‘Adaptive Management' in Aid Programmes

A BEAM Exchange webinar
10 Dec 2014, 1pm GMT
The webinar

- **Introduction** - Ashley Aarons, BEAM Exchange

- **Adaptive management: through the eyes of an average staff member** - Amir Allana, Pollen Group - EWB Canada

- **Compliance: making the space for adaptive management** - Tim Sparkman, a2b solutions

- **Complex markets, adaptive management: lessons from two programs** - Peter Roggekamp, CAVAC

- **Questions and Answers** – participant questions
Adaptive Management

Through the Eyes of an Average Staff Member
Story #1: Moses
Story #2: Fariya
Key Takeaway #1: Adaptive management rests on how engaged and genuinely interested each individual staff member is in the work/mission of the organization; this enables performance with low levels of prescription.
Key Takeaway #2: Consistent messaging and role modeling from management is vital. Setting up an environment where curiosity and critical thinking emerges is a slow, deliberate process.
Key Takeaway #3: Tools and processes will support adaptation: strategic reviews, time for reflection, lightly-structured reporting. These tools are secondary to the culture of learning.
Thank You
amirallana@ewb.ca
COMPLIANCE

Making the space for adaptive management
Budgeting
Setting targets
Workplanning
Reporting
Keeping space for failure
Donor engagement
Budgeting

• Large lump sums

• Especially for outyears (starting at Year 2)

• Maximize contractual flexibility

• Staffing is the core of “program cost”
  • Not an “overhead” or otherwise negative “operational cost”
Setting targets

- As few indicators as possible in the contract
- Focus on behaviors
- Volume of partnership is an acceptable output
Workplanning
Reporting

- the simplest reports would show:
  - What was tried – how it went and what did not work as expected
  - What the program team learned from the failure
  - How that learning is being incorporated into the program

- You can’t fake adaptation…
Building failure into the process
What is the right level of donor engagement?

• It’s an open question and probably depends on the donor and the rep
1. Launch, March 2, 2004
2. First Earth flyby, March 3, 2005
4. Second Earth flyby, November 14, 2007
5. Asteroid Steins flyby
6. Third Earth flyby, November 11, 2009
7. Asteroid Lutetia flyby
8. Arriving at the comet in 2014
9. Rosetta observes comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko
CAVAC shortest summary:

✓ Rice and Vegetables in Cambodia
✓ Assisted 40+ Companies to innovate
✓ Constructed 25 Irrigation schemes
✓ ½ of all rice farmers have access to commercial advice on fertilizer or pesticides.
✓ 250 000+ Outreach.

2009 - 2015

Peter Roggekamp
Team Leader

Address: 138 Norodom Boulevard
Phnom Penh CAMBODIA
+855 (0)23 218 310
+855 (0)23 218 410
peterroggekamp@cavac.kh.org

Complex markets,
Adaptive management.
Lessons from 2 programs
M4P makes sense but does not fit with the socio-economic reality
Why M4P does not fit

- Complicated context
- Addressing constraints

Complex context
Innovation
Problems: Complex, otherwise would have been solved already.

Context: Socio-economic reality in developing countries is highly complex, hard to predict and far from linear.

Interventions: Keep as simple as possible even though innovation is never really simple.
## Normal practice vs. Adaptive management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Normal practice</th>
<th>Adaptive management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Detailed design document. Specific outputs and targets. Strict budget lines.</td>
<td>Design allows for maximum flexibility related to activities and resource allocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor control</td>
<td>Monitoring progress against a target.</td>
<td>Monitoring capacity to implement. Monitoring internal systems and strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Extensive upfront research. Often partly external.</td>
<td>Continues learning with short initial research. Internal to allow staff to understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companies’ involvement</td>
<td>Interventions well designed and often tested before engaging with companies of other partners.</td>
<td>Program need market players as partners from the start because reality cannot be fully understood by the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventions</td>
<td>Well designed to address constraints. Executing a plan. Copy what works. Pilot ideas and then scale up. Program in control. Failed intervention is failure for program.</td>
<td>Innovation partnerships with market players. Finding partner and then design an intervention. Joint learning and adjusting. Partner in the lead. No copying of solutions. Interventions do not fail as long as you learn and act on it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Adaptive Management in reality!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal practice</th>
<th>Adaptive management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portfolio of Interventions</strong></td>
<td>More or less fixed portfolio of markets and interventions. Start with a few and add later on in the program. Drop the failed ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M&amp;E</strong></td>
<td>Normal monitoring of activities and impact assessment separated. M&amp;E is proofing and should be external.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjustments</strong></td>
<td>Changes in interventions will be made when someone notices it goes wrong. Adjustment is bad planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Targets</strong></td>
<td>Set upfront by donor (log frame). Monitor against intermediate targets. Targets guide the program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aren’t we forgetting something?
Yes, donors and their program designs always forget that programs also need to be implemented.
### Normal practice

**STAFF**

Staff is an overhead and costs need to be controlled.  
- Hire experience staff (from other NGO’s.)  
- Focus on technical skills.

A 1 to 3 ratio local – international is OK.  
- International staff initiates activities.  
- Staff executes the activities.

Good staff is available.

**Organogram**

Hierarchy makes things easier and motivates the senior ones.

**Culture**

A “do your task and report what is required” culture. Loyalty and positive thinking is rewarded.

**Internal systems**

Solid and efficient systems that allow for proper reporting and a minimal chance of fraud. Systems in line with donor expectations. Host government involved in operational decisions.

### Adaptive management

**STAFF**

Success = 70% having the right local staff.  
- Staff needs to have analytical and entrepreneurial skills. Technical skills are nice to have. Hire the most clever ones you can find!!

- Only Local experts really understand the context.

- A 1 to 10 ratio local – international is OK.  
- Local experts initial, monitor, adjust everything. International expertise could coach and give guidance.

- Good local experts with experience do not exist in most cases and need to be trained on the job.

**Organogram**

ONLY FLAT works. Hierarchy kills creativity and honestly.

**Culture**

A genuine learning culture is needed. Local experts need to be comfortable to report things that did not go well. The organization always need to takes action. This is very hard to achieve!!!!!!!

**Internal systems**

FLEXIBLE SYSTEMS are needed at all levels. Offers to partners need to be flexible. Contracts with partners need to be flexible. Internal decisions only. But donor and host government monitor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Normal practice</strong></th>
<th><strong>Adaptive management</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STAFF</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Staff is an overhead and costs need to be controlled.  
  Hire experience staff (from other NGO’s.)  
  Focus on technical skills. | Success = 70% having the right local staff.  
  Staff needs to have analytical and entrepreneurial skills. Technical skills are nice to have. Hire the most clever ones you can find!! Only Local experts really understand the context. |
| A 1 to 3 ratio local – international is OK  
  International staff initiates activities.  
  Staff executes the activities | A 1 to 10 ratio local – international is OK.  
  Local experts initial, monitor, adjust everything. International expertise could coach and give guidance.  
  Good local experts with experience do not exist in most cases and need to be trained on the job. |
| Good staff is available. | |
| **Organogram** | |
| Hierarchy makes things easier and motivates the senior ones. | ONLY FLAT works. Hierarchy kills creativity and honestly. |
| **Culture** | |
| A “do your task and report what is required” culture. Loyalty and positive thinking is rewarded. | A genuine learning culture is needed. Local experts need to be comfortable to report things that did not go well. The organization always need to takes action. **This is very hard to achieve!!!!!!** |
| **Internal systems** | |
| Solid and efficient systems that allow for proper reporting and a minimal chance of fraud. Systems in line with donor expectations. Host government involved in operational decisions. | **FLEXIBLE SYSTEMS** are needed at all levels. Offers to partners need to be flexible. Contracts with partners need to be flexible. Internal decisions only. But donor and host government monitor. |
The recommendations from our complexity experts

1. Resist engineering
2. Resist fatalism
3. Promote innovation
4. Embrace creative destruction
5. Shape development
6. Embrace experimentation
7. Act global
Resist engineering
Avoid isomorphic mimicry
Embrace experimentation
Promote Innovation

Engineering works in a complicated world where large studies and good planning makes sense.

Copying and scaling up solutions to address constraints will not work well in a complex reality.

I actually dislike the word as it looks like we just try anything. Trying and learning go hand in hand. Good strategies control the freedom to experiment.

Yes, that is where it is all about! Not about addressing problems.
Adaptive management in PSD is not a choice. It is the only option for success.

Donors do not need to lose control. A.M. programs allow for better and earlier control.

Success is all about flexibility (25%) and competent local experts (70%)
CAVAC has a website that explains how we work.

I wrote a paper for the 2012 DCED M&E seminar in Bangkok reflecting on M&E.

With some colleagues, we wrote a draft paper: *Guidelines for good market development program design*. 
Questions and Answers

Ashley Aarons
Ashley.aarons@beamexchange.org

Amir Allana
amirallana@ewb.ca

Tim Sparkman
tsparkman@ug.mercycorps.org

Peter Roggekamp
peterroggekamp@cavackh.org
Resources

• Visit bit.ly/beamadapt
  • BEAM Exchange page on adaptive management with additional resources

• Visit bit.ly/navigating-complexity for:
  • Case study ‘Navigating Complexity: Adaptive Management at the Northern Karamoja Growth, Health, and Governance Program’

• Visit bit.ly/CAVAC-website for:
  • Cambodia Agricultural Value Chain Program website

• Survey: bit.ly/beamsurvey