outcome mapping

Learning the way forward: Adapting St^{2}eep's planning, monitoring and evaluation process through Outcome Mapping

Summary

Planning, monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) within the Secondary Teacher Training Environmental Education Programme (St^{2}eep) has evolved from being merely an accountability exercise to a structured, participatory and learning-oriented process. The journey to transform this process was facilitated by the use of Outcome Mapping at key stages of the program's life cycle. St^{2}eep's own PM&E practice is strongly linked to the theory upon which Outcome Mapping rests; it is characterized by participation, based on self-assessment and team learning, leading to a useful PM&E process for the actors involved. Through the adoption and adaptation of Outcome Mapping, the PM&E process has become embedded in the program management cycles and informs future planning. Outcome Mapping provided a useful framework to address the sustainability challenges of the program and to design capacity development processes with clarity about the roles of all the different actors involved.

PM&E approaches: shifting paradigms and processes

As common within international development programs, St^{2}eep's original program proposal as well as its planning, monitoring and evaluation strategies were guided by the logical framework approach (LFA). The LFA presented a seemingly straightforward planning tool for the environmental education (EE) integration process. Progress monitoring and evaluation were guided by a list of indicators linked to the programs key result areas.

What is St^{2}eep?
www.st^{2}eep.org.zw

The Secondary Teacher Training Environmental Education Programme (St^{2}eep) in Zimbabwe began in January 2003 in partnership with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, three Secondary Teacher Training Colleges and the Flemish Office for Development, Cooperation and Technical Assistance (VVOB). The aim of the project is to integrate environmental education (EE) in the curriculum of secondary teacher training and to support EE initiatives in the colleges and pilot schools in order to enhance sustainable utilization of natural resources and life skills. EE is done through the integration of in-service training of lecturers, facilitation of the syllabi review process, developing EE learning resources and supporting college-based EE initiatives.

VVOB is the principal supporting agency of the programme and provides financial support as well as external process facilitators.

However, after carrying out an in-depth and internal organizational reflection exercise in December 2004 with the project team and key stakeholders, it became clear that the use of the LFA had certain limitations and challenges for the specific context of St^{2}eep and its supporting development agency, the Flemish Office for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance (VVOB). The LFA-based PM&E reports consisted of a summary of the activities done, the achieved changes of state (e.g. 20% of the syllabi have been revised) and future planned activities. Since the VVOB facilitators worked at an operational level within St^{2}eep, including the compiling of reports, it was not difficult for them to conduct this inquiry into facts and figures of the program. However, the following shortcomings of this process lead the program to search for more integrated M&E approaches:

■ PM&E became a practice of report writing by the VVOB facilitators to meet the official budgetary and reporting requirements from head office. Although this was sufficient for accountability purposes to the supporting agency, the information in the PM&E reports was based on the perceptions of the VVOB facilitators.

■ The LFA did not question or address the program's theory of change and intervention paradigm (and therefore, did not address the sustainability of the program). It did not examine the high operational involvement of VVOB, the heavy workload of the volunteer local coordinators and the lack of long-term vision to support EE implementation processes in participating institutions, including the future roles and commitments of stakeholders.

■ Learning occurred only at the level of individual VVOB facilitators; so whether M&E results influenced further planning depended on the VVOB facilitator.

■ The LFA-based PM&E process was divorced from the program because local partners did not have the opportunity to actively contribute their input and perspectives and did not directly influence or inform collective decision-making or future planning.

Responding to these challenges, a more process-oriented and participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) system unfolded in an informal and intuitive way within the program. The emerging PM&E system was characterized by stakeholder involvement, ongoing discussions and negotiation on the way forward, flexibility in dealing with unintended results, and a focus on self-assessment.

A strategic re-planning exercise (April-December 2005), in preparation for its second phase (2006 to 2008) was guided by Outcome Mapping as it appeared to be more effective in dealing with the complexity and the specific context of the program.

Needs-based adaptation: redesigning the planning, monitoring and evaluation framework with Outcome Mapping

As a group of stakeholders and facilitators, St^{2}eep decided that the framework guiding the second phase should focus on the institutionalization of the EE integration process. This entailed not only an assessment of the outcomes of the EE integration but a focus on the development process behind the EE integration. Further clarification on the roles and relationships of the different actors – not excluding VVOB – was needed as well as continuous reflection on the sustainability of the program and St^{2}eep's own capacity.

Paving the way for OM in St^{2}eep: defining who is who

Paving the way for OM did not only require a mind shift, but also a critical analysis of the existing St^{2}eep structures and an openness to change them. In addition, OM needed customisation to the specific context and situation of St^{2}eep. Because St^{2}eep is not an organisation, but a cooperation programme between different partners with their own organisational structures, initially it was difficult to define who exactly the *implementing team* was and which partners could be defined as *boundary partners*. The internal dialogue which followed over a period of two months resulted in the re-design of the program structure guided by two interconnected OM systems (see fig.1):

1. The St^{2}eep coordinating team influencing the college EE steering teams, college administrations, respective ministries and the university of Zimbabwe (Boundary partners); and

2. VVOB (or other future supporting agencies) as implementing team influencing the St^{2}eep coordinating team (the boundary partner to VVOB).
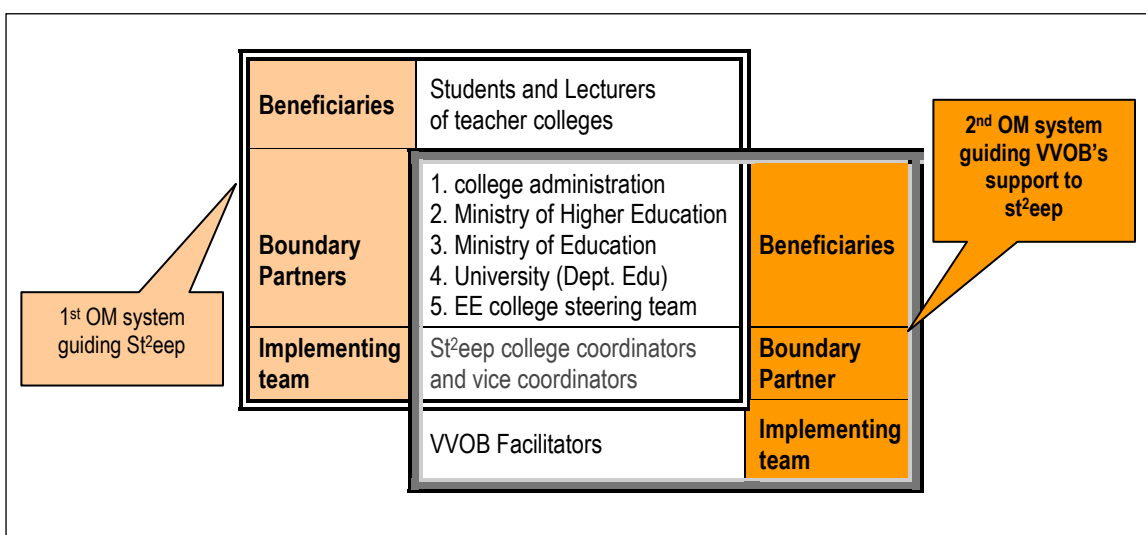

Figure 1: Two interconnected OM systems guiding the partnership between VVOB and St^{2}eep

St^{2}eep and VVOB embarked together – through four workshops in a period of seven months – on the different phases of the OM process: developing the Intentional Designs and planning the Monitoring and Evaluation system (see fig.2).

Preparation period	
Aug 2004	**Start questioning sustainability and PM&E system**
Dec 2004	**In-depth self-assessment workshop**
Jan 2005	**Start planning phase 2 (directions and focus)**
Mar 2005	**Decision to use Outcome Mapping**
Intentional + M&E design	
June 2005	**1st OM workshop – Institutionalising St^{2}eep**
Sept 2005	**2nd OM workshop – The role of VVOB**
Dec 2005	**3rd OM workshop – designing the M&E framework**
Implementing OM (year 1)	
Jan 2006	**Start of St^{2}eep phase 2**
Apr 2006	**1st Progress Monitoring Meeting**
Sept 2006	**2nd Progress Monitoring Meeting**
Dec 2006	**3rd Progress Monitoring Meeting**
Dec 2006	**End of year evaluation (self-assessment)**

Figure 2: Timeline for using OM in St^{2}eep

Vision	Mission	St^{2}eep's Boundary Partners
Education in Zimbabwe is reoriented towards critical thinking, action competence and responsible behaviour by individuals and groups to achieve sustainable living in a healthy environment. In this way, the Zimbabwean community is empowered to make informed individual and collaborative decisions, which will ensure continual effective environmental management.	In support of this vision, St^{2}eep will create an enabling environment for sustained EE implementation in Secondary Teachers' Colleges through the encouragement of active learning processes which promote participation, critical thinking, informed decision-making, action competence and responsible citizenry. St^{2}eep will conduct on-going pre- and in-service capacity enhancement, curriculum review and implementation and strive for the reorientation of assessment of teaching and learning in line with principles of Environmental Education. St^{2}eep will lobby for motivational strategies and policies to ensure that EE is institutionalized in the education system and encourage outreach programs through networking with schools, communities and environmental interest groups. St^{2}eep will ensure that graduates of the Secondary Teachers' Colleges are able to implement EE in their teaching.	- **EE Steering Teams** - **College Administrators** - **Ministry of Higher Education** - **Department of Teacher Education** - **Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture**

Figure 3: New vision and mission & Boundary Partners of St^{2}eep

Looking at St2eep through new eyes: developing the Intentional Design

VVOB and St2eep organised a 3-day workshop in June 2005 with its boundary partners to create the Intentional Design.

Step	Key reflections on the process of developing the Intentional Design St2eep
Re-defining Vision and Mission	By reflecting on its original vision and mission, St2eep and its boundary partners were able to incorporate new insights and priorities that had emerged during the three years of operations for a clearer, more concise vision and mission (see fig.3). At this stage, St2eep also identified the key result areas and criteria for successful EE integration, thereby making an initial innovation combining LFA and Outcome Mapping.
Establishing Boundary Partners	A better understanding by all stakeholders about their roles and responsibilities and about exactly who St2eep is, emerged from the discussion and exercises on boundary partners. The workshop initiated a dialogue between St2eep, the Ministry of Higher Education and the College administrators on the future of the program and the incorporation of St2eep into the existing college structures. As a result of these participatory deliberations, college principals and the Ministry of Higher Education decided to establish a new position in each college: Environmental Education Coordinators. This was a major achievement and step forward for the institutionalization of St2eep and the EE integration process and institutional capacity development.
Characterizing behavioural changes	Behavioural changes (detailed in Outcome Challenge statements and their coinciding sets of Progress Markers for each boundary partner) were developed through shared discussion and debate among the boundary partners themselves (see fig.4). This opportunity meant that relationships among boundary partners could be identified and discussed. Participation of boundary partners in the workshop made for better 'ownership' of the desired behavioural changes. Through the identification of behavioural change, a 'job profile' was drafted for the newly appointed EE Coordinators to be submitted to college principals. These have assisted in the justification and consistency of the position of college-based EE Coordinators.
Defining St2eep's influence	The strategy maps allowed for a clear examination of St2eep's new roles in this phase of the project, and led to coherence between behavioural changes and the actions needed to influence those changes.
Internal culture	The identification of Organizational Practices was a chance for St2eep to reflect on and describe its intuitively developed 'organizational' principles and culture, and to bring to the forefront the importance placed on self-assessment.

Boundary Partner: College Administrators	
Outcome Challenge: St^{2}eep intends to see **college administrators** who continually support EE activities within the colleges by appointing full-time EE coordinators and providing office space, transport, equipment, finances, communication and other resources for successful EE implementation. These college administrators are cooperating with St^{2}eep by incorporating EE in the college strategic plan and encouraging lecturers for EE orientation, workshops and programs. They are attending EE organised functions. They are actively supporting policy development and implementation through the recognition that EE is part and parcel of the curriculum and college functions.	

St^{2}eep EXPECTS to see the college administrators	
1	Appointing full time EE coordinators.
2	Providing office space and equipment for the EE coordinators.
3	Authorising lecturers to participate in EE activities.
4	Chairing the NMT.
5	Facilitating a reduced teaching load for the college coordinators.

St^{2}eep would LIKE to see the college administrators	
6	Attending EE activities.
7	Supporting college EE policy development and implementation.
8	Providing transport, finances and other resources for EE activities.
9	Including and positioning EE, high on the agenda of staff meetings.
10	Including and positioning EE, high on the agenda of academic board meetings.

St^{2}eep would LOVE to see the college administrators	
11	Incorporating EE in the college strategic plan.
12	Appointing full time EE coordinators.

Figure 4: Sample Boundary Partner, Outcome Challenge and Progress Markers

Layering the Intentional Design: developing a framework for VVOB

With the newly appointed local EE coordinators in place from 2006 onwards, a plan for the gradual 'move out' of the VVOB facilitators (expatriate Belgian staff) was developed. In addition, since VVOB had committed itself to further support St^{2}eep from 2006 until the end of 2008, the role of VVOB (and potentially other donors) in supporting St^{2}eep was clarified. OM provided a framework for St^{2}eep and VVOB to facilitate a change in their role in educational development programs from program coordination to facilitation of capacity development processes.

By developing a layered OM system with St^{2}eep becoming the boundary partner of VVOB, VVOB could focus its support on influencing change in the behaviour and actions of St^{2}eep, so that St^{2}eep could better support the EE integration process. The desired changes in behaviour and actions of St^{2}eep were identified and resulted in an outcome challenge statement and gradual set of progress markers for St^{2}eep.

Figure 1 visualizes this layered OM system, while Figure 5 provides an example of VVOB's strategies that will support St^{2}eep's behavioural changes and the enabling environment for those changes.
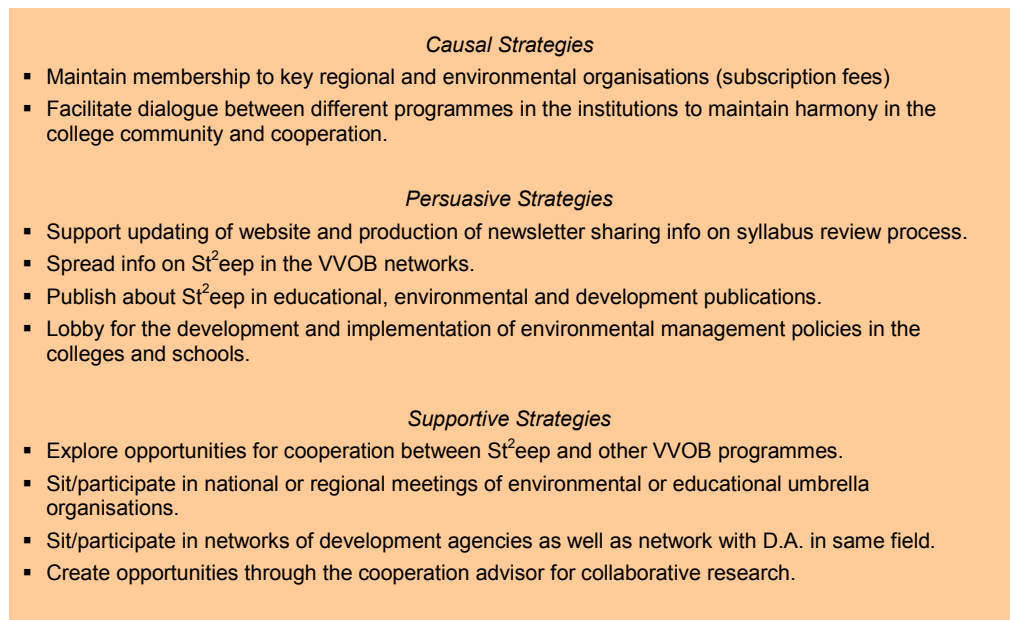

Causal Strategies

- Maintain membership to key regional and environmental organisations (subscription fees)
- Facilitate dialogue between different programmes in the institutions to maintain harmony in the college community and cooperation.

Persuasive Strategies

- Support updating of website and production of newsletter sharing info on syllabus review process.
- Spread info on St^{2}eep in the VVOB networks.
- Publish about St^{2}eep in educational, environmental and development publications.
- Lobby for the development and implementation of environmental management policies in the colleges and schools.

Supportive Strategies

- Explore opportunities for cooperation between St^{2}eep and other VVOB programmes.
- Sit/participate in national or regional meetings of environmental or educational umbrella organisations.
- Sit/participate in networks of development agencies as well as network with D.A. in same field.
- Create opportunities through the cooperation advisor for collaborative research.

Figure 5: Extract from VVOB strategy map with strategies to facilitate a supportive environment for St^{2}eep.

Collective M&E: St^{2}eep's new participatory and use-oriented monitoring and evaluation approach

Through the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) based on the Intentional Design (the planning stage), the complexity of development, and of the program, was addressed in such a way that St^{2}eep was no longer a set of activities to be implemented according to a predetermined plan, but an evolutionary process consisting of continuous cycles of action, reflection and adaptation. M&E therefore facilitated opportunities to allow incorporation of emerging lessons, new responses to the environment, examination of intended and unintended results and actively refining the implementation strategies of the program. St^{2}eep recognized the need for these considerations to be incorporated into the planning phase, and indeed the planning of M&E. A third Outcome Mapping workshop (December 2005) facilitated the development of an M&E system for St^{2}eep and VVOB and concluded the strategic re-planning of St^{2}eep/VVOB.

a) Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation

Who monitors whom?

As the 'new' St^{2}eep was meant to be embedded in the existing college structures – through the local EE coordinators – it was necessary to integrate the M&E system into college procedures as well. A meeting was held with college principals to discuss the internal accountability and reporting systems and how St^{2}eep and the EE integration process could be integrated. It was decided that:

- the internal performance appraisal systems for civil servants in Zimbabwe is also applicable for the newly appointed EE Coordinators of St^{2}eep;

- the EE Coordinators report M&E results to their respective Head of Department;

- the college Academic Boards monitor the EE integration process while the Department of Teacher Education (University of Zimbabwe), the accrediting institute, monitors the process through approval of revised syllabi and the yearly external assessment.

St^{2}eep's guiding M&E principles

Before actually engaging in M&E, the program constructed a list of guiding principles upon which its M&E approach and process sits:

- **Use-oriented: M&E should be relevant and useful for both St^{2}eep, colleges and VVOB.**

- **Integrated: The M&E system should not be considered in isolation from the other work but integral part of the work.**

- **Mutual accountability: M&E should meet accountability requirements of St^{2}eep, colleges and VVOB, but also between St^{2}eep and VVOB. Not only are St^{2}eep and the colleges accountable to VVOB, but VVOB is also accountable to St^{2}eep.**

- **Downward accountability: this implies accountability to the ultimate beneficiaries of the programme such as the lecturers and students.**

- **Learning: M&E should foster organisational & individual learning.**

- **Achievable: realistic, (cost)-effective, pragmatic, simple, light to implement but accurate.**

- **Self-assessment: the desired approach for end of year evaluation moments**

In addition, the National Management Team (NMT) of St^{2}eep, which is chaired by the college principals on a rotational basis, is responsible for the over-all coordination of M&E within St^{2}eep while the implementation is coordinated by the Operational Management Team (OMT). It was agreed to monitor and/or evaluate the following stakeholders: the Boundary Partners of St^{2}eep, the EE Coordinators, the National Coordinator, St^{2}eep as an 'organization', the VVOB facilitator(s), VVOB as an organization and the beneficiaries of the program (lecturers and students). Figure 6 presents St^{2}eep's new monitoring framework.
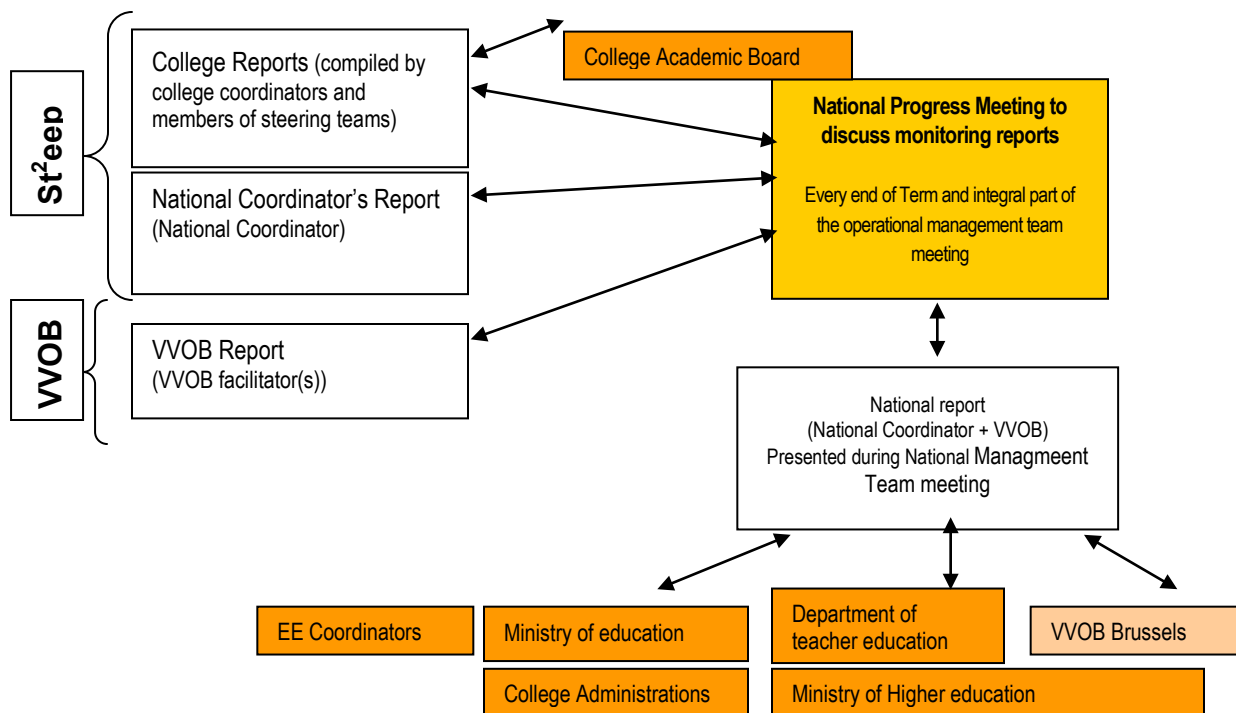
Figure 6: overview of St^{2}eep monitoring framework

In order to determine what precisely needs to be monitored St^{2}eep stakeholders prioritize Key Result Areas, the Boundary Partners, Outcome Challenges, Progress Markers, Strategy Maps and Organizational Practices at the end of each year for the next financial year.

b) Implementing the monitoring

Monitoring what and how?
Using OM, St^{2}eep developed a two-way monitoring system. St^{2}eep monitors the changes in behaviour and actions of its Boundary Partners and reflects on the strategies, applied by the St^{2}eep Coordinators and supporting teams, which have or have not contributed to the desired changes. Accordingly, VVOB monitors the changes in behaviour and actions of the St^{2}eep coordinating team and reflects on the strategies applied by the VVOB facilitators. At the same time, the EE Coordinators and the supporting teams provide discussion and feedback on the support provided by the VVOB facilitators.

Different ways of monitoring in St^{2}eep

- Regular face-to-face meetings to record observed changes.

- Filling out electronic data sheets on an on-going basis.

- Interviews and/or focus groups with Boundary Partners.

- Making time for monitoring activities in operational management team meetings (once every three months) and national management team meetings (three times a year).

- Incorporating OM monitoring in mid-term evaluation and end-of-year evaluation.

- Participatory learning & reflection groups.

Specific monitoring documents for the National Coordinator, the EE coordinators and the VVOB facilitators have been developed to facilitate these reflective exercises. These documents contain an introductory section which features the vision and mission statements and the key result areas drawn from the original logical framework document (see fig.7). These key result areas provide a recognisable link between the original logical framework and the current project document based on the outcome mapping methodology. Featuring the key result areas serves as a reminder of the general milestones that the project is working towards.

Key result areas of St^{2}eep				
Result area	**Results**	**Priorities for 2006**		
		Low	Medium	High
1. EE integration in syllabi of secondary teacher training	All subject syllabi of are reviewed in view of EE			x
2. EE Implementation in the curriculum (teaching and learning)	The teaching and learning methodologies used by lecturers are based on EE principles		x	
	EE aspects are assessed: examinations, assignments, course work (although assessment should not be too much exam-oriented)		x	
3. EE implementation in co-curricular activities	Observable, tangible EE activities in colleges, communities and schools: e.g. college grounds, classrooms, commemoration of environmental days, community involvement, …			x
	Development and application of an College Environmental Management Policy	x		

Figure 7: Key result areas of the St^{2}eep project

The monitoring document also contains a specific monitoring section for each boundary partner. Each such section consists of two journals: one for the progress markers and one for the strategy map for that specific boundary partner. One of the components of the progress marker journal is a checklist, which helps those doing the monitoring to carry out a quick reflection on the behaviours of each boundary partner. A set of three guiding questions inspire a more narrative report on the progress markers, at the same time encouraging deeper reflection on anticipated and unanticipated changes in behaviour. These reflection questions include:

■ What are the changes that have occurred (as a set) in the list of progress markers?

■ What changes were not anticipated or were unintentional? How were they important to the program?

■ Which desired changes did not take place and why?

The strategy journal also features a checklist followed by a set of guiding questions, analyzing the effectiveness of the strategies and how they influenced changes in the progress markers.

Strategies from the strategy maps are grouped under main headings within the strategy checklist. These include Program Management Strategies such as planning, monitoring, evaluation and financial and resource management, and EE implementation such as syllabus review, training, resource centers (see fig.8).

Boundary partner: EE Steering Teams			Planning 2006					Monitoring (was the activity done?)	
		STRATEGIES	Y	N	T1	T2	T3	Yes	No
Programme Management									
Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation									
		Coordinate the yearly college-based planning exercise	X				X		
45	E1	Coordinate the college-based Monitoring (three monthly) and Evaluation (yearly) activities.	X		X	X	X		
Administration & logistics									
1	I1	Coordinate logistics of college-based activities: Invitations, booking of accommodation and workshop or meeting venue, catering, transport, writing of reports, payments, ….	X		X	X	X		
Finance and resource management									
47	E1	Manage the available funds at college level	X		X	X	X		
48	E1	Make sure necessary funds are available before each activity.	X		X	X	X		
70	E3	Seek approval and commitment of colleges for activities	X		X	X	X		

Fig. 8: extract from st²eep's strategy journal

c) Analyzing and using the data

The monitoring exercise results in three separate reports:

■ The national St²eep report compiled by the National Coordinator. This report focuses on national St²eep activities and their influence on policy level boundary partners such as the Ministries of higher education, the Ministry of Education and the Department of Teacher Education.

■ The college reports compiled by the EE Coordinators. These reports focus on college based St²eep activities and their influence on college based boundary partners such as the EE steering teams and the college administrations.

■ The VVOB report compiled by the VVOB facilitators. This report focuses activities carried out by the VVOB facilitators and their influence on the St²eep coordinating team.

All of these reports have a similar structure. EE Coordinators, national coordinator and VVOB facilitators are committed and motivated to filling out the reports in large part

because of the underlying "peer pressure" (they do not wish to be seen as uncommitted in front of their peers) and because it is part of their job descriptions.

To share the main findings and allow for feedback and consultation from stakeholders, the reports are presented during a national Progress Monitoring Meeting (PMM) incorporated into the Operational Management Team (OMT) meeting in which all boundary partners participate. In this way, the monitoring process and results are used as a tool for reflection & learning and inform decisions on future planning and action.
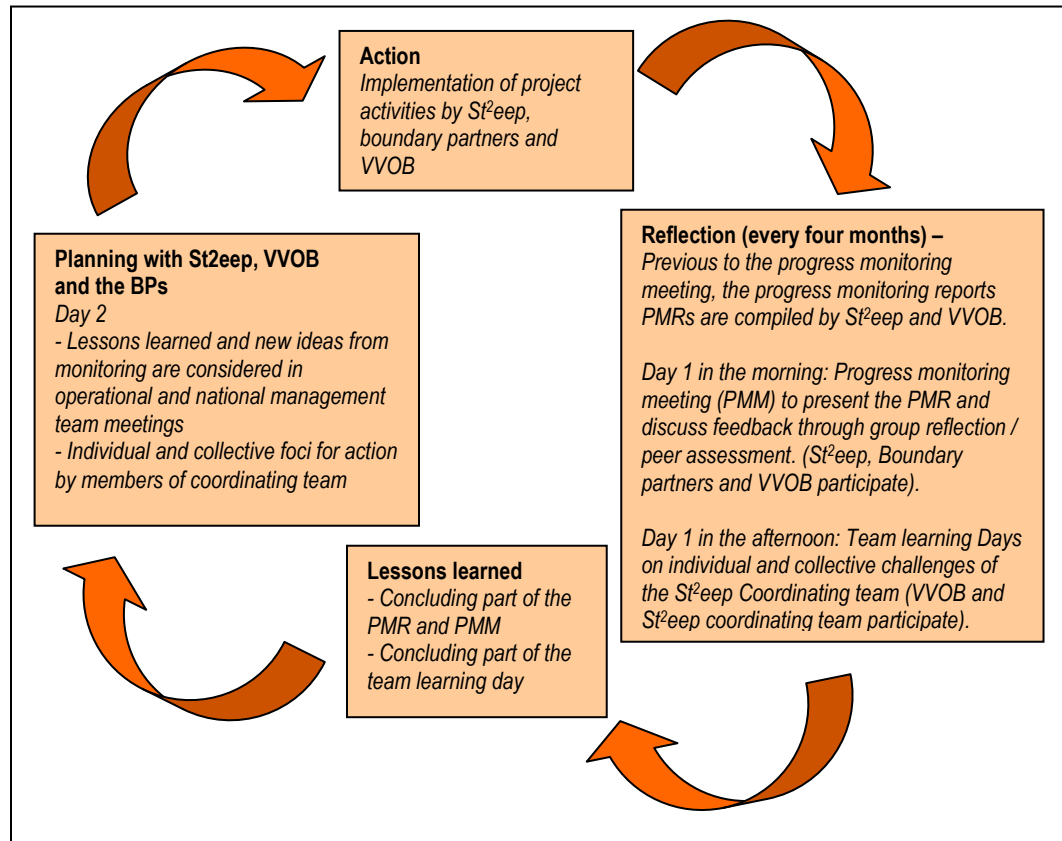

Action
Implementation of project activities by St²eep, boundary partners and VVOB

Reflection (every four months) –
Previous to the progress monitoring meeting, the progress monitoring reports PMRs are compiled by St²eep and VVOB.

Day 1 in the morning: Progress monitoring meeting (PMM) to present the PMR and discuss feedback through group reflection / peer assessment. (St²eep, Boundary partners and VVOB participate).

Day 1 in the afternoon: Team learning Days on individual and collective challenges of the St²eep Coordinating team (VVOB and St²eep coordinating team participate).

Planning with St2eep, VVOB and the BPs
Day 2
- Lessons learned and new ideas from monitoring are considered in operational and national management team meetings
- Individual and collective foci for action by members of coordinating team

Lessons learned
- Concluding part of the PMR and PMM
- Concluding part of the team learning day

Fig. 9: PM&E leads the learning cycle in St²eep

After inclusion of the feedback, lessons learned and remarks by the operational management team, the three reports are compiled into one national 4-month St²eep/VVOB monitoring report. This report is sent out to College Administrators, Ministry of Higher Education and VVOB Head Office and presented to the National Management Team (NMT) meeting.

Team learning days

Team learning days are embedded in St²eep management and planning structures and reporting requirements. At the end of each term, a peer-coaching day is organized for the boundary partners and VVOB facilitators. This peer coaching group, also called participatory learning group, analyzes the organizational practices of St²eep and VVOB as well as on elements of their partnership, normally not discussed in formal meetings.

As colleges require reporting at the end of each term (3 times a year), VVOB has changed its internal quarterly (4 times a year) monitoring report system to a 4-month report system as well. In this way, VVOB requirements are in line with the local reporting requirements, avoiding a situation of two parallel monitoring systems. As the Operating Management Team OMT is meeting at the end of every term, the Progress Monitoring Meeting (PMM) is integrated into existing structures and operations.

Evaluation

In addition to the ongoing monitoring activities, St^{2}eep and VVOB have identified the basic framework for a more in-depth evaluation of the program and its partners. The following ideas were agreed upon for a first evaluation exercise:

■ Evaluation of the EE integration process itself;

■ In-depth evaluation of some specific progress markers, strategies or organizational practices as indicated by the Outcome Mapping approach;

■ Evaluation questions with regard to the sustainability of the program;

■ Evaluation of the program logic and its PM&E system;

■ Evaluation of the support of VVOB; and

■ Evaluation of partnership issues such as ownership, accountability, power and participation.

Each end of year evaluation includes a self-assessment workshop as well as an external evaluation. Priority areas are agreed upon between St^{2}eep and the external evaluator. The external evaluators report is sent to the boundary partners and is used during the self assessment workshop. Reports from the external evaluation and the self assessment workshops are sent to VVOB and boundary partners for accountability. Learnings from the end of year evaluation process inform planning for the next year and provide a basis for the next cycle of progress monitoring meetings and team learning days.

"What did we achieve?" vs. "What did we do, how did we do it and why did we do it?":

The St^{2}eep team developed a self-assessment workshop to identify and discuss strengths and areas for improvement, engaging boundary and strategic partners in critical reflection. Elements of the self-assessment include:

▪ 'The whole picture' (how well is St^{2}eep performing)

▪ Boundary partners changes in behaviour

▪ Leadership

▪ Partnerships and resources

▪ Beneficiary satisfaction

▪ Ways of working

▪ Supporting agency cooperation

Conclusions: Reflecting on the experience

Using solely the LFA to guide St^{2}eep's planning, monitoring and evaluation process was unsatisfactory as it did not allow for the identification and reflection of many other types of results that St^{2}eep was seeking, nor was it conducive to collective learning. Although St^{2}eep found that Outcome Mapping was the right approach given the program's PM&E needs, its application did not come without challenges. These challenges were embraced as part of the overall learning experience of the program.

OM is not straightforward to implement. It requires careful contemplation of the methodology and customization to different contexts. It must also be carefully planned for (budget, time/activities). OM also requires a mind shift by the program team and its boundary partners. It is not just a 'face lift' operation. For it to be successful, the management of the programme and the environment in which it operates need to be supportive to this new approach.

By using OM, St^{2}eep was able to innovate and do better PM&E through the following:

■ Dedicating time, personnel and additional funds for reflection, discussion and consensus;

■ Adapting OM journals to suit St^{2}eep's needs; for example, incorporating the program's key result areas from the LFA;

■ Focusing on relationship building, through the approach and as results;

■ Providing opportunities for individual, group and organizational learning, with a focus on internal / self-reflection as well as peer assessment;

■ Developing two parallel OM systems – one for St^{2}eep and one for VVOB, in order to measure at a more detailed level the operational handover of the program.

■ Incorporating M&E into already existing meetings (such as team meetings, college meetings, etc);

■ Enhancing participation of both the project team and the boundary partners in the PM&E process;

■ Looking beyond the achievement of results by focusing on how the results have been achieved;

■ Focus on ownership and sustainability through capacity development processes with boundary partners and less focus on operational involvement of VVOB.

■ Input monitoring has been replaced by a focus on behavioural change results;

■ Boundary partners are agents of change and enhance their own responsibility, power and capacity as well as leadership of the project.

■ St^{2}eep is accountable to VVOB with regards to its performance and the funding; VVOB is in turn accountable to St^{2}eep, and boundary partners, with regard to its support of strategies, facilitation approach and organizational practices.

Outcome Mapping has made St²eep's and VVOB's PM&E cycles more exciting, useful, relevant and transformative. Ownership of St²eep, and of its programming, has become more endogenous, as EE coordinators in each of the colleges become increasingly the leaders of St²eep and are able to clearly identify where their actions should be focused to further increase ownership and results through the behavioural changes of the identified boundary partners.

In order to continually strive for a balance between accountability and learning, this case study concludes by summarizing two key questions a project, program or organization could ask itself, based on St²eep's experience:

Is there openness to new ideas? The main PM&E tool still used globally by VVOB is the LFA. St²eep therefore had to integrate both LFA and OM approaches. Currently St²eep uses the OM system at the operational level and draws from the original LFA to develop the yearly operational plans grounded in OM. The progress monitoring moments are also fully grounded in the OM framework. The LFA reporting system is still used at the end of each year to report to VVOB. The LFA remains relevant to meet accountability requirements, resulting in a practice whereby the VVOB facilitators 'translate' emerging ideas and strategies into the operational and budget planning based on the original framework.

Is the timing and commitment right to support OM? Introducing OM means that the program needs to be ready for change and the necessary funds need to be made available. Three comprehensive 2-3 day workshops were needed for St²eep to get the OM system ready for implementation. It also requires a small team of committed people who are willing to spearhead this process, as well as facilitation and coaching, especially in the analysis of the data. For example, it sill remains a challenge for the boundary partners who fill in the monitoring reports to stay focused on the link between strategies carried out and their possible effect on noticed changes in the progress markers for specific boundary partners. Vigilance is required to ensure that the monitoring process does not revert back to a mere checklist of activities carried out by the project team.

This case study was prepared by Steff Deprez, Jan Van Ongevalle, Huib Huyse and Kaia Ambrose, with editing contributions from Heidi Schaeffer and Sarah Earl.

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VVOB, the Flemish Office for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance, (**www.vvob.be**) is a development agency, subsidised by the Belgian federal and Flemish government. Over the years, VVOB has built a solid reputation in the development community with its capacity development programmes in the education and training sector. VVOB strives for a sustainable world with equal opportunities. Within the broad framework of poverty reduction, it contributes to the improvement of the quality of education and training in developing countries. Through strategic partnerships VVOB works from the meso-level towards: *sustainable solutions* for education and training challenges within the framework of local policies in developing countries; and *a stronger solidarity* between Flanders and developing countries. To achieve this, we support local capacity development programmes through a balanced mix of resource supply, service delivery, networking and exchange.