

# Engaging with Impact: How do we know if we have made a difference?

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## Executive summary

This report is based on conversations that took place at the Wellcome Trust's fourth international engagement workshop: 'Engaging with impact: how do we know if we have made a difference?' The workshop took place in South Africa in October 2012.

Engagement with science includes diverse activities and interactions between different groups. As researchers, engagement practitioners, communicators and artists, engagement is about the exchange of ideas, opinions and practice between research and communities, the public and policy makers. There are many ways to engage in different contexts, depending on the type of science, the characteristics of the engaging participants and what these different groups would like to achieve through the engagement process.

Engagement is an integral part of health research. Many people who fund and conduct such research are increasingly accepting and promoting engagement. With engagement firmly established, it is time to think about the quality and impact of these activities. How do we know whether engagement is achieving its aims? Are we having the 'impact' that we are being asked to demonstrate? How do we build an evidence base to inform and advocate for engagement practice?

Reasons to monitor and evaluate engagement activities include:

- accountability ('downwards' to communities, as well as 'upwards' to donors)
- validation of an activity and its findings
- management and allocation of resources, such as funding
- strategy and planning of engagement work (now and future)
- influencing policy and advocating for change
- learning and sharing learning.

It can be difficult to decide on the most effective way to monitor and evaluate engagement activities when faced with a diverse range of objectives, agendas, audiences and mechanisms for engagement. This workshop explored elements of monitoring and evaluation, including:

- what is engagement trying to achieve?
- is it all about impact?
- indicators: what and how?
- the challenges of monitoring and evaluation
- monitoring and evaluation frameworks and tools.

Participants had backgrounds in engagement practice, social science research and international development. Together they discussed the real and practical challenges they each faced when trying to evaluate engagement activities. Their experiences are described throughout this report. The Wellcome Trust staff also presented some of the approaches they have used to monitor and evaluate engagement.

There is no one 'right' way to do monitoring and evaluation. It is important to create space to think carefully about why we are doing things and find out what we really need to know. Take regular time to reflect on what your monitoring is telling you: doing this matters as much as any particular framework or technical tool.

## Introduction

This report is based on conversations that took place at the Wellcome Trust's fourth international engagement workshop: 'Engaging with impact: how do we know if we have made a difference?' The workshop took place in South Africa in October 2012. The report is not a direct record of what happened but a reframing of the discussions that took place and the practical examples that delegates presented to each other. It also presents ideas and frameworks the Wellcome Trust has drawn on for the monitoring and evaluation of engagement activities.

"The Wellcome Trust has long advocated the importance of public engagement with research as an integral component of our vision to achieve extraordinary improvements in health. Many scientists are committed to engaging the public with their work for multiple reasons: to inspire, to educate, to inform, to involve. Whether a funder, researcher or participant in public engagement, we all want to believe that it has had an impact and is worth doing. We want to understand, for example, whether engagement gives people confidence in research and helps them to trust researchers, whether people are inspired and enthused when hearing about science and its discoveries, and how findings from research address questions that really matter to people. However, identifying such impacts and seeking ways to capture evidence of impact are both difficult to do."

Clare Matterson

Director, Medical Humanities and Engagement at the Wellcome Trust

In the past few years, engagement as an integral part of health research has become increasingly accepted by those funding and conducting research. With engagement firmly established, it is time to think about the quality and impact of these activities. How can we engage better? How do we justify and leverage the resources good engagement practice needs? And can we draw on insights from other domains on what makes engagement effective? Monitoring and evaluation is an area that many want to see strengthened. It can be challenging to identify the most fitting approach when faced with a diverse range of objectives, agendas, audiences and mechanisms for engagement. Building an evidence base of what works in particular contexts is vital for engagement practitioners and scientists working increasingly in this field.

The workshop brought together engagement practitioners, social science researchers and development professionals. It allowed delegates to share their practical experiences of evaluation, dip into existing theory and experiment with some of the methods other people use.

"Monitoring and evaluation should be about learning and finding out what is or is not working. Doing monitoring and evaluation can help you understand the programme. What it must not be is a tick box activity for funders or because you 'have to do it'."

Liz Allen, Wellcome Trust

### **SALT Visit (Cape Town, South Africa), 1 October 2012**

Some of the meeting participants visited a township near the venue before the workshop. The Constellation, represented by Ricardo Walters, facilitated a one-day SALT experience with Kuyasa, a non-governmental organisation in the peri-urban township of Kayamandi, outside Stellenbosch. The organisation focuses on the support and empowerment of vulnerable youths and children, and psycho-social support and home care for their caregivers (many of whom are living with HIV).

SALT (which stands for 'support and stimulate, appreciate strength, learn, and transfer') is a way of thinking and learning. The Constellation has developed this approach as a respectful participatory process of engaging communities and listening to what their experience teaches. Ten participants from the Wellcome Trust conference attended the session, which provided an opportunity for immersion in a real community to begin to understand the local context in which the conference was hosted. Four members of the Kuyasa team joined the ten participants and everyone took part in a workshop to prepare for home visits. In four small teams, led by a Kuyasa member, participants entered the community and visited people in their homes for half an hour.

One participant said: "After the experience of today, I feel so incredibly privileged to have participated...I'm so impressed by the level of depth in the sharing during the home visit and here among the participants."

## Engagement with science

'Engagement' with science can be seen as a range of activities and interactions that build relationships between scientists and the public and communities. It may build public awareness and critical understanding of science, including the ability of communities to hold scientists accountable. It may also inform the research agenda or the details of particular research studies, and there is evidence that it ultimately leads to better science.

Understandings and approaches to engagement vary, however. It is important to continue to reflect on what is at stake and consider whether our engagement activities are really doing what we want them to do.

Science and health research does not take place within a vacuum: scientists and scientific processes operate within specific geographical and sociopolitical environments. Scientists, patients, communities and policy makers interact with one another in varied ways, and these interactions are of concern to anyone wanting to explore public or community engagement. Whether to engage with communities or not is an ethical question. However, engagement itself cannot be assumed to be ethical because this depends on how it is conducted. Reflection on research ethics should not stop because some community engagement has taken place. Engagement itself has ethical implications.

Public and community engagement are difficult concepts to fix in place, in theory and in practice. We often use public engagement and community engagement interchangeably, and this can get confusing. The question 'Who is the public?' is simple to answer. The general public can be understood to be the population at large in all its diversity and complexity, although different sections of 'the public' can still be targeted. Mass media is an example of how to reach the public. The question 'Who is the community?' is more complicated. Finding ways to engage a community requires understanding who people are within the community and what they think and feel, but engagement practitioners will not always know this. It is important to recognise that communities do not always speak with one voice and that power dynamics are at play between different groups and individuals. Who represents whom in communities is a crucial question, and it is important to ensure that not only the powerful voices are heard.

"Communities are groups of people who share something in common such as geographical space, a particular interest or a culture. Communities are not static, and individuals within a community do not always agree or have common agendas."

Sian Aggett, Wellcome Trust

Engagement challenges the notion of communities as 'recipients' or 'subjects' within research. It offers the potential for the public and community members to become politically and critically aware of the scientific process and actors within it. Society and communities within it can also drive the engagement process, holding scientists and science accountable for the ethics of their conduct.

"Community engagement it is not only about sending messages about the science. Sometimes, it is about adapting what we do. Sometimes it is about how we actually engage communities in technical discussions – about how we respond to their values and understandings. There are examples where we think, 'OK, we will not do the study at all, as it is inappropriate'. Or 'we will adapt the study and do this but not that'. We go beyond messaging to adapting the science."

Vicki Marsh

Engagement can be about developing relationships between the scientific profession, scientific institutions, scientists and communities over the long term. Although engagement activities might be discrete one-off interventions (such as a film project or a radio show), more in-depth engagement can happen over a longer period of time, through multiple engagement activities.

Engagement involves diverse activities and interactions. As researchers, engagement practitioners, communicators and artists, how we engage with communities about science and how communities engage with us really matters. This exchange of ideas, opinions and practice is what community engagement is all

about. Engaging with communities in creative ways, collaborating with artists and using participatory methodologies are real options for scientists and practitioners working with them. Creative methodologies can be particularly helpful to nurture genuine expression, subvert power and catalyse discussion.

Scientists, communities and the wider public – including civil society and policy actors – engage with each other for a variety of reasons (outlined on page 10). Understanding these reasons from both your own perspective and that of other communities is important for the process to work. It manages expectations, fosters trust and enables open communication.

## Monitoring and evaluation: why do it?

Monitoring involves gathering routine information on an initiative as it unfolds, which means we have enough information when it comes to assessing the initiative's achievements in an evaluation. Evaluation involves taking stock of whether an initiative has done what it set out to do and learning about what has worked well and what may have not have turned out as expected.

For many people, doing public and community engagement requires a huge leap of faith into a realm of activities they are unfamiliar with. Taking the next step to evaluate these activities is another challenge. How do we know when we are doing good engagement and for the right reasons? How do we learn from what we do and feed that learning back into our practice? How can we be clear about what we want our engagement activities to achieve? Do those we are engaging with have the same expectations? Who, therefore, decides what the engagement activities are meant to achieve?

Public or community engagement practices need to build an evidence base. Evaluating and monitoring community engagement processes and outcomes are important, and anyone planning an evaluation should be aware of whose agenda is being promoted and on whose terms the evaluations take place. Monitoring and evaluation should play a vital part in the management and improvement of an activity, organisation or process. It should focus on learning, action and design tools and will often draw on social research methodologies. However, unless you monitor key information, you will find it hard to complete a final evaluation.

### **Why monitor and evaluate engagement with science projects and programmes?**

There are lots of reasons. For example:

- Accountability and validation of an activity and its findings. An evidence-based analysis of engagement gives legitimacy to the engagement activity and process.
- Management of resources, such as funding. If you can demonstrate that community engagement is of benefit and is 'value for money', you are more likely to attract funds for similar work in the future.
- Strategy and planning of engagement work (now and in the future). Learning about what works and what does not work in a given context can help with strategic planning.
- Influencing policy and advocating for change. Being able to demonstrate and communicate the value of community engagement, and the benefits it brings to science and communities, might increase the chances of influencing policy. It might also increase the likelihood of public participation in policy processes, as part of good practice in policy development.
- Learning and sharing learning. Many people around the world are engaging with science and with their community and are learning from their experiences. The more this is shared in a global community, the better engagement is likely to become.

### **What are the benefits and costs of trying to evaluate engagement activities?**

#### **Benefits**

- It gives your activity credibility.
- It can tell you whether a project is working and how it is working.
- It tells a story, gives meaning and helps us do better next time.
- It makes the programme or project more relevant.
- Devising the evaluation up front can clarify expectations and can be a useful tool internally.

#### **Costs**

- It costs a lot of money.
- It can prevent you from doing other work instead.
- It can appear that you are not confident about what you are doing.
- If you just look for one sign of impact, it can stop you finding and observing other things.

## Is it all about impact?

‘Impact’ is an increasingly popular term that you might come across when asked whether engagement activities are achieving what they set out to. Most grantholders are required by funders and agencies to justify work through its impact. But what does ‘impact’ mean? What is it? How do we find it? Can the impact of public engagement with science be identified, measured and reported?

In monitoring and evaluation terms, ‘impact’ is usually taken to mean the longer-term sustainable change attributable to a project or intervention that remains after the project has finished. It is hoped that the activities and immediate outputs of a project support some medium-term changes (often called ‘outcomes’). These then continue to have an impact after the duration of the project.

Impact is traditionally understood as a direct causal influence of a project that can be measured (the dictionary defines impact as “the action of one object coming forcibly into contact with another”), but such an understanding of impact is problematic when it comes to public engagement projects. Simple, linear cause-effect relationships – such as pushing a person on a swing to move them backwards and forwards – are rare in social interventions, where multiple actors and agendas and the influence of context make things inherently more complex. As an eminently social process, public engagement initiatives demand a different kind of evaluation that is able to capture this complexity and address the quality of relationships.

In complex social situations, ‘attribution’ is often elusive. For example, can we really attribute change to a radio show aiming to influence behaviour when it is just one of many influences on a person in 20 years of experience? For interventions in the social realm, it is more scientific and more realistic to consider the contribution of a project rather than expect to pin down attribution.

Simple ‘before-and-after’ comparisons that seek to definitively identify the impact of a project, which are common in traditional evaluations, might also not be appropriate. Even though you may be clear about the kind of engagement you want and what you hope to achieve, the important relationships, social dynamics and actors are not always clear at the outset.

It is still important to be transparent regarding your project’s aims and assumptions about how change happens (your ‘theory of change’; see page 20). But your detailed activities and plan may need to change as the project develops and you get a deeper understanding of the context in which you are working. This is probably more important than trying to ‘prove’ that your project was solely responsible for some particular change defined in advance, which may subsequently turn out to be irrelevant.

“Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.”  
Albert Einstein

Identifying impact usually involves things that are easy to quantify, such as the number of visitors or outputs published. But often the best things to emerge from an activity are qualitative and long term, such as feelings of inspiration or empowerment. These may be harder to measure or to compare across contexts. Qualitative changes are often the ones that really matter, however, such as the shift from toleration of a project by a community to active ownership. Employing approaches that can capture these qualitative shifts is vital in the field of public engagement.

### **Stories from the field: documenting the journey in urban engagement**

Dekha Andekha (the Seen and the Unseen) in India has a long history of working with slum populations in participatory ways. This project engaged communities in an urban slum for ten months to talk about participants' lives and health and to explore these factors through art, photography, clay and textiles. National artists trained the community members in the various art forms, and, as part of the process, people discussed health issues, the work that researchers did with them and how the work impacted their life. The conversations culminated in high-quality contemporary art products, and at the end of the process, they turned a school into an art gallery for a final public exhibition.

The evaluation of this engagement process was iterative (it happened continually throughout the project timeline, building on itself) and both qualitative and quantitative. Researchers counted the number of people involved in the dialogue, the number of discussions that took place and the number of people visiting the exhibition. They also wanted to document the entire process so they knew what had happened and could identify some 'do and do not's' for the future. A photojournalist followed the process and their photos illustrated the stories in the final evaluation, which was published as a book.

"We don't know if it is a proper evaluation, but it is a journey, it is a document, and it shows the process."  
Priya Arunagrawal

The beautiful and artistic document demonstrates the value of combining tools and experimenting with different approaches, particularly in seeking to explore a process.

## What is engagement trying to achieve?

At its heart, engagement is about exchange. It is not just about providing information or disseminating ideas or results. Engagement is about finding formal and informal ways to bridge the divide between two or more knowledge systems and cultures (e.g. between scientists, policy makers and community members).

Part of the reasoning behind engagement is a belief that it will improve the quality of research. In public health, this means researchers being informed about the context in which they work, building relationships with communities who contribute to their research, and ensuring their research is relevant to real-world questions and ethically conducted. But there is another angle to engagement. Society and communities can also drive the engagement process, holding scientists and science accountable for their actions and ethics. At this end of the spectrum, the purpose of engagement might be to have empowered communities who can engage with the concepts and values of science on their own terms. An important question is whether both sets of objectives can exist within the same project or programme. If so, how can this be achieved?

For the Wellcome Trust, several aspects of engagement are key. Engaging communities directly affected by research is a crucial component of good practice and ethics in the research enterprise. There is also value in the better communication of existing research and fostering informed public debate on health issues. Better understanding of science and its social contribution by the public in general is another reason for engagement. The Wellcome Trust understands public engagement with science at three (not mutually exclusive) levels:

- ‘must-do’ engagement
- ‘smart-to-do’ engagement
- ‘wise-to-do’ engagement.

‘Must-do’ engagement involves communities directly affected by the research itself. Without engagement at this level, it would simply not be possible to do high-quality, ethically sound population-based research. This form of work is often known as ‘community engagement’. It is an integral part of the research enterprise and is generally funded out of routine research budgets.

‘Smart-to-do’ engagement activities are not integral to the research but usually add value to a specific project – for example, by providing training in communication to researchers or fostering debate about the health issue being investigated. Researchers usually see this sort of engagement as being at least partially in their own interests; they often initiate and implement these activities. However, these initiatives are often funded from money that is outside the ‘core’ research budget.

‘Wise-to-do’ engagement is not tied to a specific study. Rather, it seeks to develop longer-term outcomes, such as the promotion of scientific literacy and placing science within a broader cultural landscape. It is often driven by people who consider themselves to be practitioners of public engagement, rather than researchers, and it is most commonly funded from budgets dedicated to the practice of public engagement.

A range of Wellcome Trust-funded projects engage with communities for different purposes. Around these key aspects of engagement, the drivers and motivations to engage with communities are many and varied. They include:

- to obtain consent for trials, to fulfil funding requirements or to get public approval for a research project
- for ethical reasons (it protects citizens’ rights, shows respect to the community, and makes scientists and institutions more accountable)
- because it enables empowered communities with increased critical consciousness and ability to protest (here, engagement is about increasing democracy and accountability)
- because of a genuine interest in holding dialogue, bringing in different voices, and increasing trust and mutual understanding between different groups
- because it will lead to ‘better science’ and improve health and healthcare provision, benefitting both research and people
- to influence and change health-relevant policy and practice
- because engagement is an expectation of funders.

If there are key purposes for our public engagement with science, how will we know we are being effective? What kind of changes should we expect to see, and for whom, as a result of our engagement activities? How will we measure such changes?

Experiences and case studies shared at the workshop illustrated a range of different kinds of change in several different settings. These case studies are included as boxes throughout this report and are summarised in the table below.

<b>Project and focus</b>	<b>Types of change described</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
<b>KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme</b> Community representatives consulted about KEMRI's work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build trust and mutual understanding with communities via the community representatives.</li> <li>• Quality of engagement process with representatives.</li> <li>• Community representatives perception of their role and influence.</li> <li>• Community representatives ability to give and independent perspective on KEMRI.</li> <li>• Able to address rumours about KEMRI research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community understands KEMRI research, is able to express an independent perspective on it and trusts that KEMRI will address any concerns raised.</li> <li>• Community advisory boards are an effective and trusted mechanism for genuine dialogue about research between the community and researchers.</li> <li>• Negative rumours about the research are challenged within community discourse.</li> </ul>
<b>Shoklo Malaria Research Unit</b> Tak Province Border Ethics Advisory Board to inform SMRU research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling diverse participation across cultural, political and language differences, and addressing literacy a challenge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethics advisory boards enable diverse participation across cultural, political and language differences to inform SMRU research.</li> </ul>
<b>Health talk Radio Malawi</b> Science communication radio programme 'Health talk radio' with health topics, panel discussion, poetry and drama, with public texting questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMS radio software to analyse texts to programme. Number and content of texts.</li> <li>• Radio listening club discussions, top three issues discussed.</li> <li>• Research to explore community impact of radio with focus group discussions.</li> <li>• Increasing audience.</li> <li>• Responsiveness of presenters to listeners increases responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community radio talk show is an effective forum for interactive dialogue on health research and health issues for the community with wide audience and active community input.</li> </ul>
<b>Dekha Undekha: Seen Unseen</b> Art co-creation project. People from disadvantaged communities putting on art exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement in process.</li> <li>• Their perspectives on what important to depict in 'health' – 'they spoke about their lives'.</li> <li>• Quality art project.</li> <li>• Responses to the art – number of visitors, press coverage.</li> <li>• Confidence and skills developed.</li> <li>• Photojournalist as evaluation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disadvantaged communities have the skills and confidence to use artistic processes to speak about their lives and experience relating to health, and a large audience is ready to listen/engage with their art.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Public dialogues to inform Research Councils</b> Helping Research Councils to understand how to communicate with the public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better understanding of public attitudes to research/science</li> <li>• Stronger engagement with NGOs and civil society.</li> <li>• Researchers more ready to consider social implications of research.</li> <li>• Respond with more effective process of involvement of stakeholders by research councils.</li> <li>• Do results of research affect senior people in the organisations (need routes into management).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public bodies commissioning research and researchers develop effective mechanisms to involve public and other stakeholders in a way that informs the research agenda.</li> <li>• Research is planned and developed in a such a way that senior staff in organisations are ready to respond to research results by changing their policy and practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Debating matters evaluation</b> Encourage practices of informed, reasoned debate in schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of debates and numbers of children involved.</li> <li>• Range of topics.</li> <li>• Quality of argumentation and use of research and evidence.</li> <li>• Greater interest in ideas of pupils.</li> <li>• Greater confidence and ability to discuss in public.</li> <li>• Greater understanding of importance of evidence and research and scientific process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater interest in and volume of debates in schools that employ research evidence and demonstrate reasoned argument.</li> <li>• Students have greater skills and confidence in developing a reasoned, evidence informed position on key contemporary debates.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building research skills of NGOs in Tamil Nadu</b> Introduce NGOs and community health workers to value of research on TB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater use of research and scientific literacy of NGOs.</li> <li>• Science capacity of community health workers.</li> <li>• Enable CBOs to show their contribution more scientifically.</li> <li>• Build network of trained researchers NGOs could engage with on health research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs are better able to use scientific research to develop and assess community responses to TB.</li> <li>• Community health workers are more able to understand scientific research.</li> <li>• Establish a network of trained researchers that NGOs draw on in their work on health.</li> </ul>

### **What other changes might we try observe or measure?**

Beyond the example projects shared at the workshop, we might also be interested in the following questions.

Did engagement influence scientific practice and decision-making?

- Did scientists do anything differently as a result?
- Did scientists adapt or cancel a study or trial?
- Did scientists decide to do things differently in the future?
- Did scientists perceive their research differently as a result?
- Did scientists perceive the research community differently as a result?

Did engagement influence other participants and stakeholders to alter their attitude, behave differently, or interact in new ways?

- Did they show a changed awareness of scientific interventions or show increased understanding of science as a knowledge system?
- Did they protest against an intervention or elements of the design?
- Did they instigate contact with scientists on their own terms?
- Did participants aspire to know more and express an opinion about science or a particular area of science?
- Did the engagement promote more respectful and trusting relationships between researcher, participants and other stakeholders?

How many people were engaged? What type of person engaged?

- age
- gender
- position and influence in society.

What is the quality of the engagement process?

- How ethical are our engagement practices?
- Over what period of time do we engage?
- Does this constitute good engagement?
- What are our values, and how do our values interact with those of the community?
- How are practitioners and participants engaged with the process?
- Is the depth of engagement appropriate to the outlined objectives?

Answers to such questions then help to give us an overall picture of how effective our engagement work has been for the effort and resources we have invested and a better sense of who is being reached and affected and how it changes the way they act.

For the Wellcome Trust, answers to such questions can also help to gauge the following variables.

#### **Impact**

What was the impact of the project on the public, professionals, practice and policy?

How did it affect people's knowledge, behaviour, attitudes, emotions, awareness and skills?

#### **Reach**

Who was the project for and who did it reach? Consider both primary and secondary groups reached and don't forget reach within research/science as one of your participant groups.

#### **Quality**

How good was the project?

Did the audience relate to it?

Was the content rigorous?

What were the production values and artistic expression?

## Value for money

What did the project achieve in comparison to the amount of funds spent?

How does this compare to other projects?

Was this good value for money?

It is the kinds of changes outlined above that any evaluation needs to be able to help us capture, assess and understand, to know whether we are being effective and to help us improve our engagement approach. Bringing together the examples of engagement work presented at the workshop and the loose framework the Wellcome Trust has used to characterise different levels of public engagement shows that partners are working across a range of different levels of public engagement with science, but with a predominance of work focused on community engagement.

<b>Levels of engagement</b>		
<b>Must do</b>	<b>Types of change</b>	<b>Example projects</b>
Community engagement in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation of communities directly affected by a particular piece of research.</li> <li>• Establish community advisory forums to promote understanding and dialogue around research priorities and agenda.</li> <li>• Research process informed by community and public input.</li> <li>• Build capacity of communities affected by research to identify and communicate their needs and priorities around health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KEMRI community advisory boards.</li> <li>• Tak Province Border Ethics Advisory Board.</li> <li>• Public dialogues inform Research councils (Involve).</li> <li>• Dekha Undekha: Seen Unseen.</li> </ul>
<b>Smart to do</b> Build capacity for research communication Research informs public and policy dialogue on health and social issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase community and public awareness of existing health research.</li> <li>• Increased public debate and media on health issues informed by community level experiences and scientific evidence.</li> <li>• Strengthen the capacity of researchers to communicate research to the media, policy makers and the public.</li> <li>• Researchers access support from research communication intermediaries.</li> <li>• Research informs changes in policy and practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Talk Radio Malawi.</li> <li>• Public dialogues inform Research Councils (Involve).</li> <li>• Building NGO and community health worker capacity in Tamil Nadu.</li> </ul>
<b>Wise to do</b> Promote public literacy in science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public understand and value scientific processes for generating research and evidence.</li> <li>• Public able to critically appraise evidence or lack of it in public debate on key contemporary social issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debating Matters.</li> </ul>

## The challenges of monitoring and evaluation

You may face a host of challenges when trying to evaluate public or community engagement with health research.

### **Contribution rather than attribution**

As we have seen, It is not easy to identify tangible impact when changes may be longitudinal or unseen (e.g. attitudinal change). External factors that were unforeseen at the outset might affect your intervention. For example, a government policy might change, and this in turn may mean that some of the project activities are no longer relevant. If attribution is hard to pin down, it is still important to identify what part your intervention has played and assess its contribution?

### **Capturing the unexpected**

Sometimes, ripple effects from your project have an influence that you weren't looking for when you started. In the case of the KEMRI–Wellcome Trust research project in Kilifi, community advisory boards that were intended to ensure community representatives were consulted about research had the effect of building the skills of community members, and they were valued by the community for this. It is hard to measure whether something you did had an effect somewhere else or in ways that were unanticipated – but some methods are more suited than others to capturing unexpected changes, as we shall see below.

### **Stories from the field: unexpected findings in Kenya**

When the KEMRI–Wellcome Trust Research programme in Kilifi, Kenya, carried out an evaluation of their community boards, they were surprised by some unexpected findings. KEMRI has a group of community representatives (KEMRI Community Representatives, or KCRs) comprising 220 elected community members from 15 locations. The group includes local administrative leaders and there is good gender, age and educational level representation. The group works voluntarily and has no conflict of interest. They do not participate in studies, but they are consulted about issues relating to KEMRI's work.

KEMRI hope that the community representatives are accurate in what they communicate about the community's broader views. But are they really representative? How can KEMRI measure the quality of its engagement with community representatives? KEMRI decided to monitor and evaluate their community engagement through the KCRs using (a) action research with the group, including listening and learning from members, and (b) household surveys and focus group discussions.

One finding revealed the level of awareness the KCRs held about their powerful position and their ability to manipulate the community. One participant in a focus group discussion said: "We can say good things about KEMRI and at the same time say bad things about KEMRI... I mean, with the influence KCRs currently command in the community, we can decide to influence the community negatively if we want to, and they will listen."

### **What to monitor and evaluate and how**

Deciding what to monitor and evaluate will depend on being clear about the changes that are important to measure. This, in turn, will depend on the understandings and assumptions about how change happens; the 'theory of change' for the engagement project being undertaken. The types of change that are seen as important will then influence the evaluation methods chosen.

Making assumptions clear and transparent in a 'theory of change' (see page 20) for the engagement activities being undertaken means they can be tested against evidence of what actually happened, with the potential to learn and further sharpen the theory of change for subsequent projects.

“The difficulty in measuring the impact of public engagement in science is there is little agreement on what to measure or how to measure it. In pragmatic terms, this simply suggests that care and thought must be given to the design of impact studies and that design decisions about methods, underlying assumptions and claims must be made transparent.”

Emily Dawson, Researcher

### **Appropriate time frame**

This is a big consideration in monitoring and evaluation. Sometimes scientists' endeavours take a long time before fruition: for example, 18 years passed between Robert Edwards first cultivating and maturing human eggs in the lab in the early 1960s and the first test-tube baby being born in 1978. In the early 1970s, Milstein and Kohler manufactured the first monoclonal antibodies, but it was 30 years before they were widely adopted in therapies. When is the right time to evaluate? The time-frame for a community giving consent to a particular piece of research may be quite different from that taken to develop relationships of trust and levels of confidence strong enough for a community to challenge a research agenda.

### **Who is involved in monitoring and evaluation?**

Who is involved in deciding what to assess, the process of gathering information, and the analysis and reflection that are part of evaluation? This depends a lot on what questions the evaluation is trying to answer. When what makes for good engagement in a given setting is not well known and knowledge of the context is needed, 'insider' perspectives are important. One reason for 'participatory evaluations' is such a need to draw on the insights and knowledge of those people whose lives are most affected by an issue.

'Outsider' perspectives, by contrast, may be able to notice things that those close to an issue take for granted and to place local experiences in the wider context of what engagement looks like and commonly involves in other places. In this way, they can help compare different experiences against benchmarks of what is already known and what has been shown to be effective, which may be a priority for those involved in programmes of engagement.

### **Sharing lessons learned**

Sharing learning from different projects is important to build a cumulative sense of what is effective for different aspects of engagement. Given each situation is different, this means finding a balance between drawing out general principles of what makes for good engagement and understanding how it plays out differently in different contexts.

## Principles and tips for monitoring and evaluation

Presentations and discussions at the workshop identified several key elements of good monitoring and evaluation, no matter what the framework.

### **What are the basic principles of monitoring and evaluation?**

- Involve stakeholders, particularly those who will use the results of the evaluation, from the start.
- Agree with the donor or funder about outcomes.
- Decide whether the evaluation will emphasise accountability to a donor (and evidence that plans were delivered) or emphasise learning (and reflect on what worked and what did not for future improvement).
- Decide on objectives and/or outcomes and associated indicators and method.
- Ensure it is integrated into the project plan from the start.
- Ensure it is properly resourced – financially and in terms of staff time.
- Ensure it is practical, usable and proportionate.

### **Questions to ask yourself if you are doing monitoring and evaluation:**

- What is it that will tell you whether the project is working well or not? What framework are you using?
- Are the questions the evaluation seeks to answer clear?
- Have you got the right people involved in the monitoring and evaluation?
- Whose perspectives and experiences do you need to gather to answer the evaluation questions? What other sources of information do you need to consult?
- How will you collect data? What data collection tools will you use?
- How will you feed learning and lessons into the next project and programme?
- How will you analyse and report the findings?

### **Top tips for monitoring and evaluation:**

- Understand your stakeholder and audience requirements and expectations (funder, colleagues, community stakeholders).
- Be prospective: build in monitoring and evaluation in the project planning stage. Using one of the project planning frameworks outlined elsewhere may help with this.
- Choose appropriate methods and tailor them: there is no right or wrong.
- Resourcing: ensure access to key data and information and, if appropriate, find someone to manage the process.
- Consider options for trends and benchmarks if possible.
- Keep it real, and be proportionate and practical; measures can evolve.
- Be flexible and iterative. Learning is part of the process.

### **What forms an evaluation?**

There can be different types of review during an evaluation process.

- a set-up review includes baseline surveys, starting points, and so on
- a formative review tests aspects of a project before its implementation or in its early stages so adjustments can be made
- a process review is a mid-term or ongoing review
- a summative review is done at the end of a project and is often one-off and external.

### **Monitoring and evaluation glossary**

**Monitoring:** routinely gathering relevant information during a project about progress in delivering its activities.

**Evaluation:** making a judgement about whether a project had the effect that it set out to achieve and giving an assessment of the value of the project overall.

Indicator: a specific aspect of a situation or activity that can be repeatedly measured over time to gauge the progress the project is making towards its aims.

Input: the things a project will supply to carry out the planned activities, such as skills, equipment, funds and human resources.

Output: usually, the immediate results of project activities; for example, the output of a training workshop on research methods might be 'participants with an increased knowledge of research methods and the ability to critically assess research quality'.

Impact: the effect a project has over the long term after the project has finished (rather than the effects during a project such as the short-term outputs of its activities). Impact is often seen as the long-term contribution a project has to its broader overall goal.

The OECD-DAC has produced a comprehensive glossary of evaluation terms for development-related interventions:

[www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationofdevelopmentprogrammes/glossaryofkeytermsinevaluationandresultsbasedmanagement.htm](http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationofdevelopmentprogrammes/glossaryofkeytermsinevaluationandresultsbasedmanagement.htm)

### **Stories from the field: iterative learning and response in evaluation**

Malawi–Liverpool–Wellcome Trust (MLW) is a clinical research programme with a focus on malaria, HIV/TB, non-communicable disease, and microbes, immunity and vaccines. They have a science communication programme that leads programme-wide and study-specific public engagement. As part of this engagement, researchers recently developed a weekly Sunday radio programme, broadcast in Chichewa (the national language of Malawi), with national reach. The programme is called *Umoyo N'kukambirana*, or *The Health Talk Radio Programme*. The target audience is youth and adults and includes residents of both urban and rural districts. Each episode features different health topics in line with MLW health research and has a panel discussion, poetry and drama. The public can send text messages to the programme for free and ask questions to the panel.

MLW wanted to assess the impact of the radio programme on the community. They decided to take an integrated and parallel approach including longitudinal monitoring and learning from experience, or a feedback loop to allow them to improve the show as they progress. But they faced some key challenges: How could they capture listener responses spread over a wide geographical area? How could they ensure that the information obtained captures depth of experience, as well as numbers?

MLW downloaded free open-source SMS radio software that allows radio stations to interact with audiences via SMS messaging. This provided them with a toll-free line for listeners to text to. During each show, they regularly request feedback from listeners, and there is also a specific question in each show to which listeners are invited to respond. Text messaging goes on all week, and there is a weekly prize draw for participants as an incentive.

What kind of data were produced through the evaluation? SMS technology brings in the date, the time, the telephone number of the people texting and the content of the text. If people want to be in the prize draw, they have to enter their sex, age and district. There are also radio listener clubs with a more targeted evaluation approach: these listeners fill in a monitoring form identifying who they are, what they discussed at their club meeting and the top three issues that were raised.

This is a learning process and the data are not yet complete and comprehensive, but it is a good start. Researchers are able to feed back their findings to the radio show; for example, they can encourage SMS users to send their demographic details by offering to enter them in a prize draw.

## Monitoring and evaluation frameworks

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks are the overall conceptual framing or theory about the most appropriate ways to track and measure change. Frameworks are ways of organising and keep you focused on what you want your outcomes to be and what information you will collect to keep you on track. Frameworks help to focus thinking and clarify definitions. Some frameworks are better than others at accommodating external events, dealing with the unexpected and understanding process. We look at 'causal' frameworks below, as in the example of logical framework analysis. By contrast, outcome mapping can be seen as a 'contribution' framework.

Monitoring and evaluation approaches are more specific than frameworks and usually spell out particular things to be measured and how to go about measuring them. In this way, they are usually based on particular ideas of what constitutes good performance or relevant change.

Monitoring and evaluation tools are particular measurement or assessment techniques that are used as part of broader monitoring and evaluation frameworks or approaches to generate evidence and data about the results of an intervention. Some tools – semi-structured interviews, for example – can be used across different monitoring and evaluation frameworks and approaches.

Below, we summarise several frameworks introduced at the workshop and highlight some of their strengths and weakness in relation to the challenge of evaluating engagement projects. Whichever framework you use, however, if you do not build in monitoring and evaluation from the start of a project, you will struggle to do it midway or at the end. In addition, regardless of the framework used, it is necessary to devote time to routinely gathering information and reflecting on what it tells you about progress towards the aims of the project. In many ways, this analysis and reflection is the most important thing, and the differences between different frameworks and approaches can be overstated. Most frameworks seek to make explicit what a project aims to do and the means by which it will do it, so they are useful as long as they are checked against the evidence gathered about what is really happening in a project.

“These frameworks can be complex, but whether you use them to their full extent is up to you, according to your context and project. It is just a way of organising your thoughts.”  
Liz Allen, Wellcome Trust

### **Logical framework or 'logframe'**

The logical framework seeks to lay out concrete steps that a project will take, to lead in a causal sequence to particular expected results. It seeks to support a gathering of evidence to demonstrate impact that can be definitively attributed to the project. The logframe is one of the most widely used frameworks for monitoring and evaluation. It is less useful for projects where details of the intervention or relevant actors depend on gaining knowledge of particular contexts, rather than being clear at the outset. It is also less able to deal with the unexpected, focusing measurement on a predefined set of ideas about what counts as evidence of success.

From 'A Summary of the Theory Behind the Logical Framework Approach', SIDA, Kari Ortengren (2004):

“The Logical Framework is used to:

- 1) identify problems and needs in a certain sector of society
- 2) facilitate selecting and setting priorities between projects
- 3) plan and implement development projects effectively
- 4) follow-up and evaluate development projects.

What the method is used for depends on the role of and the needs of its users.

LFA was developed during the 1960s and has been widely spread all over the world since the 1970s. Today it is used by private companies, municipalities and by all most all international development organisations, when assessing, and making follow-ups and evaluations of projects/programmes.

The LFA methods contains nine different steps:

1. Analysis of the project's Context
2. Stakeholder Analysis
3. Problem Analysis/Situation Analysis
4. Objectives Analysis
5. Plan of Activities
6. Resource Planning
7. Indicators/Measurements of Objectives
8. Risk Analysis and Risk Management
9. Analysis of the Assumptions"

See [www.researchtoaction.org/2012/05/the-logical-framework-approach-a-summary-of-the-theory-behind-the-lfa-method/](http://www.researchtoaction.org/2012/05/the-logical-framework-approach-a-summary-of-the-theory-behind-the-lfa-method/) for more information.

### **Outcome mapping**

Outcome mapping is a participatory evaluation approach. It seeks to understand the contribution of a project to changes in the practice of stakeholders and partners the project can directly influence: their 'boundary partners'. It recognises that there will be many factors and influences outside a project's control that may have a bearing on its outcomes. Because of this, it seeks to establish the contribution the project made, rather than attempting to claim definitive attribution. Many people find the focus on changes in direct partners much easier to grasp than the focus of logframes on more abstract and disembodied processes of change.

"OM can provide a set of tools that can be used stand-alone or in combination with other planning, monitoring and evaluation systems, if you want to:

- Identify individuals, groups or organizations with whom you will work directly to influence behavioural change.
- Plan and monitor behavioural change and the strategies to support those changes.
- Monitor internal practices of the project or program to remain effective.
- Create an evaluation framework to examine more precisely a particular issue.

OM is a robust methodology that can be adapted to a wide range of contexts. Potential users of OM should be aware that the methodology requires skilled facilitation as well as dedicated budget and time, which could mean support from higher levels within an organization. OM also often requires a 'mind shift' of personal and organisational paradigms or theories of social change."

Outcome Mapping Learning Community website

See [www.outcomemapping.ca/](http://www.outcomemapping.ca/) for more information.

### **Theory of change**

Theory of change is a method of clarifying the underlying assumptions about how change happens in a project and the expected sequence of intermediate changes needed to work towards a longer-term goal. It places the activities of your project in the wider frame of other actors and influence in the context in which you work.

Theory of change, which is growing in popularity in international development circles, is used in different ways by different people. Some focus on this sequence of steps and changes, making the approach similar to logical framework analysis. Others emphasise gaining deeper knowledge of the context in which a project plays out and stress the need for constant learning and regular revision of the theory of change to reflect emerging understanding. Like outcome mapping, theory of change also encourages you to look at other actors in the same field, how you can ensure your activities complement rather than duplicate others and how you can work with others towards common aims.

“As we define it, a Theory of Change defines all building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks – interchangeably referred to as outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change/change framework, which is a graphic representation of the change process.

Built around the pathway of change, a Theory of Change describes the types of interventions (a single program or a comprehensive community initiative) that bring about the outcomes depicted in the pathway of a change map. Each outcome in the pathway of change is tied to an intervention, revealing the often complex web of activity that is required to bring about change.”

Theory of Change Learning website

See [www.theoryofchange.org/](http://www.theoryofchange.org/) for more information.

Keystone have developed a useful guide for developing a theory of change for a project, which is available at [www.keystoneaccountability.org/node/215](http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/node/215).

### **Participatory monitoring and evaluation**

Participatory monitoring and evaluation seeks to put all the decisions about evaluation – who does it for what purposes and to answer what questions – in the hands of the people affected by the project, or at least ensure that they have strong input into the whole process. Participatory monitoring and evaluation recognises that communities’ knowledge and experience of their own context, gives them an important insight into what is important and relevant in that context. In this way, it does not privilege the ‘detached’ viewpoint of the outsider, something that is common to traditional evaluation. Rigour is still important, but it is about making values and positions of those involved explicit and transparent, rather than pretending that any one position can be ‘objective’.

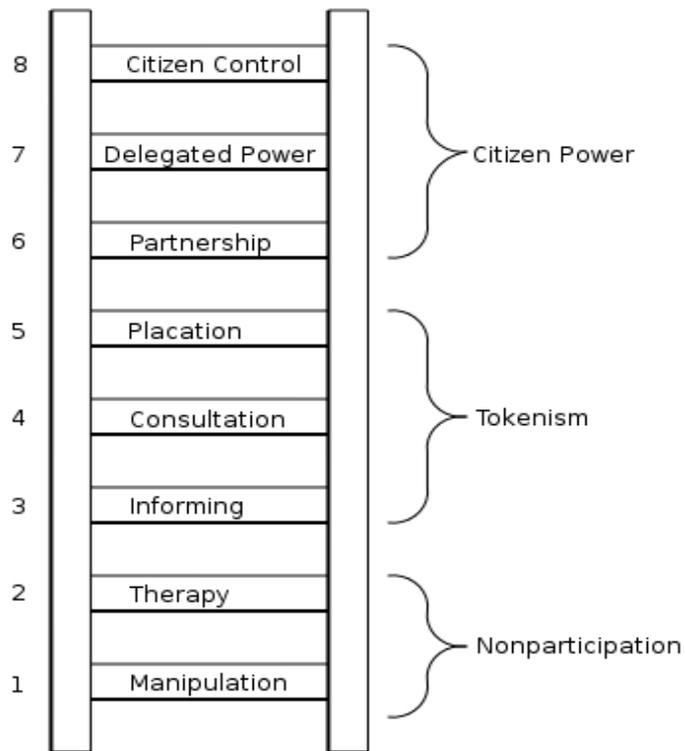
“Perhaps what distinguishes PM&E [participatory monitoring and evaluation] is its emphasis on the inclusion of a wider sphere of stakeholders in the M&E process than more conventional approaches. PM&E practitioners believe that stakeholders who are involved in development planning and implementation should also be involved in monitoring changes and determining indicators for ‘success’. PM&E’s fundamental values are trust, ownership and empowerment.”

Who Measures Change? An introduction to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication for Social Change. Parks et al. 2005. Communication for Social Change Consortium.

[www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/who\\_measures\\_change.pdf](http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/who_measures_change.pdf)

Participatory frameworks have a long history of development, critique and use. Sherry Arnstein’s model (below) is a famous example of an early participatory framework; it might not be the best for you, but it should give you something to start thinking about. Participation is a very contested issue, surrounded by arguments about what ‘counts’ as real participation. Think about what is appropriate and useful in the context of your work – and remember, it is a process of development that you will share with other participants.

**Participatory framework: Sherry Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation**



From page 217 of her 1969 article, Arnstein SR. A ladder of citizen participation. *J Amer Inst Planners* 1969;35(4):215-24.

## Indicators: what and how?

Indicators are an essential part of monitoring and evaluation. What is an indicator? How do you develop them? Your monitoring and evaluation framework helps you to make explicit assumptions about how change happens. It helps you identify the kinds of changes that are significant and that you want to track and capture. Your monitoring and evaluation tools are particular measurement techniques, which will be covered in the next section.

Your indicators, however, are the particular things you will measure and gather information on. They are more specific aspects of a situation or activity that will indicate whether you are on track when measured.

“An indicator – used in the context of assessing impact – is something that can be used to suggest progress and direction of travel and can be either quantitative or qualitative.”

Liz Allen, Wellcome Trust

Sometimes indicators are set in advance and sometimes they can emerge. They can be set in consultation or collaboration with other project stakeholders.

SMART indicators are:

- specific
- measurable
- attainable
- relevant
- timely.

SPICE indicators are:

- subjective
- participatory
- interpreted/communicable
- cross-checked
- empowering
- diverse and disaggregated.

### Flexibility

Often, people ask whether indicators are set in stone. What happens when you develop indicators that need to change at a later stage of the project? How can you have indicators that accommodate unforeseen consequences of your work? When you write a grant proposal, you are expected to say what your indicators will be. Then, as part of a project, you get together with partners and participants and ask what they think the indicators should be. There might be fundamental differences between yours and theirs.

There needs to be flexibility to change the indicators, and a recognition that – despite best efforts to outline expected changes and related indicators at the beginning of a project – they will probably need to change. They may need to be adapted to reflect the greater understanding of context brought by community participation or deeper understanding developed over time. Where a project explicitly aims to encourage community participation and participatory evaluation, it is recognised that initial attempts to identify changes and indicators will be complemented or even replaced by those developed with participants.

At the same time, regardless of who develops the indicators for a project at its outset, the social settings in which engagement unfolds are complex and unpredictable. This means the project needs to adapt to reflect a changed understanding of the aims and activities that will be effective. This, in turn, may mean that indicators need to change, which will make it hard to assess project progress against the initial indicators developed. In social programmes where the need to adapt and learn is recognised, carefully documenting the changes in direction and emphasis (and the reasons for those changes) is a substitute for the simple before-and-after comparisons of more traditional evaluation.

In addition, plans for monitoring and evaluating a project can recognise that different stakeholders may have different ideas of what makes for important changes. So develop a range of indicators that capture these different perspectives and monitor information on all of them. In the example of the Most Significant Change approach ([www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf](http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf)) for gathering stories of impact, accounts of what are seen as significant changes are gathered from different stakeholders in a project. For example, a

project on engagement with health research may seek to gather stories of important change from the community, researchers and project staff. This enables the different ideas about change and value to be made explicit rather than remain as unexamined assumptions.

Sometimes unintended consequences (such as capacity building) appear as part of an engagement project and there are no indicators set to help explain them. It is a challenge to try to communicate about the unintended outcomes that occur when you engage with communities. One way this can be tackled is for a project to deliberately set out to gather information on unexpected changes as part of its overall monitoring and evaluation plan. In the case of the Most Significant Change example above, different stakeholders may be asked to produce stories about unexpected changes, as well as those more specifically about health research.

Different sets of indicators might be needed for different aspects of a project. For example, you want to know the findings of the research, but you also want it to be a participatory process, so you need indicators to find out whether and how you have been able to engage with communities. You deliberately engage people in indicators, but also you have indicators to see whether you have been able to engage. These are known as process indicators.

“Flexibility is necessary, but there is a limit. As a researcher or community engagement actor, you have different audiences to please. For example, the community might say what we want to do in the first year is build relationships, but if we go to the donor and say ‘What we did in our first year was to build relationships,’ they might be disappointed.”

Mike Parker, University of Oxford

“When you look at engagement, you have to evaluate the quality of the process.”

Rob Vincent

### **Stories from the field: demonstrating the value of engagement**

The Research Council’s public dialogues originally grew from reacting to public suspicion of genetic modification. The public dialogues now take place between scientists, policy makers and the public. Policy makers gauge public response to the science, then they make decisions about what to fund and how to fund it.

Involve carried out a review of the public dialogues, focusing on six dialogues and eight consultations. The process helped the research councils to understand the social implications of the science and how to communicate with the public. Through reviewing the public dialogues, a useful set of indicators emerged. Broadly speaking, these public dialogues have benefited research councils in six different ways.

These are:

- better understanding of public attitudes relating to an emerging area of research
- better understanding of publics as potential end users or consumers of research
- researchers stimulated to reflect on the social implications of their research
- to promote stronger stakeholder engagement with NGOs and civil society
- to contribute to wider public debate about emerging research and technologies.

“Finding clear indicators can help to make the business case for engagement.”

Simon Burall, Director of Involve

## Monitoring and evaluation tools

Monitoring and evaluation tools are particular measurement or assessment techniques that are used as part of broader monitoring and evaluation frameworks or approaches to generate evidence and data about the results of an intervention. Some tools – semi-structured interviews, for example – can be used across different monitoring and evaluation frameworks and approaches.

Participants at the workshop in South Africa in December 2012 discussed and explored a range of tools to be used in relation to the monitoring and evaluation of engagement. These included:

- action learning sets
- interviews
- surveys
- rapid appraisal
- in-depth case studies
- participatory film
- focus group discussions
- cost-benefit analysis.

Many other tools support monitoring and evaluation processes. The ‘useful resources’ list at the end of this publication is intended to help you explore some of them.

### Interviews

Interviews are a core research method and are useful for a range of purposes. Structured interviews, in which you ask people lots of questions, can be used in a quantitative way. An interview can also be used to find out background information or in-depth information; this is known as a conversational, semi-structured or unstructured interview and is often used in qualitative research. There are also many other ways to use interviews, depending the researchers’ or project’s needs (see Annex 1).

### Surveys

A survey, or questionnaire, is a data collection tool that is generally used to gather information about individuals (e.g. perceptions, opinions, behaviours and/or preferences). In social research, surveys are one of the most commonly used methods of delivering primary research data. Surveys can be used with small or large populations (samples) depending on the issue under investigation and the desired level of representation of views. As a research tool, surveys are flexible, relatively inexpensive and can deliver rapid results, if set up correctly. Surveys can be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. One of the challenges of surveys is that they rely on the self-reporting of attitudes and practices, so they can be subject to ‘desirability bias’ as people may tend to say what they think the interviewer wants to hear or what is seen as socially acceptable. Consequently, it is important to cross-check or ‘triangulate’ with other methods, something that is true generally for the tools described here (see Annex 2).

### Rapid appraisal

Rapid appraisal is a quick and relatively low-cost method of obtaining qualitative and quantitative information or gathering feedback from communities and other stakeholders. It is ‘rapid’ because it uses existing information and a quick gathering of information from stakeholders or ‘key informants’. Rapid appraisal first involves collecting data from existing written sources. The method provides qualitative understanding of the local environment and people’s values, motives and opinions. It can provide a context for interpreting quantitative data collected using more formal methods, and it can be a very flexible and responsive method that allows researchers to explore new ideas quickly. However, because its findings relate to a specific community, you cannot generalise from them. Increasingly, however, participatory appraisal methods are also used to generate quantitative data as a kind of ‘participatory statistics’, which can be aggregated across settings and support generalisation (Chambers 2008).

Useful link: Rapid Appraisal Tips, USAID [transition.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-UsingRapidAppraisalMethods.pdf](https://transition.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-UsingRapidAppraisalMethods.pdf)

Chambers R. 2008. *Revolutions in Development Enquiry*. London: Earthscan.

### **In-depth case studies**

Case studies are used extensively in social science research and in evaluation research. They help us understand complex social phenomena. This tool allows us to examine the meaningful aspects of people's every day lives, in a holistic sense. The key features of the in-depth case study method are: problem definition, design, data collection, data analysis, composition and reporting. Case studies are often done badly and lack rigour. They are also criticised for being too specific, and therefore it is impossible to draw generalisations. They can also result in long and unwieldy reports, which are hard to read. However, when case studies are done well, they can be very useful and provide insights that are unobtainable elsewhere.

Useful reference: Yin RK. 2003. Case Study Research. Sage Publications.

### **Participatory video**

Participatory video is a technique that enables a group or community to make and edit their own film. This allows people to come together over an issue they feel strongly about, document their opinions and thoughts, and explore ideas in a participatory way. Both the process of making the film and the final product are important. Because participatory video is a reflective process, participants can identify evaluation objectives and indicators, collect data and analyse their findings through film. Participatory video can be time consuming, but it can produce data that are different to the data produced using more traditional monitoring and evaluation methods, making it a complementary method.

Useful link: Resources on Participatory Video, compiled by the Participation, Power and Social Change Team at the Institute of Development Studies, 2005. [community.eldis.org/.599426df](http://community.eldis.org/.599426df)

### **Focus group discussions**

A focus group discussion brings people together to discuss a specific topic of interest. A group facilitator will guide the discussion and introduce topics relevant to the research process, and a good facilitator will allow participants to agree and disagree with each other to ensure a broad expression of insights and opinions about the topic. The range and variations of opinions, beliefs, experiences and practices are important to capture. Focus group discussions can explore the meanings of surveys or statistics, find out about local understanding of issues of concern and introduce a qualitative aspect to the research process.

Focus group discussion sessions must be planned well in advance. This involves deciding the main objective of the discussion, developing an agenda and key questions, and planning how to document the discussion. Then suitable participants (between six and eight people) must be identified. The facilitation of the focus group discussion should be carefully executed: the facilitator should maintain a neutral attitude, word questions carefully and summarise the session accurately. The session report should contain the content of the discussion and any observations made about the participants during the discussion.

Useful link: Research Tools, Focus Group Discussion, Overseas Development Institute, 2009. [www.odi.org.uk/publications/5695-focus-group-discussion](http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/5695-focus-group-discussion)

### **Stories from the field: combining interviews, focus groups and observation**

The Shoklo Malaria Research Unit (SMRU) conducts research with refugees, migrant workers, displaced people and day migrants on the Thai-Burmese border, and has recently facilitated the set-up of the Tak Province Border Community Ethics Advisory Board (T-CAB). SMRU asked how they should evaluate the T-CAB, and the questions they asked were: (a) It is a good model for their setting? (b) If not, what should they do instead?

They carried out interviews, focus group discussions and observations to explore these questions. They selected people to participate: T-CAB members, researchers, research subjects, health personnel from SMRU and community members (including doctors, teachers, monks and businessmen). The results of the evaluation concluded that consultation with the T-CAB has made improvements in SMRU research, in particular in the operational and ethical aspects. They find the model to be beneficial.

### **Action learning sets**

Action learning sets typically work with a small group of five or six people who work in a similar field. They are usually a tool for individual and organisational learning, rather than an evaluation tool for a particular project, but they support reflection, learning and 'evaluative thinking' on practical experience. Each person in the group takes turns to introduce a challenge that they have in their work in some depth, and goes through a structured process of clarification questions that help them to reflect on the challenge. The process emphasises that the listeners should avoid being too quick to give advice or recommendations. By building a rich picture of the circumstances, the process can help the person presenting the challenge to look at it again. It can be a powerful way to find new perspectives on intransigent problems or suggest new, practical ways to approach them in future.

Useful link: Action Learning Sets, BOND. [www.bond.org.uk/data/files/resources/463/No-5.1-Action-Learning-Sets.pdf](http://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/resources/463/No-5.1-Action-Learning-Sets.pdf)

### **Cost-benefit analysis**

Involve and Consumer Focus have developed a simple toolkit to capture costs and benefits to make a strong business case for engagement, including:

- costs that can be given a monetary value
- benefits that can be given a monetary value
- costs that cannot be expressed in monetary terms
- benefits that cannot be expressed in monetary terms.

This tool is designed to help users understand the value of engagement and to make a convincing business case, to internal and external audiences, by looking at the actual costs and benefits in detail. The toolkit is aimed at those who manage, design, deliver, plan or commission public engagement projects and does not require the reader to have detailed knowledge of economics. The toolkit is a practical document that helps users create a business case for engagement and does not aim to deliver academic economic research. The resulting business case, therefore, should be considered a case of 'good enough' information.

Useful link: Involve Toolkit ([www.involve.org.uk/making-the-case-for-public-engagement/](http://www.involve.org.uk/making-the-case-for-public-engagement/))

### **Stories from the field: using multiple tools in one evaluation**

Debating Matters is an initiative to encourage debate in UK schools. It runs a national schools debating competition across the UK, which will involve more than 250 schools in around 300 debates this academic year. Students research, construct and then defend an argument under cross-examination from a diverse range of judges drawn from science, business, media, politics, law, academia and the arts. Judges provide public feedback on the students' performances before coming to their decision. By taking ideas and young people seriously, it inspires ongoing and passionate debate: from the school corridor to the school minibus and the family dinner table.

Debating Matters used a range of evaluation tools in one strategy, including quantitative and qualitative methods. They then triangulated the evidence. They monitored participation and partnerships and used quantitative surveys of teachers, team debriefs, and vox pops and quotes from pupils, teachers and judges. Their biggest challenge is how to monitor what people are inspired to do as a consequence of Debating Matters.

## Summary

Monitoring and evaluating engagement activities can seem complex. There are many aspects to think about, such as the purpose of the evaluation, what you are trying to measure, how you should measure it and over what time frame. As with any evaluation, however, being clear about what you are trying to achieve overall should help you select the most appropriate framework and subsequent tools to use. There is no one 'right' way to do monitoring and evaluation. It is important to create space to think carefully about why you are doing things and what you really need to know. Take regular time to reflect on what your monitoring is telling you. Doing this matters as much as any particular framework or technical tool. Many scientists and engagement practitioners are experimenting with different forms of monitoring and evaluation, depending on their context and values. Sharing both the outcomes of the evaluation and experiences of the evaluation process is important for other scientists and practitioners who wish to work with frameworks and tools that may be new to them.

A list of useful resources can be found at the end of this publication.

### Other important issues

During the Wellcome Trust's fourth international engagement workshop, many issues arose that relate to engagement in general and may require further discussion. These included:

- What is the role of intermediaries, and what can be expected of researchers in relation to engagement?
- How much can be expected of a community in relation to their participation?
- How do we use research evidence to improve the field of engagement?
- What are the perceived risks of engagement? What is the role of participatory risk assessment?
- When is engagement exploitative?
- How do we best share our experiences of engagement and evaluation practice outside the workshop?
- Is it possible to capture stories that are true to the data?
- What should be the composition of community advisory boards?

These issues, among others, form part of an ongoing dialogue between engagement practitioners, social scientists and biomedical scientists.

### Trust

A strong theme that emerged during discussions at the workshop was the issue of trust.

The questions raised included:

- How many dimensions does trust have?
- Do you want society or a community to only trust you up to a point so they still retain the ability to be critical?
- What is the role of trusted intermediaries in brokering trust between communities and scientists to deepen participation and engagement?
- Does the type of engagement (and criticism) change with the level of trust?

One delegate suggested a way of understanding trust in relation to engagement:

When there is **no trust**, there is intense criticism from the public or a community, which challenges the research or even prevents it from taking place.

When there is **basic trust**, the public or community trusts what you do but there is limited dialogue.

Finally, **deep trust** allows criticism that supports the research agenda and moves it forward.

But how do you measure trust? What are appropriate levels of trust? Who is worthy of trust? Can there be too much trust? If so, how do you evaluate the levels of trust and ensure that the general public or a community does not over-trust?

“If there is too much trust, then people are vulnerable to abuse. In a good relationship with integrity and openness and accountability, it is healthy. But if it is unquestioning trust, it is not healthy.”  
Delegate

“People don’t often express mistrust early; you only see indicators of distrust quite far along the process, so it is hard to prevent it from breaking down.”  
Sian Aggett

## Useful resources

### **Monitoring and Evaluation News website**

This website focuses on methods of monitoring and evaluating the progress and outcomes of development aid programs, big and small. Many of the methods discussed are also relevant to the practice of evaluation.  
[mande.co.uk/](http://mande.co.uk/)

### **Keystone Accountability website**

This website has a range of practical and useful monitoring and evaluation tools, including guides, reports, presentations and articles.  
[www.keystoneaccountability.org/](http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/)

### **NGO Evidence Principles**

This web page, hosted by BOND, encourages you to think through different principles of monitoring and evaluation and helps you to review and assure the quality of existing evidence.  
[www.bond.org.uk/pages/the-ngo-evidence-principles.html](http://www.bond.org.uk/pages/the-ngo-evidence-principles.html)

### **National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement**

This website provides access to a range of evaluation resources, including practical guidelines and information on planning and costing an evaluation project.  
[www.publicengagement.ac.uk/how/guides/evaluation/resources](http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/how/guides/evaluation/resources)

### **Manchester Beacon Evaluation Guide**

A practical hands-on guide to provide support for the evaluation of public engagement events or projects supported by the Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement. The guide supports gathering information to help reflect on successes and challenges, and it contains useful principles that are applicable to anyone working in this area.  
[www.manchesterbeacon.org/publications/view/10/Public-Engagement-Evaluation-Guide](http://www.manchesterbeacon.org/publications/view/10/Public-Engagement-Evaluation-Guide)

### **UCL Evaluation Toolkit**

This guide is intended for people who are putting on events with a public audience in mind. It will help you to define your reasons for hosting an event and to understand how well your event has succeeded in fulfilling your aims.  
[www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/research/toolkits/Event\\_Evaluation](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/research/toolkits/Event_Evaluation)

### **Higher Education STEM**

This guide contains a useful set of questions to ask yourself when beginning an evaluation and provides a set of resources.  
[www.hestem.ac.uk/evaluation](http://www.hestem.ac.uk/evaluation)

### **Inspiring Learning for All**

The Inspiring Learning Framework helps museums, libraries and archives to capture and evidence their impact by identifying generic learning and social outcomes for individuals and communities. Their toolkit for researchers can help identify the most appropriate methods for your programme or activity.  
[www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/toolstemplates/](http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/toolstemplates/)

### **Briefing Paper: Auditing, Benchmarking and Evaluating Public Engagement**

This paper, by Angie Hart, Simon Northmore and Chloe Gerhardt, clearly distinguishes between auditing, benchmarking and evaluation of public engagement activities. It showcases examples of engagement work and identifies how each was evaluated.  
[talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/AuditingBenchmarkingandEvaluatingPublicEngagement.pdf](http://talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/AuditingBenchmarkingandEvaluatingPublicEngagement.pdf)

### **Lessons from deliberative public engagement work: a scoping study**

**Ajoy Datta**

This scoping study assesses the benefits of engagement with science for the public, scientists, institutions and other actors, including industry. It then identifies and discusses 16 issues and concludes with some guiding principles to help public engagement practitioners and scientists plan ahead.

[www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/7489.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/7489.pdf)

### **Action Evaluation Resources**

This website contains a range of useful resources including general frameworks and overviews, funders and evaluation resources, monitoring and evaluation system design resources, developmental and formative evaluation resources, and hard-to-measure and other metric resources.

[actionevaluation.org/resources/](http://actionevaluation.org/resources/)

### **HIVOS Knowledge Programme: A Theory of Change**

This resource portal contains information on the background, objectives, principles and methodology of this Theory of Change initiative. The Resources section contains key readings and brief summaries relating to ten frequently asked questions about Theory of Change thinking.

[www.hivos.net/Hivos-Knowledge-Programme/Themes/Theory-of-Change](http://www.hivos.net/Hivos-Knowledge-Programme/Themes/Theory-of-Change)

## Annex I

### Interviews

Interviews are useful for a range of purposes. Structured interviews, in which you ask people lots of questions, can be used in a quantitative way. An interview can also be used to find out background information or in-depth information; this is known as a conversational, semi-structured or unstructured interview and is often used in qualitative research. You can also use interviews in many other ways.

#### **Practical tips for interviewers**

- Remember, as with all research, power relationships are present: keep in mind what this might mean for organising and analysing your research. Interview people in their spaces, not yours. Try not to intimidate them.
- Accept that getting access to research participants for interviews can be hard and might require a lot of effort on your part.
- Language matters! If you can't speak the 'right' language, maybe someone else should do the interview.
- Always check your kit before an interview. That includes batteries, microphones, audio and/or visual recording equipment, tapes, hard drive space and anything else you are taking with you. Take spare batteries, tapes and so on.
- Research as much as you can before you do an interview. If you are doing a follow-up interview, revisit the earlier interview(s), focus groups or notes you had about that person, group or situation. This helps you to ask better questions.
- Think in advance about the kind of person or people you are going to meet. What customs might they have that could be different from yours? How might you frame questions that may be very sensitive subjects for them? Practice asking these questions on your own or with a colleague first.
- Write up your notes after your interview as soon as possible. You can and will forget details, feelings, thoughts and ideas you had at the time.
- Remember, people don't always mean what they say: people change their minds, and interviews are understood as co-constructions. In other words, interview responses do not represent the ultimate truth or someone's innermost thoughts. They might even be telling you what they think you want to hear.

It can also be helpful to:

- Carry extra consent forms.
- Carry out interviews in a neutral space if it is not possible to do them in a space that 'belongs' to the interviewee.
- Ask interviewees to choose their own pseudonyms.
- Transcribe the interview as soon as possible in case you need to add notes to my transcript that explain particular phrases or issues.
- Relax. People always seem to say the most insightful, detailed or useful things after you stop recording them, but don't worry about it: listen, and make notes as soon as you can.

Interviews are a core research method, and they have been so widely used for so long that a great deal has been written about them. The list below is a simple starting point that includes some 'key' texts.

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## Annex 2

### Surveys

#### **What are surveys?**

A survey, or questionnaire, is a data collection tool that is generally used to gather information about individuals (e.g. perceptions, opinions, behaviours and/or preferences). In social research, surveys are one of the most commonly used methods of delivering primary research data. Surveys can be used with small or large populations (samples) depending on the issue under investigation and the desired level of representation of views. As a research tool, surveys are flexible, relatively inexpensive and can deliver rapid results, if set up correctly.

The mode of delivery of a survey can be varied, ranging from anything from a short paper-based feedback to an online questionnaire, to a semi-structured interview carried out in person. They can be used as a method on their own or to complement other methods of investigation and are typically used to:

- capture feedback or opinions
- assess perceptions before and/or after an activity
- validate a hypothesis
- generate a hypothesis.

#### **Steps in a survey project**

There are several key steps that should be taken before carrying out a survey; these can help you decide whether it is the correct tool to help you to explore a specific question or issue. The main considerations include:

- Establish the goals – what do you want to know, and who wants to know?
- Determine the sample – who do you want to talk to?
- Decide what to ask – design the questions.
- Choose the platform for the survey – paper, online or interview?
- Pilot the questions – do they yield what you need?
- Design data capture points – what will you do with the response data?
- Analyse – how will you analyse and report the findings?

#### **Survey design considerations**

Surveys can be used to collect both quantitative data (numerical data, e.g. statistics) and qualitative data (text that allows more of an understanding to contextualise numerical data). The type of data collected depends on the format of question used: closed questions, such as those with multiple-choice answers, collect quantitative data, whereas open text box questions collect qualitative data.

When considering the sort of question you should use, it is important to understand exactly what you need to know and how you intend to use the information gathered. A single-answer question is useful when trying to understand something specific and quantifiable, whereas an open text question should be used when trying to understand the reasons behind an answer because it provides respondents with the opportunity to fully explain themselves.

How you ask the question will influence what you can do with the data; for example, if you ask an open question you may need to look for themes in the responses (to code) to be able to use the data more quantifiably. If you ask a closed question, this may limit your ability to understand exactly what a respondent meant.

#### **Determining the sample**

When considering who your sample should consist of, it is important to consider the following:

- Who is the target population?
- How many people do you want to reach?
- Do you need statistical robustness?

- Representation vs population – do you need to capture the views of all people of interest to you, or is it possible for you to select a representative sample?
- Use of quotas – for example, can you ask a certain number of each ‘type’ of person?

Sampling can also be problematic when using surveys because a biased sample will produce biased results. It is important to ensure that your sample is as unbiased as possible and also acknowledge that your results will only reflect the views of those respondents who choose to complete your survey.

### **Question design**

Careful survey design and consideration is crucial to the success and quality of the data that are collected via this method.

It is important to design questions that will be understood by all respondents in exactly the same way, with no space for ambiguity; if respondents interpret your questions differently and therefore respond differently, the data will be of limited use.

It is also important to make sure the question wording does not lead your respondents towards a particular answer or encourage your respondents to agree with your hypothesis. Creating a balanced set of questions before you begin is crucial to the quality of data that you will be able to collect.

It is also important that you use a balanced scale to avoid leading your respondents towards a particular opinion when using a rating scale; therefore, there should be two positive options, one neutral option and two negative options (such as ‘very satisfied’, ‘fairly satisfied’, ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’, ‘fairly dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’, or a scale of 1–5 or 1–7 with semantic anchor points).

When using closed questions to collect quantitative data, pre-determined answers can leave respondents feeling unable to accurately express their opinion and simply ticking a box that best explains their view – even if it is not accurate. One way of potentially overcoming this is by including an ‘other’ option for all questions.

**A pilot or test** of your survey before you launch to all will help to ensure to test that you have got it right and allow you to make any changes to maximise its utility.

### **Limitations**

Surveys do have their limitations and they do need to be planned and resourced properly – in both the design and execution phases.

It can be difficult to achieve a high response rate for a survey, especially when asking for opinions from the general public; the introduction of some kind of incentive to encourage participation in a survey can help (e.g. the chance to win a prize), but be careful that the introduction of an incentive does not skew or bias your response.

## Wellcome Trust

We are a global charitable foundation dedicated to achieving extraordinary improvements in human and animal health. We support the brightest minds in biomedical research and the medical humanities. Our breadth of support includes public engagement, education and the application of research to improve health. We are independent of both political and commercial interests.

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