

Next Generation Network Evaluation

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Purpose

This paper reviews the current field of network monitoring and evaluation with the goal of identifying where progress has been made and where further work is still needed. It proposes a framework for network impacts planning, assessment, reporting and learning that can help to close some of the current gaps in network evaluation while building on the advances that have been made. This document is written for practitioners undertaking network evaluation and foundation program staff working to support networks.

Introduction and Context

Networking and networks have become increasingly and consciously utilized as organizing strategies and structures for creating social change in this world.¹ The growing realization that no single actor, no matter how effective they are, is capable of tackling today's social problems has spurred a flurry of international interest and investment in networks from a wide range of actors and sources.

The World Bank began funding networks through its Global and Regional Partnership Program in the mid-1990's and is now currently supporting approximately 175 partnership programs, having spent \$3.5 billion in 2006 alone.² The Climate Works Foundation has organized more than ten funders and organizations from across sectors and geographies as part of a billion dollar coordinated campaign to fight climate change.³ The Global AIDS Alliance has launched an advocacy network across six African countries in a Campaign to End Pediatric HIV/AIDS.⁴ Grant makers like the Ford Foundation⁵, Anne E. Casey Foundation⁶, MacArthur Foundation⁷ and many others have made the funding of networks a key part of their portfolio and grant making strategy.

At the same time, the growing demand for more success from social change public and private initiatives has created an explosion of interest in and demand for increased and improved monitoring and evaluation and impact evaluation. Governments, donors and practitioners are all feeling pressure to demonstrate and report on the impact of their work.

Together, these two trends have created a growing appetite for the monitoring and evaluation and impact evaluation of networks. An increasing number of methods, tools and metrics have been proposed, developed and piloted in response to this demand. While important steps have been taken, the field of network monitoring and evaluation is still, in theory and even more so in practice, in its infancy.

MonitorMonitorMonitorMonitorMonitorMonitor1 Wilson-Grau and Nuñez 2006.

²<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTOED/EXTGLOREGPARPROG/0,,menuPK:4426469~pagePK:64829575~piPK:64829612~theSitePK:4426313,00.html>

³ <http://www.climateworks.org/partners/>

⁴ <http://www.globalaidsalliance.org/index.php/1032>

⁵ <http://www.fordfoundation.org/about>

⁶ <http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/MakingConnections.aspx>

⁷ http://www.macfound.org/site/c.lkLXJ8MQKrH/b.938141/k.FEFC/Domestic_Grantmaking.htm

This paper is divided into four sections. Section one provides a literature review of the current field of network monitoring and evaluation describing various current metrics and tools for network monitoring and evaluation. The section concludes with a discussion of the key gaps in the current field. Section two examines the key characteristics of networks and the implications these have for evaluation. Section three further elaborates the specific challenges of network evaluation and desirable characteristics for a network monitoring and evaluation system. Section four introduces a framework for network monitoring and evaluation currently being developed by iScale and its partners and explains how it can be implemented.

The Current Field

The field of network evaluation is still young both in theory and practice. The number of experts or practitioners writing or working on the subject to date has been a relatively small community.⁸ Most studies using network methodologies to date have been small in both the size of the networks and the number of participants with the majority of these projects focusing more on network diagnosis than assessment.⁹

However, a growing number of thought leaders and practitioners are beginning to develop a number of network metrics tools and broader approaches. Much of this work draws from other fields like complexity science and systems thinking. There is, however, still a lack of practical texts and examples of network evaluation in practice. Lessons learned from the monitoring and evaluation work that has used network methodologies has not been well shared across the field.

The following section overviews some of the metrics and tools in development or practice. Part one explores the various network metrics that have either been used in practice or identified in theory. Part two describe a number of network tools that can be used to support the approaches or metrics examined.

Network Metrics

Examining network effectiveness requires attention to three, broad, overlapping categories:¹⁰

1. **Network Vibrancy:** how healthy is the network along multiple dimensions (participation, network form, leadership, capacity, etc.)?
2. **Network Connectivity:** what is the nature of relationships within the network? Is everyone connected who needs to be? What is the quality of these connections? Does the network effectively bridge differences? Is the network becoming more interconnected? What is the network's reach?
3. **Network Effects:** what progress is the network making on identifying and achieving its outputs, outcomes and impact?¹¹

⁸ Creech, 2001; Creech and Ramji, 2004; Provan and Milward, 2001.

⁹ Bender-demoll, 2008.

¹⁰ Netgains Handbook.

There is often a tendency to focus on either one or two but not all three of these categories. Practitioners and thought leaders have identified a series of components within each of these three categories that contribute to overall network effectiveness. These components can be broken down even further into specific questions and measures. The table below is based on a review of the existing literature and practice. It is a combination of metrics used in practice and potential metrics identified by thought leaders/practitioners.

IMPORTANT NETWORK COMPONENT AND MEASURES

Component	Questions	Example Measures/Data Sources	Author
Network Vibrancy	A network is more than connections. What are the essential characteristics that a network must achieve so that its efforts will be successful and, if so desired, sustainable?		
Trust	To what degree do network members hold a set of shared values?	1. Alignment of network members explicit written organizational principles, vision and mission	Madeline Church et al., 2002
	To what degree do network members hold a set of shared norms or operating principals?	1. Existence of written MOU between members	Madeline Church et al., 2002, IDRC Literature review
Structure and Governance	How is the network organized?	1. Review of network strategy documents 2. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews	Creech 2004, Madeline Church et al., 2002
	How dose the network make decisions?	1. Review of network strategy documents 2. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews	Creech 2004
	Are there any structural and governance issues impeding the network's effectiveness?	1. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews	Creech 2004
	Is control of the network distributed among members or is it centralized?	1. Review of network strategy documents 2. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews	Net Gains Handbook
Core/periphery:	How large is the core? Does it contain different but overlapping clusters? How large is the periphery?	1. Network maps	Holley, 2007

¹¹ Monitor Institute, 2009

Ownership	Are network members working “in” the network or “for” it?	1. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 2. Stakeholder survey	IDRC network review
Changes in knowledge base	To what degree has the network changed the knowledge base or framed the debate for the issues it focuses on?	1. Interviews with key people the network was trying to influence 2. Reviewing unsolicited user feedback 3. Journal indexes and citation indexes as indicators of references to the networks information in academic and professional literature 4. Web server logs to track growth in site traffic	Creech 2004
Member Capacity Development	Were there appropriate levels of intellectual support for the research being undertaken by the network?	1. Number of experts supporting the research process both within and external to the network	Creech 2004
	Were network members afforded opportunities to receive training to further their knowledge and skills?	1. Number of background training sessions provided by the network for the issues under investigation 2. Number of workshops held to exchange information and ideas within the network 3. Existence of funding for network members to seek out and receive further professional training	Creech 2004
	Were efforts made to include young researchers/professionals in the networks activities?	1. Number of young researchers/professionals included in network projects	Creech 2004
	Was customized information provided to members to support research?	1. Stakeholder surveys	Creech 2004
Life cycle	How is the network performing in comparison to other networks at similar stages in development?	1. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 2. Stakeholder survey	Creech 2004
	What is the continuum of growth of the network?	1. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 2. Stakeholder survey	Creech 2004
Diversity	How much diversity is contained in the network?	1. Membership breakdown by geography 2. Membership breakdown by sector 3. Membership breakdown by issue area	Holley, 2007; IDRC network review, Net Gains Handbook

Diversity	Are individuals interacting primarily with people like them or different from them?	1. Demographic breakdown of partners participating in joint-projects	Holley, 2007
Interdependence	Are ties that are accidentally broken (due to death, retirement, job changes) replaced?	1. Review of human resources records	Mizruchi&Galaskiewicz, 1993; Gary, 1985; Provan & Milward
	Is there an absence of service duplication?	1. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 2. Stakeholder survey	
Resilience	How dependent is the network on a small number of individuals? If those individuals left, would the network fragment?	1. Network maps 2. Stakeholder interviews	Holley, 2007
Sustainability	How is the network defining sustainability?	1. Review of network strategy documents 2. Key network leadership interviews	Earl, 2004
	What factors help or hinder sustainability of networks?	1. Key stakeholder interviews	Earl, 2004
	Does the network have the required resources to operate?	1. Review of budget documents 2. Key stakeholder interviews	Creech 2004, Merchant et al, 1999; Hendricks, 1999
Alignment	Are there formal rules for conflict resolution?	1. Review of network documents	Mitchell&Shortell, 2000
	Is there a match between problems addressed in the network and partnership composition?	1. Review of network activities and membership breakdown 2. Stakeholder interviews	Mitchell&Shortell, 2000
	Is there match between partnership composition and network priorities	1. Review of membership breakdown 2. Stakeholder interviews	Mitchell&Shortell, 2000
	Is there a match between partnership task complexity (differentiation) and governance structures (coordination and control)	1. Review of network documents 2. Stakeholder interviews	Mitchell&Shortell, 2000
Cohesion	Who are the individuals most central to the network?	1. Network maps 2. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews	Holley, 2007
	What level multiplicity – measure of network density, strength and durability – exists within the network?	1. Network maps 2. Number of overlapping ties between network members	Provan&Milward, 2001

Cohesion	How cohesive is the network?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strength of ties between members 2. Duration of members relationships 3. Number of members with multiple ties to the network 	McMahon, Miller&Drake, 2001
Network Development	Is the network continuing to develop?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of members making and taking advantage of both strong and weak ties in the Network 2. Number of members coming together in different combinations in the network 3. Size of the network (number of orgs involved, number of individuals involved) 4. Increasing diversity among network members 5. Increase in range of services provided (if appropriate) 6. Increasing strength of ties between members 	Provan&Milward, 2001; Wilson-Grau, 2006; Net Gains Handbook; Selsky, 1991; Chapman, 2001
	<p>Is the network adapting overtime to match its context?</p> <p>Is it capable of managing change?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of new technologies where appropriate 2. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 3. Existence of explicit learning and feedback loops 	IDRC Network review
Connectivity	<p>What is flowing through the network - information and other resources?</p> <p>What are the characteristics of links among nodes, especially their structural arrangements?</p> <p>How robust are the connections the network makes?</p>		
Communication Quality and Practice	How is the network publishing its work?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of published journal articles 2. Number of self-published articles 	Creech 2004
	Did the network organize workshops, events and consultations to promote network knowledge and information?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of workshops 2. Number of consultations 3. Number of events 	Creech 2004
	Are network members bringing in communications professionals to assist with network communications?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of communication professionals used 	Creech 2004

Communication Quality and Practice	How diverse was the network's set of products?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of research papers 2. Number of issue papers 3. Number of policy notes 4. Number of newsletters 	Creech 2004
	How effectively is the network using electronic media?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of network products on their website 2. Number of member websites that point to the network website 3. Number of members that contribute actively to the network website 4. Website tracking – website hits, comments posted etc... 	Creech 2004
	How effectively is the network using mainstream media?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of news article references to network activities 2. Number of press releases drafted by the network 3. Number of members who are pooling their media contacts 4. Number of members who are developing and distributing network media releases 	Creech 2004
	How well does the network communicate internally?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of network newsletters sent 2. Number of emails exchanged between network members 3. Number of resources exchanged between network members 4. Number of network meetings held 5. Breakdown of types of information exchanged between members 6. Range of technology employed 	Fanner, 1998

Communication Quality and Practice	How often do members communicate with each other	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of emails/phone calls between/among network members 2. Number of meetings to discuss network activities between network members 	Madeline Church et al., 2002
Connector	<p>How connected is the network? Who are the individuals who are connecting people who wouldn't otherwise be connected? How likely is it that people throughout the network know what is happening in other parts of the network?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 2. Stakeholder survey 	Holley, 2007
Participation	Who is participating, when and for how long?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Membership breakdown by length and activity level 2. Number of members actively participating in the network 3. Number of members engaging in multiple kinds of network activities 	Madeline Church et al., 2002
	What are members contributing?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 2. Stakeholder survey 	Madeline Church et al., 2002
Coordination	What style of governance is used?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 2. Stakeholder survey 3. Review of relevant network documents 	Earl, 2004
	What coordination approaches have been used?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 2. Stakeholder survey 3. Review of relevant network documents 	Earl, 2004
Collaboration	What is the level of collaboration within the network?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of joint-proposals written by network members 2. Number of joint-projects undertaken by network members 	Madeline Church et al., 2002
	Are members willing to work together?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of members working on joint projects 2. Number of projects jointly initiated 3. Number of members actively sharing resources 	Selsky, 1991

Effects	What outputs is the network producing - at what costs - and what outcomes, or impacts, is the network having by producing these outputs? (DEPENDENT ON THE Network's TOC)		
Systemic Change	Are the networks overall goals and objectives being achieved?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systems or field level data in which the network is working 2. External stakeholder perceptions 	
Value added	Are the networks goals and objectives clear and are they being achieved?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of network strategy documents 2. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 3. Review of network monitoring data 	Creech 2004; IDRC network review
	Is the network fully realizing the advantages of working together?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholder (external and internal) perceptions gathered through interviews 2. Review of relevant network documents and monitoring data 	Creech 2004
	Is the knowledge being produced relevant to the needs of decision makers?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of targeted issue briefs produced by the network 2. Stakeholder (external and internal) perspectives gathered through interviews 3. Degree to which decision makers adopt the language and arguments supported by the network 	Creech 2004
Importance/influence of network in its environment	How central is the network? Centrality - measure of the importance and influence of the network within the power structure and organizational ecology of its community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of requests for participation by other organizations 2. Relative size of budget 3. Number of media references 4. Number of key stakeholders that publically support the network 5. Number of key stakeholders that identify the network as important 	Mitchell&Shortell, 2000; Provan&Millard 2001

Importance/influence of network in its environment	How influential is the network?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of requests from key stakeholders for information from the network 2. Number of requests from key stakeholders for network participation 3. Number of media references 4. Number of key decision makers that publically support the network 	Mitchell&Shortell, 2000; Provan&Millard 2001
	Who are the individuals who are the most influential?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholder perceptions gathered through interviews 2. Stakeholder survey 	Holley, 2007
	How effectively does the network engage with key stakeholders outside the network?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of participants who attended network sponsored events 2. Number of meetings with key stakeholders 3. Number of requests from key stakeholders for work, information or further engagement 4. Interviews with key people whom the network was trying to influence to ascertain who they know within the network, how they found out about the network's work and how they became interested in what the network was doing 5. Number of new funding proposals that resulted from relationship building activities 	Creech 2004

Network Tools

Most network assessment tools developed in theory or used in practice focus on examining a specific aspect of the network or metric like participation, structure or connections. Individual tools can be used in various combinations to support a broader network approach to monitoring and evaluation and support data gathering for specific metrics of interest. The tools reviewed here are grouped in three main categories aligned with the three network metric categories:

- **Network Vibrancy** – tools that focus on measuring and monitoring characteristics of the network identified as “essential” to the overall health and functioning of the network. Examples of such characteristics include: trust, participation, sustainability, alignment etc. (see the table above for a more complete listing and further description).
- **Network Connectivity** – tools that examine the nature of the ties, relationships and process that promote connectivity. Examples include: communication quality and practice, collaboration, etc. (see the table above for a more complete listing and further description).
- **Network Effects** – tools that help to elucidate and clarify what outputs network activities are producing, what outcomes and impacts these contribute to and reflect, revise and refine the original network theory of change or underlying strategies.

Network Vibrancy Tools

Channels of participation - (Church et al, 2002) This simple tool helps a network understand how and where members are interacting with the network and what their priorities are. “Categories” of participation are conceptualized as a set of concentric circles with the outer ring representing lower levels of active participation (e.g., participating in mailing lists) and inner rings increasing levels of active participation (e.g., participation in network strategy). This tool has been used by a number of networks. In one example, a lobbying network described several levels of participation from 1 – inner-circle: high levels of communication, debate, discussion and input; part of decision-making process; trusted and has regular dialogue with government to 5 – recipient of information. The network then developed a simple table to record members’ level of participation, what they contribute to the network and other factors like level of access members have to key players, etc. The table was a useful way for this network for identifying gaps in the network’s coverage and reach.

Network Effectiveness Diagnostic and Development Tool - (Monitor Institute) Short tool to identify the strengths and weaknesses and to explore possible actions to develop or strengthen the network being developed by the Monitor Institute. The network is rated on a three-point scale on characteristics of what are considered to be healthy network. The tool does not appear to consider a network’s stage of development or function.

Comparative Constituency Feedback – (Keystone Accountability) Comparative Constituency Feedback surveys and reports provide organizations with transformative data about how their constituents perceive them and how this perception compares with that of other similar organizations in their field. CCF surveys create a space in which constituents of a social change



process can safely and anonymously share their honest impressions of the practices, systems and behaviors of a funder or an implementing organization. Comparative constituency feedback surveys use a carefully designed questionnaire to collect perceptions anonymously from organizations’ constituents on key aspects of performance. The questionnaire is administered simultaneously to a comparable constituency group for a cohort of similar organizations. It can be applied at different points along the development value chain, between funders and grantees, international NGOs and their field-based partners, networks and their members, and, most importantly, between organizations and their primary constituents – those who are meant to benefit from their work.

Example in Practice: Comparative Constituency Feedback for Transnational Social Change Networks

Keystone in partnership with iScale has been developing CCF surveys as a tool for networks to assess how well they achieve meaningful participation across their key constituents, as well as carry out assessments of their performance and impact based on feedback by their constituents.

In April of 2009, Keystone and iScale brought together a cohort of nine networks to conduct a comparative survey of their constituents. The cohort developed a common questionnaire that was distributed to network constituents. Keystone and iScale provided each network with a report that identified their individual results and how their results compared to those of the other networks in the cohort. The survey asked questions grouped around six different sections:

Section	Feedback areas
Structure and function of the network	Network model, support or active agent function
Quality of relationships with the network’s bodies	Meeting constituents’ needs, quality of communications, responsiveness to feedback
Network vibrancy	New relationships established, their value, adequacy of network’s size and diversity, extent of participation in the network
Level of synergy within the network	Sharing of common interests and concerns, participation in network’s strategy and decision making
Value added for constituents	Network effectiveness, meeting of expectations
Network’s impact	Impact on constituents’ work, influence in the field

The goal of the project was to present constituent perceptions back to network leadership as a means to stimulate dialogue with constituents and identify specific opportunities for improvement. The comparative analysis of a network’s performance relative to others in the group helps to illuminate areas of relative weak or strong performance, pinpoint areas for improvement and encourage networks to learn from each other. Network’s can identify areas they would like to improve and then track progress towards these objectives by running the survey again. Although the pilot was only recently completed, feedback from networks that participated in the cohort has been quite positive. Networks have found the survey results to be quite informative and useful. Many have already shared summary versions of the reports with the primary constituents and identified areas they will seek to improve over the next year.

Network Function Approach (NFA) - A methodology being developed by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) that evaluates networks based on the functions it fulfills and the roles it plays in fulfilling its functions. NFA was developed specifically for research and policy networks but may be relevant for networks more generally.

Each of a network's existing or planned activities are mapped against the six functions. Participants identify the balance of effort between various functions. For each function, participants indicate if the network plays an agency or support role. Each function is then rated for effectiveness and efficiency on a scale of 1-5. Participants then take the current functional focus they have just developed and reflect back to the mission/vision for the network. Questions like "how aligned is the network with its mission, should the function focus balance change, should the mission change" are discussed. Building on this conversation, an ideal focus balance is developed. Participants then discuss what is needed to move from the existing focus and role to the ideal focus and role. All of this is captured in a simple matrix.

The NFA has been used as:

- Management tool to set strategic priorities for an emerging network, or to re-think the strategic priorities of an existing network
- Collaborative learning tool, bringing together different networks to discuss common problems and solutions
- Mechanism to analyze existing work plans and monitoring network activities
- Model that can be part of an overall approach to evaluating the effectiveness of a network
- Framework for comparative case-study research across a range of networks.

The approach has been applied within British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND), helped to develop ALNAP's new five year strategy and was recently used with the Global Network of CSO for disaster reduction.

Steps include:

1. Analyze the relevance of the network's vision and mission
2. Map existing / planned activities against the six functions
3. Identify the current / planned balance of effort across the six functions
4. For each function, identify how the network role is balanced between 'Agency' or 'Support'
5. Rate efficiency and effectiveness
6. Reflect on the vision and mission
7. Agree ideal functional focus and role
8. What is needed to move from the existing focus and role to the ideal focus and role?

Example in Practice: Network Function Approach Experiences from ALNAP and ICVA *

ALNAP: The NFA was introduced to the ALNAP Secretariat midway through the development of the new five-year strategy. A number of objectives had already been identified, but it had been difficult to deal with overlaps and bring them together in a coherent way. The NFA was used as a framework to structure and consolidate feedback from member organizations, leading to five strategic objectives, each of them related to one or two of the key network functions, as shown below. Where two network functions came together under a single strategic objective, this was because that objective required undertaking both of those functions, either simultaneously or sequentially.

Strategic Objective
One: ALNAP will establish stronger links between learning processes and improvements in humanitarian policy and field practice
Two: ALNAP will advocate for, and actively promote, improvements in performance in the humanitarian sector.
Three: ALNAP will improve system-wide for a for active learning and the exchange of experiences and ideas.
Four: ALNAP will work to improve the quality and utilisation of evaluation within the network and throughout the humanitarian system.
Five: ALNAP will expand its global reach and engagement in order to better promote humanitarian learning

The NFA was subsequently used to present the final version of the strategy to the ALNAP membership in December 2007. The framework proved especially useful in clarifying what would stay the same and what would change as a result of the new strategy.

‘...The network functions approach has proved to be an invaluable tool in the development of the five-year ALNAP strategy. It has helped ALNAP establish a coherent framework which illustrates the differences and complementarities between each strategic objective and how they fit together within the context of the strategic vision. This has enabled the ALNAP membership to engage more fully with the development of the strategy and has provided a means of framing the final product in a lively and understandable fashion. NFA has brought clarity and new energy to ALNAP’s strategic processes...’ (John Mitchell, Head of ALNAP)

ICVA: For an established network such as ICVA, a network functions approach is an indispensable tool in determining its new strategic direction. With a membership as large and diverse as ICVA’s, there is always a challenge in providing a range of activities to keep all members satisfied, while maintaining a coherent focus. One (very common!) mistake that ICVA has made in the past is to try to cover too many activities in its workplans and programs.

At present, ICVA's dominant function is filtering large amounts of information to aid in understanding new trends in humanitarian policy and practice. However, it also includes elements of 'community-building' and 'amplifying'.

In its strategic review process, currently underway, ICVA will use the NFA to determine whether it is ideal to maintain this combination of different functions, or whether there is a need to concentrate on a single distinct function and build the work of the network around this.

** Directly taken from: Ramalingam, et al. 2008. "Strengthening Humanitarian Networks: Applying the Network Function Approach" Background Note. London. ODI*

Network Connectivity Tools

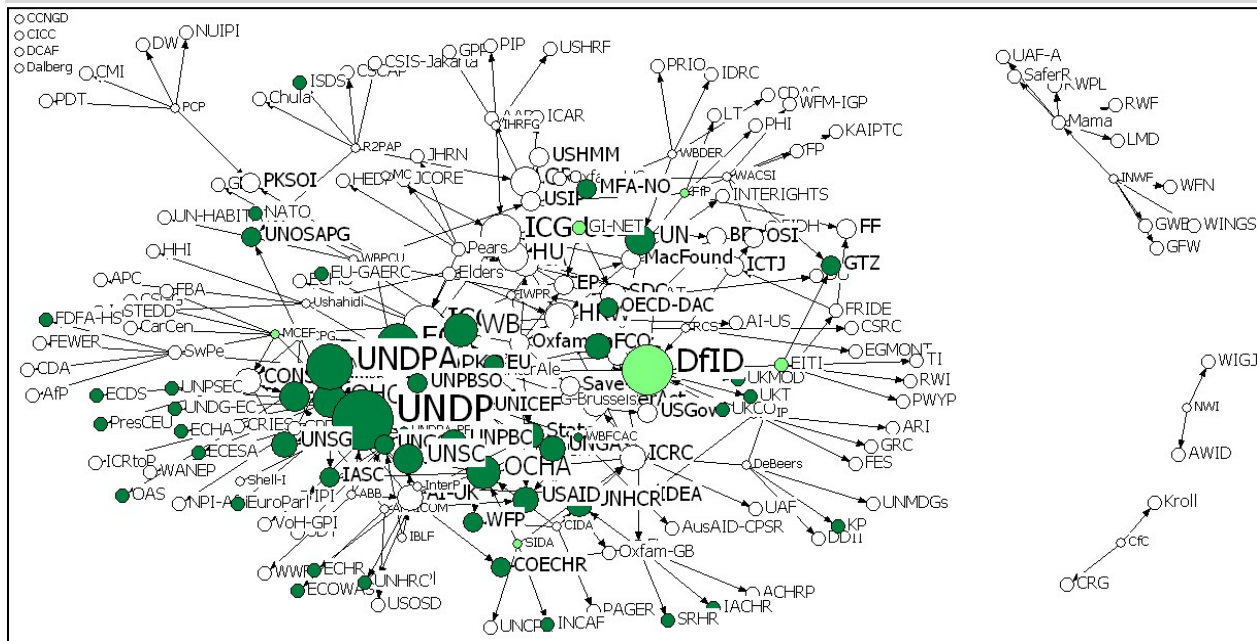
Social Network Analysis - Network methodologies are applied to human social relations and groups as a way to analyze behavior patterns focusing on the role of group structures and relational aspect of society. Included in this set of approaches are also Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) which uses network methodologies to examine the relationships between organizations and Dynamic Network Analysis (DNA) which uses network methodologies to assess the changes in "dynamic" or "longitudinal networks" in which the set of relationships or the membership changes over time. DNA is used to describe processes in which the structures of relationships do not remain constant over time.

Examples in Practice: Mapping the Actors involved in the Prevention of Mass Atrocities

The Mass Atrocities Mapping and Network Development project was a project of iScale's Peace and Security program. The key goals for this project were to 1) improve knowledge about the actors working to build peace, address conflict and end mass atrocities; 2) strengthen relationships among various actors working to address these issues; 3) improve strategies among key actors in the global network. Social network analysis (SNA) was one of the tools used to map the actors working within the issue area of mass atrocity prevention.

iScale used key informant interviews to gather information about the various working relationships between actors. This information was then used to develop SNA maps presented back to key stakeholders during community meetings. The maps were used to stimulate conversation and discussion rather than as a definitive representation of the issue space.

SNA maps provided one picture of the current state of the field, including the prominence of various actors on the international landscape. Meeting participants analyzed images from the mapping, like the one below, to identify key features of the mass atrocities landscape.



The mapping indicated that “already-plugged-in” groups from the global north, including multi-lateral and bilateral agencies, occupy the most prominent positions in the field. Specifically, the UN appears to dominate the global policy landscape of organizations working to address violence and mass atrocities. The meeting participants utilized these images and their own experiences to and raise important questions about the field. These included:

- 1) Is this really what we want the field to look like?
- 2) Are those actors currently seen at the center of the field best positioned to represent the interests of people affected by violence and mass atrocities
- 3) Who are the actors that are not visible in the maps and where are they?
- 4) What can we do to bring other players in the policy making space, to the core?
- 5) What role can the GSG play in creating a new system (not necessarily a new architecture) that includes an expanded set of roles and organizations at its center?

Value Network Analysis - VNA is a modeling methodology developed by Verna Allee and her colleagues that maps activities and sets of relationships from a dynamic whole systems perspective. Identifying both tangible and intangible transactions, it incorporates new thinking around knowledge, networks and organizational complexity. VNA proposes a way to model organizational relationships as living networks of tangible and intangible value exchanges between roles played in a network allowing members to better understand the impact of their actions in both tangible and intangible terms.

Example in Practice: Mapping Roles for the Prevention of Mass Atrocities

Value Network Analysis was a secondary tool used in the Mass Atrocities Mapping and Network Development project explained above to map actors within the field. Participants were asked to identify the critical functions needed to effectively respond to mass violence and atrocities during stakeholder workshops. Focusing on “what” functions are needed rather than “who” is necessary provided critical information for further developing the network as it helped to identify participants who might have otherwise been overlooked and priorities for strengthening these roles with less reference to organizational self-interest



Some of the communities identified through this exercise are often not included in gatherings of stakeholders working to end mass violence and atrocities. These included, for example, the media (“information collector,” “storyteller,” “awareness raiser,”), development and humanitarian relief agencies (“development assistance provider” and “humanitarian relief/recovery”), funders (“funder,” “donor,”), businesses (which can play a number of these roles), and especially persons from the communities directly affected by these issues (the “beneficiary” and the “perpetrator”). While these stakeholders are often engaged in other ways, such as members of the media being invited to certain events of the usual suspects or funders being asked to support the work of the usual suspects, they are not always or often thought of as needing to have a seat at the table. VNA, in this case, helped to understand what functions are needed for the network to work effectively and identify potential gaps as well as important stakeholders outside of the “usual suspects.”

Monitoring Networking at the Edges - (Church et al, 2002) Monitoring the level of networking that does not directly involve the secretariat but, rather, is stimulated by the network. This can be used as one metric for measuring network vibrancy. One way to do this is to track the number of new contacts/connections a network member has made as the result of putting an item in the newsletter using a short follow-up survey with the author.

Example in Practice: Monitoring Networking at the Edges*

“Putting people in touch with one another...” is one of the core objectives that the International Forum for Rural Transportation (IFRTD) has decided to monitor. IFRTD uses its newsletter as a key mechanism for stimulating networking between members. The newsletter includes only short descriptions of news items to encourage members to follow-up directly with the author of the item for more detailed information. The secretariat then asks (through a short survey or follow-up email) members with items featured in the newsletter what new contacts or opportunities were created as a result of running their item in the newsletter. This information is then recorded and monitored over time.

Other examples include: Creative Exchange who asks and records how many contacts have been made as a result of placing an item in the newsletter; ABColumbia who tracks the type of people who are subscribing to their weekly newsletter as one means for determining the reach of the network; The Conflict Development and Peace Network who records how many new subscribers register after each newsletter as an indicator of networking – current recipients are sharing the newsletter with others which then encourages them to sign-up for the news letter themselves.

These activities have helped various networks better assess activity within the network.

**These examples draw heavily from Church, et al. 2002. “Participation, Relationships and Dynamic Change: New Thinking on Evaluating the Work of International Networks”.*

Partnership Score Card - (Lock Lee and Kjaer) This tool assesses partnerships by analyzing the tangible and intangible exchanges between the parties. It identifies for each role the individual value flows that the role is accountable for as well as the value flows that each role is responsible for assessing. It is intended to diagnose where partnerships are excelling, where they are breaking down and why. Performance targets can be set and measured/assessed at regular intervals.

Feedback Analysis - (Eoyang and Berkas, 1998) An effort to identify and simplify feedback patterns for evaluation. Stakeholders develop network maps indicating what is exchanged between members, what happens as a result, how feedback loops could be improved and if new loops should be added. Each key group within the system is represented in a diagram. Lines between various actors indicate an exchange of information, energy and/or resources.

Network Effects Tools

Impact Pathway Evaluation (IPE) - (Boru Douthwaite) IPE is a two-phase process. Phase one involves internal monitoring and evaluation guided by the ToC. Phase two involves external ex-post impact evaluation also guided by the ToC and building off of results from phase one. Phase

one begins by visually depicting the initiative's impact pathway or ToC. Boxes can be used to describe activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes and final outcomes. Arrows are used to connect these various components. Answers to a series of questions asked of each box are then recorded into an impact pathway matrix similar to a log frame but with greater detail about how activities and outputs contribute to the ultimate goal. Questions include:

1. What would success look like?
2. What are the factors that influence the achievement of each outcome?
3. Which of these can be influenced by the project?
4. Which factors are outside the direct influence of the project?
5. What is the program currently doing to address these factors in order to bring about this outcome?
6. What performance information should we collect?
7. How can we gather this information?

This is then used to identify performance indicators. Monitoring of indicators provides information to guide the project and revise and refine the impact pathway. Evaluation seeks to establish plausible links between the project's impact pathway and subsequent developmental changes.

Participatory Impact Pathway Analysis (PIPA) – PIPA is a practical planning and monitoring and evaluation approach developed for use with complex projects in the water and food sectors. PIPA begins with a participatory workshop where stakeholders make explicit their assumptions about how the project will achieve an impact. Activities include: constructing a problem tree, visioning exercises and network mapping. The results of these exercises are then articulated in the form of two logic models. 1) The Outcome Logic Model - describes the project's medium term objectives in the form of hypotheses. 2) The Impact Logic Model - describes how the expected outcomes will lead to the ultimate impact. The outcome targets and milestones set by participants are regularly revisited and revised as part of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities. PIPA promotes learning and provides a framework for action research on processes of change.

Contribution Assessment – (Church et al, 2002) Understanding how members participate, why some members participate more than others, how to encourage greater participation and how to measure participations are key questions for a network. Contribution assessment helps a network understand the level of commitment and contribution that its participants are offering and see where resources lie in the network by mapping the contributions members believe they can make. It can be used to create a baseline to assess if the network enabled its members to contribute over time and how that contribution created value for the network.

Weaver's Triangle for Networks - (Church et al, 2002) A strategic planning tool used to clarify aims, objectives and activities. It distinguishes what is being done from why it is being done to help test the link between the two and better understand the underlying theory of the work.

Participatory Story-Building - (Church et al, 2002) An interactive evaluative exercise undertaken by network members. Key actors, strategies and moments of change are mapped as a

way of plotting the story of change on which all are working together. Each participant will have a slightly different story to tell about their work and the key moments of changes and challenges from their point of view. This exercise seeks to bring all stories together into one, without losing the individual richness, and then examine the combined story. The process helps the network to understand who or where the main points of influence are and what the key moments of change have been. This enables learning about the network's scope of work, reach and access as well as which strategies have been most influential. These learnings can then be incorporated into the future planning and strategy.

Example in Practice: ABColumbia and Participatory Story-building*

ABColumbia is an advocacy network of several British and Irish NGOs working in Columbia. The network focuses on human rights and decision making working to influence decision makers in the UK and Ireland and, through them, European decision makers to address the human rights and humanitarian crisis in Columbia.

The network has begun to use participatory story-building to identify the how networked lobbying and advocacy had contributed toward progress on Plan Columbia. Individuals closest to the action were asked to identify key moments of change, actors and strategies used. Several networks in Columbia, national and Europe-wide networks as well as grass-roots and policy networks in the US participated. These accounts have begun to reveal a picture of who the key players in the network are, what the overlapping networks did to facilitate the timely provision and use of key documents and how well work was coordinated. ABColumbia has recorded key moments of change for each region along parallel time-lines as a way to link action in one region to another. The network extracted the following lessons from their initial trial of the tool:

1. Selecting strategically important events rather than narrative activities is key to constructing a meaningful story.
2. Works best if the exercise is undertaken when as many as possible of the participants are in the same room at the same time. This helps illuminate the relationship between activities.

**This example draws heavily from Church, et al. 2002. "Participation, Relationships and Dynamic Change: New Thinking on Evaluating the Work of International Networks".*

Short and simples - (Eoyang and Berkas, 1998) Involves developing a short list of simple rules that can be used to help each individual group within the system design and implement their own evaluation plans. Provides a framework for micro-design and micro-evaluation while providing coherence at the macro-level.

Systems approaches - A systems approach is particularly useful when trying to obtain a holistic picture of the environment in which an organization operates. In the context of a network, the "system" is extremely complex and includes parts that cannot be understood independent of the broader network. A systems approach takes this complexity into consideration and tries to assess how the various parts are embedded in and interdependent with the whole system. Key to this is the premise that aggregated component analysis does not yield the same information as analysis of the system itself.

A particular strength of implementing systems approaches is that it can include both qualitative and quantitative forms of inquiry (including, but not limited to, direct observation, informal interviews and fieldwork). Its emphasis on inquiry and understanding also makes the approach naturally open to learning as an objective.

Outcome Mapping (OM) - A methodology developed by the Canadian International Development Research Center (IDRC) for planning and assessing social effects and internal performance. OM can be used at the project, program or organizational levels as a monitoring system or to evaluate ongoing or completed activities. It makes explicit a program's theory of change and takes a learning-based and use-driven view of evaluation guided by principles of participation and iterative learning, encouraging evaluative thinking throughout the program cycle by all program team members (<http://www.idrc.ca>).

Outcome mapping focuses on the changes in behavior, relationships or actions of those individuals, groups or organizations with whom the network interacts directly. Outcome mapping allows for monitoring and evaluation in relation to the much broader development context while focusing specific assessment on activities within the network's sphere of influence. The approach establishes a vision of human, social and environmental betterment to which the program or organization wishes to contribute to and then focuses on monitoring and evaluating those factors and actors within that program or organization's sphere of influence.

IISD Network Planning, monitoring and evaluation framework – This model draws elements from various traditional approaches. A planning framework articulates activities, network member outcomes (articulated as changes in behavior of members) and stakeholder outcomes (articulated as changes in behavior of influence targets outside the network) as well as indicators for each of the three. A second table outlines the activities specific to the running of the "network" (network meetings, systems and procedures, etc.) and indicators to track them. A monitoring framework uses progress journals similar to OM to track the activities and outcomes identified in the planning framework. An evaluation framework is used to conduct both an annual and final evaluation. A basic table is used for the evaluation. Each activity is rated on a three-point scale, outputs related to that activity are recorded beside and then below member outcomes and stories and stakeholder outcomes and stories are written in narrative form. Lastly, any unexpected outcomes and adjustments needed are described. The framework is in many ways a combination of outcome mapping and the logical framework approach.

Systemic Leverage Index - An approach developed by Jim Ritchie Dunham and the Institute for Strategic Clarity, the Systemic Leverage Index (SLI) examines how different groups and organizations come together to achieve their own goals and to attain a broader collective goal.

SLI is guided by four main questions:

- At the system level, what are the broad impacts the network is trying to achieve?
- Do the various members contributing to these impacts have different value sets and is it clear how the contribution of these different members combine?
- What are the influential effects of the decisions and actions of members on one another?
- What specific interventions does the network make within the system?

Answers to these questions help to create an index of system "health" from the perspectives of different stakeholder groups and levels. The SLI approach creates a conversation around values, asking, "Is there a way that I can make it beneficial for me and for the larger group?" It is a start to measuring stakeholders' inter-dependencies and moves away from a traditional additive measurement approach to describing synergies and systemic impacts.

Gaps in Current Practice

While the field of network monitoring and evaluation is growing, there are still a number of key gaps in theory and, even more so, in practice. At the macro level, there are few comprehensive frameworks for developing network monitoring and evaluation systems that include both periodic evaluation, monitoring and tracking and explicit feedback loops to promote utilization, learning, adaptation and improvement. Those approaches that do encourage the development of a broader evaluation system (like OM or PIPA) provide relatively more guidance on the strategic planning stages of networks and less on continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation.

On the metrics side, there are a growing number of network metrics but they are often not utilized in practice. Examining network effectiveness requires attention to three overlapping and interrelated categories as mentioned above: vibrancy, connectivity and effects. A network evaluation usually either assesses only the work of the network or the "network" itself. SNA/ONA is often used for the latter. Also, there is often not a conscious connection between identifying metrics to monitor and then selecting the tools that are needed to support the gathering of such metrics.

When it comes to tools, most of the current network approaches address only one or at most a few of the specific challenges faced by networks. Additionally, an explicit focus on revising and refining a network's theory of change is lacking in many of the tools and approaches. Questions like: 1) What role does networking play in the network's theory of change?, 2) Is the network advantage being realized? and 3) What is the value added of the network approach?, are not addressed.

Network Theories of Change

When networks are initiated there are, either explicitly or implicitly, arguments for why a network rather than some other type of organizational form was best suited for the particular mission under consideration. These arguments are a description of what stakeholders understand to be the "networking advantage" - theories about how networks, different from other organizations, create change. Below are some of the most common advantages of networks.¹²

Rapid Growth and Diffusion - Networks can expand rapidly and widely because members benefit from adding new links and therefore they seek to make new linkages. As more nodes are

¹² Provan, 1995; Provan 2001; Plastrik and Taylor, 2006; Monitor Institute 2008; Health Network Review

added the network diffuses information and resources more and more widely through its links. This diffusion effect allows networks to spread ideas and generate feedback rapidly.

Coordinated Action and Connectivity – Networks are particularly useful for addressing systemic problems where coordination between actors is necessary. This can help avoid duplication of services/efforts, reduce costs and increase efficiency. Networks allow for deep specialization to be linked rather than created under one roof. Well-coordinated networks offer a way to weave together or create capacities that better leverage performance and results that can lead to increased overall impact.

Adaptive and Resilient - Networks can assemble capacities and disassemble them with relative ease; they can adapt nimbly. Links among people or organizations can be added or severed or they can become latent, meaning they are maintained at very low level of connectivity or more active. Additionally, networks can withstand stresses such as the dissolution of one or more links because its nodes quickly reorganize around disruptions or bottlenecks without a significant decline in their functionality.

Building off of these advantages, networks are said to fulfill six overlapping and non-exclusive functions:¹³

1. **Filter** – Identify which information is most useful and/or organize it in an accessible manner
2. **Amplify** – Bring forth/advocate a specific message or position. Take little known or little understood ideas and make them more widely understood.
3. **Convene** – Organize groups and individuals around some common theme or goal
4. **Community Building** – Promote and sustain norms and values within the network
5. **Invest/provide** – Provide resources to support the activities of members related to network goals
6. **Facilitate** – Increase network members efficiency and promote learning across members

These functions can also be thought of in terms of specific strategies or network theories of action. A network will, most often, use some combination of these theories of action to support their goals. For example the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), a network of public, civil society and commercial organizations, works to provide members with access to global knowledge and innovation by 1) creating a network of organizations within and across regions, 2) supporting capacity development and 3) providing opportunities for resource mobilizations.¹⁴ In supporting these goals, GKP:

- Filters and disseminates knowledge and innovations gathered from its members and others throughout its network
- Convenes members and others to share good practices and new knowledge during conferences and smaller workshops
- Provides small seed grants to members to support their activities

¹³ Mendizabal, E. 2006. The following description of the 6 functions draws heavily from work this and other work by Enrique Mendizabal.

¹⁴ <http://www.globalknowledgepartnership.org/gkp/index.cfm/pageid/835>



- Facilitates learning across members through member meetings and joint projects

Other networks may utilize a different combination of strategies. For example Networks like the Campaign to End Pediatric HIV/AIDS, which focuses on advocacy as a means to increase coverage rates for pediatric HIV/AIDS across six partner countries:

- Amplifies a particular set of ideas and policy stance on pediatric HIV/AIDS
- Convenes partners at the global, national and regional level across six partner countries in order to organize a cohesive advocacy campaign
- Provides resources to each of the official country partners to organize local advocacy efforts

In each case, different combinations of strategies that leverage various network advantages are used to support the networks specific goals.

Networks as Complicated and Complex Initiatives

The way in which and how change is expected to be achieved varies across change initiatives. While some initiatives are standardized others may be complicated or complex. The table below further explains each type of initiative, the underlying understanding of change, context and evaluation focus.

Some change initiatives or programs, policies, etc. are standardized or consistently implemented in similar contexts and expected to yield comparable results. Such initiatives tend to work best in homogenous environments that are tightly controlled and/or well understood. Vaccinating children against disease is one example of a standardized initiative. The initiative, vaccination, is implemented in the same way each time and the expected result, immunity to a specific disease, is the same in each instance.

Networks and networking strategies, on the other hand, are generally complicated (involving multiple factors, actors and contexts) and also often complex (non-linear, path dependent and emergent). Even when networks use similar mechanisms multiple times, the way in which the initiative is implemented will vary based on context and results will not always be uniform.

Take for example the case of KaBOOM!, a US non-profit working to build play-spaces and communities. KaBOOM! uses a three part strategy: 1) lead – leading communities to create new play spaces utilizing community-building processes; 2) seed – supporting community groups by providing planning tools, training, challenge grants and technical assistance to build play-spaces themselves; and 3) rally – building a movement of advocates through city-level activities that result in the creation of play-spaces in other cities across the nation.

At first glance the seed pathway appears to be a standardized initiative. However, community-building and working with the community to actually create the play-spaces is key to the KaBOOM! strategy. The contextual environment varies from community to community as do the expected results. As such, KaBOOM! uses a slightly different process in each community

although the same general principles will hold true. KaBOOM!’s three-part strategy, taken together, is both complicated and complex.

Initiative ¹⁵	Understanding of Change	Context	Evaluation Focus	Example
Standardized	Based on causal linear logics often with a single impact pathway. Scale through replication	Operate in environments that are tightly controlled, well understood, homogenous. Follow a standardized “recipe”	What works?	Vaccines
Complicated	Have multiple, simultaneous and/or alternative impact pathways. However, the impact pathways themselves are generally well understood.	Operate in environments that are dynamic but eventually knowable.	What works in what contexts?	Maternal and child health program
Complex	Non-linear with feedback loops, including reinforcing loops and disproportionate effects at critical limits. Specific outcomes and means to achieve them emerge organically over time through learning.	Operate in environments that are constantly evolving and not fully knowable.	What works here and now? What do we mean by ‘works’?	Building and strengthening health systems

Traditional approaches for monitoring and evaluation may be useful for standardized initiatives or simple aspects of initiatives, but are insufficient for accurately capturing the dynamics of complicated and/or complex initiatives such as networks. Networks often operate at multiple (local, regional, global) levels and need to be able to draw on data across various sources. Additionally, evaluators of networks need to generate and report back on findings at both macro and micro levels. Capturing the results of the network’s work is important but an understanding of how and why the observed changes occurred is equally, if not more, important for continuous improvement and learning. Networks need to be able to capture both expected and unexpected outcomes. This is particularly important as many network outcomes are emergent. The table below identifies the implications of these characteristics for evaluation.

¹⁵ Table draws substantially from Rogers, 2008

Network Characteristic	Implication for Evaluation
Complicated	<p>Needs to draw from multiple types and sources of data, needs to be examine not just if change occurred but how and why as well.</p> <p>Needs to generate consistent and comparable data across levels, findings need to be at both the macro and micro levels.</p>
Complex	<p>Needs to be flexible, the network theory of change should be continuously revised and refined, attention should be paid to both expected and unexpected results.</p> <p>Needs to match the stage of development of the network, needs to be built into network activities, requires mechanisms for continuous feedback.</p>

Challenges of Network Monitoring and Evaluation

The same characteristics that make networks unique also create a number of specific challenges when it comes to developing appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems.

Networks are Complicated

Understanding both the network “parts” and “whole” - The value generated through the network is the product of interactions and partnerships between actors across the network.¹⁶ This makes it difficult to disaggregate the network into appropriate units of analysis. It is often the case that the network in its entirety is equated with the secretariat. Using the secretariat as a proxy for the entire network is problematic as the secretariat is only one of the many actors that makes up the network. While the secretariat makes an important contribution to the network, it is only one piece of the puzzle.

Developing appropriate network metrics - Assessing network effectiveness requires attention to three inter-related and overlapping categories: 1) vibrancy, 2) connectivity and 3) effects.¹⁷ However, developing appropriate and meaningful metrics for these three levels can be quite challenging. Additionally, measuring the specific value added of the network and a networking approach is difficult.

Gathering comparable and consistent data across the network – A network’s evaluation framework needs to be flexible enough to apply across levels and activity streams while maintaining enough consistency to allow for cross comparison.

¹⁶ Creech, 2001; Willson-Grau and Nuñez, 2006.

¹⁷ Plastrik and Taylor, 2006.

Networks are Complex

Identifying impacts - Traditional tools and approaches are often not designed to capture both the tangible and intangible impacts associated with networks.¹⁸ While there is a tendency to focus on tangible impacts, networks are both a means towards ends and an end in themselves. The existence of the network itself is inherently valuable; without it there would be no interaction of its parts. Many unplanned and unintended positive changes occur from the existence of a vibrant network that would not have occurred otherwise. However, these impacts can be difficult to capture and attribute.¹⁹ How do you measure changes in the complex, dynamic and open environment of networks? Who can assume credit for all the changes resulting in impacts? How can such changes and impacts be mapped and understood (who changes what, to whom, and how)?

Utilizing results for real time learning and improvement – Networks, particularly those without clear network hubs, face challenges ensuring that evaluation learnings are disseminated and utilized throughout the network.

Managing Emergent Outcomes - Networks are complicated and complex systems operating at multiple levels and across numerous dimensions and involving a diverse range of stakeholders each with their own strategies and theories of change. They are particularly likely to have emergent outcomes as a result.²⁰

Linking networks to their current stage of development - A network’s current stage of development has implications for evaluation both in terms of what measures of network health will be most meaningful and how much and what kind of progress towards outcomes can be expected.²¹

Not surprisingly, network practitioners²² have identified a series of desirable characteristics for a network monitoring and evaluation system that meet the needs and goals of complicated and complex initiatives:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate learning over time • Be holistic in approach • Be able to keep different parts in view easily • Help us remember what we already know • Include quantitative and qualitative • Be based on adequate baselines • Be able to capture different time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be transparent • Be appropriate to scale and complexity • Be cost effective • Be repeatable and repeated • Utilize both time series and cross-sectional analysis • Have the capacity to include different tools • Be able to capture diffuse/indirect
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¹⁸ Creech and Ramji, 2004; Creech, 2001; Horelli, 2009.

¹⁹ Willson-Grau and Nuñez, 2006; Horelli, 2009.

²⁰ Horelli, 2009.

²¹ Plastrik and Taylor, 2006; Taylor-Powell and Rossing, 2006

²² Characteristics were identified by participants in Washington, D.C., in 2007 during a meeting of iScale’s Impact Community of Practice (ICoP). ICoP brings together representatives from various networks, evaluation experts and practitioners to share their experiences/expertise, explore the challenges networks face in measuring their impact and develop innovative solutions for these difficulties.

<p>horizons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Garner trust for sharing information within the network• Create incentives for members participating in the measurement system• Help measure things for which metrics don't currently exist• Help us evaluate our bridging efficacy• Demonstrate added value of “networking”• Be a coherent system• Be participatory and built on consensus	<p>impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate influence• Be credible - based on accurate info• Be integrated into and further develop theory of change• Be integrated into organizational life• Make the full network visible to itself• Be able to measure the networks overall impact and integrate autonomous impacts of members• Be useful as a donor education tool• Be simple• Be flexible to the unique needs of each network• Be adaptable to dynamic change processes• Easily communicate to different audiences and levels (global to local)
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Network Impact Planning, Assessment, Reporting and Learning Systems

Many of the current network approaches and tools can effectively support specific aspects of network evaluation. However, these approaches used independently are not sufficient to support an entire network monitoring and evaluation system. iScale's Impact Planning, Assessment, Reporting and Learning (IPARL) approach is a holistic framework being developed by iScale and its partners which brings together network planning, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. The IPARL framework consists of a general set of key components that should be included in all network monitoring and evaluation systems and a menu of options that can be tailored by practitioners to match their specific needs.

General key IPARL components include²³:

1. A clearly articulated theory of change and theories of action
2. An integrated M&E framework composed of
 - a. A set of network metrics
 - b. A set of network tools
 - c. Periodic evaluation – including impact evaluation
3. Stakeholder, public and donor reporting
4. Continuous improvement and learning mechanisms

A variety of approaches and tools, including those reviewed above, can be used to support the various IPARL components.

Articulating a Network Theory of Change

Network actors generally understand change as complicated and complex.²⁴ A network's theory of change is the formal articulation of such notions. A network level theory of change identifies high-level strategies and impacts. It is not an implementation plan, but rather it describes how change happens and the progress markers to look for along the way. It is a comprehensive and flexible learning framework that, at the network level:

- 1. Identifies desirable results (What)**
 - a. Describes network level impacts
 - b. Indicates which outcomes the network will be held accountable for
 - c. Identifies categories for monitoring and measurement
- 2. Articulates the multiple and often interacting strategies for affecting change (under what conditions, through what mechanisms and why?)**
 - a. Describes the process for achieving outcomes
 - b. Shows the relationships between activities/outputs and expected results/outcomes

²³ Khagram, et al, 2009.

²⁴ Wilson-Grau and Nuñez, 2006.

3. **Maps out the actors that contribute to various strategies (who)** and locates a specific individual strategy or set of strategies (theory of action)
 - a. Provides a summary of how the various members contribute toward the network as a whole

A network theory of change recognizes that generally no single actor, factor or strategy working independently is able to create the change needed to reach network success. Rather, impact is attained through the combined and coordinated efforts of multiple actors with overlapping and mutually reinforcing theories of action in conjunction with multiple external factors and conditions.²⁵

A network theory of change must be flexible, dynamic and adaptive, allowing a network to shift its strategy in response to changes in context. An initial theory of change can be developed but will need to be revised and refined as learning takes place.²⁶ The goals may remain clear but the specific pathways and activities remain emergent.

Explicating Network Members' Theories of Action

A network theory of change elucidates the collective network approach and network level outcomes, helps individual network actors map the ecosystem in which they work and identifies the other actors and factors that positively or negatively affect their work. A member theory of action explicates the specific strategy(ies) that guide individual actor's actions/activities and member level outcomes. It articulates how an individual actor will contribute toward collective network outcomes while also pursuing internal purposes. Clearly articulated theories of action that are aligned with the network level theory of change create a cohesive yet flexible and adaptive framework that helps to ensure coordinated action at all levels.

The theory of change (at the collective network level) and the theories of action (at the actor/initiative level) form the foundation for the IPARL integrated assessment framework for what to examine, measure, analyze and why. Building the integrated assessment framework around the theory of change/theories of action ensures that the data collected, evaluations and lessons learned that are generated are relevant, useful and utilized.

Developing An Integrated Assessment Framework

An integrated assessment framework links Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) with impact evaluation (IE), increasing the IE's relevance and utilization while decreasing its cost. It collects consistent and comparable data across partners, contexts and action streams. Specifically, it includes:

1. A set of network metrics for monitoring progress
2. A set of network tools to support the collection of metrics
3. Periodic evaluation including impact evaluation

²⁵ Khagram, et al, 2009.

²⁶ Rogers, 2008

The agreed-upon measures and indicators that are collected should be aligned with the network level outcomes identified in the theory of change and the member level outcomes identified in the theories of action. The integrated assessment framework makes it clear where, what and when to measure. Measures may be refined over time as the assessment framework continues to develop. It is particularly important in the case of networks that the assessment framework not be overly rigid as this can stifle creative impulses and ignore emerging initiatives and solutions.²⁷ Assessing network effectiveness also requires attention to three inter-related and overlapping categories mentioned above: 1) vibrancy, 2) connectivity and 3) results.²⁸ In addition, priority areas may be affected by the network's current stage of development.²⁹

Collecting constituency feedback and enabling constituency voice is a key part of the evidence gathering and validation process. Constituency voice refers to how effectively the views of primary constituents (intended beneficiaries, local partners, etc.) are heard at all stages of work that affects them. Effective mechanisms for constituency voice involve collecting views and feedback from the network constituents on an ongoing basis combined with constituency dialogue processes.

Developing Stakeholder, Public and Donor Reporting Processes

Current reporting practices are often little more than marketing or donor accounting. This can undermine honest, inclusive reflection, learning and practical change.³⁰ Public reporting should be more than a mere exercise of accountability to donors in which organizations present self-reported, unverified information that typically only reflects positive outputs and results. Rather, it should promote accountability across a range of stakeholders including donors, partners, beneficiaries, etc. An IPARL framework includes transparent public reporting that supports stakeholder engagement, accountability, learning, adaptive management and strategic decision making. Formats may vary, but public reports should address the questions:

- What was to be achieved?
- What was achieved?
- What caused or hindered success?
- What's working well?
- What should be changed and why?
- What has been changed and how?

Stakeholder reporting presents a key opportunity for findings to be debated, verified or refuted by stakeholders. Properly organized, such "constituency voice" assures the integrity of claimed achievements or failures, enhances legitimacy and motivates new commitments, creativity and investments for better practice. Explicitly sharing evaluation findings with constituents:

²⁷ Plastrik and Taylor, 2006.

²⁸ Plastrik and Taylor, 2006.

²⁹ Plastrik and Taylor, 2006.

³⁰ Khagram et al., 2009.

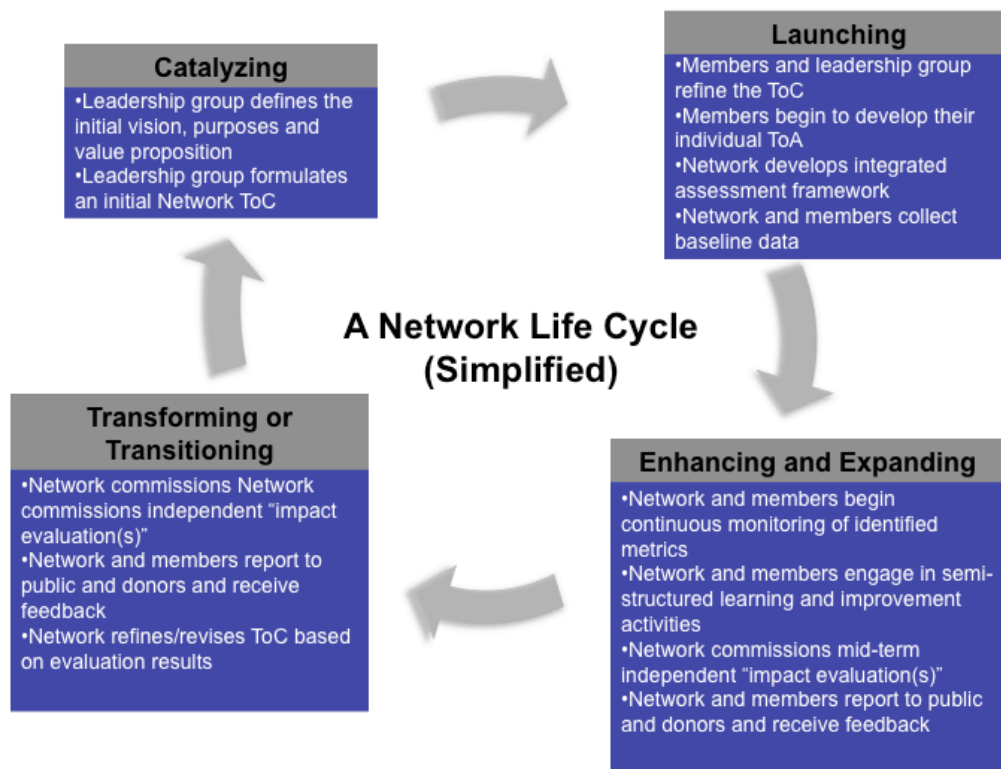
- Provides new insight about effects on key constituents, can inform the network’s assessments of its efforts, and help it to course correct.
- Informs the network’s understanding of important, new aspects of its performance.
- Empowers constituents by amplifying their voices. The process gives constituents a new opportunity to participate in the network and increase their sense of stake in it.
- Helps the network grow in legitimacy as a result of its visible efforts to be accountable to its constituents.

Continuous Learning and Improvement mechanisms

Underlying and running through the IPARL framework is a commitment to continuous learning and improvement. Structured activities that create space for network members and constituents to reflect and analyze monitoring and evaluation results are necessary in order for the network and its partners to learn and course-correct in real time. Lessons learned are shared across partners to scale-up success and overcome challenges. Such learnings can, and should, also be used as a planning input to future programs and investment as a way to maximize impact.

Implementing an IPARL System Through the Network Life Cycle

The lifecycle of a network can be used as a guide to help organize the implementation of a network IPARL system. Specific IPARL components and activities can be matched to various stages within the life cycle. Once a network has determined the stage they currently fall into, it becomes clear which IPARL components and activities they should be focusing on.



Catalyzing

This phase involves developing the foundations for launching the network. It includes an initial mapping of the issues/problem and key stakeholders to gain an understanding of the current landscape, gaps and potential opportunities.³¹ Key stakeholders identified through the initial mapping and a leadership group capable of addressing the identified issue/problem are then convened to help define the vision, purpose and value of the network. These initial conversations also include an explicit discussion of network communication needs, general philosophy, incentives, goals and first attempts at simple knowledge management practices. The leadership group should develop an initial and basic theory of change.

Launching

The network's broad purpose, as defined during the catalyzing phase, is then sharpened and operationalized in the subsequent launching phase. Here members and leadership should work together to review and revise the initial network theory of change developed in the previous phase. Members can then begin to explicate their individual, but linked, theories of action. The network theory of change starts with the overall goal(s) or vision of the network described in the catalyzing phase and then work backwards to describe how the network as a whole plans to achieve the goal(s). Working backwards requires participants to identify the intermediate outcomes that necessary for achieving the vision and general set of strategies for reaching these outcomes. This general frame becomes the network theory of change. Individual members indicate which strategies they will focus on and describe how their actions will help bring about the intermediate outcomes in detail.

Enhancing and Expanding

This phase focuses on expanding and enhancing network structures developed during the initial launch phase. Networks in this phase should focus on developing their integrated assessment framework. Indicators should be identified at each level of a member's theory of action (activities, outputs, outcomes and intermediate outcomes). Network leadership should be in charge of compiling and aggregating individual member data and tracking overall network progress towards the intermediate outcomes identified by the network. Once indicators have been decided upon, the first step for each member will be to collect a baseline. A baseline creates a starting point and describes the landscape before the launch of the network. Data on the current status of each of the outputs and outcomes members identify to monitor needs to be collected at the start of the network so that subsequent data can be compared to the initial starting point and progress charted. A table similar to that below can be used to collect initial baseline data and chart progress for each indicator.

³¹ Networks may emerge organically or as part of a conscience strategy.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 1

	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE	METHOD	FREQUENCY	RESPONSIBLE	BASELINE DATA	PROGRESS
OUTCOME							
OUTPUT							

Periodic reflection on network progress and lessons learned is important if the network is to course correct in real time. These reflective sessions may result in publically distributable reports, changes to monitoring procedures or strategy refinement.

Transforming

At this point the network will have a robust set of monitoring data to examine and a formal assessment of the network to assess network vibrancy, effectiveness, communication tools/practices, etc. The evaluation should feed into any strategic rethinking of the network vision, purposes and values. This creates an opportunity for the network to refine/redefine its vision, purpose and value. These changes may then be reflected/recorded in a revised network theory of change and corresponding member theories of action.

Network evaluations focused around a theory of change are more useful than simplistic counterfactual-focused evaluations. If there was a single step in the causal chain, that is, the network does something (x) and that is intended to result in something (y), then asking the counterfactual question would likely yield powerful information. However, as mentioned above, networks are extremely complex and complicated initiatives that have multiple steps in the causal chain. These characteristics make the value of counterfactuals minimal at best. For the counterfactual question to generate useful information/learnings in a network, we have to ask the counterfactual at every step in the chain across the theory of change. Richness and detail about a network’s contribution is gained by asking the counterfactual question at each step in the theory of change.

Challenges of Network IPARL

While developing an IPARL system is clearly an important part of managing a network, it is not without its challenges. For example, integrating an IPARL system into the pre-existent culture and operational processes of a network can be difficult. Network managers may encounter initial resistance from staff and network members how have yet to be convinced of the value and utility of monitoring and evaluation practices. Building the capacity of members and staff to participate in network IPARL activities may also pose an initial challenge. Under-resourced networks may have trouble finding necessary funding or convincing members and network leadership that IPARL efforts are a good use of scares resources. Donors may or may not be willing to fund evaluation.

Network IPARL Cases

The cases below examine the extent to which two networks are using an IPARL system and can help to further clarify and ground in practice the ideas discussed above. The first case will explore the Global Knowledge Partnership's evaluation activities and the second will examine the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict's efforts. In both, the focus will be on assessing to what extent each network has/or has not implemented the IPARL framework described above. The third case will examine the Global Aids Alliance efforts to implement an IPARL system for their Campaign to End Pediatric HIV/AIDS.

The Global Knowledge Partnership

GKP is an international multi-stakeholder network working to promote innovation and advancement in knowledge and information and communication technology (ICT) for Development. The network brings together public, private and civil society organizations with the goal of sharing knowledge and building partnerships for knowledge and ICT for development. GKP's work focuses on four strategic themes: access to knowledge, education, poverty reduction and resource mobilization. The network operates globally and in eight regions with about 100 members in 50 countries.

GKP has gone through several incarnations. Initially formed in Toronto, Canada, in 1997, the secretariat was moved to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2001. From 1997-2000 much of GKP's focus was on launching the network and building the foundations. With the secretariat move to Malaysia began the period of network expansion. 2006 and 2007 were important years in that they marked the first year of GKP's 2010 strategy (the secretariat spent the first part of 2006 developing the five-year plan known as Strategy 2010) and the network's ten-year anniversary. 2007 was also the first time that GKP underwent an external review in great part due to increasing donor pressure to demonstrate results and as a means for developing at least some baseline against which to measure Strategy 2010.

Articulating theories of change and action – Although GKP did develop a program framework in 2006, this was by no means a theory of change as defined by the IPARL system. First, the process through which Strategy 2010 was developed (by the secretariat and then approved during an annual member's meeting), lacked the stakeholder consultation and feedback prescribed by IPARL's theory of change development process.

Second, while Strategy 2010 identified a clear vision, there were a number of logic gaps in how GKP intended to attain its vision. Intermediate objectives were not well-defined and specific interim outcomes not identified. For example, the connection between knowledge sharing and networking activities and how that was to lead to transformative change that would alleviate poverty was not clearly explained or defined.

The objectives that were identified in the strategy tended to be more programmatic activity areas than clear objectives. Identifying the outcomes that these activity areas were intended to

engender would have made the framework more robust. Additionally, the causal relationship between components within Strategy 2010 was not clearly articulated.

Developing an integrated assessment framework – GKP utilized a traditional log frame to track and monitor progress. However, in part because clear intermediate outcomes were not identified, the indicators used did not move past measuring outputs. For example, if the goal was related to partnership building, the indicators were number of partnerships or % of members from X region. As such, success was equated not with the quality of the partnerships, but rather with high numbers of members and better sector/regional representation. Every member was weighted equally; there was no distinction between more active members. This meant that a situation with 100 inactive members could be considered more successful than one with only 50 very active members.

Indicators could also have been refined to be more temporal. This would have helped to measure progress towards specific milestones and guide the planning process. Also setting targets for each year could have assisted in monitoring progress and adding in creating more continuous feedback loops.

Additionally, very little data was collected for activities outside of the Secretariat. This meant that little was known about what was happening at the regional level. Data collected at all levels is crucial for effectively monitoring and assessing a network. Without this, the assessment only spoke to the secretariat and missed measuring the unique metrics that should be captured when examining networks (pgs. 5-12).

Stakeholder, public and donor reporting – GKP produced and publically shared (via their website) annual reports from 2001-2008. These reports highlighted key activities and successes but provided little assessment of progress toward objectives. GKP's 2007 external review was shared with the Executive Committee but was not made publically available.

Continuous improvement mechanisms – The Executive Committee, who met throughout the year, did provide strategic guidance and feedback for GKP based on report backs from GKP staff and external task forces. However, there was less feedback/guidance gathered from members directly or from the regional network and coordinators.

GKP Today – There was a lull in activities from 2008-2009 during which time GKP underwent a strategic rethinking and research process. The Executive Committee established a task force to facilitate a network-wide reflection and visioning process and to develop a more cohesive plan and strategy that would respond effectively to members' priorities and capacity to contribute against the shifting context of regional and global development needs. The task force completed its work in mid-2009 and the Omar Dengo Foundation agreed to be an interim secretariat host.

In May 2010 the secretariat was moved to its new host at the Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies in New Delhi, India. A new strategic framework was also recently approved by the Executive Committee.

Historically, GKP has had a relatively weak IPARL system. Some initial groundwork has been laid but additional effort is needed if a robust system is to be created. With the development of a new strategic framework and rebirth as GKP3.0, GKP may be able to gather valuable lessons reflecting on their past evaluation efforts. Hopefully, GKP3.0's new evaluation system will be able to build on these lessons and further develop their IPARL system.

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a global civil society-led network that seeks to build an international consensus on peace building and the prevention of violent conflict. GPACC began a process to improve its monitoring and evaluation procedures in 2006 due to a general sense of dissatisfaction with the current system. Previous M&E efforts had predominantly focused on accountability, mainly to external donors, as the main purpose. A logical framework approach (LFA) was used but only on an ad hoc basis. The sporadic application and underlying linear nature of LFA proved insufficient for illustrating GPACC's results. This meant that M&E was not integrated into the daily work of the network and instead operated as a relatively unconnected parallel process.

This set of challenges prompted the GPACC's international secretariat to investigate other more suitable M&E frameworks. Specifically GPACC was interested in an M&E system that would:

- Improve learning
- Promote transparency and accountability
- Improve effectiveness and quality
- Assist in lobby and advocacy activities
- Contributing to and improve theories of action for conflict prevention and peace building

However, GPACC encountered a number of challenges as they worked to identify an appropriate M&E framework to support these goals. First, compared to organizations, networks are complex and their results tend to be difficult to predict. GPPAC is often asked to demonstrate that its programs result in significant, lasting changes in the well-being of communities affected by violent conflict. The theories of action/impact pathways for creating peace, security and prosperity are multiple, simultaneous and overlapping. Within GPACC a diversity of individuals, organizations and actors interact to support a shift from reaction to prevention. "Impacts," when achieved, are often the product of a confluence of factors for which no single agency or program can realistically claim full credit.

Second, networks typically have a non-linear way of functioning and cause and effect are hard to determine beforehand. Their work does not end after a few of years, but is ongoing. This made many conventional M&E frameworks difficult to apply.

Outcome Mapping was chosen as the underlying M&E approach that best supported GPPAC's goals and evaluation challenges because it:

- Is a systemic approach
- Facilitates the tracking of results, from the early foundational changes right through to ambitious improvements in social conditions. It recognizes behavioral changes in a program's direct partners as outcomes and hence makes it easier to track the intangible results inherent to peace building work
- Helps a program differentiate among the many kinds of partners it may have. It focuses on the direct partners a program is working with.
- Recognizes that long-term impacts are rarely accomplished by the work of a single actor. Therefore, Outcome Mapping does not talk about attribution, but about contribution. By using Outcome Mapping, a program is not claiming the achievement of impacts; rather, the focus is on its contributions to outcomes. These outcomes, in turn, enhance the possibility of achieving impacts — but the relationship is not necessarily a direct one of cause and effect.

Through the process of implementing OM within the network GPACC discovered that:

- Staff and partners are more enthusiastic about M&E due to Outcome Mapping
- Outcome Mapping makes the “real” results of GPPAC visible
- M&E is no longer done only for accountability reasons
- Donors can be convinced

Articulating Theories of Change and Action - GPACC has completed the entire intentional design and planning process. This resulted in a 15 Regional Action Agendas (regional theories of action) developed from 15 parallel regional consultation and dialogue processes held over the course of three years and involving over a thousand civil society organizations active in conflict prevention and peace building.³²

Building off of these 15 regional action agendas, a GPACC task force developed a global action agenda (network theory of change). This was a collaborative process where the task force continuously solicited feedback and comments from throughout GPACC members and beyond.³³ This document outlined the key high-level priorities for addressing conflict, identified strategies to support these priorities and highlighted key reforms and tasks necessary for implementing such strategies. GPACC then developed a more specific work plan for operationalizing the action agendas.

Developing an Integrated Assessment Framework – The work plan identified the various areas to be measured, targets and expected outcome results. However monitoring remains a challenge and more space for reflection and discussion of results is needed. GPACC is currently working to develop a new five-year strategic plan. The network deemed it necessary to collect and write-up a first round of outcomes at both the regional and secretariat level before finalizing the strategic plan.

³² Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict Global Action Agenda

³³ Ibid

GPACC first introduced this evaluation concept during its last steering committee meeting. A set of four questions (1. What are the changes you see, 2. Who changed how and when, 3. Why is this change important, 4. How did GPACC contribute to that change?) was sent out to network and secretariat representatives via email. GPACC staff followed-up through phone interviews to discuss outcomes with participants. Participants were then asked to write-up their outcome and send them to the GPACC M&E coordinator. These were reviewed and further discussed. Three regions where collecting outcomes proved particularly difficult were chosen for in-country visits by the GPACC M&E coordinator.

Stakeholder, public and donor reporting - A report with these outcomes will be presented to the steering committee during their next meeting to help inform the planning process. GPACC also reports some of their key achievements publically on their website. Additionally, the initial regional consultation process and stakeholder consultations that went into developing both the regional and global action plans could be leveraged to share out and receive feedback on any evaluation results and strategic decisions. However, as mentioned above more room could be made for greater reflection and discussion.

Continuous improvement mechanism – GPACC has explicitly linked their outcome-based evaluation exercise to planning as the results are intended to feed directly into the five-year strategic planning process. It is still too early to determine the degree to which the evaluation results will actually be utilized.

GPACC and their network members have found OM particularly useful for planning and further elaborating their ToAs. However they have found OM lacking when it comes to monitoring and that it provides little to no guidance with respect to evaluation specifically. GPACC may wish to consider combining OM with other evaluation tools as the further develop their integrated assessment framework.

The Global AIDS Alliance and its Campaign to End Pediatric HIV/AIDS

In early 2009, the Global AIDS Alliance (GAA) was in the midst of planning a large advocacy campaign to address pediatric HIV/AIDS. The campaign was to focus on sub-Saharan Africa, where, despite international commitments to achieve universal access to HIV/AIDS services by 2010, including 80% coverage for prevention of parent-to-child transmission services, progress toward these goals remained too slow, and pediatric HIV transmission remained unacceptably high. To accelerate progress, GAA, together with key partners, including selected African advocacy organizations and networks, the Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative, and UNICEF, were to launch a three-year Campaign to End Pediatric HIV/AIDS (CEPA) in May 2009. The Campaign would focus on overcoming policy and implementation bottlenecks to scaling up prevention of parent-to-child transmission (PPTCT+) and pediatric diagnosis, treatment, and care programs in six focus countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Nigeria, and Mozambique. The campaign would leverage policy reforms, at both the global and country levels in order to 1) expand and activate in-country advocacy networks and 2) hold governments and decision-makers accountable for tangible progress towards their policy commitments. CEPA expected to 1) improve program delivery in the field and 2) increase the impact of ongoing investments from international donors and national governments.

GAA recognized early on that for CEPA to be truly impactful, it would have to work at multiple (local-to-global) levels. A complex and dynamic multi-stakeholder and multiple level networked advocacy campaign such as CEPA would require an overarching framework that would need to be flexible, aligned across the multiple levels, and promote real time learning and adaptability.

Unique Characteristics of Networked Advocacy - Advocacy campaigns frequently seek to achieve a plurality of objectives across a variety of institutions, groups and contexts. Achieving all the objectives of a campaign is rare. Compromise is often necessary in cases where an outright victory cannot be achieved, and measures of success must take partial victories into account.

While programs can be affected by unpredicted and contextual variables, the policy process takes that possibility to a whole new level. Constantly shifting contexts and dynamics means that advocacy efforts must frequently change their objectives and strategies mid-course, often rendering initial benchmarks irrelevant. Consequently, advocates have a need for real-time data. To make informed decisions, advocates need timely answers to the strategic questions they regularly face.

Attributing responsibility or making causal inferences for any observed changes in policy to the actions of a specific organization or campaign is exceedingly challenging. Different, simultaneous strategies are employed and often by different actors. In such a complex environment it is difficult to assess which approach(es) or organization(s), if any, are having an impact. Because each campaign is a unique combination of strategies, targets, and outcomes it is difficult to make simple comparisons between interventions over time.

These characteristics create challenges for evaluation and compel advocates to consider evaluation as one part of a holistic planning, monitoring, and evaluation system.

Launching an IPARL System for CEPA - GAA recognized from the start that they would need a system that could provide them with real time feedback about what was and what was not working across all six countries so that they could effectively manage and guide the campaign. They needed to be able to identify and capitalize on new opportunities as they arose, course correct to avoid failures and record lessons learned to inform future campaigns. There was also external pressure from donors to demonstrate impact and meet accountability standards that required CEPA to undergo a mid-term and final external evaluation. iScale began working with CEPA and its donor in August, 2009, to help them marry these two purposes by developing an IPARL system that included:

1. Well-elaborated theory of change and theories of action at the country and global levels with aligned key performance indicators (KPIs) that are reportable and useable by multiple stakeholders, including funders,
2. Reporting instruments (such as scorecards) that include KPIs, constituency feedback data, and lessons learned to incentivize and support adaptive action including transmitting effective practices across at least six national loci of action,
3. Real time and rapid advocacy action learning and sharing for identifying and overcoming policy and implementation bottlenecks,
4. A 21st century communications platform that supports real-time virtual engagement across network partners, generates a dynamic knowledge base of effective practices, and further supports the advocacy efforts of the network partners, and
5. Data, information, and analysis demonstrating the degree and level of achievement of outcomes and the plausible contribution thereof from CEPA.

Aligning Theories of Change and Action Across Partners and Levels - Given the desired network orientation of CEPA, the first steps in the “Laying the Foundation” phase of the Campaign necessitated the participation of GAA, potential CEPA Country Partners, as well as other key stakeholders to provide their inputs and feedback into the substance/objectives of the Campaign as well as the overall process through which the Campaign would be carried out. For iScale, this was the key moment during which the Campaign would begin to develop a Theory of Change, or framework delineating how the Campaign expected change to happen.

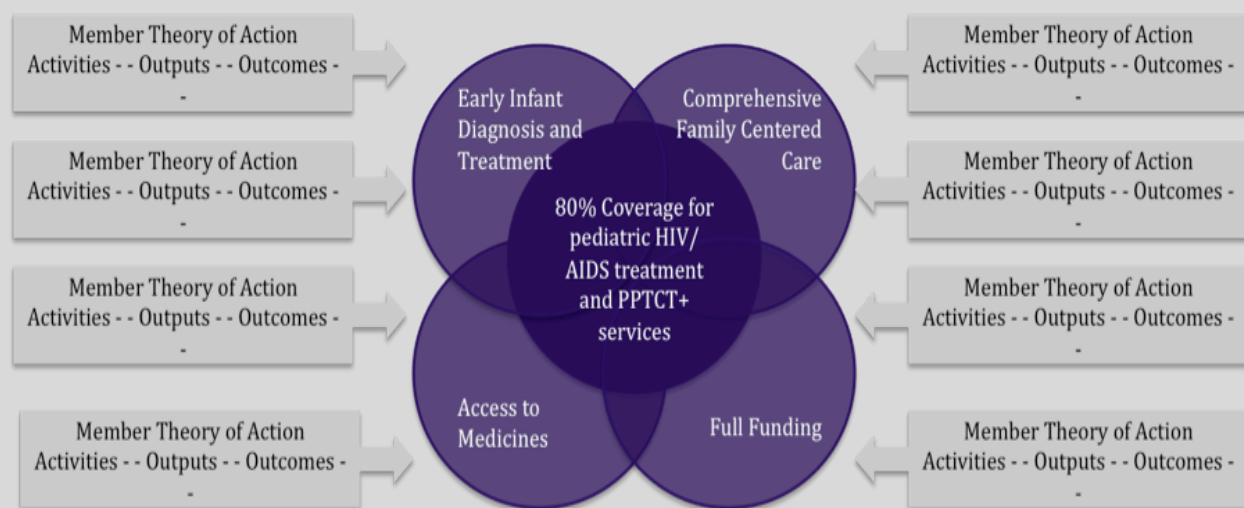
The campaign’s success is in part dependent upon its ability to align the diverse strategies and individual goals across partners and levels (global and national) around a common theory of change. A common CEPA-wide ToC enhances the coordination of actors and activities so as to encourage collective progress toward the common goal of achieving 80% coverage while simultaneously strengthening the capacity of and supporting individual partner purposes. One of the first tasks in the initial foundation and planning phase of the Campaign was the articulation

of a CEPA-wide ToC which would serve as an umbrella for the individual, national and global level partners' theories of action (ToA).

The primary long-term goal of CEPA is to increase coverage rates for prevention of parent-to-child transmission (PPTCT) and pediatric treatment services to the globally agreed-upon target of 80% and ensure high-quality services. This goal is common across all partners supporting the campaign. During their initial planning phase and based on careful research, GAA selected four key substantive areas that needed to be focused on, in order to scale the impact of the Campaign in address pediatric HIV/AIDS:

1. Family centered care and nutrition
2. Early infant diagnoses and treatment
3. Access to appropriate medicines
4. Full funding to eliminate pediatric HIV/AIDS

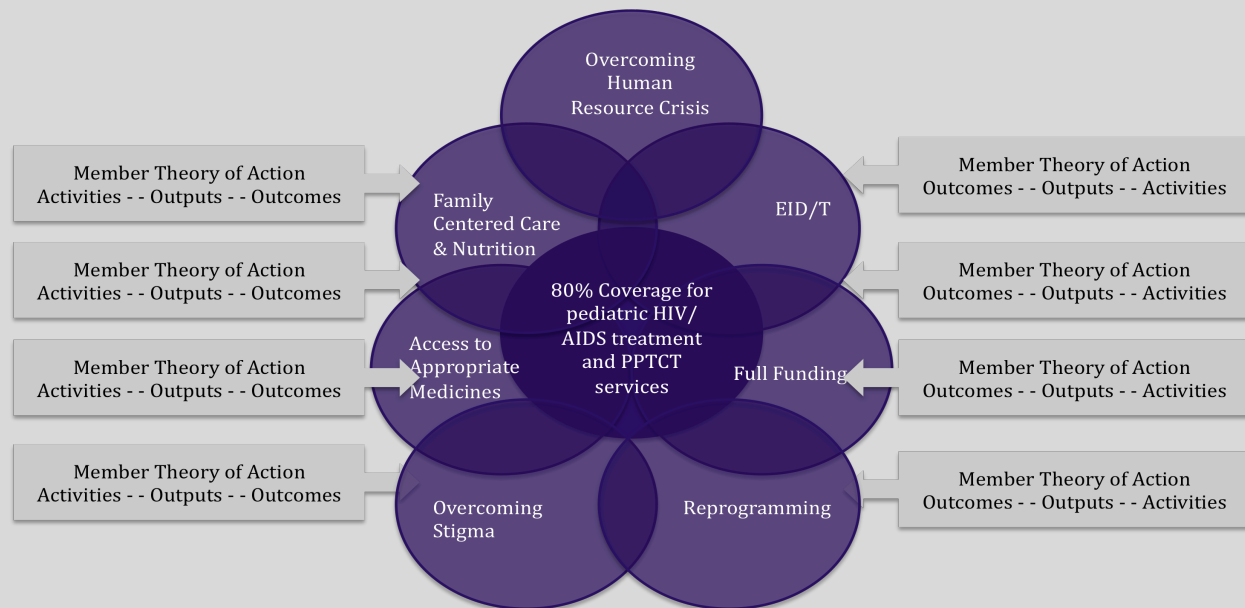
CEPA Long-term goal and original four core objective areas



The original four core objective areas and the common goal of 80% coverage were used to help create a common structure for global and national level ToAs (see figure above).

Step 1 and 2 of developing a ToC - iScale worked with CEPA Partners first on the initial two campaign-level pieces of the ToC. Following intense discussions, both remote and in-person, there emerged a set of core objectives, or impact areas, on which the Campaign would focus. These were the four substantive areas mentioned above (including, family centered care and nutrition; early infant diagnosis and treatment; access to appropriate medicines; and full funding), but added to them were three other key areas, namely, overcoming human resource crises, overcoming stigma and discrimination, and reprogramming key mechanisms like the Global Fund and PEPFAR, all of which were identified in collaboration with CEPA Country Partners (see diagram below). It was expected that by focusing on these seven key objective Campaign-level areas, National, Regional, and Global CEPA Partners would achieve the primary

long-term goal of increasing coverage rates for prevention of parent-to-child transmission (PPTCT) and pediatric treatment services to the globally agreed-upon target of 80% and ensure high-quality services.



CEPA Partners also discussed and identified the kinds of outcomes the Campaign would work on – as this was an advocacy campaign, there was debate around whether to focus on people-level impacts (such as more children on HAART, or reduced parent-to-child HIV transmission rates) or on policy and funding level impacts (such as policy adopted by Government to ..., or budget increase for PMTCT approved by Government). The latter, identified as advocacy outcomes, are what CEPA agreed to be held accountable for. It was important however, to show the link between the people-level outcomes (what ultimately drives many of the CEPA advocates) and the advocacy outcomes (elements that are needed to achieve the people-level outcomes).

Step 3 – ToA - The seven core objective areas and the common goal of 80% coverage were used to help create a common structure for global and national level ToAs (see figure above). Country level partners were asked to develop their individual theories of action by doing the following for each of the core and cross-cutting objectives taking into consideration their specific country context:

1. Identify the **people-level outcomes** tied to each specific core objective which were expected to contribute to achievement of the long-term Campaign goal
2. Identify the **bottlenecks** that were preventing the achievement of the people-level outcomes
3. Identify the **advocacy outcomes** that would address/remove those identified bottlenecks that prevent achievement of the people-level outcomes

4. Identify the **outputs** that would be steps toward the achievement of advocacy outcomes
5. Identify the **indicators** and other types of evidence so that progress towards advocacy outcomes and outputs could be monitored over time
6. Identify the **activities** to achieve advocacy outcomes and outputs

While the steps might appear to be straightforward, the process of developing the Campaign-level ToC and National, Regional, and Global Theories of Action was in fact, complex. iScale worked remotely and in-person with CEPA Partners on numerous iterations of outcome, output and indicator refinement.

Developing the Integrated Assessment Framework - M&E Plans - With the Laying the Foundation phase coming to a close, iScale is supporting CEPA Partners to develop the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) components for their advocacy plans. Effective M&E plans will be crucial in generating data, information and analysis demonstrating the degree and level of achievement of outcomes and the plausible contribution thereof from CEPA. Steps in developing M&E plans include:

1. Development of Theory of Action maps
2. Completion of Indicator/Evidence tables
3. Identification of baseline of the indicators/evidence for each advocacy outcome and output
4. Identification of possible rapid advocacy learning activities
5. Reporting on progress toward indicators/evidence of advocacy outcomes and advocacy outputs

Theory of Action Maps - As described above, iScale first worked with CEPA Partners to identify beneficiary outcomes, bottlenecks, advocacy outcomes, advocacy outputs and indicators/evidence for the seven core objectives, in tabular format. These tables are useful in capturing what is desired to be achieved, but are less successful in explaining how and why what is desired will actually be achieved. The next step, then, is to construct maps of the ToAs to help visualize these components and depict the causal linkages or the mechanisms that describe “how” the actions will produce the changes to alleviate the bottlenecks. The maps are important especially for the role they will play in framing the mid-term and final evaluations, as well as for the purpose of learning more broadly.

Specifically, a Theory of Action map is a visual tool that brings together the advocacy outcomes and outputs (and their corresponding indicators), and shows, with the use of arrows, the logic behind how a CEPA Partner plans to achieve their identified advocacy outcomes. The map can also elaborate non-linear linkages - for example, advocacy outputs may contribute toward one or more advocacy outcomes, in a way a table cannot.

Indicator/Evidence Tables and Baseline - With the indicators established, iScale supported CEPA Partners to identify the ways in which they planned to collect indicator data. For each indicator of an advocacy outcome or output, CEPA Partners were requested to identify the

source of the data, the methodology for collecting the data, the frequency of data collection, and who was responsible for collecting the data.

The very important next step was to identify the current status of the identified advocacy outcomes and outputs. The establishment of this baseline is central to the evaluation process. To accurately assess progress toward the outcomes and outputs identified in the ToAs, it is imperative to know the starting point.

Data Gathering and Rapid Advocacy Learning Activities - iScale understands the rapid pace in which advocacy is done. Often advocates have little or no time to reflect on an experience and learn about what was successful and what might need to be improved. For CEPA, iScale has selected a suite of activities, like intense period debriefs, which will allow for the capturing of these kinds of information and learning in a light, un-burdensome way.

For ongoing data gathering, tools like the evidence of change journal will be extremely useful for CEPA Partners. These are basic journals in which Partners will be able to enter results they are observing that are connected to identified outcomes and outputs. These journals can also help record and track unintended or unanticipated results, which are important in capturing for learning and course correction.

Reporting - iScale's IPARL system supports the development of all of the above components and then helps to establish reporting instruments, such as scorecards, that include indicators and lessons learned to incentivize and support adaptive action including transmitting effective practices across numerous national loci of action.

All of the above seems like, and is, considerable work. It requires time and energy, especially at the front end to establish Campaign-appropriate systems. The multi-stakeholder, multiple level nature of CEPA only serves to complicate the planning and systems development process further. Ultimately, iScale is confident that the difficult planning work that was done by CEPA Partners will help in establishing effective systems needed for real-time sharing and learning for course correction, which in turn will be crucial in reaching 80% coverage for pediatric HIV/AIDS treatment and services.

Next Steps - iScale has had a close relationship with GAA and CEPA as a systems development and planning partner for the Campaign. iScale has been responsible for co-developing components of the IPARL system along with CEPA Partners, guiding the initial implementation, and providing in-depth and on-going support as needed. CEPA National Partners will take increasing ownership of the IPARL system as the Campaign progresses. Going forward, iScale will begin to transition to its role as evaluator and prepare to conduct both the mid-term and final evaluations. This type of planning and evaluation partnership will allow iScale to be collaboratively involved throughout the Campaign lifecycle and help build internal planning, assessment and learning capacity that can be sustained over time and increase the utilization and relevance of evaluation results.

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