TOOL
MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES

WHY

The **most significant change** (MSC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It collects stories about significant changes that have happened among the participants in a project. The project participants are involved in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analyzing the stories – that way both the project participants and the project team learn from the process.

The Most Significant Change method does not make use of pre-defined indicators, especially ones that have to be counted and measured. Instead it draws of peoples experience of changes in their own lives through stories – who did what, when, why and why was the event important?

It is especially useful for making sense of complex information, creating 'thick, rich' description of changes and capturing unexpected as well as expected changes.

WHEN

Most Significant Change stories can provide information about changes throughout the project and contribute to learning along the way. It most often used at the end of a project or at time when the project has been running for long enough for changes to take place.

If you use most significant change stories to evaluate a course, the method can be used three to six months after the course, but not immediately at the end of the course.

HOW

Most Significant Change stories can be used as methodology on its own or together with other methods – for the **impact grid** evaluation. The impact grid helps to organize stories, so that you identify the importance of changes and to what extent the project has contributed to creating the change.

If used with the impact grid, most significant change stories are collected by asking a simple question such as "*During the last 3 months, in your opinion what was the* **most significant change** *that took place for participants in the projec*t"? as a framework for the impact grid exercise.

People are then asked why they consider the mentioned changes to be the most significant.

In its **full version**, the most significant change method goes through a long and systematic process to identify and document the stories that speak of the most significant changes in an organization and project.

It starts off by introducing the method to a wide range of stakeholders, identifying focal areas of change and collect stories. The collected stories are then filtered through different levels of the organization and project. Each level reviews the stories and selects the most significant stories – over several rounds of storytelling and collection. At the end of the process a document is produced with the selected change stories accompanied by the reasons the stories were selected.

The stories can be used for internal learning, for case stories for advocacy and for dialogue with funders on the changes that the project achieves.

For futher information on how the Most Significan Change method can be used for a comprehensive evaluation please confer with the guide The '**Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique. A guide to its** use written by Rick Daves and Jess Dart, 2005