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People-Centred Evaluation

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Abstract:

People-Centred Evaluation

This paper outlines the emerging 'People-Centred Evaluation' (PCE) Approach. This approach has recently been used in both overseas development and the Australian Public sector. It is particularly well suited for developing practical internal monitoring and evaluation systems for projects that aim to encourage practice change and capacity building amongst target stakeholders. Having a strong program logic element, PCE helps groups clarify their project design. However, unlike the 'logical framework', PCE uses targeted stakeholders as the organising construct. PCE uses straightforward non-conceptual language, and invites participants to develop a 'home-grown' monitoring and evaluation framework that they can understand and own. The hands-on approach offers a very human and accessible approach to monitoring and evaluation.

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While this approach draws on 'Outcomes Mapping' (Earl et al 2001), 'Contribution Analysis' (Mayne 1999), and Sue Funnell's program logic approach (Funnel 2000), there are also some significant differences that will be discussed in this paper. PCE offers a unique, inclusive approach to project design and evaluation that will appeal to many practitioners.

Introduction

This paper outlines the emerging 'People-Centred Evaluation' (PCE) approach that guides the development of practical internal monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) frameworks for projects and programs. This approach to developing MEL frameworks is conducted in a participatory manner, and centres around the notion of creating a shared understanding of *who* the program can realistically influence, and what outcomes – or practice changes – are expected from these people. PCE is both a people-friendly and a people-centred approach to monitoring and evaluation.

In the last decade evaluation has undergone a shift from attempting to 'prove' whether a program has achieved outcomes, to a softer focus on striving to understand the extent to which the program has *contributed* to outcomes and using this knowledge to improve programming (Mayne 1999). One of the reasons for this shift is the common failure of attributing program activities to outcomes and the subsequent need to reduce the uncertainly about how programs actually do impact on their intended outcomes. This is accompanied by a movement towards 'management by outcomes', and has led to an increased demand for demonstrating achievement of outcomes. To meet this need, program teams need practical ways to demonstrate that their programs have made a difference; they need to show how program activities have plausibly contributed to outcomes. PCE is one approach that can help them do this.

I begin the paper by giving an overview of how and why PCE was developed. Following this a summary of People-Centred Evaluation is presented, with a focus on the specific approach to program logic that characterises PCE. This leads into an overview of the principles for PCE. To explore the practical dimensions, I then offer a case study of how it was used by the Victorian State Landcare Team. Following from this, the type of program settings best suited to PCE are explored. The paper concludes with an

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overview of the similarities and differences between Outcomes Mapping (Earl 2001), Contribution Analysis (Mayne 1999) and PCE.

The story of how PCE evolved

PCE is a practical approach to developing monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) frameworks that evolved with my practice over the last 15 years. My overall objective was to develop an approach that was simple enough to be picked up and owned by program staff, yet comprehensive enough for staff to be able to run with, without a high need for external assistance. I wanted it to emphasize the learning aspect of evaluation, so that program staff could use it to improve their work and lead to a greater chance that the program would contribute to desired outcomes. I was very keen to develop an approach that program staff would find to be helpful and useful, rather than burdensome and oppressive. My experience in consultancy led me to understand that program evaluation was often disliked and even dreaded by program staff. Having a belief in participatory approaches, I also felt it imperative to include processes to ensure that not only program staff, but also end users (or beneficiaries) were involved in the evaluation process wherever appropriate.

People-Centred Evaluation

People-Centred Evaluation (PCE) aims to help practitioners develop practical internal monitoring and evaluation and learning (MEL) frameworks for projects and programs. MEL frameworks are developed through a workshop process, and the resulting framework is used by project staff to guide their own internal monitoring systems, develop sensible measures to track progress, and scope any external evaluations that may be necessary.

Having a strong program logic element, PCE helps groups clarify their project design. However, unlike the logical framework, PCE uses targeted stakeholders as the organising construct. One of the key distinguishing features of PCE concerns the way program logic is created. The main distinguishing aspects of the program logic process are:

1. Participation in the program logic mapping process

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2. A people-centred manner for creating the logic model
3. The use of generic theories of change

Each one of these elements will be discussed in turn.

1. Participation in the program logic mapping process

Program logic is the rationale behind a program or project – what are understood to be the cause-and-effect relationships between project activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes, and ultimate outcomes. Represented as a diagram or matrix, program logic shows a series of expected consequences, not just a sequence of events. Owen describes this as a form of design clarification (Owen 1993). In the international literature this tool is usually referred to as 'program logic'. However, program logic can be applied at the project, sub-project or even initiative level.

It should be noted that there is little consensus with regard to terminology. Some people may use terms such as 'program theory', 'program logic' and 'theory of action' interchangeably.

Program logic is best used in a participatory manner and is noted for enabling groups to come to consensus about the realistic outcomes and goals of a project. Ideally, program logic would be mapped out before implementation, modified and referred to throughout the life of a project. However, in many cases program logic is usefully conducted later on in the life of a project to help bring a project back on track or to form a key part of the evaluation framework. Program logic has much to offer participatory social change projects when done in group settings. If revised regularly it can map emerging outcomes and help stakeholders come to a shared understanding of desired results. It can also provide quick feedback concerning the integrity of the project design.

There is nothing new about the concept of having some sort of a logic model in a project proposal. Logical frameworks have formed the back pages of most project proposals from international development for at least 30 years. Yet new participatory approaches to program logic seem to be a particularly useful refinement to this old tool.

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Using logic in a group situation can lead to huge amounts of learning and critical thinking for the groups involved. A key aspect to the way PCE employs program logic is that the logic models are built in a way that everyone can physically lay their hands on them and engage in the model building process, for example cards on the floor, or by use of a 'magic wall'.[A]

Developing program logic can be a confrontational yet mind-opening process. I have witnessed many groups benefiting from using it to focus their work. Some have said that it has caused them to change the way they think – the way they plan new projects and the way they question things. Some groups take their logic model into the very heart of their work. For example, after spending considerable time developing their model together, one group proudly laminated their model and placed it on the table at every meeting. The team even gave it a pet name, reflecting its shape. During meetings they repeatedly pointed to parts of it, and frequently used the language of the model to talk about the impact they were aiming to achieve.

In PCE, program logic is the spine of the MEL system. Firstly, it works at the planning stage by helping groups to surface the underlying logic of their planned program. Once exposed, this logic and the associated assumptions can be evaluated and refined, leading to a more robust program design. Secondly, it helps groups develop a MEL framework for the life of the project; it guides the development of effective key evaluation questions and performance indicators. The program logic is revised regularly (for example, each year) to reflect any changes in the project direction, and to help program teams gain a shared understanding of any emerging outcomes. It is an effective focusing tool, helping to remind program teams of the bigger picture. Finally, it can be used to structure evaluation reports.

A commonly heard criticism of simple program logic models is that they do not do justice to the complexity of programming. However, a surprising degree of benefit can come when a team develops a simple logic model for a complex and emergent project. Firstly, it can give them a language to describe their complex projects in a way others can understand and secondly, it helps them unpack the complexity.

[A] A magic wall is a sticky wall created by spraying repositionable adhesive onto a plastic surface, allowing for paper to be stuck and moved multiple times until the model is agreed on.

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Ultimately, the most important benefits that program logic brings are projects with coherent logic and groups with a shared understanding of this logic. Experience suggests that this does contribute to improved project outcomes (McDonald *et al*. 2003).

2. A people-centred logic model

Alternatively referred to as 'reach' (Montague 1998), the term 'people-centred' refers to the particular way program logic is created around key people targeted by the program. Program logic models such as the logical framework (see Figure 1) do not specifically make reference to *who* the project is targeting. In overseas development the logical framework is the predominant method used, invariably tacked onto the back of every project proposal. Often logical frameworks have references to things like '40% increase in production' without qualifying *who* is increasing the production. There are a number of reasons why I believe program logic should be people-centred.

According to Montague (1998) logic models that do not make reference to *who* and *where* action is taking place, suffer from several problems. Most importantly, they lack the sensitivity to the impacts on different participant groups. In addition, there are a number of practical reasons why I favour people-centred logic models:

- *Most change occurs through people!* Change happens by influencing people, for example beneficiaries, policy makers and partners.

- *People-centred is less abstract.* Abstract concepts such as 'outputs' and 'outcomes' are very difficult for people with lower levels of education to master (and sometimes for those of us with lots of education!). There is often confusion between outputs and outcomes.

- *It makes sense on a practical level.* Ultimately we have to ask people for information when collecting data. Therefore if we organise our planning around the different categories of actors we need to engage with at the start, it also helps us work out who we need to speak with in the monitoring and evaluation work.

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- *It helps distinguish between the different levels of impact experienced by different participant groups.* For example, the difference experienced between men and women, beneficiaries and partners.

- *It ties in with network perspectives* – which are gaining popularity as an alternative mind set with which to plan and evaluate change (see Davies work 2003).

In contrast with the logical framework, program logic models with elements of reach focus on who the program is intending to reach. For example, Bennett's Hierarchy presents a generic theory of change for agricultural extension, based on the theory of voluntary behaviour change (see Figure 2). At level 3 of the hierarchy, the matrix asks about which farmers will be participating in the program.

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Figure 1 The logical framework matrix: questions to be answered when filling in each cell of a logical framework.

	Narrative summary	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Broader goal	What wider issue will the project help to resolve (e.g. a national objective)?	What are the indicators of goal achievement?	What are the sources of information? What methods are to be used to obtain it?	What assumptions/ external factors must be true if the purposes are to help reach the Broader Goal?
Purpose [Primary reasons for the project]	What immediate changes/ benefits will the project bring about for the target population or area?	What are the measures to judge the project's immediate effects, benefits and losses?	What are the sources of information? What methods are to be used for obtaining it?	What external factors must be true if outputs are to achieve the Purpose?
Outputs	What direct outputs will the project produce so it can achieve its purpose?	What kind and quantity of outputs are planned, and by when will they be produced?	What are the sources of information? What methods are to be used for obtaining it?	What external factors must be realised to produce the planned outputs in time?
Activities	What activities must be undertaken to produce the outputs? When must these activities take place?	**Inputs/ resources** What materials, equipment/ services are required, at what cost, over what period?	What are the sources of information on inputs? What methods are to be used to obtain it?	**(Initial assumptions)** What actions outside the control of the donor are necessary to begin the project?
Source: Modified from AIDAB (1991) and Farrington and Nelson (1997)				

Figure 2 Bennett's Hierarchy

Level	Description	Examples of performance expectations
Level 8	Consequences for society	As a consequence of production increase, export targets are reached and the national economy is strengthened.
Level 7	Consequences for the target group	As a consequence of the new practice, production has increased by 25%, contributing to an increased farm income of the target group, and a decreasing trend for target farmers to move out of the area.
Level 6	Behavioural changes in the target group	2 years later, it is found that 50 % of the community have adopted new practices.
Level 5	Change in: knowledge, attitude, skills, aspirations (KASA)	Differences in the findings of surveys that were conducted before and after the intervention indicate that the target farmers have gained significantly greater knowledge and skills with regard to prime lamb production
Level 4	The farmers' opinion about extension activities	In a one-page survey completed at the end of the workshop 80% of the participants were satisfied with the program.
Level 3	Farmer participation in extension activities (target stakeholder group)	400 farmers attended the meetings, 500 listened to the broadcast, and more than 35% of the attendees were women.
Level 2	Implementation of the program by extension agents	20 workshops held, 2,000 pamphlets published and distributed, 5 radio programs conducted to advertise the event.
Level 1	Programming of the extension activities (inputs	7 staff will be trained, and an equivalent of 7 full time wages spent on the project.

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	monitoring)	
Source : Adapted from Bennett (1975)		

Other program logic approaches that include components of reach include Mayne's results expectations charts (1999) and the Kirkpatrick Scale (Kirkpatrick 1975) which is used to help evaluate training programs.

3. The use of generic theories of change

Unlike logical frameworks, PCE makes use of generic theories of change. A generic theory of change is a theory about how a particular type of intervention occurs. A well known generic theory of change is Bennett's Hierarchy (see Figure 2), which describes the typical theory of change for voluntary behaviour change in agricultural extension programs. However, unlike Bennett's Hierarchy, which offers a singular change mechanism (voluntary behaviour change through persuasion), in PCE we offer two additional core theories of change:

- the empowerment model (change is driven by the targeted stakeholder group/s, change can be broad in intent)
- the carrot and stick model (incentives and regulation).

Together, these three models are loosely based on 'strategies' described in Outcome Mapping (Earl et al 2001, p.63,). However, extending upon the strategies by Earl et al (2001), in PCE each model has designated intermediate outcomes. These intermediate outcomes were developed through my own praxis, having been refined gradually over time across a wide range of program contexts. The key thing to note is that generic theories of change are offered as 'food for thought'; ultimately participants develop a tailored program logic model to represent a plausible model for how they believe their program activities will contribute to outcomes – they have no need to stick rigidly with one of the generic models. In fact, more often than not, programs elect to use more than one of these generic change mechanisms.

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The core principles of PCE

While the particular program logic approach is a key distinguishing feature of PCE, this approach is also concerned with measurement, evaluation, learning and reporting. All components of PCE are governed by a set of principles which include:

1. ***Participation.*** The best people to develop a MEL framework for their program are the program team with input from end users (change to targeted stakeholders for change?) where possible. This is why PCE uses a workshop process to develop both the program logic and the MEL framework. Whereever possible we invite a broad spectrum of stakeholders to participate. The evaluator plays the role of facilitator in this setting.

   PCE also advocates participatory data collection and analysis approaches such the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique (Davies and Dart 2005). In particular, MSC is important as it involves stakeholders in the analysis and judgement-making process.

2. ***Development of a shared understanding***. Program logic is used to help clarify outcomes and bring about a shared vision. The more people involved with the creation of the logic process, the better. It also aims to bring about a shared understanding of the value of monitoring and evaluation for the program team.

3. ***People-centred.*** The logic model should be developed around consideration of *who* the program is trying to target, and by examining intermediaries who can best be influenced to achieve this change. This means developing different threads of the logic model for different targeted stakeholders. From here onwards, all methods of evaluation, monitoring tools and formats are developed with reference to these identified stakeholder groups. If MSC is used for instance, the 'domains of change' reflect these different stakeholder groups. Even project objectives are developed with reference to stakeholders.

4. ***Multiple theories of change.*** In the program logic process at least three different generic theories of change are offered as 'food for thought' to help participants consider appropriate strategies to achieve their outcomes. The

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generic models most commonly offered are the 'empowerment' model, the 'carrot and stick' model and the 'persuasion' model. These generic models are simplified theories of change commonly underpinning programs that strive for social, economic or environmental betterment. PCE acknowledges that i) a program may need to target different types of stakeholders and ii) that we may utilize different instruments for different targeted stakeholder groups.

5. ***Multiple lines of evidence.*** PCE advocates that key evaluation questions are best addressed using multiple methods. For example, quantitative data is enhanced by more in-depth qualitative inquiry.

6. ***Reflection and learning.*** PCE stresses the importance of building in formal processes for staff to interpret findings and reflect on progress. One of the most commonly used tools for this is 'annual reflection workshops'. The idea is to reflect on the data against the program logic model in order to i) refine the logic to make it more plausible and ii) have a dialogue about progress against the performance expectations expressed in the program logic model.

7. ***Consideration of the evaluation audience.*** The MEL must firstly meet the needs of the program team, but of course it is all the better if it also helps them meet the requirements of funders and other evaluation audiences.

The process of developing a people-centred MEL framework

People-centred MEL frameworks are created through a workshop process which lasts between two and three days. After defining high level goals, participants conduct a form of stakeholder analysis involving relationship mapping, which leads to the development of between one and five clusters of stakeholder groups, or more specifically, targets for change. The clustering is done on the basis of the sort of influence the program is trying to exert on the stakeholders. Once defined, a visual program logic model is surfaced for each of these clusters. To help participants do this, three generic theories of change are offered to encourage thought about the type of theory that best underpins the intervention for each group. The workshop process concludes by bringing the sub-logics together (ie: the logic created for each stakeholder group) to create an overarching theory of change for the whole program.

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From here onwards, all methods of evaluation, monitoring tools and formats are developed with reference to the identified stakeholder group. Even project objectives are developed with reference to stakeholders.

The basic chronology of steps used in the creation of a 'people-centred' MEL in a workshop process are:

1. Clarify the intent of the program using program logic:
    - gain a shared understanding of how the program will contribute to broader goals
    - determine who we need to engage and who are the targeted stakeholders for change using a relationship mapping process
    - develop logic models for each of the key groups of targeted stakeholders
    - bring the sub-logic models together to make one overarching logic model
    - articulate gaps and assumptions.

2. Develop a monitoring strategy aligned to program the logic model.

3. Develop people-centred key evaluation questions to address higher levels of program logic, and other strategic issues.

4. Select methods to address KEQs.

5. Plan the consultation process with the evaluation audience to ensure the frameworks meets their needs.

6. Devise reporting and learning systems aligned to the models for example:
    - an annual report that tells the 'performance story' against logic model
    - reflection processes to ensure we learn.

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In order to illustrate these steps more fully a case study is presented that outlines how PCE was used to develop a MEL framework for the Victorian State Landcare Team. This case study was written by Phil McGarry who is a member of this team.

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A case study of the use of PCE with the Statewide Landcare team: written by Phil McGarry from the State Landcare Team

In response to increasing demands for evaluative information, in 2003 the State Landcare team decided to develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plan for the Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare. The MEL is currently being used at the State level and all 10 regions of Victoria have developed regional MELs, all of this using a PCE approach.

Launched in 2002, the Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare (VAPSGL) is the 10-year strategic framework that guides the Victorian Government's support to Landcare and community based environment groups. The Framework was developed by both government and the community and embodies a critical partnership in the state's management of its natural resources. The implementation of the VAPSGL has focussed on three key areas;

- *strengthening investment in Landcare;*
- *supporting Landcare volunteers; and,*
- *helping people manage land.*

This program ultimately aims to increase the effectiveness of current work and lift the trajectory of change by adopting a landscape scale approach to connecting communities and protecting ecosystems services.

Basic evaluation approach taken by State Team

At all times we saw monitoring and evaluation as a tool for our team to help us do our work, rather than for funders. We believe that monitoring and evaluation can be liberating and empowering if people harness it for their own need. If done properly with consideration of what the evaluation is trying to achieve, it can help groups actually achieve better results. For us this means communities across Victoria would be more engaged within the context of natural resource management (NRM). This is the approach we took in the State Landcare Team as we developed our MEL. The MEL needed to explore and clarify the outcomes of the Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare and it needed to provide a framework to demonstrate that these outcomes were being achieved.

The development of our Statewide MEL was based on program logic. Our logic model was developed with an understanding of:

- *how we believe the work of Landcare coordinators and facilitators contributes to NRM & social outcomes*
- *who we engage*
- *who are our targeted end-users.*

Our program logic model enabled us to decide what measures should be included in reporting frameworks which took the form of quarterly reports focusing on measurement and documented quantitative evidence. This data included such measures as the number of Landcare groups with action plans, training opportunities and events, landholder consultations, etc. These quarterly journals were then compiled into an annual report. But these measures only gave us part of the story. To answer the more

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complex questions, we made use of two key participatory qualitative methods that gave the community a voice; a voice that will hopefully demonstrate an increase in community capacity. These methods were the Most Significant Change technique (MSC) (Davies and Dart 2004) and 'Group Health Scales'.

MSC involves collecting stories of change brought about by an intervention. Stories are collected from community members in a way that captures their understanding of the change and how that change came about. After stories have been collected they are subject to a systematic selection process of the most significant of these stories by a purposely selected committee. This committee is made up of a variety of stakeholders. MSC provides useful and interesting accounts of how landholders at the grass roots had been affected by the project interventions.

'Group Health' scales are a 5 point qualitative scale. Each level describes a group at different stages of group health from 'just hanging on in there' to 'trail blazing'. Each level of the scale includes a description of a group and a colloquial title. To score themselves, groups choose a level that best fits how they see themselves at a point in time and this is compared at regular annual intervals. The data collected is another indicator of community ability to engage and generate impact.

This systematic collection of both quantitative measures and qualitative data, combined with reflection helped us to demonstrate the expected outcomes that we are aiming to achieve, as well as detecting unexpected outcomes.

The process of developing our MEL began in August 2003 and this involved 2 workshops in which we covered the following topics:

- *an introduction to evaluation*
- *determining the 'next users' and 'end users' of the project (or targeted stakeholders for change?)*
- *developing a program logic*
- *determining what data is needed to report on the program logic*
- *learning about results ladders and how to develop one*
- *understanding and identifying 'audiences' of evaluation*
- *learning how to choose suitable evaluation methods*
- *deciding how to manage the evaluation plan*
- *determining what will we report and what will our reports contain*
- *understanding and using MSC.*

Figure 3 presents the simplified logic model we created in 2004.

How we used the logic to inform the monitoring evaluation and learning plan

Once the logic models were completed, we used them to help us create Key Evaluation questions which were used to guide the data collection. These questions were:

1. *To what extent do facilitators and coordinators understand their role as group facilitators, and to what extent are they practicing this?*
2. *To what extent are coordinators and facilitators being offered adequate opportunities to enhance their capabilities?*
3. *To what extent are Landcare groups working efficiently and effectively?*

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4. *What were the most significant connections and opportunities that Landcare facilitators and coordinators have catalyzed and what are the implications for Landcare?*
5. *What were the most significant achievements of Landcare from the eyes of the stakeholders of Landcare, and what role have facilitators and coordinators played in this?*
6. *What were the unexpected outcomes that have arisen from the activities to implement the Victorian Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare?*

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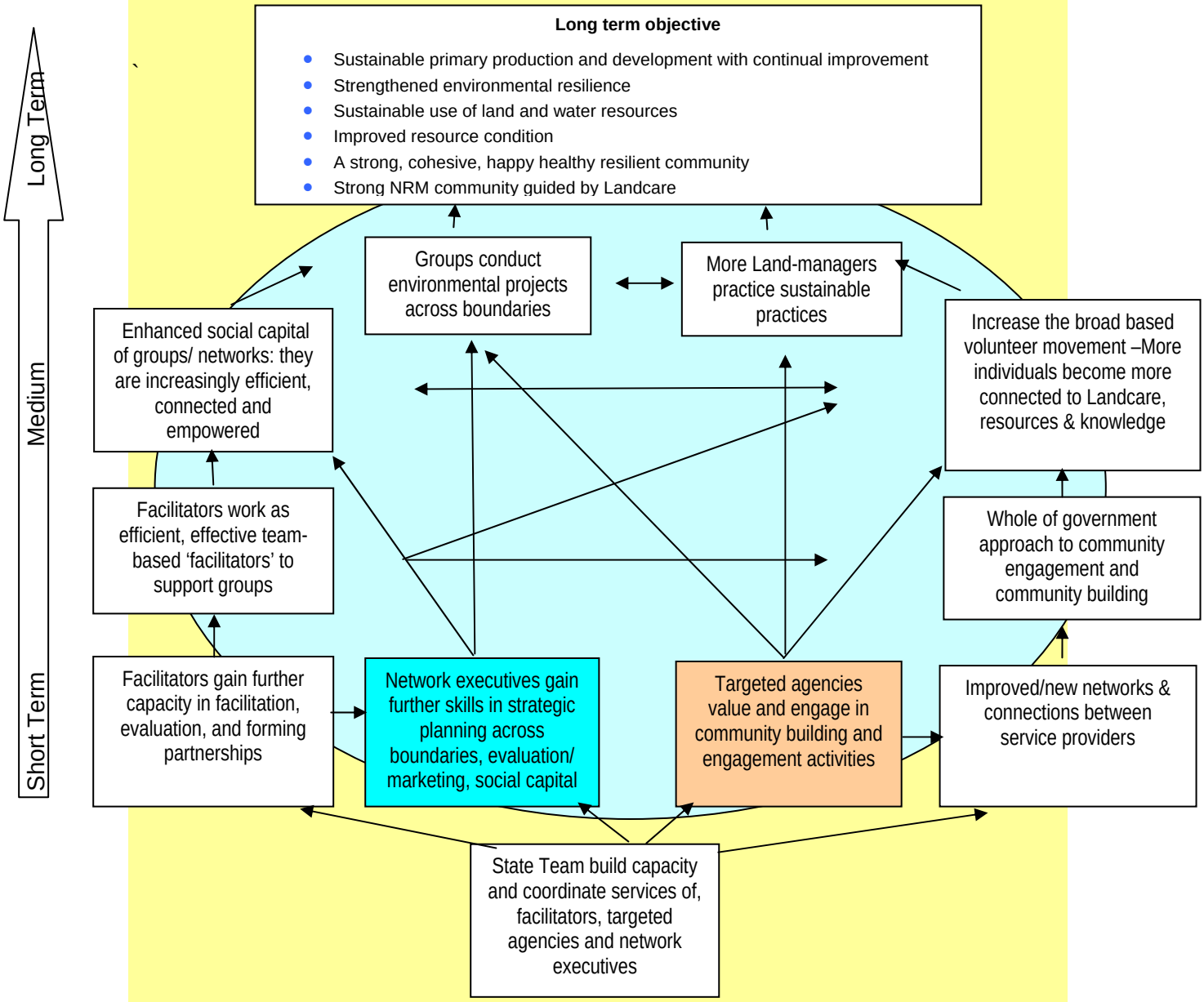
Figure three: Summary logic for State Landcare Team Victoria



For each question, evaluation methods, reporting formats and processes were put in place.

In 2005 we held our first 'annual reflection' at which all of this information was collected, collated and analysed in relation to the program logic to determine how we as a team were proceeding in terms of delivering the required outcomes. In 2005 we revisited our initial program logic model and created a new one based on findings of an external evaluation that we scoped with the help of our key evaluation questions and MEL.

By May 2003 we had completed the process at the state level and decided to embark on a process of working with Landcare facilitators on a similar process at a regional level. Each of the 10 regions voluntarily elected to go through the same process.

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The monitoring and evaluation work really opened a number of the team's eyes up. It provided a clear pathway to deliver the outcomes and a tangible way of capturing evidence. Before that it was huge - there was nothing you couldn't do under the banner of the action plan. It had a major effect in terms of giving the team a sense of a shared clear direction.

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Where to use PCE

PCE has been effectively used in several programs in Australia and in overseas development contexts. Some of the program areas where it has been effectively used by program staff include:

- Community strengthening
- Drug withdrawal
- Landcare support
- Agricultural science and extension
- Leadership
- Innovation
- Food export
- Vocational training Reconciliation and reconstruction
- Social and community development.

Clearly, this is a wide range of programs and projects., What they all have in common however, is that they seek to bring about social, environmental or economic betterment through people. So, PCE works best to guide staff to monitor and evaluate their programs that seek to bring about change by influencing the behaviour or opportunities for people. Because of this, it may not be a suitable to use PCE where the intervention is more of a direct action such as biophysical works.

PCE appears to be particularly effective in international development settings. We found it to be highly effective for enabling local NGOs in the Pacific and Micronesia to develop their own monitoring and evaluation frameworks. The 'home-grown' logic models (as they called them) were a very different proposition to the traditional logical framework that was often completed by visiting consultants, and seen more as a bureaucratic hurdle than a model to guide the direction of the teams work.

How it relates to other approaches and techniques

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Contribution analysis

The importance of addressing attribution has been highlighted by John Mayne (1999) who has introduced the concept of 'contribution analysis'. According to Mayne "*what is needed for both understanding and reporting is a specific analysis undertaken to provide information on the contribution of a program to the outcomes it is trying to influence."* Concurring with Mayne's emphasis, PCE stresses that when applying the concept of contribution it is important to note that we are presenting a *credible picture of attribution* to increase our knowledge about the contribution being made by the program. We need to accept the fact that what we are doing is measuring with the aim of *reducing the uncertainty about the contribution made, not proving the contribution made*.

Mayne (*ibid*., 1999) suggested a number of strategies that can be used to address attribution through performance measurement and that collectively, these are elements constitute 'contribution analysis' (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Mayne's strategies to address attribution

Contribution Analysis: Addressing Attribution with Performance Measures

- Acknowledge the problem
- Present the logic of the program.
- Identify and document behavioural changes.
- Use discriminating indicators.
- Track performance over time.
- Discuss, and test alternative

The steps used in PCE to develop a people-centred MEL framework are entirely consistent with the key elements described in the box above:

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***Acknowledge the problem*.** When developing a logic model it is essential to have a concrete understanding of what it is that the project is really trying to achieve, and what greater outcomes it will contribute towards. The first step of developing a people-centred logic model is to clarify the goals and outcomes of the program.

Present the logic of the program and Identify and document behavioural changes. Mayne (1999) states that the outputs of a program need to be focused on influencing people, or a target audience (the reach element), to act in different ways so that anticipated outcomes can occur. This requires clarification of the various stakeholders of a program and an understanding of who the program is aiming to influence and who will help us achieve this. The next step focuses on the desired changes in behaviour of those we wish to influence. This is consistent with Mayne's emphasis that in order to bring about an outcome, programs have to change peoples 'behaviour. According to Mayne (1991), "if we can observe these short term changes occurring, the logical case for the program's attribution can be enhanced" (p.10).

***Use discriminating indicators and track performance over time*.** In PCE, we use a further set of steps to use ensure that discriminating indicators are used to tell 'the performance story'. When preparing a performance story, evidence is generally gathered at each level of the logic model to see if the expected outcomes have been achieved**.** Measuring at a number of levels can help to establish causal relationships. A combination of performance indicators and/or questions can be applied at each level. Through presenting and discussing the logic behind the program when reporting performance, one has laid out exactly what is being measured and what the major assumptions are concerning the contribution of the program (Dart and Mayne 2005)

***Gather additional relevant evidence*.** In addition to determining the evidence which needs to be collected during the program implementation state, PCE includes a process for developing key evaluation questions based on the requirements of the evaluation audiences. It is really important to engage with the evaluation audience early on – to ensure that their evaluation requirements will be met.

Discuss, and test alternative explanations. The area that PCE least addresses is Mayne's step concerning the testing of rival theories of change to further understand how likely it is that the program contributed to the intended outcome., This aspect

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however, is partially addressed in Step 6 of PCE, where program teams come together in annual reflections to refine the program logic model. In a sense, the refinement process can involve 'interrogating' the theory of change, and posing possible alternative explanations for the results. For example, in the Landcare case study, the initial logic model was substantially modified as a result of conducting an evidence-based reflection.

PCE is entirely compatible with the steps proposed in contribution analysis, indeed, so much so that PCE must be considered a type of contribution analysis. However, the PCE approach has specific processes to develop each step of the framework and employs a different process when developing the logic and subsequent evaluation framework.

Outcomes mapping

Another close relative to PCE may well be 'Outcomes Mapping' (Earl et al 2001) that is widely used in overseas development settings. Like PCE, outcomes mapping recognizes that change is achieved essentially by people relating to each other and their environment. Like PCE, the originality of this approach lies in its shift away from assessing the products of a program to focus on change in behaviours, relationships and actions and activities in people, groups and organizations it works directly with.

However, Outcomes Mapping does not explicitly include program logic, nor does it go in to much depth about how the evaluation process should occur. However, there are clear links in terms of the position both approaches take by focusing on outcomes as practice change.

Like PCE, both 'outcomes mapping' and contribution analysis are based on three key premises:

- That change occurs through people
- That attribution cannot be proved, rather we should aim to improve our understanding of how a program plausibly contributes to stipulated end outcomes

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- Surfacing the theory of how a program is expected to work has multiple benefits in terms of clarifying program design and creating a more fully shared vision.

Conclusion

PCE offers a practical, inclusive approach to developing internal monitoring and evaluation frameworks that will appeal to many practitioners. PCE uses straightforward non-conceptual language, and invites participants to develop a 'home-grown' monitoring and evaluation framework that they can understand and own. The hands-on approach offers a very human and accessible approach to monitoring and evaluation. After an analysis of related approaches, it can be seen that PCE can be considered a type of 'Contribution Analysis', and is closely related to 'Outcomes Mapping'. PCE does, however, offer a unique set of practical workshop processes to develop a useful MEL framework.

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