

On the occasion of the first Outcome Mapping course by MDF, 18-20 September 2007 in Ede

## Outcome Mapping and Logical Framework Analysis

### 1. Introduction

Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) has nestled itself deeply in the minds of many development practitioners. This is especially so with actors in those projects, programmes and organisations which receive funding from multi-lateral, bi-lateral and civil society/NGO-support donors for whom LFA (or components of it) is a standard tool used for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME). Being brought into contact with a new PME paradigm, inevitably makes them to compare that paradigm with LFA.

This was also the case with Outcome Mapping, as was manifested on the occasion of the MDF-OM course in Ede. Outcome, in fact, is a word from the language of the Logical Framework. As with LFA, outcome refers to desired changes which indicate progress toward large-scale development goals. However, on the *nature* of the desired change, both approaches differ fundamentally, and for Outcome Mapping users it is important to have a good understanding of the differences between the two frameworks.

Discussions have been going on and papers have been written about differences and resemblances between LFA and OM. We refer here to the 2001 document by Terry Smutylo: "*Crouching Impact, Hidden Attribution: Threats to Learning in Development Programs*", many arguments of which are repeated in the International Development Research Centre book "*Outcome Mapping; Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*" (Sarah Earl, Fred Carden & Terry Smutylo). We also refer to the ongoing Outcome Mapping Learning Community discussions online ([www.outcomemapping.ca](http://www.outcomemapping.ca)) whereby OM-users worldwide share and discuss experiences, exchange lessons learned and best practices, and explore problems and issues.

### 2. Outcome: the Logical Framework Analysis paradigm

OM and LFA are based on different perceptions of the nature of social change. LFA has its merits and is also criticized. LFA (in the way it is usually practiced) views change, in the form of 'outcome' and 'impact', as a linear, predictable, measurable and straightforward 'logical' relationship between a programme and the change it wishes to effect<sup>1</sup>. Following from this view, in LFA, it is assumed that the results which development programmes aim for are to a great extent within the programme's control.

In development terms, this typically means providing evidence that a particular project or programme has brought about a sustainable improvement in the environment or in the well-being of a large number of targeted beneficiaries. Therefore, if improvement occurs, it will be 'attributed' to the actions of the programmes. LFA requires to measure, demonstrate, and be accountable for development impact. Consequently, the search for outcome and impact has become a dominant part of the development discourse. Nevertheless when donors and recipients try to be accountable for achieving outcome and

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<sup>1</sup> The MDF teaching material about LFA (based on the stakeholder and problem analysis methods envisioned in the erstwhile Objective Oriented Project Planning methodology) differs from the stereotype of the Logical Framework Analysis presented here, a point which will be treated in section 4 : Combination of LFA and OM.

impact, they are severely limiting their potential for understanding how and why outcome and impact occur.

The reliance on LFA or Results Based Management (RBM) in the planning, management and evaluation of each programme has created a bureaucratization in programming. In this process, it seems that agreements and partnerships based on *shared values* have been replaced by bureaucratic trust based on *plans, budgets, and accounts* (Roche, 1999). This emphasis on plans, budgets, and accounts has implications for the organisation of interventions:

- the way how partners are selected;
- the ways in which relationships with partners develop;
- the kind of programmes which are initiated;
- the ways in which those programmes are designed and implemented; and
- the type of management and reporting that is expected of programme partners.

Overall, this shift in approach leads to structures that foster the belief among managers that appropriately updated planning and reporting documents greatly improve the quality of development projects, as well as enhancing the role of the managers in the achievements of results.

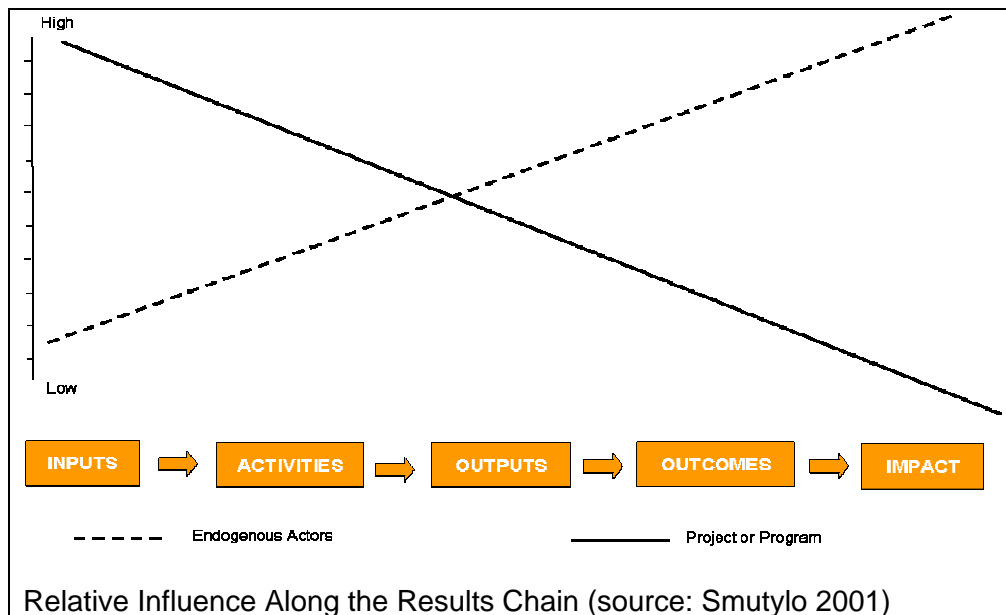
Development agencies feel pressured to attribute to their interventions the changes that have occurred. In the case of LFA, in seeking to demonstrate how programmes have led to development outcome, one does not examine or learn about how the contributions or involvement of others (including donors, recipients, other organisations, and participants), and the (social, cultural, natural) environment in which those interventions occur, fit together to create development results. One does not examine or learn how 'outcome' comes about. What is change exactly, and how do target groups or recipients of donor-support really change, if they do so? How then do they use or apply or incorporate (or not) in their lifeworld the products or services which the programmes provide? What are all the factors and actors involved in such a change-process? Will the 'development' be sustainable?

Obviously, at outcome-level, unlike at input<sup>2</sup> level, 'results' are not very much under the control of programmes any more. With other words, once local participants become increasingly involved and active, the balance of influence should begin to change. See figure below.

If the project progresses as intended, local actors become more committed and their roles become more prominent. For the outcomes of the project to be relevant and to lead to long term, large scale, sustainable benefits – i.e. create impact – then local ownership and influence and control need to become effective and dominant. Results move to the impact stage as project influence is replaced by the beneficiaries' (or other stakeholders') activities and institutions. Thus a paradox exists for external agencies under pressure to take credit for results at the 'outcomes' and 'impact' stages: for it is at these stages where their influence, if they have been successful, is low and decreasing relative to that of other actors (Smutylo, 1991).

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<sup>2</sup> Such as budget and project design, choice of partners, location, time, etc.



### 3. Outcome: the Outcome Mapping paradigm

With Outcome Mapping, ‘outcomes’ are seen as changes in behaviour, the reason being that development’s primary concern is the way people behave toward each other and towards the environment. Changes in these behaviours are accomplished by and for the benefit of people and their ability to contribute to the achievement of a common vision. Although a programme can influence the achievement of outcomes, it cannot control them because ultimate responsibility rests with the local players and processes. With Outcome Mapping, programmes identify the actors with whom they will work and then devise strategies to help equip these selected partners with the tools, techniques, and resources to contribute to the development process.

Outcome Mapping is seeking to understand the ways in which organisations contribute to change rather than trying to attribute change to a single organisation or intervention. Changes in behaviour, relationships, activities and/or actions of the people, groups, and organisations with whom a programme works directly, can be logically linked to a programme’s activities although there is not usually a direct causal connection.

The heart of Outcome Mapping is captured in two key innovations: a) linking result measurement to the behaviour of the programme’s primary partners; and 2) the use of progress markers (indicators) for articulating the traceable logic of the intended behaviour changes. Those partners who apply Outcome Mapping enthusiastically, apparently do so because it enables them to tell their story in ways that realistically reflect the conditions and challenges they face, i.e. with respect to the changes in project partner’s behaviour: namely (in OM terminology) ‘expected’, ‘desired’ and ‘loved to see happen’.

Outcome Mapping recognizes that different direct partners operate within different logic and responsibility systems, and that their lifeworld is concerned with many fields which have nothing to do with the programme. OM is not based on a cause-effect framework; rather, it recognizes that multiple, nonlinear (social, cultural, environmental) events lead to change. It seeks challenges rather than pretending to solve problems. Like in other PME approaches, it defines and monitors strategy and progress.

Instead of attempting to monitor and evaluate all elements of the programme with one set of tools, OM defines three distinct but highly interrelated sets of activities and changes: 1. the behaviour of direct partners, 2. the programme's strategies and 3. organisational practices – in order to enhance understanding of how the programme has contributed to change. By linking organisational assessment with the monitoring of changes in boundary (direct) partners, OM recognizes that the programme will also have to change during the course of an initiative. OM encourages a programme to think of itself as a dynamic, learning organisation whose goals, methods, and relationships with partners need to be reconsidered and adjusted regularly.

#### **4. Where LFA and OM may be combined**

Both LFA and OM are planning, monitoring and evaluation methodologies based on a coherent logic. They are both concerned with projects and programmes (OM also with organisations), and their typical cycles. They can both be called tools for Project/Programme Cycle Management (PCM). It seems that the scope for use of LFA is broader than that of OM: LFA can be used for any kind of intervention (including engineering works, advocacy, sector support programmes), while OM seems to be more appropriate for smaller scale projects focused on behavioural change. In LFA, social change is addressed implicitly, while in OM it is addressed explicitly. Unfortunately, LFA is not always used as a participative methodology, and seldom as a learning tool. The procedures of OM seem to guarantee (especially) the learning process.

In spite of the fact that the 'outcome paradigms' sketched above, show major differences in character, there are also some resemblances between LFA and OM, at least in form, terminology and procedure. This is due to the fact that they are both PCM instruments. This situation raises the question (among many OM trainees) whether perhaps the one can be converted into the other, or whether they can be combined in one way or the other.


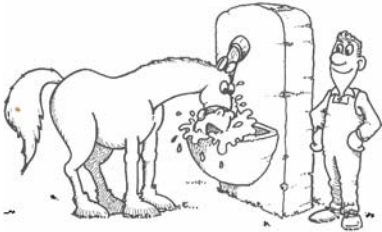
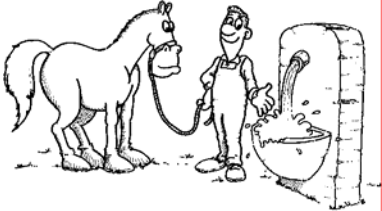

Before discussing this issue of combination, MDF wants to clarify a few points about the way it treats the Logical Framework:

1. LFA, according to MDF, is a PCM tool which can only be effectively used by an organisation which may be typified as a learning organisation (flexibly adapting to changing realities in the real world where the projects take place, and efficient in developing standard formats for documents throughout the cycle).
2. LFA is a participative approach, in which all possible stakeholders concerned by a certain well-defined development issue ('the subject') are identified in the initial stage of identification. These stakeholders together analyse the environment in which particular 'problems' (i.e. a negative perception of reality) play a role. This 'problem analysis' determines the relevance of a future intervention for these particular stakeholders. An assembly of other stakeholders would eventually lead to another project.
3. MDF clearly distinguishes between 'outputs' (products and services provided by a project or programme) and 'outcome' (the reaction of the beneficiaries: whether they make use of those products and services in the appropriate way). Beforehand, even while 'solutions' (a positive perception of reality) have been analysed by all stakeholders together, one can not be sure about 'outcome' as this depends on human factors (sociological, political, economical, cultural). Some of these 'external' factors can be identified, and these determine the 'assumptions' in the Logical Framework. If other external (and internal) factors exist and form

obstacles, outputs will simply not lead to outcome (= the beneficiaries' tangible benefits - the achievement of the project/programme purpose). In such a case, the factors (and actors) have to be studied, and other 'outputs' or 'results' will have to be looked for<sup>3</sup>. The adjusting of the LF during implementation (unfortunately often omitted) determines the tool's flexibility, making it appropriate as a learning tool.

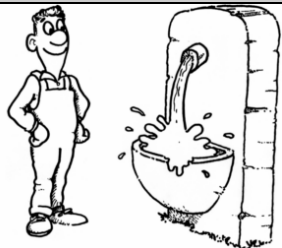

4. 'Impact', in the MDF perception, is not automatically achieved in a linear, logical way bottom upwards in the objective/result chain of a project or programme. We say: outcome may *contribute* to the 'overall objectives' or impact, but impact depends on many other factors too.

MDF clarifies the above points with the help of pictures of the Happy Horse<sup>4</sup> (start from bottom):

	Horse Parable <sup>i</sup>	Intervention Logic	Explanation
	<b>Happy Horse</b>	<b>Overall Objective/s</b>	<b>Importance of the project for the society</b>
	<b>Drinking horse</b>	<b>Project Purpose</b>	<b>Reason why beneficiaries need the project</b>
	<b>Horse present at the fountain</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>What will be delivered by the project</b>
	<b>Leading the horse to the fountain</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>What stakeholders and beneficiaries will do</b>

<sup>3</sup> For a systematic study of factors and actors in such a situation, the LFA as such does not provide tools.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from: ILO, 1995, design, monitoring and evaluation of technical co-operation programmes and projects. A training manual.

	Horse Parable <sup>i</sup>	Intervention Logic	Explanation
	Fountain and the man	Resources	Inputs required for the activities
	Thirsty horse	Problem analysis	Starting situation

**“One can lead a horse to water, but one cannot make it drink” (English proverb)**

The picture is shown with separate cards, each with one image. The challenge of this picture-show, is to:

1. Take away the card Project Purpose (outcome), the drinking horse, and ask the question: If, in spite of the Resources, Activities and Results, the horse is not going to drink (“... one cannot make it drink”), then what is wrong in our story, in our logic?
2. Take away the Happy Horse card and replace it with a Sad Horse card (the horse is still not happy), then what is wrong in our story?

In both cases the participants must admit that the logic of the ‘intervention logic’-chain is not obvious: results (outputs) do not automatically and in a linear way lead to outcome, and outcome does not automatically lead to impact.

For MDF too, outcome in LFA depends on human behaviour: if they use the outputs correctly, their behaviour has changed. But this behaviour is not easily predictable – not even for the partners or beneficiaries themselves. There is no automatism in change, even if the project-outputs seem very beneficial. Change usually implies changing power relations in social situations, or a change in status or interests; change has ‘winners’ and ‘losers’. Therefore, even if all partners or stakeholders are initially convinced to be able and motivated to attain desired outcome and impact, they may react differently when that change is about to occur, even at the cost of profits for all (this is often seen as the ‘illogical’ part of behaviour).

The ideas described above reflect the principles underlying Outcome Mapping. If LFA took as outcome (project/programme purpose) the effect of behavioural change of key boundary (direct) partners, and if indicators (or progress markers) were used to make that behavioural change evident, and its effect for beneficiaries “measurable”, then Outcome Mapping would be part of a flexible LFA – the two may then even coincide.

This can only be feasible if the sort of “project” intended with the LFA, has to do with outcomes (or outcome challenges) defined as *changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organisations with whom the project works directly (called boundary partners)*. Such a project may then identify for each partner’s

outcome challenge so-called 'progress markers' – these represent a change model (*expect to see, like to see, love to see*), and are used in the planning as well as in the monitoring process. They are generally framed as follows: *Who? Is doing what? How?* They can be considered as a set of outcome indicators, which makes the (complexity and logic of the) change process tangible.

Outcome Mapping 'outputs' in the LFA are represented in a 'strategy map' for each outcome challenge: strategies/activities used by the programme to influence the boundary partners (directly, through training, through other partners, or through the environment).

In monitoring, like in planning, Outcome Mapping focuses on the same three processes: 1. boundary partners' achievement of progress markers (using an outcome journal), 2. the programme's strategy (using a strategy journal), and 3. its organisational practices (using a performance journal). The third element would be an enrichment in LFA, since the 'logic' of the LF (amongst a number of other disadvantages) does not cover organisational aspects<sup>5</sup>.

So, OM could be used inside a LFA (not the reverse), provided that the LFA concerns a project focused on changing behaviour (which most development processes are all about), and not on, for instance, macro-economic policies, which seem to be de-linked from real persons. It is not recommended to translate OM terminology directly into LFA terminology and *vice versa*, since the terms may have a different meaning in each of the paradigms. OM can be applied inside a development chain, and also in a funding partner-executing partner chain relationship, but there does not exist anything like 'interlocked outcome maps'.

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<sup>5</sup> MDF uses for organisational performance and change processes another tool: the Integrated Organisation Model.

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