

Anticipating How Knowing Will Lead to Action



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Anticipating How Knowing Will Lead to Action

Answering Basic Questions

Articulating Outcomes

Planning for Impact

Begin with the end in mind.

What do you hope knowing will enable you to do?

- **Engage and communicate** with users
- Move in **positive directions** through decision-making and action-taking
- **Drive improvements** in services, resources, spaces, etc.
 - Increase effectiveness
 - Increase equity
 - Lower costs and/or align costs with priorities
- Ensure library efforts are effective and aligned with values and user needs/goals
- **Make a difference**

What consequences might occur if you do not know more than you currently do?

- **Miss opportunities to connect** with and make a difference for users or not-yet users
- **Fail to uphold commitments** to users and stakeholders
- **Waste valuable time, resources, and labor** that could otherwise be put to effective use
- **Miss out on collaborative opportunities** with institutional partners or others
- **Continue possible harms or exclusions**
- Diminish perception of the library as a valuable contributor

What actions do you anticipate enabling through knowing?

- **Co-create and improve** services, collections, and spaces alongside and on behalf of users
- **Improve marketing** to connect with users and not-yet users
- **Define problems** accurately; inform problem solutions
- **Monitor progress** toward long term goals
- Inform future **strategic planning**
- Ensure careful **stewardship** of resources
- Align library worker labor with maximum importance and impact
- Respond to internal and external checks on quality

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Backward Design

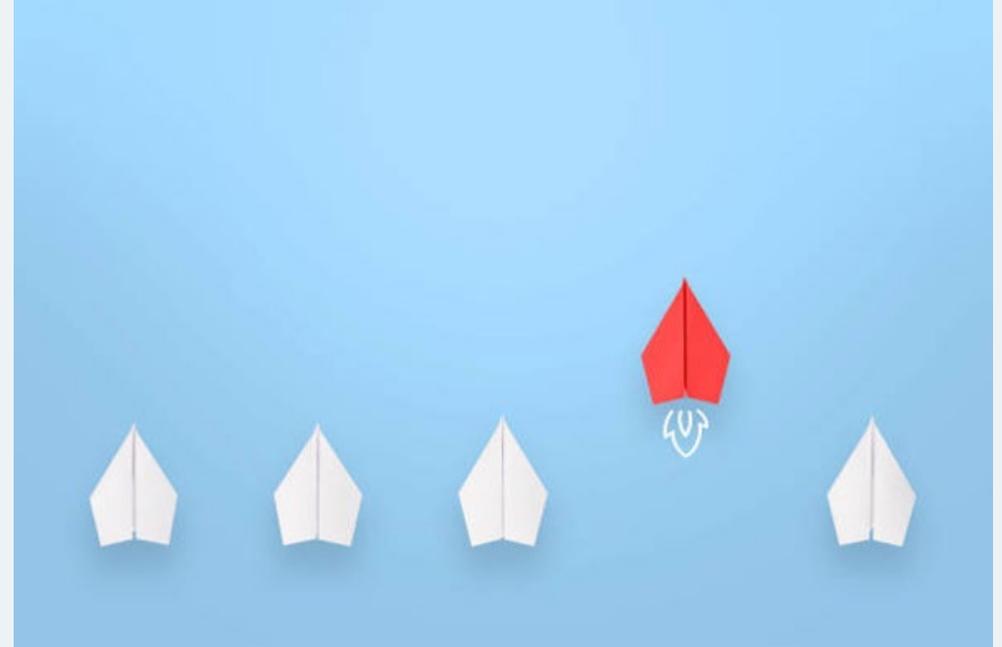
1. What do you want users to learn, experience, engage with?

2. How will you know if they've learned, experienced, engaged?

3. What activities will help them learn, experience, engage?

User Outcomes for Impact from the Start

- Outcomes state clearly the goals that a particular user, service, resource, or space is intended to accomplish.
- Outcomes drive assessment.
- The essential question of many assessments is: Did the user, service, resource, or space accomplish its intent?



User Outcomes are NOT

- **Inputs** — resources libraries use to provide services
 - Budget spent on resources
 - Staff numbers
 - Staff work hours or transactions
- **Outputs** – what libraries do with the resources
 - Books circulated
 - Reference questions answered
 - Programs presented
 - Resources downloaded
- **Process measures** — resources allocated (time, money)
- These are all **library- or staff-centric**.
- These are efficiency and effort measures.



User Outcomes

- Statements of **what the user(s) will know or be able to do** as a result of library interactions.
- Statements of what a library service, resource, or space will accomplish; generally expressed in terms of impact on user(s) or other groups/individuals.
 - **“The user(s) will be able to [+ ACTION VERB]”**
- Optional:
 - Add explanation of purpose or impact.
 - **“The user(s) will be able to [+ ACTION VERB A THING] in order to [WHY or EXPRESSION OF IMPACT].”**
 - Add measures/indicators that demonstrate the outcome was achieved and/or what users will do or say to show that they’ve achieved it.
 - **“The user(s) will be able to [+ ACTION VERB A THING X number of times or in Y way] in order to [WHY or EXPRESSION OF IMPACT].”**

User Outcome Focus



- What happens to people as a result of library interactions
- **Benefits** to users
- **Gains** in feelings/perceptions, knowledge, skills, attitudes/values, behaviors, or condition/status.
- **Effectiveness**, not efficiency or effort

Double-check:

- **Focus should be on users**, not libraries/librarians
- Focus should not be what the library/librarian does or provides

Questions Answered by User Outcomes

- **So what?**
- What **difference** did the library/librarians make for the user(s)?
- What **changed** for the user(s) as a result of library interactions?
 - Learning
 - Action/behavior
 - Condition



Benefits of User Outcomes for the Library

- Provides **practical information** on how to improve programs and meet user needs.
- Can yield **quantitative data, qualitative information, or both.**
- Forces librarians to **articulate assumptions and aspirations.**
- Produces information for **collaborations, communication, and reporting.**
- Keeps library services, collections, spaces, etc. focused and on track.
- Provides new information and perspectives.

Common Outcome Mistakes

- Choosing a **verb that is not active**. Verbs like “understand,” “recognize,” “become” are not active, cannot be observed, and thus are difficult or even impossible to measure or judge.
- Choosing a **scope that isn’t meaningful**, and usually that is a result of thinking small rather than being ambitious.
- An outcome that reads, “The user will attend the library program” leads to big questions:
 - “So what?”
 - “Who cares that someone attends a program?”
 - “What difference does that make?”
- The ***difference*** is where an outcome of meaning comes from. “The user will learn X...” or “The user will articulate that they feel included in Y community...” or “The user will accomplish Z goal...” are much more meaningful in scope.

Adding Measures/Indicators



- **Outcomes** set the intended result; **performance indicators** describe how we know the outcome (result) was achieved.
- Indicators are **concrete** and **specific** descriptions of measures of the outcome.
- Indicators define and operationalize an outcome.
 - What does meeting an outcome look like?
 - How will we know an outcome is met?
 - What will we measure/judge to know an outcome is met?

Adding Targets to Indicators

Within indicators, you may also set **targets** to quantify the indicator (or a change in the indicator) and/or set a timeframe within which a target should be met.

- Indicators must be able to be **seen/observed/measured/judged**.
- It can be hard to **balance ambition vs. ease of attainment** in setting realistic but also “**stretch**” targets.
- **Historical data, staff experience, and user input** can help you set reasonable targets.
- Generally speaking, if the goal is continuous improvement, **setting targets a bit better than your past achievement** makes sense, with ongoing check ins and resetting of targets over time.
- What is key is being able to explain **why** targets are set as they are.

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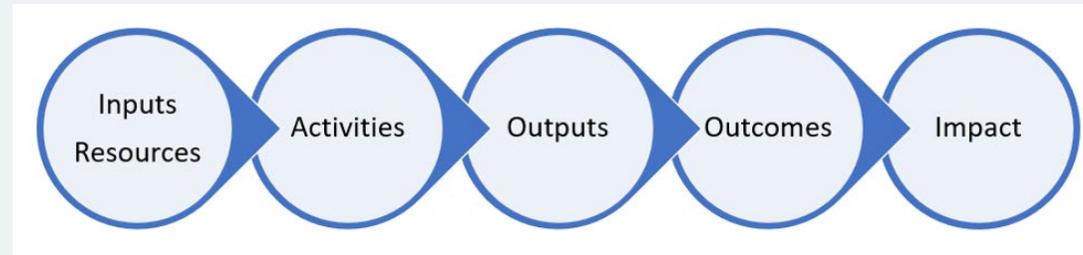
Planning for Impact

From Outcomes to Impact

- Outcomes and impact are linked.
- Outcomes are more specific and concrete and often more immediate.
- Impact tells a **broader, more comprehensive story of change, growth, development**, and ongoing improvement based on actions and can take longer to emerge.
- One way to think about the difference: Impact is a **long term effect** of outcome achievement.

Outcomes Create Impact





Element	Logic Description (if... Then)
Resources/inputs	Certain resources are necessary to operate the program.
Activities	<u>If</u> you have access to the resources, <u>then</u> you can use them to accomplish planned activities
Outputs	<u>If</u> you accomplish the planned activities <u>then</u> you will deliver the product or service output that you intended.
Outcomes/benefits, as measured by indicators	<u>If</u> you accomplish your planned activities to the extent you intended in your outputs, <u>then</u> your participants (organization) will benefit in certain ways.
Impact (long term outcomes)	<u>If</u> the benefits to participants or organizations are achieved, <u>then</u> certain changes in organizations or systems might be expected to occur.

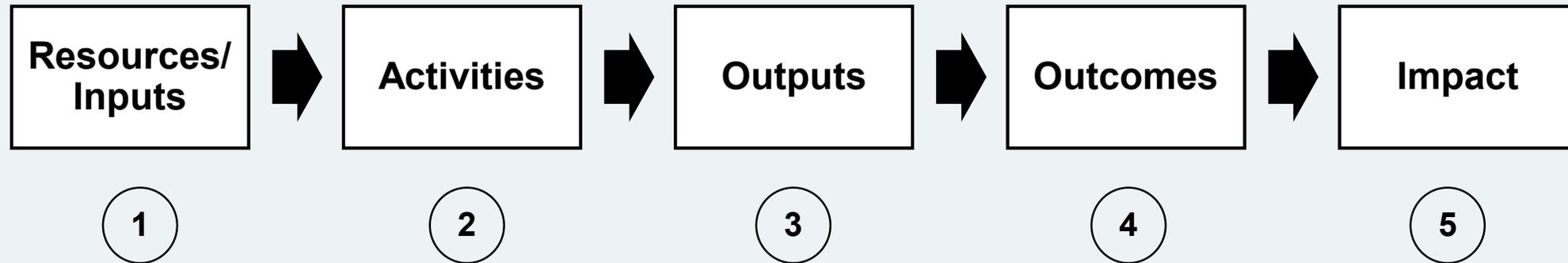
Certain resources are needed to operate your program

*If you have access to them, **then** you can use them to accomplish your planned activities*

*If you accomplish your planned activities, **then** you will hopefully deliver the amount of product and/or service that you intended*

*If you accomplish your planned activities to the extent you intended, **then** your participants will benefit in certain ways*

*If these benefits to participants are achieved, **then** certain changes in organizations, communities, or systems might be expected to occur*



Your Planned Work

Your Intended Results



- Resources dedicated to or consumed by the project
- Usually a NOUN
staff, facilities, money, time...

- What the project does with inputs to fulfill its mission
- Usually a GERUND
a verb in its “-ing” form, such as assessing, enabling, reviewing...

- The volume of work accomplished by the project
- Usually a QUANTITY
the number of projects, the number of case studies...

- Benefits or changes for participants during or after project activities
- Usually a CHANGE
better projects, increased skills...

- The long term consequences of the intervention
- A fundamental CHANGE
intended or unintended in a system or society

Your Planned Work

Your Intended Results

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Planning – Implementation – Evaluation

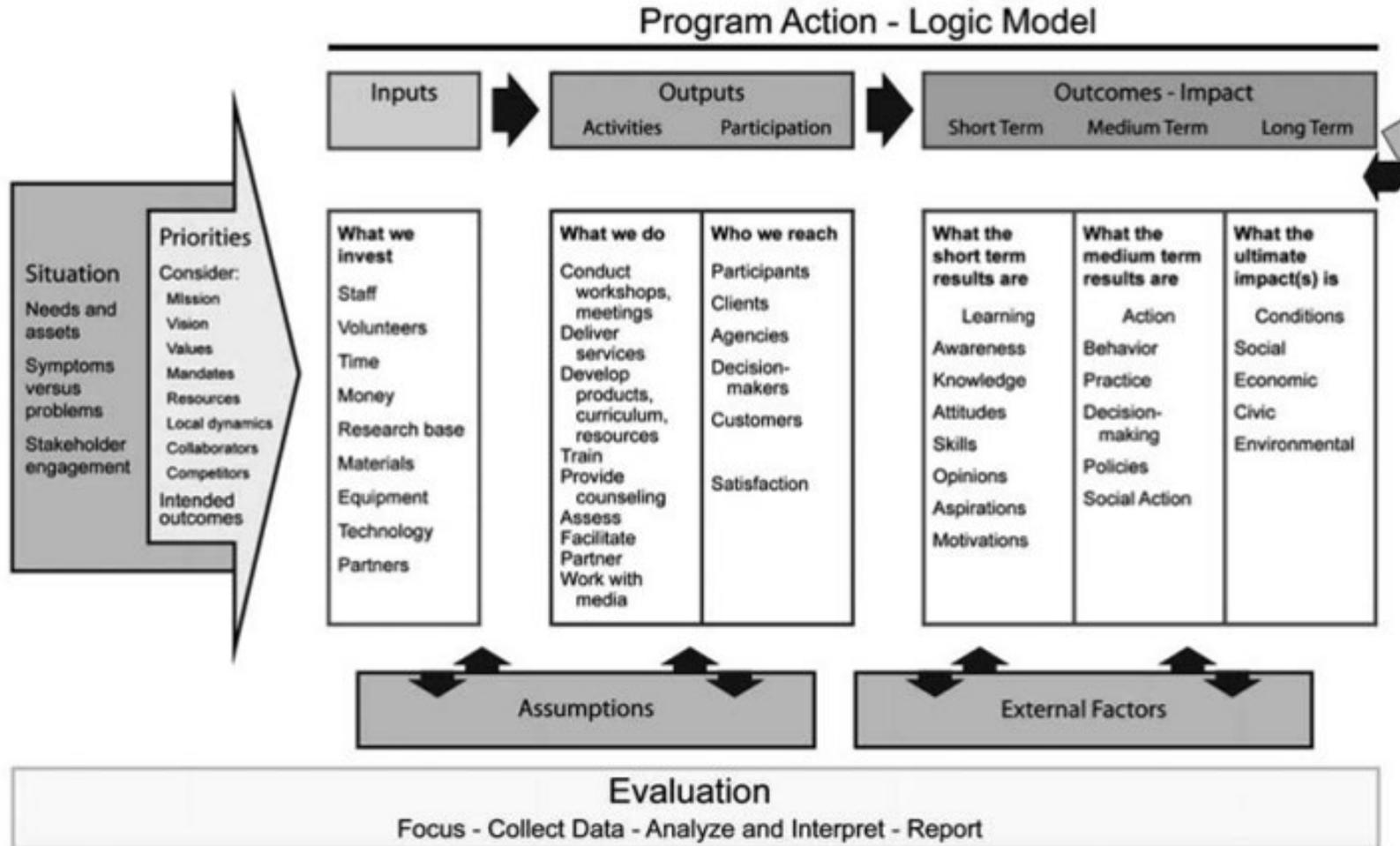


FIGURE 1 Framework for a Simple Logic Model

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