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Critical Readings on Assessing and Learning for Social Change: A Review

Irene Guijt
January 2008

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Critical Readings on Assessing and Learning for Social Change: A Review

Irene Guijt

Summary

The readings in this literature review provide an overview of the ideas and approaches that are considered useful in shaping new approaches to assessment and learning that strengthen the very processes of transformation that are their focus. The choice of readings has been strongly shaped by discussions held with the 'ASC group', an invited group of development professionals who discussed the theme during 2005 and 2006. The review aims to guide individuals engaged in transformational development processes – be they in the South or North – with two different needs:

1. Those interested in monitoring and evaluation and facing methodological and conceptual questions about how to deal with the dilemmas posed by social change processes in terms of assessment and learning.
2. Those active in social change processes and keen to understand how their work can be strengthened by conscious assessment and learning processes.

This review consists of a combination of conceptual and methodological discussions, as well as practical examples about assessing social change.

The conceptual part of the review consists of two blocks of readings: 'Perspectives on Assessment' and 'Analytical Frameworks'. Both relate to more conceptual ideas that underpin the more practical methodological choices.

The practical examples including descriptions of generic methodologies as well as specific case studies and are organised in three blocks. The readings in 'Practical Considerations' seek to address some of the more uneasy methodological dilemmas. In 'Specific Methods and Approaches', readings relate to concrete examples of recent methods that have emerged in part to address some of the dilemmas. Finally, in 'Inspiration from Concrete Examples', the reader will find case studies from a wide range of geographical, social and organisational contexts that show how effective and just assessment and learning processes can be possible.

Keywords: assessment, learning, social change, participation, monitoring, evaluation, relationships, power.

Irene Guijt has worked for 15 years on development issues, focusing on participation, resource management, civil society and learning processes. She has research, training and facilitation experience with grassroots organisations and international agencies, about which she has published widely to bridge the persistent gap between academia and practice. She is currently completing her PhD at Wageningen University on why current perspectives on monitoring are unlikely to contribute to learning in the context of dynamic resource management partnerships that are engaged in institutional transformation. Irene has collaborated with the Participation, Power and Social Change Team at IDS on various initiatives since the early 1990s, including most recently as coordinator of a five country evaluation of Dutch NGO support to strengthen civil society participation and then the 'Assessing Social Change' initiative. The author can be contacted at: iguijt@learning-bydesign.org

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Irene Guijt
Learning by Design

1 Introducing the review

1.1 The challenges of assessing social change

When involved in social change processes, how can one learn about what is happening in ways that strengthen the work? What kinds of assessment processes are possible and with what values should they take place? What types of issues might be important to consider and what methodological options exist? This literature review seeks to provide readings that address these questions. The readings cover more than the monitoring and learning *about* social change work – they focus on how such monitoring and learning can work *for* and strengthen social change. Therefore the readings refer to a broad range of key concepts that are important in assessment processes of social change.

Social change is the conscious effort to counterbalance the impact of economic, social and political injustices on the vulnerable, marginalised and the poor, including imbalanced access to resources, goods and services.

The term ‘social change’ is generic, in and of itself, neutral, and contested, hence making it easily co-opted and the subject of confusion. In this publication, the understanding of the term focuses on it being a transformational process focusing on (re)distributing power. This requires structural change of society, its institutions and norms, as part of a more equitable sharing of resources and opportunities.

Social change can be engendered through focused intervention in the form of projects or programmes, or as part of a wider movement of societal change which links a range of interacting initiatives, such as in the women’s or landless movement. Such processes are long trajectories of sudden advances, laboured gains, unexpected setbacks and striking when opportunities present themselves. They require sustained efforts at various levels. This includes work on generating trust between people in situations of conflict, civic education on rights and policies, capacity-building to enable participation in service delivery, advocacy work to influence policies and economic structures, and ensuring dialogue and engagement in civil society organisations themselves.

Ongoing assessment or evaluation of efforts by those involved is important to know if efforts are bearing fruit and if new strategies and activities are needed. Continual critical reflection is the basis for active and shared learning that makes such built-in assessment useful. Such development processes have certain characteristics that confound those seeking to apply mainstream thinking on assessment and learning. It is a long-term goal that involves many actors and multiple types of activities, often requiring risk taking and precedent setting without clarity about a positive outcome. In such contexts, the types of monitoring and evaluation processes favoured by funding agencies sit uneasily. Several features are distinct.

First, being able to assess a pro-poor social change effort effectively requires clarity about how social change occurs and building a context-specific understanding of how power inequities may be challenged. This, in turn, requires articulating the assumptions that lay at the basis of one’s strategies and ideas about how change happens. Such assumptions, often implicit and tacit, are recognised to be difficult to

surface. And when change strategies are based on fraught assumptions of how change occurs that are not reassessed over time, it leads to efforts with sub-optimal effects. Groups can get stuck in a well-known strategy and perspective that becomes outmoded and therefore ineffective due to contextual changes.

Another key problem occurs if pro-poor social change is viewed not as a process with progress markers but rather as an end point and product. This leads to a range of distortions, notably a focus on concrete outcomes rather than progress markers and ignoring the value of small, incremental changes. Being accountable to a process rather than a product to which groups are committed means that 'the down stream long-term results become the lighthouse that guide the action and not the rod with which impact is measured'. (Ortiz and Pacheco, pers.com., 8 April 2005)

Furthermore, in externally driven change initiatives, there is often a timeframe mismatch between the long-term impacts and expectations of short-term externally funded initiatives. Many development organisations contribute to this by romanticising and 'commoditising' their social change work, in the process creating unrealistic expectations of the timeframe for goal achievement.

Pro-poor social change is about process and it has many aspects, which means that efforts intertwine in changing contexts, goalposts inevitably shift, and impact is perhaps best described in terms of 'emergent' phenomena of change.¹ This makes it irrelevant to talk in terms of attribution to specific individuals, efforts or organisations. Standard monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches based on fixed, time-bound achievements and segmented realities fail to do justice to such interconnected efforts over a long time period. Recognising the broad system interactions needed for pro-poor social change means letting go of the attribution obsession that is so prevalent in the development sector.

These and other challenges (see Box 1.1) form the motivation for deepening the understanding of what becomes possible, feasible and, above all, useful when it comes to assessment and learning in the specific context of social change work as defined above. In so doing, it is paramount that the process of assessment and learning furthers the transformation processes themselves. This, in turn, requires consistency of values and clarity about who is benefiting from the process.

Box 1.1 Anomalies with conventional M&E due to characteristics of social change

- It is difficult to strive for measurable results, as results of social change work can take the form of something not occurring, sustaining a past gain or suddenly shifting from an upward change trend to stagnation or deterioration – or the reverse.

1 An emergent property becomes apparent when several simple entities or processes operate in an environment but form more complex behaviours as a collective. Certain properties emerge that the entities or processes do not have themselves. See readings on systems thinking in section 3.6.

- It is impossible to attribute impact to specific inputs due to multiple factors and actors; hence it makes no sense to attribute an outcome to one particular intervention.
- It is difficult to measure the impact – and even the outcomes – of activities that are often part of social change work, such as organising dialogues, lobbying governments and advocacy work.
- The shifting nature of social change challenges, as some obstacles fade while others surface, make a rigid plan of action or accountability for specific results a potential hindrance to strategic efforts.
- It is difficult to discern progress due to the mutual interdependence of efforts and unclear boundaries, making effects only evident if other causes are subsequently or simultaneously addressed.
- Prioritising ‘local relevance’ above ‘relevance for funding agencies’, which leads to questions about the merits of information needs and modalities that only have value for funding agencies.

1.2 About the audience and structure

The readings in this literature review provide an overview of the ideas and approaches that are considered potentially useful in shaping new ways of assessing and learning that strengthen the very processes of transformation that are their focus. The choice of readings has been strongly shaped by discussions held with the ASC Group, an invited group of development professionals who discussed the theme during 2005 and 2006 (see Acknowledgements and Box 1.2). For example, the importance of critical reflection, popular education, action research, power analysis and stories were repeated in those discussions and are reflected in the choice of readings here.

Box 1.2. About the ASC Group, process and outputs

Between May 2005 and November 2006, a small group of development professionals discussed the opportunities and challenges for assessing and learning about social change in ways that, in turn, provide valuable insights and strengthen the change process. This group was composed of individuals whose position in relation to the topic represented important voices: activists, researchers, evaluators, facilitators, international and local NGO staff. This group called itself the Assessing Social Change or ASC Group.

Central to the group’s discussions was a common concern with the chasm between the need for reflective social change practice and the existing understanding and repertoire of approaches for assessment and learning. The group debated and shared experiences through a series of facilitated e-discussions, case studies and two workshops.

The ASC group was coordinated by Irene Guijt of Learning by Design and was part of an initiative by the Power, Participation and Social Change Team at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK. This initiative had emerged from earlier discussions in Canada between US-based activists and evaluators and Southern development professionals around the same topic, seeking to construct exchanges that could help strengthen social change work. Both phases of the work were supported by the Ford Foundation. The North American discussions have continued in parallel as the 'Learning Group on Organizational Learning and Organizational Development' under the guidance of Vicki Creed, with Andy Mott and Francois Pierre-Louis.

The ASC project has led to several outputs: four case studies (see readings 86–9); this literature review; and a synthesis paper that draws on the literature review, the case studies and the group discussions (see reading 42). All outputs and details of the ASC initiative can be found at: www.ids.ac.uk/ids/Part/proj/socialchange.html

The review aims to guide individuals engaged in transformational development processes – be they in the South or North – with two different needs:

- 1 Those interested in monitoring and evaluation, who face methodological and conceptual questions about how to deal with the dilemmas posed by social change processes in terms of assessment and learning;
- 2 Those active in social change processes and keen to understand how their work can be strengthened by conscious assessment and learning processes.

The literature review consists of five clusters of readings that combine conceptual and methodological discussions with practical examples about assessing social change (see Box 1.3). Annex 1 provides a full list of all readings for easy reference.

The conceptual part of the review consists of two clusters of readings: 'Perspectives on assessment' and 'Analytical frameworks'. Both relate to the conceptual ideas that underpin the more practical methodological choices. Why concepts? As Lewin, a pioneer of thinking on group dynamics and action research said, 'There is nothing more practical than a good theory' (Lewin 1952).² In the ASC group discussions, a key recurring theme was the importance of working with groups on clarifying their so-called 'theory of change'. Groups can be very active in lobbying and advocacy work, awareness-raising, coalition building – but if they are not guided by clarity about what it is they are trying to influence and how they think change occurs, then such efforts can have little impact. In parallel, unless one is clear on the theories and concepts that are behind the choice for a particular assessment and learning process, then they can be inadequate for strengthening the social change work. Hence the importance of including readings on theories that underpin assessment processes and conceptual frameworks that can help structure such processes.

Box 1.3. A road map to the clusters

- To be clear about the existing schools of thought on assessment and learning that are participatory and seek to address power inequalities, go to 'Perspectives on assessment'.
- To understand how to embed concepts relevant to social change initiatives into an assessment and learning process, go to 'Analytical frameworks'.
- To be aware of some methodological dilemmas that are likely to be encountered en route, go to 'Practical considerations'.
- For details on how to work with certain methodological options that have particular value for assessing and learning about and for social change initiatives, go to 'Specific methods and approaches'.
- To understand how different organisations are making assessment for social change happen, go to 'Inspiration from concrete examples'.

For more practical insights, the review offers three clusters of reading. The readings in 'Practical considerations' address some of the uneasy methodological dilemmas that were touched on above. In 'Specific methods and approaches', readings relate to concrete examples of recent methods that have emerged in part to address some of the dilemmas. Finally, in 'Inspiration from concrete examples', the reader will find case studies from a wide range of geographical, social and organisational contexts that show how effective and just assessment and learning processes are possible.

Finally, a few practical words about the selection of readings and their location.

This is a very select choice from among a vast literature – many other possible frameworks, theories, and practical readings exist. A selection was made of core readings, with the main criteria being: the relative contribution of the reading to understanding social change; inclusion of an explanation of process, rather than just pure findings about social change; and the relevance of the reading to assessment and learning. Where multiple choices of readings were possible, preference was given to the more applied one with the most direct relevance for social change and assessment and learning.

The readings contain gaps and oddities, some of which merit some clarification. For example, much of the evaluation literature often speaks in terms of 'the evaluator', where that person plays a central coordinating role. In the context of social change, such a central person may not exist, with the learning process revolving instead around a shared responsibility for design and implementation. Hence, an adapted reading of that material ignoring the central focus on the evaluator may be needed.

2 Lewin, K. (1952) *Field Theory in Social Science: Selected Theoretical Papers*, London: Tavistock: 169

Also, much of the reading has a rather Northern NGO-centric perspective, which may feel uncomfortable or less relevant for those working rooted in social movements and less bureaucratic settings. Similarly, an adapted reading will be necessary. Several gaps exist. One significant gap is, for example, the solid body of material on capacity building for assessing and learning about social change processes. Much can be found on facilitation and organising in general, on how to design evaluations, on capacity building for development, but little exists on the convergence of these for the social change context. Another gap is the use of media other than the written word (video, theatre, arts, etc) in assessment processes. None of the readings provide precise and comprehensive solutions to the dilemmas outlined in section 1. In general, few definitive readings were found for the issues highlighted in section 4 'Practical considerations'. These gaps, plus others, highlight a need for more detailed documentation from the perspective of social change processes.

As you browse through the readings, you might be surprised how some of them are categorised. Many readings include several issues, conceptual, methodological and practical, and hence could fit in more than one section. However, they have been placed in the most logical 'home' for that reading to avoid duplication. Therefore, where particularly useful references exist in other sections, cross-referencing makes it clear where to find these. Within each sub-section, the readings have been organised with the most recent publication first.

Accessing the references can be difficult for those without internet access and without access to academic journals. As many references as possible include a free web-based option. Please note that these texts still require that you respect the rules of copyright of the original publications. Where possible, subscription-only academic journal articles were avoided. However, this was not always possible. If using these references, it is best to refer to the printed versions since differences may exist between the internet and the printed versions.

2 Perspectives on assessment

The references in this section focus on eight schools of thought about evaluation, assessment and learning that have particular relevance to social change processes (see Table 2.1). Several features aided in the selection of these readings, from among the many possible other schools of thought in this field. All the perspectives listed here work explicitly on addressing power inequities and tackling structural causes of injustice. They also all seek to ensure that assessment and learning processes have local value, in order to strengthen the work that is being examined. Central to these perspectives is a commitment to engaging participants in the process, locating them within the broad domain of participatory development. These features mean that the readings tend to be part conceptual underpinning and part practical explanation, some of them in the form of guides or checklists.

Table 2.1. Readings for ‘Perspectives on assessment’

Action research and appreciative inquiry	<p>1 Reason, P. and McArdle, K.L. (2006) ‘Action Research and Organisation Development’, in T. Cummings (ed.), <i>Handbook of Organisation Development</i>, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications</p> <p>2 Rogers, P.J. and Fraser, D. (2003) ‘Appreciating Appreciative Inquiry’, <i>New Directions For Evaluation</i> 100</p>
Organisational learning	<p>3 Woodhill, J. (2007) ‘M&E as Learning: Rethinking the Dominant Paradigm’, in J. de Graaf et al. (eds), <i>Monitoring and Evaluation of Soil Conservation and Watershed Development Project</i>, Enfield, NH.: Science Publishers</p> <p>4 Dlamini, N. (2006) ‘Transparency of Process. Monitoring and Evaluation in Learning Organisations’, <i>CDRA Annual Report 2005–2006</i>, Cape Town: Community Development Resource Association</p> <p>5 Rogers, P. and Williams, B. (2006), ‘Evaluation for Practice Improvement and Organisational Learning’, in I.F. Shaw, J.C. Greene and M.M. Mark (eds), <i>The Sage Handbook of Evaluation</i>, London: Sage Publications</p> <p>6 Pasteur, K. (2006) ‘Learning for Development’, in: R. Eyben (ed.), <i>Relationships for Aid</i>, London: Earthscan</p> <p>7 Britton, B. (1998) <i>The Learning NGO</i>, Occasional Papers Series Number 17, Oxford: INTRAC</p>
Popular education	<p>8 Freire, P. (1972) <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i>, Harmondsworth: Penguin</p> <p>9 Foley, G. (1999) <i>Learning in Social Action: A Contribution to Understanding Informal Education</i>, London: Zed Books</p>
Feminist evaluation	<p>10 Seigart, D. and Brisolaro, S. (eds) (2003) ‘Feminist Evaluation: Explorations and Experience’, <i>New Directions for Evaluation</i> 96</p>

<p>Participatory and empowerment evaluation</p>	<p>11 Mayoux, L. (2005) <i>Between Tyranny and Utopia: Participatory Evaluation for Pro-Poor Development</i>, Performance Assessment Research Centre Discussion Paper, Edinburgh: PARC</p> <p>12 Fetterman, D.M. (2005) 'Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice. Assessing Levels of Commitment', in D.M. Fetterman and A. Wandersman (eds), <i>Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice</i>, New York: Guildford Publications</p> <p>13 Cousins, J.B. and Whitmore, E. (1998) 'Framing Participatory Evaluation', in <i>New Directions for Evaluations</i> 80: 5–23</p> <p>14 Guijt, I. and Gaventa, J. (1998) <i>Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Learning from Change</i>, IDS Policy Briefing 12, Brighton: IDS</p>
<p>Democratic evaluation and dialogue</p>	<p>15 Pruitt, B. and Thomas, P. (2007) <i>Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners</i>, Washington, DC/Stockholm, Sweden/New York NY: General Secretariat of the Organisation of American States, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and United Nations Development Programme</p> <p>16 Figueroa, M.E.; Kincaid, D.L.; Rani, M. and Lewis, G. (2002) <i>Communication for Social Change: An Integrated Model for Measuring the Process and Its Outcomes</i>, The Communication for Social Change Working Paper 1, New York: Rockefeller Foundation and Johns Hopkins University</p> <p>17 House, E.R. and Howe, K.R. (2000) <i>Deliberative Democratic Evaluation Checklist</i>, www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/dd_checklist.htm</p>
<p>Utilisation-focused evaluation and realistic evaluation</p>	<p>18 Patton, M.Q. (1997) <i>Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text</i>, 3rd edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications</p>

	19 Tilley, N. (2000) 'Realistic Evaluation: An Overview', presentation at the founding conference of the Danish Evaluation Society, September 2000
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Action research and appreciative inquiry (section 2.1) are part of a family of reflective methodologies that pursue action (or change) and research (or understanding), simultaneously aiming 'to change practices, social structures, and social media which maintain irrationality, injustice, and unsatisfying forms of existence'.³ Others call it an orientation to inquiry rather than a methodology. It involves a cyclic process that alternates between action and critical reflection. It is participatory, value-oriented and democratic in its intentions. Action research strives for two types of outputs: a changed understanding within participants of their own 'agency' (capacity to act) and a changed understanding of structural causes (better understanding of the overall picture). Appreciative inquiry is one form of action research.

Organisational learning (section 2.2) is both a set of perspectives as well as procedures that enable learning to be embedded in a programme or organisational setting. Much action research has occurred within organisations to build this body of thinking, which is often pragmatic and seeks to reconcile the need for individual learning within the dynamics of organisational contexts. This literature has dwelt less on the types of alliances and partnerships that often emerge or are constructed in the context of wider social change trajectories, but much of its thinking can be adapted to deal with issues that emerge in such interactions.

Popular education (section 2.3) may be defined as both a broad school of thought and an educational approach designed to expand the consciousness of its participants, which leads to greater awareness of how an individual's personal experiences are connected to larger societal problems. The educational process in which conscientisation and critical reflection are central fosters empowerment in participants, so they are better able to act to effect change on the problems that affect them.

Feminist evaluation (section 2.4) has its roots in feminist research. It represents an important strand of practice in assessing social change due to its explicit emancipatory intention and its focus on the gender inequities that lead to social injustice. It considers evaluation as a political activity. It recognises that knowledge is a powerful resource that should be of and for the people who create it and that there are multiple ways of knowing, some of which are privileged over others.

Participatory and empowerment evaluation (section 2.5) are included here because they focus on people in assessing the merits of their own or externally driven

3 McTaggart (2002) personal communication, cited in J. Marshall and P. Reason (2007), 'Quality in Research as "Taking an Attitude of Inquiry"', *Management Research News* 30.5: 368–80. See also www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arhome.html

initiatives. Participatory evaluation is a broad banner under which a wide range of processes can be slotted, ranging from self-assessments to more consultative processes that seek beneficiary opinions. Empowerment evaluation seeks to foster improvement and self-determination. Although it can be applied to individuals, organisations, communities, and societies or cultures, the focus is usually on programmes. Empowerment evaluation is value-driven. Programme participants conduct their own evaluations, while an outside evaluation specialist often serves as a coach or additional facilitator.

Democratic evaluation and dialogue (section 2.6) aims at equity and inclusion in programme evaluation and to promote public accountability and transparency. House and Howe (2002, see annotation 15) describe it in terms of three key components: inclusion of under-represented and powerless groups in the evaluation, dialogue and deliberation. Democratic dialogue is a growing school of thought and practice that seeks to resolve societal problems by creating opportunities that enable the development of mutual understanding and concessions, rather than forcing imposing one-sided views and interests. It can be used to achieve consensus or prevent conflict, thus complementing democratic institutions, such as legislatures, political parties and government bodies.

Utilisation-focused evaluation (section 2.7) is a highly influential school of thought whose central tenet is the need for any assessment process to be useful *in situ*. It is important for the theme of this literature review because its concerned with ensuring that from an assessment process learning ensues among those living with the programme or process being evaluated. Realistic evaluation is a growing school of thought similarly based on the idea of usefulness for practice. It is unique in developing a series of theories of possible change explanations related to what is being evaluated as the basis for then selecting what needs to be measured.

2.1 Action research and appreciative inquiry

- 1 Reason, P. and McArdle, K.L. (2006) 'Action Research and Organisation Development', in T. Cummings (ed.), *Handbook of Organisation Development*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, people.bath.ac.uk/mnspwr/Papers/ActionResearch&OrganizationDevelopment.pdf

From among the extensive literature on action research, this paper is included here both for its succinct and clear summary of action research, as well as its discussion of this perspective within the context of organisational change. The authors consider such a change process as profoundly emancipatory, if based on continual inquiry, development and curiosity in ourselves and in those we work with, rather than a set of techniques. Their perspective is focused on the intention to change things 'for the better', through engagement of all those concerned, including deciding what needs to be changed and what 'better' might mean. The paper starts with a summary of the history of organisational development and action research, and of their relationship. The authors then describe short examples of action research practice and suggest how these could be seen as organisational development interventions. They explain how action research and organisational development both involve interplay between 'me' (my own experience and

behaviour), 'us' (our immediate peers) and 'them' (the wider organisation) and encourage attention to be paid simultaneously to all three perspectives.

2 Rogers P.J. and Fraser, D. (2003). 'Appreciating Appreciative Inquiry', *New Directions For Evaluation* 100

The authors aim to develop a rounded understanding of the strengths and limitations of appreciative inquiry from different perspectives and to increase the value of it for evaluators. Appreciative inquiry offers promise as an addition to the evaluator's repertoire, but it is not always appropriate and requires special skills and abilities. Nor is it only about finding nice things to say or looking at the 'good stuff'. Even for those who are not interested in adopting appreciative inquiry, there is much to be learned from it about effectively incorporating techniques and approaches from other disciplines and professions into evaluation approaches. Over-enthusiastic promotion of any new approach to evaluation risks oversimplifying the processes involved and the demands it makes on those who use it.

2.2 Organisational learning

3 Woodhill, J. (2007) 'M&E as Learning: Rethinking the Dominant Paradigm', in J. de Graaf et al. (eds), *Monitoring and Evaluation of Soil Conservation and Watershed Development Project*, Enfield, NH: Science Publishers

This book chapter argues that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) can only usefully contribute if it is based on a much greater focus on learning than is currently the case. A learning paradigm challenges the quantitative indicator-based and externally driven approaches that have characterised M&E in the development field. The chapter proposes five key functions for M&E: accountability; supporting strategic and operational management; knowledge creation; and empowerment. From this perspective, current M&E trends and debates are examined, leading to the identification of the key building blocks for a learning-oriented M&E paradigm. The chapter concludes by outlining the elements of a learning system that embodies such a paradigm. The argument is not to throw away indicators (be they quantitative and qualitative) or to compromise the collection and analysis of good data, since solid learning requires solid information. Rather, this chapter asks those working on development initiatives to place the indicator and information management aspects of M&E in a broader context of team and organisational learning. The challenge is to use effective reflective processes that can capture and utilise the wealth of actors' tacit knowledge, which is all too often ignored.

4 Dlamini, N. (2006) 'Transparency of Process. Monitoring and Evaluation in Learning Organisations', *CDRA Annual Report 2005–2006*, Cape Town: Community Development Resource Association, www.cdra.org.za/AnnualRep/CDRA%20Annual%20Report%202006.pdf

This article presents an overview of what is needed if M&E is shaped by the desire to learn rather than the obligation to report. The author starts with concerns about the results obsession that shapes M&E practice in the development sector. This

leads her to discuss the instrumentalist, managerialist approach, which is mechanistic and focuses on expert-driven processes concerned with outputs, activities and indicators. The focus on efficient use of resources squeezes time and opportunity for the reflection that makes responsiveness possible. The article identifies key features of organisations where M&E has transformational learning potential. The organisation must have a questioning orientation, must aim to transform power relations, and must demonstrate the principles of participation and accountability. Implementing organisational activities such as M&E with a learning perspective gives them a different character. For the organisation it means: seeing M&E as an inside-out process; having the courage to question purpose and identity; improving practice through ongoing learning; looking for M&E in the culture and orientation of both individuals and the organisation as a whole. Key challenges are discussed, notably facilitating the human connections that are needed, as learning lives in relationships between those in an organisation.

5 Rogers, P. and Williams, B. (2006), 'Evaluation for Practice Improvement and Organisational Learning', in I.F. Shaw, J.C. Greene and M.M. Mark (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Evaluation*, London: Sage Publications

This chapter addresses the question of how practice improves and how evaluation can contribute to this improvement. The authors recognise that no matter what theory of change the evaluation process is based on, stakeholders' use of the information is, in the end, what counts. They discuss three clusters of key concepts: learning, organisational learning and organisational dynamics. Particularly insightful is their exploration of organisational dynamics, where they identify six processes that impact on practice and examine whether or not it is improved in an organisational setting. This is useful for someone dealing with an evaluation to understand the political, social and organisational dynamics of the work being assessed and how to make an evaluation as influential as possible. In relation to this conceptual exploration, they then identify a series of approaches that can be used to shape the evaluation process – action research, appreciative inquiry, empowerment evaluation, evaluative inquiry, and systemic evaluation. They close with observations about three common challenges: balancing timeliness and relevance of information; enabling the questioning of assumptions; and responding to defensive and emotional responses.

6 Pasteur, K. (2006) 'Learning for Development', in R. Eyben (ed.), *Relationships for Aid*, London: Earthscan. A shorter, earlier version is available from: www.livelihoods.org/lessons/Learning/LitReview.pdf

The author provides an overview of the organisational learning literature with a focus on the development context, in particular how to view learning as reflection and reflexivity. She discusses in general terms how this can lead to the reframing of knowledge and understanding, as well as improved actions and outcomes. The article includes a summary of different existing models and concepts on (organisational) learning and knowledge management. The author highlights aspects that are recurrent themes in many readings in this review, such as systems thinking, exploring assumptions, and (self) reflection through inquiry and dialogue. The chapter discusses the implications of such aspects of learning for organisations in terms of underlying theories and concepts, organisational (infra) structure, and the attitudes, sensibilities and skills needed for collaboration.

7 Britton, B. (1998) *The Learning NGO*, Occasional Papers Series 17, Oxford: INTRAC, www.intrac.org/docs/OPS17.pdf

This paper examines the relevance of the 'learning organisation' concept for NGOs. It offers a conceptual framework focusing on organisations that are value-driven, non-profit making and development-oriented. The author presents eight key functions of a learning organisation, from creating a supportive culture to applying the learning. The article is practical, seeking to encourage NGOs to examine themselves in the light of a list of characteristics of learning organisations. To this end, it includes a diagnostic tool for NGOs to use in assessing their current capacity for organisational learning.

2.3 Popular education

8 Freire, P. (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Harmondsworth: Penguin

For a short introduction and other references, see: www.infed.org/thinkers/et-freir.htm

This book is the most widely quoted source of inspiration for popular education, although Freire's work evolved in subsequent decades. The book is based on the idea that education is deeply political and can lead to liberatory practice of people on the fringes of their societies. It places critical dialogue at the centre of its vision of pedagogy and views people as subjects, rather than objects, of their own educational process. This perspective changes the nature of education from transferring knowledge to facilitating people's conscious and critical experience of their world, which builds the capacity to question and challenge structures of oppression. The book omits issues of gender, race, ethnicity and others, but remains a classic and highly influential text. It is relevant when seeking to assess social change as it discusses how learning processes can be viewed and structured as political processes that are rooted in people's experiences.

9 Foley, G. (1999) *Learning in Social Action: A Contribution to Understanding Informal Education*, London: Zed Books

This book discusses learning that occurs in diverse social movements. The learning that occurs as part of the process of social struggles and political activity are central in the cases from the United States of America, Brazil, Zimbabwe and Australia. The author focuses on how these processes can help people to un-learn dominant, oppressive ideologies and discourses and learn instead oppositional, liberatory ones, even if such processes of emancipatory learning are inevitably complex and contradictory. Foley relates these processes of informal learning in contested contexts to current thinking in adult education and identifies an agenda in adult education theory and practice that is based on a radical critique of capitalism. The book's strength lies in its grounded reflections on adult education in general, rather than in novel conceptual ideas. This reading further illustrates the ideas found in the previous reading, highlighting the nature of learning as political and challenging of dominant structures.

2.4 Feminist evaluation

10 Seigart, D. and Brisolara, S. (eds) (2003) 'Feminist Evaluation: Explorations and Experience', *New Directions for Evaluation* 96

Feminist evaluation emphasises the ways that pervasive gender inequality can distort programme design, implementation and outcome. The contributors to this volume provide theoretical underpinnings for a feminist approach to evaluation and show how to apply this theory in the real world. Although feminist evaluation is sometimes criticised as being too overtly political, its advocates argue that all evaluations (and the work being evaluated) are situated in a political environment, which – together with the gender, race, class, ability and sexual orientation of both evaluators and those they work with – have a profound impact on the process of evaluation. Feminist evaluators acknowledge these influences at the outset and make their stance towards them explicit. As evaluators they are committed to accurate measurement of programme effectiveness, but also to a larger goal of social justice for the oppressed, particularly, but not exclusively, women. The first three chapters present background on feminist theory and philosophy and discuss how it can enhance and transform evaluation theory and practice. The following four chapters focus on practice, presenting case studies of feminist evaluation: an adolescent violence protection programme; a women's substance abuse programme; a sexual health programme for gay and bisexual men; and international development. The concluding chapters address the question of the legitimacy of a feminist approach to evaluation and point the way to future developments.

2.5 Participatory and empowerment evaluation

11 Mayoux, L. (2005) *Between Tyranny and Utopia: Participatory Evaluation for Pro-Poor Development*, Performance Assessment Research Centre Discussion Paper, Edinburgh: PARC, www.lindaswebs.org.uk/Page3_Orglearning/Resmeth/ParticipatoryEvaluation_final.doc

In the light of recent and current innovations in participatory methods, this paper discusses the competing claims, and theoretical and practical challenges and proposes ways forward. It starts with an overview of participatory methods and recent critiques. It discusses the potential contribution to increasing the relevance and reliability of evaluations and to pro-poor development, but also the costs involved. The author then discusses the basis on which participatory evaluation can contribute to pro-poor development – by ensuring inclusion and informed participation of vulnerable stakeholders in those stages of evaluation where participation can be most directly empowering (i.e. by increasing their knowledge and influence in decision-making). This may mean inclusion at the design, analysis and dissemination stages, rather than just at the information collection stage. The paper closes by warning against equating one-off participatory evaluations with empowerment processes.

- 12 Fetterman, D.M. (2005) 'Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice. Assessing Levels of Commitment', in D.M. Fetterman and A. Wandersman (eds), *Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice*, New York: Guildford Publications, www.guilford.com/excerpts/fetterman.pdf**

This book chapter discusses how specific principles guide empowerment evaluation practice. The principles include: improvement; community ownership and knowledge; inclusion; democratic participation; social justice; evidence-based strategies; capacity building; organisational learning; and accountability. In applying these principles to real-world settings, practice becomes messy, requiring nuance, compromise and built-in tensions. The chapter includes some examples of different stakeholder roles in the evaluation process and the criteria for assessing high, medium and low levels of each principle in practice.

- 13 Cousins, J.B. and Whitmore, E. (1998) 'Framing Participatory Evaluation', *New Directions for Evaluations* 80: 5–23**

This paper distinguishes between transformative participatory evaluation that aims to empower and emancipate less powerful community participants, and practical participatory evaluation whose primary purpose is organisational decision-making and problem solving. The two streams are compared and differentiated on the basis of who participates in the evaluation process, the depth of their participation, as well as who controls the process. This provides a useful conceptual overview to help organisations interested in participatory evaluation to consider their assessment goals in terms of empowerment and determine what kind of process best fits with those objectives.

- 14 Guijt, I. and Gaventa, J. (1998) *Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Learning from Change*, IDS Policy Briefing 12, Brighton: IDS, www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/briefs/PB12.pdf**

This briefing paper summarises the difference between participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) and conventional M&E approaches. It focuses on the 'who' question: who should make judgements about the effectiveness of development and on what basis? Usually it is outside experts who take charge. PM&E is described as a different approach that involves local people, development agencies and policymakers deciding together how progress should be measured, and the results acted upon. It can reveal valuable lessons and improve accountability, but needs to be sustained and has far-reaching implications for development organisations. The paper stresses that it is a challenging process for all concerned since it encourages people to examine their assumptions about what constitutes progress and to face up to the contradictions and conflicts that can emerge.

2.6 Democratic evaluation and dialogue

- 15 Pruitt, B. and Thomas, P. (2007) *Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners*. Washington, DC/Stockholm, Sweden/New York NY: General Secretariat of the Organisation of American States, International Institute**

for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and United Nations Development Programme, www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/page.pl?s=2;p=tools_handbook_dd

This handbook is focused on the broader process of generating dialogues that strengthen democratic practice. It contains a section on the M&E of democratic dialogues and includes three case studies that outline the outcomes and impacts of such dialogues. Other parts of the handbook are also relevant, as the authors embed assessment within the preparation phase, during which outcome objectives (personal and socio-political) and process objectives are mapped out, including an analysis of these objectives in context. The authors stress the need to map out the theory, or theories of change that underpin a democratic dialogue. This approach, which is central in other readings in this review, is based on the importance of knowing what implicit or explicit understanding of social change underpins the process that one is assessing and wanting to learn from.

16 Figueroa, M.E.; Kincaid, D.L.; Rani, M. and Lewis, G. (2002) *Communication for Social Change: An Integrated Model for Measuring the Process and Its Outcomes*, The Communication for Social Change Working Paper 1, New York: Rockefeller Foundation and John Hopkins University, www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/socialchange.pdf

The model of Communication for Social Change (CFSC) describes an iterative process where community dialogue and collective action interact to produce social change in a way that improves the health and welfare of all community members. It is an integrated model that draws from a broad literature on development communication developed since the early 1960s. In particular, the work of Latin American theorists and communication activists were used for their clarity and rich recommendations for a more people-inclusive, integrated approach of using communication for development. For social change, a model of communication is required that is cyclical, relational and leads to an outcome of mutual change rather than one-sided, individual change. The model describes 'community dialogue and action' as a sequential process or series of steps that can take place, some of them simultaneously, within the community and which lead to the solution of a common problem. This reading also contains fairly detailed ideas for integrating participatory evaluation into the change process. This includes thoughts on indicators to measure the process of community dialogue and collective action (relating to: leadership; degree and equity of participation; information equity; collective self-efficacy; sense of ownership; social cohesion; and social norms) and the importance of clarifying who should conduct the assessment process and for what purpose.

17 House, E.R. and Howe, K.R. (2000) *Deliberative Democratic Evaluation Checklist*, www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/dd_checklist.htm.

Also see 'The Evaluation Exchange' for a special issue on Democratic Evaluation, www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/content/eval/issue31/fall2005.pdf

The purpose of this checklist is to guide evaluations from a deliberative democratic perspective. Such evaluation incorporates democratic processes within the evaluation to secure better conclusions. The aspiration is to construct valid conclusions

where there are conflicting views. The approach extends impartiality by including relevant interests, values and views so that conclusions can be unbiased, both factually and in terms of values. Relevant value positions are included, but are subject to criticism, in the same way that other findings are. Not all value claims are equally defensible. The evaluator is still responsible for unbiased data collection, analysis and arriving at sound conclusions. The guiding principles are inclusion, dialogue and deliberation, alongside research validity.

2.7 Utilisation-focused evaluation and realistic evaluation

18 Patton, M.Q. (1997) *Utilization-Focused Evaluation: the New Century Text*, 3rd edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

This is a classic text, arguing that in order for evaluations to be useful, the first thing to do is foster intended use by intended users. Illustrated by numerous examples from practice, this book presents conceptual, methodological and practical aspects of utilisation-focused evaluation. Each chapter contains a review of the relevant literature and examples from practice to illustrate key points. The book offers a definite point of view developed from observing much of what has passed for programme evaluation, but has not in fact been very useful. Some issues discussed of particular relevance include: ethical issues in utilisation-focused evaluation; specific techniques for managing the power dynamics of working with primary intended users, as well as evaluation stakeholders; how to generate commitment to use of the evaluation findings; and using participatory evaluation processes to change a programme's culture and build a learning organisation. For a checklist on utilisation evaluation see www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/ufe.pdf.

19 Tilley, N. (2000) 'Realistic Evaluation: An Overview', presentation at the founding conference of the Danish Evaluation Society, September 2000, www.danskevalueringsselskab.dk/pdf/Nick%20Tilley.pdf (12 July, 2007)

This online text is a presentation by one of the originators of realistic evaluation (the other being Ray Pawson) and provides a good overview with examples of its potential and its relevance. This evaluation perspective seeks to inform the development of policy and practice, and advocates lesson learning on a small-scale prior to extended implementation. Hence it incorporates a type of action research perspective. This article examines why a focus on experimentation is, however, problematic as a way to check if something is working or not. While the question asked in traditional experimentation is, 'does this work?' or 'what works?', this tradition asks, 'what works for whom in what circumstances?'. With this focus, it seeks to make it easier for evaluations to identify how and under what conditions a given measure will produce its impacts. With an understanding of how measures will produce varying impacts in different circumstances, the policymaker and practitioner are then better able to decide what policies to implement, in what conditions. Realistic

20 Polite and prudent maintenance of records for authority is so widespread that it can be regarded as an embedded feature of the modern human condition.

evaluation focuses considerably, therefore, on developing different theories that could explain how impact might occur and uses this as the basis for deciding what to measure.

3 Analytical frameworks

After choosing a core perspective or combining several, assessment and learning can be ‘filled’ in a range of ways. Notwithstanding the principles underlying all the perspectives above, to a greater or lesser extent they can all be gender-focused, explicit about power relations, centred on the dynamics of conflict and so forth. Such choices must be made explicitly. Therefore, an important complement to developing methodological clarity is infusing perspectives with relevant concepts, in order to construct an appropriate framework to guide the assessment and learning process.

The readings in this section (see Table 3.1) are not evaluation, learning or assessment perspectives as such, but they relate to key concepts that are important in assessing processes of social change. These concepts can also be considered lenses that help focus on a specific aspect of the change process, be it rights-based intentions, gender equality aims or innovation aspirations. Each concept can be used within the context of one or more of the perspectives discussed in section 2. These readings are a variety of discussions on concepts, but have been selected as far as possible for their links to assessment and learning.

Table 3.1 Readings for ‘Analytical frameworks’

Thinking about rights-based approaches	<p>20 Chapman, J.; Pereira Junior, A.; Prasad Uprety, L.; Okwaare, S.; Azumah, V. and Miller, V. (2005) ‘Rights-based Development Approaches: Combining Politics, Creativity and Organisation’, in <i>Critical Webs of Power and Change – Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy</i>, London: ActionAid International</p> <p>21 Nyamu-Musembi, C. and Cornwall, A. (2004) <i>What is the ‘Rights-based Approach’ all About? Perspectives from International Development Agencies</i>, IDS Working Paper 234, Brighton: IDS</p> <p>22 Theis, J. (2003) <i>Rights-based Monitoring and Evaluation. A Discussion Paper</i>, London: Save the Children</p>
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Power analysis	<p>23 Miller, V.; VeneKlasen, L.; Reilly, M. and Clark, C. (2007) <i>Making Change Happen: Power. Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace</i>, Making Change Happen 3, Washington, DC: Just Associates</p> <p>24 Gaventa, J. (2005) <i>Reflections on the Uses of the 'Power Cube' Approach for Analyzing the Spaces, Places and Dynamics of Civil Society Participation and Engagement</i>, CFP evaluation series 2003–2006 no. 4, The Hague: MBN Secretariat</p>
The lens of gender empowerment	<p>25 Bell, E.; Esplen, E. and Moser, A. (2007) <i>Gender and Indicators</i>, BRIDGE Cutting Edge Pack 11, Brighton: IDS</p> <p>26 Mosedale, S. (2005) 'Assessing Women's Empowerment: Towards a Conceptual Framework', <i>Journal of International Development</i> 17: 243–57</p> <p>27 Puntteney, D.L. (2002) <i>Measuring Social Change Investments</i>, San Francisco: Women's Funding Network</p> <p>28 Kabeer, N. (2000) 'Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment', in S. Razavi (ed.), <i>Gendered Poverty and Well-Being</i>, Oxford: Blackwell</p>
Accountability definitions and issues	<p>29 Newell, P. and Wheeler, J. (2006) <i>Making Accountability Count</i>, IDS Policy Briefing 33, Brighton: IDS</p> <p>30 Keystone (2006) <i>Survey Results: Downward Accountability to 'Beneficiaries': NGO and Donor Perspectives</i>, London: Keystone</p> <p>31 Jagadananda and Brown, L.D. (2005) <i>Civil Society Legitimacy and Accountability: Issues and Challenges</i>, Draft Paper, New York: Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organisations, Harvard University</p>

<p>Peace and conflict resolution concerns</p>	<p>32 Austin, A.; Fischer, M. and Wils, O. (eds) (2003) 'Dialogue 1: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment: Critical Views from Theory and Practice' and Bloomfield, D., Fischer, M. and Schmelzle, B. (eds) (2005) 'Dialogue 4: New Trends in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)', in <i>Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation</i>, Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management</p> <p>33 Church, C. and Shouldice, J. (2002) <i>The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions: Framing the State of Play</i>, INCORE Working Paper, Northern Ireland: International Conflict Research (INCORE)</p> <p>Church, C. and Shouldice, J. (2003) <i>The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions: Part II: Emerging Practice and Theory</i>, INCORE Working Paper, Northern Ireland: International Conflict Research (INCORE)</p>
<p>Change as complexity and systems thinking</p>	<p>34 Midgely, G. (2007) 'Systems Thinking for Evaluation', in B. Williams and I. Imam (eds), <i>Systems Concepts in Evaluation. An Expert Anthology</i>, Point Reyes, California: Edge Press/American Evaluation Association</p> <p>35 Eoyang, G.H. and Berkas, T.H. (1998) 'Evaluation in a Complex Adaptive System', unpublished paper</p>
<p>A focus on innovation</p>	<p>36 Perrin, B. (2002) 'How to – and How Not to – Evaluate Innovation', <i>Evaluation: The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice</i> 1.8: 13–28</p>
<p>Capacity-building definitions and implications</p>	<p>37 Lusthaus, C.; Adrien, M.H. and Perstinger, M. (1999) <i>Capacity Development: Definitions, Issues and Implications for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation</i>, Universalialia Occasional Paper 35, Universalialia, Montreal, Quebec, Canada</p>

	<p>38 Watson, D. (2005) <i>Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity and Capacity Development</i>, ECDPM Discussion Paper 58B, Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management</p>
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Rights-based approaches (section 3.1) are central to much of the discourse in development that seeks to redress injustices, although there is considerable diversity of opinions about the practical value and extent to which the underlying 'rights-based' perspective is emancipatory. The readings include: one document that highlights an organisation's critical view on this, stemming from its interest in people-centred advocacy; one conceptual critique; and a practical discussion with a focus on M&E.

Power analysis (section 3.2) is central to strategising for social justice and pro-poor change – and is central in assessing if it has occurred. One reading offers a broad look at different terms and understandings of power, while the other explains a specific framework, 'the power cube', in particular its use in evaluation and social change work.

Gender empowerment (section 3.3) offers a powerful lens through which to understand better inequality and its redress. The four readings are distinct, but offer complementary frameworks on how to think about empowerment, particularly when assessing what has changed.

Accountability definitions and issues (section 3.4) are increasingly central to development, with a surge in deliberate efforts to hold to account governments to its citizens, organisational leadership to its members and corporations to society at large. Two readings offer conceptual perspectives, while a third reading reports on a large survey about downward accountability, an aspect of growing importance within social change initiatives.

Peace and conflict resolution contexts (section 3.5) offer specific challenges for assessment and learning processes, such as extreme dynamics, non-linearity of change and added urgency. The two readings offer up-to-date discussions on thinking within the field of peace building, including what is needed to deviate from standard approaches to evaluation and learning.

Emerging very recently as a key concern is the understanding that change is complex, (section 3.6) for which systems thinking can provide important insights, as it recognises the non-linear, intertwined nature of change and organisations. The first reading is a broad look at key issues in systems thinking and their relevance for evaluation. The second reading focuses on organisations as complex adaptive systems and outlines the features that require an evaluation alternative.

An interest in innovation is inevitable in social change (section 3.7). Many such change processes require innovations of some kind, including new types of relationships, unknown partners, precedent-setting practical work and experimentation. This topic merits more thinking, for which the reading provided is an important starting point.

Capacity building as a domain of intervention is central to much social change work (section 3.8). Its complexity and diversity offers unique challenges for assessment processes. The two readings discuss important definitional and practical considerations and provide insights as to where the field of assessing and learning from – and for – capacity building needs to evolve.

3.1 Thinking about rights-based approaches

- 20 Chapman, J.; Pereira Junior, A.; Prasad Uprety, L.; Okwaare, S.; Azumah, V. and Miller, V. (2005) 'Rights-based Development Approaches: Combining Politics, Creativity and Organisation', *Critical Webs of Power and Change – Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy*, London: ActionAid International, www.actionaid.org/assets/pdf/rights.pdf

This paper is part of a resource pack based on a three year, multi-location action research process undertaken by ActionAid International with several of its partners. This particular paper looks at how, in diverse contexts, rights-based approaches have taken on specific and useful meanings and under what conditions they have lived up to the promise they symbolise. The authors stress the importance of certain core values as central to rights-based thinking, notably justice, equity, equality, dignity, respect, solidarity and inclusion. They discuss the practical implications of this concept, linking it to other much-used terms such as participation and empowerment, and articulate the role of development NGOs. It is a grounded reflection about an abstract and contested term, but which nevertheless has potential to structure an assessment process around an analysis of rights. Understanding the pros and cons of the term is important if efforts to assess social change processes are to capture the insights into shifting power relations that the term potentially offers.

- 21 Nyamu-Musembi, C. and Cornwall, A. (2004) *What is the 'Rights-based Approach' all About? Perspectives from International Development Agencies*, IDS Working Paper 234, Brighton: IDS, www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/wp/wp234.pdf

This paper critically examines the term 'rights-based approach' as used by an increasing group of development actors and agencies. The authors point out that the usage is diverse and often unclear. For some, its grounding in human rights legislation makes such an approach distinctive, lending it the promise of re-politicising areas of development work that have become domesticated, as they have been mainstreamed by institutions like the World Bank. Others complain it is simply old wine in new bottles. This paper helps in cutting through some of the 'fuzzy' discourse and tangled threads of contemporary rights talk. It looks at questions such as: where is today's rights-based discourse coming from? Why rights and why now? What are the differences between versions and emphases articulated by different international development actors? What are their shortcomings, and what do these imply for the practice and politics of development? The authors also look at some of the implications of the different

ways of relating human rights to development. They conclude that a rights-based approach is only useful if it has the potential to achieve a positive transformation of power relations among the various development actors. So, those who use the term must be prepared to interrogate themselves about the extent to which it enables those whose lives are affected the most, to articulate their priorities and claim genuine accountability from development agencies. They conclude by arguing that development agencies must become more critically self-aware and address inherent power inequalities in their interaction with these people. This reading provides further clarity (also see readings 20 and 22) about how the rights concept can lose its political intention. It thus helps those involved in assessing and learning about social change, to understand how to make the most of the concept's potential to understand changes in power structures.

22 Theis, J. (2003) *Rights-based Monitoring and Evaluation. A Discussion Paper*, London: Save the Children, www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/hrbap/RBA_monitoring_evaluation.pdf

Concentrating on aspects of M&E that are more specific to a rights-based approach to development, this paper offers a framework that goes beyond measuring the changes in people's lives and includes changes in accountability, equity and participation. It focuses mainly on children's rights, although the issues raised are relevant to the rights of any excluded or marginalised group. It suggests the use of existing methods to measure change and proposes potentially relevant methods and frameworks for the areas of: gender; disability; participation and empowerment; advocacy; policy and legal change; behaviour change; and governance. The paper also discusses what is needed internally within organisations to encourage this focus on M&E. This includes incentives for staff and partners to use certain dimensions of change and critically reviewing and improving their own work, as well as aligning internal policies and procedures to reflect human rights principles, to reinforce a rights-based programme approach. The annexes provide insightful examples of rights-based M&E.

3.2 Power analysis

23 Miller, V.; VeneKlasen, L.; Reilly, M. and Clark, C. (2007) *Making Change Happen: Power. Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace*, Making Change Happen 3, Washington, DC: Just Associates, www.justassociates.org/index_files/MCH3red.pdf

This paper is the first of a two-part publication that examines the complexities of power and opportunities for constructing and transforming power. The paper emerged out of ongoing and diverse discussions with social movements, deliberating on issues such as why, despite some advocacy advances, overall gains seem inadequate. It discusses a range of concepts and ways of understanding power in the context of how to strengthen analysis, action and movement building. There is ample practical illustration to root the concepts in recognisable mechanisms and structures of society. The paper stresses the need for an understanding of power to guide actions, if it is to offset the destructive impacts of globalisation processes

that threaten inclusive social, economic and environmental wellbeing. If shifts in power relations are to form the analytical backbone of an assessment and learning process, then it is vital to understand the diversity of ways in which the term power can be viewed. This reading provides that clarity.

- 24 Gaventa, J. (2005) *Reflections on the Uses of the 'Power Cube' Approach for Analyzing the Spaces, Places and Dynamics of Civil Society Participation and Engagement*, CFP evaluation series 2003–2006 no. 4, The Hague: MBN Secretariat, www.partos.nl/uploaded_files/13-CSP-Gaventa-paper.pdf**

This paper discusses the so-called 'power cube' framework and how it has been used in the context of evaluating citizen participation and to re-strategise related initiatives. This three dimensional framework looks at the spaces for and places of participation and the dynamics of power relationships in an interconnected way. It emerged from a need for more subtle analysis of the broad term citizen participation, which is used to describe a wide range of work that seeks to increase citizen engagement with policy processes. This framework is particularly relevant to those keen to look at how power affects the transformative potential of specific strategies and actions and is illustrated with diverse and detailed examples to inspire a range of possible uses.

3.3 The lens of gender empowerment

- 25 Bell, E.; Esplen, E. and Moser, A. (2007) *Gender and Indicators*, BRIDGE Cutting Edge Pack 11, Brighton: IDS, www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports_gend_CEP.html#Indicators**

This resource pack provides a comprehensive overview of gender and measurements of change, focusing on indicators, highlighting good practice from the grassroots to the international level and making key recommendations. What does a world without gender inequality look like? Realising this vision requires inspiring and mobilising social change. But what would indicate we are on the right track and how do we know when we get there? The Pack explores issues such as: deciding what and how to measure, including selecting appropriate methods and methodologies; measuring the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming; measuring change, especially in 'hard to measure' areas such as poverty, empowerment, gender-based violence and conflict; monitoring and strengthening international measurement instruments and indicators; and developing and using regional gender-sensitive approaches, indicators and statistics. It consists of three papers: 'Gender and Indicators: Supporting Resources Collection'; 'Gender and Indicators: Overview Report'; and a summary of these papers, with two short case studies.

- 26 Mosedale, S. (2005) 'Assessing Women's Empowerment: Towards a Conceptual Framework', *Journal of International Development* 17: 243–57**

This article discusses a relatively neglected angle in empowerment discussions, that of description and measurement. Despite the widespread use of the term empowerment, there is no accepted method for measuring and tracking changes.

The article argues that to understand empowerment as a relative state of change, compared to a presumed 'disempowered' state previously, then it is critical to understand the debates that have shaped and refined the concept of power and its operation. After a brief review of how women's empowerment has been discussed within development studies, the author turns to debates on the concept of power and how these were refined during the second half of the twentieth century. She then discusses how power relations might be described and evaluated in a particular context, for which she proposes a conceptual framework within which empowerment might be assessed.

- 27 Punttenney, D.L. (2002) *Measuring Social Change Investments*, San Francisco: Women's Funding Network, www.wfnet.org/documents/publications/dpunterney-paper.pdf**

This practical framework emerges from the ongoing philanthropic investments by the Women's Funding Network (USA) in women and girls. The paper reflects discussions in the Women's Funding Movement around questions such as how to evaluate the impact of the work and how to know when philanthropic institutions are more effective at tracking and claiming the impact of social change investments. The paper presents evidence from a literature review for an interpretation of social change that is multi-dimensional and presents a model that accommodates both its complexity and lack of predictability. The model enables philanthropic institutions and their grantee partners to capture the rich array of their achievements, from micro to macro, that represent the results of deliberate investment in transforming the social and institutional landscapes. The model, 'the achievement vector' is built around the categories: naming the issue; direct service; education and public awareness; knowledge and research; advocacy and public policy; and community organising.

- 28 Kabeer, N. (2000) 'Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment', in S. Razavi (ed.), *Gendered Poverty and Well-Being*, Oxford: Blackwell. A longer, earlier version can be found on the UNRISD website: [www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/\(httpPublications\)/31EEF181BEC398A380256B67005B720A?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/(httpPublications)/31EEF181BEC398A380256B67005B720A?OpenDocument)**

This chapter conceptualises empowerment as the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices, acquire such an ability, as well as acquiring consciousness and realising values. Empowerment is embedded in three dimensions: resources, agency and achievements, and operates at individual, institutional and structural levels. Such a conceptualisation can help identify and locate different forms of empowerment. But because people are individuals with different values and preferences, the manifestations of their empowerment will vary and therefore can be difficult to predict or measure. The author points out the limitations of measuring empowerment based on access to and/or control over resources, decision-making agency, and achievements, highlighting the critical need for deeper and clearer analysis. The author concludes that valid and meaningful indicators of empowerment need to capture and triangulate all three dimensions: resources, agency and achievements.

3.4 Accountability definitions and issues

- 29 Newell, P. and Wheeler, J. (2006) *Making Accountability Count*, IDS Policy Briefing 33, Brighton: IDS, www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/briefs/PB33.pdf

Accountability has become a buzzword in development debates. It is central to development policy, whether it be government accountability (as a central component of good governance), corporate accountability (promoted by a swathe of standards and codes), or civil society accountability (claimed by people and organisations from the bottom up). Yet with so many competing ideas, interpretations and practices, it is sometimes unclear how improved accountability is directly relevant to the lives of poor and marginalised people. In order to build accountable institutions that respond to claims by citizens, it is crucial to understand how accountability matters, for whom and under what conditions it operates. This Policy Briefing looks at who benefits from improved accountability and focuses on how people claim accountability in practice. If assessment and learning processes are to look at how accountability has changed, then the term needs to be well understood. This reading provides an overview of the diversity of interpretations that can help those constructing an assessment process be conscious about which interpretation or aspect of accountability is being used.

- 30 Keystone (2006) *Survey Results: Downward Accountability to 'Beneficiaries': NGO and Donor Perspectives*, London: Keystone, www.keystonereporting.org/files/Keystone%20Survey%20Apr%2006%20Final%20Report.pdf

This paper is the result of a survey of over 400 individuals around the world on the concept of downward accountability and accountability of organisations to the 'beneficiaries'. The paper is primarily a report of the responses, with the conclusions in particular being of general interest. These focus on the difference between rhetoric and practice and the reasons for existing gaps. Written from a donor perspective and examining what donors can or should do to bring about more downward accountability, it stresses the need to relieve bureaucratic burdens. The conclusions also point to lack of conceptual clarity on what downward accountability is, and confusion about what it means to be 'learning' from beneficiaries (through participatory evaluation) and the redistribution of power to those whose political and economic voice is expected to be enhanced (through downward accountability). This reading has been included because downward accountability is emerging as one possible way to view an assessment and learning process that seeks to be consistent with social change, as discussed in section 1 of this literature review.

- 31 Jagadananda and Brown, L.D. (2005) *Civil Society Legitimacy and Accountability: Issues and Challenges*, draft paper, New York: Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organisations, Harvard University, www.civicus.org/new/media/ScopingReportdraft5.6.051.pdf

The growing influence of civil society organisations (CSOs) in development and governance at all levels, has led to growing questions about their legitimacy and accountability as social and political actors. This paper considers one of the most

complex challenges for CSOs – ongoing constructive influence requires a solid legitimate base. The paper looks at the issues surrounding legitimacy and accountability, why they have become so prominent in recent times, and analyses existing systems and practices to meet the related challenges. It suggests a framework to help analyse the issues and identifies steps for developing systems to enhance CSO legitimacy and accountability. The paper also considers what it calls ‘multi-organisation domains’, such as campaign alliances, sectors of similar organisations and problem domains that may involve diverse actors. This reading provides CSOs with concrete ideas for developing an assessment and learning process that places local stakeholders in the centre and thus seeks to build legitimacy that can, in turn, increase the CSOs’ potential for constructive influence.

3.5 Peace and conflict resolution concerns

- 32 Austin, A.; Fischer, M. and Wils, O. (eds) (2003) ‘Dialogue 1: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment: Critical Views from Theory and Practice’ and Bloomfield, D., Fischer, M. and Schmelzle, B. (eds) (2005) ‘Dialogue 4: New Trends in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)’, in *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=5

This extensive online publication consists of a series of commissioned articles and a set of edited dialogues between practitioners active in peace and conflict resolution. Two dialogues are of particular interest. Dialogue 1, ‘Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment: Critical Views from Theory and Practice’ scopes the issues and seeks to develop a framework for a ‘unifying methodology’. Dialogue 4, ‘New Trends in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)’ contains a particularly pertinent introductory chapter, which highlights recent developments in attempts to improve the understanding and methodology of peace- and conflict-related assessment and evaluation. Particularly recognisable for all those active in social change is the description of key issues and themes that are challenges today, but also embody some significant opportunities.

- 33 Church, C. and Shouldice, J. (2002) *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions: Framing the State of Play*, INCORE Working Paper, Northern Ireland: International Conflict Research (INCORE), www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/publications/research/incore%20A5final1.pdf

Church, C. and Shouldice, J. (2003) *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions: Part II: Emerging Practice and Theory*, INCORE Working Paper, Northern Ireland: International Conflict Research (INCORE), www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/publications/research/THE%20FINAL%20OVER%20SION%202.pdf

This document highlights the critical issues to consider when undertaking the evaluation of conflict resolution and management initiatives. It brings together experience and practice and includes methods for evaluating peace building. This volume provides an overarching framework to guide the evaluation of conflict

resolution. The framework is structured around three themes: goals and assumptions; process accountability; and the range of results (short- and long-term). It also discusses concepts it is useful to make explicit and defines the scope of influence of efforts. This study is based on a literature review, interviews and dialogues with peace building practitioners, evaluators and funders. Part II is a more theoretical reflection emerging from discussions with practitioners.

3.6 Change as complexity and systems thinking

- 34 Midgely, G. (2007) 'Systems Thinking for Evaluation', in B. Williams and I. Imam (eds), *Systems Concepts in Evaluation. An Expert Anthology*, Point Reyes, California: Edge Press/American Evaluation Association

This chapter discusses the intellectual development of the systems field, how this has influenced practice and the relevance of this to evaluators and evaluation. The author discusses how the use of systems concepts and approaches can significantly improve the relevance and utility of evaluation, by helping stakeholders clarify their respective interests and power and the worldviews implicit in their work. It can help clarify the goals, roles, responsibilities and knowledge requirements of an evaluation. It can be used at the design, implementation, analysis, and reporting stages of an evaluation. Systems concepts and approaches can be mixed and matched according to the circumstances. Those involved in evaluations can help design a more relevant evaluation, increase participation in the process and enhance the usefulness of findings.

- 35 Eoyang, G.H. and Berkas, T.H. (1998) 'Evaluation in a Complex Adaptive System', unpublished paper, www.winternet.com/eoyang/EvalinCAS.pdf

This article discusses the basic assumptions about organisational dynamics on which many standard evaluation tools, techniques and methods are based. Such assumptions include linear organisational dynamics (predictability, low dimensionality, system closure, stability and equilibration). To be effective, the authors argue, an evaluation must match the dynamics of the system to which it is applied. However, many of these assumptions are not valid when a system enters what they call 'the regime of a complex adaptive system (CAS)', which they say is the case for organisations. Such systems are dynamic, massively entangled, scale independent, transformative and emergent – properties that are all described in some detail. This means that different strategies are required to evaluate human systems as CASs. Evaluation techniques and methods are needed that integrate assumptions about the dynamic nature of the system. The paper summarises the characteristics of CASs from an organisational perspective. It identifies properties of an evaluation system that are consistent with the nature of a CAS. It describes evaluation tools and techniques that promise more effective evaluation of human CASs. Finally, it examines the role of the evaluator in a complex, adaptive system.

3.7 A focus on innovation

- 36 Perrin, B. (2002) 'How to – and How Not to – Evaluate Innovation', in *Evaluation: The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice* 1.8: 13–28

Many of those working on social change processes are engaged in social innovations of some kind, including new types of relationships, unknown partners, precedent-setting practical work and experimentation. This means that outcomes are not necessarily known, nor is the path to the final result. Hence it is important to understand the nature of an innovation and how it affects what can be expected from evaluation processes, particularly as many traditional evaluation methods inhibit rather than support innovation. This article discusses the nature of innovation, identifies limitations of traditional evaluation approaches for assessing it and proposes an alternative model of evaluation consistent with the nature of innovation. Most attempts at innovation, by definition, are risky and should fail – otherwise they are using safe, rather than unknown or truly innovative approaches. A few key impacts by a minority of projects or participants may be much more meaningful than changes in mean (or average) scores. Yet the most common measure of programme impact is the mean. In contrast, this article suggests that evaluation of innovation should identify the minority of situations where real impact has occurred and the reasons for this. This is in keeping with the approach venture capitalists typically take where they expect most of their investments to fail, but to be compensated by major gains on just a few.

3.8 Capacity building definitions and implications

- 37 Lusthaus, C.; Adrien, M.H. and Perstinger, M. (1999) *Capacity Development: Definitions, Issues and Implications for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation*, Universalialia Occasional Paper 35, Universalialia, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, www.universalialia.com/site/files/occas35.pdf

This article presents definitions and approaches of capacity development and capacity building. It highlights and discusses different issues generated by the elasticity of the concept and the lack of consensus around it. Particularly relevant is the section on implications for planning, monitoring and evaluation, which makes recommendations for assessing capacity development in a way that is congruent to its aim. The paper is strongly oriented toward donor-funded development projects, yet its generic insights are useful for social change organisations wanting to monitor and assess capacity development initiatives.

- 38 Watson, D. (2005) *Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity and Capacity Development*, ECDPM Discussion Paper 58B, Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management, [www.ecdpm.org/Web_ECDPM/Web/Content/Download.nsf/0/4EB26B200266AED5C12570C1003E28A2/\\$FILE/Watson_M&E%20of%20capacity%20and%20CD_2006_DP58B.pdf](http://www.ecdpm.org/Web_ECDPM/Web/Content/Download.nsf/0/4EB26B200266AED5C12570C1003E28A2/$FILE/Watson_M&E%20of%20capacity%20and%20CD_2006_DP58B.pdf)

This paper is the result of an extensive literature review and ongoing discussions that brings together issues around capacity, its development and how to undertake the monitoring and evaluation of what is often an intangible process that is poorly defined and understood. It synthesises significant insights from systems thinking and reviews some recent methodological innovations. It is part of a study by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) on this topic that resulted in a series of case studies, the insights from which also feed into this paper. Key conclusions relate to a wide range of issues, including: the paucity of examples and diversity of interpretations; the tension between the long-term trajectory of capacity development and the results-based regime under which donors operate; the difficulties of transferring effective capacity development approaches to the public sector; and the merits of investing in internally developed monitoring systems that do not detract from the capacity building itself.

4 Practical considerations

Practitioners are increasingly critical and vocal about the challenges they face when assessing and learning from social change processes. These challenges are the inevitable result of specific characteristics of social change, and include: how to deal with attribution; what to do about the restrictive effect of indicators, without losing their potential; and where to locate a concern for ethics and standards (see Box 1.1, section 1). This section contains readings that debate and question a number of important pillars of standard evaluation (see Table 4.1). In so doing, they are opening the way for the emergence of practical alternatives and greater acceptance of other, equally valid standards of practice. Few of the references here represent a comprehensive discussion on these important considerations, as the discourse and practice is still too recent for this. But together they embody an important starting point that will hopefully inspire more debate and innovation. Compiling this section of the bibliography was the most difficult in terms of finding a set of succinct, comprehensive and relevant readings.

Table 4.1 Readings for ‘Practical considerations’

Understanding social change and working with assumptions	<p>39 Eyben R.; Kidder, T.; Bronstein, A. and Rowlands, J. (forthcoming 2007) ‘Thinking about Change for Development Practice: A Case Study from Oxfam GB’, <i>Development in Practice</i></p> <p>40 Dewar, J.A.; Builder, C.H.; Hix, W.M. and Levin, M.H. (1993) <i>Assumption-based Planning. A Planning Tool for Very Uncertain Times</i>, Cambridge: Rand</p> <p>41 Argyris, C. and Schön, D. (1978) <i>Organisational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective</i>, Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley</p>
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Assessing social change	<p>42 Guijt, I. (2007) <i>Assessing and Learning for Social Change: A Discussion Paper</i>, Brighton and The Netherlands: IDS and Learning by Design</p> <p>43 Reeler, D. (2007) <i>A Theory of Social Change and Implications for Practice, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation</i>, Cape Town: Community Development Resource Association</p> <p>44 Batliwala, S. (2006) 'Measuring Social Change', <i>Alliance</i> 11.1: 12–14</p> <p>45 Chapman, J.; Pereira Junior, A.; Prasad Uprety, L.; Okwaare, S.; Azumah, V. and Miller, V. (2005) 'Summary of Learning', <i>Critical Webs of Power and Change – Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy</i>, London: ActionAid International</p>
Dealing with attribution	<p>46 Iverson, A. (2003) <i>Attribution and Aid Evaluation in International Development: A Literature Review</i>, Canada: International Development Research Centre</p> <p>47 Roche, C. (1999) <i>Impact Assessment for Development Agencies: Learning to Value Change</i>, Oxford: Oxfam</p>
Making the most of indicators (and seeing the limits)	<p>48 Alsop, R. and Heinsohn, N. (2005) <i>Measuring Empowerment in Practice: Structuring Analysis and Framing Indicators</i>, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3510, Washington, DC: World Bank</p> <p>49 Whitehouse, C. and Winderl, T. (2005) 'Indicators. A Discussion Paper', in S. Cummings, <i>Why did the Chicken Cross the Road? And Other Stories on Development Evaluation</i>, Amsterdam: KIT Publishers</p> <p>50 Walker, P.; Lewis, J.; Lingayah, S. and Somner, F. (2000) <i>Prove it! Measuring the Effect of Neighbourhood Renewal on Local People</i>, London: Groundwork, The New Economics Foundation and Barclays Bank plc</p>

<p>Ensuring the capacity to assess social change processes</p>	<p>51 Preskill, H. and Russ-Eft, D. (2005) <i>Building Evaluation Capacity: 72 Activities for Teaching and Training</i>, London: Sage Publications</p> <p>52 VeneKlasen, L. and Miller, V. (2002) <i>A New Weave of Power, People and Politics. The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation</i>, Oklahoma City: World Neighbors</p> <p>53 Johnson, D. (2000) 'Laying the Foundation: Capacity Building for Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation', in M. Estrella, J. Blauert, D. Campilan, J. Gaventa, J. Gonsalves, I. Guijt, D. Johnson and R. Ricafort (eds), <i>Learning from Change: Issues and Experiences in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation</i>, London: Intermediate Technology Publications</p>
<p>Caring about relationships, ethics and standards</p>	<p>54 Mawdsley, E.; Townsend, J.G. and Porter, G. (2005) 'Trust, Accountability, and Face-to-Face Interaction in North-South Relations', <i>Development in Practice</i> 5.1: 77–82</p> <p>55 Win, E. (2004) ' "If it Doesn't Fit on the Blue Square It's Out". An Open Letter to my "Donor" Friend', in L. Groves and R. Hinton (eds), <i>Inclusive Aid: Changing Power and Relationships in International Development</i>, London: Earthscan</p> <p>56 Wallace, T. and Chapman, J. (2003) 'Some Realities Behind the Rhetoric of Downward Accountability', working paper presented at INTRAC Fifth Evaluation Conference in the Netherlands</p> <p>57 Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. (1989) <i>Fourth Generation Evaluation</i>, Newbury Park, CA.: Sage Publications</p>
<p>Building in critical reflection</p>	<p>58 Klouda, T. (2004) 'Thinking Critically, Speaking Critically', unpublished paper</p>

	<p>59 Sorgenfrei, M. with Buxton, C. (2006) <i>Building Organisational Capacity Through Analytical Skills Training in Central Asia</i>, Praxis Note 22, Oxford: INTRAC</p> <p>60 Chapman, J.; Pereira Junior, A.; Prasad Uprety, L.; Okwaare, S.; Azumah, V. and Miller, V. (2005) 'Critical Thinking', <i>Critical Webs of Power and Change – Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy</i>, London: ActionAid International</p> <p>61 Brookfield, S. (1987) <i>Developing Critical Thinkers. Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting</i>, Milton Keynes: Open University Press</p>
<p>Generalising insights and systematising lessons</p>	<p>62 Phartiyal, P. (2006) <i>Systematization to Capture Project Experiences: A Guide</i>, New Delhi, India: Knowledge Networking for Rural Development in Asia/Pacific Region (ENRAP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)</p> <p>63 Guijt, I.; Berdegue, J.; Escobar, G.; Ramirez, R. and Keintaanranta, J. (2005) <i>Institutionalizing Learning in Rural Poverty Alleviation Initiatives</i>, Discussion Paper produced for RIMISP, Chile: Latin American Center for Rural Development (RIMISP)</p> <p>64 Patton, M.Q. (2001) 'Evaluation, Knowledge Management, Best Practices, and High Quality Lessons Learned', <i>American Journal of Evaluation</i> 22: 329–36</p>

The importance of understanding social change and working with assumptions (section 4.1) is hard to over-emphasise. One reading discusses the importance of articulating the theories of change that shape strategies and policies, grounding it in the practice of an international NGO. The second, contrasting reading is a practical guide on how to surface and work with underlying assumptions. The third reading is a classic text from the 'grandfathers' of assumption-based thinking, which evolved from contrasting organisational intentions with behaviours.

Assessing social change (section 4.2) contains four very recent readings emerging from a critical look at the problems with standard evaluation and monitoring

approaches within the realm of social change. Two readings represent the collective ideas of a range of development professionals, while another reflects on the anomaly between measurement obsession and the realities of social change. A fourth reading outlines three theories of change and articulates the implications for assessment and learning.

Dealing with attribution (section 4.3) is a recurring headache for those engaged in multi-actor, multi-location, multi-level and multi-strategy change work, with the constant pressure of how to 'prove' causality? The three readings outline important issues in relation to this challenge and argue for a detailed revision of the obsession with splicing off and naming specific efforts.

Making the most of indicators and seeing their limits (section 4.4) contains three very diverse readings. One focuses on the use of indicators to look at the complex notion of empowerment while the second reading is a dialogue between an advocate and critic of indicators as a mechanism for tracking change. The third is a practical guide on how to use indicators to take stock of social capital in neighbourhood regeneration work.

Ensuring the capacity to assess social change processes (section 4.5) contains two readings. The first is a rare text that gives details on how to train to build evaluation capacity. The second reflects on the need for capacity in a broad sense to facilitate critical reflection on power, justice, policy processes and social change. The third reading looks at the notion of stakeholder capacity for participatory M&E as requiring both access and the ability to participate.

Caring about relationships, ethics and standards (section 4.6) contains two critical commentaries on the unequal power relations between Northern and Southern organisations, ostensibly engaged in the same effort to overcome injustices. Another reading continues in the same vein, highlighting the particular problems with the professed pursuit of downward accountability. A fourth reading from a classic text offers a set of standards by which to judge evaluation processes that are based on a constructivist paradigm.

Building in critical reflection (section 4.7) is the motor that drives high quality assessment and learning and is indispensable. The first reading challenges development workers to step out of their comfort zone and think critically. A second reading is an account of a training process on analytical skills in Central Asia. The third reading is a grounded summary of the important issues related to critical reflection in people-centred advocacy work from one international NGO's perspective. Finally there is a classic text on how to develop critical thinking in adults.

Generalising insights and systematising lessons (section 4.8) has been included since this is a growing area of work, as assessment processes are called upon to help fuel new generation of knowledge. Two readings focus on practical discussions of how to undertake systematisation, with the third reading being a constructive criticism of the growing hype around 'learning lessons'.

4.1 Understanding social change and working with assumptions

- 39 Eyben R.; Kidder, T.; Bronstein, A. and Rowlands, J. (forthcoming 2007) 'Thinking About Change for Development Practice: A Case Study from Oxfam GB', *Development in Practice*

How does change happen and what can we do to make it happen in the way we would like? These questions are often debated among development workers. Yet few development organisations explore them systematically in their strategy and policy work. This article argues that development practice is informed by theories of change but many individuals and organisations do not make these explicit. The opportunity is then missed to understand how strategic choices and debates are informed by different ideas about how history happens and the role of purposeful intervention for progressive social change. In the last few years, some staff of Oxfam Great Britain have been creating processes to debate their theories of change as part of an effort to improve practice. In this context, this article introduces four sets of ideas about change, with a discussion of how these have been explored in two processes – the global labour rights programme and the UK Poverty Programme – and some of the challenges emerging from these processes. It shows how, by explicitly debating theories of change, organisational decision-making processes can be better informed and strategic choices made more transparent and diverse.

- 40 Dewar, J.A.; Builder, C.H.; Hix, W.M. and Levin, M.H. (1993) *Assumption-based Planning. A Planning Tool for Very Uncertain Times*, Cambridge: Rand, www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/2005/MR114.pdf

Also available as Dewar, J.A. (2002) *Assumption-Based Planning: A Tool for Reducing Avoidable Surprises*, RAND Studies in Policy Analysis, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

This report documents a strategic planning methodology, 'Assumption-Based Planning', that RAND developed to aid the US Army with its long- and mid-range planning. Despite its background, which sits uneasily in today's political climate and with the social justice focus of this bibliography, the report is a rare contribution to the surfacing and challenging of assumptions that can help those engaged in long-term, strategic planning. It is based on the recognition that unwelcome surprises in the life of any organisation can often be traced to the failure of an assumption that the organisation's leadership did not anticipate or had not deemed important. Assumption-based planning is a tool for identifying as many assumptions as possible and bringing them explicitly into the planning process. After discussing what assumptions are, the booklet proceeds with a five step description of identifying assumptions; identifying so-called 'load-bearing, vulnerable assumptions'; identifying signposts; developing shaping actions; and developing hedging actions. It also presents steps for monitoring the 'vulnerable' assumptions of a plan by taking actions to control them where possible and preparing for potential failure where control is not possible. All this booklet requires is imaginative reading to substitute the militaristic examples with those from social justice efforts.

- 41 Argyris, C. and Schön, D. (1978) *Organisational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective*, Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley. For an introduction to the ideas, see: www.infed.org/thinkers/argyris.htm

Building on earlier work by both authors, this classic text outlines two sets of terms that have become central to organisational learning, both of which are crucial to surfacing and addressing assumptions and governing values. The first set of terms – theory-in-action and espoused theory – relates to the difference between theories about what is implicit in what we do and those that we use to explain to others or ourselves about what we think we do. The authors explain the importance of examining the degree of congruence, pointing out the common disjunction between the two theories. The second set of terms relates to whether learning occurs within the framework of given or chosen goals, plans, values and rules – the so-called ‘single loop’ learning. Another level of learning that requires questioning the assumed validity of these goals and plans is ‘double loop’ learning, which can reframe the basic premises on which an organisation operates. The book details how the two sets of ideas are related.

4.2 Assessing social change

- 42 Guijt, I. (2007) *Assessing and Learning for Social Change: A Discussion Paper*, Brighton and The Netherlands: IDS and Learning by Design, www.ids.ac.uk/ids/Part/proj/socialchange.html

This paper is a summary of discussions that took place over the period of 18 months among an invited group of development professionals active in furthering pro-poor and pro-equity social change. Their concern was how to reconceptualise and make possible assessment and learning processes about social change that also strengthen the change processes themselves. The paper summarises the debates, experiences and issues that were shared. It provides an overview of what is understood by social change and how this affects organisational learning and assessment, highlighting key features that sit at odds with existing M&E approaches. It discusses methodological options and their ability to overcome existing methodological limitations. The paper also discusses what is needed to understand and deal with the many different actors involved in such assessment processes, including local people and their organisations, facilitators and intermediaries, and donor and funding agencies. Finally, it discusses the challenges of scaling up and scaling down, and how to ensure interconnectedness between levels and scales at which social change needs to occur, while maintaining integrity across the levels.

- 43 Reeler, D. (2007) *A Theory of Social Change and Implications for Practice, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation*, Cape Town: Community Development Resource Association www.cdra.org.za/articles/A%20Theory%20of%20Social%20Change%20by%20Doug%20Reeler.pdf

This paper offers an insightful analysis of three fundamentally different types of change: emergent, transformative and ‘projectable’ change – each of which has significant implications for assessment and learning. Emergent change describes the daily adaptive and uneven processes of unconscious and conscious learning from experience and the change that results from that. This is the most prevalent and

enduring form of change. Transformative change emerges in situations of crisis or entrenched thinking, while 'projectable' change tends to succeed where problems, needs and possibilities are more visible, under relatively stable conditions and relationships. This differentiation of theories of social change can be seen as an observational map to help practitioners to read and navigate processes of social change. Reeler discusses the core implications for learning processes for each of these types of changes and implications for funding agencies.

- 44 Batliwala, S. (2006) 'Measuring Social Change', *Alliance* 11.1: 12–14, www.alliancemagazine.org**

This article succinctly argues the need to question the way that measurement is taken for granted as an integral and 'good thing' in all aspects of life. It challenges assumptions around the usefulness of statistics and the instruments used to measure social change as adequate, effective and able to strengthen positive change. This article examines the problem with these assumptions in the context of increasing demands, particularly by funding agencies, on activists' time and energy. The author urges questioning when measurement may be meaningless or even detrimental to understanding how change happens. Her points are illustrated with examples from rural and urban development projects, particularly women's empowerment projects, in India. This short reading explains why alternative ways to assess and learn about social change are urgently needed in ways that respect the specific characteristics of such change processes.

- 45 Chapman, J.; Pereira Junior, A.; Prasad Uprety, L.; Okwaare, S.; Azumah, V. and Miller, V. (2005) 'Summary of Learning', in *Critical Webs of Power and Change – Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy*, London: ActionAid International, www.actionaid.org/assets/pdf%5Csummary.pdf**

This paper summarises the learning from a three-year action research process undertaken by ActionAid International with several of its partners. It examines the many challenges the team faced in relation to people-centred advocacy and ways that groups plan, monitor and learn from these experiences. They discuss the issues and tensions involved in reconciling advocacy and evaluation, but also highlight key insights about what is needed for effective advocacy planning, action and learning. This includes challenges around people's assumptions and understandings of power, gender and change, and how these affected their advocacy strategies. Another set of challenges is related to the dynamics and interplay between these different elements and their implications for effective action and useful learning processes. The authors reflect on indicators, methods, critical thinking and leadership issues in this context.

4.3 Dealing with attribution⁴

- 46 Iverson, A. (2003) *Attribution and Aid Evaluation in International Development: A Literature Review*, Canada: International Development Research Centre, www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/10557699520iverson-final.doc**

This literature review looks at the problems related to the attribution of results within development evaluation. By looking at social science research, on which evaluation approaches draw, it becomes evident that cause-effect relationships with social research are always relationships based on correlation and probability. This is contrary to the attribution focus of standard evaluation. The author then looks at how sectors and levels of intervention and analysis affect the extent to which attribution becomes feasible, before going on to explore the logical framework analysis approach in detail. Finally, attribution is examined in relation to a shift that has occurred within evaluation since the 1980s – from ‘proving’ to ‘improving’ – hence making alternative methodologies and approaches to evaluation possible. The paper reflects on an evolving topic and thus provides no final clarity. It contains references to other key papers on the topic.

47 Roche, C. (1999) *Impact Assessment for Development Agencies: Learning to Value Change*, Oxford: Oxfam

This book is interesting because of the author’s willingness and ability to question some common assumptions about impact assessment, including indicators, measurement and attribution. It is written largely from the perspective of an externally facilitated impact assessment and a project mode of development. Nevertheless, when combined with, for example an action research or other assessment perspective, it offers many valuable practical contributions to assessment that are illustrated with a wide range of examples from advocacy, emergencies and organisational change. In two short sections on attribution, Roche recognises the difficulty of explaining causality of observed impact and the need to be realistic when claiming impact, given that development is a convergence of efforts and processes. The author discusses the pros and cons of different options: control groups, non-project respondents, secondary data and seeking other explanations. Its project-oriented perspective leads to the conclusion that comparing beneficiaries with non-project respondents may often be the most appropriate approach.

4.4 Making the most of indicators (and seeing the limits)⁵

48 Alsop, R. and Heinsohn, N. (2005) *Measuring Empowerment in Practice: Structuring Analysis and Framing Indicators*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3510, Washington, DC: World Bank, siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/41307_wps3510.pdf

This paper presents an analytic framework that can be used to measure and monitor empowerment processes and outcomes. It is located here rather than in section 3 because it illustrates the potential of indicators to deal with the topic of empowerment. Its measuring empowerment framework shows how to gather data on empowerment and structure its analysis for insights at local and national levels. After defining empowerment in terms of agency and opportunity structure,

4 Also see readings on ‘Outcome mapping’ in section 5.5.

5 Also see readings on ‘Most significant change’ in section 5.6.

the paper shows how it can be reduced to measurable components. Asset endowments (psychological, informational, organisational, material, social, financial or human) are used as indicators of agency. Opportunity structure is measured by the presence and operation of formal and informal institutions, including laws, regulatory frameworks and norms governing behaviour. Degrees of empowerment are measured by the existence of choice, the use of choice and the achievement of choice. Four concrete examples show how the indicator framework can be used.

- 49 Whitehouse, C. and Winderl, T. (2005) 'Indicators. A Discussion Paper', in S. Cummings, *Why did the Chicken Cross the Road? And Other Stories on Development Evaluation*, Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, www.mande.co.uk/docs/Indicators%20%20The%20Ants%20and%20the%20Cockroach.pdf**

This collection of short reflections on evaluation and development cooperation includes two contributions on indicators and (the limits of) their merits. In 'The Ants and the Cockroach: a Challenge to the Use of Indicators', Whitehouse argues that the use of indicators can be time consuming and expensive, can result in programme design being skewed away from the most effective and towards the most measurable, and that indicators are, most worryingly, an essentially flawed concept. Related to the use of the logical framework approach, Whitehouse advocates that its use should be restricted to articulating the logic of the intervention. In Winderl's reply ('A Pot of Chicken Soup'), the author identifies problems with Whitehouse's assumptions and counters that the alternatives are more problematic. Winderl urges judicious use of the information that indicators provide, seeing it as 'indications', rather than measurements.

- 50 Walker, P.; Lewis, J.; Lingayah, S. and Somner, F. (2000) *Prove it! Measuring the Effect of Neighbourhood Renewal on Local People*, London: Groundwork, The New Economics Foundation and Barclays Bank plc, www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_publicationdetail.aspx?pid=2**

This simple and practical handbook describes a method for measuring the effect of community projects on local people, both in terms of their quality of life and their relationship with the projects. This publication was borne out of the shift from justifying neighbourhood renewal projects in physical terms (e.g. trees planted, amenities created) to the effect on social capital. Especially relevant for those wanting to evaluate community development, the proposed method is based on indicators and is participatory, as local people are involved in indicator selection and undertaking community surveys. The guidance on indicators of social capital is interesting since many of them are akin to or form the basis of social change. The examples are based on work in the United Kingdom.

4.5 Ensuring the capacity to assess social change processes

- 51 Preskill, H. and Russ-Eft, D. (2005) *Building Evaluation Capacity: 72 Activities for Teaching and Training*, London: Sage Publications**

This book, although not focused specifically on assessing and learning about social change processes, examines how to build the capacities needed for effective evaluations. The entire evaluation process is addressed, including: an understanding

of what evaluation is; the politics and ethics of evaluation; and the influence of culture on evaluation. It suggests how to enable dialogue and debate about: various evaluation models, approaches and designs; data collection and analysis methods; communicating and reporting progress and findings; and building and sustaining support for evaluation. Each activity includes an overview, instructional objectives, time estimates, materials needed, handouts and procedures for effectively working through the activity, whether with few or many participants.

52 VeneKlasen, L. and Miller, V. (2002) *A New Weave of Power, People and Politics. The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*, Oklahoma City: World Neighbors

This book is a conceptually clear and practical overview for those engaged in processes of power, politics and exclusion, delving into questions of citizenship, constituency-building, social change, gender and accountability. It presents a wealth of ideas on how to enhance capacities for 'citizen-centred advocacy' through a process of popular education that strengthens understanding and strategies. It provides a grounded approach to conscientisation by addressing various aspects of social change processes, recognising its intrinsically political nature. Specifically about assessing social change are the frameworks for empowerment and the section on measuring empowerment (pgs 39–58).

53 Johnson, D. (2000) 'Laying the Foundation: Capacity Building for Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation', in M. Estrella, J. Blauert, D. Campilan, J. Gaventa, J. Gonsalves, I. Guijt, D. Johnson and R. Ricafort (eds), *Learning from Change: Issues and Experiences in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation*, London: Intermediate Technology Publications

This chapter identifies elements to ensure participants have the access and the ability to participate in participatory monitoring and evaluation. Both elements are well defined and presented as the foundation for building participatory monitoring and evaluation capacity. Written for development projects, it raises many issues relevant for broader change efforts such as when and where to start capacity building, what are the capacities to be built, and how to carry it out. Particularly interesting are the sections on dealing with multiple stakeholder needs and expectations, and the key elements for strengthening abilities. The section on resources raises concerns of particular interest to social change organisations.

4.6 Caring about relationships, ethics and standards

54 Mawdsley, E.; Townsend, J.G. and Porter, G. (2005) 'Trust, Accountability, and Face-to-Face Interaction in North-South Relations', *Development in Practice* 5.1: 77–82

In this paper, the authors present a critique of the dominant methods of monitoring and accountability within the NGO community. They suggest that an over-reliance on documentation, targets and indicators, as well as the devaluation of professional working practices and relations, have deeply problematic outcomes. Instead, the paper contends for greater personal interaction between Northern and Southern NGOs as a formal mechanism of partnership. It argues that increasing the

number and quality of face-to-face visits can – in some circumstances and with appropriate safeguards – contribute to the greater effectiveness of both Northern and Southern NGOs by: fostering a more open dialogue between partners; improving upward and downward accountability; and by making monitoring and accountability more rigorous and meaningful. While addressing only one set of relationships and type of organisation (Northern and Southern NGOs), its emphasis on personal dialogue lends itself to other relationships within the broad domain of social change processes.

- 55 Win, E. (2004) ‘ “If it Doesn’t Fit on the Blue Square It’s Out”. An Open Letter to my “Donor” Friend’, in L. Groves and R. Hinton (eds), *Inclusive Aid: Changing Power and Relationships in International Development*, London: Earthscan**

This concise book chapter looks at the power relations between a Zimbabwean activist and a foreign development worker. It critiques the imposition of donor reporting procedures as hindering the very local development that was supposed to be supported. It looks at the donor-centric view on what constitutes valid reporting and learning, which ignore local needs. Its frank style highlights the sharp divide that exists between many Northern development NGO and Southern ‘partners’, even though both purport to address issues of social, economic and political justice. This reading argues for alternative modes of assessing and learning about social change that are consistent with intended development aims and explains the role of donors in making such alternatives possible.

- 56 Wallace, T. and Chapman, J. (2003) ‘Some Realities Behind the Rhetoric of Downward Accountability’, working paper presented at INTRAC Fifth Evaluation Conference in the Netherlands, www.intrac.org/docs/Wallace_Chapman.pdf**

Drawing on data collected from a three-country study (United Kingdom, South Africa and Uganda), the authors argue that the policies and procedures of UK NGOs for disbursement of and accounting for aid money ensure that upward accountability dominates, rather than the professed local ownership and downward accountability. They critique the excessive dependence of the development sector on performance and results measurement that leads to poor work. This is part of a wider problem of domination by donors of their recipients, which skews the relationship and undermines the potential for these relationships to work well as partnerships. Yet it is this very idea of partnership that most agencies involved in development believe in and want to achieve. This reading provides further evidence and details about the need for alternative modes of assessing and learning about social change that are consistent with intended development aims, and how current UK NGO funding procedures hinder this.

- 57 Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. (1989) *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, Newbury Park, CA.: Sage Publications**

This book is a classic evaluation text that challenges the positivist paradigm on which many standard evaluation approaches are based, by offering one based on a constructivist paradigm. It is located in this section due to its useful reflections on

standards by which to judge the merits of such an alternative evaluation process. Chapter 8, 'Judging the Quality of Fourth Generation Evaluation' outlines alternative standards in terms of trustworthiness criteria, process scrutiny and authenticity criteria. The authors challenge the conventional focus on criteria such as internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity that shape many evaluation processes, as unworkable within a constructivist framework. Despite its academic style, this chapter can help those struggling to meet standard evaluation criteria consider alternative views, through this consideration of a constructivist evaluation paradigm.

4.7 Building in critical reflection

- 58 Klouda, T. (2004) 'Thinking Critically, Speaking Critically', unpublished paper, www.tonyklouda.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Critical_Think.htm**

This think piece on development highlights barriers to critical reflection and makes recommendations to address them. The author is particularly critical of outsiders' interventions in the change process, illustrating what goes wrong and why. He also distinguishes between facilitating and challenging, arguing that the use of the latter should be increased in order for social change to occur. In assessing social change, critical reflection is essential yet is often very difficult to realise. This reading explains some of the reasons for this difficulty and offers thoughts on how to make critical reflection possible.

- 59 Sorgenfrei, M. with Buxton, C. (2006) *Building Organisational Capacity Through Analytical Skills Training in Central Asia*, Praxis Note 22, Oxford: INTRAC, www.intrac.org/pages/PraxisNote22.html**

There is growing recognition that weak analytical capacity prevents many civil society organisations (CSOs) from working effectively, so it is important to explore how such capacity can be developed. CSOs need to draw on analysis to stimulate their processes of strategic reflection and organisational adaptation. They can also improve their ways of working by analysing their practical experiences. This article defines which analytical skills are most important and shares insights from a two-year analytical skills training programme carried out in Central Asia. It considers the local challenges faced when encountering traditional forms of analysis, as well as an overview of initial impacts. It concludes with reflections on how such training may be improved in terms of content and process. This reading provides practical insight about what is (and is not) possible when explicitly fostering critical reflection as part of an assessment and learning process.

- 60 Chapman, J.; Pereira Junior, A.; Prasad Uprety, L.; Okwaare, S.; Azumah, V. and Miller, V. (2005) 'Critical Thinking', in *Critical Webs of Power and Change – Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy*, London: ActionAid International, www.actionaid.org/assets/pdf%5Ccritical.pdf**

This short paper is part of a resource pack based on a three-year, multi-location action research process undertaken by ActionAid International with several of its partners. This particular paper looks at what kind of critical thinking is happening

within people-centred advocacy, which will be useful for those engaged in such work and wondering about their own level of critical reflection. The authors consider critical thinking the connecting thread in the journey from participatory planning to reflection and beyond. They define the key elements and its relevance for social change processes. Finally, they list key constraints to critical thinking, including lack of motivation, lack of information and lack of trust. The paper is a useful, concise introduction to a fundamentally important process. It can help one to understand which constraints to critical thinking exist in one's own context.

61 Brookfield, S. (1987) *Developing Critical Thinkers. Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press

This classic text defines what it means to think critically in adult life and what is needed to learn to think critically. Central to this is the ability it engenders to make explicit our own assumptions and those of others, and to examine how these shape our thinking and action. The author makes explicit the links between critical thinking and healthy democracies, highlighting the need for analysing political issues, television reporting and personal relationships. The book is also very practical, offering three chapters of methods and approaches to develop critical thinking capacities. The book closes with personal reflections on the risks and rewards of encouraging critical thinking.

4.8 Generalising insights and systematising lessons

62 Phartiyal, P. (2006) *Systematization to Capture Project Experiences: A Guide*, New Delhi, India: Knowledge Networking for Rural Development in Asia/Pacific Region (ENRAP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), www.enrap.org/index.php?module=pnKnwMang&func=downloadFile&did=696&disposition=view&kid=408&cid=23

Systemisation is an evaluative and participatory technique of documentation that has been promoted among the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) family, by FIDAMERICA, IFAD's network in Latin America. It has gained popularity due to its effectiveness in documenting and disseminating poverty reduction lessons. This is an English adaptation of the original Spanish guide. It outlines an approach that helps stakeholders describe and analyse the situation before intervention, after intervention and the process of change. In the process, participants also learn to address the issues that emerge. The full method can run over several weeks, while core documentation takes place within a one-week period.

63 Guijt, I.; Berdegú, J.; Escobar, G.; Ramirez, R. and Keintaanranta, J. (2005) *Institutionalizing Learning in Rural Poverty Alleviation Initiatives*, Discussion Paper produced for RIMISP, Chile: Latin American Center for Rural Development (RIMISP), www.ifsaglo2005.org/programm/papers/t3_case_studies.pdf

Building on systematisation methodology (see previous reading), this paper presents an approach termed the AGC (Learning and Knowledge Management) for

improving the learning capacity of rural development initiatives focused on poverty reduction. Each of the five phases of the AGC approach are presented and discussed in a practical way, with various examples from different contexts. It illustrates the use of this approach for three levels of learning: activities-focused learning (most often used with context-specific lessons), results-focused learning (about pathways of change generating more generic lessons), and goal-oriented learning (least often used with lessons that may go beyond the local context). It analyses the factors that contributed to success and failure of this approach in 18 sites where it was used. The final section on the conditions needed for effective learning in rural development initiatives, highlights the need to stay realistic as many contexts throw up considerable disincentives for development actors to engage in critical reflection. This reading provides a practical and detailed discussion about how to embed a learning process based on critical reflection in development initiatives that are often based on social change objectives and examines the limiting factors when fostering learning.

- 64 Patton, M.Q. (2001) 'Evaluation, Knowledge Management, Best Practices, and High Quality Lessons Learned', *American Journal of Evaluation* 22: 329–36, aje.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/22/3/329

This article looks at the growing mania around generating 'lessons learned' and best practices as part of evaluation processes. The ideas here relate to the pressure to learn lessons in general. It emerges, Patton argues, from the increasing focus on knowledge management and learning organisations and the growing emphasis on evaluation for knowledge generation. Very few organisations are, however, clear about what is meant by a best practice and what it means to learn a lesson. The author critiques the lack of definition and standards around these notions, rejecting 'best practice' as a political statement rather than an empirical finding. The article includes a list of specific criteria and questions to ask in order to recognise high quality lessons.

5 Specific methods and approaches

This section contains practical descriptions about four specific areas where assessment and learning occur and two promising emerging approaches. Many of the readings are based on concrete examples and are written by those engaged in or committed to the type of social change work that is the focus of this literature review (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Readings for 'Specific methods and approaches'

Assessing advocacy and policy influencing work	65 Ringsing, B. and Leeuwis, C. (2007) 'Learning about Advocacy: A Case Study of Challenges, Everyday Practices and Tension', <i>Evaluation: The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice</i>
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	<p>66 Coates, B. and David, R. (2003) 'Learning for Change: The Art of Assessing the Impact of Advocacy Work', in J. Pettit, L. Roper and D. Eade (eds), <i>Development and the Learning Organisation</i>, Oxford: Oxfam</p> <p>67 McGuigan, C. (2003) <i>Closing the Circle: From Measuring Policy Change to Assessing Policies in Practice</i>, United Kingdom: Save the Children</p>
Assessing partnerships and networks	<p>68 Wilson-Grau, R. and Nunez, M. (2007) 'Evaluating International Social Change Networks: A Conceptual Framework for a Participatory Approach', <i>Development in Practice</i> 17.2: 258–71</p> <p>69 Church, M.; Bitel, M.; Armstrong, K.; Fernando, P.; Gould, H.; Joss, S.; Marwaha-Diedrich, M.; de la Torre, A.L. and Vouhé, C. (2002) <i>Participation, Relationships and Dynamic Change: New Thinking on Evaluating the Work of International Networks</i>, Working Paper 121, London: Development Planning Unit, University College London</p>
Assessing conflict resolution efforts	<p>70 Bloomfield, D.; Fischer, M. and Schmelzle, B. (2005) 'Dialogue 4: New Trends in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)', in <i>Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation</i>, Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management</p> <p>71 Church, C. and Shouldice, J. (2003) <i>The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions II: Emerging Practice and Theory</i>, INCORE Working Paper, Northern Ireland: International Conflict Research (INCORE)</p>
Organisational (capacity) assessment and capacity building	<p>72 Linnell, D. (2003) <i>Evaluation of Capacity Building: Lessons from the Field</i>, Washington, DC: Alliance for Nonprofit Management</p> <p>73 McKinsey (2001) <i>Self-Assessment Capacity Grid</i>, Washington, DC: Venture Philanthropy Partners</p>

	<p>74 Lusthaus, C.; Adrien, M.H.; Anderson, G. and Carden, F. (1999) <i>Enhancing Organisational Performance: A Toolbox for Self-assessment</i>, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre</p> <p>75 Levy, C. (1996) <i>The Process of Institutionalising Gender in Policy and Planning: The Web of Institutionalisation</i>, Working Paper 74, London: Development Planning Unit, University College London</p>
Outcome mapping	<p>76 Ambrose, K. (2004) 'Constructing Collaborative Learning: Outcome Mapping and its Multiple Uses in the Project Cycle of a SUB Initiative', unpublished paper</p> <p>77 Earl, S.; Carden, F. and Smutylo, T. (2001) <i>Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs</i>, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre</p>
Video, stories and the 'most significant change' method	<p>78 Colton, S.; Ward, V. et al. (2006) <i>Story Guide. Building Bridges Using Narrative Techniques</i>, Berne, Switzerland: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation</p> <p>79 Sydenham, E. (2006) <i>Participatory Video for Voice, Reflection and Exchange on Human Rights-Based Development. Guidelines to Participatory Video taken from Workshop Experiences in Somalia/land</i>, The Netherlands: Equalinrights and Oxfam-Novib</p> <p>80 Lunch, C. (2006) <i>Experiences with the MSC Approach. Participatory Video for Monitoring and Evaluation</i>, Capacity.org issue 29, Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management</p> <p>81 Davies, R. and Dart, J. (2005) <i>The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use</i></p> <p>82 Mitchell, M. and Egudo, M. (2003) <i>A Review of Narrative Methodology</i>, Edinburgh, Australia: Defence Science and Technology Organisation Systems Sciences Laboratory</p>

	83 ActionAid International (undated), <i>Critical Stories of Change</i> , Johannesburg: ActionAid International
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Assessing advocacy and policy influencing work (section 5.1) is a central part of much social change work and one where much confusion and limited capacities exist. Two readings focus on generic pitfalls and point to possible approaches to deal with them. A third reading is a case study-based article that discusses how the salient features of advocacy processes fail to nest within conventional project monitoring.

Assessing partnerships and networks (section 5.2) contains two readings, both focused on networks that offer complementary insights on how to proceed with assessment. One is a detailed evaluation framework, while the other is a more detailed discussion of key aspects that need to be examined in the context of participation and partnership in a network.

The readings in assessing conflict resolution efforts (section 5.3) are sister volumes to the readings in section 3.5, but with a more practical focus.

Organisational (capacity) assessment and capacity building (section 5.4) includes one overview of practice on the evaluation of capacity building from a North American context. A second reading deals with the process of undertaking an organisational self-assessment. The third reading is an illustrative grid that shows how the idea of organisational capacity can be disaggregated, scaled and ranked in a way that can trigger debate about where capacity strengthening needs to occur. In the final reading, a framework is discussed that enables organisations to examine if they are consistent in their transition towards new values, such as gender mainstreaming or power analysis, using a 13 element diagnostic process.

Outcome mapping (section 5.5) has emerged as a potentially interesting approach that tackles some of the dilemmas of conventional M&E that are most tricky for social change initiatives. One reading is a core training guide offering a comprehensive overview, while the second illustrates how one project in Ecuador has taken up the approach.

Video, stories and the 'most significant change' method (section 5.6) have been included, as the use of narrative is increasingly being rediscovered as a method that allows the richness of often complex stories of change to be told. One reading discusses participatory video for human rights-based development and offers practical guidelines. Two readings relate to the 'most significant change' method – a comprehensive guide and an account of how participatory video was used to capture and debate the stories. A fourth reading relates to the use of 'critical stories of change' by an international NGO.

5.1 Assessing advocacy and policy influencing work

- 65 Ringsing, B. and Leeuwis, C. (2007) 'Learning about Advocacy: A Case Study of Challenges, Everyday Practices and Tension', *Evaluation: The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*

Advocacy has become an important area of development support. Simultaneously, the interest in learning-oriented monitoring of advocacy programmes has increased. Starting from the premise that learning has socio-political dimensions, this article explores the challenges and contradictions of such monitoring in Latin American advocacy activities supported by a Danish NGO. The case study shows that two largely separate monitoring systems co-exist. Alongside a conventional formal and indicator-based monitoring system, project staff and stakeholders have developed a more informal and dialogical mode of monitoring advocacy. Although the latter has potential advantages from a learning perspective, its actual contribution to institutional learning is sub-optimal, due to various socio-political obstacles and influences. The authors conclude that improving learning-oriented monitoring first and foremost requires affirmative political action and leadership to widen the space for learning and reflexivity.

- 66 Coates, B. and David, R. (2003) 'Learning for Change: The Art of Assessing the Impact of Advocacy Work', in J. Pettit, L. Roper and D. Eade (eds), *Development and the Learning Organisation*, Oxford: Oxfam, www.developmentinpractice.org/readers/Learning%20Org/Coates.pdf

This book chapter outlines the complexities of the changing advocacy environment and the key challenges in assessing advocacy efforts. It identifies common pitfalls for the monitoring and evaluation of advocacy and suggests some broad approaches to effective M&E for advocacy. This chapter raises issues such as target setting, cooperation, choice of tools, information sources and aims. Four principles for monitoring and evaluating advocacy are identified: ensure that what an NGO values gets measured; use methodological approaches that are appropriate for the type of advocacy work being carried out; look at the whole, not just the parts; and make impact assessment an organisational priority.

- 67 McGuigan, C. (2003) *Closing the Circle: From Measuring Policy Change to Assessing Policies in Practice*, United Kingdom: Save the Children, www.mande.co.uk/docs/ClosingTheCircle.pdf

This publication presents an overview of the current literature on impact assessment of advocacy. This is in the context of growing interest by NGOs who are increasingly engaged in advocacy and policy work and need to understand what works in order to prove and improve impact. Some promising tools and approaches exist that enable analysis of policy change, as well as civil society and democracy outcomes. Existing frameworks offer some initial guidance on evaluating these dimensions and are presented in this paper. It looks at the difficulties of attribution, the implications of adopting a rights-based approach within the context of advocacy work and the need to look at the policy implementation gap. It warns against seeking to refine the quality of evidence, to the detriment of investing efforts in strengthening civil society. By involving people in assessing the

effectiveness of public policy that affects their lives, impact assessment strategies can be directly linked to efforts to strengthen civil society and to form more democratic societies. The author urges viewing the M&E of advocacy as part of an holistic policy process, rather than as a separate task at the end.

5.2 Assessing partnerships and networks

- 68 Wilson-Grau, R. and Nunez, M. (2007) 'Evaluating International Social Change Networks: A Conceptual Framework for a Participatory Approach', *Development in Practice* 17.2: 258–71

The authors have developed a framework of indicators to help evaluate networks, with a focus on international social change networks. Their framework includes the assessment of four qualities of a network: democracy, membership diversity, dynamism and performance. These four quality criteria are related to three operational dimensions: political purpose and strategies, developed by clarifying the type of change that the network seeks; what values drive the membership and; how the network proposes to achieve the results that will fulfil its purpose. Organisation and management requires examination of the structure, operational management, institutional capacity and communication. Leadership and participation requires decision-making processes and collaboration that emerge from democratic leadership and the active involvement of the members. Based on these elements the authors compose a four-by-three matrix that can be used to assess the quality of the network, suggesting indicators for each cell that can guide the evaluator. The matrix is meant to be used flexibly, so not all cells may be relevant. Finally, they suggest a thorough look at four types of outputs from a network: operational outputs, organic outcomes (capacity of network members), political outcomes and impact.

- 69 Church, M.; Bitel, M.; Armstrong, K.; Fernando, P.; Gould, H.; Joss, S.; Marwaha-Diedrich, M.; de la Torre, A.L. and Vouhé, C. (2002) *Participation, Relationships and Dynamic Change: New Thinking on Evaluating the Work of International Networks*, Working Paper 121, London: Development Planning Unit, University College London, www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/publications/working%20papers%20pdf/WP121.pdf

The authors look at networks as a means for connecting people and developing partnerships. They examine how relationships and trust, structure and participation interrelate in the network and expand on each of these elements. They then relate this to the potential for evaluating the quality of the network. They stress the need to evaluate the capacity of a network to affect change both internally, at the level of processes and externally, at the level of influencing activities. The authors describe a possible process, with evaluation questions relating to: participation; relationship building and trust; facilitative leadership; structure and control; diversity and dynamism; and decentralisation and democracy. They argue that attempts to disaggregate the impact of the work of the individual members and that of the network in a lobbying or advocacy environment miss the point. Evaluating lobbying and advocacy work must try and understand the added value that linking and coordinating bring to advocacy.

5.3 Assessing conflict resolution efforts

- 70 Bloomfield, D.; Fischer, M. and Schmelzle, B. (2005) 'Dialogue 4: New Trends in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)', in *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/dialogue4_pcianew_complete.pdf

This dialogue is part of an extensive online publication that consists of a series of commissioned articles and a set of edited dialogues between practitioners active in peace and conflict resolution. Two chapters in Dialogue 4 are of particular interest: Chapter 4 'Third-Generation PCIA: Introducing the Aid for Peace Approach' in which Paffenholz outlines a basic model for assessing peace building efforts; and chapter 5 'Ways of Moving Forward: A Community of Practice and Learning'. In this chapter Barbolet et al. respond by outlining a theory of impact assessment for this domain of work and set out an agenda for improving practice. Also see reading 32.

- 71 Church, C. and Shouldice, J. (2003) *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions II: Emerging Practice and Theory*, INCORE Working Paper, Northern Ireland: International Conflict Research (INCORE), www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/publications/research/incore%20A5final1.pdf

This sister volume to reading 32 highlights key challenges encountered in evaluation of conflict resolution efforts and presents possible routes to overcome or minimise them. The challenges are organised along four key themes: the evaluator (roles, level of engagement and ethical responsibilities); the politics of selection and dissemination; affecting change beyond the project level; and challenging assumptions.

5.4 Organisational (capacity) assessment

- 72 Linnell, D. (2003) *Evaluation of Capacity Building: Lessons from the Field*, Washington, DC: Alliance for Nonprofit Management

This report is the result of research commissioned by the Alliance for Nonprofit Management that draws together lessons learned from those who have evaluated capacity-building programmes in the United States of America. Evaluation of capacity building is absolutely critical to achieving quality, although the practice is not widespread. Questioned posed include: what are the best ways to evaluate capacity-building interventions?; what is the role of stakeholders in the evaluation process?; are there some helpful case studies in capacity-building evaluation? Several case studies are included in this report and it contains resources to help evaluate capacity-building programmes taken from more than 60 interviews, a literature review and a scan of capacity-building evaluations.

- 73 McKinsey (2001) *Self-Assessment Capacity Grid*, Washington, DC: Venture Philanthropy Partners, www.emcf.org/evaluation/mckinsey_assessment_tool.htm

The McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid is designed to help non-profit organisations assess their organisational capacity. This practical tool illustrates a systematic approach to take stock of the types of capacities that should be in place for an organisation to be effective, giving each type a rating. Capacities are identified in seven areas: aspirations; strategy; organisational skills; human resources; systems and infrastructure; organisational structure; and culture. The grid should be used in conjunction with the Capacity Framework, which explains the seven elements of organisational capacity and their components. For each of these seven areas, a detailed description is provided that enables an organisation or network to identify how it rates in relation to four levels. This is not a precise rating, but rather a kind of 'temperature gauge' of current capacity levels. The ratings indicate if there is: a clear need for increased capacity; a basic level of capacity in place; a moderate level of capacity in place; or a high level of capacity in place. The grid asks the users to score the organisation for each element of organisational capacity by selecting the text that best describes the organisation's current status or performance. The grid is interesting because it illustrates how it is possible to disaggregate the idea of capacity and make it assessable. Social change organisations may wish to examine other capacities than the seven in the existing grid. It will also need to be adapted for use in collaborative social change settings, where the capacities of multiple actors need to be examined.

- 74 Lusthaus, C.; Adrien, M.H.; Anderson, G. and Carden, F. (1999) *Enhancing Organisational Performance: A Toolbox for Self-assessment*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, www.idrc.ca/openebooks/870-8/**

This book is a practical step-by-step guide to help an organisation decide whether to conduct a self-assessment, how to plan it and how to implement it. Several exercises and checklists are included for each step. The appendices contain self-assessment tools, tips on data collection, sample questionnaires and an example of how to use the exercises. The ideas in this guide are flexible enough to be used to assess a wide range of organisations, with additional adaptation needed for application to alliances and partnerships.

- 75 Levy, C. (1996) *The Process of Institutionalising Gender in Policy and Planning: the Web of Institutionalisation*, Working Paper 74, London: Development Planning Unit, University College London, www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/publications/working%20papers%20pdf/wp74.pdf**

This article describes a systematic framework to help analyse whether organisations or structures are consistent in their core values and functioning, when making a shift towards embracing a new value, such as gender mainstreaming. Many development-focused organisations profess to uphold a wide range of values such as gender equity, participation, power-sensitivity, poverty-focus and so forth. Yet in practice, these organisations are often inconsistent in what they say, what they enable and what they do. It is much harder to truly institutionalise values and much easier to simply state their importance. Levy noticed many disappointing results in the context of her work on mainstreaming gender equity in organisations. There was very little evidence of sustained change that related to a gender perspective in the practices of the organisations (NGO, government, bilateral and multilateral) that

she encountered. To encourage a more systemic and systematic analysis of what is needed to embed a value in an organisation, Levy developed the idea of a web of elements that need to be in place for coherence and consistency. The web identifies 13 essential areas that need to be synchronised for institutionalising a normative shift, such as gender awareness, stakeholder participation and power analysis.

5.5 Outcome mapping

- 76** Ambrose, K. (2004) 'Constructing Collaborative Learning: Outcome Mapping and its Multiple Uses in the Project Cycle of a SUB Initiative', unpublished paper, www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=56

This article summarises Outcome Mapping activities within the Ceja Andina project in Ecuador, highlighting the challenges, changes and projected actions that emerged from the application and innovation of the methodology. It explores two concepts that the methodology has helped support: social learning; and institutional learning and change. It concludes with the key lessons learned and challenges for the future. This short paper, while describing work in progress, is a practical illustration of the salient features of Outcome Mapping and their use within a real context.

- 77** Earl, S.; Carden, F. and Smutylo, T. (2001) *Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, www.idrc.ca/openebooks/959-3/

This book provides a comprehensive description of Outcome Mapping, its background, uses and overall process. Written for facilitators, it provides practical guidance and worksheets for a 12-step process for use with organisations and groups. Outcome Mapping is an innovative approach for planning, M&E and organisational learning that defines changes as changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of people, groups and organisations with whom a programme works directly. In working with the notion of boundary partners and progress markers, it challenges several assumed truths about M&E. Demand for Outcome Mapping is growing rapidly, as it provides practical options for tough M&E questions such as: how can we understand our contribution to social change within complex and dynamic partnerships?; how can we bring analytical rigour to our monitoring and analysis based on qualitative information?; how can outcome challenges, progress markers and strategy or organisational monitoring lead to new insights efficiently without 'death by data'?; how can we structure and track development in terms of partnerships and process? See www.outcomemapping.ca for additional information on Outcome Mapping.

5.6 Video, stories and the ‘most significant change’ method

78 Colton, S.; Ward, V. *et al.* (2006) *Story Guide. Building Bridges Using Narrative Techniques*, Berne, Switzerland: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 162.23.39.120/dezaweb/resources/resource_en_155620.pdf

This guide was designed to be thought provoking and practical for those seeking to use stories for organisational learning. It is based on the recognition that working with stories in organisational settings – to aid reflection, build communities, transfer practical learning or capitalise on experiences – is complicated and not suited to every situation. The materials contained here should help the reader develop competence and confidence as tellers or facilitators of telling and may also support the development of more complex methodologies and programmes involving knowledge sharing, change and communication. The guide contains: tips, templates and tools to help you find, share and capitalise on experience; reflections on the practical and the emotional aspects of story telling; consideration of the challenges and risks in institutionalising these approaches; and illustrations from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation’s (SDC) experience to date of putting stories to work.

79 Sydenham, E. (2006) *Participatory Video for Voice, Reflection and Exchange on Human Rights-Based Development. Guidelines to Participatory Video taken from Workshop Experiences in Somalia/Land*, The Netherlands: Equalinrights and Oxfam-Novib, www.equalinrights.org/file.html?id=1589

This report offers guidelines for those working to put participatory video into practice and deepen the application of rights-based strategies in their work. It traces through the process of a workshop held in Hargeisa, in December 2006. The facilitation tools draw from a range of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) principles and methods. The report applies and adapts PLA tools to the context of fragile states with a focus on human rights-based work. A range of practical steps and methods are described in terms of key objectives, elements and outcomes. Important considerations to ensure effective use of participatory video are highlighted, including preparations and editing. This reading is a practical discussion of a specific method, which can be used to support social change work by fostering learning through dialogue.

80 Lunch, C. (2006) *Experiences with the MSC Approach. Participatory Video for Monitoring and Evaluation*, Capacity.org issue 29, Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management, www.capacity.org/en/journal/tools_and_methods/participatory_video_for_monitoring_and_evaluation

Participatory video lends itself well to monitoring and evaluation. This article describes how communities are using video to capture and interpret stories of significant change. Participatory video is an iterative process whereby community members use video to document innovations and ideas, or to focus on issues that affect their environment or their village. The participants attend participatory video workshops where they can review what they and others have filmed. The videos are then screened to the wider community, thus enabling wider community

participation. This local viewing of the material is essential to participatory video – it opens up local communication channels, promotes dialogue and discussion, and triggers a dynamic exchange of ideas on ways to solve problems. It can also help to gauge trends, thus helping build consensus within the community.

81 Davies, R. and Dart, J. (2005) *The ‘Most Significant Change’ (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use*, www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf

This highly accessible and practical guide contains a detailed and clear description of the process and steps of implementing the ‘Most Significant Change’ (MSC) monitoring method, to support programme evaluation and for organisational learning. MSC is based on sharing stories of change and then deliberate selection of the story that most represents the type of change being pursued. The guide is useful for those who are not familiar with MSC, but also appropriate for the more experienced as it offers guidelines for analysing the level of change reflected in the stories. The guide includes a trouble-shooting section to help respond to concerns expressed by M&E stakeholders and a section on building capacities for the successful use of MSC.

82 Mitchell, M. and Egudo, M. (2003) *A Review of Narrative Methodology*, Edinburch, Australia: Defence Science and Technology Organisation Systems Sciences Laboratory, www.cnr.uidaho.edu/CSS506/506%20Readings/Review%20of%20Narritive%20Methodology%20Australian%20Gov.pdf

This annotated bibliography of 26 key readings focuses on the various approaches to studying narrative. It covers the approaches to narrative in an interdisciplinary manner, including the fields of psychology, sociology, linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, organisation studies and history. Narrative is an interpretive approach in the social sciences involving storytelling methodology. The story becomes an object of study, focusing on how individuals or groups make sense of events and actions in their lives. The theoretical underpinnings to narrative approaches are outlined, as are the applied benefits of storytelling such as how narrative conveys tacit knowledge, how it can enable sense making and how it constructs identity. For several of the readings, web-links are provided.

83 ActionAid International (undated), *Critical Stories of Change*, Johannesburg: ActionAid International, www.actionaid.org/main.aspx?PageID=286

This website describes ActionAid International’s work on using stories to reflect on, understand and document the realities, difficulties and joys of its human rights-based work. ‘The Critical Stories of Change’ have been used for personal reflection, supporting training efforts and in communications work, thus becoming a tool for learning about social change trajectories. On one level ‘Critical Stories of Change’ are case studies, but instead of a traditional case study that involves few people and little transformation in learning, the stories attempt to facilitate learning at different levels, including: dialogue around the process; critically challenging stakeholders and rights-holders on the work; situating the work in the broader political, social and economic context; and provoking readers into a deeper understanding of human rights-based approaches. Such stories can therefore be seen as a method

for assessing and learning for social change. The documentation process aims to democratise knowledge generation so that all those who played a part in the learning process are acknowledged appropriately in the final work as co-creators. The website provides some methodological guidance and links to the three examples (Brazil, India and Kenya) that have been written so far. A fourth 'story of change' about civil society dialogue and the EU can be found at: www.actionaid.org/main.aspx?PageID=286.

6 Inspiration from concrete examples

This section includes 14 examples of how assessment and learning processes about social change have been used to strengthen social change work. The examples have been taken from diverse parts of the world and Table 6.1 provides a road map to the core content of each readings. The readings listed here are in chronological order of publication.

Table 6.1 Roadmap to the examples from practice

Authors, no of reading	Geographic Area	Keywords
84. Shah, A.	Africa	Reality checks, learning through visits, critical perspective, listening, complexity of development.
85. McDougall, C. <i>et al.</i>	Nepal	Collaborative monitoring, equal access to opportunities, forest resources, local capacity, institutional change.
86. Mwasaru, M.	Kenya	Participatory action research, mining rights, resistance paradigm, capacity building, facilitation challenges.
87. Patel, S.	India	Coalition, slum dwellers, values versus results, unpredictability, relationships, intertwining of assessment and implementation.
88. Reilly, M.	USA	Activist context, historical and cultural factors, resistance to assessment, disconnect with donors, agenda for change.
89. Samba, E	Kenya	Women's movement, self-fuelled evolution, embedded processes, dialogue, stories, professionalisation.

90. ActionAid International	Global	International NGO, guidelines on accountability, learning and planning, principles and components.
91. Martínez, E.	Global	Impact inquiry, gender, gains, missed opportunities, unacceptable harms, methodological innovation.
92. David R. <i>et al.</i>	Global	International NGO, principle-driven learning and accountability, change process, epilogue on current status.
93. Mayoux, L. and ANANDI	India	Participatory learning, information systems for local empowerment, advocacy, dialogue, domestic violence, institutional strategies.
94. Menconi, M.	USA	Activist context, evaluation challenges, process description, limitations, future options for innovation.
95. Gillespie, G.	South Africa	Scenario planning, dialogue process, individual and policy impact.
96. Espinosa, R.D.	Colombia	Systemic example, indigenous groups, local indicators, decentralised governance, external process.
97. Ellis, P.	Caribbean, St. Ellis	Participatory impact assessment, community-based development, intangible welfare outcomes, gender relations.

84 Shah, A. (forthcoming 2007) 'Reality Check: Accountability, Learning and Planning With The People That Matter', *PLA Notes*, London: IIED

This article discusses a new practice that the author calls 'reality checks'. He contrasts this idea with 'Immersion', so-called 'exposure visits' by development professionals to the homes of poor people. Reality checks are exactly what the words state – an opportunity for those far-removed from the daily realities of poor people, to check one's work, ideology and practice against the realities that poor citizens face. During the reality check, three broad principles are applied: accountability, learning and planning. He describes as follows the experience of an HIV/AIDS-focused reality check by ActionAid International staff that led to profound learning:

Emotions that angered us about things we could have done differently. Discoveries that showed us we had not taken account of so many things. Hopeful moments that encouraged us that there are some things we are adding value to. Inspiring moments that reconfirmed to us the power of local citizenry. Challenging moments that provoked us to question our own

assumptions, beliefs and attitudes. Physically painful moments that showed us just how difficult it is to earn a livelihood. Learning moments that opened our eyes to whole new way of looking at things. Embarrassing moments that put us on the spot on how we use our resources.

(Shah, A., forthcoming 2007)

- 85 McDougall, C.; Khadka, C. and Dangol, S. (2007) 'Monitoring as Leverage for Equal Access to Opportunities in Nepal', in I. Guijt (ed.), *Negotiating Learning: Collaborative Monitoring in Forest Resource Management*, Washington, DC: Resources for the Future**

This case study illustrates how a monitoring system enabled members of a forestry user group to be held accountable for its equity-promoting goals, specifically by widening access to decision-making and planning, while being more systematic and inclusive. Particularly innovative is the development of a heterogeneity indicator to assess equity of participation, contribution and benefits. The article includes a detailed table that shows how collaborative, adaptive and reflective monitoring has led to concrete changes in institutional structures and processes.

- 86 Mwasaru, M. (2007) *Assessing Social Change Through Participatory Action Research: The Case of Kasighau Small-Scale Miners*, case study produced for the Assessing Social Change initiative, www.ids.ac.uk/ids/Part/proj/socialchange.html**

This is an account of a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project in Kenya that helped a coalition of activist groups dealing with rights to mining resources look at its struggles and gain new insights to help them re-strategise and empower themselves. The author describes the context in which PAR emerged as a strategic choice and the players involved in the process. He details the process and the impacts at different levels – individual, strategic and organisational. He discusses the key challenges and dilemmas faced when undertaking PAR from a resistance paradigm perspective.

- 87 Patel, S. (2007) *Reflections on Innovation, Assessment and Social Change. A SPARC Case Study*, case study produced for the Assessing Social Change initiative, Brighton: IDS, www.ids.ac.uk/ids/Part/proj/socialchange.html**

The author describes two decades of work by the Alliance (The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), The National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan) to overcome urban poverty in Mumbai. The activities are unplanned, evolve and involve many actors – and can be described once they have happened. However, their non-linearity and unpredictability means that they cannot be defined ahead of time, thus confounding mainstream evaluation approaches. The case study of the Mumbai Urban Transport Project emphasises how a superficial assessment could allow them to simply claim it as a success, but that a deeper assessment requires an analysis of the values, principles, processes and relationships that were built over years and made it possible to 'grasp the moment' and clinch victory at a critical time. Furthermore, the total entwinement of implementation, strategising and assessment defies the standard assumption that

isolates evaluation as a process and methodology. This highlights the mismatch between donor perspectives on assessment and the clash with their own approach to social change and development.

- 88 Reilly, M. (2007) *An Agenda for Change in the USA: Insights from a Conversation about Assessing Social Change in Washington, DC*, case study produced for the Assessing Social Change initiative, www.ids.ac.uk/ids/Part/proj/socialchange.html**

This paper is a conversation with activists that throws interesting light on the need to understand the political struggles and history of a particular context and, within that, to understand the role of assessment as part of a process of social change. The paper discusses the origins of resistance by activists to valuing assessment as a support to organising work. In particular, the conversation focuses on the disconnect between the need for embedded evaluation and the technocratic paradigm, which underpins imposed and dominant evaluation approaches. The author outlines an agenda for action for funders, activists and external supporters in the USA.

- 89 Samba, E. (2007) *Sauti Ya Wanawake. The Role of Reflection in Women's Social Change Work*, case study produced for the Assessing Social Change initiative, Brighton: IDS, www.ids.ac.uk/ids/Part/proj/socialchange.html**

This case study recounts how an emerging social women's movement in Kenya evolved in its approach to learning, at a range of different levels and through local processes. It discusses the slow changes from humble beginnings to tackle the deep-rooted violence against women, requiring action at individual, community, institutional and political levels. In parallel, the women's capacities had to be built through a largely self-driven process. Particularly important were the regular sharing meetings in which personal accounts and evidence-based strategising took place. As the movement grew, more systemic processes and structures emerged to ensure ongoing sharing and critical reflection about priorities, strategies and impacts.

- 90 ActionAid International (2006) *Accountability, Learning and Planning System*, Johannesburg: ActionAid International, www.actionaid.org/assets/pdf%5CALPSENGGLISH2006FINAL_14FEB06.pdf**

This document is the latest version of ActionAid International's Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS). It is arguably the most notable shift by an international NGO to ensure that its strategic priorities and principles are reflected in its procedures for learning and accountability. Particularly significant is the discussion around guiding principles and attitudes and behaviours, plus the participatory review and reflection processes, and peer reviews that have now been institutionalised. Also see readings 84 and 92.

- 91 Martínez, E. (2006) *The Courage to Change: Confronting the Limits and Unleashing the Potential of CARE's Programming for Women. Synthesis Report: Phase 2. CARE International Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women's Empowerment*, USA: CARE International**

This report summarises the findings from Phase 2 of CARE International's Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women's Empowerment. The report draws its insights from nearly 30 research sites and secondary data from nearly 1,000 projects, all of which make some claim to advancing the rights and well being of women and girls. The report is a frank account of dispelling myths and the development of inquiry processes that are opening up new channels for more honest dialogue. Impacts relate directly to the levels of trust, reciprocity and mutual respect between CARE and the women it claims to serve. The women have ideas about women's empowerment that sometimes challenge those of CARE. The author discusses the emerging positive impacts, as well as the missed opportunities and unacceptable damage for CARE as an international NGO.

92 David, R.; Mancini, A. and Guijt, I. (2005) 'Bringing Systems in Line with Values: The Practice of the Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS)', in R. Eyben (ed.), *Relationships for Aid*, London: Earthscan

This book chapter describes the challenges and successes experienced in the first years of ActionAid's organisational change process to adopt the Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS). It illustrates how the organisation managed to deal with controversy and resistance to change, while championing an approach where the organisation is accountable to primary stakeholders through a participatory review and reflection process. ALPS challenges the idea that accountability is about field offices writing reports to the central office and highlights how monitoring can be used as a source of learning. The article ends with a postscript by an independent reviewer, who looked at how ALPS had been taken up four years after it was officially launched.

93 Mayoux, L. and ANANDI (2005) 'Policy Arena Participatory Action Learning System (Pals): Impact Assessment for Civil Society Development and Grassroots-Based Advocacy in ANANDI, India', *Journal of International Development* 17: 211–42

This paper discusses preliminary experiences of Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI) in developing a new methodology termed Participatory Action Learning Systems (PALS). Building on both new and established participatory tools and processes, the aim is to develop participatory, integrated and sustainable information systems for local level empowerment, grassroots-based advocacy and programme-level decision making. Individuals and groups are supported to fulfil their own information needs. The individual and group level processes are scaled up and given additional strength through networking events where information is exchanged and consolidated for lobbying and advocacy. Although the methodology is still very much in the development phase, the quantitative and qualitative information has been rich and more reliable than surveys conducted under the same conditions. The PALS training process has already led to changes in people's lives, group functioning, and staff and participant relationships. It has facilitated discussion of complex and sensitive issues like empowerment, domestic violence, and wider institutional impacts and strategies.

- 94 Menconi, M. (2003) 'Bringing Evaluation to the Grassroots: Insights Gleaned from Studying the Mobilization for Global Justice', in *The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education*.
Paper originally presented to The Society for the Study of Social Problems, August 2003, www.infed.org/evaluation/evaluation_globalization.htm

This paper is an account of how an evaluation process was carried out in an activist setting, through the global social movement Mobilization for Global Justice. The author describes the specific issues that need consideration when carrying out evaluations in activist settings. She describes the four elements that comprised the programme's M&E process and gives an overall comment on the quality of insights gained. She closes with references to evaluation literature that may open up new avenues.

- 95 Gillespie, G. (2000) *The Footprints of Mont Fleur: The Mont Fleur Scenario Project, South Africa 1991–1992*, Democratic Dialogue Regional Project. See taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/content/1hca782543wnphje/fulltext.pdf for an independent commentary on this process.

This case study describes the use of 'scenario planning' for thinking about possible futures for a 'new South Africa' in 1990. Up until this point, scenario planning was well known in business circles but had not been tried in the civic arena. The Mont Fleur Scenario Project led to the communication of three scenarios. The process had three effects. First, it influenced the thinking of the individuals involved, some of whom went on to occupy powerful political and national positions after the elections in 1994. Second, the scenarios informed public debate in the period of transition to democracy, as participants presented them to the National Executive Committees of political parties, the cabinet, business leaders and the general public. Third, the Mont Fleur project influenced the thinking of the African National Congress executive group, particularly around its economic policy, as the scenario work illuminated some of the dangers of a populist macro-economic approach.

- 96 Espinosa, R.D. (2000) 'Monitoring and Evaluating Local Development Through Community Participation: The Experience of the Association of Indigenous Cabildos of Northern Cuaca', in M. Estrella, J. Blauert, D. Campilan, J. Gaventa, J. Gonsalves, I. Guijt, D. Johnson and R. Ricafort (eds), *Learning from Change: Issues and Experiences in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation*, London: Intermediate Technology Publications

This chapter summarises the innovative and long-term experience of a grassroots indigenous association in designing and implementing a self-managed and participatory form of M&E. The M&E process was aimed at supporting learning-based development planning, decentralised governance and programmatic work, while enabling social change. Details are given about the steps of process design, indicator development, monitoring and community validation processes.

- 97 Ellis, P. (1998) 'Rose Hall Ten Years Later: A Case Study of Participatory Evaluation in St. Vincent', in E. Jackson and Y. Kassam (eds), *Knowledge Shared: Participatory Evaluation in Development Cooperation*, Kumarian Press/International Development Research Centre, www.idrc.ca/openbooks/868-6/

This case study is an engaging account of participatory evaluation for community-based development with a particular focus on gender and development. It tells the story of an impact assessment process ten years after implementation started, by a committee that had originally used participatory evaluation as part of project implementation. The subsequent assessment provides evidence to show how ordinary people can, through the use of the participatory methodology, become empowered and motivated to participate in and take control of their own development. The chapter's originality lies in its emphasis on intangible welfare outcomes such as women-men relationships, emotions, feelings of self-worth as well as self-reliance.

Annex 1 Overview of all readings

Readings for 'Perspectives on assessment'	
Action Research and Appreciative Inquiry	<p>1 Reason, P. and McArdle, K.L. (2006) 'Action Research and Organisation Development', in T. Cummings (ed.), <i>Handbook of Organisation Development</i>, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications</p> <p>2 Rogers P.J. and Fraser, D. (2003) 'Appreciating Appreciative Inquiry', <i>New Directions For Evaluation</i> 100</p>
Organisational learning	<p>3 Woodhill, J. (2007) 'M&E as Learning: Rethinking the Dominant Paradigm', in J. de Graaf et al. (eds), <i>Monitoring and Evaluation of Soil Conservation and Watershed Development Project</i>, Enfield, NH: Science Publishers</p> <p>4 Dlamini, N. (2006) 'Transparency of Process. Monitoring and Evaluation in Learning Organisations', <i>CDRA Annual Report 2005–2006</i>, Cape Town: Community Development Resource Association</p> <p>5 Rogers, P. and Williams, B. (2006) 'Evaluation for Practice Improvement and Organisational Learning', in I.F. Shaw, J.C. Greene and M.M. Mark (eds), <i>The Sage Handbook of Evaluation</i>, London: Sage Publications</p> <p>6 Pasteur, K. (2006) 'Learning for Development', in R. Eyben (ed.), <i>Relationships for Aid</i>, London: Earthscan</p> <p>7 Britton, B. (1998) <i>The Learning NGO</i>, Occasional Papers Series 17, Oxford: INTRAC</p>
Popular education	<p>8 Freire, P. (1972) <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i>, Harmondsworth: Penguin</p> <p>9 Foley, G. (1999) <i>Learning in Social Action: A Contribution to Understanding Informal Education</i>, London: Zed Books</p>
Feminist evaluation	<p>10 Seigart, D. and Brisolaro, S. (eds) (2003) 'Feminist Evaluation: Explorations and Experience', <i>New Directions for Evaluation</i> 96</p>
Participatory and Empowerment Evaluation	<p>11 Mayoux, L. (2005) <i>Between Tyranny and Utopia: Participatory Evaluation for Pro-Poor Development</i>, Performance Assessment Research Centre Discussion Paper, Edinburgh: PARC</p>

	<p>12 Fetterman, D.M. (2005) 'Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice. Assessing Levels of Commitment', in D.M. Fetterman and A. Wandersman (eds), <i>Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice</i>, New York: Guildford Publications</p> <p>13 Cousins, J.B. and Whitmore, E. (1998) 'Framing Participatory Evaluation', <i>New Directions for Evaluations</i> 80: 5–23</p> <p>14 Guijt, I. and Gaventa, J. (1998) <i>Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Learning from Change</i>, IDS Policy Briefing 12, Brighton: IDS</p>
Democratic Evaluation and Dialogue	<p>15 Pruitt, B. and Thomas, P. (2007) <i>Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners</i>, Washington, DC/Stockholm, Sweden/New York NY: General Secretariat of the Organisation of American States, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and United Nations Development Programme</p> <p>16 Figueroa, M.E.; Kincaid, D.L.; Rani, M. and Lewis, G. (2002) <i>Communication for Social Change: An Integrated Model for Measuring the Process and Its Outcomes</i>, The Communication for Social Change Working Paper 1, New York: Rockefeller Foundation and Johns Hopkins University</p> <p>17 House, E.R. and Howe, K.R. (2000) <i>Deliberative Democratic Evaluation Checklist</i>, www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/dd_checklist.htm</p>
Utilization-focused Evaluation and Realistic Evaluation	<p>18 Patton, M.Q. (1997) <i>Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text</i>, 3rd edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications</p> <p>19 Tilley, N. (2000) 'Realistic Evaluation: An Overview', presentation at the founding conference of the Danish Evaluation Society, September 2000</p>
Readings for 'Analytical frameworks'	
Thinking about rights-based approaches	<p>20 Chapman, J.; Pereira Junior, A.; Prasad Uprety, L.; Okwaare, S.; Azumah, V. and Miller, V. (2005) 'Rights-based Development Approaches: Combining Politics, Creativity and Organisation', in <i>Critical Webs of Power and Change – Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy</i>, London: ActionAid International</p>

	<p>21 Nyamu-Musembi, C. and Cornwall, A. (2004) <i>What is the 'Rights-based Approach' all About? Perspectives from International Development Agencies</i>, IDS Working Paper 234, Brighton: IDS</p> <p>22 Theis, J. (2003) <i>Rights-based Monitoring and Evaluation. A Discussion Paper</i>, London: Save the Children</p>
Power analysis	<p>23 Miller, V.; VeneKlasen, L.; Reilly, M. and Clark, C. (2007) <i>Making Change Happen: Power. Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace</i>, Making Change Happen 3, Washington, DC: Just Associates</p> <p>24 Gaventa, J. (2005) <i>Reflections on the Uses of the 'Power Cube' Approach for Analyzing the Spaces, Places and Dynamics of Civil Society Participation and Engagement</i>, CFP Evaluation Series 2003–2006 no. 4, The Hague: MBN Secretariat</p>
The lens of gender empowerment	<p>25 Bell, E.; Esplen, E. and Moser, A. (2007) <i>Gender and Indicators</i>, BRIDGE Cutting Edge Pack 11, Brighton: IDS</p> <p>26 Mosedale, S. (2005) 'Assessing Women's Empowerment: Towards a Conceptual Framework', <i>Journal of International Development</i> 17: 243–57</p> <p>27 Puntteney, D.L. (2002) <i>Measuring Social Change Investments</i>, San Francisco: Women's Funding Network</p> <p>28 Kabeer, N. (2000) 'Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment', in S. Razavi (ed.), <i>Gendered Poverty and Well-Being</i>, Oxford: Blackwell</p>
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