Linking M&E to Impact Evaluation

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Based upon InterAction Guidance Note 2

Burt Perrin
France

Burt@BurtPerrin.com
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

The Intervention → Impact

Context!
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

2. Identify priorities for undertaking IE

3. Identify information/data needs

4. Start with what you have

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

6. Use the findings (e.g. to improve policies/programs)

7. Review, reflect, and update
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)
Teoría de Cambio del PPVG

Major conciencia y entendimiento del problema entre los actores políticos y jurídicos

Aprobación y Aplicación de leyes y políticas para prevenir la VG

Las instituciones del estado previenen activamente la VG

Mayor colaboración entre actores claves

Reducción de la VG

Penalización efectiva de la VG

Mayor conciencia pública

Más intercambio de información, comunicación y educación

Construcción de Pensamiento crítico
IMPACT ON CHILDREN

The enabling environment (Institutions, policies & programmes, legislation, awareness, mobilization...)

Children

Families and communities

Capacity building
IPEC/partner Initiatives
Targeted Interventions
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*