

# M&E OF DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES



Many social development projects involve service delivery to poor and marginalised people. These projects may be relatively easy to measure. CSOs are often involved in other kinds of approaches, such as advocacy, capacity building and mobilisation. The type of monitoring and evaluation needed for these approaches can be very different to the type needed to monitor and evaluate service delivery projects.

Many social development projects involve the delivery of services to poor and marginalised people. Service delivery is perhaps the most straightforward development approach to measure. It usually involves at the very least:

- recording what is being delivered;
- assessing how well it is being delivered;
- identifying who is accessing the services; and
- assessing resulting changes in their lives.

Of these, the first three may be relatively straightforward. However, assessing changes in peoples' lives, and working out how much of this is due to a social development project, is not always easy. Nonetheless, there is a lot of guidance available to social development practitioners on how to monitor and evaluate service delivery work. And there are often industry standard tools and indicators that can be used in sectors of work such as health, education, and agricultural extension.

CSOs may also be involved in a variety of other different approaches. These include advocacy, capacity building and mobilisation. The type of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) needed for these approaches can be very different from that needed to monitor and evaluate service delivery projects. This area of the M&E Universe describes how M&E processes need to be adapted to support different approaches.

The development approaches covered in the M&E Universe are divided into three main areas: advocacy, capacity strengthening and other approaches.

## Advocacy

CSOs are increasingly becoming involved in advocacy and campaigning work, sometimes described as policy influencing. Six papers in this section of the M&E Universe are dedicated to the M&E of advocacy. These are as follows.

- The core paper on *M&E of advocacy* is designed as an introductory paper. It describes the different kinds of advocacy work conducted by CSOs, and outlines some of the different types of changes that can result from their work. It also lists some of the many M&E challenges that are unique to advocacy work. It concludes by describing the main purposes of M&E for

advocacy work, and outlines how the quality of an advocacy M&E approach can be judged.

- The paper *M&E systems for advocacy work* covers some of the main elements of an M&E system (or approach) for an advocacy intervention. It primarily focuses on M&E processes that differ from those required in other kinds of social development project.
- The paper on *Monitoring advocacy activities* provides examples of indicators, questions and progress markers used to monitor different kinds of advocacy activities.
- The complementary paper on *Contribution to advocacy outcomes* looks at how to conduct M&E in the opposite direction – first identifying a change or set of changes, and then working backwards to try and identify the contribution of a CSO or advocacy intervention.
- The short paper on *M&E of advocacy portfolios* describes some different methods that can be used to monitor and evaluate a range of different advocacy interventions around a theme or geographical area.
- The final paper *M&E tools for advocacy work* lists some of the tools and methodologies that can be used to monitor and evaluate advocacy work.

## Capacity strengthening

Four papers are dedicated to the M&E of capacity strengthening. These are as follows.

- The core paper on *M&E of capacity strengthening* is designed as an introductory paper. It covers some of the main challenges and conceptual issues. A common theme throughout the paper is how to undertake M&E in a way that strengthens the capacity development process and does not undermine it. The paper concludes with INTRAC's top ten tips for conducting M&E in capacity strengthening work.
- The paper on *M&E systems for capacity strengthening* looks at how to develop a simple M&E system for capacity strengthening initiatives aimed at individual organisations, or a small number of organisations. The paper also advises on how to ensure that capacity strengthening and M&E work complement each other, avoiding unnecessary duplication.

- By contrast, the paper on **M&E of capacity strengthening portfolios** covers work designed to support a large number of organisations. It includes a list of indicators that are commonly used to capture change across multiple organisations.
- The final paper is called **Tools for M&E of capacity strengthening**. It lists some of the different tools and methodologies that can be used to monitor and evaluate capacity strengthening work.

Three further papers in this section deal with related themes and approaches.

- A paper on **M&E of partnerships** looks at partnership more broadly, as distinct from capacity strengthening, and describes some simple approaches that CSOs can use to monitor and evaluate their partnership work.
- A paper on **M&E of training** covers work designed to assess training at an individual level. It covers some of the main models CSOs use to evaluate formal training.
- The paper on **M&E of network development** provides advice on how to monitor and evaluate the development of networks, focusing particularly on two M&E methodologies – social network analysis and network surveys.

## Other areas

A number of other papers cover different M&E approaches that are not directly to advocacy or capacity strengthening.

- A paper on **M&E of humanitarian action** deals with M&E during and after humanitarian crises, largely

during the immediate, emergency phase. It outlines some of the main differences between M&E of humanitarian action and M&E of other kinds of work. It also directs the reader to several resources that can be used to guide M&E in humanitarian programmes.

- The paper on **M&E of research** provides a brief description of some of the approaches used to monitor and evaluate research projects and programmes. It is an introductory paper only, as M&E of research is quite a specialised area.
- The paper on **M&E of added-value** suggests some simple methods and approaches that outline how large non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can monitor and evaluate their own contribution within specific development programmes and the international aid chain more generally.
- A paper on **M&E of pilot projects** describes how M&E is conducted during different stages of the innovation process, from project piloting through to mainstreaming and replication.
- A brief advisory paper on **M&E of development education** covers monitoring and evaluation at different stages of a development education project or programme.
- Finally, the paper on **M&E of civil society funds**, based largely on INTRAC's own experiences in supporting or implementing civil society fund management in countries such as Ethiopia, Nepal, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and the UK, aims to provide a checklist of things to think about when developing an M&E approach for a civil society fund.

## Further reading and resources

The papers in this section of the M&E Universe can be accessed by clicking on the links below



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INTRAC is a specialist capacity building institution for organisations involved in international relief and development. Since 1992, INTRAC has contributed significantly to the body of knowledge on monitoring and evaluation. Our approach to M&E is practical and founded on core principles. We encourage appropriate M&E, based on understanding what works in different contexts, and we work with people to develop their own M&E approaches and tools, based on their needs.

**M&E Training & Consultancy**

INTRAC's team of M&E specialists offer consultancy and training in all aspects of M&E, from core skills development through to the design of complex M&E systems.

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