INDICATORS

COMMONLY OBSERVED PRACTICES

⊗ Creating a high reporting burden with too many indicators

⊗ Focusing too much on output or process

⊗ Not aligning indicators with intended results

⊗ Relying solely on the USAID Standard Framework

⊗ Lacking clear definition on how to measure
  Ex: "Level of awareness"

⊗ Using quantitative measures for qualitative changes

⊗ Requiring unavailable time or money
  Ex: population-wide survey with limited MEL budget

⊗ Framing as goals rather than objective measures
  Ex: "More girls in school"

BEST LOCALLY LED PRACTICES

⊘ Limiting to only indicators needed for learning or accountability, often less than 10

⊘ Developing indicators based on local definitions of success, not just USAID's

⊘ Using *output*-level (what it did) **and** *outcome*-level (what it achieved)
  Ex: "Change in knowledge measured," not "Number of people trained"

⊘ Choosing short- and medium-term outcome indicators, including those that capture incremental progress
  Ex: "Change in knowledge measured," not "Number of people trained"

⊘ Defining indicators clearly using a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS)

⊘ Ensuring indicators are not directional
  Ex: "Number of girls in school"

⊘ Considering using both qualitative and quantitative data

⊘ Accounting for the time and money needed for measurement

⊘ Exploring qualitative approaches (instead of indicators) to capture performance

THEORY OF CHANGE

COMMONLY OBSERVED PRACTICES

- ⊗ Including "IF-THEN" statements based on assumptions without naming or considering those assumptions

- ⊗ Using the theory of change for the sole purpose of communicating the activity components (and not as a guide for design or implementation)

- ⊗ Relying on a single person or small team to develop the theory of change

- ⊗ Creating a complicated results framework with many boxes and lines that is hard to understand or update

BEST LOCALLY LED PRACTICES

- ✓ Identifying assumptions implicit in the "IF-THEN" statements: In other words, why do we think "x" will lead to "y"? Write them down and periodically consider whether they are holding true.

  Ex: "If we coach government officials on engaging marginalized groups, then they will engage these groups in policy formation. We assume that the problem is lack of knowledge on how to engage these groups."

- ✓ Recognizing that the process of developing a theory of change is as valuable as the product itself!

  Considering your assumptions can strengthen program design

- ✓ Involving local stakeholders in developing the theory of change

  They can advise on the best entry points for the intervention, and suggest assumptions that may not have been considered.

- ✓ Keeping the theory of change simple enough to update over time as the activity adapts in response to new learning

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

COMMONLY OBSERVED PRACTICES

- ⊗ Showing up in a community to ask their thoughts on the activity without plans to capture feedback

- ⊗ Collecting feedback through methods inaccessible to participants

    Ex: Holding virtual feedback sessions amongst participants with limited internet access

- ⊗ Sending feedback into a "black box" without communication with the participants and other stakeholders about how feedback was used

BEST LOCALLY LED PRACTICES

- ✓ Ensuring feedback is resourced, planned, and structured

    💡 *Drawing on informal conversations is okay, but ensure that learning is captured!*

- ✓ Capturing participants' perceptions of activity quality and relevance

- ✓ Using specific and diverse feedback collection methods that take community preferences for sharing feedback into account

    Ex: Written and oral formats; group and individual settings

- ✓ Developing a plan to use feedback to adapt or improve the activity

- ✓ Including a plan to share findings – and what was done with the learning – back with participants

LEARNING PLAN

COMMONLY OBSERVED PRACTICES

- ⊗ Talking broadly about learning without identifying themes or topics to prioritize
- ⊗ Asking questions that are unanswerable or very general
- ⊗ Choosing learning questions without outlining specific activities for learning
- ⊗ Choosing learning questions that cannot realistically be answered based on existing cost or logistical barriers
- ⊗ Not making a plan for integrating learning to inform activity adaptations

BEST LOCALLY LED PRACTICES

- ⊘ Designing learning questions/priorities to fill knowledge gaps in the Theory of Change
- ⊘ Developing answerable questions to inform and improve the activity throughout implementation
- ⊘ Seeking input early from key stakeholders
- ⊘ Integrating flexibility for new or more refined questions to emerge
- ⊘ Creating a clear plan for learning activities to answer questions, defining *what* and *when*
- ⊘ Drawing on diverse knowledge sources, including local and experiential learning
- ⊘ Identifying innovative, audience-specific products or methods to share learning with program participants and other local stakeholders in the local language
- ⊘ Ensuring feasibility based on internal and external barriers (cost constraints, geographical access)
- ⊘ Making a plan based on for the *who*, *how, and when* to adaptively manage the activity with learning

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