Monitoring & Evaluation

An Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy influencing processes

Monitoring

Monitoring is:

“the systematic and continuous assessment of the progress of IRM policy advocacy and lobby interventions over time, which checks that things are ‘going to plan’ and enables adjustments to be made in a methodical way” (Bakewell, O., Adams, J. & Pratt, B. (2003, cited in WaterAid, 2007);

demonstrate innovative and effective strategies.

Monitoring information can help to:

- generate financial and political support for advocacy activities in the PfR; and
- market the PfR.

Evaluation

- Evaluation is “the periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency and impact of a piece of work with respect to its stated objectives and is usually carried out at some significant stage in the PfR project’s development, e.g. at the end of a planning period, as the project moves to a new phase, or in response to a particular critical issue” (Ibid.).

Its ultimate purpose is to:

- draw lessons from experience in order to improve the quality of an advocacy campaign;
- improve the design of future campaigns; and
- demonstrate the PfR’s merits to supporters, policymakers, donors, allies.

Challenges of monitoring & evaluating advocacy

- Atribution problem (It can be very difficult to determine the links between policy influencing activities and outputs)
- Subjectivity & need to change objectives along the way due to external factors.
- Practical problems that constrain the production and use of knowledge about influencing activities. (Staff carrying out influencing work rarely have the time or resources to conduct robust M&E, and individual and institutional capacity is limited in many organizations)

Using Theories of Change for Advocacy

The Partners for Resilience(PfR) program is aimed at influencing policy and practices to integrate Integrated Risk Management (IRM) approach and its principles.

As a policy process, monitoring and evaluation of policy and practice influencing processes are liable to the challenges. Therefore, use of theory of changes as tool for M&E is crucial. The most widely used and effective theory of changes and approaches that help PfR's M&E activities to come up with valuable information are **Dimensions of influence approach** and **Actor-centered theories.**

Dimensions of influence

Focuses on monitoring different dimensions of change, for example:

- The political and policy context
- The nature of the evidence for change
- The Key actors and the relationships between them
- External factors (e.g. social structures or international developments)

Together these factors create the conditions for policy change.

Actor-centered theories

- Actors as the key driving force for change
- E.g. Outcome mapping -> focuses on the behavior of ‘boundary partners’ which are individuals, groups and organizations which the program interacts with directly to effect change.

Evaluating uptake and use

- This approach involves looking at the extent to which research or advice is visibly ‘picked up’ and used by others, such as being cited in a government policy paper or mentioned in a newspaper

Tools:

- ***Uptake logs:*** *this is simply a log (perhaps an email inbox or database) where comments, anecdotes and examples of ‘uptake’ or influence are recorded.*
- ***New areas for citation analysis****: a more proactive approach to understanding uptake and use is citation analysis. In the academic field, this involves tracking citations in academic journals, but this can be expanded to cover other more policy-relevant areas such as websites, newspapers, international standards, training manuals, policy documents and operational guidelines.*
- ***User surveys****: large-scale questionnaires or smaller scale focus groups can be used to ascertain how much, and in what way, target audiences use and value the outputs provided.*

Time to practice!