



The use of Sensemaker[®]

*for impact/outcome assessment
of development programmes?*

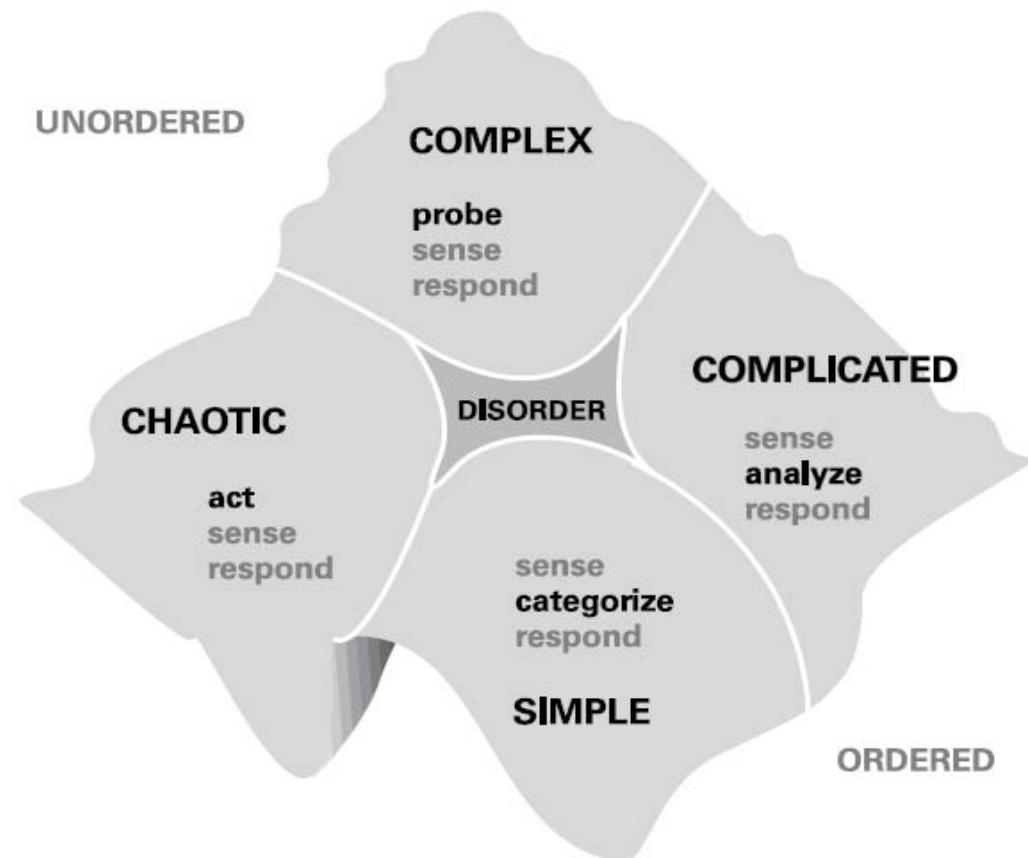
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Collective Learning Moment
31 March 2011

Based on work from Dave Snowden, Irene Guijt, Global Giving



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Background & underlying principles





Design Features of SenseMaker

Stories told by people are filters through which they make decisions. People use fragmented material to make sense of the world around them.

Sensemaker: software that comes with a methodological approach

- Use of large numbers of fragmented micro-narratives
- Self-signification
- Software (Sensemaker®) generates quantitative (visual) data
- Patterns & trends against topics of interest
- Analysis, interpretation and use for action/interventions

Mix of soft and hard data to make sense of complex realities, to distill patterns and to respond in a timely manner

Use of fragmented micro-narratives



- Fragments/micro-narratives
Transcribed narratives, spoken narratives, video-clips, newspaper clippings, photographs, parts of reports, blog extracts, ...
- Stories are *not* large constructed stories explaining a point
- Mass capture (100 ... to e.g. 3000 stories) show diversity of perspectives
- All fragments add up to a set of multi-faceted impressions about the situation/topics of interests

Self-Signification



- Respondents signify their own stories against predefined topics of interest (*signification framework*)
- Respondents decides what the story means
 - > add a layer of meaning to the story
- **Signification/question framework:** generates consistent data
- It reveals the world through the eyes of citizens, beneficiaries, customers, clients, stakeholders, ...
- Different than other story-telling methods (e.g. MSC, ...)

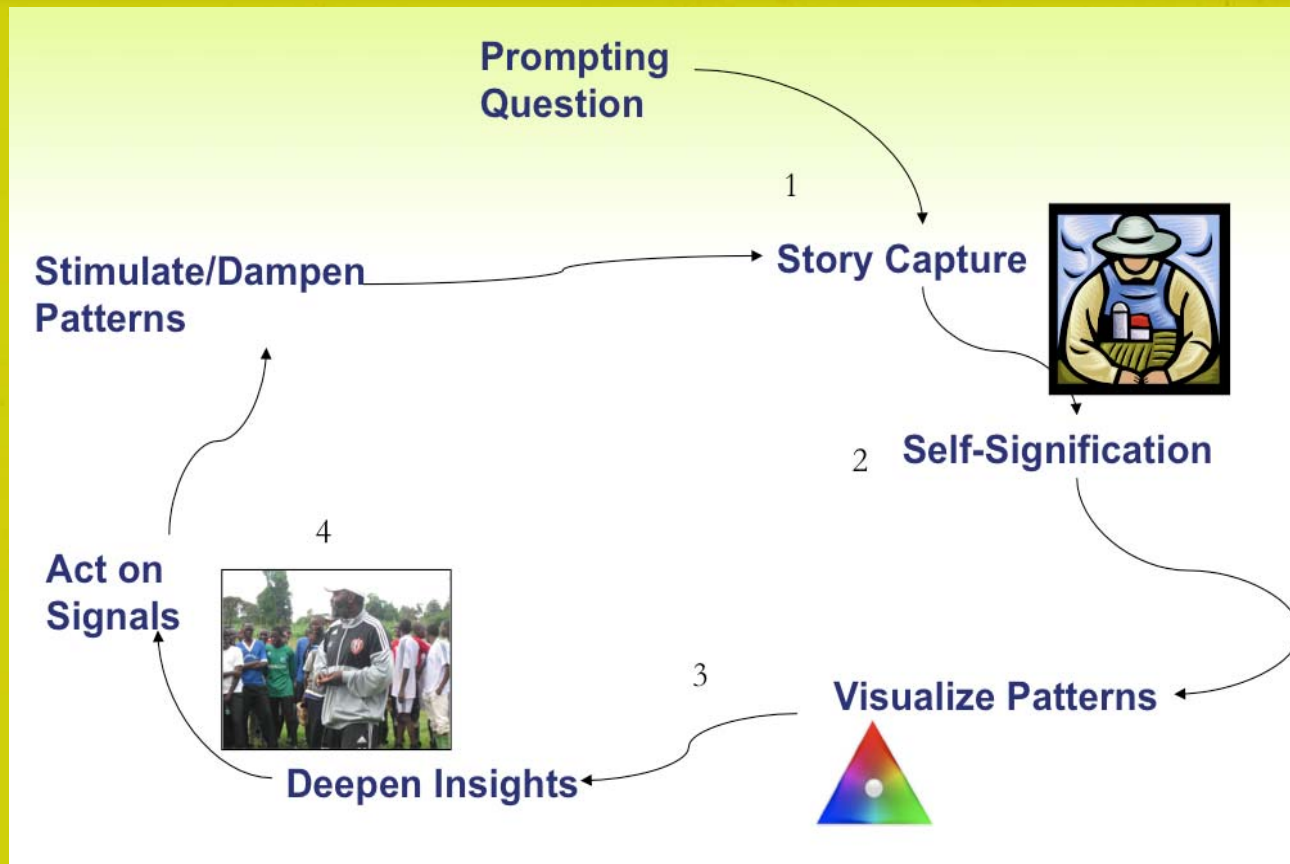
Sensemaker[®]: software (statistics)



- Statistical software based on signification framework
- Very quick identification of (visual, quantifiable) patterns around the pre-defined topics/domains of interest
 - Compare patterns between organisations, themes, geographic areas, age groups, type actors, ...
 - Asking specific questions about sub-sets, correlations, ...
- After interesting patterns are observed > read stories, make sense and act upon it
 - > *The original material (fragments) can be directly accessed by the managers/decision-makers*

Patented software + methodology (generic signification of meaning into a geometric shape)

Methodological logic



Methodological Logic



- 1. Prompting question or image**
triggers a lived experience
- 2. Storyteller *self-indexes* story**
gives meaning, but can be done by others
- 3. Software detect patterns**
visual patterns among stories
- 4. Sense-making in dialogue**
people discuss patterns and story clusters
- 5. Act on patterns**
Stimulate beneficial patterns; dampen undesirable ones



Prompting question

- A **single** question that triggers people to tell a story they find meaningful?
- A question that 'touches' people (hopeful, disturbing,...)
- The prompting question is the same for all the people you collect stories from

Can you share a story about one past community effort (organized activity led by a person or NGO) you witnessed or know about? (Global Giving)

Imagine that you meet some family members who live in another village and start talking about water. What would you tell them about one recent moment or event when you felt either hopeful or discouraged about rural water supply? (IRC)

What would you tell you neighbouring farmer to motivate him/her (or not) to join the farmer organisation?

Motivate why your children would still be farming in 20 years time?

Story capture

- From who?
Incentives?
- Technology?
Pen&paper, direct web capture, mobile phones
- Lots of stories (min. >100-200)
If ongoing >
comparing patterns over time



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Tell us about a specific experience or moment that made you hopeful or concerned about the pr
to contribute to sustainable growth and/or social justice in rural development.

T

Please give your story a title:

TEST TITLE





Self-signification

- Respondents **signify/code/make sense** of their own stories & experience against predefined topics of interest
- Based on **signification framework**
 - same question framework for all stories
- Identify the **topics/domains of interest**
 - Who wants to know what and why?
 - In line with the objectives of the programme? *Empowerment family farmers, shift gender-relationships, coordination water service providers, ...*
 - What are the values, beliefs, ... that driving the programme
 - Limited number of questions



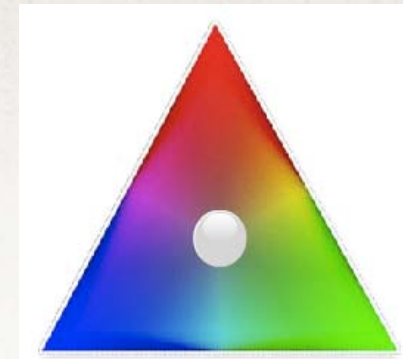
Signification framework

Based on three type of questions:

1. Triads (three aspects within a domain of interest)
2. Dyads (polarity or opposing negative)
3. Multi-choice questions

This community effort improved ...

Social relations



Physical conditions

Economic opportunities

This story relates to... (pick up to 3)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Water or sanitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food | <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS | <input type="checkbox"/> Other health issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Informal learning / training | <input type="checkbox"/> Social relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-esteem | <input type="checkbox"/> Formal education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None of these | |

Questions about you

Sex:

Age:

This story ...

Would have happened anyway without an organized community effort



Impossible without an organization's help

This story is about a community effort that...

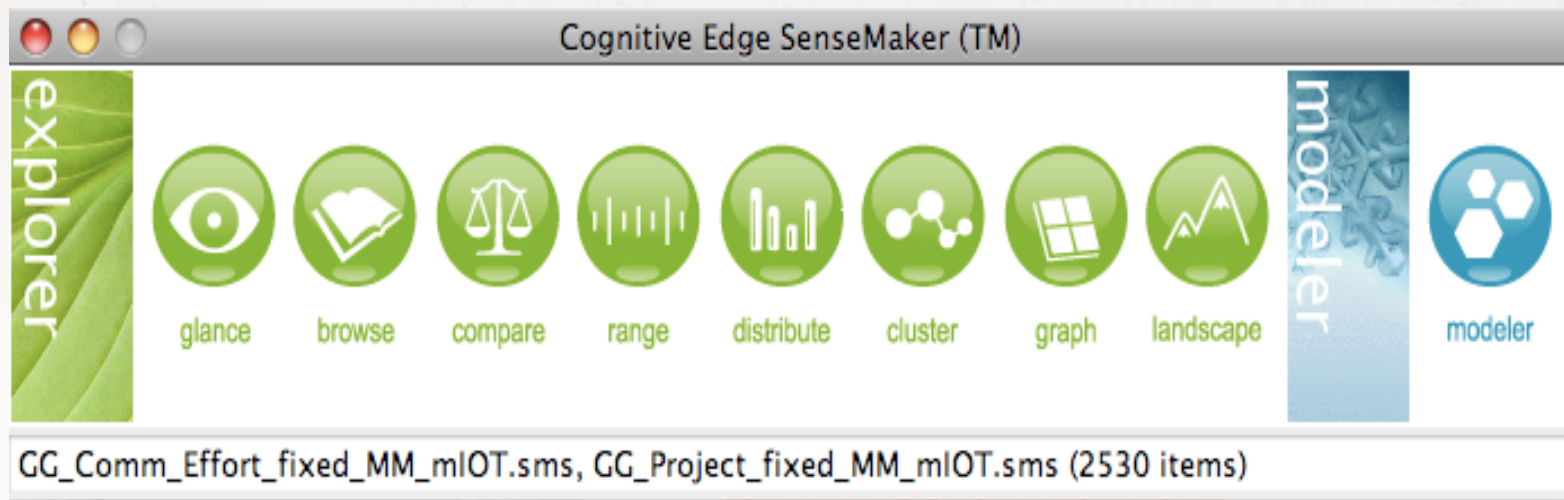
Failed



Succeeded

Visualise patterns

- Stories & significations > entered in **COLLECTOR**
(=webbased entry system designed by Cognitive Edge)
- Analytical Sensemaker software (**EXPLORER**)

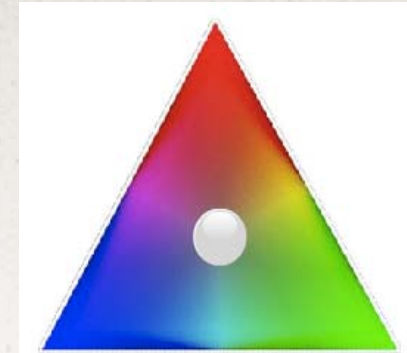


- Shows visual/quantifiable patterns that are strong and of potential interest

Triads (Graph)

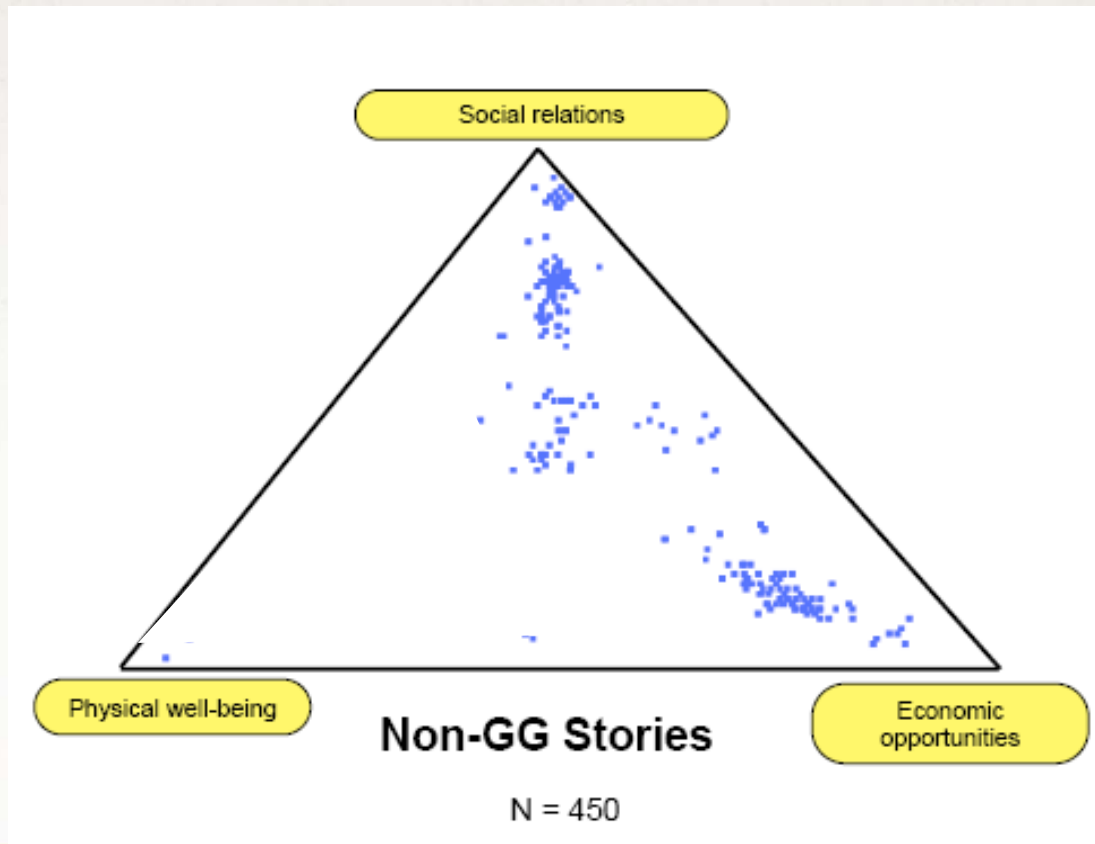
This community effort improved ...

Social relations



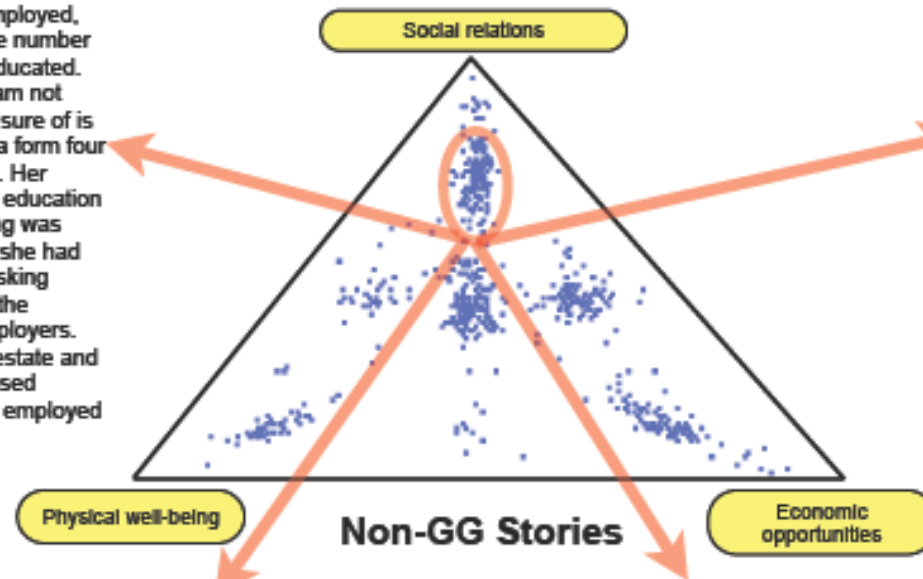
Physical conditions

Economic opportunities



Diving into the data - each datapoint represents a story, directly accessible by the analyst

“ Many youths in this country are unemployed, and Kibera being part of it has a large number of unemployed youths and semi-uneducated. There is this but one thing as C.D.F am not sure of its sponsor, but one thing am sure of is that it has changed lives. Jacky was a form four graduate with a min-grade of C+(plus). Her parents were very poor to further her education and my hope of having higher learning was close to nothing untill i got thi job. All she had todo was to walk from door to door asking families of their health status then in the evening return the findings to the employers. She is now linging in a middle class estate and has higher diploma on community based coursed and all thanks to C.D.C who employed her. ”



“ because most of the youths in slums are thrown out from their farmers immediately they reach eighteen years old, this kind of act has affected many and makes alot of them to commit crime and participate in theft activities, this has been as result of hunger ad what even to put in their body, so they lack alterative and involve in shortcuts that ends cutting their dreams and others left paralysed while others get favour. With the coming of Kibera harmless, many youths have been invoiced in beneficiary activities, that is offered by the organization, they mostly involve themselves in practical arts such a s vanung, performing drama and other drawing that has enabled many of find themselves carry and hour in crime, the organization has also sponsored some of the youth are now they are going to school and them getting a better job, thanks to Kibera flameless for the stretched him to help the level of came has gone down and many youths have been encouraged to join hamlets and get better future. ”

“ AMREF Africa medical research foundation has promoted good health to the kibera schools in our school it is known by all pupils because last year it held a fund for the opening of a global hand washing day. It brought dustbins in our school it build for us toilets BRAVO to AMREF for doing all this to promote our school. The AMREF team has promoted this to all schools in kibera slums I would urge them to go in the kibera houses so that there should be a clean environment in kibera houses so that there should be a clean environment in kibera. They even go to school worldwide and promote the health. The youths should volunteer to work with the AMREF to promote good health to the world AMREF should promote the health worldwide. ”

“ Everyone has a pride of better life in future. A life with less difficulties because because you have enough money to solve some of the problems that usually affect people mostly those living in the slums. This is the main reason why women in this area have been empowered to involve themselves in business that may help their families and children therefore takes to school. With a lot of projects still undone they hope that they would yield enough many to solve their financial problems. They are dedicated in working hard to achieve their dreams because they cannot live without money thus that is their main reason why they are busy in their work. ”



Visualise patterns

- Dyads

This story is about a community effort that...

Failed N/A Succeeded



Further analysis



Many possible combinations of variables, triads, dyads and multi-choice > a set of visual patterns emerge

Specific questions can be asked?

For example:

- What is the difference between men and women in access to economic opportunities?
- Compare the stories on improved income between the rice chain in Java and the rice chain in West-Flores?
- Show me the stories on food security?
- ...

Sensemaking (in dialogue)



What does it mean for us? For the actors involved?

- **Feed the results and patterns back** to the relevant people (value chain actors, programme implementers, ...)
- **Facilitation is required**
- **Reading a limited set of stories** that represents a specific visual pattern of interest
- make meaning of what the stories as a set tell you (e.g. 20 stories mention the same issue)

Sensemaking (in dialogue)



How does it inform us to act?

Rich information can emerge:

- what people need?
- what dynamics are at play?
- what services are not yet delivered properly?
- what would people like to see happening?
- ...

Decision on:

- Enforcing beneficial patterns
- Dampening non-desirable patterns



Potential uses



The use of Sensemaker



- Improving customer/citizen engagement
- Employee satisfaction
- Impact measurement
- Better decision-making at policy and frontline levels
- Marketing / improving sales results
- Intelligence, army
- Research
- Cross-organizational comparisons/knowledge sharing
- Threat and weak-signal detection in large datasets
- Event learning
- Innovation programmes
- ...

> *First applications in development: Global Giving, IRC, ...*

Impact assessment / monitoring



Impact assessment/monitoring

- Continuous flow of stories feeding into Sensemaker
> allows to see emerging changes (e.g. impact) and needs
- Shifting patterns of impact as perceived by different perspectives
- Moves away of attribution of efforts
- Seeing the real changes through the eyes of beneficiaries



Advantages of Sensemaker

- Quick analysis of qualitative material
- Making sense of distributed (fragmented) information from multiple sources and interactions
- Understanding change as it emerges and making real-time adjustments
 - > quick feedback, rapid responsiveness
- Provides insights in perspectives, attitudes, values of communities dealing with a common issue
- Threat and weak-signal detection of hidden and emergent opportunities/threats
- It is a continuous process instead to fixed pre-determined systems > direct learning
- Provides evidence-based 'hard' and 'soft' data

Design issues



Designing Use of SenseMaker



Sensemaker for M&E: Scope, foci, uses

Assessment of { **impact?** (changes at farmer level)
(livelihood framework)
outcome? (changes in the value chain)
(farmer organisations)

- not for measuring typical 'hard data' indicators
- might be useful for 'difficult' indicators such as *'improved influence/power in the trade relationship'*
- Un-pack the relations between chain actors
- Perceptions on role, capacities, functioning of farmer organisations
- ...

Impact evaluation > impact monitoring

Designing Use of SenseMaker®



Sensemaker for M&E: Scope, foci, uses

if *ongoing* assessment

- impact: changes are not always steering and guiding the ongoing short-term action and planning.
- more suited for measuring outcomes within the sphere of influence??
 - > ensure that feedback is directly useful for programme steering

Designing Use of SenseMaker®



Sensemaker for M&E: Scope, foci, uses

Ongoing chain analysis against some key domains of interest

- > Collect and get clarity – in a non-threatening manner - of the different perspectives in a value chain
- > collectively analysed, shared, debated among chain actors
(feedback)
- > collective learning tool for chain strengthening

Maybe more suited for new development initiatives/
programmes

Designing Use of SenseMaker®



Develop signification framework *Content and 'translation'*

- Scope, focus and uses need to be clear
- It forces you to think about a different kind of questioning
- The prompting questions is crucial!
- Farmers, partners will need to be part of developing the signification framework
- Different type of storytellers use the same signification framework

Designing Use of SenseMaker[®]



Strategies for data collection

Who, how, how often, how long, etc?

- Collection of large amount of stories (>100)
> challenge: operational + incentives
- Build in the data collection in existing processes and activities
- Collect stories with big groups at the same time and facilitated
- Use of triads and dyads with people who are illiterate?

Designing Use of SenseMaker®



Data analysis

How will analysis take place, who will be involved, what is the rhythm of analysis (how often at which level?)

Use of software

- Required expertise level to interpret patterns seems to be high (at first sight).
- Costs involved (lease contract, design costs, ...)
- Continuous? what is realistic in a normal programme set-up?
- Direct use of the results for annual planning and reporting
- Stories can also be used for other purposes (research, communication, ...)