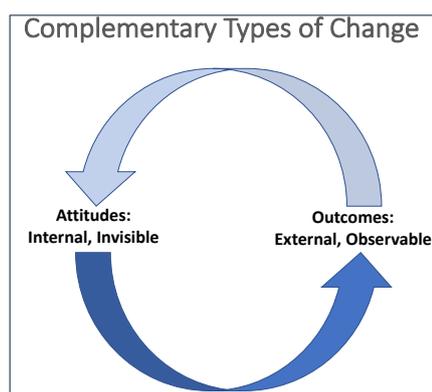


Evaluation Methodology Discussion Note: Outcome Harvesting plus Attitude Change Research for Interreligious Peacebuilding

This note aims to summarize the rationale behind a methodology adaptation in progress and to elicit feedback, ideas, and sharing of relevant experiences. A learning update will be circulated by late 2019.

Outcome Harvesting plus attitude change research is a promising methodology for the evaluation of interreligious peace initiatives in which:

- **Outcomes cannot be precisely predicted.** Such initiatives take place in contexts of complexity where cause-and-effect is difficult to pin down. They involve faith-based practitioners, many of whom do not find it meaningful to detail their intended results before taking action. Importantly, some such initiatives also feature emergent designs in which objectives are determined by participants during implementation, not pre-defined at the outset. This calls for the flexibility to identify and substantiate results *after* they occur – the core principle of Outcome Harvesting.
- **Individual attitudes matter.** Many interreligious peace initiatives involve work on attitude change, which Outcome Harvesting is not designed to capture. Outcomes are observable external changes in action or behavior, while attitudes (broadly defined) are any *internal* prejudice or perception that influences *external* behavior towards people from a different religious identity group. This makes attitude change a useful complement to Outcome Harvesting. Attitude change research may include repeated surveys, one-time surveys, and identifying and substantiating public self-proclamations of attitude change. Given the challenges of accurately measuring attitudes, Outcome Harvesting provides a useful form of triangulation.



The working hypothesis is a **two-way interaction** between attitude and behavior. Current peacebuilding practice emphasizes the role of attitude in shaping behavior. Yet there is also evidence to indicate that behavior change can influence attitude.¹ For example, a behavior change upon beginning to attend cross-faith events can bring new interaction with other identity groups, an opportunity for attitude change. The inter-relationship between internal transformation and external behavior also holds resonance in most theological traditions.

Two preliminary learning efforts are underway to combine Outcome Harvesting with attitude change research in evaluations of Christian-Muslim peace networks supported by NGOs. The first, evaluated

externally with Tearfund in Iraq in 2018, was a mid-term formative evaluation to inform strategy development. The second, evaluated internally with Peace Catalyst International in the USA in 2019, positions an Outcome Harvesting pilot alongside a results-based evaluation that includes elementary attitude change research. Both organizations are considering longer-term uptake of Outcome Harvesting plus attitude change research as a core methodology. Learnings from the Iraq pilot will soon be applied in Egypt. These early efforts will surface learnings on how to refine the methodology for greater usefulness and rigor in the future.

At the same time, local M&E capacities are emergent, so each evaluation has faced limitations. The Iraq evaluation featured direct integration between Outcome identification and attitude change findings, but limited substantiation of Outcomes. The US evaluation featured Outcome substantiation in 2 of 10 target cities, but a less direct integration between Outcomes and attitude change findings. Attitude baselines are absent in both cases. This poses additional questions regarding the extent to which Outcome Harvesting and attitude change research can be modified to suit the limited technical or financial capacities of the contexts in which much interreligious work takes place. **Send your feedback and ideas to ripple@michellegarred.net.**

¹ For example, tests of contact theory. See J. Dovidio *et al.*, "Reducing intergroup bias through intergroup contact: Twenty years of progress and future directions." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 20.5 (2017): 606-620.