



## **Outcome Mapping and the Logical Framework Approach: Can they share a space?**

Within the community of Outcome Mapping users, there is the inevitable question of how well Outcome Mapping fits with other M&E approaches, methodologies and tools. Much discussion has already been initiated around the possibility of using both Outcome Mapping (OM) and the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) for program and project design, monitoring and evaluation.

The on-going discussions have manifested different opinions, from a theoretical perspective in some instances, and in others from practice. Some believe that OM and LFA should never share a space, based on their fundamentally different paradigms and approaches to planning, monitoring and evaluation of development interventions. Others, from practical experience, have carved out a shared space for the use of OM in their LFA-driven projects, using OM to track the process of change and contribute innovative dimensions to social and organizational learning.

This brief does not attempt to answer the question of OM and LFA's compatibility. There is no formula of how to create a shared space for both, as the use of OM or LFA or both, depends on the nature and complexity of the work to be undertaken, the reporting obligations to donors and other required uses of the monitoring and evaluation data, as well as the capacities and resources of those planning, monitoring and evaluating. The purpose of this brief is to systematize some of the evolving discussions and present ideas for further debate. It is largely based on a document entitled "From Programme Management to Development Programmes: Comparative Study of Results-Based Management-Outcome Mapping" by Natalia Ortiz, as well as dialogue among Outcome Mapping users. We invite you to add to this discussion on the Outcome Mapping Learning Community ([www.outcomemapping.ca](http://www.outcomemapping.ca)).

### **How do OM and LFA match up?**

A direct transposition of OM concepts and tools into LFA language tends to diminish the significance of OM; rather, a comparison between the two, and recognizing the useful aspects of both has produced ideas of how development practitioners can use OM in their LFA-dominated work settings, and to integrate two models that have seemingly unmatchable elements in their design. An important caveat must be emphasized here: this brief uses generalizations of the way the LFA is used in many development agencies; while agencies use the LFA in different ways, these generalizations are based on common perceptions that have been widely discussed. Within the same point, we must recognize that OM can be reframed, modified and used in a very different way than how it was meant to in its "orthodoxy". Some of the key distinctions between OM and LFA are as follows:

- While both OM and LFA provide a framework for planning, monitoring and evaluation, and both have an explicit focus on results and change, the underlying principles that guide them are based upon fundamentally different approaches to development and social change.
- The linearity of the logframe is seen as its greatest weakness since development is incremental and non-linear, which OM strives to recognize, monitor and analyze. In

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this sense, the LFA is often seen as sharing those elements that characterize “traditional evaluation” while OM leans towards those elements that characterize “developmental evaluation” (see Box 1).

- LFA’s focal point of planning and assessment is on the project or program and what it has achieved; OM assesses change in the development players and how the program hope to and was able to contribute (or not) to that change, and why.

Traditional evaluations:	Developmental evaluations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Judge success or failure</li> <li>▪ Measure against fixed goals</li> <li>▪ External for objectivity</li> <li>▪ Linear cause/effect models</li> <li>▪ Accountability to external</li> <li>▪ Accountability for control, blame</li> <li>▪ Evaluator controls evaluation</li> <li>▪ Engender fear of failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide feedback for improvement</li> <li>▪ New measures as goals evolve</li> <li>▪ Internal, integrated, interpretive</li> <li>▪ Seek to capture system dynamics</li> <li>▪ Accountability to values, commitments</li> <li>▪ Understand and respond strategically</li> <li>▪ Evaluator matches process to context</li> <li>▪ Feed hunger for learning</li> </ul>

*Box 1: Adapted from: Patton, Michael Q., 2006, “Evaluation for the Way We Work”. The Nonprofit Quarterly. Spring.*

- The LFA strives to measure downstream, widespread impact as evidence of program “success”, while OM focuses on analyzing foundational behavioural changes, and the contributions made to support those changes, in order to tell a story of transformation from the outset of an intervention.

Box 2 briefly unpacks additional characteristics of each of the approaches.

*Box 2: Unpacking planning, monitoring and evaluation characteristics of LFA and OM*

<b>LFA</b>	<b>OM</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expected results are aligned with activities in a cause-effect chain. Activities produce outputs (goods and services), which result in immediate, intermediate and final outcomes.</li> <li>▪ Performance measurement is guided by indicators for monitoring different levels of results. Plans and measures against pre-determined targets of these indicators to determine success of project.</li> <li>▪ Keeps the greatest number of variables possible under control, to attribute the identified results and changes to the program’s actions.</li> <li>▪ Data collection and analysis is used for upward accountability, improving program decision-making and managing risks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plans for and assesses outcomes, defined as the changes of behaviour of the people with whom a program works directly. Modifies the intervention according to the complexity of the change process and the developments context.</li> <li>▪ Uses progress markers as points of reference to motivate reflection and learning, and to represent a change pathway of boundary partners.</li> <li>▪ Recognizes contributions from multiple factors and actors.</li> <li>▪ Balances learning and multiple accountabilities, by identifying the use of M&amp;E data and by employing participatory and use-oriented approaches to PM&amp;E.</li> </ul>

## **Can OM and LFA share a space?**

Any PM&E approach is influenced by the intended uses of M&E data, donor reporting requirements, organizational and partner information needs and interests, resources available, geographical scope, type of initiative, M&E traditions, skills and capacity. OM and LFA may be useful at different levels, for diverse types of interventions or for information and in different contexts. Rather than pitting LFA and OM against each other, we need to understand what kinds of information and uses each has, as well as their advantages and disadvantages, and find ways for them to add value to each other.

By bringing LFA and OM into a shared space, we must be prepared for possibly higher resource investment (personnel, time, capacity building, money) as well as an investment in creating the trust needed to drive participatory and collaborative planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Development, and social transformation, benefit not from a battle of methodologies or approaches, but from taking the appropriate elements of either OM or LFA (or other methods) appropriate to the context and using them to influence the deepest social change possible. Some examples of how this could occur are:

### *Enabling participation and social learning*

- Using the LFA and / or the Intentional Design as a visual aid and tool for discussion, learning and consensus among stakeholders, to inspire and guide the actions of the program and partners.
- Building in multiple logic integration and equitable collaboration into the planning, monitoring and evaluation process.

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### *Recognizing and systematizing complexity*

- Drawing on the LFA to guide stakeholder understanding about the sequence of changes to which the program expects to contribute to through its influence on the boundary partners.
- Focusing not just on the end development results, but also on an understanding of the processes that leads to them.

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### *Prioritizing learning and multiple accountabilities*

- Planning structured and systematic learning process, which the stakeholders can use to guide their decisions and actions.
- Modifying the LFA based on analysis and changing circumstances.
- Shifting from attribution to contribution, inviting the constant reconstruction and analysis of what is taking place in the program's sphere of influence.
- Offer donors an opportunity to learn more about how results were – or were not – achieved.

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### *Improving organizational learning*

- Strengthening the capacity of the program team for reflection and adapting to changing conditions to maintain relevance.
- Ready the program to be an agent of change and subject to change.

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### *Promoting evaluative thinking and utilization-focused evaluation*

- Advocating for greater understanding by implementing organizations and boundary partners about the links between the program actions, the boundary partners' actions and development changes.
- Interpreting and using the data obtained on the indicators.

## *OM Highlights: OM and LFA – Can they share a space?*

Some practical examples of how projects have used both OM and LFA:

**Example 1: Expanding on outputs and outcomes to include OM outcomes and progress markers.** OM can “unpack” the outcomes within the LFA to provide a specific focus on behavioural change. Output indicators incorporate “expect to see” progress markers, while “like” and “love to see” become outcome indicators. Bridging LFA outputs and outcomes through OM outcomes and progress markers allows for a more complex picture of behavioural change. Progress markers as indicators would not be used to measure the impact of the program, but rather to observe the tendencies and progression towards change. Targets are not defined for the indicators whose principal function is no longer a point to be achieved, but as a means of collecting information about changes over time.

**Example 2: Using OM strategy map to support LFA outputs and activities.** Developing a strategy map can help diversify activities in the LFA to propose the best combination of activities in order to contribute to outcomes.

**Example 3: M&E planning and the PMF -** The performance measurement framework (PMF) and OM’s monitoring and evaluation plan ask similar questions, with one key difference: OM prioritizes use and users to drive monitoring and evaluation data collection, analysis and use. By bringing a focus to the use and users of data, the PMF could benefit from identifying more coherent and relevant monitoring tools, timing and resources. The OM journals permit data to be classified, organized and collected, with key questions for understanding the context and others’ contributions towards results. The journals include among other issues, information which helps analyze how the program influenced boundary partners, information on non-linear relationships, unexpected results, and contributing actors and factors.

We hope the conversation about OM and LFA and other methods will continue and contribute to our collective quest for more effective development programming.

### **References:**

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