Evaluation 101

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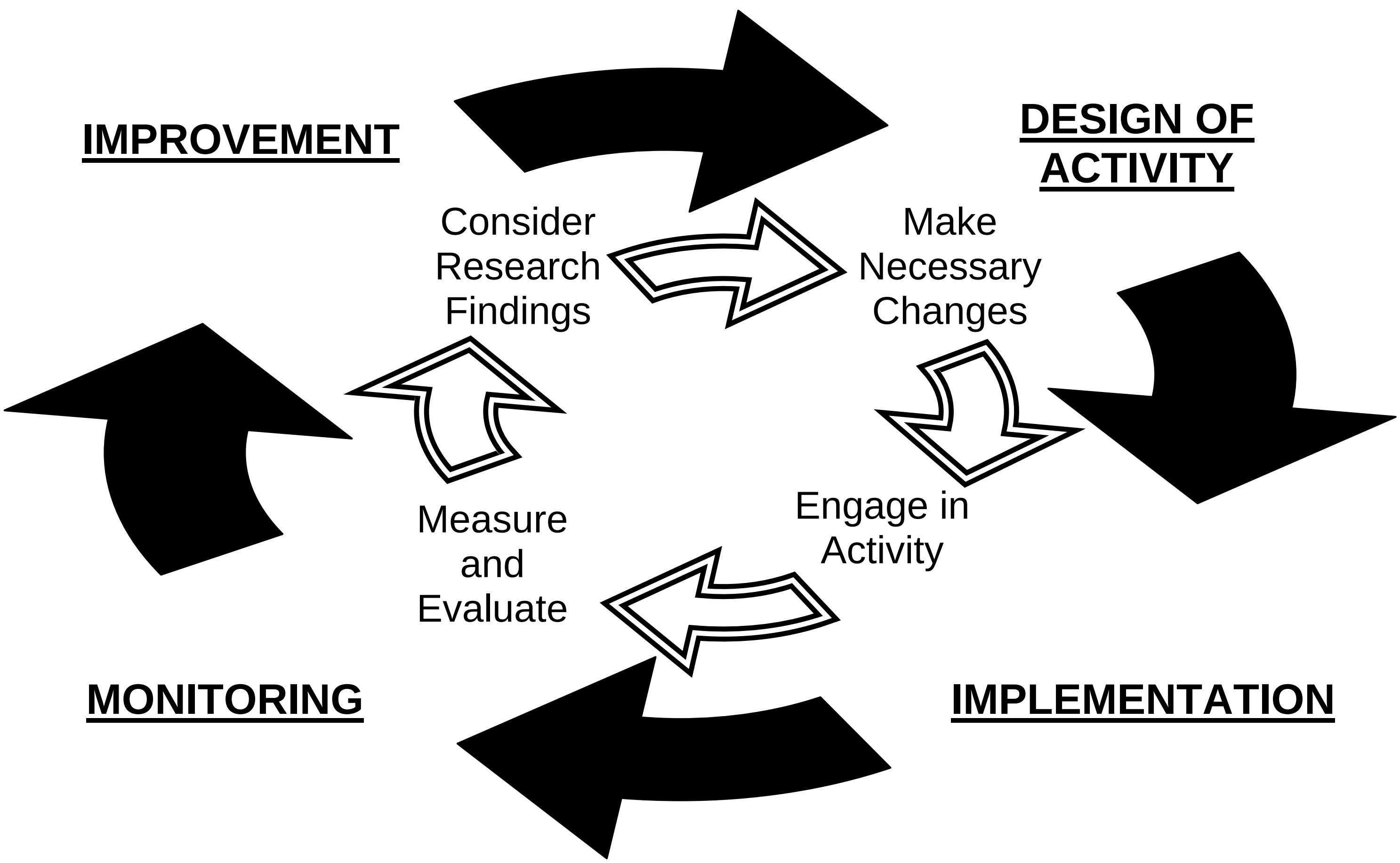
“Evaluation is a systematic process for an organization to obtain information on its activities, its impacts, and the effectiveness of its work, so that it can improve its activities and describe its accomplishments”[1]



[1] Mattessich, Paul W. (2003), *The Manager's Guide to Program Evaluation: Planning, Contracting and Managing for Useful Results*, Saint Paul, MN: Wilder Research Center, p. 3

Evaluation: A Seven Step Program[2]

1. Identify the primary intended users of the evaluation
2. Identify and focus the relevant evaluation questions
3. Make design methods and measurement decisions
4. Collect data
5. Organize data for stakeholder analysis
6. Involve users in interpretation of findings
7. Facilitate intended use by intended users

TYPES OF DATA

Quantitative data are figures – think of it as quantities, or, things you can measure. This can be a count of something, percentages, ranges, or any other amount that can be reflected by a number.

Qualitative data are words or observations. This data cannot be counted. Instead, it is analyzed by looking for themes and answers to questions that cannot be quantified. For example, instead of asking 'how many,' qualitative data asks how or why?

Both types of data are useful for different reasons. Quantitative allows statistical analysis, whereas qualitative data provides deeper insight and more detail.

Quantitative	Qualitative
It is 30°C in this room.	It is very warm in this room.
25 people attended a meeting, and only 2 the last time.	There were a lot more people at the meeting compared to last time.

[2] Adapted from Mignone, Javier (2008) University of Manitoba, Department of Family Social Sciences presentation

MEASUREMENT TOOLS[3]

The following table provides an overview of some common measurement tools:

Methods/ Tools	Overall Purpose	Strengths	Limitations
Questionnaires, Surveys, Checklists	To obtain information quickly, easily and in a non-threatening way.	• produce accurate data • can be completed quickly and are relatively low cost • good for collecting data from large groups • sample questionnaires already exist	• need to be brief and ask relatively simple questions • wording and order can have a major effect on answers • interpretation may vary between respondents • may not get the full story
Interviews/Summary Forms	To provide a fuller understanding of someone's impressions or experiences and to learn more about responses to questions.	• permits clarification and elaboration of responses • process builds trust • process does not require a high literacy level • greater completion rate than paper surveys	• time consuming • difficult to analyze and compare • can be costly • requires skilled interviewers
Direct Observation Form	To gather information and identify change from one perspective	• provides a snapshot view • facilitates comparison • tracks change over time • provides a counterpoint to staff assumptions	• interpreting and categorizing behaviours can be difficult

[3] Taken from United Way of Winnipeg (April 2007), "*Program Outcome Evaluations*," Prepared by Patricia Hodgert

Measurement Tools Continued

Methods/ Tools	Overall Purpose	Strengths	Limitations
Focus Groups / Group Summary	To explore a topic in depth through group discussion.	• inexpensive • can identify unanticipated issues • helps explain quantitative findings	• responses need to be analyzed • requires a good facilitator • can be difficult to get group together • group perspective may distort individual views
Case Studies and Testimonials	To provide a comprehensive examination of a client's experiences.	• provides "rich" information on specific cases • can answer cause and effect questions	• time consuming to collect, organize, and describe • reflects only one individual's experience
Staff Round-tables	To provide a forum for staff to evaluate programs/services as a group.	• involves staff in measurement process • broad-based and comprehensive • provides first hand information and a counterpoint to participant views	• a staff perspective only • group perspective may distort individual views • staff have a vested interest

Make Design and Measurement Decisions

There are no rigid rules for making methods decisions. It is important to keep in mind:

- There is no single best plan for an evaluation – the 'best' design is based on the program
- There is no perfect design – every design has the ability to succeed or fail dependent on implementation, and every design has its strengths and limitations
- There are always errors and ambiguities – unless it is truly scientific in a controlled environment, there will always be subjectivities

Overall, any evaluation will ask one or more of the following five questions . . .[4]

1. Did our clients change, and if so, how much and in what ways?
2. How much service did we provide and what was the quality of that service?
3. What was the quantity and quality of the resources we used to implement our programs?
4. Which resources were most important for providing high-quality service?
5. Which strategies (program qualities) were most important for achieving the desired outcomes?

Standards for Evaluation[5]

Utility–Ensure that an evaluation will serve the practical information needs of intended users

Feasibility–Ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, sensible, sensitive to any potential issues, and economical

Propriety–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 those effected by its results

Accuracy–Ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth or merit of the program being evaluated

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[4] A Funder's Guide to Evaluation – Leveraging Evaluation to Improve Nonprofit Effectiveness. – Peter York. (2005)

[5] Adapted from Mignone, Javier (2008) University of Manitoba, Department of Family Social Sciences presentation

SAMPLE LOGIC MODEL

You do not have to put in an answer for each example give. **However, your responses should be clear and detailed.** Each outcome should be listed on its own row, with program and evaluation plans specific to it.

PROGRAM NAME: ABC Homework Club									
	Program Plan				*Outcome Plan*			*Evaluation Plan*	
#	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	TARGET GROUP	SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT TOOLS
1.	- 4 staff members - 3 volunteers - 52 combined work hours - $435 - Books - Pens/Pencils - Computer	- help with homework - help with reading - provide guidance with homework	- 14 youth attended - 13 program sessions - 26 program hours	- Youth aged 4-18 in Winnipeg's inner city	- Youth will have increased reading skills		- Higher probability of employment due to education	- Youth attending the program have difficulty reading a book at grade level 1 on first day of program, but grade level 3 on last day - Youth report that reading is easier for them	- Record of difficulty of books child is reading - Self-report
2.	- 4 staff members - 3 volunteers - 52 combined work hours - $435 - Books - Pens/Pencils - Computer	- help with homework - help with reading - provide guidance with homework	- 14 youth attended - 13 program sessions - 26 program hours	- Youth aged 4-18 in Winnipeg's inner city		- Youth will have increased academic achievement		- Increase in grades - Better attendance at school	- Academic records - Self-reports (questionnaires)
3.	- 4 staff members - 3 volunteers - 52 combined work hours - $435 - Books - Pens/Pencils - Computer	- help with homework - help with reading - provide guidance with homework - support from staff/volunteers -activities involving group work/team work	- 14 youth attended - 13 program sessions - 26 program hours	- Youth aged 4-18 in Winnipeg's inner city	- Youth will experience positive relationship with adults and peers			- Youth indicate there is an adult at the program they can trust - Youth indicate they like to come to program to be with their friends	- Questionnaire - Dotocracy

Logic Model Checklist

A logic model is a graphical representation of your program's goals, activities and the results. It should illustrate the cause-effect relationships between the activities, outputs and the outcomes. Below are definition of each section of a logic model, and examples to consider when filling it in. Your logic model does not need to have an answer for every example given for each section.

Inputs: *Resources a program uses to achieve the desired outcome*

What we invest: staff, volunteers, time, money, research, materials, equipment, technology, and partners

- Should include information about the resources the agency has available to run the program (i.e. Number of full-time employees, number of volunteers, time, money)

Activities: *Main task of the program staff/volunteers directed to beneficiaries*

What we do: conduct workshops, deliver services, develop products/resources, train, provide counseling, assess, facilitate, partner

- Does not include administrative aspects of the program (i.e. Payroll information)
- List activities that absorb the bulk of available resources

Outputs: *Direct products of a program which can be counted*

What we measure: number of people served, hours of service provided, product created

- The sum total of activities or products that reach the participants (target group)
- Should include the actual number of activities planned, total number of hours, actual number of participants to be reached)

Target Group: *Individuals affected by the program*

Who we reach: participants, clients, agencies, decision-makers, customers

- Includes everyone affected by participation in the program directly or indirectly

Outcomes: *The benefits the target group experiences during or after participating in the program*

Short Term Outcomes →Changes in: awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, opinions, aspirations, motivations
Medium Term Outcomes → Changes in: behaviour, practice, decision-making, policies, social action
Long Term Outcomes → Changes in: social conditions, economic conditions, civic conditions, environmental conditions

- Should logically link activities and results
- Represent the consequences of activities and outputs
- Should be realistic and achievable – "Is the stated outcome 'doable' in terms of time and resources?
- Does each outcome describe a specific change in attitude or behaviour/action/situation?

Performance Indicators: *These are the changes that indicate that the outcome has been achieved*

What we measure: observable changes, measureable changes

- Indicators should be measurable or observable by evaluators
- More than one indicator should be used for each outcome

Measurement Tools: *Tools used to evaluate the program and measure the indicators*

What we use: surveys, focus groups, standardized tests, observation, and anecdotal reports

- More than one measurement tool can be used to measure indicators
- Should be consistent when implementing measurement tools to increase data rigor

Evaluation Checklist

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Does your program/agency have…

☐ A **program logic model**?

☐ **Measurement tools** asking the questions you want to know the answers to?

☐ A **data collection plan** so it is easy to identify what data is being collecting, when and how it is being collected, and whose responsibility it is?

☐ A plan to create **pre- and post- data** so that comparisons and conclusions can be made regarding the impact of your activities?

☐ The capacity to **report your outcomes data** to United Way of Winnipeg using the HOMES database (as well as the ability to report your findings to other staff, stakeholders and funders)?

☐ **A culture of evaluation** – is evaluation being embedded in, and supported by, the practices of your agency and board members? **Use and share your findings!**

☐ Does your ED know about and support the process of outcomes evaluation (if it isn't you)?

☐ Do you have a process by which you can report your findings to staff and stakeholders?

☐ Do you see the value of evaluation and share its importance with others at your agency?

☐ Have you used your results for continued quality improvement to your programs?

☐ Do you have a plan in place to evaluate other programs your agency offers?

These processes are crucial to the sustainability of evaluation over time.

☐ Contact information for **evaluation support** to answer any questions you have or provide any support you need?

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