Measuring what matters
Workshop Workbook

Funded by
the European Union

CVSS Council of Voluntary Social Services

EVALUCORE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Workshop Workbook, designed as a practical companion to the workshop sessions. This workbook is intended to support your learning experience, providing:

✅ Key concepts and insights that align with the workshop slides.
✅ Space for note-taking and personal reflections.
✅ Easy-to-use templates to help you apply M&E principles to your work.

While this workbook is a stand-alone resource, its full value is best realised when used alongside the interactive discussions, exercises, and facilitator insights provided during the workshop. Attending the sessions will help deepen your understanding and allow for real-time application and feedback.

Using This Workbook

This resource is structured to guide you step by step through foundational MEL concepts, such as:

📌 The difference between outputs and outcomes
📌 Developing a Theory of Change and Logic Models
📌 Identifying meaningful indicators and designing a Results Framework
📌 Practical exercises to apply these concepts to your projects

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Disclaimer

This workbook's content represents the facilitator's work and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Council of Voluntary Social Services or the European Union. The perspectives, examples, and recommendations included are intended to enhance learning and encourage critical thinking within the field of MEL.

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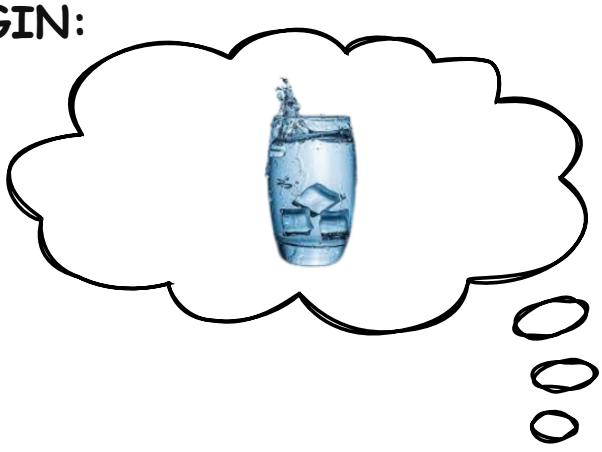
MANY NAMES FOR MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING (MEL)

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) is known by many names across different sectors and organisations, including Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Results-Based Management (RBM), Performance Management, and Adaptive Management, among others. While these terms may emphasise different aspects—some focusing more on accountability, others on learning or adaptive decision-making—the core principles remain the same.

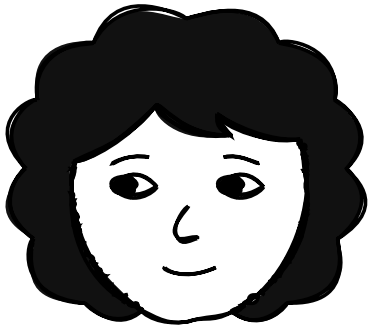
Regardless of the terminology, the fundamental purpose is to systematically track progress, assess effectiveness, and use evidence to inform decision-making and improve outcomes. For the purposes of this workshop and workbook, we will use the term "Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning" (MEL) to encompass this shared foundation.

REFLECTIONS BEFORE WE BEGIN: DRINK MORE WATER



To help us understand MEL, think for a minute about a goal to drink more water, then answer the following questions.

Why did you decide to pursue this goal?
How was success defined?
How was progress measured?
What counted as water?
What was your baseline consumption?
What was the baseline measurement of the reason you were drinking more?



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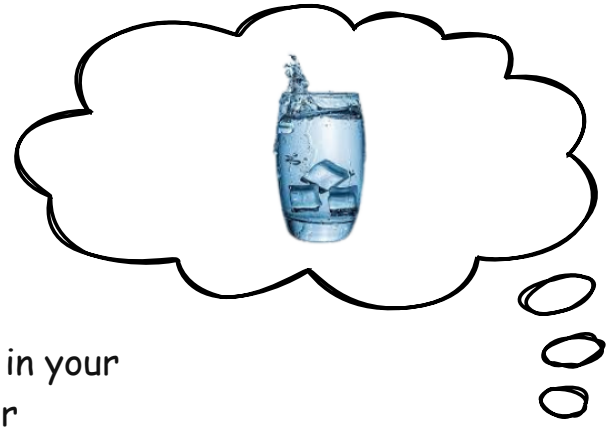
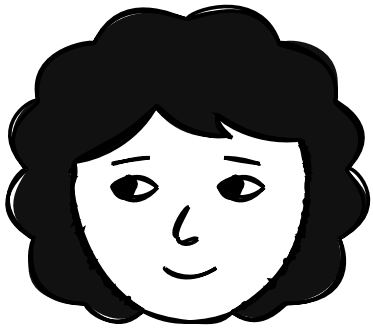
Now, discuss your answers with others. You may find that the same goal is defined differently by different people. Additionally, most may not define it by the expected change, just by the actions that they take in pursuing their goals.

DRINK MORE WATER WITH A MEL LENS





What measurable difference will occur in your health status once you drink more water consistently?

What is the baseline consumption level before you start working on your goal? What is the baseline measurement of the health status factor you expect to change?

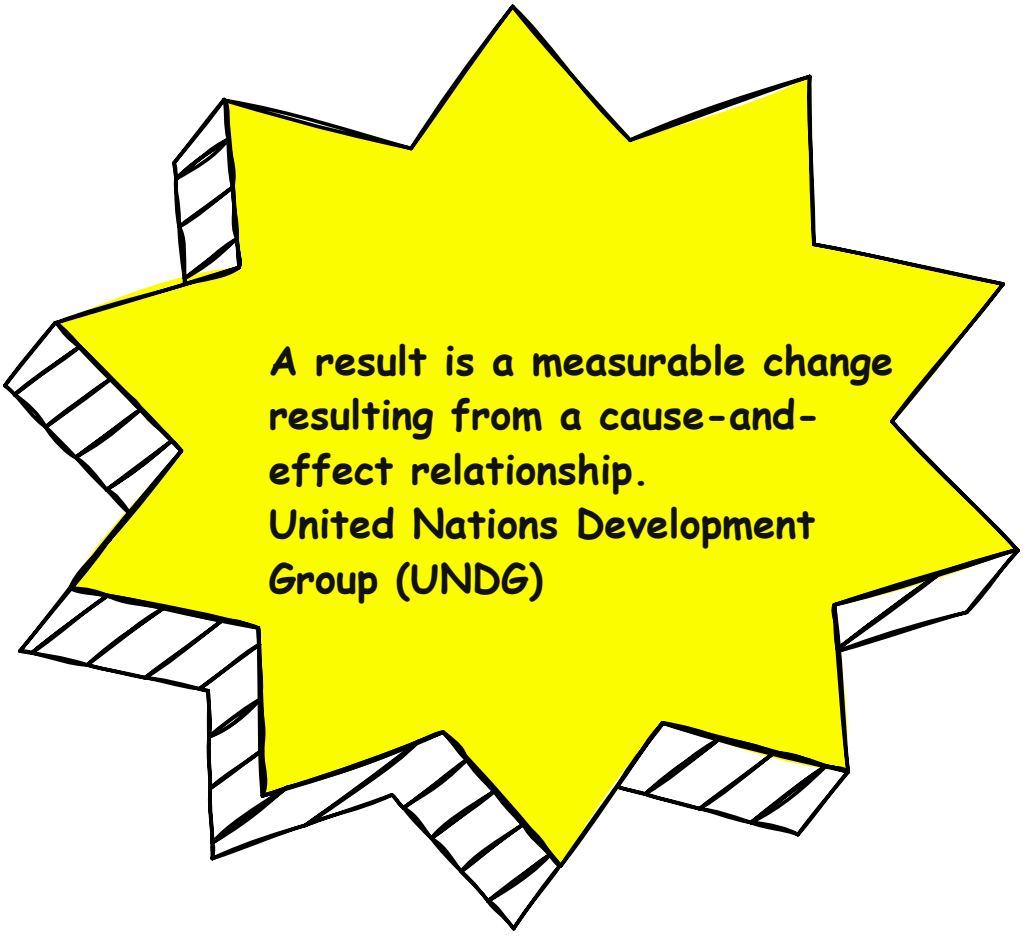
What reasonable justification do you have for thinking increased water consumption will positively influence the problem you want to address?

How will you systematically track progress toward the goal, including measurements of water consumed and changes in the ultimate factor?

MEL requires that we go beyond defining success by what we do, but rather by the effectiveness of what we did. It moves from just tracking what we did, and seeks to answer the question - SO WHAT?

WHAT IS A RESULT?

MEL is all about RESULTS, and more importantly, it's a focus on the systematic measurement of the results that matter.



In MEL, there are three (3) levels of results of interest.

Tangible evidence that activities occurred with participants.

Changes in individual participants' knowledge, status, and/or behaviour.

The ripple effect to the wider community and society when several persons experience outcomes. This usually relates to the WHY of your programme.

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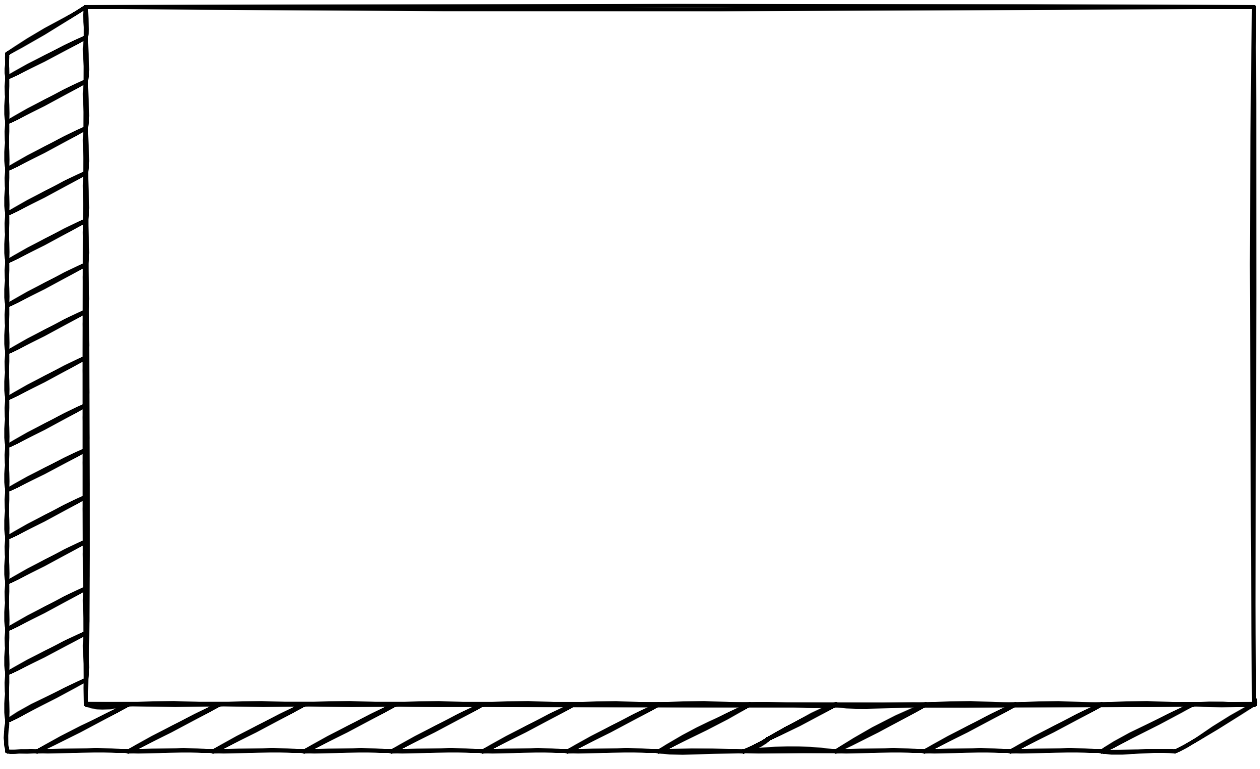
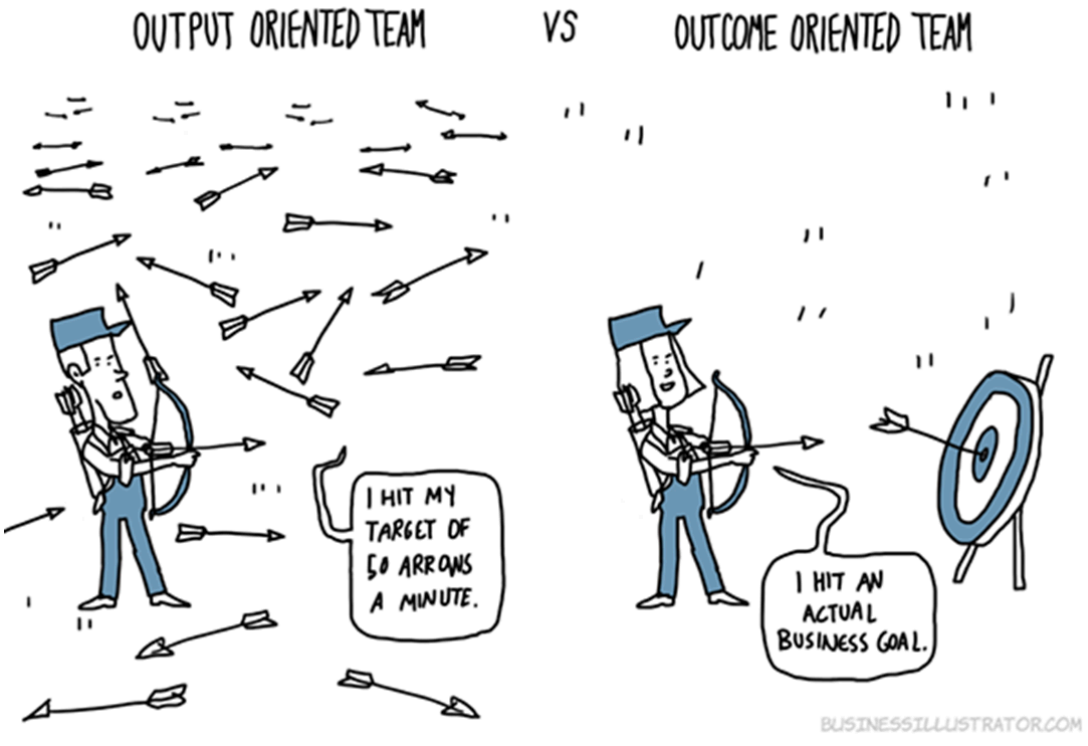


MEL seeks to help us connect what we do to what we want to achieve, allowing us to adapt along the way.



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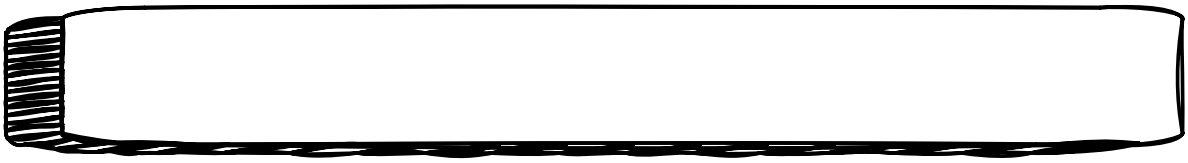
WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO MEL?

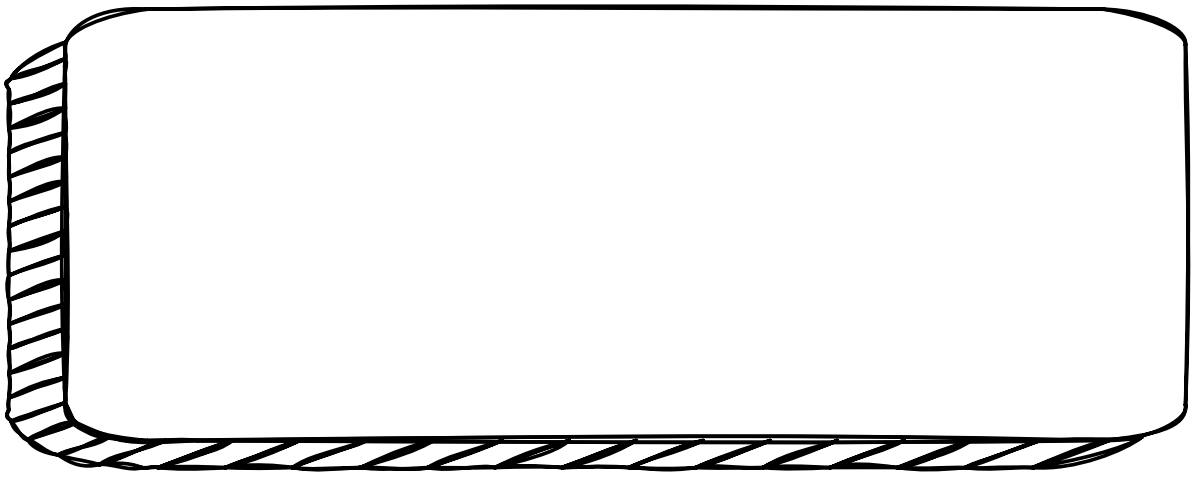
- ✔ Understanding of the problem.
- ✔ Theory of change.
- ✔ Appropriate measures for outcomes and impact.
- ✔ Available data sources.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM: BRAINSTORM WITH STAKEHOLDERS

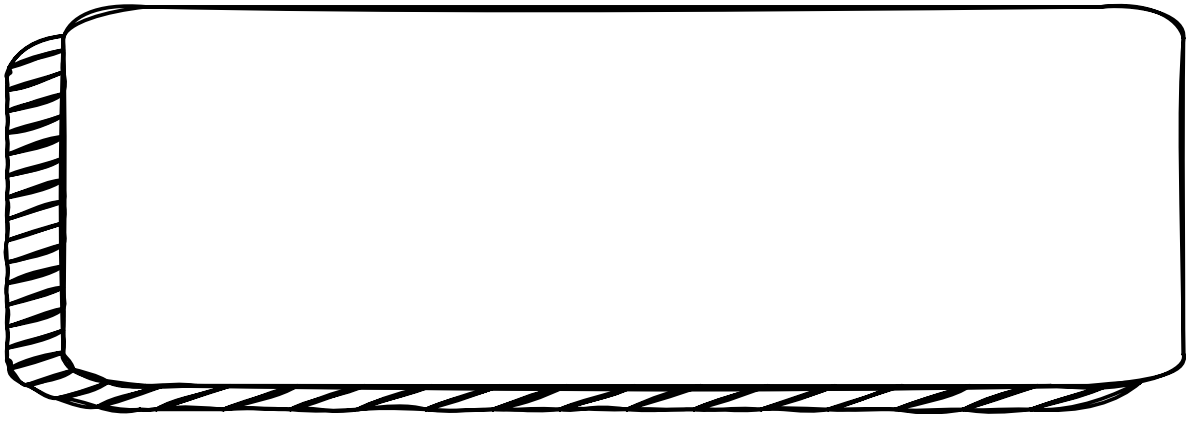
How do you know this is a problem? Is there any data to support this claim?



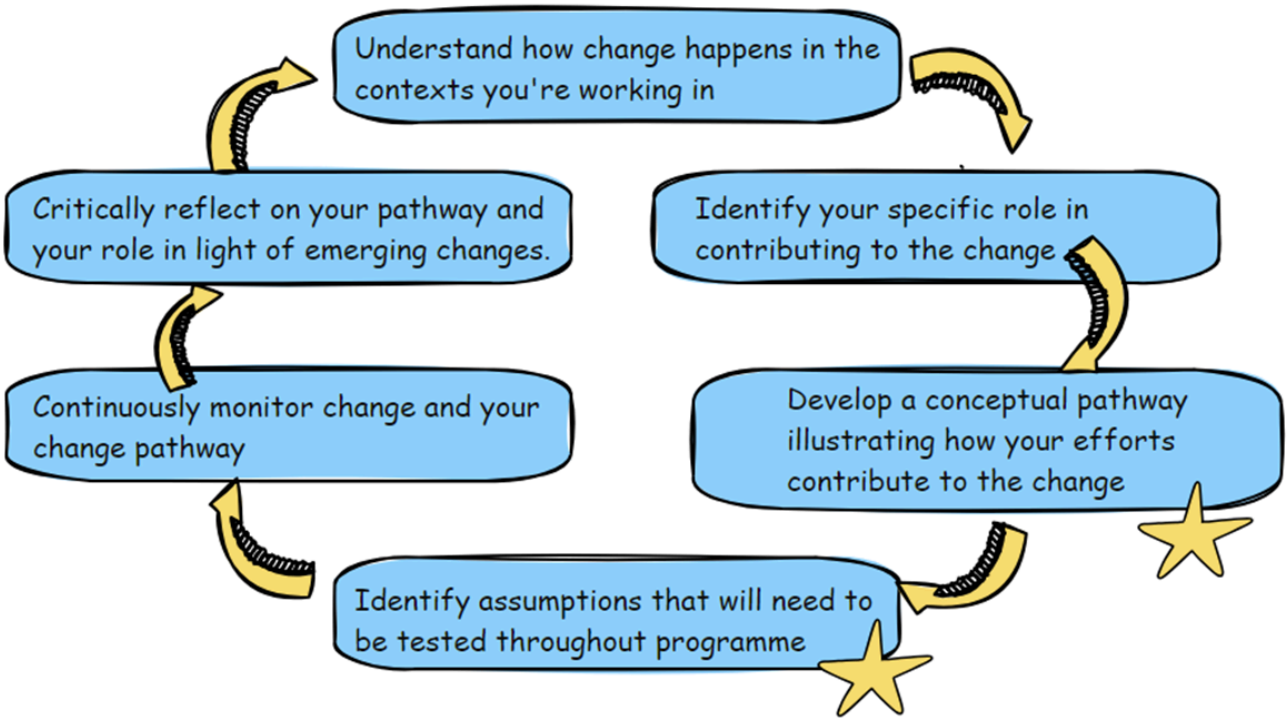
How big or widespread is the issue? How many people are affected by this problem? Are all persons affected in the same way by the problem? How does it differ for different age groups? How does it affect different sexes? What evidence is there to support these claims?



How do the people affected by this issue feel about the problem? What solutions have they come up with to cope with this issue? What suggestions do they have for programme interventions? What other solutions have been attempted before? What local institutions (schools, churches, businesses, community groups) can we collaborate with? Are there any successful community-driven initiatives we can learn from or replicate?



THEORY OF CHANGE: HOW WE THINK CHANGE HAPPENS

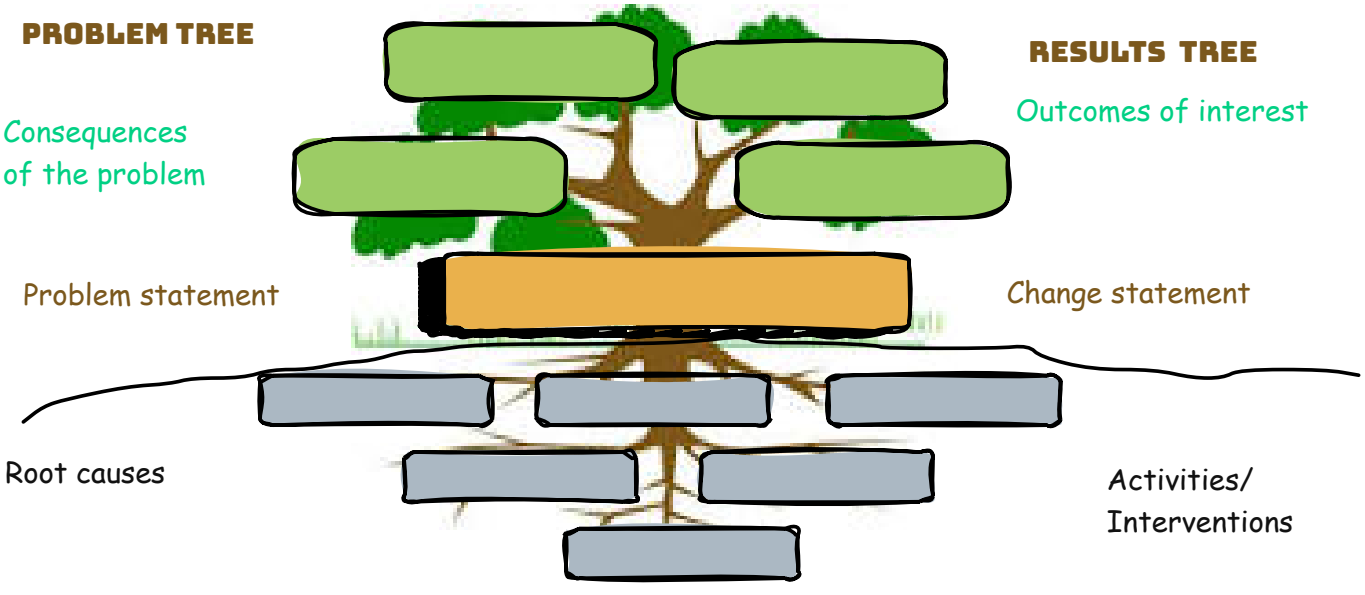


A theory of change articulates how we believe change will happen and how we plan to invest time and resources to contribute to that change. A logic model is the conceptual pathway for this change, intended to be a simple illustration of the logic behind a policy, programme, or initiative. It represents the relationships among the resources that go into a program, the activities the programme undertakes, and the resulting changes or benefits.

All programmes generally tend to have an implicit theory of change, so the challenge is to make it explicit so that it can be understood by all and improved..

PROBLEM-TREE/ ROOT-CAUSE ANALYSIS

One tool that can help you understand the problem and build a theory of change is a problem-tree/ root-cause analysis, which helps uncover the root causes, effects, and pathways for change.

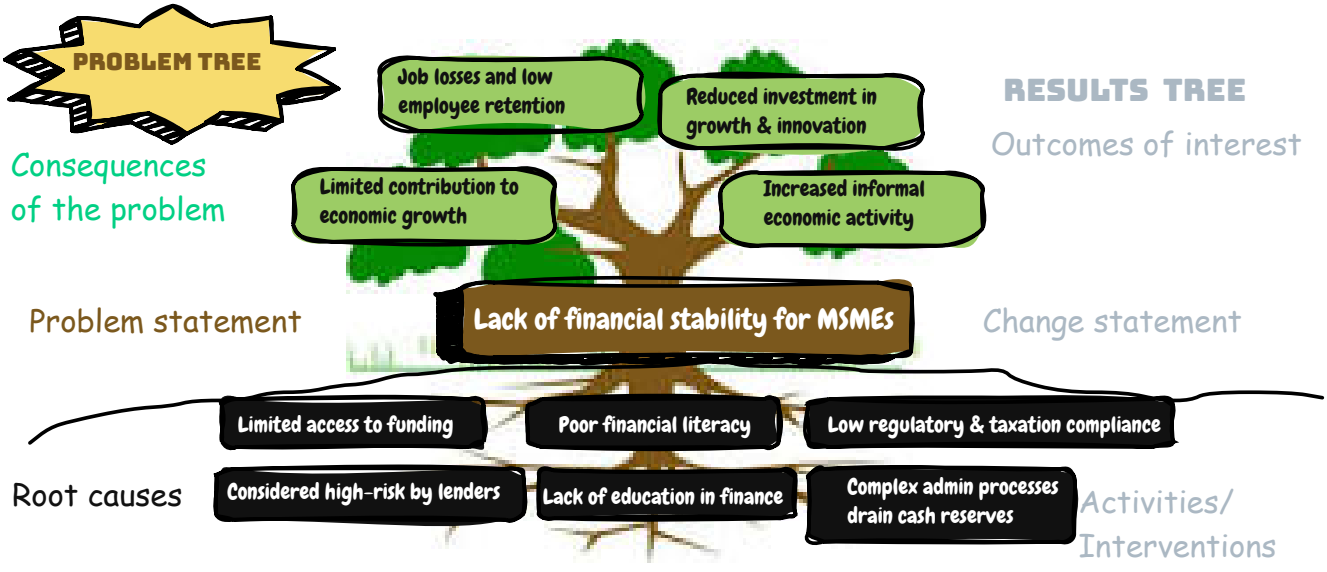


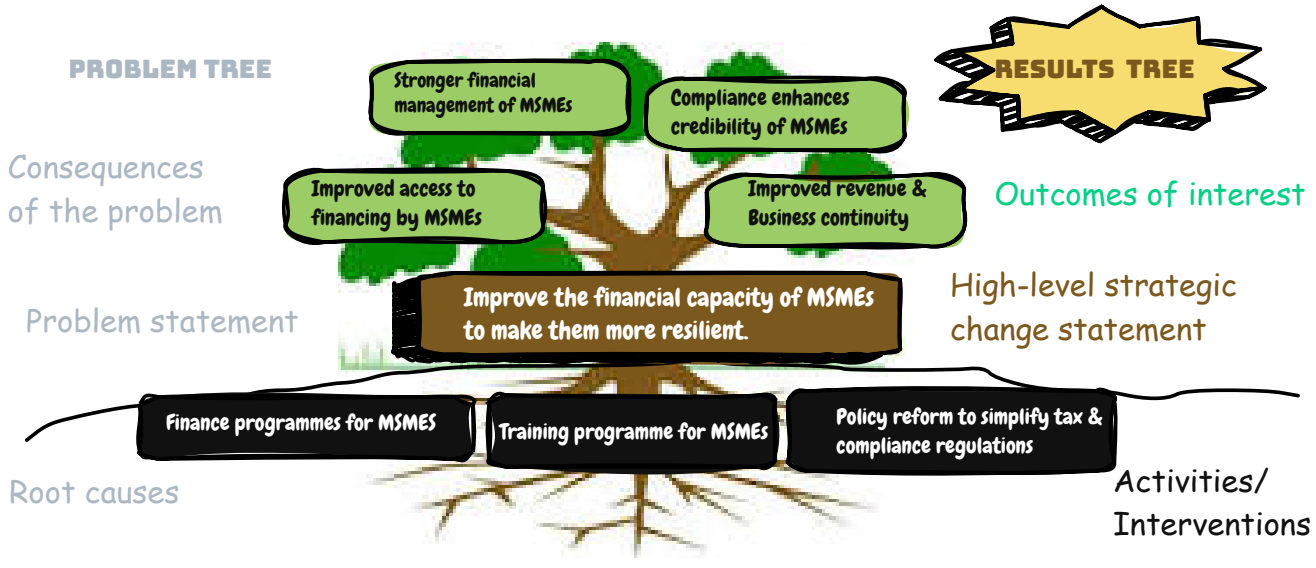
The trunk of the tree represents the central issue that the project aims to address. This will then be converted to a change or impact statement.

The tree's roots represent underlying causes and contributing factors, helping to determine key intervention points.

The branches and leaves represent the effects or consequences of the problem, showing why intervention is essential. When you switch to a solution tree, these become the outcomes.

A WORKED-OUT EXAMPLE





PROBLEM-TREE/ ROOT-CAUSE ANALYSIS DISCUSSION POINTS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

How did you distinguish between symptoms/ effects and root causes?

What data/ evidence exists to support the root-cause analysis?

Why haven't past interventions solved this issue?

How can the results of our root-cause analysis be used to adjust or improve the design and implementation of programmes? Are our activities addressing the root causes?

What policies, cultural norms, or institutional structures contribute to this issue?

What changes would make the most significant impact in solving this problem?

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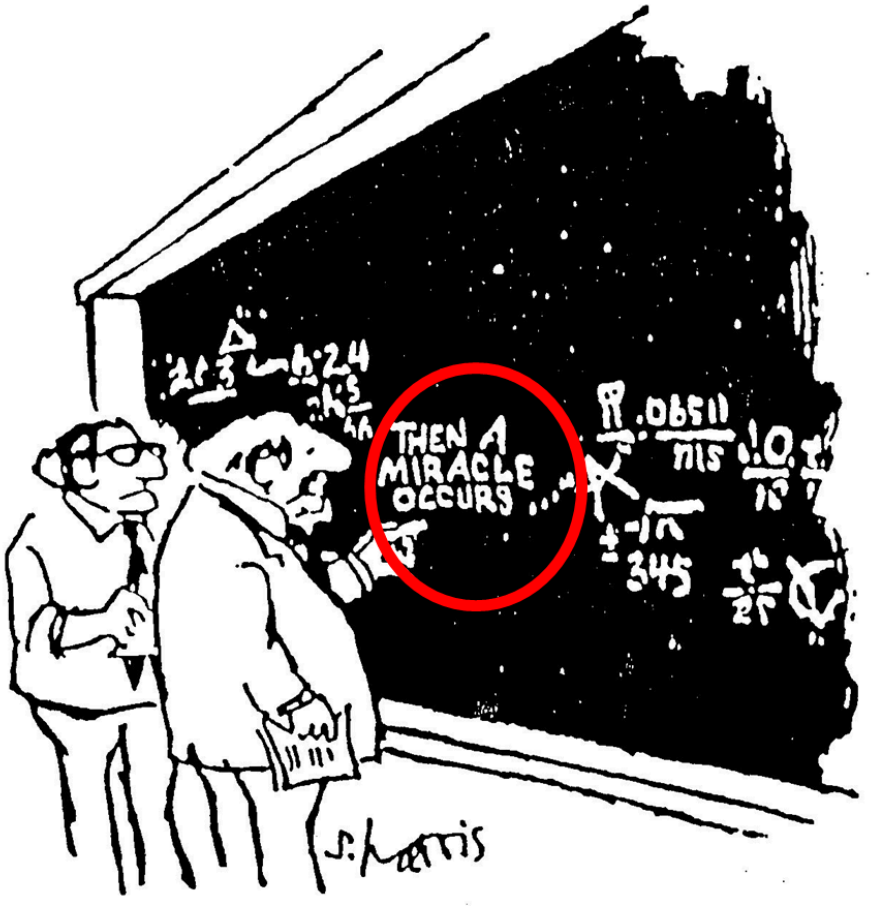
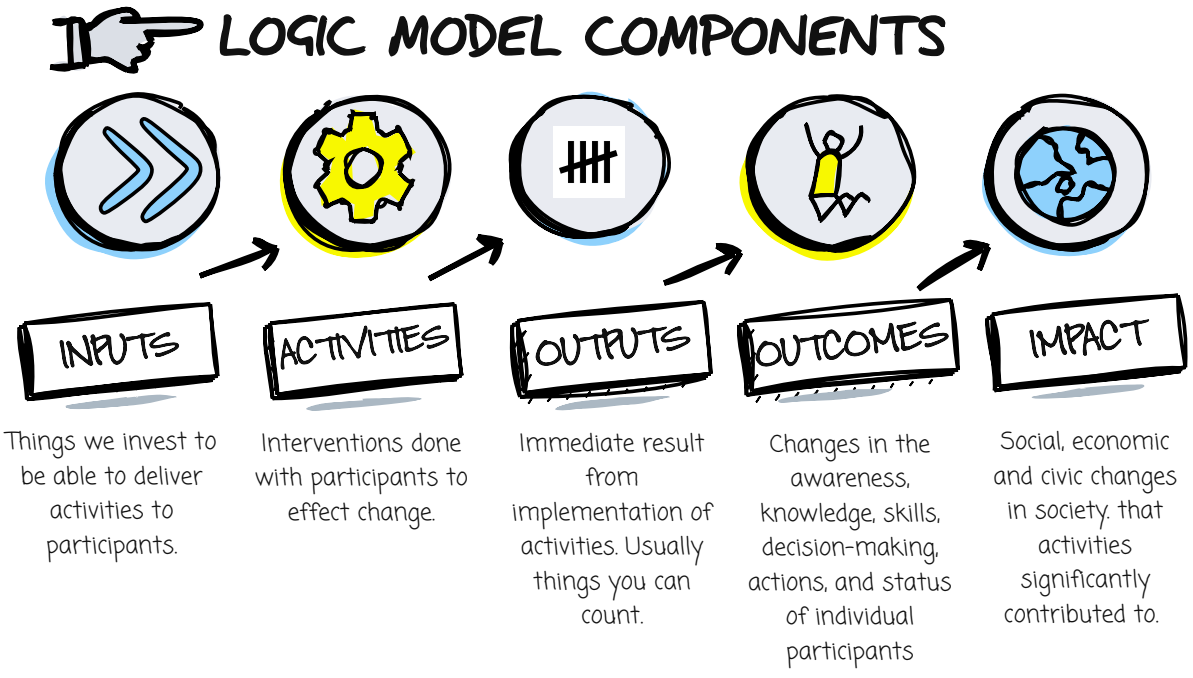
LOGIC MODEL - INTRODUCTION



A common challenge is that activities and strategies do not achieve the desired outcomes.

A logic model explicitly connects what you do and what you expect to achieve. The flow of the logic model starts with Inputs and works through to a final outcome at a societal level, aka impact. The activities' outputs collectively contribute to the programme's outcomes and impacts.

Underlying a logic model is a series of 'if-then' relationships that express the programme's theory of change.

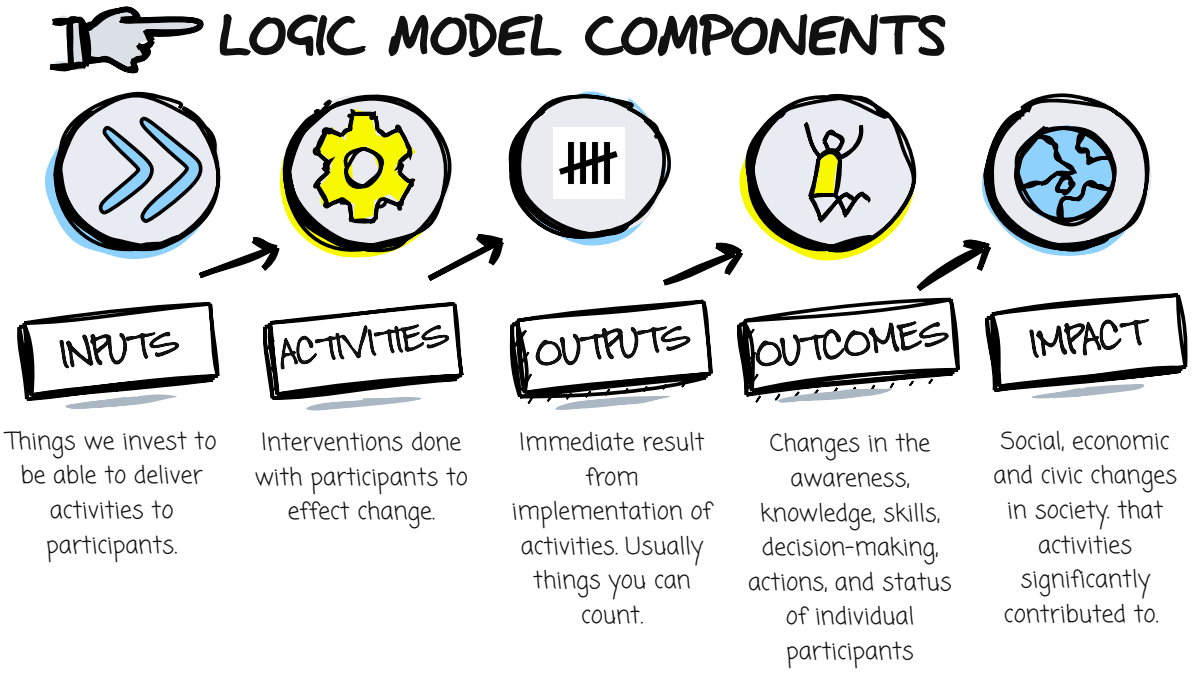


Inputs include human, financial, organisational, and community resources a programme has available to direct toward doing the work.

Programme activities are what the programme does with the resources that are an intentional part of the programme implementation used to bring about the changes or results.

Outputs are the direct products of programme activities—the tangible evidence that activities occurred. They are usually 'countable', e.g., workshops held, males and females reached, condoms distributed, campaigns launched, etc.

Outcomes are specific changes in programme participants' knowledge, skills, behaviour, status, and level of functioning, such as an increase in school grades, decreased fights with peers, increased positive attitudes towards marginalised groups, increased condom use, and increased income levels.



Impact refers to the changes at a broader societal level over time that result from the incremental increase in the number of participants experiencing outcomes from your programme, e.g., a decrease in annual school dropout rates, an increase in employment rates of the community, and a decrease in serious acts of violence in the community.

Other factors that must be considered when designing your logic model are the programme assumptions and external factors that influence your programme's success. Assumptions are the principles, beliefs, theories, and ideas you hold about why and how the identified change strategies will work in your situation. An example of an assumption is that unattached youth desire skills training and will commit to the duration of the programme to receive certification. External factors involve the potential barriers and/or supports that are outside the control of your programme and might impact the change your programme intends to deliver. These often include aspects of power, policy, and environmental flux. An example of an external factor could be the COVID-19 pandemic.

Logic Model - Jamaican Style

Mi seh yuh haffi plan it right,
Fi mek sure di ting shine bright.
If yuh waan change di worl' today,
Logic model show yuh di way!

Inputs? Dat a di real foundation,
Money, people, tools, preparation.
Without dem roots, yuh cyaan mek tree,
Nuttin' cyan't grow, yuh see?

Activities? Work weh yuh put een,
Train up di yute, keep di beach dem clean.
Teach di people, build up di place,
Step by step, we set di pace.

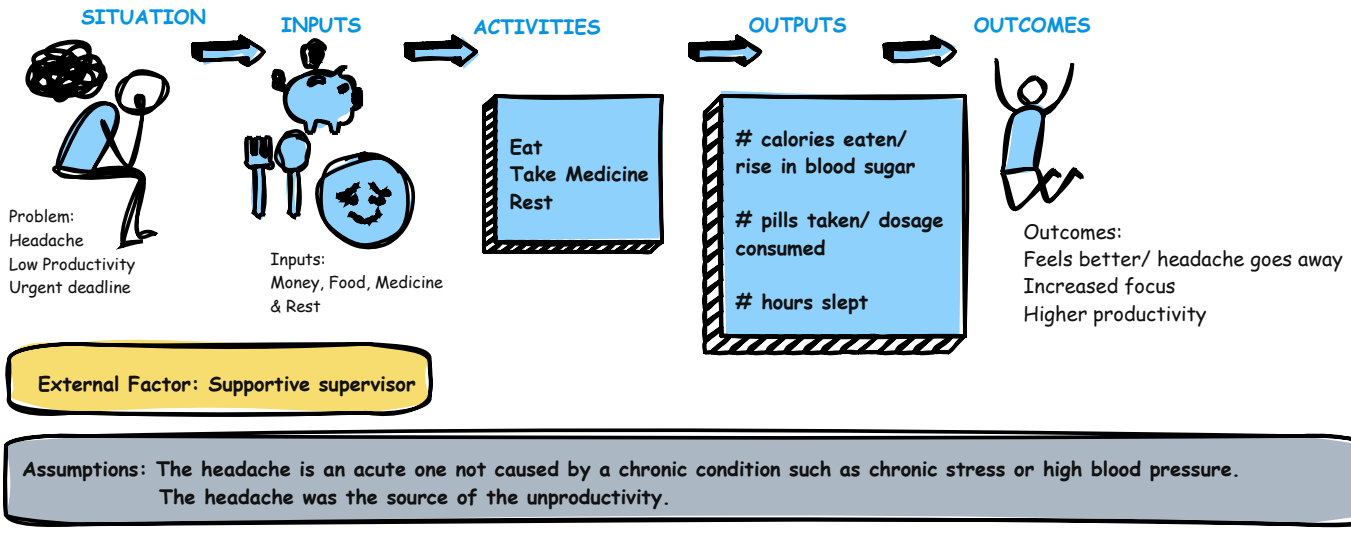
Outputs? Yuh haffi check,
Count up di work, mek sure it connect.
If wi gi' out book, how much dem get?
If wi train dem well, dem ready yet?

But wait deh now, outcome real,
A no jus' numbers, a how dem feel.
Di mindset change? Di skill dem grow?
Wi haffi know before wi go!

Di impact? Dat a di real big dream,
Di ting weh go past weh yuh can see.
Long-time change, whole system move,
If wi work it right, di plan improve.

So memba now, nuh guess, nuh stray,
Use di model fi guide di way.
Track yuh step, keep di focus tight,
Jamaican style, wi do it right!

LOGIC MODEL - EVERYDAY EXAMPLE



Now think back to our example of drinking more water.
What would be the logic model components of that goal?

Inputs:

Activities:

Outputs:

Outcomes:

LOGIC MODEL COMPONENTS

INPUTS

Things we invest to be able to deliver activities to participants.

ACTIVITIES

Interventions done with participants to effect change.

OUTPUTS

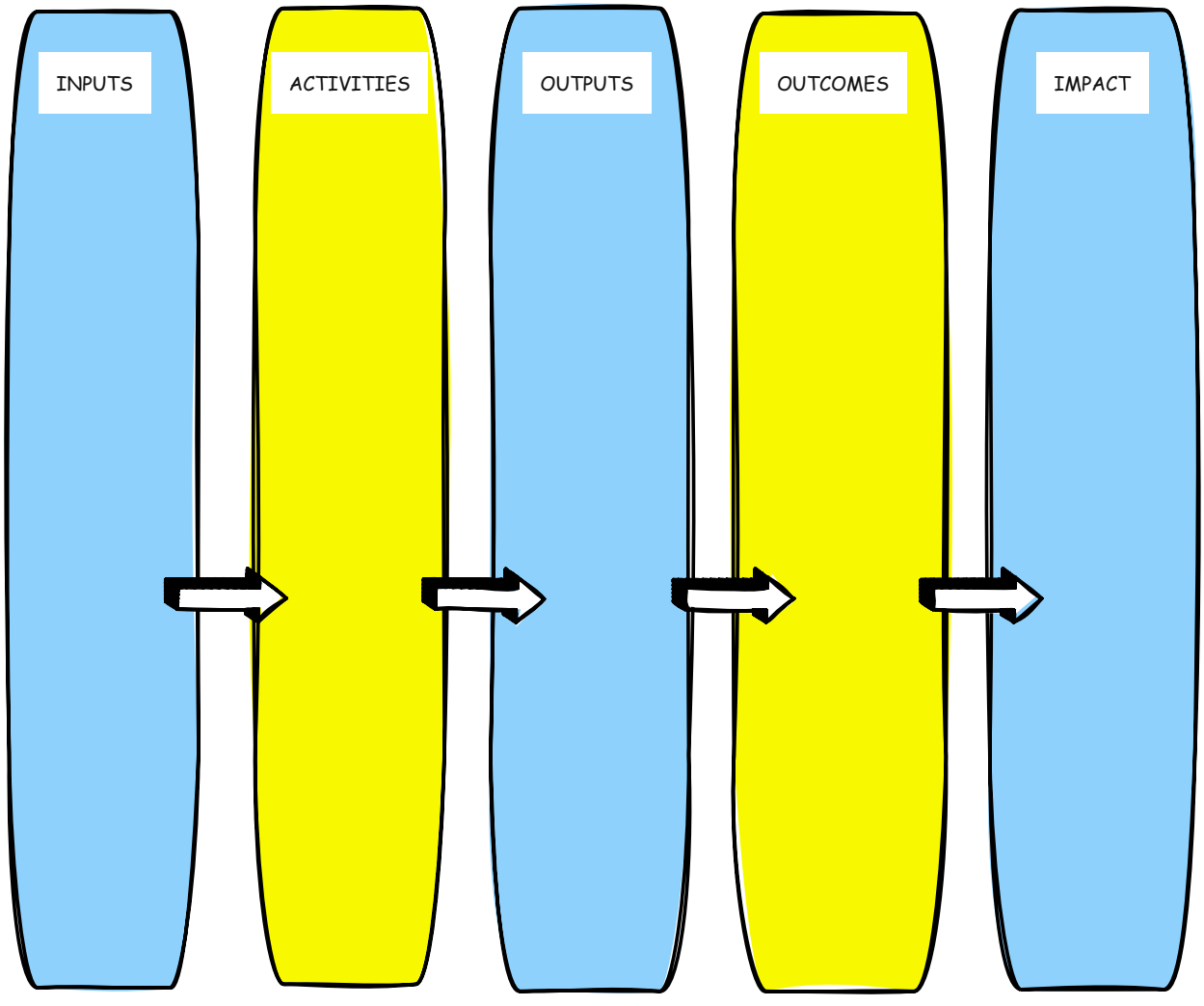
Immediate result from implementation of activities. Usually things you can count.

OUTCOMES

Changes in the awareness, knowledge, skills, decision-making, actions, and status of individual participants

IMPACT

Social, economic and civic changes in society that activities significantly contribute to.



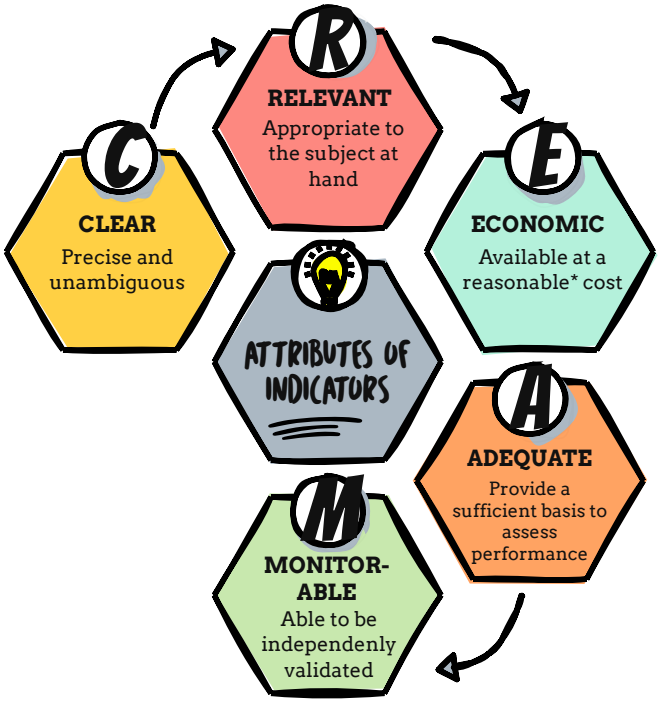
INDICATORS - HOW WE MEASURE RESULTS

Indicators are measurable signs or metrics used to track progress toward achieving results. They provide evidence of change (e.g., percentage of students who pass literacy tests, number of people lifted out of poverty, average crop yield per farmer).

Indicators may be qualitative or quantitative.

Quantitative
* # of/ % of
* Rates

Qualitative
* compliance with,
* quality of, extent of or level of
* changes in institutional processes, attitudes, beliefs, motives and behaviours of individuals



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RESULTS FRAMEWORKS

MEL is all about results, specifically measuring the results that matter (i.e. outcomes and impact). Results are thus defined in greater detail to clarify precisely what success looks like. Results frameworks, therefore, include:-

* Results across the different levels of change (outputs, outcomes, impacts), as well as
* how we will measure if a change has occurred (indicators) and
* performance targets (definition of success), along with
* baseline measures (our starting point & reference for change).

It may also be helpful to specify what decisions the indicators support.

Notes

RESULTS FRAMEWORK - WORKED OUT EXAMPLE

This example of a results framework is for an NGO seeking to provide support for the community reintegration of incarcerated females on their release from jail. The programme's theory of change was that if it offered consistent and structured support (case management, therapy, skills training, and job placement) to women transitioning out of the penal system in their town, they could live independent and successful lives without returning to crime. Ultimately, this would reduce former female inmates' recidivism rate 18 months after release.

Example

Indicator	Data Use	Baseline	Target
OUTPUT: Enrollment INDICATORS: # of applications received Average time taken between application & acceptance	Assess the effectiveness of outreach and promotion efforts among inmates Assess the efficiency of intake process		
OUTPUT: Counselling session attendance INDICATOR % of clients who attended >85% of support group sessions over a specified period	Assesses adherence of clients to programme initiatives. Determine if challenges are being experienced with one of the main activities of the programme		
OUTCOME: Employment INDICATOR: % of graduates who earn at or above minimum wage in the first quarter after graduation (disaggregated by type of employment)	Measures the employability of participants despite their criminal history.		
IMPACT: Reduced recidivism among former female inmates INDICATOR: % of former female inmates who were re-arrested within 18 months of release.	Assesses the change being made at a broader population level and the success of achieving the overall goal of the programme.		

RESULTS FRAMEWORK TEMPLATE

Now it's your turn. Identify how you will measure the change for the outputs, outcomes and impacts for your programme that you identified above, and note what is your starting baseline and intended/ desired level of change (target).

Indicator	Data Use	Baseline	Target

INDICATOR DICTIONARIES

An indicator dictionary (also known as an indicator reference sheet) is a structured document that provides clear definitions and details for each indicator used in a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system. It ensures consistency in data collection, interpretation, and reporting by outlining key elements such as the indicator's definition, purpose, unit of measurement, data sources, frequency of data collection, responsible parties, and any disaggregation required (e.g., by gender, age, location).

A well-developed indicator dictionary helps to standardise measurement across projects, improve data quality, and enhance comparability over time. By serving as a reference for all stakeholders involved in data collection and analysis, it minimises ambiguity and ensures that indicators are used consistently to track progress and inform decision-making.

Indicator	Indicator Name
Aligned Outcome	Outcome or impact that this indicator supports
Precise Definition	Clarifies any terms in the indicator name e.g., youth could be further defined to mean youth between 18 and 29 years.
Rationale	Why this indicator is important to measure.
Construction and measuring	Methodology to calculate performance
Data Disaggregation	Level of disaggregation for the indicator, e.g., sex, age groups, communities
Data Sources	Specific report or register where the information for measurement of this indicator is expected to be able to be pulled from
Reporting frequency	Frequency of reporting performance
Responsible Department	Department with responsibility for reporting on this indicator
Limitations and bias	Any exclusions or special considerations to the data that need to be considered for accurate interpretation

INDICATOR DICTIONARY - WORKED OUT EXAMPLE

Indicator	Police clear-up rates.
Aligned outcome/ impact	National Security agencies are more effective at reducing violent criminal behaviour and victimisation.
Precise definition	Percentage change in police clear-up for murder & Major Crimes. A case is considered cleared once an arrest has been made and the investigation closed.
Rationale for indicator	Improvements in the clear-up rate by charge is a contributor to reducing violence & victimization as it removes criminals from communities which can also act as a deterrent for future offenders
Construction and measuring	Clear-up rate = (# of cases cleared by charge during reporting period divided by the total number of cases by charge under investigation during the reporting period) * 100 % change = [(New clear-up rate/ Old clear-up rate) – 1] * 100 A negative % change calculation will indicate a decrease.
Data disaggregation	By target community, sex and age, type of major crime
Data source	JCF Statistics
Reporting Frequency	Quarterly
Responsible agency/ unit/ position	JCF
Limitations and Biases	

INDICATOR DICTIONARY TEMPLATE

Now it's your turn. Complete the indicator dictionary for your programme's indicators.

Indicator	
Aligned outcome/ impact	
Precise definition	
Rationale for indicator	
Construction and measuring	
Data disaggregation	
Data source	
Reporting Frequency	
Responsible agency/ unit/ position	
Limitations and Biases	

LET US CONNECT

Thank you for engaging with this Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Workbook! We hope it has provided you with practical tools and insights to strengthen your MEL practice. Remember, MEL is an ongoing journey of learning and adaptation, and applying these concepts in your work will contribute to more effective programs and impactful results.

We'd love to stay connected and continue the conversation! Follow us on Instagram and Facebook for more MEL resources, discussions, and updates. You can also connect with us on LinkedIn to exchange ideas, share experiences, and grow your professional network.

If you have any questions or feedback, feel free to reach out—we'd love to hear from you! Keep learning, keep evaluating, and keep making a difference.

Happy MEL-ing! 🚀