Articulating forecasting and theories of change to build shared visions of change

Genowefa Blundo Canto, UMR Innovation
Montpellier 27 02 2020

GloFoodS workshop "Improving access to food through agroecology: public policy scenarios in favor of the aaroecologoical transition"
Objectives

• Draw attention on potential issues, driving forces and tipping points, when building research for development interventions
  ⇒ Intervention: e.g. programme, project, strategy, network, platform, an action on a territory

• Articulating forecasting and theory of change approaches to support strategic planning and adapt actions through monitoring, evaluation and learning that help to navigate complexity
Building Theories of Change with ImpresS Ex-ante
I think you should be a little more specific, here in Step 2
Culture of impact: building plausible impact pathways and shared visions of change

• Implementing interventions, actions, networks that have a shared goal and plan their actions to achieve that goal, vision, by making explicit how they are going to get there (the impact pathway and related theory of change)

• Adaptively act for change through reflexive processes and learning
Building ex ante impact pathways: imagine the future and how to get there

• Future is uncertain

• Past experience and knowledge gives us some direction

• Identifying obstacles and opportunities to leverage change

**Plausibility:** making explicit why we think an intervention will work, for whom, how, and under what circumstances
How do we do it?

IMPRESS EX ANTE
AN APPROACH FOR BUILDING EX ANTE IMPACT PATHWAYS

ImpressS team authors involved in developing and drafting this guide: Blundo Canto G. • Barret D. • Faure G. • Hairzein E. • Monier C. • Triomphe B.
Key definitions

OUTCOMES
Changes in practices, behaviour, and interactions linked to the appropriation (use, adoption, adaptation, transformation) of outputs. Who does what differently?

MAJOR CHANGES
Changes in knowledge, motivation, opportunity and capacity needed to change practices, behaviours and interactions.

IMPACTS
The medium and long-term effects of the intervention, as results of the outcomes. They can be positive, negative, intended, unintended, direct and indirect.
Adapted from Boru Douthwaite
1. Building a narrative
2. Mapping the outcomes
3. Finalize the impact pathway
4. Translate into different outputs

2 bis. Interactions with public actors
2 ter. Target capacity building

4 steps approach
Iterative process
Translation of the shared vision into Different outputs Different languages

Initial assessment

Problem analysis

Vision of the future

Ecosystem

Perimeter

Actors

Type
Impact
Contribution
Opposition
Influence
Interactions

Outputs / products

Strategies / activities
- Underlying hypothesis

Obstacles / opportunities
- Related to actors
- Related to the context

Major changes
(knowledge, capacities, motivation)

Outcomes: changes in practices, behavior and interactions

First version of the narrative

Impact pathway finalization

Architecture of the initiative
(project, living lab, roadmap, strategy, …)

Finalized narrative

Concept note / document describing the initiative

Logframe

Participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning system

Participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning system

Ecosystem

First version of the narrative

Shared vision

Initial assessment

Vision of the future

Problem analysis

Ecosystem

Perimeter

Actors

Type
Impact
Contribution
Opposition
Influence
Interactions

Outcomes: changes in practices, behavior and interactions

Major changes
(knowledge, capacities, motivation)

Obstacles / opportunities
- Related to actors
- Related to the context

Strategies / activities
- Underlying hypothesis

Outputs / products

Impact pathway finalization

First version of the narrative

Shared vision

Initial assessment

Vision of the future

Problem analysis

Ecosystem

Perimeter

Actors

Type
Impact
Contribution
Opposition
Influence
Interactions

Outcomes: changes in practices, behavior and interactions

Major changes
(knowledge, capacities, motivation)

Obstacles / opportunities
- Related to actors
- Related to the context

Strategies / activities
- Underlying hypothesis

Outputs / products
How to articulate theory of change and forecasting?
Outcomes reflected as aspirations
Opportunities related to pockets of the future in the present

Complement the problem tree with the circles of tensions and synergies related to long term effects of the vision taken as reality
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of the future: Understanding why and how to use an exploratory approach to alternative futures</th>
<th>Culture of Impact: Starting from the vision of the future to reflect (and question) the strategies, role &amp; contribution of the scientific community to long-term impacts, and integrate this reflection in the practices of the institution and its members.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>Make explicit alternative representations of the future connected to a new representation of the present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach</strong></td>
<td>Semi-open indefinite system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking outside the box</td>
<td>Using the future to guide planning (desirability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking the rupture, exploring the unknown</td>
<td>System thinking (searching for causalities and underlying hypotheses) to break out of linearity and understand a complex system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De-thinking linearity (complexity)</td>
<td>Thinking about relationships (system thinking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of the future</td>
<td>Culture of Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen the capacity of actors to anticipate:</td>
<td>Strengthen the capacity of actors to build plausible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interventions that aim to generate change:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain the perception of the world and the future</td>
<td>• Collectively define a vision of the desired situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exploring plausible futures</td>
<td>and the desirable changes to achieve it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Giving new understanding/meaning to the present</td>
<td>• Understand the existing problems, obstacles and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enable the realization of societal choices</td>
<td>opportunities for change for different stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Define orientations from alternatives</td>
<td>• Define action strategies in a participatory manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify key elements of change (actions/actors)</td>
<td>• Explain the assumptions underlying the causal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collective reflection on the role and legitimacy of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the various actors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

• Use the future to rethink the present and link it to actions: => articulating different time frames

• Systemic thinking

• Navigating complexity

• Increase plausibility of action and learning capacity through collective intelligence
Thank you!

genowefa.blundo_canto@cirad.fr