

Outcome Mapping

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Part I

1 Introduction

As a project manager in co-operation for development I was never entirely happy with the method of the logical framework approach (LFA). As a result of the practical experiences gained during the project work, it is more the case that I have taken a critical approach towards the application of LFA in development co-operation. While searching for improvements, my attention was drawn by a specialist of the Swiss Agency for Development and Corporation (SDC) to Outcome Mapping. According to the current level of knowledge, I regard Outcome Mapping as an interesting method that helps solve various problems which I came across in the practical project work. In this article I am presenting a number of ideas to those who co-ordinate, plan and manage development co-operation projects or programmes. Important background information on these ideas can be found in the stories of my progress report entitled "Project ownership in the project country"¹.

2 The logical understanding of the development process

Development is a social process. Many people in different social positions and occupational fields are involved in development processes in a variety of activities. The processes are frequently complex, even in the case of simple changes. Human actions in the social context have a special dynamic.

¹ Projektträgerschaft im Projektland. Ein persönlicher Erfahrungsbericht aus dem Kirgisisch-Schweizerischen Landwirtschaftsprojekt, Aufbauphase 1994 bis 1999.

Outcome Mapping and LFA are concepts to describe the processes in notional terms by way of plans or in retrospect in a logically structured manner. All illustration concepts have their advantages and disadvantages. Stakeholders have different demands that they place on illustrating the process. The following comments deal with the advantages and disadvantages of LFA and Outcome Mapping from the point of view of the project management and implementation.

3 What is Outcome Mapping and how does it differ from LFA?

3.1 LFA – logic at the product level

Diagram 1: The LFA matrix

Target System	Indicators	Verification	Assumptions
Overall goal			
Project objectives		+	Assumptions
Expected results		+	Assumptions
Activities		+	Assumptions

The statements in all boxes are clear and are expressed in precisely worded brief forms. The planning process starts with the **problem analysis**. The planners use the problem analysis to initially derive the overall goal. Following this project objectives, expected results and activities are planned from top to bottom in logical steps. The **project logic** is as follows: if the activities are carried out and certain assumptions apply, the expected result occurs (product). If the expected results are obtained and certain assumptions apply, this is a contribution to the project objectives. Once the project objectives have been attained and certain assumptions

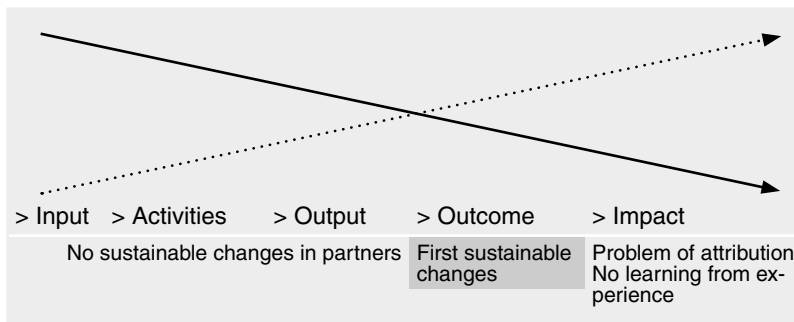
apply, that is a contribution to the overall goal. The effects of the project are thought through at a product level. Examples of products are competencies, organisations, investment goods, services, income.

3.2 Weaknesses of LFA

a) The problem of learning from experience

The lasting success of LFA is measured on its contribution to the overall goal. The contribution of the project to the overall goal must be measured as an impact.

Diagram 2: Why not impact monitoring?



Key

- ▶ Decreasing project control
-▶ Increasing influence of partners and beneficiaries and other factors

Definitions

Impact describes the positive and negative, primary and secondary, long-term effects (consequence and side effects of a programme or project, which may be direct or indirect, intended or unintentional, desired or not desired).²

Outcome describes changes which a project or programme has sparked at the partners' action and behavioural level. The term comprises changes in relations, activities, or actions of persons, groups or organisations.

² After: Glossary German / SDC. The 27 most frequent terms in the SDC in the Evaluation and Controlling divisions. SDC, May 2002.

Weaknesses of impact monitoring

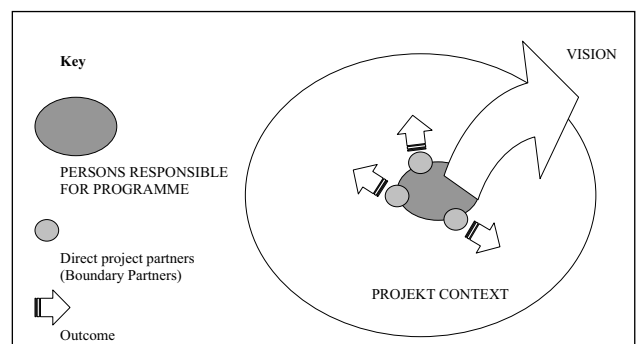
1. It usually takes several years until an Impact becomes quantifiable. During this period changes occur in the project context and it is practically impossible to attribute a certain impact to a certain project.
2. After several years the lessons learned from the success come too late to apply them in the project management.
3. Changes in actions and behaviour (outcome) are project effects of project partners, which can be observed, quantified and incorporated in the project management and thus contributions to create lasting changes from the outset.

b) The problem of project ownership

The LFA plans the project's contribution to project objectives and overall goal. It is an assumption, that partners are subsequently interested, capable and able to the necessary contributions from there side. Outcome Mapping plans first contributions of its partners and then adequate project support to partners. This makes a significant difference in ownership commitment and dynamic of interaction. Instead of a mere assumption on partner's use of project outputs in the LFA, with Outcome Mapping the partners are committed by the outcome challenge and the project by the strategy map, which is to support outcomes. Partners are involved in an active way from the outset, ownership is strengthened and sustainability promoted.

3.3 Outcome Mapping – logic at the behavioural level

Diagram 3: The concept of Outcome Mapping



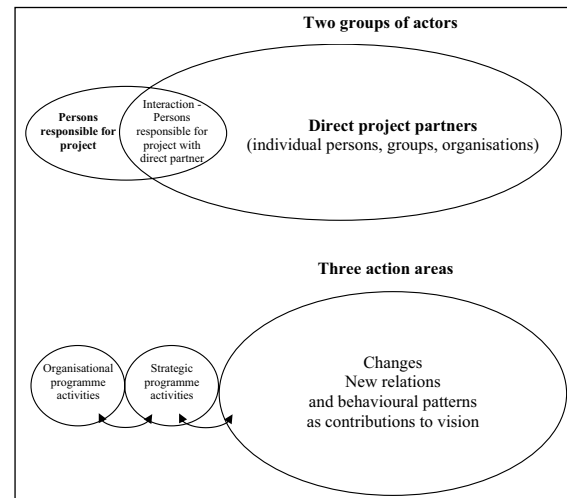
The central point of Outcome Mapping is the planning and monitoring of outcomes

Consequently the focus of Outcome Mapping according to the definition is to be found among the acting people, their roles in society and their relations. They receive the importance they deserve, but also the responsibility that they have to assume. The project also assumes more responsibility. From the very outset it must plan with the partners, and plan their contribution. From the very outset it must observe whether the partners assume their responsibility and provide their contribution. If this is the case, the project is on the road to success. If not, the project is not on the road to success and must be corrected.

At the start of the planning process there is a **historical scan** on key events of the affected target groups. These events are the reason for a joint programme and projects. The projects are geared towards lasting behavioural changes, which support the well being of the participants and the affected people. This is more than the solution to a problem. The planning of behavioural change is a paradigm change. The train of thought in the scan is geared towards the complex and dynamic social interaction, and develops new visions for the future. This is only possible together with the partners. The process is heavily dependent on the project partners' logic.

Initiators and sponsors develop a programme. They co-operate directly with several project partners. The **programme or project logic** is as stated below: the programme or project is intended to have a positive effect on the behaviour of the direct project partners in relation to the vision. It is envisaged that changed behavioural patterns of the selected project partners contribute in favour of the target groups in the project environment, often via further participants. All participants gear their relations, their co-operation and their actions towards a joint vision. The logic follows the real demands of a vision placed on the participating role players.

Diagram 4: Action areas and groups of actors



3.4 Historical scan and the seven steps of intentional design

Historical scan

In a scan the participants and affected persons recall the key events in their working life and their organisation. They attach importance to positive and negative milestones. They think from a national, international, global and personal point of view.

Intentional design

Following the historical scan, a planning process takes its course in seven steps:

1. Drawing up and describing a vision
2. Determining and describing the programme's mission
3. Selecting project partners
4. Describing the challenges which the vision creates in relation to the project partners (outcome challenges)
5. Describing the step-by-step progressing and widening contributions of the project partners (progress markers)
6. Drawing up the strategies that the programme uses to support the project partners' contributions (strategy map)
7. Drawing up the measures and activities of the programme so one can be effective, efficient, relevant and have a lasting effect (organisational practices)

1. Vision

Description of the medium-term situation with all the key features (social, economical, ecological etc.) to which the programme intends to contribute. The vision constitutes the specific orientation framework for the actions of all participants.

2. Programme mission

An ideal brief description, which states the partners with whom the programme intends to co-operate directly and what it intends to do (including all organisational measures and activities that are required so that the programme itself remains effective, efficient, relevant and has a lasting effect).

3. Direct partners

Key actors for innovations in an action context who are suitable for contributing to the vision and with whom the project intends to co-operate directly (partners in the border area of the programme and its action environment)

4. Partners' outcome challenges

Challenges for changes of the individual project partners that contribute to the vision on assumption that the programme was very successful.

5. Progress markers

A set of gradually further-reaching and widening changes, which the programme partners go through and spark to meet the Outcome challenges (milestones in the change process).

6. Strategic plans of programme

A matrix with strategy types (causal, persuasive, supportive), which the programme applies to influence the projects of the partners such that these can best meet their Outcome challenges. Strategies are either directly geared towards the programme partners, or to the environment in which they work.

7. Organisational measures or activities

Measures and activities that are required so that the programme itself remains effective, efficient, relevant and has a lasting effect so as to play its part.

Part II

4 For example SASA (Sustainable Agriculture Support in Albania)

4.1 Introduction

Using the SASA project as a practical example, attempts are being made here to illustrate the two variants, LFA and Outcome Mapping, regarding a number of aspects. SASA started with an orientation phase of 2 years and is now in its second phase. A logframe was worked out for each of the two phases.

4.2 The variant „overall goal“ and the variant „vision“

4.2.1 Overall goal Phase I, 2001 to 2002

The overall goal for the orientation phase I was worded as follows:

Quote: “The economic situation of the rural population improved through sustainable use of the available local potential for the agricultural production, improved processing and marketing of products.

The word „sustainable“ includes ecological, social and economical aspects.)”

4.2.2 Overall goals of Phase II, 2003 to 2006

In the project evaluation the Organic Agriculture Association (OAA) has established the need for a strengthening of management. To establish management experience in the OAA, SDC has, as a result of the project evaluation, decided to delegate the project management for Phase II to the OAA. Planning is a key element of the management. Those responsible for planning decided to plan Phase II together with the OAA more concretely than is usually the case, and better address the necessary activities and envisaged changes in partners. The introduction of good planning aims to contribute good project implementation management to OAA.

To be able to plan concretely, three sub-projects have been specified as an initial step in the planning workshop together with OAA. OAA should, together with its project partners, concentrate on the activities for these sub-projects in Phase II. In tandem, and upon

the conclusion, two additional sub-projects were planned with the objective of strengthening the OAA as a development organisation. The five specific sub-projects are:

Sub-project 1: Organic fruit and vegetables for the capital city

This amounts to supplying the capital city with biological fruit and vegetables from a selected region in the city's trading area. The overall goal is:

Quote: "Improve market opportunities for organic fruit and vegetable producers."

Sub-project 2: Organic olive oil

A market opportunity is expected in the domestic and export markets in the case of organic olive oil. The overall goal is:

Quote: „Improve the economic situation of olive farmers through better market opportunities with organic production.“

Sub-project 3: Goat and sheep products of the Karaburuni region

It is thought that this region already has a good name for good quality cheese and meat from sheep and goat farming. The overall goal is:

Quote: „Improve the economic situation of shepherds' families in Karaburuni by keeping and adding job and income opportunities.“

Sub-project 4: Innovations for sustainability of OAA

OAA should also have scope to address new ideas and opportunities to develop new projects with other partners and become stronger as an organisation. The overall goal has been worded in this respect as follows:

Quote: „OAA can react on initiatives coming from market oriented organic producers or processors.“

Sub-project 5: Organisational development OAA

In this respect the following overall goal has been worked out:

Quote: "OAA is a strong institution promoting sustainable principles at national level, having an active membership in Albania."

4.2.3 Variant „vision“, Phase II

A vision is in the place of the overall goal according to the methodology of Outcome Mapping. This describes, in a more concrete way, the situation to which the project aims to contribute. Consequently, Outcome Mapping would have been a suitable planning method for phase II of SASA. The following text provides a vision that expresses what those responsible for the project and the partners perhaps had in mind with their project. This vision can be surmised in the planning workshop from the worded goals and discussions. However, it was not formulated in full, discussed and clarified at the time although a vision is part of management.

Vision of an ecologically lasting agriculture in Albania

Families with small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises in Albania find their livelihood by applying special, ecologically lasting, production methods. These are, in particular, farming families in hilly and mountainous areas. Farming methods are at the fore such as certified organic agriculture or ecologically lasting production of regional branded products. There is a complete vertical marketing chain in place for these products from producers to customers. The chain also includes enterprises involved in processing, distribution and marketing. All links in the chain abide by the principles of environmentally friendly and healthy production. Politics and law support these principles via training, consulting and research. Lasting methods for producing healthy foods constitute an important task of the training, consulting and research at various levels and in various special fields. Justification of the political support is based on the public goods in environmental matters and in regional promotion of trade and industry and healthy foods. It is for these reasons that also consumer organisations, environmental groups and their networks support the vision of ecologically lasting agriculture.

Commentary

It was not possible in the evaluation to empirically verify the project's contribution to improving the economic situation at the end of Phase I. The project had to be given more time in this respect. Other factors will also change during this period. It will be practically impossible to reliably assess the project's impact on any occasion regarding the above-mentioned overall goal of Phase I. This is the problem with Impact Monitoring.

This should be improved with the planning for Phase II and by way of more concrete overall goals that are achievable in a shorter period. The newly worded overall goals of the sub-projects are at the behavioural level. They state that producers or processors can sell their products, or have work. They also state that OAA must pursue a strategy to be strong in itself and also be able to carry out projects in the future. Individual examples will soon reveal whether the project is on track. The observations can be used to draw conclusions as feedback for the management.

The specific planning for Phase II is applied Outcome Mapping, although those responsible for the planning were not, at that time, familiar with this method. A carefully worked out vision that is supported by all key project partners would have made a good orientation framework for the co-operation between the various partners.

The planning of Intentional Design according to Outcome Mapping would have supported the intention of planning and illustrating the planning results in more specific terms. The workshop once again lost key information in the form of the LFA document that was drawn up after the workshop.

4.3 Variant „project goals“ and variant „project mission“

4.3.1 „Project goals“, Phase I

The matrix for phase I of SASA states a project objective in 5 sub-goals. The subject matter of the project objectives is the Albanian *Organic Agriculture Association (OAA)*. The specific content of the project objective is: Sub-objective 1: structure and concept of OAA. Sub-objective 2: OAA implementation of mandates, which cover costs. Sub-objective 3: producers and processors promoted by OAA have their income improved, work in a more lasting manner and have a better demand. Sub-objective 4: production, processing and demand for eco products are harmonised, and an efficient marketing system is set up. Sub-objective 5: consumers are aware of the different production

systems and have at their disposal reliable information on the products.

4.3.2 Variant „project mission“

As an alternative to project objectives, the responsible planners, according to the Outcome Mapping method, formulate with the participants the project mission statement in the second stage. The following text provides an example of how this project mission could be formulated based on the above-mentioned vision:

Project mission

The project supports with consultancies, training, equipment, loans, support to legislation for the certified organic agriculture and the regional brand production:

- Agricultural pilot enterprises in the first development phase of lasting organic production
- Pilot processing enterprises in the first development phase
- The development of institutions and organisations regarding certification
- Training of teachers and consultants, in particular their national and international networking
- Organising a broad-based, linked, support movement

Commentary

The project contributes to the overall goal by way of the comprehensive promotion by OAA. In the case of LFA this is a widespread model. The contribution to the overall goal often consists of the promotion of a few, or more NGOs, often also the promotion of a consulting service or an infrastructure system.

It is a very restricted, and in relation to the success, uncertain contribution to the promotion of organic agriculture if merely a single NGO is supported. The entire development process of production, processing, marketing, certification and the political and legal support is too much for a single NGO.

As an alternative the project mission shows that the question of project partners results in broader support by the project. Different project partners require support to achieve a successful contribution to the vision.

4.4 Variant „expected results and activities“ and variant „project partners and outcome challenges“

4.4.1 Variant „expected results and activities“, Phase I

The LFA matrix contains 18 expected results, which constitute project contributions to a strong OAA. As stated above, it is expected of OAA that its contribution to the overall goal be provided in its entire breadth.

The list of project activities, which require these 18 results, contains the following: analyses, develop strategies and concepts, organise conferences, apply strategies and concepts, supply equipment, appoint employees, train and learn, manage and administer, procure orders, work out and print brochures and so on. It is often not clear whose contributions to the activities are expected. There is a risk that too much is done by paid project contributors, which does not produce a lasting effect.

4.4.2 Variant „project partners and outcome challenges“

According to the Outcome Mapping method, those responsible plan together with the participants in a third step the partners who, in an actual case, are important with regard to making a successful contribution to the vision. The fourth step then deals with the contributions of individual project partners and the challenges that are to be met by the partners. Two options are conceivable to determine the partners:

Direct project partners

Option I

OAA is the owner of the programme, which SDC supports.

Key project partners with whom the programme directly co-operates are:

- pilot-farming enterprises,
- pilot enterprises involving processing,
- pilot sales persons,
- specialist teachers and consultants.

Option II

SDC owns the programme. Key partners with whom the programme directly co-operates are:

- OAA,
- specialist teachers and consultants,
- possibly NGOs in the field of marketing,
- consumer interests.

The following steps are merely intended here to provide a brief description:

4.4.3 Outcome challenges (4) and progress markers (5)

The outcome challenges and progress markers are drawn up in a participative process for each group of direct project partners. The outcome challenges can be very demanding and it is clear that the partners need time and must proceed on a step-by-step basis. It is important therefore that progress markers are defined which are adjusted in line with the required change process. progress markers can be defined for an initial step which, perhaps, consists of partners' reactions to the programme, which can quite probably be expected. Further progress markers refer perhaps to changes, which require further-reaching reactions of the partners and prerequisites in the environment. The highest stage consists of changes that necessitate further-reaching or broad-based changes of the partners and conditions in the environment, and are only possible if the project is very successful.

Remarks:

The project objectives of the sub-projects of Phase II (see above) are described in a manner similar to the outcome challenges of the project partners. They say something about the changes in which partners of sub-projects which will be contributing to the vision.

Progress markers, which demonstrate a path or process, are stated in outcome mapping in the place of indicators in LFA.

The strategic (6) and organisational (7) programme measures are geared towards supporting the project partners in their contributions to the vision.

Commentary

LFA only plans activities of the project workers. Outcome Mapping also plans the expected and desired contributions of partners who intend to support the programme.

The LFA matrix does not distinguish between expected results that are easy or very difficult to obtain. For example, the organisation and structure of OAA, or a guiding principle for OAA, are highly likely to be expected as results. If it is expected that OAA and its services are known to possible customers, this result is already slightly more difficult to obtain. Information is possible but whether it reaches its destination and arouses attention and interest is something that goes a step further and deserves special attention during the work. If it is expected of OAA that producers and dealers know the consumers' wishes within and outside Albania, and act accordingly, this expectation extends too far for OAA.

The fact that the project products sufficiently equip OAA so that it can in turn influence all the further and important actors such that it brings about a significant contribution to the overall goal, is a very difficult requirement for the project and OAA. The entire development process of production, processing, marketing, certifying and the political and legal support is too complex for one project partner.

Part III

5 Summary of the special features of Outcome Mapping

Outcome Mapping is characterised by a number of features that are important in the co-operation for development. **Outcome Mapping is:**

Vision-oriented

Visions justify the motivation and form an orientation framework. A vision-oriented procedure is a whole and practical approach. Visions can contain complex and multi-dimensional correlations. In contrast, a problem-oriented procedure is a scientific-analytical approach that is geared towards single problems and is one-dimensional. A solution to a problem or a sum of solutions to problems by no means produces a whole solution or vision.

Actor-related

All actors, including the project partners, are approached, incorporated, supported and promoted directly and in a binding manner. Planning, monitoring

and evaluation, carried out in an actor-related manner, reach out to the actors directly, take them seriously and underline their responsibility.

A social profile can show the variety of actors in the project environment at various hierarchical levels and in various occupational sectors that are affected by a topic. Being familiar with the project environment and incorporating the key partners is important for those responsible for projects and programmes involving co-operation for lasting development.

Behaviour-oriented

Change in the co-operation for development occurs at the action and behavioural level. Changes in actors' behaviour are associated with all innovations and indispensable for their lasting effect. Changes in behaviour are useful indicators for the management.

Context-oriented

The historical scan is context oriented. The specific endeavours to realise a vision can be observed and evaluated (monitoring and evaluation) on an on-going basis and during the entire process. The partners' behaviour in their context also provides feedback at short notice. Consequently the intentional design can be corrected on an on-going basis.

A programme approach

Many partners can participate in the changes in the programme with projects. The programme approach is suitable for the most complex of tasks involving social change. Even simple changes prove to be complex in a social, economic and technical environment. The project approach remains insufficient, isolated, or becomes cumbersome and centralist in the management structure if the project is to be implemented on a broad scale.

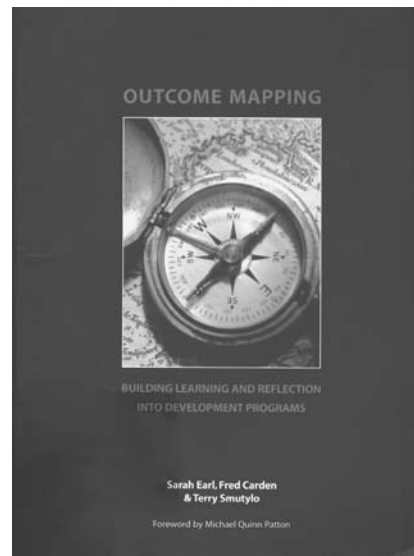
A learning concept based on experience

The train of thought in relation to understanding the process in the co-operation for development must take place at the level of social action and behaviour. Co-operation for development is not a factual process and not a technical process. Results have their history and one can only learn from experiences if one is aware of both. Outcome Mapping understands and structures the

development process in a practical manner and close to the reality lived by the people in their various roles as individuals, in groups, as members of organisations and participants in institutions.

Outcome Mapping structures key information such that the illustration is suitable for the practical implementation and monitoring of the process and for the success of a programme. In contrast, in LFA matrix, much of this information is lacking. It is not possible to draw up the intentional design of the Outcome Mapping from a LFA matrix and a LFA project document. This is a disadvantage for the lasting project implementation. LFA documents are only sufficient at the administrative level as general parameters and for the project control. The LFA matrix does not satisfy the requirements of project partners and thus of lasting development processes.

Those responsible and the project partners can themselves note key events on an ongoing basis in an Outcome journal, strategy journal and the performance journal. Process and success monitoring can be combined, and lessons can be learned from this. Initial experiences about the success of work stages can be collected, evaluated and fed back into the project management in good time on the basis of the progress markers at the outcome level. Learning by doing or the learning organisation becomes reality.



Outcome Mapping. Building learning and reflection into development programs: Sarah Earl, Fred Carden and Terry Smutylo.

Published by the International Development Research Centre, PO Box 8500, Ottawa, ON, Canada K1G 3H9
<http://www.idrc.ca>
ISBN 0-88936-959-3