

Social Impact Evaluation

By

Rajneesh Chowdhury

(Rajneesh.Chowdhury@hull.ac.uk)

04 June 2021

What we will cover

- Ice breaker
- Wicked problems and systems thinking
- Social impact evaluation
- Professional considerations

Ice-breaker



Ice breaker

- What is impact evaluation according to you?
- What challenges/concerns surface for you when you think of or get into impact evaluation?
- Any experience of a 'successful' or an 'unsuccessful' impact evaluation project that you may have been part of?

Wicked problems & systems thinking



Wicked Problems



Ambiguous
Volatile & Unpredictable
Nonlinear
Unique

Baahubali story

- Baahubali lives in a village near a chemical company and works for the same company
- The company allocated CSR funds for education of the village children
- The main village river is severely contaminated because the chemical company flushes its industrial waste into the river
- Baahubali's wife is a small-time fisherwoman and is now out of business as the contaminated water has wiped out the fish
- Baahubali's son constantly falls ill and drops out of school
- The company eventually stopped funding the education program
- Abject poverty and dissonance in the village continues

Reflections

- What do you think?
- Key learning?
- What could have been done differently?



**Reductionist
Approach**



**Systems
Approach**

Two fundamentally different ways of approaching situations

The difference

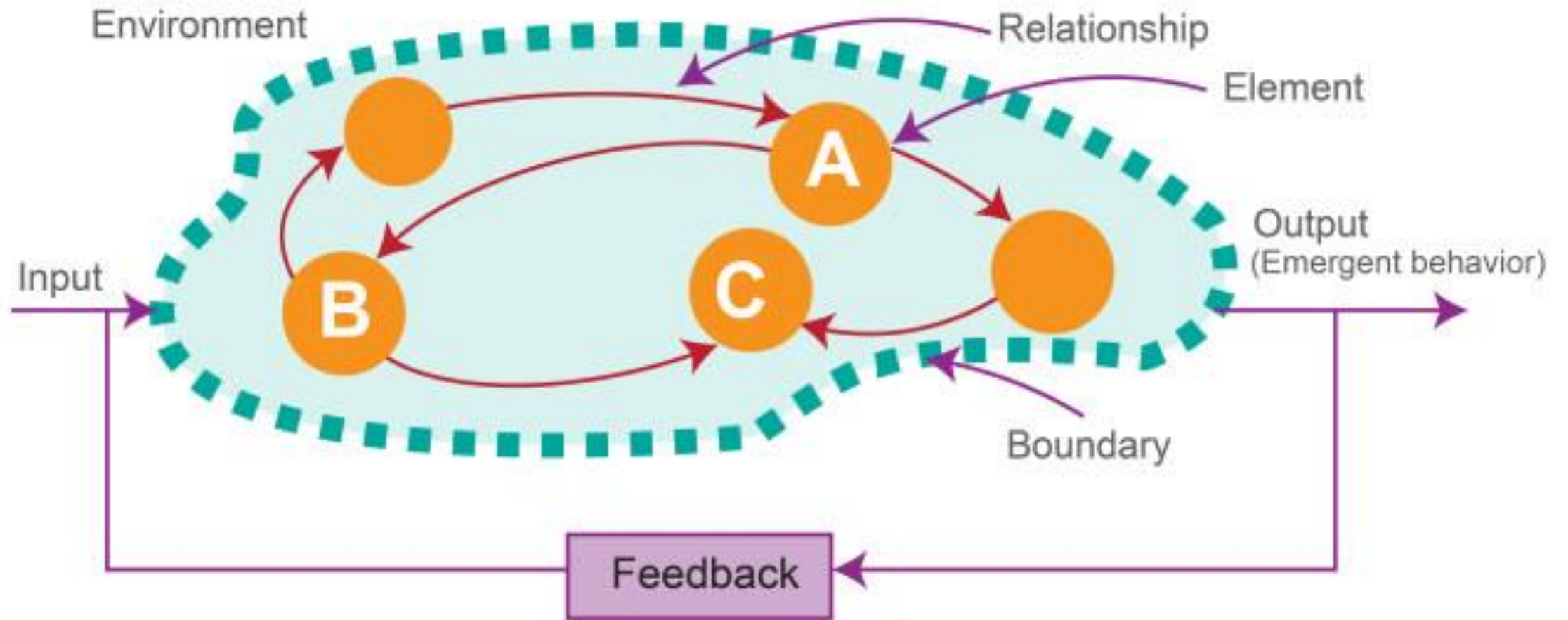
Reductionist Approach

- Linear thinking
- Focus on problem-solving
- Expert-led
- Focus on optimisation
- Barriers mindset

Systems Approach

- Holistic thinking
- Focus on problem-structuring
- Stakeholder-led
- Focus on empowerment
- Boundaries mindset

The systems approach



Social impact evaluation



Impact

Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended

Impact evaluation

Focused and structured understanding of the impact – whether direct or indirect, positive or negative, intended or unintended

Impact evaluation

Broader questions

- Where have we started?
- Where are we going?
- Where are the traffic lights?
- Where are the potholes?
- Why are we going there anyway?



Dimensions

Relevance Does our intervention meet the need of the beneficiary?

Efficiency Are we doing the things right?

Effectiveness Are we doing the right things?

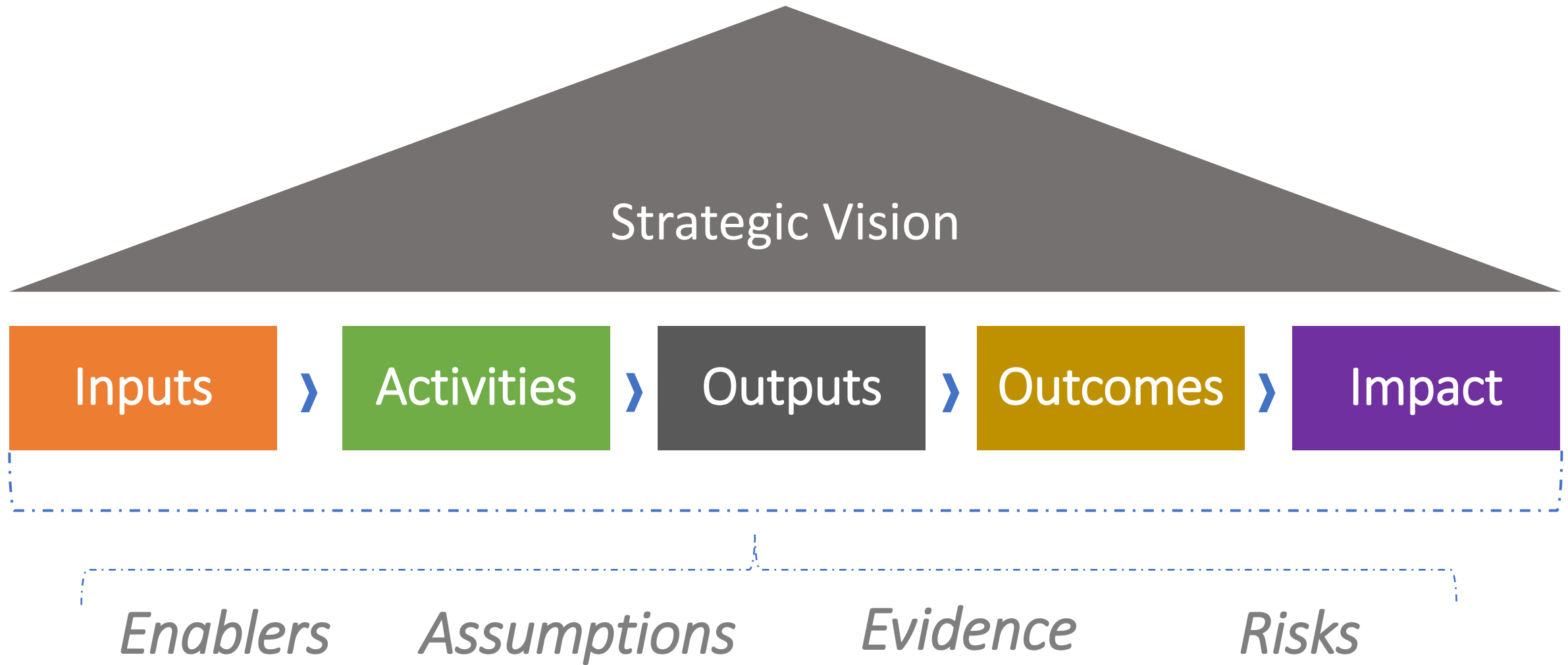
Impact Are we moving the needle?

Sustainability Will the effects last after we move out?

Example (Cleft Lip Org.)

Criteria	Performance	Gaps
Relevance	Over 35,000 children are born with a cleft of the lip and/or palate in India each year. There's an estimated backlog of over a million untreated patients due to ignorance and poverty. We find ways to make treatment available to children while building local treatment capacities.	The need and problem statement to be stated in alignment with global and national targets or development goals in all communication material
Effectiveness	We have raised Rs. 3 crores through local donations and sponsored 3,000 safe, quality and totally free reconstructive surgeries for poor children in India.	Gaps in funding have been witnessed. Need to align targets, benchmarks and visions to measure effectiveness of the programme.
Efficiency	3000 surgeries were sponsored from Rs. 3 crores in the last 5 years.	Through effective data intelligence and better management, the numbers could be higher.
Impact	Cleft surgeries have impacted lives of children and families positively – physically and psychologically.	Impact in terms of human stories/videos need to be recorded.
Sustainability	Sustainability is dependent on sources of funding and nature of partnerships with hospitals. We leverage local doctors ONLY.	Currently no funding model and long-term contracts with hospitals.
Value Add/USP	<i>'Teach a person to fish' approach and complete focus on cleft impairments.</i>	<i>We have not sufficiently highlighted our USP.</i>

Theory of Change (ToC)



Example

VISION

Systemic community development and women's empowerment

Inputs

Infrastructure
Videos
Handouts
Funds

Activities

Menstrual hygiene workshops and awareness material
Connecting pad-making units with target schools

Outputs

Awareness of physiological and psychological changes amongst adolescent girls
Availability of sanitary napkins

Outcomes

Usage of sanitary napkins by adolescent girls
Reduced infections related to non-use of sanitary pads

Impact

Healthy and self-aware adolescent girls in a village who are in control of their own bodies and minds

Enablers

Empathetic facilitator (Internal enabler); welcoming village school where teachers are concerned

Assumptions

The girls who attend the workshops inform their parents what they have learnt; the boys come to know what the workshops are about

Evidence

According to the WHO, 78% of adolescent girls in villages in the State who go through menstrual hygiene workshops end up using sanitary pads within a week

Risks

Parents of the adolescent girls raised a protest against the workshops saying that it is against the village culture

Menstrual Hygiene Program

Exercise

- Think of any program you have been involved in or have interest
- What would be the chain as per ToC?
- Has it made you think differently?

Nuances

Social impact evaluation needs to strike a balance

Objective

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time-bound



Subjective
Participatory
Interpreted
Cross-checked
Empowering
Disaggregated

Subjective

Professional Considerations



Social Impact

A significant, positive change that addresses a pressing social challenge... having a social impact is the result of a deliberate set of activities with a goal around this definition.

(Ross School of Business, University of Michigan)



Sustainable Development Goals

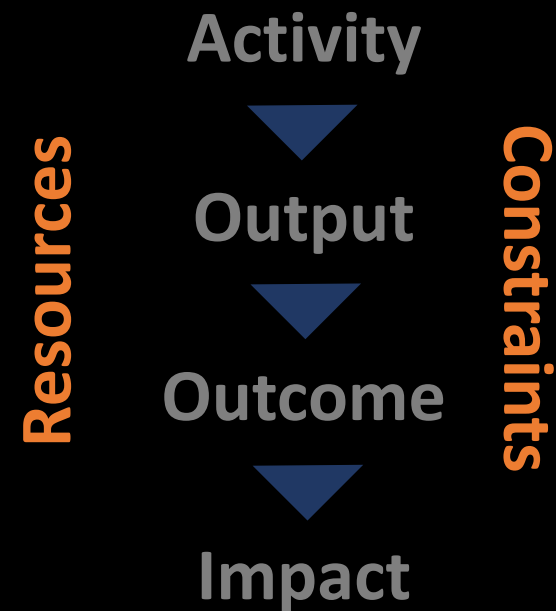


Design

Implementation

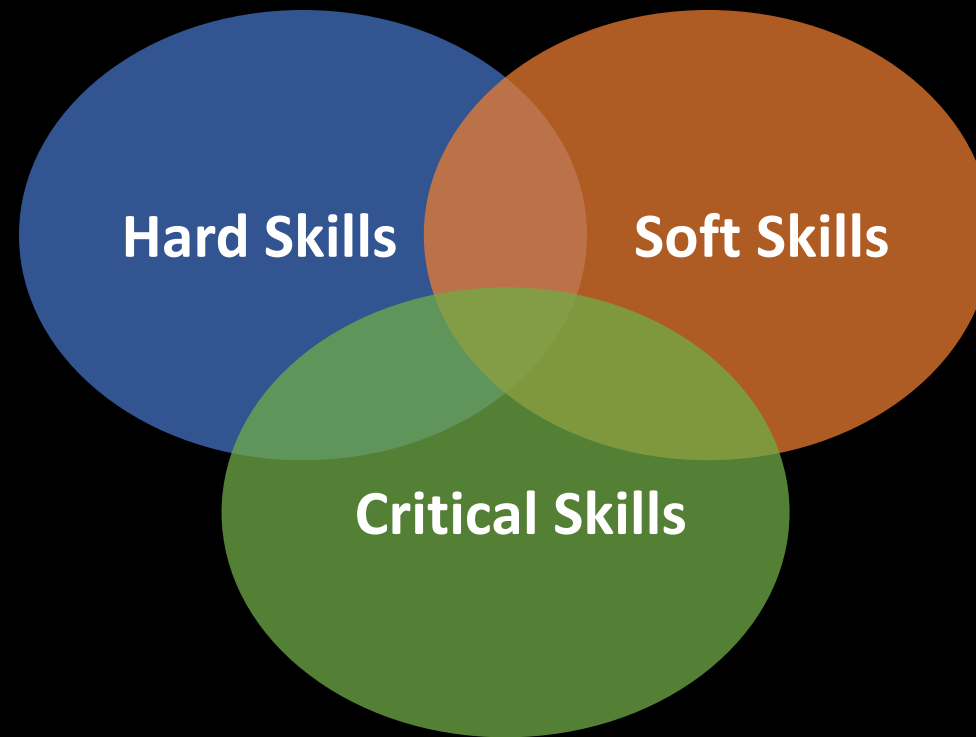
Evaluation

Theory of Change



1. Recognise **interconnections** within and between the goals to understand **emergence**
2. Draw **boundaries** to define impact realisation and recognise **permeability** and **overlaps**
3. Identify **high leverage points** in the system for maximal impact
4. Recognise **feedback loops** and work towards variety attenuation of the system in which the intervention is situated
5. Understanding of **local issues** and customisation of solutions for local nuances
6. Change **mobilisation** at the local levels and equipping change agents at the community level with finance, resources and infrastructure
7. Think not just implementation but **sustenance** of the same
8. Consider **evaluation holistically**
9. Stay **flexible** and adaptive through design, implementation and measurement of social impact projects
10. Drive partnerships between institutions and individuals to create **cumulative force** for social change

Imperatives for change makers



“Working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, across various cultural, disciplinary and sectoral boundaries requires specific competences and skills, including open-mindedness, empathy, listening, influencing, negotiation, brokering, alongside strategic and critical thinking.”

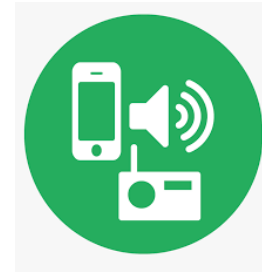
Stakeholder universe



FUNDERS



EMPLOYEES



MEDIA



GOVERNMENT



CIVIL
SOCIETY



PARTNERS



SCEPTICS



LATERAL
ORGANISATIONS

Thank you!

(Rajneesh.Chowdhury@hull.ac.uk)

04 June 2021