Lean data for SDC

A thought starter
Bern, 31st October 2017

Agenda

What is it?

How to use it?

Some ideas for you?

Questions?

Imagine…

…you would know what is truly happening at the end of that bush road (without travelling to it yourself)

…you do not need to hire anymore 60 PHD students to verify what your implementing partners state about their impact

…you could show figures for the true impact of your work, real time, directly from the end beneficiaries

Then you think…

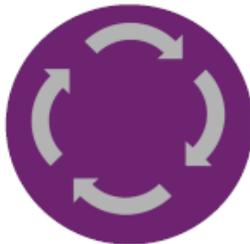**Imagine I won the loto** ☺

Lean data may be the answer

Lean data collection is based on 3 key principles

Ask the end users/ beneficiaries directly, about living conditions, impact, satisfaction, unmet needs, actual behavior…

Use low-cost technology for data collection (low cost, high speed, high accuracy)

Collect data for action, not information…

Some examples

COMPANY INDUSTRY LOCATION	IMPACT QUESTION	LEARNING	ACTION	METHOD (COST)	QUALITY ASSURANCE
Burn Cookstove sales Kenya	Do buyers of Burn cookstoves reduce charcoal usage to the expected degree (by 60 percent) as a result of using the product?	Customers' use of charcoal decreases to the same degree as laboratory tests had predicted it would	Working to understand which distribution channels are most effective at reaching poor rural customers	SMS texting, call center ($3,000 over the course of four weeks)	Using call center interviews to validate SMS data
Edubridge Vocational training India	Which factors account for the difference between "successful" and "unsuccessful" Edubridge trainees?	Customers with better urban social networks are more likely to get and keep a job; poorer students are more likely to seek out jobs and keep them	Using data to segment customers and working to improve the match between training services and trainee needs	Call center ($1,500 over the course of four months)	Using Acumen personnel to train call center staff
KZ Noir Coffee processing Rwanda	What is the poverty level of KZ Noir farmers? Do the earnings of these farmers improve because of their participation in the KZ Noir premium-sharing program?	Preliminary results show that 59 percent of KZ Noir farmers are extremely poor; data on changes in farmers' income are forthcoming	Using results (such as a high incidence of bank account usage among customers) to improve premium-sharing program	SMS texting and in-person tablet-based surveys ($15,000 over the course of two months)	Enlisting researchers at a third-party firm (IDinsight) to implement survey
SolarNow Solar energy systems Uganda	Does in-house financing improve the ability of Solar-Now to reach the poor? Does household expenditure on energy decline as a result of using a SolarNow product?	Reach among the poor is better than expected (49 percent of customers live on less that $2.50 per day); most customers show only a small savings in energy expenditure in the first three to four years after purchase	Starting to conduct quarterly surveys to track customer segmentation and customer satisfaction	Call center ($2,000 over the course of four weeks)	Using a third-party call center as well as remote field staff; using SolarNow's call center for follow-up survey to test for consistency of responses
Ziqitza Health Care Limited Ambulance services India	Does the Ziqitza ambulance service succeed in reaching low-income customers? How does usage vary between male and female customers?	Most customers (75 percent) are below the poverty line; pregnant women are a core market	Improving access in hard-to-reach regions; working with local governments in remote areas to increase public awareness	Call center ($14,000 over the course of four months)	Working with Grameen Foundation to train call center staff and to conduct in-person validation of sub-sample

Each of these companies is part of the Acumen portfolio. Cost figures do not account for Acumen staff time.

Benefits of lean data

Less costly, faster, more often, less intrusive, and less complicated to set up

About creating value for end users/ beneficiaries, what matters to them, rather than focusing on compliance and reporting

Tool to improve the organizations that work for you and the sustainability of their/ your interventions

SDC can use lean data to...

1

Understand if the needle is truly moving and by how much
- From: #farmers reached to: are these farmers better off?
- From: #students attending new vocational schools to: do students find a better job with higher income after graduation?
- From: #solar lanterns sold to: are clients saving money on kerosene? How else is their livelihood improving?

2

Understand what works or not, by comparing performance over time or between programs
- From: #targets achieved in logframe to: has this partner invested resources wisely and improved over time?
- From: #how many activities completed to: is this approach truly working in general and in particular?

3

Generate data and insights that better convey the importance and relevance of your work to others
- From: #where cut the Latam budget to: are these programs delivering superior value?
- From: #is taxpayer money well spent to: each dollar invested resulted in farmers earning 10$ more this year, sustainably

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Others are already doing it…

Investors that care about social impact and donors' platform who aim to engage with private sector are already using this tool (e.g. Acumen Fund has done close to 100 surveys and the Business Call to Action 8 ones).

BUT
> they do it for the recipient organization (rather than teaching them how to do it)
> they do not compile or analyze data centrally (i.e. insights remain at the level of the recipient organization)
> they mostly serve their own investees/ members; at best, they sell their (proprietary) services to others

And SDC is doing it too…in pioneering ways!

SDC just started in one if its programs, will do 9 surveys by end of year, and dozens more in the coming years. We are focusing on social entrepreneurs (i.e. start-ups that want to create social impact)

AND YOU DO IT BETTER THAN OTHERS:

➢ methodology to help cohorts of organizations do it by themselves, as well as 'train the trainers' scheme to allow others do the same among their portfolio of projects (i.e. non-proprietary methodology)

➢ centralization of data, compiling insights about what works or not, as well as progress over time on 1 platform, real time

➢ testing migrating all program reporting onto this platform too (end users > field organizations > implementing/intermediary organizations > SDC), real time

What do you think?

? **Lean Data**: could this be a disruptive innovation for monitoring and evaluation of impact?

? **SDC**: could the quality assurance team develop a standard out of it for SDC programmes and become first in class in development effectiveness?

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