Discussion Paper on the Monitoring and Evaluation of UN-assisted Communication for Development Programmes

—Recommendations for Best Practice Methodologies and Indicators—

Background Paper

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has been prepared as a background paper for the 11th U.N. Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, to be held in Washington from 11-13 March 2009 and serves as a discussion paper for the first theme of the Round Table: "Assessing and Demonstrating the Impact of Communication for Development." U.N. agencies recognise Communication for Development (C4D) as a central tool in supporting development, and in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As a consequence, much work has been carried out to understand and embed the principles of C4D within the U.N. structure. However, despite an emphasis on C4D programmes and also on results-based management within the United Nations, there are currently no commonly-agreed tools for assessing the impact of C4D programmes. This paper is designed to help round table participants explore the key issues surrounding C4D, consider case studies and best practice methodology, in order to identify key questions and indicators at the roundtable, from the draft indicators proposed at the end of this paper.

1. **Interpretation of C4D** Despite a greater appreciation of C4D within the United Nations, there is still some conceptual confusion regarding its practical interpretation and application. The first section addresses this confusion in the context of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), locating C4D programmes under two broadly-defined, human rights-based frameworks: diffusion or behaviour change communication and participatory communication, or communication for social change. These approaches are underpinned by a wide range of information and communication technologies. There is no single definition of C4D for the complex field of development work, but evidence suggests that combining elements of both approaches can be the most effective way to ensure the success of a C4D process.

2. **Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation** Initiatives that simultaneously employ several levels of communication require a more complex, nuanced approach to M&E. There is a wide range of analytical tools available to and employed by evaluators yet there is no systematic use of M&E to demonstrate impact. Moreover, interviews have revealed that there is often uncertainty over what this entails and which approaches are best. This section considers the definitions of "monitoring" and "evaluation" and highlights the benefits of an effective M&E strategy adopted at the outset of a C4D initiative, emphasising that formative evaluation and planning are as critical to impact as subsequent M&E of outcomes and impacts. Building on the categories outlined in the first section, the paper discusses the principal tools and approaches, from conventional, quantitative research techniques to more intricate, participatory processes. As such, it provides an overview and analysis of M&E approaches to inform thinking on best practice methodologies, and which practitioners and policy makers alike can refer to when thinking about the most appropriate toolkit for an intervention. Finally, it considers these approaches in the context of managing for development results (MfDR) and country ownership of results.

3. **Challenges to Monitoring & Evaluating C4D** The third section considers the principal challenges associated with measuring C4D that discussions over best practice

must take into account. These challenges are generated by the nature of development aid itself and the complexity of C4D.

4. **Research, Monitoring and Evaluation in Practice** An examination of the practical application of C4D and strategies to monitor and evaluate progress and impact follows. A theoretical model is used to illustrate how programme goals, results and activities link in to research, monitoring and evaluation. Various case studies are used to illustrate how initiatives have used a variety of approaches to gather informative results and feed these back into programme design. Others highlight some of the practical challenges to M&E even within a highly successful programme, such as limited understanding at senior stakeholder level of the implications and requirements of participatory M&E, organisational weaknesses and country capacity and lack of resources.

5. **Best Practice Methodologies and Conclusions** A combination of research and information gathered from interviews with practitioners at policy and field level is used in this section to make recommendations for best practice methodology, when faced with several significant challenges to effective M&E in the field. The section discusses the issues of causality/attribution; working within the resources available for analysing an initiative (which are often very poor); using M&E to establish all the outcomes of an initiative; combining approaches to provide enhanced feedback and avoid a conceptual divide; reporting for and aligning results with donors and funding bodies while nonetheless maintaining ultimate objectivity; working through country-led systems; identifying the strategic intent in order to give an initiative a clearer direction; making planning, monitoring and evaluation key parts of any C4D initiative and ensuring that all the above considerations feed into real country ownership of results. The section proposes that a tailored toolkit approach to M&E of C4D is necessary in order to deal with the many complexities of this field. It emphasises the need for flexibility within any evaluation and discusses the strengths of Most Significant Change, Outcome Mapping and the LogFrame as state of the art techniques that attempt to meet the above challenges. The section concludes by reiterating that qualitative and quantitative tools are not mutually exclusive but should be used as complementary strategies for providing the most comprehensive, clear and pragmatic assessment and reporting of C4D.

6. **Draft Indicators** Section 6 moves on to consider the use of indicators for assessing impact across the broad remit of U.N. agency activities in the field of C4D. 5 principal C4D components are identified: the level of local awareness about the development programme and the issues covered by the initiative; evidence of direct impact as a result of the programme; participation and empowerment; the level of media coverage; and country capacity. Within each component, key questions, proposed indicators and guidance on methodology to verify the indicators are suggested. This framework for thinking about indicators has been designed to have practical application in the field and is proposed to guide discussion at the roundtable over how such an approach can be used across the U.N. system.

7. **Questions for the Roundtable** The paper concludes by proposing questions for roundtable participants to discuss in order to refine the suggested indicators and

consider strategies for their adoption. A critical part of such strategies and the successful adoption of indictors will be strong communication and coordination at all levels within the U.N. agencies in terms of continuing to enhance and cultivate modes of monitoring and evaluation for communication programmes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Experience has shown that development interventions are much more effective when they employ the strategic use of communications. In addition, a fully democratic society cannot function without clear channels of communication available to all. Because of this, communication as a means for development has been adopted by the United Nations as a central strategy in the global bid to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.[1]

The United Nations Inter-Agency Roundtables on Communication for Development are informal international forums for U.N. agencies working in the field of development communications to harmonize approaches, provide news on progress and share good practices. Although strictly a U.N. forum, outside participants, such as those from bilateral organizations, universities and NGOS are often invited to share their experiences and to participate in the discussions. The roundtables have been held every two years since 1986, under the aegis of a U.N. agency that is chosen by rotation. The 10th Roundtable took place in Addis Ababa in 2007.

Communication for development (C4D) is based on the premise that communication approaches and methodologies have a significant impact on the development and growth of individuals and communities. As development is driven by people, C4D efforts are being focused in the community while the United Nations is moving towards institutionalizing the concept and application of C4D. Aligned with these efforts, there is now a clear focus on the monitoring and evaluation of C4D. C4D is an under-resourced area within the United Nations and providing strong evidence of impact through effective M&E systems is a vital tool in securing funding, human resources and time for future work in this field. Results gathered from the practical application of C4D are also necessary to inform the development of communications strategies and to show accountability. While there is a large body of work on communication for development as an initiative in itself, there is less research into the monitoring and evaluation of C4D and a similar lack of documentation on the evaluation of these initiatives in the field. In order to move C4D into the mainstream U.N. agenda, there must be systematic efforts to fill this knowledge gap.

The nature of the development system is changing: from donor-driven approaches to country-led systems championed by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action; from project-based approaches towards a variety of aid modalities, focusing on aid effectiveness, capacity-building and ownership, through systemic harmonisation and alignment.[2] This shift makes the task of monitoring and evaluation

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[1] 'The Round Table reiterated that communication for development is critical for the success of the Millennium Development Goals.' "Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system." Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/130, including the recommendations of the tenth United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development. p.3.

[2] da Costa, P "Managing for and Communicating Development Results." Background Paper Prepared for the OECD Informal Network of DAC Development Communicators (DevCom Network) p.2-3.

harder, as it is increasingly difficult to attribute change to individual actors and to situate "impact" within the wider development system. This creates almost boundless scope for the definition of "results" in the results-based management systems of the U.N. agencies. Different agencies, stakeholders and participants expect different results. Discussions over a system-wide approach will need to reflect upon what types of results it needs to collect and report. At the point of identifying indicators, the paper will also make the distinction between C4D as the key approach for a development programme in itself and C4D as one facet of a broader programme.

This paper aims to propose recommendations for best practice methodology and indicators to measure C4D. It first explores the concept and process of C4D with a focus on M&E. Through research, case studies and personal interviews the paper examines and discusses the various approaches to monitoring and evaluation and the associated challenges with a view to highlighting some state of the art methodologies and determining best practice. Following this analysis, the paper identifies broad categories of indicators, which are proposed as the central theme for discussion alongside best practice methodology at the 11th Roundtable at the World Bank in Washington, DC in March 2009. These indicators are designed to focus on the effectiveness of communication as a tool and process for development rather than on the impacts of specific C4D programmes.

2. INTERPRETATION OF C4D

A brief examination of C4D initiatives in terms of theory, design and implementation is necessary in order to understand them in the context of M&E. The Rome Consensus holds Communication for Development to be "a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communication."[3]

There is still some conceptual confusion and disagreement over the practical interpretation of C4D, yet a degree of consensus must be reached in order to move C4D up the development agenda. The 8th U.N. roundtable in Managua identified three broad approaches to communication for development: behaviour change communication, communication for social change and advocacy communication.[4] While recognising the importance of this definition, this paper, in specifically considering the practical application of monitoring and evaluation approaches, will describe C4D initiatives under two headings: one-to-many, or diffusion communication; and two-way,

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[3] "World Congress on Communication for Development: Lessons, Challenges and the way forward." p.xxxiii.

[4] UNFPA "Communication for Development Roundtable Report. Focus on HIV/AIDS communication and evaluation." 8th Round table, 26-28 November2001, Managua. p.15

or participatory communication. It should be highlighted that the former approach does not preclude the process of two-way dialogue, but rather that less emphasis is placed upon it. Both frameworks are underpinned by a wide range of information and communication technologies. The third dimension, advocacy,[5] is more used by some agencies than others. Participatory in nature and rooted in collectively-organised, community action, advocacy, while often differing from other modes of two-way communication in its range of actors, will be considered, for the purposes of this paper, within the broad field of participatory communication for development.

2.1. Diffusion Communication

Initiatives based on diffusion theory use communication to carry out a transfer of information. "Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. Diffusion of innovations is a theory of how, why, and at what rate new ideas, spread through cultures."[6] A central component of many civic education initiatives, diffusion aims to provide individuals and their communities with the opportunities to make informed choices on issues that affect their lives.[7] An outcome-oriented approach geared towards a change in attitudes and consequent change in practice, this approach has evolved greatly, adopting a more holistic, human-rights based perspective to C4D, using increasingly sophisticated methods of marketing and education and a growing element of interpersonal communication. This interpersonal aspect has in several instances proven to be the critical catalyst for eventual action. It can also provide key local knowledge and understanding, to ensure that the programme is correctly directed and based upon premises that successfully translate into the values of the target audience. Similarly, ongoing local consultation during the project can ascertain to what extent communication elements are working, whether messages are reaching the intended sector and whether the approach can be modified for greater impact.

2.2. Participatory/ Behaviour and Social Change Communication

The shift in diffusion initiatives described above has prompted the emergence and consolidation of Communication for Behaviour and Social Change and other participatory processes within the field of C4D.[8]

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[5] Advocacy is defined by the United Nations as is defined as organized, often collective efforts involving networks and coalitions to influence public policy and attitudes to social norms on wide ranging issues. UNESCO "Towards a Common U.N. System Approach: The Role of Communication for Development in Achieving the MDGs." Background Paper prepared for the 10th U.N. Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development p.11

6 Everett Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, 1962; 1995 and others.

7 UNDP "Integrating Communication for Development [C4D]into the Common Country Assessment [CCA] and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework [UNDAF]" Background paper for Addis Ababa Roundtable follow-up meeting UNESCO, Paris, 3-4 December 2007 p.3

8 UNDP has, for instance, selected the Communication for Social Change Consortium as training vendor in C4D for its regional offices. CFSC Consortium – Current Projects.

Communication for Development (C4D) is a systematic, planned and evidence based **strategic process** that is intrinsically **linked** to **programme elements**; uses **consultation** and **participation** of children, families, communities and networks, and privileges local contexts; and relies on a **mix of communication tools, channels** and **approaches**, to **promote positive** and **measurable behaviour and social change**.[9]

C4D is a long-term process. While some results can be achieved in a short time frame, intrinsic behavioural and social change is a multi-year process, sometimes spreading over two or more generations.

In order to achieve desired behavioural and social change objectives, Communication for Development uses a **mix of four key strategies**:

– *Behaviour Change Communication (BCC)* – uses a combination of approaches, including social marketing and participatory communication, to help inform, influence and support households, community groups and opinion leaders for the adoption and sustained practice of desired behaviours. In general, BCC is considered more data driven, based on empirical evidence and able to demonstrate measurable results, sometimes in relatively shorter time frames.

– *Community-led Communication for Social Change (CFSC)* – seeks to engage and empower communities and networks to influence or reinforce social norms and cultural practices to create an environment that supports long-term sustainable change. It is *human resource intensive* and often requires investment over longer periods of time. Its results are usually measured in terms of processes and shifts in social norms or power relationships.

– *Social Mobilisation* – engages and motivates civic society (NGOs, community- and faith-based organizations/networks, etc.) around a common cause, to educate and provide support to communities and families.

– *Advocacy* – helps develop mechanisms to ensure that the perspectives, concerns and voices of children, women and men from marginalized groups, are reflected in upstream policy dialogue and decision making.

Results of Communication for Development interventions **can be measured by:**

– *Increased knowledge and awareness*
– *Improved and new skills*
– *Increased demand for products and services*
– *Improvements in service delivery (e.g. improved interaction between service providers and clients)*
– *Changes in behaviour and practices*
– *Shifts in attitudes, social norms and power relationships*
– *Enhanced self esteem, self efficacy[10]*

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9 UNICEF Concept Note, Communication for Development, Organisational Review Exercise: April 2007

[10] Ibid.

These processes work towards longer-term social change within communities, based on "a process of public and private dialogue through which people themselves define who they are, what they need and how to get what they need in order to improve their own lives. CFSC utilizes dialogue that leads to collective problem identification, decision making and community-based implementation of solutions to development issues."[11] While participatory initiatives still have a specific development objective as their outcome, the emphasis is largely upon the process of the intervention: "The act of people coming together to decide who they are, what they want and how they will obtain what they want...demonstrates success, especially for poor, previously marginalised or excluded people."[12] This encourages local ownership, shared responsibility and empowerment among communities while also creating the potential to impact upon policy and delivery at higher levels.[13] This approach includes advocacy communication as a tool to highlight policy issues at the decision-making level and to reduce the impact of forces that restrict or oppose the inclusive, participatory process.

2.3. Fluidity through the Spectrum

While the above approaches place different emphasis on design, process and outcome, it is crucial to recognise that there is in fact great potential for fluidity through the spectrum and the combining of C4D strategies for the greatest impact. Experience has shown that communities involved in participatory communication in development projects are more receptive and responsive to diffusion initiatives, while other cases have proved that a blending of strategies within an initiative can prove most effective. Rather than targeting one methodology, the key is to ensure that strategy design harnesses the power of C4D in every form throughout the development process. "Study after study has shown the futility of trying to pinpoint what exactly triggers, stimulates or sustains individuals and social groups to 'change'... Planners should always strive for a blend rather than seek or rely on the 'silver bullet.'"[14] When measured alone, a mass media message may have negligible direct results, but the same message can have significantly greater impacts when mediated through other channels of communication, such as interpersonal or group communication.[15]

However, initiatives that simultaneously employ many types and levels of communication necessitate a more complex and sensitive approach to monitoring and

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[11] Communication for Social Change Consortium - Our Mission.

[12] Gray-Felder, D in Figueroa, ME, Lawrence Kincaid, D, Rani, M, Lewis, G "Communication for Social Change: An Integrated Model for Measuring the Process and Its Outcomes" (Foreword)

[13] Servaes, J "Communication for Development: Making a Difference"

[14] Parks, W "Developing communication and social mobilization indicators to monitor behavioural outcomes." Background resource paper for the UNICEF ROSA Experts' Consultation on Strategic Communication for Behaviour and Social Change in South Asia, p.18

[15] Inagaki, N "Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development - recent trends in empirical research" p.35

evaluation. This will, in turn, impact upon the discussion of best practice evaluation and the potential for designing of a shared set of indicators.

2.4. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

The common denominator throughout these approaches is the use of a wide range of ICTs to deliver information and promote discussion and participation. These are the tools of most interventions. For instance, where a diffusion campaign will depend on a local radio station to educate through the stories of a regular soap opera, a participatory campaign may use a radio station to communicate timings and locations of community meetings, thereby promoting local dialogue.

However, ICTs also provide a very substantial opportunity for C4D in their own right. "The transformative capacity of ICTs facilitates information access and enables community participation; promotes the creation of enabling policy environments, innovative financing and multi-stakeholder partnerships, which are needed to reap the benefits."[16] The capacity of ICTs for development has increased dramatically in the past decade as access to and provision of technologies has democratized the use of communication channels across the developing world. ICTs allow C4D initiatives to cut across social divides such as gender and reach those most at risk of missing out on the information revolution while encouraging everyone to get involved in issues that affect their lives and their development.

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C4D in many forms offers an effective approach to achieving both specific programme goals and developing capacity for critical thinking, collective action and community responsibility. However, C4D programmes have by no means been successful across the board and those who favour a more commercial, economics-driven approach question their value. Yet the lesson to be learnt from various successes and failures within C4D operations is the critical need for thorough planning at the outset of a project. To increase and demonstrate the effectiveness of C4D, planning, monitoring and evaluation must play a critical role and be accorded the appropriate consideration and resources.

3. PLANNING, MONITORING & EVALUATION

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[16] United Nations System Report of the Director-General of UNESCO on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/130, including the recommendations of the tenth U.N. Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development p.4

The emphasis on results in the United Nations (along with the recognition of C4D as a significant element of the international drive to attain the MDGs) demands a clear and precise framework to analyse impact and demonstrate performance. [17]

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) provide tools for organisations to assess the performance of C4D programmes, through measuring progress and managing programme inputs and outputs to achieve the highest outcome results.   In the right context M&E establishes links between past, present and future interventions and results, and demonstrates accountability. It provides "critical information that empowers policymakers to make better-informed decisions, or, in the case of the MDGs, to target the appropriate resources and provide policy support for their achievement."[18] M&E also helps build country capacity for future development, organisation and learning.

Monitoring is a continuous process which undertakes to provide regular feedback regarding the development –direction, consistency, outputs – of a programme. Systematic monitoring can offer early indications of progress and success and can be used to identify the potential for improvement in service delivery.

Evaluation analyses the relevance, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of development efforts, based on agreed criteria and benchmarks. Ideally, systematic and objective study of programme design, implementation and results should aim to identify what works and why, highlight intended and unintended results, and provide strategic lessons for the future.[19] Evaluation can be undertaken both prior to an initiative (formative) and after it (summative). However, while most resources are directed towards summative evaluation, formative evaluation, planning and research is equally critical in providing baseline data, identifying desired outcomes and designing a project.

For monitoring and evaluation to be effective in the context of C4D, a common approach to harnessing the power of communication throughout the design, planning, monitoring and evaluation stages of any initiative must be pursued within the U.N. system. There is a strong case for integrating C4D into all U.N. programme development and for U.N. communicators therefore to be at the table from the outset, working alongside results professionals, programme managers, M&E specialists and statisticians to ensure that C4D indicators are included in the wider picture of results-based management.[20]

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[17] This is clearly reflected in a survey of U.N. agency staff involved with C4D initiatives carried out in preparation for the 11th C4D Roundtable, which expresses the crucial need for well-documented evidence proving the value of C4D. *"The added value of C4D to accelerate results is not well known"; "collect good practices and evidence of how C4D contributes to impact and showcase these during high level meetings with decision makers"; "A solid evidence base is an essential precondition to acceptance of C4D as a core strategy of successful development."* World Bank / The Communication Initiative (draft): "Institutionalizing Communication for Development within the U.N. system" Executive Summary

[18] Segone, M (ed.) UNICEF *"New Trends in Development Evaluation"* p.12

[19] "The Evaluation Policy of UNDP." Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund. (Annual Session 2006) p.5

[20] Da Costa,P. Correspondence with consultant.

With a degree of confusion over the concept and practical application of C4D across the United Nations, there is also a certain divergence within the system as to what proper monitoring and evaluation of C4D entails and what it should achieve. This discrepancy is exacerbated by the wide range of analytical tools that are available to and employed by the large number of U.N. partners in the MDG and national development goal projects: "Some methodologies meet the needs of economists, some produce other kinds of quantitative evidence, and some produce qualitative evidence, which can be useful for assessing the achievement of objectives that are widely desired but hard to quantify, such as empowerment."[21]

Where some M&E strategies are designed to obtain clean, quantitative results, measuring inputs against outputs and outcomes, participatory analyses of C4D initiatives focus more on processes. The extent to which an initiative fosters community learning, decision-making, critical self-analysis and collective action – the process- is as significant as the development objective itself. Accordingly, M&E needs to include a far broader range of more qualitative factors: "points of resistance to change; how organisations both constrain and empower people with regard to change; those aspects of change potential that are limited to certain contexts and those that are transferable across contexts; how innovations gain leverage within social and political structures; and how people actually do (or do not) change behaviour patterns." [22] Social changes can often be too fluid, too long-term or too intangible to quantify in more traditional ways and require a similarly nuanced mode of analysis, which makes producing data that can be used in a results-based management system more challenging.

3.1. Commonly Used Approaches to Monitoring and Evaluation

This section provides an overview of the main approaches currently employed in the field of M&E, which have application to C4D and some of which are already used by the United Nations. It is included because research has shown a lack of awareness and understanding relating to some approaches among certain agencies. This applies predominantly to the more participatory, complex methods and is not the case across the board. The section will outline the M&E approaches, discussing their strengths and weaknesses and any barriers to their application in order to provide the grounding for a discussion of best practice methodology and inform the dialogue over indicators for assessing impact.

– **Diffusion Based Tools and Approaches to M&E**

At one end of the scale, communication initiatives are often able to use a variety of fairly conventional, mostly quantitative research techniques to obtain and analyse statistical findings. The below examples are not intended as an exhaustive list but

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[21] World Bank "World Congress on C4D. Lessons, Challenges and the Way Forward." p.98-99

[22] Segone, M (ed.) UNICEF *"New Trends in Development Evaluation"* p.10

rather a summary, in alphabetical order, of some of the most prominent methods, between which there is some degree of overlap.

Behaviour change comparisons/Behavioural Surveillance Surveys — A fairly straightforward approach to evaluation, these involve close observation of the community to determine whether a campaign has changed behaviour patterns. However, such evaluations when carried out in isolation may be inadequate representations of intervention impact as they cannot take into account any external factors that influence the subject under observation.

Cost Benefit/Cost Effectiveness Analysis — These analyses assess the cost of a programme against the costs and or perceived benefits of its output. Where cost-benefit measures inputs and outcomes in monetary terms, cost-effectiveness measures inputs in monetary terms and outcomes in qualitative terms. [23] In a results-based environment where competition for funds is tight and donors want to see the most efficient use of their resources, this can be a useful tool in demonstrating success.

Experimental Impact Evaluation Studies — Impact evaluation studies enable the analyst to assess a group's awareness of a specific issue and track their behaviour through data collection and interviews. Studies range in scope and duration dependent upon the resources available. In its simplest form, a study will analyse the behaviour of a group after an intervention. It can be enriched by comparing these findings with a formative study of the same group. The use of a control group in either method will provide further detail and help to isolate the impact of the intervention itself.

Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviours, and Practices (KABP) Surveys — Such research can be used to assess a community's knowledge prior to, and quantify the change in knowledge during and after a C4D intervention. Using well-established tools of market research such as surveys produced for distribution among the community, KABP surveys are most useful in message-based campaigns but used on their own lack the depth and insight provided by more qualitative methods.

Logical Framework — The LogFrame is a tool for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating an initiative within a framework described by linear, logical programming. In identifying expected (logical) links between inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impact, performance indicators for each stage of the chain can be established to assess whether the expected change is taking place. In similar fashion, those designing and implementing the initiative can flag up potential risks or obstacles to achieving the desired impact.[24] The use of the LogFrame ranges from a simple summary of programme expectations to an effective monitoring tool for reviewing and reorienting a programme towards greater success and to an objective basis for summative evaluations. If or when stakeholders are engaged it can also encourage a

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[23] World Bank. "Monitoring and Evaluation: Some Tools, Methods and Approaches" p.20

[24] World Bank. "Monitoring and Evaluation: Some Tools, Methods and Approaches" p.18

level of participation and local ownership. It arguably has some limitations as a representational device: within the framework it can be difficult to include multiple causal pathways and interactions, for instance, in representing the extent and/or impact of participation, and where C4D initiatives encompass a larger field of activity these problems are exacerbated.[25] Nonetheless, in situations where a comprehensive, well-funded evaluation is not possible, several leading M&E specialists argue that the LogFrame really comes into its own.[26]

Media coverage analysis analyses the amount and content of particular issues within the media to ascertain how and how much a message is being communicated.

Policy change analysis monitors changes to government policy and legislation on particular issues as an indication of whether an initiative is influencing attitudes and behaviour at policy level, increasing the potential for changes to flow down to local level.

Propensity Score Matching — A recently developed statistical tool that is rapidly gaining ground as a useful way to refine estimations of the effects of C4D when more usual controls, such as pre- and post intervention surveys or control groups are not possible. A PSM approach would start by assessing the likelihood that individuals will be exposed to a campaign. The evaluation team then applies this propensity to the results of a survey on the incidence of desired change within a smaller group, in order to create a larger vision of the behaviour change. A campaign is deemed to have been effective when it has influenced the behaviour of those who were not previously predisposed to the change in question.[27]

Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys — PETS provide a method for monitoring an initiative, and are advocated by the World Bank as a means to provide a quantitative diagnosis of service delivery and to assess accountability through the team. PETS track the flow of public funds from their release to their arrival at a development project to ensure the budget is implemented in a predictable and controllable way. As part of a broader survey they can be a useful tool for improving a service but do not constitute a comprehensive M&E tool. They also tend to be time-consuming and costly.[28]

Rapid Rural Appraisal — A qualitative alternative to measuring attitudes and behaviour based on information collected from a few key informants via questions and the discussion of ideas, this method developed in response to the perceived problems of outsiders missing or misunderstanding local people in the context of development work. While it provides detailed qualitative information, the scope of information

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[25] Davies,R "Social Network Analysis as an Evaluation Tool: Experiences with International Development Aid Programmes" p.1

[26] Interview with Will Parks

[27] World Bank. "World Congress on Communication for Development. Lessons, Challenges, and the Way Forward." p.97

[28] World Bank. "Monitoring and Evaluation: Some Tools, Methods and Approaches" p.18

gathering may not be wide or random enough to act as a baseline for experimental design and stand up to statistical scrutiny.[29]

Regression Analysis — A statistical tool for analysing the nature of a relationship between two variables, regression analysis and multiple regression analysis can be used to describe the effect of an initiative upon two or more independent variables. The very strength of regression analysis is its ability to isolate cause and effect despite variability in the data. However, its main weakness lies in the fact that it relies upon certain assumptions, which, if incorrect can undermine the findings.

Tracking surveys examine the reach and understanding of key messages by tracking their progress from design to dissemination via various communication capacities.

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In the appropriate situation, these approaches, either alone or in combination, can provide informative analysis regarding the fundamental objective, methodology and outcome of a C4D programme. However, their tendency to focus on quantitative data and statistics often fails to provide the depth necessary for understanding more complex C4D initiatives and does not always allow for other unexpected outcomes. Conditions may require more than the above can offer and this is the area where methods with more subtle and nuanced elements add value.

- **Participatory Tools and Approaches to M&E**

In the context of promoting dialogue and building capacity towards community empowerment and ownership, C4D initiatives should always aim to include a level of participatory analysis. "Empowerment is possible only if community members critically reflect on their experiences and understand the reasons for failure and success."[30] Reflection at stakeholder level can not only generate a greater appreciation of process and results but also help a community articulate its development needs, and move towards designing and implementing future projects. Importantly, it fosters learning amongst key stakeholders and should fuel organisational learning and development. As such, the strengths of these approaches lie not only in providing a method for data gathering, but also in creating a framework for decision-making. It is important to observe that it is not the methods in themselves that are participatory: rather it is how they are applied, which can be in more or less participatory ways. Certain methods do lend themselves to participation more than others and these tend to be qualitative in nature, although not exclusively so.   The leading approaches are described below in alphabetical order.

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[29] DFID "Monitoring and Evaluating Information and Communication for Development (ICD) Programmes - Guidelines" p.14

[30] Waisbord, S "Family Tree of Theories, Methodologies and Strategies in Development Communication" p.21

Ethnographic Action Research (EAR) — This continuous process of M&E has been developed specifically for Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) initiatives to analyse and improve how they work within local social networks. EAR should be built into an ICTs development initiative from the outset, so that a research culture encouraging knowledge–gathering and reflection combines with and contributes continuously to opportunities for project development.[31] Tools include observation, individual and group interviews, self-documentation and questionnaires and aim for a high level of participation and inclusion at every stage. Monitoring and evaluation then aims to measure outcomes and effectiveness against baseline formative research. The approach provides the space and means to analyse unexpected outcomes and is most useful when an initiative is flexible enough to adapt to research findings. However, EAR can be very time-consuming and does not work where a short, fast evaluation is required at the start and/or end of an initiative. Moreover, it is not suited to one-off diffusion of information initiatives.

Most Significant Change (MSC) — A key methodology among participatory approaches, MSC involves many stakeholders in a continuous process throughout the programme cycle which both monitors progress and evaluates outcomes. It involves the collection of significant change stories and the reasons behind their selection at field level, followed by the systematic selection of the most significant of these by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The process of collecting and selecting stories encourages focus on both the stories of change and development themselves, and issues regarding implementation, cause and effect of strategy. The more regularly the MSC process is conducted from field level up, the more depth and understanding this form of monitoring and evaluation can bring to a project.[32] While MSC will initially provide more qualitative information, there is scope to quantify results, for instance in terms of which stories emerge most regularly and how these compare from one area to another.

Outcome Mapping focuses on one particular category of results - changes in the behaviour of people, groups, and organizations with whom a program works directly, providing a framework to understand these changes and assess efforts aimed at contributing to them. This approach reflects the fact that while a program can influence the achievement of outcomes, it cannot control them completely. The outcome mapping process starts by conceiving a well-structured plan: identifying the partners with whom the programme will work and devising strategies to help equip them with the tools, techniques, and resources to contribute to the development. The process is then monitored and evaluated in the same terms. For instance, to measure the impact of a clean water programme providing water filters, as opposed to simply counting the

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[31] Tacchi, J, Slater, D, Hearn, G (UNESCO) "Ethnographic Action Research. A User's Handbook developed to innovate and research ICT applications for poverty eradication."

[32] Davies, R, Dart, J, "The 'Most Significant Change' Technique. A Guide to its Use." Extra information taken from Hovland, I, "Successful Communication. A Toolkit for Researchers and Civil Society Organisations"

number of filters installed and measuring the change in contamination levels before and after their installation, the focus is on whether people responsible for the filters have the correct tools, knowledge and skills to monitor, repair and change the filters.[33] A supplement to more usual forms of M&E, it encourages evaluative thinking throughout the programme cycle and helps participants understand their goals in less rigid terms. Its particular strength lies in the fact that it is able to characterize and assess the contributions development programmes make to the achievement of outcomes, thereby engaging more openly and honestly with the issue of contribution analysis.

Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal — PRCA offers an increasingly participatory approach adapted from the Rapid Rural Appraisal method discussed above. It is "a truly participatory process whereby the concerned community is involved as an equal partner with the project formulation team in deciding what activities they will implement, how they will implement them, what communication channels will be used, what assistance they expect to receive from the project and what responsibilities they will assume to make the project work and be sustainable."[34] Widespread participation in simple evaluation methods, such as oral testimonies, interviews, group work[35] represents a rapid way to conduct a community-based communication assessment not only for planning purposes but also during and after an intervention.

Social Network Analysis — SNA involves the construction of network diagrams that focus on the structure of relationships ranging from local to global fields. Protagonists argue for its use as development programmes of all kinds can easily be conceptualised as networks and these in turn describe actors, relationships and behaviour patterns in terms which are easy to understand and possible to verify. Davies and other protagonists commend its value in evaluating development aid initiatives for several reasons: social network analysis focuses on social relationships; networks can be seen and analysed on many levels and on many scales; networks are not linear – thereby permitting greater depth and intricacy; there is a range of methods for describing networks; and there is a range of theories about social and other networks.[36] However, these same assets also raise the question of SNA's general applicability in field situations. The potential for great complexity and an abundance of network measures mean the biggest challenge in this approach is keeping it both simple enough to implement and sufficiently broad in scope to be of value.

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[33] Earl,S, Carden,F, Smutylo,T.(IDRC) "Brochure on Outcome Mapping: The Challenges of Assessing Development Impacts" and Hovland, I "Successful Communication. A Toolkit for Researchers and Civil Society Organisations" p.52

[34] The Communication Initiative. "SADC Regional Centre of Communication for Development." Extra information taken from Anyaegbunam, C, Mefalopulos, P, Moetsabi, T "Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal. Starting with the People. A Handbook."

[35] Ailish Byrne (ed.) (CFSC) "Measuring Change: A Guide to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication for Social Change." p.10

[36] Davies,R "Social Network Analysis as an Evaluation Tool: Experiences with International Development Aid Programmes"

Where more traditional, quantitative evaluation techniques fail to appreciate the increasingly complex nature of many development initiatives, these methods focus on innovative ways to assess less tangible outcomes alongside the principal objective and often use more qualitative analyses. There is some difference of opinion as to the value of quantitative against qualitative data, but increasingly there are calls for an appropriate combination of both. In terms of statistical evidence and securing funding from donors there is still a preference for "hard" data produced from standard, quantitative evaluation techniques.[37] As with the approaches to C4D themselves, these modes of M&E should not be seen as mutually exclusive, nor as rigidly defined in every case, rather as a complementary set of methods that can be adapted and when used in the right combination can provide a suitable strategy for pragmatic evaluation and clear reporting.

Participatory approaches to M&E focus heavily on analysing process goals such as dialogue and empowerment, yet each initiative still has a specific outcome goal to be measured. A diffusion of information programme designed in consultation with local community members may choose to assess the outcome goal with quantitative data, but will also need the analytical capacity to account for and understand the value added by the element of participation. As a tool for advocating for C4D's key role in the U.N. system, monitoring and evaluation must therefore seek to assess the extent to which participation meets both process and outcome goals in a more precise, comparable manner.

In order to drive C4D into the U.N. development framework at both theoretical and operational levels, the above methodologies must be considered in the context of achieving results and more specifically managing for development results (MfDR). Now a "centrepiece of global efforts to improve public management for achieving development results, MfDR is defined as '… a management strategy focused on development performance and on sustainable improvements in country outcomes. It provides a coherent framework for development effectiveness in which performance information is used for improved decision making, and it includes practical tools for strategic planning, risk management, progress monitoring and outcome evaluation.'" MfDR offers an effective model for thinking about results and has informed efforts in the OECD to embed communication strategies within its development agenda.[38] Where current practices within the United Nations are being, and can continue to be, more systematically positioned within the results agenda, there is real potential for progress within the institutionalization of C4D.

Yet the process of measuring C4D should not only produce results: it should also seek to ask and determine *whose* results they are. As the development system shifts focus and approach, so C4D evaluators should set out to ensure their systems of measurement involve the stakeholder fully and are driven by demand. As the

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[37] Jacobson,T "Participatory Communication: The Case for Quantitative Assessment" The Drum Beat 381.

[38] da Costa, P "Managing for and Communicating Development Results." Background Paper Prepared for the OECD Informal Network of DAC Development Communicators (DevCom Network)" p.5

understanding and appreciation of C4D grows within the broad field of development, the next step is to use and build upon current methodologies to harness the power of stakeholder participation in cultivating M&E, implementing and reporting on it. This feeds directly into the issue of ownership: specifically, the concept of building country capacity, of raising awareness and developing systems, so that local ownership of development becomes a realistic and tangible objective.[39] It is not only the processes of C4D initiatives themselves that have the ability to make communication available and give voice to those groups marginalized by social inequality, but also the way development agencies choose to evaluate these efforts. As discussed above, some approaches will have more natural scope to do this than others, but stakeholder communication, involvement and ownership should not be limited to methodologies that are more participatory in nature: efforts should be made to build this element into any evaluation practice. Such a policy, by implication, reiterates the recommendation made earlier that C4D specialists be involved at every stage of the development process, from the conception through to the evaluation of an initiative in order to integrate fully the communication process into the development framework. It is essential to take positive steps in this direction in order to both demonstrate the value communication can add to development systems on a global scale and to embed its principles within the U.N. operating framework.

4. CHALLENGES TO MONITORING AND EVALUATING C4D

Before moving on to consider some best practice approaches to analysing C4D initiatives, it is worth taking into account the fact that nearly all approaches to M&E in this field have to face certain difficulties posed by the very nature of C4D and development aid in general. The extent to which methodologies can overcome these challenges is of great import in determining those of most value to practitioners and should be taken into account when creating indicators for best practice.

- **CAUSALITY / ATTRIBUTION —** Evaluation teams continuously face the challenge of isolating the impact of a C4D programme from the influence of other political, economic and social factors. Without intervention the observed changes may have occurred anyway, at a lower level or slower pace. They may arise as a natural development/progression or could be stimulated by other factors such as private and public investment from domestic, international and traded resources, all of which drive development.

- **RESOURCES —** Constraints over resources such as funding, personnel and time do exist and can exert a significant amount of pressure on efforts to evaluate C4D programmes. Greater discussion of and possible ways to overcome these pressures are covered in the section below on best practice methodology.

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[39] da Costa,P Correspondence with consultant.

- **NATURE OF OUTCOMES —** As mentioned above, some process goals and outcomes such as empowerment, governance, dialogue and equality can be hard to measure and define in terms that can be used for analysis and comparison.

- **TOOLS OF MEASUREMENT – A LACK OF CONSENSUS —** Approaches to M&E differ greatly as does the information they provide. As a result, it may be difficult to compare studies that are quite similar in objective and process if they have been analysed using different methodologies. Moreover, how can we balance qualitative descriptions and subjective assessments of impacts with quantitative and more objective measures?

- **TIME FRAME —** In many areas targeted for development, such as agriculture and conservation, changes happen over long periods of time: setting/imposing an unrealistic time frame for impact evaluation would reduce the potential for providing the most complete and accurate results. Conversely, for an initiative conceived in a short time frame, out of necessity, such as humanitarian relief in a crisis situation, there may not be time to construct and implement a comprehensive M&E framework. And yet this is one area where the ability to reference tried and tested approaches, as guidance for future emergency interventions could be of most use.

- **DEFINING THE TARGET AUDIENCE —** When initiatives are designed using a medium with a broad reach, it is difficult to define a specific target audience, as in the case of radio or television campaigns or dialogues for broader social change.

- **GAINING ACCESS —** ICTs can offer impressive opportunities for development but not a panacea. Many prerequisites, such as prompt deregulation, effective competition among service providers, and targeted, competitive subsidies among service providers need to be put in place in order to reap the potential benefits. Care must be taken to ensure that ICTs provision does not simply serve to exacerbate existing economic and social divides and further marginalize the poor through a disparity of access. "Access to information through ICTs is a question not only of *connectivity* but also of *capability* to use the new tools and relevant *content* provided in accessible and useful forms."[40] Approaches to monitoring and evaluating ICTs initiatives must therefore give careful consideration to the enabling factors related to ICTs provision/access.

- **REPORTING FAILURE —** In searching for best practice methodologies, published studies have a bias towards successful initiatives which tend to be "boutique" in nature, with the consequence of under-reporting weaker projects even when they are most valuable for learning processes. In terms of M&E, this raises the question of their wider applicability and relevance.

- **REPORTING FOR THE LONGER TERM —** A recent study commissioned by the World Bank which examined 35 C4D initiatives found a significant lack of reporting

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[40] Torero,M, von Braun,J (IFPRI) "Information and Communication Technologies for the Poor" p.6

on the long-terms effects of communication, yet the outcomes of many C4D initiatives can only be assessed over a longer period of time than is often granted. In the World Bank study, only four initiatives provided a perspective beyond the immediate time-frame and, furthermore, these insights were not examined through rigorous analysis but instead through anecdotal accounts.[41]

- **CREATING SUSTAINABILITY AND CAPACITY —** Linked to this, sustainability and capacity development are central concepts in moving C4D up the international agenda. Tools promoting participation and empowerment can help to create a more sustainable development environment but again, more work needs to be done on reporting and developing this issue within the context of M&E. The reasons behind these gaps and limitations need careful consideration - in particular the general dearth of resources for sustained long-term M&E and related capacity development in this sector.

- **PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE INITIATIVES —** The nature of a C4D initiative itself can throw up difficulties in the field of M&E, as observed in two interviews.[42] Agencies are involved in a lot of preventative work to avoid a problem occurring as well as conventional development work to deal with a problem that already exists. However it is much harder to measure and assess the impact of preventative measures and it is very difficult to demonstrate impact when something *didn't occur* as the result of an initiative: how do you assess or measure what did not happen? This may be where tools such as story-telling can add significant value.

- **FROM THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE WHOLE —** By their nature, boutique-style projects as discussed above fail to tackle the root causes of poor service delivery and the structural changes necessary for development. One project at a time will not add up to development, especially if it is developed and implemented in isolation from the policies and responsibilities of the developing country government. Yet the continual strengthening of country capacity in the context of the Millennium Development Goals is a core component of efforts to institutionalise C4D within the United Nations and to define a common frame of analysis. While this is not of specific relevance to approaches to M&E, it is a crucial point that merits renewed emphasis at this stage.

- **GLOBALISATION —** The increasing intensity and velocity of relationships between countries[43]; the growing inequality within and between countries, and between individuals and groups- provides an overarching challenge to the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of C4D. The MDGs measure progress in tackling poverty by aggregating and averaging change at national level, but do not address issues of distribution. In this way some of the goals could in theory be

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[41] Inagaki, N "Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development – recent trends in empirical research." p.41

[42] Interviews conducted with World Bank staff.

[43] Held et al. *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*.

achieved without in practice reducing inequality.[44] All development campaigns must be addressed in this context and work towards alleviating these disparities, not increasing them.

– **ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES —** There are also significant organisational challenges that must be overcome before the United Nations can institutionalize C4D and the M&E processes within it. These relate to issues such as tensions between policy at the centre and operations at the field level and working through country-led systems; working with and answering to different donors or governments; operating under substantial time, personnel and funding restraints while needing to achieve and prove results; and ensuring that C4D is recognised as an effective development strategy by practitioners involved in other fields.

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The section on best practice methodology will discuss these and other such challenges in detail. The next section demonstrates how some C4D initiatives have tried to confront these issues in their approaches to evaluation.

5. RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN PRACTICE

The case studies below highlight how good practices of research, monitoring and evaluation can contribute to the success of a communication initiative and also help to uncover the reasons for weaknesses. Some are very specific examples; some show how evaluation might transfer across similar initiatives; others are more general. Importantly, the experience of the UNICEF/CFSC Consortium illustrates clearly why M&E processes need to be supported over the longer-term for their potential to be realised and to do justice to the programmes they are evaluating. There are very few well-documented examples of good practice in the field of M&E for C4D: this raises major questions about the level of resources dedicated to M&E processes over time, including those for capacity development. Where examples do exist, they re-occur throughout the literature. Conversely it appears relatively easy to find examples of C4D initiatives. There is definitely great scope for future work on the M&E of C4D at all levels, an area that remains in need of greater investment.

The table below is a theoretical model showing how M&E practices can link together in a simple progression to provide clear results. It offers a best practice model for the research, monitoring and evaluation of a programme for the prevention and control of avian influenza/pandemic influenza and merits consideration for its simple framework and descriptive capacity before moving on to examples from the field.

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[44] UNESCO "Towards a Common U.N. System Approach: The Role of Communication for Development in Achieving the MDGs" Background Paper prepared for the 10th U.N. Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development p.18

Table 1. Linking Programme Goals, Results, Activities with Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

Level	Avian Influenza/pandemic influenza example	Research, Monitoring Evaluation
Programme Goal	Contribute to the prevention and containment of avian influenza and human influenza epidemics in XXX	Impact Evaluation Baseline, Ending, Time after Strategic Communication ended
Programme Results	Reduce morbidity and mortality and minimize social disruption associated with pandemic	Outcome Evaluation Baseline, Endline
Behavioural Results	Rural poultry farmers send reports of suspected bird cases immediately (within 24 hours) to the local veterinary authorities (one of several behavioural results)	Behavioural Monitoring, Significant Change Monitoring Evaluation Baseline, During, End
Activities (inputs, outputs)	Training of interpersonal communicators Community radio bulletins Training of farmer support groups Local administrative mobilisation Point-of-service promotion at field stations Mobilisation of school students	Implementation Monitoring, Pre-Testing During – As Planned? Reach? Quality? Satisfaction? Participation? Readjusting?

Note: XXX refers to country. The upward arrows indicate the upward logical linkage. If implementation activities are carried out successfully, this should lead to achievement of behavioural results. In turn, if behavioural results are achieved, this should lead to achievement of programme results, and so on.[45]

5.1. Case Studies

The TOSTAN experience is a good example of how quantitative and qualitative modes of M&E can be blended. The approach immediately involved the target community in articulating their needs in order to inform programme design, involved participation in implementation, provided the context for a rich understanding of the intervention in terms of outputs and outcomes while coherent and systematic evaluation furnished stakeholders with lessons to consider in the design of further programmes.

TOSTAN[46]

- NGO promoting community-led development/education based in Senegal
- **Basic education programme** in 20 villages combined with **community-led development** on 4 issues: hygiene, problem solving, women's health, and human rights. **Emphasis was on enabling participants**, mostly women, to analyze their own situation and find the best solutions for themselves.
- Evaluation strategy **identified 4 objectives and 4 hypotheses and designed a corresponding methodology to test these**. **Quantitative methods included formative, periodical and endline interviews and KABP surveys. Qualitative methods included ethnographic observation** (over a 3 week period with each villager) **and social network analysis**. **A control group** was used successfully.
- Evaluation demonstrated substantial impact: social change in all areas of initiative. Reduced support for and practice of FGC. Better environmental hygiene, respect for human rights, health improvement.
- **Lessons learned from evaluation has allowed programme replication on wide scale**: Since 1997, 3,307 villages in Senegal, 298 in Guinea, and 23 in Burkina Faso, as well as villages in three other African

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[45] Parks, W, "Essentials for Excellence. Researching, Monitoring and Evaluating Strategic Communication for Behaviour and Social Change with Special Reference to the Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza/Pandemic Influenza" p.5

[46] For more information on Tostan: initiatives, evaluations and replication of programmes:www.tostan.org

The study on the following page provides a clear example of Most Significant Change in practice. The example has not been cited much elsewhere as it was only fully concluded in 2007. The experience demonstrates how MSC can be used to assess to impact of one initiative on a local scale alongside several initiatives on a regional or national scale. This may provide an illustration of how either different agencies or different country teams from the same agency may cooperate. The reporting of the stories told also shows how MSC can inform future improvement to programme design.

Community Driven Approaches to address the Feminisation of HIV/AIDS in India[47]

- Aims: increase awareness and knowledge of HIV/AIDS, reduce stigma and discrimination, create demand for accurate information and quality services; increase linkages between women and HIV/AIDS support at community level; increase skills, knowledge and therefore capacity of women, communities and partner NGOs to undertake further project activities and increase project access.
- Alliance India (AI), partners and NGOs **selected sites and trained local NGO staff in MSC**: establishing the **domains of change, story collection, selection and analysis**. Each NGO established its own domains based on the types of change it wanted to measure.
- Field staff from partner organisations **collected stories** from target populations in **individual interviews, group discussions** and **written experiences** of programme staff.
- Each site **reviewed the collected stories** using a **facilitator** to prompt **discussion** and smooth the process of story selection. Where no consensus could be reached for one story in each domain, 2 were selected. **Explanations for selecting each story** were included.
- **AI reviewed stories for final selection** in those domains of change that were common to each NGO: quality of life; participation; group's influence on members; staff capacity.
- As a one-year pilot project, the timeframe was too short to gauge whole impact of a pilot project but organisations who placed this project with earlier, ongoing , longer term interventions were able to **demonstrate the value added by this project through MSC stories**
- Almost all stories from the different domains revealed the critical and **significant role played by peer educators** – reflecting importance of this role in moving the project forward
- Through MSC stories it emerged that total involvement of men in projects is very much important in order to mitigate tensions arising when power structures and institutional norms are challenged
- Many stories reiterated the need for a **longer term intervention** plan and the need to **mobilise the whole community** not just the key people/groups when pursuing such programmes.

Although there is not, as yet, an agreed conceptual framework for impact evaluation of Farmer Field Schools (FFS), [48] the following analysis of 25 Integrated Pest Management (IPM) schools outlines efforts to streamline differing M&E approaches in order to produce some coherent, overarching conclusions regarding the effects of FFS. The full report details the many and varied M&E methodologies and the outcomes

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[47] India HIV/AIDS Alliance "Stories of Significance: Redefining Change. An assortment of community voices and articulations. A report based on an evaluation of a programme on "Community Driven Approaches to Address the Feminisation of HIV/AIDS in India" by means of the 'Most Significant Change' Technique"

[48] Research indicates that an agreed methodology for impact evaluation is still under development and that evaluations are still limited. Braun, A "Agriculture is in again - WDR 2008"

identified in each case. The study also discusses moves towards establishing a set of general indicators relating to FFS alongside the initiative to scale up the FFS approach on a globally effective basis.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Farmer Field Schools (FFS)[49]

- FFS are a form of adult education premised on the fact that farmers learn optimally from field observation and experimentation
- FFS educate farmers so that they might better tailor farming practices and reduce reliance on pesticides in the context of diverse, dynamic ecological conditions
- A Global IPM Facility analysis of 25 IPM FF Schools reflects a **wide range of evaluation approaches. Studies were designed to be either statistically rigorous (with restricted scope) or comprehensive (but with limited coverage) but never both.** However, the analysis processes all the results to identify patterns, establish networks and draw overall conclusions in order to create a forum for the application of lessons learned and further programming.
- **Most studies focused quantitative data on the immediate impact of training** e.g., reduction in use of pesticides and increase in crop yields
- **Several studies employed predominantly qualitative approaches (non-structured interviews and participant observation) to consider broader developmental, process outcomes.** FFS "stimulated continued learning, strengthened social and political skills which in turn prompted collective local action on policy-making for improved agro-ecosystem management."
- **FFS evaluation suffers from the same challenges as other development and communication programmes yet efforts are being made to overcome these and establish common understanding and lessons from experiences worldwide.** One global qualitative study has compared the success factors between five approaches to IPM training**. Success was defined in terms of acceptance by clients, efficiency, broad impact, sustainability and adaptability**. It was concluded that the participatory Farmer Field School contained the main ingredients necessary for successful development over and above other initiatives because it supported farmers responsiveness to local and dynamic conditions
- **The System-Wide Program is moving towards a common approach to M&E based on the use of indicators at 3 levels: farm household / community / institutional policy-making**. Further investigation into this global initiative may provide useful lessons in going forward.
- **Networks are being developed for the purpose of knowledge sharing, cooperation and improvements in service delivery. There are currently 3 national FFS networks globally in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda**
- The Global IPM Facility analysis concludes with the need for more emphasis on participatory evaluation in order to better situate the potential benefits of the FFS approach (education, environmental protection and public health) within the global field of development aid.

The case study below represents an effective form of participatory monitoring and evaluation that allows for the whole process of a C4D initiative over a relatively short space of time, from participatory baseline research and analysis o findings feeding into programme design, implementation and follow-up. This example takes a highly qualitative approach and could benefit from being complemented with some form of quantitative data, but it nonetheless is a good reflection of how participation at every stage can best inform a programme and why the process of M&E itself is of critical value.

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[49] For more information on IPM Farmer Field Schools, see van den Berg, H "IPM Farmer Field Schools: A Synthesis of 25 Impact Evaluations."

Sensitisation and Education through Kunda Arts (SEKA) [50]

- SEKA is a Zambian NGO. C4D strategy combines action research and participatory theatre to sensitise and educate communities on various social and environmental issues. It also uses theatre as an interactive research tool to identify and channel information from communities to government, development organisations and other decision-making bodies.
- Works as a vehicle for research, education and vocalising community concerns. The organisers believe plays stimulate action rather than allowing conversation to stagnate.
- *Gathering Information:* Actor-researchers (trained in action research) live in villages, interacting, observing and learning about issues, views, concerns and hopes.
- *Analysing Information:* Each evening actor-researchers report back their findings. Towards the end of the stay all information is combined and analysed.
- *Developing Scripts:* Drama scripts are developed to include the main issues that have arisen from the analysis and aim to tackle the issues that have been identified.
- *Performance:* Performance is promoted as a big village event including dances and performances from village groups to make it a collective, inclusive effort. All stakeholders are invited. The performance encourages audience participation in verifying findings taking ownership of issues and thinking about solutions.
- *Action Plan/Follow-up:* SEKA team along with the community and field workers then acts on the suggested interventions with solutions deemed practical by the community.
- SEKA also works in partnership with specific initiatives as vehicle for communicating their message, such as BEST CHOICE Campaign to combat child labour through education. SEKA was used to raise awareness and mobilise the community towards action.
  SEKA identified root causes of obstacles to child education and helped community to overcome them.
  E.g. Children herding cattle all day prevents them going to school. But children enjoy herding cattle. So parents draw up duty roster for cattle herding, children herd cattle on weekends and parents build parks in the school to encourage children to attend

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The report on the Tanzanian radio soap opera *Twende na Wakati* is a relatively well known example of monitoring and evaluating C4D. The case provides clear details regarding the monitoring and evaluation methodologies and illustrates how these were driven by the programme design. The report describes the use of a control group and a regular monitoring strategy to add a greater level of detail and accuracy to the evaluation programme and emphasises the role of communication throughout – from the broadcasting of the soap opera itself to the level of interpersonal communication it generated through to the approaches used in data collection and analysis.

Entertainment-Education and HIV/AIDS Prevention: A Field Experiment in Tanzania[51]

- Evaluation of the impact of a long-running entertainment-education radio soap opera on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour by promoting HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning, gender equity, and other health issues. The soap opera was designed to stimulate interpersonal communication about AIDS among the listeners by presenting them with negative, transitional, and positive role models for HIV prevention behaviours.
- **Intervention design impacted upon M&E methodologies**: programme results drive programme (psychosocial models / diffusion and social-movements theories e.g. role modelling and cultural belief systems / relational variables e.g. social networks, community organisation and mobilisation).

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[50] For more information on SEKA see www.seka-educational-theatre.com and www.comminit.com/en/print/264105

[51] For more information see Vaughan, P, Rogers, E, Singhal, A, Swalehe, R "Entertainment Education and HIV/AIDS Prevention: A Field Experiment in Tanzania."

- **Data collection: five personal interview surveys starting in first year and conducted at one-year intervals throughout broadcast period**. The survey questionnaire asked people to report their demographic information, exposure to and perceptions of the soap opera and other HIV/AIDS information, and other relevant attitudes and preventive practices.
- **Data supplemented by anecdotal information gathered from letters received from the audience**. For instance: "I have listened to your radio programme and understood that this radio programme *Twende na Wakati* will save my life and that of my wife."
- **Evaluation objectivity was strengthened with control group** (who received programme transmission at a later date). Control group allowed evaluators to account for potential effects of other national anti-AIDS programmes
- **Some sampling bias existed** due to use of self-selection approach in collecting data: this was skewed towards higher socioeconomic status and those with access to radio.
- Exposure grew over time and evaluation identified positive effects on knowledge, attitudes and behaviour regarding the adoption of HIV/AIDS prevention practices among listeners. **Evaluation sufficiently nuanced to allow for explanations of how listeners behaved**: people were more inclined to reduce the number of sexual partners than adopt condom use or share razors (thereby identifying another potential area of intervention)
- Changes developed through intervening variables including self-perception of risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, interpersonal communication about HIV/AIDS, and identification with the primary characters and their role models in the radio soap opera.

The following case is included primarily to illustrate some of the classic challenges that stakeholders can encounter in their efforts to conduct systematic, effective monitoring and evaluation of a C4D campaign over time. From the evidence gathered through participatory research and observation of the dialogues in practice, indications are that this approach to communicating and understanding issues relating to HIV/AIDS (stigma, VCT, social support etc.) can be highly successful. However, the example highlights how rigorous M&E of such long-term social change initiatives requires commitment and resources over time from the centre, without which evaluation processes and findings, despite solid data, design and engagement at the operational level will inevitably remain limited.

- Ultimate objectives of programme: use communication to accelerate local ownership, shared leadership and sustained impact.
- Focus on HIV/AIDS within its broader "life context" of issues of poverty, unemployment, street children, gender discrimination, local socio-economic and cultural contexts…
- Fundamental principles of **self-determination, participation and inclusion** underpin the whole initiative, including its M&E
- Aim to achieve above objectives by **enabling *voice*** (for the marginalized and excluded), *space* (places, media and policies that form facilitating environments) and *connectivity* (alliances, both horizontal and vertical). Above values reflected in training, support and refresher courses for dialogue facilitators.
- **Observation** of dialogues in practice has indicated many strengths and a high level of success. Informal reporting of processes similarly reflect good progress.
- Initial **participatory monitoring and evaluation** training and processes were enthusiastically received and engaged in, including use of the **Most Significant Change** approach.
- However, **the lack of longer-term high level commitment to and resources for participatory monitoring and evaluation** meant that the process could only progress to a limited extent, leaving many key actors frustrated.
- Reasons given include
  – **Limited understanding** on behalf of senior stakeholders about the implications of participatory M&E (especially in terms of support, time and resources required)
  – **Over ambitious expectations** from the start for many reasons
  – **Challenges presented by organisational cultures** – the initiative involved many NGOs, CBOs, media groups, UNICEF, the Consortium and others
  – **Organisational capacity needs and weaknesses in-country.**

It is also worth noting that the majority of cases included above are non-United Nations, from NGOs. This reinforces the point made above, that while there are many examples of C4D initiatives to examine, there is a distinct shortage of M&E, or documentation of M&E to back them up. U.N. agencies may face specific constraints that preclude them from using or trying some of these approaches and this is an issue that should be raised for discussion at the roundtable in the context of moving C4D up the U.N. agenda.

6. BEST PRACTICE METHODOLOGY AND CONCLUSIONS

Recommendations provided below relating to best practice methodology for the M&E of C4D should serve to inform discussions over the potential for a system-wide framework governing C4D initiatives within the United Nations. The points raised in this section have been generated by consideration of the research carried out for this paper alongside the interviews conducted in relation to experience of measuring the impact of

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[52] Correspondence with Ailish Byrne of CFSC Consortium and http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/mazi-articles.php?id=317

C4D on the ground.[53] The discussion is therefore intended as a starting point from which roundtable participants may progress, developing the debate with their own experience.

A central challenge to identifying best M&E practices is the fact that we are effectively aiming to evaluate evaluation techniques: while the above examples show how some tools have been used and have shown evidence of results, there is no standardized way to measure one approach against another. Comparison is further complicated by the fact that several tools for monitoring and evaluation may be used together, effectively multiplying the combination of subjects under comparison.

Attribution / Causality In seeking to demonstrate impact, evaluators consistently encounter the problem of attribution, or causality, which provides a central challenge to results-based management in the context of development. In light of earlier conclusions regarding the complexity of communication initiatives, their outputs, outcomes, and impacts, best practice should always aim to create the analytical space first to allow for the emergence of unexpected results and second to establish causality for these results. This information can feed back into the programme for further refinement and may also provide suggestions for future initiatives relating to other development goals. Several analytical approaches seek to overcome the issue of attribution internally with varying degrees of accuracy,[54] but "controlled comparisons...to estimate what happens when strategic communication is in place versus what would happen without it... probably remain the best way to address the problem of attributing effect."[55] However this approach is resource-heavy in terms of personnel, funding and time and also has ethical considerations. For instance when an initiative is proving successful, it must then be repeated –either in its original form or adapted for greater effect- with the control group. Time series analysis offers another approach to establishing causality through the systematic modification of the programme and consequent assessment of the resulting changes over time, but this again demands time and capital and requires the programme to be sufficiently flexible to permit such modifications.[56] The issue of attribution is central to the effective working of results-based management and evaluation but in some cases evaluators may have to accept that causality cannot be definitively proven.

However, at the heart of this is the fact that development and sustainable change are, by nature, long-term goals. Where the measures mentioned above are not a practical option, a thorough baseline analysis combined with well-conceived indicators should help evaluators establish links between inputs and outputs. Yet the challenge

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[53] Interviews have been carried out with staff from UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, CFSC and independent consultants.

[54] For instance, Outcome Mapping, MSC, Propensity Score Matching

[55] PARKS,W "Essential for Excellence. Researching, Monitoring and Evaluating Strategic Communication for Behaviour and Social Change with Special Reference to the Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza/Pandemic Influenza" p.16

[56] PARKS,W "Essential for Excellence. Researching, Monitoring and Evaluating Strategic Communication for Behaviour and Social Change with Special Reference to the Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza/Pandemic Influenza" p.16

lies in moving beyond immediate outputs to track and prove links to eventual outcomes and impacts in the longer term. For any initiative that hopes to establish some level of understanding relating to attribution, there should be an ongoing monitoring and evaluation system that provides short, medium and longer-term results and also promotes a continuous dialogue between these stages. The challenges to, along with the value of, understanding causality apply at every level of analysis – while the outcomes and impacts of an initiative are ultimately of more interest than the immediate outputs. Similarly, conveying the outcomes and impacts of the U.N. system as a whole is much more challenging than reporting agency successes, but the process will have a much greater resonance over the long term.[57]

Measure Where the Money is – Working Within Resources Available While this paper has shown that there is great need for enhanced awareness and understanding of C4D and a consequent increased allocation of resources, teams must in the meantime aim to work within the resources available. Another tactic that might be used when budgetary constraints impact upon the potential for comprehensive M&E is to focus those funds available for analysis to where the greatest investment has been made – literally speaking, to monitor where the money is. Such an approach, while limiting the scope for a multi-faceted evaluation, can nonetheless be highly useful in demonstrating that investment has made a difference. Moreover, focussing measurement on specific aspects of a programme and managing monitoring and evaluation in detail increases the accuracy of the data obtained. Again, this relates to the concept of managing an evaluation for results. Where time constraints limit endline evaluation, the need for effective monitoring is emphasised. Evaluation often does take place under significant time restraints – often "less than a month", yet monitoring systems that are continuously gathering data effectively can feed valuable information into final evaluations.[58] The RealWorld Evaluation (RWE) approach has been developed in response to some of the challenges discussed in this section – "the all too real difficulties in the practical world of evaluation and constraints imposed by budget, time, data and politics." As such it represents another process that might be considered by evaluators operating in situations where difficult circumstances can force a trade-off between available resources and acceptable standards of evaluation practice.[59] The principle stages of this methodology are illustrated in Annex II.

Measuring to Establish All the Results A second challenge within the context of application and experience thus far is that *"you get the results you measure for."* This is overlaid by the fact that processes, outputs and outcomes, measured and presented in different contexts hold different levels of currency with the various agencies involved in the United Nations's C4D programmes. The vast majority of documented cases show a

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[57] da Costa,P Correspondence with consultant

[58] Davies, R "Social Network Analysis as an Evaluation Tool: Experiences with International Development Aid Programmes" p.1

[59] Segone, M *"Country-led monitoring and evaluation systems. Better evidence, better policies, better development results."* p.201

clear trend for employing evaluation techniques that reflect the nature of the communication process itself: the use of qualitative evaluation is biased overwhelmingly towards projects that are predominantly participatory, horizontal and process-focused while most diffusion projects are assessed quantitatively. In a World Bank study of 35 C4D initiatives, only one study investigating the impacts of a mass media diffusion campaign employed a quantitative approach to monitoring and evaluation. Other studies had similar findings.[60] There is, in one sense nothing wrong with this: evaluation teams should certainly not seek to complicate their task unnecessarily. However the choice of M&E employed can affect the success of ascertaining outcomes and impacts. The nature of the intervention should not be seen as a limiting factor upon determining monitoring and evaluation strategies, dictating a quantitative methodology for a broadly diffusion-based initiative or vice versa when greater consideration of the circumstances could lead to the selection of another strategy. Such tactics might fail to capture the underlying, structural factors that impact upon the success of a project.

      Combining Approaches to M&E to Provide Better Feedback A blend of methodologies within an evaluation strategy should create a sufficient degree of flexibility to permit lessons to be learned from field to boardroom-level, which can be fed back in to improve programme design. Such tactics depend on a degree of flexibility within the mind of the evaluator, who should not foreclose the potential for using more complex methods, but neither dismiss methods that have a more narrow approach. One interviewee felt it was important to highlight that simple evaluation tools using traditional anthropological or sociological methods can provide crucial information about development impact at a low level that can feed into the overall evaluation at a higher level. Discussion of best practice methodology should therefore seek to discourage current trends towards a divide between quantitative and qualitative approaches. Participatory strategies are continuously challenged by power imbalances imposed by existing social hierarchies and cultural differences: corresponding M&E approaches encourage qualitative investigation to uncover such issues that can jeopardise success. Yet diffusion-based strategies can also be challenged by similar power imbalances. Therefore the approach to analysing the impact of these types of campaigns should no less be able to account for this. "There is no reason to avoid quantitative research methods to analyze convoluted structural problems. If employed correctly, quantitative methods can establish causal links between immediate issues at hand with root structural causes of development problems. Strengths in quantitative research—the ability to generalize findings for future applications, established techniques to handle voluminous data, operationalization of complex factors into measurable variables—can make invaluable contributions to the formulation of much needed holistic development approaches."[61] It is essential to stress again that in designing an evaluation neither

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[60] Morris, N "The diffusion and participatory models: a comparative analysis" in Hemer, O and Tufte, T (ed.) *Media and Glocal Change*; Inagaki,N "Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development – recent trends in empirical research"

[61] Inagaki, N "Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development – recent trends in empirical research" p.46

quantitative nor qualitative methodologies are mutually exclusive – both are necessary for a comprehensive and informative analysis. The key is in the balance and approach used to report results to different audiences.

Reporting for and Aligning Results The above conclusions also apply to how results are fed through to donors: evaluation teams must "write to their audience" and align their programme results with the concerns of the body they are reporting to. For instance, aligning with national development goals when reporting to government; agency development goals when reporting to agencies such as DfiD, AusAid or USAID; and the Millennium Development Goals when reporting to the United Nations. Until the concept of C4D is more deeply institutionalised within the U.N. operating framework (which may allow for future refinement of approaches to evaluating C4D), analysis should aim to provide for all of the above so that agencies, donors and management may best use the information for their ends. However, this recommendation is made with a significant caveat. There is a distinct difference between measuring for the results you want to achieve and measuring for the results you want to be able to prove a programme has achieved. Moreover, it is "sometimes as important to report failures as to report successes. Being frank and honest with different stakeholders makes for better dialogue and in some cases increased support for the development intervention in question."[62]

Maintaining Objectivity The design of monitoring and evaluation for an initiative must be carried out objectively and as a consequence be able to account for all possible outcomes and shortcomings, as opposed to using tactical research to support pre-existing views. Several interviewees had seen a significant amount of M&E that was tailored to get the results evaluators wanted, both in terms of justifying funding from donors and in terms of external perceptions of C4D, which often reflected a lack of conceptual understanding. As opposed to carrying out M&E based on the indicators and objectives of an initiative, some use evaluation as a tool to obtain the data they want –referred to as 'opinion research' by one interviewee, thereby foreclosing the chance to obtain all the results that exist.

Working Though Country-Led Systems The Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action both emphasise that working through country-level systems and strengthening country capacity is central to moving development forward. However, practical application is still somewhat removed from the aspirations of these agreements and as agencies work towards this objective it is critical to guarantee the availability and applicability of monitoring and evaluation systems at country and regional level.

Several interviewees--some based at headquarters level, some at field level--referred to a degree of "tension" or "deliberation" between policy at the centre and operations in the field. This mainly revolves around how policies can be fine-tuned to

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[62] da Costa,P Correspondence with consultant

be more effective and relevant[63] and constitutes, in effect, a demand-driven approach to improving M&E systems. This tension was highlighted by the UNESCO paper for the 10th round table on C4D[64] and, evidence suggests, is currently developing through debate and discussion in several agencies. On one hand there can be a lack of information fed through from central offices to field offices regarding evaluation practice: where one centrally-based staff member described their role as providing standards, norms and guidance, a programme specialist in the regional office of the same agency described current practice as "when people get to the point of really needing something, they will go out and find it."[65] Country offices have a key responsibility to drive the fine-tuning of policy and move the agenda forward by asking for the right tools to do so. Without this, organisations will struggle to streamline global strategy. On the other hand, central management and HQ teams have a responsibility to ensure that recommendations for monitoring and evaluation practices are not only available but also applicable, being easy to understand and use in field situations. There is a significant place for precise design and clear language, which can in turn increase the potential for practical dissemination of central recommendations and regional interpretation in a coherent manner. The issue comes down to one of communication, coordination and cooperation both among agency offices and between agencies. Greater efforts in this field would help to overcome the knowledge gap between country and central office in terms identifying good practice, sharing the knowledge and using the lessons learned for scaling up projects to the appropriate scale.

Identifying the Strategic Intent The recently-published UNICEF work on country-led monitoring and evaluation discusses the concept of strategic intent as an "essential requisite for any relevant and efficient country-led evaluation."[66] Aligned with, and moving beyond the concept of results-based management, strategic intent takes the end-result as its starting point for designing and evaluating a campaign but aims to provide greater depth and understanding, enabling "judgements on intended and unintended, positive and negative effects of the results achieved"[67] through a less linear approach to evaluation.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation: Key Parts of the Initiative In order that research, monitoring and evaluation be planned and implemented effectively it is critical that all involved understand the role of C4D as a tool capable of producing meaningful and sustainable developmental change. The easiest way to do this is to demonstrate results, noting nonetheless that results can vary and that process itself can be a result. Certifiable results are the product of strong evaluation and meaningful evaluation is the

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[63] Interview with members of UNDP and World Bank

[64] UNESCO "Towards a Common U.N. System Appoach: The Role of Communication for Development in Achieving the MDGs" Background Paper prepared for the 10th U.N. Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development p.23

[65] Interviews conducted with agency staff.

[66] Segone, M *"Country-led monitoring and evaluation systems. Better evidence, better policies, better development results."* p.56

[67] Segone, M *"Country-led monitoring and evaluation systems. Better evidence, better policies, better development results."* p.75

product of sound planning. By this logic, evaluations most capable of proving and attributing impact are those with the broadest analytical capacity and those accorded sufficient resources and significance. To be most effective, monitoring and evaluation should be incorporated into any initiative from the outset. Nearly every interview conducted for this paper –with researchers, practitioners and centrally-based agency staff- raised the same key point: in an ideal world every initiative should start with a baseline analysis. An assessment of needs feeds into results-based management by directing structure and informing overall design. It creates a framework in which to identify objectives and indicators, to establish the timeline of intermediate monitoring stages and to track inputs and outputs. All information gathered can then be fed back into the initiative in a logical and coherent way. In best practice cases it also allows for the introduction of more sophisticated evaluation tools: a comparison of results before and after the programme and the use of a control group. However, in practice the baseline evaluation is often not undertaken or is only partially carried out. World Bank interviewees from the Development Communications Division estimated that between 25% and 50% of all communication initiatives now employ some form of baseline survey. They also stated that their initiatives enjoyed some success in feeding monitoring results back into project development. Yet this example falls far short of ideal standards and suggests there is a need for further grounding of this system at the operational level. Successive papers and reports have recommended that C4D become an essential element in any development initiative and that a corresponding communication needs assessment be incorporated into the initiative. It is now time to establish a practical way to move these recommendations forward.

Ownership of Results The paper has already discussed the issue of "ownership" of development initiatives and results and this issue is worth reiterating in the context of best practice. The growth of a results-based culture combined with the practical shift from top-down approaches to participatory, country-driven, consultative processes raises the issue of ownership and how systems can be developed to promote and sustain local ownership. There is much progress to be made on this but "the outcome of Accra provides a timely opportunity to advance real country ownership."[68] This feeds directly into considerations of best practice M&E in that the emphasis on country capacity, ownership and empowerment requires the use of methodologies that harness stakeholder communication and participation toward achieving that goal. Where openly inclusive approaches such as those discussed below are not suitable for evaluation, it remains essential to promote participation through the adaptation of other methods in order to foster local ownership of results.

A Tailored Toolkit Approach to Methodologies As discussed throughout this paper, to deal with the complexities and challenges of monitoring and evaluating C4D projects or project components, a tailored toolkit approach to methodologies is

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[68] da Costa, P "Managing for and Communicating Development Results." Background Paper Prepared for the OECD Informal Network of DAC Development Communicators (DevCom Network)" p.21

required. The type(s) of methodology selected will depend both on the type of project, but also the restraints of the evaluation in terms of time, resources and organizational challenges. For this reason, each methodological approach will vary. As such, suggesting best practice, in terms of selection of methodologies that can apply to all C4D evaluations, would be impossible as well as futile. Instead, the evaluator should decide at the outset of each evaluation what would be the appropriate set of methodologies and toolkits for the specific intervention. Reflecting the fluidity in the spectrum that exists in C4D projects, variability in M&E approaches, combining both qualitative and quantitative tools, appropriate both to the type of intervention and the challenges it faces, provides the most effective way to establish best practice in M&E of C4D. Nonetheless, from the various approaches discussed earlier it is worth highlighting a few methodologies, which represent "state of the art" techniques that practitioners should consider adding to their existing toolbox of evaluation approaches. Based upon the strength of their capacity to encompass such complex situations, one expert practitioner interviewed for this paper has suggested these two approaches could always be considered as possible tools for planning, monitoring and evaluation, whatever the circumstances.[69] On this note, it is critical to emphasise that for many agencies, donors and other involved parties, these and other qualitative processes will not provide a replacement for gathering and analysing statistical data. Findings from these evaluations should always be allied to quantitative analyses for maximum impact and effect.

– **Most Significant Change** is an approach to monitoring and evaluation that has been in use for almost 15 years and is now seen to be coming of age as field teams, central agency staff and researchers become more aware of its capabilities and application. The various strengths of MSC have been discussed above and its value in both individual projects and larger scale initiatives encompassing many projects has been demonstrated in the case studies. It can be used to evaluate bottom-up initiatives that do not have predetermined outcomes against which to evaluate, encourages analysis as well as data collection and requires few professional skills to implement, creating space for everyone to "tell a story." Moreover, it is not merely a tool for M&E but also an intervention goal in itself, involving cooperation, contribution and participation at every level. The ability to absorb and streamline large amounts of data in complex situations where quantitative data is not applicable, is where MSC may prove most useful in moving towards U.N. cooperation /synchronisation over assessing the impact of C4D.

– **Outcome Mapping** is another methodology with a similarly powerful capacity for monitoring and evaluating, and which also incorporates a strong planning component. The approach holds strong currency among researchers and practitioners as a valuable way to bridge the gap between differing groups of stakeholders, to set indicators and to state intentions. Compared with MSC and some other methods,

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[69] Interview with Will Parks.

outcome mapping does seem to be a complex approach that necessitates the presence of an M&E specialist for field-level application. However with time to raise awareness and understanding of its value, and to develop a clear and straightforward framework for its use by non-specialists, it will provide an authoritative tool for planning, monitoring and evaluating communication for development.

– **LogFrame** A logical approach linking goals to outcomes should form the basis of any M&E process and a strong example of this is the LogFrame. The LogFrame allows the programme team to work through the inputs and outputs of a programme in a precise manner driven by the desired outcomes. In practice programme teams often struggle to determine results because they are unable to operate the logical framework of how various elements of their programme link together. A basic understanding of M&E grounded in an approach such as this could be one way to progress impact assessment of C4D initiatives as an interim measure and lay the groundwork for more nuanced evaluation over time. As such the LogFrame should not just be an option to be considered for an evaluation but rather a logical model of change should drive any M&E system. A recently published paper argues that the strengths of this approach to the field of M&E are its contributions in the following areas: (i) what change is anticipated; (ii) what risks there are to that change ever coming into being; (iii) why a system of monitoring is necessary to capture relevant data on whether the change is emerging as planned; and, iv) how and when relevant stakeholders will be able to decide if the initiative was a success or not.[70]

In drawing some conclusions from the above analyses, it is clear that in every situation a toolkit approach to monitoring and evaluation is critical. It allows stakeholders to maintain flexibility in the face of developing conditions and provides a rich variety of resources to draw on. Furthermore, the application of each methodology should be tailored to suit local conditions. Evaluators should take care to avoid the theoretical and practical divide between qualitative and quantitative processes and align their results with the interests of the supervising bodies. Proper research and planning should not be overlooked when conceiving a C4D programme as it will inform direction, design and ultimately help to create conditions that are conducive to success. In a results-based management system, results must also drive monitoring and evaluation. To move forward, it is absolutely critical that results are collected and presented in a sound and coherent manner in order to convince management, donors and development workers in other fields of the effectiveness of C4D.

7. DRAFT INDICATORS

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[70] Kusek, J, Rist R "Getting the Logic Right. How a strong theory of change supports programmes which work!" in Segone, M (ed.) *Country-led monitoring and evaluation systems. Better evidence, better policies, better development results.*p.198

Building on these recommendations and analysis, this section proposes some general draft indicators for assessing the effectiveness of C4D.

An indicator is a "measure of inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts."[71] It is information on a particular circumstance that is measurable in some form. It serves as an "approximation of complex processes, events and trends" and combined with information from the programme itself can be used in series to track progress towards an established objective. A group of indicators need not all be quantitative or qualitative in nature nor perfect in definition but they should be easy to interpret, easy to measure and limited in number to a critical selection that have definitive applicability to the development objective. [72]

Indicators should also be able to grow with an initiative. A World Bank project on judicial reform cited in one interview illustrated this point well. Two elements were discussed: C4D in the form of advocacy for judicial reform and communication in the form of education to raise awareness among the general populace of their rights with reference to the judicial system. However, as the success of the advocacy campaign grew, so people came to expect more of the programme, thereby moving the goalposts from their initial standpoint and making progress towards the indicators harder to evaluate in a scientific way.[73]

The 10th roundtable background paper emphasised that C4 indicators must be "an integral part of every project planning process at the upstream design stage"[74] and the work in this paper reinforces this fundamental point.

The checklist for indicators provided in the adjacent box gives a clear direction in identifying criteria for measurement.[75]

These indicators are presented with a caveat. It is easy to be overly enthusiastic about the creation and

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Checklist for Indicators

- **Validity**: Does it measure the result(s)?
- **Reliability**: Is it a consistent measure over time and, if supplied externally, will it continue to be available?
- **Sensitivity**: When a change occurs will it be sensitive to those changes?
- **Equality**: Does it have a way to measure the comparative situation for women?
- **Simplicity**: Will it be easy to collect and analyze the information?
- **Utility**: Will the information be useful for decision-making and learning?
- **Affordable**: Do we have the resources to collect the information?

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[71] World Bank. "Monitoring and Evaluation: Some Tools, Methods and Approaches" p.6

[72] Parks, W "Developing communication and social mobilization indicators to monitor behavioural outcomes." Background resource paper for the UNICEF ROSA Experts' Consultation on Strategic Communication for Behaviour and Social Change in South Asia, p.3

[73] Interview with Paolo Mefalopulos

[74] UNESCO "Towards a Common U.N. System Approach: The Role of Communication for Development in Achieving the MDGs" Background Paper prepared for the 10th U.N. Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development p.31

[75] UNDG "Report on the Tuvalu National Consultation." p.11

use of indicators within M&E and both researchers and practitioners interviewed for this paper have experienced cases where 300-400 indicators have been created--in practice far too many to provide a functional framework for precise analysis and clear reporting. Indicators should adhere to the SMART framework to ensure that they are and remain specific, measurable, action-oriented, relevant and time-bound. Experience and discussion with practitioners suggests that to ensure practical application, indicators should be limited to around 20-25 main indicators per project.

The following headings are proposed as a framework in which to think about indicators. As this paper emphasises the fluidity through the spectrum of diffusion- and participation-based approaches to C4D and the evaluation of these initiatives, the use of indicators is proposed in the context of a toolbox. These categories will not all be equally relevant to each C4D initiative and the aim is that they be selected dependent on conditions on the ground.

The suggested indicators would be structured around five principal **Communication for Development results**. For each result, ***key questions*** are proposed to arrive at potential indicators. ***Sample indicators*** are provided in tabular form; finally these indicate the type of **M& E system** that might be appropriate to gather the data necessary to verify the suggested indicators. The structure can be conceptualised as a process of "drilling down" from the desired C4D result to ways of verifying how far this outcome is achieved in practice. The five principal C4D results are:

- **Result 1: the level of local awareness about the development programme and the issues covered by the initiative:** the extent to which local stakeholders and subjects of the programme are aware of the existence of the development programme, its aims and objectives or of the issues that are the subject of the initiative; evidence of local media coverage or local communications about the programme or initiative.

- **Result 2: evidence of direct impact** as a result of the programme both in development goals attained, behaviour change visible and whether the impact of the development programme is sustainable beyond the duration of the specific initiative.

- **Result 3: participation and empowerment:** the extent to which there is evidence that local communities and public agencies have participated in shaping and developing the initiative, including in monitoring and evaluating the programme itself; evidence that local participation has helped increase the impact and therefore the results of the programme; evidence of local ownership in the management or direction of the programme.

- **Result 4: level of media coverage:** evidence of local media coverage or local communications about the programme or initiative; willingness of media organisations to engage in discussing and/or promoting the objectives of the programme.

- **Result 5: country capacity:** evidence that the country capacity to sustain development initiatives of this kind has increased; where relevant, that increased capacities have been internalised within the relevant public bodies

Below is the provisional grid setting out the five results. This should be treated as a toolbox in that the indicators most relevant to the desired results should be selected and the most appropriate M &E approaches adopted. This will also hold where C4D is one component of a broader development programme – in this case there may be a broader set of indicators into which some of these can be inserted to test the impact of the specific communication initiative.

Components	Key Questions	Possible Focus of Indicators	Guidance on appropriate M&E methodologies to extract relevant data
the level of local awareness about the development programme and issues	Are local stakeholders aware that the development programme is in place?	Evidence of local communication about the programme – e.g. survey data	KABP surveys using market research tools such as surveys Experimental impact evaluation studies
	Are they aware what the goals of the programme are?	Evidence of local media coverage Evidence of community knowledge prior to and subsequent to a development programme	Tracking surveys e.g. rapid rural appraisal Media coverage analysis Propensity score matching
	Has knowledge of the issues covered by the programme increased?	Demonstrable increased knowledge Behaviour change based on new awareness Evidence of peer to peer teaching/information dissemination	Tracking Surveys Behaviour change comparisons Most significant change Qualitative interviews Logical Framework analysis
evidence of direct impact	Is there evidence that the development goals were attained, wholly or in part?	Results achieved measured against predetermined targets (e.g. % take up)	Behaviour change comparisons Behavioural Surveillance surveys
	Is there evidence of behaviour change appropriate to the development initiative?	Evidence that long-term motivation for change and support for change (including financial) exists.	Outcome mapping Most Significant Change Ethnographic action research
	Is there evidence that the change achieved is likely to be sustainable beyond the life of the development programme?	Evidence that long-term motivation for change and support for change (including financial) exists.	Outcome mapping
	Is there evidence that the change achieved has been so at a reasonable cost and within a reasonable time frame?	Analysis of output benefits against total cost of programme	Cost benefit/cost effectiveness analysis Public expenditure tracking surveys
participation and empowerment	Are local communities and public agencies participating in shaping and developing the initiative?	Evidence of active participation in the development of the programme	Most significant Change
	Have local communities participated in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme?	M&E approaches include local communities in design and data gathering	Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal
	Has local participation helped increase the impact and therefore the results of the programme?	Evidence of changes to the programme that result from local interventions Data that shows local communities regard the development programme as their own – e.g. independent initiatives, from below.	Direct surveys of local participants Outcome mapping
	Is there evidence of local ownership in the management or direction of the programme?	Examples of programming/publications featuring the project or programme	Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal Tracking surveys / outcome mapping
level of media coverage	Does adequate media coverage of the programme exist?	Defined percentage of total programming Is the broadcasting or circulation accessible to local communities?	Media monitoring Surveys of media and ICT penetration
	Is the media coverage local?	Evidence that the issues raised are communicated to take into account local	Media coverage analysis

8. FINAL REMARKS AND QUESTIONS FOR THE ROUNDTABLE

"Communication can make real changes, even under most challenging circumstances. The elevated international development efforts motivated by the U.N. Millennium Development Goals are encouraging and should be sustained."[76] However, a crucial part of achieving this is monitoring and evaluation, which despite gaining centrality and recognition in the past five to ten years still has a long way to go before it is applied coherently, consistently and in a coordinated manner within the U.N. system.

For this reason, as well as establishing and embedding best practice methodology, there is value in creating indicators for C4D to support, and exploit the capacity of the rich array of monitoring and evaluation approaches. These indicators can be adapted to local conditions as long as implementers are grounded in the design, application, capabilities and limitations of communication as a tool for development.[77]   But it is vital that any system of indicators is not too elaborate and detailed. Pressures of work in the field will militate against the adoption of complex systems of indicators – for that reason it may be useful to focus on a limited number of indicators that concentrate on the "strategic intent" of the programme.

It is absolutely fundamental that, moving forward, there is a concerted effort to establish mechanisms for sharing experience and leaning, coordinating analysis and mapping C4D initiatives within the broader context of U.N. work towards to the MDGs. Adopting a common approach to overarching indicators will take the U.N. operating framework one practical step closer to making this goal a functional reality.

Feedback from interviews indicated recognition of a change of pace in communication projects – momentum is gathering, driven by a growing sense of urgency. This calls for a very adaptive, almost opportunistic approach to designing C4D initiatives and measuring impact. With time at a premium, the aim is to get coverage as quickly and effectively as possible while remaining thorough. In some situations therefore a substantive quantitative assessment may not be possible: in others, there will not be the scope for a deep, qualitative appraisal. However, the ability to build some evaluation process in from the start allows for the progressive monitoring of the programme and can still provide a rich picture of an initiative's impact at the end.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE ROUNDTABLE

Organisational challenges

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[76] INAGAKI, N "Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development – recent trends in empirical research" p.46

[77] Interview with Will Parks

–   What are the constraints –within specific agencies and within the United Nations as a whole- that inhibit/prevent / discourage those running C4D initiatives from carrying out M&E using some of the more intricate methodologies?

–   How can agencies move to better situate M&E systems for C4D within country-led systems and within the results-based management framework?

–   How to strengthen M&E organisational capacity needs and weaknesses in-country? How can we institutionalise M&E operations through country-led systems?

–   Organisational challenges of operating with great many actors (U.N. agencies, NGOs, media groups etc.) Is there scope to establish a framework for action so that M&E initiatives are not bogged down in bureaucracy and are still accorded correct level of attention? (as in case of Ethiopia/Zambia dialogues over HIV/AIDS)

M&E tools/approaches

–   Does the RWE approach featured in the 2009 UNICEF publication on Country-Led monitoring and evaluation systems (presented in Annex II) represent a workable model that all U.N. agencies involved in C4D can use to overcome some of the challenges to M&E?

–   In the context of the results-based management systems of the agencies, what types of results does a system-wide approach need to collect?

–   Would it be useful to use the LogFrame as a starting point for all C4D initiatives and all M&E? Would this be feasible within different agencies?

Indicators

–   Are the outline indicators useful and applicable across a range of U.N. agencies?

ANNEX I: Bibliography

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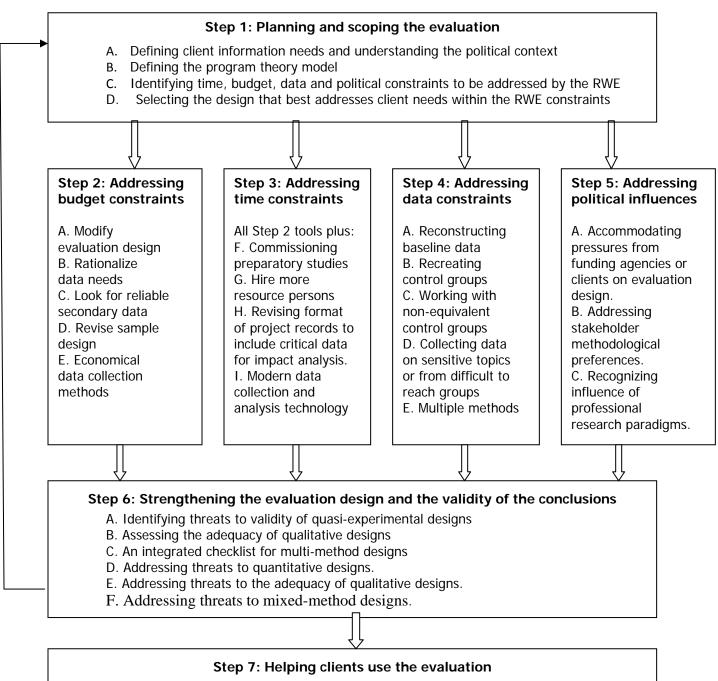–   World Bank, (2007), "World Congress on Communication for Development: Lessons, Challenges and the way forward." (ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/ai143e/ai143e00.pdf)

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ANNEX II: The Real World Evaluation (RWE) Approach

Step 1: Planning and scoping the evaluation

A. Defining client information needs and understanding the political context
B. Defining the program theory model
C. Identifying time, budget, data and political constraints to be addressed by the RWE
D. Selecting the design that best addresses client needs within the RWE constraints

Step 2: Addressing budget constraints

A. Modify evaluation design
B. Rationalize data needs
C. Look for reliable secondary data
D. Revise sample design
E. Economical data collection methods

Step 3: Addressing time constraints

All Step 2 tools plus:
F. Commissioning preparatory studies
G. Hire more resource persons
H. Revising format of project records to include critical data for impact analysis.
I. Modern data collection and analysis technology

Step 4: Addressing data constraints

A. Reconstructing baseline data
B. Recreating control groups
C. Working with non-equivalent control groups
D. Collecting data on sensitive topics or from difficult to reach groups
E. Multiple methods

Step 5: Addressing political influences

A. Accommodating pressures from funding agencies or clients on evaluation design.
B. Addressing stakeholder methodological preferences.
C. Recognizing influence of professional research paradigms.

Step 6: Strengthening the evaluation design and the validity of the conclusions

A. Identifying threats to validity of quasi-experimental designs
B. Assessing the adequacy of qualitative designs
C. An integrated checklist for multi-method designs
D. Addressing threats to quantitative designs.
E. Addressing threats to the adequacy of qualitative designs.
F. Addressing threats to mixed-method designs.

Step 7: Helping clients use the evaluation

A. Ensuring active participation of clients in the Scoping Phase
B. Formative evaluation strategies
C. Constant communication with all stakeholders throughout the evaluation
D. Evaluation capacity building
E. Appropriate strategies for communicating findings
F. Developing and monitoring the follow-up action plan