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A Guide to Participatory Outcome-Focused Monitoring with Most Significant Change, Outcome Harvesting, and Outcome Mapping

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Errors and omissions in this guidance are the author’s alone.

Acronyms

DAE	Department of Agriculture Extension	MSC	Most Significant Change
IDEAL	Implementer-led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning	OH	Outcome Harvesting
LSP	Local Service Provider	OM	Outcome Mapping
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation	RFSA	Resilience Food Security Activity
MCHN	Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition	SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning	TOC	Theory of change
		USAID	United States Agency for International Development



Preface

Audience

This guidance is primarily aimed at development and humanitarian professionals who design or manage monitoring and evaluation processes to support design and implementation of qualitative monitoring using Most Significant Change (MSC), Outcome Harvesting (OH), or Outcome Mapping (OM), which are participatory, outcome-focused qualitative methods.

Purpose

This guidance is a resource to strengthen qualitative monitoring, specifically addressing commonplace gaps or weakness in the monitoring of complex development and humanitarian projects. Importantly, these gaps include:

1. Lack of evidence about unexpected, as well as expected, changes or outcomes, especially during project implementation.
2. Limited documentation about whether and how a project contributed to change. Such information is vital to learning about what worked and how to build on successes.
3. Limited data to inform the review of theories of change, which limits their function and relevance.

Addressing these monitoring gaps has the potential to contribute to more informed and effective adaptive management and learning.

This guidance can be used to support the design and implementation of monitoring exercises using MSC, OH, and OM. Specifically, it supports users in choosing among MSC, OH, and OM or blending elements from these approaches. Additionally, it provides practical tips and examples - including expertise gained during the two pilot qualitative monitoring activities conducted in Niger and Bangladesh - as well as other publicly available materials.

This document complements existing resources, including the Qualitative Toolkit for Monitoring Food Security Activities Funded by the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (Fox, 2023) and the substantial existing documentation on each of the three methods, including CARE's own guidance.¹ To avoid duplication, this document provides relevant guidance on each method and links to useful resources in Appendix A.

Limitations of the guidance

Depending on prior knowledge, users of this guidance may benefit from additional guidance or training on the fundamentals of qualitative data collection and analysis and introductions to each approach; see Appendix A for recommendations. Regardless of prior knowledge, guidance cannot substitute for training, mentoring, or direct support. However, this guidance document should help readers to determine whether they may want to use one or more of the three qualitative approaches and to

¹ Relevant CARE guidance and tools include: 1. Qualitative Methods Guidance Note for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) at CARE; 2. Outcome Mapping Manual: Development of a monitoring system for the Right to Food project using Outcome Mapping, CARE Nepal; 3. Tipping Point MEL Methods Brief: Outcome Mapping; 4. The Rolling Profile Tool.

help inform the design, planning, and implementation of a monitoring system that uses these approaches. For those who are confident and have relevant experience, this guide may be sufficient. Others may want more specific instructions available elsewhere or a coach who can provide direct guidance or support.

How to use the guidance

The guidance is organized in two parts. **Part I** provides good practices and tips on using OH, OM and MSC methods for monitoring. **Part II** provides guidance on deciding if these approaches—individually or by blending methods—could help meet a project’s monitoring needs and details the system and capacity requirements and good practices for integrating these participatory, outcome-focused approaches.

Experience from the pilots conducted by CARE in Bangladesh and in Niger is highlighted throughout as practical examples and practice tips.

Cases: Two pilot projects

CARE conducted two qualitative monitoring activities integrated within Resilience and Food Security Activity (RFSA) programs implemented by CARE Bangladesh (**SHOUHARDO III**) and CARE Niger (**Hamzari**) to inform development of this guidance. Programs were selected primarily because they were in different phases of implementation. For this reason, the uses and the monitoring questions for the activities would be different and generate a range of learnings relevant for developing this guidance. The **SHOUHARDO III** project was in its close-out phase and the activity was designed to understand the changes to which one of the project’s interventions contributed to refine the intervention for the follow-on project (**SHOUHARDO III Plus**). The **Hamzari** project was in mid-implementation and the activity was designed to assess the social and behavioral change activity related to maternal and infant health and nutrition for accountability and adaptive management purposes. Project managers and MEL advisors participated in training on the three MEL approaches and tested the approaches in their projects. Training and coaching were provided throughout the pilot activities.



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PART I: Using MSC, OH and OM

1. Why MSC, OH, and OM

Emerging evidence and practical guidance for monitoring and evaluation in development and humanitarian practice highlight the value of and need for integrating quantitative and qualitative methods to improve learning and adaptation. This type of ‘complexity-aware’ approach is particularly important for programs like USAID/BHA-funded RFSAs. Due to the multiple interventions, stakeholders, and the integrated and layered nature of RFSAs programming, understanding when and how and what change happens is a challenge, contributing to gaps in understanding and ineffective learning and adaptive management (Pasanen & Barnett, 2019). Importantly, these methods account for the fact that change is highly contextual, non-linear and has multiple contributors (Earl, Carden & Smutylo, 2001), (USAID, 2021).

A complexity-aware approach: 1) allows program staff to consider participant and stakeholder perspectives and interrelationships, 2) improves the effectiveness of monitoring data in that it keeps pace with changes (sometimes unexpected), 3) enables stakeholders to understand and consider at a broader range of outcomes, including unintended consequences, alternative causes, and multiple contributions, and 4) engages a diverse group of stakeholders, thus deepening the learnings generated. Finally, these methods make spaces for participants in capturing change and learning that can enhance program impact and further catalyze social change (Smith, 2017).

In recent years CARE has invested in strengthening capacity to use qualitative approaches and evidence in M&E, with a focus on three participatory and outcome-focused monitoring and evaluation methods: Outcome Harvesting (OH), Outcome Mapping (OM), and Most Significant Change (MSC) (CARE 2017). These participant-centered approaches can be used to generate critical insights about what has changed and how and the importance of changes that are attributable to a program or intervention. All three methods are particularly effective for generating learning about program effects that cannot be captured with quantitative indicators. Finally, they can be very effective in generating knowledge about program effects that were not foreseen, including negative effects.

OH involves collecting (“harvesting”) evidence of what has changed (“outcomes”) and, then, working backward, determining whether and how an intervention or program has contributed to those changes. When integrated into routine monitoring, evidence generated through the OH process can help program staff understand how and when effects arise, in real-time, creating critical insights into pathways of change (Breakthrough Action, 2018; World Bank, 2014). Like OH, OM generates insights on outcomes, defined as behavior changes, and is also an iterative process of reflection with program stakeholders. MSC is a method that can be integrated with OH and OM or used alone to collect significant change stories in one or more domains and can generate an in-depth, participant- and group-level understanding of the significance of changes.

MSC, OH, and OM in a nutshell

Most Significant Change (MSC)

Overview: MSC is a process that captures experiences of change for either individuals or groups. The process is participatory because a range of stakeholders are involved in developing stories, deciding on their significance, and in analyzing the stories to understand whether change is happening, what changes are happening and why those changes are happening.

Uses: MSC is useful for stakeholders to understand what changes have occurred and different perspectives on why the changes are significant.

What makes MSC unique?

Programmers cannot assume to know the most important difference or impact a program has on the lived experience of an individual or group. This method provides space for the program participant's voice and perspective. This method also values the narrative as critical data for monitoring and evaluating programs.

Outcome Harvesting (OH)

Overview: OH is a process that captures outcomes through an iterative, exploratory approach, as compared to assessing outcomes in a pre-defined, results-based approach. A range of stakeholders participate in describing and substantiating outcomes. Outcomes are defined as changes in the behavior (actions, relationships, policies, practices) of individuals, groups or organizations influenced or contributed to by a program.

Uses: Outcomes documented through the OH process has many uses including to validate or revise a Theory of Change or planning framework, to monitor emergence of program outcomes, or to plan a new or follow-on program.

What makes OH unique?

This method provides a specific, robust, and replicable process for documenting how programs contribute to outcomes and the significance of those outcomes.

Outcome Mapping (OM)

Overview: OM like OH is a process used to identify and monitor changes in the behavior of people, groups and organizations influenced by a program. Participants in the process include what are referred to as boundary partners. Boundary partners are those individuals, groups, and organizations with whom a program interacts.

Uses: OM is a process that can be used to develop a participant-centered theory of change and to monitor program progress.

What makes OM unique?

The method is unique in its focus on developing a monitoring framework or theory of change that is participant- and behavior change focused.

2. Common characteristics

The five common characteristics defining the value-add of using MSC, OH and OM for monitoring are:

Qualitative. Qualitative monitoring – the collection and reflection on qualitative data at regular intervals - can enrich and complement what you learn from quantitative monitoring by revealing *why* an intervention does or does not work, *how*, and *for whom* (Fox, Cook & Peek, 2023).

Participatory. As a minimum, participation means that people beyond the MEL advisor or team are involved in collecting and making sense of MEL data. Where feasible, more involvement of stakeholders—and activity participants in particular—a brings more significant benefits, as noted in the following observation in the CARE Nepal OM Manual for the Right to Food program. This observation is equally relevant to MSC and OH:

The OM process is intended to be participatory and, wherever feasible, can involve the full range of stakeholders, including social actors. OM is based on principles of participation and purposefully includes those implementing the program in the design and data collection so as to encourage ownership and use of findings. It is intended to be used as a consciousness-raising, consensus-building, and empowerment tool for project staff (CARE Nepal, 2017).

Outcome-focused. Each approach is focused on the results that follow from what an intervention does and produces.² These results are referred to as ‘changes’ in MSC and ‘outcomes’ in OH and OM. Changes or outcomes may be expected (described in your program plan or theory of change) or unexpected (a result that wasn’t described in your plan or theory of change). Activities and outputs – the more traditional focus of monitoring - are of secondary interest.

Complexity-aware. Most interventions involve complexity – uncertainty about results and/or how they can be achieved - to some extent, whether creating a consensus, building, or changing relationships, shifting behaviors, changing norms, promoting policy or practice change, or building capacities. Monitoring such results using traditional metrics is problematic because of change, and how change comes about is unpredictable.

TIP | The greater the:

- DISAGREEMENT about what is the development challenge
- DISAGREEMENT about what is the solution
- UNCERTAINTY about what will be the results of your actions

...the more useful MSC/OH/OM will be.

Intuitive. While collecting data requires preparation, practice and good interpersonal skills, using each approach is intuitive and hence practical. For example, everyone can answer questions such as ‘*Who changed, and how?*’ and tell stories.

² MSC can also be used to learn about changes important to stakeholders that have not been influenced by your intervention.

3. How to use MSC³

Five essential steps

There are many adaptations of the ten-step MSC process originally defined (Rick Davies and Jess Dart, 2005). The five steps detailed below are essential and set MSC apart from other approaches.

- Step 1:** Defining domains of change (optional).
- Step 2:** Collect significant change stories.
- Step 3:** Select the most significant of the change stories.
- Step 4:** Verify significant change stories (optional).
- Step 5:** Feedback on selection of most significant change stories.

Step 1: Define domains of change (optional)

Domains are broad categories of possible change areas, such as ‘change in attitude or behavior’ or ‘changes in people’s participation’. You can use MSC with or without defining domains. Defining domains:

- Provides a guide for collecting significant change stories⁴ through a rigorous, yet open-ended process to communicate progress or change in the context of a particular program or intervention.
- Helps to ensure significant change stories align with learning, evaluation or reporting needs, for example, concerning the changes or assumptions in your theory of change, or changes on the individual, household, community, or organizational levels, as well as suggestions for program improvement.
- Aids in grouping change stories for analysis.
- Can include a domain for negative stories or suggestions for improvement, encouraging their collection.

TIP | Selecting Domains of Change

- If using domains, including an open domain facilitates the collection of entirely unexpected stories that fall outside of the domains you defined.
- Defining domains can be a bottom-up process involving stakeholders, thereby increasing buy-in. Early use of MSC could be done without domains, then involve stakeholders in categorizing domains evident in the stories and choosing which domains to focus on in future rounds of MSC.
- Keep in mind the feasibility of collecting and processing stories from numerous domains: in total, up to five domains is manageable.

³ This section is adapted from and builds on June Lennie, 2011 & Rick Davies and Jess Dart, 2005.

⁴ Technical note by USAID provides useful guidance to improve the rigor and credibility of stories. USAID (2013) Technical Note: Evaluative Case Studies. https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/usaid_case_study_tech_note_2013.pdf

Selection of domains of change for the pilots:

In the **SHOUHARDO III** pilot, the domains used corresponded with the parameters for assessing the sustainability of changes achieved by the project: changes in resources, changes in motivation, changes in capacity, and changes in interpersonal relationship / linkage. In addition, one open domain was used to capture any other types of change important to storytellers. Storytellers / sources engaged included two types of local service providers: vaccinators and community skilled birth attendants.

In the **Hamzari** pilot, the domains used corresponded to expected outcomes and varied by storyteller.

Table 1: Storytellers and domains of change in the Hamzari pilot.

Storyteller	Domain of change
Care group members	Maternal and child health and nutrition Household food governance Decision making
Safe spaces participants	Adolescents' nutrition Workload Sexual and reproductive health Decision making
Husband's school participants	Social norms governing maternal and child health and nutrition Household food governance

Step 2: Collect significant change stories

Task 1: Choose from whom to collect stories

Consider whose perspectives you need to learn about to answer your monitoring questions. You may want to know about changes from various perspectives, including from program participants, those with different roles in the intervention, and duty bearers. When thinking about which actors to choose, remember that a story may be about a storyteller, others, or communities or institutions.

Once you have decided which group or groups you want to collect stories from, consider factors that might also have an influence about whether and what change happens. Such factors may include gender, age, educational level, location, and period of engagement in the intervention. The considerations will inform how and how many storytellers are selected for participation.

Task 2: Decide how best to collect MSC stories

The main ways to collect stories each have their pros and cons:

Individual interviews. This is ideal for collecting all the rich information needed for a story. Compared to group discussions, it takes more time per story. Allow one to two hours per interview.

Group discussions. Sharing stories in a group setting can be catalytic: hearing one story can trigger others to tell their stories. It can also be energizing / enjoyable for all involved. At the group or community level, multiple people can contribute to a story, thereby validating and enriching the story. At the individual level, more stories can be captured at a given time than when using interviews. However, a significant disadvantage is that stories are likely to be lacking

in detail and less informative. There is also a risk that group members follow what more dominant members say rather than sharing their perspectives.

Staff writing what they observed. MEL and technical staff can write stories based on what they have seen and heard. Choose staff who will know best about changes in the domains you are interested in. Sourcing stories from staff reduces the time and resources compared to interviews or group discussions with external stakeholders. Still, follow-up will probably be needed to get all the information needed for a story. Stories may have the authentic voice of staff but won't have the voice of external stakeholders.

Selection of data collection approach for significant change stories in the pilots:

In the **SHOUHARDO III** pilot, stories were collected using **individual interviews**. This approach was chosen because findings from the significant change stories would be used to understand sustainability factors for Local Service Providers (LSPs). Therefore, the relevant perspective, story, and experience was at individual-level.

In the **Hamzari** pilot, **both focus group discussions** and **individual interviews** were used. Both approaches were chosen because the activity's aim was to understand change at individual, group and community levels. Observation was not chosen as an approach for either pilot because both pilots sought to collect data to represent the authentic voices and experiences of program participants.

Task 3: Develop an action plan

In order to capture stories from all stakeholders, it is important to make a realistic plan. For example, for each interview, plan time for preparation, travel, the interview, to organize your notes and the data collected, and time to reflect on the interview and how you might adjust your questions for the following interview. Assuming an interview will last between one and two hours, you should allow about two to four hours per story, not including travel time.

You can set out your action plan in a simple template:

TABLE 2: ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE FOR COLLECTING SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES.

Interviewer / story collector	MSC change stories from...	Domain	How many stories

TIP | Designing the Story Collection Process

- For individual-level stories of change, consider following group discussions with individual interviews to elaborate each story.
- When forming groups, consider and manage power relations.
- Fewer, more complete, and better written stories are likely to be richer in information and more credible compared to more stories of poorer quality.
- Consider taking one or more photos to illustrate each change story and the storyteller, or have the storyteller take one or more photos themselves. Photos can be helpful in helping to tell a change story. They can also be used to help confirm a change story.

Collection of stories in the pilots:

In the **Hamzari** pilot, 34 significant change stories were collected from three different participant groups in three of the nine geographic areas where the **Hamzari** program is implemented. Data collection took place over the course of three weeks (November to December 2022). The collection team included a range of program staff—those coordinating and managing program activities, technical staff focused on gender and social and behavioral change, and M&E staff. The following criteria were used to select the data collection sites:

- intensity of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) / maternal and child health and nutrition (MCHN) activities
- synergy with other activities
- evidence of behavioral shifts (already, through other data sources)
- existence of significant examples of program-induced changes in SRH and MNCH decision-making (individual or community-based)
- diverse population / experience among selected communities

In the **SHOUHARDO III** pilot, 16 significant change stories were collected from two types of LSPs supported by the SHOUHARDO III program. Sampling was purposive rather than random. The team agreed to collect significant change stories from those LSPs who demonstrated the ability to sustain service delivery supported by SHOUHARDO III after the program ended. The team also conducted MSC with community members who have received support from the LSPs. The study team first collected a short list of LSPs living in the study area from the implementing partners, and within whom any of the first four domain of changes pertain. Then the team arranged a quick brief discussion with the participants (through online or mobile) about the changes that had taken place in his/her life. The team then sat for a discussion and identified the final participants, in accordance with the domain of changes, to whom they visited to capture the MSC stories.

Task 4: Develop your story collection guide

A story collection guide is a tool the interviewer or facilitator uses to solicit significant change stories. Story collectors should only use a few simple, open questions to allow the story to be told naturally. It should include the central question about a significant change and any additional questions needed to probe for information required to write the story and answer your monitoring questions.

Optional starter question: *Tell me about your involvement in / contact with the [XYZ] project. When did you get involved, and what have you done/been part of?*

Basic story collection question: *Thinking of your involvement in [Project XYZ] in the past [months/years], what for you has been the most significant change you have experienced or observed about [domain of change]?*

Question to clarify the story's significance: *Why, for you, is the story significant? Why did you choose to share it?*

In addition to the core questions above, story collectors should have probing questions in mind to use as needed, such as:

- *Why did that happen?*
- *Why do you say that?*
- *What effect did this have?*
- *Can you give me a good example of the type of change you're talking about?*

Developing a form that indicates all the information you need to collect can be helpful. **Appendix D** is an example guide to use in individual interviews and **Appendix E** is a guide for group discussions. The story collection guides used in the **Hamzari** and **SHOUHARDO III** pilot activities are available as appendices to the activity reports.

Task 5: Engage with the storyteller(s)

Using interviews, group discussions, or asking staff to submit written stories, start by explaining how the information and any images will be used. It is important both to give the option of anonymity for the storyteller or those they describe in their story and to obtain for voluntary and informed consent to collect their story and take photos, if using. Story collectors should be prepared to spend a reasonable amount of time – often more than an hour – with storytellers.

It may be difficult for a storyteller to choose a single most significant change if you are asking them to think of changes over a long period, say more than three months.

TIP | Collecting Stories from Participants

You may need to start by helping the storyteller brainstorm different changes they can think of and then ask them to choose the most significant among them. Or you may decide to record more than one story per person.

Task 6: Write up the stories

It is important for stories to be written in precise and detailed way.⁵ As a minimum, each story should document the following information:

1. Information about who collected the story, who told the story, and when the events in the story occurred.
2. A detailed description of the story itself – what happened – that includes:
 - The situation before the change.
 - What changed.
 - The situation after the change(s) occurred.
3. The significance to the storyteller of the change(s) described in the story, specifically: which is the most significant change and why?

⁵ USAID has useful [guidance](#) on structuring the write-up of stories, which provides complementary guidance that can be useful in structuring the write-up of MSC stories. However, it is important to distinguish success stories from MSC stories. MSC stories are collected, synthesized and analyzed through a rigorous process that is designed to assess and understand comprehensively the changes that are happening throughout a participant group or community. The generation of stories alone is not the goal of the exercise but rather it is the collective group of stories, the details on how change happens in those stories, and the evidence that is generated through the selection process that enables the user to understand how changes is happening, how a program is contributing to change and why changes are significant (or not).

Depending on monitoring needs, additional information can also be collected from storytellers, such as what the intervention did that led to the change(s) described, information on negative changes, or suggestions for improvement. Consider the following when writing each story:

- Be concise while including detail. Typically, stories that are less than one page and up to two pages are sufficient to capture helpful detail and not too long to make analysis overly time-consuming.
- Aim to capture the story in the voice of the storyteller as much as possible. The use of direct quotes for some of the story is helpful. It may be necessary to re-organize or edit the story so that it is clear and logical.
- Ensure the story is understandable to those without background / local knowledge.
- As far as possible, make the story specific and detailed enough to make it credible and easy to verify.
- Add your observations about the individual, their context, and other relevant details.

TIP | Writing Up Change Stories

If possible, share the written story with the storyteller and invite them to make corrections. Their review of stories adds to their authenticity and hence credibility and is particularly important if the story is made public.

Sample MSC stories: The MSC Stories collected during the [Hamzari](#) and the [SHOUHARDO III](#) pilots are available here.

Task 7: Store each story

Decide how you will digitally store the stories, photos, and records of free prior and informed consent so that they can be shared and analyzed. Ensure adequate data privacy.

Step 3: Select the most significant stories

After each storyteller has selected what, for them, has been the most significant change in a monitoring period, the next step involves one or more groups of people (sometimes called panels) discussing a set of stories and choosing one or more stories as being most significant. A panel may select one overall story from all monitoring domains, one from each, or more than one story. There may be one or more panels, depending on how your intervention is structured and how far you want to build an understanding of the significance of changes among stakeholders, internally (for program learning) and externally. If using more than one panel, each selection is passed to the next level in the project or context hierarchy, with the reasons for their selections and critical points from the panel discussions. Each panel repeats the process.

TIP | Engaging internal and external stakeholder for story selection

- For internal stakeholders, use the existing management hierarchy in your intervention to structure the selection process.
- For external stakeholders, consider whose perspectives it is important to understand and engage with if your intervention is to have a lasting influence. Engaging such stakeholders through selection can help build understanding and a relationship.

Significant story selection process (Dresser & Mansfield, 2016; PeacePlayers, 2017)

One Village Partners. Three panels were used, reflecting the organization’s hierarchy. In the first panel, Program Coordinators selected 24 stories from the 217 identified, one for each domain in each village where the intervention was active. The second panel, made up of Senior Leadership in Sierra Leone, selected five stories from the 24, one from each of the five domains. Lastly, the United States-based Executive Team panel selected a single top story for the year.

Peace Players. Three rounds of selection were used for a program operating in four locations. In round one, program staff from each location were paired, with each staff team selecting the five most significant stories from another location. From the initial set of 73, 22 stories five were selected. In round two, leadership teams were paired with teams from a different location and each team selected two most significant stories from the five in each location. Lastly, in round three, staff in Washington, D.C. and the Managing Directors of each program selected a single “most significant story of all”.

The selection process involves the following:

1. Deciding who should be involved in each panel. You may choose to group people with similar roles/status or create a mix of people from different stakeholder groups.
2. The panel considers questions such as:
 - *From among all these significant changes, what do you think was the most significant change of all?*
 - *Why do you think this is significant?*

TIP | Determining Criteria for Story Selection in MSC

Some criteria, such as relevance to the domain and plausibility, may be defined before the selection. But learning is most effective when a panel lets some criteria emerge after considering all the stories, during a discussion, and as an intervention evolves.

3. Choosing a method to decide on the most significant story. Options include:
 - **Simple voting.** Facilitate a discussion before votes are cast.
 - **Iterative voting.** The facilitator gives panel members time to consider each story before asking all panelists to share their views on which story is most significant. The facilitator records panelist views after each round. This method is informative, and voters are more conscious of others’ opinions, but it takes longer than simple voting.
 - **Scoring.** Develop a rating scale. Panelists justify the ratings they gave each story. Discuss and record reasons for significant differences.
 - **Secret ballot.** Useful to counter unequal power among panel members.

The method used to select the most significant story, the selection criteria used, and the discussion should be documented and attached to each story.

TIP

STORY SELECTION IN MSC.

- Selection is primarily a process for eliciting a discussion that surfaces what people value about changes. The actual stories that get 'selected' are somewhat incidental.
- It is best to try out different selection methods to find one that best suits your cultural and organizational context.

The selection process involves discussing the facts first, then giving opinions. Stories with questionable accuracy or where the role of the intervention is doubtful can be rejected.

The stories that are not selected should be kept in a database and used when analyzing the full set of stories and to support program learning about using MSC. See **Appendix F** for a facilitation guide for story selection.

Participants in the selection process for the pilot activities:

In the **SHOUHARDO III** pilot, a combination of senior management, technical, and Knowledge Management teams selected stories.

In the **Hamzari** pilot, a team selected stories, including the MCHN component lead, the SBC officer, the KML lead, and the M&E lead. They considered research questions, program priorities, and communities' perspectives.

Step 4: Verify stories (optional)

Verification of the accuracy of stories can be valuable in some situations. There is always a risk that some people may exaggerate the significance of events or not give a fully accurate account of what happened. Informing storytellers that there are procedures for verifying stories can also help improve the stories' accuracy. However, verification must be handled carefully since it could negatively affect participants. Participants may think they are seen to be untrustworthy or may be discouraged from reporting anything other than what they think is expected. Thus, describing the process as an 'exploration' or a 'quality check' may be better.

Story verification process (Dresser & Mansfield, 2016; PeacePlayers, 2017)

One Village Partners. Initial summary 'headlines' about significant change stories were verified and developed into full stories by staff using interviews.

Peace Players. Stories included in the public report were verified by interviews. Authors were asked to approve the final version of each story.

Verification may not be necessary when, for example:

- Those selecting stories have sufficient knowledge to vet stories for accuracy and this is one of the criteria used for selection.
- Selected stories are used for program learning and not externally for reporting or communications.

Verification should be given a high priority at the following points in the MSC process:

- When a story is first collected, such as when a fieldworker documents a change that has been reported to them.
- When one or more panels select a story.
- When a story is communicated beyond the organization, such as to donors or the general community.
- Where a story is used as the basis for recommending important changes to a program or an organization's policies.

The credibility of data can be enhanced through the following:

- Rich descriptions of changes that include context as well as subjective views on the significance of changes, (i.e., 'thick description').
- The systematic process of selection.
- Involving those who know about the accuracy of changes described in stories and their context in the selection of stories.
- Transparency of story collection and selection.
- Verification by visiting the story collection location.

If errors are found during verification, engage the storyteller again and seek to agree on a corrected version of the story. If differences persist between the version told by the storyteller and the information obtained through verification, then agree with the monitoring system users whether the story should be excluded. If retained, the verification process results should be shared with each panel so they can be considered during their selection.

TIP | Addressing Errors in Change Stories

It is likely that most MSC stories will contain some factual errors. What needs to be considered is how these errors affect the significance given to the change by the storyteller (Lennie, 2011).

TIP | Improving the Credibility of Change Stories.

- Informing storytellers during collection that their story may be checked for accuracy.
- Using quality standards such as those from OH as criteria for selecting stories or even for including them in a selection process. For instance, this could consist of each change description should include information on when, who, what, and where; the explanation for why the change is significant should be reasonable; and the intervention's contribution to the change should be plausible.

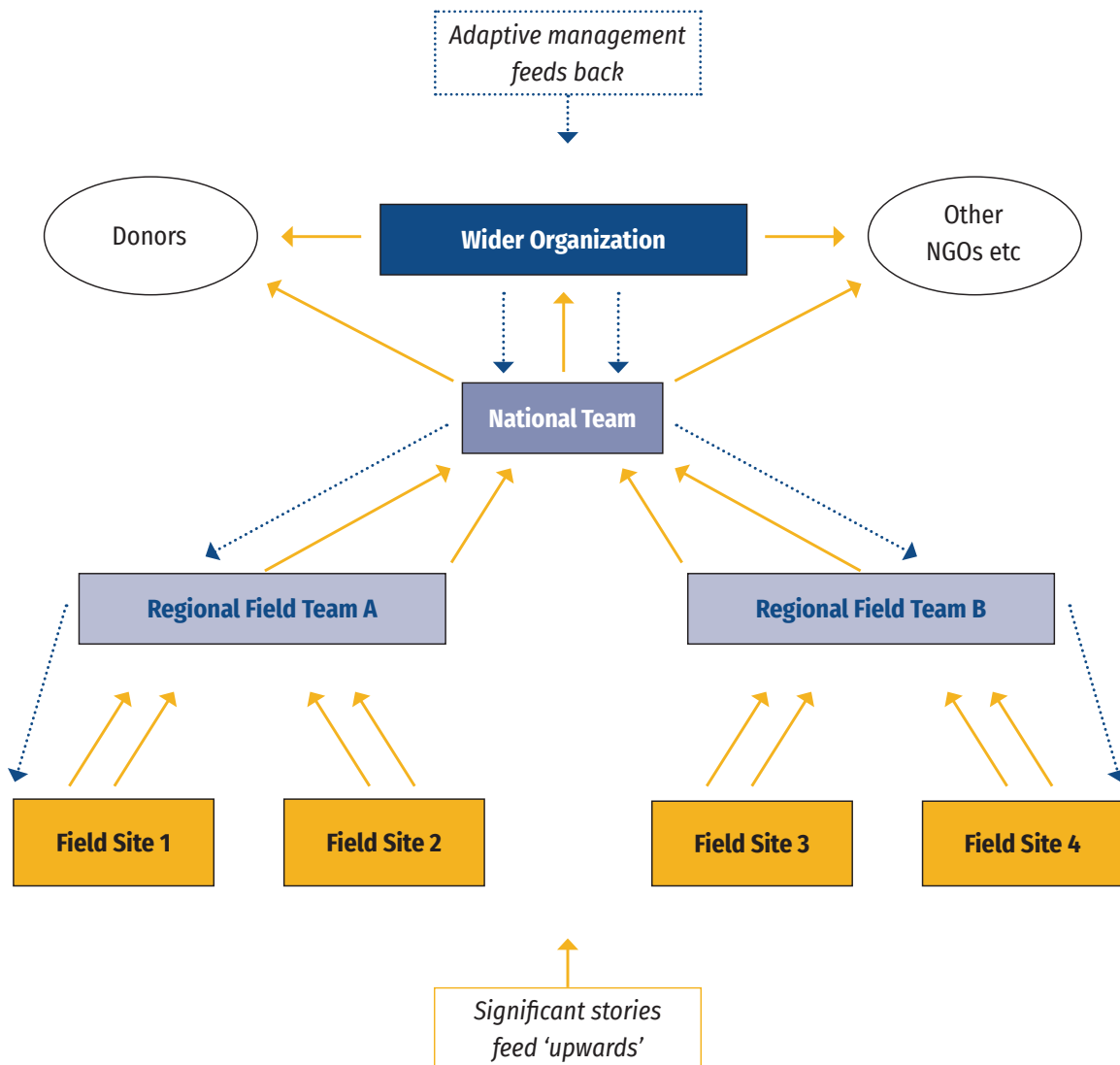
Step 5: Feedback on story selection

Feedback from the selection process should be shared with those who provided the stories. Typically, feedback includes sharing which stories were selected and why. An important reason for doing this is that information about which social change stories were selected can help expand or challenge a storyteller's view about what is significant. It completes the feedback loop between different levels of participation in an organization, creating an ongoing dialogue about significant changes (Figure 1). In some contexts, this could be disempowering to those who shared stories that were not selected and therefore it is important to be mindful of this when sharing information about story selection.

TIP | Sharing Back with MSC Participants

In terms of what to share, the project team could share all the stories with an analysis of why each story was significant in its own way. The team could also provide a summary of discussions that the MSC process elicited.

FIGURE 1: EXAMPLE FLOW OF STORY SELECTION AND FEEDBACK (Wilder & Walpole, 2008)



4. How to use OH⁶

Five steps

The OH process can be described in five steps:

Step 1: Design the harvest (specify roles and how the OH steps will be applied in a particular context).

Step 2: Harvest outcomes.

Step 3: Substantiate (verify) outcome statements (optional).

Step 4: Analyze and interpret data.

Step 5: Support use.

Step 1: Design the harvest

Using OH starts with a carefully considered design process with the harvest users to adapt the five steps OH to the harvest context and needs of the harvest users. To design your harvest, use Appendix B: Good practices when using participatory MEL approaches.

Step 2: Harvest outcomes

Outcome definition in OH

An outcome is a) a change in an actor's behavior that has been observed, b) that is significant, and c) that has been influenced by your intervention.

Task 1: Define what data is needed.

The core requirements are for each outcome to be written as an **outcome statement** comprising three elements:

- 1. Outcome description:** When the change occurred, who changed, what the change was, and where the change happened.
- 2. Significance description:** why the outcome is a significant change. Include information on the situation before the change. State if the change is a new practice or a breakthrough. Relate the change to the goals of the intervention.
- 3. Contribution description:** A description of the activities and outputs of the intervention that plausibly contributed to the outcome.

TIP | Outcomes as Observable Changes

Outcomes must be observable changes. It is not an outcome if you cannot imagine what the outcome looks, sounds, or feels like. Thus, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge changes are not considered to be outcomes. This is a requirement because observable changes are verifiable and hence arguably more credible than, for example, changes in feelings or awareness that are within us and therefore cannot be observed.

⁶ This section draws on 1. The materials and experience of The Outcome Harvesting Training Team: Goele Scheers & Richard Smith www.outcomeharvesting.training; 2. Ricardo Wilson-Grau, 2019

Example outcome statement from the SHOUHARDO III pilot⁷

Outcome description: Since February 2022, Woman A has been working with seed dealers and the Sub-Assistant Agriculture Office of the Department of Agriculture Exertion (DAE) to source and sell improved seed and offering technical advice, mostly to women from poor and extremely poor households, in four SHOUHARDO III communities and five non-SHOUHARDO communities. By October 2022, she had more than 700 customers.

Significance: Before engaging with the SHOUHARDO III program, Woman A was engaged in agricultural activities but lacked technical knowledge on seeds and relationships with seed dealers and the Sub-Assistant Agriculture Office of the DAE. Previously, farmers in these communities mainly used local seeds with poor germination rates which produced lower yields. These farmers can now easily buy improved seeds.

Contribution: In October 2021, SHOUHARDO III provided Woman A with business orientation training then business management training in January 2021. From November–December 2021, Field staff introduced her to local government departments and private company/dealer agents and guided her on how to work with the DAE. The program also introduced her to the communities through one or more meetings or events in each community.

⁷ Names and locations have been removed from this public version of the outcome statement. When harvesting, it is important to include sufficient detail to ensure the outcome statement is verifiable and hence credible.

Usually, it is sufficient that each element of an outcome statement is a short narrative of one to three sentences. Such concise outcome statements reduce the amount of information needed and hence the time/effort involved in harvesting, while still allowing the necessary information to be collected. Short outcome statements are also quicker and easier to analyze, providing an advantage as the volume of data grows over several monitoring cycles. More concise statements are also easier to communicate.

Only use longer outcome statements if the additional information is useful for answering the monitoring questions. For example, additional information could include the contribution of other actors to the outcome, the role of any collaborations in the outcome, the history of the situation before an outcome, or the sustainability of the outcome.

Example outcome ‘headline’ summaries from the SHOUHARDO III pilot

Example 1: From community volunteer to providing maternal and child health services in the community.

Example 2: New savings groups used to engage 150 women and adolescent girls in savings.

TIP | Creating Headlines

Create a ‘headline’ version of each outcome statement to use when communicating about the outcomes, as when analyzing them in a participatory process or sharing them in reports or briefings.

TIP | Formulating Outcome Statements

- The outcome and contribution descriptions must be observable facts, whereas significance descriptions can include the subjective opinion of the person or people describing the outcome.
- Outcomes can be small but significant steps, such as actors coming together to work on an issue for the first time, and major changes, such as policy breakthroughs.
- Outcomes can be about unexpected or unanticipated changes, including negative changes. Negative changes are changes your intervention has contributed to, but are contrary to the intervention's goals.
- The contribution description must be plausible. To judge plausibility, ensure the contribution is described in sufficient detail. Mention the date and number of activities, the topics covered in training, etc.
- Make the outcome statement understandable to anyone by avoiding jargon and abbreviations and defining all terms. Once harvested, an outcome statement may be read by people beyond the immediate context of those who described it.

Task 2: Identify data sources.

In OH, the key consideration when choosing sources are that they meet all three of the following criteria:

- a) Most knowledgeable about the outcomes.
- b) Motivated to share what they know.
- c) Trustworthy.

Sources may be internal (for example, staff, implementing partner staff, volunteers) or external to the intervention, typically the actors you have sought to engage with or influence. In part, choosing sources is a pragmatic decision depending on who is motivated to participate. For example, those who are knowledgeable may not be motivated to engage and share what they know, as when staff have moved on to other projects or organizations, or when external actors you have engaged with are too busy to join an interview or workshop. Other times internal sources may know little about outcomes and it is essential to engage external sources to learn about and document outcomes for the first time.

Harvesting from internal sources can work well when they are knowledgeable about outcomes and users want to use OH to support a reflection and learning process. Typically, those closest to implementation are the most knowledgeable.

Harvesting from external sources is particularly valuable when you want to learn about their perspective on the significance of each outcome. Whether sources are internal or external, the accuracy of what they tell you can be confirmed with independent external actors in Step 3 – Substantiation – and by rigorously harvesting observable and hence verifiable outcome statements.

SHOUHARDO III example: Outcome sources were external to the project: a) LSPs who had been engaged in and supported by the program, and b) Community members who are users of the services provided by LSPs to understand if / how services had changed in terms of accessibility, availability, and quality, as well as the impact service changes have had on their lives.

Task 3: Choose data collection method(s) and design guidance/templates.

Options for collecting data, or 'harvesting outcomes', include interviews, workshops, and through messaging (e.g., email/text). Each has advantages and disadvantages, the most important of which are summarized in Table 3 below. Each method can be used online as well as face-to-face.

TABLE 3: PROS AND CONS OF COMMON METHODS FOR ENGAGING SOURCES IN OH

Method to engage sources	Pros	Cons
Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-efficient for the source, compared to attending a workshop. • Harvester can probe for the information needed. • Interviewer can build trust making it more likely the source will discuss sensitive issues. • Typically no costs for securing time from the source. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information shared in an open-ended way through a structured interview will not correspond directly to the elements of an outcome statement. Therefore, the harvester needs to be able to think in real time of the probing questions necessary to get all the required information. • Time and cost for harvester(s) may be greater than with a workshop.
Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups can write outcome statements, enriching and cross-checking information. • Stimulating to see what other groups write. • Time pressure gets the outcome statements written. • Real time feedback from harvester(s). • Builds group cohesion, exchange and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time commitment of participants. • Participant numbers limited by number of harvesters – must be sufficient to provide real time feedback on outcome statements. • Cost of bringing sources and harvesters together if face-to-face.
Email or message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvester has time to review each outcome statement and can be precise with their questions. • Low level time commitment required from source and can spread inputs over several days. • Low cost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources may not respond at all or not respond promptly. • Sources who do respond may differ from those who do not and thus bias the outcomes harvested. • Sources may not immediately understand what information is needed. • Maintaining engagement during communication exchange can be difficult.

Having chosen a method for engaging sources, the harvester designs a tool to guide data collection. This might be guiding questions or a template. The tool should guide harvesters in collecting information needed to answer the monitoring questions. The tool may be designed to collect information other than that required for the outcome statements, for example, recommendations for what the intervention could do differently in the future. The tool should record the identity of each source, the harvester’s identity, time, and location of the interview, and specifically ask sources to identify any unintended outcomes, both positive and negative.

Each outcome statement should be ‘owned’ by its source(s). Therefore, source(s) should write their outcome statements where possible. If sources need support from a harvester to write outcome statements, ask them to review statements and, if necessary, amend what the harvester has written.

See **Appendix G** for an example OH interview guide from the **SHOUHARDO III** pilot.

Task 4: Engage sources

Data collection using OH differs from other qualitative approaches. It involves a to-and-fro, or ‘ping-pong’, between the harvester(s) and various sources to identify outcomes and to develop the corresponding outcome statements.

Options for activities engaging sources at the beginning of a harvest include:

- Sharing one or more example outcome statements to show people the information you seek.
- Actor mapping to identify whom an intervention has influenced, then brainstorming to identify outcomes. Best used in a workshop or focus group discussion.
- Survey to identify achievements.
- Document review. This involves reviewing existing reports, blogs, and any materials about an intervention’s achievements and noting information on possible outcomes.

Regardless of the harvest design, the process will result in drafts of possible outcomes. The harvester then engages with the source(s) for each outcome to first confirm if it is indeed an outcome (*Is the actor who changed clear? Is the contribution plausible?*), then guide them to elaborate on the other information needed to complete an outcome statement. Engaging sources commonly results in some initial possible outcomes being rejected and additional outcomes being identified.

TIP | Harvesting Outcomes

- An outcome harvest should be an open process. In other words, do not refer to your theory of change or logical framework (e.g., intended outcomes) during the harvest. If you do, then you are likely to miss unintended outcomes from your harvest. Instead, guide sources to think about who they have seen change behavior and how.
- Plan sufficient time to communicate back-and-forth with sources. This includes time to follow up with sources after workshops or interviews to clarify or capture missing information.
- During the harvesting process—whether in individual interviews, focus group discussions or workshops, be sure to record the name of the individual(s) who knows about each possible outcome for the purposes of follow-up.

For more tips on harvesting outcomes using interviews, workshops, and email, see **Appendix H**.

For an example of an OH workshop facilitation guide, see **Appendix I**.

Step 3: Substantiate outcome statements (optional)

As with MSC, OH includes a step on verification, or, as it is called in OH, substantiation. Like MSC, the step can be valuable to ensure accuracy and hence the credibility of the data.

Substantiation is the process of selecting a sample of outcome statements and consulting with one or more independent people to ensure accuracy, deepen understanding, or both.⁸

This step is optional because:

1. OH assumes there will always be some uncertainty in any data, whether qualitative or quantitative.
2. Substantiation requires time and resources. Therefore, whether and how you substantiate will depend in part on feasibility.
3. Different uses of monitoring may require different levels of confidence in the credibility of data. Hence the users of a harvest should decide whether substantiation is needed, and this is based primarily on how the data and results will be used.

⁸. Adapted from Ricardo Wilson-Grau, 2019.

For example, when a harvest is being used program learning (e.g. for training or for checking a theory of change) versus if it will be used for reporting, external sharing, or to inform decision-making, then users may find that well-formulated outcome statements are credible and reliable without substantiation, especially if they are triangulated from multiple sources. In contrast, when some or all outcomes from a harvest may be used in reporting, external communications, or to inform programming decisions, then users may want some or all the outcome statements to be substantiated. Finally, when outcomes are being harvested in an ongoing way or in several rounds of data collection, substantiation may be done at planned intervals, for example in preparation for an annual learning event or reporting period.

4. Other processes also contribute to data credibility, so substantiation is not the only step that contributes to results being valid and replicable. For example, multiple sources of data are used to formulate outcome descriptions. Triangulation among data sources is an approach commonly used by M&E professionals to ensure data credibility.

TIP | Substantiation in OH

When using OH for monitoring, substantiation is often not used, or it is used occasionally, such as once a year to check a sub-set of outcomes. Substantiation may instead be a task for evaluators during mid-term or final evaluations.

If using substantiation, harvesters and users need to agree on when to substantiate, which outcomes, which data (outcome, significance, contribution), who to ask, who will lead the process – staff or an external evaluator - and criteria to accept or reject outcomes if responses from substantiators are contradictory. Depending on experience, readers may benefit from further facilitation or support to implement this step.⁹

TIP | Credibility in Outcome Statements

Above all, the quality of the outcome harvesting process and outcome statements makes the data credible.

Example of substantiation in an outcome harvest (Smith, Aziz & Sutcliffe, 2018)

Outcomes were selected for substantiation based on a) significance, as judged by the evaluator and CARE-BD and b) feasibility. Feasibility was influenced by several factors, most importantly the highly sensitive and sometimes personal nature of some of the outcomes meant that the evaluators needed to be confident that substantiation would not cause harm or distress.

Substantiation was attempted for 19 of the 33 outcomes. It was not possible to reach the substantiators of four of the outcomes. Of the 15 remaining outcomes, one or more substantiators fully confirmed the accuracy of 13 outcomes, 2 of these 13 outcomes were only partially confirmed by one substantiator, and a further 2 outcomes were partially confirmed by substantiators. No outcomes were said to be inaccurate but one of the partly substantiated outcomes was rejected. The other partly substantiated outcomes were considered to be sufficiently accurate and valid to be used as evidence, at least for learning.

In conclusion, 32 EKATA outcomes were considered to be credible for program learning but that further verification (through documentation) and / or substantiation with independent third parties was recommended before non-substantiated outcomes are used externally.

⁹ Ricardo Wilson-Grau, 2019. Provides detailed guidance on substantiation.



Step 4: Analysis and interpretation

Organizing data to help answer monitoring questions (analysis) and using the data to answer your monitoring questions (interpretation) involve using qualitative data analysis techniques that are not specific to OH. Considerations that are specific to OH are:

- Who to involve? Some analysis, such as classifying outcomes by type of social actor that has changed behavior, may be best done by sources if the classification needs to align with how an intervention defines its stakeholders. More broadly, involving one or more of social actors, partners, technical staff, or management in at least parts of analysis and interpretation can enrich how the data is used and almost certainly increases ownership of the findings and inspires/ informs a variety of next steps among those involved in the analysis.
- Analysis can be done on one or more elements of an outcome statement, depending on the question(s) to be answered. For example, if the question concerns contribution, then analyze the contribution descriptions.
- Interpretation is question-driven. Use OH to answer monitoring questions to maximize its usefulness.

TIP | Analysis in OH

Analysis and interpretation is more than a list of or summary of outcome statements. It is organizing and then using the data to answer the monitoring questions. See Appendix B, Good Practice 10, Organize and use data to answer monitoring questions. Appendix B, Table 8 is an example of database fields that can be used to organize data.

Step 5: Support use

Two types of use are considered as part of the OH process: use of findings to answer your monitoring questions and use to advance organization learning and strengthen capacities developed through the monitoring process. Both types of use are underpinned by the participation of those implementing an intervention and other stakeholders in the monitoring process.

For a monitoring process to be worthwhile, timely use is essential. Plan events where data will be used to inform reflection and decisions.¹⁰

Process uses are often valuable and come from staff, partners, and other stakeholders participating in the monitoring process. They include shifting the focus from activities to outcomes, supporting a learning culture and evaluative thinking, and enhancing a shared understanding of achievements and how they came about.

¹⁰. See Appendix B, Good Practice 9. See also Appendix C, for an example planning matrix.

5. How to use OM¹¹

TIP | Using OM

- A monitoring framework developed through OM can serve as the results framework for a project or program.

Both pilot teams indicated a strong interest in using OM in the future. Still, they did not select it for the pilots because the implementation of each project was too advanced for it to be helpful to develop and test a new monitoring framework.

Steps and OM processes are illustrated below with reference to the Right to Food for Nepal example (CARE Nepal, 2017).

Four Essential steps

As originally described in 2001, OM has twelve steps and three stages: Intentional Design, Outcome & Performance Monitoring, and Evaluation Planning. The first two stages are the most relevant to this guidance. The twelve steps are not a fixed recipe to follow. A context-sensitive choice of steps, tools, and adaptation of the steps is essential. Right for Food is an example of one adaptation. Another adaptation was made by the Tipping Point project in Nepal and Bangladesh, an intervention that also used several other qualitative approaches (CARE, 2023). Many resources exemplifying and discussing OM adaptations are available¹². To support further adaptation and innovation in using OM, the Outcome Mapping Learning Community (OMLC) (Outcome Mapping Community of Practice, 2023) published a set of principles, concepts, and guiding practices in 2020 (Outcome Mapping Learning Community Stewards, 2021).

Here, we will focus on steps that are both essential and set OM apart from MSC and OH:

- Step 1:** Prepare to create a monitoring framework.
- Step 2:** Design an actor-oriented framework.
- Step 3:** Develop a monitoring system.
- Step 4:** Use the monitoring system to support learning.

Step 1: Prepare to create a monitoring framework

Preparation is needed to decide if OM is likely to work in your context considering the relationships you have with stakeholders and funders, and to initiate the participatory process that OM requires. OM is quite different from other qualitative M&E approaches as it is based on the idea of thinking about change through the lens of human behavior. Where neither OM nor OH has been used before, such actor-focused thinking will be new, hence the importance of preparation.

Preparation for creating a monitoring framework (Earl, Carden & Smutylo, 2001) has four essential parts¹³:

1. The conception of an intervention by local organization(s), their international partners, and donors.
2. Agreement on an intervention outline, including a problem analysis, objectives, thematic focus, and geographic scope.
3. Creation of a foundation for successfully applying OM by developing a common understanding among project implementers of the central concepts of OM, particularly the idea of thinking about change through the lens of human behavior, and ensuring commitment and support for using OM.

¹¹. This section draws on the following references: Sarah Earl, Fred Carden, and Terry Smutylo, 2001; CARE Nepal, 2017; Outcome Mapping Learning Community: www.outcomemapping.ca; Jan Van Ongevalle, Huib Huuse, Eugenia Boutylkova, Anneke Maarse & Cristien Temmink, 2014.

¹². Daniel Roduner and Olivia M. Hartmann-Fässler, 2009. OM ideas 3: Module on Step-0: How to prepare for OM Intentional Design. <https://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/om-ideas-3-module-on-step-0-how-to-prepare-for-om-intentional-design>. Accessed 30 December 2022.

¹³. Adapted from Roduner and Hartman-Fässler (2009).

4. Gathering of information on the relationships and perspectives of stakeholders to be involved in planning and other actors in the system.

TIP | Designing an Outcome Mapping Exercise

- If you are designing a project that follows from earlier work, consider doing an outcome harvest of the previous work to identify the actors it influenced. Then determine which of these actors you would want to influence or support going forwards and involve them in co-designing your OM monitoring framework.
- Review the three essential and five optional 'enabling factors' to determine if OM is appropriate for an intervention – see Section 2. The 'Module on Step-0' also includes a checklist of factors that will increase or decrease the likelihood that OM can be used successfully. (Roduner & Hartmann-Fässler, 2009)

In the CARE Nepal case, preparation included:

- Stakeholder mapping and extensive consultations with potential partners to identify civil society partners to participate in the design of the monitoring framework.
- A two-day workshop during which stakeholders identified the underlying causes of food insecurity and how they can be addressed by civil society, citizens, and government.

In conclusion, the CARE Nepal team found that OM was a suitable approach for monitoring their Right to Food project.

Why we might use OM for monitoring relates to the implementation context and programming reality of complex projects.

- We cannot control people and change processes
 - We cannot predict exactly who and what will change (nonlinear change)
- BUT
- We can monitor whether and how change happens
 - We can use this data and these insights to optimize our strategies for making change more likely.

Step 2: Design an actor-oriented monitoring framework

As defined in the original OM facilitation guide, a monitoring framework developed with OM answers four questions (Earl, Carden & Smutylo, 2001):

- *Why?* (What is the vision to which the program wants to contribute?)
- *Who?* (Who are the program's boundary partners, i.e., actors an intervention aims to influence directly?)
- *What?* (What are the tangible changes being sought in boundary partners?)
- *How?* (How will the program contribute to the change process among its boundary partners?)

OM has seven steps for creating a monitoring framework¹⁴. Whether you use all or some of the steps to create your monitoring framework depends on your context and monitoring priorities. In the Right to Food example, the first phase of developing

¹⁴. The seven steps are known as the Intentional Design Stage in OM: 1. Describe the Vision; 2. Identify the Mission; 3. Identify the Boundary Partners; 4. Identify the Outcome Challenges for each Boundary Partner; 5. Develop Progress Markers for each Boundary Partner; 6. Complete a Strategy Map for each Outcome Challenge; 7. Articulate Organizational Practices.

a framework involved three of the seven options: vision, boundary partners, and progress markers. Each of these options is described below.¹⁵

Vision

In OM, a vision, or ‘dream’ is an accountability-free description of what you want to help achieve through your intervention. It is accountability-free because it goes beyond what your intervention alone can achieve and represents an ideal picture of the system you are working to change some years later.

The vision developed for the Right to Food project by workshop participants:

Small holder and landless farmers and among them women, Dalits, marginalized groups, disabled, elderly, etc. have sufficient access to food throughout the year (from their own land and other resources, sustainable agriculture practices) and are better able to utilize food (and awareness about what nutrition is required for different people and age groups). The groups have access to resources and services, know their rights and have the capacity to claim their rights. Women farmers and landless are empowered and active in decision-making committees of local groups, federations, civil society organizations, and government structures at different levels. The groups are united and able to claim fair wages and equal wages for equal work. The government is pro-active and responsive in fulfilling people’s rights and implementing laws and policies guaranteeing the right to food.

TIP | Developing a Vision Statement

The process of collectively developing a dream or vision statement is as important as the final, agreed text. It helps create a common understanding of the boundaries of an intervention as well as the ultimate changes sought by the intervention. The dream/vision becomes the ‘north star’ that provides direction through the many twists, turns, and challenges involved in delivering an intervention.

Mapping key actors (boundary partners) to create a visual theory of change

Next, CARE Nepal and its partners identified their key actors or boundary partners¹⁶. Key actors are defined as those who were critical for achieving the vision and whom the intervention has a relationship or opportunity to influence directly. In other words, these were the actors with whom the intervention’s implementing organizations work to have a positive and sustained change for their ‘impact groups’.

To do this, they used the idea of a sphere of influence to distinguish key actors they could influence directly from among all their stakeholders (Figure 2). First, they distinguished what they could control – activities, inputs, outputs – from what they could only influence – outcomes understood as changes in behavior of key actors with whom they worked directly in the community, civil society, private sector, and government. Lastly, they recognized they could only influence some actors and changes at the broader impact level indirectly.

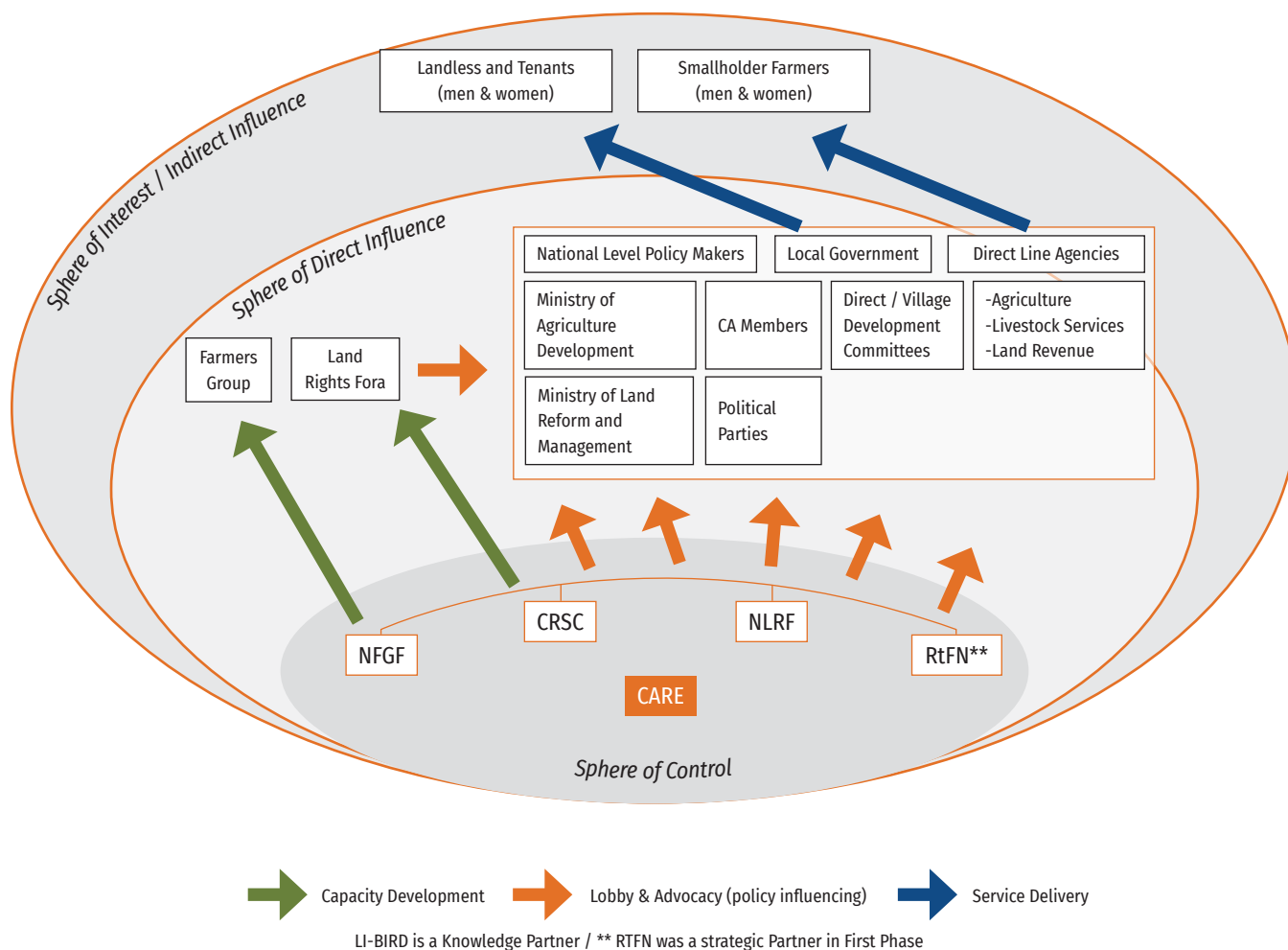
The sphere of influence¹⁷ is the focus of OM. Once the key actors were identified, subsequent planning focused on how to optimize the chances of influence and monitoring focused on capturing changes (outcomes) in these actors.

¹⁵ In later workshops, other options were added as needs evolved.

¹⁶ Such ‘key actors’ are known as Boundary Partners in OM literature. CARE Nepal used the term key actors in their OM exercise.

¹⁷ The sphere of influence is as those actors with whom the program has the opportunity to work with and/or influence.

FIGURE 2: THEORY OF CHANGE OVERVIEW FROM THE RIGHT TO FOOD PROJECT, CARE NEPAL.



TIP | Mapping Key Actors / Boundary Partners

- Adapt OM terms for local context and use, as CARE Nepal did using the term 'key actor' instead of Boundary Partner. They also used 'sphere of direct influence' instead of 'sphere of influence' and 'sphere of indirect influence' instead of 'sphere of interest'.
- Key actors may change during an intervention as different actors become more or less relevant to the change process.
- Choose a limited number of Boundary Partners – about five - to monitor. Otherwise, the task may not be feasible. Prioritize the partners you most need to monitor because change is most critical or with whom you are the least certain which of your strategies will succeed.
- When you want to see a similar change in various actors, they could be grouped as a category, as in the Nepal case with 'national policy makers'.

Outcome Challenge or ‘mini-vision’

Next, a ‘mini-vision’ was developed for each key actor to describe the ideal behavior of the actor if they are contributing to realizing the agreed vision. To create each outcome challenge, workshop participants were asked:

Ideally, to contribute to the vision, what would the boundary partner be doing? With whom would they be interacting? How could this boundary partner contribute maximally to the vision?

Progress markers

The ideal behavior of a key actor is likely to take time to materialize and may never be seen. Therefore, progress markers were defined for each key actor or group of key actors to create a framework to monitor progress towards the ideal behavior.

To develop progress markers, participants were asked:

- What are the changes that we would **expect** to see from the social actor (as an early positive response to our engagement with them)?
- What are the changes we would **like** to see (signs of active engagement, ownership)?
- What are the changes we would **love** to see (an ideal situation, deep transformation)?

To illustrate how progress markers differ from and add value to traditional indicators and the OM idea of ‘expect to see’, ‘like to see’, and ‘love to see’ levels of change, the project used the example of a typical capacity assessment indicator for “gender”: “the organization has a gender policy” or “has a gender focal person”. To develop progress markers, ask, “then what?”. If having a policy and a focal person is an “expect to see” change that would be likely to occur in the short-term, what would be a sign of a more difficult change for the organization to make - “like to see” - and what change or changes would show fundamental transformation in the organization - “love to see”?

TIP | Choosing Progress Markers

- To make monitoring several progress markers feasible, group them into categories, as in the Right to Food case study with ‘government willingness to work with civil society’.
- The OM Practitioners Guide contains several ideas for working with Progress Markers (Ambrose & Deprez, 2023).

For examples of progress markers from the Right to Food project, see **Appendix J**.

Strategy maps

A strategy map was developed for each key actor to help the project think broadly about how it supports them to change. Workshop participants were asked to name their key strategies for influencing the key actors. The strategies mentioned were written on cards. The facilitator then introduced two overall types of strategies with sub-categories (see Table 4):

- Strategies directed at the key actor: causal, persuasive, or supportive.
- Strategies directed at the environment in which the key actor operates: causal, persuasive or supportive.

CARE Nepal’s OM guide states:

...the strategy maps were particularly useful to map the support of CARE towards its boundary partners and to use it in combination with its partner’s progress markers as basis for reflection on the effectiveness of its support strategies and to map out adjustments to CARE’s support if necessary.

TABLE 4: THE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK USED TO DEVELOP STRATEGY MAPS FOR EACH KEY ACTOR.

	Casual (direct effect)	Persuasive	Supportive
Strategies which are directed at the key actors (I for individual boundary partner)	E.g. finance something directly, doing something directly for the actor	E.g. Try to influence directly be bringing new ideas, new concepts (risky if only workshops and training - no control over if people are actually going to take up and adopt the things, they have learned)	E.g. Coaching and day to day support, on the job, organize together, plan together etc. to strengthen the capacity of the actor. In the case of lobbying it is a continuous thing
Strategies directed more to the environment in which the key actors operate (E for boundary partner environment)	E.g Support strategy to enable the actors directly (e.g. providing support to establish an office for a new organization, or computers, etc.). Or setting up rules e.g. “activities must be gender inclusive” which will have a direct effect	E.g. Making sure key actors have access to information, lobbying one actor which is blocking a key actor, so they can enable the key actor to get through with their agenda.	E.g. Developing social networks of people and organisations to move forward (does not happen automatically), supportive networks (important aspect of the programme)

Step 3: Develop the monitoring process

When developing an outcome-focused monitoring process, follow the 10 Good Practices (Section 4) alongside this OM-specific guidance.

Where possible, monitoring involves the intervention team interacting with key actors. In general, a range of actors can be engaged in a monitoring activity using OM. Typically, relevant actors will be identified through a mapping exercise conducted in the planning phase of the activity. Actors are engaged throughout the process, ideally, though practical considerations (resource constraints or time, for example) may limit engagement.¹⁸

In the Nepal example, an outcome journal was customized to track changes among key actors as a tool for documenting changes (outcomes) and recording these against relevant progress markers. Space was also included for:

- Unanticipated changes.
- Support strategies used and follow-up needed.
- Contributing or limiting factors.
- Lessons learned and recommendations.

Outcome journals were updated every six months. Information on progress markers was mainly collected and discussed during monitoring meetings at various levels (local, provincial, and federal). Reflection on what had changed in monitoring meetings supported learning. Specifically, the CARE team supported civil society partners to take ownership of the monitoring process and monitor social change in and across many community groups and government stakeholders at different levels.

¹⁸. See Appendix B for additional guidance on selecting and engaging actors in participatory outcome-focused monitoring.

Rather than applying this as a control-oriented monitoring tool, the team has used **OM as a dialogue and self-assessment learning tool** with partners.¹⁹

Step 4: Use the results to support learning

As with any M&E approach, merely using OM to collect data on progress markers or outcome challenges is not sufficient to support learning. Following research on several OM cases, Jan van Ongevalle (Van Ongevalle, Huyse, et al., 2014, p.12) and colleagues identified the following features of successful learning processes:

1. **Collective reflection** about the monitoring information through meetings or workshops that involve program staff and/or boundary partners. Participation of boundary partners in reflection on the monitoring information will be less likely when there is an advocacy or lobby relation between the boundary partner and the program team.
2. **Skillful facilitation** of collective reflection moments to support deeper learning.
3. Using the progress markers and outcome challenges as a **basis for dialogue** and conversations instead of checklists that need to be assessed.
4. Using the progress markers and outcome challenges **flexibly**, allowing them to change along the way based on the lessons learned.
5. Combine **reflection on changes** in the boundary partners with review on the **effectiveness of the support** provided by the program team.



¹⁹ Maria Ploug Petersen, 2017.

6. Good practices for participatory outcome-focused monitoring using MSC, OH, and OM²⁰

This section introduces a set of good practices which, if followed, will help ensure your use of the approaches effectively supports a project's learning and reporting needs. See Figure 3 and Table 5 below. For a more detailed explanation refer to Appendix B.

Stage 1: Users and uses (Good Practices 1-3)

When preparing to use the approaches, identify **who will use the monitoring process and resulting data** and **what they will use it for**. Is it to bring participant voice into the intervention, support team learning, strengthening relations with actors you need influence, report to a funder, a combination of all these, or something different? Different users (project managers, implementing partners, fieldworker, head office directors) likely have different uses or needs for the data and the insights generated. The comparison of features in Section 3 can help users identify what they can get from using participatory, qualitative monitoring. Once the uses are clear, users then must **identify monitoring questions**, the answers to which will address their uses.

Stage 2: Data requirements (Good Practices 4-8)

The monitoring questions dictate the **information that needs to be collected** and the **sources to be engaged**. **Ethical standards** must be followed when collecting data. **Data collection method(s)** need to be agreed upon, and steps taken to ensure the **data will be credible and reliable**.

Stage 3: Using data for learning (Good Practices 9-10)

Learning and other uses won't happen automatically. Instead, plan **how to use the data collected** to engage monitoring system users in **answering the monitoring questions**.

²⁰. This section is informed by Utilization Focused Evaluation. Many of the good practices can be applied when using any participatory, qualitative MEL approach, but some steps, such as 'Information required', are specific to the three approaches: MSC, OH, and OM.



FIGURE 3: GOOD PRACTICES IN A PARTICIPATORY MONITORING SYSTEM

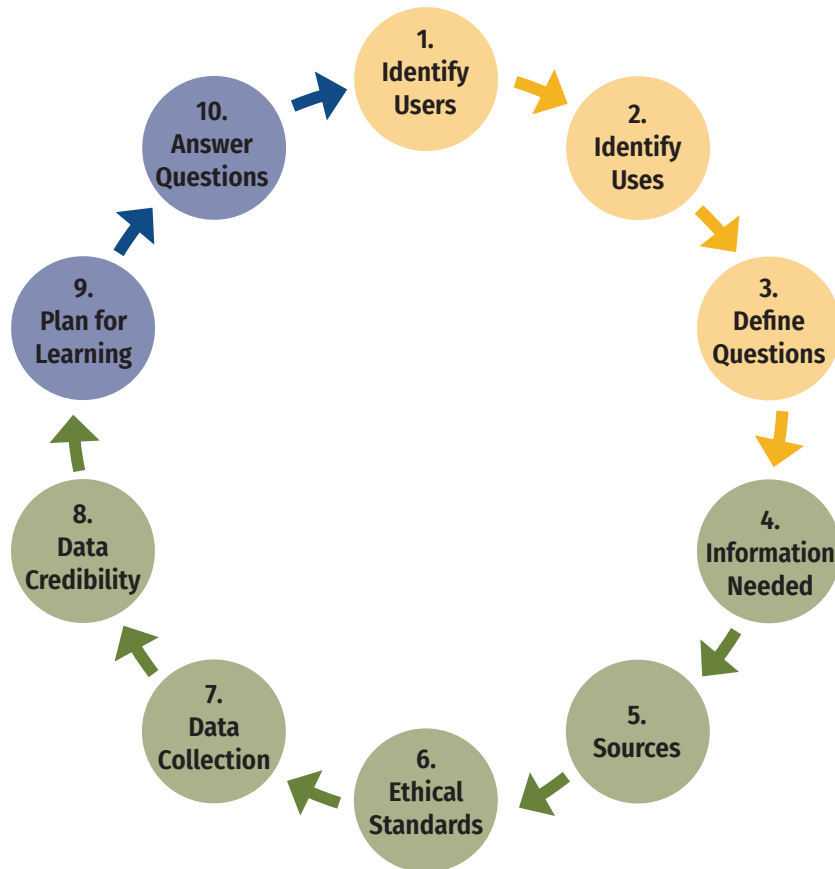


TABLE 5: GOOD PRACTICES IN A PARTICIPATORY MONITORING SYSTEM

Stage	Good practice	Description
1: Users and uses	1: Identify users.	Identify monitoring system users who will make decisions based on the data or findings. These users must be involved in designing the monitoring process and any decisions about its use.
	2: Define the uses and timeline.	Engage users to clarify how and when they will use the monitoring data and findings. Different users (project leaders, management, etc.) may have different uses.
	3: Define monitoring questions.	To ensure that monitoring is focused on user interests, work with users to define monitoring questions. Data—once collected and analyzed—is then used to answer monitoring questions.
2: Data requirements	4: Agree on the information required.	Engage users to agree on the information needed to answer the monitoring questions and when it is required. Data needs and timing of data collection will then inform decisions regarding which approaches to use, as there are differences in the data each will produce.
	5: Choose sources (informants).	Decide who will be the informants and sources that you engage with, and how you engage with them. Sources can be internal or external to the project, and there is value in both.
	6: Ensure ethical standards.	When selecting and inviting people to share information on outcomes or changes, it is important to get their free and informed consent for how the information they provide, and any photos taken, will be used.
	7: Choose data collection method(s).	Each option for engaging sources has its pros and cons. Documenting unintended or negative changes is a challenge. Good facilitation can avoid monitoring becoming a ‘check box’ exercise for confirming that change has happened.
	8: Ensure data is credible and reliable.	Ask users: will the data be credible and reliable for your intended uses and if not, what will make it credible and reliable? The answer to this question may vary depending on use of the data.
3: Data use for learning	9: Plan how you will turn data into learning.	Using participatory outcome-focused approaches for collecting and analyzing data does not in itself support learning. For learning to happen, there need to be participatory spaces where monitoring data and analysis will be used.
	10: Organize and use data to answer monitoring questions.	Agree with users on categories that will be useful for organizing the data to answer monitoring questions, drawing on the richness of data.



PART II: Deciding to use MSC, OH, and OM for participatory outcome-focused monitoring

1. When to use MSC, OH, and OM

These approaches can support critical, evaluative thinking - routine reflection on good evidence to inform judgments and decisions – and learning within a project team, among partners, across an organization, and with stakeholders about how the implementation of an intervention can be improved. To put it another way, these methods can support: ‘results-based learning’ (Van Ongevalle & Peels, 2014).

TIP | Evaluative Thinking

Evaluative thinking doesn’t happen automatically when using any of the approaches: it requires deliberate effort and commitment to learning as well as time and resources.

Consider using MSC, OH, or OM if one or more of the following are particularly important or relevant for your project:

- **A more holistic, system-wide understanding** of your desired (OM) or achieved (all approaches) results when change pathways are not linear or are uncertain. For example: complement quantitative measures of income or well-being changes by documenting if duty bearers are engaging with and accountable to those they serve in new ways.
- **Learning from and valuing diverse perspectives** of participants/partners/project team/management/stakeholders/independent actors, for instance to inform a theory of change review (all approaches).
- **Strengthened relationships** with those who matter most for achieving project objectives when you involve them in co-designing the project (OM) or collecting or making sense of data (all approaches).
- **Shifting power in project decision-making** to project participants and partners when they create a monitoring framework (OM) and make sense of the MEL data (all approaches).
- **Shifting an implementing team’s focus from what has been done to what has changed (all approaches).** The following observation in the MSC Guide could be said about each approach (Davies & Dart, 2005): *When the technique is implemented successfully, whole teams of people begin to focus their attention on program impact.*

- **Generating evidence about unexpected changes**, including negative changes (all approaches).
- **Understanding your contribution** to an outcome or change, identifying those strategies that are not leading to change, and assessing the implications for strategies going forwards (OM and OH; optional: MSC).
- **Providing insights into the potential sustainability of changes**, for instance, by documenting changes that occurred after an intervention activity such as a workshop, training, small grant, etc., or documenting changes that signify participants taking ownership of processes or products developed by the intervention (all approaches).
- **Energize and build the capacity of teams** to collect, analyze and use qualitative data that tells the story of how change is unfolding (all approaches).
- **Generating data to inform evaluations** and identifying where further inquiries are needed and where to focus verification efforts (all approaches).



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2. Choose or blend approaches

‘...the purpose of the study, the research questions, and factors such as time, resources, accessibility, and logistic constraints drive the selection of the most appropriate method(s) in any qualitative inquiry.’

– IDEAL Qualitative Monitoring Guideline (2023) (Fox, Cook & Peek, 2023)

This section aims to help readers build an understanding of the features of each approach and how the approaches can be blended.

Once you have decided that these approaches could be helpful for your monitoring objectives and are feasible, **the next important step is to choose the best approach or decide how to blend elements from more than one approach.** Using one approach is an option, but blending - as in mixing up ideas, tools, or processes from different participatory MEL approaches (Smith, 2022) - may better meet your needs, a topic recently explored in detail (Aston & Apgar, 2022). The users should decide on the choice or blend of approaches considering the information needed to answer their monitoring questions (Section 4). On the other hand, defining monitoring questions that these three approaches can be used to answer requires an understanding of what can be learned using each approach.

Three of the main reasons for choosing each approach are highlighted below. It is useful to consider whether one approach that stands out as being most beneficial or whether a blend of approaches is more attractive. If you are unclear or want to confirm your thinking with a more detailed comparison, use the comparison of approaches in Table 6 (below) to identify the features (purpose, data sources, data, analysis, and sensemaking) that are most important for monitoring your intervention. Finally, use your selection of features to inform/revise the monitoring questions you want to answer using MSC, OH, and OM.

Three reasons for choosing MSC, OH, and OM

Use MSC when you:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are mainly interested in exceptional or unexpected changes, not processes of change.• Value information on any change, not only in behavior changes.• Want to learn about and share multiple views on the significance of changes.
Use OH when you:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Want to monitor behavior changes alongside or instead of any results framework.• Want a concise and rigorous way of documenting outcomes, their significance, and the intervention’s contribution to the outcome.• Are interested in documenting and learning from processes of changes and unexpected changes.
Use OM when you:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Want to develop an actor and outcome-oriented monitoring framework/theory of change.• Want to monitor a limited number of actors you engage with directly, not indirectly.• Value an explicit focus on monitoring your strategies or your practices.

Options for blending approaches

Different approaches or combinations of approaches may be helpful at various points in an intervention’s cycle. Some options for blending approaches are listed below for inspiration.

OH and OM:

- Use learning about actors in the system from an OH evaluation to develop an OM monitoring framework or TOC.
- Use OM to create a monitoring framework, then monitor using OH to ensure data is credible.
- If a high number of actors to engage with directly makes monitoring with OM too complicated, then use light-touch OM/OH thinking to create an actor/behavior change TOC and OH to monitor.
- Use an OM design if there is a limited number of actors to monitor, then OH for monitoring to support learning and external uses such as reporting and communication.
- Use OM for a quick reflection on progress markers frequently, then formulate OH-type outcome statements periodically.

OM or OH with MSC:

- Monitor with OM/OH, then periodically use MSC to go more in-depth to understand a particular change or different perspectives on changes (e.g. beneficiaries vs. field staff)
- Monitor with OH, then use an MSC selection/feedback process on the outcome statements to surface and discuss different perspectives on significance of outcomes. Option: select more than one outcome.
- When using OM, add OH or MSC to help better understand 'unexpected' changes beyond the partners that you had hoped to see changes among.
- Document and select the most significant change stories as OH-style outcome statements to enhance rigor by ensuring changes are observable changes and contributions are plausible.
- Use the OH design process with MSC.

Selection of methods for the **SHOUHARDO III** and **Hamzari** pilots.

SHOUHARDO III pilot activity: A design blending OH and MSC was chosen. Those methods were chosen because the program staff wanted to assess changes among LSPs and in the community related to the service provisioning model, **how the program contributed** to those changes, and their **significance**. Additionally, program staff wanted to understand whether there were **unexpected** or **negative changes** that were happening either for LSPs, for service delivery, or in the communities where **SHOUHARDO III** had been implementing the service provisioning model. Both OH and MSC are right fit for these purposes, including to assess unanticipated changes, being focused on collecting outcomes and change stories from program participants and stakeholders that articulate the change that has been experienced, what has contributed to the change, and why the change is important to the person or group experiencing it. Finally, program staff wanted to understand the sustainability of changes and how the program could contribute to enhancing sustainability during **SHOUHARDO III** Plus. Both OH and MSC can be adapted to generate evidence on sustainability.

OM was not chosen because **SHOUHARDO III** was at the end of the program cycle. OM is a method designed to establish what changes a program would like to effect and for assessing the extent to which those changes are emerging. OM typically is used at program inception and then one or more times during the program cycle to monitor emergence of program outcomes.

Hamzari pilot activity: Among the three methods (OM, OH, and MSC), MSC was seen as right fit for the objectives, audience and uses. Since the final year²¹ of the **Hamzari** program was underway, the focus was primarily on documenting **whether and how change was happening**, both for accountability and for adaptive management as the program entered late implementation.

²¹ After the completion of this exercise the Hamzari program was granted a two-year extension and will close September 31, 2025.

TABLE 6: MONITORING FEATURES OF OM, OH, AND MSC COMPARED^{22, 23}

Monitoring features	OM	OH	MSC
USES			
Develop a framework for assessing progress	<p>Yes.</p> <p>OM has seven design steps through which to develop a framework to assess progress a) towards the anticipated changes in actors you influence, b) in the strategies you use to influence other actors, and c) in the practices of the implementing organization(s).</p> <p>OM's actor-focused thinking on how change happens can also be used in other results frameworks without the seven design steps.</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>OH does not provide a process or tools to develop a framework for assessing progress. However, using OH for monitoring or evaluation can produce an understanding of your relationships with, and influence on actors, that can be used to bring an actor-centered approach into the design of further work.</p> <p>Can use alongside any results framework.</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>MSC does not provide tools to develop a framework for assessing progress but understanding the changes valued by the different actors can inform the frameworks for assessing the progress of further work.</p> <p>Can use alongside any results framework.</p>
Monitor a process of change	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Maybe.</p> <p>If story collection is sufficiently frequent and the full set of change stories is used, not only the most significant stories.</p>
Scale of intervention	<p>Interventions of any scale but monitoring focused on about five or so of the actors you engage with directly.</p> <p>Use to monitor the parts of the system you most want to learn about.</p>	<p>Interventions of any scale but monitoring documents only the changes known to the sources or informants with whom you engage.</p>	<p>Interventions of any scale, including those with multiple organizational layers, but only the changes known to storytellers will emerge or be surfaced.</p>
DATA SOURCES			
Choice of informants and sources	<p>When possible, involve actors that an intervention engages with directly in defining and monitoring a change process.</p> <p>Where this isn't possible, engage at least an intervention's implementing team.</p>	<p>Sources are those who know the outcomes best and are motivated to share information. They must be seen as trustworthy by those who will use the findings of the outcome harvest. They may be internal to the intervention (often field staff) or actors influenced by the intervention.</p>	<p>Those whose perspective on change you want to understand. This is typically project staff, project participants, or those that you expect will otherwise benefit from a project.</p>
Authentic voice of informant	<p>Not systematically captured</p>	<p>Not captured as information 'formulated' as an outcome statement.</p>	<p>Captures the voice of storytellers in stories.</p>

²² OM-OH comparisons draw on: Outcome Harvesting Community Facilitators and Outcome Mapping Learning Community Stewards, 2021.

²³ See Appendix B (Good practices when using participatory outcome-focused monitoring approaches) for more on choosing sources, information required, supporting evidence needed for verification, and analysis and sensemaking.

Monitoring features	OM	OH	MSC
DATA			
Change / outcome	<p>Outcome defined as a behavior change of an actor an intervention has engaged with directly.</p> <p>Attitude, belief, and knowledge changes are not considered to be outcomes.</p>	<p>Outcome defined as an observable behavior change of an actor influenced directly or indirectly and intentionally or not by the intervention.</p> <p>Attitude, belief, and knowledge changes are not considered to be outcomes.</p>	<p>Stories of change may contain:</p> <p>Behavior changes of the informant or others</p> <p>Attitude / belief / knowledge changes</p> <p>Other types of change, such as improved health, income, or well-being</p> <p>Each story may contain more than one outcome as defined by OM and OH</p>
Requirements for documenting changes and outcomes	<p>OM is more flexible than OH. It requires a description of change. It can include a description of the contribution of the project (and other actors) but does not specify what specific information needs to be included.</p>	<p>There are specific requirements for how to write an 'outcome statement'—which includes the outcome description, a description of the significance of an outcome, and a description of the contribution of the intervention.</p> <p>This consistency arguably enhances rigor and can streamline analysis.</p>	<p>Changes experienced by or important to the storyteller at the level of individual, community, institutions, or policy.</p> <p>There is no requirement that the intervention being monitored should have helped bring about the change described by the storyteller but in practice this is what users of MSC usually seek (Davies & Dart, 2005, p.21).</p>
Unexpected changes or outcomes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Negative changes or outcomes	<p>Potentially yes.</p> <p>Requires adaptation of the original guidance and data collection tool (outcome journal).</p>	Yes	Yes
Direct and indirect changes or outcomes	No, only outcomes of those you influence directly are recorded.	Yes. As the definition of outcome includes is broader than in OM, OH can be used to capture outcomes more widely in the system an intervention seeks to change	Yes

Monitoring features	OM	OH	MSC
Significance of change	Not documented but discussed during sensemaking.	Described by whoever describes a change; can include views of stakeholders during sensemaking.	Essential that the storyteller explains why the change is important for them. Essential that others also discuss significance of change(s) and share their conclusions.
How an intervention contributed to the change	Yes	Essential information. Must demonstrate a plausible link to the change.	Not required
How other actors or factors contributed to the change	Yes	Optional	Not required
Supporting evidence and triangulation	Yes, good practice to include supporting evidence when recording progress in an outcome journal.	Optional, if useful. May include supporting documentation, engaging independent third parties (substantiation), direct observation.	Optional, if useful. When used, verification through field visit is suggested.
ANALYSIS AND SENSEMAKING			
<i>The process of organizing and using the data collected to inform learning and decision-making.</i>			
Lessons and implications for program	Yes. Part of outcome journal.	Optional. Depends on uses/questions you have.	Optional, depends on uses/questions you have. Could capture if using a negative change or “what could be improved” domain.
Who participates	Can involve one or more of implementing team, MEL team, partners, management and actors that an intervention engages with directly. Equity-focused applications need to involve collective sensemaking.	Can involve one or more of implementing team, MEL team, partners, management and outcome sources.	Essential: one or more ‘panels’ of stakeholders select their most significant story. Optional: MEL team / implementing team identify and reflect on the themes / patterns in a set of stories
Feedback on analysis and selection with informants or others who identified a significant change	Not explicitly part of the OM process but could be done	Not explicitly part of the OH process but could be done	Essential in the original description of the approach.

3. Suitability and readiness to use

This section provides guidance on:

- The suitability of MSC, OH and OM for monitoring your intervention or a part of your intervention, and if your intervention and organization are ready to use such participatory approaches.
- Relevant staff competencies and training requirements.
- When in an intervention’s implementation to use the monitoring approaches.

Step 1: Check the suitability of the approaches and readiness of a team for using MSC, OH, and OM

The presence or absence of enabling factors can help determine the suitability of the approaches for meeting your monitoring needs and the readiness of an intervention. The checklist of enabling factors below builds on an analysis of 128 case studies of OM applications but is equally relevant to MSC and OH. Four essential enabling factors must be present to successfully use the approaches and five optional enabling factors are relevant for optimizing and scaling up use.²⁴ These factors are detailed in the table below (Table 7).

TABLE 7: CHECKLIST TO ASSESS THE SUITABILITY OF MSC, OH, OR OM AND READINESS OF AN INTERVENTION TO USE THE APPROACHES.

Four ESSENTIAL enabling factors should be present if using MSC, OH, or OM.	
1. Existence of complexity in the intervention environment.	If complexity is not a factor in achieving any of the results of your intervention, then the time and effort needed to use these approaches is unlikely to be justified.
2. Recognition of, and willingness to act upon complexity.	Awareness of complexity is insufficient: intervention managers must be willing to move beyond the familiarity of linear cause-effect logic and understand the rationale for using approaches that are participatory, outcome-oriented, and sensitive to complexities, otherwise the use of MSC/OH/OM can be mechanistic and of limited value.
3. Champions and the availability of appropriate technical support.	Support for novel MEL approaches takes time to build and without champions either within or outside an organization it is unlikely to be sustained. When introducing a new MEL approach, it is invaluable to have at least one person that is committed to making it work and has the confidence and competence to adapt the chosen approach(es) as needed. This ‘champion’ will have relevant MEL knowledge and experience and will motivate others to use the approach(es). They, or others, will provide technical support to others through coaching and/or training.
4. Facilitation skills.	The ability to facilitate the monitoring process and activities in a productive, equitable way is an essential skill for each approach.

²⁴ Adapted from: Richard Smith, John Mauremootoo and Kornelia Rassmann, 2014. For an illustration of how the checklist can be used, see an example from CARE Canada. Kaia Ambrose, 2014.

The presence of one or more of the following OPTIONAL enabling factors is needed to optimize or scale up the use of MSC, OH, or OM.

<p>1. Funder support.</p>	<p>Having funder support for using a participatory MEL approach can streamline monitoring and allow resources to be made available for the participatory processes. Such support is optional, however, because it is possible to use the approaches in parallel to monitoring requirements dictated by funders, for example by applying an approach at the operational level but reporting using a Logical Framework Approach or using concepts – such as the OM/OH outcome definition – in a funder-mandated results framework without explicitly referring to the approaches or using their terminology. If present, funder support could range from encouraging intervention stakeholders to use the approaches to participating in using MEL activities and using the data from MSC/OH/OM to inform decision-making.</p>
<p>2. Support and understanding at the executive level.</p>	<p>High-level support for using the approaches can be very helpful, for example, in a) creating the spaces needed for learning and adaptive management, b) ensuring the use of MSC/OH/OM is adapted to fit with organizational practices, such as data collection tools, data management systems, and existing spaces where people use evidence to make or adapt plans.</p>
<p>3. The promotion of an organizational learning culture.</p>	<p>A strong learning culture will ensure the monitoring data is used not only for reporting but also for adaptive management. A relatively weak learning culture is likely to limit the use and effectiveness of the three approaches.</p>
<p>4. Appreciation of a learning oriented M&E system at multiple levels in the organization.</p>	<p>At one extreme, M&E can be seen as a compliance function that is done by one or more specialists. Where there is wider participation in M&E—Involving technical, management, communications, and knowledge management teams—MSC, OH, and OM can be used to help an organization manage for results (change) rather than for activities.</p>
<p>5. Sufficient resources.</p>	<p>In some contexts, no additional resources may be required, for example when staff have relevant competencies and experience or when decisions are taken on how to apply the approaches in a way that minimizes costs. In other contexts, the need for additional resources may be considerable and involve training and coaching for staff and partners, sensitization of management to the added value of participatory MEL approaches and staff time needed, facilitation of the participatory design of a monitoring framework, guidance on analysis, facilitation of participatory sensemaking, and development of data management tools and practices. See Section 1, Limitations and challenges of monitoring with MSC, OH, and OM, for more on resource requirements.</p>

Step 2: Consider competencies and training needs

When deciding roles, consider the core competencies needed for those leading any qualitative monitoring process: the ability to work with people, the ability to facilitate participatory processes, experience collecting and analyzing qualitative data, attention to detail, and excellent listening and writing skills.

Capturing high-quality qualitative data takes practice. Therefore, training should go beyond introducing ideas and include practice with expert feedback and expert coaching during field testing of data collection tools. The amount of training and practice needed will depend on prior experience and a person's aptitude for data collection and writing concisely, clearly, and accurately. Data collection skills can and should be continuously developed with feedback from one or more people with more or at least the same level of experience as you.

TIP

Nurture data collection skills through practice and peer discussion.

Step 3: Decide when and how often to use MSC, OH, and OM

All three approaches are well suited to monitoring throughout implementation. However, to support adaptive management, the use of the approaches needs to start early enough in the project cycle to inform evidence-based changes to interventions. When deciding when to start monitoring, remember that outcomes and other changes take time to materialize. Hence there may be few outcomes to observe in the early months of implementation. But, on the other hand, starting monitoring for outcomes or changes early in the implementation cycle helps build an understanding of what changes to work towards and be observant of.

Earlier and more frequent data collection cycles – every one to six months – are useful to document change processes and adapt implementation in an ongoing way. Less frequent data collection – every year or more – may be sufficient to document and inform large-scale decisions on how to support some change processes. However, there is a risk that minor, but still significant, changes or outcomes will be missed and opportunities to improve implementation lost.

Uniquely among the three approaches, OM starts with the design of a monitoring framework. Ideally, the approach should be used before implementation begins or in the early stages of an intervention to benefit from the OM monitoring framework.

TIP

Regardless of when you start monitoring, planning how and when data will be used should take place at the earliest stages to ensure data supports learning.²⁵

²⁵ See Good Practice X, Appendix B.

4. Limitations and challenges of monitoring with MSC, OH, and OM

- **Participatory outcome-focused approaches need to be complemented with other tools and approaches.** MSC, OH, and OM can be an important and even central part of an M&E system but are unlikely to meet all your needs for monitoring. Other approaches will be needed to monitor, for example, context, activities, cost-effectiveness, media influence, and large-scale changes in economic/environmental/social well-being. Periodic evaluations should be considered, for example, to examine in detail the importance of an intervention's contribution to changes, its relevance, or assumptions or pathways in its theory of change.
- **The number of participants in a monitoring activity will be limited by time, logistical constraints and resource constraints.** Only the changes that informants are aware of are captured when using these methods. Yet, the number of informants (participants in your exercise) whom can be realistically engaged will be limited. Therefore, it is likely some changes will not be assessed or captured.

TIP | Selecting Key Actors

- **Focus monitoring on key actors in the system you are seeking to support and that you want to learn about and from.**
 - **If the number of key actors is so large that you can only engage or learn about a fraction of them, then use the approaches to exemplify what works and why.**
-
- **Monitoring needs to be timely if it is to be useful.** Yet, the full use of all aspects of any of these approaches takes days or weeks, not hours, of calendar time and the participation of staff beyond the M&E team and stakeholders. The time needed by any one person involved in monitoring is not continuous; instead, the important consideration is that the involvement of various people in the participatory process inevitably requires planning and coordination. The users of the monitoring data, as well as the informants, need to be engaged. Keep enough time to analyze and draw conclusions from the data once collected.
 - **As with introducing any new process, additional resources – funds and staff time - may be required.** As they are participatory approaches, each will require time from the people involved within and beyond the MEL team. Those leading the process should sensitize those involved that hours to days of their time will be needed, depending on their role. To understand how far the securing of required resources will be a challenge, consider the main factors that determine if additional resources will be needed to introduce and use one or more of the three approaches:
 1. The extent to which the approaches will replace, or be additional to, other monitoring activities.
 2. Whether those who will lead and participate in the use of MSC, OH, and OM need training or support.
 3. How the approaches will be used. For example, lower-cost use could be achieved by using some, not all, of the OM planning steps; the collection of data in OH from staff and partners without the need for fieldwork; or verifying significant change stories during the same field visit that they are collected in (MSC). Other options for reducing costs include training and mentoring field-based partners or staff to monitor, thereby reducing the need for field visits, using existing stakeholder engagement or decision-making processes in your organization to collect, analyze or make sense of the data, virtual rather than face-face data collection and sensemaking, reducing or eliminating the need for data to be triangulated by independent third parties or observation.
 4. The scale at which the approaches are used, specifically the number of users designing the monitoring process²⁶, the number of data collectors or facilitators needed, and the number of sources/storytellers/partners you engage.
 5. If external support is needed for one or more of design, data collection, analysis, sensemaking quality control, or verification.

²⁶ See Good Practice 1, Appendix B.

TIP | Motivating participation

- Start small and test a new monitoring approach with those who are most motivated.
- If using an approach in full seems unrealistic, consider using ideas or tools from multiple approaches. For example, the concept of an outcome as a behavior change you have influenced can be integrated into an existing monitoring framework, such as a theory of change or log-frame.
- Consider motivating teams to log changes they observe frequently but in note form using an app or journal, then periodically bring teams together to elaborate on the changes/outcomes and reflect on what they mean.
- Maximize participation by using existing spaces and processes for collecting and reflecting on data.
- Start small and do a pilot test to determine which options work best and use this knowledge to determine what is needed and feasible regarding time commitments and costs.
- Identify existing events and opportunities for engagement that can be used to collect and make sense of data, thereby minimizing additional costs and embedding the monitoring in organizational practices.



Appendixes

Appendix A: Key resources

Online communities and resource libraries

- Outcome Mapping Learning Community: <https://www.outcomemapping.ca>.
- Outcome Harvesting Community: <https://outcomeharvesting.net>.
- Most Significant Change page on M&E News: <https://mande.co.uk/special-issues/most-significant-change-msc/>.

Key resources on each approach

- The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique. A Guide to its Use by Rick Davies and Jess Dart (2005).
- The Most Significant Change technique. A manual for M&E staff and others at Equal Access by June Lennie (2011).
- Outcome Harvesting: Principles, Steps and Evaluation Applications by Ricardo Wilson-Grau (2019).
- Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs, IDRC, by Sarah Earl, Fred Carden, and Terry Smutylo (2001).
- Outcome Mapping practitioners' guide: <https://www.outcomemapping.ca/outcome-mapping-practitioner-guide>.

Using, adapting, and blending

- Eight enabling factors that can be used to determine if OM is appropriate: <https://www.outcomemapping.ca/nuggets/eight-enabling-factors-for-om>. Accessed 29 December 2022.
- The Outcome Mapping Usefulness Barometer | Jan Van Ongevalle & Rafael Peels | January 2014: <https://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/the-outcome-mapping-usefulness-barometer>. Accessed 25 January 2023.
- OM and OH: common concepts, differences, and uses: <https://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/outcome-mapping-and-outcome-harvesting-common-concepts-differences-and-uses>. Accessed 25 January 2023
- 20 years of Outcome Mapping: Evolving practices for transformative change: <https://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/20-years-of-outcome-mapping-evolving-practices-for-transformative-change>. Accessed 25 January 2023.
- A practical guide for actor focused planning, monitoring and evaluation, Jan Van Ongevalle, Huib Huyse, Eugenia Boutylkova, Anneke Maarse & Cristien Temmink: <https://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/a-practical-guide-for-actor-focused-planning-monitoring-and-evaluation>. Accessed 25 January 2023
- Aston, T. and Apgar, M. (2022) The Art and Craft of Bricolage in Evaluation, CDI Practice Paper 24, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, DOI: 10.19088/IDS.2022.068. Accessed 30 December 2022.

Appendix B: Good practices for participatory outcome-focused monitoring with MSC, OH, and OM

Good practice 1: Identify users.

Identify monitoring system users who will make decisions based on the data or findings.²⁷ These users must be involved in designing how the monitoring approach or combination of approaches will be used. This involvement needs to continue throughout the monitoring process as decisions will be needed as the process unfolds. In addition to staff, implementing partners, and potentially funders, consider involving the users you want to develop relations with through the intervention.

TIP | Creating a User Committee

Consider creating a user committee to keep users engaged during the initial design process and revisions to the design during the MEL process.

Good practice 2: Define the uses.

Clarity about the various uses and knowing when data will be needed and for what it will be used should guide your planning and decisions on using the approaches. Therefore, it is important to engage the users to clarify how and when they will use the monitoring data and findings. Different users (e.g., project leads or project managers) may have different uses. For some users, monitoring may be for program learning only; while for others, it may be needed for reporting or accountability. In addition to uses of the data, there may be process uses such as building capacity to work with qualitative data (as in the two pilots) or supporting adaptive management through participatory sensemaking.

Each of the three approaches can be used to capture evidence from different perspectives about changes or outcomes that have been observed and the role of interventions in bringing them about. This evidence can be used to validate theories of change and inform decisions on how to adapt interventions. However, using these approaches does not automatically support adaptive management. Learning that informs practice requires conscious choices to be made.²⁸

Some potential programmatic uses of outcome-focused monitoring data are²⁹:

- Improving performance (by feeding learning into the adaptive management cycle).
- Helping the program meet reporting requirements.
- Supplying information for planned evaluations (external or internal).
- Informing development of knowledge products and supporting communication activities.
- Developing case-study materials.
- Learning about a specific strategy or practice over time.

When considering when users will need data and reflection, keep in mind the time required for the main stages of a participatory monitoring cycle:

²⁷. 'Primary users' in OH and other Utilization Focused Evaluation approaches.

²⁸. See Good Practice 9, Appendix B. For examples of how 'complexity-sensitive' MEL approaches can be used to support adaptive management, see also Tiina Pasanen and Inka Barnett, 2019.

²⁹. Adapted from: Sarah Earl, Fred Carden and Terry Smutylo, 2001, p.84

- **Involving users in decisions:** the major investment of time from users is the first time the monitoring process is designed and used.
- **Collecting data:** allow sufficient time to confirm that you have accurately recorded the information provided by sources. The OH process requires going to and from with each source. With MSC and OM, try to check that each source agrees with how the story or outcome has been written.
- **Validating data:** when needing real-time information, verification may not be possible. One strategy is to verify data periodically as a quality check on the monitoring process, or before data is used externally.
- **Analysis and sensemaking:** Allow sufficient time to prepare, work with and draw conclusions from the data with others.

Good practice 3: Define monitoring questions.

To ensure that monitoring is focused on user interests, it is important to work with users to define monitoring questions. Once collected and analyzed, monitoring data is used to answer the monitoring questions. Users may decide to use or elaborate some or all these typical monitoring questions or to develop others³⁰:

- *What activities/interventions should we keep doing?*
- *What do we need to change to see the results that we want to see?*
- *Are we still working with the right actors / partners?*
- *What strategies or practices do we need to add?*
- *What strategies do we need to end?*
- *What changes/outcomes should be evaluated in more depth?*

Refinements or additional questions that the three approaches might respond to include:

- *How have we contributed to changes / outcomes?*
- *Which types of changes / outcomes were most significant and for whom?*
- *Which types of actors have changed because of the project?*

TIP | Minimizing the Number of Monitoring Questions

Consider the following when defining or refining monitoring questions:

1. *What do you want to know and don't already know from other monitoring?*
2. *Will one or more of these three approaches tell you what you want to know? Or do you need to consider other approaches?*
3. *Is there sufficient capacity to use these participatory approaches, including previous experience and availability of support?*

Appendix C provides an example of a mapping of the users and uses for the results of the monitoring activity as well as the monitoring questions from the **Hamzari** pilot.

³⁰. Adapted from Steff Deprez, 2021.

Good practice 4: Agree on the information required.

Engage users to agree the information needed to answer the monitoring questions. Clearly defined questions will allow you to make effective decisions about which approaches to use, especially since each produces different kinds of data. These differences are highlighted below.³¹

Kind of change monitored

Both **OM** and **OH** understand outcomes to be changes in behavior influenced by an intervention. When not using OM or OH, such outcomes may often be missed as they are generally considered intangible and too difficult to monitor (Van Ongevalle & Peels, 2014). With **MSC**, changes may include behavior changes of the storyteller or others they have observed, but they **may additionally or alternatively include other types of change** such as feelings, emotions, or attitudes, as well changes in well-being related to health, income or the environment.

Each approach is well suited for monitoring **unexpected changes**³², both positive and negative.

TIP

- Use OM or OH where you want or need to be sure you will monitor behavior changes of informants and sources or those they know about.
- Observable behavior changes are more credible than changes that are not visible, like emotions or attitudes, because observable behavior changes are verifiable. For this reason, outcomes described using OH must be observable changes.
- Use MSC if you want to capture changes important to a storyteller that may include behavior and other types of changes
- Use OM to prioritize your monitoring on those you most want to see a change in but are uncertain of. Blend with OH or MSC to monitor changes more widely in the system you are seeking to change

Indirect outcomes or changes:

Both OH and MSC can capture both **direct and indirect outcomes** of an intervention. An indirect outcome emerges when an actor you engaged with influences a change in another actor you didn't engage with. On the other hand, OM is designed to monitor changes achieved by actors that the intervention engages with directly.

Outcome or change descriptions:

- **MSC:** Stories collected are about significant changes experienced by, or important to, the storyteller at the level of the individual, community, institutions, or policy. They may contain:
 - Behavior changes of the informant or others
 - Attitude/belief/knowledge changes
 - Other types of changes, such as improved health, income, or well-being
 - Each story may contain more than one outcome as defined by OM and OH
- **OH:** Outcome descriptions are a concise description of when the change occurred, who changed, what was the behavior change and where it occurred. The project must have influenced the change directly or indirectly, intentionally or not. In OH, changes in attitudes, beliefs or knowledge are not considered outcomes as they are not observable as behavior

³¹ The information collected using each approach is discussed in Part I, Sections 3 to 5 (Using MSC, Using OH and Using OM). The main features are explored to guide decision-making on how to use each method. Guidance on what method to choose or whether and how to blend approaches is discussed in Part II, Section 3.

³² Unexpected positive changes are results that you did not anticipate in your results framework or theory of change but are, none-the-less, in line with the goal or purpose of the intervention. Unexpected negative changes are results that have been influenced by the intervention that go against the goal or purpose of the intervention.

changes. If an attitude, belief, or knowledge change is demonstrated by a behavior change then the behavior change is the outcome.

- **OM:** a description of a behavior change is required but the information required is not specified. The behavior change is of an actor the intervention has engaged with directly. Like with OH, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge changes are not considered outcomes; only behavior changes are considered outcomes.

Significance descriptions:

- **MSC:** One or more groups of people are asked: Considering a set of changes, which for you is the most significant change and why?
- **OH:** Those describing outcomes are asked: *Why, for you, is the change you described significant?* Other actors can also be engaged during sensemaking to ask their views, but unlike for MSC, no systematic process is defined. Where relevant, the significance description is written to explain clearly how the outcome demonstrates an attitude, belief, or knowledge change.
- **OM:** Significance is not recorded during data collection but views on the significance of outcomes are typically explored during reflection or sensemaking on a set of outcomes mapped.

Contribution descriptions:

- **MSC:** A description of the project's role in the changes is not collected. The process of collecting significant change stories is open-ended, and both changes that have been influenced and those that your intervention has not influenced are collected. However, MSC users are usually interested only in changes in which they have had a role in supporting or facilitating.
- **OH:** The process is not designed to confirm a causal link between the outcome and a project activity; therefore, contribution not attribution is assumed. Through the process the project contribution is identified and described with sufficient detail to allow it to be judged to be plausible. In practice, the contribution of others may be documented, and the importance of a project's contribution may be rated. Outcome statements may also be used in other contribution tests such as process tracing and contribution analysis.
- **OM:** The process is similarly not designed to confirm a causal link; therefore, contribution not attribution is assumed. Unlike with OH, the plausibility of the contribution is not confirmed. Contribution is collected in a more open-ended approach, by asking participants for a description of the role of the project and others in supporting or facilitating the change.

Other information needed:

- In addition to the requirements for describing outcomes or changes, each approach is flexible in allowing other information to be collected. For example, depending on your monitoring questions, you may decide to collect information on the likelihood of changes or outcomes being sustained, the importance of the contribution of other actors, or context changes not influenced by the intervention.

Good practice 5: Choose sources (informants).

Decide who will be the informants or sources that you engage with during monitoring, as well as how you engage with them. Sources may be internal (e.g., staff) and external to the project, and both have important perspectives and experiences related to monitoring change. For example, internal sources can think critically about achievements, because they know the project well. Working with external sources can help you develop relationships and provide different, at times less biased, perspectives, including those of people with less power in the system you are working in, such as women and vulnerable populations.

With MSC, engaging with actors you or others have influenced is one option. Equally, stories may be collected from staff who are knowledgeable about changes. Of the three approaches, only MSC emphasizes the importance of capturing the storyteller's voice in data collection. MSC's use of a storyteller's voice combined with the selection of stories can bring grassroots and field-level perspectives on changes to otherwise distant and more powerful actors, building a wider understanding of real change in context as experienced by storytellers.

With OM, where possible, the data sources for defining the monitoring framework and collecting monitoring data are actors you engage with to support change³³. But in practice, this may not always be the case and you can use other sources to monitor, so long as they know about changes in those actors you seek to influence and are seen as trustworthy sources by the users of the monitoring data.

With OH, you may engage those whose changes you have influenced in data collection, but this is not a requirement. Equally valid is to engage staff to document the outcomes they know of.

Regardless of the sources chosen, it is important to keep in mind that what people tell you will be affected by power dynamics and how you manage them. For example, consider separating genders when harvesting when combining them may limit the expression of some participants. Within an organization, creating a safe learning environment where accurate information is shared may be helped by separating data collection processes for junior and senior staff.

TIP | Choosing Sources

- Choosing sources is, in part, a pragmatic decision that depends on their motivation to participate and the data collection method you use. Partners, grantees, or participants may be motivated to join a workshop. In contrast, government officials or other duty bearers may grant you an interview but not wish to participate in a workshop.
- The choice of sources could affect the change stories/outcomes collected because intervention staff and external sources may know more about some change stories/outcomes than others. For example, a staff member may know something about several outcomes, whereas an external source may know everything about only a few outcomes. Internal and external sources may also understand the significance of stories / outcomes differently.
- To counter potential bias, engage with a diversity of actors as sources or for verification and be transparent about limitations of perspectives and potential bias.

Good practice 6: Ethical considerations (USAID, 2022).

There are several key ethical considerations that should be addressed in the context of monitoring with a focus on ensure you 'do no harm' through data collection, validation, and use. First, when selecting and inviting people to share information on outcomes / changes, it is essential to inform them about the process of data collection and usage, including whether the data will be attributed to them or anonymized. Before conducting any data collection, data collectors should obtain their voluntary and informed consent for how the information they provide, and any photos taken, will be used. Second, only use the information provided in the way(s) you agreed. Finally, it is important to ensure that data are kept secure and confidential, including through anonymization when and if relevant.

³³ The centrality of actor-focus in OM practice is evident in the three OM principles: 1. *Social, policy & systems changes depend on changes in human behavior*, 2. *People contribute to their own wellbeing*, and 3. *Sustained improvements in people's lives or environments depend on relationships*. See: Outcome Mapping Learning Community Stewards, 2021.

Good practice 7: Choose data collection method(s).³⁴

Data collection in both OH and MSC is an open process in which the results framework is ignored, making these approaches particularly well suited to learning about unexpected results. In contrast, with OM the results framework is used when monitoring outcomes. Whichever approach is used, there is a risk of monitoring being used to compare progress against anticipated results. Good facilitation of the monitoring process is needed to address the risk of monitoring becoming such a 'check box' exercise that limits any insights into unintended changes (positive or negative). Facilitators need to encourage and make space and time for sources to consider if there have been other changes that were not anticipated. With each approach, identifying negative changes or outcomes needs a deliberate process, otherwise there is a tendency for them to go unreported.

TIP | Collecting High Quality Data

- If using a workshop format to collect data, be sure to have enough facilitators who can guide data collection.
- If using interviews and capturing responses in real-time is challenging or distracting, record interviews or discussions and use the recordings to write up the data later. When recording isn't possible, one person should ask questions while another takes notes.
- Keep recordings or transcripts to refer to while processing the data.
- Have a supervisor experienced with qualitative data, and ideally these approaches provide guidance in the field. Meet with this supervisor every evening to review data, discuss challenges and consider adjustments to tools for subsequent data collection. Such supervisor support can be provided remotely if necessary.
- Structure data collection activities or templates to include unexpected changes, not only those that were planned. Failure to do this may result in one of the key benefits of the approaches – identifying unexpected results – being missed.
- When using OM, consider blending it with OH or MSC so you are open to results not anticipated in the OM framework.
- To capture unexpected negative results, facilitate a process that makes those participating feel they are safe to share even if things didn't turn out well, and make a specific space in the workshop program or data collection tool where you ask about unexpected negative results.
- Be positive when asking about negative changes, as in 'changes that reflect an area to improve (negative)' (Davies & Dart, 2005, p.19).

Good practice 8: Ensure data is credible and reliable.

MSC stories and outcomes assessed using OM or OH may contain inaccuracies. Arguably, some imprecision is typical in any qualitative or quantitative data collection. The question is: will the data be credible and reliable for your intended uses and if not, what will make it credible and reliable? Your answer to this question may vary depending on how monitoring will be used. Some monitoring uses (e.g., accountability to funders or boards, or to inform program decision-making) may require higher credibility than other uses (e.g., teams wanting real-time information to inform strategy or for training purposes).

Triangulation is the most common way of enhancing data credibility and reliability. In the context of OH, OM, and MSC, triangulation involves confirming facts of a story or outcome by using two or more sources of information, such as documentary evidence, asking others about the change story or outcome, or direct observation of the change. For example, in OM, the original Outcome Journal required each outcome to be supported by documented evidence (Earl, Carden & Smutylo, 2001). This is also possible in both MSC and OH, both of which also identify other options for enhancing the credibility of the data and monitoring process.³⁵

³⁴. Part I Sections 3 to 5 provide guidance and references for approach-specific tools, templates, and options for engaging with sources.

³⁵. For additional guidance on substantiation when using MSC and OH see Part 1, Section 3, Step 4 (MSC) and Part 1, Section 4, Step 3 (OH).

TIP | Improving Data Credibility and Reliability

- Ensure the users of your monitoring system agree that the primary data sources are trustworthy.
- Decisions on triangulation need to balance feasibility in terms of cost and the consequences for the timely availability of data. When using monitoring to support real-time decision-making, a practical approach is to periodically check the accuracy of data more thoroughly rather than require all data to be confirmed to the same high standard.

Good practice 9: Plan how you will turn data into learning.

After collecting and validating data, it is important to have a plan for how you will use the data to answer your monitoring questions. The answers to your monitoring questions will inform learning and decisions on if and how to adapt your strategies.

OM offers no guarantee that learning will take place. There is a risk that the initial excitement about the OM framework during the planning stage fizzles out over time and more so if the OM framework is experienced as yet another imposed P,M&E approach, or if it is not in tune with donor requirements or if organizational capacity to support implementation is limited. (Jan Van Ongevalle & Rafael Peels, January 2014)

Participatory outcome-focused approaches are designed to foster learning among implementers, program participants and other actors. Therefore, bringing together a range of stakeholders to reflect on data and insights developed through these methods is a good practice and has been integrated into the process in some way for each of the methods. For instance, the objective of promoting a common understanding about the changes various stakeholders want to see from an intervention is baked into MSC through the feedback process (see MSC, Step 5). In OM, defining the changes you want to see, and monitoring with those you support or influence, serves a similar learning purpose.

However, for learning to happen, it is important to create **participatory spaces** where monitoring data will be analyzed and where results of analysis will be shared and reflected on. To help ensure this is the case, use your monitoring plan to specify who will use which monitoring information at which event (meeting, workshop).

A key consideration is **who** should be involved in analysis and sensemaking. Who needs to be ‘in the room’ depends on how you envisage **using the monitoring data**. Stakeholders will have differing perspectives and you need to decide which are essential for the sensemaking process. For example, participants could include one or more of the implementing team only, actors you engage with and seek to influence, partners, managers, and/or beneficiaries.

TIP | Using Data for Learning

- Plan for analysis and sensemaking by considering when your project comes together to consider achievements and make plans. Use this space to engage others in reflecting on the significance of monitoring data.
- Allow enough time for participatory analysis and sensemaking, as this is where you get the learning benefit from monitoring.
- Analysis may be done by one or more of the following: informants or sources when collecting data, the MEL team, partners, or other technical or management staff. Who you involve depends on whose perspective you want, who is best informed and who is motivated to participate.
- Plan to enhance the credibility of your answers to the monitoring questions by involving others in the analysis and sensemaking and being transparent about the data underpinning your conclusions.
- Strive to avoid ‘extractive’ use of data by providing feedback to sources on your interpretation of the data or involve them in interpreting data.

Good practice 10: Organize and use data to answer monitoring questions.

Agree with the users on categories that will be useful for organizing the data to answer the monitoring questions. You can choose a mix of pre-defined categories; for example, categories that are aligned with the project’s results framework, theory of change, or sustainability framework. You can also choose ‘emergent’ categories, defined during a preliminary review of the data and which are new and not part of the project’s frameworks.

TIP

SELECTING ANALYSIS CATEGORIES.

Agreeing on categories with users before data collection begins helps to ensure a common understanding of the monitoring questions, allows for more focused data collection tools, and may identify data that is best categorized by sources, such as rating the importance of the intervention’s contribution to an outcome.

Once you have determined the domains for organizing the data, collate the data into a database or spreadsheet. As an example, Table 8 details fields you might use with OH. The actual fields may vary depending on the monitoring questions, the data collected, and the context.

TABLE 8: EXAMPLE OF DATABASE FIELDS FOR ORGANIZING OUTCOME HARVESTING DATA

Data field	Explanation
Number	A unique number for each outcome statement
Source(s)	Names and affiliation of the person describing an outcome
Short title	A ‘headline’ to summarize the outcome and make it easy to communicate / use in the report.
Direct / indirect contribution	A change in a social actor the project engaged with directly, or one it influenced through others (indirectly).
Type of social actor	Agree with users. May be pre-defined from an intervention plan / ToC, or derived from the data.
Domain of change	Agree with users. May be pre-defined from an intervention plan / ToC, or derived from the data.
Outcome description	From outcome statement
Year outcome materialized	From outcome statement
Significance description	from outcome statement
Contribution description	from outcome statement
Type of contribution	Agree with users. May be pre-defined from an intervention plan / ToC, or derived from the data.

When working with qualitative data, **one person may understand a piece of data differently from someone else**. It is essential, therefore, to define categories, agree on the definitions of those categories with users, and allow time for those involved in analysis to practice applying the categories. Following these steps will increase consistency between analysts.

TIP

Run a standardization exercise by having all analysts test-code a sample of data, then compare results and harmonize understanding and application of categories.

Answers to monitoring questions will be based on patterns and trends in the data. Numerical summaries of categories help identify patterns and trends but **plan to draw on the richness of the qualitative data when sensemaking and reporting**.

TIP

Use examples of outcomes or changes or excerpts in any report. Make the data available for those who are curious.

When using patterns and trends in the data to answer your monitoring questions, observing **the absence of change is useful for learning and adapting**. The lack of an anticipated result or change can be as informative as its presence. It is a sign that one or more of your strategies is not having the intended effect. There are many reasons why this may be the case, and these should be considered when making adaptive management decisions or making recommendations to future programmers, policy makers, etc.



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Appendix C: Users and Uses and Monitoring Questions for the Hamzari pilot

TABLE: USE AND USERS FOR THE HAMZARI PILOT.

Uses of results	When should the results be available?	USERS				
		Hamzari	CARE Niger	International NGOs in Niger	Technical Services (State)	USAID
Development of strategies and work plans	Annual (April / May) for elaboration of the PREP	X				
Preparation of annual and quarterly reports	Annual (September / October) and Quarterly	X				
Resource mobilization (project design)	Annual (August / September) for the periodic meeting CARE programs	X	X			
Improving interventions and practices of the humanitarian and development community	Annual for the periodic meeting of INGOs in Niger	X	X	X	X	X
Learning/visibility of U.S. Funding in Niger	Annual (October) for Annual periodic meeting					X
Annual reporting (annual)	Annual (December / January)				X	

Monitoring questions

1. What are the most significant changes identified following Hamzari's intervention in MCHN?
2. What is the significance (importance, sustainability, and relevance) of these changes in the lives of participants, including the wider community?
3. What are the mechanisms by which these changes have been possible or not?
4. What is the contribution of the program and other stakeholders / partners (community, other initiatives) to the changes?
5. What unforeseen changes has Hamzari contributed to?
6. To what extent has Hamzari lived up to the community's expectations and have communities fulfilled their commitments, including participation in planning, monitoring and learning?
7. What do the stories imply for the priorities and strategies of the next phase of Hamzari?

Appendix D: Example interview guide for collecting stories about significant changes (Lennie, 2011)

Information about MSC for participants

We hope to capture a story about personal or social changes connected to your participation in *[name of program]*, or from your current or previous involvement in program activities. If you are happy with this, I'll write down your story in my notebook, and then after our discussion I'll check that I've got all the details of your story right. This session should take about one-two hours.

[Project / organization name] may want to use your story and other information collected during our meeting for several purposes including:

- to tell our donors and stakeholders about the significant changes that have happened to community members as a result of our programs.
- to help us understand what others think is good and not so good about our programs.
- to make improvements to our programs.

If you provide a story, I will ask you to fill in a consent form about the use of your story. If the storyteller does not want their name written down, describe their role in the project/community.

Guiding questions

1. *From your point of view, describe the most significant change you have experienced / know about in others in [domain 1] that has resulted from participating in [add the name of program]. Please be as specific as possible and give examples.*
2. *Repeat the above for other domains of change, as necessary.*
3. *Why are these changes significant for you?*
4. *How has [name of program] contributed to these changes?*
5. *From your point of view, describe the most important negative impact of [add the name of program], if any, that you have experienced or observed.*
6. *How could the [add name of program] program be improved to meet community needs better?*

Note

- If the interviewee is unsure what the domain of change in the question means, then you can provide some further explanation by referring examples.

Appendix E: Example guide for collecting stories about significant changes by group discussion (Lennie, 2011)

You should aim to have up to ten people in the group. Consider separate groups where power dynamics or social norms may constrain what one or more participants say.

Information about MSC for participants

We hope to capture some stories about personal or social changes connected to your participation in [name of program] or from your current or previous involvement in program activities. If you are happy with this, I'll write down your stories in my notebook and then after our discussion, I'll check that I've got all the details of your stories right.

This session should take about one to two hours.

[Project / organization name] may want to use your story and other information collected during our meeting for several purposes including:

- to tell our donors and stakeholders about the significant changes that have happened to community members because of our programs.
- to help us understand what others think is good and not so good about our programs.
- to make improvements to our programs.

I will ask everyone who provides a story to fill in a consent form about the use of your story.

Questions for participants

Take a few minutes to think about any impacts that participating in [add the name of program] has had on your life or on the lives of others in your community. They could be positive or negative impacts.

Would one of you be willing to share a story about the most significant change in your life or in the lives of others that you know has happened due to your participation?

(Note: if the group has plenty of time available, you could ask a series of questions based on the domains of change, rather than this general question.)

If they have not provided this information when they tell their stories, before the following story is told, ask each storyteller:

- *Why are these changes significant to you?*
- *How has the program contributed to these changes?*

Encourage other participants to share their stories with the group.

After the session, please do the following:

- Check with each storyteller that you accurately captured their story in your notes.
- Provide each person with a copy of their completed consent form.

Appendix F: Sample facilitation guide for story selection (Davies & Dart, 2005)

The facilitator writes all the titles of the stories on the whiteboard, grouped by domain. They leave a space next to each story for comments.

TABLE 9: EXAMPLE OF A TABLE USED DURING STORY SELECTION

Domain	Story title	Comments
4	My life is getting better	Strong, written by a beneficiary, but incomplete, story not finished.
4	Feeling empowered	Moving story, beginning middle and end. Attribution to project is questionable. Great story, not sure if it is about the project.
4	Better decisions for the family	Good solid story. Heard many times before. Small change yet crucial. Not sure about the dates mentioned.
4	Now I understand	OK, not enough information to really understand what is going on.

- The facilitator invites volunteers to read out all the stories belonging to the first domain of change. After each story ask:
 - *What is this story really about?*
 - *What is your opinion of the story?*
- The facilitator writes any comments next to the title on the white board as above.
- When all the stories have been read out for the first domain, ask people to vote for the story that they find most significant. Voting can be done by a show of hands.
- When the votes have been cast, if there is a range of scores, encourage participants to discuss why they chose the story they chose. For example:
 - *Why did you choose this story above all other stories?*
 - *But some of you chose a different story – can you explain why you didn't choose this story?*
 - *What do you think of the stories in general?*
- Next to each story make notes of the reasons why they were and were not selected.
- Once everyone has heard why certain stories were voted for above others, the facilitator may call a second vote, this time there may be more consensus.
- If there is still no consensus about which story to choose, facilitate a discussion on the options with the group and come to an agreement, for example:
 - Choose two stories to reflect the range of views
 - Decide that none of the stories adequately represents what is valued
 - Choose one story but add a caveat explaining that not all people voted for this story because...
- Move onto the next domain.

Appendix G: SHOUHARDO III OH interview guide

Outcome Harvesting (OH) / In-Depth Interview (IDI) checklist for LSPs

Date of data collection:

Introduction and Consent:

My name is _____ and I am currently working for/with CARE Bangladesh SHOUHARDO III program.

We are going to conduct a survey with you to know your improvements/ success in your life as a LSP. The survey is voluntary and confidential. We will not disclose your information to any other entity not directly related to this program. Participation in this survey is voluntary. No compensation, monetary or otherwise, can be offered for your participation as this may be seen as coercing your participation.

If you decide not to participate in this survey, your decision will not affect future relations with the SHOUHARDO III program or its personnel. If you decide not to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time.

These questions in total will take approximately one and half hour to complete. Could you please spare the time for the interview? Yes No

TABLE: DATA COLLECTION FORM

SL	Questions	Response	Instruction
A	Demographic Information		
	District	[List of district]	
	Upazila	[List of upazila]	
	Union	[List of union]	
	Village	[List of village]	
	Name of the LSP		
	Gender	Male Female Transgender	
	Age (in year)		
	Type of LSP	On-farm LSP- Vaccinator Off-farm LSP- Sanchay Sathi LSP WASH LSP H&N- PCSBA	

SL	Questions	Response	Instruction
	Service coverage areas <i>[Identify the SHOUHARDO and Non-SHOUHARDO areas]</i>	[union(s), village(s)]	
	Contact number		
B	A Basic Research on Respondent		
	What activities SHOUHARDO III program do in your community?		
	How have you been involved with or in contact with the program?		
	How long are you involved with this program as a LSP? (in year)		
	Do you know any other LSP (same type) works in your community?	Yes No	
	What services are they providing in your community, according to your knowledge?		Ask for each type of LSP that s/ he mentioned in B8
C	Harvesting Outcomes <i>[for the period of October 2021 – September 2022]</i>		
	In the last one year, what changes do you observe in your life after getting involved with LSP (behavior, relationships, actions, policies, or practices)? <i>[Note: The harvesters will identify the outcomes, not outputs over the discussion period. An output is under the control of the project, but the project influences an outcome. After the first question, you may find that the interviewee shares information or talks about multiple possible outcomes. As you listen, you need to determine which results are clear and which need to be investigated further to see if there are any outcomes. To qualify as outcomes, attitudinal changes such as increases in awareness, knowledge, and commitment or dedication require evidence of associated changes in behavior, relationships, actions, policies, or practices.]</i>		Ask the following questions for each outcome you identified

SL	Questions	Response	Instruction	
<p><i>[Circle these questions from C2 to C9 for each outcome identified in the above discussion]</i></p> <p>Please use additional sheets if required (there might have more than three outcomes, please record)</p>				
SL	Questions	Outcome-1	Outcome-2	Outcome-3
	<p>Please mention the outcome (changes in behavior/ relationships/ actions/ policies/ practices) we are now talking about.</p> <p><i>[Note: Interviewer record the outcome here]</i></p>			
	<p>As you mentioned, there have been changes in your behavior/ relationships/ actions/ policies/ practices, would you please tell me when the change took place?</p> <p><i>[Probe to get a specific month and year as possible]</i></p>			
	<p>Can you tell me how the program contributed to make this change?</p> <p><i>[Please probe for the type of contribution - indirect or direct, partial or whole, intended or not]</i></p>			
	<p>To what extent the program contributed to make this change of yours?</p> <p><i>[Please try to establish a link between the cause and effect. Also record the stories of providing "0" score]</i></p>	<p>0---1---2---3---4---5</p> <p>[Where '0' stands for no contribution and '5' stands for full contribution]</p>	<p>0---1---2---3---4---5</p> <p>[Where '0' stands for no contribution and '5' stands for full contribution]</p>	<p>0---1---2---3---4---5</p> <p>[Where '0' stands for no contribution and '5' stands for full contribution]</p>
	<p>How is this change significant to you?</p>			

SL	Questions	Response		Instruction
	<p>Please rate the significance of the change- to what extent you think this change is significant?</p> <p><i>[Check relevance the response with C9]</i></p>	<p>0---1---2---3---4---5</p> <p>[Where '0' stands for 'No significance' and '5' stands for 'Highly significant']</p>	<p>0---1---2---3---4---5</p> <p>[Where '0' stands for 'No significance' and '5' stands for 'Highly significant']</p>	<p>0---1---2---3---4---5</p> <p>[Where '0' stands for 'No significance' and '5' stands for 'Highly significant']</p>
	<p>Are there any other actors contributed to this change in your behavior, relationships, actions, policies, or practices, even in a small way?</p> <p>If yes, what actors? How did they contribute?</p>			
	<p>To what extent did the other actors contribute this change?</p> <p><i>[Check relevance the response with C11]</i></p>	<p>0---1---2---3---4---5</p> <p>[Where '0' stands for no contribution and '5' stands for full contribution]</p>	<p>0---1---2---3---4---5</p> <p>[Where '0' stands for no contribution and '5' stands for full contribution]</p>	<p>0---1---2---3---4---5</p> <p>[Where '0' stands for no contribution and '5' stands for full contribution]</p>
D	Challenges and Opportunities			
	<p>What are the motivation factor that you will continue your activities to make others benefited from you?</p> <p><i>[Please try to get if there have any sustainable catalyst that motivated him/her in continuing the activities.]</i></p>			

SL	Questions	Response	Instruction
	<p>What are the challenges you facing to continue or further develop and sustain your services?</p>		
	<p>Do you perceive that you will be able to generate sufficient revenue from this activity to provide you with adequate income? How?</p>		
	<p>How could you make your services affordable to participants?</p> <p>[Record the potential challenges and overcoming strategies (if any)]</p>		
	<p>Would you please like to share any negative effects to you of the program (if any)?</p> <p><i>[From this question, you may identify negative outcomes. If they identify any negative effects, follow up to find out who has changed, how, when and where; in what way the program contributed to this change; why for them is this negative change significant?</i></p> <p><i>When identifying negative changes, take care not to confuse negative outcomes (that must have come about at least in part because of SHO III) with negative changes in the context for the project.]</i></p>		

SL	Questions	Response	Instruction
E	Comments and Suggestions		
	Would you please like to share any comments or suggestions?		



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Appendix H: Tips for harvesting outcomes using interviews, workshops, and email

Interview process:

- Start by asking about changes the person has observed in the area of interest. Do not use leading questions that mention what the intended results of the intervention are.
- Probe by asking about who has changed, and in what way.
- Thinking of each outcome in turn, probe for the specific information needed for an outcome statement.
- Leave the interview with the information you need for each outcome statement.
- Write up statements as soon as possible after the interview while the information is fresh in your mind.
- Check written statements with source and amend, if necessary.

Workshop process:

- Ensure all participants engaged will be able to contribute to formulating outcome statements by only inviting those likely to have information on outcomes.
- Form groups of people who know about the same outcomes, keeping groups small enough (two-five) so all are involved in formulating outcome statements.
- Carefully consider power relations. You might involve more powerful actors separately or for a limited duration, allowing others to express themselves more freely. Those otherwise marginalized can be appropriately supported to have a voice in spaces they normally don't.
- Sensitize participants that there may be follow-up with last questions on their outcomes.
- Include time for initial analysis and reflection on outcomes during the workshop to give participants an idea of how the data will be used.

Email or message process:

- Only use if you are confident the source will be comfortable reading, writing, and responding to feedback in writing.
- Introduce yourself and why you are contacting the person, emphasizing your interest in learning.
- Avoid OH jargon.
- Explain, using an example, what information you are looking for, i.e., an outcome statement.
- Clarify contribution by emphasizing that others may also have contributed to each outcome.
- Sensitize that you may reply asking for clarifications. It can take two to three rounds of communication before a statement is complete.

Appendix I: Example facilitation guide for an OH workshop

NOTE: This example comes from an outcome harvesting exercise conducted in 2018 for the OIKKO project implemented by CARE Bangladesh. (Richard Smith, Humaira Aziz and Joe Sutcliffe, 2018.)

Purpose of this workshop: To learn if the EKATA groups helped workshop participants and if so how. This will help CARE and its partners work better in the future. We already know a lot about what the project did but not so much about what difference the training and support to EKATAs made to their members and other RMG workers.

A. Introductory exercise

Objective: remind EKATA facilitators and members what their action plans were and what they achieved.

Work individually or with the person who was your EKATA facilitator

30 mins individually and 30 mins plenary

1. Thinking of your EKATA group(s), please list all the action plans, grouping them as personal plans, community plans and work place plans.
2. For each action plan, indicate if it was: not started / partly implemented / fully implemented. Use a table:

TABLE: TEMPLATE FOR SUMMARIZING THE STATUS OF ACTION PLANS

Action plan	Not started	Partly implemented	Fully implemented
A			
B etc			

B. Guiding questions for the outcome harvest

- Form four random groups. Give each group member an opportunity to tell a story of change or to describe an outcome.
- Use flip charts to record outcome statements. Don't forget to number each sheet with your group number and the number of the outcome! Example: 1-1 (group 1, outcome 1), 1-2 (group 1, outcome 2).
- Use the following questions as prompts to harvest outcomes related to collective action, individual changes, negative changes and sustainability.
- Record responses to the following as short outcome statements, 1-2 sentences for each of: outcome / significance / contribution

COLLECTIVE ACTION – work place and community

1. Did EKATA group members start to raise any issues collectively after they joined the group? If so, what happened: who was involved, what did they do?
2. Was it significant (something new / different) that they raised an issue collectively, why?
3. Do you think their participation in the EKATA group helped them? How?
4. How was the issue resolved? What specific, positive result did the workers get? Had there been previous attempts to resolve the issue, if so what had happened?
5. Was it significant that the issue was resolved, why?

INDIVIDUAL – leadership and personal

6. Leadership: Have women shown leadership during the EKATA process and if so how?
7. Personal: do you know of any examples of women taking action in their personal life because of feeling empowered (savings, family decision making, etc)?
8. Do you think their participation in the EKATA group helped them? How?

NEGATIVE CHANGES

9. Were there any negative reactions from duty bearers as a result of women participating in EKATA groups / taking action?

SUSTAINABILITY: ASK EACH GROUP FOR ONE EXAMPLE = 4 IN TOTAL.

10. Since the EKATA groups ended:
 - a. Do you know of any former members who have raised issues collectively after the project ended? If so, what happened?
 - b. Can you describe an example where an EKATA group member supported one another / provided support to non-members?

Note: We expect outcomes that describe changes in the behavior of:

- Women factory workers (individually and collectively)
- Employers (in response to worker demands)
- Male 'duty bearers' in households / communities

C. Information needed for each outcome statement

- Number the outcome

- Detail the name of group describing the outcome

- Description of outcome

- o 1-2 sentences: describe who changed, what, where and when.

- Significance of outcome

- o 1-2 sentences: explain significance in relation to the previous situation and the contribution of the outcome towards the bigger aims of the project).
- o On a scale of 1-3, indicate if the change described in your outcome is most likely where 1 is a on-off change and 3 is a lasting change.

- Contribution of OIKKO to outcome

- o 1-2 sentences: explain who (implementing partner, CARE, etc.) in OIKKO did what, when and where to help bring about this outcome.
- o The change described in the outcome (answer one of the following)
 - 1: Would have happened without the project
 - 2: OIKKO but also others made an important contribution. If yes, who?
 - 3: Others contributed – who? - but OIKKO made the most important contribution / it wouldn't have happened without OIKKO.
 - 4: OIKKO was the only contributor

- Substantiation

- o Collect the name and contact details for three people who were not responsible for OIKKO's contribution AND who could confirm or comment on the outcome, its significance and the contribution.

- Evidence

- o List any existing written / photographic, etc materials that support the accuracy of the outcome as described

Appendix J: Progress markers, Right to Food, CARE Nepal

TABLE: EXAMPLE PROGRESS MARKERS FROM RIGHT TO FOOD, CARE NEPAL

<p>National Farmer's Group Federation, Nepal "M&E Tools" Progress Markers</p>
<p>Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation & Ministry of Industry, Commerce & Supplies (Climate Department)</p>
<p>Dream: Priority of State Government on Small Farmers and Climate Upliftment Friendly Policies, Plans and Programs</p>
<p>Progress markers</p>
<p>Expect to see</p>
<p>The federal government will recognize the federation as an organization working for small and marginalized and landless women farmer's rights. (<i>recognize meeting, recognize letter inlisted in ministry</i>)</p>
<p>The state-level Ministry will invite the federation to discuss about agriculture and climate related issues. (<i>times of invitation, discussion, interaction and meetings</i>)</p>
<p>Love to see</p>
<p>1. The program information related to agriculture will flow through farmers' knowledge centre and animal expert centre on time. (<i>Which information, which medium, effectiveness of those information</i>)</p>
<p>2. The state-level ministry will take priority over the demands, proposals, policy issues submitted by federation. (<i>take positively to demands, active listening, commitment</i>)</p>
<p>3. The plans and programs of the Ministry will be small, marginalized, landless women farmer and climate upliftment friendly. (<i>Yearly program revive</i>)</p>
<p>Like to see</p>
<p>1. The Ministry and climate department will have made small farmers' friendly policy, strategy directories, and arrangement related to agriculture, forest and environment and climate upliftment. (<i>policy, law and periodic plan</i>)</p>
<p>2. There will be institutional representation of the Federation at the Ministry level committees.</p>
<p>Farmer's Group Federation "M&E Tools" Progress Markers</p>
<p>Provincial Federation</p>
<p>Dream: Organizational mobilization, policy advocacy and facilitation in implementation</p>
<p>Progress markers</p>
<p>Expect to see</p>
<p>1. Regular meeting of the Federation, issued based discussion, documentation of members, meeting of members organizations will be made.</p>

Farmer's Group Federation "M&E Tools" Progress Markers

2. Agricultural related information of provenance, organizational details, program collection and flow it to the members.
3. Provided necessary support to the regularity and structures of institutional activities. (*Council, General meetings*)
4. The concerned committee of the government, sub-committee and stakeholders will invite the federation to the issues related discussion of agriculture and farmers.

Love to see

1. Provincial federation will have facilitated in program planning and implementation and organizational activities.
2. Provincial federation will support in organizational activities, campaign wise and project activities of federation and facilitated in issued based activities. (*Council, trainings, project implementation*)
3. State level issues of agriculture and farmers will be identified and policy wise discussed with stakeholders. (*times of discussion, what was result?*)
4. Province federation will coordinate, collaborate and co-work with the province government to make agriculture related policy, its plan and modification.

Like to see

1. federation will be represented in committees related to agriculture and livestock. (*committee and role in it*)
2. The provincial Federation will be established as an institution headed by the farmers and agricultural sector's issues. (*skillful campaigner, facilitation in issues based campaign*)





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