

HANDOUT
ECDAN Systems Thinking Masterclass
Session 10: Complexity Aware Monitoring Approaches for
Adaptive and Context Specific Program Improvement
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Case Scenario:

Staff with Project Zed in Country Y are wrapping up their 5-year multi-faceted child health project and are interested in looking back at a year-long advocacy campaign that was undertaken in 2022 that focused on promoting the integration of responsive caregiving promotion into routine well-child/growth monitoring visits in 3 pilot districts in the most remote areas of the country.

Project Zed would like to document the effects of the advocacy and whether/how the intervention has impacted nutrition and developmental outcomes in children to inform scale-up efforts (for the next multi-year award).

Project Zed is well-staffed and well-resourced with local experts who have experience and expertise using and facilitating qualitative research approaches. They have availability to commit to these efforts, but time is limited as project is closing in six months.

Which complexity aware monitoring approaches could we use?

Questions to ask:

- Where are you in your program cycle?

- What questions do you need to answer?

- What resources do you have and/or need to implement?

- Others?

MATRIX FOR COMPARING COMPLEXITY-AWARE MONITORING APPROACHES

	Timing in project cycle			Questions addressed by approach					Data type		Ease of use		
Complexity-aware monitoring approach	Design & Planning / Formative Assessments	Implementation / Ongoing Monitoring	Evaluation / Interim or Final Evaluations	What outcomes might be missing?	What outcomes might yet to emerge?	How do stakeholders perceive the project or intervention?	What factors contributed to the observed outcomes?	What is happening in the wider context?	Qualitative	Quantitative	Skills & resources required*	Intensity / Level of effort**	Type of engagement†
Social Network Analysis	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	1-3	1,2	1
Causal Link Monitoring	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	2,3	1	1,2
Outcome Mapping	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	2,3	2	1,2
Sentinel Indicators	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	2	1	3
Pause & Reflect		X	X	X		X		X	X		1	1	2
Outcome Harvesting		X	X	X			X		X		2	2,3	3
Most Significant Change		X	X	X		X	X		X		1,2	2,3	1,2
Ripple Effects Mapping		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		2,3	2	1
Contribution Analysis			X				X		X	X	2	2,3	2,3

* 1 = Little/no training needed, little/no resources (easily community-led); 2 = Some training (i.e. facilitation skills, basic understanding of causal frameworks, etc.) and resources required (often junior-mid-level project staff); 3 = Training and expertise likely needed, requires significant resources (often senior-level project staff)

^{**} **1** = Able to integrate within existing staff workload and/or short-term engagement of external assistance; **2** = Moderate dedicated staff time needed and/or medium-term engagement and/or; **3** = Dedicated staff needed and/or longer-term external engagement
[†] **1** = Best as in-person engagement with group or in community setting; **2** = Easily adapted for virtual engagement with videoconferencing and related technologies; **3** = Able to complete remotely via desk reviews, email, phone calls, online surveys, etc.