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Outcome Mapping: Documenting Process in the Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey Project

Brent Hammer
University of Alberta, bhammer@ualberta.ca

Fay Fletcher
University of Alberta

Rebecca Shortt
University of Alberta

Mandy MacRae
University of Alberta

Alicia Hibbert
University of British Columbia

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Abstract

Mapping serves as a metaphor for where we are now, where we have been, and where we are going. In this paper the authors illustrate the use of outcome mapping as a methodological framework for documenting the planning, monitoring, and evaluation process for the Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) project. The MSLSJ is a multi-year, multi-site, multi-method research project. It is centered on building relationships and facilitating knowledge exchange between the University of Alberta team, Métis Settlement Councils and administrators, and Settlement members. We highlight how the outcome mapping framework enables us to document project processes through the identification of key boundary partners and strategies in support of learning. Outcome mapping became a reflective and strategic tool for the MSLSJ project, reflecting on six years of data from seven sites, representing over 430 participants, and guiding the project forward.

Keywords

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Brent Hammer, Fay Fletcher, Rebecca Shortt, and Mandy MacRae
University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Alicia Hibbert
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Mapping serves as a metaphor for where we are now, where we have been, and where we are going. In this paper the authors illustrate the use of outcome mapping as a methodological framework for documenting the planning, monitoring, and evaluation process for the Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) project. The MSLSJ is a multi-year, multi-site, multi-method research project. It is centered on building relationships and facilitating knowledge exchange between the University of Alberta team, Métis Settlement Councils and administrators, and Settlement members. We highlight how the outcome mapping framework enables us to document project processes through the identification of key boundary partners and strategies in support of learning. Outcome mapping became a reflective and strategic tool for the MSLSJ project, reflecting on six years of data from seven sites, representing over 430 participants, and guiding the project forward. Keywords: Outcome Mapping, Methodology, Boundary Partners, Métis

Outcome mapping (OM) is a methodology developed by the International Development Research Centre for planning, monitoring, and evaluating development initiatives to bring about sustainable social change (Earl, Carden, & Smutylo, 2001). The intent of OM was to provide an alternative methodology that went beyond planning for and measuring outputs to meet funder expectations. Developmental organizations, including Non-Governmental Organization officials, policy makers, and research scientists, typically plan, monitor, and evaluate for changes in participants' well-being within a specific development initiative. However, OM recognizes that outputs (e.g., social changes) rarely occur due to a single program intervention. If they do occur, they are unlikely to be sustainable. Instead, OM focuses on intentional social changes achieved through changes in behavior and relationship building among all project participants (Nyangaga, Smutylo, Romney, & Kristjanson, 2010). OM also recognizes that a specific program may not be the only contributing factor or influence on behavior changes and outcomes.

Outcome mapping (OM) has primarily been tested by development research organizations and programs working in, but not originating from, Africa, Latin America, and Asia (for examples see Jones & Hearn, 2009; Kulkharni & Pant, 2006; Nyangaga, et al., 2010). While its origins are rooted in attempts to measure macro-level economic development outcomes in these regions, we recognized the potential of OM to document planning, monitoring, and evaluating processes of the Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) project. Historically, OM has been employed with participants whose formal education makes them comfortable expressing themselves in a group setting (Earl et al., 2001). This is not the case with all stakeholders in the MSLSJ project as there is diversity among partners in formal education completion and experience, while all living within the same geographic and political region. The MSLSJ is a multi-year, multi-site program using a multi-method research

framework. It is a community based participatory research project centered on building relationships and knowledge exchange between the University of Alberta and Métis Settlements in Alberta, Canada.

Of particular interest to us was OM's focus on documenting outcomes as influences (correlation) as opposed to impacts (causation). OM's use of the term *mapping*–as a metaphor for informing us about where we are now, where we have been, and where we are going–resonated with the premise of the MSLSJ project as a *journey,* not a destination. In this context, and as Earl (2006) suggests, OM is not about using prescribed academic terminology, the rigid application of specific research tools, or linear cause-and-effect monitoring.

In this article, we will illustrate the use of OM: 1. As a methodological framework used to document planning, monitoring, and evaluating processes in a complex multi-year, multi-sited, multi-method community based participatory research project with Indigenous communities; and 2. As a process to identify program participants and stakeholders (labelled as Boundary Partners), their project-identified goals, and the strategies designed to influence their behavior through their participation in the MSLSJ project. By employing OM in a non-traditional manner, this article seeks to bridge the knowledge-action gap in a program designed to influence the well-being of participants and their communities. We begin with an overview of the MSLSJ project.

Project Context and Methods

The Métis are a distinct Indigenous group in Canada, some living on self-governed Settlements in Alberta. Alberta has the largest Métis population in Canada at 96,865; this represents 21.4 percent of the total Métis population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). Alberta is presently the only jurisdiction in Canada where Métis people have retained a self-governing land base. Approximately 5,000 Métis people reside on eight Métis Settlements (Government of Alberta, 2019).

The Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) project evolved from a response to Alberta Health Services' call for proposals to design and implement culturally appropriate programs addressing substance abuse, violence, and bullying in Indigenous communities. To investigate the particular context of Métis well-being in Alberta, researchers from the University of Alberta and Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement partnered in a community based participatory research (CBPR) project to strengthen resiliency among Métis children and youth (Fletcher, Baydala, Hibbert, & Robertson, 2013). Resiliency refers to the "ability of children and adolescents to cope successfully in the face of stress-related, at-risk or adversarial situations" (Donnan & Hammond, 2007, p. 450). The MSLSJ is both a program and research project.

A Multi-Year Project

The MSLSJ's short term goal was to develop, implement, and evaluate life skills summer day camps for participating Settlement youth aged 7-14 over several years. Community members were hired and trained to facilitate the youth camps. The long-term goal is to contribute to individual and community well-being for members of all eight Métis Settlements in Alberta. OM plays a key role in documenting strategies and actions taken to achieve this long-term goal. The MSLSJ has evolved into a multi-year, multi-site, and multi-methods project that requires a framework capable of documenting increasingly complex processes. OM supports this while also being flexible enough to adapt to community differences, as is required in CBPR engagement.

Research projects typically operate on a three-year cycle, largely due to time limited funding (Israel et al., 2006). The MSLSJ is entering its 10th year in 2019. MSLSJ developed from focus groups and a needs and readiness assessment conducted by Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement and University of Alberta team members in 2010 (Fletcher, Hibbert, Robertson, & Asselin, 2013). The following two years, 2011-12, were spent developing program content as well as building relationships with our partners, including obtaining approval from Settlement council and administration. The first summer youth life skills camps were delivered in 2013. By the end of summer 2018, six consecutive years of facilitator training and summer life skills camps have been delivered and evaluated. Project funding has been secured through 2021.

A Multi-Site Project

The Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) project operates out of the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta in Edmonton Alberta. This is the site where the University of Alberta research and evaluation team is based and the center for project management and communication, identified by the ✷ in Figure 1. It is important to include this location as *one* of the program/research sites of the project. However, one of the central principles of CBPR projects is to engage directly with communities and community members that you are partnering with. This engagement means physically going out to each community or "site." One of the main objectives of the MSLSJ from the beginning was to partner with all eight Métis Settlements, identified in Figure 1.
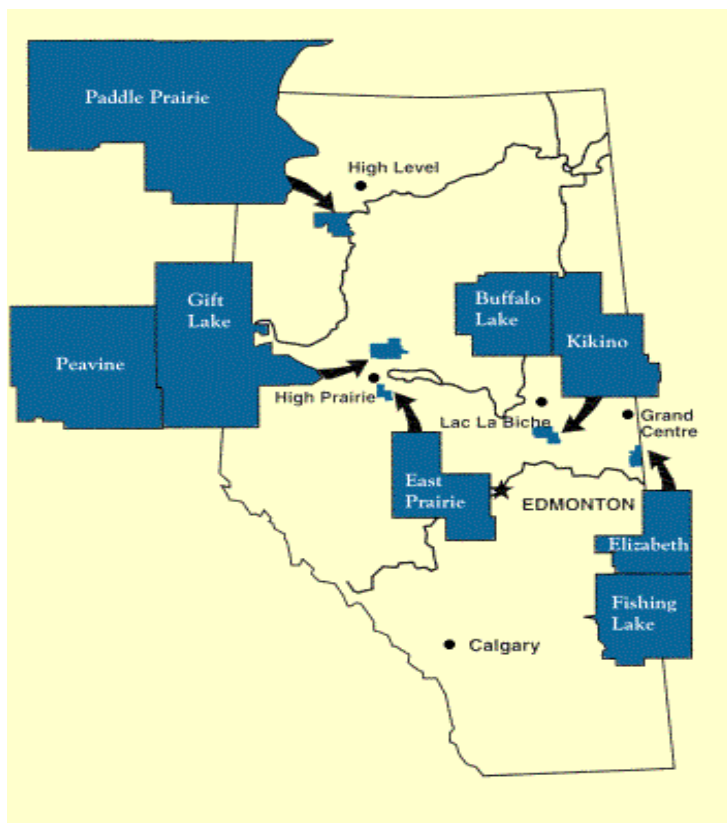
Figure 1: Map of the eight Métis Settlements in Alberta (DWRG Press, 2008).

Buffalo Lake was the first Settlement to partner with the University of Alberta in the project. By the time it came to deliver the first life skills summer camp program in 2013, Kikino joined the program as the second community. In 2015, the MSLSJ project expanded to include Fishing Lake and Elizabeth. In 2017, the project grew again to include Gift Lake and East Prairie as

partners. By 2018, the total number of Settlements engaging with the life skills program grew to seven with the addition of Peavine. While not all Settlements have participated in the life skills summer camps each year, each site remains part of the overall project framework and discussion in that they may choose to re-engage with the life skills program at a later date. In 2018, there were five Settlements participating in the project, each delivering summer camps to their youth. Including Edmonton, MSLSJ was active in six sites this past year.

A Multi-Methods Project

The Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) project began with a mixed methods approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Fletcher, Hibbert, & Hammer, 2017; Hammer, Fletcher, & Hibbert, 2017; Hibbert, Fletcher, & Hammer, 2018). A mixed methods approach was considered essential for effective community based participatory projects (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becke, 1998). The longevity of the MSLSJ project, the increasing number of community partners and research sites, and the range of research methods and tools employed, all speak to the success of the project (Fletcher, Hammer, & Hibbert, 2014; Fletcher, Hibbert, Hammer, & Ladouceur, 2016). However, these elements also point to the increasing amount of data collected, number of participants and partners, number of strategies to be implemented and monitored, and the sheer complexity of logistics required to manage a project of this scale.

In 2016, after completing three successful summers of delivering and evaluating facilitator training and summer camps, the University of Alberta team decided to incorporate OM into the existing research methodology to help document the increasing number and complexity of activities employed to deliver the program and to monitor and evaluate the strategies intended to influence the behavior of each boundary partner (BP) in the MSLSJ project. While OM would be valuable in producing a summative document of the overall project, it was also recognized as a useful framework for capturing the unexpected activities and outcomes, or ripples of influence, that were not being directly addressed by the MSLSJ project. Next, we present the methodology employed in creating our OM framework, followed by discussion of how that framework allowed us to document the processes of planning, monitoring, and evaluating the MSLSJ.

Methodology for Creating the OM Framework

In 2016, the outcome mapping (OM) framework was incorporated into MSLSJ to document the activities of a growing community based participatory research project and program. The University of Alberta research team, with five years of relationship building and three years experience with life skills camp delivery and data collection, was comfortable using the three stage, 12 step model (Figure 2) outlined in the OM manual developed by the International Development Research Centre (Earl et al., 2001).

As indicated by the arrows and numbering in the schematic, the three stages and 12 steps are designed to lead into and inform each other as well as provide an interactive process to accommodate modifications to the Intentional Design (Stage 1) which could then influence Outcome and Performance Monitoring (Stage 2) and ultimately Evaluation Planning (Stage 3).

To begin the process of creating an OM framework for the MSLSJ project, we scheduled a two-day workshop with four University of Alberta project research team members (later designated as BP#6). This group consisted of the Principal Investigator, Research Project Lead, Projects Administrator, and a Graduate Student Research Assistant, who had been designated to facilitate the workshops. The graduate student had worked part-time on the project so was familiar with it and the other team members which aided the process. Although

Earl et al. (2001) suggest conducting a historical scan before beginning the planning process, this step was not considered necessary. A historical scan is a review of the project's history, activities, development, and achievements to date. Due to the MSLSJ project being active, with three years of research completed, objectives, shared understanding, and a common language were well established (Fletcher et al., 2014).

Day one of the workshop focused on the Intentional Design stage and Steps 1 through 7 (Figure 2). This is the stage in which the why, who, what, and how questions are articulated. Worksheets for each step, provided in the OM Manual (Earl, et al., 2001), were used to create our framework.
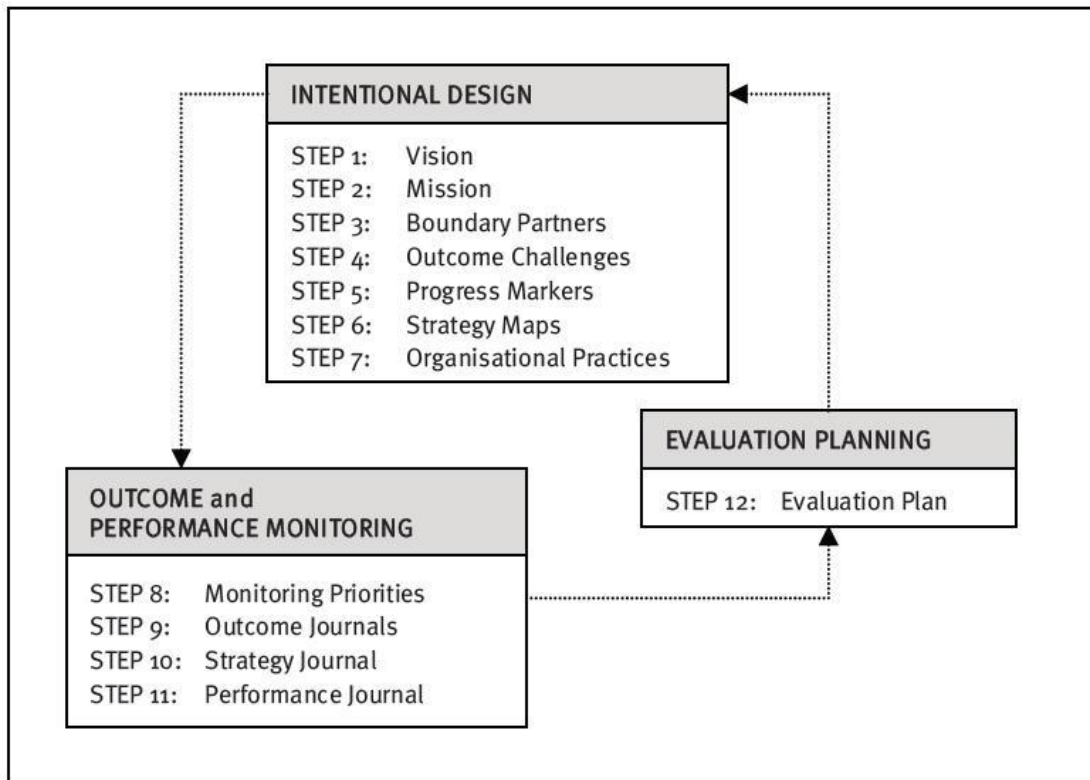

Figure 2: Outcome Mapping 3 stage, 12 step model (Earl, Carden, & Smutylo, 2001).

The second day of the workshop focused on stage two, Outcome and Performance Monitoring with Steps 8 to 11 (Figure 2). Stage 2 began with the establishment of monitoring priorities, determining what we wish to monitor on an ongoing basis. Three self-assessment tools –Outcome, Strategy, and Performance Journals–were created to document the activities and outputs that would influence behavior change for each BP to achieve their Outcome Challenge established in stage one. Worksheets and a projector were used to facilitate this process.

Another important component of Stage 2 includes establishing who will be doing the outcome and performance monitoring and how often it will occur. The University of Alberta research team determined that the Graduate Research Assistant, who facilitated the workshops, would be responsible for the regular maintenance of the OM framework. The four-member team met on a monthly basis for the first year to provide ongoing monitoring of each BP's strategy journal. This monitoring was changed to meeting every two months in the second year. Monitoring of the University of Alberta research team (BP#6) performance journal occurred quarterly. The monitoring of each BP's outcome journal was conducted on a semi-annual basis and there was an annual review of the project framework, including revisiting all seven steps

of the Intentional Design Stage. In 2017, the Graduate Research Assistant became the Qualitative Research Coordinator for the project and in 2018, another Research Coordinator was added to the OM research and evaluation team, increasing the University of Alberta research team to five members.

Stage 3, Evaluation Planning, was completed at a third workshop, one month after completing stage one and two. As Earl et al. (2001) state, the purpose of developing an evaluation plan is to make sure a project bases its decisions on "systematically collected data rather than on perceptions and assumptions" (p. 114). This statement reinforced to the research team that Outcome Mapping, as a methodological framework, could provide value in documenting MSLSJ planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

Application of OM to MSLSJ

Results of Stage 1: Intentional Design, Steps 1 through 4, are represented in our MSLSJ project Framework (Figure 3).

Vision: the vision of the Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) project is for the Métis Settlements to independently plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain a comprehensive and effective suite of youth life skills programs for community change.	
Mission: In support of this vision, our mission is to determine sustainable boundary partner roles and accountabilities (behaviours, attributes, actions, activities) for community well-being and individual resilience. To this end, we aim to: 1) develop and evaluate community leadership and 2) build partnerships. We would achieve these through training, mentoring, process improvement, and contributing to Métis settlement networks.	
Boundary Partner 1: MSLSJ Community Champion	**Outcome Challenge 1:** to develop and evaluate individual capacity and skills to manage, evaluate, and sustain the life skills journey summer camp in multiple settlements.
Boundary Partner 2: MSLSJ Community Program Assistants	**Outcome Challenge 2:** to develop and evaluate individual capacity and skill to manage, evaluate, and sustain the life skills journey summer camp facilitator training.
Boundary Partner 3: Community Facilitators & Learners	**Outcome Challenge 3:** to develop individual and group capacity and skill to deliver and sustain the life skills journey summer camp.

Boundary Partner 4: Settlement Youth Campers	**Outcome Challenge 4:** to develop knowledge of life skills and increased internal resiliency factors.
Boundary Partner 5: Métis Settlement Council and Leadership/Administration	**Outcome Challenge 5:** to collaborate on developing and evaluating community capacity, resiliency, and network building in support of the program's mission.
Boundary Partner 6: MSLSJ University Research Team (Faculty of Extension)	**Outcome Challenge 6:** to create policies and an environment within the university and between the university and community; define and foster sustainable BP roles and accountabilities to fulfill the program vision.
Boundary Partner 7: Funders	**Outcome Challenge 7:** to enhance the funding organization and government departments' awareness and the valuation of the program's mission by developing a deep understanding of the challenges in achieving sustainable BP roles and accountabilities.

Figure 3: MSLSJ Program Framework.

      Vision and mission. Outcome mapping (OM), Steps 1 and 2 of the framework process, requires the discussion and articulation of the project's goals and logic, and their documentation in the framework as vision and mission statements. The vision statement is meant to convey the ultimate (but frequently unachievable) large scale changes that the project hopes to encourage and to describe why participants are engaged in the project. The vision of the MSLSJ project is for the Métis Settlements to independently plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain a comprehensive and effective suite of youth life skills programs for community change. This vision is meant to provide inspiration and motivation to all project participants so that they may contribute to the project.

      The mission statement is intended to support the vision statement while being more tangible and theoretically achievable. The MSLSJ Mission is to determine sustainable BP roles and accountabilities (behaviors, attributes, actions. Activities) for community well-being and individual resilience. To this end, we aim to: (a) develop and evaluate community leadership and (b) build relationships. We would achieve these through training, mentoring, process improvement, and contributing to Métis Settlement networks. Our mission statement provides the impetus for specific objectives, strategies, activities, and outcomes that contribute to supporting the vision. The original MSLSJ vision and mission statements were revised during our annual review of the project framework at the end of 2018. This illustrates that OM is adaptable to changes in direction that occur in a multi-year project, reflecting lessons learned and shifting priorities. The vision and mission statements guide the process forward to determine who the project will being interacting with.

Boundary partners. Step 3 of the Intentional Design stage involves identifying the project's BPs. BPs "are those individuals, groups, or organizations with whom the program interacts directly and with whom the program can anticipate opportunities for influence" (Earl, et al., p. 41). Although the MSLSJ project had a five-year history of building relationships with participants and three years of delivering training for community facilitators and summer camps for community youth, it was important to identify all partners that the project felt they directly had contact with regardless of the partners level of participation in the project. As Earl et al. (2001) suggest in OM, BPs should represent a broad sphere of potential influence. It was also important to consider and acknowledge that the project's objective was not to imply a linear cause and effect relationship to measuring direct impacts to BPs but rather to suggest that their participation in the program may influence their behavior and lead to outcomes.

After careful consideration, the University of Alberta research team identified seven BPs for the project (Figure 3). The first BP identified was Community Champion. This BP was intended to represent an individual within each partnering community who would serve as a spokesperson for the project, to facilitate and sustain relationships among community members and other BPs (Israel et al., 2006). It was hoped the Community Champion would serve as a gatekeeper (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007), an individual who would have access and some control over community resources and the opportunity to promote the MSLSJ summer camp program to their community youth.

BP#2 was originally labeled Community Facilitator Trainer and represented the project's longer-term goal of training a community member to deliver facilitator training rather than on participating communities being reliant on the University of Alberta BP to provide this training. Identifying, documenting, and ultimately changing this BP in our OM framework over two years illustrates the dynamic nature of the process and its role in guiding the project forward in its objective to influence many participants. The label was changed to Community Program Assistant in 2018 when, for the first time in the project, six individuals were hired to fill this position. The name change reflects a shift in role and increased responsibilities of this BP with the project. OM recognizes that the project needs to adapt to the roles of the BPs, to re-evaluate goals and relationships on a regular basis (Earl et al., 2001). They would still be responsible for training community facilitators, but it was hoped that they would help facilitate communication in their respective communities between the community champion, settlement administration, and the University of Alberta team. Having a presence in the community with the Community Program Assistant would also serve to promote the MSLSJ summer camps throughout the year. These changes and intentions meant that BP#2 now became the principal focus for the project to influence change.

BP#3 are the Community Facilitators. These individuals are hired to receive training to deliver the MSLSJ summer camps to the youth in their communities. On average, the Community Facilitators received between six and 10 weeks of employment. The Community Facilitator was considered a key BP whom the project would be directly interacting (through training and mentoring) with as they represented the mentors and role models who would be engaging with the community youth at the summer MSLSJ camps. The community youth campers were labeled BP#4 and represented those aged 7-14 who registered for and participated in the MSLSJ summer camps.

Settlement Council and Leadership/Administration were included in our OM framework as BP#5 as they represent the importance of communicating with and having the support of community leadership if a CBPR project is to have success or a chance at sustainability (Fletcher, 2003). OM recognizes the significance of including all BPs in as much of the project process as possible. To this end, it was our intent to participate in needs and readiness discussions with Settlement Councils and Administration and to report back to them with MSLSJ camps influences and outcomes.

BP#6 represents the University Research Team at the University of Alberta Faculty of Extension. As the project managers for MSLSJ, the responsibility for OM and documenting the processes involved in planning, monitoring, and evaluating rests primarily with the project staff.

It was determined during our OM workshop that funders should be included as BP#7. This determination was made to recognize that MSLSJ project's interactions with funding agencies were to move beyond the standard submission of reports and status updates. It was our intention to influence the behavior of the funders in how they engaged with CBPR projects, especially those that involved Indigenous communities. It was hoped our work, and those of all the project's BPs in the MSLSJ, would help inform and shape policies, procedures, and expectations when working with small, rural communities with individual circumstances and needs.

After determining and documenting all of the project's BPs in the OM framework, the next task in the Intentional Design Stage was to: create an Outcome Challenge for each BP (Step 4); identify Progress Markers (Step 5) for each BP's Outcome Challenge; and develop a Strategy Map (Step 6) to identify strategies employed by the project designed to influence the BP's behavior and guide them towards their Outcome Challenge. To illustrate how these steps were documented in our OM framework we will focus on one specific BP from our project as an example.

Boundary Partner #2: Community Program Assistant

Outcome challenge. Outcome challenge statements are meant to represent the desired change in the BP's behavior through their participation in the project. They should, as Earl et al. (2001) suggest "be idealistic but realistic" (p. 47). Towards that end, the Outcome Challenge created and documented in the MSLSJ framework for BP#2 was: To develop and evaluate individual capacity and skill to manage, evaluate, and sustain the Life Skills Journey summer camp facilitator training (Figure 3).

Progress markers. Graduated progress markers are identified for each BP and are intended to represent different levels of change in the BP's behavior that would indicate progress towards achieving their stated Outcome Challenge. The first graduated level, *expect to see*, are markers that are intended to be easy for the BP to achieve. For example, in our OM framework for BP#2, there are five *expect to see* progress markers:

1. Co-instruct facilitator training with University of Alberta Facilitator Trainer; independently lead 2 modules.
2. Mentor and support community facilitators during the summer life skills journey training and camps.
3. Actively collaborate with MSLSJ Community Camp Administrator.
4. Record personal observations in field notes or check-in with Program Coordinator.
5. Promote "Hope" language throughout the summer life skills camps and the community.

The second level of progress markers, the *like to see*, are meant to suggest that the BP is more actively engaged in the learning activities designed to influence their behavior as the project continues to guide them towards their Outcome Challenge. For example, to indicate progression we created three *like to see* markers for BP#2:

6. Independently lead all modules with on-site support from Program Coordinator.

7. Become a spokesperson for the MSLSJ project within their own Métis Settlement and externally.
8. Become a knowledge mobilizer for the MSLSJ project, i.e. receive invitations and request to speak, present workshops, etc.

This last progress marker was added to our framework in January of 2019 at one of our regular OM update meetings. This is another example of how OM recognizes that a project and its managing BP (the University of Alberta research team, BP#6) be committed to adapting and growing its relationship with a BP, putting them in a position to succeed and improving the likelihood of any change being sustainable.

The third level of progress markers, the *love to see,* are meant to represent what Earl et al. (2001) describe as representing "profound" and "transformative change" (p. 54). For example, to indicate this change in BP#2 we documented three progress markers at this level:

9. Assume an active role in community leadership or administration.
10. Initiate professional development towards personal growth, capacity, and skill acquisition.
11. Plan and instruct engaging facilitator training independently.

The completion of the OM worksheet for Step 5 resulted in the identification of 11 progress markers for BP#2. These markers would be used later to track and record progress as part of Stage 2: Outcome and Performance Monitoring when the BP's Outcome Journal was reviewed every six months. To guide each BP towards achieving these progress markers and their outcome challenge, a strategy map is created in Step 6.

Strategy map. A strategy map is comprised of strategies and activities aimed at specific BPs to guide them towards achieving their progress markers. The strategy map is divided into six cells (Earl et al., 2001), with the top three cells devoted to activities aimed at the BPs as individuals and the bottom three cells aimed at the BPs environment. The three cells on each tier are further broken down to three levels of desired achievement for a strategy or activity. The first cell is for strategies or activities that, if achieved, indicate the program contributed to influencing the BPs behavior change in a direct and successful way. For example, one strategy/activity in our BP#2 strategy map is to document/collect/share information on facilitator training impacts and challenges. This would then become the strategy to be monitored in their Strategy Journal (Step 10 of Stage 2: Outcome and Performance Monitoring).

Strategy journal. In each BPs strategy journal, each strategy to be monitored, such as the sample given above for BP#2, *document/collect/share information on facilitator training impacts and challenges*, is given their own worksheet, which is separated into sections. In the first section, a description of an activity is recorded. This is meant to document what the project did, with whom and when. To illustrate, one activity documented in this section of our OM framework was: on June 25, 2018, Community Program Assistant Greta (pseudonym used to protect anonymity) was instructed to provide daily journal entries to the Team Google Drive around her experiences during facilitator training. She was provided with a suggested list of questions to help her reflect on her day and how she thought training went. The questions were designed to have her think about her role and responsibilities in the process of training facilitators as well as to generate some self-reflection and introspection around her own learning and participation in the project. She could either voice record her journal entries on her cell phone and upload them straight on to the Drive or hand write them out on a prepared Google document in the Drive.

The second section on the Strategy Journal was for documenting the effectiveness of the activity by asking how the activity influenced a change in the BP. This effectiveness was monitored through qualitative measures, including post-camp interviews with the BPs where we asked, *Were you comfortable to document/collect/share information on facilitator training impacts and challenges through your daily journal process?* To illustrate how this process unfolded, here is Greta's response:

> Was I comfortable with it? Yeah, it was fine. It actually helped me realize what happened through the day. Usually when you go home, you don't think what happened about the day, because you're like, "That day's over." But when you go home and write about it, I thought that was really good. It was good to sit down at the end of the day, and especially writing it out for me. During the training, when I was writing it out, it made me realize what my strengths are, or what happened through the day. It made me really observant, 'cause I knew I had to write after the day.

Greta's response suggests that the specific activity from BP#2's strategy map, *Document/collect/share information on facilitator training impacts and challenges*, may have influenced her behavior contributing to achieving progress marker #2, Mentor and support community facilitators during the life skills journey training and camps. This is a marker that we would *expect to see* based on the BP's participation in the project and on her role as a Community Program Assistant.

Further evidence of Greta's behavior being influenced by her participation in the MSLSJ project came from the same interview when asked, *Do you think you learned something new about yourself this year from participating in the [program assistant training] program?* Her response suggests she may have experienced some profound change which would indicate achieving *love to see* progress marker #11, *Initiate professional development towards personal growth, capacity, and skill acquisition*:

> Yeah. I didn't know that I could talk to strangers. That's a really big thing for me. With these jobs, it's making me come out of that shell. I'm not as shy anymore. I'm more willing to talk to other people. Doing time sheets and stuff, being that leader, it's made me realize I could be more, I could better myself and come out of that shell more. This job actually really improved my wellbeing, 'cause I'm someone that likes a routine. I have a routine every morning with this job, and I think I improved as a person, being in this kind of role. That was my career goal, I wanted to not be shy … I wanted to meet new people and really go out there for once. I think this one really helped me.

By engaging Greta in the process of data collection through daily journaling and then documenting the activities and effectiveness in OM, we are able to monitor strategies designed to make connections leading back to the BP#2's outcome challenge: *To develop and evaluate individual capacity and skill to manage, evaluate, and sustain the Life Skills Journey summer camp facilitator training.*

Evaluation Plan

One of OM's guiding principles is that evaluation should improve program planning and delivery. Using OM to document the planning and monitoring process of the MSLSJ project provided copious information for analysis and dissemination and as Earl et al. (2001)

suggest "Utilization is the ultimate purpose of evaluation" (p. 115). While we recognized the necessity of providing annual reports to funders, we also recognized the importance of sharing lessons learned and wisdom gained by engaging in this process. To this end, our evaluation plan (Stage 3) focused on sharing this wisdom by (a) presenting project findings to Settlement councils and leadership, (b) presenting findings on boundary partnerships at public celebrations, and (3) publishing in academic journals and presenting at academic conferences. The overarching lesson we learned, and one recognized by OM, is that engaging in the process itself is more valuable than measuring specific outputs or generating reports. This lesson learned highlights the importance of attempting to engage as many BPs as possible in as many aspects of the process as possible.

Discussion

Outcome mapping (OM) has made and continues to make valuable contributions to the MSLSJ project. One of our goals was to use outcome mapping in a more complex environment than the OM guide advises–in a real CBPR project with rural Indigenous communities.

Determining and defining all Boundary Partners (BP), and how they may change over time, increased our understanding of each BP in relation to each other, but especially in relation to the University of Alberta research team members. OM helps us recognize that strategies and actions affect different BPs in different ways. It makes us think about how different BPs can work together or how they influence the whole of the project. For example, how can the Program Assistants work closer with community administrators to make processes like signing memorandums of understanding happen quicker because they have a direct impact on the proceedings of the summer youth camps. This example reinforces Earl et al.'s (2001) point that the BP is in control of behavior change. It is the project's objective to influence that behavior change in a positive direction towards the BP's Outcome Challenge by providing new opportunities, training and skill acquisition, resources, and mentorship for a certain period of time.

Documenting the project processes in OM drew our attention to what and where the communities (both individuals and as a group) are at in terms of training needs. OM helps us to set reasonable goals based on every person's and every community's capacity. Continuously reviewing the BPs, their progress markers, and strategy maps helps shape decisions about data analysis (e.g., thinking about what a particular BP may want to see from the data and how can we present it in ways that are translatable to them and influential in changing their behavior).

As a contributing member of BP#6, University of Alberta research team, and the project's managing partner, participation in the OM process provides motivation in our individual roles. Being involved in constructive strategies to improve the project is both professionally and personally rewarding. OM, and its reliance on self assessment monitoring, encourages self reflection. The discussions that we have had each time we evaluate the project's and boundary partners' progress (in particular, the *expect to see, like to see, love to see* markers) allows us to reflect on our own roles and how they evolve and change as well as the project team's role in relation to the communities that we work with.

Participating in the OM documenting process is an excellent way to get feedback from colleagues, as well as other BPs. Regular discussions spur new ideas, which can help make the project more effective. Sometimes the discussions challenge us to think in a different way, offering perspectives not yet considered. They remind us of all the small steps that went towards a larger goal, which sometimes can be forgotten when they seem insignificant.

OM has challenged us to think holistically about all aspects of the project. As a methodological framework, it has allowed us to document the process of planning, monitoring, and evaluating a multi-year, multi-site, multi methods program, and research project. OM

promotes planning, monitoring, and evaluating not as discrete events but rather part of an integrated, organic process where reflection and adaptability are encouraged. OM's focus on attributing behavior change in BPs to their participation in the project rather than on measuring and reporting on inputs and outputs makes the framework an effective tool in conducting community based participatory research. The framework, as a practical and metaphorical map allows you to see where you are at, where you have been, and where you may go in the future.

Limitations

The main challenge in using OM is getting your BP's participation in the process of creating and contributing to a framework for the project. This participation would include planning, monitoring, and evaluating phases. As stated earlier, our BPs did not participate in the workshops to create the MSLSJ framework. This is a similar challenge experienced in many community-based participatory projects where one of the key characteristics is participation by community members in all phases of the project (Fletcher, 2003; Horowitz, Robinson, & Seifer, 2009). While the OM process is meant to be highly participatory and consultative, a desirable goal, it is often not practical or possible to have BPs participate. There are often logistical issues around time and distance. As illustrated in Figure 1, the MSLSJ project consists of many communities (sites) spread around the province, requiring significant travel. Furthermore, many Settlement Council members and administrators are very busy running the daily operations of their communities.

It is important not to interpret any lack of BP participation in the OM process as a lack of interest in the project or the project's goals. It just means that BP#6, the University of Alberta research team, as the project management boundary partner, needs to be diligent in adapting and modifying strategies to the requirements, abilities, and expectations of participating boundary partners. We found that using OM as methodological framework for the MSLSJ project enabled us to do that. This was evident in our example of BP#2 where the role, responsibilities, and even the descriptive label changed over time and they have now become an active BP in the OM process. This illustrates that documenting process in OM does lead to action, as in 2018 the project increased focus and resources to the hiring, training and skill development of the Community Program Assistants (BP#2) to be prepared to lead facilitator training and be a spokesperson for the MSLSJ in their community.

Outcome mapping was a more complex endeavor than expected and takes a lot of dedicated time and leadership. We are not sure that the outcomes will be mapped as originally anticipated but the process it has facilitated has been worthwhile. The lessons learned by engaging in OM have proven to be more significant and valuable than any specific output or report. For us, OM is an inclusive iterative process of critical reflection which, as Earl (2006) suggests, is ultimately about telling a story about people. OM encourages us to appreciate what we have accomplished, to celebrate and share the successes no matter how small. Using OM to document the MSLSJ project process has increased our confidence in the ability to have discussions about issues and challenges that may otherwise be ignored.

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Author Note

Brent Hammer is a Qualitative Research Coordinator with the Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey Project in the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta, Canada. He has a PhD in Cultural Anthropology. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: bhammer@ualberta.ca.

Alicia Hibbert is a Wellbeing Planning and Evaluation Advisor at the University of British Columbia, Canada. She has worked as an applied researcher since 2010 at the University of Alberta, working with First Nations and Métis communities to build resiliency among children and youth.

Fay Fletcher is a Professor with the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta, Canada. She has focused on the integration of research and teaching with the intent of making adult education more accessible, relevant, and meaningful for all learners.

Rebecca Shortt is a Research Coordinator with the Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey Project in the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta, Canada. She has an MA in Community Engagement with a focus on Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationship building.

Mandy MacRae is a Project Specialist with the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta, Canada. She has worked as an administrator supporting Indigenous education programs since 2014.

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