

Remembrances of Raj Kumar Verma by the OM Community

Today I went to the hospital to visit Raj Verma with IDRC colleagues in Delhi. Sadly, he's been very sick for a long time and, unfortunately, he died this afternoon. Raj was one of the original users, developers and promoters of OM. For those of you who didn't meet Raj personally, you may know him through his writings on OM in Nagaland or his postings on this community. Raj was a kind man and will be greatly missed. I thought you would want to know.

Sarah Earl, International Development Research Centre, Canada

I first met Raj in 1999 when an IDRC program officer asked me to go with him to Nagaland to help with a self-assessment of a project that was under funding threat from its donor. The program officer thought outcome mapping might be useful to the project in making its case.

Raj met me at the airport in Dimapur with some of his colleagues to drive us up into the mountains to Kohima. (For those of you who don't know Nagaland, it is in the foothills of the Himalayas in the far northeast of India, bordering on Burma. It is a stunningly beautiful state that suffers from political turmoil and population pressures that are resulting in erosion and significant agricultural problems.) Raj spent a good deal of the road journey from the airport up into the hills on the phone checking with friends and contacts on the condition of the road ahead, and for any signs of unrest – which tended to erupt with little notice. Driving through forests on questionable roads in the dark with all this going on should have been an unsettling experience but somehow Raj made it all seem fine and perfectly normal!

For the ten days I was there on that first visit, Raj was my cultural, social and political guide. He led a team of project officers from all 16 districts of the state, coming from different disciplinary backgrounds. His leadership with the project team was evident throughout the visit. He led us into the first outcome mapping self-assessment while we were still in the design stage of building outcome mapping and well before the book was published. His own knowledge of om was limited to our brief discussions over the three days leading up to the workshop – and my ideas were only forming then as well. Sarah, Terry and I had each done some work in the field, but this was the first time we worked with such a large project, I think. It helped form what we produced in the outcome mapping book and is acknowledged in the book's preface. Raj was central to that contribution and treated it very much as a process of co-learning and co-construction.

The project team was a bit unsure of what we were doing but they knew they needed to do something to prepare for the visit by the donor evaluation team. Raj put his faith in what we said we would do and led the team to full participation. Multiple languages were at use during the workshop and Raj also played the role of interpreter. We were pretty sure we had developed a solid report on the successes and challenges of the first phase of NEPED – the Nagaland Environmental Protection and Economic Development project. That was confirmed

in a discussion with the external evaluator who was sent in by the donor when I met him after his report was complete. He told me how impressed he was that not only was the data about the project well organized and accessible, but the team members each had a really solid understanding of the whole project not only their piece of it – and they received funding for a second phase. Raj was instrumental in making all that happen. He continued to build outcome mapping into the project and became an advocate, promoter and teacher of outcome mapping not only in India but in Thailand and Nepal as well as in Canada. He helped me to ground the ideas in reality and his warm welcome into Nagaland was a major driving force for me in understanding what outcome mapping can contribute to development.

Raj embodied the vision we had for outcome mapping: that it is driven by its users, expanded and improved by them and builds its life in the outcome mapping community. I will miss him.

Fred Carden, International Development Research Centre, Canada

I never met him personally but I knew his reputation and the contribution he made to the development of the OM methodology. His work has certainly had a positive impact on the OM community. To honour his memory I'd like to share this publication which he co-authored: [Outcome Mapping: Those Who Dream Make a Difference](#).

Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this time.

Simon Hearn, Overseas Development Institute, UK

May he R.I.P. Although I never met Raj and know only a few people from the OM community – his name is one I remember because of the brilliant documentation from Nagaland.

Archana Patkar, Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), Switzerland

Although I have never physically met Raj, I know him and love him through his inputs to promoting best practices of Outcome mapping. I would like to expand my condolences to Raj's family and relatives.

Dr Jacques Somda, IUCN Central and West Africa programme, Burkina Faso

On behalf of the Ghana Chapter of the Community, kindly extend our condolences to the family of Raj. As a mortal, his journey on earth is time bound; what matters most however, are the foot prints he left behind. May soul rest in peace.

Andrews Frimpong, Ghana

Raj helped us with Outcome Mapping for two research and development projects- dairy in Assam and zoonoses in SE Asia. He was a valuable resource as well as a lovely person and will be greatly missed. One of our colleagues (Rameswar Deka) is visiting Nagaland this month and will pass on our and the OM community condolences to his family in person.

Delia Grace, International Livestock Research Institute, Kenya

It is really sad news you ever want to hear in life. May God help his family with strength and energy to bear irreversible loss.

Ashutosh Jha, PEOCIT Technologies, Mumbai, India

It makes me so sad. Raj (and Fred) came to Thailand for the first OM workshop around 11 years ago. So I can say that he is the first man to push OM practice in Thailand too. With his Nagaland case, I also use it to explain OM as a whole picture. Rest in peace.

Moo Weeraboon Wisartsakul, Thammasat University, Thailand

He conducted an excellent training in Colombo Sri Lanka about two years ago which really inspired me to join the OM community. On behalf of all my colleagues extend our deepest sympathies to the family. May his soul rest in peace.

Hemanthi Goonasekera, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, Bangkok, Thailand

I too had the pleasure and honor of meeting Raj in Nagaland, and seeing his skilful way of interacting with people and bridging cultural divides. His contribution not only to OM but also to engagement between the people of Nagaland and the rest of Indian society was meaningful and a lasting legacy. He will be remembered.

Daniel Buckles, Carleton University, Canada

Very sad to hear this news. We will all miss him. May His Soul Rest In Peace

George W.Chaima, New Restoration Plan, Malawi

Sad to hear this news. I wish him safe journey.

Emmanuel Danso, District Assemblies' Common Fund, Ghana

This personal account of Raj Verma by Fred Carden is moving. It portrays someone who took development work as a vocation and not a profession. From this account, he has reproduced himself in the people he worked with and his work, including his contribution to outcome mapping, will continue to live and grow. I am new to outcome mapping and I am grateful to Raj for his contribution. I am inspired by this testimony.

Tony Dogbe, Participatory Development Associates, Ghana

It is a matter of sadness for me personally to hear about the demise of Raj Kumar Verma who was an internationally well-known OM PRACTITIONER. I pray for his peace and calm in ultimate adobe.

I personally benefited by his publications like "Outcome Mapping: Striking a Balance Between Accountability and Learning" during my first participation in an 'OM public event' organised by 'Consumer Unity and Trust Society' on Last Feb. 18, 2011 in Jaipur, Rajasthan jointly with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London in which Terry Smutylo, Founder and Former Director, Evaluation Unit, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada and one of the principal authors of the OM methodology and Simon Hearn, Research Officer, ODI were the lead resource persons.

Madhu Sudan, Consumer Unity and Trust Society, Jaipur, India

Though I have not yet undergone training in OM, it is sad to note that one of those versified in the domain to the point of being a trainer has suddenly fallen. I will therefore like to extend my deepest condolences to the entire community to which he contributed and to his family -whose tears will surpass all of ours. Well done Verma, rest in peace and light perpetual shine upon you!

Gbawu Woiwor, Interpeace, Liberia

It's very sad when I heard about dear Raj Verma, I never met him but came to know from all of you, shared experiences about him. Really he was genuine person, we will never forget his contribution in OM community. We all pray to God to bless his soul...

Rajesh Vasanttrao Bhosale, Integrated Disease Surveillance Project, Dhule, India