

Outputs vs. Outcomes

Module 6
Logic Models Simplified

Learning Objectives

- Define and differentiate between outputs and outcomes
- Develop measurable and realistic outputs and outcomes for nonprofit programs
- Identify common pitfalls when reporting outputs vs. outcomes in grant applications
- Apply best practices to align outputs and outcomes with funder expectations

Understanding Outputs

- Outputs are the direct, measurable products or services delivered by a program
- Outputs indicate program activity but do not reflect long-term impact

Examples

- Number of food boxes distributed per month
- Number of families who attended a nutrition workshop
- Number of community partners engaged in food distribution

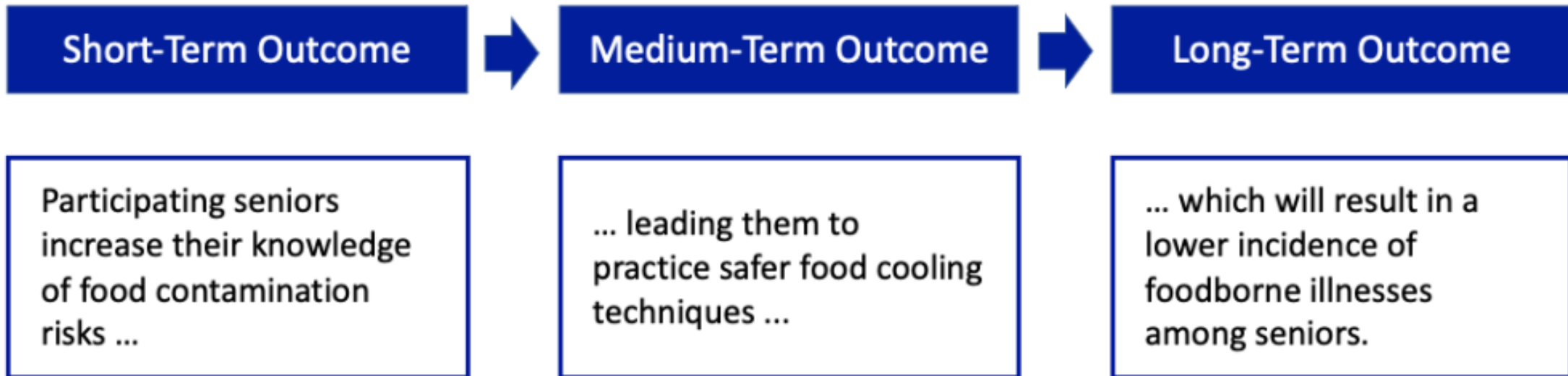
Understanding Understanding Outcomes in Logic Models

- Outcomes measure the changes that result from your work
- Focus on knowledge, behavior, conditions, or policy changes
- Outcomes are harder to measure but crucial for funder confidence and program evaluation
- Reflect the “so what?” behind your work



Types of Outcomes

- Short-Term: Immediate changes in knowledge, skills, or behaviors
- Intermediate: Changes in actions or decision-making
- Long-Term: Systemic or sustainable improvements



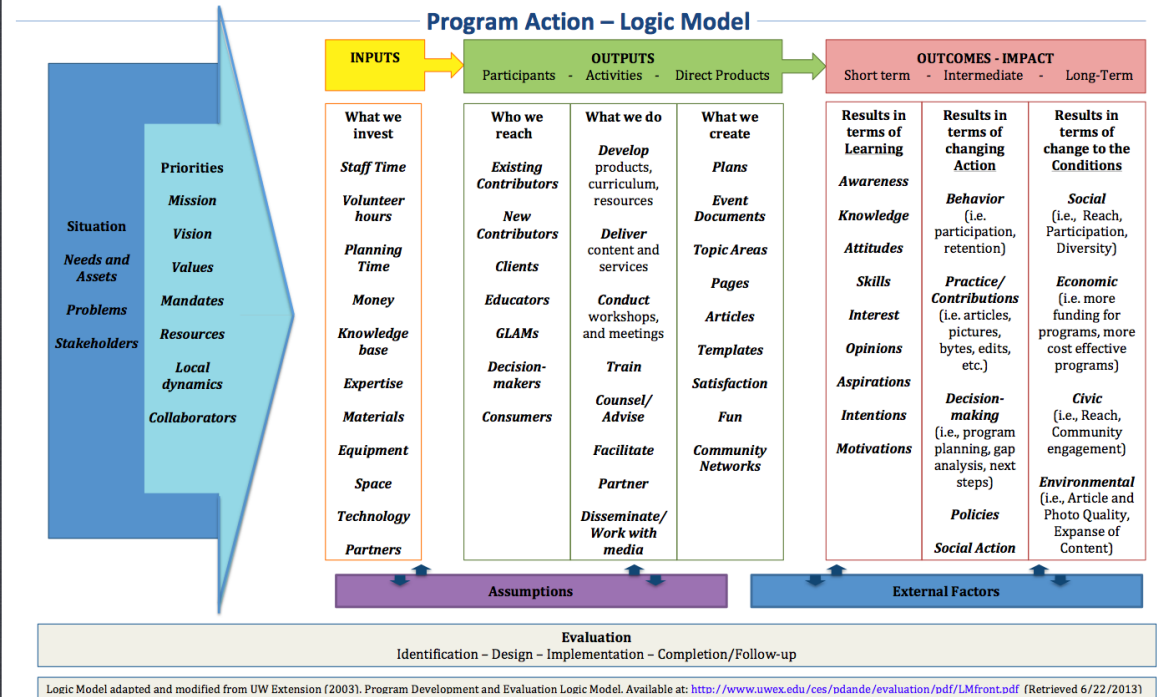
Outputs vs. Outcomes

Outputs (What We Did)	Outcomes (Why It Matters)
1,000 food boxes distributed	80% of families report improved food security
200 individuals attended financial literacy workshops	60% of attendees opened savings accounts within six months
500 students received free meals at afterschool programs	75% of students showed improved academic performance due to better nutrition



Common Pitfalls in Grant Applications

- Over-reporting outputs while ignoring outcomes
- Using vague or immeasurable language for outcomes
- Failing to collect baseline data to show progress
- Misalignment between stated outcomes and funder priorities
- Using terms like “empower” or “improve” without defining what that means



Best Practices for Aligning Outputs and Outcomes

- Start with the End in Mind
- Define the ultimate goal and work backward to ensure activities lead to meaningful change
- Use SMART Outcomes
- Ensure outcomes are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
- Collect Qualitative & Quantitative Data
- Numbers are important, but so are participant stories and testimonials
- Tie Outcomes to Funders' Priorities
- Show how your outcomes align with grantmaker objectives

Key Takeaways & Next Steps

- SMART outcomes and strong data collection lead to successful grant proposals
- Funders prioritize impact over activity
- Outputs measure what you do; outcomes measure why it matters
- Clear and measurable outcomes strengthen grant applications