Stiftung Zewo

Schweizerische Zertifizierungsstelle für gemeinnützige, Spenden sammelnde Organisationen Stiftung Zewo Lägernstrasse 27 8037 Zürich Telefon +41 (0)44 366 99 55

Outcome and Impact Assessment in International Development Zewo Guidelines for Projects and Programmes

Resources

Factsheets

The main impact assessment approaches and methods that are widely used in practice are presented in a series of clear summaries:

Logical Framework Approach

The Logical Framework Approach is THE most widespread standard for results-based project planning in development circles. For that reason, the present guidelines are largely based on the logframe model. The Logical Framework Approach is not per se a specific method for assessing impact; rather, it makes outcome and impact assessment possible.

Outcome Mapping

Outcome Mapping is an approach to developing a system to record the (qualitative) effects of projects and programmes. As an approach, it is based on an alternative understanding of outcomes and it proposes practical instruments to record outcomes. It is also a project-planning instrument.

Theory of Change

Theory of Change is also an approach to results-based project planning and is based on a somewhat more open results model than the Logical Framework Approach. Like the Logical Framework Approach, it contains no instruments for assessing outcomes, but is designed instead simply to make outcome and impact assessment possible.

Most Significant Change

Most Significant Change is a very specific, qualitative and participatory technique for recording the effects of projects and programmes. It is based on the systematic analysis of individual experiences and thus dispenses entirely with indicators and figures.

MAPP

MAPP is likewise a specific, participatory method for recording the effects of projects and programmes. It is based on group discussions during which effects and developments are analysed retrospectively following a set programme.

Link: General information

Rick Davies (the man behind Most Significant Change) runs a private blog containing a great deal of information (some of it critical) and further links.

Monitoring and Evaluation NEWS

Links: Methodological overviews

Below you will find collections and overviews of impact assessment methodologies, methods and instruments used in development.

The German Evaluation Society has published an extensive overview of existing methodologies and methods of impact assessment. The methods are compared according to various criteria.

DeGEval, Wirkungsanalyse — Eine Landkarte für die entwicklungspolitische Praxis (2009)

ACT Development has also produced a collection of impact assessment methods. The methods are characterised and analysed in a standardised way.

ACT Development, A guide to assessing our contribution to change

This Wageningen UR Centre for Development Innovation portal contains a great deal of (unfortunately fairly unstructured) information and links on the subject of "Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation".

PPM&E Resource Portal

A list of links on monitoring and evaluation methods, including a number of practical toolkits on the website of the Institutional Learning and Change Initiative

Tools and methods for Monitoring and Evaluation

Links: monitoring and evaluation handbooks

Below you will find handbooks on the practical implementation of results-based monitoring and evaluation systems and/or impact assessment methods.

There is a detailed handbook on project monitoring and evaluation by the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Annex D is of general interest, as it gives an overview of various monitoring and evaluation tools (from sampling to focus groups and Spider's Web). Available in English, Arabic, Spanish and French.

International Fund for Agricultural Development, Managing for Impact in Rural Development: A guide for project Monitoring and Evaluation (2002)

This handbook also focuses on rural development and exclusively on participatory impact assessment. It provides explanations of various practical, participatory data collection methods. Available in English, Spanish and French.

Feinstein International Center, Participatory Impact Assessment — A Guide for Practioners (2008)

Karl Herweg und Kurt Steiner, Impact Monitoring and Assessment, Instruments for use in rural development project with a focus on sustainable land management. (2002)

Another handbook on participatory monitoring and evaluation in the area of agricultural/rural development; Volume 2 describes several practical tools. Available in English and Spanish.

Volume 1: Procedure

Volume 2: Toolbox

Brief guidelines for carrying out data collection at the beginning of a project (or at other times) by the German Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit.

GTZ, Baselineerhebung (2010)

The World Bank handbook focuses more on (country) programme impact assessment.

Jody Zall Kusek and Ray C. Rist, Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System, The World Bank, Washington D.C. (2004)

The UNDP handbook also focuses on country programme impact assessment.

United Nations Development Programme, Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (2009)

The wide-ranging EuropeAid project management handbook.

European Commission, Project Cycle Management Guidelines (2004)

Links: toolkits

Below you will find links to concrete, ready-to-use instruments for measuring impact in specific situations.

Contains four complementary methods. Originally designed for credit and savings projects, but can also be used in other areas according to the authors.

The NGO-IDEAs «Impact Toolbox»

Helvetas, Tracer Studies for VET Programmes — a Practical Tool Kit

Links: experiences

Sourcebook on Emerging Good Practice in Managing for Development Results

BMZ, Wirkungsevaluierungen — zum Stand der internationalen Diskussion und dessen Relevanz für die

Evaluierung der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit

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Logical Framework Approach

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) was developed for USAID in the 1960s. Since then it has been adopted and adapted by many other international development organisations. Among them was the German agency GTZ, which derived its Goal-Oriented Project Planning (ZOPP) from it. LFA is widely used today, although the methodology is often used in a more flexible and more pragmatic manner than in the 1970s and 1980s. Also, many approaches known as "Results-Based Management" (RBM) and "Managing for Development Results" are based on the Logical Framework Approach or are at least closely related to it.

The Logical Framework Approach is a systematic and analytical planning process used for the results-based planning of a project (or programme) and for the associated monitoring and evaluation system. The basic idea of the Logical Framework Approach is to condense the planned project mechanism down into a relatively simple, linear Logic Model, using a documented situation and problem analysis as the point of departure. This forms the basis for planning the monitoring and evaluation system, whereby the project's outputs and effects are recorded by means of quantitative or qualitative indicators. Lastly, the project mechanism and the monitoring and evaluation system are summarised in a standardised table (logframe). The Logical Framework Approach is therefore not per se a method of measuring impact. Instead, it helps with planning projects and evaluating them in a goal- and results-based manner.

IMPORTANT

The term Logical Framework Approach (LFA) should not be confused with the term Logical Framework Matrix (I the so-called "logframe". The Logical Framework Approach is the whole planning process, whereas the logfram its product and one of its tools.

Planning process

Descriptions of the precise approach vary slightly depending on the source. According to the European Commission's PCM Guidelines, the Logical Framework Approach includes the following steps:

Stakeholder analysis

The stakeholder analysis aims to clarify who the stakeholders (partners, target groups, beneficiaries, opponents, etc.) are that participate in the project and/or are positively or negatively affected by it.

Problem analysis

The problem analysis identifies the negative aspects of the existing situation. These are organised into causal links and presented in the form of a "problem tree". Preferably, the problem tree should be drawn up in a participatory exercise with stakeholders.

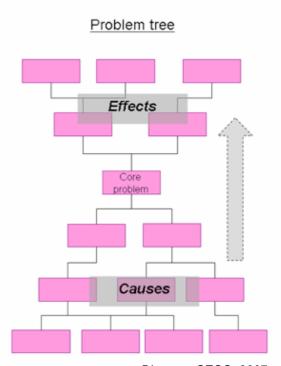


Diagram: SECO, 2007

Objective analysis

During the objective analysis, solutions are drawn up for the problems that have been identified. The negative aspects shown in the problem tree are converted into desirable, positive future situations and presented as an objective tree according to a logic of means and end. In the simplest scenario, the objective tree is structured identically to the problem tree.

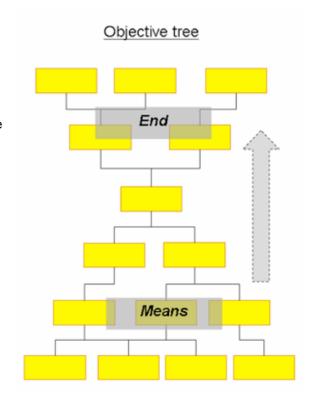


Diagram: SECO, 2007

Strategy analysis

The strategy analysis serves to clarify which (of usually several) ways to the objective in the objective tree is the most appropriate and feasible. Some of the criteria that need to be considered in doing this are: existing possibilities, probability of success, local ownership, cost, resources, relevance, effectiveness, negative effects, etc.

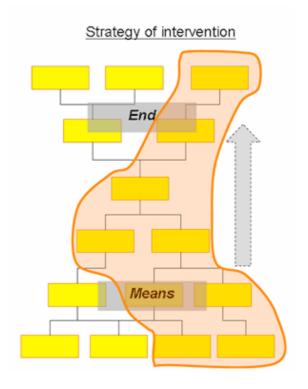


Diagram: SECO, 2007

Developing the Logical Framework Matrix

The results of the Logical Framework Analysis (stakeholders, problems, objectives, strategies) are presented in the Logical Framework Matrix (logframe). This provides a summary of the project design. The simplest form of logframe is a matrix with four columns and rows.

Logframe

Project description	Indicator	Source	Assumptions
Long-term effects and project's contribution to overarching goals	How (with which units of measurement) is the impact measured, including the planned quantity, quality and time?w	How is the information collected, when and by whom?	
Direct utility and effects of the project for target groups	How (with which units of measurement) is the outcome measured, including planned quantity, quality and time?	As above	If the outcome is achieved, which assumptions must be fulfilled for the project to contribute to the impact?
Concrete products or services provided by the project	How (with which units of measurement) is the output measured, including planned quantity, quality and time?	As above	If the outputs are achieved, which assumptions must be fulfilled for the project to contribute to the outcome?
Activities that must be undertaken for the project to have			If the activities are carrie out which assumptions must be fulfilled for the output to come about?
	Long-term effects and project's contribution to overarching goals Direct utility and effects of the project for target groups Concrete products or services provided by the project Activities that must be undertaken for	Long-term effects and project's contribution to overarching goals Direct utility and effects of the project for target groups Concrete products or services provided by the project the project the project the project the project or services that must be undertaken for the project to have How (with which units of measurement) is the outcome measured, including planned quantity, quality and time? How (with which units of measurement) is the output measured, including planned quantity, quality and time?	Long-term effects and project's contribution to overarching goals Direct utility and effects of the project for target groups Concrete products or services provided by the project Activities that must be undertaken for the project to overarching the outcome measured, including planned quantity, quality and time? How (with which units of measurement) is the outcome measured, including planned quantity, quality and time? Activities that must be undertaken for the project to have How (with which units of measurement) is the output measured, including planned quantity, quality and time?

The first column of the logframe summarises what the project is supposed to do and shows the causal relation within the hierarchy of objectives. It is based on a linear Logic Model that runs from bottom to top. The fourth column contains the so-called assumptions. These are external factors that can potentially or definitely influence the success of the project, but lie outside the project managers' sphere of influence. Together, the first and the fourth columns form the "vertical logic" of the logframe:

- If the activities are carried out and the assumptions (at this level) are correct, then the outputs are produced.
- If the outputs are produced and the assumptions are correct, then the outcomes are achieved.
- If the outcomes are achieved and the assumptions are correct, then the project will be able to contribute to the overarching goal (impact).

The second column is filled in with the indicators by which the achievement of objectives at the respective level can be measured. At the same time, how and where these indicators are to be collected (known as sources or means of verification) is entered into the third column. The relation between objectives, indicators and sources is called the "horizontal logic" of the logframe.

Suitability

The Logical Framework Approach is without any doubt a powerful tool for results-based project planning. The process is also oriented towards measuring the effects, although no means of measuring are explicitly mentioned. If the Logical Framework Approach is well implemented, it can:

- Promote dialogue between all parties;
- Contribute to identifying problems and correct solutions to them;

- Contribute to clarifying and expressing in concrete terms the project's objectives and effects;
- Enable and plan evaluation and impact assessment.

Critics of the Logical Framework Approach note that the underlying logic model is too simple for the complex realities encountered in the field. They add that the Logical Framework Approach encourages tunnel vision and allows little flexibility. In practice, logframes (i.e. the matrix) are often filled out without going through the whole planning process. If that is the case, then it is indeed very simplistic. The Logical Framework Approach is occasionally criticised for being based on an exclusively Western mode of thinking and therefore not very suited to certain cultures.

Links

A shorter introduction to the Logical Framework Approach can be found here:

SECO - The Logical Framework User Manual (2007)

More comprehensive manuals on the Logical Framework Approach can be found, for example, here:

Chapter 5: The Logical Framework Approach in European Commission – PCM Guidelines (2004) AusAID – AusGuideline 3.3: The Logical Framework Approach (2005) SIDA – The Logical Framework Approach (2004)

And much more information can be found on Rick Davies' website:

Monitoring and Evaluation NEWS Website.



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Outcome Mapping

Outcome Mapping was developed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa, Canada, and published in manual form in 2001. It is a system for recording project/programme progress, or more precisely a structured process for planning for it. The core concept in Outcome Mapping is that development is based on changes in people's behaviour. In contrast to conventional impact assessment methods, its focus is therefore not on (logically linked) project outputs and their effects on the target groups. Outcome Mapping concentrates instead on behavioural changes (called "outcomes") in direct partners with whom the project is working (so-called "boundary partners"). Outcome Mapping is a qualitative and participatory approach and focuses on the project's contribution to development. It was developed particularly as a tool for learning and for self-evaluation.

Planning process

The Outcome Mapping planning process consists of three stages and twelve steps, which would ideally be gone through in the planning phase of general project management.

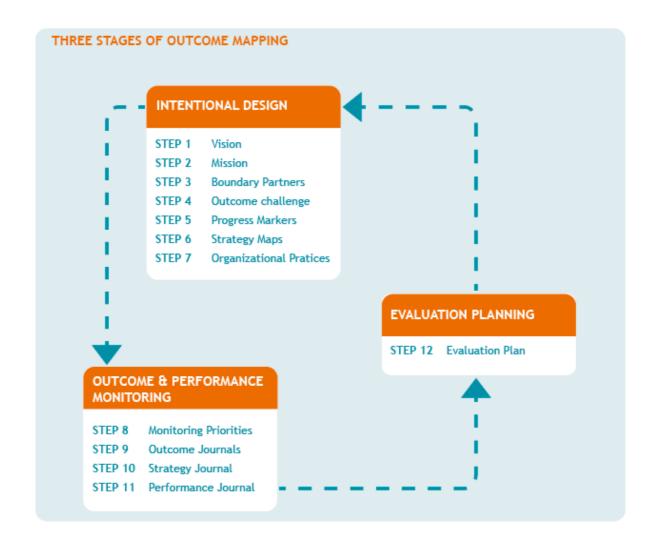


Illustration: IDRC

Stage 1: Intentional Design

The aim here is to clarify and define (on a participatory basis) the overarching goals to which the project should contribute and the strategies used to achieve them. The first step involves writing down a project "vision" (why?) and "mission" (how?). A central task is to identify the primary "boundary partners" on whom the project will focus. These typically include the direct recipients of the project outputs (e.g. a local partner organisation) as well as other stakeholders. For every "boundary partner", the general, desired behavioural changes are described and several concrete behavioural changes (so-called "progress markers") are defined. Lastly, the activities designed to influence these changes in behaviour over the life of the project are defined.

Stage 2: Outcome & Performance Monitoring

The second stage involves the development of an ongoing monitoring system. The basic principle here is not just to monitor the achieved results (behavioural changes. Data is also collected on the activities and how the project works as an organisational unit. The first step is to set the monitoring priorities and, based on this, three data collection tools are planned. The "boundary partners" progress is charted in relation to the "progress markers" by means of the "outcome journal". The activities carried out in favour of the partners and their results are recorded in the "strategy journal". Lastly, internal processes are closely monitored with the help of the "performance journal".

Stage 3: Evaluation Planning

The last stage aims to clarify which aspects of the project (specific outcomes, activities or processes) need to be evaluated and plans the necessary resources for this to be done.

Suitability

Outcome Mapping is suitable for:

- Analysing the effects of development projects whose success can not be recorded using quantitative indicators alone;
- Analysing the effects of participatory projects that aim to improve the behaviour (e.g. interaction, action/reaction and participation) of specific actors in complex systems;
- Working out with which actors a project works with and which changes should be achieved with which strategies;
- Making a case for a project's contribution to a development;
- Learning.

Conversely, it follows that Outcome Mapping is less suitable for demonstrating accountability or for ascertaining a project's direct development contribution.

Outcome Mapping is also a planning and monitoring tool, and it therefore would not appear to make any sense to use Outcome Mapping for evaluations that only are initiated once a project has ended.

Links

The complete Outcome Mapping Manual is available online:

Sarah Earl, Fred Carden and Terry Smutylo – Outcome Mapping (2001)

There is further information about Outcome Mapping on the following websites:

IDRC Outcome Mapping Website
Outcome Mapping Learning Community

For an article on (possibly) combining the Logical Framework Approach and Outcome Mapping:

D. Roduner, W. Schläppi und W. Egli — Logical Framework Approach and Outcome Mapping — A Constructive Attempt of Synthesis (2008)

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Theory of Change

Theory of Change is an approach that was put forward and promoted by the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, New York, and ActKnowledge, New York. It should be noted that the term "Theory of Change" can be used in another context to mean any kind of results model. Theory of Change is used here to define two things in fact: firstly, a systematic project planning cycle (Theory of Change Process of Method) and, secondly, a specific form of results model (the actual Theory of Change), which is the outcome of this process. The basic idea of this process, taking the project objective and the project goal as its starting points, is to determine which preconditions the project must create in order for the outcome objectives to be achieved. Next, indicators for measuring the preconditions and objectives are set and plans are made for which activities must be undertaken in order to create these preconditions. This is all then presented as a flow chart, or more precisely a result chain. This presentation is the project's Theory of Change. Like the Logical Framework Approach, the Theory of Change is therefore not *per se* an impact assessment method, but rather helps projects and their evaluation as part of results-based planning.

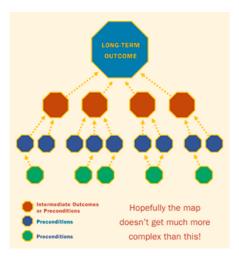
Comparison between Theory of Change and Logical Framework Approach

The Theory of Change Method and the Logical Framework Approach share a systematic approach to creating a results model as well as the fact that they both measure success by means of indicators. The Theory of Change Method is distinguished primarily by the fact that the underlying results model is more open; it allows for many intermediate steps and there is no strict linear relation, so the activities can be included at different levels of the model.

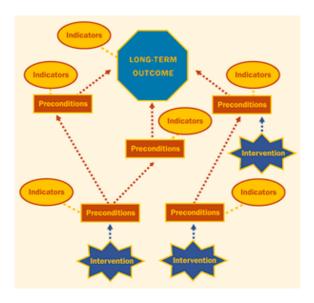
Planning process

The process consists of the following five steps:

- 1. Identify goals and assumptions
- 2. Backwards mapping and connecting outcomes
- 3. Developing indicators
- 4. Identifying interventions
- 5. Writing a narrative



The first step involves drawing up the project objective and the project goals in a participatory process. Particular attention is paid to defining, at the same time, which external assumptions must be fulfilled so that these objectives can be achieved at all. As a second step, through backwards induction, it must be established which interim results (preconditions) must be achieved first, both in time and logically, for the project objectives to be able to follow on. It should be noted that these preconditions should also be effects (changes, conditions, achieved results) and not activities. In this stage too, a close watch should be kept on the underlying assumptions. The result of this process is a results chain (a series of consecutive effects), or more precisely a tree of effects.



As a third step, indicators must be found for all the preconditions and outcomes so that the progress of the project can be constantly checked during the implementation phase and so that eventually a good data basis for an impact assessment is available. The fourth step consists of determining the position in this effects tree at which the project should develop its activities. It is assumed that there will be steps that will take place autonomously and others where the project will need to intervene. The end result of the process is therefore a diagram of an effects tree with the indicators, assumptions and interventions entered in the correct places.

In a fifth and final step, a written explanation is added to the diagram.

Suitability

The role of Theory of Change's as a project planning process is primarily to facilitate a dialogue between different stakeholders, to contribute to identifying correct solutions and to clarifying and expressing the project's objectives and effects in concrete terms, and to enable results-based monitoring and evaluation. Theory of Change is particular suitable for:

- Planning complex projects and programmes;
- Recording (on an ongoing basis) the effects of a programme with a close monitoring and evaluation system.

Theory of Change has the ambition to implement a detailed results model and monitoring system and may be costly as a result.

Links

The Theory of Change Method was published in the following User Guide:

Andrea A. Anderson, The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change (2005)

This document illustrates the method using a real-life example:

ActKnowledge and the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, Guided Example: Project Superwomen (2003)

ActKnowledge operates a Theory of Change website. It also contains an online tool for drawing ToCs:

Theory of Change Community

This Powerpoint presentation explains the differences between the Theory of Change and the Logic Model:

Andrea A. Anderson and Hélène Clark, Theories of Change and Logic Models: Telling Them Apart (2004)

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Most Significant Change

The Most Significant Change technique was developed in the 1990s by Rick Davies and published in a User Guide (with Jess Dart). It is a qualitative and participatory method for recording the effects of a project or programme. Most Significant Change can be used as an ongoing monitoring tool during a project. However, the technique is especially useful for project evaluation, since it provides "data" about its outcomes and impacts. Most Significant Change is essentially based on collecting stories about significant changes - particularly from a project's target groups – and then, via a systematic, multi-step process, selecting the Most Significant Changes. Most Significant Change is particularly suitable for complex and multi-layered projects with varied effects. It also records unexpected effects. The Most Significant Change technique, when successfully implemented, leads to whole teams focusing on the effects of their projects. Most Significant Change is thus particularly good for learning.

Implementierung

The User Guide describes the implementation of Most Significant Change in 10 steps:

- 1. How to start and raise interest
- 2. Defining the domains of change
- 3. Defining the reporting period
- 4. Collecting Significant Change stories
- 5. Selecting the most significant of the stories
- 6. Feeding back the results of the selection process
- 7. Verification of the stories
- 8. Quantification
- 9. Secondary analysis and meta-monitoring
- 10. Revising the system

The first step consists of involving various stakeholders and motivating them to collaborate (as the process is highly participatory). The next step is for the participants to define in which areas or on which subjects the Significant Change stories should be collected. Then they define at what intervals the stories should be collected.

The stories are collected from the people who are the most closely involved, i.e. usually beneficiaries or project staff in the field. The stories are essentially collected with the following simple question: "In your opinion, what was the most significant change for the project beneficiaries in the last three months?"

The collected stories are then filtered through the hierarchical structure of the project, programme or organisation. In concrete terms, this means that the stories are analysed and discussed at each level and eventually each level passes on one "Most Significant Story" for each subject area. Simultaneously, the selection criteria are fed back to interested stakeholders. The top level of the organisation produces a document containing the selected stories.



Illustration: example of selection process (ADRA Laos). Source: MSC User Guide

The next step involves verification of the selected stories during a field trip in order to establish, first of all, that they are true and, secondly, to obtain more information about the significant event. An extra step might consist of quantifying the qualitative information in the stories, e.g. with figures of how many people have experienced the same change.

The last two steps are to monitor the monitoring (e.g. Who took part and what influence did they have on the results? Which kinds of change were counted how often?) and to check the process itself (e.g. What lessons were learnt from using the technique?).

Suitability

Most Significant Change is suitable:

- When complex projects/programmes bring about multiple and varied effects;
- When unexpected changes need to be recorded as well;
- For recording the effects of large-scale programmes with a large number of organisational levels;
- For recording the effects of participatory projects/programmes focusing on social changes;
- When there is no pre-existing knowledge of monitoring and evaluation, as it is easy to communicate;
- When a detailed picture of changes is desired;
- For making a case for a project's contribution to development;
- For learning.

Most Significant Change demands a relatively large amount of time and its effects unfold only when several rounds of selection and feedback have been carried out. It therefore makes less sense to use Most Significant Change:

- If an expected change needs confirming;
- If a completed project needs to be evaluated retrospectively;
- If an average experience of the beneficiaries needs to be ascertained;
- If there is a need for a quick and cheap evaluation for purposes of accountability.

Links

The User Guide is available online.

Rick Davis and Jess Dart - The Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique (2005).

The Australian consultancy firm Clear Horizon (Jess Dart) has produced a:

"Quick Start Guide" for the practical implementation of Most Significant Change

Most Significant Change at Rick Davies' "Monitoring and Evaluation NEWS" homepage:

Monitoring and Evaluation NEWS

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Method for Impact Assessment of Programmes and Projects (MAPP)

MAPP was developed in 1999 by Dr Susanne Neubart at the German Development Institute. It is a participatory approach to recording the effects of a project or programme. MAPP is based on group discussions that record and analyse retrospectively, using a series of logical tools, changes and effects surrounding a project or programme. The group analyses the effect of the project, at first in general and then in detail, by means of various self-defined indicators. Next, the relevant project measures and activities (and additional actors) are listed and prioritised. Lastly, the group looks at the contribution made by the individual development measures to the observed developments. The authors claim that the method makes it possible to bridge the attribution gap. MAPP is well suited for assessing multi-dimensional development schemes. It also records unexpected effects. The assessments are primarily of a qualitative nature and are based on the subjective judgments of the participants in the group discussion.

Method

The method consists of using the following 6 tools in a logical sequence.

• Lifeline

The overall development of the project area is analysed from local people's perspective over the period of the project under evaluation on a five-point scale and presented as a graph.

Trend analysis

Development over this period is recorded in detail using several criteria, giving an overall trend for each criterion. This step also involves the participants in the group discussion defining the criteria (indicators).

Crosschecking

Statistics, monitoring data, observations, etc. can all be called upon to check the trend analysis results.

List of measures

A list is made of the measures used in the project

Quality of life

Diagram: Neubert (2010)

under study and also of other actors (other projects, government, etc.) and put in order of their relevance to beneficiaries in the area. In addition, the beneficiaries' own contribution in terms of work and money is also analysed.

Influence matrix

The group now discusses and analyses the effect of individual measures (4.) on the individual development criteria (2.) and these are entered into a matrix. This matrix makes it possible to analyse, firstly, which measures had a strong influence and, secondly, which indicators changed for the better or the worse.

Development Indicators	Interrentional activities												
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Development and impact profile

Diagram: Neubert (2010

The most important information gained using the previous tools are summarised to give an overview. This shows whether, overall, development is evolving in a robust or a vulnerable (irregular) fashion, which the main factors favouring development are, and what role the development measures of different organisations plays in this.

Suitability

MAPP is very suitable:

- For projects/programmes with clearly defined target groups and effects that can be perceived by these target groups;
- For evaluating multi-dimensional target plans (e.g. poverty alleviation, democratisation, etc.).

A certain culture of dialogue in the partner country is a precondition for this method to be successfully employed. Only then can genuine consensus as well as controversial perceptions be recognised in the group discussions.

Links

MAPP on the German Development Institute's website

An introduction including examples of all the tools as used in a real-life project:

Susanne Neubert – Description and Examples of MAPP (2010)