

IMPACT MEASUREMENT

NGO Outcomes Framework Toolkit

A Comprehensive Guide to Measuring and Demonstrating Impact for Not-for-Profit Organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia

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| AmplifyData.org.nz

Theory of Change

Logic Models

Outcome Indicators

Data Collection

Reporting

Sector Standards

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roduction

Outcomes matter and how this toolkit will help your organisation

Why Outcomes Matter

In the not-for-profit sector, demonstrating impact is no longer optional — it's essential. Funders, boards, and communities increasingly expect organisations to show not just what they do, but what difference they make.

External Pressures

- Funders requiring outcome evidence
- Increased competition for funding
- Government commissioning based on outcomes
- Public expectations for accountability
- Donors wanting to see impact

Internal Benefits

- Improved programme design
- Better resource allocation
- Stronger case for support
- Enhanced learning and adaptation
- Greater staff and volunteer motivation

Who This Toolkit Is For

Programme Managers

Design and implement outcomes frameworks for your programmes.

CEOs & Directors

Lead organisation-wide outcomes measurement and demonstrate impact to stakeholders.

Evaluation Staff

Tools and methods for rigorous yet practical measurement approaches.

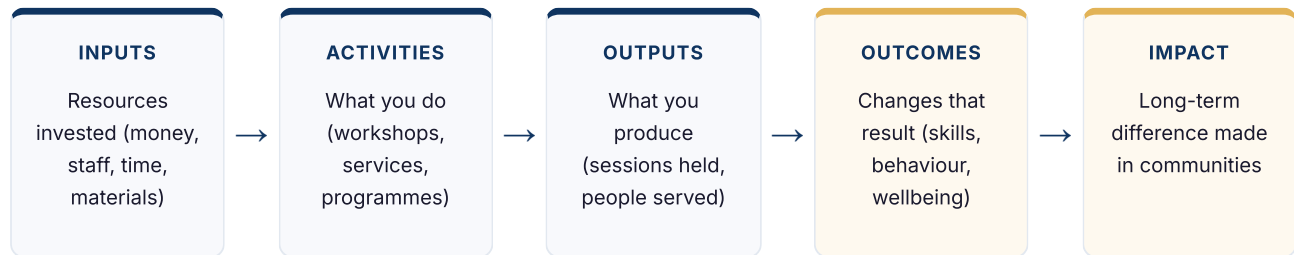
Board Members

Understand outcomes reporting and ensure governance oversight of impact.

Understanding Outcomes & Impact

Concepts and terminology for outcomes measurement

The Results Chain



Outputs vs Outcomes

ASPECT	OUTPUTS (WHAT YOU DID)	OUTCOMES (WHAT CHANGED)
Definition	Direct products of activities	Changes in participants' lives
Measures	Quantity and volume	Quality and change
Examples	50 workshops delivered, 200 people served	75% gained employment, 80% reported improved confidence
Control	High — you control what you deliver	Lower — influenced by external factors
Value	Shows efficiency and reach	Shows effectiveness and impact

Levels of Outcomes

Short-term	0-6 months: Changes in knowledge, awareness, skills, attitudes. Easiest to measure and attribute to your programme.
Medium-term	6-24 months: Changes in behaviour, practice, decision-making, access. Require follow-up measurement.
Long-term	2-5+ years: Changes in condition, status, wellbeing, systems. Hardest to measure and attribute; often require population data.

Theory of Change

Explaining how and why your activities lead to the outcomes you seek

What is a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change (ToC) is a comprehensive description of how and why a desired change is expected to happen. It maps out the logical sequence from activities to long-term impact, identifying assumptions and external factors along the way.

A Good Theory of Change Answers

- **What problem** are you addressing?
- **Who** are your target participants/beneficiaries?
- **What activities** do you deliver?
- **What changes** do you expect to see (short, medium, long-term)?
- **Why** do you believe your activities will cause these changes?
- **What assumptions** underpin your theory?
- **What external factors** could affect results?

Developing Your Theory of Change

1

Define the Problem

Clearly articulate the problem or need you're addressing. Use evidence and community voice to define the issue.

2

Identify Long-Term Goal

What is the ultimate change you want to see? Start with the end in mind and work backwards.

3

Map the Pathway

Identify the sequence of outcomes needed to achieve the long-term goal. What needs to happen first, second, third?

4

Identify Activities

What activities will trigger each outcome in the pathway? Link activities to specific outcomes.

5

Articulate Assumptions

What conditions must be true for your theory to work? These are your assumptions — make them explicit.

6

Test and Refine

Review your theory with stakeholders, test against evidence, and refine regularly based on what you learn.

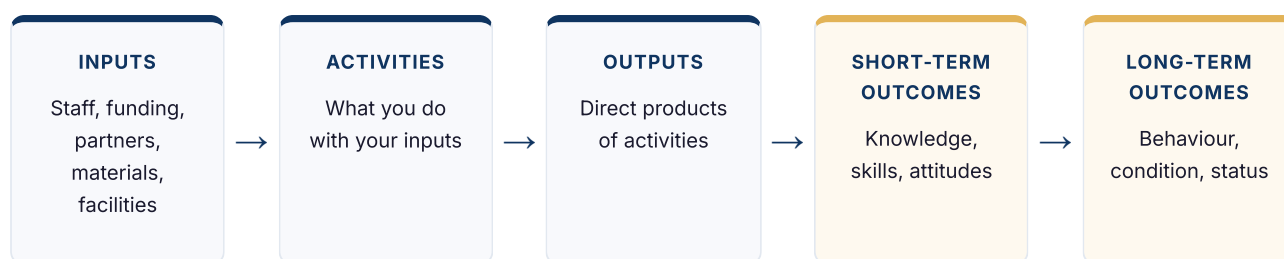
Logic Models

Using practical programme logic models for outcomes planning

What is a Logic Model?

A logic model is a visual representation of how your programme works. It shows the logical relationships between resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes. Think of it as the practical, programme-level expression of your Theory of Change.

Logic Model Template



Example: Youth Employment Programme

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
2 FTE staff, \$200k funding, employer partnerships	Job readiness workshops, CV support, interview coaching, work placements	40 young people complete programme, 25 work placements	Improved interview skills, increased confidence, career awareness	Sustained employment, financial independence, career progression

Tips for Building Logic Models

- Involve programme staff in development — they know the work best
- Keep it to one page for each programme
- Use it as a living document — review and update regularly
- Include external factors that could affect outcomes
- Start with what you can realistically measure

Outcome Indicators Library

Comprehensive library of indicators organised by sector and outcome area

What Makes a Good Indicator?

SMART Indicators

- **Specific:** Clearly defined and understood by all
- **Measurable:** Can be quantified or assessed objectively
- **Achievable:** Realistic given your programme and timeframe
- **Relevant:** Directly linked to the outcome you're measuring
- **Time-bound:** Has a clear timeframe for measurement

Indicators by Sector

Health & Wellbeing

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE
Improved mental health	% reporting reduced psychological distress (K10 scale)	Pre/post validated survey
Increased physical activity	% meeting recommended exercise guidelines	Self-report survey
Better nutrition	% reporting increased fruit/vegetable intake	Pre/post survey
Reduced social isolation	% reporting increased social connections	UCLA Loneliness Scale

Education & Training

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE
Improved literacy	Reading age improvement (months gained)	Standardised assessment
Qualification attainment	% completing qualification or certification	Programme records
Increased confidence	Self-rated confidence score improvement	Pre/post survey
Engagement in learning	% attendance rate across programme	Attendance records

Employment

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE
Gained employment	% entering employment within 3 months	Follow-up contact
Sustained employment	% remaining employed at 6 and 12 months	Follow-up contact
Improved employability	Self-rated employability skills score	Pre/post survey
Career progression	% reporting improved job quality/income	Follow-up survey

Data Collection Planning

Designing practical and ethical data collection for outcomes measurement

Data Collection Methods

Surveys & Questionnaires

- Pre/post programme surveys
- Satisfaction surveys
- Follow-up surveys (3, 6, 12 months)
- Validated tools (e.g., K10, WEMWBS)

Best for: Quantitative outcome data at scale

Interviews

- Individual depth interviews
- Key informant interviews
- Most Significant Change stories
- Stakeholder perspectives

Best for: Rich qualitative understanding of change

Focus Groups

- Participant group discussions
- Community consultation
- Programme design feedback
- Outcome validation

Best for: Exploring shared experiences and perspectives

Programme Data

- Attendance and participation records
- Service delivery data
- Case notes and assessments
- Referral and exit data

Best for: Output data and programme monitoring

Data Collection Plan Template

OUTCOME

INDICATOR

METHOD

WHEN

WHO COLLECTS

SAMPLE

Ethical Considerations

Ethics in Outcomes Measurement

- **Informed consent:** Participants must understand what data is collected and how it will be used
- **Voluntary participation:** Declining to provide data must not affect service access
- **Cultural safety:** Data collection must be culturally appropriate and respectful
- **Do no harm:** Avoid questions that could cause distress or re-traumatise
- **Confidentiality:** Protect individual identity in reporting
- **Data sovereignty:** Respect Māori data sovereignty principles (NZ)

Measurement Tools & Methods

Validated tools and practical methods for measuring outcomes

Validated Measurement Tools

TOOL	MEASURES	ITEMS	COST	BEST FOR
K10 / K6	Psychological distress	10 / 6	Free	Mental health programmes
WEMWBS	Mental wellbeing	14 / 7	Free (registration)	Wellbeing programmes
Outcome Star	Multiple life domains	Varies	Licensed	Holistic support services
UCLA Loneliness	Social isolation	3-20	Free	Social connection programmes
Cantril Ladder	Life satisfaction	1	Free	General wellbeing
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	Self-esteem	10	Free	Personal development

Pre-Post Measurement Design

Best Practice for Pre/Post Design

- Use the same questions at baseline and follow-up
- Collect baseline data **before** the programme begins (not retroactively)
- Allow sufficient time between measurements for change to occur
- Track individual participants (using anonymised IDs) to measure change
- Aim for at least 60% response rate at follow-up
- Consider a comparison/control group where feasible

AU Sector Standards Alignment

Aligning your outcomes framework with national standards and frameworks

New Zealand Frameworks

Living Standards Framework

Treasury's framework for measuring wellbeing across 12 domains including health, housing, income, and social connections.

He Ara Waiora

Māori perspective on wellbeing encompassing wairua (spiritual), hinengaro (mental), tinana (physical), and whānau (family).

Social Wellbeing Agency

Indicators Aotearoa NZ — national wellbeing indicators for tracking population outcomes.

Results-Based Accountability

Used by many NZ government agencies. Distinguishes population outcomes from programme performance measures.

Australian Frameworks

DSS Data Exchange (DEX)

Standard outcome measurement for Australian Government-funded programmes using SCORE assessments.

AIHW Outcome Frameworks

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare performance frameworks for health and welfare outcomes.

Closing the Gap

National agreement targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes across multiple domains.

Social Impact Measurement

Centre for Social Impact and Social Ventures Australia methodologies for impact assessment.

Reporting Your Outcomes

Communicating your impact effectively to different audiences

Reporting for Different Audiences

AUDIENCE	WHAT THEY WANT	FORMAT	FREQUENCY
Board	Strategic overview, trends, risks	Dashboard, summary report	Quarterly
Funders	Evidence of impact, value for money	Formal report with data	As per contract
Donors	Stories of change, emotional connection	Impact stories, infographics	Annually + campaigns
Beneficiaries	What happened with their input	Plain language summary	Annually
Staff	Programme performance, learning	Operational dashboard	Monthly/quarterly
Public	Overall impact, accountability	Annual report, website	Annually

Outcomes Reporting Best Practices

- Combine quantitative data with qualitative stories for compelling evidence
- Be honest about what didn't work — this builds credibility and enables learning
- Use visuals (charts, infographics) to make data accessible
- Report against your Theory of Change and logic model
- Include participant voice and stories (with consent)
- Acknowledge limitations and external factors
- Show trends over time, not just single-point data
- Make recommendations for programme improvement based on data

Building an Outcomes Culture

Building outcomes thinking across your entire organisation

What is an Outcomes Culture?

An outcomes culture exists when everyone in the organisation — from board to frontline staff — understands, values, and contributes to measuring and improving outcomes. It's not just about compliance; it's about continuous learning and improvement.

1

Leadership Commitment

CEO and board champion outcomes measurement. Allocate dedicated resources and make outcomes a strategic priority.

2

Staff Engagement

Involve frontline staff in designing outcomes frameworks. They understand what works and why. Make data collection part of the role, not an add-on.

3

Build Capability

Train all staff in outcomes concepts and data collection. Develop specialist evaluation capability. Use peer learning and external support.

4

Use Data for Learning

Create regular opportunities to review data together. Ask "What is the data telling us?" Use insights to improve programmes, not just report to funders.

5

Celebrate and Share

Celebrate what works. Share learnings across teams and with the sector. Build a reputation for evidence-based practice.

Signs of a Healthy Outcomes Culture

- Staff can articulate the outcomes their programme is working toward
- Data collection is seen as part of good practice, not a burden
- Teams regularly discuss data and use it to improve their work
- The organisation is comfortable sharing what didn't work
- Board discussions include outcomes data alongside financial reports
- Funders receive proactive outcomes reporting

Templates & Worksheets

to-use templates for implementing your outcomes framework

Available Templates

Theory of Change Worksheet

Step-by-step template for developing your organisation's theory of change.

Logic Model Template

Visual template for mapping programme inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes.

Outcome Indicator Tracker

Spreadsheet for tracking outcome indicators with targets and actuals.

Data Collection Plan

Template for planning who collects what data, when, and how.

Pre/Post Survey Template

Customisable survey template for baseline and follow-up measurement.

Outcomes Report Template

Structured template for reporting outcomes to funders and stakeholders.

Sources & Further Reading

Organisations, tools, and references for outcomes measurement

Key Organisations

New Zealand

- Social Wellbeing Agency — Indicators Aotearoa NZ
- Superu (Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit)
- Community Research — Sector research support
- Philanthropy NZ — Funder guidance on outcomes
- Te Pūnaha Matatini — Complex systems research

Australia

- Centre for Social Impact
- Social Ventures Australia
- Australian Evaluation Society
- AIHW — Outcome frameworks
- DSS Data Exchange — SCORE methodology

Recommended Reading

- Measuring the Difference** — New Philanthropy Capital
- Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough** by Mark Friedman — Results-Based Accountability
- The Outcomes Book** by Nigel Ball — Practical guide for NZ nonprofits
- Better Evaluation** — Online evaluation resource (betterevaluation.org)
- Theory of Change** — Center for Theory of Change (theoryofchange.org)

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This toolkit is provided as general guidance. Organisations should adapt the frameworks and tools to their specific context and consider engaging evaluation specialists for complex measurement needs.