



Evaluation in International Ministry: Key Principles and Practical Tools



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Kingdom Values in Evaluation—Is This Biblical?

More frequently than ever before, international Christian organizations are being asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their ministry. Governing boards and major donors are asking ministries to show evidence of their results.

In the United States, donor advisory group Charity Navigator has added Results Reporting as a key dimension (with financial health and transparency) of its assessment of all organizations, saying, “We believe that effective charities manage their performance and thereby know and act on their results.”¹

In our experience, interest in evaluation is also growing among ministry staff and leadership—in the Majority World as well as in the West. Recently, GMI spoke with the African international director of a large ministry about evaluation. The leader spoke passionately about the need to gather evidence of impact across all of the organization’s varied branches. As a medical doctor, he had seen how results-oriented evaluation improves practice.

Global ministry leaders and field staff are finding that evaluation affirms their hard work, improves their communication and gives them next steps and new ideas for ministry.

Further, research among ministry CEOs indicates that Majority-World CEOs may place greater priority than Western CEOs on assessing ministry opportunities (so many options!) and in helping field staff maintain work-life balance.² Evaluation can play a key role in these tasks.

Evaluation centers on making judgments like: To what degree were goals accomplished? How well were needs met? Why did things turn out as they did? What could be done better?

For some ministries, this emphasis has led to concern. Is results-oriented evaluation consistent with biblical values? Aren’t we supposed to leave the results to God? Shouldn’t we mostly be concerned with faithfulness?

Is evaluation an appropriate activity in Christian ministry?

One answer comes from a surprising secular source: Michael Scriven, professor of psychology at Claremont Graduate School and (in the view of many) the father of modern evaluation.³ He notes that few charitable and humanitarian organizations have a clearly articulated ethical foundation for evaluating what is “good” for those they serve, with one notable exception: Christian missionaries, for whom biblical revelation and commandment provide objective authority and standard!⁴

Scripture offers a number of insights into this issue. Jesus’ parables of the Kingdom often reflect measurable growth and results. Fruitfulness is expected (Parable of the Barren Fig Tree, Luke 13:6-9). The fruitfulness of good soil varies (Parable of the Sower, Matthew 13:8). Stewards are expected to produce a measurable return (Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30). The worker can recognize growth and maturity even without

¹ http://www.charitynavigator.org/_asset/_etc/CN_Results_Reporting_Concept_Note.pdf

² *CEO Survey 2013: Navigating Global Currents*, Full Research Report. Missio Nexus, pp. 55-56. Available as of 1/25/2016 at https://netforum.avectra.com/eweb/shopping/shopping.aspx?site=exchange&prd_key=d97194b8-d9ad-46a1-b25e-f8b86352838f

³ <http://aea365.org/blog/abhik-roy-kristin-hobson-and-chris-coryn-on-the-scriven-number/>

⁴ Advanced Evaluation Methods, Concepts & Problems, Professional Development Workshop 33, October 24, 2012, American Evaluation Association convention, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Transcript of address is unpublished; statement is based on recollection of the author, who attended the address <http://archive.eval.org/eval2012/12pdw.desc.htm>

knowing how a seed grows (Parable of the Seed Growing, Mark 4:6-9). In each of these parables of the Kingdom of God, the Master's servants are expected to observe and measure results and are able to assign value to them.

GMI has spent much time thinking and discussing the Kingdom values that support and inform ministry evaluation. We have come to focus on three values in particular:

Kingdom Values

Three central kingdom values	Nine values related to evaluation	Biblical image
CHANGE – The kingdom is earth-shaking, transformative, liberating, and joyful. This is the kingdom humanity has been waiting for since Eden. This is it!	• Process and outcome both valuable • Transformed lives • Innovation as part of stewardship • Thinking forward from evaluation (goal is to build up not to blame & tear down)	Mark 1:15 The time is fulfilled! The new era is beginning. Change, reorient to the new reality, and welcome the good news.
MYSTERY – The kingdom comes gently, gradually, and mysteriously rather than by force, hurry, or manipulation.	• Celebration of God's work • Dependence on God • Quantitative & qualitative both needed • Thinking forward from evaluation	Mark 4:28 The farmer goes to sleep and gets up, night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know.
UNITY – The kingdom unites people under one Lord rather than feeding their competitive spirit. It is treasonous to evaluate anything in terms of its value for building our own little kingdoms.	• Collaboration not competition • Local context is factored in (unity has diversity not standardization)	Matthew 8:11 I tell you, many will come from the east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Change: The Kingdom of God not only *is* but also *is coming*. Change is essential as the Kingdom is more fully announced and people submit more fully to it. We serve in ministry in order to participate in Kingdom advancement. Measuring aspects of its advancement allows us to celebrate what God has done—and rejoice that He has allowed us to participate with Him.

Change varies. The harvest may be thirty-fold, or sixty-fold or a hundred-fold. When we measure change, sometimes we learn that things haven't changed as we hoped or anticipated. It may be the nature of the soil, but it could also relate to the actions of the harvester. This leads us to reflect and to learn and, as the Spirit leads, to maintain or adjust our approach.

We also evaluate because the situation around us is changing. The world of ministry is not a laboratory, where conditions can be held constant. New needs, opportunities and threats emerge—for us and for those we serve. Evaluation and assessment helps us to better understand changes to our environment and to the needs of those we serve.

Mystery: The Kingdom of God is understandable but not fully. There is only one who fully understands and reveals. As a result, our ability to evaluate is limited and fallible.

This relates both to the scope of evaluation and our posture as we evaluate. In terms of scope, we should only seek to evaluate what we have been given responsibility for. In terms of posture, we should bathe our evaluation in humility, knowing that “we see in a mirror dimly” and we know only “know in part.”

Sometimes, God takes the initiative to reveal what has been hidden. Often, He reveals in response to requests or in conjunction with our efforts to discover. We approach evaluation prayerfully, asking God to allow us to discover what He has done and is doing.

Unity: Unity is a key value of the Kingdom. The Son is united with the Father and prays for the unity of the disciples. The process of evaluation involves observing, listening and measuring—all of which foster shared understanding. Shared understanding leads to unity in discernment and action. When we agree about what *is* and what *has been*, we are better able to discuss and agree on what *could be*.

Evaluation also requires stating goals—and often stating how those goals are to be achieved, along with what evidence represents progress toward goals. When ministry colleagues work through that process, differences come to light, revealing areas of disunity that may not have been recognized. Once these differences are surfaced, clarity can be sought and unity restored or strengthened.

These values (and others as well) provide solid support for evaluation. In Change there is reason to measure and evaluate progress. In Mystery there are limits and conditions for measuring and evaluating progress. In Unity there is hope that measuring and evaluating progress will be celebrated and built upon.

Positioning Evaluation in the Organization

Evaluation offers many benefits to an organization, but some people are likely to perceive it as a threat, especially if you plan to use outside assistance. Push-back in your organization can take many forms:

- “We don’t have the time or money.”
- “We are not professionals. This is ministry.”
- “Things are fine the way they are.”
- “We don’t need outsiders telling us what to do.”
- “We’re not quite ready, timing-wise. Let’s wait a year or two.”
- “The gratitude of those we serve is all the affirmation we need.”
- “Our national partners won’t respond well to invasive Western management techniques.”
- “If we can’t be transparent and honest among ourselves, we are in real trouble.”

Developing the trust of colleagues for evaluation is important. It is worth taking time to lay the groundwork for cooperation. Here are a few themes to emphasize as you communicate:

1. Affirm that everyone wants the best for the ministry and especially for those it serves. This keeps the focus on organizational benefits and off of personal concerns about criticism.
2. Encourage people that the ministry’s success stories need to be better known and shared.
3. Help people understand that evaluation will focus on programs and processes, not on people. This is a learning exercise, not a job review for anyone.
4. Use the metaphor of physical health to show the importance of measurement and the value of identifying a few key measures, or **indicators**. Measures are essential in health care—and should be essential in ministry. Health care workers focus on the measures that have proven to be important. Ministries can do the same.
5. Emphasize that the organization has primary responsibility for evaluating its work. Organization leaders and staff will be active participants. Outsiders may be used for certain tasks and projects, but they serve the ministry, not the other way around.
6. Affirm the organization’s commitment to not burden staff with lots of additional reporting. Whenever possible, evaluation will be built into the regular work of ministry.
7. Let them know that national leaders often have more experience with evaluation than do North Americans. Many are at ease in reporting on impact and accountability to donors in other lands.
8. Remind them that change happens whether we do evaluation or not. Doing evaluation means that change is less likely to be arbitrary and more likely to be informed by evidence and input from staff and from those served.
9. Encourage them with stories of ministries that have found evaluation helpful. The process often helps staff to better understand how their role helps the organization to reach its goals.
10. Assure them that evaluation done well tends to result in better relationships with donors and more resources for ministry.

Getting Started—Internal Evaluation: What did we learn?

The fastest, easiest evaluation work you can do is self-evaluation. How did the work go? What did you learn? How would you do it differently next time? Most ministry leaders do this, but few do it intentionally, recording what was learned, sharing lessons with others and applying those lessons into project guidelines and training.

When records of learning are not kept and managed, an organization's knowledge is mostly stored in the minds of individual staff members. When the staff member leaves the organization, or forgets the information, or cannot be found when someone else needs the information, knowledge is lost.

After-Action Review

An easy way to do self-evaluation is through an after-action review (AAR). This can be done for a whole project or for stages of a project. Frontiers is one organization that encourages this. They keep it simple, asking:

1. What did we plan or expect to happen?
2. What actually happened?
 - a. What went well?
 - b. What did not go well?
3. What are one or two lessons we can apply?

Build an AAR into the project tasks and schedule—don't make it a separate event or activity. Make sure that everyone participates, but limit potential conflict by keeping the discussion focused on processes, not people.

Have someone record responses and distribute to participants and others. A paper or electronic form can be helpful for storing and retrieving information—but keep it easy and accessible. This simple exercise can provide meaningful examples doing evaluation and being a “learning organization.”

Listening to Those Being Served

The next-easiest thing to do is observe and listen to those whom you are serving. Many kinds of instruments are available to do this, and it is better than self-evaluation, because the source of the feedback is those who are experiencing impact first hand.

Most ministries are strongly motivated by seeing lives changed. They love to gather and share stories of how they saw God transform lives and the privilege they experienced in being a part of such change.

These stories are an example of **qualitative research**. They demonstrate that impact happens through their ministry and they often describe the process of change.

Most ministries routinely gather and share such stories in communication with donors and prayer partners. Ministries can take a few additional steps to strengthen this simple form of evaluation:

1. Ask those whose lives were changed to tell their own story. Record the stories on audio or video and translate/transcribe the text. Resist the urge to ask leading questions or interpret their story for them. The simpler the questions or directions are, the better. A simple, “Please tell us the story of what God has done for you” is often sufficient. Prompting for greater detail at key points can be helpful. This can often be done just by repeating someone's last phrase or saying, “Tell us more about that.” “How”

questions are often good facilitators: “How did that come about?” “How are things different now?”

2. Ask about similar stories. One anecdote shows that change is possible. Several stories can demonstrate a pattern of transformation or the replication of transformation. “Do you know of other people who have had a similar experience? Who? Tell me about them.” “Have you shared your story with others? With whom? How did they respond?” Take notes about how impact has multiplied. Ask for introductions to others whose lives have been changed. See how many generations of impact can be documented.
3. Explore how they did (or would do) ministry differently. When replication occurs, adaptation often happens. Ask about this in a way that communicates that adaptation is expected. Seek to discover what was done differently and why.
4. Explore barriers to multiplication. Ask if there are others in the community who haven’t yet experienced such a change. Follow up by asking what keeps people from such an experience—and what might be done (or who might be needed) to overcome any obstacles mentioned.
5. Document and organize responses. When many responses have been collected, create codes for the most common responses for easier counting.

We encourage ministries to extend their listening efforts beyond a handful of stories. A few people can demonstrate that growth has occurred. But they don’t demonstrate how broadly or consistently growth has occurred. To do that, you would need to listen to everyone served—or at least a group that represents everyone served. This is where systematic sampling can help.

Most ministries do not have the time, money or access to interview everyone who is served. But most can use a form of systematic sampling—in which everyone served has a roughly equal likelihood of being interviewed. Consistently applying a decision rule can help achieve this. For example, your ministry can seek to interview every X^{th} person or every X^{th} site or every X^{th} day.

In reporting to partners, this demonstrates that the stories gathered reflect the experiences of not only a few people but of the population being served. Collecting a relatively large number of stories also allows you to use the evaluation technique known as **Most-Significant Change** (MSC), which is discussed later in this paper.

Finally, if you combine story-gathering with a few categorical or numeric questions, you have entered into a realm of **quantitative research**, where summary measures and statistics can be used to describe learning.

Evaluation: More than Looking Back

So far, we have looked at easy ways to get started with evaluation. These have addressed two basic questions:

How do we think things have changed as a result of our ministry?

How do those we serve think things have changed as a result of our ministry?

Asking these questions intentionally puts us in a listening posture. Answers to these questions can be mined for insights that help us improve projects and programs—and help us communicate with constituents.

But these questions have limitations. As honest as we try to be with ourselves, we tend to see and hear what we want (perceptual bias). And those we serve are likely to say affirming things to preserve relationships and to continue to receive benefits (social desirability bias and funding bias).

Techniques can be applied to reduce bias as we listen. But these questions fall short in other ways—both look back in time and depend upon memories, which are highly unreliable. They also consider ministry isolated from its context.

If the only evaluation tools we used were questions like these, people would be likely to ask questions of us, like:

- How do you know for sure that things have changed? Did you measure anything before starting your project or program?
- Have other ministries also been serving these people? How do you know the changes are a result of your ministry and not another?
- What conditions enabled your ministry to be effective in this setting? How can you be sure those conditions are met elsewhere?
- What about those who haven't been served—have things stayed the same for them—or have they changed?
- Have negative changes also occurred alongside positive ones? What are the unintended consequences of your ministry?
- Are the positive changes sustainable, or will they revert back over time?
- Are those you are serving able to bring positive change to others? How can you demonstrate that impact?

Discovering answers to these questions can make a huge difference in ministry, resulting in more effective service, increased confidence among those who serve and better relationships with those who fund or support the ministry.

Expectations: Finding a Realistic, Affordable Approach

When ministry leaders read the preceding questions, they may begin to get nervous about the amount of time, work and expense involved in evaluation. So, before exploring frameworks for evaluation of project/program impact, let's touch on expectations.

Evaluation does not have to be difficult, but it is a discipline. It takes commitment—and time to do the planning thought work—and later the field work—to discover indicators that should be measured.

Indicators reflect progress toward **outcomes** and vary from project to project. Most projects have a small number of objectives. Those objectives relate to a small set of organizational goals. Information demonstrating progress toward those goals will fit into a small set of categories. With time, those categories will become familiar and selecting useful measures from them will become second nature.

Early on, however, the ocean of potentially useful information is large and the ways it can be organized are many. Don't be discouraged! The tools described in this document can help you navigate that ocean and arrive at information that is valuable and accessible.

From there, expect to experiment and adapt your approach as you learn what works best for your organization.

How much should you spend on evaluation? For its international programs, The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) established a policy of allocating 3 percent of project budgets to evaluation, based on a UN rule of thumb. Then it experimented and adapted, allowing variation where appropriate!⁵ We encourage ministry organizations that operate on a smaller scale to plan for two to three times that, or 6 to 10 percent.

⁵ Office of Inspector General, *Audit of USAID's Evaluation Policy Implementation*, Audit Report No. 9-000-15-004-P, September 10, 2015. Accessed 1/25/2016 at <https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/audit-reports/9-000-15-004-p.pdf>.

Big Picture: Linking Mission & Vision to Evaluation

Whether evaluating a large program or a small-scale project, it is important to relate evaluation criteria to the overall goals of the ministry. This ensures that the basis for evaluation is sound and provides a consistent framework for evaluation.

Additionally, tying evaluation to organization goals helps project staff to understand how their portion of the work contributes to big-picture goals, and it helps everyone to keep pulling in the same direction.

So, begin by reviewing your organization's mission and vision statements. Read them through carefully. Then, consider a project or program for evaluation and ask yourself, "Is this project consistent with our mission?" "Can a clear connection be drawn from the goals of this project to our organizational vision?" If the answers are not yes to both questions, the project activities and goals may need revision—or the mission or vision statement may need to be reviewed.

A **mission statement** usually describes what an organization does and for whom. The activities tend to be within the organization's control and the audiences served are directly accessible. Staff members are expected to carry out the mission now. When a project is held up to the mission statement, you can ask: "In this project, are we doing the things that what we say that we do? Are we serving those we want to serve?"

A **vision statement**, on the other hand, usually describes a future state—one that can be influenced but that is not within an organization's direct control. It may apply to many people or communities, whether they are directly accessible to the organization or not. A vision provides a standard to which future outcomes can be compared. It helps an organization to consider, "If our vision were to be fulfilled, what would that look like? What evidence of progress would be visible from this project?"

These questions provide guidance as you consider which activities to track and which evidence to gather among key audiences.

Let's take a look at a hypothetical example of how to do project evaluation.

Our organization is beginning a Scripture engagement effort among the (fictional) Kemaba language group. The Bible has been translated into Kemaba but literacy is low. Our project is designed to help people learn, memorize and share a set of 40 Bible stories and be able to apply principles from those stories to their daily lives.

First, we check to see if our project activity aligns with our organizational mission statement:

"Increasing scriptural access and engagement for all peoples."

Good news! Our project aligns clearly with the engagement part of the mission statement, focusing on a particular people. Our evaluation should seek to gather evidence of increased engagement. Access to Scripture is a condition required for engagement to occur, so it may also be part of the evaluation.

We also check our project goal against our vision statement: "Seeing a multiplying movement of people enjoying God's presence and blessing through Scripture knowledge and application."

More good news: Our project directly addresses knowledge and application. It also involves sharing stories with others, which connects to our desire to see multiplication. As we evaluate, we will want to see evidence gathered of an increase in knowledge, an increase in applying that knowledge, and multiplication of knowledge and application to others.

Begin at the Beginning

For those getting started with evaluation, we recommend selecting a project that is at its beginning, rather than one at its conclusion. For the latter, the tools described earlier in this document (After-action Review and Collecting Stories) may suffice.

There are two basic types of evaluation. **Summative evaluation** focuses on measuring the impact of a project or program on the people it serves. **Formative evaluation** focuses on improving the design and performance of an ongoing project or program. Both types can be extremely valuable for a ministry, and both types can be applied to the same project or program.

You can think of summative evaluation as looking backward (“What did we accomplish?”) and formative evaluation as looking forward (“How can we make it better?”). Both types are most effective when planned and executed from the beginning of a project. As Stephen Covey famously wrote, “Begin with the end in mind.”⁶

Planning summative evaluation from the beginning of a project helps you build measurement into the project plan, making it easy to see evidence of impact at the end. Involve project members in the planning process, or

For our Kemaba Scripture Engagement project, our team brainstorms the following possibilities for summative evaluation to show growth in memorizing, sharing and applying Scripture:

Audio File Distribution: *We can track how often online audio files are accessed and downloaded. We can also track how many phone micro-cards are distributed. We can map file downloads by date and location.*

Distribution Survey: *When people download a file, we can ask them to answer: 1. Who told you about this story? 2. Who else could you share the story with? These questions encourage and measure multiplication.*

Pre/Post Testing: *Our plan includes a storying initiative among Kemaba-speaking pastors, with sermon notes and micro-card audio files. We can survey church members at the start and end of the project. We ask them to tell us selected stories, lessons, how those lessons have been applied and who else they have shared stories with. We can also survey pastors about how they carried out the program.*

Social Media Monitoring: *We can monitor a handful of Kemaba-language social-media sites for references to names and key terms used in the stories, as well as for examples of applications referenced in lessons.*

Focus Groups: *At the end of the project we can gather a group of pastors who used the program extensively and a group of lay people identified as high-volume story sharers. Among other things, we ask them for stories of how they have seen people apply the lessons from the stories.*

Children’s Events: *We can throw parties in selected communities for Kemaba children who have learned the stories. Participants are encouraged to demonstrate what they have learned. Narratives of sharing and applying lessons are collected from children and their parents.*

Requests for Materials: *During the initiative, staff members and key volunteers log the number of requests they receive for story materials.*

even those being served. Brainstorm many options for summative evidence. You may not use all of them, or even most of them. But a large number of ideas makes it likely that good evidence will emerge from the process.

Summative methods are carried out while the project is happening (as well as afterward)—to show how project goals were accomplished. Stories play a role, but the emphasis is often on countable evidence or **quantitative information**.

Formative evaluation, meanwhile, involves learning while doing—it gives us information to improve the project while it is happening. Numbers play a role, but the emphasis is on **qualitative information**.

The process for formative evaluation is similar. During project planning, gather the team and brainstorm several forms of feedback that could help the team to understand how well the project is progressing and how it could be improved—even as it is being carried out.

Once candidate sets of evaluation elements have been generated, you can select which elements to use based on relevance, budget, ease of gathering data, similarity/difference to other elements, etc.

Several frameworks for decision making can also be used to make sure that the measures selected address the needs of your organization. These will be explored after we say a few words about complexity.

Our Kemaba Scripture Engagement project evaluation team brainstorms the following possibilities of formative elements to show growth in memorizing, sharing and applying Scripture:

Exploring Similar Initiatives: *Our organization has done similar projects for other languages. Our project team can review evaluation reports filed by those teams and learn what went well and what might be improved. Similarities and differences between these other groups and Kemaba speakers can be discussed.*

Project Design Research: *Before project launch, a needs assessment can be done in a handful of Kemaba-speaking communities. The needs can help identify application ideas for biblical stories. Stories can be tested among key volunteers and pastors to identify the best set of 40 stories—and to discover relevant applications.*

Story Review: *In churches and other public settings where stories are being shared, each session can begin with a review of the previous story, with listeners asked to fill in key elements of the story and then invited to share ways that they applied the story after hearing it. Applications are recorded and entered into a database.*

Relative Story Use: *Story-distribution rates can be monitored to see which stories are most frequently distributed and shared with others. These help illustrate which needs are most strongly felt. Based on the data, staff and volunteers discuss other potential projects that could be developed to address those needs.*

Observation: *Staff and volunteers can observe some of the participating churches. They can talk with pastors and church members to find out what worked well and what might be improved. They can ask who else should hear the stories and how barriers could be overcome. Similar discussions with social media users can take place.*

Progress Meeting: *Staff and volunteers meet at the mid-point of the initiative to discuss how things are going and what might be changed/improved. The Input is documented and distributed to participants afterward.*

Complexity: Measuring As Things Are Moving

While your ministry is working to influence change, local and global conditions are changing around you. And the pace of change is only increasing. Additionally, the social and spiritual problems addressed by ministries are significantly complex—there is almost never a single cause. And, while Christ is the singular solution to every human problem, the ways in which He brings healing are wonderfully diverse.

Complexity creates challenges for those desiring to influence and measure change—especially when using summative approaches. Because between the beginning and end of a project, the things that we thought were worth measuring may change—or even our understanding of the problem itself!

This can lead to frustration and the temptation to abandon evaluation altogether. But have patience. The following principles can help those who find themselves evaluating ministry in the midst of complexity:

1. **Include formative evaluation methods.** These are flexible by nature and are less vulnerable to changing conditions.
2. **For summative methods, state your assumptions.** Ministry always involves assumptions about what is true about situations, people and activities. Stating and clarifying what we believe to be true at the beginning of a project allows us to know when to keep or change our evaluation plans. If the assumptions are still valid at the end of a project, we can look back and measure changes with confidence. When our assumptions change, we have permission to adjust our evaluation plans.
3. **Favor measures that can be gathered quickly.** Some types of information are easier to gather than others, and some data-collection methods take longer than others. Favor those that can be executed rapidly. Be willing to commit resources to mobilize the people needed or to acquire the technology needed to gather and process information quickly.

For more about how to evaluate in complex environments, look for resources on “Developmental Evaluation.”⁷

Now, we can look at some of the common frameworks used to support evaluation.

⁷ A good place to start is http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation. For a detailed treatment, read Patton, Michael Quinn. *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*. The Guilford Press, 2010. <http://www.amazon.com/Developmental-Evaluation-Appling-Complexity-Concepts-Innovation/dp/1606238728>.

Logic Model/Log Frame

Perhaps the most-commonly used tool in the evaluation toolkit is the Logic Model or Logic Framework (often shortened to Log Frame). There are many forms and variations of this tool, but the overall thrust is the same: Define and logically link the components of the project or program in sequential order (or reverse-sequential order), emphasizing the outcomes that are ultimately sought.

In essence, the model describes a logical chain, saying, “If we take _____ resources and use them in _____ activities, we expect to see _____ outputs, leading to _____ outcomes for people and _____ impact on society.”

Or, in reverse order: “If we intend to see _____ impact on society, then it will require _____ outcomes for people, which are most likely if _____ outputs are produced, which we expect to result from _____ activities using _____ resources.”

You can find 200-page books about how to develop a Logic Model,⁸ but they all boil down to developing a logical chain that demonstrates how your people and plans can realistically lead to the outcomes and impact you are seeking. The template to be filled in is simple—GMI evaluation training uses the form on the next page. But the process of filling in the blanks takes real work, and the discussion and debate that it generates among program or project leaders is often surprising—and almost always energizing.

Logic Models are effective because they:

- Encourage, if not force, you to state assumptions about how your programs work.
- Relentless focus on **outcomes**, which are clearly distinguished from **outputs**. This means that it doesn’t matter how many people participate in your program, or even what they learn from it (outputs). What matters is what happens afterward—whether real change occurs in people’s behaviors, situations or relationships (outcomes).
- Often call for you to identify **indicators**—measures of progress toward expected outcomes. Your hoped-for outcome may be people achieving increased financial independence. Your indicator may be participants’ improvement in asset-to-debt ratio a year after joining. Independence is the goal; improvement in debt ratio is the evidence chosen to reflect it.
- Can be completed forward or backward or both-ends-toward-the-middle. This is handy, as some organizations are defined by fixed resources or activities, while others have a laser focus on solving a particular problem, and the resources and activities can be altered as necessary.

Some Logic Models distinguish between **outcomes** (changes experienced by participants and their families, often within a year of taking part) and **impacts** (changes experienced by a community or society as a long-term, cumulative or secondary effect of the changes experienced by participants). In most evaluation discussions, however, the terms are used interchangeably.

Some funders require their grantees to develop a Logic Model to show intentional thought and planning.

⁸ By example, see Taylor-Powell, Ellen, et.al, *Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models*, U. of Wisconsin-Extension, 2003. Accessed 1/26/2016. <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/pdf/lmcourseall.pdf>

Elements for Program/Project Evaluation

Initiating			Implementation						Summative Evaluation			
Realities: Need: Problem or Opportunity		Key Input/ Resources	Activities/ Services		Re- enforcing Essential Behaviors		Leader Support Practices		Progress Markers/ Monitoring		Outcomes/ Anticipated & Unanticipated	Impact: Anticipated & Unanticipated

Evaluation Foundations: Organizational Realities in Context

Context: Perspective on Needs, Resources and Desired Results/History
Funding Source: Expectations and Requirements
Organizational Mission/Vision/Values/History

Theory of Change

Theory of Change (TOC) is a close cousin to the Logic Model. Some people consider the two to be essentially the same. Others argue forcefully that they differ from one another. You can read this summary of the perceived differences and decide whether one is worth distinguishing from the other.

Where a Logic Model can be completed forwards or backwards, a Theory of Change Model always works from outcomes back to activities and resources. Outcomes are usually positioned at the top or left of the diagram.

Where a Logic Model emphasizes the components in the process of change, Theory of Change emphasizes the links between the components. A Theory of Change Model draws arrows from output X to outcome Y and asks users to give a suggested explanation of how and why one follows from the other. When evaluations are conducted, evidence is gathered to support or alter the suggested explanation of how and why outcomes are achieved.

The Center for Theory of Change website offers several sample TOC diagrams.⁹

Our Kemaba Scripture Engagement project evaluation team discusses whether to develop a Logic Model or a Theory of Change model. The consensus is that while it would make sense for the international leadership of the Scripture Engagement Initiative to develop such a model, it seems like a lot of work for us to carry out at the local level.

So, at a regional conference, our team is amused to hear that one of the international SE initiative leaders has been learning about evaluation and wants to know if we would join her and another project team to do a half-day starter exercise on Theory of Change. "Of course!" we answer.

We have a great discussion, starting by imagining that a "multiplying movement" of Scripture knowledge and application has emerged. We discuss what must have happened along the way (outcomes) and why.

Our team strongly agrees on two outcomes:

- 1. People consistently hearing or reading God's Word daily; and*
- 2. People consistently re-sharing Bible stories with others from the time that they first hear them.*

Then, we discuss why people would do those things. For daily exposure, one person suggests that people will do it if their pastor expects them to. Another suggests that people will do it when they see someone else model it. We land on the idea that people will do it when they see Jesus model it.

If that is so, someone says, then the first story that we should share is the one about Jesus prioritizing time with God and regularly quoting God's Word as He taught. Time runs out before we can define the indicators we would associate with our outcomes, but the "why" conversation has already influenced our team's thinking about story sequence and will lead us to new ideas for how we measure engagement and multiplication.

⁹ See <http://www.theoryofchange.org/library/toc-examples/>.

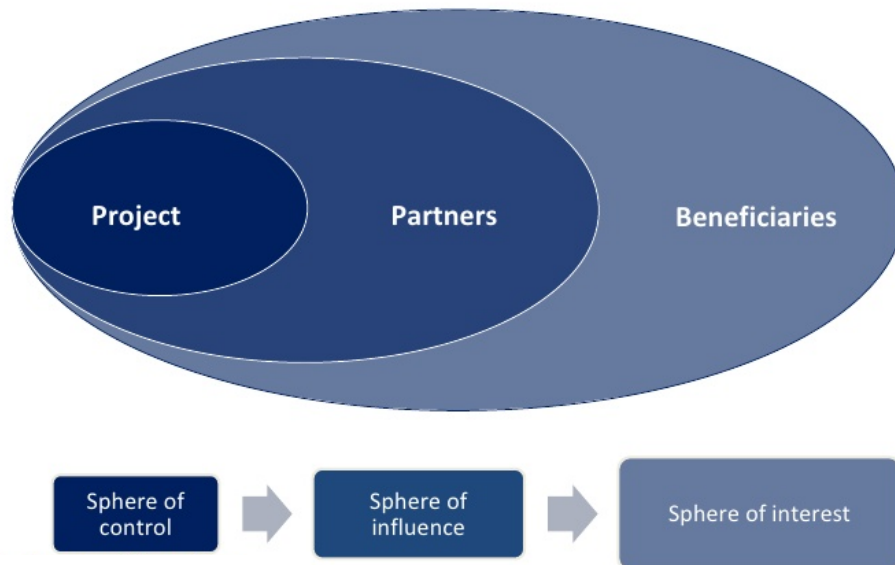
Outcome Mapping

In Outcome Mapping (OM) the core idea is that facilitating change is not about what you know or do, it's about who you know and who they influence. Outcome Mapping puts a twist on the Logic Model by emphasizing the people and relationships involved in the change process, rather than emphasizing a sequence of events.

In Outcome Mapping, we assume that our influence decreases as relational distance to those involved increases. Meanwhile, the influence of those served increases as the relational distance from our team increases. Outcome Mapping says that we should model and evaluate change by thinking first about the people involved, and where resources, activities, outcomes and impacts fit in terms of relational distance rather than time sequence.

A typical Outcome Map has three concentric ovals. The core is the Sphere of Control, the middle is the Sphere of Influence and the outer is the Sphere of Interest. For evaluation planning, we use the same elements that appear in a Logic Model (resources, activities, outputs and outcomes), but we link them to staff/volunteers, key partners or beneficiaries.

The goal in Outcome Mapping is to determine the kinds of information that should be gathered in each sphere.



Outcome Mapping helps evaluators to think about who information should be gathered about and who it should be gathered by. In terms of understanding change, it emphasizes who is able to be a link or bridge-builder between spheres.

This model also gives evaluators a good sense of how easy/difficult and expensive/inexpensive it will be to gather the information needed in evaluation. Measures in the Sphere of Control are usually easy and inexpensive to access. Those in the Sphere of Influence require more work and expense. And those in the Sphere of Interest may not be directly gatherable in the field—they may have to be obtained from partners or outside sources, such as census data, the UN or university researchers.

Outcome Mapping goes to the same destination as a Logic Model, but it makes activities secondary to relationships. It tends to be better for ongoing programs than for time-bound projects, because it provides greater flexibility for changes in activity.

Our Kemaba Scripture Engagement evaluation team decides to try an Outcome Mapping exercise to think about who plays key roles among the Kemaba and what kind of information they may offer about Scripture engagement. On the office white board we draw three Outcome Mapping ovals and begin to discuss which people should go where—and what evaluation elements could relate to their role.

***Pastors** are mentioned first. We list them as partners in the Sphere of Influence. We affirm measures and activities that were previously discussed: monitoring how many pastors adopt the church storying initiative (a direct link to the project) and the observing some of their churches and conducting focus groups with them. We also note that pastors are gatekeepers to church members.*

***Community Leaders** and **Teachers** are mentioned. We list them as beneficiaries and possible partners, able to bridge the Sphere of Influence and the Sphere of Interest. We note that teachers can also bridge to **Children**, whom we list as beneficiaries in the Sphere of Interest who can bridge to **Families**. We note that Children's Events fits here as an opportunity to gather evaluation evidence.*

*As the discussion continues, someone mentions a group that hasn't been discussed before: **Christian Medical Workers**. Another ministry runs clinics in several villages. These are a link to Kemaba speakers who live in remote areas and only occasionally come to town for supplies and health care. What if we invited medical workers to use some of the stories related to healing and wholeness? Our team begins to see a new possibility for distributing Scripture to **Rural People** on the outer rim of the Sphere of Interest. We discuss three data points that we could ask medical workers to collect from people traveling more than two hours to reach the clinic: Percentage of patients who agree or decline to hear a story, percentage who say they already heard the story from someone else (multiplication) and approximate location of residence.*

We add this idea to the list of candidate measures for evaluation.

Most Significant Change

Most Significant Change (MSC) is a field-driven tool that involves ranking stories of change. Designed to be repeated over time, MSC is best used in ongoing programs rather than projects. In addition to affirming anticipated kinds of change, it also helps to identify unexpected changes that could lead to new programs or changes in direction of existing programs.

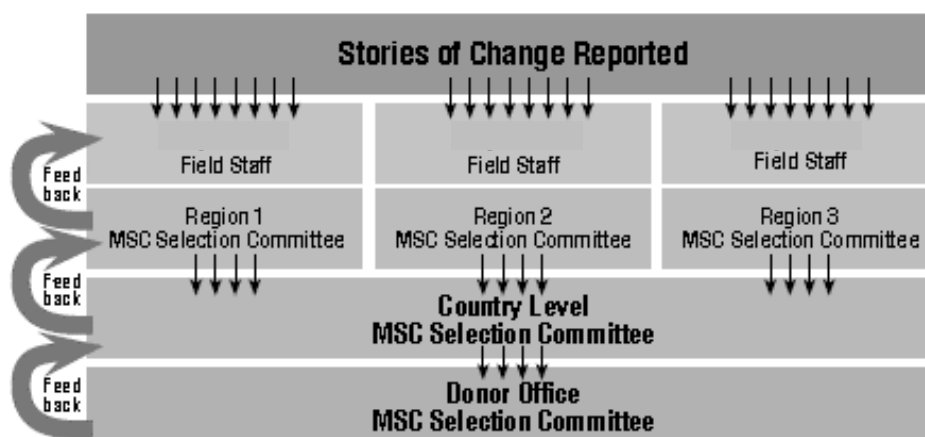
Here's how it works:

1. Organization leaders learn about and authorize the use of the tool. A few (3-5) domains of interest are identified—for example, change in personal/family situation, change in personal behavior, change in a community, change in how people relate, change in policy.
2. Those served through a program are asked by frontline staff or volunteers about the most significant change that they have seen or experienced in (domain of interest X) over (period of time Y). Those who respond are asked to explain why they felt that change was significant.
3. Selected frontline staff or volunteers are asked to select, for each domain of interest, the story they consider to be the most significant change (along with the reason it is considered significant). Those stories are passed on to a selected group of local or area supervisors.
4. The supervisors repeat the process, working as a group to choose the story in each domain that they consider most significant and assigning a reason for the choice. The selected stories are passed up to a province, national or regional level. Additionally, the frontline staff and volunteers are informed about the choices made by the supervisors.
5. The process repeats until the stories reach global/organizational leadership. At each stage, stories are read by all members, discussed as a group and the most significant ones selected by an agreed-upon method. The reasons are documented, stories are sent up the chain and feedback is given to the group below.
6. At the most senior level, reporting goes both to staff and to other constituents, such as donors and board members. Implications and ideas for testing are identified.
7. The process repeats itself over several reporting periods.

MSC offers value on many levels. By processing stories, everyone stays in touch with work at the field level. By working in groups, the concept of “significance” is discussed in depth and refined. Unity is sought. Leaders learn what is important to field staff and vice-versa. Impact is reported to constituents at all levels. New ideas emerge. Changes in organizational emphasis or direction are documented over time.¹⁰

¹⁰ For more about the MSC process we recommend Davies and Dart's *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use*. April 2005 Accessed 1/26/2015 at <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>

Most-Significant Change Model



As part of the evaluation planning process, our Kemaba Scripture Engagement project team talks to a team from our agency in a neighboring country that did a similar project last year. Members of the team speak enthusiastically about gathering stories of change.

They tell us that they traded stories with a third team that was doing a Scripture Engagement project at the same time. That team shared a story involving a young woman who was enthralled with the audio recordings of Bible stories. Her family listened with her, but her deaf uncle was left out. The young woman knew only a little sign language, but she determined to learn more so that she could share the stories with her uncle. Her experience inspired four others in her church to learn how to sign the stories as well. Relationships began to grow with the long-isolated deaf community, which had no church.

Afterward, our team makes two decisions:

1. We will invite two other teams doing Scripture Engagement projects to collaborate on a pilot MSC project. As we gather stories, we will share them with the other teams. Each group of two teams will serve as the review group for the other team. When we talk to our regional director about it, he agrees to ask staffers in the regional office to volunteer to serve as a next-level review team for the stories that emerge.
2. We return to our Outcome Mapping model and list the Kemaba Deaf Community under Sphere of Interest. We create and add a new item to our list of candidate measures for evaluation: number of people trained and able to tell the stories in sign language.

Inside and Outside Perspectives: Using Advisors and Contractors Wisely

GMI provides research and evaluation services for ministries, so take this section with a grain of salt. But we also are champions for research throughout the mission community. Unlike other kinds of research, evaluation should never be fully outsourced. It works best when the organization takes primary responsibility and uses outsiders at strategic intervals.

Occasions when it makes sense to use an external consultant include:

1. **When setting up an evaluation program.** There are lots of great resources available online to learn about evaluation—so many that you can become awash in possibilities. Coaching from an experienced evaluator can help you assess readiness and design an approach to evaluation and reporting that fits your organization’s needs, style and budget.
2. **When training staff members to do evaluation.** Because evaluation can’t be fully outsourced, your organization needs some evaluation-capable staffers to execute program elements and monitor progress. Consider having a consultant assist you in a participative training session.
3. **For a big project or program.** Evaluation of large projects can be complex, expensive and time consuming. Hiring an outsider can help keep things on schedule and within budget, while providing an experienced voice. Just remember to involve them as early as possible.
4. **For occasional deep-dives.** With ongoing programs, monitoring can often be managed in house. Every so often, a deeper level of listening and observation is needed. A third party is often helpful.
5. **For key stakeholders.** Grant makers want to see your commitment to doing good in-house evaluation. For major projects, however, having an objective, third-party perspective often increases confidence in the results.
6. **For sensitive issues.** At certain times and on certain topics, those being served may need someone from outside of the organization to talk to, who has no personal stake in the project. Contractors can deliver third-party confidentiality when needed.

Do’s and Don’ts in retaining outside help:

- Don’t expect a supplier to submit a full proposal without taking time to discuss the organization’s needs and capabilities. On the other hand, do expect to pay for an initial consultation with prospective suppliers prior to receiving a full proposal—an initial meeting to explore ideas and test their fit with your organization is worth the cost.
- Do provide prospective suppliers with examples of your evaluation processes and reports.
- Do ask prospective suppliers how they intend to support and strengthen your organization’s ongoing internal evaluation efforts.

Returning to Simple: Selecting Indicators

Up until now, we have done little or no measuring or evidence gathering—it has all been planning. We have made sure that we have defined the Outcomes we are seeking, checked them against organizational goals, and described the change process that we expect to take place.

We have also identified potential **Indicators**—measures that demonstrate progress toward Outcomes. Some Outcomes cannot be measured directly, so we have to find something measurable to represent or approximate a concept that is not measurable. Indicators can be direct or indirect measures.

The thinking and discussion generated through tools like Logic Models and Outcomes Mapping has led us to create a large set of potential Indicators, each linked to at least one Outcome. This gives us confidence that we have not overlooked measures that may be useful.

But eventually we must stop expanding possibilities and begin to select the Indicators we will actually measure. There may be many good candidates, but measuring them all would cost too much time and money. Look through them and distinguish the winners from those that don't quite make the cut.

What are we looking for? Indicators tend to have all of these characteristics:

- **Accessibility**—they are gatherable without requiring unreasonable time and expense;
- **Quality**—they do a good job of describing the changes that are important;
- **Distinctiveness**—they are not too similar to other things that you are measuring.

Keep a record of the measures that don't make the cut—we may decide to give them a try later on. But don't be afraid of cutting back to separate the good from the great. Our final set of Indicators should be memorable for our evaluation team, for organization leadership, for field leaders and for donors.

Our Kemaba Scripture Engagement evaluation team concludes our planning by selecting outcomes to emphasize and key indicators to represent those outcomes. We have collected a candidate set of nine outcomes and 34 potential indicators to demonstrate progress toward those outcomes.

Knowing that if we measured all of those things, we'd never have time for anything else, our team works to scale back to a handful of outcomes and indicators. Everyone is sad to have to shelve so many good ideas for measuring progress. Each time we do so, someone repeats the catchphrase: "Don't lose that idea! We may need it someday."

In the end, our team decides on a set of five outcomes, with 10 corresponding indicators—and a commit to measure them. Most of the data-collection needs can be integrated with project activities, although most require a commitment to continuing measurement for six months after the project completion. The evaluation plan also calls for a post-project survey of at least 20 people in each of six Kemaba communities. Finally, the team also commits to complete an After-Action Review of the project upon completion.

Outcomes and Indicators selected by the team appear in the table on the next page.

Selected Set of Kemaba Scripture-Engagement Project Outcomes and Indicators

Outcome	Indicators
<i>Widespread Desire for Kemaba Scripture Resources</i>	<i>Total number of inbound requests for program resources, including micro-cards, audio downloads, sermon notes, etc., during and within six months following the project.</i>
<i>Frequent Exposure to Scripture in Kemaba</i>	<i>Number of pastors reporting use of at least six stories in sermons or other church-wide events.</i> <i>During post-project survey of six Kemaba communities, % of people able to accurately retell from memory at least two scriptural stories that they heard or read in the past seven days.</i>
<i>Widespread Re-sharing of Kemaba Scripture Stories</i>	<i>During post-project survey of six Kemaba communities, % of people who can name at least two people outside of extended family with whom they re-shared scriptural stories.</i> <i>% of medical clinic visitors and staff-led event participants who, upon hearing a Scriptural story, report having already heard it from a native Kemaba speaker.</i> <i>Number of links in the longest chain of re-tellings verified by a staff member or partner during the project.</i>
<i>Widespread Practical, Life-giving Application of Scriptural Principles</i>	<i>Total number of Most-Significant Change stories submitted by staff, pastors and medical workers during and within six months following the project.</i> <i>Percentage of those stories rated as “high significance” by the two-team peer review group.</i>
<i>Sustainability of Scriptural Engagement</i>	<i>Number of additional (beyond the set of 40) Kemaba scriptural audio stories developed, recorded and added to the database for distribution and download during and within six months following the project.</i> <i>Total number of Kemaba communities hosting a Scripture story event for children.</i>

Bringing in the Harvest: Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting

Develop a plan for how and how often to gather Indicators. There are many forms of data gathering, so our methods will depend on your data, but the most important thing is to carry it out consistently across locations, time periods and data collectors. Consider writing a field guide that describes what to do (and what not to do). Develop training sessions for those doing fieldwork. Brief outside suppliers on standards used in the past.

When doing fieldwork among those served by the ministry, be aware of social research ethics principles, designed to protect research participants.¹¹ Principles include voluntary participation, informed consent (having the purpose of the research explained) and confidentiality. An important principle for researchers in ministry is **right to service**, which means that project or program benefits should not be withheld from people who desire them simply because they have been assigned to a comparison group for research purposes (known as a **control group**).

Remember the importance of maintaining good internal relationships in evaluation, because we are likely to need the cooperation of local field leaders to help us meet those who are served. Make sure that colleagues understand the purpose and process of evaluation. Keep them well informed and clearly communicate what is expected of them during data collection.

Create a plan for storing and analyzing data. Think about who will have access to the data and how it will be kept secure.

Throughout this paper we have made few distinctions between project evaluation and program evaluation. Reporting is one area where that difference matters. Projects usually have a clear start and finish, so evaluation is often formatted as a single report. Programs, however, are usually ongoing. Data may be compared across different time periods, with attention given to upward or downward trends. Storing data in a relational database can make this type of reporting much easier.

Another benefit of using a database is the ability to vary access settings for different stakeholders. Organization leaders may be given wider access than field staff, who may only need access to their local/area results. Donors may have a different level of access.

One organization that provides a flexible electronic platform for reporting evaluation data is ForGood (<http://forgood.org>). GMI partners with ForGood to help ministries manage their needs in both measurement and reporting to stakeholders.

¹¹ One resource for ethics in social research is the Web Center for Social Research Methods. See <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/ethics.php>.

A typical evaluation report may contain:

- Title Page (name of the organization or project/program that is being, evaluated; date)
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary (one-page overview of findings/recommendations)
- Purpose of the Report (what type of evaluation(s) was conducted, what decisions are being aided by the findings of the evaluation, who is making the decision, etc.)
- Background and description about the organization and/or project/program being evaluated
- Problem Statement (description of the ministry or community need that is being met by the project or program)
- Overall Goal(s) of Project or Program
- Activities of the Program
- Overall Evaluation Goals - what questions are being answered by the evaluation
- Outcomes and Indicators selected
- Methodology and types of Data/Information collected
- Analysis Methods
- Limitations of the evaluation (cautions about findings and how to use the findings/conclusions, etc.)
- Interpretations and Conclusions (from analysis of the data/information)
- Recommendations (regarding the decisions that must be made about the program)
- Appendices: content of the appendices depends on the goals of the evaluation report, and can include such things as instruments used to collect data/information, data gathered in the research, testimonials (comments made by users of the program), and case studies of users of the program.

The following questions may help you to make sense of data in analysis and reporting:

Identifying Findings for Individual Stakeholder groups

- What are the findings for each Stakeholder group?
- Are there common perspectives among the Stakeholders?
- Are there significant discrepancies? What are they? Is there any rationale for discrepancies?
- Combined group findings
- What findings confirmed that the project reached its desired outcomes and impact?
- What findings indicate that the project did not reach its desired outcomes and impact?
- What findings indicate unanticipated results and outcomes? Positive or negative?

Drawing Conclusions

- Did the project reach its desired impact? What was the perceived impact? If different for different Stakeholders, why the difference?
- Were the desired outcomes reached? Were there any unanticipated outcomes? Positive or negative?
- Did the Stakeholder group perceive their role in a positive light?
- Were the realities in practice the ones identified at the beginning?

- Did the organization have the right and adequate resources to meet the program needs in such a way that the outcomes and impact could happen?
- Were the program activities and services relevant and robust enough to produce the desired outcomes and impact?
- Were internal and external supports consistently practiced so that change toward outcomes and impact could happen incrementally?
- Were the right leading indicators identified and re-enforced so that they led over time to the desired outcomes and impact?
- What were the suggestions for improvement from each Stakeholder group?

Celebration/Planning

Evaluation reporting is often framed in a context of accountability. This can leave the impression that evaluation is something that we do for others. Even if those “others” are trusted partners who are eager to see us succeed, accountability can leave us thinking that evaluation is about them, not about us.

In reality, evaluation in ministry is firstly about honoring God and those He loves. We serve people for His sake and for theirs. God knows the progress that has been made on their behalf. When we measure progress (even in our imperfect ways), we are drawn in part into the heavenly celebration of Kingdom expansion.

As we mentioned at the start, the coming of God’s Kingdom is both “now” and “not yet.” It’s a truth that ensures that there’s always something to celebrate, and always something more to be a part of.

Frequently, the emphasis in evaluation is on what is yet to be done. But celebrating what has been accomplished is a key benefit. When it comes to ministry staff and stakeholders, celebration changes the “us-them” dynamic, reuniting both groups as “we,” who have been used by God in Kingdom advance.

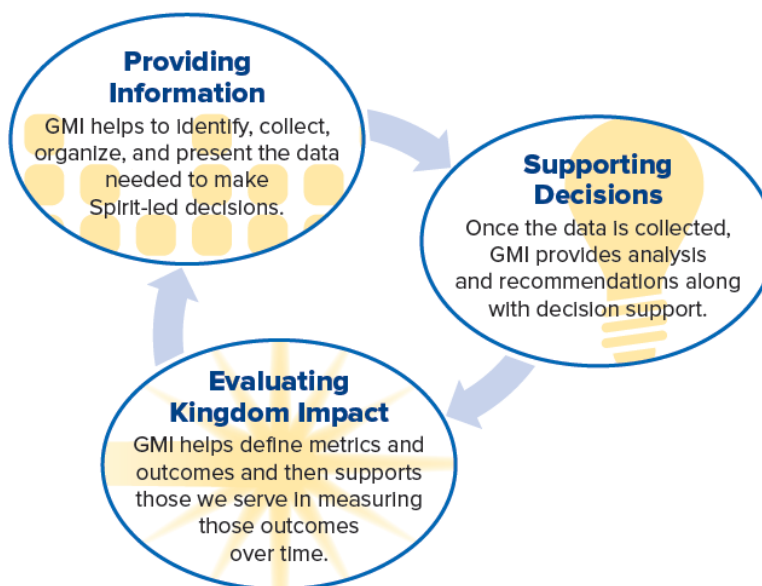
Good evaluators recognize this and make sure that what has been accomplished is communicated effectively both internally and externally—not to win others’ approval, nor to puff ourselves up, but to recognize what God has revealed and celebrate what He has done through us.

*That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you,
so that you too may have fellowship with us. (1 John 1:3, ESV)*

The Knowledge Stewardship Cycle

Good evaluators also use the “not yet” part of evaluation to create momentum for new and renewed forms of ministry. Lessons learned are used in ministry planning, which includes an assessment of situations and needs. We respond to needs and opportunities with new forms of ministry. Then, we evaluate progress again.

If that sounds like a cycle, it is. GMI calls it the Knowledge Stewardship Cycle. God reveals what has been done and what is yet to be done. Information refreshes our understanding of situations and needs, leading us to develop new responses. New forms of ministry are designed and carried out. Then, God willing, lives are changed. We seek to confirm the outcomes, celebrate them, and look forward again to what is yet to come.



Tools and Training

We hope this paper has provided practical help and encouragement for you to begin or enhance your evaluation efforts. That is mission fulfillment for GMI.

Our role in coming alongside you can take various forms, depending on your needs:

1. **Encouraging and Connecting**—More and more people and ministries are doing high-quality evaluation. We want to stay in touch with what you are doing and learning in evaluation. We are especially interested in connecting with evaluators in the Majority World, some of whom serve as GMI Global Associates. For more information about GMI Global Associates, contact Nelson Jennings (nelson.jennings@gmi.org).
2. **Training and Tools**—In response to growing interest in evaluation, GMI is strengthening our own evaluation skills and helping others to do so as well. In addition to this white paper, GMI has developed an evaluation toolkit and a training module called “Orientation to Evaluation in Ministry Settings.”

The GMI Evaluation Toolkit is available online and includes tools and resources for five stages of the evaluation process: Plans, Outcomes, Instruments, Data, and Reports.

The training module is a five-day workshop of guided learning by a skilled GMI facilitator. It introduces the evaluation process and provides basic skills in planning and carrying out the evaluation process.

More information about accessing both the Toolkit and the training can be found at gmi.org or by talking to any of the GMI staff or Global Associates.

3. **Evaluation Services**—as mentioned in the section on using advisors and contractors, GMI is available to serve as a fee-for-service consultant and research supplier. Whether you need a quick over-the-shoulder review of your plans or an extensive, multi-country impact assessment, GMI is glad to assist.

Our researchers combine professional-grade skills with extensive experience in global ministry. And, because many of them receive missionary support, GMI is able to provide services very affordably. Contact GMI Research Services at info@gmi.org to discussing your potential project.

Evaluation Glossary

After-Action Review	A learning tool in which those involved in a project or program reflect on and document what happened, what was learned and how those lessons can be applied in the future.
Complexity	A state marked both by uncertain outcomes and a lack of agreement about how outcomes may be influenced. Creates challenges for evaluation, especially summative evaluation.
Developmental Evaluation	A subset of the evaluation field concerned with conducting evaluation under conditions of complexity. Favors rapid, flexible methods. Employs decision rules about when to change the approach or basis of an evaluation.
Formative Evaluation	Approach for assessing the changes resulting from a program or project as it is being carried out. Rapid feedback and flexible methods produce information to make adjustments with the aim of improving performance during the implementation phase. (To be distinguished from Summative Evaluation)
Impacts	A result or effect that is caused by or attributable to a project or program. Impact is often used to refer to higher level effects of a program that occur in the medium or long term. Impact can be intended or unintended, as well as positive or negative. Examples include extension of human rights, development of movements, increased life expectancy. (Sometimes distinguished from Outcomes)
Indicators	Quantitative or qualitative factors that provide a reliable way to measure a particular outcome. Selection of an indicator reflects a commitment by program or project staff to measure at appropriate intervals, to monitor change and to report to stakeholders.
Logic Model	A logic model, often a visual representation, provides a road map showing the sequence of related events connecting the need for a planned program with the programs' desired outcomes and impact.
Mission Statement	Summary statement describing what an organization does, whom it serves and why or how it works. Used in evaluation as a standard for aligning project or program activities with organizational identity.
Most-Significant Change	A field-driven, story-based evaluation technique in which stories illustrating outcomes of change are ranked in terms of relative significance. Selected stories and reasons for selection are passed up and down the supervisory chain to further understanding of change processes, priorities and opportunities.
Outcome Mapping	An evaluation-planning tool that links the desired outcomes of a project or program to the people or groups involved/affected. Relationships are plotted on the basis of their relational distance to the program. Evaluation measures/evidence are chosen to correspond to each key relationship.
Outcomes	Results or effects related to a project or program, usually described in terms of change in people's condition, behavior, values or policy. May be directly or indirectly observed, short or long term, influenced by outside factors or not. Examples include increased health, spiritual transformation, reduced dependence, increased partnership. (To be distinguished from Outputs)

Outputs	Immediate, directly observed products, goods, and services of project or program activities. Examples include event attendance, ability demonstrated, decisions made, items distributed, satisfaction experienced. (To be distinguished from Outcomes)
Qualitative Information	Data that is gathered systematically and described using words, sounds or images, rather than numerical terms. Useful in evaluation for describing the nature of and reasons for changes over time or differences between groups. (To be distinguished from Quantitative Information)
Quantitative Information	Data that is gathered systematically and counted or otherwise expressed in numerical terms, counted, or compared on a scale. Useful in evaluation for confirming and describing changes over time or differences between groups. (To be distinguished from Qualitative)
Summative Evaluation	Appraisal of a program in its later stages or after it has been completed to (a) assess its impact (b) identify the factors that affected its performance (c) assess the sustainability of its results, and (d) draw lessons that may inform other programs. (To be distinguished from Formative Evaluation)
Theory of Change	An evaluation-planning tool that plots, in reverse sequence, the steps and causes of change leading to the desired outcomes of a project or program. Evaluation measures/evidence are chosen that correspond to each key step.
Vision Statement	Summary statement describing the future state that will exist when an organization's goals are achieved. Used in evaluation as a standard for aligning project or program outcomes with organizational goals.