Operationalizing Adaptive Management

What it takes. Why it matters.

Emma Proud - Senior Adviser, Economic and Market Development
Chris Maclay – Program Manager, PROSPECTS Liberia

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Working in partnership, we bring big ideas and bold action together with local insights, building stability and strength from within.

Saving and improving lives in the world’s toughest places.
The world is changing...
What is adaptive management?
Poll: so, what is adaptive management?

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PHRASES BEST DESCRIBE ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT?

A. Taking ‘small bets’ that allow us to build on success and learn from failures

B. Using excellent monitoring processes as feedback loops for program decisions

C. Changing strategies, plans, and activities to meet an overall goal, in response to new information

D. All of the above

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A structured, iterative process of robust decision making in the face of uncertainty, with an aim to reducing uncertainty over time via system monitoring.
Poll: Are you managing adaptively?

Are you currently using adaptive management?

A. Yes
B. No
C. Don’t know
Adaptive management at Mercy Corps

- Culture
- People & Skills
- Tools & Systems
- Enabling environment
Culture
People & Skills
Tools & Systems
Tools & Systems

Prove

Improve
LESSONS FOR EFFECTIVE RESILIENCE PROGRAMS:
a case study of the RAIN program in Ethiopia
AUGUST 2013
Enabling environment
Poll: Adaptive management in practice

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR AN ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE?

A. USAID/OFDA funded emergency programs

B. USAID funded market systems development programs

C. USAID/Food for Peace funded food security programs

D. USAID/PEPFAR funded HIV programs

E. None of the above

F. All of the above
Introducing E-CAP

Spreading information to end Ebola.

We are working with communities to quickly spread lifesaving knowledge so people can protect themselves and their families from Ebola.

Liberia

Mercy Corps Team

Public Health Trainers

Community Educators

2 million

Total Liberians Reached
Enabling environment in E-CAP
Tools & Systems in E-CAP

- % of people who state that if somebody in their family was sick with fever, running stomach and headache, they would call for somebody to take them to an ETU.
- % people who believe that when somebody goes to an ETU they will get food.
- % people who believe that when somebody goes to an ETU they will get medicine.
- % people who believe that if you call for a burial team to pick up a dead body, you will have to pay money.
- % people who believe that when somebody goes to an ETU, their family can visit them.
- % people who would feel totally or a little comfortable feeling touching, hugging or kissing a family member or friend who is an Ebola survivor.
- % people who would feel totally or a little comfortable visiting the house of an Ebola survivor.
- % of people who state they will only believe that somebody who had Ebola is cured if they have a paper from the ETU.
Culture in E-CAP
People & Skills in E-CAP
Saving and improving lives in the world's toughest places.

NAVIGATING COMPLEXITY
Increased agricultural productivity

Increased availability of and access to high quality inputs

CAHWS providing reliable vet services

Drug shops providing reliable vet services
People & Skills
Tools & Systems

- Weekly Reports
- After-Action Reviews
- In-House Studies
- Strategic Reviews
- Results Chains

- Principles & Development Philosophy
- Goals, Objectives (Systemic Change)
- Program Strategies
- Tactics (Operations & Activities)

Rate of Change:
- Changes Continually
- Stays Constant
Enabling environment

Increased agricultural productivity

Increased availability of and access to high quality inputs

CAHWS providing reliable vet services

Drug shops providing reliable vet services
Lessons for replication

**Culture**
Promote a spirit of outcome-orientation & failure-friendly culture between donor and implementer.

**People & Skills**
Hires for key positions should not always be based on years of experience, but on soft coaching and change management skills.

**Tools & Systems**
Allocate sufficient budgets for learning. ‘Innovation & investment funds’ are exceptionally effective in development programs.

**Enabling environment**
Orient M&E to outcomes, allowing flexibility at the activity level. Ensure the scope for adaptive management is clear and supported throughout.

**Remember:** You can’t just do one – these are mutually reinforcing.
Additional References

Mercy Corps References

External References
1. Christopher Maclay (2014). Management not models...

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Contacts

Emma Proud, Sr Advisor for Economic & Market Development
eproud@hq.mercycorps.org

Chris Maclay, Program Manager for PROSPECTS, Mercy Corps - Liberia
cmaclay@lr.mercycorps.org

For more on research & learning
Jon Kurtz, Director of Research and Learning
jkurtz@dc.mercycorps.org

For more on policy analysis & recommendations
Madeline Rose, Policy & Advocacy Advisor
mrose@dc.mercycorps.org