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Introduction to Evidence-Based Project Design

switchboard
connecting resettlement experts





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Today's Speaker



Sally Beiruti

Program Manager,
Monitoring and
Evaluation

Learning Objectives



By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1

Define

key terms related to M&E and project design

2

Distinguish

between two logic models: theories of change and logframes

3

Explain

the importance of evidence-informed project design in the refugee resettlement space

4

Determine

how various types of evidence can inform project design decisions



Defining Key Terms

in Project Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation



Monitoring

- An **ongoing process** of collecting, managing, and analyzing information
- Answers questions about **project progress** and the implementation process



What does monitoring look like?

- Reflects on the progress of project implementation
- Includes various data collection and analysis activities
- Answers key questions about the fidelity of implementation and whether you're reaching the target group

What are some benefits of monitoring?





Evaluation

- Collects and analyzes information **once or twice** during a project—usually at **the end of a phase of the project**
- Answers questions about the **project's outcomes, its impact**, and what influenced the outcomes and impact



What does evaluation look like?

- Asking big questions about the program's progress
- Using the answers to improve the program overall
- Reflecting on project successes and key challenges
- Generating reports on findings

What is the purpose of evaluation?



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Which—monitoring or evaluation—is more useful for providing the information needed to make long-term modifications to a project?

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Which one occurs fewer times during the project cycle?

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You want to check whether you need to make short-term changes to your project, so you collect and analyze data on an ongoing basis and review that data.

Is this better described as monitoring or evaluation?

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2

Logic Models

A Brief Introduction to Theories of Change and Logical Frameworks



Logic Model

A graphic representation that shows all steps necessary to reach a goal





Two Types of Logic Models

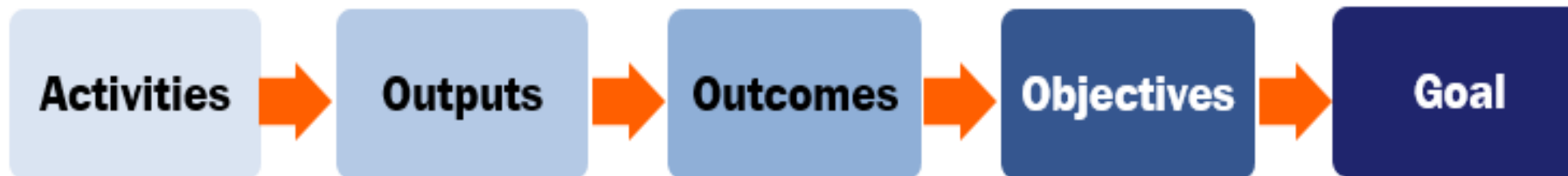
- **A theory of change (ToC)** highlights the causal pathways between activities, outputs, outcomes, and objectives
- **A logical framework (logframe)** is a table or matrix that summarizes the key elements of a project strategy

Theories of Change and Logframes



	Description	Indicators	Means of Verification (Data Source)	Assumptions
Objectives				
Outcomes				
Outputs				
Activities				

Logframe



Theory of Change (ToC)



3

Evidence-Based Project Design

What is it, and why is it important?



What are evidence-based projects?

Existing evidence has been used to inform the theory of change and implementation.

Evidence-Based Practice





Examples of evidence can include...

- Meta-analysis
- Systematic reviews and evidence summaries
- Impact evaluations
- Findings from previous cycles of your project



Evidence and Data in the Project Cycle

1. Design

Using evidence to inform the project design and priorities

4. End of Project Phase

Writing a final report to generate more evidence



2. Planning/Start-up

Planning and developing data collection and management tools; training staff on their use

3. Implementation

Using data analysis to inform programming and conducting data reviews



Why build an evidence-based project?

Increases project success

Mitigates risk and avoids harm

Optimizes use of resources



Supports our responsibility to clients

Saves time and increases confidence in decision-making

Meets requirements of many funders



What are data-driven projects?

Data shapes project design and informs decision-making during the life of the project.

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What is one type of evidence that can be used to inform project design?

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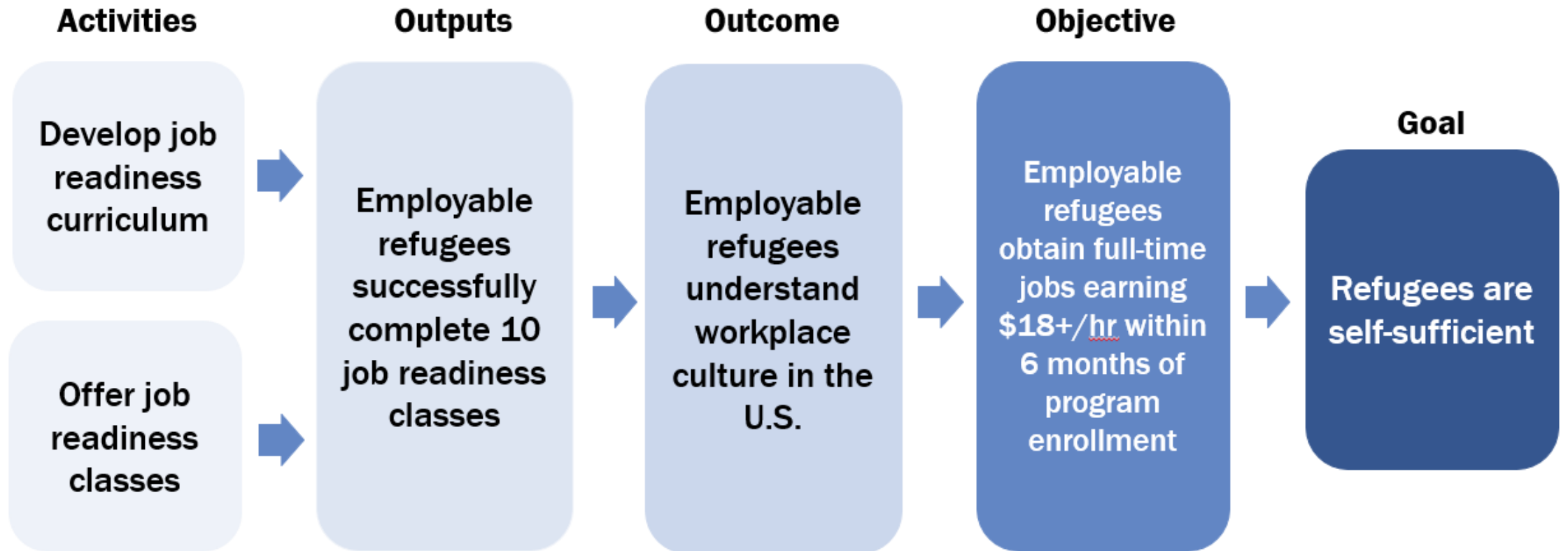
Evidence Informing Project Design Decisions

A Walkthrough Example

Theoretical Case Study: Employment Program



Theory of Change



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What is one reason that Mariam should ensure her program is evidence-based?

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Evidence-Based Practice



Research Evidence



Evidence Summary

What Strategies Improve The Outcomes Of Refugee Women In Employment Programs?

This evidence summary, authored by Switchboard, summarizes the state of available evidence regarding strategies to improve the employment rates of refugee women in employment programs.

Limited but growing evidence shows positive impacts of national policies on the employment rates of refugees.



Evidence Summary

What Strategies Enhance Career Development For Newcomers?

While evidence is limited, certain alternative pathways to career development can help improve newcomers' workforce integration.

- Suggestive evidence shows that vocational training can contribute to workforce integration.
- Suggestive evidence shows that scholastic- and career-focused afterschool programs may improve students' self-reported preparedness to enter the workforce.
- Moderately strong evidence shows that vocational training focused on goal setting does not improve workforce integration.
- Suggestive evidence shows formal and informal language training contribute to workforce integration.



Research Evidence: *What strategies enhance career development for newcomers?*

While evidence is limited, certain alternative pathways to career development can help improve newcomers' workforce integration.

- Suggestive evidence shows that vocational training can contribute to workforce integration.
- Suggestive evidence shows that scholastic- and career-focused afterschool programs may improve students' self-reported preparedness to enter the workforce.
- Moderately strong evidence shows that vocational training focused on goal setting does not improve workforce integration.

Suggestive evidence shows formal and informal language training contribute to workforce integration.

- Some studies show that merging vocational training and language programs can increase the success rate of newcomers entering the workforce.
- Two studies suggest that there may be a relationship between language training, social capital, and workforce integration.

Research Evidence: *What strategies improve the outcomes of refugee women in employment programs?*

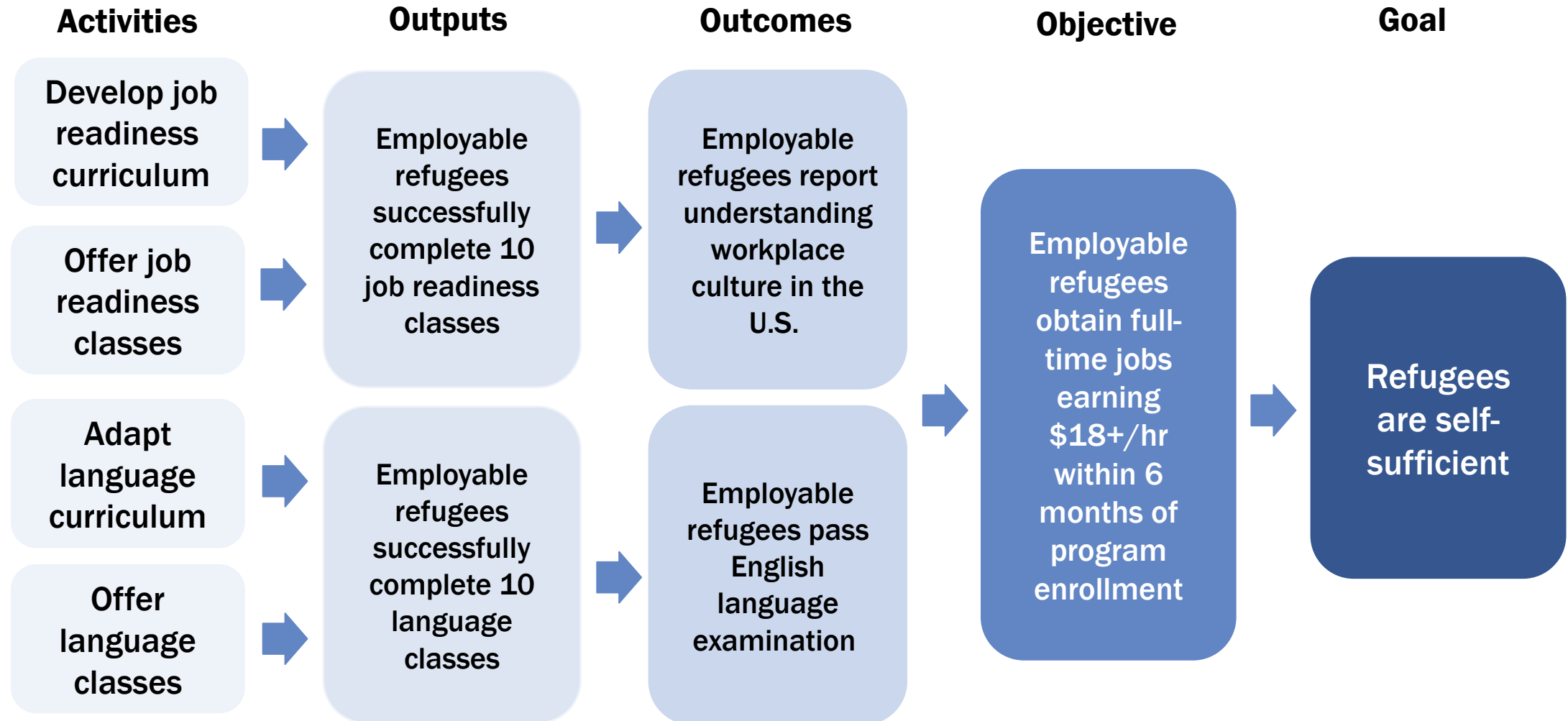


Largely suggestive evidence provides some guidance on what could work for refugee women entering the labor market.

- Extended case management is associated with higher household incomes and job satisfaction, in addition to significantly higher employment rates at six months and one year post-resettlement. However, benefits for women are not as clear as those for men.
- Supporting women in developing skills and meeting educational attainment goals can lead to higher employment rates.
- **Opening opportunities for women to engage in the workforce in non-traditional ways, such as through entrepreneurship or gig work, could help overcome potential barriers surrounding traditional workplaces.**



Theory of Change



Client Preferences: Needs Assessment





Practitioner Expertise and Experience

- Previous programs have had data quality issues



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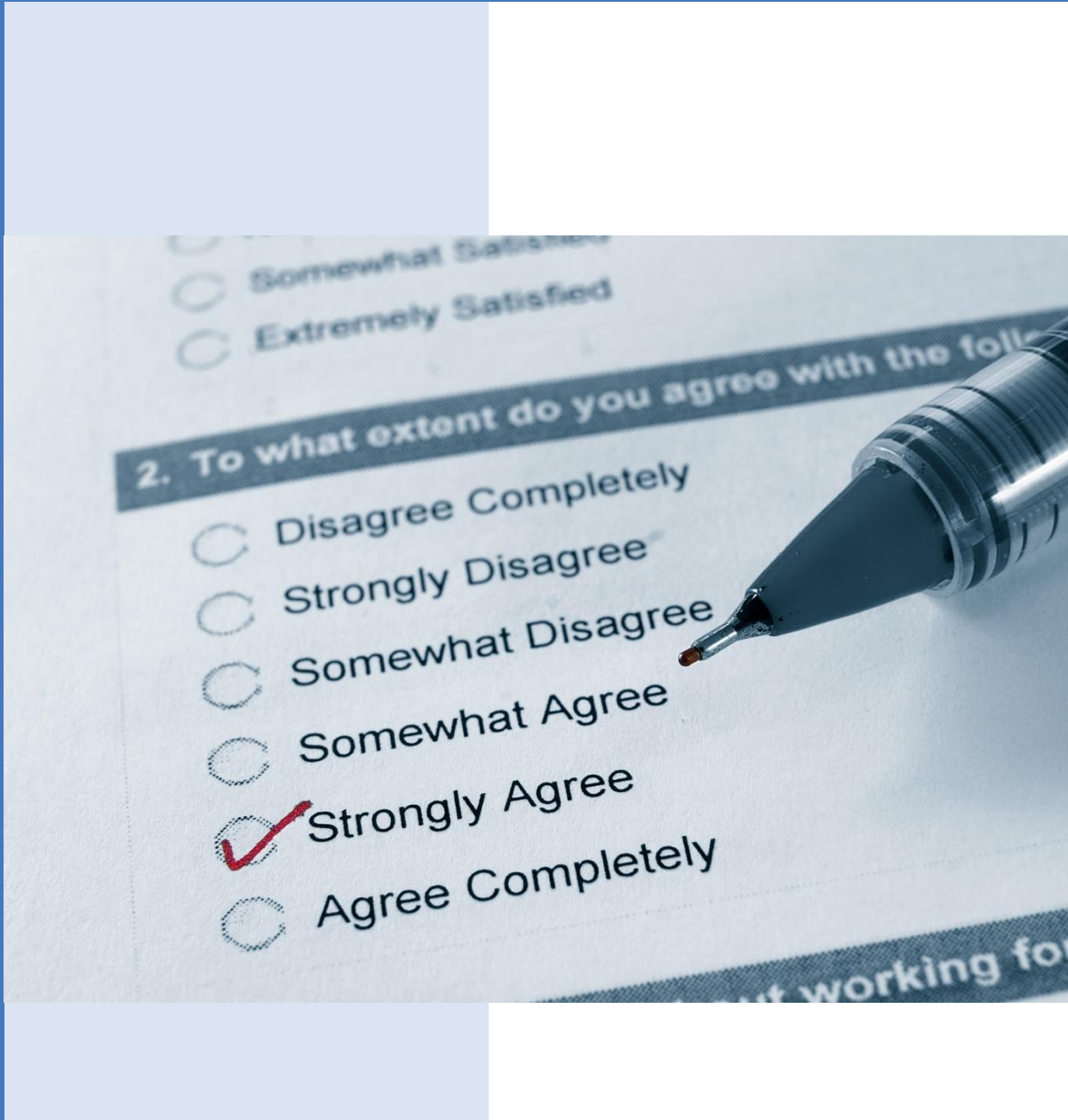
What could Mariam do to avoid having these data issues again?

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Practitioner Expertise and Experience

- Previous programs have had data quality issues
- Program staff will be trained on data collection tools prior to the start of the program



Evidence-Based Practice





Help us help you!

Scan the QR code or click the link in the chat!

- Short, 5-question survey
- Takes less than 60 seconds to complete
- Helps us improve our training and technical assistance





Questions?

Type your questions in the Q&A

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Recommended Resources

- [Tip Sheet: 7 Tips for Developing Data-Driven, Evidence-Based Programs](#)
- [Blog Post: Are Your Programs and Services Evidence-Based? Implementation Science Can Help!](#)
- [Webinar: Introducing the Switchboard Evidence Database](#)



Tip Sheet:

7 Tips for Planning Data-driven, Evidence-based Programs

In designing programs to respond to the needs of refugees in the U.S, service providers have the opportunity to improve program planning processes and take steps towards becoming more data-driven and evidence-based.

Data-driven programs are those where data shapes program design and informs decision making during the life of the program. *Evidence-based* programs are those where existing evidence has been used to inform the theory of change and implementation. This resource offers seven tips you can use during program planning to ensure your programs are data-driven and evidence-based.

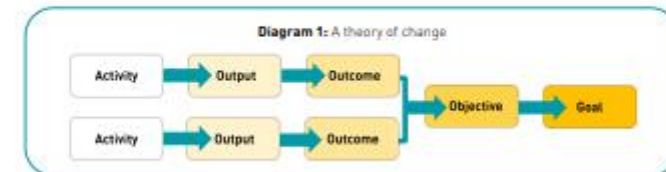
Tip 1: Develop a theory of change [also referred to as a logic model].

It isn't always required by donors, but mapping out your project's logic visually, using arrows to show causal pathways, can help make sure that your project logic is sound and that the results you intend to achieve are clear and measurable.

The diagram itself can be a helpful reference tool for program staff, particularly for the visual learners among us. But the real value lies in the process of [developing a theory of change](#),

which involves what is referred to as "backwards mapping." The process requires that you get clear and specific about the objectives you hope to ultimately achieve—and about more immediate results that your success depends on. The process requires that you ask:

- "What do we really mean by [insert vague outcome phrasing here]?"
- What do we need to achieve first, in order to achieve this outcome? Does it logically make sense that x will lead to y?"





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