Reflect AND Improve

**A Tool Kit for Engaging
Youth and Adults as Partners
in Program Evaluation**

INNOVATION CENTER
for community & youth development

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The ***Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development*** works to unleash the potential of youth, adults, organizations, and communities to engage together to create a just and equitable society. We connect thinkers and leaders of all ages to develop fresh ideas, forge new partnerships, and design strategies that engage young people and their communities. We turn theoretical knowledge into practical know-how that advances the field of youth development and promotes social change.

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Background

This tool kit is produced as a result of a four-year joint initiative of the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development and the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University. The goal of the initiative, known as the Planning and Evaluation Resource Center (PERC), is to advance the field of positive youth development by strengthening the program planning and evaluation cycle of youth-serving agencies.

In partnership with the New England Network for Child, Youth and Family Services; Social Policy Research Associates; and the University of Kentucky, PERC worked with 30 diverse community-based youth organizations in both rural and urban settings, ranging from 4-H clubs, to youth civic engagement organizations, to programs serving runaway youth. Through these partnerships, we designed and tested practical evaluation tools and activities, made them available to many more organizations through trainings and conference presentations, and disseminated them through an electronic clearinghouse and tutorial designed by the project at www.evaluationtools.org. With this tool kit, the project has taken the best of these tools and activities and presented them in an easy to use format that guides groups of youth and adults through the process of planning, designing, implementing, analyzing, and sharing the results of an evaluation. The Innovation Center has also recruited and trained a cadre of youth and adult trainers/facilitators who will work with practitioners to implement these evaluation strategies in a variety of organizations across the country.

For more information on the Innovation Center's evaluation work and to access trainers and facilitators, please visit our web site at www.theinnovationcenter.org.

Acknowledgments

This tool kit is the product of the work and dedication of many youth, adults, organizations, and communities committed to the strengthening of youth and community development at the local level. Without their time, vision, and interest in using evaluation to improve practice, this resource would not have been possible.

The following organizations piloted different pieces of the tool kit and other activities, lending their time and expertise to the creation and improvement of evaluation practice.

Department of Community and Leadership Development at the University of Kentucky

Lexington, KY

CAPAY (Coalition for Asian Pacific American Youth)

Boston area, MA

Domus

Stamford, CT

Kids in Crisis

Cos Cob, CT

Leadership Excellence

Oakland, CA

McCracken County Teen 4-H Club

McCracken County, KY

Mi Casa Resource Center for Women

Denver, CO

New Beginnings

Lewiston, ME

New England Network for Child, Youth and Family Services

Burlington, VT

Outright

Portland, ME

Roca, Inc.

Chelsea, MA

Social Policy Research Associates

Oakland, CA

Spectrum Youth Services

Burlington, VT

Vermont Coalition for Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs
Burlington, VT
Washington County Teen 4-H Club
Washington, KY
YUCA (Youth United for Community Action)
Bay Area, CA
Young Women's Project
Washington, DC

The following individuals and organizations wrote many of the activities and provided much of the content in the tool kit:

Roger Rennekamp, University of Kentucky, Department of Community and Leadership Development. A nationally recognized leader and expert in the areas of evaluation and youth–adult partnerships, Roger worked for two years creating, piloting, and revising core tool kit activities with youth and adults in 4-H groups across the state of Kentucky and nationally.

Sengsouvanh Soukamneuth, Heather Lewis-Charp, Laura Heiman, and Johanna Lacoe, Social Policy Research Associates. Many of the activities in this tool kit are adapted from the Social Policy Research Associates' and Innovation Center's *Evaluating Civic Activism Tool Kit: A Curriculum for Community and Youth–Serving Organizations*. Social Policy Research Associates worked for three years with many community-based partners creating, piloting, and refining tool kit activities and providing technical assistance on evaluation.

Janet Richardson, Independent Consultant. Jan reviewed all the evaluation and planning tools created through the PERC project and wove them together, adding new materials from the field and the Innovation Center, writing new pieces, and editing others to make the tool kit a comprehensive and user-friendly resource.

We would also like to extend specific thanks to the following organizations and individuals for their contributions to the design, editing, and printing of this tool kit:

Contents

Introduction

*T*his evaluation tool kit provides resources to engage young people and adults in the evaluation of community-building initiatives. The tool kit is developed from a participatory, empowerment-oriented perspective. Instead of contracting with an external evaluator to assess a community-building initiative, this tool kit allows a community facilitator to capitalize on the gifts and talents of community members. Through their involvement in evaluation activities, community members gain new skills while engaging in reflective activities that lead to improvements in their program, project, or activity (Fetterman, 1996 in Fetterman et al, 1996).

Program evaluation is often looked upon as a mysterious process that is best left to highly trained professionals. Moreover, external evaluators are sometimes seen as being more objective judges of an effort's merits. But many times, community members themselves make the best evaluators. They are known and trusted within the community and have access to information that an external evaluator may not have. Their unique knowledge of the effort makes it easier for them to give meaning to the data that has been collected.

To get a broad perspective on the data available, it is important to include young people as evaluators in this process. In evaluating community-building activities—as in planning or implementing them—it is critical to include young people in the decision-making processes, because evaluation results will affect the programs that include youth.

Some people avoid the evaluation process because they feel they have little experience as evaluators. But in reality, we are all experienced evaluators. We wake up in the morning, hear the weather forecast, and make a judgment about how we should dress for the day. We get dressed, look in the mirror, and make a judgment about our appearance. We evaluate every time we make a consumer purchase.

The sections that follow are designed to help youth and adults build on the evaluation skills they already have and put them to use in evaluating a community change effort.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL KIT

This tool kit contains a series of strategies and activities related to evaluation. The series is designed to be used both in total and by section. If used as a workbook during training sessions, the content of each section is designed to build on the previous section and to cover all aspects of self-evaluation. The content is also designed to be used section-by-section, so that readers with different degrees of evaluation expertise can access the materials at different points. The sections are as follows:

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Youth–Adult Partnerships in the Evaluation Process

Rationale for including youth in the evaluation process and specific strategies and tips for getting young people involved.

Section 3: Introduction to Evaluation

Evaluation 101—an overview of key terms and concepts with a focus on the benefits and challenges of evaluation.

Section 4: Setting the Stage for Evaluation

Introduction to frameworks for evaluation, including logic models and theories of change. Discussion of developing indicators to measure program success.

Section 5: Developing and Implementing an Evaluation Plan

A step-by-step guide to setting up the evaluation: looking at resources; identifying stakeholders; setting goals; forming evaluation questions; and collecting, analyzing, and reporting data.

Section 6: Glossary/Resources/References

The following guidelines are offered to help you decide where to start:

1. No matter what your experience is with evaluation, if you are new to youth–adult partnerships or need a brief refresher, start with *2: Youth–Adult Partnerships in the Evaluation Process*.

2. If you have a solid background in working as a member of a youth–adult partnership but are new to the evaluation process or are just beginning a new evaluation, then begin with *3: Introduction to Evaluation*. This will help you look at what is involved and determine how to get started.

3. If your organization has an evaluation plan in place, but does NOT have a logic model or theory of change, then you can begin with *4: Setting the Stage for Evaluation*.

4. If you have an evaluation plan and logic model but need help with choosing data collection methods, designing tools, or analyzing or using data, then go to *5: Developing and Implementing an Evaluation Plan*.

We suggest that you read through this tool kit first to get a feel for what it contains. Then you can decide where and how to begin your evaluation work.

Youth–Adult Partnerships in the Evaluation Process

A RATIONALE FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

This tool kit emphasizes that both youth and adults make important and essential contributions to any evaluation effort. In particular, young people have important insights into what needs to be evaluated. They bring fresh approaches to data collection and analysis.

Engaging young people in *community building* is a process through which young people and adults work as partners to examine their community, create a vision for the future, and implement an action plan that leads to desired change. But *planning* and *doing* are only the beginning. Evaluation is needed to determine what worked, what didn't, and what should be done differently. Evaluation also helps the team determine whether it achieved the desired results. A community-building effort is not complete without evaluation. And, as with the planning and doing, it is important that young people be involved as partners in the evaluation.

> *... the mutual contributions of youth and adults can result in a synergy, a new power and energy that propels decision-making groups to greater innovation and productivity.*
>
> ZELDIN, MCDANIEL, TOPITZES, AND CALVERT (2000)

Adults have long recognized that young people are able-bodied implementers of community-building efforts. Consequently, the phase of community building in which young people are most frequently seen working side-by-side with adults is program implementation.

Recently, young people have become more involved in planning community-building efforts. The widespread infusion of young people on planning boards, councils, and committees has served to give them a greater voice in determining the direction that community-building efforts should take.

The phase of community building in which young people tend to be least involved is evaluation. For one reason or another, adults have continued to take the lead in the evaluation process. Perhaps adults see evaluation as being far too complicated for young people. But research has shown that young people rise to the challenge, growing and stretching into their new roles as evaluators (Sabo, 2003).

As you work with the activities in this tool kit, remember to include a focus on youth involvement in the evaluation process. You will find tips and activities for involving youth as partners throughout the following pages.

Where possible, evaluators should attempt to foster the social equity of the evaluation, so that those who give to the evaluation can receive some benefits in return. Evaluators should seek to ensure that those who bear the burdens of contributing data ... are doing so willingly ... and have maximum feasible opportunity to obtain benefits that may be produced from the evaluation.

AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION (1999)

SUMMARY: WHY INVOLVE YOUTH IN EVALUATION?

Respond to Youth Stakeholders: Youth are directly affected by evaluation results, and involving them in evaluation empowers them to use their leadership skills to effect change.

Enhance Evaluation Design: As important stakeholders in programs, youth can provide valuable input on designing youth-friendly evaluation tools.

Equalize the Power Between Youth and Adults: Programs can actively involve youth in designing evaluation tools, pilot testing them, collecting data from their peers, reviewing evaluation results, and making suggestions for modifying practices.

Facilitate Sound Youth Development: Youth can directly apply their leadership skills through the process of learning to build community relationships and understanding real-world experiences.

Promote Youth Involvement in Community Change: Youth can practice real-life community involvement through data collection, reflection, and action.

A FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN EVALUATION

Lofquist (1989) identified a continuum of attitudes that adults may have toward young people. These attitudes affect the degree to which young people are involved in community-building efforts. That continuum, as adapted by the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development (2001), is represented below.

Youth as Objects   Adults exercise arbitrary and nearly total control over youth.

Youth as Recipients   Actions of adults are based on what they believe is good for young people.

Youth as Resources   Young people provide input into decisions, but they are still primarily in a helping role.

Youth as Partners   Youth and adults equally share decision-making power and responsibility.

How do the attitudes of adults affect how young people are involved in the evaluation of community building? The chart on page 6 identifies the role young people might play in evaluation from each of the four perspectives. The activities on pp. 7-15 allow you to explore how young people are involved in different ways in your own community, challenges to their full involvement, and how you can work to increase their involvement. For more activities and tips on youth–adult partnerships, see *Youth–Adult Partnerships: A Training Manual* (Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, 2003).

A CONTINUUM OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN EVALUATION

	YOUTH AS OBJECTS	YOUTH AS RECIPIENTS	YOUTH AS RESOURCES	YOUTH AS PARTNERS
RELATIONSHIP	Youth are evaluation objects.	Adults allow youth to participate in selected evaluation activities.	Adults view contributions of youth as beneficial, but they retain control.	Youth and adults share responsibility for the evaluation.
EVALUATION QUESTIONS	Evaluation questions are based on adult needs for information.	Evaluation questions are based on what adults believe they need to know to help youth.	Evaluation questions are developed with input from youth.	Evaluation questions are jointly developed by adults and youth.
METHODOLOGIES	Evaluation methods are determined by adults. Activities are performed by adults.	Adults determine evaluation methods, and they create situations in which young people learn from involvement.	Youth help adults decide on evaluation methods and help with evaluation activities.	Youth and adults jointly decide on evaluation activities. Activities are performed by youth and adults.
ANALYSIS OF DATA	Adults analyze data in ways that make sense to them.	Adults determine how data will be analyzed, and they create situations in which young people learn from involvement.	Youth help adults decide how data will be analyzed and help with analysis.	Youth and adults jointly analyze data.
EVALUATION USE	Adults use findings for their benefit.	Adults use findings in a manner they believe is in the best interest of young people.	Young people provide input regarding use of the findings.	Youth and adults use findings for their mutual benefit.
BENEFITS	Youth receive no benefit from involvement in the process. Youth indirectly benefit from the findings.	Youth receive limited benefit from involvement in the process. Youth indirectly benefit from the findings.	Youth receive moderate benefit from involvement in the process. Youth directly benefit from the findings.	Youth receive significant benefit from involvement in the process. Youth directly benefit from the findings.

    Reflect and Improve Tool Kit

ACTIVITY: SPECTRUM OF ATTITUDES

Charting Youth Involvement

Overview
This activity "maps" the existence and nature of youth participation in the community. It can also be a great activity to warm people up to evaluation or to provide some training in needs assessment, data gathering and analysis.

Objectives
* To distinguish the various types of youth–adult relationships
* To identify existing areas and opportunities for youth participation in the community

Materials Needed
Flip chart
"Spectrum of Attitudes" handout, page 9
"Spectrum of Attitudes Activity" handout, page 10
"Charting Youth Involvement" handout, page 11
Pens
Markers

Time Required
Approximately 1 hour

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Setting the context	15 min.	* Introduce the spectrum of attitudes using the "Spectrum of Attitudes" handout or a flip chart with key points. * As you describe each relationship, ask the group for a few examples, emphasizing the viewing of youth as TO, FOR, FOR/WITH, and WITH. * Distribute the "Spectrum of Attitudes Activity" handout. * Ask participants, in pairs or small groups, to identify whether youth are viewed as objects, recipients, resources, or partners in each example. * Ask for the answers to be shared with the total group, and discuss differences in perception. * Say to the group, "Now we are going to look at this more closely by mapping youth involvement in our own community."	Flip chart "Spectrum of Attitudes" handout Pens Markers "Spectrum of Attitudes Activity" handout

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 2 Mapping	20 min.	✴ Give everyone a copy of the handout "Charting Youth Involvement" and go through the instructions. It is helpful to refer to an example that you have created. ✴ Have each person create a map of youth involvement in the community.	"Charting Youth Involvement" handout Markers
Step 3 Sharing	10 min.	If the group is small, offer each person a chance to share his or her map with the group. If it is large, split into smaller groups with a facilitator in each group.	
Step 4 Reflection and discussion	10 min.	Ask the following questions: ✴ What images from the maps stand out to you? ✴ Were there any surprises for you as people shared? ✴ What similarities did you see in people's maps? ✴ What differences did you see? ✴ In general, how are youth involved in this community? ✴ What opportunities for new roles for youth exist? Where? ✴ What does this tell us about our work as a group?	

(Adapted from the Points of Light Foundation "Mapping Youth Programs for Youth Involvement" handout)

HANDOUT: SPECTRUM OF ATTITUDES

It is helpful to look at attitudes underlying youth–adult relationships along a spectrum.

ATTITUDE TYPE

Youth as Objects	Youth as Recipients	Youth as Resources	Youth as Partners

TO   FOR   WITH

Youth as Objects: Adults exercise arbitrary and near total control over youth. Programs and activities are TO youth.

Youth as Recipients: Based on what they think is in the youth's best interest, adults determine needs, prescribe remedies, implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes with little youth input. Programs and activities are FOR youth.

Youth as Resources: Youth help adults in planning, implementing, and evaluating work. Programs and activities are FOR and WITH youth.

Youth–Adult Partnerships: Youth and adults share decision-making power equally. Programs and activities are WITH youth.

Adapted from Lofquist, W. (1989). *The Technology of Prevention*. Tucson, AZ: Associates for Youth Development.

HANDOUT: SPECTRUM OF ATTITUDES ACTIVITY

Use this handout to determine whether young people are involved as **Objects?** (TO) **Recipients?** (FOR) **Resources?** (FOR/WITH) **Partners?** (WITH) in the following examples:

_____ 1. Youth participants take a test at the completion of the program to demonstrate that it is effective.

_____ 2. Young people and adults jointly determine what evaluation methods will be used.

_____ 3. To help young people develop their communication skills, adults allow young people to conduct interviews with program participants using a script written by an adult.

_____ 4. Young people participate in focus group interviews to help adults better understand how the program is functioning.

_____ 5. Young people review a draft of a questionnaire and make editorial suggestions regarding how it could be written in teen-friendly language.

_____ 6. To help young people improve their computer skills, adults have them enter survey data into a spreadsheet for analysis.

_____ 7. Young people present evaluation findings to relevant stakeholder groups, with adults available to help, if needed.

_____ 8. Young people provide adults with suggestions regarding the evaluation methods they feel would be appropriate.

_____ 9. Young people help adults understand and interpret comments made by other youth.

_____ 10. Adults allow young people to distribute and collect questionnaires in their classrooms.

_____ 11. Youth who participate in the program are randomly assigned into control and experimental groups by adults conducting the study.

_____ 12. Young people and adults participate in a brainstorming session to identify questions they want to see answered by the evaluation.

Answers: 1, 4, and 11 describe youth as objects.

3, 6, and 10 describe youth as recipients.

5, 8, and 9 describe youth as resources.

2, 7, and 12 describe youth as partners.

NOTE: This activity can also be conducted as a card-sort exercise. For example, you can write each item on a separate card and distribute the cards to participants. Each person selects the appropriate category for the situation on his or her card and shares the answer with a partner. Afterwards, participants share their answers with the total group.

HANDOUT: CHARTING YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

1. Draw a map of your connections to organizations and groups in the community. Include the organizations and groups that you are a part of, that many youth are a part of, and that many adults are a part of.

2. With a different color pen, highlight the points at which young people participate. Make a note about how they participate using the following codes:
   * P = as partners (with youth)
   * RS = as resources (for/with youth)
   * RC = as recipients (for youth)
   * O = as objects (to youth)

3. With another color pen, make a star to indicate where new opportunities exist for youth to participate.

ACTIVITY: STAGES OF YOUTH–ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

Objective

To gather information from participants about what they think are the knowledge and skills needed to start, sustain, and advocate for youth–adult partnerships

Materials Needed

Three flip charts with questions from below

Markers

Tape

Time Required

Approximately 45 minutes

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Setting the context	2 min.	Remind the group that everyone has various levels of experience with youth–adult partnerships. You could say, "As I look around the room, I can only imagine the variety of experiences each of us has had working in partnerships during our lifetime. This exercise has been created to help us share our knowledge and skills as we develop our work in youth–adult partnerships. Different skills, knowledge, and experiences are needed for different stages of youth–adult partnerships."	
Step 2 Stating the questions	5 min.	Refer to three flip charts. ✷ **First Chart:** What are the skills/knowledge/attitudes needed to *start* a youth–adult partnership? ✷ **Second Chart:** What are the skills/knowledge/attitudes needed to *sustain* a youth–adult partnership? ✷ **Third Chart:** What are the skills/knowledge/attitudes needed to *advocate* for youth–adult partnerships?	Flip charts Tape
Step 3 Clarifying	10 min.	Ask the group to read the questions and re-state them in their own words so that everyone is clear about what is meant. Ask the group for one or two ideas for each flip chart.	

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 4 Brain-storming	20 min.	Divide the participants into three groups, and assign each group to one flip chart. Ask each group to do a quick, yet thorough, brainstorm and to record every idea presented in the group on the flip chart. Encourage them to consider drawings or other creative ways to document their answers. After 5 minutes, ask a member from each group to post its flip chart in the front of the room and take turns presenting the groups' ideas.	Markers
Step 5 Reflection and discussion	10 min.	Process the activity in the large group using the following questions: ✳ What ideas stand out for you? ✳ What ideas are familiar? ✳ What ideas are new to you? ✳ What ideas are similar across the three stages? ✳ What is missing from our lists? ✳ How can these ideas help you start a youth–adult partnership? Sustain one? Advocate for a partnership?	

ACTIVITY: IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Objective
To explore and name the potential barriers to working in partnership with young people

Time
Approximately 45 minutes

Materials
Flip chart
Markers
Tape

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Setting the context	5 min.	If we can all agree on the benefits of having youth as full partners in the work that we do and in our communities, then what blocks us from achieving that goal? Have the group think about and discuss the real and perceived barriers to having effective and successful youth–adult partnerships.	
Step 2 Stating questions	5 min.	Divide the participants into several small groups (six groups would be ideal). Ask each group to stand at one of the following six stations, designated by the following six questions, written on sheets of flip chart paper prepared earlier. ✳ How do adults view young people? ✳ How do young people view adults? ✳ What behaviors have you experienced in intergenerational meetings that would not be helpful in building healthy partnerships? ✳ What behaviors have you seen that help build healthy partnerships? ✳ What blocks us from building effective working relationships between youth and adults? ✳ How can we ensure that barriers to building effective partnerships are minimized or eliminated?	Flip charts Markers Tape

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 3 Rotating	20 min.	Explain that each group will have 2 minutes to brainstorm answers to the questions posted on the flip chart paper. Encourage groups to write down all answers, big or small. After 2 minutes, ask the groups to rotate to the next station. Rotation occurs until all groups have had the opportunity to answer each question.	Markers
Step 4 Reviewing	10 min.	Ask the group to walk around the room to review each station, then ask the participants to reassemble as a large group.	
Step 5 Reflection and discussion	10 min.	Process the activity in the large group using the following questions: ✶ What words or phrases caught your attention? ✶ What discussions did groups have as they rotated around the room? ✶ What gaps exist? ✶ What new ideas did you see? ✶ What concerns do you have? ✶ What would you say about the information to someone who is not here? ✶ What can you do over the next 2 weeks to begin to address a block or barrier?	

Introduction to Evaluation

Why Evaluate?

To evaluate something means literally to look at it and judge its quality or value. An organization might evaluate individual employees, its programs, and/or the organization as a whole. When you evaluate a person's performance, you try to find out how well he or she carries out his or her responsibilities. When you evaluate a program, you want to know how far the program went in achieving its *goals* and *objectives*. And when you evaluate an organization, you ask how well it operates to achieve its organizational mission. Evaluation involves collecting information that helps you make these judgments fairly.

This tool kit focuses on *program evaluation*. Why is program evaluation so important?

Benefits of Evaluation

Improve the program: Identify strengths and weaknesses of program activities.

Build organizational **capacity**: Improve the ability to plan and implement programs. Document progress toward meeting program goals.

Inform and refine community **change efforts**: Identify unmet community needs and assess the impact of social change efforts.

Enhance **personal growth** and development among staff and participants: Provide feedback to staff and participants about their work. Recognize accomplishments and provide suggestions for improvement.

Provide evidence of program **accomplishments**: Report to boards, community members, and funders about program effectiveness.

Baseline Data for Evaluation

In order to experience the benefits of your evaluation work, it must be clear where the people and programs involved were before taking part in your organization's activities; that is, you must have a baseline from which to measure progress as you carry out your evaluation.

To understand what your program achieves, you have to know where you began.

Baseline questions might include the following:
* How serious is a particular problem or need among participants who will be a part of your program?
* What behaviors, interests, or skills do the participants have at the start of the program?

The amount of baseline information you collect will depend on your level of resources. For example, you may be limited to asking participants about their attitudes or behaviors. Or you may have the resources to gain a fuller picture by also asking parents and teachers about participants' needs, interests, and skills. Data collected for needs assessment purposes may also be used as baseline data.

Collecting this information allows you to find out how well the program achieved what it set out to do. Has a person's skill level increased because of the program? What parts of the program appear to have contributed most (or least) to the participants' success? If you did not achieve what you intended, how do you account for the outcome? What should you do differently next time?

Simply put, the idea is to identify participant skills, behaviors, and attitudes before the program begins in order to compare this baseline information with the same skills, behaviors, and attitudes *after* the program is finished.

WHY EVALUATE?

✴ What gets measures gets done.

✴ If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure.

✴ If you can't see success, you can't reward it.

✴ If you can't reward success, you're probably rewarding failure.

✴ If you can't see success, you can't learn from it.

✴ If you can't recognize failure, you can't learn from it.

✴ If you can demostrate results, you can win public support.

Adapted from Osborne, D and T. Gaebler. (1992). In Patton, M. Q. (1997). *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Setting the Stage for Evaluation

Before you develop a plan for your evaluation process, it is important to take a look at your organization's mission and goals and construct a theory of change that will describe the results toward which you are working.

Mission and Goals

The first step in setting the stage for your evaluation is to review your organization's mission and goals and reflect on how well they represent your work. Your activities and outcomes should map back to that mission.

ACTIVITY: REVISITING MISSION AND GOALS

Objective

To verify that an organization's activities and outcomes are in line with its stated mission and goals

Materials Needed

Half sheets of paper

Pens

Markers

Tape

Copies of mission and goals (If the organization does not have goals or a mission statement, try to find something that is a directional statement, with objectives or strategies that are generally accepted within the agency. If nothing like this is available, postpone this activity until these can be developed.)

Time Required

Approximately 60 minutes

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL

Step 1 Introduction	10 min.	✶ Distribute copies of mission and goals. Review these to determine whether the participants have any questions or concerns about the content.
		✶ Divide a section of the wall into three columns, using these headings:
		  – *Mission and Goals* (in this column, use the following subcategories, starting at the top and moving down: Mission, Goal 1, Goal 2, etc.)
		  – *Program Activities*
		  – *Changes in Youth Behavior*
			Copies of mission and goals
			Half sheets of paper
			Markers

Step 2 Examining the mission and goals	15 min.	✶ Ask participants to each jot down, on half sheets of paper, three key words from their mission statement and goals that most accurately reflect their work today.
		✶ Have them place the half sheets in the appropriate place under Mission and Goals section on the wall.
		✶ Discuss questions such as these:
		  – How well do the mission and goals represent your actual work?
		  – Do the mission and goals articulate the outcomes that you hope to achieve?
			Half sheets
			Tape

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 3 Determining how program activities tie to the mission and goals	15 min.	★ Have participants, working in small groups, write on half sheets any actual program activities they can think of that reflect the mission and goals (one activity per sheet). ★ Ask a representative from each group to place these in the "Program Activities" row, across from the related mission piece or goal statement. ★ Ask the following: – To what extent are your program activities reflective of your mission and goals? – Using a specific example from the wall, can you track a specific activity back to a goal and a piece of the mission statement?	Half sheets Markers Tape
Step 4 Tracking mission and goals through to behavior change	15 min.	★ Ask participants, still working in small groups, to write on blank half sheets (one idea per sheet) the places and ways in which youth have been involved in various activities. ★ After these have been posted, repeat the process to post changes they have seen in youth (i.e., youth outcomes) as a result of their participation in various program activities. ★ Discuss the following questions: – Are the changes you see in youth consistent with the goals outlined in your mission? – How well do your mission and goals map to your activities and youth outcomes?	Half sheets Markers Tape
Step 5 Reflection and discussion	5 min.	Process this activity with the full group, using such questions as these: ★ What piece of information on the wall stood out for you? ★ What lessons can you take from this exercise? ★ Were there any surprises for you? ★ How can you use this information in your organization in the near future?	
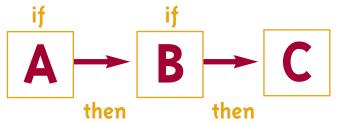
One major key to successful evaluation planning is the use of logic modeling to help organizations become more purposeful in their work. As you revisit your mission and goals, you will probably discover that your actions and activities have been somewhat random. However, if you make an effort to build a logic model for each program thrust, priority, or goal area, you are likely to be better focused on achieving success in all areas of your work.

As you move on to the development of a logic model in the next section of this book, you will look more closely at activities that are planned or are currently in progress and at the anticipated results of these activities. It is important that you maintain only those activities that help move the organization toward the fulfillment of its mission and goals. You now have the information with which to make that judgment.

CONSTRUCTING A THEORY OF CHANGE

Successful community-building efforts produce significant and lasting changes in people and the places they live. Such change typically begins with a group of people participating in a dialogue on the future of its community. Such dialogue leads to purposeful actions organized in a manner that results in valued outcomes for a community and its people. The understanding we have about how such actions go about producing the outcomes we desire is called a *theory of change*.

In short, a theory of change explains why the things we do should produce the results we intend. Seldom, though, can a theory of change be expressed as a simple two-element relationship between our activities and desired outcomes. More often, program theory is expressed as a chain of "if–then" relationships somewhat analogous to a chain of dominos standing on end. When one domino falls, it causes the next to fall, and so on.

For example, if adults change their opinions regarding the value of young people on boards and committees, then one would expect that youth representation on such boards and committees would increase over time. Subsequently, if more young people are appointed to boards and committees, then community decision making should more inclusively reflect the wishes and desires of the community's young people.

Underlying the series of *if–then* relationships are a number of assumptions, or beliefs, about the program and how it will work and what it will achieve. It is often assumed that a program is linked to improvement in participant or client well-being and that the program will have the necessary time, money, and expertise to achieve its goals. Because individual participants' assumptions may vary, developing a group theory of change and a group action plan can bring the differences to light. Group discussion can clarify expectations.

When developing a theory of change, think about the underlying assumptions. Are they realistic and sound? What evidence or research do you have to support your assumptions?

Many theories of change are *implicit*. In other words, they exist only in the minds of the people involved in the change effort. It is quite possible that each person involved in a community-building effort is operating from a different theory of change. Consequently, everyone may have a different view of how the change effort should unfold. Conflicting theories of change can lead to

frustration within a group. One way to avoid such problems is to involve the group in constructing a *logic model* for the community-building effort (Rennekamp and Jacobs, 2004). Additional information about theories of change, including an activity to use with your group to help construct a theory of change, can be found in *Building Community: A Toolkit on Youth and Adults in Charting Assets and Creating Change* (Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, 2001).

WHAT IS A LOGIC MODEL?

Simply stated, a logic model is a graphic depiction of a theory of change. A logic model helps make the theory of change behind a community-building effort explicit, or clear in meaning, rather than implicit. When the logic model is developed by a group, rather than an individual, it represents a shared understanding of a theory of change.

Tips for Involving Youth as Partners

Each member of a community-building team has his or her own mental image of how and why a particular community-building effort functions. Only through a facilitated process can these multiple images be fashioned into a shared theory of change. Involving youth as partners in the evaluation of community building begins with ensuring that young people are a part of the team that develops the logic model for the effort. It is important that the community-building team include roughly equal numbers of youth and adults. Also make sure that committees and discussion groups contain both youth and adult members.

Logic models specify the activities and events that ultimately lead to your desired outcomes. Some logic models are simple linear chains. Others are more complex and systems oriented. Although no prescribed formula exists for how a finished model should look, the benefits of using logic models in program development are clear and compelling.

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation (2000) cites several benefits of using logic models. First, the process of building a logic model can serve as the *action-planning phase* of a community-building effort. Once developed, a logic model functions as a *blueprint for implementation*. Second, a logic model can help us *communicate our plans* to others who may be contemplating an initial or continuing investment in our community-building efforts. Perhaps most important, a logic model can serve as a *framework for evaluation* by identifying milestones at which evaluation activities should occur.

Because the process of building a logic model can serve as the action-planning phase of a community-building effort, if your group is currently planning a community-building effort, you are strongly encouraged to develop a logic model at this time.

Even if you are well into the implementation phases of your community-building effort, it is still beneficial to develop a logic model. Because logic models specify the outcomes you aim to produce through your community-building activities, they serve as an excellent tool for initiating discussions about evaluation. A logic model can also serve as a diagnostic tool to help figure out why a community-building effort may not be working as planned.

Be aware, however, that the process used to develop a logic model for an existing community-building effort is somewhat different from the process used to design a new model in response to an identified community priority. This section addresses some of those differences on pp. 28–29.

Why Use a Logic Model?

Why should you develop and use a logic model? How will it help you?

Logic models

* bring detail to broad goals, including planning, evaluation, implementation, and communications;
* help identify gaps in program logic and clarify assumptions, thereby making success more likely;
* build understanding and promote consensus about what the program is and how it will work;
* build buy-in and teamwork;
* make underlying beliefs explicit;
* help clarify what is appropriate to evaluate—and when—so that evaluation resources are used wisely; and
* summarize complex programs to communicate with stakeholders, funders, and audiences.

Logic models also enable effective competition for resources. Many funders, for example, require logic models in their grant requests.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF LOGIC MODELS

Inputs are the resources needed to support a community-building effort. Inputs include such things as time, money, paid staff, volunteers, materials, facilities, and equipment. Inputs are the costs of implementing a community-building effort. They include all kinds of resources in support of the project, whether human, material, or financial.

Outputs are the actions of the group that are seen as being instrumental in producing community change. These actions are usually conducted for or with a particular audience.

Outcomes are conditions produced by a community-building effort. Many people view outcomes as synonymous with *results*.

Inputs resources	→	**Outputs** actions	→	**Outcomes** results
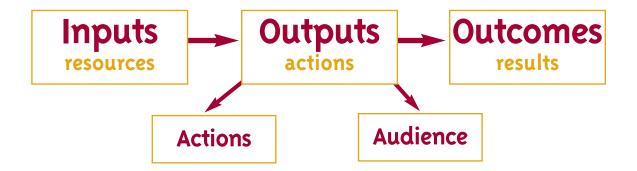
More About Outputs

Outputs include an array of activities that are seen as instrumental in producing the outcomes desired. Outputs can include such things as media campaigns, camps, retreats, recreation pro-grams, workshops, seminars, and a host of other community learning opportunities. They also include services provided to others by the community-building team. What each team chooses to do depends on what it wants to accomplish.
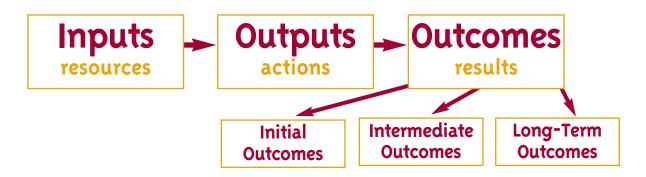
Frequently implied, but seldom articulated, is the notion that activities are conducted for or with a particular audience. Media campaigns frequently focus on changing the opinions of a particular segment of the population. Learning opportunities are designed with the needs of a particular group of learners in mind. Services are provided to a particular group of people.

Consequently, the process of developing a logic model frequently involves specifying both the activities undertaken by the group and the audience with which the activity is conducted.

Inputs resources	→	**Outputs** actions	→	**Outcomes** results

Actions   **Audience**

More About Outcomes

Not all outcomes are created equal. Accordingly, the United Way of America (1996) has developed a framework for thinking about outcomes, as depicted in the following diagram.

The framework suggests that *initial outcomes* are the first benefits or changes that a community-building effort produces. Initial outcomes are frequently characterized as the *learning* that occurs within a target population; consequently, they include such things as knowledge gain, expanded awareness of an issue, acquisition of new skills, and changes of opinion.

Intermediate outcomes are often characterized as changes in *behavior* or *actions* that are produced as a result of the initial outcomes (i.e., as a result of the lessons learned). Intermediate outcomes can include policy changes or social action. Intermediate outcomes link initial outcomes to more distant long-term outcomes.

Long-term outcomes tend to consist of the ultimate benefits that a community-building effort aims to bring about. Long-term outcomes are often characterized as changes in social, economic, or environmental conditions that are brought about by changed behaviors, policies, or social actions.

CREATING A LOGIC MODEL: WHERE TO START?

There is no single or best way to create a logic model. How you create your model depends on the developmental stage of the program or community-building effort you are working with.

For Existing Programs: → Move from Left to Right, Asking "Why?"

* You might start at the left-hand side of the logic model diagram and ask, "What resources (inputs) are we using to make this program happen?"
* Moving to the right, ask, "What activities (outputs) are we carrying out?"
* "Who makes up our audience (outputs) participating in these events?"
* "What do we want our participant(s) to learn (immediate outcomes)?"

✴ "What behaviors or actions (intermediate outcomes) are we looking for as a result of that learning?"

✴ "What ultimate benefits (long-term outcomes) do we hope for as a result of these behaviors?"

You can simply ask the question "Why?" as you move across the model. "Why are we investing these resources?" (Answer: So we can conduct x number of training sessions with x number of participants). "Why do we hold these training sessions?" (Answer: So our audience will learn relevant skills, knowledge, and attitudes). Ask and answer the questions until the logic model is completed.

For New Programs: ←Move from Right to Left, asking "What?" and "How?"

If you are in the planning stage of a new program, you might start with the long-term expected end result—the impact—and work backward. "What is our desired long-term outcome? What specific behaviors or actions will help us move toward that outcome? What lessons must be acquired to achieve these actions?" Keep moving from right to left.

You can also move across the model from right to left asking "How?" For example, you can ask, "How can we achieve this desired long-term outcome? How can we ensure that people will have the necessary lessons to carry out these actions?"

Remember, there is no single starting or ending point. A logic model is dynamic. It will change as the program changes. Much of the value of the logic model lies in the process of creating it, checking it, and modifying it while bringing all key stakeholders to a shared understanding of what the program is and what it will do.

ACTIVITY: LOGIC MODELING

Overview

This activity is designed to help youth and adults jointly develop a logic model of their community-building effort. The result is a document that depicts a shared understanding of how their work will produce the outcomes they desire.

This activity is best done in the planning phase of the community-building effort. The logic model that results then becomes the blueprint for achieving the group's vision. It also identifies key milestones at which evaluation activity should occur and helps the group plan for evaluation from the outset.

This activity is written specifically for groups designing a new community-building effort. It encourages the group to begin with the end results in mind. Accordingly, the activity begins with the specification of the long-term outcomes that the group is working toward. These long-term outcomes may have already been identified through a community visioning exercise or similar activity. The team then identifies the intermediate and initial outcomes that are precursors to achieving the long-term outcomes. Only then does the group engage in a discussion about strategies for achieving the outcomes and the resources needed to support its efforts.

For groups designing new community-building efforts, the activity can be conducted as written. However, *groups wishing to develop a logic model for an existing community-building effort may want to change the order in which major elements of the logic model are identified*. For example, in an existing effort, members of the community-building team may be familiar with what the group does and how it functions, but participants may have less clarity about what the group is trying to accomplish in terms of initial, intermediate, or long-term outcomes. In such cases, it may be beneficial to begin by identifying what resources the group consumes (inputs) and what the groups does (outputs) before initiating discussions about outcomes.

Tips for Involving Youth as Partners

A logic model for an existing community-building effort depicts relationships between events and occurrences that have already happened. But the manner in which adults and young people experience these events and occurrences may be somewhat different. It is possible they did not even experience the same things. Consequently, it is not at all unusual for adults and youth to have very different perceptions of the community-building effort and what it is accomplishing. When building logic models for existing efforts, listen carefully for differing interpretations of what is happening. Explore differing perceptions to assure the logic model is not biased toward adults or program authorities.

ACTIVITY: LOGIC MODELING

Feel free to adapt this activity to your specific needs.

Objective

To build a logic model for a community-building effort that reflects a shared understanding of how actions of the group lead to desired outcomes

Materials Needed

Photocopies of preceding pages on logic modeling

Flip chart paper

Markers

Tape

Half sheets of paper

Spray adhesive

"Community-Building Logic Model" template, page 34

Time Required

Approximately 2 hours

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Setting the context	10 min.	✶ Briefly summarize the content from the previous pages on logic models, discussing the importance of a theory of change and the basic elements of a logic model. ✶ Then say to the group, "Today we are going to develop a picture of how our community-building process is to operate. We are going to show how the actions we take within the community produce the results we desire. What we produce today will be a draft version of our logic model. But a part of the task will also be to identify a team that will further refine what we do today."	Handouts of the previous pages. Make enough copies so that each participant can have a copy.

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 2 **Articulating** **the vision**	20 min.	★ At the top of a sheet of flip chart paper, write the words "Long-Term Outcomes." (If you are building a logic model for an existing community-building effort, you may choose to start with Step 5.) ★ Place the sheet of flip chart paper on the wall. ★ Say to the group, "We are going to begin by identifying what we want to see happen as a result of our efforts. We are going to identify the desired outcomes of the community-building effort. We will begin with identifying the long-term outcomes of our work. The long-term outcomes should be statements that represent the vision we have for the community—that is, the conditions which will exist as a result of our work." ★ Distribute the half sheets of paper and markers. Have each person identify two or three long-term outcomes of the community-building effort. Have them write each outcome on a separate half-sheet of paper. ★ Collect all the half sheets, read them aloud to the group, and affix them to the flip chart paper. (For best results, spray the flip chart paper with adhesive prior to the activity.) ★ Work with the group to group similar ideas in pairs or clusters. When the group has completed its work, go on to identifying intermediate outcomes.	Flip chart paper Markers Tape Half sheets of paper Spray adhesive
Step 3 **Identifying** **intermediate** **outcomes**	20 min.	★ At the top of a sheet of flip chart paper write the words "Intermediate Outcomes." Place the sheet of paper on the wall to the left of the previous one. ★ Say to the group, "We are now going to identify the intermediate outcomes for our community-building effort. Intermediate outcomes are typically those things that people must do differently if the long-term outcomes we just identified are to be achieved. Intermediate outcomes include changes in policies, procedures, behaviors, actions, or practices." ★ Repeat the process described above in Step 2: Cluster similar responses, then ask whether any items, pairs, or clusters previously identified as long-term outcomes now look more like intermediate outcomes.	Flip chart paper Markers Tape Half sheets Spray adhesive

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 4 **Identifying** **initial** **outcomes**	20 min.	✴ At the top of a sheet of flip chart paper write the words "Initial Outcomes." Place the sheet of paper on the wall to the left of the previous one. ✴ Say to the group, "We are now going to identify the initial outcomes for our community-building effort. Initial outcomes are typically represented by increased awareness of an issue or changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, or intentions." ✴ Repeat the process described above.	Flip chart paper Markers Tape Half sheets Spray adhesive
Step 5 **Identifying** **actions**	20 min.	✴ At the top of a sheet of flip chart paper write the words "Outputs or Activities." Place the sheet of flip chart paper on the wall to the left of the previous one. ✴ Say to the group, "We are now going to identify the outputs or activities for our community-building effort. These are the activities we will carry out to produce the outcomes we have identified. For each of these, please also identify the audience for or with which the activity is undertaken." ✴ Repeat the process described above.	Flip chart paper Markers Tape Half sheets Spray adhesive
Step 6 **Identifying** **inputs**	20 min.	✴ At the top of a sheet of flip chart paper write the words "Inputs or Resources." Place the sheet of flip chart paper on the wall to the left of the previous one. ✴ Say to the group, "We are now going to identify the inputs or resources needed to support our activities. These typically include money, staff, volunteers, facilities, and the efforts of partners." ✴ Repeat the process to identify resources needed.	Flip chart paper Markers Tape Half sheets Spray adhesive
Step 7 **Review** **and refine**	10 min.	✴ Ask the group to review what it has created. Then ask the following questions, pausing after each one for discussion: – Looking at our work, what stands out to you? – How are the various elements related? – Do some sections seem more difficult than others? – How can we use this in our evaluation efforts? ✴ Be sure to mention, "The planning of our community-building effort has unfolded from right to left as we have moved across the wall. We started with the end results in mind. Now, how will the actual events unfold as we move into the implementation stage?" ✴ Then secure volunteers to further refine the logic model using the "Community-Building Logic Model" template.	"Community-Building Logic Model" template

TEMPLATE: COMMUNITY-BUILDING LOGIC MODEL

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES		
	Actions	Audience	Initial	Intermediate	Long-Term
Resources deployed to address situation	Actions supported by resources invested	Individuals or groups for whom actions are intended	*Learning* that results from involvement	*Behaviors* that result from learning	*Conditions* that change as a result of behaviors

Example: Outcomes-Based Logic Model

Young Women's Project Theory of Change

Outcomes

* Knowledge, skill, attitude change (100 teens)
* Teens use counseling and social service resource referrals (25 teens)
* Teens use peer support circles and network (100 teens)
* School and community impact through project implementation

Outputs

* Curriculum and lesson plans: advocacy, reproductive health, mental health, violence against women, needs assessment, project development
* Materials and worksheets
* Training of trainers on popular education, working with teens, evaluation, social justice
* Social service materials

Activities

* Training in self-advocacy, reproductive health, mental health, violence against women, needs assessment, project development
* Individual counseling and interventions
* Resource service referrals

Inputs

* Staff (well-trained and supported)
* School personnel to help with recruitment
* School facilities (room to meet in)
* Youth Women's Project facilities (computers, space, supplies), food, gifts, money for stipends

LIMITATIONS OF LOGIC MODELS

Logic models are helpful and sound tools to use as a basis for planning and evaluation activities, but they have some limitations that should be made known to participants in the process:

* Logic models only *represent* reality; they are not reality.
    – Programs are not linear.
    – Programs are dynamic interrelationships that rarely follow sequential order.
* Logic models focus on expected outcomes—you also need to pay attention to unintended or unexpected outcomes: positive, negative, and neutral.

✳ Outcomes cannot always be attributed to items listed in the logic model.
  – The program is likely to be just one of many factors influencing outcomes.
  – Consider other factors that may be affecting observed outcomes.
  – There is no "proof" that the program caused the outcome.
✳ Logic models *do not* address the questions:
  – Are we doing the right thing?
  – Should we have this program at all?

CHECKING THE LOGIC MODEL

✳ Are the outcomes really outcomes?
✳ Is the longest term outcome
  – meaningful?
  – logical?
  – realistic?
✳ Do the activities/outputs realistically lead to outcomes?
✳ Do we have the resources needed for the activities?
✳ Does the logic model represent the program's purpose?
✳ Does it respond to the situation?
✳ How will the context of the program and community affect the resources, outputs and outcomes?

USING LOGIC MODELS TO FRAME EVALUATION

Logic models guide evaluation by
✳ Answering a variety of questions about the program, such as:
  – How many youth did we reach in our community-organizing effort?
  – What activities best help youth learn about social change work?
  – What skills are youth learning in our programs?
✳ Generating evaluation questions about context, implementation, and outcomes:
  – Context: What community factors contributed to successful youth organizing?
  – Implementation: How are adult staff involved in community work?
  – Outcomes: What have we learned about our work in the community?

Now it is time to move on to the development of the evaluation plan.

Developing and Implementing an Evaluation Plan

Evaluation has been described as a systematic process for judging the value or worth of something (Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick, 1997). That systematic process begins with a clear evaluation plan, which is a "road map" for your evaluation. The evaluation plan contains a data collection plan, resources for evaluation, evaluation goals, evaluation questions, and a timeline. It also identifies who is involved in the evaluation. A good plan reflects your organization's values, mission, and goals.

Developing an evaluation plan involves these basic steps:

Take stock of resources available for evaluation: Determine the scale of the evaluation, set aside appropriate funds for self-evaluation efforts, and factor in volunteers and in-kind services.

Identify stakeholders and their information needs: A stakeholder can be defined as anyone who has a stake or interest in your community-building effort. In this step, the community-building team identifies the information needs of various stakeholders.

Establish evaluation goals/purpose with organizational values in mind: Common goals may include testing program effectiveness, making the case for changing program practices, or justifying continued funding.

Develop evaluation questions: In this step, the community-building team revisits the community-building logic model and develops evaluation questions in light of stakeholder needs for information.

Identify indicators and standards: Indicators are the specific pieces of information that provide you with answers to your evaluation questions. It is also important to identify the level of an indicator that represents "goodness."

Review existing data sources and select evaluation methods: Evaluation data can be collected using a number of methods. In this step, decisions are made about the methods most appropriate for your evaluation project.

Develop an evaluation timeline: The process of developing an evaluation timeline involves specifying the points in time when measurements will be taken. Measurements can be taken before, during, and after a community-building effort.

The sections that follow provide detailed explanations of each of these steps. But before developing an evaluation plan for your particular project, it can be helpful to lead the group through the following "warm-up" activity.

ACTIVITY: WARM-UP

Overview

This participatory activity illustrates the basic principles of evaluation.

Objective

To create an understanding of the importance of evaluation questions in focusing an evaluation

Materials Needed

"Evaluation" worksheet, page 41

Pens

Three different brands of chocolate chip cookies, enough for each participant to have one cookie of each brand

Time Required

Approximately 40 minutes

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Setting the context	2 min.	Say to the group, "You are about to conduct an evaluation activity. The subject of the evaluation will be chocolate chip cookies. During this activity, we are going to develop evaluation questions, gather evidence from the samples provided, and determine which samples best meet our expectations."	
Step 2 Establishing criteria	5 min.	Give each person a copy of the "Evaluation" worksheet on the following page. Say, "First, I want you to think about the information you need to make an informed decision about which brand of cookie to buy. What questions would you want answered before you bought a particular brand of cookie? Write those questions in the left column of the worksheet. You will use the same questions as a guide for evaluating each cookie."	"Evaluation" worksheet Pens
Step 3 Gathering evidence	10 min.	Have each person come forward and get one cookie of each brand. Say, "Use whatever methods you choose to gather evidence that helps you answer each of the evaluation questions you have identified. Record your findings in the second column of the worksheet."	Three different brands of chocolate chip cookies

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 4 Judgment	5 min.	Say, "Now use the evidence you obtained to rate each cookie on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest."	
Step 5 Sharing	5 min.	Now tell the participants to form groups of three and share their evaluation questions, methods of gathering evidence, and their judgments about the cookies.	
Step 6 Reflection and discussion	13 min.	Lead a full-group discussion: Read each of the following questions to the group, allowing for responses after each one: ✶ What are some of the evaluation questions you identified? ✶ Why did people develop different evaluation questions? ✶ Did any of you have particular standards or expectations that the cookie must meet, such as a particular number of chocolate chips? ✶ What methods did people use to gather data about their cookies? ✶ What judgments did you make about the cookies? ✶ How might the selection of evaluation questions affect one's judgments about which cookie to buy? ✶ In what ways is this like evaluating community building? ✶ In what ways is it different?	

Adapted from Preskill, H., and D. Russ-Eft. (2005). *Building Evaluation Capacity: 72 Activities for Teaching and Training*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, www.sagepub.com.

WORKSHEET: COOKIE EVALUATION

Brand of Cookie _____

Questions	Data or Findings	Method	Rating
Final Rating or Score			

Brand of Cookie _____

Questions	Data or Findings	Method	Rating
Final Rating or Score			

Brand of Cookie _____

Questions	Data or Findings	Method	Rating
Final Rating or Score			

TAKING STOCK OF RESOURCES

Before you start taking any action to implement an evaluation in your organization, it is important to take stock of the resources that you have to do the job. This includes all sorts of resources available to you—financial, material, human, in-kind, etc.

First, determine the scale of the evaluation. How many programs will you be evaluating? What time frame will you be evaluating? From whom will you need to gather information? Generally, the larger the scope of the evaluation, the greater the resources you will need.

Next, look at the resources that exist:

* What funds are available for the evaluation process? How much staff time will be needed? What supplies or other equipment will you need?
* Take stock of the volunteer time that will be available to you, and look at other in-kind services that you might take advantage of during this activity.
* In a self-evaluation, consider the costs for the design, data collection, analysis, and reporting phases of the process. Are there partners or other organizations that can be helpful to you?

ACTIVITY: TAKING STOCK OF RESOURCES

Objective

To identify existing resources within the community that would be helpful in the evaluation process

Materials Needed

Flip chart

Markers

List of steps in evaluation plan

"Resources to Leverage for Your Evaluation" handout, page 44

Time Required

50 minutes

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Review of steps in evaluation	10 min.	✶ Describe the evaluation process and post a list of the steps. ✶ Explain to the group that the first step in developing an evaluation plan is to take stock of resources available in the community.	List of steps in the evaluation plan, see pp. 37-38
Step 2 Brainstorm resources	15 min.	Ask participants to break into small groups and answer the following question: "What resources in your local area can be leveraged to support your evaluation?"	Flip chart Paper Markers
Step 3 Share	15 min.	✶ Have each group report out; solicit any additional ideas group members may have. ✶ Distribute "Resources to Leverage for Your Evaluation" handout.	"Resources to Leverage for Your Evaluation" handout
Step 4 Reflect and discussion	10 min.	Help the group reflect on the activity, posing questions: ✶ What resources struck you as the most important to our evaluation process? Most interesting? Most surprising? ✶ Which were easy to come up with? ✶ Which were the hardest? ✶ What was your favorite part of this activity? ✶ How can we use this list of resources as we plan our evaluation?	

HANDOUT: RESOURCES TO LEVERAGE FOR YOUR EVALUATION

RESOURCES	WEBSITE	NOTES
Americans for the Arts	www.americansforthearts.org	Free tool kit on evaluation.
Data Center Youth Strategy Center	www.datacenter.org www.datacenter.org/programs/youth.htm	Free resources on research, particularly research planning and design
Department of Education	www.ed.gov	A good resource for educational information—particularly statistics
Full Circle Fund	www.fullcirclefund.org	Provides grants and technical assistance (TA) and connects business leaders
Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development	www.theinnovationcenter.org	Provides resources, technical assistance, and training on evaluation and youth–adult partnerships
Leadership Learning Community	www.leadershiplearning.org	Provides resources on evaluation of leadership development programs
Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ)	www.wilderdom.com/leq.html	Research tool on measuring personal change
Open Society Institute	www.soros.org	Focuses on youth media and crime
Planning and Evaluation Resource Center (PERC)	www.evaluationtools.org	Clearinghouse and tutorial on evaluation and planning
RMC Research Corporation	www.rmcdenver.com/resources.htm	Maintains Compendium of Assessment and Research Tools (CART), a database of survey tools
Social Policy Research Associates (SPR)	www.spra.com	Provides training and technical assistance on evaluation; conducts large and small-scale research projects
Taproot Group	www.taprootfoundation.org	Donates time to nonprofits
W. K. Kellogg Foundation	www.wkkf.org	Has an evaluation tool kit available
Youth in Focus	www.youthinfocus.net	Developed and field-tested the Youth-led Research, Evaluation and Planning (Youth REP) method
Points of Light Youth Leadership Institute	www.pyli.org	Training, curricula and resources on youth leadership

More Ideas For Discovering Local Area Resources

Local Area Colleges and Universities: Colleges and universities in your area will probably have resources that you can use for research. Their resources may include anything from faculty expertise to students looking for research opportunities in the form of an internship. By contacting the departments appropriate to your research at local colleges or universities, you can also discover other resources in your community.

Small Business Feasibility Studies: As part of their feasibility studies, new businesses in your local area may have conducted community surveys that you could use as a resource for your data collection.

CHECKLIST: DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION PLAN

Take stock of your current situation. Individual members of the evaluation team can complete the checklist, and their responses can be discussed as a group. Refer back to these responses as your evaluation plan progresses.

YES	NO	
Stakeholder and Youth Involvement		
		Do we make intentional efforts to involve relevant stakeholders?
		Have we identified ways to involve all stakeholders in the evaluation?
		Do we actively seek ways to involve youth in the evaluation?
		Do we provide opportunities for youth to feel welcomed and respected in our evaluation design process?
		Can we enhance youth leadership skills through the evaluation?
		Have we identified barriers to involving youth in evaluation?
Goals and Outcomes		
		Do the goals of the evaluation reflect our mission and program activities?
		Are the evaluation activities realistic given our available resources?
		Do the outcomes outlined in the logic model (theory of change) reflect our core activities?
Data		
		Will the evaluation plan gather new and useful data?
		Will we be able to use the data that we gather?
Staffing		
		Have we identified core staff to conduct and lead the evaluation effort?
		Does the organization support the roles of the staff leading the evaluation?
		Are we making time for these staff to fully carry out the evaluation activities?

IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR INFORMATION NEEDS

Stakeholders

A stakeholder is anyone who has a *stake,* or interest, in your efforts. In general, stakeholders want to know whether your efforts merit their endorsement, investment, or involvement. They need information from you to help them make that assessment. Typical stakeholder groups include youth, parents, volunteers, business leaders, elected officials, collaborators and funders. Each program or community effort, however, will have its own set of stakeholders.

You saw in the previous cookie activity how stakeholders have different information needs. Not everyone identified the same evaluation questions. A health-conscious person may have wanted to know the sugar and fat content of each cookie. Someone on a tight budget may have wanted to know the cost of the cookies. Some people just want to know how they taste.

Likewise, stakeholders in a community change effort may have different needs for information. Some stakeholders may want to know whether the funds devoted to your effort were used in an appropriate manner. Other stakeholders may want assurance that products and services made available through your efforts were distributed equitably. Another stakeholder group may want to know how many people benefited from your efforts. Still other stakeholders may want specific information about how those people benefited. Ultimately, stakeholder information needs depend heavily on the relationship of each stakeholder to the program.

A list of stakeholders can be produced by answering the question, "Who cares?"

Lead the group through a discussion of the relevant stakeholders in your community-building effort. Identify the specific information each stakeholder group would need about your program. List the various stakeholders and their information needs on flip chart paper, then develop a group consensus on which stakeholders to involve on the evaluation team. Use the "Stakeholder Inventory" on page 47.

Tips for Involving Youth as Partners

When groups think about stakeholders, they frequently think first about adults in positions of power, such as funders and elected officials. They often overlook many youth stakeholder groups. Make sure the stakeholder list that your team develops includes youth and adult stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER INVENTORY

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	INFORMATION NEEDS

MEETING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Tips for Holding Effective Meetings With Stakeholders

Planning for evaluation usually involves a series of meetings with key stakeholders. Stakeholders may include the board, youth, and community members. Before and during these meetings, all stakeholders will want to feel that they are on equal footing in shaping the evaluation plan and making decisions about its design. To make this happen, it is important to involve all partners, as much as possible, in all aspects of setting up and conducting meetings. Below are general tips for what to do before, during, and after meetings with stakeholders.

This meeting with the stakeholders should first and foremost focus on prioritizing information needs (i.e., the questions they want answered). Once this has been determined, the group can move on to look at possible designs and methods.

Before the Meeting

∗ **Set clear goals for the meeting.** Be realistic about what can be accomplished in one meeting, and make sure you have enough time to accomplish these goals.

∗ **Ask all stakeholders to contribute items to the agenda.** It is helpful to have each stakeholder think about agenda items for the meeting in advance. You may want to conduct a brief conference call prior to your first meeting in order to set goals and prepare an agenda.

During the Meeting

∗ **Follow the agenda and keep to the times set for each item.** As much as possible, the facilitator or meeting leader should try to follow the agenda and keep discussion within the time allotted, unless the group agrees that an extension is necessary.

∗ **Use an icebreaker at the beginning of the meeting.** Starting a meeting (after announcements and reviewing the agenda) with an icebreaker is a way for participants to become more familiar with each other and get energized to positively tackle the tasks on the agenda. Try to have youth lead the icebreakers to keep the group energized.

∗ **Use agreed-upon methods to prioritize evaluation activities.** Sometimes stakeholders find that it is easy to generate ideas for evaluation but difficult to prioritize them. You might want to try the prioritization activity on page 49.

Prioritization Activity

One prioritization strategy is to post all the evaluation options (evaluation questions, methods, etc.) on the wall and give each participant colored stickers. Ask each participant to put up to three stickers on each evaluation activity that is a priority to their organization (the more stickers, the higher the priority). Give the participants 3 to 5 minutes to make their choices, and then tally the results and present them to the group. Whichever method you use, make sure that all members of the group can live with the results, and remind them that lower priority evaluation activities may not be pursued.

✳ **Develop next steps, timelines, and lead people to take responsibility for the next steps at the end of the meeting.** Make sure you schedule time at the end of each meeting to talk about next steps, including follow-up activities for your evaluation plan. Once you have the next steps, choose dates and lead people to take responsibility for implementing the next steps.

After the Meeting

✳ **Reflect on the success of the meeting**. Take time to reflect on the meeting and whether you achieved your goals. Is there anything you can do to make the next meeting more successful?

ESTABLISHING EVALUATION GOALS

Before deciding on evaluation methods, questions, or anything else, it is important to focus your evaluation by establishing a common goal or purpose—one that accords with organizational values and goals.

Common goals may include
* testing program effectiveness,
* making a case for changing program practice(s),
* justifying continued funding, and
* documenting community change efforts.

Goals may be divided into different levels:
* Youth level: to understand whether youth have developed a better understanding of community issues and strategies for addressing those issues.
* Organizational level: to document how the organization has enhanced its ability to serve youth.
* Community level: to document and refine community change work.

The "Identifying Goals" activity (page 51) helps to elicit suggested goals for your evaluation. Have the group decide which goals to focus on at each level: youth, organization, and community.

ACTIVITY: IDENTIFYING GOALS

Objective

To elicit, categorize, and prioritize evaluation goals

Materials Needed

Flip chart paper

Markers

Tape

Copies of the organization's goals (and objectives, if available)

"Identifying Goals for Evaluation" worksheet, page 53

Time Required

85 minutes

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Goal review	10 min.	★ With the full group, review the organization's goals. ★ Discuss and answer any questions about the goals.	Organization's goals
Step 2 Brain-storming evaluation goals	30 min.	★ Using the goals as a backdrop, ask participants, working in small groups, to brainstorm a list of possible evaluation goals and write these on flipchart paper. ★ Post lists; have groups circulate to read all lists and add ideas as appropriate. ★ Hold a full-group discussion to eliminate undesirable or duplicate items.	Flip chart paper Markers Tape
Step 3 Categor-izing and prioritizing	20 min.	★ Divide participants into three groups. ★ Assign each group to one of the following three categories: youth, organization, or community. ★ Ask each group to select items relevant to its category from the lists on the wall and create a new list for that category, using the "Identifying Goals" worksheet. ★ Each group should then select from its new list the top 3 to 5 goals relating to its category and record these, in priority order, on another sheet of flip chart paper. ★ Post the paper on wall.	Flip chart paper Markers Tape "Identifying Goals for Evaluation" worksheet

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 4 Selecting goals	15 min.	✷ Ask each group to share its choices. ✷ Have each participant vote for one goal in each category. Select the top 2 goals in each category as the direction-setting goals to guide the evaluation.	
Step 5 Reflection and discussion	10 min.	Process the activity, asking questions: ✷ Were the suggested goals fairly evenly divided among the three categories? ✷ Was any one category more difficult than the others to address? In what way? ✷ Which part of this activity did you enjoy the most? The least? Why? ✷ How can these goals help you determine your evaluation questions? The methods you will select?	

WORKSHEET: IDENTIFYING GOALS FOR EVALUATION

Identify evaluation goals for each of the following categories.

Youth-level evaluation goals

Organization-level evaluation goals

Community-level evaluation goals

IDENTIFYING EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Prove or Improve?

As we expand our understanding of evaluation, it is important to make a distinction between two broad types of evaluation.

Outcome evaluation (also referred to as *summative evaluation* or *impact evaluation*) focuses on documenting the results of a community-building effort. Outcome evaluation helps determine how a community and its people are different as a result of what was done. It examines the change that the efforts produced. To the degree possible, its aim is to "prove" that the community change effort was effective and beneficial. In addition to looking at changes that resulted in the community, outcome evaluation can also examine how participation in the effort affected the young people and adults involved in the process. Outcome evaluation questions come from the right side of a community-building logic model.

Process evaluation (also referred to as *formative* or *improvement evaluation*) provides information useful for *improving the process* used to bring about community change. Process evaluation helps determine what might be done differently the next time a similar community change effort is implemented. If the aim of outcome evaluation is to "prove," the aim of process evaluation is to "improve." This type of evaluation is a catalyst for continual learning and growth. Process evaluation questions come from the left side of a community-building logic model.

Neither outcome evaluation nor process evaluation is superior to or more desirable than the other. Both are essential. Suppose an outcome evaluation finds that the community-building efforts fell short of achieving the desired results. In that case, process evaluation might shed light on why the effort was not successful. Conversely, process evaluation may also help identify approaches, strategies, processes, and actions that contributed to an effort's success. In essence, outcome and process evaluation are inextricably intertwined. At times, it is difficult to categorize an evaluation effort as being either one or the other.

Some authors have suggested that one way in which outcome and process evaluation differ is in their usefulness to stakeholders (Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick, 1997). Stakeholders external to the effort, particularly funders, may be more interested in whether the program made a difference. Consequently, information provided by outcome evaluation may be of more interest to them. Stakeholders internal to the effort, such as members of the community-building team, are often more interested in information generated by process evaluation.

Connecting the Logic Model to Evaluation Questions

Setting Assumptions	Implementation Quality and Quantity	Outcomes Effectiveness, Magnitude, and Satisfaction		
Context Input	Activities → Outputs	Short-term outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long term outcomes
What aspects of our situation most shaped our ability to do the work we set out to do in our community?	What did our program accomplish in the community? What activities went well or could have been better?	What resulted from our work in the community?	What have we learned about doing this kind of work in a community like ours?	

Adapted from W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (2000). *Logic Model Development Guide*. Battle Creek, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

If you feel that the group would benefit from a further exploration of the outcome/process distinctions, please use the activity on page 56 with the participants to clarify any questions or concerns.

ACTIVITY: OUTCOME/PROCESS EVALUATIONS

Below are some questions that could be asked about a community change effort. Some of the questions deal with the outcomes of such an effort. Others deal with improving the process used to achieve the desired outcomes. If the question focuses on an outcome of the community change effort, place an "O" in the space to the left of the question. If the question is more about the process used, write "P" in the space to the left of the question.

_____   1. Was the manner in which we publicized our work effective?

_____   2. In what ways is the community better as a result of our work?

_____   3. Were all the relevant community partners members of our coalition?

_____   4. Have community members changed behaviors as a result of our work?

_____   5. How could the effort be improved?

_____   6. What effect did we have on policies related to the issue?

_____   7. What did people learn as a result of participating in the program?

_____   8. What barriers prevented young people from participating as full partners?

_____   9. In what ways did we affect public opinion about the issue?

_____   10. Is the community safer as a result of our efforts?

_____   11. Were work assignments completed on time?

_____   12. Did people gain new skills as a result of our efforts?

_____   13. What effect did we have on the community?

_____   14. Were the planning meetings productive?

_____   15. Were the decision-making strategies used by the group effective?

_____   16. Were we successful in achieving our goals?

Answers: 1, 3, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 15 are process questions.
          2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 16 are outcome questions.

DECIDING WHAT TO EVALUATE

Before moving forward with evaluation activities, a decision needs to be made about what to evaluate. Unfortunately, deciding what to evaluate can sometimes be more difficult than conducting the evaluation itself!

One could evaluate many aspects of a community-building effort. The previous sections discussed two basic types of evaluation. One type focuses on measuring outcomes, or the results, of a community-building effort. The other focuses on determining how the community-building effort could be improved.

Remember, multiple levels of outcomes can be measured. If the focus is on measuring *outcomes*, should you measure initial, intermediate, or long-term outcomes? Similarly, if you focus on examining the community-building *process*, deciding what elements of that process should be evaluated can also be difficult.

Once these evaluation goals have been established, they form the basis for identifying the questions that will be asked during the evaluation itself. For example, if an evaluation goal is "to determine the effectiveness of our youth leadership program," what are some specific questions that will result in our being able to know to what extent we have met this goal?

Fortunately, two information sources help determine what should be evaluated. The first is the *community-building logic model* constructed earlier. The second is the list of *stakeholder information needs*. In the exercise that follows, members of the community-building team will use these two information sources to generate a list of potential evaluation questions. Examples of the type of questions that the activity may produce are as follows:

* Did adults change their opinions about the importance of involving young people on boards and committees?
* Were printed materials inclusive and culturally sensitive?
* Has there been a reduction in school violence?
* Did the community-building effort effectively reach all the intended audiences?

It is unlikely that all the questions on the list will ultimately be answered. Some things are too costly to evaluate. Some are too time consuming. And some things we simply don't know how to evaluate. Consequently, the goal of evaluation is to provide maximally useful information given the setting and constraints within which the community-building effort operates. What is actually evaluated is based on *what makes sense* for a particular community-building effort.

* Evaluation questions should focus on understanding how your program will meet its intended goals. Good questions enable you and others to get the answers you need to tell your story.
* Pick a program activity that you want to evaluate.
* Decide whether you want your questions to focus on the processes or outcomes of your work.
* Use simple, concrete language that focuses on what you need to know.

Tips for Involving Youth as Partners

Youth members of a community-building team may have important insights into the specific information needs of various stakeholder groups. Listen closely for ideas from young people regarding evaluation questions.

ACTIVITY: GENERATING EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Overview

Youth and adults work in small groups to discuss the focus of the evaluation.

Objective

To use the community-building logic model and the list of stakeholder information needs to develop a list of evaluation questions

Materials Needed

Flip chart

"Evaluation Questions Flip Chart" template, page 61

Markers

Tape

Completed logic model, page 34

"Identifying Goals for Evaluation" worksheet, page 53

Adhesive dots

Time Required

Approximately 90 minutes

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Revisiting the logic model	10 min. 30 min.	★ Say to the group, "The purpose of this activity is to develop a set of questions that will guide our evaluation efforts." ★ Divide the participants into groups of 3 to 5 people. To the degree possible, ensure that each group has equal representation of youth and adults. ★ Then ask each group to look at the logic model that the group developed earlier. Ask them to discuss the following question: "How does the logic model we developed inform the process of evaluation?" (How does the logic model help us know what to evaluate?)	Completed logic model
Step 2 Brainstorming evaluation questions	20 min.	★ Now ask the participants to look at the "Identifying Goals for Evaluation" worksheet in their small group. ★ Using the logic model and the worksheet, identify 3 to 5 questions that need to be answered by the evaluation. A recorder in each small group should write down the questions identified. ★ After each group has identified at least 3 evaluation questions, have each group share one of its evaluation questions with the entire group. The facilitator should write the questions on flip chart paper as they are read. ★ Continue taking one question per group until all questions have been read—see "Flip Chart Template."	Flip chart paper Markers "Identifying Goals for Evaluation" worksheet "Evaluation Questions Flip Chart" template

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 3 Analysis	20 min.	★ Say to the group, "Now we are going to examine some of the benefits and challenges to answering these evaluation questions. We will first look at the benefits." ★ Begin by asking the group to identify the benefits derived from answering the first question. Perhaps ask, "Of what value is the answer to this question?" Record the responses on flip chart paper. ★ Next, ask the group to identify the challenges or difficulties that may be encountered in answering that question. Again, record the responses on flip chart paper. ★ Continue until benefits and challenges have been identified for each potential evaluation question.	Flip chart paper Markers
Step 4 Building consensus	10 min.	★ Give each person in the room 3 to 5 adhesive dots. Tell them to place a dot on the flip chart next to each question they feel should become a focus of the evaluation. ★ After everyone has voted, count the number of dots by each question. ★ Then involve the group in deciding how many of the top "vote-getters" the group can reasonably work on.	Adhesive dots

TEMPLATE: EVALUATION QUESTIONS FLIP CHART

EVALUATION QUESTION	WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ANSWERING THIS QUESTION?	WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OR DIFFICULTIES?

WORKSHEET: TAKING STOCK OF EXISTING DATA

Now that you have your list of evaluation questions, lead the group through a discussion of data you already have and data you need. Fill out the information on the following sheet. This will help you focus your resources on the gaps in your data.

	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DATA YOU ALREADY HAVE	DATA YOU NEED
Youth characteristics and program activity			
Program-level information			
Youth outcomes			
Community impact			

DEVELOPING INDICATORS

On many occasions, families across the country sit down together for a delicious meal. Often, the prominent feature of that meal is a plump, juicy turkey. Earlier that morning, the person responsible for preparing the meal most likely cleaned the uncooked bird, positioned it in a roasting pan, and placed it in a heated oven. Although experienced chefs know how they will determine when the turkey is ready to eat, others will have to decide on the *indicator* of doneness they will use.

Perhaps the most reliable indicator of doneness is the internal temperature of the meat, as measured by a meat thermometer inserted into the flesh of the bird. In the absence of a meat thermometer, some people will simply roast the turkey at a particular temperature for a specified number of minutes per pound. Others determine doneness by manipulating the connective tissues in the leg joints. Some will simply cook the turkey until it is golden brown. Some food manufacturers make it easy on the cook by inserting a small plastic device into the bird. When the turkey is done, an *indicator* pops out of the device.

You can certainly look at a number of indicators to figure out when a turkey is ready to eat. But what does all this have to do with community building?

In the previous section, we developed a set of questions to guide our evaluation efforts. *Indicators are the specific things that we examine for answers to our evaluation questions.* If we want to know whether our community-building effort was successful in reducing graffiti in the community, what information do we need to answer that question? If we wanted to know whether community members changed their attitudes toward recycling, what indicator of attitude would we use? The table on page 64 gives examples of indicators for different types of evaluation questions.

Be aware that multiple indicators may exist for answering a particular evaluation question. For example, a number of indicators can answer whether adults are more willing to include young people on boards and committees.

Although indicators specify what to look at for the answers to evaluation questions, they do not specify the level or value of a particular indicator that must be achieved for an effort to be considered a success. Is a score of 80 percent on a test considered a "good" score? Is a 10-percent reduction in litter on a particular section of highway sufficient to call an anti-litter campaign a success? It depends on our expectations.

As we develop indicators, it is also useful to identify the *standards* that constitute success. Without criteria or standards, the conclusions we draw about our evaluation data are subject to question.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SAMPLE INDICATORS

QUESTIONS	INDICATORS
What changes in attitude about environmental pollution were achieved?	✷ Decrease in littering ✷ Increase in recycling ✷ Awareness of effects of environmental pollution ✷ Awareness of different types of environmental injustices
How much did youth increase their participation in social change?	✷ Communicates with elected officials about social policy ✷ Demonstrates knowledge about public policy that affects own community ✷ Increases level of community involvement (e.g., volunteering, participating in rallies and protests)
How much did communication skills improve?	✷ Increased ability to identify social injustices ✷ Improved written and oral communication skills ✷ Increased knowledge and use of media outlets to express views

ACTIVITY: SPECIFYING INDICATORS AND STANDARDS

Overview

The community-building team begins work on an evaluation plan.

Objective

To develop indicators for each of the evaluation questions participants have written

Materials Needed

Copies of the "Evaluation" worksheet, page 66
Pens

Time Required

Approximately 30 minutes

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Introducing a framework for evaluation planning	10 min.	✦ Say to the group, "The purpose of this activity is to develop indicators for each of the evaluation questions we have written." ✦ Give each participant a copy of the "Evaluation" worksheet. ✦ Have the participants write the evaluation questions to be answered in the left column of the worksheet. ✦ Divide participants into small groups. ✦ Have each group select which one of the evaluation questions it wants to work on.	"Evaluation" worksheet Pens
Step 2 Identifying indicators	10 min.	✦ Now ask the groups to identify some indicators for their selected evaluation question. Emphasize that indicators specify what data the group can use to answer the question. Ask the groups to specify the level (standard) of the indicator that will constitute success, when possible.	
Step 3 Reflection and discussion	10 min.	Have each group share its indicators and standards. Discuss them in the full group, asking questions: – What was easy? Hard? – How do you feel about your final product? – Can you use these in your evaluation plan?	

WORKSHEET: EVALUATION

WHAT QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED?	WHAT INDICATORS AND STANDARDS WILL BE USED?	WHAT EVALUATION METHODS WILL BE USED?	WHEN WILL EVALUATION ACTIVITIES OCCUR?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

EXISTING INFORMATION

Generally, *existing information* is defined as data collected by an entity other than your community-building team. Although usually collected for other purposes, this information frequently plays an important role in both the initiation and evaluation of community-building efforts. Look first at how existing information catalyzes community action.

Numbers and statistics alone do not speak for themselves. It is the value of a particular piece of information that gives it meaning. In many cases a particular piece of information will disturb community members to the point that it prompts community action. For example, a community may choose to address its rising rate of petty crime because of data released by local law enforcement authorities. Another community may be stirred to action because community members are below average on some national indicator of community health.

When an indicator of community well-being, such as the petty crime rate, has actually catalyzed community action, it may make sense to use subsequent measures of the indicator to evaluate the success of your team's efforts. But care must be taken in using existing information. Consider the following factors when using this type of data:

✳ Make sure you understand completely what the information represents. What does it include? What is not included? How is the indicator defined? How is it measured? When were the measurements taken? Answers to these questions help you determine whether the indicator is appropriate for measuring the success of your community-building effort.
✳ Does your community-building effort have the potential to produce measurable change in the indicator you are considering? If your community-building activities are highly localized, it is unlikely that you will observe change in indicators that represent broad geographic regions.
✳ Get assurances that the data you are using is credible and unbiased. Know who collected the information. Is it from a credible government source? Or is it produced by an organization that may have a hidden agenda?

Using Existing Information

To use existing information, begin by gathering all available information that relates to your community-building effort. Members of your community-building team may know of existing information sources that are relevant to your project, and the Internet is a wonderful tool for accessing information. Refer back to your list of data you have and data you need. Then, decide which measures are appropriate for assessing the impact of your community-building effort. The sections that follow briefly describe several common methods for collecting evaluation data.

EVALUATION METHODS

Although indicators identify what you will look at to determine whether evaluation criteria are met, they do not specify how indicator data will be collected. You must still decide which evaluation method(s) to use. For example, if we are interested in knowing whether a community campaign was successful in influencing how community members view their relationship with the environment, we may select attitudes toward recycling as the indicator of change. But how can we measure attitudes toward the environment? Could we use a questionnaire? Might personal interviews be appropriate? What other methods could we use?

Just as a carpenter has many tools in his toolbox, evaluators also must have numerous tools at their disposal. The carpenter may have a saw, hammer, chisel, square, and drill. An evaluator's toolbox may contain questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and observation. Evaluators select the method best suited for the job.

Selecting the right method involves many factors. Some methods are better for gathering quantitative data, others for qualitative data. Some are better for particular audiences than others. Some methods gather richer, deeper data than others do.

When designing evaluation tools and selecting evaluation methods, it is useful to consider the cultural contexts of the communities in which programs operate. Here are some guiding questions to consider to ensure that evaluation methods and tools are culturally appropriate:

* Are data collection methods relevant and culturally sensitive to the population being evaluated?
* Have you considered how different methods may or may not work in various cultures? Have you explored how different groups prefer to share information (e.g., orally, in writing, one-on-one, in groups, through the arts)?
* Do the instruments consider potential language barriers that may inhibit some people from understanding the evaluation questions?
* Do the instruments consider the cultural context of the respondents?
* Are multiple methods being used, so that information can be analyzed in a variety of ways?

Tips for Involving Youth as Partners

Young people may have a number of fresh ideas for gathering evaluation data. Be open to their ideas and suggestions. Their ideas frequently result in more user-friendly evaluation tools and methods and, thus, better data. Don't be afraid to try new methods.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are simple and effective tools for collecting information from a large number of people. Compared with other ways of collecting information, questionnaires are relatively inexpensive to administer. They can be used to gather information about the community-building process itself (process evaluation) or the results it produced (outcome evaluation).

Utility of Questionnaires

When using questionnaires to evaluate your community-building *process,* you typically ask questions about how the work of the team was accomplished. For example, you could ask participants in a community event to provide ideas for how the event could be improved in the future. An end-of-event questionnaire could be used to gather such information.

Questionnaires can also be used to collect information about the *outcomes* of a community-building effort. Questions would focus on how the community is different as a result of what was done. For example, a questionnaire might be used to find out whether community members have changed their opinions about a particular issue as a result of the team's efforts. Questionnaires can also be used to find out what community members are doing differently as a result of the community-building efforts.

Types of Questions

Questionnaires can contain either *forced-choice* or *open-ended* questions. Forced-choice questions have a limited number of responses from which a respondent may choose. Respondents are frequently asked to check or circle their desired responses. One advantage of forced-choice questions is that they are typically easier to analyze than open-ended questions.

Example of Forced-Choice Question

Which of the following best describes the degree to which young people were involved in making decisions about the project?

_____ No involvement

_____ Little involvement

_____ Moderate involvement

_____ Extensive involvement

An open-ended question does not require a respondent to choose from a set of possible responses. Instead, respondents are free to answer as they choose. Open-ended questions typically provide more in-depth information than forced-choice questions do. They also help solicit unanticipated responses.

Example of Open-Ended Question

What are some of the challenges young people face when working in partnership with adults?

Hints for Constructing Questionnaires

First, revisit the evaluation questions you developed earlier and decide whether a questionnaire is the best way to gather the information you need. If so, decide on the specific group of people to whom the questionnaire will be administered.

Next, referring to the evaluation questions, begin developing items for the questionnaire. Evaluation questions tend to be more general than the items or individual questions that may appear on a questionnaire. Therefore, it may take more than one item to answer a particular evaluation question.

Group the questions by topic or format. (For example, you may want to put all the forced-choice questions together.) Put demographic questions about where participants live, their age, or gender at the end.

Leave lots of "white space" in the margins and between questions. The goal is to make the questionnaire look like it is easy to complete. Also, strive to achieve a vertical flow in how the respondent must answer the questions. That is, minimize left-to-right movement of a pen or pencil across the page (Rennekamp, 1999).

Administering Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be administered via mail, telephone, or computer; in face-to-face interviews; or in a group. Each method has distinct advantages and disadvantages. For example, mail administration allows for broad reach but often produces low response rates. Web-based questionnaires can be programmed to automatically summarize the results but can only be completed by people who have access to the Internet. Face-to-face or telephone interviews often produce more complete information, but they are time consuming to conduct. Administering paper-and-pencil questionnaires in a group setting often results in high response rates, but respondents often hurry through the questionnaire and provide less detailed information.

Analyzing the Responses

Analyze forced-choice questions by calculating the percentage of respondents who selected a particular response. Means are also appropriate for some numeric data. Open-ended questions are best analyzed by looking for themes in the information provided by respondents.

Focus Groups

Group interviews are another way to collect information from many people. Most people are familiar with focus groups.

A focus group is a small-group gathering conducted specifically to collect information from the group members. During a focus group discussion, between 6 and 12 people, who are similar in one or more ways, are guided through a facilitated discussion on a clearly defined topic (Krueger and Casey, 2000).

The goal of any focus group is to promote self-disclosure among participants. Because a group, rather than an individual, is asked to respond to questions, dialogue tends to take on a life of its own. Participants "piggy-back" on the comments of others and add a richness to the dialogue that could not be achieved through a one-on-one interview.

Clarifying Expectations

The first step in planning a focus group is to clarify its purpose. What kind of information do you hope to gain from your focus group discussion? Do you want input about how an activity or event could be improved, or are you more interested in the activity's impact on the community? What specific information is needed? Your answers to these questions will help you decide whom to invite to participate in the focus group discussion.

Selecting Participants

Members of a focus group should have some characteristic in common. For example, the information you need to collect might suggest that you need to conduct a focus group composed of middle-school girls. Even though participants in a focus group are similar in one or two desired characteristics, the group must also include enough diversity in other characteristics to provide an accurate portrayal of the group's collective opinion. For example, the group might be composed of middle-school girls who represent the racial, ethnic, and economic diversity of the middle school's population.

Getting People to Attend

Occasionally, people avoid using focus groups because they are afraid that the people they invite won't show up. To ensure high attendance rates, begin by making personal contact with the people you wish to invite. This is often done through a telephone call or personal visit. For those who agree to attend, send a personal letter that confirms their participation and communicates the relevant details of the event. Then make a reminder phone contact the day before the event.

What Happens at the Focus Group Interview?

Focus group interviews typically last no longer than 90 minutes and often take less time. In many instances, the actual "interview" is preceded by a snack or light meal. Focus groups can be conducted around a large table or with participants seated in a circle of chairs. Participants are typically given name tags. A moderator welcomes the group and asks a series of 6 to 10 open-ended questions, and an assistant moderator or recorder takes notes. The discussion is often tape recorded for later playback or transcription. It is important, however, to let participants know that they are being recorded.

Developing Questions for Focus Groups

An important step in preparing for the focus group interview is the development of a set of questions that encourage participants to respond and collect the information needed. Good questions sound conversational and natural. They are usually short, open-ended, and one-dimensional (i.e., they ask for only one piece of information at a time). Begin with an introductory question that will get people talking and make them feel comfortable. Gradually move into the topic you want them to discuss with a transition question that is followed by several key questions covering the major areas of interest.

The specific order in which the questions are asked is called the *questioning route*. A good questioning route has an easy beginning, flows logically and naturally from one question to another, and moves from the general to the specific. It is important to estimate the time required to exhaust the discussion on each question. These time estimates can be used to help manage the focus group discussion.

Moderating Focus Groups

Effective moderating requires preparation, mental discipline, and skill in facilitating group interaction. But first, moderators must believe that all participants have something to contribute to the discussion regardless of their education level, experience, or background. Moderators must listen attentively, with sensitivity, and try to understand the perspective of each participant. Lack of respect is quickly transmitted to participants and results in reduced contributions.

Tips for Conducting Good Interviews

✶ Use active listening skills—listen more, talk less.

✶ Maintain eye contact and use body language that says you are interested and nonjudgmental.

✶ Keep a neutral demeanor and try not to let your own opinions show.

✶ Probe when appropriate. Follow up with "Why? Say more about this" … or "Please elaborate."

Data Analysis

Data analysis consists of indexing, managing, and interpreting the pieces of information that are collected during the interview. Begin by coding or labeling the notes (or transcripts) of the session according to content. For example, all references to the publicity surrounding a community event could be labeled with the same code. Next, use scissors or word-processing software to collate the coded text into each category. Each category should be in a separate pile or section of the document. Finally, write a summary statement that is true of each extract or piece of text in the pile or group. These statements often become key themes that are communicated in your evaluation report.

Key-Informant Interviews

A key informant is someone who, because of his or her unique position in a community, can provide you with important information about your community-building effort. Some key informants have first-hand knowledge of the community-building effort and can provide you with their own assessment of what is occurring. Others have access to information that would be difficult for you to obtain without their participation. In such cases, key informants pass along that information to you, often with an interpretation of what the data might mean. The use of key informants is a relatively simple and inexpensive means of collecting information.

Identifying Key Informants

Every community-building effort has a unique set of key informants. Key informants can be teachers, elected officials, youth, community leaders, agency staff, parents, and even funders. Begin by asking the question, "Who in my community is in a position to provide me with information about how the community-building effort is working?" Then make a list of the key informants relevant to your community-building effort.

Next, decide who among the members of your project team would be the most appropriate person (or persons) to interview the key informants. Some members of the team might have better access to particular informants than others. Those team members should then make an appointment to conduct a face-to-face or telephone interview with each key informant assigned to them. If the key informant will need to gather any information from his or her records before the interview, it is good to state that in advance.

Questions

Before the interview, know what type of information you want from the key informant you are interviewing. Take some time before the interview to write down the questions you plan to ask. One approach is to write some key questions to cover each of the important topics, then a couple of potential follow-up questions for each key question. Ask factual questions about a particular topic first, then the opinion questions. Be sure to write open-ended rather than "yes–no" questions.

The goal is to be specific with questioning while allowing enough flexibility for open discussion.

Interviewing

Interviews should be structured, yet conversational. Begin by making the key informant comfortable. Tell him or her the purpose of the interview and provide assurance that the information will only be used for making judgments about the community-building effort. Because of the nature of the information key informants provide, it is often difficult to ensure their anonymity. In many cases, the key informant is the only person who could have provided a particular piece of information. (That is why they are key informants!) Make sure the key informant is comfortable with the way you plan to use the information you collect.

Maintain a neutral attitude throughout the interview. Don't try to defend your community-building project or argue with the key informant's assessment of a situation. Be prepared to probe or use follow-up questions to gather additional information that might clarify why the key informant sees the situation as he or she does. Be sure to take detailed notes—they are essential to accurate analysis.

Data Analysis

Responses from the key informants are typically reviewed and analyzed to identify key themes as well as divergent viewpoints. This analysis may be best accomplished by a meeting of all interviewers in which everyone shares information from his or her interview(s).

Observation

The aim of observation is to document behavior through watching and listening. Through observation it is possible to see *what* people are doing, *when* they do it, *where* they do it, and *how* they are doing it. You can use observation to gather information about the community-building process itself (i.e., process evaluation) or the results it produced (i.e., outcome evaluation).

Although the benefits of observations are multifold, the presence of the observer may influence the behavior of those being observed. The consistency of data collected can also vary if more than one observer is gathering data.

Observing Process

Using observation to evaluate your community-building *process* might be as simple as having an impartial observer sit in on a planning meeting of your community-building group. In such a role, the observer may simply take notes about how the group goes about its work. Results are then used to improve how the planning group functions.

Observing Outcomes

When the goal of an evaluation project is to document *results* of a community-building effort, observation is frequently used to determine whether people have changed their behavior as a direct consequence of the group's actions. In such cases, observation has some clear and distinct

advantages over asking people to self-report their behavior through questionnaires or inter-views. First, people tend to overestimate how frequently they perform good behaviors. Second, they may provide you with information that they think you want to hear. Direct observation eliminates those problems.

Unstructured Versus Structured Observation

Observation can be either unstructured or structured in nature. In unstructured observation, observers are generally not asked to look for specific things, nor are they asked to record their observations in any particular manner.

Structured observation involves the systematic collection of specific pieces of information. Structured observation frequently involves the use of checklists, forms, or observation schedules upon which observers record what they see. Observers receive training on how to recognize what they are looking for as well as how to record what they observe.

Behaviors Versus Traces

Sometime observers can record the presence of an actual behavior. For example, an observer may be asked to record how many different active-listening techniques are used in a mock peer counseling session. Other times, observers look for something called *traces* of behavior, such as graffiti or litter on the roadside.

Guidelines for Observing Events

Identify the Purpose of the Observation

Determine the focus of the observation, including who will be observed, what will be observed, and the duration of the observation. For example, an observation of a racism workshop could include documentation of the number of youth present, which youth participated, how the youth participated, and the methods the facilitator used to solicit equal participation.

Design an Observation Guide

Once you identify the purpose of the observation, the observation guide should be developed to address key observation questions and goals. These goals can include interactions between individuals or groups of people, activities, and topics discussed. See the Sample Observation Guide on page 77.

Train Observers

Determine what type of documentation is appropriate for each component of the observation form. If possible, have all observers observe the same situation and fill out their forms separately, then compare their responses. Discuss the observers' differences in level of detail and content. This analysis will help create a common understanding of what level and type of information should be collected.

What to Observe

* **The setting:** What is the physical environment like? What kinds of behavior does the setting encourage, permit, discourage, or prevent?
* **The participants:** Who is in the scene? How many people are there, and what are their roles? What brings these people together? Who is allowed there?
* **Activities and interactions:** What is going on? Is there a definable sequence of activities? How do people interact with the activity and one another?
* **Frequency and duration:** When did the activity begin? How long does it last? Is the activity recurring or unique? How typical of such situations is the one being observed?

SAMPLE OBSERVATION GUIDE

Name of observer_____ Date_____

Event_____

Location_____

Number of youth present _____

Number of adults present _____

Number of staff present _____

General

Take note of the following general dimensions.

GENERAL DIMENSIONS	YES	NO	COMMENTS AND DETAILS
Do youth lead the activity?			
Does the session structure allow for broad group input?			
Is the space comfortable and well lit?			
Do youth feel comfortable in the space?			
Are the walls or space decorated in any way?			
Is information presented in a variety of modes (visual, oral, discussion based)?			

Youth–Adult Interaction

Please check one box for the following qualities of youth–adult interaction.

QUALITIES OF INTERACTION	YES	NO	UNEVEN	COMMENTS
Guidelines or ground rules are set at the beginning of activity.				
Youth ask questions.				
Staff or adults avoid the use of jargon or technical terms and stop to explain when youth don't understand.				
Youth share from their own experiences.				
Staff and/or adults share from their own experiences.				

QUALITIES OF INTERACTION	YES	NO	UNEVEN	COMMENTS
All youth participate in discussion.				
Adults and youth appear to respect each other's opinions and perspectives.				
Efforts are made to equalize input (i.e., adults or other youth solicit the participation of quiet youth and adults).				
Body language of youth seems engaged and energized.				
Participation crosses racial, cultural, and gender boundaries.				

Describe an interesting comment or exchange that occurred during the observation.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How would you describe the climate of the activity (informal, structured, friendly, etc.)?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Other comments

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

ACTIVITY: HOW, WHAT, WHY? CHOOSING METHODS

Overview

You now have developed several evaluation questions and have examined a variety of methods that you might use in gathering data. The next step is to decide which data collection method is appropriate to use in each situation.

First, consider your evaluation questions. Your choice of tools and methods should be driven by the types of questions you want answered. Evaluation questions fall into four categories:

* WHY questions are best addressed through face-to-face methods, such as interviews and focus groups.
* HOW questions help you understand how something happened or the process of implementing a program. These also work best in interviews or focus groups.
* HOW MANY questions are best addressed through surveys, activity logs, intake data, and other ways of capturing quantitative or numeric data.
* WHAT questions help you document what program staff have done and what participants have experienced. All methods can be used to answer WHAT questions.

Try the following simple activity with the group to solidify what they have learned about selecting data collection methods.

Objective

To learn an appropriate process for choosing data collection methods

Materials Needed

Flip chart
Markers
Tape
Index cards or half sheets of paper

Time Required

Approximately 55 minutes

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Introduction	10 min.	Post on a flip chart and present to the group the information above about the types of evaluation questions and possible methods to be used for data collection.	Flip chart Markers
Step 2 Matching questions and methods	20 min.	✶ Post on flip charts or on the walls around the room signs listing all possible data collection methods. Be sure to add an "Other" sign, as well. ✶ Ask each person to write up to 5 evaluation questions on index cards or half sheets—one question per card. Then have participants post their questions under whichever method they think is most appropriate.	Markers Tape Index cards or half sheets
Step 3 Review the data	10 min.	Have everyone walk around and read what has been posted.	
Step 4 Reflection and discussion	15 min.	Process the activity, asking questions: ✶ Which methods seem to be used the most? The least? ✶ Were any questions hard to assign to a method? ✶ What lessons from this activity can be useful in planning our evaluation?	

DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION TIMELINE

Deciding when to collect data is an important part of planning an evaluation. When you don't plan for data collection, you often miss important opportunities to gather data. For example, once you begin your community-building project, you may no longer have the opportunity to gather important baseline data about the community.

Basically, evaluation data can be collected at only three points in time—*before* the community-building project, *during* the community-building project, and *after* it has been completed. Frequently, you collect *baseline data* before the community-building project to document the conditions that existed beforehand. Sometimes data are collected during a community-building effort to determine whether the effort is on course or needs changes. Data can also be collected after the community-building project is completed to document what was accomplished. Below are several evaluation designs that use different time frames for data collection. The arrows indicate the points at which data are collected.

Community-Building Activities

In the example above, evaluation data are collected just once—after the community-building efforts have been completed. Although this design allows evaluators to ask community members about the changes they have seen since the onset of community-building activities, it does not involve collection of true baseline data.

Community-Building Activities

The next design includes the collection of baseline data before the community-building activities are implemented. This design provides more assurances that change did, in fact, occur between the two points in time, but it does not say for certain that your community-building efforts produced the change. This design is frequently called a *pretest–posttest design*.

Community-Building Activities

This design adds a measurement point during the community-building activities. Data collection at this point in time frequently focuses on the community-building process and how it could be improved.

Community-Building Activities

This final design, called a *time-series design*, involves taking periodic measurements of a relevant indicator at multiple points in time. This design helps identify trends that may be brought about by the community-building activities. Again, however, it is difficult to be sure that the changes were brought about by the community-building activities.

Each of the designs above has strengths and limitations. All could be improved by taking measurements from a comparison or control group. When you know how much natural change occurred in a group or community that was not affected by your community-building effort, you are better prepared to make claims regarding the success of your efforts.

ANALYZING EVALUATION RESULTS

Many community organizations frequently face an analysis "roadblock": collecting large quantities of data that are never fully analyzed. Here are some keys to overcoming the analysis roadblock:

* Demystify data analysis; data analysis can be an empowering process for your organization.
* Develop a plan for data analysis, either to
  – conduct data analysis within your organization or
  – get help with analysis from outside consultants
* Report your findings in ways that will engage program stakeholders, funders, and other community members.
* Draw on your data to improve your program practices.

Data Analysis: Where to Begin?

1. Decide whether to do an *internal* analysis or use an *external* consultant.
2. Gather *first impressions*. Discuss the quality and breadth of data with the evaluation team. Guiding questions:
   – Did anything occur that may have compromised the data?
   – What are the initial thoughts on evaluation results? Did anything come as a surprise?
   – What interviews or data sources are particularly rich or helpful?
3. *Organize* and "clean" your data. The purpose is to determine if you have accurate and quality responses to questions and processes. Examine all the data related to each research question separately. Ideally, there should be more than one data source for each question. Think if information is missing, misrepresented or inconsistent.
4. *Analyze* your data.
   * *Quantitative data analysis* is the analysis of numbers. Quantitative data are best presented in the form of pictures, such as graphs and charts.
     – Sources of quantitative data include surveys, sign-in sheets, event forms, entrance interviews, or applications with demographic data; census data; and budget data.
     – Quantitative data analysis can consist of simple calculations yielding factual information on attendance, usage, changes in performance, or changes in knowledge or attitudes (e.g., pre- and posttests). Program staff can do this analysis with the help of spreadsheet software (e.g., Excel).

* Qualitative data analysis is the analysis of words and pictures. Qualitative data are best pre-sented as "word stories" or "video stories."
   – Sources of qualitative data include observation notes, anecdotal records, document review, content analysis (e.g., of videos or youth media), and interviews and focus group notes.
   – Qualitative data analysis can include identifying themes in the data (a process called *coding*). Themes can be framed around your key evaluation questions or other sources. This analysis can also include creating a story from the data that uses descriptive details of behaviors and selections of representative quotes from those who were interviewed.

Interpreting your data can be done in the context of answering the following questions:
* Are the results reasonable?
* How can the results be explained?
* What is surprising about the results?
* What is missing from the results?
* What implications do the results have for identifying how the program can improve?

When you prepare your findings, be sure to include positive and unexpected or negative results:
* Positive results tell you where your program's strengths are, motivate staff and other program stakeholders, and identify program areas that might be expanded.
* Unexpected or negative results are crucial to framing recommendations and modifying practices. They can also be part of an argument for expanded funding or programming (e.g., increases in staffing or expansion of facilities).

Checklist for Data Analysis
* Are the goals for data analysis realistic, given the program budget and staff commitments?
* Are all possible data sources being drawn upon in order to develop findings?
* Is there an effort to identify program weaknesses and program strengths?
* Have efforts been made to involve program stakeholders?
* Are findings and recommendations framed in such a way that they can be useful for program improvement?

COMMUNICATING EVALUATION RESULTS

The final phase of the evaluation process involves putting the information generated into the hands of relevant stakeholders. As we saw earlier, however, not all stakeholders have the same information needs. Some stakeholders, particularly those internal to the community-building effort, are interested in information about how the work can be improved. Other stakeholders are more interested in the results of the community-building effort.

Nor do all stakeholders want their information in the same format. Some stakeholders want information in abbreviated formats, with major findings highlighted. Others need more complete reports.

Consequently, developing a communication plan for your evaluation project involves three basic steps:

1. Review the list of stakeholders developed earlier. For which of these stakeholders will you develop a communication strategy? Which groups need or expect a report?
2. Decide which pieces of evaluation data would be of greatest interest to each stakeholder group. Again, revisit the list of stakeholder information needs developed earlier.
3. Decide on the format of the report to be used with each stakeholder group. Consider slide presentations, printed reports, executive summaries, newspaper articles, and oral reports. Include charts, graphs, photographs, and other graphics if appropriate.
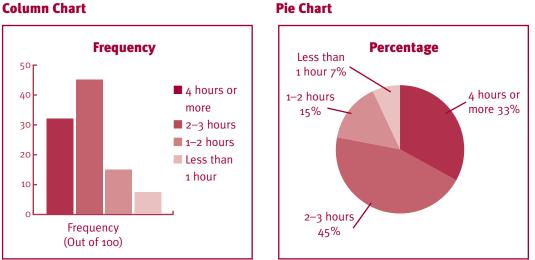
Tips for Involving Youth as Partners

Young people and adults can be involved in the presentation of evaluation results. Consider appointing a team of youth and adults who can present the evaluation results to partner organizations, civic groups, and government. Presentations by young people often captivate an audience of adults more than presentations by other adults do. Make sure that young people have meaningful roles in preparing and presenting the information and are not just tokens.
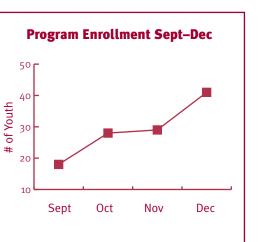
PRESENTING SURVEY RESULTS

Quantitative results are easiest to understand when they are presented as pictures. Spreadsheet software can convert simple statistics (such as a percentage distribution) into bar charts or pie charts.
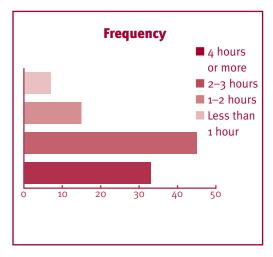
Using an application like Microsoft Excel is straightforward for simple statistics. Just enter your data into a spreadsheet and select the columns you would like to chart. Then, press the "Chart Wizard" icon on the toolbar. The Chart Wizard will ask you questions about what type of chart you would like to create. Choices for chart types include column, bar, pie, line, scatter, and area, among others. You will probably find column, bar, pie, and line charts to be most useful. Here are some examples:

Column Chart

Pie Chart

Line Chart

Program Enrollment Sept–Dec

Bar Chart

Frequency

- 4 hours or more
- 2–3 hours
- 1–2 hours
- Less than 1 hour

Once you create your chart, you can edit fonts, colors, arrangement, and labels. You can copy and paste charts from Excel straight into word-processing documents for your reports. Choose the most effective way to present your data, keeping in mind which chart type will show the greatest change or difference (if that is what you are highlighting.) Also, be selective about what you decide to chart. Only chart the data that you think will be most useful for funders and other stakeholders to see.

NEXT STEPS

Evaluation findings can be used in several ways to modify existing practices in an organization. The first might be to set targets to identify your goals in program modification. Involve multiple program stakeholders in a "visioning" process, imagining where your organization should be on core outcomes and indicators (e.g., higher rates of retention, increased youth knowledge of community) at various points in time (1 year, 3 years, etc.).

Then, *create an action plan* for achieving program improvement, which includes identifying someone to oversee the process, a timeline, an assessment of program resources needed to bring about change, and evidence of the accomplishment.

Next, *make commitments*—set tangible and realistic commitments to changing program practices that will help you reach your targets (e.g., extending the volunteer network, increasing "one-on-ones" with new youth participants).

Using the "Goal Planning" worksheet (page 90) , have stakeholder groups set targets, create action plans and commitments, and identify appropriate time frames for reaching your new goals.

ACTIVITY: ACTION PLANNING

Objective

To help stakeholder groups set targets, create action plans, and identify time frames for reaching goals

Materials Needed

"Goal Planning" worksheet, page 90

Pens

Tape

Time Required

80 minutes

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIAL
Step 1 Introduction	5 min.	Introduce the concept of beginning "next steps" by participating in a group planning activity.	
Step 2 Start actions plans	45 min.	✳ Divide participants into small groups. ✳ Ask participants to select practices within the organization that they wish to modify. Each group can decide which practice to focus on for the purpose of this activity. ✳ Next, groups can set "targets," or goals, for the activity selected. Using the "Goal Planning" worksheet, have each group complete its planning process by deciding on the next steps, commitments, time frame, lead person for each activity, and so on.	"Goal Planning" worksheet Pens
Step 3 Review findings	15 min.	Have each group post its plan on the wall; ask participants to circulate and look at all the plans that were developed.	Tape
Step 4 Reflection and discussion	15 min.	Process the activity, asking questions: ✳ What practices were selected to be modified? ✳ What targets were set? Are they realistic? ✳ Will the plans, timelines, etc., be sufficient to meet the goals? ✳ Which part of the planning worksheet was the hardest to complete? Easiest? Why? ✳ How can you start to put these plans into effect?	

WORKSHEET: GOAL PLANNING

GOALS/TARGETS	Next Steps/Plans/Commitments	Time Frame	Lead Person
1.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____		
2.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____		
3.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____		
4.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____		
5.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____		

WHAT CONSTITUTES GOOD EVALUATION?

In 1994, the American Evaluation Association released a set of standards regarding what constitutes good program evaluation. According to these standards, the four basic attributes of sound program evaluation are *utility, feasibility, propriety,* and *accuracy*.

Utility

Utility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be useful to stakeholders.

* Are all relevant stakeholders identified?
* Do the evaluators have credibility with stakeholders?
* Is the scope of the evaluation sufficient?
* Is the values orientation identified?
* Is the report clear and understandable?
* Are the data timely?
* Are the data usable?

Feasibility

Feasibility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.

* Are procedures practical?
* Is the evaluation politically viable?
* Is the evaluation cost-effective?

Propriety

Propriety standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation as well as of those affected by its results.

* Is the evaluation conducted from a service orientation?
* Are formal agreements developed when needed?
* Are the rights of human subjects protected?
* Are human interactions appropriate?
* Is assessment fair and complete?
* Are evaluation questions, data collection methods, and all processes culturally sensitive and appropriate?
* Are findings disclosed properly?
* Are conflict-of-interest issues addressed properly?
* Are evaluators fiscally responsible?

Accuracy

Accuracy standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation is conducted with technical rigor.

* Is the nature of the program described fully?

* Is the program context described fully?

* Are evaluation purposes and procedures described fully?

* Are information sources defensible?

* Is the information valid?

* Is the information reliable?

* Is information collected systematically?

* Is quantitative information analyzed appropriately?

* Is qualitative information analyzed appropriately?

* Are conclusions justified?

* Is the reporting of results impartial?

Take a few moments to clarify the meaning of these standards and to discuss how these standards might apply to your evaluation. What steps could you take to ensure that appropriate standards are met?

Tips for Involving Youth as Partners

Young people grow from reflection and analysis. Lead a discussion with the community-building team about how well the evaluation efforts met the evaluation standards described above. What should the team do differently? How could the evaluation be improved?

Glossary/ Resources/ References

Glossary

Baseline Data: Information that is collected at the beginning of a program activity to determine where youth and participants started in their skills, knowledge, or capabilities. Once this information is gathered, it is possible to identify how youth and participants advanced in those areas over the course of the program.

Case Study: A detailed description of a representative individual, event, or program.

Coding: The process of condensing and categorizing qualitative data through the identification of common themes.

Data: Information collected in evaluation; it can consist of stories, numbers, words, pictures, or other elements.

Document Review: Use of documents as a source of data. Document reviews often use portfolios, budgets, performance ratings, program logs, tally sheets, and transcripts from community meetings.

Findings: Knowledge provided by evaluations that summarizes the effectiveness of programs, services, and activities. Findings offer a detailed look at how a program works.

Focus Group: A moderated group discussion on a particular issue or topic.

Frequency: The number of times that a given response or behavior occurs.

Indicators: Observable, measurable markers of the changes and benefits of program participation.

Interview: Oral collection of data through specific, mostly open-ended questions. Interviews can occur in person or over the phone.

Logic Model/Theory of Change: A summary of how a program works; it includes information on how activities will lead to expected short-term and long-term outcomes.

Observation Guide: A checklist or structured format for observation.

Observation: A structured format for describing behavior, interactions, events, or activities. Observations include anecdotes (i.e., stories) that describe observed behaviors or attitudes in individual people.

Outcome Evaluation: Measurement of the impact of a program in relation to stated short-term and long-term goals. Outcome evaluation may measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of youth and community and often uses a quantitative approach.

Outcome (or Impact): Benefits or changes in individuals and communities as the result of a program.

Participatory Evaluation: An evaluation approach that involves stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.

Pretest–Posttest: A written or oral test that measures specific knowledge, behaviors, or skills that the program is seeking to measure; the test is given before and after participants engage in program activities.

Process Evaluation: Documentation of how well a program has been implemented and how well it is functioning. May examine aspects such as program operations, the types and quality of services, who provides services, what type of youth served, and so on. Identifies program strengths and weaknesses.

Qualitative Data Analysis: Analysis of words, pictures, or descriptions of behaviors. Best presented as "word stories" or "video stories."

Qualitative Data: A record of thoughts, observations, opinions, stories, and words.

Qualitative Methods: Research methods that obtain non-numeric information, such as words, pictures, and descriptions of behaviors. Qualitative data describe how a project functions and what it may mean to the people involved. Examples of qualitative methods include open-ended interviews, focus groups, observations, and documents.

Quantitative Data Analysis: Analysis of numbers, including survey responses that are assigned numbers in the form of a "scale." Best presented in the form of charts and graphs.

Quantitative Data: Numeric information, such as population, demographic, and income statistics. Includes attitudinal and behavioral data gathered from surveys.

Quantitative Methods: Research methods that obtain information that can be counted or measured. Examples include analysis of survey data that tracks the number of people involved in project activity, the number of products or services provided, or the number of community residents living below the poverty line.

Respondent: A person responding to questions in a survey or interview. Respondents in youth programs are likely to be staff, youth participants, community members, or parents.

Sample: A subset of a population (e.g., individuals, records, communities) that represents key characteristics of the general population.

Stakeholders: Those who care about and will be affected by what is learned from evaluation.

Storytelling: Use of quotations and detailed descriptions to capture the "story," or essence, of a program or event.

Survey: A written or oral series of clearly defined questions for a specific audience or survey population. Questions are often close-ended (i.e., "forced choice"), providing a set of answer choices to ensure easy analysis.

Validity: The strength of evaluation conclusions, inferences, or propositions. It is the degree to which an instrument or evaluation approach measures what it is supposed to be measuring.

RESOURCES

The Planning and Evaluation Resource Center (PERC) website, www.evaluationtools.org, is an online tutorial and clearinghouse of evaluation and planning tools created in partnership with the Applied Developmental Science Institute at Tufts University. This dynamic website includes evaluation and planning tools, tips, and opportunities to link with others looking to use evaluation to strengthen community youth development programs.

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