Analysis, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Contributions to Social Change

Meaningfully measuring international solidarity and decentralized cooperation

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Preface

How can we stimulate, support, and guide the dynamics of social transformation? We moderns have been reflecting on this question ever since our societies broke off with the structures of the *Ancien Régime,* which were supposed to have eternally embodied the essence of social cohesion. Hence, ever since we have been confronted with the "problem" of change.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *Contribution to the Rectification of the Public's Judgment of the French Revolution* (1793) describes the enigma of social cohesion that had become obscure in the eyes of its own protagonists, as well as the quest for the privileged ("revolutionary") moment when the structures that shape our world are assumed to establish themselves in a fleeting self-transparency. Since that first interpretation of what saw itself as a radical-minded upheaval, at least three visions of "societal" or "social change" have come into conflict.

For some (those who are conscious or unconscious Raymond Boudon epigones, for example), "change" always boils down more or less to the reform of individual practices. In this case, the "social" nature of the desired transformations loses its meaning. For others, among whom the distant heirs of Fichte, a political project can, alone and *ex nihilo,* establish the collective that undertakes it. The question of material and symbolic resources capable of fueling the transformation of structures, references, and standards, etc., is thus disposed of. Finally, a third metaphysical aspect of "social change", perhaps closer to Pierre Bourdieu, on the contrary asserts that if there is change, it breaks free of the strategies of actors who are prisoners of their *habitus*…

The only way to disengage from such a metaphysical debate is to evaluate *in situ* the projects and achievements that have concretely coincided with social transformations. The goal of this publication is in fact to catalyze thought on such an evaluation undertaking, within the specific context of aid for "development"—another concept specific to the modern vocabulary of "change".

This publication presents the proceedings of the seminar "Analysis, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Contributions to Social Change", which was held by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and F3E (Evaluate, Exchange, Elucidate), on November 5, 2014, in Paris.

An initial AFD-F3E joint seminar initiative brought us together in 2012 for exchanges on how evaluation practices were changing in the context of the shift in the agenda from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness. That seminar enabled us to highlight evaluation's contribution to learning, dialogue, and cohesion among development actors. Bolstered by the success of that initial gathering, donors, NGOs, researchers, local authorities, and partners from the South wished to repeat the collective exercise in 2014, this time in order to question the

capacity of evaluation to assess the social change we seek to accomplish collectively through our interventions. Don't all development actors strive to support and contribute to the change desired by their partners in the field? Wanting to demonstrate the results and impact of these actions is an intention that is widely shared. But what kind of social change are we talking about? Who defines it and implements it? Does evaluation as we practice it have the capacity to assess social change? What changes in our conceptions and modes of intervention are required for an evaluation that can monitor and analyze the dynamics of change at work?

These questions, as might be expected, reveal the extent to which the founding debates mentioned above persist in our thinking. (For example, the methods of impact evaluation built upon randomized controlled trials pertain to the individualism that, as recalled above, is unsuitable for explaining social relationships as such.) But here these debates are repositioned in the empirical field, where social reality—which ultimately determines the outcome of our discussions—can be given a voice.

As part of the International Year of Evaluation 2015, we are especially happy to make the richness of this seminar, *via* the publication of its proceedings in French and in English, available to a broader public.

We thank F3E for having suggested that AFD initiate discussions on these issues and for having included international evaluation practitioners. We are especially grateful to all the speakers for the quality of their talks and the diversity of views they were able to share, and to all the moderators for their participation. Special thanks finally to Emilie Aberlen, Charlotte Boisteau, and Florent Bédécarrats for having organized this seminar; Valérie Huguenin, Bertrand Loiseau, and Laurent Delcayrou for their support; and Guillaume de Saint Phalle, Charles Sellen, Annie Lopez-Portzert, and Françoise Tiffoin for publishing the proceedings.

Gaël Giraud
Chief Economist
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Summary

Emilie Aberlen, Florent Bédécarrats,
Charlotte Boisteau

After the first edition of this seminar in 2013, which was dedicated to the development of evaluation practices, AFD and F3E co-organized a second edition, which was held in Paris on November 5, 2014. The subject was the way in which social change is understood by various actors in the fields of international development and its evaluation. What follows is an overview of the ideas expressed in the forum.

Introduction

That social change cannot be imposed any more than it can be pre-programmed or controlled is a unanimously accepted opinion among the participants of the seminar. Yet, the main premise of AFD and F3E, in addition to development institutions at large, is to encourage and accompany such processes of change. Each of these organizations feels the need to structure the development initiatives that they support, to communicate and discuss the content of such programs, and to better organize collective efforts. Issues of transparency and of accountability oblige them to monitor their contributions in ever-shorter periods of time, long before such changes can take place.

Central to this debate is the question: As contributors to social change, how shall we comprehend and appreciate it without either succumbing to narrowly technical or normative conceptions, or falling prey to complete relativism?

Three round-table exchanges on this subject aimed to: (i) understand the significance and the main issues of social change, (ii) take stock of the types of methods that are used to evaluate contributions to social change, and (iii) gauge the extent to which evaluation can be a driver of change.

The significance and the implications of social change

Putting forth a research-oriented perspective, Philippe Lavigne Delville warns against using the word "change", as it is often used to express outlooks that can be described as unequivocal and sequential. In the social sciences the term "social dynamics" is preferred, as it better reflects their often contradictory, non-linear, and complex character. Social scientists can usually only

understand these processes in a fragmented way, by observing the interactions between endogenous processes of change and the external interventions that attempt to orient them.

Such is the case in socio-anthropology, where the stakeholder interplay that development projects give rise to is analyzed. The findings of these studies usually indicate that interventions do not have the impact they initially intended.

Conceived of in a normative way, development initiatives are then negotiated and reinterpreted through a range of analytical grids and *via* local contexts and dynamics that end up transforming them significantly. The main issue for development practitioners is to understand the situation in which they seek to intervene, so as to predict the reactions and reinterpretations that their projects may bring about—all the while providing not only the financial and technical, but also the political and symbolic resources to carry them through.

In such a context, evaluation should focus less on assessing the ability of the development practitioners to effect the desired changes, and more on their ability to strategically understand the interactions that arise throughout the course of the project. With such a goal in mind, certain organizations have devised monitoring procedures that allow real-time analysis of how interactions are formed, and make it therefore possible to adapt their actions accordingly.

Doug Reeler is the co-organizer of The Barefoot Guide Connection, a community of social change practitioners that is at once local and global. They produce guides that are *"written by people who do not usually write, for people who do not usually read"*. His work shows that traditional tools of planning and evaluation such as logical framework approaches only work when change is happening—what he refers to as "projectable change". When processes of change are emerging over time, both consciously and (more often) unconsciously, it is better to resort to approaches of learning and knowledge capitalization. Finally, when change processes have come to a halt, more intensive work is called for, which he refers to as "transformative change". Attempts to specifically address the underlying reasons for the blockage (such as fear, hate, doubt, and the like) are made in order to create the conditions for change.

Learning must in every case be a driver for evaluative approaches to change. That is why failure is intrinsically part of the attitude he recommends: mistakes, when not ignored, can often give rise to the most important lessons. Theory comes afterwards. However, we should be wary of tools and methods: these could lead to forcing the agenda of donors and development professionals on local communities, whereas only the opposite can enable real social change.

Michael Narberhaus shares a systemic vision of social change that primarily European civil society practitioners, activists, and organizations, have endeavored to bring about. Reporting on observations of the profoundly unsustainable nature of the global capitalist model of growth, he condemns the superficial, narrow, and fragmented state of the movements that attempt to prevent the impending disaster. Civil society organizations have shown themselves to be incapable of truly opposing such a model, because their professionalization makes them economically dependent, at the same time as it leads them to restrict and reframe the definition of their roles as activists or promoters of development. They work without overall coordination or strategy, and do not manage to create a more cross-cutting and sustainable model of development.

Wriggling out of this straightjacket and managing to truly make a transition would require working on both the political and the cultural scales, and constructing niches likely to catalyze the creation

of alternative systems that are sufficiently original, successful, and resilient. Alternatives to the current modes of production and consumption (and to the culture that comes along with them) indeed exist, but they need more time to ripen in order to overtake the dominant system. This political interpretation is a challenge to the narrowness of the field of analysis and evaluation that is promoted by donors. It questions the ability of evaluation to take stock (within its perimeters) of the interactions between the different scales, in addition to the structural roots of change.

The presentations in this seminar have fueled a wealth of exchanges that can be grouped into three lines of thought.

First, several participants have expressed their fear that local populations have not been consulted enough in the process of design and evaluation of actions to promote social change. It is also important to consider a diverse range of viewpoints and to move away from the idea of transferring aid from the North to the South. The experiences of community groups in South Africa described by Doug Reeler are particularly pertinent in this regard. Several participants have underlined the importance of not taking on an angelic posture when analyzing the power plays between actors involved in development processes, as troubling the dominant mode of functioning can sometimes result in violent confrontations of ideas, views, and vested interests. Development projects can thus alter—or perpetuate—power imbalances or institutional blockages. Wanting to both promote and evaluate social change entails understanding the political nature of such interventions.

Even if everyone agrees that the standard tools of planning, monitoring, and evaluation of social changes are insufficient, it is nonetheless difficult to orchestrate collective actions without the help of shared methods. The exchanges show that, above and beyond the tools themselves, it is the way in which they are used that matters. When intelligently adapted to facilitate dialogue and collective reflection, as opposed to being used rigidly as a form of bureaucratic control, they can provide points of reference for action, negotiation, and shared learning among actors of development.

Methodological innovation: Shifting focus to evaluate the contribution of social change interventions

Regardless of whether evaluation takes place in local communities, NGOs, or central administrations, it is often criticized. It is nonetheless essential for the creation of lasting and useful programs in societies, particularly when confronted with political changes or projects of short duration. It is interesting to note that even though the paradigms regarding international solidarity interventions have changed in an attempt to go beyond the idea of directly doing things for people, a substitution approach remains prevalent in the domain of evaluation.

Elisabeth Hofmann puts forth an analysis of the issues and practices in evaluations of gender-aware projects. She reminds us that development projects do not all function with a preconceived idea of the transformations that they seek to bring about, and/or that they can unknowingly give rise to. Nevertheless, most development interventions have both direct and indirect effects on

gender relations, because of the manner in which their beneficiaries are chosen, the processes of decision-making that are set up, and the balances of power that are reworked. When interventions are "gender-blind", they run the risk of perpetuating inequality. When evaluations are "gender-aware", they often focus on issues of access (assets, incomes, and the like), and on knowledge (adequate education and training, and whether or not these have been understood).

An empowerment-based approach involves aspects more difficult to evaluate: willingness (which implies self-confidence, social representation, and fears of stigmatization), and power (which requires taking into account institutions, governance, and access to resources and decision-making processes). Such approaches must employ qualitative methodologies that include in-depth interviews and group discussions in an attempt to compare the perceptions of the various actors involved.

Moctar Diallo introduces the perspective of a cooperative multi-stakeholder program that fits within a process of sociopolitical transformation. This program attempted to establish a mode of participative and transparent governance within a context of institutional collapse due to blatant corruption and endemic violence. Nonetheless, there was still a certain gap between the goals (democracy, human rights, and participation) and the actions implemented (capacity building, advocacy, and awareness-raising campaigns).

Several tools were called upon: a logical framework focused on actions (which sought more to satisfy the donor than the civil society organizations); a monitoring and evaluation tool that asked participants to make observations of their activities, thereby inciting debate and further adjustments to the project; and a final evaluation designed in a decentralized and not very participative manner, which ended up highlighting the significant gap between civil society actors' expectations from the program and what measures were actually implemented. Certain parts of the project, for example those that sought to interest citizens in the raising and usage of tax resources, nonetheless brought about significant changes that went far beyond the scope that was initially intended. What is interesting, and what justifies the entire initiative is this "second life" of the project—and yet the tools at hand have not enabled us to take stock of this unexpectedly rich level of complexity.

This type of experience highlights the need for links between the various stages of intervention: planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Like projects, the relevance of evaluations nonetheless depends on the participation of the entire range of actors. Such approaches are fundamentally political and conflictual, because civil society does not speak with one single voice, and yet this type of intervention seeks to build common positions.

Bruno de Reviers provides a progress report on the action research agenda run by F3E, which aims to better understand the challenges of capacity building and change. Several methods have been drawn upon, such as Outcome Mapping and the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique. Above and beyond these tools, however, it is the process that brings individual actors to think together during the key phases of the project. Initially, it is about setting common goals, and then it is about agreeing on an actual course of action. Awareness of the difficulty of using tools for both learning and accountability at the same time is paramount. In order to promote social change, actors as well as processes must be considered. Linear perspectives are to be avoided in an effort to understand complex mechanisms and unexpected factors, and to privilege

approaches that are less normative than the indicators (for example, by widening the range of indicators or so-called progress markers), which are more heterogeneous and qualitative.

The discussion period made it possible to touch on several issues again, particularly the innovative character of the proposed tools and approaches. In what way does the technical content of new evaluation tools (*e.g.* Outcome Mapping and Most Significant Change technique) fundamentally differ from the logical framework? More than the content of the tools, is it not the type of actor (civil society, donors, etc.) which has produced each respective tool that varies from one tool to the other? Would not there be more innovation if the tools strayed from the project framework with its tight time constraints, in order to accompany the stakeholders in their projections over a longer term, such as fifteen or twenty years? Furthermore, the organizational implications of participative evaluation were discussed. Participative monitoring and evaluation require prior participative design of the project itself, but development actors sometimes have a hard time implementing this because of their own organizational concerns. For many, the challenge remains to more strongly decompartmentalize the evaluation, forecast, and strategic planning phases of the project.

Can evaluation contribute to social change?

François Grünewald shows us how evaluation can be used in emergency situations, and the ways and means of reconciling emergency relief, evaluation, and social change. In crisis-ridden contexts, the ability of evaluations to catalyze social change is directly related to their temporal nature. The main issue is to make relevant recommendations at the right moment, and to accompany their ownership by teams that are directly involved in the situation in the field. Such work necessitates the use of new evaluative approaches. An example of this in practice is Groupe URD (Urgence, Réhabilitation, Développement), which conducts its evaluations in real time, particularly in the aftermath of natural disasters (such as Hurricane Mitch, Indian Ocean tsunami, earthquake and cyclones in Haiti), in order to ensure a greater level of responsiveness and reorientation in the programs evaluated. Also developed are iterative evaluations that include mini-seminars to integrate the learning processes of the entire range of actors involved in the evaluation process. These exercises are repeated at regular intervals (six months, twelve months, and beyond) so as to accompany the interventions over the long term, such as in Afghanistan or Haiti. They enable long-term monitoring of the effects of emergency relief programs in addition to identifying potential issues concerning the misappropriation of funds, as has sometimes been seen in the case of refugee camp management schemes. Finally, approaches are developed that offer a sort of "after-sales service" for evaluations, which include an operational-research program offer that enables further understanding of mechanisms and learning processes brought about by the evaluation. These approaches can result in the creation of actual observatories, such as in Haiti, where the collective range of evaluations in the country ensured the coordination between the studies and the training processes of the people who were in charge of conducting them.

Michèle Cahu shares her experience both as the elected official in charge of the decentralized cooperation of the Picardy Region in France and as the official who commissioned the evaluation program led by Marc Totté of Inter-Mondes. Even if the question of desired forms of social change was neither initially articulated as such, nor consciously included in the design of the

long-term program, evaluation both revealed and enabled reflection on the matter by the Region's working groups (both technicians and elected officials). Marc Totté reminds us that evaluators did not limit their approaches to simply making observations on what was achieved *versus* what was expected, in terms of activities and objectives of the support program for local governance and decentralization in West Africa. Rather than focusing on the shortfalls in delivery as regards the logical framework, the evaluation process consisted in identifying and understanding potential differences in interpretation between the actors involved, including asking questions about project standards, geographical scope, and stakeholders. More attention was paid to the process of transformation than to the final products, and examined in detail were the "invisible" sources and mechanisms of change from which the "visible" achievements of the program would follow. Focusing on the principles that underlay the modes of regulation of the contexts of intervention was, for Marc Totté, key to enabling the evaluation process to catch up with and take part in the changes. Michèle Cahu further reminds us that the precondition for examining these and other such norms is the sense of one's own legitimacy—that is, maintaining trustful relationships with the actors for (and with) whom the programs are carried out. All of the contributors to the seminar agree that to be clear about the implications of a given project, as an evaluator or as the person commissioning the evaluation, one must accept to simply be oneself, as well as be capable of listening, of being questioned by one's partners, and of even changing.

Charlotte Boisteau brings F3E's point of view to bear on the question of the contribution of evaluative processes (including evaluation, capitalization, studies, monitoring and evaluation, etc.) to social change. Still today, there is a certain resistance to the idea of evaluation as a dynamic agent for learning. This stems from the difficulty of development actors to submit to being observed, to sharing their experiences within their organizations, and to linking analysis with strategy. What contexts, and what practices can promote the learning process in evaluation? Paramount are the role of the actors and beneficiaries within the learning process, the quality of guidance and support provided as part of the evaluations, and the attentiveness to the governance of evaluations *vis-à-vis* potential power plays among actors. In such a context, links between research and evaluations can also benefit from further reinforcement.

Issuing from the positions presented in this session are calls for greater consideration within the evaluations of the changes that interventions in the South have brought to the North. What could also be encouraged, some say, is the inclusion of donor representatives in the learning process, particularly after they become stakeholders in the funding of interventions. It is also recommended that the time for feedback on results be extended. A final suggestion is for responsibility for the monitoring of changes in the South to be taken up by the beneficiaries of the projects themselves: they are the foremost affected by such changes, and they should be in control of their monitoring.

Even if international solidarity organizations can neither impose nor program social changes, their mission is to attempt to contribute to them. What is needed in this case is an evolving approach to evaluation that is less technical, sequential, and centralized than previous models. Indeed, varied and successful initiatives of this kind do exist and are moving in this direction— this seminar has provided several significant examples. The discussions converged in that they encourage evaluation practitioners (sponsors, evaluators, and stakeholders alike) to remain open to innovations and further work in this direction.

Opening Remarks

Philippe Orliange, Director of Strategy,
Partnerships and Communication (SPC), AFD

Hello everyone,

Welcome to Agence Française de Développement.

First and foremost, I would like to thank F3E and the various departments within AFD for having organized this second joint seminar on social change.

A special thank you to Charlotte Boisteau, Florent Bédécarrats, and Emilie Aberlen, for their help in having organized this event, which I have been asked to open despite not being a specialist of evaluation or social change—although who knows?

I read through several of the written contributions in preparation for this talk. From them, I learned that "social change cannot be mandated", and that "thinking we can pre-define and master the outcomes of projects is an illusion". These statements, especially from the perspective of AFD, are a lesson in humility.

Following that, Philippe Lavigne Delville's use of the term "shackles of the logical framework"[1] is striking, as just one day ago we heard that without this logical framework there are neither projects nor strategies.

Just as intriguing is the way in which the time frames of projects on the one hand, and social dynamics of change on the other, are essentially incompatible. The latter can take several years, even decades, to unfold, while the former are spread out only over a period of a few years.

Be that as it may, we still keep asking ourselves what social change is exactly. That is why Marc Totté goes straight to the point with his question, "What is the nature of social change?" It is perhaps a question that we do not explore enough, here at AFD.

Becoming Head of Strategy, after having been Director of Operations at AFD, requires one to meet increasingly stringent demands of transparency and accountability from a whole series of stakeholders. These demands make it difficult to say that "there are a lot of unknowns in projects; we can't expect to pin down every single one of them". Indeed, we must accept that there are unknowns, even though we are likely to try to reduce them as much as possible in

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[1]   Trans. note: Appears as "*le corset du cadre logique*" in the French original.

order to fit them within a logical framework, thereby fulfilling the demands laid out in our mandates by the agencies we are accountable to.

Another source of tension is that these demands of accountability are often immediate. It is an issue that goes well beyond the scope of development and development projects. We often have to document and report on things before we have even executed them.

After all, what government body would understand if we said, "Give us money to finance development projects whose effects will only be seen in twenty years"? Yet, as far as social dynamics are concerned, twenty years is often a reasonable length of time.

While the development financing agenda is oriented towards an increase in standards, the written contributions to this forum explain how important it is to support and accompany social dynamics—which means being flexible with such standards. Are we ready for that though? Are we ready to give up on 50% of climate-related projects that have co-benefits, in addition to 40% of "gender" projects?

As a last remark, Charlotte Boisteau's article entitled, "I Learn Therefore I Am" falls under this category. It is as if AFD as a whole were summed up here. That's because, here at AFD, we see ourselves as a community engaged in financial production as much as in knowledge production, particularly in the processes of learning. It is through learning that we become what we hope and strive to be.

Thank you to all of the participants in this seminar, especially those who have crossed mountains, oceans, and rivers to come to Paris.

Reiterating the importance of the subject of our meeting seems unnecessary given the number of specialists in the room today.

By way of the subjects that you know so well, we as your attentive audience shall further our own strategic considerations. We thereby open our ears to you.

Thank you.

1. WHAT CHANGES
FOR WHICH DEVELOPMENT ISSUES?

Introduction

Alain Henry

If the task at hand is evaluating social change in development aid programs, we must begin by better situating both the end goals and the issues. What does social change try to accomplish? What need does it respond to? When we address development issues in a way that is less normative than most projects do—and rightfully so—in a way that is not imposed from the exterior but open to collective decision-making, do we not run the risk of relativism, entering a world that is devoid of all ideas of universal progress? In freeing ourselves from the constraints of accountability and the "shackles" of logical frameworks—the offshoot of which is the attempt to "mandate" change—are we not venturing into a territory in which evaluation is impossible? By what yardsticks can we measure the value of each contribution and the appropriate use of collective goods?

As a preamble to the discussions that follow, I would like to speak about the existence of a small number of development issues, which can hardly be compared unilaterally. However, what we will see is that the ways in which each society—as a social and political body—can attempt to effectively attain these are much more contextual. What are we really projecting with ideas of "development" or "poverty reduction"? These words represent all kinds of mysterious and ill-defined, inaccessible, but omnipresent, deities. Though certain aspects can be put into perspective—gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates in themselves, or the ability to measure poverty by daily income—it may be impossible to do so for others.

According to Lévi-Strauss, the development of Western societies can be characterized according to three objective transformations: the doubling of human life expectancy, the hundred-fold increase in individual energetic capacity, and the unlimited access to social relations on a planet-wide scale.

Over the past five hundred years, average life expectancy in developed countries has doubled. In other words, being born there means that one can hope to live the equivalent of what would have been two lives in the past—with all the level of comfort and health that goes along with it. Such aspirations of better health, of a two-fold increase in life span, and more generally of a better overall level of vitality, can hardly be questioned. Many social changes are undertaken with these types of improvements in mind.

A second aspect of these transformations is the energetic capacity that each human being commands today. Such "progress" seems problematic, in that it is a reflection of our greedy consumption of energy and our excessive rate of carbon emission. Nonetheless, each and every person in this room enjoys an energetic capacity that is one hundred times what our ancestors

in the Middle Ages did. At that time, instead of energy surplus, the richest of the lot benefited from the physical force of their servants. Our world today is vastly different. It is a world in which the inalienable freedom of human beings is recognized, and in which the inhabitants of rich countries command an amount of energy that is equivalent to that of a hundred of their ancestors' slaves. All of us can appreciate this capacity for ourselves, when at the end of a long day of work we decide to take the elevator rather than the stairs, thereby saving the little bit of energy that is left for family activities. Here again, there are no absolutes, just the universal hope that everyone may access more vital energy.

The third significant transformation in Western societies is that of relational capacity. Today, we can instantaneously be put in contact with virtually anyone we would like, in any and every corner of the planet. It is more than just a simple technological revolution and the ability to exchange a few meaningless words. Relational ability—in the sense that Amartya Sen talks about—is a key element in human development. On this matter, I would like to mention that AFD supports research on the measurement of development by the quantification of relational capacities. This is another facet of our contemporary condition that no one seems to disagree with.

Once these three goals of development are brought to light, they are hardly relative. We can then acknowledge that conceptions of well-being and best practices for living together vary significantly from one society to another. Furthermore, the way in which each society comes to attain such efficiencies—longer lifespan, heightened energetic capacity, and increased relational ability—can also vary significantly.

That brings us to the more relative question of cultural and institutional specificity. Every country and every society must set up an order, a discipline, and a sense of common good for which individuals sacrifice their vested interests; and, on the other hand, they must also support individual initiative and open creativity. Each political culture has its own way of resolving this set of paradoxical demands (one example of which is the nearly opposite ways that people in French and English societies adhere to rules).

Such specific ways of seeing emerge as soon as institutions are required to define their organizational techniques and functional operations. Likewise, it is within these types of reasoning that each society must conceive of the ways to orchestrate change. Even if change can be driven externally, it must be relayed from within, as Philippe Lavigne Delville reminds us in his presentation.

Discussions of social change also lead us to question inequality. Two other contributions alert us to this. Multiple forms of inequality persist—and are even aggravated—everywhere in the world, and they can only be reduced by increasing people's ability to engage in debate. Change often implies a critique of systems of dominance inherited from the past. Such observations provide the grounds by which development practitioners go beyond the three historical transformations I have just described, and seek to institute social change with the aim of promoting the principles of modernity and equality. Efforts at promoting gender equality are a good example. Moving from a general to a specific situation means accepting to go beyond absolute concepts and making the choice to adapt practices to context. Societies tend to develop as a function of their particular conceptions of the world, which are an expression of their anthropology and their inherent political philosophy.

Though we may agree upon the grand changes sought here, the way of bringing them about requires a significant amount of reflection. Here, in the context of my presentation, I have outlined three changes that have occurred over a span of five hundred years. Yet the presentations that follow shall show us to what extent this work is more complex when it applies to international development programs. Evaluators must take such pressing issues into consideration for their projects, in real time and within short time frames, whereas donors tend to require measurable outcomes. Indeed, that is where things start to get complicated!

1.1. Evaluating the Contributions of Development Actions to Social Change: Perspectives from the Social Sciences and Methodological Considerations

Philippe Lavigne Delville

Introduction

In this round table, my role is that of an academic, who starts by saying that everything is complicated, and then continues by recalling a number of points that will for some seem obvious, but which can be useful to keep in mind at the beginning of a conference.

Social change is a fundamental issue in the social sciences as much as in development, in both dimensions of the term: development as processes of economic, social, and political change in societies; and development as a proactive intervention that aims to institute certain types of change in societies. In fact, development interventions aim to bring specific changes. But what type of change? For whom? And what is social change?

The key is to think about the relationship between the process of social change and proactive interventions: How do development projects, which are focused on their own definite objectives for change, interact with, influence, and in some cases even counter, larger processes of change? How can we analyze and evaluate the contributions of such development efforts to processes of social change, and to "development" in general?

In this paper, I would like to elaborate on three points. First, I wish to question the notion of social change, which is often too conventional or ill-defined. Then, I will discuss the claims of development institutions that change can be generated or controlled, and also the structural tension that development interventions engender between the desire to provide support

to endogenous initiatives for change and the urge to restructure social realities following a prescriptive approach. Finally, I will address the issue of evaluation.

Social change or social dynamics?

In a prescriptive approach, social change is about "moving in the right direction" towards improvements in the living conditions of groups that are deemed as disadvantaged or otherwise insufficiently propelled into modernity. The idea is straightforward: the goal is to make the tools of progress (such as money, or techniques) available to local communities. In such a vision, people lack either the knowledge or the power (or both) to undergo modernity on their own, either because their traditions are too entrenched, or because they suffer from domination. They must adopt more efficient ways of doing things, and to do so they must become more entrepreneurial and individualistic. Change must be brought to them—or forced upon them if need be. In such an approach, change is understood to be unidirectional. Societies are supposed to go from tradition to modernity, from community to capitalism, along a linear path, with the double assumption that the processes of social change move in a pre-conceived direction, and that the impetus comes from outside. This approach is at the same time highly normative (there a one good way) and teleological in the sense that the path is already laid out; the goals having been determined from the outset.

In the field of technical change, few practitioners are still influenced by such a conception. We all know that techniques are not universal, but fit in given contexts. But how far are we from it when we discuss institutional reform? It is almost as if we had gone from imposing a modernization-driven idea of technical models to imposing prescriptive institutional models, with a discourse that boils down to: "Developing countries and communities in the South must adopt efficient institutions, markets, rule of law, neutral public institutions, and the like". As Li (2011) says, the idea is to "render society technical", in an apolitical conception of politics, with the underlying ambition of creating perfect citizens who are conscientious of the common good, active in decision-making processes, and committed to monitoring their political representatives, who themselves are publicly accountable. But citizens like these do not exist. The social fabric is far from neutral and consensual. It is itself made up of inequality, acts of domination, and of uneven power relations. Furthermore, some have even asked, "Is good governance a good development strategy?" (Meisel and Ould Aoudia, 2007). In other words, are we not talking about imposing models when we support economic development by way of institutions that are the very fruit of such development and not a prerequisite?

"Social change" as an idea is often bandied about in a general way, forgetting about the importance of asking, "Who is this change intended for? What is the agenda? Where is it heading?". It is often part and parcel with a modernization-driven approach, which encourages change for the sake of change, and in which certain parties take it upon themselves to define the meaning and the "right direction" to move in. No society is static; social change is everywhere. Political organization, economic differentiation, and gender relations play themselves out in all different forms and intensities. And thus, even the absence of change needs explaining! As soon as we move away from a prescriptive, modernist mindset, what starts to stand out

are multitudinous, and often contradictory, social, economic and political dynamics. That is why social sciences refer today more to "social dynamics" than to "social change" in order to avoid reproducing a normative vision. Such social dynamics are at the interface of what Georges Balandier has referred to as "dynamics from inside" and "dynamics from outside". They are the outcomes of the intentional strategies implemented by various groups to change their situation or to maintain the power relations that produce them, within the larger dynamic contexts of environmental, social, political, and economic change. Academics cannot apprehend the entire range of complex, multitudinous dynamics of change within a single analysis. Instead, they focus on one aspect or another according to their individual interests, the places, or the contexts.

Social dynamics and development interventions: the illusion of planned change

The goal of development projects is to institute change according to a set of pre-defined goals. In a technocratic perspective in which societies are relatively static, and/or in which technical change is a catalyst for social change, things are easy: development as a social process is part and parcel with development intervention. We all know, however, that that is not how it works: development projects are "interventions into dynamic systems" (Elwert and Bierschenk, 1988), made up of heterogeneous groups of actors who are engaged in social relations that are rife with inequality and domination as well as with solidarity. Their interests often conflict in their competition for resources or for power, their visions of the world can differ substantially, and they are at the mercy of other, much larger, processes of economic and political change. Consequently, the question begs to be asked: What is the meaning of a given development intervention for the different groups involved? What is at stake in local arenas?

What influence do interventions have in local arenas on local current dynamics, given the influence of macroscopic factors of change? Can a project aiming at protecting natural resources significantly reduce the problem of overexploitation, itself the result of demographic explosion and poverty? Can an agricultural development project overcome the negative impact of economic liberalization on peasant livelihoods? What can awareness campaigns about the effects of early marriage do to counter the dynamics of religious fundamentalism? Finally, what are the ways in which interventions are appropriated and interpreted at the local level?

The socio-anthropology of development has made it clear that projects are interpreted / appropriated / neutralized at the local level, according to the representation and interests of the actors concerned, the issues at hand, and the opportunities offered for capturing the resources brought by the project (Olivier de Sardan, 1995). The supposed "resistance to change" encompasses active strategies of neutralization of potential effects of interventions deemed inadequately adapted or dangerous—at least for certain actors.

Social change cannot be mandated. Development projects can only act and make lasting impacts if they fit with the agendas of (at least some) parties involved. They can favor or

encourage certain dynamics, but they can rarely create them anew or direct their course. The idea of programming social change must be done away with. We cannot keep thinking that the dynamics of social change and development interventions go hand in hand (Li, 2014).

Thinking that we can pre-define and control the effects of projects is almost an illusion. Development projects provide various resources—financial, technical, intellectual, political, symbolic (in terms of recognition, or valorization of certain actors or practices)—and try to put them at the disposal of certain people or organizations, who may or may not manage to make good use of them and include them in their strategies. In turn, the resources may or may not then be taken up or neutralized by others. Illusion of control is all the stronger when:

— Interventions refuse to admit this reality and are designed with a mechanistic logic;

— Interventions are conceived of too generally, according to a techno-centric and apolitical world vision, and without taking into account strategic groups, local arenas, dynamics, or existing power relations. For example, when one plans to support agriculture without asking which farmers to support, or aims to shift gender imbalances without being aware of the needs and wants of different types of women, of the cultural and economic issues behind their current position, or even of what is socially acceptable. Ignorance of the issues at stake on the ground, or the interests of different groups of actors (such as those who are able or unable to appropriate the project, or to neutralize it), prevents foresight into the strategies of the various actors, thereby submitting the intervention to a myriad of power plays;

— Interventions are designed as a succession of activities that are decided upon in advance, and must be implemented as planned, rendering them difficult to adapt in response to the different realities they encounter. Defining the objectives and the means by which they can be brought to term is indispensable. However, maintaining a too-rigid idea of what and how things should be done, held tightly within an intangible "logical framework", is no solution either, because it becomes impossible to adjust to the various sources of uncertainty and adapt the project to the realities that are always more complex than what was initially imagined. Thinking in terms of logical framework implicitly assumes that once the diagnosis has been completed and the project deemed relevant, one can follow a foolproof plan and obtain the desired result. Such a method ignores the fact that permanent interactions are induced between local spaces and those of the intervention, and that projects are "voyages of discovery" (Hirschman, 1967). Most often, the fit between development action and realities must be built in the course of a project (Korten, 1980);

— Interventions are planned for a lapse of time that is incompatible with the desired goal. Change always requires a certain amount of time in order to settle in, but project time frames often make it impossible, with problems of continuity and coherence between successive stages. When financial support stops, the change-inducing processes are abandoned before they have been consolidated. This is often a cause of failure, because the actors whose interests are not served by the change know that it isn't necessary to directly oppose it. Instead, they can just wait out the duration of the project, and when

the external participants are no longer present, everything just goes "back to normal". Having already had a bad experience with projects that have suddenly been revoked, the actors who would have supported them lose confidence in the long-term effects of the interventions. They stop taking risks and simply remain in a position of perpetual waiting;

— Interventions over the past twenty years have become larger and more societally-based, in ever-shorter periods of time (three-year periods), and in ever-more rigid contractual conditions. A growing contradiction thus exists between the goals and the ability to achieve them... so much that one can wonder whether the increasing use of terms such as "contributes to" or "favors" in the logical frameworks do not indicate a certain level of renunciation of the intended goals as much as an acknowledgement that a development project can do everything by itself.

Not all projects share such rationale, of course, at least not at the same degree. The level of tyranny of a logical framework and the degree of bureaucratization in development project implementation depends on the institutions and the individuals involved. For a long time now, committed practitioners (in aid institutions, NGOs, and some private companies) have been promoting projects that try to accompany social dynamics, and they are self-reflexive as regards the limits of what can be done in a "project" (Lecomte, 1989). Projects that have had the most remarkable results are rarely those that were defined and precisely programmed in advance. The most relevant ones are those which are in sync with the local dynamics, and strategically provide certain actors with technical, economic, and symbolic resources, which rely on realistic analysis of the stumbling blocks and the issues, which have an allotment of time and funding coherent with the desired changes. Finally, successful interventions are cognizant of the various stakes in the issues they confront, and they adapt their actions according to the realities and problems they encounter. In so doing, they are able to bring about significant changes through technical and organizational innovations that enable certain groups of actors to renegotiate their place within the web of social relationships and the economy. The impact of such efforts may then be considerable: in Guinea, for example, the rice sector was streamlined and the place of women reinforced when parboiling was introduced; in Cambodia, the rehabilitation of the polders of Prey Nup strongly reduced the shortfall in rice production for poor families and made it possible for a farmers' organization to represent the community in negotiations with the State.

Based on these findings, three broad questions regarding development interventions can be asked.

Once we agree that a given intervention plays most often only a limited role in larger dynamics of change, that its operational relevance is to be established with each new context, and that it is subject to various forms of re-appropriation, we have to admit that what we are "intervening in the dynamics of social systems", something that is neither socially nor politically neutral. In such complex contexts, we have to strategically think over our temporary position within local arenas. We have to think about the kind of alliances we make with certain groups of actors when we give them priority over financial and cognitive resources provided by the project, in order to augment their ability to renegotiate their position within economic supply chains

and exert more power within local spheres. Every intervention has a prescriptive dimension. It contains visions of how things should be, conceptions of what should be done, and distinct ideas of what must be developed. But if they want to fit the realities and have positive impacts, project designers cannot make their choices only according to their own ideas or to the popular subjects from development conferences. They have to build on a sound analysis of local issues for the different strategic groups in the field. They have to accept the prescriptive nature of their work, all the while being reflexive about their legitimacy within social contexts and the politics of intervention. They have to find ways to set these things up for debate or negotiation with parties at the local level.

Project designers have to recognize and manage the tension between rationales of support (which entails setting up and taking hold of ideas, listening, flexibility, and an ability to take advantage of opportunities), and rationales of programming.

Reflections on this subject are numerous, especially as regards the strategic ways in which "logical framework matrices" can be employed (Neu, 2005). That said, I am not sure we have fully taken stock of the implications of these analyses on the design and the implementation of development projects. Despite the evolution of the aims (more societal) and of the strategies for implementing the projects (trying to manage complex, multi-actors processes), we can wonder whether we are not still adhering to a relatively mechanistic conception of interventions—and whether aid policies are not tending towards more rigidity (Lavigne Delville, 2013).

Evaluating the contribution of development interventions to processes of change: conceptual and methodological challenges

From the moment when we jettison the idea that the pre-planned actions will necessarily give rise to desired results, and when we accept the process-based nature of interventions, the issue of evaluation gets more complicated. Four specific difficulties present themselves:

1. It is impossible to grasp the entire range of dynamics that may be influenced by a given intervention. Every evaluation is partial, privileging certain lines of questioning, or objects, and runs the risk of overlooking the impacts it may have elsewhere. How can we define the right parameters and avoid making the mistake of barking up the wrong tree? (See Diagram 1). For example, whatever their technico-economic impacts are, development projects can have significant socio-political impacts, as organizations promoted by the project are arenas of political competition for leadership in local arenas. Local people with whom the project team has stronger relations can look for social or political legitimacy, and/or capture part of the allotted funds. If we want to avoid overlooking important aspects of the interventions that lie above and beyond the direct actions undertaken, we must ask ourselves questions about the overall impact on social dynamics that such interventions can have, and foresee both the direct and indirect as well as positive and negative influences that the projects can have.

Diagram 1. Avoiding a narrow focus on project actions

THE SUBJECT STUDIED →
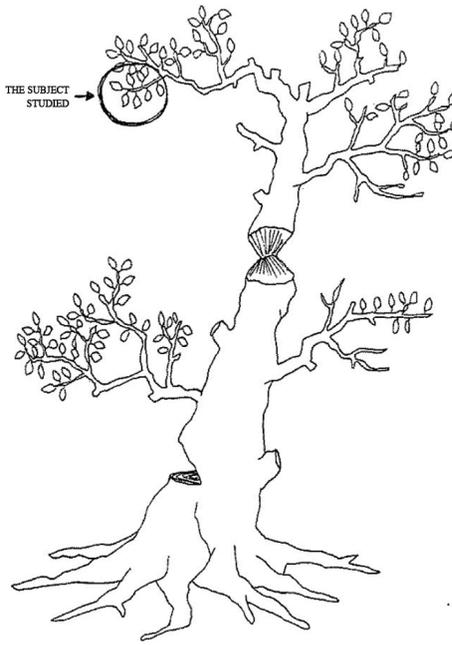
Source: Billaz and Diwara (1982).

2. Observation requires the definition of indicators. Indicators tied to project activities are quite easy to define and to document, but they can restrict comprehension of impact and overall dynamics. On the other hand, impact indicators are more interesting in terms of understanding dynamics, but are difficult to document within classic processes of monitoring and evaluation. Regarding training sessions, for instance, it is easy to report the number of courses, the participants, their profiles, and maybe also the take-home message from the session. More difficult, however, is knowing what the collaborators may have remembered, what they have managed to put into practice, and whether or not it has had a significant impact on their professional or personal trajectory.

Diagram 2. What is observed?

Project space

Population space

Project

Population

1: Rate of execution of programmed activities?

2: Actual rate of use of services?

3: Effects on the quality of life of populations?
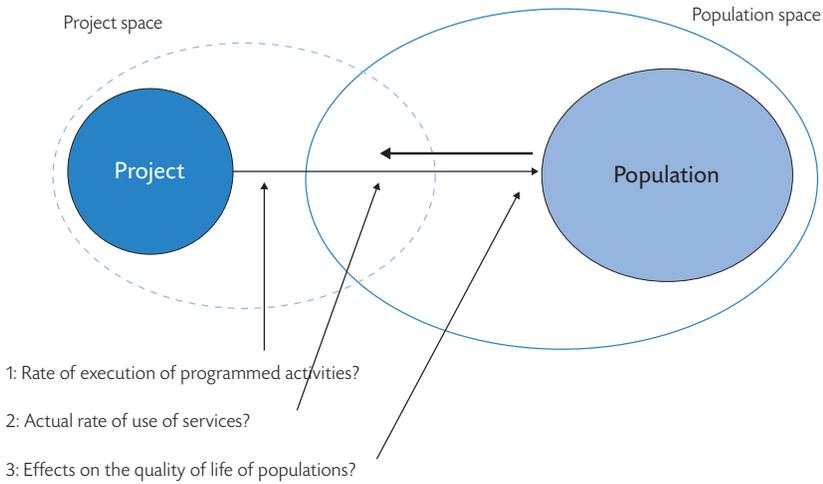
Source: Lavigne Delville (2004).

3. Change is the result of multiple dynamics, of which development interventions only play a part. That is why comparing the situation "before project" and "after project" is unsuitable: the observed changes cannot be traced back to the development project alone. Ideally, a comparison between the situations "with project" and "without project" would be better, because it would allow us to identify the impacts of the project within the impacts of the global dynamics. But such analysis is difficult, due to the specificities of each situation, which makes it difficult to assume that "with project" and "without project" are the sole difference between them.

Diagram 3. Overall dynamics and project effect

Before / After

With / Without

Overall dynamics

Time

t_0

t_n
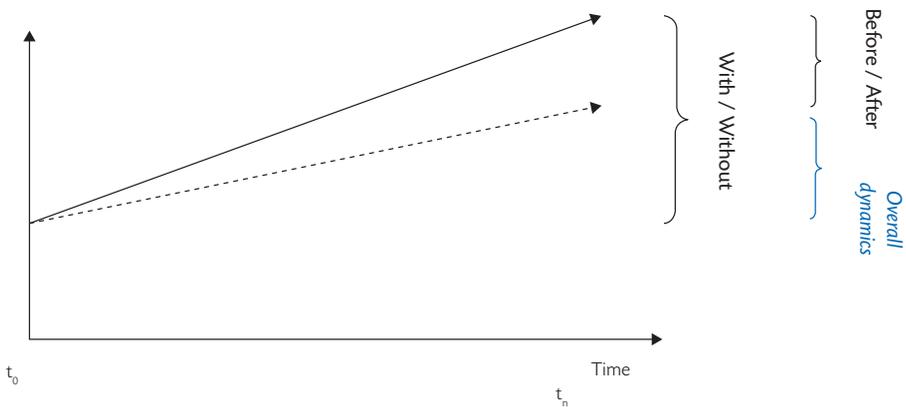
Source: Lavigne Delville (2004).

4. Change is far from linear. The moment of observation can influence the conclusions significantly, and future dynamics cannot be foreseen.

Diagram 4. Conclusions can vary according to the time when the evaluation takes place
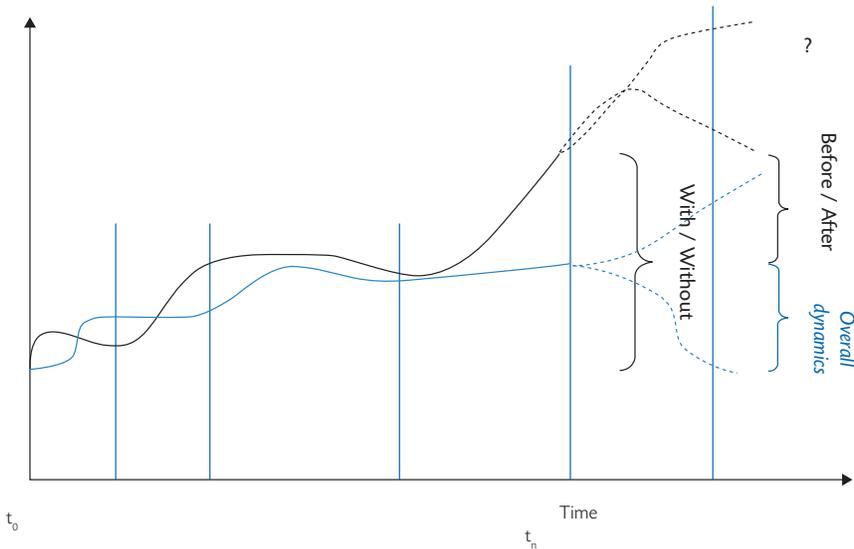
Source: Author.

There is no ideal solution to these dilemmas. Rather, defining a monitoring and evaluation framework able to document change is a matter of choices and compromise as regards issues and tools that make sense in a given reality and within a given set of constraints.

Conclusion
Qualitative "process documentation" on the dynamics of change

Evaluating the contribution of development interventions to the dynamics of social change means addressing strong methodological challenges. Short-term assessment studies at the end of the project are hardly suitable for such an effort, especially if sound analyses of what happened during the project are unavailable. Focusing on participation and people's perceptions of change is indispensable. However, it can be a trap if the required participation turns into a quick method that accumulates all the biases. I myself recall a participative methodology for impact study that claimed to analyze the effects of an agricultural development project on food security. During two days of workshops with people from the local community, there

was a focus group on agrarian change and on food shortage, followed by another on the evolution of yields and the role of the development project in the process. On paper, the methodology was very attractive. The local farmers had unanimously agreed that yields had increased. However, the footnotes of the report revealed the details of the activities that had actually been undertaken in the village by the project: it consisted of a series of stone lines over a few hundred meters, on a few farmers' fields—something that could not have had any impact on the food situation in the village! Clearly, community members sought to convey a positive image of the project to the evaluators for other reasons.

Consequently, there is no real alternative to sound social sciences oriented studies, using observations and a number of in-depth interviews to understand the dynamics of change, and to question the (intended or unintended) effects of the undertaken actions within them.

Such studies are inevitably heavy and difficult to systematize, especially if they are conducted after the project, and cannot use the observations and analyses collected over the course of the project. Furthermore, they are only meaningful if the timeframe they study is congruent with the dynamics of change themselves, which often requires looking at a succession of development projects or financial phases. They would be much more relevant if they could include preliminary analyses of situational dynamics and hypotheses of change drivers, and also use the results of monitoring and evaluation, documenting the various reinterpretations of the initial "project". In the case of the Prey Nup polder rehabilitation project, the monitoring process demonstrated the positive impact of the project on rice yields and production. Because this technical result was acknowledged, the impact assessment was able to focus on the effects of the project in terms of socio-economic differentiation (Lagandré, 2007).

When these kinds of studies are not undertaken as research projects, a lighter alternative exists: process monitoring and documentation (PMD). This is a qualitative approach to monitoring the dynamics brought about by interventions, which enables real-time follow up of the perceptions and strategies of the actors concerned, the issues at stake including the various points of view, and the reasons for their reactions (Mosse *et al.*, 1998). This differs from more classic forms of monitoring and evaluation, which provide only partial information, focused on activities more than on impact, and often too late to adapt the project activities or objectives.

Process monitoring can include real-time socio-anthropological investigations that are autonomous from but run parallel to the project, or socio-anthropological support to practitioners, in order to help them to better understand the dynamics of intervention. In any case, it involves observing and documenting the processes in progress, through a dialogue between practitioners and social science researchers—a dialogue that is often both difficult and productive—and is also better than analyzing dynamics after the project.

A real-time (or nearly real-time) sociological feedback system that accounts for how actions take place in the field and their subsequent perceptions and reactions by local actors would enable the strategic management of interventions. This field seems to be especially useful, though to my knowledge it has not been drawn upon in France.

For large enough projects, such a system could be set up with doctoral students in socio-anthropology as part of the monitoring and evaluation team. Having worked out their

theoretical framework beforehand, they would be able to conduct sound field studies with the dual goal of providing feedback to the project's team and thus contributing to real-time project management on the one hand, and of producing distanced analysis and synthesis of experience on the other.

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1.2. Facilitating Social Change: Seven Questions that Keep us Awake

Doug Reeler

"The important thing is the relationships, not the agenda... eventually they will call me to a meeting, I will not call them to a meeting. Participation means that we participate with the village people, not that they participate with us... the first thing is to make relationships, not to make projects." Meas Nee (1999).

"People have to be seen as being actively involved, given the opportunity, in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs." Amartya Sen (1999).

Social change does not begin with the ability to find right answers, but with continually developing more powerful questions, out of experience, and from there moving forward. Often there are no answers, only continual questioning into the future. As Rilke implores:

"Be patient towards all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves... Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer." Rilke (1929).

Consider the question: "How do we bring communities and government together into a co-creative relationship?" The answer to this complex question is not only different for different contexts, but in each of these contexts the response cannot be simply cooked up in a strategic planning session or a project logframe with a fixed budget under a donor's deadline. The answer must be discovered through continuous cycles of doing, observing, reflecting, learning, and re-planning, each requiring its own process of disciplined questioning. And the more participative they are, the more likely they are to succeed. It is likely that the question itself will evolve, for example, to: "How do we support communities and local government to prepare themselves for engagement?" This is the practice of social change, alive and continually searching for better questions, able to meet the evolving intricacies and nuances of life.

This is not an easy stance to take in a world that demands answers in the form of a solid plan up front, a budget that can be accounted for, and proof that this was the right plan, if the funding

is still to flow. It takes a certain humility to say "We don't know yet", or to say that we want to question and experiment our way forward. Who will fund "We don't know yet"? Yet, without this humility we are unlikely to approach the future as learners and should not be surprised when the right answers (and impacts) continue to elude us.

This writing shares seven questions and lines of inquiry that guide our work.

Question 1 – What is social change and how do we approach it?

Question 2 – What is our primary role as development practitioners?

Question 3 – How do we see and work with power?

Question 4 – How do we work with uncertainty?

Question 5 – What social change strategies work best?

Question 6 – What kinds of organizations and leadership do we need to face the future?

Question 7 – How can we have conversations that matter?

Question 1 – What is social change and how do we approach it?

Cause and effect versus *flux and constraint*

"Cause and effect" as an explanation of how things change is a useful concept only for the movement of inanimate objects and technical systems. The reality is that individual and social change are animate, paradoxical, and internally-driven, and thus how they change cannot be explained by logical "cause and effect". The concept of "flux and constraint" is more accurate. Living beings and systems are always in a continuous flux of change from within. What holds us in a particular state (of unchange) are a series of constraints, internal and external, which when lifted will enable movement, driven from within.

"People don't resist change. They resist being changed." Peter M. Senge.

People cannot be changed from the outside as if they are pieces on a chessboard. Indeed, to apply an attempted cause-and-effect external stimulus for change is more likely to provoke resistance or further passivity. If women in a community are stuck, seemingly passive, and unable to break out of dependence and subservience to the patriarchy, it is not because they are internally passive as a natural state, but because their will and capacity to change are held back by a series of constraints both internal (psychological and cultural) and external. If they can be helped to remove or lower these constraints, they may be able to change themselves and their (power) relationship to the world. (Franzetta, 2010).

Three kinds of change

In working with communities, organizations, or networks, before we ask, "How do we change things?", we like to ask, "How are things already changing or how is change being constrained?" In this way we are able to acknowledge and work with the innate forces for and against change.

In our work we have identified three dominant kinds of change that people, communities, and societies tend to go through (Reeler, 2007).

• **Emergent change** describes the day-to-day unfolding of life, adaptive and uneven processes of unconscious and conscious learning from experience, and the changes in attitudes and actions that result from them. This applies to individuals, families, communities, organizations, and societies adjusting to shifting realities, trying to improve and enhance what they know and do, building on what is there step-by-step and unassuredly, but still learning and adapting. However successfully or unsuccessfully.

Emergent change exists most strongly in unpredictable and fluid conditions. These may be a result of external uncertainties like an unstable economy or a fragile political system, or of internal uncertainty where things are fragmented or still in formation.

> *In peri-urban areas around Cape Town, like in many cities of the South, rural migrants arrive every day seeking work, health services, and schools for their children. They gather and group on spare pieces of land, illegally occupying them. Some migrants are connected through rural ties, and some make new connections, for protection and support. They are emerging communities, still fragile, and fractured and vulnerable to rivalries and exploitation. With time and experience, leadership and a sense of place, trust and identity begin to form. Patriarchal and tribal rifts are still prevalent.*
>
> *The Federation of the Urban Poor was built over time by organized shack dwellers. Allied to Shack Dwellers International and supported by some NGOs, it often begins work in such emergent communities by helping women form "daily savings groups" through which they elect trusted collectors (emergent leaders) to collect a small amount of change each day from each member. This provides a seedling foundation for local organization and leadership, on which larger programs of change can be built in the future.*

• **Transformative change**. At some stage in the development of all social beings, it is typical for crisis to develop. This may be the product of a natural process of inner development, *e.g.* the classic pioneering organization reaching the limits of its family-like structuring, roles, and relationships: it becomes stuck and unable to grow without a qualitative shift to a more conscious structuring and more systematic way of working, letting go of its informality, and transforming the way it works.

Crises may also be the product of social beings entering into tense or contradictory relationships with their world, when prompted by shifts in external political, economic, cultural, or environmental contexts. The funding crisis experienced by many NGOs since 2008 is a good example.

Crisis sets the stage for transformative change. Unlike emergent change, which is characterized as a learning process, transformative change is more about *unlearning*: about people letting go of the dominant ideas, values, or beliefs that underpin the crisis and that no longer suit the situation or relationships that are developing. Pioneering organizations in crisis have to unlearn their informal ways, often even letting go their pioneers. NGOs facing funding crises have to unlearn their dependency on certain ways of being funded or even on funding itself.

> *South Africa is riven by conflict and protest. Every day, in scores of townships, residents block the roads and march on their local councils, sometimes violently, to protest the lack of service delivery (water, housing, electricity). They feel cheated and expect the government to deliver. But the government cannot deliver on its own—its attempts at top-down delivery on the back of a bureaucratic infrastructure inherited from the Apartheid regime is failing amidst corruption and lack of capacity.*
>
> *A key transformation that needs to take place revolves around challenging the top-down nature of the system and the assumptions that a passive citizenry must have its services delivered by an active government. Even the language of "rights", so beloved of development aid, which separates "rights holders" from "duty bearers", encourages the conception that local government and community have separate interests and feeds their mutual alienation. The endless cycles of protest and failed delivery will not end until communities and government let go of these notions and let go of the way they see each other, and their roles, to discover more co-creative ways for communities to bring their resourcefulness and initiatives to meet the collective resources and larger systems of support held by the government.*

How can we give impetus to letting go of these attitudes? What can we do to help either side to begin to see past this fruitless cycle?

Working with resistance to change is at the heart of transformation. In our heads we may know we have to change, but deeper down we are held captive, frozen in the current state and unable to let go.

Three things stand out here at the heart of resistance to change:

- **Fear** of losing power, privilege, identity. Fear of being hurt, or worse. Fear of the unknown that will disrupt what we have become used to, even if this is just strategies to cope with what has not worked;

- **Doubt and self-doubt** that they or I cannot be better or do what is required, that we and our ideas are inadequate, that we do not have the capability;

- **Hatred or self-hatred**. Where there has been conflict, abuse, or trauma, we can be consumed by bitterness, resentment, and revenge—or paradoxically blame or even hate ourselves for what we have done or not done, or even for what has been done to us.

All of these block or constrain the will, or imprison the innate flux of change. There are no easy methods for working with these deep resistances. In our practice we look for ways to uncover and share them and to bring them to light either intimately or socially, to give them perspective, and to enable them to be expressed. Through naming and verbalizing come the possibility of

release or of freeing ourselves. Helping people share their stories is a well-tried approach, which is often cathartic for tellers and listeners. Simply asking ourselves and sharing what we fear, doubt, and hate—and supporting honest answers and conversations—is sometimes all that is required.

On the other side of fear, doubt, and hatred we can find courage, faith, and love. Good ideas for change are flimsy without courage, and so encouraging each other to face our fears is central to our work. Certainty is the opposite of doubt but hardly possible in the face of unpredictable realities. And so faith in human beings to rise above the odds helps us deal with doubt. Likewise for love, one of the least spoken words in the books and workshops on social change, but without which little is sustainable or even worthwhile. Perhaps its mysterious and transcendent nature is too difficult to express explicitly, or the scientist in us remains wary of something that refuses to be measured and quantified. But there can be few transformations that are not centered on the transformation of the heart.

How do we work more consciously with doubt and faith, fear and courage, and hatred and love in our practice?

- **Projectable or vision-led change**. Human beings can identify and solve problems and imagine or envision different possibilities or solutions for the future. We can *project* possible visions or outcomes and formulate conscious plans to bring about change. This is the essence of development projects, where they are appropriate and possible.

Where conditions of change (especially the relationships of a system) are reasonably coherent, stable, and predictable—and where unpredictable risks do not threaten desired results— projectable change initiatives and well-planned projects then become possible.

> Abraham Maslow said, in 1966, *"I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail."* (Maslow, 1966, p. 15).

The fact is that many people in the development aid industry, especially those who control and are responsible for finances and resource allocations, tend to like Projectable Change approaches because they give the illusion of control and accountability, even when the conditions for projects simply do not yet exist. Indeed, few situations of marginalization, impoverishment, or oppression are projectable, by definition. Other work, often emergent or transformative, needs to be done before projects make sense.

The key is not to rush into any particular approach, but rather to observe what kinds of change are already at play and to see if there are ways to take them into account and use them as best as possible.

How can we build a sensibility to more accurately read the nature of change conditions and formulate approaches to change that can work with these?

Question 2 – What is our primary role as development practitioners?

The need for change in marginalized and impoverished communities the world over is widespread and vast. But the ability and resources of governments and NGOs to work with these needs, in helpful ways, are extremely limited.

This conundrum points to approaches that answer these questions:

a) How can the limited capacities and resources of outsiders support the unlocking of hidden resources and resourcefulness in a community?

b) How can neighbors stimulate change in their neighbors and learning from each other: horizontally, peer-to-peer, community-to-community, and municipality-to-municipality, so that positive change and development can spill over or spread—as does fire, no longer constrained by the limitations of government or NGOs.

In the Limpopo Province in South Africa, the Community Development Resource Association (CDRA) has been working with scores of self-organized women's groups who come together to see to the needs of their young children. The program is called Letsema (the Sotho word for a universal tradition of working together to reach a common purpose). Until we started work with them they were stuck within their own worlds, unaware of their own interesting and useful experiences and capabilities. We supported them so that they could start visiting each other in a series of horizontal learning exchanges, in which they shared how they lived and worked, learning from each other's innovations and exploring new ideas together. From that mutual appreciation they were better able to see more of their own self-worth and develop some confidence to begin visualizing a different future for themselves, in which they are active participants.

While the first several horizontal exchanges were stimulated and supported from the outside, they are now widespread, happening spontaneously and regularly without any external support.

Communities, which often appear to outsiders as needy victims, have reservoirs of hidden and potential capacities and resourcefulness from hard-learned experience that vastly outweigh what can be brought in from the outside. Once brought to the surface and validated by people themselves, these become the seedbeds out of which change can be nurtured.

But most development aid projects we have seen unthinkingly dump capacity-building, technology, and funding onto communities, focusing on the idea that people lack capacity, resources, and organization. Through these highly-planned and logframed capacity-building projects, they further bury the hidden reservoirs of community potential.

And, of course, burying what people have and know and bringing answers and resources from the outside inevitably buries people's own will, confidence, and ownership, and the projects fail to sustain themselves once the capacity and resource bringers leave. Failure is blamed on the same incapacities, and people are left worse off than before. This is the grand narrative of the development aid industry.

We must recognize that people have been developing long before development aid came into their lives and will continue to develop long after it leaves. The will to develop is innate and inborn. It is an inside-out and a continuous process. It may not be happening in a healthy or productive way in this or that community, and it may be that its potential is blocked or buried by a series of constraints, but it is the only game in town to work with.

Development is already happening, and as an outsider I cannot deliver development to anyone or indeed bring change to anyone any more than I can eat for them or cough for them!

> *In the Letsema Program we support the rural women's groups by bringing their leaders together for five-day workshops. These are not training sessions but development sessions, in which the women are encouraged to tell their life stories, to listen to each other, to experiment with asking better questions, to inquire into the power relationships they are caught in, and to build trust and solidarity between them. There is very little teaching, just the odd concept or two, and no fixed curriculum. The workshop evolves as the women suggest, and as they increasingly facilitate themselves and set the agendas. They are continually encouraged to reflect on themselves and to draw strength, forgiveness, and learning from lives that—without exception—are filled with experiences of hardship, trauma, sacrifice, initiative, and triumph. In a few days they start to look at themselves and each other differently, each a bit taller, their eyes filled with hope and courage and their minds with new ideas.*

Do we have the patience and faith to support people so they can reach out to and learn from each other in their own way and at their own pace?

Question 3 – How do we see and work with power?

Power is held in relationships, whether it is our inner power we ourselves struggle to claim, the power we have over others or the power we hold cooperatively with others, or the power the state wields in relation to its citizens. Without relationship power means little: it has no force, for bad or for good. *If we want to shift power, we have to shift relationships.*

It is within each or all of these three levels of relationships that people are free or unfree. If in our view of ourselves we have fear, self-doubt, or self-hatred, we become inhibited, entrapped, or unfree. A stuck and abusive relationship with a partner may be as great a hindrance to development as a lack of social opportunity or as (a relationship of) political oppression. These kinds of "unfreedoms" at the three levels of relationship mutually reinforce each other and add up to a recipe for entrenched marginalization (and superiority of the other)—the core target of development interventions.

But the word or notion of "power" in many cultures is difficult to work with. In collective cultures power is often veiled and hidden behind seemingly collective processes, in which those with power use their influence, experience, and ability to steer decisions in directions they like. To even suggest that there are power differentials and that they constrain development is regarded as disrespectful.

Power does strange things to the best of us. Those of us who do confront power directly often find that the harder we push, the more we struggle, the stronger becomes the resistance to change, and the more we bolster the forces we had sought to weaken. Power is paradoxical and can seldom be approached in a straight line. Even non-violent struggles, which bring a moral force to change, have to walk a fine line to avoid becoming threatening in a way that provokes an unwanted backlash.

The corrupt and powerful, who are addicted to power and money and who are fearful and dismissive of others, will have to be confronted with the truth of their destructive and self-destructive obsessions and fears, and be either persuaded or toppled. Sometimes the powerful undermine themselves, blinded by their egos and often living in hiding or denial of their power, both protected and trapped by their security apparatus. How can we engage them in ways that do not burn down the whole country?

When the powerful are unseated by force, how often is their place taken by people who adopt the same behaviors, using the old regime's repressive laws and institutions to secure their new regime? Or worse, rival pretenders to the throne rush into the political vacuum and new wars begin. It did not take long for much of the hopeful and unstoppable "Arab Spring" to degenerate into nightmare scenarios.

Clearly there are distinctions to be made. Some good people lose themselves in their new power and can be persuaded away from dysfunctional uses and be helped to change and share. But more often the powerful will change only when confronted by a crisis or a transformative challenge in which the *perceived costs* to themselves of holding onto power are greater than the *perceived risks* of letting go. Calculating and communicating perceived costs and risks can be where some of the key work lies in weakening the resolve of the dysfunctionally powerful. The fall of the Berlin Wall and of Apartheid both happened when a point of sanity was reached and the regimes were helped to see the writing on the wall.

Sometimes the head follows a change of heart. Sometimes the heart follows a change of the head. In both cases the will to change still has to be transformed. Fear, doubt, hatred.

Some people would focus on building alternatives rather than confrontation:

> *"You never change anything by fighting existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."* R. Buckminster Fuller.

This choice does not always exist and can be naïve in many situations. Modern-day slaves cannot wait for alternatives to their bondage to develop. But as a part of a sustainable approach, developing alternatives can be critical. Facing climate change will require the development of alternatives, but these will flourish as viable investments only when the causes of global warming are tackled and made more politically, morally, and financially costly than the powerful can stomach.

The complex and paradoxical nature of power requires that we have diverse and layered approaches to change when obstinate and brutal power is being faced. But still many more questions remain.

Question 4 – How do we work with uncertainty?

Most of what is happening inside a change process is invisible not only to outsiders but also to communities themselves. We are all stumbling around in the dark pretending that we can see, imagining that we can find the answers, and desperately trying to create enough certainty to feel safe and in control, and to show we are accountable.

So what do we do? First of all we need to recognize that uncertainty can neither be wished away nor be brought under control by more planning. The mindsets that frame the planning, monitoring, and evaluation systems that shape development aid projects usually emphasize control and accountability above learning and adaptation. To get funding, everything needs to be thought through, activities and budgets agreed upon upfront, and monitoring checks put into place to ensure that people do what they have promised to do. A little failure and some learning are tolerated, but not too much. Miss enough targets and your funding is cut and you may get fired.

This is a killer problem for two reasons:

Firstly, the tendency is to do the big planning upfront, back in the NGO or government offices, following the rules to get the funding, and then to sell the plans to the communities. But this pre-empts and undermines the most critical elements of sustainable development: authentic processes of community initiative, ownership, and the surfacing of vital and hidden resourcefulness. (If communities are recognized as resourceful, will the NGOs need to provide so many resources and therefore get as much funding?).

Secondly, the promise and illusion of control and accountability given by the logframed, bureaucratic development project undermine the thoughtful and continual adjusting of practice and plans, based on the ongoing experience of success and failure required to learn our way through complex conditions into an uncertain future.

How can we actually reward honesty about "failure" and prioritize learning before and above accountability for results? To put accountability higher than learning is a sure-fire recipe for the corruption that plagues so many development projects. We know that in uncertain times it is only through honest learning, and the innovation this enables, that sustainable results become possible. This is not a new question, and many readers are probably tired of hearing it. And therein lies the real question. Despite our doubts about bureaucratic accountability for results and the need we have for a learning approach, what keeps holding us captive?

We have also boxed our learning processes into Monitoring and Evaluation systems, outsourcing our learning evaluations to experts and effectively robbing the stakeholders of the one thing that may enable success: *the ability to learn our way forward through continuous processes of action learning.*[2]

But it would be wrong to simply see learning as a way to better navigate complex change or as something that should occasionally or periodically accompany the work we do to improve it.

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[2] Some twenty years ago we used the phrase "Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation", seeing it as a continuous cycle. The dropping of "Planning" from shared discourse reflects this outsourcing to M&E experts.

In our view, learning is far more important than that: *social change is fundamentally a learning and unlearning process best met by a learning practice.* Indeed, change, development and learning are virtually indistinguishable.

The challenge is to recognize and work with learning and unlearning in every aspect of a change program, to see in its DNA the spirals of learning that describe the reality of how we actually do learn and unlearn our way into the future.

There are three types of learning to recognize here:

- **Action Learning**. Simply put, this involves continually observing and reflecting on experience, drawing learnings from those reflections, and transforming the implications of those learnings into future actions. Most NGOs I know try through their M&E systems to draw learnings immediately from experience without deep observation and reflection, resulting in shallow and misleading learnings. Action Learning is a nuanced change process that requires a disciplined approach (see *Barefoot Guide to Learning Practices in Organizations and Social Change*).[3] This connects strongly to *emergent change* discussed earlier;

- **Unlearning.** Sometimes, in order to move forward, learning does not help because we are constrained by ideas, beliefs, or attitudes that are too close to us to easily let go. Before we can continue to learn our way forward, we have to pause to unlearn these things, *i.e.,* how white people see black people, how men see women, how women see themselves. These prejudices have to be unlearned. But usually, unless there is the force or pain of a crisis, people are unwilling to do so. Fear, doubt, and self-doubt—as well as resentment, hatred, or even self-hatred—are the predominant factors for this kind of resistance to change. Helping people to bring these factors to the surface and face them can be the key work of social change. This connects strongly to *transformative change* discussed earlier;

- **Horizontal Learning.** Since time immemorial, people have learnt from each other, informally sharing stories and wisdom, trading innovations and recipes, teaching each other techniques and technologies—neighbor to neighbor, farmer to farmer, parent to child. This horizontal learning has always been a powerful motor of social change.

We have learned that if we want to work together collaboratively and fruitfully, we have to begin this by learning together, horizontally. The powerful housing and farmers' movements Shack Dwellers International and Via Campesina use horizontal exchanges at the heart of their mobilization and organization. In South Africa, as described above, the Letsema Program uses horizontal learning exchanges not only to share innovations but also to build relationships and solidarity.[4]

Through horizontal learning processes, communities can stimulate and support change in each other with minimal external help, with development spilling from village to village, or even of

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[3]   http://www.barefootguide.org/barefoot-guide-2.html

[4]   See also Reeler, 2005, for a fuller elaboration of horizontal learning as a change method, approach, and strategy.

change catching fire as good ideas and innovations spread widely and generously by word of mouth, as they used to before modern times.

> *"In the Limpopo province, a group of 60-odd villages revived a traditional practice of meeting once a year for a seed-sharing festival. This had fallen into disuse since the agricultural industry, ushered in by government extension officers, began showing small farmers the modern way, creating deep and worrying dependencies on corporate-controlled seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. An awareness workshop by a local NGO on the looming dangers of genetically-modified seeds finally tipped the scales and provoked the renewal of the old practice.*
>
> *Now, at a different village each year, the farmers once again send representatives of each village to gather and congregate for several days, each bringing bags of their beans and grains to cook and taste and then to freely share as seed, with advice on how best to plant and grow. And all of this generates the revival of other cultural practices, of songs and dances and stories that express a renewed identity of community and interdependency."* (Reeler, 2005).

The question that we continue to ask is: How can we cultivate support, including funding, for open-ended horizontal learning practices and approaches that cannot guarantee this or that outcome, but that prepare the ground for solidarity and collaboration?

Question 5 – What social change strategies work best?

In our experience there is seldom one strategy that is sufficient to meet the complex processes of social change. And quite often several consecutive or concurrent strategies are called for. Some of the different strategies are described or implied in the text above, but here I would like to spell them out more clearly (adapted from Rowson, 2014):

- **Top-down strategies.** Democratically elected governments, legitimately appointed leaders, and skilled managers may be called upon to implement changes from above, particularly those that meet initiatives from below. Universal health care, sanitation, education, transport and communication infrastructure, and police forces to combat criminality may all be top-down initiatives. Of course how they meet the varied needs of communities and at what point they require community engagement from below must be considered, but there are valid aspects of social change that are legitimately and developmentally brought from above;

- **Bottom-up strategies.** Of course, sometimes change begins from below, where stuck power above cannot move, whether out of its own interest or because of external uncertainties. Marginalized and oppressed people must free themselves. Communities cannot wait for a collapsed local government to deliver water before they take matters into their own hands;

- **Inside-out strategies.** All sustainable change begins as an inward journey. Before people and organizations can free themselves from their oppressors, they must free themselves from their own self-identification as powerless victims (and on the other

side as controllers, saviors and experts). This is a kind of transformative change, of individuals and communities unlearning what they have held to be true and of seeing themselves with new eyes before embarking on changing the attitudes and even the laws and practices of society;

- **Sideways strategies.** This is closely connected to horizontal learning, as a powerful motor of change, whereby people connect across boundaries within and between communities and organizations, perhaps involving some unlearning, to create new communities to face their problems and take advantage of new possibilities;

- **Do nothing strategies.** To gain sufficient strength, a situation sometimes needs the space and time to sort itself out for a crisis to ripen, or for will to change. We may need to spend time simply observing to see if we do have a role and what that role might be. We should not assume that the kind of change that we can support is always needed or possible. Be wary of change merchants posing as social change practitioners!

Complex or comprehensive change agendas, programs, and interventions quite often contain several of these strategies, running concurrently, or one set of actions paving the way for the next. Horizontal exchanges (sideways strategies) have proven to have surprising success in creating foundations of learning and solidarity for collaborative or co-creative initiatives. Top-down or bottom-up strategies seldom succeed unless they provoke some transformative inside-out change in key actors.

But no planned strategy can account for the full story or anticipate what will prevail. The complexity of change can only be met by diverse approaches that learn their way into the future.

Question 6 – What kinds of organizations and leadership do we need to face the future?

In this post-modern age, the conventional and traditional hierarchical forms of organization and strong leaders, in all walks of life, appear to be less and less appropriate. Although this paper has addressed itself largely to the empowerment and transformation of the marginalized and oppressed, much the same applies to people and organizations of the powerful, those at the center, often stuck in their power and needing to be freed from entrenched notions of their superiority. We are all trapped, wittingly and unwittingly, in this binary of leader and follower, boss and subordinate, oppressor and victim, playing out an old script that needs rewriting.

New organisations need to take account of a massive shift that is taking place in the culture and identity of young people. They are emerging en masse, informed and empowered by education, TV, and the Internet as never before, yet unwilling to meekly follow strong leaders. This creates huge implications and challenges for conventional activism, whose more politically sussed vanguard have relied on their authority, bolstered by disciplined solidarity among their followers, as a way to maneuver and take action as a force for change. It seems that young people are simply less willing to be herded around by anyone, more active but less tolerant, and *easier to mobilize yet more difficult to organize* than ever before.

The world is starting to experiment with less controlling, more participative, less hierarchical, self-organizing and networked forms of organization. But these are tentative. What is clear is that they are not so easily held together by formal structure and rules, but rather by new kinds of relationships, conversations, values and understandings. Their ability to be agile and to learn may be a determining factor in navigating the uncertain future.

A word on leadership. Leaders are only one form of leadership. Conventionally they are the dominant form. But increasingly, as people demand participation and joint decision-making, it is through conversations, in meetings and workshops, that leadership, as a process, is taking place. As this grows, the role of leaders becomes more facilitative, paying attention less to the decisions and more to the quality of process and the conversations that lead to good decisions.

> *In the organization I have worked with over the past 18 years, the idea of a particular "leader" always felt strange. Indeed, for a number of years we had no one who was called "the Director". People would call us and ask for the Director and the receptionist would reply, "Please hold on, I will see who is in". Eventually we did designate a Director because this answer was too disturbing for the outside world. However, leadership is essentially and mostly held in our monthly learning days, when we gather to reflect on the issues and experiences of the month to learn our way forward and to make important strategic decisions. The process is the leader.*

How can we re-imagine leadership as intelligent learning processes, in many possible forms, to meet the complex and diverse challenges we face?

Question 7 – How can we have conversations that matter?

How different are we from the conversations that we have with ourselves and with each other? In many ways we are conversations. If we were to stop conversing we would find that we would soon stop living. Human conversation, in human relationships, lies at the very heart of the processes of social life.

Good social change happens from good conversations. Almost all change takes place through conversations of one kind or another.

The first conversation is the one that each of us has with ourselves, if we allow it, between the different voices that live in our heads and hearts. We are, each of us, a community of voices. We are social beings, continually influenced by the people with whom we grow up and live. How often do we hear the voice of a parent, a friend or teacher pop up into our heads in response to a situation? We debate and argue with ourselves when faced with a dilemma, using some points of view of two or more of the influential people in our lives. Holding and allowing different voices can be a healthy thing because this working with diversity inside us helps us to prepare for and meet the diversity and complexity of life outside, to prepare for conversations with others.

The second conversation is the one each individual has with another or others, engaging to chat, share, confront, and resolve the issues of life, bringing the voices of each person together.

In doing so, and in issues of social change, we may or may not find common ground. But we are also changed by these conversations—we continually learn and unlearn, emerge and transform. As we move closer together, we prepare ourselves for the third type of conversation.

The third type of conversation is the one we, as a community, have with others. It might be a group of parents engaging their children's teacher, or a community speaking to their councilor. What this conversation carries is social power and the potential to spark or pave the way for social change. When we speak of a new dialogue it is of conversations that change us, where we change each other and ultimately where we change the world.

As social change practitioners, we must pay attention to each of these levels of conversation *as each level prepares people to engage at the next.* Multi-stakeholder conversations are often flawed and disempowering because there is unequal preparation as, typically, communities are pushed into processes with government before they have become aware of their own resourcefulness or resolved their own differences.

In all these conversations that involve change, there may be voices of fear, of doubt and self-doubt, of resentment or self-hatred, or of self-denigration or self-elevation, moving from the individual to the group. How these are brought to the surface and dealt with will determine whether the individual or the group is able to act and to find the will to be part of the change.

> *"Out of the diversity of 'voices' we find the richness of conversations, and out of our rich conversations spring the relationships, ideas and impulses for change. We are social beings and it is through our many voices in many conversations that we are most social. How authentic voices are brought, received, engaged with, and supported makes a world of difference to the quality of conversation, to human engagement, and to the contribution we each can make to processes of change"* Nomvula Dlamini (2013).

Concluding thoughts

As we look for better questions and answers in deeper conversations, we have to recognize that in the sheer complexity of being human and working with change, so much remains that is unknown and even more that is unknowable. Relying on experts and their upfront over-planning can no longer meet the reality. And so, I have argued in this paper for diverse collaborative, learning-based approaches to change that can meet the learning-based nature of change.

Social transformation can happen in a simple conversation that leads to a change of heart. Or it can take decades of strife and hardship. So much hinges on the human qualities of questioning, observing, reflecting, learning, relating, and conversing among the role players. Collaborative human processes and facilitative leadership are called for to address the big questions. Up to a point, several of these can be consciously acquired or even taught, but the human trust and commitment required to carry and sustain change are the tangible and malleable qualities that need to be unblocked and cultivated.

But we are all still in the thrall of obsessively detailed planning, monitoring, evaluation, and other technical systems to manage and control social change—all of them instrumental manifestations of our fear of losing control and power. This is perhaps our greatest challenge: to let go, not to leave, but let go of our need for certainty and control and to have more faith in our collective ability to humbly learn our way forward in messy but creative, human, and real processes.

One question we keep asking ourselves is "In what ways are our own needs, doubts and fears hindering our ability, and the ability of people we work with, to learn our way into the future?".

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1.3. The Great Transition: Towards a New Activism to Effectively Support Transition to a Truly Sustainable and Just Economy

Michael Narberhaus

1. Mainstream activism is reinforcing the current paradigm, rather than making effective contributions to a truly sustainable and just society

Up to now, not many professional civil society organizations (*i.e.* environmental and development NGOs as well as unions) have been promoting the much-needed transition to a new economic system based on the principles of ecological limits, solidarity, human well-being and intergenerational justice. Nor are many of these organizations embracing the complexity of systemic change in their strategies, campaigns, and projects. Even grassroots organizations, which are usually more radical in their visions, find it often difficult to develop comprehensive system change strategies that go beyond niche experiments and politics of protest.

Fighting symptoms, not root causes

Many NGOs are very good at campaigning for a particular policy goal and at mobilizing sufficient public support to achieve this goal, *i.e.* winning their campaign. Campaigns that achieve their policy goals, such as a reduction in CO_2 emissions for new European vehicles or an increase in aid to poor countries, are not necessarily successful from a systemic-change perspective. They might fail to tackle the underlying root causes and thereby contribute to perpetuating the problems. For example, while cars are becoming more fuel efficient year by year, overall fuel consumption is increasing globally due to a dramatic annual increase in additional cars on the roads. Also, while aid transfers might help to ameliorate extreme poverty, they have little or no

effect on globally rising inequality. Often these actions may even contribute to strengthening the status quo by repeatedly stating and confirming that the world will be all right if here we apply some better technology to save CO_2, or if there we transfer some more aid to the poor.

Ignoring culture

Current CSO campaigns often fail to address the cultural dimension of social change adequately. Firstly, the heavy reliance on technical facts and rational arguments fails to address the importance of the non-conscious mind in human behavior. It is at this level where mental frames (the cognitive structures in our long-term memories) help human beings to make sense of reality and interpret the facts their own way. For example, many climate scientists have realized how even the clearest evidence and best facts fail to move the climate change agenda forward. Secondly, short-term tactics, *i.e.* the hope to move the political agenda forward by playing the game of government and business, often mean that CSOs are communicating the very values and frames of our current culture of self-interest and national interest. These many bits of communications are thereby contributing to maintaining the cultural status quo.

Too much focus on advocacy and lobbying

Much CSO work focuses on national and international advocacy, within a business-as-usual political context that prevents far-reaching societal change. Due to the inherent path dependencies of political and economic institutions and their short-term focus, the potential to use lobbying and advocacy to go beyond piecemeal actions is very limited. Even worse, political lobbying and advocacy effectively means playing the game of the current system; the self-reinforcing power of current political and economic institutions is hence systematically underestimated.

2. The Smart CSOs Lab

Since its foundation in 2011, the Smart CSOs Lab has functioned as a space for activists and people from across civil society to reflect on the effectiveness of their work to achieve long-lasting change and to explore new more effective strategies. The network has evolved since then and now includes a diverse range of civil society leaders from a variety of international organizations such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, ActionAid, Bread for the World, CONCORD, CIDSE, and ITUC, as well as from grassroots organizations and academia.

These people are seriously engaged in finding ways to solve global issues like climate change, poverty, and human rights, etc. They realize that the ways their organizations (or civil society sector) are trying to fix these problems do not seem to work anymore: inequality is rising globally, and climate change is seriously threatening the future of human civilization. These activists believe that while they have won many battles, we as humanity are losing the planet (meaning that while the world would be worse off without the battles that have been won, in the end things are not improving, but only getting less bad than they would have been without these actions). These activists and change agents have the energy to do something about it.

Smart CSOs acts as a community of practice and as a learning lab to experiment with new strategies aimed at directly addressing these concerns. While the thinking of the lab is constantly evolving, the people who are committed to it share a common vision and framework for change so as to orient themselves when exploring new strategies: The Great Transition.

3. The Great Transition – a comprehensive vision to tackle multiple crises

Nobody knows exactly how we will achieve a sustainable world or what it will look like. There is need for a broad diversity of ideas, approaches, and policies. Indeed, differences in history, culture, geography, and the like will both ensure and require many different visions and pathways. However, the more CSOs can agree on the core values and principles for a transition to sustainability, the more successful they will be as change agents.

The so-called Great Transition constitutes a flexible vision for a sustainable global economy and society. It was originally developed by the Global Scenario Group,[5] the name being a deliberate analogy to *The Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi's book on the Industrial Revolution.[6] The Great Transition implies that deep systemic change, similar to the Industrial Revolution, is what we need now. It demands that societal values and lifestyles, as well as the structures of the current economic system—which are not set in stone—*must* change if we want to have a serious chance of tackling today's global crises. The currently globally dominant neo-liberal market model and the obsession of growth in the economic system are the two main system logics that require fundamental redesign. The paradigm of the Great Transition has the potential to align a diverse range of CSO sectors, such as development and environmental NGOs, community groups, faith-based organizations, and trade unions under one unifying vision, thereby providing a new source of collective strength.

4. A model to help activists explore effective strategies for change

Campaigns designed for systemic change need to have a long-term perspective and cannot define their success by some specific short-term policy outputs. Furthermore, they need to focus on changing the logic of the debate by pointing out the root causes of the problems rather than the symptoms. And, finally, they need to help mobilize and speak to people in many different parts of society, not just those who are most affected or marginalized. The civil rights movement in the US and the movement to abolish slavery were successful when they were supported by people who were themselves either white or not slaves.

[5]   Raskin, P. *et al.* (2002), *Great Transition: The Promise and Lure of the Times Ahead,* Tellus Institute, Boston. www.gtini-tiative.org/documents/Great_Transitions.pdf

[6]   Polanyi, K. (1944), *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time,* Beacon Press, Boston.

If activists want to develop strategies that achieve change in complex systems, they must better understand the system and also develop processes and structures to continuously learn and improve strategies and interventions. Systems thinking methods and tools can be used to develop strategies based on increased systems understanding. So, as part of the Smart CSOs Lab's dialogue, we use a model that aims to apply systems thinking and help activists have informed discussion on how they can improve their theories and strategies of change.

The model's purpose is primarily to help activists develop, refine, and improve their theories of change when designing system-change strategies. Or, in other words, it is about learning what different aspects and levels of change have to be taken into account and how activists have to change the way they work if they want to become successful change agents for an eco-solidarity economy.

Multi-level model: A systemic transition to a truly sustainable and just economy

CULTURE

Old culture
Values, frames and worldviews of consumerism, marketisation, (national) self interest and growth

New culture
Values, frames and worldviews of wellbeing, sufficiency and (global) solidarity

REGIMES

Old unsustainable economic system
Dominant political, economic & social institutions

New eco-solidarity economy

NICHES

Seeds of the new economy
Sufficiency and solidarity economy, the Commons, new democratic governance etc.

Economic system is path dependent, self stabilising and growth and market oriented.

Many niches and often isolated change agents. Niches are tolerated by the mainstream system.

Source: author.

The model works at three levels:

- **Culture**: This is where the current cultural values, frames and worldviews lie. These are currently dominated by consumerism, marketization, nationalism, and self-interest. Here a shift to a culture of sufficiency, wellbeing, and solidarity must emerge to support the transition to the new economy;

- **Regimes**: This is where the dominant political, economic, and social institutions of the old unsustainable economic system lie and where—to succeed in the transition—the institutions of the new truly sustainable and just economic system must consolidate;

- **Niches**: These are the protected spaces where the seeds of the new system emerge and are experimented, and where—in the case of a successful transition—the most promising innovations become stronger and get sufficient support to eventually institutionalize.

The model is based on the understanding that all three levels are important for a transition to the new economic system. Each of the levels holds important *core messages* of which we must be aware:

- **Culture:** Activists, organizations, and campaigns need to embody the values of the new system to support the transition. The current reality is that they are still too often communicating and representing the values of self-interest, consumerism, and growth, thereby helping to perpetuate the current culture;

- **Regimes:** Institutions are highly path-dependent and self-stabilizing, and they generally reject fundamental transformation. Much of the current policy advocacy work of civil society organizations, while successful in promoting incremental changes, is (or would be) ineffective when it comes to promoting systemic change. By playing the political game, they cannot expect to make effective contributions to change;

- **Niches:** While there are a growing number of experiments with alternative economic models, these are normally either tolerated by the mainstream institutions or co-opted by the system to play by the market rules. In many civil society organizations there is a lack of understanding of the emerging radical system innovations and insufficient belief in one's own potential to support them. Civil society needs to find ways to connect, strengthen, and illuminate the pioneers of the new system, and thus increase their potential so that the seeds of the new economy become systems of influence.

Professional organizations should much more strategically engage and support the emerging and existing movements that can play a role in and become coherent voices for systemic change. We need many more spaces of deep learning and for strategizing about how to support the Great Transition.

The main value of the model becomes apparent when we look at it as a whole and explore the existing and potential feedback loops between the three change levels. Here the main message is that a successful Great Transition will require strong positive feedback loops among all levels. It will require strong impetus from a cultural shift and strengthening of the niches in order to create a virtuous circle of feedback loops that will eventually unlock the institutional lock-ins at the regimes level.

The reverse message is that the model loses most of its value if we interpret it in a simplistic way, *e.g.* by classifying any given civil society strategy or approach into one of the three levels without evaluating what core message the change level holds and what feedback loops it might create, support, or weaken.

5. Working on systemic change requires new ways of evaluation

Clearly, traditional ways of measuring success in civil society organizations and funding mechanisms have to be critically reviewed if we agree to adopt a system-change perspective and a normative framework like the Great Transition.

To create new monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, civil society organizations need to work with grant-making organizations to develop a common understanding of suitable theories of change for systemic change (see above).

While improving scientific understanding of complex processes is vital, the fact of the matter is that uncertainty is an unavoidable part of systemic challenges. Hence, new monitoring and evaluation tools need to incorporate uncertainty and cannot be focused entirely on narrow single-issue outputs.

Furthermore, M&E for systemic change should evaluate how well, fast, and honestly learning is being captured, made openly available, and used by the organization and beyond, the aim being to enable civil society to continuously improve their theories of change.

Because the ultimate success of the Great Transition can only be known in the long run and because the individual contribution of any given campaign is most likely impossible to measure, M&E needs to take their theories of change as the basis to formulate aims that seem plausible milestones on the pathway of the Great Transition. Because the Great Transition has to be seen as an experimental process, not achieving the milestones should not mean failure, but rather serve to change and improve our theories of change (learning as a focus of evaluation).

The potential of a campaign to achieve systemic change can be discussed and evaluated with the help of the above multi-level model. The following questions are crucial when evaluating the design of campaigns and projects:

1) Is the campaign/project pointing towards the underlying logic (root causes) of the problems it aims to shift?

2) How well is the project/campaign embracing the full complexity of social change?

- *Is the strategy consciously taking into account the three levels of the model and attempting to develop synergies among the three levels?*

3) How conscious is the project/campaign in embracing the cultural dimension of change?

- *Is the project/campaign avoiding the communication of values and frames of consumerism, neoliberalism, and self-interest?*

- *Is the project/campaign framed towards the root causes of the problem it tries to shift?*

- *Is the project's/campaign's communication strengthening helpful frames and avoiding the strengthening of unhelpful ones?*

- *Is the project/campaign avoiding emphasis on "us" vs "them" as its main frame? If the campaign wants to empower people to collectively redesign the economic system, it needs to work towards a realization that we are all part of the system.*

4) Is the project/campaign truly rethinking the role advocacy and lobbying should take, in comparison to movement-building actions.

- *Is the project/campaign carefully considering the trade-offs between possible short-term wins and a potential long-term negative effect from reinforcing the broken political institutions?*

- *If the project/campaign is focused on a change in public policy, is the policy goal supportive of a deeper transition (i.e. towards a commons and sufficiency economy) and does it avoid supporting piecemeal actions?*

- *Is the project/campaign clearly trying to build or strengthen a movement for systemic change?*

- *Is the project/campaign supporting the pioneers and seeds of the new economy?*

To conclude, the multi-level model can help activists assess their current strategies compared to their potential to encourage (or hinder) a systemic transition, can support strategic conversations about possible new system-change strategies and how these could eventually mutually reinforce each other, and can contribute to constant evaluation and improvement of an organization's strategies and campaigns.

While the model is a useful and flexible tool for strategic conversations, it is not an all-explaining wonder box. It has to be populated little by little with knowledge and wisdom from theory and practice to improve understanding about more effective activism for systemic change. New methods and tools of M&E have to build on this understanding.

2. Methodological Innovation: Changing Focus to Evaluate How Interventions Contribute to Social Change

Introduction

Fleur Ferry

Methodological innovation is an ambitious and complex subject at the confluence of basic research and the need for experimentation. In this instance, the issue is not to clarify what innovation is exactly, in its essence, but rather to try to consider things with a pragmatic and technical perspective in order to provide some points of reference for daily practice.

Our intention is to start from the premise that methodological innovation requires novel approaches—that is, not only fresh perspectives, but also new instruments and perhaps even a change in attitude.

Within the broad field of innovation, the question of evaluating the contributions of interventions to social change is a fundamental one. Until recently, we had been under the impression that the evaluation of the actions alone was no longer sufficient and that it is necessary to see further down the road, to expand our horizons, and to go "beyond". The present situation is now leading us to that same conclusion, to the point that it has almost become a necessity.

Personally, I have been working for local authorities for quite some time, and have noticed some changes in evaluation practices, though these changes do not always go in the same direction. Indeed, the evaluation of the public policies of local and regional authorities remains a "grey area", and its reality is completely heterogeneous. Evaluations remain an underused or even disparaged instrument among certain authorities, as well as in certain specific fields of expertise. And with the growing financial constraints of these past years, evaluations are sometimes even considered non-essential. In contrast, other local authorities have made evaluations systematic and have even set up dedicated cross-cutting support services. In certain cases, among the leaders in the field, even evaluations of change are carried out. Within the diverse activities of local public policy, international aid is actually the area in which innovation is the strongest. Until recently, international cooperation by local and regional authorities was hardly regulated, often considered optional, and frequently put into question. International cooperation by local and regional authorities has therefore had to remain flexible and to constantly adapt by experimenting and implementing new practices.

Within the same general trend, the current context is pushing both local and regional authorities to question the relevance of their interventions. The latest territorial reform has brought about many questions, and certain local and regional authorities have undergone profound changes due to shifts in the political majority. Specifically, following the latest municipal elections, many

instances of cooperation were suspended or terminated, and the budget allocated to external aid has melted away. Authorities have found themselves in a situation of extreme urgency, in which they have had to demonstrate clearly that the interventions that they have funded have genuinely contributed to social change—in a profound way, on both sides of the development equation (North and South). NGOs have also been affected by these interrogations, as they too face a growing scarcity of resources, in part funded by public subsidies. In this alarming context, evaluation cannot be considered a luxury; it is, very much to the contrary, an essential tool that makes it possible both to improve the quality of aid and to better explain the meaning of the actions carried out.

In light of this, what instruments should be used? What new methodologies might be invented to evaluate the contribution of interventions to change? Each of the contributions here provides some of the answers. Moctar Diallo, Country Director for Aide et Action International / Africa and national coordinator for PROJEG (the cooperative multi-stakeholder program for Guinea), has highlighted the major methodological challenge of the evaluation of multi-stakeholder programs. Elisabeth Hofmann has followed a similar path: having also focused her research on the evaluation of multi-stakeholder subjects, she suggests going beyond the limits imposed by the "traditional" sector-based approach. Finally, the contributions of Bruno de Reviers and Maria Cristina Temmink provide a complementary perspective—the former thanks to his expertise in supporting program participants in monitoring and evaluating change-inducing dynamics, and the latter with her specific way of consistently amalgamating research and action in order to bring about methodological innovation within the projects and organizations for which she provides guidance.

These contributions show how important one's perspective on the issue really is. For a long time, the paradigm of development has focused on "doing for others". This paradigm is changing. However, though intimately linked to the development process, evaluation is just barely keeping up with that transformation, for both cultural and contextual reasons. Evaluation as a tool must help support both actions and participants. Evaluations must be instruments in the service of ideas, not an end in themselves. The reasons for their use must be obvious to people, and they must allow for both experimentation and innovation in order to better bring about change.

2.1. Evaluating the Contribution of PCPAs to Social Change – The Case of the Guinea PCPA (PROJEG)

Moctar Diallo

Introduction

What type of social change (or social changes) is (are) to be brought about by cooperative multi-stakeholder programs (*Programmes concertés pluri-acteurs* - PCPAs)? How are these changes apprehended or measured? What is the general outcome of PCPAs? What lessons are there to be learnt in terms of these programs and how they are evaluated?

In this presentation I seek to provide answers to these questions based on my first-hand experience with PROJEG, a PCPA launched in Guinea. After describing PROJEG, I will address the methods that were used to measure social change, present a general assessment of the program and, finally, share a few lessons that emerge from this case study.

PROJEG and the challenges of Guinean civil society

PROJEG was launched in 2007[7] against the backdrop of the near bankruptcy of the Guinean state, which had lost its credibility and legitimacy among its impoverished population. Its elected representatives, both at a local level and in the parliament, had lost their popular support. The resources obtained by mining (33% of public revenues) are consistently misappropriated or squandered. Human rights violations have been rife for decades, and any political opposition—and especially that from the country's youth—is brutally suppressed. The voices of civil solidarity organizations (CSOs) are the only ones that are heard and listened to in this context of violence and despair. Political parties have all but disappeared from the public arena. Guinea's neighboring countries (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea Bissau) have been crippled by long years of civil war, which have either just recently finished or are still

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[7]   The process of setting it up started in 2002.

running their course. Cooperative ties with developed countries and multilateral institutions have been suspended due to poor governance and the lack of democracy.

Informed by the insights provided by the preliminary evaluation,[8] Guinean civil society stakeholders have given themselves the following challenges:

- To participate in the peace-building process and the consolidation of practices that are consistent with human rights and the principles of good governance;

- To help foster an institutional environment that is conducive to diversified and multi-stakeholder free speech;

- To position civil society as a key player in the drafting and implementation of the country's poverty reduction strategy;

- To have youth participate in the management and decision-making bodies of local institutions and NGOs.

As is clear from this exposé, PROJEG aims to bring about changes that would make: i) civil society organizations both organized and widely listened to, and thus capable of fostering a State that would respect the principles of democracy, human rights, and good economic governance, and ii) youth a recognized contributor to political decision-making, including within the councils of local communities.

Does PROJEG have objectives that are both clearly defined and aligned with the challenges of civil society, a strategy, and the instruments necessary to ensure that the supported actions contribute to bringing about the desired changes?

Measuring changes

PROJEG has used three instruments for the monitoring and evaluation of the program: a logical framework, monitoring and evaluation practices, and external evaluations.

The logical framework

The logical framework was designed to facilitate the collection of data giving information on the implementation of activities that are mainly supported through the use of the support fund. At that stage, no link had been built between the challenges facing civil society and the expected results—a shortfall identified during the 2010 mid-term evaluation of the program.

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[8] The purpose of the preliminary study was to define the terms of the future program (PCPA Guinea) to be submitted to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE). An initial analysis of Guinean civil society was conducted, forums for dialogue with the public authorities and the parties involved were identified, and ways in which the Guinea PCPA could be organized and steered were proposed.

PROJEG performance indicators

To facilitate, within a multi-stakeholder partnership, the participation of Guinean civil society and its youth in the formulation and implementation of sectoral public development policies.

R1 The operational capacity and good governance of Guinean CSOs supported by PROJEG are reinforced.	**1.** 100% of the CSOs supported by PROJEG have adequate supporting documentation. **2.** All the CSOs supported by PROJEG have achieved the results defined in their action plan.
R2 Forums for dialogue and networking constructed within a multi-stakeholder partnership are up and running.	**1.** The sessions scheduled in the context of the consultation mechanisms of PROJEG are held (Steering Committee, General Assembly, Regional Council) according to the rules and principles of the program. **2.** The decisions and initiatives taken within the consultation schemes are implemented and achieve their results. **3.** The number of partnerships between French NGOs and Guinean CSOs has doubled, up from 11.

Source: author.

The monitoring and evaluation practices

The purpose of the monitoring and evaluation practices is to define the key performance indicators for each desired outcome and to elaborate how these indicators are to be documented. These practices have helped define the responsibilities of the program's stakeholders in monitoring the activities funded by PROJEG. They also cover issues such as identifying the sources of data and how to verify them, specifying collection sites and the people in charge of the data collection (which can range from PROJEG employees, members of CSOs, and program partners to officials working in decentralized government bodies). The participation of these stakeholders in the monitoring of the program's activities has the advantage of stimulating discussion within the regional colleges,[9] between the members of the program and the CSOs that have formalized a relationship with PROJEG. The college is a place for peer accountability.

External evaluations

PROJEG has gone through two of these contractual evaluations, commissioned by the funding body (AFD). The first one, or mid-term evaluation, was carried out in 2010, and the second, or final evaluation, corresponds to the end of the 2008–2012 agreement.

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[9]   The regional colleges are forums for discussion and exchange of ideas. Four sessions are organized every year. They facilitate networking between organizations as well as further reflection on the themes and activities of the program.

The evaluation questions of the mid-term evaluation were based on the criteria of efficiency, relevance, and program ownership. The questions can be divided into three categories:

- The systems for the steering and implementation of PROJEG, such as the roles of the Steering Committee and the Executive Secretariat, that of the program leaders in ensuring its transparency, and the management and allocation of the support funds;

- The capacity of the program to achieve its results by means of the initiatives it supports and the role of the monitoring and evaluation practices in verifying that the main lines of PROJEG are well implemented and undergoing continuous improvement;

- The capacity of the program to: i) ensure the continued existence of the regional colleges and to make them a forum for diversified free speech and the construction of local initiatives and partnerships; ii) take charge of youth issues through its governance, its consultative frameworks, and its instruments for the support of initiatives; and iii) adapt to a context of socio-political instability.

This evaluation made it possible to reformulate the objectives of PROJEG and build a clearer link with the challenges of civil society identified during the preliminary study. The objectives provided by this evaluation and validated by the Steering Committee of PROJEG are the following:

General objective: That Guinean civil society, and particularly the youth organizations within multi-stakeholder partnerships, may weigh on defining and implementing public policies, ensuring that these policies contribute to the sustainable development of the country and to the reduction of inequalities and poverty.

Specific objective 1: To lead civil society to contribute more specifically to the development of the most strategic policies and public administrations on the national, regional, and local level.

Specific objective 2: To support civil society in consolidating democracy and peace-building in order to foster public debate and the efficient implementation of public policies.

This evaluation helped improve the efficiency of the program and bring about a greater coherence between objectives. It has shifted thinking on several subjects, including the following:

- Policies or public administration that the action PROJEG should target;
- Capabilities and skills that should be reinforced among CSOs;
- Type of actions and groups that should be given priority support to achieve these objectives;
- Linkages to be built between local and national levels in the supported projects.

As a result, the overall efficiency of the support fund was improved.

The final assessment has chosen "the efficiency of PROJEG support to the construction of durable social dynamics" as the scope of evaluation. The program stakeholders consider it

necessary to be able to gauge the potential longevity of current social dynamics and find how to facilitate them. The evaluation questions were centered on the understanding of Guinean social dynamics and the capacity of PROJEG to take into account the external factors that could influence them.

This evaluation, which would seem more likely to enable us to analyze the changes brought about by PROJEG after five years of operation, will mostly be an analysis of the situation of the social dynamics that will have been brought about or bolstered by PROJEG.

What is the outcome of the evaluation practices and their instruments?

General assessment

The findings that emerge from our experiences of evaluation reveal a gap between the methodologies used and their capacity to evaluate the changes brought about by the PCPAs. Explanations for this difficulty to evaluate changes are as follows:

Making the challenges legible

During the first three years of the program (the pilot phase and the two initial years of operation), there were no clearly defined objectives that addressed the outcomes targeted by the program. As stated in the pilot-phase document: *"The aim of PROJEG is that the actors of Guinean civil society fully participate in the development process and the fight against poverty and inequality; that they may be a real source of proposals, alongside the State, to help define the public development policies; and that they may make a meaningful contribution to the implementation of these public policies"*. Professionalization, advocacy and influence on public policy, and youth development were selected as the priority areas of intervention of the program.

The initial objectives were unclear, and no relevant indicators in terms of observed changes were defined. As a result, the logical framework failed to be an efficient instrument to monitor and evaluate the program. Moreover, the expectation of having indicators that would be both quantitative and very factual made them very difficult to define, and even once they were documented, the chosen indicators did not supply any information on the capacity of the program to bring about change.

Taking the stakeholders into account

The PCPA carries out its activities through its members and the initiatives it supports. Achieving the results it intends depends on the ability of its members to take part in dynamics that could potentially bring about change. What follows is that on the one hand, the need arises for sharing issues/objectives that bear these changes, and, on the other, the need arises for a proper definition of the role of the program participants in the monitoring and evaluation practices. There must be an ongoing exchange between the stakeholders of the program (Steering Committee, Executive Committee, members) in terms of the issues that PROJEG addresses.

Questions must be raised regarding the capacity of the actions or projects supported to change the relations among citizens on the one hand, and between citizens, the civil administration, and elected representatives on the other.

After a period of three years, certain actions carried out by local CSOs with the support of PROJEG have led to the departure of local council presidents accused of misappropriating funds derived from mining activities. These situations have provided a wealth of learning opportunities on the relationships between stakeholders and the power relations strategies at play, but documenting them has proven impossible. Moreover, any such changes are of an unstable nature, as they are based only on local recognition and the weakness of the public administration. They question us as much on the instruments and methods we use to identify and understand these slow-moving processes, as they do on our capacity to address and accompany the factors of sustainability or continuity of the changes brought about by the program.

Institutional changes can be viewed as another aspect of social change if they proceed from the cooperative multi-stakeholder actions. Such changes are most often brought about by the involvement of CSOs and reflect profound social changes or shifts in the balance of power. This can be observed in the case of laws that penalize female circumcision or criminalize torture. These laws offer the advantage of imparting a lasting impact on changes as well as providing an avenue for legal redress when they are violated, which encourages the watchdog function taken on by the CSOs.

Lessons learned

The PCPAs seek to produce social changes inspired by the values and principles of fairness, democracy, transparency, and respect for human rights in contexts where the political and community agents develop practices that counter these principles and values.

This aspect of PCPAs as instruments that bring about change is only scarcely taken into consideration when they are formulated, implemented, and evaluated. In that regard, the evaluation of PCPAs, their various stages, and the instruments used to implement them are clearly essential.

The **preliminary evaluation** represents the founding stage of the collective project backed by the PCPA. Indeed, it brings together the local and national stakeholders of civil society for a situational analysis (the initial situation when the project is launched) with a view of producing the social changes that civil society yearns for. The evaluation must therefore take into account the aspect of the PCPA as a project/process and facilitate the elaboration of methods that make it possible to repeatedly question the ability of the program to bring about changes through its policies and features, and the stakeholders' place in shifting environments. The drafting of the terms of reference of the preliminary study then becomes a core element of the start of the process of setting up PCPAs, as soon as it becomes involved in formulating a vision and targets for substantial change.

The **construction of the logical framework** must give all the program stakeholders who are involved in social change projects the possibility to build programming that makes the linkages among challenges, objectives, specific objectives, sub-targets, activities, and indicators legible. The monitoring and evaluation practices that follow more easily define the responsibilities of each participant in addition to their deadlines.

The contractual evaluations (both mid-term and final) are collective moments to review and analyze the roadmap and the resources committed by the program, with the intention of bringing about the desired outcomes, all the while taking into account the broader context of implementation. AFD plays a crucial role in this process, enforcing the observance of the approach that starts with the preliminary evaluation. AFD must, as far as possible, ensure that the contractual evaluations help verify the contribution of the program to actually bringing about change.

The monitoring and evaluation process raises the question of what is measured and to whom the program is held accountable. To help the program achieve its objectives, it is worthwhile to effectively measure the long-term results of the projects supported. These elements do not directly inform us of the ability of the program to proceed in a correct manner, however, given that the development of the members of the program does not depend only on the actions of the program. As regards the funding bodies, should other indicators also be developed to inform on the implementation and the appropriate development of the program?

The **financing instruments** must play a crucial place in producing and guiding social dynamics. Special care is required when using these instruments, so as to avoid favoring donor-recipient relationships between the program and civil society stakeholders. Beyond its financial aspect, the fund must be an instrument to achieve real results and implement a strategy.

The fund can also be a political instrument by i) reinforcing the recognition of the program and the mobilization of CSOs, ii) making it possible to better know the various territories, stakeholders, and their needs, iii) improving responsiveness in a country facing serious political crises and recurring human rights violations.

It can be an instrument to provide structure by i) improving capacity building through the sharing of expertise, ii) decompartmentalizing stakeholders by way of the emergence of innovative partnerships and the enforcement of partnership criteria, and iii) stimulating CSOs to look for partnerships beyond their usual circles, which can bring down the barriers between some stakeholders (CSOs and elected officials, CSOs and administrative bodies, and the like).

It can be an instrument capable of bringing to life the principles of PROJEG, thanks to the rules and features governing the selection of the projects to be supported.

2.2. How to Evaluate the Contribution of Gender-Aware Development Actions to Social Change?

Elisabeth Hofmann

This presentation attempts to shed light on three lines of inquiry: the way in which NGOs induce or contribute to social change as it relates to the social relations of the sexes,[10] the methods of evaluation of such contributions to social change, and the relevant support mechanisms to help improve such practices of evaluation.

Before getting started, clarification of what it means to "take gender into account" in NGO interventions is useful. A generally accepted classification system by Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996) puts forth three categories:

— Gender-blind policies are ones in which gender is not considered—those that lack sex-differentiated data for example, as when members of the same family are counted as a single homogenous group during the research process and the head of the household speaks for all the members. In the absence of these distinctions, such projects have ended up reinforcing the inequalities between men and women. Men are indeed in a better position to take advantage of the opportunities brought about by the projects and thus improve certain aspects of their living conditions more than their female counterparts;

— Gender-neutral policies are ones in which gender as a variable is included in the diagnostic, the monitoring, and the evaluation of the project, in such a way as to benefit both men and women equally and avoid increasing the discrepancies between them;

— Gender-aware policies are ones whose primary or secondary objectives are to reduce forms of inequality between the sexes, and in so doing improve the situation of women.

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[10] The term "*rapports sociaux de sexe*" (literally, "social relations of the sexes") was used in the French academic milieu before the term "gender relations" became accepted.

Only the third type of project intentionally acts in favor of positive social change in terms of gender equity. It seeks to reinforce the rights of women and/or to moderate the uneven power relations to which they are subjected. As regards the first type of project, it is important to remember that the forms of social change it generates can actually be detrimental to the living conditions of women if they increase the gender gap in terms of decision-making power, income, or independence. As gender is not listed in the terms of reference for many projects, the unintended effects can be underreported. Not all evaluators are sensitive to the various forms and repercussions of gender biases. Incidentally, they fail to use the appropriate tools or practice the methods of participative data collection that have been developed for exactly this purpose—and which enable women to voice their opinions and analytic reflections in the exchanges, preferably in a collective context.

How are gender-aware interventions by NGOs likely to create or to contribute to social change?

Multiple and diverse, gender relations are present in every society, in all domains of public and private life. They vary according to both time and space, and depending on the sub-groups and contexts in question. Complex interactions arise between two individuals (in a relationship, for example), between members of society at large (laws and social norms), or at an even larger scale (international migrations of domestic workers, etc.), and at every intermediate level (the extended family, the local association, or the community, to name a few). Indeed, gender relations express themselves in concert with class relations and are intricately bound to other factors, such as ethnic origin, religion, able-bodiedness, urban-rural divides, and the like. Status, roles, and interactions with others are also dependent on age, and can vary over one's lifetime. To take just one example, a young, single woman does not interact in the same way as a more mature woman who shares her house with her eldest son and daughter-in-law. A gender-aware approach will consider this intersectional position,[11] taking into account that gender is constructed in relation to other social factors. Females are not one homogenous group. However, within a mixed setting of both females and males, females often occupy a subordinate or disadvantaged position in comparison with males.

When it comes to gender, social change can take on many different forms. Some examples of this are: increased participation by women in decision-making processes, rises in income that women are able to decide how to spend, the voting on and enforcement of laws that protect women from violence (of which domestic violence and the denial of access to education are just two), greater contribution by men in household tasks, and active involvement in the support of one's HIV-positive spouse in the case of serodiscordant couples. As with any form of social change, both the private and the public sphere are affected, because changes in one domain will impact the other. Each project has its own sphere of intervention: violence, micro-credit, agriculture, infrastructure, political participation, and so on.

....

[11] The notion of "intersectionality" (Crenshaw and Bonis, 2005) aims to convey the "crossing" of various social characteristics of individuals and groups.

Development actions in each different domain can contribute to gender-related social change. First, by way of actions that can benefit women directly: seminars, support services, access to credit, medical care, counselling, among others. Then, through strengthening the resources and skills of active community members in a gender-aware manner, or by way of advocacy and popular communication of the importance of gender in every step of the process, from diagnostic to monitoring and evaluation. Diversity—and even better, equal representation of men and women—should be a core value in the processes of decision-making and team-building. This could mean providing opportunities for women to enter certain technical fields if too few candidates are available. Finally, professional skills in gender awareness must be strengthened, and explicitly included in the job qualifications of local, expatriate, and head office development workers. In order to promote significant contribution to gender-related social change, the protagonists of change must have the means and the ability to justify, to providers of funds, the cost of the added value that such policies provide.

Certain forms of social change are often targeted in gender-aware interventions:

- Improvements in access to and control of resources;
- Improvements in women's rights, both formally (in terms of legislation), and in practice (application of the laws in place);
- Improvements in protection against gender-related violence.

In order to achieve these objectives, different strategies exist and can be combined with one another. One of them began in the 1960s and is based on the notion of *empowerment*. The term has been used by African-Americans in their struggle for equal rights and against poverty. It has also been taken up by Latin American feminist movements, and in discourses such as that of public health among First Nations peoples in Canada.

Paolo Freire's 1970 description of the "pedagogy of the oppressed" is not unlike the notion of empowerment by the acquisition of critical consciousness, which is in effect a transformation of conscience through education as an exercise in individual freedom: *"Authentic [...] liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it"*. Naila Kabeer in Asia, Magdalena León in Latin America, and Sarah Longwe in Africa are just a few of the authors who have theorized the concept of emancipation in the context of women's movements in the South. Diasporas also strongly contribute to its development. We are witnessing very successful initiatives that have adapted this impetus, which originally emerged from feminism in the North, to local contexts in the South.

The relevance of the notion of empowerment proceeds from its multi-dimensional character. Indeed, despite some progress in terms of gender equality, realities remain troubling: many women have little or no education, no control over their fertility, no personal resources; they face physical, emotional, and sexual violence; and—in still a large number of countries—they have a legal status that is inferior to that of men. The education of girls is an absolute precondition for the empowerment of women, yet, despite increases in school enrolment rates, education standards and learning conditions are still vastly unsatisfactory. Women's organizations in the South often remain fragile and subject to political instrumentalization.

Empowerment refers to two complementary and interlinked dimensions: the individual dimension, which refers to the power that a woman has over her own life and her ability to make decisions within her relationship, her family, and society at large; and the collective dimension, which refers to the power of groups (of men or women) in a collective vision of social change, in addition to greater social justice for both women and men. The notion of empowerment can be broken down into different sub-categories in order to guide the design of evaluations for development projects.

Diagram 5. Linkage of empowerment dimensions with social actors
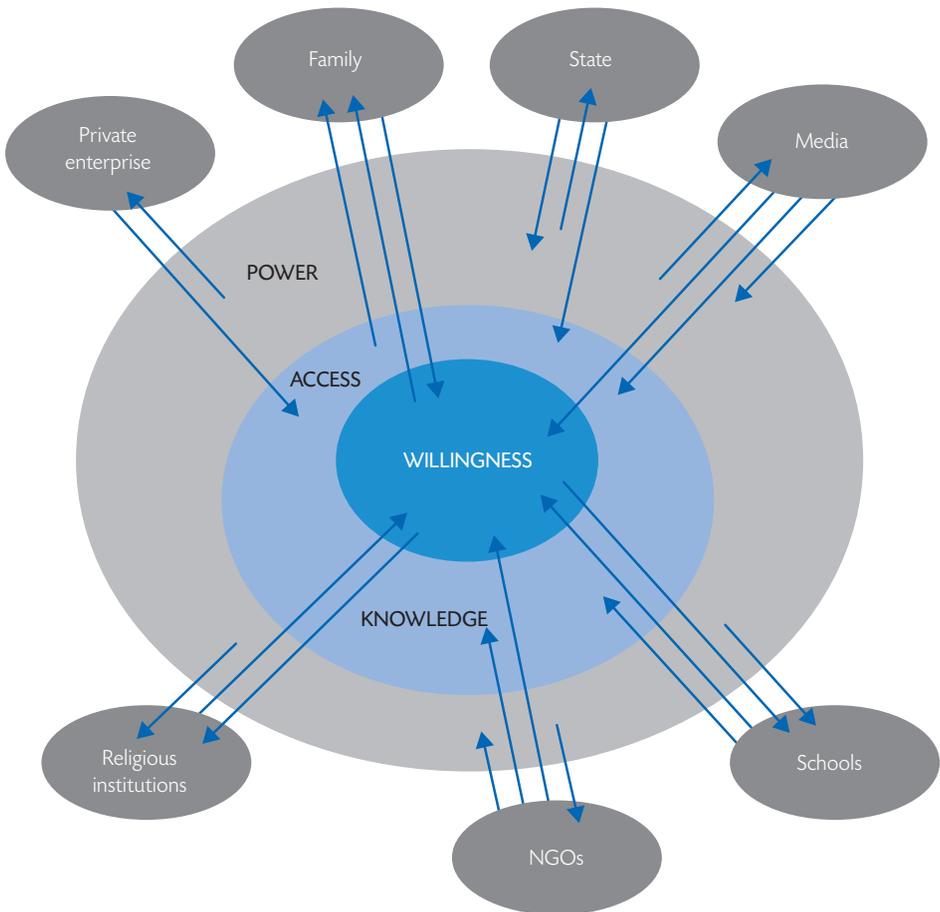
Source: Recherche Empowerment: ATOL, 2002.

Among these sub-categories, the one put forth by the Belgian development agency provides a model of gender-aware social change through the reinforcement of four aspects of empowerment (Charlier and Caubergs, 2007):

- Access: Includes economic means, better health, and time efficiency; access to services such as credit, information, education, professional development, health clinics, markets, and the like;

- Knowledge and Know-How: Includes understanding, practical knowledge, intellectual resources, and the ability to apply such resources and to transpose them into actions or further resources;

- Willingness: Includes psychological strength, values, self-esteem, self-image, awareness of one's life project in addition to the challenges facing one's community, state of mind (*être*), and the ability to mobilize the latter for the benefit of others (*savoir-être*);

- Power: Includes the ability to make decisions for oneself and for others, to be responsible, to exercise choice in one's actions, and to be able to draw upon the resources that follow from one's level of access, knowledge, and desire.

Empowerment is not an end-point or a state to be attained, but a non-linear process that development projects aim to support. Diagram 5 illustrates the linkage of certain dimensions of empowerment together with other social actors. The arrows indicate the influences of various types of actors on the different aspects of empowerment, in addition to emphasizing the reciprocal interactions in terms of social and societal transformation.

How to evaluate these approaches...

...at individual and collective levels

In order to produce or reinforce social change in favor of equality and gender equity, projects must aim to further the social relations that individuals maintain in conjunction with their socially constructed, sexed identities. The individual dimension is unavoidable. Accent is put on relations between people of different sex, but this must also take into account relations between people of the same sex, insofar as they are influenced by gender. Examples of this include uneven power relations between people of the same sex due to gender stereotypes, such as unfair restrictions imposed on a young girl by her stepmother, or homophobic violence.

Gender-aware initiatives start with the personal dimension in order to produce social change that ultimately also has an effect on the broader collective dimension. It is in reinforcing the "willingness" and the "power" that efforts to increase "access" and "knowledge" can have an effect on women's lives. Strengthening these four aspects allows women to become more capable and motivated to invest their energy in collective organizations, to take on responsibility, to mobilize other people, and so on. In addition to the individual dimension, understanding the collective dimension is essential to influence societal transformation, to multiply individual

changes, and to make lasting effects on social change. Both of these levels must be taken into account in gender-aware evaluation.

...according to a subset of empowerment

Gender awareness can be evaluated based on different aspects of empowerment (see Diagram 5 for the four subsets of empowerment, or the Annex for a description of the four types of power). As an example, the guide for the former Belgian Commission for Women and Development (Charlier and Caubergs, 2007) recommends working with these four subsets, at the individual and the collective levels respectively, at different stages in the project.

First, in the diagnostic phase, by focusing on the four aspects of access, knowledge, willingness, and power at both the individual and collective levels; second, in the project realization phase, so that the project responds to (or at least, takes into account) the various weaknesses in the population as regards the four aspects in their two dimensions; and finally, by evaluating the four aspects and the two dimensions within the same grid.

That said, the other variant of empowerment, which draws upon a quadripartite model inspired by Foucault's work on power, clearly aims to articulate the individual dimension for three of the categories ("to", "in", and "over") and the collective dimension for the fourth type (which is referred to here as "alongside"). Both variants could easily serve as evaluation grids for gender awareness, because their multidimensionality enables them to link both durable and structuring changes.

Diagrams 6 and 7 have been taken from Charlier and Cauberg's 2007 study, which features two levels: the individual and the collective, in order to put forth a set of empowerment indicators that will enable the evaluation of gender-aware social change.

Evaluating the aspects of "access" and "knowledge" at the individual level (as in the category "power to") is already part of a number of evaluation practices. It is about seeing that the project beneficiaries have better access to credit, increased incomes, improved knowledge and skills, and the like. The more challenging part of evaluating empowerment is the "willingness" and the "power" (or the "power in" and the "power alongside", in the subsets of power). On the one hand, social construction is central here: daring to defend a point of view in public, the image a woman has of herself, and the courage to play a different role from what is normally expected, for example. On the other hand, social mobility and group structuring are being alluded to: social cohesion within collective structures, the nature of dialogue and processes of consultation, and the sharing of decision-making power, to name a few.

Diagram 6. Empowerment indicators—individual level

Overview–Inventory	Program Input	Increased Options Life Projects	
		Program Results	Impact on Quality of Life
1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Economic Resources	Economic Resources	ACCESS	ACCESS
Human Resources	Human Resources	KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW	KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW
Sociopolitical Resources	Sociopolitical Resources	WILLINGNESS	WILLINGNESS
		POWER	POWER
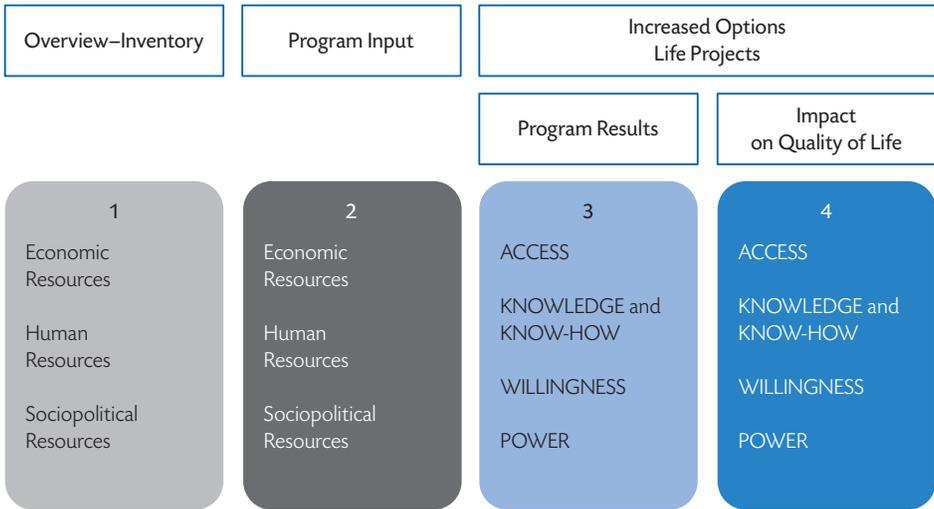
Diagram 7. Empowerment indicators—collective level

Overview–Inventory	Program Input	Societal Choices Gender Equality	
		Program Results	Impact on Social Justice
1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Economic Resources	Economic Resources	ACCESS	ACCESS
Human Resources	Human Resources	KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW	KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW
Sociopolitical Resources	Sociopolitical Resources	WILLINGNESS	WILLINGNESS
		POWER	POWER
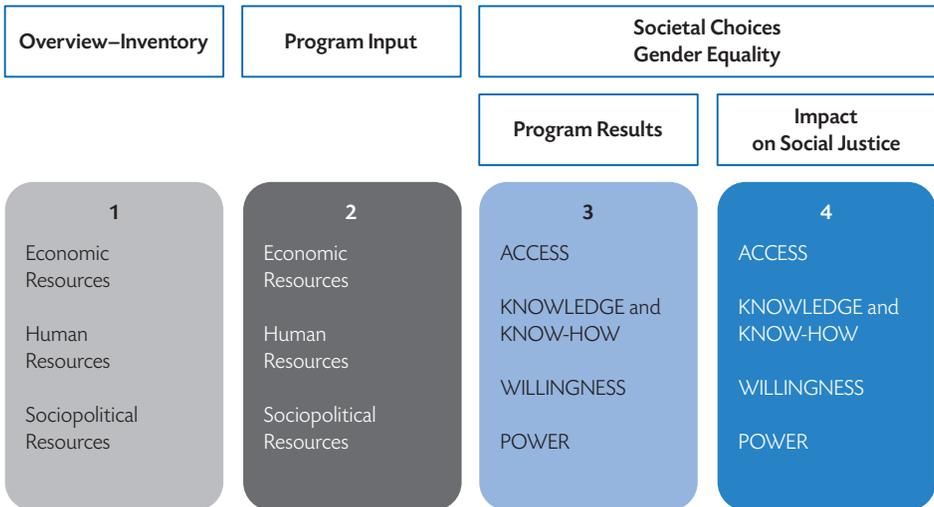
Source: Charlier and Caubergs (2007).

... taking into account the evolving nature of perceptions

Evaluation aims to detect the changes in socially constructed feminine and masculine identities and the social relations that constitute them. This aspect of evaluation draws upon people's perceptions—mostly (but not solely) those of women. During the evaluation of an in-process or finished project, the focus is on the changes that the people in question may have experienced, in addition to the (often perceived) reasons for such changes. From this, the significance of the project in terms of its contribution can be derived. To illustrate this in action: it is important to go beyond the observation that certain beneficiaries are more comfortable speaking in public after the intervention than they had been before, but to examine how the women perceive the changes and why they have occurred, in their opinion. Is it only because the project has set up a "round-table" discussion in which everyone must speak? Do the women affected by such interactions appreciate the change, or does the structure make them uncomfortable? Is it important for them? The responses to such questions about the reasons for the observed changes are sometimes difficult to interpret, because they tend to highlight various triggering factors as opposed to bringing out a clear analysis of the underlying causes (which ultimately enable understanding the contribution to change that the project has made).

In order to "detect" the evolution of such perceptions, evaluations utilize semi-structured interviews and focus groups in addition to less conventional means such as artistic expression. Fruitful exercises have been undertaken in which self-evaluation methods have led the people involved to understand how change has occurred in their lives in general, which can in itself play a role in reinforcing self-esteem (for example, in the case of grids that women are given to fill out on a daily basis). These techniques are part of a formative process of evaluation, in which participative methods of evaluation are not about simply collecting data, but about directly supporting people's increasing awareness of their situation and its development.

Such evaluations are not uniquely focused on the perceptions of change by the women involved. Obtaining feedback from people's social entourage is also very useful. This includes, but is not limited to, spouses, parents, and in-laws, in addition to resource people and community authorities (both formal and traditional), such as nurses, clergy, teachers, village elders, and local elected representatives. These factors are important because one of the frequently-noted critiques of the appropriateness of projects that aim to promote gender awareness is that they support women through a process that can end up putting them at odds with their environment. Evaluation of the project's ability to also facilitate changes in the beneficiaries' wider social milieu (by way of theater performances, for example) can be an important point in the process.

...by way of evaluating participation

Factual measures can be easily taken into account when assessing collective dimensions of social experience: the presence of women in mixed structures, participation in meetings, representation in decision-making processes, and the like. Furthermore, resorting to observations can allow quantitative aspects to surface, which can help in appraising the effectiveness of women's participation in mixed meetings. For example, the evaluation team can observe the physical placement of women and men in the room, the way in which they intervene in discussions (including, but not limited to, when, the number of times, for how long,

and what kind of reactions they receive), the ambiance in general (collegial, or tense, etc.), and the type of leadership they exhibit, among others.

From the point of view of gender equity, evaluation of gender-awareness risks focusing solely on the quantitative dimension of women's participation in mixed meetings and institutions. However, in some contexts, the very nature of a mixed meeting can interfere with or limit women's actual participation, because they would not dare contradict men in a public setting. In these cases, meetings held between the women themselves beforehand that are later represented in the decision-making process can actually have more of an impact in making their opinions heard. Interpretations of the appropriate ratio of women to men thus require particular attention.

Observation of meetings and other opportunities to apprehend the functioning of non-mixed structures such as associations, charities, and community groups is also important. The determination of a strong leader can often give the impression of a dynamic collective, but sometimes it is more in terms of the "power in" an individual rather than of the "power alongside" a number of the members. Furthermore, analysis of the socio-economic status of leaders can reveal other, non-gender-related dynamics: hidden beneath the impression of female empowerment can be a reproduction of traditional structures of domination (for example, a women's association president who is the wife of the head of a clan). Intersectional approaches—which take into account class relations, ethnic relations, caste and hierarchy, age, and the like—enable better understanding of the complexity of the situation.

...with the help of a skilled evaluation team

Cultural ways of life are specific to each and every context in which gender relations appear in both the private and the public domains. Evaluation processes must take them into account. The composition of evaluation teams is important, and it is preferable to include at least one local community member. The gender of the team members is also a non-negligible factor in facilitating or limiting the free expression of the people interviewed, be it individually or collectively. In an ideal situation, all of the members of the evaluation team should have knowledge, skills, and experience with gender awareness. On the one hand, they must master the key concepts: differences between sex and gender; access and control; practical needs and strategic interests; in addition to theoretical tools such as multiple roles, empowerment, social construction, and the like. On the other hand, they must be able to put them to use in the context of evaluation, and be able to adapt them as necessary to each cultural context.

The terms of reference of gender-aware evaluations must explicitly address gender and its effects. This is also true for methodologies designed in response to the terms of reference: the evaluation teams' methodological proposals must be designed to be able to account for gender, for example by way of an entry for empowerment. Participative methods of evaluation should be favored, including, but not limited to, small group discussions, artistic workshops with collective results analysis, and active involvement of beneficiaries in the evaluation feedback and follow-up workshops. Participative methods can be triangulated with more frontal methods of observation, such as data collection by questionnaire. The quality of gender awareness within the methodology must be part of the criteria for the selection of evaluation team members. Furthermore, as per a perspective of transversal integration of gender, these principles must be part of all evaluation processes, and not simply those targeted at gender-aware policies.

Furthering gender awareness in projects and evaluation practices

Reinforcement of gender awareness in projects and evaluation practices often comes up against the constraints of the project approach. The explicitly participative processes necessary for the empowerment of women are difficult to set up within the approaches to projects in which everything is planned and determined in advance (dates, duration, budget, nature of activity and so on). Initiatives that target empowerment aim to reinforce complex processes that cannot entirely be determined in advance.

Nonetheless, certain types of support can still advance gender inclusion within the constraints of the project approach. The first of these is reinforcing the team's gender-awareness skills: understanding gender approaches and related concepts, and the ability to adapt them to real-life, specific situations over the course of the project. Periodic workshops on the topic have so far not been useful in this regard. Instead, "training actions" have had much more lasting effect in that they support participants' learning processes throughout the acquisition and application of new skills in their respective fields.[12] Furthermore, as a complement to the in-house seminars and workshops, reinforcement of gender-awareness skills can also take place through external hiring.

A participatory approach in both the projects and their evaluation is, as mentioned above, fundamental for gender integration. The best preparation for the evaluation of the empowerment of the women involved is to build both reflexive and analytical activities into the project itself.[13] This fulfils the parallel goal of contributing to awareness on behalf of the women involved and makes it possible to look back at their progress later on. Participants can be asked to reflect on the changes in their lives by way of regular group workshops or a personal journal. They can express themselves orally, in writing, through different stages of progression, artistically, or by other means. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation are not limited to instruments of measuring effects, but can have positive repercussions in terms of raising participants' self-awareness. Such processes contribute to their empowerment, and incidentally to the reduction of gender inequality and to fostering social change.

The complexity of these approaches could increase the costs of evaluation and be inhibiting. One of the most effective accompanying measures is to create a fund for this type of evaluation so that gender awareness does not remain a mere intention. Financing the integration of gender awareness in projects and their methods of evaluation can be obtained through appropriate budgeting, which values human resources and the necessary training. Another option is to support the co-financing of gender-aware projects, offering support throughout the stages of design, implementation, monitoring and follow-up, and evaluation. In any case, discourses of gender integration have progressed substantially in recent years, and it is indispensable today to support them with the appropriate means so that awareness of the relations between the sexes can generate the intended effects: contribution to social change to which populations—and within them, women—aspire, all the while respecting both the goals and values advocated.

....

[12] An example of this is professional development seminars held in series of three, each of which lasts one week, over the course of three months, with virtual follow-up and support between the seminars.

[13] Though the majority of gender-aware interventions are aimed at women, other initiatives exist for men, *e.g.* gender-based violence prevention, or fighting homophobia. These also draw upon empowerment-based perspectives.

Two Variants of Empowerment

Two operational variants of the notion of empowerment are widely accepted and can be drawn upon in the evaluation process. This table presents them opposite one another in order to show the similarities and differences between the two.

Four types of power (Charlier, 2006)		Four subsets of empowerment (Charlier and Caubergs, 2007)	
Power to	Power that includes decision-making, authority, problem-solving, and the development of a certain kind of creativity that renders individuals able to accomplish things (intellectual ability, economic ability, access to and control over resources, etc.). Technical skills learned by women over the course of a project that allows them to increase their critical consciousness, which has been hindered by lack of resources. Issues of access are significant in gender-related social change.	Access	Economic power in terms of material benefits such as income, land, tools, or technology. This form of power is not limited to the possession of resources and wealth, but also includes health and well-being, time, access to credit, information, and educational services, health centers, markets, and the like.
Power in	Refers to self-image, identity, and psychological strength. For example, for actors in the Bolivian solidarity economy of fair trade, self-esteem and self-confidence are related to the extent to which people dare to speak in public. Women's self-perception changed, as well as their relation to their family and society at large.	Knowledge and Know-how	Practical and intellectual knowledge and/or skills that allow maximum benefit of the opportunities that present themselves to individuals and the community. This includes leadership, techniques and/or processes, education (literacy, and the like) as well as the development of analytical skills and logic/reasoning. Know-how is about the practical application of knowledge or the ability to transfer one's knowledge into actions or resources.
Power alongside	Social and political power that puts forth notions of solidarity and the ability to negotiate and defend a common goal. Critical consciousness is built within the group. Changes take place within associations, and leaders emerge who represent the group in formal decision-making contexts. Both local communities and neighborhoods are affected.	Willingness	This concerns psychological strength and/or spiritual power: values, fears, self-confidence, and self-image. The ability and the desire to determine one's own future. Awareness of one's own life project, as well as the challenges that face the community. The concept of "willingness" has two facets: one's own state of mind (*être*), and the ability to use it with others (soft skills, or *savoir-être*).
Power over	Based on relations of domination and/or subordination which are mutually exclusive.	Power	The ability to make decisions, to assume responsibility, to choose one's actions freely, to mobilize one's own resources (access, knowledge, and willingness). Decision-making includes several different aspects: - Making decisions for oneself; participating in decision-making processes; influencing or controlling the decisions made on one's behalf; - Making decisions for others; giving orders (as in certain situations one must take action quickly).

Source: author.

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2.3 Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation of Complex Processes of Social Change: Towards a Diversified, Learning, and Actor-oriented Approach[14]

Maria Cristina (Cristien) Temmink

Introduction

This paper outlines a three-year collaborative action research process undertaken from 2010 to 2012 by PSO[15] (the Netherlands) along with one Belgian and ten Dutch development NGOs. The Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA) from the University of Leuven (KU Leuven) provided methodological support. Through this action research, participating organizations, together with their Southern partners, explored whether and how a variety of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (PME) approaches and methods[16] could help them deal with challenges in PME concerning complex processes of social change. The methods piloted include Outcome Mapping (OM), Most Significant Change (MSC), SenseMaker, Client-Satisfaction Instruments, Personal-Goal Exercises, Outcome Studies, and Scorecards.

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[14] This paper is an adapted version of the full paper "Dealing with Complexity through 'Actor-focused' Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME): From Results-based Management to Results-based Learning". See for full paper: https://www.partos.nl/webfm_send/34462

[15] PSO was an association of over 60 Dutch development organizations dedicated to facilitating learning among its members about capacity development for civil society. PSO was shut down at the end of 2012 due to financial cuts in government funding.

[16] In this paper, a PME approach refers to a combination of various PME methods, tools, and concepts and the way they are implemented within a specific context of a program or organization. A PME approach also encompasses the underlying values, principles, and agendas that come with its methods, tools, and concepts. A PME system refers to the way in which PME approaches and PME-related activities are practically organized, interlinked, and implemented within a specific context of a program or organization.

The program was conceived in a collaborative way and based on the "real-life" experiences and existing challenges of participating organizations. Such challenges concerned demonstrating intangible results, learning throughout the change process, strengthening relationships among actors, satisfying accountability requirements, and stimulating ownership of PME activities.

The main observation that came out of this action research was that, for PME of complex social change processes, organizations are best helped with a diversified, learning, and actor-oriented approach. We observed that most organizations combined various methods and tools, which they adapted for their specific context and needs. There is no one-size-fits-all. Also, for dealing with complex change, there is a need to refocus from results-based *management* towards results-based *learning*.

While some kind of predetermined results framework can be useful to provide focus and give direction, in contexts of complex change, program actors need to go beyond these frameworks. Concretely, this means more flexibility in planning of activities as to *how* to get closer to the desired results, and being able to adapt along the way. Related to this, constant efforts for genuine learning have to be made, and openness to unexpected and intangible results is required. Lastly, PME approaches focusing on the actors that the program is trying to directly or indirectly influence seemed to support organizations in demonstrating results in complex processes of social change. These "actor-focused" approaches had the potential to provide good insights with regard to how and why change occurred, and which interventions contributed to it.

The need for complexity-oriented PME

The reasons for starting this action research were twofold. First, general trends and observations regarding PME in international development contributed to putting PME in a higher position on the agenda of development organizations. Second, PSO members were facing some persistent challenges in their PME practice, particularly when dealing with complex processes of social change.

Trends in international development

The general trends regarding PME are varied. First, over the last decade, there has been a growing international call for results-based management, whereby development actors are asked to be accountable for and demonstrate achievement of "measurable" results (Paris Declaration, 2005; Accra Agenda for Action, 2008; and High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, 2011; Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness in Istanbul, 2011). Many organizations have been trying to strengthen their PME systems in response to this call.

Second, increasing calls for local ownership and leadership and for donor harmonization have contributed to more indirect modes of aid delivery, resulting in long implementation chains, partnerships with governments and civil society, and bottom-up approaches (Stern *et al*, 2012). These developments, whereby local actors take responsibility for their own development and donor organizations have less control over the achievement of results, have created specific challenges for PME that are often very context-specific.

Third, after more than two decades of implementing a results agenda, success stories remain limited. Development actors continue to face problems in implementing results-based management approaches in a way that contributes to improved analysis, planning, and decision-making. Instead, they are often mechanically used for accountability and control purposes (Vähämäki *et al.*, 2011). The notion that development is something that can be technically managed and controlled seems to continue to prevail in many organizations. Nevertheless, a growing number of organizations are now looking for PME approaches that can help them advance the analytic and responsive-to-change notions of results-based management within their programs.

Fourth, the need to demonstrate results can lead to risk-averse behavior and focus on results that are more tangible and easy to measure. Consequently, organizations that work towards less tangible change—such as gender equality, governance, empowerment, and civil society capacity-development—find themselves struggling to measure results using established monitoring and evaluation tools (Stern *et al.*, 2012).

This challenge is well illustrated by former USAID (United States Agency for International Development) president Andrew Natsios (2010), who notes that: "*...those development programs that are most precisely and easily measured are the least transformational, and those programs that are most transformational are the least measurable*". In response, organizations dealing with more complex transformational change are looking for complementary PME approaches that can help them to plan, monitor, and learn from results that are less easy to measure.

Fifth, results-based management can be approached from different theoretical perspectives. The most dominant is often referred to as a scientific or positivist worldview, which assumes that change occurs in a linear fashion, with causal relations between inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impacts that can be known. Associated PME approaches rely on solid theories of change that are ideally developed through empirically testing hypotheses for change. Examples include logical frameworks, monitoring through SMART indicators, theory-based evaluations, and impact evaluations with experimental and quasi-experimental designs. Influential proponents of experimental designs for impact evaluation include the poverty-action lab J-PAL, the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3IE), and the Evaluation Gap Working Group, which authored the "When Will We Ever Learn" report.

However, results-based management can also be approached from a more complexity-oriented theoretical perspective. Such a perspective is rather critical of linear thinking, especially when confronted with complex processes of social change (Stern *et al.*, 2012; Mowles, 2010; Batliwala & Pitman, 2010; Ramalingam, 2008; Eyben, 2006). A complexity perspective accepts that, in complex change processes, the relationship between cause and effect is rather unpredictable and that unexpected results often occur. Such PME approaches take into account perceptions as much as they do objectively observed and measured changes in state. Examples include OM (Earl *et al.*, 2001) which focuses on assessing behavioral change, MSC (Davies *et al.*, 2005), and utilization-focused and developmental evaluation as proposed by Michael Quinn Patton (2008, 2011).

Unpacking complex social change

The collaborative action research underscored the importance of working towards results. However, it also confirmed the problems with results-based management approaches that follow a logic of linearity, predictability, and control when dealing with complex social-change processes. In order to deal with the notion of complexity in the action research, we focused on two characteristics that we identified from the literature and our practices as having important implications for PME: *Emergence* and the occurrence of *multiple actors, perspectives, and relationships.*

Emergence is an important feature of complex change. Change is emergent when the relationship between cause and effect within the change process is not linear (an effect is not necessarily proportional to the cause) or predictable. It is an unplanned, uncontrollable, and unpredictable process, whereby results emerge out of the complex interactions among all actors in the system.

Emergence in complex processes of social change is often intensified by the influence of many different actors attempting to deal with social issues. This is unavoidable: no single actor or organization has the capacity to solve complex problems (Jones, 2011). In addition, these actors often have different understandings of and perspectives on the same issue. What is a problem for one may not be a problem for someone else; or the problem might be understood and experienced in various ways. Also, different forms of interactions can exist between the actors involved in a social change process. Collaboration, negotiation, dialogue, influencing, lobbying, and conflict are just a few examples of such interactions.

The complexity of social change processes therefore implies that these cannot be easily managed by certain results-based tools that follow a logic of linearity, predictability, and control. Both emergence and the multiple actors, perspectives, and interactions generate a continuous flow of new information, to which actors in the system in turn respond through constant adaptation. Hence, besides learning from the expected change (the desired development results), PME approaches need to facilitate learning from unexpected, emergent, and intangible results. Moreover, they have to support the adaptive capacity of the program or organizations to respond adequately to these ever changing circumstances, in order to maintain or increase effectiveness.

Methodology of the action research

Before continuing with the findings of this action research, it may be worthwhile sharing some information regarding the process that led to these findings. First, the action research was designed as a collaborative and collective learning experience. This means that, from the outset, the participating organizations were actively engaged in defining the research questions, as well as in collecting data and collectively reflecting on this data to answer the questions. Second, the research was conducted at two interconnected levels: the individual organization level (What was the organization concretely struggling with in terms of PME of complex processes of social change?) and the collective level (When considering all the organizational questions, what collective questions emerged?). Both the research questions and an extensive literature review served as input for a theoretical framework that formed the basis of the action research.

The design of this framework was not a clear-cut endeavor either, but rather a messy one. Both the organizational and the collective questions were reframed several times during the course of the action research, based on insights emerging from the study and negotiations between the participating organizations and the research coordinators. Eventually, one overall collective research question with four sub-questions were identified. The sub-questions are directly related to the implications of complexity for PME.

The collective central question was: "How can PME contribute to the capacity of organizations and their partners to deal with complex processes of social change?" Organizations then experimented with various methods and tools, developing and refining their approaches in order to better deal with their expressed challenges, while researching the following sub-questions:

1. How does the PME approach help clarify relationships, roles, and expectations of the actors involved in the intervention?

2. How does the PME approach help program stakeholders learn about the progress made towards the development objectives?

3. How does the PME approach help strengthen the internal adaptive capacity of the program, partner organizations, partner networks, and/or Northern NGOs?

4. To what extent does the PME approach help strengthen upward, downward, and horizontal accountability needs?

Since research questions were formulated at both the organizational and the collective level, data collection and reflection also occurred at those two levels. The participating organizations gathered information from their own process, engaging staff members in their organization and partners to answer their organizational research question. At the collective level, PSO and HIVA facilitated collective learning and sense-making sessions in which representatives of the various organizations exchanged their questions, experiences, and insights from their action research cases, both reflecting on the organizational and collective research questions and drawing lessons from across the individual cases.

Findings[17]

Regarding the collective central question, the main conclusion was that organizations were most helped by a diversified, learning, and actor-oriented PME approach when dealing with complex processes of social change. Various factors contributed to this. First, when organizations started clarifying their PME challenges and the needs of the different stakeholders, it became clear that they had to combine different methods and tools to address these adequately. This process also made it necessary to be more explicit about the underlying assumptions, values, and (political) agenda that come with the methods, tools, and concepts. This often resulted in different kinds

[17] For further information on the design and implementation of different approaches piloted for dealing with complex change, see: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/a-practical-guide-for-actor-focused-planning-monitoring-and-evaluation

of conversations within organizations and with partners that could be experienced as difficult and unusual, but also as helpful.

Second, when dealing with complex processes of social change, there is a need to refocus from results-based *management* (RBM) to results-based *learning*. RBM suggests predetermined and fixed results, as well as a controlling approach for steering towards these results. Results-based learning is based on a more responsive and flexible mindset. It does not deny that results are important. However, it constantly questions what constitutes good results in a certain context and for whom, as well as how to get desired results in an ever changing environment. Moreover, a learning-oriented approach is also more open and incorporates strategies to gain insights into intangible, unexpected, and less measurable results.

Third, a common characteristic of the PME approaches piloted in this action research was their focus on specific actors whom the programs were trying to influence, directly or indirectly: what we call an actor-focused PME approach.[18] It was observed that, if done well and followed through with the necessary leadership, actor-focused PME approaches can provide development organizations working towards complex change with the means to demonstrate this complex change (*i.e.* show their results). Moreover, they can learn how this change happened and how the interventions of the organization contributed to it. This can help organizations adjust their strategies according to lessons learned, making the impact more effective and adaptive. Actor-focused PME practice is therefore not just an interesting complement to more mainstream linear planning logic; we consider it an essential component of learning-centered program management, particularly in contexts of complex change.

Advantages

In relation to the sub-questions, we identified advantages and challenges of applying diversified, learning, and actor-oriented approaches. In terms of advantages, when dealing with and clarifying multiple relationships, roles, expectations, and perspectives of actors involved, the approaches facilitated deeper interactions and better understanding among the different actors. A determining factor was that the actors were brought together to discuss roles, perspectives, and expectations in the first place. Many organizations expressed that this led to deeper conversations, dialogue, better understanding, and increased trust. On this basis it was easier to develop shared theories of change that, at the same time, were more flexible.

The various PME approaches also supported both broader and deeper learning, precisely because they addressed so many questions. This facilitated not only learning about progress towards the development objectives, but also insights into intangible and less measurable results. Regarding strengthening the internal adaptive capacity of programs, partners, and Northern NGOs, it was observed that PME itself had the potential of becoming part of a

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[18]   We chose to call the piloted PME approaches "actor-focused" for two main reasons. First, because they direct the focus of PME towards changes in what people do or perceive instead of changes in state (*e.g.,* increased income or production). Second, because the direct or indirect target groups are actively involved in the collection and/or use of the monitoring information.

capacity-development process. It created broader involvement by staff and partners in reflection and learning processes, allowing them to focus more on the effects of the program instead of merely execution. In this way, it facilitated self-reflection. All the above advantages contributed to strengthening accountability, as a wider variety of results could be demonstrated, as well increased transparency, trust, and empowerment. Another advantage was that the selection of merely positive stories could be avoided, as monitoring was primarily used for critical reflection purposes.

Challenges

We also identified challenges in implementing diversified, learning, and actor-oriented PME approaches. For example, it was observed that very strong leadership is required to introduce these approaches and promote open and learning-oriented attitudes. As actor-focused approaches are not common, "unlearning" of previous habits and unhelpful attitudes is required. Organizations mentioned how difficult it was to get staff and partners to openly discuss failures, unequal power relations, and competing interests.

Also, it was noted that considerable skills, time investment, and local management are required to pull these processes through. In terms of learning about results, organizations found it challenging to sustain the collaborative learning process, due to limited resources necessary for collection and analysis of information and for the promotion of critical reflection on results. Reflective practice for strengthening the adaptive capacity was experienced as vulnerable when it was limited to a pilot project, instead of mainstream PME practice. Also, anchoring reflection and learning in the organizational day-to-day work was a recurrent challenge.

In terms of *upward* accountability, it remained difficult to prove causal links between activities and effects. For *downward* accountability, it was a challenge to obtain honest and critical feedback, as well as to react adequately on this feedback. Horizontal accountability was faced with the need to create time and space for this, and to acknowledge and work with power issues.

Conclusions and recommendations

The overall aim of this action research process was to find out whether and how the piloted PME approaches helped organizations and their partners better deal with complex processes of social change. The findings of the research affirm the importance of demonstrating results while learning constantly in order to assess whether the program and activities are moving in the right direction, and to make adjustments when necessary. However, at the same time it questions whether results can be technically "managed". Result areas that are too rigidly managed and made uniform across various contexts risk making PME merely an artificial reporting exercise. This may be comfortable for program implementers and donors, but it does not contribute to better and effective programs and effectiveness in development cooperation.

Focusing PME on the different actors involved at the various levels in a program can help it become more learning-oriented and better able to deal with the unpredictability of complex

change. Genuine learning about results can be stimulated if an effort is made to look for unexpected and intangible results (in addition to expected results) and if opportunities for collaborative learning are purposefully organized and skillfully facilitated. Some recommendations for NGO managers and program implementers to help them make "learning from results" a reality are as follows:

Using actor-focused PME approaches can help broaden a program's results "radar". In other words, tracking changes in behavior, relationships, and direct and indirect target groups' actions and/or perceptions at different levels in the results chain can bring to light unexpected effects that may remain hidden by monitoring that uses predetermined results frameworks.

Regular monitoring of program results that inform program adjustments is crucial when dealing with complex change processes. This may require shifting perceptions of the meaning and value of regular monitoring practice.

Strong leadership that motivates and mandates regular learning-centered monitoring of program effects. Actor-focused PME approaches can help, but will not by themselves guarantee that a program becomes better able to deal with processes of complex change. Regular monitoring and learning about a program's results requires considerable effort in terms of time and financial and logistical resources.

Do not hide behind the strategic planning and reporting formats required by a donor in order to avoid actor-focused PME approaches to operationalize strategic planning. Most organizations participating in this action research already had a strategic plan in place, with associated budgets approved by their respective donors. Nevertheless, all cases were able to experiment with actor-focused PME approaches that were complementary to their strategic planning framework and based on a planning logic that was fundamentally different from the predetermined results-based logical framework. It is a matter of deciding what is most important for the organization and engaging in a dialogue about this with management and with donors.

Also, for donors it would be interesting to stimulate results-based learning, especially in light of the aid effectiveness agenda. This would, moreover, offer the potential to increase their role in supporting exchange and mutual learning between various programs they support. Some recommendations for doing this could be:

1. **Request that funded programs show how they use PME systems that are learning-centered,** and stimulate formal and informal learning at individual and collective level to increase effectiveness.

2. **Use a wider notion of what "results" and "PME" can entail**. Very useful program results can be harvested in terms of changed behavior, relationships, or perceptions among social actors directly or indirectly influenced by a program. While such changes may not provide objective measurements of changes in state, which may be the specific objective of a program (*e.g.*, increased production or income, improved health, etc.), they are crucial to making these changes in state sustainable.

3. **Request that programs submit proposals that are clear and explicit about the various actors** in a program's sphere of control (*i.e.*, who is responsible for inputs,

activities, and outputs), spheres of direct influence (direct target groups), and spheres of indirect influence (indirect target groups and/or final beneficiaries).

4. **Allow programs to use part of the operational budget to fine-tune their actor-focused program design** in collaboration with local program stakeholders and accept adjustments that are informed by lessons learned from program effects.

5. **Develop the donor staff's knowledge** about the basic characteristics of actor-focused PME approaches, their suitability for specific contexts, and their potential to complement (but not necessary replace) other, more established, approaches.

To conclude, we would argue that using diversified, learning, and actor-oriented PME approaches in a more systematic way can help organizations deal with and make sense of more complex change processes. Note that this is a tentative recommendation that should be further explored and sustained by more empirical evidence. Also, collaborative action research has proven to be effective in both strengthening the capacity of the participating organizations in the use of complexity-oriented PME, and in drawing lessons from complex change processes that can be useful for practitioners, policy-makers, and donor organizations.

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2.4. Taking a Change-driven Approach to Development

Bruno de Reviers

Questions abound regarding the manner in which we approach change, particularly from a methodological point of view. Change-driven approaches seem to meet certain challenges, by providing slightly different ways of thinking and going about things. F3E is currently experimenting these approaches with its members.

Why should we seek new methodologies?

PCM: a useful, but limited, approach

Project cycle management (PCM), which is built around the logical framework, is the conventional standard for methodological practices in the development field (EuropeAid, 2004; Hadjaj-Castro, 2007*a*). It has proven useful in certain contexts, particularly when the idea is to program, monitor, and evaluate activities and their direct results. The promotion of PCM and its gradual widespread use have made it possible to structure the methodological practices of development actors.

PCM has its limits, however. These can be intrinsic limits: it is indeed based on a linearity principle and mechanical cause-and-effect sequences (such as, "If I implement my project correctly, then I will achieve a given result, which will contribute to another given result"). This principle is hardly compatible with the complexity of a change process (for instance, in the case of a long-term capacity-building process for a partner). But the limits of PCM are also and above all linked to the way in which it is implemented: the logical framework has too often become a rigid contractual reference. And the entire PCM process is then implemented in a mostly managerial way to give legitimacy to the use of funds allocated to given projects. Results-based management provides some improvement over PCM (risk analysis, development of participatory aspects and learning) but remains restrained in the same linear reasoning (Hadjaj-Castro, 2007*b*).

F3E's pathway towards change-driven approaches

PCM was for a long time F3E's only gateway to action. The notion of change appeared in a formal way only quite recently. The impacts of actions have always been a concern, however. For this reason, F3E promoted impact studies with a participatory dimension and with efficiency in mind. In spite of this, little had been done within the organization at that level.

Starting in 2009, F3E gradually increased its work of pooling the experiences of its members and of producing methodological instruments and guidelines. This is now one of F3E's main driving forces. Between 2011 and 2013, several collective initiatives and working groups were established to discuss various subjects ranging from capacity building and impact analysis to multi-stakeholder dynamics. Discussions in these groups gradually converged towards a common goal among the various members of F3E, namely: how to better plan, monitor, and evaluate interventions that seek to support change processes. The general consensus was clear: PCM was not up to the challenge.

Two methodological guides derived from the work of these task forces were published in 2014: one for actions in favor of citizenship and international solidarity education in France (Miguel Sierra *et al.*, 2014), and the other for development projects in the South (Reviers and Hadjaj-Castro, 2014).

PRISME: Experimenting with novel and change-driven approaches

To further these collective discussions, F3E set up a joint program called PRISME (the program of methodological innovations to plan, monitor, and evaluate change processes) with fourteen of its members (both NGOs and local authorities) and thirteen of their partners. This four-year program started in July 2014 and aims to support fifteen experimental change-driven approaches in ten different countries, both on development projects in the South and on citizenship education in France—with subjects such as local development, capacity building, and networking. One of the major challenges of the program is for the organizations involved to take ownership of these approaches and to disseminate them internally.

There is also a collective aspect to this program, as the idea is to capitalize upon these innovative experiments and to gradually disseminate them in the field of development. PRISME therefore takes into account the key dimensions of innovation processes: experimentation, sharing, capitalization, and widespread dissemination with a view towards widespread use. It is therefore also a change process in itself.

How should this be done?

Use the existing methodologies to construct custom-made approaches

The challenge identified by F3E is that of analyzing a change process, planning an intervention that can support that process, and then monitoring and evaluating both the reality of the changes that are occurring and the contribution of the intervention to these changes.

To do so, a certain number of methods and approaches have been developed and tested. The most well-known of these is most probably Outcome Mapping, a methodology formalized in 2002 by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). It is a methodology for planning, monitoring, and evaluation, which focuses on analyzing changes in intermediary actors with whom a program is directly interacting (Earl *et al.*, 2002). The Most Significant Change technique developed by Rick Davies is a methodology for participatory and qualitative evaluation that focuses on the selection and the analysis of stories of change collected from the stakeholders of an intervention (Davies and Dart, 2005). In the past few years, a spectrum of methods has been developing around what is referred to (fairly inappropriately) as the "theory of change", primarily so in English-speaking circles, and has been well-received. Why "inappropriately"? Because rather than being a theory, it is more of an approach bringing together a variety of methodologies that are not always perfectly coherent with one another.

These different approaches have been analyzed in the F3E working groups and the methodological guides mentioned earlier. F3E has also supported several evaluations and monitoring-evaluation approaches based on Outcome Mapping (with AIDES, Frères des Hommes, CIMADE, and a few others). F3E also conducted an internal monitoring and evaluation review inspired by this method.

The PRISME program will use these different methodologies. The idea is not to develop any one single methodology however, but rather to build custom-made approaches linked to the specificities of each context (and in particular the resources and capacities of the actors for change) by picking interesting elements from existing systems here and there.

Analyze change and plan an intervention

To analyze change and plan interventions, practitioners can make use of various methodologies that have been developed around change theories. This provides them with a solid, structured base.

The construction of a "theory of change" can be divided into three main steps. Of course it is necessary to go back and forth between each of these three stages, as the reflection process is necessarily iterative.

The first step is to bring a group of actors[19] to project themselves into the future by defining their vision of the change they wish to bring about in the long term. It is then necessary to analyze the context to identify the triggers of change, in other words the actors or factors that impact the vision of change. At that level, analysis of the actors of the context (mapping), of power relations among them, and of strategies of influence is a crucial phase in the "Working out pathways of change" approach.

The second step is to draft "pathways of change", *i.e.* to project oneself in the future in order to formalize the process by which the group of actors believe that change should occur. It is a set of prerequisites for the vision of change to happen. These are therefore intermediary

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[19] Individual or collective actors: individuals, groups of individuals, organizations, institutions, networks and the like.

changes but should not necessarily be linked together by direct cause-and-effect relationships, so as to avoid relapsing into a causal chain and linear thinking. The underlying assumptions should then be analyzed. This is a particularly interesting aspect of the theories of change that makes it possible to question oneself and to compare the various perspectives and values of the different actors that have defined their common vision of change. Finally, a connection between this pathway of change and the intervention is made: What will our contribution to these changes be? What will our role be? If the intervention is already underway, how can its planning be adjusted and made consistent with the theory of change?

The third step is to draft a monitoring and evaluation system on this basis. The monitoring and evaluation must then inform the development of the theory of change. Indeed, any theory of change that would be stationary and unquestioned would not make much sense.

To illustrate how an existing plan can be made consistent with a theory of change, reference can be made to the support by the Research Institute for Work and Society (HIVA) to AIDES in 2012, as part of an F3E study. The idea was to set up a monitoring and evaluation system based on outcome mapping within a major HIV control program, with 42 partners in around 20 countries (capacity building, advocacy, etc.). Outcome mapping is not formally a part of theory of change but can be equated to this spectrum of approaches, give or take a few minor details. In the context of this support, the logical framework of the AIDES program was reviewed and adjusted—with the consent of AFD, which financed the program. Engaging in this procedure made it possible to rearrange the results of the logical framework and then to outline the intervention logic by clarifying the linkage between results and objectives, thanks to "progress indicators" (sorts of intermediary changes that act as indicators for monitoring and evaluation).

In this type of work, it is nevertheless important not to relapse into linear modes of thought that would oversimplify the complexity of reality, by opting for the easy way out.


Monitoring and evaluating change

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, the core idea is to shift our focus away from the intervention—which is far from natural for us as practitioners. Thus, instead of monitoring the results that an intervention produces, we base ourselves on the monitoring of changes in the contexts and only then do we analyze the intervention's contribution to the changes observed. This calls for methods that emphasize learning, *via* flexible tools: above all we are seeking to understand how change is occurring and how we are contributing to it, rather than attempting to justify or prove that we are indeed doing what we had initially planned to do.

Certain methods develop qualitative indicators to track changes within the framework of a theory of change. We are then in a deductive approach, as in the case of outcome mapping and its progress indicators, for instance. Other methods are based on major open-ended questions to identify changes and allow for more space for the identification of unexpected changes. These are inductive approaches. The Most Significant Change approach can illustrate such methods. In reality, we do not necessarily have to choose between one or the other type of approach, and we can indeed combine instruments from both realms as long as we remain very realistic about

our capacities to actually implement them. The two families of approaches are complementary.

In terms of final evaluation, and in the absence of an approach that is formally geared towards change from the start, it is possible to try to retrace, *ex-post*, the change processes that have occurred and to analyze the contribution of an intervention in these processes. The evaluation of the cooperative program for Morocco (PCM III), which is

Source: « Se décentrer, prendre du recul », Hamidou Zoetaba, from the F3E-COTA guide « Agir pour le changement » (2014).

currently being conducted by IRAM (the Institute for Research and Application of Development Methods) with the support of F3E, is an illustration of such an *ex-post* application of a theory of change methodology. The F3E NGO members Starting Block and FERT have also tested evaluation of citizenship and international solidarity education actions internally, within the framework of the Educasol-F3E working group (see the methodological guide mentioned above).

How are these approaches different from the usual methodological practices?

As an introduction to this section, it is important to highlight a key point: it is important to avoid focusing only on the methodological paraphernalia. The instruments and methods mentioned earlier on are important but are only a means to an end, and their usefulness primarily relies on the way in which they are implemented. Without the right attitude, they probably would not be any better than an alternative approach. A logical framework that is constructed and used intelligently would be much more useful than a theory of change that was hastily drafted—and never revisited—simply to satisfy a donor.

Change-driven approaches differ from the more common approaches on three key notes:

Source: « Les outils miracle n'existent pas », Hamidou Zoetaba, from the F3E-COTA guide « Agir pour le changement » (2014).

- **They are free from linearity**. When we project ourselves into the long term, we cannot reason mechanically ("if we do this (A), then this will happen (B)"). Change-driven approaches account for uncertainty: the pathways of change are not drafted with a cause-and-effect rationale, and the planning, monitoring, and evaluation instruments make it easier to take uncertainty into account as we go along. The idea is to analyze the contribution of an intervention to change, not to attribute the origin of these causes;

- **They are conducive to shifting our focus away from the projects we are supporting**, so that we look more broadly at the changing context where we are operating as practitioners and where we are but one piece of the puzzle (the project is not necessarily the main driver of change). The starting point of the evaluation is therefore change, not the intervention;

Source: « Analyser la contribution et non l'attribution », Hamidou Zoetaba, from the F3E-COTA guide « Agir pour le changement » (2014).

- **They provide a strategic perspective.** Change-driven approaches do not replace project management using logical frameworks: they supplement them by providing an analysis of change with a long-term perspective and a framework that is more conducive to learning.

Alongside these three key elements, change-driven approaches strongly emphasize their participatory and inclusive aspects, which also contribute to building the capacities of the actors that are experiencing change. The conventional notion of accountability is also revisited: development practitioners are not only accountable to donors but also to the stakeholders we are working for.

What changes does this entail for us?

Supporting a change process demands a slightly different attitude from that of the "developer" who "does" development. The nuances in the words we use are important: we support process but do not conduct change.

Gradually, this can also bring practitioners to change their strategies and positioning, or even their core mission.

Two key points to remember

Going "from project to process"

Although is it crucial to manage one's projects properly, these are simply means to an end and not an end in themselves: the most important part is the change process that we are supporting as practitioners. Hence the importance of broadening our scope and shifting our focus from project to context.

Moreover, thinking in terms of "processes" often goes against our methodological instincts. Very often, the change process began well before the development intervention and will continue after it. We can set objectives of change in the form of outcomes, but, even if we manage to do so, the process of change will surely continue developing, and nothing suggests that it will be in the direction we had hoped for.

Going "from action to actor"

Beyond the analysis of the actions conducted, attention must be focused on the development of the actors: mentalities, behaviors, working practices, relationships with one another, and so on. Indeed, if social change does occur, it will be because the actors of change will themselves have changed. And they are the ones that ensure the continuity of social change.

This emphasis on actors permeates the entire methodological approach.

Source: « L'appréciation du changement est subjective », Hamidou Zoetaba, from the F3E-COTA guide « Agir pour le changement » (2014).

Ultimately, what is hiding behind all of this is probably another way of conceiving of development projects.

> Social change: not only "over there" but also "here"

A few years ago, in a meeting, a former president of F3E said (in an intentionally wry and ironic way): *"Let us not go agitating for revolutions in the South that we haven't been able—or have dared—to carry out at home, here, in France."* As a matter of fact, thinking about social change is a wide-ranging reflection indeed. In many fields, the analysis of power relationships and influences among actors rapidly leads to the close ties that unite the different parts of the world.

I will not expand on this point, which would have been more relevant in the first round-table discussion, but the foregoing points cannot be covered without bringing this up.

We cannot therefore talk about social change in the South without also discussing social change in the North. In a way, this refers to the link between "supporting development" (in the South) and an education in global citizenship (in the North) broadened to a reflection on our own models of development "over here" and therefore to the role that the actors of development cooperation and international solidarity can play on their own national territories.

This is an issue that should be included in the shifts in postures.

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3.
CAN EVALUATION CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL CHANGE?

Introduction

Philippe Mayol

Evaluation is one of the central phases of the project cycle. Often done *ex-post,* it should, in theory at least, take place several years after the project is finished in order to fully understand the results and the lasting impacts of the intervention. The only reason it is not the case already is because of the constraints imposed by the funding bodies, and the financial, operational, and chronological projection abilities of development practitioners (such as NGOs, community organizations, public or para-governmental organizations, or decentralized cooperatives). As a result, the majority of post-project evaluations aim to assess the results of activities after the implementation. They also aim to bring about changes in the practices and interventions and to improve the quality of the actions by specific agents. Sometimes they can seem to be at odds with the expectations and with the long-term nature of the changes that the project beneficiaries are involved in.

Following from the premise that the main causes of poverty and underdevelopment are often rooted in the processes of political, social, and cultural structuring (such as bad practices on the individual and collective levels, unsuitable public politicians or no public politicians at all), acting on the underlying causes means re-examining the structural factors and providing responses in the form of development projects that correct such problems in the mid- to long-term. The question that begs to be asked, however, is of knowing who will have the legitimacy and the responsibility of dreaming up, setting up, and evaluating such processes within the given time frame, in order to act upon the underlying causes and enable the desired form of social change. Our institutions rarely have the ability to function according to such long-term perspectives and on the same territory. Furthermore, our ways of understanding contexts and designing projects follow from our own cultural spheres, which are not necessarily the same as those of the communities in which we intervene. That is why it is up to them to assume responsibility for piloting their own process of social change, while evaluating, among other things, the way in which they got to the present state.

Taking this as a point of departure, the need for long-term monitoring processes that are adapted to both the diverse range of local contexts and the rhythms of each community is a real challenge. What this means for our organizations is that we must align ourselves over and above the expectations of the project cycle or the logical framework—or rather, we must put them in their rightful place. The definition, monitoring, and evaluation of short-term projects (in general, ones that take place over less than four years) must first align themselves within much longer processes, which are complex and not easy to understand, especially for development

actors who are foreign to the regions in question. Then, the issue isn't just about looking at the past (and the present) in order to assess the changes that have taken place, but in looking ahead and continually reflecting on the best course of action and its relevance according to the local populations' concerns and the way they analyze their own issues.

In order to accomplish such a task, it is tempting to position the tools in the project cycle such as *ex-ante* evaluation or problem trees. However, one must remember that such tools are designed and used by and for development practitioners. These measures were created in order to organize logical frameworks before the fact, in an extremely codified and simplistic way. They never manage to uncover the underlying causes of the problems in the first place (which could be thought of as the roots of the tree, in a way).

The issue is thus less about knowing which evaluation tools that are currently in use can contribute to social change, and more about understanding which logical methods of evaluation enable better long-term links between changes in practices at the scale of the project, and desired forms of social change in general. In practice, this means actually shifting responsibility from the practitioners to the populations in question. It is the individual communities who are ultimately responsible for achieving the desired forms of social change, while the institutions are often only temporarily involved in the situation and are culturally and historically foreign.

It is thus under these conditions that evaluation—or rather, the "in-process" evaluative methods, ones that align themselves with the overall guidelines of desired and self-directed change in the communities themselves—can contribute to the intended social transformations.

The contributions that follow shall develop on these links. First, in the context of an emergency intervention along with François Grünewald of URD, and then through the interaction between social change in the North and the South with Michèle Cahu (an elected representative heading decentralized cooperation in Picardy), and then with Marc Totté from the Belgian collective Inter-Mondes, who evaluated the cooperation experience. Finally, Charlotte Boisteau from F3E and Marc Totté again shall tell us in a more conceptual way about the issues in grasping and understanding processes of change.

3.1 "I Learn, Therefore I Am": Guiding Change

Charlotte Boisteau[20]

In the field of international development, intended changes often do not happen, or if they do, they have unexpected repercussions. In this article, I would like to look at the factors that stand in the way of progress within the domain. Our main hypothesis could be that declines in resources and personal drive are related to deficiencies in learning processes. But what learning process, and what knowledge could we be referring to? Why do these shortcomings prevent the optimization of our efforts?

Some avenues of thought:

Do we listen enough? Are we respectful enough, and modest enough, to remain open to the discourses of the Other, and to be conscious of the fact that we exist amongst a multitude of human beings? Are we not in a hurry to dress wounds before even taking the time to reflect? Are we in a position to learn, or do we think that as soon as we are labelled and stamped as "professionals" we are no longer learners?

Learning is a continuous process. The idea is to remain receptive and never stop developing as a person and as a practitioner. Small changes at the individual level can catalyze larger forms of collective change.

Learning and change are intricately linked to one another. In order to increase one's knowledge and to stimulate change, new things must be learned. To most, learning is first an individual matter or the personal preoccupation of people who seek to expose themselves to new perspectives. However, the two laws of learning—and incidentally, of change—are about listening and questioning. Then more listening is needed, at the same time as empathy, which allows the person to understand what the other person has said, and in so doing, enrich him or herself. In order to switch from one mode to the next, individuals use what the sociologists Bruno Latour and Michel Callon call "translation"[21]. Listening is key to learning. That is why,

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[21] Success of "translation" depends on the cooperation in innovation of all the people concerned. It is based on the idea that the ways of thinking of each of the cooperating actors mutually enrich, rather than clash with, one another.

before sitting down in a group, people should ask themselves a few questions about the subject to be discussed, about the different forms of expression that may be called upon, about the appropriate spaces for listening, about the actors involved, and so on. Active listening is a demanding exercise.

In the field of international solidarity, three difficulties continue to pose problems:

— The difficulty of being observed by others, and of feeling judged;

— The difficulty of sharing our experiences and of collectively constructing, even in our own institutions;

— The difficulty of linking analysis and strategy.

These three difficulties are wrapped up with our emotions, our practices, and our political strategies. Yet what conditions do these changes require, large or small? Are they favored by a particular environment? How can we create dynamics of learning among ourselves, as development actors? Here, we have assembled a few lessons from our experience of evaluation at F3E,[22] and from the learning process as part of The Barefoot Guide Connection.[23]

Lesson 1. Knowledge is guided, and primarily through evaluation

Listening spaces are not easy to create or to maintain. They can take on several forms, physical or virtual. PM&E (Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation), and evaluation approaches in general, can create such spaces. These critical outlets are life rafts for many international solidarity organizations, which, if they were to note what is formulated there, would instill dynamics of learning as much as they instill accountability. Yet, they are not always perceived in such a way. Why?

First, it is because it is much easier to ask other people questions than oneself. However, this type of interrogation at both individual and collective levels is the foundation of a critical and constructive process whose potential lies in both the medium to long term, whilst the benefits are visible in the short term, at the very moment when practices are questioned. PM&E entails self-examination; it is an approach that consists of continuous learning, development, and improvement.

Space-time within reflection: the PM&E

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[22] See http://f3e.asso.fr

[23] The Barefoot Guide Connection [which can be read about in more detail in the contribution of Doug Reeler] is a worldwide and local community of social change practitioners who, by sharing their experiences, deepen the approaches and develop innovations that contribute to desired transformations in a world of constant change. The Barefoot Guide Connection began by producing guides, called "Barefoot Guides". They strive to be accessible to all types of readers, and they put existing knowledge into operation, all the while developing additional collective intelligence among practitioners, who recount and draw conclusions from their histories. At the heart of the process are writing workshops whose participants are not used to writing. Barefoot Guides are made by and for practitioners. http://www.barefootguide.org.

In order for the learning process to be as beneficial as possible, it is important to have both an exterior point of view and to be supported in one's efforts. A proactive approach is essential for success: in order to accept change, it is important to want to change in the first place. Indeed, we often learn more from our failures than from our successes, and this is true as much at a personal level as at a structural and/or organizational level.

PM&E processes thus become a meeting point, one that can be experienced as power plays among actors. Like any other power play, these include struggles of dominance and submission. That is why F3E supports studies (evaluations, monitoring and follow-up, knowledge capitalization, impact studies, and the like), and defines its role as a demanding, mediating, and supportive third party. The role of such a third party is to ensure balance among the various constituents. Sometimes—and this is all too often the case—when the PM&E is not supported well enough, it is overcome by power struggles and its intended use is thwarted. Examples of instrumentalized evaluations abound.

Supporting learning processes is key to bringing about change. It is the objective relevance of the supporting practitioner that enables the emergence—if not the convergence—of the critical viewpoints necessary for learning and for the adoption of a progressive stance. Supporting practitioners are agents that facilitate the recognition of needs and the identification of potential avenues for change. They are not neutral but analytical, they are often contradictory, and they make extensive use of the mirroring effect. However, practitioners are responsible for objectivity (or rather, an objectivized form of subjectivity), which they use to construct their point of view. The supporting practitioners more or less ensure the appropriate use of the evaluation process. That is because the stumbling blocks are numerous, both in the way in which the evaluation is used and—even more so—with regard to the usefulness of the evaluation process itself.

Little by little, one actor after another, this is how we construct knowledge. Beyond individual knowledge, and more than the sum of its parts, it is a form of collective intelligence.

Lesson 2. Positioning actors in the midst of learning initiatives

The issue of actors themselves is at the heart of the challenges faced by PM&E initiatives.

Who conducts evaluation processes, and who is evaluated? How can we be as inclusive, reassuring, acknowledging, and constructive as possible? Who are we speaking to when we plan, monitor, and evaluate? Who are we exchanging with?

Paramount in the evaluation process is the issue of participation—and even more so, that of governance. It provides the impetus for movement in the right direction, in addition to assuring the appropriate use of evaluation.

A multitude of tools to promote participation in evaluation processes indeed exists, but do we know who we want to participate, and why? Other processes are similar to evaluation in that they favor learning, such as knowledge capitalization, quality control, or knowledge management. Each of these encourages the participation of various actors, who become the primary beneficiaries. In return, their development accelerates, at the same time as it

transforms, the operational aspects of the program. When the development processes are oriented towards "soft skills" (capacity building, empowerment, etc.), it is the actors more than the operations that benefit from learning. Up to now, action has been paramount and has often been emphasized over the actors.

Actors are participants in the evaluation process, and must undergo repositioning. However, one must also be aware that actions do not have the same meaning for everyone. It is because the meaning can vary significantly that we consider it essential to understand how it is that action has meaning for the people who benefit from it.

Box 2

The "end beneficiary" does not seem to be targeted by the evaluation process. How can we better access these people?

Interview with Lilian Poch, F3E Study Coordinator

This depends on the actions and on what is being evaluated. Partners in the South are increasingly involved in evaluations, insofar as they are increasingly involved with projects / programs / development interventions, and as they can also be the beneficiaries of capacity building. As for the direct beneficiaries of the services we provide (the "end beneficiaries"), it is more difficult to know how and in what way they are involved in the evaluation process: we are not directly present in the consultant-organized workshops, so we can only assume that people are consulted, both individually and collectively.

Yet, above and beyond the evaluation of this aspect of the participation by the "beneficiaries", it is the system of development aid that should be questioned: What is the goal of development cooperation, what is the role of evaluation within this framework, and what about the "beneficiaries"? In order to understand this, and to move the system in the right direction, one has to live within it and seek to advance it in small increments.

Evaluation is often motivated by the need to be accountable. However, we rarely understand the populations who are "beneficiaries" of our actions; instead we understand those who fund them. It is tempting to draw a parallel with the declines in resources and personal drive that we spoke about in the introduction. Indeed, that is what Olivier Consolo, the former director of the European NGO Federation for Relief and Development (CONCORD) has been decrying for the past several years, by attempting instead to promote downward accountability. Many consultants confirm the absence of indicators reporting satisfaction of the abovementioned beneficiaries.

This is certainly the most negative aspect of the logical framework: the relegation of the beneficiaries to the end of the chain as soon as they are not directly stakeholders in the action, and the waning ambition to reach out to them.

Innovation in the domain of evaluation will take place through its governance. We must urgently rethink the role of beneficiaries of evaluative actions, as well as demystify the PM&E process and not leave it just to the "experts".

Yet it is also the development paradigm itself that must be questioned by way of its very own governance…

Lesson 3. Governing the evaluation process and favoring the dynamics of multiple actors of social change

Without doubt, simply considering each actor in turn is not enough—favoring exchanges and creating multi-party dynamics seems necessary. During the writing workshop for *Barefoot Guide Volume 4* in Johannesburg, a participant said, *"We would all like to know that there are no barriers, but unfortunately, our experiences show us that there are a large number of them"*. The first experience that people have is the one that takes place among development actors.

When we speak of governance or participation in the evaluation, it is to enhance the procedures for making heard the voices that people are not used to hearing.

The issue of participation is not just about principles; it is also an issue of rootedness in reality. It is nonetheless far from being a guarantee of the representation or the balance among actors in an evaluation. To illustrate participation at multiple levels (institutional and partnership-based), the following is testimony of an association that commissioned an evaluation of its partnerships.

Box 3

"Evaluating 250 projects with 25 partners over the course of 14 years turned out to be difficult at a methodological level. We wanted to transform our evaluation, so that we could appropriate the results.

That is why we called upon F3E as a third party in order to allow us to take a step back as regards the evaluation commissioned internally, and to challenge our reflections. Together, we decided to clarify the goal of the study and to conduct an evaluation of our partnerships. We wanted to know how we had worked within our internationally focused network, and how we had managed to treat the idea of subsidiarity.

The way in which our partners would be involved in the process was an important consideration. We decided to create a steering committee that would include a partner from the country involved, as a representative of the other partners. When the project was in the mid-term reporting stage, we organized an in-situ *workshop that attempted to generate dialogue and exchange with the respective partners. Participants in the workshop reported feeling enriched as a community of actors. Often for them, the presence of organizations from the North is associated with building their capacities. For us, however, we did not want to position ourselves as donors and recipients. We therefore decided to opt for an attitude of exchange, which the evaluation process enabled us to do.*

Currently we are reflecting on the way in which these observations can enrich our management teams, both internationally and in France. Throughout the process of evaluation, we have committed to maintaining ongoing dialogue with our Board of Directors in order to share each step of the study in addition to our thoughts (and doubts, if any) with the commissioners of the study. Evaluation procedures reinforce both the skills of individuals and those of institutions."

Source: author.

The major issue with innovation in evaluation is its governability,[24] which is a reflection of new modes of governance of social change.[25] It requires identifying the actors involved and understanding their relations and power struggles, in order to break down the useless and ineffective barriers that are often erected between them. Learning becomes a medium for empowerment that enables the balance of power to be restored.

Indeed, preoccupation with learning lies within individuals, but critical consciousness of the power of learning can be an entry point into the virtuous and collective circle that is learning.

Here at F3E this is what we refer to as the learning cycle, with action at the individual level and at the structural scale, in an attempt to seek collective benefits through sharing and exchanging experiences. We analyze and learn lessons from both experience and action; we appropriate them for ourselves before sharing them. In so doing, they become richer, and can be reinvested in action, and give rise to further opportunities for learning. Multi-actor methods are based on the multiplicity of contributions. They gain their significance from the diversity of viewpoints expressed. If conducted in a respectful way, the encounters seek neither consensus nor homogeneity, and they include tension, friction, altercation, and can even get violent (in a healthy way, of course).

Governance in evaluation, like governance in social change, is a distinctly political subject. Both are the reflections of power relations that take place among actors. Are there not observers and those who are observed; "developed" and those who are "developing"; "reinforcers" and those who are reinforced; and plays of dominance and submission? In order to better govern the evaluation process, from now on we should keep in mind the importance of balance of power, as well as the desire to purposely strive for collective intelligence, by way of multi-actor dynamics.

Lesson 4. Innovation in evaluation means recognizing the political nature of measurement

Evaluations are not always strategic and innovative; sometimes they are based on reductive and simplistic analytic frameworks. That is why for the past several years the feeling that they all tell the same story is not uncommon.

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[24] We use the word "governability" here to refer to the ability to govern what is to be governed. It stems from the Foucauldian notion of "governmentality", which operates through institutions and imbues the nation-state with all-embracing political power. Governability is about governing governance.

[25] Whilst the notion of governmentality conveys a strong, centralized state, the word "governance" reflects the decentralized and shared forms of political power among actors, be they *public or private, official or unofficial, institutional or associative, and likely to operate on different scales*" (Dortier, 2004). The concept of governance has gradually been assimilated to progressive ideas with regard to "collective intelligence", thereby legitimizing the functioning of networked societies. In our opinion, however, the participation of a multitude of private or community actors in the political arena cannot be understood as progress: on the one hand, participation and representation are not the same thing; while on the other, the intentions of different actors are not necessarily commendable. The key question in governance as opposed to governmentality is authority.

The analytical framework most often used in the evaluation process is the "logical framework". Sometimes it can be inefficient, or even more like a straightjacket. The way it is used often contorts observation and listening, fitting them into the mold it imposes. What is lost in the process is also the sense of surprise, the unexpected events, the hidden aspects, collective intelligence, and learning... Development cannot be summed up—or measured—strictly by the results in comparison with their projections. It is a process that requires admitting and embracing complexity.

Numerous methods and tools for learning exist, and they are increasingly innovative, contextualized, and efficient. Ranging from theories of change (ToC), Outcome Mapping, and the Most Significant Change technique (MSC), among others, the most important thing is not the tool itself, because as efficient or innovative as it may be, it can be misused. The essential aspect is the support process for social change.

In the context of evaluation, or rather, in the context of learning, the key is taking the time to create the socio-temporal space of reflection and continuous improvement. It is not about creating change directly, but observing the changes that are created, and allowing them to emerge in all of their complexity. Evaluation approaches are just toolkits that enable people—be it on the individual, the collective, or the institutional level (and it is essential to act on the three levels at the same time)—to strengthen and affirm their approach, and to correct it or reorient it if necessary.

Some are persistent about measuring change, whose qualitative dimension can overtake its quantitative dimension. Rather than attempt to measure meaning, however, we should bring meaning to the act of measuring!

It is difficult, and perhaps even erroneous, to attribute change to certain agents and not to others. On the other hand, it is both possible and desirable to support change (and those who contribute to it) by identifying the changes sought and the way in which their successful manifestation comes about. Evaluation processes are thus part and parcel of the political nature of development, and their pedagogical dimension transmits strong political messages whose consequences are a function of the quality of attention they are paid.

Conclusion

It is the level of "interconnectivity", "cross-fertilization", pooling and sharing that in the end creates the collective intelligence that enables the production of positive social change. What begins to emerge is the question of the legitimacy of the actors who take part in social change (or not). Couldn't civil society organizations (CSOs), which are responsible for constructive opposition, take up the helm? The role of CSOs could be to oversee the changes that operate at every level, in all types of environments. Accompanying change would entail taking account of these multiple changes in order to shape them into a whole, which is called social change—all the while knowing that there is not just one but many forms of social change because people's interests, values, principles, and visions are not the same everywhere (and must not be).

CSOs would be responsible for guaranteeing betterment of humanity—that is, the respect of values—so that the betterment of some does not come at the cost of the ruin of others.

Change is now, and it is in learning that we change. We must nonetheless be careful when it comes to appeals from various parties. Change cannot become a tyrannical obsession. What is at stake is being unable to appreciate the present, in which action takes place. Change takes time and space, and requires perseverance and tolerance. *Ubuntu!*[26]

References

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[26] *Ubuntu* is a Bantu word that means respect, helpfulness, sharing, community, generosity, trust, and selflessness— all at the same time. In an interview, Nelson Mandela described the word: *"Ubuntu does not mean that people should not enrich themselves. The question therefore is: Are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to be able to improve?"*.

3.2. Improving the Quality of "Real-time" Aid for More Effective Change: Experiences from the Observatories of Humanitarian Aid and Reconstruction Set Up by Groupe URD (Afghanistan, Chad, and Haiti)

François Grünewald

Groupe URD is a small organization that stands out as being quite original: created approximately twenty years ago following collective thoughts and discussions on what the post-Cold War world would become and the consequences of this change on the fields of development and humanitarian aid, it has undergone a self-imposed exile in a farm in Provence, France. This particular choice plunges Groupe URD into the difficult contexts unique to small remote areas with their many risks (floods, forest fires, land conflicts, etc.), and this on a real-time and daily basis. As a result, our organization must constantly try to align its reflections and recommendations on international crisis contexts and what can be experienced in France. The efforts Groupe URD has made on environmental impact (energy, carbon footprint, water management, sanitation, and waste), as well as on social dynamics (which have earned Groupe URD a social entrepreneurship award in the Rhône-Alpes region), are not trivial for an organization concerned with social change.

When we conduct an evaluation on the response to a drought or to floods related to environmental degradation, or when we see refugees' problems with access to energy (wood for cooking, electricity) for instance, we can say that "it is something that affects us because it

is also something we experience back home". Our quest for coherence between "Here, and Over-There" has a major impact on the credibility of our recommendations. Groupe URD was quick to state its core mission in its Articles of Association: to help improve humanitarian and reconstruction practices. Over time, this mission has taken a number of forms, prompted by consistent involvement in the evaluation of humanitarian relief and post-crisis reconstruction efforts (Groupe URD has participated in more than fifty evaluation processes in the past fifteen years, on four continents and in various contexts ranging from wars to natural disasters to post-crisis situations), the development of evaluation and quality-monitoring instruments, and training in the use of these instruments.

As a result, Groupe URD became involved in many international and national discussions on these subjects. Publications in French and English; its regularly updated website; four to six training sessions on the subject every year; the implementation of the Quality Project;[27] and numerous missions in Central America, Afghanistan, Africa, Asia, and more, testify to this commitment. As does Groupe URD's strong involvement in the implementation of the Global Study on the Consultation and Participation Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action (with evaluations conducted in Sri Lanka, Colombia, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Angola).

Indeed, I will have to answer the core question of this conference: Does evaluation contribute to social change? However, I shall ask myself the following question first: Does evaluation contribute to any change at all for the individuals involved in the programs that are evaluated?

Of course, I will approach this question with a good dose of humility. Numerous reports are only compliance reports that verify the proper funding of a project and its completion in full conformity with the initial logical framework – questions then do not go much further than this. Have my evaluation reports ever changed someone's life? The day before yesterday, I was in Nyoungwa in Guinea, right at the border with Sierra Leone. I arrived too late to catch the ferry across the river. The sun was setting on the horizon, over the riverbank and behind the coconut palms, far beyond the most distant pirogues, and I asked myself: "What will I have to say at the AFD-F3E seminar on evaluation?". The stories of two events that happened to me in extreme circumstances sprung to mind.

Few evaluations bring us in contact with death-row situations. Nevertheless, I have had such an experience twice. The first time was in the Caucasus, where I was evaluating prison management programs. As I was conducting interviews and looking at how the prison was managed, I found myself in the death-row section of the prison, and was shocked by the levels of extreme violence there. What could I suggest, as an evaluator? I then thought: "These people are bored. They are violent, have nothing to do and are afraid because they know they are going to die. They should be given books to read." The recommendation I then made to the organization that commissioned the evaluation was to send books. Three weeks after, I was informed that the atmosphere of the prison had completely changed. The inmates were reading and were much calmer. Several months later, I received a letter from Tbilisi. In this letter, a woman was writing to me that her brother, who had recently been executed, had asked her to thank me for the books, because they enabled him to "escape" from his harsh reality and made his last days on Earth much more serene.

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[27] www.compasqualite.org

The second experience is only a few days old, in an Ebola treatment center in Sierra Leone. I should point out that when one enters the so-called "high risk zone", wearing a protection suit and a mask, the people we meet have only about a thirty percent chance of survival. In these centers, there are many children, often very young, sometimes alone, without the mother they have lost, completely oblivious to what is happening to them. They cry and some of them do not even understand that they are going to die. What could I offer, when they had access to competent medical staff and what was, ultimately, efficient logistics? Distribute comic books? Most of these children couldn't read. Moreover, once touched, these comics would become a hazard that would have to be burned every evening—burned and replaced every day. The same would occur with toys, which would have to be "decontaminated". How about music that would be broadcast on a radio cassette player placed beyond the risk zone and that would play songs for the children of the treatment center? When I returned with the evening team, I observed that the children were listening closely to the song and weren't crying anymore: they were singing and clapping their hands. Many of them would probably be dead in a fortnight.

The question of the use of evaluations as a process of learning and institutional change is at the heart of the agendas of the officials in charge of the evaluation services of many an institution (Grünewald, 2005). Indeed, evaluation is too often seen first as an act of control—and is therefore feared—before being considered an instrument for progress. Moreover, experience shows that reports, which are often delivered very tardily after the completion of the program, gather dust on a shelf and aren't really used as a source of feedback. Although priorities should hinge on "evaluate to enable change", concerns focus on the question of "evaluate as control" or "evaluate as an alibi" (Grünewald, 2002). Yet again, there was a disconnection between lessons and action. It proved important to draw the result of the evaluation closer to the action itself. Groupe URD therefore put a lot of effort into the search for an evaluation system with a strong learning component and the capacity to bring about change in "real time". Evaluation can have a strong impact when it is timely and is capable of providing feedback on key elements in real time.

With real-time evaluation processes, a team of evaluators comes to see the results within the first few months of the response. It often transpires that many parameters that were taken into account at the beginning of the intervention have already lost their relevance, or that the initial logical framework isn't adapted anymore. The kinetics of change in relief and reconstruction are often extremely rapid. In such contexts, aid practitioners are so fully absorbed in their work that they can't manage to establish the distance needed to better take into account the changes that have occurred. And, at that moment, a kindly, critical, and constructive external perspective can have a very strong impact.

Real-time Evaluation (RTE)

Real-time evaluation is conducted by a team that is outside the action (from either a regional office or headquarters, but above all from outside). The first RTEs were carried out by Groupe URD in 1999 in Central America, after Hurricane Mitch, then after the 2001 earthquakes in El Salvador and at the start of the Afghanistan operations in 2002. RTE consists in evaluation visits in the field during ongoing operations in order to decide upon a strategic course of action. Groupe

URD tries to establish its presence with an initial mission within the first three months after the start of the humanitarian interventions: three months after the 2004 Tsunami, one month after the earthquake in Haiti (Grunewald, 2010), one month after the 2012 typhoons in the Philippines (Grunewald and Boyer, 2012). RTE can occur later in the process, during crises that occur over a protracted period (RTE in the Horn of Africa conducted by Groupe URD eight months after the launch of relief interventions in 2006; in the Sahel for the Department for International Development (DFID), eight months after the emergency operations were initiated).

Iterative Evaluations with Mini Seminars (IEMS)

This process was developed and tested by Groupe URD from 1999 to March 2002 to draw lessons from humanitarian actions, after Hurricane Mitch (Grunewald *et al.*, 2000) and the El Salvador earthquakes. Following Hurricane Mitch, we carried out a series of evaluation missions after six, twelve, and forty-eight months. After the December 2004 Tsunami (Grunewald, 2006), the process was carried out at a brisk pace: three months, six months, eight months, one year, two years and up to four years after the disaster (Deprez and Labattut, 2010), in order to see what was going on. This proved very interesting. Indeed, we have established that a significant portion of the informal settlements rehabilitation programs carried out by NGOs to resettle people affected by the hurricane, or following the tsunami, had been completely perverted. When we came back forty-eight months after the disaster, some programs that seemed very positive after six months, or even twelve months, were now telling a very different story: the houses had been sold away; speculators had bought part of the camps and had practically turned them into prostitution dens. In San Salvador, the camps had become places where labor was concentrated for *maquilas* and export-processing-zone plants.

These complex processes link the exchanges, the coordination of questions, the evaluation missions regularly sent to the field, and the complex feedback process encompassing the local NGOs and the international actors. Each time, the final stage has taken the form of a series of technical workshops and conferences (in France, Switzerland, and the United States), articles in specialist publications, as well as new ideas on how to improve the learning processes. Since then, Groupe URD has conducted such iterative evaluations in Chad, in the areas affected by the 2004 Tsunami (RTE for FAO in June–Oct. 2005, several missions for France in Oct. 2006–Nov. 2006), in Haiti (from 2012 to 2014) after the earthquake, and, very recently, in the Sahel on the behalf of the British cooperation agency DFID (from October 2013 to April 2014). Supporting them in the long term by providing an independent evaluative perspective, with a human outlook, makes it possible to evaluate projects and progress very positively.

Something else stood out as very important in our opinion: during relief interventions, humanitarian practitioners often have a very low level of contextual knowledge, including in sociology and anthropology. Groupe URD's strategy is to very rapidly bring to the field, in the research or evaluation teams that we deploy, the skills that can provide such a perspective. Our team in Haiti included a Haitian woman, very early in the process, who is an anthropologist, architect, and urban planner, and she led us to review part of the housing reconstruction programs. The Haitian *lakou* (the space including the house and its periphery) is indeed not a

mere square space with a roof over it. It must have a window at the front, another in the back, a terrace next to the kitchen, and other such elements. We made a short film out of this: "From a box to sleep in to a house to live in", which can be watched on our website.

The Observatories or "learning offices"

The concept of a "learning office" emerged from the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP). The feasibility of this process had been studied together with ALNAP in several concrete cases (in India with the Orissa typhoon, in Timor Leste, Sierra Leone, and Kosovo) and had led ALNAP to implement a pilot process in Malawi in 2002, in the context of the food crisis in Southern Africa.

One of the major challenges of this approach is to see how it can be set up side-by-side, but without unnecessary duplication, with other institutions such as the United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). For Groupe URD, which took part in ALNAP's work on learning offices from the very beginning, the decision to go further than IEMS processes and to look for systems that could help us embed the learning processes in the field was taken in Afghanistan.[28] Indeed, after having set up the IEMS, from March 2002 to the end of 2003 (following four missions), we had received significant demand from NGOs and the Afghan populations for us to stay: "We need the after-sales service of your evaluations. You conduct an iterative evaluation and a mini-seminar, but something more is required: to facilitate discussion on the subject of the results of the evaluation." Our work has also highlighted the fact that evaluations, both ours and that of other protagonists, often bring to light issues that are difficult to handle given a lack of understanding of the context and certain challenges.

The evaluator can raise a research issue but doesn't necessarily have an easy solution to offer. To find the solution, it is necessary to set up a mini program of operational research that will make it possible to better grasp a complicated question with solutions that are difficult to find. Our observatories now therefore nearly systematically include internal operational research capabilities to investigate these critical points raised by the evaluations. We have thus conducted various research programs on the challenges of participation (in the context of Afghanistan, on the social management of water, on the linkages between food security and poppy production, as well as on the challenges of urban reconstruction [Boyer, 2010]).

This "operational research" component that was launched within the Afghanistan Observatory was replicated during the Albania-Kosovo crisis (Grunewald, 1999). This initiative consisted in blending "real-time evaluation" with an evaluation team sent as early as spring 1999 to Albania, and longer-term research during Summer 2000, with, each time, a reporting system. After an initial field mission, a series of discussions was organized with interested NGOs. After the second mission, a mini-seminar was organized in Tirana with Albanian and international NGOs, and a larger event was held in Paris.[29]

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[28] http://www.urd.org/Groupe-URD-in-Afghanistan,95

[29] This approach emerged from Groupe URD's research and evaluation agreement with Coordination SUD, a platform for the coordination of international solidarity NGOs in France.

We have repeated the experience in Chad[30] with a similar type of program in the east of the country at the period of time when it was overflowing with refugees and internally displaced persons (Grünewald *et al.*, 2008). This had a fundamental impact (Groupe URD, 2009), but also on the issue of resilience to drought (Renaudin and Raillon, 2011). Thanks to the discussions inspired by our evaluations, it was possible to explore in depth the land tenure issue within programs for the return internally displaced persons or for the management of humanitarian space (Grünewald and Collins, 2009). When some people were saying that "to allow displaced people to return to where they come from, it will be necessary to provide them with dispensaries, possibly even a school and a water connection", we would explain that "these people who have left their villages five or six years ago will return to places where the land may have been cultivated by other people since then, or maybe not, but that their tenure has lapsed. How can land issues then be managed?". Finally, we conducted a full study on this subject that has been a key element of all our reflection on humanitarian aid and reconstruction (Sokpoh and Collins, 2010).

The evaluations and operational research conducted by the observatories often lead to requests for training. Technical subjects often act as important underpinnings for capacity building, for instance on sanitation management, as in Chad (Patinet, 2009; Patinet, 2011). Very often, however, the demand for training covers peripheral subjects to project management, quality management, or even more cross-cutting issues (such as gender and the environment). The Afghanistan Observatory continued working on these challenges, in coordination with the Acbar NGOs.

Another element mentioned during our discussions with Afghan, Chadian, and Haitian actors was their difficulties coming to terms with the numerous evaluations. "We see many international actors who come to conduct evaluations, and we Haitians do not know how to proceed. We are given terms of reference, for instance, but we do not understand very well what they mean. The same happens with the reports we are sometimes—actually rarely—sent: we do not understand what they mean either. We would like you to help us understand this." For this reason, in Haiti we have set up support programs for local actors on evaluation.

We are coming to a fairly mature model with the experience of the Haiti Observatory,[31] known as the Evaluation and Learning Support Office (ELSO), financed by British, Irish, and American agencies. There are three pillars to this model:

1) Supporting all the evaluation processes that are carried out in the country (not those we are conducting but those of others), with instruments such as a file listing all the evaluators we have trained and a pooling of lessons on the various evaluations we have received, which are either put into written form as abstracts that are sent out in the Observatory's newsletter, or presented during coordination meetings.

2) Carrying out substantial action research on issues that are raised during the evaluations. For instance, evaluations have highlighted the complexity and the misunderstandings

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[30] http://www.urd.org/Groupe-URD-in-Chad
[31] http://www.urd.org/Our-activities-in-Haiti

regarding security issues in Haiti – ELSO therefore launched a study on the reality of insecurity in Haiti (Dandois, 2013). Urban land tenure issues rapidly became a key issue in discussions, and we therefore conducted different studies on the subject. There again, temporary shelters were intended to be given to people with title deeds, but ninety percent of the urban population of Haiti do not have any. To look for a workable solution, we launched a study on land tenure in Haiti (Bailey, Levine, and Boyer, 2012).

3) Providing support for training on quality practices and evaluation. Haitian NGOs, the Haitian managers of international NGOs, and the government ministries (Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Health) say, as in Chad and Afghanistan, that they meet all these evaluators but do not understand what they do or what they expect from them. Furthermore, the reports sent to them are often in English, even though they are French speakers. The reports of the Haiti Observatory are written in English, French, and Creole, in order to be as accessible as possible.

These long-term support processes, with an external, critical perspective that is well integrated into the assistance landscape, facilitate the proper communication of needs and make them well accepted as shedding new light on programs. The Observatory is run by a team consisting of French, Canadian, and Haitian practitioners. Its researchers are in liaison with the Haitian universities, the national and international NGOs, the ministries, the UN institutions, and the donors. The training sessions are carried out in cooperation with the Haitian universities. Students are also involved in supervised projects during the course of their studies. The Observatory will soon close its office, but we will try to work remotely to strengthen evaluation skills in universities, within administrations and the Haitian civil society, insofar as we will be able to obtain all the necessary funding. The idea is to leave Haiti at the end of 2015 once we have reinforced the capacities of the two main universities to offer courses on evaluation and the quality management of the programs, helped in evaluation capacity building for the relevant ministries, and—finally—contributed to establishing a cluster of Haitian evaluators who will be able to act as local partners for evaluations conducted by international organizations.

The use of the reports and the quality of the processes of restitution and ownership remain a cause for concern for us.

Innovative reporting instruments

On its own, a report rarely acts as an instrument for social change or the changing of practices. This is why we are very much involved in innovative approaches using videos[32] as a way of reporting on evaluations and making it possible to bring the voices from the grassroots into policy dialogue. The presentation of these videos in the major conferences has always had significant impact: in the case of Haiti in 2010, following the real-time evaluation for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (Grünewald and Binder, 2010), our video[33] helped raise

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[32] http://www.urd.org/Videos,105
[33] http://www.urd.org/Videos-of-the-Real-time-Evaluation

awareness on how inadequate humanitarian practice was to the urban context, as well as on the mismatch between the vision of the practitioners and the view of the beneficiaries and affected people. Similarly, the video we made for the evaluation of the British programs for humanitarian aid in the Sahel[34] has been an important tool for the dissemination of key messages. Whenever possible, we have also projected these videos to beneficiaries and affected populations, which has strengthened their pride. Also worthy of note are:

— The reporting workshops in the field and at headquarters (thus hooking up with the IEMS);

— The ongoing advice provided directly in the field during the evaluation process, to different stakeholders;

— The memoranda given in real time before leaving the field;

— The recommendations framework;

— The summary report (key messages of the evaluation).

Discussion and thought about these experiences continue. The aim is for the evaluation reports to be actually used rather than remain unheeded, and for their impact on populations to be maximized rather than remain very limited.

Box 4

The Observatories of humanitarian aid and reconstruction

Learning, improving practices, and supporting change aren't self-evident, especially in crisis and post-crisis situations. The aid practitioners are subject to constraints in terms of time and results achieved—they have little time to step back and to analyze the situation, how it is unfolding, and the impact of their actions. Academic research takes place in an entirely different time frame, and its results are often too theoretical or difficult to translate into practices by aid practitioners. Insights and know-how that would prove useful for action are not always available in the field or are difficult to access. Institutional memory is weak, and the high turnover of expatriate staff doesn't allow for learning in the long run. Finally, relief and development actors share little inform-ation on their practices and programs. The Observatory therefore facilitates "lateral" learning (between actors sharing the same context), "in-learning" (integrating lessons learnt from other contexts) and "out-learning" (exporting the lessons learnt in a given context to other situations).

Monitoring, evaluating, facilitating learning and accountability processes all the while building and supporting the capacities and efforts of local stakeholders (both national and decentralized) in terms of monitoring and evaluation: such are the missions of the Observatories.

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[34] http://www.urd.org/Video-of-the-evaluation-of-the,2208

The three Observatories set up by Groupe URD during the past ten years have been subject to evaluations (de Geoffroy, 2010) in order to improve their relevance and performance, especially in terms of support to shifting practices and improving impact. It appears that these Observatories of humanitarian aid and reconstruction take on their full meaning in crisis and post-crisis contexts first and foremost because they make it possible to:

— Reinforce, or even create, a culture of individual and collective learning;

— Help find some possible answers to complex subjects;

— Strengthen capabilities on the sensitive subjects of evaluation, quality, accountability, and learning.

As a result, the observatories contribute to creating or reinforcing a strong connection between the community of aid practitioners and the field of evaluation, and to strengthening the links on evaluations between national and international operators. We will also see that this lasting connection, *via* the observatories or the long-term IEMS, provides a fairly original capacity for strategic thinking (Grunewald, 2011*a*), embedded in trend detection over several sites, time frames, sectors, and institutions, as we have demonstrated in the case of Afghanistan (Grunewald and Pascal, 2006; Grunewald, 2010; Grunewald, 2011*b*; Grunewald, 2011*c*).

The problematic funding of the observatories

Learning is rarely seen as a priority, and it is always difficult to rapidly find the financial resources to set up such observatories, even when the need is obvious. For instance, we have been trying to convince the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI) since May 2013 of the importance of such an initiative in the Sahel and in the "Mali +" region,[35] but to no avail. Our Afghanistan and Chad Observatories have had to be closed due to a lack of funds. The Haiti Observatory is now considering a "lean" strategy to be able to continue to meet the strong demands that are expressed.

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3.3. A Reflection on Change and Evaluation in Decentralized Cooperation Programs: Picardy, Benin, Niger, and Madagascar

Michèle Cahu

Introduction

My contribution will mostly serve to anticipate a joint statement by Marc Totté, of Inter-Mondes Belgium, and myself, on change and evaluation in the decentralized cooperation programs of the Picardy Region. Picardy put Inter-Mondes Belgium in charge of a comparative and cross-cutting evaluation of its cooperation programs in 2011, which yielded many findings. My points of view are those of an elected official who has been in charge of this cooperation policy since 2004. I should specify that I am neither an expert nor a professional development practitioner, although I have been gripped by these questions for the past ten years. It is a challenge for elected officials (myself included) to preserve their own voice and genuineness. This is why I wish to express myself simply and freely, without trying to reformulate in the lingo of development practitioners what I have encountered and my thoughts on the subject.

I will focus on three main lines of thought:

- How the cooperation policy and programs of Picardy contribute or must contribute to social change in the North and the South;

- How the recently conducted strategic evaluations of these cooperation projects are capable of assessing the contribution of our action to social change;

- How certain evaluations have been drivers of change at the level of the various stakeholders of the programs in the North and the South.

Was the notion of social change as a positive and lasting development one of the expectations, or even the primary expectation, of the policy of decentralized cooperation of the Picardy Region? Is this social change a prospect of the South for the South, a prospect of the North for the South, or does it bear expectations for exchanges and effects in both directions?

Supposing that social change is a relevant area, an expectation or a result of this policy, how did one or several evaluations manage to specify, analyze, or support it?

I will refrain from describing the history of this cooperation policy simply in terms of technical challenges and objectives. I find it more interesting to try to express why Picardy has been conducting this policy since 1995, what the foundations of the current programs are, and what the ambitions of the officials that initiated them were.

Three periods and several areas of cooperation: for what kind of social change?

1995-2004: the foundations and the initial impulse

In 1995, Picardy and the municipalities of the Collines department in Benin got involved in a cooperation agreement, before the first municipal elections were even carried out in Benin at the end of 2002. CIDR was (and still is) Picardy's partner in charge of the design and implementation of this cooperation. The importance of the presence of this NGO in the implementation of Picardy's cooperation programs is linked to its expertise in supporting local development and decentralization. This policy choice shared by the Picardy Region and its partners allowed us at the outset to achieve high-quality collaborative work between politicians, technicians, and NGOs—with the NGOs providing insight on the challenges, the main policy lines and the difficulties, and providing common perspectives for the local authorities according to their expectations and the realities they are facing.

The program shifted towards the support of the municipalities in setting up inter-municipal services after 2004 (the *Groupement Intercommunal de Collines* – GIC), with two specific elements at inception: dedicated funds—the *Fonds de développement des territoires* (FDT – territorial development fund) and the *Fonds de développement local* (FDL – local development fund)—and the well-asserted importance of community facilitation. The gradual increase in autonomy and the self-financing of the municipalities were decided upon in the first agreements. The construction of infrastructure (classrooms, wells, latrines, roads, dispensaries, etc.) rounded out the support to operations thanks to a line of funding dedicated to investment. It also afforded an immediate visibility of the results of cooperation to the beneficiary populations; this was crucial, as the structural aspects of the support to municipalities require a commitment in the medium and long term to be properly deployed.

Picardy was already very attached to the development and spatial planning of its own territory, with a marked influence of its planning policies on its vision of decentralized cooperation.

Although initiated under a different political majority from 1995 to 2004, the first stage has influenced this policy up to today. The successive politicians acted as the policy-makers of the cooperation, and the leading force in the field was CIDR, active in Benin since the 1960s.

This initial, so-called formative phase was characterized by the strong influence from CIDR, support and facilitation for the Benin state and its devolved services, and implication by Picardy

elected officials. It sought to assist municipalities—even before decentralization—to structure themselves and to better prepare their response to the challenges of public service and the needs of their populations.

I cannot suggest that the Picardy officials were already aiming for social change in Benin and in Collines at the outset in 1995, but they were certainly driven by the desire to open Picardy up to other lands and cultures, albeit with limited means in relation to those presently earmarked for cooperation. Although social change was not put forward in any precise policy statement at the time as far as I know, it was very well inchoately there, in gestation, arising from a common intention of Picardy and Collines to open up and therefore to transform themselves.

For Collines, the rise of decentralization, supported by Picardy, was heralding many expectations in terms of social change. It is easy to imagine the extent of these expectations: recent and loosely structured municipalities, with huge needs in terms of training, studies, and evaluations; a decentralization that was affirmed but insufficiently funded; and a population with pressing needs in all sorts of domains: sanitation, water, health care, education, the economy, housing, land tenure, civil registers, etc. The new officials, especially the mayors, embodied their constituents' aspirations for change, and they discovered the scale of their task at the very same time as that of the scarcity of their technical, economic, and financial resources. They were pioneers, but many also saw themselves as guinea pigs.

In the Picardy regional council, a project coordinator, now the director of the international relations department, was alone in monitoring the program agreements up until 2004.

2004-2010: the expansion of Picardy's cooperation policy and the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals

In 2004, under the leadership of today's political majority, we decided to increase the budget for regional cooperation considerably, from 0.04% of the regional budget in 2004 to 0.98% of this reference budget by 2010. This increase was validated by the region's president, and the regional assembly voted not only in favor of this commitment, but to exceed the Millennium Development Goals commitment wherein 0.7% of the budget of local communities is dedicated to development. In 2006, the cooperation with the six municipalities of the Collines department in Benin was followed by an agreement with the inter-municipal association of the six municipalities of Alibori (Benin), after a request by their elected officials, and in 2007 by one with twelve municipalities of two (and now three) departments of Niger (Konni, Madaoua, and Malbaza).

For this cooperation, Picardy chose to partner with a coalition of NGOs known for their expertise: IRAM, the Centre International d'Etudes pour le Développement Local (CIEDEL), and the Nigerien NGO Réseau d'Appui aux Initiatives Locales (RAIL). Then, in 2008, a cooperation agreement was signed with the municipalities of three of the four districts of the Diana region in Madagascar, organized in inter-municipal associations, as well as a direct agreement with this very same region. This cooperation followed the joint appeal of the Assembly of French regions (ARF) and the Assembly of the twenty-two regions of Madagascar (A 22 RM), prompting each French region to cooperate with one region of Madagascar. CIDR, already present in Madagascar, implemented this cooperation with the local NGO Territoires et Développement.

In each of these programs, the cooperation with Picardy targeted the support to municipalities, their structuring, their development, and their skills. The inter-municipal associations were an instrument for the pooling of resources and solidarity, in order to profitably address development issues in contexts of municipal decentralization stated at the national level but only thinly followed by financial transfers. Among the instruments of cooperation were: studies, training sessions for technicians and officials, exchange visits aimed at training and meeting with partners, support for technical advisers of NGOs, permanent program teams, and interns. The steering and political orientation of these programs was supported on a continuous basis though punctuated by key moments where the different participants were brought together in a co-decision process. During this second stage, several sector-specific programs were also initiated.

In Niger, a program to combat desertification through erosion control and land restoration, renamed *Gestion durable des ressources naturelles* (GDRN – sustainable management of natural resources), involved the planting of 800,000 acacia trees from 2009 to 2011 on 3,000 hectares of land. This had a positive impact on the local economy and offered employment opportunities to the local population in different projects in the form of "cash for work". In Collines, Benin, a social entrepreneurship program was set up with the company SENS, which was identified by the Picardy Region: made up of social investors from Benin and France, it helped so-called social entrepreneurs develop their companies while organizing and training small producers in fields such as beekeeping, local materials, plant health control, essential oils, and fresh fruit juices.

In Madagascar, activities linked to water and sanitation were formed, co-financed by Picardy, the Artois/Picardy Water Agency, and the Somme Departmental Council. Each of these programs was linked with the inter-municipal associations in order to provide them with institutional grounding and ensure their longevity. At the same time, reflection on support to local economic development led to the implementation in 2009, in Alibori, of an economic development agency and the creation of an annual inter-municipal fair in that department. Finally, from 2007 to 2010, a second orientation of cooperation put forward:

– Subsidies to solidarity NGOs from Picardy, based on certain criteria;

– Specialized training workshops in development education;

– The setting up of a network of international solidarity actors from Picardy;

– Each year, an annual cooperation forum celebrating one of our partner territories, in the presence of a delegation. This forum would bring together associations, citizens, professional NGOs, elected officials, and artists. Above all, this was a time for meeting and exchanging between stakeholders over the course of two days, with panel discussions on specific issues of development and cooperation. There was also a time for cultural exchange, which highlighted music, dance, plays, and exhibitions of visual arts created by the partners we had invited. These moments were very lively and highly appreciated; they embodied the cooperation policy in the Picardy Region, which had been largely inaccessible due to its technicality and lack of communication.

During this period, the Department for International Relations expanded, with its staff increasing to nine employees plus several interns.

2010–2014: seeking funds

The 2010 regional elections signaled a marked shift for Picardy's cooperation policy, as the second orientation of cooperation described above was completely abandoned following a decision by the regional president.

The European component was then uncoupled from international cooperation, and what was previously managed by the same political delegation found itself separated into two different departments. Furthermore, the budget for decentralized cooperation was slashed. The political context had been turbulent since 2009, and regional authorities had seen their budgets restricted.

As a result, co-financing was sought to round out the funding of the programs, involving the European Union (EU), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The inter-municipal associations proved attractive for some technical and financial partners (TFP) looking for contacts to achieve good-quality local grounding for their development funds. Nevertheless, this co-financing also introduced some extra technical complexity and new needs for results, compelling the region's Technical Service Department to focus on achieving short-term results that were sometimes distant from the concerns for social change, which require time and the implementation of complex processes that are possibly closer to a philosophy of action than to accounting.

In this difficult context, the external cross-cutting evaluation of the programs, which was conducted by Inter-Mondes Belgium and which took place over nine months in 2011, was awaited with concern, both within the Department of International Relations and by me. I was conscious that if this evaluation expressed any important qualification or negative opinions that were too severe, this difficult cooperation policy, at the crossroad between tense political issues and continuously targeted by a strongly averse group from the far-right of the political spectrum, would meet its end. The fact is that, over the years and travel within France or to the South, we had marshaled positive acknowledgments of the benefits and relevance of Picardy's decentralized cooperation. Both in the field and during numerous conversations and trips, I had the opportunity to consider the positive impact of what had been initiated by Picardy. But no one is a prophet in his own land, and, for lack of time, the other officials would not travel to the territories covered by our programs, and communication on our cooperation policy remained minimal.

It was becoming very complicated to promote the image of the cooperation policy in Picardy, as the primary beneficiaries were far away and the others, from within Picardy, were now deprived of the second orientation of cooperation that supported a network of solidarity actors within Picardy. We had to reinvent the idea of reciprocity.

Inter-Mondes Belgium's extensive and fine-quality work would lead to in-depth inquiry and introduce the issues of change, citizenship, and meaning. This work had to do with the programs in Niger, Madagascar, and Collines in Benin.

With Inter-Mondes Belgium, the very meaning of the evaluation was first questioned within the Regional Council of Picardy. Without being a specialist on evaluation issues, my understanding

is that the instruments that are typically used to evaluate the effects and impacts of the public policies of our regional authority had more to do with mathematics than philosophy. As a general rule, the idea is to evaluate tangible and quantified results in order to justify the use of public funds. It would be wrong to believe that cooperation does not seek this kind of result, as the project managers that monitor the agreements want to give full account of the veracity of the figures and what they cover in terms of objective realities.

The financial and legal services of the region are often referred to by the department as the uncompromising supervisors of quantitative results and the transparency of actions. Without questioning this strict approach, which is thought out at the outset of each program and applied to its financial aspects, the evaluation puts forward the issue of change as a process, and therefore as a movement, be it continuous or discontinuous, and the markers of change as bearings putting into question the process itself. Citizenship must be addressed in all the institutional and technical arrangements—that is, the capacity and the possibility given to Nigerien, Beninese, and Malagasy citizens to become agents of their own citizenship, in different democratic situations, all difficult and complex, and the capacity of each of these cooperation projects to take into account these issues of citizenship, to think them out, and to embed them in the expectations and the strategic directions of the programs.

Before the 2011 evaluation, community facilitation, upheld as a key component of development, did not sufficiently highlight the notion of citizenship. The real question was becoming: How must the structuring of municipalities, as supported by decentralized cooperation, take into account citizenship within each territory, in a less mechanical way than by technical capacity building and the strengthening of dialogue between elected officials and local populations, promulgated but difficult to apply effectively? What are the real expectations of the elected officials for their constituents? What changes do they actually long for?

Starting from this evaluation, the meaning of our actions and that of the whole of the cooperation policy was framed as an open inquiry rather than as expected results, the latter remaining statutorily inscribed in every administrative document. Obviously, it must be acknowledged that our partner NGOs hadn't waited for the evaluation to contemplate the meaning of the development actions. For Picardy's decentralized cooperation, expertise and technical aspects were nevertheless taking precedence over the process of inquiry, without which no lasting change can be contemplated either in the South or the North. Carried away by an expansion of the programs, the technical and control instruments were likely to carry more weight than the political vision. The evaluation raised many areas of reflection and demonstrated the importance of pursuing this policy. The painstaking work of the evaluators referred us back to the sensitive aspects of the programs, put words on blurred perceptions of what should be done or not done, and all that is so faint and indiscernible in the heat of the action. The issue of meaning, of why we are doing things, and of what we want to do, was foreshadowing or inaugurating the issue of social change.

The multi-country Niger/Alibori evaluation that was recently completed (in 2014) by Inter-Mondes Belgium, specifically to address the expectations of the EU, which co-financed these programs, showed a pronounced increase in the trend: the control of activities was taking over the political vision that brings about change. The evaluation highlighted the failure to properly

take into account the cultural aspects of each country, *"What people expect, what counts for them, what keeps them awake at night"* (Marc Totté). It nevertheless highlighted the relevance and the courage of an ambitious policy.

How are the evaluations a driver for change at the level of the different stakeholders in the North and the South?

A whole book would be necessary to answer such a question and would probably demand another evaluation on this very subject. Here's what I make of it: evaluations have positively challenged us by redirecting our focus from certain outcomes to others. They lead us to think differently about certain problems. We cannot make any assumption on the views of every party, but in my opinion the evaluation has shown how essential a collective conception of change was, both understood as an individual involvement in change and as a collective implementation. Several "systems" of thought (NGOs, politicians, technicians) in the North and the South team up around a same project but, to be able to create something useful in common, we must all accept to change our opinions, our habits, and our certainties, and to know which personal "place" we are talking about. This isn't easy to do, as any change or proposed change often leads to conflict or crisis situations. Solving these crises in a structured framework is what brings about change.

The elected officials of the Collines department who attended the presentation of the evaluation in 2011 participated with keen interest, though I cannot say for sure whether this evaluation has been decisive in the fulfilment of their political mandate. The inter-municipal technical teams and the program teams have benefited from the evaluation in their practices and their policies. The challenge remains to achieve a collective vision between technicians and officials from the inter-municipal organizations and the NGOs in order for each other's expertise and experience to act as a source of richness rather than division.

In spring 2014, a workshop on change, in Alibori, facilitated by CIDR and comprising elected officials and inter-municipal and municipal technicians of Alibori and the representative officials and technicians of Picardy, geared the inquiry towards the expected change, highlighting the impediments to change, the expectations of change, the sometimes imaginary representations, and the objective realities. For many participants, this workshop revealed their own attitude to change and the requirement to question their own implication before expecting from others that they change or become agents of change.

In conclusion, I will say that Picardy got itself involved in quite an adventure, supporting development through social change in the South. I dare not say this to the North, given how much this transfer from the South to the North is still in its infancy. Nevertheless, the potential is there, and the numerous discussions I have had with African officials lead me to believe that they could contribute valuable contributions to our own approaches of decentralization and many other social issues related to social change. Their visits to Picardy have maybe already prompted, among officials from Picardy, further reflections. History is on the move, and changes are occurring, even though they can be invisible and silent. We just have to support what we have to support there where we are, without being impatient.

3.4. Are We Evaluating Changes in Form or in Society?

The Example of the Successive Evaluations of the Programs Funded by the Picardy Region (France) in Benin, Niger, and Madagascar

Marc Totté

Introduction

The purpose of this contribution is to show that in order for evaluations to be able to contribute to second-order change, at both the level of society and the community, major changes must be made in the way that evaluations are conceived and conducted. This contribution draws upon the same experience as Michèle Cahu's article, and I will therefore not expand on the specifics of the interesting type of cooperation developed by the Picardy Region.

Generally speaking, evaluations remain quite strongly predicated on the "project-program" culture *via* the famous logical framework and its focus on outward accountability. At the end of the last century, a shift towards a fourth generation of evaluations began, the results of which (findings and recommendations) would be primarily formed in the adversarial proceedings between the stakeholders of the project rather than from the standpoint of the internal rationale of the expert.[36] Is this shift sufficient to imprint the notion of change within the evaluation process? Indeed, the fact of engaging very different worlds in a constructive dialogue still seems to be a major hurdle in the field of aid, cooperation, and international solidarity, which is struggling to visualize the "Other" as someone or something completely different. From this fundamentally universal perspective, the Other is viewed as simply lagging behind, soon to be assimilated into another way of thinking by way of a significant amount of training, information, awareness campaigns, and capacity building. Having to really inscribe the action and evaluation processes inter-culturally—in other words, to organize the dialogue between various intermediaries or between various representations of the ways of organizing life chances—is now the primary constraint that limits the possibilities of inducing change, or even identifying it.

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[36] For more participatory approaches, see Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1997; and for more political approaches see Durant *et al.*, 1995 or Floc'hlay and Plottu, 1998.

Naturally, we must first agree on what we mean by "change". Counter-intuitively, change is indeed conceived in extremely varied ways in different cultures. A quarter of a century of development and evaluation practice leads us to believe that the professional culture of development cooperation has brought that sector's actors to conceive of change in terms of increasing outcomes (results, impacts—in other terms, seeing change as determined, "perfected", and most often ideal). This conception makes it particularly difficult to observe transformations that are "in the making" at the moment in which things are actually changing (the change that is neither set nor stabilized, but in progress). This cultural mindset reflects a specific Western conception of change, of its economy and of its rationality, and which has been analyzed in depth by philosophers such as Jullien (2002, 2003), Kamenarović (2005, 2012) and Benasayag (2007).[37] Nonetheless, other conceptions of the process are worthy of greater attention.

Once we have gone through our inquiry on the nature of change, we shall briefly present the example of the evaluations of the inter-municipal structures in Benin, Niger, and Madagascar that we conducted on behalf of the Regional Council of Picardy.[38] As we are not in a position to clarify the outcomes and impacts of these evaluations, we intend to focus on the implications of the transformation that is underway, as we have perceived it during or after the evaluations, thanks to various support processes of these projects and to several of their stakeholders.[39]

Finally, we will try to identify a few lessons on the evaluation method and the support processes used both during and after evaluation, as they have been implemented by the Picardy Region with its NGO partners.

"Change", "social": What are we talking about exactly?

The Western conception of change is closely connected to outcomes and achievements based on models and plans. Change is seen as a product rather than as a process (Jullien, 2002). A model is used as a benchmark, often an ideal one (in the sense that it is generally not achieved back home either), by which the local situations are necessarily perceived as demonstrating some form of "resistance". In other cultures, especially in societies where heteronomy of norms is prevalent,[40] internal change, coming from within the individual, is not generally understood as possible.

In yet other cultures, however, change is thought of as something dynamic, constantly in effect; it is a transformation or mutation in perpetual motion. This is the case in a country

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[37] Also see the work of developmental anthropologists such as Bouju, Boutinet, De Sardan, or Jacob, or of historians such as Mappa.

[38] Please refer to the contribution of Michèle Cahu for more details.

[39] Inter-Mondes has indeed been supporting CIDR (Picardy Region's main NGO partner in Benin and Madagascar) in the facilitation of workshops on change for several years now.

[40] In such cultures, fairness and good are not viewed as being the products of the mind and internal, autonomous reflective thought, but determined by God, gods, ancestor spirits, or other supernatural forces.

such as China, where such an intellectual construct that is quite universally considered as being exceptional, was conceived more than 2,500 years ago and formalized in the *Book of Changes*, or *I Ching*. More generally, in Asia, the relationship to change is very different from ours: rather than being founded on the relationship between end and means, it is considered from the standpoint of the relationship between conditions and consequences based on the "propensity of things" (Jullien, 2003).

The nature of change is also an important consideration. It is now becoming widely accepted that first-order change should not be our primary concern. Having more plentiful and better conditions (such as income, roads, wells, schools, clinics, clothes, machines, medicine, seeds, agricultural inputs, or even knowledge and skills) is definitely important, but it does not ensure the capacity to anticipate or to collectively address the challenges and constraints to come.

Second-order change consists in doing something completely different, on profoundly different foundations. The idea is not so much about having more things but about "being together" in a different way. It is about being different not only *vis-à-vis* the Other (people or things that are different) but also *vis-à-vis* one's own, and, specifically, *vis-à-vis* nature and natural resources. It is about having a different attitude towards things in addition to people. What is important is not trying to have as much income as possible, nor having more "science", which ultimately leads to increases in needs.

Rather, second-order change requires us to transform the way we conceive of ourselves (and of the Other) as well as the way we learn (and unlearn)—this in order to internalize the conditions of our development, the ways of making a profit, redistributing, building linkages, constructing our relationship to the individual and the collective, our relationship to freedom and equality, and the like. Yet, the vast majority of projects are not working on this point, or if they are, only very indirectly. The standard approach is to consider that the major development objectives (democracy, good governance, equality, transparency, accountability, and so on) are present as undisputable universal realities that will necessarily and mechanically happen in time.

The subject of change must therefore be revisited. What is visible in society is not key anymore: technological innovation, new practices, new representation bodies, new installations, and the like—these are just forms. What should be addressed is what determines our relationship to power, to work, to equality, to poverty, to group organization, to the individual, to the collective, to authority, or to freedom. That is, the mechanisms within society that exacerbate the processes of impoverishment, inequalities, violence and exclusion. All of this, in fact, in an increasingly globalized and therefore interdependent world.

Of course, forms should be acted upon—it is impossible to do otherwise. In fact, it is forms: the reproduction of problems from one year to another, the tensions between elected representatives and technicians, the tensions between populations and "agents", the manifestations of inequalities, the situations of deprivation—to name just a few—which make it possible for us to retrace the mechanisms that explain why it is so difficult to ensure decent wages for agricultural labor, to maintain public amenities, or to nurture and uphold economic

activities that eventually improve the relationships within families or among members of a community (or a municipality). Or to retrace and explain why in Madagascar, Benin, or Niger (to list only the countries in which the Picardy Region intervenes), we find it so normal to take advantage of and profit from a situation and unconsciously or consciously fight to have "more". Rather than seeking to act more in "common", everyone is for his or her own group. They stop attempting to go beyond the "every man for himself" rationales, and in so doing they move towards a mentality of individualism—just as we do at home with the lottery, and "over there" with the *tontine* rotating saving and credits associations. "Collectivist" rationales take precedence: ones in which people are together, but without sharing resources.

Bearing that in mind, instituting social change is not only about "helping" vulnerable populations and individuals. Actually (depending on sensibilities), it is more about working on the linkages that exist in society between the wealthy and the poor, between social "elders" and social "juniors". It is about putting our thinking to work on the social standards that make us consider it normal for there to be "superiors" and "inferiors". This is the case on both sides of the equation.

In this context, the notion of regulation plays a significant role in understanding change and transformation. It is not about regulation and adjustment (as in the idea of the thermostat), but about the production of meaning, of values, and standards, around the rule. This type of regulation suggests challenging, on both sides, the standards on which the rules of "collaboration" or "living" together are based, at any level, thus helping the practitioners to shed their "inculturation". This is why we consider it a prerequisite for interculturality.[41] The culture of the project is targeted here on the same terms as the culture of the society that it addresses.

An evaluation method that combines the standards of the "project" and "society"

To do so, we had to develop a novel evaluation method. The method used with the programs funded by the Picardy Region is summarized in Figure 1. The evaluation of these programs for the strengthening of inter-municipal linkages at the political, economic and social levels in Niger, Madagascar, and Benin (see Michèle Cahu's contribution in this very same publication) primarily addressed the questions of efficacy and relevance.

The method consists in comparing the explicit or implicit standards of the project (in its objectives, expected results, and promoted activities) with what local "society" makes of them through the results, outcomes, and impacts that are actually delivered in terms of main expected objectives.

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[41] The root "inter-" is chosen as a modality of the dialogue between various conceptions rather than the alternative root "pluri-" (in which everyone is in consensus about the same "way") or the root "multi-" (everyone in their ghetto or sanctuary).
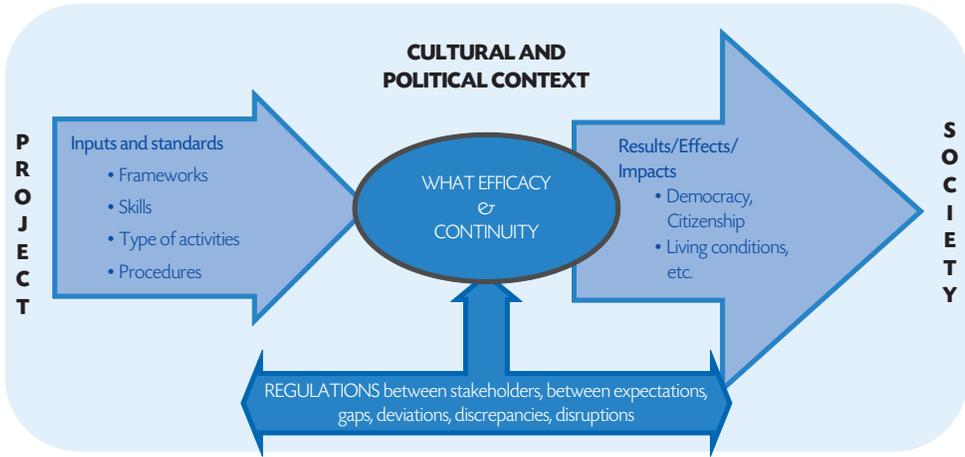
Source: Inter-Mondes (unpublished).

All this makes it possible to primarily (but not exclusively, according to the terms of reference) assess the "effectivation"[42] and the "continuation" of the progress produced.[43] Evaluation is thus seen in the perspective of a cultural and political context that is more profoundly permeated here than in more regular assessments: How do democracy, citizenship, equality, and participation make sense in a given society? How is the project acting as a springboard to address the relationship to such notions? How are the stakeholders regulating—in other words, producing by themselves new standards and rules that are conducive to living together in harmony—based on the gaps, deviations, shifts, or disruptions with what was initially planned?

Regulation thus becomes key in the evaluation process—not only during the initial negotiation of objectives and rules of the project, as is usually done, but also, and fundamentally more so, during the course of the process itself, discussing what goes around the rule, the framework, the standards and values, and the sanctions, and what should collectively be decided in case of transgression, be it from a donor (who would modify the initial conditions) or a participant (who would not deliver according to plan).

Just as for the activity of the project, the idea is indeed intended to achieve a dual impact: while verifying that all that has been planned for is achieved, the idea is mostly to assess what it has generated, during and beyond the course of the evaluation, in terms of reflexive thought

[42] The wording is complex and convoluted but bears witness to the difficulty of our language and of our thought to conceive of change as an open process that is largely undetermined. This wording is proposed as a reaction to "effectiveness", which does not compare the activity as it is carried out to what was initially planned. "Effectivation" would express the art of putting to work what has effectively been done (acts not narratives) in the light of the produced effects.

[43] This wording ("effectivation" and not "effectiveness", "continuation" and not "continuity") illustrates a methodological trend to place ourselves more in the perspective of the process than the outcomes.

by the stakeholders as regards negative, unforeseen, or yet undetermined effects, and their capacities to conceive of things differently. This should concern both parties: the participants in the "North" are as targeted for change as are those of the "South".

A process driven by and for the Picardy Region

In 2011, we were selected to evaluate the Picardy Region's decentralized cooperation policies *via* three of its intervention mechanisms: in Benin, Madagascar, and Niger. This year, after winning a new public contract, Inter-Mondes was again selected to evaluate a new inter-municipality program in Alibori (Benin) as well as the same program in Niger. In the meantime, new possibilities have opened up to work more closely with some of the Picardy Region's partner NGOs, namely CIDR. This has created extremely interesting conditions as we can now reconsider the evaluation work that was accomplished and support the stakeholders in implementing a number of recommendations.

Decentralized cooperation as carried out by the Picardy Region is quite unusual. Readers are invited to refer to Michèle Cahu's article in this very same publication to get a more precise idea. According to our analysis, it is a policy that differs very sharply from the old ways of cooperating in a decentralized, vertical, and instrumentalizing way, based on often exclusive relationships between a local authority in the North and one in the South. The option of working on inter-municipal linkages—though debatable in each of the contexts—is to be replaced in the perspective of a type of decentralized cooperation that seeks to avoid having municipalities in the South perpetually wait and expect things from their counterparts in the North. The idea is that they self-organize in order to equip themselves with bodies that are better able to negotiate a number of things, with other stakeholders of the community, with foreign partners, or with their own government.

Two major questions have been addressed during the evaluations on the basis of this first finding:

- The first question is "internal" and amounts to knowing how this positively ambitious policy is reflected in tangible terms in the programs. In other words, are its principles sufficiently accounted for in the formulation of the programs? Does it have a theory of action that enables it to connect the major expectations to the systems in place? How does it manage to balance these core objectives with the constraints of any decentralized cooperation, which mostly relate to the visibility of the actions accomplished within the timeframe of terms of office and electoral cycles?

- The second question is "external" and questions the capacity to translate the more political and cultural challenges and concerns in the local contexts. This question has been addressed in two ways: (1) by comparing the French and African contexts, and (2) by verifying the willingness and ability to work in the more deeply cultural dimensions that underlie political realities and the relationship to change.

From a methodological point of view, I would like to highlight the Picardy Region's own evaluation capabilities. Its internal evaluation department has led us to better specify the processes and instruments we used and ultimately prompted us to adapt methods to expectations.

The main finding after the first wave of evaluations: reassessing one's own models and methods of intervention is crucially important

This first finding, already clearly revealed in 2011, is related to the difficulty we registered in incorporating very broad political concerns—democracy and citizenship—into modes of action that match the initial ambitions. This difficulty is linked to the lack of thoroughly adequate methods and instruments to "act political", which generally leads stakeholders to conservatively use only the standard instruments of funds, community development planning, calls for projects, as well as the traditional ways of building and using logical frameworks. Then there are the difficulties in designing specific approaches that are adapted to each context.

It also emerged that the inter-municipal systems overseas remained more in the opportunistic mode of a collective of services geared towards the benefit of each of the municipalities rather than as bodies that were willing to share resources and opportunities and to challenge their authorities regarding the major issues that are undermining their own capacities to address development challenges. There are quite a few of them: lack of public services, lack of qualified staff within the public sector, lack of interest within the ministries, pressures on export-sector resources, or "sanctuarizing" tourism areas, to name a few—not forgetting the occurrences of governments "unloading" issues on the municipalities: corruption, factionalism, fiefdoms and clans, and the like. In degrees depending on the age of these inter-municipal systems, we found that they mostly remained geared towards international aid, with the risk of gradual disconnection from their own members—the municipalities—and from their own governments and governing bodies.

Regarding the concrete approaches and modalities of action, the first findings put forward a certain uniformity in the proposed approaches in many of the systems: community facilitation, development planning on the basis of towns (*Planification du développement communale*—PDC) or neighborhoods (development plan of Fokontany, Madagascar), setting up funds (municipal development fund, support funds targeted at community, municipal, or inter-municipal initiatives, depending on cases), capacity building for municipal managers and elected municipal representatives, the issue of gender (most often addressed through studies), project management assistance, economic development, and the like. The standards underlying these approaches appeared to be identical whatever the cultural and political context—the importance of having the broadest possible level of participation in the community facilitation processes; the importance of transparency, of accountability, and of a certain form of fairness in the management of the funds (a proportionality that is conceived more on external criteria of the return on investment, performance in the management of accounts and the efficiency in implementation); project management that is more oriented towards what is upstream from the management of the amenities (feasibility studies, management of the tender documents) than on what is downstream (monitoring uses, interviews, boosting the sense of responsibility and ownership); the importance of the construction of basic services rather than of work on delivery and the quality of service.

All this testifies to a difficulty in integrating the approaches into concrete situations. We will illustrate this with two short examples.

> In Benin, community facilitation to address land issues in the Collines region is difficult, although they are very frequent in this part of the country—between families, between ethnic groups, and between municipalities. Community facilitation remained narrowly focused on identifying the basic needs and expectations, in view of improving the coverage of public services (education, health care, sanitation).

> In Madagascar, the same facilitation approach aimed towards development planning is stumbling over the issue of participation in questioning and addressing what, in this part of the world, deeply undermines the possibilities of organizing life chances, i.e. the relation to rules, to standards, to authority (the Ray Aman dreny). Community facilitation led to drafting development plans for Fokontany and annual operational plans, without having a single rule mentioning how to avoid or curb the causes of daily suffering. With the result that, in some neighborhoods, the street pumps were unusable "museum pieces", and there was still the same demand for pumps.

In both these examples, we could observe the mechanical reproduction of approaches that were nevertheless interesting in principle, as well as the difficulty to address the standards and values that make the encountered problems so efficient in self-reproducing infinitely. It must be acknowledged that these cases are not uncommon, and that they even generally represent what is produced in the "municipal development plans".

Following this evaluation work and its presentations, several missions have been carried out by the Picardy Region with its NGO partners (without Inter-Mondes), notably in Madagascar and Benin, to work on the issue of change, through workshops entitled "Acting for change" (*"Agir pour le changement"*). These missions have been an opportunity to talk about change in more tangible terms, to put forward other perspectives than those that usually define partnership relations (financing, tracking progress on the activities, etc.).

The exercises carried out in these missions highlighted a series of tensions between municipalities and inter-municipal programs, between elected officials and municipal technicians, and between the technical structures of the inter-municipal bodies and their peers "remaining" in the municipalities. They have had the effect of awakening the stakeholders to the major challenges of inter-municipal programs. While some components are certainly opportunistic in their motivations (particularly publicized in the community arenas by the partisan or factionalist games between the mayor, the elected officials, and/or the technicians—secretaries-general in particular), there are also genuine concerns in terms of better understanding what is happening—with certain individuals indeed doing their best to find a bit of common sense in an inter-municipal project that should not be a sum of "missile projects" but that first and foremost defines a vision of society.

The question of "in-depth" change thus started to make sense in people's minds. At different levels, participants started to discuss it, and even to try to act for change. These three entries—thought, language, and practices—were important for us at Inter-Mondes, as they helped us identify the shifts occurring on these levels. The dialectical relationship between

these three focal points is indeed crucial for checking consistency and improving the awareness of the differences between what is said, what is thought, and what is done.

A more tangible entry remained lacking because invariably the question of the "how" would emerge everywhere: "In concrete terms, how should we act?" "How should we address issues?" "Who should we be challenging?" "Are we doing enough?".

The contributions of a second wave of evaluations: connecting to broader social challenges

Just after the last of the Picardy Region and CIDR's "Acting for change" workshops, we took part in evaluations in Benin and Niger (and in Madagascar in the same region, but not directly for the Picardy Region), a second time, three years after our first intervention there. We immediately sensed something quite surprising: the stakeholder arrangements were much more fraught with tensions—be it between the municipalities and the inter-municipal bodies in the South, or between practitioners in the North—but also much more penetrated with interest and curiosity than during the first wave of evaluations. This created a context that was conducive to reflective thought, but also required us to redesign the way the interviews were conducted. The situation had clearly changed.

In the meantime, we were also asked by one of the NGOs, CIDR, to work with them once a year in facilitating their annual meetings on the subject of change.

During the course of these undertakings, we have had the opportunity to work more tangibly on the issue of change and in particular to look into the difficulty of identifying the mechanisms that, within societies, cause or facilitate problems and suffering. The second wave of evaluations helped us by giving us the possibility to define certain assumptions regarding those mechanisms. From a methodological standpoint, this second wave of evaluations highlights the importance of addressing the capacities to think about the interactions between the standards of the projects and those of society—how stakeholders used the delivery differential (compared to the previously "set" expected results), the discrepancies in design (compared to the major objectives of what was expected), the possible deviations (new activities, reorientations) or even disruptions, as resources to effect change. There was a change of vocabulary in the terms of reference: what had been limited to "being more effective" or "more relevant" shifted to "addressing more challenging questions". Immediately positioning the evaluation on this field was important.

The initial assumption made in the pre-mission guidelines was that of a difficulty to translate the link between what was expected in the relatively short term (the results expected over the course of the program) and the major expectations presented in the "overall objectives" of the program in terms of democratic participation and civic involvement into a sufficiently explicit theory of action. On this basis we have listed all the difficulties that were encountered in applying the standards of the promoted activities in the concrete context of the actions. For instance, in Benin:

- The community facilitation was the most permeated by explicit standards. It is always conceived of from the perspective of building public infrastructure and of generalized

participation. One such example in this program: an initiative on gender—from the village to the municipality—which quite naturally leads to a demand for... an "inter-municipal women's center". However, from a more positive point of view, most of the activities have also been locally reoriented mostly from reporting commitments to reporting "achievements" at the level of the neighborhood councils;

— Economic development was less permeated with standards. In fact, it is scattered over a wide array of spheres (trade fairs, warehouse receipt system, support for craftsmen, etc.) of a rather speculative nature, most of them geared towards improving the results of previously existing activities, much more than the generation of new activities that would provide local added value. In practice, we found a strong social demand for trade fairs, which emerged without the need for creating awareness or convincing anyone (unlike the warehouse receipt system, where risks are higher). But the capacity to promote these fairs for support/assistance in the creation or maintenance of the added value in the department remains low, while deficiencies seem to be poorly anticipated (notably the supremacy of foreign operators in these trade fairs that capture part of the hard currency generated on site);

— The management of funds—also very permeated with standards and rules—is still very much focused on "mastering" processes and studies, without generating any certainty in the results in terms of quality and the use of the publications. There is a trend towards reinforcing the rules rather than analyzing the differences in meaning and values, thence the reasons for the difficulties encountered in their application. The analysis in terms of balance of power within the municipal councils (between elected officials and the technical services department) and between municipalities and inter-municipal bodies remains insufficiently developed;

— The more institutional construction of the inter-municipality was likewise permeated with standards. It has not gone the way we hoped: that of a multi-stakeholder consultation framework at the department level (expression of democracy, participation, transparency). The development of the decision-making bodies is instead going in the direction of a combination of schemes between "peers" (the mayors in the supreme body, with the elected officials held in reserve and the technicians in networks with one another) with a very piecemeal opening to economic operators, to devolved services, to the more symbolical resources of the municipality (which were not explicitly mentioned in the standards of the projects).

Though these developments are not negative, and though things are progressing overall (in terms of capacities, decision-making, giving elected officials a greater sense of responsibility at the inter-municipal level, etc.), we perceive that this is not the key arena where local development is playing out. Be it a matter of economic, social, or political development, there remains a major difficulty in addressing the major challenges that undermine and determine the development of these municipalities. At the end of the day, there is a more general questioning: by trying to formulate a narrative that doesn't touch on what gives a bleak outlook fraught with uncertainty, or even threats, doesn't the "project" extract itself from the local historical context?

Let us immediately say that this does not fall under the responsibility of the external supporters as much as of the local stakeholders themselves. Impact must remain the responsibility of these local stakeholders. On the other hand, that which is the domain of external support is the way in which we challenge and adapt the systems in order for them to facilitate the second-order changes that we seek to achieve. The evaluation must draw lines in that regard. At that level the message has been heard. The issue of regulation (developing standards as much as rules) is now under serious consideration by the practitioners of the decentralized cooperation of the Picardy Region. It is becoming a preferred gateway for CIDR, especially to grasp this issue of in-depth change. It does, however, cause a certain number of problems, especially for the members of the field teams who have to "reformat" themselves and override the way they have been conceiving of their work for the past several decades.

A few difficulties and… plenty of prospects?

Here we present the findings that have emerged from these evaluations in terms of practices/conditions that enable the interventions—as much as the evaluations—to be genuinely permeated by the intercultural dimension of change.

Questions of legitimacy

This question relentlessly keeps propping up: "Is it our role to question their own standards and values? What gives us that right?" Together we have built four types of answers to this question.

Most of the CIDR/Picardy Regional Council projects that we have had the opportunity to evaluate are, as many such projects, especially permeated by Western standards: democracy, participation, transparency, gender equality, accountability, etc. We must remember that these concepts have a long and meandering history in the History of Western societies and no definite content. In the instruments as well, the causal relationships of a given logical framework and the precise way in which objectives and results are determined—all this is a hallmark of a certain way of conceiving of the world order and how it should run. As practitioners, we are therefore like our counterparts, whether we want it or not: highly permeated with "exotic" standards.

The problem is that these standards are generally not explicit and that they are therefore not debated, or locally reinvested—unless superficially or through guile. Most often, the partners will adapt and act as if these standards were natural and right for them. Also, very often they modify the way they think, without their being fully conscious of this effect and without their internalizing it to the point that they reinvest those standards elsewhere, in their more quotidian world (that of family, church, leisure, etc.). In our opinion, there is therefore much more illegitimacy in remaining vague on all this, rather than making the effort to discuss the implicit standards of the programs, inasmuch as the discussion is genuine—that is, expressed in questions. And here there appears a second condition.

To be legitimate, we must be as close as possible to the questions rather than to the answers. Rather than coming with preconceived models of thought and action that are presumed to be universal,[44] the idea is to challenge and to question our counterparts: "I see that you say X although you do Y. How come?" "Why is this so unforgivingly dysfunctional in this circumstance but not this other situation?" These are important questions to raise to remove people from their "inculturation". It is as important to make sure that they can "re-inculturate" themselves on their own based on new rules and standards that are adapted to present and future challenges.

Challenging and questioning the evidence helps stakeholders appropriate the analysis, standards, and rules—and therefore gives those a genuine legitimacy. Far from being imposing, this way of doing things leads to a genuine emancipation (in the sense that participants free themselves from automatic ways of thinking, *i.e.* the "unthought thoughts" that can possibly hinder their progress). But doing this also requires a certain level of symmetry in the questioning.

Then, the third condition: How could it be unjustified to accept reciprocity, in a completely symmetric fashion, *i.e.* that the partner challenges us on our own standards and values? Equality and freedom also have their dark side. There is therefore a requirement to make ourselves open and available to inquiries coming from others. And, still continuing on the example of democracy, there is no lack of questions on the subject in the West in these times of major social hardships. This obviously is not easy. It supposes, on issues such as democracy, gender, accountability, equality, and freedom, etc., not to conceive of oneself as the beholder of the one and only truth. This doesn't mean these values should be abandoned, but simply that one should understand that they are the product of a historical development, of a society, that aren't necessarily reproducible, or reproducible as such elsewhere, in other histories or in other societies.

This also implies, and this is our fourth key idea, that one must accept to change oneself in the relationship as a condition for change to happen in one's counterpart: it is not possible to change another if we do not put ourselves in a position to change ourselves. It is then the relationship that becomes important. The intercultural relationship, which works as two mirrors that enable both parties to better reflect "themselves"... For us, this is what international solidarity is all about. The salt-water fish becomes aware that it had been swimming in the ocean only when put in freshwater!

Questions of feasibility

The following questions also repeatedly re-emerge: "How should we do things in practice?" "In practical terms, how can this mechanism be found?" Regarding the interventions, these questions of course also question this stance of the more "intercultural" evaluation. To what extent is it possible to work on inter-culturality, given all the contingencies for which the project is held liable?

Generally speaking, we must insist on the fact that the idea is less to do something in a completely different way than to base ourselves on the activities that we already carry out and to achieve

[44] Our own difficulties in applying them back home is usually not a subject that is even touched upon.

them with a completely different mindset. A mindset where it isn't only the immediate result that counts but especially (next to the construction of much more distant prospects, raised in overall objectives of the programs and projects) that focuses on the way societies operate and on why they do so in that particular way. It is up to each person to find their own most favorable course of action according to—and within—its context to better grasp this issue of "making society". Let us highlight, however, that "making society" doesn't mean reaching consensus but taking care that those who are different (foreigners, the "others" that are often the "Other", those who think differently, etc.) find their place in a vision of society that unites rather than divides. This is what the Picardy Region, with its partners, is trying to do with its inter-municipality projects, by insisting on the ownership by local players of the analysis and the construction of their own missions-visions. This is an important first step. The next step is, however, to also work on the way societies operate, and particularly to act upon anything that could hinder, or even disqualify from within, the accomplishment of these missions-visions.

It is also important to verify what the terms we are generalizing mean, whenever they are used: for instance, what "solidarity" means when used by elected representatives, or what "participation" and even "inter-municipality" mean when they formulate them as spoken words or as thoughts, compared to their practices... Finally, we must challenge the stakeholders on the possible distortions and contradictions that might arise (they think thusly—but what makes them think that way, and why do they think like that when I think differently?)...

Lessons on the conditions for an evaluation of development aid intervention to help bring about social change

The evaluation itself can only be the initiation of a reflective thought process. It doesn't guarantee *per se* the effectiveness of the propositions put forward and the achievement of the propensities to change. But it certainly is essential if we want to go beyond the "narratives" and agreed frameworks on what is fair and right, or even indispensable, to do between partners. The "project" is, in this spirit, emblematic of all these attempts to sum up reality in a narrative that is short, simple, coherent, and usually extremely far from the complex reality.

For an evaluation to foster reflexive thought, the following conditions must be met:

— Strong political will, so that the evaluation can go beyond the general framework of the normative narrative in which the "project-program" is confined;

— The evaluation must go beyond the precise framework of the rationale of the intervention and its expected results;

— The evaluation must take into serious consideration the broad long-term development objectives (the "overall objectives"), often considered as self-evident, and make them the core purpose of their inquiry, even more so than the results actually achieved;

— The evaluation must explicitly question the capacity to translate the linkage between the activities, the projected results, and the broad development objectives into a practical theory of action;

— The evaluation must avail of a sufficient understanding of the political and cultural contexts in which the action is unfolding (much more even than the know-how of the "techniques" to be used in the course of the intervention).

Before all that, certain precautions must be taken at the much earlier stage of the drafting of the normative framework of the evaluation process itself. Supporting the drafting of the terms of reference, supporting the selection of the candidates for the evaluation auditing, setting up the Steering Committee, identifying clear stages for the presentation-enrichment-sharing of the findings/recommendations, and the discussing of the preliminary documents, etc., are now very much a part of the culture of evaluation, at least in France, and in large part thanks to organizations such as the F3E network, which makes it its foremost mission to promote quality evaluations (with the credo "evaluate to enable change") in the context of development aid.

Further on, once the evaluation is complete, a few other conditions must be met to really get the most out of the evaluation:

— Creating a wide range of opportunities for the "final" presentation of the evaluation output;

— Organizing a proper dialogue around the propositions;

— Monitoring and providing assistance in setting up processes from the propositions and other recommendations (even more than in implementing them) by remobilizing the evaluators as much as possible (inasmuch as their analysis appears to be relevant);

— Helping define the criteria and key impact indicators that are meaningful for the main interested parties and inviting them to spontaneously monitor, evaluate, and capitalize on the evaluations internally, in the normal course of their activities.

All this requires strong political will on the part of the elected representatives, the external relations service of the decentralized cooperation office, and the NGO partners. We cannot draw enough attention to the importance of these conditions, which, in the present case, happened to be particularly well fulfilled!

Under those conditions—and if we are indeed looking to promote in-depth change as we have defined it at the beginning, and not simply changing forms—the evaluation can be instrumental in fostering change. Fostering change does not mean ensuring that change will happen, however, and the path between the two is often challenging and arduous. Monitoring and support proves essential in many cases, which demands, beyond the political will to effect change, the adequate means to translate the recommendations of the evaluation into processes. Believing that an evaluation could by itself ensure that change will happen would be forgetting that the institutional challenges, the interplay between stakeholders, and all these other things that make us—practitioners of international solidarity—constantly adjust ourselves and adapt, but without ever really changing our ways of conceiving of interventions and our relationship to the Other. Believing that evaluations have that kind of power would also probably end up affecting the participants and main stakeholders in the South, by taking away their sense of responsibility and ownership about something that ultimately is their own prerogative.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

Laurent Delcayrou

As a conclusion, I've noted a few key words from the seminar.

The first is "social change".

Some prefer to speak of "social dynamics", while others refer to "societal change". Yet behind the different terminology is the convergence of subjective dimensions, which are linked to the behaviors of the various actors and the multiplicity of the dynamics in question. Views differ on the nature of and the underlying reasons for such changes, however. How can we go beyond "superficial" changes and manage to identify the social mechanisms to move forward so that real change can occur? How can we revisit the norms and rules that govern these societies, in order to focus on the key factors, thereby promoting lasting social changes? Who are the legitimate actors that can decide or arbitrate changes sought by such changes?

These questions bring us to the second keyword of the day: "action".

Quite a bit of critique has been voiced on current processes for designing and shaping actions, and there has been a lot of talk on the necessity of creating new "project" tools other than the logical framework (or at least of how to use it differently). In terms of change-driven actions, a certain amount of modesty is required... To be effective, action must be the product of substantial reflection by the stakeholders on how to define a common vision and clarify the nature of the social/societal changes desired. As far as we actors in the North are concerned, this process actually challenges the cohesiveness of the policies and practices here, in France. Likewise, I have noted from the discussions the necessity of a permanent link between the implementation of actions and the processes of change (both those which are observed and those which are sought after). Such a requirement calls into question the ability of current tools (technical, administrative, or financial) to adapt the action in progress, so as to make it more relevant and more effective.

That brings us to the third keyword: "evaluation"—of both the action and of its contribution to change.

Over the course of this seminar, we have discussed very interesting perspectives on the analysis of practices. How can the latter play a role in learning, or even in capacity for learning? How can analyses of practices (most notably, the practice of evaluation) themselves have the power to transform, and how can they be agents of social change? The limits of traditional evaluation methods have been discussed, as much for their scope (too centered on practices and on forecasts/results, and not enough on politics and the wider changes in motion), as for their form and mode (missions too limited, lack of financial resources). Consensus has formed over the promotion of continuous evaluation processes that could take stock of social dynamics throughout the life of the action. This seminar has also been a reminder that the issue of social change and of the action's contribution should be integrated into every stage of the project cycle, from design to monitoring, and to evaluation.

The fourth (and last) keyword is: "cross-fertilization".[45]

Recalled over the course of the seminar was the fact that the methodological, human, and financial resources required to develop change-driven approaches are still largely unavailable to individual actors. No one can do it alone! We must work together! It is exactly on this point that platforms, associations, and collectives have pooled their resources in order to put their members first.

F3E is one of these collectives. Made up of approximately one hundred NGOs and French local governments, it strives to be a reference point among non-governmental actors aiming to increase the quality of actions and further the measurement of their effects on social change.

Several initiatives have been undertaken in order to develop change-driven approaches. These are grouped along three lines (from which the three "E"s in F3E were derived): Evaluate, Exchange, Elucidate.

Evaluate: Accompany members in the process of analyzing their practices:

- We provide support for renewed approaches to evaluation and monitoring for projects that incorporate the dimension of "social change" to a greater degree;

- Together with our members and partners, we seek methodological innovations in the fields of planning, managing, monitoring, and evaluation of change-driven projects. For more information, see the PRISME program outline that has been presented as part of the present seminar.

Exchange: Put one's practices to discussion and develop collective intelligence:

- We organize collective forums for exchange among our partners and members, in which training material from the PRISME program can be used to produce new methodological tools;

....

[45] Trans. note: "*mutualisation*" in the original French can also mean pooling and sharing (of resources, for example).

- We provide a forum for putting these methodology proposals to discussion along with other actors: NGOs, local governments, technical and financial partners, consultants, research bodies, collectives, and platforms in the field of international cooperation and solidarity;

- We actively participate in the practices of change dynamics at an international level, such as those of the Barefoot Guide on social change and transformative evaluation (www. barefootguide.org).

Elucidate: Participate in and contribute to sector-wide reflection:

- Together with other collectives and at the request of public authorities, we contribute to the revision of instruments used in planning, monitoring, and evaluating development actions;

- F3E's methodological products are widely disseminated and appreciated, in particular those on capacity building and change;

- Finally, F3E organizes conferences and symposiums for reflection and debate, both alone and in partnerships with other organizations (as is the case with the present event).

Above and beyond these previous initiatives, reflection on the evaluation of social change generates new questions for F3E, such as:

- How shall we incorporate social change into the other approaches to which F3E provides support? From preliminary studies to capitalization processes?

- How can we be more involved in the role and impact of our members' actions with regard to change in their communities in France and not be involved merely in decentralized cooperation and citizenship education?

- In turn, how can we question the positioning of F3E with respect to all the other actors of social change? This includes, but is not limited to, research, education, social and solidarity economies, and private enterprise—both here and abroad.

The goal of repositioning improvement in action within the framework of contributing to social change raises many new questions. The year 2015 provides a significant opportunity to address them within the framework of the strategy evaluation of F3E, an action that is currently taking place in conjunction with several of our members and partners.

I will end this note with a warm and energetic thank you to all of the contributors and team members of F3E and AFD who have made this seminar a success. Finally, I would like to thank all the persons attending this seminar for their attentiveness and active participation.

Moreover, I would like to invite everyone—both members and non-members of F3E—to work together with us so as to contribute to and take advantage of the reflections and methodological findings of our collective.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Bertrand Loiseau

This seminar on evaluation and social change follows another, which took place two years ago, on the theme of evaluation of CSO initiatives. Today's theme was identified over the course of the first seminar, as a direction in which AFD should head in order to have the actors who propel or undergo change become involved in its future evaluations.

The richness of the contributions presented during that seminar, in addition to the discussions that they provoked, has compelled AFD to continue to promote the work already started and to open up new fields of action.

A working group made up of actors from F3E, Coordination SUD, and AFD has been created to review and adjust the evaluation processes of CSO projects funded by AFD. Two examples of the adjustments that it intends to make are: 1) support for the diversity of evaluation practices, and 2) increased interest in analyzing processes and their effects.

From the outset of every project, AFD attempts to identify the cross-cutting issues in social change (such as gender and capacity building). With this in mind from the design stage onwards, standard evaluation practices have already been reviewed and amended for gender awareness (in which relevance, efficacy, and effectiveness are taken into account), and are in the course of review and amendment for capacity building.

The insight AFD acquires from evaluations of projects led by CSOs must help it to improve the evaluations of projects it funds (projects led by states, local governments, and public corporations). Several action points have been identified over the course of this seminar:

– To include evaluation earlier in the project cycle, so as to ensure continuity with the monitoring processes during the implementation stage;

– To reinforce the participative aspect of evaluations, in order to go beyond simple stakeholder involvement (as is currently the case);

– To diversify the methods of evaluation, with the intention of better understanding the social dynamics at work (as Philippe Lavigne Delville has highlighted in his contribution);

– To clearly differentiate between learning and accountability (as Doug Reeler has explained);

– To recognize the effects of time on projects (as François Grünewald has demonstrated), as the factor of time can significantly alter the conclusions of an evaluation, depending on the moment when the evaluations are conducted.

AFD is still in the "Regimes" category, as Michael Narberhaus has defined it. Nonetheless, the agency has a solid foundation to draw upon, following the evaluation policy it adopted at the end of 2013. This policy incorporates the various ideas for change discussed over the course of this seminar. Dialogue will also continue with the CSOs, which are more innovative, more flexible, and more reactive than AFD. This dialogue will continue to be an inspiration for the revisiting of practices, organizational modes, contracts, and official tools.

Biographies of Participants

Emilie ABERLEN

Emilie Aberlen joined AFD's Evaluation and Knowledge Capitalisation Unit (EVA) in 2011. She has contributed to the discussion on the evaluation of development aid through various publications and symposiums (AFD's evaluation policy, the approximation between practices with other European donors, the 9th European Development Research Network (EUDN) conference on evaluation, the F3E-AFD seminar, and others) and actively follows the evaluations and studies on AFD-funded NGOs and interventions in crisis situations. Trained in law and a graduate of Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (IEP), she has worked as a research assistant, as a consultant in the evaluation of public policies at the local, national, and European levels, and as an internal evaluator. She has more specifically worked on linkages between relief and development, between social and urban policies, and on human rights issues.

Florent BÉDÉCARRATS

A Ph.D. graduate of the Paris-Sorbonne University, Florent Bédécarrats joined AFD's Evaluation and Knowledge Capitalisation Unit in 2013 and is currently in charge of impact studies. From 2007 to 2013, he was in charge of research and development activities at CERISE, a platform of microfinance support organizations. Previously, he worked for three years in Latin America, for a social enterprise in tourism and culture in Brazil, for a network of microfinance cooperatives in Mexico, and for an international NGO in Guatemala.

Charlotte BOISTEAU

Charlotte Boisteau is International Program Officer at F3E. A Ph.D. graduate of École Polytechnique Fédérale of Lausanne, she has been working on action research in the development field for more than fifteen years. She has been a development practitioner, a consultant, and a lecturer/researcher in France, Colombia, and South Africa. She now focuses on evaluation, the efficiency of development initiatives, and social change.

Michèle CAHU

Michèle Cahu has been an elected official of the Regional Council of Picardy since 2004. She was the Vice-President in charge of the decentralized cooperation with Benin, Niger, and Madagascar until 2010, and the Regional Councilor in charge of decentralized cooperation until 2015. Initially trained as a nurse, she worked in the psychotherapy center of the Saint-Quentin hospital in the Aisne department, in Picardy, for thirty-five years.

Laurent DELCAYROU

Laurent Delcayrou is the Director of F3E, a network of NGOs and French local and regional authorities that is dedicated to improving the quality and impact of the international actions of solidarity and decentralized cooperation. Trained as an agronomist and an economist, he has helped guide development policies and programs in France and Africa for more than two decades—be it as an expat in Burkina Faso or Congo-Brazzaville, as a consultant in local development, or as the Director of Operations for the NGO CIDR, until 2014.

Moctar DIALLO

Moctar Diallo is presently the coordinator of PROJEG (the cooperative multi-stakeholder program for the strengthening of civil society organizations and youth in Guinea). He is also the Guinea Country Director for Aide et Action International / Africa. He holds a Master's in foreign languages and a diploma in social sciences (DHEPS, University of Paris 3). A civil society activist, he is a member of the think tank "Actes citoyens" and a board member of the NGO *Centre guinéen de formation et d'éducation pour le développement.*

Fleur FERRY

Fleur Ferry has been working for the past ten years for the Seine-Maritime department in France. She is also a trustee of F3E and the Vice-President of Arricod. A specialist of public policy and decentralized cooperation, she is particularly interested in governance issues and capacity building for local project managers in situations of decentralization.

François GRÜNEWALD

François Grünewald is an agronomist trained at INA-PG. For over thirty-five years, he has been working in the field of international solidarity for NGOs, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and various bilateral cooperation agencies. He has been coordinating Groupe URD since 1997 and carries out evaluations of many humanitarian and reconstruction programs (in a Post-Mitch context, Chechenya, areas affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Somalia, Darfur, the African Great Lakes, the Balkans, Afghanistan, the Caucasus, Haiti, the Sahel, Mali, the Philippines, and others), for donors (European Commission and the governments of France, the United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries), the ICRC, the United Nations, and NGOs. He worked as team leader for the interagency evaluations of the response to the Horn of Africa drought in 2005–2006, and in Haiti and the Sahel region. A specialist of crisis prevention and the preparation of emergency response mechanisms (such as civil protection) as well as post-crisis reconstruction, he has published extensively on the management of humanitarian crisis situations.

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Alain Henry is Director of Research at AFD. An alumnus of École Polytechnique and member of the Ponts et Chaussées state corps of civil engineering, he began working at AFD in 1981. During the past ten years, he has acted as the Infrastructure and Urban Development Director

(2002–2007), the Vietnam Director (2007–2011), and the Chief of Staff of the Minister for Cooperation (2011–2012). He is a founding member and director of Europact (1994–2000), an NGO supporting and evaluating projects for development NGOs. Since 1989, he has been a research fellow and member of the Management and Society group at CNRS. His research investigates the relationship between economic management and the cultural context (especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and Vietnam). He has published and contributed to many publications, including *Cultures et mondialisation* [Cultures and Globalization] in the "Points" collection of Éditions du Seuil, *Tontines et banques au Cameroun* [Tontines and Banks in Cameroon] published by Karthala, and *Rédiger les procédures de l'entreprise* [How to Write Company Procedures], published by Éditions d'organisation, Paris.

Elisabeth HOFMANN

Elisabeth Hofmann holds a Ph.D. in development economics and has been a lecturer at the University of Bordeaux Montaigne (IATU/STC) for several years. She has significant professional experience in development projects and in the theme of gender and development, as an instructor, an evaluator, and a consultant. A researcher at the CNRS laboratory "Les Afriques dans le Monde" [*Africas in the World*] (LAM, ex-CEAN, Sciences Po Bordeaux), she coordinated the international francophone network "Genre en Action" [*Gender in Action*] (www.genreenaction. net) for six years and remains an active member. She is one of the founders of the UNESCO chair "Training of Professionals in Sustainable Development", a position that she currently holds.

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Philippe Lavigne Delville is a socio-anthropologist and research director at IRD. He is particularly involved in development policies, projects, and land policies. He was the scientific director of GRET from 1999 to 2008 and has been the President of APAD since 2013. Among his key publications are "Affronter l'incertitude ? Les projets de développement à contre-courant de la révolution du management de projets", Revue Tiers Monde N° 211 (2012), pp. 153–168, *Pour une anthropologie symétrique entre « développeurs » et « développés »*, in Copans, J and C. Freud (Eds.), *Le développement aujourd'hui : chemin de croix ou croisée des chemins*, Cahiers d'études Africaines, N° 202-203 (2011), pp. 491–509, as well as "À la recherche du chaînon manquant. Construire des articulations entre recherche en sciences sociales et pratique du développement", in Bierschenk, Th., G. Blundo, Y. Jaffré, M. Tidjani Alou (eds), 2007, *Une anthropologie entre rigueur et engagement. Essais autour de l'œuvre de Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan*, APAD, Karthala, Leiden, Paris, pp. 127–150.

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Bertrand Loiseau is presently in charge of the Evaluation and Knowledge Capitalisation Unit of AFD. Trained as a public works engineer and a graduate of the Institut d'Administration des Entreprises (IAE), Paris, Bertrand Loiseau has spent most of his career at AFD. First based in Senegal and Morocco, he identified and monitored infrastructure projects, and then moved on to work on the fight against climate change at the headquarters of the World Bank. Upon his return to AFD, he contributed to the effort to mitigate climate change within AFD projects.

Later, he was put in charge of the preparatory work for AFD's new Strategic Orientation Plan. Finally, he was the Director of AFD's management control unit.

Philippe MAYOL

Philippe Mayol is in charge of the Africa Department at CCFD – Terre Solidaire. After initial scientific training, he went to Burundi as a volunteer in camps for Rwandan refugees and internally displaced Burundians. For two years, he was in charge of international solidarity projects in a major French organization in people's education. For the next five years, he monitored CCFD – Terre Solidaire's partnerships in Southern Africa and Madagascar. He was then a member of F3E's Executive Board for six years. Philippe Mayol has a thorough knowledge of African civil societies (he co-authored the *Barometer of Civil Societies* published in 2014 by CCFD – Terre Solidaire) and took part in numerous international events such as the World Social Forum, Rio+20, etc. He is specialized in the challenges linked to the processes of social change and those linked to alternative social, economic, and ecological models.

Michael NARBERHAUS

Michael Narberhaus is the coordinator of the Smart CSOs Lab (www.smart-csos.org), an international network of civil society leaders, academics, and funders aiming to develop and put into practice strategies that embrace the cultural and systemic causes of the social and environmental crises of our times. Michael has an academic background in economics and had an earlier career in the private sector. Since 2004, he has worked at the interface between research and civil society activism, with a deep interest in theories of change, systems thinking, and inter-disciplinary approaches.

Philippe ORLIANGE

Philippe Orliange is the Executive Director for Strategy, Partnerships, and Communication at AFD. A graduate of IEP Paris (in international relations), he has been a diplomat throughout his career and has worked for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Congo, Kenya, New York (permanent mission to the United Nations), Colombia, Vietnam, and South Africa. He has also held various positions within the central administration of the Ministry (Africa, United Nations, International Cooperation and Development).

From 2006 to 2008, Philippe Orliange was Geographical Coordinator for Lebanon and Egypt and then Deputy Director for the Mediterranean – Middle East Department at AFD. From 2011 to August 2014, he was Deputy Director and then Director of the Latin America – Caribbean Department at AFD.

He has lectured at the Externado University in Colombia, at SIPA / Columbia University in New York, at IEP Paris, and the Institut Catholique of Lille. He has authored a dissertation on the depictions of international society in the Tintin comic book series.

Doug REELER

Doug Reeler works for the Community Development Resource Association in Cape Town. After studies in anthropology and economic history, he was a secondary school teacher and an activist in the turbulent townships of Cape Flats in the 1980s. He then worked in community organization and development. His research is primarily focused on the processes, design, and facilitation of social change with a large variety of stakeholders. He aims to develop more efficient social change practices and co-creative and collaborative organizational forms. He was one of the pioneers of the *Barefoot Guides to Social Change* in 2007.

Bruno de REVIERS

Bruno de Reviers joined F3E in 2006 and focuses on action research. Following several years of working for an NGO in Senegal (Enda) on urban development and network facilitation programs, he directed a regional multi-stakeholder network, Cercoop. His areas of practice include capacity building for local and regional authorities, supporting social change processes, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of municipal water services.

Maria Cristina (Cristien) TEMMINK

Maria Cristina Temmink is an experienced facilitator of civil society learning and capacity development with a Master's degree in NGO management from the London School of Economics. She has over 15 years of experience working in and with NGOs, grassroots organizations, and social movements in Latin America, Africa, and Europe. Between 2008 and 2012, she worked as a facilitator of learning at PSO, the Dutch umbrella organization of NGOs dedicated to Learning & Capacity Development. There she designed and facilitated collective action-learning processes of members. The main programs she was involved in were "Planning, monitoring and evaluation of complex processes of social change", "Learning oriented planning, monitoring & evaluation", and "Civil Society at Crossroads" (about the future of civil society in the world). Currently, Maria Cristina is a civic entrepreneur at Learning for Transformation, a social enterprise based in The Hague, Netherlands, dedicated to the design and facilitation of transformative learning processes for civic organizations.

Marc TOTTÉ

Marc Totté is a geographer and hydrologist, with a Ph.D. in Sciences from University College London (UCL). He spent part of his childhood in Niger and Algeria, before studying in Belgium. He first worked in Burkina Faso for the NGO Oxfam Belgium. After his doctoral research on the study of farming systems and the cotton issue in Burkina Faso, he was hired by COTA as a practitioner and researcher. He worked there from 1997 to 2006, conducting around sixty consulting missions (mainly for the evaluation of programs for NGOs, the EU, CTB, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and AFD), and coordinating research on decentralization in West Africa. He has also taken part in the creation of Laboratoire Citoyennetés with the former President of the National Decentralization Commission of Burkina Faso. Since 2007, he has been working as the coordinator of Inter-Mondes Belgique, a non-profit organization specialized in studying and supporting the process of change in the way societies operate in Europe and Africa.

List of Acronyms
and Abbreviations

AFD	*Agence Française de Développement*
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
APAD	Euro-African Association for the Anthropology of Social Change and Development
CIDR	*Centre International de Développement et de Recherche* (International Centre of Development and Research)
CIDSE	*Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité* (International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity)
CNRS	*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (French National Center for Scientific Research)
CONCORD	European NGO Federation for Relief and Development
COTA	*Collectif d'Echanges pour la Technologie Appropriée* (Collective of Exchanges for Appropriate Technology)
CSO	Civil Solidarity Organizations
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EU	European Union
F3E	*Fonds pour la promotion des études préalables, des études transversales et des évaluations* (Fund for the Promotion of Preliminary Studies, Cross-cutting Studies and Evaluations)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIVA	Research Institute for Work and Society (Belgium)
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IEMS	Iterative Evaluations with Mini Seminars
IRAM	Institute for Research and Application of Development Methods

ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MSC	Most Significant Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OM	Outcome Mapping
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PME / PM&E	Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation
PRISME	Program of Methodological Innovations to Plan, Monitor, and Evaluate Change Processes
RTE	Real-time Evaluation
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

Presentation of F3E

Founded in 1994, F3E is a non-profit multi-actor network of approximately 80 NGOs and local governments. Its mission is to improve the evaluation, the impact, and the quality of international solidarity and decentralized cooperation initiatives. To do so, F3E develops capacity-building activities that are useful for the analysis and sharing of practices:

- Guidance of study and support approaches;
- Organization of collective projects for action research;
- Production of knowledge and tools;
- Training.

These activities encourage actors to analyze their own actions, draw conclusions from them, appropriate the lessons, and to reinvest the latter into further actions. These steps are an essential part of the improvement of the actions themselves.

F3E brings together a wide range of actors that it works to unite into a network (which includes its members, experts, public authorities, researchers, partners from both the South and the North, etc.), and this above and beyond its activities as an active resource center that makes documentary resources available on its website.

F3E thus provides a dynamic forum of exchange and learning in which methodologies for development, innovation, and capacity building of actors are actively nurtured. Guided by the principle that everyone can benefit collectively, it promotes the experiences it has gained from its previous actions among all the actors of development cooperation, and it enriches collective reflection within the sector of international solidarity and decentralized cooperation.

F3E's strong relationships with actors of development as well as the experience it has gained in analysis of development practices makes F3E a key player in the strategic and political debates within the sector.

What is AFD?

Agence Française de Développement (AFD), a public financial institution that implements the policy defined by the French Government, works to combat poverty and promote sustainable development.

AFD operates on four continents *via* a network of 72 offices and finances and supports projects that improve living conditions for populations, boost economic growth and protect the planet.

In 2014, AFD earmarked EUR 8.1bn to finance projects in developing countries and for overseas France.

Analysis, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Contributions to Social Change

There are many actors in the field of international solidarity and decentralized development cooperation who seek to orient or contribute to "social change". While they agree that social change cannot be dictated, planned, or controlled, they do not all share the same outlook on the type of social change desired. Social change is a recurrent theme in discussions. How can it be defined in practical terms by the actors who help guide it? How can evaluation capture the endogenous changes that exogenous development interventions support? Methodology is an important issue, if evaluation is to meet the varied expectations of the different aid actors.

On November 5, 2014, the second joint F3E-AFD seminar attempted to answer these questions. Both French and international actors came together for three round-table discussions: Philippe Lavigne Delville (researcher at IRD, President of the Euro-African Association for the Anthropology of Social Change and Development, Doug Reeler (Community Development Resource Association, South Africa), Michael Narberhaus (Smart CSOs Lab), Moctar Diallo (coordinator of the *Programme concerté de renforcement des Organisations de la société civile et de la jeunesse guinéenne*), Elisabeth Hofmann (senior lecturer and expert in gender issues), Maria Cristina Temmink (consultant, the Netherlands), Bruno de Reviers (F3E), Charlotte Boisteau (F3E), François Grünewald (Groupe URD), Michèle Cahu (Regional Councilor of the Picardy Region in France, in charge of decentralized cooperation), and Marc Totté (consultant, Inter- Mondes).

Together they talked about the significance and issues of social change, the status of methods that help assess contributions to change, and evaluation—that tool and vehicle of organizational or even social change. These seminar proceedings include each of their contributions, which show the basis of the discussions held during this second F3E-AFD seminar. To commemorate the International Year of Evaluation, they have been published in both French and English, so as to give a broader voice to the French-speaking world's thought on evaluation.

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Etudes de l'AFD

Evaluer • Echanger • Eclairer

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DE DÉVELOPPEMENT