



1

activity focus/reporting

Quantitative data not that meaningful, didn't help us learn

feeling a bit stuck in old plans

Not sure how to handle qualitative data

Needed something FLEXIBLE, RICH, HELP US LEARN

Lifted eyes of staff from activity plans and outputs to more strategic thinking about how to contribute to the outcomes we hoped to see.

As we developed this further, we were also able to use these approaches with communities, and develop more participatory M&E.

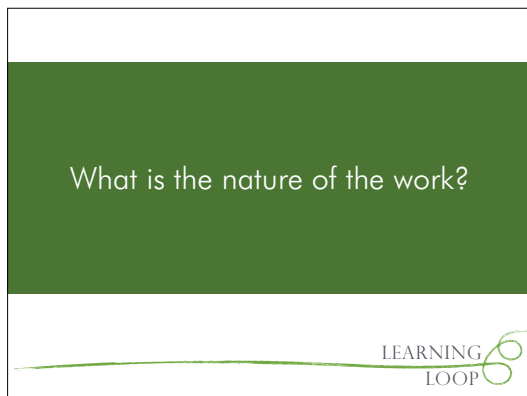
This helped us find new strategies, and tailor them to the specific places we worked in.

The tools also helped us communicate a richer picture of change with our supporting partners.

Since seeing how it is also benefiting other local organisations...

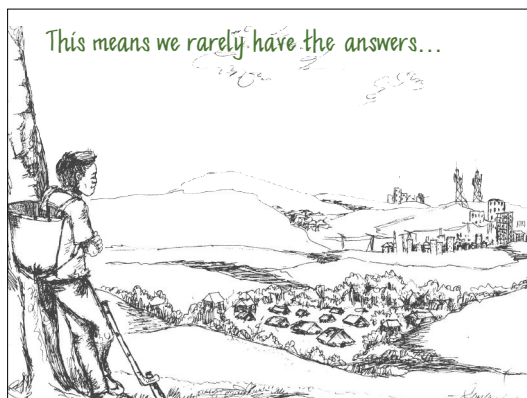
We are now also working with supporting partners (like SMCs MOs) and how these tools shape their work and relationships

... something we are still learning about and look forward to hearing more insights from all of you.



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...that we are supporting



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What is our response as to this boys situation - how can we build resilience - the preparedness and capacity to cope with changes which could disempower and impoverish.

Not a SIMPLE answer ... COMPLEX

## Is it ...

- supporting equal access to health rights
- protection of refugees
- peace building
- access to safe water
- inclusion of youth into decision making processes
- gender equality
- Indigenous rights to forest protection
- ...

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PAUSE - Ask them to add in the chat...

*All of these can be seen as socially complex!*

*The complexity of a problem generally increases as the number of human factors involved increases.*

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political and policy reform involve complex systems, where variables affect each other rather than being separable, and their interactions can also change the system itself. Political and social systems are like cats, not watches. Need a different set of tools

## Outline

- Part one: Complex social systems
  - systems
  - social systems
  - complexity in social systems
  - How can we work with this - actor focus.
- Part two: Tools
  - Outcome/Actor focused approaches - main tools/ approaches you need in your toolkit!

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Systems concepts - what do we mean by a system, can be thought of in different ways

closed independent system...

Measurement and design based in Newtonian science relies on testing separable variables, and assumes change progresses at a steady rate in a single direction.  
For instance, you can deconstruct a watch (a Newtonian system) learn the interactions of each part, and put them together to understand how a watch works.



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Cat - multiple, interdependent and diverse elements

if you take a cat a part(an interdependent system), and test each part of its anatomy, you understand only some of how it behaves in real life, and you probably won't be able to bring it back to life again!



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3 core concepts to help us think about and engage with complex social systems.

Understanding inter-relationships - How do things connect and influence each other? changing relationships, power relations,  
Engaging with multiple-perspectives - What are the different ways a situation can be understood? Do different groups perceive the situation differently?  
Reflecting on boundary choices - What's in and what's out? What do we think is relevant to work with, why?

## What makes situations complex?



Contextual complexity

Causal complexity



Dynamic and rapidly changing

Different Perspectives



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Complex situations are often complex due to the combination of four different factors:

Contextual complexity - each context has its own unique blend of actors, environment, relationships, history and culture, which we rarely understand before we are engaged in the context, and never completely understand.

Causal complexity - the cause and effect relationships of the multitude of factors are impossible to fully understand. They seem unpredictable and are probably non-linear. But usually we can see patterns retrospectively when we look back at what has happened.

Dynamic and rapidly changing - actors and factors change significantly and rapidly. This is especially true in conflict situations.

Different Perspectives - different actors may hold very different perspectives about what the goals look like and how we should get there, especially when these relate to social norms (e.g. Gender) Furthermore, these perspectives are in constant flux as peoples' opinions change and develop.

*"Complexity demands different ways of working"*

- Harry Jones, 2011. Taking responsibility for complexity

- Understanding local realities - who makes the **local system** what it is.
- **Learning** about how people are changing.
- **Adapting** our plans to keep up with the situation and our discoveries
- **Cooperating** with others.

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Harry Jones, F.B.D.B., 2011. Taking responsibility for complexity: how implementation can achieve results in the face of complex problems - ODI Working Papers 330. pp.1-72.

coop - capacities to address complex issues are distributed across different actors

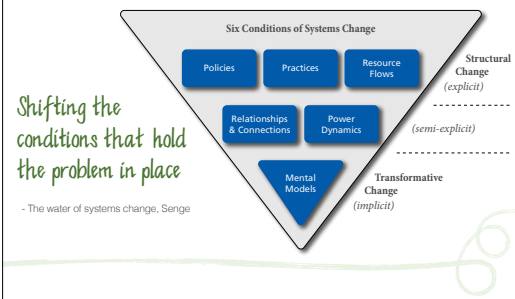
## Focus on Actors and Behaviour

*Social issues are constructed and perpetuated by social actors and therefore in order to change the systems, we need to influence the behaviour of actors in the local system.*



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## Systems change



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Waters of systems change: [https://www.fsg.org/publications/water\\_of\\_systems\\_change](https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change)

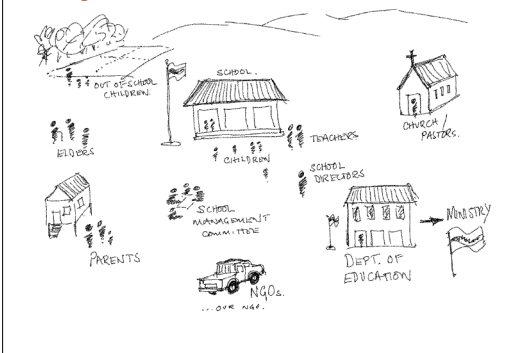
## Local Systems

"interconnected sets of actors—governments, civil society the private sector, universities, individual citizens and others—that jointly produce a particular development outcome"

- USAID 2014, Local Systems

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What might this look like...



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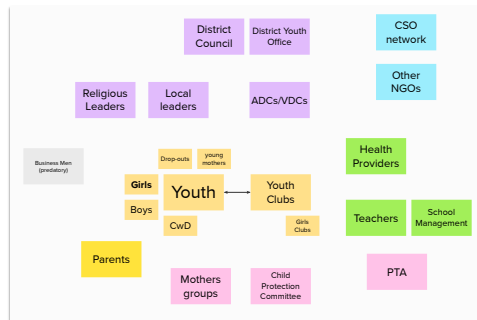
What might this look like

...

question the boundaries!

What are the power relations? influence? Think religious actors too - they often play an important role in shaping norms (for better or worse!).

What might this look like...



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What might this look like

...

question the boundaries!

What are the power relations? influence? Think religious actors too - they often play an important role in shaping norms (for better or worse!).

## Leprosy Mission Example



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Doing something like this is your homework...

A key first step in understanding and working with OM and OH

## Actor-focused approaches

- Complex development issues are created and perpetuated by the actors in the system.
- Capacities to address complex issues are distributed across different actors.
- Monitor behavioural change ... and adapt.

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Actor focused approaches are about putting people back in development PME!  
 AF creates a Concrete and pragmatic way of structuring our work with complex issues focusing on who needs to change and how?  
 It is about recognising that we don't do development for people, people develop of their own will and agendas, and we can only support and influence change but working with and through existing actors and systems is the road to sustainable change.

## Introduction to HW No. 1

1. Look at a partner proposal that you are familiar with **or** an issue that you are working to change through your organisation.
2. Map out the actors who are holding the problem in place.
3. Describe their current behaviour and relationships.
4. Take a picture and submit it onto Fabo.
5. Reflect on: How well were the actors and relationships described in the proposal? How could this be improved?

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How can OM and OH help?

LEARNING  
LOOP

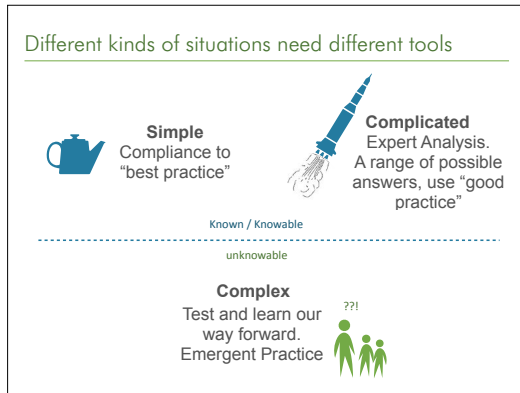
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complexity demands different ways of working ...



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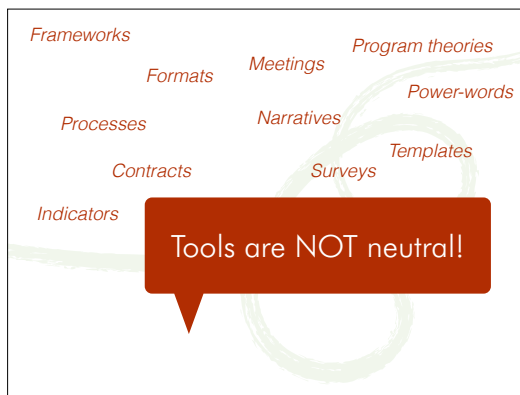
We often perceive three different kinds of situations, each of which require different ways of working.

Firstly, things that are known or knowable can be thought of in two categories:

Simple - like making soup or tea or finance systems. Use best practice, follow the instructions/recipe!

Complicated - like putting a man on the moon, vaccination programs, or boring wells. It can be done - we can call upon the expert knowledge needed. There may be different ways of getting the results we want. Create a plan with experts and follow the plan.

Finally, there are also situations which are unknown, or even unknowable. These are Complex - like bringing up children, what worked for the first child doesn't necessarily work for the next! We need to test ideas and see what works, learning our way forward. This is called emergent practice.



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bias our behaviour

encourage us to look at some things and not others!

open our eyes to some things, but keep us blind to others - boundary

assume different kinds of system - simple or complex



## Actor-focused approaches

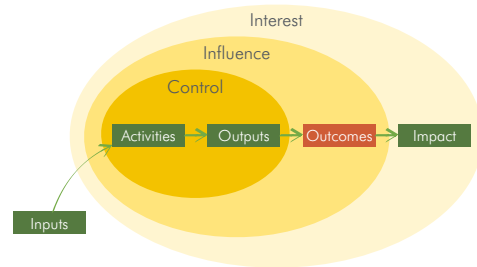
Both OM and OH help us understand how we are **influencing** behavioural change in actors in the system.



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As discussed early AF approaches can help us with complex social systems...

## Focus on outcomes



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You are probably familiar with the way our programmes are designed with inputs, activities...

Control  
Influence  
Interest

In work with complex issues, our focus needs to be on our sphere of influence, where we can learn from how things are changing, and how we are supporting that change.

## What is an Outcome?

*A behavioural change in a social actor that we have contributed to (or hope to).*



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Within OM and OH there is quite a specific definition of an Outcome...


Outcomes are changes in behaviour, relationships, attitudes or policies (and practices, skills, knowledge, that are observable) of individuals, groups, or organisations.

...or early signs of change (intermediate outcomes).

Image from Outcome Harvesting intro video.

In practice this means...

- Outcomes = Short stories about change
- Paying attention to first signs of change in the system of actors - *emergent change*.
- Not only looking for planned results - *unintended change*
- Learning with others - *perspectives on change*
- Adaptive management and learning - *working with change*



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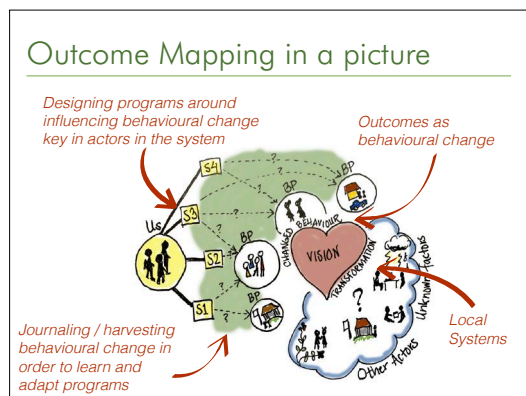
One tool that can help:



Outcome Mapping

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A quick summary of these tools, which we will be looking at in more depth over the next webinars.



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sketching up DESIRED OUTCOMES (hoped for behavioural changes) and planning around these  
THEN ... journaling OBSERVED OUTCOMES (actual behavioural changes)

## OUTCOME MAPPING STEPS

- Vision
- Mission
- Identification of boundary partners
- Outcome challenges
- Progress markers
- Strategy maps
- Organisational practices
- M&E



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Another tool that can help:

Outcome Harvesting

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developed as a participatory evaluation tool - increasingly being used for monitoring

OM more focus on Planning and Monitoring  
OH more focus on Monitoring and evaluating

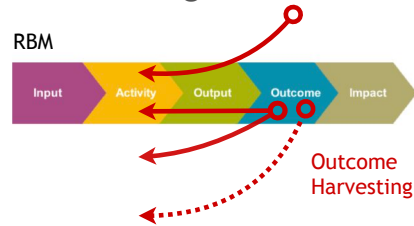
Both focus on actors, participation and learning!



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not really like harvesting (easy) ... more like searching for mushrooms in the forest! ... takes some time and practice

## Reverse logic



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One of the key elements ...

no matter what planning tool has been used, it looks at results in terms of outcomes

Find the outcomes first - expected and unexpected

Link back to planned activities (and even to other external factors which created the outcome)

## OH Steps

- Design
- Review documentation and draft outcomes
- Engage with informants (make them more concrete)
- Substantiation
- Analysis and Interpretation
- Supporting the use of findings

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Steps if doing as a full evaluation ... can also be done as a simplified process of collecting outcomes

## Why Outcome-based approaches?

- Recognises that development is not done by us (but by the actors *in* the system)
- Focuses on influencing actors and their behaviours.
- Helps us think about who we are in the system.
- Helps us work with complexity by thinking about boundaries, relationships and perspectives and...
- Provides framework for testing strategies and learning from qualitative behavioural change data.
- Supports program adaptation.

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to summarise...

You may need other  
tools as well!



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e.g. monitoring outputs  
Measuring high level impact

... but we believe that OM and OH are helpful tools/approaches use in complex change, especially when we are connected to local realities and can learn with local actors

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