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GLCb2033 Monitoring and Evaluation

Theory of Change: Evaluation for Results

WEEK 3

Case Study
From Cement Floors to Happiness in Mexico and hometask:

RESULT-BASED MANAGEMENT (RBM)
This section focuses on real-world applications of the Theory of Change, examining case studies and interactive group exercises to solidify understanding.

Introduction to Theory of Change
A 'theory of change' explains how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts. It can be developed for any level of intervention – an event, a project, a programme, a policy, a strategy or an organization

Learning Objectives

Icebreaker Activity
"What are the most important steps to achieve success in a project?"

Visualizing a Theory of Change

Conceptual Framing

Key Components of ToC

Definition and Purpose of Theory of Change

Theory of Change in Evaluation

Theory of Change and Evaluation
Understanding the Theory of Change (ToC) is essential for effective planning and evaluation of programs. This framework not only clarifies distinct outcomes but also illustrates the pathways to achieve them through measurable indicators.

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Theory of Change: Evaluation for Results

WEEK 3

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the concept of Theory of Change (ToC) and its significance in project planning.

2. Learn how ToC integrates with Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBM).

3. Analyze case studies showcasing the application of ToC in real-world evaluations.

Icebreaker Activity

"What are the most important steps to achieve success in a project?"

Introduction to Theory of Change

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Conceptual Framing

The first task of a systematic program theory-driven evaluation is to develop a conceptual framework or program theory of how a program intends to solve theproblem of interest (i.e., meet the needs of its target population). Three commondefinitions of program theory capture:

- The construction of a plausible and sensible model of how a program issupposed to work (Bickman, 1987).
- A set of propositions regarding what goes on in the black box during thetransformation of input to output; that is, how a bad situation is transformedinto a better one through treatment inputs (Lipsey, 1993).
- The process through which program components are presumed to affectoutcomes and the conditions under which these processes are believed tooperate (Donaldson, 2001a).

Program theory is sometimes described by a logic model, program model, theory of change, cause map, action theory, intervening mechanism theory, systems map, a non-linear conceptual framework,and the like (Bonis & Donaldson, 2021; Leeuw & Donaldson, 2015; Lemire,Christie, Kwako, Leeuw, & Donaldson, 2020).

Program impact theory illustrates the expected results of a program, in contrast to **program process theory**, which describes the nature of the programitself.

Definition and Purpose of Theory of Change

Definition and Purpose
• **What is a Theory of Change?**
o A detailed description of **how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context**.
o Emphasize that it is not just a plan but a **theory of how the program will lead to its intended outcomes**.

A Theory of Change provides a detailed description of how and why change is expected to occur in a specific context. It serves as a roadmap for program planning, implementation, and evaluation, emphasizing a strategic approach rather than merely outlining steps to follow.

Sometimes the term is used generally to refer t**o any version of this process, including a results chain, which shows a series of boxes from inputs to outputs, outcomes and impacts**, or a logframe, which represents the same information in a matrix.

EVALUATION HANDBOOK

Key Components of ToC

Program Process Theory

Inputs | Activities | Outputs → Initial Outcomes → Intermediate Outcomes → Long-Term Outcomes

Program Impact Theory

FIGURE 2.3   How the standard logic model framework relates to program theory.

Workplace Health Promotion Program → Employee Fitness → Job Performance

FIGURE 2.2   Program impact theory example.

This illustrates that workers who participate in a workplace health promotion program are expected to obtain higher levels of fitness (proximal outcome), which in turn is expected to improve their job performance (distal outcome). The problem of interest in this example is low job performance. The program is expected to solve the problem by improving employee fitness. Put another way, this program rests on the assumption that employees need to raise their fitness level in order to perform well at work. This identified need could be based on a hunch of the designers of the program, or it could have been the primary finding identified in a systematic needs assessment. The main point to emphasize her

Key Components:
o Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact (RESULTS CHAIN - look IS -> W3 Practice_materials.
o **Assumptions:** Explain the importance of identifying critical assumptions in a ToC.
o Contextual Factors: Highlight external factors that could affect success.

Visualizing a Theory of Change
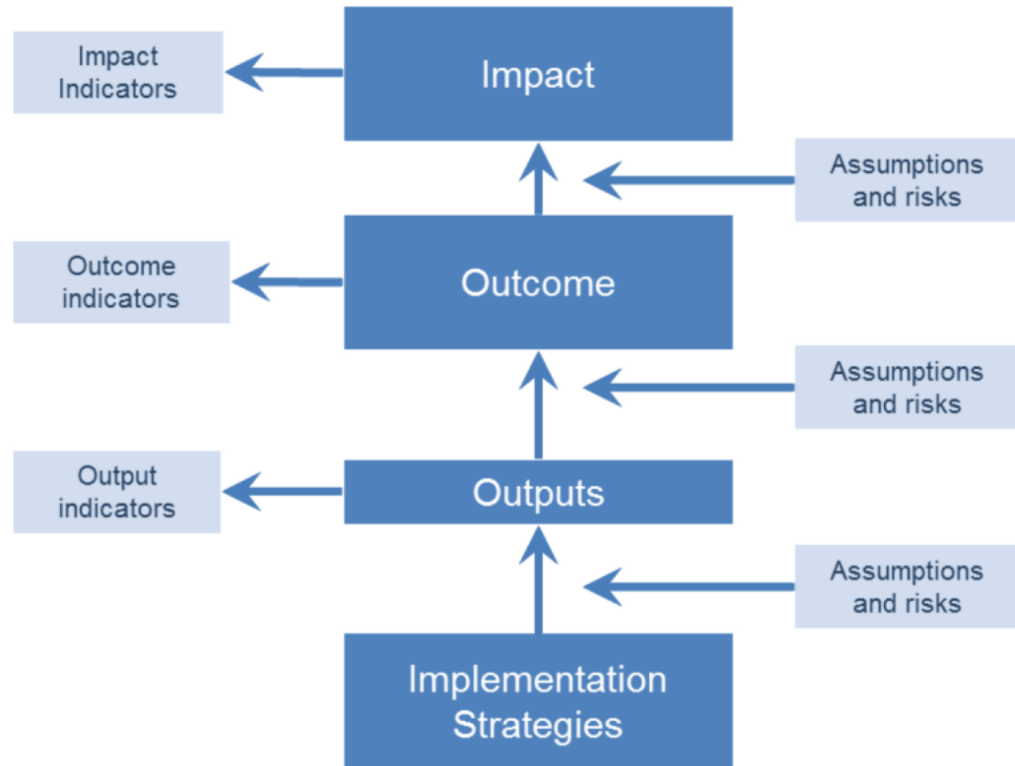
Source: United Nations Children's Fund, Supplementary Programme Note on the Theory of Change, Peer Review Group meeting, 11 March 2014, UNICEF, New York, 2014, p. 4. See www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/PRG-overview_10Mar2014.pdf.
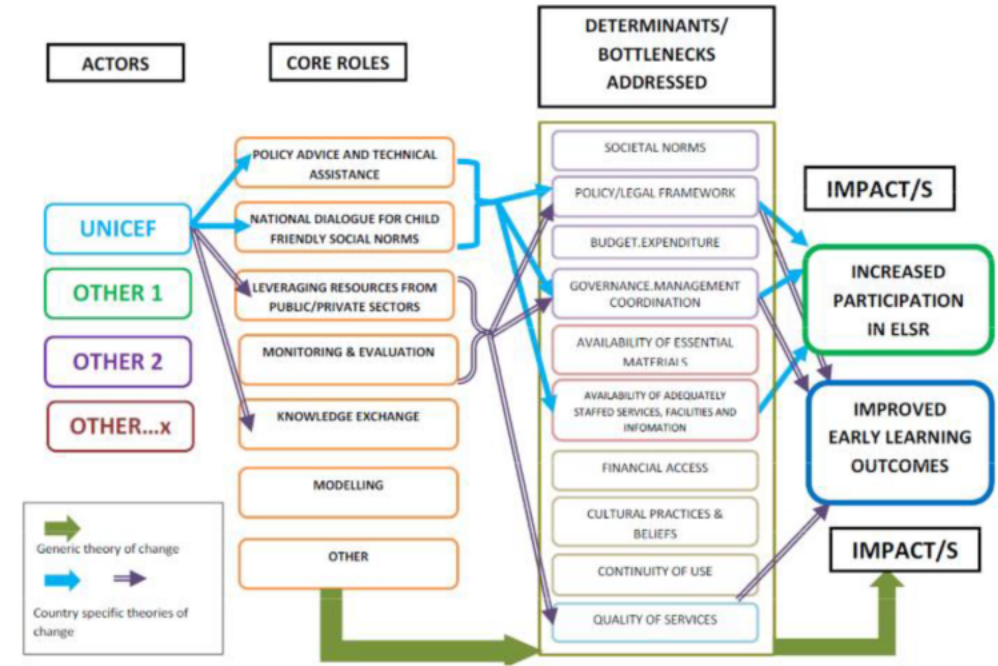
Source: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (2014) Terms of Reference for Multi-country evaluation on increasing access and equity in early childhood education: UNICEF's contribution to achieving results in six CEE-CIS countries, 2005–2012, p. 7.

Illustration is in IS - WEEK 3 Practice_materials, p. 4, FIgure 3

RESULT-BASED MANAGEMENT (RBM)

This section focuses on real-world applications of the Theory of Change, examining case studies and interactive group exercises to solidify understanding.

Theory of Change in Evaluation

a. Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBM)
• RBM as a framework focused on achieving desired results.
• RBM: ToC helps in defining results, identifying indicators, and guiding M&E strategies.
b. Evaluation Using Theory of Change

• Formative and Summative Evaluations:

o **Formative:** Used during the design and early implementation to ensure the program is on track.
o **Summative:** Used at the end of a project to assess the achievement of outcomes and impact.

GO TO IS -> WEEK 3 Practice materials

Information obtained from a monitoring system reveals the performance of only what is being measured (although it can be compared against both past performance and some planned level of present or projected performance [targets]).

Monitoring data do not reveal why that level of performance occurred or provide causal explanations about changes in performance from one reporting period to another or one site to another. This information comes from an evaluation system.

An evaluation system serves a complementary but distinct function within a results-based management framework.

Ten Steps to Building a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System

1. conducting a readiness assessment
2. agreeing on performance outcomes to monitor and evaluate
3. selecting key indicators to monitor outcomes
4. gathering baseline data on indicators
5. planning for improvement: setting realistic targets
6. monitoring for results
7. using evaluation information
8. reporting fi ndings
9. using fi ndings
10. sustaining the M&E system within the organization.

Source: Kusek and Rist 2004.

Upcoming week 4 Types and approaches to the M&E

Diversity of reasons for evaluation will give rise to the different approaches to evaluation based upon diverse theories founded on a variety of perspectives.

Some evaluations even merge the diverse approaches as long as they are helpful for evaluation. These approaches are based on selected features of the project, such as the objectives, management, beneficiaries, participants, and complexity.

We will consider topic on the Assumption Development
selection the key indicators to **monitor** outcomes

Case Study

From Cement Floors to Happiness in Mexico and hometask:

Go to IS -> Week 4 -> **Home task for practicing ToC:** read the case and develop 1-page table on the explanation of the program activity described in the Case, using the ToC