Process study

Motivations for the process study

PAR involves collective generation of knowledge for change & continuous reflection, learning and adjustment on how the project does this

As the project comes to an end, we wanted to collate these experiences into an account of what happened and why from the perspectives of the platform and project team

Objectives

To develop a history of the project from its establishment to date

To obtain **initial, qualitative measure** of the emerging contributions that URAdapt is making towards climate change preparedness. This recognizes that the timescale over which most change occurs is beyond the project lifetime, and that **assigning causal attribution to any single entity can be a challenge**.

The **features** in its operational design and strategy that allowed URAdapt to make such contributions. This takes into account the **evolution** that the project has undergone in the hands of the initial proposal writing team, and **subsequent project implementation staff other key stakeholders.**

Elements of the study

Institutional histories

Narratives that documents how institutional arrangements – ways of working – evolve over time in pursuit of more effective ways to achieve goals. They can be used to chart institutional innovations in projects and to highlight barriers to change. They draw out and synthesize lessons for research projects, partnerships and organizations.

Source: Shambu Prasad, C., et al. (2006). Engaging Scientists Through Institutional Histories. ILAC Brief No. 14. Rome, Italy: Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative.
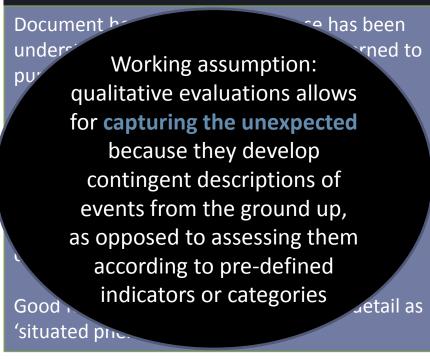
Quantitative evaluations

Measure the degree to which predefined project goals have been achieved and how much impact the project has had

Assign attribution of changes in the implementation context to the project

Powerful tools for understanding average conditions and states

Good for obtaining breadth in coverage and analysis, and generalizability in results ,from large 'n' datasets

Qualitative evaluations

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Working assumption: qualitative evaluations allows for **capturing the unexpected** because they develop contingent descriptions of events from the ground up, as opposed to assessing them according to pre-defined indicators or categories

Study methods

Documentary analysis & semi-structured interviews

Sources

Interim reports
Platform meeting reports
Internal communications
Process documentation

19 face-to-face interviews with platform members in Accra
3 members responded via email
Respodents recruited through call for respondents at February 2012 platform meeting
In addition, project team & consultant selected individuals on the basis of attendance at platform meetings
Skype interviews with proposal writing team (IWMI Theme Leader and former PhD student) and CCAA program officer

Analytical questions

Interpretation of goals, achievements, setbacks, levels of leverage and ultimate identity

The strategies and tactics that have been deployed (including –but not limited to – multi-stakeholder platforms)

The reasons for choosing them (including their reflection of project policy and institutional contexts)

The organising principles underlying the project concept (translation of 'PAR', 'social learning', 'vulnerability' and 'policy influence' into concepts that it could operationalize)

The lessons that these experiences have generated, and could be offered as broader insights on research-for-development processes

The roles that the project has played in the wider research and development landscapes

Highlights on platforms

Most feel that project has been innovative – both in terms of its subject matter and its approach

Appreciation of the fact that the project engaged with stakeholders through platforms throughout the entire project lifetime, instead of convention of launch events and end-of-project validation workshops

In particular, bringing together individuals from policy communities (people who can both directly influence or provide advice on policy, strategies, plans and projects) and research communities has been welcomed. A critical mass of people has been exposed to issues, and with their support, recommendations are believed to have a greater likelihood of being heard and taken on-board.

Platforms perceived as ways of updating stakeholders on project progress, and most feel that they have been free to critique and query the work in efforts to improve its validity and utility

They have allowed the stakeholders to demand accountability from the project team, and some have felt a collective sense of responsibility in ensuring quality outputs

Platforms have offered opportunities for skills development on processes (for example, on *PAR*, *research uptake* and *outcome mapping*) and learning in terms of content (*IWRM*, *climate change*, *urban water supply and sanitation*, *flooding*, *health*). From the project's side, this was an explicit strategy to sustain momentum while waiting for the results of the research to materialize.

In addition, platforms have provided opportunities for networking, the formation of new collaborative relationships and information exchange on 'who is doing what on which issues'

Highlights on platforms

However, questions were raised regarding the degree to which the research has incorporated grassroots concerns. Given that the project would develop a strategic agenda for policy influence, some respondents were sensitive to the importance of ensuring that the agenda's recommendations would not create further rupture to the circumstances faced by vulnerable grassroots communities, but would instead support their existing adaptive capacities.

Equally, there was a sense of urgency on the part of the stakeholders to see the research finalized and the strategic agenda developed.

Respondents called upon URAdapt to develop a dissemination strategy that would account for lobbying 'higher up's' while also channeling information to grassroots communities.

What next?

Way forward

Strategic agenda – example			
Current situation	**Project message**	**Space for uptake**	**Tool for uptake**
Inability of existing infrastructure to deliver expected services and withstand current climate events. Where rainfall intensity and flood risks increase, climate change will impose additional costs to road, stormwater drainage and flood protection infrastructure	Go beyond add... data to forecasting future weather patterns according to 'new rules of the game'.	Reported plans for upgrading of drainage infrastructure within MA	Meetings with mayor, head of Development Planning and Coordinating Unit, head of Budgeting/ MCI Coordinator, heads and senior technical staff of departments, chairpersons of assembly sub-committees.

Not just devising agenda message, but thinking about how it reflects current situation and how to take it forward

Way forward

Differing views – future of platform

Some respondents suggested an arrangement whereby the stakeholders could 'monitor each other' on the degree to which the recommendations are being implemented

Others expressed concern that the resource base, which the project created will dissipate when the project comes to an end

Has platform been a transient forum that has served its purpose?

Discussion?

Way forward

Differing views – project purpose	
Project as a diagnostic exercise, an effort to better characterise the water management issues that the city could face under different climate change scenarios for future action by the city itself. Platform was expected to prompt new awareness among the representatives of the stakeholder organisations and communities that would go beyond the individual and catalyse cascades of change.	Project would go beyond diagnosis and also assist stakeholder organisations to mainstream eventual recommendations into practice (facilitating organisational change)

Discussion?