Outcome Harvesting in a page·

Outcome Harvesting can be used for either monitoring or evaluation of projects, programs or organisations. Depending on the situation, either an external or internal person can be designated to lead the Outcome Harvesting process. To ensure success, the harvester recruits the participation of the change agents who work to influence "outcomes": changes in behaviour writ large — actions, relationships, policies or practices — of one or more social actors. The user who requires the findings of the harvest is also engaged throughout the process. The process consists of six iterative steps.

1. ***Design the Outcome Harvest***: Harvest users and harvesters identify useful questions to guide the harvest and agree what information is to be collected as the *outcome description*, in addition to the changes in the social actors and how the change agent's intervention influenced them.

2. ***Review documentation and draft outcome descriptions***: Harvesters identify and extract changes in individuals, groups, communities, organisations or institutions evidenced in reports, evaluations, press releases and other documentation, along with what the change agents did to contribute to them.

3. ***Engage with informants in formulating outcome descriptions:*** Harvesters communicate directly with the change agent informants to review the outcome descriptions extracted from the files, identify and formulate additional outcomes, and classify them all. Informants will often consult with others inside or outside their organization who are well-informed about outcomes to which they have contributed.

4. ***Substantiate***: Harvesters obtain the views of one or more independent people knowledgeable about the outcome, or a representative group of outcomes, and how they were achieved, to enhance the validity as well as the credibility of the findings.

5. ***Analyse and interpret***: Harvesters organise outcome descriptions through a database in order to make sense of them, analyse and interpret the data and provide evidence-based answers to the useful harvesting questions.

6. ***Support use of findings:*** Harvesters propose points for discussion to harvest users grounded in the evidence-based answers to the useful questions. Discussions with users might include how they could make use of findings. The harvesters also wrap up their contribution by accompanying or facilitating the discussion amongst harvest users.

OUTCOME HARVESTING CONCEPTS

Change agent: The individual or organisation that influences an outcome through an intervention.

Harvest users: The people who require the findings of an Outcome Harvest to make decisions or take action.

Harvesters: People responsible for managing the Outcome Harvest.

Outcome Description: The written formulation of *who* changed *what*, *when* and *where*, and *how* it was influenced by a change agent. May include the outcome's significance, context, and history, amongst other dimensions.

Outcome Harvest: The identification, formulation, analysis and interpretation of outcomes to answer useable questions.

Outcome: Change in the behaviour, relationships, actions, activities, policies or practices of a social actor.

Social actor: Individual, group, community, organisation or institution.

Substantiation: Confirmation of the substance of an Outcome Description by an informant knowledgeable about the outcome but independent of the change agent.

Useful questions: Questions that guide the Outcome Harvest because the answers to them will be put to use by the harvest users.