

Methods and Tools for Measuring Systemic Change

Method/Tool	Description
Most Significant Change (MSC)	MSC is a participatory method based on stakeholder narratives. Stakeholders identify what they consider to be the most significant change resulting from the intervention. The process generates hundreds of stories, which are selected by staff through a hierarchical winnowing process of categorizing them by topic ("domains of change") and choosing the most representative from a group of stories to advance to the next level. Stories may be collected on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis.
Outcome Harvesting (OH)	In OH, the evaluation user works with the evaluator (harvester) to define questions about outcomes that can be used to make decisions and take action. Outcomes may relate to behavior, relationships, practices or policies. For each outcome, the harvester uses a variety of data sources to assess the degree to which outcomes have occurred and the contribution of the implementer (change agent) to that outcome. The approach is retrospective in that it first describes outcomes and then seeks plausible explanations of how the outcomes occurred. OH can be used for ongoing monitoring or ex-post impact evaluation.
Outcome Mapping (OM)	OM is used to plan, monitor, and evaluate interventions working with boundary partners to achieve social change. Outcomes are changes in behaviors, actions, or relationships. OM measures the contribution of an intervention to complex change processes, assessing progress toward influencing behavior change among boundary partners. OM tools for monitoring change processes include outcome journals, for measuring partner changes; strategy journals, for tracking intervention strategies; and performance journals, for capturing changes in organizational practices.
Sensemaker	The proprietary Sensemaker software program captures a large number of brief narratives that are interpreted by the people telling the story, using dimensions defined by the implementer. The software identifies emerging patterns of perceptions and attitudes, providing insights that the implementer can use to adjust the intervention in order to, for example, amplify or dampen the emerging patterns.
Social Network Analysis (SNA)	SNA is used to visualize and analyze actors in a system and relationships between them. It can depict many types of formal and informal networks, including firms linked in a market system, households linked through kinship or social ties, and collaborating groups or associations. A network map can show the number of actors, how closely or distantly they are connected, and actors who are centrally located. The linkages in a SNA can describe a variety of flows, including products, payments, business services, credit, information, and technology diffusion.
Capturing Indicators with Standard Measurement Tools	Standard data collection tools, such as key informant interviews, focus group discussions and surveys, can be applied to capture key indicators of systemic change. These indicators may include the spread of new behaviors through imitation, independent investment, and adaptation and can be identified through application of various frameworks for identifying systemic changes, such as results chains, the Adopt, Adapt, Expand, Respond framework, causal loop diagrams, or others.
Systemic Action Research (SAR) / Participatory Systemic Inquiry (PSI)	SAR and PSI are related methods for capturing systemic change. SAR is an iterative action research process of hypothesis testing, reflection and updating over 18-36 months. It focuses explicitly on system dynamics and provides a framework for parallel inquiry processes at different scales within a system. SAR draws on a range of methods including systems mapping, surveys, transect walks, participatory videos, storytelling and open discussions. PSI is an approach for mapping partners and relationships by engaging multiple groups of stakeholders within the system. Results from different subsystems are triangulated to verify with stakeholders how the system is operating. PSI can be conducted as part of SAR or on its own.

This list was prepared by MarketShare Associates with input by Impact LLC under the Leveraging Economic Opportunities (LEO) project to stimulate discussion on approaches for measuring systemic change. It is meant to be a starting point for discussion rather than a comprehensive list of all methods and tools. If you are interested in monitoring systemic change within the context of inclusive market systems facilitation and would like to participate in this collaborative learning effort, please join us for a March 10 webinar discussion (www.seepnetwork.org/measuring-systemic-change--building-the-toolbox-events-245.php) and/or contact Ben Fowler of the LEO project at ben@MarketShareAssociates.com.