

# Alternative M&E

## A catalogue of approaches and tools

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# Alternative **M&E**

**A CATALOGUE OF APPROACHES AND TOOLS**  
John Fox, Beatrice Mulindwa, Christine Kamau and Ruth Mwikali

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# Abbreviations

ALPS	Accountability, Learning and Planning System
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWPC	Critical Webs of Power and Change
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
FFA	Force Field Analysis
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HR	Human Relations
HR&SJ	Human Rights and Social Justice
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MfDR	Managing for Development Results
MP	Member of Parliament
MSC	Most Significant Change
MS Denmark	Danish Association for International Cooperation
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NCG	Nordic Consulting Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OD	Organisational Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OM	Outcome Mapping
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PMF	Performance Measurement Framework
PPRP	Participatory Review and Reflection Process
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RBE	Results-Based Evaluation
RBM	Results-Based Monitoring
SC	Significant Change
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
US	United States

## A story to open with...

It was the evening after the worst day of violence in the aftermath of Kenya's botched elections at the end of 2007. Mildred (yes, let's call her Mildred) a programme officer of one of the large international NGOs, was watching the news. Yet again, the opening scenes were of marauding youths in the Nairobi slums, waving pangas and sticks, burning houses, taunting the police, and only scattering when the teargas billowed towards them.

Then the camera focused on a young woman who sank to her knees in the middle of the street. Her skirt torn, her blouse stained, she raised her arms in the air and pleaded for help. She led a small crowd down to a river. There were bodies in the water. The woman pointed to where there was a man lying against the bank. It was her husband; he was badly gashed – but he was still alive.

Mildred slept badly that night. In the morning she drove to the Mathare slum. She contacted one of her colleagues who worked there and told him that she wanted to find the young woman who had been shown on TV the previous evening. Two days later they found her.

Let's call her Joyce. She told Mildred her story. She told how the youths had burst into her

house; how she had been raped by all of them, one after the other; how her husband had been forced to watch all this – and then how they had dragged him outside when they left. She was almost unconscious, but she could hear the shouts and screams.

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### Over the next few days Mildred did what she could

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That same day, Mildred met thirty other women who had been raped. Many of them were still torn and bleeding; some had lost their husbands; many now had no homes; all of them were at risk of HIV infection – and all of them were in need of help.

Over the next few days, Mildred did what she could. She rallied her friends; especially, she got the advice of those who were lawyers; she collected money and blankets and food; she interested her media contacts in the women's plight... But when she looked for more structured support from her INGO (her international NGO), she was told: 'But that isn't in your work plan for 2007/8'.

But Mildred went ahead. To the credit of her INGO supervisors,

they didn't stop her. Later, as the significance of what Mildred had initiated became more and more clear, her organisation provided funds for three kinds of support for the raped women of Mathare: medical treatment, counselling, and incorporation into a project focusing on income generation.

The material losses had been great – the loss of homes and businesses. But the psychological scars were deep – and much less easy to deal with. For a number of the women, their rape had been witnessed by their husbands and their children. Because of this, some husbands had deserted them. For many of the women their wounds hadn't been treated early enough – and a number had been infected with HIV.

But twenty victims of rape from the Mathare and also the Kibera slum were strong and confident enough to tell their stories on a special day set aside for this by Kenya's Commission on Post-Election Violence. Mildred and colleagues from other NGOs also gave evidence to the Commission. This time there were no questions like, 'And what were you wearing?' 'Did you do anything to provoke these men?' This time the perpetrators would not escape prosecution and the women would find justice.

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*If you, like Mildred, have ever felt trapped in a logframe and confined by a workplan, then you should appreciate this catalogue's presentation of alternative approaches to M&E.*

*If you have ever wondered how, as well as count the countables (like the number of prosecuted men in Mildred's story), you could measure the rising hope in those like the Mathare women, then you should appreciate what this catalogue offers. You will find tools for capturing the stories of people whose lives are changed by programmes that raise awareness of rights and promote social justice.*

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# Introduction

*A tourist was lost somewhere among the twisting murram roads of Kilifi at the Coast in Kenya. He stopped his hire car to ask a villager the way to Mombasa....  
"Pole! Kama ningekuwa ninaenda Mombasa, singeanzia hapa!"  
(Sorry! But if I was going to Mombasa, I wouldn't start from here!)*

As the above story shows, to reach where we want to go we need to know where we are. And to know where we are, it is often important to know where we have been. And that is why M&E is important. Monitoring tells us where we are – and evaluation tells us where we have been. Also, both assume a motive of knowing how best to get where we want to go. Otherwise, the findings of M&E would be of interest only to historians.

## The Origin of the Catalogue

A study of various **Ford Foundation Eastern Africa (FFEA)** grantees in the **Human Rights and Social Justice** sphere revealed the different ways in which M&E was appreciated and or used<sup>1</sup>. The following is a summary of the findings:

- Among some of the FFEA organisations, M&E is only conducted in a perfunctory manner;
- There were difficulties in applying traditional M&E mechanisms within the Social Justice and Human Rights areas;
- There were difficulties in designing tools relevant to activities in the Social Justice and Human Rights field;
- There was a lack of capacity to implement effective M&E processes;
- There were problems within some of the organisations on how to assess the impact of their activities based on the goals and objectives;
- There were no mechanisms for assessing the way in which organisations are regarded either by the communities in which they work or by the public at large, irrespective of whether they are connected to them or not.

This catalogue is about M&E – on ways of knowing where we are, where we have been – in order to learn lessons that will help us get to where we want to be. It is intended, primarily, for organisations working in the field of human rights and social justice, but it should be of

interest to any organisation or individual who wishes to explore a variety of methods that can be used in M&E. The focus is not on the more conventional M&E approaches that are best at measuring things that are easily measurable – but on approaches that recognise the complexity of human interactions, that focus on changes in attitudes and behaviours, that are concerned with processes as much as with outcomes, and claim only contribution rather than attribution.

The first section reviews some general issues related to M&E and describes what we have just called the '**conventional**' approach – the logical framework approach that over the last two decades has been the one approved, if not demanded, by donors. And it discusses why in programmes raising awareness of human rights and promoting social justice these conventional M&E approaches have their limitations.

The second section presents the characteristics, applications, advantages (and sometimes disadvantages or weaknesses) of seven **alternative or evolutionary approaches** that focus more on qualitative rather than quantitative M&E factors – and ones that will be more applicable in the fields of Human Rights and Social Justice.

The third and final section is a '**Toolkit**' – a description of various M&E tools you might use, whatever approach you are taking.

You will see that some of the M&E approaches covered in this manual are quite elaborate and are suited only to large-scale organisations. However, we should emphasise that you might find it appropriate to select techniques and tools from any of the approaches, according to your circumstances and interests.

<sup>1</sup>Mukasa, S and Oloka-Onyango J (2007)



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**Part One**

# Contexts

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# Monitoring and Evaluation

## Some Definitions

**Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** tend to be seen as additional tasks to management while, in fact, they are core management functions. Through M&E, organisations are able to ascertain whether or not they are meeting their organisational, project or programme objectives. Nevertheless, some publications differentiate between monitoring, review and evaluation.

**Monitoring** involves the continuous collection, analysis and communication of information on the progress and results being achieved. It highlights strengths and weaknesses and facilitates the making of decisions by responsible personnel mainly within an organisation, about building on successes, improving performance, and adapting to changing situations.

**Internal monitoring** is undertaken by an organisation using its own systems and procedures to meet its own ongoing management information needs; while **external monitoring** involves external agents (such as donor officials or contracted consultants) using donor designed/ approved monitoring methods and reporting formats. In this case, the information is meant to meet the donor's own reporting and accountability requirements.

**Reviewing** is done occasionally, and it provides opportunities for implementers and stakeholders to further analyse information gathered from monitoring. In a review, decisions are made on whether any changes need to be made.

**Table 1: Differences between M&E terms**

	MONITORING	REVIEWING	EVALUATION
When is it done?	<b>Continuously</b> - throughout the life of a project	<b>Occasionally</b> - in the middle or at the end of the project	<b>Occasionally</b> - at the end or beyond the phase or project
What is measured?	<b>Efficiency</b> - use of inputs, activities, outputs, assumptions	<b>Effectiveness, relevance and immediate impact</b> - achievement of purpose	<b>Longer-term impact and sustainability</b> - achievement of purpose and goal and unplanned change
Who is involved	<b>Staff within the organisation</b>	<b>Staff and people from outside the organisation</b>	<b>People from outside the organisation</b>
What sources of information are used?	<b>Internal documents</b> e.g: monthly or quarterly reports, work and travel logs, minutes of meetings	<b>Internal and external documents</b> e.g: annual reports, consultants' reports	<b>Internal and external documents</b> e.g: consultants' reports, national statistics, impact assessment reports
Who uses the results?	<b>Managers and project staff</b>	<b>Managers, staff, donors, beneficiaries</b>	<b>Managers, staff, donors, beneficiaries, other organisations</b>
How are the results used?	<b>To make minor changes</b>	<b>Changes in policies, strategy and future work</b>	<b>Major changes in policy, strategy and future work</b>

Source: Blackman (2003:66)

**Evaluation** is broader in scope and less frequent. It also provides information for making decisions about improvements in management and implementation; it assesses the extent to which a project or programme has achieved its results and made an impact, and the findings are used to make strategic policy and programming decisions.

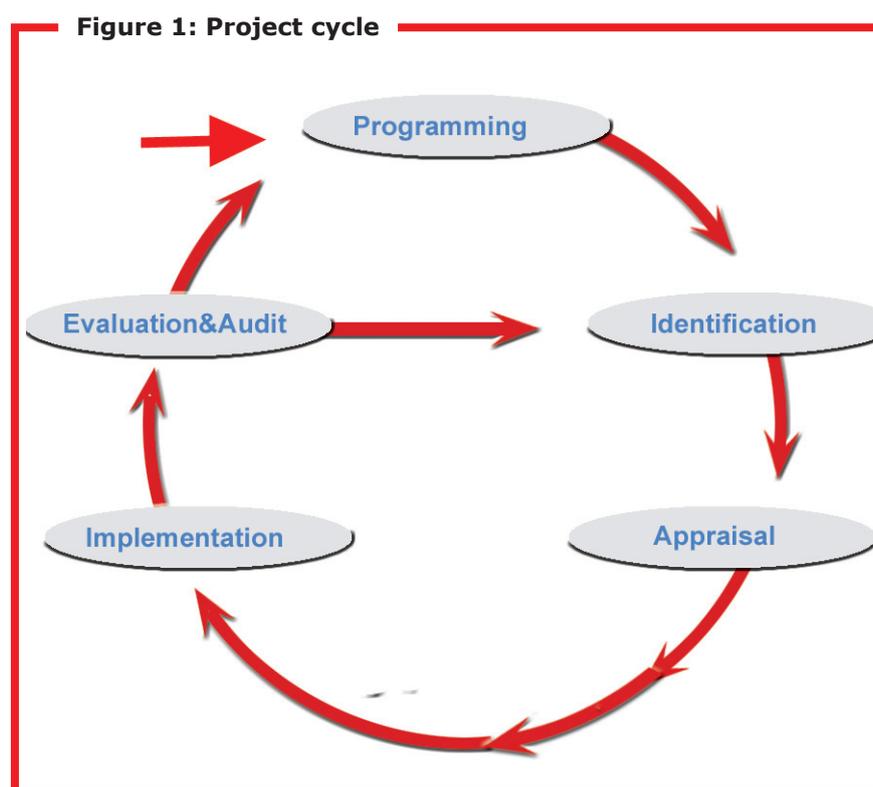
Evaluations can be carried out:

- mid-way in project implementation (**mid-term evaluations**) usually to review progress in terms of what is being achieved and take corrective measures;
- mostly at the end of a project period (**end-of-project evaluation**) to assess what has been achieved by the funding sources; or
- a few years after completion of a project to assess impact (**impact evaluation**), to assess the extent to which a project or programme has contributed to achieving the overall or, sometimes, national objective.

**Audits** are primarily concerned with the financial management elements, with a focus on project results. The aims are to provide assurance and accountability to stakeholders and, at the same time, provide recommendations for improvements in current and future activities.

M&E functions take place at different stages of the project cycle – and the explanation of these stages vary considerably among development actors. Monitoring takes place at the implementation stage; while evaluation takes place at the end or audit stage. Some commonly used stages are: programming, identification, design or formulation, implementation and evaluation.

However, it is important to note that progression to the next stage of the cycle is not in reality separate from the other; there is an ongoing process of learning, reflecting and acting. Consequently, despite the differentiation between monitoring and evaluation, they are complementary and interwoven activities.



Source: European Commission (2004:16)

## Some Main Considerations

Since one of the main purposes of this catalogue is to explore a variety of M&E approaches and, particularly, to contrast what has become conventional with a number of the less conventional, it is appropriate at this onset to consider some fundamental aspects of M&E that should be recognised, whatever the approach taken or the tool used.

### Some Guiding Principles

Here we consider some underlying principles that should be respected whatever the M&E system adopted or approach taken:

#### **The main purpose of M&E is to improve development programme implementation:**

Its main target groups are those with responsibilities for managing or overseeing programmes; it makes programme strategy formulation more systematic and management decision making better informed.

#### **M&E leads beyond reflection to action:**

It focuses on lessons being learnt about what produces positive changes in the lives and livelihoods of programme beneficiaries – generating action-oriented findings and applicable recommendations.

**To ensure relevance and enhance accuracy, M&E secures the participation of stakeholders:** They have a right to be involved since they will be affected by the M&E outcomes; also, their involvement will promote a more comprehensive exploration of different experiences and perceptions.

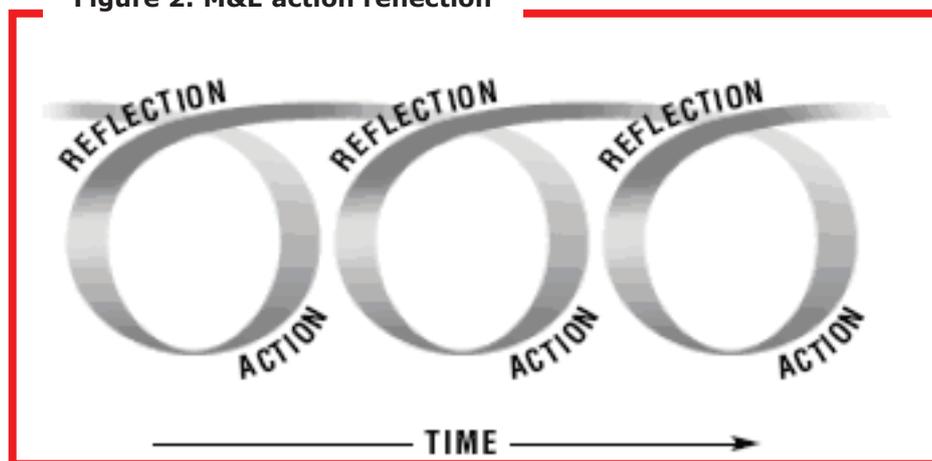
#### **A sound evaluation enhances the capacities of those who will be expected to use the evaluation findings:**

As argued in the International Development Research Centre's (IDRC's) Outcome Mapping Manual (a resource that will be extensively drawn on later in this catalogue): 'Organisations need some level of internal evaluation capacity in order to be able to devise, participate in, or utilize evaluations effectively.' Exclusive reliance on external expertise can limit an organisation's ability to be clear and specific about its goals and to learn and apply lessons. Specific strategies can be built into evaluations that are aimed explicitly at fostering these organisational characteristics.

#### **Evaluation methods adhere to accepted standards for ethical research:**

All those engaged in the process – respondents in

Figure 2: M&E action reflection



Source: Blackman (2003:11)

**To improve programme efficiency and effectiveness, an M&E strategy is determined at the planning stage of a programme:** It helps to clarify the outcomes that are anticipated; it ensures that relevant information will be collected from the outset of the programme.

interviews and participants in consultative meetings – are able to provide information and express views without apprehension that what they say will be used against them at a later time.

## The 'Big Five' Themes

When carrying out a monitoring or evaluation exercise, if you aim to be as comprehensive as possible in addressing issues, there are five main themes that should be taken up. All five have questions that should be answered. Since we are writing from the safarilands of East Africa, it might be appropriate to call them the 'Big Five'.

Whatever the M&E approach taken (quantitative or qualitative; mainstream or alternative) all five of these themes need to be addressed, and

their questions answered, if the exercise is to be coherent as well as comprehensive. Furthermore, these themes can be related to the 'DAC<sup>1</sup> criteria' of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability. However, as usually presented in M&E manuals and guidelines, these criteria are closely tied to a logframe approach to programme design and assessment, and they do not focus enough, we would argue, on process considerations.

**Table 2: The 'big five' themes**

<p><b>1. Programme design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Was the original programme design well conceived, in terms of objectives, target groups and anticipated outcomes?</li> <li>➤ Was it addressing relevant and priority needs?</li> <li>➤ How valid were the assumptions made and risks anticipated?</li> <li>➤ How well has the programme adapted during implementation?</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Is the implementation approach appropriate to meeting the programme's objectives?</li> <li>➤ Have the most suitable implementing actors been chosen?</li> <li>➤ Are they using the most effective methods for achieving the programme's anticipated outcomes?</li> <li>➤ How well has the programme adapted to changing circumstances?</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Are the programme inputs (funds, equipment and other materials) sufficient and available when needed?</li> <li>➤ Are activities on time, at planned cost and efficiently managed?</li> <li>➤ How inclusive and flexible are the M&amp;E systems being used?</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Are services or facilities established by the programme being received or used by the planned beneficiaries?</li> <li>➤ To what extent is the programme contributing to changes in policies or decision-making structures?</li> <li>➤ What changes in people's lives are being made – changes to which the programme can be said to be contributing?</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Continuity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is the level of policy support by government agencies or other relevant institutions?</li> <li>➤ How well is the programme contributing to capacity building for those individuals or organisations that will be expected to carry on with activities initiated by the programme?</li> <li>➤ Is the programme in tune with prevailing socio-cultural values and behaviours?</li> <li>➤ Are environmental issues being taken into account?</li> <li>➤ Will funds be available to support activities beyond the life of the programme? Are lessons being documented – and communicated?</li> </ul>
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<sup>1</sup>Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for European Cooperation and Development (OECD).

# The Logical Framework Approach

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) is both a process and a tool for planners and managers. It provides a systematic methodology for programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Its origins date back to the 1970s and can be found in practices adopted by the US military and the National Aeronautical Space Agency (NASA). This might be of some significance, because

the basic logic of the LFA is a linear one. Presumably, when building a spaceship, one thing does lead to another.

Therefore, the LFA – and its extension as the **Project Cycle Management (PCM)** – has been the main approach used in development programme design. It has also been the dominant influence in programme management and

monitoring for a number of years. Most readers will have some experience of the LFA or the PCM. Before presenting in the next main part of this catalogue the systems that have grown out of them (or have been developed in order to either complement or counteract them) it is necessary to briefly review them here.

## Key Features of the LFA

The basic logic of the LFA is:

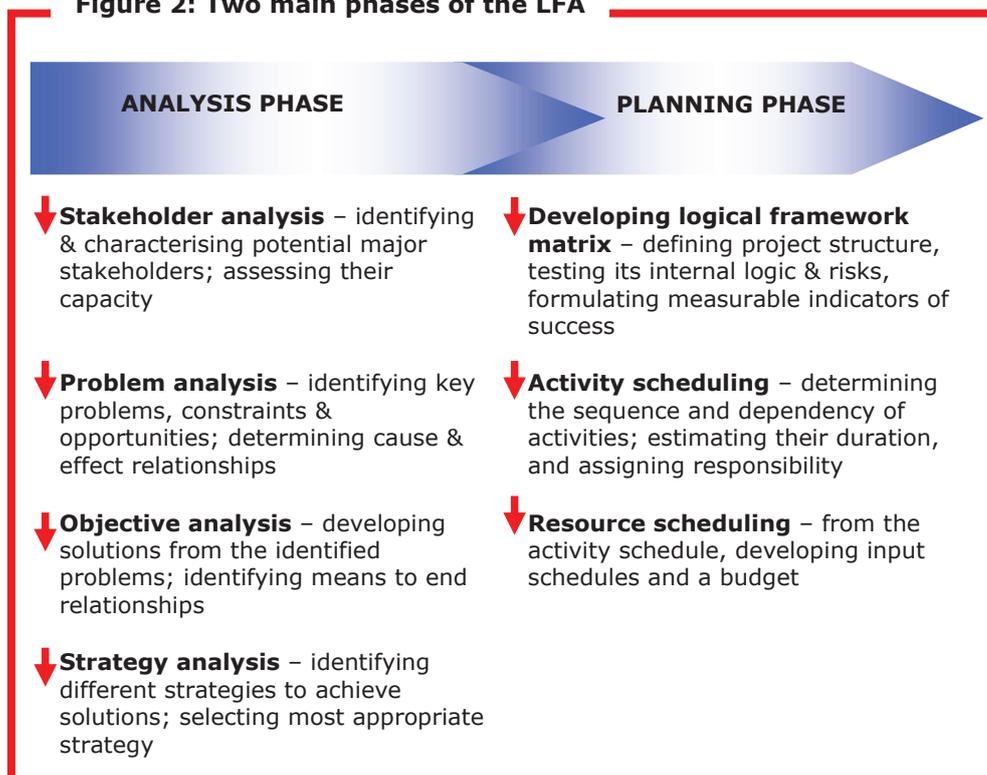
*Activities* → *results* → *programme purpose*  
→ *development objective*

The logic is: if you carry out certain activities, you will produce certain results (or outputs or outcomes), and if you produce these results you will achieve your programme purpose (or immediate objective). If you achieve your

purpose, your programme – especially over a longer term – will contribute to a development (or wider) objective.

The LFA is particularly applicable in the identification and formulation phases of the project (or programme) cycle, and it leads to a presentation of the results of problem analysis – and the identification of objectives in a systematic and consistent way.

**Figure 2: Two main phases of the LFA**



Source: European Commission (2004:60)

The key products of the analytical process are summarised in a matrix called the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM), which displays the derived objectives in their hierarchical relationship in the following manner:

**Table 3: Intervention logic**

The diagram shows a 5x4 grid representing the Logical Framework Matrix. The vertical axis is labeled 'Vertical logic' with an upward-pointing arrow, and the horizontal axis is labeled 'Horizontal logic' with a rightward-pointing arrow. The grid is divided into two main sections: a top section with a red header row and four orange data rows, and a bottom section with a single orange row. The top section's columns are: 'Intervention Logic', 'Objectively Verifiable Indicators', 'Sources of Verification', and 'Assumptions'. The bottom section's columns are: 'Activities', 'Means', and 'Costs'. The 'Assumptions' column is empty in the bottom row.

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
Development/Overall Objective				
Purpose				
Outputs /Results				
Activities		Means		Costs

The first column is referred to as the **intervention logic**. It consists of:

- The **Overall Objective**, identifying why the programme is important;
- The **Project Purpose** highlighting why the programme is needed;
- The **Results** are what the programme will deliver;
- The **Activities** are what the programme will do.

The second column consists of **Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI)**s. They specify the project's objectives in operationally measurable terms of quantity, quality, target group(s), time and place. They are defined during the identification and formulation stages and specified in greater detail during implementation, based on the needs of the organisation or project to allow for effective monitoring.

**Means** are the inputs necessary for carrying out the planned activities. They should be summarised at the bottom row of the second column. They will also be specified in more detail when preparing an activity or implementation schedule. But even in the logframe summary, the distinction should be made between inputs

related to human resources and those related to material resources.

**Sources of Verification (SoV)**, found in the third column, indicate where and in what form evidence is found for progress made in achieving OVIs. They help to test whether or not the indicator can be realistically measured within a reasonable amount of time and at a reasonable cost in terms of money and effort. They come in the form of progress reports (quarterly, yearly), project accounts, project records, official statistics, monitoring and evaluation reports, mid-term review reports, etc.

The **Costs** appear at the bottom row of the fourth column. This is usually a summary of the budget and, where necessary, the contribution of each partner specified; for example, the government, donors or beneficiaries.

**Assumptions**, found in the fourth column, are external factors outside the direct control of the project that might influence the achievement of the project's Activities, Results, Project Purpose and Overall Objectives. So the Assumptions that connect Results to Project Purpose are the critical success factors

## Applications

- The LFA is most suitable when you want to be as comprehensive and systematic as possible in designing a programme – in conducting a situation analysis, establishing a hierarchy of means by which the programme’s objectives will be achieved, estimating assumptions and risks related to external factors, and formulating an array of indicators that give not only a set of targets for implementation but also a set of measures for monitoring and evaluating the programme’s progress.
- For donors, who have a responsibility for appraising and overseeing a large number of programme proposals and programme reports, it provides a consistent methodology of assessment and review.
- Also, applied in the recommended way, the LFA enables the participation of stakeholders in the programme design and monitoring.

## Resources

According to the EC Project Cycle Management Guidelines, the key elements of the LFA are very useful resources in the design and implementation of an effective M&E system, including the reporting processes. These include the situation analysis, the LFM, activity schedules, and resource and budget schedules.

The OVIs and SoVs provide the framework for a more detailed M&E plan to be designed and

implemented by project managers. The Results Indicators, Means of Verification, Activities, Inputs and Costs provide a framework for preparing an assessment of a project’s progress by comparing what was planned and what has been achieved.

In evaluation, the logframe specifies what was to be achieved (Results and Purpose) and how these were to be verified using OVIs and SoVs.

**Table 4: Link between LFM and M&E**

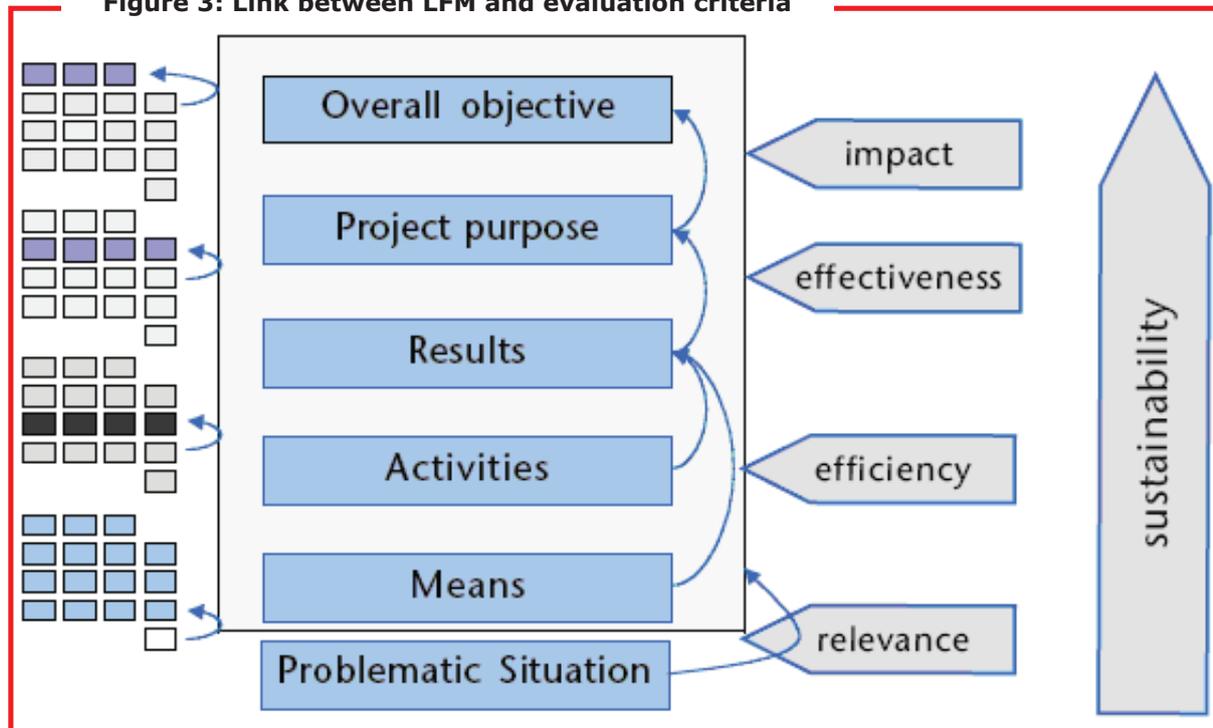
Focus	Logframe hierarchy of objectives
Evaluation	Overall objective
Evaluation and review	Purpose
Monitoring, review and audit	Results
Monitoring and audit	Activities and resources

Source: European Commission (2004:103)

## Advantages

- During the initial stages of deciding whether to pursue an idea for a programme intervention, the LFA can be an effective method for testing the relevance of the proposed programme.
- It should ensure a review of other programmes with similar objectives in the same target area – through the discussion of assumptions related to external influences.
- It facilitates a discussion of the potential risks and an assessment of their strengths.
- The LFM can be (and often is) the basis for a contract between a donor and a programme implementing agency.
- It generates an array of indicators for assessing the progress (achievements and failings) of the programme.
- It is the basic text for making detailed work plans, terms of reference for supporting consultancy assignments, drawing up budgets and providing a template for progress reports.

Figure 3: Link between LFM and evaluation criteria



Source: European Commission (2004:54)

## Limitations of the Logframe

Given the considerations on M&E in the field of Human Rights and Social Change, it should be clear that conventional M&E approaches, entailing the use of the logframe and precise indicators, can become quite problematic when trying to assess impacts in that field. These are some of the main limitations:

### **Limited focus on processes**

LFA monitoring systems tend to focus on outcomes rather than on structures and processes. They tend to pay less attention, for example, to tracking the growth of accountability, which is a key component of human rights progress.

### **Little qualitative data on impact and change**

Conventional M&E systems tend to pay more attention to activities rather than to impacts. For example, a typical monitoring report might measure the number of clients accessing legal aid in a given period without assessing the actual outcomes of the clients' cases and a corresponding improvement in their circumstances.

### **Concentration on too few actors**

To assess the status of a given right it means that attention must focus on the capacity and effectiveness of duty bearers in discharging their human rights obligations. But a very wide range of actors should be considered – from government agencies to civil society, from public institutions to private businesses, from individuals to whole communities.

### **Disproportionate emphasis on short term successes**

Conventional M&E tools focus on short term achievements which can be measured from year to year; yet human rights outcomes are long-term, involving changes in attitudes, perceptions and value systems at individual and societal levels. And the conventional monitoring systems lack tools for measuring the important intangible impact of attitudinal change.

### **Other limitations of the logframe**

- The LFA focuses too much on problems rather than potentials.
- It assumes a linear logic in the implementation of a programme (one thing leads to another) – and social change is usually effected through multiple causes.
- It leaves little room for dealing with uncertainties and for flexible responses.
- There is a tendency for programme designers to focus too quickly on the logframe matrix as a design template rather than a summary of decisions.... Which means that the boxes of the LFM are filled in without a detailed situation analysis and rigorous discussion of possible strategies.
- Quite often the programme document becomes too skeletal – lacking a rich description of the programme’s context and a detailed presentation of how the programme will be managed.
- Despite the emphasis on participation, because the LFA is a complex design tool, too often the programme document is written not by programme managers or stakeholders – but by external consultants.

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### **For more information:**

Blackman R, **Project Cycle Management: Resourcing Organisations with Opportunities for Transformation and Sharing** (ROOTS Resources No.5), 2003.

European Commission, **Aid Delivery Methods Volume 1: Project Cycle Management Guidelines**, 2004

Fox J and Mwikali R, **Managing the Cycle: Project Designs, Proposals and Monitoring Reports**, Diakonia and IntermediaNCG, 2004.

Kari Örtengren, **The Logical Framework Approach: A Summary of The Theory Behind the LFA Method**, SIDA, 2004.

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# Conventional and Alternative M&E Approaches

So many agencies – particularly donors – have adopted and adapted the LFA that it can justifiably be called the ‘mainstream’ or ‘conventional’ M&E approach. But because of the disadvantages listed above, over recent years a number of alternative approaches have

been developed – particularly by international NGOs, and especially those that are implementing or supporting programmes related to the upholding of human rights and the promotion of social justice, where often process is more important than product, and

impacts are more difficult to assess.

Some of the main differences between conventional and alternative M&E are summarised in the following table:

**Table 5: Conventional versus alternative M&E**

Conventional M&E approaches:	Alternative M&E approaches:
Evolved from a concept of development as mainly infrastructural	More adaptable for assessing processes of social change
Driven by a demand to be accountable (usually to donors)	More inclined to promote downward accountability, organizational learning and strategic adjustments to programmes
Follow a linear and assumed predictable trajectory	Recognize complexity and uncertainty in the progress of programmes
Focus on demonstrating results and ascribing achievements to specific actors	Recognize diversity of efforts of different actors and focus on contributions to achievements
Look for completed outcomes	Values incremental shifts in attitudes and behaviours
Work within relatively short timeframes	Acknowledge that social change occurs over long timeframes
Often focus on a single (and project-specific) level of intervention	Addresses changes happening at local levels and also policy or structural changes occurring at national or international levels
Assessment data rarely shared with primary stakeholders	Provides feedback to target groups, as well as securing their involvement in shaping M&E approaches
Often, their main concern is to justify, maintain or increase, donor funding	Lead to critical reflection on the part of all agencies involved in the intervention

# M&E for Human Rights and Social Justice

In the fields of Human Rights some desired outcomes are fairly easily measured – whether, for example, a particular country signs an international convention, or whether judicial cases of violence against women have increased or declined over a specified period. But the recognition of human rights is a fundamental aspect of Social Justice – and social justice is about much more

than the administration of law. A just society is one in which individuals and communities enjoy fair treatment and an impartial share of resources and benefits. So programmes concerned with upholding human rights and promoting social justice support the establishment of viable institutions of governance and enable public participation in those institutions – supporting

mechanisms for citizens to give voice and building the capacity of governments (whether national or local) to be responsive and accountable.

With such objectives, it is clear that for programmes in the field of Human Rights and Social Justice the more appropriate M&E approaches are those described in the table above as ‘alternative’.

## Some Main Considerations

Several main considerations can be identified when monitoring the extent to which rights are enjoyed (and where they are not universally enjoyed, the effectiveness of existing mechanisms of redress).<sup>1</sup>

### **Identifying structural conditions**

One key issue for investigation is the existence of a legal and policy framework that facilitates the respect for, and fulfilment of, human rights. In addition, it is important to assess the existence and strength of institutions and organisations (both state-owned and non-governmental) that safeguard respect for and enforce human rights. In essence, then, this entails an assessment of structural conditions that can guarantee the enjoyment of human rights for present and future generations.

### **Observing process**

This is the operationalisation of the structural conditions. In other words: ‘To what extent are laws respected?’ and ‘How effective are those institutions and organisations set up to enforce the upholding of human rights?’ And this will entail the exploration of issues regarding the independence of those institutions, and their capacity to discharge their functions.

### **Assessing Outcomes**

The existence of structural conditions and their effective operationalisation should bring about a change in the quality of life for individuals and communities. The main areas of inquiry, then, are whether and to what extent people actually enjoy human rights.

A balance has to be maintained between structural conditions, process and outcomes, because they are all essential components of a human rights inquiry. For example, it is not enough to have in place a legal and policy framework, and corresponding institutions to enforce human rights respect and fulfilment, if the institutions lack capacity to discharge their functions effectively or are inaccessible to would-be users. Conversely, whereas such institutions may be accessible to potential users but are having no effect on the lives of the users, then they are lacking in so far as bringing about the desired ends of equity and wellbeing.

### **Following human rights principles**

In determining whether rights are enforced, and how they are enforced, certain human rights principles such as accountability, participation, non-discrimination and empowerment all need to be taken into account. But these principles may well be realised or upheld only gradually. Processes become as important as outcomes. So in this field a focus needs to be on trends as well as on end states – in order to recognise emerging problems, to assess the effectiveness of responses, and to determine whether progress is being made in achieving a programme’s objectives.

### **Setting time scales**

Human rights changes are usually long-term in nature and systemic. It is, therefore, vital to develop mechanisms for tracking long-term goals as well as smaller, incremental and subtle changes that contribute to the achievement of these long-term goals.

<sup>1</sup>Hines, A (2005)

***Apportioning contributions***

Given that human rights organisations frequently engage in collaborative interventions – and given the very complex nature of the outcomes they are trying to achieve – it becomes very difficult to apportion responsibility for change to any one actor or event. What is important, then, is that individual organisations should recognise the value of such collaboration and should be satisfied that they are making a significant contribution to positive social change. And, in such cases of collaboration, monitoring should facilitate the identification of best practice and enable sharing and learning among the participating organisations.

# Summary of M&E Approaches

Approaches	Key Features	Applications	Resources	Advantages	Disadvantages/ Limitations
<b>Logical Framework Approach (LFA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainly used by EC and some member countries</li> <li>Provides a systematic methodology for programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>Basic logic is linear, in that one thing leads to another (from activities-results-purpose-development objective)</li> <li>Analytical process summarised in a logical framework matrix (LFM) displaying the objectives in a hierarchy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive and systematic in programme design for donor assessment and review</li> <li>Stakeholders can participate in programme design and implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Logical Framework Matrix, (LFM)</li> <li>An LFA facilitator</li> <li>A group of participants who understand LFA</li> <li>Funds for holding stakeholder workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective in testing relevance of proposed programme</li> <li>Checks duplication and comparative advantages by reviewing other programmes in the same areas</li> <li>Facilitates discussions of potential risks</li> <li>A basis for contract between implementing agency and donor</li> <li>Generates indicators for assessing progress</li> <li>Basic text for making work plans, budgets, ToRs for support inputs, templates for reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis on problems than potentials</li> <li>Assumes linear logic in programme implementation</li> <li>Little room given for dealing with uncertainties or flexible responses</li> <li>Temptation to focus on filling LFM without thorough analysis of strategies</li> <li>Due to complexity of LFA, programme document tends to be written by external consultants</li> </ul>
<b>Results Based Monitoring (RBM)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used by agencies such as UNDP, UNESCO, CIDA, World Bank</li> <li>Emphasis on outcomes rather than inputs and outputs</li> <li>Three main steps:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying programme results;</li> <li>collecting analysing and compiling baseline data; and</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involves beneficiaries in the process of identifying issues for monitoring, collecting data, using information for taking action</li> <li>Helps develop realistic results</li> <li>Assists in identifying programme beneficiaries and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance Measurement Framework (PFM) developed through a multi-stakeholder workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficial to programme management as it is possible to see how the outputs produced are actually utilised and whether they are relevant to the overall goal</li> <li>Enables programme to adjust accordingly</li> <li>Greater 'buy-in' as stakeholders and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confusing activities with outputs</li> <li>Possibility of making unclear linkages between the different levels of results making it difficult to establish how a specific result has been established</li> <li>Overemphasising results that are easy to quantify at the</li> </ul>

Approaches	Key Features	Applications	Resources	Advantages	Disadvantages/ Limitations
	<p>c) formulating performance indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results are interlinked (a cause and effect relationship/results chain)</li> </ul>	<p>designing programmes that meet their needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitates use of information to make effective management decisions</li> </ul>		<p>beneficiaries are involved right from the start</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involvement of stakeholders can lead to improved capacities of community members</li> <li>Moves focus from inputs and processes to the objectives to be met</li> </ul>	<p>expense of less tangible ones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying unrealistic results</li> <li>Failure to achieve a balance between qualitative and quantitative indicators</li> <li>Confusing indicators with results</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability, Learning and Planning Systems (ALPS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed by ActionAid International</li> <li>Emphasis on reflection of programmes to ensure accountability, facilitate review and reformulation of strategies</li> <li>Focus on goals related to upholding rights and promoting social justice</li> <li>Involves 12 organisational processes and mechanisms which influence the organisation's strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant for large organisations that work through a number of partners and have multiple accountabilities</li> <li>Relevant for organisations committed to engaging grassroots beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ActionAid's manual on ALPS</li> <li>Staff members well versed on rights issues and skilled in facilitating in community-based discussion forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrates M&amp;E within a planning framework</li> <li>Emphasis on organisational learning</li> <li>Has potential to bolster commitment to an organisation's goals and instil a sense of teamwork</li> <li>Minimises bureaucracy through a comprehensive coverage of programme and financial management</li> <li>Embodies a rights-based approach</li> <li>Its principles and processes facilitate accountability and transparency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not always easy to find staff who can internalise and act on the rights-based principles advocated in ALPS</li> <li>Some managers might not be open to engage in the exploration of power relationships as part of organisational learning</li> <li>The ALPS manual does not describe well some of the techniques involved such as 'capturing of stories'</li> </ul>

Approaches	Key Features	Applications	Resources	Advantages	Disadvantages/ Limitations
<p><b>Most Significant Change (MSC)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A highly participatory process of collecting, analysing and selecting stories about the progress and impact of a programme</li> <li>• Has ten implementation steps:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Starting and raising interest;</li> <li>- Defining domains of change;</li> <li>- Defining the reporting period;</li> <li>- Collecting stories;</li> <li>- Selecting the most significant stories;</li> <li>- Feeding back the selected stories;</li> <li>- Verifying stories;</li> <li>- Quantifying;</li> <li>- Secondary analysis;</li> <li>- Revising the system.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Best suited for programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That produce diverse outcomes</li> <li>• Set up by large organisations</li> <li>• Focusing on change: social, behavioural, organisational, policy, etc.</li> <li>• That emphasise participation</li> <li>• That have regular contact with field staff and participants</li> <li>• That are highly specialised such as family counselling</li> <li>• Or agencies that are struggling with conventional M&amp;E systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitators or 'Champions' – people that are genuinely excited about the approach</li> <li>• The MSC Guide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides rich picture of the situation</li> <li>• Participatory and does not require special professional skills; staff have to develop ways of 'freeing' people to tell their stories</li> <li>• Encourages analysis and interpretation</li> <li>• Builds staff capacity to facilitate discussion, analyse data and conceptualise impact</li> <li>• Identifies unexpected changes</li> <li>• Fosters strong partnerships through collection and filtering of stories</li> <li>• Provides materials for enriching a communication strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time consuming</li> <li>• Cannot be used as sole technique for monitoring</li> <li>• Tends to favour success stories</li> <li>• Selection of stories is highly subjective</li> <li>• Selection process might tend to suppress unpopular views</li> </ul>
<p><b>Critical Webs of Power and Change (CWPC)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed by ActionAid for their social change and advocacy work</li> <li>• Closely linked to ALPS</li> <li>• M&amp;E emphasises 'reflection and learning' and developing 'lessons and knowledge' instead of financial accountability to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive approach in planning, reviewing, learning</li> <li>• Best used at the beginning of an advocacy programme to create buy-in from staff members</li> <li>• Helps to understand and work with power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills in facilitation, questioning, listening, analysing power and context, and addressing gender issues</li> <li>• Critical timelines help an organisation:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify changes over time;</li> <li>document key events;</li> <li>discuss</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tools can be modified and adapted for use either individually or in combination</li> <li>• Advocates for the participation of all stakeholders and provides good tools for reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires commitment of whole organisation to implement well</li> <li>• Some tools and techniques might require specialised people in organisation</li> </ul>

Approaches	Key Features	Applications	Resources	Advantages	Disadvantages/ Limitations
	<p>donors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involves six main processes: planning, monitoring, reflection and learning, critical thinking, participation and use of information</li> </ul>	<p>dynamics within an organisation and the context of implementation</p>	<p>how and why changes occur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchange visits to other organisations</li> <li>Risk analysis to identify risks and plan how to deal with potential impacts</li> <li>Advocacy networks allow development of new insights.</li> </ul>		
<b>Outcome Mapping (OM)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed by the International Development Research Centre</li> <li>Focus on outcomes as behavioural change which can be logically linked to a programme's activities</li> <li>Focus on people and changes in behaviour, particularly, capacity building of local communities</li> <li>Assumes an intervention only makes a contribution; boundary partners control change</li> <li>Divided into three stages: intentional; outcome and performance monitoring; and evaluation planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best used from the planning stages of a programme as it helps to focus support to partners on specific changes</li> <li>Helps a programme clarify what it wants to achieve, with whom and how</li> <li>Offers a method for monitoring changes in boundary partners and in programme</li> <li>Also used as an end-of-programme assessment tool</li> <li>Planning and M&amp;E not discrete events; designed to be cyclical with one feeding to another</li> <li>Helps a programme to be more strategic about the actors it targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design workshop of approximately three days and a facilitator</li> <li>Staff time of about a day to develop the monitoring system</li> <li>IDRC manual on OM methodology which includes data collection tools and worksheets for entering data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a systematic and participatory method for: a) setting programme objectives and strategies, b) monitoring its contribution to outcomes, c) identifying priority areas for evaluation studies</li> <li>Combines process and outcome evaluation by collecting data on work of boundary partners</li> <li>Including boundary partners enables feedback from other agencies</li> <li>Provides a high degree of self-assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Because it is elaborate, demands organisational commitment</li> <li>As it is a self-assessment system, staff can be tempted to ignore failures</li> <li>OM only works as an M&amp;E system if it is established at the beginning of a programme with clear decisions about strategic directions</li> <li>Relations with boundary partners may not be as clear-cut as described in the IDRC manual</li> </ul>



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## Part Two

# Alternative Approaches

The next part of this catalogue presents five M&E approaches that have emerged as a reaction to the weaknesses of logframe approaches in assessing social change. They should be of particular interest to those organisations working on human rights and social justice – organisations wanting to set appropriate priorities, create effective strategies, encourage and enforce accountability, and assess their own progress and impacts.

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# Results-Based Monitoring

Results-Based Monitoring (RBM) is an example of a fairly 'conventional' M&E method that is now being adopted and adapted by a few organisations, in particular, UNDP, UNESCO, the World Bank and CIDA. It seeks to move beyond measuring project implementation inputs and outputs – towards being more people-oriented and more concerned with outcomes

– especially ones that are not so easily quantifiable.

RBM is defined by the World Bank as a system for collecting and analysing information in order to compare how well a programme is performing against expected results.<sup>1</sup> It seeks to measure results based

on their definition in work plans and budgets. Its complementary Results Based Evaluation (RBE) assesses an ongoing or completed programme in order to determine its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, with the aim of drawing lessons and using them in making adjustments to the exiting programme or in formulating new programmes.

<sup>1</sup> International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2004)

## Key Features

In undertaking RBM, three main steps are involved:

- Identifying what will constitute the programme results;
- Collecting, analysing and compiling baseline data;
- Formulating performance indicators.

### Results

As defined in a CIDA RBM manual on developing result chains, a result is defined as 'a describable or measurable development change resulting from a cause and effect relationship'. These changes are categorised as:

- Short-term results or outputs;
- Medium-term results or outcomes;
- Long-term results or impact.

**Outputs:** The direct results (products or services) of programme activities, and they are

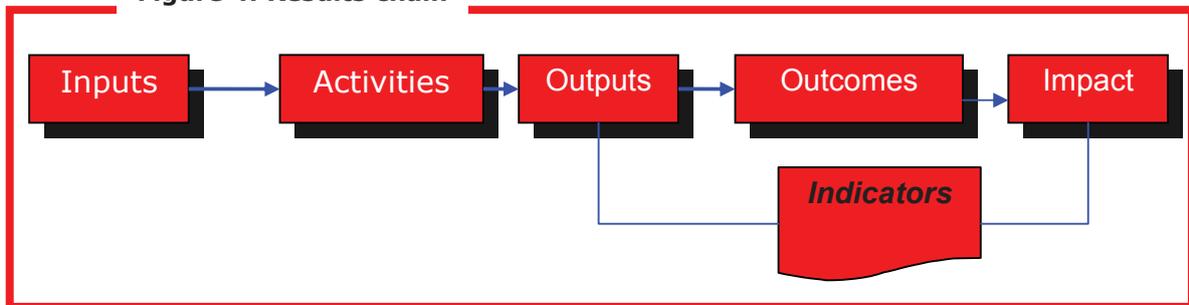
intermediate steps contributing towards the impact.

**Outcomes:** Medium-term results in a programme's life-span, determined by how beneficiaries make use of the programme's outputs.

**Impact:** Changes, positive or negative, intended or unintended, which have occurred in the lives of beneficiaries as a result of a programme's activities – corresponding with a fulfilment of the overall or development objective of the programme.

The linking of the three types of result (with the results at one level affecting the results at the next level) is what in RBM is called a 'results chain':

Figure 4: Results chain



## How to formulate expected results

As indicated in UNESCO's RBM guidelines, the following should be taken into consideration when formulating results:<sup>2</sup>

### Consider the beneficiaries' perspective

As much as possible, results should be formulated from the beneficiaries' point of view; focusing on the changes expected rather than on what is planned to be done. And the process in the selection of results should be as participatory as possible, involving a wide range of stakeholders and beneficiaries.

### Use 'change' language instead of 'action' language

'Action' language usually describes a result from the provider's or implementer's point of view. It can be interpreted in many ways and it focuses on the completion of activities. Examples of action language could be:

- 'To promote adult literacy',*
- 'To educate the community on HIV&AIDS'.*

On the other hand, 'change' language focuses on what should be different as a consequence of activities rather than on what is being done. For example, 'Adults have access to literacy classes and materials', or 'The community is educated by means of different complementary communication methods on issues regarding HIV&AIDS'.

### Formulate SMART results

An expected result should follow the conventional criteria of being SMART:

**Specific:** Exact and clearly stated; they should identify the kinds of change expected and should be as detailed as possible without being wordy.

**Measurable:** Either qualitatively or quantitatively; considering whether it is possible to identify manageable performance indicators.

**Achievable:** Feasible within the means of the human and financial resources that are available to the programme; if not, it is important either to reconsider and adjust the scope of the programme or bring in additional resources.

**Relevant:** Responding to recognised needs and challenges, but care should be taken to remain within the programme's mandate.

**Time-bound:** Within a stated time-frame, taking care that the expected results are achievable within this allocated time-frame.

### Unexpected results

Programmes more often than not produce some results other than those planned or intended. It is important that these are recognised and understood, as they can assist in re-scheduling the programme's activities to become more relevant and in improving the appropriateness of its strategy.

### Baseline data

Baseline data gives a programme its starting point against which it can measure the change it desires to make. The situation before a programme's initiation is the baseline – and the starting point for results monitoring.

Points to consider when collecting baseline data<sup>3</sup>:

- **Building internal commitment within the organisation** to social issues prior to commencing the baseline, particularly on the part of senior management.
- **Considering resources available** to conduct the baseline study: time, budget, skills and existing information.
- **Thinking through linkages** between the programme and social issues:
  - Focusing on social issues that influence or will be influenced;
  - Considering longer-term strategic issues, e.g. social licence to operate (acknowledging a community's right to say 'no').
- **Mapping stakeholders** in as detailed a manner as possible, to clarify who will influence, or be influenced by, the programme – and who should be engaged.
- **Capturing existing information**, which you know already and/or can easily get access to:
  - Staff and community knowledge;
  - Secondary information from already existing publications by other organisations and donor agencies.
- **Talking to people:** gathering and analysing data using participatory approaches and using this as a way to build constructive relationships.

### Identifying performance indicators

Performance indicators help an organisation to measure its progress towards achieving anticipated results. They provide evidence that a result has been achieved or that progress is being made. So they assist in assessing the effectiveness of a programme's activities.

There are a number of reasons why it is important to formulate and use indicators<sup>4</sup>:

<sup>2</sup>UNESCO (2008)

<sup>3</sup>Ed O'Keefe (2004)

<sup>4</sup> CIDA (2000)

- To determine progress towards achieving planned results at the output, outcome and impact levels;
- To inform decision-making in the field and headquarters, thereby providing for more effective annual work plans of programmes;
- To improve a programme's performance and development impact;
- To support sound resource allocation;
- To mitigate risks to the achievement of results.

It is important that indicators are directly related to the result they are measuring. They should be credible and designed on the basis of the scope and context within which a programme intends to work.

Too many indicators can be counterproductive; they can become a burden when they require too much data to be collected, as this risks the indicators being too complex and costly to put together and analyse.

In selecting indicators, therefore, these factors should be taken into account:

- Local input from programme stakeholders and beneficiaries is desirable;
- Indicator selection is easier when results are clear and well defined.

To ensure triangulation (cross-checking information across data sets to reduce potential biases) a maximum of two to three indicators per result is essential.

### Quantitative versus qualitative indicators

Two main types of indicators can be differentiated: quantitative indicators that have a numerical value attached (e.g. '50% girls have access to school facilities'); qualitative indicators that are based on individual perceptions, attitudes and judgements (e.g. Girls in focus group discussions in three case study schools express satisfaction with school facilities).

Quantitative indicators are sometimes regarded as being too detached, only measuring cold, hard facts; potentially ignoring difficult-to-measure factors that actually might be the

most important. On the other hand, qualitative indicators are sometimes viewed as being too subjective, unreliable and hard to verify. But whether you choose the one or the other should depend on the nature of the result that you are trying to measure.

In selecting to use a quantitative measure of a programme's results – especially in regard to large-scale and complex programmes – in an effort to minimise subjectivity, you will often need to involve yourself in a statistical analysis based on surveys or the administration of questionnaires. However, as highlighted in UNESCO's RBM manual, such an approach is not without its problems – a survey might prove to be too costly, for example; respondents might not be easy to identify; and their perceptions of satisfaction with services, of course, are often subject to influences other than the service itself.

Qualitative indicators focus on changes in awareness, attitudes and satisfaction. They can be measured by using a variety of tools such as ones to be found in the Toolkit of this catalogue – focus groups, for example, semi-structured interviews, and the variety of PRA techniques. They are particularly relevant when interventions involve capacity development or the improvement of service delivery – assessing, for example, whether the services are wanted, useful and effectively delivered.

### Proxy indicators

In some instances, it is not easy to measure a result that is of importance to a programme. This may be due to the cost or the complexity of data collection. So a proxy indicator can be used: an indirect approximation of change in the absence of a direct measure. It usually reveals performance trends to make programme managers aware of potential problems or areas of success, for example, in cases of outcomes related to policy dialogue, changes in governance and other difficult-to-measure results. For example, the outcome of 'fair and efficient administration of justice' is often measured by surveying public confidence in the judicial system. Although high public confidence does not prove that the system is actually fair, it is very likely that there would be a correlation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> UNDP (2002)

## Applications

RBM is now being used by a number of organisations as they seek to move away from M&E approaches that focus more on activities to one that focuses more on results. Its use implies a management that is concerned about accountability. It is also most relevant for organisations that are committed to involving programme beneficiaries in the process of identifying issues for monitoring, collecting data and using information for taking action.

Notably, RBM seeks to answer the 'So what?' instead of the 'Have we done it?' question. Its application is likely to prevent an organisation from thinking that the completion of a programme's activities will ensure the improvement of a development situation. To ask 'We have done it, but so what?' is to focus more on the results of an intervention rather than on the achievement of an implementation plan or the successful disbursement of funds.

From an institutional point of view, the

main purpose of the RBM approach is to:

- Help in developing realistic results;
- Assist in clearly identifying programme beneficiaries and designing programmes that meet their needs;
- Facilitate the use of results information to make effective management decisions;
- Monitor the progress of expected results with the use of suitable indicators;
- Increase knowledge and improve management and implementation practice through lessons learned;
- Generate and use performance information for accountability reporting to external stakeholders.

But the first beneficiaries are the managers themselves. They are likely to have much more control over the activities they are responsible for, be in a better position to take well-informed decisions and to share this experience with their colleagues and all other stakeholders.

## Resources

According to CIDA's RBM handbook, a Performance Measurement Framework (also referred to as the Performance Monitoring Framework) is an essential tool for systematically planning and collecting relevant information for monitoring, learning and reporting.

So the main elements of a PMF are:

**Results:** What will be achieved in the short, medium and long-term.

**Indicators:** Evidence that helps to measure progress towards achieving results.

**Sources of information:** Individuals, organisations, reports and other documents.

**Data collection methods and techniques:** The methods and techniques that will be used to measure results e.g. semi-structured interviews, focus groups, PRA techniques, etc.

**Frequency:** How often the information will be collected. At start up, programmes will naturally focus more on activities since it is still too early to monitor results. This will change as programmes progress to monitoring the achievement of short, medium and long-term results.

**Responsibility:** Who will do the work. It is important that specific people are identified to do this, in order to ensure consistency and possibilities for follow-up.

This is what a PMF might look like:

**Table 5: Performance monitoring framework**

Results	Performance indicators	Data source	Data collection methods	How often?	Who will do the work?
<b>Impact</b>					
<b>Outcomes</b>					
<b>Outputs</b>					
<b>Activities</b>					

Such a PMF is best developed through a multi-stakeholder workshop. It is crucial to involve the direct beneficiaries, so that the results and indicators reflect the beneficiaries' point of view of what changes should be desired and

anticipated. This will also provide an opportunity to determine the capacity of the organisation for collecting and analysing information and to identify areas requiring strengthening.

## Advantages

- An RBM system that is well entrenched in an organization's management style is beneficial for programme management because it becomes possible to see how the outputs produced are actually utilized and whether they are relevant to the overall goal of the programme. It enables the programme to adjust accordingly; for example, by involving more stakeholders, initiating more activities and so on.
- Because the approach tries to involve stakeholders and beneficiaries right from the start, there is a greater chance of 'buy in'. This involvement can also lead to capacities of some community members being built – through their engagement in gathering information.
- As mentioned in UNESCO's RBM manual, RBM helps to move the focus of programming, managing and decision-making, from inputs and processes to the objectives to be met. At the **planning stage** it ensures that there is a discussion of the necessary and sufficient sum of the interventions to achieve an expected result.

## Possible Disadvantages or Limitations

Common mistakes encountered when implementing RBM include:

- Confusing completed activities with outputs;
- Making unclear linkages between the different levels of results so that it becomes hard to establish how a specific result has been established;
- Overemphasizing results that are easy to quantify at the expense of less tangible, but no less important results;
- Identifying unrealistic results – they can sometimes be too ambitious compared to the time and resources that the programme has at its disposal;
- Failing to achieve a balance between qualitative and quantitative indicators;
- Confusing indicators with results.

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### For more information:

Ashbourne E, Balkind J and Cooper H, **Emerging Good Practices in Managing for Development Results: Source Book**, World Bank, first edition 2006, second edition 2007.

CIDA, **RBM Handbook on Developing Results Chains: The Basics of RBM as applied to 100 Project Examples**, Results-Based Management Division, 2000.

Ed O'Keefe, **Conducting Baseline Studies for Community Development Monitoring**, Synergy Global Consulting, December 2004.

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, **Designing and Building a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System**, 2004.

UNDP, **Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results**, UNDP Evaluation Office, January 2002.

UNESCO, **Results-Based Programming, Management and Monitoring (RBM) at UNESCO: Guiding Principles**, Bureau of Strategic Planning, 2008.

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# Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS)

Developed and defined by ActionAid International, the Accountability, Learning and Planning System – or ALPS – is an M&E framework that emphasises critical reflection on development programmes that should ensure accountability and facilitate a review and reformulation of strategies.

ActionAid's programmes are rights-based, focusing on six themes:

- **Women's rights;**
- **The right to education;**
- **The right to food**
- **The right to human security during conflicts and emergencies;**
- **The right to life and dignity in the face of HIV&AIDS;**
- **The right to just and democratic governance.**

As set out in the organisation's revised manual on ALPS in 2006<sup>1</sup>, ActionAid has four main goals:

<sup>1</sup>ActionAid International (2007).

- a. Poor and excluded communities will exercise power to secure their rights;
- b. Women and girls will gain power to secure their rights;
- c. Citizens and civil society across the world will fight for rights and justice;
- d. States and their institutions will be accountable and democratic and will promote, protect and fulfil human rights for all.

The achievement of such goals – upholding rights and promoting social justice – is certainly not easy to measure by what we have been calling 'conventional' or 'logframe' M&E approaches. ALPS, then, is a comprehensive M&E system that seeks to meet the criteria we have formulated in Part One of this catalogue for 'alternative' approaches:

- Adaptable for assessing processes of social change;

- Promoting organizational learning and strategic adjustments;
- Recognizing complexity and uncertainty;
- Recognizing diversity of efforts and focusing on contributions to achievements;
- Valuing incremental shifts;
- Acknowledging that social change occurs over long timeframes;
- Addressing changes happening at local levels and also structural changes at national or international levels;
- Feeding back to target groups, as well as securing their involvement in shaping M&E approaches;
- Leading to critical reflection on the part of all agencies involved in programmes.

## Key Features

### ALPS Objectives

The ALPS manual presents three main objectives that pick up the three key words of the system:

- To deepen **accountability** to all stakeholders, particularly the poor and excluded people with whom the programme is working;
- To ensure that all processes create space for innovation, **learning** and critical reflection, and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy;
- To ensure that **planning** is participatory and puts analysis of power relations and a commitment to addressing women's rights at the core of all organisational processes.

### Core elements

Again, as formulated in the revised manual, there are four core elements of the system:

<p><b>1. Principles:</b></p>	<p>ALPS seeks to strengthen accountability to the poor and excluded people and to strengthen commitment to women’s rights. It emphasises critical reflection and promotes transparency. It requires a constant analysis of power.</p>
<p><b>2. Attitudes and behaviour:</b></p>	<p>ALPS can only be effective if programme staff, volunteers, activists, trustees and partners hold attitudes and behave in ways that fit with the programme’s shared vision, mission and values.</p>
<p><b>3. Organisational policies and processes:</b></p>	<p>ALPS integrates cycles of appraisal, strategy formulation, planning and reviews. It also includes auditing processes to further strengthen the accountability of the system. It requires transparency in all that is done.</p>
<p><b>4. ALPS applies to the whole of an organisation and forms the basis for its partnerships:</b></p>	<p>ALPS applies, for example, to the whole of ActionAid, including affiliates, country programmes and all parts of the international secretariat. It also forms the basis of the partnership with other organisations. It sets out minimum core requirements and standards.</p>

So, from this it can be seen that ALPS is indeed more than just an M&E system. It enables accountability in relation to programme performance; it also promotes critical reflection on the part of all actors in programmes – and it informs planning.

Figure 7: ALPS core elements



## The Organisational Processes

The total ALPS system involves 12 organisational processes and mechanisms, starting with the formulation of plans, budgets and strategies at the grassroots level, which help determine country strategies, which in turn influence the overall ActionAid international strategy:

1. Appraisals,
2. Strategies,
3. Strategic plans,
4. Annual plans and budgets,
5. Strategic reviews,
6. Peer reviews,
7. Organisational climate reviews,
8. Annual participatory reviews and reflection processes,
9. Annual reports,
10. Internal governance annual reviews,
11. External and internal audits,
12. Open information policy.

**1. Appraisals:** Their purpose is to determine the relevance and feasibility of new programmes; special projects; country, regional or international campaigns – on the basis of financial, technical and political considerations. Their formulation involves internal stakeholder groups (including finance, sponsorship, funding affiliates and thematic staff) and external stakeholders (including poor and excluded members of the community, potential partners, donors and government).

**2. Strategies:** These are the key documents that chart the course of ActionAid's work at both international and national levels. The process of formulating the International Strategy is led by the Chief Executive and it involves a dedicated team composed of a cross-section of staff from the whole organisation, in consultation with staff, trustees and other key stakeholders – particularly the poor and excluded peoples. The strategy document includes ActionAid's vision, mission and values; a context analysis; goals, strategic priorities and key actions; governance mechanisms; and expected outcomes. The formulation occurs every 5-6 years. The country strategies, aligned with the international strategy and following a similar consultative process, are formulated at least once every five years.

**3. Strategic plans:** Explain how the international strategy will be delivered by international theme, regions, function and international campaigns. Strategic plans for programmes explain how country strategies will be supported. The plans outline the key objectives, strategic actions and key expected outcomes towards achieving the objectives of the ActionAid international strategy and the country strategies. They also

set out the broad allocation of resources for the plan period. In this, they provide guidelines for the annual planning and budgeting process. Especially for the programme strategic plans, the consultative process is as extensive as possible, reflecting stakeholder perspectives, ideas and commitments.

**4. Annual plans and budgets:** Describing activities and the allocation of resources, they are primarily tools for management, to enable the systematic achievement of strategic objectives. With stakeholders, they are the key accountability mechanisms. They include brief contextual updates; outlines of major learning from the review and reflection process; description of main proposed activities; comments on relevance to strategies; budgets; comments on fundraising and communication plans; staffing plans; risk analysis.

**5. Participatory review and reflection processes (PRRPs):** A set of PRRPs is carried out each year by countries, regions, themes and functions. Working with stakeholder groups, they assess what has been done; take into account what has been learnt; consider what will be done differently in the future. The process involves as many stakeholder groups as possible, including poor and excluded people, partners, donors and supporters.

**6. Annual reports:** These are key documents for reporting progress and sharing information about outcomes of programmes, lessons and challenges – in the light of relevant strategic plans and appraisals. They include:

- Key areas of progress and outcomes;
- Summary of 'prouds and sorry's', key achievements, challenges and lessons;
- Review of financial performance, income and expenditure trends;
- Progress on developing internal governance and board development;
- Perspectives and testimonies of main stakeholders in their assessments of change;
- Case studies, oral testimonies and stories of change that reflect lessons and outcomes of work during the year;
- Stories capturing what has been achieved as a result of a shift in power relationships.

**7. External reviews:** Carried out before the end of each strategic plan period for ActionAid International as a whole, country programmes, themes and campaigns, the review process:

- Involves all key stakeholders, especially the poor and excluded people;
- Assesses impact and changes brought about (whether positive or negative) in the lives of the poor and the excluded;

- Assesses performance against strategic objectives;
- Judges the effectiveness of accountability processes to poor and excluded groups, partners, allies and other key stakeholders;
- Assesses the changes in the nature and quality of relationships and partnerships;
- Assesses and analyses the costs incurred in work on strategic objectives vis-à-vis performance and impact;
- Analyses financial performance when applicable (fundraising, sponsorship, income planning, etc);
- Assesses organisational effectiveness;
- Captures the main learning that should feed into the next strategic plan;
- Captures stories about what has been achieved as a result of shifts in power relationships;
- Sets out key issues and recommendations for the peer review process and the strategy formulation.

**8. Peer reviews of country programmes:** Reviews of external reviewers' observations, comments and recommendations. Carried out by a small team including a Country Director, International Director and an International Trustee. The team interacts with a sample of people, organisations and communities covered by the external review.

**9. Governance reviews:** Carried out by the Board of Trustees as a reflection on their role as governors of ActionAid International. They assess the performance of the board, in order to encourage accountability, identify required changes and potential new governance initiatives. They focus on:

- Progress against performance plan;
- Teamwork of the board;
- Relationship with management;
- Relationship with affiliates and associates;
- Lessons learnt and improvement plans.

**10. Staff climate surveys:** For taking stock of the state of the institution and for considering

responsive strategies. Conducted by country HR/OD managers and contracted consultants. The survey includes an analysis of:

- Work facilitation and work environment;
- Policies, systems and support;
- Power and participation (empowerment);
- Attitudes and behaviour;
- Team building and team functioning;
- Internal communications;
- Learning and reflection;
- Women's rights and gender equity;
- Leadership.

It occurs once every two years.

**11. Audits:** An independent examination of accounting records, procedures and activities. Both external and internal audits are carried out. They are designed to ensure the efficient and effective utilisation and management of funds.

**12. Open information policy:** Guided by ActionAid International's commitment to transparency, the policy involves the timely and free flow of information, in accessible language and format, to stakeholders and especially to poor and excluded peoples and their organisations. The policy also recognises that ActionAid International is directly accountable to its staff, partners, donors and host governments. The kinds of information freely shared include:

- Vision, mission, values, goals and objectives;
- Names and brief biographies of key functionaries;
- Finance, gender, fundraising policies, etc;
- Staff employment data;
- Strategy papers, three year plans and annual budgets;
- Reviews and annual reports;
- Grants to partners and fund usage policy;
- Partners, donors, auditors, bankers and investment managers.

## Applications

An accountability, learning and planning system such as ALPS is most relevant for large INGOs like ActionAid that work through a number of partners and have multiple accountabilities – and the system is particularly relevant for aid organisations that are committed to engaging the grassroots beneficiaries in policy dialogue,

reflection on programme implementation, and adjustment of strategies. Nevertheless, there are important elements that could be adopted by any development agency, whatever its size – elements such as the programme appraisal formats, the participatory review and reflection processes, and the peer reviews.

## Resources

The rationale for, and processes of, ALPS are well documented in ActionAid's manual on the system. But with such a stress on gender issues and on information sharing with poor and excluded

groups, any organisation operating ALPS must have staff members who are well versed in rights issues and who are skilled in facilitating community-based discussion forums.

## Advantages

- The most striking feature of ALPS is the way in which it integrates M&E within a planning framework;
- Whilst recognising accountability responsibilities, the main emphasis of ALPS is on organisational learning;
- Applied rigorously and openly it should bolster commitment to an organisation's goals and instil a sense of teamwork;
- Though comprehensive in its coverage of programme and financial management, the ethos of ALPS is to minimise bureaucracy;
- For an organisation that takes a rights-based approach in its programmes, ALPS itself embodies such an approach;
- It facilitates accountability and transparency through such methods as participatory budget processes, public information boards describing activities and related budgets, social audits and involvement of communities in monitoring the work of implementing partners.

## Possible Disadvantages or Limitations

- ALPS is strong in its affirmation of principles – principles to do with gender sensitivities, with empowerment of the poor, with transparency in transaction – but it might not always be easy to find staff who can internalise and act on such principles.
- One central concern in the system – one vital factor in organisational learning – is the exploration of power relationships within the organisation. But some managers of organisations might well be reluctant to openly engage in such explorations.
- The ALPS manual is effective in describing the overall system of reviews and reporting, but it does not describe some of the techniques involved. One example is the 'capturing of stories'... And this is a central theme of the next M&E approach, 'Most Significant Change'.

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### For more information:

ActionAid International, **Alps: Accountability, Learning and Planning System**, 2007.

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# Most Significant Change

Most Significant Change (MSC) is a highly participatory M&E approach that is essentially a collection, analysis and selection of stories about the progress and impact of a programme – stories that record ‘most significant change’.

The most comprehensive description of MSC is a manual written by Rick Davies and Jess Dart<sup>1</sup>. This is their ‘nutshell’ description:

‘The most significant change (MSC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring and

evaluation. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analysing the data. It is a form of monitoring because it occurs throughout the program cycle and provides information to help people manage the program. It contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of the program as a whole.

‘Essentially, the process involves the collection of significant changes (SCs)

stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The designated staff and stakeholders are initially involved by ‘searching’ for project impact. Once changes have been captured, various people sit down together, read the stories aloud and have regular and often in-depth discussions about the value of these reported changes. When the technique is implemented successfully, whole teams of people begin to focus their attention on program impact.’

<sup>1</sup> Davies RJ and Dart JJ (2005)

## Key Features

The Davies and Dart MSC Guide presents an overview of the ten implementation steps:

- 1. Starting and raising interest;**
- 2. Defining the domains of change;**
- 3. Defining the reporting period;**
- 4. Collecting SC stories;**
- 5. Selecting the most significant of the stories;**
- 6. Feeding back the results of the selection process;**
- 7. Verification of stories;**
- 8. Quantification;**
- 9. Secondary analysis and meta-monitoring;**
- 10. Revising the system.**

### 1. Raising interest

The first of these steps involves introducing a range of stakeholders to MSC and fostering their interest and commitment to participate.

### 2. Domains of change

The next step is to identify the ‘domains of change’ to be monitored. This is a matter of selected stakeholders identifying broad domains as, for example, ‘changes in people’s lives’, that are not as precisely defined as conventional performance indicators; they are deliberately kept loose – and to be refined by the actual users.

### 3. Frequency of monitoring

The third step is to decide how frequently to monitor changes taking place in these domains.

### 4. Collecting stories

‘Significant change’ stories are collected from those most directly involved, such as participants and field staff. The stories are collected by asking a simple question such as: ‘During the last month, in your opinion, what was the most significant change that took place for participants in the programme?’ In addition to the telling of a story, respondents are encouraged to say why they consider the particular change they have focused on to be the most significant one.

### 5. Selecting stories

The stories are then analysed and filtered up through the ‘levels of authority’ typically found within a programme. Each level of the hierarchy reviews a series of stories sent to them by the level below; it selects the single most significant account of change within each of the agreed domains. Each group then sends the selected stories up to the next level of the programme hierarchy, and the number of stories is whittled down through a systematic and transparent process.

## 6. Feeding back

Every time stories are selected, the criteria used to select them are recorded and fed back to all interested stakeholders, so that each subsequent round of story collection and selection is informed by feedback from previous rounds. The organisation is effectively recording and adjusting the direction of its attention – and the criteria it uses for valuing the events it sees there.

After this process has been used for some time, such as a year, a document is produced with all stories selected at the uppermost organisational level over that period in each domain of change. The stories are accompanied by the reasons the stories were selected. The programme funders are asked to assess the stories in this document and select those that best represent the sort of outcomes they wish to fund. They are also asked to document the reasons for their choice. This information is fed back to programme managers.

## 7. Verifying

The selected stories can then be verified by visiting the sites where the described events took place. The purpose of this is two-fold: to check that stories have been reported accurately

and honestly, and to provide an opportunity to gather more information about events seen as especially significant. If conducted some time after the event, a visit also offers a chance to see what has happened since the event was first documented.

## 8. Quantifying

The next step is quantification, which can take place at two stages. When an account of change is first described, it is possible to include quantitative as well as qualitative information. It is also possible to quantify the extent to which the most significant changes identified in one location have taken place in other locations within a specific period.

## 9. Meta-monitoring

The next step after quantification is monitoring the monitoring system itself. This can include looking at who participated and how they affected the contents, and analysing how often different types of changes are reported.

## 10. Revising the system

The final step is to revise the design of the MSC process to take into account what has been learned as a direct result of using it and from analysing its use.

### The kernel

In what it calls the 'kernel' of the MSC process, the Guide has a question along the lines of:

*'Looking back over the last month [or six months or year], what do you think was the most significant change of all?'*

And a similar question is posed when the answers to the first question – the stories

– are considered by another group of participants:

*'From all these stories of significant change, what do you think was the most significant change of all?'*

It is a process that provides a relatively simple means for making sense of a large and complex amount of information collected from many participants across a

range of settings.

So there is a twin purpose: MSC not only generates stories that say significant things about the impact of a programme, by recording the criteria used by the various management hierarchies, it also reveals most significant things about the values and objectives of the implementing or funding agency.

## Applications

As the Guide suggests, MSC is better suited to the following kinds of programme:

- Complex programmes that produce diverse and emergent outcomes;
- Those mounted by large organisations with numerous organisational layers;
- Those (like those in the HRSJ sector) that focus particularly on social change – change in people's lives, the sustainability of institutions, improvements in organisational performance, policy formulation and the maintenance of partnerships;
- Programmes that are participatory in ethos;
- Those that are designed with repeated contact between field staff and participants;
- Those that provide highly customised services to a small group of beneficiaries – such as family counselling;
- And programmes implemented by agencies that are struggling with conventional monitoring systems.

MSC suits those organisations that are ready to try something different – and that are open to discuss failings as well as achievements.

## Resources

### 1. Facilitators

Any organisation wanting to implement MSC needs what the Guide calls 'champions'. These are people who are genuinely excited about the approach, are willing to invest their time in learning about it, and are then ready to design how it can be implemented across their organisation. They are people who can:

- Motivate others to adopt MSC;

- Teach the skills of story collection;
- Coordinate the selection of stories;
- Ensure feedback occurs.

### 2. The Guide

The MSC Guide is a detailed commentary on all ten steps involved in the approach. But what follows are brief summaries of the main concepts and techniques:

#### MSC Guide: Main concepts and techniques

**Domains of change:** Broad (and as the Guide says, 'often fuzzy') categories of possible 'significant change' stories. Three possible domains are: changes in the quality of people's lives; changes in the nature of people's participation in programme activities; changes in the sustainability of an organisation and activities.

'A domain of change is not an indicator. Good indicators are supposed to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound). Indicators must be defined so that everyone defines them in the same way. Domains of change, on the other hand, are deliberately fuzzy to allow people to have different interpretations of what constitutes a change in that area.'

**Reporting period:** For organisations using MSC, the frequency of collecting SC stories has varied from fortnightly to yearly. But the most common is quarterly – to coincide with the usual reporting period.

**Systematic process of selection:** Validity is enhanced by the rigour with which stories are analysed. All are analysed by a panel of designate stakeholders, who attach their interpretations to the stories. The selected stories can be passed on to another group who also attaches its interpretations and selection criteria. This process is claimed to be more systematic than the way most organisations capture and discuss information about performance.

**Purposive sampling:** MSC sampling method is selective rather than inclusive. Rather than collecting information on average circumstances, it focuses on exceptional circumstances. (Some would argue that this is not a reliable basis on which to make judgements about the performance of a programme. The counter argument is that such purposive sampling is not only a legitimate form of data collection in qualitative research, but it also provides greater learning from the 'information-rich cases'.)

## Advantages

Though MSC does not replace the ordinary kind of monitoring – the tracking of activities and the achievement of targets in relation to plans – it has sparked keen interest in a number of organisations because:

- It can provide a rich picture of what is happening within a programme – much richer than what can be conveyed by statistics.
- It is a participatory approach to monitoring that does not require special professional skills – though it is important that staff members using it develop ways of 'freeing' people to tell their stories.
- It encourages analysis and interpretation as well as just data collection, in as much as people need to explain why they think one story of change is more important than another.
- So it builds up the capacity of staff to facilitate discussion, to analyse data and to conceptualise impact.
- It is a good way to identify unexpected changes brought about by a programme.
- It is, therefore, useful in monitoring 'bottom-up' initiatives that do not have pre-defined outcomes or targets against which to measure achievements.
- It helps to expose and explore the values 'carried' by an organisation – at all its levels – and to promote a discussion about which of those values should have most weight.
- It is not afraid to recognise – and debate – a diversity of perceptions and opinions.
- It puts events in context, by using 'thick description' – detailed accounts of events placed in their local settings, 'where people and their views of events are visible'.
- It enables a changing focus on what is important – unlike in conventional monitoring systems where indicators tend to remain the same each reporting period.
- It fosters a shared vision.
- It renews staff enthusiasm as they witness, firsthand, changes that can be attributed to their work.

- It fosters stronger partnerships through the collecting and filtering of stories.
  - It provides materials for enriching an organisation's communication strategy.
- The focus is on learning rather than on accountability. 'MSC stories can reflect real changes in the world as well as changing views within an organisation about what is important.'

## Possible Disadvantages or Limitations

- Certainly, MSC is time consuming – not only in collecting the stories, but also in setting up the array of selection meetings.
- It cannot (and should not) be used as the sole technique for producing summative judgements of the overall progress (achievements and shortfalls) of a programme.
- It often tends to favour stories of success rather than failure.
- Its selection process for the stories is highly subjective. (Therefore, it is always important to be aware of who are on the selection panels and what their values are.)
- Its selection process – decisions being made by a majority – might tend to suppress harsh or unpopular views.
- The selection process might give rise to competitive tensions.
- It might mean that there is a bias in favour of those who are good at telling stories.

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### For more information:

Dart JJ and Davies RJ, 'A Dialogical Story-Based Evaluation Tool: The Most Significant Change Technique', **American Journal of Evaluation** Vol. 24: pp. 137-155, 2003.

Davies RJ and Dart JJ, **The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use**, April 2005.

Davies RJ, 'An Evolutionary Approach to Organisational Learning', in Mosse, D, Farrington J and Rew A, **Development as Process: Concepts and Methods for Working with Complexity**, Routledge/ODI, 1998.

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# Critical Webs of Power and Change

The Critical Webs of Power and Change (CWPC) approach was developed by ActionAid specifically for their social change and advocacy work. It was in an effort to introduce a culture of careful planning, reflection and learning in their people-centred advocacy programmes. What follows below is a summary of the approach, as we have adapted it from ActionAid's Critical Webs of Power and Change Resource Pack<sup>1</sup>.

Often, the terms 'monitoring' and 'evaluation' have been used

<sup>1</sup> Chapman et al (2005)

as referring to activities carried out especially for financial accountability to donors. In designing CWPC, ActionAid have attempted instead to use the terms to match more effectively the requirements of social change organizations; instead of evaluation, they use the terms '*reflection and learning*'. Monitoring is incorporated in the process as an important step in developing '*lessons and knowledge*'.

This approach is closely related to the other main M&E system used by ActionAid – the Accountability, Learning and

Planning System (ALPS) – that is explored above.

In particular, the two approaches lay emphasis on the nature of incremental changes and the length of time that social change can take, the power-play that influences programmes and their implementation, and the need for critical reflection on the part of the agencies involved. Also, both M&E systems advocate for monitoring and evaluation as a process of learning that should be participatory and used as an aid to programme planning and strategy.

## Key Features

The main processes of this approach are:

1. Planning;
2. Monitoring;
3. Reflection and learning;
4. Critical thinking;
5. Participation;
6. Use of information, accountability and sharing.

### 1. Planning

Planning is a matter of identifying the desired impacts of an intervention, designing implementation strategies for achieving these impacts – and then monitoring them. Planning in advocacy work involves the development of:

**Contextual and problem analysis:** Also referred to as a baseline or assessment study. This is an analysis of problems in their unique contexts. It might involve posing some questions such as, 'What are the problems to be tackled?' 'Which of these are within the organisation's capacity?' 'What are the most important forces, players and events that can affect implementation?' During this process, power and gender analyses should be undertaken. (See the Toolkit section on how to conduct gender analyses).

**An overall 'change strategy':** Usually, a long-term plan that reflects where the organization is, what it intends to achieve, and how to go about achieving it.

**A time-bound plan:** To guide advocacy activities. This takes into account the context within which implementation is taking place, sets out the changes the programme hopes to achieve in the short and medium-term, and the strategies to make those changes happen.

**Tactics and actions:** Usually short-term activities for specific moments and opportunities during implementation that advance the immediate plans of the programme.

**A monitoring system:** A system of questions and answers that gives an indication of whether implementation is progressing as scheduled, and whether the changes hoped for are being achieved.

The planning process should be as participatory as possible, involving normally excluded, marginalised and other relevant groups. However, there are always challenges to be overcome when seeking to maximise participation – such as understanding power dynamics, recognising the different levels of access to information, and estimating the time and resources needed for the exercise to be effective.

## 2. Monitoring

In advocacy work there are two key aspects to be monitored: the planned *activities* and the hoped for *changes* that are a result of these activities. These could be changes in the context within which the implementation is taking place – and changes in people's lives, in their power structures and relationships. Monitoring provides the information necessary for promoting accountability, making assessments and deriving learning.

### Monitoring is particularly valuable when:

- The information collected and generated proves useful in adjusting programme implementation;
- It supports the empowerment of target groups and encourages collective action;
- It is not too time consuming.

Monitoring can be both formal and informal. It is formal when it draws on progress reports on the programme's implementation; it is informal when it records ad hoc observations or impressions of key players. The challenge presented here is that formal monitoring is usually done for reporting to donors and, as such, it is often considered more 'real' and valid than the informal monitoring – often seen as not 'scientific' enough. Also, formal monitoring usually is more time consuming and, unfortunately, is rarely used for learning and for effecting changes in programme strategies. On the other hand, informal monitoring is often considered not objective enough to be taken seriously; notwithstanding that ad hoc observations of attitude change and shifts in power dynamics in a community can be important indicators of a programme's impact.

When setting up a monitoring system, some useful considerations for guiding the process may include:

- Considering who should and wants to be involved;
- Clarifying participants' expectations of the process, and in what way each person or group wants to contribute;
- Defining the priorities for monitoring and reviewing;
- Identifying what information is needed to best monitor actions and changes that the organisation wants to achieve (specifying indicators);
- Agreeing on the methods, responsibilities and timing of information collection.

Once monitoring has begun, a good way to check whether the information collected should continue being collected or revised, is to see whether it is being used for decision making and reporting.

In selecting indicators, it is important that they are kept simple and are within the means and available resources of the organisation. They should be:

- Relevant: showing something about the system that should be taken into consideration;
- Easy to understand, even by people who are not experts;
- Reliable: the information provided by the indicator can be trusted;
- Based on accessible data: the information is available or can be gathered while there is still time to act.

Advocacy goals often shift as the context changes; therefore, pre-set outcomes may not be the best yardstick by which to measure progress. Indicators also need to change accordingly.

## 3. Reflection and learning

ActionAid views 'reflection and learning' as moments when they pause to look back at their experiences to judge the effectiveness of their strategies. This is also when they learn lessons from these experiences to guide them in re-orienting their strategies. Changes in the context and power relations that have occurred during the time of implementation of advocacy work are reflected upon, with a particular emphasis on the participation of marginalised groups in analysing what has happened. This is useful in helping these groups to draw lessons that strengthen their own knowledge, sense of empowerment, and ability to exercise their rights.

Because they explore both successes and failures, and call for critical reviews, these moments are sometimes considered threatening; therefore, an atmosphere of open questioning and constructive

criticism should be fostered within the group. The process should be interesting and fun – but should also consider the power dynamics within the group.

When organising for a reflection and learning exercise, it is important to take into account:

- **The time and place in which reflection occurs:** Getting this right helps to create the right frame of mind to be fully involved in the exercise. Constant interruptions or an uncomfortable venue will interfere with this.
- **Interpersonal environment:** Participants have to feel that their opinions will be valued and that it is possible to question the assumptions and suggestions of others. If there are other issues at stake – such as power plays going on between two camps or individuals – reflection and learning can become difficult.
- **Prior preparation:** The sequence of discussion of issues will also affect the exercise. If need be, a skilled outside facilitator can be invited to steer the exercise.
- **Information:** The process should provide enough information to ensure a good reflection session.

#### 4. Critical thinking

This is a process that entails asking questions, testing ideas, using information, interpreting evidence, making judgments and probing under the surface to determine how best to respond to constantly changing realities.

Below are the elements of critical thinking as listed in the resource pack:

- It is more an active process than a passive one;
- It involves individuals and groups raising questions themselves;
- In people-centred advocacy, it involves asking who is benefiting and who is losing in a given situation;
- It requires self-confidence, as it involves trusting one's own reasoning and analytical skills;
- It means being careful and not jumping to conclusions, which entails taking time to gather information, interpreting it and then judging its credibility;
- It involves taking into account one's own biases, perceptions and emotions – and how these affect the conclusions that one arrives at.

Within an organisation, skills in critical thinking can be developed in various ways:

- Challenging each other respectfully and seeking out others who have developed and fine-tuned these skills;
- Carrying out action research exercises where a group consciously sets out to learn and draw lessons from its work by reflecting on its actions;
- Participating in programme reviews and reflections;
- Taking part in exchanges, activities and debates where people share and discuss the lessons, questions and challenges they face;
- Encouraging an atmosphere of debate, learning and support in the organisation.

#### 5. Participation

In people-centred advocacy, participation is viewed as a right: the right of the poor and marginalised to participate in decisions that affect their lives, from voting in elections to making decisions about resource use and personal relationships. Transparency is a pre-requisite of genuine participation.

For participation to be truly effective, the processes need to move beyond ensuring that people have a voice to building their capacity towards critical thinking and the ability to organize themselves into effective groups.

Participation should be particularly emphasised during planning sessions, since this is when major decisions are first made, at the onset of and throughout implementation to create buy-in, and during monitoring and evaluation – not merely as respondents but also in deciding methods and indicators. As will be seen in the next section, this is the same approach emphasised in ALPS.

The most appropriate channels to use, and the levels of participation to reach, in people-centred advocacy vary depending on the context and the issues. Culture plays an important role, for example, if an organization decides to use meetings; in certain cultures, women cannot be in the same room as men or cannot enter public places. At other times, many different languages are used in an area and participants can only express themselves confidently in their own language. If this is not catered for adequately, then the chance for them to actively engage in discussions may be lost.

It is easy to get lost, however, in over-participation with too much time taken by multiple meetings and events. It is therefore important to select with whom, how and when to participate, in order to make it an asset rather than a hindrance to programme work.

## 6. Sharing and accountability

Collective action, sharing and trust, are valuable drivers in people-centred advocacy, since they help to ensure coordination, cooperation and responsibility among the individuals and organizations involved.

Sharing and accountability processes are linked but distinct. Sharing involves exchanging stories, analyses, insights and information about implementation experiences with colleagues, and people outside the organisation who have similar concerns. This creates dialogue with others; it encourages learning and opportunities

for collaborative action. Accountability, on the other hand, focuses more on governance issues, around how decisions are made and who controls resources. It also focuses on how resources and actions are monitored, accounted for and judged to be effective – or not. It is about taking responsibility and fostering relationships among those directly involved in advocacy work.

Through accountability mechanisms, organisations can monitor the way they lead, make decisions and account for expenditures.

## Skills and Resources

### Facilitation skills

Facilitation and its accompanying skills of promoting critical thinking, questioning, and collaboration is important in all aspects of advocacy – from planning and monitoring to assessment and learning. It can be placed in the hands of one person or a team, depending on the size of the group and the complexity of the task. A facilitator comes in handy when an organization is:

- Trying to plan its advocacy work;
- Reflecting on experiences, reviewing progress, or drawing lessons from its work;
- Being aware of difficult power dynamics operating in a group;
- Trying out a particular method, framework or tool that is new.

The facilitator, if an outsider, should have experience in popular education and processes that promote critical thinking and give voice to the poor and marginalized. Insiders, members of the organization, can also take over the facilitation role but, since they will then have a clear stake concerning the outcomes of the meeting, they need to try not to dominate the agenda. This dual role can be quite challenging.

The facilitators should ensure participation, improve communication, support analysis, and help the group examine and solve problems and make decisions. They should set the mood and climate of the group and keep energy high.

When it comes to recording, there are various techniques that facilitators can employ, such as the use of large newsprint notepads, flipcharts and other visual materials. Taking notes that everyone can see during meetings helps establish a common framework of understanding among the group and prevents people from repeating points.

### Questioning and listening

To help an organization learn and probe deeper into issues, it is important that someone is able to use good questioning techniques. What are needed are extended stretches of questioning and dialogue in which the answers produce information that is explored and eventually builds towards insight. Any answer, no matter how good, can be followed by another question that is re-directed to the rest of the group in order to stimulate dialogue.

During this process, the organization should create an atmosphere where everyone feels free to question each other, and a critical dialogue can emerge. The way in which questions are asked can undermine or build these sessions, and therefore care should be taken so that no one feels attacked, belittled or alienated by the process.

Questions can either be closed or open. Closed questions are specific and can be answered 'Yes' or 'No', or with a brief statement with no further elaboration required. They are useful when trying to end a discussion. On the other hand, open questions do not invite any particular answer, but open up discussion and are usually the most effective in prompting critical thinking. They allow people to express feelings and opinions and encourage them to reflect. *What? How? or Why?* are terms normally used to initiate open-ended questions. For example, 'What can we do to address this problem?' Care should be taken when asking a *Why* question because it can sound accusatory and cause people to become defensive.

The ability to ask good questions is closely linked to the ability to listen to what participants are saying. A good listener will concentrate on what is being said, be attentive to important moments in the conversation, and pay attention to the way

in which body language indicates attitude.

### Analysing power and context

Once an organisation starts to analyse how power is intertwined with and affects their advocacy work, they can broaden their actions and strategies. Analysing the context within which activities are taking place enables an understanding of the different forces at play that can affect advocacy in a particular setting. Contextual analyses can capture a snapshot of these dynamics at certain moments or period in time.

Power and context analyses should be conducted at all stages of the programme cycle – in planning, implementation, and in monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the programme takes into account how they are changing and then adapt accordingly.

In conducting power analyses, an organisation should ensure that it is participatory, involving as many stakeholders and beneficiaries as possible.

Participation has three advantages:

- It ensures dynamism and depth of discussions;
- Makes the exercise part of the empowerment process;
- Creates ownership of the work.

In conducting contextual analyses an organisation should:

- Consider using a brainstorming session to agree on how wide the sphere of focus should be. (Even though the work is being carried out at a community level, international forces such as those generated by World Bank can shape the way the work is conducted.)
- Discuss what kind of information will be required to support the analysis.
- Include a historical perspective of the context. It helps to learn from what has already been done.

### Addressing gender issues and women's rights

In its advocacy work, ActionAid believes that special attention should be paid to how issues affect the lives of women and girls. Merely ensuring that women participate in activities is not enough. It is also important to invest in their empowerment to ensure that they feel confident and able to engage fully in discussions and decision making. Discussing gender roles can be a sensitive matter, evoking strong emotions; therefore, gender discussions need to be handled carefully.

While tackling gender and women's rights, organisations should pay attention to how gender relations:

- Shape norms, values and ideologies;
- Influence the political agenda;
- Determine whose voice is heard in decision-making processes;
- Affect formal decision-making and implementation of public policies.

For more details on how to conduct gender analysis refer to the Toolkit.

### Empowerment

There are a number of possible dimensions of empowerment to be taken into account when thinking about the strategies and impacts of advocacy work. The categories sometimes tend to overlap, but they include:

- **Political empowerment:** Through people's willingness and capacity to participate in decision making processes by using channels such as local councils, unions, political parties and so on.
- **Social empowerment:** Related to people's power in everyday life and participation in community organizations, social events, networking, access to social services such as healthcare and education, and the ability to make decisions about their lives and bodies.
- **Economic empowerment:** Related to people's ability to generate and sustain a means of livelihood through employment opportunities; access to, and the ability to use, resources such as land and livestock; and access to financial and technical support offered by the government to improve productive capacity.
- **Cultural empowerment:** Related to people's ability to review, challenge and change traditional beliefs, attitudes and values.

Mapping these different dimensions of empowerment can be very useful for groups when they are developing indicators of change or finding case study stories to share lessons and learning from their advocacy work.

### Critical timelines

Timelines help an organization to identify trends or stages of the advocacy's evolution over time, assist with the documentation of key events, and facilitate discussions about how and why changes occur and the challenges faced.

Timelines can be developed using pictures, words or symbols, and they can be drawn up in a brainstorm session. Events, actions and trends are noted down using different colour cards and placed along a time-line. Then participants are asked to note on their own cards (using either symbols or words) what big, small, positive or negative events happened as a result of their work and when it happened. It is important to allow for enough time, and also enough space, to construct the time-line.

Timelines are a flexible yet powerful tool to initiate discussions and map the historical progress of advocacy work. [Refer to the Toolkit for more information on how to use time-lines.]

### Exchange visits

Exchange visits involve activists visiting other organisations to share experiences and expand their knowledge. Visiting the field allows people to see actual changes and strategies at the community level that others at higher levels of the organisation are not always aware of. Field visits are also very energising and give people more confidence and greater drive for learning, and for putting that learning into practice when they return home.

### Risk analysis

In advocacy work, there is always potential for backlash and conflict. Carrying out a risk analysis helps to identify the risks involved and to plan for how to deal with the potential impacts.

When conducting it, some guiding questions to ask could be:

- What are the major things that can go wrong?
- What is the potential impact of these risks – high, medium or low?
- How likely is it that this negative situation will happen – high, medium or low?
- What can be done to reduce the risks and to protect the organisation?

A risk analysis can help an organisation to select from a range of possible strategies, and to reflect more on how to minimise risks. It is best done in a workshop setting, where participants are encouraged to have brainstorm sessions. Different coloured cards can be used to signify impacts and the likelihoods of negative impacts taking place. As with the time-line, enough time and floor space should be allowed to chart it.

#### To make successful exchange visits, organizations need to consider the following:

**Logistics:** How much will the visit cost? Is it within the organisation's means? Are there any language barriers that may be encountered requiring a translator?

**Who:** Power dynamics in an organization can sometimes result in the same people going for the visits each and every time. According to the kind of activities that the organization being visited undertakes, it is important that staff members who will benefit most from the visit and who can best communicate and apply the lessons learnt should get

the opportunity. The people making the visit should learn as much as possible about the host organisation and make a plan of what they want to learn. It would be good to share with the host the lessons and challenges that your own organisation has experienced so that both organisations benefit from the visit.

**During the visit:** If the host would like any part of the discussion to remain confidential, this must be honoured. It is good to clarify to the host how the visiting organisation intends

to use the information learnt. During the visit, the visiting organisation might find it useful to hold short reflection sessions to review what has been learnt and discuss relevant new questions.

**After the visit:** The people who went on the visit have an obligation to share what they learnt with the rest of the organisation. Instead of a written report, a workshop presentation is more useful because it allows for discussion.

## Advocacy networks

Networks (also called alliances or coalitions) allow for the development of new insights through the interaction of different perspectives and approaches. Advocacy networks can be formal or informal, local or global, in terms of membership. They can be temporary or permanent associations.

The performance of a network needs to be monitored and, to do this, an organisation should consider a few things, such as:

- How well is the network being managed and led? A key focus should be on how far the network is creating the conditions and opportunities for synergy, joint action and joint reflection.
- How effectively is the network undertaking joint advocacy? Deciding on and implementing processes of planning, reflection and learning within networks requires agreement between its members.

The most important aspect of networks is the attitude of its members: their openness to dialogue and willingness to negotiate makes a big difference in whether organisations are able to work together.

## Applications

The Critical Webs approach is a comprehensive planning, reviewing and learning approach that is best used at the beginning of an advocacy programme to create 'buy-in' from staff members right at the start. It is useful in helping to understand, and work with, power dynamics within an organisation and the context within which implementation is taking place. Organisations that have learning as a key motivator for monitoring activities will find it useful, as will organisations working in rights-based development. Some of the tools and resources can be adapted to fit many organisations – and they can be used either in combination or separately.

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### For more information:

Chapman J, Junior AP, Uprety LP, Okwaare s, Azumah V, Miller V, **Critical Webs of Power and Change: Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy**, ActionAid, 2005.

Peavey, F, **Strategic Questioning for Personal and Social Change**, 1992.

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## Advantages

- The tools and resources in CWPC, such as gender analysis, time-lines and so on, can be modified and adapted for use either individually or in combination.
- It advocates strongly for the participation of all stakeholders and provides good tools for reflection and learning. It encourages organisations to be more critical of their planning and implementation processes, and it provides an atmosphere of learning, critical analysis and dialogue.

## Limitations

- Critical Webs is a fairly elaborate system and, to implement it well, it requires the commitment of the whole organisation. Some of the techniques and resources might also demand some specialised people within the organisation to guide the rest of the group – especially for techniques such as gender analysis and the 'questioning and listening' tool. Some of the tools may also require that an organisation dedicates quite a bit of time for them to be used effectively.
- Unless the organisation encourages a culture of respect for others' opinions and nurtures a spirit of learning, this approach can be challenging to implement.
- In advocacy, networking is promoted and, although it is a valuable approach, it should be taken up with caution and some realism because, of course, not all networks are open about their real motives or principled in their activities.

# Outcome Mapping

Outcome Mapping (OM) is perhaps the most elaborate of the approaches explored here. It is an alternative to the theory-based, logical-framework approaches to monitoring and evaluation that rely mainly on a cause-effect relationship.

Developed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, essentially OM recognizes that multiple, non-linear events lead to change. It focuses on people and changes in behaviour – and, in particular, on how far development interventions

have built the capacity of local communities. OM assumes only that a contribution has been made – it never attempts attributions.

## Key Features

As described in a publication of IDRC, which is essentially a manual of OM<sup>1</sup>, the approach focuses on one specific type of result: outcomes as behavioural change. Here, outcomes are defined as 'changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a program works directly'. Such outcomes, it is argued, can be logically linked to a programme's activities, although they are not necessarily directly caused by them. These changes are aimed at contributing to specific aspects of human and ecological well-being by providing partners with new tools, techniques, and resources to contribute to the development process.

### Boundary partners

Boundary partners are those individuals, groups, and organizations with whom a programme interacts directly and with whom a programme anticipates opportunities for influence.

OM assumes that the boundary partners control change and that, as external agents, development programmes only facilitate the process by providing access to new resources, ideas, or opportunities for a certain period of time. A focus on the behaviour of the boundary partners does not mean that the programme decides how, when, and why those partners will change. 'In fact, by focusing on changes in behaviour,' the OM manual says, 'Outcome Mapping makes explicit something that has been accepted by development practitioners for a long time: the most successful programs are those that devolve power and responsibility to endogenous actors.'

### Contribution rather than attribution

Most activities will involve multiple outcomes because they have multiple boundary partners. By using OM, a programme is not claiming the achievement of development impacts – those very broad changes such as an increase in democratisation of state institutions or a reduction in poverty of a community. Rather, the focus is on a programme's contributions to outcomes. These outcomes, in turn, enhance the possibility of making development impacts – but the relationship is not necessarily a direct one of cause and effect. Ultimately, all organizations engaged in international development want their work to contribute to long-term development impacts. However, this is rarely accomplished by the work of a single actor (especially an external donor agency or an international NGO). The complexity of the development process makes it extremely difficult to assess impact. Furthermore, focusing assessment on long-term development impacts does not necessarily provide the kind of information and feedback that programmes require to improve their performance. For these reasons, OM focuses on outcomes instead of impact, while recognizing the importance of impact as the ultimate goal toward which programmes work.

### Focus on people

Because development is essentially about the changing way in which people relate to each other and their environments, the focus of OM is on people. It is in this aspect that OM can claim originality – in its shift from assessing the

<sup>1</sup> Earl S, Carden F, Smutylo, T (2001)

development impact of a programme (defined as changes in state; for example, poverty alleviation or reduced conflict) and towards changes in the behaviours, relationships, actions or activities of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a development programme works directly.

'This shift significantly alters the way a programme understands its goals and assesses its performance and results,' the OM manual claims. 'OM establishes a vision of the human, social, and environmental betterment to which the programme hopes to contribute and then focuses M&E on factors and actors within that programme's direct sphere of influence. The programme's contributions to development are planned and assessed based on its influence on the partners with whom it is working to effect change. At its essence, development is accomplished by, and for, people. Therefore, this is the central concept of Outcome Mapping.'

OM should not be seen as replacing the more conventional forms of evaluation, which mainly focus on changes in conditions – such as improved services or greater democratisation. It should be seen as supplementing them by focusing specifically on related behavioural change.

### Three stages

OM is divided into three stages. The first stage, **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:

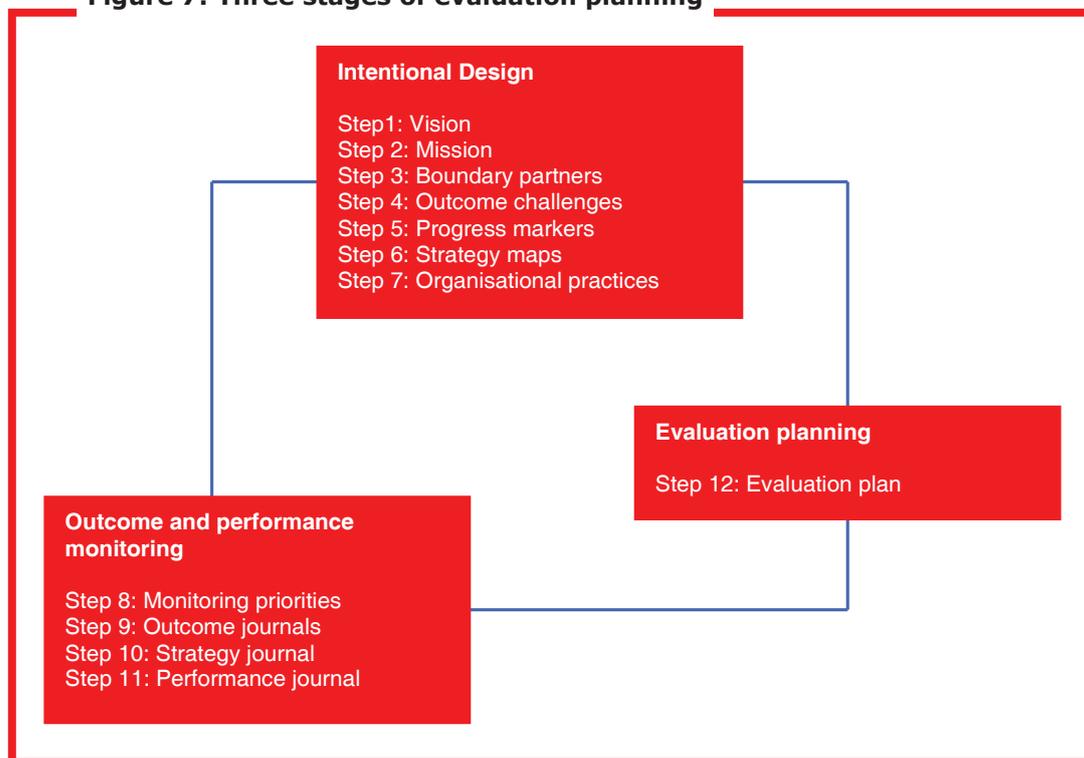
- Why? (What is the vision to which the programme wants to contribute?)
- Who? (Who are the programme's boundary partners?)
- What? (What are the changes that are being sought?)
- How? (How will the programme contribute to the change process?)

The second stage, **Outcome and Performance Monitoring**, provides a framework for the ongoing monitoring of the programme's actions and the boundary partners' progress toward the achievement of outcomes. It is based largely on systematized self-assessment. It provides the following data collection tools for elements identified in the Intentional Design stage:

- Outcome Journal (progress markers);
- Strategy Journal (strategy maps);
- Performance Journal (organizational practices).

The third stage, **Evaluation Planning**, helps the programme identify evaluation priorities and develop an evaluation plan. The figure on the next page from the OM manual illustrates the three stages:

**Figure 7: Three stages of evaluation planning**



OM puts a high premium on participation. Its process for identifying a programme's goals and designing its M&E framework and plan should involve the full range of stakeholders, including boundary partners, in order to engage those implementing the programme in discussions about design and in the actual data collection. The intention is to encourage ownership and to ensure the use of findings. In this way, OM becomes a tool for consciousness-raising, consensus-building, and empowerment for those working directly in the development programme.

## Applications

OM is an integrated planning, monitoring, and evaluation approach that is best used at the beginning of a programme, once the main focus of the programme has been decided. It is particularly effective when used from the planning stage, as it helps a programme to focus on supporting specific changes in its partners. With some adaptations, its various elements and tools can be used separately or in conjunction with other processes; for example, a SWOT (see Toolkit, p....), a situational analysis, or an LFA.

The IDRC manual does not provide the reader with instructions on how to adapt OM, but instead assumes it is being used in its totality. OM helps a programme to clarify what it wants to accomplish, with whom, and how. It then offers a method for monitoring changes in the boundary partners and in the programme, and it encourages the programme to look regularly at how it can improve its performance. It can also be used as an end-of-programme assessment tool when the purpose of the evaluation is to study the programme as a whole.

In OM, planning, monitoring, and evaluation are not discrete events but are designed to be cyclical, with one feeding into the other. It is impossible to plan for all eventualities; therefore, a successful programme is one that assesses and adapts to changing situations in an intelligent way, based on thoughtful reflection. Planning is done based on the best knowledge available, and the programme uses M&E as reflective tools to assess change and choose appropriate actions.

OM can help a programme 'tell its performance story' by providing a framework for it to design and articulate its logic; record internal and external monitoring data; indicate cases of positive performance and areas for improvement; evaluate intended and unexpected results; gather data on its contribution to changes in its partners; and establish priorities and an evaluation plan.

The framework helps the programme to ask a series of questions, as outlined in the manual:

### **Designing and articulating the programme's logic:**

- What are our development goals?
- How can our programme contribute to those development goals?
- Who are our boundary partners?
- How do we need to change in order to influence our boundary partners' contribution to the broader development goals?

### **Recording internal and external monitoring data:**

- How far have our boundary partners progressed towards achieving outcomes?
- What are we doing to support the achievement of outcomes?
- How well have we performed?

### **Indicating cases of positive performance and areas for improvement:**

- What worked well? Why? Are all the necessary strategies included?
- Are we spreading ourselves too thin by trying to use too many strategies?
- How can we maximize our contributions?

### **Evaluating intended and unexpected results:**

- Who changed? How did they change?
- If they did not change as expected, do we need to do something different or reorient our expectations?

### **Gathering data on the contribution that a programme made to bringing about changes in its partners:**

- What activities/strategies were used?
- How did the activities influence individuals, groups, or institutions to change?

### **Establishing evaluation priorities and an evaluation plan:**

- What strategies, relationships, or issues need to be studied in depth?
- How, and from where, can we gather relevant data?

Outcome Mapping can help a programme to be more strategic about the actors it targets, the changes it expects to see, and the means it employs. It is designed to make the programme more effective in terms of the results to which it contributes.

## Resources

A design workshop takes approximately three days. The monitoring system takes one staff member about one day per monitoring session. A few hours are required from each of the other staff members to contribute data.

### Facilitator

The facilitator of the design workshop should be familiar with the OM methodology and comfortable with the concepts of evaluation for learning, participatory research, and organizational change. It could be either an internal or an external facilitator. The role is to engage participants, ensure that all opinions are heard and considered, note areas of consensus and differences, and to move the discussion on so that the task is completed in the allotted time.

'Therefore the individual should be skilled in consensus building,' the manual says, 'be able to determine the power dynamics in a group, and be able to ensure that the diverse opinions of the group are captured.'

### Manual

The IDRC manual presents all the elements of the OM methodology as it moves through the stages of design, monitoring and evaluation. All 12 steps are described and examples are given of finished 'products'.

What follows are brief summaries of the main concepts and techniques elaborated in the manual:

<b>Outcome challenge:</b>	Outcomes are the effects of the programme 'being there', with a focus on how actors behave as a result of being reached. An outcome challenge describes how the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of an individual, group or institution will change if a programme is very successful. The 'challenge' is for the programme to help bring about these changes.
<b>Progress markers:</b>	Graduated progress markers are identified for each of the outcome challenges that the programme is tackling. A set of progress markers represent a change model for the boundary partners. The markers should advance in degree from the minimum one would <i>expect to see</i> the boundary partner doing as an early response to the programme's basic activities, to what it would <i>like to see</i> them doing, to what it would <i>love to see</i> them doing if the programme were having a profound influence.
<b>Strategy map:</b>	The map summarises the strategies (choice of activities) used by the programme to contribute to the achievement of an outcome. Its format is a matrix in which the strategies are distinguished according to whether they are directed at individuals or their organisation – or at the environment in which the individuals or their organisations operate. They are also distinguished according to whether they cause a direct effect, arouse new thinking or skills, or build a supportive network.
<b>Organisational practices:</b>	A record of activities undertaken by a programme to determine how it is operating in order to fulfil its mission. Collecting and analysing data on organisational practices is important for two reasons: first, it provides an opportunity to reflect on what is going on internally in the organisation and how improvements can be made; second, it enables a recording of any unintended results – which might lead off in new programme directions.
<b>Monitoring priorities:</b>	OM collects information with regard to three considerations: organisational practices being employed by the programme to remain relevant, innovative and viable; progress towards outcomes being achieved by boundary partners; strategies employed by the programme to encourage changes in boundary partners. Three data collection tools are used: outcome journal, strategy journal and performance journal. The degree to which findings are documented ('light' or 'heavy') will depend on what best suits the interests and resources of the organisation.
<b>Outcome journal:</b>	This notes 'outcome challenges' and progress in relation to the three categories, 'expect to see', 'like to see' and 'love to see'. It goes on to log any change observed, the contributing factors and actors, sources of evidence, and any unanticipated change. Finally, lessons learnt are noted – and the required programme changes.
<b>Strategy journal:</b>	Records data on the strategies being employed to encourage change in the boundary partners. It is filled during the programme's regular monitoring meetings. The format should include: resources allocated (inputs), activities undertaken, a judgement on their effectiveness, the outputs and any required follow-up.  'When completing the journal [the programme] should not just ask "How well have we done", it should also ask "how can we improve over the next few months?"'
<b>Performance journal:</b>	A tool for monitoring an organisation's actions in responding to boundary partners' changing needs – a single journal for recording data in regular monitoring meetings. It records data gathered through either quantitative indicators, qualitative examples – or both.
<b>Organisation practice indicators:</b>	See table on some examples of organisation practice indicators
<b>Evaluation plan:</b>	A short description of the main elements of the evaluation to be conducted by the programme. It outlines the issues to be explored, the way findings will be used, the information sources, evaluation methods, evaluation team, timing and approximate costs. If there will be an external evaluation, the plan will help determine the ToR. See figure on possible questions for an evaluation plan.

**Organisation practice indicators:** Some examples:

<p><b>1. Prospecting for new ideas, opportunities and resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of new ideas shared in the team;</li> <li>➤ Number of new ideas integrated into the work of the programme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Seeking feedback from key informants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of key informants from whom the programme seeks feedback;</li> <li>➤ Number of changes made to the programme because of feedback.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Obtaining support of your next highest power:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of strategic contacts with the next highest power;</li> <li>➤ Number of hoped-for responses from the next highest power.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Assessing and (re)designing products, services, systems and procedures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of small changes ('tweaks') made to existing products, services, systems and procedures;</li> <li>➤ Number of significant enhancements to existing products, services, systems and procedures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Checking up on those already served to add value:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of boundary partners for whom additional services were provided;</li> <li>➤ Timing/regularity of checking up on those already served.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Sharing your best wisdom with the world:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of requests to the programme for it to share its 'wisdom';</li> <li>➤ Number of events/activities where programme 'wisdom' is shared.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Experimenting to remain innovative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of new ventures into an area without previous experience;</li> <li>➤ Number of experimental areas that proved successful and were repeated and institutionalised.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Engaging in organisational reflection:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number and frequency of opportunities for the programme team to reflect;</li> <li>➤ Number of adjustments to the programme coming out of a process or organisational reflection.</li> </ul>

**Evaluation plan:** Some possible questions that would assist in developing an evaluation plan:

*'What do managers and funders want or need to know about the programme?'*  
*'What do we need to report on?'*  
*'What do we currently not know that, if we did know, would help us be more effective?'*  
*'What information might make a difference to what we do?'*  
*'What areas or issues does the programme need to know more about in order to improve?'*  
*'What are our knowledge gaps?'*  
*'What are our partners' knowledge gaps?'*  
*'Is there an issue that we have been monitoring that should be studied in greater depth?'*  
*'What can be done to help the programme's partners fulfil their learning and accountability requirements?'*

The IDRC manual also includes worksheets for entering the data related to each of the above OM tools.

## Advantages

- OM provides a systematic and highly participatory method for setting a programme's objectives and strategies, for monitoring its contribution to outcomes, and for identifying priority areas for detailed evaluation studies.
- It ensures a combination of process and outcome evaluation by collecting data on a programme's success in implementing its strategies and the results being achieved by its boundary partners.
- Focusing M&E on a programme's boundary partners makes it possible to obtain useful feedback about the programme's performance across the agencies within its sphere of influence.
- By regularly collecting data on external results and internal performance, a programme has more than adequate material for fulfilling its accountability requirements to its managers and donors.
- By monitoring in three key areas – changes in the behaviour of partners; the programme's strategies; and the way in which it functions as an organizational unit – OM provides a programme with a continuous system for thinking holistically and strategically about how it intends to achieve results. 'It provides the tools for a programme to tell its performance story.'
- Perhaps most important, by actively engaging a team in the monitoring and evaluation process, OM promotes a high and consistent degree of self assessment.

## Possible Disadvantages or Limitations

- OM is a very elaborate system – demanding that an organisation is thoroughly committed to it and willing to find time for orienting its staff and for setting up the regular monitoring meetings. It depends on having a team that, as the manual has it, 'shares an understanding of the purpose of their work, works collaboratively, and values each other's opinions'.
- The system is essentially a self-assessment process. There is, then, a concern that programme staff can be tempted to ignore failures and put a gloss on their reports. However, it is argued in the manual that programme staff are often more critical of themselves than an external evaluator would be.
- OM only works properly as an M&E system if it is established right at the beginning of a programme, and once it has made clear and communicated decisions about its strategic directions. So the initial Design Workshop is crucial.
- IDRC that developed OM is a research institution – so its role in relation to its boundary partners (a main focus of the monitoring) is perhaps more clear-cut than it is for many other development organisations that work through various implementing partners.

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### For more information:

Earl S, Carden F and Smutylo T, **Brochure on Outcome Mapping: The Challenges of Assessing Development Impacts**, International Development Research Institute, (undated).

Earl S, Carden F and Smutylo T, **Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection in Development Programs**, Evaluation Unit, IDRC, 2001.

IDRC, **'Three Organisations Implement Outcome Mapping in their Monitoring and Evaluation Processes'**, Honduras Project Team, September 2004.

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## Part Three

# Toolkit

The activities and exercises described in the following pages come from a variety of sources. Some are very well known and have been used many times in workshops all over the world; a few might not have been published before. All of them can be used in promoting discussion during monitoring and evaluation processes.

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# Toolkit 1: Conducting a Situation Analysis

## Toolkit 1.1 Historical Scans<sup>1</sup>

<b>Purpose</b>	When beginning a programme planning process, a 'historical scan' is a review of a programme's history, its achievements, and the events and issues that have influenced its development. If the programme has been active and is entering a new phase, this initial exercise can help contextualize the events and influencing factors for both new and existing staff members. It can provide an opportunity for participants to develop a shared understanding of the programme's history – and a common language with which to discuss its future.
<b>Materials</b>	Cards, flipchart paper and felt pens
<b>Timing</b>	Three hours
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask each member of the group to write down an answer to the following question: <i>'What are the key events (positive or negative milestones) in the past X years that were important to you? Professionally? Organizationally? Nationally? Internationally? Personally?'</i>  (The amount of time, X, will vary and will be determined by the length of time the programme has been operating. For example, for a programme that is planning its second five-year cycle the focus could be on the previous five years.)</li> <li>2. Make a time-line on the display wall, dividing it vertically by time and horizontally by type of event (relating to the organization, to the national or international context). Depending on the overall length of time the group has to cover, the period can be divided into months, quarters or years.</li> <li>3. As participants call out events, write them/put them up on the time-line.</li> <li>4. Once the events have all been logged, invite the participants to analyze their individual or overall meaning. Ask questions that encourage the participants to look at the data from different perspectives.</li> <li>5. Record the key comments on a flipchart.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the high/low points or successes/challenges?</li> <li>• Where are the shifts or turning points? What kind? Why?</li> <li>• How would you name the early/mid/later periods?</li> <li>• What trends/issues do you see over the period? Vertically? Horizontally?</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> [Adapted from the approach for conducting a historical scan developed by the ICA (Institute of Cultural Affairs) Canada – and as presented in the IDRC manual on Outcome Mapping]

## Toolkit 1.2: Vision Statements

This is also adapted from the IDRC manual on Outcome Mapping. It outlines the process for formulating a vision statement at the outset of planning an M&E strategy.

<b>Purpose</b>	To articulate why an organisation is involved in development and to provide an inspirational focus.
<b>Materials</b>	Flipchart materials or LCD projector
<b>Timing</b>	Two hours
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the purpose of a vision statement: to reflect the large-scale development-related changes that a programme hopes to encourage or, as IDRC's OM manual has it, 'to motivate staff and highlight the ultimate purpose of their day-to-day work'.</li> <li>2. As a warm-up discussion, put the following question to the group: 'In just a few sentences, what is this programme supposed to accomplish?' And to involve as many participants as possible, ask, 'Is this the way everyone sees the programme? Does this fit with the organisation's objectives and mandate?'</li> <li>3. Invite each participant to write down the two or three characteristics that would describe the near future (the next three to five years) if the programme were to be wildly successful. By asking question such as the following: 'What are your dreams of success?' 'What changes do you want to try to help bring about?' 'Imagine the context in three to five years when the programme has been very successful: what would be different?'</li> <li>4. Post the responses on the wall; review and discuss them.</li> <li>5. Arrange for the participants to have a break and, on your own or with one or two volunteers, draft a vision statement that uses the participants' ideas and words – a draft that captures the different perspectives but eliminates duplication.</li> <li>6. Once the group has reconvened, display the first draft of the vision statement – ideally on a LCD projector.</li> <li>7. Slowly read through the statement, asking participants to note any inaccuracies or inappropriate wording.</li> <li>8. Go through the statement a second time, pausing for participants to raise their points and to consider alternative wording.</li> <li>9. When the wording is resolved, read through the whole statement a third time – checking that it does meet with the participants' approval.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the final vision statement contain no culturally insensitive, politically charged, or incorrect words or phrases?</li> <li>• Do participants feel that the statement reflects the broad development changes that the programme is trying to help bring about?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 1.3: Mission Statements

Once a vision statement has been drafted, a related mission statement can be written in terms of how the programme intends to work towards the vision. It is not a comprehensive description of all the activities that the programme will set

in train – rather, it is an ideal statement about how the programme will contribute. It describes what the programme wants to 'grow into' as it supports the achievement of the vision.

### Sequence

In drafting the mission statement, the group will follow a very similar sequence of activities as when drafting the vision statement:

1. Ask members of the group to respond to the question: 'How can the programme best contribute to, or support, the achievement of the vision?' 'What does the programme need to be like to in order to do this?'
2. Try to involve the whole group by asking, 'Is this the way everyone sees the mission of your work?'
3. Ask each participant to write down two or three characteristics that the programme would have if it was working perfectly?
4. While the group is on a break, alone or with one or two volunteers, draft a mission statement that uses the participants' ideas and words – one that captures differences and eliminates duplication.
5. When the group has reconvened, review and revise the statement, ideally, using a LCD projector.
6. At the end of the revision process, read through the entire statement and check for the approval of the participants.

### Issues

- When drafting the vision statement, if things are said that are more relevant to the mission statement, note them under a separate 'Mission' heading. Then make sure these ideas are incorporated when moving on to draft the mission statement.
- If time for the M&E design workshop is limited, it is possible to save time by asking participants to respond on email before the workshop. The sorts of question to ask are:
  - Picture the programme three to five years from now and imagine that it has been very successful in developing and implementing its activities. In such an ideal situation, assuming everything went well, what changes did your programme bring about?
  - In achieving such a vision, how can the programme best contribute? What areas does it need to work in, in order to promote and support the realisation of the vision?
  - What individuals, groups and organisations will the programme need to work with in order to effect these changes?
- Then, vision and mission statements can be drafted before the design workshop and sent out to the participants for review and revision.

# Toolkit 2: Establishing Issues for Investigation

## Toolkit 2.1: Reviewing Documents

<b>Purpose</b>	Relevant documents are reviewed in order to understand more about the origins and evolution of a programme. Such a study can provide information on the situation analysis that led to the initiation of the programme, its context – physical or policy context – and the rationale for the programme’s design.
<b>Materials</b>	The actual documentation itself, whether in print or electronic form
<b>Timing</b>	At least one – but perhaps three days
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine the questions you want to answer and the issues you want to explore. (These are often specified in a ToR, if you are conducting an ‘external’ monitoring or evaluation assignment. But whatever kind of assignment it is, it should be helpful in listing the questions to consider them in the light of the ‘big five’ M&amp;E themes presented in the ‘Main Considerations’ chapter: Programme Design, Strategy, Management, Impact, Continuity.</li> <li>2. List all possible sources of information related to the programme (programme documentation, government records, academic studies, programme evaluations, etc.)</li> <li>3. Decide on those that are most likely to provide the necessary information. As a guide, the most likely should be:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Donor country strategy papers;</li> <li>➤ Feasibility studies;</li> <li>➤ Original programme proposal;</li> <li>➤ Programme or project document;</li> <li>➤ Inception report;</li> <li>➤ Annual workplans;</li> <li>➤ Quarterly and annual reports;</li> <li>➤ Previous M&amp;E reports.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Collect the documents and check on their reliability.</li> <li>5. Review them in the light of your checklist of questions and issues.</li> <li>6. Identify information gaps, and consider how these will be filled (or information elaborated or substantiated) in your other data collection methods – questionnaires, interviews or focus group discussions.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How consistent is the information you have gleaned?</li> <li>• What issues need to be followed up?</li> <li>• What has the documentation study told you about the effectiveness of the programme’s M&amp;E system?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 2.2: Stakeholder Analyses

<b>Purpose</b>	A stakeholder analysis is a method of assessing what interests a range of organisations have, or could have, in a programme. From a monitoring perspective, a stakeholder analysis can assist in determining a sample of respondents and for analysing stakeholder relations (in collaboration or in conflict)
<b>Materials</b>	Cards or flipchart papers, felt pens
<b>Timing</b>	One to two hours
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clarify your purpose in conducting the stakeholder analysis – depending on the stage in the monitoring cycle.</li> <li>2. Identify the criteria you will use for deciding who to involve, along the lines of:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Whether they are beneficiaries;</li> <li>➤ Their formal role in the programme;</li> <li>➤ The interests they represent;</li> <li>➤ Their involvement in development initiatives in the target area...</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Compile a list of all the people or organisations that meet the criteria – most likely in a brainstorming session with colleagues.</li> <li>4. Construct a matrix (see example on the following page) that lists for each stakeholder community or organisation its general characteristics, specific interests related to the programme, problems and potentials, its contribution to the programme.</li> <li>5. Use this analysis to assist in developing a checklist of issues to explore when interviewing representatives of the stakeholders or engaging them in a focus group discussion.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you sure you have included all possible stakeholders in this review?</li> <li>• Would there be an advantage in organising a discussion session for a mixed group of stakeholders, in which different perceptions could be explored?</li> </ul>

**Illustration****Korr Stakeholder Analysis**

(Adapted from a case study in 'Managing the Cycle'<sup>1</sup>, in which Korr is presented as a pastoralist community in northern Kenya, suffering a degradation of their land by overgrazing – and exposed to the threat of land enclosure. The imagined 'Arid Lands Programme' is a broad-based initiative aimed at addressing land issues as well as exploring alternative livelihoods for the pastoralist community of Korr.)

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>General characteristics</b>	<b>Interests related to programme</b>	<b>Problems and potentials</b>	<b>Contribution to programme</b>
<b>Men, women and children of Korr</b>	In difficult circumstances; Caught between two worlds – traditional and modern	Looking for improved livelihoods	Traditional way of life threatened; Land degraded; Few livelihood alternatives; Young attracted to 'modern ways'	The ultimate beneficiaries
<b>Korr Pastoralist Association</b>	Elected to represent the interests of the community	Expected to take a lead in programme implementation	Knowledgeable about community; Dominated by men; Lacking organisational skills	Beneficiaries of capacity building component of programme
<b>Catholic priest and church leaders</b>	Priest is an expatriate; Church leaders mainly men	Committed to helping people of Korr	Initiated and funded borehole that has led to over-settlement and over-grazing	Represented on Programme Steering Committee
<b>School teachers</b>	Mainly local; Mostly men; Usually young	Sympathetic towards projects bringing 'progress'	Have leadership and literacy skills	Involved in disseminating information about the programme
<b>Government extension agents</b>	Mainly outsiders; Mainly men	Upholders of government policy on environment and development matters	Technically skilled; Having an orientation towards settlement concepts of development	Responsible for supervision of some programme activities
<b>Community-based organisations</b>	From the locality; Involving both men and women	Keen about engagement in programme activities	Lacking capacities in terms of expertise and material resources	Some are implementing agents
<b>Development-oriented NGOs</b>	Two INGOs involved in livestock improvement and marketing projects	Their activities are relevant to programme's own strategy	Seem to be concerned about their own 'visibility' in target area	Sometimes appear as collaborators – and sometimes as competitors

<sup>1</sup> Fox J and Mwikali R (2004)

# Toolkit 3: Exploring Perceptions

## Toolkit 3.1: Talking Pictures

<b>Purpose</b>	To provide an opportunity for participants to express their views about the performance (problems and potentials) of a programme or an organization.
<b>Materials</b>	Flipchart papers and felt pens
<b>Timing</b>	60 to 90 minutes
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ask each participant to draw a picture which is symbolic of the programme or organization under discussion. Reassure them that artistic skills are not necessary or on test! (It might be more appropriate sometimes to work in clusters – formed according to roles and responsibilities).</li><li>2. After 20 to 30 minutes ask each participant in turn to display his or her picture.</li><li>3. First, ask for group reactions: 'What do you see?'; 'What is this picture telling us?'</li><li>4. Then ask the artist(s) to explain the significances of the picture.</li><li>5. In the whole group, discuss the perceptions conveyed by the picture.</li></ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What has been learned about the participants' perceptions of the programme or the organization?</li><li>• What issues should be explored further?</li></ul>

## Toolkit 3.2: Polarities

<b>Purpose</b>	Stakeholders – whether managers or beneficiaries – might sometimes hold negative opinions or harbour doubts about the programme they are engaged in. The purpose of this exercise, in a workshop session, is to encourage such stakeholders to express their concerns. It also provides a useful opportunity for clarifying the objectives and strategy of their programme – in the light of both the negative and positive opinions that have been revealed.
<b>Materials</b>	Flipchart, felt pens
<b>Timing</b>	60 to 90 minutes
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the objectives of the activity, and write the name of the programme on a flipchart.</li> <li>2. Ask the participants to write down their individual responses under two headings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What do you think or feel is good about the project?</li> <li>➤ What do you think or feel is not so good about the project?</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. To facilitate the expression of negative, or even hostile, opinions, it helps to suggest that participants can write remarks that they imagine colleagues or other agents involved in the programme might make.</li> <li>4. Go around the group and log the responses under two main headings: 'Positive' and 'Negative'.</li> <li>5. Discuss the results with the group; identify common responses and agree on the main issues to be addressed.</li> <li>6. Invite programme directors or managers who are present to talk about its objectives and strategy in the light of the questions and concerns that have been raised in the Polarities exercise.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How consistent are the reactions of the participants?</li> <li>• What accounts for any major differences that have emerged?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 3.3: SWOT Analysis

<b>Purpose</b>	A common – and very effective – discussion format to assess the performance of an organization or a programme.
<b>Materials</b>	Flipchart and felt pens – or an LCD projector
<b>Timing</b>	One to two hours
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the meaning of the key terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strengths:</b> those internal factors that contribute to effective performance;</li> <li>• <b>Weaknesses:</b> those internal factors that are working against the programme achieving its objectives;</li> <li>• <b>Opportunities:</b> those external factors that could be of help in ensuring the programme's success;</li> <li>• <b>Threats:</b> those external factors that could hinder or block the programme's progress.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Either run the exercise as a brainstorming session with the whole group, if it is small enough (less than twelve participants) – or divide the participants into sub-groups, if the group is large or if there would be an advantage in exploring the different perceptions of different stakeholders.</li> <li>3. Suggest that the following questions might prove useful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To assess strengths:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What are the things or activities in the current programme that are continually successful?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What is working well?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What important resources are available?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What advantages does it have?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What, if anything, can it claim is unique?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>To assess weaknesses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What continually goes wrong?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What are the things that the programme needs to improve?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What is lacking – in terms of qualities, skills, experiences?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What is lacking – in terms of resources?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What do other programmes do better?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>To assess opportunities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What are the untapped potentials of the programme's context?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What situations exist – or will likely exist in the future – that could be turned to advantage?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What are the 'good ideas' that people have discussed but never actually tried out?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>To assess threats:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What could threaten the programme's very survival?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What could stop it from achieving its goals?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What could diminish motivation and reduce effectiveness?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Tell the participants that, when answering these questions, they should try to avoid guesswork – and deal only with what exists, and not what should be the case!</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key issues that have emerged?</li> <li>• What actions need to be taken to address them? (These are pointers to a very preliminary action plan)</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 3.4: Force Field Analysis

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>Force Field Analysis (FFA) is a decision-making technique that can be effectively adapted for M&amp;E purposes. It is a neat and easily grasped tool for involving a group in exploring perceptions related to the main objectives of a programme.</p> <p>Any problem situation can be seen as a field of forces working in opposite directions. There are the 'restraining forces' that are holding us back from reaching our objective; there are the 'driving forces' that are actually helping to achieve it. There are two main tasks in working through a FFA: first, identifying both sets of forces; second, assessing how the restraining forces can be counteracted and the driving forces increased. If we can do this, we can break down the barriers and move in the direction we wish to go.</p>
<b>Materials</b>	Flipchart and/or LCD projector
<b>Timing</b>	One to two hours
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write up on the flipchart the objective that you are 'reality testing'.</li> <li>2. Draw a line down the middle of the sheet and the arrows pointing in the opposite directions.</li> <li>3. On the right-hand side, through a brainstorming session, identify and list all the restraining forces – those factors that have a negative influence on the achievement of the objective. Explain to the group that they should resist getting involved in much debate as the 'forces' are identified. (Note that it seems to be psychologically more productive to begin with the negative factors.)</li> <li>4. On the left-hand side, identify and list all the driving forces – factors that have a positive influence on the achievement of the objective.</li> <li>5. Analyse both sets of forces, asking yourselves: 'How can the restraining forces be reduced or weakened?' 'How can the driving forces be strengthened?' and 'Can any driving forces be added?'</li> <li>6. In this final step you will be generating 'action points' that could form the basis of an action plan for reviewing and improving the programme's implementation.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How valid is the array of forces that has been generated?</li> <li>• How does this array fit with the situation analysis conducted when formulating the programme?</li> <li>• What does the exercise reveal about the appropriateness of the strategy adopted by the programme?</li> <li>• What does it say about the need to adjust the strategy?</li> </ul>

**Illustration**

## To Strengthen Accountability

The following 'force field analysis' was conducted with a group of civil society representatives during an evaluation of donor-funded Citizens Voice and Accountability interventions in Nepal, October 2007<sup>1</sup>.

Driving forces	Restraining forces
<p>The concerned voice of civil society is getting louder</p> <p><i>Rayamajhi</i> investigation reports are available</p> <p>Commission for Investigation of Abuses of Authority (CIAA) reports publicise unaccountability matters</p> <p>Social audits are increasing</p> <p>Basic rights to education and health are being recognised</p> <p>The CSO base is being widened</p>	<p>The centralised system of decision making persists</p> <p>Bureaucracy is upwards rather than downwards accountable</p> <p>Too much reliance on donor funding</p> <p>The rule of law is not abided by</p> <p>Political parties are not accountable to the people</p> <p>The decision makers in most institutions (civil society as well as CSOs) are not marginalised people but the elite</p> <p>CIAA reports are not acted on</p> <p>There is a lack of disaggregated reports on outreach services by different community (ethnic, caste) groups</p> <p>There is a lack of political will to act on HR conventions</p> <p>Parliament makes recommendations, but it cannot make the politicians implement</p>
Action Points:	
<p>Put more emphasis on programmes designed to empower people to hold government accountable;</p> <p>Carry out more 'citizens' satisfaction' surveys;</p> <p>Make policy making bodies more inclusive;</p> <p>Establish provisions to call back politicians who are not accountable;</p> <p>Donors should be more stringent in setting criteria for selecting agencies they fund.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> Fox J, Thaarup J, Swanson G and Chapagain Y (2008)

# Toolkit 4: Using PRA Techniques

## Toolkit 4.1: Sketch Maps

<p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p>Sketch Maps are the primary PRA tools for collecting data with beneficiaries about a particular place within a programme area – its boundaries, layout and significant features. Although maps can be used to record anything from human health to livestock movements, the most common maps are: Resource Maps, which document an area’s physical resources (crops, water points, grazing areas); Social Maps, which illustrate its social conditions (houses, wealth levels, family sizes); and Mobility Charts, which record the pattern of people’s movements.</p> <p>Since drawing Sketch Maps doesn’t require special expertise or equipment (they can first be drawn on the ground, using whatever materials are lying around), and since the drawing can be a group activity, they can provide an excellent opportunity for sharing information between programme workers and community members. In the start-up phases they are used for identifying local problems and potentials. Each ‘side’ has its special knowledge; programme staff might be better informed about technical matters, such as the potential for water supplies or legal frameworks related to local land issues, but the local people will have direct knowledge about such things as boundaries and inter-group relationships – and they will certainly have a sharper insight into the social and political problems experienced by the community.</p> <p>As a monitoring tool, the redrawing of maps can highlight changes and indicate progress.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<p>Anything to hand – such as sticks, stones and leaves – plus pens and large sheets of paper for transferring the model to a more permanent and displayable format.</p>
<p><b>Timing</b></p>	<p>45 minutes to three hours</p>
<p><b>Sequence</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide the participants into groups to produce models and maps of the programme area. If there is diversity in terms of background, experience and expertise, use this as the criteria for the division into groups.</li> <li>2. Decide which kind of map will be drawn and whether it will be constructed inside or outside, in the sand or on paper, with objects or with pens.</li> <li>3. Whichever way is chosen, emphasise that this is a job for everyone; not just for those with an artistic flair – and certainly not just for the ‘outsider’ programme staff.</li> <li>4. If it is a basic Sketch Map, ask the groups to plot what was done in the initial phase: the boundaries, the position of houses, wells and so forth. (But do not be too prescriptive, because it is important that the exercise captures the varying perceptions of the participants.)</li> <li>5. If it is a Resource Map, ask the groups to add details such as boreholes, animals and pastures.</li> <li>6. If it is a Social Map, make sure that all the households in the community are included. Use symbols to indicate whatever information you have decided to collect – ethnic differences, wealth (poor/rich), education, age, health status, number of children, etc.</li> <li>7. When the groups have finished (or when they are ‘time-barred’), display the products on the wall. (If the groups choose to work with models, allow time for a paper-and-pen record to be made.)</li> <li>8. Invite each group to present its map – focusing on whatever themes they have chosen to highlight.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we now know about the area and the community that we didn’t know before?</li> <li>• How useful are the maps in monitoring the progress and achievements of the programme?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 4.2: Transect Walks

<b>Purpose</b>	A 'transect' is a systematic walk – or drive, or camel ride – through a project area, gathering data to supplement that already recorded in a community's sketch maps. The resulting diagram can present details on key problems and potential solutions, as well as physical characteristics such as gradients, water flows, drainage systems, soil types and vegetation. In a start-up phase of a programme, it can deepen the programme staff's – and community members' – knowledge of the area, and of relationships between the physical environment, and human activities. As a monitoring tool, a repeated transect walk can indicate progress and improvements.
<b>Materials</b>	Pens and large sheets of paper
<b>Timing</b>	Minimum 90 minutes – up to a whole day
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On the basis of a community's sketch maps, decide the most revealing or appropriate route/s for a transect walk. (It could be a relatively short walk; if, on the other hand, you are dealing with the wider horizons of a pastoralist community, it will usually be more appropriate to go by car or on camels!)</li> <li>2. If the members of the groups are not from the locality, arrange for some knowledgeable local people to accompany the groups.</li> <li>3. Make sure you allow enough time for the groups to plan their walks or drives – focusing on what they are hoping to find out and the particular methods of investigation they will be using. (Will they, for example, be conducting interviews along the way?)</li> <li>4. Take a logical starting point – such as a boundary or a high point.</li> <li>5. Assign specific responsibilities to group members: someone to note water features, for example; someone to concentrate on soils and pasture; someone to observe human settlement and activities.</li> <li>6. Proceed along the chosen route, recording the changing features of the regions covered. (Longer transects can be 'zoned' according to area names or even soil types or vegetation cover.)</li> <li>7. Take time for informal interviews and note-taking along the way.</li> <li>8. At the end of the walk or drive, complete the notes and draw up the transect 'maps'.</li> <li>9. Arrange for the maps to be displayed, viewed (in a 'gallery walk', perhaps), and discussed.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you learn anything new about the locality?</li> <li>• Did you encounter any new practices, or traditional technologies, etc, that could have a positive impact on local development?</li> <li>• How can the programme make use of these discoveries?</li> <li>• What were the main development constraints encountered?</li> <li>• How can the programme address these constraints?</li> <li>• What differences can be detected since the previous transect walk?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 4.3: Venn Diagrams

<b>Purpose</b>	A Venn Diagram is a map of institutional relationships, using symbols or circles of varying sizes to represent individuals or organisations and their perceived importance to a community or project. The size of the symbols or circles indicates their importance; the positioning – overlapping, touching or separate – indicates their degree of contact. The diagram can thus illustrate the relationships between several different institutions – and reveal those most in need of improvement. Repeated, it becomes a monitoring tool for indicating changes in relationships and values.
<b>Materials</b>	Large sheets of paper, pens
<b>Timing</b>	45 minutes to 1 hour
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide the participants into manageable groups for conducting the activity – maintaining a good cross-section of experience in each group.</li> <li>2. Explain the purpose and the process of a Venn Diagram.</li> <li>3. Ask the participants to make a list of all the institutions operating in the area, or those involved in a particular programme.</li> <li>4. Invite the group to choose an object or a symbol for each institution and to place them inside or outside a circle, near or far, according to how the group assesses their importance or the quality of service they are providing. Alternatively, the group can draw the institutions as circles – on paper or on the ground.</li> <li>5. Establish clear scales for representing each institution’s importance to the community – through different sized circles – and their degree of contact. The latter may be represented as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Separate circles: no contact;</li> <li>➤ Touching circles: some information passing between institutions;</li> <li>➤ Small overlap: some cooperation in decision making;</li> <li>➤ Large overlap: substantial cooperation in decision making.</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. When the groups are finished, invite them to display their diagrams.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How similar or different are the groups’ diagrams? What are the reasons?</li> <li>• What can be learnt from the exercise about those institutions that are most and least respected – and the reasons for these feelings?</li> <li>• What is being done about important institutions – eg. those related to health or education – that have been placed far away from the centre?</li> <li>• What other institutions do the participants want to ‘bring back to the centre’?</li> <li>• What are the significant differences between this exercise and the initial one?</li> </ul>

**Illustration:**

## Outside Looking In: A Study in Broken Relationships

In Mandera, in the remote north-east of Kenya, a monitoring team encountered a classic example of how a Venn Diagram can provoke an animated and constructive debate about the institutional relationships of a community – the benefits, constraints and changes in those relationships, and plans for improving difficult or unproductive alliances.

The community was a populous pastoralist centre that was once a favoured recipient of donor aid; the Venn Diagram showed ten organisations inside the community 'circle' and five outside. The team leader began by asking why the community had placed those five organisations outside. (He did not have to prompt the discussion too much after that!) One of the community leaders said they had placed the five organisations outside the circle because 'we hear about them but have never seen them'. The largest circle at the centre of

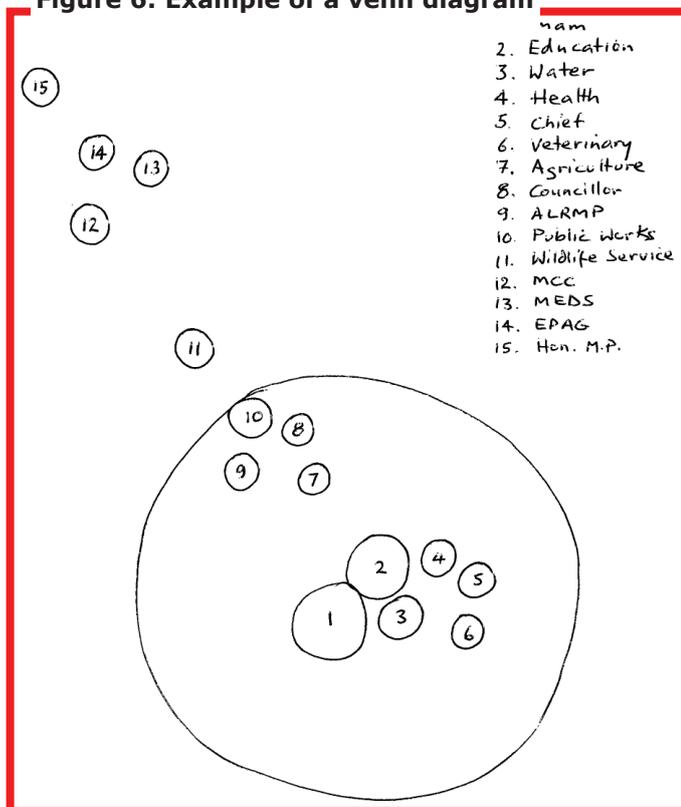
the diagram was the Imam, who, as one leader said, was 'always with us, always praying for us, always leading us'. The smallest circle, furthest away from the centre, was reserved for the local MP – 'since he was elected 15 years ago, we have only seen him when he is running election campaigns'.

The discussion turned to why the MP had been re-elected – because his family was influential, and because people believed his repeated promises to make good on his election pledges. Without their MP's support, the community had formed associations to implement their own water and health projects. Active NGOs and development agencies did not co-operate with the MP; he used to work closely with their councillor (No. 8), but they had fallen out. One leader described the MP through a popular Somali proverb: 'A man who you do not know in five days, you will not know in five years.' Although most had

never met the District Education Officer, they put the Ministry of Education in second place because a request for a new school for their children had immediately borne fruit. 'We channel all our requests through the DEO's office and, whether positive or not, we always get a reply.' The Water Department featured third for providing them with a water pump, an elevated tank, pipes and training.

So, asked the monitoring team leader, 'How do you think you could bring those outside the circle inside?' The leaders agreed that they could press for consultations with the five 'sidelined' organisations, to discuss specific projects together, and elect community groups to be responsible for them. One member made the provocative suggestion of sending a copy of the Venn Diagram to the five – 'to offer them a chance of coming inside the circle'.

**Figure 6: Example of a venn diagram**



## Toolkit 4.4: Timelines

<b>Purpose</b>	The Timeline is a history of major events in the recollected life of a community – important incidents, developments, disasters and achievements. (It takes a much longer view than the Historical Scan described on page 54) It helps both community development workers and community members to understand why things are the way they are. Like all historical records, it can reveal how the community commonly responds to problems and opportunities. From an M&E perspective, it can help in understanding why a community behaves in the way it does – and what changes effected by a programme might have particular significance.
<b>Materials</b>	Large sheets of paper and pens
<b>Timing</b>	45 minutes to one hour
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Try to ensure that the composition of the community group is as varied as possible – including elders, women, religious leaders, members of the local administration, etc.</li> <li>2. If the group is too large, divide it into sub-groups.</li> <li>3. Use group discussion rather than one-to-one interviews, because the dialogue that will be generated will prompt others' memories, and cross-check for accuracy.</li> <li>4. Explain to the groups the purpose of the exercise.</li> <li>5. If the talk doesn't flow smoothly to begin with, try some of the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 'When did this settlement start?'</li> <li>➤ 'Who were its founders?'</li> <li>➤ 'What would you say is the most important event you can remember in this community?'</li> <li>➤ 'Have there been any bad epidemics?'</li> <li>➤ 'What has been the worst thing that has happened to this community?'</li> <li>➤ 'What has been the best thing that has happened?'</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. If there is difficulty in fixing dates, establish some 'markers', such as World War II, Independence, the beginning of civil or ethnic conflict , etc.</li> <li>7. When the lists are complete, review them and try to establish significant trends.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has been learnt about recurring problems in the community?</li> <li>• What has been learnt about the likely impacts of the programme – and their significance to the community?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 4.5: Diaries

<b>Purpose</b>	Not really a PRA technique but, like the Timeline, it helps to track and understand changes over a specified time period – though, in this case, the lifetime of a programme. It records events and reactions over time – as written up by an individual or a group. It can capture details of happenings, and feelings about them, that might be missed by other monitoring methods. It can, if wished, focus on particular indicators or issues.
<b>Materials</b>	A diary
<b>Timing</b>	As long as the programme lasts
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is important to introduce the idea and process of using the diary as early as possible in the programme.</li> <li>2. Discuss the possible focuses and the forms of entry, and decide what will be recorded in the diary – and how.</li> <li>3. Choose someone to take responsibility for making the entries.</li> <li>4. Explain that such a programme diary can contain photographs, audio and video recordings, as well as written entries.</li> <li>5. At regular intervals, use the diary to trigger discussions on what is being learnt about the progress of the programme.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would it be effective to establish a 'diary group' to assist the individual responsible for the entries?</li> <li>• To what extent is this kind of 'process documentation' useful in promoting learning about the programme?</li> <li>• How can the content be used in the formulation of regular progress reports – and in generating publicity materials?</li> </ul>

# Toolkit 5: Facilitating Discussions

## Toolkit 5.1: Semi-Structured Interviews

<b>Purpose</b>	Unlike formal 'structured' interviews in which all the questions are pre-determined, the semi-structured interview allows for more flexible questioning and helps the facilitator to break down the barriers surrounding sensitive local issues. As with all data-gathering and analytical exercises, it is important to include a broad cross-section of people involved in your programme among your interviewees – community leaders, elders, teachers, local officials, as well as 'ordinary people' – to confirm that what is being said in meetings really does reflect the views and aspirations of the whole community. It is equally important to achieve a good balance between men and women, old and young, rich and poor. As to the style of interviewing, the choice is between formal and informal. If the intention is to make people relax and encourage them to be open and frank, then an informal, friendly but purposeful approach is, of course, more likely to succeed.
<b>Materials</b>	Notebooks and pencils (Sometimes it might be appropriate to use a tape-recorder)
<b>Timing</b>	60 minutes or less for each interview
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose your interview sample – whether programme beneficiaries, fieldworkers, managers or other resource persons.</li> <li>2. Visit households, or choose other suitable places, for conducting the interviews.</li> <li>3. Introduce yourself (and the members of your interviewing team) and explain the purpose of the interviews.</li> <li>4. Assure your respondents about confidentiality.</li> <li>5. Use a prepared checklist of questions for guidance, but conduct the interview in an informal manner – creating a relaxed atmosphere and avoiding an interrogative style.</li> <li>6. Make sure your posture and manner show that you are really attending to what is being said.</li> <li>7. Use open questions – rather than those that only call for a 'Yes' or 'No' answer.</li> <li>8. When you would like more information on a particular point, use questions such as: 'That's a very interesting point – can you tell me something more about it?'</li> <li>9. Listen carefully and avoid interrupting.</li> <li>10. Give positive feedback whenever possible – the nods, smiles and other non-verbal signals that show you are interested – as well as encouraging comments such as 'I think what you are saying here is very important'.</li> <li>11. Don't be afraid to add new questions if they seem relevant to the way the interview is proceeding.</li> <li>12. If 'interviewees' seem to be contradicting themselves – or if they seem to be withholding information – find a polite way of pointing it out. (But be careful not to push too hard.)</li> <li>13. It is a useful technique to occasionally check that you are really picking up the views and feelings of a respondent: 'Can I just check that I am interpreting you correctly? My understanding is that you are saying...'</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the information collected in the interviews compare with that collected by the other tools?</li> <li>• What new information has emerged?</li> <li>• To what use can this information be put?</li> <li>• Are there any issues that should be taken up in follow-up consultation</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 5.2: Focus Groups<sup>1</sup>

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>A discussion technique that uses a small group of members representing different interests to explore different perspectives on issues. For M&amp;E purposes it can be very useful for assessing opinions about how things have changed, about the effectiveness of a programme – and for identifying topics that need to be investigated more deeply.</p> <p>'This method can generate focused insights more quickly and generally more cheaply than through a series of key informants or formal social surveys.'</p>
<b>Materials</b>	Flipcharts; perhaps tape-recorder
<b>Timing</b>	One to two hours
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decide on the number of people to include in the group – four is, we suggest, the minimum; 12 the maximum.</li> <li>2. Decide on the membership of the group. If you wish to obtain information/ideas from different viewpoints, you can either set up a heterogeneous group or you can hold a number of homogeneous groups – but the groups being different from each other – and compare responses.</li> <li>3. At the beginning, clarify the topic and the objective of the meeting – which will also mean introducing yourself and your role in monitoring a particular programme or exploring a specific issue.</li> <li>4. Make clear the key topic for discussion.</li> <li>5. Let the group debate the issue with minimum intervention from you. Your role is to facilitate – trying to make sure every member has a chance to put his or her point of view.</li> <li>6. Occasionally, it might be helpful to summarise the main points emerging, saying something like, 'Am I right that there seems to be two main opinions here: on the one hand, some are saying..... on the other hand, others are saying.....'.</li> <li>7. Keep good notes and log key points on a flipchart. Usually it helps if there are two of you running the meeting: one, mainly to facilitate the discussion; the other to keep full notes.</li> <li>8. Decide whether recording the meeting would be an inhibiting factor. Usually it is not, if little fuss is made and the equipment is unobtrusive. But remember that transcribing such discussion sessions is very time consuming.</li> <li>9. Take note of non-verbal communication – which members seem to be uncomfortable, keep quiet, or show signs of disagreement even if they do not declare it.</li> <li>10. At the end of the session, review the main points written up on the flipchart in order to check on whether they indicate a good understanding of the group's views on the issues.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the group as representative as hoped for?</li> <li>• What has been learnt about the main issue being explored?</li> <li>• Are there strongly divergent views, and what are the reasons?</li> <li>• How should they be followed up?</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Guijt and Woodhall, A Guide for Project M&E: Managing for Impact in Rural Development, IFAD, 2002.

## Toolkit 5.3: Ranking Technique

<b>Purpose</b>	A simple ranking technique that enables a group to prioritise a list of issues or actions. From an M&E perspective, it can assist in ranking a list of performance indicators – or in ranking a number of suggested impacts of a programme.
<b>Materials</b>	Cards, flipchart
<b>Timing</b>	15 to 45 minutes (depending on the size of the group)
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compile a list of issues, problems, actions or topics that need to be ranked – this might be through brainstorming or from a previous report, etc.</li> <li>2. Ask each participant to rank each item on the list on a set of cards – giving the highest number to the highest ranked item. (For example, if there are six items, the highest score will be six).</li> <li>3. Collect the cards and tally the scores on a master flipchart sheet.</li> <li>4. The totals for each item will determine the priority list.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a danger that the priority list has been generated without sufficient time and thought?</li> <li>• How does the group's ranking compare with the conclusions of others?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 5.4: Collecting Stories

<b>Purpose</b>	To encourage people involved in a programme to describe the changes they have experienced or witnessed as a result of a programme's activities. <i>(The following material is adapted from the Davies and Dart, 'Most Significant Change' Guide)</i>
<b>Materials</b>	Notebooks and/or tape-recorder or video camera
<b>Timing</b>	30 minutes to two hours (depending on the approach taken)
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take care with the setting for the interview or group discussion – making sure it is as comfortable and non-distracting as possible.</li> <li>2. Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the occasion.</li> <li>3. Invite the respondent(s) to say a little about themselves – especially their contact with the programme.</li> <li>4. Put the key question. The one suggested in the MSC Guide is:  <i>'Looking back over the last month (or whatever is the monitoring period), what do you think was the most significant change in the quality of people's lives in this community?'</i>  (In the MSC Guide, there is an interesting commentary on the rationale for the wording:  '<b>Looking back over the last month...</b>' refers to a specific time period.  '<b>... what do you think was...</b>' asks respondents to exercise their own judgement.  '<b>... the most significant...</b>' asks respondents to be selective, not to try to comment on everything, but to focus in and report on one thing.  '<b>... change...</b>' asks respondents to be more selective, to report a change rather than a static condition.  '<b>... in the quality of people's lives...</b>' asks respondents to be even more selective – not just any kind of change but a change in the quality of people's lives. (The wording depends on the domain of change being explored – see page....)  '<b>... in this community...</b>' like the first part of the question, this establishes a boundary.</li> <li>5. If you are interviewing and taking notes, read the story back to the story-teller to check that you have captured the essence of the story – or you can use a tape-recorder and then transcribe.</li> <li>6. If you are holding a group discussion, you will usually find that one person's story triggers another. Again, a tape recorder is almost essential in such discussion, story-sharing sessions.</li> <li>7. You can also ask beneficiaries to write down their stories themselves – but very often respondents would feel much more confident in telling rather than writing.</li> <li>8. When documenting a story, make sure to record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Information about who collected the story and when the events occurred;</li> <li>➤ Brief notes on the nature of the story and the particular change it describes;</li> <li>➤ What the storyteller says about the significance of the story. (The person might naturally begin or end their story in this way; if not, make sure to prompt for an answer on this – because it goes to the heart of the MSC method.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>9. It is useful to add a title to the story – and this will help in the review and selection process.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you recorded sufficient detail? (You can't assume that people reading a story you have collected will have the same background knowledge that you have.)</li> <li>• Have you collected stories from the right sorts of people? (If a programme is essentially about improving people's awareness of their rights and making them more confident in demanding such rights, then the crucial stories are from the beneficiaries themselves. On the other hand, if the programme is about changes in NGO networks, then the best storytellers would be the staff of partner organisations.)</li> <li>• Have you asked for the consent of the storyteller to have a name attached to the story – or to pass on the story for monitoring purposes?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 5.5: Constructing Case Studies<sup>1</sup>

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>A case study enables you to obtain rich information on a specific situation or issue. It can provide a human context for more quantitative data collected by other methods. It can be particularly useful in complex situations where there are many variables to be taken into account.</p> <p>A case study can, for example, document the story (life-story) of a person, programme or institution – especially relevant if the focus is on how change is initiated and dealt with.</p> <p>'From an M&amp;E perspective, case studies add life to what might otherwise be data without a human face, and they allow for an in-depth understanding of the context and human factors behind general or summarised data that may be collected through other means.'</p>
<b>Materials</b>	Tape recorder or video-recorder
<b>Timing</b>	Not so easy to determine – anything from a few hours to a few days!
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider your objectives and determine the nature of the case study you are looking to construct.</li> <li>2. Identify the person(s) you will need to interview in order to collect the relevant information for the case study.</li> <li>3. Decide how you will collect and record the information – note-taking or electronic recording.</li> <li>4. Decide on whether it would enrich the case study to include photographs – and prepare to take them yourself or arrange for someone else to do that.</li> <li>5. Prepare a preliminary outline of the case study – the key topics and logical flow of ideas.</li> <li>6. Compile a topics/issues checklist to guide your interviews or discussion groups – but when engaged be open to new ideas and changes in direction.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would it be appropriate to generate other case studies for 'cross-case' comparisons?</li> <li>• How does the information you have obtained through the case study fit with information collected by other means?</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Guijt I and Woodhill J (2002)

## Toolkit 5.6: Role Plays

<b>Purpose</b>	To enable groups to enact scenes that express their views on what of significance is (or has been) happening in a programme – or about what they wish would happen. Such dramatic presentations are particularly useful with groups that might be inhibited in articulating their thoughts and feelings (either because of language difficulties or because of the sensitivity of the issues being explored).
<b>Materials</b>	For making a presentation, whatever props are at hand; for recording it, a video recorder
<b>Timing</b>	For preparation, presentation and discussion, anywhere between two hours and half a day
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the objective of the exercise – to illuminate particular issues through a role play and a follow-up discussion.</li> <li>2. Present a brief scenario that will highlight the specific issues.</li> <li>3. To ensure participation of the whole group, divide the group into clusters that identify with the characters in the role play. (If for example, the role play focuses on community members lack of trust that their Member of Parliament is not spending his constituency development fund in a transparent manner – nor for the benefit of the community – one cluster would identify with the MP, one with his or her local agent, and one with a vocal group of local citizens.)</li> <li>4. Give the group time (say, 30 minutes) to prepare how they will approach the situation when the citizens' group bring their complaints to the MP. Explain that the meeting for which they are preparing should last no longer than 20 minutes.</li> <li>5. Begin the role play and, ideally, make a video recording.</li> <li>6. When the role play is finished, invite the participants to go back to their clusters to consider how the meeting had gone, in the light of their preparations and expectations. While this is happening, cue the recording to enable a focus on the most significant portions, if there is not time for a full playback.</li> <li>7. Show the video recording, having briefed the participants to watch for key learnings.</li> <li>8. Facilitate a discussion on the issues highlighted by the role play – and on how well the programme is addressing such issues.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How typical is the scenario that has been acted out?</li> <li>• What light does the exercise throw on the effectiveness of the programme?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 5.7: Brainstorming

<b>Purpose</b>	To elicit spontaneous reactions from a group or to get ideas quickly – without getting caught up in detailed analysis. It also encourages creativity in the generation of ideas. It is used in conjunction with, or as a start-up for, other data gathering methods. It is, for example, the style of a SWOT analysis (see Toolkit 3.3) or the PRA techniques (see Toolkit 4).
<b>Materials</b>	Flipcharts papers
<b>Timing</b>	From five minutes to two hours – depending on the discussion framework
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clarify the topic at hand.</li> <li>2. Encourage the group to think imaginatively, freely – and not to be afraid to come up with seemingly bizarre ideas.</li> <li>3. Invite them to speak up, quite spontaneously, with ideas.</li> <li>4. Write up the points as they come – everyone’s ideas should be treated equally.</li> <li>5. Discourage debate on whatever ideas are generated.</li> <li>6. When all – or what you assume is all – the ideas are up on the flipchart, then invite discussion and analysis.</li> <li>7. Cluster the ideas according to themes, comparisons and contrasts.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you watching that some individuals are not dominating the group?</li> <li>• Would it help, as an alternative method, to pass round cards at the beginning, so that every person has the chance to write down – and then contribute – their ideas?</li> </ul>

# Toolkit 6: LFA Tools

## Toolkit 6.1: Problem Trees

<b>Purpose</b>	The Problem Tree is an activity in which beneficiaries of a target community are asked to declare their problems – and then to explore their causes. Once a cause is stated, the group is prompted to consider the cause of that cause – and so on, until a ‘root cause’ is identified. Similarly, once an effect is identified, the group is encouraged to consider its further effects.
<b>Materials</b>	Cards, pins, pinboard, large sheets of paper, glue – or LCD projector
<b>Timing</b>	90 minutes to two hours
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefly describe the format and purpose of a Problem Tree (a hierarchy of problems arrayed according to their ‘cause and effect’ relationships), and explain its use.</li> <li>2. Ask the participants to ‘brainstorm’ all the problems that the target community is facing.</li> <li>3. Write each problem on a separate card</li> <li>4. Choose an initial ‘key problem’ and post it on the board.</li> <li>5. See if the cards can be arranged according to cause and effect, in relation to the first problem.</li> <li>6. Ask the group to suggest causes for each of the problems – if they are not already identified.</li> <li>7. When ‘root causes’ have been identified, ask the group to suggest possible solutions – which can then be ranked using the methods described on the previous pages.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the problems been worded precisely enough?</li> <li>• Does each card feature only one problem?</li> <li>• Are the cause/effect relationships logical?</li> <li>• Is the card directly below a problem the direct or immediate cause of that problem?</li> <li>• If this is a repeated exercise in a monitoring mode – how does the problem tree compare with the initial one made in the needs identifying stage of the programme development?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 6.2: Objective Trees

<b>Purpose</b>	The Objectives Tree involves a natural transformation of the Problem Tree – turning it on its head to identify objectives in relation to specific problems.
<b>Materials</b>	Cards, pins, pinboard, large sheets of paper – or LCD projector
<b>Timing</b>	45 to 90 minutes
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the concept of the Objectives Tree, and how it is linked to the Problem Tree.</li> <li>2. Explain that the logic will now be seeing 'means/ends' relationships, rather than the 'causes/effects' identified in the Problem Tree.</li> <li>3. Revise the problem statements, so that they become objectives – adding new statements of objectives if necessary.</li> <li>4. Point out that, while the focus is on how to solve problems, the proposed solutions should be realistic and achievable.</li> <li>5. Divide the participants into small groups and invite them to construct Objectives Trees based on their existing Problem Trees.</li> <li>6. Invite the groups to display their trees.</li> <li>7. In a plenary discussion, consider the similarities and differences in the trees on display.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the suggested solutions feasible?</li> <li>• If this is a repeated exercise in a monitoring mode – how does the objectives tree compare with the initial one made in the needs identifying stage of the programme development?</li> </ul>

# Toolkit 7: Gender Analysis

## Toolkit 7.1: Daily Calendars

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>A Daily Calendar is used to analyse the differing roles and responsibilities of men and women, boys and girls, based on a description of the tasks they carry out in a typical day. The purpose is to differentiate these tasks according to gender. An understanding of specific gender roles within a particular community will help to gauge the development needs of different groups and adjust programme plans to avoid infringing cultural norms or overburdening a particular group.</p> <p>The key questions in preparing a Daily Calendar are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 'Who does what?'</li> <li>➤ 'How much time is spent on these activities by men and women, boys and girls?'</li> <li>➤ 'How should the project design be formatted to take account of these findings?'</li> </ul>
<b>Materials</b>	Pens and paper
<b>Timing</b>	90 minutes to two hours
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide the participants into male and female groups. (Alternatively, you might conduct the interviews in people's homes, talking separately with men and women.)</li> <li>2. Ask each group to log their own activities – and those of the opposite sex.</li> <li>3. Translate the tasks into a daily programme of activities – for a typical day in each season.</li> <li>4. Help the groups to develop a detailed daily timetable – from what they do when they wake up in the morning to the last activity performed before going to sleep.</li> <li>5. When the groups have finished their calendars, display them so that each group can comment on all the others'.</li> <li>6. Compare the calendars produced by each group – and their different perceptions of each other's days.</li> <li>7. Record the data in charts that distinguish between household tasks, work and community activities.</li> <li>8. Discuss significance of what has been recorded.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has been learnt about who does what in the community?</li> <li>• Is either 'side' surprised at the others' activities? If so, why?</li> <li>• What, if any, are the changes since the exercise was done previously?</li> </ul>

## Toolkit 7.2: Access and Control Profiles

<b>Purpose</b>	The Access and Control Profile is an important tool for identifying the different resources owned by women and men – and the extent to which they have access to or control over them. In the planning of development projects, it is a vital tool for identifying the distribution of benefits between women and men and the effects on their motivation – and for reducing the barriers to the access and control of future beneficiaries.
<b>Materials</b>	Flipchart, card, pins, pinboard
<b>Timing</b>	One to two hours
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain that this is a tool for identifying resources, their ownership and benefits to women, men and the youth.</li> <li>2. Brainstorm the difference in meaning between 'access to' and 'control of'. Explain that 'access' means that you can use something – but not that it cannot be taken away from you!</li> <li>3. In small groups, list some important resources within the project areas (land, pasture, water, labour, etc.) and ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 'What resources do men and women require for their work?'</li> <li>➤ 'Who has access to these resources?'</li> <li>➤ 'Who has control of them?'</li> <li>➤ 'How will this access and control be affected by project interventions?'</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Now consider the issue of benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 'What benefits do men and women derive from their work?'</li> <li>➤ 'Are these benefits commensurate with their inputs?'</li> <li>➤ 'Who controls these benefits?'</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Discuss the conclusions in a final plenary session.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What barriers make participation difficult – for either women or men?</li> <li>• To what extent is the programme contributing to the lifting of these barriers?</li> </ul>

**Illustration****Food and Home: A Somali Woman's Lot<sup>1</sup>**

The above table, drawn up by an all-male 'Mobile Extension Team' in Wajir in the arid north-east of Kenya, gives an insight into the male-dominated pastoralist life. As far as the animals are concerned, the team members agreed that women do most of the work related to the goats and pack animals – but the decision when to sell or slaughter is always the man's. With water, the balance is more equal: women are in charge of providing water for the home and young animals, and have some control over the wells, although men control all the major water points. With labour, although the women decide some of the girls' activities, men have overall control of the labour of the household. Although women can sell milk and ghee, when one of the animals is sold the man controls all the proceeds. In fact, men have control over nearly every aspect of daily life.

The notable exception is the *herio*, the traditional Somali pastoralists' dwelling, which is traditionally provided by the woman's parents and remains the property of the woman during the marriage. In the case of a divorce, the *herio* and a few other domestic possessions are usually left to the woman. The man, of course, gets all the animals.

The main lesson to emerge from this discussion was that men and women have almost equal access to resources – but men have nearly all the control. A woman may decide when to sell a goat but, when the sale is done, she has to hand the money straight over to her husband. As one participant noted, 'This is why so many restocking programmes fail. The man has total control over the sale of the animals and if he decides to sell his whole herd, the woman has to acquiesce. There's no equality in decision-making.'

Resources	Access		Control	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Goats	x	xx	x	
Pack Animals	x	xx	x	
Camels	xx	x	x	
Water	x	x	x	X
Pasture	x	x	x	
Gums/Resins	x		x	
Huts ( <i>Herios</i> )	x	x		X
Labour	x	x	x	
Meat/Milk/Ghee	x	x		X
Cash (Hides)	x	x	x	

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Johnstone R, Fox J, Musyoki S and Ibrahim D, A Participatory Journey: promoting development within pastoralist communities, Intermedia/ICG, 1999.

## Toolkit 7.3: Gender Analysis Matrix

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>A Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM) is used to assess the potential effects of a specific programme on men and women, boys and girls, in terms of their time, labour, resources and culture. Used sensitively and sympathetically, it can initiate a process of analysis that identifies and challenges established assumptions about gender roles within a community.</p> <p>The matrix is best used in a group in which men and women are equally represented. If this is not the case, it may be useful to split the participants along gender lines, and to compare their matrices afterwards.</p>
<b>Materials</b>	Cards, pins, pinboard, large sheets of paper
<b>Timing</b>	One to three hours
<b>Sequence</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the concept of the Gender Analysis Matrix – and how it can be useful in promoting the interest and involvement of everyone in the development process.</li> <li>2. Help the participants to agree on definitions for the terms in the matrix: Time refers to changes in the amount of time it takes each group to carry out tasks associated with the programme under discussion; 'Labour' refers to changes in those tasks; 'Resources' refers to changes in access to capital as a result of the project; and 'Culture' refers to changes in the social aspects of the participants' lives.</li> <li>3. Record on a flipchart the objectives, problems and activities of the project under discussion.</li> <li>4. Draw up a matrix and invite the participants to share their feelings on the impact of the programme on their own social group.</li> <li>5. Record the effects with short phrases in each cell of the matrix. Beside each, mark whether the effects are desirable or consistent with the project objectives, using positive (+), negative (-) or neutral (+/-) signs. (Note that quantitative effects can be marked with multiple +s or -s according to an agreed scale.)</li> <li>6. Initiate a discussion on the findings of the matrix.</li> </ol>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What effects is the programme having on the resources of women?</li> <li>• Are they losing access to land or control over money they earn?</li> <li>• What impact is the programme having on men's time?</li> <li>• Is the programme challenging or reinforcing unequal gender relations?</li> <li>• According to the nature of the programme under discussion, would it be useful to consider its effects on other categories or 'sub-categories' within the community, eg. female-headed households, women who work with animals, elders, young men, etc.</li> </ul>

*Illustration*

## Gender Analysis Matrix for a Water-Pan Construction Project in Kajiado District, Kenya – the Women’s Perspective<sup>1</sup>

CATEGORY	LABOUR	TIME	RESOURCES	CULTURE
<b>WOMEN</b>	+ Shorter distance to water source + Reduced labour for fetching water	+ Less time spent on fetching water + More time available for other duties	+ Increase in livestock productivity	+ Female roles changed in both household and community
<b>HOUSEHOLD</b>	+ Labour released for other duties	+ More time available for household chores	+ Increased household hygiene - Obligation to contribute money or labour to project	+ More time for other family and household tasks + Improved hygiene and cleanliness
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	+ Labour released for other duties	+ More time available for household chores	+ Improved community health - Need to commit money to project + More water for domestic use	+ Greater chances for participation in community activities + Enhanced status in the community.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Johnstone R, Fox J, Musyoki S and Ibrahim D (1999)

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