Toward Building Evidence of Kingdom Impact

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The mission of all Christ-Centered Organizations (CCOs) is to extend God's kingdom on earth. CCOs, therefore, are in the business of inspiring, motivating, and engaging in mission to take the gospel to the whole world, a gospel that is holistic in nature. One of the main issues that arises in this kind of work is what kind of actual difference the CCO is making, a difference that can be labeled as "kingdom impact." This article argues that seeking evidence of kingdom impact, in other words seeking to monitor, evaluate, and measure the impact of programs and projects from what can be called a "Kingdom Impact Measurement Framework" (KIMF), can be of great help in the work that CCOs do as part of submitting themselves completely to the Lordship of Christ. It starts out by reviewing the potential benefits of seeking to measure kingdom impact, suggests the possible theological underpinnings for how to put that into practice, presents the "Kingdom Impact Measurement Framework" and its elements, and concludes with the prayer that this might help CCOs differentiate their approaches from those used by secular counterparts. The hope and prayer is that what is shared here will be helpful for the range of CCOs that are in their incipient processes of prayerfully discerning whether and how to engage in this endeavor, as well as those that are far along their way on that journey.

Introduction

The mission of all Christ-Centered Organizations (CCOs) is to extend God's kingdom on earth, which is manifested through individual and social transformation. Increasing love for God and neighbors is evidence of moving toward this kingdom goal. Individual transformation in Christian mission involves releasing the person from whatever bondage prevents him or her from realizing God-given potential for abundant living. Social transformation involves healing broken relationships to restore justice in all social institutions, while honoring gifts within the culture that promote life over death. The CCO's mission may contain visible developmental objectives such as improving the health of children, improving education for children, increasing access to safe water, working toward food security, or less tangible developmental objectives, such as improved Biblical world views, increases in Samaritan love, or increased generative hope. Projects are God-given vehicles that achieve not only visible developmental objectives (transactional), but also intangible developmental objectives (transcendence). CCOs, therefore, are in the business of inspiring, motivating, and engaging in mission to take the holistic gospel to the whole world. In particular, their thinking and acting is grounded in the belief that spiritual realities are inseparably interwoven with day-to-day "ordinary" living (Bradshaw 1993).

Understanding the local dynamics of sin and grace is central to both planning and implementation of missional activities. The kingdom vision is at odds with worldly visions for a better future. For CCOs, measuring kingdom impact (success from a kingdom perspective) is not only a strategic imperative, but also a biblical mandate required by a steadfast faithfulness to God. It is acting out of biblical love in every aspect of living. That is the essence of the Kingdom Impact Measurement Framework (KIMF) presented in this paper. The KIMF can help CCOs submit themselves completely to the Lordship of Christ.

The foundation for the conceptual construction of the KIMF presented in this paper is laid out in my doctoral dissertation (Kumar 2017). To a great extent, my thinking in developing the KIMF is influenced by the fourth-generation model of evaluation (Guba and Lincoln 1989). In the construction of KIMF, however, I have blended both the positivist and post-positivist paradigms with the fourth-generation evaluation model, and introduced reflexivism as a new paradigm into the framework. Reflexivism does not necessarily mean reflection. A relatively new practice in evaluation, reflexivism is about self-awareness, i.e., questioning our values, prejudice, thought processes, habitual actions and assumptions to strive to understand our complex roles in relations to others. Furthermore, there are two sets of essential features of fourth-generation evaluation

that I have adapted in the KIMF. First, that the claims, concerns, and issues of stakeholders (mission staff, community members) serve as the basis for determining what should be measured (kingdom impact), which then becomes the basis of determining what data we should collect and what analytical insights we need. This is why the KIMF is transformational, because the goal for kingdom people is to seek evidence of kingdom impact – the state of shalom. Secondly, the methodological exercise is performed using constructivist and reflexive inquiry paradigms, involving the evaluators, evaluatees, and evaluands. That is why the KIMF is also transformative as it seeks to renew the minds (Rom.12:2, Col. 2:2-8) of all stakeholders involved. The aim of this methodology is to develop consensus among stakeholders who previously may have held different, perhaps conflicting, constructions of realities. If knowledge exists essentially in the form of human constructions, then a paradigm that recognizes and accepts that premise from the start is to be preferred. My hope and prayer is that these ideas will be helpful for all CCOs that are in the incipient processes of prayerfully discerning whether and how to engage in this endeavor, as well as those who are far along their way on this journey.

Benefits of Measuring Kingdom Impact

Christian mission has a long history, and has engaged CCOs, both independently and collaboratively, for centuries. By some estimates, global Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), which include CCOs, provide over $100 billion of privately donated funds for their mission activities (The GIIN 2020). In the last several decades the issue around measuring the impact and effectiveness of non-profit organizations as a whole has risen more and more to the fore. Independent of these contextual pressures, there are at least five ways in which CCOs might benefit significantly from undertaking the measurement of their kingdom impact:

1. **Providing credible evidence of who we are and what we do:** By definition, CCOs are influenced and motivated by the love of Christ to show the love of Christ through the programs they engage in. Generally, this involves seeking to design activities that meet physical needs as well as the needs of the mind, body, and spirit in a way that is holistic and sustainable (Offutt and Reynolds 2019). Our faith is an asset and an important ingredient in our work to end poverty, and collecting evidence that points to its holistic impact (the kingdom impact) helps us to better articulate who we are and what we do as disciples of Christ.

2. **Capitalizing on the opportunity to witness for Christ:** It is our utmost duty to witness for Christ in all we do. As Jesus said to the disciples, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Measuring kingdom impact gives us additional opportunities to be such witnesses. Biblical narratives are not simply stories, but evidence-based testimony of reliable witnesses; likewise, not only does measuring kingdom impact provide us with data that point to tangible evidence that Christ continues to transform the world, but telling the story through discernible kingdom impact presents the face of Christ without preaching a word.

3. **Securing a seat at the table with our secular and non-Christian counterparts:** By gathering data of kingdom impact based on prayerful and clear-eyed strategies, CCOs that are not already in a position to learn from and share evaluation and learning tools and methods with our secular colleagues can join the community of CCOs who are already doing so. Increasingly, CCOs like Food for the Hungry, World Vision, and many others have become important partners for the World Bank and the United Nations (Haynes 2013). Other CCOs have joined networks like the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI) that are seeking to learn from each other and influence policy. This seat at the table gives CCOs increased access to resources of all kinds to expand their knowledge and programs, while also representing opportunities for additional witness as mentioned above.

4. **Build a common pool of knowledge of effective strategies for Christian mission:** Closely related to #3, as CCOs build up their capacity to measure kingdom impact they will also benefit from and contribute to the pool of knowledge and learning among CCOs themselves, for example through established networks like the Accord Network and the Accord Research Alliance (ARA). Larger CCOs that invest in creating this common pool of knowledge also benefit smaller CCOs as they can leverage this knowledge of successful missional strategies to create kingdom impact. Not all CCOs have resources to invest in research and evaluations, but if large CCOs share their findings, small and often under-resourced CCOs can also make the most of their funds and people-power by investing in what works. Currently, most CCOs collect more data than they realize, from donor management systems to statistics about who uses their services to the outcomes for those participants. With ever-increasing amounts of evidence and knowledge pooled together, methodological, theological, and

theoretical tools and frameworks can be further developed, transformed, and shared to benefit CCOs.

5. **Promote accountability and Christian stewardship:** Christian stewardship is a theological virtue and an act of flourishing in the management of God's call to live godly lives. Christian stewardship demands that CCOs wisely manage their resources, and measuring impact that feeds into designing evidence-based programming can be of great help. CCO investment in evidence-building and using the evidence can lead to better decision-making and developing better mission strategies, and thereby give CCOs the opportunity to create more "bang for the buck." Moreover, the kind of kingdom impact data referred to here will enhance the reputation of CCOs and most likely make them more attractive to both donors and grantors. Polling from Gallup, for example, found that 57% of donors look for a solid mission and proof that the charities can accomplish that mission before they open their wallets (Fritz 2020). Foundations typically ask potential grantees to provide a section on evaluation in their grant applications. They follow up with site visits and frequent reporting expectations to ensure the effectiveness of the evaluation plan. The more data-driven the CCO, the more likely that it will attract foundation grants. Even watchdog organizations, such as Charity Navigator, include assessment platforms that incorporate performance or impact components.

A Theology of Kingdom Impact Measurement

Having reviewed the benefits of measuring kingdom impact, it becomes crucial to identify the foundational underpinnings that inform its creation and practice. This theology of kingdom impact measurement consists of seven elements:

1. **God delights in evidence, measurement, and evaluation:** We serve a God who created a world of measurable things, and he seems to find delight in measurement. In fact, he takes measuring things very seriously, including the spiritual growth of believers. Thus, measuring the impact of programs and projects is an important subplot in God's story. For example, Jesus speaks often of the measurement of faith, love, and hope (e.g., Matt. 6:30, 8:26, 16:8, Jn 15:13). Similarly, throughout the Bible, hope, joy, and knowledge are all referred to as measurable in the life of the believer. In fact, the Bible itself is a source of BIG DATA, data as historical narrative, data in terms of law, data in poetry, and data in prophecies, all leading to one thing – The Theos. "The more we explore data in the Bible, the more we discover his purpose" (Everitt 2009, 137).

2. **Evaluation is and must be treated as an instrument of spiritual discernment:** As we do evaluation work, we need to walk with Jesus. As we take up evaluation assignments, we must walk barefoot, because we will witness God at work; we will be in his holy presence. If we are to be highly professional, we must gird ourselves with prayer and fasting (Foster 1998). We must use our gifts of the Spirit as tools for collecting evidence of kingdom impact. Evaluators need to wear the full armor of God, or else they can be easily attacked by the evil one, because he does not want the renewing of minds arising from the transformational work of Christian missions (Kumar 2017).

3. **The evaluation of holistic Christian mission must seek to be transformational as well as transformative:** A transformational approach to evaluation has to do with ensuring that through measurements, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) staff are looking for evidence of shalom - the kingdom impact. If we do not engage in this process of discernment, our evaluation work may be indistinguishable from that of secular organizations, and would not be transformational in the spiritual sense of the word. In fact, transformational evaluation begins with seeing and discerning what God is doing in the communities in the midst of all the rigor involved in highly technically sound development programs. It begins with God and ends with God. Typical developmental evaluation, on the other hand, begins with human effort and seeks to enhance human effort (Cookingham 2015, Kumar 2017). A kingdom approach to evaluation, however, must also be transformative, one that includes the objective of renewing the evaluator's thinking and stakeholders' views regarding what really matters in Christian mission (Cookingham 2015, Kumar 2017). The image for transformative evaluation is a longer period of time that includes study, prayer, fasting, scripture search (Foster 1998), and visioning interwoven with evaluation planning, data collection and analysis, and report preparation. The evaluation is an occasion for evaluation team members and others to grow spiritually as they seek God's will for Christian mission (Kumar 2017).

4. **An evaluation of Christian mission should examine the motives, worldview, ideological underpinnings, and spiritual undergirding that drive development planning and interventions:** Among the aims of holistic Christian mission are (a) awareness of how God relates to people, (b) repentance, or change in

thinking from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness, and (c) commitment to community that is led by the Holy Spirit (Cookingham 2009, Kumar 2017). To understand awareness on (a) how God relates to people, the evaluation must ask questions such as: In local communities, what does God call staff and various groups of stakeholders to do about the present situation? Participatory scripture exercises and transformative prayer (Foster 1998) that aid a process of discerning appropriate recommendations are especially helpful here. Also, what do staff, community members, and other stakeholders envision for communities that will make the establishment of God's kingdom manifest? And how can this evaluation enable kingdom visioning (Kumar 2017)? For (b) repentance, or a change in thinking from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness, questions such as "what aspects of sin in these communities are keeping people in bondage?" can be helpful. We should ask ourselves, "How can the content and style of the evaluation enable appropriate confession and repentance" (Kumar 2017)? Finally, for (c) commitment to community that is led by the Holy Spirit, it might be best to ask whether staff and community members (including church leaders) believe that God is powerful enough to transform these communities according to his overall purpose. Or what does evaluation evidence say about their belief and unbelief (Kumar 2017)?

5. **Evaluation is about telling the truth:** Evaluation is about truth-telling of the community's life. It is about establishing truth in the public domain. Furthermore, as John 8:32 reminds us, it is pointing in the direction of truth that sets every human being free. Good evaluation helps people become aware of what they create when they live in ways inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus. Evaluations help in unmasking the deceptions (Col. 2:7-8) of the principalities and powers, and they help expose the ultimate powerlessness of the principalities and powers in the face of God's rule (Cookingham 2009, Kumar 2017). Does our desire to be in control of things by setting and achieving goals reflect rebellion against God's unfolding plan for salvation and redemption? There is a mix of motives that can be placed on a continuum from selfish gain to selfless service. There is a mix of perceptions about God that range from seeing God as being at work for the greatest good of people from a divine perspective, to understanding God as irrelevant for describing the dynamics of Christian mission. There is a mix of faith touchstones from God being compassionate but single-mindedly focused on salvation, to people

meaning to do good deeds, but getting diverted easily (Cookingham 2009, Kumar 2017).

6. **Evaluation should facilitate speaking about the most meaningful things witnessed:** As followers of Jesus, we speak about the most meaningful things we witness. A primary evaluation task should thus be to assist project stakeholders to use all of their senses to seek evidence in development work that illuminates the meaning of life, the Word that was there from the beginning, and that is made manifest in the relationships of ordinary life. There are especially two kinds of evidence that need to be spoken. One is the deeds of darkness that need to be confessed, so that those involved can be cleansed and liberated to love God and neighbor. The other is the experience of walking in the light, the joy of being in the presence of God (Cookingham 2009, Kumar 2017).

7. **In an evaluation, it is crucial that the culture and worldview of the community subject to evaluation be taken fully into account:** It is extremely important that the evaluation be based on an understanding of the community's worldview and core values that are manifested in thought, word, and deed in order to understand the significance of observations and information (Bradshaw 1993). This calls for a deep level of cultural competence and discernment, especially in the process of analyzing the worldview of the poor and non-poor, including measuring behavioral changes (especially those that indicate love for God and neighbor in that culture). Such deep understanding allows the evaluator to assess the extent to which the poor can imagine a different future and those with power are enabled to redefine power and challenge various aspects of reality that perpetuate poverty (Cookingham 2009, Kumar 2017). This can be very complex, but it is essential for holistic Christian mission evaluation. We need to respect local cultures, and if we are going to engage in any evaluation within a particular culture, local people who are part of the culture should participate fully in the evaluation. This reinforces Accord Network Principle #6, that we enter a community as guests, grow as partners, and continue as friends, demonstrating humility and a learner's heart to understand poverty from their perspective and in their culture (Accord Network, n.d.). We can then envision culturally-sensitive project designs, measure progress, and celebrate together in culturally appropriate ways.

A Kingdom Impact Measurement Framework

With the theological underpinnings in place, we can now consider how to apply them in practice by

creating a guiding framework for kingdom impact evaluation. This framework, called the "Kingdom Impact Measurement Framework" (KIMF), draws and builds on two sources, and bears some similarities to a third. First, it is a framework developed and used in Food for the Hungry under the name "Evidence Building Capability Framework." Second, it builds on the insights from the article "Towards Laying a Foundation for Christ-Centered M&E" (Check et al. 2020). Third, it bears nomenclature similarities with Eido Research's "Kingdom Impact Framework" (Eido Research), a framework that Eido has been developing with some members of the Accord Network and

beyond. Even though some terminology in this paper is similar to Eido's Kingdom Impact Framework (KIF), the Kingdom Impact Measurement Framework proposed here has different elements and perspectives.

As seen in Figure 1, this framework is made up of six components. The first, and overarching, component is the kingdom framework. The other five – program theory, evaluation design, the measurement of impact, advanced analysis, and biblical hermeneutics, are intimately linked together and influenced by the kingdom framework perspective. In what follows, each is presented in detail.

Figure 1: Kingdom Impact Measurement Framework

Seeking Kingdom Impact Evidence Requires a Kingdom Framework

Evaluation is about learning, which never happens in a vacuum. Rather, learning always happens in some kind of cognitive framework, in some kind of basic conceptual model that structures and interconnects ideas together and helps us make sense of things. It is always important, therefore, to intentionally create frameworks that guide planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. In fact, there are excellent examples of kingdom frameworks that have already been created by Christ-Centered Organizations (CCOs). These include World Vision's Transformational Development Framework, Tear Fund's Light Wheel, Eido Research's Kingdom Impact Framework, and Food for the Hungry's

Transformation Framework (See Box 1). The crucial function of all these frameworks is to help articulate the CCO's theology, theory, and practice, and to provide a foundation towards seeking, building, and using evidence for kingdom impact.

CCO frameworks built to guide the evaluation and measurement of the impact of programs are most helpful if they consist of three components: 1) the theological component that underpins the framework as a whole and drives the purpose and reason for the framework's existence and the principles under which it should operate; 2) the theoretical component that gives additional insights into how and why things work the way they do; and 3) the operational component that transforms the conceptual elements of theology and theory into practice, including the practice of

measurement and the analysis of results. Figure 2 gives a visual depiction of these components and their relationship to each other as they function in a constant process of feedback and flux to nurture, sustain, and transform the Kingdom Impact Measurement Framework as a whole.

Box 1: An Example of Food for the Hungry's (FH) Kingdom Framework*

Theological Framework: God's Story – *The Foundation of FH's work in Relief and Development* (Food for the Hungry 2017) articulates the theological assertions that inspire, guide, and support FH's mission. God's story can be summarized through the four concepts of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. God's story starts with God's creation to try to understand God's intended design for his creation and our (humans') role in it. To perform well in Christian mission, FH must return to God's design for the world and exercise its Christian imagination for peace, justice, and abundant life (12).

Theoretical Framework: FH believes that poverty is multifaceted and thus needs to be responded to holistically. FH's definition of multidimensional poverty embraces a diverse range of characteristics, such as moral, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, and it is not limited only to financial resources, material deprivation, social isolation, exclusion and powerlessness, and physical and psychological ill-being (16).

Operational Framework: When asking how FH makes its theological and theoretical frameworks operational, the answers lie in FH's Child-Focused Community Transformation (CFCT) program model. At the heart of this model is the welfare of the most vulnerable population in most societies — children. All programs and projects in FH use approaches as defined in CFCT (19).

Measurement Framework: It is through the measurement framework that FH is able to understand whether it is delivering on its mission, that is, the evidence of a trend of a community's advancement toward flourishing and preparedness to continue their transformational development pursuit. This measurement framework is applied to all FH's programs (20).

Results Framework: The results framework for measuring the kingdom impact is what FH calls transformational outcomes or domains of change. There are seven domains of change that all FH programs are measured on, and these domains of change provide evidence of restoring broken relationships, which are based on FH's theological and theoretical framework that defines poverty as the result of broken relationships (21).

* All page numbers are from Food for the Hungry's *Impact and Learning Report (FY 17-19) (2019b)*
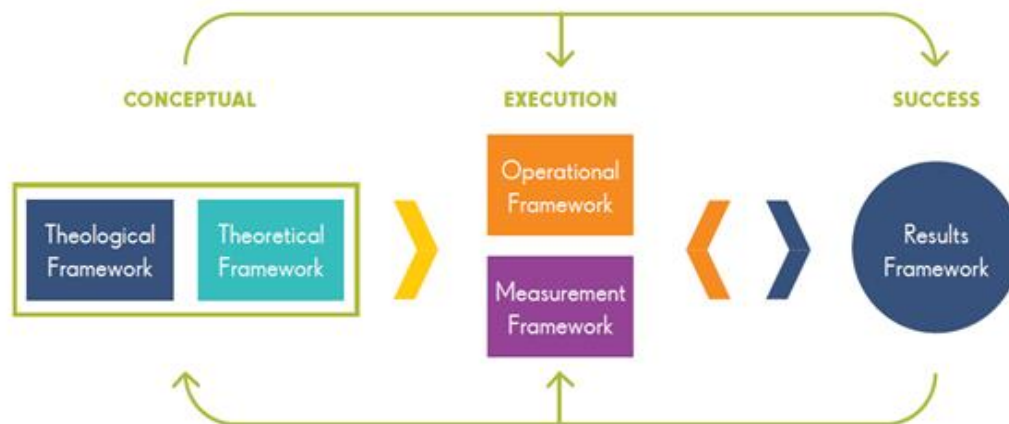

Figure 2: Conceptual Construction of the Kingdom Framework (Source: FH's Impact and Learning Report, 2019b, 7)

The role of the first component (the theological framework) is to answer "the why" question. Why a CCO exists and why we do what we do should be answered by the CCO's theological framework. The second component in the kingdom framework is the theoretical framework that primarily answers "the what." There are multiple perspectives and theories used to understand poverty; therefore, just as with the theological framework, the CCO needs to ascertain its theoretical understanding of poverty. A theoretical framework provides conceptual clarity on the missional impact and outcomes the CCO wants to achieve. Ascertaining a better theoretical underpinning of the evidence they generate would also make this body of knowledge more useful. The need for the operational framework, the third component in the kingdom framework, is to answer "the how" question. CCOs operationalize their theological and theoretical frameworks through an operational framework. In the absence of an operational framework, the danger is that theological and theoretical frameworks can limit themselves to mere abstract concepts. What is implemented needs to be measured. That is the purpose of the measurement framework and the results framework; to connect the "why," the "what," and the "how" by developing and focusing on metrics that matter (Greer & Horst 2014). It is through the measurement framework that the CCO will be able to understand whether it is delivering on its mission. The results framework connects CCO evidence back to what it defined in its theological and theoretical frameworks.

Seeking Kingdom Impact Evidence Requires Sound Program Theory

In order to guide the collection of the evidences of kingdom impact, it is essential to be guided by program theory. The program theory should be guided by both the theological and theoretical frameworks. Program theory helps explore why (or why not) CCOs missional activities are effective. Program interventions should be underpinned by appropriate theory. A good theory helps to prevent overlooking factors that may be important determinants of program execution. Program theory generally consists of two elements, the names for which are sometimes used interchangeably: a *theory of change* and a *theory of action* (Funnel & Rogers 2011). The theory of change explains **why** a certain set of activities leads to a certain set of results, whereas the theory of action describes in detail **what** those activities and results are. Program theory, which is the combination of the theory of change and theory of action, becomes the basis for impact evaluation (Funnel and Rogers 2011). CCOs are encouraged to develop a program theory for each of their programs, and to do so paying special attention to what they want

to achieve both on the material and the spiritual side. Grounding this process in the CCO's theological framework and biblical worldview is crucial; otherwise, CCO programs will be no different from those of their secular counterparts.

Seeking Kingdom Impact Evidence Requires an Appropriate Evaluation Design

Choosing an appropriate evaluation design is highly technical and the most overlooked part of any evaluation. Again, the decision to choose an evaluation design should be guided by theological and theoretical frameworks. Evaluation designs determine what and how to measure and validate the program theory. They can be created with a focus on collecting quantitative evidence, qualitative evidence, or both. The purpose of choosing an appropriate evaluation design is to ensure that the data collected can answer the evaluation questions that are most important for the organization and the community, and, as much as possible, provide evidence of the causal links between the interventions and the impact as defined in the program theory. The way the evaluation is designed has much to do with how accurate and reliable the results are, and how well those results can be used to improve program interventions. The design should be one that best addresses key threats to internal validity (whether the intervention caused the change) and external validity (the ability to generalize results to other situations, communities, and populations) (Food for the Hungry 2019a). In this process, four main objectives must be kept in mind:

- Providing reliability, validity, and credibility to the results.
- Choosing the right data collection methods to answer evaluation questions.
- Identifying unintended consequences (both positive and negative).
- Organizing the structure for the evaluation and a coherent evaluation plan.

It is critical that the evaluation questions are defined before choosing an evaluation design. Here again, the theological and theoretical frameworks help define evaluation questions. A specific design can be chosen by considering the following:

- What are the evaluation questions?
- What is the nature of the program? Which design will better provide the information that can lead to valid and reliable conclusions?
- How valid and reliable do findings need to be?
- Are there any ethical concerns related to choosing a specific design?

- How feasible is each option? What is the time constraint and how much does each option cost?

Experimental designs such as randomized control trials (RCTs) can be costlier than quasi-experimental or non-experimental designs, but they are well-suited if the evaluation's purpose is to answer questions around causality. RCTs are not always needed. Some alternatives to RCTs are Factorial Designs and Time Series Designs, which do a better job of answering change questions and whether the change is due to the programs in question. CCOs that do not need RCTs can use quasi-experimental, non- experimental, factorial, or time-series designs.

Seeking Kingdom Impact Evidence Requires Measuring Impact

One of the main traps CCOs fall into with their measurement efforts is that they measure only what they actually do, or what they implement. This is sometimes referred to as "traditional" M&E. For example, measuring the number of Bibles distributed, the number of children attending Sunday school, or other such "indicators," does not provide evidence of kingdom impact, nor does it provide an opportunity to learn and improve. The problem is that these are measurements of "outputs," of the activities carried out, not of "outcomes" or "impacts" that actually represent the real transformation.

In his book, *Impact Assessment for Development Agencies – Learning to Value Change* (2005), Chris Roche defines impact as "significant or lasting changes in people's lives, brought about by a given action or series of action" (21). He defines impact measurement as "systematic analysis of the lasting changes – positive or negative, intended or not – in people's lives brought about by a given action or series of action" (Roche 2005, 21). Evidence of kingdom impact, therefore, is about capturing certain types of change: change in the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of people who are served by CCO programs. These are the "results" that are actually sought, encompassing both the "outcomes" and the "impacts" of the programs. This is why "Results-Based Management" (RBM) approaches have become so influential in the humanitarian relief and development world and have influenced M&E practices globally. RBM is a broad management strategy aimed at learning and achieving improved performance and demonstrable results. RBM differs from traditional M&E that focusses only on inputs, activities, and outputs as mentioned earlier, whereas RBM combines the traditional monitoring with assessments of outcomes and impacts (Morra Imas and Rist 2009, 108). RBM has been demanded by major donors such as USAID and others for many years now.

Monitoring and Evaluation based on RBM is especially well-suited for documenting the evidence of kingdom impact because it is designed to address the "so what" questions. For example, so what that outputs have been generated? So what that activities have taken place? So what that outputs from these activities have been counted? It therefore feeds into the process of assessing both measurable heart and well-being changes in the lives of the most vulnerable, especially children, providing feedback on the actual outcomes and impacts of missional strategies and projects. RBM also supports the performance of CCOs and other stakeholders in relation to their obligations, functions, and relationships, and holds them accountable for results that demonstrate kingdom values.

Seeking Kingdom Impact Evidence Uses Advanced Analytical Capabilities When Quantitative Approaches Are Employed

When using quantitative evaluation approaches to evaluation, advanced statistical analytical capabilities are especially helpful in generating the most useful and far-reaching insights and conclusions that help describe kingdom impact and also provide guidance for how to improve it. Without insights, data are mere empty statistics. It is insights that help CCOs leverage and harness value from their data and turn them into strategic assets. CCOs can use what data science refers to as the "Final Frontier of Analytical Capabilities" (Louchez 2016) to derive insights from their evaluation data. At the heart of this lies data analytics, a process that can be defined as taking raw data and transforming it in a way that it can generate actionable insights from that data. Building capabilities in data analytics is key in creating a data-driven culture within any organization, and in understanding data at a deep level that some see as critical to organizational success (Intel Corporation, n.d.). Louchez points to four analytical capabilities that CCOs must invest in their organization: descriptive or exploratory analysis, diagnostic analysis, predictive analysis, and prescriptive analysis (Walker 2014; Louchez 2016).

- **Descriptive or Exploratory Analytical Capability:** This is primarily called "hindsight analysis" as it looks only at the historical data. Descriptive analysis helps explore the data and answer the question of "what" is happening in the program (Louchez 2016). Most common in M&E, descriptive analysis has to do with identifying trends, with tracking change over time, and with understanding the extent to which progress is being made in achieving key indicators, and what problems might exist. Limiting the process to descriptive analysis alone is not good enough,

because it uses univariate and bivariate analysis and provides information only on progress (trends).

- **Diagnostic Analysis:** This type of analysis helps answer the "why" of what is happening. (Louchez 2016), and thus complements descriptive analysis. Diagnostic Analysis enables CCOs to drill down to the root cause of the problems identified during descriptive analysis. Also based on the evaluation design chosen, it provides the ability to isolate the confounding factors.

The purpose of both descriptive and diagnostic analysis is to help CCOs make operational, tactical, or strategic decisions, and to make course corrections based on the insights generated so that problems can be addressed or impacts can be sustained.

- **Predictive Analytical Capability:** Predictive analysis basically predicts "what's likely to happen" (Louchez 2016). Predictive analysis is gaining more significance these days. Use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) is making predictive analysis easier. One can build predictive modelling using AI/ML algorithms. This type of analysis helps predict the likelihood of success or failure of a strategy or program interventions. It is carried out using multivariate methods, with odds ratios and relative risks being the most common statistical measures employed.

- **Prescriptive Analytical Capability:** Prescriptive analysis basically helps CCOs answer the question, "so what do I need to do?" (Louchez 2016). Based on predictive analysis, prescriptive analysis deals with prescribing where a CCO should specifically invest so that there is a high likelihood of kingdom impact – maybe even maximum impact. This analysis uses linear, logistic, multivariate, and multinomial regression modelling and is the most advanced of the four.

The purpose of predictive and prescriptive analysis is to make informed choices so that better results can be achieved. It enables CCOs (especially those with limited funding) to make decisions on how to concentrate their resources on mission activities most likely to yield kingdom impact.

Seeking Kingdom Impact Evidence Requires Adopting a Hermeneutical Approach to Learning and Reflection.

The final component of the Kingdom Impact Measurement Framework is a hermeneutical approach to learning and reflection. "Hermeneutical" simply means interpretation and making sense, and this approach consists of interpreting the data with three tools: the theological framework, an awareness of different perspectives (a "constructivist" approach), and helping those different perspectives be in dialogue with each other (a "reflexive" approach). This approach basically takes results of the operational framework, which are measured using the results framework, and connects them back to the theological and theoretical framework to make sense of the data.

First, without the right interpretation, quantitative and qualitative data are, at best, merely empty statistics and decontextualized opinions and, at worst, quite misleading. This is because the relationship between the data and its usefulness (value) depends on how we approach them interpretively. This "hermeneutical" approach has up to four levels of depth of understanding and abstraction, levels that make up what has been called a "hierarchy of data, information, knowledge, wisdom" (DIKW framework), as depicted in Figure 4 (Kumar 2021). At the base level of this hierarchy lie the data, which are individual facts, statistics, or narrative items. They are raw and, without some transformation and interpretation, are of limited value. The second level of interpretation is information, which consists of data that have been applied to the context and understanding of one or more relational connections in the data. The third level is knowledge, an arranging of information in a useful manner based on an identification and understanding of observed patterns and trends. When meaning is provided to the information, it transforms into knowledge. Knowledge differs from data or information. New knowledge may be created from existing knowledge using logical inference. The fourth and final level of interpretation is wisdom. When insights are generated from knowledge, the knowledge converts to wisdom. Usually achieved over a long time span, wisdom helps us understand the principles that underpin patterns and relationships at the level of information and knowledge, and it helps in driving data-driven decision making. Moving in the data value chain from data to knowledge is primarily enabled by data science practices, while moving from knowledge to wisdom requires a discernment process. Seeking evidence of kingdom impact, therefore, is about discerning a compassionate use of knowledge and wisdom. It is at this point that we transition in our analytics from using data as transactional to transcendence and start gazing at the face of God (Kumar 2021).
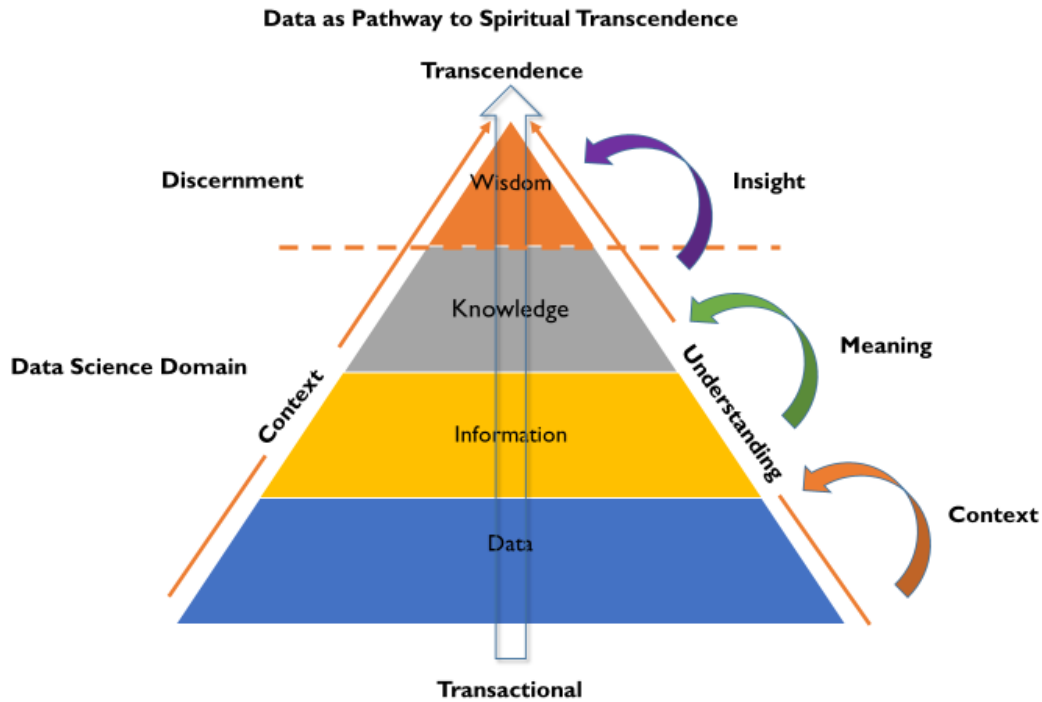
Figure 4: The Hermeneutical Approach to Data Interpretation (Kumar 2021)

A hermeneutical approach is important not only for the analysis of data, but also for building the evaluation design itself. In other words, it pulls everything together. To this end, a key part of applying the hermeneutical insights to the process of seeking evidence for kingdom impact lies in recognizing the facts that (1) the actors involved in CCO programs may have different perspectives on the central problems and their causes, (2) some outcomes of any program and missional activities are unpredictable, and (3) the process of transformation involves multiple pathways and interrelated factors that are not always apparent. This means that it is important for any monitoring and evaluation design to appreciate that people are the motor behind the development and societal change processes, and that it is only through sharing experiences from different perspectives by different people that one gets the full range of knowledge needed – a "constructivist approach." It is also important to foster an inclusive "reflexive approach" that enables a collective learning process (in groups of actors and in projects), as well as to focus on results in terms of learning and institutional change (Van Mierlo 2010).

A robust approach to building kingdom evidence combines the best of these constructivist (fourth generation models) and reflexive approaches with the results-oriented approach (positivist and post-positivist). A summary of the various tools available from each approach is provided in Table 1. This kind of comprehensive approach would stimulate the exchange of perspectives enabling (1) mutual understanding among different actors, (2) exchange of experiences and support of collective learning, and (3) improvement and change in mission strategies. Further, this approach provides good insights into research, tests approaches, and helps to collaboratively design context-sensitive, multi-sectoral mission activities that yield kingdom impact.

Conclusion

One of the recurring questions among CCO practitioners is what CCOs bring to the table that is different from other relief, development, and advocacy organizations. After all, much (although not all) of the relief, development, and advocacy work done by CCOs is through practical assistance that may not necessarily have a clearly evident "spiritual" dimension to it. Just because CCOs engage in relief, development, and advocacy work, does not necessarily make their work "spiritual," except perhaps in the broad scope of their spiritual mission of "kingdom building." It could be argued that much of what CCOs give attention to is essentially employing "good science" through good evidence, and that if CCOs would employ the same design, monitoring, evaluation, and learning that good secular organizations do, it would serve them well, and it would also reflect Christ-centered values. In fact, the substantial overlapping of the principles of the American Evaluation Association with the Accord Network principles of excellence in Integral Mission

charted out by Check et al. (2020, 61) show how this argument has some merit to it.

And yet, CCOs are called to engage effectively with the heart and spirituality of the communities they serve through engagement with faith leaders and actors (Bornstein 2005), to address spiritual root causes of poverty, and to engage in multi-faith environments to achieve long-lasting positive changes in attitudes and behavior. And they are uniquely positioned to do so. These types of engagements can and should lead CCOs to a different approach to planning for, implementing, and evaluating and measuring impact, precisely because of their call to be witnesses to Christ. The hope and prayer of this article is that that the presentation of this Kingdom Impact Measurement Framework will help CCOs at all stages of their engagement with measurement to think creatively about what the spiritual impact dimensions of their programs might be, and how best to seek evidence of both spiritual and material aspects as an integral whole.

	Results-Oriented Approach	Constructivist Approach	Reflexive Approach
Use	RCT, other evaluation design, baselines and final evaluation, reporting on Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) and Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) progress	Identifying barriers to change, semi-annual and annual reviews, midterm evaluation, final evaluation	Periodic project management meetings, structured reflective events in the life of the project, Research and Innovation (R&I) workshops
Methods	Theory of change (TOC), log frames,	Learning histories, responsive evaluation, most significant change, impact grid	Reflexive monitoring in action/reflexive process, monitoring/interactive learning approach
Data collection methodology	Quantitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
Role of data and M&E	Accountability, generating evidence to prove causality of pathways and supporting project management	Supporting strategic and tactical management, TOC analysis, reasons-for-change learning from stakeholders, modifying processes, and support setting learning agenda	Evidence to support knowledge creation and adaptation. Learning, change of practices, and their institutional setting
Focus	Results/predefined objectives or procedures	Meanings and values, based on negotiations	Calling existing practices and institutional settings into question
Paradigm	Reality exists and can be measured/defined objectively.	Reality is constructed through interaction and negotiation.	Reality has to be reconstructed, a new reality has to be developed.

Table 1: Summary of Approaches and Functions of M&E to be used in the Project

Note from the Editor:

Readers will likely have noticed that no examples of what such an evaluation would actually look like are presented in this paper. If the argument in this paper has intrigued you, please check out the CRDA's next issue (expected in August 2022), in which one or several such practical examples will be presented in part 2 of this paper. If you or your organization is interested in contributing to part 2 of this paper, please contact the editor or the author.

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