Uwezo Uganda Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework

December 2024

Content:

I.   Introduction & Objectives

The proposed Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework for Uwezo Uganda aims to build reflective and evaluative practice into our work of conducting assessments and research, engagement and influencing, to support decision making and demonstrate progress and is designed to help monitor and evaluate the intended results from Uwezo Uganda's new Strategy 2025-2028. The overall purpose of this MEL framework is for Uwezo to become a **principal-focused adaptive initiative** that influences the education system. Uwezo Uganda has benefited from the guidance of its partners, including board members, technical advisors, regional and global counterparts and district partners in the development of the new strategy and accompanying MEL framework.
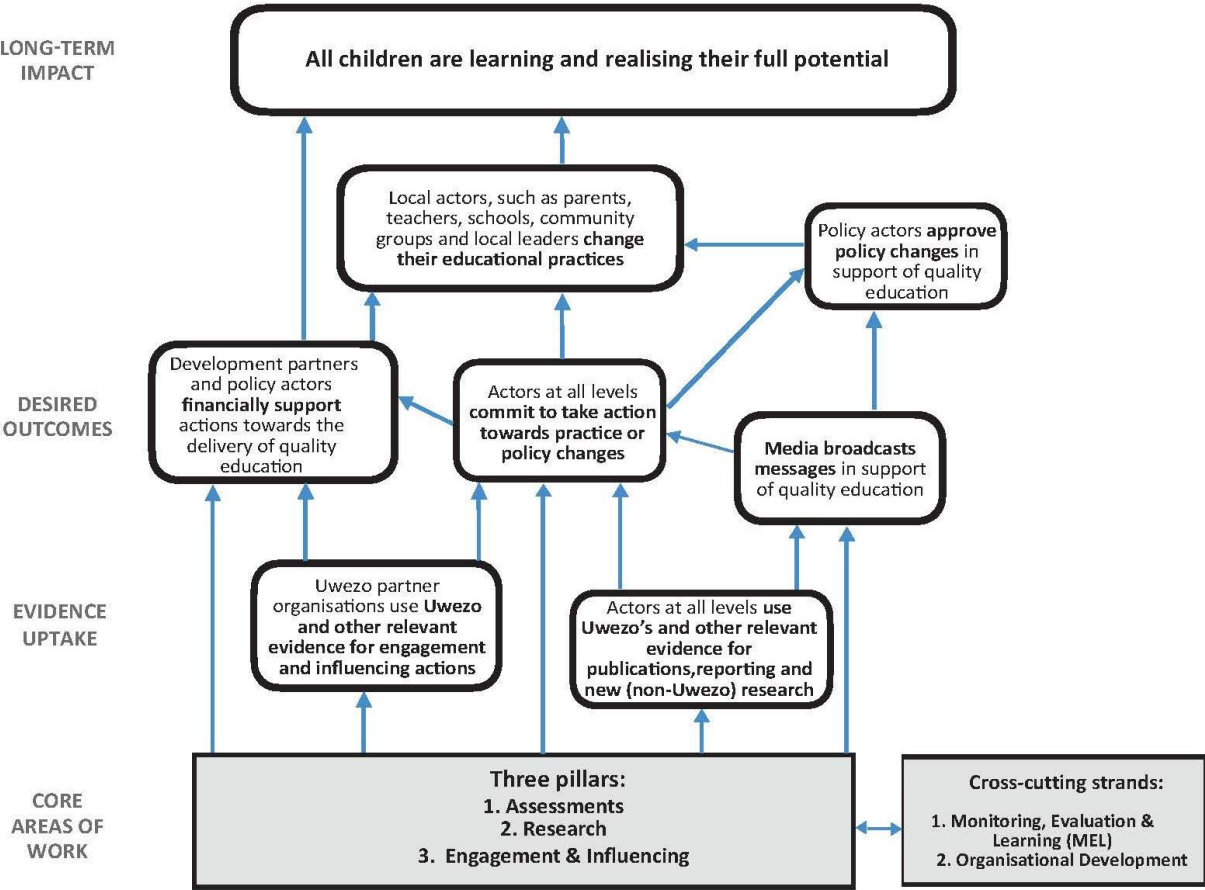
After the endorsement of the board of Uwezo Uganda of the new strategy (2025-2028), this MEL framework will bring structure to Uwezo Uganda's M&E efforts by moving away from ad-hoc attempts to monitor indicators, by developing and committing to a multi-year plan and strengthening the link between the monitoring and evaluation, learning, adaptation and decision-making.

The Uwezo Uganda Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework provides an interconnected strategy for:
(a) assessing and reporting early, intermediate and ultimate outcomes and adherence to shared principles;
(b) Research uptake and media monitoring, and reporting outputs;
(c) Linking MEL with operational and strategic decision-making in a learning and adaptation cycle;
(d) preparing the ground for incidental deepening learning studies.

This MEL framework is accompanied by concrete tools, such as an Outcome Harvesting Guideline and After-Action Review tool.

II.   Uwezo Uganda's Theory of Change

LONG-TERM IMPACT

All children are learning and realising their full potential

Local actors, such as parents, teachers, schools, community groups and local leaders **change their educational practices**

Policy actors **approve policy changes** in support of quality education

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Development partners and policy actors **financially support** actions towards the delivery of quality education

Actors at all levels **commit to take action towards practice or policy changes**

Media broadcasts messages in support of quality education

EVIDENCE UPTAKE

Uwezo partner organisations use **Uwezo and other relevant evidence for engagement and influencing actions**

Actors at all levels **use Uwezo's and other relevant evidence for publications,reporting and new (non-Uwezo) research**

CORE AREAS OF WORK

Three pillars:
1. Assessments
2. Research
3. Engagement & Influencing

Cross-cutting strands:

1. Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)
2. Organisational Development

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III. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework

In keeping with the Uwezo Uganda Strategy 2025-28 and its revised Theory of Change (TOC), and based on the feedback received from partners, Uwezo Uganda has developed a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework that particularly acknowledges the various desired outcomes of Uwezo Uganda's strategy. This is included below and forms the basis of a MEL framework that includes indicators for ultimate, intermediate and early level outcomes as well as outputs.

Participatory Outcome Harvesting

To explore outcome-level changes Uwezo will use participatory Outcome Harvesting (Wilson-Grau, 2018). Together with our like-minded CSOs at national level and partner organisations at district level we will use this method to identify, formulate and make sense of outcomes. Outcome Harvesting is useful when the aim is to understand the process of change as formulated in our ToC and how each outcome contributes to this change, rather than simply to accumulate a list of results. We will conduct Outcome Harvesting in a participatory manner bi-annually, such as in face-to-face or virtual workshops.

As part of our Outcome Harvesting methodology, we will reflect on our principles. In Uwezo Uganda's strategy 2025-2028 we present our shared guiding principles. We will include them in terms of reflecting on whether our practice is consistent with them, and whether they are leading to outcomes.

We will engage in improving our effectiveness by questioning our theory of change to readjust our strategy - are our core areas of work leading to research uptake and our desired outcomes? At what level did the outcomes happen: community, district, national, or international? How effective are the pillars in our core areas of work in terms of knowledge sharing and developing collective initiatives? Were the shared guiding principles adhered to, and did they help in influencing outcomes? In order to answer these questions, we need information on our joint outcomes that we will be linking to the theory of change presented in our strategy. We will do this at mid-term and at end-term of this strategic period.

Research uptake and Media monitoring

We keep track of web analytics to collect information about the use of our web services: what is being seen, shared and downloaded, when and by whom. We search for where our work is mentioned – for example newspapers, broadcast media, training manuals, international standards and operational guidelines, government policy and programme documents, websites, blogs and social media. We will save this information in

logs. We will use a particular inbox to which staff can send emails containing information that needs to be logged. This unstructured approach makes it easy to submit and store evidence of uptake of research outputs and media expressions.

Output reporting

Output reporting is an exercise that involves regularly sharing updates during quarterly meetings on indicators, as well as next steps with the team in order to identify priorities and make adjustments. The outputs are to be reported in quarterly and annual progress reports.

IMPACT: All children learning and realising their full potential				
OUTCOMES				
Outcome level	**Type of outcome**	**Description**	**Indicator**	**Means of verification**
Ultimate outcome	Practice change	Local actors, such as parents, teachers, schools, community groups and local leaders change their educational practices	# of outcomes that describe a practice change in local actors, that Uwezo data contributed to	Harvested outcomes report, supported by evidence such as • Photos of events • Reports • News articles
	Policy change	Policy actors approve policy changes in support of equitable and inclusive education for all	# of outcomes that describe a policy change in policy actors, that Uwezo data contributed to	Harvested outcomes report, supported by evidence such as • Policy documents
Intermediate outcome	Financial support	Donors and policy actors financially support interventions towards the delivery of quality education, particularly for public schools	# of outcomes that describe a change in the way policy or donor actors provide financial support, that Uwezo data contributed to	Harvested outcomes report, supported by evidence such as • Letters • Contracts • Announcements

	Commitment to take action	Actors at all levels, such as policy actors or donors, commit to take action towards practice or policy changes	# of outcomes that describe a change in the commitments actors at all levels make, that Uwezo data contributed to	Harvested outcomes report, supported by evidence such as • Press release • Photos of events • Activity reports • News articles
Early outcome	Media exposure	Media broadcasts messages in support of quality learning	# of outcomes that describe a change in the way the media broadcasts messages, that Uwezo data contributed to	Harvested outcomes report, supported by evidence such as • Documented media outings
	Use of evidence to inform reporting and (new) research	Actors at all levels, such as policy actors, international organisations and research institutions use Uwezo's evidence to inform publications, reporting and new (non-Uwezo) research, thereby building upon and spreading Uwezo's evidence	# of outcomes that describe a change in the way actors at all levels use evidence to inform publications and (new) research, that Uwezo data contributed to	Harvested outcomes report, supported by evidence such as • Publications • (District) reports • Research plans
	Partners use evidence for influencing	Uwezo partner organisations use Uwezo's evidence for engagement and influencing actions	# of outcomes that describe a change in the way Uwezo partner organisations use Uwezo reports or other reports that Uwezo data contributed to	Harvested outcomes report, supported by evidence such as • Project plans • Photos of events • Activity reports
OUTPUTS				
Pillar	**Type of output**	**Description**	**Indicator**	**Means of verification**
Pillar I	Assessments	Uwezo Uganda produces high quality and relevant assessments	# assessment reports	• Annual report(s)

			# communication products about the assessment	• Donor reports
Pillar II	Research	Uwezo Uganda produces high quality and relevant research	# research reports # communication products related to the research	
Pillar III	Engagement & influencing	Uwezo Uganda conducts constructive actions to engage and influence actors	# actions at global and regional level # actions at national and district level	

IV.   Learning and Adaptation

This section proposes some processes and routines to ensure that monitoring and evaluation findings feedback into programming to facilitate internal adaptive learning. Evidence and critical information generated from the MEL framework should be used to inform decision-making, make course corrections, and improve future programming. Reflection and learning will be embedded in the organizational processes of Uwezo Uganda and will lead to adaptation and change as needed.

The findings of the OH assessments and media monitoring and output reports provide input for learning.
Besides these reports, we will also conduct After- Action Reviews (AARs) at the end of every major program activity.

After Action Reviews
After an activity, such as an assessment or research has taken place, we organise an AAR. We bring together the team to reflect on three simple questions: what was supposed to happen, what actually happened and why were there differences? AARs are designed to be quick and light – not requiring a facilitator, an agenda or too much time – and collect any information that might otherwise be forgotten and lost once the activity passes. Therefore, we include them as part of the activity itself and schedule them right at the end. We will file away the notes from the meeting and bring them out at the next reflection point.

We will continue to integrate reflection points in the planning of our work to focus intently on learning and adaptation. We organise regular quarterly and annual reflection meetings, during which we review our operations, update our context analysis, monitor our research uptake and media data, and any other data coming out of our MEL framework to adapt our core areas of work as required. These sessions will also be used to identify new trends or topics that we could take up.

During these reflection moments we want to monitor our operations by reviewing emerging lessons from implementation and adjusting activities and outputs to achieve more and make better use of resources. Are activities being implemented according to plan? Did we produce them in a timely manner? Is there a need for improving or adjusting activities? In order to be adaptable, we need information on the quality and quantity of outputs and information on the research uptake that are the result of our core areas of work.

To monitor and discuss the context during our reflection moments, we will be sensing changes in policy, politics, environment, economics and society related to public education. Understanding the context will entail knowing about the people in charge of the policy area and their incentives. We need to know about the shifting politics in the field of education: the agendas and motivations of different actors, who is influencing whom and any new opportunities for getting messages across. We need to be aware of changing ways our evidence is used, as well as the wider system of stakeholders.

V.   Additional deepening learning studies

Besides the MEL framework that includes output and outcome indicators, additional learning questions may pop up depending on changes in evidence needs, contexts, or priorities. For example, how is the community of practice functioning? What do partner organisations value in their cooperation with Uwezo? For these learning needs, flexibility is required to accommodate different levels of inquiry. This MEL framework leaves room for conducting additional 'light' studies to answer learning questions without overburdening the organisation.

Story-telling with Sprockler

Sprockler provides an innovative combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Most evaluation methods combine surveys (quantitative data) with focus groups (qualitative data), while Sprockler captures both in one effort. A Sprockler inquiry starts with an open question to capture a short story, and then continues with regular survey questions to unpack the story (single choice, multi choice, etc). Sprockler is a useful method to capture matters that are important to stakeholders and enable us to listen to both expected and unexpected feedback from a diverse set of

people, such as community members and policy stakeholders at different levels. We will apply Sprockler in those cases where we want to examine a single learning question. For example, after one year of implementation of the Community of Practice we want to monitor how it's going by asking participating Uwezo evidence users to share a short story on their most significant learning moment in the Cop, and answer some additional signifying questions.

VI.   Implementation of the MEL Framework

Uwezo Uganda is committed to high quality MEL work going forward, better leveraging monitoring and evaluation functions to improve our strategic decision-making, results-based project management, and institutional learning.

The first year of the new strategy (2025) will be a year of transition from MEL perspectives as Uwezo Uganda starts implementing the new framework, allocating resources to fill the internal gaps in M&E skills and capacity, and preparing to launch the planned bi-annual Outcome Harvesting assessment in 2026. All these will lay a solid foundation for Uwezo Uganda to fully operationalise the proposed MEL Framework by the end of 2025.

Activity planning:
- Bi-annual Outcome Harvesting exercise
- Quarterly and yearly output reports
- Brief Donor reporting (if requested by specific donors)
- Quarterly reflection moments
- Continuous research uptake and media monitoring
- At the end of an activity: After Action Reviews
- When needed: Deepening learning studies
- At mid-term and end-term of this strategy period: reflection on our theory of change to readjust our strategy if needed.

VII.   Annex: tools

- AAR tool
- OH guideline