# AccessEd and Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Leaders in Sustainable Development Programme

**Workshop: Social Entrepreneurship: Impact and Evaluation (Part 1)**

*Overarching workshop theme:*

This session is a two-part session that focused on theory and practical guidance for impact measurement. It will cover all you need to know as an introduction to impact measurement and impact evaluation.

These sub-themes will be discussed during the live follow-up session:

- Why is it important to do impact evaluation?

- Who is impact evaluation for?

- What is the difference between monitoring, evaluation and research?

- What are the components of impact evaluation?

- How do you devise programme indicators?

## Session pre-reading

Read the follow article extract. This extract directs attention to four broad categories of indicators.

How to Talk About Nonprofit Impact from Inputs to Outcomes - Inputs, Outputs, Outcomes, Impact - How are they Different?

Major donors, foundations, and nonprofit rating agencies such as Charity Navigator and GuideStar have all made it clear that they want charities to measure and report concrete results.

The idea of measuring results is far from new but has taken on more importance in the 21st century. Foundations and many individual philanthropists now search for organizations that are data-driven and results-oriented.

*Measurement Is Trending*
Indeed, a new movement called effective altruism (championed by the ethicist Peter Singer) has especially caught the interest of young donors and tech-savvy philanthropists.

Just think of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other philanthropists such as Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, and Jeff Skoll, a founder of eBay, whose foundation supports social entrepreneurs. These philanthropists, using their experience with the tech industry, look for data-driven causes to back with their fortunes.

This new fascination with linking philanthropy to measurable results has landed many organizations in the murky waters of program assessment and evaluation.

Most nonprofit professionals are not experts in measurement. But they should, at least, be aware of the basic concepts. Also, fundraising professionals need to be able to talk and write about results. But that is more difficult than it might it seem since there is widespread confusion about the basic terminology.

## Clarifying the Terms

One influential book in this field has been Mario Morino's "Leap of Reason: Managing To Outcomes In An Era Of Scarcity." The book lays out a framework for nonprofit organizations to do their work from conception to evaluation. Here is a summary of the terms Morino says are crucial for all nonprofit program managers and fundraisers to understand.

## Theory of Change: How change comes about.

The set of formal relationships presumed to exist for a defined population, the intended outcomes the organization will strive to bring about, and the logic model for producing those outcomes. A theory of change must be meaningful to stakeholders, plausible, doable with available resources, and measurable.

## Logic Model: What the program does and how.

The related parts of a program, showing how the program objectives, program activities, and expected outcomes are linked. The logic model clarifies who will be served, expected accomplishments, and how those will be accomplished. A program is the products or services your organization provides to change a situation.

Examples of program activities include classes, lobbying, public awareness campaigns, performing, displaying, or protecting artifacts or animals. A program might also provide food or shelter for the needy or recreational programs for young people. A program is what your organization does.

Designing a logic model may seem intimidating, but there are many examples and templates online to help.

## Inputs: Resources committed to the program.

Money, time, staff, expertise, methods, and facilities the organization commits to bring about the intended outputs, outcomes, and impact. Resources can be financial, but also the time of staff or volunteers. Expertise, such as a consultant or a partner organization, can be considered an input.

### Outputs: What is counted.
Numerical counts of a program's actions or products that were created or delivered, the number of people served, and the activities or services provided. For instance, a training program provides graduates. A particular effort might yield information such as white papers or studies. A homeless shelter creates filled beds.

We usually describe outputs with numbers. For instance, "...we filled 96% of available beds..." or "...our training program resulted in 95 graduates."

### Outputs are measurable and readily determined.
It's tempting to stop with outputs because they are easy to produce. You just count. How many people did you serve? How many meals did you dish out?

But, your organization should try to get to the next level of outcomes and impact.

### Outcomes: What the program wishes to achieve.
Outcomes are meaningful changes for the population served, such as anticipated changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behavior, condition, or status. Changes should be measured and monitored and link directly to the program. An outcome is an effect your program produces on the people or issues you serve or address.

For instance, the result of a training program might be the number of graduates who get a job and keep it for a particular period.

An outcome is a change that occurred because of your program. It is measurable and time-limited, although it may take a while to determine its full effect.

Measuring outcomes requires a more significant commitment of time and resources. Plus, you may have to track performance over time.

### Indicators: What helps the program to stay on course.

These are specific, observable, and measurable characteristics, actions, or conditions that show whether or not the desired change has happened. Indicators reveal progress during the program. If indicators are positive, continue that activity. If indicators are negative, then it's time to change course or introduce programmatic changes.

### Impact: What effect took place because of the program

Impact consists of the results that are directly due to the outcomes of a program. Results are determined by evaluations that factor out other explanations for these results. Impacts are the long-term or indirect effects of your outcomes.

Impacts are hard to measure since they may or may not happen. They are what one hopes to accomplish.

For instance, graduating from a training program may eventually lead to a better quality of life for the individual. But how do you know? What are the indicators of a better quality of life? How long will it take to see the impact?

*Written by J. Fritz, May 21, 2020.

## Session pre-work

During this session, you will be asked to develop your own causal hypothesis and your own project or programme indicators.

As pre-work, identify which project or programme – in the context of your research - you will be referring to during the session. Additionally, start thinking about which 2 indicators you could use to assess the impact of your own project or programme?