

# Outcome Harvesting for Evaluating Capacity Strengthening Interventions

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# What is HC3?

The Health Communication Capacity Collaborative (HC3) is a five-year, global project funded by USAID. It is designed to strengthen developing country capacity to implement state-of-the-art social and behavior change communication (SBCC) programs.

# Objectives

1. Introduce outcome harvesting as a complexity-aware methodology
2. Describe the steps of outcome harvesting
3. List examples of what one can learn from outcome harvesting
4. List the strengths and limitations of outcome harvesting

# What is a complex project?



# Complexity-Aware Approaches

A group of approaches well suited to monitor and evaluate complex projects in which the relationship between cause and effect (i.e. theory of change) is incompletely understood or in which the implementation process changed from the original plan.

Adapted from USAID (2013) Discussion Note; Complexity-Aware Monitoring.  
Version 2.0.

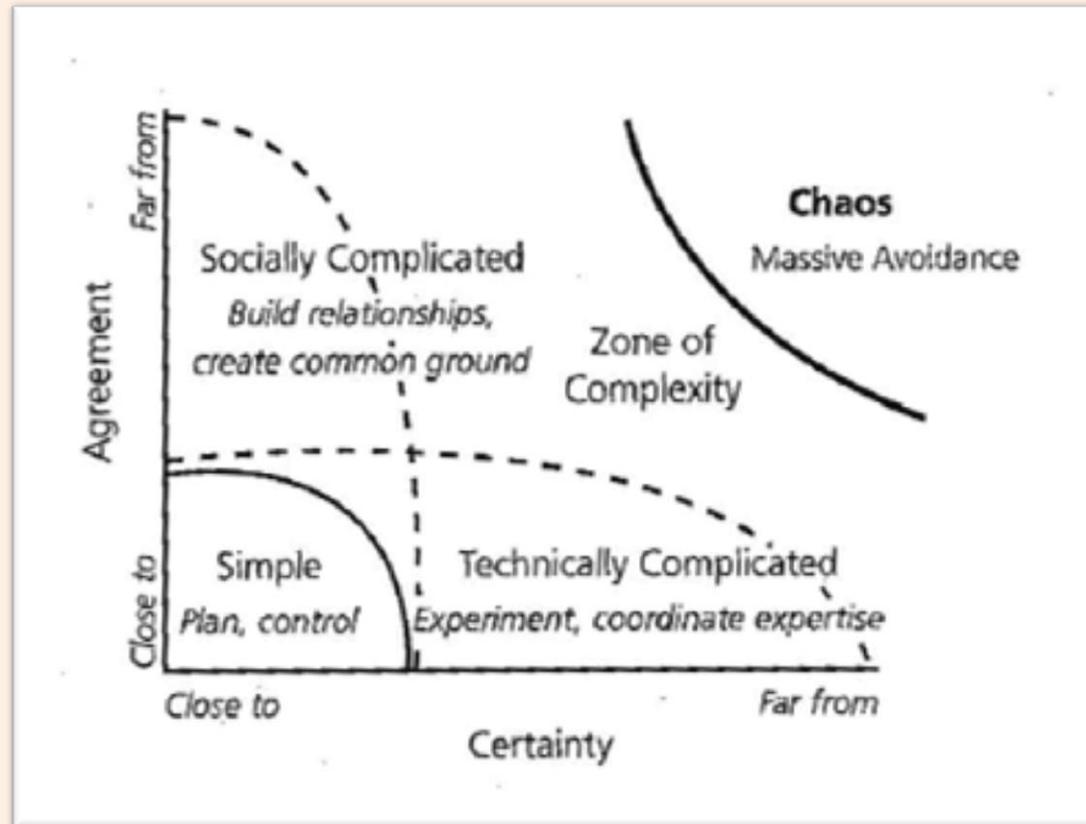
# Guiding questions

To identify complex aspects of a project or strategy, consider:

- What is the degree of certainty (e.g. theory of change) about how to solve the problem?
- What is the degree of agreement among stakeholders about how to solve the problem?

USAID (2013) Discussion Note; Complexity-Aware Monitoring. Version 2.0.

# Agreement and Certainty Matrix



Patton, M.Q. (2011). Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use. New York: The Guildford Press, p. 94.

## Complexity-aware approaches

- Consider a broader range of outcomes associated with an intervention (e.g. positive, negative, intended, unintended)
- Consider alternative causes from other actors or factors
- Consider non-linear or multiple pathways of contribution

USAID (2013) Discussion Note; Complexity-Aware Monitoring. Version 2.0.

# Complexity-aware approaches

## Examples of complexity-aware methods

- Sentinel indicators
- Stakeholder feedback
- Process monitoring of impacts
- Most significant change
- Outcome harvesting

USAID (2013) Discussion Note; Complexity-Aware Monitoring. Version 2.0.

# Outcome Harvesting



# Outcome Harvesting

A participatory, qualitative, complexity-aware methodology used to identify project outcomes and link them to project outputs by describing contributions to each outcome.

# What is an outcome?



# Outcomes

Outcomes are demonstrated changes in the behavior of an institution or organization, which were influenced by an intervention. Outcomes must be specific, verifiable, relevant, have occurred since the beginning of an intervention and cannot have been under the direct control of the intervention.

# Formulating Outcomes

1. In October 2014, MoH received a grant from the World Bank to support its SBCC work.
2. In January 2015, HC3 hired SBCC specialists who began to work as seconded advisors with the MoH.
3. In March 2015, HC3 trained MoH officials on the components of strategic campaign design.
4. In October 2015, MoH officials launched a strategic campaign to promote key HIV prevention behaviors.

# Outcome Harvesting Methodology

1. Design
2. Review of documentation and drafting outcome
3. Engagement of Informants and refinement of outcomes
4. Substantiation of outcomes
5. Analysis and Interpretation
6. Use of findings

## HC3's adaptations

- For each outcome, inquired about other actors and factors that contributed
- Merged substantiation and engagement with informant steps to maximize participation from external parties
- Required both internal and external verification for each outcome
- Engaged informants (internal and external) in person not exclusively by email

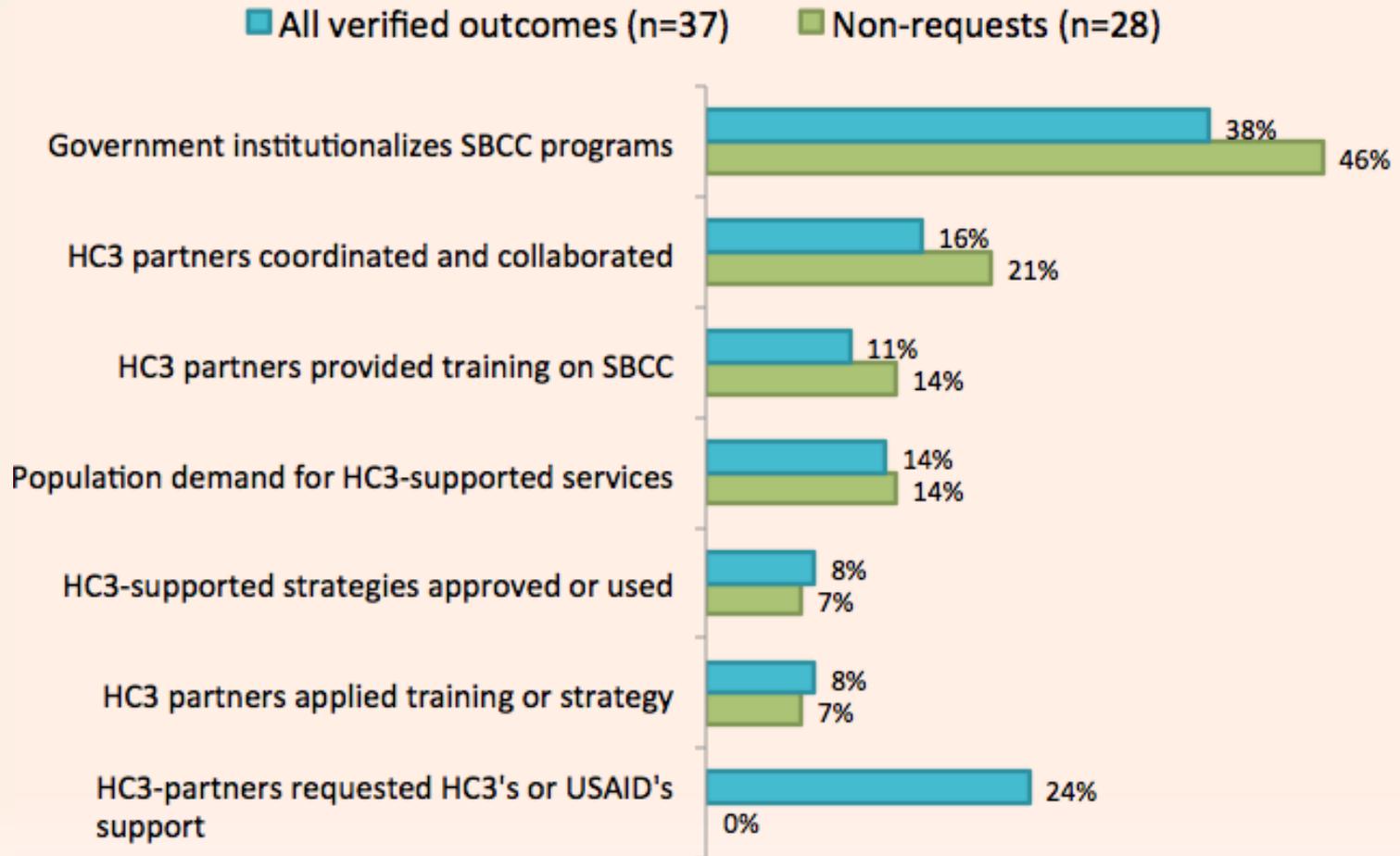
# What can you learn?



# Country Evaluation Questions

1. In what ways has the MoH demonstrated important changes in their capacity for improved SBCC since the start of the project?
2. To what extent did these HC3-country outcomes since the start of the project exceed or fall short of HC3-country project objectives?
3. How effective were HC3-country capacity strengthening interventions and strategies?
4. How sustainable were the outcomes to which the HC3-country program contributed?

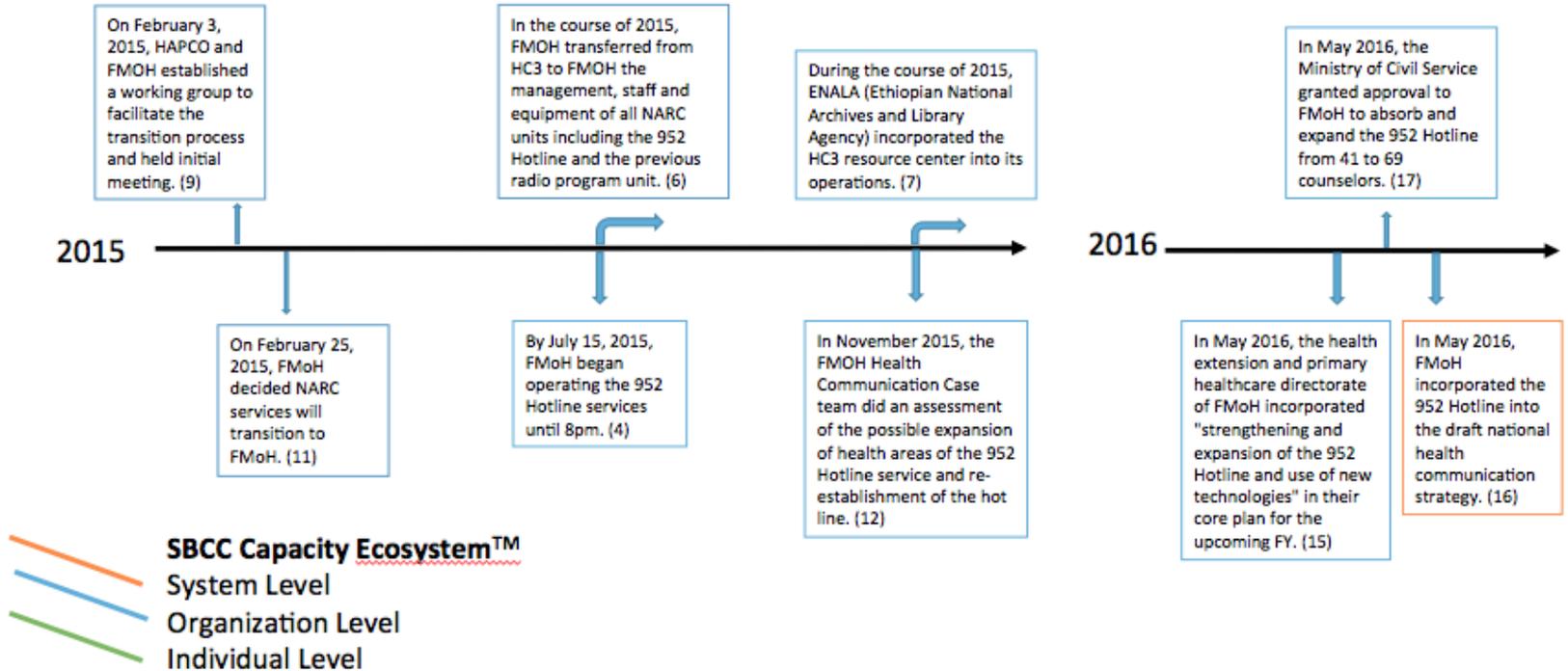
# Types of outcomes



Source: HC3 Ethiopia project, 2014-2016

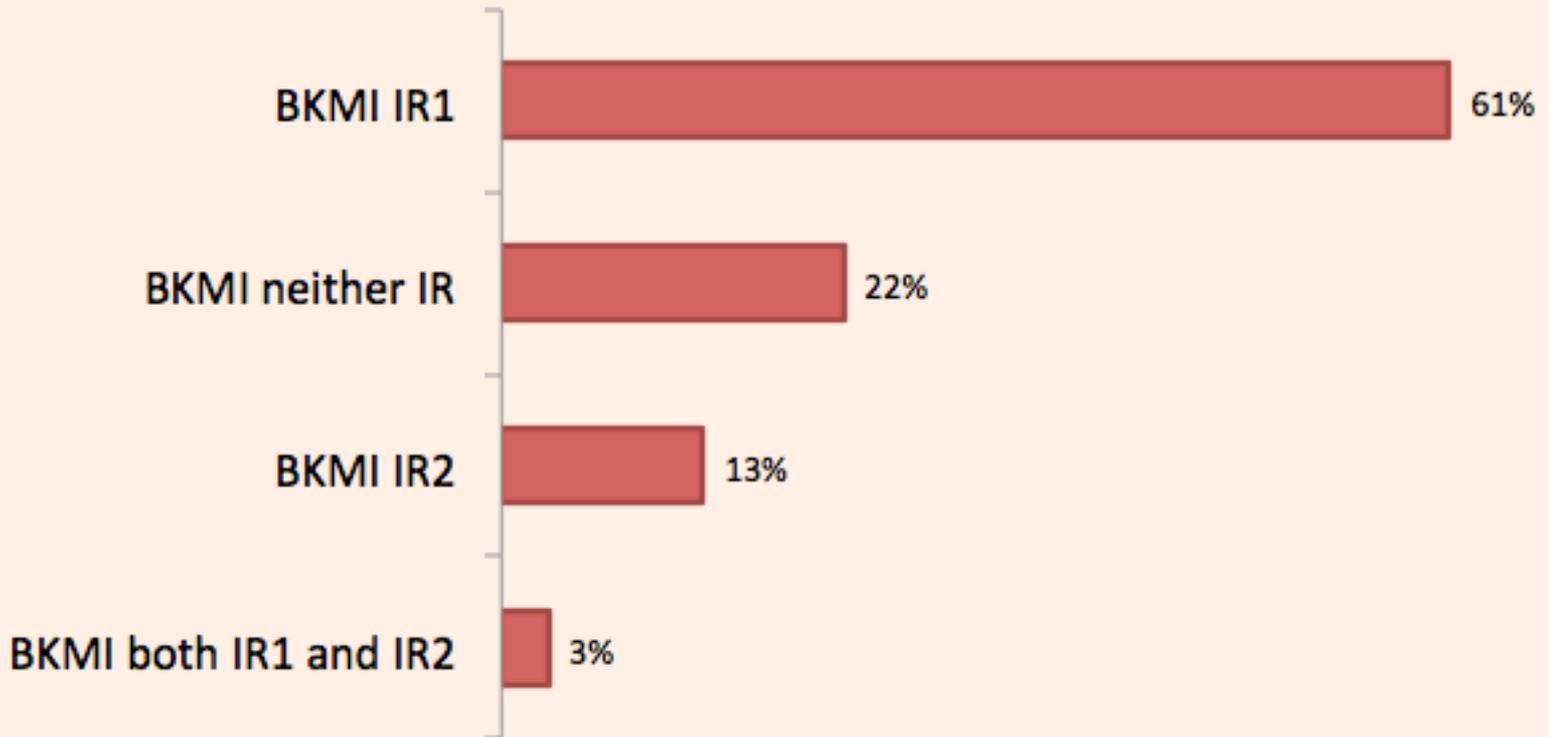
# Processes of change

## Change Analysis: Transition of NARC services from HC3 to FMOH



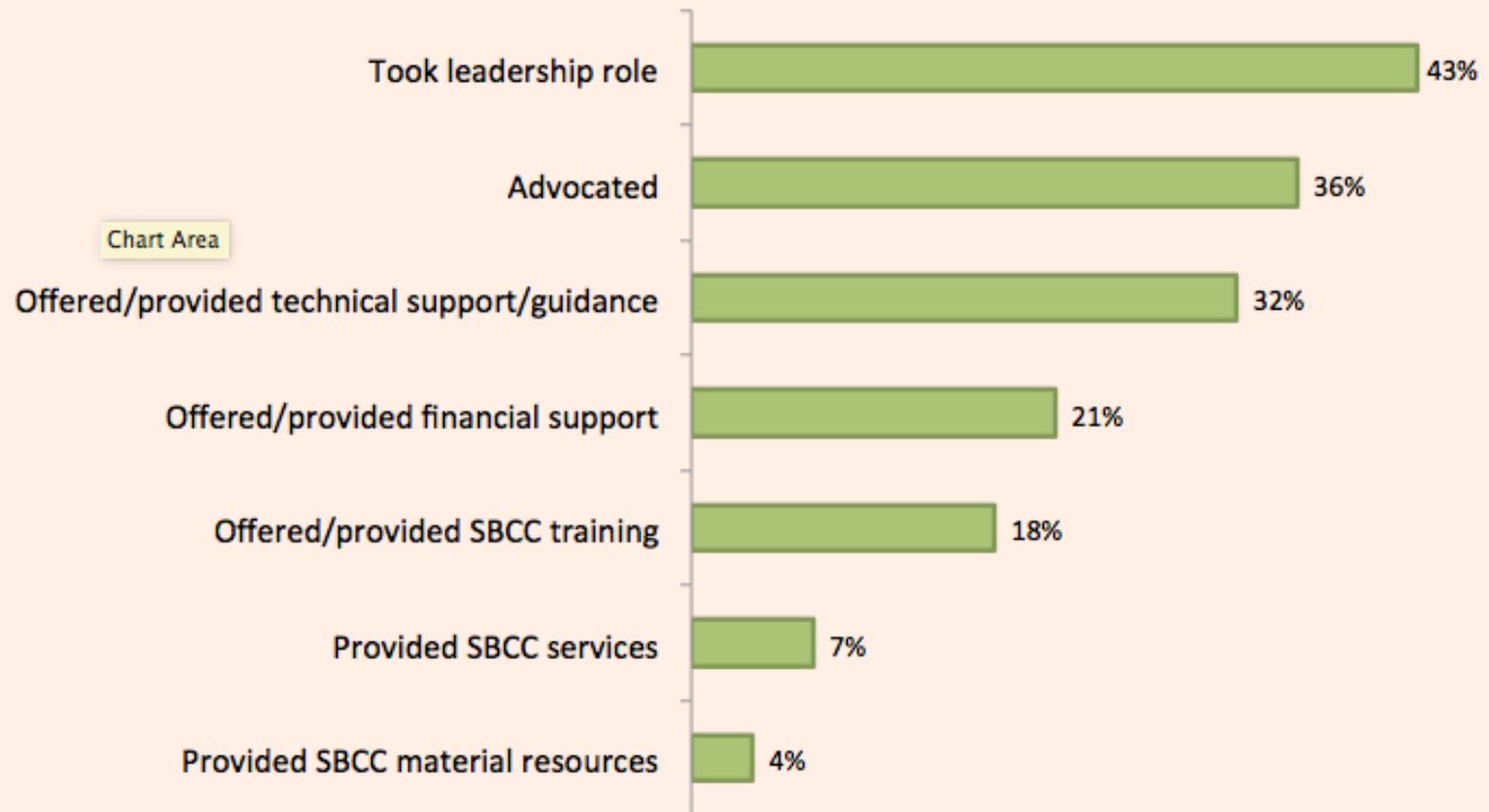
Source: HC3 Ethiopia project, 2014-2016

## Outcomes vs. Project Objectives



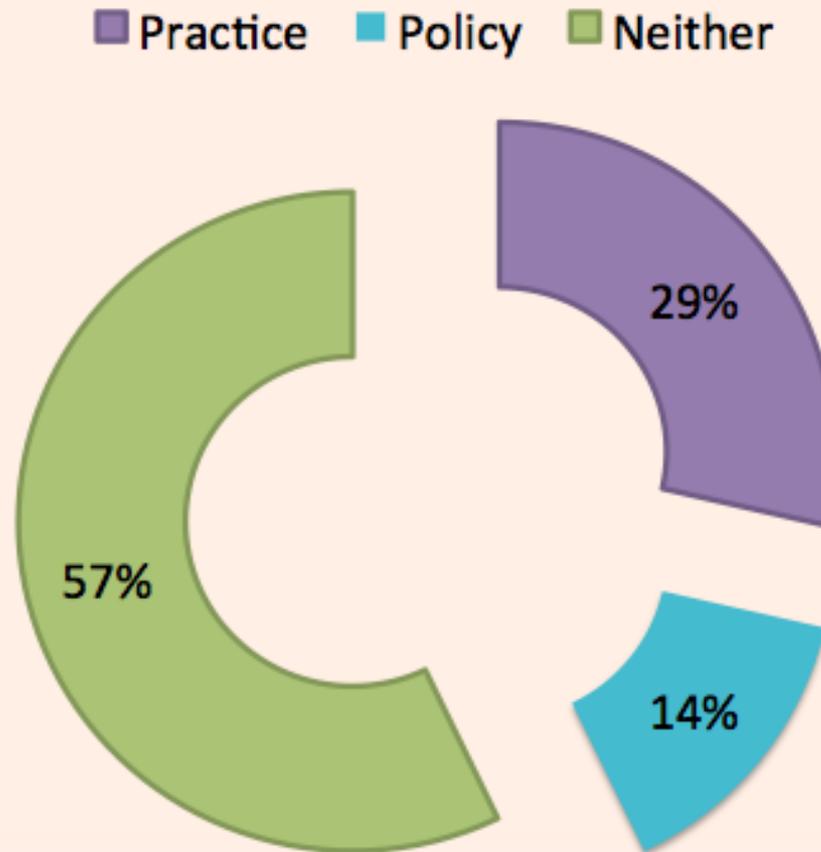
Source: HC3 Bangladesh (BKMI) project, 2014-2016

# Types of influence



Source: HC3 Ethiopia project, 2014-2016

# Sustainability of Outcomes



Source: HC3 Ethiopia project, 2014-2016

# Strengths, Limitations and Lessons Learned



# Strengths of outcome harvesting

- Provides a way to describe change when there are few or no reliable quantitative indicators of project processes and effects
- Provides a description of the ways in which an intervention has influenced changed
- Challenges an organization to reflect critically on what they have accomplished
- Increases sense of ownership of the organization implementing the intervention

## Limitations of outcome harvesting

- Does not necessarily enable you to compare the relative influence of different interventions in achieving outcomes
- Requires significant resource investment and buy-in from the organization that implemented the intervention and the organization(s) that was influenced by the intervention

## Limitations of outcome harvesting

- Documentation and stakeholder recall, both of which are affected by subjective bias, play a role in determining what data is collected and substantiated
- The methodology is flexible and not very standard across different applications; this in turn affects comparability across evaluations

## Lessons Learned

- As with other methods, the nature and quality of data influences what conclusions one can make
  - E.g. process of change
  - E.g. effectiveness of intervention activities
- If verification is important, spell out exactly what you want
- Discuss and clarify what evaluation terms mean (e.g. effectiveness, sustainable), brainstorm examples as a team
- Local capacity and commitment counts

# Questions...