Outcome Harvesting in Complex Contexts

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Acknowledgment of country

'We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country on which we meet today and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.'

Objectives

- To provide a brief overview of Outcome Harvesting

- To understand when and how it is useful in MEL practices

- To discuss two practical examples of OH in practice

When Jo met Sarah…

- **Jo's story**
  - Was looking for a method that was flexible enough to be tailored to ensure cultural responsibilities and ethics are respected
  - … and that respects the Aboriginal Outcomes Team's way of being and way of doing, as well as their knowledge
  - A method that evaluates WITH the community
  - Transforming our evaluation practice

- **Sarah's story**
  - Obsessed with how great OH is
  - Happy to chat about it to anyone who would listen

- …. And the journey began

What is Outcome Harvesting and why do we use it?

- An "outcome" is a <u>change</u> that has occurred due to a specific intervention

- Change = what others (individuals, organisations) are doing differently as a result of a specific intervention

- Focuses on higher level outcomes/changes, rather than activities
  - Focus on changes in behaviour, attitudes, norms, laws, policies, ways of working

- The change can be intended or unintended

- The change can also be positive or negative

- "Harvesting" just means collecting these examples of change in a structured way

- Monitoring/evaluation tool

What is Outcome Harvesting and why do we use it?

- OH facilitates the respect of the 'Do No Harm' principle

- OH focuses heavily on community engagement, participation and perspectives

- OH can be easily tailored to be culturally-sensitive, conflict-sensitive, gender-sensitive and trauma-sensitive – ALL KINDS of sensitivity

- Retrospective: captures changes that have already occurred
  - These are then triangulated with other evidence sources, e.g. activity monitoring data; interviews; survey data

- Inclusive: Can be used with programme staff, beneficiaries, partners
  - Anyone involved in the intervention who will be aware of, and able to speak about, changes that have occurred
  - Participants don't need to know programme outcomes/objectives
  - Includes people with lived experiences

- Practical, participatory, accessible
  - no technical knowledge of MEL needed

Why is it useful?

- Helps gather evidence of changes that have occurred from those close to the intervention
  - Primary data source

- Can apply to stories of change for individuals, groups & communities as well as structural change

- Goes beyond numbers – brings qualitative evidence into the picture

- Not too technical and easy to use

- Doesn't require huge amounts of activity-level data

- Flexibility of timing – can be used regularly or as needed
  - (OH as a monitoring tool)

When is it useful?

- In complex contexts of change, e.g. advocacy or peacebuilding

  - Where progress is not always linear

  - Where success/results are not always clear

  - Where tangible change can take a long time to be visible

  - Contribution v. attribution

Overview of the process

- Works backwards – what "change" occurred and how did <u>the intervention</u> contribute?

  - Step 1: identify and verify the change

  - Step 2: why is this change significant?

  - Step 3: who contributed to this change and how?

  - Step 4: what evidence do we have of this?

  - Step 5: map this change back to the programme objectives and RF/ToC (where possible)

  - Step 6: how can we harness this learning? How will it change/improve future work?

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