

# Evaluating initiatives, big and small: The best evidence in cost effective ways

SASTA Professional Development Day


September 2010



DISCOVER TRUTH | INSPIRE ACTION

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**Contact Details** Anne Dowden  
Evaluator, Research New Zealand  
Phone 04 462 6405  
Cell 027 500 4405  
[anne.dowden@researchnz.com](mailto:anne.dowden@researchnz.com)

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- ◆ Getting started – know your issues and context
  - ◆ Getting in deeper – know your outcomes
  - ◆ Using logic tools - support your initiative
  - ◆ Getting the full story down - guide evaluative processes
  - ◆ Using your tools to be effective and efficient
  - ◆ Summary

## So what's Evaluation all about: Why do it?

- ◆ Accountability reporting
- ◆ Value for money
  
- ◆ Was it effective?
- ◆ How can we do it better?
- ◆ Who did it help the most?
  
- ◆ Identify and celebrate your successes

## And what's 'Monitoring'?

- **Monitoring** is a process of collecting data about an initiative that will provide answers to questions about the initiative.
- Monitoring data is specific information about:
  - ◆ The initiative's areas of activity (i.e. areas of focus, did they happen as planned?).
  - ◆ The initiative's activity over time (i.e. short-term activities and so on).
  - ◆ The initiative's achievements (or outcomes) for each activity, and over time.
- Monitoring data informs reporting and can be used for evaluation.

## And what about monitoring and evaluation? How do they fit together?

- **Evaluation** is the process of using data (monitoring data) and other information to make judgements about the success (or otherwise) of an initiative.
- Judgements (value judgements) are done against agreed definitions of 'success'
  - ◆ Outcome evaluation, Impact evaluation
- **Evaluation** can also be a process of improving an initiative
  - ◆ Formative evaluation

## Value judgements = Evaluation

- ◆ Value based questions
- ◆ How many people ...?
- ◆ What happened ...?
- ◆ How effective was it?
- ◆ Was it well orientated to the youth culture?

- ◆ Evaluation – what is this?

- ◆ Using logic tools - support your initiative
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## Getting started: know your initiative

- ◆ Know your issue
  - ◆ Needs Assessment and other Research
- ◆ Be ready to describe the mechanisms/activities
  - ◆ Based on Best Practice
- ◆ Be clear of your audiences/populations
  - ◆ Consider cultural requirements: youth culture, Pacific culture

## Getting started: know your initiative

- ◆ Know your intentions
  - ◆ What changes you hope to see
- ◆ Know what else is happening
  - ◆ Context
  - ◆ The competing events, messages, initiatives
  - ◆ Opportunities to partnership with others

## Getting in deeper: really know what you want to achieve with your initiative

- ◆ What are all the outcomes you want to achieve?
- ◆ Is there an order to these outcomes?
  - ◆ Are they all outcomes? (i.e. changes you need/want)
  - ◆ Are some activities you need to do before achieving outcomes?
- ◆ Is all outcomes relevant to your initiative?
  - ◆ Are they all realistically within 'reach' or can you justify a position that they are 'beyond the reach' of your initiative?

## Getting in deeper: really know what you want to achieve with your initiative

And for each outcome ...

- ◆ What will count as good evidence that you are achieving each of these outcomes?
- ◆ Hmm .... but who says this is good enough to be a success?
- ◆ Whose opinions count here?

*"Is it the funder?" "Your boss?" "The text books/academics?" "Local stakeholders: community leaders, an expert/steering group, local iwi, service users?"*

**And when you have a clear idea of the 'outcomes' and 'success indicators', you can think 'measures'**

- ◆ You know what your outcomes are
- ◆ You know what situations will 'count' as success (i.e. the good evidence/success indicators)
  - ◆ "When people understand ..."
  - ◆ "When people consistently wear seatbelts"
- ◆ Now you have to plan out how you will know/record that you have reached success (i.e. what will you actually measure)?
  - ◆ Ask questions
  - ◆ Record behaviours
  - ◆ Using surveys, interviews, records of incident rates

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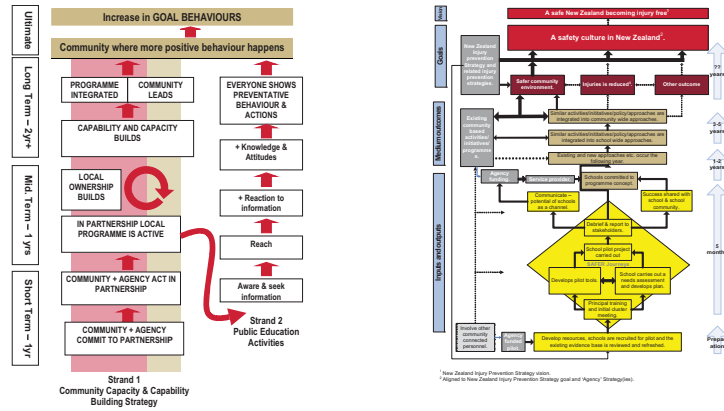
**Be strategic and logical: Describe your initiative and be able to share the concepts with others**

*“By making explicit the (sometimes unstated) desired outcomes of a programme, initiative or strategy a logic model makes it possible to design, plan, manage (and evaluate) for outcomes”*

## **Logic models**

- ◆ Fundamentally a logic model is a communication tool
  - ◆ It makes explicit the intended outcomes of a programme/project/initiative or strategy
- ◆ It allows debate about
  - ◆ the intended outcomes
  - ◆ the hierarchy of outcomes (which leads to the next)
  - ◆ the theory of change

## Logic models of programmes



## Logic model of a strategy (one of 7 pages)

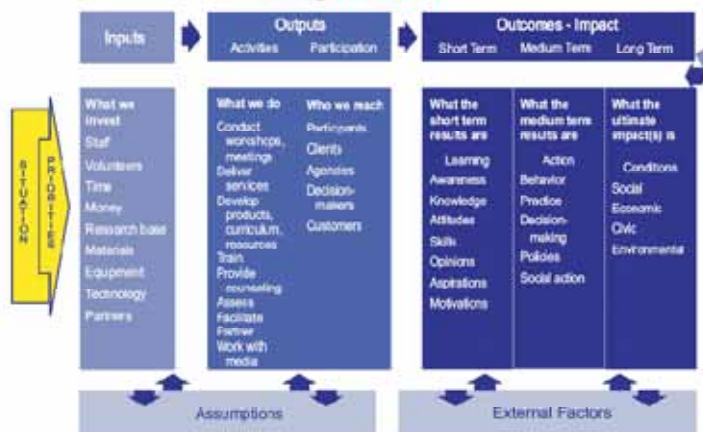


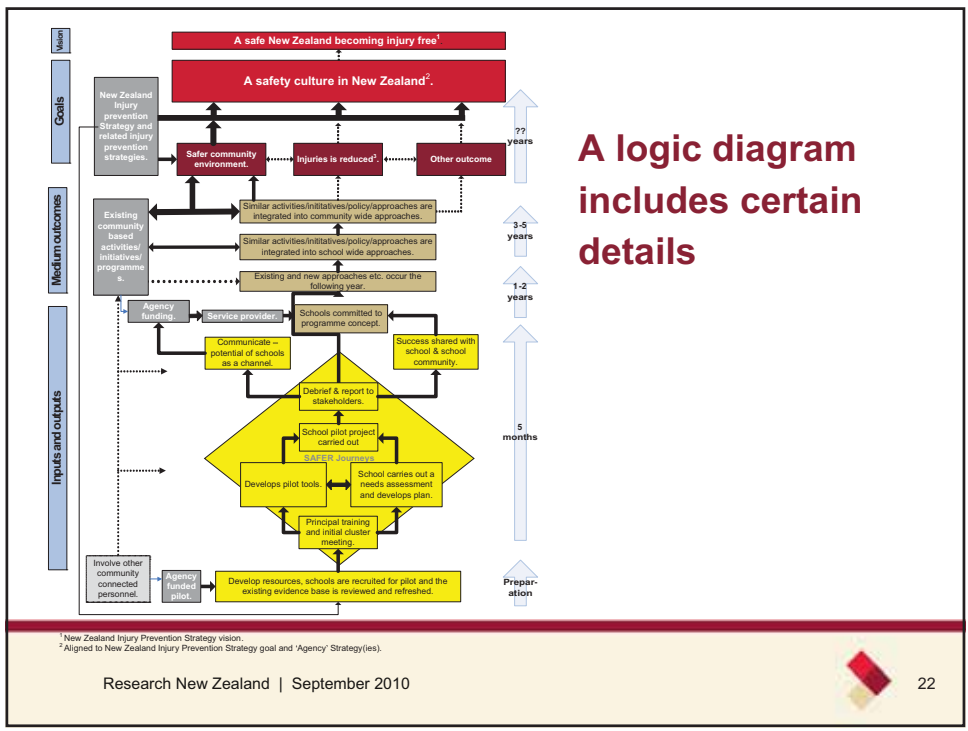
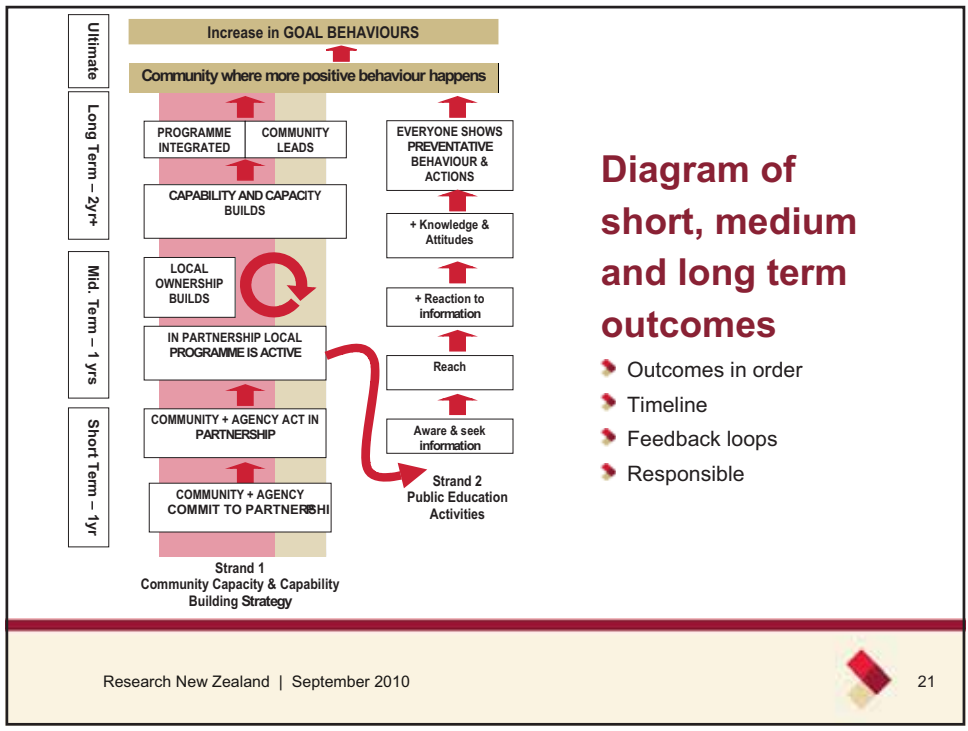
## Describe your initiative: use a 'logic model'

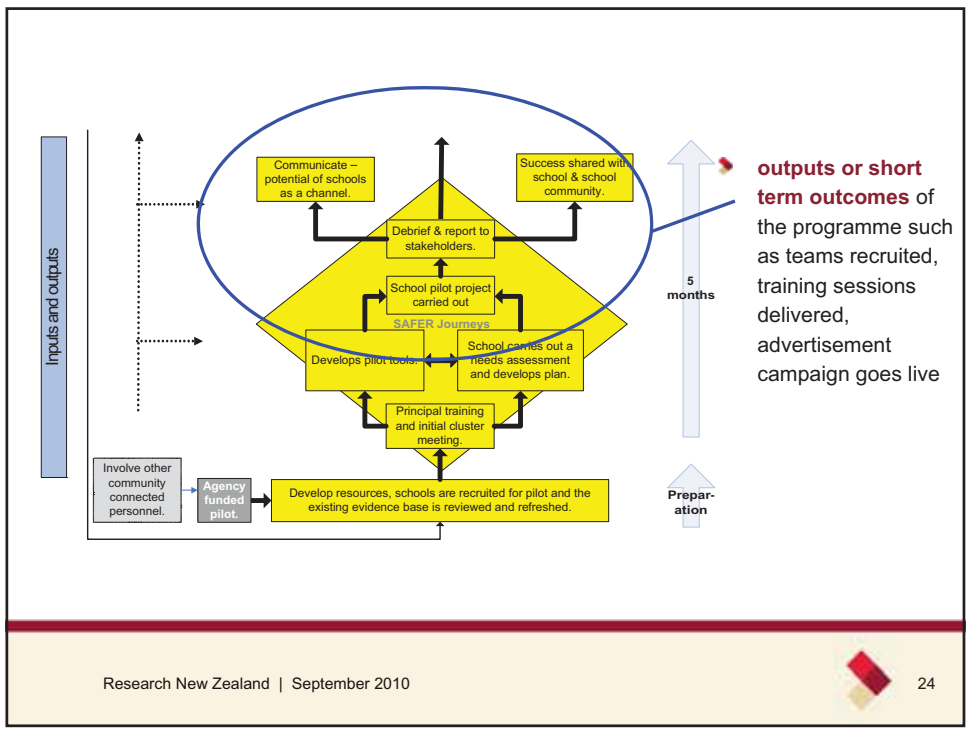
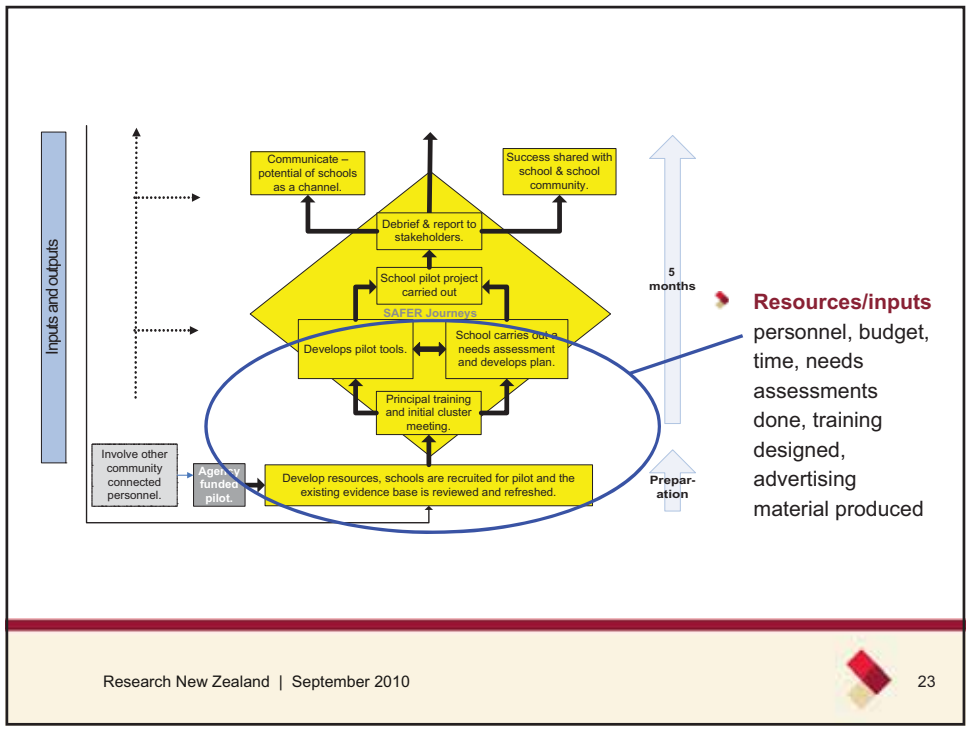
- ◆ No common language
- ◆ No one way to present them
- ◆ Some are only diagrams
- ◆ Some are a table or matrix of detailed information
- ◆ Some are both
- ◆ Some are 'programme logics': specific and operationally focused
- ◆ Others are overarching logics of a 'system' with generic components
  
- ◆ Useful logic models are more than a process or flow diagram

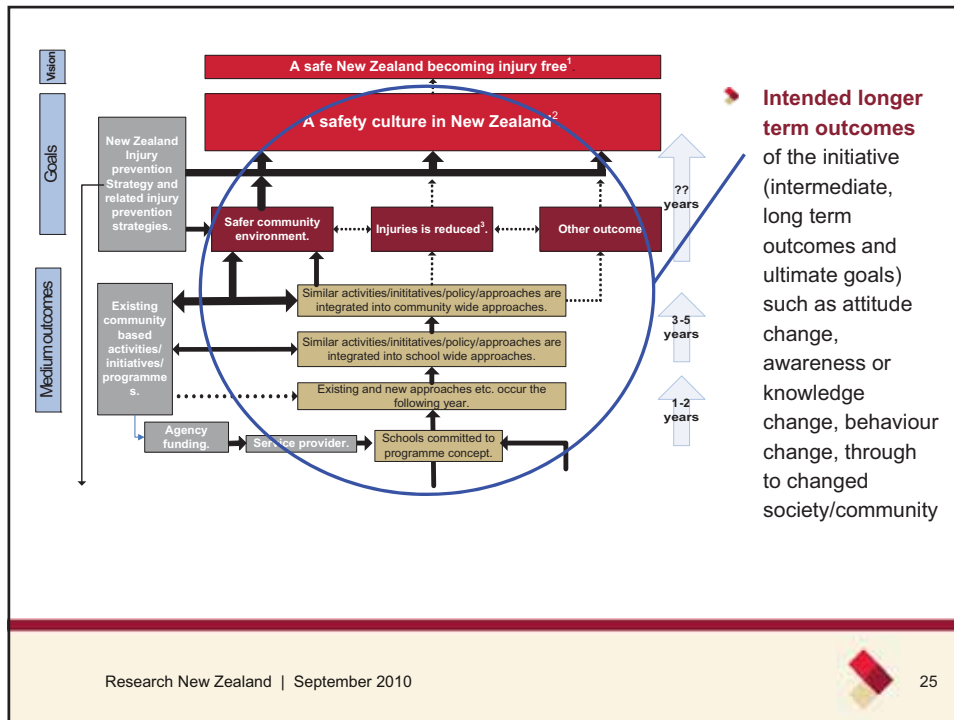
## Matrix of inputs, outputs and outcomes

### Logic Model









- ◆ Evaluation – what is this?
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## Describe your initiative – the full story

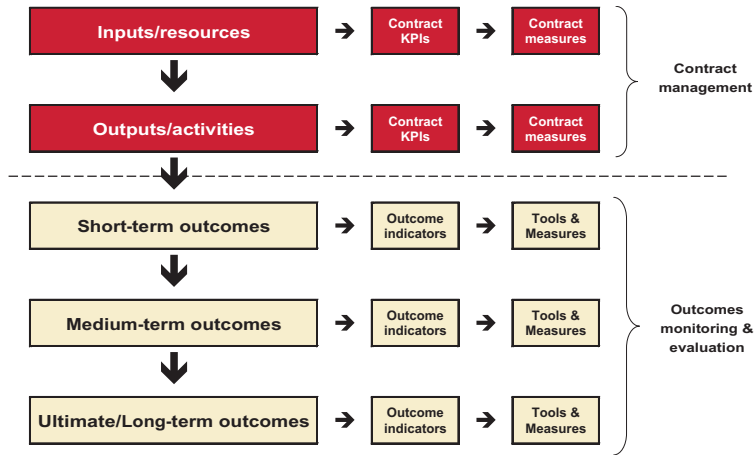
- ◆ 1. Strategic context of the initiative
  - ◆ Which national strategy/strategies does it come under?
  - ◆ Which specific strategic objectives does it contribute towards?
  - ◆ What organisational objectives or outcomes, annual objectives will it contribute towards?
- ◆ 2. Diagram(s)
  - ◆ Diagram of the context within the national strategy/strategies
  - ◆ Diagram of the initiative
- ◆ 3. Outcomes Matrix

*“Simple diagrams can be best for illustrating complexity”*

## Outcomes Matrix

- ◆ Inputs/outputs for contract monitoring (KPIs)
  - ◆ The inputs (resourcing) of the programme
  - ◆ The outputs (number of sessions/activities) of the programme
- ◆ Outcomes for monitoring progress towards outcomes (M & E)
  - ◆ Intended outcomes of the programme
  - ◆ Success indicators for each outcome: i.e. if you are successful, what will it look like?
  - ◆ Measures for each outcome (and list of data collection tools)
  
  - ◆ Short term, medium term and long term
  - ◆ As relevant ultimate goals

## Outcomes Matrix



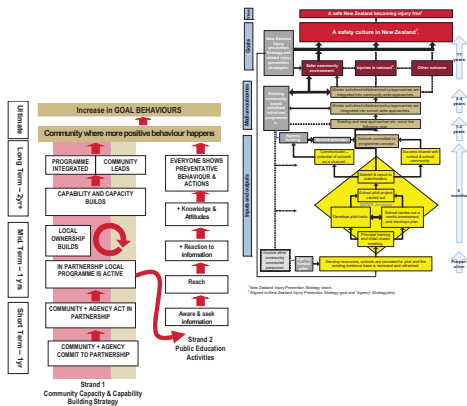
## Outcomes Matrix

Short-term outcomes	Indicators	[Tools] Possible measures
Teenagers understand unsafe situations	Teenagers are fully engaged in the discussions about safety	[High school survey] Students describe as per indicator
Medium-term outcomes	Indicators	[Tools] Possible measures
Teenagers use skills effectively in school.	Teenagers effectively use terms and skills in school to handle unsafe situations	[High school survey] [Teacher checklist] Students / Classroom Teachers - report teenagers using terms and skills in school
↓ ↓		
Ultimate Goal	Indicators	[Tools] Possible measures
Teenagers in the community confidently deal with unsafe situations in all areas of their lives.	Teenagers effectively use skills in all areas of their life	[Student focus group] [Police Community Constable interview]

## Developing a diagram and a matrix is very useful

A diagram:

- is ideal for **communicating** with a range of stakeholders
- is a **memory aid** of the matrix details



## Developing a diagram and a matrix is very useful

A matrix:

- provides detail for **accountability** discussions with governance
- records **definitions of the initiative's design & intent** (outcomes)
- guides **delivery** (maintains focus on delivering the intended outcomes)
- makes explicit **how progress will be monitored** (data collection)
- makes explicit what **success** is (i.e. how it will be evaluated).

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Teenagers use skills effectively	Teenagers effectively use terms and skills in school to handle unsafe situations	[High school stu Students / Clas

- ◆ Evaluation – what is this?
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**So now you have a logic model ...  
and an outcomes framework**

**So now go collect the data and do the report**

## **Define & refine your evaluation objectives**

- ✦ What types of decisions will you make with the data? What are your key research objectives?
  - ◆ Effectiveness/impact (suggests quantitative survey data)
  - ◆ Quality improvement ideas (suggests in-depth focus group, one-on-one interview data)
  
- ✦ What data must you collect to answer each objective?
  - ◆ What is critical data: the key to knowing your progress?
  - ◆ What data is only 'nice to have'? (could look for free/existing data)

***Thou shall use your logic model to check for critical data***

## **Logic models help to identify ideal data sources**

Your logic model will help you identify:

- ✦ Which stakeholders are involved in the activity or are likely to be aware whether the outcome has been achieved
  - ◆ Be sure to think about who knows, **not** who is easy to ask
  - ◆ Again which are must haves: highly focused and relevant will be cost effective and can provide the best evidence
  
- ✦ Which other data sources might be useful

## Know your data needs and think laterally

Grasp all opportunities to collect relevant data about your initiative

- ◆ Consider 'existing' sources of information
  - ◆ Existing administrative data, e.g. data on number of website 'hits'
  - ◆ Existing annual surveys (Council survey, DHB Needs Assessments)
- ◆ Consider forming partnerships, add to existing surveys to collect data
- ◆ Does some data (less critical data) have an easy-to-collect proxy?
  - ◆ e.g. drivers that wear seatbelts - rather than all occupants
- ◆ 'Buy' key questions from an omnibus survey

***Thou shall check data collection decisions  
against your logic model***

## Analysis and reporting approach

- ◆ Analyse & report the answers to your evaluation questions

***Thou shall answer your evaluation questions  
based on analysis of all your data and  
information (triangulation)***

***Thou shall not report by 'results': school  
principals' interviews, police survey, drivers'  
survey, traffic offence data***

## Analysis and reporting approach

- ◆ Report which outcomes were achieved
- ◆ Use your logic model
  - ◆ Fundamentally a logic model is a communication tool
  - ◆ It makes explicit the intended outcomes of an initiative
  
  - ◆ Use it to structure your report
  - ◆ Mini logic diagram
  - ◆ Community Lens / Board viewpoint

## Evaluation: 'making judgements'

- ◆ You have your data, you know what it shows

***You know 'what is so'***

***But 'so what'? – is it good enough to count as success?***

***You have to make a judgement***
- ◆ Go back to the success indicators (outcomes matrix)
- ◆ Use your stakeholders/expert group/community
- ◆ Workshop your data
- ◆ Be transparent in your reporting

## Summary

- ◆ Evaluation is a process of making value judgements
- ◆ Logic model diagrams and matrices enhance delivery of quality initiatives which are more readily evaluable
- ◆ They require resources to develop, but when used well they keep everyone focused and add real value throughout the lifecycle of an initiative (and an evaluation)

Anyone who fully engages with logic model tools becomes a changed person – they get inspired, they think differently, they start applying these tools everywhere

## Question time

**Anne Dowden**  
Evaluator  
Research New Zealand  
04 462 6405  
027 500 4405

[anne.dowden@researchnz.com](mailto:anne.dowden@researchnz.com)

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