

M&E OF DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION



Development education first emerged in the 1970s with the intention of raising public awareness of, and support for, international development within developed countries. It can usually be monitored and evaluated in the same way as other education work. The main challenge is that development education is often carried out without specific longer-term objectives, making it hard to know where to look for change.

Development education first emerged as a theme in the 1970s. It was originally based on the desire of governments of countries donating international aid and International Non-governmental Organisations (INGOs) to raise public awareness of, and support for, international development amongst citizens of developed countries (Bourn u.d.).

Development education is sometimes known by different names, such as global learning, global education and global citizenship. There is no widely accepted definition.

However, most definitions are similar to the one below:

“Development education is an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It seeks to engage people in analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship and participation. It is about supporting people in understanding, and in acting to transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect their lives and others at personal, community, national and international levels.” (Irish Aid 2003, p12)

Based on a large survey of European NGOs in 2010, a number of common objectives of development education were identified. These were:

- to inform and raise awareness of development issues;
- to change attitudes and behaviours;
- to enable understanding of the causes and effects of global issues; and
- to mobilise citizens through informed action.

Development education can be targeted at any kind of stakeholder, but is increasingly aimed at children and young people through both formal and informal education structures (Daly et. al. 2015). It commonly focuses on areas such as poverty, injustice, gender equality, climate change and human rights, and often encourages citizens to make connections between their own lives, and the lives of people living in developing countries (Trocaire u.d.).

Whilst the ultimate purpose of development education is to maintain support for international development efforts, most agree that it should not be carried out to engage in public relations, support specific campaigns, push organisational agendas or raise money. Instead it is about supporting citizens to reach their own conclusions on

development issues. This marks a clear line between development education and campaigning (Bourn u.d.). Nonetheless, there are times when development education is partly designed to encourage citizens to take specific actions.

Similarities with M&E of education

In many ways, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of development education is similar to the M&E of many other kinds of development work, especially work in the education sector. However, there are a couple of features that make it different.

Perhaps most importantly, whilst the ultimate aim of development education may be to make life better for poor and marginalised people, the pathways between educational activities and the ultimate impact are often long and uncertain. Development education works on the assumption that raised awareness and informed action will eventually support global, social change. However, projects and programmes do not always specify a detailed pathway to change. Instead, citizens may be encouraged to take whatever action they see fit, based on their increased awareness and understanding.

This sometimes means that development education is carried out without specific medium- to long-term objectives or end goals, and therefore involves a more open-ended process. This can make M&E more difficult because organisations carrying out development education activities may not know where to look for change.

Another issue is that many organisations are often working in the same space (i.e. encouraging awareness raising and action, and supporting citizens to engage in different areas of development activities). This means it may be hard for individual CSOs to assess their contribution to wider change, beyond the changed behaviour of those citizens they directly support. For example, increased positive perceptions of development activities within a country may be the result of many different factors and organisations.

Nevertheless, for most development education work the basic rules of M&E apply. This means having a clear idea of what you are going to do, and what you are attempting to achieve in the short-term, as well as a clear rationale for why it is important. Nowadays, CSOs often define this within a Theory of Change.

Levels of M&E

There is very little widely available literature on how to conduct M&E of development education, and no overall, agreed, consistent approach. Therefore, the information contained within this paper should be treated as advisory only, rather than a summary of best practice. Nevertheless, development education work is commonly monitored and evaluated at a number of different levels (see diagram opposite). These are similar to the levels outlined in Kirkpatrick's model, which is commonly used to monitor and evaluate training (Kirkpatrick Partners 2020).

LEVEL ONE

Monitoring development education activities: As with any kind of social development work, monitoring activities is usually the easiest part. It should be straightforward to record what a CSO has done, and the tangible products delivered such as citizens trained, events held, or resources disseminated.

It may be harder to assess how well activities were carried out. Nonetheless there are plenty of available methods to assess the quality and relevance of events or workshops. These include methods such as training evaluation forms or satisfaction questionnaires, which investigate how far citizens felt training was relevant, well-facilitated, etc. CSOs may also collect quotes or testimonials, although these are often more useful for communication purposes than to genuinely find out how well activities were conducted.

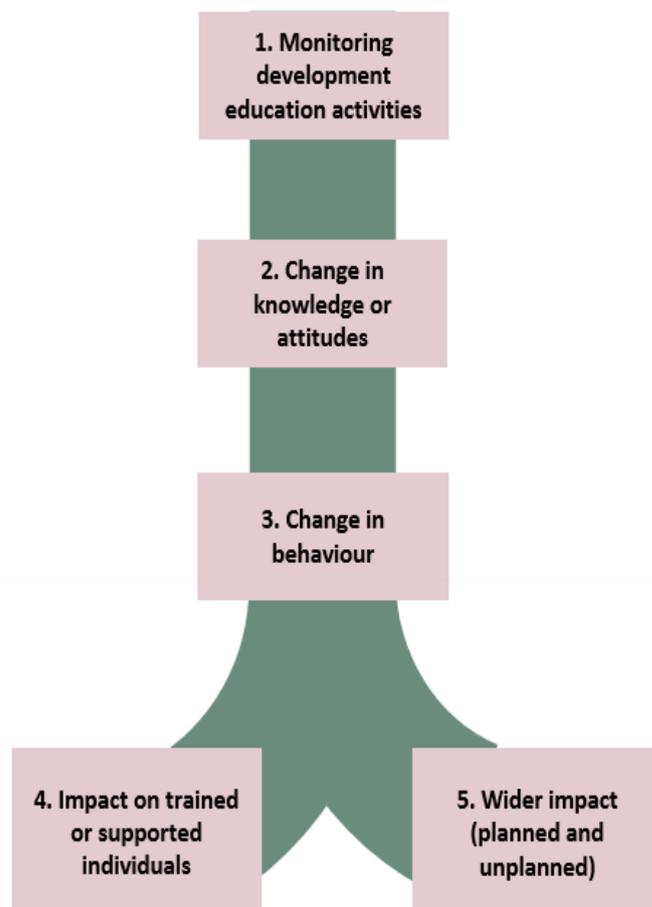
LEVEL TWO

Change in knowledge or attitudes: It should also be relatively straightforward to assess how far citizen's knowledge or attitudes have changed, particularly if they have spent some time involved in an activity, such as a training course. This can be done via traditional ways of assessing increased knowledge, such as evaluation forms submitted at the start and end of educational activities. However, the nature of development educational activities also allows for more innovative activities to be built into the learning process, such as group reflections, discussions, quizzes, etc. These can be used to help assess whether or not knowledge or attitudes are changing, particularly if they are carried out at different stages of training, such as at the beginning and end.

It is, of course, harder to assess change in knowledge or attitudes when activities are based around the distribution of materials, or one-off events where engagement with citizens may only be limited. However, some simple methods are described within the Development Education Toolkit, referenced at the end of this paper (see Saolta 2020).

When assessing changes in knowledge or attitudes it is almost always important to know the specific change sought. This could, for example, be a change in citizens' knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), or a change in attitudes towards migrants or refugees, or a change in willingness to reduce household waste (ibid).

M&E of development education: different levels



Identifying specific changes in this way makes it much easier to monitor or evaluate whether they have happened.

LEVEL THREE

Change in behaviour: If development education activities engage citizens over an extended period it is also possible to assess whether behaviour has changed, especially in the short- and medium-term. As with monitoring changes in attitudes, it is easier to establish behaviour change if a CSO knows the kind of behaviour it wants to change.

Behaviour change can be established in two ways. First, CSOs can identify specific behaviour changes they wish to look for, whilst planning and implementing development education activities. Second, citizens can be encouraged to identify planned behaviour change during an activity, or at the end, and then asked at a later date whether they followed through on their commitments. For example, if one of the objectives of a development education activity is to encourage the recycling of waste it should be relatively straightforward to find out at a later stage whether or not this has happened, and if so ask citizens why their behaviour changed.

Sometimes it is not possible to identify beforehand what behaviour change might look like. In these cases CSOs may have to rely on asking more open-ended questions, such as *"What have you done differently since engaging in the*

development education activity?” This makes information harder to analyse (and may make it more subjective), but enables a broader range of behaviour changes to be identified.

Alternatively, it is possible to include a range of potential behaviour changes in a survey or questionnaire, and ask which ones are applicable. The graph at the bottom of this page, for example, is derived from a regular survey submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Denmark each year (Danish MFA 2020, p22). The survey uses closed questions, and allows respondents to cite any number of behaviours. Change can then be assessed by comparing answers year on year.

Behaviour change is more difficult to assess over the longer-term, especially when development education activities involve one-off events, short training courses, or remote activities. In order to track behaviour change over longer periods, it may be important to build in incentives to encourage citizens to provide feedback at a later stage. Incentives might include certificates, awards, or the showcasing of projects (Daly et. al. 2015).

If pursuing this kind of approach it is important that CSOs plan how to stay connected with citizens after events have been completed (including complying with data protection laws that may require consent to contact people at a later date). As with any development intervention, CSOs need to consider whether the extra effort and expense of carrying out long-term M&E is worth it, especially if development education activities are short or relatively inexpensive to carry out.

Ultimately, it is easier to assess behaviour change over longer timescales when:

- desired changes can be identified beforehand;
- changes are easily measurable;
- citizens or participants are willing to be honest about whether or how far behaviour has changed;

- there is sufficient funding to conduct the M&E work, and a clear purpose for how information will be used; and
- CSOs have carried out appropriate work during an intervention to make sure participants can be contacted at a later date.



Impact on trained or supported individuals: In some development education programmes it is important to assess the impact on participating citizens, as well as looking at how knowledge, attitudes and behaviours

have changed. For example, the British Council’s Active Citizens programme identifies possible individual changes such as increased self-awareness, confidence, motivation, strategic and critical thinking, project management, personal resilience, increased engagement in cross-cultural networks, and demonstrated leadership. As previously, establishing this kind of change requires CSOs to keep track of citizens, and then contact them at a later stage to establish what – if anything – has changed.

It is important to note that changes for individual citizens are not restricted to those based in developed countries. Many development education activities involve promoting linkages between people living in developed and developing countries. This means it may also be useful to assess changes in the lives of citizens of developing countries. In addition, programmes dealing with issues such as Active Citizenship and Global Citizenship are increasingly being implemented in developing countries.



Wider impact (planned and unplanned): As stated earlier, the ultimate aim of development education is to enhance international development efforts. However, it is not always possible to assess change at this

level. Whether CSOs attempt to do so or not is partly down to the level of investment (i.e. how much time and effort they have put into their development education

Have you done anything for a development CSO during the past two years?



programmes). If a CSO puts significant effort into a development education programme it is more likely to want to know whether that programme has had an impact (see case study opposite)

A CSO does not always have to measure wider impact itself. The Danish MFA survey shown in the diagram on the previous page is an example of where change has been measured by a third-party. Danish CSOs are then able to focus their M&E on assessing or explaining their own particular contribution to any significant change (in this case changes in public support for development CSOs). Several of the papers in the M&E Universe deal with methodologies designed to help CSOs assess contribution to change. These include contribution analysis, process tracing and the Qualitative Impact Protocol (QUIP).

It is of course much harder for CSOs to assess the ultimate impact of their development education work if they do not know precisely what that impact will look like. If a CSO does not know where to look for change then the only real option is to track citizens over an extended period, and seek to identify cases where a) their behaviour has changed in certain ways; and b) this changed behaviour has led to wider impact on poor or disadvantaged communities, or the environment. These cases can then be investigated in greater depth.

Again, the big challenge is practical – to keep records of citizens involved in development education activities, to ensure CSOs have permission to contact them at a later date, to ensure citizens have incentives to respond, and to acquire resources to analyse large amounts of qualitative data, and follow up interesting cases in more depth.

Whether CSOs are prepared to do this depends on the relative costs and benefits. In other words, it depends on

Case study: Nurture Earth

Nurture Earth is a development education provider working towards the long-term goal of advancing waste reduction and sustainable waste management. Nurture Earth delivers workshops to local community groups, and designed a series of one-day workshops, aiming to change participants' awareness of what single-use plastic does to the environment; support understanding of potential sustainable actions; and induce commitment to actions to reduce household waste.

As well as developing basic indicators such as the number of workshops completed, the number of participants, and the percentage of participants expressing satisfaction with the workshops, Nurture Earth also set out some indicators dealing with higher-level change. These included:

- the % of people who can identify environmental problems caused by single use plastics (knowledge);
- the % of people reporting an increase in recycling behaviour (behaviour);
- the number of single use plastic items no longer used by participants (behaviour); and
- the % of business and public services banning single-use plastic (wider impact)

Capturing changes such as banning single-use plastic will require Nurture Earth not only to follow-up on trained participants, but also to conduct M&E activities designed to show its contribution to wider change. This is not easy, and will require significant expertise and resources.

Source: Saolta 2020

what it costs them to conduct the M&E in terms of time, effort and money, and the benefits accruing in terms of improved programme performance, better accountability to different stakeholders, and potentially wider support from the public and donors.

Further reading and resources

Three papers in the M&E Universe deal with methodologies designed to help CSOs assess contribution to change. These cover contribution analysis, process tracing and the Qualitative Impact Protocol (QUIP). Another paper covers the M&E of training. The papers can be accessed by clicking on the links below.



There is very little available information on how to monitor and evaluate development education activities. A starting point might be the 'Development Education Evaluation Toolkit for the Adult and Community Education' by Lindsay Cleary, published in 2020. This is a toolkit designed to help development education providers and practitioners measure the outcomes and impact of their activities. It suggests a range of different approaches that can be tailored to individual requirements, courses and training schemes. It can be found at <https://developmenteducation.ie/resource/development-education-evaluation-toolkit/>. It is listed under Saolta (2020) below.

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