A

framework

Collaboration

Compendium of qualitative methods for monitoring and evaluating OD

To accompany "Exploring qualitative approaches to assessing change in Organisational Development Programmes - A 'think piece' commissioned by WWF UK"

COMPENDIUM OF QUALITATIVE METHODS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING OD

To accompany "Exploring qualitative approaches to assessing change in Organisational Development Programmes - A 'think piece' commissioned by WWF UK"

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INTRODUCTION

This document examines 6 methods and 4 tools that are particularly suited to monitoring and evaluating (M&E) organisational development (OD).

Methods include:

1. Stories of Change
2. Most Significant Change
3. Outcome Mapping
4. Appreciative Inquiry
5. Sensemaker®
6. Organisational Assessment*

Tools include:

1. Rich Pictures
2. Impact Grid
3. Timelines
4. Visioning

* Organisational Assessment, although strictly speaking could be considered as a quantitative method, is often based on the use of qualitative methods and tools and is frequently used for assessing organisational change and development.

As a reminder, *quantitative* methods help us to capture the 'amount' or extent of change. *Qualitative* methods, in general, without using highly specialised language engineering tools, cannot provide that, and are therefore not always adequate for making management decisions. On the other hand, qualitative methods provide information on the how, the why and the 'so what?'. They provide information on the meaning of change, the possible barriers and benefits, the unintended effects, and the interpretations and implications the change (or lack of change) has for individuals and therefore for the organisation.

To learn about what difference OD is making, one needs to be able to examine it from all angles. Returning to the reasons for doing M&E (described in Table 2 of the accompanying document), qualitative methods are suited to

- understanding the value of a programme
- learning how to improve it
- identifying problems
- adaptation in complex, emergent and dynamic conditions
- knowledge generation.
- 'Downward accountability' (because of their emphasis on participation).

The use of qualitative methods to conduct M&E of OD requires commitment, expertise, and investment. In describing the methods below, we have looked at some method-specific advantages and limitations. However, there are some generic advantages and limitations of using qualitative methods, over and above the different kinds of information they are designed to gather:

General advantages of qualitative methods

- Can be used with all staff no matter what their level in the organisational structure
- Engages those directly affected by the change and encourages them to make sense of their own experience
- Can surface unexpected outcomes

Limitations of qualitative methods:

- It may be a challenge to obtain rich data about organisational change in organisations where speaking about problems / mistakes is culturally unacceptable
- Often require good communication and facilitation skills
- Can be time consuming and/or expensive, which is sometimes why sample sizes are often smaller than with quantitative methods. This can sometimes undermine the credibility or persuasiveness of the findings.
- Can seem superficially easier to undertake, as the skills involved can be seen as extensions of 'normal' human social skills of interaction and conversation. In reality some qualitative methods can be difficult to use well.
- The energy created can lead to elevated expectations, and consequent loss of motivation if 'nothing happens'.

Method 1: Most Significant Change (MSC)

What is Most Significant Change?

Most Significant Change is a methodological approach for story-based, participatory monitoring and evaluation. The purpose of MSC is 'to identify significant outcomes and impacts, including unintended changes; to identify what the organisation really values in terms of change; to encourage analysis and reflection; and to base management decisions on evidence of outcomes'. Significant Change stories are gathered and panels of designated stakeholders decide which of these stories are the most significant – and why. The value of the changes is discussed and this leads to a dialogue on planned and actual outcomes.

A panel of designated stakeholders discuss "significant change" stories emanating from the field and define what the "most significant change" is. (© Rick Davis and Jess Dart)

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

MSC can be very helpful in explaining *how* change comes about (processes and causal mechanisms) and *when* (in what situations and contexts) so it can be used to contribute to the development of a Theory of Change. There are few documented examples of MSC being used to evaluate organisational development and change initiatives, perhaps because it is the *collection* of stories rather than the *scoring and ranking* element that is the most commonly used part of MSC, as the following example illustrates.

Example: Using MSC to evaluate a capacity-building support provider

CABUNGO, a Malawian-based organisation, used MSC to evaluate its capacity building services as a pilot project. The pilot enabled CABUNGO to identify changes in organisational capacity such as shifts in attitudes, skills, knowledge and behaviour. Changes were also seen in relationships and power dynamics. Most of the stories generated described internal changes within the recipient organisation, but some also described changes in their external relationships with donors and the wider community. Participants in the evaluation process felt that the story-based approach was useful in helping CABUNGO understand the impact it had on the organisational capacity of its clients, and how its services could be improved. The key advantages of using MSC were its ability to capture and consolidate the different perspectives of stakeholders, to aid understanding and conceptualisation of complex change, and to enhance organisational learning. The constraints lay in meeting the needs of externally driven evaluation processes and dealing with subjectivity and bias.

Source: Simister and Smith, 2010[1]

Process

There are five basic steps in using MSC:

1. Decide the domain of change for the stories (for example, the effects of a leadership development program on managers) and who should be asked to provide the stories.
2. Collect the stories (often done using interviews which may be audio or video recorded or transcribed), including the contributor's view of why they consider the change they have reported to be significant.
3. Verify the stories using other data sources.
4. Analyse the stories and select which stories are the most significant. This is usually done by a panel to which stakeholders may be invited as participants.
5. Share the stories and the selection criteria with the contributors so that learning happens about what types of change are most valued.

A very thorough description of how to collect stories (including the use of photos and videos as well as written narratives) can be found at http://monitoring.cpwf.info/m-e-tools-and-workbook/most-significant-change/use-of-msc-in-the-cpwf/collecting-sc-stories

MSC is not just about collecting and reporting stories but about going through a process to make sense of and learn from the stories – in particular, to understand the implicit criteria used to select the stories and, by making these criteria explicit, identify what kinds of change are really valued in the organisation.

MSC provides some information about intended and unintended impact but is primarily about identifying change outcomes and clarifying the values held by different stakeholders. By itself, MSC is not sufficient for impact evaluation as it is more likely to provide information about positive change.

Key considerations

MSC needs someone familiar with the MSC methodology to facilitate and oversee the process. This could be someone who has used MSC in a different context – for example in programme evaluation.

The story collection stage may require story collectors to interview the story-tellers (though the stories can also be written by individuals without the involvement of others).

Most Significant Change is a time-consuming method both in terms of the collection of stories and also their analysis. The MSC process requires adequate time for story collection, recording and analysis – from start to finish the process should be allowed no less than one month.

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[1] *Simister, Nigel and Rachel Smith (2010) Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building: Is it really that difficult?, Praxis Paper 23, Oxford: INTRAC*

The method requires clarity about the domain(s) of change that the stories should focus on. If the domain of change is sensitive (for example, the effects of a leadership development program on managers), participants may need reassurance about confidentiality.

The story analysis process requires the involvement of a panel of individuals who must read/view/listen to and discuss all the stories. The panel of people who will select the most significant stories must be able to reflect on what the criteria that they have used for selection tells them about what is valued in the organisation. This process benefits from an experienced facilitator who is familiar with the MSC method.

Advantages and limitations

Advantages

- Directly engages those who are affected by change.
- The narrative approach is well-suited to examining complex organisational change without clear cause-effect relationships.
- Does not use predetermined indicators so success is described in the terms of the stakeholders.
- Unintended and unexpected changes can be readily identified.
- Apart from interviewing and facilitation skills, no specific technical skills needed for implementation though training in the overall method may be needed.

Limitations

- Collection and analysis of stories can be time-consuming
- Domains of change must be very clearly specified
- It can be difficult to elicit stories so skilled interviewers may be needed
- There is a tendency for MSC to elicit 'good news' stories and overlook 'bad news' stories.
- Identification of agreed criteria for selecting stories and prioritisation of stories requires good facilitation skills.

Where to look for resources

- A useful introduction to the use of MSC in evaluations http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/most_significant_change
- Davies, Rick & Jess Dart (2006): The 'Most Significant Change' Technique: A Guide to Its Use http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf
- A brief summary of MSC http://www.adb.org/publications/most-significant-change-technique
- This paper by Rebecca Wrigley of INTRAC describes in detail the boxed example earlier in this document http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/408/Praxis-Paper-12-Learning-from-Capacity-Building-Practice.pdf
- This video describes how UNICEF uses MSC in its programme activity but gives a useful overview of the method https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkuJ69zKScU
- WWF Australia used the MSC technique to evaluate its Woodland Watch programme http://awsassets.wwf.org.au/downloads/wa004_woodland_watch_social_impacts_2000_2005_1dec05.pdf

METHOD 2: OUTCOME MAPPING (OM)

What is Outcome Mapping?

Outcome Mapping[2] focuses specifically on changes in behaviour, relationships and activities in the people to whom an intervention is targeted. It does not ignore issues such as culture, but it assumes that cultural changes will be visible in behaviour, relationships and activities

According to an ODI survey of the implementation of outcome mapping[3], the main principles underpinning the method are

- Recognising that *people* drive change processes, and therefore understanding and influencing the roles of these actors, their mind set, motivations and relationships is critical.
- OM emphasises that the most effective planning, monitoring and evaluation systems are 'cyclical, iterative and reflexive'.
- By involving actors in the planning, monitoring and evaluation process, two way accountability replaces upward accountability
- With OM, processes of transformation and change are owned collectively; they are not the result of a causal chain beginning with 'inputs' and controlled by donors, but of a complex web of interactions between different actors, forces and trends. To produce sustainable changes, projects should contribute to and influence these processes of social change, rather than focusing on controlling specific outcomes and claiming attribution. A more honest approach can generate a more meaningful picture of the actual contribution and role of a project/programme in achieving results
- OM provides a framework for systematic discussions and a set of tools to incorporate these perspectives into practice.

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

OM is seen as ideal for complex processes where it is difficult to produce meaningful monitoring results. By presenting the overarching objective as a series of progressive behaviour changes of the actors involved, staff can track progress and learn as they work. OM was originally formulated as a way of increasing the understanding of the influence of research, and it is seen as particularly useful where the changes being made are a long way "upstream" from societal impact, which makes it highly relevant to OD, where it is often difficult to detect the direct downstream impact. OM is used by organisations such as CGIAR, ACT Development, the RAPID programme at ODI and the International Livestock Research Institute.

Research conducted by the Outcome Mapping Learning Community[4] gathered feedback from 43 people who have used OM to investigate how useful it has been, particularly for supporting complex projects. The study found that OM is helpful in four distinct ways:

1. dealing with multiple actors who come with different expectations, understandings, roles and responsibilities;
2. stimulating learning about a programme's effects in order to deal with unpredictability and non-linearity;
3. satisfying multiple accountability needs associated with the multiple actors involved in the programme; and
4. strengthening adaptive capacity of programme stakeholders to remain relevant and effective in changing contexts.

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[2] *Earl, S., Carden, F. and Smutylo, T. (2001) Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs, Ottawa: IDRC. http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/Pages/IDRCBookDetails.aspx?PublicationID=121*

[3] *Jones, H. and Hearn, S. (2009). Outcome Mapping: A realistic alternative for planning, monitoring and evaluation. http://www.odi.org/publications/4118-outcome-mapping-realistic-planning-monitoring-evaluation*

[4] *Hearn, S. (2014). The Outcome Mapping Usefulness Barometer http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/the-outcome-mapping-usefulness-barometer*

Example: World Bank[5]

In early 2000, a Regional Development Bank conducted an organizational change process. The proposed change process gained support, institutionalization and a concrete framework through the application of Outcome Mapping. Outcome Mapping was used to design the implementation framework for the change process and to highlight the human element and the behavioural changes needed for organizational change within a multi-lateral bank. By integrating the organization's strategic plan, approved recommendations from an operational audit, and Outcome Mapping, an implementation plan was developed as an overarching plan for the change management process. Outcome Mapping also provided a framework for assessing the effects of the change process.

Process

Adopting OM as an method involves integrating it throughout the OD cycle.

Stage 1: Design

The first stage is the design stage (**Intentional Design Stage**), which helps a project establish consensus on the macro level changes it will help to bring about and plan the strategies it will use. It helps answer four questions: Why? (What is the vision to which the programme wants to contribute?); Who? (Who are the programme's boundary partners? Since boundary partners are those whose behaviour is expected to change, then in an OD context, boundary partners are likely to be internal); What? (What are the tangible changes that are being sought?); and How? (How will the programme contribute to the change process among its boundary partners?). An outcome challenge statement describes the desired changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, actions (professional practices) of the boundary partners.

Figure 1 illustrates the behavioural changes identified as necessary for the implementation of the Change Management Plan (CMP).

[5] *Ambrose, K., Karden, F., and Earl, S. Positioning for change: Using Outcome Mapping to guide institutional change within a Regional Development Bank http://www.outcomemapping.ca/download/RDB_e_2.pdf*

Vision of the CMP

The Regional Development Bank is a highly professional and integrated organization that is viewed by its stakeholders and borrowing member countries as the premier development finance institution dedicated to the systematic reduction of poverty in the region. The organization is a model of good governance through efficient, quality –driven and effective programme delivery and through living our core values of trust, openness, transparency and mutual respect in all our dealings with each other and with our clients.

Mission of the CMP

The CMP will facilitate change to organizational structure, process, systems, policies, practices, procedures and employee behaviours and attitudes, so that the organization can fulfil its vision and mission as the premier institution in the region.

Boundary Partners

- Senior management group
- Change management task force
- Management / supervisors – Operations department and activities
- Management / supervisors – planning and supporting departments and activities
- Support staff
- Staff association committee
- Loans committee
- Training committee

Broad Behaviours

Leading change – *leadership, strategic direction, more visibility of leaders, delegate responsibilities*

Creating a change in culture – *interconnectedness between unites, horizontality, knowledge sharing, interest people in the broader picture*

Communication change – *shared vision, spaces for communication*

Supporting the change process – *create a learning environment, understand needs of individual departments, monitor and evaluate*

Figure 1: Broad behaviours consistent with strategic plan

Progress Markers are developed. These are a set of statements describing a gradual progression of changed behaviour in the boundary partner leading to the ideal outcome challenge. They are a core element in OM, and though they can seem like indicators in the sense that they are observable and measurable, they differ in that they can be adjusted during the implementation process, can include unintended results, do not describe a change in state and do not contain percentages or deadlines;

Figure 2 shows for the World Bank example how broad behaviours were translated into specific behaviours for particular groups (in this case, the Reporting Officers team).

Sampling of Progress Markers for boundary partner Reporting Officers (ROs)

Outcome Challenge: The CMP intends to see reporting officers providing strong and visible leadership, frequent face-to-face communications, being open and receptive to feedback and ideas, actively soliciting input and giving fair and honest feedback to staff in a timely and respectful manner. ROs ensure their unit is staffed with the appropriate skill mix and level and will empower staff through acknowledging and appreciating their contributions and through delegating responsibility within defined and clear parameters. ROs coach staff and provide and are accountable for their training and development needs so staff can competently fulfil their work. ROs are proactively and accountable for encouraging teamwork within and across divisions / departments and for supporting and recognizing creative and innovative behaviour. They act as the role models of professional behaviour and typify the organization's core values at all times and resolve issues with staff and internal and external clients in a timely and responsive manner using effective conflict management and resolution skills. ROs are responsible and accountable for achieving the stated performance objectives and will work cooperatively and collaboratively with other work units to achieve the mission of the organization.

Expect to see ROs

1. Establishing inter-departmental communication forums.
2. Convening regular staff meetings.
3. Delegating decision making vis-à-vis clearly defined parameters.
4. Convening regular intra-departmental meetings to discuss work programmes.
5. Orienting new staff to their unit.
6. Developing annual training plans with each staff member.

Like to see ROs

7. Consulting Human Resources in their unit planning and activities.
8. Updating and developing policies and processes within their own unit.
9. Establishing mechanisms to share and review work programmes across departments, especially on research projects.
10. Recognizing support staff as integral members of work teams and including them as work team members.

Love to see ROs

11. Conducting annual performance appraisals and providing open, confidential and constructive feedback.
12. Providing support staff with opportunities to reach their potential through job enrichment, career and training opportunities.
13. Creating spaces and mechanismas for self-assessment and for staff assessment of ROs.

Figure 2: Tailored progress markers for different boundary partners

Strategy maps are a mix of different types of strategies used by the implementing team to contribute to and support the achievement of the desired changes at the level of the boundary partners. OM encourages those involved in the intervention to identify strategies which are aimed directly at the boundary partner and those aimed at the environment in which the boundary partner operates.

Organisational Practices explain how the implementing team is going to operate and organise itself to fulfil its mission. It is based on the idea that supporting change in boundary partners requires that the internal team itself is able to change and adapt as well, i.e., not only by being efficient and effective (operational capacities) but also by being relevant (adaptive capacities).

Stage 2: Monitoring

The second stage is the monitoring stage (Outcome and Performance Monitoring). This stage provides a framework for the on-going monitoring of a project's actions and the boundary partners' progress toward the achievement of outcomes. It is based largely on systematised self-assessment. It provides the following data collection tools for elements identified in the Intentional Design stage: an Outcome Journal' (to track impact against progress markers); a Strategy Journal' (that seeks to test and adapt the programmes strategy in ever changing circumstances); and a 'Performance Journal' (that logs organisational practices and gauges the need for improvements).

Stage 3: Evaluation planning

The third stage, **Evaluation Planning**, helps the project identify evaluation priorities (more in-depth review of progress) and develop an evaluation plan that makes good use of resources and provides strategic benefit to the project.

Key considerations

Research into the implementation of OM indicated that there are seven 'enabling factors' which affect the successful integration of OM into PME

Essential

1. OM is suitable where complexity exists. In situations in which results or means to achieving results are more predictable, a "light touch" use of the tools and concepts is more appropriate
2. Recognition of and willingness to act upon complexity in the project environment and an understanding of the rationale for OM application
3. Champions and the availability of appropriate technical support

Optional

4. Support for and understanding of OM at executive level
5. promotion of organisational learning culture
6. An appreciation of the value of a results and learning-oriented planning, monitoring and evaluation system at multiple levels in the organisation
7. Availability of sufficient resources for the implementation of OM

Advantages and limitations

Research on the implementation of outcome mapping indicates that though it spans the entire project cycle, it is seen to be most useful at the planning stage. As an evaluation tool, it is somewhat underspecified and is often used in conjunction with methods such as Most Significant Change, Action Learning and Outcome Harvesting. Very few organisations using OM use it "by the book", but adapt it to local conditions. Often only some of the evaluation tools (outcome journals etc.) are used, or they are "rolled up", into a single template or implemented via a workshop, in order to reduce the paperwork and reporting burden on individuals.

Advantages

- Does not use predetermined indicators so success is described in the terms of the stakeholders
- Unintended changes can be identified
- Subjectivity is made transparent
- Can be used with all staff no matter what their level in the management hierarchy
- Can be used to complement and extend other approaches e.g. MSC[6]

Limitiations

- Not adequate for comprehensive M&E on its own. Needs to be combined with other methods.
- Creation of good progress markers is essential for the method to work
- Implementation requires a deep understanding of method to manage it

[6] *Smith, R., Mauremootoo, J. and Rassman, K. (2012). Ten years of Outcome Mapping adaptations and support http://www.outcomemapping.ca/download/10_years_of_OM.pdf*

Where to look for resources

- The Outcome Mapping Learning Community (resources are free to download, though membership is required to participate in discussions). http://www.outcomemapping.ca
- The ODI have adapted Outcome Mapping in a version called ROMA http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9012.pdf
- Outcome mapping was used in an evaluation of the WWF Madagascar & Western Indian Ocean Programme Office Climate Change and Adaptation Capacity in Madagascar programme[7]

[7] *Project final evaluation report Climate Change and Adaptation Capacity Madagascar approximately 2013. http://www.norad.no/globalassets/import-2162015-80434-am/www.norad.no-ny/filarkiv/ngo-evaluations/project-final-evaluation-report-for-climate-change-adaptation-capacity-in-madagascar-project.pdf*

METHOD 3: STORIES OF CHANGE

What are Stories of Change?

Stories of Change are narratives prepared and used to examine and understand the change brought about by projects, programmes and other initiatives. The Stories of Change method can provide an in-depth insight into the process and outcomes (both intended and unintended) of organisational development and change processes.

Stories of Change document change as experienced by individuals. They are different from case studies because they are gathered for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation and to encourage critical reflection, learning and sharing based on real experience.

Stories of Change is one of a number of narrative methods that include more sophisticated story-based approaches such as 'The Success Case Method[8]', 'Critical Stories of Change', and 'Most Significant Change'[9].

According to McClintock (2004), personal stories are useful for evaluation because of their following attributes:

- Storytelling lends itself to participatory change processes because it relies on people to make sense of their own experiences and environments.
- Stories can be used to focus on particular interventions while also reflecting on the array of contextual factors that influence outcomes.
- Stories can be systematically gathered and claims verified from independent sources or options.
- Narrative data can be analysed using existing conceptual frameworks or assessed for emergent themes.
- Narrative options can be integrated into on-going organisational processes to aid in programme planning, decision making, and strategic management.

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

Although used mainly for examining the implementation, outcomes and impact of *programmes*, Stories of Change are highly relevant to understanding organisational development and change processes.

In a recent paper on the evaluation of OD, the authors make the following case for including Stories of Change as an important part of the evaluator's toolkit "… the stories people tell, the language they use to tell them and the metaphors they use to describe change can be a powerful tool for the evaluator. Organisational culture is sometimes defined as the stories people tell one another. A measure of success [of organisational development] could be that the stories have changed…".

Process

Stories of Change can be recorded in the form of video, audio, photographs or written documents depending on why the story is being collected. In their written form, Stories of Change are usually short documents (1-2 pages A4) that describe a change experienced by an individual or small group (the story tellers). The key parts of a written Story of Change are:

- basic information about the story
- the context and time period covered by the story
- a clear description of the 'before' and 'after/current' situations
- a description and explanation of the change process (including what has driven the change and the obstacles encountered)
- what difference these changes made to the storyteller, their team and the wider organisation?
- a reflection on why the change is important to the story teller

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[8] *Brinkerhoff, Robert O (2002) The Success Case Method: Find Out Quickly What's Working and What's Not, San Francisco: Berrett Koehler*

[9] *See elsewhere in this document*

Collecting written Stories of Change can be made easier if a pro-forma is prepared based on the bullet points above. Some organisations also encourage staff and stakeholders to use diaries and blogs as a way of collecting potential stories.

Written Stories of Change are most effective when they are documented using the 'voice' of the storyteller with words that the story-teller used during the story collection process.

Video-recorded and to a lesser extent audio-recorded, Stories of Change have an immediacy that can be very engaging and bring to life the experience of the story-teller in a way that is more difficult with the written word. However, written Stories of Change (or transcribed video and audio recordings) can be more easily analysed.

Analysing Stories of Change can be done in a number of ways from a simple reflection process, through ranking and refining methods such as Most Significant Change to the use of analytic software such as Cognitive Edge (see Sensemaker® elsewhere in this document) and other 'sense-making' approaches that provide a quantitative analysis.

Key considerations

The greater the depth of analysis, the more time-consuming and/or expensive the process is to undertake but the richer the data that can be drawn out of the stories.

Stories are sometimes used for other purposes such as annual reporting, advocacy, supporter communication activities and marketing, but Stories of Change are collected with the intention of providing a realistic and honest picture of the complexity and challenges involved in a process of change and the outcomes achieved as a result. For this reason, Stories of Change should not try to disguise unexpected outcomes or avoid uncomfortable realities. Exploring these difficult aspects of change, alongside successes and achievements, is fundamental to the method.

Advantages and limitations

Advantages

- Well-suited to examining complex organisational change without clear cause-effect relationships
- Unintended and unexpected changes can be identified
- Narrative data can be analysed using existing conceptual frameworks or can give rise to emergent themes
- Can be used with all staff no matter what their level in the management hierarchy
- Sharing stories within an organisation can strengthen working relationships
- No specific skills needed for implementation

Limitiations

- Not adequate for comprehensive M&E on its own. Needs to be combined with other methods.
- Need to consider the ethical implications of making stories widely available.
- May not be suitable where speaking about problems / mistakes is culturally unacceptable
- Analysing stories can be time-consuming
- Analysing stories using special software requires technical expertise

Where to look for resources

- The page on stories at the Better Evaluation website has excellent tips and suggestions on the use of stories http://betterevaluation.org/evaluation-options/stories
- Carroll, Kate (September 2011) 'Stories, critical analysis and learning in ActionAid' in PLA Notes No. 63 'How wide are the ripples? From local participation to international organisational learning'. Available from http://pubs.iied.org/14606IIED.html
- Although he focuses mainly on programme evaluation, Charles McClintock's reflections on the use of stories are very relevant to organisational development. McClintock, C. (2004). Using narrative options to link program evaluation and organization development. The Evaluation Exchange IX: 4 Winter 2003/2004. http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/reflecting-on-the-past-and-future-of-evaluation/using-narrative-methods-to-link-program-evaluation-and-organization-development
- Sole, D. and Wilson, D. (2002). Storytelling in organizations: The power and traps of using story to share knowledge in organizations. Harvard Learning Innovations Laboratory. Presidents and Fellows of Harvard College, Cambridge, USA. http://providersedge.com/docs/km_articles/Storytelling_in_Organizations.pdf

METHOD 4: SENSEMAKING AND SENSEMAKER®

What is Sensemaking?

Sensemaking is the process by which individuals give meaning to their experience, and how in particular they work their way through ambiguity to come to a particular position. Sensemaking underpins many, if not all, qualitative methods, and therefore is an approach rather than a methodology. It has underpinned research in human computer interaction, in information science, and in organisational studies, and we include it here as way of both differentiating it from and linking it to the discussion of the Sensemaker®methodology later in this section.

According to Weick[10], sensemaking in organisations has 7 properties:

1. Identity is central. Sensemaking begins with a "sensemaker" – an individual, who is himself or herself an ongoing puzzle undergoing continual redefinition, trying to present some self to others and trying to decide which self is appropriate. "Depending who I am, my definition of what is 'out there' will also change"
2. Sensemaking is **retrospective** – it draws on past experience, and the point in the past that you go back to affects what you notice in the present.
3. People **enact** their environments they face in dialogues and narratives. As people speak, and build narrative accounts, it helps them understand what they think, organize their experiences and control and predict events and reduce complexity.
4. Sensemaking is a **social** activity in that plausible stories are preserved, retained or shared. The audience for sensemaking includes the speakers themselves and the narratives are 'both individual and shared...an evolving product of conversations with ourselves and with others'.
5. Sensemaking is **ongoing**, so individuals simultaneously shape and react to the environments they face.
6. People **extract cues** from the context to help them decide on what information is relevant and what explanations are acceptable. Extracted cues provide points of reference for linking ideas to broader networks of meaning and are 'simple, familiar structures that are seeds from which people develop a larger sense of what may be occurring.
7. People favour **plausibility over accuracy** in their accounts of events and contexts: "in an equivocal, postmodern world, infused with the politics of interpretation and conflicting interests and inhabited by people with multiple shifting identities, an obsession with accuracy seems fruitless, and not of much practical help, either" (Weick 1995: 61).

Many methods and tools which use stories as a source of data share at least some of the assumptions of sensemaking, e.g. Most Significant Change, Stories of Change, Outcome Mapping, Discourse Analysis, Critical Incident Technique etc. However, the Sensemaker/Cynefin methodology is explicitly based on sensemaking.

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

When dealing with organizational issues, sensemaking requires us to look for explanations and answers in terms of how people understand the issues rather than in the structures or systems themselves. Sensemaking is based on the idea that organisational issues - strategies, conflict, change, goals, plans, tasks, team dynamics, and so on - are not objective 'things' that present themselves to the observer to be investigated. Rather, the issues are socially constructed by the people in the organisation. It has been argued[11] that conventional, *diagnostic* OD's basic assumptions about people, organisations and change may cause a certain short-sightedness concerning how best to understand and bring about change in organisations. Werkman suggests (using a case study of OD in a police force) that a sensemaking approach can help OD practitioners to better understand the situation on which they are working in situations of organisational change. Sensemaking can enrich OD interventions by placing a more explicit focus on the way people co-create meaning through their interactions with each other. Sensemaking is therefore very consistent with the dialogic model of OD. As Cheung-Judge (2011, p38) points out, the significance of social constructionism to OD practice is:

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[10] *Weick, K.E. (1995). Sensemaking in Organizations. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.*

[11] *Werkman, R. (2010). Reinventing organization development: how a sensemaking perspective can enrich OD theories and interventions. Journal of Change Management, 10 (4), 421-438*

> *"... its belief that if reality is socially constructed, then it can be modified by injecting alternative conversations, stories and narratives into the system. Also change leaders need to accept that reality is not one-dimensional and hence their job is to work with the diverse meaning of the change from the various stakeholder groups."*

So, rather than trying to identify an 'objective' reality, OD practice should be aiming to understand and work with the diverse meanings that those involved ascribe to the situation. Sensemaking is a key method for doing this.

What is Sensemaker®?

The Cynefin (pronounced 'cu-ne-vin') framework for understanding change underpins Sensemaker® methodology.

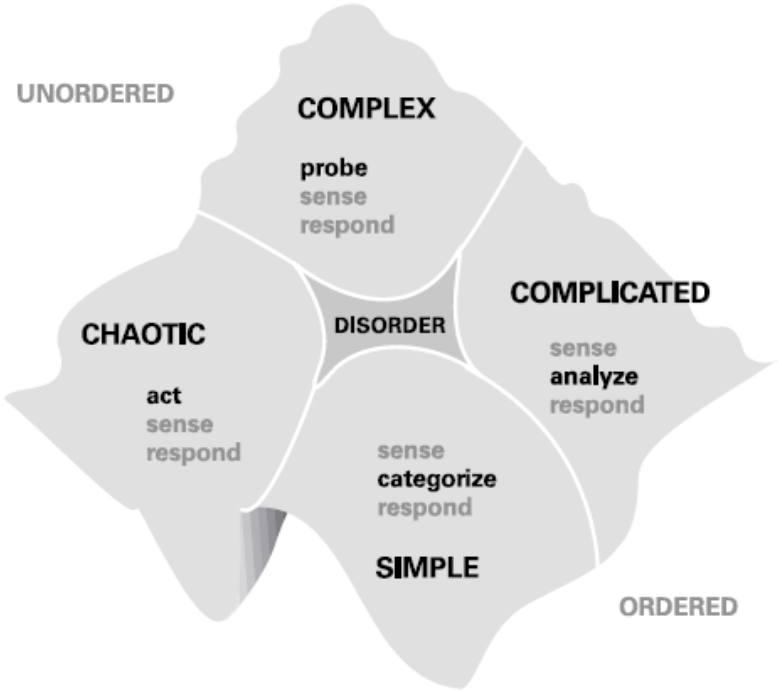

Figure 1: The Cynefin Framework[12]

This Cynefin framework was developed by Snowden and Kurtz in 2007. The framework assumes that decision making in organisations happens in one of the following four domains:

- the *simple* domain, where the relationship between cause and effect is clear and linear. This domain is often where best practice and standard operating procedures (SOPs) exist.
- The *complicated* domain needs more analysis to work out cause-effect, and this is often conducted by experts within an organisation.
- The *complex* domain is where the cause and effect relationship is so intertwined that the relationship is only obvious in hindsight. In this space, networks and relationships are non-linear, so a small activity in one part of the network can have a large effect elsewhere. Things are unpredictable, but what you need to look at is patterns. "People" issues such as culture, leadership, trust are part of this domain and it therefore needs different tools to identify patterns and make decisions.
- In the *chaotic* domain there is no perceivable relationship between cause and effect: in this case, you just need to do something, which will push you into one of the other domains and then you can proceed from there.

Sensemaker® methodology grew from this framework as a way of exploring complex domains in more detail. It is a truly hybrid qualitative-quantitative method, as it uses stories, coding by participants themselves against a pre-ordained framework, but involves collecting enough 'micro narratives' that patterns (clusters of similar responses) can be detected.

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[12] *Snowden, D.J. and Boone, M.E. (2007). A leader's framework for decision making. Harvard Business Review. http://aacu-secure.nisgroup.com/meetings/ild/documents/Symonette.MakeAssessmentWork.ALeadersFramework.pdf*

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

There are very few examples of the use of Sensemaker® in the field of OD but a recent initiative is likely to be of direct relevance to WWF. Caritas India and Catholic Relief Services initiated Sensemaker® training in April 2015 in order to examine the impact of organisational development initiatives in the context of partner capacity building.

Process

The process (**Error! Reference source not found.**) starts with a prompting question or image to trigger the espondent to share an experience or outcome that is significant for the topic being researched.

After sharing the story, the respondent is asked to code their own story (either using a paper questionnaire, or ideally, by using a handheld smartphone or tablet by categorising the story in relation to specific questions. These questions and categories form the 'signification' (or question) framework and are predefined—drawing on concepts, theories and programme intentions.

Once many micro-narratives (stories) are collected, the software is used to filter and analyse micro-narratives to identify patterns and trends that may be significant for action

These patterns and the related stories are the basis for 'sense-making' by key stakeholders

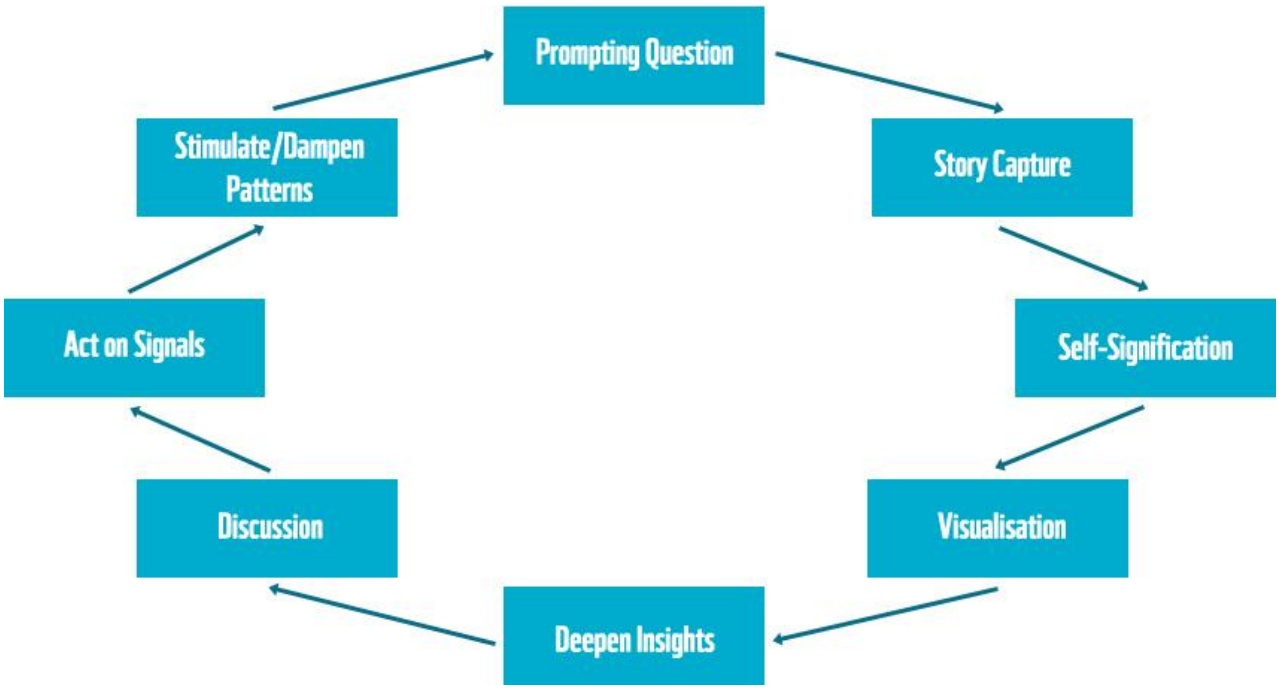

Figure 2: The Sensemaker® process

The Sensemaker® software (Figure 3) operates through paper surveys or a web or mobile app environment, allowing individuals to self interpret and index micro-narratives against three criteria to build a robust framework for understanding behaviour, positioning, views, opinions, fears and opportunities.

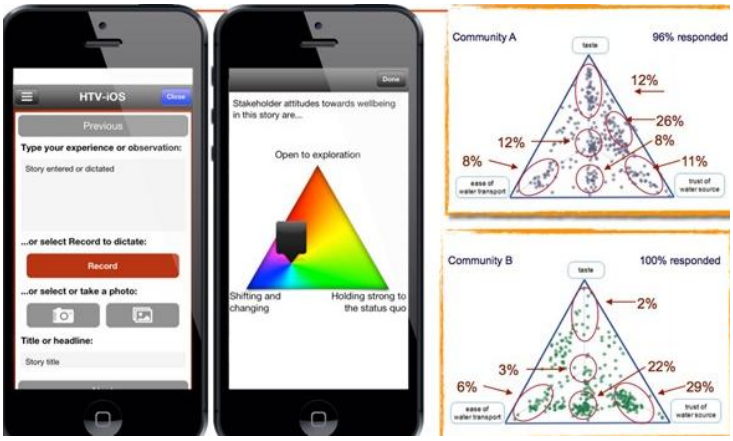

Figure 3: Sensemaker® software and output

Advantages and limitations

Advantages

- Monitor complex issues while reducing the likelihood of participants aiming to present themselves in a positive light
- Merge the merits of quantitative and qualitative data by iterating between the statistics about experiences and individual stories;
- Reduce researcher bias as participants 'code' their own stories
- Claims to be better than other qualitative methods at detecting 'weak' signals that indicate change over time, and this is plausible, given the difficulty of using qualitative data to detect change.
- Not as labour or skill intensive in interviewing and facilitation as other more 'pure' qualitative methods

Limitations

- 'Locked' into gathering data via particular tools and software
- Not flexible enough to merge data from other sources – can be triangulated at interpretation stage only
- Quite an 'alien' approach for people familiar with only quantitative or only qualitative approaches: requires substantial training to be useful
- Needs substantial quantities of 'micro narratives' for analysis to be meaningful

Resources needed

It is important to ensure that when comparing the cost of M&E that the cost of consultancy, training and software for other methods are factored in. A reservation, however, is that more generic software and training can be used with other projects and domains, whereas if the organisation decides to stop using Sensemaker® in the future, investment in branded software and training may then be a sunk cost which does not have continued benefits for the organisation.

As Sensemaker®is a commercial product, which comes with associated consultancy, it is difficult to access exact prices. UNDP has collaborated with Cognitive Edge[13] to launch a project called 'Fragments of Impact'. As part of the costings for this, the usual prices for Sensemaker® were quoted for comparison purposes as follows:

	Cost (GBP)
Framework building and app/website production	3,225
Monthly software licences for the six months of the project	1,548
Mentoring (per month for 6 months)	3,870
4 days of training on complexity, research and more	2,774
Additional customisation/modification of signifier frameworks e.g. additional languages:	1,290

[13] *http://cognitive-edge.com/news/an-exciting-new-opportunity-for-development-aid-and-ngo-working-with-sensemaker-undp-and-cognitive-edge/*

Where to look for resources

1. Casella, D., Magara, P., Kumasi, T.C., Guijt, I. and van Soest, A., 2014. The Triple-S Project Sensemaker® experience: a method tested and rejected. (Triple-S Working Paper 9) The Hague: IRC. http://www.ircwash.org/resources/triple-s-project-sensemaker%C2%AE-experience-method-tested-and-rejected#

   This is a very thoughtful account of choosing, piloting and rejecting a methodology which was piloted as a potential way of evaluating a six-year, multi-country learning initiative to improve water supply to the rural poor, led by IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre. It is unusual to see such a frank and insightful account of a 'failure', and the team (of whom one of the authors, Irene Guijt, is an academic and Sensemaker® consultant) concluded that "despite the unsuccessful attempt to apply SenseMaker® as a monitoring method for Triple-S, it is not dismissed as a useful method: it simply did not work within the Triple-S context and for the reasons already mentioned. Other development sector initiatives, including the water and sanitation sub-sector, have used SenseMaker® as a key diagnostic and research method with promising results emerging in relation to decision making". This document is well worth a read for the 'devil in the detail' issues which may derail implementation of a chosen M&E method, and also demonstrates the value of piloting before committing to a final choice.

2. Deprez, S., Huyge, C., Van Gool Maldonaldi, C. (20120. Using Sensemaker to measure, learn and communicate about smallholder farmer inclusion. Case Report: Thematic learning programme on planning, monitoring and evaluation of complex processes of social change. VECO http://www.veco-ngo.org/sites/www.veco-ngo.org/files/blog/bijlage/sensemaker_case_study_0.pdf

   A much more positive pilot which provides substantial details on the steps involved in implementing Sensemaker

3. Yim, J. (2010). Wales Audit Office Staff Survey Report. Cognitive Edge Consultants. http://old.cognitive-edge.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/WAO-Survey-2010-Report-2.pdf

   Provides a simple example of how Sensemaker results can be reported.

METHOD 5: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI)

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

AI is a strengths-based approach and method which seeks to achieve long-term positive change by focusing on things that give life to an organization's system when it is operating at its best. Sometimes considered more of a philosophy than a specific approach or methodology, AI seeks out examples of what is 'working right' and builds on these rather than focusing on problem solving or gap analysis. AI uses structured conversations and storytelling in a collaborative inquiry into a predefined area of exploration.

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

AI has been developed and implemented largely within an OD context. Cooperrider and Srivastva at the Case Western Reserve University who first developed the general approach in the early 1980's, and then refined this with the 5-D implementation model ten years later. Since that time, many well-known national and multinational corporations, official aid agencies and public sector entities have all used AI as an approach to change. In the 1990's the Global Excellence in Management Initiative, supported by USAID funding, brought AI into the international development sector, although it was more oriented towards programme work rather than OD. One particular experience of note was the AI work that Catholic Relief Services (CRS) undertook, with support from GEM:

Example: Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

This 60 year-old international development organization revitalized its relationships with local partners through an Appreciative Inquiry process that, over two and a half years, brought field offices into dialogue and reflection about just and equal partnerships in southern Africa, Eastern Europe, and South Asia. To model such relationships, it formed a partnership with the GEM Initiative of Case Western Reserve University to guide this work.

CRS followed the 5-D cycle, holding two global partnership meetings and then coaching pilot countries to use appreciative interviews to discover what gives life to their partnerships through examples of past successes and resolving and reconciling past misunderstandings. They then dreamed about the effective and excellent partnerships they wanted to create together.

The data from the partnership meetings fed into an international partnership conference in 2000. In a three-day conference, CRS and partners designed systems, policies, and procedures to make them more congruent with their emerging vision of partnership principles. The data from the partnership meetings fed into two international partnership summits in 1998 and 2000.

This strategic process eventually contributed significantly to a 2001 World Summit that developed the agency's vision for the next ten years and involved four thousand staff in eighty countries. Also as part of the delivery phase, CRS has launched the implementation of the vision.

According to Meg Kinghorn, CRS's technical adviser for partnership and capacity building at that time, relationships changed as soon as people started talking about what they had jointly achieved and what was really important in working together (C. Liebler, personal communication, Mar. 30, 2003). GEM codirector Claudia Liebler stated, "We did make an impact—we created an agency-wide dialogue, changes were made in relationships, and some changes were made in the social architecture of CRS" (personal communication, Mar. 30, 2003).

AI can be applied to any capacity level as the initial 'Define' phase (Figure 1) will establish the boundaries for its application. For example, it can focus on Leaders ('an inspiring and empowering leadership') or on the organisation as a whole ('when we are at our best'). It can also be applied to one specific change domain within the organisation such as cultural change:

> *A lesson we are learning over and over again as we engage hundreds and thousands of people in Appreciative Inquiry is one we first noted in our work with GTE. When people are asked to participate in a change effort targeted at changing behaviors – specifically their behaviors – they are ambivalent at best. When people are asked to bring their best forward for the benefit of the organization they do so with enthusiasm and pride.14*

There have also been positive experiences of adapting and applying some of the AI principles and specific methods in different contexts and at different moments of a change process. It is possible to adapt the principles of a positive inquiry process in order to review progress in an OD process. One way of doing this is to use the first 'Discovery' phase questioning method to explore existing strengths at one point of time and then compare the emerging picture with the original baseline. One author notes that AI makes most sense as a *formative* evaluation strategy as opposed to a summative one, given that people's vision for a better organization will necessarily evolve over time, so there is no single end point but a multiplicity of them (A. Arenas).

Finally, returning to the overarching philosophy of AI and to one of its founders, D. Cooperrider, this important and influential thinking is now being used to reframe OD itself. Cooperrider is one of the proponents of what is being referred to as Innovation-inspired Positive OD (IPOD) in which AI is one of the cornerstones (along with positive psychology, design thinking and biomimicry).

Process

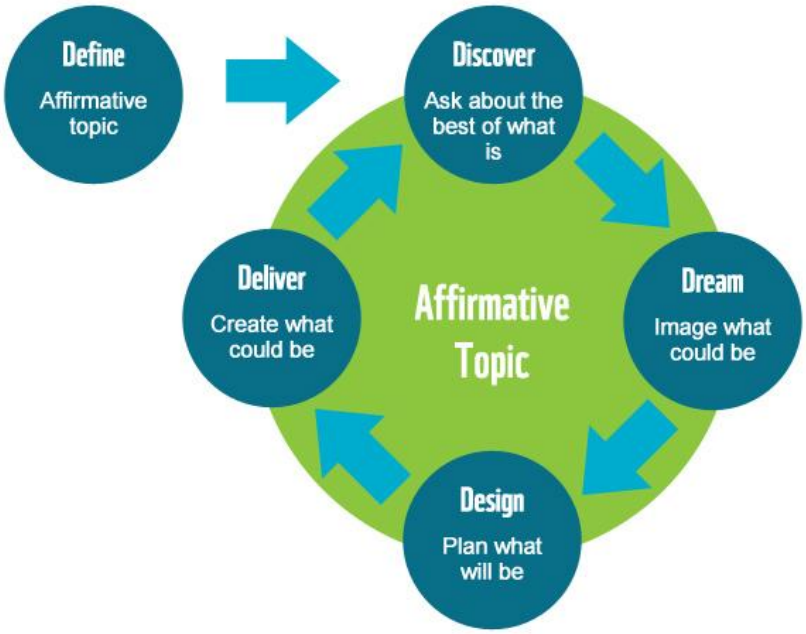

Figure 1: The 5-D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry

The most common application of the approach is during a face-to-face process (e.g. Appreciative Inquiry Summits) which brings together a large, representative cross-section of an organization's internal and external stakeholders to identify and build upon the organization's core strengths. The process for stimulating this creative dialogue involves the 5-D Cycle illustrated above, which provides the structure and basic framework for the meeting agenda.

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14 *Whitney, D., Cooperrider, D., Garrison, M., Moore, J., Dinga, L. (1996). Appreciative Inquiry and Culture Change at GTE / Verizon.* https://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/bestcasesDetail.cfm?coid=2880

1. Define

Before the event, it is necessary to articulate the focus of inquiry in a way that stimulates desire to work together and articulates well what the people are curious about, and want to see more of. This can take two different forms:

- The organisation has a 'problem' (e.g. poor partner relationships) and this phase reframes that problem into an appreciative topic (e.g. 'delighted partners who proactively seek us out for new collaboration opportunities').
- The organisation doesn't have a 'problem', but wants to build on success more generally. Then, rather than having to reframe a deficit, it starts with an inquiry process seeking out more general high point stories that are not led by a topic.

2. Discover

During the event, people interview each other and are asked to tell stories about the topic. Strengths are uncovered and accomplishments and successes are acknowledged, spread and elevated. The themes and patterns arising from the stories are then articulated in plenary in a clear and understandable way, so that everyone understands what really supports and enables these high-point experiences – often called the 'positive core'. This deep and thorough understanding becomes the base from which new possibilities are going to be 'grown'.

The questions used to shape the interviews and elicit the stories are carefully crafted (See **Error! Reference ource not found.** for examples of questions).

3. Dream

In this phase the participants envision themselves and their organization functioning at their best. It uses various kinds of visualization and other exercises to produce 'dreams' that are articulated in both expressive and analytical forms. The Dream phase is not like a traditional visioning process – there's no direct intent that the Dream is describing some 'future state' that the organisation is going to move towards. The 'dreams' are provocations and energizers that set up the energy and personal shift in both the individual and the collective thinking, which stimulates people to change the way they act immediately in the present. They are synthesised in provocative propositions, which can be in the form of words – a single sentence, a mission statement, a poem or a drawing.

4. Design

This phase is about creating the structure, processes and relationships that will support the dream. The macro pictures produced in the Dream phase are broken down into specific statements that address short-, medium- and long-term strategies. These statements are micro-level provocative propositions that detail a specific plan of action, with doable activities spread over time. Essentially, this phase addresses the question: "*How do we need to transform our processes, strategies, structures, systems, etc. in order to make it most possible that our dreams will flourish*?"

5. Deliver (or Destiny in some uses)

This phase is about delivering on the outputs of the Design phase. However, it does so with a strong emphasis on innovation through the mobilization of new ideas, material resources and personnel. It supports continuous learning so that members can learn from even the smallest of successes for future replication. It pushes for active participation and shared responsibility for decision-making. It stresses continuous evaluation to ensure adequate progress and to revise action plans when appropriate and it encourages an appreciative eye to celebrate the highlights of the organizational transformation. This latter point is a reminder of the cyclical nature of AI, which means that any stage can recur at any point during the transformational process.

Key Considerations

AI requires a genuine openness to consider new methods and approaches.

All participants must be informed about the approach and why it is different from other 'problem-solving' approaches, before the workshop or event (if AI is being used in its 'full' version).

A trained facilitator of AI will be required if the 'full' version is to be used. If partial application, then the change facilitator needs to be aware of the principles and how to apply them to the specific needs of their organisation.

Arguably, AI will be most fruitful in a culture which is not overly self-critical.

Advantages and limitations

Advantages

- Can be highly motivational and energizing
- Creates opportunities for all to share their positive experiences
- Positive Discovery questions can be helpful in identifying concrete examples of change.
- The use of positive propositions may help synthesis of key points emerging from the data analysis.
- The principles behind the approach can be applied to many different contexts
- Well suited to the dialogic approach to OD

Limitations

- The 'full' version requires commitment of time which may not be made available unless leadership commits to this approach.
- Does need a deep understanding of the approach

Where to look for resources

- Cooperrider, D. L., Whitney, D., Stavros, J. M. (2008). Appreciative Inquiry Handbook (2nd ed.). Brunswick, OH: Crown Custom Publishing, Inc
- The resource section of the website of the David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry, based at Champlain College, USA http://www.champlain.edu/ai-home/about-appreciative-inquiry/appreciative-inquiry-resources
- A consulting firm which specialises in AI has a good resources section, as well as links to other portals and sources of information http://www.centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/resources/appreciative/
- http://www.aipractitioner.com/ international journal focusing on positive relational approaches to change such as Appreciative Inquiry.
- https://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/ worldwide portal devoted to the fullest sharing of academic resources and practical tools on Appreciative Inquiry and the rapidly growing *discipline of positive change*.

AI applied to evaluations:

- Preskill, H., Tzavaras Catsambas, T. (2006). Reframing evaluation through appreciative inquiry. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Kotellos, K., Rockey, S., Tahmassebi, B. (2005). Using Appreciative Methods to Evaluate an Appreciative Inquiry Process: Evergreen Cove Holistic Learning Center. AI Practitioner: International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry, February 2005. https://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/uploads/Feb%202005%20intro.pdf
- Examines how elements of AI were successfully incorporated into an evaluation that assessed the results of an AI change process.
- Arenas, A. (2009). Evaluating TVET Programmes through Appreciative Inquiry. Work, Learning and Sustainable Development: Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Issues, Concerns and Prospects, 8, pp 477-488 http://tinyurl.com/pnk6asu

METHOD 6: ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENTS (OA)

What are Organisational Assessments?

An Organisational Assessment (OA) is a term applied to the systematic analysis of organisational capacity and health (and relationships and performance in some applications)[15]. The OA can be of a holistic nature (a systemic OA) or can be focused on selected organisational dimensions or capacity areas (in which case it is useful to call this a 'Capacity Assessment'). The expected use of the assessment results will define the scope and characteristics of an OA process and accompanying tools.

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

An OA is usually undertaken in the initial Diagnosis phase of the OD cycle, and is often re-applied at some point during the OD process and/or at the exit phase to facilitate learning about progress or achievement of desired changes within an organisation. It can also be used during evaluations of capacity building programmes working with a number of organisations, such as civil society strengthening programmes. Here it is common to find OAs being implemented for the purposes of needs assessments and to inform the shaping of the support provision. That initial information is used as baseline data and the repeat OA provides data for assessing change results across the range of participating organisations.

Most (not all) OA processes work with pre-defined descriptions – indicators - of either 'ideal' (sometimes called 'benchmark') capacity in the multiple areas of interest, or with a number of 'evolving' indicators which describe capacity as it develops. There will often be some process of expressing the level of capacity via a quantitative measure of some sort – either numeric, or using a visual image (e.g. seedling to fruiting tree imagery). Qualitative data and analysis is then incorporated via explanatory sections in the tool, or in a full assessment report.

Process

Qualitative data gathering methods are usually included as part of the initial OA process. Whilst the OA itself is directed at analysing the organisational system as a whole, specific data gathering methods can be focused on selected levels or aspects of organisational life. These can be adapted for use outside of the OA context, as part of a portfolio of data gathering methods for the monitoring and evaluation of organisational change. For example:

- *Stakeholder mapping exercise* – a visual mapping with use of bubbles, arrows etc. to portray the power dynamics and quality of relationships that an organisation may have with its stakeholders. Use at evaluation phase involves the production of two maps – one to portray relationships at the start of the OD period and one to portray current relationships.
- *Influencing mapping* – some exercises can be designed to enable the analysis of the existing capacity to influence actors within a specific field or sector. Similar to the stakeholder exercise above, these can be used in a 'before' and 'current' portrayal within the context of evaluating organisational change.

[15] *Other similar analytical processes may be known by other terms, such as Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA).*

Example: Mapping the capacity to influence the Institutional Landscape – the Aids Alliance

Within the OA instrument designed for Intermediary Organisations, one section is focused on assessing the capacity to influence other actors within the HIV-AIDS sector. One indicator is:

Awareness of and collaboration with other organisations

The tool presents seven criteria, and a participatory exercise facilitates discussion leading to the assignment of a numeric value representing the degree to which all of the criteria are met. Some of the criteria include:

- Staff are aware of several organisations doing HIV work that are community-based and are not already partners of the NGO.
- Staff have productive contacts with more than 80% of national HIV organisations.
- Staff have productive contacts with HIV organisations in over half the districts/regions of the country.
- The NGO leads or participates in all relevant national networks or forums that meet regularly (at least every six months).

Whilst it may be relatively easy to identify the other organisations in the field, and analyse internal documentation to identify the *number* of relationships that exist with them, it is only through dialogue and collective reflection that the *quality* of those contacts can be assessed in order to decide the degree to which they are 'productive'.

A participatory exercise (via group work and plenary) enables participants to identify the nature of the relationship with all the organisations. Five possible types of collaborating, influencing and sharing contacts are described:

a) Have personal contacts with staff from this organisation/network
b) Have collaborated together in a network, on a programme initiative, on an advocacy project or on policy work
c) Have successfully influenced this organisation or network through advocacy or in a leadership/advisory role
d) Have had exchange visits/learning/sharing lessons with this organisation/network
e) We are viewed as a significant player in the HIV field by this organisation/network

Participants define which of these apply to each one of the organisations (there can be more than one type of relationship) by using grids on flipcharts. Individuals then reflect on the final picture and decide for themselves a score for the indicator above, based on their assessment of how many of the criteria have been met. After individual scores are posted anonymously on a chart, there then follows a plenary discussion and a collective decision on the overall score.

This is a synthesis of the exercise described in pages 24-26 of 'Intermediary Organisations Capacity Analysis' : International HIV-AIDS Alliance, 2008

Other qualitative methods used as part of data gathering for use in OAs, and which could be adapted for use in evaluations of OD work, include:

- Staff surveys with narrative sections included
- Cultural audits with narrative sections
- Focus group discussions
- Semi-structured interviews
- Timelines
- Rich pictures
- Power analysis

Key Considerations

To carry out a full OA it is advisable to ensure an appropriate process and set of instruments and metrics are available. This is most likely to require tailoring existing OAs. There are, in addition, a number of other critical pre-requisites that apply when implementing full OA processes. References to these are often found in the introductory sections of OA instruments that have been developed for use within the international development sector.

For the effective use of specific qualitative data gathering methods it will be necessary to be very clear about the purpose of their application, the specific outputs required and how these will feed into the assessment analysis. This is especially true when applying these for the evaluation of organisational change.

Undertaking a full OA during the diagnosis phase of an OD process may tend to be rather costly in terms of the demands on staff time and extensive in terms of the total time period required. There are definite rewards and benefits

in investing in a participatory, quality OA process, and these would normally be considered to outweigh the costs. The same may be said of the implementation of a repeat OA at the end of the OD process, for evaluation purposes.

When assessing organisational change, the selection of specific qualitative data gathering methods from the full OA, and combining them with other methods, may be more appropriate than implementing a full repeat OA. In these cases, adaptation of methods may provide opportunities for cost savings.

Advantages and limitations

These advantages and limitations refer to the use of specific OA data gathering methods when applied to evaluating organisational development and change

Advantages

- Highly flexible and easy to contextualise if adapting participatory exercises to the focus of the evaluation.
- Triangulation is facilitated by combining different exercises and data gathering methods.
- Many of the specific exercises are practical and participatory in nature.
- There is a link back to the original OA analysis, and reference can be made to relevant baseline information to be found there.

Limitations

- It may feel a little 'piece-meal' if there is no overarching methodological framework

Where to look for resources on specific data gathering methods within OAs

Some examples of specific qualitative data-gathering methods used within Organisational Assessment processes can be found in the Aids Alliance materials for capacity assessment, where participatory exercises are combined with quantitative assessment of capacity levels

- see sessions 2 and 5 of the Networks Capacity Assessment tool: http://www.aidsalliance.org/assets/000/000/663/279-Network-capacity-analysis-workshop-guide_original.pdf?1406293505
- see section 5, Workshop Modules, of the Intermediary Organisations Capacity Analysis tool: http://www.aidsalliance.org/assets/000/000/665/285-Intermediary-capacity-analysis_original.pdf?1406293618

There is a basic, practical guide with tools and tips for assessing organisational capacity and performance which dates from 1999, produced by IDRC in Canada. Much of the content is still valid, and provides basic information on Group Techniques (Tip 1) and also a very basic and simple set of questions for a Culture Audit to be implemented by group discussion (Tool 4 and Exercise 11):
http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/Pages/IDRCBookDetails.aspx?PublicationID=371

Tool 1: Rich Pictures

What is a Rich Picture?

Rich Pictures is a method used to explore, define and understand a complex situation using a diagram. Drawing Rich Pictures was originally devised as part of Soft Systems Methodology[16] but it has now evolved into a recognised 'standalone' method that can be used in many different ways. A Rich Picture uses drawing to visualise the complex systems nature of a situation, open up discussion, generate creativity and insight, and facilitate shared understanding.

Rich Pictures, by using (usually cartoon-type) images rather than words to examine complex organisational issues, involves the use of different neural pathways and encourages holistic systems-thinking and creativity.

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

Rich Pictures are well-suited to examining organisational development issues because even apparently simple organisational issues always involve complex multiple inter-acting relationships. Pictures are often a better medium than words for expressing complexity because they encourage a more dynamic and holistic representation of a situation – in short they can provide a rich amount of information in an easily digestible form.

Rich Pictures have been used in organisational development in many ways, including:

- Examining problem situations and identifying the potential for change
- Identifying key individuals in change processes
- Exploring the nature of organisational culture
- Reflecting on organisational change processes currently underway.

[16] *Checkland, Peter and Jim Scholes (1999) Soft Systems Methodology in Action, Chichester, UK: Wiley*

- Identifying what has changed as a result of an organisational development initiative.

Example: A Collective Rich Picture

In order to help a small team of five internal consultants working in an international telecommunications company review a change process that they were conducting I asked them to prepare a joint Rich Picture of their current situation as part of an After Action Review[17]. After introducing them to the idea of Rich Pictures, they spent over an hour drawing and chatting to each other about the situation in their organisation and their role as change agents. There was a lot of laughter during the process and they produced a picture about 3m by 2m. Each person in turn then explained their contributions to the picture and others asked questions of clarification. I encouraged them to add new parts to the picture so that it captured the richness of their discussion. We then used the After Action Review questions:

- What was supposed to happen during the change process?
- What actually happened?
- Why were there differences?
- What can we learn from this?

During the discussion the team made frequent reference to the Rich Picture and the metaphors they had used to represent elements of the change process that were important to them.

Even though all five were very experienced consultants they were surprised at how much they benefitted from using a visual approach to representing the complex organisational change process in which they were involved. Using a Rich Picture helped them to view the process from multiple perspectives and provided a constant reference point for their discussion.

Process

Rich pictures are usually drawn by individuals but the method can be used effectively with teams/groups to create a collective shared picture of a situation. The pictures should be large - drawn using marker pens on flipchart sized paper – in order to facilitate discussion.

Some hints for drawing rich pictures are:

1. The subject of the picture should be clearly stated before starting the drawing. Often the best way to frame the subject is to use a question, e.g. 'What have been the effects of our recent leadership development programme?'
2. Use all the space available – spread out the parts of the picture but leave some space for developing the picture (a Rich Picture is a dynamic tool and can be revised to incorporate new insights).
3. The person(s) drawing the picture should appear in the picture. This helps to increase ownership of the analysis and deepen the insights.
4. Include key people, teams and structures relevant to the subject.
5. Include other important stakeholders outside the organisation, if relevant.
6. Represent the achievements, issues, problems and concerns of the people in the diagram using speech bubbles and thought bubbles (just like comic books).
7. Use metaphors as a shorthand way of representing complex ideas – for example, animals, methods of transport, etc.
8. Represent types of relationships using arrows, lines and other ways of showing interconnections.
9. Add short notes only if they are needed – keep it visual.
10. Represent the organisational climate or quality of the relationships using symbols e.g. dark clouds, sunshine, lightning flashes, etc.
11. Include influencing factors within the organisation or its wider environment.

[17] *After Action Review is a leadership and knowledge-sharing tool that brings together people in the midst of an activity to discuss successes, unintended outcomes and failures in an open and honest way with a view to learn from experience.*

When the picture or pictures have been drawn allow some time for people to look at each others' drawings. Allow each person some time to explain their drawing (or in the case of a collectively produced drawing their understanding of the jointly produced Rich Picture) then open a discussion to explore the issues that have been raised.

Key considerations

The Rich Picture method involves moving people out of their 'comfort zone' of using the written or spoken word, so some individuals may require encouragement that their artistic ability is not being judged.

When used in evaluations, Rich Pictures are not a 'stand-alone' method but can be combined with other methods to generate significant insights and enable the open discussion of subjects that might otherwise be considered too sensitive.

Rich Pictures can be used to examine change from the individual level to the whole organisation.

Rich Pictures can be combined with narrative methods such as Stories of Change and Most Significant Change to provide powerful descriptions of change as experienced by individuals.

Drawing Rich Pictures can access deeply held views and strongly felt emotions. They can reveal complexity and 'messiness' that has previously been avoided. However, because the focus is on the picture rather than the person, what might otherwise be difficult conversations are usually easier to handle – the drawing becomes a mediator. Nevertheless, Rich Pictures need careful debriefing. Those unfamiliar with the method may find it useful to look at some of the excellent videos produced by the UK Open University on the subject (see the 'Where to look for resources' section)

Drawing rich pictures requires very few resources - little more than the time of those involved. Drawing a rich picture normally takes about 20-30 minutes. Explaining the rich picture can be done in less than 30 minutes and yet can open up new insights.

Advantages and limitations

Advantages

- Enables a holistic understanding of complex organisational situations in a relatively short time.
- Moves people out of their normal 'comfort zone' thereby encouraging new ways of explaining and understanding situations.
- Using different neural pathways encourages creativity and connection and often generates interesting new insights.
- Enables everyone to contribute on a more equal basis (those in positions of leadership may not be the most gifted artists!)
- Provides a quick way of re-engaging with an issue at a later date.

Limitations

- Enables a holistic understanding of complex organisational situations in a relatively short time.
- Moves people out of their normal 'comfort zone' thereby encouraging new ways of explaining and understanding situations.
- Using different neural pathways encourages creativity and connection and often generates interesting new insights.
- Enables everyone to contribute on a more equal basis (those in positions of leadership may not be the most gifted artists!)
- Provides a quick way of re-engaging with an issue at a later date.

Where to look for resources

- There's an excellent series of eight short videos about rich pictures produced by the UK Open University here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZH-NKqKF9A&list=PLhQpDGfX5e7CFc5BQ8rW6SnKrnle-9Kgb but if you want to show the power of the method try this one about using rich pictures at work, first https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzzauPb2O34&list=PLhQpDGfX5e7CFc5BQ8rW6SnKrnle-9Kgb&index=7
- For an interesting video showing examples of the use of rich pictures and other graphical ways of exploring issues see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQwA9krV8EA#t=78
- For a useful introduction to Rich Pictures visit http://betterevaluation.org/evaluation-options/richpictures
- For some excellent descriptions about the use of Rich Pictures see Armson, Rosalind (2011) Growing Wings on the Way: Systems Thinking for Messy Situations, Bridport, England: Triarchy Press
- For those interested in exploring the use of pictures for understanding and solving complex problems see Roam, Dan (2009) Unfolding the Napkin, New York: Portfolio

Tool 2: Impact Grid

What is an Impact Grid?

The Impact Grid facilitates analysis of the relationship between organisational change and OD interventions, and thus deepens understanding about the effectiveness of the OD/change process. It is an exercise which can be carried out during an interim review of progress (formative use) or at the end of a pre-determined change period (summative use).

It uses a visual aid of two axes (Figure 1) to identify degree of change and degree of contribution made to that change by an intervention. Used in a participatory workshop, and drawing on evidence of changes gathered previously, the Impact Grid enables participants to reflect on both the significance of organisational changes *and* the degree and ways in which the OD process contributed to those changes.

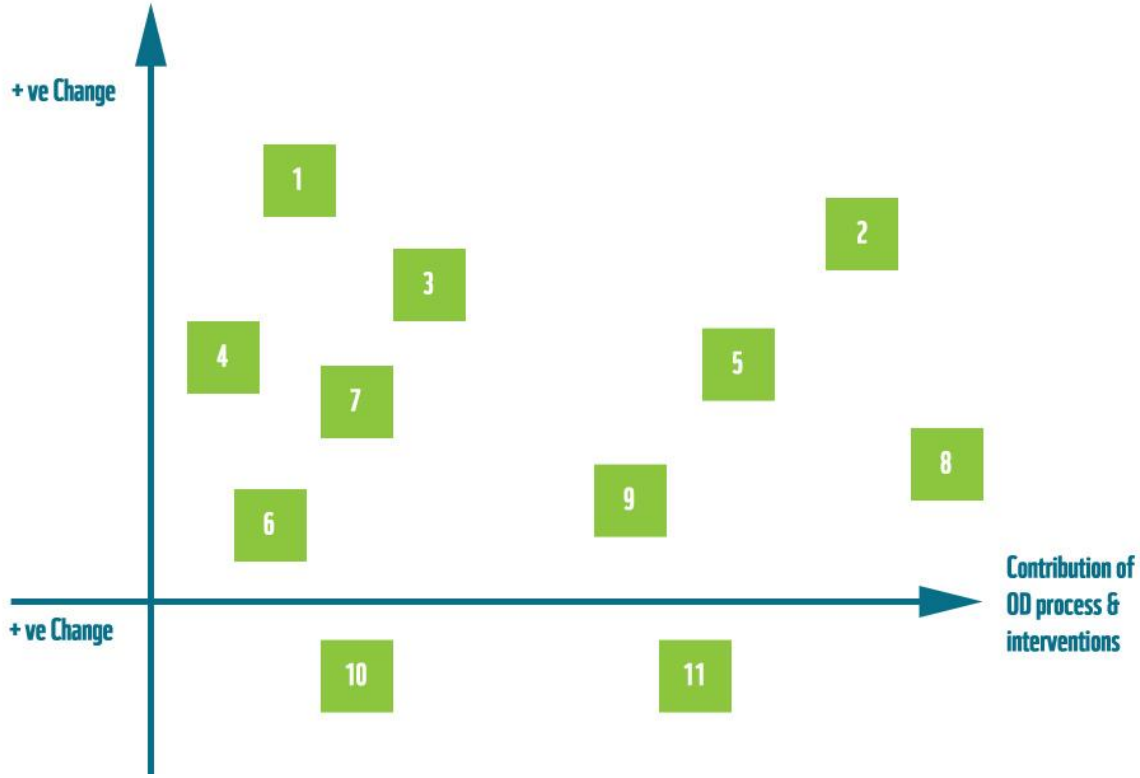

Figure 1: Impact Grid

Figure 1 shows the visual aid used in the exercise. The boxes with the numbers each represent a specific change identified by participants.

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

This exercise is highly relevant to the assessment of organisational change, particularly in facilitating a shared analysis of the significance of identified changes and the degree to which the efforts of the OD process contributed to those changes. It facilitates the identification of changes for different stakeholders both internally within the organisation and externally, as well as changes at any level (individual, team, organisation-wide).

The process of discussion about where to place each identified change is, in itself, a contribution to ongoing organisational development. This is because it builds deeper understanding of the organisation and its development through reflection, discussion and agreement about the significance of change and the usefulness of specific OD interventions.

The exercise also contributes to strengthening understanding about what type of evidence is most useful when undertaking the assessment of organisational change. This will emerge as participants are asked to provide examples of identified changes together with reasons for locating these along the vertical axis to illustrate degree of their significance for the organisation and its performance.

Example: Using the Impact Grid as part of a Case Study

We used the Impact Grid in a one and a half hour exercise which formed part of separate one-day workshops held with NGOs who were participating in a study on the impact of OD support services provided to them by their umbrella organisation. The workshops were held in the early phase of the one-year study, and the organisations had been engaging in different ways and time frames with the support services. During the workshop, in addition to the Grid exercise we used a variety of data gathering methods including timelines, visioning exercises, group discussions and semi-structured interviews.

There were rich discussions about the significance of the organisational changes that the participants identified; aided in each case by the challenge of deciding where on the vertical axis (degree of significance) the change should be located. The discussions were equally fruitful when it came to the location of the change along the horizontal axis (degree of contribution made by the services).

The resulting picture gave a flavour of how the organisational support services had played different types of roles – at times being the key catalyst for change, and at other times providing further reinforcement to changes that were already underway. There was much to reflect upon, and with more time available we could have delved a lot deeper into the factors that influenced those different contributions.

Process

Impact Grid is a participatory exercise which can take approximately 2-3 hours:

Step 1: Identify changes in relation to the situation before the OD process

Small group work identifies changes which are written on cards/post-its, specifying what exactly has changed and for whom. Ideally, evidence sources should be noted down and the robustness identified e.g. If the evidence was from one source, it can be classed as "anecdotal" (A); if two different sources, it can be classed as "some supporting evidence" (SSE); if three or more, it can be considered "reliable evidence" (RE). Once agreed, the appropriate letters are added to the specific cards.

Step 2: Assess the significance of identified changes and the contribution made by the OD process and its interventions.

In plenary, the positioning of each card/post-it is discussed. The simplest use of the vertical axis is to show degree of positive/negative change (as per the visual aid above). A working definition of 'positive/negative' would need to be agreed.

It is also possible to do this exercise by using the vertical axis to show significance of the change in terms of overall impact for the organisation and its performance. Criteria can be established for this e.g. in terms of the OECD criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability.

The horizontal axis is used to illustrate degree of contribution made by the OD process to the identified changes. Placing a card towards the left hand side will reflect an analysis that there was negligent contribution made by the OD process. This should facilitate reflection about where/how the organisation is generating change processes without the aid of structured interventions that formed part of a change plan.

Step 3: Identify stronger and weaker OD interventions:

Once all the cards are placed, it is useful to reflect upon whether any particular OD interventions played a greater contribution than others; and which, if any, failed to make expected changes or even generated negative change.

Step 4: Analyse linkages

It is useful to consider whether there are connections between different changes that are identified, as this can both examine the initial planning logic (especially the thoughts about sequencing change interventions) and simultaneously draw out connections across levels of change (outcome-impact levels). These can be illustrated through the use of arrows between cards and speech bubble post-its to describe the link.

Step 5: Catch the surprising and unexpected

A final step is to ensure that all the important and relevant information is captured on the chart. This can take place in pairs, small groups or plenary.

Advantages and limitations

Advantages

- Is focused on assessing the effectiveness of the OD process
- Facilitates shared reflection and learning.
- Provides a visual aid to prompt discussion and analysis.
- Easy to conduct and does not require technical expertise to organise or contribute.
- Provides a shared group experience that encourages active participation.
- Likely to engage all participants – even those who may normally be silent in discussions.

Limitations

- Does require sufficient time to ensure exploration of differences of opinion or interpretation.
- Requires knowledge/awareness of the different change interventions that took place.

Where to look for resources

- The Danish Youth Council have produced a short set of instructions for conducting an Impact Grid exercise http://duf.dk/uploads/tx_templavoila/Tool_-_Impact_grid_02.pdf
- Impact grids have been used in a variety of M&E contexts, not just OD, and it has been used by a number of INTRAC consultants.

Tool 3: Visioning

What is Visioning?

The most common reference is to the production of a 'Vision Statement' however 'visioning' is a method which can be used in diverse contexts, beyond the production of that specific type of output. The purpose of visioning is to facilitate the articulation of a desired 'end state' e.g. the overall goal of an OD or change process, or the key characteristics of different organizational elements in their ideal state. Thus, visioning is about long-term ambition, positive framing, big picture outcomes. It involves taking intuitive, creative and informed leaps into a possible, aspirational future.

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

In addition to the most common application for the production of an Organisational Vision Statement, the visioning method can be used to identify qualitative indicators for long term aspirations. Visioning can be applied to the organisation as a whole, including its engagement with the external world, or to selected elements. It is particularly useful in describing aspirations for the more 'intangible' elements of organisational life.

In relation to *evaluation* or assessment of progress in organisational change processes, visioning can be used in different ways. If the method was utilised at the early design phase, then the descriptions that emerged at that time serve as references for measuring degree of achievement in a way that complements other planning approaches which include SMART objectives, KPIs, etc.

Visioning can also be introduced during the ongoing OD process. It can build on the existing plans and formulations of change objectives to 'fill out' the picture or further develop the understanding of what change is desired. Used in this way, visioning can draw on experience to date but elevate the thinking towards a further distant moment in time or provide the opportunity to re-think certain aspects of the process.

Example of Visioning in Action:

Context: Case Study research aiming to test the Theory of Change of British/Scottish NGO umbrella bodies providing services and tools to strengthen capacity for effectiveness in its membership. NGOs were selected on basis of criteria of participation for a few years in a number of these services and tools.

Application: In a workshop, the use of a Visioning exercise was to provide an opportunity to check participants' visualisation of the overall picture of their organisation in the future as a result of their engagement with that support.

Process: Used a 3-circle model of organisational capacity drawn on flipchart. Individuals were asked to identify key characteristics of what 'effective' would look like within each dimension. It was stressed that people should write what was uppermost in their minds. These were written on post-its and clustered around appropriate place on the model. Discussion and agreement on emerging descriptions.

In one case, this exercise took place a number of months after a change plan had been produced within the organisation. The participants remarked that the outputs of the Visioning exercise were different, and complemented those of the change plan. The outputs will be used in a second workshop after one year, to assess degree of achievement and level of contribution of the umbrella bodies' services and tools towards those changes.

Process

There is no *one*, prescribed visioning exercise method or tool. A common exercise is the 'guided visualisation' whereby individuals are asked to imagine they are in their organisation in ten or twenty years' time. In a workshop, a series of questions are posed which enable the individual to build up descriptions of what they 'see' or 'experience'. These questions are developed according to the focus of the exercise, but may include:

- Major accomplishments of the organisation – what are you most proud of? (imagine newspaper headlines)
- What were the breakthroughs – things that enabled the organisation achieve a new level of success
- Who are you engaging with? – why are they choosing your organisation?
- What does the inside of the organisation 'feel like' - who is there (key characteristics e.g. age, diversity etc); what are the behaviours or group 'norms' that give expression to the culture inside the organisation?

- How are people working together – what systems, structures, behaviours enable them to do this successfully?
- Leadership – who is leading? What is the style like?
- How are people learning and innovating?

Once individual participants have written their answers (on cards for each question), then some form of sharing, clustering responses and identifying common themes will take place. The descriptions in the themes will be further developed into concrete statements or descriptions which can serve as outcome or impact indicators depending on the subject matter. This may happen after the face-to-face workshop.

Key Considerations

- Participants need to be able to let go of the 'detail' –to stand back and take a broader perspective
- Participants need to be open to new ways of looking at current reality
- Individual participants will need to be willing to tap into their imagination and possibly even their emotions.
- Requires enough time to follow through to getting outputs that can be worked into statements or indicators (minimum of 3 hours).

Advantages and limitations

Advantages

- Motivational and energizing
- Can facilitate the expression of the 'essence' of what a change process is aiming for.
- As a group process, enables the development of a shared picture of desired change outcomes.
- Can facilitate the description of the more 'intangible' or 'soft' elements of organisational capacity.
- Can be used to reframe or reassert desired outcomes during the OD process.

Limitations

- May not 'fit' with WWF culture or individual 'comfort levels'
- Needs facilitation
- Requires follow-up from the workshop in order to craft appropriate outputs.
- If used in assessing progress, there may be a bias towards descriptions that reflect current change objectives.

Where to look for resources

- A general description of visioning can be found at http://www.kstoolkit.org/Envisioning+the+Future

TOOL 4: TIMELINES

What is a timeline?

A Timeline (sometimes called 'River of Life') is a graphical representation of a specified period in the history of a team, organisation, project or change initiative. It normally involves writing and drawing on a large banner fixed to a wall. Timelines usually include key events, achievements, decisions, changes (including the arrival and departure of staff), external influences and both intended and unintended outcomes.

The purpose of the Timeline is to develop a shared understanding of a specified time-limited period in an organisation's history. By narrowing the scope of the timeline it can also be used to examine a specific programme or activity.

What makes a Timeline exercise particularly powerful is that it is a shared group experience where all participants, no matter how new to the organisation (or whatever is chosen as the focus of the timeline), can contribute. For facilitators and for participants new to an organisation it can be a very valuable (and relatively quick) way of building an understanding of an organisational change or development process from the perspective of the people in the organisation who were involved in or affected by it. For all participants it can help to build a more rich understanding of the organisational change.

Relevance to organisational development and organisational change

Organisational development/change processes may take place over a lengthy time period. They can also be complex – involving many activities and people. During the course of an organisational development/change process individuals may leave or join the organisation. For recently joined individuals the history of a change process may not be clear. Even for those who have been involved since the beginning it is easy to be unaware of (or even forget) some of the important elements. Without a shared picture of the OD process from its origins to the present day it can be difficult to place recent changes in context.

A Timeline is a very effective way of focusing the attention of those involved in or affected by an organisational development process at the beginning of a review or evaluation. It can be used to develop a shared understanding of the OD process to date and creates a shared reference point for subsequent discussions.

Example: Using a Timeline to begin a review

At the start of a workshop to review the Knowledge Management Unit of a large Dutch INGO which had gone through a number of significant changes I (as an external reviewer) asked the small team of five to create a shared timeline of the Unit's history, concentrating more on the most recent year. I asked the team to include key team events, achievements, staff arrivals and departures, events and changes external to the team, decisions, and any other significant changes. This process generated a lot of energy and for the two staff members who had recently joined the Unit the exercise filled in a number of gaps in their understanding of how the Unit had evolved over time. After a 20 minute discussion to clarify items on the timeline, change the timings of some events and relive some amusing stories the team was ready to engage with more in-depth discussions as part of the review process. We referred back to the timeline (which remained on the wall throughout the workshop) on a number of occasions.

Process

Set up the timeline by fixing to a wall a length of lining paper (or wallpaper) or stick flipchart sheets together to make a poster about 1 metre high by about 4 metres long. The poster can be longer if you are covering a long period of time or there are lots of participants. Mark a horizontal line from one end of the paper to the other about halfway down the paper. Decide on the length of period you want to cover in the timeline (this is usually determined by the timing of the change process under consideration). Mark the years and/or months along the line. It can be useful to allow more space for more recent years (as it is likely that people have more to say about the organisation's recent history).

Brief participants about the purpose and focus of the timeline and what could be included e.g. key events, achievements, decisions, changes (including the arrival and departure of staff), external influences and both intended and unintended outcomes related to the subject.

Provide each participant with a marker pen and ask them to add their contributions and to talk to each other as they do so. The idea is to get a 'buzz' of interest around the timeline. Allow about 20 minutes for the participants to write their comments on the timeline.

Open up a discussion to clarify comments, check the accuracy of the timings, discuss the sequence of events and draw out any interesting comments, encourage questions of clarification and the sharing of insights or surprises. One or two participants can be asked to make any necessary changes to the timeline.

Key considerations

A Timeline is a tool and is not adequate as a 'stand-alone' evaluation method. Although Timelines must be used in conjunction with evaluation methods, they provide a powerful way of beginning the planning process for an evaluation or launching an evaluation process.

For a timeline exercise to be most effective requires high levels of participant involvement. This can be encouraged by ensuring clarity about the purpose of the timeline exercise; about the focus of the timeline (e.g. a particular organisational change process) and about the period covered. An effective timeline exercise also requires careful selection of participants who are familiar with the focus of the timeline (ideally including some participants who know about the early stages of the time period covered).

Conducting a timeline exercise is relatively inexpensive. The main costs involved are the time of the participants and (perhaps) a facilitator. The exercise itself involves two main stages – creating the timeline (which takes about 30 minutes) and analysing the timeline (which can normally be done in less than an hour).

Advantages and limitations

Advantages

- Provides a shared understanding of a period in the life of an organisation, project, or a particular organisational development/change initiative.
- Easy to conduct and does not require technical expertise to organise or contribute.
- Provides a shared group experience that encourages active participation.
- Likely to engage all participants – even those who may normally be silent in discussions.
- Sets the scene for review/evaluation.
- Provides a graphical reminder/backdrop to an evaluation workshop.

Limitations

- Can be time-consuming if there are differences of opinion or interpretation that need to be discussed.

Where to look for resources

- For a general introduction to the uses of timelines (or River of Life diagrams as they are sometimes called) with some nice photographs see http://www.kstoolkit.org/River+of+Life
- Timelines can also be used with virtual teams! See http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline_2

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction to qualitative data analysis

Regardless of which methods or tools are used, substantial quantities of material will be generated (that material may be audio recordings, text documents, video footage and perhaps even photos or drawings).

A remarkable gap in the literature which we examined on qualitative methods in M&E is that of the physical management and analysis of the data generated. This is by no means specific to the M&E of OD – a DFID-commissioned review of qualitative data analysis in evaluation commented that the analysis of qualitative data is especially weak, wasn't always reported, and even where it was analysed, did not use state-of-the-art designs and methods[18]

If qualitative data are to be used for learning and accountability, we must be able to place some trust in the quality of those data. A critical part of maintaining quality is a transparent and systematic analysis process.

High quality qualitative M&E should be defensible in design, rigorous in conduct, and should be credible[19]. A minimum requirement for high quality qualitative data analysis is that the data would be transcribed verbatim and carefully.

Turning qualitative data into knowledge involves processes of analysis *and* synthesis. Some of the activities involved are illustrated in Figure1.

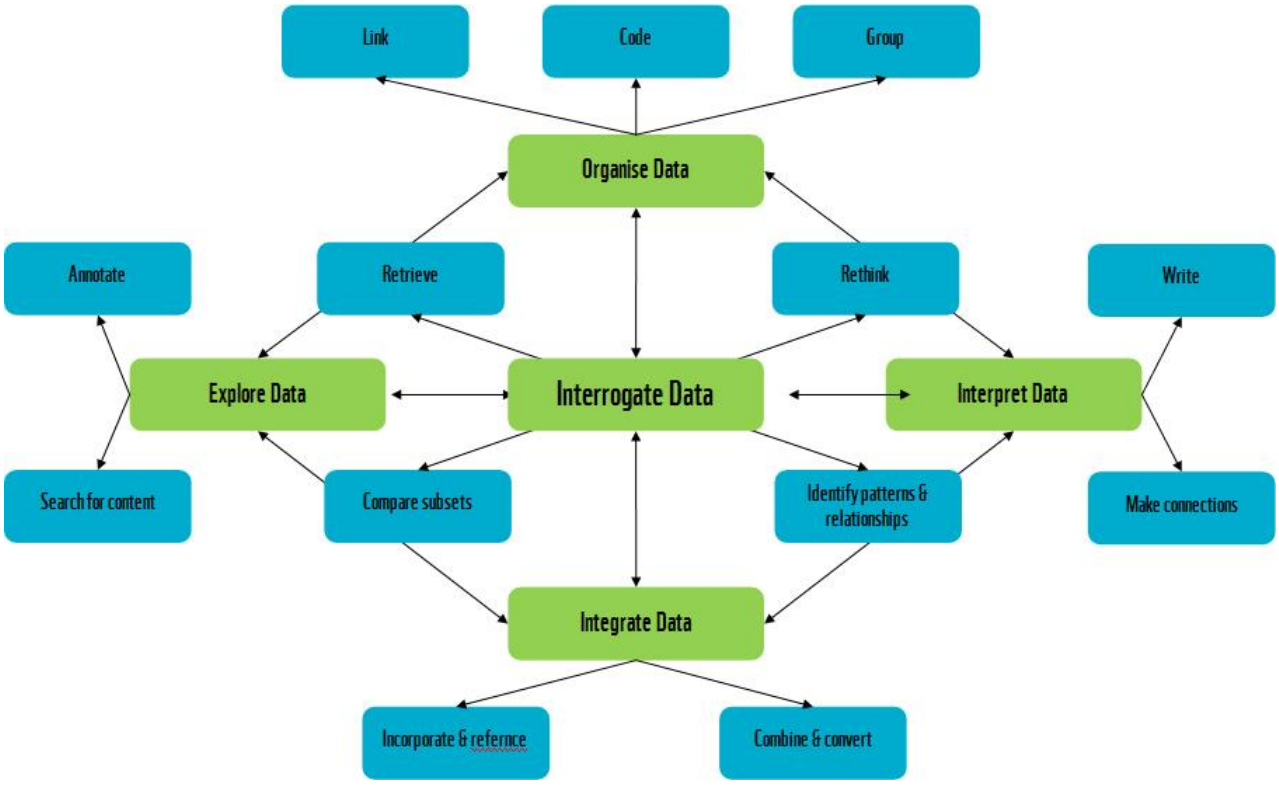

Figure 1: Processes involved in analysis of qualitative data (from C. Silva, CAQDAS Networking Project, University of Surrey)

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[18] *Stern, E., Stame, N., Mayne, J., Forss, K., Davies, R. and Befani, B. (2012). Broadening the range of designs and methods for impact evaluation: Report of a study commissioned by DFID.* *http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/189575/Default.aspx*

[19] *Spencer, L, Ritchie, J., Lewis, J. and Dillon, L. (2003). Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence. UK Government Chief Social Researcher's Office/National Centre for Social Research.* *http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/a_quality_framework_tcm6-38740.pdf*

Making a commitment to high quality qualitative data analysis involves considering the following issues:

Gathering and storage Will the accounts be recorded audio, handwritten, free prose or completed templates? Will they be text or visual (e.g. photos, videos). How will they be compiled, and by whom?

Who will receive them and how will they be stored? E.g. Will they be gathered and stored synchronously (e.g. as free text within online survey software), sent appended to emails, or uploaded by local staff to a central database?

Analysis Regardless of whether the analysis is conducted manually (e.g. with a highlighter pen or manually cutting and pasting into e.g. excel or a mindmap), or using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to *mechanise* (but not automate) the analysis, it is still necessary to decide *what* to analyse. This depends very much on the questions under investigation. 'Units of analysis' might include:

- Behaviours, specific acts
- Events – once off or regular.
- Activities – these are of a longer duration, and involve other people within a particular setting
- Strategies, practice or tactics
- States – general conditions experienced by people or found in organisations
- Meanings –including concepts, significance and the use of symbols and metaphors – all critical to understanding organisational culture.
- Relationships or interactions
- Conditions or constraints
- Consequences
- Settings – the entire context of the events under study

The most common "unit of analysis" is *themes*, which involves taking what is said at face value, and allocating it to categories which are relevant to the issue under examination.

Steps in qualitative data analysis

The steps in a systematic analysis involve:

- Tagging the text with the codes (e.g. themes)
- Summarising the material in relation to each theme
- Synthesising – draw out conclusions based on the themes identified.

The point is not to count the number of instances of the theme! There are much simpler and more appropriate methods if what you are really looking for is quantitative data. It is at this stage that it is tempting to attach some sort of weighting or strength to issues. However, the point of gathering stories is to create 'thick description' – rich narratives of the breadth and depth of the topic under investigation. To draw conclusions about people's priorities, or the strength of their opinions (beyond 'positive' and 'negative'), quantitative methods are more useful. The degree to which these analysis steps are undertaken by a single analyst, a team, or indeed the evaluation participants themselves can vary. Some (and only some) of the options available are illustrated in Figure 2.

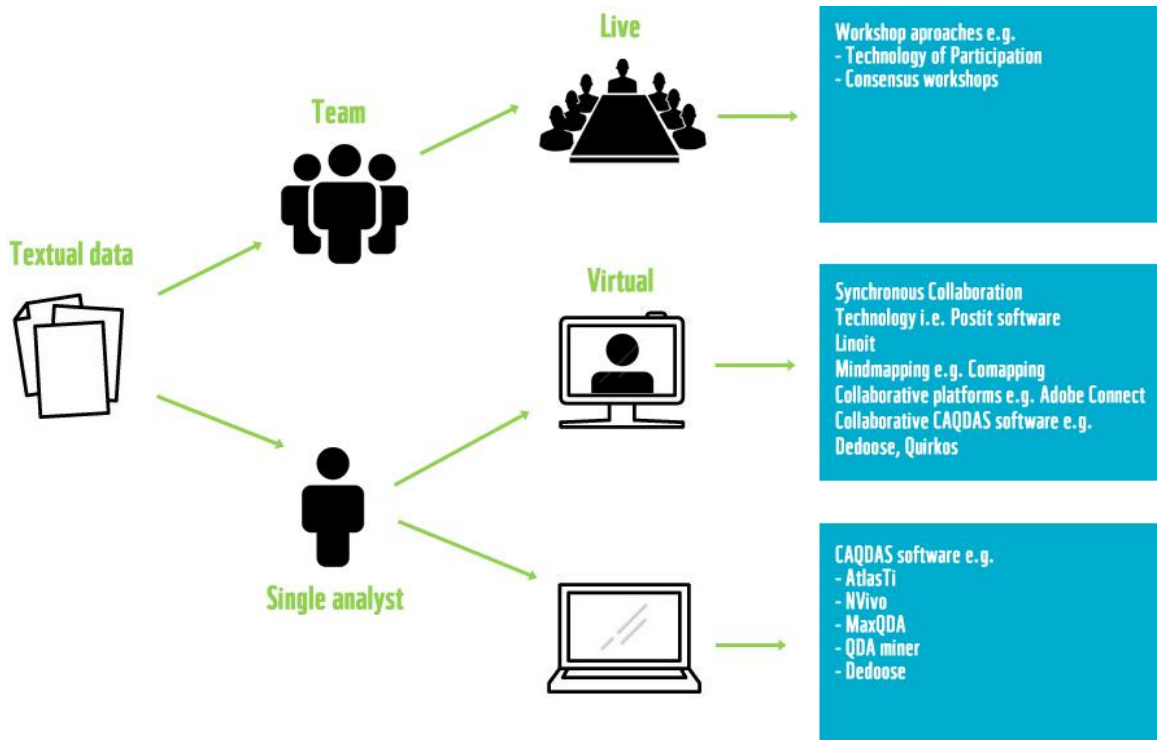

Figure 2: Choosing analysis platforms/methods

For example, in a workshop setting, individuals can examine stories. A consensus workshop can then be held to elicit and cluster common themes. A similar process could be conducted virtually (and therefore from remote locations) using collaborative mind-mapping or *collaborative* qualitative data analysis software such as Dedoose[20] or Quirkos[21]. Another way of involving participants in the actual coding of the stories is to have individuals enter their micro stories into software such as Sensemaker, coding it at the same time, with an analyst generating charts and identifying patterns in the data.

Where a single analyst or a team of analysts are coding the qualitative data themselves, it is preferably to use dedicated CAQDAS software to do this. (Some analysts cut and paste text into Excel and code there, but this is time consuming, and is also very fiddly if you wish to attach multiple codes to a single piece of text).

Resources needed

It is unlikely that an organisation would invest in the capital and training costs of qualitative data analysis unless this was also an element in the wider M&E of programmes within an organisation.

There are two separate cost issues in conducting qualitative research: operational costs and capital costs. Operational costs refers to costs such as data collection time (interviewing/facilitation), transcription costs, and the time required to do proper analysis).

[20] *www.dedoose.com*

[21] *www.quirkos.com*

Operational costs

Table 1 describes the operational costs of generating and analysing one interview. A general point to bear in mind is that the generation of qualitative data is expensive in terms of time, and therefore it is imperative that an investment is made in analysing it to generate real insight and value from the material gathered. Transcription is an expensive component, but without transcription, the interview is likely to be compromised by the interviewer trying to make contemporaneous notes, data quality is much poorer, and the analysis is actually more difficult, as the analyst is trying to make sense of impoverished notes rather than verbatim narratives. Transcription also provides the opportunity to improve on interviewing technique, and it reduces the possibility that narratives are inaccurately summarised by the interviewer. Costs can be reduced by gathering data via written narratives.

The assumptions underpinning Table 1 are as follows:

1. Staff (or consultant) time is expensive. Elements of the process may be contracted out or delegated in order to free up the analyst to concentrate their effort on the analysis. With a carefully worked up coding scheme, analysis can also be delegated. Therefore the costing is based on the cost of contracting out or delegating as much of the process as possible to support staff or external agencies at an estimated £15 per hour.
2. Interviews require a skilled interviewer, ideally with some knowledge of the area under investigation. Therefore, it is likely to be a false economy to delegate this to administrative support staff. It can, of course, be contracted out, but to a freelance interviewer rather than to e.g. a temping agency. However, there is also an argument for conducting peer interviewing, where a slight compromise in the quality of information obtained is compensated for by the opportunity to interact with and learn from a peer
3. Transcription requires a foot pedal and software (free) in order to slow the interview pace down to typing speed. Fast and reasonably high quality transcriptions can be obtained from dedicated transcription companies, e.g. www.speechtotext.com
4. Analysis can take as little as 20 minutes per 1 hour of interview, but working up the coding scheme, analysing the first few interviews, and refining the coding scheme, can take several hours.

Item	Time (mins)	Cost[1]
Recruitment and setup costs	30	7.50
Interview (6k words)	60	75[2]
Transcription[3]	180	45
Analysis	60[4] (using software)	15
		£132.50

Table 1: Costs of the stages of qualitative data collection and analysis of one interview

Capital costs

Capital costs refers to investment in the infrastructure required to do high quality qualitative research, including recording equipment (telephone microphone, recorder (though many investigators now use mobile phones or laptops to record), a foot pedal for transcription and CAQDAS (computer assisted qualitative data analysis software). Dedicated software is often is a hidden cost in quantitative research, because MS Excel comes as standard on desktops, and has sophisticated enough statistical capabilities that it is sufficient for most M&E purposes). *Table 2* illustrates the costs for some of the best known software packages.

Software	Particular Features	Cost (£)
QDA miner (+ *unlimited free version with reduced functionality)*	Timeline	1,321
MaxQDA		890
HyperResearch	Basic but adequate; can incorporate pictures and video	601
Atlas.Ti	Can integrate audio with text; integrate Google Earth locations	1,380
Transana* (open source): single user	Particularly specialised for video	260
Transana (multi user per project)	Collaborative coding	478
NVivo	Current market leader	1,295
Dedoose	Cloud based, monthly	£6
Quirkos	Unusual visual interface	£320

Table 2: Cost of CAQDAS software

Most CAQDAS software is charged via a one off licence fee, with the costs of individual licences varying from £320 to £1,300 – in this respect, the costs are comparable to statistical software. However, *Dedoose* is the exception to this, with a charging structure based on a monthly fee (£6 per user).

The variation in costs is partly determined by whether the software can deal with audio, video and image files as well as text files, the extent to which quantitative data can be integrated, the user friendliness of the interface, and the flexibility and sophistication of the analyses supported.

Where to look for resources

- Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis, J. and Dillon, L. (2003). Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence. UK Cabinet Office Strategy Unit http://www.policyhub.gov.uk/docs/qqe_rep.pdf
- Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. (2nd edition). London: Sage
- Choosing CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software) - http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sociology/research/researchcentres/caqdas/support/choosing/index.htm
- QDA Miner Lite (free) - http://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/freeware. Cut down version of full QDA Miner (OMITS: advanced text retrieval tools (query-by-example, section retrieval, clustered coding, etc.), most of the analysis features (clustering, multidimensional scaling, crosstab, etc.) and several advanced code management features). However, retains all the essential features for importing, coding, annotating documents and images and for retrieving coded segments.

COMPARING QUALITATIVE METHODS AND TOOLS – A DECISION MAKING MATRIX

Table 1 summarises our assessment of the usefulness of all the methods and tools we examined in detail, using criteria that we believe will be of particular relevance to WWF.

Criteria for usefulness: In each 1 is poor and 5 is good	Stories of Change	Most Significant Change	Outcome Mapping	Appreciative Inquiry (full)	Appreciative Inquiry (part)	Rich pictures	Impact Grid	Timelines	Visioning	Sensemaker®
1. Impact as well as outcomes - How effectively does the method contribute to assessing impact (in terms of achievement of conservation goals) as well as outcomes (in terms of organisational change)?	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	1	4	4
2. Flexibility - How good is the method at examining complex organisational change without clear cause-effect relationships?	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	2	5
3. How good is the method at assessing change in the absence of qualitative indicators in the change plan	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	1	5	5
4. Unintended change - How effective is the method at identifying unintended changes?	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	3	1	2
5. How well does the method promote critical reflection?	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	3
6. Adaptive management - How well does the method contribute to strengthening adaptive management?	3	4	5	5	5	3	4	1	2	3
7. Special technical skills and knowledge required - How easy is the method to use without specialist skills and knowledge?	4	2	4	2	3	5	5	5	4	1
8. Complementarity – How easy is it to combine the method with other methods?	5	4	3	3	5	5	5	5	4	1
9. Inclusiveness - How easy is it for anyone to contribute using the method?	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4
10. Time required - How quick is the method in terms of both data-gathering and analysis? (1 is very time consuming, 5 is low use of time)	4	2	1	1	4	5	4	5	5	4

SOME FINAL REFLECTIONS ON THE USE OF QUALITATIVE METHODS

Complementarity of qualitative methods

Complementarity refers to how easy it is to combine a qualitative method with other qualitative methods. We believe that in practice, the methods we examine in this study – or at least aspects of them – can be readily combined to investigate and assess OD interventions. Moreover, all of the *tools* can be used to support and enhance almost all of the methods. However, as mentioned in the section on triangulation, it is important to be clear at what stage it is best to combine methods. Combining data from different methods at the *analysis* stage of an evaluation is different to designing an evaluation process that uses mixed methods where the combination occurs at the *interpretation* stage. For example, one method which is incompatible with other qualitative methods at the *analysis* stage is Sensemaker. This is because the coding of the data is done by participants themselves immediately after they have generated a micro story, so it is not possible to introduce data derived from other methods directly into the analysis.

Virtual and face to face use of qualitative methods in M&E

In wider discussions of monitoring and evaluation, there is often an assumption that qualitative methods can only be implemented 'live', in face to face and small group settings. However, in the context of OD, where those involved are usually office based in locations with access to the internet, it is possible to make much more use of virtual/on-line ways of working than might be initially thought possible (bandwidth permitting). For example, interviews and focus groups can be conducted using Skype; Rich Pictures can be shared online and even Timelines can be created as an online group activity using specialist online websites. In fact, almost all of the methods and tools we have examined in this document can, with some forward planning and imagination, be used in a virtual as well as face-to-face setting. However, our general advice would be that wherever possible, qualitative methods should be used face to face, as this has the added benefits of strengthening relationships and creating more opportunities for informal as well as formal learning and sharing.

Resource considerations

It is difficult to compare qualitative with quantitative approaches in terms of resource requirements. Some qualitative methods are heavily frontloaded with workshop time (AI and outcome mapping in particular) which, though it could be seen as equivalent to design time for surveys and other quantitative tools, is costly because it requires expert facilitation, and also requires substantial levels of staff participation.

In general, the cost of qualitative methods is the somewhat hidden cost of stakeholder time in participating: quantitative M&E is often delegated to people in particular roles, the design and planning is often conducted by a smaller team, and quantitative tools are faster for participants to complete. Participation, on the other hand, is slow and costly.

Assuming that training, M&E design and learning costs are equivalent across qualitative and quantitative methods, then the main point of differentiation is the cost of data collection and analysis. However, this is difficult to calculate, because of the different criteria determining sample size: the sample for a statistically valid quantitative sample should be calculated on the basis of a 'power calculation'[22] whereas the sample size for a qualitative sample is determined by 'saturation' – you stop collecting new qualitative material when you are no longer revealing any new themes. These are idealised rules for sampling: where there is a small or finite number of stakeholders, or where it is desirable that everyone has a voice, it is often the case that everyone is "sampled".

[22] http://betterevaluation.org/resource/guide/sample_size_and_power_calculations

About the Authors

About Framework

Framework is a collective of independent consultants dedicated to strengthening organisations, networks, and social movements working for positive social change. Our aim is to help develop healthy civil society organisations in the UK and internationally. We do this by drawing on our 30-year history working worldwide with development, humanitarian and environmental organisations, applying our specialist knowledge of organisational development and management, and upholding our values of creativity, integrity, and connection. Framework has worked closely with WWF UK and some of its network partners on initiatives concerning partnership, organisational assessment, organisational learning and organisational development for over a decade. You can find out more at www.framework.org.uk

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COMPENDIUM OF QUALITATIVE METHODS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING OD

To accompany "Exploring qualitative approaches to assessing change in Organisational Development Programmes - A 'think piece' commissioned by WWF UK"

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Why we are here
To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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