Integrating complexity concepts into program theory

A demonstration of the Actor-based Change Framework

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The Actor-based Change (ABC) Framework

What is Programme Theory?

- A set of assumptions about how an intervention achieves its intended results and under what conditions.

- An explicit identification of the implicit connection between activities and outcomes.

- Helps to articulate our understanding of how and why change happens.

- A way of attempting to be more honest about complex change processes.

- Assists in understanding programme attribution vs. contribution.
The Actor-based Change (ABC) Framework

Complexity and Programme Theory

**Simple situation**
*Domain of the known*

**Complicated situation**
*Domain of the unknown but knowable*

**Complex situation**
*Domain of the unknowable*

- Input
- Processes
- Outputs
- Outcomes

- Final Outcome
  - Intermediate outcome 1
  - Intermediate outcome 2
  - Short-term outcome 1
  - Short-term outcome 2
  - Short-term outcome 3
  - Causal Mechanism 1
  - Causal Mechanism 1

No image available
Complex systems
Definition and properties

Complexity arises in any system in which many agents interact and adapt to one another and their environments.

These interactions and adaptations result in evolutionary processes and often surprising "emergent" behaviors at the macro level.
Actor-based approach to mapping the system
Minimum requirements for programme theory in complex systems

- Describes system dynamics:
- Development problem to be addressed
- The relevant actor groups associated with the problem
- The system’s boundaries
Focus on behaviour change
Minimum requirements for programme theory in complex systems

- The conditions that dictate practices and relationships
- How behaviours need to change to address the problem at the system level
- How programme interventions contribute to this change

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Causal inference models which capture emergent change
Minimum requirements for programme theory in complex systems

- Expected pathways by which interventions lead to actor-level changes
- Possible pathways by which these lead to systems change
ABC Framework in Practice
Using the ABC Framework to articulate program theory

**Actor-based Systems Map**
The current system dynamics in terms of the development problem to be addressed, the main actor groups in the system, and the conditions that dictate practices and relationships

**Change Agenda**
Which conditions need to shift to lead to sustainable changes in practices and relationships amongst system actor groups which address the development problem in a sustainable manner

**Causal Impact Pathways**
The expected pathways by which interventions lead to actor-level changes and the possible pathways by which these lead to systems change
Case Study:

Nepal Integrated Program for Strengthening Security and Justice (IP-SSJ)
Nepal Integrated Program for Strengthening Security and Justice (IP-SSJ)

Funding
UK Department for International Development (DFID)

Timeline
2015 to 2020

Programme goal
• Improve capabilities of formal and informal institutions to provide justice to poor and marginalised communities in Nepal

Programme implementation
• Delivered by a number of implementing partners, carrying out a diverse range of activities to improve quality and accessibility of S&J services in the 25 targeted multi-investment districts
Nepal Integrated Program for Strengthening Security and Justice (IP-SSJ)

Independent impact evaluation

**Timeline**

2015 to 2020

**Evaluation activities**

- Impact Evaluation
- Thematic Research
- Programme Monitoring
- Learning and Improvement

**Evaluation implementation**

- Palladium
- Consortium of local Nepali partner organisations
Programme Theory Development
**DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM**

- High rates of unreported crime, especially among women and girls
- High rates of physical violence
- Social norms, family pressures and community expectations
- Community attitudes can mean that state and societal institutions are unwilling to respond
- Costs, part. access to the formal justice system
- Services are available in minority of districts
- The nature and performance of the duty-bearing institutions of the state
- Political interference and corruption

**WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?**

- Poor are left without dignity, are prevented from realising their rights and remain trapped in chronic poverty
- Victims of crimes
- Poor and marginalised
- Women and girls
- Perpetrators of abuse

**WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?**

- Friends, family, community leaders, religious leaders are not supportive
- Victims lack opportunity & motivation
- Service providers are not preventing crimes or effectively responding
- Informal service providers are not effectively responding
- Political actors at the local and national level

**CURRENT STATE**

- Victims of crimes
- Poor and marginalised
- Women and girls
- Perpetrators of abuse

**ACTOR GROUPS**

- Victims of crimes
- Poor and marginalised
- Women and girls
- Perpetrators of abuse
High rates of unreported crime, especially among women and girls

High rates of physical violence

Survivors of GBV do not use services

Partners commit GBV
## CURRENT STATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low use of formal security and justice services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Low knowledge of their rights when victim of a crime, especially related to GBV</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Limited availability of specialized police and shelter services to cater to survivors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strong social norms which detract from women reporting abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perceptions that police do not provide effective and efficient services to survivors of GBV, and thus survivors have little to gain for seeking their help</td>
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## BEHAVIOUR

### CAPABILITY

*Psychological or physical ability to enact change*

### OPPORTUNITY

*Physical and social environment that enables change*

### MOTIVATION

*Reflective and automatic mechanisms that influence change*

## Survivors of GBV

## OTHER RELEVANT ACTORS

- Local police
- Media
- Community leaders
- Local police
- Friends, family members and community and religious leaders
- Local police
Police do not provide effective and efficient services to population

- Limited knowledge of guidelines for dealing with GBV cases, including referral mechanisms
- Poor technical skills
- Infrastructure, equipment, facilities lacking/poor
- Police reluctant to respond to crimes deemed as “social” issues
- Poor performance management systems

**CURRENT STATE**

**BEHAVIOUR**
- **CAPABILITY**
  - Psychological or physical ability to enact change
- **OPPORTUNITY**
  - Physical and social environment that enables change
- **MOTIVATION**
  - Reflective and automatic mechanisms that influence change

**LOCAL POLICE**

**OTHER RELEVANT ACTORS**
- District Police, National Police, Police academies
- National Police
- Ministry of Interior
- District Police, National Police

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High rates of unreported crime, especially among women and girls

Legal aid providers do not provide effective and responsive services

Community Mediators do not provide effective and responsive services

GBV groups are not providing effective services

Women’s groups do not provide effective services

Survivors of GBV do not use services

Local police do not provide effective services

District Police don’t provide effective service

WCO are not effectively coordinating GBV services

Formal Justice Actors provide ineffective, unfair & corrupt services

GBC groups are not providing effective services

Political Leaders do not actively address GBV in community

Community & Religious Leaders do not actively address GBV

Partners commit GBV

Friends do not actively address GBV in community

Schools, teachers and PTAs do not actively address GBV in community

Media do not efficiently and effectively cover GBV issues

National Police manage systems change for police

DWC provide limited support to GBV services

WCSC provide ineffective services in a few areas

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Police do not provide effective and efficient services to population

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Local Police

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**FUTURE STATE**

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**CAPABILITY**

*Psychological or physical ability to enact change*

**OPPORTUNITY**

*Physical and social environment that enables change*

**MOTIVATION**

*Reflective and automatic mechanisms that influence change*
Change in Behaviour

Change in COM
- Knowledge & awareness
- Skills
- Infrastructure & equipment
- Tools for implementation

Assumptions
- Willingness to change behaviour
- Budget available to continue implementing
- Policy framework is supportive to change

Intervention

Assumptions
- Skills trainings are relevant
- The right people attend the training events
- Equipment is maintained

CONDITIONS WHICH MUST BE TRUE!!!
Local Police

### FUTURE STATE

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Behaviour Change
- Provide effective and efficient service to the population
- Are proactive and take preventative action

Causal link assumptions
- Police can communicate with local people
- Sufficient female officers
- Superiors are supportive of reform
- Police have interest in serving public
- Satisfied with job conditions, remuneration
- Improved organisation/systems

Change in behavioural conditions
- Improved knowledge of guidelines and policies for dealing with SGBV cases
- Improved technical skills
- Positive attitudes about addressing all types of crime
- Improved infrastructure, equipment and facilities
- Strong performance management system incentivises police performance

Causal link assumptions
- Trainings are relevant
- Training targets the right people
- Low turn over/transfer
- Infrastructure and equipment is maintained

Interventions delivered
- Capacity building on GBV case handling to police
- Capacity Building of Local Police
- Infrastructure and equipment support
- Performance management

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Reduced rates of unreported crime, especially among women and girls

Legal aid providers provide effective legal services

Survivors of GBV use S&J services

Family members commit less GBV

National Police manage systems change for police

District Police provide effective service

Local police provide effective and responsive services

Theory of Action

Formal Justice Actors provide effective services

Survivors of GBV use S&J services

Family members commit less GBV

Reduced rates of physical violence

Legal aid providers provide effective legal services

Survivors of GBV use S&J services

Family members commit less GBV
Emergent outcomes

- Reduced rates of unreported crime, especially among women and girls
- Reduced rates of physical violence

**Legal aid providers** provide fair and effective services

**Community Mediators** provide effective and responsive services

**Formal Justice Actors** provide fair and effective services

**District Police** provide effective service

**Local police** provide effective and responsive services to the population, particularly to survivors of GBV

**Women's groups** actively identify and refer cases of GBV

**GBV groups** actively identify and refer cases of GBV

**WCO** effectively coordinate district-level GBV response

**DWC** actively support GBV coordination and service delivery

**NC** actively participate in GBV case management

**National Police** effectively implement performance management system for police

**WCSC** provide specialised services to survivors of GBV

**Political Leaders** challenge social norms around GBV

**Community & Religious Leaders** challenge social norms around GBV

**Partners** do not commit gender-based violence

**Friends** encourage victims to seek support

**Mediators** provide effective and responsive services

**GBV groups** actively identify and refer cases of GBV

**Community & Religious Leaders** challenge social norms around GBV

**Schools, teachers and PTAs** challenge social norms around GBV

**Media** efficiently and effectively cover issues of GBV in the community

**Survivors of GBV** use services

**Partners** do not commit gender-based violence

**GBV groups** actively identify and refer cases of GBV

**Women’s groups** actively identify and refer cases of GBV

**District Police** provide effective service

**National Police** effectively implement performance management system for police

**Formal Justice Actors** provide fair and effective services

**Legal aid providers** provide fair and effective services

Reduced rates of physical violence
Reduced rates of unreported crime

Perpetrators commit less crime

Victims of crime use S&J services

Police provide more effective and responsive services

Communities have improved capabilities, opportunities and motivations to address social norms around crime

Communities and police have opportunities to build bridges

Other service providers have improved capabilities, opportunities and motivations

More crimes are reported to service providers

Communities use S&J services

Police provide more effective and responsive services

Victims of crime use S&J services

Other service providers provide more effective and responsive services

Communities have improved capabilities, opportunities and motivations to address social norms around crime

Communities and police have opportunities to build bridges

Other service providers have improved capabilities, opportunities and motivations

Police have improved capabilities, opportunities and motivations

Supply & demand-side actors reached with by IP-SSJ

Supply & demand-side actors change S & J-related practices

Communities change S & J-related practices

Communities benefit from practice changes

Improved security and access to justice

Assumptions

THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC)

UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT STATE

IP-SSJ DETAILED THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC)

IP-SSJ OVERVIEW THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC)

Uses of Programme Theory developed through the ABC Framework
### Theory of Action

**Behaviour Change**
- Provide effective and efficient service to the population
- Are proactive and take preventative action

**Change in Behavioural Conditions**
- Improved knowledge of guidelines and policies for dealing with SGBV cases
- Improved technical skills
- Positive attitudes about addressing all types of crime
- Improved infrastructure, equipment and facilities
- Strong performance management system incentivises police performance

#### Causal Link Assumptions
- Police can communicate with local people
- Sufficient female officers
- Superiors are supportive of reform
- Police have interest in serving public
- Satisfied with job conditions, remuneration
- Improved organisation/systems

**Interventions Delivered**
- Capacity building on GBV case handling to police
- Capacity Building of Local Police
- Infrastructure and equipment support
- Performance management

#### Indicators

- % of community members reporting strongly agree or agree to the statements:
  - I am satisfied with the quality of police services
  - It is easy to talk to the police as they are friendly with the community

- Nepal Police expressing positive attitudes towards crime prevention

- % of police with improved capacity score

- % of police satisfied with relevance of training

- Number of police trained

#### Data Source

- Household survey
- Qualitative data collection
- Programme data – training evaluation

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PROGRAMME STRATEGY FOR ADAPTATION AND LEARNING

THEORY OF ACTION

Behaviour Change

Causal link assumptions

Change in behavioural conditions

Causal link assumptions

Interventions delivered

Assess and adapt intervention strategy

Reassess assumptions

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PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Qualitative data collection

Household Surveys

Programme monitoring

Theory of Action

Reduced rates of unreported crime, especially among women and girls

Reduced rates of physical violence

Legal aid providers provide effective legal services

Formal Justice Actors provide effective services

Survivors of GBV use &SJR services

Family members commit less GBV

National Police manage systems change for police

District Police provide effective service

Local police provide effective and responsive services

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Conclusions
Advantages and challenges

**Advantages**

- Captures complexity while strengthening causal logic
- Framework can be applied at any point in a program process
- Encourages local participation in program theory design processes
- Methodologically pluralistic

**Challenges**

- Requires upfront investment in time and staff resources
- Requires skilled facilitation with multiple stakeholders
- Data-intensive nature might overburden M&E system