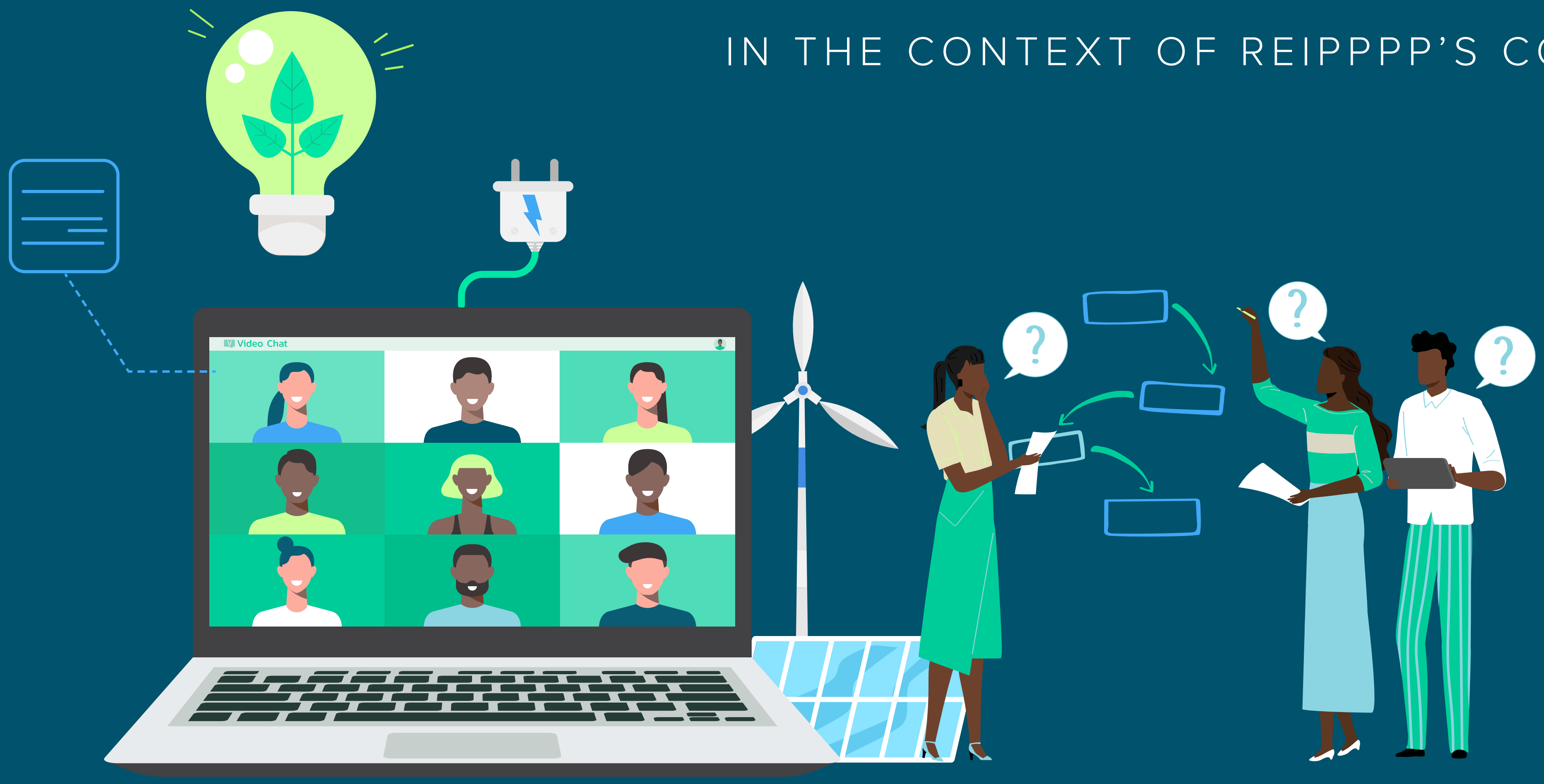
MONITORING & EVALUATION

IN THE CONTEXT OF REIPPPP'S COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

From
USAID INSPIRE
Online Dialogues
Series 2022

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

INSPIRE Initiative for Social Performance in Renewable Energy
ONLINE DIALOGUES

Mischa Minné Consulting

Forethought Africa Meaningful Development

USAID INSPIRE ONLINE DIALOGUES

The USAID INSPIRE Online Dialogues project was a 12 months project, implemented by Synergy Global Consulting and partners under the INSPIRE umbrella, that aims to connect the REIPPPP's SED/ED eco-system online, provide a digital platform for stakeholders including government, companies and communities to exchange experiences and innovate on practice, as well as curate knowledge on a publicly accessible resource platform.

REFERENCE SUGGESTION

Mabilu, M and Minne M (2022). USAID INSPIRE Online Dialogues- Frequently Asked Questions: Monitoring and Evaluation in the context of REIPPPP's Community Investments, INSPIRE, online available under www.inspire-excellence.net

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to extend their thanks to all those that participated in the discussions, and for providing the valuable insights toward improving M&E in the sector.

Contents

WHAT IS MONITORING AND EVALUATION? / 2

Why invest in M&E? / 2

What is an M&E framework? / 3

How do I build my M&E framework? / 3

WHAT IS A THEORY OF CHANGE? / 4

The Elements of a Theory of Change / 4

Theory of Changes: ECD Examples / 5

WHAT IS AN INDICATOR? / 6

And how do I design or identify the right ones? / 6

Smart Criteria / 6

Theory of Change Indicators / 7

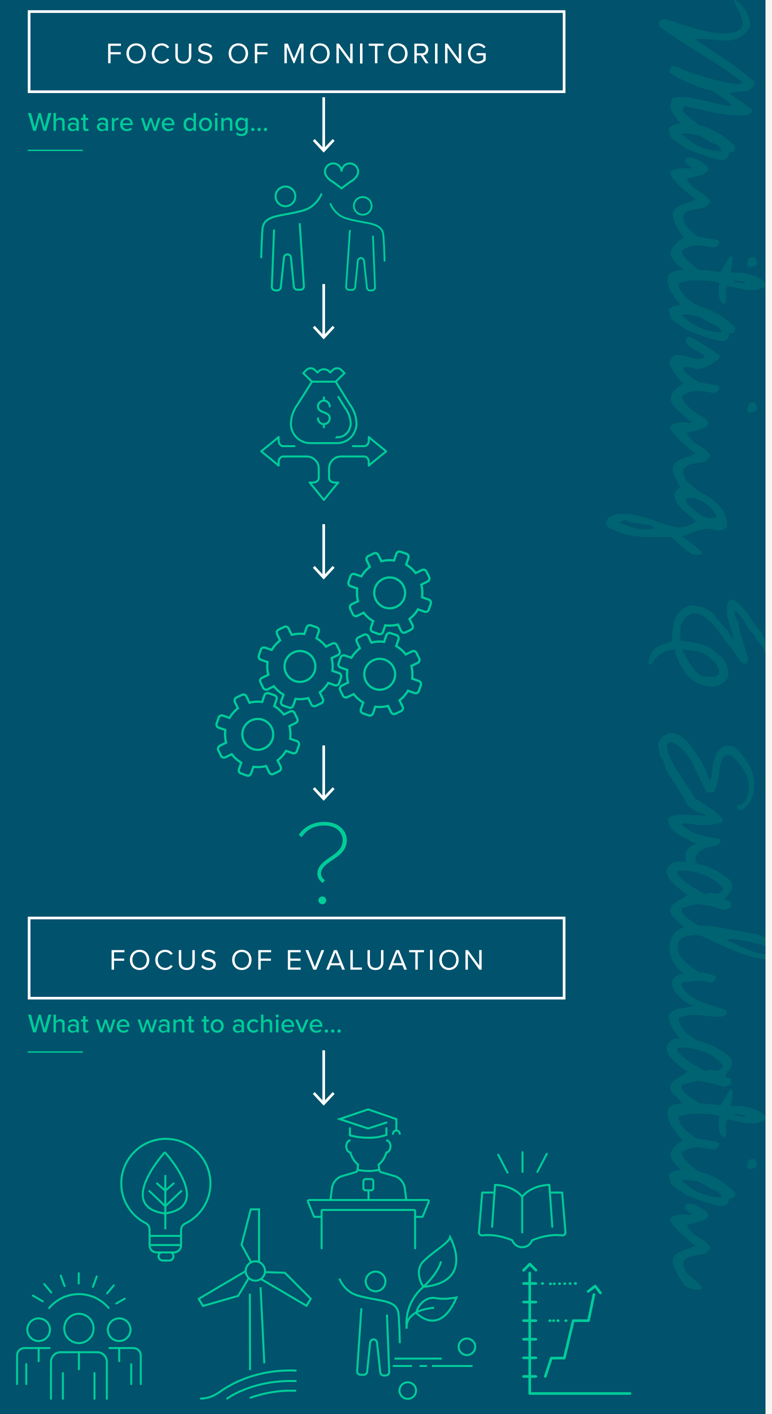
ECD Examples / 7

What data should I be collecting? / 8

What is a baseline? / 8

What informs how we set targets? / 9

WHERE DO WE START THE M&E JOURNEY? / 9



What is Monitoring and Evaluation?

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is the process of collecting and analysing programme data, monitoring key indicators of a programme, and evaluating whether it has met its objectives.

While often used synonymously, monitoring and evaluation in fact refer to two different activities.

- **Monitoring** involves the regular tracking of the implementation of a programme, basically collecting data about the progress of a programme and some predefined indicators to see if a programme is going according to plan or if there is a need for any adjustments. Monitoring data, linked to the programme/project Theory of Change/ Logic Model/Log frame, provides a foundation and key input for the evaluation phase.
- **Evaluation** is the second step and involves the collection and analysis of data (including monitoring data) to be able to determine if the objectives or goals of the programme were achieved or not, and what lessons can be applied in improving the programme.

WHY INVEST IN M&E?

1. Understand how you create impact (change)
2. Understand what works/doesn't work
3. Support informed internal decision making
4. Improve quality of programme delivery
5. Accountability to stakeholders
6. Make the case for funding

WHAT IS AN M&E FRAMEWORK?

A framework, generally, is a foundational structure underlying a system.

A M&E framework is therefore the foundation on which an organisation builds its M&E process/approach. It is designed to guide organisations through a process of measuring, assessing and managing their impact on society wherever they operate.

The key components of a M&E framework are:

- the outputs and outcomes linked to the impact goals as outlined in the theory of change
- the activities or programmes connected to each outcome
- the metrics for measurement - indicator/s (KPIs)
- baseline and target for each indicator
- data required
- data source
- frequency of data collection
- person responsible

Other elements can be incorporated as per the organisation's requirements

The framework developed should be grounded in what the organization does and how it does it, flexible and complement existing tools and processes.

HOW DO I BUILD MY M&E FRAMEWORK?

Start with defining the project / programme an impact strategy.

The most common approaches for this are:

- Theory of change
- Logic Model
- Log Frame
- Design or identify your indicators

Define how your indicators will be measured (what data is required)

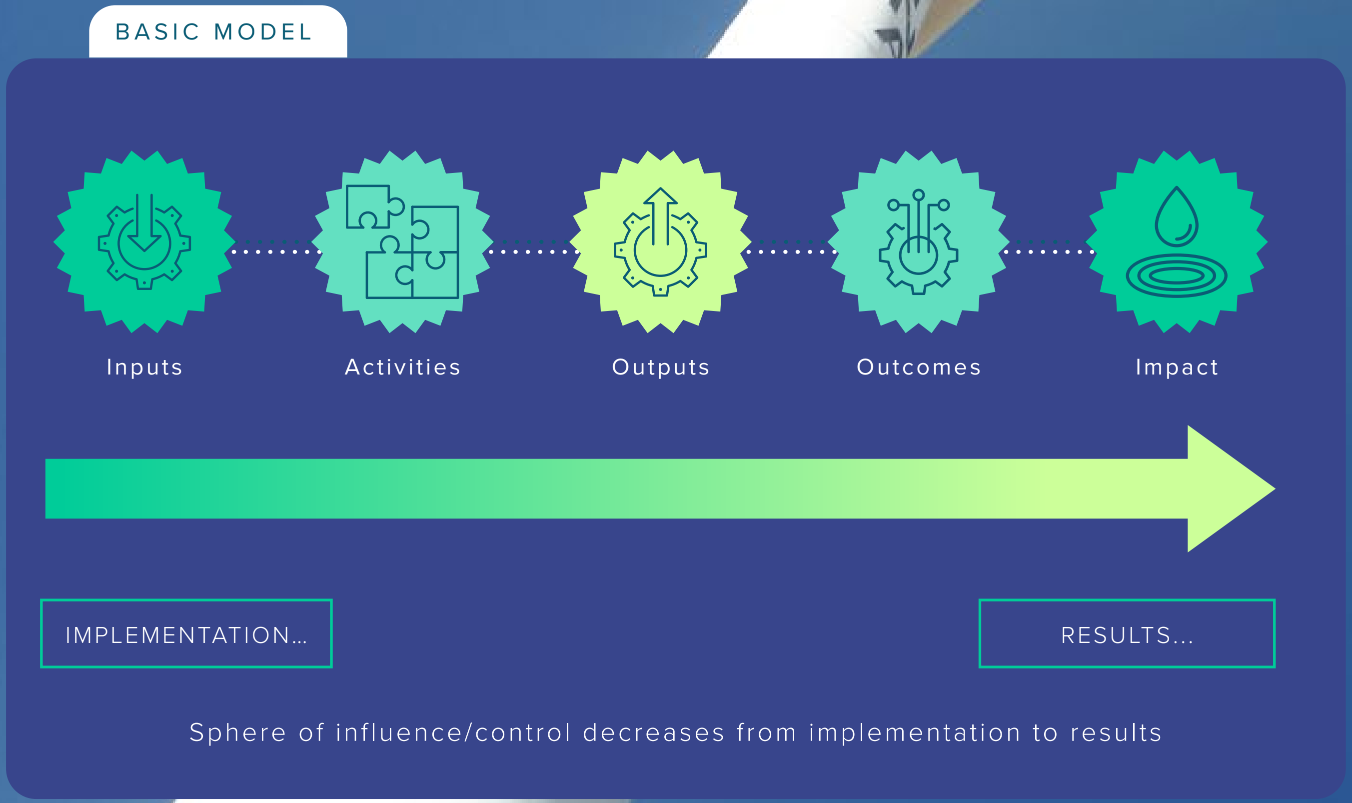
Identify where the data will come from (the "data source")

Decide how frequently it will be measured (monthly, quarterly, annually, etc.) and by who

Measure the baseline and set the target

What is a Theory of Change?

The Theory of Change describes the inputs into a project, its outputs, how those outputs are expected to deliver outcomes. It is the main building block and starting point for a variety of M&E approaches.



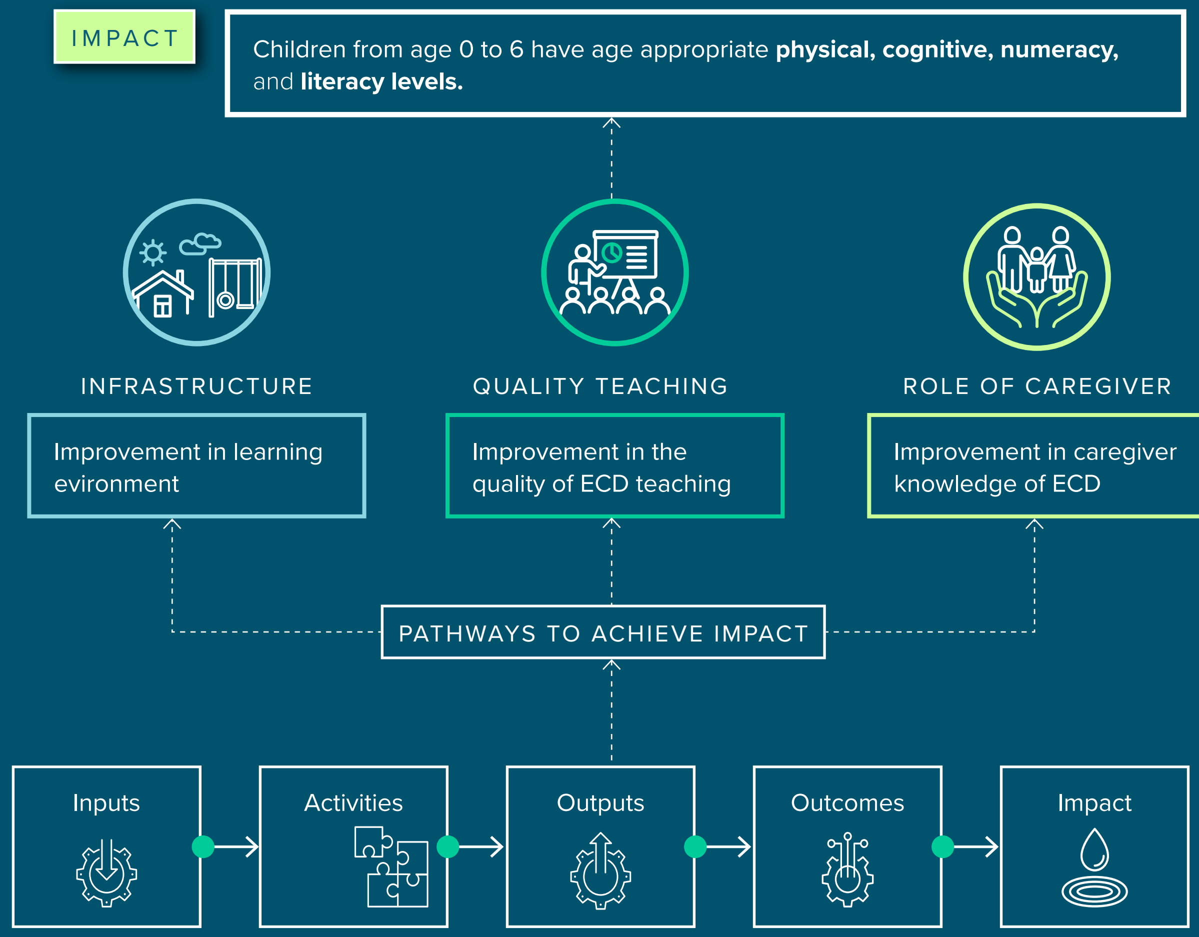
THE ELEMENTS OF A THEORY OF CHANGE

TOC ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
INPUT	• All the resources used by the organisation (including time (people), money, information, expertise and in-kind donations) to carry out its activities (or the resources that go into the project).
ACTIVITIES	• The actions an organisation undertakes to implement a project/ programme; or • The way an organisation chooses to implement a project programme; or • Actions undertaken to achieve the impact.
OUTPUTS	• Direct, measurable results derived from activities. • Quantitative records of what has happened/what the team and service providers have done/delivered on the project.
OUTCOME	• Observable changes that have occurred and can be directly linked to the activities. • The relevant result that the endeavors of the organisation have brought about for each stakeholder.
IMPACT	• The broader social change a project or organisation is trying to achieve. • Longer-term effects of outcomes on households, communities, and society.

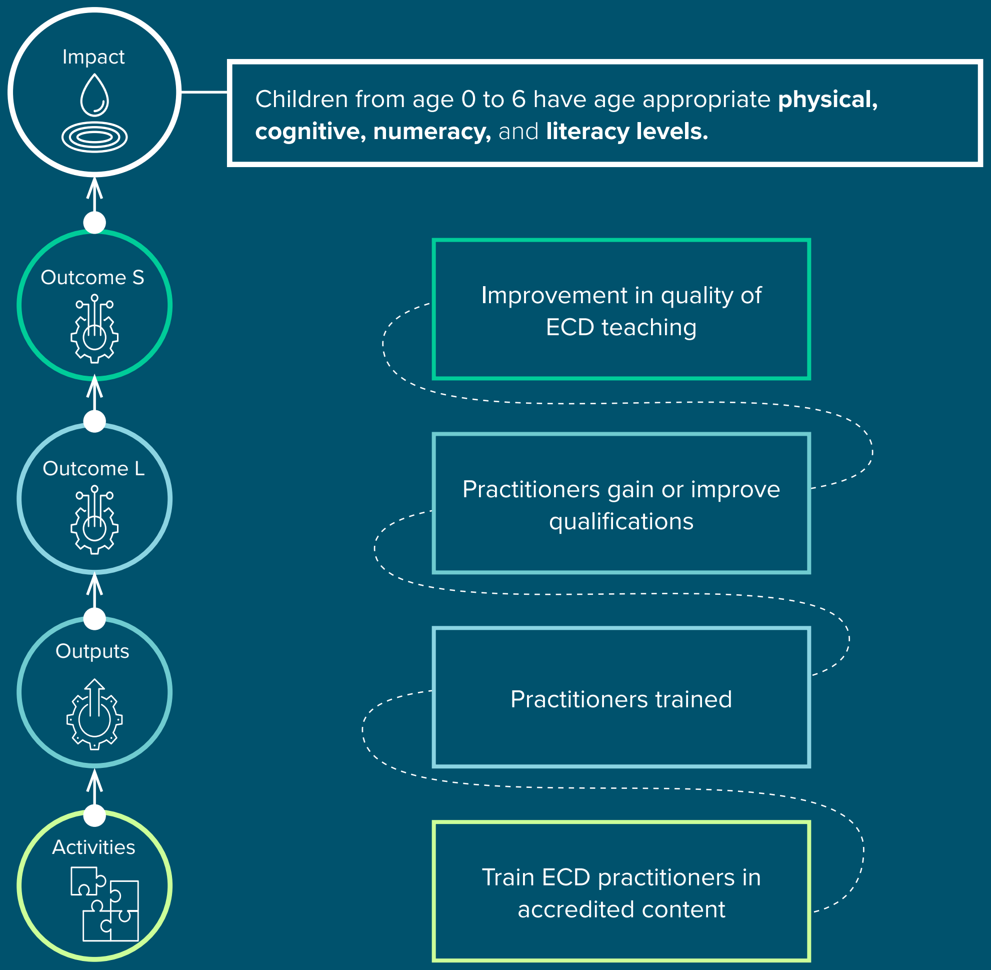
Theories of Change

ECD EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE A



EXAMPLE B



What is an indicator?

AND HOW DO I DESIGN OR IDENTIFY THE RIGHT ONES?

- An indicator is a metric/ that help to measure changes in a given situation. Indicators are ways of knowing that change has happened.
- Indicators can be both quantitative and qualitative, depending on what needs to be measured and in what ways.
- One way to develop good indicators is to use the S.M.A.R.T. criteria, as explained alongside. Consider each of these points when developing new indicators or revising old ones.

TIP 1

Choose indicators directly related to the outputs, outcomes or impact goal on your Theory of Change / Logic Model / logframe.

TIP 2

Where possible choose standard indicators that are commonly used for the type of programme or outcome. Using standard indicators can be better because they are already well defined, there are tools available to measure them, and you will be able to compare your results to other programs or national statistics.

Smart Criteria

SPECIFIC

Clear and unambiguous re what is to be measured

MEASURABLE

Indicator can be measured consistently over time

ATTAINABLE

Data can reasonably be obtained

RELEVANT

Indicator provides relevant info

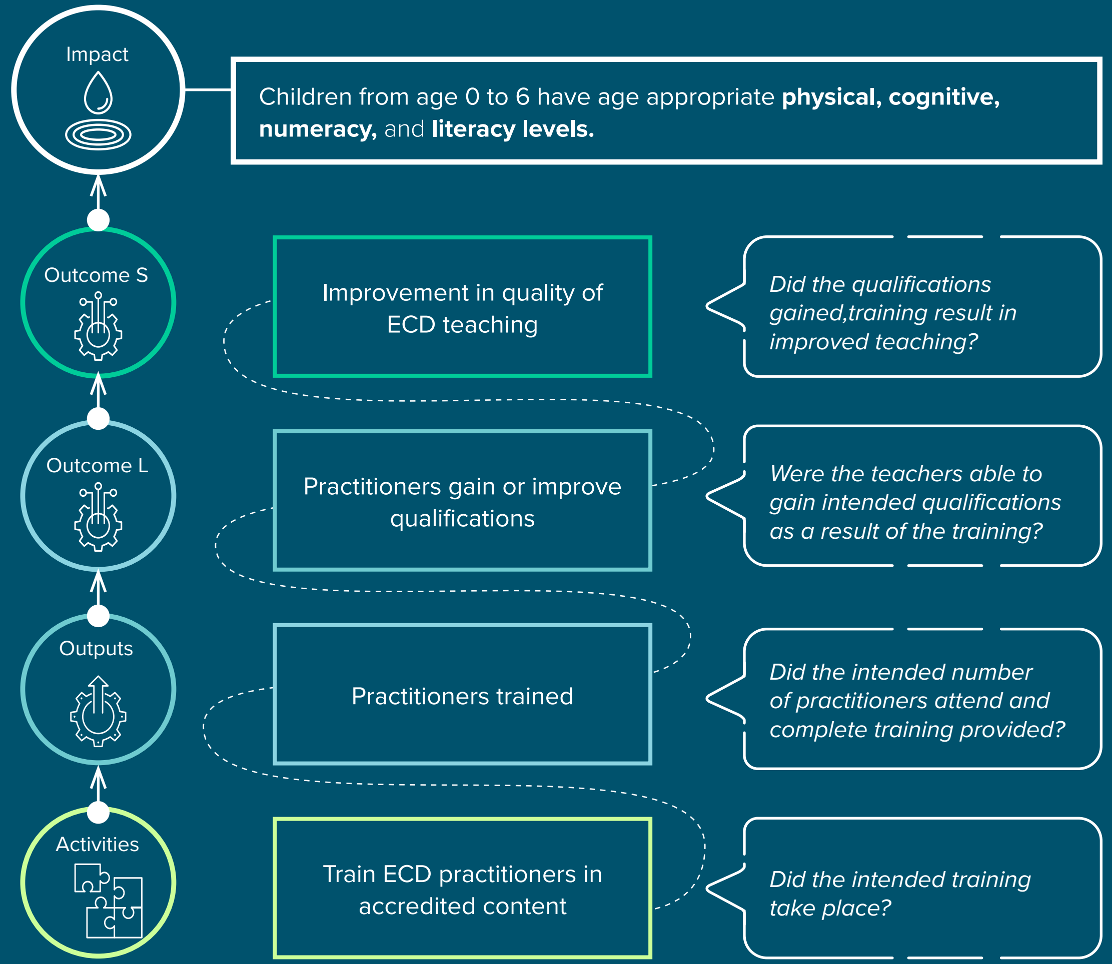
TIME-BOUND

Captures change within a certain time period

Theory of Change Indicators

ECD EXAMPLES

What do we want to understand about the practitioner training through [M&E] data collection?



TOC LEVEL	WHAT DO WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND?	INDICATOR SUGGESTED IN GROUP SESSIONS
ACTIVITY	Did the intended training take place ?	• Number of trainings / training sessions that took place • Training attendance rate
OUTPUT	Did the intended number of practitioners attend and complete training provided?	• Number practitioners that attended the training (attendance rate) • Number of practitioners that completed the training
OUTCOME S	Were the teachers able to gain intended qualifications as a result of the training?	• Number of ECD practitioners with the intended qualification • Number of practitioners working in ECD that have the relevant qualifications
OUTCOME L	Did the qualifications gained / training result in improved teaching?	• Learners academic performance • Holistic development of learners (Impact - Children from age 0 to 6 have age appropriate physical, cognitive, numeracy, and literacy levels)

What data should I be collecting?

The types of indicators will determine what data should be collected, the data collection methods and data sources to be used and how the results will be reported. Most programmes need to draw on multiple data sources.

DATA TO BE COLLECTED CAN BE

- Qualitative: information stored in text (words; stories); or
- Quantitative: information stored in numbers or %

FOR PROJECT DATA

- Focus on collected data that is relevant. Often this already exists within the organisation.
- For new data, the people directly involved in the creation of social impact – project participants, implementers or employees, are the best source.

YOU MAY ALSO NEED TO COLLECT CONTEXT DATA

KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- Can the data be accessed in a practical fashion?
- Can the source provide quality data?
- Can the data be accessed on a regular timely basis?
- Is primary data collection from the information source feasible and cost effective?
- Only collect information that directly relates to the performance questions and indicators that have been identified.

What is a baseline?

The Baseline is the collection of measures on indicators prior to the implementation of a project / analysis of the current situation to identify the starting points for a programme or a project.

It informs starting point for outcome measurement (evaluation) and is developed in relation to the Theory of Change.

The are two types of baselines:

- Concurrent Baseline: Done before a project commences (preferred)
- Retrospective Baseline: Done when a project is already implemented; less accurate, more intensive process to get the data

The M&E process can be used as an opportunity to create both a retrospective baseline and establish a new baseline.

WHAT INFORMS HOW WE SET TARGETS?

A target is a desired measure on an indicator at the end of the project or at a specific time in the project. The things that inform target setting include:

- Resources available
- Current or previous years performance
- Measure on the baseline
- Relevant national or global targets

If we're starting our M&E journey, where do we start?

01

Select one two most important outcomes your organization is interested in (outcomes must be directly related to the activities of the organization)

02

Next, think about what data you may already have that helps you answer the question from step 1

03

Figure a way out to collect additional data that may be needed to fill the data gap from the perspective of learning about the outcomes. This is where you think about additional stakeholder surveys (or interviews) that might be needed to understand what outcomes stakeholders are experiencing.

04

Collect, process and analyse data

05

Report on this to stakeholders

This will give you insights into you internal M&E capacity and readiness, and therefore your starting position for M&E. ”

"Not everything that matters can be measured. Not everything that we can measure matters.