

Harvesting social change outcomes: identifying patterns of shared interest, strategies & outcomes across multiple organizations and issues

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- ❑ Introduction to case study
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Principle 6 of Outcomes Harvesting is to Harvest Social Change Outcomes. A strength of the methodology is its ability to pick up the mix of actions that contribute towards changes or outcomes over time. It picks up the range of small and big, not very important and very significant changes – or outcomes – over time. It can do this in relation to the efforts of a single organisation; but it can also do this in relation to a network, or an effort of multiple organisations to influence a field or a specific kind of change.

In this presentation, I'm going to share with you examples of how harvesting social change outcomes can demonstrate patterns of change. I'll also illustrate how it can 'establish plausible influence of the intervention' which is Principle 8 of Outcomes Harvesting. I'll also talk to how that learning can support evaluation users – whether organisations, networks or funders – to strengthen their strategies and activities which talks to Principle 1 – Facilitate usefulness throughout the harvest.

- Introduction to the case study
- Identifying the patterns in **types of outcomes that indicated progress** towards intended goals
- Identifying **patterns in sites of influence** by multiple groups
- Identifying patterns in **whose strategies influenced which locations**
- Identifying the **mix of strategies that influenced these outcomes** over time
- Identifying **shifts in strategies influencing outcomes over time**; and
- **shifts in types of outcomes over time**
- Conclusion

The case study

The case study for my presentation is an evaluation – what we called a ‘Learning Review’ of the Ford Foundation’s 54million dollar **Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide global initiative** (SHRW) which ran from mid-2012 until 2017. This image is the cover of a summary report to share lessons with the field that you can download.



The public report ‘Towards a new ecology for the human rights movement’ is at https://www.openglobalrights.org/userfiles/file/Towards%20a%20new%20ecology_SHRW%20Review%20Public%20Report_11_2017%20Final_compressed.pdf

The initiative aimed to respond to the shifting global context and multi-polar world by:

- Catalyzing efforts to strengthen the perceived legitimacy and influence of local movements on global agendas and strategies
- Strengthening the effectiveness of the human rights movement and international system

It supported 14 organisations, dropping one after a year, so it was ultimately 6 human rights organisations registered in the global south, and 7 international NGOs registered in the global north, plus a number of technical support organisations, and Ford’s continued support to two major global NGOs (Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch).

In 2016, the Ford Foundation put out a Request for Qualifications, selected and commissioned a learning review to map, document and analyze the SHRW initiative. I coordinated this review with a global team of evaluators and human rights experts.

The Learning Review’s questions were

- How well did the initiative contribute to
 - **enhancing southern participation** and
 - **shifting north-south power relations** in the global human rights movement;
 - **shifts in debates, discourses, mechanisms, policies or practices** of international or regional bodies or national mechanisms or legal systems?



- What **funding approaches** best support the efforts of NGOs and networks in the Global South to influence the human rights movement and of international NGOs to facilitate this?

To answer these questions, we used multiple methods including document reviews, interviews, social network analysis, a survey of funders & experts, case studies and outcomes harvesting, with involvement of grantees from conceptualisation through to analysis.

1250 harvested outcomes

We harvested 1250 outcomes from 3 years of grantee reports (2014-2016), plus grantee reflections on these.

We categorised them by topic showing topics ranging from rights of diverse populations – women, indigenous people, disabled people, transgender people – to diverse sectors - holding the business sector, governments & even other civil society groups accountable for human rights – on issues ranging from migration, to drugs, to the right to protest. I mention this to give you some idea of the challenges for our ability to answer the evaluation questions, given the range of issues and, as you will see, the range of sites of advocacy.

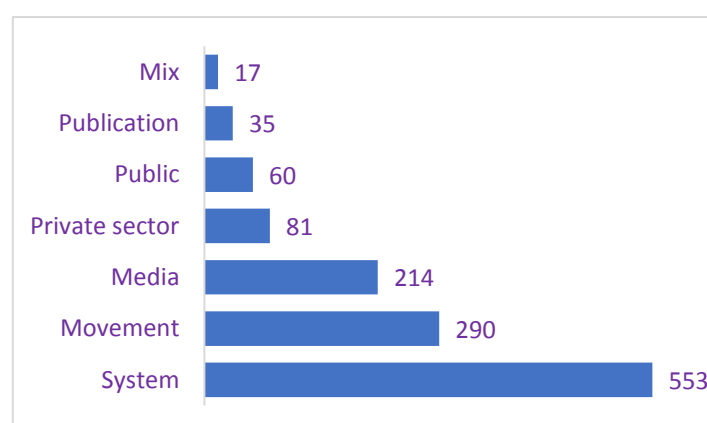


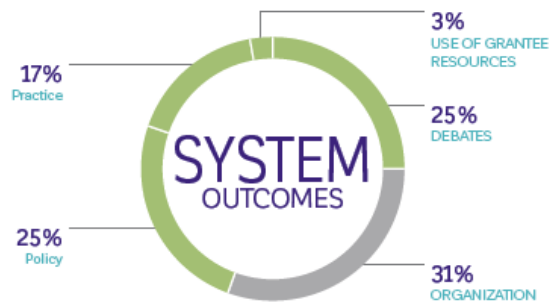
Figure: 1250 outcomes in different spheres of the human rights field

We categorised the various spheres in which we found outcomes. In this image, you see that 44% related to the legal system, that is to governments at national, regional and international levels, including legislatures, executive/ administration, and judiciaries). Nearly a quarter were outcomes within the human rights movement which had in fact been the primary target of this initiative, on the assumption that shifting power and voice in the movement would in turn influence whose voices are heard in advocacy to legal institutions. Not surprisingly in this era of social media, 17% of outcomes were in the media, potentially influencing the human rights movement, the legal system or even members of the public.

In this presentation, I use the analysis we did of the 553 outcomes in the human rights legal or governmental and inter-governmental system.

Identifying the types of outcomes indicating progress towards intended goals

FIGURE 5: 'SYSTEM OUTCOMES' INFLUENCED BY SHRW GRANTEES



By categorising outcomes that had an influence on the human rights system, we could see that 42% were actual changes in policy or practice. The rest were outcomes that indicated progress towards influencing policy or practice. For example, a quarter were shifts in discourse or narratives of decision-makers. Nearly a third were outcomes showing shifts in civil society capacities to influence – for example, invitations by human rights institutions to grantees to sit on policy committees, or new collaborations between civil society groups advocating to a human rights institution. Some of these outcomes may be deemed more or less significant by the evaluation users. So, a decision-maker using a grantee policy brief is almost certainly less significant than an actual shift in policy. However, the moment in which a decision-maker quotes a grantee's materials is still a sign of influence, and hence of progress. What OH allows you to do, is to see the proportions of changes in relation to the human rights system, influenced by the initiative.

Identifying patterns in sites of influence by multiple groups

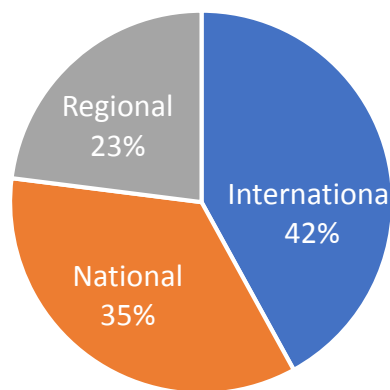


Figure: Geographic breakdown of outcomes in the human rights system

Categorising all of the human rights system outcomes, we could see what proportions of outcomes were at national, regional or international levels.

The framing of the initiative had not given much attention to the regional level, but the findings showed that the grantees in the initiative were giving significant attention to regional intergovernmental institutions. We can see which regional institutions were

targeted most, by which groups. Findings also showed that groups were influencing national governments other than their own – which indicated the need to shift the understanding of international advocacy from advocacy to international bodies such as the UN, to advocacy to influence governments anywhere and at any levels.

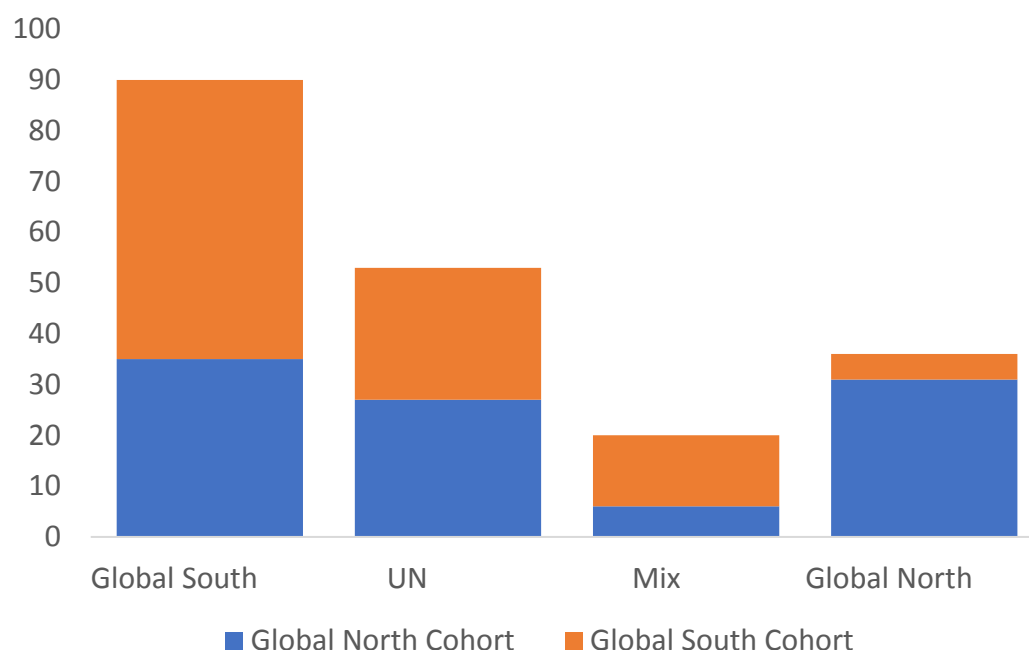
Once harvested, one can narrow down one's questions, for example to ask what outcomes were influenced in one country, or only in one regional institution. By narrowing down, you get a closer feel of what issues were in play in that institution by the grantees, and what mix of grantees and others were engaging that institution, so you find patterns within patterns.

Identifying patterns in whose strategies are influencing which locations

Analysis of outcomes also reveals patterns in the strategies of those influencing outcomes, thereby addressing the evaluation question regarding shifts in north-south power relations.

For example, analyzing outcomes of the two cohorts in the initiative, those registered in the global south and those in the global north we found that both groups give roughly the same attention to national and international terrains, but Global South grantees influenced proportionally more regional actors (74%).

Whose strategies are influencing actors in which locations?



Continuing on this theme, this slide shows that the two cohorts targeted different actors – about the same proportion of their outcomes targeted actors in the United Nations, but only a small proportion of the outcomes influenced by the global south grantees targeted outcome actors in the global north, whereas a third of outcomes from global north grantees did so.

This alerts us to relative differences in power and reach, since nearly a third of outcomes of grantees from the global north targeted actors in the global south.

In other words, global north grantees seek to have influence over outcome actors in the global south vastly disproportionately to global south grantees seeking to influence global north actors.

Identifying the mix of strategies influencing these outcomes

Analysis of harvested outcomes in the human rights system allows us to see **what mix of strategies** influenced them – in the figure (below) you can see that generic advocacy was the most significant influence, but nearly a fifth were influenced by grantees conducting training or holding workshops or conferences. Not surprisingly, only a small proportion were influenced by grantees having actually got themselves a seat at the table doing policy negotiation.

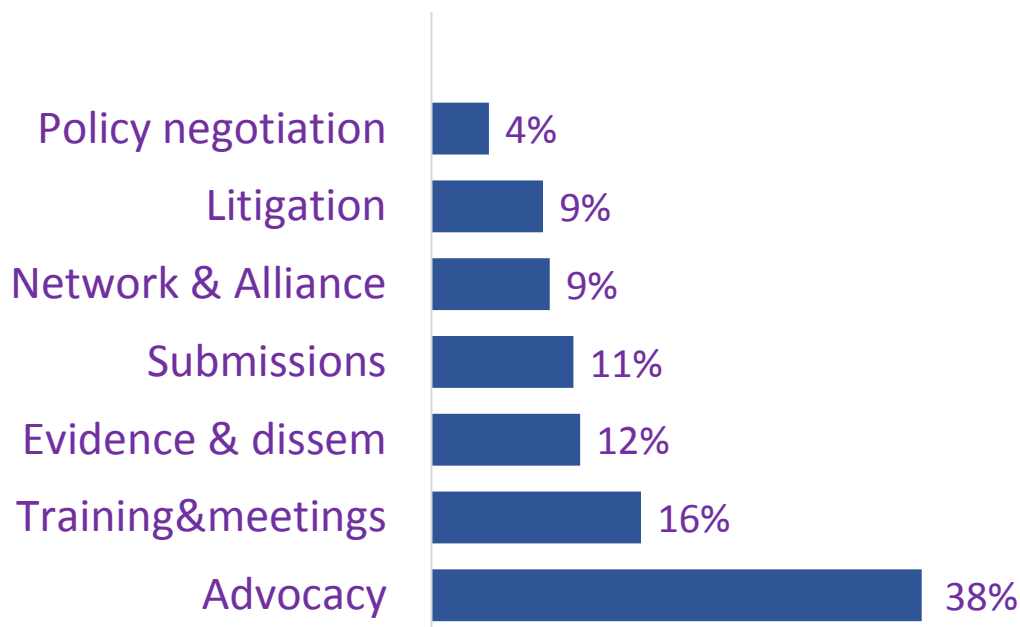


Figure: Proportions of grantee activities that influenced human rights system outcomes

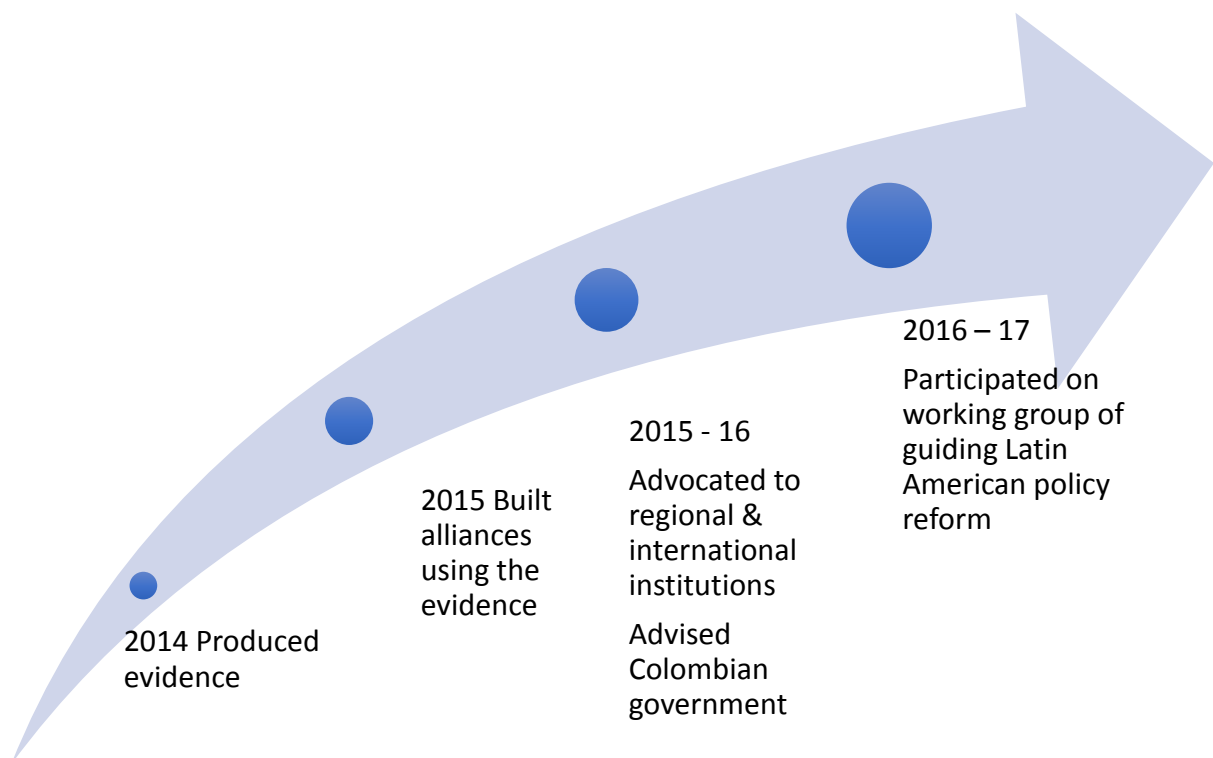
Outcome analysis also showed us the high levels of civil society collaboration – influencing almost half of all outcomes

Seeking more detail – a quarter of all outcomes were influenced by south-south collaborations – again an important insight for an initiative aiming to enhance southern participation in the human rights field.



Figure: Collaborations influenced 48% of outcomes

Identifying the mix of strategies influencing these outcomes over time



*Figure: Shifts in strategies influencing outcomes over time
– the case of CELS, Argentina – the impact of drug policies on human rights*

One can also categorise strategies that influence outcomes by year. One could draw out all outcomes pertaining to a particular policy objective, and then analyse the strategies used over time, and the shifts in types of outcome over time. In this case I've simplified it by

looking at strategy shifts by one grantee although it was actually a huge collaboration among 20 groups including other grantees in this initiative – from producing evidence to using it to build alliances, to advocating to diverse institutions, to a more formal advisory role to a national government (and UNDP) and participation in a regional inter-governmental working group.

Shift in type of outcomes over time

You can also see the shifts in types of outcomes over time, that were plausibly influenced by these activities –

- Beginning with others' use of evidence produced;
- broadening of alliances;
- shifts in government legal approach;
- and ultimately shifts in policy guidance.

Conclusion

Outcome Harvesting is an effective method for identifying patterns in outcome

- Topics
- Types
- Sites
- Strategies that influence them
&
- Shifts in strategies and types of outcomes over time

Are the analysed outcomes alone enough? This would depend on the evaluation questions. In this example, we complemented them with case studies so that one could learn lessons about the ways in which grantees, with others, influenced different kinds of institutions at a level of nuance that aggregated outcomes data cannot provide – particularly pertaining to questions of motivation, power dynamics and the like.

We used social network analysis to gain deeper insights into shifts in the relationship among grantees over the period of the initiative, something that outcomes harvesting could not quite capture.

I'd be very happy to take questions on this approach, or on the 'how to' if you're wondering how one makes it happen!

Thank you.

Abstract

Experienced advocacy groups will use multiple strategies for influencing those with power from public protests, to petitions, to building relationships with decision-makers or those close to them over time. Often a mix of insider and outsider strategies may be used when speaking truth to power. How does an evaluator capture the diversity of strategies and what role, if any, they play in influencing change? How much more difficult for an evaluator commissioned to assess the role of a funding initiative – in this case the \$54m Ford Foundation's Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide – which supported organisations across regions working on different issues with different strategies? In a mixed-methods

evaluation, the 1250 outcomes demonstrate one of Outcomes Harvesting's principles – 'revealing patterns of social change' – regarding which institutions were being targeted around what range of issues globally and to see where and how diverse strategies and capabilities of the grantees were mutually reinforcing.

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