

Evaluation in the world of outcomes

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Outline

- ◇ Evaluation what, who and when
- ◇ An outcomes based approach
- ◇ What are we evaluating?
- ◇ Who is 'het' for what?
- ◇ So what happens once its done?
- ◇ Looking ahead



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Evaluation: What, Who, When and Why

Using information from monitoring and elsewhere to judge the performance of an organisation, project or programme

- ◇ Self-evaluation
- ◇ Peer-evaluation
- ◇ External evaluation



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Evaluation: What, Who, When and Why (cont)

◇ Formative

◇ Summative

◇ Ongoing

But why evaluate? The question of motivation may remain linked to conditions of original or securing of future funding but to what extent is evaluation being used as a means of improving our own practice and influencing that of others.



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Outcomes: What they are and what they are not



Baseline Inputs Objectives

Outcomes Activities Impact

Hard outcomes Monitoring Aim

Benchmark Soft Outcomes

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Outcomes?



Outcomes are the **anticipated consequences or impacts of services / projects and their associated outputs**. Outcomes are usually defined in terms of change against a baseline and can relate to a broad and / or specific community or client group.



Outputs are the quantifiable **products or services resulting from the service / project**. Outputs are often measures of throughput or participation. For example, 1,000 under 5s participating in sports programmes, home safety checks for 500 households, 50 additional training places provided.



Communities Scotland ROA Guidance to CPPs 2004

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So how comes outcomes? (cont)

- ◇ previous regeneration programmes focused on inputs and output measures
- ◇ weaknesses on evidencing their contribution to wider changes/outcomes/impacts
- ◇ recognition that regeneration programmes did not work in isolation
- ◇ Efficiencies and Transforming Public Services agenda



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Evaluation in an outcomes world

- ◊ Principles of good evaluation still apply
 - clarity of purpose, what is being evaluated and can it be evaluated
 - need for sound data
 - engagement of stakeholders
 - evaluation as a basis for learning and improvement

- ◊ Who is setting the measures against which evaluation will be carried out? One person's output is another person's outcome. Are we considering outcomes in relation to:
 - 'global indicators'
 - communities
 - individuals
 - processes
 - wider influences and unintentional impacts



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Responsibilities

- ◊ Clarity by policy makers on the purposes of funding programmes and their purposes.
- ◊ Shared commitment from national, regional and/or local to a relationship between 'outcomes', 'indicators', 'outputs' and 'services'. This may bring a loss in local autonomy to set priorities and restrict the funding of some activities.
- ◊ Requires robust reporting and monitoring systems that link activity to outcomes, and that increase involvement of other strategic partners.



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Challenges

- ◇ Too many 'outcomes', 'indicators', 'outputs' etc etc
- ◇ Aggregation and attribution within an outcomes based model
- ◇ Value for money and the use of benchmarking
- ◇ Responsibilities for Culling activity



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Lessons

- ◊ Need for clarity of purpose and focus for evaluations
- ◊ Improved linkages between outcomes, outputs et al
- ◊ Put lots of funds in one pot and you can't ask about a single ingredient
- ◊ The earlier the better
- ◊ Use them



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References

- ◇ Evaluation Support Scotland

<http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/index.asp>

- ◇ Scottish Centre for Regeneration

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- ◇ Wikipedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evaluation>



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Thank you for your time.

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