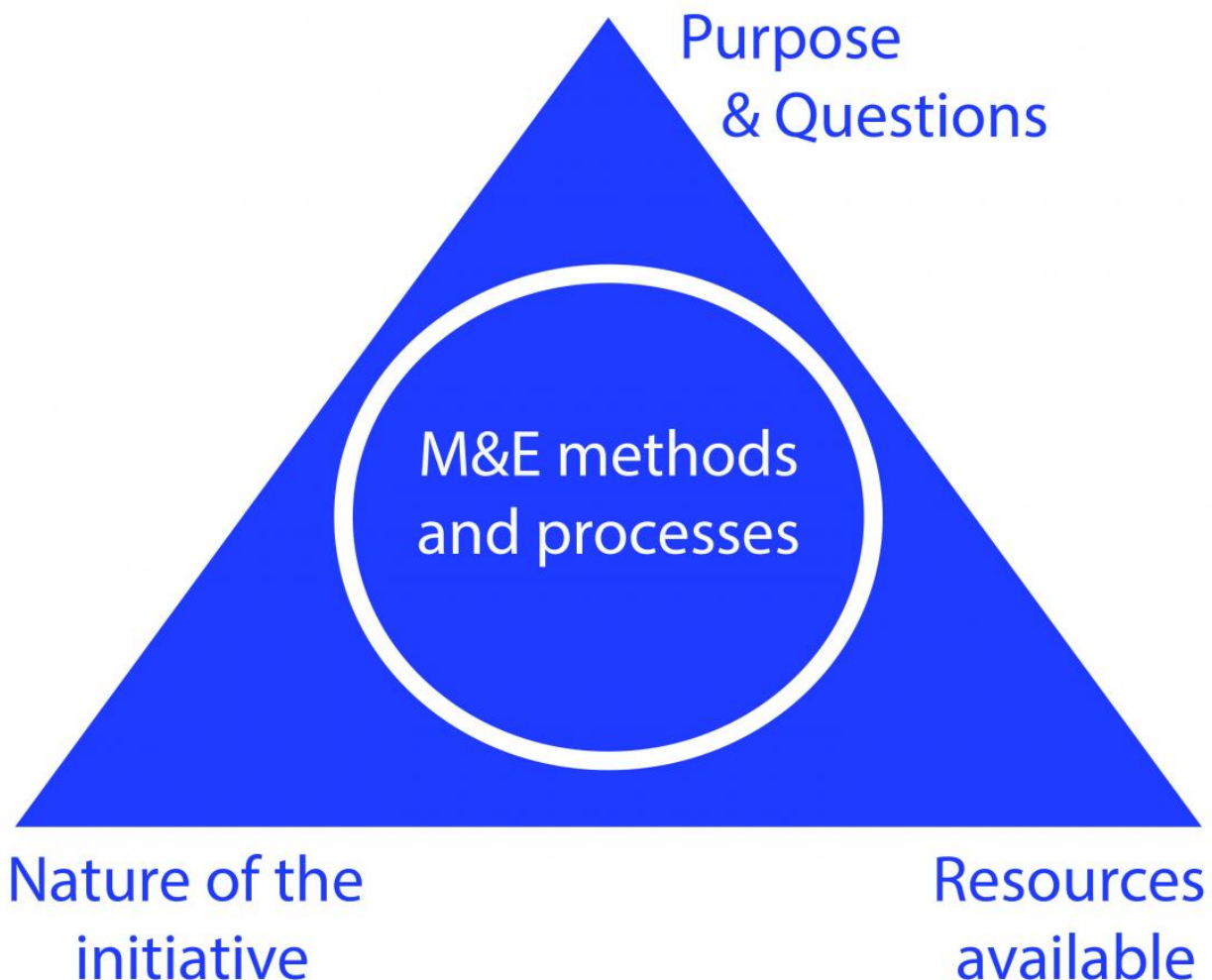


C4D: Specify the key R,M&E questions

What is it?

R,M&E Questions are the small number of broad questions that R,M&E are intended to answer, not the many specific questions that might be on a questionnaire or an interview schedule. Deciding which questions should be answered is one of the most important and often the most difficult parts of designing M&E (Catley et al. 2008: 12). The approach advocated here is a questions-driven approach, where key users first agree on what they need to know and use that as the basis for selecting methods and indicators. The evaluation part of R,M&E systems, by definition, should answer truly evaluative questions: it must ask not only 'What were the results?' (a descriptive question) but also 'How good were the results?' (an evaluative question). Depending on the type of M&E, causal questions also need to be addressed (to what extent were the results due to the intervention?).



General Information

The approach advocated on this page draws heavily from the following pages in the Manager's Guide to Evaluation:

- [Develop agreed key evaluation questions](#)
Evaluation, by definition, must answer truly evaluative questions: it must ask not only 'What were the results?' (a descriptive question) but also 'How good were the results?' (an evaluative question). Depending on the type of evaluation, causal questions also need to be addressed (to what extent were the results due to the intervention?).
- [Consider important aspects of the evaluation](#)
Evaluations are designed to answer the Key Evaluation Questions. Different types of questions need different methods and designs to answer them.

This particular resource brings clarity to the task of articulating questions and understanding the type of question being asked (descriptive, causal, evaluative and action), and therefore the kinds of methods that can be used to answer them. Other key generalist advice includes:

- Limit the number to 5-7 high level questions
- Understand the kinds of [questions](#) asked at different points in the program cycle
- Use the [purpose](#) to guide the selection of questions

The [Specify the Key Evaluation Questions page](#) of the Rainbow Framework similarly offers generalist advice, and presents the task in a slightly different way. It includes some good links to guide on engaging with stakeholders to develop evaluation questions, which is useful for taking a participatory approach to specifying questions. These pages are recommended background reading before considering options to apply to C4D.

Why it is useful to analyse the types of questions within key questions for C4D

Observations as part of the *Evaluating C4D* project with UNICEF have revealed two problems:

- People often think that indicators come first, and questions are developed based on these
- Relatedly, R,M&E work tends to mostly focus on describing situations, and it is assumed that from there it is easy to infer contribution and causation, and decide on actions.

In particular, questions about contribution and attribution in C4D are common themes in discussions about needs, but causal questions and methods are rarely incorporated in C4D R,M&E designs. If questions about C4D contributions are important for stakeholders, it is vital that causal questions are reflected in the key questions (most likely as sub-questions) selected.

When deciding on key questions for C4D R,M&E the following steps are recommended:

1. [Use the Program Theory or Logic Model](#)
2. Consider the types of key questions
3. [Analyse each Key Question](#)

Applying the C4D principles

Participatory

The C4D Evaluation Framework advocates for a participatory approach. In the context of specifying key questions, a participatory approach would mean engaging (at least) with [primary intended users](#) and other stakeholders to decide on key questions.

Holistic

C4D initiatives usually respond to problems strongly connected with different social, cultural, economic, political, geographic and structural contexts. This means that in C4D R,M&E it is important to ask questions about underlying causes and social, cultural economic, political, geographic and structural contexts - from the situation analysis right through to the monitoring and evaluation.

Critical

In C4D it is important that questions are framed in such a way that allows for multiple and diverse voices to contribute answers. This is important for descriptive questions, causal questions and evaluative questions.

Realistic

In C4D the questions should be written in a way that calls for need for various methods and tools that will capture people's voices.

Complex

It is likely that there will be differing views that need to be taken into account about what the key R,M&E questions should be. In addition, the boundaries may need adjusting as situations change, particularly with the emergence of new understandings, stakeholders and ideas.

Resource

- [Monitoring and evaluation of participatory theatre for change](#)

This guide sets out six key evaluation questions around the concept of 'Relevance' (where monitoring questions are structured according to 'Reach, Resonance, Response'). These questions directly relate to the Theory of Change, though are broad and forward-looking. Although it is written with reference to Participatory Theatre, the resource can be easily adapted to a range of C4D approaches, especially participatory C4D approaches. This resource is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in relation to this task in the following ways:

- **Complex:** the strong use of a theory of change to guide the selection of evaluation questions
- **Realistic:** the six questions are specific. There are not too many questions, but there are

no major gaps.

- **Learning-based:** the evaluation questions will not just check what happened, but seek out new insights and practices that can be used to inform future programs.

Example

Retrospective Analysis study of Open Defecation in Nadia District, India

- The Retrospective Analysis of ODF in Nadia District, India is an example of a study that was framed by questions about underlying causes and contexts. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in relation to this task in the following ways:
 - **Realistic:** the questions bind the focus to the needs of the stakeholders, based on gaps in the knowledge.
 - **Participatory:** the first phase of the study engaged with key stakeholder to find out what their key questions are.

C4D Hub: Analyse each key evaluation question

Embedded within broad key questions for R,M&E there are often different types of smaller questions.

Main types of questions

Descriptive questions

Asking what is the context/situation and what has happened.

Answer by:

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D: Sample](#)

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D: Use measures, indicators or metrics](#)

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D: Collect and/or retrieve data \(methods\)](#)

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D: Manage data](#)

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D: Analyse data](#)

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D: Visualise data](#)

Causal questions

Asking about what has contributed to the changes that have been observed.

Answer by one or a combination of the methods for:

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D: Investigate causal attribution and contribution](#)

Evaluative questions

Asking about whether the program is a success or the best method.

Answer by:

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D: Synthesise data from a single study or evaluation](#)

See also [Determine what 'success' looks like](#), part of FRAME.

Action questions

Asking about what should be done based on the findings.

Answer by:

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D: Develop recommendations](#)

You can read more about these [four types of questions](#) in the Rainbow Framework. The ways of answering your KEQs will depend on what type of question you are asking.

Example: Deconstructing a question

The section below deconstructs the Key Questions that were listed in a Terms of Reference for a C4D Assessment into smaller descriptive, evaluative, causal or action questions.

Key question 1

What has been the visibility of the campaign and level of engagement of the general public in the UNICEF-led social media portals such as Facebook, UNICEF Viet Nam and UN websites, YouTube channel etc.?

Smaller, embedded questions

1. What kind of content was posted on social media (descriptive)
2. What kind of engagement was there on the social media portals (descriptive)

3. How rich was the engagement (evaluative)

Key question 2

How effective has the outreach of the campaign's interventions in the community been, with a focus on how specific target groups of participants interpreted or made sense of media messages (with reference to teachers, parents, caregivers, children; local authorities at provincial, district and commune levels; and community-based networks (Women's Union and Youth's Union)?

Smaller, embedded questions

1. How did specific groups interpret and make sense of the messages? (descriptive)
2. To what extent did they make sense of the messages in the ways intended? (evaluative)

Key question 3

To what extent has the campaign reportedly contributed to raising knowledge and influencing positive attitudes toward ending VAC among target groups of participants across the evaluated channels of communication?

Smaller, embedded questions

1. What changes in knowledge and attitudes have occurred and for who? (descriptive)
2. What has contributed to these changes? (causal)

Key question 4

What worked well and what are areas for improvement in relation to the main messages of the campaign: violence against children is not justifiable, violence against children is preventable, speak out to end violence against children and violence against children is everyone's business?

Smaller, embedded questions

1. What has worked (and not worked) about the messages, for whom, and in what circumstances? (evaluative)
2. How can we improve? (action)

Key question 5

What factors (e.g. socio-cultural, ethical, moral, economic, etc) impeded or enhanced key attitudinal and behavioural interventions?

Smaller, embedded questions

1. What were the bottlenecks for whom? (causal)

Key question 6

What are lessons learnt from the project and recommendations for the next phase's interventions with a focus on community-based engagement for action?

Smaller, embedded questions

1. What should we keep doing, what should we stop doing, what should we do better, and what should we start doing? (action)
2. How can we improve the design and implementation? (action)
3. What is the best way to design a community-based engagement program? (evaluative)