



This newsletter is sent to you by **Insideout**, as part of our commitment to building greater understanding of monitoring and evaluation practice. We hope that the information will be helpful to you in the work that you do.

GREETINGS FROM INSIDEOUT!

In this issue we will be dealing with some frequently asked questions regarding monitoring and evaluation:

- What is the difference between monitoring and evaluation?
- What are the different approaches to monitoring?
- How can monitoring be of use to me in my work?
- What is the difference between a baseline study and a needs assessment?

ISSUE #7: HOW TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE ADVOCACY EFFORTS

What is the difference between monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring answers the question: “What is happening (or not happening) in your projects/programmes?”

Evaluation answers the question: “Why something is (or is not) happening in your project.”

In other words, monitoring is about tracking your progress, while evaluation involves making judgements about the value of a programme and/or determining the reasons for success or failure.

The key differences between the two terms are summarised in the following table:

Item	Monitoring	Evaluation
Frequency	Ongoing	Periodic
Main action	Keeping track/Oversight	Assessment
Basic purpose	Improving efficiency Adjusting work plan	Improving effectiveness, impact, future programming
Focuses on	Inputs/outputs, process outcomes, work plans	Effectiveness, relevance, impact, cost-effectiveness
Conducted by	Usually internal function	Can be internal or external functions

For a more detailed discussion of the difference between these terms please go to: www.bond.org.uk/pubs/guidance/4monitorandevaluate.pdf

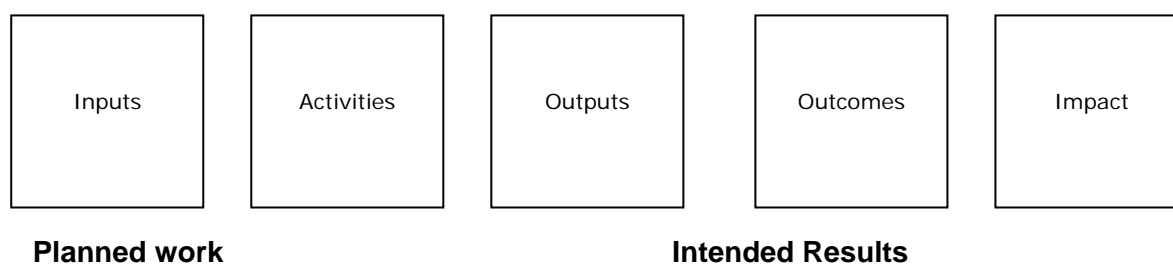
You can also download a comprehensive glossary of M&E terms at the following website: www.oecd.org/findDocument/0,2350,en_2649_34435_1_119678_1_1_1,00.html

What are the different approaches to monitoring?

There are two major models in use: the Logical Framework (log frame) approach and the Results Based Monitoring (RBM) approach. A third approach or model is the Most Significant Change Technique (MSC).

Both the log frame and RBM are models for monitoring as well as project design. They are also both logical models in that they emphasise the logical linkages between various aspects of a project/programme design.

The diagram below depicts an example of **basic logic model**:



The **log frame approach** focuses on the goals, purposes/objectives, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts of a project and requires information on indicators and means of verification. It is essentially a way of structuring the main elements in a project, highlighting logical linkages between intended inputs, planned activities and expected results.

For more information on **log frames** the resource "DFID Tools for Development – Log Frame" can be accessed at the link below. It provides a basic introduction to Logical Frameworks. This resource is most appropriate for those who are new to log frames and looking for a brief introduction.

www.unssc.org/web1/Is/downloads/toolsfordevelopment%20dfid.pdf

The **results based monitoring framework** is very similar to the log frame, and may use similar terminology but is more focused on the results of the project in terms of the cause-effect relationships between levels of results (outputs, outcomes and impact). RBM also looks at the logical linkages between activities and results but is more focused on expected results. Part of the process of RBM entails analysing the problem(s) the project or programme is trying to address, thereby locating the project or programme within the larger plans of the organisation and in relation to other programmes. In this way it is suited to strategic planning but can also be used for project-level design. www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/proj.doc

For information on RBM "Knowing the What and the How: RBM in UNDP, a Technical Note" describes results based management within the UNDP context (but useful for non-UNDP projects as well). This guide provides a good explanation of inputs, outcomes, outputs and impact. It also discusses the impact of focusing on results in project management and indicator development. It is best for intermediate-level practitioners. www.undp.org/eo/documents/methodology/rbm/RBM-technical-note.doc

Most significant change: Monitoring without indicators

This approach differs from the two models described above in that it does not focus on the expected results, or on having a set of indicators. Most Significant Change (MSC) is a participatory monitoring system that can deal with the unexpected. It draws meaning from actual events, rather than being based on indicators. The method involves systematically collecting stories which are then analysed, discussed and verified. The stories capture changes in the lives of beneficiaries, their colleagues and in the character of their participation. The method also helps to identify why change happens. The following website provides a brief overview of the Most Significant Change Technique www.healthcomms.org/comms/eval/le02.html

A full guide on Most Significant Change can be accessed at: www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf

How can monitoring be of use to me in my work?

Monitoring is a management tool that provides you with timely information concerning the impact of a project. It provides the information that is needed to make decisions and to ensure that resources are used effectively. It essentially enables you to identify what is working well and what isn't early on so that you can replicate successful actions and seek solutions for difficulties before it's too late. In this sense it is an early warning system. Monitoring information is therefore key to making informed decisions and to managing your project.

There are many reasons for carrying out monitoring. These include:

1. It provides project management, staff and other stakeholders with information on whether progress is being made towards achieving project objectives. In this regard, monitoring represents a continuous assessment of project implementation in relation to project plans, resources, infrastructure, and use of services by project beneficiaries.
2. It provides regular feedback to enhance the ongoing learning experience and to improve the planning process and effectiveness of interventions.
3. It increases project accountability with donors and other stakeholders.

4. It enables managers and staff to identify and reinforce initial positive project results, strengths and successes. Equally, monitoring alerts managers to actual and potential project weaknesses, problems and shortcomings before it is too late. This provides managers with the opportunity to make timely adjustments and corrective actions to improve the programme/project design, work plan and implementation strategies.
5. Monitoring assists project management to check whether the project continues to be relevant to the target group and/or geographical area, and whether project assumptions are still valid.
www.passia.org/seminars/2002/ME/Chapter1.htm

But...Monitoring can be overwhelming you might say!

It need not be overwhelming. Remember - you should not be spending the bulk of your time or resources on monitoring. Monitoring should generate the minimum amount of data that you need to ensure that you are managing your project effectively.



Imagine your project as a bicycle. In order to move forward, change direction and ultimately reach your destination you need to rely on the cogs, which are in fact very small in relation to the bicycle but essential to its operation. In the same way, you need to rely on monitoring to inform you when to change direction, or to use the brakes and stop and reflect, and to help you reach your end goals. But the time and resources spent on monitoring should be small in comparison to what you spend on implementation!

What is the difference between a baseline study and a needs assessment?

The starting point...point of comparison...status quo...what the situation is now!

Baseline information

Baseline information usually consists of facts and figures collected at the initial stages of a project that provides a basis for measuring progress in achieving project results. It is a study that collects information on the indicators for your output, outcomes and impact results that you have developed for your programme.

In other words, a baseline study simply defines the 'pre-operation exposure' condition for the set of indicators that will be used to assess achievement of the outcomes and impact expressed in the programme's logical framework.

The following link provides details on questions such as "What is baseline?" and "When to do a baseline study?"

http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ko/mekb_module_10.pdf

What does the community need vs. what is provided

Needs assessment

Essentially a needs assessment identifies the gap between what the community needs are and what is currently being provided. This allows for clearer strategising and allocation of resources. It would answer questions such as:

- Are there other organisations in the community providing similar services to the ones you are providing?
- What types of services are needed and at what capacity?

A needs assessment is different to a baseline study in that it assesses the needs of a community quite broadly, while a baseline study narrowly focuses on collecting information on a specific set of indicators.

On line resources

The Evaluation Exchange (A periodical on emerging evaluation issues) provides a number of articles dealing with the evaluation of advocacy in the Spring 2007 issue:

www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/content/eval/issue34/spring2007.pdf

The following link takes you to a guide to measuring advocacy and policy work, which is the first in a two part guide: www.organizationalresearch.com/publications/a_guide_to_measuring_advocacy_and_policy.pdf

The following link takes you to the second part of the guide which deals with tools for measuring advocacy and change work: www.organizationalresearch.com/publications/a_handbook_of_data_collection_tools.pdf

The Innovation Network provides a list of articles on advocacy and links to the websites at:

www.innonet.org/index.php?section_id=101&content_id=480

WHO IS INSIDEOUT?

Insideout is a consultancy, specialising in services including:

- Conducting programme evaluations
- Developing monitoring frameworks
- Running M&E training courses

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