A Complementary Approach to Developing Progress Markers

Julius Nyangaga and Heidi Schaeffer

March 2011

"Change cannot be engineered but can only be cultivated. Seeds must be chosen whose fruits not only suit the taste of the eaters, but also to suit the soil in which they are planted, the conditions for their fruition. Processes of change, whether emergent, transformative or projectable, are already there, moving or latent, and must be read and worked with as natural processes inherent to the lives and cultures of people themselves." –Doug Reeler

1 Executive summary

In this paper we focus on the Outcome Mapping concept of progress markers and present the results of the research that was conducted through the Outcome Mapping Learning Community (OMLC) in 2009 and 2010 to analyse how project teams have formulated their progress markers. The paper discusses both similarities and differences in progress markers and the observed patterns across 32 sets of markers that were received.

The study aimed to demonstrate that planned transformation in boundary partners, as described by progress markers, follows a somewhat predictable pattern, beginning with changes in knowledge and understanding; moving to changes in attitudes; and then to practice changes consistent with new knowledge and new attitudes. The research explored the implications of planning for behaviour change outcomes (progress markers) using the consistently observed patterns in the predicted changes of boundary partners (BPs). The ultimate purpose being to strengthen the effectiveness of Outcome Mapping as a method to bring about desired changes in boundary partners.

32 sets of progress markers from 13 different projects were reviewed for this study. The sample of projects was not large or random enough to allow for statistical analysis and this report therefore only draws conclusions based on what was observed from the 32 sets provided. While the observations reported cannot be generalised to a wider population of progress markers, they will provide useful insights and guidance for OM users.

Our initial analysis revealed that the progress marker sets did not easily fit into the proposed knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) categories of change. Many of the markers described complex actions that encompassed all or two of the three (KAP) responses. However, a pattern was observed in the progress markers. The progress markers could be categorised into three distinct types of practice-oriented outcomes. There were outcomes describing how BP's develop an understanding of the project goals and their roles, which we call P1, with 'P' standing for practice. The second type, P2, was about the partners getting involved in project activities and developing extended networks of support and collaboration. The third cluster of outcomes, P3, was consistent with activities aimed at entrenching the planned change. Most P1 and P2 outcomes were at the early stages of planned changes, followed by P2 outcomes and then P3 outcomes at later stages. However, there were overlaps across the board with a few PMs depicting characteristics of two or more category types.

We conclude that sets of PMs developed for any one BP will depend on the stage of project implementation and the alignment status of a particular BP to a program's vision and mission. P1 outcomes are useful when introducing the project's intentions or emerging developments to stakeholders and especially those passive or disinclined to the project's objectives. The P2 outcomes should be strived for when working with supportive partners, while P3 outcomes are for those so aligned that they can support institutionalization of planned changes.

The P1, P2 and P3 types of outcome complement the *Expect to see*, *Like to see,* and *Love to see* categories of progress markers recommended in the OM manual, whereby initial PMs are the ‘low hanging fruit,’ (Smutylo, 2009) and quickly achievable with a partner depending on their alignment to the project’s vision and mission.

However, together with the possibilities and realities of overlapping progress indicators, all transformation should not be seen as definite linear processes, but as part of a cyclic learning process influenced by dynamics of complex changing environment(s).

Key words: Outcome mapping, outcomes, project indicators, progress makers, KAP.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the dedicated OM practitioners for providing project details including sets of progress markers: Steff Deprez, Jan Van Ongevalle, Beatrice Briggs, Terri Willard, Ziad Moussa, Daniel Roduner, Sarah Earl, Kaia Ambrose, Terry Smutylo and Sumana Wijeratna.

For providing advice: Ricardo Wilson-Grau, Jan Van Ongevalle and Simon Hearn.

This study has been supported by a research grant from the Outcome Mapping Learning Community (OLMC), which is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and managed by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

2 Introduction

Outcomes are the central focus of a project's planning, implementation and monitoring framework when using the Outcome Mapping (OM) approach (Earl et al, 2001). They describe changes in the boundary partners[1] (BPs) behaviour as a result of a project's intervention efforts and can include both quantitative and qualitative change. Outcomes in Outcome Mapping are specifically defined as changes in the actions, activities or relationships of individuals and groups, as well as changes in organizations and institutional systems with possible support of the activities and outputs of a project, programme or organization. The outcome challenge (OC) is the development intervention's idea[2] of how the BPs is successfully contributing to the desired vision of change. Progress markers describe the gradual or milestone changes in a boundary partner as they progress from their current situation to full achievement of their outcome challenge, from their very first steps right through to deeper transformative changes.

Identifying realistic and observable progress markers is essential to success in applying the Outcome Mapping methodology. Progress markers provide a framework for observing changes in the boundary partner's actions, interactions, relationships, procedures or policies over time, and can measure the direction of those changes in relation to the agreed intention. In this paper, we postulate that progress markers follow distinct patterns of change as the selected boundary partners' transformation progresses towards the Outcome Challenge. These patterns of change can be helpful within the Outcome Mapping intentional design work with boundary partners, to strengthen understanding about desired behavioural change and ultimately, the effectiveness of the project in achieving outcomes.

3 Background, Justification and Hypothesis

Using sets of progress markers from different projects with different boundary partners, we set out to demonstrate that behavioural changes, while complex, nonlinear and somewhat unpredictable, can often follow a consistent pattern. We were aware that there is the *Expect, Like* and *Love to see* sequence of progress markers, but the exact meaning of this groups is indefinite and, in many instances, challenging to explain the difference. With a rather fluid difference between *Expect*, *Like* and *Love* sequence, it is not clear how a program can demonstrate progress was being made. If progress markers could be grouped into distinct describable groups, like Knowledge types to Attitude types to Practices (K-A-P) types of change, the resulting categorisation could support better their development. However, we also wanted to explore the implications of any emerging patterns to the generation of effective progress markers.

---

[1] Boundary Partners are defined as individuals, groups, or organisations with whom the program interacts directly and with whom the program can anticipate opportunities for influence

[2] The Outcome Challenge should, if at all possible, be developed with active participation from the project's boundary partners and not solely from the perspective of the project team.

The initial hypothesis for this research was that when projects developed a set of progress markers, with or without the involvement of boundary partners, they followed a KAP sequence. The model can be summarised as follows: the knowledge phase (K) is when the partner gets to learn the project's intentions and vision. It is followed by an attitude phase (A) when the partner demonstrates an 'emotional' and motivational connection to the project's intention. This may range from just a change from extreme negativity to tolerance, or from acceptance to avid enthusiasm (if demonstrable) to the project's vision and mission. The final practice phase (P) is when the partner undertakes actions corresponding to commitment to the project's intended goals. The research intended to test the hypothesis that the K-A-P model can be used as a simplified complementary approach to assist OM users in developing and monitoring effective indicators of progress (PMs).

In Outcome Mapping we speak about how to influence change and we acknowledge that there are many contributions to change which are outside our sphere of influence, and therefore not predictable. Change in Outcome Mapping is generally understood as complex and non-linear.

The KAP model, on the other hand, views change as predictable and linear. We did not expect the KAP model would explain patterns of change in all cases. Our underlying research objective was to strengthen methods for developing effective (planned and achieved) progress markers. We set out to discover patterns of change in planned progress markers to see if ways of thinking about change (KAP or other) could contribute to the overall effectiveness of Outcome Mapping.

We assumed that a set of markers did not have to cover all of the three phases of the model and that the markers may have been developed for only one or two collapsed phases. However, the K-A-P sequence was still expected to be maintained, so that attitude always followed knowledge, and practice always followed attitude. We were careful not to narrow down the focus on the K-A-P sequence alone, so that if the model was not proved, further analysis could allow us to explore patterns of change observed in the sets of PMs.

4 Theories of Behaviour Change

There are numerous models of predicting individual behaviour change and, in the early 1990's, research was conducted to determine common elements between the most widely accepted models, (Prochaska, et al, 1992). Based on their research, the three necessary conditions that are required for individual behaviour change to occur are:

1. The person has the skills necessary to perform the behaviour
2. The person has formed a strong positive intention (or made a commitment) to perform the behaviour
3. There are no environmental constraints that make it impossible for the behaviour to occur

The three necessary conditions for behaviour change follow the first two phases of the K-A-P model to some extent. For example, 'having the necessary skills to perform the behaviour' could be viewed as the knowledge phase of the K-A-P model. Having made, 'a commitment to perform the behaviour,' could be viewed as the attitude phase of the KAP model.

One initial challenge with applying the KAP model hypothesis is that, in Outcome Mapping, attitude change can be reflected in actions at every stage including the very beginning of the work with boundary partners. This is particularly true when BPs are active participants in the project from the beginning. Changes in attitude are very hard to measure and even harder to determine is the extent to which an attitudinal change has contributed to the new practice (behaviour).

Contributing to discussions in the Outcome Mapping Learning Community (OMLC) in 2007, Terry Smutylo (one of the authors of OM) points out that 'In OM we consider that, in general, attitudinal changes, if significant to the programme, will be reflected in the behavioural changes of the actors. The early progress markers (Expect to See) often indicate that the boundary partner perceives project intentions, recognizes the need for change, commits to making change and takes some first steps towards changing. These changes in perspective or intent on the part of the partner could be considered changes associated with attitudinal change'.

On many occasions boundary partners are not just individual people but comprise groups, organisations and institutions. It is the intention of many development programmes to bring about transformation in groups, organisations and institutions, who may then go through phases of realisation, reflection, and implementation of change. When a program develops progress markers for these boundary partners, targeted change will consist of transformation similar to that expected in individual boundary partners, but demonstrated as changes in working relationships, institutional values and policies, and operating procedures (Practices). During the study, and without separating types of BPs, we sought to observe the patterns of change in such boundary partners, and if they also followed a K – A – P sequence.

5 Methodology

5.1 Data collection

Contributions were invited from projects that have used OM in their programs. Data was collected using a questionnaire and telephone conversations. Progress marker data was also extracted from the researcher's own project case reports. In the end 32 sets of PMs were collected from 13 projects, which was not large or random enough to allow for statistical analysis. Therefore, the inferences made hereafter are based on an appraisal of what was observed from the sets provided and may not be generalised to a wider population of progress marker sets.

5.2 Data analysis

The sets of progress markers, together with details about the implementing organisations, projects and boundary partners have been compiled in a separate report (available upon request). Presented in this paper is the classification of progress markers and a few examples for demonstration.

Initially, each progress marker was reviewed and allocated into one of the KAP categories by reading about the project and the boundary partner, and selected a class (K, A or P) for a progress marker depending on our interpretation of which class it belonged. Later, when we concluded the invalidity of the K, A and P model, we repeated the analysis using our new observed 'Practice' outcome classes which we defined as P1, P2 and P3. The same process of scoring, using the new P-type classification was followed. It was not always possible to interpret the meaning and extent of the outcomes described, because we struggled to find observable action-oriented statements to facilitate interpretations. This also required an understanding of the project and the context of the change implied, leading to further consultations with the respondents.

6 Findings and discussion

6.1 Categorization of Progress Markers

To look for patterns in the arrangement of the markers, the sets were placed in a table as shown in Appendix 1. The top row lists the 32 boundary partners – not arranged in any specific order. The rest is a chart showing a colour-coded allocation of outcome type for each marker. Projects developed different numbers of progress markers for each of their BPs. Some only had seven PMs while the longest sets had up to 19 PMs for a boundary partner. Boundary partner No 28 also had seven PMs, but two of them – the first and the last – were not changes associated with the BP, so they were not scored. In all the discussions, hereafter, some progress markers have been extracted from the original sets and are presented as examples in various figures.

As mentioned earlier, the progress markers obtained through the survey respondents did not fit into K, A and P categories. An examination of the PMs statements quickly revealed that change was not distinctly about knowledge acquisition (K), and attitudinal change (A), followed in the end by observable practices (P), especially in an exclusively separate sequenced manner. Almost all of the progress markers provided describe actions by the BP and therefore can be interpreted as practices. At the same time, many of the progress markers provided describe complex actions that encompass knowledge and attitude change with/or without practical actions. Furthermore, the markers varied from simple (one-line) actions (box 1) to a complex set of activities (box 2). This observation is important since it clearly illustrates that the hypothesis – (that PMs follow the K-A- P sequence) could NOT be proved by the sets of PMs received.

Box 1. Examples of single-action PMs

...keep records of steering team meetings & activities (A and P)

...attend information sessions and ask questions (K, A and P)

...donate prizes (A and P)

...use the ILRI LFFS manual (P)

...mobilise communities into establishing LFFS (A and P)

...prepare informative materials to hand in to prospective employers (A and P)

...generate their own funds and reinvest in community projects (A and P)

Box 2. Examples of complex-action PMs

...undertaking activities that enhance awareness and commitment on urban agriculture and food security at local and national level (K, A and P)

...select a real case to apply the research-action in MAC and follow its development until they obtain relevant outcomes and a joint learning (K, A and P)

...guarantee that their participation is representative of the group and maintain communication with the groups to which they belong so that decisions made are qualified and socialised among all stakeholders. (K, A and P)

...participating in joint research ventures with the (research) team, working with the researchers and veterinary authorities on policies and regulations for the region that will allow the adoption and implementation of the technology (K, A and P)

A fresh analysis of the progress markers revealed that they fell into outcome classes that were about practices of different types in the change process. They were labelled practice level 1 (P1); practice level 2 (P2); and practice level 3 (P3).

P1 type of progress markers were outcomes related to BPs developing an understanding of the project goals, their role, that the role of other stakeholders (including the beneficiaries) and implications of the project's goals on their environment (social, economic and bio-geographical), plus feeding back any concerns implied by planned change. The examples below (box 3) demonstrate that these kinds of outcomes describe the BP as **building their knowledge, awareness and gathering of information** in preparation for change.

Box 3. Examples of P1 types of progress markers: Knowledge acquisition processes and practices

...accept appointments with the project team to learn about the technology

...attending forums where (the project) elaborates about the technology

...raising questions and issues that (the Project) will address to encourage (the BP's) uptake of the technology

...attending events hosted by youth regarding the information society

...seek out information on issues related to the digital divide, digital opportunities, the information society, and ICT4D

...reading materials provided by CFC1 and their peers through the (Project's) Initiative

...seek out additional information on water and watershed issues from external sources

...requesting position papers from the relevant departments to solicit input into decisions

...clarify their purpose, methods of organisation and internal functioning

...identifying (their) environmental problems (in relation to the Project's initiative)

The second cluster of progress markers, P2 types, is outcomes with more tangible engagement in the project's activities. The partner is acting independently in support of the project's mission and carries out proposed tasks as shown in box 4. These outcomes also include the partner communicating the project's intended goals to others and supporting the latter's participation or making the desired change relevant.

Box 4. Examples of P2 types of progress markers: Getting involved and enrolling others

...establishing and expanding the membership base of the national organisation in Indonesia

...organise 'popular education' to increase critical thinking of their members

...initiate activities/meetings during which farmers and farmer/producer organisations can share, learn and cooperate together on aspects of the value chain

...identify & collaborate with key actors of the supported value chain

...encourage club members to interact with local Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) so as to appreciate their plight

....organise OVC related activities targeting students, drawing on the expertise of student bodies

...publicize the network on their web site

...sign letters of commitment and respond to the intake survey

...brokering or developing partnerships with other agencies to take local action

...identify opportunities for collaboration with other institutions and stakeholders

The third and final cluster of progress markers (P3) are outcomes consistent with institutionalisation of intended change and ownership in continuing the desired changes. At the individual and group levels, the outcomes demonstrate cultural transformation. At institutional levels (national, regional or international organisations' levels) the actions are reflected in strategies, changed systems and policies embedded into rules and regulations. Examples are shown in box 5.

Box 5. Examples of P2 types of progress markers: Getting involved and enrolling others

...modifying/creating institutional structures to better enable the engagement of young people in ICT4D activities

...promoting the YCDO Coalition, their experiences and results

...provide human and financial support to young people and youth organisations engaging in national, regional, and international ICT4D policy dialogues

...sharing lessons and advocating the use of the (LFFS) methodology ... to (their) superiors, etc.

...institutionalise the methodology, including the practice in all extension practices: have it written in their practice manuals, policies and mission statements

...contribute to the improvement of the methodology internationally to continually make it even more effective

...generate their own funds and re-invest in (related) community projects

...influence policies and local development (in line with the project's plans)

...developing and putting in place a communication policy guiding how information is shared within the organisation

...establishing mechanisms to share and review work programmes across departments, especially on research projects

A strong element of P3 outcomes include partners generating lessons to be used in being more effective in advancing their outcome challenges and the project's vision.

There were challenges in categorizing the progress markers. In some cases the PM's demonstrated actions of what appears to be different response levels at the same time depending on one's understanding and interpretation of the actions, e.g.

> "Private Commercial Partners, Companies agree to feedback mechanisms with researchers and other partners so that any constraints to development, delivery and usage are adequately raised and addressed"

Can be both type P2 ('agreeing to feedback mechanisms' is P2-type of engagement shift) and P3 (ensuring the feedback mechanism works to continuously address constrains is a long-term P3-type of shift).

Or

> "AUB-ESDU ... initiating and strengthening local platforms for dialogue and cooperation among the various stakeholders in urban agriculture at local level and initiate and support joint planning, implementation and monitoring of action plans on urban agriculture and food security"

Can also be both type P2 (initiating and strengthening local platforms for dialogue is P2) and P3 ('joint planning, implementation and monitoring of action plans' is a made-for-sustainability P3-type of response).

Context is important when categorizing progress markers. Indeed Smutylo (2009) points out that the sets of progress markers will strongly be related to the context. One needs to understand what the project was addressing and/or the stage of implementation, the rationale for the boundary partner(s) selected and their attitudinal position in relation to the project's vision, their outcome challenge(s) and capacity to transform or influence transformation. Even external factors such as political and economic environments, can dictate the nature of progress markers to be planned for. In addition to understanding the context, the categorization of PMs is a subjective interpretation.

6.2 Patterns in progress markers categories

The P1, P2 and P3 classes of progress markers for the different BPs were categorized and colour coded. Appendix 1 shows that most PMs are at the P1 and P2 level, which occur during the earlier stages of planned changes. Though we believe change to be non-linear and cyclical in nature, P1 outcomes were consistently followed by P2 outcomes. The P3 types of PMs (sustained continuous change and Institutionalization) come at later stages.

The metaphor that fits well with understanding the categories of PMs is that of a journey. Dr Barry Kibel, the founder of Outcome Engineering – a precursor to Outcome Mapping – identified six stages of group change using the metaphor of a journey as follows:

Level 1: Knowing that there is a journey to take (Corresponds to the P1 level)
Level 2: Taking the first Steps (P1)
Level 3: Investing your own resources (P1/P2/P3)
Level 4: Overcoming resistance to the change (P1/P2/P3)
Level 5: Identifying with the journey by joining with others with a similar approach (Corresponds to the P2 level)
Level 6: Leaving a legacy (now an expert for others) (Corresponds to the P3 level).

P1 progress markers can be equated with a boundary partner building knowledge and capacity in preparation for the journey. P2 progress markers contain steps about the boundary partner's ownership in the journey of change. They demonstrate commitment to the journey with the partners investing their own resources and time, and developing extended networks of support. The boundary partners communicate intended goals to others, encouraging them to join the journey.

P3 progress markers describe steps about the boundary partner continuing the journey as leaders and experts for others. At the individual and group levels, the BPs undergo cultural transformation; at an organizational level there are institutional outcomes reflected in policies embedded into rules of interaction as the journey proceeds.

6.3 Progress markers for particular boundary partners

As mentioned earlier any set of markers developed for a partner will strongly be related to the project's context. We have postulated that progress markers for any BP will depend on the stage of project implementation and the alignment status of that particular BP to the project goals and the shared vision of change. That is to say that once a program identifies which BPs they will work with, they will develop markers with or for each of them based on outcomes that should be supported.

It is, therefore, easy to observe that P1 progress markers will be crucial when introducing a project to new boundary partners. It will be especially vital in getting support from those disinclined to the mission or vision. The focus should then be to increase their knowledge regarding the Program's background and justification so as to develop acceptance, even if only to a point of tolerance. Participatory processes should be applied to provide space for the partners to indicate how the project should proceed for them. The examples shown in box 3 are typical, especially if arrangements are made for opportunities the program has to address any questions and concerns raised by the boundary partners as well as other stakeholders they (the BPs) interact with.

The P2 set of progress markers describe outcomes related to partners undertaking tasks and activities planned and supported by the project. In this set of outcomes, the project is working with BPs who are relatively more aligned and ready to support the project's mission. It is through this set of PMs (and related boundary partners) where the Program easily demonstrates progression beyond the initial introductory stages. Involving partners in project activities (undertaking assigned tasks, translating project intentions into what they would like/prefer and promoting the project's vision and mission to other stakeholders) has often been reported as progress made.

For boundary partners demonstrating eager support, the program would be better served by working with boundary partners to entrench targeted changes using P3 types of progress markers ('culturalization', institutionalization and regularization of the change through long term policies). P3 level PMs indicate how the program is sustaining change. One may argue that P3 types of progress markers should occupy a dominant part of targeted change since they demonstrate a kind of permanence in targeted system change. The sampled 32 sets (though not random) do not show this. There is a possibility that most projects are more confident of getting partners convinced of their intentions and expect the ownership and entrenchment to develop in due time. It could also be that the P3 level progress markers require profound changes in individuals, organizations and systems and the process must first be owned and then directed by the partners in an emergent way. Another argument is that P3 types of outcomes should only be associated with partners who have the capacity to sustain such change, e.g. cultural leaders and policy makers, who may not be within the project's sphere of influence. That may be so, but change can also be effected by working at the level of the partners' environment. That way the institutionalization can be achieved if it is supported by members of a community able to communicate such development to its key members. Examples from the sets include:

> Extension Agents/Workers... providing expertise on LFFS to policy planners and development organizations

Communities... providing inputs in policy formulation and decision making

The Association of Municipalities (villages)... defending the interests of member municipalities to (governing) institutions... and partners ...

In conclusion, one may consider initial progress markers to be the 'low hanging fruits' and sometimes easily achievable if the targeted BP is aligned with the project's vision and mission. This conclusion supports the case for thorough stakeholder analysis, using an understanding of the dimensions of power to influence, accompanied by how well aligned the boundary partners are to planned changes. During the stakeholder analysis, projects should explore the outcomes to be targeted (to achieve the vision), what the gaps to achieve these outcomes are and, hence, who are the most effective to support (BPs) to address those gaps.

6.4 Relating P1, P2, and P3 PMs with Expect, Like and Love to see categories

There were only a few progress markers provided that were categorised into the *Expect to see ...*, *Like to see ...* and *Love to see ...* groups mentioned in the OM manual. It appears as though projects developed markers convenient for their own planning and monitoring process. In addition, not many followed the guidelines recommended in the manual on numbers of progress markers at each category: three (*Expect to see*), eight (*Like to see*) and three (*Love to see*) progress markers. Out of the 32 sets only six sets had 15 progress markers of change and none of those six sets showed to which groups the PMs belonged.

The manual describes the '*Expect to see*' markers as 'what the partner would be doing as early response' to the project's mission, followed by what the programme would '*Like to see'* the partner doing and then '*Love to see'* them doing if the project was having a profound influence. The early progress markers are those seen to be 'low hanging fruit' (Smutylo, 2009), and are easy to achieve before planning for and recording changes that would take time or greater commitment by the partner. There may be no direct relationship between the *Expect, Like* and *Love to see* sequence and the P1, P2 and P 3 order, and this study did not try to find a relationship between the two ways of categorising progress markers.

Generally, our research results show that progress markers move from P1, where partners acquire knowledge and capacity building in preparation for change, to P2 where they are engaged in and embarking on a change process, and if possible, P3 the regularisation of the change process. As mentioned earlier, this research was exploring for a kind of classification that could provide a more distinct way of classifying outcomes, rather than the fluid and indefinite *Expect, Like* and *Love to see* groups. The difference between the two ways of categorising markers shows that P1, P2 and P3 categories can be used to build on the *Expect*, *Like* and *Love* sequencing.

As argued earlier, when discussing the influence of alignment with the project, markers can start from one category or another; it will depend on how aligned the partner is to the project's initial approaches as well as to emerging developments and information. For some partners, information-seeking behaviour will be an expected starting point, for others it will be about getting immediately involved in planned activities and promoting the project's objectives, and so on.

The sets provided by the respondents did not appear to always follow this sequence. Assuming the *Expect*, *Like* and *Love* to see sequence is reflected in the P1, P2 and P3 order, there were instances where outcomes describing entrenched or sustained change (P3) came before what may be considered early signs of influence involving awareness and capacity building (P1) . This is expected as programmes may support partners to get involved in project activities (P2 and Like to see) in order to realise early (expect to see or P1) types of progress markers.

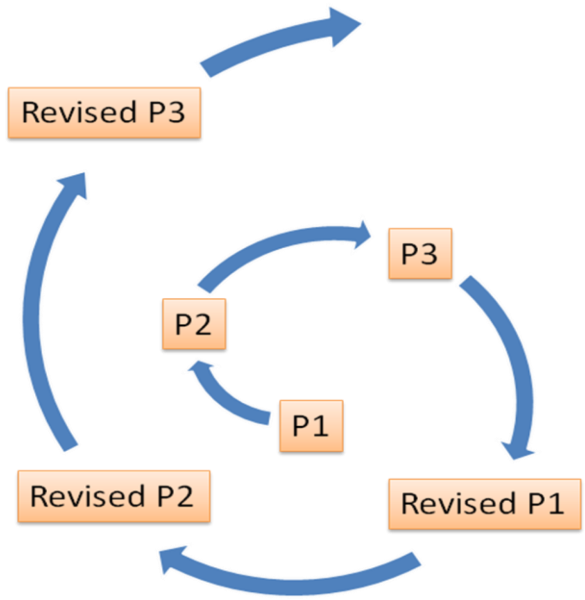
6.5 Progress markers are NOT supposed to be linear

Although the PM sets analysed were not comprehensive enough to demonstrate the cyclical nature of change, many authors reiterate that change in systems is not linear, but complex, adaptive development which depends on internal and external dynamics that influence direction. The Participatory Impact Pathway Analysis (PIPA) method – an approach complimentary in many ways to Outcome Mapping – acknowledges that progress in complex adaptive systems is not linear, but emergent and unpredictable (Douthwaite, et al, 2008). A fundamental element of PIPA is stakeholders regularly planning, reviewing and revising for incremental progression. Reeler (2007) argues that approaching development as a linear process is a common delusion of programme designers. He argues that progress happens as a result of change that is emergent and transformative despite any projectable planning.

Developing progress markers is an example of projectable planning that assumes stability of various influential factors but it should be done as part of a cyclic learning process (Figure 1). Ideally PMs are supposed to be revised during (and even beyond) the project period. The outcomes of a boundary partner can vary, rendering planned evidence of change meaningless or its importance less significant. This variation can be a continuous progression from one P category to another.

For example P1 progress markers for a project in mid-term review or at the end of a project cycle (for reflection in cycle-mode), are actions associated with how to better appreciate project progress and emergent changes for more appropriate contribution to the mission. They are outcomes associated with how partners appreciate progress that has been made so far and how to manage emerging developments for more effective contribution to the mission. A revision of P2 progress markers will then be about the BP promoting the programme’s new vision and mission in line with the emerging changes, while P3 types will be about entrenching revised cultures and policies in consideration of these developments. An example of one set of PMs that possibly showed such a cycling is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A cyclic depiction of P1, P2 and P3 types of progress markers



From a planning and monitoring viewpoint there are two main challenges of this cycling trend. The first is the project's ability to predict in advance (during initial planning stages of a project) the nature of the second (or third) level changes (or steps). These can only become clearer during reviews of progress made and emerging factors influencing future plans. The second challenge will be the collection of evidence to demonstrate that the project was proceeding towards its long term vision.

Figure 2. An example of a progress marker set with cycles of P, P2 and P3 types

Boundary Partner: Senior Management Group (SMG)	
Outcome Challenge: The project intended to see the members of SMG seeking wide participation throughout the organization in the planning and implementation of the Change Management Programme (CMP), and in maintaining close working relationships with Head of Governments and other senior officials within the member countries. The SMG shows strong and visible leadership and have frequent face-to-face communication with staff. The SMG recognises the achievements of teams and staff in the development and implementation of the CMP. The SMG adheres to the agreed-upon model and champions and exemplifies the core values, particularly transparency and open communications, respect for staff, ensuring that staff are treated fairly and equitably and that policies are consistently applied. The SMG ensures that departments are adequately resourced with the required skill mix to meet client's current and future development needs.	
Progress markers	**Cycling P Types**
Senior Management Group ... develop and put in place a communication policy guiding how information is shared within the organisation.	P3
They ... schedule regular meetings to communicate the decisions and rationale of board meetings.	P2
They ... interact frequently with staff to exchange ideas and provide clarity and consistency in the formulation and implementation of policies.	P1

They recruit and retain competent management teams and holding these reporting officers accountable for their work outputs.	P2
They conduct performance appraisals with their staff members.	P2/3
They ... are reviewing the current training committee and establishing a new committee.	P3
They ... develop an annual rolling plan to be produced every six months.	P3
They ... establish a procedure and process for the Staff Association Committee.	P2
They ... are requesting position papers from the relevant departments to solicit input into decisions.	P1
They ... are convening bi-monthly meetings with directors and deputy directors to receive feedback from units and divisions on issues and to encourage collaboration through the organisation.	P2
They are consulting mangers on the re-allocation of resources and re-ordering of priorities.	P2/3
They are collaborating with the heads of key regional organisations in setting developmental goals and formulating policies.	P2/P3

As can be observed, a programme can start with policy-related long term changes (P3), even if the policy developed appears to be mere development of a document. This then is followed by adherence to that policy of institutional change (P2), from which the boundary partner will learn more about the programme's vision (P1), engage and promote more (P2), and take part in refining even more effective changes on the same policy (P3). This cycling of progress markers can contribute to instances where it is sometimes difficult to classify the stage of change because the PMs belong to more than one practice category.

6.6 Types of boundary partners

Observations from the 13 projects about boundary partners revealed that most partners selected for support by projects could be described according the original OM guidelines, i.e. ' ... individuals, groups, or organisations with whom the program interacts *directly* and with whom the program can *anticipate opportunities for influence*'. However, some projects had broad, un-defined and non-specific groups as boundary partners such as Farmers, Villages, Communities, Foundations, International Donors, National Governments, etc., with no clear indication of how the project team would have opportunities for direct interaction. The quality of the progress markers varied in terms of the level of detail and description of actions (verbs) related to particular boundary partners. More detail is necessary to describe the change sought in the partner. It seemed to us that progress markers developed for BPs by the project teams lacked some important detail needed to strengthen strategies and capture and achieve change. These observations have a bearing on further research about how programs identify and work with boundary partners, and hence the kinds of BPs that should be deemed most effective for monitoring and achieving outcomes.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion we observed patterns in progress markers which provide a complementary approach to the 'expect, like and love to see' categories for developing progress markers described in the Outcome Mapping manual. These categories can enable programme and project teams to appreciate and visualise change with their boundary partners and can inform specific strategies to strengthen the effectiveness of Outcome Mapping. We are not assuming that BP change can be fully predicted and implemented without on-going monitoring, revision and adaptation. However, the initial analysis of 32 sets of progress markers from 13 Outcome Mapping projects shows a somewhat systematic progression of planned boundary partner change that can inform our understanding of change related to three practice categories:

P1 Preparation for the Journey: building Knowledge and Capacity

P2 The owned journey begins: building support, collaboration and networks

P3 The owned journey proceeds: sustained continuous actions. Institutionalisation, Policies and/or Culture Change

The P1, P2 and P3 categories of practice can be usefully understood by thinking about the metaphor of a journey taken with our partners. A journey which is participatory and where all travellers are learning and integrating experiences as they move along. This is a journey taken with our boundary partners and using Outcome Mapping requires that the journey is based on building relationships of understanding, respect and support. The P1, P2 and P3 categories of practice help to make this relationship and process more explicit. Success on the journey happens as partners take more and more leadership for their direction and ownership of the process and of their accomplishments.

The direction of the journey may be moving toward the project's desired vision or it may change course in a continuous way, depending on the complexity of the processes of change. There is a risk in assuming that the measure of success for determining the effectiveness of the journey is in predicting and arriving at 'the' destination. Change is continuous and therefore when monitoring and adapting progress markers, a linear approach erroneously assumes that once one gets past the capacity development stage, there will be no need to expect such changes in later stages. Boundary partners, like all other programme stakeholders, will always be confronted with emerging developments that require another level of understanding (capacity development), engagement and institutionalisation. Programmes should keep this in mind when reviewing progress markers developed in initial stages. Project designers should review (initially and at regular intervals) their vision, what gaps are to be addressed to achieve outcome challenges and, hence, who should be supported. That is, one must consider the proposed categorisation of practices within the context of each project stage and BP type.

The P1, P2 and P3 categories describe projectable change in boundary partners and can be used by project teams to make OM's 'expect, like and love to see' PMs more specific and observable. For example, development interventions would 'like to see' their partners taking more ownership in the desired change (whatever that specifically looks like in the context of each project or programme).

Using the complementary categories for ‘like to see’, project teams can know generally to strengthen P2 level behaviours that support joining with others, building support and networks. At the P2 level they can plan strategies that build behaviours related to the BP’s ownership in the desired change and those that reduce the project’s influence, with the intention that the momentum for change can continue. At the ‘love to see’ level our partners become more and more self-determined in addressing challenges. Using the P3 practice category would look like BPs being advocates for policies and procedures that sustain system and cultural transformation.

The complexity of change must be remembered here as we are speaking very generally about patterns that were observed in a limited sample of Outcome mapping projects. Our underlying research objective was to strengthen methods for developing effective progress markers. We set out to discover patterns of change in planned progress markers to see if ways of thinking about change (KAP or other) could contribute to the overall effectiveness of Outcome Mapping. The research did discover interesting patterns of change in planned progress markers however we were not able to determine the effectiveness in predicting actual change. Our research was not comprehensive enough to assess the effectiveness of the P1, P2 and P3 progress markers in particular cases and analyse how the planned PMs were monitored and which ones were achieved.

We recommend follow-up research with the original sample of 13 projects to test the extent to which the model holds up to scoring by the project teams; and to discover which PMs were achieved and which were not achieved. In other words, how understanding projectable change and using the P1, P2 and P3 categories, and the participation of BPs in the planning processes, contributes to the overall effectiveness of OM. Research is required to investigate if and how the new complimentary approach is useful to project teams and their partners for developing, monitoring and evaluating outcomes. For this we recommend empirical studies using larger and more random sets of progress markers carried out to further analyse if projected change applies statistically across a larger sample.

8 References

Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (2005) 'The influence of attitudes on behaviour' in D. Albarracín, B. T. Johnson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *The handbook of attitudes* (pp. 173-221), Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Dolores Albarracín, Blair T. Johnson, and Mark P. Zanna (Eds.) (2005). *The handbook of attitudes*. Douthwaite et al, 2001. Learning Selection Model". See discussion on theories of behaviour change, "Learning Selection Model".

Douthwaite, B., Alvarez, B.S., Thiele, G., Mackay, R., Cordoba, D., and Tehelen, K. (2008) *Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis: a practical method for project planning and evaluation*. Paper presented at 'Rethinking Impact: Understanding the Complexity of Poverty and Change' Workshop, 26-28 March, Cali, Colombia.

Earl S., Carden F. and Smutylo T. (2001) *Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, IDRC (International Development Research Centre) 120 pp. ISBN 0-88936-959-3.

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (2010). *Predicting and changing behaviour: The reasoned action approach*. New York: Psychology Press (Taylor & Francis).

Nyangaga J., Kristjanson,P.,, Romney, D., Smutylo, T., and Mathews. G (2010)'Research that matters: outcome mapping for linking knowledge to poverty-reduction actions' in *Development in Practice*, Volume 20 Issue 8, 972.

Outcome Mapping Learning Community, Online discussions. http://www.outcomemapping.ca/

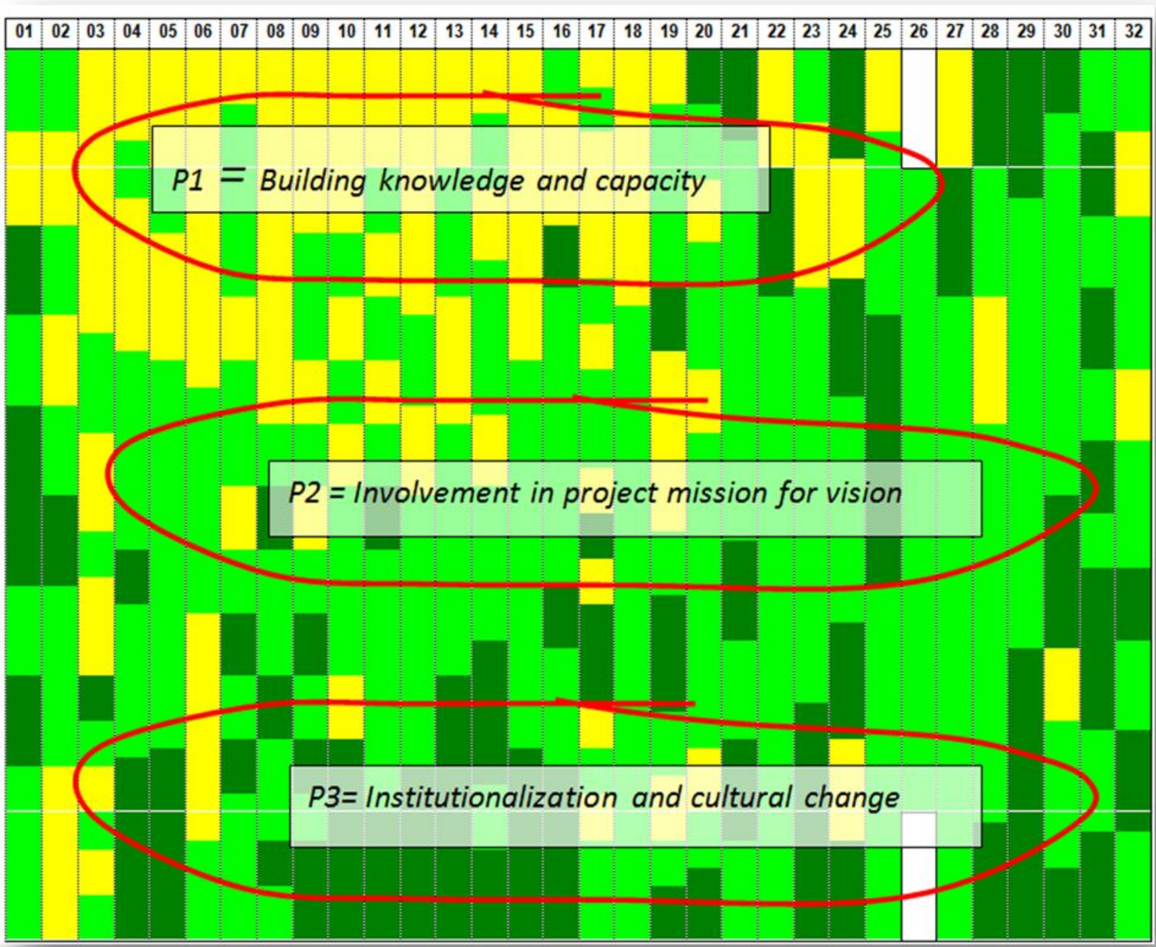
Prochaska, J.O., DiClemente, C.C, and Norcross. J.C. (1992) 'In Search of How People Change: Applications to Addictive Behaviours' in *American Psychologist*, American Psychological Association, Inc. 0O03-066X/92/$2 00. Vol. 47, No 9, 1102 – 1114.

Prochaska, J.O, Velicer, W. F., Rossi, J.S., Goldstein, M.G., Marcus, B.H., Rakowski, W. Fiore, C., Harlow, L.L., Redding, C. A., Rosenbloom, D., and Rossi, S.R. (1994) 'Stages of change and decisional balance for 12 problem behaviours', in *Health Psychology*, 13(1), 39-46.

Reeler, D. (2007) A three-fold theory of social change and implications for practice, planning, monitoring and evaluation, a publication of the Centre for Developmental Practice.

Smutylo, Terry. Personal communication.

9 Appendix 1: The distribution of P1, P2 and P3 types of the 32 sets of progress markers



Colour code legend

P1 = PMs showing knowledge acquisition and capacity building	P2 = PMs showing BP's greater involvement and promotion of vision and mission	P3 = Institutionalization, entrenchment in culture and policies

P1 Preparation for the Journey: building Knowledge and Capacity

P1 progress markers are early actions related to the BP building their knowledge about the project's vision and mission and their roles (as partners) in the journey. PMs in this category will usually include any reactions and actions by the BP in question (or in focus) – in response to the project team's strategies (intervention) – to be open about the project's intentions and equip themselves with more information about the project’s mission. They are the followed by actions associated with the BP’s decision to begin to participate in identifying and contributing toward the vision (at least in the initial stages). For a project in mid-term review or at the end of a project cycle (for reflection in cycle-mode), they are actions associated with how to better appreciate progress the project has made and how to manage emerging developments (both internal and external) for more effective contribution to the mission.

P2 The owned journey begins: building support and networks

P2 progress markers are those associated with positive support to the project vision and mission through promotion of the goal, intentions and targeted benefits to the community or system. PMs in this phase will be associated with direct involvement in establishing project outputs, recruiting, influencing and building support in other stakeholders. In this phase the BPs contribute to the project’s mission by sharing who else is crucial to the project’s mission and vision and/or demonstrate how they contribute to the project’s mission by developing outputs beyond the original project’s direct sphere of influence.

P3 The owned journey proceeds: sustained continuous actions. Institutionalization, Policies and/or Culture Change

P3 progress markers are actions by BPs that result in sustained change along the Project’s mission, advocacy for entrenched system transformation through establishing or influencing policies. The BPs at this stage demonstrating ownership of targeted change; at the individual; level, this will be reflected in habit and cultural transformation, if any can be observed. They also contribute to arrangements (innovatively, creatively) that make targeted transformation deeply entrenched through permanency mechanisms.