Innovations in Theory-Based Evaluation

Using Nested Actor-Based Theories of Change to Evaluate a Complex International Development Intervention

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Innovations in Theory-Based Evaluation: Using Nested Actor-Based Theories of Change to Evaluate a Complex International Development Intervention.
Presented by Andrew Koleros at the 13th European Evaluation Society Biennial Conference
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Origins in programme evaluation

Monitoring tool for accountability and performance

Usefulness to support program design

Used by programs as a communication tool
Actor-based nested ToCs as an approach to articulate an evaluable ToC which both addresses complexity and allows for sound theory-based evaluation.
Security Sector Accountability and Police Reform (SSAPR) Programme

• DFID-funded 5 year programme (2009-14)
• Improved sense of public safety & security among Congolese citizens

• Police Support Programme
• Control & Coordination of Security Sector
• External Accountability
• ME&L
SSAPR Independent Impact Evaluation

Evaluation questions

- Did SSAPR interventions contribute to changes in police capacity and accountability, stakeholder empowerment and ownership and sustainability over the intervention period? How did these changes occur?
- Did these changes contribute to more effective policing? How did this occur?
- Did more effective policing contribute to improved security for Congolese citizens?
- What were the key factors that contributed to these changes?
Impact evaluation design

- Quasi-experimental evaluation design approach
  - Cross-sectional representative household sample surveys in matched pilot and comparison sites
  - Analysed through a difference-in-difference (DiD) approach

- Nested within an overarching theory-based evaluation design approach
  - Use of quantitative and qualitative primary and secondary data
  - Contribution analysis (CA) as an analytical approach to identify contributory causes to results and support causal claims
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Developing an Evaluable ToC as Part of Evaluation Design
A critical but often neglected component of conducting a robust CA

SSAPR Theory of Change:
- Programme began in 2009
- TOC developed in 2013 by UK Stabilisation Unit staff
- Reflected programme logic from implementers' perspective
Developing an Evaluable ToC as Part of Evaluation Design

A critical but often neglected component of conducting a robust CA

Evaluability assessment:

- Clarity
- Relevance
- Plausibility
- Validity or reliability
- Testability
- Contextualized
- Consistent
- Complexity
- Agreement

Developing an Evaluable ToC as Part of Evaluation Design

An actor-based approach to unpacking a complex ToC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSAPR Component</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Actor Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police mechanisms to address public needs</td>
<td>Police-community forums</td>
<td>• Local police</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training police in community engagement</td>
<td>• Community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with local authorities</td>
<td>• Local authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling legal and policy framework for police reform</td>
<td>Technical support to drafting new legislation, policies, etc.</td>
<td>• Members of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political engagement to ensure this is adopted</td>
<td>• Regional delegations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity building of MISDAC</td>
<td>• National Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>Preparing the public to engage with police</td>
<td>• Ministry of Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community scorecards</td>
<td>• Ministry of Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity of non-state actors</td>
<td>Training and support to civil society, media and research actors</td>
<td>• Community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regarding security and accountability</td>
<td>• Civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>IG (Inspector General); police complaints mechanism</td>
<td>• Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building consensus around reforms</td>
<td>Daily engagement across state institutions</td>
<td>• Researchers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building external demand</td>
<td>• National Police / IG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement at both national and regional levels</td>
<td>• State institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Members of Parliament</td>
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</table>
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Main actor groups at site level

- Community members
- Police (PNC)
- Local Authorities

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Identification of additional actors

- Civil society organizations
- Security sector coordination actors
- Media
- Parliamentarians

Challenges and Opportunities

- Improved Wellbeing
  - Increased public sense of security

- Direct Benefits
  - Improved police-public-local authority cooperation

- Direct Benefits
  - Reduction in crime

- Changes in Police practice
  - Improved police response to public security needs
  - Improved police behaviour and motivation: service to citizens, seeking consultation, arresting criminals, no bribes and harassment
  - Senior police officials speaking out

- Police capacity increased
  - Police skills
  - Ability to respond (vehicles, mobiles, uniforms, stations)
  - Attitude changes
  - Collaboration skills and means

- Police reach & reaction
  - Activities/Goods & Services
    - Funds for infrastructure and equipment
    - Police training

Assumptions (A1)

- Willingness to listen and learn

Assumptions (A2a)

- Funds used to acquire needed infrastructure & equipment
- Some form of adequate compensation
- Seen for likely reduced income from bribes

Assumptions (A3)

- Rewards seen as compensating for income loss
- Civic duty outweighs power loss
- Penalties for misbehavior seen as real
- New infrastructure and equipment well managed and maintained
- Police leadership visibly supportive
- No significant drop out from PDP
- Decentralisation system in place
- [CCOSF TOC]
- [CCOSF TOC]
- Strengthened internal accountability
- [CCOSF TOC]

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How good actor-based ToCs allow for good Impact Stories

Identifying impact stories within the overall ToC
How good actor-based ToCs allow for good Impact Stories

Gathering data for impact stories

Actor-based ToC

- Increased public sense of security
- Improved police-public collaboration
- Change in police practice
- PSP Activities

Indicators

- % of population who feels safe in their neighbourhoods
- % of community members reporting positive changes in community-police collaboration
- Number and attendance of community fora with police
- % of community members satisfied with police
- % of community members experiencing harassment from the police
- % of community members who think the police respond rapidly to demands for assistance
- Number and content of police trainings
- Number of buildings constructed
- Number and type of equipment provided

Key data sources

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How good actor-based ToCs allow for good Impact Stories

Assembling and revising impact stories

Actor-based ToC

Increased public sense of security

Improved police-public collaboration

Change in police practice

PSP Activities

Did the cause occur?

Were assumptions met?

Did the cause occur?

Is there evidence that links cause to effect?

What’s our contribution claim?

Assumptions
How good actor-based ToCs allow for good Impact Stories

Assembling and revising impact stories

Police officers exposed to SSAPR have positively changed their practice as a result of SSAPR intervention

The PSP component of the programme aimed to improve police practice to better serve the public and respond to community needs by training the police and providing infrastructure and equipment support. SSAPR reached a sufficient number of police officers with police support interventions in favour of the community policing model, or policía de proximidad (PdP), including intensive training and coaching for over 1,500 officers. For some police officers, this was the first training they received.

Several gender-targeted activities were also conducted, initially in support of victims of gender-based violence (GBV). Police stations were provided with infrastructure and equipment to support the police in dealing with female victims and cases of GBV. The programme also incorporated training into the PSP approach on how to effectively deal with cases of GBV.

Additional gender mainstreaming and gender equity activities began relatively late in the programme. This included integrating gender focal points into PdP operations and developing strategies to mainstream gender issues across the organisation.

Community members also reported improvements in police practice over time in SSAPR pilot sites, specifically among PdP-trained officers. Quantitative analysis indicates that positive interactions with a PdP officer were highly correlated with improved perceptions of security.

Community members in SSAPR pilot sites also reported seeing more frequent patrols over the life of the programme. To support these changes, the programme supported the media and civil society to establish external accountability mechanisms in SSAPR pilot sites to hold the police to account for their behaviour.

The volume of evidence gathered during this evaluation suggests these changes were credibly the result of SSAPR activities. Participation in the PdP-supported training programme improved the capacity of the police and their practices, although work here may be beginning to slip, with declining police motivation and a reduction in activity within external accountability mechanisms. The evidence is more mixed on the degree to which changes in equipment and infrastructure supported by the programme led to changes in police practice, although it seems to have had an effect on the community's perceptions of the police's capacity. Supplementary analysis also did not find evidence of any compelling external factors likely to have strongly influenced these changes, strengthening the certainty of our findings.

Changes in police practice
- Improved police response to public security needs
- Improved police behaviour and performance

Changes in police capacity
- Practical ability to respond
- Technical, practical and coordination skills

Police sufficiently reached
- Funds for infrastructure and equipment
- Police training
Strengths and weaknesses of evaluation approach

**STRENGTHS**

- Unpacking complexity
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Constructing impact stories
- Assessing sustainability

**WEAKNESSES**

- Selecting impact stories
- Significant time commitment
- Significant data requirements
Future improvements based on this experience

Articulating behavioural changes using the COM-B Approach

Actor-based Change (ABC) Framework

Actor-based Systems Map
Change Agenda
Causal Impact Pathways
Merci beaucoup
Asante sana
Totondi Botondi
THANK YOU
Matondo
Tuasakidila

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