

2017 ANNUAL EVALUATION CONFERENCE
10-11 MAY 2017
HOLIDAY INN REGENT'S PARK, LONDON



UKES 2017 presentation

First, a very brief introduction to...



A little history

Then...

Founded in 1958

when 16 British volunteers
were sent to
teach **English in Borneo**

Now...

Today, VSO is a highly respected
**international development
organisation**

that has engaged over
43,000 volunteers
to work on programmes in more than
120 countries



VSO Today

£80mm+
revenue

595
in-country
program partners

operating in
23 countries

589
international volunteers

leading largest multi-country
study on the
**development impact
of volunteers**
with IDS

VSO volunteers



e-Volunteers



Parliamentary &
Eminent Volunteers



National
Volunteers



International
Volunteers



Corporate
Volunteers



Youth & International
Citizen Service Volunteers

**Unlocking Talent
through Technology**

**Maternal &
Newborn Health**

**Inclusive
Education**



health, HIV & AIDS

**Adolescent Sexual
Reproductive
Health & Rights**

**VSO's
areas of
work**

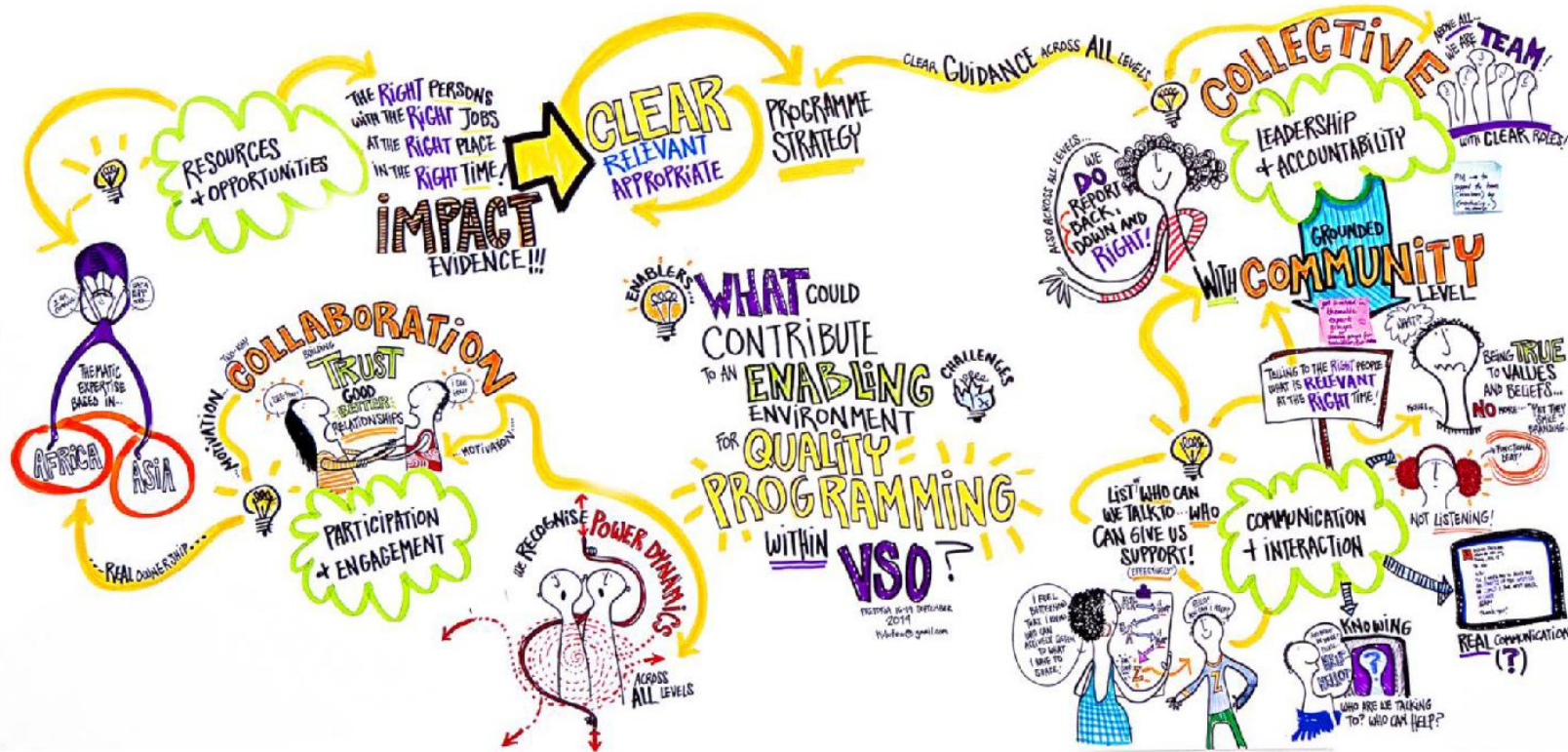
**Social
Accountability**



**Agri-based
Value Chains**

**Youth
Employment**

1. The journey so far: Building the practice of action research



Practices we would like to share today:

Building closer loops for learning and action planning:

- Globally planning evaluations with multiple layers of consolidation, participatory validation and quicker loops for learning before getting to the final written knowledge product.

Collective sense making of evidence:

- Collective analysis and synthesis of evidence within communities of practices around VSO thematic areas, in order to make immediate use of the evidence generated through evaluations and shorten the gap between programme learning and rigorous generation of evidence.



What have we learnt and want to share?

- These practices have started to demonstrate how developing more appropriate mechanisms for intentional learning and reflection at multiple levels can speed up at the process at which evaluation findings can be put in use.
- Our finding is that learning loops, combined with a focus on synthesis rather than aggregation, are more instrumental in transferring evidence across programmes in different contexts than the traditional focus on recommendations and management responses.
- These practices are possible in a context where the generation of evidence is closer to programme implementation and design, and the focus is shifted from independence to learning.



Practice 1: Global, multi stakeholder ICS evaluation

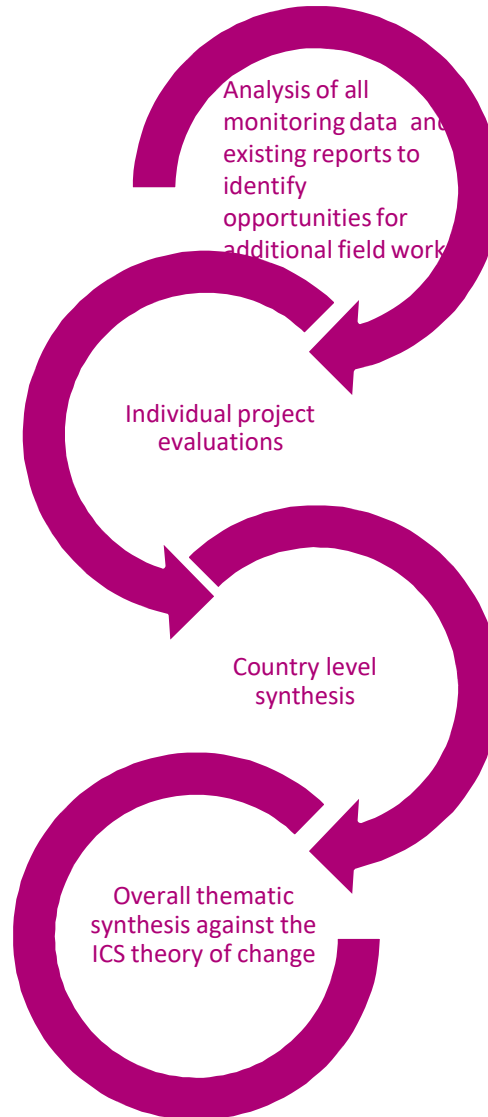
- This evaluation took place over a period of six months and consisted of different stages and a multitude of activities. The approach and the methodological design for the evaluation has been multi-layered and included an overarching methodological design combining open qualitative research, analysis across a multitude of cases, realist evaluation in the synthesis, quantitative data collection and the incorporation of literature on youth led development and youth volunteering.
- The overall evaluation consisted of 3 main phases:
 - **Phase 1**: analysis of all existing monitoring data from over 130 projects.
 - **Phase 2**: Field work and primary data collection in 5 countries, across 16 projects, reaching more than a 1100 respondents, amongst community members, members of partner organizations, volunteers and host homes.
 - **Phase 3**: synthesis of finding across all steps of phase 1 and 2.



Evaluation levels

Individual projects evaluations ended with participatory validation processes so that the learning feed immediately back into programme design.

Realist inspired synthesis across themes and geographies to validate overall ICS theory of change and design



Through the analysis of monitoring data and existing reports, individual projects were identified for the field work. A thorough participatory process was followed to develop individual ToRs for each country.

Learning from each project fed into a final country validation where higher level learning fed back in learning, reflection and programme adaptation.



From recommendations to action planning

Management responses

Typically written in response to recommendations written by evaluators at the end of an evaluation, after analysis and sense making have been completed.



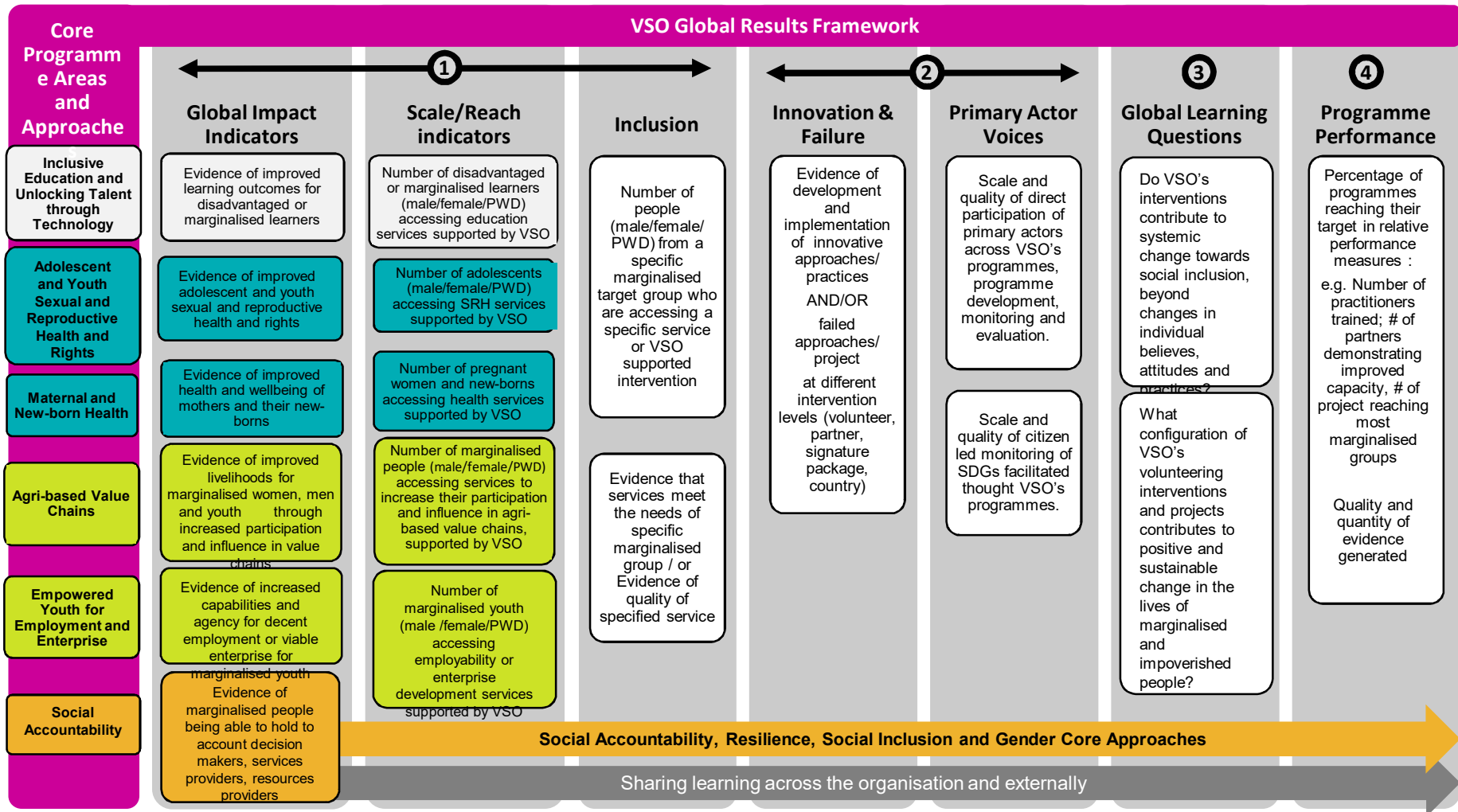
Collective action planning

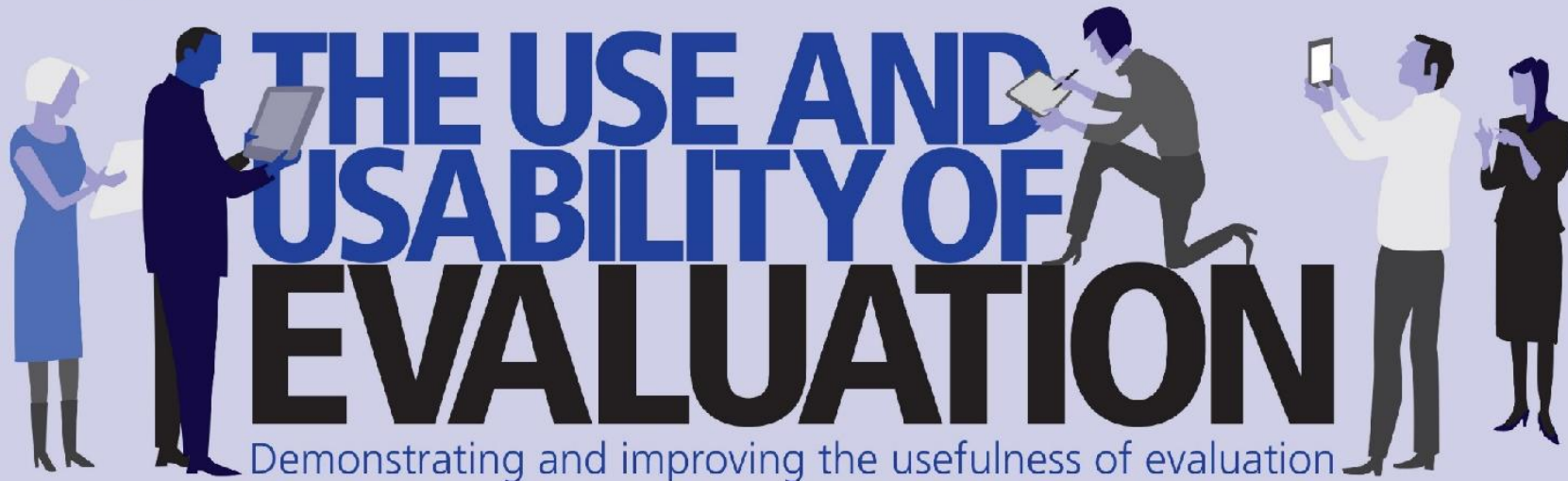
Programme management and practitioners are continuously engaged with the findings as they emerge, included in sense making, analysis and the very generation of actions to address the findings. Different levels of actions planning emerge over the life of an evaluations.

Practice 2: Use of Evidence synthesis templates

- Grounded on the levels, indicators and questions of VSO's Global results framework
- Collective analysis and synthesis of evidence generated through evaluation in communities of practices around VSO core programme areas, in order to make immediate use of evidence generated through evaluations and to shorten the gap between programme learning and rigorous generation of evidence
- Synthesis templates after each evaluation, build on global theories of change and intended to enable programme practitioners to engage with the evidence differently from a management response.







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