?	Network maps. Stakeholder interviews.

Sustainability	How does the network define sustainability?	Review of strategy documents. Interviews with key leaders.
	How conscious are members of factors helping/hindering sustainability/	Interviews with key stakeholders.
	Does the network have adequate resources for its operations?	Budget review. Interviews with key stakeholders.
Alignment	Are there formal rules and systems for conflict resolution?	Review of network documents.
	Is there a good fit between the network issues and priorities and the composition of the membership?	Membership breakdown. Review of network activities. Stakeholder interviews.
	Are coordination/control mechanisms well matched to handle complexity?	
Cohesion	Who are the individuals most central to the network? Can the network survive their absence?	Network maps. Stakeholder perceptions.
	What level of multiplicity/overlap is there within the network?	Network maps. Number of overlapping interlinkages and relationships between members. Number of members coming together in multiple forums within the network.
	How cohesive is the network?	Number of members with multiple ties to the network. Number of members attending network events and participating in review/reflection.
Network growth and development	Is the network growing and developing?	Increase in membership and coverage. Increasing diversity of membership. Increase in number of members with multiple links to each other and to the network.
	Is the network adapting to match the changing context?	Use of new technologies. Stakeholder perceptions (interviews) Existence of structured learning and feedback loops
Connectivity	How are information and other resources flowing through the network? What are the characteristics of links among nodes, especially their structural arrangements? How robust are the connections made by the network?	
	How is the network publishing and disseminating its work?	Number of articles published by network. Number of articles published in professional journals. Number of media features.
	Have workshops and other events been organised for knowledge dissemination?	Number of workshops, consultations and dissemination events.

Communication quality and practice	What is the range and diversity of network knowledge products?	Number and nature of knowledge products (technical papers, popular articles, issue papers, policy briefs, newsletters, campaign materials).
	How effectively is the network using electronic media?	Number of network products shared on website. Number of member websites that link to network website. Number of member contributions to network website. Website hits, comments posted, unsolicited feedback.
	How effectively is the network using mainstream media?	Number of press releases by network. Number of newspaper/magazine articles by and about the network. Number of members involved in developing and distributing network media releases. Number of members who are pooling media contacts within the network.
	How are internal communications organised?	Review of network newsletters. Review of e-mail exchanges. Review of information exchanges between members. Network meeting records. Number of meetings organised by sub-groups of members to discuss network issues.
Connectedness	Who are the individuals who are active in building connections among members? Do members know what is happening in other parts of the network?	Stakeholder perceptions (interviews). Stakeholder surveys. Stakeholder perceptions (interviews). Stakeholder surveys.
	Participation	How much do members participate in the network and how? What are members contributing to the network?
Coordination	What are the systems for network governance?	Review of network documents. Stakeholder perceptions (interviews). Stakeholder surveys.
	What are the coordination mechanisms being used?	
	What is the level of collaboration within the network?	Number of joint activities undertaken by network members. Number of joint proposals developed by members. Number of members actively sharing resources.
Effects	What outputs is the network producing? At what costs?	

	What outcomes or impacts is the network producing through these outputs?	
Systemic change	Is the network moving towards achieving its goals and objectives?	External stakeholder perceptions. Field monitoring reports.
Value addition	Is the network fully realising the advantages of working together?	Review of monitoring reports. External and internal stakeholder perceptions.
	Is the knowledge being generated by the network relevant to decision-makers?	Number of targeted issue briefs produced by the network. External and internal stakeholder perceptions. Extent to which language/analysis generated by network has been adopted by decision-makers.
Influence	How is the network located within the power structure and organisational ecology of its 'community'?	Number of requests for membership. Number of media references. Number of key stakeholders that publicly support and endorse the network. Size of budget.
	How influential is the network?	Number of requests for information and support from key stakeholders. Number of media references. Number of key decision-makers who publicly support and endorse the network.
	Who are the individuals who exercise the most influence within the network?	Stakeholder perceptions (interviews). Stakeholder surveys.
	How effectively does the network engage with key external stakeholders?	Number of meetings with key external stakeholders. Number of key external stakeholders attending network events. Number of requests from key external stakeholders for information, support or further engagement. Number of new funding opportunities resulting from building external connections. Perceptions of people whom the network has tried to influence (interviews).

Network monitoring tools

A range of participatory mapping and monitoring tools have been adapted to the needs of network monitoring. Combinations of tools can also be used to track the three key network metrics (vibrancy, connectivity and effects). Suggested contents for a basic toolkit are given below.

Tool	Description and source
Participation mapping	<p>Can be used to map member interactions with the network. Categories/levels of participation are conceptualised as concentric circles, with the outermost ring representing low levels of participation (eg participation in mailing lists), and progressively higher levels of participation (eg participation in strategy development, fund-raising) in the inner circles. Mapping can highlight gaps in network coverage and reach.</p> <p>http://www.scalingimpact.net/files/IScale%20Mapping%20v4.pdf</p>
Comparative constituency feedback	<p>CCF surveys create space for members to give honest feedback on practices, systems and behaviours. A questionnaire is used to canvass perceptions of members about key aspects of network performance. The questionnaire is also distributed to a comparative group of organisations external to the network. CCF surveys can be used to stimulate dialogue with constituents and identify opportunities for improvement. The comparative analysis of a network's performance relative to others in the environment helps to illuminate areas of relative weak or strong performance and encourage networks to learn from each other. Networks can identify areas they would like to improve and then track progress towards these objectives by running the survey again.</p> <p>Intercambios, GBV Prevention Network and P4P could consider the possibility of developing and applying a common CCF survey questionnaire.</p> <p>http://www.istr.org/conferences/barcelona/WPVOLUME/Kiryttopoulou.pdf</p>
Partnership scorecard	<p>This is a simple and easy-to-use tool based on Value Network Analysis, depicted in the form of a value network map. The map pinpoints the key roles within the network and shows the tangible and intangible value flows between them. Tangible flows typically represent the "contracted" deliverables between the members or between members and the secretariat. The intangibles are the complementary value adding elements that are not formally specified, but which are key to the partnership (such as early warnings on emerging situations, information sharing, referrals or recommendations).</p> <p>The value network map is developed in a workshop setting and finalised after ensuring that all participants are comfortable with the meaning and accountabilities represented by each value flow. The mapping process will also reveal any mismatch in perceptions of roles and expectations of different actors, and provides an opportunity for clarification and consensus-building.</p> <p>The completed map shows the criticality of each value deliverable along with its perceived cost or risk, and can be used to identify "quick wins" where performance gaps can be addressed with minimal cost and risk.</p> <p>The Partnership Scorecard is developed from the VNA maps. The scorecard identifies the "value creator" and "value receiver" associated with each value flow. Each</p>

	<p>participant in the network will have a set of value deliverables that they are responsible for creating and a set of value deliverables that they will be receiving and will be responsible for assessing.</p> <p>Once established, the Partnership Scorecard becomes a measurement and monitoring vehicle for the network. Partners are periodically surveyed for an assessment of the value flows they are receiving. These periodic assessments are then used to highlight emerging issues in the partnership and identify the adjustments in value flow necessary to re-establish the balance.</p> <p>http://www.optimice.com.au/page721.php</p>
<p>Network Functions Approach</p>	<p>The NFA is based on the conceptualisation of networks in terms of six basic functions – community-building, filtering, amplifying, learning and facilitating, investing and providing, and convening. The NFA helps networks to move towards an ‘ideal’ functional mix. Each of a network’s existing or planned activities are mapped against the six functions.</p> <p>Participants identify the balance of effort between various functions. For each function, participants indicate if the network plays an agency or support role. Each function is then rated for effectiveness and efficiency on a scale of 1-5. Participants then take the current functional focus they have just developed and reflect back to the mission/vision for the network. Participants discuss the degree of alignment between the network and its mission, and decide whether there is a need for a change in the focus and balance of the functions or in the mission. Building on this conversation, an ideal balance is developed. Participants then discuss what is needed to move from the existing focus and role to the ideal focus and role. All of this is captured in a simple matrix.</p> <p>http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/579.pdf</p>
<p>Social network analyses</p>	<p>Network methodologies are applied to human social relations and groups as a way to analyse behaviour patterns, group structures and inter-relationships between different actors. Organisational Network Analysis (ONA) uses network methodologies to examine the relationships between organisations. Dynamic Network Analysis (DNA) uses network methodologies to assess the changes in "dynamic" or "longitudinal networks" in which the set of relationships or the membership changes over time.</p> <p>Discussions can include questions such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is this really what we want the field to look like? - Are those actors currently seen at the centre of the field best positioned to represent the interests of people affected by the issue? - Who are the actors that are not visible in the maps and where are they? - What can we do to bring other players in the policy making space, to the core? <p>http://www.scalingimpact.net/files/IScale%20Mapping%20v4.pdf</p>
<p>Monitoring “networking at the edges”</p>	<p>Monitoring the level of networking that does not directly involve the secretariat but is stimulated by membership of the network. This can be used for measuring network vibrancy. For instance, networks can track the number of new contacts/connections a network member has made as the result of putting an item in the newsletter by sending a short follow-up survey to the author.</p> <p>The number of new subscribers who register for the newsletter after having been told about it by a member could also be used as an indicator of “networking at the edges”.</p> <p>www.actionresearch.net/living/madpdf/</p>

<p>Impact pathway evaluation</p>	<p>IPE is a two-phase process, beginning with internal monitoring and evaluation guided by the Theory of Change, followed by external ex-post impact evaluation.</p> <p>A visual depiction of the network impact pathway is created in Phase I, with boxes describing activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes and final outcomes, with arrows showing the connections between them. Answers to a series of questions asked of each box are then recorded into an impact pathway matrix, which looks like a logframe but is far more detailed.</p> <p>Possible questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What would success look like? - What are the factors that influence the achievement of each outcome? - Which of these can be influenced by the project? - Which factors are outside the direct influence of the project? - What is the program currently doing to address these factors? - What performance information should we collect and how? <p>Performance indicators identified through this process are monitored during Phase I. Ex-post evaluation in Phase II uses the same set of performance indicators and seeks to establish plausible links between the project's impact pathway and subsequent developmental changes.</p> <p>www.cgiar-ilac.org/files/publications/briefs/ILAC_Brief17_PIPA.pdf</p>
<p>Participatory Impact Pathway Analysis</p>	<p>PIPA provides a conceptual framework for action-learning. The process begins with a participatory workshop where stakeholders make explicit their assumptions about how the project will achieve an impact through constructing a problem tree, visioning exercises and network mapping. The results of these exercises are then articulated in the form of two logic models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Outcome Logic Model describes the project's medium term objectives in the form of hypotheses. - The Impact Logic Model describes how the expected outcomes will lead to the ultimate impact. <p>The outcome targets and milestones set by participants are regularly revisited and revised as part of the M&E system.</p> <p>www.cgiar-ilac.org/files/publications/briefs/ILAC_Brief17_PIPA.pdf</p>
<p>Participatory story-building</p>	<p>Key actors, strategies and moments of change are mapped as a way of plotting the story of change on which all are working together. Each participant will have a slightly different story to tell about their work and the key moments of changes and challenges from their point of view. This exercise seeks to bring all stories together into one narrative, without losing their individual richness. The process helps the network to understand who or where the main points of influence are and what the key moments of change have been. It also enables learning about the network's scope of work, reach and access and highlights the strategies that have been most influential. These learnings can be incorporated into future strategic planning.</p> <p>www.actionresearch.net/living/madpdf/</p>
<p>Outcome mapping</p>	<p>This methodology developed by IDRC can be used as a monitoring system as well to evaluate ongoing or completed activities. It takes the theory of change as a starting point and is guided by principles of participation and iterative learning, encouraging evaluative thinking throughout the program cycle by all program team members</p> <p>Outcome mapping focuses on the changes in behaviour, relationships or actions of those individuals, groups or organisations with whom the network interacts directly.</p>

Rather than claiming and attribution of development impacts, outcome mapping focuses on **contributions** to outcomes that can enhance the possibility of development impacts.

Outcome mapping involves three stages.

Intentional Design helps to establish consensus on the macro-level change goals and plan the strategies to achieve them. The tool consists of four questions: Why? (What is the vision to which the network wants to contribute?); Who? (Who are the boundary partners?); What? (What are the changes that are being sought?); and How? (How will the programme contribute to the change process?).

Outcome and Performance Monitoring provides a framework for the ongoing monitoring of progress toward the achievement of outcomes, using data collection tools such as an Outcome Journal (progress markers); a Strategy Journal (strategy maps); and a Performance Journal (organisational practices).

Evaluation Planning helps the programme identify evaluation priorities and develop an evaluation plan.

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