Outcome-Based Social Programs

A Program Planning & Funding Guide

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Wong Lin Hong

Contents

Acknowledgements

This Guide is the result of extensive research. There is a tremendous wealth of information in books and the Internet. There is much sharing of accumulated experience and best practices. Everyone in the social sector is eager to help others to do good in better ways. It is with the same objectives that I have acquired the knowledge, compiled the shared wisdom, and now attempt to present the current best practices and concepts clearly and logically to both program providers and funders.

I have included many of the information sources in the Bibliography, in acknowledgement of the work done and also to benefit readers of this Guide. The investment practices of Due Diligence, Value Adding and Monitoring are from my experience in the Venture Capital industry, which I have captured in my book "Venture Capital Fund Management: A Comprehensive Approach to Investment Practices & the Entire Operations of a VC Firm" published by Thomson Reuters, USA. Those who wish to adopt more investment practices into their Outcome-Based Evaluation process may find this book useful.

The case study in this Guide was constructed with the kind cooperation of Outward Bound Singapore (OBS). I wish to thank Mr Steven Lau Puay Kiong, Head, Community Engagement Programme, OBS, for his kind assistance in providing information and time spent with me to discuss the program.

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Finally, I wish to thank Mr Tan Soo Nan, Chief Executive of the Tote Board, Singapore, for initiating this effort and the Tote Board for sponsoring this Guide. It has been a short but valuable journey for me, travelling in parallel with my work as Executive Director of SE Hub Ltd, a social enterprise funded by the Tote Board, with a mission to invest in and support social enterprises in Singapore.

Wong Lin Hong
April 2013

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Notes: 1. Illustrations are commissioned and inserted by the publisher.
         2. This book is best printed on A4 paper, double-sided.

Foreword

The world is experiencing explosive growth in the social sector. There is a proliferation of organisations, large and small, setting out to do good in many ways and in many countries and communities.

This might be attributable to growing wealth and hence a greater willingness to give back to society. However it is perhaps more due to increasingly pervasive social consciousness. With speedier and greater penetration of news media, our world gets smaller. The suffering and hardships of our fellow men, women and children get closer to home and touch our hearts and minds with greater impact, relentlessly urging responses.

The social sector in Singapore is reaching a watershed, as more and younger professionals with passion join in. They are harnessing the Internet, social networks and mobile devices to do good. They are establishing new ways and refreshing models to connect donors, volunteers, professionals, and academics to those in need, be they organisations or individuals.

Tote Board is actively encouraging voluntary welfare organisations and charities to plan out Outcome-Based Programs. However, despite the availability of reference information in books and on the Internet, many of them encounter difficulties when they try to do so. The feedback is that the information available is hard to comprehend and often incomplete.

This Guide offers clear and practical advice on how to plan out an Outcome-Based Program. It gives detailed step-by-step instructions on the whole process from beginning to end. While highlighting the benefits, it also points out limitations and issues to watch out for. Social program providers should find this Guide helpful.

Funders of social programs and projects should also find this Guide useful. They will benefit from adopting Outcome-Based Evaluation methodology, and even more so if they incorporate investment best practices such as due diligence, value adding and monitoring which are introduced here.

We thank the author, Wong Lin Hong and the illustrator, Khidir Suhaimi for their efforts.

Tan Soo Nan
Chief Executive, Tote Board
April 2013
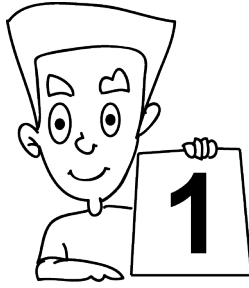
Introduction

T raditionally, donors, grant-makers and sponsors have supported social programs and projects[1] based either purely on their sympathy or philanthropy, or through evaluation of the merits of the overall program and the quality of the program's elements: inputs, activities, and results or outputs. These elements form the structure of a traditional social program, as illustrated in Fig 1.
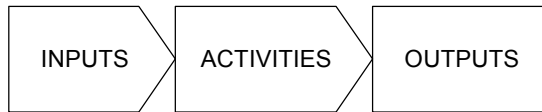
INPUTS ＞ ACTIVITIES ＞ OUTPUTS

Fig 1. Traditional Social Program Structure

Social program providers have thus planned out programs focusing on providing the best available inputs to enable the carrying out of a set of activities designed to achieve targeted outputs.

In recent times this approach has been found to be inadequate. Social programs are meant to benefit the participants, whether directly or indirectly. The end results should relate to the beneficiaries - have they benefitted or improved? Achievement of target outputs does not necessarily mean that participants have benefited much or at all.

Therefore there is an emerging trend for funders to require social program providers to show whether or how much the beneficiaries have benefitted or been improved; in other words, the outcomes experienced by the beneficiaries. After all, these are the objectives of the social programs and hence their worthiness for support should be based on the quality of the outcomes. It is not so much the quantity or quality of the inputs, activities or outputs.

Nevertheless, it is all the inputs, activities and outputs of a program that produce the outcomes. Thus program providers need to plan out an outcome-based program in its entirety, consisting of the structure as shown in Fig 2.

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[1]A Project is a short-term specific activity while a Program is a set of activities aimed at achieving desired objectives. Henceforth in this Guide, Projects will also be referred to as Programs for the sake of brevity.

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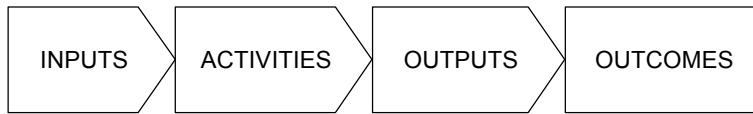
Fig 2. Outcome-Based Program Structure

In planning a social program, one cannot just focus on outputs alone. A program may produce substantial and significant outputs, but they would be of little use if the beneficiaries gain little improvement and derive few benefits, i.e. poor outcomes. Neither should a program be planned solely based on the outcomes, as the quality of the outcomes depends on the program's inputs, activities and outputs. A complete planning approach must be taken, integrating both *Program Planning* and *Outcome Planning*.

In Part I of this Guide we go through some basic concepts by looking at more detailed descriptions of the elements of a program, with emphasis on the differences between outputs and outcomes, and elaborating on what are outcomes.

In Part II we study the whole process of planning out an outcome-based social program. This would be useful to program providers who wish to advance from the planning of traditional programs to planning outcome-based programs.

In Chapter 3 we look at the traditional Program Planning process, which consists of securing the resources and other inputs, working out the activities that are required and measuring the outputs. You may be familiar with this already, but we go through this for completeness and for the benefit of those who are new to the social sector.

In Chapter 4 we go through Outcome Planning, carefully step by step, as it may be new to many of you. Finally we integrate the two planning processes in Chapter 5. The whole program has to work coherently and consistently to produce the desired outcomes. Careful and proper planning ensures efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the desired outcomes to meet the social needs that are being addressed.

Chapter 6 wraps up Part II by outlining a Funding Proposal. This is to ensure that you have captured all important and relevant information for your program to secure funding, regardless of whether it is internal or external funding.

In Part III we change our perspective from that of a program provider to that of a funder of social programs. There is an emerging trend for funders to use *Outcome-Based Evaluation* or *Outcome Funding*, as a methodology to evaluate programs based on outcomes, to help in deciding whether a program is worth funding.

It is not sufficient to evaluate only the outcomes of a program. The evaluation has to be on all the elements of the program, as it is the combination of the inputs, activities and outputs that produce the outcomes. Outcome-Based Evaluation should therefore require the funder to go through the whole process of Outcome-Based Program Planning, which we studied in Part II, but from the perspective of an examiner instead of a planner.

In Chapter 7 we do not re-examine the planning process; we just touch on the benefits and limitations of outcome-based programs, since an understanding of these helps in

carrying out a balanced evaluation.

TIPS Instead, in Chapter 8 we look at how Outcome-Based Evaluation can be conducted effectively by adopting the investigation methodology used in the investment industry called *Due Diligence*. This is another emerging trend. Besides shifting the spotlight from outputs to outcomes, funders are changing their mind-sets to consider their funding of program providers from the point of view of investors rather than grant givers. They seek returns from their investments in the form of outcomes. They apply due diligence methods in investigating the provider and the program.

They also attempt to *Add Value* to program providers, which we discuss in Chapter 9. In Chapter 10 we discuss *Monitoring*, which is an important process in Private Equity and Venture Capital investing. The application of these investment processes to evaluating social programs and working with program providers turns Outcome-Based Evaluation into what I would call *Outcome-Based Investment* or *Outcome Investing*.

After Chapter 11 which concludes the Guide, there is a Case Study to enable you, and perhaps together with your colleagues, to put into practice what we have gone through. This case is based on an actual program conducted by Outward Bound Singapore, which is funded by the Tote Board.

An overview of the case, together with teaching notes and references are provided for the teacher or facilitator in the Teaching Notes section. If you intend to work on the case study, you should not refer to the Teaching Notes section until you complete the case. This will enable you to derive maximum benefit from the case study.

Some of the content may be repeated in different parts of this Guide, but it is for the sake of clarity or completeness. To recap, we go through the basics of Social Programs in Part I, the Planning of Outcome-Based Programs in Part II, and the Evaluation of Outcome-Based Programs in Part III. Part II will benefit program providers, while Part III is meant for funders.

However, program providers will find Part III useful too, as an understanding of how their programs are evaluated will help them plan their programs successfully. On the other hand, funders will find Part II useful too, as an understanding of the planning process helps in their evaluation of programs.

A mutual understanding of each other's processes and issues fosters a close working partnership between providers and funders that will help both to successfully achieve their goals of doing good. In so doing, the program beneficiaries also achieve the best outcomes.

Part I

THE BASICS

Outputs & Outcomes

I n this Chapter we review the elements of outcome-based social programs. Such programs incorporate the elements of traditional programs, which are inputs, activities and outputs. These elements work together to produce the outcomes to the beneficiaries of the program. Therefore they are important and should be taken into consideration together with the outcomes, when planning and developing an outcome-based program.

A social program may be defined as a series of activities or services with a definite beginning and leading to a defined and predictable end to achieve a set of social objectives. The program is created or developed to meet an identified social need or to help solve a social problem. In so doing, various resources are used to promote, support and carry out the program. The organisation that sets up the program and carries it out may be called the service provider or program provider.
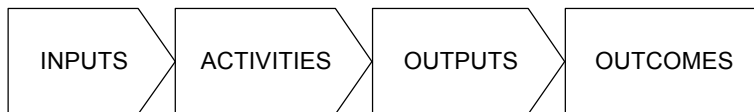
INPUTS ＞ ACTIVITIES ＞ OUTPUTS ＞ OUTCOMES

Fig 2. Outcome-Based Program Structure

Fig 2 from the Introduction is shown again, to depict the elements of an outcome-based social program. We shall discuss the elements in detail, in particular focusing on outputs and outcomes.

After reviewing the elements, we look at an example Outcome-Based Program. We compare outputs and outcomes, and delve deeper into outcomes. We end this Chapter by discussing the benefits and limitations of using outcomes in planning out a social program.

Needs

Social needs are problems in society that call for action to be taken to alleviate or service them. Therefore, social welfare and charitable organisations, whether public, private, or jointly, create or develop programs to help those in need.

Social program providers identify the needs that are critical in their communities and

within their capability to assist. They must understand the problems well enough in order to plan out programs that will achieve the desired outcomes that address the identified needs. Often they have to verify that the needs are real and important.

The program providers then plan out the proper elements of the programs to achieve the desired outcomes.

Inputs

Inputs required to conduct a social program consist of various resources, such as people, physical, financial and information resources. They include equipment, supplies, tools, facilities, staff, volunteers, and money. Do not forget intangible inputs such as time and ideas, and inputs that will affect the design and conduct of the program such as laws, regulations, as well as funding terms and conditions.

We may think of the stakeholders involved in a program as inputs as well. These are the program provider and its staff; external people such as volunteers, professionals and consultants if any; the funders; the participants who are the beneficiaries of the program; and in some cases the authorities.

Activities

Activities are what are done with the inputs, and the action steps and processes undertaken with the participants, to fulfil the objectives of the program, which are to meet the needs of the participants or to society at large. Activities are strategies, techniques, and service methodology used in a program. More specifically, they may be teaching, training, counselling, sheltering, feeding, clothing, and job preparing.

Activities may be conducted as talks, courses, workshops, outings, projects or surveys. It is important to note that traditionally, activities focus on what the program does, and the outputs that will be achieved, and not the impact on the participants. However, with greater realisation of the importance of outcomes, program providers try to select or conduct activities that will lead to better outcomes.

Note that activities include pre-program and external actions such as preparations, recruitment, marketing, fund raising and consultation.

Outputs

Outputs are the direct products of program activities. They are units of measures of the program deliverables, the volume of activities and services, the amount of work accomplished, and the people served. They are all usually expressed in quantitative terms. Examples are the number of classes or people taught, counselled, sheltered, fed, or clothed; the number of clients served, books published, number of hours of training, counselling sessions, and so on.

Again, outputs say nothing about the actual impact on participants. Outputs have no inherent value but are still important as they could lead to desired benefits or changes, which are outcomes.

Outcomes

Unlike outputs which relate to the program, outcomes relate to the participants of a program. They express the benefits, changes or impact experienced by the participants because of the activities and outputs. These are usually expressed in qualitative terms. However there can be indicators that can be identified and measured to provide quantitative results to reflect the quality of the outcomes.

Some outcomes are not achieved immediately as some changes take time to develop in the beneficiaries. Therefore outcomes are often categorised into immediate or short-term outcomes, intermediate or medium-term outcomes, and long-term outcomes.

Short-term outcomes are initial benefits or changes to participants. They are important as they are indicators of real progress achieved by the participants and they can lead to longer-term effects. The more immediate an outcome, the stronger is the program's impact in this aspect on the participant.

Medium-term outcomes are those changes in behaviour and outlook that take a longer time to develop and arise from new knowledge, skills or attitudes acquired by participants from the program.

Long-term outcomes are ultimate outcomes, which are permanent and meaningful changes in the participants, often in terms of their conditions or status. The longer term the outcome, the more likely that other influences may interfere, thus reducing the chances of success. Also it would be more difficult to attribute the outcome to the program.

Now that we have gone through the elements of outcome-based social programs in some detail, we can see that perhaps a better depiction of such programs would be in Fig 3. It includes the needs, which after all is the rationale for the creation of the program, and it reminds us that the outcomes can be short, medium or long term in nature.

We can also see that the real beginning is the needs and the end is the outcomes.
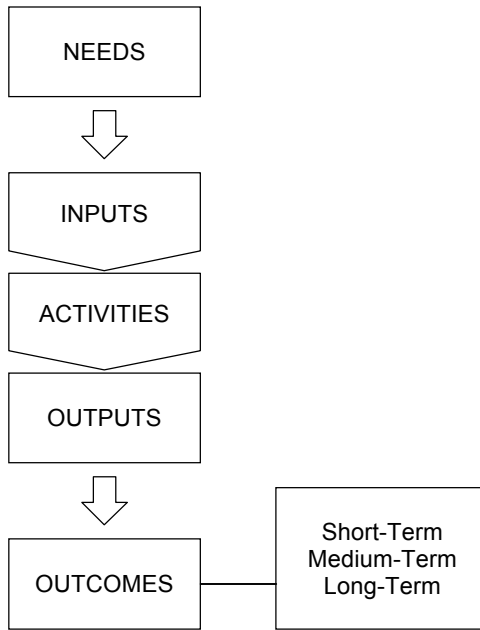
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Fig 3. Detailed Depiction of an Outcome-Based Program

Example of an Outcome-Based Program

Here is an example of an outcome-based program and its elements. Consider a program to develop skills in finding jobs for ex-offenders.

TIPS

o   Inputs would be money, program staff, volunteers, consultants, computers, facilities, curricula, training materials, training equipment such as a projector and screen and perhaps a video recorder to record and show role-playing interviews.

o   Activities would be talks, workshops, role-plays, mentoring, group sessions, and training exercises such as job searching and selecting, application writing, resume writing, and interviewing. Pre-program activities would be coordination of staff, volunteers and materials, promotion of the program, recruitment and selection of participants, location of training facilities, and discussions with potential partners and funders.

o   Outputs would be the number of participants, levels of attendance, course completion rates, materials developed, materials used, training sessions held, and the number of trainers and their hours. Note that none of these describe what happened to the participants.

o   Outcomes would be measures of the benefits derived by the participants. Did the ex-offenders acquire the desired skills, did they show greater confidence at interviews, and were their self-awareness and self-presentation increased? These are immediate or short-term outcomes that can be tested or assessed at the end of the program. After a period of time, the participants could be surveyed to find out their success rates in applying for jobs, going for interviews and securing jobs.

These would be medium-term outcomes. Long-term outcomes would be the number who stayed on their jobs, for how long, and the rate of recidivism.

Differences Between Outputs and Outcomes

It is important to be clear on the differences between outputs and outcomes. Here are several examples to illustrate:

- A program to teach youths on anger management:
  - Outputs would be the number of youths participating and the number of training sessions.
  - Outcomes would be changes in the participants' understanding of anger and impact on behaviour, and changes in the participants' responses in anger situations.

- A corrective talk to littering offenders:
  - Outputs would be the number of sessions and number of participants per session.
  - Outcomes would be the number of repeat offences among the participants, and greater pride in the cleanliness of the environment.

- Overnight camping for youths:
  - Outputs would be the types and number of activities during the camp.
  - Outcomes would be that the youths learn new skills in outdoor survival, develop positive peer relationships, and greater sense of self-confidence.

Quality versus Quantity
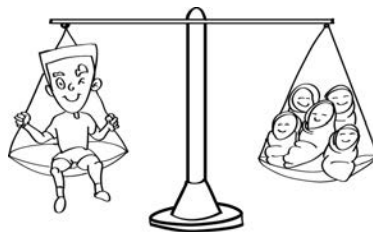
Here is another example[2] that highlights how a program is planned out differently after the program provider places greater importance on outcomes than outputs. Generally, outcomes relate to quality whereas output relates to quantity. Thus this example illustrates the contention between quality and quantity.

The program is to provide speech and language therapy (SLT) to dyslexic children from low-income families and charging them subsidised fees. The SLT is to help the kids reach a sufficient level of proficiency to enable learning on the main literacy program.

The program, over a duration of two years, is designed to allocate a capacity of 15 kids per

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[2] This example came about from my discussions with the Dyslexia Association of Singapore. My thanks to the very able and dedicated staff for providing the inputs.

quarter for 20 hours of SLT each, resulting in a total output of 120 kids. However the provider is rethinking the program after considering the outcomes of these kids.

The nature and intensity of learning difficulties are different for each dyslexic kid. Thus the amount, or length, of therapy required to reach a particular proficiency level is different also. Having a fixed length of 20 hours therapy may not be a good idea as many may not reach an adequate or sustainable level of proficiency. They cannot afford to continue the SLT by paying full fees.

A better program would be to have an initial intake of 15 children. When a child reaches the proficiency level to access learning on the literacy program, the child graduates and another child is taken in. If a child does not reach this level in a year, the therapy place is released for another child.

The end result is a lower output of children. But most if not all of them will have reached a sufficiently high level of proficiency, which is a better outcome. The revised program will produce lower outputs but better outcomes.

Categorisation of Outcomes

Literature on outcomes has quoted a couple of acronyms for outcomes. One is BACKS to stand for changes in Behaviour, Attitude, Condition, Knowledge and Status. Another is KASA, which represents Knowledge, Attitude, Skills and Aspirations. We can perhaps combine them together with Values to form BACKSAVS to stand for Behaviour, Attitude, Condition, Knowledge, Status, Aspirations, Values and Skills. When thinking about outcomes, the acronyms help us to remember what they are or are not.

Another way of categorising outcomes is as follows:

- o   Learning: Awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, opinions, aspirations, motivation.
- o   Behaviour: Practice, decision-making, policies, social action.
- o   Condition: Social, economic, civic, environmental, literacy, self-reliance.

Outcomes would be changes, increases or improvements in learning, behaviour or condition.

Not Outcomes

To further appreciate the nature of outcomes, here are examples of results which are *not* outcomes:

- o   Improved inputs such as better equipment or more qualified teachers.
- o   Increased number of participants. (This is usually just an output. However if there is an educational or awareness program to encourage people to enrol in a certain training course, then the increase in number

of participants in this training program is an outcome of the educational or awareness program.)

o Participants' satisfaction with certain aspects of the program, such as efficient arrangements, courtesy of staffers, refreshments provided, etc.

o Outcomes that are beyond the scope of a program should not be attributed to the program. This is particularly so for long-term outcomes which may actually arise from other influences.

o Outcomes that are derived by a targeted group of individuals should not be generalised to be derived by the whole community.

Unintended and Negative Outcomes

A program may have unintended outcomes or negative outcomes. All programs should be reviewed to consider whether there will be unintended or negative outcomes. For example, giving rewards to students for improved exam grades might encourage cheating or some students may be bullied into giving up their rewards. The programs should be adjusted or monitored to avoid or prevent such outcomes.

Part II

PLANNING PROGRAMS

Program Planning

How would you develop an outcome-based program? One way would be to develop it in the traditional way by working out the inputs and activities required to generate the desired outputs. Then you would merely think what outcomes would result from the program and its outputs. But chances are you would not be able to achieve the best outcomes and in fact may achieve very little or superficial outcomes.

You must plan the whole program from the start with the desired end outcomes in mind. Then all the inputs, activities and outputs are tied together to produce the best outcomes. At the start, the outcomes may be hazy and would largely be based on the identified need that requires to be satisfied. As the planning proceeds, the important and achievable outcomes will become apparent and can be selected. Some revisions to the inputs and activities may then be needed. Several iterative steps may be required.

Planning and developing a new outcome-based program properly can therefore be a challenging and tedious task. We shall make the work easier by breaking down the processes into logical steps. Fig 4 shows the first set of steps.
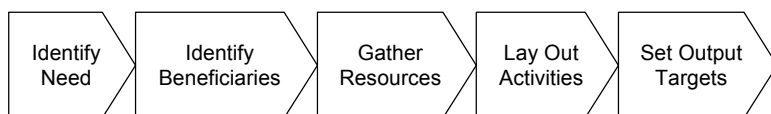
| Identify Need | Identify Beneficiaries | Gather Resources | Lay Out Activities | Set Output Targets |

Fig 4. Program Planning

Fig 5 and Fig 6 show the next sets of steps which will be covered in the next Chapters.

Select Outcomes	Find Indicators	Collect Data	Analyse Data

Fig 5. Outcome Planning

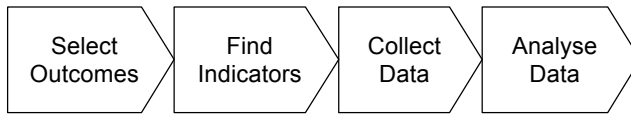| Do Logic Model	Do Costing & Coordination	Run Trial	Do Reports

Fig 6. Integrating the Plans

Identify Need

If your organisation wishes to start a new program to serve a need, you might have already identified the need. Whether or not this is the case, you have to verify the identified need by asking a few questions and making investigations to get the answers:

- o Is the need met by other programs? Or is the need not met adequately currently?
- o Is the need credible? Ensure that the need is real and substantiated by careful observation, research or experience.
- o Is there another need that is more urgent or important? Would it be more worthwhile to address this need instead?
- o What changes are desirable to meet the need? These would be the target outcomes. Make preliminary assessments of the target outcomes to be assured that they are realistic and achievable.
- o Would potential funders support a program to address this need? Without funding, the program cannot proceed.

Each program should have a simple mission statement stating the need and what the program does, for whom and what are the benefits aimed to serve the need.

Identify Beneficiaries

When the need is identified, the beneficiaries would also be identified. However you may need to be more specific and targeted in defining the demographics of the beneficiaries, so that the program can be designed to achieve maximum benefits. If the program tries to serve too wide a group of beneficiaries, it may be too diffused and many beneficiaries will not get the desired quality of outcomes. Demographic characteristics may be categorised by age, sex, race, education level, skill level, income level, employment status, family profile, type of disability, etc.

If the need is spread over several demographic groups, you can tailor different programs to serve each group.

Gather Resources

These are the inputs to your program, which include people, money, equipment, materials, supplies, facilities, partners, collaborators, related agencies, community groups, and funders. People would include staff, both full-time and part-time, volunteers, consultants, professionals and officials and sometimes the media as well. Do not forget intangible inputs such as people's ideas and time, online resources, laws and regulations as well as funding application, approval and disbursement processes.

Lay Out Activities

Activities are what the program carries out, using the inputs to fulfil the program's mission. Activities include the workflow and methods, techniques, and strategies used for the delivery of the services.

You have to lay out the various activities required in the program (or in each program if you have several) to deliver the services to the beneficiaries. If you have several programs to serve the need, create mechanisms to facilitate coordination and collaboration between programs in terms of scheduling, use of resources, data collection and reporting. Program leaders can meet regularly to compare notes and resolve resource or scheduling conflicts.

Here are some questions to ask to work out the activities required:

o   What should be done to address the need?
o   Should these be internally or externally delivered?
o   Are there additional external activities that are necessary, such as promotion of the program, recruitment of external collaborators and recruitment of participants?
o   How will the activities or services help to meet the need?
o   How will the activities or services help the participants?
o   What activities or services will help or not help the participants to achieve the desired outcomes? Remove or modify those that do not.

Set out the program schedule, such as start date, dates for certain milestones and end date. Add in required pre-program activities such as promotion of the program, recruitment of participants and collaborators, as well as preliminary consultations with funders.

Set Output Targets

Outputs are the direct results of the program's activities. They are usually measures of the volume of work carried out, such as the number of participants that completed the program or passed the tests, the number of classes taught, the amount of educational materials distributed, or the number of hours of counselling held.

Besides measuring the volume of work, outputs have little value in themselves. But they are intended to lead on to generating the desired outcomes for participants. With more inputs, more activities may be carried out, and more outputs derived. However this does not necessarily mean that more or better outcomes are achieved.

You need to set targets for outputs as a measure of the efforts required in the activities and inputs to produce the outputs. At the end of the program, comparison of actual versus target outputs will help in the assessment of the sufficiency and efficiency of utilisation of inputs, and the conduct of the activities.

Outcome Planning

T his is probably the most difficult part of the program planning process. First of all, it must be realised that a program must have outcomes and that these must be clearly stated and measured, indirectly if not directly. As a result, the quality of the services provided to beneficiaries can be measured and later improved, if necessary.

Therefore careful thinking, discussion and rethinking of intended outcomes will pay off, as the choices will determine how the program inputs, activities and outputs may need to be modified to better match and meet the choices.

In this Chapter we shall discuss selection of outcomes and the measurement of outcomes, which consist of finding indicators and determining how to collect and analyse the data.

For reference, we reproduce here Fig 5 which was presented earlier, to show the Outcome Planning process which is part of the whole Outcome-Based Program Planning process.
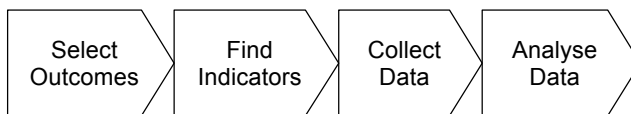

Fig 5. Outcome Planning

Select Outcomes

You may first refer back to Chapter 2 to refresh on what are outcomes. Remember that they are changes in beneficiaries in terms of BACKSAVS: behaviour, attitudes, condition, knowledge, status, aspirations, values and skills.

It is also advisable to take a step back to think again about the program and the need that is to be addressed. The chosen outcomes should be related and relevant. The following questions should be asked:

   o   Are the outcomes based on the program's mission and meeting the need? Select

those that are relevant, valid and would satisfy the need.

o Do the outcomes resolve the root cause of the need or the symptoms? However the program need not necessarily provide a total solution.

o Are the outcomes really outcomes or are they outputs?

o How should the program's inputs, activities and outputs be modified to better match and meet the chosen outcomes? Or should the outcomes be modified for better match? In other words, are all the elements of the program (the inputs, activities, outputs, beneficiaries and outcomes) logically and consistently linked?

o Are the activities the right things to be done to achieve the desired outcomes? Do not be carried away with whether the activities will be done right.

o Can we anticipate potential problems that will hinder achievement of the desired outcomes? Modify the plans to prevent or rectify them.

Here are more questions to ask to help in the proper selection of outcomes:

o Are the outcomes clearly stated, easy to understand and persuasive? Redraft with care.

o Are the outcomes realistic and can be accomplished, or are they airy-fairy or idealistic? They should be ambitious, yet feasible.

o Have external experts been consulted? This is to avoid in-bred or biased ideas.

o Are the chosen outcomes qualitatively stated, such as "more …", "increased …", "enhanced …", "new …", "changed …"? These are acceptable.

o Are there outcomes that are sub-goals of the main objective of the program? These may be useful in helping to achieve the main objective. They may allow easier measurement of incremental progress and post-mortem of any failures.

o How sustainable are the chosen outcomes? Differentiate between short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes. Make sure that they relate and logically lead from one to the other.

o Are there duplicate, overlapping or unimportant outcomes? Weed them out.

o Are there potential negative outcomes? Can we think of any unintended outcomes that may arise?

The selection of outcomes is not a scientific process that just needs to be done once through. Judgement is involved and thoughts and ideas can only be clarified and crystallised by going through the process. Therefore complete a cycle of selecting all the desired outcomes, then carry out at least one more cycle to fine tune. If they are not well thought out, the program's objectives will not be well met.

Outcome Measurements

Generally speaking, outcomes are not easy to measure, as they are mostly qualitative in nature. Therefore indicators are used instead to reflect the benefits derived and the changes achieved by the participants of a program. After the desired outcomes have been selected, relevant indicators have to be found. In selecting an indicator, thought has to be given to its relevance to the outcome, as well as data collection aspects: how, who and when to measure, and who does the measuring. We shall look into these in detail in the following sections.

Besides measuring outcomes derived by the beneficiaries, measurements may be made on other aspects of a program, which depend on the interests of the service providers or funders. For example, the program organiser may wish to find out how well the program was run so as to make future improvements; program partners may wish to know how much and how important were their contributions, to determine future involvement; and the funders may want to know how cost-effective was the program in order to consider future funding. Many of these measurements may require indicators as well.

Find Indicators

There is no magic formula that produces a list of indicators for each desired outcome, although through your own program experience or that of other program providers, several tried and tested indicators may already be known. Otherwise, logic and common sense should prevail.

As a simple example, let us take a program to promote anti-littering in a condominium. The desired outcomes would be a cleaner and safer neighbourhood. It can be easily reasoned out that the indicators of these outcomes would be the amount of litter found and the number of high-rise littering incidents or accidents over a period of time. Measurements can be made before and after the program. The amount of litter found can be measured by the weight and volume of the litter collected by cleaners from the condominium grounds over a period of three months after the program.

As part of the program, participants are requested to report observed high-rise littering incidents or accidents to the program provider, supplemented by police reports, if any. This example shows how we can derive indicators from the desired outcomes, how these indicators may be measured, who collects the data, and when the measurements are to be made.

Here are some questions to help in the finding of suitable indicators:

- o Is the chosen indicator relevant and related to the outcome to be measured?
- o Is the chosen indicator reliable and practical?
- o Is the chosen indicator vague or ambiguous? Even though the indicator may be relevant, it would be useless if it is not well specified.
- o Will the indicator provide qualitative measures, such as "substantial", "adequate", or "acceptable"? Indicators should preferably provide quantitative results, but qualitative results may still be useful as supplementary information as a last resort.
- o Would more than one indicator be required for a particular outcome? This is possible as one indicator may not be sufficient to capture all aspects of the outcome.
- o Are there indicators which track progress during the running of the program? Such indicators are useful.
- o Are there indicators required to measure other aspects of the program besides the outcomes? Find out what may be required by service providers and funders.

Each chosen indicator will require the following to be spelled out: Data Sources (What data to collect and who to measure?), Collection Methods (How, who and when to collect?) and Data Analysis (How to analyse the data?).

Collect Data

Remember that the most important data is a proper database of the participants in the program. This is because we want to measure what happened to them. There should be profiles of the participants such as age, sex, race, educational, skill and income levels, as well as data relating to their respective attendance and performance results. Other data to be collected are particulars of the program staff and service providers, and the schedules and types of activities carried out.

Additional pre-program data may need to be collected to have more detailed profiles of the participants. The pre-program data enables comparisons with post-program data and allows more ways to categorise data according to various characteristics of the participants for the purpose of analysis.

Here is a list of important data to be collected:

- o Quantitative measurements pre- and post-program, such as weight gained or lost, increased lung capacity (for a stop-smoking program) and skills or knowledge acquired, which are closely related to the outcomes.
- o Evaluations at the end of the program, such as surveys, checklists, interview forms, test results and scores, observation notes & ratings, self-testimonials, staff evaluations and discussions, and focus group reviews.
- o Observations by individuals in the program such as staff, volunteers and consultants involved in the program. Care has to be taken to ensure that they do not slant the observations to make the program look good.
- o Observations by individuals external to the program such as relatives, employers, teachers, counsellors, or by the neighbourhood, community or various committees. Such third party reports are more relevant for programs affecting the neighbourhood or community or for public awareness and education. However they may be inaccurate due to effects of memory, perception, misinterpretation or fears.
- o Observations by trained observers, who can provide specific information that are usually reliable and data-rich.
- o Self-reports or assessments by participants, but consideration must be given that there may be biases or unreliability of judgements.
- o Past program records: such past records may be used for comparisons to show progress or as benchmarks.
- o Records from other organisations (such as schools, companies, or sports clubs which the participants belong to or are involved with).

It is advisable to have a variety and range of data collected. Keep in mind that data may have to be aggregated if there are confidentiality issues.

You have to decide on whether you should measure all the participants or a sample or subgroup, such as only those who complete the program or pass the end-of-program test, or only those with certain characteristics. Your decision may be different for different measures or data to be collected. Very often, even though the measurements are made on individuals, the data collected would be aggregated to provide more meaningful analyses and information.

Collection Methods

Data collection methods and procedures must be spelled out and documented. There must be accuracy in the data collected and consistency between data collectors. The documentation can be revised to capture improvements in the methods. Seek professional help to develop a data collection system if necessary. A poorly designed or documented system defeats the purpose of measuring the indicators and outcomes. But trade-offs may be necessary because of costs, time and expertise.

In choosing or designing a data collection method, keep in mind that the method must be:

- o Credible: it is not biased and not subject to manipulation
- o Valid: it is a relevant and proper measure for the outcome
- o Reliable: it is accurate and consistent
- o Transparent: it is clear and easily understood
- o Feasible: it is realistic and practical
- o Inexpensive: it is not too costly to implement
- o Time-effective: it is not too time-consuming to design and use
- o Easy to use: it does not have too many questions, categories or topics
- o Essential: it does not ask for inessential information
- o Timely: it should allow data to be collected in a timely fashion as data can vary with time
- o Tried and tested: it uses tried and tested methods where possible.

In terms of timing of measurements, most are carried out at the end of a program. If milestones are important, then you have to work out the time intervals during and after the program to make the measurements. In this case, measurements at the start and end of the program will still be needed.

Keep in mind that the impact of a program may decline with time and may be affected by other factors later on. Some programs may have just a one-time impact, like building an extension to a nursing home, or a fund-raising project, so the timing may be just the commencement and completion of the project.

Sometimes choosing the right people to do the measuring is important. There may be confidentiality issues, so people who the participants trust should collect the data. Or the proper collection of the data may require proper understanding of the measurement process or the basis of the measurement, so people with the right expertise may be required.

Analyse Data

The measured indicators can be analysed in isolation or in combination. They may be related to each participant and breakdowns can be compiled for each category of interest, such as age, sex, educational background or income level. Together with overall statistics, such breakdowns can be analysed and may provide meaningful information on variations in performances or outcomes. These may also enable appropriate adjustments to be made to the program or parts of the program for future improvement.

However, be careful that breaking down into too many subcategories may result in too small a number of participants to provide statistically significant conclusions.
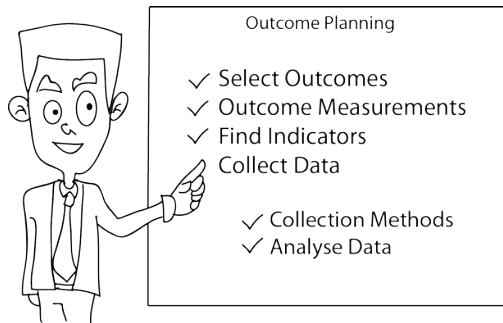
Issues to Note

There may not be well-established or readily available indicators and measurement methods of outcomes for some programs.

If measurements are not well chosen or well designed, they may require onerous time, efforts and money. You may need to make wise and sensible trade-offs. Also, increased experience help efficiencies and reduction of resources needed.

Even if the measurements show that the intended benefits are not achieved or not fully achieved, the findings do not show where the problems were and how they can be fixed. Therefore outcome measurement should not replace program measurements which can detect flaws in the resources or conduct of the program that could have resulted in the poor outcomes.

Even if the measurements show that the intended benefits were achieved, they do not prove with certainty a direct causal relationship, i.e. that benefits were solely and directly due to the program. Such proof requires statistical verification using control groups and isolating the influences of the program from other factors that may have been present. However, if the program works, there is no need to split hairs over this or incur unnecessary expenditures to get proof.

The findings of the outcome measurements do not indicate or prove whether the measurements were the right and proper ones for the specific program. It is the designers of the program who need to ensure that the indicators and the measurements are the most appropriate.

Expertise may not be available internally to design, conduct and analyse the measurements. You may have to leverage outside resources such as from universities, corporations, or get a training grant to build expertise internally.

The need to achieve high performance as shown by the measurements may result in choosing participants who are most likely to show positive change. This could leave out those participants who most need the program.

Be alert to inappropriate outcome targets imposed by funders which could result in adverse effects on your program. Be prepared and open to sort out the issues with the funders.

Be careful that the need for outcome measurements can impose extra burdens on the participants, whether in terms of time, privacy or confidentiality. This may be made worse if the personal stories or case studies are reported or presented openly.

Many of these limitations and problems have no answer other than a call for better understanding and considerate handling of the issues by all concerned.
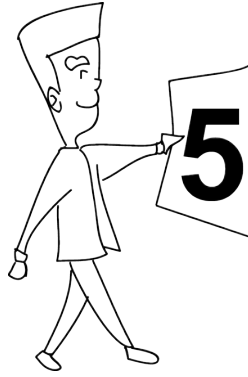
Integrating the Plans

A t this stage, the program's inputs, activities and outputs have been planned out. Outcomes have been defined, indicators have been chosen, and measurement systems have been worked out. We now have to go through the final steps. We reproduce here Fig 6 which was presented earlier as the final part of the whole Outcome-Based Program Planning process.
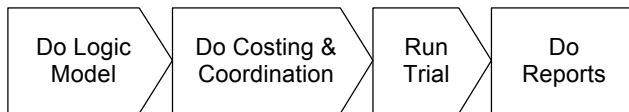

Fig 6. Integrating the Plans

In this part, we first map out a Logic Model and then cost out the program to determine the amount of funding required and to secure in-principle support. The program details are then distributed to all involved, other than participants, so that the efforts can be coordinated. Some program providers may go through a trial run to test out the program, collect and analyse the data and to write a preliminary report.

With the completion of this part, the program is ready to be launched, and staff can be confident that with all the planning and preparation, it will run smoothly and will provide the best outcomes to the beneficiaries.

Logic Model

The Logic Model was first developed in the 1970s and has since undergone many refinements. It is widely used to represent projects, programs or policies that are meant to produce particular results. It can be used at all stages of a program, whether it is at the planning, implementation or evaluation stage.

It depicts the causal and time sequences and relationships of all the important elements and sub-elements of the program, and hence allows detection of broken, missing, false or reversed links, and helps to throw out unimportant, irrelevant or inconsistent sub-elements.

In its simplest form, the Logic Model for an outcome-based program is shown in Fig 7.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes

Fig 7. A Simple Logic Model

A more detailed Logic Model is shown in Fig 8. Use whichever template you wish, or design your own, so long as it captures all the important elements of the program.

You may also wish to compile pre-program inputs and activities that are necessary for the program to be launched, in a separate template.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Indicators
			Short-Term	
			Medium-Term	
			Long-Term	

Fig 8. A More Detailed Logic Model

All members of the team should participate in this exercise. Draw the template on a large whiteboard. Write one idea or item of an input, activity, output, outcome and indicator on a sticky note and paste onto the template. Notes can be moved around. Draw arrows from left to right to show temporal and causal links between items. Certain activities may need to be sequenced, so some arrows may be within the Activities column.

This exercise will build up connected chains of items resulting in an outcome. One chain may end in more than one outcome or several chains may end in one outcome. Use a different colour to draw vertical lines showing relationship links. These would usually be within a column.

There can be differences in opinion when drawing the lines but just get a quick consensus and do not waste time and effort by drawing dotted lines as a compromise to show loosely connected items. This will make the model too messy and will lose its usefulness. However, make sure that causal relationships are correctly represented.

You should now be able to easily see isolated items, broken links and chains that do not end in an outcome. Going through this exercise will also help in identifying inputs,

activities, outputs, outcomes and indicators that might have been missed out. You might also see that certain activities might be merged for better efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Having a helicopter view of the whole program will help to weed out outcomes that are inconsistent, duplicative, overlapping, unimportant or negative. But do not simply weed out short-term outcomes in favour of medium or long-term ones. Often the short-term outcomes are necessary as they lead to the longer-term outcomes.

Be prepared to spend more time than you expect. It would also be wise to break out and come back to the whiteboard at another time or another day. You may need to go through a few rounds of moving, adding or deleting the items and redrawing, adding or deleting the lines. If outcome-based program planning is new to some staff, they may have difficulty differentiating between outputs and outcomes. Here is where the team leader can use BACKSAVS (see page 12) as a reminder.

After the staff have worked out a satisfactory Logic Model, you may wish to invite external parties to take a fresh look and provide feedback. Find people who have the knowledge and experience relevant to the program and its objectives, and people who will be involved in the program, including funders.

The time spent will be worth it. This exercise helps to improve the program, as well as clarify and align the views of the group so that they all work in the same direction towards the program goals.

At the end of this Chapter, on page 34, is an example Logic Model. It is formatted vertically to fit into the page, and is simplified for the sake of clarity.

Costing and Coordination

Once the plans are worked out, the costs to run the program have to be calculated, including the cost of data collection and analysis, and hiring of external consultants. Management has to check whether internal funding is enough or whether a funder has to be sought. If insufficient funds are available, the program has to be scaled down. A funding proposal, whether for internal or external funding, will have to be submitted and commitment of funding has to be secured. This is discussed in the next Chapter.

Once it is determined that the program is doable, program details have to be distributed to all involved at all levels. These include staff, volunteers, partners, service providers, board, committee members, and funders, if any, so that they are informed and their efforts are coordinated.

There may have to be final tweaking of timelines to match and align the activity timelines with those of staff and service providers. The scheduling of measurements to be conducted and analysed have to match the availability of staff and external resources such as consultants and students. The timelines for analyses and reports have to meet internal schedules as well as deadlines that are imposed by funders.

Trial Run

Some literature recommend a trial run of the program before implementation. This would perhaps be necessary only if it is a new and complicated program, and if the program provider has sufficient resources to do so, including staff, time and money. A complex program may be broken down into subsets and only certain subsets be chosen for trials.

If deemed necessary, the trial will be useful in finding implementation problems. Program staff and data collectors can feedback issues. Incomplete data collection or inaccurate data measurement can be detected. The trial participants can feedback hiccups and opinions that can help to improve delivery and perhaps even outcomes.

By ironing out all these issues in the trial, we can avoid midstream program changes while the program is in progress, as they will cause disruptions and confusion. In the worst case, the trial may show that the whole program is so weak that it may be best to go back to the drawing board, but this is unlikely if careful thought and planning have taken place.

For the trial to be most useful, the process has to be carried through to analysis and reporting, which may also show up flaws in data entry or collection, receiving inconsistent or conflicting answers from surveys and interviews, or getting irrelevant or useless information. Analysis and tabulation of data will also show out errors in interpreting or transcribing data, as well as whether tests were appropriate in terms of type, difficulty level, or target demography.

Trial Reports and Final Reports

The comments here are valid for reports for the trial run as well as formal reports to be prepared on completion of the program.

The report should not be just for the sake of reporting or to satisfy funders. It should also be for the purpose of learning and improvement. A report that is just presenting the analyses of the measurements is not enough. There should also be explanations, discussions, findings and conclusions arising from the measurements. These should report on whether the outcomes were up to expectations or not, and what were the internal and external causes and influences. Relevant feedback and observations from all involved should be captured.

The report should propose improvements for future programs. It should be clearly written with tables, charts and commentary. There could be customised versions of the report for funders, board, staff and others, with more details and emphasis on their respective areas of interest. Some funders may require an executive summary.

The format of a report could be along the following lines:

- o   Objectives: brief descriptions of the need and the intended outcomes
- o   Background Information: relevant information of the organisation and the observed situation from which the need arises

- o Program Overview: summary of the program, outlining the Inputs, including profiles of participants; Activities, including timelines; target Outputs and Outcomes, including expected longer- term outcomes
- o Analysis of Measurements: interpretations of indicators and results to reflect progress and achievements or non-achievement of outcomes
- o Program Assessment: objective assessments of various aspects of the program by staff and external parties involved
- o Conclusions and Recommendations: including future improvements
- o Appendices: details of indicators and respective measures, summaries of data and information collected, data analyses and results, basis for interpretations and conclusions, and interesting case studies of some participants.

Summary of Outcome-Based Program Planning

Fig 9 is a recap and outline of the whole planning process. The last three steps of the process shown in this table would also be the implementation phase of the program.

Fig 9. Outcome-Based Planning Process

1	Identify need	Define clearly the need being addressed.
2	Identify beneficiaries	Determine the demographics and the number of participants.
3	Gather resources	Determine and secure all internal and external resources required.
4	Lay out activities	Work out the activities, their schedules, delivery methods and inputs required.
5	Set output targets	Set the volume of work to aim for, particularly those that lead to outcomes.
6	Select outcomes	Choose clear outcomes that relate to and address the need.
7	Find indicators	Determine measurable indicators for each outcome.
8	Collect data	Document the how, when, where and who for data to be collected.
9	Analyse data	Spell out how data is to be aggregated & analysed to generate relevant statistics.
10	Do logic model	Map out the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and indicators logically.
11	Do costing & coordination	Work out costs, get funding approved in principle and coordinate all parties.
12	Run trial or run program	Have a trial run to debug the program if necessary, or proceed to run the program.
13	Do reports	Work out the formats, conclusions and recommendations to be reported.

Fig 10. Logic Model Example

PROGRAM: Job Re-Entry Skills Training for Ex-Offenders

INPUTS			
Life-skills trainer	Internal staff A	Internal staff B Video camera	Help organisation rep. and brochures
ACTIVITIES			
Life-skills training Workplace skills training	Job search planning Resume writing Cover letter writing	Interview questions Posture & dressing Explaining conviction Interview role-play	Talk on finding assistance
OUTPUTS			
No. of participants attended	No. of participants attended No. of resumes and cover letters written	FAQ compilations Dressing show and tell Role-play videos	List of help organisations
OUTCOMES			
Greater self-confidence and self-esteem	Job search and application skills	Confidence and skill in interview conduct and explaining past	
INDICATORS			
Self-assessment Interview by staff	No. of job applications	No. of job interviews	

o   Draw arrows downwards connecting items with temporal or causal links.
o   Change the sequence of activities if they are related and in the wrong order.
o   It is all right if one chain of items ends up in more than one outcome.
o   It is all right if more than one chain of items end up in one outcome.
o   Weed out isolated items, correct or remove broken links, and remove a chain if it does not end up in an outcome.
o   Review the model another day, and/or have it reviewed by external parties.

Funding Proposal

Y ou have fine-tuned your program and now you are ready to secure funding for it. Whether the program is to be internally or externally funded or a combination of both, you would need to put up a funding proposal. This Chapter is to suggest the format and the key details that should be incorporated. A program provider may have its own preferred format, but frequently it has to be tailored to the prospective funder's format. The suggested format here helps to ensure that the important information to be provided is complete.

It would be helpful to prepare an executive summary and a slide presentation. The executive summary should not be longer than two pages. The presentation should highlight the key points, and you can afford to indulge in some hard selling, since the formal proposal should just provide facts objectively.

The executive summary may be the initial submission to sound out the interest of the funder. This could be followed by a meeting, where you can go through your hard sell presentation and answer the initial questions from the prospective funder. Finally you submit the formal proposal, or one modified to suit the funder, if there is interest. Your work is not finished, as there will be further rounds of meetings and questions until a funding decision is reached.

Proposal Format

Here is a suggested format for the funding proposal, and the details that should preferably be included:

1. Executive Summary
   o Introduction to our organisation
   o Social needs or problems being addressed
   o Brief profiles of target beneficiaries
   o Program outline
   o Overall costs and funding required

2. Organisation Details
    o Organisation chart and responsibilities
    o Details of program staff
    o Track records of our organisation

3. Program Inputs
    o Details of resources, including external resources
    o Beneficiaries' profiles and demography

4. Program Activities
    o Pre-program activities
    o Details of program activities including time lines

5. Program Outputs
    o Target outputs
    o Subsidiary and intermediate milestones and goals

6. Program Outcomes
    o Target outcomes including respective indicators and measurement systems
    o Relationship of the target outcomes to the need or problem being addressed
    o Subsidiary and intermediate outcomes
    o Quantitative and qualitative aspects of the outcomes

7. Post-program Activities
    o Follow up of participants
    o Longer-term outcomes
    o Follow-on programs, planned or potential
    o Remedial programs

8. Costs and Funding Details
    o Breakdown of costs and receipts
    o Program cash flow
    o Amount of funding requested
    o Justifications for funding

9. Summary and Conclusion
    o Program's benefits to society
    o Concluding remarks

10. Appendices
    o Logic model (simplified, if too complex)
    o White papers, if any, on the sociology of the needs or problems being addressed
    o Reports, if any, on the pervasiveness and intensity of the social needs or problems
       being addressed
    o Reports, if any, on how such needs or problems are addressed elsewhere
    o Measurement of the social impact of the program (desirable to work this out if
       possible).

The points listed above are self-explanatory and should be used as guides to the information to be provided. You can see that they follow the steps in the program planning process that we have gone through.
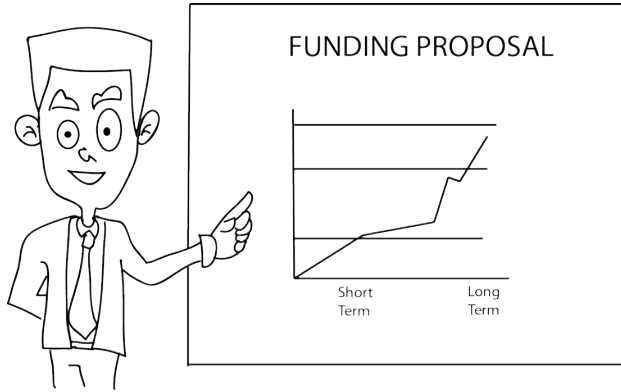
Part III

FUNDING PROGRAMS

Outcome-Based Evaluation

F unders of social programs traditionally evaluate social programs by examining the inputs, activities and outputs. Many have moved on to evaluate outcomes as well. The methodology to do this is usually called Outcome-Based Evaluation (OBE) or Outcome Funding.

OBE is a systematic way to assess a program, emphasising on the extent to which the program will or has achieved its desired outcomes. The central issue in the evaluation is:

- o How did or will the program change or improve the behaviour, attitude, condition, knowledge, status, aspirations, values or skills of the participants?

The evaluation therefore focuses on the quality and the achievement of the outcomes desired to solve a social need.

A complete evaluation has to examine not merely the outcomes, but all the other elements of the program as well. This is because all the elements of an outcome-based program are linked together. A proper OBE has to evaluate the whole outcome-based program – how well it has been planned and implemented.

Thus the other key issue in OBE is:

- o How well were the Outcome-Based Planning processes carried out and implemented to achieve the desired outcomes?

Funders are encouraged to use OBE to evaluate programs. They have to be careful they are not misled by the name that they need to evaluate only outcomes. The more appropriate name should be Outcome-Based Program Evaluation. They are evaluating programs that have applied Outcome-Based Planning, and to reiterate, they should evaluate the whole program and not just the outcomes.

We have already described and incorporated the Outcome-Based Planning methodology in Part II of this Guide, taking the perspective of program providers. OBE is merely taking

the perspective of a funder instead, to examine what has been planned or implemented.

Some funders have moved beyond OBE. While OBE gives assurance of the quality and value of the outcomes in a program, there is little assurance that the outcomes will be achieved when the program is implemented. They see the need for deeper investigation and are now adopting the investigation methodology of investors such as corporate investors, private equity funds and venture capital funds. This method is called *due diligence*.

There are other investment processes that can be of use to funders. One of them is called *value adding*. In addition to the financial support, investors proactively try to add value by providing other forms of support that will increase the value of the investee or the acquisition. In the same way, funders can add value to the program providers that they fund.

Another investment process is *monitoring*. While it may seem that monitoring is rather simple and straightforward, there are some best practices that funders may not have thought of.

In Chapters 8 to 10 we discuss how due diligence, value adding and monitoring processes can be applied by funders when they evaluate programs and work with providers. In doing so, Outcome Funding will be improved from mere funding to what may be called *Outcome Investing*.

In this Chapter we explain the benefits and limitations of outcome-based programs. Having this understanding helps a funder to carry out OBE in a balanced and sympathetic way.

Outcome-Based Program Benefits

Outcome-Based Funding is the funding of social programs that focuses on the achievement of outcomes by participants. Funders assess programs using OBE, which is a widely used methodology nowadays. Funders can assess how well programs are planned; whether all elements: inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes, work together consistently and effectively with minimal wastage of resources. Funders are therefore able to select the best programs to fund and have enough confidence that the programs will run to plan and will achieve the desired outcomes.

Program providers are also using OBE as a management tool, for self-assessment of their programs, prior to or after implementation. This provides feedback on the performance of programs and points out areas for improvement in program strategies, execution and target setting.

When programs are planned out, whatever staff and volunteer training needs, technical assistance, collaboration partners and other resource needs to fill up gaps in the program requirements can be discovered. Budget planning and allocation of resources are easier with the program details mapped out. Properly planned pre-program activities such as publicity promotion will enhance public image and will more easily attract target participants.

When more programs are run successfully, staff confidence, morale, motivation and cooperation increase; staff and volunteer recruitment becomes easier; and opportunities are given to staff to grow and develop as the organisation expands with more programs as well as more complex programs.

Getting funding is also easier as the programs will better meet the criteria and objectives of the funders. By showing funders that better programs can be planned and ably run will encourage funders to develop closer partnerships.

Outcome-Based Program Problems and Limitations

A social organisation may encounter the following staff problems and constraints in attempting to implement an outcome-based planning process successfully:

- o There are time, work or funding constraints. There could also be insufficient technical expertise, especially in the measurements. While the organisation may recognise the value, it lacks sufficient staff effort, time, expertise and funding to properly implement the process.
- o Some or all of various processes are not carried out well; for example, the need or the outcomes are not clearly identified, or the indicators and measures are not well defined.
- o The management team or some of the key staff do not understand the processes well enough or do not appreciate the value of the processes.
- o Management is too ambitious or fussy in perfecting the system resulting in loss of morale or motivation to complete the process.
- o Staff may feel threatened by the performance measurements and the accountability, so top management or the Board may need to provide assurance and guidance.
- o Staff may have over-used IT to drive the program resulting in lack of personal touch, feel and feedback.
- o Staff may have focused too much on outcome measurement at the expense of loss of focus on outcome achievement.
- o No follow up is conducted to determine the longer-term outcomes. This could be due to a lack of resources or inadequate recording or updating of participants' records.

Management should realise that the whole team must be committed and have perseverance. But they should not go overboard with too many activities, too much cost, or too many outcomes. Complicated and lengthy processes need to be broken down into small steps. If the organisation is small, programs need to be scaled down accordingly. The important aim is to go through the process, learn along the way, and improve with each program.

Besides problems arising from the staff as outlined above, it should be recognised that Outcome-Based Programs do have some inherent limitations, especially if they are not well thought out from the very beginning, such as:

- o If the outcomes desired to solve the need were poorly identified, the program cannot show this out.
- o If the outcomes chosen to be measured are not the best ones, the program will not show that there are better outcomes that need to be measured.
- o Unless a proper post-mortem is conducted using the Logic Model, the running of the program may show that problems were encountered without pinpointing where.
- o During the construction and review of the Logic Model, causality between elements of the program were identified, but the running of the program does not prove such causality, as usually a control group would be necessary, but of course this would be costly and impractical. Thus care has to be taken in making claims that certain outcomes were directly the result of the program.
- o Some measurements may not work out well, but it is true that valid and meaningful measurements are hard to find. Some measurements may require onerous time, effort or money.
- o If a measurement does not work, the program does not show where is the problem and how it can be fixed.
- o Participants have to be carefully chosen, so that they do not feel that they are used as research subjects. On the other hand, care has to be taken that selection of participants is not biased towards those that are more likely to show positive outcomes, in order to show high program performance. Choice should be based on those who most need the program.
- o Care has to be taken that funders do not impose outcome targets that are inappropriate to the program. Program providers have to be open to sorting out such issues with the funders.
- o Care has to be taken that negative outcomes are avoided and do not wash out the positive outcomes. However if the negative outcomes are unanticipated or unavoidable, they can be useful learning points for the program provider.

Many of these problems and limitations have no answer. What the organisation needs is that all staff have proper understanding of the limitations and that they handle the problems cooperatively. What funders have to do is to take these problems and limitations into consideration when conducting OBE.
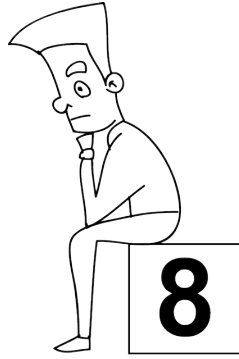
Due Diligence

I nvestors conduct very thorough investigations on potential investees or candidate acquisitions to help select those investments that will provide the best returns or those acquisition that will provide the best value to the organisation as a whole. These investigations are called *due diligence*. In the same way, social funders should use due diligence methods to carry out Outcome-Based Evaluation to select those social programs that are most deserving of funding, and in particular will provide the best outcomes for the beneficiaries.

Due Diligence Basics

Due diligence work can be very extensive, requiring checks on the program management team, and all aspects of the program, including all the inputs, the proposed activities, target outputs and desired outcomes. The funder must not only understand how each element of the program works, but also how they work together to achieve the program objectives.

Furthermore, the funder has to look into the performance of programs previously carried out by the provider and others that may be currently in progress. The funder may even wish to interview past participants or other funders for their experience with the provider.

It is therefore all too easy for the funder to get lost in the quagmire of questions that need to be asked and the information to be obtained. This could result in not only time and effort wasted in gathering unimportant, irrelevant and even useless data, but also having such data confusing the issues and clouding decision-making.

In the following sections are lists of questions that will guide you in your due diligence on various aspects of a social program. You do not need to go through each section with the same thoroughness or else it will be too time consuming and you will have data overload.

You should first review the program as a whole. This will help you to narrow down to those important aspects of the program that need closer investigation. Sometimes it may occur that during the due diligence, what has been initially thought to be unimportant can turn out to be critical. Be flexible and adjust your due diligence accordingly.

When you proceed on to the due diligence of each of the specific elements of the program, you should similarly first and foremost ask yourself what are the most important and critical issues for that element. For example, when you investigate the inputs, you should first think out which of the inputs are critical to the success of the program. What if the chosen inputs are wrong or lacking in the required standards? What if the critical inputs are inadequate or insufficient and may need to be supplemented?

When you investigate the activities, you should first consider which of these are critical to the success of the program. In other words, which activities contribute most to achieving the outcomes? What can go wrong with these activities?

When you go through the outputs, you should differentiate those that lead to outcomes from those that are merely measures of the volume of work. Are the outputs sufficient or substantial enough to produce the desired outcomes?

Finally, when you work on evaluating the outcomes, you should focus on those that generate the most and best benefits to the participants. In the first place, are these the right outcomes to serve the needs that were identified? Will these outcomes be achieved?

These questions are just examples and they may vary depending on the situation. You have to think of the proper questions to ask yourself and the program provider. All these front-end questions will point you to the critical areas and make your due diligence efficient and effective. You do not waste time on peripheral issues and gathering irrelevant and unimportant information.

Due Diligence Techniques

Interviews should be conducted face-to-face for better interaction and observation of body language. Do not treat the questions listed here as checklists. Do not frame your questions as a checklist requiring just a yes or no answer. This makes the questioner go through the checklist robotically and this will only beget robotic answering.

Questions should be open-ended and phrased to evoke explanation, elaboration or substantiation. Intentional moments of silence may provoke the interviewee to say more or to blurt out information that was not intended to be provided.

Dig deeper into the answers given. For example, when given a reason, ask whether it is a reason at all. Is the reason good, relevant and important? Are there other reasons that are more appropriate?

Ask for clarifications so as to avoid wrong assumptions or jumping to wrong conclusions. You will be surprised how often this happens to you. The clarification could often turn out to be the opposite of your assumed conclusion.

Sometimes what is not said can reveal more than what is said. When discussing an issue, if important matters or if substantiating information are not provided, it should make you wonder why.

TIPS

Important answers and claims need to be verified. This can be done by checking consistency with answers given by different members of the team or given by external referees or experts, or found in research sources.

The questions presented here are examples and are not meant to be complete or exhaustive. You should also refer to Part II of this Guide which is on the Planning process to help trigger more questions.

Due Diligence of the Overall Program

In evaluating the program as a whole, you should ask the following questions:

- o What need is being satisfied by the program? Is the need correctly identified, well understood, important and verified? Is this program the best way to deal with it?
- o Is the program planned and structured to do what is intended to meet the need? Will it succeed?
- o Are there parts of the program that are irrelevant, useless or impractical?
- o Are the pre-program activities for promotion, recruitment of external service providers and participants well laid out?
- o Can the delivery mechanisms or services be made more efficient, more cost-effective or more impactful? What are the program's strengths and weaknesses?
- o Was a Logic Model built up and refined?
- o Are the program management structure, responsibilities and accountability properly spelled out?
- o Are there plans for post-program management review of the performance of the program and for improvements to be made?
- o Will program reports be submitted and how detailed and informative will they be?
- o Will management be open and objective in its reviews and reports? Besides reporting on the program performance, will management carry out self-assessment of its performance?
- o Are there other similar programs that we can compare with? How do they compare?
- o Are there opportunities to scale up or replicate the program elsewhere? These could be funding opportunities too.
- o Will there be positive external effects, such as to families or the community?

As earlier mentioned, note that the answers provided here may point you to specific areas to zero in for further due diligence. Some of these areas may require due diligence to be conducted outside the program or outside the organisation.

Due Diligence of Inputs

 The management team is the most important input to the program. To a large extent they determine the success or failure, or the degree of success of the program. Therefore due diligence here will very much focus on the key members of the team.

The due diligence of the team must be undertaken in the context of the program to be conducted, as the skills and experience required may be different for different programs, and may even be so for different scales or scopes of a program.

Due diligence should be conducted on each key staff separately and together as a team. Individual interviews are not only meant to check on individual expertise and commitment and the degree of passion towards helping beneficiaries. They are also to detect differences in opinion and whether the team works well together. If possible and if you as a potential funder are brought into the planning process, you could also observe the dynamics of the team and the leadership qualities of the CEO.

Additional questions may be asked to assess whether the respective roles and responsibilities are well spelled out and coordinated, and whether individual accountability is well understood.

Other due diligence questions would be on program inputs other than management, and examples are as follows:

o   Are the resources complete, adequate, properly allocated and cost-effective?
o   Are external human resources such as volunteers and professionals properly sourced and allocated, and will contribute significantly?
o   Is the funding requirement correctly calculated and adequate?
o   Has the program taken into account laws, regulations and funding requirements?
o   Are the participants correctly identified and properly selected?

This last point relating to the participants is important in another way. Many social programs are geared towards disadvantaged people. It is not unusual that some participants may drop out of the program mid-stream due to personal reasons. If the program provider does not have sufficient past experience, the enrolment for the program may be under-provided. The dropouts will result in under-achievement of outcomes and reduce the cost-effectiveness of the program.

It is difficult to assess the seriousness of this problem when doing due diligence, as such personal problems cannot be anticipated. You have to raise this issue with the program provider and make sure that the starting enrolment is high enough to cater to the possible dropout rates at various critical stages of the program, so that target outcomes are achieved at the end of the program, and benefit the target number of participants.

Due Diligence of Activities

Each activity should be inspected to see whether it is relevant, well planned and scheduled, sufficient for the program's requirements, cost-effective, and conducted by the right staff or external provider. Each activity should either support another activity or directly lead to one or more outputs and outcomes.

Check whether necessary pre-program activities have been missed out. These would be activities such as recruitment of collaborators and participants, as well as promotion of the program.

Due Diligence of Outputs

Check whether target outputs are correctly identified, clear and specific to the program. Are the outputs merely for the sake of measurement of the volume of work or do they also lead to desired outcomes for participants? Are there more outputs than necessary to be measured?

Due Diligence of Outcomes

The desired outcomes of the program are just as important as the program management team. The due diligence of the outcomes entails not only assessment of the quality of the chosen outcomes, it also requires assessment of the related indicators and measurements that have been defined.

Of course the most important questions to ask are whether the outcomes will really address the social need that has been identified and how well will the need be met. Then we must also ask whether the participants will derive those outcomes and to what degree, and how sustainable are the outcomes. In other words, are the outcomes important and relevant and will bring about meaningful benefits or changes to the participants, and preferably in sustainable ways?

Furthermore, are the outcomes:

o   Clear in defining the scope of the program?
o   Useful in pointing out the areas of success or problems in the program?
o   Effective in communicating the benefits of the program to various stakeholders?

Making comparisons of the program's outcomes in various ways could be useful in your due diligence, such as:

o   Compare outcomes for different participants: what parts of the program relate more to certain participants or certain characteristics of the participants that could result in better outcomes?
o   Compare outcomes achieved by different program units, facilities or other organisations: attempting to correlate the better outcomes to the various units,

facilities or organisations (in similar programs) may point to relevant causal factors affecting the quality of the outcomes.

- o Compare outcomes using different delivery strategies: such as different approaches, differences in the intensity of the parts or the overall program, or different ways in which the program is delivered.
- o Compare outcomes with those of prior years: this would be easier to do if similar programs have been run before.
- o Compare outcomes with the targets that were set: this is also relatively easy, but care must be taken to note whether the targets were set to be too easy or too hard to begin with.

It may difficult for a small social organisation to carry out such comparisons, and even larger organisations may not have sufficient data for meaningful comparisons. At most they could make comparisons with prior years or with the targets set.

However, you as the funder would be better able to conduct such due diligence as you would likely be focusing on particular types of social programs or you could be supporting several organisations running similar programs. Such comparisons enable better assessments of the outcomes. Your feedback and advice would be valuable to the program provider in improving the outcomes.

Due Diligence of Indicators

Questions you may ask could be:

- o Is there at least one indicator for each important outcome?
- o Does each indicator measure an important aspect of the outcome?
- o Are the indicators specified sufficiently and correctly? Does it really indicate the benefit or change?
- o Does each indicator provide the statistics that will show the program's achievement of the outcome measured?

Due Diligence of Measurement Systems

Here you may ask the following:

- o Is the data collection plan comprehensive enough to provide meaningful breakdowns of statistical data into sub-categories so as to assess the performance from different angles?
- o Is the data collection method feasible and not too expensive?
- o Is there a less time-intensive or less expensive way to collect the information?
- o Will the resulting data be useful to program managers for improvements to the program?
- o Are the tests and measurements valid and reliable?
- o Will the resulting data be credible to parties external to the program?
- o If the program is new and the measurement system is newly developed, did the staff carry out trial runs or system tests?

Due Diligence of Logic Model

Example questions would be:

- o Does the Logic Model include all activities and outcomes that are important?
- o Does the Logic Model make appropriate and correct connections between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes?
- o Are there loose ends, gaps and broken links in the chains linking the program elements?
- o Has the Logic Model been reviewed by all key staff and by external experts?

Due Diligence of Past Reports

Program reports are important in that they show the thoroughness of data collection, documentation and how well past programs were run. They also show whether management has taken the trouble to use them to identify and make improvements. Therefore it would be useful for you to inspect past reports to assess the following:

- o Were the findings objective and reasonable?
- o Were they properly substantiated and presented clearly?
- o What questions raised were not answered in the report?
- o Were explanations of problem areas and proposed remedies satisfactory?
- o What other tables or charts would have been helpful?
- o Was there anything missing, such as overlooked outcomes or influencing factors?
- o Were improvements in program organisation and management systems identified and were they implemented?

Due Diligence Conclusions

Often when conducting due diligence, you do not know where to start, and you do not know when to end. You have to step back now and then to review the work done to see whether all the critical issues have been investigated, and even if not, whether you should stop.

You are likely to be swamped by lots of information, some of which would be positive, and some of which could be negative, vague or conflicting. You have to weed out the extraneous information and focus on the critical issues.

Try to resolve conflicting information or opinions by going back to the references again for verification. You will be surprised that often, opinions can change when confronted by alternative views. Sometimes, you will get clarifications that will help to resolve the conflict or inconsistency. Otherwise give greater weight to the opinions of those who were more authoritative and who were clear and firm in stating their views.

As a funder, the issues that are important to your funding decision are the quality and performance of the program. Thus you should concentrate on the due diligence and evaluation of the outputs, outcomes and costs to arrive at your decision.

To be fair to the program provider, you should discuss any adverse findings for the purpose of clarification and to jointly seek ways to rectify or improve the program. In the process, you are also adding value to the provider.

Be careful that you do not brush aside consideration of the outputs of the program while giving emphasis on the outcomes. Consider two programs with the same outcomes and costs. If one program has more outputs than the other, it is likely that the program is more deserving of funding. This would be particularly so, if the higher outputs relate to the participants, such that more participants are successful in achieving the target outcomes, or if the participants are successful in achieving more of the outcomes than for the other program. Obviously the claims will have to be verified by your due diligence.

In the same way, the quality of outcomes and their relevance to the needs being addressed, and the cost-effectiveness of the program are important factors that contribute to the funding decision. All these have to be verified or adjusted to realistic levels in order that correct conclusions can be made, and a proper funding level be decided upon.

The final funding decision depends on other factors such as the funder's generosity and availability of funds, alignment of the funder's and the program provider's objectives and relationships and the quality of other programs that may be applying for funding as well. Proper due diligence will facilitate a correct funding decision and a correct choice among competing programs.

Value of Due Diligence

You can see the value of asking pertinent questions and obtaining detailed enough information to assist in the funding decision-making. However this is not the only value of due diligence.

Your due diligence can help the program provider improve itself and its program in many ways. The due diligence of management and all aspects of the program can identify existing weaknesses and point to how improvements can be made.

The value of due diligence
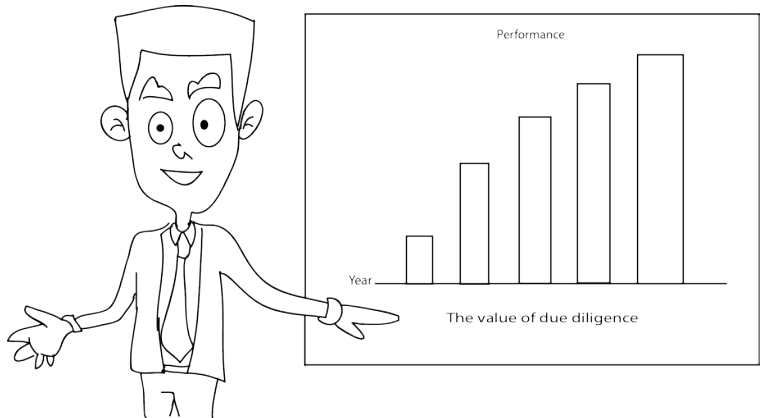
Also, if the weaknesses and pitfalls are spotted, but it is not feasible or timely to make changes, the program provider can pay attention to monitoring these areas and put in place appropriate contingency plans to ensure the smooth running of the program.

Arising from the due diligence results, you may wish to break your funding into tranches so that amounts are progressively disbursed only if the program goes according to plan. Your due diligence gives you a thorough understanding of the program and enables you to set appropriate benchmarks as milestones for funds disbursement.

These are examples of the many ways in which funders can benefit from due diligence. Since program providers will also derive much benefit, they should be cooperative in providing answers to the seemingly unending questions that will be asked, and welcome the advice of the funders.

Adding Value

Funders have the ability to provide support to program providers beyond just funding. The benefits of value adding are that the program provider increases its capability; programs are improved; and hence better and more outcomes are derived by participants. In turn the funders, and in fact society at large, benefit through achieving more for each dollar of funding spent.

Program providers should therefore select funders, if possible, who are able and willing to add value. They should be open to admitting their weaknesses and requesting help from their funders. On receipt of criticisms, they should not be defensive, but be prepared to do soul searching and to make improvements. They should view funders as partners, and not just money providers.

We have seen in the previous Chapter on Due Diligence how areas of weakness are identified and can be improved. These could be in the management, the overall program, or all the different aspects and elements of the program. In this Chapter, we discuss how funders can go beyond helping to improve the weaknesses in programs. They can also add value by helping to positively shape programs and program managements.

Shaping Programs

An important area where funders can add value is in helping to shape all aspects of the program. The funder's experience and knowledge gained through funding of many programs and program providers can be very valuable. The funder can make comparisons and tap on the good and bad experiences of others.

Obviously the first area where the funder can render advice is in the program's target outcomes. The funder can help to identify important outcomes, modify some of them and prioritise them together with the program provider.

When the funder goes through due diligence of the overall program, as well as the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes, it is actually bringing to bear all its acquired expertise to critique, not just the negative aspects, but also the positive aspects of all these areas. This helps the program provider to see the strengths and weaknesses of the program, which often may not be entirely obvious from its own perspective.

For instance, the funder can assist in looking for the best external service providers or consultants; in finding suitable facilities and equipment; in adjusting the pace and substance of the activities; in setting appropriate milestones to monitor the program's progress; and in reducing some costs.

The funder should not consider that its work is done after conducting due diligence and making its funding decision, even if the funding is denied. Whether the funding is approved or not, much value can be further derived from all the due diligence work done, by providing feedback and offering advice, and concrete assistance to the program provider.

Shaping Management

Besides assessing the program, the funder may detect weaknesses in the program management organisation and staff, and spot their strengths as well. Again, it is often that management cannot see their own weaknesses and even if they do, they may be in denial or may procrastinate in making improvements. Lack of time or funding are convenient excuses.

Funders can therefore help by not only providing the feedback, but also by exerting pressure through the current or prospective funding. Some funders organise management talks and workshops for their program providers, which would be feasible with a critical mass of attendees. This is particularly useful as many staff in social organisations have become leaders through their commitments and achievements in serving others and lack formal management training.

Due to perennial tightness of funds and the priority of spending for more and better programs, social organisations are less willing to spend on management training and upgrading. It is the finance staff who often lose out, in preference for operational staff, when there is whatever training done. But achieving cost-effectiveness is important to the organisation. Thus the funder may again exert pressure for improvement in this area, and may even need to provide its finance staff to assist the provider in the meantime.

Sometimes the funder has to provide multiyear support to help the provider build capability and capacity. In particular, the funder can encourage the adoption and assist in the implementation of outcome-based program planning. This could be a difficult transition for the provider, as it needs changes in the mind-sets of management staff.

The funder can also help to effect other changes in the provider organisation, such as staffing, board composition, and corporate systems, whether in general management, HR, financial controls or program management systems.

Diminishing Value

Sometimes a funder may unwittingly diminish value through its requirements for the funding, particularly when the program provider is struggling in making initial attempts at outcome-based program planning.

In providing help, the funder has to be patient and not make excessive demands which could lead to unintended harmful consequences such as loss of morale and staff turnover. The funder should focus on fostering self-improvement, rather than externally enforce actions or threaten withdrawal of funding. Also, focus should not be on end results, but on the means towards achieving the results and sustaining such efforts.

Wrong use of findings from outcome measurements or emphasis on inappropriate outcome measurements can result in poor outcomes. Funders should allow sufficient time to design and test out desired outcomes and outcome measurement systems before imposing them across programs. Funders should give credit to program managers if they are sincere in making outcome measurements, even if the measurement results turn out to be poor.

Funders should avoid making quick assumptions or judgements on what is a necessary level of outcome performance to qualify for funding. Even comparison with another similar program can be difficult if there are differences in the profiles of the participants or perhaps even slight differences in the inputs and activities. It may be better to compare the historical performance of a program to see whether there have been improvements with each new cycle.

Finally, to foster a strong partnership, both funders and program providers should not be afraid to express problems or difficulties openly, and should work positively and constructively to seek solutions or compromises.
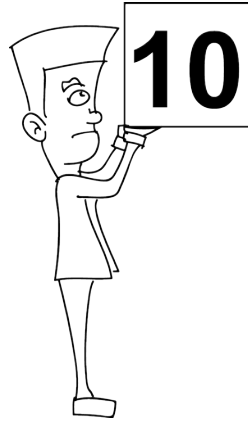
Monitoring

I t is obvious that after a program is funded, the funder would want to monitor it to track its progress and be assured that its objectives will be met. In the investment world, the purpose of monitoring extends beyond these reasons. By keeping close tabs on its investee company, the investor can be promptly alerted of potential or impending problems. It will therefore be easier to work out solutions. Knowing what is happening enables the investor to also find ways to add value; to ensure proper corporate governance; to enforce investment terms and conditions; and to determine the best timing and ways to divest from the company.

Similarly, funders should not view monitoring as merely tracking and reporting on progress, and at the end of the program, assessing whether objectives were met. In this Chapter we discuss these and other objectives of carrying out effective monitoring, to derive benefits for both the funder and the provider.

Prerequisites

A prerequisite for effective monitoring to occur is that the program provider has to view the funder as a valuable partner and not just a fund provider. Therefore it has to be prompt in alerting the funder of problems faced or changes made at any point of the program, including pre-program arrangements and post-program assessments. It has to be open and ready to admit mistakes and to ask for help.

Similarly, the funder has to be responsive to the provider. It has to be flexible to allow necessary midstream program changes and even changes to target outcomes. The key is that it has to understand why the problems were faced or why changes had to be made. What it learns will be useful to other providers and to future programs. Even though the funder might have chosen a capable provider and the program might be running smoothly, the funder could learn what were the specific strengths of the provider and how well the program elements (inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes) were planned and worked together.

On the other hand, the provider must not be burdened by too frequent and onerous reports. These must be scheduled and mutually agreed upon at the start. The funder must be prepared to make site visits instead of totally depending on written reports. Certainly, assessment of achievement of a milestone should be done onsite.

Implementation Problems

As mentioned, the key objective of monitoring is to track whether the implementation of the program is smooth, leading to achievement of the target outcomes. As the program progresses, such monitoring will help in alerting problems, so that preventive or corrective actions can be taken. If a problem discovered midstream could not be tackled as it would be disruptive, then attention should be paid on the problem to monitor the extent of its impact.

At the end of the program, if it is found that outcomes are not achieved or not fully achieved, effective monitoring will help the funder and the provider in their post-mortem. The provider has the benefit of the observations of the funder who is not caught up with running the program. Without effective monitoring, contributory factors might be missed.

Program Changes

Not all program changes are prompted by implementation problems. Some may be changes to make improvements that were discovered during the running of the program. Close monitoring could lead to such positive ideas being generated.

Adding Value

Observations in the monitoring will point to what you can do to add value currently and in future, to tackle problems and weaknesses. On the other hand, you can identify strengths in the program or the provider that can perhaps be emulated by other providers.

Cost-Effectiveness

As the funder, one of your top concerns is whether the funds were wisely and effectively spent, and whether there were wastages that could have been prevented or avoided. This will assist in your cost analysis of future programs. Some actual expenditures may differ from the budget and close monitoring will be needed or else negative variances may be washed out by some positive variances and these would not be detected in the final reports.

Governance

There may be milestones and other terms and conditions imposed in the approval of the funding. Close monitoring will allow corrective or compliance actions to be taken early

and hence more easily by the provider. In the worst case, if such actions are not taken, funding may have to be stopped.

Partnership

Close and frequent contact with the provider helps to cultivate understanding and cooperation. Developing a strong partnership is indeed a desirable outcome for both.

Conclusion

I n this Guide, we have covered the essentials of Outcome-Based Programs. We have looked at it from the perspective of program providers, as to how they can effectively carry out each step of Outcome-Based Program Planning to achieve the best outcomes with high efficiency and productivity.

We have also looked at Outcome-Based Programs from the point of view of funders, as to how they can effectively carry out Outcome-Based Program Evaluation. We have advanced this process from Outcome Funding to Outcome Investing by incorporating due diligence, value adding and monitoring.

Each process has relevance and value to each party. Each will find much value in understanding its own and the other party's process. Program providers will know how funders will evaluate them and their programs, and thus plan out programs that align with the objectives of the funders. They can also carry out Outcome-Based Evaluation on their own programs for self-evaluation and improvement purposes.

Funders will gain from a better understanding of the Outcome-Based Program Planning process. They will be better able to carry out their evaluation to select the best programs and program providers to support. Through a detailed understanding of the process they will know how and where to add value to program providers.

The end result is that a program provider and the funder will develop a rewarding partnership, working together to bring about the best outcomes for beneficiaries and a better society for all.

Part IV

CASE STUDY

Case Study

Outward Bound Singapore
5-Day Intercept Program
For Youths With At-Risk Behaviour

Introduction

Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) is one of the VWOs which went through a training course on Outcome-Based Programs organised by the Tote Board. The VWOs were invited to apply the concepts that they learned to submit outcome-based programs to Tote Board for possible funding support.

Boon-Ngee Sebastian, Director of Grant Management, Tote Board, says to Lyne Chia, Assistant Manager, "OBS wants to play its part in helping youths, in particular youths at risk who exhibit truancy behaviour or have dropped out of school. OBS is seeking funding for its 5-Day Intercept Program so that the program can be made affordable to more youths. Please evaluate it."

Boon-Ngee added, "OBS has made some modifications to its Intercept Program to cater to the target group and they hope to improve the program further by learning from experience. It is good that anyway they want to run the program now so that they can start to help the youths now."

Lyne knows that OBS is well established and has been running outward bound programs for many years that are well-proven and accepted worldwide. She mutters to herself, "These programs build self-confidence, teamwork and mutual trust. I wonder how they can help youths who truant or drop out of school."

Lyne has her work cut out for her. She has to:

o Do due diligence on the outcomes of the program to help Tote Board make a funding decision
o Assess the performance targets set by OBS
o Determine whether the funding should be disbursed in tranches and if so, what milestones should OBS meet before each tranche is to be released
o Recommend improvements to the program to OBS.

She starts to pore through the funding application submitted by OBS …

Company Background

Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) has been providing outdoor education and adventure learning programs to help people realise their full potential since 1967. More than 250,000

people have benefitted from their journey of self-discovery, emerging stronger both mentally and physically.

OBS is a member of the global Outward Bound network. It operates from two centres in Pulau Ubin, and one in East Coast Park. Each year more than 20,000 children, youths and adults take part in programs in these centres. There are more than 100 different programs in a year. These are run by 3 business units with the following types of programs:

o Professional Programs for corporate team building and leadership
o Youth Centric Programs
o Community Outreach and Partnership programs.

Out of a total staff of 140, there are more than 90 full time instructors who are trained in various outdoor skills, soft skills, safety and medical procedures. Besides managing the training, the instructors aim to inspire and motivate each and every participant.

The rugged terrain of Ubin island and the surrounding sea provide for ideal training activities, as well as facilities built by OBS, such as towers, rock climbing walls, a tunnelling and caving system, rope courses, camps, sailing boats and kayaks.

OBS is managed by the People's Association, a statutory board in Singapore that promotes racial harmony and social cohesion.

The 5-Day Intercept Program
For Youths With At-Risk Behaviour

As part of its Community Outreach to schools, OBS runs a 5-day program for truant secondary school students, with the following details:

o Course Objectives: This program for youths at risk aims to create awareness of the precarious situations that they are in, to equip them with essential life skills to manage their current predisposed risky environment, and to aid them in setting clear self-developmental goals so that they leave the course with clear directions of pursuit and purpose.

o Participants: Secondary schools will select suitable truant youths for the program. The program is planned for 10 groups of 12 participants a year over a two-year period. A school will also have a student counsellor or physical education teacher to accompany its students.

o Participant Characteristics: The participants are aged 14 to 18, poor in studies, academically challenged, have low interest in studies, are under supervision of school counsellors or social workers, do not report to school on time, skip classes, are disruptive in class, are absent from extra-curricular activities, and engage in fights and gangster activities.

o Trainer Inputs: The OBS trainer works closely with the accompanying counsellor or teacher to deliver learning components, by helping to resolve adverse situations that may arise and sometimes even discreetly creating problem situations.

o Activities: The program includes goal-setting exercises, problem-solving activities, a journey concept expedition and a commitment activity. The journey aims to teach the youths responsibility, resilience, control over negative thoughts and emotions, leadership skills and goal setting.

Program Details (Condensed)

A Course Self-Assessment Survey Form is filled up by each student prior to the commencement of the program. The form is given in Fig A. At the end of the course the same form is filled up again by participants to gain feedback on the program and the trainer effectiveness.

The form is also filled up by participants one month and three months after the program completion. Comparisons between these forms, together with that filled up before the program started will provide feedback on the progress of the participants.

During the program, there is a debrief at the end of each day to review lessons learned and for mutual sharing, facilitated by the trainer. There are also quiet periods in the morning for the youths to reflect.

Day 1: Shock and Self-Awareness

o Unexpected swim to a rowboat to row towards the island. Abandon boat at camp buoy and swim to shore to arrive at Camp 1. (Learning Objectives: Ability to cope in an unexpected situation, helping others, mastering a craft, learning new skills.)

o Youths told to leave Camp 1 to trek to the campsite. (Learning Objectives: Coping with an unexpected trek and making preparations as a team, meeting challenges during the trek.)

o Evening run and camp establishment. (Learning Objectives: Making choices, taking responsibilities and self-awareness of decisions.)

Day 2: Journey Choices

o Return to Camp 1 with a choice of an en route stopover. (Learning Objectives: Team planning, coping with being lost.)

o Kayak to the swamp and collect any object that is meaningful personally. (Learning Objectives: Outdoor kinaesthetic learning, attachment, and self-esteem.)

o   Colour Mess Part I (art therapy). (Learning Objectives: Appreciating beauty among messiness, wisdom amidst chaos, finding meaning and opportunities in situations.)

Day 3: Responsibility and Roles

o   Trust and belay[3] training. (Learning Objectives: Learning about giving support, gaining trust and discovering internal guidance, and identifying one's "belayers".)

o   Inverse tower and rope course challenge. (Learning Objective: Teamwork in facing challenges.)

o   Writing an "I'm Important" note. (Learning Objective: Gaining self-esteem and belief in oneself.)

o   Solo night walk. (Learning Objective: Recognising and coping with fear.)

Day 4: Preparedness, Process and Persistence

o   Cross-island expedition by kayak, having two hours to prepare and plan, with en route team decisions on time management and making a waypoint camp. (Learning Objectives: Planning, organising, managing changes, navigating, getting lost, time and portage management, peer pressure and discord.)

o   Colour Mess Part II. (Learning Objectives: Finding the message and pattern in one's messy life, finding wisdom in the life challenges.)

Day 5: Action Plans

o   Final debrief and personal action plans. (Learning Objective: Making a life roadmap.)

o   Commitment activity – taking a trapeze dive. (Learning Objective: Making a commitment to plans.)

o   Course closing, evaluation and post-course survey.

Program Modifications

OBS has made the following modifications to the program to address the truancy problem of the youths:

o   OBS assigns more mature and experienced trainers to this program, and especially those who have expressed interest in the program.

---

[3] "Belay" is a mountain-climbing term, which is to attach one end of a rope to a person to provide secure and stable support.

o The program intensity is made higher. There are more introspective activities. Participants are encouraged to write down their experiences and feelings every evening in a journal.

o At the end of Day 5, each participant commits in writing to achieve 100% school attendance. The Commitment Form is shown in Fig B.

o The schools will provide to OBS regular attendance and behaviour reports on the participants.

o One month after the program, OBS will call in batches of 12 participants for a half-day Momentum Session. They will fill up the Course Self-Assessment Survey Form (Fig A) and will have a solo tunnelling activity. This is followed by an interview session, using the Interview Form shown in Fig C. The OBS client manager will conduct the interview with the school staff or counsellor. They will check on the progress of each participant over the past month and how well the commitment plan was followed. OBS will provide advice and assistance to those who did not; and will also seek further continuing commitment.

o Three months after the program, the schools will administer the Course Self-Assessment Survey Form and will submit to OBS, together with more attendance and behaviour records.

Outputs

A total of 240 youths would have participated in the two-year program.

Short-Term Outcomes

The short-term outcomes targeted by OBS are as follows:

o Improve social emotional learning
o Increase life skills
o Set goals and directions

Longer-Term Outcomes

The longer-term outcomes targeted by OBS are as follows:

For truanting youths:
o Increased school attendance
o Reduced delinquency behaviours

For out-of-school youths (dropouts):
o Increased life engagement
o Reduced delinquency behaviours

Measurement of Outcomes

The Course Self-Assessment forms serve to measure the outcomes for each participant. These aim to capture how well the program improves the youths' social emotional learning, increases their life skills and spurs them into setting developmental goals to guide their life journeys after the program.

These forms are supplemented by the school attendance and behaviour reports.

Performance Targets

OBS uses a funnelling approach to set target outcomes as follows for each year of the program:

o 200 students will be informed about this program.

o As a result, 160 of them are expected to be keen and will perform a baseline self-assessment. They will identify 2 personal change targets.

o 120 of them will be inspired and report on Day 1 of the program.

o Of the 120 participants, 90 will cope well and display positive "on-track" changes, such as engaged learning, helping others, and participating in group discussions, by Day 3 of the program.

o 80 students will complete the program and express their commitment to realise their personal action plan with 3 need-to-do's.

o Of the 80, 64 will have kept to their commitment for one month and improved by reducing delinquent behaviours, such as using vulgarities, skipping classes, committing petty crimes, and staying out late.

o Finally, 42 of the 64 will be able to sustain their commitment and effort, and see improvement in their school attendance by the time of the 3-month post course survey.

Costs

Since OBS already has the infrastructure, the program costs are all operational, consisting of staff costs, use of facilities and equipment, as well as provision of food. OBS has intentionally lowered its cost calculations for this program, which results in a fee of $140 per day per participant or $700 each for the course. This compares with the usual fee of $165 per day per participant.

Funding

OBS has proposed to the Tote Board to fund 75% of the fee, so that the client organisations pay 25%, or $35 per day per participant.

Fig A. Course Self-Assessment Form

Participant No: _____   **Gender** (please circle one):   Male   Female

School: _____   **Age:** _____

Ethnicity (please circle one):
Chinese   Indian   Malay   Eurasian   Other: _____

Parental Status (please circle one):   Married   Divorce   Never Married   Widowed

Housing Type (please circle one):
HDB 3 room flat and below   HDB 4/5 room flat   Condominium   Private House
Others: _____

Educational Level (please circle one):
Secondary 1   Secondary 2   Secondary 3   Secondary 4   Secondary 5

SECTION A

There are no right or wrong answers. Please read each sentence carefully and circle the number which best describes you.

False Not like me						True Like me	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
This statement doesn't describe me at all		Often false		Often true		This statement describes me very well	

1.	I do not have any goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2.	People understand me when I'm talking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.	If I succeed in life it will be because of my efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4.	I am good at cooperating with team members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5.	I prefer to set my own goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6.	Goals are important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

7.	I work hard at solving what's causing my problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8.	My life is mostly controlled by external things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9.	I like cooperating in a team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10.	I have good conversations with other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11.	Having goals makes my life more enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12.	I am effective at solving the cause of my problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13.	What I do and how I do it will determine my successes in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14.	I have specific goals to aim for.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15.	I understand other people when they are talking to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
16.	I communicate well when in a group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
17.	I cooperate well when working in team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
18.	My own efforts and actions are what will determine my future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
19.	I solve problems to the best of my ability.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
20.	I communicate effectively with other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
21.	Luck, other people and events control most of my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

SECTION B

Please read each sentence carefully and circle the number which best describes you.

0	1	2	3
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	0	1	2	3
2.	At times, I think I am no good at all.	0	1	2	3
3.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	0	1	2	3
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	0	1	2	3
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	0	1	2	3
6.	I certainly feel useless at times.	0	1	2	3
7.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	0	1	2	3
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	0	1	2	3
9.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	0	1	2	3
10.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	0	1	2	3

Fig B. Commitment Form

My Life Road Map (Intercept)

Wrong / unwise paths that led me to truancy...

Directions and paths that I want to take... (and what I need to do in the next 1-3 months to get there)

In order to achieve 100% attendance, I will need to:

1._____

2._____

3._____

Road Blocks (inside or outside of me) that I might meet...

Inside me:

Outside me:

Who are my 'Life Belayers' that I can turn to for help, when I meet these road blocks?

In School : _____

At Home   : _____

Outside   : _____

Others   : _____

1) Wrong / unwise paths that I've been to...
  → Reflect on current situation

2) Directions and paths that I want to take... (and what do I need to do to get there for the next 1 to 3 mths)
  → Set goals (i.e. such as back to school, regular attendance positive behaviour, etc)
  → Set action plans (i.e. checklist to reach goals set above)

3) Road Blocks (inside or outside of ME) that I might meet...
  → Identify Obstacle / temptation that might cause distraction such as laziness, low priority in study, go out with friends etc.

4) Who are my 'Life Belayers' that I can turn to for help when I meet these road blocks...
  → Pax to realise that they have resources and coping abilities when they fall away from their goals or meet road blocks

Fig C. Interview Form

Momentum Session
(1-Month Post Intercept Program)

Name: _____

Number of days absent without reason
in the past month: _____

1) Do you remember the commitment you made after the OBS programme last month?

2) What is the progress on your commitment?

3) Are there any stumbling blocks (event, people) that stop you from progressing with
    your commitment?

    a. If yes, how can we help you?
    b. If no, do you foresee any in the future?

4) Are you committed to achieve 100% attendance in school/CCA?

    a. If no, why?
    b. If yes, when do you hope to achieve it by?

A Note On The Case Study

The case study is prepared for the purpose of classroom discussion and not to illustrate either effective or ineffective program planning or program evaluation by the people or organisations mentioned. The case is based largely on a real program to make it interesting and immersive, with a protagonist that students can identify with and role-play.

Some details, particularly the course details, are modified for the sake of brevity. Some confidential information such as detailed costing is not included here. These would normally be provided in the funding application.

As in real life, very often information provided may be incomplete, vague or irrelevant. There would be no exactly right or wrong answers. Trade-offs and compromises may have to be accepted due to constraints. These provide better lessons to students than crafting cases that are resolved by perfect and clear-cut answers.

Thanks again to Outward Bound Singapore for their permission and assistance in writing up this case.

Case Study Teaching Notes

Outward Bound Singapore
5-Day Intercept Program
For Youths With At-Risk Behaviour

Overview

This case is to put students in the role of a funder, conducting due diligence on a program to assist in making a funding decision. While the focus is on the due diligence of the outcomes of the program, students will realise that outcomes cannot be assessed in isolation, as they are linked to all other elements of the program. Thus due diligence will also need to be conducted on other aspects of the program.

It is typical in due diligence that we do not know where to start and when to end. We are easily and quickly lost in the myriad questions that need to be asked, and the often vague and conflicting information that we receive. We end up with wasted efforts and inconclusive results. Students therefore need to discern the critical and relevant issues and to prioritise their efforts. This case helps them to realise this.

Discussion Notes

The class should first discuss why and how the activities of the program help the youths at risk. The accuracy of their conclusions is not so important. What is important is that they make the effort to link the activities to the outcomes. They will then realise that due diligence of outcomes require due diligence of the activities.

Then the class should focus on the modifications made to the program and how these help to tailor the outcomes to serve the specific needs of the youths.

Are the modifications made to the program sufficient? How do they contribute to the desired outcomes? Can students suggest other modifications or new activities that are better? However, students should recognise that this is a 5-day program and so there are constraints against packing too much in.

Besides getting the students to evaluate the links between the activities and the outcomes, as well as the needs, this exercise illustrates how a funder can add value by suggesting changes to the program.

Many students will be like Lyne, when taking a first look at the case, wondering how an Outward Bound course could help with truancy problems. Most would have a vague idea of the course and think that it is more for team building. They will have a struggle relating the course outcomes with the needs of truant youths.

In real life, Lyne's due diligence includes a visit to OBS to observe the Intercept Program in progress and to talk to school staff to gain knowledge of the truancy problems. These help her to understand and evaluate the program.

However, for this case study, students can still acquire relevant knowledge by searching the Internet. There are many informative sites on Outward Bound programs and on truancy. Screen captures from two useful sites are in Attachment 1 and 2.

The write-up and video in the site referenced in Attachment 1 reveal many of the outcomes, although these relate to a 3-week program instead of a 5-day program. In fact some students may rightly suggest a longer duration for the program and involvement of the parents as improvements to the program. It would be useful to show the video during the class discussion.

The students should be informed that OBS also conducts a 21-day Pathfinder program that provides a much more intensive and perhaps life-changing experience. Many research studies show that 21 days is the minimum duration to form or break a habit.

Attachment 2 shows the causes of truancy. Firstly students should relate the program outcomes to the causes arising from the youths' own characteristics. Do the outcomes help to serve the needs arising from these personal causes?

However, truancy is not just caused by characteristics or weaknesses of the students. There are external factors such as the family and school situations. This should trigger the students to think further whether the program will help those youths whose truancy is caused by external factors, and how the program can be modified to help such youths. For example, involvement of the parents is a relevant modification.

The usefulness of the information obtained from the above research highlights the importance of research in due diligence, not only from the Internet, but also from other sources such as academia, industry experts, consultants, related businesses or organisations and publications. It is not sufficient to just study and analyse the information provided.

Understanding the root causes of the social problem is also important to finding proper solutions. In this case, an understanding of the causes of truancy is important.

It would be useful to see what performance targets and milestones the students intend to set and how and why they would break up the funding into tranches. Answers will vary, but the purpose is more to have the students think through these issues.

The class could wrap up with a discussion on whether the program is worth funding and if so, by how much. Of course there is no single answer as the amount of funding not only depends on the merits of the program, but also on the funder's availability of funds, the alignment of this program with its overall objectives, the seriousness of truancy in schools, etc. The purpose of this discussion is for students to be aware of these other factors.

From: http://blog.outwardbound.org/?p=173

OUTWARD BOUND'S INTERCEPT PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK YOUTH: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE AND WHY

Posted on October 29, 2010 by Kim Young

> "I think this experience has been absolutely life changing for her. I don't know where she would be without it." – Parent of Intercept Student

(Video on the views of the parents and students about the Intercept Program)

Who?
Intercept is an Outward Bound program designed for teens and families that need help navigating the oftentimes rough transition from adolescence to adulthood. Typical Intercept students may be struggling in school, have conflict with family and have anger management issues that stem from family conflicts. We help these families forge a path to a brighter future.

What?
For decades, Outward Bound has been committed to helping troubled teens and families face their unique challenges. Intercept is our award-winning program for teens that have started down a destructive path. Intercept is the recipient of the Society for Adolescent Medicine's 2009 Hillary E.C. Millar Award for Innovative Approaches to Adolescent Health Care.

When?
Intercept is designed for teens who are 12-17 and young adults from 18-20 years of age.

Where?
The wilderness of course! We offer Intercept courses across the country, where students will engage in programs that last from 20-50 days. Students face wilderness obstacles such as river canoeing, rock climbing, kayaking, backpacking, solo expeditions and personal challenge events.

Why?
Intercept students return from their experiences with a new outlook on life, better communication skills, anger management tools and sense of purpose. Students truly get to know themselves and prove to themselves they can do a lot more than they ever thought they could!

From: http://www.truancyprevention.org/

Causes of Truancy

What influences truancy? In early research, depending upon the perspective of the researcher, truancy was said to be caused by the student, the student's family, or the school. More recently, it is understood that a combination of all three factors usually affect truancy:

Characteristics of the Student:

- low grades in reading and mathematics
- neurological factors, such as dyslexia
- inability to make friends with mainstream students or teachers
- negative attitudes toward school or teachers

Characteristics of the Student's Family:
- parent(s) who do not value education
- parent(s) who did not complete school, were truant themselves
- poor parenting skills
- low socio-economic status
- physical or mental health problems of parents
- family history of delinquency
- single parent families
- many children in the family

Characteristics of the School:
- weak or no monitoring of daily attendance
- inconsistent attendance policies
- lack of parent involvement in the school
- lack of personalized attention to students
- lack of teacher expectations for high student achievement

Appendix:
Outcome versus Impact

The differences between Output and Outcome are clear. However the differences between Outcome and Impact are not clear. Both refer to the consequences of programs. In fact, for some these terms mean the same and are used interchangeably. On the other hand, many distinguish between the two terms. But the different ways in which the distinctions are made add to the confusion.

This Guide has described Outcomes in great detail. It would be useful to have a clear understanding of what is meant by Impact, as accepted by more authoritative literature.

Outcome

We know that Outcomes are changes in learning, behaviour or condition in participants after undergoing a program, and these can be short-term, medium-term or long-term in nature, and may be positive or even negative changes. Of course, depending on the program, the Outcomes may occur in the community or the environment as well.

Impact

What then is Impact? Many define Impact as longer-term, deeper or broader changes resulting from a program. In my opinion, these are not satisfactory distinctions. Outcomes may also be observed to be long term in duration and may also be deep and broad in nature, affecting an organisation, a family, a community or the environment, and not just the participants.

Problems arise when considering longer term and broader effects of a program. Such effects are diluted or polluted by other influences and all the outcomes cannot be attributed to the program. Screening out non-program influences would be difficult. It would be even more difficult, the longer-term or broader the analysis.

Happily, Social Science provides a methodology called Counterfactual Analysis that enables comparison between the outcomes attributable to a program against what would have happened to the participants without the program. The Impact of the program would correctly be defined to be this comparison.

A simple example would be to observe two groups of people with similar demographics in a similar environment. One group goes through a social program and the other (the control group) does not. The Impact of the program would be the observed differences in outcomes between the two groups at any point in time.

By taking the differences in outcomes, the effects of non-program influences are eliminated, as they are equally felt by both groups. The accuracy and value of such Impact

measurement would depend on the use of the best methodology that is available, feasible and appropriate to the program being evaluated.

It is not the intent of this Appendix to delve into the methodologies. The intent here is to show that:

Impact = Set A of Outcomes – Set B of Outcomes

Where:

Set A = Outcomes of participants in the program
Set B = Outcomes of the control group who did not participate

The definition of Impact as the difference between the outcomes achieved by a program versus what would have happened anyway without the program is more satisfactory. In any case this definition clearly shows the difference between Impact and Outcome.

Example 1

Here is a simple fictitious illustration. Country ABC has a penal population of 10,000. It costs the government $50 million per year to run the prisons administration. Thus the cost per inmate per year is $5,000.

Typically 12,000 inmates were released per year. In 2008 the recidivism rate was 30% within one year after release, or 3,600 would be readmitted in 2009. The recidivism rate had historically been declining by 0.5% per year due to improving socio-economic conditions in the country.

In 2008, Country ABC decided to institute a rehabilitation program for all inmates prior to release. In 2009 it was found that the recidivism rate dropped to 28%, or 3,360 readmitted in that year for those released in 2008. The government claimed that arising from the rehabilitation program, the number readmitted dropped by 240, or a savings of $1.2 million.

However this is not correct. If nothing was done, the recidivism rate would have fallen to 29.5% or 3,540. Thus if nothing was done, the government would have saved the cost of 60 inmates or $300,000 in any case.

Thus using the formulas in the previous section:

Set A Outcome = $1.2 million
Set B Outcome = $0.3 million
Therefore Impact = 1.2 – 0.3 = $900,000

Thus the total outcome in 2009 was a savings of $1.2 million, but the impact from the program was actually $0.9 million. An outcome of $300,000 arose from other influences. It would be incorrect to claim that the impact from the program was $1.2 million in 2009.

Example 2

Another example could be a school having a supplementary after-school program for say Class A. Another class, say Class B, in the same level not undergoing the supplementary program would be used as the control group.

We assume that at the beginning of the year, both classes have similar sets of academic results, say Set 0 (zero) Outcome. At the end of the year, Class A, with the supplementary program achieves Set A Outcome. Class B, without the program, achieves Set B Outcome, which ordinarily will be better than Set 0 due to the normal class programs.

The conclusions we can correctly draw from this example are:

- o The **outcome** of the normal *and* supplementary programs for Class A were the changes from Set 0 to Set A

- o The **outcome** of the normal programs for Class B were the changes from Set 0 to Set B

- o The **impact** of the normal programs is the same as the outcome for Class B

- o The **impact** of the supplementary program is not the same as the outcome for Class A as they were also influenced by the normal programs

- o If we assume acceptable homogeneity between Class A and Class B, the **impact** of the supplementary program is the difference between Set A and Set B.

Note the difference between outcome and impact as described in these conclusions. For Class B, the outcome and impact are the same, as nothing more was done for them. For Class A, the outcome and impact are not the same, due to the intervention of the supplementary program. We have to separate out the outcome of the supplementary program from the total outcome, by using Class B as the control group.

If the two groups are properly chosen to have strong homogeneity, the last conclusion would be valid.

Finally, for this discussion, the outcome sets could be a single target outcome (such as a higher maths score), or a group of outcomes (such as a higher maths score, higher self-esteem, greater interest in school, etc) that is being studied.

Side Notes

As a side note, perhaps the more accurate definition would be where:

Set A = Outcomes of participants in the program
Set B = Outcomes of the *same participants* if they did not participate in the program

This eliminates any differences between the participants and the control group, but requires hypothetical assumptions.

It is also interesting to note how the formula would turn out if we were to measure the Impact immediately after a program, particularly a program of relatively short duration.

The control group would have been subject to little or no influence and hence they would not have experienced any change in learning, behaviour or condition. Thus for the control group, Set B = 0. For the participants, Impact = Set A – Set B. But Set B = 0. So for the participants, the Impact = Set A. We conclude that immediately after a program, the Impact on the participants would be their immediate Outcomes. This explains why one would think of Impact as being synonymous with Outcome.

The differences show up when non-program influences come into play such as some time after the program, or when impact is analysed on a broader basis. Then Set B ≠ 0 as there are other influences, and Impact ≠ Set A, but would have to be calculated as Set A less Set B.

NOTE: In "A Practical Guide to Measuring and Managing Impact" published by the European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA) in April 2013, it is stated that five factors need to be considered when measuring impact:

- *Deadweight*: This relates to a consideration of what would have happened anyway in the absence of the social program. It includes the progress that beneficiaries would have made without going through the program (which reduces the impact of the program), as well as any negative consequences that might arise without the intervention of the program (which increases the impact of the program).

- *Attribution*: This relates to understanding how much of the change observed in the beneficiaries is the result of the program or the effect of other programs or activities taking place at the same time.

- *Displacement*: This relates to the possibility that some positive interventions of a program may be offset by negative effects seen in a different group which is not the target beneficiary of the program. For example, a reduction of crime in a community due to an intervention program might have been because the criminals moved into another community elsewhere.

- *Drop off*: This relates to diminishing impact over time. Therefore measured impact must account for the estimated time period of its effect after the completion of the program. Since drop off may vary from one beneficiary to the next, it would be useful to identify the more common effects to enable future improvements to the program.

- *Unintended consequences*: These are positive or negative effects arising from a program which are not part of the desired effect.

Measurement of impact has to adjust for these five factors to derive the net impact that can rightly be attributed to a social program.

Glossary

This is a quick reference with brief explanations of some terms used in this Guide. Please use the Index to turn to those pages where a term is used, for details and for the context in which the term is used.

Activities	Actions taken or work done with the inputs and participants of a program to produce results and benefits to participants.
BACKS	An acronym that stands for Behaviour, Attitude, Condition, Knowledge and Status.
BACKSAVS	An acronym that stands for Behaviour, Attitude, Condition, Knowledge, Status, Aspirations, Values and Skills.
Due Diligence	A process, usually in the context of investments and acquisitions, where the performance and value of a company, or the character of a person, is investigated with some degree of thoroughness.
Funder	A person or organisation that provides funds, such as donors, sponsors, and grant-makers, to support a program or an organisation.
Indicators	In the context of Outcome-Based Evaluation, these are measurable, observable and quantifiable factors that represent the quality of outcomes.
Inputs	In the context of social programs, these are resources that are put into and consumed by the program activities. Loosely speaking, participants may be considered as inputs as well.
KASA	An acronym that stands for Knowledge, Attitude, Skills and Aspirations.
Logic Model	In the context of social programs, this is a map linking temporal, causal and other relationships between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and indicators.
Monitoring	In the context of investments, this is a process where an investor keeps close tabs on an investee so as to be aware of its current progress or problems.
OBE or Outcome-Based Evaluation	A systematic way to assess whether a program or project has achieved or will achieve its goals, particularly with respect to the benefits to participants.
Outcome-Based Program Evaluation	A better name for OBE as it reflects the need to evaluate the whole program and not just the outcomes.
Outcome-Based Programs	Social programs that are planned and constructed to emphasise achieving outcomes for participants.

Outcome Funding	The funding of outcome-based programs.
Outcome Investing	The funding of outcome-based programs incorporating investment methodologies such as due diligence and value adding.
Outcome Planning	The process of planning and selecting outcomes for a program, which includes determination of suitable indicators, measurement systems, data collection and analyses of data to reflect the quality of outcomes.
Outcome Program Planning	The planning of a program that focuses on achieving outcomes. This should consist of planning of inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes.
Outcomes	Typically changes or improvements in behaviour, attitude, condition, knowledge, status, aspirations, values or skills of beneficiaries arising from participation in a program.
Outputs	Quantitative measures of the direct results of a program, such as volume of work or number of people served.
Program Planning	The planning of traditional programs, consisting of planning of inputs, activities and outputs.
Program or Service Provider	An organisation that organises and conducts a social program.
Value Adding	In the context of investing, the processes or actions of an investor to assist its investee companies, thereby increasing their corporate valuations.
VWO	Voluntary Welfare Organisation

Index of Figures

Traditional Social Program Structure

INPUTS → ACTIVITIES → OUTPUTS

Fig 1. Page 1

Outcome-Based Program Structure

INPUTS → ACTIVITIES → OUTPUTS → OUTCOMES
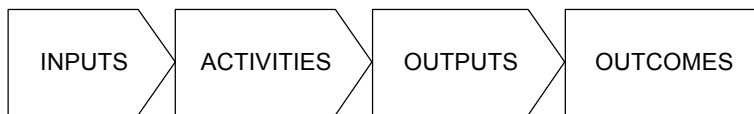
Fig 2. Page 2, 7

Detailed Depiction of an Outcome-Based Program

NEEDS

INPUTS

ACTIVITIES

OUTPUTS

OUTCOMES — Short-Term / Medium-Term / Long-Term
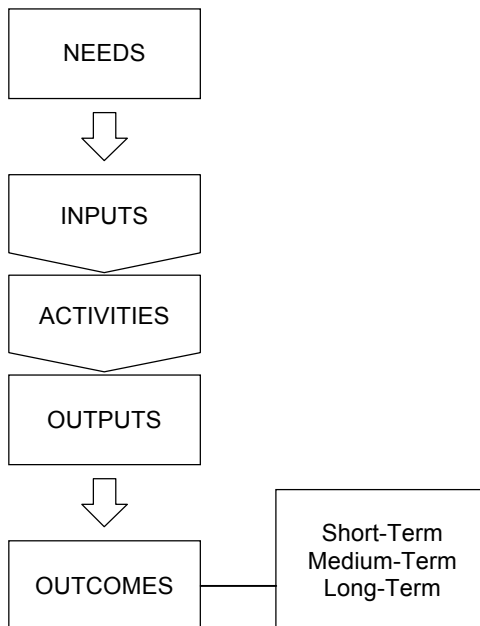
Fig 3. Page 10

Program Planning

Identify Need → Identify Beneficiaries → Gather Resources → Lay Out Activities → Set Output Targets
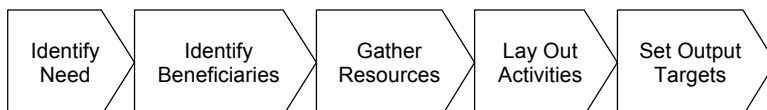
Fig 4. Page 17

Outcome Planning
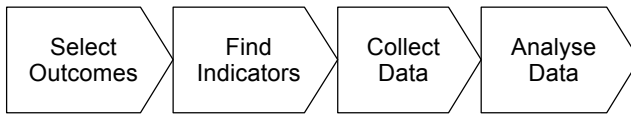
Fig 5. Page 18, 21

Integrating the Plans

Fig 6. Page 18, 29

A Simple Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes

Fig 7. Page 30

A More Detailed Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Indicators
			Short-Term	
			Medium-Term	
			Long-Term	

Fig 8. Page 30

Outcome-Based Planning Process

1	Identify need	Define clearly the need being addressed.
2	Identify beneficiaries	Determine the demographics and the number of participants.
3	Gather resources	Determine and secure all internal and external resources required.
4	Lay out activities	Work out the activities, their schedules, delivery methods and inputs required.
5	Set output targets	Set the volume of work to aim for, particularly those that lead to outcomes.
6	Select outcomes	Choose clear outcomes that relate to and address the need.
7	Find indicators	Determine measurable indicators for each outcome.
8	Collect data	Document the how, when, where and who for data to be collected.
9	Analyse data	Spell out how data is to be aggregated & analysed to generate relevant statistics.
10	Do logic model	Map out the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and indicators logically.
11	Do costing & coordination	Work out costs, get funding approved in principle and coordinate all parties.
12	Run trial or run program	Have a trial run to debug the program if necessary, or proceed to run the program.
13	Do reports	Work out the formats, conclusions and recommendations to be reported.

Fig 9. Page 33

Logic Model Example

PROGRAM: Job Re-Entry Skills Training for Ex-Offenders

INPUTS			
Life-skills trainer	Internal staff A	Internal staff B Video camera	Help organisation rep. and brochures
ACTIVITIES			
Life-skills training Workplace skills training	Job search planning Resume writing Cover letter writing	Interview questions Posture & dressing Explaining conviction Interview role-play	Talk on finding assistance
OUTPUTS			
No. of participants attended	No. of participants attended No. of resumes and cover letters written	FAQ compilations Dressing show and tell Role-play videos	List of help organisations
OUTCOMES			
Greater self-confidence and self-esteem	Job search and application skills	Confidence and skill in interview conduct and explaining past	
INDICATORS			
Self-assessment Interview by staff	No. of job applications	No. of job interviews	

o   Draw arrows downwards connecting items with temporal or causal links.
o   Change the sequence of activities if they are related and in the wrong order.
o   It is all right if one chain of items ends up in more than one outcome.
o   It is all right if more than one chain of items end up in one outcome.
o   Weed out isolated items, correct or remove broken links, and remove a chain if it does not end up in an outcome.
o   Review the model another day, and/or have it reviewed by external parties.

Fig 10. Page 34

Bibliography

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Where multiple pages are referenced, the page(s) that contain the definition, the explanation or the most relevant pages, are in **bold**.

About the Author

Lin Hong Wong is presently Executive Director of SE Hub Ltd, a social enterprise in Singapore that is funded by Tote Board, Singapore. SE Hub is established to invest in Singapore-based social enterprises that provide products or services to the disadvantaged.

Lin Hong has ten years experience as a senior partner in a leading Asian venture capital firm, two and a half years in the mentoring and incubation of start-ups, nine years as a CEO in high-tech manufacturing firms and eleven years in the Singapore Economic Development Board, promoting the development of the electronics industry.

Lin Hong is the author of "Venture Capital Fund Management: *A Comprehensive Approach to Investment Practices & the Entire Operations of a VC Firm*", published by Aspatore Books / Thomson Reuters in November 2005.

He was previously the Managing Director for Business Development in Temasek Capital (Pte) Ltd from October 2000 to March 2003. (Temasek Capital was the private equity arm of Temasek Holdings, a Singapore government-owned investment firm with a global portfolio worth S$193 billion in 2011.) His responsibility was to set up Temasek's incubation program, which provided funding, support and mentoring services to start-ups and early stage companies. The program was successfully established in Singapore, Chennai and Shenzhen and several investments into start-ups were made in these cities.

Prior to joining Temasek, Lin Hong was the EVP of Transpac Capital Pte Ltd, from 1990 to 2000. Transpac was established in 1986 (then known as Transtech) and grew to become one of the largest venture capital firms in South-East Asia, managing more than US$820 million of funds in 2000, which were invested in a broad range of companies in Asia and USA.

Prior to Transpac, Lin Hong was the CEO of U.S. subsidiaries manufacturing disk drives in Singapore, from 1981 to 1990. This included starting up from scratch, Computer Memories Far East Ltd in 1983, which was sold to Micropolis Ltd for about US$30 million in 1986, resulting in a significant capital gain for the owners of Computer Memories.

Lin Hong and his management team restarted under Micropolis in 1986 and grew the Singapore operations to achieve a revenue run rate of US$400 million at the time of his departure in 1990. Lin Hong started work in 1970 in the Singapore Economic Development Board, heading the electronics group, where he spent eleven years promoting the development of the electronics industry in Singapore, which is now the largest industrial sector in the economy.

Lin Hong has a bachelor degree in electrical engineering and a diploma in business administration. He has served on the boards of listed and private companies in USA and Singapore. He served for 20 years on the Board of Governors of the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), Singapore (1981 to 2001), and for 18 years on the Board of Governors of Nanyang Polytechnic, Singapore (1992 to 2010). He was awarded a Singapore Public Service Medal in 1992 and a Distinguished Friend of ITE award in 2012.

He is also the Managing Director of Wingz Capital Pte Ltd, a venture capital consulting company, and Managing Partner of Wingz LLP, a software development company. However, because of his appointment as the Executive Director of SE Hub Ltd, Wingz Capital and Wingz LLP are now dormant. Lin Hong is currently also Chairman of ITE Holding Pte Ltd, as well as a board member of SPRING SEEDS Capital Pte Ltd and Spice Connect Pte Ltd.

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