



Program Impacts

## Glossary of Common Terms

**Program.** An educational program is a series of organized learning activities and resources aimed to help people make improvements in their lives.

**Program Evaluation.** The systematic process of asking critical questions, collecting appropriate information, analyzing, interpreting and using the information in order to improve programs and be accountable for positive, equitable results and resources invested.

**Accountability.** Responsibility for effective and efficient performance of programs. Measures of accountability focus on (1) benefits accruing from the program as valued by customers and supporters; (2) how resources are invested and the results attained.

**Inputs.** Resources that go into a program including staff time, materials, money, equipment, facilities, volunteer time.

**Outputs.** The activities, products and participation that are generated through the investment of resources.

**Outcomes.** Results or changes that occur from the educational effort. Outcomes answer the question... "So what?" What difference has the program made in peoples' lives? Whose lives? Outcomes may relate to changes in knowledge, awareness, skills, attitudes, opinions, aspirations, motivation, behavior, practice, decision making, policies, social action, condition, or status. Outcomes may be intended and unintended; positive and negative. Outcomes fall along a continuum from immediate (initial; short-term) to intermediate (medium-term) to final outcomes (long-term), often synonymous with impact.

**Impact.** The social, economic, civic and/or environmental consequences of the program. Impacts tend to be longer-term and so may be equated with goals. Impacts may be positive, negative and/or neutral; intended or unintended.

**Impact indicator.** Expression or indication of impact. Evidence that the impact has/is being achieved.

**Measure.** Either quantitative or qualitative information that expresses the phenomenon under study. In the past, the term *measure* or *measurement* carried a quantitative implication of precision and, in the field of education, was synonymous with testing and instrumentation. Today, the term *measure* is used broadly to include both quantitative and qualitative information.

**Qualitative methodology** – Methods that examine phenomena in depth and detail without predetermined categories or hypotheses. Emphasis is on understanding the phenomena as it exists. Often connoted with naturalistic inquiry, inductive, social anthropological worldview. Qualitative methods usually consist of three kinds of data collection: observation, open-ended interviewing, and document review.

**Quantitative methodology** – Methods that seek the *facts* or *causes* of phenomena which can be expressed numerically and analyzed statistically. Interest is in generalizability. Often connoted with a positivist, deductive, natural science worldview. Quantitative methods consist of standardized, structured data collection including surveys, closed-ended interviews, tests.

**Quantitative data.** Data in a numerical format

**Qualitative data.** Data in a narrative or text format

**Baseline.** Information about the situation or condition prior to a program or intervention.

**Benchmarks.** Performance data that are used for comparative purposes.

#### SUMMARY OF PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

