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Indicators of Impact

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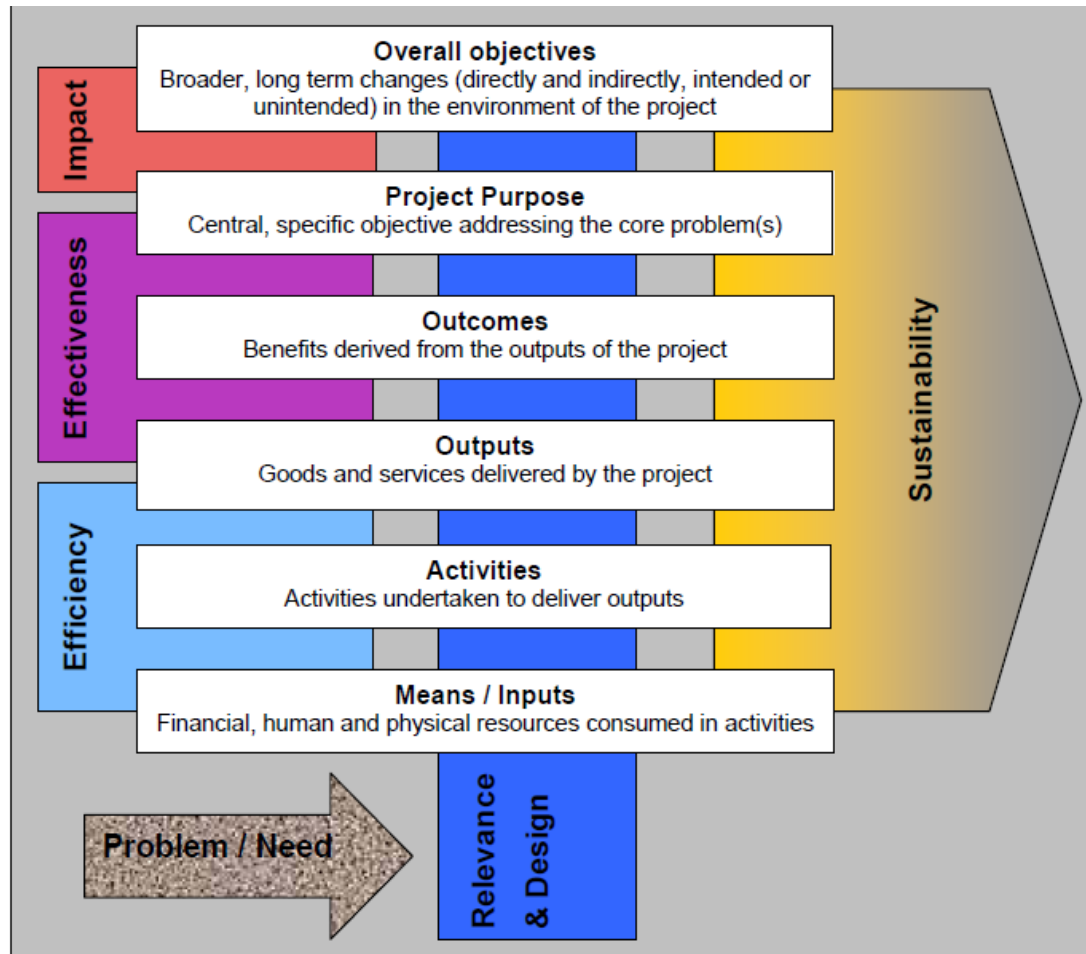
WHY ARE WE INTERESTED IN IMPACT?

- **Development policies and interventions**, in one way or another, have to do with **changing behavior/intentions/knowledge** of households, individuals, and organizations
- Crucial for understanding what can change behavior is **information about these mechanisms**.
- Assessing the impact allow us to **understand the changes produced and to learn from them**
- Think of the **project as an “investment”**: the impact achieved on the targeted environment / beneficiaries (that is the changes produced) is the way we can measure the **“profit” from our investment**
- **The impact assessment shows the changes in the overall well-being that can be attributed to a particular programme**

WHY IMPACT IS IMPORTANT?

- **Accountability:** Impact indicators measure what a project has achieved relative to its aims and thus promote accountability;
- **Public relations and advocacy:** Impacts and Performance indicators can be used to create consensus, to advocate for the project's goals;
- **Dissemination of best practices:** a project develops a “good practice” when its impact is credible, measurable, effective.
- **Benchmarking of current situation:** Performance indicators can generate data against which to measure subsequent projects;
- **Quality management:** Performance indicators can be used to measure beneficiaries satisfaction and assess how the project is managed;
- **Policy review:** Performance indicators can be incorporated within a national population policy framework with baseline information clearly specified and benchmarks set out on a medium to long-term basis

WHAT IS IMPACT?



WHAT IS IMPACT? (2)

- **Impact** is the Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended;
- It describes how and to which degree the project has contributed to the solution of the problem and to the achievement of the overall objective.
- When the objective hierarchy is read from the bottom up, it can be expressed in terms :
- **IF** adequate inputs/resources are provided, **THEN** activities can be undertaken;
- **IF** the activities are undertaken, **THEN** results can be produced;
- **IF** results are produced, **THEN** the purpose will be achieved; and
- **IF** the purpose is achieved, **THEN** this should contribute towards the overall objective**(IMPACT)**

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Did key project/policies/programs achieve the intended goal?
- Can the changes in outcomes be explained by those programs, or are they the result of some other intervening factors occurring simultaneously?
- Do key program impacts vary across different groups of intended beneficiaries (males, females, indigenous people), regions, and over time?
- If so, what are the cultural, economic, and political factors that limit the full participation of vulnerable groups (women or others) in the program benefits?
- Are there any unintended effects, either positive or negative?
- How effective are key programs in comparison with alternative interventions?
- Are key programs worth the resources they cost?

HOW CAN WE ASSESS IMPACT?

- The most common tool to assess the performance and then the impact of the project is to use the specific indicators
- Indicators measure the accomplishment of the project goals and targets.
- They can be **qualitative or quantitative**, and provide a way of spotting and measuring underlying trends.
- Indicators should be defined during the **formulation stage**, but they often can and need to be specified in greater detail **during implementation**.
- Indicators should measure intangible as well as tangible changes, particularly in projects that value factors such as personal and social development.

INDICATORS AND LOGFRAME

Logframe objective terminology	Indicator terminology
Overall objective	Impact indicators
Purpose	Outcome indicators
Result	Output indicators

HOW TO SELECT INDICATORS

- Good indicators need to be: relevant to the project and its environment, relevant to the national / international standards, feasible to collect, easy to interpret, they should allow tracking a change over a time.
- They should as much as possible specify quantity, quality, time (QQT)
- Be realistic
- Involve the right people (don't impose)
- Allow to review targets on a regular basis
- Provide incentives to report honestly (don't shoot the messenger!)

HOW TO SELECT INDICATORS (2)

- **Specifying OVIs** helps to check the feasibility of objectives and helps form the basis of the project's monitoring and evaluation system.
- They are formulated in response to the question “How would we know whether or not what has been planned is actually happening or happened? How do we verify success?”
- A good OVI should be **SMART.....**
 - **S**pecific to the objective it is supposed to measure
 - **M**easurable (either quantitatively or qualitatively)
 - **A**vailable at an acceptable cost
 - **R**elevant to the information needs of managers
 - **T**ime-bound – so we know when we can expect the objective/target to be achieved

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify a limited number of indicators that adequately measure the outputs.
- Identify the data sources available and the type of data collection needed for each indicator.
- Construct a matrix listing the indicators, identifying their importance for project monitoring (high/low), the easiness of obtaining data on the indicator (easy/feasible but requires effort/difficult) and the cost of data collection.
- Prioritise indicators by importance, the easiness of obtaining data and cost and select a set of indicators.
- Group selected indicators by source of data to determine the set of sources, which can provide data on clusters of indicators.
- Make a final selection of a group of indicators and decide on a data collection plan in light of available logistical, human and financial resources and time.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

- **Available:** Can the indicator be constructed from **existing data sources**? Where source materials either do not exist or are weak, project efforts to strengthen existing sources or create new ones able to provide accurate and timely data must be feasible in terms of costs.
- **Manageable:** Does the indicator impose an unnecessary **data collection** or **cost burden** on the donor organization or national agencies? If so, it should not be used.
- **Clarity:** Is the indicator clear for project managers and other partners to **understand** and **interpret**?
- **Repeatable:** Can the indicator be **consistently measured** over time? At the minimum this implies providing two mutually exclusive **response categories** - more usually it refers to the ease of representation of a variable as a **frequency, percentage, ratio, average** etc.
- **Robustness:** Does the indicator provide a **robust** measure of the project result? Robustness is generally taken to reflect the qualities of **validity, specificity, sensitivity and reliability**.

IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Impact and sustainability are closely related
- A well-articulated intervention should address the time horizons over which different types of outcomes and impacts could reasonably be expected to occur
- In some cases project managers say that impact indicators are not immediately available as the real impact will emerge in the medium – long term:
- One more reason then to show that the results achieved will continue after the end of the project (assuring sustainability is **extremely important – it is a necessary condition to have a successful project**)

IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY (2)

- The sustainability of positive impacts **COULD** also likely to be evident only in the longer term
- **For example:** it may take several years to observe changes in the cognitive development of young children resulting from early childhood development programs.
- Therefore in the short/medium term we need to focus on other impacts that will be observable in the short term, such as the institutionalization of practices and the development of organizational capacity, that are likely to contribute to the sustainability of impacts for participants and communities in the longer term.
- Important is the need to be clear about the time within which welfare changes are to be expected
- In such instances, indicators of shorter term outcomes may be needed to form a judgment on the direction and speed of realization of the intervention's objective

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES TO BE CLEARLY ADDRESSED

- **Financial sustainability** issues (e.g. affordability, local authorities budget commitment, cost-recovery mechanisms, private sector management, etc)
- The **technology being used/promoted** by the project is appropriate and can be maintained
- Issues of **environmental and social sustainability** are being appropriately assessed and managed
- **Institutional strengthening and capacity building** activities (e.g. policy and systems development, training of trainers) are being effectively carried out, and skills transferred
- Plan for the **phase out of any external assistance/TA**, and the handover of the management responsibilities

Annexes

- Attached to this presentation you will find suggestions for the selection of impact indicators
- It is based on three types of projects:
 - Raise public awareness for CH
 - Education as tool for younger generation
 - Communication as tool to enlarge impact