What is good practice for impact management?

There is a widely accepted process for impact management:

Framework
- Establish goal
- Develop logic

Data
- Agree what to measure and how
- Collect evidence

Results
- Analyse evidence
- Use findings

Start by reviewing your current approach to the above 6 steps

For further reading:

Tote Board 2013, “Outcome-Based Social Programs: A Program Planning & Funding Guide”

Centre for Social Impact (2014)
Step 1: develop a framework

A “good” framework will be a Theory of Change or logic model that maps out the link between activities, outcomes and end goal

✓ Your main stakeholders were involved and understand it

✓ It is a live document

✓ You’ve laid out key assumptions & supporting evidence

It usually takes at least half a day to develop a basic framework
A framework for your framework?

It can be helpful to use other existing frameworks as a starting point or broader context for your Theory of Change.

Quality of Life

- Physical:
  - Function & mobility (internal)
- Social:
  - Relationships
  - Feeling supported
  - Ability to help self & others (external)
- Practical:
  - Financial
  - Ability to perform daily tasks (external)
- Emotional:
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Ability to help self & others (internal)
- Spiritual:
  - Meaning in life

Use other frameworks, but make sure you really own the result.

Collective frameworks


Expect to see more of this type of “collective impact” model in future...
Developing a framework is often a frustrating and challenging process. But, we highly recommend you **invest the time because:**

They tell you what to measure

AND

They help you estimate what you can’t measure
Step 2: Plan what data to collect

There is less consensus about what is good practice for data collection

“\textit{You can’t quantify love}”

- Participant subjective opinions
- Rich, nuanced story-telling
- Observations by staff or others

“\textit{If it’s not scientific it’s a waste of time}”

- Control and treatment groups
- Validated tools
- Statistically significant sample sizes
- External evaluator

Claroify why you are collecting data then choose tools accordingly

https://www.povertyactionlab.org/research-resources

See Silva Ferretti for video, cartoon and other visual, qualitative, participatory methods e.g. www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrTBMs6O8
What is good practice for data collection?

Some suggest that the gold standard for data is external scientific studies e.g. randomised controlled trials (RCTs).

But note that RCTs may not always be feasible or appropriate.
One approach is to “layer up” multiple data sources

We often like to think of it as detective work i.e. continually piecing together the picture from multiple sources

Assumption:
If we help people set up savings groups, their financial situation will improve significantly

- Focus group discussions and key informant interviews
- Quantitative surveys
- Staff reflections

This approach works well in supporting continuous learning & improvement
Tips for collecting and using self-reported data

Data collected from “beneficiaries” themselves is often extremely valuable, but watch out for bias:

**Pitfalls**

1. Beneficiaries may feel they should give positive feedback
2. The easiest beneficiaries to survey / interview are probably also the most engaged
3. People often can’t remember accurately how things have changed
4. Beneficiaries may be confused about what your org has done for them versus other support from other orgs / sources
5. It may not be feasible / ethical to survey the specific beneficiary group in a standard way

**Tips**

1. Make it really clear that their feedback is anonymous
2. Offer a five point scale with a “neutral” as well as a “not sure” option
3. Get a volunteer, student or other third party to ask the questions if possible
4. Build the data collection into your programme plan if possible – e.g. All beneficiaries fill in the baseline survey when they first join the prog
5. Do a pre-post- if possible, rather than just a retrospective survey
6. Consult best practice for how to phrase specific questions
7. Consider using images or flashcards to make surveys more accessible
8. Translate into other languages if needed
9. Triangulate beneficiary feedback with observations from third parties such as case workers, teachers, parents
10. Report with caveat

*We must be honest with ourselves about what the data is/isn’t telling us*
Step 3: Using the findings

This is the most important step. There is no point collecting data if you are not going to use it.

THREE MAIN WAYS TO USE IMPACT DATA:

**Internal learning & improvement**
- Ensure senior leaders can review key data routinely
- Actively share impact data with staff & volunteers

**Reporting to stakeholders**
- Proactively suggest what metrics you want to report to funders
- Don’t forget to report to your clients / beneficiaries

**Marketing / fundraising**
- Make the most of your data to attract new partners but at the same time, please be honest!

We think the most important use is for learning & improvement
Three things you can do to improve your impact management

- **ALLOCATE**
  - Sufficient resources for impact management

- **DEVELOP A**
  - Strong framework and keep it live

- **MAKE SURE YOU**
  - Use the data to learn & improve, not just report
Please let us know if you found this useful – you can contact us at info@justcauseasia.org

More information at www.justcauseasia.org