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?

Agreement and Certainty Matrix

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

Complexity-aware approaches

Examples of complexity-aware methods

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

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

- On February 3, 2015, HAPCO and FMoH established a working group to facilitate the transition process and held the initial meeting. (9)
- In the course of 2015, FMoH transferred from HC3 to FMoH the management, staff and equipment of all NARC units including the 952 Hotline and the previous radio program unit. (6)
- During the course of 2015, ENALA (Ethiopian National Archives and Library Agency) incorporated the HC3 resource center into its operations. (7)
- In May 2016, the Ministry of Civil Service granted approval to FMoH to absorb and expand the 952 Hotline from 41 to 69 counselors. (17)

2015

- On February 25, 2015, FMoH decided NARC services will transition to FMoH. (11)
- By July 15, 2015, FMoH began operating the 952 Hotline services until 8pm. (4)
- In November 2015, the FMoH Health Communication Case team did an assessment of the possible expansion of health areas of the 952 Hotline service and re-establishment of the hotline. (12)

2016

- In May 2016, the health extension and primary healthcare directorate of FMoH incorporated “strengthening and expansion of the 952 Hotline and use of new technologies” in their core plan for the upcoming FY. (15)
- In May 2016, FMoH incorporated the 952 Hotline into the draft national health communication strategy. (16)

Source: HC3 Ethiopia project, 2014-2016
Outcomes vs. Project Objectives

- BKMI IR1: 61%
- BKMI neither IR: 22%
- BKMI IR2: 13%
- BKMI both IR1 and IR2: 3%

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

- Took leadership role: 43%
- Advocated: 36%
- Offered/provided technical support/guidance: 32%
- Offered/provided financial support: 21%
- Offered/provided SBCC training: 18%
- Provided SBCC services: 7%
- Provided SBCC material resources: 4%

Source: HC3 Ethiopia project, 2014-2016
Sustainability of Outcomes

- Practice: 57%
- Policy: 14%
- Neither: 29%

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...