

Linking M&E to Impact Evaluation

Webinar

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Based upon InterAction Guidance Note 2

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Objectives of this webinar

- ◆ Develop an understanding of potential linkages between M&E and impact evaluation
- ◆ Provide some ideas how to go about this
- ◆ NGO context
- ◆ Your questions and comments

Why link M&E to Impact Evaluation?

- ◆ Often viewed as discrete activities
 - M&E: major focus on what's happening, on outputs, more immediate outcomes
 - IE: longer-term changes, attribution
 - IE often treated as a "rigorous" research study separate from an NGO's regular activities and routine M&E
- ◆ But: M&E essential to meaningful IE
 - Value, however, not automatic

What do we mean by “impact evaluation”?

- ◆ Discussed by Patricia Rogers in Guidance Note 1, earlier webinar
- ◆ IE: identifying the effects *resulting* from an intervention
 - Intended or unintended, primary or secondary, direct or indirect
 - Systematically and empirically
 - Impacts occur later than – and as a result of – outputs and intermediate outcomes

What *monitoring* can and cannot do

Some characteristics

- ◆ Tracks progress against pre-identified objectives, indicators, targets
- ◆ Ongoing or periodic
- ◆ Existing or easily obtainable data
- ◆ Usually quantitative
- ◆ Often for reporting & management

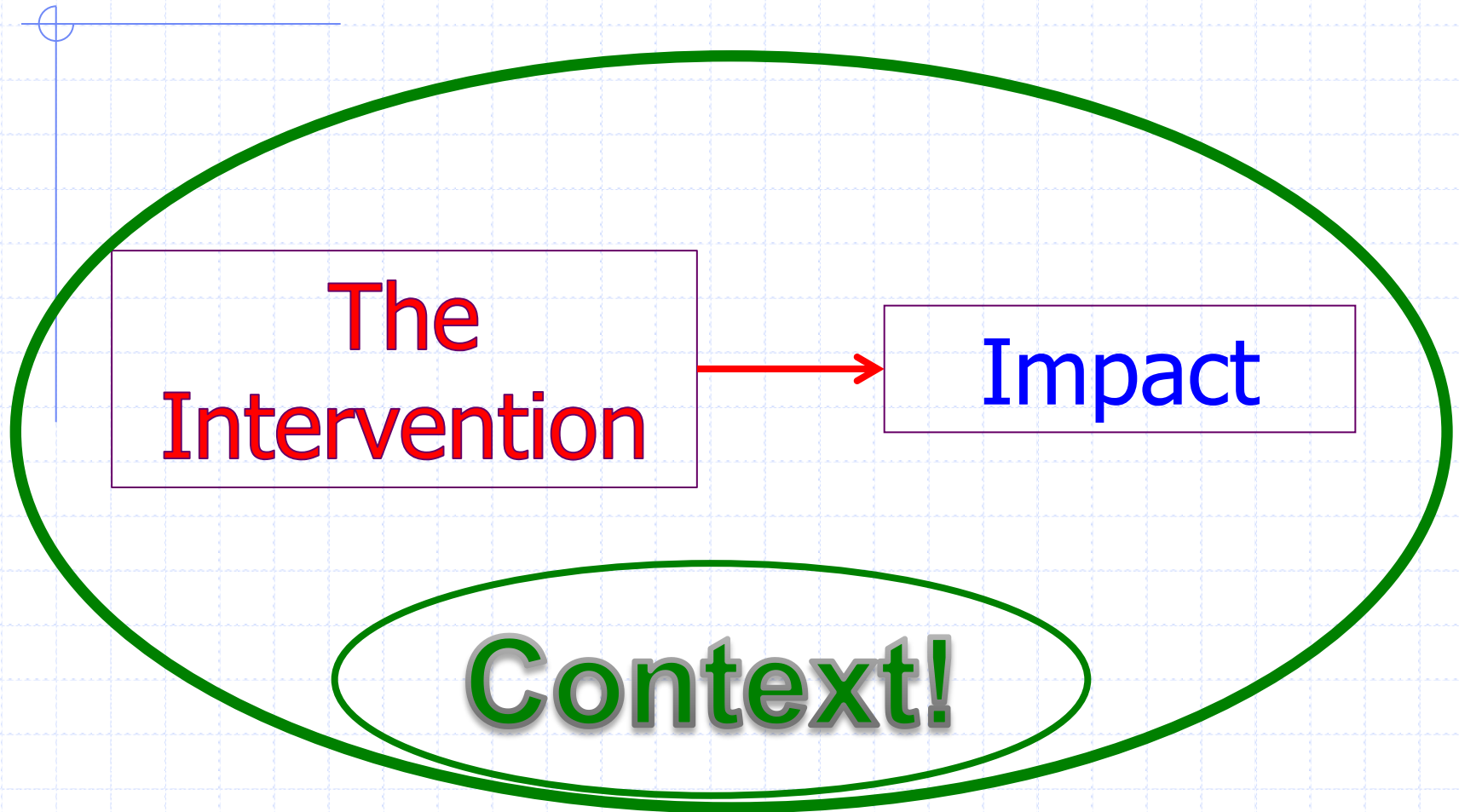
Some limitations

- ◆ Cannot question appropriateness of the program, activities, objectives, indicators
- ◆ Unable to consider unintended effects
- ◆ Cannot address “why” questions
- ◆ Cannot indicate causality

Contribution of other forms of evaluation, other evaluation questions

- ◆ Needs assessment
- ◆ Evaluation of process or implementation
- ◆ Formative evaluation
- ◆ Other important evaluation questions:
 - Relevance
 - Efficiency and alternatives
 - Sustainability
 - Unintended/unexpected effects
 - Context and other contributing factors

Essential elements of IE



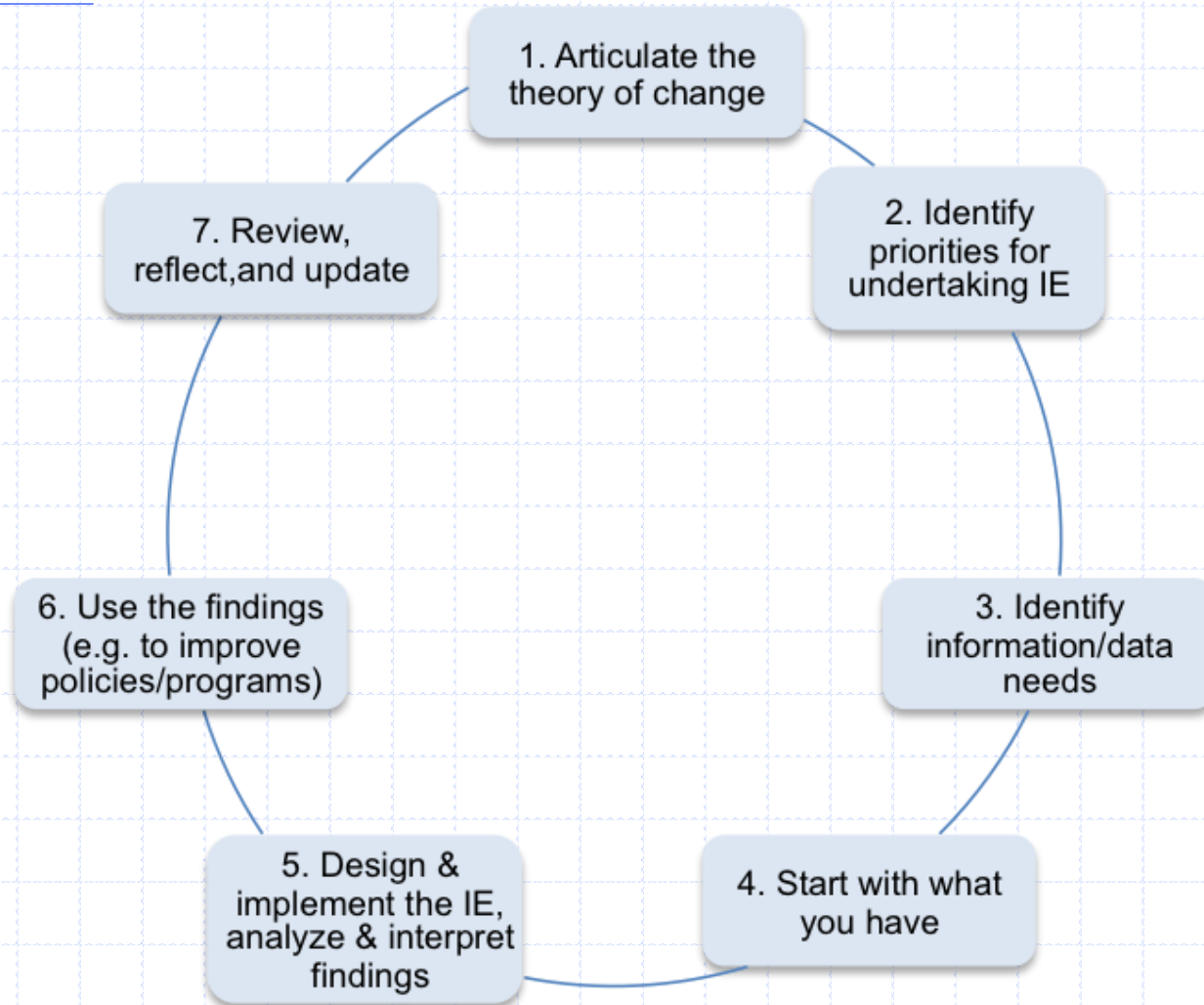
Attribution

- ◆ Essential to impact evaluation
- ◆ But ...
 - What is the *actual* intervention?
 - What *else* has been going on?
 - Who did, did not, benefit
- ◆ Essential role for M&E
 - But NOT automatic, ONLY if planned for
 - Most M&E for purposes other than IE
- ◆ Added value of NGOs

How M&E can contribute to IE

- ◆ Identifying when and under what circumstances IE is possible and appropriate
- ◆ Contributing data needed to make IE possible
 - e.g., baseline data, information about the nature of the intervention, what else is going on, who benefited...
- ◆ Contributing information needed to interpret and apply IE findings
 - e.g., quality of implementation, data to help explain *why* change has taken place

How to build impact evaluation into M&E thinking and practices



1. Articulate the theory of change

- ◆ How the intervention is expected to “work”
- ◆ Trajectory
 - When appropriate to expect impact to occur
- ◆ What “results” can be expected to occur when
- ◆ Process: involve stakeholders in development of the theory of change

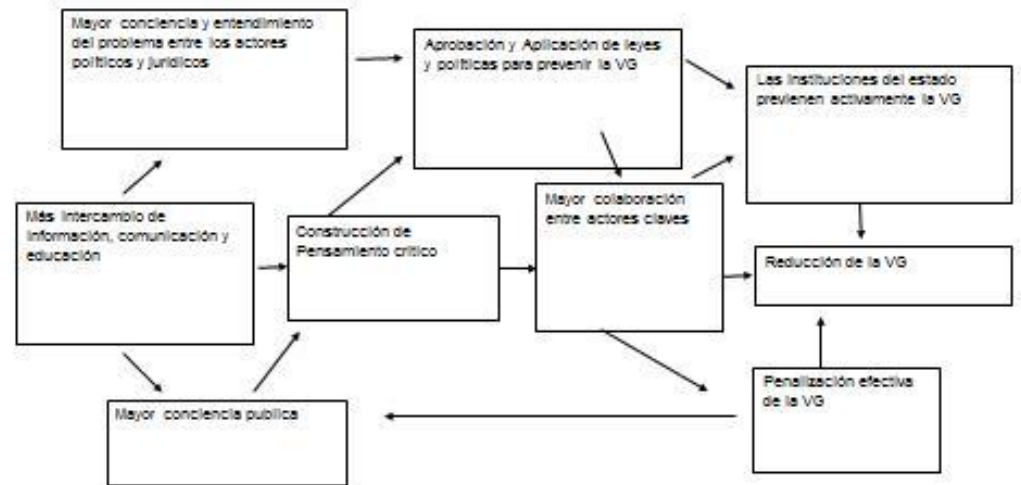
Generic logic model (simplified)



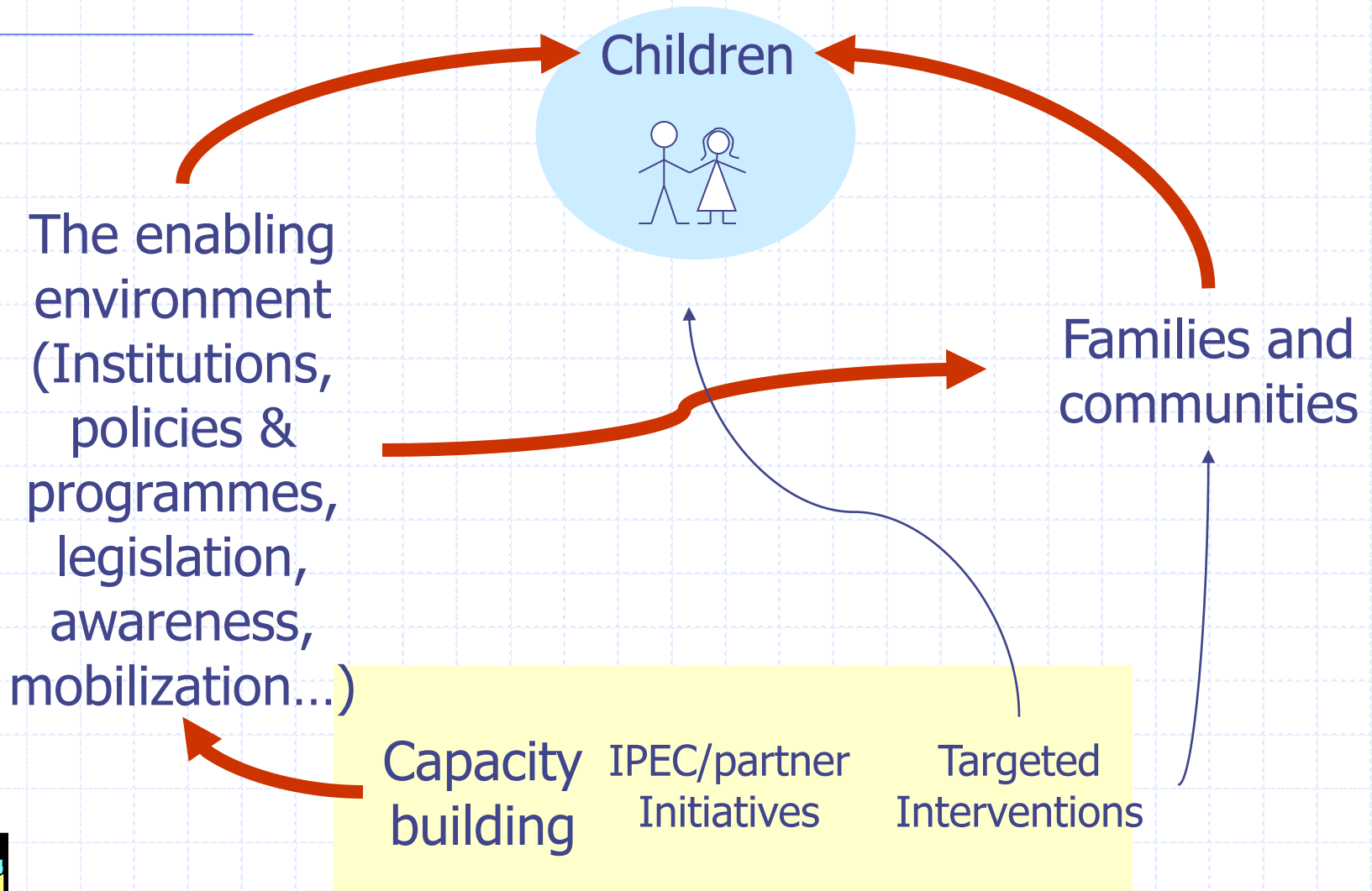
Allison Davis, Oxfam: Theory of Change – Program to Prevent Gender Based Violence in El Salvador (21 March 2012 Webinar)



Teoría de Cambio del PPVG



IMPACT ON CHILDREN



2. Identify priorities for IE

- ◆ Follows from the theory of change
- ◆ Key questions of (various) stakeholders
- ◆ What is already known?
- ◆ **When possible, meaningful to conduct IE?**
- ◆ What can't be answered through simpler means?
- ◆ Key potential role of M&E in all of the above

3. Identify information needs

- ◆ Baseline data (disaggregated)
- ◆ Nature of program as *actually* implemented
- ◆ Who has been served?
- ◆ What else has been going on?
- ◆ Outcomes/impacts: short-medium-long term
- ◆ What else (unintended/unexpected effects)?
- ◆ Appropriateness/relevance of program?
- ◆ What else is needed?
- ◆ Other considerations

4. Start with what you have

- ◆ Contribution analysis
- ◆ Reflective discussions
 - (Monitoring can be qualitative as well as quantitative)
- ◆ Eliminate rival plausible hypotheses

Contribution Analysis (Mayne: Using performance measures sensibly)

1. Develop the results chain
2. Assess the existing evidence on results
3. Assess the alternative explanations
4. Assemble the performance story
5. Seek out additional evidence
6. Revise and strengthen the performance story

5. Design & implement the IE, Analyze & interpret findings

◆ Some areas for contribution of M&E

- Make sure that the *right questions* are addressed in IE
- Make use of existing M&E data
- Plan complementary M&E

◆ Interpretation

- Explanation: whys and hows: get inside the black box
- Sub-group differences

6. Use the findings

- ◆ Integrate IE findings with other information: M&E, other
- ◆ Animate sessions (NGO staff, other stakeholders) to consider implications
 - Strategy, program approaches
 - Other needs
- ◆ M&E: major contribution to identifying generalizability of IE findings

7. Review, reflect, update

- ◆ Periodic, not only at “the end”
- ◆ Acknowledge that responsive programs do and should change
- ◆ Interim reviews/reflective discussions
- ◆ Identify implications of program changes to IE approach
- ◆ Update the performance story
- ◆ Implications of IE for future M&E

Engage the *entire* organization

- ◆ Program staff
 - HQ, field
- ◆ Senior management
- ◆ **NOT** just M&E specialists, researchers, consultants

Conclusion

- ◆ *Potential* contribution of M&E to IE
 - Help establish priorities for IE
 - The actual intervention
 - Context
 - Interpretation/use
 - Contribute to results-oriented thinking
- ◆ Various steps for M&E to support IE
- ◆ Added value of NGOs
- ◆ But value/use of M&E not automatic