



Strategy for results and measurement

Background

The design and focus of the Voices for Change (V4C) programme calls for a significant investment in systems which promote learning about what is working and what is not, while seeking to track the learning curve for changes in social norms underpinning gender equality in Nigeria.

Whilst informed by evidence, the approach adopted by V4C is innovative and largely untested, both globally as well as in Nigeria. The programme is therefore understood as a pilot to be used to develop the evidence base around approaches to tackling social norms underpinning gender inequality. Understanding, documenting and communicating what works is therefore an important dimension of the

V4C's approach

Given the nature of the V4C programme, our results and measurement strategy has sought to both promote **learning about what works** and **provide accountability** to DFID. We have made a significant investment in results measurement with seven per cent of the total V4C budget allocated for measurement across the results chain¹. This strategy has permitted the use of appropriate methods to fulfil each distinct purpose.

The key results measurement approaches for promoting learning about what works are:

- Attitudes, Practices and Social Norms (APSN) survey: an annual population representative survey of young people in V4C target states to measure change in attitudes and practices relating to three targeted behaviours² and to understand whether V4C has contributed to these changes. As the behaviours the programme seeks to change are understood to be socially based, to track change, we are not only measuring what young people themselves think and do, we also assess young people's expectations about others: their perceptions of how others (in their reference group) think and behave, as well as their perceptions of how their reference group expects young people themselves to think and behave.
- Case studies: A set of qualitative research studies which explore how key changes have been brought about and the contribution V4C has made in that process. The

¹ The causal sequence for a development intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts, and feedback. In some agencies, reach is part of the results' chain. Related terms: assumptions, results framework.

² These are: violence against girls and women; non-involvement of women in decision-making; and non-acceptability of women to lead.

methodology for the case study process draws heavily on the ‘Outcome Harvesting’³ approach as a way of gathering an understanding of the changes taking place. This was chosen to broaden the search for changes beyond those intended by the project activities, so that we can notice unintended and negative changes, as well as keep the focus on outcome rather than output level.

To demonstrate results for the funding committed, we have a set of tools to facilitate accountability to DFID. These are:

1. Theory of change (ToC) and intervention logic⁴: V4C’s theory of change and intervention logic set out how the team expects change to happen and how the various components of the programme work together to achieve the desired change. The effectiveness of V4C interventions depends on complex interactions and feedback loops within their results chains. As a result, V4C’s measurement system is structured to produce deeper insights into the effectiveness of the big pushes at the level of ‘self’, ‘society’ and ‘institutions’ to inform learning and programme reviews.

Figure 1: V4C’s theory of change



2. Logical framework: Using the DFID logframe, V4C has focused its assessments on relatively contiguous relationships in the results chain.

³ See Ricardo Wilson-Grau & Heather Britt, Outcome Harvesting, May 2012 for a description of the Outcome Harvesting approach.

⁴ Intervention logic explains how the project objective is to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions.

- a) At the *outcome* level, we measure the degree to which intended outcomes have been achieved. V4C's success is measured by the extent to which young people in the four target states have more positive attitudes and practices relating to three targeted behaviours. The assessments also explore young people's expectations about others: their perceptions of how others (in their reference group) think and behave (first order expectations), as well as their perceptions of how their reference group expects young people themselves to think and behave (second order expectations)⁵.
- b) At the *output* level, intervention-based monitoring is applied to assess how V4C interventions have achieved change and the extent to which this has led to an improved enabling environment for young women's empowerment. Each output area has tailored tools for assessment. The measurement markers primarily focus on reach, message awareness, and taking action, with intentional focus on quantitative indicators – essential for understanding the scale of programme.

Results measurement is mainstreamed as an integral process across the programme. This implies that technical specialists take charge of tracking results of programmes implemented for the associated output areas with support from the Results and Measurement Technical Lead. In addition, the Results and Measurement Technical Lead provides oversight for tracking and reporting at the outcome level.

V4C's experience

In the last four years, V4C has invested in robust measurement systems to support adaptive programming and the ability to demonstrate impact. The strategy forms the basis for the measurement systems which allowed for in-depth tracking and analysis of **what change is happening, why, where and how** as well as generate better understanding of **costs in relation to impacts**.

Learning about what works

The APSN and case studies are rich sources of learning, which help build the evidence base around what works and what is contributing to outcome level results. These studies easily facilitated learning for the V4C programme. While the APSN surveys and case studies have provided a body of evidence on some impacts of the programme implementation, successes and gaps, these studies have not been fully utilised for programme reviews. The annual studies largely assessed the programmes outcome at the third and fourth (final) year of the programme hence not allowing sufficient time to inform programme implementation reviews, although they could be instrumental for planning a new phase of work on social norms change. At the output level, we applied intervention-based monitoring to assess whether and how V4C's interventions have achieved desired changes and the extent to which this has led to intended (and

⁵ Social norms theory recognises that individuals' behaviours are often shaped by behavioural expectations within a social group. People adopt certain behaviours because they believe that most people in their reference group (the people who are important to them) behave in this way and that people in their reference group expect them to behave in this way. This understanding has explicitly informed the V4C measurement of attitudes, practices and social norms.

unintended) outcomes. In addition, we used feedback from implementing partners to inform programme implementation reviews.

Because the programme is using a ToC approach, the measurement systems have provided opportunities to reflect on (a) if 'we are doing things well'; (b) whether 'we are doing the right things'; and (c) 'how we know what is right to do'⁶. For us to continually learn lessons and adapt, we have applied methodological rigour across our measurement systems and processes so that data collected is comparable and reliable.

Accountability tools

DFID has given V4C the space to treat the ToC/intervention logic and logframe as living documents, to evolve with changes experienced by the programme. This has been critical to ensuring we have an accountability framework which fits – and aids – the programme. Programme management has focused on delivery of logframe targets (amongst other attributable outputs). The logframe has therefore helped drive implementation in an appropriate way, especially in finding the right balance between quantitative 'hard' indicators and providing evidence that explains the difference the programme is making to people's lives.

The appropriate measurement tools developed to address each change promise vary depending on the intervention and the context. To increase our understanding of the pace of change and the trajectory of change, we ensured that our measurement efforts have strong emphasis on quantitative indicators of progress. This has facilitated comparison across different variables e.g. by state, sex, exposed/not exposed to V4C interventions, and with previous years. As a result, data collection at various levels of the result chain has been *effectively* managed, thus meeting the reporting requirement to DFID.

Shared responsibility for results measurement

We were able to fully mainstream monitoring and evaluation across the programme – hence, making results measurement, analysis and use of results data 'everyone's responsibility'. This means we are implementing a rigorous and adaptive system that encourages synergies and cross team working in relation to measurement and action learning. This approach has provided an opportunity to make data amalgamable in conducting robust and convincing analysis and disseminating the findings for multiple purposes. With common parameters around data collection and common areas of inquiry (i.e., what the change is trying to accomplish), different sources of data were amalgamated, and this is comparable across the change areas. This step has allowed for instance, alignment of the pre- and post-training surveys for school-based programme and religious leaders for better analysis and comparison.

The challenges and V4C's response to them

The logframe required regular and substantive revisions throughout the life of the V4C programme, which although time consuming, was essential to ensuring the logframe was fit for purpose and could help drive programme implementation. The need for regular revision of the

⁶ Guijt, I. (2010) 'Exploding the myth of incompatibility between accountability and learning', in Capacity development in practice: Improving on results.

logframe is unsurprising for a project working in such a new area. It was difficult to predict the most useful indicators and the pace of change, particularly of attitudes and behaviours, and there were pressures from DFID to be ambitious at some time. DFID was receptive to the need to evolve the logframe and allowed the space to do this, and the external annual reviews guided this. As a result, the targets were well aligned to programme activities and the results informed discussions on how to evolve implementation strategies to improve the achievement of results.

Measuring progress in some areas of the programme was particularly challenging. For example, relying on data supplied by media houses for media reach turned out to be not sufficiently robust for our purposes. A media tracking survey aimed to understand V4C messages and brand appeal was however developed. Similarly, knowing the depth of learning that could realistically be achieved through our online Purple spaces and therefore what was a reasonable indicator and target posed a challenge.

Conclusions and practical implications

It is important to **invest in results measurement for learning**, by programme implementation team and for global evidence building. This is still an area where evidence about what works is limited so necessary to learn by doing and share that learning with others. In addition, it is important to anticipate and build in sufficient time and space to treat the ToC/intervention logic and logframe as living documents to evolve as programme implementation evolves, whilst also staying true to the overall objectives and agreed outcome level targets.

Due to the nature of V4C programme of challenging restrictive social norms that may inhibit women's opportunities, it pays to **ensure results measurement captures the difference the programme is making to the intended beneficiaries** and is able to communicate this. Above all, measurement instruments that take considerably resources (for example, time) to implement such as the APSN survey should be made to serve the programme. This can be done by **making headline findings quickly available to the programme team** in an accessible format and by convening team discussion to internalise the findings and agree implications for programming.

Mainstream responsibilities for results measurement across technical leads, with the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit supporting and co-ordinating has proven to be an applicable approach for a social change programme like V4C. However, it is necessary to ensure attention is given to creating a joined-up M&E system.

Making data amalgamable has proven effective in conducting robust and convincing analysis and disseminating the findings for multiple purposes. It is possible to amalgamate results data from different sources, and thus make comparable across the change areas. This way, the programme can easily communicate its success and impact, to influence policy and future directions of programming and to also contribute to the growing area of interest around personal transformation and empowerment.