

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

A GUIDE FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS



A fundamental question for any organization is whether our **activities, projects, and programs are successful and effective**. By this, we mean to what extent our organization can achieve its goals, fulfill its mission, and create the change it desires.

→ To answer these questions reliably, it is important that we:

- rely on data rather than assumptions
- systematically analyze the data with the help of external expert(s).

There are many ways to collect data related to our organization's work. Although most organizations have some level of data collection and aggregation, measurement and evaluation is significantly more complex. To help, **it is worth separating the two**:



DATA GATHERING

Data gathering is the most basic level of collecting data. Measuring the number of people present at our programs and collecting feedback from them is an example of data gathering. Although this information can be important, it most likely does **not provide a comprehensive picture** of the success and effectiveness of the activity, project, or program we want to measure.

- ▶ **data collection method:** random, unsystematic
- ▶ **data quality:** partial data that does not give a complete picture of our work
- ▶ **sample:** small, less representative
- ▶ **objectivity:** limited



MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Measurement and evaluation, on the other hand, is characterized by a high degree of **consciousness and planning**. We record various types of data and use complex methodologies which will later be analyzed in partnership with external experts. Measurement and evaluation can therefore be seen as a research project which provides a real picture of our success and effectiveness.

- ▶ **data collection method:** planned, systematic
- ▶ **data quality:** data that provides a more complete picture
- ▶ **sample:** larger, more representative
- ▶ **objectivity:** higher level



IMPORTANT

While we can lead and manage data collection within our organization, we will **need an expert** in the field to plan and conduct the measurement and evaluation, who most often comes from outside the organization.

WHY SHOULD WE CARRY OUT MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION WORK?

Measurement and evaluation help us:

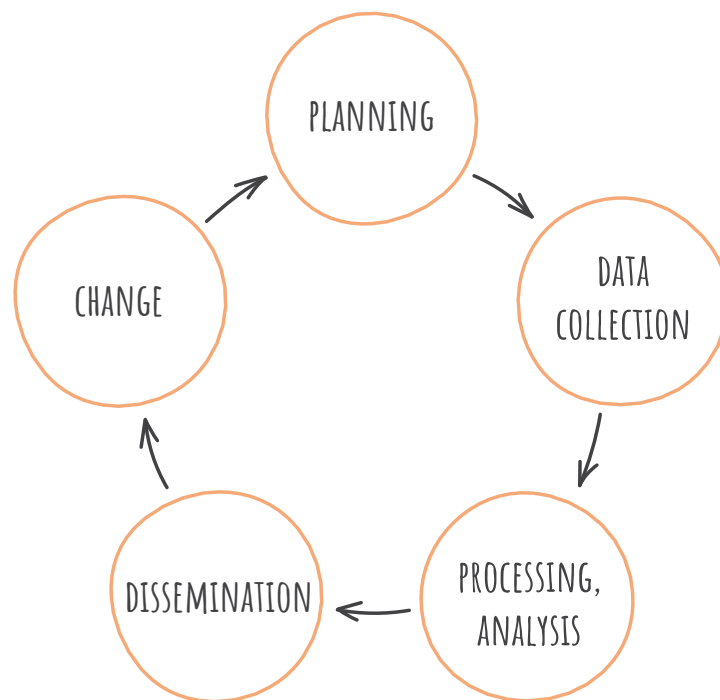
- ▶ gain a deeper understanding of our target audience's needs: Ensure the needs are really what we think they are and ensure we are providing an adequate response to them.
- ▶ examine, review, and evaluate the work we have done so far.
- ▶ assess the current state of our organization.
- ▶ understand the work we have done and the efficiency of our operations.
- ▶ set strategic priorities and make strategic decisions.
- ▶ communicate our validated work with stakeholders and strengthen our legitimacy.
- ▶ successfully work with partners because we are clear on what we need from them.

ORGANIZATIONAL PREREQUISITES

Measurement and evaluation work is **resource-intensive**, but we should not let that deter us. Taking into account the size of our organization and the resources available to us, we can get started on this work in different ways. At the same time, we should be careful that this work does not disproportionately hinder the activities and operations of our organization.

Although measurement and evaluation can help us retain supporters or attract new ones, and is even essential for fundraising, it is important not to conduct measurement and evaluation work based on this aspect. **Measurement and evaluation should start from our organization's strategy.** We should **monitor, assess, and support the change** we want to achieve as is formulated in our strategy.

THE STAGES OF THE PROCESS



We should plan the measurement and evaluation work as a multi-stage process, during which we must enlist the help of external experts.

► **Planning**

What do we want to measure, what data do we need, and how can we gather the information?

Who? Team members in collaboration with external experts.

► **Data collection**

The systematic collection of necessary data.

Who? Depending on the type of data and/or the methodology of data collection, it can be performed by an external expert or our team members.

► **Processing/analysis**

Interpret the collected data and draw conclusions.

Who? External experts, followed by team members in collaboration with external experts.

► **Dissemination**

Communicate the conclusions and results within our organization, to relevant partners, and to the public.

Who? Our team members.

► **Change**

Integrate the results into the work of our organization. Recognize what needs to change and plan on executing that change.

Who? Our team members.

► **Planning**

In accordance with the changes made, and, if necessary, developing a new measurement system.

Who? Our team members in cooperation with external experts.

WHAT TO MEASURE – DIFFERENT LEVELS OF MEASUREMENT

Alongside the planning, management, and monitoring processes, our **logic model** is also the basis for measurement and evaluation (see [Logic Model Guide](#)). The logic model can be used to define the **immediate results** (outputs), **medium-term results** (outcomes) and the **impact** our organization works towards.

PROBLEM A need or desire that we want to respond to	GOAL How we will respond	INPUT Capacities we have, what we “put in”	ACTIVITY What we do, what actions we take	OUTPUT Direct and quantifiable results	OUTCOME Medium-term results and trends, changes in conditions	IMPACT Long-term changes as a result of the outcome

Outputs are usually measured through gathering data. However, to ensure that these numbers do not stand alone, they should be subjected to deeper analysis and evaluation with the help of an external expert.

The core of our organization’s measurement and evaluation research will be the **outcomes**. Although we will be working with an external expert for a significant part of the time, it is beneficial for the success of our joint work if we ourselves have a basic understanding of the process. The **tool** presented here can be useful for this purpose.

OUTCOME Medium-term results, processes, states, shifts	RESULT INDICATOR What makes the result tangible and measurable	DATA SOURCE Where is the data collected from	DATA COLLECTION METHOD Quantitative, qualitative e.g. interview, focus group, questionnaire	TIMING When and how often the data collection occurs