Capacity Development Measurement

Review of Recommendations
August 27, 2015
Drivers of an Updated Approach

• Partner impetus to develop shared measurement approaches (e.g. at HICD Pro launch event, AIDSTAR II closing)

• Respond to findings of Learning Agenda on Local Capacity Development

• Improve project design by monitoring links from organizational-level change to system change and development results
• **What gets measured, counts** is often true in USAID

• Emphasis on partnership, local ownership has renewed focus on capacity development

• Crux issue: how to measure it?
AVOID measuring “capacity” as potential

- Limited use, often misleading
- Easy to distort energy toward “best practices” signaling

Isomorphic mimicry...

...capability traps
Agency-accepted shared approach to measuring organizational capacity development and its link to higher-order results of interest:

- Developed in wide consultation
- Incorporated into guidance as a mix of recommendations and requirements
- Seeded through pilots across sectors
- Supported with tools and TA
Recommendations: Measuring Capacity Development

1. Measure centered on **performance**

2. Measure performance across multiple domains: effective achievement and **adaptive functions**

3. Measure at two levels: **organization ↔ local system**

4. Emphasize the **contribution** of programming to change (many contributing factors ≠ attribution)

5. Account for **systems effects**:
   - Unforeseen effects/outcomes
   - Alternative influences/causes of change
   - Multiple, non-linear pathways to contribution toward change
1. Measure Performance

- Measure for learning and higher-order accountability
- Capacity developed $\rightarrow$ **improved performance**
- Capacity improved or increased… “so what?”

**Strengthen Capacity, Measure Performance**
2. Measure Performance Holistically: Effective and Adaptive Functions

- Achieving Results
- Meeting Standards

- Delivering Services
- Enhancing Reach

- Mobilizing Resources
- Increasing Social Capital

- Engaging Stakeholders
- Learning

Adapted from FACT
3. Measurement: Ties From Org to System

- We strengthen any organization so it can operate in and influence a wider system

- To monitor, must measure both change in organization and change in system

- Surfaces (and adjusts) the theory of change

- Performance and capacities depend on role that organization plays
4. Look for Our Contribution (not attribution)

- Systems (organizational) change is complex - doesn’t always emerge in the same way from the same steps.

- Paradigm for systems-focused interventions, such as capacity development, is **contribution** – our work is one important influence among many.

- To understand **contribution** to results, must look at both change in organizations/relationships and change in the system.

- Important to have realistic claims of contribution – easy to overstate.
5. Account for Systems Effects

- Unforeseen effects/outcomes
- Alternative influences/causes of change (incentives, organizational culture, other actors…)
- Multiple, non-linear pathways to contribution toward change

3 Principles of Complexity-Aware Monitoring

Learn more at:
http://usaidlearninglab.org/complexity-aware-monitoring/basics
Significance of Recommended Approach: Aligns Incentives

- Measures what we care most about – performance change and resulting impact
- Easier to adopt “best fit” approach, reduces pressures for cookie-cutter models
- Clearer communication to and through partners
Significance of Recommended Approach: Enables Collective Learning

- Allows comparison of different approaches, including other systems interventions
- Better trace ways capacity development matters, over longer term
- Bringing into sharper focus when and how of different approaches
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Assessment</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th>Capacity Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand likelihood and magnitude of potential negative occurrences; define risk mitigation and/or management plan</td>
<td>Ongoing and routine data collection to reveal whether desired results are being achieved</td>
<td>Efforts to improve the capability of a given partner to perform, sustain, and self-renew over time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexes 1 & 2: Bibliography and Background

- Citations in literature linking recommendations to scholarship and practitioners

- Describes internal and external process to develop these materials

- Highlights cross-Agency group reflecting diverse sectors that support capacity development
Annexes 3 & 4: Example Project M&E Plans

• Reminder: Project (USAID-speak for multiple, related awards/activities)

• Two Examples in two sectors

• Model how to apply these recommendations without providing cut-and-paste boilerplate

• Help articulate fit with regular and required reporting
Annex 5: Example Solicitation Language

- Easy ways to ask offerers/respondents to apply recommendations

- Applicable to different forms of solicitation & award

- Aim: implementer can customize proposed response as appropriate for solicitation
• Continued internal sharing of recommendations and related package of tools

• Building recommended approach into Agency training courses on M&E, Project Design

• Early adoption from some flagship central mechanisms
Group Exercise

1. We have 6 flipcharts around the room to form 6 groups
2. Select a reporter to share back
3. Discuss the recommendations – does this resonate with your experience? (30 min)
4. Note on flipchart – top areas of endorsement, areas of concern; pick top 3 of each
5. Next, considering the solicitation language and other materials – pick top 3 steps to make this practical