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Alison Napier

ANapier@intrac.org

01865 263051

NGO Federatie

Monitoring and Evaluation Training Handout
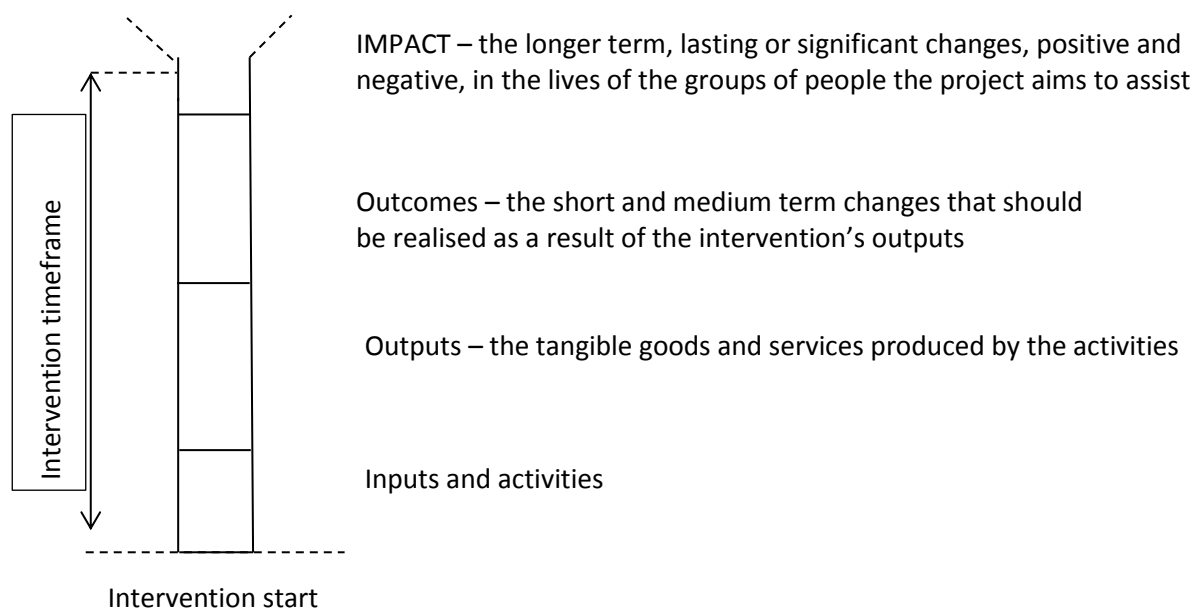
CONTENTS

1 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tends to focus on the **progress and effectiveness** of projects and **programmes**, while impact assessment tends to focus on **change.**

There is sometimes confusion in terminology: should the consequences of our interventions be called 'outcomes' or 'impact'. What if any is the difference? The impact ladder is helpful in clarifying this:

IMPACT – the longer term, lasting or significant changes, positive and negative, in the lives of the groups of people the project aims to assist

Outcomes – the short and medium term changes that should be realised as a result of the intervention's outputs

Outputs – the tangible goods and services produced by the activities

Inputs and activities

Intervention timeframe

Intervention start

The 'ladder' also shows that we can't measure impact without also measuring the lower parts of the ladder because the **logic of our interventions** is that each leads to the next.

Monitoring	Evaluation	Impact Monitoring and Assessment
Measures on-going activities	Measures performance against objectives	Assesses change in people's lives: positive or negative, intended or not
Main work during project/ programme implementation	Main work in middle or at end of project/programme cycle	Can be included at all stages and/or can be used specifically after the end of programme/project
Focus on interventions	Focus on interventions	Focus on affected populations
Focus on outputs	Focus on outcomes/impact	Focus on impact and change
• What is being done? • How well are we doing it?	• What has happened? • Did we achieve what we set out to achieve?	• What has changed? • For whom? • How significant is it for them? • Will it last? • What, if anything, did our programme contribute?

2 IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING: THEORY OF CHANGE

What is a Theory of Change?

"A Theory of Change (ToC) is an on-going process of reflection that explores change and how it happens – and what that means for the part that an organisation plays in a particular context, sector and/or with a group of people". (*Comic Relief Theory of Change Guidelines 2011*)

Theory of Change is an approach to programme design and planning that focusses on what we think will *change*, not on what we plan to *do*.

While the log frame captures a four step logic – input, output, outcome and impact, in reality the pathways through which change happens often have many more steps. These are often interlinked and can move both forward and backward and even skip steps. Theory of change has been developed to help capture that complexity.

A ToC should provide a clear, testable hypothesis about how change will occur that not only allows implementers to be accountable for results, but also makes the results more credible because they were predicted to occur in a certain way.

There should be agreement amongst stakeholders about what defines success (the desired change) and what needs to happen to get there. It should include how the project, programme or organisation will positively affect the lives of the people that it aims to support, including people of differing genders and identities who have been identified as particularly disadvantaged in the context analysis.

A good ToC can be both a powerful communication tool that captures the complexity of an intervention, and provide a framework for measuring impact.

Common elements of a Theory of Change include:

- **AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT FOR CHANGE** - A conceptual piece, which considers how change happens in relation to the issues and problems – and the specific target (or impact) groups - that the organisation seeks to address. This should include a gender and diversity analysis, which identifies the most disadvantaged groups that will be targeted by the programme/ organisation. The analysis will inform strategic decisions about what the programme/ organisation does and why.

- **A CHANGE PATHWAY** that articulates the relationship between the following elements:
  - The problems to be addressed and their underlying causes
  - A vision of change – if all problems were successfully addressed what would it look like
  - The population – organisations, groups and individuals you are working with and for
  - Principles of engagement
  - Ways of influencing change – with and for identified target groups
  - Medium term changes that you expect to see as a result

  - **A FRAMEWORK** against which impact can be measured.

Steps in developing a Theory of Change

INTRAC views ToC as a cycle of planning and critical reflection involving 6 stages:
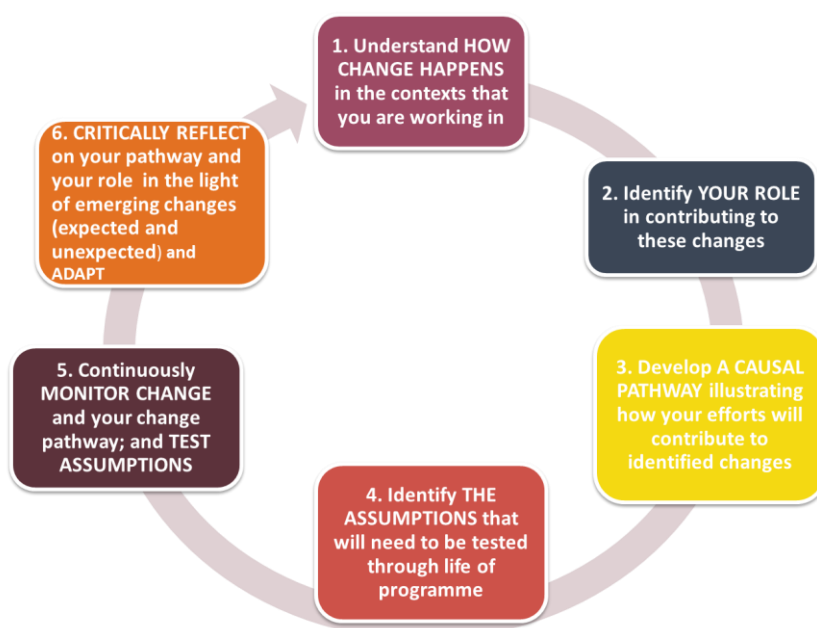
Critical questions to consider when using ToC for programme design and planning include:

Stage 1: How does Change happen?

Step back from your own programme and think about the bigger picture of change in relation to the thematic areas and target groups that you plan to work with.

1   What is the overall vision for the future for these groups of people (to which your project/ programme will contribute)?

2   How is power structured in relation to this issue or group and what factors either long term or short term could influence change (+/-) ? How might power relations shift for the most vulnerable or excluded groups?

3   What are the top level changes that would support this vision? What would need to be in place for this vision to be realised (Who would be doing what differently? What would be in place?)?

Stage 2: Analysis of your programme's specific contribution to change

4   Given this vision and the top level changes that are required, who are other actors in the picture and what are they doing? Who/ What are the potential allies and barriers to change?

5   Given this, and your own organisation's strengths and focus – and the resources you have available - what exactly can your programme contribute directly/indirectly? What is within your sphere of influence to change?

Stage 3: Developing the change pathway:

6 Based on this, what is the overall goal of your project/ programme for this phase?

7 Working backwards from the goal, what changes (for whom) would have to be in place for this goal to be realised in the medium-term?

8 Looking at this, who do you need to work with? What changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviours will contribute to these identified medium term changes?

9 So what do you need to do with whom? And how will these planned strategies (activities) link together and contribute to the changes you want to see at all levels?

Stage 4: Identifying and Testing Assumptions

10 What assumptions are you making about how change will happen? How is your thinking informed by facts about 'what works' (evidence), in the context in which you are working?

11 What other actors/factors (including political factors) might help or hinder you in achieving these planned changes?

12 Why do you think this approach is the best way of achieving your programme goal?

Stages 5 and 6: Review and adapt (6-12 months)

13 What is changing and how significant is this? Which change pathways have been more successful or less successful? What should we do differently?

Checklist of questions to ask when reviewing a ToC

(Could be done in stakeholder workshop every 6 months)

Update on context	• What has changed in the external environment since our initial analysis? • Are there any new developments that could impact either positively or negatively on our programme? • Are there any emerging opportunities that we could build on or use?
Focus on expected changes	Look back at the expected changes in your ToC. For each, report on: • The changes, if any, that did take place <u>and evidence to support your findings</u>. • If no change has taken place, discuss and identify why this is (external/ internal factors)? • The significance of any changes (and to whom it is significant); and • An assessment of your organisational contribution to these changes
Focus on your change pathways and your assumptions	Look at the changes that have taken place and ask the following questions: • Who/what was responsible for these changes? Is this what you expected or have new actors emerged as more important than those you identified? • Which approaches seem to be working/not working and what could be the reasons for this? • Is the pace of change what you expected – slower, faster? • Have any external factors/opportunities/critical junctures helped or hindered change? • What, if anything did your organisation contribute to these changes? How confident are you in this answer (not very/a little/ very)? Provide evidence • What does the above learning tell you about your change pathways and assumptions?
Analysis of findings and how this will affect your change pathways from this point forward	• Discuss what can the programme and your organisation learn from these findings and analysis? • How should the programme adapt as a result? • Is there a need to revise the impact pathway or to try new ones? If so, attach the revised or new pathway with explanatory notes
Looking forward - the next six months	What will be your main focus for the next six months? Which areas of change do you hope to influence? List up to 4 either short or medium term changes as appropriate. **For each one,** what do you expect/hope to see change in relation to this over the next six months? Specify: • Types of change for specific target groups • Your organisation's contribution to this • What might help or hinder progress (e.g. political/ social/ environmental/ economic factors, change in personnel, capacity etc.) • What assumptions will you be testing?

INTRAC | training@intrac.org | Tel: +44 (0)1865 201851 | www.intrac.org | @intrac_uk

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DfiD checklist for assessing the quality of a ToC

1. Clear analysis of the context and wider change process sought
- Is there a clear 'story' about the actors, factors and stakeholders at play in a specific context and on a specific issue? Is it a strategic response to a contextual analysis and assessment of external and internal learning?
- Is it clear how systemic changes are expected to emerge as a result of the actions of the intervention and other actors and factors in the system (ToC)?

2. Clearly articulated vision of change and process of change sought
- Is the vision conceptually clear and specific?
- Is the change process conceptually clear, logical but with non-linearity expressed?
- Are the hypothetical causal pathways mapped, with no missing links, specific to the programme in its context, and not a generic response?

3. Assumptions are made explicit, categorised and linked to specific aspects
- Have the assumptions been made explicit, in relation to different aspects of the ToC:
    - about how change is understood to happen - paradigms and worldviews informing this
    - the enabling and constraining factors
    - the contextual conditions
    - other actors, stakeholders and beneficiaries
    - strategy and implementation options?
- Does the narrative describe key 'pathways' (i.e. the hypothetical sequences of change, sometimes called results or outcomes chains)?
- Does the programme make explicit its 'drivers of change' (i.e. how its interventions interact with the context to influence change)
- Are the strategic options described in relation to the drivers of change?

4. Assessment of external learning & evidence for change drivers & cause-effect links
- Is there a narrative assessment of learning / evidence for key assumptions and change pathways? Is the strength of the evidence assessed?
- Are the aspects that are poorly understood flagged?
- Does the assessment make sense given the sources referred to?

5. Documentation, communication and wide ownership
- Is the ToC used regularly in discussion and communication both internally and externally?
- Can it be easily summarised verbally by a wide range of stakeholders?
- Is documentation available, describing different stages of ToC development and use?
- Are there different products tailored for different stakeholders and uses?
- Are changes in the ToC over time captured and documented?

6. Active use of ToC in planning, M&E and management processes
- Is the ToC explicitly used in strategic planning and in the design and practice of M&E?
- Do M&E questions pick up on where cause-effect links are poorly understood?
- Are ToC reviews and adaptation integrated into management process (at least once/ year)?

3 PLANNING FOR M&E: THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

What is a Logical Framework Approach?

The logframe is a planning, monitoring and evaluation (and often reporting) tool used by most bilateral and multilateral aid agencies and International NGOs in the management of projects. Its popularity with donors, along with the demands of results-based management, has resulted in the logframe becoming the dominant planning tool used within international development. It was originally designed for use in discrete, time bound projects, providing a logical hierarchy of objectives that identifies how stated objectives will be measured and achieved.

Standard '4x4' logical framework matrix

Narrative Summary (Hierarchy of objectives)	Indicators (Objectively verifiable indicators)	Means of Verification (Sources of information)	Assumptions/risks
Overall Objective (Goal, Impact) *The overall societal change – which the project is expected to contribute to*	Impact indicators *Measure project's contribution to the goal – longer term changes in people's lives*	Where the data for the indicators will come from	Hypotheses about factors or risks that could affect the progress or success of a project at all levels.
Immediate Objectives (Purpose, Outcomes) *The change in people's lives or in people's behaviour which the project aims to bring about*	Outcome indicators *Measure changes that are brought about within project timeframe resulting from project outputs*		
Outputs *The products (goods and services) resulting from project activities*	Output indicators *Measure what the project has produced*		
Activities and inputs *The resources put into the project and what we do with them to benefit the target group (i.e. to produce the outputs)*	Measure progress of project implementation - will be included in regular management monitoring of the project		

The **hierarchy of objectives** selected should be read logically from the bottom to the top. **If** we complete our activities, **then** we will produce our outputs. **If** we produce our outputs, **then** we will reach our immediate objectives (outcomes). **If** we achieve our immediate objectives, **then** we will contribute to the overall objective (goal).

Objectively Verifiable Indicators provide evidence of change in relation to outputs, outcomes and overall objectives/ impact. These should include changes in gender and group power relations.

Means of verification provide evidence of when, how, where the information for each indicator will be collected.

Risks and Assumptions may affect the project's planned implementation and achievements but are outside the control of the project. Risks and assumption which particularly affect disadvantaged groups should be prioritised.

Developments and challenges with Logframes[1]

Over the past few years, a new format has become more common, which requires indicators in the logframe to be worded as 'neutral' statements, and the inclusion of baseline, milestones and targets against these. See the example below:

Indicator	Baseline	Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Target
% of girls in project areas who report living free from violence over the	10%	25%	35%	50%
# of children completing one year of basic primary education in project-supported schools	0	600	800	1,200
Capacity of supported partner to develop own project proposals	Partner has no ability to develop independent project proposals	Partner can develop proposals with assistance from supporting agency	Partner is capable of developing independent project proposals	At least two project proposals are favourably received by donors
Policy on use of common grazing land exists	No policy supports use of common grazing land by beneficiaries.	Local government officials agree to look into the issue, and attend meetings	A new proposed policy is outlined and sent out for consultation.	Policy on use of common grazing land is adopted by local government.

The logical framework, in its initial form, was not designed to cope with a high level of complexity. However, its use has spread to complex, multi-layered programmes and nowadays it is often used to summarise the entire portfolio of international NGOs. This has led to problems such as:

- Work may be so oversimplified that the logframe becomes useless for management purposes.

- The hierarchy of changes needed to achieve the ultimate impact may become squeezed into a single change statement, which gives no real sense of the scale or variety of changes sought or considered necessary.

- Outputs and outcomes can become confused. This is because a logframe is only written from the point of view of one agency, while a complex programme may involve many different agencies:

Some common solutions to addressing these challenges are described below:

Expanding the logframe

The first and simplest solution is to allow multiple purpose (or outcome) statements within a logical framework. In the example provided, each organisation could have its own 'strand' of the logical framework, complete with purpose (outcome) and output statements. The different

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[1] Material taken from Simister, N (2017) Beyond Logframes, unpublished.

strands could then combine to support the wider goal (impact). Some agencies' logframes allow multiple purposes to be defined, whilst other agencies have more rigid logframe rules.
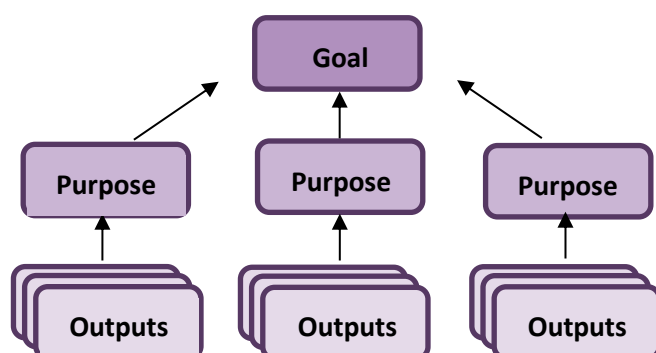
Using multiple logframes

Another option is to use multiple logframes within a single programme or organisation. One way is to develop a number of logframes, each with its own purpose (or outcome), reflecting the work of each individual agency or project. These logframes then 'add up to' a programmatic logframe. The logic is that if each individual project achieves its outcome/s then the programme as a whole is likely to achieve its outcome/s:
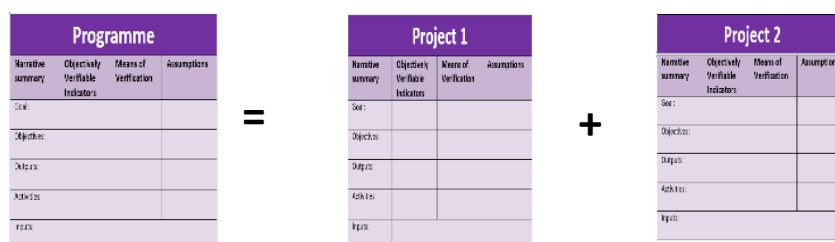
A less rigid approach is to develop a programmatic logframe to represent the work of the entire programme. Each partner or project within the programme then develops its own logframe, which contributes to the programmatic logframe:
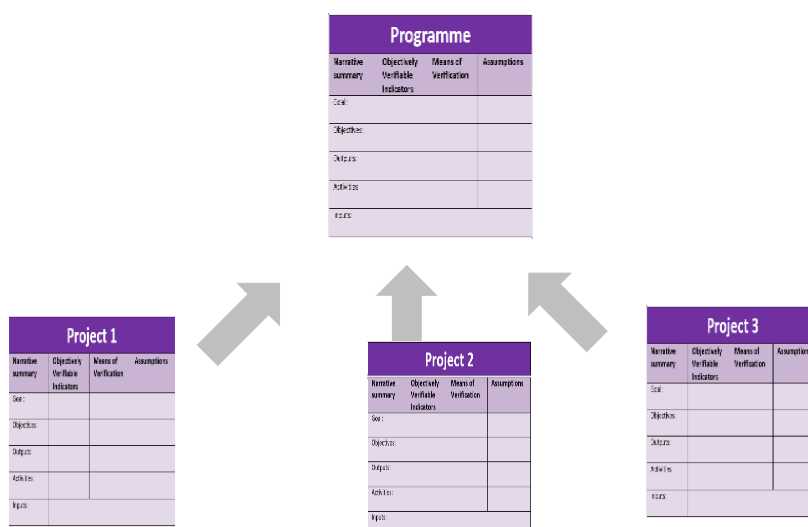
Changing the rules of the logframe

A common complaint is that the logframe is not very good at managing for long-term, cumulative change. This is because the average logframe covers a period of less than five years, whereas in the field of social development changes can take much longer to emerge.

One solution for multi-phase programmes is to weaken the linkages between the output and outcome levels. For example, outputs could be set for a programme period to capture the immediate results of activities undertaken, as usual. However, outcomes could represent changes identified over the period that may have arisen wholly or partly through activities carried out in previous funding phases. This allows for capturing and reporting changes in areas such as capacity development and policy influencing where change tends to arise over long time periods.

Some have also called for a greater emphasis on learning within the logical framework, particularly for pilot or innovation projects or programmes. This can be achieved by placing a series of learning questions at the heart of a logical framework – areas of interest to an organisation and/or its donors that could be explored over the course of a project or programme. Organisations could then be held partly accountable for what they have learned rather than simply for achieving short-term results.

Some differences between Logframe and ToC?

Logframe	Theory of Change
- Focuses on what needs to be done - Represents what you want to do - List of project components - Descriptive - Captures a four step logic – input/activity, output, outcome and impact - Includes assumptions and risks affecting the progress or success of a project at all levels	- Focuses on what needs to change - Requires critical thinking on change - Describes a causal pathway that specifies what is needed for change to happen - Explanatory - Captures that change processes often have many steps that are interlinked and can move both forwards (+ve change) and backwards (-ve) as well as skip steps - Describes in greater detail who is expected to change, what will enable that change and the assumptions underlying how this will happen - Includes barriers and facilitating factors affecting the progress or success of a project or programme at all levels

4 INDICATORS

Indicators are commonly used in development interventions to provide **evidence of change**, and form an important part of most M&E systems and approaches.

Indicators can be set at many different levels. There are many different types, the most common of which are quantitative and qualitative indicators. Indicators can be developed and refined in different ways, depending on the context.

The decision on how indicators are selected will also depend on the context you are working in. Ways of selecting indicators include:

- Consulting with a range of stakeholders, including facilitating community participation. These come from the bottom up and are context specific, however they also belong to the stakeholders who are expected to deliver on the project/programme.

- Some organisations have a list of common indicators that projects can select from.

- Some donors require specific indicators to be used by organisations they fund.

- Other organisations have a set of standard indicators that must be used for specific programmes or thematic areas (particularly if they wish to aggregate information).

Key questions to ask when refining indicators:

1. Will you be able to collect information on the indicator? If so, where will you get it from?

2. Is it likely to be accurate (credible)?

3. How much will it cost to get the information in terms of:
   - Staff time?
   - Beneficiary time?
   - Money?

4. How often will you have to collect it?

5. Does it require baseline information? If so, can you get this information?

6. Do your staff have the capacity (or desire) to collect the information honestly and accurately?

7. How far can you attribute the indicator to your efforts?

8. Will the indicator tell you anything you did not know before?

9. Will it help you make decisions to improve future performance?

10. Will it help you to be accountable to different stakeholders?

11. How else will it help you (if at all)?

12. Will it allow you to share information with others to help their own projects and programmes?

13. Might the indicator lead you to further investigation or enquiry?

Qualitative and quantitative indicators

Differences between quantitative and qualitative indicators

QUANTITATIVE	QUALITATIVE
Expressed as numbers	Expressed as words
Provide information on width and scope of work	Provide in-depth information
Analysed through statistical data methods	Analysed through summarising, reduction and scoring
Often need to be interpreted through qualitative inquiry	Often applies to a small number of people or situations
Indicators usually selected before selecting tools	Sometimes tools are selected before the indicators

It is not the way the indicator is worded that makes it qualitative or quantitative but the way it is reported – if you report a number it is quantitative if you report in words it is qualitative.

Once the indicators have been selected the final step is to operationalise them by defining the indicators clearly, and stating who will collect them, when, how often and which tools or methodologies will be used.

> *"An objective that cannot be measured may still have value as a guiding or inspiring objective. An indicator that cannot be collected is a worthless parasite"* (Simister, 2015).

Finally, it is important to note that some indicators may emerge over the course of a project or programme, and other indicators may need to be removed or adjusted. This might be because the indicators prove too difficult or expensive to use, or because of changes in the external socio-economic environment, or because they simply don't work as planned. A good M&E system or approach will allow for the addition, removal or adjustment of indicators from time to time as a matter of course.

References:

- Simister, N. (2015). Indicators. Monitoring and Evaluation Series: 8. Oxford: INTRAC. https://www.intrac.org/resources/monitoring-and-evaluation-planning-series-8/
- Simister, N (2015) Programme Indicators. Monitoring and Evaluation Planning Series 9 https://www.intrac.org/resources/monitoring-and-evaluation-planning-series-9/

5 SELECTING DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Deciding which tools or methods to use can be more of an art than a science. Below is a short list of guiding questions to ask yourself before deciding on a method or tool, remembering that for every tool available there are probably many more that could provide the same information:

- **What is the purpose of your Monitoring or Evaluation process?**

  - What information do you need to answer your M&E question? Are you looking at Impact, Outcome or Output level?

- **Who are the intended users of the data that will be generated?**

  - Will the methods/tools you select allow you to gather information that can be analysed and presented in a way that will be seen as credible by your stakeholders?

- **What type of information do you need?**

  - Do you want representative standardised information that could be comparable across locations? Do you want to examine the diversity or range of experiences, or tell a story of the change that has been brought about?

- **Who will you collect the data from?**

  - Where and how can respondents be reached? How big is the target population? What is culturally and linguistically appropriate? Does the data already exist? Are they predominantly male or female? Depending on the context, some methods may make it easier for less confident people of either sex to participate effectively, (for example, focus groups, interviewers of the same sex).
  - Often the most vulnerable groups are also hardest to reach and/ or groups for which it may be difficult to obtain reliable data (e.g. groups that are not officially recognised/ discriminated against)

- **Who is collecting the data?**

  - In some areas, for example, security issues or long distances to be travelled may make it more difficult for women or a person confined to a wheelchair to conduct interviews or focus groups.

- **How will you analyse the data?**

  - What skills do you have available to you to do the analysis?

- **What resources are available (time, money, volunteers, travel expenses, supplies)**

  - What resources do you have? When are the results needed? What are your own (in-house) skills? Which methods can you afford to manage?

- **How intrusive will your selected method be?**

  - Will certain tools disrupt the programme, or be seen as intrusive by your respondents? Is the data you need sensitive?

- **Think about the strengths and weaknesses of different methods and tools**

  - Review the trade-offs and compromises you have made and then decide what is/are the most appropriate tools or methods for your M&E needs
  - Then check again to make sure that the method meets the overall purpose of the exercise

6 COMMON DATA COLLECTION METHODS USED IN M&E AND IA

Method	Definition and Use	Strengths	Weaknesses
Case Studies	Collecting information that results in a story that can be descriptive or explanatory and can serve to answer questions of how and why	Can deal with a full variety of evidence from documents, interviews, observation Can add explanatory power when focus is on institutions, processes, programmes, decisions and events	Good case studies are difficult to do Require specialised research and writing skills Can't generalise findings to population Time consuming Difficult to replicate
Focus Groups	Holding focused discussions with members of target population who are familiar with pertinent issues. The purpose is to compare the beneficiaries' perspectives with abstract concepts in the evaluation's objectives	Similar advantages to interviews Particularly useful where participant interaction is desired Useful way of identifying hierarchical influences	Can be expensive and time consuming Must be sensitive to mixing of hierarchical levels Can't make generalisations
Interviews	The interviewer asks questions of one or more persons and records the respondents' answers. Interviews may be formal or informal, face-to-face or by telephone, or closed- or open ended. They can be structured, semi-structured or – rarely – unstructured	People can explain their experiences in their own words and setting Flexible, allow interviewer to pursue unanticipated lines of enquiry or probe issues Useful where language difficulties are anticipated Greater likelihood of input from senior officials	Time consuming Can be expensive If not done properly, the interviewer can influence the interviewee's response
Observation	Observing and recording situation in a log or diary. This includes who is involved; what happens; when, where, and how events occur. Observation can be direct (observer watches and records), or participatory (observer becomes part of the setting for a period of time).	Provides descriptive information on context and observed changes	Quality and usefulness of data highly dependent on observer's observational; and writing skills Findings can be open to interpretation Does not easily apply within a short time-frame to process change
Questionnaires	Developing a set of survey questions whose answers can be coded consistently	Can reach a wide sample simultaneously Allows respondents time to think before they answer Can be answered anonymously Impose uniformity by asking all respondents the same things Make data compilation and comparison easier	The quality of responses highly dependent on the clarity of questions Sometimes difficult to persuade people to complete and return questionnaire Can involve forcing institutional activities and people's experiences into predetermined categories

Written Document Analysis	Reviewing documents such as records, administrative databases, training materials and correspondence	Can identify issues to investigate further and provide evidence of action, change and impact to support respondents' perceptions Can be inexpensive	Can be time consuming
Stories of Change	Similar to case studies but with a greater focus on change. They are many variations. MSC is a specific process that mobilises small groups involved with interventions in the regular capturing of outcome stories. (Davies, Dart 2005)	Very good for capturing significant, unexpected , positive and or negative changes Very participatory	Time consuming in preparation, implementation and analysis Not useful for collecting quantitative data
KAB/P studies (Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviours/ Practices)	A KAB/P survey is a method of obtaining largely quantitative data relating to people's awareness, knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, practices or some other aspect of their lives. It is usually a sample survey using a structured questionnaire. It can be administered directly face-to-face or by telephone, or through self-completion via the internet or physical documents.	KAB/P surveys can be used longitudinally to collect baseline data and capture changes without relying on interviewees' recall Very good for tracking and assessing changes in capacity	Time consuming in preparation, implementation and analysis
Media monitoring	Media monitoring encompasses a range of processes for tracking the appearance in the media of matters of interest (e.g. child labour issues). This is typically outsourced to an agency and increasingly employs electronic search technology.	Useful for tracking change in relation to advocacy efforts, as change is notoriously unpredictable	Cost implications if outsourced. Is only useful if high levels of analysis applied
PRA techniques	Participatory approaches encompass a range of methodologies which ensure that that the perspectives and insights of all stakeholders, beneficiaries as well as project implementers, are taken into consideration in the design and conduct of evaluative research Examples include maps, timelines, scoring and ranking etc	Particularly appropriate in working with groups for whom questionnaires or conventional FGDs are less appropriate. Encourage people to describe changes in their lives brought about by interventions in their own terms.	Not so good for capturing information when number of stakeholders is very high Time consuming and requires skilled facilitators
RCT Randomised controlled trial	An RCT is a quantitative, comparative, controlled experimental method. In an RCT people are allocated at random (by chance alone) to receive one of several clinical interventions. One of these interventions is the standard of comparison or control. The control may be a standard practice, a placebo ("sugar pill"), or no intervention at all. RCTs seek to measure and compare the outcomes after the participants receive the interventions.	Can be used with care for measuring straightforward, simple interventions	RCTs are often applied inappropriately to interventions typical of development (e.g. capacity building, governance, participation, and advocacy). These are usually complex, long-term and multi-variable interventions where the links between the interventions and the changes cannot be proven statistically. RCTs are expensive and require research expertise.

7 GUIDELINES FOR USING CASE STUDIES

Why use case studies?

Case studies of various kinds are a powerful tool in monitoring and evaluation. However, they are also used for many other purposes and it is important not to confuse a case study designed for M&E with case studies used for marketing or publicity purposes.

They provide a more extensive description of the beneficiary group (or partner organisations in capacity building projects) and how the interventions have affected their knowledge, skills and behaviour. A good case study provides detailed qualitative information, and therefore as a method, justifies the investment of greater resources in data collection than is usual in most monitoring and evaluation activities.

Who/When to use them?

Case studies in the programme/ project context are used to show how the project has impacted on the intended target group and so the tool is usually used during mid-term reviews and post completion evaluations rather than as a monitoring tool. Because the method requires a greater level of resourcing it is usual to focus on a small number of the beneficiaries and therefore the criteria as to why this sample was chosen needs to be made explicit (see below). They are especially useful to show how an intervention has made a difference to the lives of groups disadvantaged because of their gender or identity.

The Method

The starting point is the analysis of data already collected and what that has revealed about outcomes and impact. This should indicate what changes have occurred in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, how the interventions' effects developed over the life of the project and the part played by other actors and other forces. On the basis of this earlier work, case studies can be identified that illustrate the key learning and conclusions. Every project and programme is distinctive so it is not possible in a general way to identify what things case studies will illustrate but examples may be to examine and better understand:

- A group that benefitted from the project compared to one not involved.

- A group where the effects of the project can be strongly seen compared to a group where the impact has been weak.

- Groups of beneficiaries with similar characteristics (e.g. level of poverty, sex, age, geographical location) but experiencing different project interventions.

- A group that is representative of the target population with the case study illustrating how the project affected them during the different stages of the project.

- With capacity building/organisational development projects case studies can be used to show how the beneficiary organisation gained in capability and how this was used to achieve their goals in more effective and efficient ways.

The size and complexity of the case study is dependent on the nature of the project and the importance given to the tool as a way of sharing with others the difference the interventions have made. A case study may be as small as a few paragraphs, or as large as a substantial article, the basis of a web-page communication or a documentary film.

After the case study examples have been chosen, a range of quantitative and qualitative tools can be used to collect additional data: interviews, meetings, questionnaires, surveys, analysis of reports and official statistics, participatory approaches, time lines, impact grids, self-reviews etc.

Once the data has been analysed it needs to be written up in a case study format. These are usually less formal than reports - they describe situations and explain processes and responses. Human interest stories are often used to capture the reader's attention, while photographs can provide a visual context. In writing up case studies it is important to have identified the intended audience/s and to ensure that the style and format of the case study is appropriate for them.

Types of case studies

Comprehensive case studies require careful and purposive selection of the particular cases to be studied. The ways in which cases should be selected will depend on how they are going to be used. Examples of types of case studies and their uses are shown in the matrix below:

TYPE OF CASE	EXAMPLES OF USE
Unusual, extreme, or deviant cases e.g. programme dropouts, failures or successes	Useful in understanding puzzling cases which seem to break the rules, and why certain people or organisations seem to achieve particularly good or bad results. Useful in understanding the reasons for exceptionally good or bad performance.
Typical or average cases	Useful in understanding the situation of most people, communities, and organisations. Findings may be replicable in other 'normal' situations.
Homogenous or similar cases e.g. looking at impact on a group of women of the same age, or looking at a number of credit projects)	Useful in looking at particular sub-groups particularly affected by the problem addressed in depth which may be important when many different types of people or activities are involved.
Varied or heterogeneous cases e.g. deliberately seeking out different groups of people, organisations or types of programmes	Useful in exploring common or distinct patterns across a great variety of groups, issues or projects. Common patterns in such cases are likely to indicate core key impacts of wider relevance, precisely because they occur across diverse groups.
Critical cases These may have wider relevance and can be used for broader purposes, such as innovative work or work with new groups: may produce results which have high political impact	Useful when a single case study can dramatically make a point; statements such as 'if it happens here it can happen anywhere' or 'if it doesn't work here it won't work anywhere' indicate that a case is critical.
Snowballing cases e.g. starts with a few cases and then selects others on the basis of the findings	Useful when the information to select all case studies is not available or where selection depends on having a greater understanding of the situation.
Convenience cases (case studies are chosen solely because it is easy - the information already exists, the site is very close, and so on)	It is generally a bad idea to use if these are the only or most important reasons for choosing case studies.

Source Roche (1999), adapted from Patton (1990)

8   PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

Participatory tools include Participatory Rapid/ Rural Appraisal (PRA), Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), Participatory Impact Assessment (PIA) and others. They are based around the participation of a broad range of different people, especially those affected by a project or programme. They include a large 'family' of tools, with some common features including:

- The language and concepts are compatible with the way the respondents think, not a reflection of how those seeking the information think.

- Those with less confidence to speak up (women, lower caste, those with a disability, those living in distant places) are actively sought out so that their opinions are also fully included in the data collection process.

- Triangulation – information about the same things is collected in different ways and from different sources to ensure it is reliable.

- Different people with different skills and different views make up the multi-disciplinary teams and all are involved in the design, data collection and analysis.

- 'Optimal ignorance and appropriate imprecision' is a guiding principle; in other words the test of the validity of the process is whether it provides insights and understanding that help us to deliver better projects and programmes, not that it is academically approved.

- On the spot analysis- the team reviews its findings before moving on. It builds on the understanding it is gaining, and then focuses on the things emerging as important.

Increasing interest in the more systematic generation and use of 'participatory numbers' recognises the 'hierarchy of evidence' that prioritises quantitative approaches and research using standard sampling techniques, questionnaires and statistical analysis and the advantages of statistical methods, including in:

- Helping to assess causality through identifying correlations

- Influencing policy-makers

- Enabling policy-makers and influencers to put numbers on trends and other comparisons

- Enabling aggregation

Methodological innovation in the use of participatory methods to generate statistics rejects the assumptions that participatory approaches only generate qualitative data, that participatory data cannot be analysed statistically and that participatory methods cannot be robust or rigorous.

Jeremy Holland (2013) suggests that wider and more systematic use of participatory statistics would benefit both development agencies and local communities:

- Can generate accurate and generalizable statistics in a timely, efficient and effective way;

- Participatory statistics empower local people in a sphere of research that has traditionally been highly extractive and externally controlled.

References/ Resources:

- http://www.participatorymethods.org/

- Jeremy Holland, ed. (2013) *Who Counts? The Power of Participatory Statistics*, Practical Action Publishing, Rugby, UK.

9 MEASURING CHANGE: THE CHALLENGE

The challenge of measuring change is establishing causality: 'Did **a** (our intervention) cause **b** (the observed change)?'

A   Caused →   B

Development agencies are concerned about human processes. The very nature of our development interventions means that our programmes and projects are:

- Complex

- Involve many different interventions and actors

- Subject to unexpected events

- Implemented with limited resources.

Thus we are never going to be able to measure change (impact) in the same way that medical drugs can be trialled. We have so many influencing factors and external variables that all need to be taken into consideration when trying to identify change particularly when we are asked to prove attribution. Many projects/ programmes/ organisations we are involved in demand that we **attribute** change or impact to our work i.e. provide measurable evidence of the specific impact that our intervention has had - an extremely difficult exercise given the complex contexts we work in.

Some people say 'wave a white flag - surrender the attempt to measure impact. But the reality is that we cannot give up. Not only are funders demanding that we demonstrate how we are making a difference, our own striving for greater effectiveness also demands that we find ways to measure change.

However, we need to accept that the methods that we use to measure change and establish causality must be **appropriate** and **sustainable** given the level of complexity involved in development processes and the money available to conduct assessments.

So is it possible to measure change? - There is no magic bullet; it takes time and effort.

10 RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIALS

Attribution requires a comparison of the benchmark (baseline) to the overall change, most often involving a statistical analysis of the performance of key variables (indicators).

Since the push for better, more 'robust' evidence of results, there has been increasing interest among development agencies in using experimental methods or quasi-experimental methods as part of M&E, specifically for impact assessment. There are ongoing theoretical debates about whether or not a Randomised-Control-Trial (RCT) is 'the gold standard' approach to impact measurement in terms of assessing attribution.

Broadly, experimental approaches work by comparing the intervention population (the 'treatment' group) with a similar non-intervention population ('control' or 'comparison' group). The treatment group receives the development intervention while the control group does not and therefore the control group provides the (theoretical) evidence of the 'counterfactual' - what would have happened if the intervention had not taken place.

In a Randomised Control Trial (RCT), both the intervention and the control populations are selected randomly; where they are not randomly selected, then this is called a quasi-experimental, rather than a full experimental design.

Development agencies are often unsure about when to use RCTs. Some guidelines about when to use them include:

- When there is a clear question about whether something works or not i.e. in a situation of 'proof of concept'

- In a context where it may be possible to scale up an intervention that proves to be successful

- When the size of the population is sufficiently large and it is possible to randomize

- When you have the research resources and skills to do it

- When you are able to complement the results with contextual and qualitative analysis, to understand the 'why' of the effect

Ultimately, it is important to choose the most appropriate method to solve the problem and use common sense!

11 CONTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

Contribution recognises that there are usually several actors and factors influencing whether or not, how and to what extent positive change occurs and that it may not be statistically possible or desirable to identify (or measure) the distinctive contribution of each. Approaches such as 'Contribution analysis' or 'Process Tracing' are designed to assess contribution.

Contribution Analysis is an approach to 'solving the attribution problem' by focussing on assessing the progress of a programme/ project towards achieving outcome/s and systematically exploring the extent to which observed results are a consequence of the project/ programme. The approach follows six broad steps:

1. Set out the attribution problem to be assessed

2. Develop/ Test a Theory of Change/ Logic model

3. Gather existing data/ evidence of the Theory of Change

4. Assemble and Assess the contribution story

5. Seek out additional evidence - and challenge the story

6. Revise and strengthen the contribution story
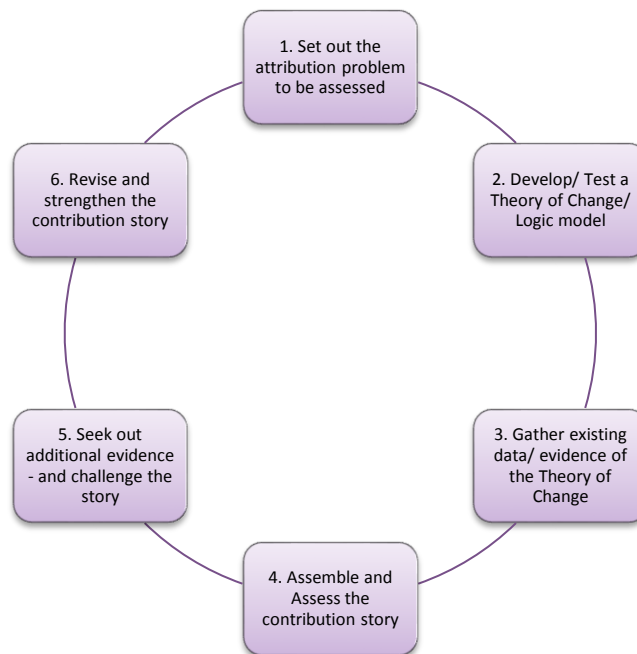
Drawing on contribution analysis, we have identified 5 stages in assessing the impact of programmes and projects:

1. Establish the logic of the interventions

Assess whether the activities and inputs have the potential to 'solve the problem' that the programme is addressing. This process should be an integral part of any project design but it may not have been done well (or the documentation is weak/ lost). It is often necessary to use 'retrospective facilitation' techniques to identify the underpinning conceptual logic and make it overt and available for examination and challenge.

2. Identify indicators that can be tested

In well-designed programmes these indicators of performance will have been identified and stated as part of the original documentation. However, again, it may be necessary to retrospectively work with the implementing team/partner to agree what indicators can be used to show that the interventions have been successfully implemented and the immediate outcomes and longer term impact are taking place.

3. Monitor and evaluate the interventions.

Here, we need to ask the first of the major evaluation questions 'Did we do what we said we'd do?' Draw on any already existing monitoring and evaluation data.

4. Assess the impact indicators.

This will involve different stakeholders (and their different criteria of success) and the use of a number of different tools and methodologies. In most development projects there are at least three main stakeholder groups to involve in the measure of impact - the implementers, the beneficiary group, and the funders. Methods and tools appropriate to each group should be used, and a process that ensures that both the 'formal criteria of success are assessed but ALSO the criteria that stakeholder groups may have, even if these do not relate to the intended outcomes.

5. Make an overall assessment.

A good evaluation will be able to say to what extent the activities and inputs were conducted, whether the planned outputs were achieved and what impact it has had up to the point of the assessment (outcomes), and what likely future on-going impact it will have. This 'pulling together' of the data will be able to draw on quantitative evidence (the budget used, the number of…etc) but it will also need to draw upon judgements made by stakeholders. The important point is that the issues have been made explicit. A good assessment enables discussions and learning to take place that would not have been possible before.

A 'plausible association' exists between the interventions, outcomes and impact when:

- There is a logical connection between the 'problem' and the activities, outputs and outcomes.
- The interventions have been implemented in a way consistent with this logic.
- Evidence from different stakeholders shows that the outcomes have been achieved and that there is a good likelihood of continued positive long-term impacts.
- Assessments of factors external to the programme conclude that it was the project interventions that were the main contributing factor to the observed changes.

References:

- *John Mayne (2008) Contribution Analysis: An Approach to Exploring Cause and Effect, ILAC Brief 16, May 2008 (since updated)*
- *A useful resource when considering methods for assessing impact is Elliot Stern et al (2012) Broadening the Range of Designs and Methods for Impact Evaluations: A Study commissioned by the Department for International Development; DfID Working Paper 28, April 2012*

12 MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE (MSC)

🔴 Access full text: available online

MSC is a participatory method of collecting and analysing stories from the field which focuses on monitoring intermediate outcomes and impact. It provides a simple means of making sense of a large amount of complex information and is best suited to large-scale, open-ended projects which would otherwise be difficult to monitor easily using traditional methods.

The MSC process involves the following steps: raising interest; defining the domains of change; defining the reporting period; collecting significant change (SC) stories; selecting the most significant of the stories; feeding back the results of the selection process; verifying the stories; quantification; secondary analysis and meta-monitoring; and revising the system.

MSC monitoring is useful for identifying unexpected changes. It requires no special professional skills, encourages analysis as well as data collection and can build staff capacity. It can deliver a rich picture of what is happening and can be used to monitor and evaluate bottom-up initiatives that do not have predefined outcomes. MSC is better suited to some programme contexts than others and has a number of advantages and drawbacks compared to other forms of M&E:

- MSC is suited to monitoring that focuses on learning rather than just accountability. The types of programmes can gain considerable value from MSC include those that are complex, large, focused on social change, participatory and highly customised.

- MSC may be less appropriate for: capturing expected change; developing good news stories; conducting retrospective evaluation; understanding the average experience of participants; producing an evaluation report for accountability purposes; or for completing a quick and cheap evaluation.

- MSC helps draw valid conclusions through thick description, systematic selection, transparency, verification, participation, and member checking.

- Some of the key enablers for MSC are: an organisational culture where it is acceptable to discuss failures; a willingness to try something different; infrastructure to enable regular feedback; and commitment by senior managers.

- Problems with MSC relate to the meaning, significance and relevance of the question, the selection of SC stories, time constraints, and complaints that certain choices are ignored and feedback forgotten. Furthermore, MSC contains a number of biases as well as subjectivity in the selection process.

MSC should be considered a complementary form of monitoring which fills a number of gaps. It tells us about unexpected outcomes, encourages a diversity of views, enables broad participation, puts events in context and enables a changing focus on what is important. It can be fine-tuned by developing methods for incorporating insights into programme planning, eliciting the views of programme critics, participatory analysis of stories *en masse* and improving the feedback process.

Evaluation approaches that would complement MSC include those that provide quantitative evidence of the achievement of outcomes, evidence of 'average' experiences and views of non-participants. Further research should focus on: the extent of unexpected changes and negative stories that are reported, and ways of strengthening both the feedback loop and the link between dialogue and programme planning. It might also serve to investigate how to strengthen MSC for use in summative evaluation and combine MSC with deductive approaches.

13 OUTCOME MAPPING

Outcome mapping was originally developed by IDRC, Canada. It can be seen as an example of 'waving the white flag' on attempts to measure impact! It focuses on three distinct areas:

- *Behavioural change***:** Changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organisations with whom a programme works directly.

- *Boundary partners*: Those individuals, groups, and organisations with whom the programme interacts directly and with whom the programme anticipates opportunities for influence.

- *Contribution***:** By using OM, a programme is not claiming the achievement of development impacts; rather, the focus is on its contributions to outcomes. These outcomes, in turn, enhance the possibility of development impacts - but the relationship is not necessarily a direct one of cause and effect.

The essence of outcome mapping (OM) is the recognition that development is essentially about people relating to each other and their environments. OM encourages a shift away from assessing the development impact of a programme and towards changes in the behaviours, relationships, actions or activities of the people, groups, and organisations with whom a development programme works directly and whether/ to what extent/ how the project has contributed to these changes.

OM establishes a vision of the human, social, and environmental situation to which a programme hopes to contribute, and then focuses M&E on factors and actors within that programme's **direct sphere of influence**. It does not ignore the importance of changes in 'state' (such as cleaner water) but instead argues that for each change in state there are correlating changes in behaviour.

It is not a data collection tool *per se*, but is more a methodology that can be used as a broader framework in conjunction with other data collection tools.

There are three key stages to outcome mapping:

1**.** *Intentional Design* - helps a programme establish consensus on the macro level changes it will help to bring about and plan the strategies it will use. It helps answer four questions:

- What is the vision to which the programme wants to contribute?
- Who are the program's boundary partners?
- What are the changes that are being sought?
- How will the programme contribute to the change process?

2. *Outcome and Performance Monitoring* - provides a framework for the ongoing monitoring of the program's actions and the boundary partners' progress toward the achievement of outcomes. It is based largely on systematised self-assessment.

3. *Evaluation Planning* - helps identify evaluation priorities and develop an evaluation plan.

OM is based on principles of participation and purposefully includes those implementing the programme in the design and data collection so as to encourage ownership and use of findings. It is intended to be used as a consciousness-raising, consensus-building, and empowerment tool for those working directly in the development program. The process for identifying the macro-level changes and designing the monitoring framework and evaluation plan is intended to be participatory and, wherever feasible, can involve the full range of stakeholders, including boundary partners who are not part of the project or programme.

Reference:

Information on outcome mapping can be found at www.outcomemapping.ca

14 IMPACT GRIDS

This participatory approach is based on participants identifying *stories of change* - brief examples of changes in knowledge, skills and confidence and what they have done as a result of the intervention.

Who/When:

The tool can be used with individuals, groups and teams that potentially benefit (or are affected by) the project - this may be disadvantaged groups or their organisations, such as partners who are in a capacity building relationship with the implementers. It works best with participants that are literate but it can be used with illiterate respondents if resource people are present to write down the stories. As it is concerned with outcomes and impact the intervention needs to have been running for long enough that the inputs, activities and outputs can take effect.

The Method

The grid consists of a vertical axis with a horizontal axis that divides the vertical one into a positive area (above the axis) for stories of +ve change and a negative area (below the axis) for stories that respondents rate as having had an adverse effect (-ve). The horizontal axis represents the respondent's assessment of how strongly the change can be attributed to the project's interventions e.g. if they believe that the action or change wouldn't have happened without the project, they place their story on the strongly attributed end of the axis; if they believe that the action may have happened anyway but that some effect on the action was a consequence of the project, then they place their story on the weakly attributed end of the axis.

To conduct an impact grid exercise, bring together the participants in a meeting/workshop. The facilitator outlines the recent history of the project to remind people of what has happened; this must be done sensitively to avoid biasing the respondents.

Participants are then asked to think about whether and how the project has affected them and write down examples on post-it notes. There is no limit to how many stories each person can compile though in practice most identify about 2 to 4. They can then share this with a partner and further clarify it.
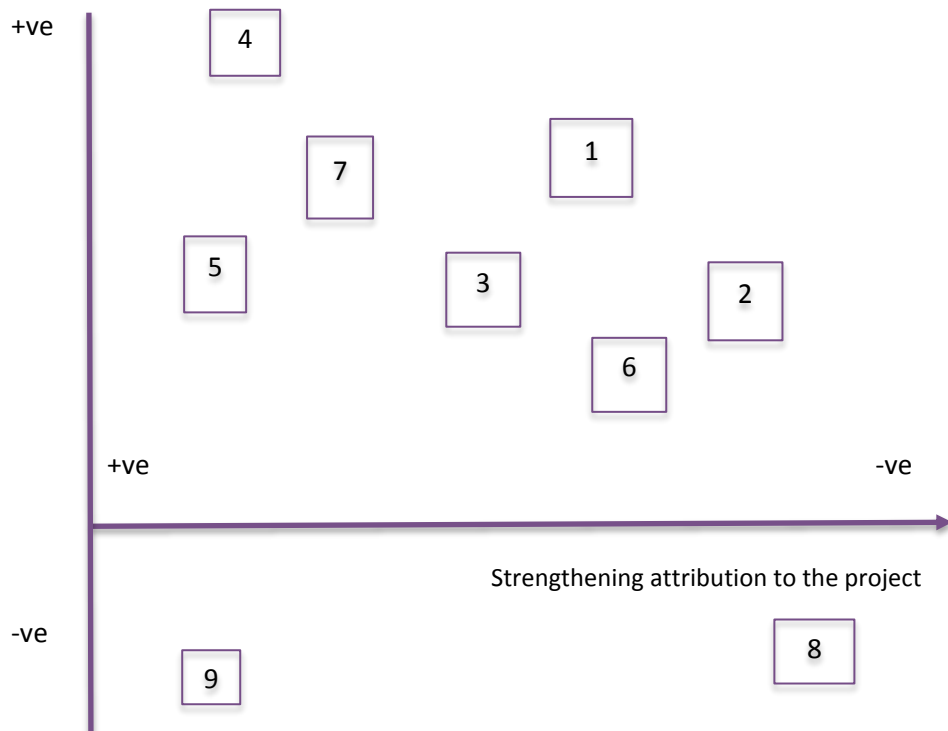
The group then comes together and each person reads out their story and sticks it onto the grid in the position they believe is appropriate. Depending on the level of trust and power hierarchies in the room, there can then be an open discussion where participants can be challenged to reconsider the location and move the story if they agree with the challenge.

The analysis of the stories can be done together with the group (depending on the purpose and who is in the room). Otherwise, once the exercise is over the facilitator numbers each story and draws an A4 replica of the grid showing the position of the numbered stories. The stories are then analysed to identify the areas of change identified and any emerging patterns e.g. the proportion of positive to negative stories; the characteristics of the respondents giving negative stories; the characteristics of those reporting stories strongly attributed to the project (are they mainly women or men, richer or poorer, those from certain disadvantaged groups, or is it certain types of interventions that evoke a strong attribution rating?)

If the tool is being used as part of an evaluation then the grid and stories can be reproduced in the Appendix to the report while the conclusions from the analysis can be presented in the main body of the report.

The grid can be used over the life of the project with the same respondents to enable the implementing team to track how and when changes are emerging in the beneficiary groups. The tool can also provide an early identification of examples of change, and some of these may lend themselves to further examination and writing up as case studies.

Example of an Impact Grid

+ve

```
        4

              7              1

      5              3              2

                        6


+ve                                                    -ve

                              ──────────────────►
                        Strengthening attribution to the project

-ve
                                                  8
      9
```

15 MEASURING CAPACITY CHANGE (OCATS)

An organisational assessment can be a very simple and informal exercise, perhaps involving a few straightforward questions or a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis. However, in some cases more formal tools are used to help make an organisational assessment.

Organisational assessment (**OA**) tools, often known as organisational capacity assessment tools (**OCATs**) are designed to assess capacity, and plan capacity development. Sometimes they are used to monitor and evaluate capacity development or capacity building. They are the only tool in widespread use designed specifically with capacity development in mind. These tools can be used in different ways:

a) To assess the capacity of an organisation to act as a partner or be a recipient of funds or support. Used in this way, an OA tool performs an audit function. In these cases the OA tool often focuses on areas of capacity that are of interest to the external agency, such as financial management or project cycle management.
b) To make a general organisational assessment. It helps an organisation identify its strengths and weaknesses, and usually leads to the development of an action plan to help meet its needs.
c) Organisational assessments are sometimes repeated at discrete intervals. This is partly designed to show changes in organisational capacity over a period of time. OA tools used in this way perform a monitoring and evaluation function.

There are numerous different types of OCAT tools available, designed for different purposes and situations. However, most follow a similar pattern:

STEP 1 – Breaking capacity into manageable areas

Capacity is divided into a number of discrete areas. These may include areas such as internal management, relational management, ability to carry out core functions such as to implement programmes in a gender and diversity sensitive manner, human resources, etc. The different areas are often further broken down into more detailed statements (sometimes called indicators) each addressing a different aspect of capacity. In some tools the areas, statements or indicators are pre-set. In others there is flexibility for different areas to be defined by participants.

STEP 2 – Developing a ranking or rating system

A simple rating or ranking system is developed to identify the capacity of an organisation against each of the different areas of indicators. A rating system usually involves a sliding scale such as a scale of 1 to 10, where '10' denotes the highest capacity and '1' the lowest. The more common alternative is to use a set of pre-defined ranks or grades such as 'this area of work needs radical improvement', 'this area of work needs some improvement' and 'this area of work needs no improvement'. Some tools include different pre-defined statements for ranking each area or indicator.

STEP 3 – Developing a process for ranking or rating capacity

There are many ways of doing this. For example, organisations can attempt to reach consensus or can rate or rank themselves using a show of hands or majority voting. Sometimes surveys are used. Where external stakeholders are involved, a key decision to make is whether the ranking or rating should be

done exclusively by the supported organisations (self-evaluation), or whether wider stakeholders should also have some input.

STEP 4 – Analysing the results and taking action

The value of many OA tools lies in the discussion and analysis itself, and they are considered worthwhile simply to help people critically analyse and reflect on internal capacity. In most cases the resulting analyses are also used for defined purposes. This might include developing an action plan to address weaknesses or build on strengths. In some cases an organisational assessment is repeated at regular intervals, and changes analysed to show what has changed, how and why.

Strengths and Weaknesses of OA tools for M&E

Strengths	Weaknesses
• OA tools can ensure that capacity development or capacity building is taken seriously, and is formally monitored and evaluated • They enable organisations to identify necessary changes to help achieve their mission • OA tools provide a rolling baseline so that progress over time can be assessed. • Results can sometimes be aggregated or summarized across different organisations, sectors or countries • OA tools focus on the outcomes of capacity building work, not just the activities carried out.	• It can be hard to show how improved capacity is attributable to any particular support provided. • An OA tools does not necessarily show how any improved capacity contributes towards improved performance. • Ranking or rating can be subjective, based on perceptions of different stakeholders. If there is no external input then results are open to accusations of bias. • Organisations often rate or rank themselves highly at first. Later on they might become more aware of their limitations in specific areas and might give lower scores. A lower score, therefore, does not always indicate a negative impact or failure of capacity building.

Adapted from: Praxis Paper 23: Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building: Is it really that difficult? INTRAC 2010
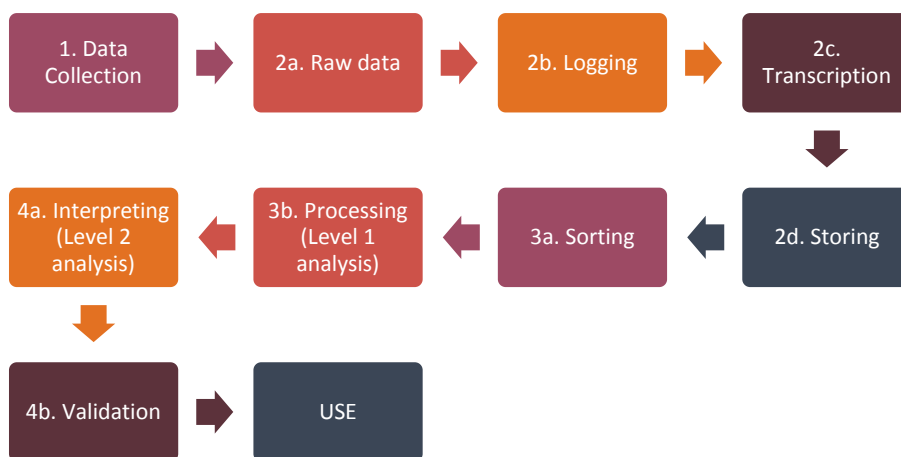
16 DATA ANALYSIS

**Evidence is not the same as data. 'Data' refers to the pieces of information you gather….
Your task is to turn some of these pieces of data into evidence'.**

(McNiff and Whitehead (2011)).

Once M&E data has been gathered, it then needs to be analysed and turned into evidence about progress and impact that can be reported, shared and used to learn and improve work. There is little point in collecting M&E data if it is not analysed and used.

A breakdown of the process of getting from data collection to the use of evidence is shown below. This attempts to demonstrate that good data analysis requires a methodical approach, with several important steps.

```
1. Data        →    2a. Raw data   →    2b. Logging   →    2c.
Collection                                                  Transcription
                                                               ↓
4a. Interpreting ←   3b. Processing ←    3a. Sorting   ←    2d. Storing
(Level 2             (Level 1
analysis)            analysis)
    ↓
4b. Validation   →   USE
```

The methods used for analysis need to reflect the nature of the data collected.

Managing and organising data

a) Creating a raw data bank: record all the different sources of data. This might include completed questionnaires, items of literature, notes from focus group discussions and interviews, media cuttings, observations from field work, notes from team meetings or meetings with stakeholders, and visuals.

b) Logging: catalogue and record each piece of information using a numbering and coding system. Use a table to keep a record of all surveys, interviews, meetings or focus groups. Make sure there is a record of when meetings or interviews took place, who was invited, who attended, who facilitated and who took notes. For documents, use a referencing system or electronic library to keep track of the sources, what they relate to, and where to find them. Any films or recordings should be downloaded and carefully catalogued including details such as respondent name(s), date, time and place.

c) Transcription and translation: all the rough notes from interviews, focus groups and fieldwork need to be typed up; and transcribed and translated if necessary. The value of writing up everything is that data are then easier to handle, understand, copy and store. However, transcription and translation is resource-intensive (time and cost). Note that when writing up focus groups, observations about who said what, and how people of different gender and identity groups behaved and interacted should be included.

d) Storing data: make sure there is a clear system for storing the data in paper or electronic formats, and that responsibility for the raw data is assigned. Raw data may be required for further analysis at a later date, or for verifying claims. Having a clear system is particularly important if the people who were responsible for collecting the data leave an organisation or change roles. Sensitive data, including personal information on interviewees, should be password-protected or encrypted. Make sure all electronic data is backed up.

Sorting and processing – or level 1 analysis

Data analysis: "a process of taking things apart and putting them back together again" (Laws 2003).

a) Sorting: first of all, get to know the data by reading (over and over again if necessary) and breaking it down into different components. There are different ways that data can be broken down:

- by type: quantitative (numerical information, responses to closed questions, pre-coded data), qualitative (words, statements, responses to open questions, narratives and stories from interviews), content (literature and other documents and texts)

- by theme or area of interest, for example around evaluation questions, key lines of enquiry or indicators

- by respondent groups

b) Processing the data (level 1 analysis)
Quantitative data: if a survey was conducted there will be quantitative data to analyse, statistical data to be generated. The analysis of quantitative data permits the following:

- To generate a broad picture around the research questions

- To establish some basic patterns using percentages, averages and measures of spread

- To spot trends and interesting points for deeper analysis

- To spot outliers or unexpected findings

- To draw some associations between different variables, e.g. X% of men of a certain age said Y about women participating in public life

- To create visual representations of the data in the form of charts, graphs and figures

In-depth statistical analysis requires statistical knowledge, skills, software, time and resources. However, basic statistical analysis can be carried out using fairly simple functions in excel or survey programmes.

Qualitative data: Qualitative data requires sense to be made of (often) a large volume of texts. These could be short responses to open questions in a survey, but each statement will be different because the respondent has used their own words. Or they might be transcripts from a two-hour focus group or interview. The analysis of qualitative data permits the following:

- To interpret the meanings of statements from respondents

- To draw out themes from multiple responses to open-ended questions

- To establish patterns across different types of texts

- To draw out statistical data from qualitative data, i.e. establish the percentage of people who mentioned a particular issue in response to an open-ended question

- To identify and explore single anecdotes that are worthy of further interrogation

- identify stories that can provide rich depth to your reports or other outputs

There are different approaches to analysing qualitative data. One approach is to 'code' the data to cluster responses and summarise findings. Codes are numbers, labels or keywords used to describe a particular theme or sub-theme that emerges from the text. Codes can be used to explore how many times particular issues come up, where and in what contexts. Statistical data can also be generated from coded data. An alternative approach is to maintain the integrity of the story emerging from qualitative data, using a descriptive narrative to summarise the story. Remember to quote any particularly interesting views word for word; and to report views that are very different or contradictory.

Interpreting the data – or second level analysis

Evidence is generated by interpreting the patterns and trends in the data. This is done by putting the different bits of data back together again in order to make and substantiate claims. Essentially this step is about working out what it all means.

Explaining patterns: start by identifying patterns, associations and relationships between different clusters of data. What is the *range* of responses to key questions, e.g. how many people agreed or disagreed? What were the *typical* responses, i.e. those that came up most frequently? How strongly did respondents feel about the topic? Is there anything surprising or unexpected that challenges assumptions? What are the underlying, contextual explanations for the patterns? Can any cause and effect be identified? This can be approached from two different directions:

- Starting with the key lines of enquiry/questions/indicators: what is the relevant question or indicator that these data relate to? What is the answer that they provide? Do the data confirm expectations or are they saying something completely different?

- Starting with the data: What do the data seem to be saying, and does that answer any of the questions? This approach is less structured and allows the data to tell the story, which may be a different story to the one anticipated.

Triangulation: this involves putting together different pieces of evidence to justify claims about an issue or question, using different sources to show similar ideas, concerns and opinions. Pieces of data which contradict other pieces need to be handled with care. This might involve deeper exploration to tease out the contradictions, or it may just require a clear note/explanation in the report for future reference and study.

Preliminary findings: summarise the key ideas and preliminary conclusions that emerged from the process of analysis and interpretation of the data. Select stories, quotes and statistics that

underpin the claims. When using quotes, to the extent possible leave quotations in the words of the respondents, including at least a minimal identifier with the quote (e.g. women's group, southern district). And remember to provide references that can be traced back to the raw data source if necessary.

A lot of time can be spent playing around with data. At some point the analyst needs to stop and move on. This may be when no new patterns or links emerge; or when the level of information is good enough for the purposes of the exercise.

Validation – or testing knowledge

This is a reflection step. It is a moment for stepping back and challenging the evidence drawn out of the data, the assumptions being made and the learning. It is also an opportunity to share preliminary findings and reflections with others and to get their feedback, as well as to draw out lessons for future reference.

Internal validation: spaces should be created for reflection amongst those collecting and analysing the data. It is particularly important to reflect on the quality of the data, including issues such as: researcher influence over the process; how data are being interpreting; contextual factors that might have affected the data but have not been taken into account; ensuring that generalisations are not being made that are not justified; and ensuring that alternative explanations are considered for the findings.

Thinking through the quality of the evidence is a part of preparing to write up the findings, and a way of preparing to respond to any criticisms of the data and claims.

The most straightforward way to deal with any anomalies in the data or evidence is to provide a very clear explanation of the methods used, the choices made, and how those choices may have affected the results. However, the raw data may need to be revisited or additional data may need to be collected to fill in gaps. In some instances, the data may just not be useable.

External validation: the main challenges and criticisms of data and evidence are that they are not considered to be independent, credible, valid or objective. This is where keeping a very clear record of choices and actions throughout the M&E process or exercise becomes extremely important, providing a justification of what was done and how. It is therefore also good practice to build in an external validation process to:

- Share initial findings, key learning and ideas for action with other key stakeholders and get their feedback. This is an opportunity to check the accuracy of the findings, to test them and to check how they are being portrayed. This process is also about ensuring that stakeholders are involved in the analysis and can share in the learning process. This can be done through validation meetings or workshops, and through reporting initial findings in written forms.

- Take on board comments and ideas. Consider how to deal with any criticisms about the methods, problems with the findings, or gaps in the data.

- Document this process.

17 EVALUATION TYPES AND APPROACHES

There are many types of evaluations including: Process; Formative; Summative; Developmental; Real-time; Utilisation Focussed; Impact etc etc. There is information available online about all of these – a useful website for this is Better Evaluation http://www.betterevaluation.org/

The UK Evaluation Society (UKES) has also developed useful guidelines for good practice in evaluation, including for evaluators, commissioners, self-evaluation and evaluation participants, available at: https://www.evaluation.org.uk/index.php/about-us/publications/46-ukes-guidelines-

INTRAC's Nigel Simister has developed several short papers on different aspects of Evaluations, as part of developing a new M&E resource called the 'M&E Universe'. These are currently available from INTRAC on request.

Utilisation focused evaluation

Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE), developed by Michael Quinn Patton, is based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users. Therefore evaluations should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance.

UFE has two essential elements:

- First, the primary intended users of the evaluation must be clearly identified and personally engaged at the beginning of the evaluation process to ensure that their primary intended uses can be identified.
- Second, evaluators must ensure that these intended uses of the evaluation by the primary intended users guide all other decisions made about the evaluation process.

Rather than a focus on general and abstract users and uses, UFE is focused on real and specific users and uses. The evaluator's job is not to make decisions independently of the intended users, but to facilitate decision making amongst the people who will use the findings of the evaluation.

Patton argues that research on evaluation demonstrates that: "Intended users are more likely to use evaluations if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings and that they are more likely to understand and feel ownership if they've been actively involved. By actively involving primary intended users, the evaluator is preparing the groundwork for use." (Patton, 2008, Chapter 3[2])

UFE can be used for different types of evaluation (formative, summative, process, impact) and in a variety of ways depending on the context and the needs of the situation. Patton's original framework consisted of a 5 step process which has been further elaborated in a 12 step (see below) and 17 step process[3].

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[2] Michael Quinn Patton, M. Q (2008) Utilization-Focused Evaluation, Fourth Edition, Saint Paul, MN. Sage Publishing.
[3] http://betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation

12 Steps in Utilisation Focussed Evaluation:

Source: *Ricardo Ramírez and Dal Brodhead (2013). Utilization focused evaluation: a primer for evaluators/ Ricardo Ramirez and Dal Brodhead; with contributions from Chelladurai Solomon ..[et al]. PDF versions of this publication are available for free downloads in three languages (English, French and Spanish) at:*

https://evaluationinpractice.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/ufeenglishprimer.pdf
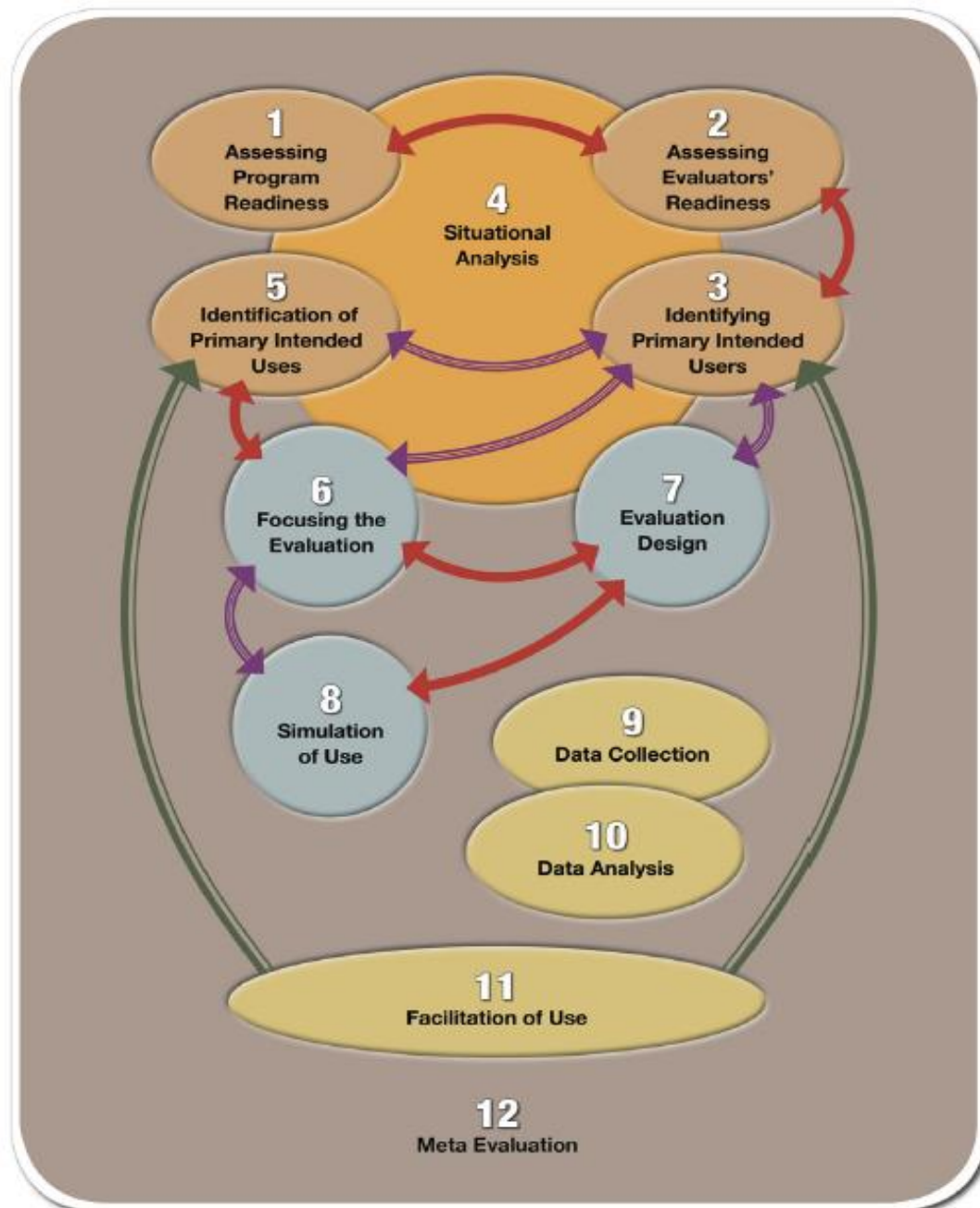
18 DESIGNING AN EVALUATION - EXERCISE

Background to the project

An international NGO secured funding under DfID's Girls Education Challenge Fund for a three year, £12 million project to support girls' education in an African country. The project goal was to support marginalised girls at-risk of dropping out of basic education, to access education and stay in school. The project aimed to reduce the barriers to girls' education and improve girls' access, retention and success in school. It has been operating in 3 Provinces and 8 Districts targeting 467 schools and a total of 43,500 girls aged 10-18 through three strategic areas of intervention:

- Enhancing household economic capacity to support girls in school,
- Transforming attitudes towards girls' education and strengthening family, community and schools' support systems for girls to stay in school,
- Increasing girls' confidence, self-esteem and capacity to choose to stay in school, and, empowering them to perform better in schools.

Recognising that girls (and boys) with disabilities in rural areas face even greater disadvantages, disability was to be mainstreamed through the project and the project actively sought to reach children with disabilities.

TASK: Designing an evaluation approach

Please discuss how you would approach evaluating this project?

- How would you assess change and the project's contribution over the project timeframe?
- What key indicators would you use to evaluate the success of this project?
- Who/ What would be your sources of information?
- What data collection methodologies would you use?
- What challenges could you foresee with the evaluation and how would you mitigate these?

19 MANAGING AN EVALUATION – ZRD CASE STUDY

The expatriate programme director of an African NGO, ZRD, became increasingly aware that the organisation's supporters felt the need for a review of the work to date. However, pressure from the staff made the director agree that such an evaluation should be very "participative". As the director also wants to impress the donors, he asks them whether they would like to assist in the evaluation.

Meanwhile the largest donor agency, FINAG, was already considering its own evaluation: in part because there have been some concerns about the programme such as the high recurrent costs; the apparent lack of change in the agency's strategies for many years; and the tendency to rely heavily upon technical inputs provided by expatriate staff in the fields of health and agriculture. Also FINAG was starting to feel that perhaps it had been funding this programme for quite a long time and some change was needed.

FINAG readily agreed to pay for the evaluation when asked by ZRD and instructed its evaluation office to put together a team of evaluators and to draw up a TOR. Someone from the FINAG evaluation office in Helsinki, Ingrid, was travelling in Central Africa and so visited the agency and was able to discuss with ZRD their view of the evaluation. On returning to her own HQ in Finland, Ingrid became aware of some of the major problems FINAG perceived in ZRD. She drew up a terms of reference which sought to review the whole programme of ZRD and sent it to the desk officer and to the country office for comment.

Meanwhile it became clear that recruiting a team was not going to be easy. The donor had a policy that the lead member should be an outsider, but that a member of the NGO staff should also be on the team. The FINAG project director also suggested that Ingrid should be part of the team. A member of staff was nominated by ZRD who also suggested another person from Senegal. After some time a Finish university professor, Lars Pedersen, (whose his main academic interests was the influence of Paulo Freire in Africa), was found who was willing to be team leader; who spoke French; and had worked in Senegal some years before.

Due to delays in receiving comments on the TOR from ZRD, the donor decided to go ahead with the draft TOR, with the only changes suggested by the desk officer (who wanted to ensure that the evaluation questioned why the agency was not working in Kinshasa and why they were not working with women's groups).

Ingrid and Lars, the expatriate members of the evaluation team then met for a few days in FINAG's office and discussed the programme with several members of staff. The programme director made it clear that he felt that they should be withdrawing from the country, and the desk officer who felt that the programme needed to change radically to take into account concerns over gender and urban work.

The expatriate team arrived in the country to find that ZRD had organised a staff meeting to discuss the TOR. However, flights were already booked by the team to visit one of the sub-projects in Kanaga and these couldn't be cancelled, so instead there was a briefing meeting with the director who talked about the programme. Due to logistical problems the field visits were difficult and the team spent several unproductive days travelling overland, getting bogged down in the mud, missing key contacts and so forth. The local ZRD staff were upset that the Senegalese evaluator complained constantly about these logistical problems. Unfortunately the evaluation

team member chosen by ZRD missed some of the field trips because his father-in-law died; later he failed to meet up with the rest of the team due to local flights being cancelled.

A planned "feedback" meeting of all the ZRD staff and the full evaluation team was cancelled due to problems agreeing a date and time. The evaluation team instead managed to draft an initial report during a short time in the capital city. This report strongly criticised the theoretical underpinnings of the agency for its lack of participation by clients; its misunderstanding of social development and failure to develop community based organisations; it also criticised the gender policy of ZRD as being non-existent. This draft was then left in Kinshasa with the donor's evaluation officer to present to a staff meeting after the departure of the rest of the team.

The meeting went very badly as the staff felt that they had not been understood, that they had not been allowed to participate in the evaluation. The Director strongly resented the implication that he and his senior advisers didn't understand the basic concepts of social development, and argued that they knew what was possible in terms of women's work and that the evaluator was trying to impose foreign feminism onto them. A letter was sent to FINAG complaining about the evaluation team because the evaluation was not participative; the evaluation team was insensitive to local conditions; the Senegalese was obviously unused to the problems of rural field work; and the team leader was arrogant, academic and aggressive.

Back in Helsinki some staff accepted the report as confirming their worst fears about the programme. However, others including two people who had worked in the country (one for ZRD itself) defended the agency and attacked the evaluation team leader and the evaluation officer for their lack of understanding and top down approach.

Questions

1) What went wrong? What should have been done before, during and after the evaluation to avoid these problems?

2) Is there anything which could be done now to salvage the situation?

20 WRITING A GOOD TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

For most people the TOR is the single most important evaluation document; it brings together the different aspects of the negotiation, context, objectives and logistics of an evaluation. The following check-list highlights some of our experiences of TORs.

Being honest about the purpose

- Is there scope for questioning or is this a managerial review which accepts certain existing limitations (e.g. The project must continue regardless, senior management can do no wrong, the government cannot be questioned …)?

- Is this a donor driven review/ a joint exercise/ or partner driven etc.? Be honest!

Writing the TOR:

- Who should be involved will depend in part on the objectives,
- An imposed TOR will be more likely to cause tension.
- Ideally get the views of those affected or expected to "participate" of the TOR or provide them with the opportunity to contribute to the TOR

Contents of the TOR:

- The purpose/ objectives of the evaluation The WHY.
- The ownership of the process: the WHO
- The use of the evaluation.
- Place the evaluation in a context:
- Operationalise the evaluation objectives into specific questions and where possible prioritise them. The WHAT.
- Define areas of special concern, eg gender and diversity awareness.
- Make it clear how the team is to be composed, how it is structured (who is the leader and has the last say in case of disagreement).
- Provide an outline person specification for the team / evaluator in order to assist in deciding the sort of person / people you require and there specific skills / qualifications. Ensure the entire team is gender and diversity sensitive, and consider what type of evaluators will be best placed to communicate effectively with the different gender and diversity groups affected by the project.
- Set a realistic time frame.
- Agree the budget.
- Outline the reporting requirements (length etc.)
- Specify whether any follow up is required on behalf of the team (e.g. presentation of the report, revisiting the site later etc).

Methodology:

- Is it important to specify the methodology to be used?

- Is the type of evaluation clear enough to indicate the appropriate methodology :

- Can you afford the "best" method, or are you obliged to compromise. "Don't expect Rolls Royce evaluation on a bicycle budget".

21 REPORTING CHANGE

When producing reports for an external audience (i.e. for people who are not working within your project or programme, and perhaps not even within your own country), you need to provide enough information for other people to be able to make a considered opinion about the changes resulting from your work, and about any lessons learned. Some of the areas that should be considered when reporting:

- **Has there been change?** Has anything changed since the project started? Are the changes positive or negative? Are there changes that were expected but have not happened? Are there any unexpected changes?

- **How significant was the change?** Some changes are relatively minor, whilst others can be life-changing. Explain the significance of the change within your report.

- **How many people were affected by the change?** Sometimes changes are reported which have affected many people. At other times, you might be reporting a case study based on just one or two people. It is useful to explain how many people you think might have been affected by the change, and how.

- **Which target groups were affected by the change?** Change does not normally happen equally across all stakeholders. Some may benefit more than others. A report should be clear about which particular target groups were involved in the change.

- **What was the impact on sub-categories or groups?** *A* report should emphasise any differences between different target groups, if known. For example, some changes might affect boys more than girls, or affect people with disabilities only. Simply reporting on a general change across a large number of different groups might hide significant differences.

- **Was the change intended or not?** This can be an extremely valuable source of learning. Sometimes the most profound changes are those that were unplanned. Describing changes of this kind can provide valuable lessons to feed back into planning cycles.

- **Is the change likely to be sustainable?** Some changes might be long-lasting while others might be relatively short-lived. It can be useful to report how sustainable any change is likely to be and the risks or assumptions that might influence this.

- **What made the change happen?** What is your assessment of how the change came about? What were the key processes leading to it? This is important to report so that others can learn e.g. how to replicate the work (or avoid mistakes in the case of negative changes). Reporting on the key processes that led to a change also helps to substantiate any claim that the change was as a result of the project.

- **How will the change result in positive changes in people's lives?** Sometimes the implication of change is unclear to outsiders. For example, you might report that villagers have become more active in lobbying local government. Within your project the implications may be clear. But for an outsider you might need to spell out why you consider this an important change, and what you hope the ultimate long-term result (or impact) will be.

- **How do changes compare to baseline (if any)?** If you report that 75% of people in a location now have access to better health care, this could be considered as an extremely important change. On the other hand, the situation might be worse than last year! Wherever possible, a report describing change should detail the original situation so that people can understand how large or important the changes are. This applies to both quantitative and qualitative changes.

- **How do changes compare to what was hoped for, or considered realistic?** Equally, if you report that 15 health committees have now been formed in an area, the implication is that this is a positive change. However, if you planned to facilitate 100 such groups, this casts a different light on the information. It is therefore often useful to describe what was originally planned, so that people reading your report can see immediately the scale of any change relative to your expectations.

- **What evidence do you have for your change?** This is arguably the most important aspect to report when describing any change or changes. There is a world of difference between describing the findings of a professionally-conducted, large-scale research study, and reporting findings based on a conversation with a couple of villagers. The description of evidence does not have to be substantial. It is enough to make an introductory statement such as *"the findings of focus-group studies in three villages suggested that … "* or *"anecdotal evidence suggests that … "* or *"independent research by government bodies has found that …"*. This will allow the reader to make up his/her own mind about the value of your evidence.

- **There is no reason at all why anecdotal evidence of change should not be described in a report.** Provided it is clear that the change reported is not based on rigorous data collection and analysis methodologies, impressions of change can still be useful. The danger comes when anecdotal evidence is reported as if it were a firm conclusion based on rigorous evidence, instead of a tentative conclusion which needs to be further investigated if it is to be properly validated.

- **With what degree of confidence can you state the change?** M&E systems often encourage people to be very definite in their opinions. For example, a logical framework encourages people to say whether a change has happened or not. However, in many cases, you may have some evidence that a change has occurred, but you may not be sure. In other cases, you might be sure that change has occurred, but not sure how far your project contributed towards it. In these cases, it is usually better to state the change anyway, and to add some qualifying statements that make it clear how confident you are that change has occurred. If you think there are other possible explanations for why change has happened, it is often useful to state this as well. Again, anyone reading your report can make up his/her own mind provided they have the necessary information on which to base an opinion.

22 CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING QUALITY OF AN EVALUATION REPORT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA, INDICATORS AND COMPONENTS		
1	**VALIDITY (*does the evaluation measure what it was meant to measure?*)**	score
1.1	**Problem definition**	
1.1.1	Clarity with which problem is defined and further developed in evaluation questions *[The evaluation questions arise from the problem definition]*	
1.1.2	Definition of evaluation criteria *[A clear and comprehensive description of the evaluation criteria – e.g. effectiveness – applied in evaluating the activity)*	
1.2	**Subject evaluated**	
1.2.1	Definition, functionality, and parameters of the subject evaluated *[A detailed description of the component activities evaluated (type, target group, location, period, organisation, financial value, etc.) – the 'evaluation population')]*	
1.2.2	The place of the subject evaluated in its policy and institutional context *[An account of relevant policy contexts and principles and of the institutional environment in which the subject evaluated operates]*	
1.3	**Policy theory (Theory of Change/ Logic model)**	
1.3.1	Account or reconstruction of intervention logic and result levels *[An account of the theory behind the policy, including the assumptions about causal and final relationships underpinning the activities evaluated, and the assumptions about the input/output/outcome hierarchy]*	
1.3.2	Operationalisation of results measurement via indicators *[The extent to which the indicators defined at the various results levels can be regarded as specific, measurable, and time-bound]*	
1.4	**Analysis**	
1.4.1	Information sources, information collection, and information processing *[The care with which the information sources were selected, and the precision and transparency with which the information was processed and analysed]*	
1.4.2	Underpinning of conclusions by results *[The extent to which the conclusions arose from the evaluation results - findings]*	
2	**Reliability (how reliable are the evaluation results?)**	score
2.1	**Evaluation methods**	
2.1.1	Specification of and justification for evaluation methods applied [A precise description of and justification for the evaluation methods and techniques]	
2.1.2	Verification of information / triangulation [The extent to which information was checked, various sources used, and various methods applied to collect information about the same features and phenomena]	

2.2	**Scope**	
2.2.1	Representativeness of sample or case study selection [The extent to which the conclusions drawn from the sample evaluated or case study conducted apply to the entire 'evaluation population']	
2.2.2	Limitations of the evaluation [An explanation of shortcomings and limitations regarding the extent to which the results and conclusions can be generalised]	
2.3	**Independence**	
2.3.1	Of the source material (with regard to interested parties) [The extent to which the selection of information sources and their content – especially documentation and respondents – were independent of other parties (stakeholders) with an interest in the evaluation]	
2.3.2	Of the evaluators (with regard to interested parties) [The extent to which the evaluators operated and reported independently from parties (stakeholders) with an interest in the evaluation:]	
2.4	**Evaluation procedure and quality control**	
2.4.1	Justification for evaluation procedure [Description of the evaluation procedure, including any modifications to the original evaluation plan]	
2.4.2	Quality control via internal or external supervision [Review of the design and/or conduct of the evaluation by a guidance or supervisory body within or external to the entity/entities which commissioned the evaluation]	

3	**USABILITY (*of the evaluation results*)**	score
3.1	**Presentation**	
3.1.1	Clarity of the evaluation's objective(s) *[The clarity with which the evaluators specified the objective(s) for which their results are to be used]*	
3.1.2	Accessibility of the evaluation results *[The clarity and completeness with which the evaluation report and its summary reflect the essence of the evaluation, especially its main results]*	
3.2	**Connections (logic)**	
3.2.1	Evaluation questions answered by conclusions *[The completeness with which all the evaluation questions were answered by the conclusions]*	
3.2.2	Feasibility of lessons or recommendations *[The feasibility of the recommendations presented and the extent to which they lie within the remit of those responsible to act, especially the entity that commissioned the evaluation]*	

Source

This checklist is based on the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards. It is adapted from the checklist used by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
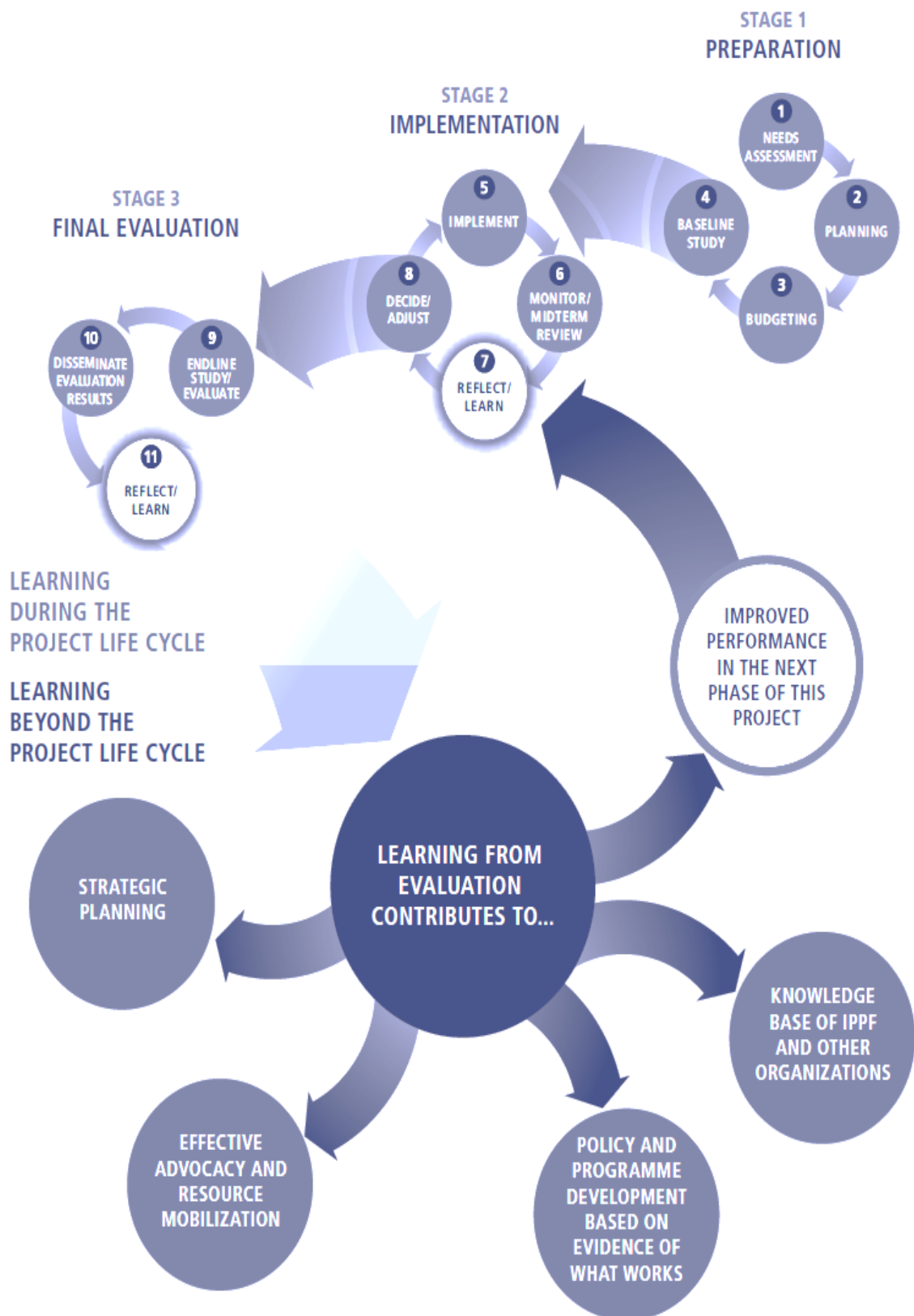
23 REPORTING AND USING RESULTS OF EVALUATIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Target Audience	What they need to know	How best to present this to them	What you hope they will do with it
Donors	*Depends on donor but usually:* • How money was spent • Outputs-outcomes-impact • To what extent the programme is sustainable • Lessons learned and how they will be applied • Programme performance • Transparency	• Full reports • Summary reports in brief accessible format • Case studies and visuals • Visits to head office to present more visually • Clear audits	• Report to tax payers • Focus on positives and lessons learned • Learn and adapt in terms of what they require in terms of planning and reporting • Shift focus from demanding reports on outputs/outcomes to impact • Improve collaboration with organisations • Finance new phase • Push for quality impact assessment in future
Programme Staff	• Key findings • Exec Summary • Examples of successes and failures • Summary of lessons learned and recommendations • Practical examples to demonstrate how findings could be applied to other contexts	*Focus is on practical application* • Short reports which offer the "need to know" in accessible format • Clear signpost for accessing full report • One day workshop with all programme staff which focuses on taking the learning into future plans • Face to face meetings with key people who might apply learning • Visuals available on intranet	• Learn • Improve what they are doing • Develop a plan of action for responding to learning and recommendations (with help and support from M&E team)

Fundraising and Communication	• Accomplishments • Evidence of accountability • Evidence of cost effectiveness • Ways in which current efforts could be scaled up • Gaps that could/need to be filled for more effective results in future rounds • New ways of working that they can demonstrate	• Case studies + stories of change • Updates on policy changes etc. • Photo gallery • Short summaries which are tailored to their specific needs	• Develop new proposals • Encourage other donors internationally, nationally and locally • Sharing best practice in a variety of media • Advocate for an increased budget for impact assessment • Post successes on Youtube, Facebook and other on line sharing media
Partners	• Enough information to report to their donors and communities • Results • Value for money • Learning and recommendations	• Full report + • Short reports which offer the "need to know" in accessible format • Workshop with which focuses on taking the learning into future plans • Face to face meetings with key people who might apply learning	• Adapt what they are doing • Apply lessons in future planning and funding applications • Find more effective ways of working with the community
Communities	• Findings - significant changes positive, negative and unexpected • To what extent the programme/project was considered successful • Appreciate their contributions • Verify and/or revise findings	• Discussion groups • Meetings • Radio for wider dissemination • Scenario planning workshops	• Take greater ownership of project • Use results as a springboard to encourage more positive changes

24 INTEGRATING THE 'L' IN MEL

Example from Signpost International of integrating learning and M&E

STAGE 1
PREPARATION

STAGE 2
IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE 3
FINAL EVALUATION

1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT
2 PLANNING
3 BUDGETING
4 BASELINE STUDY
5 IMPLEMENT
6 MONITOR/ MIDTERM REVIEW
7 REFLECT/ LEARN
8 DECIDE/ ADJUST
9 ENDLINE STUDY/ EVALUATE
10 DISSEMINATE EVALUATION RESULTS
11 REFLECT/ LEARN

LEARNING DURING THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

LEARNING BEYOND THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

IMPROVED PERFORMANCE IN THE NEXT PHASE OF THIS PROJECT

LEARNING FROM EVALUATION CONTRIBUTES TO...

STRATEGIC PLANNING

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

POLICY AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT BASED ON EVIDENCE OF WHAT WORKS

KNOWLEDGE BASE OF IPPF AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

25 SELECTED INTRAC M&E-RELATED RESOURCES

Summarising portfolio change: results frameworks at organisational level, Nigel Simister, Jan 2016
https://www.intrac.org/resources/paper-10-summarising-portfolio-change-results-frameworks-organisational-level/

Post-closure evaluation: an indulgence or a valuable exercise? ONTRAC 61, January 2016
https://www.intrac.org/resources/ontrac-post-closure-evaluation-an-indulgence-or-a-valuable-exercise/

Monitoring and Evaluation Planning Series – June to September 2015. Includes 16 short papers on planning for M&E
https://www.intrac.org/resources/monitoring-evaluation-special-series/

Praxis Paper 30 'Monitoring and Evaluating Training: Challenges, opportunities and recommendations', Paula Haddock, September 2015
https://www.intrac.org/resources/praxis-paper-30-monitoring-evaluating-training-challenges-opportunities-recommendations/

More of an art than a science: Challenges and solutions in monitoring and evaluating advocacy
By Sarah Rose, February 2014
https://www.intrac.org/resources/art-science-challenges-solutions-monitoring-evaluating-advocacy/

ONTRAC 53: Transparent, accountable, legitimate, credible: NGO responses to scrutiny
By Rachel Hayman, Celestine Krosschell, Sean Conlin, Angela Crack, and Erla Thrandardottir, January 2013
http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/758/ONTRAC-53-Transparent-accountable-legitimate-credible-NGO-responses-to-scrutiny.pdf

ONTRAC 51: Theory of Change - what's it all about? By Maureen O'Flynn, James Treasure-Evans, Stephen Fraser, Duncan Green, Isabel Vogel, May 2012
https://www.intrac.org/resources/ontrac-51-theory-change-whats/

INTRAC Briefing Paper 32 'Where, how and why are Action Research approaches used by international development non-governmental organisations?'
By Rowan Popplewell and Rachel Hayman, September 2012
https://www.intrac.org/resources/briefing-paper-32-action-research-approaches-used-international-development-non-governmental-organisations/

Praxis Paper 26 'Dealing with complexity through Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation (PME)'
By Jan Van Ongevalle, Anneke Maarse, Cristien Temmink, Eugenia Boutylkova and Huib Huyse, February 2012
https://www.intrac.org/resources/praxis-paper-26-dealing-complexity-planning-monitoring-evaluation-pme/

Impact Assessment: Understanding and assessing our contributions to change
By Maureen O'Flynn, November 2010
https://www.intrac.org/resources/paper-7-impact-assessment-understanding-assessing-contributions-change/

Monitoring and Evaluation of Learning Networks, By Rick James, April 2010
https://www.intrac.org/resources/monitoring-evaluating-learning-networks/

Praxis Paper 23 'Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building: Is it really that difficult?'
By Nigel Simister with Rachel Smith, February 2010
https://www.intrac.org/resources/praxis-paper-23-monitoring-evaluating-capacity-building-really-difficult/

Developing M&E Systems for Complex Organisations: A Methodology, Nigel Simister, Nov 2009
https://www.intrac.org/resources/developing-systems-complex-organisations-methodology/

26 USEFUL M&E-RELATED WEBSITES

ALNAP: Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
www.alnap.org

Better Evaluation: http://betterevaluation.org/

BOND: Network of UK based voluntary organisations working in international development and development education. Effectiveness and transparency | Bond

UK Evaluation Society https://www.evaluation.org.uk/

IDS: Institute of Development Studies, Sussex - Leading centre for research and teaching on International Development   www.ids.ac.uk

Participatory Methods website, includes numerous practical guidance and resources on participatory approaches to M&E   http://www.participatorymethods.org/

Centre for Development Impact website, joint initiative between IDS, ITAD and University of East Anglia (UEA) http://www.ids.ac.uk/cdi

Monitoring and Evaluation News: Information about developments in M&E methods relevant to development projects and programmes Monitoring and Evaluation NEWS

ODI: Overseas Development Institute http://www.odi.org and ODI Humanitarian Practice Network http://odihpn.org/

Pelican Initiative: Platform for Evidence-based Learning & Communication for Social Change
https://dgroups.org/groups/pelican

3ie: 3ieimpact-3ie:International Initiative for Impact Evaluation | Evaluating Impact, Informing Policy, Improving Lives