

Glossary of common terms

Accountability. Responsibility to provide evidence to stakeholders and funders about the effectiveness and efficiency of programs.

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

Benchmarks. Performance data that are used for comparative purposes.

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.

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

Logic model. Graphic representation of a program showing the intended relationships between investments and results.

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.

Outcomes. Results or changes from the program such as changes in knowledge, awareness, skills, attitudes, opinions, aspirations, motivation, behavior, practice, decision-making, policies, social action, condition, or status. Outcomes may be intended and/or 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.

Outputs. The activities, products, and participation generated through the investment of resources. Goods and services delivered.

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 collection of information about activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs used to make judgments, improve effectiveness, add to knowledge, and/or inform decisions about programs in order to improve programs and be accountable for positive and equitable results and resources invested.

Performance measurement. The ongoing monitoring and reporting of accomplishments, particularly progress towards pre-established goals.

Qualitative data. Data in a narrative or text format.

Quantitative data. Data in numerical format.

