

## Communication for Development (C4D)

The Evaluating C4D Resource Hub is a collection of methods, guides, and tools to use when researching, monitoring and evaluating (R,M&E) Communication for Development (C4D) initiatives.

### What is C4D?

Communication for Development (C4D) uses communication tools and techniques to facilitate community participation and engagement and foster transformative social change. C4D initiatives often relate to complex and interrelated cultural and contextual factors with the aim of bringing about social and behavioural changes. C4D often includes dialogue and community participation. C4D is usually not able to bring about change on its own and must work closely with other sectors, but equally, the sustainability and effectiveness of development sectors often depend on good C4D.

These features of C4D mean that there are particular challenges when doing research, monitoring and evaluation (RM&E) of C4D.

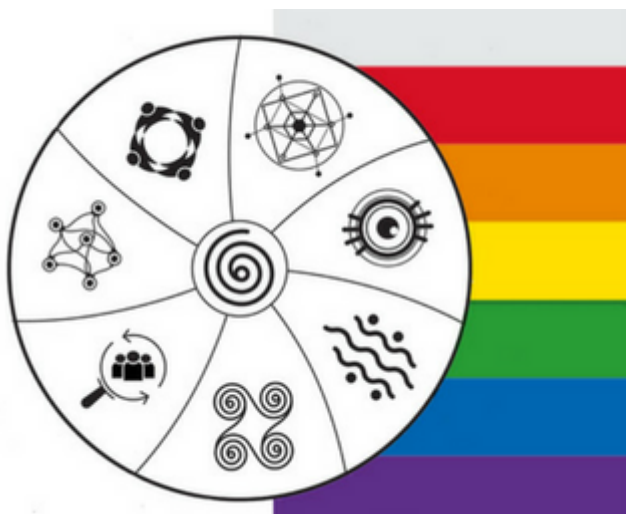
### The C4D resource hub

The Evaluating C4D Resource Hub is designed to help you make choices about tools and resources that are consistent with the principles underpinning C4D and building on the tasks and methods in the BetterEvaluation Rainbow Framework.

The Hub is structured around two combined frameworks:

**The C4D Evaluation Framework** (represented by the circle) is an approach. It describes the values and principles that guide decisions in C4D.

**The BetterEvaluation Rainbow Framework** (represented by the rainbows) is a structure. It organises the practical tasks and methods into seven clusters.



You can download a printable guide to navigating the Evaluating C4D Resource Hub here:

[Evaluating-C4D-Printable-Navigation-Guide.pdf](#)

PDF

1.18 MB

The Hub applies the C4D Evaluation Framework to each of the practical R,M&E tasks, and recommends methods and tools.

## Explore the C4D hub

The goal of the Evaluating C4D Resource Hub is to help you find the right kinds of methods, tools and resources that suit your practical needs and match the approach you want to take. You will probably move between understanding the Evaluating C4D Framework principles and Rainbow Framework tasks to help you decide on the right methods and tools for your situation.

## Understanding the C4D

- [Communication for development \(C4D\) project](#)

About the Evaluating C4D Resource Hub

The Evaluating C4D Resource Hub has been developed as part of a research partnership with RMIT University, the University of Hyderabad and UNICEF Communication for Development (C4D).

- [C4D Hub: Definitions of key terms](#)

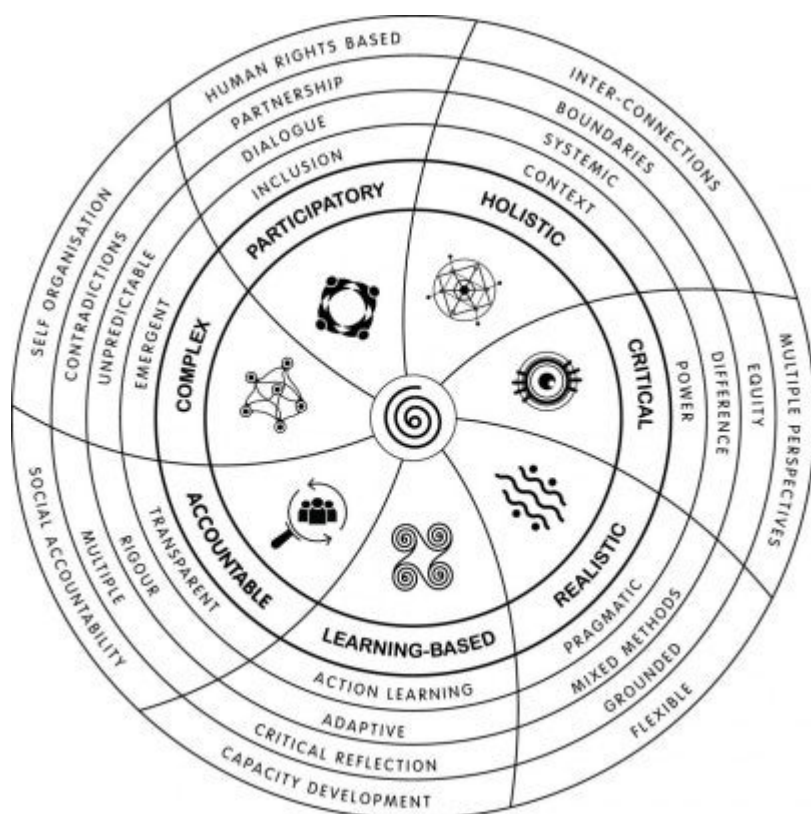
A brief overview of key terms used in the C4D framework

## [Principles: C4D RME Framework Summary](#)

## The C4D Evaluation Framework

The C4D Evaluation Framework was developed to reflect the needs and values of Communication for Development. The Framework is made up of seven interconnected principles. These principles guide our choices about R,M&E.

The C4D Evaluation Framework used in this Resource Hub is adapted from the framework published by Lennie and Tacchi (2013).



Explore the links to each of the principles below to find:

- An overview of the principle
- Advice on applying the principle
- Commonly experienced challenges and strategies for overcoming
- Links to practical resources, toolkits and guides for applying the principle

## [C4D: Participatory](#)

### **Inclusion; dialogue; partnership; human rights-based**

Participation is a central principle for C4D, and therefore should be incorporated in the R,M&E of C4D. Participatory R,M&E is undertaken in partnership with children and adolescents, community members and other stakeholders, using processes that are culturally and socially appropriate, creative, and based on mutual trust, openness and dialogue.

### **Where do we start?**

The question that should guide participatory approaches is: ‘Who should be involved in the R,M&E, why and how?’ This question should be reflected on right from the conceptualisation and planning stages of a C4D intervention. It should then be raised again when approaching each of the R,M&E stages and tasks.

Participation in C4D R,M&E is not just about using interesting methods and involving

people/institutions in data collection and analysis. A high level of participation is also about sharing decision making responsibilities about the R,M&E processes, the outcomes, and utilisation. To achieve a high level of participation that is potentially transformative and empowering start by thinking about which stakeholders should have a role in decision making about the R,M&E. the following tasks can be useful:

- [Understand and engage stakeholders](#)
- [Establish decision making processes](#)
- [Identify primary intended users](#)

Decisions about ways to engage stakeholders (i.e. in framing, data collection and analysis, reporting), and who should be engaged, can flow from there. For more on thinking through who might be involved, why, and how see [Participatory Approaches, Methodological Briefs from the UNICEF Office of Research](#).

## **Incorporating and implementing participatory approaches in practice**

### **Manage (and commission) an evaluation or evaluation system**

The [Understand and engage stakeholders](#) task is an important foundation for a participatory approach.

The [Establish decision making processes](#) task is an opportunity to formalise the involvement of stakeholders in decision making about the R,M&E. Participation in decision making about R,M&E is an important part of a participatory approach.

One important decision that needs to be made is [who will conduct the R,M&E](#). In a participatory approach an external consultant may be needed as a facilitator. Stakeholders may have roles in framing, commissioning, data collection and/or analysis.

Participatory approaches may cost more (at least initially) and may take longer. This needs to be considered as part of the task: [Determine and secure resources](#). It is important to balance the needs of a participatory approach with the need to remain *realistic*.

Using participatory processes to identify, adapt and [agree on ethical and quality standards for R,M&E](#) ensures that the standards guide appropriate practices in keeping with local standards and expectations.

Partners, community groups and others with roles in planning and implementing C4D should be involved in the task of [Developing Planning Documents \(Evaluation Plans and M&E Frameworks\)](#). This ensures that these documents respond to local needs, questions and contexts.

A participatory approach to the task of [Reviewing R,M&E \(meta evaluation\)](#) enables mutual learning and engagement among partners, relevant institutions and community groups.

[Developing R,M&E capacity](#) is an important task, since participatory approaches will often depend on capacity building of stakeholders. All learning events, structures and processes should be

inclusive of community groups and other implementers and planners of C4D.

## Define

The [develop initial description](#) task is a relatively quick and simple way to engage stakeholders in the R,M&E. This can be done even if a full participatory approach is not being followed.

Community groups and other stakeholders can be engaged in the process of [developing a program theory/logic model](#). 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.

Involving different stakeholders in the task of [identifying potential unintended results](#) can draw on their unique knowledge and perspectives about an initiative, and reveal new information.

## Frame

In the task, [Identify primary intended users](#), it is useful to remember that in C4D users of R,M&E may include community members and leaders, who may take action as a result of findings.

When taking a participatory approach, the task of [Deciding on the purpose](#) of the R,M&E will usually mean thinking beyond donor/reporting uses.

In a participatory approach, engaged stakeholders (especially the primary intended users) should contribute to [specifying the key R,M&E questions](#). The R,M&E should respond to their questions.

The [Determine what 'success' looks like](#) task is about defining values and criteria. In a participatory approach these values and criteria should express what success means for and with the communities and other stakeholders.

## Describe (to answer descriptive questions)

[Use measures, indicators or metrics](#): Indicators should reflect local ways of looking at and measuring the world. Ideally, those funding, managing, planning, implementing, collecting, and using the data should be involved in the selection of indicators. In C4D this includes community groups and partners. Participatory numbers is an option for generating quantitative measures in a participatory way.

Some methods to [Collect and/or retrieve data](#) are more engaging, less extractive, and enable mutual learning to a greater extent, than others.

When taking a participatory approach, it is important to think about who owns the data, and therefore responsibility for [data management](#). There may be additional challenges when dealing with data that has been generated through more engaging methods.

A participatory approach to [analysing data](#) can reveal new findings and meanings, and support mutual learning.

[Visualising the data](#) can help make the data analysis process and findings more accessible for stakeholders.

## **Synthesise**

There are participatory ways to approach the task of [Synthesising Data from a Single Study/Evaluation](#) so that the perspectives of communities and other stakeholders can be included. See methods such as a consensus conference, and qualitative weight and sum options.

There are options for [Synthesising data across studies \(research, monitoring data, evaluations\)](#) that mean this task can be undertaken in a participatory way supporting mutual learning.

A participatory approach to the task of [Generalising Findings](#) means thinking about how the knowledge of partners, communities and other stakeholders' can inform questions about generalisability and how successful approaches can be adapted. Participatory options for this task include [Horizontal Evaluation](#) or the [Positive Deviance approach](#).

## **Report and support use**

Taking a participatory approach to the task of [Identifying Reporting Requirements](#) would mean actively engaging with key stakeholders in a reporting needs analysis, and/or the development of a communication plan.

When undertaking the task of [Developing Reporting Media](#), the media products can be co-created by some or all of the people and groups involved in the R,M&E. This is particularly useful as a strategy to ensure that results are communicated in appropriate and accessible ways.

A participatory approach to the task of [Developing recommendations](#) means meaningful engagement with partners, community groups and local institutions to ensure that the process supports community-driven development informed by local knowledge.

In a participatory approach, when undertaking the task of [Supporting use](#), in addition to use by development agencies, it is important to include processes to support use among community members and leaders, and other stakeholders.

## **Challenges and strategies**

### **Legitimacy**

Some may worry that participatory R,M&E will not have enough credibility or legitimacy. Some may criticise participatory approaches as lacking impartiality and independence, and believe that evaluations must be undertaken by an external consultant. It is important to address these concerns. The task [Define ethical and quality R,M&E standards](#) provides advice on this. There are ways to incorporate participatory approaches that fit with UNEG standards.

### **Ethics**

There can be additional ethical challenges associated with participatory approaches, especially in

relation to sensitive topics such as HIV/AIDS, issues relating to children child marriage, violence against children). Not all stakeholders must be involved in all aspects of R,M&E where this is not appropriate. In these cases consider the appropriateness of involving marginalised groups in:

- Decision making about the R,M&E (see [Establish Decision making processes](#))
- [Reviewing R,M&E \(meta evaluation\)](#)
- [Specifying the key R,M&E questions](#)
- [Determining what 'success' looks like](#)
- [Analysing data](#)
- [Synthesise Data from a single Study/Evaluation](#)
- and/or [Developing recommendations](#)

The [Participation Matrix tool](#) can help to map the possible roles.

## Meaningful participation

Sometimes we end up with 'tokenistic' participation. This can happen where bureaucratic processes overtake engagement processes, or where some stakeholders are not able to participate openly because of fear or differences in power, or issues of language (jargon) etc. Ongoing [critical reflection](#) is the best defence against tokenistic participation.

## Time and resources

It is common to feel that we don't have enough time and resources for participatory R,M&E. The task [Determine and secure resources](#) contains useful advice on managing limited time and resources and suggestions for low-budget options. Including stakeholders in Decision making (see [Establish Decision making processes](#)) is a useful first step, and from there stakeholders can decide which tasks require full participation.

## Working at scale

Meaningful participation with communities can be difficult when working at a large scale (e.g. in a context like India with 1.2 billion people). Focus on whose knowledge and participation matters. Consider [sampling methods](#) that might help to achieve representative or purposive groups for participation. [Methods to collect data](#) can be specifically chosen to deal with scale, such as participatory numbers or digital technologies (such as crowdsourcing).

## Resources

- [Facilitating workshops for the co-generation of knowledge: 21 tips](#)

A web resource that lists useful and practical tips on facilitating workshops. For understanding and engaging stakeholders, the tips include: 3) Use workshops to get to know key players face-to-face; 4) Co-convene; 7) Be prepared and optimally unprepared with the programme; 11) Identify key documents, encourage participants to study them in advance, and have them available; 12) Encourage multiple ownership and credit; 13) Set an informal atmosphere, and err on the side of informality; 14) Make good use of car and bus journeys!; 18) Use

Participatory PowerPoint and 19) Think in advance about follow-up and seek agreement on actions.

- [A framework for monitoring and evaluating children's participation](#)

This resource by Save the Children is a 6-part guide that explores how to monitor and evaluate children's participation in programmes, communities, and in wider society, using participatory R,M&E approaches. Although it refers to 'participation' and not 'C4D', these two areas of work are highly complementary and often have significant overlaps. It includes indicators and tools with which to measure the work that is being undertaken, including:

- 25 indicators to help map how institutionalised children's participation is
- tools designed to help monitor and evaluate the scope, quality, and outcomes of children's participation
- a 10-step guide to help undertake a participatory monitoring and evaluation process

- [The IDEAS guide and facilitators' guide](#)

This is an entry-level guide to designing a learning-focused M&E Plan for small-scale C4D initiatives. The guide supports implementing teams to lead the design of the M&E plan.

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

- Participatory: Each module in the resource outlines a group-based, often visual activity to explore options and make decisions in participatory ways in order to be accessible for people with little or no prior experience of M&E.
- Realistic: The resource was developed in the context of small-grants, so it is sensitive to the needs of small-scale initiatives. The language and processes are as simple as possible.
- Learning-based: The resource has a strong emphasis on using M&E during implementation to adjust the project direction as unfolds.
- Accountable: The resource includes a number of steps to map stakeholders and understand who has an interest in the findings of M&E about the project. This includes funders, and may include others such as governments, community leaders, participants and others.

## Examples

- [KAP action research study on violence against children](#)

A KAP action research project exploring issues of violence against children in Tanzania is an example of engaging with community researcher, children and other community groups for mutual-learning. Different groups were involved in different ways, including making decisions about what the research should focus on and how it should be done (framing), developing recommendations, including stakeholders as analysts of data, as data collectors, and as sources of information. Includes a matrix specifying the ways different groups were involved in different aspects of the research.

## **C4D: Holistic**

### **Context; systemic; boundaries; inter-connections**

Taking a holistic approach means considering the systems, structures and contexts within which people operate. This means seeking to understand the broader contexts and inter-connections between organisations, groups and individuals involved in a C4D initiative (directly or indirectly). This might include the different 'communicative ecologies' (or communication contexts) that people experience.

### **Where do we start**

The define and frame sets of tasks can be useful for thinking about a holistic approach. While it is important to define the scope of R, M&E, it is important not to focus too narrowly on the separate parts of an initiative, but instead to view the C4D and related initiatives within broader systems.

A key moment to ensure you are taking a holistic approach to R, M&E is when you [Specify the key questions](#).

### **Incorporating and implementing systems thinking in practice**

#### **Manage (and commission) an evaluation or evaluation system**

[Define ethical and quality standards for R, M&E:](#)

Our expectations and perceptions of quality and ethics is culturally bound. In seeking agreement on quality and ethical standards it is important to understand these in the context of social, cultural, and organisational systems.

[Develop R, M&E capacity:](#)

It is important to take a whole of system approach to capacity development of C4D R, M&E. It can be useful to consider:

- What type of capacity development is needed, for whom, and at what level?
- How can capacity development be most effectively built into the activities of our organization and its R, M&E systems and processes?
- How will R, M&E capacity be sustained, especially if key staff leaves our organization?

#### **Define**

[Identifying potential unintended results:](#)

A holistic approach requires that we keep an eye on the wider context, which is important for identifying unintended results. Ethnographic and Ethnographic Action Research approaches can be

useful for understanding why something has, or has not, happened through immersive and open-ended research that seeks to situate an event, activity, thing, or group within a broader relational context.

## **Frame**

### [Specify the key questions:](#)

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.

### [Determine what 'success' looks like:](#)

A holistic approach to this task encourages us to think about how the context influences the definition of success, values, aspirations and perspectives. It can be useful to seek ways to define holistic visions of success, beyond indicators and targets (i.e. in Results Frameworks) which often only show a single dimension of success.

## **Describe (to answer descriptive questions)**

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

Indicators are concise, partial, aggregates of information. This is the opposite of holistic, in-depth information. Indicators can be used to 'indicate' areas that might need further, more in-depth, investigation (e.g., negative and positive outliers or lack of change where you expected to see change). Indicators should be used in combination with other more holistic methods to deeply understand situations.

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

If your key questions set out to explore contextual factors, the methods you chose to answer the questions need to be the type that helps you construct 'thick descriptions' (comprehensive, in-depth, contextual).

### [Manage data:](#)

Paying attention to a whole system can require multiple methods, and so you need an appropriate way to manage the R, M&E data. Thinking about and analysing the data together can help you to consider the focus of the R, M&E within the broader context.

### [Combine qualitative and quantitative data:](#)

Combining qualitative and quantitative data enables different paths into understanding the context. Combining data from different methods gives a more rounded, more holistic view of a context.

## Understand causes (to answer questions about causes and contributions)

When [Investigating Causal Contribution and Attribution](#):

- [Strategies based on creating a counterfactual](#) are often not suitable because they distort how the intervention might work in the 'real world' contexts.
- [Strategies to check that the results support causal attribution](#) are more sensitive to context and interconnections.
- [Strategies for investigating possible alternative explanations](#) are important for challenging and problematising assumptions as part of a holistic approach.

## Synthesise

When [generalising findings](#) it is important to identify what the key social, political, economic, cultural and other systemic factors were, in that specific place and time, that affected whether it worked. This will help to predict what factors will need to be considered in other contexts.

## Challenges and strategies

### Institutional barriers

There can be institutional and other barriers to holistic approaches to framing and implementing R,M&E. For example, large or joint programs sometimes get segmented and delegated to different partners, losing the holistic frame.

Use the [Understand and engage stakeholders](#) task as the basis for thinking about how to bring stakeholders together.

These management processes can be used in other tasks such as:

- [Determine what 'success' looks like,](#)
- [Check the results support causal attribution\(strategy 2\)](#)
- [Generalise Findings](#)

in in order to bring cohesiveness and systems thinking to these tasks.

## Resourcing

There can be a tension between being holistic and being realistic. For example, methods that are strong in terms of their ability to gain rich contextual understandings, such as Ethnographic Action Research, pose real challenges for tasks like [Manage Data](#) and [Analyse data](#).

Use the [Determine and secure resources](#) (and revisit as necessary) task to develop a clear picture of financial resources, capacities and time. The pages on the [Manage Data](#) and [Analyse data](#) tasks include advice for making these processes as realistic as possible.

Other advice on shoestring methods are included as part of [C4D: realistic](#).

## Resources

- [Ethnographic Action Research Toolbox](#)

Ethnographic Action Research is a methodology that was developed to link action research with ethnographic approaches as a way to build in holistic research alongside implementation of C4D. The online EAR Training Handbook includes practical guidance and examples for using EAR methods such as communicative ecology mapping, semi-structured interviews, short questionnaire surveys, and participant observation. The 'Dealing with EAR Data' section includes guidance on analysing 'messy' data.

## C4D: Complexity

### **Emergent; unpredictable; contradictions; self-organisation**

The principle of complexity draws our attention to the multiple and changing 'interconnections' and 'inter-relationships' in C4D initiatives. It highlights complicated aspects: where there are multiple organisations working in similar ways, multiple components or parts of the initiative, or where we know that C4D interventions will work differently in different contexts. It also highlights complex aspects: where change is not predictable but comes about through 'adaptive' responses to changing circumstances.

### **Where do we start?**

Complexity can easily become overwhelming. It requires a different kind of mindset and can challenge our organisational systems. A good place to start is by thinking about how we need to adapt our management and organisational systems and processes to be more flexible, more attuned to different perspectives and changes. The [manage cluster of tasks](#) help us reflect on whether our organisational context supports or prevents R,M&E that enables us to be adaptive in our C4D work.

## **Applying the C4D Principles**

### **Manage (and commission) an evaluation or evaluation system**

[Understand and engage stakeholders](#): The stakeholders in complex social change processes may be a changing group of people. Their ideas, motivations, priorities, commitments and openness to adaptive C4D action may also change in response to the changes in the social system. Stakeholder mapping processes can help with engagement, especially where there are multiple stakeholders with different values and information needs.

[Establish decision making processes](#): Decision-making about how the evaluation will be done (including framing its purpose and questions, choosing an evaluation team, approving an evaluation plan and an evaluation report) may need to include different stakeholders. If the key stakeholders change, the decision making structures and processes might need to be flexible. Sometimes we may

need to revisit decisions that have already been made.

[Develop planning documents \(Evaluation Plans and M&E Frameworks\)](#): C4D is generally integrated into a program. Because of this, M&E Frameworks for C4D should ideally be developed as part of the broader program's M&E Frameworks. Where there is a need for changing C4D action based on new insights, rapid, flexible cycles of evaluation will be most appropriate. Evaluation contracts will need to take this into account.

[Develop R,M&E capacity](#): Capacity building efforts need to support people and organisations to become more aware of how to work with the complexity of social change. This may mean capacity building in understanding and using complexity concepts and language, and exploring different ways of thinking about and responding to social change.

## **Define**

[Developing a program theory/logic model](#): 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](#).

[Identifying potential unintended results](#): 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).

## **Frame**

[Identify primary intended users](#): There may be different views about who to include, there may be multiple users. Primary intended users may have different information needs because of their different roles and priorities.

[Deciding on the purpose](#): The evaluation's purpose might need to change to support emerging findings and learning. How programs are implemented may change as a result. The primary intended users and their needs should be reviewed and revised to accommodate change.

[Specify the key R,M&E questions](#): 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.

## **Describe (to answer descriptive questions)**

[Sample](#): Samples should include multiple perspectives, to understand differences in experiences in different settings. Complex interventions might need sampling strategies that can be adapted to suit emerging issues and understandings, such as using 'purposeful' sampling (selecting based on what is useful or most interesting) to follow up emerging patterns and findings.

[Use measures, indicators or metrics](#): The selection and creation of outcome and impact indicators is a tricky area for C4D since emergent outcomes are hard to predict and are different in each context.

[Collect and/or retrieve data](#): Data methods should be chosen for how well they will show different perspectives and experiences, and increase understanding of how contextual factors influence outcomes. In complicated and complex interventions, quick methods (compared to slow methods like national surveys) will be more useful for informing adaptive implementation of C4D.

[Analyse data](#): Simple averages, frequency tables and graphs will not be enough to represent complicated and complex aspects of C4D interventions. At the very least, there should be disaggregation in tables and diagrams to show differential effects on different sub-groups. Time-lines can be important for showing non-linear change over time.

[Manage data](#): Where there are multiple project partners, it is important to pay attention to data quality across organisations, data security when sharing data, and compatibility of IT systems. To support adaptive implementation of C4D it is useful to have data management systems that can quickly produce different types of reports in response to changing information needs.

## **Understand causes (to answer questions about causes and contributions)**

[Investigate Causal Attribution and Contribution](#): To understand the causal contribution it is important to also understand the contributions of other programs and contextual factors. Strategies to investigate this must be in the evaluation design.

## **Synthesise**

[Generalising findings](#): Although there may rarely be a one-size-fits-all set of recommendations for C4D, there may be some key principles or insights about the kinds of contextual factors that have most influence and can be generalised.

## **Report and support use**

[Identifying Reporting Requirements](#): Different primary intended users may have different preferences for receiving reports. They may also have different interests and time scales for applying the findings. Thoughtful reporting strategies that suit the user's needs and timeframes can help facilitate an adaptive approach to C4D work.

## **Case example**

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

The WASH team and the C4D team in UNICEF India was working with the government on two pilot approaches to ending open defecation when a separate district (Nadia district) started gaining attention as the first district in India to be declared Open Defecation Free. UNICEF India decided to undertake a study of how this had been achieved in order to see what could be learned or adapted for other parts of the country. This is consistent with the C4D Framework in the following ways:

- **Complexity:** Targeted investigations to understand successful cases and whether aspects can be replicated and adapted elsewhere is good practice in complex situations.
- **Holistic:** The quantitative data showed that the case was a success, and more open, holistic and qualitative methods were used to complement that knowledge to understand how and why it had worked in that case.
- **Critical:** While the quantitative data indicated that the case was 100% successful, the study also set out to understand how different groups had been affected, and the extent to which differences in caste, wealth, geographic location, gender and other factors influence the likelihood of sustaining those changes.

## Resources

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

Includes guidance on theories of change, recognising that multiple theories of change combine to achieve change. 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 are selected and that theories are adapted and informed by context/conflict analysis.
- [Democracy, governance, and randomised media assistance](#)

This resource draws on findings from a research report BBC Media action on the use of Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) and other experimental and quasi-experimental designs with a counterfactual in the field of media and communication for development. This review is helpful for understanding what kinds of C4D initiatives are amenable to experimental designs, and which types tend to be too complicated and complex to allow for these strategies for causal analysis.

- **Accountable:** program teams are often asked to consider experimental designs, since this kind of evaluation can provide credible evidence about whether a program works. However, being accountable also means understanding when this approach is feasible and will deliver credible results.

- [Compare results to the counterfactual](#)

The C4D Evaluation Framework would suggest the need to reflect the following issues when considering using an experimental design:

- Complexity: as with all experimental and quasi-experimental designs, this creation of a counterfactual in the design of the research initiative required standardised implementation, and therefore did not allow the flexibility for adaptive and emergent approaches to C4D to be used.
- Participatory: experimental and quasi-experimental designs are generally not associated with participatory approaches, due to the need for standardisation and specific technical expertise.

## **C4D: Critical**

### **Power; difference; equity; multiple perspectives**

Including different perspectives highlights the critical importance of paying attention to power. Our approach to R,M&E needs to actively address issues of equity and diversity by paying attention to gender, caste, class, ethnicity, age, status, education and other relevant differences. Design and implementation of RM&E can build upon the strengths and limitations of different evaluation approaches and methods; to find the right approaches for your evaluation questions and include all relevant voices and perspectives.

### **Where do we start?**

It is important to pay attention to issues of unequal power and maintain a critical-thinking mindset while undertaking all RM&E tasks. This is vital for a meaningful participatory R,M&E approach, and the best defense against tokenistic participation and bias in RM&E. A good place to start is by developing a plan for [Reviewing the RM&E \(meta evaluation\)](#) to embed critical reflection throughout the RM&E planning and implementation process.

### **Incorporating and implementing participatory approaches in practice**

#### **Manage (and commission) an evaluation or evaluation system**

##### Understand and engage stakeholders:

Ensure an equity lens when thinking about stakeholders. Make sure you are not just working with the easy-to-reach groups. Think about differences in voice and power within each stakeholder groups. While the inclusion of representatives can be a good way to ensure integration of marginalised voices it can also be problematic. Are representatives truly representative or are there differences in power and class within the group they represent? Is there a risk of wealth-bias, literacy-bias, roadside-bias and other biases identified by Robert Chambers?

### [Establish decision making processes:](#)

It is important to critically reflect on and remove any barriers to participation in decision making (e.g. geography of meeting locations, frequency of the meetings, logistics, language, etc.).

### [Decide who will conduct the R,M&E:](#)

What are the assumptions about who should conduct the R,M&E? What alternatives are there, and how might they be more or less inclusive of diverse voices? What kinds of qualities are important for a facilitator/ evaluator? How will might different facilitators influence power dynamics?

### [Define ethical and quality standards for R,M&E:](#)

It is important to question existing sets of standards and their relevance in the local setting. We need to ask: whose interests and expectations are reflected in the quality and ethical standards? what are the assumptions embedded in the standards? what other perspectives are missing from those standards?

### [Develop Planning Documents \(Evaluation Plans and MnE Frameworks\):](#)

It is important to reflect on power imbalances in the development of these strategic documents. Who has control over the creation and any adaptations to documents? How accessible are documents? Some types of strategic documents, such as Logical Frameworks, reflect Western styles of thinking and planning.

### [Review evaluation \(meta evaluation\):](#)

Critical reflection throughout all aspects of the RM&E helps to maintain the quality of the RM&E and identify areas for improvement or extra attention. It is particularly important where participatory RM&E approaches are used in order to maintain an eye to issues of power and voice. Developing meta evaluation processes helps to formalise the processes and procedures that will incorporate this in to an implementable plan for regular critical reflection.

### [Develop RM&E capacity:](#)

Lack of local capacity can lead to exclusion of local voices and perspectives. Partnerships and capacity building within local community groups and institutions is important so that there is genuine inclusion and contribution of local voices and perspectives. Pay critical attention to power dynamics in capacity building partnerships.

## **Define**

### [Developing a program theory/logic model:](#)

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.

### [Identifying potential unintended results:](#)

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

## **Frame**

### [Identify primary intended users:](#)

It is important to bring a critical lens to this process, and ensure that the primary intended users are not only those with formal, hierarchical power. The processes for engaging with primary intended users should address issues of power and control to ensure the needs and values of the less powerful are not excluded.

### [Specify the key R,M&E questions:](#)

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.

### [Determine what 'success' looks like:](#)

Whose criteria and standards are reflected are whose are excluded? What are the assumptions? Could the vision of success be enriched through the inclusion of different perspectives?

## **Describe (to answer descriptive questions)**

### [Sample:](#)

Sampling should pay attention to equity dimensions, and ensure that the most vulnerable groups are represented, and that the data is able to be disaggregated. Additional effort might be needed to get adequate coverage of more remote, more disadvantaged groups due to known biases such as: roadside bias, seasonal bias, pro-literacy bias, etc.

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

Indicators should specify the required data disaggregations (often this needs to include age, sex, income, levels of vulnerability etc.). Local groups and institutions should be meaningfully involved in the process of developing and using indicators. This inclusion of local perspectives and attention to equity reduces the risk of indicators incentivising easier reach to populations to achieve targets.

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

Consider weaknesses of methods in terms of equity, power and voice. Critically reflect on how certain methods may distort, exclude or silence particular perspectives.

### [Analysing data:](#)

The data analysis process should involve looking for differences, exceptions, and a critical analysis of power. Participatory data analysis processes can help draw out these differences. In these cases it is

important to reflect on who should be involved in analysis, how to ensure meaningful contribution.

#### [Visualising the data:](#)

From a communication of results perspective, data visualisation can help as many groups as possible to engage with data and findings and [make reports accessible](#).

### **Understand causes (to answer questions about causes and contributions)**

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

It is important to pay attention to the different ways that C4D initiatives affect different groups.

[Counterfactual-based designs](#) (strategy 1) can show differences experienced by different groups through data disaggregations (looking at different variables). However, mechanisms to create a comparison groups (such as incentives) may disguise power differences.

Critical reflection on power dynamics and inclusion might therefore make strategy 2: [Check the results support causal attribution](#) and Strategy 3: [Investigate possible alternative explanations](#) better options.

### **Synthesise**

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

Consider whose voices are included and excluded from the process of weighing up findings and making judgements.

#### [Synthesise data across evaluations:](#)

Ensure a critical and equity-focused approach by exploring what works for whom and in what circumstances.

#### [Generalise Findings:](#)

Consider who the initiative has worked for and where (who has it not worked for) and how this might translate to other contexts (places, people and groups). When using participatory approaches to generalising findings, consider whose perspectives are included and silenced in this process.

### **Report and support use**

#### [Identify reporting requirements:](#)

Critically reflect on the assumptions relating to reporting. It is important to ask: are there good reasons why reporting must take certain forms? are there ways in which certain reporting requirements exclude or favour certain groups? whose needs are being served by the reporting requirements?

#### [Ensure accessibility:](#)

Because of the nature of C4D, there is likely to be a greater emphasis on communicating with diverse groups. How might differences in age, status, gender, geography, as well as disability, literacy, language, and education affect access, both physical access and access based on abilities?

### [Developing recommendations:](#)

There is a need to ensure that the recommendations includes a range of voices and perspectives, taking into account the power inequities between stakeholders.

## **Challenges and strategies**

### **Who is excluded?**

It can be difficult, especially when using participatory approaches, to know exactly what to do when certain people or groups are being excluded or silenced by more powerful groups. There is no easy answer to this, but recognising that power is present in participatory settings is a good first step. Solutions will vary from case to case, and creativity and group reflections will be important. For example, could you separate larger groups into smaller groups of similar people (e.g. groups of women, men, girls, community leaders, farmers etc.). A highly recommended resource to develop thinking about power and how it is present in your R,M&E practice is [a discussion about different dimensions and aspects of power on the Participatory Methods website by IDS](#).

## **Resources**

- [Power, on the Participatory Methods website](#)

An introductory page on different ways of analysing power, such as visible, hidden and invisible; power to, power with, power within; public, private, intimate; socialised and internalised. The Participatory Methods website also lists tools and resources to help analyse power, and work towards transformative change.

- [Facilitating workshops for the co-generation of knowledge: 21 tips](#)

This set of tips, written by Robert Chambers, are useful ideas for successful workshop facilitation towards learning, sharing and co-generating knowledge. Some of the tips offer practical ways to think ahead about how to manage power differences, for example, between government officials or VIPs, and other groups.

- [Doing qualitative field research on gender norms with adolescent girls and their families](#)

this resource includes practical advice, examples and tools to ensure gender sensitivity in evaluation and research with adolescent girls. The guide takes seriously the gender specific considerations that are required for ethical evaluation research and provides practical tools.

- [Participatory rural communication appraisal starting with the people](#)

This is a C4D resource developed in the context of C4D and rural development but applicable to other program focus areas. This is an excellent resource that provides guidance on how to

work with community groups and institutions in participatory and learning-based ways to ensure that they are involved in deciding what kind of evidence and success they would like to generate from development interventions.

[The principles underpinning PRCA](#) incorporate power-sensitive approaches to participation, including recognising gender-dimensions, the need for a humble facilitator, and the ways in which the power of local communities may be undervalued and hidden.

The resource also deals directly with issues such as biases common to C4D R,M&E such as: roadside bias, visibility bias, wealth bias, pro-literacy bias and others. It includes [strategies for avoiding these biases](#), including how it is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework.

## **C4D: Accountable**

### **Transparent; rigour; multiple; quality**

Accountability means demonstrating results communities, partners, funders and policy makers. R,M&E that is rigorous, transparent and relevant will produce evidence for accountability. In C4D our primary responsibility is to be listening to, learning from and reporting to community groups and partners. Achieving accountability depends on having clear and shared expectations about what is to be evaluated, what the evaluation questions are, and how you will go about answering them. Understanding who you are accountable to also requires clarity.

### **Where do we start?**

[Deciding on the purpose](#), and more specifically how the primary intended users of the RM&E intend to use the findings and what their expectations are, and how this balances with [Learning-based](#) purposes. Being clear about the purpose helps to guide decisions about quality standards, rigour, and reporting.

## **Incorporating and implementing accountability approaches in practice**

### **Manage (and commission) an evaluation or evaluation system**

[Understand and engage stakeholders](#): As part of understanding and engaging stakeholders it can be useful think about accountability in a multi-dimensional sense, including accountability to donors (upward accountability and reporting), and accountability to colleagues, partners and collaborators and communities (horizontal accountability).

[Define ethical and quality evaluation standards](#): The quality and ethical standards for C4D R,M&E should reflect the expectations of all the people and groups we are accountable to (donors and managers, partners and community groups). Defining and following quality and ethical standards is important for maintaining accountability and integrity in RM&E. Ensuring ethical practices in RM&E

is a responsibility of everyone involved in the R,M&E.

[Document management processes and agreements](#): Transparent and thorough record-keeping of management processes and agreements is supports accountability to all stakeholders in RM&E processes.

## **Define**

[Identify potential unintended results](#): 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.

## **Frame**

[Identify primary intended users](#): We often assume that the primary intended users of RM&E are the manager and donors. In C4D we to think more broadly about who might use the RM&E. Key users in C4D usually include community groups, partners and others with roles in planning and implementation. The C4D and the R,M&E should be accountable to all of these groups.

[Deciding on the purpose](#): R,M&E can be useful for accountability purposes, because it can be used to report back to all people and groups connected to the C4D initiative (including donors, managers, partners, community groups, 'beneficiaries' and others).

[Determine what 'success' looks like](#): Working with community groups, partners and others to find agreement about what success might look like means that everybody knows and understands what values are used to make judgements about a program. In other words, the criteria and values to judge success are shared and transparent.

## **Describe (to answer descriptive questions)**

[Sample](#): Thoughtful and thorough sampling helps to make the R,M&E design more rigorous. In quantitative (numbers based) methods sampling the sample size and the sample selection are key to making credible claims about the findings. In qualitative (words, stories,visual) methods, sharing details about the sample and selection process increases credibility and trustworthiness.

[Use measures, indicators or metrics](#): We usually think about indicators as being useful for reporting and accountability to managers and donors. Indicators should also be used for providing partners, communication groups and others participating in the intervention with information about what was achieved/not achieved, and the importance of the indicators for their community. When using the data from indicators in this way, it is important to acknowledge that the information is simplified and partial, and that other types of information are usually needed to make informed decisions about the intervention.

[Combine qualitative and quantitative data](#): A key part of being accountable is rigour. Combining data from different data collection methods boosts the rigour by providing different perspectives and ways to understand a problem.

[Analyse data](#): Those involved in data analysis are in a powerful position of meaning making. It is important that the processes used to analyse data are rigorous, systematic and transparent.

[Manage Data](#): C4D emphasises good data management and ownership processes that are respectful, ethical, and responsible. It is important to agree to policies and processes that prevent or minimise harm (especially for vulnerable groups). These discussions should take place before, during and after the data collection.

## **Understand causes (to answer questions about causes and contributions)**

### [Investigate Causal Attribution and Contribution](#)

A central question in RM&E from an accountability perspective is 'what has been the impact (or contribution) of C4D to observed changes'. Answering this question rigorously requires selecting carefully from three causal analysis strategies:

- [Compare results to a counterfactual](#);
- [Check the results support causal attribution](#);
- [Investigate possible alternative explanations](#)).

## **Synthesise**

[Synthesise Data from a Single Study/Evaluation](#): By undertaking data synthesis processes we can make findings based on different sources of evidence and voices. This is useful tool for accountability to partners and community groups, and to donors and managers.

## **Report and support use**

[Identifying Reporting Requirements](#): Reports from R,M&E are usually focused on satisfying the needs of donor and managers. These are important users, but it is also important to think about the reporting needs of other groups we are accountable to. This includes partners, community groups, local institutions and other stakeholders.

[Developing recommendations](#): How can social accountability principles be used to ensure that recommendations from stakeholders are heard and meaningfully considered?

[Supporting use](#): To achieve social accountability it is critical that recommendations from different stakeholders are heard and meaningfully considered by decision makers. Committed and transparent processes to ensure that the findings (both positive and negative) from R,M&E are used is an important part of accountability.

## **Challenges and strategies**

### **Audience for reporting**

Systems like Results-Based Management tend to prioritise reporting to managers and donors, rather than accountability to partners and community groups. C4D can lead the charge in advocating for a multi-dimensional understanding of accountability, as set out in the SDGs

## What does success look like?

In Results-Based Management, accountability is usually judged based on how well the initiative followed planned processes. This is not as suitable in complex situations or where experimentation and adaptability are key.

The following tasks and approaches can be useful for thinking about alternatives:

- [Determine what 'success' looks like](#): this task is about being transparent about what 'success' means to different groups. Experimentation and learning could be part of what is valued.
- There are different ways to develop M&E Frameworks, including using Outcome Mapping, which sets out different ways of monitoring performance. Alternatives are discussed in [Develop Planning Documents](#) (Evaluation Plans and MnE Frameworks).

## Fear of failure

Too much focus on 'accountability' for 'results' can make people fear failure. In C4D where outcomes are less controllable and predictable, teams might start limiting the objectives they set. This can also lead to less collaboration, where sections or organisations (in a joint project) only work on areas that they are accountable/responsible for. The Theory of Change is a useful way to create a holistic overview of how we think different parts of the project contribute to change (see [Develop program theory or logic model](#)). Concepts like the sphere of control, sphere of influence, and sphere of concern, borrowed from [Outcome Mapping](#), can be useful for identifying the degree to which teams should be expected to be accountable for changes.

## Methodological rigour

A common perception within some organisations is that high quality and credible evaluations require quantitative data

There are certainly ways to ensure rigour and quality in mixed-methods and qualitative designs. The following tasks can be useful:

- Use the [Questions-Led ME Framework](#) resource, which is based on the idea that methods should be chosen based on how well they will answer questions in the local context. These steps help ensure well-considered decisions.
- [Define ethical and quality evaluation standards](#): this task includes advice for identifying quality standards, and how to make sure these are followed.
- [Identify primary intended users](#) and [Decide purpose](#): these interlinked steps should clarify who will use the R,M&E and what they will use it for. If the users or the purposes requires being sensitive to what certain people believe is 'credible', that might in fact be a good reason to select particular

## Case Examples

- [Measuring empowerment? Ask them: Quantifying qualitative outcomes from people's own](#)

## [analysis](#)

by Jupp, D. & Ali, S. I. (with contribution from C. Barahona).

This case offers an alternative model for creating indicators. Participatory process were used to develop and measure progress against indicators of community empowerment. Accountability in this case is primarily maintained at the community level, but the data generated was repurposed for upward reporting requirements.

- [U-report](#)

U-Report is an SMS-based, user-centered social monitoring tool which supports social accountability. U-Report supports social accountability by providing a platform on which citizens can voice concerns and priorities and provide feedback to governments, development agencies and other decision makers.

## Resources

- [A toolkit for monitoring and evaluating children's participation](#)

This 6-part toolkit provides guidance on how to monitor and evaluate children's participation in programmes, communities, and in wider society. It promotes participatory approaches to involve children in the monitoring and evaluation process.

## [C4D: Realistic](#)

### **Pragmatic; mixed-methods; grounded; flexible**

To be most effective, R,M&E approaches and methods need to be grounded in local realities. This requires openness, freedom, flexibility and realism in planning and implementing R,M&E and in the selection of approaches, methodologies and methods. This approach aims to increase the usefulness of evaluation results, which should focus on intended, unintended, expected, unexpected, negative and positive change. Long-term engagement with organizations and communities ensures effectiveness and sustainability, and a long-term perspective on both evaluation and social change.

### **Where do we start?**

In order to make decisions about what is feasible and practical, it is important to understand what resources are available and seek additional resources where required. A good place to start is the [Determine and secure resources](#) task.

# Incorporating and implementing critical approaches in practice

## Manage (and commission) an evaluation or evaluation system

### [Determine and secure resources:](#)

Securing the resources needed, particularly funding, for R,M&E of C4D is a common challenge. This task is a foundational task for being realistic in the approach to R,M&E of C4D.

### [Define ethical and quality standards for R,M&E:](#)

In C4D the ethical standards should cover sharing results and findings in accessible ways (especially with marginalised groups and those who were consulted in the data collection and report writing process) as an ethical responsibility. This also helps with promoting a [learning-based](#) culture and continuous learning.

### [Document management processes and agreements:](#)

Pay attention to the description of the Scope of Work and make sure it matches the funding available. Experienced consultants can see (and will avoid) Terms of References that ask too much within too little time and without adequate resources. Use the [Determine and secure resources](#) task to make sure the resources available match the scope and consider cheaper options.

### [Develop R,M&E capacity:](#)

Not all capacity building work should start from scratch. What existing systems and 'communities of practice' can be used to enhance capacities and strengthen networks? Prior to implementing capacity building ensure a capacity needs assessment (which could be rapid) has been undertaken.

## Define

### [Develop an initial description:](#)

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.

## Frame

### [Specify the key R,M&E questions:](#)

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.

## Describe (to answer descriptive questions)

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

Choices about methods must remain practical, pragmatic, and feasible, and fit with the available resources. This may involve compromise to remain realistic, however, in C4D ensuring that local needs, voices and experiences are given prominence should remain a priority.

#### [Combine qualitative and quantitative data:](#)

As part of being realistic, the C4D Evaluation Framework advocates for the use of mixed-methods. This doesn't mean that every R,M&E activity must include both qualitative and quantitative data, however. For example, a qualitative study might be needed to fill gaps in quantitative data or indicators.

#### [Analysing data:](#)

Additional resources may be required for analysing qualitative data (words-based data i.e. spoken or written, stories, interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, videos etc.). In C4D, qualitative data is often critical to understanding contexts and changes. Qualitative data analysis (summarising and looking for patterns and themes) can be more time consuming compared to quantitative data, and requires different sets of skills.

### **Understand causes (to answer questions about causes and contributions)**

#### [Investigate Causal Attribution and Contribution:](#)

Feasibility and availability of expertise might be factors when deciding on methods for investigating causes.

[Experimental and quasi-experimental designs](#) (strategy 1) don't necessarily take more time and resources, but they do depend on a number of practical factors including: upfront investment in planning and design; and the ability to plan the C4D intervention around the needs of the experiment.

Where these things are not possible, it might be more pragmatic to use:

- Strategy 2: [Check the results support causal attribution](#) and;
- Strategy 3: [Investigate possible alternative explanations](#).

### **Synthesise**

#### [Synthesise data across evaluations:](#)

Lower cost options, such as [rapid evidence assessment](#), are useful where there is a need to realistically balance the available resources and the need for quality data and rigour.

### **Report and support use**

#### [Develop reporting media:](#)

While there are many great options that may be ideal for communicating with different groups, it is also important to be realistic about how many different options are feasible. There may need to be

trade-offs in relation how many different media are used, the quality of production and other factors.

## Challenges and strategies

In an ideal world there would be enough resources to do a perfect evaluation. In the real world, small budgets and a lack of time mean that compromises might be necessary. How do you decide where to compromise? And how do you maintain the integrity and usefulness?

It is important first to be clear about the resources that are available, and to think broadly about resources (including staff time, knowledge, existing sources of data etc.) and how to seek additional. Advice of this nature is outlined in [Determine and secure resources](#). Thinking about the match between the design and the available resources is often something we have to return to. It involves thinking creatively to make the best use of resources. Are there adaptations that can be made to make data collection methods more 'rapid' and small scale? See [Collect and/or retrieve data](#). Are there ways to value and synthesise tacit knowledge of stakeholders to achieve the goals? See [Synthesise data across evaluations](#).

Indicators for C4D poses challenges in terms of feasibility and practicality. Existing data sets usually don't cover C4D dimensions, however, commissioning data collection for indicators is often not feasible.

Remember that indicators are signs or signals of progress. Although it often takes the form of population or household data, perhaps there are other things that might be 'good enough' signals of progress? Or are there proxy indicators that could be used (with a clear understanding from collaborators about the limitations)? Read more on the [Use measures, indicators or metrics](#) page.

Data collection systems using technology can be a realistic solution. Although it requires some upfront investment, in the long term household surveys are much more feasible. See the [T-Watoto](#) case example.

## Case example

In Vietnam the assessment of the VAC Campaign had a relatively small budget of approximately \$10,000USD. The original plan for the assessment had to be scaled back to be feasible within the scope. However, with careful planning and strategic selection of samples (two field sites), methods and tools, and data sources, a useful report that met the needs of the key users was achieved.

### Barefoot M&E

The Barefoot Impact Evaluation methodology was developed in the context of a UNESCO/UNDP Media Project in Mozambique (see [the Communication Initiative website](#)) as a cost-effective, simple and practical R,M&E methodology to be designed and implemented by community radio, with little or not external support. It uses a range of local tools and solutions to build R,M&E plans around the opportunities that are available. It was designed to be just enough to 'check the pulse' of the radio, but not too burdensome. The techniques used have wide applicability, and could be adapted to suit a range of different C4D NGO and other contexts. Some of the realistic, barefoot techniques include:

- an internal self-assessment 'check-up' using a checklist
- 'hearing out' the community, where informal interviews with community members on their satisfaction are added onto routine contact with communities
- Registration of callers and letters to the station, with forms left by the phones so that demographic information of callers can be recorded
- feedback questions on the back of message slips (message slips are primarily to request announcements are made, but 30% of people also filled in the questionnaire on the back)
- interviews with people living in the staff members' neighbourhood, which enable some spread of the sample
- interviewing at public events
- some M&E is undertaken by a 'community mobilizer', who is a paid staff member at the station and is trained to undertake more in-depth focus group discussions and interviews.

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

- [Realistic](#) The low-cost 'barefoot' approach focuses on make the most of limited resources. Although does not meet academic standards in terms of sampling and rigour, it is good enough for the context in which is it to be used.
- [Participatory](#) The approach is intended to be managed and implemented by community radio stations with a nominated community mobilizer.
- [Learning-based](#) The key users of the assessments are the community radio stations themselves. If they use it for learning and improving, the M&E is meeting the purpose.

## Resources

- [52 weeks of BetterEvaluation: Week 13: Evaluation on a shoestring](#)

Many organisations are having to find ways of doing more for less - including doing evaluation with fewer resources.

## C4D: Learning-based

### **Action-learning; adaptive; capacity development; critical reflection**

In a learning-based approach RM&E is integrated into the whole programme cycle and involves all staff and stakeholders. This principle draws on some of the core principles of action learning and participatory action research (PAR), including iterative reflection on implementation for continual improvement. Involving a broad group of stakeholders in R,M&E requires attention to capacity development and learning processes and events.

## Where do we start?

It can be useful to begin by [Reviewing R,M&E \(meta evaluation\)](#) with a focus on previous efforts in order to understand: what worked well? what didn't work well? who was involved? how can the current initiative build on that?

To consider how learning fits into a new R,M&E initiative begin by [Deciding on the purpose](#), and more specifically how the primary intended users intended to use R,M&E can help to clarify the expectations in terms of learning from R,M&E, and how this balances with [accountability](#)-focused purposes.

[Develop R,M&E capacity](#), which should begin with an assessment of existing capacities, can also be a starting point for implementing the learning-based principle. It is especially useful to think about how capacity building processes can support [participatory](#) approaches to R,M&E.

## Incorporating and implementing learning-based approaches in practice

### Manage (and commission) an evaluation or evaluation system

#### [Understand and engage stakeholders:](#)

To effectively implement the C4D Evaluation Framework, a receptive organisational and community context and culture is required. Staff of organisations at all levels and relevant community members need to be willing to engage in constant reflection and learning from R,M&E in order to continually develop and improve organisational systems and C4D initiatives. This is dependent upon meaningful stakeholder engagement in the beginning and continuing throughout implementation.

#### [Establish decision making processes:](#)

Decision making processes and structures (such as an ongoing technical working group) should emphasise leadership and responsibilities for knowledge management, exchange and utilisation to ensure continuous learning, mutual understanding and creative ideas and thinking.

#### [Decide who will conduct the R,M&E:](#)

In contexts where it is difficult to find available, local evaluators with the skills and knowledge to be able to undertake C4D evaluation and studies, partnerships with capacity building components can be considered.

#### [Develop Planning Documents \(Evaluation Plans and MnE Frameworks\):](#)

Learning events, structures and processes (inclusive of all partners and community groups involved in implementation) should be built into M&E Frameworks and Evaluation/Research Plans. M&E Frameworks should be flexible enough to accommodate emergent issues. Some organisations are starting to refer to 'Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Frameworks' to emphasise the importance of considering how frameworks can support learning in addition to producing information.

### [Document management processes and agreements:](#)

Recruiting consultants with expertise in both C4D and the specific program area can be challenging. It is even more difficult when seeking local or regionally based consultants. Consider what kinds of expertise are required, what kinds are desirable, and what kinds are easily translatable from similar fields and approaches. Also consider whether capacity building and mentoring partnerships can be incorporated to fill gaps. See also [Decide who will conduct the research/evaluation](#) (or other study or monitoring).

### [Reviewing R,M&E \(meta evaluation\):](#)

Including review or meta-evaluation processes in C4D R,M&E systems is a key part of being learning-based, using critical reflection processes, and it contributes to capacity development. The aim is to continually strengthen and improve R,M&E processes so that they better meet the needs of the people and organisations involved and help to create more sustainable, learning-oriented C4D organisations and initiatives.

### [Develop R,M&E capacity:](#)

Including capacity development processes in C4D R,M&E systems is a key part of being [learning-based](#). This process should begin with a preliminary assessment of R,M&E capacities of local groups and institutions. What sort of ongoing training, support or mentoring might be needed? What sorts of local research training institutions are available? How can this best be delivered?

## **Define**

### [Develop initial description:](#)

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.

### [Developing a program theory/logic model:](#)

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 where it is more likely it is 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.

## **Frame**

### [Deciding on the purpose:](#)

The approach advocated by the C4D Evaluation Framework is to use R,M&E processes for adaptive and learning-based process, so that findings can be fed into ongoing C4D activities. This is because most C4D activities are complicated or complex (to understand the nature of your activity see [Complexity](#)).

## **Describe (to answer descriptive questions)**

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

Indicator selection should be focused on the type of 'summary' information that can tell us whether or not the intervention is 'on track' in terms of its implementation and anticipated results. Where the intervention content or implementation needs to be very adaptive and/or the results cannot be fully defined in advance (such as in complex situations), different indicators may need to be selected at different times during the intervention period. The indicators should help to answer the 'key learning questions' that are posed at various times.

[Data management:](#)

Related to the participatory approach, it is important to consider whether stakeholders may need capacity building support to be able to effectively manage data.

## **Understand causes (to answer questions about causes and contributions)**

[Investigate Causal Attribution and Contribution:](#)

The learning needs may determine which combination of strategies will be most useful. While [designs creating a counterfactual \(strategy 1\)](#) are best in situations where strong hypotheses (theories) are known and need to be tested and proven, they are not as well suited in more exploratory situations.

A combination of Strategy 2: [Check the results support causal attribution](#) and Strategy 3: [Investigate possible alternative explanations \(strategy 3\)](#) can be used where there is a need to learn about and better understandings of causes and changes.

## **Report and support use**

[Supporting use:](#)

This task contributes to a learning-based approach through taking seriously the tasks associated with supporting the use of findings in future programs and phases.

## **Challenges and strategies**

People often assume that 'learning' is just a given part of any R,M&E that has recommendations and lessons learned section of the report, and assume that no special attention or planning is required.

Being learning-based is both an approach, and a set of deliberate processes and strategies. It's an approach that requires more flexible, adaptive systems to allow for initiatives to grow and change as more understanding is developed. Deliberate processes and strategies, such as [Reviewing R,M&E](#)

[\(meta evaluation\)](#), [Developing R,M&E capacity](#), and thorough processes to [Generalise findings](#), [Develop recommendations](#), and [support use](#) are key to a committed learning-based approach. Examples may include learning-committees, annual reviews etc.

People sometimes assume that being 'learning-based' demonstrates a lack of commitment to accountability.

The C4D Evaluation Framework would suggest that learning is a form of accountability. In most cases these two purposes can be balanced. See the [Decide purpose](#) task to work through the options.

How can we be adaptive and emergent in our approach using Results Frameworks?

It is quite hard to be adaptive and emergent when using Results Frameworks. Although they can be adjusted at certain times, they require heavy planning and are difficult to use for truly adaptive and emergent implementation. There are other options. See [Develop Planning Documents \(Evaluation Plans and M&E Frameworks\)](#) for details of options compatible with adaptive and emergent approaches.

## Case Studies

- [A study of the drivers of violence against children - Positive change in Tanzania and Zanzibar](#)

International collaboration for capacity building as part of the KAP study of VAC in Tanzania

In 2014 UNICEF Tanzania Country Office in collaboration with Government commissioned University of Huddersfield - the Centre for Applied Childhood Studies in partnership with Mzumbe University in Tanzania, to undertake a study entitled: The Drivers of Violence Against Children in Tanzania, a participatory action research exploring knowledge, attitudes and socio-cultural practices that contribute to violence against children in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar.

This is an example of a learning based approach in the following ways:

As part of the study a mentoring relationship between UK researchers and local university researchers was set up. This initiative brought together researchers from the UK (University of Huddersfield) and researchers from a local university (Mzumbe University in Tanzania) in a mentoring relationship. In addition, 10 researchers were recruited through Mzumbe University and trained to undertake community action research, and were deployed to research sites to recruit and train community researchers and child peer-researchers. The methods used in this initiative were not simply extractive (ascertaining people's views through qualitative research), but used participatory approaches to actively engage with stakeholders in iterative processes of learning. The 500 participants were supported to explore and critically reflect on the socio cultural factors that underpin violence against children, and through gaining a better understanding of the issues, explore possibilities for change.

This example demonstrates the need to build the capacity in order to use participatory methods. The C4D Evaluation Framework would also highlight the following areas for consideration:

Realistic Those interested in replicating should be aware that the involvement of the UK researchers increased the budget, and this in turn impacted on the sustainability of the capacity after the initiative ended. The mentoring model could have been more sustainable and cost-effective if a regionally-based mentor institution was matched with a local institution.

- [Terms of reference for an action research approach to evaluation of She Can project - ActionAid](#)

This Terms of Reference (ToR) outlines the basis for the phased theory-based evaluation of the 'She Can' project.

## Resources

- [The IDEAS guide and facilitators' guide](#)

An entry-level guide for designing a learning-focused M&E Plan for C4D initiatives. The guide supports implementing teams to lead the design of the M&E plan.

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

- Learning-based: The resource has a strong emphasis on using M&E during implementation to adjust the project direction as the project unfolds. It uses a metaphor of sailing to help users understand what a learning-based approach mean.
  - Participatory: Each module in the resource outlines a group-based, often visual activity to explore options and make decisions in participatory ways in order to be accessible for people with little or no prior experience of M&E.
  - Realistic: The resource was developed in the context of small-grants, so it is sensitive to the needs of small-scale initiatives. The language and processes are as simple as possible.
  - Accountable: The resource includes a number of steps to map stakeholders and understand who has an interest in the findings of the M&E about the project. This includes funders, and may include others such as governments, community leaders, participants and others.
- [The community radio continuous improvement toolkit](#)

This toolkit is premised on a mix of self-assessment and peer-review towards co-learning and horizontal evaluation. In this case, it is fellow community radio station staff and volunteers who undertake the assessment. It was created in the context of community radios in India, but, with some adaptation of the questions, the processes and guidance could be applied to support peer-assessment between organisations doing a range of different types of C4D.

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

- Learning-based: The peer-review methodology enables staff and volunteers and different

community radio stations to learn from the experiences and innovations of other radio stations while undertaking the peer assessment. Often peer-reviewers come back to their own stations with new ideas to adapt. The purpose of the methodology is continual learning.

- **Participatory:** The peer-review process is participatory, with peer community radio station staff and volunteers engaging in critical and self-reflection meetings and workshops.
- **Realistic:** The process outlined is focused on working through and reflecting on a series of questions. Although it takes some time, it makes use of the knowledge and expertise of participants and is not overly burdensome.

It is important to consider the following:

- **Accountable:** Although the Indian Government has agreed to use this methodology in place of accountability- focused evaluation processes, the methodology is not about replicating external accountability R,M&E and is instead explicitly directed towards co-learning and continual improvement, towards building a community of practice. The methods of self-assessment and peer-review may not be considered rigorous enough in other circumstances where upward accountability and reporting are included as a purpose of R,M&E efforts.
- [Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal Manual](#)

This is a C4D resource developed in the context of C4D and rural development by FAO, with wide applicability to other program focus areas. This is an excellent resource that provides guidance on how to work with community groups and institutions in participatory and learning-based ways to ensure that they are involved in deciding what kind of evidence and success they would like to generate from development interventions.

- [Equal Access Community Researcher Manual for Publication](#)

PDF  
1.3 MB

This manual is part of the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit developed with a C4D organisation (Equal Access). The Community Researcher Manual was developed for the community researchers working on a particular C4D project. It clearly explains the approach, the role of community researchers, the context and the tools to be used. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Learning-based** This is an example of a resource developed to build the capacity of community researchers
- **Participatory** Including community researchers and building their capacity to lead the research is a good example of how to build in participatory approaches.

## [Tasks: C4D R,M&E through the Rainbow Framework](#)

The Rainbow Framework structures the main, practical 'tasks' involved in doing research, monitoring and evaluation (R,M&E) into seven themes or 'clusters'.

The C4D Resource Hub uses the Rainbow Framework structure to give practical recommendations on tools, methods and resources that are in keeping with the seven [principles for C4D R,M&E](#) (as adapted in the Evaluating C4D project), with links to C4D specific examples where possible.

Remember, these are not steps. Most people will explore the tasks based on need and interest, rather than follow the clusters one after the other. For example, 'manage' tasks are undertaken at different points in the R,M&E process.

## **C4D: Manage**

Manage is one of the seven clusters of tasks in the Rainbow Framework. Managing R,M&E involves agreeing on how decisions will be made and ensuring decisions are implemented well. Decisions and choices may need to be revisited and revised throughout implementation.

There are nine tasks associated with manage. Each task includes C4D specific methods, advice and resources on managing and commissioning evaluations and studies, and managing R,M&E systems

## **C4D: Understand and engage stakeholders**

### **What is it?**

Stakeholders are people, community groups and institutions with a stake in the C4D initiative and the associated research, monitoring, evaluation and studies. It is important to ensure their active participation before, during and after the evaluation. In cases where this is not possible, one alternative would be to involve representatives who can advocate on their behalf.

### **General information**

The main page on [Understanding and engaging with stakeholders](#) provides a detailed description, methods and advice of a general nature. This page is a recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

## **Applying the C4D principles**

### **Participatory**

This task is a foundational task when taking a participatory approach to R,M&E of C4D. A participatory approach, as advocated in the C4D Evaluation Framework, is dependent on good understanding of stakeholders and on meaningful and active engagement with them in planning, framing and implementation. This sets a foundation for a 'transformational' level of participation in R,M&E.

## Complexity

The stakeholders in complex social change processes may be a changing group of people. Their ideas, motivations, priorities, commitments and openness to adaptive C4D action may also change in response to the changes in the social system. Stakeholder mapping processes can help with engagement, especially where there are multiple stakeholders with different values and information needs.

## Learning-based

To effectively implement the C4D Evaluation Framework, a receptive organizational and community context and culture is required. Staff of organizations at all levels and relevant community members need to be willing to engage in constant reflection and learning from R,M&E in order to continually develop and improve organisational systems and C4D initiatives. This is dependent upon meaningful stakeholder engagement in the beginning and continuing throughout implementation.

## Critical

Ensure an equity lens when thinking about stakeholders. Make sure you are not just working with the easy-to-reach groups. Think about differences in voice and power within each stakeholder groups. While the inclusion of representatives can be a good way to ensure integration of marginalised voices it can also be problematic. Are representatives truly representative or are there differences in power and class within the group they represent? Is there a risk of wealth-bias, literacy-bias, roadside-bias and other biases identified by [Robert Chambers](#)?

## Accountable

As part of understanding and engaging stakeholders it can be useful think about accountability in a multi-dimensional sense, including accountability to donors (upward accountability and reporting), and accountability to colleagues, partners and collaborators and communities (horizontal accountability).

# Recommended methods and adaptations for understanding stakeholders in C4D

## General stakeholder mapping methods

- [Stakeholder mapping and analysis](#)

Several good methods that would work well for C4D are listed on this method page.

## Mindmap with sticky-notes

- This is a more visual process for stakeholder mapping. It is useful when identifying stakeholders is more difficult, and you need to work with partners in participatory and visual

ways to unpack interconnections and perspectives. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- [C4D: Participatory](#)

The visual and tactile nature of the approach means this mapping process can be undertaken with a range of partners.

- [C4D: Complexity](#)

The visual and moveable nature of the approach means it is useful when there is a need to unpack complex interconnections and different perspectives.

## **Borrowing the concept of 'Boundary Partners(/Actors)'**

- A key concept in Outcome Mapping is the 'Boundary Partners', sometimes referred to as 'Boundary Actors'. Boundary Partners(/Actors) are a subset of an initiative's stakeholders. Boundary Partners(/Actors) are the people, groups, or organisations that are directly engaged in the initiative, and who can be influenced through the initiative, and who in turn can influence outcomes that are outside the control or influence of the initiative. Focusing on Boundary Partners(/Actors) is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- [C4D: Realistic](#)

Focusing on boundary partners (in addition to immediate beneficiaries) is a more realistic and practical response to the potentially huge numbers of stakeholders.

- [C4D: Complexity](#)

Relationships with Boundary Partners/Actors in Outcome Mapping are understood to be dynamic and change over time.

## **Resources**

- [The IDEAS guide and facilitators' guide](#)

Modules 3 and 4 of the IDEAS Guide (developed for practitioners implementing small-scale media and communication projects) provide guidance on Stakeholder Mapping.

- [Outcome Mapping](#)

Outcome Mapping is an approach that helps unpack an initiative's theory of change and provides a framework to collect data on the immediate, basic changes that lead to longer, more transformative change.

- [What is a boundary partner?](#)

The Outcome Mapping Learning Community have published a useful summary and dialogue document on Boundary Partners/Actors, with further links to resources.

## **Recommended methods and adaptations for engaging with stakeholders and C4D**

### **General stakeholder engagement methods**

- [Understand and engage stakeholders](#)

Several good methods that would work well for C4D are listed on this Rainbow Framework page. Most of these are geared towards engagement by evaluators in preparation for a discrete study or evaluation, but similar techniques could be used to begin or continue engagement.

### **Understand stakeholders**

- [Community scoping](#)

Community profiles are good for developing a more in-depth understanding of a community of interest.

- [Stakeholder mapping and analysis](#)

Stakeholders are individuals or organizations that will be affected in some significant way by the outcome of the evaluation process or that are affected by the performance of the intervention, or both.

### **Engage stakeholders**

- [Community fairs](#)

A community fair is an event organised within the local community with the aim of providing information about a project and raising awareness of relevant issues.

- [Fishbowl technique](#)

The fish bowl activity is used to manage group discussion.

- [Informal meeting processes](#)

Informal meetings can simply be a conversation between an evaluator and a key stakeholder that is not conducted in a formal way.

## Adapting C4D approaches

- C4D practitioners will already have many skills and techniques for facilitating communication and engagement, and these can be adapted for use with R,M&E stakeholders, including colleagues and partners.
- [Equal access participatory monitoring and evaluation toolkit](#)

Module 1 of the Equal Access Participatory M&E toolkit 'Effective communication, feedback and reporting systems in a PM&E process' is a comprehensive (though quite long) guide on both analysing stakeholders and communication flows, and practical ways to build on this for ongoing engagement with stakeholders. This resource was developed in the context of a C4D NGO, so it is therefore highly relevant for C4D initiatives and is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework.

(Some of the content in this document also covers identifying key users and their uses, which come under the Frame part of the Rainbow Framework).

- [Facilitating workshops for the co-generation of knowledge: 21 tips](#)

A web resource that lists useful and practical tips on facilitating workshops. For understanding and engaging stakeholders, the tips include: 3) Use workshops to get to know key players face-to-face; 4) Co-convene; 7) Be prepared and optimally unprepared with the programme; 11) Identify key documents, encourage participants to study them in advance, and have them available; 12) Encourage multiple ownership and credit; 13) Set an informal atmosphere, and err on the side of informality; 14) Make good use of car and bus journeys!; 18) Use Participatory PowerPoint and 19) Think in advance about follow-up and seek agreement on actions.

## C4D: Establish Decision making processes

### What is it?

Many decisions will need to be made in the course of planning and implementing research monitoring and evaluation. To think about and implement effective decisions it is useful consider the following: a) to be explicit about and agree on what structures and processes will be used to make decisions, b) which specific participants should be/could be involved in the various decision making processes, c) to distinguish between the decision-making group (which might be labelled a [steering group](#) or a task force) and an [advisory group](#) (which can provide technical or cultural advice, but cannot make decisions), d) to be clear about how decisions will be made, which could be on the basis of [consensus](#) (which aims to find decisions which everyone can accept), [hierarchical](#) (on the basis of formal positions of authority) or [majority](#), e) establish the extent to which each group will be involved or informed of each decision.

## General information

The Rainbow Framework page "[Establish decision making processes](#)" outlines generalist methods in relation to types of decision making structures, processes for exploring issues, and processes for making decisions.

[Step 1 of the BetterEvaluation Manager's Guide to Evaluation](#) guides the development of the following products:

- Evaluation management plan
- Decision-making matrix
- List of responsibilities for the evaluation manager
- List of responsibilities for the evaluator
- Information about Joint Evaluations towards an Evaluation Partnership Agreement

These pages are recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

## Applying the C4D principles

### Participatory

The C4D Evaluation Framework would encourage participatory decision making processes where possible. This means that stakeholders are actively engaged in decision making about the framing and design of R,M&E. This task is an opportunity to formalise the involvement of stakeholders in decision making.

### Critical

The C4D Evaluation Framework would encourage participatory decision making processes where possible. This means that stakeholders are actively engaged in decision making about the framing and design of R,M&E. This task is an opportunity to formalise the involvement of stakeholders in decision making.

### Learning-based

Decision-making processes and structures (such as an ongoing technical working group) should emphasise leadership and responsibilities for knowledge management, exchange and utilisation to ensure continuous learning, mutual understanding and creative ideas and thinking.

### Complex

Decision-making about how the evaluation will be done (including framing its purpose and questions, choosing an evaluation team, approving an evaluation plan and an evaluation report) may need to include different stakeholders. If the key stakeholders change, the decision making structures and processes might need to be flexible. Sometimes we may need to revisit decisions that have already been made.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

### Advisory and working groups/committees:

- Consider the creation of one or more of the following:

- [Steering group](#)

An M&E/evaluation/study steering committee or 'technical working group' to work through decisions and take forward actions (this could include representatives from all stakeholder groups).

- [Advisory group](#)

A technical advisory committee or ad hoc technical advisors to provide expert advice and recommendations (this may include local/regional experts) .

- [Citizen juries](#)

A community jury or consultation committee to review proposals, work through decisions and take forward actions (this may include, for example, local NGOs, Faith-Based Groups, activists, children's/adolescents/parents/etc. committees).

### Joint evaluations

- [Address particular evaluation management issues relating to joint projects, including donor partnerships](#)

This page of the Manager's Guide provides useful information for thinking about different kinds of joint evaluations and how this influences decision-making processes.

### Decision making matrix

- Consider creating a decision-making matrix as outlined in the example below. This can be useful to:
  - set out the kinds of decisions that will need to be made about the R,M&E (in this case, an evaluation).
  - clarify the roles of different groups in the different decisions
  - clarify the roles of each group in the different decisions, for instance, are they:
    - consulted
    - informed
    - integral to the discussions
    - required to approve

For instance, when deciding the focus of the evaluation, a technical sub-group might *propose* the focus, the technical working group might *discuss* and *meet consensus agreement*, and the evaluation team might be *informed* of the decision.

For more information see [Step 1 of the Manager's Guide to Evaluation](#).

## **C4D: Decide who will conduct the research or evaluation (or other studies for monitoring)**

### **What is it?**

Research, monitoring and evaluation tasks (such as developing an M&E Framework, undertaking small studies and evaluations) can be done internally by existing staff (within one organisation or as a partnership or joint activity involving a number of implementing partners), externally by a consultant, or a hybrid of these two options (where there is a combination of internal staff and stakeholders and external researchers and evaluators). It could also be done by peers, or by community groups. Required types of expertise, need for fresh outsider perspectives, cost, and time are key issues in deciding who will conduct some or all of the evaluation tasks.

### **General information**

The steps of the Manager's Guide to Evaluation for planning and managing evaluation give a comparison of the strengths and trade-offs of [internal and external evaluation methods](#). This guide helps decision-makers to be explicit about the reasons for decisions. The steps also provide guidance on [qualities to consider when recruiting](#) external evaluators or researchers. The Rainbow Framework also provides an overview of key methods and approaches for [deciding who will conduct an evaluation](#). These pages are recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

### **Applying the C4D principles**

#### **Participatory**

One important decision that needs to be made is who will conduct the R,M&E. This might mean involving internal staff, partners, community groups and other stakeholders in the R,M&E process. External consultant may still have a role in participatory R,M&E:

- An external consultant might be involved as a facilitator of a participatory R,M&E process
- If [stakeholders are involved in decision making about the R,M&E](#), they may decide that an external consultant is more beneficial, for example, for reasons of credibility, time scarcity, or particular expertise. The [list of trade-offs](#) can be a useful tool to have this discussion with stakeholders.

## Learning-based

Sometimes there are very few local evaluators with the skills and knowledge to be able to undertake C4D evaluation and studies. In these cases partnerships between international/regional consultants, local consultants and local community groups and organisations can be considered. In these situations you can state explicitly that mentoring and capacity development of the local partner are expected.

## Critical

What are the assumptions about who should conduct the R,M&E? What alternatives are there, and how might they be more or less inclusive of diverse voices? What kinds of qualities are important for a facilitator/ evaluator? How will might different facilitators influence power dynamic.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

### General options

- [Decide who will conduct the evaluation](#)

Several good methods and approaches that would work well for C4D are listed on this page of the Rainbow Framework, including methods such as internal methods; hybrid methods; community-based methods; external consultant; expert review; and peer review, and approaches such as horizontal evaluation and participatory evaluations.

### Mentoring role descriptions

- [Determine the evaluator qualities](#)

If mentoring roles will be part of your plan, consider this as part of determining consultant qualities, and include it in the EOI (see [Document management processes and agreements](#) for further information).

## Resource

- [The community radio continuous improvement toolkit](#)

This toolkit is premised on a mix of self-assessment and peer-review towards co-learning and horizontal evaluation. In this case, it is fellow community radio station staff and volunteers who undertake the assessment. It was created in the context of community radios in India, but, with some adaptation of the questions, the processes and guidance could be applied to support peer-assessment between organisations doing a range of different types of C4D.

## Examples

- [Ruka Juu II: Young farmers in business](#)

PDF

4.02 MB

The Ruka Juu Impact Evaluation was undertaken as a partnership between C4D NGO Femina HIP's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) department, international consultants and two local partners.

- [My Rights My Voice completion report 2011-2016](#)

My Rights My Voice Completion Report was led by a team of independent evaluators. Youth familiar with the programme were included in the field research as 'peer evaluators' in three out of the four countries. After initial training and the development of appropriate data collection tools, they independently carried out evaluation research with peers, parents and teachers, and presented the findings to Oxfam staff and partners.

This example is consistent with the C4D Evaluation framework in relation to this task in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** the report's background section (52-53) provides an example of an evaluation can be designed to incorporate both professional evaluators and young people in conducting evaluation tasks.
- **Learning-based:** participation of young people in peer-evaluation was to support mutual learning. It depended on adequate training in data collection tools.

## C4D: Participatory Matrix

Participation is a fundamental element of C4D, and should, where possible and appropriate, be incorporated into RM&E as a means of developing effective, innovative and sustainable C4D.

Different stakeholders can be engaged for different purposes and at different phases of RM&E planning and implementation. Participation in the form of providing information/data is a fairly nominal form of participation, while at the other end of the spectrum inclusion in decision making can be 'transformative' and 'empowering' .

## Participatory matrix

A participation and role matrix can help to map out which stakeholders will be contributing to which kinds of activities.

The level of participation increases from left to right. To map the stakeholders using the matrix, list the stakeholders in the first column, then indicate which roles each stakeholder has in the M&E/study (there may be more than one).

You can turn this into a collaborative process by discussing this matrix with stakeholders. You might want to replicate it on a large piece of paper. Consider the established decision making processes to determine who should be involved in determining how different groups might be engaged.

	<b>(lower level of participation - nominal)</b>				<b>higher level of participation - potentially transformative)</b>
Stakeholder	Sources of data/information	Collectors of data	Analysts of data	Decision-makers about what to do with the M&E findings.	Decision-makers about what the M&E/study should focus on, and how it should be done, and what to do with the findings.

## Resources

- [Impact evaluation: UNICEF's briefs and videos](#)

Nikola Balvin, Knowledge Management Specialist at the UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, presents new resources on impact evaluation and discusses how they can be used to support managers who commission impact evaluations.

## Engaging stakeholders

- [Community fairs](#)

A community fair is an event organised within the local community with the aim of providing information about a project and raising awareness of relevant issues.

- [Fishbowl technique](#)

The fish bowl activity is used to manage group discussion.

- [Formal meeting processes](#)

Studies have demonstrated that attendance at meetings and conferences, planning discussions within the project related to use of the program evaluation, and participation in data collection foster feelings of evaluation involvement among stakeholders (T

- [Informal meeting processes](#)

Informal meetings can simply be a conversation between an evaluator and a key stakeholder that is not conducted in a formal way.

## **C4D: Determine and secure resources**

### **What is it?**

Resources needed for R,M&E might include funding (to engage consultants, to cover travel costs, catering, R,M&E materials), time, expertise, willingness to be involved, and existing data. It is important be clear about available resources, and to be able to estimate the resources that will be required to do the R,M&E tasks well. Resources can then be secured (for example, through annual or project budgets, or seeking buy-in). If the resources required for the R,M&E are more than the resources available, additional resources will need to be found and/or strategies used to reduce the resources required, such as reducing the scope of the R,M&E.

### **General information**

The Manager's Guide to Evaluation provides detailed guidance on issues to consider regarding the [identification of resources](#), including suggestions for calculating budgets. The Rainbow Framework also [covers the topic](#) with additional links to methods for determining resources required and for securing resources, including working with local universities and strategies for reducing costs. There is also a relevant blog post on doing [evaluations on a shoestring](#). These pages are recommended background reading before considering options to apply to C4D.

### **Applying the C4D principles**

#### **Realistic**

Securing the resources needed, particularly funding, for R,M&E of C4D is a common challenge. This task is a foundational task for being realistic in the approach to R,M&E of C4D.

#### **Participatory**

It is important to openly acknowledge that participatory approaches generally require more time and more resources. Additional resources may include:

- additional time for [engaging stakeholders](#) and [establishing decision making processes](#)
- resources for [capacity development](#)

However, researchers (including June Lennie and Jo Tacchi in their book *Evaluating Communication for Development: a Framework for Social Change*) argue that participatory approaches are often less costly in the long term when the benefits of participation are factored in.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

### General options

- [Determine and secure resources](#)

Several good methods and approaches that would work well for C4D, with little to no adaptation required, are listed on this page of the Rainbow Framework. This includes creating an evaluation budget matrix and calculating evaluation costs including time, money and expertise. There is also advice on making the most of existing resources, such as working with universities to staff the evaluation and strategies to reduce costs.

### Using existing data

- [Resources stocktake](#)

The resources available for evaluation include people's time and expertise, equipment and funding.

## Example

### Barefoot M&E

- The Barefoot Impact Evaluation methodology for community radio M&E in Mozambique was designed to be a simple and inexpensive process for community radio organisations to manage and implement themselves, without expensive international consultants. It uses a range of clever M&E solutions to build M&E plans around the opportunities that are available. It was designed to be just enough to 'check the pulse' of the radio, but not too burdensome. The techniques used have wide applicability, and could be adapted to suit a range of different C4D NGO and other contexts. Some of the realistic, barefoot techniques include:
  - An internal self-assessment 'check-up' using a checklist
  - 'Hearing out' the community, where informal interviews with community members on their satisfaction are added onto routine contact with communities
  - Registration of callers and letters to the station, with forms left by the phones so that demographic information of callers can be recorded
  - Feedback questions on the back of message slips (message slips are primarily to request announcements are made, but 30% of people also filled in the questionnaire on the back)
  - Interviews with people living in the staff members' neighbourhood, which enables some

spread of the sample

- Interviewing at public events
- Some M&E is undertaken by a 'community mobilizer', who is a paid staff member at the station and is trained to undertake more in-depth focus group discussions and interviews.

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

- **Realistic:** the low-cost 'barefoot' approach focuses on make the most of limited resources. Although unable to meet academic standards in terms of sampling and rigour, it is good enough for the context in which is to be used.
- **Participatory:** the approach is intended to be managed and implemented by community radio stations with a nominated community mobilizer.
- **Learning-based:** the key users of the assessments are the community radio stations themselves. If they use it for learning and improving the M&E is meeting the purpose.

For further information about this example see the following resources:

- [Assessing Community Change: Development of a 'Bare Foot' Impact Assessment Methodology](#)
- [Internews community media guide 2009](#)  
PDF  
2.9 MB

See the article "Community Research for Community Media Sustainability" by Birgitte Jallo on page 34-37 of this guide.

## [C4D: Define ethical and quality evaluation standards for R,M&E](#)

### What is it?

It is important to agree on and be clear about what both the quality standards are for the R,M&E (issues such as rigor, contextuality, gender sensitivity, impartiality and other criteria about the quality of R,M&E), and what the ethical standards are (being respectful, sensitive, transparent and avoiding causing harm or raising false expectations). Quality and ethical standards should be agreed to early on, and adhered to throughout implementation. The ethical standards become particularly relevant considering methods and the workplan. It is also important to ensure there are processes to maintain awareness among all stakeholders about the agreed standards - for example by including a planned review process of the evaluation at key stages (e.g. the design, and the draft report - see [Review R,MandE systems and studies \(meta evaluation\)](#)).

### General information on quality standards

The Rainbow Framework covers general guidance on agreeing to [quality and ethical standards](#), with links to information on ethical guidelines and quality standards. The UN Evaluation Group (UNEG)

(to which UNICEF adheres) offers several [guidance documents](#), including:

- [UNEG Norms and Standards](#)
- [UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports](#)
- [UN Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System](#)

There are 13 'Norms' in the UNEG Norms and Standards, ranging from stating that UN agencies should have evaluation policies in place to discussions around impartiality, independence and ethics. There are four 'Standards' (which overlap somewhat with the 13 Norms), each with a series of sub-level standards. These pages and resources are recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

## **General information on ethics in R,M&E**

Ethics can feel quite challenging, but it really comes down to being respectful, transparent and avoiding causing harm. Important to identify any ethical risks and develop strategies and processes for managing these. There are many resources available on this topic, with a comprehensive list available on the [Ethical Guidelines](#) page on BetterEvaluation.

## **Applying the C4D principles**

### **Accountable**

The quality and ethical standards for C4D R,M&E should reflect the expectations of all the people and groups we are accountable to (donors and managers, partners and community groups). Defining and following quality and ethical standards is important for maintaining accountability and integrity in RM&E. Ensuring ethical practices in RM&E is a responsibility of everyone involved in the R,M&E.

### **Critical**

It is important to question existing sets of standards and their relevance in the local setting. We need to ask: whose interests and expectations are reflected in the quality and ethical standards? what are the assumptions embedded in the standards? what other perspectives are missing from those standards?

### **Participatory**

Participatory processes can be used to develop and clarify quality and ethical standards with partners, and community groups. This ensures that standards lay out appropriate practices in keeping with local standards and expectations. In terms of ethical standards, participatory approaches to define ethical standards can help ensure these are locally appropriate, especially where participatory methods are used, or where sensitive topics are being explored.

### **Holistic**

Our expectations and perceptions of quality and ethics are culturally bound. In seeking agreement on quality and ethical standards it is important to understand these in the context of social, cultural, and organisational systems.

## Realistic

In C4D the ethical standards should cover sharing results and findings in accessible ways (especially with marginalised groups and those who were consulted in the data collection and report writing process) as an ethical responsibility. This also helps with promoting a learning-based culture and continuous learning.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for Quality Standards and C4D

### Independence, impartiality and perceived conflicts

- [C4D: Establish Decision making processes](#)

Where there is a perceived conflict between participatory approaches of R,M&E and the Quality Standards (i.e. independence and impartiality), it may be useful to think of the range of methods for including stakeholders in participatory ways, including in decision making. The [Participation Matrix](#) can be a useful way to balance the quality standards and participatory approaches.

### Example

- [My Rights My Voice completion report 2011-2016](#)

This is a report summarising the evaluation findings of the My Right My Voice (MRMV) program. It is an example of how an evaluation can be conducted by both young, peer-evaluators and a professional consultant evaluator.

## General resources on ethics in R,M&E

- Below are some relevant resources with a particular focus on children and adolescents.
- [So You Want to Involve Children in Research? A toolkit supporting children's meaningful and ethical participation in re...](#)

This practical toolkit by Laws and Mann for Save the Children (2004), includes key principles, case studies and a checklist of key ethical considerations in M&E involving children.

- [Participatory approaches](#)

Participatory Approaches by Irene Guijt (2014) is part of a series of Methodological Briefs by the UNICEF Office of Research. It offers comprehensive guidance on involving children in participatory M&E, including a checklist of key ethical concerns.

- [Ethical Research Involving Children](#)

A compendium put together by UNICEF with a range of other partners, covering harms and benefits, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, payment and compensation, a section on available supports, sections on the different stages (planning, design, data collection, analysis & dissemination etc.), and finishing with a long list of case studies.

- [Evaluation Technical Notes - UNICEF Evaluation Office \(archived link\)](#)

Provides an overview of ethical considerations when involving children in M&E.

- [Doing qualitative field research on gender norms with adolescent girls and their families](#)

This research and practice note includes practical advice, examples and tools to ensure gender sensitivity in evaluation and research with adolescent girls.

It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Critical:** the guide takes seriously the gender-specific considerations that are required for ethical evaluation research and provides practical tools
- **Participation:** using this guide will help ensure meaningful participation and voice by adolescent girls in evaluation research.
- **Holistic:** the guide suggests open-ended questions and including family members in research to bring a holistic understanding.

- [Oxfam Responsible Program Data Policy](#)

This document outlines a rights-based policy for ethical data management, based on the following rights: the right to be counted and heard; the right to dignity and respect; the right to make an informed decision; the right to privacy; and the right to not be put at risk.

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

**Critical:** The policy recognises that data and ownership of data entails a position of power and responsibility, and the importance of the rights of marginalised groups in this process.

**Accountable:** The policy emphasises the ethical dimensions of data management processes and responsibilities.

- [C4D: Manage data](#)

Good data management means that systems are in place for consistent and ethical (see Define ethical and quality evaluation standards) collection, recording, storage, security, backing up, cleaning, and modifying, and ownership of data. This is part of data quality assurance (DQA).

## Specific resources on ethics and C4D R,M&E

- [Equal access participatory monitoring and evaluation toolkit](#)

This toolkit aims to help communication for development (C4D) organisations to demonstrate the impacts and outcomes of their initiatives, listen to their listeners, continuously learn, and feed this learning back into the organisation and its practices.

- [The IDEAS guide and facilitators' guide](#)

Modules 5 and 8 of this guide include activities to learn about common ethical risks in media and communication projects and evaluation, and to reflect on how these relate to projects. This resource is particularly good as an entry level guide.

## **C4D: Develop planning documents (evaluation plans and M&E frameworks)**

### **What is it?**

To undertake this task you need to bring together all the decisions made (manage, define, frame) and develop the documents that reflect these decisions.

This task covers two types of planning documents:

- Evaluation (or Research/ Study) Plans (for a single, discrete activity)
- Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks (a framework for monitoring, evaluating and learning through a range monitoring and evaluating activities)

An Evaluation/Research/Study Plan specifies: what will be evaluated; the purpose and criteria for the evaluation; the key evaluation questions; and how data will be collected, analysed, synthesised and reported.

A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework outlines the overall R,M&E plan for monitoring and evaluating across an entire program, or across different programs. It should specify the monitoring strategies, any studies, reviews or evaluations to do, with details about data sources, timing, management processes, as well as an overall program theory/logic model.

### **General Information**

#### **Evaluation/Research Study Plan**

The [Manager's Guide to Evaluation](#) provides a comprehensive guide for creating an Evaluation (or study/research) Plan, covering management, scoping, and commissioning processes. The specific steps that support the development of the evaluation planning documents are:

- [Scope the Evaluation](#)
- [Manage the development of the evaluation methodology](#)
- [Manage the development of the Workplan including logistics](#)

#### **M&E Framework**

BetterEvaluation provides some information on [developing an M&E Framework](#) (it is also possible to follow the Steps listed above as a guide to developing M&E Frameworks, though some steps will be

skipped). Another resource is a practical book by Markiewicz and Patrick [Developing Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks](#); the [companion website](#) includes a downloadable template that can be used as the basis of an M&E Framework (see also an [abbreviated guide on the authors' website](#)). This resource suggests the use of OEAC/DAC Evaluation Criteria as the basis of key questions, and this influences the construction of the template.

The pages above are recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

In the section below specific to C4D we provide adapted versions of these templates with additional guidance with reference to C4D specific examples.

## Applying the C4D Principles

### Participatory

Partners, community groups and others with roles in planning and implementing C4D should be involved in the development of the M&E Framework or the Evaluation/Research Plan. This ensures that these documents respond to local needs, questions and contexts.

### Complex

C4D is generally integrated into a program. Because of this, M&E Frameworks for C4D should ideally be developed as part of the broader program's M&E Frameworks. Where there is a need for changing C4D action based on new insights, rapid, flexible cycles of evaluation will be most appropriate. Evaluation contracts will need to take this into account.

### Critical

It is important to reflect on power imbalances in the development of these strategic documents. Who has control over the creation and any adaptations to documents? How accessible are documents? Some types of strategic documents, such as Logical Frameworks, reflect Western styles of thinking and planning.

### Learning-based

Learning events, structures and processes (inclusive of all partners and community groups involved in implementation) should be built into M&E Frameworks and Evaluation/Research Plans. M&E Frameworks should be flexible enough to accommodate emergent issues. Some organisations are starting to refer to 'Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Frameworks' to emphasise the importance of considering how frameworks can support learning in addition to producing information.

## Recommended methods and adaptation

### M&E Framework

- [C4D: Develop planning documents \(evaluation plans and M&E frameworks\)](#)

Results Framework/Logical Framework: A Results Framework is associated with Results Based Management. It places an emphasis on monitoring progress using largely quantitative indicators with indicators set for each level of the causal chain (inputs, outputs, outcomes, processes). Results Frameworks have some advantages in terms of accountability and equity, but they can be limiting in terms of some of the other principles in the C4D Evaluation Framework.

Outcome Mapping Performance Monitoring Framework and Evaluation Plan: The Outcome Mapping process works towards setting up a realistic, learning-based Performance Monitoring Framework to understand changes in behaviour, relationships, actions and activities in the people and groups who are connected with the program. This process is compatible with most principles in the C4D Evaluation Framework, but some adaptations may be required to meet accountability requirements in some cases.

- [C4D Hub: Create a questions-led M&E framework](#)

A questions-led M&E Framework starts with thinking about the information needs (questions) of the primary intended users, and builds a plan for answering those questions.

## Evaluation plan

- The BetterEvaluation website includes several methods that can be adapted to suit C4D, including:
- [Evaluation plan](#)

This method sets out details of what, how and when evaluation tasks will be undertaken.

- [Evaluation work plan](#)

This method is more specific about timeframes, deliverables and milestones.

- [Inception report](#)

An inception report may be a first milestone or deliverable, which sets out the conceptual framework, key questions and methodology, and timeframe after some initial scoping work, either desk-based or in the field.

## Example

- [Articulating mental models](#)

Retrospective analysis of ODF in Nadia District, India - example of participatory process to develop key questions informing the research plan.

In this study the researchers used articulating mental models to seek the inputs of key stakeholders in the development of the research plan (the research design and key questions). This was process undertaken during a scoping phase. A range of stakeholders, including

relevant UNICEF teams, District and local administrators, Faith-based-organisations, health extension workers, community-level committees and individuals were asked their views 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 lives within the local context
- The sustainability factors
- their theories of change

The findings were combined and used as the basis for further exploration.

## **C4D Hub: Develop an M&E Framework**

A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework outlines the overall RM&E plan for monitoring and evaluating across an entire program, or across different programs. It should specify the monitoring strategies, any studies, reviews or evaluations to do done, with details about data sources, timing, management processes, as well as an overall program theory/logic model.

### **Groundwork tasks**

The M&E Framework should be informed by several other important decisions and tasks. The C4D Evaluation framework approach would suggest consideration of the following aspects as preparation for undertaking this task:

#### **Participatory**

Have you identified and engaged with stakeholders? Will they be involved in developing the M&E Framework or Evaluation Plan?

- [Understand and engage stakeholders](#)

#### **Complex:**

Have you reviewed aspects of the C4D initiatives that are simple, complicated and complex, and considered the implications? Have you developed a Program Theory that includes possible intended and unintended changes?

- [Complexity](#)
- [Develop program theory/logic model](#)
- [Identify potential unintended results](#)

#### **Holistic**

Have you carefully considered the key M&E questions? Do these relate to the primary purpose for the M&E Framework, paying attention to context? Do they relate to the Program Theory?

- [Specify the key Research/M&E questions](#)
- [Decide purpose](#)
- [Develop program theory/logic model](#)

## **Realistic**

Have you determined what resources are available?

- [Determine and secure resources](#)

## **Learning-based**

Have you considered the capacity-building needs and planned for these?

- [Develop RM&E capacity](#)

# **Deciding on which method to use to create an M&E Framework**

Three methods for developing an M&E Framework are recommended for C4D.

## **1. A questions-led M&E Framework**

A questions-led M&E Framework starts with thinking about the information needs (questions) of the primary intended users, and builds a plan for answering those questions. This is a good method for C4D and is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

### **Participatory**

The potential uses that stakeholders, especially the primary intended users, have are the focus of the M&E. These stakeholders and users should be involved in deciding on the purpose and questions, and selecting options for answering questions

### **Holistic**

The [key M&E questions](#) drive the direction of the framework. These questions should go beyond 'what happened' and also question the causes, how good programs and results are, and what to do next.

### **Critical**

A questions-led M&E Framework encourages mixed methods to build a rich understanding of what is working, and what is not working, for different groups.

### **Realistic**

A questions-led M&E Framework prioritises efforts around the questions that matter most to users. It does not try to measure everything. If primary intended users want to know about impact of C4D

initiatives, that implies certain types of strategies, and should be planned for as part of the M&E Framework. If there are lots of uncertainties about what might work, an M&E Framework can be built to allow for trialling and comparison of different strategies that are investigated through smaller studies and inform an emergent approach.

## **Learning-based**

A questions-led M&E Framework takes learning from RM&E seriously, beyond a list of recommendations at the end. If key users priorities understanding how to make improvements during implementation, this implies certain strategies. Further, learning structures, events and processes (such as committees, annual reviews etc.) can be built into the M&E Framework.

## **Accountable**

A questions-led M&E Framework supports a true accountability, beyond compliance-oriented reporting against indicators, through building a rigorous, mixed-methods M&E Framework that can be designed to answer questions about effectiveness, impact, relevant and other quality standard criteria.

## **Complex**

A questions-led M&E Framework is much easier to design around complicated and complex types of C4D initiatives and problems. Depending on the framing of key questions, a Questions-Led M&E Framework can be designed to support emergent and responsive implementation using methods and strategies suited to understanding uncertainty. The focus on questions means it remain realistic, rather than trying to measure every single thing that might possibly be measured.

## **Resource**

[Create a questions led M&E framework](#)

This approach represents a new innovation in the way C4D M&E Frameworks can be created.

## **Example**

[National program for child protection communication](#)

The Vietnam CO and RMIT University researchers followed these steps with counterparts to co-develop an M&E Framework and Plan for the VAC campaign. Matrices were used to document their decisions

## **2. Results Frameworks**

Results Frameworks are common in agencies using Results-Based Management approaches. A Results Framework uses a Logic Model as the basis of selecting or creating indicators for inputs, outputs, outcomes. A Results Framework brings the following benefits:

## **Accountable**

Results Frameworks are designed for upwards reporting against agreed performance indicators. It is easy for managers to aggregate these and get a quick, composite picture of progress.

## **Critical**

Results Frameworks can specify the data disaggregations that will be required to enable an understanding of results for different groups, including marginalised groups. Further, Results Frameworks generally include targets, which can specify if improvements in indicators for specific groups or geographical locations should be targeted, and the expected targets of more challenging groups compared to easier to reach/engage groups.

There are a number of weaknesses to understand about Results Frameworks. These include:

## **Participatory**

Logical Frameworks and Results Frameworks can be inaccessible, foreign and difficult to understand, especially for local NGO partners, who are usually not part of the process of designing the frameworks.

## **Holistic**

Results Frameworks mainly rely on the selection of indicators to provide an indication of what is happening. A Results Framework generally does not set programs up well to understand the causes or contributions of changes in indicators. If you are using a Results Framework, ensure that you consider methods and strategies that help you understand contributions and causes, how good the program is, and how it can be improved.

## **Complex**

A Results Framework is based the assumption that change happens in linear ways (inputs leads to outputs, lead to outcomes). Complicated and complex change trajectories (e.g. if something gets worse before it gets better, thing improve and suddenly decline) and other contradictions and uncertainties remain largely invisible.

## **Learning-based**

Results Frameworks are premised on a high degree of upfront planning followed by implementation of that plan. Although it is sometimes possible to adjust Results Framework at certain times, it is generally not easy to build a Results Framework in such a way that allows for adaptive and learning-based implementation.

Results Frameworks can be adapted to be more in keeping with the C4D Evaluation Framework by considering what additional monitoring might be needed, and what additional small research, studies, evaluations and reviews can be included.



## Tasks

Specify C4D inputs, outputs, outcomes at each level of the Program Theory

- [Develop program theory or logic model](#)

Select indicators and other monitoring strategies

- [Use measures, indicators or metrics](#)
- [Sample](#)
- [Collect and/or retrieve data \(methods\)](#)
- [Analyse data](#)

## Resource

[ESARO Results-based management training](#)

PPTX

1.18 MB

These easy-to-follow slides provide detailed steps on developing a Results Framework. It includes particularly useful guidance on problem analysis, outcome chain (or program theory), and strategies, risks and assumptions, which are built into the Results Framework.

It 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
- **Holistic or complex:** This particular training package includes several useful processes for creating a robust Theory of Change, taking into account assumptions, risks, priorities, and an explicit change theory, which is used as the basis for a Results Framework.

## Example

[Monitoring and Evaluation of Participatory Theatre for Change \(PTC\)](#)

[Summary and review of the Monitoring and evaluation of participatory theatre for change \(PTC\)](#)

Table 2 on page 17 includes a sample monitoring plan. This guide demonstrates how a strong theory of change can inform the design of monitoring and evaluation plans. 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, which is based on three high level principles, which can be adaptively applied to suit emerging conditions.
- **Realistic:** the 'Reach, Resonance, Response' framework is simple enough to understand, useful as a guiding framework, and captures the important aspects of C4D outputs and outcomes.

### 3. Outcome Mapping to Develop an M&E System

The Outcome Mapping process includes the development of a Performance Monitoring Framework and an Evaluation Plan. Outcome Mapping was developed as an alternative to the kinds of M&E Frameworks associated with Results Based Management, and is particularly intended for social and behavioural change and social transformation initiatives. The Performance Monitoring Framework sets out how actions and progress towards goals will be monitored, building on the progress markers (based on what you would 'expect to see', 'like to see', and 'love to see' in boundary partners), the strategies and organizational practices (all mapped out in the intentional design, similar to theory of change, stage). Not everything is monitored, and there are 'light' methods. There are three main data collection tools for monitoring: an outcome journal, a strategy journal and a performance journal. The Evaluation Plan in Outcome mapping is based on the identified uses of primary intended users and their questions. This approach is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

#### **Participatory**

Outcome Mapping is based on a participatory approach, with much of the planning and mapping decisions intended to be made in workshop settings.

#### **Complex**

Outcome Mapping focuses on changes in the behaviours, relationships, actions or activities of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a development program works directly, rather than focusing on the development impact of a program in terms of changes in the state or situation such as poverty alleviation, or reduced child marriage etc.

#### **Learning-based**

Outcome Mapping builds a monitoring and evaluation system for continual learning and improvement.

#### **Realistic**

Outcome Mapping uses group processes to prioritise what will be monitored, recognising that the resources for monitoring and evaluation are limited. In Outcome Mapping, the available resources are channelled into efforts to better understanding of the influences of a program's work on change and use this to improve its performance.

It is important to keep in mind:

#### **Accountable**

While Outcome Mapping resources point to ways to use Outcome Mapping for accountability and reporting, mutual learning and improvement is more of the focus. The monitoring methods used are generally based on self-assessment and reporting, which may not be considered rigorous enough in some contexts. Some adaptations to use alternative methods could be used to address this problem.

## Resources

[BetterEvaluation page on Outcome Mapping](#)

This page includes a concise overview and relates the approach to the Rainbow Framework tasks.

[Outcome Mapping Learning Community](#)

A hub of information on Outcome Mapping, including guides, manuals, video tutorials, and examples.

## [C4D Hub: Create a questions-led M&E framework](#)

A questions-led M&E Framework starts with thinking about the information needs (questions) of the primary intended users, and builds a plan for answering those questions.

This is a good method for C4D and is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

### **Participatory**

The potential uses that stakeholders, especially the primary intended users, have are the focus of the M&E. These stakeholders and users should be involved in deciding on the purpose and questions, and selecting options for answering questions.

### **Holistic**

The key M&E questions drive the direction of the framework. These questions should go beyond 'what happened' and also question the causes, how good programs and results are, and what to do next.

### **Critical**

A questions-led M&E Framework encourages mixed methods to build a rich understanding of what is working, and what is not working, for different groups.

### **Realistic**

A questions-led M&E Framework prioritises efforts around the questions that matter most to users. It does not try to measure everything. If primary intended users want to know about impact of C4D initiatives, that implies certain types of strategies, and should be planned for as part of the M&E Framework. If there are lots of uncertainties about what might work, an M&E Framework can be built to allow for trialling and comparison of different strategies that are investigated through smaller studies and inform an emergent approach.

## Learning-based

A questions-led M&E Framework takes learning from RM&E seriously, beyond a list of recommendations at the end. If key users priorities understanding how to make improvements during implementation, this implies certain strategies. Further, learning structures, events and processes (such as committees, annual reviews etc.) can be built into the M&E Framework.

## Accountable

A questions-led M&E Framework supports a true accountability, beyond compliance-oriented reporting against indicators, through building a rigorous, mixed-methods M&E Framework that can be designed to answer questions about effectiveness, impact, relevant and other quality standard criteria.

## Complex

A questions-led M&E Framework is much easier to design around complicated and complex types of C4D initiatives and problems. Depending on the framing of key questions, a Questions-Led M&E Framework can be designed to support emergent and responsive implementation using methods and strategies suited to understanding uncertainty. The focus on questions means it remain realistic, rather than trying to measure every single thing that might possibly be measured.

## Steps:

### Step 1. Recommended preparation tasks: a checklist

The M&E Framework should be informed by several other important decisions and tasks. The C4D Evaluation framework approach would suggest consideration of the following aspects as preparation for undertaking this task:

#### Participatory:

Have you [identified and engaged with stakeholders](#)? Will they be involved in developing the M&E Framework or Evaluation Plan?

#### Complex:

Have you reviewed aspects of the C4D initiatives that are [simple, complicated and complex](#), and considered the implications? Have you [developed a Program Theory](#) that includes possible [intended and unintended changes](#)?

#### Realistic:

Have you [determined what resources are available](#)?

#### Learning based:

Have you considered the [capacity building needs and planned for these](#)?

## Step 2: Specify the key questions, and analyse them by type.

[Specify the key questions](#), and [analyse them by type](#).

Different types of questions require different types of methods and strategies to get answers. The four main types are:

- Descriptive
- Causal
- Evaluative
- Predictive and Action

## Step 3: Download a matrix template to fill in as you make decisions:

[C4D Matrix Template](#)

DOCX

22 KB

## Step 4: Sort Questions by Type

1. Start by sorting all the smaller questions by their type. This means making a new list of all the descriptive questions, all the causal questions, all the evaluative questions, and all the action/predictive questions (it is helpful to keep the numbers, i.e. 1.1, 1.2 etc. for resorting according to the Key Question later).
2. Identify any questions that are the same or similar, and if possible adjust the wording of very similar questions slightly to avoid unnecessary duplication, making sure not to lose the essence of any questions.
3. Paste the list of questions under each of the headings (Descriptive, Causal, Evaluative, Action/Predictive) in Matrix Template document the space provided.

## Step 5: Decide how to answer descriptive questions and compile a matrix

In your matrix template add all the descriptive questions to the first column:

Descriptive Question (DQ)	What will be described	Existing data	Additional data collection/retrieval	Sampling/disaggregation (equity)	Analysis	Timing
DQ x.x						
DQ x.x						
DQ x.x						

In the second column make a clear statement about what will be described (e.g. types of/number of communication activities undertaken, or levels of knowledge on a specific topic). A theory of change can be very helpful here. (see here for more on [Develop a Theory of Change](#)).

In the third column list any existing or accessible data that could be used to answer that question, and assess their quality and relevance (see [Determine and secure resources](#)). There are often statistics available that can be used for C4D indicators. Other existing data that might be useful can come from previous research and evaluation studies, official records and publicly available statistics.

Finally, make selections for additional data collection/retrieval, sampling and analysis, and add these to the matrix. More information on options for these is below:

- [Sample](#)
- [Use measures, indicators or metrics](#)
- [Collect and/or retrieve data](#)
- [Manage data](#)
- [Combine qualitative and quantitative data](#)
- [Analyse data](#)

## Step 6: Decide how to answer causal questions and compile a matrix

The matrix for answering causal questions is slightly different. Often a matrix to answer causal questions will refer to descriptive data and will use analysis strategies that investigate causal relationships between variables.

Causal relationship	Comments	Strategy 1: Scope for a credible counterfactual?	Strategy 2: Scope for checking consistency of evidence?	Strategy 3: Scope for ruling out other alternative explanations?
Variable 1	Variable 2			

First we need to identify the variables. Looking at each of your causal questions try to identify what the variables are. A very simple example might be:

Variable 1: Exposure to communication materials

Variable 2: Level of understanding of a specific topic

In a question about bottleneck and barriers, Variable 1 might be 'the presence of a barrier' and variable 2 the intermediate outcome. Your theory of change can be useful for clarifying variables

(see [Develop program theory or logic model](#)).

Use the comments column to note any important information e.g. the treatment of groups of variables, or use of answers from descriptive questions.

There are three main strategies for answering questions about the causal relationships between variables.

- [Compare results to a counterfactual \(strategy 1\)](#)
- [Check the results support causal attribution \(strategy 2\)](#)
- [Investigate possible alternative explanations \(strategy 3\)](#)

Review these strategies, note whether or not a credible counterfactual will be feasible; and the list selected strategies for checking the consistency of evidence and for ruling out alternative explanations. It is recommended that you include multiple strategies of different kinds.

### Examples

- [National program for child protection communication M&E plan](#) (page 20-22): Matrix for answering causal questions as filled in by Vietnam CO and their counterparts with variables identified

### Resources

- [Watch a webinar on Answering causal questions and investigating C4D contributions](#) . Use the password *evaluatingC4D*

## Step 7: Decide how to answer evaluative questions and compile a matrix

The matrix for answering evaluative questions needs to show the processes you will use to select and apply criteria, standards and weighting. Each evaluative question in your list might need its own processes, or a group of evaluative questions might be answered using the same processes.

---

What will be evaluated	Criteria	Standards	Synthesis/Weighting	Process for developing agreed standards, criteria and synthesis
------------------------	----------	-----------	---------------------	---

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Begin by making a statement about what will be evaluated (that is, what will be judged or valued). This might be particular activities, particular C4D approaches, particular sites, or particular outcomes.

To judge and value something we can apply criteria, standards and then we would synthesise and weight those to come to conclusions.

- [Determine what 'success' looks like](#)
- [Synthesise data from a single evaluation](#)

Once you have made your selections, add these to the matrix and describe the processes to be used.

## Step 8: Decide how to answer Action/ Predictive Questions and compile a matrix

Answering action questions in a credible way often requires a process of identifying and assessing options for action. It is often useful to have a wider group of people involved in this process than simply an external evaluation team.

Action/Predictive Questions (AQ)	Process and participants for answering Action/Predictive Questions
AQ x.x	
AQ x.x	
AQ x.x	

Begin by listing the Action/Predictive questions in the first column.

The material on how to [generalise findings and decide on actions](#) indicates some methods for answering action/predictive questions

Once you have made your selections add these to the second column. Note: you may use the same process to answer all questions and in these cases you may simplify the matrix to indicate this.

## Step 9: Develop a summary evaluation matrix with all planned data collection and analysis, including use of existing data

The next step is to compile a matrix that summarises how you will answer each of the Key Questions and associated smaller questions. This is intended as a summary table; in most cases the more detailed matrixes for answering descriptive, causal, evaluative and action questions will remain in the final document.

KQ	Data source / method / analysis 1	Data source / method / analysis 2	Data source / method / analysis 3	Data source / method / analysis 4
<b>1 [add KQs]</b>				
1.1 [add sub questions]				
1.2				
1.3				

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1.4

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2.

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2.1

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2.2

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3.

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3.1

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3.2

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3.3

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4.

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4.1

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4.2

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Add the Key Questions into the shaded rows, the associated sub or smaller questions underneath. You may need to add or remove rows. Add short descriptions of the data source or method in the corresponding boxes. Where possible, make note of timing, (i.e. baseline + every six months; baseline, midline, endline; ad hoc or as triggered etc.)

You can either rename the column headings (e.g. Existing data; Data Collection and Analysis methods; Causal Analysis methods; Stakeholder workshops), which makes it easy to see all the additional data collection in one column; or you could leave the headings as listed and fill in from left to right in the corresponding rows. This makes sense where there are a high number of different methods being used.

### **Step 10. List required tasks, studies, events, processes**

The final step is to extract a list of the tasks, studies, events and processes that are outlined in the matrix, and the associated methods (e.g. baseline studies, bottleneck analysis studies, evaluations, workshops, expert analysis or review processes etc). This list will later be used as the basis of a cost estimate and a workplan.

If who is doing the evaluation had not yet been decided, [decide who will conduct the evaluation](#)

## **C4D: Document management processes and agreements**

## What is it?

A number of documents (such as Terms of Reference (ToR), Request for Proposal (RFP) and/or Scope of Work) need to be created as part of the management of research, evaluations and studies. Such documents provide guidance, and they are particularly important when commissioning external evaluators. The documents state the roles, resources, and responsibilities of the researchers or evaluators and the scope of the study or evaluation.

## General information

The BetterEvaluation Rainbow framework includes good [resources on creating these documents](#). There is also a [GeneraTOR tool](#) developed as part of the Steps for Planning and Managing an Evaluation to generate a TOR. In addition, the [UNEG Quality Checklist](#) is a useful guide for UN agencies from the United Nations Evaluation Group, which includes a checklist for developing a good quality evaluation ToR or inception report. These pages are recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

## Applying the C4D Principles

### Learning-based

Recruiting consultants with expertise in both C4D and the specific program area can be challenging. Consider what kinds of expertise are required, what kinds are desirable, and what kinds are easily translatable from similar fields and approaches. Also consider whether capacity building and mentoring partnerships can be incorporated to fill gaps. See also [Decide who will conduct the research/evaluation](#) (or other study or monitoring).

### Accountable

Transparent and thorough record-keeping of management processes and agreements is supports accountability to all stakeholders in RM&E processes.

### Realistic

Pay attention to the description of the Scope of Work and make sure it matches the funding available. Experienced consultants can see (and will avoid) Terms of References that ask too much within too little time and without adequate resources. Use the [Determine and secure resources](#) task to make sure the resources available match the scope and consider cheaper methods.

## Recommended options and adaptations for documenting management processes and agreements in C4D

### General options

- [Determine and secure resources](#)

Identify what resources (time, money, expertise, equipment, etc.) will be needed and available for the evaluation. Consider both internal resources (e.g. staff time) and external resources (e.g. participants' time to attend meetings to provide feedback).

- These methods include:

- [Expression of interest](#)

An expression of interest (EoI) is a way for an organisation to publish its intention to appoint an evaluation team to conduct an evaluation of a specific project or program.

- [Request for proposal \(RFP\)](#)

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a formal request for evaluators to prepare a response to a planned evaluation and are generally used to select the final evaluator for the evaluation.

- [Scope of work](#)

A Scope of Work (SOW) is a plan for conducting an evaluation which outlines the work that is to be performed by the evaluation team.

- [Terms of reference](#)

A Terms of Reference (ToR) document provides an important overview of what is expected in an evaluation.

- [Contractual agreement](#)

A formal contract is needed to engage an external evaluator and a written agreement covering similar issues can also be used to document agreements about an internal evaluator.

- [Memorandum of understanding](#)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines an agreement between two collaborating bodies in order to identify the working relationships and guidelines that exist between them.

## Examples

- There are many examples of C4D-related Expressions of Interests, Request for Proposals and Terms of References. Below are two:
- [Final Evaluation for “Communicating for Peace in South Sudan: A Social and Behaviour Change Communication Initiative”](#)

This TOR, created by Search for Common Ground, gives a comprehensive and well-structured overview for a fairly standard type of evaluation. The document includes:

The context The intervention summary (see Develop initial description) Goals (see Decide purpose) Audience (see Identify primary intended users) The key questions (see Specify the key evaluation questions and with criteria (see Determine what 'success' looks like) Some guidance on the suggested sample selection (see Sample) and methods (see Collect and or retrieve data (methods)) Expectations and deliverables Logistical support Timeframe Budget (see Determine and secure resources) Requirements of the evaluator (see Decide who will conduct the evaluation) Ethical and qualities standards (see Define ethical and quality evaluation standards) Instructions for applicants.

- [Terms of reference for an action research approach to evaluation of She Can project - ActionAid](#)

This is an example of a TOR for an evaluation more in keeping with the C4D Evaluation Framework. 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 to be used as outlined in this TOR is a theory-based evaluation using some action research.

The approach and the TOR are consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Complex:** the use of the phased process allows for an adaptive approach. The first phase includes limited data collection to inform monitoring and learning strategies, followed by a second phase with six-monthly data collection and review activities, and a third and final phase that includes 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 undertake evaluation. The description on pages 5-6 show 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). Further, although the consultancy will last approximately 3 years over four countries, the budget is relatively modest at \$100,000, accounting for the fact that it is not a full-time consultancy.
- **Critical:** The TOR states that the evaluation design must give 'due consideration to the involvement of project participants at all stages, and must seek to give primacy to the views and voices of people living in poverty, particularly women and girls'.

## [C4D: Review R,M&E systems and studies \(meta evaluation\)](#)

## What is it?

A review process (also referred to as a meta-evaluation) is an important part of the implementation process. It enables critical reflection and reviews of the effectiveness of R,M&E systems, studies and evaluation capacity development strategies. Reviews can be undertaken on evaluation or research plans and M&E frameworks prior to implementation, and on evaluation and assessment reports after implementation.

## General Information

The Rainbow Framework provides methods for [undertaking a review](#), including expert reviews, peer-reviews and more. The Manager's Guide to Evaluation also provides guidance on including a both a technical review process and a review by key stakeholders of the [evaluation/study design](#) prior to implementation (towards the end of the section). These pages are recommended background reading before considering options to apply to C4D.

## Applying the C4D Evaluation Principles

### Critical

Critical reflection throughout all aspects of the RM&E helps to maintain the quality of the RM&E and identify areas for improvement or extra attention. It is particularly important where participatory RM&E approaches are used in order to maintain an eye to issues of power and voice. Developing meta-evaluation processes helps to formalise the processes and procedures that will incorporate this in to an implementable plan for regular critical reflection.

### Learning-based

Including review or meta-evaluation processes in C4D R,M&E systems is a key part of being learning-based, using critical reflection processes, and it contributes to capacity development. The aim is to continually strengthen and improve R,M&E processes so that they better meet the needs of the people and organizations involved and help to create more sustainable, learning-oriented C4D organizations and initiatives.

### Participatory

This task enables mutual learning and engagement among partners, relevant institutions and community groups.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

- The C4D Evaluation Framework would encourage an inclusive, participatory approach to meta-evaluation, such as:
- [Group critical reflection](#)

This method involves facilitating group stakeholder feedback sessions on evaluation findings.

- [Individual critical reflection](#)

This method involves facilitating independent feedback from particular individual stakeholders.

- [Peer review](#)

Conducting an evaluation using individuals/organizations who are working on similar projects.

- [Expert review](#)

Expert review involves an identified expert providing a review of draft documents at specified stages of a process and/or planned processes.

## **C4D: Develop R,M&E capacity**

### **What is it?**

Assessing the capacity, and support for the capacity development needs, of organizations and key partners and community groups and others involved in the R,M&E will help to increase the effectiveness, quality, rigour and utilisation of the overall R,M&E processes and outcomes.

Capacity refers to: human capacities (knowledge and skills), organizational capacities (technical infrastructure and processes) and social capacities (supportive networks and relationships). It also means fostering an evaluation and learning culture by strengthening the whole organization and its R,M&E systems and improving coordination, cooperation and collaboration between internal and external agents and groups.

### **General Information**

The Rainbow Framework section on [developing evaluation capacity](#) lists a range of methods that are useful for thinking about capacity development as more than training and workshops. This page is recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

## **Applying the C4D Evaluation Principles**

### **Learning-based**

Including capacity development processes in C4D R,M&E systems is a key part of being learning-based. This process should begin with a preliminary assessment of R,M&E capacities of local groups and institutions. What sort of ongoing training, support or mentoring might be needed? What sorts of local research training institutions are available? How can this best be delivered?

## **Participatory**

Capacity development is an important task since participatory approaches will often depend on capacity-building of stakeholders. All learning events, structures and processes should be inclusive of community groups and other implementers and planners of C4D.

## **Holistic**

It is important to take a whole of system approach to R,M&E capacity development of C4D. It can be useful to consider:

- What type of capacity development is needed, for whom, and at what level?
- How can capacity development be most effectively built into the activities of our organization and its R,M&E systems and processes?
- How will evaluation capacity be sustained, especially if key staff leaves our organization?

## **Realistic**

Not all capacity-building work should start from scratch. What existing systems and 'communities of practice' can be used to enhance capacities and strengthen networks? Prior to implementing capacity building ensure a capacity needs assessment (which could be rapid) has been undertaken.

## **Complexity**

Capacity building efforts need to support people and organisations to become more aware of how to work with the complexity of social change. This may mean capacity building in understanding and using complexity concepts and language, and exploring different ways of thinking about and responding to social change.

## **Critical**

A lack of local capacity can lead to exclusion of local voices and perspectives. Partnerships and capacity building within local community groups and institutions are important so that there is genuine inclusion and contribution of local voices and perspectives. Pay critical attention to power dynamics in capacity-building partnerships.

## **C4D resources and examples**

- The following networks and resources are a good starting point for strengthening R,M&E Capacity Development - how could you build on them:
- [The C4D Network](#)

A global network of scholars, consultants and practitioners. The C4D Network regularly posts and sends emails about seminars, courses, new guides, resources, and other news. Members of the C4D Network also organise 'meetups' in various cities throughout the year. It is possible to join as a free or paid member.

- [The Communication Initiative](#)

Best known as an online repository of C4D resources, research, news and much more; and for the regular Drum Beat newsletter. It also includes network/group spaces for discussion.

- [The Learning Lab - UNICEF Malawi \(C4D\)](#)

An initiative by the UNICEF Malawi C4D team (run by Change Makers) that brought together UNICEF program teams, government partners and NGO partners for a highly reflexive five day workshop.

- [My Rights My Voice completion report 2011-2016](#)

This evaluation was conducted by both professional evaluators and youth peer evaluators. This example is consistent with the C4D evaluation framework in relation to this task in the following way:

- **Learning-based:** Youth peer-evaluators were trained to use appropriate data collection tools. In countries where access by international evaluators was restricted due to visa and safety issues, a senior national evaluator conducted the fieldwork with distance coaching from the core evaluation team.

## [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 are 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](#)  
PPTX  
1.18 MB

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).

## **C4D: Frame**

Frame is one of the seven clusters of R,M&E tasks in the Rainbow Framework.

Framing R,M&E involves being clear about the boundaries of the R,M&E. Why is the R,M&E being done? What are the broad R,M&E questions it is trying to answer? What are the values that will be used to make judgments about whether it is good or bad, better or worse than alternatives, or getting better or worse?

There are four tasks associated with frame. Each task includes C4D specific methods, advice and resources on establishing the boundaries and focus of the R,M&E

## **C4D: Identify primary intended users**

### **What is it?**

Intended users are the specifically identified people who will use the M&E findings; primary intended users are those whose needs the evaluation will particularly try to meet. Primary intended users have a desire, responsibility or role in doing things differently (e.g. make decisions, change strategies, take action, change policies, etc.), because of their engagement in the R,M&E process and/or with the R,M&E findings. Therefore, to make sure the R,M&E is used, it is important to identify and engage with these people. The [stakeholder engagement task](#) is a good starting point for identifying users. It is useful to think about the primary intended users while also thinking about the [primary intended uses \(or the purpose\)](#).

### **General information**

General advice and additional resources about [identifying intended users](#) are available in the Rainbow Framework - this page is recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

### **Applying the C4D principles**

#### **Participatory**

Because the C4D Evaluation Framework suggests a participatory approach, this should influence thinking about primary intended users. For example, in C4D key members of the community can often be primary intended users, especially for collective action and social mobilization.

#### **Accountable**

We often assume that the primary intended users of RM&E are the manager and donors. In C4D we to think more broadly about who might use the RM&E. Key users in C4D usually include community groups, partners and others with roles in planning and implementation. The C4D and the R,M&E should be accountable to all of these groups.

#### **Critical**

It is important to bring a critical lens to this process, and ensure that the primary intended users are

not only those with formal, hierarchical power. The processes for engaging with primary intended users should address issues of power and control to ensure the needs and values of the less powerful are not excluded.

## Complex

There may be different views about who to include, there may be multiple users. Primary intended users may have different information needs because of their different roles and priorities.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

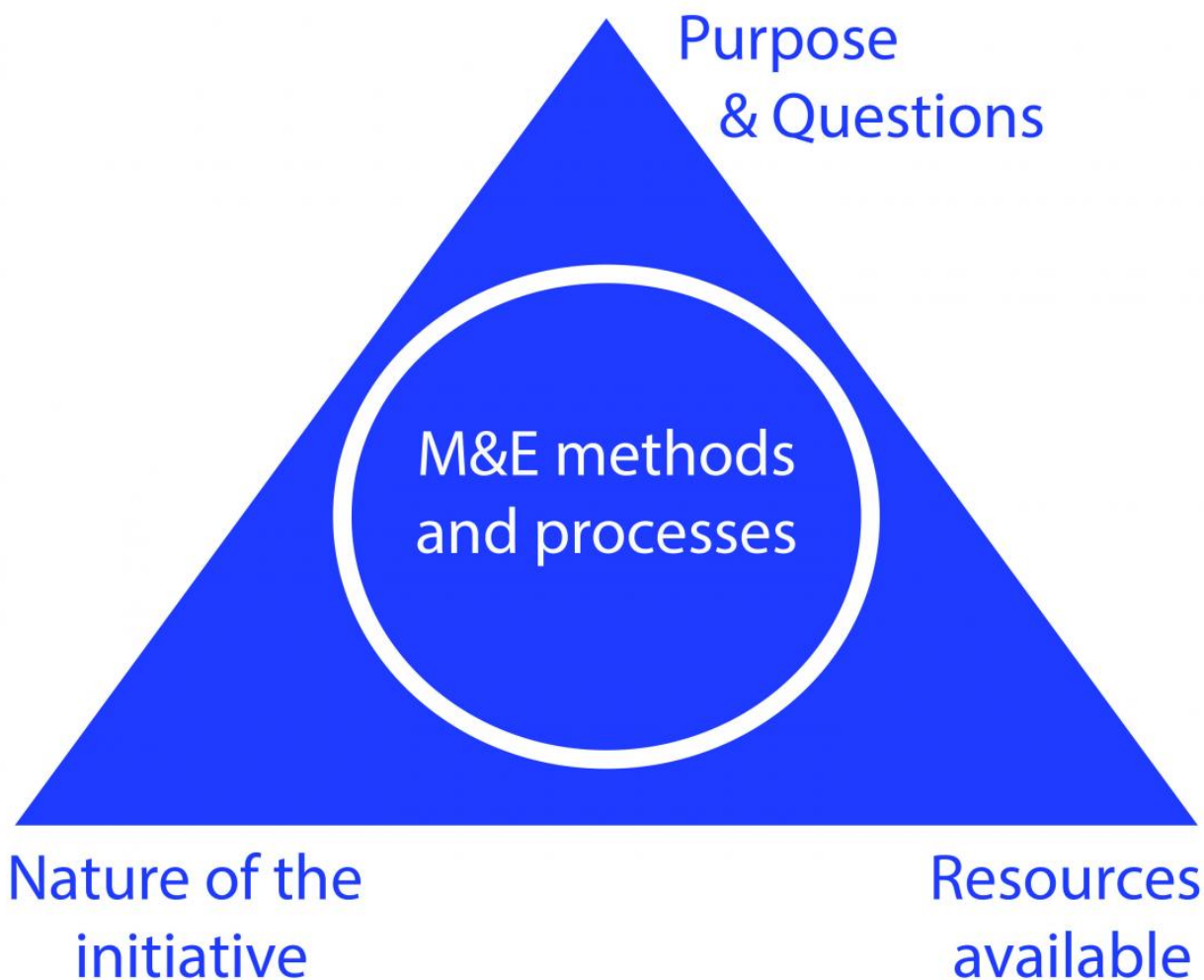
- Below are some ideas about primary intended uses and users. You can find further discussion about uses (purpose) on the ['Decide purpose'](#) page.

Primary intended uses	Primary intended users
Incremental adjustments and improvements?	Program managers?
Revisions during annual planning or end-of-cycle changes?	UNICEF (or similar agency) staff?
Accountability? (consider to whom - eg funders, local community, peers)	Implementing partners? Local community? Civil society?
Contributing to evidence base about what works for whom in what context and how?	Government partners - central agencies? Line agencies?
Informing subsequent investment decisions	Joint funders and donors?
Advocacy on behalf of the community?	Civil society?

## C4D: Decide purpose

### What is it?

The purpose of the R,M&E, and the key driving questions is one of the three key components that should determine the M&E methods and processes that are used. The other key issues are [determining and securing resources](#) and understanding the nature of the initiative (for which it may be useful to read about [developing program theory or logic model](#) with [complexity](#)). This discussion about uses is also associated with the task of [identifying primary intended users](#). It is important to be specific about purposes (i.e. more than grand statements about 'learning and accountability'). It is also important to understand potential conflicting purposes.



## General information

The Rainbow Framework includes detailed information on [deciding purpose](#), including more information about common purposes, and resources on, for example, potential conflicts between learning and accountability. This page is recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

## Applying the C4D principles

### Learning-based

The approach advocated by the C4D Evaluation Framework is to use R,M&E processes for adaptive and learning based process, so that findings can be fed into ongoing C4D activities. This is because most C4D activities are complicated or complex (to understand the nature of your activity see [Complexity](#)).

### Accountable

R,M&E can be useful for accountability purposes, because it can be used to report back to all people

and groups connected to the C4D initiative (including donors, managers, partners, community groups, ‘beneficiaries’ and others).

## Complexity

The evaluation’s purpose might need to change to support emerging findings and learning. How programs are implemented may change as a result. The primary intended users and their needs should be reviewed and revised to accommodate change.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

- Here are some ideas about common intended uses. It can be useful to think about this in conjunction with [Identifying primary intended users](#).

Primary intended uses	Primary intended users
Incremental adjustments and improvements?	Program managers?
Revisions during annual planning or end-of-cycle changes?	UNICEF (or similar agency) staff?
Accountability? (consider to whom - eg funders, local community, peers)	Implementing partners? Local community? Civil society?
Contributing to evidence base about what works for whom in what context and how?	Government partners - central agencies? Line agencies?
Informing subsequent investment decisions	Joint funders and donors?
Advocacy on behalf of the community?	Civil society?

## Resources

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

This guide states very clearly that monitoring and evaluation should be for both learning and accountability (p10, 26), and argues that designing the monitoring and evaluation frameworks and tools is critical to achieving these objectives. This resource is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in relation to this task in the following ways:

- **Learning-based:** the guide suggests involving theatre actors in data collection and management (particularly in community scans) so that this can inform programming.
- **Accountable:** the guide frames monitoring and tracking as responsibilities to ensure

accountability, which is important because 'Unless the PTC programming is implemented with sufficient quality and rigour along PTC standards, it cannot be expected that the programme would result in the desired change' p 28.

- [Terms of reference for an action research approach to evaluation of She Can project - ActionAid](#)

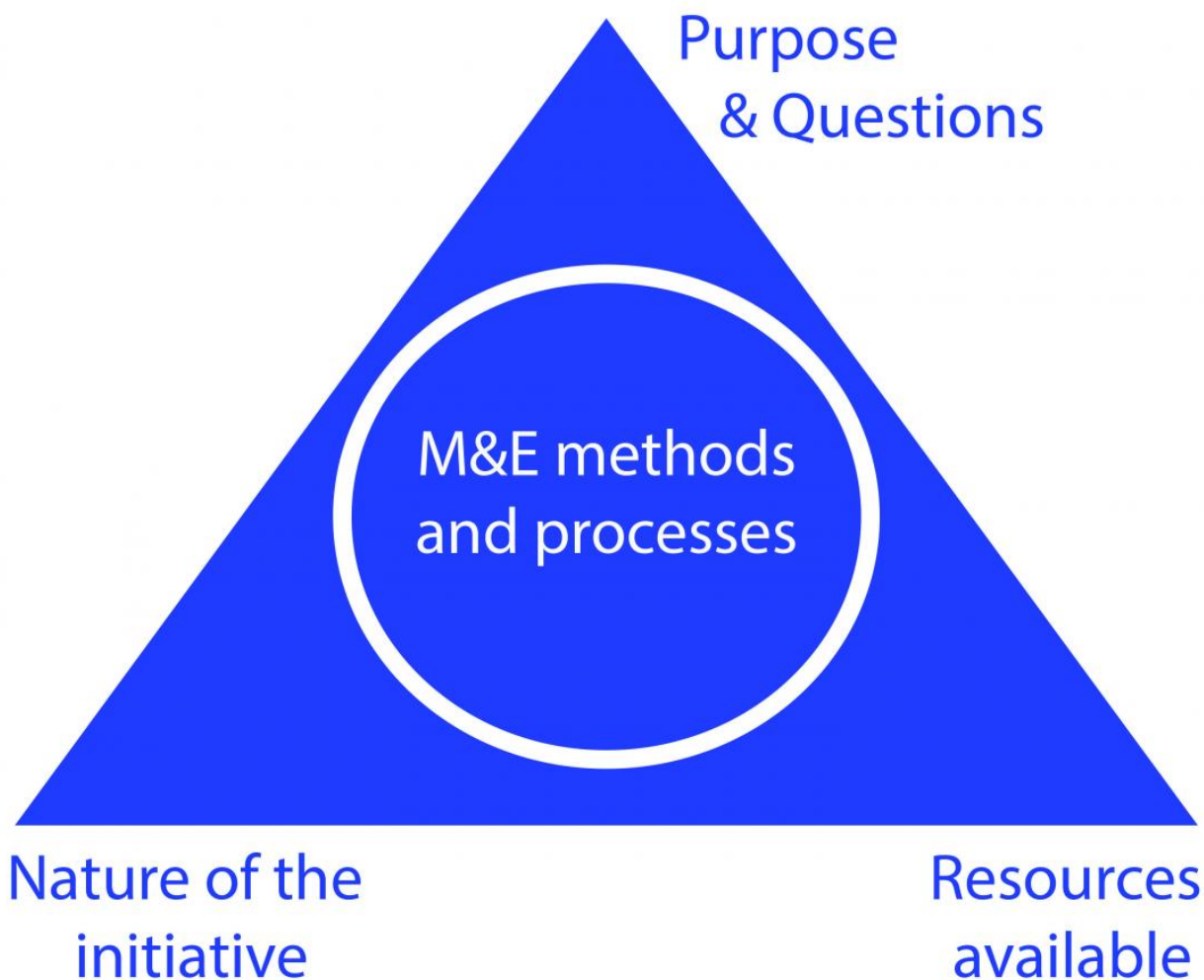
This TOR is an example of an evaluation that is specifically aimed at achieving learning outcomes. Although the term 'C4D' is not used in this TOR, the activities include campaigns, mobilisation, coalition building, and women's groups and school clubs: all relevant to C4D. The approach and the TOR are consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in relation to this task in the following ways:

- **Learning-based:** learning is the primary objective of this evaluation (see page 2). This is justified on the basis that the evidence base on theories of change and what works in tackling violence against women and girls is weak, and the donors, program staff and 'beneficiaries' all prioritise learning and contributions to evidence and lessons. This is achieved through a 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.

## [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)

## **C4D: Determine what 'success' looks like**

### **What is it?**

Evaluation, which means to assess the value or worth of something, is essentially about values. Underpinning R,M&E systems are questions such as 'Is this good? Which is better? What is best?'.

Therefore, it is important to be systematic and transparent about the values that are used through the development of criteria and standards, and where these come from. Identifying what success looks like should also take into account outcomes and impacts (intended and unintended, especially possible negative outcomes), processes (in particular consistency with values about ethical behaviour and non-violence), and the distribution of costs and benefits (in particular the comparative value of initiatives that work for most people on average and those that are particularly effective for the most marginalised or disadvantaged).

It can be helpful to work through the logic of evaluation systematically - identify what the criteria are for success (for example, reduced incidence of violence against children), what the standards are (for example, a 10% reduction from the previous year; or a reduction to the national average; or a reduction to zero), and [how diverse evidence will be synthesised](#) (how different elements will be combined). Being clear about synthesis is especially important when there is an overall evaluative judgement, such as value-for-money which takes into account both effectiveness and cost - at what point is a more expensive method better? It is also important when there is a 'hurdle' requirement which must be met - for example, a cheaper method would be not acceptable if it involved the use of child labour.

## General Information

Developing an agreed statement of 'what success looks like' generally involves a combination of drawing on formal statements of values, articulating tacit (unstated but important) values, and negotiating between the relative importance and legitimacy of different values.

Formal statements of values include:

- [Stated goals and objectives](#)
- Sustainable Development Goals
- [Standards, evaluative criteria and benchmarks](#)  
(where these exist already)
- The OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

Processes that can be used to articulate tacit values include:

- [Hierarchical card sorting](#)  
(HCS) a participatory card sorting method designed to provide insight into how people categorise and rank different phenomena
- [Photovoice](#)  
Using cameras to allow participants (often intended beneficiaries) to take and share photos in order to identify what is important to them
- [Rich pictures](#)  
Exploring, acknowledging and defining a situation through diagrams in order to create a preliminary mental model how it works (including what is valued),
- [Stories of change](#)  
(Part of the Most Significant Change approach) showing what is valued through the use of specific narratives of events
- [Values clarification interviews](#)  
Interviewing key informants and intended beneficiaries to identify what they value

- [Values clarification public opinion questionnaires](#)  
Seeking feedback from large numbers of people about their priorities through the use of questionnaires.

Negotiating between different values can be done through:

- [Concept mapping](#)
- [Delphi study](#)  
Generating a consensus without face to face contact by soliciting opinions from individuals in an iterative process of answering questions
- [Dotmocracy](#)  
Recording participants opinions by using sticky dots to either record agreement or disagreement with written statements
- [Public consultations](#)  
Conducting public meetings to provide an opportunity for the community to raise issues of concern and respond to methods.

Information about all of these is available in the Rainbow Framework including comprehensive information about [criteria and standards](#).

## Applying the C4D principles

UN Agencies like UNICEF often use the [OCED-DAC criteria](#). While these are clear and reputable, they are also very broad and generic, and processes are needed to operationalise these for a particular initiative. The C4D Evaluation Framework would encourage the following approaches:

### Participatory

Whose values are being used as the basis of the evaluation? What do stakeholders and beneficiaries consider to be good, better, and best C4D processes, practices and outcomes? How can participatory techniques (such as [hierarchical card sorting](#)) be employed to effectively engage with stakeholders about what they value, and why?

### Critical

Whose criteria and standards are reflected and whose are excluded? What are the assumptions? Could the vision of success be enriched through the inclusion of different perspectives?

### Holistic

An holistic approach to this task encourages us to think about how the context influences the definition of success, values, aspirations and perspectives. It can be useful to seek ways to define holistic visions of success, beyond indicators and targets (i.e. in Results Frameworks) which often only show a single dimension of success.

### Accountable

Working with community groups, partners and others to find agreement about what success might

look like means that everybody knows and understands what values are used to make judgements about a program. In other words, the criteria and values to judge success are shared and transparent.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

- [Hierarchical card sorting](#)

HCS is a participatory sorting and ranking process which helps to articulate participants' tacit criteria, standards and approach to synthesis. It could be used pre-implementation to describe criteria and standards and weigh them up against each other (i.e. which ones are most important?). Alternatively, it could be used post data collection to weigh up the value of different cases based on emergent, tacit values and standards. This approach is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** Hierarchical Card Sorting enables a participatory approach to describing criteria and standards and applying and weighing up different values.
  - **Holistic:** Hierarchical Card Sorting is a way to develop criteria and standards that are relevant and responsive to the context, rather than starting from global and generic standards.
  - **Accountable:** Because Hierarchical Card Sorting is a way of eliciting values from different groups, it is a way of ensuring social and downward accountability (especially when used pre-implementation).
- [Most significant change](#)

MSC can be used post-implementation and involves processes of comparing and ranking to ascertain which changes are seen as most valuable by key groups. The process involves collecting stories of change, analysing and sorting these into groups, and then ranking to decide on the most significant or valuable changes. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** the process involves working with groups of stakeholders to collect stories and analyse what different groups value and consider most important about a program's impacts.
- **Complex:** The strength of Most Significant Change is the way it is sensitive to unpredictable and emergent impacts (mainly positive).

*Caution: in general Most Significant Change will not be sufficient as an R,M&E plan on its own, since it is mainly useful for picking up positive impacts at the extreme (less common) end.*

## [C4D: Describe](#)

Describe is one of the seven clusters of R,M&E tasks in the Rainbow Framework.

The describe cluster of evaluation tasks involves collecting or retrieving data and analyzing it to answer R,M&E questions about situations and what has happened (the activities, outcomes and impacts) and other important contextual information.

There are seven tasks associated with describe. Each task includes C4D specific methods, advice and resources for generating data that describes situations and changes

## C4D: Sample

### What is it?

In some cases, it might be possible to gather data on an entire population (for example, some data might be available from every participant, or about every project), but in most cases, it will be necessary to take a sample of projects, sites, events, or people. Deciding on sampling strategies is an important part of an R,M&E design. The decision should be strategic and well-considered, informed by the purpose, the nature of the initiative, the nature and requirements of particular methods, and the resources available.

Three broad types of sampling are: random sampling (which uses random or quasi-random methods to select the sample and then uses statistical inference to draw conclusions about the population); purposeful sampling (which selects information-rich cases to study and then use analytical inference to draw conclusions with wider applicability; and convenience sampling (which selects readily accessible cases and is at greatest risk of bias).

### General information

More information on [sampling methods](#) is available in the Rainbow Framework. This page is recommended background reading before considering options to apply to C4D. Sampling should be considered alongside issues of response rate and coverage - results are more accurate from a well-chosen sample with a high response rate than from a population with a poor response rate that usually is biased.

### Applying the C4D principles

Situations that influence sampling decisions:

#### Complex

Samples should include multiple perspectives, to understand differences in experiences in different settings. Complex interventions might need sampling strategies that can be adapted to suit emerging issues and understandings, such as using 'purposeful' sampling (selecting based on what is useful or most interesting) to follow up emerging patterns and findings.

## Accountable

Thoughtful and thorough sampling helps to make the R,M&E design more rigorous. In quantitative (numbers based) methods sampling the sample size and the sample selection are key to making credible claims about the findings. In qualitative (words, stories, visual) methods, sharing details about the sample and selection process increases credibility and trustworthiness.

## Critical

More generally, sampling should pay attention to equity dimensions, and ensure that the most vulnerable groups are represented and that the data is able to be disaggregated. Additional effort might be needed to get adequate coverage of more remote, more disadvantaged groups due to known biases such as: roadside bias, seasonal bias, pro-literacy bias, etc.

# Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

## Resources

- [Doing qualitative field research on gender norms with adolescent girls and their families](#)

This is a guide to conducting qualitative research with children and young people with a focus on gender sensitivity. It includes useful advice relevant to sampling such as 'Include girls from different backgrounds and in different situations', 'Include girls' parents, grandparents, siblings and other family and community members' and 'Think through which issues are priorities for you to explore' (p4). This guide is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in relation to this task in the following ways:

- **Holistic:** the guidance on sampling suggests thinking about cases as samples, including other people around the girl who influence her context.
  - **Complex:** the guidance focuses on rich descriptions from multiple perspectives, rather than the number of respondents
  - **Realistic:** the guide advises choosing a sample that helps achieve the objectives
  - **Critical:** the guide suggests seeking out girls with different kinds of experiences and backgrounds.
- [How to Determine a Sample Size: Tipsheet #60](#)

This is a clear and accessible guide to making decisions about samples in quantitative data, such as surveys (for example, Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices surveys). It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

**Realistic:** the steps in the tip sheet move back and forth between the resources available and the desired precision level and risk. **Critical:** the final tip points to the fact that characteristics of non-respondents are significantly different, and suggests that understanding the limitations of the method and using mixed methods is important.

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

### **What are measures, indicators and metrics?**

Measures, indicators or metrics are used to succinctly describe the context, implementation and/or results of an intervention (project, program, policy) such as inputs, processes or activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. The terms are often used in different ways in different organisations, so it is important to check their meaning in a specific setting or context. In this guidance, we use the term 'indicator' to refer to all of these terms and make a distinction only where it is important to do so – in particular, to distinguish between a direct and accurate 'measure' of something and a partial, approximate 'indicator'.

### **General information**

The [use measures, indicators or metrics page](#) of the Rainbow Framework provides detailed information about these concepts and a range of resources including examples of how they have been used in practice across different topical areas and sectors. It is highly recommended to read this page first before considering options to apply to C4D interventions.

### **Applying the C4D principles**

#### **Complex**

The selection and creation of outcome and impact indicators is a tricky area for C4D since emergent outcomes are hard to predict and are different in each context.

#### **Participatory**

Indicators should reflect local ways of looking at and measuring the world. Ideally, those funding, managing, planning, implementing, collecting and using the data should be involved in the selection of indicators. In C4D this includes community groups and partners. [Participatory numbers](#) is a method for generating quantitative measures in participatory ways.

#### **Learning-based**

Indicator selection should be focused on the type of 'summary' information that can tell us whether or not the intervention is 'on track' in terms of its implementation and anticipated results. In the first instance, it is important to check if appropriate indicators already exist rather than developing new ones. That way, we can draw on the experience from others in terms of the usefulness and use of an indicator as well as the feasibility of collecting and interpreting the data on a regular basis (i.e., we can learn something from the track record of these indicators to help us decide whether or not to select that indicator for our particular purposes, resources and context). Where the intervention content or implementation needs to be very adaptive and/or the results cannot be fully defined in advance (such as in complex situations), different indicators may need to be selected at different times during the intervention period. The indicators should help to answer the 'key learning questions' that are posed at various times.

## **Holistic**

Indicators are concise, partial, aggregates of information. This is the opposite of holistic, in-depth information. Indicators can be used to 'indicate' areas that might need further, more in-depth, investigation (e.g., negative and positive outliers or lack of change where you expected to see change). Indicators should be used in combination with other more holistic methods to deeply understand situations.

## **Accountable**

We usually think about indicators as being useful for reporting and accountability to managers and donors. Indicators should also be used for providing partners, communication groups and others participating in the intervention with information about what was achieved/not achieved, and the importance of the indicators for their community. When using the data from indicators in this way, it is important to acknowledge that the information is simplified and partial, and that other types of information are usually needed to make informed decisions about the intervention.

## **Critical**

Indicators should specify the required data disaggregations (often this needs to include age, sex, income, levels of vulnerability etc.). Local groups and institutions should be meaningfully involved in the process of developing and using indicators. This inclusion of local perspectives and attention to equity reduces the risk of indicators incentivising easier reach to populations to achieve targets.

## **Important considerations in selecting indicators for C4D**

Indicators can be useful when recognised for what they are: partial information that can provide alerts of things not going as planned and signs of important changes (or lack thereof) which may trigger further investigation. It is important to select an appropriate 'set' of indicators -usually consisting of different types (input, process/activity, output, outcome, impact) - which can be interpreted together to get a more complete picture of what has happened. It might be useful to undertake a 'data rehearsal', where primary intended users of indicator data are presented with different scenarios of data and asked to discuss how they could use these to inform their decisions - and to identify what changes need to be made to their content or presentation to make them more useful. It is recommended to do this as part of the process of selecting or developing indicators.

Collecting, analysing and interpreting longer-term results (outcomes and impacts) is often expensive and difficult to do well. As noted above, these results are also most likely due to a range of interventions, not just C4D. Hence, it is advisable to partner with others (such as those funding or implementing other interventions with similar goals) to ensure this information is collected -where appropriate- at regular intervals and with high quality.

It is also critically important that indicators are not only about results but also about the quality and quantity of implementation (e.g., making sure that a C4D intervention adheres to the principles of 'participation' or that implementation of the C4D strategy is done to the extent needed to expect results).

Given there are many elements to quality assurance, it is often hard to capture through just a

handful of indicators. Therefore using rubrics may be particularly useful to cover different dimensions of what is considered 'success'. Rubrics can complement indicators, can incorporate indicators or can be used as an alternative to indicators (see below).

## **Characteristics of good indicators and good indicator sets:**

For most indicators, we are particularly interested in assessing changes over time (i.e., looking at trends in the indicator data) so it is crucially important to be able to collect, analyse and interpret the data regularly (the frequency will depend on the type of indicator) and with good quality. Indicator data that is of low quality can mislead decision making.

Developing a good indicator can be quite hard. One has to ensure, among other things, that:

- the indicator is fully defined so it is clear to those collecting, analysing, interpreting and using the indicator data what it is that is being measured, how, with what frequency etc;
- it actually measures what it intends to measure or is a reasonable indicator of it (referred to as its 'validity')
- data can be collected consistently by different people and at different times (referred to as its 'reliability')
- it is affordable and feasible to collect the data regularly and with high quality.
- (the [use measures and indicators page](#) of the Rainbow Framework has more information on the common characteristics of a good indicator or good indicator set, such as affordable, comparable, feasible, measurable, operational, reliable, sensitive, specific).

For these reasons, it is usually much better to use an existing indicator that ticks most, if not all, of the boxes of a good indicator and has been used in a real-life context by others. As noted above, a good 'set' of indicators reflects different dimensions of the intervention and the anticipated results along the pathway to ultimate outcomes or impact.

If you need to craft a new indicator, you need to provide in written guidelines:

- Title (indicator label)
- Definition
- Purpose (rationale)
- Method of measurement
- Numerator
- Denominator (where relevant)
- Calculation
- Data collection method
- Data collection tools
- Data collection frequency
- Data disaggregation
- Limitations
- Information to interpret and use the data

You will also need to pilot test data collection and revise the indicator where needed, and provide training for those collecting, managing, analysing and using the data. This may include data rehearsal as described above.

## Rubrics: a complementary or alternative way of capturing key information

Different stakeholder groups often have different views on:

- ‘what is important’ in terms of what the intervention provides, how it is done and what the results are intended to be;
- ‘how well’ the program is performing on the things that matter.

This is especially the case for interventions that are complex in nature or operate in a complex environment. Defining ‘success’ needs to go beyond just selecting a handful of results indicators.

Rubrics can be used to assess and judge performance along various dimensions. A rubric has two core aspects:

(1) evaluative criteria that define ‘what is important’ in terms of what the intervention provides, how it is done and what the results are intended to be; and,

(2) descriptions of levels of performance in terms of what constitutes ‘excellent’, ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘adequate’, or ‘poor’ performance.

Rubrics can incorporate qualitative and quantitative indicators (including important ones that are already in use) and other types of evidence (including emergent) plus specific guidance about the synthesis of this evidence (such as hurdle requirements or benchmarks).

The page on [rubrics](#) provides further information, resources and examples of rubrics.

## Recommended steps for selecting and using C4D

In collaboration with key stakeholders (at minimum, [primary intended users](#) of the data, which usually includes partners and community groups):

- Use the intervention’s theory of change (see [Develop program theory or logic model](#)) to identify key questions about the C4D components of implementation and their anticipated contribution to expected results. Clarify which of these key C4D questions might be answered (partially or in full) by using indicators.
- Select - from existing indicator sources - different types of indicators (inputs, activities/processes, outputs, outcomes, impacts) at different levels of the system where relevant (such as individual, community, society) to obtain a ‘set’ of indicators that matches the identified information needs. (A C4D Registry of Indicators is under development).
- Critically reflect on the gaps and assumptions, and consider how well the available indicators reflect local perspectives, realities and priorities.
- Where needed, develop new indicators (ideally, only if existing good indicators do not serve your information needs) using a collaborative process for indicator development. Consider the common standards for good indicators. Then, pilot-test them and revise them as needed before rolling them out for use.
- As part of rolling them out for use, make sure they are fully defined and described (indicator guidelines) and train people in how to collect the data, how to store and manage the data, and

how to interpret and use the data.

- Periodically re-assess the utility of the indicator and continue using it (as is), stop using it, or revise it (you need to weigh up the pros and cons of a disruption in trend data before you stop using or revise the indicator).

## Resources

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

This resource outlines suggested indicators (21-27), which are tied to the theory of change (p11-14), and include methods to collect the information. See table 2, page 17 for a sample of indicators with timing and methods. 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 relation to this task in the following ways:

- **Complex:** the indicators relate directly to the six different, interconnected theories in the Theory of Change.
  - **Realistic:** 'Reach, Resonance and Response' framing provides a powerful yet manageable way to think through groups of indicators. The tools suggested to collect the information are as simple as possible while still achieving rigour and sensitivity. The plan also requires creating a plan for the timing of data collection.
  - **Holistic:** the guide makes specific reference to the importance of thinking about timing, especially for longer-term changes, which should not be measured immediately after.
- [Participatory numbers \(or parti-numbers\)](#)

Indicators tend to require quantitative data. 'Participatory numbers' refers to a collection of methods that involve communities in the process of generating statistically valid and reliable quantitative data. Some of the strategies include: mapping, modelling, pile sorting, pie diagrams, card writing and sorting, matrix ranking and scoring, and linkage diagramming. With planning and testing, these methods could be used to inform and define indicators in C4D, with repeated cycles of data collection to assess trends and changes. See also 'Who Counts? The power of participatory statistics' edited by Jeremy Holland with chapters on the use of different methods from contexts around the world.

- [Participatory rural communication appraisal starting with the people](#)

The Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal Handbook (especially chapters 5 & 6) provides guidance on how to plan and undertake a baseline study, building on the situation analysis framework (used in a similar way to a [program theory](#)) to develop a questionnaire or survey design including pre-testing and sharing results with the community. The resource is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** PRCA allow rural people to participate in everything from information collection and analysis, problem identification and prioritisation to decision-making about how best to tackle issues revealed.
- **Critical:** PRCA brings attention to the common biases that can distort the study findings.

- **Complexity:** The process encouraged through PCRA to undertake a baseline includes strong reference to the understandings about underlying causes and contextual factors as understood through the situation analysis.
- **Learning-based:** RPRCA emphasises information sharing, including of the findings from the baseline study.

## Example

- [Measuring empowerment? Ask them: Quantifying qualitative outcomes from people's own analysis](#)

This paper, written by Dee Jupp and Sohel Ibn Ali with contribution from Carlos Barahona for Sida, uses the experiences of a social movement in Bangladesh to demonstrate how empowerment can be measured by those who are being empowered.

## Additional resources

- [C4D Indicators for MTSP MoRES-HIVAIDS](#)

DOCX

45.49 KB

A list of C4D indicators relating to HIV/AIDS developed by ESARO. Work to build these into a possible C4D Registry of Indicators is ongoing.

- [C4D Indicators for MTSP MoRES-Child Protection](#)

DOCX

67.37 KB

A list of C4D indicators relating to Child Protection developed by ESARO. Work to build these into a possible C4D Registry of Indicators is ongoing.

- [UNICEF GCPAS Handbook for the KPIs' implementation](#)

PDF

4.39 MB

A guide created by the Comms Section for monitoring UNICEF's advocacy and media work. Aspects of this may be useful for C4D, though a more critical and holistic view of communication is likely to be required.

- [UNICEF Concept note: The rationale and recommendation for C4D indicators in national surveys](#)

DOCX

283.24 KB

Mapping of existing indicators and suggestions for new MICS survey questions for C4D in UNICEF.

- [Webinar on C4D and indicators](#)

Use password: evaluatingC4D

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

### What is it?

Data collection methods should be selected on the basis of how well they will answer the key questions, with due consideration of available resources. Decisions about methods need to be made in conjunction with other [decisions about the key questions](#) (what to collect data on), whether [indicators](#) might be used, how [sampling](#) will be used, and how data will be [managed](#) and [analysed](#). When decisions are made, these should be [documented in Planning Documents](#). The data collection methods on this page will generate descriptive data: information about what has happened or how things are through measuring or describing things.

### General information

While there are many different methods for data collection/retrieval, they can be grouped into the following types: information from individuals (eg key informant interviews); information from groups (e.g. focus group discussions); observation (either directly or through photographs and videos, including aerial observation); physical measurements; and existing records and data (including social media and other media). General information on methods and other methods is available on the [Collect or Retrieve data page](#) of the Rainbow Framework. This page is recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

### Applying the C4D principles

#### Participatory

Some methods are more engaging, less extractive, and enable mutual learning, to a greater extent than others. Although this is not the full extent of what it means to take a participatory approach, methods of this nature are recommended.

#### Holistic

If your key questions set out to explore contextual factors, the methods you chose to answer the questions need to be the type that helps you construct 'thick descriptions' (comprehensive, in-depth, contextual).

#### Critical

We need to be conscious of gender and other power inequalities that exclude marginalised groups from contributing to the process: analytically reflect on how methods may distort, exclude or silence particular perspectives and voices.

## Realistic

Choices about methods must remain practical, pragmatic, and feasible, and fit with the available resources. This may involve compromise to remain realistic, however, in C4D ensuring that local needs, voices and experiences are given prominence should remain a priority.

## Complex

Data methods should be chosen for how well they will show different perspectives and experiences, and increase understanding of how contextual factors influence outcomes. In complicated and complex interventions, quick methods (compared to slow methods like national surveys) will be more useful for informing adaptive implementation of C4D.

# Recommended methods for collecting data to answer descriptive questions relating to C4D

## Data from individuals or groups

- **Communicative ecology mapping**

An interactive method which seeks to uncover rich details about communication environments, uses and contexts through mapping. They can be made with individuals or with groups of people during discussion or drawn up afterwards on the basis of discussions and then checked with the participants. It is particularly useful for C4D situation analysis and intervention design. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Holistic:** Communicative ecology mapping enables participants to share how they use different communication spaces, uses and contexts. It does not assume that communication looks the same in all places in the way that standardised surveys might.
- **Participatory:** Communicative Ecology Mapping can be an engaging and visual method where participants map their communicative ecology (although it can also be created from interview data)

### Resource

[Ethnographic Action Research Toolbox](#)

Communicative Ecologies and Communicative Ecology Mapping is covered in the EAR Toolbox.

### Example

[EVAC Assessment](#)

Communicative Ecology Mapping was used as part of an assessment of the Violence Against Children campaign in Vietnam. It mapped children's communicative ecologies, and was

intended to be used for planning the next phase of the campaign. See Appendix page 52-54

### • **Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal**

Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal was adapted from 'Rapid Rural Appraisal' (RRA) as a way to conduct multidisciplinary and participatory research in rural settings without requiring the intensive time commitment assumed by other qualitative investigations. By actively involving community members in the research process, the method also builds capacity by training people in research and involving them in the analysis. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal uses appropriate participatory techniques to involve participants in reflection and learning processes.
- **Realistic:** Like RRA, Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal focuses on 'rapid' and less time-intensive participatory approaches to participatory research.

#### **Resource**

[Participatory rural communication appraisal starting with the people](#)

For guidance on data collection tools associated with PRCA [see Chapter 4: PRCA Tools and Techniques](#) and [Chapter 5 \(Toolbox\): Tools and Techniques](#)

#### **Example**

[KAP action research study on violence against children](#)

A study exploring Knowledge Attitudes and Practices relating to Violence Against Children in Tanzania used Participatory Appraisal (not necessarily PRCA), among other methods.

### • **Critical Listening and Feedback Sessions (also Participatory Viewing and Listening)**

Critical Listening (or viewing) and Feedback sessions is a process of group listening to or viewing content, followed by reflective and analytical discussions and responses. It has been used in C4D as a way for content producers to critically reflect on their content, and to get feedback from key community groups and audiences. This method is consistent with the C4D Framework in the following ways:

- **Learning-based:** The feedback can be used to continually improve content, or as part of an assessment of content.
- **Holistic:** The process enables rich explorations of meaning and interpretation of content.
- **Participatory:** The process is a highly engaging method in which participants engage in mutual learning.

#### **Resource**

[Equal Access PM&E toolkit - Module 4 Critical listening and feedback sessions](#)

PDF  
409.44 KB

Module 4 of the Equal Access Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation toolkit provides an overview of Critical Listening and Feedback Sessions.

#### **Example**

[Ruka Juu II: Young farmers in business](#)

PDF  
4.02 MB

The Ruka Juu II Young Farmers in Business impact study (from 2013) is a good example of the use of participatory viewing and listening sessions undertaken with various community groups as part of an impact assessment.

#### • **Surveys**

Surveys and questionnaires are a set of structured questions that aim to collect specific information from the chosen respondents (written or orally). The questions are designed to gather information about attitudes, preferences and factual information of respondents, and can be useful when information from a representative sample is required. Knowledge Attitudes and Practices surveys (KAPs) are common in C4D. However, experience from practice suggests that KAP surveys are often limited and unsatisfactory for a deep understanding contexts and causes. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Accountable:** Because a survey can collect data from greater numbers of people it helps to give a sense of the scale of impact, which is useful in discussions about effectiveness and impact.
- **Critical:** Surveys should include some questions about demographics, which can be useful for disaggregating data and understanding differences and equity dimensions (see [Sample](#)).

#### **Resources**

[FAO Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal Handbook](#)

Chapter 5 of this resource, on baseline studies, provides good advice on constructing a questionnaire or survey

[Questionnaires](#)

This page offers detailed information and links to resources about survey methods.

#### **Example**

[T-Watoto](#)

Tuzungumze na Watoto (T-Watoto) is an example of how a system for regular mobile phone household surveys can be set up by partnering with a local call-centre to regularly collect data for monitoring and evaluation. A representative sample of randomly selected households are surveyed, depending on the sample-size requirements. Any member of the household may be interviewed.

- **Key Informant Interviews**

A Key Informant Interview (KII) involves gathering information directly from an individual who has good knowledge or experience on a subject of interest to the study or evaluation. KII is useful and effective when the person doing the interview is trusted by the key informant. This allows the interviewer to probe or ask further questions until he or she gets the necessary information. It is a common method and can be consistent with all the C4D Evaluation Framework principles. In particular:

- **Holistic:** semi-structured interviews with key informants in particular allow for open exploration of points and factors
- **Critical:** people who may not be able to participate fully in group settings may feel more comfortable to speak in interviews, especially if the interviewer is trusted

#### **Resources**

[Qualitative research methods for use in equity-focused monitoring](#)

PDF

1.53 MB

Page 10-11 of this resource provides a comprehensive guide with UNICEF C4D examples and considerations.

[Key informant interviews](#)

Provides guidance and links to a range of examples (beyond C4D) and resources.

[Ethnographic Action Research Toolbox](#)

The EAR Toolbox provides guidance on individual and group interviews - useful if you are interested in a more ethnographic approach to interviewing (semi-structured) .

Mack, Natasha, et al. 2005. Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide. Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International, Module 3.

- **Focus group discussions**

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is an effective way to capture information about norms, behaviours, practices and the variety of opinions or views within a particular population or group (e.g., adult married women, female teachers, and male farmers). The richness of focus group data emerges from the group dynamics and from the diversity of the group. FGDs may help identify commonly held views among group members, including - at times -

divergent views. An FGD usually gathers 8 to 15 individuals (not too many) who represent a specific group to talk about a specific subject. The composition of the group is important: depending on the socio-cultural setting, it may be inappropriate to host mixed groups (e.g., adolescent girls and boys). Further, age and gender are important considerations. Focus Group Discussions can be consistent with all the C4D Evaluation Framework principles. In particular:

- **Holistic:** Focus group discussions allow for participants to drive open exploration of points and factors and discuss ideas together.
- **Critical:** In focus group discussions are usually conducted with groups of people that are similar or diverse (such as women, men, adolescents, community leaders, etc.), which helps to reduce barriers to participation, and enrich the quality of voices.

## Resources

### [Qualitative research methods for use in equity-focused monitoring](#)

PDF

1.53 MB

Page 12-14 of this resource provides a comprehensive guide with UNICEF C4D examples and considerations.

### [Ethnographic Action Research Toolbox](#)

The EAR Toolbox provides guidance on group interviews - useful if you are interested in a more ethnographic approach to focus groups (semi-structured)

Mack et al., 2005. Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide. Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International, Module 4. ([find hyperlinks](#))

## Example

### [KAP action research study on violence against children](#)

A study exploring Knowledge Attitudes and Practices relating to Violence Against Children in Tanzania used focus group discussions in a highly engaged, dialogical way, among other methods.

## • Social mapping

Social Mapping is a cartographic, two-dimensional, visual representation of the distribution of resources, services, processes, social relationships, and networks. Mapping may help to assess not only where key resources and places are located, but why certain services are or are not being accessed by all members of the community (e.g., why certain health clinics might not be visited by women or children). It can also be used to understand the organisation of institutions. A variant of Social Mapping, Body Mapping, can reveal people's anatomical ideas and health concepts, aspects related to mental and physical health, wellbeing, and even child protection issues such as sexual abuse. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in

the following ways:

- **Participatory:** The visual and group-based nature of the method makes it a more engaging method where participants can actively lead the direction of discussion.
- **Critical:** This is a critical method that allows for the decentralisation of power and control in the data collection process.
- **Holistic:** By moving away from interview techniques that are strictly guided by predetermined questionnaires or closed-ended questions, mapping and follow-up interviews can reveal cultural barriers, the beliefs that hold them in place, and bottlenecks that may have never arisen from traditional surveys or interviews.

## Resources

[Qualitative research methods for use in equity-focused monitoring](#)

PDF

1.53 MB

Page 14-16 provides a comprehensive guide with UNICEF C4D examples and considerations.

[FAO's Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal](#)

This resource includes concise guidance on sketch mapping.

[Social mapping](#)

This method page provides detailed explanation, guidance and links to resources and examples.

[Rural appraisal: Rapid, Relaxed and Participatory](#) (PDF) - IDS Discussion Paper 311

Resource by Robert Chambers.

[Tools together now! 100 participatory tools to mobilise communities for HIV/AIDS](#)(PDF)

Cornwall, Andrea, 2001. Body Mapping in Health PRA/RRA. London: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Originally published in RRA Notes (1992), Issue 16, pp.69-76.

## • **Transect walk**

The Transect Walk is a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tool for observing the terrain and everyday life in a given place from the perspective of local community members. During the walk, stops are made along the way, and observations are discussed with community members. After the walk is over, a small group discussion may ensue. Use in Equity-focused Monitoring Transect walks can help provide an overview of the distribution of resources, use of a particular service or supply, or other specific features of a settlement in a short period of time. For example, a transect walk may be used to check for treated bed-nets in every other house and asking persons in that house who sleeps under them. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** the group-based nature of the method makes it a more engaging method where participants can lead the direction of discussion.
- **Critical:** walks can be a powerful way of uncovering differences between groups.
- **Holistic:** walks can reveal the interconnected nature of problems and change, and locate issues in the local environment and context.

## Resource

### [FAO's Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal Handbook](#)

This resource includes concise points about Transect Walks.

### [Qualitative research methods for use in equity-focused monitoring](#)

PDF

1.53 MB

Page 16-17 provides a comprehensive guide with UNICEF C4D examples and considerations.

### [Transect](#)

This method page provides examples, guidance and links to resources

### [Transect walk](#) (PDF)

World Bank resource provides an overview of transect walks.

### [Integrated Approaches to Participatory Development \(IAPAD\)](#)

The IAPAD website focuses on sharing information on participatory mapping methodologies and processes.

### [Transect mapping - IAPAD](#) (archived link)

## Existing documents

### • Media review

A media review is the process of studying newspaper articles, letters to the editor, television or radio broadcasts, possibly advertisements, and other types of media as applicable in order to understand the range of opinions around a specific issue of concern. It can be used to in the context of advocacy communication work. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Realistic:** The bulk of the work in a media review is desk-based, and it can therefore be a less expensive option.

## Resource

[Qualitative research methods for use in equity-focused monitoring](#)

PDF

1.53 MB

Page 8-9 provides a comprehensive guide with UNICEF C4D examples and considerations.

## Observation

### • Participant observation

Participant Observation is a method used by ethnographic researchers while present in a community or organisational setting to gain a close understanding of people's lives, including actions, interactions, behaviours and practices, through intensive involvement and participation, often over an extended period of time. The intention is that as participants become more comfortable and trust the researcher, the 'observer effect', where people change their behaviours because they know they are being watched, is reduced. Typically it is based on semi-structured and open-ended observation techniques, where extensive field notes are taken and where there is a flexible research design. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Realistic:** Although observation can lead to significant amounts of data in the form of fieldnotes (especially less structured, more open types of observation), it can be a less expensive method compared to interviews and focus groups.
- **Holistic:** Sometimes people's reported behaviour (in interviews, surveys, focus groups etc.) is different to their actual behaviour, where additional environmental, social and other factors can influence behaviour. Observation can help give different, more holistic insights.

## Resources

[Qualitative research methods for use in equity-focused monitoring](#)

PDF

1.53 MB

Page 9 provides a comprehensive guide with UNICEF C4D examples and considerations.

Rainbow Framework :

[Collect and/ or retrieve data](#)

Look for the 'Observation' section on this Rainbow Framework page for a list of different types of observation techniques with detailed outlines and links to resources and examples.

[Ethnographic Action Research Toolbox](#)

Participant observation and fieldnotes in the EAR Toolbox - particularly useful for using

observation techniques in the context of an ethnographic approach.

[Qualitative methods](#)

[Finding a voice: Themes and discussions](#)

- **Non-participant observation**

Observing individuals and groups without actively participating or engaging. The observer takes on a more distant position and avoids influencing practices. However, it is important to recognise that even without active participation, people may change their behaviours if they know they are being observed (known as the observer effect). Non-participant observation may be structured (where very specific and pre-determined phenomena and variables are documented); semi-structured (where some areas of interest and variables may be pre-determined, with space to include additional details; or open-ended (without any pre-determined structure). Examples include observation of hand washing practices among child and adult members of a community, observing a clinic session in a local health facility, or observing a community meeting where programme-related issues are discussed.

**Resource**

[Non-participant observation](#)

Non-participant Observation involves observing participants without actively participating.

## Additional resources

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

This resource sets out a logical process to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan with suggested tools for collecting data. The guide suggests the following methods: Community Assessment Scans (similar to Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal); Key Informant Interviews; and Focus Groups. This guide is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in relation to this task in the following ways:

- **Realistic:** the guide suggests a good mix of methods that are fit for purpose, but will not become overly burdensome. The selection of tools is based on the questions, which are based on the Theory of Change.
  - **Participatory:** the actors themselves are often included as part of data collection. This is especially the case for the community scans and the monitoring.
- [Doing qualitative field research on gender norms with adolescent girls and their families](#)

This is a guide to conducting qualitative research with children and young people with a focus on gender sensitivity. Pages 7-9 provide useful advice on framing questions for adolescent girls in sensitive ways. Table 1 on page 10-12 includes a list of useful tools, purpose, who to include and why, key questions to ask, and tips on getting the most out of the tool. It covers

general methods such as: Social Mapping (community mapping, body mapping); in-depth interviews and key informant interviews; and Focus Group Discussions. It also includes guidance on gender-specific methods such as inter-generational trio (exploring social norms with three generations); marital network; outlier case study/life history. This guide is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in relation to this task in the following ways:

- **Holistic:** the tools suggest very open approaches to understanding contexts and factors, including a range of different people and perspectives.
- **Realistic:** the guide is specific about the strengths of each tool, and offers very pragmatic advice for dealing with sensitive topics and situations.
- **Critical:** the guide is sensitive to discomfort and sensitivities that the girls may be feeling and the suggestions support both the research and the participants.

## C4D: Manage data

### What is it?

Good data management means that systems are in place for consistent and [ethical](#) collection, recording, storage, security, backing up, cleaning, and modifying, and ownership of data. This is part of data quality assurance (DQA). Data quality assurance (DQA) should be built into each step in the data cycle – data collection, aggregation and reporting, analysis, use, dissemination and feedback and longer-term ownership and retention. An important part of this is 'data cleaning', which refers to checking for inaccurate or missing data.

### General information

The '[Manage data](#)' page of the Rainbow Framework provides generalist information, methods and resources about data management. This page is recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

### Applying the C4D principles

#### Holistic

It is important to consider that taking a holistic approach to data collection means that the data is often not pre-standardised (e.g. following a standardised interview protocol), but is, rather, more responsive and open to being shaped by the context.

#### Complex

Where there are multiple project partners, it is important to pay attention to data quality across organisations, data security when sharing data, and compatibility of IT systems. To support adaptive implementation of C4D it is useful to have data management systems that can quickly produce different types of reports in response to changing information needs.

## Participatory

In a participatory approach, it is important to think about who owns the data and therefore has responsibility for data management.

## Learning-based

Related to the participatory approach, it is important to consider whether stakeholders may need capacity-building support to be able to effectively manage data.

## Realistic

Good data management practices are important for keeping analysis processes manageable and feasible.

## Accountable

C4D emphasises good data management and ownership processes that are respectful, ethical, and responsible. It is important to agree to policies and processes that prevent or minimise harm (especially for vulnerable groups). These discussions should take place before, during and after the data collection.

## Resources

- The following resources provide useful guidance on managing data:
- [Ethnographic Action Research Toolbox](#)

The Ethnographic Action Research Toolbox has a whole section devoted to [dealing with data](#), including documenting data, organising and labelling data, and developing themes and managing codes.

[Equal access participatory monitoring and evaluation toolkit](#)

Page 63 of the Community Researcher Manual for Equal Access (a C4D organisation) covers good data management processes

The resources above are particularly useful in the context of the C4D Evaluation Framework for the following reasons:

- **Holistic:** open ended, unstructured data tends to be messier and more difficult to manage than structured (i.e. survey) data.
- **Realistic:** both tools were developed in the context of C4D NGOs, and so are inherently aimed towards being as pragmatic as possible.
- [Oxfam Responsible Program Data Policy](#)

This document outlines a rights-based policy for data management, based on the following

rights: the right to be counted and heard; the right to dignity and respect; the right to make an informed decision; the right to privacy; and the right to not be put at risk. This policy is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

**Critical:** The policy recognises that data and ownership of data entails a position of power and responsibility, and the importance of considering marginalised voices in this process.

**Accountable:** The policy emphasises the ethical dimensions of data management processes and responsibilities.

## **C4D: Combine qualitative and quantitative data**

### **What is it?**

M&E Frameworks and evaluation/study designs that include the collection both qualitative and quantitative data, are an important strategy for strong and balanced findings. It is important to plan in advance how the different types of data will be combined. Combining different kinds of data enriches findings, it can enable an examination of the generalisability of emerging hypothesis from qualitative data, qualitative data may offer explanations about patterns observed in quantitative data, and triangulation of data can confirm or reject findings from one source of data.

### **General information**

The Rainbow Framework includes detailed information on a range of methods for [combining different kinds of data](#). This page is recommended background reading before considering options to apply to C4D.

### **Applying the C4D principles**

#### **Realistic**

As part of being realistic, the C4D Evaluation Framework advocates for the use of mixed-methods. This doesn't mean that every R,M&E activity must include both qualitative and quantitative data, however. For example, a qualitative study might be needed to fill gaps in quantitative data or indicators.

#### **Holistic**

Combining qualitative and quantitative data enables different paths into understanding the context. Combining data from different methods gives a more rounded, more holistic view of a context.

#### **Accountable**

A key part of being accountable is rigour. Combining data from different data collection methods boosts the rigour by providing different perspectives and ways to understand a problem.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

### Resource

- [Qualitative research methods for use in equity-focused monitoring](#)

PDF

1.53 MB

An overview of how triangulation helps with validity is available on page 26 of this resource.

### Example

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

The Retrospective Analysis study of successful open defecation initiatives in Nadia, India, was specifically intended to fill gaps in knowledge. Existing quantitative surveys had confirmed that the initiatives had worked at a population level, and by using ethnographic and qualitative approaches, the study could answer questions about how and why the initiative had worked in holistic and contextualized ways.

## C4D: Analyse data

### What is it?

Analysing descriptive data (data about what has happened or is happening) means looking for patterns and themes, making sense of and summarising the data. It is an important part of every RM&E system or study. Techniques for analysis should be selected alongside the selection of methods in the design of a research study or evaluation. There are two basic categories of analysis methods for descriptive questions: qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis.

### General information

The Rainbow Framework includes detailed information on a range of [analysis methods](#). In addition, one of the UNICEF Methodological Briefs [Overview: Data Collection and Analysis Methods in Impact Evaluation](#), by the UNICEF Office of Research, Florence covers data collection and analysis. These pages are recommended background reading before considering options to apply to C4D.

## Applying the C4D principles

### Realistic

Additional resources may be required for analysing qualitative data (words-based data i.e. spoken or

written, stories, interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, videos etc.). In C4D, qualitative data is often critical to understanding contexts and changes. Qualitative data analysis (summarising and looking for patterns and themes) can be more time consuming compared to quantitative data, and requires different sets of skills.

## Participatory

The C4D Evaluation Framework encourages involvement of partners, institutions and community groups in the analysis process. Some methods/approaches have participatory analysis processes built in. A participatory approach to analysing data can reveal new findings and meanings, and support mutual learning.

## Critical

The data analysis process should involve looking for differences, exceptions, and a critical analysis of power. To reveal these differences it is useful to involve a diversity of perspectives in the interpretation and meaning-making process.

## Complexity

Simple averages, frequency tables and graphs will not be enough to represent complicated and complex aspects of C4D interventions. At the very least, there should be disaggregation in tables and diagrams to show differential effects on different sub-groups. Timelines can be important for showing non-linear change over time.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

- [Equal access participatory monitoring and evaluation toolkit](#)

Module 5 of this resource 'Doing qualitative data analysis' is a useful guide to doing qualitative data analysis. It covers the basic steps involved in undertaking qualitative data analysis, explains the difference between description and interpretation, suggests ways to get feedback on analysis, and discusses how to use triangulation to increase the trustworthiness of findings. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Realistic:** the module sets out the ideal steps for data analysis, and also offers more 'rapid' alternatives.
  - **Holistic:** this module is particularly aimed at helping people deal with and make sense of 'messy' data that comes from more open-ended, holistic data collection approaches.
- [Ethnographic Action Research Toolbox](#)

A brief, web-resource that provides guidance on data management, labelling and analysis, particularly useful for qualitative and ethnographic data. The analysis section includes examples of themes and coding. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Holistic:** this resource is particularly focused on analysing 'messy' data that comes from

ethnographic approaches, which are more open-ended and unstructured.

- **Learning-based:** the resource connects the processes of analysis to learning by linking analysis with developing findings for planning and action.
- [The IDEAS guide and facilitators' guide](#)

Module 9 of the IDEAS Guide provides a guide to doing qualitative and quantitative analysis using sticky notes to summarise and sort data into themes. This guide is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** the resource outlines a group-based, visual process for analysing data, and is designed to be accessible for people with little or no prior experience of M&E.
- **Realistic:** the resource uses simplified processes similar to coding. Ideally, participants would be familiar with the data, or sometimes should be allowed for familiarisation with data during the workshop.
- **Holistic:** this resource guides processes of analysing both qualitative 'messy' data and quantitative data.
- [Participatory rural communication appraisal starting with the people](#)

Section 6.4 of the Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) Handbook provides guidance on how to conduct analysis with community groups and other stakeholders. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** The guidance encourages the inclusion of community groups in processes of reflection and analysis.
- **Critical:** The guidance includes a list of key questions to be asking through the analysis process which bring attention to the differences in experiences among different groups.
- **Realistic:** The processes outlined are all quite practical and feasible, getting to the heart of what is important for a participatory approach to analysis.

## Example

- [KAP action research study on violence against children](#)

A study exploring Knowledge Attitudes and Practices relating to Violence Against Children in Tanzania used a technical reference group, including community researchers and child-peer researchers, to take a participatory approach to analysis. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in relation to this task in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** university researchers, community researchers and community groups were all involved in data analysis processes
- **Learning-based:** the involvement of a range of groups enabled mutual learning and for insight to inform recommendations.

## C4D: Visualise data

## What is it?

Data visualisation is the process of representing data graphically. It can make it easier to see trends and patterns. Data visualisation can be used during data analysis as part of making sense of data. It can also be used to communicate results as part of producing the reports.

## General information

The Rainbow Framework includes advice on [choosing data visualisation techniques](#) to suit different kinds of data. This page is recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

## Applying the C4D principles

### Participatory

Data visualisation as part of participatory processes of analysis can enable better engagement and analysis by stakeholders. Some methods (such as mapping, photovoice) generate visual data to begin with and this can also be useful (see [Collect and/or retrieve data \(methods\)](#) for more information) .

### Complexity

Data visualisation tools are particularly in complex situations. Trialling a range of different ways to visualise data during analysis can reveal unexpected relationships and change trajectories.

### Critical

From a communication of results perspective, data visualisation can help as many groups as possible to engage with data and findings. This has overlaps with the [Ensure accessibility](#) task.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

### Resources

- [Visualise data](#)

There are thousands of resources online about data visualisation (or 'dataviz') but this page remains a good place to start when exploring options for visualising different kinds of data.

- [American Evaluation Association Blog Data Visualisation category](#)

This blog category includes a wide range of resources, links and discussions about data visualisation. Ideas and topics include doing sketches and drawings first before transferring to digital, and graphical recording.

- [Conquering the dusty shelf report: data visualisation for evaluation](#)

A blog post outlining three strategies for data visualisation. The third tactic includes an example of incorporating qualitative quotes with a bar graph, which is particularly useful in C4D where qualitative data is common.

## **C4D: Understand causes and contributions**

Understand Causes is one of the seven clusters of R,M&E tasks in the Rainbow Framework.

Most evaluations need to investigate what is causing any changes observed. This involves selecting methods for investigating causal attribution and contribution.

There is one main task and three key methods associated with Understand causes. The task below contains C4D specific methods, advice and resources on investigating causal attribution and contribution

## **C4D: Investigate causal attribution and contribution**

### **What is it?**

For most evaluations it is not enough to just gather and report data about activities and changes in conditions (expected results) - there needs to be an investigation of the role of the intervention in producing these results. This is needed for any outcome or impact evaluation and also for any evaluation that examines effectiveness or ways to improve performance.

In evaluation, causal attribution and contribution refer to being able to be confident there is a causal link between events - in particular between activities and results. The term 'causal attribution' refers to a direct causal link. The term 'causal contribution' can be used to recognise multiple contributing factors that produce results. The term 'causal inference' covers both of these.

There are three main strategies for exploring causal inference. These are outlined below. This video provides an [overview of the three main strategies](#).

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D Hub: Compare results to a counterfactual \(strategy 1\)](#)

Compares the observed results to an estimate of what have been the situation if the intervention had not been implemented, often by creating or identifying a group of similar people who have not participated in a program.

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D Hub: Check the results support causal attribution \(strategy 2\)](#)

Examines whether the data are consistent with the theory of change - in particular seeking out data that doesn't match (for example the timing of the change makes it not plausible that it was due to

the intervention).

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D Hub: Investigate possible alternative explanations \(strategy 3\)](#)

Identifies other possible explanations (for example, the activities of another program) and then investigates whether these can be ruled out.

## General information

A UNICEF Office of Research Methodological Brief on [Strategies for Causal Attribution](#) (by Patricia Rogers) provides a good general overview of all three strategies. Another recommended general resource is [Impact Evaluation: A Guide for Managers](#) Elliot Stern. The Rainbow Framework's cluster of tasks on [understanding causes](#) also provides information on all three strategies. These resources are recommended background reading/viewing before considering methods that could be applied to C4D.

## Applying the C4D principles

### Holistic

When selecting from strategies consider:

- Strategies to create a counterfactual (strategy 1) are often not suitable because they distort how the intervention might work in the 'real world' contexts. Strategies to check the results support causal attribution are more sensitive to context and interconnections.
- Strategies for investigating possible alternative explanations (strategy 3) are important for challenging and problematising assumptions as part of a holistic approach.

### Complexity

To understand the causal contribution it is important to also understand the contributions of other programs and contextual factors. Strategies to investigate this must be in the evaluation design.

### Learning-based

The learning needs may determine which combination of strategies will be most useful. While designs creating a counterfactual (strategy 1) are best in situations where strong hypotheses (theories) are known and need to be tested and proven, they are not as well suited in more exploratory situations. A combination of Strategy 2: 'Check the results support causal attribution' and Strategy 3: 'Investigate possible alternative explanations' can be used where there is a need to learn about and better understand causes and changes.

### Critical

It is important to pay attention to the different ways that C4D initiatives affect different groups. Counterfactual-based designs (strategy 1) can show differences experienced by different groups through data disaggregations (looking at different variables). However, mechanisms to create

comparison groups (such as incentives) may disguise power differences. Critical reflection on power dynamics and inclusion might therefore make Strategy 2: Check the results support causal attribution and Strategy 3: Investigate possible alternative explanations better methods.

## **Accountable**

A central question in RM&E from an accountability perspective is 'what has been the impact (or contribution) of C4D to observed changes'. Answering this question rigorously requires selecting carefully from three causal analysis strategies.

## **Realistic**

Feasibility and availability of expertise might be factors when deciding on methods for investigating causes. Experimental and quasi-experimental designs (strategy 1) don't necessarily take more time and resources, but they do depend on a number of practical factors including: upfront investment in planning and design; and the ability to plan the C4D intervention around the needs of the experiment. Where these things are not possible, it might be more pragmatic to use Strategy 2: Check the results support causal attribution and Strategy 3: Investigate possible alternative explanations (strategy 3).

# **Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D**

## **Casual Contribution and C4D**

- In C4D it is often more useful to think about investigating 'causal contribution', rather than 'causal attribution'. Thinking in term causal contribution recognises that multiple factors contribute to changes. In UNICEF, for example, C4D and Program teams are often interested in investigating the contribution of C4D components of programs to the outcomes and impacts that are observed.

## **Selecting Strategies for Investigating Causal Contribution in C4D**

- There are three broad strategies for answering causal questions and C4D R,M&E might use a combination of these.

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D Hub: Compare results to a counterfactual \(strategy 1\)](#)

An estimate of what would have happened in the absence of a program.

While designs that include counterfactual are considered by some to be the 'gold standard', for many C4D initiatives a credible counterfactual will not be possible. This is especially the case

in programs where participants are volunteers or are specially selected for participation, and for national level programs. In these cases you will need to use the other two strategies (often in combination) for causal inference.

If you don't have, or can't create, a credible counterfactual...

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D Hub: Check the results support causal attribution \(strategy 2\)](#)

Look systematically at whether the evidence is consistent with what would be expected if the intervention was producing the observed changes.

Communication for Development (C4D) :

[C4D Hub: Investigate possible alternative explanations \(strategy 3\)](#)

Identify possible alternative explanations and investigate whether these can be ruled out.

## **C4D Hub: Compare results to a counterfactual (strategy 1)**

One of the ways of understanding causes is to compare the observed results to those you would expect if the intervention had not been implemented. This is known as the 'counterfactual'.

There are three broad methods for creating a counterfactual. These are:

- Experimental designs (also known as Randomised Control Trials);
- Quasi-experimental designs (non-randomised control group);
- Non-experimental methods for creating a counterfactual.

Experimental and quasi-experimental designs are usually used in evaluation when there is a need to prove that an intervention works, for example, in order to justify more investment or scale-up. It is less suitable as a method to explore what might work. Further, it is important to note that not all situations lend themselves to using experimental and quasi-experimental designs (discussed further below).

## **General information**

The BetterEvaluation Website includes comprehensive resources and overviews of the three methods (experimental designs, quasi-experimental designs, and non-experimental methods). Other key, generalist resources include:

- [Resources on Randomised Control Trials](#) by UNICEF Office of Research Innocenti, including a [short video](#)
- [Resources on Quasi Experimental Design by the UNICEF Office of Research](#) Innocenti
- [Resources and toolkits via 3ie](#) (International Initiative for Impact Evaluation) - note that impact evaluation in this context is used as interchangeable with experimental designs.
- [A guide by JPAL \(Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab\)](#), which takes users through the steps of

deciding if a question can be answered through an experimental design and randomisation, through to research designs, data collection and analysis.

These pages are recommended background reading before considering methods that could be applied to C4D.

## Counterfactuals and C4D - Applying the C4D principles

### Complex

M&E Frameworks/Evaluations that include counterfactuals in the design are rare in C4D. Counterfactuals can be useful for explaining fairly linear cause and effect relationships, repeating patterns and interdependencies across the social system. On the other hand, the following factors make it particularly difficult:

- Counterfactuals for evaluation generally need to be built into the design of the initiative before implementation begins. The design of the initiative will be significantly influenced by the needs of a counterfactual, especially if randomisation is used. In particular, most Counterfactual Designs require standardised implementation and are not appropriate where adaptive and emergent approaches to C4D are used.
- Some initiatives, by their nature, are inappropriate for counterfactual designs. This is particularly the case for complicated and complex types of initiatives.

### Participatory

Although counterfactual designs are generally not associated with participatory approaches, if the stakeholders (especially key users) decide that counterfactual designs are useful for the purpose, these groups could be involved in decision making about the design.

### Critical

One of the strengths of a randomised control trial is that differences and inequities should become apparent through data disaggregations. However, mechanisms to create comparison groups (such as incentives) may disguise how power and marginalisation affect real-world interventions and lead to misleading results. Further, these types of designs require high levels of expertise and top-down management, which may exclude certain groups from participating in the R,M&E processes.

Critical reflection on power dynamics and inclusion might therefore suggest

- Strategy 2: [Check the results support causal attribution](#) and
- Strategy 3: [Investigate possible alternative explanations](#)

### Realistic

While experimental and quasi-experimental designs may not necessarily require more investment of time and resources, they do depend on a number of practical factors. Feasibility is dependent on: significant investment in planning and design upfront; and the ability to plan the intervention around the needs of the experimental/quasi-experimental design.

## Holistic

Experimental and quasi-experimental designs often use artificial mechanisms to create comparison groups. This might include incentives to participate, the selection of participants based on specific criteria, or additional interventions to control for other variables. These factors may distort how the intervention might work in the 'real world'. In addition, it is important even in experimental and quasi-experimental designs to undertake some additional data collection to build a holistic understanding of causes, even when the statistics appear conclusive.

## C4D and Experimental designs

There are examples of Experimental Designs using Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) in C4D. Although randomization is usually done at individual participant level, it is also possible to randomise larger clusters or groups such as villages, listenership or dialogue groups, schools etc.

### Resources and examples

- [BBC Media action has published a review of the use of RCTs](#) and other experimental and quasi-experimental designs with a counterfactual in the field of media and communication for development. It includes examples of using radio listening groups for a comparison of exposed and counterfactual groups. See
- [Femina HIP, a Tanzanian C4D NGO, partnered with researchers to implement a RCT design of an edutainment TV program](#) . The television program was intended to encourage entrepreneurialism among youth. The quasi-experimental design involved randomly selecting 43 secondary schools, and using encouragement design to incentivise viewing of the TV program by students at half the schools. Importantly, the researchers also conducted focus group discussions. The focus group discussions revealed that young people don't always have the power within the household to choose what they watch. This means that even though the results of the RCT showed that viewing the TV program lead to increases in entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviours, young people only had access to the TV content because of the incentives offered. This shows the importance of using different methods to understand contextual factors, even when using RCTs.
- [An RCT on a civic education program and the impact on voter behaviour](#) by Search for Common Ground with Jpal in Sierra Leone.
- [Delaying Child Marriage through Community-Based Skills-Development Programs for Girls: Results from a Randomized Controlled Study in Rural Bangladesh](#) assesses the impact of the Bangladeshi Association for Life Skills, Income, and Knowledge for Adolescents (BALIKA) programme by performing a difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis adjusting for three key sociodemographic characteristics: age, religion, and wealth quintile.
- [Encouraging community-based monitoring of healthcare in Uganda](#) is a case study by Jpal which shows how an RCT design can be applied to assess participatory approaches. In this case, the unit is the village. 25 village dispensaries were randomly selected to begin community monitoring processes, with 25 other dispensaries used as the control (no treatment).

## C4D and Quasi-experimental designs

Quasi-experimental designs are in some ways more feasible since the counterfactual for comparison is created through options such as matched comparisons and double-difference designs.

### Resources and examples

- [BBC Media action has published a review of the use of RCTs and other experimental and quasi-experimental designs](#) with a counterfactual in the field of media and communication for development. It includes examples of using radio listening groups for a comparison of exposed and counterfactual groups. See

## C4D and Non-experimental methods

Non-experimental methods are the easiest, but also the least credible, of the three options, since it is based on developing a hypothetical prediction of what would have happened in the absence of the intervention. This can be as simple as asking key informants to predict what would have happened in the absence of the C4D initiative(s).

### [C4D Hub: Check the results support causal attribution \(strategy 2\)](#)

Checking the consistency of results means analysing data in systematic ways to check the extent to which it matches what would be expected if it has worked, in order to understand whether a causal relationship exists between variables.

This may involve specific and additional data collection (e.g. key informant attribution) or analysis of existing or descriptive data (e.g. checking exposure/intensity patterns, checking the timing of outcomes, comparative case studies). Having a strong [logic model or program theory](#) is a foundation for most methods. It is advisable to use this strategy in combination with [Investigate possible alternative explanations \(strategy 3\)](#), and in this way seek to understand the intervention's contribution in the context of other contributing factors.

It is recommended that you look over the [full list of methods for checking the consistency of results](#) before considering methods that may be applied to C4D.

## Applying the C4D principles and checking the consistency of results

### Complex

In general, the methods outlined under this strategy are good methods for answering causal questions about C4D, since it is possible to use a combination of methods in complicated and complex C4D initiatives. It is best to use this in combination with strategies to [rule out possible](#)

[alternative explanations](#). In checking the consistency of results, it is important to be attuned to feedback loops (where one or more factors reinforce changes in each other), tipping points (where at some point one, perhaps minor thing builds on cumulative factors over time to create significant change) and other non-linear, complex interactions.

## **Holistic**

This option is more sensitive to context and interconnections than counterfactual options

## **Participatory**

Several options can be adapted to be more inclusive, engaging and contribute to mutual learning. One option that is explicitly participatory is [Collaborative Outcomes Reporting](#) which maps data against the theory of change, and then uses a combination of expert review and community consultation to check the credibility of the evidence

## **Learning-based**

This option is useful for developing better understandings of causes and changes. (In comparison, [counterfactual designs](#) are better for situations where strong hypotheses (theories) are known and need to be tested and proven).

## **Realistic**

There are many practical and feasible options for checking to see that the evidence supports conclusions about attribution or contribution by the C4D intervention to the observed changes. Even very modest R,M&E Frameworks and studies could include these options to greatly improve the ability to make clear, evidence-based causal inference

## **Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D**

A combination of strategies is usually advisable.

### [Check dose-response patterns](#)

This involves examining the link between 'dose' (or intensity of engagement) and response to see whether the program caused the outcome. In C4D this could look at whether the amount of engagement in the communication activities (exposure to videos, frequency of participation in events etc.) corresponds with the level of changes in variables (such as increases in knowledge, empowerment etc.). This could also involve checking if there has been an increase in the particular issues covered in the communication activities and not in other similar issues (for example, increases in specific types of violence or behaviours covered compared to issues not covered).

It is useful to think about the following principles in the C4D Evaluation Framework:

- [complexity](#): relying on dose patterns alone can assume linear (simple cause-effect) relationships between exposure and changes. While this approach may provide some interesting insights, it is good to combine it with other options, and explore the possibilities of

feedback-loops, tipping-points and other complex interactions of factors.

### [Check timing of outcomes](#)

Check that the timing of actual changes makes sense in terms of the timing of interventions. In C4D this could be checking to see whether the timing of changes in attendance at health clinics or community-led actions is consistent with timing of engagement in communication activities.

It is useful to think about the following principles in the C4D Evaluation Framework:

- [complexity](#): relying on timing of outcomes alone can assume linear relationships between exposure and changes. Social and behaviour changes are often long-term, incremental changes, reliant on a conducive context, rather than immediate and obvious change. This method can provide interesting insights, but should usually be combined with other lines of investigation.

### [Key informant interviews](#)

Key informants are asked about the causes of change and whether this is linked to program activities through qualitative causal narratives.

It is useful to think about the following principles in the C4D Evaluation Framework:

- [holistic](#): there is a risk with this method that participants will give the answers they think you want. To avoid this bias, start with open-ended qualitative exploration of what participants say led to the changes, rather than testing if the communication activities caused the changes.

## Examples

- [UNICEF Vietnam National Program for Child Protection M&E Plans Framework](#)

The UNICEF Vietnam Country Office with their government counterparts developed a M&E plan that included causal analysis strategies through checking the consistency of evidence.

- [UNICEF Tanzania Country Office, causal analysis of the Shuga Radio program's contribution to HIV/AIDS outcomes](#)

The UNICEF Tanzania Country Office undertook causal analysis of the Shuga Radio program's contribution to HIV/AIDS outcomes through checking the consistency of evidence and ruling out possible alternative explanations. This example is consistent with the C4D Evaluation in the following ways:

[complexity](#): multiple lines of enquiry were used to come to some conclusions about causes. Multiple possible causes were identified, and each may have some contribution.

## Resources

- [Contribution analysis](#)

Contribution analysis is an evaluation approach that provides a systematic way of understanding an intervention's contribution to observed outcomes or impacts.

- [Contribution analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect](#)

This brief from the Institutional Learning and Change Initiative (ILAC) explores contribution analysis and how it can be used to provide credible assessments of cause and effect.

## **C4D Hub: Investigate possible alternative explanations (strategy 3)**

This strategy involves looking at the evidence at hand, and systematically identifying other possible causes of changes (such as other programs, external political and social changes etc.), and then investigating the extent to which they contributed the change.

Often there are multiple causes for any given change, so this process is also about understanding the relative contribution of multiple factors. It is useful to have a strong [program theory or logic model](#), and use this to think about alternative explanations at each level of the change theory. This strategy is best used in combination with strategies to [check the consistency of evidence](#), and in this way offers a way to engage in credible causal analysis without a counterfactual.

There are many [methods for identifying and ruling out other possible explanations](#).

## **Ruling out possible alternative explanations and applying the C4D principles**

### **Complex**

Using this strategy is important in complicated and complex situations. It is almost a given in C4D that social and behavioural changes will have multiple causes, some of which may be predictable, and others which won't be. Because of this, this strategy may not so much be about 'ruling out' alternative explanations, but instead making a judgement about the extent of the contribution of a C4D initiative in the context of identified multiple causes

### **Holistic**

Some openness to challenging and problematising assumptions and being surprised by findings is important when undertaking this task

### **Participatory**

A participatory approach to draw on a range of different perspectives and knowledge would strengthen the findings from this task.

## Realistic

There are many practical and feasible options for investigating alternative explanations. Even very modest R,M&E Frameworks and studies could include these options to greatly improve the ability to make clear, evidence-based causal inference

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

A combination of strategies is usually advisable

### [General Elimination Methodology](#)

A process of identifying alternative explanations and then systematically investigating them to see if they can be ruled out. A range of different, open-ended methods can be used to investigate alternative explanations. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- [realistic](#): the methods for elimination and investigation should be flexible and pragmatic
- [holistic](#): the process ensures a holistic understanding of changes and contexts, and not just cherry-picking evidence that supports the theories
- [participatory](#): with flexibility and creativity, this process could be adapted to include stakeholders and communities in brainstorming alternative explanations and investigations.

### [Key informant interviews](#)

Key informant interviews with experts and community members to identify possible explanations for change, and to assess whether these explanations can be ruled out. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- [holistic](#): the process ensures a holistic understanding of changes and contexts, and not just cherry-picking evidence that supports the theories
- [participatory](#): this process ensures that a range of different perspectives are included.

### [Process tracing](#)

Going through each stage of the theory of change and considering whether there are plausible alternative explanations at each step. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- [realistic](#): this is a relatively simple and pragmatic process that can easily be added to a combination of other options.
- [participatory](#): with flexibility and creativity, this process could be adapted to include stakeholders and communities.

### [Searching for disconfirming evidence/following up exceptions](#)

There are usually outlying cases in any data, that stand out as not following the pattern (both positive outliers and negative outliers). These exceptions can give potential clues about causal factors. Similarly, further investigations into cases that seem to disconfirm the theory and trying to explain can yield important insights about causal mechanisms and contexts. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- [complex](#): this process is consistent with complexity theories since it recognises that the same factors and conditions affect different people in different ways, and seeks to use that to learn and adapt.

## Resources

- [Contribution analysis - Social science methods series](#)

This paper, written by Franca Eirich and Anita Morrison for the Scottish Government, provides detailed guidance on contribution analysis and its use in Scottish settings.

## Examples

- [UNICEF Vietnam National Program for Child Protection M&E Plans Framework](#)

The UNICEF Vietnam Country Office with their government counterparts developed a M&E plan that included causal analysis strategies through checking the consistency of evidence.

## C4D: Synthesise

Synthesise is one of the seven clusters of R,M&E tasks in the Rainbow Framework. These tasks involve bringing together data and evidence into an overall conclusion and judgement.

There are three tasks associated with Synthesise. These tasks include C4D specific methods, advice and resources on bringing together data and findings.

## C4D: Synthesise data from a single study or evaluation

### What is it?

Studies and evaluations must, in the end, make evaluative judgments. To do that, there needs to be a process of drawing together data and findings (often from descriptive data and causal analysis); and systematic synthesis and conclusions. In evaluations, this process will often draw upon standards and criteria developed as part of [Determining what 'success' looks like](#). In other types of studies, such as situation analysis, it may use other ways of weighing up and recommending methods. This process is particularly important where there are mixed results from the data, and an overall judgement and weighting needs to be made. Attention to processes to properly synthesise data and make a judgement about the value can significantly boost the quality and usefulness of C4D RM&E.

## General information

There are many methods that can be used for synthesising and valuing. The Rainbow Framework includes [relevant methods](#), such as those covering processes (such as consensus conferences and expert panels), techniques (such as cost effectiveness analysis, numeric weighting, and rubrics), and approaches (such as social return on investment). This page is recommended as background reading before considering options to apply to C4D.

## Applying the C4D principles to synthesising data from a single evaluation

### Participatory

Stakeholders should be meaningfully engaged in the process of weighing up the different outcomes, benefits, and costs (monetary and unintended outcomes). See methods such as a consensus conference, and qualitative weight and sum methods.

### Critical

Consider whose voices are included and excluded from the process of weighing up findings and making judgements, in order to allow for the collective contribution to the weighing up the extent to which success has been achieved.

### Accountable

By undertaking data synthesis processes we can make findings based on different sources of evidence and voices. This is a useful tool for accountability to partners and community groups, and to donors and managers.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for synthesising data from a single evaluation in C4D

### Participatory processes

- There are ways to undertake this process in a participatory manner, in keeping with the C4D Evaluation Framework, so that the perspectives of communities and other stakeholders can be included appropriately. The Rainbow Framework lists [several methods](#) for undertaking these processes. The following may be of particular interest:
- [Consensus conference](#)

This method may be particularly useful as it supports the participatory principle.

- [Qualitative weight and sum](#)

This method may be a useful technique since it uses symbols to apply ratings.

## Balancing costs

- There are several methods for synthesising from a monitory perspective:
- [Value for money](#)

Value for money is a term used in different ways, including as a synonym for cost-effectiveness, and as systematic approach to considering these issues throughout planning and implementation, not only in evaluation.

- [Cost effectiveness analysis](#)

Cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) compares the relative costs of the outcomes of two or more courses of action and is considered an alternative to cost-benefit analysis (CBA).

- [Cost-benefit analysis](#)

This method compares the total costs of a programme/project with its benefits, using a common metric (most commonly monetary units), which enables you to calculate the net cost or benefit associated with the programme.

- [Cost utility analysis](#)

Cost-utility analysis (CUA) is a method that can be used to develop an overall measure of utility or value based on the preferences of individuals.

- These methods are possible in C4D, but it depends on access to relevant, quantifiable outputs and outcomes (such as, numbers of visits to health clinics, number of people wearing helmets). It is also highly dependent on good causal analysis, and where a [counterfactual](#) is not created as part of the design, strong analysis of [consistency of expected results](#) and [ruling out alternative explanations](#) will be vital.

Of the different available methods, [cost-utility analysis](#) is likely to be the most compatible with most types of C4D for the following reasons:

- **Participatory:** the approach seeks and consolidates the perspectives of stakeholder groups in deciding on preferences and quality.
- **Critical:** the approach is sensitive to the differences among different groups in the ways that different elements might be valued
- **Holistic:** the approach is useful for measuring benefits in non-monetary terms.

## C4D: Synthesise data across studies (research, monitoring data, evaluations)

### What is it?

There are often questions beyond a single program or initiative, such as “Do these types of interventions work?” or “For whom, in what ways and under what circumstances do they work?” Answering these kinds of questions means locating the evidence, assessing the quality and relevance (and deciding whether or not to include it), extracting the relevant information, and synthesising it. The evidence may be sourced from bibliographic databases, unpublished studies, etc.

### General information

The Rainbow Framework includes [comprehensive information on a range of methods](#) with links to further resources and tools. These range from the more rigorous systematic review methods, through to rapid methods of evidence assessment. [3ie also has a list of resources](#), particularly on the more rigorous and technical systematic review methods such as Cochrane and Campbell. It is recommended that some or all of these resources are reviewed before considering methods to apply to C4D.

### Applying the C4D Principles

#### Learning-based

Synthesising data from across evaluations can be a useful way for better understanding the critical factors and qualities that make for successful C4D.

#### Critical

To ensure a critical and equity-focused approach, and to account for the complexity of different outcomes for different groups, the [realist synthesis](#) method would be useful for exploring what works for whom and in what circumstances.

#### Realistic

There are less expensive methods, such as [rapid evidence assessment](#), which may be useful where there is a need to realistically balance available resources and appropriate rigour.

#### Participatory

This task can be undertaken in a participatory way, supporting mutual learning.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

### Sources of data for a synthesis of C4D evidence

- The [Communication Initiative](#) is a large repository of reports and evidence relating to C4D. It is searchable through text-search and filters.
  - Through a combination of filters for program areas and search terms such as 'systematic review' or 'evidence synthesis' it should be relatively easy to find examples of systematic reviews.
- In an agency like UNICEF, it would be possible to synthesise evidence about C4D across different countries and regions from public and internal program evaluation reports.
- Desk reviews are a common type of data synthesis approach, often commissioned to inform program design.

### Recommended methods

- [Best evidence synthesis](#)

An approach to assembling and synthesising a wide range of evidence. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** Builds in an iterative, participatory approach to building and using a knowledge base.
- **Holistic:** The approach is not as strict about what can be included as evidence compared to some other systematic review methods. Single case studies, can, for example, be included. The approach is also sensitive to the impact of context.
- **Learning-based:** The goals of Best Evidence Synthesis are to build a knowledge base that can be applied in programs.

## C4D: Generalise findings

### What is it?

An evaluation usually involves some kind of generalisation of the findings to put forward an analysis that predicts how the findings of one initiative might relate to future programs, other places and contexts, or other groups of people. Often it is assumed that statistical generalisation is the only way to generalise, but there are a range of methods for undertaking this task.

### General information

The Rainbow Framework includes [comprehensive guidance](#) on methods with links to resources, including both statistical and non-statistical generalisation methods. This page is recommended as background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

# Applying the C4D principles to generalising findings from C4D

## Complexity

Although there may rarely be a one-size-fits-all set of recommendations for C4D, there may be some key principles or insights about the kinds of contextual factors that have the most influence and can be generalised.

## Participatory

The knowledge of partners, communities and other stakeholders can be valuable in drawing out key principles or insights that can be used to consider whether the same initiative might work in other contexts (other times, places and people).

## Critical

Consider who the initiative has worked for and where (who has it not worked for) and how this might translate to other contexts (places, people and groups). When using participatory approaches to generalising findings, consider whose perspectives are included and silenced in this process.

## Holistic

When Generalising Findings it is important to identify what the key social, political, economic, cultural and other systemic factors were, in that specific place and time, that affected whether it worked. This will help to predict what factors will need to be considered in other contexts.

## Recommended methods and adaptations for generalising findings in C4D

### Approaches

- [Realist evaluation](#)

Realist Evaluation is a complete approach to evaluation, however, it is also possible to just borrow the key concepts relating to causality and generalisation for this task. The realist evaluation approach stresses the importance of context in understanding causes and begins from the premise that causal mechanisms will only lead to those causes when the context is conducive. Therefore, claims about generalisation of findings are usually modest and contingent. Instead, it seeks to provide plausible explanations of what happened and why, with a focus on the conditions that made the changes possible. It is this focus on the conditions and contexts that can help inform assessments of whether interventions that proved successful in one setting may be so in another setting (often another specific setting, rather than an abstract or hypothetical setting)

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

- **Critical:** realist evaluation is always sensitive to differences, asking not just 'what has worked' and but also 'for whom'.
- **Holistic:** realist evaluation is highly sensitive to context and conditions, asking not just 'what has worked' but 'what has worked in what circumstances'. The conditions that support the change to happen are a key part of any assessment of generalisability.
- **Complex:** a realist evaluation approach can help make sense of the complex processes underlying programmes by formulating plausible explanations
- [Positive deviance](#)

The Positive Deviance approach treats generalisability in a slightly different way. Investigators work with communities using participatory approaches to identify outliers to the norm; people or groups who stand out as positive cases, deviating from the general trends. The Positive Deviant approach then seeks to 'discover' the uncommon behaviours and strategies that led to better solutions to problems. This informs a “Design” of initiatives to make more widespread (or 'scale up') the use of solutions through iterative processes. This approach is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** the approach is premised on the belief that communities already have the expertise and solutions to solve their own problems, participatory and community-driven approaches to discovering and analysing these are key.
- **Learning-based:** positive deviance treats generalisability of solutions from one positive case as a goal that can be achieved through iterative and action-oriented processes to test and assess solutions.
- **Complex:** the positive deviance approach is premised on the idea that communities are self-organising. The process requires highly adaptive approaches and comfort with unpredictability.
- [Horizontal evaluation](#)

Horizontal Evaluation treats generalisability differently again. In this approach, peer-learning and peer-evaluation between different groups doing similar kinds of initiatives is a mechanism for encouraging those participants to adapt and apply successful approaches. This approach is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Learning-based:** Horizontal Evaluation approaches generalisability as an outcome of peer-learning, where one of the main objectives is to learn and adapt good practices by peers.
- **Participatory:** rather than 'expert led' the horizontal evaluation approach uses participatory processes toward peer evaluation.
- **Complex:** the Horizontal Evaluation approach depends on the self-organising capacity of participants to recognise aspects that can be adapted and generalised to their own context
- **Critical:** The involvement of peers overcomes some of the uneven power relations that can occur in external evaluations, however it is important to have an experienced facilitator who can create a trusting environment and ensure participation of all people.

## Resource

- [The community radio continuous improvement toolkit](#)

This toolkit is premised on a mix of self-assessment and peer-assessment toward co-learning. It was created in the context of community radios in India, but, with some adaptation of the questions, the processes and guidance could be applied to support peer-assessment between organisations doing a range of different types of C4D.

## C4D: Report and support use

Report and support use is one of the seven clusters of R,M&E tasks in the Rainbow Framework.

These tasks involve creating reports and content from the R,M&E, sharing findings, and supporting use of and learning from the R,M&E with the primary users. Although this may be one of the last tasks, planning should begin from the very first steps.

There are five tasks associated with Report and Support Use. These tasks include C4D specific methods, advice and resources on sharing and using R,M&E findings and outcomes

## C4D: Identify reporting requirement

### What is it?

Different groups of primary intended users and other stakeholders will have different needs in relation to reporting requirements (what needs to be reported and when) emerging from R,M&E. It is important to think about these needs as part of the M&E Framework or Evaluation Plan before beginning the data collection and analysis to ensure that the R,M&E activities will meet these needs. It is useful to undertake this task in conjunction with [identifying primary intended users](#) and [deciding the purpose](#). This information should then be reviewed periodically.

### General information

Advice on undertaking the task of [identifying reporting requirements](#) can be found in the Rainbow Framework. It includes links to more information on communication plans and reporting needs analysis. This page is recommended reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

## Applying the C4D Principles

### Accountable

Reports from R,M&E are usually focused on satisfying the needs of donor and managers. These are important users, but it is also important to think about the reporting needs of other groups we are

accountable to. This includes partners, community groups, local institutions and other stakeholders.

## Participatory

Taking a participatory approach to undertaking this task would mean actively engaging with key stakeholders in a reporting needs analysis, and/or the development of a communication plan. It would mean thinking about the needs and uses of communities and other groups and the reporting requirements to support this.

## Complex

Different primary intended users may have different preferences for receiving reports. They may also have different interests and time scales for applying the findings. Thoughtful reporting strategies that suit the user's needs and timeframes can help facilitate an adaptive approach to C4D work.

## Critical

Critically reflect on the assumptions relating to reporting. It is important to ask: are there good reasons why reporting must take certain forms? are there ways in which certain reporting requirements exclude or favour certain groups? whose needs are being served by the reporting requirements?

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

- It is reasonable to expect that this task is something that would be a strength for C4D, however, this task is often neglected when things get busy.
- [Reporting needs analysis](#)

This helps in working with your stakeholders to determine their reporting needs. This approach is consistent with the C4D Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** This process supports a participatory approach, since it takes into account the needs of all stakeholders, which can inform the communication plan.
  - **Accountable:** This process ensures transparency and clarity in relation to reporting needs to ensure both upward and downward accountabilities are met.
- [Communication plan](#)

Develop a plan that outlines the strategies which will be used to communicate the results of your R,M&E.

- **Participatory:** This process supports a participatory approach, since it ensures that a plan is in place to communicate with key stakeholder groups and communities where necessary.
- **Learning-based:** A communication and dissemination plan is a key part of ensuring use and learning among key groups.

- **Critical:** In developing a communication plan it is important to think about access issues among different groups. (see also [Ensure accessibility](#))

## C4D: Develop reporting media

### What is it?

Research, monitoring and evaluation reports can be in different formats and be shared using different media. Working with different groups, users or stakeholders (see [Identify reporting requirements](#)) determine the best format for the reports. The structure of an RM&E reporting media can do a great deal to encourage the succinct reporting of direct answers to key questions, backed up by enough detail about the evaluative reasoning and methodology to demonstrate the logic and the evidence base. The products may include a traditional, written evaluation report, and other products tailored to specific groups, such as an evaluation summary, policy brief, newsletter, presentation, video, etc.

### General information

The Rainbow Framework includes [guidance on traditional, written reports](#). It also includes ideas and methods for other reporting formats. In addition, Manager's Guide to Evaluation includes (Step 8) guidance for commissioners in relation to their role in [guiding the production of reporting media](#), and (Step 9, sub-step 1) [making reports accessible](#) and engaging with stakeholders to make the findings accessible.

### Applying the C4D Principles

#### Participatory

Reporting media can be co-created by some or all of the people and groups involved in the R,M&E. This is particularly useful as a strategy to ensure that results are communicated in appropriate and accessible ways.

#### Realistic

While there are many great methods that may be ideal for communicating with different groups, it is also important to be realistic about how many different methods are feasible. There may need to be trade-offs in relation to how many different media are used, the quality of production and other factors.

### Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

- This is an RM&E task to which C4D should bring particular strengths.

The Rainbow Framework lists many methods that would be consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework, including:

- [Validation workshop](#)

Workshops with stakeholders to discuss the RM&E findings and recommendations.

- [Displays and exhibits](#)

To draw attention to particular issues and enable community engagement.

- [Video](#)

Can be an engaging and accessible medium.

- [Infographics](#)

Display complex data and messages visually in a simple manner for easy comprehension.

- [Theatre](#)

To communicate evaluation findings and engage intended users.

## Example

- [Infographic on violence against children Malawi](#)

UNICEF Malawi created an animated video to share the results of a study of Violence Against Children. This example is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

Critical: This video presents the findings in a visual, accessible and engaging manner, which means a range of different stakeholder groups could view, use and share the findings.

## C4D: Ensure accessibility

### What is it?

While producing reports, it is important to think about accessibility. There are some things you can do to improve accessibility in a general sense, such as using graphic design principles, using plain language, and using sub-headings. There are also some things you can do to improve accessibility for specific groups.

## General information

The Rainbow Framework has further guidance on [ensuring accessibility](#) of reporting media. This page is recommended background reading before considering options to apply to C4D.

## Applying the C4D Principles

### Critical

Because of the nature of C4D, there is likely to be a greater emphasis on communicating with diverse groups. How might differences in age, status, gender, geography, as well as disability, literacy, language, and education affect access, both physical access and access based on abilities?

## Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

- Some of these issues can be overcome through the selection of creative reporting media (see [Develop reporting media](#)), however, sometimes there are extra steps that can improve accessibility. An example may be adding closed caption subtitles to YouTube videos.

## C4D: Develop recommendations

### What is it?

Research studies, findings from monitoring and evaluations often make proposals for certain courses of action. This includes methods, improvements or advice on whether a program should be continued or expanded. Often, but not always, this is included as a task in the Terms of Reference or other management documents (see [Document Management Processes and Agreements](#)). Developing recommendations should be a considered process of using findings to decide on future actions. The researcher/evaluator and their team may use synthesis processes (see [Synthesise data from a single evaluation](#) and [Generalising findings](#)) to inform the development of recommendations. Processes that involve stakeholders in developing or reviewing recommendations will contribute to better use of the RM&E findings.

## General information

The Rainbow Framework lists a range of methods for engaging with stakeholders to [develop or review recommendations](#). This page is recommended as background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D.

# Applying the C4D principles to the task of developing recommendations

## Participatory

Partners, community groups and local institutions should be meaningfully engaged in the development of recommendations. This ensures that their knowledge informs future programming and helps to enable community-driven development.

## Critical

There is a need to ensure that the recommendations include a range of voices and perspectives, taking into account the power inequities between stakeholders.

## Accountable

Ensure that principles of social accountability are employed to ensure that recommendations from stakeholders are heard and meaningfully considered by decision-makers.

# Recommended methods and adaptations for developing recommendations in C4D

## Participatory processes

- The Rainbow Framework lists a range of methods that would be consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework, including:
  - Where discussions are held between beneficiaries in order to provide feedback.
  - [Group critical reflection](#)  
Where stakeholders give feedback in a group setting.
  - [Individual critical reflection](#)  
Where stakeholders give feedback individually.
  - [Participatory recommendation screening](#)  
Where draft recommendations are tested with key stakeholders.

## C4D: Support use

### What is it?

Planning and proactive actions are needed to support the utilisation of R,M&E findings. This support might be in the form of events (such as annual reviews) processes (such as written management responses, or recommendations tracking), or structures (such as learning committees or wikis). For evaluation reports and other discrete RM&E activities, time and resources should be built into the budget to account for support beyond report delivery.

### General information

The Rainbow Framework includes a range of methods (including events, processes and structures) to [support use](#), and recommends some guides. [Step 9 of the Manager's Guide to Evaluation](#) presents similar information from a commissioner's perspective, and suggests that evaluation use plans are produced as a product of this step. A key guide on this topic is the [UNESCO Guidelines for follow-up to evaluation findings](#) - a four-page paper providing an overview to UNESCO procedures. These pages are recommended background reading before considering methods to apply to C4D R,M&E.

### Applying the C4D Principles

#### Learning-based

This task contributes to a learning-based approach through taking seriously the tasks associated with supporting the use of findings in future programs and phases.

#### Participatory

How can C4D agencies support use among community and other stakeholders?

#### Accountable

To achieve social accountability it is critical that recommendations from different stakeholders are heard and meaningfully considered by decision-makers. Committed and transparent processes to ensure that the findings (both positive and negative) from R,M&E are used is an important part of accountability.

### Recommended methods and adaptations for C4D

- Several methods related to supporting use from the Rainbow Framework are consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework. In particular:
- [Annual review](#)

Annual reviews can bring together stakeholders to review RM&E findings on a regular basis. It is consistent with the C4D Evaluation Framework in the following ways:

- **Participatory:** these review meetings can involve key users and other stakeholders
- **Complex:** regular reflection and review processes support adaptive implementation approaches.
- [Data use calendar](#)

Helps ensure that the timing of data collection and analysis fit with reporting requirements and other opportunities for active use of findings.

- **Realistic:** a data-use calendar ensures that the uses of findings are kept in focus, and that data collection, analysis and report writing are realistically planned to meet these needs.

## Resources

- [The IDEAS guide and facilitators' guide](#)

Module 6 guides the creation of a data-use calendar.

- [Policy briefing](#)

Ensure that findings are translated into recommendations that suit policy makers.

- **Realistic:** tailoring the briefings to be accessible and suit the purpose increases the likelihood of use.
- [Recommendations tracking](#)

Keeping a transparent record of the responses to and action from recommendations.

- **Accountable:** this process is useful for ensuring both upward and downward accountability, where there is a responsibility that evidence is taken seriously and reasonable actions are taken.

## [C4D Hub: Definitions of key terms](#)

## Approach

Approaches are conceptually distinct ways of thinking about, designing and conducting evaluations. Examples of evaluation approaches are stakeholder-based participatory approaches and the results-based management approach, which is exemplified by the logical framework approach. Other evaluation approaches include [developmental evaluation](#) and [participatory evaluation](#).

## Evaluation

Evaluation is a systematic process of investigation to determine the outcomes of an initiative and the value that primary stakeholders place on development programmes and activities, and their outcomes. Evaluation is undertaken in order to improve development's effectiveness and sustainability, to help reach objectives, to make good decisions about future activities. It helps us to understand and identify the expected and unexpected outcomes of development activities against a clear understanding of an initiative's vision and objectives, based on community needs and aspirations, and its theory of change.

## Impact assessment

An impact assessment or impact evaluation is a specific kind of evaluation approach designed to investigate causes and contributions to change by an initiative. There are different definitions of impact evaluation. Some definitions limit impact evaluation to designs that include counterfactual approaches. However, in the Evaluating C4D Resource Hub we don't limit the definition in this way, and instead suggest that there are a range of methods that can be used to investigate impacts caused by an initiative.

## Methodology

The process, design or framework that underpins our choice and use of particular methods, particular approaches to M&E, and 'linking the choice and use of particular methods to the desired outcomes' (Hearn et al., 2009: 22). For example, an ethnographic methodology usually includes the use of participant observation, field notes, informant interviews, and other methods that provide rich and in-depth data that enables a better understanding of a particular culture or social context. In some cases an evaluation may use more than one methodology, for example case study and the most significant change (MSC) technique.

## Methods

Techniques or tools used to plan an evaluation and to collect and analyze various forms of M&E data. For example, our evaluation approach could be participatory evaluation, our methodologies might be empowerment evaluation and case study and we might use a mix of document analysis, interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys as our evaluation methods.

## Monitoring

A systematic and ongoing process of collecting, analyzing and using information about the progress of development activities over time, to help guide activities and improve programmes, projects and initiatives. Monitoring performs some similar functions as evaluation but is mainly descriptive, and compares a particular programme plan with outcomes. Evaluation does the same but also looks at causes and an initiative's contribution to changes, makes judgement about how good the initiative is, and considers options for future action.

## **Participatory monitoring and evaluation**

An approach that involves developing a partnership between stakeholders to collaboratively design, implement and use RM&E. Stakeholders may be involved in some or all of the following processes: developing tools, setting indicators (if they are used), undertaking data collection or analysis, and sharing concerns, experiences and learnings. In this approach, evaluation is seen as leading to social action and positive change. Participatory monitoring and evaluation enables local knowledge and culturally appropriate processes to be incorporated into evaluation processes. When it is well-planned and facilitated, participatory monitoring and evaluation enables the inclusion of the diverse perspectives of women, men, young people, and various age, caste, class and ethnic groups in the data collection, interpretation and analysis process.

### **Research**

Research is the systematic process of the collection and analysis of data and information, in order to generate new knowledge, to answer a specific question or to test a hypothesis. In this context, research is usually undertaken to examine relevant issues and yield evidence for better programme and policy advice.

### **RM&E(Research, Monitoring and Evaluation)**

A term used to refer to all activities undertaken with the objective of understanding, assessing and improving a situation, project, program or policy.

### **Study**

The term 'study' is used in this Resource Hub to refer to discrete investigations to generate answers to specific questions. A study may be part of the monitoring system, the evaluation system, or both. Studies may be undertaken by commissioned consultant, or be an internal investigation. Examples of studies include 'rapid assessments', 'situation analyses', 'literature/desk reviews', 'mapping exercises', 'bottleneck analyses', 'KAP surveys' and other similar sector-specific surveys.