



# ZGF Monitoring and Evaluation Training Toolkit

## **FACILITATORS' GUIDE**

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The Zambian Governance Foundation, set up in July 2009, offers capacity development and funding in support of civil society development in Zambia. ZGF provides assistance to a wide range of Zambian civil society organisations from well-established to small and emerging based in both rural and urban Zambia. It is currently supported by DFID, SIDA, DANIDA, Irish Aid and GIZ.

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The ideas, materials and templates included in the *ZGF Monitoring and Evaluation Training Toolkit* build on a review of monitoring and evaluation approaches of similar civil society accountability and governance programmes and ZGF's M&E Framework, developed by Jan Knight. The work of facilitators and monitoring and evaluation practitioners and civil society organisations engaged in change processes across the globe has also informed the toolkit. Where possible, adapted materials and ideas are referenced.

## Introduction to the toolkit

The Zambian Governance Foundation (ZGF) was established in July 2009 to further government accountability and transparency to poor and vulnerable sections of society through the development of the civil society sector in Zambia. It offers multi-year funding, including core funding, to established civil society organisations (CSOs), selected on a competitive and needs-assessment basis, together with one-off grants and capacity building to small and emerging organisations.

ZGF's overall goal is improved governance, with a focus on government accountability and responsiveness to poor and vulnerable sections of society. Its purpose is to strengthen civil society at national and sub-national level to engage more effectively with the government, have stronger influence on pro-poor policy processes, and increase monitoring of policy implementation. Enhancing civil society's capacity to influence policy processes is therefore the main thrust of the programme. Hence, social accountability, including governance and policy engagement work is at the heart of its work.

ZGF is committed to learning from the work that it funds; not only what difference has been made but also how change happens and what approaches to influencing policy, governance and accountability processes work better in different contexts. Effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and learning is therefore a key element of ZGF's work.

ZGF Grant Partners have identified inadequate or non-existent M&E systems and skills as a key weakness. Creating simple but effective M&E frameworks and processes is particularly challenging for organisations implementing civic engagement interventions aimed at demanding government accountability and responsiveness. In an effort to assist ZGF Grant Partners to strengthen their M&E skills, the ZGF Secretariat has developed a *Monitoring and Evaluation Training Toolkit*. The toolkit aims to support CSOs active in governance and policy engagement work.

The development of the toolkit builds on the ideas and experiences of a broad range of facilitators, M&E practitioners and CSOs engaged in change processes across the globe. The majority of the sessions and activities in the toolkit were piloted and further developed with ZGF Grant Partners who attended a two-day monitoring and evaluation pilot workshop on 25–26 November 2010.

### ZGF's approach to monitoring and evaluation

The principles behind ZGF's monitoring and evaluation system (ZGF, 2010a) are that it should:

- Develop the reflective and analytical capabilities of those involved
- Emphasise decision-making and analysis
- Capture negative and unintended change, in addition to expected and planned change
- Be based around learning
- Be useful for all levels of stakeholder.

The M&E system conforms to ZGF's overall guiding principles of inclusion, widening access, balancing advocacy and service delivery, and gender equality. It also conforms to its values of fairness, integrity, respect, quality and learning.

ZGF believes that M&E systems have to be practical so that learning and reporting are part of ongoing activities and planning, and serve to strengthen them too. Honest and transparent reporting is essential to

any M&E system. Lessons can only be learned and applied if work is systematically reported and analysed and the analyses are then fed into future decision-making processes. ZGF is therefore committed to creating a culture of learning in which the honest reporting of successful and unsuccessful outcomes is supported.

ZGF also encourages the involvement of different people and informants in M&E processes to bring fresh perspectives and insights.

## **The ZGF M&E training programme and toolkit**

The *ZGF Monitoring and Evaluation Training Toolkit* and the training programme it supports are primarily intended for ZGF Grant Partners and other CSOs involved in policy engagement and influencing work wishing to strengthen their M&E systems and skills.

The aim is to introduce the basic core components of an M&E system that will support CSOs to ask 10 basic questions and use the answers to inform the work that they do, the decisions they take and how to report and communicate the outcomes and impact of their work:

1. What is the issue?
2. What is the organisation trying to achieve?
3. Who is involved?
4. What has changed?
5. Who has benefited?
6. What key steps led to the change?
7. What worked well, less well and why?
8. What do your stakeholders (or key beneficiaries) say about the change?
9. What are the key lessons?
10. What still remains to be done?

The toolkit has been written for three main audiences:

- ZGF staff responsible for providing monitoring and evaluation training and capacity building support to ZGF Grant Partners;
- ZGF Grant Partner staff responsible for setting up or implementing M&E systems;
- CSOs wishing to strengthen and develop their M&E systems.

The training programme provides a mix of theoretical inputs and practical exercises that will enable participants to build their skills and understanding. The toolkit is designed to be flexible so that facilitators can tailor their training to meet the needs of different CSOs. The toolkit has been developed as a set of modules that introduce key concepts and ideas through session presentations, discussions and group activities. Deciding on which modules and activities to implement is left to each user. The complete five modules could be covered in two-and-a-half days, or specific modules, sessions and activities could be offered over a much shorter period of time to meet specific needs. There is a sample two-day workshop agenda in the last section of this document.

Although many of the ideas and activities in this toolkit have been tried and tested, they do not necessarily provide a blueprint for how things should be done. Facilitators are encouraged to adapt and develop the topic ideas and activities to participants' specific needs, skills and interests. Facilitators are also encouraged to use examples and case studies from their own experience to illustrate key points and ideas.

It is important that people using this toolkit already have some basic facilitation skills and ideally be familiar with and willing to use participatory tools. It is also helpful if they have some previous experience of influencing work and a good understanding of civil society projects and programmes.

The toolkit provides all the resources needed to conduct the M&E training course:

1. *An Introductory Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating Civil Society Influencing Initiatives*. Prepared for ZGF Grant Partners, the guide accompanies the training programme and can also be read as a stand-alone document.
2. *A Facilitators' Guide* (this document) covering the five training modules. For each training session it includes an introduction and overview, instructions for running the session, PowerPoint speaking notes corresponding to the PowerPoint slides (see below), and activity handouts.
3. A set of PowerPoint Slides for each training module. Facilitator notes are embedded in the notes section of each slide (and again in the *Facilitators' Guide*). All sessions start with a PowerPoint slide presentation. Facilitators can use the PowerPoint slide presentation in a number of different ways. For example instead of a PowerPoint presentation a facilitator can pull out the key themes and bullet points onto flipchart paper and make copies of the PowerPoint slides to hand out to participants during each session.
4. *Additional Tools and Resources* containing additional technical information and ideas for some of the activities. Facilitators can use these tools in a number of different ways. The tools and resources can be photocopied and shared with participants during the training sessions or the whole booklet can be photocopied and distributed to participants along with the *Introductory Guide*.

## The training modules

The training programme is divided into the five modules:

1. **Introduction to monitoring and evaluation:** includes a brief introduction to key concepts and highlights some of the challenges of monitoring and evaluating policy-influencing work.
2. **Monitoring and evaluation at the planning and design stage:** outlines the key steps in planning and designing programmes, projects and proposals relevant to monitoring and evaluating policy engagement, governance and influencing initiatives.
3. **Monitoring and evaluation at the implementation stage:** includes some practical examples of developing an M&E framework and plan, including tools and approaches for data and information collection.
4. **Learning, reflection and analysis:** provides some practical ideas and examples to support learning and evaluation processes.
5. **Communication and reporting:** includes practical ideas for developing case studies, stories of change and reporting on outcomes including tips on how to write succinct reports and meet the reporting requirements of ZGF.

## The role of the facilitator

As facilitator,<sup>1</sup> you should make sure all administrative details have been covered:

- Prepare all training materials (handouts, visual aids, and supplies) and deal with logistics (venue, tea breaks, and audio-visual equipment) in advance. Whenever possible, someone with experience should carry out these administrative and logistical arrangements leaving the facilitators to focus on facilitation.
- Clarify everyone's roles and areas of responsibility if other facilitators are helping to conduct the training. Meet with the co-facilitators daily to monitor the progress of the workshop and to provide each other with feedback.
- Ask participants to evaluate the training both daily and at the end of the training workshop.
- Plan follow-up activities and determine additional training needs.

It is also important to deal with participant and group composition issues:

- Be clear about who you are training, their level of skills and experience, and their expectations for the training programme.
- Be clear on how many people or organisations will be attending – this will help you in working out the timings for group activities and discussions.
- Ensure that enough time is given for participants to make arrangements to attend the training and do the necessary preparation.
- Decide on the size and composition of the groups for different activities. Use different methods to divide people into groups. For some of the group exercises you may want to pre-allocate participants to groups to ensure a good mix of skills, experience and gender representation.

## Tips on effective facilitation

### Setting the learning climate

- Read each module and review all materials and activities before each training session so that you are fully comfortable with the content and process. Adapt any of the notes and activities.
- Start on time and clearly establish yourself as the facilitator by calling the group together.
- Organise all the materials you need for the session and place them close at hand, stay within the suggested time frames.
- Gain participants' attention and interest by creating comfort between yourself and them.
- Anticipate questions.
- Prepare responses and examples to help move the discussion forward.

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<sup>1</sup> Useful resources for facilitation and participatory workshops include:

Robert Chambers (2002) *Participatory Workshops: a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities*. London: Earthscan.

Jules Pretty, Irene Guijt, John Thompson and Ian Scoones (1995) *A Trainers' Guide for Participatory Learning and Action*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

### **Presenting the session objectives**

- Introduce each session with an overview of the session objectives.
- Inform participants of what they will do during the session to achieve the session objectives.

### **Initiating the learning experience**

- The sessions have been designed to introduce a topic or concept with a presentation followed with a more participatory activity.
- Be guided by participant's responses to the presentations and allow time for clarification or for participants to use their own experience as a basis for discussion.

### **Reflecting on the session activities**

- Encourage participants to share their reactions to the activity.
- Ask participants to identify key points that emerged from the experience and the discussion.
- Help participants draw general conclusions from the experience.
- See that participants receive feedback on their work from each other and from you.

### **Applying lessons learned to real-life situations**

- Encourage participants to discuss how the information learned in the activity will be helpful in their own work.
- Discuss problems participants might experience in applying or adapting what they have learned to their own or different situations.
- Discuss what participants might do to help overcome difficulties they encounter when applying their new learning.

### **Providing closure**

- Briefly summarise the activities at the end of each session.
- Refer to the objective(s) and discuss whether and how they were achieved.
- Help participants leave with positive feelings about what they have learned.

### **Tips on effective communication**

It is the responsibility of the facilitator to present the ideas and technical material and activities as clearly as possible. Remember to read out bullet points during PowerPoint presentations and to repeat session activities if participants are not clear about what they are expected to do. Other skills used to enhance communication include the following:

#### **Nonverbal communication**

- Maintain eye contact with everyone in the group when speaking. Try not to favour certain participants.
- Move around the room without distracting the group. Avoid pacing or addressing the group from a place where you cannot be easily seen.
- React to what people say by nodding, smiling, or otherwise showing you are listening.
- Stand in front of the group, particularly at the beginning of the session. It is important to appear relaxed and at the same time be direct and confident.

## **Verbal communication**

- Ask open-ended questions that encourage responses. If a participant responds with a simple yes or no, ask: “Why do you say that?”
- Ask other participants if they agree with a statement someone makes.
- Be aware of your tone of voice. Speak slowly and clearly.
- Avoid using jargon.
- Be sure that participants talk more than you do.
- Let participants answer each other’s questions. Say: “Does anyone have an answer to that question?”
- Encourage participants to speak and provide them with positive reinforcement.
- Paraphrase statements in your own words. You can check your understanding of what participants are saying and reinforce statements.
- Keep the discussion moving forward and in the direction you want. Watch for disagreements and draw conclusions.
- Summarise the discussion. Be sure that everyone understands the main points.

# **MODULE 1:**

# **Monitoring and evaluating policy and influencing work**

## Session 1.1 M&E key terms and principles

### Introduction

Monitoring and evaluating policy and influencing work is crucial. It helps to keep you focused, energised and ensures that work is really on track in meeting its objectives. Monitoring your work is key to understanding whether your work has a purpose. It is particularly important for policy engagement and influencing initiatives as it should help you to:

- Identify problems and deal with them quickly and efficiently
- Build on our strengths and take advantages of opportunities (something that is key to influencing work)
- Explain the value of the your work to others
- Help you to assess whether your style of working is the best way of achieving the stated objectives – and change it if it is not!

Confusion can arise from different interpretations of monitoring and evaluation. It is therefore important to establish clarity and develop a shared understanding of what terms such as monitoring and evaluation mean. Though the basic process of monitoring and evaluating civil society policy and influencing work has much in common with monitoring other civil society strategies, monitoring and evaluating policy work brings some specific challenges. It is also important to therefore explore how monitoring and evaluating policy and governance work differs from project and programme work and what some of the key challenges are for monitoring and evaluating policy engagement processes.

At the end of this session participants will have:

- A shared understanding of the terms monitoring and evaluation
- An understanding of the challenges of monitoring and evaluating policy engagement and governance work
- Shared their own experience of monitoring and evaluating policy engagement and governance work
- Developed a set of key principles for the monitoring and evaluating civil society governance projects.

### Instructions

1. Prepare questions for the buzz group discussion on flipchart paper.
2. Introduce the session topic and the objectives.
3. Give the PowerPoint presentation [See PowerPoint speaking notes].

### Session overview

#### Time

60 minutes

#### Session objectives

- To develop a shared understanding of key monitoring and evaluation terms
- To explore the key challenges of monitoring and evaluating policy and influencing work
- To identify key principles/or characteristics of a monitoring and evaluation system for civil society governance projects and programmes

#### Session activities

- Introduction to the session (5 minutes)
- PowerPoint presentation (15 minutes)
- Buzz group discussion (20 minutes)
- Buzz group plenary feedback of key points (20 minutes)

#### Supporting materials

- Module 1 PowerPoint presentation slides 1 to 14
- Buzz Group questions on a flipchart
- Coloured card (two colours) and marker pens

#### Further reading

- *Introductory Guide*, part 1: 'Introduction to monitoring and evaluation'
- *On the Move: Providing tools to promote better governance*. Zambian Governance Foundation, 2010.

4. At the end of the presentation ask participants: “*What is your experience of monitoring and evaluating policy and influencing initiatives?*” Gather two or three points.
5. Introduce the **buzz groups exercise**: explain that buzz groups are when participants divide into small groups, usually twos or threes. These small groups meet for a short period to consider a simple question or problem. The ideas exchanged are then briefly presented to the other participants usually promoting further discussion.
6. Ask participants to get into their small buzz groups (3-4 people) to discuss the following questions (written on PPT or flipchart):
  - What is your understanding of good governance?
  - Given your understanding of good governance, what would be the key principles of an M&E system for civil society governance projects and programmes?
7. Buzz groups have 20 minutes to discuss the questions and brainstorm key points. Ask groups to distil the key points [3-4] onto different coloured cards – make sure they do not generate a long list.
8. Plenary feedback: after 20 minutes ask each group to volunteer one point for their understanding governance (and tell subsequent groups not to repeat a point if one group has already mentioned it). Do the same for the next question. Once all the points have been shared ask participants to see if they can see any trends/similarities.
9. At the end of the discussion distil and pull out general themes emerging and conclude session.
10. At the end of the session refer participants to ZGF booklet *On the move – Providing better tools for better governance* for ZGF’s definition of governance and good governance. You may want to put the definition onto a slide or flipchart paper.

Note: you can adapt the buzz group questions. For example you could also ask:

- When does M&E support your work? When does it hinder your work?
- What should be the core principles for monitoring and evaluating civil society influencing work?

## PowerPoint speaking notes (session 1.1)

Slide	Theme	Speaking notes
5	<b>What is monitoring?</b>	<p>Monitoring is the regular and ongoing collection and analysis of information on the progress of our work and what difference we are making. It helps to keep us focused and energised and to ensure that we are on track in achieving our objectives. It can focus particularly on whether we are carrying out our chosen strategies and actions effectively and identify areas that need to be adapted or changed.</p>
6	<b>What is evaluation?</b>	<p>Evaluation is closely related to monitoring but includes taking a more in-depth look at a point in time of the outcomes or impact of a piece of work (e.g. a project/strategy or specific initiative) and the extent to which the stated objectives have been achieved. It also includes analysing how changes in the external context should influence our work.</p> <p>The process should help you to assess whether you are working on the right issue, your goals and objectives, the strategies you have chosen, and the underlying assumptions, and how efficient your work has been and whether you have used your resources wisely. It is important to recognise that learning from one's failures, as well as the things that were a great success, can provide valuable insights into what works and what doesn't.</p>
7	<b>M&amp;E. Why bother?</b>	<p><b>So why do we need to do M&amp;E?</b></p> <p>Practitioners in civil society organisations have all sorts of competing pressures on their time and workload. M&amp;E can sometimes be viewed as an extra burden. But nothing could be further from what monitoring and evaluation should look like. A well functioning and accepted M&amp;E system should give momentum to the work and performance of the project or programme. However, this is dependent upon creating the right work environment and building capacity to make it part of the organisation's culture. In reality you probably do a lot of M&amp;E instinctively without necessarily calling it that. If you are thoughtful and systematic about your M&amp;E processes it will strengthen your policy and influencing approaches, including relationships within your organisation and with your partners, allies and the people you are working with. It can also demonstrate the benefits of investing in this type of work.</p>

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At its most basic level M&E helps you to **keep track of the progress** your policy and influencing plans and activities to make sure you're on track and to identify any problems and issues as they arise.

**Keep focused on the broader picture** and long-term goals to ensure you are working towards these, rather than just focusing on activities.

Too often monitoring and evaluation activities have a narrow focus on reporting and reviewing progress against indicators [very often quantitative and lots of them] rather than supporting you to step back and ask questions about the bigger picture and how and if your work.

Including **tracking and taking into account of the changing context**. Most policy and influencing work is dynamic, it is especially important therefore to be constantly alert to monitoring changes in the external context especially the arguments and positions of decision-makers and your major opponents, any shifts in the policy implementation process, what others might be doing on the issues and what the implications might be for your work and responding adequately by seizing opportunities and adapting strategies and action plans. This analysis should also generate valuable information for reviewing progress against baselines or set targets.

**Generate useful evidence and data** to help support and strengthen your policy and influencing strategies and messages.

Effective monitoring combined with research methods can also help to strengthen your evidence base in formulating positions and arguments to policy and decision makers. For example, data collected through your monitoring processes through qualitative and quantitative methods on whether funds or services are reaching the poorest, the quality of service from perspectives of stakeholders and people you are working with etc helps to strengthen your evidence base.

**Help improve project management and planning** and generate insights and learning on which strategies and approaches are more or less effective in different contexts and circumstances. This will include monitoring how well you have implemented your chosen strategies and activities, not just the outputs but whether and how effective you and your partners have been in carrying out the work, what difference it is making and whether you are making the most effective use of your resources (people/time, effort and money).

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**Enhance accountability** to various stakeholders including any who have been involved in your advocacy efforts, partners, communities, donors, and other parts of the organisation. Your M&E processes should therefore help you to **better understand stakeholder perspectives**.

**Demonstrate** to external and internal audiences what impact policy and influencing work can achieve.

**Build institutional memory** through simple and accessible documentation .

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10

**Challenges of monitoring and evaluating policy and influencing work**

Though the basic process of monitoring and evaluating civil society policy and influencing work has much in common with monitoring other civil society strategies, monitoring and evaluating policy work brings some specific challenges...

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**Policy influencing involves influencing power structures, persons or institutions** that are largely beyond the control of the implementing organisation, so making specific plans and rigidly defined results can be unrealistic.

**Policy influencing projects usually require a dynamic planning framework** and frequent monitoring which will allow you to modify timelines and adjust plans [whilst keeping results in focus]

The objectives of policy work are moving targets sensitive to external factors. They will change as the environment changes through unrelated factors, as progress is made or when resistance and setbacks are encountered. This means that pre-set outcomes may not be the best yardstick by which to measure change. Thus indicators of success may also need to change: an indicator that was relevant at the start of a policy and influencing strategy may lose that relevance as the work develops or changes its focus.

**Causal relations complex:** It is very difficult to determine cause and effect between policy initiatives and outcomes.

It will remain difficult to pin down exactly what was the full effect of any action even after the event. The influence of external factors is also unpredictable. Also poverty reduction is rarely brought about by one intervention on its own. It requires a whole range of interventions which are mutually supportive.

**Engaging in policy and influencing work can have political consequences** in terms of groups' relationships with each other. These consequences are hard to predict at the outset and difficult to map, although a risk assessment should be part of your planning process. There may also be sensitivities when reporting achievements especially in contexts where political space is restricted. Over attributing your role may have unintended consequences and damage relationships built with key decision makers and your allies and partners.

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## 12

**What is victory is not always clear:** Outright victory in terms of achieving all the objectives of a policy and influencing initiative is rare.

Often compromise is necessary. It is much more likely that you have made some gains and accepted some compromises and this introduces an element of subjectivity in valuing the gains achieved. For example, it may be that policy outcomes are achieved at the expense of movement building outcomes or actually reinforce power inequalities.

**Collective nature issues of attribution:** Most policy work is being done in collaboration with others with perhaps a variety of approaches. This makes any attribution of success to a particular approach difficult

**Pitfalls of policy driven influencing** - ensuring voice and role of marginalised groups, Whose interests and views are you representing issues of legitimacy etc

**Long term:** Furthermore the effect of policy work often takes a very long time, particularly if we are looking for the results of changes in power inequalities or real changes in peoples lives.

[SHOW CARTOON ON SLIDE 13 TO ILLUSTRATE LONG TERM NATURE OF CHANGE]

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## 14 [Task]

**In buzz groups discuss**

**1. What is your understanding of good governance?**

**2. Given your understanding of good governance, what would be the key principles of a monitoring & evaluation system for civil society governance projects and programmes?**

**Write 2 or 3 points on coloured cards.**

**Pink cards = understanding of governance**

**Blue cards = Characteristics**

[NB: you can adapt the questions. For example you could also ask: When does M&E support your work? When does it hinder your work? What should be the core principles of a system for monitoring and evaluating civil society policy, influencing and governance initiatives?]

[REFER PARTICIPANTS TO ZGF BOOKLET, *ON THE MOVE – PROVIDING BETTER TOOLS FOR BETTER GOVERNANCE* FOR ZGF'S DEFINITION OF GOVERNANCE AND GOOD GOVERNANCE]

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# **MODULE 2:**

# **Monitoring and evaluation at the design and planning stage**

## Session 2.1: Core elements of planning key to monitoring and evaluation

### Introduction

Good monitoring and evaluation starts at the design and planning stage. Critical to this stage is to ensure the correct building blocks are in place in order that effective monitoring processes can be developed during implementation. Failure to give attention to these processes during planning will mean considerable difficulties for later monitoring.

While this module is not intended to train you how to design a policy and influencing strategy, it is important that we explore the core components of planning that are key to effective monitoring and evaluation. When you are clear about what changes you are trying to achieve and how you believe change actually happens the sort of information that will tell you whether or not you are track becomes more evident.

At the end of this session participants will:

- Understand what the core elements of designing and planning an influencing initiative t are key to effective monitoring and evaluation
- Have learnt how others are planning policy engagement and influencing work.

### Instructions

1. Introduce the session topic and the objectives.
2. Give the PowerPoint presentation [See PowerPoint speaking notes]
3. Plenary discussion: At the end of the presentation invite participants to share their experience of planning their work – ask them:
  - What has been your experience of planning your policy and influencing work? What tools/approaches have they used to develop your situation/problem analysis?
  - Who has been involved in the process?
  - What has worked well, less well?
4. Allow 10-15 minutes for general discussion.
5. Distribute the handout, Tool 1: Key questions to ask during planning and monitoring (from *Additional Tools and Resources*)
6. Wrap up and introduce Session 2.2.

### Session overview

#### Time

30 minutes

#### Session objective

To understand the elements of designing and planning an influencing initiative that are key to effective monitoring and evaluation

#### Session activities

- PowerPoint Presentation (15 minutes)
- Plenary Discussion (15 minutes)

#### Supporting materials

- Module 2 PowerPoint presentation slides 3-9

#### Handouts

- Tool 1: Key questions to ask during planning and monitoring

#### Further reading

- *Introductory Guide*, part 2: 'Monitoring and evaluation at the planning and design stage'

## PowerPoint speaking notes (session 2.1)

Slide	Theme	Speaking notes
4	Planning	<p>At its most basic planning should help you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Identify the key issues and root of the problems you want to address (our situation analysis)</li><li>▪ Identify the key changes that you want</li><li>▪ Develop effective strategies to get what you want</li><li>▪ Design ways to monitor their progress</li><li>▪ Determine what resources and knowledge are required</li><li>▪ Ensure that your work is cost effective</li></ul>
5	Situation analysis	<p>A situation analysis for governance and influencing programmes and projects involves learning as much as possible about the specific problem (from different perspectives) and issues we are working on, including an analysis of what rights are being denied or violated in the situation. Are these rights recognised in law and if so are they being enforced? What societal players are involved in discussions on this matter, who really makes decisions, who has duties and obligations, and how does power operate at different levels?</p> <p><b>A power and stakeholder analysis</b> will help you to identify the key stakeholders you will need to engage, what rights and duties they have, what power they have, what behaviour change you are looking for from each group, and how you will communicate and engage with those stakeholders.</p> <p>Your situation analysis should also support you to <b>understand how social change happens in particular contexts</b>. Change occurs through complex inter-relationships between institutions, individuals and their physical and cultural environment. This is highly context specific and a product of historical, cultural, economic and social processes. An analysis of power and the factors that motivate and stimulate change can support us to begin to envisage how change might occur in different contexts and be sustained.</p> <p>An M&amp;E System should support you to constantly <b>revisit your problem analysis and analysis of the external context</b> and the issues that you are working on.</p>

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## 6

### Mapping the policy process

For CSOs engaged in policy influencing processes it is important, as part of your situation analysis, to map out the policy process. This this would include mapping out existing policies, laws, legislation and budgets shaping your issue and the relevant decision-making bodies and spaces involved.

Assessing entry points for civil society engagement should also be part of your situation analysis. Often this analysis is implicit in organisations engaged in policy influencing processes but it helps to map this out during your situation analysis as it will support you to assess key strategic entry points for policy engagement and assess the opportunity costs of engagement. It is useful to ask how much time and resources will meetings, research and other activities consume? Are we likely to make an impact on policy priorities or choices? Can the policy opportunity be used to educate people on their rights and to build a constituency for the long term?

Since governance comprises the processes of decision-making and the processes by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of governance focuses on both the **formal and informal** actors and structures involved in making and implementing decisions.

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## 7

### Your change objectives

Based on your analysis of the context, your understanding of how change happens in different context you can begin to formulate the desired changes that need to happen and how best to achieve this. This process should also highlight the possible risks involved and how they will be monitored and managed during implementation.

During planning questions you might ask:

- What are the changes we desire?
- What would success look like?
- What changes have to happen in the short/medium term?
- Why do we think these changes will make a difference? How will these short/medium changes actually build towards our desired change in the longer term?
- Who are the main people/institutions that we are trying to influence and/or engage with?
- How will we do this (given the activities and strengths of ourselves, partners and other agents)?
- What can we best tackle given our resources and the current context?
- What are the risks? How might our strategies and actions endanger peoples' lives, provoke backlash or place our organisation in jeopardy? What could we do to mitigate any danger or risk

Once you are clear about your intentions, you can then begin to develop more specific objectives and results you want within a given timeframe. These will inform your specific strategies and activities.

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**Your chosen role and strengths**

A realistic assessment of what your role might be should build on your strengths, learning from past initiatives, and possibilities of partnering with others. Where you should concentrate your energy and resources, where do you think you can really make a difference, and why?

Periodically during your monitoring processes you should be asking yourselves:

- How well did we succeed in carrying out our planned activities? What have we learned about our skills, capacities and attitudes?
- Have we made best use of our particular skills, strengths and characteristics?
- How did our supporters/opponents view our policy and influencing work?
- How well did we include others in our policy and influencing work?
- Have we made good uses of our resources?
- What have we learnt, what do we need to do differently?

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9

**[Plenary discussion]**

Plenary discussion – 15 minutes

Invite participants to share their experience of planning their work.

- What tools/approaches have they used to develop their situation/problem analysis?
  - Who have they involved in the process?
  - What has worked well / less well?
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## Session 2.2 Formulating objectives

### Introduction

If your objectives are clear it will be easier to know what to look for in term of monitoring information that will help you to know whether you are making progress and what difference you are making. This will also help you to identify the outputs, outcomes and indicators that are often a key requirement of donor proposals.

Civil society organisations often identify the setting of clear objectives and indicators as a key challenge. This session looks in more detail about how we might go about developing clear objectives.

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

- Understand the difference between a goal, an objective and an output
- Write a SMART objective.

### Instructions

1. Introduce the session topic and objective.
2. PowerPoint presentation [see PowerPoint Speaking Notes].
3. At the end of the presentation ask participants if they have any questions before the session activity. Allow 5 minutes for questions.
4. Hand out the participant instructions for the peer review activity, 'How to write a SMART objective'.
5. Explain the activity: The objective of this activity is to practice formulating and writing SMART objectives. Note there are many definitions of goals, objectives etc. Try not to engage in a debate about this – instead focus on getting the groups developing objectives which are as SMART as possible.
6. Ask each organisation to choose one objective from their work that contributes most to ZGF's goal or their organisation's goal. [If ZGF Goal, write this on a flipchart paper beforehand]. They have 5 minutes.

If the organisation doesn't have a specific objective see if it is possible to formulate one objective based on their work and what it is they are trying to achieve – their longer term goal. If participants are having problems writing objectives ask them to complete this sentence: 'If we want to achieve our goal [write goal] we will need to...'. Explain that in many instances you will need to bring about

### Session overview

#### Time

60 minutes

#### Session objectives

1. To understand what makes a clear objective
2. To help participants write SMART objectives

#### Session activities

- PowerPoint presentation (15 minutes)
- Exercise in pairs (5 minutes)
- Peer review (20 minutes)
- Plenary feedback (15 minutes)

#### Supporting materials

- Module 2 PowerPoint presentation slides 10-19
- Coloured cards and pens
- Flipchart paper

#### Handouts

- Tool 2: Framework for understanding the possible objectives of Influencing work
- Tool 3: How to write a SMART objective
- Tool 5: Policy and Influencing objective checklist

#### Further reading

- *Introductory Guide* part 2: 'Monitoring and evaluation at the planning and design stage'

change in a number of related but different areas if your policy work is to have any impact. For the purpose of this exercise the participants might want to include the following if writing a specific policy-influencing objective:

- Include the policy, practice or law that they want to change
- Include the influential individual, group or institution they are targeting

7. Peer review: After 5 minutes ask each organisation to pair up with another organisation. Each organisation shares and reviews each other's objective and reformulates the objective if it is not SMART. They have 20 minutes to share and reformulate their objectives. Review the questions on the PPT slide and handouts:

- Are the objectives clear, SMART – does it describe clearly and simply what you hope to achieve, why, how and by when?
- Does the objectives help us know if we are progressing towards the goal/longer term change?
- Why this objective? How does it contribute to improved governance and greater accountability?
- Is the level of ambition right? Realistic?
- Would you reword the objective in any way to make them more specific or measureable?

8. During the activity go to each group to see how they are getting on and to clarify any issues. Try to point out any objectives that are not very clear. Support participants to think about how their objectives might be reformulated to make them SMARTer.

9. Gallery walk: After 20 minutes ask participants to number their cards to identify the process of reformulating their objectives. The first card should be the original objective they started with and the last card the final version. Ask participants to stick all of their cards up onto a wall. Ask participants review the objective cards (5 minutes) on the wall and then return to plenary.

10. Plenary feedback: In plenary ask one person from each group to share the highlights of their peer review session. Prompt questions: Was the session helpful? Was it challenging? Can they give examples of objectives that become SMARTer or new objectives formulated?

11. Conclude the session: Objective setting is an important decision-making moment in planning processes. Although objectives evolve it helps to formulate them clearly from the start.

12. Distribute the session handouts:

- Tool 2: Framework for understanding the possible objectives of policy and influencing work.
- Tool 5: Policy and influencing objective checklist.

## PowerPoint speaking notes (session 2.2)

Slide	Theme	Speaking notes
11	Goals and objectives	<p>In developing objectives confusion can sometimes arise from terminology used to describe the changes and results we want to achieve. For example, goal, purpose, objective are all terms to describe a desired change.</p> <p>Some people refer to a goal as the kind of overarching change that you are working towards – your realisable vision – while an objective and purpose describe a change that needs to happen in the short to medium term in order for the longer-term goal to be achieved.</p> <p>The goal is the overall purpose of the project. It is a broad statement of what you are trying to do. It is long-term and gives direction – it helps you know where you are going, but needs an accompanying route map (strategy) to show you how to get there.</p> <p>A goal is different from an objective because it is not SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).</p> <p>Without a goal, project objectives can easily become ends in themselves and it is possible to lose sight of what you are trying to do.</p> <p>The goal needs to be linked to the mission and vision of your organisation. A goal often refers to the benefit that will be felt by those affected by an issue. The objective often refers to the desired changes in policy and practice that will contribute to that goal.</p>
12	ZGF terminology	<p>In ZGF's logframe, different levels of objectives are set out in the Goal, Purpose and Intermediate Objective (Output) statements</p> <p>ZGF use Logical Framework (logframe) analysis to set out the changes they hope to achieve through their programme. This is the planning tool most favoured by donors and funders.</p> <p>In their logframe they differentiate between Goal, Purpose Objectives and Immediate (Outputs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Goal:</b> the broad development impact to which ZGF contributes</li><li>▪ <b>Purpose:</b> the development outcome at the end of the project, more specifically the expected benefits to the target group</li><li>▪ <b>Immediate Objectives (Outputs):</b> The direct tangible results that the project delivers</li></ul> <p>In talking about your work with other people outside your organisation, it can be helpful to identify these differences so as not to get into unnecessary debates about their meaning.</p>

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# 13

Defining what we want to achieve will be identified through our planning and involving key stakeholders in the process.

An objective is the intended impact or effects of the work you are doing, the specific change that you want to see. An objective defines concretely what will be accomplished, with whom, where and in what period of time.

It is the most important part of your strategy and is usually the next step after developing the goal. It is worth spending time writing clear objectives because you will find you are able to write the rest of the influencing strategy much more quickly and you are likely to be more effective in achieving change.

[BEFORE STARTING TO EXPLAIN TO PARTICIPANTS THE DEFINITION OF THE SMART CRITERIA, ASK IF ANYONE HAS EXPERIENCE IN ESTABLISHING PROGRAMMATIC OBJECTIVES. ASK PARTICIPANTS TO VOLUNTEER CRITERIA OR CHARACTERISTICS THEY GENERALLY USE TO DEVELOP PROGRAMMATIC OBJECTIVES AND WRITE THEIR RESPONSES ON A FLIPCHART. MANY GROUPS MENTION THE SMART CRITERIA FOR OBJECTIVES AS SHOWN ON THE NEXT SLIDE BUT OTHERS MAY BE LISTED AS WELL.]

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## 14 SMART objectives

Objectives are often over ambitious or vaguely formulated. Sound objectives are essential to any planning process. Clear and concisely written objectives can bring clarity and direction to the rest of the planning process. If your objectives are clear it will also be easier to know what to look for in terms of monitoring information that will help you to know whether you are making progress and what difference you are making.

A monitoring and evaluation standard is to ask for SMART objectives:

- Specific

Too often objectives use vague terms such as “sensitise” and “empower”. These can be broken down into more clearly defined results.

- Measurable

Be as exact as possible about who, what, where and when. For example, an objective may state, “educate people about their rights”. When possible, estimate the number of people and what they will do as a result.

- Achievable

The more concrete about who, what, were and when, the more realistic your objective.

- Realistic

Try to be realistic when you develop your influencing objectives. This requires a balance between idealism and realism. This will help you to avoid setting yourself up for failure. Remember, objectives are realistic steps towards your greater vision.

- Time-bound

Although the nature of influencing work is often impossible to predict in terms of timing, it helps to be as precise as possible about your timeline.

ZGF expect Grant Partners to formulate SMART objectives in their proposals and plans.

[IMPORTANT POINT] A policy and influencing objective should be SMART but it might also include several other elements. Including:

- Policy actor or decision maker is the individual with the power to convert the advocacy objective into action (i.e., Minister of Health, Parliamentary Finance Committee, etc.).
  - Policy action or decision is the action required to achieve the objective (i.e., adopt a certain policy, allocate funds to support a specific program or initiative, etc.).
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## 15 Writing an influencing objective

If your objectives are clear it will be easier to know what to look for in terms of monitoring information that will help you to know whether you are making progress and what difference you are making.

It helps if you write down your objective as a concise statement that captures **what** you want to achieve (quantitatively and qualitatively), **for whom** (target group), and by **when?**

Here are some examples of generic objectives that reflect the type of work ZGF Grant partners are engaged in:

- To increase the number of girls in primary school in X by 25% by December 30, 2012
- To decrease the drop out rates of young mothers in secondary schools across the country (x%) by 2012

Although the SMART framework is useful, it is not the only one. People have different preferences for formulating objectives. For example some people prefer a **declarative statement** e.g.

- Mandatory hearing testing for all children entering Grade One in all schools across Zambia by 2012

Whatever your preference it is worth spending time writing clear objectives, because you will find you are able to write the rest of your influencing strategy much more quickly and you are likely to be more effective in achieving change.

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## 16

### **Possible objectives of influencing initiatives**

In many instances you will need to bring about change in a number of related but different areas if your policy work is to have any impact. *For example:*

- Changes in laws and policies
- Implementation of laws and policies
- Reform of institutions
- Changes in attitudes and behaviours
- Increasing democratic space – legitimacy of civil groups, freedom of information and space to speak out
- Civil society gains – increased cooperation, solidarity
- Getting the issue on the agenda for public debate
- Increasing support and active membership
- Developing the profile and reputation of your organisation.

In addition to setting advocacy objectives, it is important to focus right from the start on what outcomes you want to see, for the following reasons:

- Outcomes reduce the danger of being too activity-focused, i.e. objectives can sometimes become a list of 'things we intend to do'. This can lead to an M&E process that only looks at 'whether we did the things we said we'd do'.
- If you are 'outcome-focused' you are much more likely to look at the impact of the activities, rather than the activities themselves.
- It is useful to compare actual outcomes against the anticipated outcomes – changes are not always predictable.
- Focus on more than policy outcomes or other main change aim of your initiative. Since large scale change is rarely immediate and very difficult to achieve, you need to identify significant shorter term achievements.
- Important outcomes that can be monitored include, for example, the extent to which an influencing initiative has built the capacity of the organisations involved.
- Strong civil society organisations will be needed to monitor any policy gains and to hold governments accountable for policy implementation. Capacity built today could mean policy gains tomorrow.

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## 17

### **Activity: How to write SMART objectives**

*[Follow instructions for this activity]*

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## 18

### [QUESTIONS TO HELP REVIEW YOUR OBJECTIVES:]

- Are the objectives clear, SMART – does it describe clearly and simply what you hope to achieve, why, how and by when?
- Do the objectives help us know if we are progressing towards the goal/longer term change?
- Why this objective? How does it contribute to improved governance and greater accountability?
- Is the level of ambition right? Realistic?
- Would you reword the objective in any way to make them more specific or measureable?

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## 19 Hints for writing quality objectives

### Remember objectives...

- ...Are linked directly to the goals and the intended outputs (information, products, processes, services, or results) you hope to produce to reach the goal.
  - ...Reflect what you hope to produce by undertaking a specific activity. For example: You decide you want to train people (the activity), then the objective will relate to the knowledge you increase.
  - ...Usually reflect a result achieved in a relatively short time period (0-2 years).
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## Session 2.3 How will you know if you (and others) are making a difference?

### Introduction

Once you have developed your objectives, the success indicators should follow logically. Indicators are developed by asking: 'How will I know if I have achieved my objectives?' If the objectives are SMART, a key indicator is usually the objective once it has been achieved. It is often the objective put in the past tense! At other times, you might have to think of less obvious indicators. Policy engagement and influencing is often long-term, so measuring impact may take many years.<sup>2</sup>

This session will explore the range of indicators that can support us in monitoring progress and results.

At the end of this session participants will know how to develop clear indicators to monitor and evaluate policy and influencing achievements.

### Instructions

1. Before the session prepare two flipchart papers. One with the heading 'Quantitative' and another with the heading 'Qualitative'.
2. Introduce the topic and session objectives.
3. Give the PowerPoint Presentation [See PowerPoint speaking notes]
4. **Activity: Developing key indicators.** Distribute the handout and/or return to PowerPoint SLIDE 28. Explain that for the objective of this activity is to practice identifying and formulating key quantitative and qualitative indicators. For this activity we will be using a fictitious goal:

*Goal: By 2015 25% of all District Development Coordinating Committees in Zambia have equal representation from men and women*

And an intermediate objective for this goal:

*Objective: In 10 pilot districts councillors and traditional leaders demonstrate their support for equal representation by 2012*

### Session overview

#### Time

60 minutes

#### Session objective

- Write clear indicators

#### Session activities

- PowerPoint presentation (15 minutes)
- Activity: Identifying qualitative and quantitative indicators (20 minutes)
- Plenary discussion (15 minutes)

#### Supporting materials

- Module 2: PowerPoint Presentation Slides 20-28
- Coloured cards, pens and flipchart paper

#### Handouts

- Tool 6: Developing key indicators
- Module 2: PowerPoint slide 25: 'Dimensions of policy and influencing change'

#### Further reading

- *Introductory Guide*, part 2: 'Monitoring and evaluating at the planning and design stage'

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<sup>2</sup> TearFund Advocacy Manual 2003

[NOTE: For this activity you could ask one of the organisations attending to volunteer a goal and one intermediate objective you would need to make sure the objective is SMART]

5. Explain that participants will split into groups (5-6 people per group). Groups will discuss and formulate 2 or 3 quantitative and qualitative indicators for the objective. They will write each indicator onto separate coloured cards (e.g. qualitative indicators to be written separately onto red cards, quantitative indicators onto blue cards). Groups have 15 minutes for the task.
6. Group work (15 minutes).
7. Monitor groups to make sure they are progressing and to answer any questions.
8. Plenary feedback (15 minutes): Ask each group in turn to volunteer one quantitative indicator. Put this indicator on the flipchart marked 'Quantitative indicators'. Check that the indicator is clear; clarify any points if not. Once all the indicators are on the chart, look to see where there are similarities and whether any additional indicators could be added.
9. Repeat the process for 'Qualitative indicators'. Make sure that the indicators they volunteer are clear. For example if they use terms such as behaviour change, ask them how that behaviour would be different to current behaviour – what would it look like, what would you see happening that is different from the present situation?
10. Below are some example indicators that you could add to the flipchart if not already identified by the participants:

Qualitative:

- Evidence of chiefs giving special space to women to speak at meetings
- Evidence of increased women's participation in village committee meetings
- Examples of Chiefs and Headmen working with women to sensitize men
- Women reporting greater participation and voice in these forums
- Examples of women challenging decisions they think are unfair, or will have a negative impact
- First woman councillor elected

Quantitative:

- Number of times council invite women to speak at meeting
- 7 councils send out leaflets encouraging women to stand for elections
- Number of times positive statements from district councillors or traditional leaders reported in the media
- Number of women councillors elected

11. As part of this discussion ask participants to share experiences from their own policy engagement and influencing work. What types of indicators have they found useful in helping them to assess change?

What other types of information do they collect for monitoring purposes? What are some of the challenges and lessons in identifying and monitoring indicators?

12. Conclude the session. Remind participants that it is important to just choose a few key indicators, qualitative and quantitative.

13. Distribute handouts:

- PowerPoint slide 25 handout
- Tool 4: Evidence of change checklist

## PowerPoint speaking notes (session 2.3)

Slide	Theme	Speaking notes
20	<b>How will we know if we are making progress?</b>	<p>How will we know if we are making progress and whether our interventions are making a difference? This session will explore some of the methods and tools that are used to support us in monitoring progress and results. The most common tool used to monitor donor funded programmes is the use of indicators. The objective of this session is to therefore explore how to formulate clear indicators.</p>
21	<b>Indicators</b>	<p>An indicator is tool that can help you to know whether your work is making a difference. They usually describe observable changes or events, which relate to the project intervention.</p> <p>They provide the <b>evidence that something has happened</b> – whether an output delivered, an immediate effect occurred or a long-term change observed.</p>
22	<b>Quantitative indicators</b>	<p>On one level, an indicator is information that helps show us what changes are occurring as a result of our actions. They can be formulated as quantitative or qualitative indicators, for example:</p> <p><b>Quantitative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Number of women inheriting their homes when their husbands die</li><li>▪ Number of girls going to school past 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade</li><li>▪ The number of women being elected on representative bodies in (x) position</li><li>▪ Number of women getting land entitlement certificates</li><li>▪ Number of government bodies opening up forums and spaces for CSOs and local groups to engage with decision makers in policy dialogues and input into issues that affect them</li></ul>

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## 23 Qualitative indicators

If looking at issues of governance there is a need to measure and assess changes between rights holders and duty bearers, changes in the distribution and monopoly of power and changes in marginalisation of poor and vulnerable groups.

These are more difficult to measure and are usually more qualitative measures:

- Changes in local people's skills, capacity and knowledge to mobilise and advocate on their own behalf
- Changes in opinions of key targets/key influential individuals
- Changes in clauses of legislation/policy
- Changes in the collaboration and trust between state and non state actors
- Greater freedom of expression
- Greater acceptance/recognition by government of civil society groups to engage in policy processes

Qualitative indicators are usually indicators of change (outcomes). Answering these types of questions give us information that indicates whether our work is leading the changes in people's lives, power and rights that we want to achieve.

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## 24 Monitoring activities and actions

Indicators can also tell us whether the activities and actions we have planned have happened, e.g.

- How many workshops
- How many planned visits to officials made
- How many research reports produced

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## 25 [HANDOUT]

[HANDOUT TO BE PRINTED OUT FOR THIS SESSION AND DISTRIBUTED TO PARTICIPANTS]

The diagram developed by Ros David attempts to demonstrate the different dimensions of policy and influencing and the possible indicators to measure progress and impact of these dimensions.

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**26 Indicators don't explain...**

Indicators only indicate – they do not tell the whole story. For example, indicators don't explain why progress did or did not occur, or why unexpected or negative change occurred. Indicators are only one tool among many learning and reflection tools that help us evaluate our efforts. Policy and influencing objectives often shift as the context changes and as you learn more about power and what changes are needed to transform and advance peoples' rights. An indicator at the start of an influencing initiative may well lose its relevance as the influencing work broadens or shifts its focus.

In many cases, reflective questions and stories of change will also hope you to analyse how well you are doing your work as well as highlight challenges and other factors that might impact on your work. Asking stakeholders for an example of what has changed can elicit insightful and detailed evidence of change which can yield perceptive and measurable indicators.

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**27 Points to keep in mind when selecting indicators**

- Keep them simple
- Don't select too many
- Don't generate extra work in their collection
- Are they clear for everyone involved?
- Can the indicator show changes affecting different social groups?

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**28 Activity: indicator exercise**

*[Follow instructions for this activity]*

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## Session 2.4 Monitoring and data collection

### Introduction

During your planning process you will need to decide what you will monitor, the questions to ask and what information and data will be collected. This session will explore ideas, methods and tools for monitoring progress and understanding change.

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

- Identify key approaches and methods for collecting data for learning, accountability and decision making processes
- Be clear of the advantages and disadvantages of different data collection methods and tools.

### Instructions

1. Before the session prepare cards for the group work. Each card will have a goal, objective and 4 indicators (2 quantitative and 2 qualitative). You can decide whether to use a generic goal/objective and set of indicators or base the cards on existing policy engagement or influencing strategies.
2. Introduce session topic and objectives.
3. Give the PowerPoint presentation (see PowerPoint speaking notes).
4. At the end of the PowerPoint Presentation, if you are short of time or wish you engage participants in a discussion about their experience of data collection methods, either through a buzz group process (i.e. 10 minutes to share their experience of data collection and identify 2 or 3 examples).
5. Explain the purpose of the World Café activity, which is harness ideas, methods and tools for monitoring and understanding change. Explain that this is an opportunity for participants to share their ideas, experiences and tools for data collection.
6. Organise participants into groups of 4-5 per table. Hand out the activity instructions and one card (with the goal, objective and 4 indicators) to each group.
7. Each group has to discuss: *What data will support you in tracking progress against the objective and indicators?*
8. There will be **two rounds of group work** of approximately 20 minutes each.

### Session overview

#### Time

1 hour and 15 minutes

#### Session objective

To harness ideas, methods and tools for monitoring progress and understanding change

#### Session activities

- PowerPoint Presentation (15 minutes)
  - Activity: World Café: sharing our M&E approaches (1 hour)
- or
- Plenary discussion (15 minutes)

#### Supporting materials

- Module 2: PowerPoint presentation slides 29-38
- Written objectives and indicators on cards for group work (facilitator to prepare beforehand)

#### Handouts

- Tool 7: World Café: sharing our M&E data collection methods

#### Further reading

- *Introductory Guide*, part 2: 'Monitoring and evaluating at the planning and design stage'

- In the **first round** each table has to nominate a **table host**. The role of the table host is to encourage all participants to share their ideas for the data collection. The table host encourages the participants to share their experiences of methods and tools they have used. The table host will remain at the table for both rounds of conversation. Their role is to share the findings of the discussion for the participants who arrive for round two.
- Table hosts and participants are encouraged to note key ideas on flipchart paper or cards or post-it notes. Everyone at the table is responsible for supporting the host in taking notes, summarising key ideas and suggestions as they unfold.
- After 20 minutes the table host will remain at the table while other participants will split up and join new tables and new sets of participants for the **second round**. They will take the key ideas and approaches into their new discussions.
- The table host will welcome the new participants to the table and briefly share the main ideas, themes and approaches of their initial discussion. Participants who join the new table are encouraged to **link and connect ideas** coming from their previous table discussions—listening carefully and building on each other’s contributions.
- After a further 20 minutes, participants return to the table/group they started with. They have 5 minutes to share ideas and to see how the ideas and suggestions they discussed during their first table discussion have progressed.
- In plenary (15-20 minutes), each table will have 5 minutes to share their ideas and insights.

9. Ensure participants are clear about the task.

10. During the group work monitor how participants are getting on with the task. Make sure they write their ideas on cards or flipchart. After 20 minutes ask participants to move to a new table. Make sure that the table host remains at the table. Remind them what their role is. At the end of the second round get participants to join their original table for the plenary session.

11. Plenary feedback: Ask participants to share their ideas. Each group/table will have just 5 minutes. Allow a few minutes for questions after each presentation. Remember to thank the group before moving onto the next group.

12. Conclude. Remind participants again about the challenges of too much data collection. When deciding what to collect be clear how the information is to be analysed and used for learning, decision-making and accountability purposes. Remind participants that collecting data can take up time and resources, so it is important we collect what we will use, and only what we will use. The bottom line is worth repeating: *it’s important to gather the right data – and only that data. That way you will actually use it for decision-making, monitoring, and evaluating your programme.*

## PowerPoint Speaking Notes (session 2.4)

Slide	Theme	Speaking notes
30	What to monitor	<p>The key indicators you identify during your planning phase will help guide you in tracking progress and finding evidence of change. For influencing projects and initiatives there are number of other areas you will need to monitor and review if your work is to be effective and support decision-making and accountability. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Monitoring changes in the context:</b> This includes revisiting your original situation analysis and see how and if the overall context is changing and the implications, if any, for your work.</li><li>▪ <b>Monitoring the progress and results of your work:</b> This includes monitoring and reviewing the overall progress you are making towards your original objectives. This includes looking at what you have done (your outputs) and what difference this has made (your outcomes) or likely to make. It is also important to monitor any unintended and/or changes and the implications for the work you are doing. You will need to also monitor resources used. This data will help you to assess whether you are doing the right things and whether this represents value for the resources used.</li><li>▪ <b>Monitoring how well you do your work:</b> This includes monitoring and analysing how well you have implemented your chosen strategies and action plans and how effective you and your partners have been in carrying out the work and whether you need to revise your strategies and work plan.</li></ul> <p>See <i>Additional Tools and Resources</i> for Handout: Key Questions for Planning and Monitoring</p>

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## 31 Monitoring influencing work – evidence of change

For governance and influencing initiatives you should be tracking shifts and changes in the following dimensions:

- **Policy gains** – evidence of changes in institutions, policies, legislation, budgets, behaviours and practices that promote the rights of impoverished and marginalised groups and address their problems.
- **Political and democratic gains** – examples of issues being taken for public debate and in the media; evidence of increased recognition for civil groups as legitimate actors; increasing democratic space within which civil groups can operate; shifts in the way society views women’s and men’s roles, accepting women as legitimate political actors; improving access to national governments and international institutions.
- **Private sector** – evidence of shifts in the policies, programmes and practices of the private sector; more socially responsible behaviour by local and multinational corporations.
- **Individual gains** – evidence of specific improvements in the lives of impoverished and marginalised groups – their livelihoods, their sense of confidence, and their ability to exercise their rights.
- **Civil society gains** – evidence of strengthening cooperation (rather than competition) between civil society groups; strengthening the leadership of the poor and marginalised and their organisations; the development of skills needed to successfully hold governments and international organisations to account.
- **Organisational gains** – development of strong influencing; increases in cross-programme learning and interaction; organisations regarded as serious players by decision makers

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## 32 Data needs for M&E

During your planning process you will also need to decide what data and information to collect that will support you in assessing progress and how you will do this. Data collection methods will depend on the kind of indicators and key questions you have identified and whether you intend to carry out a more extensive baseline in addition to your situation and context analysis.

You need to establish what data is actually required for your M&E.

- What data do you need?
- What data do you have?
- What are the gaps in data availability?
- How can you fill the gaps internally?
- How can you get the data externally?

Collecting data can take up time and resources, so it’s important we collect what we will use, and only what we will use. The bottom line is worth repeating: it’s important to gather the right data – and only that data – that way you will actually use for decision making, monitoring, and evaluating your programme!

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**33** How do we get data for decision-making?

How can you get the information you need for your objectives and indicators? This is a topic that is too large and broad in scope for this training course, but here are some brief ideas on data collection ideas for you to consider.

**Qualitative Methods**

- Focus groups
- Key informant interviews
- Participatory rural appraisal/rapid appraisal techniques
- Stakeholder meetings

**Quantitative Methods**

- Surveys
- Central data sources
- Government officials, departmental and agency reports and statistical records

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**34** Gender

Gender can be incorporated from the programme plan through to the programme outcomes. It might be an intended focus of your programme or part of the secondary, positive effects that your programme brings. Either way, gender merits special attention, especially in governance programmes. To that end, here are some simple ways that you could collect information on gender and simultaneously “gain credit” for the positive effects your programme has on women.

For example, you could collect information separately for men and women, keep track of participation by sex, note the leadership of your programmes, and keep records of who attends meetings by gender. Many of these ways of collecting and recording this gender-specific information are easy and require little or no additional work. As you are likely already reaching out to include women, it is best for you to report it.

Gender sensitive indicators:

- Women’s participation in programme activities
- Women in leadership roles
- Young women’s decision making, etc.

Collect programme-related information among men and women:

- Hold focus groups, conduct informational interviews with men and women
- Collect household information from men and women.

Sex-disaggregated data – report information separately for men and women (participation, leadership, etc.)

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**35** Challenges of data collection

[CARTOON ONLY]

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## 36 Challenges of data collection

**Information overkill.** The types of information you collect and methods for doing this will have to be thought about carefully. The challenge is NOT to collect lots of data but to develop systems that are manageable and used and encourage stakeholder involvement and feedback. Information overload can hinder your work stifle learning processes and block decision-making. An analysis of your current information and learning systems (both formal and informal) provides a good starting point for any additions, improvements or simplifications.

**Primary data collection.** If the information is already available from existing sources of information it will save time and money. If the information is not already available, the cost and effort in collecting it should also be taken into account.

**Skills and capacities.** Tools and methods for data collection should also match users' capacities. For example elaborate studies with many open-ended questions can be especially burdensome for a smaller organisation. While a large organisation with dedicated resources may opt for large surveys, a middle-sized one may prefer to carry out assessments on a sample basis at longer intervals.

**Information not analysed or used.** There is no point in collecting information if it is not compiled or analysed. The focus should be on assessing the effects and outcomes of your work. For example, once you have identified indicators try to prioritise them. What information really tells you something? Which ones can you simply ignore (because they are too hard to collect or just less relevant)? Use only the indicators that tell you most about the impact of your work. Keep it systematic and simple.

In many cases key monitoring and reflective questions and stories of change will help you to analyse how well you are doing your work as well as highlight challenges and other factors that might impact on your work. Simply asking stakeholders, for example, what has changed, can elicit insightful and detailed evidence of change.

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## 38 World Cafe

*[Follow instructions for this activity]*

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## Session 2.5 Developing a monitoring framework and plan

### Introduction

To guide you in the type of data you need to collect and to ensure that you systematically monitor and evaluate your work it is helpful to develop a monitoring framework and a monitoring plan at the start of a new initiative or programme. Both tools are useful in guiding you to identify the type of data you need to collect and how it will be used. You may be familiar with these tools and have developed them as part of your planning process. This session will briefly go over what these two tools are and how they might support you in your M&E processes and activities.

At the end of this session participants will:

- Be able identify the key elements to include in an M&E framework and plan
- Have experienced developing either an M&E plan or framework.

### Instructions

1. Before the session, write the buzz group discussion questions onto a flipchart.
2. Introduce the session topic and objective.
3. Give the PowerPoint presentation (See PowerPoint speaking note).
4. At the end of the presentation you can either decide to have a buzz group discussion (30 minutes) or a group activity (1 hour).
5. **Buzz group discussion.** Ask participants to get into buzz groups of 3-4 people to discuss (for 15 minutes)
  - What is your experience of using an M&E plan or framework?
  - What else needs to happen for monitoring and learning to become integral part of your work?
6. After 15 minutes ask each buzz group to share the highlights of their discussion in plenary. Prompt questions include: Who developed the frameworks/plan, and who used them? How did it support your monitoring and accountability processes? What were the challenges? What were the lessons? How can monitoring and learning processes be embedded into your ongoing work? (See if they mention leadership providing space for reflection and learning,

### Session overview

#### Time

40 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes

#### Session objective

- To identify key elements to include in a monitoring framework and plan

#### Session activities

- PowerPoint presentation (10 minutes)
- Buzz group and plenary discussion (30 minutes)
- Activity 2 & 3 (1 hour)

#### Supporting materials

- PowerPoint Presentation Slides 39-44
- Flipchart paper and coloured pens

#### Handouts

- Tool 8: Developing a monitoring and evaluation framework
- Tool 9: Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan

#### Further reading

- *Introductory Guide*, part 2: 'Monitoring and evaluating at the planning and design stage'

regular team meetings, involving stakeholders, taking time to reflect and learn, etc. – explain we'll be going to cover this in more detail in module 4).

7. **Group Activity:** divide into 2 groups. Those allocated to group 1 do 'Activity 1: developing a monitoring framework' and those allocated to group 2 do 'Activity 2: developing and monitoring and evaluation plan'.
8. Distribute the handouts explaining the task.
9. Participants in each group will use the example template in the handout (either a framework or plan) as a guide. They will reproduce a plan or framework on flipchart paper and fill in the framework based on their organisations' policy and influencing goals/objectives.
  - For the framework, choose just one or two objectives.
  - For the plan, participants are not expected to complete the whole table but to choose some key areas that they are currently monitoring or should be monitoring that support their learning, decision-making and accountability requirements
10. Each organisation has 40 minutes to complete this task. Monitor the participants to ensure that they are progressing with the task and to answer any questions.
11. Peer review: after 40 minutes ask organisations to pair up with another organisation (choose one of the organisations that has carried out a different activity to you) to share and peer review your framework and plan. Participants have 10 minutes to do this.
12. Plenary: ask participants to share their experience of doing this exercise (10 minutes). Ask them: What was useful about the framework/plan? Would they add anything or take anything out? How do these frameworks/plans compare to other frameworks they are currently using or have used? How is this different to what they are already doing? How might they introduce these processes into their own organisations?
13. Conclude session. Remind participants that it is important that plans and frameworks are kept simple and are user-friendly and clear. The danger in making them overcomplicated is that people will ignore them. The person responsible for M&E should periodically review the M&E frameworks.

## PowerPoint speaking notes (session 2.5)

Slide	Theme	Speaking notes
39	Session 2.5 Developing an M&E framework and plan	<p>To guide you in the type of data you need to collect and how it will be used it is helpful to develop a monitoring framework and plan.</p> <p>This session will briefly go over what these two tools are and how they might support you in your M&amp;E processes and activities.</p> <p>[PASS HANDOUT TO PARTICIPANTS: TOOLS 5 IN “ADDITIONAL TOOLS &amp; RESOURCES”, M&amp;E FRAMEWORK &amp; PLAN TEMPLATE]</p>
40	M&E framework	<p>To guide you in the type of data you need to collect it is helpful to develop a monitoring framework. However this will become too complex if you try to cover all the aspects above. Furthermore your strategies and activities are likely to change as the external context changes and you learn more about how you might be effective. It is therefore best to keep your monitoring framework focused on <b>progress and results</b> against your objectives, and the type of information that will indicate that you are on track including whether the external <b>context</b> has changed. Information about inputs and activities should be outlined in more details in your monthly/quarterly plans.</p> <p>A monitoring framework for <b>monitoring the results of your work and the external context</b> is likely to include a mix of key indicators (information that will indicate that change is happening) and key questions to help guide you in your analysis of why that change has happened and the impact it has had or will have, along with helping you identify key changes in the external context. If influencing is just one strategy within a broader programme then one framework should cover the whole programme</p> <p>This [SLIDE] is an example of a framework using the generic objective we used in the indicator session. [YOU COULD GIVE THIS OUT AS A HANDOUT INSTEAD]</p>

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**41 An M&E plan**

[ASK PARTICIPANTS TO LOOK AT THEIR HANDOUT]

An M&E plan will help you to clarify who needs to learn what and how you will feed learning back into your policy and influencing plans. You should develop an M&E plan whenever you develop a new action plan, project plan or strategy plan and when you know what your activities will be and who will be responsible for leading them. You will probably need to revise your plan as your work develops.

Incorporating an M&E plan into your overall project plan at the planning stage of an initiative doesn't have to be complicated. Good M&E plans should be clear, simple and useable. They should also promote and encourage regular feedback from multiple sources about the benefits, problems and impact of the intervention.

Your plan should set out:

- What you will monitor i.e. the kinds of information to track and questions to ask during monitoring processes
- What information and data will be collected to do this
- How it will be collected and stored: methods, timing and responsibilities
- How you will use the information to learn, analyse, make decisions and report.
- A reporting schedule (internal and donors) – stating the type of report/document to send to which stakeholders.

It should also outline how baselines, annual reviews, mid-term and final evaluations will be undertaken (these might not be very detailed but at least there should be an indication of when and how the team envisages carrying them out).

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**42 Buzz group discussion**

[BUZZ GROUP DISCUSSION IF YOU HAVE TOO LITTLE TIME FOR THE ACTIVITIES].

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**43 Activity 1 / group 1: Developing a simple M&E framework**

*[Follow activity instructions]*

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**44 Activity 2 / group 2: Developing a simple M&E plan**

*[Follow activity instructions]*

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# **Module 3: Monitoring and Evaluation at the Implementation Stage**

## Session 3.1 Implementing your M&E plan

### Introduction

This is the stage where you implement your work plans and carry out your monitoring and evaluation on an ongoing basis. Remember implementation is also a time of learning, when you can learn whether the methods and tactics selected are having their intended impact. We do this through monitoring activities and evaluating results. There are numerous ways of monitoring and evaluating your policy engagement and influencing work. Methods can be qualitative (for example, case studies, stories and opinions) or quantitative (statistics, numbers). Monitoring and evaluating your work should not be too onerous or time consuming. It should encourage reflection, learning and lead to revised tactics for influencing change.

The objective of this session is to briefly review some of the key monitoring and evaluation activities that you will be carrying out during the implementation stage of a policy and influencing initiative. In Module 4 participants will explore in more details specific methods and tools for more in depth review and reflection processes.

At the end of this session participants will:

- Know what to monitor and evaluate work during and after implementation
- Be clear on the processes that can support effective ongoing monitoring and learning for impact and decision-making.

### Instructions

1. Prepare a flipchart with buzz group discussion questions before the start of the session.
2. Introduce the session topic and objectives.
3. Give the PowerPoint presentation (See PowerPoint speaking notes).
4. Buzz group discussion: at the end of the presentation, ask participants to get into small buzz groups of 3-4 and discuss these questions (15 minutes):
  - What methods for collecting and storing information are most effective for learning and decision-making purposes?
  - What examples of good practice can you share?
5. Plenary feedback (15 minutes): after 15 minutes ask each buzz group to share highlights from their discussion. Try to get two points from

### Session overview

#### Time

45 minutes

#### Session objective

To highlight key monitoring and evaluation activities during implementation stage

#### Session activities

- PowerPoint presentation (15 minutes)
- Buzz group and plenary discussion (30 minutes)

#### Supporting materials

- Module 3: PowerPoint Presentation Slides 1-11

#### Handouts

- Tool 10: Designing a baseline study
- Tool 11: Ideas for collecting and storing monitoring data

#### Further reading

- *Introductory Guide*, part 3: 'Monitoring and evaluation at the implementation stage'

each group. Remember to ask groups not to repeat a point if it has already been shared. Try to probe: Who has access to the information? What are some of the challenges with data collection and storage? What have they learnt from the good practice examples they've heard about? Will they do anything different as a result?

## PowerPoint speaking notes (session 3.1)

Slide	Theme	Speaking notes
2	<b>MODULE 3: Monitoring and evaluation at the implementation stage</b>	<p>This the stage where you <b>implement</b> your work plans and carrying out your monitoring plans on an ongoing basis. Remember, monitoring should not be too onerous or time consuming! It should encourage reflection, learning and lead to revised tactics for influencing change.</p> <p>The objective of this session is to briefly review some of the key M&amp;E activities that you will be carrying out during the implementation stage.</p>
3	<b>Capacity and resources for M&amp;E</b>	<p>Before we start, we need to consider the resources necessary to carry out M&amp;E activities. Each organisation or programme should have someone dedicated to M&amp;E. Whilst monitoring and learning should of course be part of everyone’s role and built into job descriptions, if you do not have someone specifically dedicated to M&amp;E then the likelihood is that M&amp;E activities will slip. It is most important that the M&amp;E person or team knows how M&amp;E is undertaken effectively even if they do not have the “in-house” abilities to do all the work themselves.</p> <p>Remember that at least 5%, but better 10%, of your programme/project resources should be designated for M&amp;E. This may sound like a lot, but consider how important it is to not only implement the programme, but to show how money was spent, who used the services, whether a difference was made, and whether that difference may be due to your programme. This budget should include funding for proper reporting forms, data management systems, and plans to use the data for decision-making. Keep in mind that the first year funds may be greater than in the middle years as you may need to gather baseline data and create all of your M&amp;E systems; one time items that last the life of a programme. Also, keep in mind that you should budget money for an evaluation at the end of the program to determine how effective and efficient the programme has been. [We’ll discuss reviews in the next session]</p> <p>[ASK PARTICIPANTS WHETHER THEIR ORGANISATIONS HAVE DESIGNATED M&amp;E STAFF/FOCAL PEOPLE AND WHETHER M&amp;E RESPONSIBILITIES ARE BUILT INTO JOB DESCRIPTIONS/PERFORMANCE MEASURES. IF NOT, HOW ARE M&amp;E ACTIVITIES COORDINATED AND CARRIED OUT? ALLOW 5 MINUTES FOR DISCUSSION BEFORE MOVING ONTO THE SLIDE 4]</p>
4	<b>Key activities during implementation</b>	<p>Key activities during implementation will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Assessing initial situation (baseline)</li><li>▪ Collecting and storing the data you agreed upon</li><li>▪ Ongoing monitoring activities</li><li>▪ Holding regular team monitoring meetings</li><li>▪ Identifying when there is a need for a more in-depth analysis and evaluation of an initiative or activity</li></ul>

[ASK PARTICIPANTS IF ANY OF THEM HAVE CARRIED OUT A BASELINE IN RELATION TO THEIR POLICY AND INFLUENCING WORK.

ASK THEM: WHY DO YOU THINK A BASELINE IS IMPORTANT? WHAT MIGHT THE CHALLENGES BE IN CARRYING OUT A BASELINE?

SEE IF THEY MENTION THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN BASELINE AND CARRYING OUT CONTEXT ANALYSIS. ASK THEM WHY.

ALLOW 5 MINUTES FOR DISCUSSION BEFORE PRESENTING THE SLIDE BULLETS.]

- A starting position from which to measure change (before/after)

Once you have identified specific policy and influencing objectives and developed your monitoring framework to track progress against these, it is important to assess the current situation to give you a baseline against which to assess progress.

- A beginning picture that describes as fully as possible the current situation
- A clear picture of the initial situation and the life circumstances of the stakeholders (women, youth, farmers, orphans etc) at the time the project began.

This baseline will be similar in many ways to the situation analysis you did to ensure you understand what the current situation is, the politics of the issue, power dynamics, and the views and positions of the various stakeholders including decision-makers, influential people and organisations, potential allies and opponents. If your situation analysis has been thorough you may already have the information you need to write up your baseline report.

**SPEAKING POINT:** Networks may need to carry out additional data collection on membership type, numbers, issues their members are involved in etc. Monitoring and evaluation methodologies for networks needs to take into the 'invisible' effects of much of their work, such as putting people in touch with each other, stimulating and facilitating action and the trust that enables concerted action.

Governance and influencing objectives often involve trying to influence behaviours, attitudes and raise awareness of issues. Depending on the issue you are working on, additional data collection or a more in-depth analysis may also be required. For example you may decide to carry out a survey, focus group discussion and/or individual interviews with a representative data sample from your key stakeholders and/or target group and revisit this group towards the end of your project for example a before/after survey to see if opinions have shifted, behaviours changed, practices shifted.

**Baselines therefore help us to assess impact.** Note: It is important to get a balance between having enough information to enable you to act upon it and gathering too much so that you will never act

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## 6

### Collecting data

Documenting information is critical for M&E and provides the basis for communication, transparency, consensus building and continuity of consultative processes. Collecting and storing data can be simple or complex, depending on the scope and scale of your policy and influencing initiative.

- Identify information and data you need to collect on a regular basis (refer to M&E plan)

You will find your monitoring much more useful if collection of key data is done systematically and that it is easily accessible and retrievable to the relevant people. Your monitoring plan should help you to identify the information you need to collect on a regular basis, key responsibilities and how you will use the data.

- Be systematic – build in feedback mechanisms into your influencing strategies and actions

Where possible it is useful to build feedback mechanisms into your influencing strategies and actions. For example when involved in major activity or event involving a group of people it can be useful to arrange for one person do on the spot interviews with those taking part in the event or pay particular attention to making notes about the language and behaviour of the target groups.

- E.g. Conference evaluations, verbal feedback, interviews, short surveys. For some influencing events/meetings or training you may be able to get feedback through an evaluation feedback form, or through a visitors book, verbal feedback, unsolicited feedback etc. In other cases, you may want to conduct a short survey or interviews with a few key stakeholders
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For ongoing monitoring and review purposes there are some very basic tips that might be helpful in thinking about how you might store and retrieve information:

**What information needs to be stored?** Think about what information and how much you need to store. Information about progress with implementation e.g. stakeholder reviews, annual project reviews, context and situation analysis data, changes in the context, unexpected impacts, minutes of meetings might sound overwhelming but it is important to assess what information needs to pass to whom for decision making, strategising and reporting. A simple method of collecting and storing key data is to have a folder and/or arch lever file for specific types of information. For example:

- A monthly monitoring file
- An activities & events file
- A media file
- A watching brief file
- Key documents file

**Who needs access to the information and when?** How data are stored depends on who is to have access to the information and how often. Information to guide strategies is critical for managers, project leaders and implementing partners, steering committees, primary stakeholder representatives and funding agencies. Information on operations is critical for field workers, managers and project leaders and primary stakeholders. In some cases you may need to leave original data with the stakeholders who produced them for example drawings, or diagrams developed with stakeholders.

**What type of information needs to be stored – hard copies or data that can be computerised?** The more people use information the better it is to computerise it. Data from surveys and questionnaires can be inputted into simple spreadsheets or word tables and stored electronically and also be shared and read by people within offices or at a distance. However, bear in mind that not all stakeholders or implementing partners will necessary have access to computers in which case hard copies will need to be stored.

**Regularly assess what information you need and what can be discarded.** A data storage system will soon get congested and overflow if it is not updated regularly. Before archiving or discarding information check that you keep copies of all materials you need for making comparisons of change over time. This includes baseline data, summaries of progress and impact information.

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<p><b>8</b> <b>Ongoing monitoring methods</b></p>	<p>Monitoring methods can be simple or complex, depending on the indicators and resources. For example, they may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Keeping records of anecdotes and conversations with target audience</li> <li>▪ Tracking when others have used your arguments or wording in their literature or presentations</li> <li>▪ Keeping significant letters and emails that have been received</li> <li>▪ Documenting and filing the messages that you have put out, number of meetings held and invitations to contribute to the issue from key external parties</li> <li>▪ Carrying out surveys and interviews to determine the impact of your actions</li> <li>▪ Monitoring the media for mentions of your work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9</b> <b>Ongoing monitoring activities</b></p>	<p>The key to monitoring how well you are doing your influencing work is to have regular team meetings. These meetings enable you to <i>‘analyse your data, results and assumptions, and operational and financial performance and adapt your work plans as necessary based on your findings’</i>.</p> <p>For civil society organisations working in networks or coalitions this includes periodic steering group meetings and partner/member meetings. It is important to decide on the frequency of your monitoring meetings at the outset of your work. Refer to your M&amp;E Plan, but remember to be flexible. For example at the height of a policy and influencing initiative, you will probably need to meet more frequently. The information you collect during your monitoring processes should inform your learning and decision making processes. Regular team meetings should also enable you to decide if a more detailed review meeting or evaluation is required.</p>
<p><b>10</b> <b>Adapt and revise plans</b></p>	<p>The learning and analysis from your ongoing monitoring and the more in depth review processes should help you identify any changes that need to be made to your plans and budget. It is important that others involved are clear about what you have learned and the rationale for these changes so you should record this in a simple way.</p>
<p><b>11</b> <b>Buzz group discussion</b></p>	<p><i>[Follow activity instructions]</i></p>

# **Module 4:**

# **Reflection, analysis**

# **and learning**

## Session 4.1 Reflection, analysis and learning

### Introduction

Reflecting and learning should happen continually as you review your work, reflect critically on it and draw out learning that helps you to decide if your strategies and actions need rethinking. It is also important that organisations promote ways of seeking ongoing feedback from multiple sources about the benefits and impact of what they do. These processes allow you to draw lessons from your actions that build your knowledge about power, gender, change and policy engagement.

Building in regular review and learning processes to take stock of your work is therefore vital to effective policy engagement and influencing work. If you don't take time to reflect and learn there is a real danger that your influencing activities will not be able to respond to the ever changing context around you and the power dynamics that shape your work.

By the end of the session participants will have:

- learnt some practical ideas and examples of tools and processes that can support learning and evaluation processes;
- developed skills in listening, analysis and facilitation;
- explored the types of change and results that organisations aim to bring about through their policy and influencing work.

### Instructions

1. Introduce the session topic and objectives.
2. Give the PowerPoint presentation [See PowerPoint speaking notes].
3. The facilitator has the choice of 2 activities for this session.
  - Activity 1: the Impact Tree activity will take about 2 hours and 30 minutes to complete. This includes explaining the task, briefing group facilitators, individual work/group work and plenary feedback.
  - Activity 2: involves a series of participatory evaluation tools (Venn Diagrams, Critical Timeline and Fishes and Boulders). Participants can practice in pairs with each other and then share their experience of using these tools in group work and in plenary. This will take about 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete, including explaining the activity, pair and peer review and plenary feedback.

### Session overview

#### Time

Approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes

#### Session objectives

- To understand how to build regular review and learning processes during implementation
- To learn and experience a participatory tool that can be used for review and reflection processes

#### Session activities

- PowerPoint presentation (15 mins)
- Group activity 1: up to 3 hours (either a whole morning or afternoon); or
- Group activity 2: 1 hour and 30 minutes

#### Supporting materials

- Module 4: PowerPoint presentation slides 1-17
- Coloured card, flipchart paper and pens

#### Handouts

- Tool 12: Questions to guide review
- Tool 13: Questions to guide reviews in coalitions and networks
- Tool 14: Sample agenda monthly/quarterly review
- Tool 15: Potential steps in an annual review and reflection process
- Tool 16: Sample agenda and process note for a one-day self assessment or annual review workshop
- Tool 18: Impact tree
- Tool 19: Impact tree group facilitator instructions
- Tool 20: Critical Timelines
- Tool 21: Venn Diagrams
- Tool 22: Fish and boulders

#### Further reading

- *Introductory Guide*, part 4: 'Reflection, analysis and learning'

4. Brief instructions for the activity 1 can be found on Module 4 PowerPoint slides 12-17. The instructions for activity 2 can just be read out. Both activities have detailed handouts for participants.

### Activity 1: Impact tree

1. **Prior preparation.** It helps if the Facilitator works out the group work composition before the workshop based on the participant list. Groups should ideally have no more than 5 organisations/and or people. For example if each organisation has 2 people you can have a group of 10 participants but only 5 will present. Alternatively you can decide that all participants will draw an impact tree and make sure that when you work out the group composition representatives from the same organisation work in different groups. The activity could also be done with participants in the same organisation (from different departments /or team members who are carrying out separate activities in support of an objective).
2. Each group will need a group facilitator. You can either say beforehand who should facilitate a group or ask for volunteers when explaining the task.
3. **Introduce objectives for this session.** The session will focus on the work of individual organisations – their experiences, challenges, achievements and lessons of policy engagement and working on governance and accountability issues. Explain that the Impact Tree is a tool that has been developed to support review and reflection processes and has been widely used around the world. It is useful for building skills in listening and critical reflection – a core requirement for active learning and review processes.
4. Explain that there you will need a number of volunteers who will help to facilitate the group work in the second part of this exercise. [Either decided beforehand or during this part of the activity]
5. **Part 1: Impact tree drawing (20 minutes).** Distribute Handout 1 to all participants. Explain that each organisation/participant is to draw a picture of a tree that will represent their experience of working on governance and accountability issues over the last 2 years (or year). ***Read through the parameters of this drawing as featured in handout 1.*** Check understanding and allow 5 minutes for clarifications.
6. Ask the participants to start on their trees. Make sure they have flipchart paper and coloured pens to draw their tree. Participants have 15 minutes.
7. Meanwhile distribute Handout 2 to the group facilitators and brief them on their role. The instructions are very detailed. Ensure they are clear about their role and stress the importance of keeping to time and using the prompt questions in their handouts to deepen the analysis and discussion of findings.
8. Check that participants are getting on with their trees and ask if they need more time. Don't allow them to go over 20 minutes.
9. **Part 2: Impact tree group work – sharing trees (1 hour and 30 minutes – 2 hours).** Once participants have drawn their trees, explain the second part of the activity. Explain that organisations will be divided into groups (ideally no more than five participants per group).
10. Sharing Trees: When the groups convene the group facilitator will ask each participant to share their tree. Each participant will have **10 minutes** to share his or her tree without any interruptions (do not go over time). Remember if there are two representatives from one organisation in the group only one presents.

11. Other participants in the group will listen carefully to the person sharing their tree. As they listen to the presentation they should make notes of any points that they would like to probe further, but they should not to interrupt or ask questions until the person has finished sharing their tree.
12. After each tree has been shared the group facilitator will invite participants to ask questions or offer their reflections on what they've heard. There will be 10 minutes of questions and further discussion.
13. The role of the group facilitator will be to support the analysis through offering additional prompt questions as appropriate. Sample prompt questions are provided on Handout 2.
14. **Part 3: Wrapping up the group discussion (10 minutes).** After all the trees have been shared and discussed, the group facilitator will ask participants to spend 2 minutes reflecting on their own and to write on separate cards two overall challenges and two overall lessons of working on governance and accountability issues. The group facilitator will then ask participants to group the cards and to distil the challenges and lessons and pull out three lessons and three challenges to be shared in plenary.
15. **Part 4: Plenary feedback (20 minutes).** Once participants are back in plenary the training facilitator will ask each group to share their reflections on the exercise and overall lessons and challenges of working on governance and accountability issues. Each group has 5 minutes maximum.
16. To conclude, distil key themes from the feedback. Explain that the process they have been through is one way they might design a review and reflection process for example an annual review or as part of an evaluation process.

## Activity 2: Participatory evaluation tools exercise

1. **Prior preparation:** print the following tools in the *Additional Tools and Resources* booklet:
  - Tool 20: Critical timelines
  - Tool 21: Venn diagrams
2. **Explain the objective:** to develop skills in facilitating a participatory review and reflection tool, to share and review the process and how it might be used or adapted for review and learning process.
3. Ask participants to pair up with someone from another organisation. Divide the tools between the pairs i.e. if there are ten pairs, three can do the timeline, three can do the Venn Diagrams and four can do the Fishes and Boulders.
4. Explain that these tools would normally be done in groups rather than with individuals.
5. Ask pairs to first read the explanation of the tool and then decide on who will facilitate the exercise (10 minutes).
6. The other pair will carry out the exercise with the support of the facilitator who will ask prompt questions and support the analysis. Each pair has 45 minutes to complete this part of the activity

7. When each pair has completed the exercise, join another pair to share your reflections of doing this exercise – preferably a pair that has worked on a different tool.
8. **Sharing experience** (15 minutes): Each pair will share their experience of using the tool (from the perspective of the facilitator and the perspective of the person using the tool to evaluate the outcomes of their influencing work).
9. Participants will discuss the potential uses of these tools for their work.
10. **Plenary** (15 minutes): After sharing the experience participants will come back to plenary to share highlights of their discussions and experience. The main facilitator should prompt the discussion by asking: What was your experience of using these tools? Was it helpful? Challenging? Did it support you to reflect and analyse your work? What was it like for the facilitators? What other experiences of participatory tools have you had? Can you see yourselves using these types of tools for your review and reflection processes? In what ways?
11. Conclude the session: note that while various participatory tools can be useful for reflection and learning purposes. As always, HOW the tool is used and the questions that are asked around it is more important than WHAT tool is used.

## PowerPoint speaking notes (session 4.1)

Slide	Theme	Speaking notes
2	<b>Session 4.1 Reflection, analysis and learning</b>	<p>How can we tell if our programme has made a difference and whether we have accomplished our objectives?</p> <p>The objective of this session is to learn some practical ideas and examples of tools and processes that can support learning and evaluation processes.</p> <p>Reflecting and learning should happen continually as you review your work, reflect on it in a critical way, and draw out learning that helps you to decide if your strategies and actions need rethinking. It is also important that organisations promote ways of seeking on-going feedback from multiple sources about the benefits and impact of the intervention. These processes allow you to draw lessons from your actions that build your knowledge about power, gender, change and advocacy.</p> <p>Building in regular review and learning processes to take stock of your work is therefore key to effective policy and influencing work. If you don't take time to reflect and learn there is a real danger that your influencing activities will not be able to respond to the ever changing context around you and the power dynamics that shape your work.</p>
3	<b>Reflective learning</b>	<p>Reflective learning is a continuous process which enables us to use our experiences to identify elements of good practice which can help us to refine and modify our ongoing work.</p> <p>Reflective learning activities can take place in parallel with monitoring and evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Can take place at all stages and levels of intervention.</li><li>▪ Allow us to organise and formulate learning "so far" in our work</li><li>▪ Draw out major themes and/ or issues and present them in ways which shape the way we think about our work and influence the direction it is taking</li><li>▪ May measure change (positive or negative) against an original baseline or benchmark</li><li>▪ Can be frequent, regular and systematic, or may be "one-off" – held at a particular point of implementation of a project or intervention</li></ul> <p>Reflective learning can be part of an ongoing process. For example, during training, it is good practice to reflect together at the end of each day in order to refine plans for the day ahead. Or it can be a periodic event which brings together a wide range of stakeholders.</p>

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## 4

### Key areas of analysis

At the heart of review and learning processes are three key areas of analysis:

#### What has been done by the programme?

- What were the initial objectives, theory of change, assumptions and initial measures of success?
- What happened in the past quarter/ six months/year? (activities and external context)
- What progress has been made and how?

#### What has changed as a result? (Positive, negative)

- Who benefited (women/men/most vulnerable, etc.) and who didn't?
- What were the intended and unintended outcomes as perceived by different stakeholder groups?
- What were the gender implications?

#### How should the learning from this process inform forthcoming work?

- What are the lessons from the past quarter/six months/year?
- How should the ongoing plans be altered as a result of these lessons?
- How could stakeholders have greater input into (or involvement in) future activities?

You should also reflect on the effectiveness of your tactics and approaches and ask yourselves some hard questions about your change model and strategies

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## 5

### Making time to reflect and learn

Reviewing, reflecting and learning should be a constant process. However to ensure that you really set enough time to do it properly it is best to set aside specific time and resources for reflective analysis to periodically take stock of your work and to make sense of the findings. It is important for the M&E plan to require that the programme team create explicit space for team reflection and analysis. Civil society initiatives are often responding to complex, changing situations. It is therefore important to make time to understand the present before engaging in processes which seek to engender change.

These 'taking stock' moments can take a variety of forms for example:

- Monthly/Quarterly Team Review meetings
  - Annual Stakeholder Reviews
  - Periodic evaluations after an event or implementation of an initiative (for example a campaign, lobbying activity etc)
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## 6

### Team meetings

At the very least you should hold monthly or quarterly review and planning meetings with your team members. These meetings should be long enough to enable you to reflect on your plans and actions, ask questions about your work and any contextual changes or political positioning, share lessons and challenges, review budgets and variances and adjust ongoing plans. They should also enable you to decide if a more detailed review or evaluation is required. A record of these meetings should be made in the form of notes or a short progress report. This information supports you in reporting to your funders, and is useful data to refer back to if a more in depth evaluation is to be carried out. It also enables you to share and communicate the outcomes of your work more widely. At the height of a specific campaign or influencing initiative you may decide that weekly or more frequent team meetings are necessary.

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## 7

### Annual stakeholder review meetings

Annual Stakeholder Reviews involves different stakeholders in the analysis of progress, challenges and impact.

An 'annual reflection process' is essentially the implementation agency creating space and time annually to reflect with stakeholders on how and if the initiative is making progress towards its objectives. Annual reflection processes provide an opportunity to reflect back on theories of change or assumptions which guide the intervention, assess progress against success criteria and involve different stakeholder groups in the analysis.

They are opportunities for organisations:

- To **reflect** on the year's work with different stakeholders
- To **learn** from the year's experience (including what has been spent)
- To **analyse** how the learning from achievements and disappointments will improve future work
- To increase **accountability** and **transparency** to internal peers and other stakeholder groups

An annual review process will be different depending on the nature, and stage, of the intervention. Multiple data methods, data sources and tools should be used. Some annual processes may involve implementing staff and other stakeholders (e.g. coalition/network members, peer organisation, funders, key informants) in feedback processes. In other situations, it may be possible to involve primary stakeholders (or their representatives) in participatory analyses of how (or if) the interventions are making a difference to people's lives. Many processes will be multi-layered, but in essence they should be kept simple and as participatory as possible.

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## 8

### Periodic reviews and evaluations

#### More in-depth look at your work:

For some policy and influencing work, you may want to undertake a more in-depth external evaluation, for example mid way through a strategy (i.e. a mid-term review), after an influencing action or at the end of a long resource intensive policy and influencing initiative. Policy and influencing work is of course hard to objectively evaluate and it will be hard to differentiate the impact of your work from that of other organisations. However an evaluation will help you probe more deeply on your assumptions about change, give stakeholders a say, help you assess the level of your contribution towards any impact, and help you to be more accountable.

Evaluations should also be an opportunity to explore changes in the context in depth, ask broader questions about direction and strategy, including: whether you are working on the right issues for the right length of time; how these issues are selected; your overall approach; how your policy and influencing work contributes to the aims of ZGF; your partners' work; and whether you are making the best use of the organisations resources. The insights and findings from these evaluations should inform learning throughout the organisation and help you to improve the quality of your policy and influencing work.

#### Draws on original baseline:

An evaluation helps you to take stock and learn lessons to make the next major effort more effective. The evaluation should also draw on the original baseline to identify any changes or major shifts that have occurred – i.e. a *before* and *after* picture. Baseline information provides the *before* picture and supports comparison.

#### External perspective:

Using someone outside the team brings in fresh perspectives and can help challenge assumptions. It is important to find someone with experience in the particular type of work to do this.

The nature of the questions asked during an evaluation will depend on the nature of the particular influencing. In many respects they are the same questions that you would ask yourselves as part of ongoing monitoring and learning.

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## 9

### **Making reflection and review processes effective**

Some thought needs to be given to planning a review and reflection process or you won't make the most of your time. Decide what the main objectives are and design the process around these. You may have a particular issue to examine or you may decide to hold a review and reflection meeting to look more broadly at the progress of your work and what difference it is making.

**Who needs to be involved?** It is important to think about who needs to be involved and how. Think through who is/has been involved, who knows of your work, who have you been trying to influence, and who were you trying to help. For example:

- Your team
- Collaborating NGOs, CSOs
- Non collaborating organisations who know of the work
- Key informants/decision makers
- Those you were trying to influence
- Those who you were trying to help.

Different levels of involvement will be appropriate for different groups. You might think about:

- Questionnaires
- Telephone interviews
- Semi-structured personal interviews
- Workshops, annual review meetings etc.

If you are going to involve target groups in your review processes either through interviews or inviting them to a review meeting, remember they may not wish to admit that they have been influenced by you or alternatively they may lead you to believe you have had more influence than you actually have. It is important that you use your critical thinking skills to help you interpret such information and where possible compare information from different sources.

**What key questions and data required?** You will need to decide what questions to be examined, any useful tools or frameworks that will support your analysis, reflection and learning, who will lead and/or facilitate the process and how the discussions and follow up actions will be documented. Ensure you have the data and information you need to be able to critically examine the questions you have decided on. Your baseline, strategies, plans, previous meeting notes/reports along with the information collected during monitoring will provide one key basis for this. However, it may be necessary to do some analysis of the monitoring data prior to the meeting, or collect additional information such as feedback from partners, allies or targets.

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**Devote time for cross-cutting issues:** Cross-cutting issues such as impacts on gender relations, benefits for the poorest most vulnerable groups and their contribution to decision making and participation processes may lose out if not included explicitly in the questions developed for your review and reflection processes. ZGF expect their partners to report on cross cutting issues such as gender, HIV and people living with disabilities.

**Create a supportive environment:** Reflection and learning requires an atmosphere of trust and respect. It is much harder in hierarchical situations or where a particular group – for example women - are not expected to speak in public because of cultural traditions and patriarchy. People have to feel their opinions will be valued and that is possible to question assumptions and suggestions of others.

**Encourage critical thinking skills:** Critical thinking is about how we approach new information, ideas, problems and issues. Critical thinking skills help us to process and analyse the information we gather and generate through our monitoring and review processes. It is not about being critical in the sense of attacking or demeaning other people's arguments. It is rather about strengthening capacities to question and challenge assumptions in a constructive way. Active discussion during team meetings and when meeting with primary stakeholders are vital if M&E is to be shared, analysed and acted upon.

**Cross-check or triangulate information:** Whenever and wherever possible, cross-check or triangulate the information you have to verify its accuracy. Is it just one individual's opinion or is it substantiated from a number of different sources? What will be important is that information is cross-checked by asking different audiences (allies, targets and staff as well as outsiders etc.).

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## 11

### **Participatory tools to support learning and review processes**

You can draw on a range of tools to help you to reflect on and review your work. It is important to be inventive, thinking about the questions that need to be answered and the types of tools that might be useful. As always, HOW the tool is used and the questions that are asked around it is more important than WHAT tool is used. Here are just some of the range of participatory tools used in review and reflection processes and how they may help you to explore issues and results.

**Venn Diagrams** can help build up a picture of different agencies/institutions and decision makers involved in a particular issue and their relative importance in the change process. They can also show changes in power relations between groups, institutions and individuals. (See Tool 21, Venn Diagrams).

**Timelines** can be used to build up knowledge of what happened when, who influenced what and the timeliness of different organisations' interventions (see Tool 20, Critical Timelines).

**Case studies** or **stories of change** from different partners or other allied groups can provide more detailed learning that you can draw from. When several groups come together to do case studies they can generate more universal learning if they reflect on a similar set of questions. With a common outline, they can collect the same kinds of information and then compare lessons across the cases more easily. (See activity in Module 5: Storytelling and case study writing).

**Impact Tree.** A tree is a universally recognised symbol with clear metaphorical meanings which people can use to explore issues or process from a new angle. Tree graphics can be used in review processes to review and reflection processes to get a holistic understanding of the context and enabling environment for undertaking policy and influencing work, the types of change and achievements resulting from influencing actions, the factors that have facilitated or hindered this work and examples of approaches that support this type of work.

I'm now going to introduce you to an activity where you will have an opportunity to use one (or more of these) tools.

[THE FACILITATOR HAS A CHOICE OF ACTIVITIES. THEY CAN EITHER GO THROUGH A MINI REVIEW PROCESS WITH THE IMPACT TREE. THIS WILL TAKE ABOUT TWO HOURS. OR THERE ARE A SERIES OF TOOLS VENN DIAGRAM, TIMELINE THAT PARTICIPANTS CAN PRACTICE. A STORY TELLING TOOL WILL BE SHARED IN MODULE 5.]

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## 12

### **Activity 1: Impact tree**

*[Follow activity instructions]*

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## 13

### **Step 1**

*[Follow activity instructions]*

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**14** **The tree has to include:** *[Follow activity instructions]*

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**15** **(cont.)** *[Follow activity instructions]*

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**16** **Step 2: sharing stories** *[Follow activity instructions]*

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**17** **Step 3: Wrapping up and plenary** *[Follow activity instructions]*

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# **Module 5:**

# **Communication and**

# **reporting**

## Session 5.1 Communication and reporting

### Introduction

Documenting information is critical for monitoring and evaluation and provides the basis for communication, transparency, consensus-building and continuity. Sharing the analysis, findings, insights and lessons from your influencing work supports not only the ongoing improvement and effectiveness of your influencing work but is key to being accountable.

Effective monitoring and evaluation processes should allow for synthesising key information – that is, reducing large amounts of information down to key issues and lessons – but it should not try to aggregate different types of data simply to provide an easy-to-read presentation. What indicates effective change in one location will not necessarily be the same in another. It is important that a focus on reporting ‘outcomes’ is not interpreted as meaning that such diversity should be ignored or glossed over.

However, distilling and synthesising outcomes and lessons from multiple sources of data for reporting and communication purposes can be a challenge for many organisations. The objective of this session is to provide some practical ideas for developing case studies, stories of change and reporting outcomes including tips on how to write succinct reports and meet the reporting requirements of ZGF.

At the end of this session participants will:

- Know how to report key outcomes and lessons
- Have practical experience of writing a case study
- Understand the role of communication in supporting their work
- Have explored effective and innovative ways of communicating and reporting on change with different audiences.

### Instructions

1. Introduce the session topic and objective.
2. Give the PowerPoint presentation [see PowerPoint presentation speaking notes].
3. At the end of the presentation, ask participants to share their examples of disseminating their work. What has worked well, less well? What are some of the challenges they face in reporting and communicating their work?
4. ZGF may also wish to add something at the end of the presentation about their reporting and learning requirements. For example this

### Session overview

#### Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

#### Session objectives

To provide practical ideas for developing case studies and stories of change and reporting on change

#### Session activities

- PowerPoint Presentation and discussion (20 minutes)
- Activity 1: Participatory Storytelling and case study writing (1 hour & 15 minutes); or
- Activity 2: Communication and reporting to different audiences (2 hours)

#### Supporting materials

- PowerPoint presentation slides
- Cards, flipchart paper and pens

#### Handouts

- Tool 23: Storytelling and case study writing
- Tool 24: Communicating and reporting to different audiences
- Tool 25 Style tips for writing up reports
- Tool 26 Tips for note-taking

#### Further reading

- *Introductory Guide*, part 5: ‘Communicating and reporting’

session could be used as an opportunity to talk about and give feedback on the ZGF reports submitted by the Grant Partners. Add an additional 10-15 minutes to the session if you decide to talk about the ZGF reporting requirements.

5. Explain the process and objectives of the next activity. The facilitator has a choice of 2 activities:
  - **Activity 1. Storytelling and case study writing:** This activity is based on a storytelling methodology that can be used in your team and with your stakeholders to help you communicate and report on change and outcomes.
  - **Activity 2: Communication and reporting to different audiences:** This is a similar activity which explores communicating to different audiences – donor, policy maker, media/general public – the outcomes and findings of your work.
6. Explain the process for the activity you decide on and then give the participants the appropriate handout.

#### **Activity 1: Storytelling and case study writing:**

1. Explain that the objective of the session is to explore a storytelling methodology for learning and reporting about change.
2. Ask for 2-3 participants to volunteer to share a story about how their work has led to change. Ask for the same number of volunteers to act as facilitators for the story telling groups. (The number of storytellers will depend on the number of participants. For example if the workshop has over 20 participants ask for 3 volunteer storytellers and 3 volunteer facilitators. If less than 20 ask for 2 storytellers and 2 story facilitators. The training facilitator can also decide to facilitate one group or request co-facilitators from the organisation running the training.)
3. Explain the process: the story facilitator's role is to support the storyteller to tell the story through a series of questions that enable both the respondent and the listeners to think more critically about the issues. The storytelling will take about 15 minutes. Participants will take notes and can ask questions at the end. All the participants (including facilitator and story teller) will be asked to write up a short one-page case study of the story.
4. Once you've explained the activity divide participants randomly into 2-3 groups. The training facilitator will assign one story facilitator and one storyteller to each group.
5. The story facilitator and storyteller sit opposite each other. Participants form a semi circle around the pair.
6. The story facilitator welcomes participants to the group and reminds them of the purpose of the exercise and the process.
7. The storyteller tells their story. The facilitator asks a series of questions to help them along. The whole storytelling process should only take up to 15 minutes. The questions are:
  - What was the issue?
  - What is the organisation trying to achieve?
  - Who is involved?

- What was changed?
  - Who has benefited?
  - Can you identify the key steps that you took that led to the change?
  - What worked well, less well?
  - What did you stakeholders (or key beneficiaries say)
  - What are the key lessons?
  - What still remains to be done?
8. At the end of the exercise the story facilitator invites participants to ask any additional questions (10 minutes).
  9. After this, all the participants write up a short one-page case study of the story. A template to help participants construct the story is included in their handout. They don't have to use this. Participants have 30 minutes to write their case study.
  10. After 30 minutes participants pair up with another participant from their group. They will read each other's story and provide constructive feedback. They have 10 minutes to share/peer review their case studies.
  11. Plenary (15 minutes): the training facilitator will ask participants to share their experience and reflections of the exercise and what you learnt about communication and reporting.

## **Activity 2: Communicating and reporting to different audiences**

1. Explain the objective of this activity:
  - to explore the role of communication in supporting your work;
  - to explore effective and innovative ways of communicating and reporting on change with different audiences.
2. Divide participants into three groups. Ask each group to choose a facilitator. Explain that each group will be asked to communicate the outcomes and findings of their learning to a specific audience.
  - Group 1. Donor
  - Group 2. Media/general public
  - Group 3. Policy-maker
  - (Or you may want to choose a more specific target group as one of your audiences for this exercise such as a village leader, coalition partner, etc.)
3. There will be a process for choosing the issue to communicate in the group.
4. **Step 1: Writing the story brief (10 minutes).** The facilitator asks each participant in the group to spend 10 minutes writing a very brief short story outline on a card (bullet points only). The outline has to include:
  - What is the title of the story?
  - What was the issue?

- What is the organisation trying to achieve?
  - Who is involved?
  - What has changed?
  - Who has benefited?
  - Key steps that led to the change?
  - What worked well, less well?
  - What are the key lessons?
  - What still remains to be done?
5. Why do you want to communicate the story (think about the audience you are communicating to e.g. policy maker, donor, general public/media)?
6. **Step 2: Pitching the story (20 minutes).** The facilitator asks each participant in the group to quickly present top line ideas of their story. They only have 3 minutes, timed by the facilitator. The facilitator sticks the cards onto a flipchart.
7. **Step 3: Voting (5 minutes).** Each participant is given 4 dots to vote for the story they would like to hear more about. They can choose to put all their dots on 1 story or spread out their votes, but they cannot vote for their own story. If there is a tie, eliminate the losers and then give each organisation another 2 dots to vote.
8. **Step 4: Developing the winning story further (10 minutes).** The participant with the winning story will be asked to talk about their story in more detail. The facilitator will ask:
- What is the story you want to tell? Why is this story exciting?
  - What is the issue?
  - What is the organisation trying to achieve?
  - Who is involved?
  - What was changed?
  - Who has benefited?
  - Can you identify the key steps that you took that led to the change?
  - What worked well, less well?
  - What did you stakeholders (or key beneficiaries say)?
  - What are the key lessons?
  - What still remains to be done?
  - What impression do you want to leave your audience (either donor, media or policy maker) with?
9. **Stage 6: How to present the story to your designated audience (30 minutes).** Group participants discuss and develop the story. They need to decide:
- What needs to be communicated and how?
  - How do they make communication relevant, succinct, exciting and accessible?
  - What are the key points they want to communicate and why?
  - What would support them to communicate more effectively?

10. Each group will be given 5 minutes to report back in plenary. They can do this in any way they want, e.g. role-play, picture/poster, song, or presentation, etc.
11. **Group presentation (30 minutes).** The Training Facilitator will ask each group to spend 5 minutes to present their story in plenary. Each group presentation will be followed by 5 minutes questions and answer. REMEMBER TO KEEP TO STRICT TIMING.
12. **Distilling key criteria for effective communication** (5 minutes). Ask participants to call out some key principles for good practice in communication. Write these onto a flipchart.
13. Conclude the session. Remind people that disseminating and communicating findings can be done through a range of communication methods. It is important to be clear on what the audience is and their specific concerns or expectations.

## PowerPoint speaking notes (session 5.1)

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Slide	Theme	Speaking notes
3	[cartoon]	This is the stage where you distil and share the lessons and outcomes of your monitoring and review processes with key internal and external audiences including funders and donors. Sharing the analysis, findings, insights and lessons from your influencing work supports not only the ongoing improvement and effectiveness of your influencing work but is also key to being accountable. The objective of this session is to provide some practical ideas for developing case studies, stories of change and reporting outcomes including tips on how to write succinct reports and meet the reporting requirements of ZGF.

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## 4

### Distilling key findings and lessons

Good M&E should allow for synthesis of key information – that is, reducing large amounts of information down to key issues and lessons – but it should not try to aggregate different types of data simply to provide an easy-to-read presentation. What indicates effective change in one location will not necessarily be the same in another. It is important that a focus on reporting ‘outcomes’ is not interpreted as meaning that such diversity should be ignored or glossed over.

However, distilling and synthesising outcomes and lessons from multiple sources of data for reporting and communication purposes can be a challenge for many organisations. Assigning at least some time to shared learning that includes writing or documentation should be built into annual or quarterly work plans. Or you could hold mini-retreats where staff members in a team have an opportunity for critical reflection, sharing and focused time for writing on some aspects of their work. This could be timed for example, to coincide with donor or funder report to ensure that findings and lessons inform and support your ongoing engagement and learning with your funders.

Points to bear in mind when writing up your reports:

- **Audience:** Know the audience you are communicating to and what their requirements and interests are. A donor report, for example, usually requires you to write to a specific format or template. The standard is to report progress against outputs and objectives, highlight key lessons and challenges and report any changes to plan including future plans and actions.
- **Focus on what was achieved or changed, not on what was done.** Too often reports focus on reporting activities carried out. Whilst it is important to know that planned work has taken place, what the reader wants to know is what difference this has made and how it contributes to your overall goal, or objective. For example, a research report may have been completed and disseminated but what the reader wants to know is whether it has made any difference. Has it fed into policy discourse, contributed to raising awareness of the issues, provided new evidence and information for others to advocate on the same issues, or built new alliances and relationships through the research process? In each case, what is the evidence and how significant is the difference?
- **Be balanced.** Totally positive reports are not credible. Don’t forget to celebrate the strengths of your project in full – don’t take them for granted. However, also be honest about the weaknesses of your project and the problems and challenges you have faced.

Remember to report **unexpected change** or things that haven’t worked so well not just reporting against outputs and defined indicators.

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## 5

(cont.)

- **Scale of change:** The reader may not understand the context, or the significance of a key stakeholder or decision maker, so you have to explain why the change is important or the potential scale of impact. For example a meeting attended by a key decision maker may be an important milestone in your influencing strategy but what the reader would want to know more. Why is this important? Did it change anything? Did it shift a behaviour/attitude? Did it open the space for future dialogue on this issue? What evidence do we have that this is significant? [Refer to the Tool 3. Evidence of change checklist]
- **Quantitative and Qualitative data:** You should draw on subjective, anecdotal as well as quantitative information. Where data is being collected use it to back up findings and to illustrate the scale of change.
- **Quotes and oral testimonies.** A report is always more interesting to read when there are quotes from participants and/or stakeholders to illustrate a key point. It brings the experience alive to the reader. Remember that in the writing up your note you do not always need to attribute the quote to a name [issues of confidentiality are important].
- **Include stories of change and mini case studies.** If you want to give some more detail about a particular initiative as a mini case-study/and or story of change you could add this as an appendix to your report or incorporate a shortened version as a box in the main report.
- **Be succinct – avoid jargon.** You don't need to cover absolutely everything. It is better to focus on a few major achievements, challenges and lessons and keep the document short and readable. You can always include supplementary supporting evidence in the appendices. For example, ZGF expect narrative reports to be supplemented by supporting documents including: lists of participants, invitation letters, workshop agendas, handouts, training material, or any other document explaining the nature and scope of the activity.
- **Financial data.** When writing an annual report or evaluation it is good practice to include some summary of financial data as this helps the reader put the achievements in perspective and get a sense of value for money. This doesn't have to be done in detail; e.g. you might include the total spend and then a pie chart giving the percentage break down over the year or period under review for spend against core costs and each objective.

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## 6

### Dissemination

Disseminating your findings can be done through a range of different communication methods, both formal and informal. Here are some ideas:

- Sharing your quarterly review reports with key internal/external stakeholders (invite comments back on the report and findings, written or verbal).
  - Producing a video/picture/poster report highlighting achievements, challenges and lessons.
  - Presenting critical issues and findings at senior management meetings.
  - Short oral presentations to key decision makers and/or target groups.
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(cont.)

- Holding a lunchtime meeting to share findings/update people on the work (including getting critical feedback from peers on this work).
- Share findings during stakeholder partners/network meetings/workshop and other forums.
- Holding periodic thematic workshops (on a particular policy influencing theme/issue) where people bring examples of their approaches, methods, lessons etc.

[ONCE BULLETS HAVE BEEN READ, ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE THEIR EXAMPLES OF DISSEMINATING THEIR WORK [10 MINUTE DISCUSSION].

ZGF MAY WISH TO ADD SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR REPORTING AND LEARNING REQUIREMENTS. YOU COULD USE THIS SESSION AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK ABOUT AND GIVE FEEDBACK ON THE ZGF REPORTS BEFORE GOING INTO THE COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING ACTIVITY]

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8

**Activity – Story telling and case study writing**

*[Follow activity instructions]*

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9

**Workshop evaluation**

This is where we will ask you to complete an evaluation of the training. Your feedback will be valuable and help us to ensure our capacity building toolkits and services remain relevant and meet the needs of the partners.

[AN EVALUATION FORM IS PROVIDED IN THE ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES BOOKLET OR YOU CAN DEVELOP YOUR OWN.

ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE WHAT THEY INTEND TO DO WHEN THEY GO BACK TO THEIR ORGANISATIONS.

TAKE FINAL QUESTIONS.]

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## Sample agenda for a two-day training workshop

Day	Time	Session
Day 1	AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introductions</li> <li>▪ Participant expectations and fears</li> <li>▪ Training objectives</li> <li>▪ Ground rules</li> <li>▪ Module 1. Session 1.1 M&amp;E key terms and principles</li> <li>▪ Activity: Buzz group discussion: Understanding of governance/key principles of an M&amp;E system for civil society governance and accountability programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Break</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Module 2. Session 2.1 Core elements of planning key to M&amp;E</li> <li>▪ Plenary discussion</li> <li>▪ Module 2. Session 2.2 Formulating Objectives PPT Presentation</li> <li>▪ Activity: How to write a SMART Objective (Pair work, peer review and plenary)</li> </ul>
<b>Lunch</b>		
	PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Module 2. Session 2.3 How will we know if we are making a difference?</li> <li>▪ Activity: Developing Key Indicators (Group work and plenary)</li> <li>▪ Module 2. Session 2.4 Monitoring and data collection PPT presentation</li> <li>▪ Activity: World café data collection – sharing our M&amp;E approaches</li> <li>▪ End of day 1 training evaluation</li> </ul>
Day 2	AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Module 2. Session 2.5 Developing a monitoring framework and plan</li> <li>▪ Activity: Buzz group discussion: Sharing experiences of using frameworks and plans/how to make M&amp;E integral to your work</li> <li>▪ Module 4. Reflection, analysis and learning PPT presentation</li> <li>▪ Activity 1: Impact tree</li> </ul>
<b>Break</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continuation of activity 1: Impact tree + plenary feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Lunch</b>		
	PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Module 3. Session 3.1 Implementing your M&amp;E Plan</li> <li>▪ Activity: Buzz group discussion: Methods for collecting and storing information/examples of good practice</li> </ul>
<b>Break</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Module 5. Session 5.1 Communication and reporting presentation</li> <li>▪ Activity 1. Participatory storytelling and case study writing (group work and plenary)</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Closing the workshop &amp; next steps</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training evaluation</li> </ul>