

# CLEAR-AA

## Development Evaluation Training Programme in Africa



# ***Introduction to Impact Evaluations***

**Volker Schöer**

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# The Purpose of Impact Evaluation

# The Difference between Monitoring and Evaluation

The terms “monitoring” and “evaluation” are sometimes used together, but they refer to two different processes.

## What Is Monitoring?

## Monitoring ...

is a continuous or regular collection and analysis of information about implementation to review progress;

compares actual progress with what was planned so that adjustments can be made in implementation; and

is an internal activity that is the responsibility of those who manage implementation. Monitoring thus represents a good management practice.

# The Difference between Monitoring and Evaluation

## What Is Evaluation?

## Evaluation...

is a periodic assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of a project, program, or intervention;

is a systematic search for answers about a project, program, or intervention; and

measures the effects of an intervention and compares them with the goals and objectives of the project, program, or intervention.

## Three Types of Evaluation Questions

**Descriptive** questions. The evaluation seeks to determine what is taking place and describes processes, conditions, organizational relationships, and stakeholder views. (*What is?*) => *process evaluation*

**Normative** questions. The evaluation compares what is taking place to what should be taking place; it assesses activities and whether or not targets are accomplished. (*What should be?*) => *implementation evaluation*

**Cause-and-effect** questions. The evaluation examines outcomes and tries to assess what difference the intervention makes in outcomes. (*“What difference does the program make?”*) => *impact evaluation*



## Definition of Impact Evaluation

Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often implement projects, programs or policies that are intended to *change individuals' economic or social outcomes*.

An important (and difficult to answer) question is:

*How effective are these programs in changing those economic or social outcomes?*

Governments and others would like to know the answer so that they can compare the *relative effectiveness of different programs*, as well as compare these *programs' benefits to their costs*.

# Definition of Impact Evaluation

For this course,

An **impact evaluation** is a study that attempts to measure the **causal impact** of a project, program or policy on an **outcome of interest** of governments and other interested parties.

How does this relate to our usual “results chain”? “*Impact*” here is the “*difference in an outcome*”, not the “*long-term impact*”

### III. Seven Purposes (Uses) of Impact Evaluation

- 1) Measure the impacts of programs and policies on outcomes of interest
- 2) Provide information useful for improving existing programs and policies
- 3) More generally, establish an evaluation process that should be applied to all projects, policies and programs that can be evaluated
- 4) Based on results from other evaluations, or on estimates of behavioral models, predict the impacts of *proposed* policies and programs
- 5) Develop an international stock of knowledge on the effectiveness of various projects, programs and policies around the world (so that we know “what works” and where we should be spending our money)
- 6) Generate political support for effective programs and policies
- 7) Generate political support for the government

# Group exercise

## Planning an Impact Evaluation

4 groups

Please provide answers to the following questions:

- 1) What is the impact that you want to evaluate? What outcome is affected by the policy? What is your ToC and your results chain?
- 2) How do you propose to implement the policy in order for you to measure its impact later?
- 3) Does your proposed implementation strategy of the policy have any practical concerns that you need to consider? Ethics?
- 4) What information do you want to collect, when and from whom?
- 5) How confident are you that your evaluation strategy allows you to attribute any change in your outcome to the policy?

Starting point:

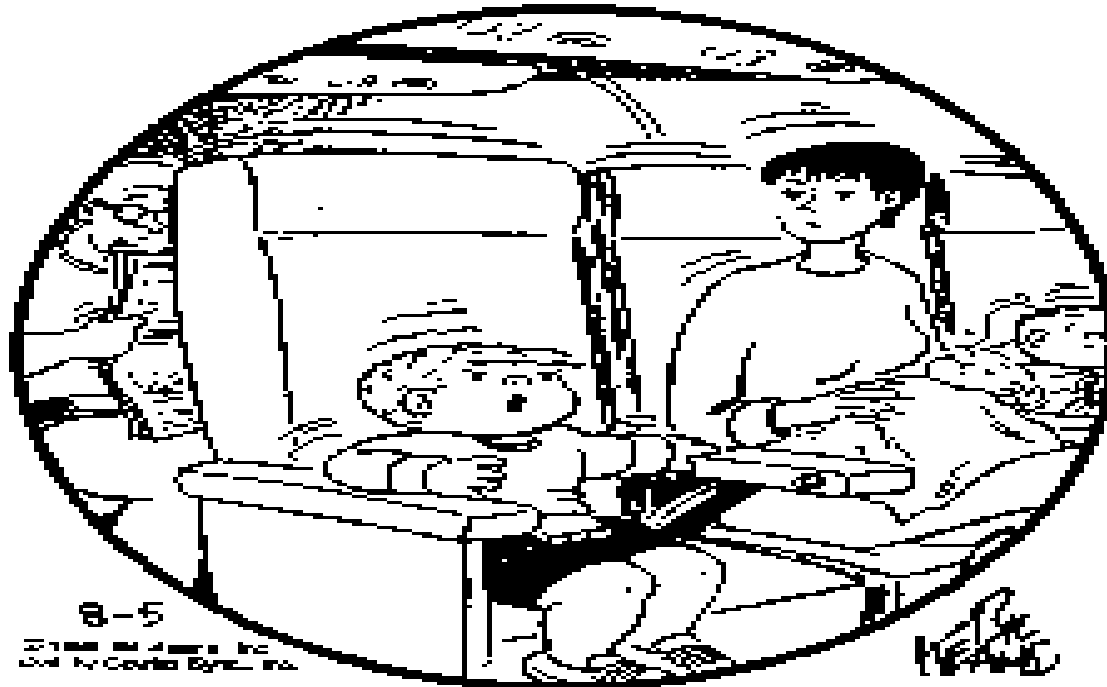
*Usually, we can measure outcomes of interest for people who participate in the project or program, or are affected by the policy.*

**BUT:**

The **hard** part is to measure *what their outcomes would have been if they had not participated.*

This is often referred to as the **counterfactual outcome**, or simply the **counterfactual**.

# THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"I wish they didn't turn on that seatbelt sign so much! Every time they do, it gets bumpy."

Correlation does not necessarily imply causation,  
neither do sequential events!