

Philanthropy of Community Instrument 3

Impact Monitoring and Evaluation (PIME)

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PREFACE

PIME is one of several instruments which have been developed to deepen the practice of grantmakers using the lens of philanthropy of community (PoC). The PoC approach recognises the extensive and intricate networks of informal philanthropy on which all poor communities rely for their survival. The PoC approach also acknowledges that, despite their best intentions, grantmakers who have failed to recognise and work hand in hand with these informal philanthropic practices have sometimes initiated interventions which have effectively undermined and even, in some cases, destroyed these practices.

These instruments have been developed to enable you as a grantmaker to build up a thorough profile of the PoC practices in a community; to quantify their worth; and to measure the impact of external interventions on them. However, before using them, three important issues need to be considered:

1. These instruments are ineffective without a thorough understanding of the concept of PoC. Therefore, before reading further, it is essential that you familiarise yourself with this concept by consulting the CGSI's guide, *The Poor Philanthropist III: A Practice-Relevant Guide for Community Philanthropy* (available at www.gsb.uct.ac.za/clpv/poorphilanthropistIII.asp).
2. It is easier to monitor the impact of an intervention on PoC practices if you have a comprehensive inventory of these practices. We therefore suggest that you first conduct a PoC Asset and Inventory Mapping (PAIM) process on the community concerned (see www.gsb.uct.ac.za/clpv/paim.asp).
3. These instruments are works in progress. Working with PoC is a dramatic departure from much of conventional grantmaking practice, and it will take some years to build up solid alternative processes and instruments. The instruments presented here build on other traditions and theoretical frameworks that can contribute to our understanding of this field (Asset Based Community Development, Social Capital and Appreciative Inquiry), and they have been forged through an extensive process of consultation, theoretical debate and fieldwork with a wide range of organisations and communities. However, they are not in any way definitive, and need to be honed, refined and contextualised by you, the practitioner. In this way, we will together build a solid foundation for a PoC-based approach to practice, which we believe will greatly enhance the benefits and long-term sustainability of all development interventions.

INTRODUCTION TO PIME

When working with a PoC lens, one of the most pressing development objectives is to ensure that interventions by donor-supported organisations serve to strengthen the existing PoC networks and relationships. This is our only hope of ensuring that the benefits of these interventions are sustainable in the long term. It is therefore essential to track the impact of interventions on these relationships at regular intervals.

Most of the conventional methodologies for monitoring and evaluating the impact of donor interventions are not ideally suited to this task. Firstly, they are usually based on the implicit assumption that external resource mobilisation is ‘inherently’ good. However, our research has demonstrated that some donor interventions may undermine and weaken self help in a community, and it is vital that this is carefully monitored and assessed. Secondly, what is measured is usually the impact of the project on some aspect of the well-being of the community, rather than its impact on the intricate web of self-help networks and norms.

It is in response to these weaknesses that we developed the PIME – an instrument that utilises the norms most significant change (MSC) technique to track the impact of interventions on PoC. This has enabled us to monitor both the positive and negative impact of what others do to support a community and what the community does for itself. It enables us to analyse a large amount of information collected from many participants in a range of settings, and, through this analysis, to answer the following question: Do external development interventions (PfC) support, distort or diminish internal resources mobilisation for self help (PoC)?

This process is by no means exhaustive, and should be supplemented with other evaluation methods. However, by highlighting how external support interacts with the five key dimensions of PoC, it also flags areas that might warrant further consideration in monitoring and evaluation.

In summary, the PIME technique offers the grantmaker the following opportunities:

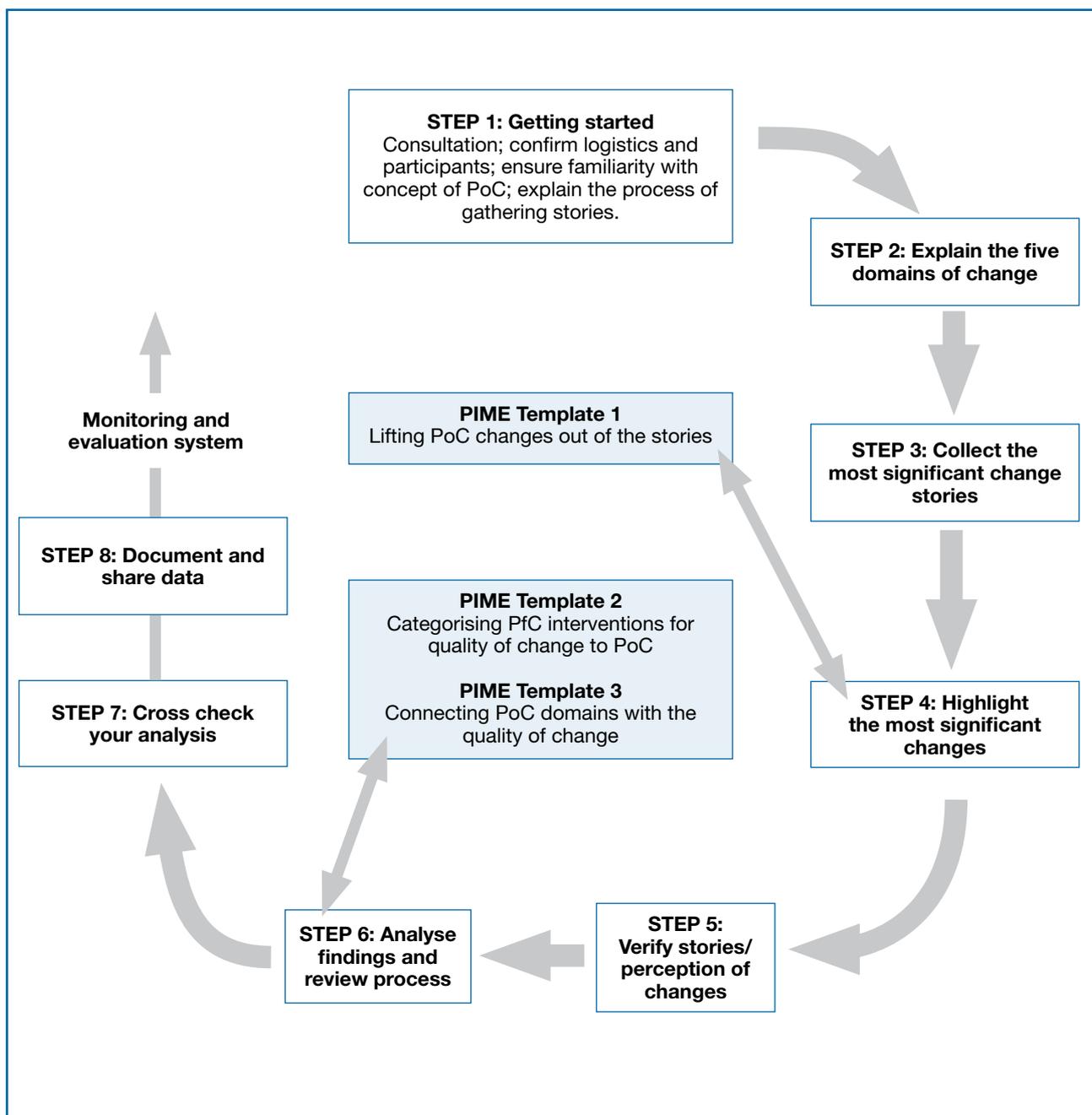
- To test the assumption that development assistance does ‘least harm’ against its impact on organic coping strategies and safety nets;
- To be more accountable to the community, as they are involved in the evaluation process;
- To deliver a picture of changes in community participation and agency, self reliance and dependency, and changes in vulnerability or marginalisation;
- To build staff capacity in analysing information/data and conceptualising impact; and
- To help advance a growing recognition that to promote sustainable development, outside help should not deplete existing help networks but should aim to strengthen them by building on and leveraging what people are committed to do for themselves with their own resources.

THE PIME PROCESS

PIME involves generating, recording and analysing narratives describing significant changes that have occurred in a community as a result of intervention by an external agency or organisation. The following are the major steps in designing a PIME process:

- STEP 1:** Getting started
- STEP 2:** Explain the five domains of change
- STEP 3:** Collect the most significant change (MSC) stories
- STEP 4:** Highlight the most significant changes
- STEP 5:** Verification
- STEP 6:** Analyse findings and review the process
- STEP 7:** Cross check your analysis
- STEP 8:** Document and share data

The PIME process and templates for each step



APPLYING PIME IN PRACTICE

STEP 1: Getting started

You need to put a number of things in place before you can start the process. The following points will assist you:

- Before you begin, make sure that the participants from the organisation are familiar with the concept of PoC. Once they understand this concept and the importance of monitoring the impact of their organisation's interventions on PoC, they will be able to recognise the benefit of committing the time and effort necessary for a successful PIME process.
- It is also important that the storytellers broadly understand what is meant by helping strategies in the community. These strategies are quite intricate, and are often 'invisible' even to members of the community who practice them, as they are so familiar and taken for granted. See Chapter 1 of the *The Poor Philanthropist III: A Practice-Relevant Guide for Community Philanthropy* (available at www.gsb.uct.ac.za/clpv/poorphilanthropistIII.asp) for more details on how to ensure that they are made aware of PoC practices within the community.
- Change will best be measured if you have a thorough picture both of the organisations in question and of the relationships and networks governing community philanthropy in that community. Ideally, you will have undertaken a PAIM process with the community, in which case you will have a thorough profile drawn up. If not, we recommend that you undertake Step 2 of the PAIM process.
- Present MSC stories from other projects (available from <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mostsignificantchanges>, or use the ones in the Tshepong case story, www.gsb.uct.ac.za/clpv/poccasesstories.asp) to clarify the process and motivate participants.
- Ensure that the organisation is clear about the scope of PIME, and that it is intended to supplement, not replace, other monitoring and evaluation techniques.
- Start small. Every organisational context is different, and conducting a pilot study will enable you to assess what will work in your situation. This will also help you identify members of the organisation who are particularly interested in PIME and would be willing to be involved in driving the process.

Who should be involved?

The initiator of the PIME process may come from within the service-provider organisation or from outside – such as a donor. In either case, it is essential that the service providers are integral to the PIME process and gain monitoring skills in the process. Ideally, the PIME team should comprise interested members of the service-provider organisation as well as others not immediately involved with service provision. During this phase, you will need to address the following questions:

- How will you gather and document information about the service provider?
- How will you get 'buy in' from the people who will be involved in telling, listening to and filtering or selecting MSC stories? In forming a PIME team you might want to consider workshopping the approach and thinking through its application to the specific context of the organisation. This will help to achieve organisational 'buy in' and provide a sound platform for negotiating the participation of other key stakeholders as well as planning for the story-collection process.
- Who should be on the PIME team?
- Which concepts should be explored and defined to ensure common understanding among the PIME team?
- Where can you begin? Is there a small pilot that you can first test?
- Who are the best people to capture the pilot MSC stories from?

A note on deciphering PfC and PoC

It is can be hard to tell if a development intervention belongs to PfC (externally sourced philanthropy for the community) or PoC. In practice, the classification of resource mobilisation as either 'horizontal' or 'vertical' is complicated. There is a grey zone where an organisation can exhibit qualities of both.

We found three considerations useful in working through this conundrum: perception, organisational characteristics and the motivation and principles underlying the help.

- **Perception:** How do those involved perceive the organisation? The stories offer insight into whether the organisation or development intervention is seen as an external resource made available to the community or whether it illustrates how a community has mobilised what they have internally.
- **Characteristics:** PfC will tend to have more formal structures, and PoC tends to be more organic and informal. You may want to do a quick inventory of transactions and actors involved to test alignment with PfC and PoC.
- **Motivation:** Why people help. Within PoC, help is largely based on reciprocity and cooperation: you help the one who helps you. The giver and receiver have mutual obligations to one another which mediate and govern the relationship, and sustain or terminate it. Within a PfC arrangement help is associated with altruism, generosity and benevolence, where the giver does not expect anything in return from the recipient.

STEP 2: Explain the domains of change

What are domains of change?

Domains are broad categories of possible changes. See the breakdown of change domains in **PIME Template 1**. Dividing significant stories into domains makes the story-filtering or selection process easier to manage. It also enables the stories to be read with reference to others in that category, thus enabling you to highlight important areas of change.

When conducting a PIME, you will use domains that enable the organisation to track the impact of their interventions on how the community helps itself. In order to do this, it is useful to use change domains based on the five facets of PoC. For a clear example, refer to the PoC change domain framework in the PIME case story (www.gsb.uct.ac.za/clpv/poccasestories.asp).

An extra domain may be created to capture significant *negative* changes, using a question such as: What changes have you seen that worry you?

Using these domains, you may focus on changes in:

- The lives of individuals (family members, neighbours, friends, strangers, etc.);
- The lives of households (family, co-habitators);
- Associational life – mutual assistance groups (volunteer organisations, societies, etc.) informal associations (burial societies, sports clubs, etc.); and

- Formal organisations operating in the community – religious organisations, volunteer organisations, welfare organisations, etc.

In conducting a PIME analysis, you are tracking changes that are a direct or indirect result of external resource interventions – for example, grants, infrastructure, advice. It is important, therefore, that the narrative focuses on changes resulting specifically from these interventions, not from other factors such as a shift in government policy or a shift in the profile of a community due to migration.

We have found that undertaking PIME with these domains is also extremely valuable in making PoC more visible and accessible to both grantmakers and the community.

Below are some questions to consider:

- What questions will you use to prompt stories? Will they be broad (i.e. about help generally) or narrow (i.e. specific to each domain)? A broad story prompt (such as: Since the programme, what changes have you noticed in the way people in the community help each other?) elicits stories that can later be analysed into each of the domains. If you want to find out more about a particular domain, a story prompt can be crafted (such as: Why do people help each other and how has this changed?).
- What period do you want to monitor change over: Since service provision began? Since a particular milestone in service provision was reached?

STEP 3: Collect the significant change stories

This is the most important step, as it is these stories which will provide you with the basis for your analysis. There are a number of points to bear in mind here:

- Stories may be collected in a group or individually. On the whole, group stories work better as they tend to be more focused and more substantial, particularly if the storytellers are in a group that they trust. Having an attentive audience may inspire the storyteller; hearing one story can provoke another story that may otherwise have remained untold. The pressure of an expectant group of people, all of whom want a chance to tell their story, adds focus and structure to the stories. In groups, ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to tell their story.
- However, in some instances, you may need to speak to people individually. In this case, be careful to avoid slipping into an interview mode. We suggest getting all the details down first, and then inviting the individual to tell a story about an experience with the organisation.
- You will need to ensure that stories are collected in an ethical manner if they are confidential or dealing in any way with sensitive personal issues. Make sure that measures are in place to protect the storyteller's dignity and confidentiality. If you are telling stories in a group, discuss this issue beforehand and make sure that all are in agreement about respecting confidentiality.
- Stories may be prompted by an open question, such as: 'What do you think has been the most significant change in how people help each other since the organisation/project started offering its services in this community?' You may then analyse these in relation to changes in each domain. Or, you could develop and ask specific questions customised to each domain as illustrated in the PoC change domain framework in the PIME case story (www.gsb.uct.ac.za/clpv/poccasesstories.asp).

Give them some guidelines, for example:

- Please pause for a moment before you decide which story about significant change you want to tell.

- Please bring your story to a clear ending so that others also have a chance to tell their stories.
- Please do not interrupt, but give the storyteller your full attention as listeners to their story.

The following questions need to be considered:

- Who will tell the MSC stories?
- Who will collect the MSC stories?
- How will they be collected?
- How and when will they be documented?
- How will you ensure that the collection process is ethical?
- How often will MSC stories be collected? Is this a once-off or ongoing process of evaluation?

STEP 4: Highlight the most significant changes

Once you have collated the stories, you need to filter them out and select which ones reflect the most significant change. This may be done as a whole, or first divided into the different domains. Stories are ideally read out aloud, and participants are asked to choose which they feel reflects the most significant change. The process you choose to do this will depend on the context of the group, as well as practical issues, but it should include the following ingredients:

- Everybody reads the MSC stories;
- Hold an in-depth conversation about which changes reflected in the stories are the most significant; and
- Document the reasons for the choice.

Highlighting the most significant changes may be done by selecting specific stories which describe them. Or, after the stories have been read, you can ask people to brainstorm what the most significant changes are as reflected in the stories. This will highlight the most significant changes as effectively as selecting the change stories.

The following questions can guide this process:

- Who would benefit from reading and selecting MSC stories/highlighting changes? You may wish to opt for a technique we called ‘story filtering’ as an alternative to story selection. Once stories have been collected, members of the PIME team discuss what is most striking about the stories with each member explaining why this is significant.
- How will the selection process work? You may as a team wish to sift through the (pilot) stories identifying themes you find the most striking, and then provide reasons for your choices and record and document these.

STEP 5: Verify the facts

Once you have selected the most significant changes, it is important to verify that they are based on sound foundations, and that the facts they represent are correct. You need to remember, however, that the stories are by their nature subjective and based on opinion, and may not be ‘verifiable’ in the true sense of the word. Template 3 in Step 6 below may also be used to validate the opinions expressed in the stories. Questions to consider:

- Will you verify any of the MSC stories?
- If so, which aspects of which stories will you verify? You may wish to focus on verifying specific information such as the baseline levels of help in the community prior to the intervention.

- Who will verify them, and how and when will they be verified?
 - Specific questions can be asked of different storytellers during the story-gathering process and story gatherers can use follow-up probes where necessary and if appropriate;
 - To establish baseline levels of help, you may wish to speak to people in the community who are not involved in or recipients of the intervention or service;
 - To verify the organisation’s self-perception of the effect of its interventions or services, you may wish to consider asking people in the community, both current and former recipients, about what has changed for them in the way they help others.

STEP 6: Analyse findings and review process

In the PIME process, analysis of the stories is a critical step. Two questions need to be explored to reveal the impact of external support on self help in the community.

1. What is changing?

Ask yourself, are the types of resources (money, time and goods) that people mobilise changing? Have the social networks and help circuits (clubs, friends, neighbours, associations, organisations) that people have drawn on changed? Or is it how people decide who to help or not that has changed? There may be a combination of many changes.

2. What is the quality of change?

Assess the stories for implications of what has been ‘added’ or ‘taken away’ from organic helping systems. For example, do people belong to more networks, clubs and associations? Have food transfers among households diminished as people get food from the soup kitchen? Alternatively, are people sharing more, as food parcels are redistributed among friends and neighbours?

The PIME templates can assist you to explore the stories from the following different angles:

- The programme or intervention involved;
- The PoC element being affected; and
- The quality of change brought about.

We suggest using all three in combination for a robust analysis. There is no particular order. The templates and facilitation notes are detailed below.

PIME Template 1: Lifting PoC changes out of the stories

This template helps you to apply a PoC lens and focus on the five PoC domains as you read through the written stories or listen to the recorded ones.

What does this tool offer?

- Questions to flag, changes to look out for. These questions are not definitive or exhaustive, but rather a first set of clues.
- A column for relevant stories or extracts which enables you to record observations on how PoC is changing, and flag the relevant stories.

At this stage the most important thing is to unearth points of change. Focus on *what* is changing, without getting stuck on the *quality* of change. If it strikes you at this point, note it down, but do not look for it – the other templates will help you to draw this out.

PIME Template 2: Categorising PFC interventions for quality of change to PoC

Once you have completed PIME Template 1, you can take the analysis further using the second template. Consult the PIME case story (www.gsb.uct.ac.za/clpv/poccasestories.asp) for an example of the record of PoC change in Tshepong.

This template helps you to focus on the contribution made by the organisation/service provider. This can help you unearth what the stories say about the *quality* of the effect of each intervention on PoC. This enables you to start considering whether an external intervention supports, distorts or depletes PoC.

What does this tool offer?

- Divides the quality of change into three main categories: *strengthen* (supports, complements or supplements); *distort* (changes the way it works); or *deplete* (reduce, drain or displace).
- Builds up a record of these changes which provides a useful snapshot of (intended or unintended) the impact that external support appears to have had on PoC.
- Provides insight into which particular programme or interventions are a catalyst for positive or negative change.

Note: Colour coding your marks (✓ or ×) can help draw out patterns.

PIME Template 3: Connecting PoC domains with the quality of change

This template assimilates the PoC domain and the quality of change. It flags both the facets that are affected as well as the type of effect.

What does this tool offer?

Completing this template provides an insight into the following:

- Do certain interventions strengthen one PoC domain and distort others?
- Which points of PoC/PfC contact have potential for change?
- How can this change be measured, tracked and monitored?
- Which PoC elements are relatively stable and which are more vulnerable to change – positive or negative?

Answering these questions can provide invaluable insight to help the organisation plan, revise and implement future interventions.

If possible, include stories to illustrate your assessment either using a code that cross refers to a longer story, or providing a short quote from the story. Consult the PIME case story (www.gsb.uct.ac.za/clpv/poccasestories.asp) for examples of stories gathered in Tshepong.

STEP 7: Vet your analysis

Once you have completed your analysis, you need to share your findings with relevant stakeholders to check whether the findings are valid. This process not only verifies your findings, but will also provide you with additional clarification to deepen your insight into what the stories are telling you about changes in PoC.

Your first task in this process is to report back your findings and interpretation of change in the five PoC domains to key stakeholders. Then ask them to explore the following questions:

- Do you think these stories are a true reflection of what happens?
- Which of these findings make sense to you in terms of your experience?
- Which seem to contradict your experience?
- Do you agree with the way in which we have interpreted the stories and changes related in them?
- If not, how would you interpret them?
- Do have any additional comments or insights into the story?

Any insights or shifts arising from this process can then be reflected in the final documentation of your analysis.

STEP 8: Document findings and feedback

The feedback you do will vary depending on your context. However, it is very valuable to inform those involved in collecting the stories about what stories you selected and why. Feedback can be given in a manner appropriate to the situation. For example, verbal feedback via representatives; email; newsletters; formal reports, etc.

Questions to consider:

- Who needs to get feedback on selected MSC stories and reasons for selection?
- How will feedback be communicated? For example, to the organisation in the form of a written report, or orally by the PIME team during a final reflection workshop?
- What will the feedback cover? Comments on all MSC stories or just those selected? You may wish to cover an explanation of the process, themes and insights surfaced by the filtering exercises, a PoC analysis, recommendations (in the case of a report to the management committee), the full suite of MSC and PIME tools for further application.

It is useful to keep a record of where stories have come from, so that they may be referred to in further analytical processes. There are different ways of doing this. You might use a spread sheet that reflects personal details, such as the gender or regional community of storytellers, as well as the outcome of the selection process. These stories provide a valuable resource for organisations, which can be used for analysis at any point. Questions to consider:

- How will you monitor and store the MSC stories? For example, attaching a coded cover sheet to each story recording the date, type of activity/service/intervention, relationship of storyteller to activity/service/intervention, etc. Reasons for selecting this story as ‘most significant’ could also be recorded on this cover sheet.
- If you use a spreadsheet, what information will you record?
- Who will do this?

PIME TEMPLATE 1

Lifting PoC change out of the stories

PoC domain of change	Think about points of change	Ask yourself	Pull out stories	Record the learning
Needs and networks	Is there a different needs profile?	Have people's needs changed? (i.e. the problems they assist with and are assisted with?)		
	Are people using different social networks and help circuits? Has how people rely on each other for help altered?	Are people going to the same people, groups, clubs, organisations for support or different ones? For example, is there more reliance on the association and less on individuals?		
	How has the profile of community help changed?	Are people pooling resources more or less with others?		
Range of capitals	Is there a different content profile or transaction pattern?	Are people giving more or less material or non-material help than before?		
	Has the value accorded material or non-material help shifted because of the organisation's interventions?			
Philosophy of collective self	Is there more collaborative/ cooperative giving – clubs, associations, pooling? What does this mean for decisions around who is helped or not? Is there more or less reciprocity?	Is there more or less reciprocity than before? Are people asking to be paid – 'won't do it for nothing'?		
Conventions of decision-making.	Has there been a change in the motivation principles or factors that determine whether you help someone or not?	Are people more or less likely to offer help than before? What are the rationales for changed decisions about helping?		
Maintaining to moving	Are people generally better or worse off now than before external support? Do they have more opportunities to improve their situation than before?	How has the service provider's support changed your life/ situation? In what way has it made a difference?		

PIME TEMPLATE 2

Categorising programmes for quality of change

Intervention/ Project	STRENGTHEN			DISTORT		DEplete
	Support	Supple- ment	Comple- ment	Compen- sate	Alter	Displace

PIME TEMPLATE 3

Connecting PoC domain with the quality of change

PoC domain of change	Strengthen	Distort	Deplete
Needs and networks			
Range of capital			
Philosophy of the collective self			
Conventions and norms of decision-making			
Maintaining to moving			