Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation for Food Policy Initiatives

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Evaluation
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Overview

- Policy Evaluation Challenges
- Monitoring vs. Evaluation (using logic model approach)
- Defining Benchmarks and Indicators
- Methods and Tools
Policy Evaluation Challenges

- Little written about how traditional evaluation approaches (e.g., for service delivery programs) apply to the measurement of advocacy and policy work

- Ambiguous specific set of metrics or tools to measure efficacy of advocacy

- A void of knowledge about what constitutes effective advocacy and policy work
More Challenges

- Successful advocacy efforts are characterized not by their ability to proceed along a predefined track, but by their ability to adapt to changing circumstances at multiple levels (local, state, federal, and across gov’t institutions), i.e. a moving target
  - Especially true when applying systems thinking because causality is tenuous at best

- Most of the time it seems like nothing is happening and/or progress is not always linear
Differences between monitoring and evaluation

- **Monitoring** (Output)
  - Check performance of a project over time.
  - Typically develop a system that allows for periodic checks
  - Goal is to understand how something is working and know when modifications are needed.

- **Evaluation** (Outcome)
  - Tool for assessing the extent to which program or policies goals were met.
  - Results can be shared to demonstrate lessons learned and program/policy impact.
Usual Logic Model

Lays out a strategy/framework for action and attribution
Simplified Logic Model

**Inputs**
- Resources:
  - Money
  - Time
  - Volunteers
  - Materials

**Outputs**
- Activities:
  - Policy briefs
  - Coalition development
  - Media campaigns
  - Community engagement events

**Outcomes**
- Short/Medium Results:
  - Partnerships
  - Coalitions
  - Campaigns
  - Changes in KAP among policy/decision-makers

**Impact**
- Long-Term Change:
  - Policy change
  - Community change
  - Social system/normative change
  - Change in health status
Monitoring

- Routine tracking (process)
- Answers: “Is everything being implemented as planned?”
Tracking

- # of meetings (with partners, policy-makers)
- # of community outreach events
- # of education and training activities
- # of communication activities
Why Monitor?

- Measures progress (management tool)
- Identifies problems/deviations to address
  - Creates feedback loops
- Ensures effective use of resources
- Ensures quality and learning to improve activities and outcomes
- Strengthens accountability
Episodic/systematic assessment of overall achievement on the intended audience

Designed with intention to attribute change to the intervention(s)
How to Evaluate Change

- Start with a theory of change (i.e., an explanation of how change happens)
  - E.g., Strength of Weak Ties
- Use your SMART objectives
- Define benchmarks/indicators
- Select appropriate methods
- Collect data
- Disseminate findings
Why Evaluate?

- Determine program effectiveness (answers the “so what” question)
- Strengthens accountability
- Promotes a learning culture focused on improving methods/approaches
- Promotes replication of successful approaches
Example:

- **Objective**: Increase by 15% the number of people in Baltimore City with access to farmers markets by December 2018
- How to turn a benchmark into an indicator
Indicators

- Measure “how much,” “how many,” “to what extent”

- Numerator/denominator (rate/ratio)
  - How many policy-/decision-makers understand the impact of cutting SNAP benefits?
  - Indicator: Number of policy makers that understand

    Number of policy makers reached
## Kaiser-Permanente CHI/HEAL Evaluation: Outcomes to Report at End of One-Year Grant for “HEALTHY EATING”

### Outcomes

**Sustaining Access...**

1. Institutional policy and practice change that sustains increased availability and access

### Indicators to Track

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Indicators to Track</th>
<th>Expectations of Grantees</th>
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</table>
| Monitoring | a. Number of activities (process measures) that promote institutional policy and practice change, such as:  
- # of meetings (with partners or targets)  
- # of assessments done  
- # of education and training activities  
- # of communications activities | Grantees will be required to report on activities that promote institutional practice change (i.e., with goal of target institution having the commitment and capacity to sustain change). |
| Evaluation | b. Evidence of progress toward institutional policy and practice change, such as:  
- # of leaders expressing commitment, allocating resources, or training staff to implement change  
- # of new policies, resolutions, or regulations introduced  
- # of new partners or supporters  
- # of new funders | Grantees will be required to report on progress toward institutional policy and practice change. |
| | c. Number of institutional policy and practice changes in place to sustain access to HEAL in schools, workplaces, or other institutions. | Grantees will be required to report on any actual institutional policy and practice changes in place to sustain access during the grant year. |
Using appropriate methods
## M&E Methods/Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIMARY SOURCES</th>
<th>SECONDARY SOURCES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Surveys (household, social network, organizational)</td>
<td>• Reports (gov’t/non-gov’t)</td>
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<td>• In-depth/key informant interviews</td>
<td>• Community records</td>
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<td>• Focus groups</td>
<td>• National data</td>
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<td>• Direct observation</td>
<td>• Tracking reports (e.g., media)</td>
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<td>• Community mapping/social mapping</td>
<td>• Audits</td>
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<td>• Content analyses</td>
<td>• Meeting notes</td>
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<td>• Story telling</td>
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Questions?

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