

Newsletter

November 2018



Welcome to our November 2018 newsletter.

With the summer months a distant memory and the New Year fast approaching, the INTRAC team are busy with new and ongoing initiatives. There are plenty of projects, training courses, and publications to update you on, as well as introductions to new members of the INTRAC team.

We have a viewpoint from INTRAC's Senior Research Consultant, Dan James, which offers thoughts on different approaches to facilitating innovation. This is particularly prominent as a number of projects that INTRAC is involved in are taking an innovation perspective.

In this month's Guest Contribution, Ajay Mehta shares his experience of working with the Cities Alliance to design and deliver an online course on project sustainability. Our Central Asia Programme Manager, Charles Buxton, shares details of a recent jobs fair helping young people in Kyrgyzstan find work and vocational training opportunities.

This issue highlights a diverse range of work. We are carrying out a mid-term evaluation of the Change the Game Academy for Wilde Ganzen, running a blended-learning programme for the Oak Foundation's programme officers to support effective partner capacity development, and helping PAMS Foundation to assess its potential for growth. In the past month, we have also assisted M&E staff from the Norwegian Refugee Council to deepen their skills in data analysis and use.

In our publications section, you can find out about the Rethinking Research Collaborative resources, which are online now, plus the latest Development in Practice issues and open access articles. And we are happy to let you know that the INTRAC resource database now features our entire back catalogue of publications, thanks to the hard work of our Communications Volunteer Lois Fallon.

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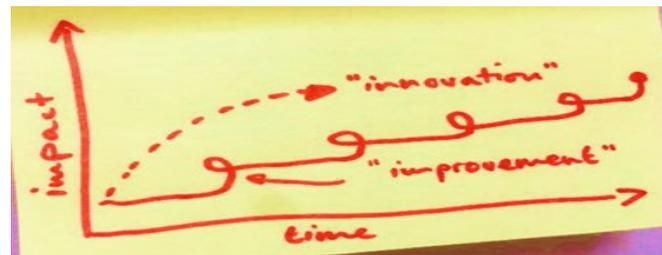
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From improvement to innovation

At INTRAC, we spend a lot of time thinking about how civil society organisations (CSOs) improve. We often think about this in terms of the programme cycle: with each cycle, we learn from successes and failures, improving through incremental steps over time. Every so often, a series of small improvements may coalesce into a new approach, a kind of ‘evolutionary jump’.

But CSOs and donors are increasingly thinking in terms of ‘innovation’, as opposed to ‘improvement’. A short definition of innovation might be a process that takes new ideas to scale. New does not necessarily mean ‘new to the world’, it may be new to a particular context. Equally, ‘scale’ may also be context-specific, although what distinguishes an innovation from an invention is that it has ‘market potential’ as well as being just a bright idea. Microfinance is perhaps a good example: lending money is not new, but the innovation comes in making it work for large numbers of poor and marginalised people who previously could not access formal finance.

Innovation processes can be thought of as an attempt to find shortcuts to the evolutionary jumps that can happen through more traditional learning and improvement. In other words, processes that help us arrive at better solutions more quickly. INTRAC is currently engaged in a number of projects taking an innovation perspective (see the Start Network and Save the Children UK in Our Work), and we see different approaches to facilitating innovation in development projects.



Innovation vs. learning and improvement

Problem-driven design is a structured way of running research and development processes to find solutions to a particular problem. It is an innovation process in its own right, but can also be used in combination with other approaches. The UK Design Council identifies four phases – discover, design, develop, deliver – visualised as a [double diamond](#).

Open innovation programmes attempt to harness the fact that many innovations come from outsiders to organisations rather than insiders. They usually start with an open call for ideas – often engaging beneficiaries themselves – followed by a staged process to develop and test ideas. Fewer ideas are supported at each stage of the process, so that only the most promising ideas are taken forward.

Seed funds are used to support a portfolio of projects that might be too high risk, or perhaps tangential to an organisation’s core work, or otherwise difficult to fund through normal channels. Technical support might be given alongside seed funds, and a seed funder might look to invest further in those projects that show sufficient promise.

Innovation labs, incubators and accelerators all involve structured programmes of financial, technical and business support to innovators, using combinations of the above (and other) approaches to select and develop cohorts of innovations.

Innovation is of course risky: there is an uncertain payoff and many CSOs and donors are rightly risk averse when allocating scarce resources and when working with vulnerable people. Innovation often requires more intensive technical support, so innovation programmes are unlikely to be as efficient as standard programmes. Finally, innovation can easily become a series of small-scale pilot projects if a clear pathway to scale has not been identified. Nevertheless, whether we call it innovation or not, there is perhaps a case for being more purposeful about where we source solutions, how we develop them, and how we balance risk in pursuit of improving our work.

Dan James is INTRAC’s Senior Research Consultant, dividing his time between consultancies and grant-funded research. With a background in economic research, he provides support for quantitative research methods across a range of INTRAC’s work.



Supporting organisations on the road to sustainability

In September 2018, INTRAC worked with the [Cities Alliance](#) to design and deliver online training on project sustainability. The aim was to support grantees of the 2015 Cities Alliance's Catalytic Fund on "Migration and the Inclusive City" in identifying challenges and opportunities for project sustainability and develop strategic options for continuing or upscaling their activities after the end of the grant. The Catalytic Fund is a global funding instrument which provides grant support for innovative projects around the world. Find out more about it [here](#).

The training was delivered online to cater for participants based all over the world. It was structured into two sessions, the first focusing on challenges to sustainability, and the second looking at opportunities for project sustainability and fundraising. In the weeks after, participants were offered a coaching session to provide further tailored advice to each project on how to go about fundraising.

In this article, the trainer Ajay Mehta shares his experience of working on this assignment.

I was delighted to work with colleagues at INTRAC to deliver this online tailor-made course. This followed the successful delivery of a 'Fundraising for Sustainability' training course in 2017, when synchronous and asynchronous methods were used to train and coach participants.

The aim of the 'Project Sustainability' course was to help organisations, their leaders and consultants to establish a robust and effective fundraising strategy that provides a clear and structured road map for growth and development in the medium to longer term. At the heart of this is the area of storytelling and communicating impactful messaging of the story that the organisation is seeking to convey – their case for support.

With immense and constant changes in the global social impact sector and the shifts in donors' behaviours, actions and expectations, organisations have never been more challenged in their ambitions and need for growth and sustainability. Many, if not most, small to medium-sized organisations operate in survival mode, far too busy delivering services and campaigns with low capacity, poor systems and processes, and ineffective governance. Developing and implementing a fundraising strategy can also often feel as if it is burdensome, labour intensive and unnecessary. What's more, organisations are having to show more agility and resilience, and anticipate and respond to change more effectively.

With this in mind, I was aware when designing the course that organisations need the support and guidance to find their "anchor" and bearings in this kind of a climate to help them on the road to sustainability and growth. Delivering the course was easier than expected as I was fully supported by INTRAC's training team.

Participants came from varied backgrounds and regions and from organisations of different sizes and structures. I found them to be engaging and engaged, typical of a sector where people are focussed on their mission and delivering services for their beneficiaries. This was particularly clear during the individual coaching sessions, where participants were able to have a specific focus on their areas of work or their organisation.

With a background of operating in the social impact sector over many years, both as a practitioner and as a consultant, I thoroughly enjoyed sharing my knowledge and experience with people who are committed and enthusiastic about bringing about change in the world. Equally, I enjoyed learning from the case studies, ideas and examples presented by the participants.



Ajay Mehta is an independent consultant, trainer and facilitator, working in the area of organisational development, growth and sustainability, strategy, and governance.

Our work



Mid-term evaluation of the Change the Game Academy Programme

INTRAC has been commissioned by [Wilde Ganzen](#) to carry out a mid-term evaluation of the [Change the Game Academy](#) (2016-2018).

Change the Game Academy aims to empower self help groups (SHGs), community based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) all over the world, but especially in low- and middle-income countries, to learn to raise funds locally and to mobilise other kinds of support. To achieve this, the present rules of the 'development game' need to be fundamentally changed: many CBOs and NGOs in the Global South largely depend on foreign funding. Change the Game Academy aims to channel the responsibility to alleviate poverty to where it ultimately belongs: the countries themselves.

Change the Game Academy builds on the Wilde Ganzen's Action for Children (AfC) programme, funded by the Dutch government from 2007-2015. In Brazil, India, Kenya and South Africa, AfC successfully trained over 900 SHGs, CBOs and NGOs to raise funds in their country for their own projects. Based on the conclusions of an [evaluation by INTRAC](#), Wilde Ganzen and its partners KCDF (Kenya), CESE (Brazil) and Smile (India) decided to make the materials developed available worldwide by developing free online courses, and to add courses on mobilising support.

Change the Game Academy uses a blended-learning approach: a combination of online and classroom learning. However, the online learning can also be done without taking a classroom course. The classroom courses in Local fundraising and mobilising support are now available in eight countries through a cooperation of Wilde Ganzen with its national partners. The online course is free for all NGOs and CBOs worldwide.

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to enable Wilde Ganzen and its national partners to reflect on progress to date, and identify any adjustments or changes to the programme. It will also be used in Wilde Ganzen's accountability reporting to one of the donors of the Change the Game Academy and other potential co-funders. It will provide an objective assessment of the support to CBOs, SHGs and NGOs, and insight and learning into success factors and barriers, as well as lessons learnt.

The mid-term evaluation will be focused on four national partners in Kenya, India, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso.



Working with Oak Foundation's grant-making staff to improve partner capacity development - update



We've now started the blended learning programme for Oak programme officers. Oak gave us the challenge of developing the knowledge, skills and confidence of their grant-making staff to support partner capacity building effectively, but without time-consuming, costly workshops. Programme officers face key questions: How do they assess capacity building needs? What do they need to know when they see partners facing issues of strategy, leadership, governance, fundraising, or safeguarding? How do they ensure the partner owns the capacity building process? How do they know what capacity methods are fit for purpose? What options for support can they recommend? How do they manage their own power?

In the last month, we've facilitated the one-day launch trainings in each of Oak's main offices in UK, USA and Switzerland. We've also started the eLearning component, involving videos, readings, case studies, group and individual exercises, reinforced by weekly facilitated webinars. Well-constructed eLearning offers the chance to deepen a participant's learning in their own time and location. It also offers Oak the opportunity to spread the learning across the whole organisation, including inducting new staff in the future.

Training in data analysis and use for Norwegian Refugee Council



The Norwegian Refugee Council is an independent humanitarian organisation helping people forced to flee. It works in crises in 31 countries, helping to save lives and rebuild futures.

Every year, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) organises a global meeting of its M&E staff, at the same time creating an opportunity to build capacity in core areas of work.

In November 2018, NRC invited INTRAC to help deepen staff skills in interpreting and using evidence to improve programming. Over three days Dan James and Rachel Hayman worked with 27 NRC staff, looking at techniques for analysing and synthesising data, and approaches to engaging programme staff throughout the process in order to strengthen how they use evidence emerging from M&E systems for decision-making. M&E training often focuses heavily on planning and data collection aspects, so this workshop offered a great opportunity to really dig deep on the analysis and use side.

The trainers structured the workshop around NRC's own M&E guidance, using data from their programmes for practical exercises. The training also helped to prepare NRC staff for a 'live' exercise in facilitation of use of evidence with one of NRC's programme teams.

Helping PAMS Foundation to assess its potential



INTRAC has been asked to take PAMS Foundation through an organisational assessment and development planning process, which would help the organisation assess its potential for growth and necessary development steps.

PAMS is based in Tanzania, but also registered in the US and Italy, and was started in 2009. It has approximately 50 staff working primarily in Tanzania. PAMS's mission is to empower the people who protect wildlife and wild places. To achieve this, its core activities include: human wildlife coexistence, environmental education, ranger support and biological exploration.

The main aspects of INTRAC's work will be: to conduct an organisational capacity assessment of the organisation; to take the results of that assessment and prioritise them; and then to assist the organisation in preparing an organisational development plan.

Promoting “decent work” for young people in Kyrgyzstan

On 16 October 2018, the square outside a cinema in the centre of Jalalabad was transformed into a jobs fair. Despite almost constant rain, an estimated 500 people dropped by.

The fair was the culmination of six months of intensive work supported by INTRAC and Ebert Foundation-Kyrgyzstan with their partners Jalalabad Civil Society Support Centre, Jalalabad Employment Department, and the Youth Council of the Federation of Trade Unions.

Their aim was to raise the issue of workers’ rights and bring trade unions and NGOs together in promoting the International Labour Organisation’s “decent work” agenda.

A major function of the fair was to help young people (and older people too) to find work and vocational training opportunities. Employers were present from major Jalalabad firms and boards displayed about 200 vacancies from Jalalabad, and 200 jobs from the Russian Federation. The Employment Department reported afterwards that 85 people had found jobs through contacts made at the fair.

Speakers from the Civil Society Support Centre, City Social Protection Department, Employment Service, deputy mayor, INTRAC, the Youth Council of the Federation of Trade Unions, and a local employers’ association opened the fair. Several journalists attended and there was full coverage of the event on local TV for three to four days.



The jobs fair also sought to inform youth about rights at work and to create a platform for discussion of key issues around youth employment.

Discussion groups were formed around four topics: the job search experience; work contracts; the role of trade unions; and discrimination at work. These emerged from research facilitated by INTRAC trainers on youth and employment in summer 2018. Data were collected by youth, NGO and trade union activists, supported by two training and coordination workshops. A survey was undertaken of 100 workers from the formal employment sector (municipal staff) and the informal sector (waiters in large and small cafés). Expert interviews and focus groups provided a wider view of labour market issues, employer expectations and the experience of young workers (including those with disabilities) in different economic sectors.



“Our main conclusion is that information about trade unions is not getting to ordinary people. So they have to solve their employment problems on their own... We were able to discuss what decent work means to them, not just the role of trade unions.” (Presenter, discussion group on the role of trade unions)



While this was not an easy forum in which to present research findings, it was encouraging to see such enthusiasm for the discussion groups, with the tents hosting the debates visited by large numbers of people all talking and asking questions.

This is an abbreviated version of Charlie’s full article which you can read [here](#).

Evaluation of Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Innovation Labs

INTRAC is undertaking an evaluation of a humanitarian innovation programme funded by DFID and coordinated by the Start Network in collaboration with the CDAC (Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities) Network. The programme aims to identify and fund innovative solutions to disaster preparedness through a network of labs based in four countries: Bangladesh, Jordan, Kenya and the Philippines, as well as a Global Lab in the UK.

The programme takes a community-centred approach to innovation, with each of the labs embedded within vulnerable communities, applying a user-centred design process to develop solutions. The evaluation is looking at programme quality at set intervals to inform decisions about the programme strategy as well as implementation. It will also assess the overall impact, appropriateness, effectiveness, sustainability and value for money of the programme, and document lessons learnt in each of these areas.

Save the Children UK - Strategic Breakthrough Investment Fund

INTRAC is undertaking a review of Save the Children UK's Strategic Breakthrough Investment Fund. This is an internal innovation fund that provides funding to 'test and invest' in new approaches and tools. A key criteria for projects selected was that they are innovative or unproven and cannot be supported through conventional funding sources. The fund has supported 22 projects in 14 countries between 2016 and 2018. The review is focused at the portfolio level and includes document reviews and interviews with Save the Children International country offices and technical advisors.



Save the Children



Rethinking Research Collaborative – online resources now available

Early in 2018, INTRAC joined forces with the Open University, Christian Aid, Praxis and the UNESCO Co-Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education. Together we are part of the Rethinking Research Collaborative, an informal international network of individuals and organisations committed to working together to encourage more inclusive, responsive collaborations to produce useful and accessible development research.

Read Rachel Hayman’s [blog](#) about the results of recent work, access [free online resources](#) targeted at different stakeholders, and read the [summary research report](#).



Development in Practice

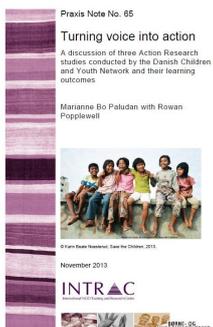
The latest Development in Practice issues, 28.7 and 28.8, are now available to browse [online](#).

Across the two issues, the articles cover a broad range of topics: on agricultural innovation and rural poverty; planning multi-partner programmes; urban housing and food security; mediated action research, participatory development, and vocational training; health and sanitation; plus many more, covering all regions of the world.

A number of the articles are open access, available to freely read and download. Choose from ‘[Enabling collaborative synthesis in multi-partner programmes](#)’; ‘[“Here we give advice for free”: the functioning of plant clinics in Rwanda](#)’; or ‘[Reproductive health services: “Business-in-a-Box” as a model social innovation](#)’.

You can also browse the whole back catalogue of open access articles from the journal [here](#).

If you are interested in submitting an article to Development in Practice, visit www.tandfonline.com/toc/cdip20/current to find out more. We are always happy to answer any queries on what and how to submit – so please contact Adam Houlbrook, Deputy Editor, at ahoulbrook@intrac.org



Newly updated resource database

INTRAC has been producing publications and resources since 1994. With a focus on civil society development, concerning all areas of the world, INTRAC staff, associates, friends, partners and clients have produced a wealth of resources aimed at sharing knowledge and good practice to improve development outcomes.

With a recent upload of over 100 resources, the INTRAC resource database now features our entire back catalogue of publications. Head to www.intrac.org/resources to browse our complete resource catalogue.



Milla Huhtala, Training Coordinator (maternity cover)

Milla joined INTRAC in November 2018 as the Training Co-ordinator (maternity cover), and is based at our head office in Oxford. In this role, she coordinates the day-to-day running of online and face-to-face open training courses, providing administrative and logistical assistance to the training team.

Originally from Northern Finland, Milla moved to the UK in 2011 to take a degree in Childhood, Culture and Education at the University of Birmingham. She stayed on to complete a Masters degree in International Studies in Education and International Development at the same university.

Milla is passionate about children's rights, and wrote her master's thesis on children's participation. She has volunteered with Oxfam in the UK, and with Volunteer West Africa (now Partner West Africa) in Ghana.



Nandita Jain, Principal Consultant

Nandita has worked with civil society organisations for more than 20 years, starting in fringe theatre and wildlife conservation in England, and then shifting to focus on international development.

For more than ten years Nandita worked on programmes in South and Central Asia with The Mountain Institute (USA) where she was instrumental in establishing award-winning community-based tourism initiatives in India, developing and disseminating new participatory planning methodologies and creating community-based biodiversity conservation initiatives in Central Asia.

Before joining INTRAC in October 2018, Nandita was consulting primarily for the World Bank in Europe and Central Asia, assisting governments and NGOs in project design, monitoring and evaluation and participatory approaches for projects covering protected area systems, sustainable land management, land reform and climate change adaptation.

She has a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture from London University, a Masters in Environmental Science and Development Studies from the University of East Anglia, and a doctoral degree in Natural Resource Policy from the University of Michigan.

Nandita's areas of expertise include programme design and management, monitoring and evaluation, facilitation and training, participatory asset-based approaches, sustainable livelihoods, social inclusion and stakeholder engagement.

INTRAC training

Upcoming courses

Online Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Online, 16 January - 27 February 2019

Our popular online course is designed for people who are relatively new to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), whether they are early career professionals, or more experienced practitioners who are switching careers and/or have never received formal training in this field. The course covers the whole MEL cycle, from clarifying the purposes of MEL to planning and selecting the most appropriate indicators and objectives, to collecting data, analysing it, reporting and - last but not least! - learning.

[Online Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning course profile](#)

Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation

Oxford, 21 January - 1 February 2019

Are you an experienced M&E practitioner facing complex challenges in your work? This 5-day face-to-face participatory course uses case studies and practical examples from the trainers and participants to illustrate and explore issues and build on your and other participants' knowledge. All participants will have previous experience in designing and managing M&E systems.

[Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation course profile](#)

Advocacy Strategy and Influencing Skills

Oxford, 11 - 15 February 2019

Learn how to influence powerful stakeholders and policy processes in a range of contexts. This course will help you understand how to develop and monitor effective advocacy strategies. You will explore tools for analysing where power lies on your issue and who has a stake in it. You will learn how to develop a Theory of Change and how to tailor your advocacy to the interests of those you seek to influence. You will also learn skills in communicating an advocacy message, face-to-face influencing techniques, using the media, public campaigning, and research for advocacy purposes.

[Advocacy Strategy and Influencing Skills course profile](#)

Gender Analysis and Planning

Oxford, 4 - 6 March 2019

This three-day course is intended for gender advisers in NGOs and UN agencies, and development practitioners with an interest in gender mainstreaming. The course will enable you to effectively and systematically analyse contexts and plan development and humanitarian programmes from a gender equality perspective, and eventually become better equipped to integrate gender into strategic and operational planning.

Gender Analysis and Planning course profile

Theory of Change for Planning and Impact Assessment

Oxford, 11 - 15 March 2019

This course introduces the elements of Theory of Change and offers the opportunity to apply and experiment with the key ideas and processes using your own case studies as well as case studies presented by the course facilitator. The course will equip you with the knowledge and skills to consider which elements of Theory of Change you can apply in your own organisational setting and how best to go about it.

Theory of Change for Planning and Impact Assessment course profile

Online Fundraising for Sustainability

Online, 18 March - 26 April 2019

This online course will broaden your understanding of fundraising and help you appreciate its more meaningful, holistic and strategic context. Fundraising for sustainability is built around the aim of reducing an organisation's exposure to risk whilst increasing its ability to pursue strategic goals. It puts the organisation's case for support at the centre of any income generation or profile raising activities, and aims to achieve greater impact and value for all of its stakeholders.

Email training@intrac.org for further information

Online Consultants for Change (C4C)

Online, Dates to be announced

C4C is INTRAC's innovative professional development programme for civil society professionals. This eight-week online course equips consultants with a core understanding of how change happens and how to manage it in way that is owned and driven by the organisation and the staff themselves. These soft skills can be applied to a whole range of interventions, from fundraising to project evaluation, and ensure that whatever intervention is done, it is done in a way that empowers people and ensures the change is sustained.

Email training@intrac.org to register your interest

For more details and to apply for any of these courses please click on the date. To download the full course profile click the link below the description, or look on our website.



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