BETWEEN OUTPUTS AND IMPACT:
USING OPERATIONAL AND QUALITATIVE DATA TO IMPROVE PROGRAM DESIGN

Anna De La Cruz
Agenda

- Introductions – name, organization, sector
- Mixed methods/operational research overview
- Example: Guatemala rural pharmacy model mixed methods evaluation
- Example: Mexico rural pharmacy pilot research
- Small group discussions
- Full group report-out
Between Outputs and Impact

Qualitative and mixed/methods operational research is useful if:

- Aren’t ready to conduct an impact evaluation, but want to start to understand the effects of the program on business and social outcomes
- You want to improve the business design and outputs
- Qualitative methods are better suited to answer your research questions (how/why questions)
Design Questions

What is the best geographic placement for business?

How do participants and clients perceive the program?

Why are sales low?

What is client satisfaction and perception of quality?

Is the training effective and can it be improved?
Methods

- Formative and market research
- Qualitative
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Observation
- Data triangulation
  - Qualitative and outputs
  - Existing records/demographic data
- Modeling social/business outcomes
Guatemala Tiendas de la Salud (TISA)
The Rural Pharmacy Model

Inputs
- Catalytic funding
- Rural entrepreneurs provided
  - Loans
  - Training/support
  - Discounted Medicine

Shared Value Outcomes
- Increased access to medicine
- Increased incomes for entrepreneurs
- Increased market share for pharmaceutical companies
- Sustainable social business model
TISA Evaluation Objectives

1. To understand the health-seeking behavior of community members where TISA stores operate

2. To assess the community-level effects of the TISA program

3. To assess the operation and management of the TISA health stores, and identify successes and areas for improvement
Methods

- Qualitative interviews, focus groups, observation
  - In-depth interviews with 65 community residents
  - Focus group discussions with 26 participants
  - In-depth interviews with 6 store owners
  - Store observations and record review
Findings

- Community and store owner demographic profiles
- Tension between limits as a seller of medicines without options for diagnosis and treatment
  - Better sales where there is a strong link with the public health system for diagnosis and referrals
- Store owner interviews revealed limited financial literacy
  - Suggested improvement needed in training
  - Sales volumes and earnings are too low
- Best-selling/most profitable items are not medicines
  - Most medicine sold is OTC, pain relief
- Store owners adjust prices and sell on credit out of necessity
- Interviews revealed lack of knowledge and/or trust of some stores among community members
  - Reasons: no marketing, other people attending store, preference for qualified providers
Mexico BOSI Pilot
Mexico BOSI Pilot

- Formative/market research
  - Survey of other medicine sellers
  - Community interviews
    - Geographic placement of stores, product demand (for service and specific products, existing health knowledge/behavior)

- Pilot operational research
  - In-depth conversations with store owners, competitors and public health workers
    - revealed a larger than anticipated distrust of generics
    - Real cost of traveling to restock
Group Discussion Questions

- Have you used mixed or qualitative methods to conduct evaluation to improve business and/or social components of your program?
  - What methods did you use?
  - What did you learn?
  - Any advice for others who want to use a similar approach?

- What program/business design research questions do you have for each other?

- Report back one example to the whole group