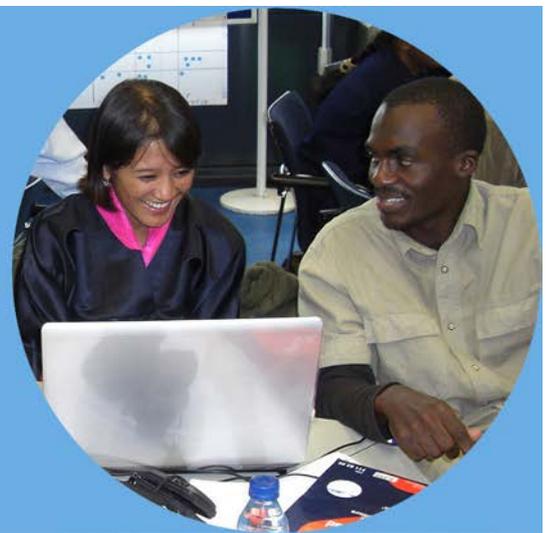


CDI and managing for impact

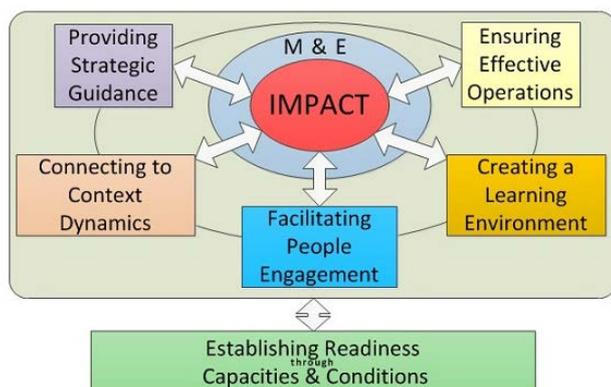
Cecile Kusters



The world is changing rapidly. Connectivity is improving with high speed. The aid architecture is changing with shifts in power to countries like China and Brazil and philanthropic organisations. The demands on our resources are ever increasing, with crises in terms of water, food, finances and conflicts. And with tighter budgets for aid, the demands for proving that our efforts are successful have also become more serious. The issues we are dealing with become more complex in nature and simple linear processes do not suffice anymore. Within this context, we need to navigate our development efforts towards sustainable impacts. How to manage this flexibly in order to meet internal and external demands, whilst keeping a focus on lasting change, is what managing for impact is about.

What is involved in managing for impact?

Managing for impact is an integrated approach to manage for development results, with a particular focus on engaging people in a learning oriented process. In the managing for impact (M4I) approach we closely link strategic design and planning, ensuring effective operations and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The M&E focuses not only on the development processes and its outputs, outcomes and impact, but also on the



The Centre for Development Innovation (CDI) is the knowledge broker of Wageningen University & Research centre (Wageningen UR). We have built an extensive international track record on issues such as food and nutrition security; sustainable markets; adaptive agriculture; ecosystem governance; conflict, disaster and reconstruction; and innovation and change. In our experience, only an integrated approach leads to sustainable change. Our staff have a unique combination of substantive knowledge, an international network and excellent process management qualities. In this issue brief we would like to share how we deal with Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) and illustrate this with a number of examples.

context in which development initiatives find themselves. Thinking through the competencies, capacities and conditions needed to support these processes is crucial to the approach. The key building blocks of the managing for impact framework are presented in the figure.

Strategic guidance

The first building block in the M4I framework is about the process of analysing a particular situation and thinking through the changes one would like to see in future and how to get there. Practically, it involves analysing institutions, stakeholders, problems and issues but also possible futures, visions and strategies of getting there. Working with theories of change and/or linked result chains are key in this process. In addition we need to be strategic in the way we work and decide. Strategic guidance involves navigating towards a desired future whilst keeping in touch with and adapting to on-the-ground realities.



Ensuring effective operations

Strategic plans need to be turned into action in terms of time, resources (human, financial, material), and other logistical and technical issues. How can we best achieve the plans that we set ourselves out to do?

Learning oriented M&E

M&E is more than a tool to demonstrate effects and account for funds received. M&E can assist us in improving the work we do and the choices we make. By engaging stakeholders in a shared process of learning, our strategic and operational decision making can be better informed. Keeping an eye not only on expected change processes, but also on the external environment that affects these processes, is crucial for adaptive management towards impact. Learning should be open to unexpected surprises.

Creating a learning environment

Particularly where complex issues are at stake and where there is a need for many stakeholders to collaborate, creating an environment where people can learn and share lessons is crucial in bringing about change. How can we create an environment where people feel safe to discuss not only successes but also failures? How can we make sense of our findings so that they lead to action?

Facilitating people engagement

It is people who will need to make M4I come alive. We need to understand those involved very well and what they bring into a situation in terms of their sense of purpose, their passions, their power, their knowledge, experience and relationships and the resulting mind-

sets. Engaging people in meaningful participation for impact is core in the M4I approach.

Connecting to context

M4I departs from the perspective that many development initiatives need to manoeuvre in a context that is dynamic and changing and involves complexities that contain many uncertainties as to what the future holds. Development initiatives do not work in a vacuum and we need to be aware of what is happening in our context so as to adapt quickly when and where needed. This complexity increases the demand for collaboration with different stakeholders and testing underlying assumptions of change.

Capacities and conditions for M4I

For M4I to be successfully implemented, one needs to think through the capacities and conditions that are needed. This can be at individual level, such as leadership, facilitation or strategic thinking competencies or personal motivation, attitudes and behaviours. At organisational level we can think of the policies and systems in place, the funds available or the resources that are needed to be able to effectively implement M4I.

Strengthening capacities toM4I

CDI strengthens capacities in M4I through international courses, tailor-made courses, organisational change processes, projects and programmes and knowledge sharing, such as our resource portal and the yearly 'M&E on the cutting edge' seminars. Contact us!

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