

Acompañamiento: an emerging map of effectiveness

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The article that starts on page 6 discusses how the processes of the Effectiveness Initiative (EI) are revealing what can be significant in influencing project effectiveness, and lists and discusses a number of these factors. This article discusses one way in which large quantities of this kind of material can be organised and worked with so that lessons can be drawn.

Acompañamiento is a word used by the Latin American teams within the EI to refer to a new paradigm of partnership. By acompañamiento we mean the collective construction and sharing of values, principles, visions, methods, burdens and responsibilities. Accompaniment (our English adaptation of the term as we use it), can exist in the many relationships all along the 'aid system', between donors and their partners, between NGOs and the community they serve, between community workers and the children, parents, and community members they work with.

The word itself is rich and evocative, having many meanings that all coalesce to describe the kinds of relationships that EI team members have seen as effective or contributing to the effectiveness of their particular

programme. It is interesting to note that in English, accompaniment doesn't really catch the richer, more human meaning of the Spanish original: the Random House Dictionary (1973) defines it as ... 'a portion of the musical text designed to serve as background and support for more important parts'.

Even with this more modest meaning, it still represents what is emerging from the data as the essence of an effective stance or attitude that is appropriate for funders, sponsoring NGOs, programme staff, and community animadoras as they relate to the communities they wish to accompany.

An initial set of over 500 themes that illuminate (and gave rise to) the concept of acompañamiento emerged from the analysis of cross-site discussions that have been held in the EI, and from

related materials. To cope with the mass of materials, a tool called 'Atlas-ti' has been used. This is a software programme that allows the user to organise complex qualitative data and assign code words to portions of text. The software also offers a graphical mapping tool, to make it easier to identify and make sense of relationships between the themes that emerge, allowing them to be grouped into 'families'.

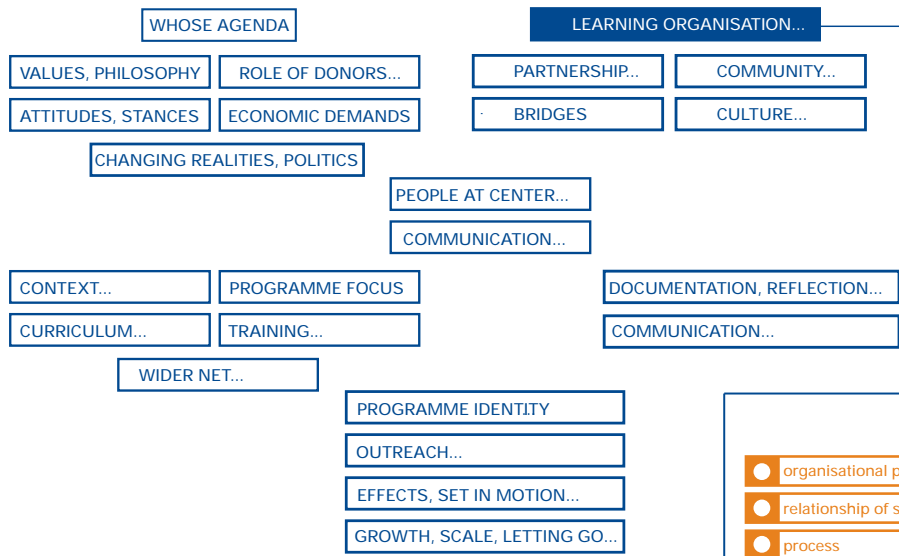
On the following page, we present an example of this mapping, titled 'The Accompaniment Families Map'. It shows the grouping of code families that together represent the concept of accompaniment. Each item on this first map you see is actually the name of a code family, containing between 6 and 60 themes. Thus, the Accompaniment Families Map in its entirety is made up of 24 sub-families. Because of space

limitations, we are only able to explore one sub-family here.

Reading the themes within this family makes it possible to get an intuitive sense of the types of issues that each family contains. However, it is important to remember that each theme is drawn from the original data, and is linked to one or several quotations from the cross-site texts that reside in the Atlas-ti database. Thus, once the map has been challenged and refined, the resulting family maps can be written up into *living documents*, discussing the themes in reference to the data, context, and source from which they were derived.

In this way, what we are learning about acompañamiento will be shown in all its dimensions, and can be more deeply and broadly understood. ○

The Accompaniment Families Map



The Code Family "Learning organisation"
 This example shows how each code family can contain as many as sixty themes.

