

National Evaluation Capacities 2017 Pre-conference workshop

Outcome Harvesting —An evaluation approach for identifying and understanding development outcomes in complex circumstances

Facilitator: Ricardo Wilson-Grau, president of Ricardo Wilson-Grau Consultoria em Gestão Empresarial Ltda, resides in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil but works internationally. Since 2003, he has evaluated over fifty international social change networks, European and North American development funders and civil society organisations. With forty co-evaluators, he developed the “Outcome Harvesting” that now has been used to collect and make sense of thousands of outcomes of over four hundred NGOs, CBOs, government agencies, multilaterals, research institutes and networks in 143 countries around the world. He has led Outcome Harvesting workshops at EES 2014 and 2016, ReLAC 2015 and AfrEA 2017.



Level: Intermediate/advanced

Workshop content and tentative agenda: Using exercises with a simulated case study, participants spend 60% of the workshop doing exercises in small groups as a means of working through the Outcome Harvesting steps:

1. Design the Outcome Harvest with key evaluative questions based on the principal uses of the primary users of the process and findings.
2. Review documentary material to draft potential outcome descriptions of who changed their behavior, how the intervention contributed and other relevant data such as the significance of the outcome.
3. Engage with human sources of information to complete outcome descriptions and formulate additional ones.
4. Substantiate the veracity of select outcome descriptions with independent third parties and deepen understanding.
5. Analyze and interpret the outcome information to answer the evaluation questions.
6. Support the use of the Outcome Harvest findings.

The training methodology is participatory and utilization-focused and organized around a case study specially written for the participants who have registered by 3 October 2017. The dynamic combines brief conceptual presentations and examples with group and plenary discussion, individual reflection, and principally two case study exercises in small groups.

- 15 minutes: Introductions
- 60 minutes: Introduction to Outcome Harvesting — essential concepts, with exercise
- 15 minutes: Coffee
- 90 minutes: Identifying and formulating outcomes (Steps 1, 2, 3 and 4) with case study exercise
- 45 minutes: Lunch
- 90 minutes: Making sense of outcomes (Steps 5 and 6), case study exercise
- 15 minutes: Coffee
- 60 minutes: Making sense of outcomes, case study exercise continued
- 20 minutes: Summary discussion
- 10 minutes: Evaluative reflection

Special attention is given to dealing with the uncertainty about the causal relationships linking inputs, activities and outputs with the outcomes of development interventions. As all concepts will be applied in working groups by the participants, they will build their practical capacities and leave the course with skills in using these complementary tools to monitor and evaluate their interventions for the purposes of both accountability and improving performance.

Preparation: Preparatory reading and exercises will be circulated to participants no later than 17:00 CET on Thursday 12 October. They should reserve 1-2 hours for preparation before the workshop.

Learning outcomes Upon successfully completing this course, participants will understand the approach sufficiently to be able to decide when, how and why Outcome Harvesting can be a useful for their development evaluations.