



Define what is to be evaluated

Develop a description (or access an existing version) of what is to be evaluated and how it is understood to work.

1. Develop initial description

What exactly is being evaluated?

Peak Experience Description: describing a time when the project/program/policy worked particularly well. This option is part of the Appreciative Inquiry approach to evaluation.

Approaches

Appreciative Inquiry: uses a group process which allows an organisation to understand the best elements of itself in order to create a better future.

Thumbnail Description: briefly describing the project/program/policy.

2. Develop program theory/logic model

How is the intervention (project, program, policy, etc.) understood to work (program theory, theory of change, logic model)?

Ways of developing logic models:

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

Backcasting: working backward from a desirable future, to the present in order to determine the feasibility of the idea or project.

Five Whys: asking questions in order to examine the cause-and-effect relationships that create underlying problems.

Group Model Building: building a logic model in a group, often using sticky notes.

Previous Research and Evaluation: extracting information about intended and actual outcomes and impacts and important aspects of context and implementation from previous reports.

SWOT Analysis: reflecting on and assessing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of a particular strategy in order to discover how it can best be implemented.

Tiny Tools Results Chain: mapping both positive and negative possible impacts from an intervention.

Approaches

Collaborative Outcomes Reporting: uses a collaborative approach to developing a logic model.

Outcome Mapping: focuses on identifying 'boundary partners' whose work is not under the control of a program but who are critically important to its success in achieving its objectives.

Participatory Impact Pathways Approach: focuses particularly on identifying the networks of actors involved and how these networks need to change in order for the objectives to be achieved.

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Ways of representing logic models:

Logframe: designing, executing and assessing projects by considering the relationships between available resources, planned activities, and desired changes or results.

Outcomes Hierarchy: (also known as a theory of change or an outcomes chain) demonstrating a series of outcomes leading up to the final impacts of a project.

Realist Matrix: focusing on one of the steps in an outcomes chain and then identifying the mechanism involved in producing the outcome and the contexts within which this mechanism operates.

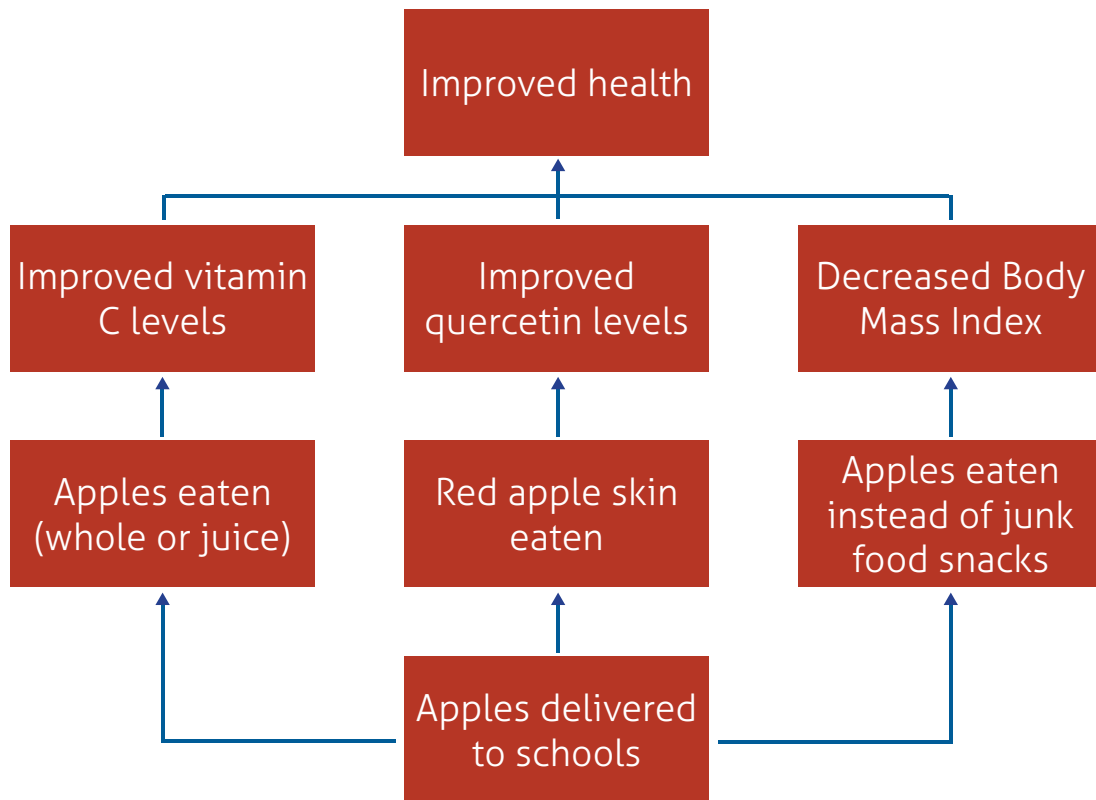
Results Chain: (also known as a pipeline model) showing a program as a series of boxes - inputs-> activities -> outputs -> outcomes -> impacts.

See the next page for two examples of representing a logic model: using an Outcomes Hierarchy and a Results Chain.

Different ways of presenting logic models:

Outcomes Hierarchy (also known as theory of change or an outcomes chain)

demonstrating a series of outcomes leading up to the final impacts of a project, sometimes including different possible causal pathways.



Results Chain (also known as a pipeline model)

showing a program as a series of boxes - inputs-> activities -> outputs -> outcomes -> impacts.



3. Identify potential unintended results

What are possible unintended results (both positive and negative) that will be important to address in the evaluation?

Key Informant Interviews: asking experienced people to identify possible negative impacts, based on their experience with similar programs. Program critics can be especially useful.

Negative Program Theory: identifying ways in which program activities might produce negative impacts rather than their intended impacts.

Risk Assessment: identifying the potential negative impacts, their likelihood of occurring and how they might be avoided.

Six Hats Thinking: promoting holistic and lateral thinking in decision-making and evaluation.

Find options (methods), resources and more information on these tasks and approaches online at <http://betterevaluation.org/plan/define>