Introduction to Evaluation

AN OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION & THE LOGIC MODEL

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Agenda

Part 1: Introduction to Evaluation
- Why Evaluate?
- When to Evaluate?
- How to Evaluate?

Part 2: Using a Logic Model Framework
- Steps in an Evaluation Process

Part 3:
- Evaluation Tips
“Research seeks to prove, evaluation seeks to improve...”

M.Q. Patton
If the Goal of Evaluation is... 

... to improve a program

Then an evaluation holds little worth unless findings are used.
Why Evaluate?

- **To gain insight** about a program and its operations – to see where we are going and where we are coming from, and to find out what works and what doesn’t
- **To improve practice** – to modify or adapt practice to enhance the success of activities
- **To assess effects** – to see how well we are meeting objectives and goals, how the program benefits the community, and to provide evidence of effectiveness
- **To build capacity** - increase funding, enhance skills, strengthen accountability
Why Evaluate: Extension?

- One of the primary purposes of evaluation within Extension is to improve the quality of the programs offered.
- It allows stakeholders to determine the programs’ assets and weaknesses:
  - Make appropriate changes
- Extension programs, no matter how large or small, benefit from a review or assessment to see if they accomplished the stated objectives.
The stage of program development and desired information influences the reason and type of program evaluation.
How to Evaluate: Types of Evaluation

- Needs Assessment
- Process Evaluation
- Outcome Evaluation
- Impact Evaluation
How: Needs Assessment

- Approaches to Needs Assessment:
  - Determine what “need” is
  - Allow stakeholders or others to help define the relevant factors
  - Search for evidence of the problem or lack thereof

- Questions:
  - What are the characteristics, needs, priorities of target population?
  - What are potential barriers/facilitators?
  - What is most appropriate to do
How: Process Evaluation

Approaches to Process Evaluation:

- What an organization is supposed to do and what it actually does are two different things.
  - Reveals how a plan is actually implemented.
- Keeping detailed data on the process allows you to say for whom the program is effective, for whom it is not, and sometimes why.

Questions

- How is program implemented? Is delivery of service adequate, uniform?
- Are activities delivered as intended? Fidelity of implementation?
- Are participants being reached as intended?
- What are participant reactions?
How: Outcome Evaluation

- Approaches to Outcome Evaluation:
  - Is used to determine whether change resulted because of participation in the program.
  - Overall, it attempts to link the change to a specific part of the program.

- Questions
  - To what extent are desired changes occurring? Goals met?
  - Who is benefiting/not benefiting? How?
  - What seems to work? Not work?
  - What are unintended outcomes?
How: Impact Evaluation

- Approaches to Impact Evaluation:
  - Examines the longer-term, deeper changes that are potentially a result of the program

- Questions
  - To what extent can changes be attributed to the program?
  - What are the net effects?
  - What are final consequences?
  - Is program worth resources it costs?
Using a Logic Model Framework

Logic Model Courtesy of University of Wisconsin Extension: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html
Logic Model in Evaluation

• Provides the program description that guides evaluation process
  • Helps match evaluation to the program
  • Helps know what and when to measure
    - Are you interested in process and/or outcomes?
  • Helps focus on key, important information
    - Prioritize: where will limited evaluation resources be spent?
    - What do we really need to know??
Steps in an Evaluation Process

- **What are the desired outcomes of this program?**
  - What are the goals?
  - What is trying to be accomplished within the next month/quarter/year(s)?

- **What activities will enable the program to reach its outcomes?**
  - How will it get there?

- **What resources are available to help the program achieve the desired outcomes?**
  - What will be used to implement the program?
Steps in Establishing an Evaluation

**Inputs:**
The resources, raw materials, clients, and staff that go into a program.

**Program Process:**
The service delivered by a program.

**Outputs:**
The services delivered or new products produced by the program process.

**Outcomes:**
The impact of the program process on the state of the target population or the social conditions that a program is expected to have changed.
For example, examining a food nutrition education program:

**Inputs:**
Program Coordinator, assistant, nutrition education manuals, videos, schools provide teen participants

**Program Process:**
Program provides in-school activities detailing how to make better food choices

**Outputs:**
Some number of teens attend programs at some number of schools.

**Outcomes:**
Initial/Short: Teens know more about nutritional food choices.
Intermediate/Mid-term: Teens influence others to make better food choices.
Long-term: Healthier community and lower obesity related rates.
Logical chain of connections showing what the program is to accomplish

**Inputs**
- Program investments

**Outputs**
- Activities
- Participation

**Outcomes**
- Short
- Medium
- Long-term

What we invest | What we do | Who we reach | What are the results
Inputs

What we invest
Staff
Volunteers
Time
Money
Research base
Materials
Equipment
Technology
Partners
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>PARTICIPATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What we do | • Train, teach  
• Deliver services  
• Develop products and resources  
• Network with others  
• Build partnerships  
• Assess  
• Facilitate  
• Work with the media  
• … | | • Participants  
• Clients  
• Customers  
• Agencies  
• Decision makers  
• Policy makers |
| Who we reach   |       | Satisfaction |
Steps in an Evaluation Process

• The *activities* are the interventions that your program will provide in order to bring about the intended outcomes.
  - Programs offer all sorts of different activities to address their desired outcomes
  - For the most part, program activities can be classified as any type of direct service or information that is provided to participants

• The *participants* are those on the receiving end of program activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>What results for individuals, families, communities.....</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHORT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Awareness</td>
<td>• Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge</td>
<td>• Decision-making</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Attitudes</td>
<td>• Policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Skills</td>
<td>• Social action</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Opinion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Aspirations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motivation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Behavioral intent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MEDIUM</strong></td>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes in</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LONG-TERM</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conditions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes in</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social (well-being)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
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Steps in an Evaluation Process

- **Outcomes** should be consistent with what could reasonably be accomplished
  - Provide a foundation for **all** subsequent program implementation and evaluation activities
  - Each of the outcomes should be evaluated
Logic model in evaluation

Program Action

Inputs
- What we invest
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Time
- Money
- Research base
- Materials
- Equipment
- Technology
- Partners

Outputs
- Activities
- Participation

Outcomes - Impact
- Short Term
- Medium Term
- Long Term
- What we do
  - Conduct workshops, meetings
  - Deliver services
  - Develop products, curriculum, resources
  - Train
  - Provide counseling
  - Assess
  - Facilitate
  - Partner
  - Work with media

Who we reach
- Participants
- Clients
- Agencies
- Decision-makers
- Customers

What the short term results are
- Learning
- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Skills
- Opinions
- Aspirations
- Motivations

What the medium term results are
- Action
- Behavior
- Practice
- Decision-making
- Policies
- Social Action

What the ultimate impact(s) is
- Conditions
- Social
- Economic
- Civic
- Environmental

Assumptions

External Factors

Evaluation

What do you want to know?  How will you know it?

EVALUATION: check and verify
Logic Model & Common Types Of Evaluation
Evaluation Tips

- Outputs and outcomes may already be expected of or available to the program
  - **Review** relevant documents from the funding agency and the larger organization to determine what outcomes are of greatest priority
  - **Ascertain** what measures of effectiveness are used by other agencies (governmental, non-profit, etc.) and determine if it makes sense for the program to use the same or similar
Evaluation Tips

- When creating data collection instruments, you should revisit program’s outputs and outcomes to develop questions that address:
  - What you want to know
  - What information you need to capture
Evaluation Tips

- **When gathering data:**
  - It’s essential to utilize data collection tools from the outset of the project
    - If a data collection system is not developed early, it will be difficult to gather accurate data
  - Streamline your process as much as possible
    - Gather similar outputs and outcomes where possible
  - Use technology to the greatest extent possible
    - Excel spreadsheets, online data collection
Evaluation Tips

- For funding purposes:
  - Be sure that outputs and outcomes are representative of the funding / grant
    - A mismatch between desired outcomes and the funder’s intentions could prevent funding.
    - Once funded, a mismatch could jeopardize continued and/or future funding.
Evaluation Tips

- On an annual basis:
  - Revisit the stated inputs, outputs, including activities, and outcomes to ensure they are focused, pragmatic, and provide a current roadmap for the program
  - Reviewing these items will ensure that the program and its evaluation are proceeding as expected
Questions?

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