

**An “Intangible Outcomes” Approach
to Program Development & Evaluation**

**A Professional Development Workbook
for Grassroots Community Organizations**

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1. INTRODUCTION & PHILOSOPHY OF THIS WORKBOOK

The participatory approach to program development and evaluation described in this workbook is intended to help the leaders of grassroots community organizations document outcomes of their programs that are essential to their program mission, but are not captured by traditional program evaluation techniques. While traditional techniques generate data sets that are useful for purposes of accounting and for third party comparison, they are of limited use for documenting the iterative living-and-learning-in-place processes that characterize grassroots community organizations, or for enhancing the capacity of those organizations to address the social determinants that affect health and wellness in their communities

The exercises and worksheets in this workbook were designed to help program leaders and other CBR practitioners systematically investigate the complexity of social determinants that affect their communities and iteratively plan and evaluate the efficacy of their programs with a level of nuance that reflects that complexity. The participatory action-research approach that informs this workbook recognizes the importance of documenting the outcomes of the exploratory, iterative, and “formative” program development and evaluation processes that are characteristic of grassroots community programs to complement the “summary” data generated by more traditional techniques like surveys, epidemiological data, and attendance rates.

This approach is of particular importance in communities where social determinants such as sexism, geographic isolation, ageism, and racism contribute to health disparities between demographic groups, neighborhoods, and regions. In these communities, a shared consciousness about these social determinants is a pre-condition to the culture change and collective action required to ameliorate those disparities.

This manual describes methods and tools that are useful for:

- **Investigating** the impacts of social determinants, including impacts that are common to all members of a community and impacts that are unique to specific identity groups.
- **Assessing** a community’s awareness of social determinants of health for purposes of program development and proposal writing.
- **Documenting** shifts in community awareness and community capacity to act on that awareness for purposes of formative program evaluation and summary reporting.

A Reflective Practice Approach to Program Development and Evaluation

A defining characteristic of grassroots community organizations is leaders who care deeply for the wellbeing of the residents of a relatively small geographic area (e.g. a neighborhood, a housing project, a section of a city). Because “wellbeing” is determined by a multitude of factors, grassroots community organizations are not single-issue organizations. As such, grassroots leaders often develop and facilitate multiple community programs simultaneously over many years.

In single-issue programs, experts from outside the community often develop the program, conduct evaluations, analyze the results, and submit reports. In grassroots community programs, issue identification, program development, and program evaluation often happens iteratively and “on-the-fly” when program leaders are faced with unanticipated circumstances as a multiple activities unfold over days, weeks, years, or in “real time.”

The successes and failures of one program help clarify issues, identify effective strategies, and inform the planning and implementation of subsequent programs. This is the defining characteristic of the “reflective practice” approach to program development and evaluation that informs this handbook.

Intangible Indicators of Program Effectiveness

The language a community uses to talk about the factors that put people at risk for poor health are *linguistic indicators* of that community’s awareness of social determinants of health and health disparities. The actions a community takes in response to that awareness are *behavioral indicators* of that community’s capacity to ameliorate those determinants and overcome those disparities. When these “intangible indicators” are systematically documented and analyzed, they can help grassroots community leaders identify opportunities, develop programs, prepare funding proposals, and document program outcomes.

Traditional methods of program development and evaluation were not design to take advantage of the living-and-learning-in-place perspective that is characteristic of grassroots community organizations. That unique advantage is essential to identifying and documenting these intangible indicators. This workbook was designed to help grassroots community leaders use that advantage.

Intangible Outcomes and Procedural Outcomes

In addition to recognizing the importance of intangible outcomes to grassroots community programs, a reflective practice approach recognizes that the innovative methods, practices, and processes that program leaders work out “on-the-fly” are also important outcomes of their programs. With this in mind, the tools and methods in this workbook are designed to help grassroots program leaders reflect, remember, and describe these important *procedural outcomes* in addition to the intangible outcomes described above.

Figure 1 is a flowchart that illustrates a reflective practice approach to program development and evaluation. Grassroots organizations can change the captions to suit specific circumstances. The captions in this example are informed by the goals of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service “Healthy People 2020” Social Determinants of Health topic area.

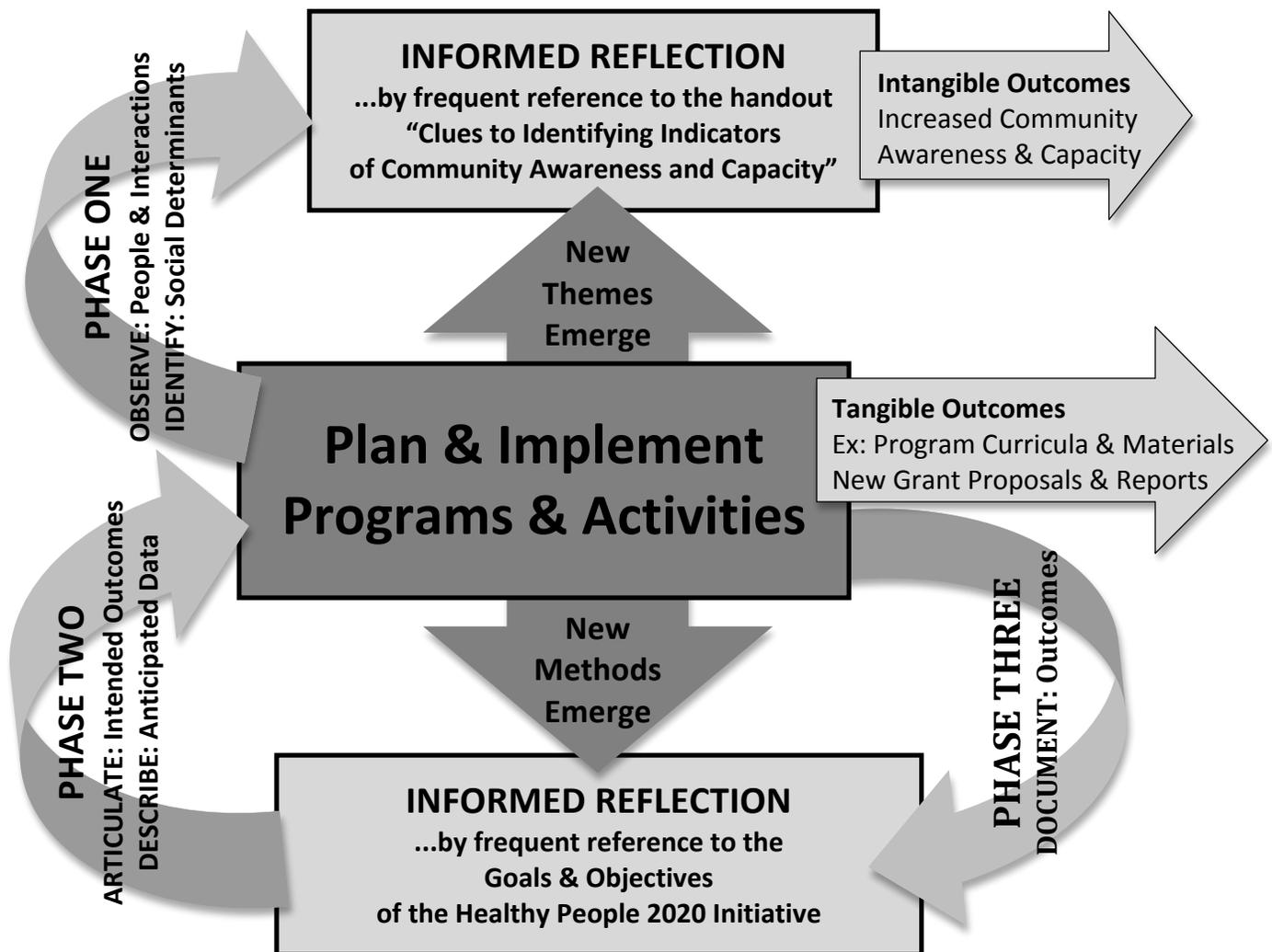


Figure 1. Flowchart of a Reflective Practice Approach to Program Evaluation informed by the US Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2020 Initiative. © 2012 Susan Thering, Ph.D
(A reproducible copy of this flowchart with an introduction to reflective practice is included in the appendix).

2. A Toolkit for Documenting Intangible Outcomes of Grassroots Programs

2.1. The Flow of Logic Worksheet

Compare the flowchart in **Figure 1** above with the table in **Figure 2** below. Notice that the term “Reflective Practice Approach to Program Evaluation” is included in both titles. The difference is that the flowchart illustrates an iterative process while the table suggests a format for documenting one “loop,” or one iteration, of that process.

Describing an Iterative Process OR Formatting Proposals & Reports

The flowchart in Figure 1 above illustrates a reflective process where the results of one phase of a program loops around to inform new program activities and identify emerging themes, and loops around again to identify program outcomes and inform new grant proposals and reports. That flowchart is a realistic description of the iterative nature of grassroots community programs.

The table below is an excerpt from a “Flow of Logic Worksheet” that was designed to help program leaders capture a “snapshot” of one loop of an iterative process. The example describes the intentions of a domestic violence awareness prevention program and reports on one relatively simple “intangible indicator” of the program’s effectiveness.

Phase One		Phase Two			Phase Three	
1. OBSERVE People, Interactions & Place	2. IDENTIFY Relevant Social Determinants & Health Disparities	3. ARTICULATE The Intended Outcomes of Your Program	4. DESCRIBE Anticipated Data		5. PLAN & IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES	6. DOCUMENT OUTCOMES
			Language Changes	Behavior Changes		
Example Young men are rude to their sisters	Example Sexism contributes to anxiety in women and girls in the community	Example Men in the community treat women respectfully	Example Young men speak respectfully to their sisters	Example Women and girls are included in community decision making	Example Domestic violence awareness program for young men.	Example 22/07/12: Young men include their sisters in planning an event.

Figure 2. An excerpt of the “Flow of Logic Worksheet”

The Flow of Logic Worksheet is a “tool” designed to guide program leaders as they develop and refine programs and report on their outcomes. By reflecting on how a program came about and recording details about process and outcomes on a “Flow of Logic Worksheet,” program leaders can organize their thoughts, identify the intangible outcomes, and describe the innovative activities they facilitated to address the issue. The linear format of a table is helpful for program planning and for grant writing, record keeping, and outlining reports.

The worksheet asks program leaders to describe the intended outcomes of their program and describe the program or activities intended to produce those intended outcomes. The worksheet then asks program leaders to reflect on the flowchart in Tab #1 above to help them think about how to fill in the remaining columns.

A reproducible copy of the worksheet and instructions is included in the appendix.

2.2. “Clues to Identifying and Documenting Intangible Outcomes”

An important intention of this handbook is enhancing the capacity of grassroots program leaders to recognize what “indicators” are relevant to the goals of their program, what “outcomes” will be relevant to their funders, and what “theory of change” suggests they can anticipate those indicators and outcomes if they engage community members in various activities.

There is a wealth of social science research that explains why a particular program might be expected to produce particular outcomes (the “theory of change”). This section introduces Handout #3, which is a compilation of “Clues to Identifying and Documenting Intangible Outcomes” that were derived from three well-respected research reports. This handout is intended to complement the library of reference materials program leaders and other Community-Based Research professionals collect to enhance and inform their reflective practice approach to program development and evaluation.

“Clues” #1: 10 Dimensions and Characteristics of Community Capacity

In 1998 the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) convened a group of public health professionals from around the country and asked them to define and characterize the term “Community Capacity.” The CDC recognized that while the term was widely used, and that many organizations claimed their

programs built or enhanced community capacity, the term was not defined in any way that would allow the claims to be documented. The results of that effort included a report titled “Identifying and Defining the Dimensions of Community Capacity to Provide a Basis for Measurement” (Goodman et al.). Handout #3 includes a selection of the “dimensions” and “characteristics” most relevant to social determinants of health and health disparities.

“Clues” #2: Three Domains of Learning

A core reading in adult education describes three broad domains of learning: technical learning, practical learning, and emancipatory learning. The **Technical** domain of learning concerns the ways we control and manipulate our environment. The **Communicative** domain is associated with how we learn to understand what others mean and to make ourselves understood as we attempt to share ideas through various media. The **Emancipatory** domain is what impels us, through conscious reflection, to identify and challenge distorted perspectives and mistaken assumptions.

While all domains of learning are important in grassroots community programs, the Emancipatory domain is largely responsible for changes in behavior, which, as mentioned above, are important intangible outcomes of many grassroots community programs. Emancipatory knowledge is gained through reflection, as distinct from the knowledge gained from our “technical” interest in the objective world or our “communicative” interest in social relationships. Handout #3 includes the ideas about the domains of learning most relevant for identifying intangible outcomes of grassroots community programs.

“Clues” #3: Two Models of Cross-Cultural Learning

In multi-cultural community settings ideas about “Cross-Cultural Learning” are of particular relevance. The Global Education approach published by M. Merryfield contrasts a “Deficit Model” and a “Transformative Model” of learning about different cultures that is very helpful for identifying indicators of cultural bias and recognizing indicators of changing perspectives. The “Transformative Model” is very much in keeping with the “Transformative Domain of Learning” mentioned above. Handout #3 includes a table that illustrates the contrast between the Deficit Model and the Transformative Model of cross-cultural learning.

A reproducible copy of Handout #3 “Clues to Identifying and Documenting Intangible Outcomes” is included in the appendix.

2.3. An “Analysis Worksheet” for use with “Clues”

One of the difficulties of evaluating the efforts of grassroots community organizations is that there are often multiple activities and multiple issues addressed simultaneously. To help our community partners organize their thoughts and focus their observations, this workbook includes an “Analysis Worksheet” that asks the program leaders to take some time to focus on their interactions with Individuals, then focus on Families, then Groups, then Institutions, and then the Community as a whole. These increasing “units of analysis” are the column headings on the Analysis Worksheet. Common “Themes” encountered are the row headings on the Analysis Worksheet.

Example: **Figure 3** is an excerpt of just one “Theme” of the Analysis Worksheet – the “Language” theme. The worksheet instructions asks the participants to reflect on the “Clues,” one by one, to help them recall any *linguistic indicators* of awareness or capacity they may have heard from Individuals, then for Families, Groups, Institutions, and then the Community as a whole. The worksheet then asks the participants to repeat the process to identify indicators of awareness and capacity for the other themes.

Roles (across) and Themes (down)	Individuals	Families	Groups	Institutions	Community
Language					

Figure 3. Example of the “Language” Theme on the Analysis Worksheet used with the “Clues”

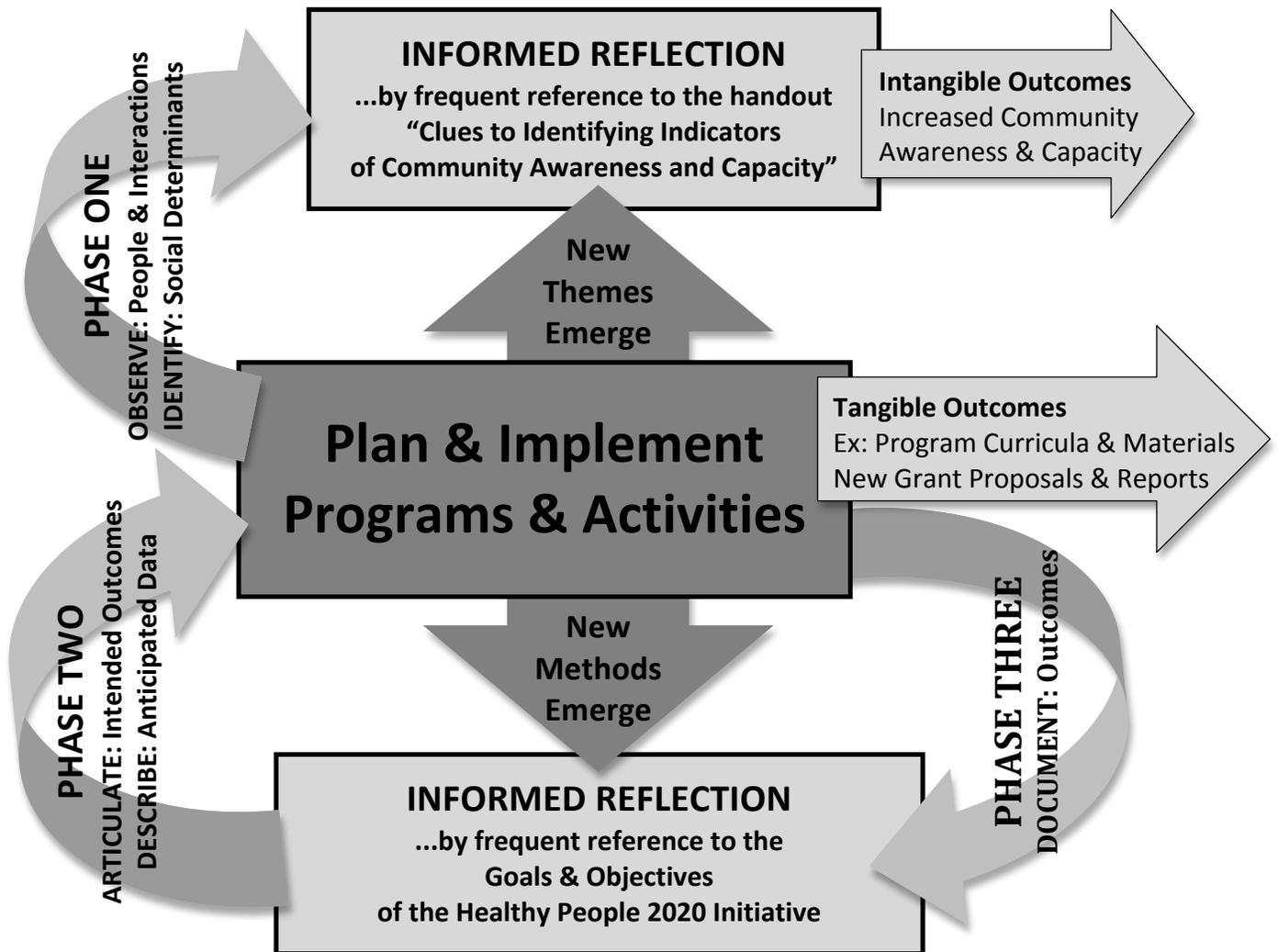
In addition, the instructions ask the program leaders and other CBR professionals to go through the same steps again to *anticipate* what language they *might* hear or they hope to hear at upcoming events that would indicate awareness of social determinants of health or indicate levels of capacity to address those social determinants. This exercise helps “tune the ear” to listen and remember key words and phrases “on-the-fly” that may be recorded in the Analysis Worksheet or a journal during or after the event. This also helps document a correlation between the program activities and the outcomes if those outcomes were listed as “anticipated data” on the funding proposal or “Flow of Logic Worksheet” (described above) before the program or activity begins.

APPENDIX

Handouts and Worksheets

1. Flowchart Diagram: “An Iterative Approach to Program Development & Evaluation & Documenting Intangible Outcomes.”
2. Worksheet: “Flow of Logic Worksheet for Documenting a Reflective Practice Approach to Program Development & Evaluation”
3. Handout: “Clues to Identifying and Documenting Intangible Outcomes”
4. An Analysis Worksheet and Framework for Noticing and Documenting Intangible Indicators

An Iterative Approach to Program Development & Evaluation & Documenting Intangible Outcomes



This flowchart illustrates a process of reflection and evaluation that loops around to inform new program activities and identify emerging themes, which loops around again to enhance program outcomes and inform new grant proposals and reports. This approach reflects the iterative living-and-learning-in-place nature of grassroots community programs and a reflective practice approach to program development and evaluation. The captions in this example are informed by the goals of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service “Healthy People 2020” Social Determinants of Health topic area. Grassroots organizations can change the captions in this flowchart to suit specific circumstances.

Flow of Logic Worksheet for Documenting a Reflective Practice Approach to Program Development & Evaluation

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Instructions:

Use this worksheet to prompt your reflections on a program or to imagine a future program. Then:

1. Reflect on your work over the past few years. Compare your experiences to the headings on the worksheet to determine a point of beginning for your reflections. Choose a point of beginning based on what you think is most relevant to your program.
2. Write in a brief description of your point of beginning in the appropriate column.
3. Describe the hoped for/ intended outcomes of your program
4. Describe the program or activities intended to produce the “Intended Outcomes”
5. Reflect on Handout #1 “Flowchart of a Reflective Practice Approach to Program Evaluation” to help you think about how to fill in the remaining columns.

Table 1: A Worksheet for Documenting Intangible Outcomes

Table 1: A Worksheet for Documenting Intangible Outcomes						
Phase One		Phase Two			Phase Three	
OBSERVE People, & Interactions	IDENTIFY Barriers, Issues, & Conflicts	ARTICULATE Intended Outcomes of Program	DESCRIBE Anticipated Data		PLAN & IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES	DOCUMENT OUTCOMES
			Short-term Communicative	Long-term Behavior Change		
Example Characteristic	Example Barrier	Example Intended Outcome (Refer to the relevant literature)	Example Communicative Learning	Example Behavior Change: New Policies, Protocols, Traditions; Other ways values are institutionalized?	Example Program & Activity	Example Outcome

Clues to Identifying and Documenting Intangible Outcomes #1:

The 10 Dimensions and Characteristics of Community Capacity

1. Citizen participation that is characterized by:

- strong participant base
- diverse network that enables different interests to take collective action
- benefits overriding costs associated with participation
- citizen involvement in defining and resolving needs

2. Leadership that is characterized by:

- inclusion of formal and informal leaders
- providing direction and structure for participants
- encouraging participation from a diverse network of community participants
- implementing procedures for ensuring participation from all during group meetings and events
- facilitating the sharing of information and resources by participants and organizations
- shaping and cultivating the development of new leaders
- a responsive and accessible style
- the ability to focus on both task and process details
- receptivity to prudent innovation and risk taking
- connectedness to other leaders

3. Skills that are characterized by:

- the ability to engage constructively in group process and conflict resolution
- the ability to collect and analyze assessment data
- problem solving, program planning, intervention design and implementation
- evaluation, resource mobilization, policy and media advocacy
- the ability to resist opposing or undesirable influences
- the ability to attain an optimal level of resource exchange (how much is being given and received)

4. Resources that are characterized by:

- access and sharing of resources that are both internal and external to a community
- social capital, or the ability to generate trust, confidence, and cooperation
- the existence of communication channels within and outside of a community

5. Social and inter-organizational networks that are characterized by:

- reciprocal links throughout the overall network
- frequent supportive interactions
- overlap with other networks within a community
- the ability to form new associations
- cooperative decision-making processes

6. Sense of community that is characterized by:

- high level of concern for community issues
- respect, generosity, and service to others
- sense of connection with the place and people
- fulfillment of needs through membership

7. Understanding of community history that is characterized by:

- awareness of important social, political, and economic changes
- awareness of the types of organizations, community groups, and community sectors that are present
- awareness of community standing relative to other communities

8. Community power that is characterized by:

- the ability to create or resist change regarding community turf, interests, or experiences
- power with others, not control over them (non-zero-sum or win-win strategies)
- influence across a variety of domains or community contexts

9. Community values that are characterized by:

- clearly defined norms, standards, and attributes
- consensus building about values

10. Critical reflection that is characterized by:

- the ability to reflect on the assumptions underlying our and others' ideas and actions
- the ability to reason logically and scrutinize arguments for ambiguity
- the ability to understand how forces in the environment influence individual and social behavior
- the ability for community organizations to self-analyze their efforts at change over time

Note: The “10 Dimensions and Characteristics of Community Capacity” is from: Goodman, Robert, Marjorie Speers, Kenneth McLeroy, Stephen Fawcett, Michelle Kegler, Edith Parker, Steven Smith, Terrie Sterling, and Nina Wallerstein. 1998. Identifying and defining the dimensions of community capacity to provide a basis for measurement. *Journal of Health Education and Behavior* 25 (3): 257–278.

Clues to Identifying and Documenting Intangible Outcomes #2:

Technical, Communicative, and Transformational Learning

The paragraphs below describe three broad domains of adult learning: technical learning, practical learning, and emancipatory learning. They are grounded in human relationships to the environment, to other people, and to power, respectively.

Technical/Instrumental Learning: The technical or “work” domain of learning concerns the ways we control and manipulate our environment, including other people. This involves ‘instrumental action’. Instrumental action always involves predictions about observable events, physical or social, which can be proven correct or incorrect. Such action is based on empirical knowledge and is governed by technical rules.

Practical/Communicative Learning: This domain is associated with how we learn to understand what others mean and to make ourselves understood as we attempt to share ideas through speech, the written word, plays, moving pictures, television, and art. Most significant learning in adulthood falls into this category because it involves understanding, describing, and explaining intentions; values; ideals; moral issues; social, political, philosophical, psychological, or educational concepts; feelings, and reasons. All of these things are shaped decisively by cultural and linguistic codes and social norms and expectations.

Transformative/Emancipatory Learning: The emancipatory domain of learning is what impels us, through conscious reflection, to identify and challenge distorted perspectives and mistaken assumptions. Emancipatory/Transformative knowledge includes an understanding of the way our history and biography determine the way we see ourselves; influences our assumptions about learning and the nature and use of knowledge; and influences our roles and social expectation and the repressed feelings that influence them. Emancipatory knowledge is gained through critical self-reflection, as distinct from the knowledge gained from our “technical” interest in the objective world or our “practical” interest in social relationships.

“Most adult learning is multidimensional and involves learning to control our environment, to understand meaning as we communicate with others, and to understand ourselves.” (Mezirow, 1991, 89)

Note: the paragraphs above are paraphrased from Mezirow 1991.

References

Habermas, Jurgen. 1971. *Knowledge and Human Interests*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
Mezirow, J. 1991. *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.

Clues to Identifying and Documenting Intangible Outcomes #3:

Cross Cultural Learning		
Issue	Deficit Model	Transformative Model
What is legitimate knowledge? What should be taught and learned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on Western civilization. • Attributes Europe or North America as a place where “real” humanity begins. • Dichotomous ideas of what is history and pre-history or non-history. • Emphasis on one perspective as “truth”. • Seeks hierarchy in what is superior and inferior viewpoints and information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All civilizations/cultures be studied. • Emphasis on multiple perspectives. • Avoids superior/inferior frameworks. • Many truths and they are conditional upon individual perspectives. • Truths are subjective. • Relationship between power and knowledge.
Cultures in non-western societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exotic, bizarre, primitive (behind “time”), problem-oriented, homogenous, and monolithic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural similarities. • Respect for differences. • Nation-states are diverse in ethnic, linguistic, religious make-up. • Counters stereotypes.
Visual (in print and visual media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective and biased images; shown as hostile, crowded, idle, disorderly; often images of “unrecognizable” people; emphasis on fear and incomprehensibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse images; under-privileged and privileged; everyday life.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard English or English as the “normal” language. • Disregard or unwillingness to use proper and respectful terminologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that language is political. • Respectful use of terms. • Learning new language leads to open-mindedness.
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One “true” religion: leading to conceptions of good and evil religions. • Desire to save people/cultures based on biased views. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion influences culture/life; • Avoids superior/inferior conceptions of religion.
Economy and Labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on free and not fair trade; hard work always leads to success; winner takes all. • Poverty is an effect of people’s habits and behavior. • Ill-informed consumerism; unwillingness to recognize the effects of consumerism. • Blames poor people in non-western societies for job loss in U.S. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examines exploitation in labor. • Fair trade benefits all. • Awareness about over-consumption. • Has understanding of how global labor works.
Prejudice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existed in the past but not now. • Reluctant to share own biases. • Is not a significant social issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prejudice is learned and is contagious. • Acknowledges/works to overcome bias. • Considers an important issue that ought to be discussed and solved. • Prejudice exists in all places in the world but in different forms.
Social Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy; no change desired; works to keep status quo in power and privilege. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to assist those who are not served by actively seeking policy changes; transformation of institutional practices.

References

Merryfield, Merry. 2002. The difference a global educator can make. *Educational Leadership* 60 (2): 18–21.

Subedi, Binaya. 2004. *An issue-oriented transformational model on global curriculum/teaching*. Keynote address. Internationalizing University of Wisconsin-Extension Conference. Wisconsin Dells, WI.

An Analysis Worksheet and Framework for Noticing and Documenting Intangible Indicators

This matrix was designed for Program Leaders and other CBR professionals to:

1. Draw attention to intangible indicators (“Informed Noticing”) at various units of analysis.
2. Organize information for reports, future grant proposals, and scholarly publication.

Roles (across) and Indicators (down)	Individual	Family	Group	Institutions	Community
Attitude					
Language (including Insightful comments)					
Behavior					
Practices					
Policy					
Others?					