Designing an Evaluation Module

This module will help the user understand the steps and processes of designing an evaluation.
### Contents

(Direct links clickable below)

- What is an evaluation?
- What is an evaluation for?
- When should an evaluation be designed?
- Who should be involved in the evaluation design?
- How is an evaluation design used?
- Practice Exercise
- Additional Resources

### Interactive Pages

(i.e. Worksheets) will help you...

- Evaluation Decisions Flow Chart
- OECD/DAC Recommendations
- Evaluation Approach Guide
What is an evaluation?

An evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of the relevance, validity, efficiency, effectiveness of project implementation, results and sustainability of planned, on-going or completed projects or programmes.¹

Evaluations take on many different forms, functions, approaches, types – the list goes on. This module will provide a starting point for someone who is looking to design an evaluation.

When designing an evaluation, there are the specific components that should be considered:

Evaluation Objectives
- Audience
- Evaluation type
- Role
- Approach

- Scope
- Evaluators
- Timing
- Budget

Compare designing an evaluation to designing a conflict transformation project; the same key questions need to be asked: What do we want to do? How are we going to do it? And who is our target audience?

These questions can be put in to evaluation terms:
- What do we want to learn about the project?
- What method of data-gathering will I use to get the information I need?
- Who will be using the evaluation, and for what?

**Tip:** What’s the difference between monitoring and evaluation? Put simply, it’s the difference between tracking and assessing. Monitoring helps you track your project’s progress during program implementation, where evaluation helps you assess your project when it is over (or halfway through the project lifecycle).

What is an evaluation used for?

The primary purpose of an evaluation is for learning and accountability, and is used in order for SFCG, its partners, and donors to be able to be continually improve their effectiveness. Depending on the objectives of the evaluation, the focus and use of the evaluation may change. Practical uses for an evaluation include:
- Aid project management decisions
- Keep project on target at mid-term
- Assess the past and plan for the future
- Ensure that project activities reflect the organization’s mission and goals
- Stay accountable to stakeholders and donors by keeping them informed
- Assess pilot programs, test the feasibility of different projects and programs, and refine existing approaches
- Record and disseminate best (and worst!) practices and results

**Tip:** Sometimes evaluations are seen only as an accountability structure to the donor. But this is not the case! Certainly, some donors require a specific system or set of tools to be used, but evaluations should be first and foremost designed for the project team and its participants.
When should an evaluation be designed?

The broad design of an evaluation should happen simultaneously with the design of the project. These elements include:

- Goal
- Outcomes
- Indicators for outcomes and goals and/or benchmarks/targets
- Outputs
- Activities
- Output indicators
- Indicator means of verification
- Indicator method of data collection

These elements are generally included in the logic framework.

The benefits of outlining the evaluation at this point in time are wide-ranging. First, it ensures that the evaluation is relevant to the project and the logical framework or theory of change that is being utilized. It also ensures continuity of all evaluations that occur in the project cycle, and allows the evaluator and their team to have an increased knowledge of the project, contributing to a faster learning curve and a speedier evaluation process. When the evaluation is implemented, these decisions can be reviewed and changed, if necessary.

Keep in mind that while it is good to begin to plan for the evaluation during design, the specifics of the evaluation are usually developed at a later stage in the project cycle, through Terms of Reference and Scopes of Work.

Who should be involved in evaluation designed?

*Keep in mind this varies by project, programme, and personnel:*

**Project manager, DME Coordinator** and **staff** should all agree on the evaluation design for the project, with input from **relevant stakeholders**. The project team must lead in the decision-making for evaluation preparation, with the DME coordinator providing technical support to the pros and cons of the evaluation decisions. Including **proposal writers** in the process is also helpful, as the evaluation procedures should be included in the proposal and the evaluation design should include measuring indicators.

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a lead facilitator for the initial discussions and creation of the evaluation design.
How is an evaluation design used?

In *Designing for Results*, Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers provide a great resource for the decision-making process when designing and planning evaluations. According to Church and Rogers, there are nine categories in which “decisions” must be made:

(Click on the category to directly jump to its according page)

- Objectives
- Audience
- Type
- Role
- Approach
- Scope
- Evaluators
- Timing
- Budget

Click here to check out the **Tool 1: Evaluation Decisions Flow Chart**

While these decisions are important to think about, it is just as important to remember that there is no one correct way to evaluate in the field of conflict transformation. As the OECD/DAC states, “Evaluation is a toolbox and the golden rule is to apply the right tool for the right question.”

OECD/DAC has a list of recommendations for peacebuilding evaluation. Check out Tool 2: **OECD/DAC Recommendations**

*Helpful documents to have on hand*

You don’t have to create the evaluation from nothing. The project proposal included a logframe. This is your ally in evaluation design. The logframe will list the project goals, objectives, outcomes, and indicators to guide the evaluation.

In some circumstances, a baseline might have also been completed. This is especially useful as the baseline data can be used in the evaluation to compare results from before the project was implemented. You may consider developing your evaluation questions from the questions asked in the baseline.
OBJECTIVES

An evaluation objective is the criteria by which a project will be evaluated. Begin by asking: What do we want to learn? What do we need to know about the project? Knowing the answers to these questions will largely determine the shape of your evaluation.

When determining your evaluation objectives, take into consideration the OECD-DAC Criteria. These five criteria will be used to come to evaluative conclusions about the project or program in question:

**OECD DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td>The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners’ and donors’ policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>The extent to which the development intervention’s objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency</strong></td>
<td>A measure of how economically resource/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impacts</strong></td>
<td>Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience of the risk of the net benefit flows over time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These criteria are a good starting point, but by no means should an evaluation cover all or be limited to these criteria. Questions should not be added just to cover criteria, and questions should also not be eliminated because they do not fit the criteria. Ultimately,

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the criteria should be used as a guide and the project team and its partners should
decide what is best for the specific project and context in which they are working.

Keeping the evaluation criteria in mind at this point is helpful to develop **key evaluation
questions**. Key evaluation questions allow you to focus in on what exactly you would
like to be answered, and later-on can be turned into sub-questions and indicators. Key
evaluation questions are clear, focused, and relevant and are based upon the type of
project. Thus key evaluation questions vary from project to project. Some examples of
key evaluation questions for peacebuilding are³:

- Is this effort making a relevant contribution to durable peace, by deliberately
  and effectively addressing key driving factors of conflict among crucial conflict
actors/constituencies?
- Is this effort making a demonstrable contribution to preventing violence, either
  by intervening swiftly to avert escalating violence or by addressing long-term
structural drivers of conflict?
- Has an assessment of peace-conflict dynamics been undertaken (and
  maintained) and has this influenced development programming choices? Does
this effort (or could it) engage on key social tensions that have been identified as
driving factors of past, current or potential conflict?
- Does the intervention avoid creating tensions within the crisis-affected
  community; between displaced people and host communities; between agencies
over the type and quantity of assistance?

For more information on evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions, check out the
Terms of Reference Module.

**AUDIENCE**

Begin by asking: *Who are the intended primary users of this evaluation, and what will
they use it for? Who are the readers? Users* are those who will be applying the findings,
lessons learned, and recommendations and *readers* are those who are interested in the
report to stay informed. Users and readers could include donors, project staff, Search
for Common Ground administrators, project beneficiaries, policy makers, or other
members of the peacebuilding community.

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³ Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Guidance for Evaluating Conflict Prevention and
Peacebuilding Activities*, pg 29-30 Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD),
2008,
Key to designing a quality evaluation is **knowing your user**. What are they interested in? What language do they speak? Do they have any requirements (This is especially important if your user is a donor)? Knowing your user allows the evaluation team to have a direction, and also ensures that the end product will actually be **utilized**.

**TYPE**

This “decision” begins with the question: **What type of evaluation will it be?** A type of evaluation is generally determined by when the evaluation takes place. The table below describes the different types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Evaluation</th>
<th>Timing of the evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term (also called formative)</td>
<td>In the middle of the project cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative</td>
<td>At the conclusion of the project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ROLE**

**What function will the evaluator play?**

There are three roles which an evaluator can perform for an evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of Evaluators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional approach to evaluation. Evaluator only implements the evaluation and the job is finished when the report is written.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultant</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expands on the responsibilities of an operative evaluator, focusing on the “use” of the evaluation. This includes developing practical recommendations, workshops, and working to develop future plan based on the evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Facilitator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combines the two evaluation roles above and also seeks to broaden project learning to the organization level and into development of the next phase of the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the consultant role is the most common, there is no mandated role for evaluators. The role which the evaluator ascribes to should be determined by the stakeholders and which role best fits the project.

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**APPROACH**

This decision begins with the question: *What evaluation approach will be used in the evaluation?* An **evaluation approach** provides the framework, philosophy, or style of an evaluation.\(^5\) Below are just a few of the common approaches to evaluations:

*Theory Based Evaluation*

Theory-based evaluation is an approach that analyses in-depth the “program theory” or “program logic” (this may also be referred to as a theory of change) to identify critical successes or failures within the program.

Similar to developmental evaluation, theory-based evaluation looks at evaluation in a non-linear way, focusing on why and how changes occur in projects. Instead of assuming a cause-effect relationship, it maps out causal factors judged important to success, allowing complexity and fluidity in the evaluation.

*Rapid Appraisal Methods*

Rapid appraisal (RA) is an approach that draws on multiple evaluation methods and techniques to quickly yet systematically collect data when time in the field is limited.\(^6\) This evaluation approach is particularly useful when there are time and budget limitations. Rapid appraisal uses a variety of methods such as quick and short surveys, interviews, and secondary data collection. They are especially helpful when information is needed within days or weeks, but can be inaccurate. A rapid appraisal should never be solely used as a final or summative evaluation for this reason. The disadvantage is the lack of time to do more in depth research on the project.

*Cost Benefit and Cost Effectiveness Analysis*

Cost benefit analysis attempts to measure the economic efficiency of project costs versus program benefits, in monetary terms. In the case that a project cannot be measured in monetary terms (which is often), cost effectiveness can be used, as the concept is the same. Cost effectiveness and cost benefit evaluations look at all project costs and benefits and then compute cost/effectiveness ratio.\(^7\) This approach to evaluation is mainly quantitative, but can include some subjective indicators. However, often it is difficult to assess the quality and accuracy of these subjective indicators.

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5. Church and Rogers, pg. 114.
6. USAID Rapid Appraisal Tip
Impact Evaluation (RCTS, Quasi-Experimental Design, Mixed-Methods)
While the type of data collection tools impact evaluators use is wide ranging, impact evaluation seeks to answer one question: What is the impact or causal effect of a program on an outcome of interest? In other words, impact evaluations answer cause and effect questions which determine the extent to the program was successful. This helps an evaluator measure the direct impacts or effect the program had on the intended outcomes. However, it does not answer the larger questions of how and why change occurs; therefore it is rarely used to measure unintended or behavioural types of change. It also costs more than the level of funding for evaluation that most donors are willing to provide, and can be quite time consuming.

Developmental Evaluation
Developmental evaluation is an adaptive learning process that seeks to develop long-term, partnering relationships between evaluators and those engaged in innovative initiatives and development by engaging in team discussions with evaluative questions, data, and logic. Contrary to impact evaluation, developmental evaluation is highly fluid, adaptive, and contextual. As a result, this approach is often used in complex and emergent situations that involve multiple actors and where change is often non-linear. Often embedded into a program team instead of contracted, a development evaluator focuses on context and relationships to bring about innovation and informed decision making. A potential disadvantage is that the evaluator may become too closely aligned with program staff and participants.

Most Significant Change
Most Significant Change (MSC) is a participatory and process oriented approach to evaluation that involves the collection of stories highlighting “significant change” that emanate from the field level, and the systematic selection of the “most significant” of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The MSC approach to evaluation works more with stories than indicators. It works on the idea that the informal narrative of stories will allow for all involved parties to develop a discussion about what they see as the impact and performance of the program as a whole. As a result, MSC is valuable for locating undefined outcomes and unexpected change. This is a highly qualitative and subjective approach not providing quantitative data. It is good to use when wanting to triangulate data (compare data from different sources).

A more detailed list of approaches is also available in SFCG’s Designing for Results by Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers, on page 114.

For approach uses, pros, and cons, check out Tool 3: Evaluation Approach Guide.
As you may have noted, many of the approaches have some similar attributes. Sometimes there will be a natural fit between the approach and the evaluation goals, but this is not always the case. When this happens, don’t be afraid to add components from other approaches and subtract from the original. Remember; always design your evaluation to best fit your needs!

A sub question to this decision asks what method of data collection you will use. Will it be quantitative? Qualitative? Mixed-methods? Sometimes this is determined by the approach, but not always. SFCG supports a mixed method approach, as it is most appropriate for peacebuilding evaluations and mixed method approaches are considered the best pairing of rigorous methodology with richness of data and content. Here are some of qualitative and quantitative techniques are listed in the following

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>In order to engage in...</th>
<th>I need to...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Watch and record events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>Talk to knowledgeable individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community mapping</td>
<td>Engage the community in the process of creating a map (for conflict assessment, asset mapping, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>Collect data and engage in storytelling of a particular person, village, or event related to the project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photos and images</td>
<td>Take pictures with a camera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Map the area using GIS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Gather selected individuals together to talk about the project and record their ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>In order to engage in...</th>
<th>I need to...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surveys and questionnaires</td>
<td>Administer a survey using my: Mobile Phone, or Paper and Pencil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre- and Post-project testing</td>
<td>Survey the project participants before and after to test their knowledge as a result of our program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical analysis</td>
<td>Use a computer program like Excel, SPSS or STATA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SCOPE

Begin by asking what are the parameters of the evaluation? Scope is determined by looking at six components of a project:

- Issues covered
- Funds spent
- Time period
- Type of intervention
- Geographical coverage
- Other elements of the intervention that is addressed in the evaluation

When deciding on the scope, it is important to look at these within the context of purpose, resources, and time. Looking at scope ensures that the evaluation will be within the ability of the project team to complete, and to complete well.

EVALUATORS

Begin by asking: What type of person is needed to conduct this evaluation? A key part of designing an evaluation is assessing the skills of the evaluator, and should be taken into consideration. Key questions to think about are:

- Will the evaluators be internal or external?
- What type of experience is required?
- How many evaluators are needed?
- Will the evaluators be local hires or recruited internationally?
- Is a particular language required?


For the most part, SFCG handles evaluations internally, but sometimes an external evaluator is hired. Ideally, this evaluator would be hired at the project design phase and return to conduct the evaluation later. While an external evaluator provides neutrality to the evaluation process, there are also some downfalls to using one. Below is a table looking at internal and external evaluations, and the pros and cons that come with each:

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8 List adapted from Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Overview of Key Steps in Planning and Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Work, pg 27, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2008.
### TIMING

This decision asks: *When will the evaluation take place?* This question is not concerned with what type of evaluation is performed (although the type of evaluation also uses time as a factor), but rather the context and events that might occur around the time the evaluation is performed. For example, an evaluation should not take place around an election, as this is often a tenuous time with heightened sensitivity and likeliness for violent conflict. This also includes times of celebration: memorial days, religious events, and anniversaries of peace accords are all events that could skew the results of your evaluation, in either a positive or negative direction.

Some practical issues should also be taken into account:

- Will key staff be in the country and available to the evaluators during the proposed evaluation?
- Is there a deadline imposed by SFCG or its donors for the evaluation findings?
- Are there any weather conditions such as a rainy season or extreme snow that might limit the evaluator's ability to travel to different parts of the country?
- Will the program participants be accessible? For instance, it would be difficult to conduct an evaluation of a peace education program in schools during the summer months when children are out of school.
• Does this conflict with any major events or deadlines within the project being evaluated?\(^9\)

**BUDGET**

This decision asks: *What will the evaluation cost?* Typically, baseline, monitoring, and evaluation costs combined make up around 5-10% of the total project budget. Although practical thinking might say the budget is the first step in designing an evaluation, leaving the budget for the last step allows for more creativity and ensures that the evaluation truly evaluates what is needed. If the evaluation does end up needing to be reworked due to budget constraints, you will have a much clearer picture of what is needed for a good evaluation, and can then allow the least important portions of the evaluation to be identified and cut with greater ease.

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\(^9\) Questions adapted from Cohen and Rogers, pgs. 131-132.
Evaluation Preparation Decision Flow Chart

EVALUATION GOAL
Improve peace building programming practically and conceptually.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES
What do we want to learn?
What do we want to know?

PRIMARY AUDIENCE
Who are the primary users?
Who are the readers?

TYPE OF EVALUATION
What type of evaluation will it be?
Formative, Summative, Impact

EVALUATOR'S ROLE
What function will the evaluator play?

APPROACH
What evaluation style will be used in the evaluation?

SCOPE
What are the parameters of the evaluation?

EVALUATION TEAM
What type of person is needed to conduct this evaluation?

TIMING
When will the evaluation take place?

BUDGET
What will the evaluation cost?
Emerging lessons from the analytical work underpinning this guidance

The joint process of developing this guidance has begun to reveal some important lessons for donor agencies and others working in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field. The following list of emerging lessons will be revised and updated once this working draft has been field tested.

1) Donors should promote the systematic use of evaluation for all conflict prevention and peacebuilding work, and require implementing partners, such as NGOs, to conduct evaluations. Evaluation can support learning and accountability as professionals in this area of development cooperation strive to improve practice and results. Such learning is key to becoming more effective at building peace.

2) A clear need for a better strategic policy framework for conflict prevention and peacebuilding work has been demonstrated. There is a need to evaluate at the strategic level and to look at the interconnections between strategies, policies, programmes and projects. Policies and operations in this sensitive field need to be more effectively linked – a goal which could be achieved in part by working with practitioners and policy makers to update the existing DAC Guidelines on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict (including the 1998 Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation), in which donors recognised that work on these issues is a central part of development, extending beyond humanitarian assistance alone.

3) Evaluations should be facilitated through better programme design, even in the planning stages when, for instance, objectives should be clearly articulated to facilitate future assessment of results. There is a general need for further development in terms of planning, funding, management and implementation of activities that try to prevent conflict or build peace. In this field in general, there is a need to build tailored tools for learning and accountability to contribute to the professionalization of interventions, including the identification of best practices.

4) Coherent and co-ordinated intervention and policy strategies are needed to make progress towards peace. Donors cannot rely solely on aid and must look at other policy instruments and their impacts on conflict and the chances for peace. Strategic engagement at various levels and across governments is essential.

5) Concepts and definitions of peacebuilding and conflict prevention require clarification. Evaluators should work with staff, policy makers, managers and stakeholders to determine and assess the concepts of peace their activity is operating on.

6) The results of conflict analysis need to be translated into action, used to influence the programming and evaluation processes and linked to other forms of analysis, such as governance assessments, power and drivers of change analysis, as well as early warning indicators. (Note: As field applications are conducted and as learning and practices evolve, this list may be refined.)

7) The use of mixed-method approaches to evaluations is recommended due the complexity and multi-faceted nature of interventions in this field.

8) Joint evaluations allow for more harmonised approaches that demonstrate how efforts of different donors add up. Involving country partners is also important for understanding how change occurs and is a key element of supporting the Paris Declaration.
### Theory Based Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory-based evaluation is an approach that analyses in-depth the “program theory” or “program logic” to identify critical successes or failures within the program.</td>
<td>Test theory of change ■ Map determining or causal factors ■ Evaluate non-linear change</td>
<td>Provides early feedback ■ Allows early correction of problems ■ Identifies unintended side-effects ■ Helps in prioritizing which issues to investigate ■ Provides basis to assess impact</td>
<td>Can easily become overly complex ■ Difficult to determine key indicators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Appraisal (RA) is an approach that draws on multiple evaluation methods and techniques to quickly yet systematically collect data when time in the field is limited.</td>
<td>Provides rapid information for management decision-making ■ Provides qualitative understanding of complex changes, situations, and motivations. ■ Quick assessments before</td>
<td>Can be conducted quickly ■ Provides flexibility to explore new ideas ■ Low cost ■ Provides context and interpretation for quantitative data</td>
<td>Difficult to generalize findings ■ Concerns of validity, credibility, and reliability ■ Limited time for in depth research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact Evaluations answer cause and effect questions which determine the extent to the program was successful.

- Measures direct impacts on outcomes
- Answer cause-effect questions
- Provides comprehensive evaluation
- Ease of interpreting results
- Use of both quantitative and qualitative data
- Very expensive and time consuming
- Does not measure behavior or unintended change
- Difficult to find control groups
- Potential for unethical methodological tools

Rapid Appraisal

Cost Benefit/Cost Effectiveness Analysis

Impact Evaluation

Developmental Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost Benefit analysis attempts to measure the economic efficiency of project costs versus program benefits, in monetary terms.</td>
<td>Determines the most efficient allocation of resources.</td>
<td>Determines efficiency</td>
<td>Fairly technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Effectiveness does the same except with non-monetary quantitative terms.</td>
<td>Determines the highest rate of return on investment</td>
<td>Makes explicit the economic assumptions</td>
<td>Difficult to assess quality and accuracy of questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provides justification of activities</td>
<td>Requisite data for cost-benefit calculations may not be available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Highly dependent on assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult to apply to qualitative questions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Most Significant Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Evaluation is an adaptive learning process that seeks to develop long-term, partnering relationships between evaluators and those engaged in innovative initiatives and development by engaging in team discussions with evaluative questions, data, and logic.</td>
<td>■ Evaluates non-linear change  ■ Provides understanding of complex and emergent situations  ■ Focused on context and relationships</td>
<td>■ Evaluator is embedded in project team  ■ Supports creation of innovative approaches  ■ Use of diverse data collection methods and tools  ■ Emphasis on processes</td>
<td>■ Potential evaluator bias  ■ Mass amount of information is time consuming  ■ Risk of ambiguity or lack of focus on results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Significant Change (MSC) is a participatory and process oriented approach to evaluation that involves the collection of stories highlighting “significant change” that emanate from the field level, and the systematic selection of the “most significant” of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff.</td>
<td>■ Complex environments  ■ Projects that focus on social change  ■ Evaluations that focus on learning</td>
<td>■ Provides structure for monitoring  ■ Identifies unexpected changes  ■ Participatory processes</td>
<td>■ Solely qualitative  ■ Difficult to obtain results on prescribed outcomes and impacts  ■ Lack of focus on accountability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for designing an evaluation. An overall guide to resources for evaluation design from the SFCG library is available [here](#).

Designing an Evaluation Resources, Samples, Etc.

Church, Cheyanne. (May 2011) The Use of Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) in Peacebuilding Evaluation. CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. [Link](#)

Church, Cheyanne, and Mark Rogers. (2006) Designing for Results. Search for Common Ground. [Link](#)


