



Introduction to indicators



20 May 2015

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What is an indicator?

- An **indicator** measures progress toward a **goal**
- A goal describes a desirable **future condition**
- An indicator is a **numeric measure** providing information in relation to the goal
- Goals and indicators are developed **together**
- Indicators are tools for **specific audiences**
 - Different indicators may be appropriate for different audiences

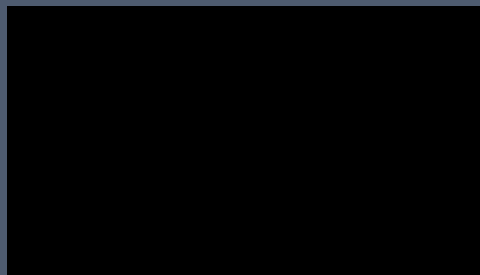
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What are indicators **used** for?

- Raising awareness
- Engaging stakeholders
- Informing decisions
- Measuring progress /
Demonstrating effectiveness
 - All of the above
 - The Millennium Development Goals are a good example of goals which are expressed as indicators

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Millennium Development Goals: Progress as at 2013



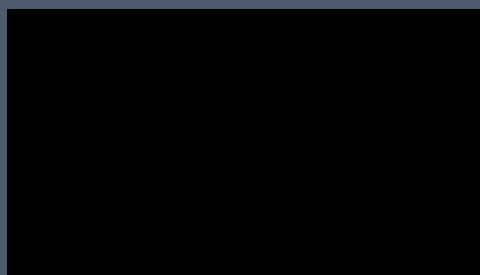
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Millennium Development Goal 1: Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty

- **Target 1A:** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day
- **Target 1C:** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
 - Between the **GOAL** and changes in the **INDICATOR** may lie a range of different interventions

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MDG Poverty Intervention



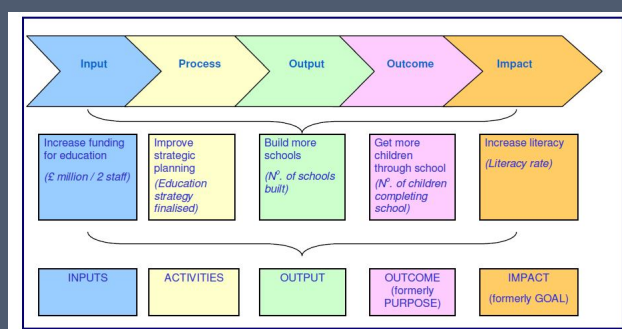
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Logical Frameworks

- Our projects are usually the interventions, which we need to be able to express in terms of the overall goal or impact with indicators
- The links between the overall goal, the actual intervention, and indicators are often expressed in logical frameworks
- These are often used by donors such as the UK's DFID when motivating or justifying Official Development Assistance (ODA)

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A logical framework to address the problem of poor literacy



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Goals (or “impacts”) start with the problem

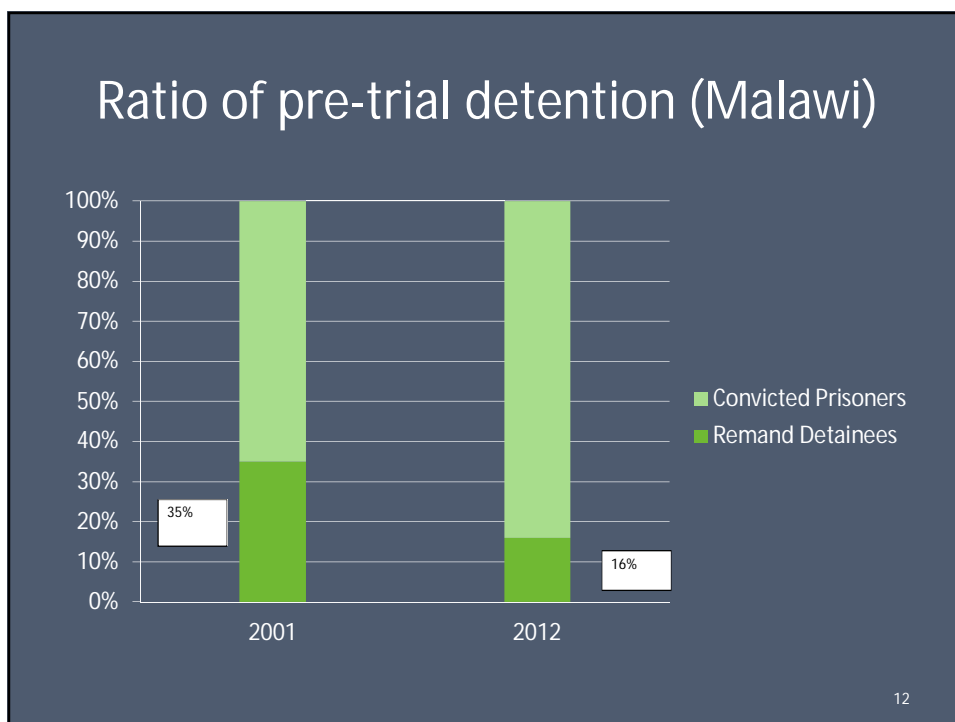
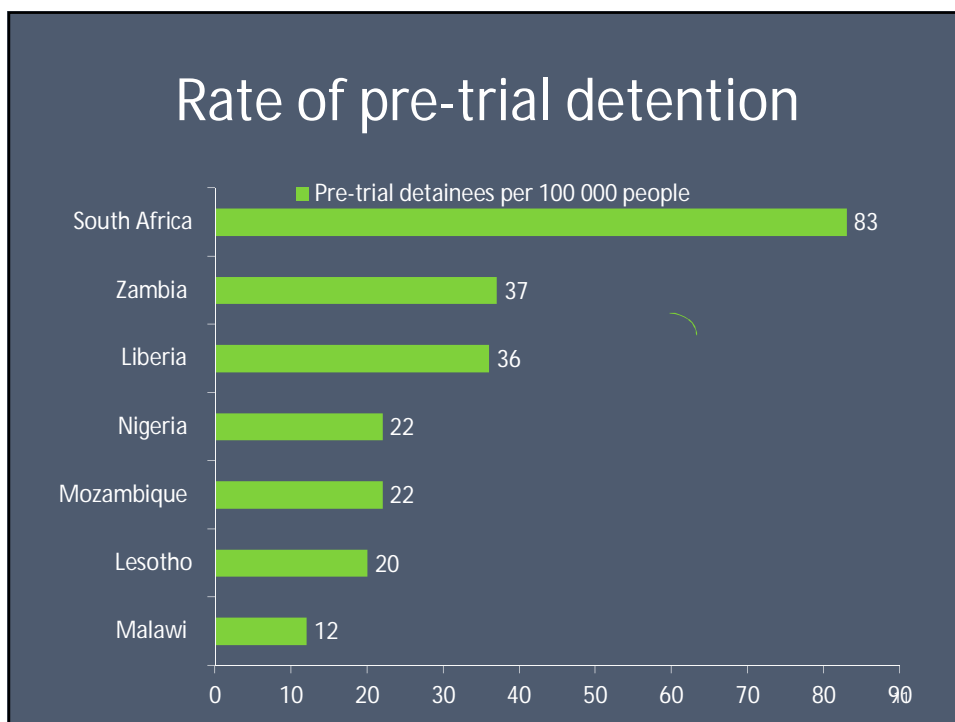
- Problem: Low literacy
- Goal: Improve literacy
 - Indicator goal: increase literacy from 50% to 80%
- Problem: Widespread poverty
- Goal: Reduce poverty
 - Indicator goal : Halve the proportion of the population with income under \$1.25

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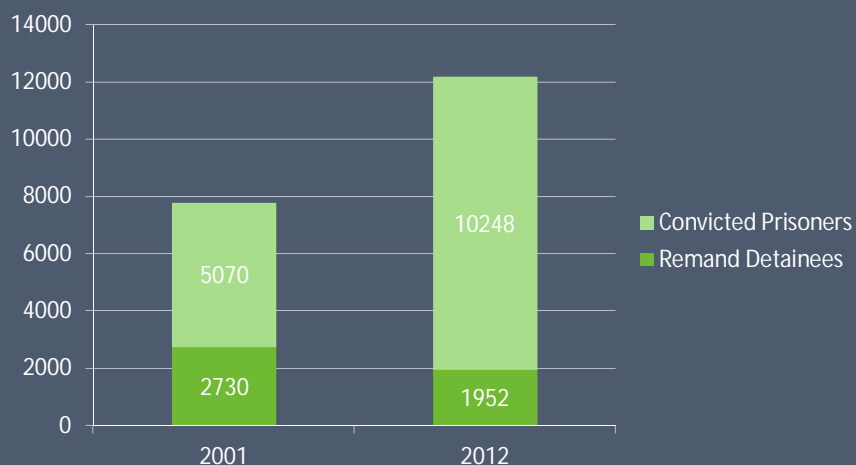
The pre-trial detention “problem”

- There is a difficulty in defining the exact problem with pre-trial detention
 - Do countries with lower percentages of the prison population pre-trial NOT have a problem?
 - Do countries with lower imprisonment rates NOT have a problem?
 - The exact problem will depend on the context
 - Where the problem or goal is inappropriately defined interventions which are pre-trial detention related will struggle to demonstrate impact

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Malawi prison numbers



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What is the problem in Malawi?

- Very high number of arrests
- Many people detained
- Many people detained at police stations
- People detained without going to court, eventually released
 - High exposure of the population to pre-trial detention
 - In Malawi e.g. 2900 in pre-trial detention in prisons as at 1 January plus 35000 admitted 1 January to 31 March.
 - The number of people "exposed" to pre-trial detention in a quarter is thus 37 900.
 - Using a population figure of 15.9 million, this implies an exposure rate per quarter of 238 per 100 000.

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Logical framework to address high exposure of the population to pre-trial detention through paralegals

- The problem has to be defined not as high rate of pre-trial detention, nor high ratio of pre-trial detention, but in terms of the number of people going through the system and the duration they spend in detention: the high number of **people-days** in detention
- This is because paralegals can't prevent arrests but can only secure earlier release

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Logical framework: exposure of the population to pre-trial detention

- **Input:** Funding for paralegal staff (\$X million)
- **Process:** expand paralegal services to police stations across the country (paralegals trained, employed and provided with necessary resources to carry out their duties)
- **Outputs:** more paralegals per site (number of paralegals per site)
- **Outcome:** increase in total releases from pre-trial detention (number of releases)
- **Impact:** **Reduction in total exposure to detention** (overall reduction of "people-days" in detention, with exact contribution of paralegal organisation)

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Problem, goal, indicator (intervention)

- Not all our interventions have the same goals, although most probably have some impact on pre-trial detention
- We have to define the problem and the goal clearly before we can start devising appropriate indicators
- The intervention must be shown to affect the goal, usually as a contribution of all impacts

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What makes an effective indicator?

- Effective indicators are:
 - **Relevant**; they show us something about the system that we need to know or which is important
 - **Easy to understand**, even by people who are not experts
 - Effective indicators are **reliable**; we can trust the information that the indicator is providing
 - Based on **accessible data**; the information is available or can be gathered while there is still time to act

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How to get to effective indicators?

- Involve stakeholders in defining indicators
- Consider both quantitative and qualitative indicators
- Consider a program's context complexity; allow for indicators to be defined or revised
- Decide on a modest range of realistic indicators; too few indicators cannot capture complex social change; too many outcomes and indicators can aim data collection in many different directions, making it difficult to gather credible evidence.
- Don't choose outcomes simply because they are easy to achieve and measure
- Don't ignore outcomes that are difficult to achieve and measure
- Take into account what you are already doing or collecting to reduce the time and effort spent on measurement
- Sub-projects may have their own separate goals and indicators

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