Applying the Agile Methodology to M&E data collection systems

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ActivityInfo
Presentation outline

1. What is “Agile”?  
2. Applying Agile to Monitoring & Evaluation  
3. Agile methodologies  
4. Agile M&E with ActivityInfo
What is “Agile”?
agile  /ˈædʒəl/  
*adjective*  
able to move quickly and easily
2001 - Agile Manifesto

https://agilemanifesto.org/
4 Values

- **Individuals and interactions**
  - over
  - Processes and Tools

- **Working Software**
  - over
  - Comprehensive Documentation

- **Stakeholder Collaboration**
  - over
  - Contract Negotiation

- **Responding to Change**
  - over
  - Following a Plan

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2001 - Agile Manifesto
12 Principles

1. Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software.

2. Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer’s competitive advantage.

3. Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.

4. Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.

5. Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.

6. The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation.

7. Working software is the primary measure of progress.

8. Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.

9. Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.

10. Simplicity—the art of maximizing the amount of work not done—is essential.

11. The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.

12. At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

2001 - Agile Manifesto
2001 - 2021 Beyond software development
Waterfall Model

1. Logical Framework
2. M&E System Design
3. Build system
4. Training
5. Start data collection
6. Provide results
What can M&E learn from Agile?

- **Value** for stakeholders
- Responding to **change**
- Importance of **teams**
Value for stakeholders
4 Values

- Individuals and interactions over Processes and Tools
- Working Software over Comprehensive Documentation
- Stakeholder Collaboration over Contract Negotiation
- Responding to Change over Following a Plan

2001 - Agile Manifesto
How does M&E provide “value”? 

- **Donor reporting**: Our organization will continue to have resources to support our beneficiaries.
- **Project status reports**: Project managers can take early action to ensure an effective implementation.
- **Impact analysis**: Program design can be adapted to better serve beneficiaries.
- **(In)validate assumption**: Our Theory of Change can be updated and improved.
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2001 - Agile Manifesto
Delivering value more frequently in M&E

- Set smaller goals, execute more frequently
- Examples:
  - Implement monthly project reports with 3 key indicators
  - Proactive donor updates every 2 months
  - Conduct small impact surveys every 6 months
  - Provide quarterly summary and analysis of all collected data
Data quality: Vicious Circles

- M&E doesn’t provide value
- Stakeholders ignore M&E
- Data quality suffers
Data quality: Virtuous Circles

- M&E starts providing a little value
- Stakeholders pay attention
- Data quality improves
Responding to change
Waterfall Model

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Change related to uncertainty

Changing environment

M&E EDITION
Cone of Uncertainty

Uncertainty

0

25%

50%

75%

125%

200%

400%

Initial Concept

Requirements Analysis

Pilot Version

Field Test

Completed

Source: Software Estimation, Steve McConnell
Waterfall

- Requirements
- Design
- Development
- Testing
- Deployment

Big outcome at end

Agile

- Req’s
- Design
- Develop
- Deploy

Cumulative outcomes

Source: [https://scrumble.nl/blog/innovatie-strategie/agile-vs-waterval/](https://scrumble.nl/blog/innovatie-strategie/agile-vs-waterval/)
## 12 Principles

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Importance of teams
Agile vs bureaucratic team

The bureaucratic team
- Top down
- Individual responsibilities
- Little interaction

The Agile team
- Autonomous
- Cross-functional
- Much interaction

Source: The Age of Agile, Stephen Denning
12 Principles

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2001 - Agile Manifesto
Agile Methodologies
Agile methodologies

Source: https://www.wesquare.nl/scrum-vs-kanban-a-fair-comparison/
The Agile - Scrum Framework

Source: https://edelalon.com/blog/2017/09/scrum/
Agile M&E with ActivityInfo
ActivityInfo: Quick introduction

- Relational database designed for M&E
- Integrated mobile data collection app (Andr/iOS)
- Fast, easy-to-use setup
- Easy to change and adapt
ActivityInfo: Get Started today

- Template Library
- Self-paced course
- Evaluation version
Thank you!