

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES

**EVALUATING THE “LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH”- TOWARDS  
LEARNING-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION**

Des Gasper

October 1999

Working Paper Series No. 303

**Comments are welcome and should be addressed to the author:**  
c/o ORPAS - Institute of Social Studies - P.O. Box 29776  
2502LT The Hague - The Netherlands  
[workingpapers@iss.nl](mailto:workingpapers@iss.nl)

The Institute of Social Studies is Europe's longest-established centre of higher education and research in development studies. Post-graduate teaching programmes range from six-week diploma courses to the PhD programme. Research at ISS is fundamental in the sense of laying a scientific basis for the formulation of appropriate development policies. The academic work of ISS is disseminated in the form of books, journal articles, teaching texts, monographs and working papers. The Working Paper series provides a forum for work in progress which seeks to elicit comments and generate discussion. The series includes the research of staff, PhD participants and visiting fellows, and outstanding research papers by graduate students.

For a list of available Working Papers and how to order them see the back of this Working Paper.

For further information contact:  
ORPAS - **Institute of Social Studies** - P.O. Box 29776  
2502LT The Hague - The Netherlands - FAX: +31 70 4260799  
E-mail: [workingpapers@iss.nl](mailto:workingpapers@iss.nl)

ISSN 0921-0210

# EVALUATING THE “LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH”- TOWARDS LEARNING-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

Des Gasper\*

## SUMMARY

The Logical Framework Approach has spread enormously, including increasingly to stages of review and evaluation. Yet it has had little systematic evaluation itself. Survey of available materials indicates several recurrent failings, some less easily countered than others. In particular: focus on achievement of intended effects by intended routes makes logframes a very limiting tool in evaluation; an assumption of consensual project objectives often becomes problematic in public and inter-organizational projects; and automatic choice of an audit form of accountability as the priority in evaluations can be at the expense of evaluation as learning.

---

\* Correspondence to: D. Gasper, PO Box 29776, 2502 LT The Hague, Netherlands; [gasper@iss.nl](mailto:gasper@iss.nl)



## CONTENTS

1 A practice which lacks much theory .....	1
2. How should we evaluate an approach in planning and evaluation?.....	3
3. Warnings from past experience: ‘logic-less frames’, ‘lack-frames’, ‘lock-frames’ .....	7
4. Useful for what and when? The centrality of unintended effects for monitoring, evaluation and learning-oriented planning .....	9
An example: excessive fnecessity , and heroic assumptions in place of empirical investigation? .....	12
5. Whose project? Whose objectives? Useful for whom?.....	14
6. Towards learning-oriented development evaluation .....	16
References.....	17



## 1. A PRACTICE WHICH LACKS MUCH THEORY

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) has been one of the classic tools of aid management. It has been a practice with relatively little accompanying theory, in sharp contrast to cost-benefit analysis or even participatory appraisal. While awareness of alternative possible formats and styles within LFA has increased in the 1990s, understanding of the nature of what LFA attempts, what it achieves and where it fails has been limited, compared to the remarkable spread in its use. While increasingly advocated as a frame for systematic evaluation, LFA's own use may not have been systematically evaluated, let alone in the forms it prescribes: by reference to 1. a clear hierarchy of objectives converging on a single goal, 2. a set of preferably measurable and time-bound indicators of achievement, 3. specified, valid, checkable sources of information, and 4. assumptions concerning other impinging factors. Perhaps then LFA is not suitable for all types of evaluation? Should it not, for example, be assessed by its full range of effects, not only its stated objectives ?

This paper suggests some steps in the theorization and assessment required. It will not engage in the fine detail of LFA, for example about how many columns and rows with just what titles and definitions (see Wiggins & Shields, 1995; Gasper, 1997), but focuses on more fundamental issues. How should we proceed in assessing a planning and evaluation approach, and in giving advice and making choices on when and how to use LFA (Section 2) ? Should we look at best, normal, or worst practice? What should we make of a tool which regularly requires the defences that it needs intelligent and careful use, and that its failings are contingent not inherent ? What assumptions should we make about the skills and motivation of the average user? And what comparisons should we make with alternative approaches?

The logical framework (LF or *logframe*) can provide a convenient overview of project objectives, and encourage attention to possible higher level justifications, external conditions, and the information needs of monitoring and evaluation. The overview it gives is especially convenient for busy senior officials but could act as an aid to exchange of views between all involved in a project, if real consultation and negotiation are accepted. However, logframes are inevitably simplifications, which become dangerous when not seen as such; they can help logical thinking, not substitute for it, but enforcement of a fixed format tends to produce illogic; and they are prone to rigidifica-

tion and thus to blocking rather than aiding adaptation (Section 3). They are less helpful in monitoring and particularly in *ex post* evaluation, given the importance of unintended effects and routes (Section 4); and, as originally a tool of intra-organizational management, face further difficulties when applied to public programmes, especially when there are persistent differences in priorities amongst stakeholders (Section 5). The paper concludes with an argument for a style of evaluation that stresses learning, not only an audit version of accountability.

I will refer to each of planning, monitoring, and (*ex post*) evaluation, but with main emphasis on evaluation given the currently increasing enforcement of logframe use there too. I concentrate on the logframe itself, also known as the *Project Matrix*, since it appears as destination in all versions of LFA. The requirement now by some funding agencies that evaluations must use LFA is primarily a requirement to prepare and use a Project Matrix. The preceding elements found in some versions of LFA, such as Stakeholder Analysis and Problem Tree Analysis, are not equally required or enforced. If they happen to be done they are in all cases required to lead to an output in a pre-set standardized means-ends matrix format. The matrix tends to be seen as the project design, not merely as a visual aid that summarizes, perhaps crudely, some of its important aspects.

A logframe is a way of describing a project (or, more generally, intervention) design. A 'project' converts Inputs to Outputs, in an enclave largely but incompletely screened from external forces; and it aims for impact on higher levels of objectives, but subject there to greater external buffeting, the more so the higher the level. The matrix contains:

- 1 - a hierarchy of levels of objectives for a project/intervention; rows in the matrix correspond to different levels of objectives, which are described in general terms in the first column; in the European Commission's Project Cycle Management (PCM) version from the 1990s for example the four rows are called Activities, Results/Outputs, Purpose, and Overall Objectives. They are supposed to be logically linked in a narrative, in which achieving what is intended at one level leads us to the next higher one;



- 2 - indicators of the fulfilment of objectives, and typically also targets and sources of information, for each of the objectives levels; usually the matrix has four columns, with the second and third columns on these measurement and data issues;
- 3 - sets of assumptions, concerning conditions required for the desired project story to happen, and notably about factors external to the project. These assumptions are specified in the final column.

The levels of objectives and the linking assumptions should be coherently connected, in a '*vertical logic*'. At each level the objectives and indicators should be coherently connected too, as the '*horizontal logic*'.

The version of the matrix introduced by USAID in the early 1970s was long dominant (Coleman 1987 is one exposition). The figure below gives a typical recent matrix format, which differs slightly but not dramatically from the old USAID version.

**Figure 1:** A late 1990s version of the logical framework / project matrix  
(Social Impact, 1997)

<b>HIERARCHY OF OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b>	<b>DATA SOURCES</b>	<b>ASSUMPTIONS &amp; RISKS</b>
<b>Goal</b>  Longer-term project impact	Measurable indicators for Goal	Data sources for verifying status of Goal-level indicators	Assumptions/risks between Goal and Super-Goal
<b>Purpose</b>  Near-term project impact. The essential motivation for undertaking the project	Measurable indicators for End-of- project Impact	Data sources for verifying status of Purpose -level indicators	Assumptions/risks between Purpose and Goal
<b>Outputs</b>  The deliverables of the project	Measurable indicators for Outputs	Data sources for verifying status of Output-level indicators	Assumptions/risks between Outputs and Purpose
<b>Activities</b>  Smaller work packages needed to accomplish each Output	Budget Summary	Data sources for verifying status of budget and Activities	Assumptions/risks between Activities and Outputs

## 2. HOW SHOULD WE EVALUATE AN APPROACH IN PLANNING AND EVALUATION?

Planning and evaluation approaches appear to be often relatively casually evaluated, whether favourably or unfavourably. We need to identify and avoid standard pitfalls.

*The danger of essentialism.* A major pitfall is the wish to define an approach as essentially good or essentially bad (Gasper, 1996). We should also though beware of a formulation like: 'As with all tools the problems associated with the Log Frame may have more to do with the way the tool is used rather than inherent problems with the tool itself' (ALNAP, 1998:13). Let us instead distinguish tools easy to misuse and those hard to; logframes appear inherently easy to misuse (Gasper, 1997). Part of the proficiency in using logframes will be to know when not to use them, or when to supplement them with other methods. Problematic methods that can be supplemented to counter their weaknesses are preferable of course to ones which cannot be remedied.

No single answer is safe for the question 'Is LFA suitable for planning and evaluation of development projects?'. There are too many varied cases and factors: types of environment, types and phases of planning/evaluation and of LFA. I argue for example in Section 3 that the value of LFA declines as we move from project design through to post-implementation evaluation. A range of cases calls for a range of advice. Even a more specific question like 'Is LFA suitable for evaluation of emergency assistance?' (Gasper, 1998) is too broad, like many questions in aid policy that reflect an appetite for generalizations in metropolitan centres of power. If we discern a central tendency in the range of case-specific answers about suitability, a generalized conclusion that ignores case-specific variations could still be dangerous.

*Which data?* We now have thirty years experience with LFA, and over fifteen years with its more complex German offspring ZOPP. Manuals are written to inspire confidence, and they do not mention the ups-and-downs of these methods in many organizations, including in their parents, USAID and GTZ. Should we look only at best practice, or also at normal practice and worst practice? The answer must be all of them. Best practice is instructive, but not always attainable; worst practice is instructive, and not always inevitable; normal practice too is instructive, about normal conditions, but certainly can often be improved.

Whose views are taken as data? The few semi-formal evaluations available of LFA use seem to have concentrated on the views of more senior officials in funding agencies (see e.g. Cracknell & Rednall, 1986). Often those required to prepare LFs, especially on the recipient country side, have not been asked their views on the planning

and evaluation methods that higher levels or donors consider good for them. Views of lower level staff, especially in intermediary agencies, when collected seem on average less favourable (see e.g. the study by Wallace et al., 1997). Views of staff in recipient country agencies and beneficiary organizations appear never to have been systematically collected (Wallace et al. now seek to remedy this.) The result is probably an optimistic bias in past evaluations. The more cautious remarks that follow are based on review of a scattered literature (see Gasper, 1997), and correspondence and discussions over several years.

*Which criteria? Which comparisons?* The criterion ‘something [good] is better than nothing’ is valid, but we need to examine what is compared with what. For some purposes there are relevant alternatives, not nothing. And when assessing methods like LFA, ZOPP and PCM we must consider how they have worked in practice, not only in the easiest or best-resourced cases, let alone just how they look in the manuals. We need to compare *along the rows* in figure 2, looking at performance under the same types of conditions, e.g. to compare case 1 with case 4. We should not compare e.g. case 1 with case 5, or case 3 with case 4.

**Figure 2:** What should be compared with what?

	<i>Without the method</i>	<i>With the method (version/style A)</i>	<i>With the method (version/style B)</i>
In the real/present world	Case 1	Case 4	Case 7
In an ideal world for the method	Case 2	Case 5	Case 8
In an ideal world for an alternative method	Case 3	Case 6	Case 9

*Which components of LFA? Which styles of LFA?* LFA is a composite with several elements, which have different potentials and deserve separate evaluation (Gasper, 1997). Further, how the composite is used makes an enormous difference, giving us in effect different versions of the method; for example, LFA can be used as (i) a tool of analysis, able to adopt various formats, and treated as one tool amongst many, with its own acknowledged limitations, or as (ii) an obligatory and fixed format, seen as the pre-

dominant tool in project design and evaluation. Different versions require different evaluations.

*For which types of environment? For which types of programme?* In assessing an approach in planning and evaluation we must consider its views about the nature of programmes and policies and about what they are trying to influence, what makes them successful, what are key factors in change--and thus what are key aspects to look at. Shadish et al. (1991) call this an evaluation approach's 'Theory of social programming'. Typically, evaluation is influenced by assumptions about purposive change which derive from and reflect particular sectors, periods and countries, and which require checking per case. LFA reflects Northern business and logistics planning of the 1960s, with assumptions of relatively well-understood and controllable change, engineered via a 'project' within, or largely controlled by, a single organization. It centres attention on outputs and service delivery, and on the achievement of intended effects by intended routes. In contrast, some other approaches stress: the range of actors and factors, the shortage of predictive power and control in inter-organizational development projects in the South, and the prime importance of identifying unintended effects (e.g. Dietz & Pfund, 1988, Honadle & Cooper, 1989; Fowler, 1997). They may go on to stress the key roles in *development* processes, and hence the priority status as evaluation foci, of impacts on capacity, adaptability and sustainability, including impacts on attitudes, skills, confidence, and modes of working, and the strengthening of organizations and institutions (e.g. Richards, 1985; Honadle & Cooper, 1990; Marsden & Oakley, 1990; Padaki, 1995).

*Which styles of evaluation and of conclusions? What type of audience?* Depending on the levels of sophistication and motivation of an audience, conclusions can be reported as simplified instructions or purely as advice for those on the spot to use in conjunction with their own information and insights. For evaluating LFA I incline to a learning orientation, identifying issues rather than assigning scores, and similarly to a style of providing *advice* on methods rather than attempting specification of rule-books.

### 3. WARNINGS FROM PAST EXPERIENCE: 'LOGIC-LESS FRAMES', 'LACK-FRAMES', 'LOCK-FRAMES'

The LF has a variety of potentials. It can further rigidify planning and evaluation approaches that fixate on shorter-term outputs; yet in some other versions and styles of use--under other conditions concerning power relations, development ideologies and available skills--it might help to focus strategic thinking and capacity-building learning-process approaches. It can help planners to consider more carefully their positive and normative theories of change; but unsupplemented it will not. It can be used as one aid in discussion and conceptualization; or treated as a required blueprint that dictates their outcome, and as an organizational charter and tool for control. Its balance of advantages versus disadvantages (and for whom) will depend on the nature of the problem faced and the styles (and locations) of the programme actors.

Four of its recurrent failings have been: 'logic-less frames', where only an illusion of logic is provided; 'jamming' of too much into one diagram; 'lack-frames', which omit vital aspects of a project; and 'lock-frames', whereby programme learning and adaptation are blocked.

First, the LF is very often used only because external funders demand it, and so is then invented after a project has been designed, rather than used to guide the design by promoting logical thinking about the links from one level to the next higher one and about the role of external factors in affecting these connections. We can name this case the '*logic-less frame*', where a preexisting logframe format is used to accommodate a preexisting design, rather than to help create a logical design in an appropriate format. The failing can be counteracted; a logframe format can be used from an early stage in project design, with its series of means-ends links derived from a systematic prior cause-effect analysis, as specified in ZOPP and PCM.

A related difficulty always encountered with LFA has been how to distinguish, and hence apply, the terms it uses for different levels in the hierarchy of objectives. Seeking clarity after twentyfive years of LFA, its PCM descendant adopts a clear principle: 'the Project Purpose... is, without exception, to be conceived as the creation of sustainable benefits for the target group' (Eggers, 1998). This raises the danger of attempting to 'jam' too much into a four-level diagram. Two inter-level links in a project are supposed to take us already to sustainable benefits. Yet the logframe contains no

clear time dimension. '*Jamming*' can cause illogic and is part of a problem of oversimplification.

Thirdly then, the LF is frequently too simple, even for simple project designs. Not everything important can be captured in a one to three pages, four or five level diagram. Eggers and I used the term '*lack-frame*' for when omissions are major (Gasper, 1997). Many LFA users have underestimated that a 'frame' includes some things and leaves others out, and that a 'frame-work' is to help the required work not substitute for it.

Fourthly, after an LF has been prepared, it tends to be fixed and not updated, and thus becomes a '*lock-frame*' (Gasper, 1997). Ironically this seems more likely the more care has gone into an LF and the more people have been consulted (Basil Cracknell, personal communication). In principle, this failing can also be counteracted, if staff are permitted, willing and able to do the extra work of updating. Eggers (1998) warns therefore against falling 'back into the routine of the logframe tradition'. He trusts that PCM is fundamentally different, due to a 'mutual learning philosophy, the participatory approach and the positive debating culture' (1998:72).

Why has the logframe tradition lacked those features? Why have logframes typically been used only where external funders demand them? Why do these simple descriptions become made compulsory, including now for evaluation and not only monitoring, *and* treated not simply as aids in thinking but as authoritative statements of approved project structure? Why do logframes become fixed/locked? One typical response is that there has not been enough training. A fuller analysis indicates stronger underlying causes.

Logframes are often only used when demanded by an external authority because they require a high degree of consensus about what is feasible and valuable. When this consensus is missing then only the pressure of a dominant authority, the controller of funds, may lead to it being declared. But without first a shared analysis of a situation the result is likely to be an illogical project matrix. Secondly, distant busy funders and supervisors typically prefer a clearcut, simple, description of a project. They consider it something definite against which recipients of public (or foreign) resources can be held accountable. But the result is liable to be a lack-frame. Distance and low trust contribute too towards the lock-frame syndrome, because of fear of loss of accountability if

receivers are allowed to modify what was earlier agreed. Also likely to remain unchanged later are illogical matrices prepared only as a formality.

One suggestion to counteract stasis and the overweighting of simplified sketches is that logframes should be dated and signed by those who wrote or approved them.<sup>1</sup> This raises a question to which we will return--whose project is it? More generally, logical frameworks when used must be seen as frames to help logical work. They cannot substitute for that work, and nor can the resulting description be a full picture of even all important aspects of a project. Besides signing and dating, every logframe should be accompanied by a note on what it has excluded and simplified.

#### 4. USEFUL FOR WHAT AND WHEN? THE CENTRALITY OF UNINTENDED EFFECTS FOR MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING-ORIENTED PLANNING

LFA has different relevance in different phases:

- 1 - *planning and design*; here it serves as an important if limited tool in seeking clarity, consistency, and realism;
- 2 - *screening and appraisal*; while relevant, especially for preliminary screening of alternatives, LFA is a relatively weak tool for appraisal and selection; e.g. it does not examine possible unintended effects or directly compare alternatives;
- 3 - *monitoring*; LFs are relevant as monitoring tools, but a danger exists that they encourage too narrow a focus, looking only at expected effects;
- 4 - *ex post (including mid-term) evaluation*; here LFs' value is less than in planning or even monitoring, since narrow focus becomes yet more dangerous.

To be more precise, *within* evaluation we can note three major types of evaluation focus (Patton, 1997; 'review' is a more accurate term than 'evaluation', since none of the types is exclusively or necessarily on ranking in terms of good/bad). One is clarification and assessment of the intervention's theory of action, its *design* and logic; which, as in Wholey's procedure of 'Evaluability Assessment', is equivalent to preparing a logframe when it is absent, deficient or outdated; second is description, understanding, and assessment of programme *processes*; third is identification and assessment of proj

---

<sup>1</sup> By John Cameron et al. at the conference on Monitoring and Evaluation, School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia, August 1998.

ect/programme *effects*. Two further types of review study where LF may add little, are: clarifying or rethinking people's needs and assets; and studies on specific operational queries presented by managers.

Logframes can be central in a design study, whereas while they help to provide questions for studies of processes or effects they are relatively weak tools there. They themselves are not instruments of identification, measurement and interpretation of effects; and they give a predetermined focus which neglects major unintended processes and effects. Use of LFA in *ex post* evaluation is a form of Goal-Based Evaluation, in Michael Scriven's terms (e.g. Scriven, 1991), and looks mostly at *desired intended effects*. Further, LFA focuses on the degree of fulfilment of the pre-set objectives at a *series* of levels: thus it considers the achievement of intended effects *in intended ways*. This routine-monitoring orientation is too narrow for an effects evaluation, since unforeseen routes and unintended impacts are typically of great importance (see e.g. Hirschman, 1967; Gasper, 1986; de Valk & Sibanda, 1986; Thomas & Grindle, 1990).<sup>2</sup>

Goal-Based Evaluation--the doctrine that one should and even must evaluate a project or policy in terms of its stated goals and objectives--has dominated much evaluation theory and practice. Typically the objectives stated at the outset are prioritized, reflecting one interpretation of accountability. Economists' cost-benefit analysis has always been heretical here: it evaluates projects and policies in terms of actual effects, regardless of stated objectives. Following a similar line, Howard Richards (1985:32) offered a preliminary classification of types of effect.

TYPES OF EFFECT	GOOD	BAD
EXPECTED	Objectives achieved	Bad objectives achieved
UNEXPECTED	Unexpected benefits	Unexpected harm

---

<sup>2</sup> As one well-documented example out of thousands, take Cohen (1987)'s study of the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit in Ethiopia, 1967-86 (Gasper, 1989). In the pre-Revolution period to 1974 the main stated programme objective was higher agricultural output by tenants and small farmers. The set targets were fulfilled. Unforeseen effects were however at least as important: 1. large farmers adopted the innovations too, and sooner, which affected local power balances and dynamics; 2. landlords raised rents greatly, and moved to evict tenants and to mechanize; 3. increased local government revenues were mainly spent to benefit the better-off. The main defences offered for the project, given these trends, concerned effects hard to measure or include in a simple logframe narrative: local capacity building amongst small farmers and in government; learning about organizational methods; and possible influence on national policies.



The doctrine of preordinate objectives invites us to focus on the upper left-hand corner in the diagram [good expected effects], and even there it tempts us to over-simplify, because it calls for a focus on stated objectives, whereas real objectives are likely to be unstated. It is irresponsible because it judges the worth of a thing on the basis of an arbitrary subset of its effects. Robert Stake has affixed the label "responsive evaluation" to studies that attribute no special importance to preordinate objectives, but instead estimate the value of the benefits a program has actually produced. (Richards, 1985:32)

Division of Expected Effects into Stated and Unstated/Tacit, as Richards suggests, gives the following. Stated Expected Good Effects are the official objectives; Stated Expected Bad Effects are the officially predicted or recorded costs, which are typically *understated*; Tacitly Expected Good Effects are not usually an important category, unlike *all* the following: Unexpected Good Effects, Unexpected Bad Effects, and Tacitly Expected Bad Effects. We could also use other terms--'Desired/Undesired' are more subtle than 'Good/Bad'; and Unintended is a broader category than Unexpected since all unexpected effects are unintended but so are some expected ones.

We should ask: expected, intended, or desired by whom? Chen (1990)'s careful treatment of Expected Unintended Effects contrasts those effects expected at the start of the programme and those when designing the review study; and implicitly distinguishes those expected by 1. managers, 2. other stakeholders (but they are often ignored), and 3. social scientists. He still neglects Unexpected Unintended Effects and thus leans too much towards pre-set data collection in evaluation.

If LFs were just one tool used amongst others in an evaluation, their restrictive programme goal-based approach would matter less. Both the core rationales for doing *ex post* evaluations militate against exclusive reliance on LFA. The first rationale--the need for ongoing learning because we lack perfect advance knowledge or full control, so that events develop in unforeseen ways--implies the inadequacy of a focus only on intended effects. The second core rationale--the demand for reporting and checking because of the presence of various groups with different interests and viewpoints and low trust between groups--implies limits to reports stated in terms of 'the project's' objectives. Yet, to take a not untypical recent example, the terms of reference for even a major multi-project evaluation of support to institution-building for democracy and human rights insisted on Logical Framework analysis as format.

So, LFA seems to downgrade the achievement of higher objectives by unforeseen routes, and the achievement of unintended effects, both good and bad. To adopt

the logframe as a central tool in effects and impact evaluations assumes that we had high powers of foresight, so that neither unforeseen routes nor unintended effects are important; or that a narrow private perspective is taken on what are significant effects, rather than a broad public concern. Neglect of unintended effects such as externalities (impacts on groups other than the targets) could fit a single-mindedly self-concerned organization -- but not, for example, democracy and human rights projects or emergency assistance (Gasper, 1998). How could one evaluate humanitarian relief in civil war situations without attention to how far it has been captured and used by warring parties, an unintended but often major effect ?

**An example: excessive faith in the necessity of intended means, and heroic assumptions in place of empirical investigation?**

Consider the model example provided for the logframe-based evaluation of human rights projects: a project design to reduce crime and human rights abuse, by improved local police work. One can visualize such a project in say Central America or South Africa. Here is the hierarchy of objectives.

**Figure 3: Project vision - justice and rule-of-law in a local police district**

ACTIVITY	OUTPUT	PROJECT PURPOSE A	PROJECT PURPOSE B	IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE	LONGER-TERM OBJECTIVE
Management training for local police ⇒	Better police management ⇒ knowledge	Change of management ⇒ attitudes	Improved police ⇒ management	Effective and fair police ⇒ services	Reduced local crime & human rights abuse

The documents that accompanied the Terms of Reference offered advice. Besides attending only to intended routes and effects, they showed excessive faith in the efficacy of the intended means.

'Failure at one point in the logframe [e.g. 1. change of attitudes or 2. change of management practices to a specified kind] implies that expected results beyond this point, in this case more effective police services and reduced local crime and human rights abuse, no longer can be expected, at least not as a result of the training'. Only 'expected results' are looked for, and the documents suggest the evaluation can be simplified if some links in the intended means-end chain fail: we do not then need to look at the higher levels. But the project in fact does not strictly require attitude change:

sometimes (consider perhaps white South African policemen) practices can change even though attitudes do not (yet). Similarly, the pre-specified kind of management practices might not be necessary, even if they were (near) sufficient, if some other kind of management could achieve the intended results. And training might have indirect helpful effects via another route than specified, e.g. via the public. It might improve other people's opinions of the police; or provide materials that become useful in community organizations and help them to discipline and complement police work. The focus on intended routes brings an excessively restricted evaluation study.

Logframe language can divert attention from actual effects in another way. The worked example argues that we can avoid considering whether [1] crime and HR abuse have actually declined as a result of the project, if we can see that the project has contributed to achievement of [2] 'effective and fair police services', since the 'positive relation [from 2 to 1] is so self evident that it need not be evaluated in depth, or at all' (project documents). The positive relation between the two has in fact been built in by definition, for 'effective police services' means those which lead to desired results. A tautology does not remove the need for evaluation; we must check whether the types of services planned for the project actually contribute to desired results.

The same argument applies for the preceding level (Project purpose b.): 'improved police management' must be identified as management which leads to effective services and better results. We cannot in advance presume that, say, American or Japanese management practice represents an improvement for South Africa or Guatemala. We have to check whether the types of management promoted by the project actually help: we must operationally specify the management practices and police services which the project officially intended to promote, and those it actually did promote and strengthen; and then empirically consider their results.

Rather than reduce the degree of attention to real effects, by use of heroic *assumptions* about which types of service are effective (the very question for which we need an evaluation study), we should apply the helpful if imperfect methods that exist for looking more *empirically* at effects (see e.g. Chambers, 1997; Dietz & Pfund, 1988; Honadle & Cooper, 1990; Padaki, 1995, Richards, 1985). Dietz & Pfund, for example, discuss the simple workable approach of structured panel discussions that identify ma-

jor types of actual effect and problem, as a basis for designing any subsequent more elaborate evaluation.

## 5. WHOSE PROJECT? WHOSE OBJECTIVES? USEFUL FOR WHOM?

In projects for promotion of democracy and human rights it is likely that stakeholders will partly disagree on intentions, especially when we come to operational meanings and priorities. If widespread detailed consensus on ends and means already existed, such that fully agreed logical frameworks could be defined, there would have been less need for promotion of democracy and human rights. Further, part of the case for democracy is that views about ends and means differ and that there should be both space and capacity for free expression of these views and for taking them into account. While we hope that exchange of views will produce some convergence and/or compromise, democracy centres on consensus on procedures (e.g. majority vote) rather than consensus on content.

The logframe emerged from corporate and military internal planning contexts marked by strong central authority and control around a relatively clear set of goals, indeed a dominant single objective: financial profit or military victory or survival. LFA attempts to impose the same sort of clarity and order on a public project. This frequently faces serious problems. '...defining the target group can be difficult, especially if conflicting interests are involved, with some groups perhaps even affected detrimentally by the project', acknowledges Eggers (1998). Even in the sort of industry that might equally fit in either the State sector or private profit-making sector, reasons for having it in the State sector include acceptance of a wider range of objectives than financial profit and a wider range of legitimate stakeholders than enterprise managers and shareholders. When we look beyond those sorts of 'public enterprise' parastatals, to other public projects, whether run by government or NGOs or a combination, there may be no single centre of authority and, in practice, quite often no clear agreed objective. Instead there are many different actors--from central government, local government, private firms, funders, intermediary NGOs, community based organizations, and families. There is no guarantee that a single vision of the project is shared. NGOs for example are not merely cheap delivery channels to implement someone else's vision, but achieve their cheapness precisely through the motivation from having their *own* vision,

values and beliefs. Multiple visions encourage broader experimentation. For multi-agency programmes one may have to specify and compare multiple frameworks.<sup>3</sup> In fact, while *within* private firms an army-style unified authority might be possible, for their *external* relations firms operate in markets. Markets are systems which allow the cooperation of different agents who do *not* have to agree on objectives.

We need to think about systems for planning and evaluation of *public* projects, that do not always assume that we must have very extensive agreement on objectives and that we can readily create it through a workshop or two. Learning processes also become inhibited if differences in views between stakeholders are treated lightly and concealed under a logframe.

Logframes have in the past represented a style of planning and evaluation that assumes high authority plus high levels of foresight; accountability considerations then predominate in *ex post* evaluation above learning considerations. The classic survey of evaluation theory by Shadish et al. (1991) identifies these assumptions in the American domestic equivalent of LFA, 'evaluability assessment'. This is a well-established procedure to plan monitoring work and routine, accountability-oriented, mid-term and even end-of-project reporting. It is not a sufficient basis for framing learning-oriented studies of effects. Wholey's criterion of 'evaluability' is, in effect, that we can write a clear, coherent and relevant logframe for the project (e.g. Wholey, 1983); if one cannot then the project is deemed 'non-manageable' and 'non-evaluable'. This fits a management approach of close specification and control. Much subsequent work queries these conceptions, not least for institution-building projects in developing countries (e.g. Marsden & Oakley, 1990; Marsden, Oakley & Pratt, 1994; Padaki, 1995). Shadish et al. characterize Wholey's work as a social engineering approach--it believes in the feasibility of authoritative evaluations which will be directly and strongly influential in reforming the projects studied--with an implicit orientation to work in and for a central government. The logframe as wielded by many foreign aid agencies reflects a similar philosophy. Alternative stances on choice of client (central power holders, or others)

---

<sup>3</sup> Mosse warns however: 'To be sure, project planning involves the creation of simplified worlds. But, to criticize planning on this account is to miss the point that this is precisely what they are (implicitly rather than explicitly) intended to be... a myth-making process [in] order to accomodate different interests and agendas' (1998:5).

and on the expected type of use of a study (direct programme control, or more indirect education and rethinking) will lead to alternative types of evaluation work.

## 6. TOWARDS LEARNING-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

Choice of methods in evaluation should be driven by an *understanding* of the nature of what is evaluated, and by *choices* about broad approach, questions and focus; rather than having evaluations start from choice of methods, however prestigious those are. Automatic resort in retrospective evaluation to a universal logframe format contravenes this.

One key choice concerns purposes, the balance between accountability and learning in designing retrospective evaluations. The importance of learning (whether for improvement of the current project or longer-term use) reflects the importance of unintended effects and routes. The following table gives suggestions from a 1998 Canberra workshop (Apthorpe & Nevile eds., 1998).

**Figure 4:** Accountability- or learning-oriented evaluation in simple or complex situations

TYPES OF EVALUATION SITUATION	ACCOUNTABILITY-ORIENTED (probably to be done by independents)	LEARNING-ORIENTED (probably to be done by stakeholders, with facilitators)
(More) SIMPLE	[1] Evaluation is feasible	[2] Feasible (given various conditions)
COMPLEX (more and more varied people, projects, agencies, etc.)	[3] Very difficult, both intellectually and politically, to identify and attribute effects, especially across many different actors	[4] Relevant and needed, but requires high quality and quantity of study resources (e.g. for investigative and illuminative narrative accounts)

LFA is an approach originating from quadrant [1]: accountability oriented studies in relatively simple conditions (e.g. a parastatal plantation). It becomes problematic even for accountability purposes in more complex, quadrant [3], circumstances. Via deepened problem-tree analysis and assumptions analysis it can help in quadrant [2], for learning in more simple conditions, provided the accountability-oriented apparatus of indicators and targets is not overweighted. This might apply also for quadrant [4], for learning in more complex situations, but only if there is very sensitive handling and subject to having lesser expectations about the adequacy or sufficiency of any logframe.

The remarkable rise of LFA in *ex post* evaluation can be seen as part of, in the words of a Professor of Accounting at the London School of Economics, 'the audit explosion... the spread of a distinct mentality of administrative control' and bureaucratized

public checking (Power, 1997:288). '...environments are made auditable, structured to the need to be monitored ex post' (p.292), for example by a focus on measurable indicators. The priority sometimes given to 'horizontal logic' over 'vertical logic' in logframing reflects a politically driven need to show the symbols of accountability.

Power argues that: 'notwithstanding the dominance of audits there are other ways of achieving accountability...

STYLE A [for audit]	STYLE B
Quantitative	Qualitative
Single Measure	Multiple Measures
External Agencies	Internal Agencies
Long Distance Methods	Local Methods
Low Trust	High Trust
Discipline	Autonomy
Ex Post Control	Real Time Control
Private Experts	Public Dialogue

The audit explosion has involved an overwhelming priority for style A' (Power, 1997:292), which is the style of the logframe. But gains from style A are much more likely if combined with elements of style B, which is prominent in for example Japanese management. For:

...it is not control, but trust, that can substitute for uncertainty. Trusted agencies will be supported to work in highly uncertain environments, and this trust will forgive also uncertainties in their own behaviour. Their logic of occasionally saying 'We do not know yet what to do because we do not yet know the situation' will be echoed by those who trust them with 'They do not know for good reason'. (Benini, 1997:351)

In conclusion, LFA should be used with care, and sometimes not at all. LFs can usefully encourage thinking about purposes, assumptions and data, but become less helpful as we move from planning to monitoring to evaluation. They can become seriously limiting in evaluation when unintended effects and routes are important, when programme-context interactions are complex and the efficacy of intended means is not well understood in advance, and if there are major differences in priorities amongst stakeholders -- situations which may be the rule rather than the exception.

## REFERENCES

ALNAP, 1998. Record of Third Meeting, Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance. London: Overseas Development Institute.

- Apthorpe, R., & Nevile, A., eds., 1998. *Managing Emergency Humanitarian Aid Evaluation:: lessons from experience. Report from the Workshop on Evaluations of Emergency Relief*, Canberra, March 13-16, 1998. Evaluation no.12, Canberra: Australian Agency for International Development.
- Benini, A.A., 1997. Uncertainty and Information Flows in Humanitarian Agencies. *Disasters*, 21(4), 335-53.
- Chambers, R., 1997. *Whose Reality Counts?* London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Chen, H-T., 1990. *Theory-Based Evaluation*. Newbury Park, Sage.
- Cohen, J.M., 1987, *Integrated Rural Development*, Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.
- Coleman, G., 1987. Logical framework approach to the monitoring and evaluation of agricultural and rural development projects. *Project Appraisal*, 2(4), 251-259.
- Cracknell, B., & Rednall, J., 1986. *Defining objectives and measuring performance in aid projects and programmes*, Report EV 384, Evaluation Department, London: Overseas Development Administration.
- Dietz, T., & Pfund, A., 1988. An Impact Identification Method for Development Project Evaluation. *Policy Studies Journal*, 8(1), 137-45.
- Eggers, H., 1998. Project Cycle Management Revisited. *The Courier* (Brussels: European Commission), no.169, May-June 1998, 69-72.
- Fowler, A., 1997. *Striking a Balance*, London: Earthscan.
- Gasper, D., 1986: Programme appraisal and evaluation: the Hiding Hand and other stories. *Public Administration and Development*, vol.6, 467-474.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1989. Review of: Cohen, J.M., 1987; in *Review of Rural & Urban Planning in Southern & Eastern Africa*, 1/1989, 111-8.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1996. Essentialism in and about Development Discourse. *European Journal of Development Research*, 8(1), 149-176.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1997, 'Logical Frameworks': A Critical Assessment. Working Paper no.278, The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.



- Gaspar, D., 1998: The logical framework approach: notes towards applications to relief evaluations, pp.42-53 in R. Apthorpe (ed.), 1998. *Towards Emergency Humanitarian Aid Evaluation*. National Centre for Development Studies, Canberra: Australian National University.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1999, "Drawing a Line" - ethical and political strategies in complex emergency assistance', *European J. of Development Research*, 11(2).
- Hirschman, A., 1967. *Development Projects Observed*. Washington: Brookings.
- Honadle, G., & Cooper, L., 1989. Beyond Coordination and Control: an interorganizational approach. *World Development*, 17(10), 1531-41.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1990. Closing the Loops: Workshop Approaches to Evaluating Development Projects. Pp.185-202 in *Methods for Social Analysis in Developing Countries*, eds. K. Finsterbusch et al. Westview Press.
- Marsden, D., & Oakley, P., 1990. *Evaluating Social Development Projects*, Oxford: Oxfam.
- Marsden, D., Oakley, P., Pratt, B., 1994. *Measuring the Process: Guidelines for Evaluating Social Development*. Oxford: INTRAC.
- Mosse, D., 1998. The Making and Marketing of Participatory Development: A Sceptical Note. Paper to EIDOS conference, SOAS, University of London, June 1998.
- Padaki, V., (ed.), 1995. *Development Intervention and Programme Evaluation - concepts and cases*, New Delhi: Sage.
- Patton, M.Q., 1997. *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, 3rd edition. Sage.
- Power, M., 1997. The Audit Explosion. Pp.286-93 in *Life After Politics*, ed. G. Mulgan, London: Fontana.
- Richards, H., 1985. *The Evaluation of Cultural Action*. London: Macmillan.
- Scriven, M., 1991. *Evaluation Thesaurus*, 4th edition. Sage.
- Shadish, W., Cook, T., & Leviton, L., 1991. *Foundations of Program Evaluation: theories of practice*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.
- Social Impact, 1997. *Managing the Project Cycle*. Takoma Park, MD: Social Impact.
- Thomas, J.W., & Grindle, M., 1990. After the Decision: Implementing Policy Reforms in Developing Countries. *World Development*, 18(8), 1163-81.
- Valk, P. de & Sibanda, B., 1986. About Pigs?: decisions, outcomes and project planning, *Public Administration & Development*, 6(4), 411-23.

- Wallace, T., Crowther, S., Shepherd, A., 1997. *Standardising Development: Influences on UK NGOs' Policies and Procedures*. Oxford: WorldView Publishing.
- Wholey, J., 1983. *Evaluation and Effective Public Management*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
- Wiggins, S., & Shields, D., 1995. Clarifying the Logical Framework. *Project Appraisal*, 10(1), 2-12.