



OutcomeMapping
LEARNING COMMUNITY

10 years of Outcome Mapping applications, adaptations & support

An exploration of how and where outcome mapping has been used, what support is needed / available, and practitioner perspectives on outcome mapping benefits, issues, solutions and new frontiers

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www.outcomemapping.ca



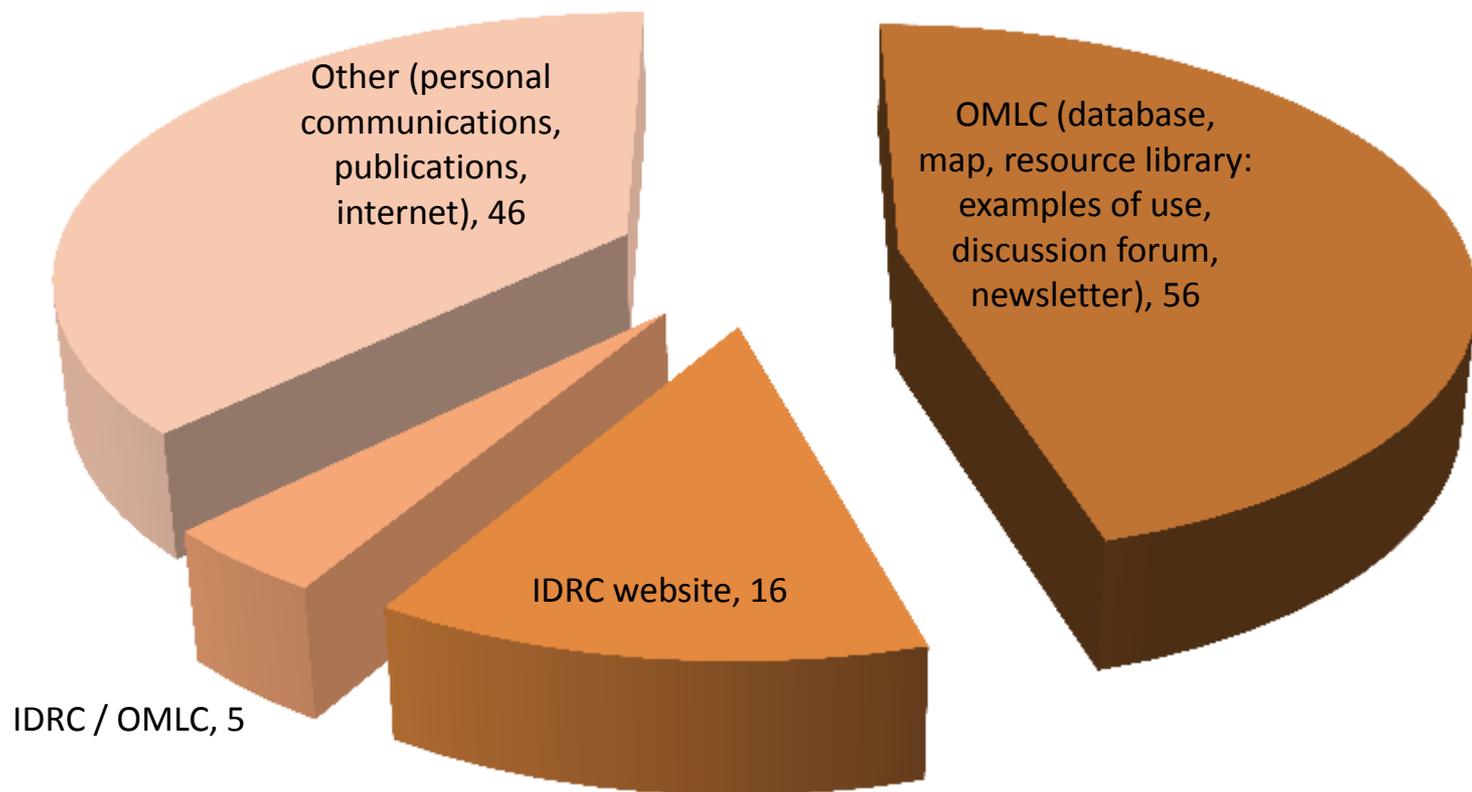
What we did

- Research Sep 2011 – March 2012, in consultation with stewards
- Created applications and practitioner databases
- Researched applications and training: OMLC, IDRC, personal communications, internet, literature...
- Interviews
- Now: preliminary results and analysis
- Next: finalise report



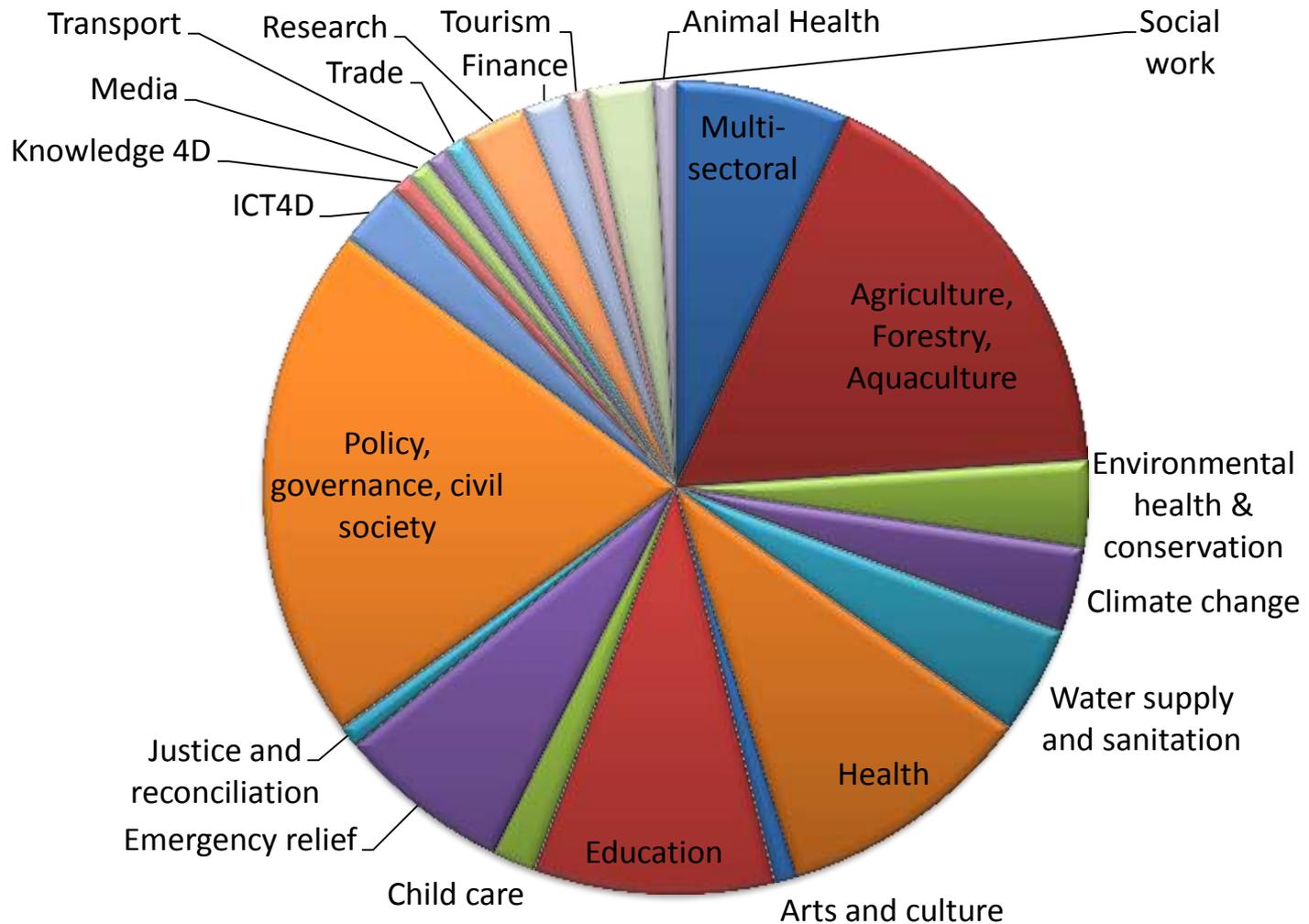
123 examples of OM use

Supported by at least 36 funding sources



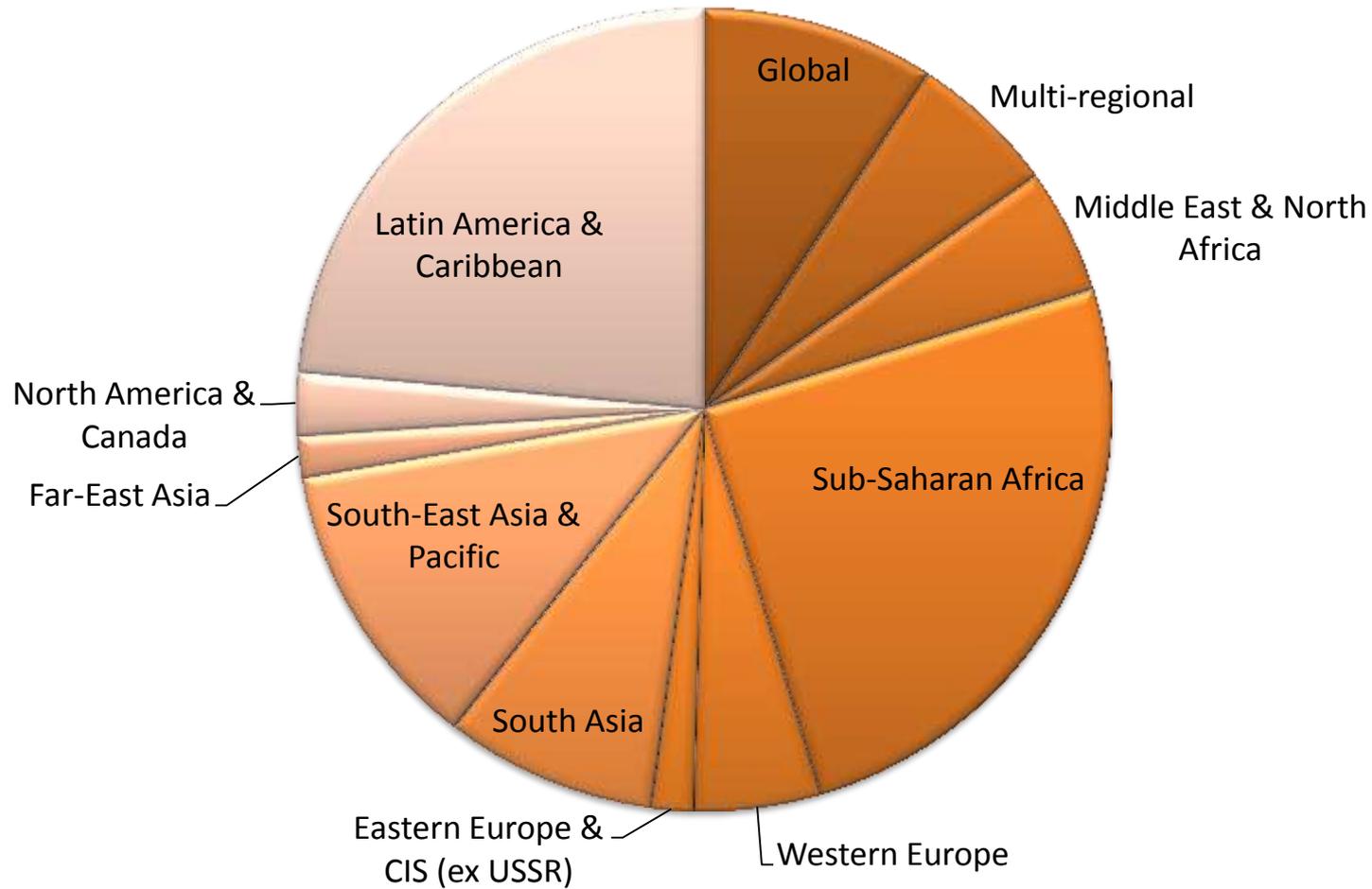


OM use by sector

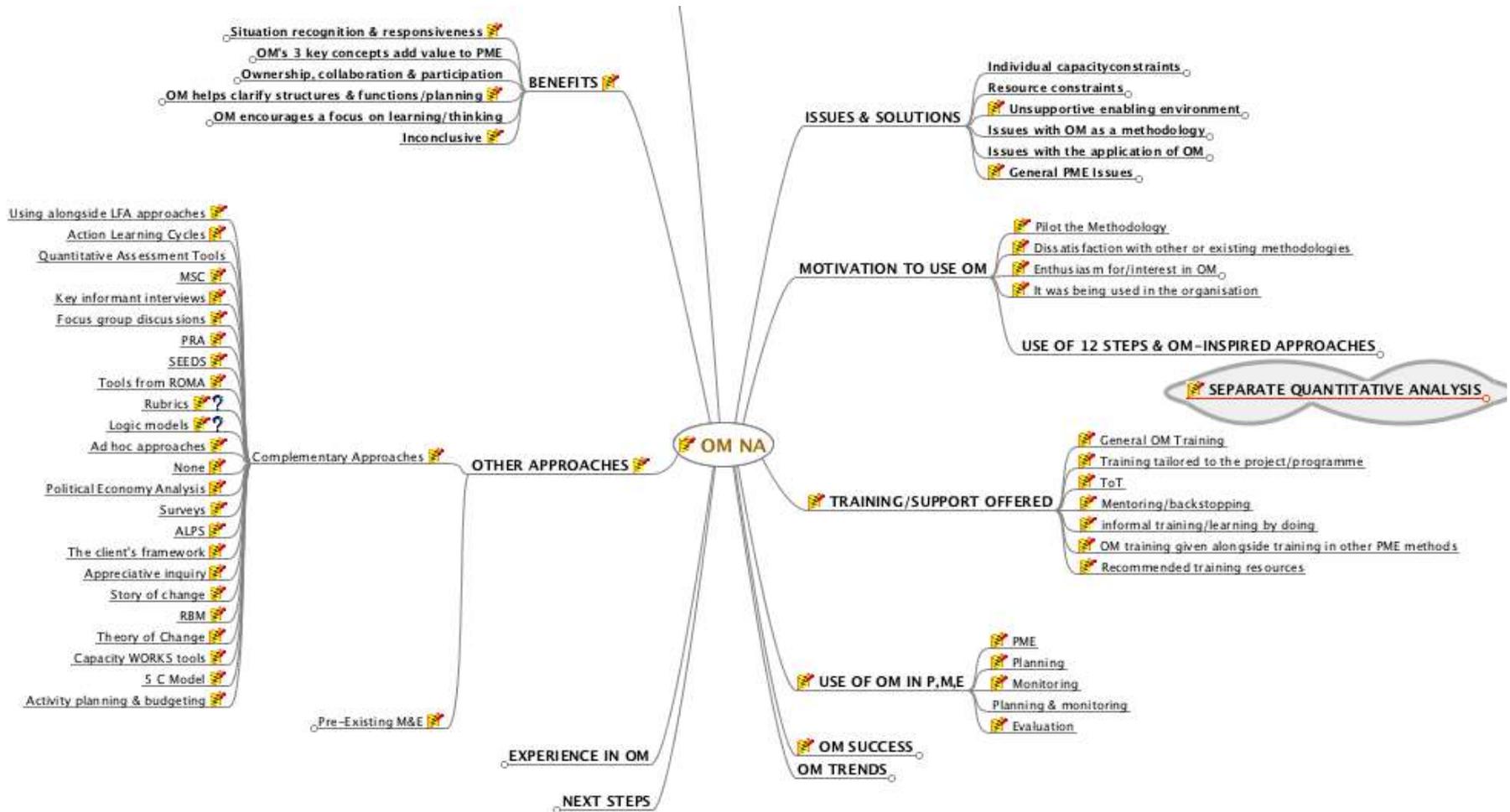




OM use by region



Mindmap of 23 interviews





Focusing on change in social actors that you only influence is a breakthrough I have heard described as a revelation, an epiphany and revolutionary.

Image: Laurie Chipps, CC BY-ND 2.0

I came to appreciate OM as an attempt to be intellectually honest about RBM. LFA expects a direct link to results. In OM, it is explicitly recognised that results will not be solely attributable to the project / intervention. Rather the project will contribute to results.



Appreciation: planning

Planning - there is nothing more useful than OM.

OM focuses people. Stop trying to change the world; focus on your sphere of influence. Tell me about 3-4 Boundary Partners, not 90 stakeholders.



Appreciation: monitoring

[OM] provides evidence to base decision making on: quarterly planning meetings are based on evidence, not the views of the most assertive participant

OM is great for organisational learning. It is the only PME method that tries to bridge across programmes and organisations, offering approaches for both in a combination



Appreciation: evaluation

The OM concept of outcomes helps people to think about evaluation differently. It does not handcuff workshop participants to our theory of change and tests some of our operating hypotheses. With this focus on stories, not semantics, people respond well.

‘Outcome harvesting’ suggests capturing what others can already see. But the evaluation actually produced outcome statements that were unexpected as they had not been captured by the monitoring we had been doing. We were surprised and impressed by the contributions our programme had made.



When OM works best

The 'OM receptivity continuum'

ESSENTIAL

Complexity, recognition of complexity, champion

DESIRABLE

Executive understanding & support, funder support, promotion of organisational learning culture, appreciation at multiple levels, availability of resources

Even in areas where country directors might still be building their confidence in using OM...we can still be sure they will be asking: who do you want to influence and why?

Simple use of OM

Extensive use of OM



Training – is there a mismatch?



Support is needed for implementing partners to get the reflection/learning cycle moving.

Many felt that training should go beyond
The seagull approach
- land, xxxx and leave!

We need follow up / support / ongoing mentoring

More could be achieved more quickly if introductory training can be given for those in similar situations rather than to mixed groups



Donors and LFA

- *[OM is] inconsistent with the way donors work.*
- But many persist with using OM alongside LFA and are excited about the results
- A more receptive donor attitude would benefit all
- After 10 years of OM, outreach could include:
 - A differentiated outreach approach for foundations / statutory funders
 - Donor-specific training promoting OM as a toolbox not alternative
 - Publicise examples of how OM adds value in LFA context e.g. how OM outcomes help understand progress / obstacles to achieving impacts
 - Seek champions within donors and facilitate the sharing of experiences among donors



Never cook by the book!



With some adaptations, its various elements and tools can be used separately or in conjunction with other processes (for example, a SWOT, a situational analysis, or an LFA).

This manual does not provide the reader with instructions on how to adapt Outcome Mapping,

but instead assumes it is being used in its totality. (p11, OM manual, Earl, Carden, Smutylo, 2001)

Image: Lee Stranahan, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



Thank you!

Our experience in conducting this research confirms what Fred Carden wrote about the late Raj Verma yesterday:

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.

