

Guidelines and Framework for Designing Basic Logic Model

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Description

The following framework can be filled in by readers to design a logic model (or diagram) for their organization and for each of its programs. Guidelines and examples are provided to help the reader.

Purpose of a Logic Model

A logic model is a top-level depiction the flow of materials and processes to produce the results desired by the organization or program. The model can be very useful to organize planning and analysis when designing the organization and its programs or when designing outcomes-based evaluations of programs. It can also be useful for describing organizations and programs (for example, in grant proposals).

What to Include and What Not to Include

Logic models can be in regard to whatever application in which the designer chooses to use them. However, when using logic models to analyze or describe organizations and programs, it's often best to use logic models to depict major, recurring items in the organization or programs -- rather than one-time items. For example, you might not choose to do a logic model for the one-time, initial activities to build an organization or program (constructing the building, registering with state and federal authorities, etc.). However, you might benefit more from using logic models to analyze and describe the major, recurring activities that occur in the organization or program (once they're built) to continue to produce the results desired for clients and the community.

Size and Level of Detail

The logic model should be of a size that readers can easily study the model without extensive reference and cross-comparisons between pages. Ideally, the logic model is one or at most two pages long. The level of detail should be sufficient for the reader to grasp the major items that go into an organization or program, what occurs to those inputs, the various outputs that results and the overall benefits/impacts (or outcomes) that occur and to which groups of people.

Note the the content of program logic models is often more specific than models for organizations. This level of specificity is often quite useful for program planners.

Definitions of Basic Terms

Logic models typically depict the inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes associated with an organization and its programs. Don't be concerned about your grasping the "correct" definition of each of the following terms. It's more important to have some sense of what they mean -- and even more important to be consistent in your use of the terms.

Inputs

These are materials that the organization or program takes in and then processes to produce the results desired by the organization. Types of inputs are people, money, equipment, facilities, supplies, people's ideas, people's time, etc. Inputs can also be major forces that influence the organization or programs. For example, the inputs to a nonprofit program that provides training to clients might include learners, training materials, teachers, classrooms, funding, paper and pencils, etc. Various laws and regulations effect how the program is conducted, for example, safety regulations, Equal Opportunity Employment guidelines, etc. Inputs are often associated with a cost to obtain and use the item -- budgets are listings of inputs and the costs to obtain and/or use them.

Processes (or Activities or Strategies or Methods)

Processes are used by the organization or program to manipulate and arrange items to produce the results desired by the organization or program. Processes can range from putting a piece of paper on a desk to manufacturing a space shuttle. However, logic models are usually only concerned with the major recurring processes associated with producing the results desired by the organization or program. For example, the major processes used by a nonprofit program that provides training to clients might include recruitment of learners, pretesting of learners, training, post-testing and certification.

Outputs

Outputs are usually the tangible results of the major processes in the organization. They are usually accounted for by their number, for example, the number of students who failed or passed a test, courses taught, tests taken, teachers used, etc. Outputs are frequently misunderstood to indicate success of an organization or program. However, if the outputs aren't directly associated with achieving the benefits desired for clients, then the outputs are poor indicators of the success of the organization and its programs. You can use many teachers, but that won't mean that many clients were successfully trained.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the (hopefully positive) impacts on those people whom the organization wanted to benefit with its programs. Outcomes are usually specified in terms of:

- a) learning, including enhancements to knowledge, understanding/perceptions/attitudes,

and behaviors

b) skills (behaviors to accomplish results, or capabilities)

c) conditions (increased security, stability, pride, etc.)

It's often to specify outcomes in terms of short-term, intermediate and long-term.

Basic Example of a Logic Model

The following example is intended to further portray the nature of inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes.

The logic model is for an organization called the Self-Directed Learning Center (SDLC).

Logic models for programs are often more detailed. Note that the more comprehensive and descriptive your logic model

inputs	processes	outputs	short-term outcome(s)	intermediate outcomes	long-term outcomes
- Free articles and other publications on the Web	- Provide peer-assistance models in which learners support each other	- 30 groups that used peer models	- high school diploma for graduates	- full-time employment for learners (in job that required high-school education)	- independent living for learner (by using salary to rent apartment)
- Collaborators	- Provide free, online training program: Basics of Self-Directed Learning	- 100 completed training programs	- improved attitude toward self and society for graduates	- increased reliability and improved judgment of learners	- strong basic life skills for learner
- Free Management Library	- Provide free, online training program: Basic Life Skills	- 900 learners who finished Basics of Self-Directed Learning	- improved family life for family of graduates	- enhanced publicity and public relations for SDLC	- improved love life for learner who's now in a relationship
- Funders		- 900 learners who finished Basic Life Skills			- increased likelihood and interest for learner to attend college
- Self-directed learners		- 900 learners who passed their GED to gain high-school diploma			
- Volunteers					
- Computers					
- Web					
- Supplies					

Logic Model for

Organization (Name)

Or Program (Name)

inputs	processes	outputs	short-term outcomes	intermediate outcomes	long-term outcomes
