

# Part I - BAD-TIMES STORIES

# VOICES FOR CHANGE

Wednesday, 16 April 2025, 14:00 GMT+2

**THE MOST  
SIGNIFICANT**



**CHALLENGE  
CHANGE**

**BASED ON A  
TRUE STORY**



# WHAT IS IT?

The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique is a form of **participatory monitoring and evaluation**. It involves the collection and selection of **stories of change**, produced by programme or project stakeholders.

## THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE

Monitoring and Evaluation without Indicators

STEP 1: define **domains of change**

STEP 2: decide how and when to **collect stories**

STEP 3: collect significant **change stories**

STEP 4: **select** the most significant stories (*training II*)

STEP 5: **verify** the stories (*training II*)

*@intrac for civil society*



# BACKGROUND

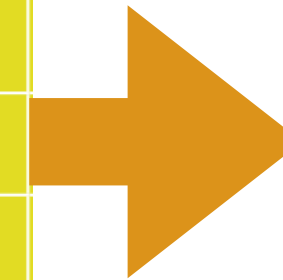
Written by Dr Rick Davies and Dr Jess Dart

Davies, R. and Dart, J. (2005) *The 'Most Significant Change' Technique - A Guide to Its Use.*

## THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE

Monitoring and Evaluation without Indicators

- CARE International, United Kingdom
- Oxfam Community Aid Abroad, Australia
- Learning to Learn, Government of South Australia
- Oxfam New Zealand
- Christian Aid, United Kingdom
- Exchange, United Kingdom
- Ibis, Denmark
- Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke (MS), Denmark
- Lutheran World Relief, United States of America



**1944 - CCIIVS historic member, founder of Alliance ActionAid Denmark (Peter Sisgaard)**



# WHY THIS TECHNIQUE

## THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE

Monitoring and Evaluation  
without Indicators

The 'Most Significant Change' technique – A guide to its use indicates some key characteristics of the kind of projects that can benefit from the technique. These tend to be projects that, like most IVS activities, are:

- **Complex** and produce diverse and emergent outcomes
- **Large**, with numerous organisational layers
- Focused on **social change**
- **Participatory** in nature
- Designed with repeated **contact** between field staff and participants
- Struggling with **conventional** monitoring systems
- Offering **highly customised** services to a small number of beneficiaries



STEP 1: define  
domains of change

# THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE

Monitoring and Evaluation  
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## DEFINE DOMAINS OF CHALLENGE/CHANGE

Identify, with stakeholders, some domains of change – typically between three and five – that will be monitored / evaluated. Domains are broad areas where **change** might be expected to occur.

IVS for **Climate Justice**  
and Ecological Restoration

Fair and Just Cross-Border  
**Mobility** for Volunteers

**Decolonising** Funding and  
Global Partnerships in IVS

Rights-Based and Inclusive  
**Participation** in IVS

Formal **Recognition** of IVS in  
Global and National Policy

Voices for Changes - Global Reflection Meeting, 6-12 April  
2025, Versailles, France.  
*Five Advocacy Proposals for International Voluntary  
Service.*



# DEFINE DOMAINS OF **CHALLENGE/CHANGE**

STEP 1: define  
domains of change

**THE MOST  
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IVS for **Climate Justice**  
and Ecological Restoration

“Recognise and fund International Voluntary Service (IVS) as a **community-driven** force for ecosystem restoration, biodiversity protection, and the development of climate-robust communities.”



# DEFINE DOMAINS OF **CHALLENGE/CHANGE**

STEP 1: define  
domains of change

## THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE

Monitoring and Evaluation  
without Indicators

Fair and Just Cross-Border  
**Mobility** for Volunteers

“Enable **freedom of movement** and equitable access to volunteering opportunities for all, regardless of origin.”



# DEFINE DOMAINS OF **CHALLENGE/CHANGE**

STEP 1: define  
domains of change

## THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE

Monitoring and Evaluation  
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Decolonising Funding and  
Global Partnerships in IVS

“Shift **power and resources to local and grassroots actors** through inclusive, direct funding and partnership models”



# DEFINE DOMAINS OF **CHALLENGE/CHANGE**

STEP 1: define  
domains of change

## THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE

Monitoring and Evaluation  
without Indicators

Rights-Based and Inclusive  
**Participation** in IVS

“Protect and promote the **rights, safety, and well-being of all volunteers** — especially in conflict-affected, post-crisis, and marginalised contexts.”



# DEFINE DOMAINS OF **CHALLENGE/CHANGE**

STEP 1: define  
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**THE MOST  
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**Monitoring and Evaluation  
without Indicators**

Formal **Recognition** of IVS in  
Global and National Policy

“ Recognise IVS as a **legitimate pathway**  
for civic engagement, peacebuilding,  
learning, and sustainable development.”



# WHEN AND HOW TO COLLECT STORIES

Deciding on the methods that will be used to **identify, record, discuss, select and analyse** the stories.

STEP 2: decide how and when to **collect stories**

**THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE**

Monitoring and Evaluation without Indicators

WHEN 1: **Test** story collection  
April 17-21

(just 1 story per organisation!)

WHEN 2: **Challenge** story collection  
April 22 - June 1

(at least 5 stories per organisation)

WHEN 3: **Change** story collection  
July-September

(at least 10 stories per organisation)

Before the second online training (April 23)

Before the Earth Artist Training and Songwriting Workshop (June 18-28)

Between the Local Actions (July-August) and the Project Management Meeting (October)



**Policy Development and Advocacy Document**  
**Symposium on Environmental and Social Justice**



# WHEN AND HOW TO COLLECT STORIES

STEP 2: decide how and when to **collect stories**

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**HOW:** Stakeholders are asked what have been the **most significant challenges / changes they have experienced or observed** within each domain over the past period, and what the storyteller believes is the significance of the events described in the story.

The different stories are then **written down (or recorded or videoed)** – either by the stakeholders themselves or by other people on their behalf.

Creative and original methods to illustrate stories are very welcome and useful, from **photography to drawing, lettes or poetry**, as long as they are properly **documented**.



# COLLECT STORIES OF **CHALLENGE/CHANGE**

**STEP 3: collect significant change stories**

Stories are normally collected from those **stakeholders most directly involved in a project or programme, such as targeted beneficiaries and project or programme staff**

## **THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE**

**Monitoring and Evaluation without Indicators**

“Looking back over the last month, what do you think was the most significant challenge/change in [particular domain of change]?”

**story**  
**[who did what, when and why]**

“why do you think this story illustrates well the challenge/change?”

In addition to a description of the story, MSC also requires some further information to be recorded for each story:

- who provided the story;
- when and where the challenge/change happened;
- what the story teller believes is the significance of the events described in the story
- What kind of projects were implemented in the place the story refers to



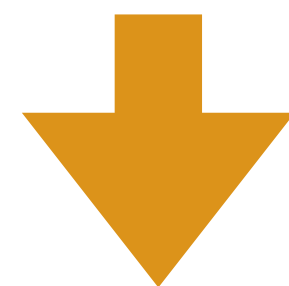
# HOMEWORK

STEP 3: collect significant change stories

Each organisation provides *one story before April 21* by e-mail to [francesco@1.or.kr](mailto:francesco@1.or.kr)  
Stories can be in **written (up to one-page) form, photo, video, drawing, poetry, etc.**

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