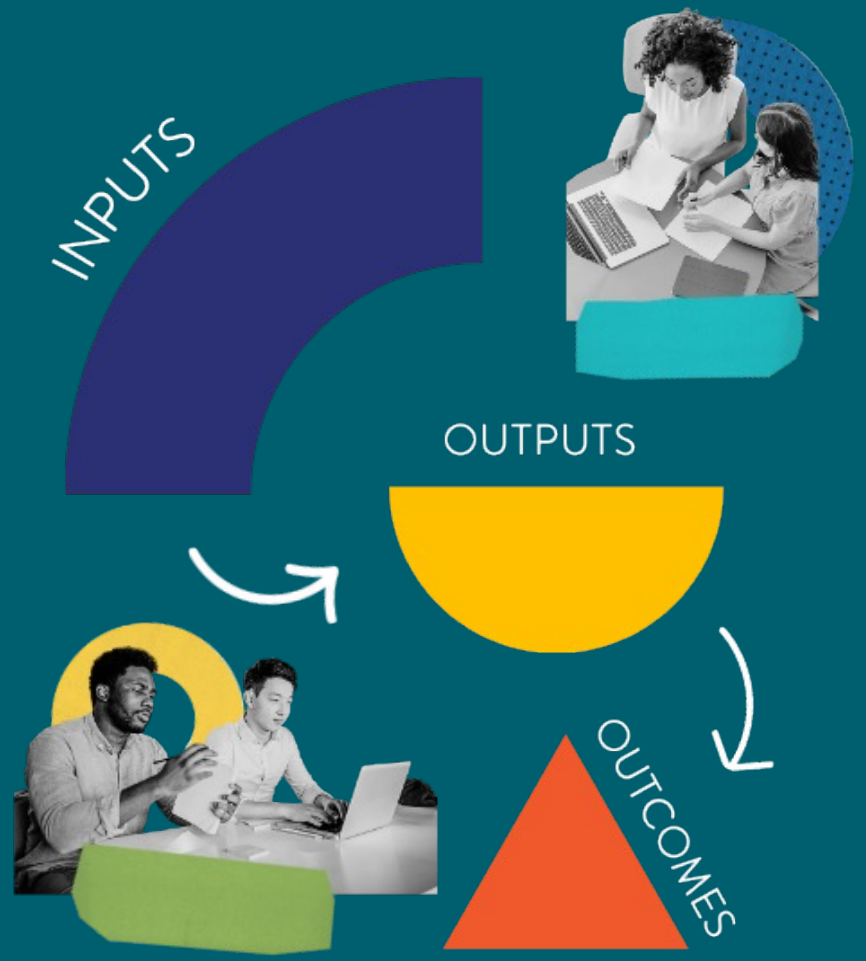
Evaluation Basics for Charting Change in a Youth Program Context



YouthREX Evaluation Team ♡

Adrienne Young
Caroline Hummell
Dorrie Fiissel
Hajar Seiyad
Rebecca Johnson

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RECOGNIZING
THE LAND & THE PEOPLE

Source: native-land.ca

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Parents of
Black Children


camh
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale


CENTRE DE SANTÉ COMMUNAUTAIRE
REXDALE
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE


scarborough
arts


DIXON HALL


ypi®
YOUTH AND
PHILANTHROPY
INITIATIVE
CANADA


PLANNED
PARENTHOOD
TORONTO


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Agenda

EVALUATION FUNDAMENTALS
10 AM TO 12.30 PM

- Introductions
- The Fundamentals of Evaluation
- YouthREX's Evaluation Framework
- Introduction to Logic Modeling

LUNCH

LOGIC MODELING
1 PM TO 4.00 PM

- Developing a Logic Model
- Logic Modeling Group Session
- Connecting Logic Modeling to Evaluation

WRAP UP

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Introductions

What organizations are in the room?

- In a sentence, what does your organization do?
- Who is here from your organization?
- Where is your organization currently at with evaluation?

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The Fundamentals of Evaluation: What? Why? And How?

(10.20 AM – 11.00 AM)

What Is Not Program Evaluation?

What Is Program Evaluation?

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What is Program Evaluation?

Program evaluation means taking a systematic approach to asking and answering questions about a program. It is away of 'taking pictures' of what is going on in an intentional and thoughtful way.

YouthREX defines program evaluation as:

"A systematic set of activities carried out towards understanding how, why, and to what extent a youth program is achieving its outcomes towards improving the wellbeing of young people".

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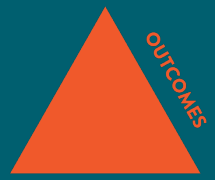
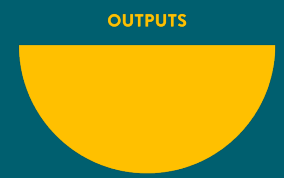
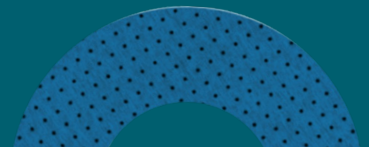


Why evaluate youth programs?





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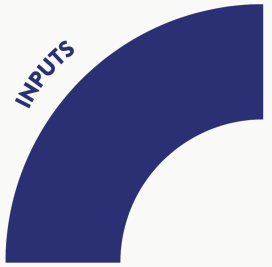
How Can Evaluation Guide Decision Making for These Stakeholders?



- Program staff (management and frontline staff)?
- Funders?
- Families?
- The community?
- Youth participants?

- What do they want to know?
- What do we want to tell them about the program?
- How do we know what they want know?
- How can they contribute to the evaluation?

Types of Evaluations

- Needs assessment
- Evaluability assessment
- **Process evaluation**
- **Outcome evaluation**
- Efficiency evaluation (cost evaluation)

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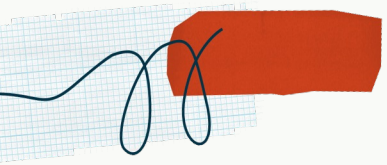
Process Evaluation

Helps to understand why a program produced the results it did. Supports the ongoing improvement of a program.

- What is the profile of youth participants? Is the program attracting a sufficient number of participants and are they the target population?
- Are youth satisfied with their experience in the program?
- Are all the project activities going as planned? If not, why? To what extent is the program being delivered as planned?
- What went well? Were there barriers/common problems to program implementation? How were barriers addressed? What can be changed or improved?
- What are the recommendations moving forward?



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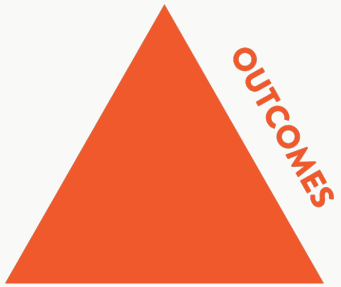
Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation helps to demonstrate the difference a program makes to the wellbeing of its youth participants.



Examples Questions an Outcome Evaluation could ask:

- Is the desired outcome observed?
- Are program participants better off than non-participants?
- Is there evidence that the program caused the observed changes?
- Is there support for the theoretical foundations underpinning the program?
- Is there evidence that the program could be implemented successfully elsewhere?

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What principles/values should guide the evaluation of youth programs?

- Strengthen projects
- Use multiple approaches
- Design evaluation to address real issues
- Create a participatory process
- Allow for flexibility
- Build capacity

(Kellogg Evaluation Handbook)

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A critical approach to evaluation acknowledges the influence of **paradigms, politics and values**

Evaluation is **political**!

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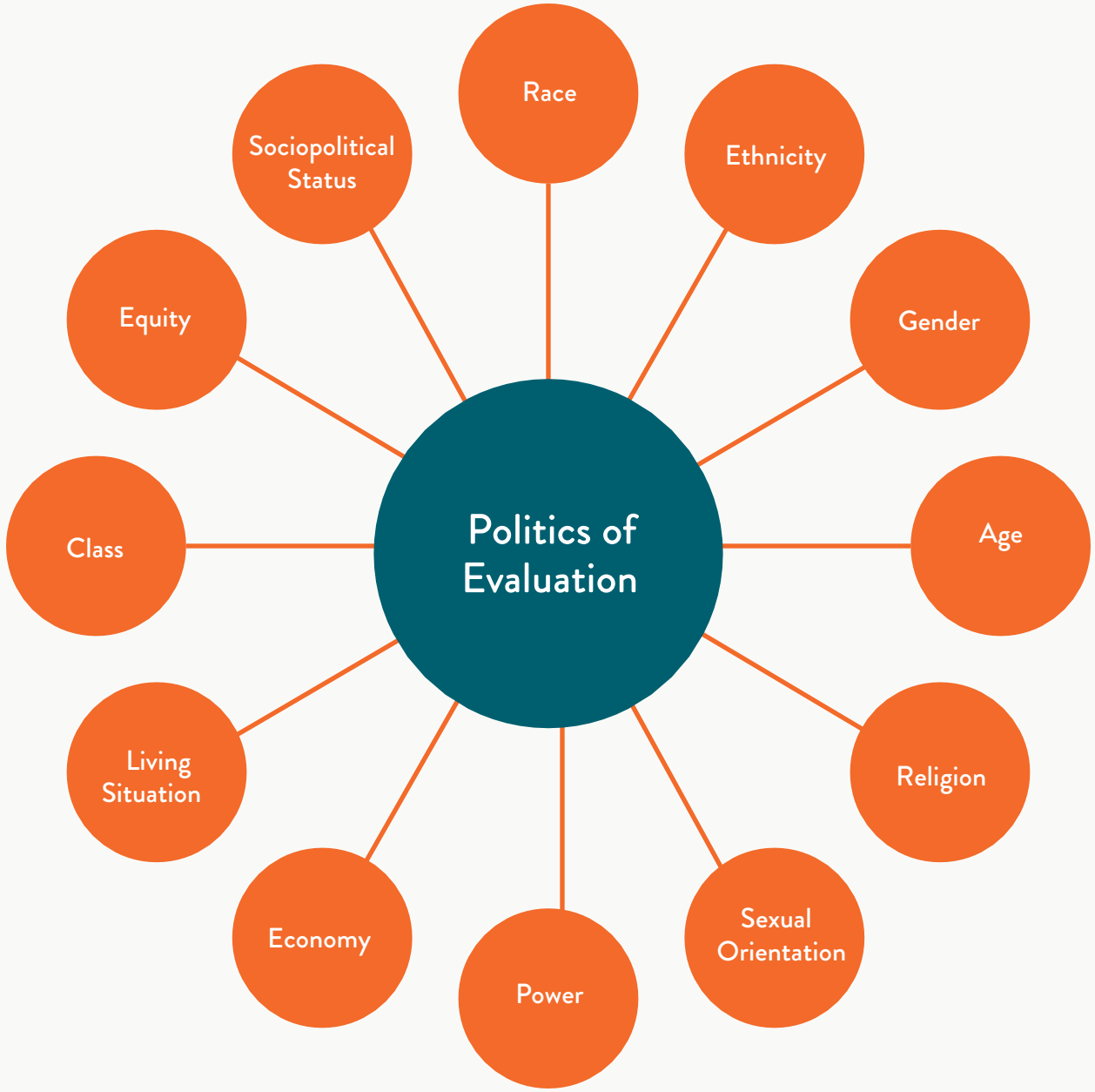

SenGupta, Hopson & Thompson-Robinson (2004)

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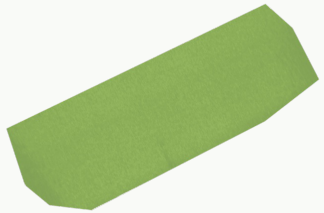
Common Myths to Get Out of the Way Before You Start Planning

Myth: It's an event to get over with and then move on

Myth: Evaluation is a whole new set of activities – we don't have the resources

Myth: There's a "right" way to do outcomes evaluation. What if we don't get it right?

Myth: We always know what youth who are part of our program need – we don't need evaluation to tell us if we're really meeting their needs or not



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The YouthREX Framework for Evaluating Youth Wellbeing

(11.00 AM – 11.40 PM)

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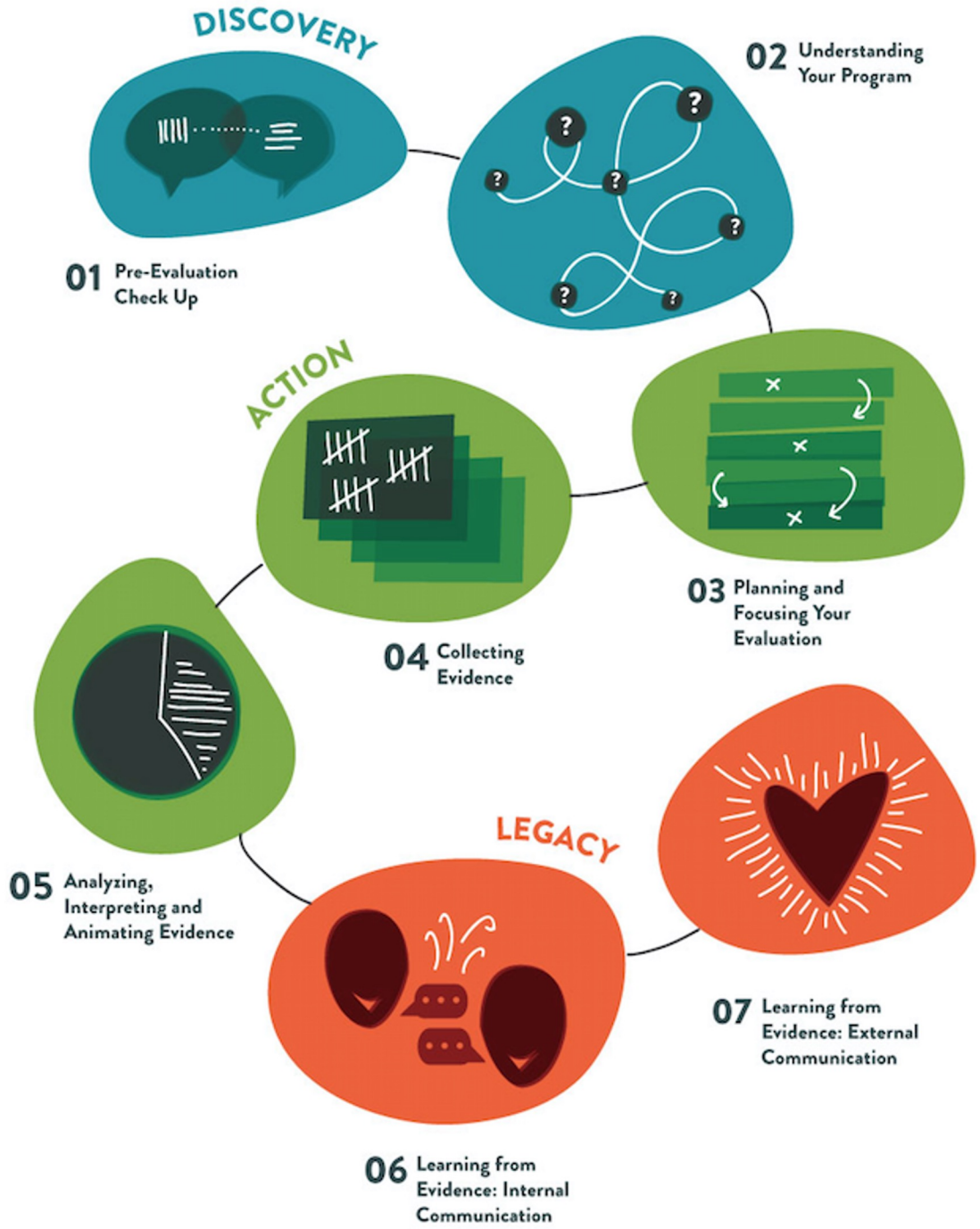
The YouthREX Framework for Evaluating Youth Well-Being

Read more on the framework here!



Why this Evaluation Framework?

- The framework pulls together the key elements of program evaluation in a simple step-by-step process that is suited to the context of grassroots youth programs.
- It emphasizes three lenses that are suitable for informing program evaluation within a grassroots youth sector context.

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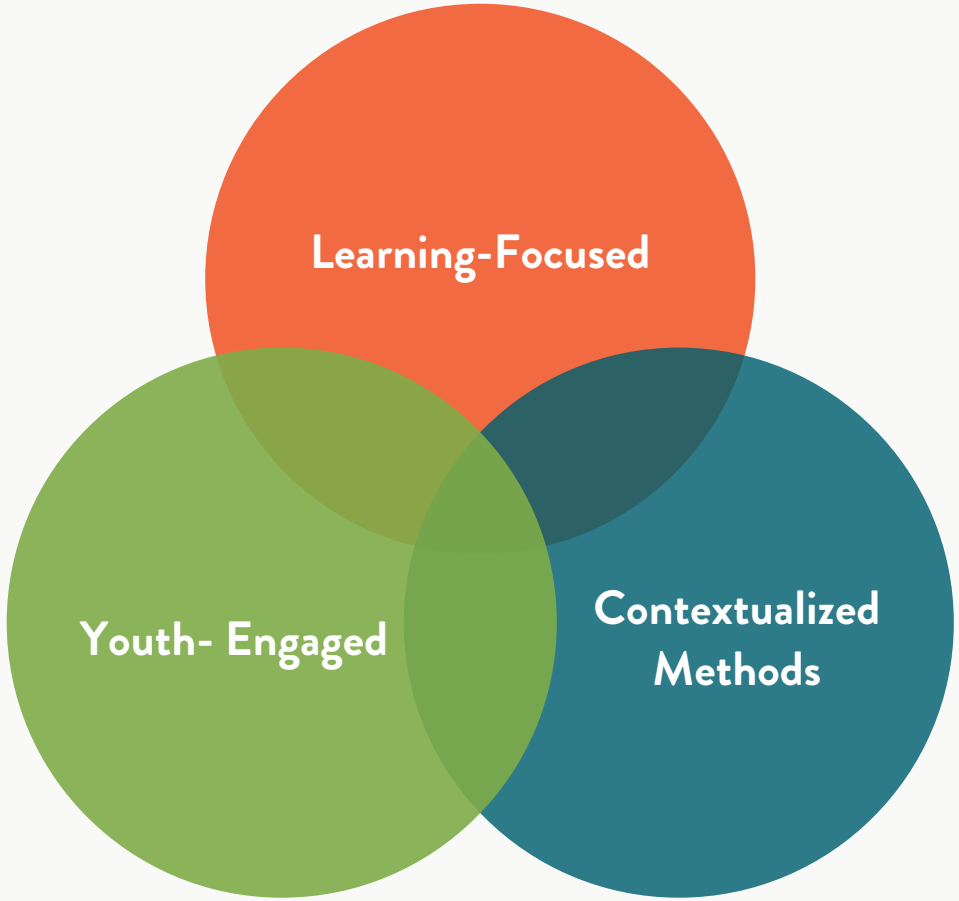
Three Guiding Lenses



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A Learning Focused Lens asks ...

Will the youth program use the insights and findings from the evaluation to improve their services and promote youth wellbeing?

‘Good’ evaluation is not simply about presenting evidence related to program processes and outcomes but importantly, about using your findings and insights to **learn and strategize** to do your work better!

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A Youth-Engaged Lens asks ...

Does the program evaluation of your youth program actively and meaningfully engage youth participants?

Youth engagement improves the overall quality of evaluation and benefits the wider community.

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Youth Engagement in Evaluation

Involving young people actively in the evaluation process to gain their insights, perspectives, and experiences.

Benefits

- Provides a more comprehensive understanding of the program or initiative
- Enhances the relevance and accuracy of evaluation findings
- Enhances evaluation capacity
- Improves program quality
- Empowers youth by valuing their input and fostering a sense of ownership

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Examples Methods for Youth Engagement

Discovery Phase

- Formation of a Youth Advisory Council
- Needs assessment with youth (surveys or interviews)

Action Phase

- Youth help create and administer data collection measures

Legacy Phase

- Youth provide feedback on, or spearhead the development of, communication resources

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Ethical Evaluation with Youth

Five key ethical principles:

1. Do no harm
2. Voluntary participation
3. Informed consent
4. Confidentiality
5. Anonymity

- How will you explain the purpose of your evaluation to youth participants?
- How will you involve youth?
- Is there a mechanism for youth to contribute to the evaluation design and methods used?
- Is there supports during and after evaluation research?

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A Contextualized Methods Lens asks ...

Do the evaluation methods allow a youth program to tell rich and nuanced stories of their processes and outcomes that acknowledge the complexity and dynamism of youth work?

You can build in rigor by having multiple lines of evidence from mixed-methods and data sources!

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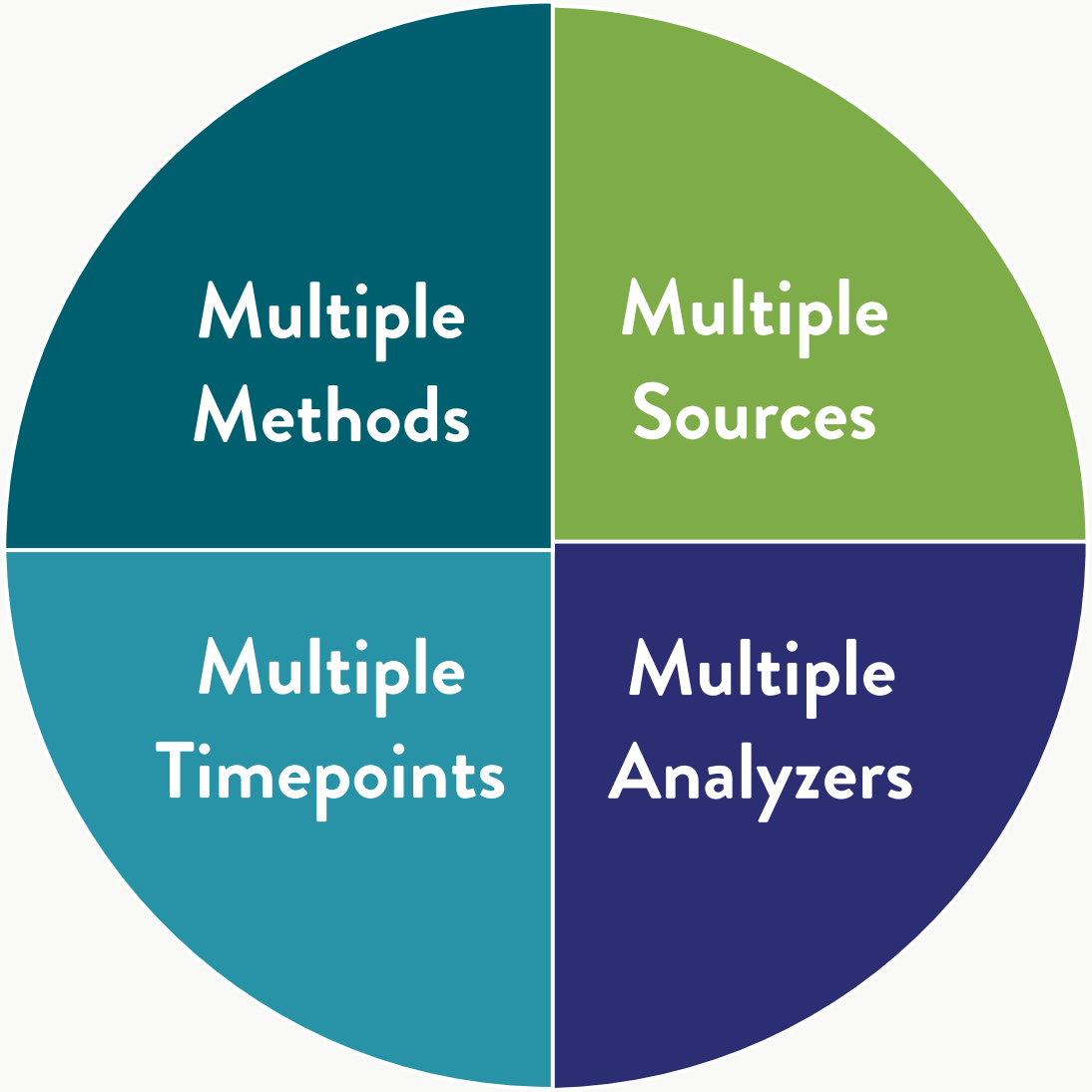
Contextualization through Triangulation



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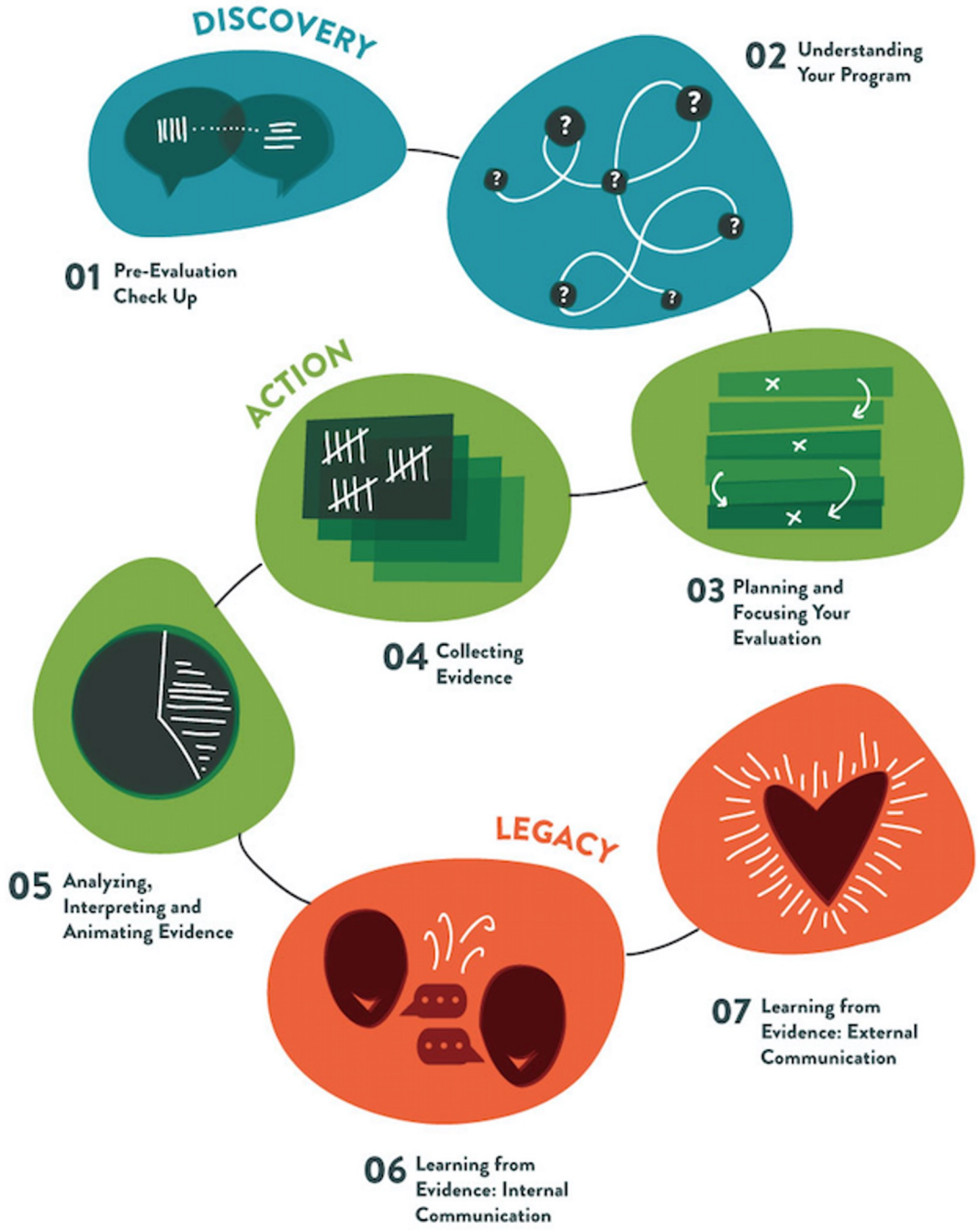
The YouthREX Framework for Evaluating Youth Well-Being

Read more on the framework here!



Phase 1: Discovery

Step 01: Pre-Evaluation Check Up

Where is your organization on your evaluation journey? What is your capacity to undertake this journey? What are your evaluation assets? What resources do you need to successfully complete this journey?

Takeaway: A shared understanding of your program's capacity – what program assets/resources are available to support your evaluation. **An example of an asset/resource would be an inventory of data that your program already collects.**

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Phase 1: Discovery

Step 02: Understanding your Program using Logic Models

What is your program theory? What are your program components and your intended outcomes? A logic model is a visual representation of your program and how it is intended to work.

Takeaway: A logic model that describes the relationship between your program's activities and intended outcomes helps you to answer these questions: What is your program trying to accomplish? How? For whom?

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Phase 2: Action

Step 03: Focusing and Planning your Evaluation

Before you set off on your evaluation journey, bring together your program stakeholders and develop a roadmap (evaluation plan)

Takeaway: **An evaluation plan** identifies your evaluation questions, your evaluation design, your data collection methods, your analysis plan and is a communication plan for sharing your findings. It is a roadmap for your evaluation journey.

Phase 2: Action

Step 04: Collecting Evidence for a process and outcome evaluation

In this step, you will collect data and stories to answer your process and outcome evaluation questions

Takeaway: Get started **collecting evidence (data + stories)** about your program, how youth experience it and learn about changes that have resulted for youth

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Phase 2: Action

Step 05: Analyzing, Interpreting and Animating Evidence

Identify themes in your qualitative data, and patterns or trends in your quantitative data. Make sense of your findings and turn the sense-making into learning that strengthens your program in order to improve the wellbeing of youth participants.

Takeaway: Data analysis, or sense-making, is central to the creation of evaluation evidence.

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Phase 3: Legacy

Step 06: Learning from Evidence: Internal Communication

Evaluation shouldn't just be a reporting exercise. Use your evaluation insights and findings to make judgments that will improve your program.

Takeaway: Evaluation evidence can inform **internal strategic program planning** aimed at improving youth wellbeing outcomes.

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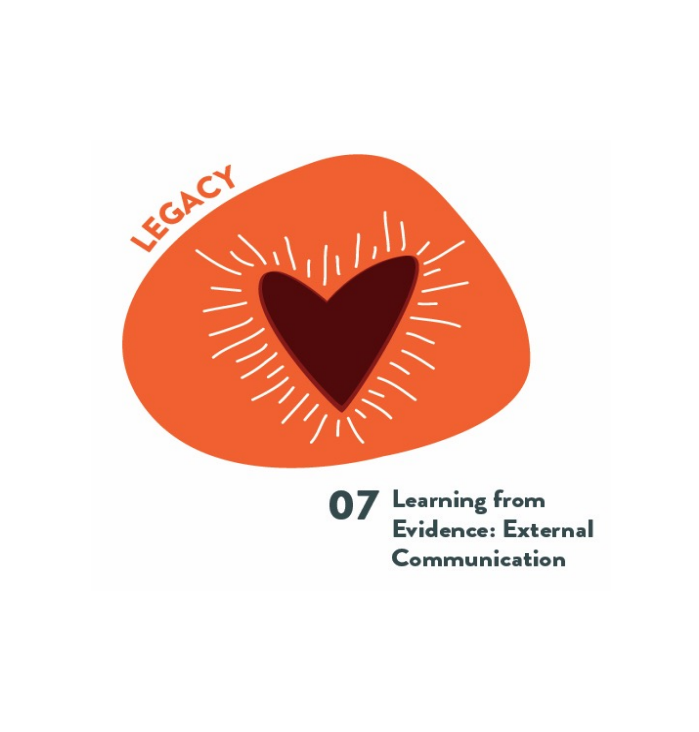
Phase 3: Legacy



Step 07: Learning from Evidence: External Communication

It's show and tell time! Share your evaluation findings in a variety of formats, both traditional and new, in order to engage different audiences. This way, you communicate your legacy to your many stakeholders in ways that they can understand the REAL story of your program.

Takeaway: Different stakeholder groups have different interests and needs. Develop **communication products** that target various stakeholder audiences.

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Data Visualization

Make it Youth-Friendly!

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Introduction to Logic Modelling

(11.40 AM – 12.30 PM)

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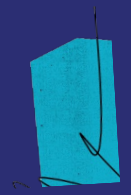
What is a Logic Model?

"... a picture of how your program works – the theory and assumptions underlying the program. This model provides a road map of your program, highlighting how it is expected to work, what activities need to come before others, and how desired outcomes are achieved."

- W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook, 1998



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Logic Models

- **Summarize** the key elements of your program
- **Explain** the rationale behind program activities
- **Describe** the link between activities and outcomes
- **Provide** an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss the program and agree on its description and intended results
- **Help** identify key questions for your evaluation
- **Serve** as a useful communication tool to describe your program to others (clear picture, logical, simple)

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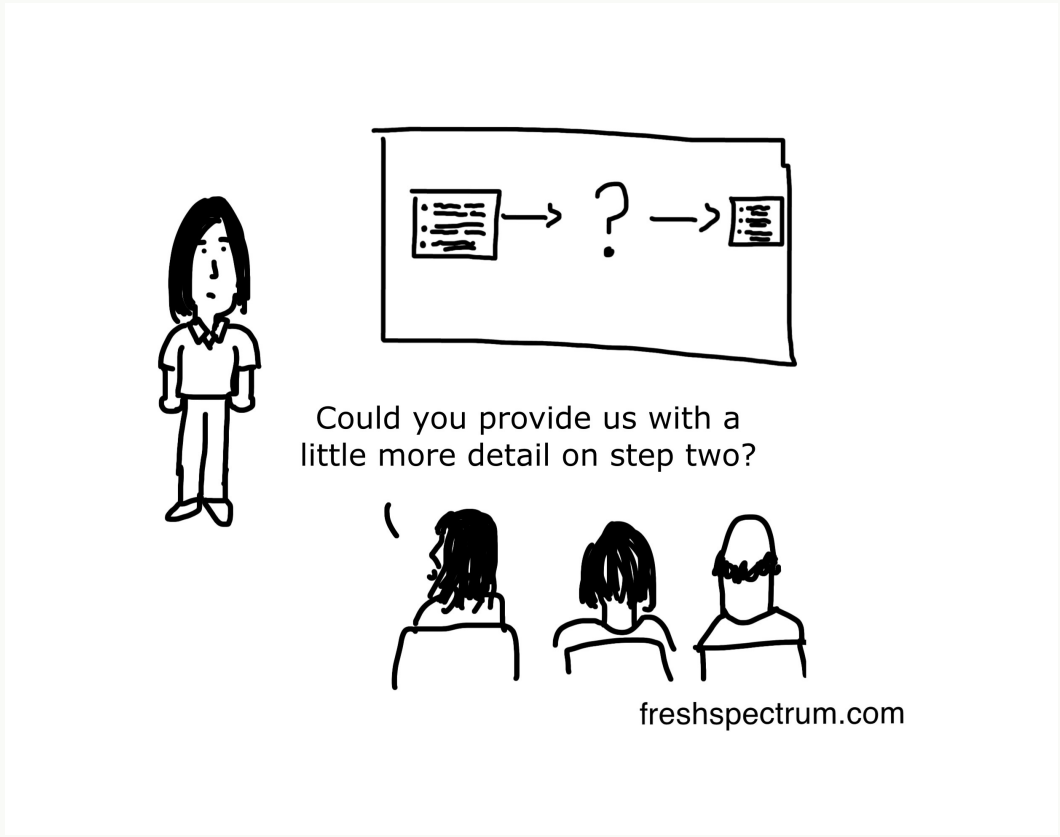
What Does a Logic Model Look Like?



Graphic display of boxes and arrows; vertical or horizontal

- Relationships, linkages

Any shape possible

- Circular, dynamic
- Cultural adaptations; storyboards

Level of detail

- Simple
- Complex

Multiple models

- Multi-level programs
- Multi-component programs

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LOGIC MODEL

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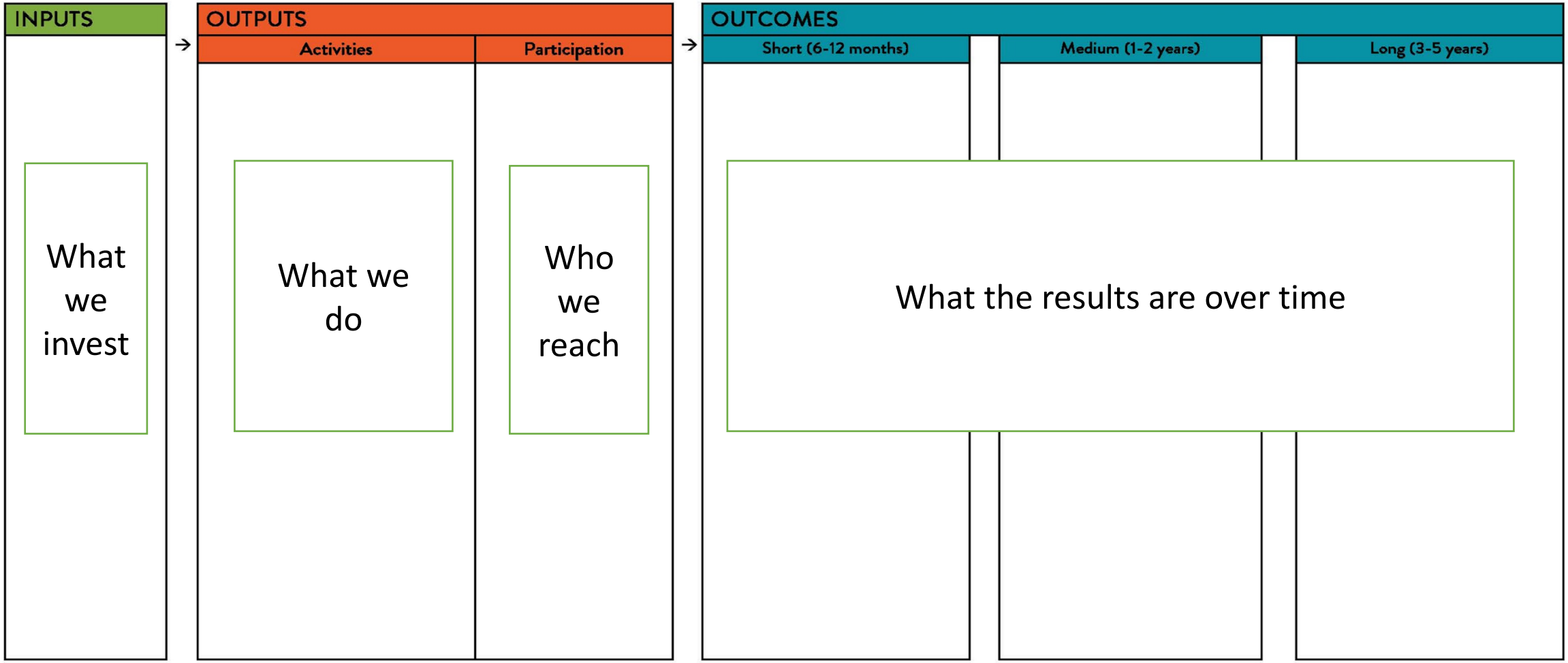
Date: Status: Contributors:

PROGRAM: SITUATION:

PRIORITIES:



Logic Model Components

Situation

- Root problem/issue ("need")
  - Context
    - Sociopolitical, environmental, economic factors
- Stakeholder engagement

Priorities

- Top program priorities in relation to the situation and context
  - Program mission, vision, and/or values
  - Mandates
  - Resources
  - Intended outcomes

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Assumptions and External Factors

Assumptions

- Beliefs
- Our ideas about the situation and problem that the program is trying to address
- The way the program will operate
- What we expect the program to achieve
- How participants learn and behave
- Resources and staff
- External and internal environment

External Factors

- Aspects influencing and influenced by the program
- Biophysical and political environments
- Economic structure
- Demographic makeup
- Participants' respective experiences
- Media
- Politics

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- Situational statement
  - Priorities
- Assumptions
- External factors
- Evaluation methods

... these still need to be discussed and identified, though!

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Inputs

What is invested into a program

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Partnerships
- Time
- Money
- Technology
- Materials / Equipment
- Space

Why are inputs important to note in logic models?

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Outputs

Activities

What we do

- Workshops
- Meetings
- Training, teaching
- Delivering services
- Developing resources
- Mentoring

Are numerical, quantifiable & descriptive

- # of classes offered
- # of services or outings
- Day of the week that the activity occurs

Participation

Who we reach

- Youth
- Clients
- Groups
- Families
- Organizations
- Decision-makers

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Outcomes

Actual benefits/changes/impacts for youth during or after participating in a program. For a smoking cessation program for youth, an outcome might be ”youth quit smoking”.

These changes (outcomes) are usually expressed in terms of:

1. Knowledge and skills: short-term outcomes
2. Behaviors: intermediate-term outcomes
3. Values, conditions, and status: long-term outcomes

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For Example:

A program to teach youth about financial literacy:

Outputs- what the service produces- the number of financial planning sessions and the number of youth seen.

Outcomes - the changes sought in the knowledge or behavior of youth- can include increased financial knowledge, youth developing and living within a budget, making monthly additions to a savings account, and having increased financial stability.

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Outcomes

Impacts of program activities:

What changes occur as a result of your program activities?
For whom?

Short-term outcomes (~ 6-12 months)

Immediate changes in knowledge, awareness, attitudes

Intermediate outcomes (~ 1-2 years)

Changes in action, behaviours

Long-term outcomes (~ 3-5 years)

Changes in the broader community, population

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Outcomes always indicate the **direction** of the intended change:

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Outputs Vs. Outcomes

Example: for a smoking cessation program

Output is the number of clients who went through the cessation program.

Outcome is the number of participants that quit smoking.

Not how many worms the bird feeds its young, but how well the fledgling flies.

(United Way of America, 1999)

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Two Key Benefits of Logic Models

Clarity:

- What is the **REAL** purpose of this program?

Agreement amongst stakeholders:

- Does my picture look like your picture?
- Does this look like a reasonable sequence of outcomes?
- What constitutes “success” at various time points of the program?

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Other Benefits of Logic Models

- **Identify** opportunities for program improvements
- **Spell** out the beliefs and assumptions that underlie your choice of activities and intended outcomes
- **Assess** your program's likelihood of success and identify factors that could impact success
- **Increase** your understanding of program performance by clarifying the sequence of events from inputs through outputs through outcomes

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When Should a Logic Model be Developed?

- In the program planning stage to develop activities for desired outcomes.
- Early in the evaluation process to serve as a resource for developing evaluation questions and performance indicators.
- As soon as possible, even if the program is already up and running.

If your program has a logic model but it hasn't been reviewed or updated in a number of years, it's time to do this!

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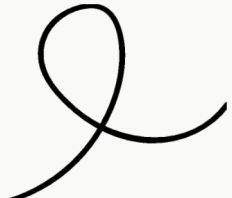
Limitations of Logic Models

- Represent an inaccurate reality
- Focus on expected outcomes
- Focus on positive change – change is not always positive
- Depicts assumed causal connections between programs and outcomes
- Does not address whether we are doing the right thing or not



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Lunch

(12.30 PM – 1.00 PM)

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Developing a Logic Model

(1.00 PM – 2.00 PM)

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LOGIC MODEL

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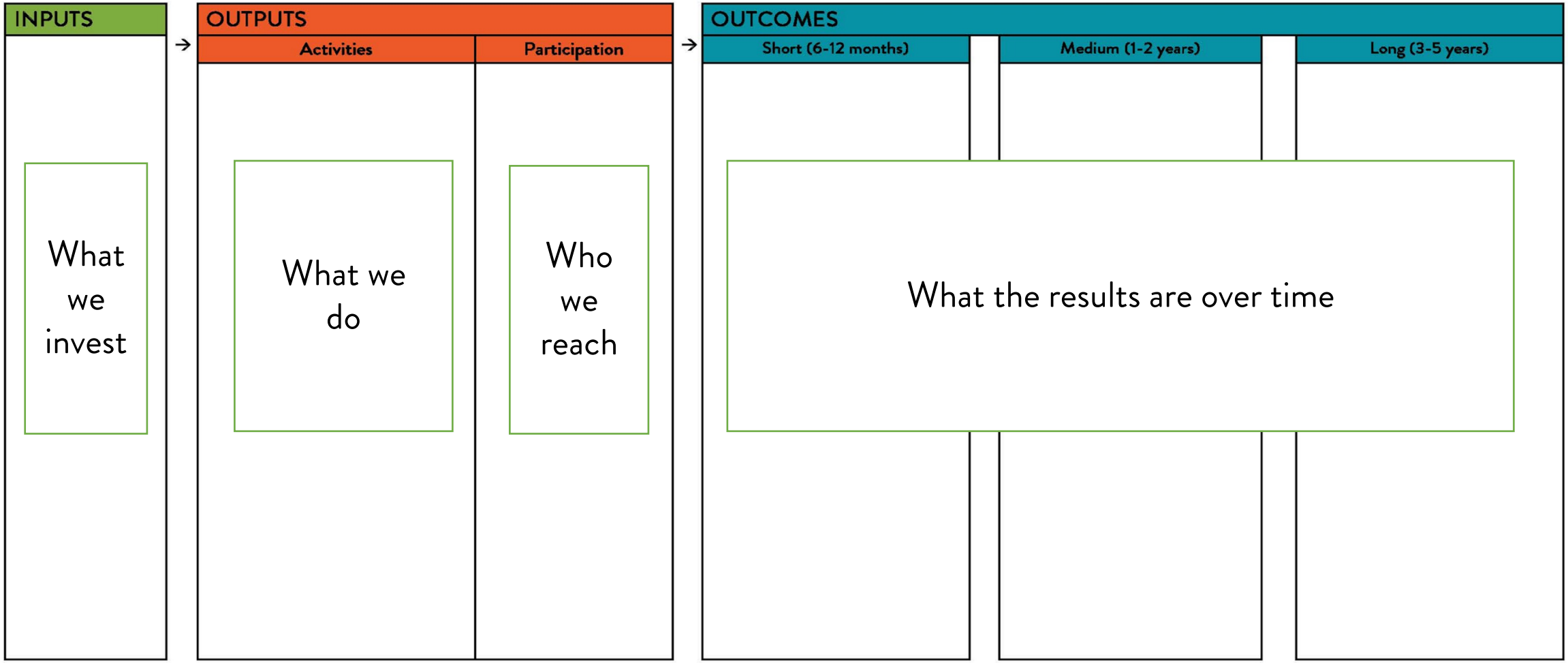
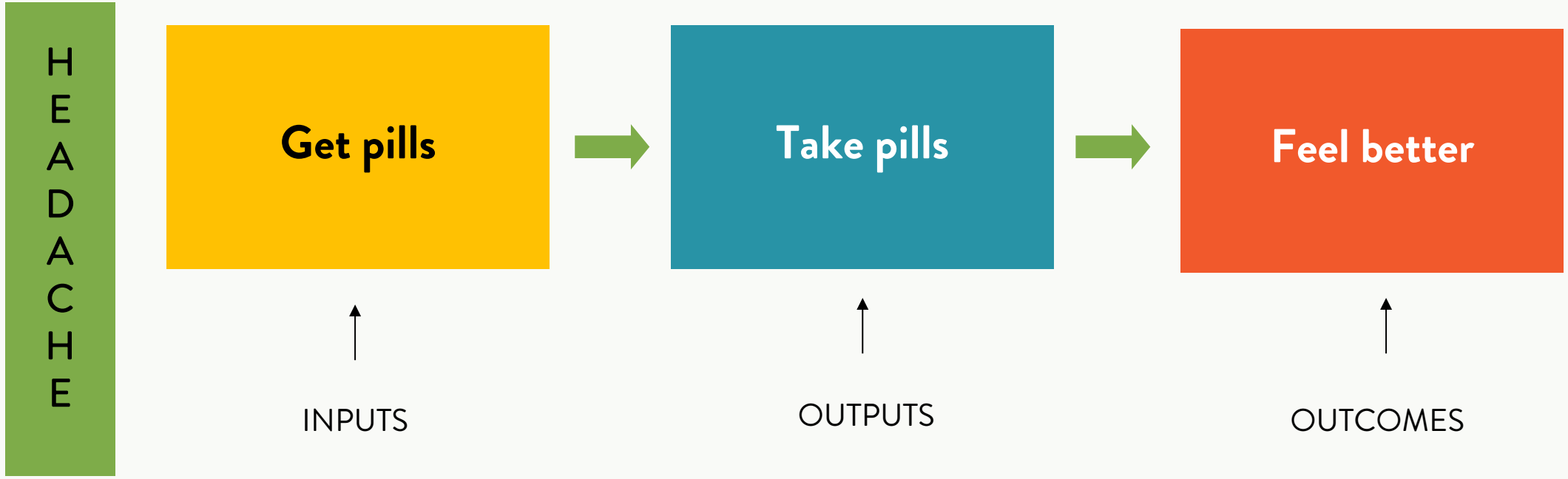
Date: Status: Contributors:

PROGRAM: SITUATION:

PRIORITIES:

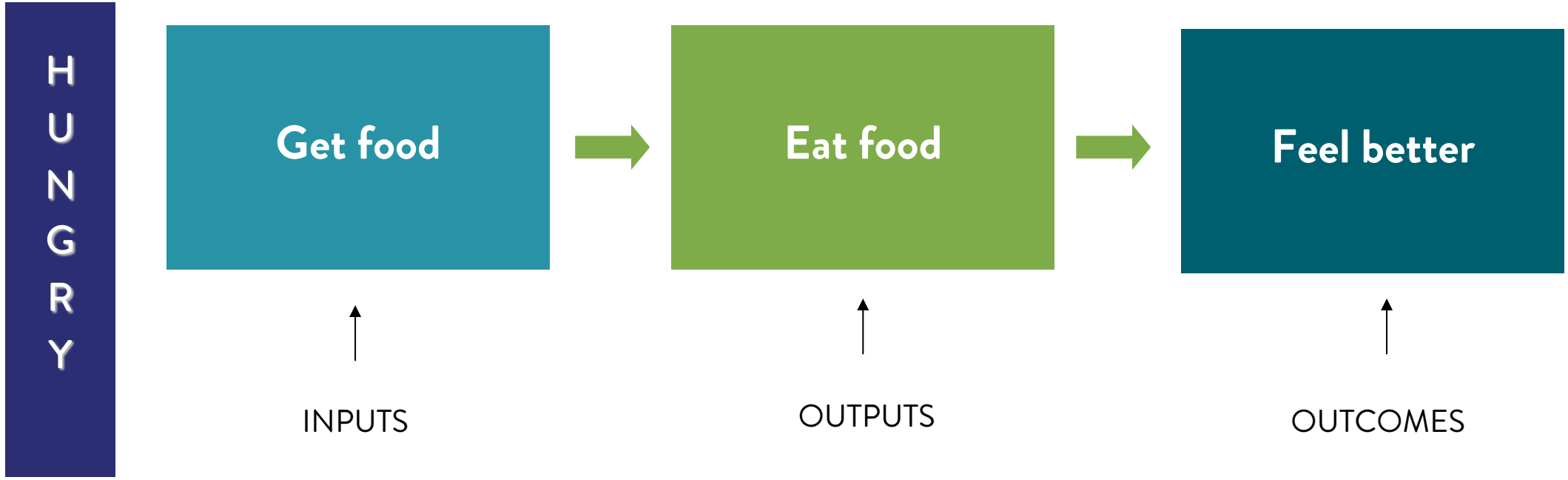


Everyday example



Situation

Everyday example



Situation

My Rich Uncle Exercise

In groups, use the handout in your folder to work through the following prompts:

- 3 compelling reasons why I need the car in my life and the difference it will make
- 3 things I will need before I get my car
- What will I use my car for?
- What evidence will I send to my uncle every 6 months?
- What difference has my car made to my life?

Activity by Dr. Gail Vallance Barrington

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My Rich Uncle Exercise

Congratulations! You have just developed a Logic Model!

Activity by Dr. Gail Vallance Barrington

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My Rich Uncle Activity	Logic Model Components
3 compelling reasons why I need the car in my life and the difference it will make	Program purpose/need
3 things I need before I get my car	Inputs
What will I use my car for?	Activities
What evidence will I send to my aunty every 6 months?	Short-term outcomes
What difference has my car made to my life?	Long-term outcomes

Logic Model Lingo Review

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What does this statement really convey?

Input or Output or Outcome?

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A common problem is that activities and strategies often do not lead to the desired outcomes. Check your 'if-then' statements and ensure that they make sense and lead to the outcomes you want to achieve. **A logic model makes the connections EXPLICIT.**

"I think you should be more explicit here in Step Two."

Common Logic Modelling Pitfalls

- Can become too time-consuming – and just paperwork
- May become too focused on outcomes without adequate attention to inputs and outputs and the logical relationships that connect them to end results
- May end up perfecting the key to the wrong lock
    - Is the program focusing on the right thing?
- Mixing levels within one logic model
- Attending to context only at the front end
- Thinking that logic model has to be "correct"
- Becomes 'fixed' rather than flexible and dynamic

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Logic Modelling
Group Practice Session

(2.00 PM – 3.20 PM)

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1/ Select a program and review the Situation, Priorities & Assumptions of your program. (10 minutes)

2/ What are the Inputs and Outputs (Activities & Participation)? (15 minutes)

3/ What are the Outcomes your program will achieve (in the Short, Medium and Long term)? (30 minutes)

4/ Use the Logic Model Review template to check your Logic Model. (5 minutes)

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Group Debrief

(20 minutes)

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Connecting Logic Modelling to Evaluation

(3.20 PM – 3.50 PM)

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Logic Models and Evaluation

A Logic Model guides our evaluation process:

- Helps us match evaluation to the program
- Helps us know what and when to measure
- Helps us focus on key, important information

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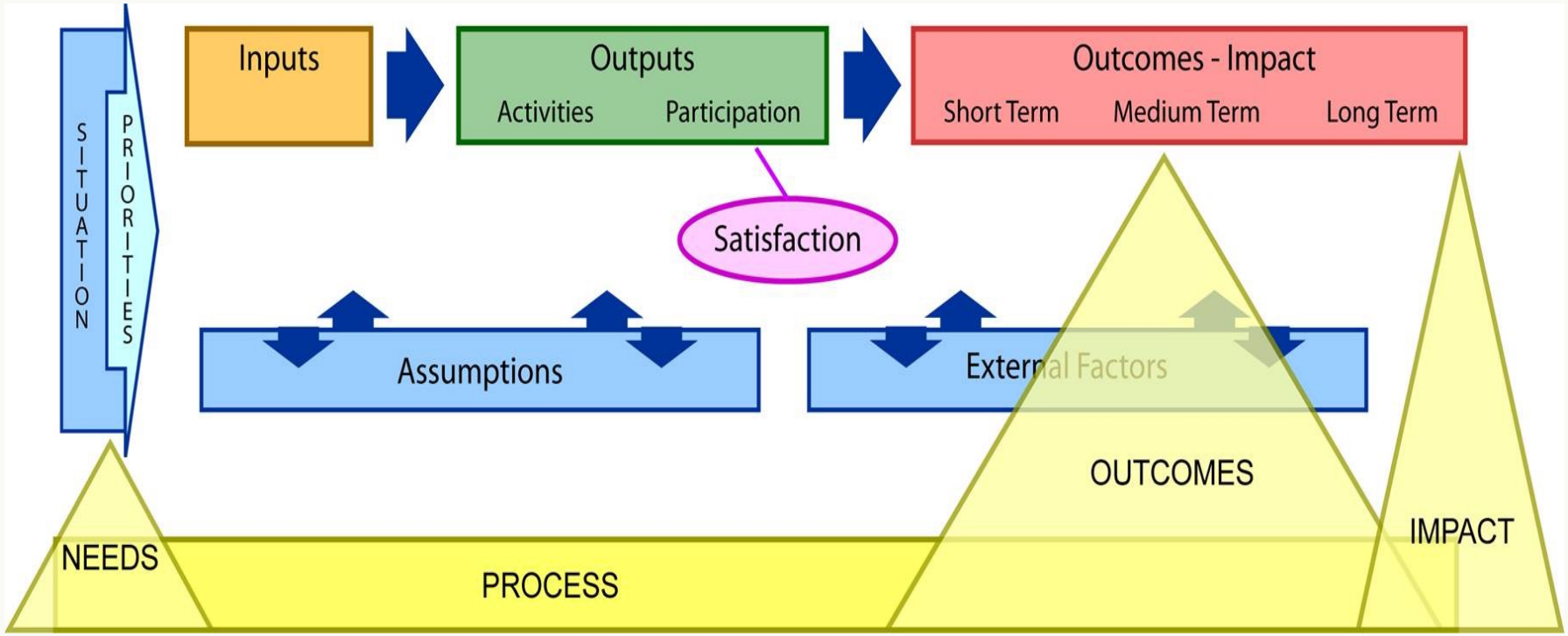
Logic Models and Common Types of Evaluation | Types of Evaluation



Needs/asset assessment:

What are the characteristics, needs, priorities of target population?

What are potential barriers/facilitators?

What is most appropriate to do?

Process evaluation:

How is program implemented?

Are activities delivered as intended? Fidelity of implementation?

Are participants being reached as intended?

What are participant reactions?

Outcome evaluation:

To what extent are desired changes occurring? Goals met?

Who is benefiting/not benefiting? How?

What seems to work? Not work?

What are unintended outcomes?

Impact evaluation:

To what extent can changes be attributed to the program?

What are the net effects?

What are final consequences?

Is program worth resources it costs?

Process Evaluation Questions

Process evaluation questions focus on how well your planned program is being implemented:

Reach: Did the target youth participate as hoped?

Outputs: Were activities implemented as planned? How often, when, and with what duration? Were outputs produced as intended? Does the program differ from the original plan? Why these differences?

Participant Satisfaction: Are youth participants satisfied with the program ? Do they feel welcomed by the program staff? Was the location and timing of the program accessible for participants?

Process Evaluation

Good Practices:

- The methods used to collect evidence should integrate with the existing program activities as much as possible.
- Program administrative data are an excellent source of process evaluation evidence.
- Timing of data collection: When will data be collected (one time? At various times during the program? Continuously through the program?) depends on purpose and method selected

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Develop your Evaluation Questions

Outcome evaluation questions focus on changes that occurred in youth participants as a result of your program:

Short-term outcomes: To what extent did participants' level of **knowledge** improve? Did their attitudes change? Did they develop new skills?

Intermediate outcomes: To what extent did participants change their **behaviour or actions**? Has this new behaviour been maintained and for how long?

Long-term outcomes: To what extent has the target population's **condition or situation** improved?

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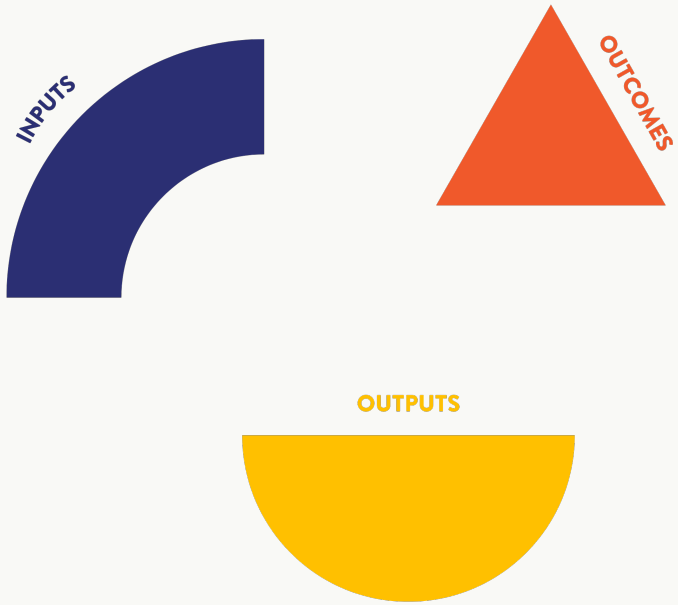
Linking Logic Models to Outcome Evaluations

What is an Outcome Evaluation?

- It helps assess a program's effectiveness at achieving its intended outcomes
    - How do I measure the outcomes in my logic model?
    - How do I select appropriate indicators for my expected outcomes?



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Specify the Outcomes & Questions to Answer

Outcome questions ask how the lives of youth have been affected by participation in your program. Outcome questions could be short, intermediate and long-terms.

Examples of short-term outcome questions:

- How have attitudes of participants about _____changed?
- What _____has the target population learned as a result of participating in the program?
- What types of skills related to _____has the target group acquired?

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Linking Logic Model to Outcome Evaluation

Outcomes, Targets and Indicators:

Targets: the number and percent of participants that you want to achieve the outcome, for example, an outcome goal of 5,000 teens (10% of teens in a community) who quit smoking over the next year

Indicators: observable and measurable "milestones" toward an outcome target. These are what you'd see, hear, read, etc., that would indicate to you whether you're making any progress toward your outcome target or not e.g. # & % of teen participants who quit smoking right after the program & 6 months after the program.

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Plan for Data Collection

Develop an evaluation plan methods grid to facilitate a shared understanding of the overall evaluation plan, and the timeline for evaluation activities.

Evaluation Question	Indicator/ Performance Measure or Link to activities / target population in logic model	Method	Data Source	Frequency	Person Responsible for data collection and timelines
What do we want to know about this program?)	**State Outcome** (change or difference you want to make) and **indicators** for outcomes (how you know the outcome is happening)? How to collect information about the indicator? E.g., Increased score on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	*What data collection method will be used to measure the indicator?* E.g. survey, focus group, interviews, document review, etc.	*Youth Participants? Family members? Staff?*	When and where info will be collected?	Who will do this?

From Outcomes to Indicators to Measurement: YouthREX's Youth Measures Inventory

Examples of outcome measures that have been developed by researchers and practitioners that fit into the seven themes from the Stepping Up Framework, as well as other measures to guide your process evaluation.

What criteria did YouthREX pay attention to when selecting measures?

Youth-Friendliness.

Open-Access

Visit the Inventory

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Wrap-Up / Next Steps

(3.50 PM – 4.00 PM)