C4D: Define

Define is one of the seven clusters of R,M&E tasks in the Rainbow Framework. The Define tasks involves developing a description of the program and how it is understood to work.

There are three tasks associated with define. Each task contains C4D specific methods, advice and resources on developing understandings about how the program works.

Define tasks relate to other tasks in the following ways:

- stakeholders may be engaged in defining the program, see the 'manage' cluster of tasks
- defining the program helps guide choices about what data to collect in the 'describe' cluster of tasks
- defining the program can inform planning for investigating causal attribution and contribution under 'understand causes'

C4D: Develop initial description

What is it?

It is important to be clear about the boundaries of what will be included in an evaluation. As part of this, it can be helpful to develop an initial brief description of what will be evaluated, which can provide a starting point for discussions to find where there are different perspectives and gaps.

General Information

The Rainbow Framework provides information on what methods and approaches are available for undertaking this task. If stakeholders are not known you might need to Understand and engage stakeholders. If decision making processes are not known you might need to Establish decision making processes. Consider these additional tasks and the general information pages before considering methods to apply to C4D.

Applying the C4D Evaluation Principles

Participatory

Ensure all those who need to be included in this process are meaningfully involved. This task is a relatively quick and simple way to engage stakeholders in the R,M&E, and can be done even if a full participatory approach is not being followed.

Realistic

This process can be useful for defining the boundaries (geographical and timeframe) of the initiative and R,M&E. It is important to be realistic about what kinds of outcomes or impacts can be expected within certain timeframes.

Learning-based

This process should be seen as open to revision as the R,M&E proceeds and new learnings emerge that have implications for the focus of the M&E.

Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

- C4D is often not a standalone program, but rather is embedded in other programs. Developing an initial description is a good way to clarify whether the study or M&E Framework will focus on:
    - Specific C4D activities or projects
    - C4D components within programs
    - A program including C4D components
    - A number of C4D initiatives across different programs
    - A policy, a strategy, an organization, a network.

- **Intentional design**

  Intentional design is part of the Outcome Mapping approach to M&E (see the first seven steps of the approach). It is recommended as one method that could be used to Develop a program theory or logic model. The first of the seven steps is to define the vision. This is then built on to develop a theory of change. Intentional Design is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

    - **Holistic**: Outcome Mapping as a whole, and Intentional Design as one of the key steps, provides a way to think holistically and systemically about how an initiative intends to achieve results.
    - **Realistic**: the Intentional Design part of Outcome Mapping is unique in the way it uses the concept of 'boundaries' to map out extent that the program can realistically influence changes in people and groups by organising these into three the different 'spheres': spheres of control, spheres of influence, and spheres of concern.
    - **Complex**: the approach recognises multiple, non-linear events leading to change. Instead of focusing on impact it focuses on subtle changes that are within the initiative's sphere of influence.

  NB: Outcome Mapping is a comprehensive approach to M&E in its own right. You could just borrow the concept of Intentional Design, as part of the Theory of Change, or you may use Outcome Mapping as your M&E approach and follow those steps.

C4D: Develop program theory or logic model

What is it?

A program theory or logic model explains how the activities of an intervention are understood to contribute to a chain of results (short-term outputs, medium-term outcomes) that produce ultimate intended or actual impacts. It can be shown in the form inputs->processes->outputs ->outcomes -> impacts but sometimes other forms are more useful.

General Information

The Rainbow Framework page on program theories and logic models provides detailed descriptions and advice of a general nature. There is also a range of other generalist resources:

- UNICEF Impact Evaluation Methodological Brief on Theory of Change,
- **ESARO Results-based management training**
  PPTX
  1.18 MB
  These training slides include very good guidance on Theory of Change, including how to dig deeper into causes and about addressing all causes of the problems, and looking at risks as part of the Theory of Change (see slides 27-46)
- Keystone Accountability's guide for Developing a Theory of Change provides a set of activities for developing a shared theory of change with stakeholders.

These resources are useful as background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

Applying the C4D principles

Participatory

The C4D Evaluation Framework would encourage a participatory approach to engaging with stakeholders to build theories of change. This ensures that program theories are generated in ways that respect and include local ways of knowing the world. Other sources, such as existing program documents, previous research on similar types of initiatives, and observations of existing initiatives can be incorporated as well. There may be legitimate reasons why a participatory approach might not be appropriate, or possible, or needs to be very limited (such as where key stakeholders are dispersed and time poor). The reasons for this decision, and how decisions have been made when developing the program theory, should be documented.

Complex

A theory of change might have complicated aspects, involving multiple contributing actors, multiple goals, and different pathways linking activities to specified goals in different contexts. A theory of change might also have complex aspects able to incorporate emergent local solutions, participation by new stakeholders, introduction of new pathways and uncertain ultimate outcomes. A more detailed theory of change can be developed retrospectively using Outcome Harvesting.

Learning-based

Program Theories and logic models can be used at various stages of the program cycle. In a learning-based approach, these would be developed over time as more knowledge becomes available:

- The design stage of the strategic planning process should include the development of a theory of change. For example, this might be one of the last tasks of a situation analysis.
- This may be revisited mid-cycle, especially in more complex and unpredictable initiatives (see section on complexity), where it is more likely that you will need to revise and build on your theory of change as you learn more.
- In evaluation studies and final evaluations program theories should inform the design of evaluations. Revising (or, where none exist, creating) a program theory may be one of the first tasks of the evaluation.

Critical

Program theories should consider how a program might work for different groups, particularly vulnerable and marginalised groups. Theories and models should be developed with and alongside groups that experience marginalisation. This helps to develop a program theory/logic model that is sensitive to what might work (and what doesn't) for whom in what circumstances.

Special guidance on 'complexity' and theories of change/logic model in C4D

To address the **complicated aspects of C4D**, it is useful to have a theory of change or logic model that:

- Shows how C4D activities connect to other program activities and to other interventions to achieve shared results
- Shows how C4D might be affected by differences in the context. The differences may be in terms of where it is implemented (e.g. different sites), and with whom (e.g. people with different characteristics). This is important because the same activities might produce different results in different contexts, or different contexts might require different activities
- Is sensitive to shared or different goals, agendas, missions and values among partners and stakeholder groups
- States long-term results in ways that are concrete, such as access to services, or skills and knowledge about how something should be done or operated.

To cover the **complex aspects of C4D**, it is useful to have a theory of change that:

- Presents a ‘living’ explanation of how activities contribute to development that is revised with cycles of adaptive C4D implementation and action
- States long-term results in ways that are more open-ended, intangible and relate to the future opportunities to grow with partners and participants
- Represents the theory of change in terms of a narrative and based on principles, which can then be applied in response to the particular situation. This is often more useful than a diagram of boxes and arrows (see section below on 'Options that may be useful for representing C4D components').

Recommended methods and adaptations for developing a program theory or logic model for C4D

- The following options can be used in combination with each other.

Participatory processes

- The page on Program Theory/Logic Models lists several processes that enable participatory approaches to developing a program theory which could be applied to C4D, such as:

- Articulating mental models

Articulating mental models involves talking individually or in groups with key informants (including program planners, service implementors and clients) about how they understand an intervention works.

- Backcasting

  Backcasting is a method that involves envisaging alternative futures.

- Five Whys

  The Five Whys is an easy question asking option that examines the cause-and-effect relationships that underly problems.

- Group model building

  Group model building involves building a logic model in a group, often using sticky notes.

- In addition, the resources shown below can be used in a participatory workshop.

Using existing resources to inform the development of a program theory

- For example, UNICEF has developed several resources to summarise some of the main social theories that underpin C4D practice. These are built around the Socio-Ecological Model, and therefore cover theories about how change happens across five levels of society.
  - **Specific theories informing C4D practice**
    DOCX
    13.62 KB
    A written summary of theories informing C4D practice (internal UNICEF document)
  - **C4D Theory of Change Framework - DRAFT**
    DOCX
    495.24 KB
    A diagram showing links between strategies at the individual, interpersonal, community, institutional and policy and legislation levels relate to outputs, outcomes and results.

Using other existing resources on C4D theories to inform the development of a program theory

- It is always good to use a range of sources and think about how they might be used and combined.
- The Communication Initiative

  The Communication Initiative includes summaries of many C4D theories including theory of planned behaviour, commitment to change, and transformational change.

- Monitoring and evaluation of participatory theatre for change

  This resource includes a section on Theories and Assumptions of Change (page 11-14) and Next Steps with Theory of Change (page 14-15). Although it has been developed for participatory theatre, the

'Reach, Resonance and Response' framing could be adapted to a range of C4D initiatives.

This resource is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Complex:** The guide outlines six different, interconnected theories and assumptions as part of the overall Theory of Change. It is a good example of how multiple theories can be used.
- **Realistic:** 'Reach, Resonance and Response' framing provides a powerful yet manageable way to think through how different theories combine in an initiative. The guide outlines six core theories of change, but encourages users to choose only those that relate to the initiative.
- **Holistic:** while the theories of change provided are general to participatory theatre, the guide suggests that only the relevant theories and selected, and that theories are adapted and informed by context/conflict analysis.

Methods that are useful for representing C4D components

Intentional design

- Intentional design is part of the Outcome Mapping approach to M&E. It sets out seven steps to define the vision, identify actors who can be influenced, outline the desired outcomes and changes, identify progress markers, and develop strategy maps and implementation plans.

  Intentional Design is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

  - **Holistic**: Outcome Mapping as a whole, and Intentional Design as one of the key steps, provides a way to think holistically and systemically about how an initiative intends to achieve results.
  - **Realistic**: the Intentional Design part of Outcome Mapping is unique in the way it uses the concept of 'boundaries' to map out extent that the program can realistically influence changes in people and groups by organising these into three the different 'spheres': spheres of control, spheres of influence, and spheres of concern.
  - **Complex**: the approach recognises multiple, non-linear events leading to change. Instead of focusing on impact it focuses on subtle changes that are within the initiative's sphere of influence.

  NB: Outcome Mapping is a comprehensive approach to M&E in its own right. You could just borrow the concept of Intentional Design, as part of the Theory of Change, or you may use Outcome Mapping as your M&E approach and follow those steps.

Theory of change

- The Theory of Change approach generally allows for more flexibility in thinking about transformative changes (as opposed to more projectable and predictable changes) compared to more linear options like Logframes (Lennie & Tacchi 2013).

Resources

- Keystone Accountability's guide for developing a theory of change

Developing a Theory of Change: A guide to developing a theory of change as a framework for inclusive dialogue, learning and accountability for social impact provides an accessible and easy to follow set of activities for developing a theory of change. It is particularly useful for C4D initiatives that include participatory communication and dialogue, and other forms of community engagement and social change. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

  - **Participatory**: The guide includes workshop plans to undertake activities with stakeholders
  - **Holistic**: the guide promotes thinking about systemic and contextual factors, and interrelationships.
  - **Complex**: The guide is sensitive to complex and dynamic types of initiatives, explicitly addressing these factors in instructions

- **ESARO Results-based management training**
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  These training slides provide guidance on undertaking problem identification and causal analysis (including Five Whys and Problem Tree Analysis), developing and outcome chain, prioritisation, and risk and assumption assessment. The slides then suggest the theory of change is represented as a Results Framework, though there are other ways the theory of change could be represented. This resource is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

  - **Accountable:** Results Based Management is typically accountability focused mechanism, used to guide upward reporting and ensure a results focus.

- Realist matrix

  A Realist Matrix shows how the same activities could trigger different causal mechanisms in different contexts (in different implementation environments, or for different groups of participants). It comes from the Realist Evaluation approach, however, a Realist Matrix can be used as a standalone approach to representing a program theory. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

  - **Complex:** the Realist Matrix ensures that the program theory is explicit about the causes and influences of change with reference to the agency of actors, the actual mechanisms of change, and the outcome
  - **Holistic:** the Realist Matrix ensures that attention is paid to the context and other variables such as social and political factors, and the available resources.
  - **Critical:** the Realist Matrix considers power and different in the development of the program theory, helping to answer 'what works for whom under what conditions?'

C4D Examples

- **Retrospective Analysis of ODF in Nadia District, India - example of participatory process to develop a Theory of Change**

  In this study the researchers used Articulating Mental Models to seek the inputs of key stakeholders in the development of the Theory of Change, as well as the overall design of the study. This was process undertaken during the scoping phase. Relevant UNICEF teams, the District Administration, Faith-based-organisations, health workers, corporate sector stakeholders, community-level committees and groups were asked directly about their theories of change, with the findings being combined and used

as the basis for further exploration. To do this, researchers/evaluators asked about:

  - The role they played in their local context,
  - The triggers which encouraged their participation in the project
  - The enabling factors which facilitated the actualisation of the success of the project
  - The manner in which the project has impacted the lives within the local context
  - The sustainability factors

  More information about how this study exemplifies the approaches advocated in the C4D Evaluation Framework will be available soon.

- Terms of reference for an action research approach to evaluation of She Can project - ActionAid

  This TOR sets out how an action research/evaluation initiative will use learning-based processes to develop an initial theory of change, which is then reviewed and revised throughout the three phases of the consultancy. Although the term 'C4D' is not used in this TOR, the activities include campaigns, mobilisation, coalition building, and women's groups and school clubs: all relevant to C4D.

  The approach and the TOR are consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in relation to this task in the following ways:

  - **Complex:** the use of the phased process allows for an adaptive approach to developing and reflecting upon the Theory of Change. In the third and final phase the theory of change is used for a theory-based evaluation to unpack change processes.
  - **Learning-based:** building on the phased, adaptive, and learning-based process above where findings are built into the change theory and implementation over time, the users (specified on page 9) are the program staff and partners who will use the findings to improve implementation, the 'beneficiaries' who will use it to better understand effective strategies for change, and DFID who are interested from a policy point of view.
  - **Participatory:** this TOR is an example of how an external evaluator can work with program staff to develop and refine a theory of change. The description on pages 5-6 shows clearly the way the consultant is expected to work in partnership with program teams and other stakeholders, and the governance structures outlined on page 9 point to the inclusion of stakeholders and partners.
  - **Realistic:** The TOR directly addresses this by stating that the evaluation design must be proportionate to the scale and scope of the project, and should seek to minimise the burden on project and partner field staff in particular' (page 8).

C4D: Identify potential unintended results

What is it?

Unintended results may be positive or negative. Unintended results should be considered as part of the development of a program theory (see Develop program theory or logic model). This means that possible unintended outcomes and impacts, especially negative impacts (that make things worse, not better) can be investigated and tracked. Negative program theory involves identifying ways in which program activities might produce negative impacts rather than their intended impacts, and this can be done at the same time as the standard program theory. In addition, the data collection in the evaluation should remain open to finding unanticipated unintended results by including some open-ended questions and methods that might uncover this (such as interviews or by encouraging reporting of unexpected results).

General information

The Rainbow Framework points to a range of methods for identifying potential unintended results, both before implementation to build on work to develop program theory or a logic model, and as part of data collection and monitoring systems. Consider these additional tasks and the general information pages before considering methods to apply to C4D.

- Key informant interviews
  Involve asking experienced people to identify possible negative impacts, based on their experience with similar programs. Program critics can be especially useful.
- Risk assessment
  Identifies the potential negative impacts, their likelihood of occurring and how they might be avoided.
- Six thinking hats
  Might be a process that can be used to encourage people to consider possible negative impacts and how they might come about.
- Unusual events reporting
  Could be a part of the open-ended data collection, ensuring that unforeseen events, incidents or outcomes are recorded.

Applying the C4D Evaluation Principles

Complex

It is not possible to predict all the impacts that might emerge from an intervention with complex aspects. These impacts can be positive or negative, and once identified responses can be developed. Therefore R,M&E plans need to have some way of looking backwards to identify and document these (such as through open-ended questions in interviews).

Accountable

Unintended results can be both positive and negative. As part of being accountable it is important to minimise any harm from unintended results from C4D. We need to use tools to help us predict (as far as possible) unintended outcomes, together with monitoring processes to identify and respond to unpredictable and negative unintended impacts as quickly as possible.

Critical

Unintended results may not affect everybody, and adverse outcomes for minority groups may not be obvious in the data. A critical approach and an equity lens to the identification of unintended results with contributions from local groups is important for understanding how C4D initiatives are affecting the least powerful.

Holistic

Holistic, open and interpretive approaches to data collection are important for identifying unintended results. Ethnographic and Ethnographic Action Research approaches are particularly strong in this way.

Participatory

Involving different stakeholders in the task can draw on their unique knowledge and perspectives about an initiative, and reveal new information.

Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

- Ethnographic Action Research Toolbox

  The EAR Toolbox provides guidance on using Ethnographic Action Research approaches. This toolbox and the approach support participatory and holistic R,M&E approaches that are particularly good for identifying unintended results. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

  - **Learning-based:** the action research approach means that the emphasis on continual learning and evaluation towards improvement. Unintended results should become evident throughout the implementation process.
  - **Complex:** because of the learning-based approach, the unpredictable unintended results should become evident throughout implementation.
  - **Holistic:** the open nature of the ethnographic approach means that the approach is particularly useful for uncovering unintended results.

Examples

- **Cholera outbreak in Kenya**

  A cholera outbreak in Kenya highlights the need to be monitoring for unintended outcomes of communication. In this case, a health program implemented in 3 Counties had been very successful in introducing zinc tablets, Oral Rehydration Salts, and Amoxicillin antibiotics, dispensed by frontline workers, for the prevention and treatment of diarrhea. Many lives were saved.

  One of the Counties in which the health program had been implemented got hit with a cholera outbreak. Reports from the outbreak location indicated that some families were not taking their sick family members to hospital and were instead treating them at home. By the time they did come to hospital the cases were critical. It was recognised that this was the result of unintended consequences of the Zinc/ORS campaign which fuelled the misconception that cholera characterised by watery stool can be treated at home with ORS Zinc just like diarrhea.

  "Now they have zinc, they have ORS, and they have seen community health volunteer, who is just their neighbour, treat their child who had Pneumonia very effectively. So, the unintended communication is that you can actually manage some of these things at home. So as a result they were trying to take zinc and ORS. So we've got to go back and tell them there is a difference between this diarrhea and the other one we told you about. If we are not able to monitor that, we are not doing good practice." (interview, C4D UNICEF Kenya)

  This exemplifies the following principles:

  - **Complex:** the health promotion program was working as intended, but the introduction of a new factor (cholera) changes the interaction of causes and outcomes for diarrhea. This case shows the importance of staying attuned to the situation in complicated and changing environments and adaptive messages and programming in responsive ways to avoid doing harm.

- **Retrospective Analysis study of Open Defecation in Nadia District, India**

The UNICEF India Office commissioned a retrospective analysis of a successful campaign and social mobilisation effort towards Open Defecation Free status. This initiative exemplifies the C4D Evaluation Framework in relation to this task in the following ways:

- **Holistic**: Ethnographic approaches were chosen in order to provide a holistic on how the campaign had worked (and perhaps, not worked) and what the unintended results had been.

- **Critical**: Ethnographic approaches and particularly field sites were chosen in order to provide a critical perspective on how the campaign and related initiatives had been experienced by particular sub-groups (caste, ethnicity, gender, wealth, geographical location).