

Outcomes Working Group Meeting - Notes

SPTF Annual Meeting, Mexico City

Tuesday, June 6, 2017

Session leaders:

- Amelia Greenberg, SPTF;
 - Bobbi Gray, Grameen Foundation;
 - Norma Rozas Lizarraga, independent consultant
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Introduction and Overview of SPTF's work (Amelia Greenberg)

- **SPTF**, which was founded in 2005, is a non-profit with 3000+ members that promotes social performance management (SPM) via convening stakeholders, coordinating work on relevant topics and disseminating resources. It is active worldwide.
 - **Structure:** small Secretariat, works with consultants
 - It manages the Outcomes Working Group (OWG). **OWG overview:**
 - Manages development of new resources in response to member demand
 - Seeks innovative practice and disseminates it
 - Hosts webinars as a platform for discussion and to share lessons from the field
 - Coordinates with other outcomes-related initiatives
 - Pilot tests outcome indicators
- Key definitions for outcomes work
 - Inputs → activities → outputs → outcomes → impact
 - *Inputs, activities* and *outputs* are the measures of implementation.
 - *Outcomes* are the measures of change. They are defined as changes for clients that are plausibly associated with the financial service provider's (FSP's) services
 - *Impact* is the measure of attributions of change. It is change that is caused by an intervention
 - **Outcomes management** refers to a multi-step organizational system for the collection, analysis, and use of outcomes data

Pilot test in Peru (Norma Rozas)

- Outcomes work is essential. We have to fight for outcomes to achieve change and work with our clients.
- The OWG is holding a pilot test of its indicators in Peru. The pilot has 3 objectives:
 - Pilot test indicators. Institutions have their own indicators and methodologies. We don't require that MFIs change their methodologies.
 - Test methodologies.
 - Track progress over three years
- Pilot process: (1) Define theory of change (Hold focus groups with clients to help clarify); (2) Analyze information that already exists; (3) Test indicators; (4) Test methodology; (5) Test results.
- Pilot test is working with three institutions and in contact with an additional three to share learning:
 - PRISMA, FINCA Peru, and Nordino are fully participating in the pilot.
 - Alternativa, Manuela Ramos and ADRA are working on outcomes data. They are included in the learning process, but they are not actively engaged in the pilot.
- The pilot started by working with each of the institutions to understand their theory of change (TOC). The TOC is a tool for developing solutions to complex social problems. It explains how a set of short- and medium-term achievements pave the way for producing long-term results. It's important to be intentional about your TOC, and to track process systematically.
- Steps for developing a TOC:
 - Identify a long-term goal.
 - Start off with the preconditions necessary to achieve the goal
 - Identify interventions your institution can conduct to create the right conditions

- Develop indicators for each condition that will be used to evaluate the performance of the interventions
- Summarize the process and different parts of your theory
- Lessons learned from TOC
 - Many institutions do not have an articulated TOC
 - It is an iterative process
 - Without a clear TOC, work can be heavily influenced by external pressures
 - Iris Lanao (FINCA Peru) said sometimes people think outcomes work involves using all your resources and spending large amounts of money. Of course you do have to invest, but it does not have to be to that degree.
 - In every training session you have with staff, start with the mission so that everyone knows where the institution is headed.
- When you're thinking about outcomes for clients that you might want to track:
 - Look at the vulnerabilities that families face. In Latin America, savings are very important.
 - FSPs usually start with making loans, but then they may move into savings, which clients really value.
 - People value education for their children.
 - The institution needs to systemize empowerment. For example, some women talk about new decisions they are making without realizing that is empowerment.
 - It's important to note if you are reducing poverty. Look at national statistics for this.
- The pilot institutions conducted focus groups to understand what clients want and then see if that matches the institutions' TOCs. These help clarify the TOC. Lessons learned from focus groups:
 - Health (physical and mental), children's well-being, housing, employment, and food security were priorities for clients.
 - Social capital was important.
 - Access to credit is important to clients
 - Clients really value savings.
 - Clients mention financial stress. Being indebted for a long time is a stress. It is important to look at the number of years that the clients have loans. Women, who mostly use loans for families, tend to have the most financial stress (paying children's school fees on time, etc.)
 - Women speak more about mental health, interpersonal relationships/social capital, self-esteem and empowerment than men.
 - In the case of the coffee cooperative, investing in buying land for farms and housing was a priority.
- Focus groups help support the institution's TOC. Institutions need to think about how they're handling these variables. Do they have processes to answer these questions? Are they listening to the client?
- You don't need to do many client focus groups. Just conducting a few is sufficient.
- One opportunity to conduct a client focus group is to use the people in the waiting room the FSP.
- Input from focus groups help strengthen the TOC. The institution can have an idea of what it wants to do, but it's important to confirm that that is also what the clients want.
- It's important to hold focus groups over time, as clients' needs change.

Where are we? (Bobbi Gray)

- To recap pilot project process:
 1. Started talking with pilot institutions about their TOCs to get idea of their visions for the types of changes they wanted to track.
 2. Then, used focus discussion with clients as a tool to validate the TOC.
- There's rarely a TOC that is actually written down that people use to develop the process. We used that as a starting point. Freedom From Hunger (FFH) has worked with high-level questions for

- clients, such as “What do you want? How do you define a good life?” and then have the institution think how to help the clients get there.
- This is an update on our pilot work on outcomes with three institutions in Peru:
 - **FINCA.** We had worked with FINCA on a health project, and they had two surveys from that previous project. We went back to those clients and repeated the survey, adding new questions from the TOC. FINCA just finished the repeat study. Now we can compare change over time. This also is an example of making sure the FSP starts by using what data it already had.
 - **PRISMA** began looking at the forms and processes that already existed and started from there. It’s a small organization, so there are limitations on how big they can make this pilot. They’re adjusting a client input form that they’ll repeat every year.
 - **Norandino** is a coffee cooperative. They had never collected the PPI before. So they did that and thought about what indicators in addition to PPI they’d want to collect. They’re collecting data now.
 - There is also the opportunity to collaborate with Global Partnerships, MFO, ADRA, and Alternativa regarding their outcomes study.
 - Additionally, we are collaborating with Manuela Ramos, which is a partner of FFH. They just started education on stress management (mental and financial), and they have added financial stress indicators, which is a concept the pilot wants to research.
 - Work on outcomes outside of LAC:
 - Grameen Foundation India is working on a massive baseline assessment of 20-30 MFIs. Some of the SPTF recommended outcomes indicators were included in the survey.
 - Aga Khan Foundation is looking across its organization to see if it can analyze outcomes for all its partners and if it is possible to harmonize at least in some ways the data that are collected across partners. Our first work with them has been with the partner in Afghanistan.
 - The OWG is also collaborating closely with Friendship Bridge. They have been collecting the same data over time, and we’ll be looking at some of their data as well.
 - The pilot is testing the process of collecting and analyzing data, but it’s also fine-tuning the questions. We’re building out the indicators as we go, and we’re trying to build on experience.

Activity: Participants examined a form that a real institution has used and thought about the types of data the form is collecting. Bobbi noted that institutions tend to keep adding data on top of data, to the point where you may have too much and don’t know what to do with it. The point is to get as lean as possible while collecting the data you need, so the cost of collecting the data is not prohibitive.

- **Participants’ responses to activity:**
 - The form gives housing, health and education levels. A lot of information on business as well. That helps give information on economic activities, apart from consumption.
 - The form seems very limited. It should include issues, such as whether the client has insurance, savings, financial education. There should also be an interview about client environment.
 - It’s important to train the advisor on the TOC so that they know the type of information they are supposed to collect. For example, sometimes a client indicates that s/he has no source of income, but an interview can reveal alternative sources of income. It’s important for an advisor to look out for this.
 - Bobbi underscored this point, noting that staff need to know why data matters. That helps them understand what they’re asking for.
 - The form has a bias for the information it is asking for and why it is asking for the information. Clients often try to assess what you are asking for and then give an answer that fits that mold because they want a loan. Fundacion Paraguaya separates the process to get more objective information: (1) access to credit and then (2) separate in-depth interview of clients to get more objective information about the TOC.

- There should be a record of financial and non-financial services that the client has received. If we can track those services they've used and compare them to the outcomes, then we can see which ones are effective.
- The form should include PPI and cash flow information. It presents a basic profile of the loan applicant, but it does not say much about the financial status of the household.
 - Tom Shaw noted that the PPI is very useful for a population sample, but it is invalid at the household level. We need to be careful about using the PPI properly.
- Bobbi encouraged participants to go back to their institutions and analyze their own forms to see what data they are collecting. What do you have that you do not use, and can you replace it with something else?

Activity: Experience-sharing exercise: Participants gathered in small groups and discussed the following questions:

- What do you measure?
- What have you learned?
- What decisions have you made based on data?
- What are your challenges?
- What will you ideally do next?
- **Participants' responses to the activity:**
 - What do you measure?
 - Fondo Esperanza asks self-awareness questions, such as "How satisfied do I feel with myself?" They ask this over time and see if there is a change.
 - It's important to ask questions about social capital to assess the link with community groups. How much support do clients get from their communities?
 - What have you learned?
 - Institutions have to collect data on empowerment by asking qualitative questions.
 - Fundacion Paraguay developed a methodology that's actionable for the families. Data often is extractive, not actionable. To fix this, it developed a poverty stoplight for clients to self-diagnose. That information stays with the family and is also used by the institution to create products.
 - Tom Shaw of CRS noted you need to bring various sources of data together and together analyze it jointly. Amelia and Bobbi agreed, saying that all of the data (client satisfaction data, exit surveys, etc.) is most helpful when looked at together.
 - One participant's institution segmented the market first to better understand the needs of clients. It measured two areas: entrepreneurial areas (by poverty line) and social aspect (by poverty, education, health). It learned that it needs to have the same products but different packaging for different clients.
 - Some outcomes information needs to come from an in-person meeting, while other information is better suited for a survey.
 - What are your challenges?
 - You need to know the right questions to ask. You do not want information that is lacking or information that you do not need.
 - Several participants noted that high client exit rates make it difficult to monitor outcomes, as it takes a certain amount of time for outcomes to occur.
 - Another challenge is how to measure actual impact, if you wish to understand or attribute how much of improved life of a client is due to the FSP's work?
 - You need to understand how regulations affect the market.
 - One participant noted that one of the main challenges of triple-bottom-line institutions is maintaining a balance. You need to ensure to keep a balance and try to convince the

- board on the justification of collecting this data and how it's going to help the clients in the long run.
- You need to change services to tailor them to different client segments. The same products can produce different outcomes for different clients.
 - Illiteracy in many countries is high, and sometimes clients do not know what is being asked.
 - It can be difficult to ensure good data quality. You need to systematize data into a management information system (MIS), and have a system for validating it.
- What will you ideally do next?
 - One participant noted that he wanted to reduce client turnover. If an institution is only perceived as providing microloans, clients may leave. If it's viewed as a life enhancing program with insurance, savings, etc., client retention may improve.
 - CRS is trying to identify behavioral changes that could be observed without asking any questions. The analysis will start soon.

Activity: Participants analyzed three data sets (FINCA Peru, Friendship Bridge, and anonymous institution). They reviewed the data and discussed the following questions:

- What are your questions/reactions to data?
- Think of one way this data would be relevant to each of the following:
 - Your marketing strategy
 - Your product design
 - Your staff training
 - Your definition of your goals (what they are and/or when you will achieve them)
 - Your investment in social data monitoring.
- **Participants' responses to the activity:**
 - Devahuti Choudhury said this is PPI data and marketing would require insight into other data. However, you can easily see at least three branches that are not reaching out to very poor clients. Others are pushing themselves to reach out to poorer clients. For marketing, you would need to look at the branches in more detail and study the regions. It could be that the institution has found a balance between branches that are more profitable but serving less-poor clients, and branches that are less profitable but doing more outreach to poor clients, which is a goal of the institution.
 - Another participant said that he needs more context to reach a conclusion on defining goals. Does the institution have a goal of working with the poor?
 - The Friendship Bridge dataset focused on household vulnerability, increased empowerment and business development. It would be worthwhile to have more segmentation. For example, with the portion of clients whose savings increased over time: Did that hold true with clients who stayed with the organization over time? Did clients who drop out not have savings? It would be good to have segmentation.
 - Lubna Tiwana of Khushali Microfinance Bank noted the importance of product design. When she started at Khushali Bank, it only did solidarity lending. After looking at the Universal Standards for SPM, it began to collect more data (complaint handling, exit surveys, etc.) and realized it was not providing products and services fit to clients' needs. It began offering individual lending, and it created products based on call center data and questionnaires. This helped increase outreach from 200,000 to 600,000 clients. If research is done in an accurate way, it helps with the identification of target clients.
 - Note the importance of staff in outcomes measurement and management. Staff need to be trained well on what data to collect, why the institution is collecting that data, and how to collect it. It's also important for the institution to invest time in helping personnel understand and buy into the institution's social goals.

- Amelia noted that involving your staff in outcomes work can also help improve staff retention. It is very motivational and helps staff see the value of their work.

Activity: Participants filled out a form to design data analysis for their institution or partners.

- Amelia asked participants to think through what they need: What are your challenges? What data do you want that you're not collecting? It's also important to build a business case for measuring outcomes. What are the operational and strategic challenges that you're facing, and how do you think outcomes data may help you with that?
- ***Participants' responses to the activity:***
 - Amelia asked participants to share their targets for specific areas, as well as discuss why and over what period of time. She clarified what she meant by goal vs target. If you say you want to improve poverty, that's a goal. A target is a number (i.e., you want 10 percent of clients to have a certain outcome).
 - Participant from Genesis said he wanted to measure financial health of clients. The target is that 50% would improve, 30% would remain the same, and 20% would be worse off. Improvement is defined as the income statement of a client increasing 10% in 12 months. The target is based off of previous experience. He said that his institution realized the clients whose income stays the same or worsens is due to not receiving the proper amount of credit. It's due to poor segmentation when offering products.
 - Caitlin Scott of Friendship Bridge said her institution's target is related to food security. It's targeting 80% to improve, 15% to stay the same, and 5% to be worse off. Friendship Bridge has baseline data on food security and knows the relationship between it and the organization's loan cycle.
 - Lubna said Khushali Bank wants to improve client well-being in the next 2-3 years. Well-being will be measured by cash flows
 - Amelia said this is an area where the OWG is potentially moving. These are the kinds of questions we want to communicate to funders and stakeholders so we have a shared understanding of what is realistic in terms of amount of change and the timeline required for change to happen. It is going to be different for different indicators. Eventually, we will be moving toward centralized standards for what it means to have good outcomes.

Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI): Application and Use Devahuti Choudhury (Grameen Foundation)

- What is the PPI:
 - Poverty measurement tool for organizations with a mission to serve the poor
 - 10 easy-to-answer questions and a scoring system
 - Provides the likelihood that the survey respondent's household is living below the poverty line
 - Country-specific; there is one PPI each for 62 countries
- New organization committed to the PPI
 - After an intensive search process, Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) was selected as the new "home" of the PPI; the PPI moved to IPA in July 2016. Grameen Foundation remains on the steering Committee
- Use of the tool
 - Can show the poverty status of clients at one point in time.
 - Can show how poverty status changes over time.
- PPI allows you to correlate the score according to the poverty line that is most appropriate for your organization.
- How to use PPI data?
 - Poverty outreach and movement
 - Percentage/number of clients below poverty line

- Percentage/number of clients showing movement or change
 - Percentage/number of clients moving above the poverty line
 - Helps identify areas of strengths and weaknesses when used as a management tool
 - Are there relationships between client groups and (1) branches, (2) cohorts of clients, (3) products and services, (4) other insights: social, economic, behavioral
 - For example, health expenditures are one of the biggest challenges clients face. You can do a segmentation to find out if failure to cope with emergencies is tied to poverty levels. That helps you design products and services for the segment that needs it most.
 - PPI analysis and SPM:
 - *Social performance areas*: poverty outreach, poverty movement, adherence to double-bottom line
 - *Factors*: geography, field unit, product, client segment (ex: Who is dropping out and does that have any correlation with poverty levels?)
 - *Analysis*: snapshot of portfolio, trends, tracking over time, correlation
 - Applications
 - Recruitment policy and incentives. For example, DfID asked Grameen to do a benchmarking study on poverty outreach and then used that data to incentivize partner FSPs: “Nobody is reaching out to clients in these areas. I’ll give you a preferential rate to go to these areas.” This relates to strategic expansion.
 - Product development. CARD (Philippines) saw there was not a large uptake for one of its savings products. Data analysis revealed that low uptake was correlated with higher poverty levels. CARD lowered the fee for this product and enrollment shot up.
 - Client retention
 - Outreach metrics
 - *Concentration*: Percentage of clients living below the poverty line
 - Concentration = Number of poor clients/Number of clients
 - *Scale*: Number of poor households served
 - Scale = Number of poor clients
 - *Penetration*: Percentage of poor households served by organization.
 - Penetration= Number of poor clients/Number of poor households
 - Targeting: Actual vs Targeted
 - The first step is to figure out what your organization’s goals are and whether targeting can serve those goals. Then, look at targets and actual poverty concentration.
 - *Inclusion*: Desired clients are correctly targeted.
 - *Exclusion*: Undesired clients are correctly excluded from a program.
 - *Under-coverage*: Desired clients are mistakenly excluded from a program.
 - *Leakage*: Undesired clients are mistakenly targeted.
 - Segmentation: Pro-poor organizations use client segmentation for market research, customer profiling, and evaluating the effectiveness of products and services.
 - “Typical” segmentations: geographic, demographic (urban vs rural), gender, age, poverty line segments
 - “Behavioral” segmentations: transactional patterns, product mix, active vs dormant, customer life cycle
 - Segmentation example 1:
 - Regional level benchmarking allows for peer group comparison and also for relevant stakeholders to compare trends across regions.

- Segmentation example from a region: This example shows that more than a quarter of the FSP's portfolio is above the poverty line. If it's trying to target below that, this would trigger the FSP to look at this.
- Segmentation example 2:
 - The PPI helps practitioners understand the different occupation segments that exist within a portfolio and the differences in poverty levels therein.
 - In this example, 76% of those engaged in irregular labor were below the poverty line, while 58% of those who had own enterprise were below the poverty line.
- Segmentation example 3:
 - Mexico has a new PPI.
 - Develops understanding of the geography you work in
 - Realistic expectations while setting outreach goals
 - Appreciation of the context within which operations exist (urban vs rural). Most of us tend to use national poverty benchmarks, but we should look at regional poverty benchmarks.
 - Comparison with underlying poverty in the population

Truelift Tool (Carmen Velasco, Co-chair of the Truelift Executive Committee)

- Is Microfinance sustainable? Does it reduce poverty?
 - More and more institutions are providing microfinance services, and more clients are using it. Why? Is it our moral responsibility? Is it because of the social need to have more inclusion, or is it because of market opportunities?
 - Millions use microfinance services because of supply and demand, and many use them even when it does not help them.
- Truelift has identified key management practices of institutions that achieve positive changes in the life of clients. It is a global initiative with participants from many countries. It wants institutions to be accountable and has created assessments and a pathway to help institutions improve their practices.
- Truelift's TOC: Measure → Learn → Adjust and change.
- Truelift's Pro-Poor Principles:
 - Intentionally reach out to those who live in poverty. It's important that it is intentional.
 - Tailor products, services and offerings to the needs of the people who live in poverty.
 - Track the progress of people who live in poverty.
- Truelift provides a pathway for adhering to the Pro-Poor Principles. The Truelift milestones:
 - Interest: Join the community that shares practices
 - Aspiring: Complete a self-assessment
 - Emerging: Promising practices; verification by third parties approved by Truelift
 - Achiever: High scores on many indicators for poverty; verification by Truelift
 - Leader: High compliance in all indicators for poverty; evaluated by external entity, approved by Truelift.
- Friendship Bridge completed a Truelift self-assessment and became a Truelift Leader. Caitlin Scott of Friendship Bridge said the institution places itself on a continuum of financial inclusion to transformation, and considers itself closer to the transformative end. The Truelift recognition validates that it's on the right track. It used a rating process, which validated whether or not it had good SPM practices, and the Truelift evaluation was complementary. You can download a self-assessment or have a rater do an external evaluation.
- Truelift does not operate in a vacuum. The Principles are integrated into other industry resources and tools.
 - It is based in the Universal Standards for SPM and is part of Dimension 1, which stipulates that institutions monitor social goals.

- The Pro-Poor Principles are integrated into the SPI4's poverty module. The SPI4 is a free tool that is fully aligned with the Universal Standards. You can download the SPI4 at <http://www.cerise-spi4.org>. It can be helpful to conduct a self-assessment and give the data to your board.
- The Truelift indicators in the SPI4 have detailed explanations on how to achieve the indicator fully.
- Once the tool is applied, you can get the information verified by a third party, which lets you move to the next Truelift milestone.
- Truelift wants to become a trademark similar to “Fair Trade.” We want social investors to come to your institution because you have a trademark that recognizes that you look for changes in the lives of clients. Not just saying this in your mission statement, but looking at results.
- Fundacion Paraguaya has also received recognition from Truelift. Eduardo Gustale said the request to do a Truelift assessment came from lower-level managers. Fundacion Paraguaya is very aggressive about reducing poverty. Poverty is no longer complex for us. We had the goal of understanding what it means to be poor and Paraguay and how to stop being poor in Paraguay. Lessons learned:
 - Loan advisors have goals for delinquency and poverty elimination.
 - Fundacion Paraguaya developed a poverty stoplight that can be used by other organizations. It's available for others who want to use it. It wants to keep improving the tool.
 - Being Truelift leaders is a responsibility. You cannot reach this level and stop. You have to continue.
 - Outreach means to focus on vulnerable population and be effective in addressing the problems of that population.
 - Measuring the indicators has allowed Fundacion Paraguaya to expand the range of products, as well as its revenues and financial sustainability.
 - We've been able to identify how many clients don't have bathrooms and have created products that solve that problem.
 - We also provide follow up that allows us to measure our impact as an organization. An effective measurement of impact allows us to better measure our resources. We involve clients in the management of information and the methodology for measuring poverty. It puts clients in the driving seat, which is empowering.
- Carmen: “Let's not kid ourselves; we are not serving the poorest of the poor. We can do better.”
- The Truelift assessment and resources can be found on its website: <https://sealofexcellence.wordpress.com/>

Key resources (Amelia Greenberg)

- All available on the OWG's webpage: <https://sptf.info/working-groups/outcomes>
- *Making the Case to FSPs for Outcomes Management* (available in Spanish and English on SPTF website)
 - A few years ago, SPTF said it wanted to develop a resource with key tips on managing outcomes. Many people said that first, you need to develop a resource on *why* institutions should manage outcomes.
 - Categorized outcome data uses by three areas:
 - Helps your institutions be accountable to your social goals.
 - Helps review systems and strategy (what's working, what's not)
 - Helps improve outcomes. Interviewed people who were using outcomes data. One example: an FSP was hoping to see changes in client behavior related to the financial education training that the FSP was offering. Outcomes data showed disappointing results. The FSP dug a little deeper and saw that when some staff

were delivering financial education, they saw changes in clients; when other staff delivered it, there were not changes. This analysis showed them that the problem was not the curriculum but the staff training. They adjusted the staff training and saw improvements in client outcomes.

- *Guidelines for FSPs on Outcomes Management* (available in Spanish and English on SPTF website)
 - Guidelines for managing outcomes credibly and affordably.
 - 10 steps centered on planning, collecting, analyzing and acting on data. The steps are presented in a wheel because this is a continuum; need to continually work on outcomes.
- *Harmonized outcomes indicators*
 - Four areas:
 - Business and entrepreneurship
 - Economic poverty, assets and housing
 - Resilience and vulnerability
 - Health
 - Now looking at other areas: social capital/empowerment, education, agriculture
 - Selected the indicators based on the following criteria: relevant, usable, clear, feasible, comparable)
- *Guidelines for investors on outcomes management*
 - Lucia Spaggiari of Microfinanza Rating worked with investors on outcomes management. They're working with investees and are often suggesting indicators.
 - She talks about some of the challenges that investors have looking across the whole portfolio, how to manage risks. We have the asset owners, the financial managers and the FSPs: one area of confusion is who is in charge of what? This gives a perspective on different ways investors manage outcomes.
- *KOMIDA (Indonesia) Case Study*
 - A couple years ago, KOMIDA became very serious about measuring outcomes. They used the SPI4 tool to assess strengths and weaknesses, and they came up with a long action plan to address the weaknesses. The process of implementing action plan can be very difficult: have to develop buy-in, determine how to sequence activities, have to be realistic about the timeline, etc. This case study discusses implementing an action plan and the challenges that come with it.
- *Webinar recordings*
 - The OWG has had about 15 guest speakers discuss different aspects on outcomes. For example, FINCA discussed ways to get better quality data. Friendship Bridge and Grameen Foundation have done a webinar on financial health.
 - Presentations and recordings are posted online, as well as a two-page brief that summarizes key points.

Activity: Participants analyzed the indicator sets for the categories that have not yet been fully developed. They were asked to think through: (1) challenges/complexities (2) reactions to proposed indicators (3) other suggestions

- ***Participants' responses to activity:***
- Social capital and empowerment
 - Challenges
 - How to specifically define “emotional support”
 - Distinguish financial support. It's either in cash or in-kind.
 - Definition of what kind of learning should they receive
 - Ambiguity vs precision in the questions
 - Challenges for groups

- You should include information about solidarity and influence.
- Indicator: Have you participated on the board of your group?
- Reactions to proposed indicators
 - The question in 7.1/7.A is already covered in 5 and 6.
 - In 7.B, instead of “you,” it should be “group.”
- Other suggestions:
 - Instead of using, “Who has the last say/word,” we would rather ask, “Who makes the decision?”
 - Question B.4 is not necessary to ask again.

Additional notes from the social capital conversations:

- “important issues” is not clearly defined
- How is the first part of 7 different from 5 and 6? They are similar.
- Second part of 7 has two components. If the group chooses to speak to the leader, it doesn’t mean any given individual in the group actually talked to the leader. If the group makes a decision to talk to the leader, then you measure whether the group worked together, not measure whether an individual spoke.
- Indicators on empowerment are related to education
- Regarding health, the head of the family may make the decision. Could be an older person, and not always the primary earner in the household.
- CRS finds that decisions on a child’s health is usually make by the mother. Decisions about other household members’ health may be made by someone else.
- “who has the last Word” is a very American phrase, and it also implies that there was a discussion when there might not have been.
- CARD asks – who makes the decision on how to use the loan?
- The client may answer differently depending on how you ask the question (e.g., whether you say “has the last Word” or “who makes the decision”)?
- CRS is working on methodologies to promote mutual decisions. This runs counter to the idea of one person having control. A good outcome for empowerment could be having both heads of household discuss and reach a joint decision.
- Education
 - Challenges/complexities
 - Matching indicators with themes that the FSP wants to explore
 - How to avoid socially accepted responses
 - Skillsets of data collectors. How well can the tackle themes such as education?
 - How do the staff prioritize themes such as education?
 - What changes can be reasonably expected through microfinance operations on themes like education?
 - Reacting to indicators
 - Indicators are not clearly reflective of the sub-theme
 - Quantitative nature of indicators is a plus.
 - Suggestions
 - Capturing education levels of adults in the family
 - Setting the reference period of change
 - Differentiate outputs and outcomes
 - Resilience towards ability to conceive education as a sub-theme
 - 1. Drop indicator:
 - 1.1 How many children have stopped attending school because of economic difficulty?
 - Data:

- Denominator: number of children in school age
- Numerator: number of children that stopped attending school in the evaluation period.

Additional notes from the education conversations:

- Some of the indicators are not framed well. There seems to be not a clear tie between the framing questions and the sub-category and indicators in many cases. For example, the satisfaction with school attendance questions seem more related to ability to pay for school.
- Note that adult education within the family is a factor that will influence kids' education, but the MFI has no ability to influence parents' education levels. Still, knowing that about parents may help you to interpret data.
- What is the frequency of data collection on education indicators? When SPTF provides guidance on recommended indicators, add guidance on the periodicity for data collection on those indicators (e.g., once every two years).
- With education, the change you can expect to see would be very indirect if you are offering generic loan products. Think about the time frame: your loan leads to consumption smoothing, then maybe increasing an income and/or savings, and then maybe after that the client would start sending more kids to school. If on the other hand your product is directly related to education, like a loan to pay school fees, then it would be realistic to measure change in a year.
- Financial capability for paying for school is a sub-theme listed as an indicator. Inability to pay for school is an indicator but is misclassified as a sub-theme.
- Regarding satisfaction, should you ask about the client's satisfaction with the financial product that is supposed to help him/her put his/her kids in school?
- Maybe you need to ask first questions about clients' own goals regarding their kids' education? Then you can ask whether they are seeing positive changes related to those specific goals.
- Complication related to education – why measure attendance if they are not learning anything? Is the teacher even there (in India sometimes they are not but kids still go to get the free lunch and then they go home)? Are children advancing a grade at the end of the year?
- The indicators on Bobbi's sheet related to reasons for not attending school are good.
- Agriculture
 - What MFI products support agriculture? Need to segment out the different agriculture products.
 - Livestock. Most go to this.
 - Crop growing
 - Seeds, fisheries, dairies
 - Land ownerships (community ownership vs individual ownership)
 - Role of intermediaries (decrease in use of intermediaries to get product to market)
 - Role of government with guarantees to support sector
 - Insurance product development
 - Ready markets – post-harvest losses
 - Getting the right prices for farmers for their crops
 - Farmer investments in technologies (i.e. drip irrigation)
 - Farming “business” indicators – planning growing marketing/financing of products
 - Agriculture is an ecosystem. That's why it's hard to detect impact.
 - Products based on commodity prices. Relationship between international and regional commodity prices.
 - Lack of information by farmings.
 - Impact on land → soil quality, environmental impacts.

- Role of fintechs might influence. Giving information.
- Good agriculture practices
- Land ownership will be contextual for an outcome
- Food security
- Area under cultivation

Conclusion (Amelia Greenberg and Bobbi Gray)

- Participants shared lessons learned and burning questions:
 - Measuring outcomes is difficult but possible.
 - Discussing agricultural indicators is not a straightforward matter. Need to talk about ecosystems, how to help farmers sell at a better price, etc.
 - Important to move people from focusing on outputs to focusing on outcomes.
 - Thin line between outcomes and impact. I want to better understand how to differentiate between the two.
 - Are indicators an end to themselves, or are they a means to the end?
 - If you ask specific questions, you can guide the people. If you are more open, you get a wealth of information but it is more difficult to tabulate.
 - The most important thing from today was the theory of change and how the indicators lead to the theory of change.
 - Measure what your strategic framework is telling you to change. Don't measure what you don't have to measure. If the process is too long, it can be very expensive.
- Key takeaways from Amelia and Bobbi
 - It's important to recognize that we have made a lot of progress. People are getting more sophisticated about outcomes management.
 - Use the resources out there. Don't start from scratch.
 - Use the harmonized indicators as a starting point.
 - We're still learning. The extent you can participate in the OWG makes everyone stronger.
 - Give feedback on indicators in Google docs (ask Bobbi for the link, or it is also in today's PowerPoint document).
 - These indicators will be refined. The indicators are still theoretical. We're now testing them. If you do have experience using them, contact Bobbi to let her know. We're trying to capture different institutions' experiences to capture lessons learned.
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