

Notes

Chapter 2

Our overall approach to impact assessment

- 1 This chapter draws heavily on the literature review and preparatory reports written by Raul Hopkins and Elsa Dawson and an interim progress report by Floris Blankenberg, Margaret Newens and Chris Roche, published in Oakley et al. (1998).
- 2 I am grateful to Fred Wessels of Oxfam GB for this rewording of Paul Willot's work on auto-evaluation (Willot 1985).
- 3 See Martha Alter Chen and Elizabeth Dunn (1997).
- 4 I am grateful to Bridget Walker of Oxfam GB for this observation.

Chapter 3 Designing an impact assessment process

- 1 Goyder, H, Davies, R, Wilkinson, W (1998) *Participatory Impact Assessment*
- 2 Personal communication from Bridget Walker of Oxfam GB.
- 3 David Hulme notes that one reason why multiple regression has been rarely used, even in the area of microfinance impact assessment which one might think is more easily quantifiable, is the 'enormous demands for data on other possible causal factors', and the huge expense and technical expertise that this requires (Hulme 1997).

Chapter 4 Choosing tools and methods

- 1 A One Stop Shop in Britain generally provides a range of services and goods. This may include advice on employment, social services, benefits, or legal advice, as well as sales of second-hand clothes and other items. Advice workers are normally specialists in particular fields such as law or welfare benefits and offer support to anyone who seeks it.

- 2 The Phoenix Club is a member-led drop-in centre for residents suffering from mental health problems which is based at the offices of the Matson Neighbourhood Project.
- 3 For more information on how to organise a training session for semi-structured interviewing, including specific exercises, see *Participatory Learning in Action: A Trainer's Guide* published by the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), pp. 73–79.
- 4 The topics discussed are based on Chen and Mahmud's conceptual framework to assess changes in women's lives (Chen and Mahmud 1995), which identifies three pathways to empowerment (material, perceptual, and relational).
- 5 Goyder, H, Davies, R, and Williamson, W (1998) *Participatory Impact Assessment Study*, Action Aid.
- 6 Social mapping is another PRA method, in which participants are asked to draw a map of the dwellings in the community and to name the household or individual who live there, or to indicate details about the status of each household.
- 7 Bridget Walker, personal communication.
- 8 Kamal Kar et al. (1997) 'Participatory Impact Assessment: Calcutta Slum Improvement Project – Main Findings Report', Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority.
- 9 The study has also calculated the direct and indirect economic impacts of projects.
- 10 See Dinwiddy and Teal (1995) for more information on how these are calculated as well as for general material on cost-benefit analysis.
- 11 I am very grateful to Sabina Alkire for this section, which heavily 'borrows' from her PhD thesis (Alkire 1999).
- 12 The IRR in this case has no distributional weights as all the projects target the same socio-economic group.

Chapter 5 Impact assessment and emergencies

- 1 These include a report on a workshop, 'Managing Emergency Humanitarian Aid evaluation: Lessons from Experience', held with AusAID support (Apthorpe and Nevile 1998), and a report entitled 'Good Practice in Evaluating Humanitarian Aid', submitted by DANIDA to the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (Hallam and Borton 1998).

- 2 The SPHERE project is an effort by a large number of international agencies to draft a humanitarian charter and to identify a set of standards and best practice in delivery of services to disaster victims.
- 3 Hallam, A and Borton, J (1998) 'Good Practice in Evaluating Humanitarian Aid', Document No.3 submitted to the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation, 30th Meeting, 27–28 May 1998, DANIDA.
- 4 Bridget Walker, personal communication.
- 5 See also David Bryer and Ed Cairns (1997).

Chapter 6 Impact assessment and advocacy

- 1 Much of this chapter is based on an article entitled 'Assessing the impact of advocacy work' by Alex Bush and Chris Roche, published in *Appropriate Technology* Vol. 24, 1997 and preceding discussions at a Development Studies Association NGO study group meeting in July 1997. It also draws on work by Jim Coe of Oxfam's Campaigns department and detailed comments on an earlier draft by Peter van Tuijl of Novib.
- 2 I am grateful to Peter van Tuijl for the ideas upon which this definition is based.
- 3 Baranyi et al. (1997) 'Making Solidarity Effective: Northern Voluntary Organisations and the Promotion of Peace in Angola and East Timor', CIIR, London.
- 4 Evaluation conducted by Development Initiatives.
- 5 Letter from Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer during Oxfam's debt campaign, to Bob Hammond, Oxfam Constituency Contact, in September 1997.
- 6 Letter from Bob Hammond, Oxfam Constituency Contact, October 1997.
- 7 See Farnworth (1998).
- 8 See Adrian Jackson (1997) for a description on the use of legislative theatre in the UK.
- 9 See Mavrocordatos (1997) on the uses of theatre for participatory monitoring.
- 10 See case studies in Holland, J. and Blackburn, J. (1998) *Whose Voice? Participatory research and policy change*.

Chapter 7 Impact assessment and organisations

- 1 This chapter in addition to the case-study material also draws upon papers and reports produced during the course of the research, notably Newens and Roche (1997) and Blankenberg, Newens and Roche (1998).
- 2 This scale builds on the ideas of Norman Uphoff (1987) in his field methodology for participatory self-evaluation.
- 3 For more on these ratios for credit programmes see Chapter 4 and Annex 2 of Johnson and Rogaly (1997).
- 4 Those who have any doubt about this, see Perera's analysis of the relationship between Sarvadaya and its donors (1997).
- 5 For an assessment of the relevance of social auditing to Oxfam see Dawson (1998).
- 6 See Edwards 1996, Howes and Roche 1996.

Appendix 1: Bibliography

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Alkire, S (1999) 'Operationalising Amartya Sen's capability approach to human development: A framework for identifying "valuable" capabilities', DPhil thesis, Magdalen College, Oxford.

Alkire, S (1997) 'Impact Assessment: Oxfam vs Poverty, A field manual for Oxfam staff in Pakistan', Oxfam.

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Appendix 3: Participants of the impact assessment workshop November 1998

Name	Organisation
Sabina Alkire	Consultant
Julie Allcock	Oxfam GB
Floris Blankenberg	SNV, The Netherlands
Dr Anup Kumar Dash	UTKAL UNIVERSITY, Orissa, India
Mr Pran Gopal Das	CYSD, Orissa, India
Elsa Dawson	Oxfam GB
Mohammed Elmi	Oxfam GB in Kenya
Yvonne Es	Novib
Yollette Etienne	Oxfam GB in Haiti
Mark Gale	The Gloucester Neighbourhood Project Network, UK
Ken Garland	Matson Neighbourhood Project, Gloucester, UK
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Walter Gonzalez	CORDES, El Salvador
Anamul Haque	Oxfam GB in Bangladesh
Prof. A.M. Muazzam Hussain	BRAC, Bangladesh
Andy Jarret	Matson Neighbourhood Project, Gloucester, UK
Mr Jolly M.C	CYSD, Orissa, India
Kamal Kar	Development Consultant, Calcutta, India

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Paresh Motla	Oxfam GB
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Koos Neefjes	Oxfam GB
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Appendix 4: List of acronyms

AAIN	Action Africa in Need
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, Bangladesh
CBA	Cost-benefit analysis
CBO	Community-based organisation
CORDES	The Foundation for Co-operation and Community Development in El Salvador
CYSD	Centre for Youth and Social Development, Orissa, India
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department For International Development, UK
EIA	Environmental impact assessment
ENDA	Environment and Development Activities, Zimbabwe
GSS	Gonoshahajjo Sangstha, Bangladesh
INGO	International non-government organisation
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre, Ghana
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
LNGO	Local non-government organisation
MNP	Matson Neighbourhood Project, UK
NGND	Northern Ghana Development Network
NGO	Non-government organisation
NK	Nijera Kori, Bangladesh
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAR	Participatory action research
PLA	Participatory learning and action
PPA	Participatory poverty assessment
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
REMPAI	Resource Management and Policy Analysis Institute
RRA	Rapid rural appraisal
SCBA	Social cost-benefit analysis
SIA	Social impact assessment

Appendix 5: Glossary

The following terms are defined as they are employed in this book, together with an indication of how they tend to be used in common practice. There is no general consensus on these issues; often the terms are used interchangeably, or their meanings are hotly contested (not least by specialists in evaluation!).

- Aim:** the overall and ultimate purpose that a project or programme seeks to achieve, often expressed in terms of desired changes in people's lives. Often used interchangeably with **goal** or **purpose**, and sometimes as the equivalent of the long-term **objective**.
- Activities:** what is done, or those actions that are actually undertaken, in a given project or programme.
- Assumptions:** estimations of how external factors in the environment, such as economic or political trends, will influence the results of a project or programme. Often used interchangeably with **hypotheses**, and based on an analysis of the context in which a project or programme takes place. Many argue that this should be the starting point for project planning and impact assessment, rather than being added on as an after-thought.
- Consistency:** the degree to which the process or methods adopted by a given project or programme are in harmony with what the programme achieves or seeks to achieve.
- Effectiveness:** the extent to which intended **outputs**, **results**, or **outcomes** have been realised.
- Effects:** the **results** or **outputs** of a given set of **activities**. These can sometimes be the same as a project's short-term **objectives** or its **outcomes**. Often used interchangeably with **outputs** and **outcomes**.
- Efficiency:** a measure of the relationship between the **inputs** or resources invested in a given project or programme, and the **outputs** and

outcomes achieved. Could the same results have been achieved for less input, or could more results have been achieved with the same input? Or, more rarely, could more resources have achieved disproportionately greater results? Often very difficult to measure.

Evaluation: traditionally refers to the assessment, at the end of the life of a project or programme or several years after, of its **impact, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability**. It is often distinguished from **monitoring** by an emphasis on **outcomes and impact**, on underlying **assumptions**, and on learning for future and broader policy purposes beyond the particular project or programme that is being assessed. Recently **evaluation** has also been used to refer to reviews undertaken during the lifetime of a project. The distinction between **monitoring** and **evaluation** has become more blurred as the credibility of one-off external evaluations has been questioned, and interest in more continuous forms of organisational learning has grown.

Goal: usually means the overall and ultimate purpose that a project or programme seeks to achieve, often expressed in terms of desired changes in people's lives. Often used interchangeably with **aim** or **purpose**, or as the equivalent of the long-term **objective** of a project or programme.

Hypotheses: estimations of how external factors in the environment will influence the results of the project or programme. Often used interchangeably with **assumptions**, and based on an analysis of the context in which a project or programme operates. Many argue that this should be the starting point for project planning and impact assessment, rather than being added on as an after-thought.

Impact: lasting or significant changes – positive or negative, intended or not – in people's lives, brought about by a given action or series of actions. Traditionally only sustainable or lasting changes were seen to constitute impact. In this book we also use the word **impact** to refer to changes which people may see as significant but which are only temporary. Often, but not always, equivalent to the **purpose, goal, aim, or long-term objective** of a project or programme, or the **indicators** by which these things are measured.

Impact assessment: the systematic analysis of the lasting or significant changes – positive or negative, intended or not – in people's lives, brought about by a given action or series of actions. Traditionally associated with assessments undertaken (a) before a project or programme starts, at the appraisal stage, to determine likely future impacts – normally for the purposes of avoiding negative environmental and social impacts – and (b) as a specific type or element of an

evaluation, undertaken after completion. Recently it has been seen as a more continuous and integral part of the project cycle; see **monitoring**.

- Impact chain:** a description of the linkages between what goes into a given project or programme (i.e. the **inputs**), the activities and process that are undertaken as a result, and the results of those process and activities, often described in the form of **outputs, outcomes, or impact**.
- Indicator:** the evidence or 'signpost' which shows whether an **activity, objective, or aim** has been achieved or is on its way to being achieved. An indicator may refer directly to the activity or objective in question (e.g. the indicator of the success of a project which aims to enable people to eat more rice would be that people actually eat more rice), or it may be a proxy or indirect measure (e.g. measuring upper-arm circumference as an indicator of malnutrition). It is important that the two are not confused; otherwise effort will be diverted into achieving change in the indicator, whether or not this is appropriate to the objective (e.g. improving muscle bulk in the upper arm, as opposed to dealing with the causes of malnutrition).
- Inputs:** the financial and human resources necessary to undertake the activities of a project or programme. Estimates of inputs often fail to include the time, effort, and energy that are not provided by funding agencies and donors.
- Longitudinal approach:** an approach to **impact assessment** which seeks to track change throughout the life-time of a given project or programme. This is often done through repeatedly assessing changes in the fortunes of the same individuals or groups.
- Monitoring:** regular and on-going assessment of progress made during the lifetime of a project, to enable adjustments to be made. Traditionally referred only to the assessment of whether a project was on track in terms of its planned **activities and outputs**, but is increasingly employed to refer to the tracking of all aspects of a project, including the scanning of the external environment and the impact achieved (whether intended or unintended): hence the increasing use of the phrase 'impact monitoring'.
- Objectives:** the intended achievements of the **activities** of a project or programme in the short, medium, or long term. Long-term objectives are often used as the equivalent of **aims or goals**. Short-term and medium-term objectives are often used as the equivalent of **outputs or outcomes**.
- Outputs:** the immediate **results or effects** of a given **activity**. Often used interchangeably with **outcomes, effects, or results**.

- Outcomes:** what will occur if the outputs are actually used or sustained. Often used interchangeably with **outputs**, **effects**, or **results**, and sometimes with **impact**.
- Project:** a time-bound collection of **activities** with a distinct purpose.
- Programme:** a collection of **projects**, grouped together to achieve greater impact, so that 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts'. For example, a programme in a particular geographic area, or one which works with a particular group of people, will often consist of a number of specific projects, which may be defined by sector or activity, e.g. credit, agriculture, health, etc., or by group or location, e.g. a specific village project. Together these projects will normally seek to achieve *more than the individual projects*; for example, a number of credit projects together may seek not only to deliver direct benefits to their clients, but also to create greater competition in the area and in so doing to undercut existing money-lenders.
- Prospective study:** the stage of the **impact assessment** process that is essentially looking forward at the impact that is desired in the future, and considering how that might be assessed. This may occur at the beginning of a project or at any stage during its life, particularly during mid-term reviews or **evaluations**.
- Purpose:** the overall and ultimate **aim** or **goal** that a project or programme seeks to achieve, often expressed in terms of desired changes in people's lives. Often used interchangeably with **goal** or **aim**.
- Relevance:** the degree to which a project, programme, or process is, or has been, relevant to the needs, aspirations, and desires of those whom it intends to benefit, and the changing context in which they are situated.
- Results:** often used to mean **effects** or **outputs**. Sometimes used to mean anything that happens as the result of a project or programme.
- Retrospective study:** an **impact-assessment** exercise, looking back at significant change that has occurred.
- Sustainability:** the degree to which the financial, organisational, social, political, or environmental benefits of a given project or programme will endure over time.

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