

Evaluation

Description This section shows the need for periodic evaluation of an advocacy initiative to see whether the objectives are being achieved, and whether any changes need to be made to the advocacy strategy. It also shows the importance of monitoring activities to show whether they are being implemented as planned. Monitoring and evaluation usually happen together.

Evaluation answers the questions:

- Have we achieved what we set out to achieve?
- If not, why not, and what might we need to change?

Monitoring answers the questions:

- Have we done the things we said we were going to do?
- If not, why not, and what needs to change?

Learning objectives

By the end of this section, participants will:

- understand the need for monitoring and evaluation
- understand the process of evaluation.

Links This links with SECTION C0 (The advocacy cycle), SECTION C3.2 (Planning – What are you trying to do?) and SECTION C3.3 (Planning – Measuring success).

Tools This section discusses the definitions of monitoring and evaluation, and contains two tools:

- A basic procedure for evaluation (TOOL 35)
- Learning review (TOOL 36)

Reasons for monitoring and evaluation

- Checking whether advocacy work is on track and determining whether any changes need to be made to the strategy
- Checking whether the objectives have been achieved
- Learning for future advocacy initiatives
- Accountability to community members who might want to know what you have said and done in their name
- Accountability to donors for use of funds.

Differences between monitoring and evaluation

MONITORING	EVALUATION
Continual collection of information	Periodic assessment
Measures activity	Evaluates success
Asks whether the project is being implemented as planned – whether it is on track	Asks whether the objectives have been achieved and contributed to the goal – whether the project is successful
Often uses people inside the project	Uses a mixture of people from inside and outside the project
May result in minor action to correct the situation	May result in major strategy change or even stopping the work

Monitoring activities

Monitoring is a way of checking that you are doing what you said you were doing, and identifying and addressing problems as they arise. It helps you to understand success or failure of your advocacy strategy.

For monitoring you simply go through each of the activities in the Activity Planning Worksheet (SECTION C3.7) or in the activities column in the Summary Advocacy Strategy (SECTION C0) and ask:

- Have we done this as we said we would, when we said we would and have we done it well?
- If not, why not?
- What activities do we need to change to get the strategy back on track?

Example 1

The activity was to deliver a three-day training course on analysing the root causes of poverty.

- You monitor whether this training course was delivered on time, whether it lasted three days and what was covered.
- If the course was delivered successfully, it is useful to learn why. For example, the community identified needs or the trainer already had contacts with community.
- If the course was not delivered as expected, find out why. For example, the roads were impassable or the community was not organised. Then decide whether you repeat or amend the activity, or try something different.

Example 2

The activity was for two local community groups to visit the Ministry of Agriculture to complain about the loss of grain subsidy.

- You monitor how many groups have tried to see the official, whether they managed to see him and what they spoke about.
- If they did manage to see the official, try to understand what enabled this to happen. For example, they sent a letter beforehand. Identify what can be learned for the future.
- If they did not manage to see the official, find out why. For example, he refused to see them or they wrote an aggressive letter. Then decide whether they should make another attempt or try a different activity.

Evaluating impact

Evaluation is more complicated than monitoring. It assesses the impact of a project, finds out whether objectives are still realistic and worth aiming for, gives credit for success to various factors or people and helps with accountability.

If you have SMART objectives and clear indicators and means of measurement (see SECTION C3.2 and C3.3) then evaluation will be a lot easier. You simply go through these three columns in the Summary Advocacy Strategy (see SECTION C0) and ask:

- Have we achieved our objectives?
- If not, why not?
- What needs to change in the strategy as a result?

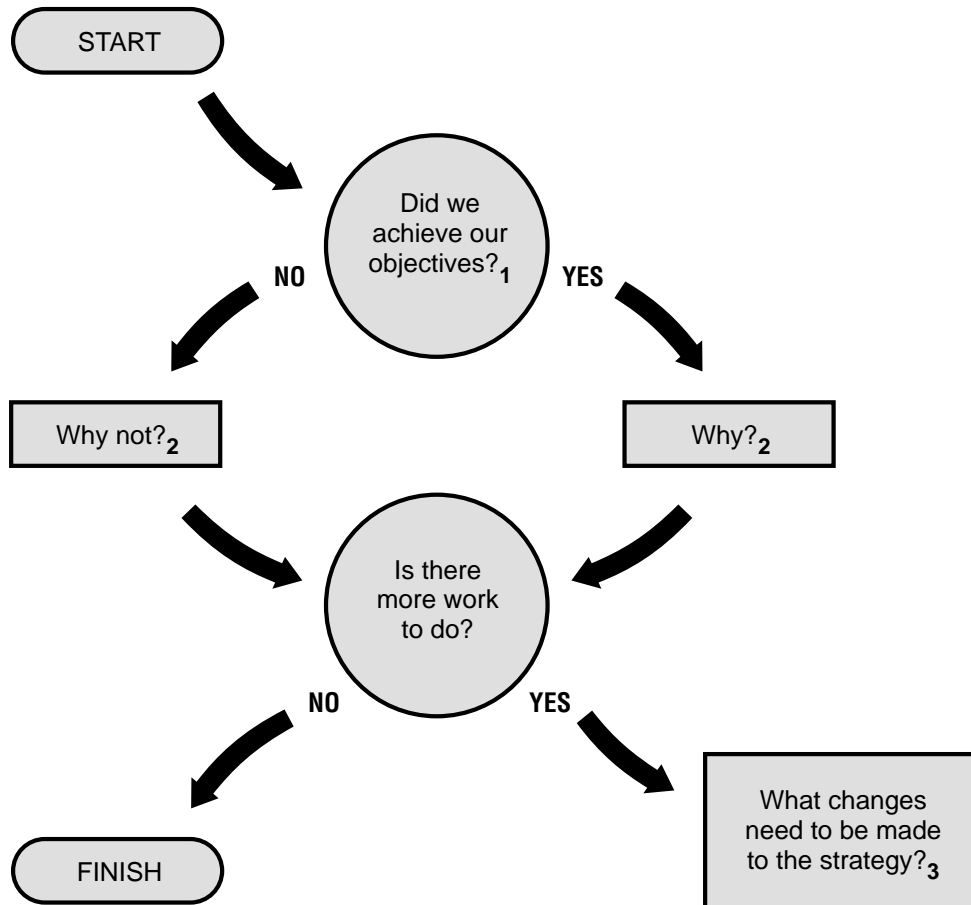
Some useful tips

- Make sure that all relevant people participate in the evaluation.
- Make sure you have SMART objectives and clear indicators and means of measurement.
- Clarify what you are evaluating and do not try to measure too much at once.
- Use the existing reporting systems for monitoring if you have them.
- Try to understand why some activities have been successful and others have not.
- Always ask what you can learn from monitoring and evaluation results.



TOOL 35

A basic procedure for evaluation



- 1 **ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES** To what degree did you achieve your objectives?
- 2 **KEY INFLUENCES** What contributed most to the success or failure of your initiative?
- 3 **CHANGES** What needs to be changed or done differently next time?

In terms of ongoing advocacy, there are three main options:

- Keep going with the strategy.
- Modify your approach based on the evaluation.
- Stop this particular initiative and learn from your mistakes next time.

Example

Objective That the government reintroduces subsidy for grain within four weeks.

- Evaluate the objective by seeing whether this subsidy has been reintroduced – look at government policy and speak to people who should be receiving subsidy.
- If it has been reintroduced, try to understand what contributed to success, such as a media campaign highlighting problems, involvement of international NGOs.
- If you have not achieved the objective, try to understand why not. For example, the activities were not implemented as agreed, the media was hostile to your demands, the government had signed a deal with the IMF for more loans if it reduced grain subsidy.
- Do you still have a chance of success? If so, what changes need to be made to the strategy? This might involve focusing your advocacy work on the IMF or mobilising massive public pressure.

Possible reasons for failure or success

Reasons for success

- Good contacts with policy makers, built on previous good relationships.
- Reliable, accurate and detailed information.
- Good use of existing contacts, networks and information available.
- Realistic objectives that could be reached within the given time frame.
- Local community were mobilised and undertook research, generated proposals and represented themselves to decision-makers.
- A march showed high degree of concern among local people.
- Clear lines of responsibility.

Reasons for failure

- Policy-makers would not listen, or could not get access to policy-makers.
- Did not have enough information.
- Did not have enough people or time and therefore did not implement strategy as planned.
- Too few allies.
- Process slower than expected.
- People did not do the activities they promised.
- Did not have enough technical or legal understanding.



TOOL 36

Learning review

After any action, whether it is a visit to a decision-maker or a whole advocacy strategy, it is useful to undertake a learning review. This is a participatory evaluation of a piece of work in order to learn basic lessons for the next time you carry out a similar activity.

It works with between four and eight people and a facilitator asks each participant:

- What one thing went well?
- What one thing did not go as well as expected?

For each point, participants discuss why it went well (or did not go well) and develop specific recommendations for next time. These are then placed into a table, as below, so others can learn for future work.

Be as specific as possible!

Example: mobilising a community for a mass demonstration

WHAT WENT WELL	TO LEARN FOR NEXT TIME
March was peaceful	Stress peaceful nature of march in all literature and announcements.
Many groups were involved	Start building network three months before demonstration
Key decision-makers came	Inform decision-makers early
Positive policy change resulted	Give decision-makers a platform to announce positive changes if they have any

WHAT DID NOT GO WELL	TO LEARN FOR NEXT TIME
Disorganised on the day	Ensure one person is in charge of organisation
Some church representatives did not come	Speak to all churches and explain the exact nature of the event