

Analysing Outcome Mapping Monitoring Data

The case of the Quality Education and Vulnerability Programme

(2008-2013, VVOB Zimbabwe, www.vvob.co.zw)

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1. Introduction

This case outlines the process of analysis of outcome mapping monitoring data that are collected in VVOB’s Quality Education and Vulnerability Programme. We first highlight the main purpose of the programme and how the programme uses outcome mapping and elements of the logical framework for its planning, monitoring and evaluation system. We briefly describe the various data collection processes and the resulting data sets and then proceed to describe how we analyse the various monitoring data. Finally we outline how the data analysis process informs our programme reports, feedback mechanisms and project management processes.

2. Quality Education and Vulnerability Programme

This programme is a partnership between VVOB (Flemish Office for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance) and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in Zimbabwe. The programme runs from 2008-2013 and supports 14 teacher education colleges to produce supportive teachers with all competencies and attitudes to address the needs of all children in order to ensure their development, safety and well-being.

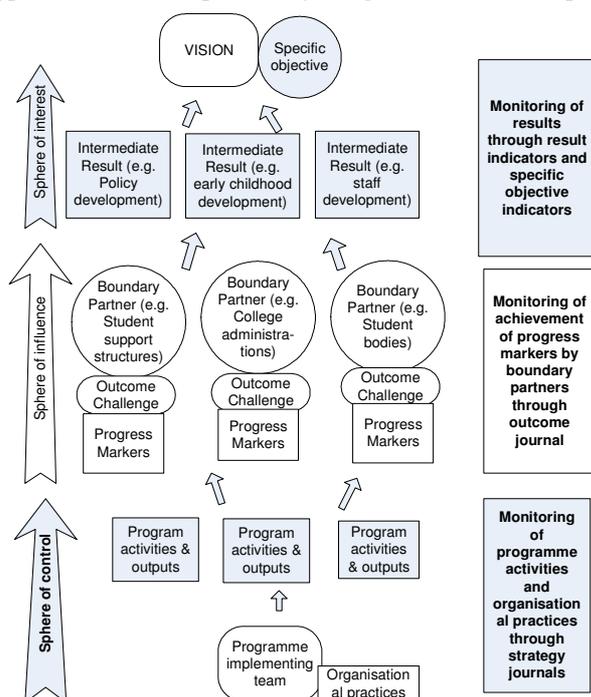
Table 1 shows the programme’s boundary partners whom the programme works directly with in the following 6 key result areas: 1) policy development, 2) co-curricular activities, 3) staff development, 4) early childhood development, 5) in-service training of teachers and 6) organizational learning.

College based boundary partners	Co-curricular support structures, Student bodies, Staff development committees, Early childhood development departments, College administrations
Boundary partners in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education	Department of planning and institutional development Computers and statistics unit
Boundary partner in the University of Zimbabwe	Department of Teacher Education

Table 1: programme’s boundary partners

An integrated framework for logical framework and outcome mapping

The diagram below shows how the outcome mapping framework and elements of the logical framework approach have been practically integrated in VVOB’s programme planning.



The shaded parts of the diagram refer to planning elements that are often found in a logical framework. These include the intermediate result areas and specific objective that fall within the sphere of interest of the programme. They also include programme activities and outputs which fall in the sphere of control of the programme. The unshaded parts refer to planning elements that constitute the particular focus in outcome mapping. These planning elements involve boundary partners, associated outcome challenge and progress markers. These are situated in the programme’s sphere of influence. This means that the programme can try to influence the boundary partners through all kind of support activities but ultimately the programme can not control the boundary partners. An additional focus of outcome mapping is the organizational practices that the programme implementing team implements to remain innovative, relevant and effective. As such the organizational practices provide a framework for organizational learning.

3. Collection of monitoring data

The programme features 6-monthly monitoring cycles. Collection of monitoring data happens at three levels: 1) programme support activities, 2) behaviour changes of the boundary partners, 3) perceptions of the ultimate beneficiaries. It involves both formal processes with specified data collection tools (e.g. strategy and monitoring journals and most significant change stories) and informal processes (e.g. informal conversations and observations during field visits, ...)

1. Strategy journals - Monitoring of programme support activities:

Monitoring at activity level is mainly done by the programme implementing team. All VVOB staff members are involved in this process which consists of one-day activity monitoring meeting, where team members complete the strategy journals. Through the outcome journals, the boundary partners are also able to provide some information about the programme's support activities. **Annex 1** shows an extract of a completed strategy journal.

2. Outcome journals - Monitoring behaviour changes (i.e. outcomes) of the boundary partners.

The programme works with all 14 teacher education colleges in Zimbabwe. Each college has six college boundary partners whom the programme is directly working with. To coordinate programme activities in the colleges, each college has established a programme coordinating team shared by a core team chair person. The programme core team, including the core team chair person, consists of lecturers who represent the various boundary partners and who participate on a voluntary basis in these teams. One of the core team chair person's responsibilities is to make sure that the **various college boundary partners complete their outcome journals**. Experience from two monitoring cycles (June and December 2008) shows that the filling of the journals is done in various ways:

- One individual who is part of a particular boundary partner group fills a particular journal.
- A boundary partner group (e.g. all members of the students support team) meets to fill the journal as a group.
- Representatives from all boundary partner groups meet to discuss progress in the programme and fill their outcome journals during the meeting.

Annex 2 shows an example of the outcome journals filled by the 6 boundary partners of one college.

3. Most significant change stories - Monitoring at the level of the beneficiaries

The programme support team recognizes that by working with teacher education colleges its activities are quite distant from its ultimate beneficiaries who are the teachers and school pupils. Even at college level, the programme is not always directly interacting with all lecturers or all students but only with specific boundary partners that in turn provide services to the lecturing staff and college students. To be able to judge if the programme's work with its boundary partners is contributing to some positive effect towards the beneficiaries (i.e. lecturers and students), the programme support team collects most significant change stories (15-20 stories) from various students and lecturers during each monitoring cycle. **Annex 3** provides examples of selected most significant change stories.

4. Informal monitoring data collection

Various informal conversations or observations from team members and boundary partners during meetings, programme activities or field visits also provide very valuable monitoring data. These data inform the more formal monitoring processes at various times in the monitoring cycle. Such data can allow triangulation of information in the strategy and outcome journals and also inform reporting and project management processes.

The data collection processes are illustrated in figure 1 that visualizes the programme's monitoring system.

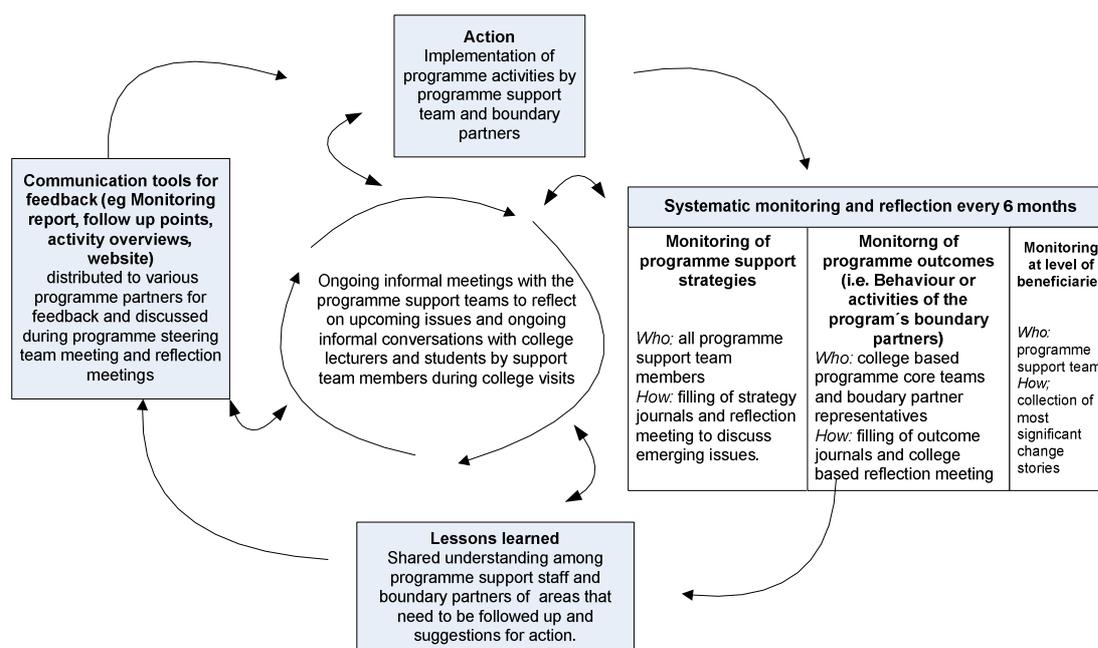


Fig.1: Programme's monitoring system as action learning cycle

4. Analysis of the monitoring data

Data analysis processes happen at different levels in the monitoring system using different methods for different purposes.

A. Analysis of the strategy journals and outcome journals

1. First level analysis during the completion of the journals – learning at 'micro' level by the boundary partners and the programme support staff.

The process

A first analysis starts during the filling of the journals. Both the strategy journals and the outcome journals are filled during a highly participatory process. Strategy journals are filled by the programme support staff during a reflection meeting with all programme staff and management. Outcome journals are filled by the boundary partners themselves during reflection meetings at their respective colleges. These reflection meetings therefore have a double purpose:

- i. They provide an opportunity for data collection as the data is provided by the meeting participants and filled in the respective sections of the journals.
- ii. The reflection meetings also provide a space for reflection on the data (i.e. self assessment) and a first level analysis. The framework of analysis is provided by the learning questions in the outcome journals and strategy journals. These questions ask for specific information on lessons learned and issues for follow up for each strategy or progress marker. This information is also filled in the journal and therefore constitutes an analysis per support strategy or progress marker. There are also some overall learning questions that help the analysis process. Analysis at this level is of direct use to the people who complete the journals and therefore facilitates immediate planning for further action or follow up related to specific lessons learned.

Analysis Outputs

The box below shows an extract from an outcome journal filled by one boundary partner group (i.e. co-curricular support structures) from a specific institution (i.e. Belvedere Technical Teachers College). The column for follow up and corrective measures allows for a deeper analysis of the monitoring data in the remarkable facts.

Progress Markers	Remarkable facts, what happened (who, how, what, where)	Date (when)	Follow up / corrective measures	Support documents
<p>3. Organise vulnerability related activities towards students and staff</p> <p>(e.g. vulnerability related orientation programmes for new students, cascade information to steering team members and club, bring students in touch with OVC reality, organise vulnerability related activities/workshops for steering team members, clubs and whole student body, involvement in staff development activities and development of psycho-social support structures for staff and students.)</p>	<p>-Organised an induction workshop for six more members who would facilitate in the college-based Cholera awareness campaign, as well as adapting the VVOB/UNICEF scenario for use at BTTC (12 members involved).</p> <p>-17 facilitators involved in organising and conducting a one-day Cholera awareness and prevention workshop for 335 first-year students and 25 staff members.</p> <p>-Sixteen lecturers involved in organising and conducting a 2-day life skills New Intake workshop for 300 first year students.</p> <p>-Fifteen lecturers involved in organising and conducting a 2-day Life Skills workshop for Teaching Practice for 300 4th year and pedagogic students.</p>	<p>24/02/09</p> <p>26/02/09</p> <p>9-10 March 2009</p> <p>20-22 March.</p> <p>30-31 March</p>	<p>-Organise a Cholera awareness workshop for those students that were left out in the workshop with first years.</p> <p>-Follow-up on action plans to clean up the identified areas in the college to prevent and curb the spread of Cholera and other unhygienic condition-related diseases (the unprotected water tank and the rubbish bunkers).</p>	<p>Reports of the workshops held (EE, PE, QE & vulnerability and life skills files.</p>
<p>Narrative of a success story or a significant change story:</p> <p>Cholera awareness and prevention workshop was an eye-opener. Staff members and students spearheaded cleaning up of unsightly places within the college after the workshop. The training of peer educators and EE club members groomed a vibrant team which has good vision for a better BTTC and the society in general.</p>				

2. Second level analysis of the journals by the programme M&E staff – learning at ‘macro’ level.

o Using the result indicators as analytical framework for analysing the outcome mapping journals

Each monitoring cycle results in one strategy journal and about 84 outcome journals (6 boundary partners x 14 colleges). All compiled journals are sent to the VVOB office for further analysis by the programme support staff responsible for compiling the monitoring report and for addressing any emerging learning needs (e.g. what is happening around a specific progress marker of a one boundary partner type across all colleges?).

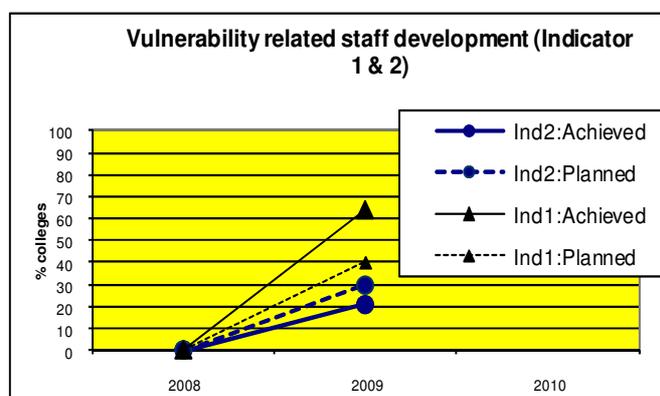
The data analysis process at this second level allows to reduce the vast qualitative monitoring data into meaningful aggregated data. The analysis process is guided by 1) principles of grounded theory and 2) the analytic framework provided by the result indicators of the programme’s logical framework.

- Principles of grounded theory allow for analysis of the monitoring data without a specific analytic framework in mind or without any predetermined analytic categories set. This allows for any important and unexpected learnings to emerge.
For example, in the second monitoring cycle of 2008, analysis of the outcome journals of the co-curricular student bodies across the 11 colleges showed that specific life skills awareness activity packs such as ‘the Aunty Stella activity’ were no longer used in any of the colleges. From deeper probing during reflection meetings it emerged that the lecturers who used to implement these activities had left the colleges and that the new lecturers simply didn’t know about the existence of the Aunty Stella activity. This provided an important and unexpected learning that was taken up as follow up point in the next monitoring cycle in 2009.
- The result indicators of the six key result areas of the programme’s logframe provide a useful analytical framework for the second level analysis of the journals. These result indicators are for a large part in line with the progress markers of the boundary partners but they do not require the detailed information from each journal but only need a quantitative interpretation of the how specific boundary partners are progressing in the various colleges. The table below illustrates the relationship between the progress markers of one boundary partner (i.e. staff development committees) and related result indicators that are used for the monitoring report for the donor.

Boundary partner: Staff development committee	
Progress marker	Result indicator
1. Coordinate general functioning of the staff development committee	1. 50% of the colleges with a detailed staff development plan with focus on OVC
2. Organise specific vulnerability related staff development activities	2. 30% of the colleges with specific committees that organise staff development activities related to OVC at least once every term 50% of the colleges with a detailed staff development plan with focus on OVC

Besides unearthing any unexpected lessons, this second level analysis translates the qualitative data from the progress markers in the journals into a quantitative interpretation of the progress related to the results indicator. A brief qualitative description to support the quantitative interpretation suffices at this analysis level. This second level analysis therefore helps to reduce the vast amount of qualitative data to meaningful aggregated data that allow the programme staff to report towards the result indicators and to complete the monitoring report, to filter out important lessons learned and to formulate meaningful feedback towards the boundary partners. This information in turn informs programme decision making and programme management and course adjustment. Plotting the monitoring data against the original baseline data gives us a tool to visualize change over time for a specific result area. The box below with an extract of the latest monitoring report of July 2009 illustrates this.

Box 1: extract from 6-monthly results monitoring report



Indicator 1 (60%)

9 out of 14 colleges (60% of the colleges) have plans for staff development around Learning Differences, attitude choice, Counselling and TP mentors. This surpassed our planned indicator of 40% of the colleges. These plans were revised during the year to include a new area around environmental education. The plans were developed by the colleges in collaboration with programme team members.

Indicator 2 (21%)

All the 14 colleges have a Staff Development Committee responsible for organising staff development related activities. However, only 3 out

of the 14 colleges (21%) have implemented activities from their staff development plan, i.e. EE in Mkoba, ECD in Nyadire (22-23/06/09), learning differences and attitude choice in UCE. We learned also that the staff development committee is not always the structure that seems to coordinate or organise staff development activities in the colleges as was the case with special needs in United College of Education. We might need to reconsider the value of staff development committees as boundary partner. In Nyadire the staff development committee together with the Teaching Practice department and the ECD department organised the ECD staff development activity. All lecturers participated in this particular workshop (80 lecturers).

Box 2 below provides another example of a data analysis tool that programme staff use to analyse the journal information against the result indicators. This particular example shows how the information from the outcome journals of one of the boundary partners (i.e. the early childhood development departments in 11 colleges) is analysed to get an overall idea about what is happening in terms of early childhood development across the 11 colleges. This analysis at the same time also directed to satisfy reporting requirements.

Box 2: Example of Framework for analysing data from Outcome Journal of the ECD Boundary partner				
College	1. 20% of the colleges that have reoriented the ECD curriculum in view of the educational needs of OVC	2. 10% of the ECD lecturers in the various colleges who carry out research pertaining to education and OVC	3. 10% of the colleges where ECD lecturers are involved in the production of relevant learning materials.	4. 10% of colleges that support specific ECD outreach programmes. ECD lecturers and students initiating and carrying out OVC related outreach programmes in ECD.
Bondolfi	YES – syllabus reviewed in January 2009 and approved by the Academic Board	YES – noted too high student-pupils ratio during TP observation (26/03/2009)	YES – toy kits and model play centre for students to learn how to do this (Apr – Jun 2009)	YES – students on TP carry out community development projects
JMN	YES – developed TP documents for use by students for vulnerable children.	YES – implemented the Observation & Monitoring of children’s development (0-3yrs) during TP	Not yet started	YES – have set up a model ECD outdoor play centre
Madziwa	YES – syllabus review meeting done on 24/03/2009 resulting in incorporation of vulnerability related themes in syllabus	Not yet started. No comment given	Not yet started. No comment given	Not yet started. No comment given
Marymount	YES – syllabus reviewed to incorporate vulnerability related	Not yet done. No comment given	Not yet done. No comment given	Not yet done. No comment given
Masvingo	YES – a series of syllabus review meetings done between Jan & Feb 2009	YES – Students on TP encouraged to carry out action research projects in their practising schools	YES – outdoor play centre designed to be user-friendly for children. Same as material developed by students during their lessons.	Not yet done. No comment given
Mkoba	YES – review of syllabus done in Feb 2009.	Not yet started. Plans to do it with intake 10	YES – improvised ECD learning material with intake 6 & 8 (started in 2007)	YES – ECD centre developed (2008-2009). Outreach project by students on TP
Morgan Zintec	Not yet done. ECD syllabus already has topics addressing vulnerability	Not yet started. No comment given	Not yet started. No comment given	Not yet started. No comment given
Morgenster	YES – monitoring implementation of vulnerability integrated ECD syllabus (March to May 09)	Not yet done. No comment given	Not yet done. Plans to come up with learning materials for deaf and dumb students by July 2009	YES – outreach programme by students on TP
Nyadire	Not yet done. No comment given	Not yet done. No comment given	Not yet done. Plans to develop learning materials by next term.	YES – ECD awareness campaign organised at Kanyongo cluster (10/06/09), Gadaga case study (Apr 09) NB. A lot of work done in outreach
Seke	YES – syllabus review done incorporating vulnerability related themes	Not yet done. No comment given	Not yet done. No comment given	YES – involved in the training of ECD para-professionals with assistance from UNICEF
UCE	YES – syllabus reviewed (dates not given)	Not yet started. No comment given	Not yet started. Plans to conduct lecture to help students on material development	Not yet started; no model ECD centre developed but plans exist to do it
Interpretation across the 11 colleges	<i>9 out of 11 colleges with ECD (approx. 82%) have engaged in various activities to review their ECD syllabi to incorporate vulnerability related themes</i>	<i>3 out of 11 colleges with ECD (about 27%) have lecturers and students involved in various research activities pertaining to education and vulnerability</i>	<i>3 out of 11 colleges with ECD (about 27%) have ECD lecturers and students involved in the production of various ECD material</i>	<i>5 out of 11 colleges with ECD (about 46%) are involved in various community outreach initiatives related to ECD and vulnerability.</i>

B. analysis of the most significant change stories

The change stories from the beneficiaries are analysed through a process of selecting the most significant change stories by small groups of programme support staff. Various insights that emerge from conversations during the story selection process together with the selected stories provide a rich source of information about the contributions of the programme at the level of the beneficiaries. At the same time, this information provides rich feedback about the effectiveness of the programmes support strategies towards the boundary partners who provide services to the beneficiaries. The VV head office staff in Brussels is also drawn in the analysis process as they are also asked to select one significant change story from the ones selected by the programme staff and give reasons for their selection. This again adds useful information about VVOB head office staff perceptions about the programme and its contribution towards changes at beneficiary level.

C. Triangulation through various data sources

Monitoring data during each 6-monthly monitoring cycle are obtained from different data sources, i.e. strategy journals, outcome journals, most significant change stories and informal conversations, observations and field visits. This allows for some verification of the monitoring findings but it also allows for deeper analysis. For example, combining information from strategy journals and outcome journals and field visits allowed us to get a better understanding of which colleges were organizing programme activities on their own or with support from the VVOB support team. While the outcome journals would sometimes indicate that certain colleges organized certain workshops, the strategy journals would indicate the level of support that was given by the programme to the colleges to make these activities happen. The less support given to a college for activities to happen the greater the level of sustainability of specific activities that can now happen without any support from VVOB. Annex 4 shows a tool to communicate the results of the data analysis related to co-curricular student activities. The excel document shows the type of workshops organized by specific colleges and a color coding indicates the level of support by VVOB. Also other quantitative data such as the number of people trained is also provided.

5. Compilation of the results monitoring report

Information generated from the various monitoring activities is used to compile the midterm (June) and end-of-year (December) results monitoring reports. Two VVOB support team members who are responsible for coordinating the monitoring activities during the monitoring cycles (twice a year or every 6 months) are also responsible for compiling the result monitoring reports.

The format of the results monitoring report is build up around the six intermediate result areas of the programme. For each result area the following information is asked for in the report:

1. Description of achieved results according to the SMART result indicators (+general description of activities done to realise it).
2. Description of not achieved results + explanation
3. Lessons learnt for underachievement and success
4. Evolution of assumptions
5. Pending issues/challenges
6. Actions and adjustments
7. Critical stories of change

Experience from three monitoring cycles has shown that the information generated from the monitoring activities at the level of activities, boundary partners and ultimate beneficiaries provide adequate information to report on the result indicators of the logical framework. This approach doesn't only allow us to report on how far the results have been met but also report on whom of the boundary partners has contributed to the achievement of these results and what the programme has done to contribute to this. This forms an important practical link between outcome mapping and logical framework to practically integrate these two approaches. After the compilation, the monitoring reports are distributed to the boundary partners and strategic partners including the VVOB head office in Brussels. As such the reports also constitute communication tools for feedback about the results of the monitoring cycles.

6. Feedback processes and feeding monitoring information into the management cycle (Third level analysis)

Various communication tools help in the feedback process towards the various stakeholders. These tools include the two yearly monitoring report that contains a narrative summary of the monitoring results structured around

the key result areas, the OM journals themselves, the excel document with workshop overviews (see attachment 4), summaries of follow up points from specific monitoring cycles (see attachment 5). These tools are used for discussion, reflection and decision making at various programme management levels. These constitutes a third level of analysis of the monitoring data and provides a platform where learnings from the monitoring process can feed programme management.

Twice a year at programme support team level

The major findings of each monitoring cycle are discussed during a reflection meeting with all support team staff and programme management.

Ongoing at operational level:

The coordination unit forms the operational management structure and consists of 6 VVOB staff members of the programme support team. The coordination unit meets often in ad-hoc meetings to address any upcoming issues on a daily basis. The coordination unit is also responsible to safeguard the bigger picture or the overall process in the programme and to coordinate the action upon the follow up points that emerge from the monitoring cycles. As such the monitoring information informs day-to-day management in an ongoing way. Also informal conversations, meetings and field visits provide great opportunities for informal feedback and learning around the monitoring data.

Twice a year at Strategic Management Level:

After every six-monthly monitoring cycle, a programme steering team meeting is organised to discuss the lessons learned and follow up points that emerged from the monitoring exercise. The programme steering team is the highest management body in the programme and consists of Ministry officials, Vice Principals of all the colleges and VVOB management. Such meetings are another level of monitoring data analysis. They provide important learning opportunities for higher management to get a deeper understanding about progress and challenges in the programme based on specific information from the monitoring process. At the same time the meeting provides the space for the steering team to take decision about any adjustments in the programme planning based on lessons learned from the monitoring. As such discussions and decisions concerning the programme are based on real data instead of assumption.

At boundary partner level:

Two yearly reflection meetings at boundary partner level provide great learning spaces where feedback is given and discussed about the lessons learnt from the previous monitoring cycle.

A visual overview of the programme's monitoring data analysis system is provided in figure 2 below.

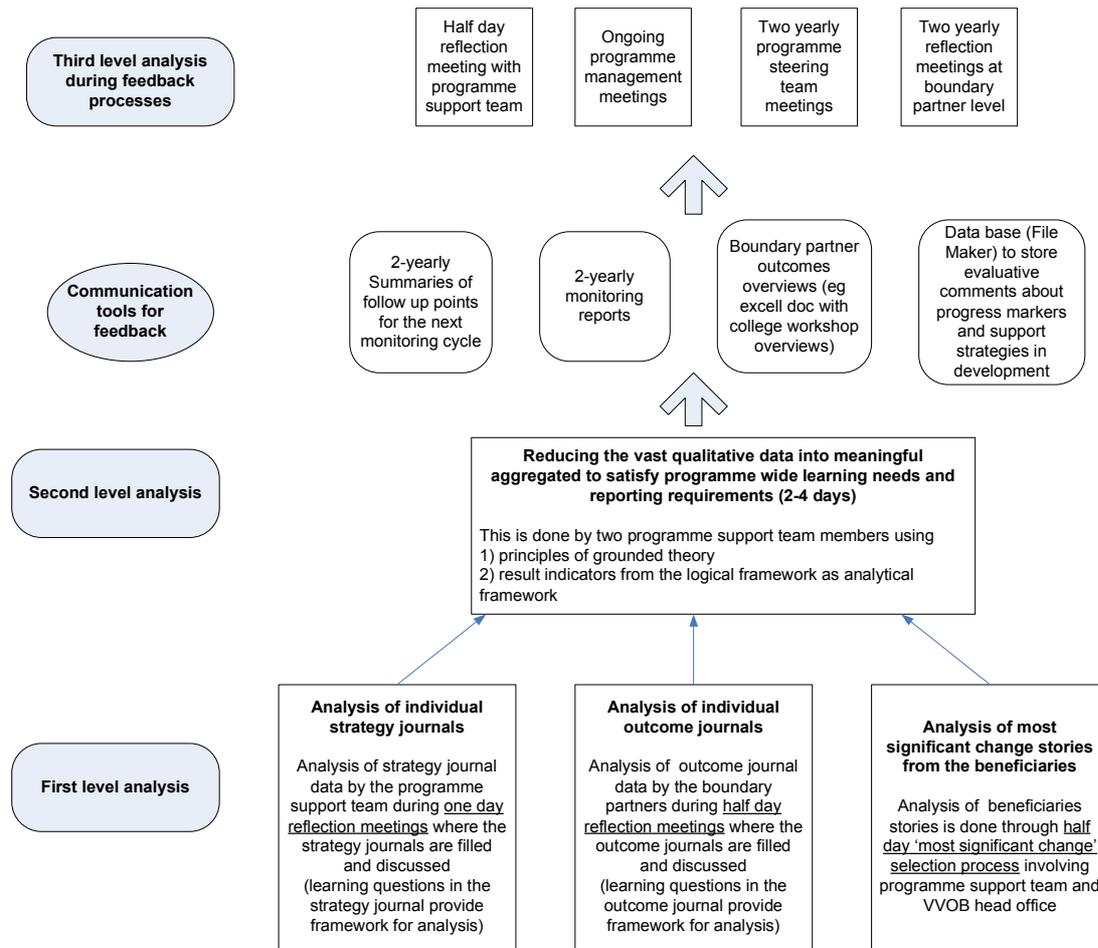


Figure 2: overview of programme's monitoring data analysis system