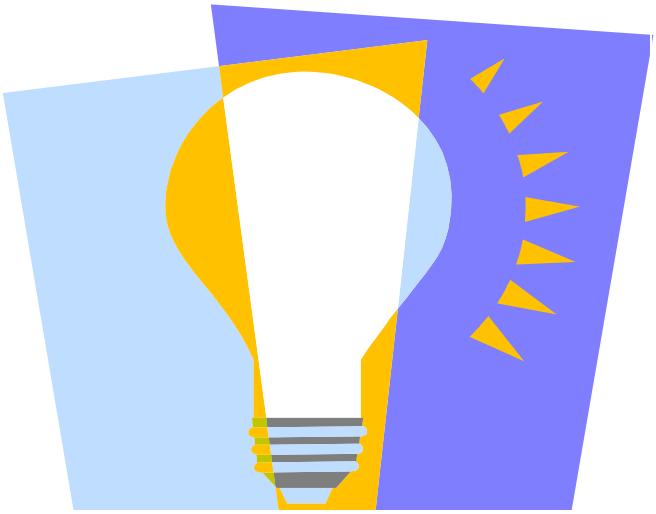

PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION ESSENTIALS

A GUIDE FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR EVALUATION PARTNERS

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The Bruner Foundation, 2004

Acknowledgments

This guide book was developed by Anita Baker with Kim Sabo to provide evaluation training to Executive Directors and Staff involved in the Rochester Effectiveness Partnership (REP). Its contents, which were revised throughout the years of the REP initiative, were strongly influenced by the work of Michael Quinn Patton of the Union Institute Graduate School, the United Way of America, Jane Reisman of the Evaluation Forum, and many others who thoughtfully add to the evaluation literature. The Rochester Effectiveness Partnership was founded on the belief that participatory evaluation is a practical management tool that can help organizations evaluate and make decisions about their programs based on meaningful information. The partnership included funders, nonprofit providers and evaluation professionals working together as equal partners, benefiting from each others' knowledge, skills and experience. The unique training model included: comprehensive, intensive, hands-on training about how to plan for and conduct evaluations, combined with a year-long opportunity to conduct an actual coached evaluation project. It also provided ongoing opportunities for trainees to be involved in coached evaluation projects and advanced training, as well as a peer-support network among the partners and an active voice in the community. See the Bruner website, www.brunerfoundation.org/ei, for more information about REP and other related efforts sponsored by the Bruner Foundation.

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Foreword

Excerpted from the Remarks of Beth Bruner, Lead REP Funder
Final REP-sponsored Community Conference (April 2004)

During its 7-year history, REP involved hundreds of people in Rochester, New York. The project was a creative and evolving collaboration seeking to learn and use participatory evaluation skills to improve programs for clients and to increase effectiveness of organizations. REP was designed to systematically build capacity to use and understand evaluation through rigorous study of, practice and application of evaluation strategies. REP fostered the improvement of programs so that clients could benefit in demonstrable ways. REP taught organizations to be better consumers of evaluation studies

Through routine evaluation of REP, we learned some clear lessons. We know that it is possible to systematically build evaluation capacity in the non-profit provider community – REP partners know more about participatory evaluation, they do better evaluations, and they commission better, more useful and user-friendly evaluations. Through REP we demonstrated that it really is possible to make data-driven program decisions that benefit service delivery to clients. REP partners can demonstrate clear changes to their programs – terminations, expansions, alterations – based on evaluation data. We also learned through REP that mastering new paradigms and skills as adults is intense and requires substantial amounts of time and other resources. REP was not a project about finding simple answers, or providing one-shot workshops. Rather, it was about understanding complexity and integrating new ways of thinking and systems of operating into every day functions of individuals and programs. The following materials were an important part of that effort.

The Bruner Foundation is making these materials available to advance the use of participatory evaluation and evaluative thinking skills in the non-profit sector. They are designed to instruct program managers and CEOs so that they can become active participants in the evaluation process. The intent is to assist in building the capacity to conduct participatory evaluations as well as to become well-informed consumers of evaluation.

We suggest using the materials sequentially, as a unit, but, depending on your own evaluation expertise and position in your organization, you may find it useful to pull out certain sections and/or activities.

It is our hope that you will find this information a valuable asset in your evaluation work and that you will give us feedback about your use of them.

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How to Use This Guide

This guide book is presented in five sections. It includes information about **program evaluation basics and planning, logic models, collecting and using evaluation data, projecting levels of effort, timelines and budgets, and evaluation reporting.** Following this "How-To" summary is a detailed table of contents for each section. At the end of the guide there is an evaluation quiz and an evaluation bibliography. Also included with this guide are comprehensive appendices which can be pulled out and used for easy references, as well as to review brief presentations of other special topics that are not covered in the main sections of the guide (see pockets of the notebook). Following the table of contents there is a full list of all appendices. There is a complementary volume of this evaluation guide available for funders, in hard copy or via the internet (see the Bruner website, www.brunerfoundation.org/ei).

This guide book is organized to help an evaluation trainee walk through the process of designing an evaluation, collecting and analyzing evaluation data, and even writing an evaluation report. In each section of this guidebook there are activities that provide practice opportunities about the topics. At the end of Section IV there is an evaluation planning summary activity which refers back to several of the activities from previous sections. It can be used to help trainees fully design an evaluation to implement in their own programs. All of the activities in Section III will help trainees practice data collection methods and will inform their choices about data collection for their designs. In Section V there is an evaluation report outline and several tips about evaluation report writing that can be used to help trainees plan for and later fully complete an evaluation report using information that was collected by implementing their designs. In addition, the appendix includes several sample completed logic models and sample completed interviews which can be used for training activities, and there is a sample observation protocol. The guide book can also be used as an evaluation reference source for those who just want to learn more about one of the specific topics. When an evaluation trainer or an evaluation trainee wants information about a specific planning, data collection or report-writing strategy, they can look it up in the table of contents or appendix list and find information quickly. There is also an evaluation bibliography with many text and on-line references about evaluation and there is a short glossary of commonly used terms about evaluation.

For the REP project, we worked through all the information up front, in a series of 10 comprehensive 3-hour training sessions. Each session included a short presentation of information, hands-on activities about the session topic, opportunities for discussion and questions, and homework for trainees to try on their own. By the end of the 10 training sessions, trainees had developed their own evaluation designs which they later implemented as part of REP. We then provided an additional 10 months of evaluation coaching and review while trainees actually conducted the evaluations they had designed and we worked through several of the additional training topics that are presented in the appendix. At the end of their REP experience, trainees from non-profit organizations summarized and presented the findings from the evaluations they had designed and conducted. The REP non-profit partners agreed that the up-front training helped prepare them to do solid evaluation work and it provided opportunities for them to increase participation in evaluation within their organizations. We recommend this approach for those who are interested in building evaluation capacity. Whether you are a trainee or a trainer, using the guide to fully prepare for and conduct evaluation or just look up specific information about evaluation-related topics, we hope that the materials provided here will support your efforts.

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I. PROGRAM EVALUATION BASICS

Important Definitions

Evaluation is a science with a relatively short history. It became a distinctive field of professional social science practice in the late 1960's (Patton 1982). There are many types and classifications of evaluation, and there are many terms associated with the practice (see glossary in the appendix). This guidebook is focused on participatory program evaluation. The following are key definitions and points of clarification necessary to orient the remaining sections of this manual.

Working Definition of Program Evaluation. The practice of evaluation involves the thoughtful, systematic collection and analysis of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs, for use by specific people, to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness, and make decisions regarding those programs (adapted from Patton 1982).

Working Definition of Participatory Evaluation. Participatory Evaluation involves trained evaluation personnel and practice-based decision-makers (i.e., organizational members with program responsibility – service providers) working in partnership. It brings together seasoned evaluators with seasoned program staff to provide training, and then design, conduct, and use results of a program evaluation (Cousins, 1998).

There is additional information in the appendix about participatory evaluation and about how to commission external evaluation or evaluation consultation.

Clarifications About Evaluation Strategies

Many years of participatory evaluation practice show that program providers, funders and evaluators can all be meaningfully engaged in program evaluation. It is important to recognize the following.

- All evaluations are partly social (because they involve human beings), partly political (because knowledge is power), and only partly technical (Herman, Morris, Fitz-Gibbons, 1996).

- Evaluation data can be collected using **qualitative** methods (e.g., observations, interviews) and/or **quantitative** methods (e.g., surveys, statistical analyses of practical assessments). Although there has been much debate about which strategies and types of data are best, current thinking indicates that **both are valuable and both can be collected and analyzed rigorously**.

- There are multiple ways to address most evaluation needs. Different evaluation needs call for different designs, types of data and data collection strategies.

This guidebook provides a framework for planning evaluations, as well as information about specific strategies to collect and analyze data and summarize evaluation findings.

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Collecting Background Information about a Program of Interest

This Guidebook addresses program evaluation. The strategies and suggestions contained here are intended to be focused on a program of interest. To initiate program evaluation, it is critical to collect some background information about the subject program. At a minimum, each of the following ten questions about the program (or program component) should be answered. Where possible, this information should be obtained from direct sources rather than from written summaries (or proposals).

(1) What is the purpose(s) of the program?

(2) What stage is the program in? (new, developing, mature, phasing out)

(3) Who are the program clients?

(4) Who are the key program staff (and where applicable, in which department is the program)?

(5) What specific strategies are used to deliver program services?

(6) What outcomes are program participants expected to achieve? (i.e., what happens to participants as a result of participating?)

(7) Are there any other evaluation studies currently being conducted regarding this program? (If so, obtain a brief description).

(8) Who are the funders of the program?

(9) What is the total program budget?

(10) Why has this program been selected for evaluation?

Purpose of Evaluation

Program evaluations can be conducted from an accountability perspective and/or from a developmental perspective and/or from a knowledge/academic values perspective. They are typically conducted to accomplish one, two or all of the following.

** To Render Judgments

** To Facilitate Improvements

** To Generate Knowledge

It is critical to carefully specify what program (or program component) is to be evaluated, and to clearly establish why evaluation is being conducted. This should be done at the earliest stages of evaluation planning and with the input of multiple stakeholders (see following to learn more about stakeholders).

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Evaluation Questions

Once the basic purpose for the evaluation has been established, evaluation questions must be clearly specified. These questions should ideally be determined by the service providers together with the evaluator, in accordance with the purpose of the evaluation (see also the appendix for examples of questions by purpose). Evaluation questions…….

- Focus and drive the evaluation (they clarify what will and will not be evaluated).
- Should be carefully specified (and agreed upon) in advance of other evaluation design work.
- Generally represent a critical subset of information that is desired about a program to address the purpose of the evaluation.

It is important to keep the number of evaluation questions manageable. The exact number of evaluation questions depends on the purpose of the evaluation and resources available to conduct the evaluation, but limiting the evaluation to address between two and five questions is strongly advised. The following are criteria of good evaluation questions (adapted from Patton, 1997):

* It is possible to obtain data to address the questions. (This addresses access, and to a lesser extent measurability. The strategies in this guide will help evaluators and service providers devise approaches for data collection. The data must be available for use though, to those undertaking evaluation.)
* There is more than one possible "answer" to the question, i.e., the findings are not predetermined by the phrasing of the question.
* Those conducting the evaluation want and need information to help them address the questions, and know how it will be used internally and where appropriate externally.
* The questions are aimed at changeable aspects of programmatic activity (i.e., they should focus on those things which can be modified where findings warrant change).

Identifying and Working With Evaluation Stakeholders

Evaluation stakeholders are people who have a stake -- a vested interest -- in evaluation findings. (Patton, 1997, p.41).

- Stakeholders include anyone who makes decisions about a program, desires information about a program, and/or is involved directly or indirectly with a program.
- Most programs have multiple stakeholders.
- Stakeholders typically have diverse and often competing interests.

In program evaluation, stakeholders typically include organizational officials (e.g., Executive Director), program staff, program clients or their caregivers, and program funders. Sometimes community members or other organizations are also stakeholders. It is critical for providers and evaluators to involve some key stakeholders in the evaluation process, especially planning. There are also usually important roles for stakeholders in data collection, analysis and reporting. See the appendix for additional suggestions for involving stakeholders in evaluation.

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Evaluation Designs

An evaluation design is a way of helping you think about and structure an evaluation. It communicates evaluation plans to evaluators, program officials, and other stakeholders. A good design should include the following:

* summary information about the selected program and why it is to be evaluated;

* the questions to be addressed by the evaluation;

* the data collection strategies that will be used;

* the individuals who will undertake the activities;

* when the activities will be conducted;

* the products of the evaluation, who will receive them, and how they will be used;

* the projected cost for doing the evaluation (where appropriate).

Choosing data collection strategies (e.g., surveys, observations, practical assessments) depends upon the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation questions, the time frame, and the available resources. If you work through each of the sections of this guide, you should be able to fully design an evaluation which can then be conducted by your organization with a participatory evaluation coach (or with the specific services of evaluation professionals). Working through this guide will also help you assess evaluation designs that are developed by evaluation professionals to meet the needs of your organization and your stakeholders. The appendix to this guide includes supplemental information to help you assess the potential effectiveness of evaluation designs.

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Getting Started

1. Collect the following information by visiting the selected program, reviewing any written summaries, and talking to key staff and clients about the program.

Preliminary Design Planning

Agency/Organization Name:	
Selected Program or Program Component	
Provider: Key Contact	
Evaluator (if applicable)	

(1) The purpose(s) of the program is/are to:

(2) The funders of the program include:

(3) The total program budget is:

(4) What stage is the program in? (new, developing, mature, phasing out)

(5) Why was this program selected for evaluation?

(6) Are there any other evaluation studies currently being conducted regarding this program?

(7) Who are the program clients?

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(8) Who are the key staff and administrators for this program?

(9) What specific strategies are used to deliver program services?

(10) What outcomes are project participants expected to achieve? (i.e., what happens to participants as a result of participating?)

2. Identify the primary stakeholders for this project – categories and names of individuals. Begin talking with them about what questions they think are important to ask. Find out what else they know about the program.

3. Using the information in section I, and any stakeholder input, jot down some probable evaluation questions for this program. Using the criteria described in section I, have a colleague test to be sure they meet the evaluation question criteria.

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Planning Stakeholder Meetings

1. **What are the goals of the meeting**

2. **What are the questions you need to ask in order to meet your goals?**

3. **Who will attend your meeting?**

4. **How long will the meeting last?**

5. **How will you obtain information from your stakeholders? What is your strategy?**

6. **How will you document this information?**

7. **What else do you need from your stakeholders?**

8. **How will you provide feedback after the stakeholder meeting?**

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II. LOGIC MODELS AS PLANNING AND EVALUATION TOOLS

Constructing a Program Logic Model

A program logic model is a simple description of how a program is understood to work to achieve outcomes for participants. It is a useful tool for program planning, evaluation and fund development. To construct a logic model it is necessary to describe program:

inputs (resources, money, staff/time, volunteers, facilities, etc.);
activities (how the program uses inputs to fulfill mission, strategies, service delivery);
outcomes (changes to individuals, or populations during or after participation).

Summarizing a Program Logic Model Helps to:

- Create a "snapshot" of program operations that addresses what is needed, how services are delivered and what is expected for participants
- Identify key program components to track.
- Think through the steps of participant progress and develop a realistic picture of what can be accomplished.

The following shows a format for a simple logic model. (Full-sized forms for reproduction, as well as those with a more comprehensive design are included in the appendix to this guide.)

Inputs	Activities	Outcomes
		You can choose to ..... * Embed targets *Distinguish between initial, intermediate and longer term. Mark which will be tracked or measured.

Adapted from the United Way of America

Important Things to Remember About Logic Models

➤ Not all programs lend themselves easily to summarization in this format.

➤ Logic models are best used in conjunction with other descriptive information or as part of a conversation. It is advisable to have one or two key project officials summarize the logic model but then to have multiple stakeholders review it and agree upon what is included and how.

➤When used for program planning, it is advisable to start with outcomes and then determine what activities will be appropriate and what inputs are needed.

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Important Things to Remember About Logic Models (con't)

➤ There are several different approaches and formats for logic models. This one is one-dimensional and limited to the three program features (inputs, activities, outcomes). It is also common to see logic models represented as funnels, or in three-dimensional formats.

➤ The relationships between inputs, activities and outcomes are not one-to-one, therefore there are no arrows. The model is supposed to illustrate how the set of inputs could support the set of activities that contribute to the set of outcomes identified. Levels of service delivery or "outputs" are shown in the activities section.

Outcomes Planning Mis-steps and Cautions

Clarifying which outcomes are expected for your program, and which should be evaluated is some of the hardest work of evaluation (see also the chart that distinguishes between outcomes, indicators and targets in the appendix). Keep the following in mind as you plan for outcomes evaluation.

- Outcomes, especially long-term outcomes, should not go beyond the program's purpose (i.e., don't project educational outcomes for an employment and training program).

- Outcomes should not go beyond the scope of the target audience (i.e., don't project change throughout the county if you are only serving a small proportion of county residents in a particular neighborhood.)

- To make judgments about a program (or facilitate improvement), you do not have to measure all indicators for all participants, sampling and snapshots for key indicators can provide ample data for decision-making.

- Avoid holding a program accountable for outcomes that are tracked and influenced largely by another system, unless there is meaningful interaction with that system regarding outcome change (e.g., don't hold an afterschool program accountable for the outcomes of students at school, unless the afterschool and day school programs are integrated).

- Do not assume that all subpopulations will have similar outcomes (e.g., outcomes may be very different for boys than for girls, projected targets may have to factor in subgroup effects).

- Be sure to measure outcomes on a timetable that corresponds to logical projections of when they will be accomplished.

- Set targets, in advance, based on: best professional hunches, external standards (when they are available), past performance (when baseline or initial data are available -- sometimes it's advisable to wait until it is). Do not agree to targets that are unrealistically high or embarrassingly low.

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Outcomes, Indicators and Targets

Different terms are used to describe the results of programs, what is expected, and how you know if meaningful results are achieved. We have found the following lexicon, adapted from the United Way of America, to be the most useful (this is also available in a single-page format in the appendix.)

Outcomes are changes in behavior, skills, knowledge, attitudes, condition or status. \Outcomes are related to the core business of the program, are realistic and attainable, within the program's sphere of influence, and appropriate. Outcomes are what a program is held accountable for.

Indicators are specific, measurable characteristics or changes that represent achievement of an outcome. Indicators are directly related to the outcome and help define it. Indicators are specific, measurable, observable, can be seen, heard or read, and make sense in relation to the outcome whose achievement they signal.

Targets specify the amount or level of outcome attainment that is expected, hoped for or required. Targets or levels of outcome attainment can be determined relative to external standards (**when they are available**) OR internal agreement (based on best professional hunches, past performance, or similar programs). Note that some of the sample logic models in the appendix have embedded targets.

Outcomes, Indicators and Targets: Issues and Cautions **READ THIS**

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	TARGETS
• Outcomes are very time-sensitive. When you measure influences what you get. • The more immediate an outcome, the more influence a program generally has on its achievement. • The type and magnitude of outcomes are closely related to program design. There is usually more than one way to get an outcome. Similarly, changes in program design often lead to changes in outcomes. • Positive outcomes are not always improvements. Sometimes they are the absence of something negative; sometimes they are achievement of a standard or milestone.	• Indicators may not capture all aspects of an outcome. • Indicators should not be excluded because they seem too simple. • Many outcomes have more than one indicator. Identify the set that you believe (or have agreed) adequately and accurately signals achievement of an outcome. Acquire agreement from key stakeholders, in advance, regarding the set of indicators and the "level" required to indicate positive outcomes. • If you are trying to measure prevention of negative events, consider identifying meaningful segments of time to follow-up and determine whether the event happened.	• Performance targets should be specified in advance (i.e., with program and evaluation design). The specification process must define what is highly effective, adequate, not adequate. Be sure there is buy-in regarding what constitutes a positive outcome. • Lacking data on past performance it may be advisable to wait for data. • Be especially cautious about wording numerical targets so they are not over or under ambitious, and so they make sense to key stakeholders or information users. • If the target statement indicates change in magnitude (i.e., increases or decreases), be sure to specify the initial levels and what is considered positive. • Be sure target statements are in sync with meaningful program time frames.

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Logic Model Assessment

To determine whether your logic model should work, answer the following important questions. If possible, involve stakeholders in the process of reviewing and assessing your logic model.

1.) Does the logic model:

*clearly distinguish between activities and outcomes and where appropriate, between initial, and longer-term outcomes?

*clearly communicate what is to be done and how it is expected to help participants?

*seem logical?

*include all the inputs, activities and outcomes that are important?

*suggest appropriate connections between inputs, activities and outcomes?

2a.) Are the outcomes identified:

*relevant to the mission/objectives of the program?

*those for which the program should be held accountable?

*represent meaningful change for participants?

*useful to program managers to identify program strengths and weaknesses?

*likely to be accepted as valid outcomes of the program by program managers and other stakeholders?

2b) Is it reasonable to expect that the program can influence the outcomes in a non-trivial way? Do the targets seem realistic?

3a.) Are the activities:

*sufficient in number, duration and intensity to contribute significantly to the outcomes?

*doable given project inputs?

3b.) Are there activities that seem unrelated to the outcomes, or does it seem likely that some important activities are missing?

4.) Do the inputs seem sufficient (in both quantity and quality) to support all activities?

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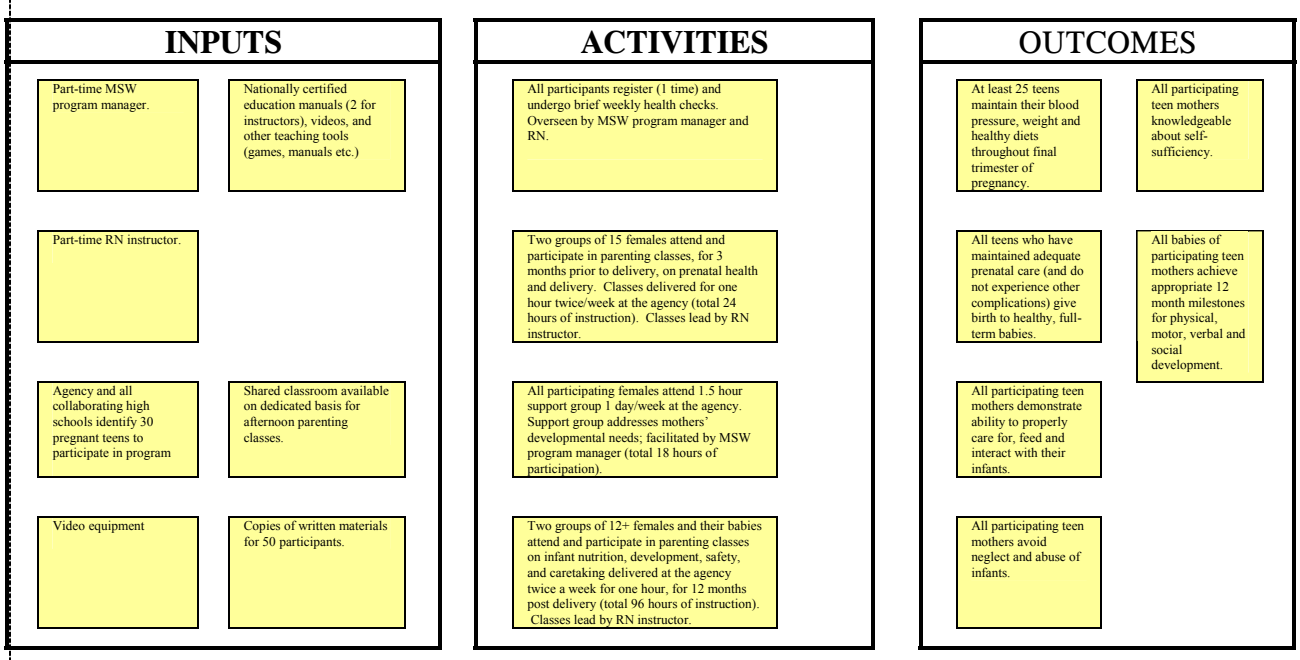
Logic Model Training Activities

1. The Logic Model Scramble

Preparation. Take any sample logic model (use those in the appendix or one that has been developed by a service provider) and separate each input, activity and outcome onto individual post-it notes. Scramble the individual components/post-it notes and affix the scrambled set onto a piece of cardboard or card stock for distribution to trainees. In addition to the "pieces" of the logic model, make three large easel pages (we use the 3M Cling Sheets) – one each for inputs, activities and outcomes. Hang the "blank logic model" easel pages on the wall.

Conducting the Un-Scrambling Activity. Distribute the scrambled logic model pieces to the trainees and have them re-assemble the logic model (i.e., place components that look like inputs onto the INPUT easel page, place outcome components onto the Outcome page etc.) The finished product should look something like the diagram below.



Assessing the Logic Model. Once the logic model has been re-assembled, distribute the sample version for trainees to review and compare to the one they have created on the wall. Facilitate a discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the logic model based on the assessment criteria in the manual.

2. Logic Models and Stakeholders

Display a completed logic model (using easel pages and post-it notes, or hand-written inputs, activities and outcomes). Have "stakeholders" (e.g., program staff, development staff, board members), rate how important each input, activity and outcome is using a symbol, numeric rating or colored sticky dot. Also have them rate how good a job has been done with each activity and each outcome. Then facilitate a discussion about strengths and challenges. This provides an opportunity for multiple stakeholders to see and talk about what should be happening in a program.

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III. COLLECTING AND USING EVALUATION DATA

There are four primary types of evaluation methodologies/data collection strategies which can (and should) be combined to address evaluation questions and allow for multiple sources of data. All have both benefits and limitations and require preparation on the front end.

- ★ RECORD/DOCUMENT REVIEW
- ★ SURVEYS
- ★ INTERVIEWS (Including Focus Groups)
- ★ OBSERVATIONS

The following table provides a brief summary of evaluation data collection methodologies. It will help you select strategies and prepare for their use. Additional details about how to plan for and use each evaluation data collection method, and examples of summarized data are clarified in the following sections. See also the supplemental materials in the appendix regarding data collection decisions.

**Remember, mixed methodologies, and multiple sources of data/respondents, collected at multiple points in time, increase evaluation rigor and usefulness of findings.

**Remember, data do not have to be collected for all participants in every program cycle. Evaluating findings from samples (subgroups) of participants or point-in-time (snapshot) estimates can be a useful approach.

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Data Collection Methods

Method	Description	Examples of Uses
SURVEYS Mail Phone Captive	Surveys have a series of questions (items) with pre-determined response choices. They can include all independent items or groups of items (scales) that can be summarized. Surveys can also include some open-ended items for write-in or clarification. Surveys can be completed by respondents or surveyors. Instruments are called questionnaires, surveys, assessment forms	**To study attitudes and perceptions.** **To collect self-reported assessment of changes in response to program.** **To collect program assessments.** **To collect some behavioral reports.** **To test knowledge** **To determine changes over time.**
INTERVIEWS Structured Semi-structured Intercept Group Interviews Focus Groups Phone, Face-to-Face	An interview is a one-sided conversation between an interviewer and a respondent. Questions are (mostly) pre-determined, but open-ended. Respondents are expected to answer using their own terms. Instruments are called protocols or interview schedules or guides.	**To study attitudes and perceptions using respondent's own language.** **To collect self-reported assessment of changes in response to program.** **To collect program assessments.** **To document program implementation** **To determine changes over time.**
OBSERVATIONS Program Participant	Observations are conducted to view and hear actual program activities. They can be focused on programs overall or participants in programs. Instruments are called protocols or guides, sometimes checklists.	**To document program implementation.** **To witness levels of skill/ability, program practices, behaviors.** **To determine changes over time.**
RECORD REVIEW Internal External	Record review is a catch-all category that involves accessing existing information or information that was collected for other purposes. Evaluation data is obtained from other types of program records – including those used by other agencies (for example the report card grades of students might be a source of data for evaluation of an after-school program; data collected as part of a drug screening might be used as part of the evaluation of a prevention program). Instruments are called protocols.	**To collect some behavioral reports.** **To test knowledge** **To verify self-reported data.** **To determine changes over time.**

Additional information about making data collection decisions is provided in the appendix.

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Record Reviews

Data that are collected for administrative and other purposes, such as attendance data, are often useful for evaluation. Once a participatory evaluator has determined what is available and how access can be achieved, reviews of existing program and/or participant data can be conducted. These data can be obtained from internal or external sources (see list below). Comparison data and needs assessment data can also be obtained for some indicators of interest. Additionally specific evaluation questions can be added to standard record-keeping strategies and responses can be collected as part of a record review (e.g., a question for parents about program value can be added to an intake form).

Available Administrative Data Sources for Programs/Participants

- Intake Forms
- Attendance Rosters
- Program Logs (e.g., daily activity descriptions)
- Evaluation Forms (e.g., customer satisfaction surveys, session assessments)
- Case Files or Case Management Data (these may include both internal data – such as progress toward internally established goals; and external data – such as reports about a participant's living arrangements, employment or childbearing status).
- Exit or Follow-up Data
- Assessments (these may also include both internal data – such as culminating knowledge measurements at the end of a cycle; and external data such as test scores, report card grades; scale scores on a behavioral scale; medical or substance use test results).

Other Extant Data for Needs Assessment or Comparisons

- Census Data -- available on the internet, in libraries or by demand from marketing firms.
- Vital Statistics -- also available on the internet, in libraries and from local health departments
- Topical Outcome Data -- e.g., crime statistics, birth outcomes, juvenile arrest data
- KIDS COUNT child well-being indicators
- National survey data -- e.g., NELS, NLS, YRBS
- Community Profile Data
- UI (unemployment insurance) data

Summarizing Record Review Data

Findings from record review data are usually determined through secondary analysis. In other words, when we use administrative data for evaluation purposes, we are using data that was collected and analyzed for other purposes. (For example, attendance data may be regularly collected for a program to inform routine, daily program operations. That same data may be summarized on a quarterly or annual basis to inform other stakeholders such as funders about program use. A participatory evaluator may take attendance data and combine them with other evaluation data to determine relationships between attendance and other outcomes.)

Record review data are typically arrayed in tables or summarized in profiles or "bullet" lists as frequencies or proportions, or averages **(see following tables)**. They can be both descriptive (e.g., summarizing the demographics of the actual target population) and/or evaluative (e.g., summarizing

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the number and percent of training program graduates who got and held jobs, summarizing the mean score for the target population on an aptitude or physical test). For additional references about how to summarize record review data see the citations list at the end of this manual under Quantitative Data Analysis. See also the example of a *Service Delivery Description* using record review data, in the appendix.

Examples of Summarized Data from Record Reviews

1. Participant Profiles. Table X: Demographics of Participants, 1999-2000

	Site 1 N = 95	Site 2 N=139	Site 3 N=160	Site 4 N=106	Total N=500
GENDER					
Female	51%	64%	49%	55%	55%
Male	49%	36%	50%	45%	45%
RACE/ETHNICITY					
African Am.	83%	59%	89%	89%	79%
Hispanic/Latino	7%	32%	7%	10%	15%
Multi-racial	8%	8%	4%	2%	5%
Other	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%
GRADE					
K-2	37%	47%	22%	38%	35%
3rd - 5th	54%	46%	54%	50%	51%
6th -9th	9%	7%	25%	13%	13%

Note: This profile represents an estimate based on data reported from the sites. It does not reflect all shifts in population over the year, as not all sites fully reported enrollment and termination data.

2. Program Outcomes Table XX: Number of Goals Achieved by Session Intensity

GOAL AREA	LOW INTENSITY 1 - 9 SESSIONS	MID INTENSITY 10 - 18 SESSIONS	HIGH INTENSITY 19 OR MORE SESSIONS
READING	3.7	5.3	7.1
LANGUAGE	3.8	6.1	7.5
MATH	2.6	4.4	4.7
PERSONAL DEV.	1.6	1.7	2.1
TOTAL	7.5	11.8	14.8

*** Desired goal achievement is 3 for reading, 3 for math, 3 for language, 1 for personal development, 10 total. ** Note that differences between those with low intensity and mid/high intensity were statistically significant.**

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Record Review Activities

1. Summarize one finding from "Table X" below

Table X: Training Participant Outcomes Compared to Goals, By Site

	NEW YORK		BOSTON		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Enrollment Goal	188		112		300	
Enrollment Actual	152	80.9	94	83.9	246	82.0
Training Completion Goal	97		48		145	
Training Completion Actual	87	89.7	39	81.3	126	86.9
Placement Goal	86		44		130	
Place Grads Actual (30 days post training)	41	47.7	26	59.1	67	51.5
Place Grads Actual (180 days post training)	83	96.5	37	84.1	120	92.3
Place Grads in Field	77	92.8	36	97.3	113	94.2

2. List available record review data at your agency (or for your selected program)

3. Construct a table shell (or "dummy table") for record review data you could use or you will use in an evaluation you conduct.

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Survey Design and Administration

Surveys have a series of questions (items) with pre-determined response choices. They can include independent items, or groups of items (scales) that can be summarized. Surveys can also include some open-ended items for "write-in" or clarification. Those who answer surveys are known as respondents. Surveys can be completed by respondents or surveyors. Instruments are called questionnaires, surveys, assessment forms.

Surveys are most productive when they are: well targeted; used to obtain data that are otherwise difficult to get; used in conjunction with other strategies (for example before and after focus groups, interviews, or observations). Surveys can be used to collect data from many respondents, but optimally they only include a fairly narrow set of questions. Some survey data are qualitative (measures of opinions, attitudes, ratings), but surveys can also be used to test for content knowledge and to gather self-reported measures of events (such as how many times respondents have smoked cigarettes in the last month or in which risk behaviors they have engaged). Quantitative analyses are often used to summarize survey responses (e.g., x% of respondents answered yes to the question).

Benefits of Surveys

- Surveys can be used to explore ideas or questions about a program.
- Surveys provide information about a large number and a wide variety of respondents, including those with whom the evaluator has little or no contact (for example, parents of students whose teachers received training through a program you are evaluating).
- Survey data can be analyzed using fairly simple and straight-forward routines. Though helpful, computers are not required.
- The results of surveys can be very compelling. They have broad appeal, and are fairly easy to present.
- Surveys can be administered and analyzed quickly, especially if pre-validated (previously tested) instruments are available, the topic is narrowly focused, and the numbers of respondents are fairly small (fewer than 500).

Drawbacks of Surveys

- Designing surveys is complicated and time consuming.
- Broad questions and open-ended responses are difficult to use.
- Analyses and presentations can require a great deal of work.

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Major Uses for Surveys

Surveys are frequently used in program evaluation. Often not well. The following is a list of common ways that surveys are used for evaluation data collection.

- **Needs Assessments** uncover the current state of affairs: what is working well or not well, what participants want or need, etc.

- **Activity Assessments and Customer Satisfaction Surveys** provide participants, staff, program managers, and program developers opportunities to rate activities (e.g., workshop, training program) regarding usefulness, quality, etc. They also provide opportunities for stakeholders to rate a program overall or its program components or staff.

- **Measures of Knowledge, Attitudes, or Self-Reported Behavior**. One-time measures are usually compared to a predetermined standard (like the number of correct answers, or the responses of a comparative group). In order to assess a change in knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviors, participants are often surveyed more than once. In this way, baseline or initial measures can be compared to subsequent measures.

Survey Questionnaire Development (and assessment)

Good surveys are hard to develop. The following provides some step-by-step suggestions for developing surveys. Items 2 through 4 should also be considered if you are assessing a survey instrument.

(1) Identify the key issues you wish to explore or "test" via the survey. Review available literature, including proprietary sources, to determine if there are good surveys or items that already exist to measure the key issues.

(2) Convert these key issues into questions and remember to:

- State the question in very specific terms, using language that is appropriate for the target population.
- Use multiple questions to sufficiently cover the topic.
- Avoid "double-negatives"
- Avoid asking multiple questions in one
- Be sure response categories match the question, are exhaustive and don't overlap.

(3) Determine what other data are needed for analytical purposes. [Demographics, other background, contact information.]

(4) Determine how the questions will be ordered and formatted and be sure to include directions for responses.

(5) Have survey instrument reviewed by others including representatives from the target group.

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Types of Surveys

There are several different types of surveys. The type of survey a participatory evaluator administers depends on the type of information that is being gathered (especially how sensitive it is), how much access there is to the respondent population, and how much time is available for completing administration. The following are the primary types of survey administration strategies.

- Mail surveys - distributed to respondents through the mail. Must have correct addresses and return instructions and you must conduct active tracking and follow-up. Response rates are typically low (even with incentives).

- Electronic surveys – posting of surveys and data collection via a website. Everyday technology is now available for this (some of it is free). Must be sure your respondents have access to the internet, must have a host site that is recognizable and used by desired respondents, and you must have current email addresses.

- Phone surveys - conducted via telephone. Response rates are generally better than mail surveys, but they are labor intensive and require that the target group have accessible phone numbers. Survey administrators must be trained.

- Staged surveys - distributed or conducted at some scheduled event with a captive target group. Response rates are typically much higher, but you must be cautious when collecting sensitive information. Surveys can be orally administered and respondents are not limited to written responses. For example, survey respondents can indicate their answers using dots, index cards, even pieces of candy (see also the activities in this section). Survey administrators must be trained.

Administration Plans: Things to Think About

➤ Who and where are your target group(s)? Do they require any special assistance to respond to the survey (e.g., translation, a reader)?

➤ Which type of survey will be best to use with your target group?

➤ How often will the surveys be administered? Annually, once only? Will the surveys be administered in a pre/post (before and after) design?

➤ Will they be **anonymous** (no identifying information used) or **confidential** (identifying information is encoded)?

➤ How much time will be required?

➤ What specific fielding strategy will be used -- where will the surveys be administered, by whom, how and when? Will there be incentives for completing the surveys?

➤ How will you track who receives a survey and who completes it? How will you provide ample opportunities for all members of the survey target population to respond?

➤ Will you use active or passive consent? Whose consent is required/ desired?

➤ How will you store and maintain the confidentiality of the information?

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Notes on Sampling and Representativeness

Often, surveys are not administered to every participant in a group. Instead some members of the group are selected to respond. This selected group is known as a sample. If your participant group is large, sampling may be advisable, but you must be able to answer the following questions. How will you identify a sample of respondents? How many respondents are needed for valid results? How will you define and ensure representativeness of your sample? The following are some necessary steps .

➤Define the target population to be studied. The term population refers to all possible respondents or subjects of the survey. The population definition must be precisely specified.

➤Decide whether you should try to include all members of the population (**census**) or to sample.

➤Select a small subset of a population that is representative of the whole population. Unless the population is very small (fewer than 200), sampling is almost always used.

Ways to Select a Sample

There are several ways to select a sample. The most common of these include simple random sampling, stratified samples, convenience samples, and purposeful samples.

- **Simple Random Sampling** approximates drawing a sample out of a hat. The desired number of sample respondents is identified and selected arbitrarily from a randomly arranged list of the total population. Each individual on the list has the same chance for being selected to participate.
- **Stratified Samples** are used when some important characteristics of the population are known prior to data collection. This is also commonly done when participants represent multiple geographic areas, or when there is disproportionate gender representation.
- **Convenience Samples** involve those respondents who can easily be contacted for participation in a survey. While their responses are often enlightening and can be summarized, they should not be generalized to the entire population.
- **Purposeful Samples** include information-rich cases. These can include extreme or deviant cases, maximum variation sampling, typical cases, critical cases (those that can make a point dramatically), and other variations.

Determining Sample Size: Some Rules of Thumb

- The larger the sample size (compared to the population size), the less error there is in generalizing responses to the whole population. (See the appendix for a table that will help you determine how big your sample size should be and to see relationships between sample sizes and sampling error.)

- When a sample is comparatively large, adding cases provides little additional precision.

- To determine the number of respondents needed, consult a probability table and select **probability samples** (see appendix), or use the following formula to determine sample size for a 95% confidence interval with 5% sampling error: $n= 385/(1+(385/N))$.

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Survey Analysis

Basic survey analysis can be conducted by hand, with commercially available spreadsheet software (like Excel), and by specialty software (such as SPSS).While some analyses can be quite complex, requiring substantial expertise in file management and statistics, many basic analyses can be conducted by program staff and other evaluation stakeholders (including youth participants). The following is a valuable guide for basic survey analysis. (Refer also to the citations in the bibliography under quantitative data analysis.)

1. Specify a Plan

Before fielding a survey, you must develop an analysis plan or strategy for how the data will be analyzed and presented. It is also a good idea to determine the desired response rate. The analysis plan specifies:

- how survey or questionnaire items are related to evaluation questions;
- what analytical procedures will be conducted with the data;
- how the results will be summarized.

2. Calculate the Response Rate

The response rate is the proportion of all returned surveys. It is calculated by dividing the number of returned surveys by the total number of "viable" surveys administered. Desirable response rates should be determined in advance of analysis, and precautions should be taken to maximize response and minimize non-response bias. Non-response bias can severely limit your ability to interpret and use survey data. Data from surveys with relatively low response rates can be used, as long as the analysts: clarify that the data only represent a select group of respondents; and, do not generalize from the findings to others.

3. Conduct Basic Survey Analyses

- tabulate the results and determine the percentages of respondents who select each answer;
- calculate averages or determine distributions (ranges, min-max values);
- disaggregate data for subpopulations (e.g., males vs. females, younger vs. older);
- summarize scale scores and calculate the average or distributions for a group.

Example: Student Survey data.

The following analyses of student survey data will be conducted:

- ♦ the percentages of students who have recently started smoking will be calculated,
- ♦ the percentage of boys who smoke will be compared to the percentage of girls who smoke,
- ♦ the average age of first alcohol use will be calculated from students responses, and
- ♦ questions that ask students to rate smoking prevention efforts will only be analyzed for those students who report that they have never smoked.
- ♦ the distribution of scores on the *likelihood of addiction scale* will be determined.

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Examples of Summarized Data from Record Reviews

Table X: Youth and Parent Perceptions of Program Impact

PERCENT OF YOUTH AND PARENT RESPONDENTS WHO INDICATED THAT THE PRG *DEFINITELY* HELPED THEM	Site1 Youth N=51	Site 1 Parents N=58	Site 2 Youth N=58	Site 2 Parents N=61	Site 3 Youth N=59	Site 3 Parents N=48	Total Youth N=168	Total Parents N=167
BUILD ACADEMIC SKILLS								
Math	65%	72%	57%	61%	36%	44%	52%	60%
Writing	82	86	78	82	81	88	80%	85%
Concentration	94	93	86	89	85	94	88%	92%
Teamwork	73	NA	78	NA	79	NA	77%	NA
Studying	53	64	57	69	76	77	62%	70%
LEARN NEW THINGS								
About music	94	93	93	97	92	94	93%	95%
About painting & drawing	88	93	86	97	92	94	89%	95%
About dramatic performance	94	93	86	97	92	94	91%	95%
DO BETTER AT SCHOOL								
Learning ways of self-expression	65	36	72	34	76	19	71%	30%
Getting better grades	53	78	72	79	56	77	61%	78%
Feeling more confident	88	94	86	97	85	94	86%	95%
PREVENT PROBLEMS								
Thinking about the future	82	57	72	74	71	44	75%	59%
Making better decisions	41	57	71	74	56	44	57%	59%
Avoiding risk situations	73	94	78	79	76	77	76%	84%

Note: Youth survey respondents were only drawn from the older groups at the sites and included only those in attendance on the day of the survey. Parent surveys were also conducted only with available respondents.

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Survey Training Activities

1. Developing Alternative Surveys

Paper and pencil are not the only formats for surveys, especially if the respondent group is not able or available to complete written surveys. The following are examples of alternative ways to deliver surveys, using commonly available materials. There are many variations on these themes.

(1) The Starburst Survey. On the starburst survey, respondents use pieces of candy to anonymously answer questions. The survey must be short and relatively simple to use this strategy, but it is different and interesting. The different pieces of candy represent different answer selections. For example, a pink starburst = *Excellent,* a yellow starburst = *Good*, an orange starburst = *Okay*, and a red starburst = not *good*. Respondents are provided with whole roles of candy for their responses. The survey questions, and the answering codes, are located near buckets or bowls where candy pieces can be dropped to indicate responses. Analysis is also very simple – just count how many of each color are left for each question. The survey instrument might look something like the following.

How would you rate the program overall?

Excellent	=	Starburst
Very Good	=	Starburst
Okay	=	Starburst
Not So Good	=	Starburst

How important was it to have access to a trained specialist each day?

Very Important	=	Starburst
Somewhat Important	=	Starburst
Not Important	=	Starburst
No Opinion	=	Starburst

We chose starburst because each roll has three sets of four colors and they are always the same colors. Other candy can be used, but it must be individually wrapped and visually distinguishable. (Chocolate must be used cautiously since it melts.)

(2) Sticky Dots. These surveys are similar to the starburst surveys, except the responses are indicated by colored "sticky dots" which are available at most office supply stores. These surveys are typically written on large easel pages or "cling sheets," with room below each question for respondents to place their "sticky dot" responses. Again this allows respondents to visualize the analysis (i.e., how many respondents have answered each question with which responses), and to respond anonymously. Additionally, if there are questions where answers are very mixed (e.g., some favorable, some not) the trainer can call for a discussion of the differences. The sticky dot survey can also include some open-ended questions where respondents can write in answers.

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Survey Training Activities (Con't)

(3) Index Cards. Colored index cards can also be used for surveys. Again, the color of the index card signifies the answer choice (e.g., a red card would equal a response of *excellent*, a yellow card would indicate a response of *good,* a blue card would indicate *okay or fair*, and a green card would equal a response of *poor*). Respondents can answer an oral survey by raising the cards in response to questions and having the survey administrator count the colors. This is not fully anonymous, as respondents can look to see how others are answering before selecting their own answer choice, but it does lend itself to quick and alternative feedback. Multiple questions can be asked, and the survey administrator can even change the response categories for different questions, as needed, as long as the responses and their relationship to the cards are clarified each time.

A variation on the index card survey is to ask a single question, with a write-in option. For example, at the end of a training session, a trainer might want to ask the participants how worthwhile their attendance had been. If it was very worthwhile they will be asked to leave the green card behind, if attendance was only somewhat worthwhile they will be asked to leave the yellow card behind, and if it was not at all worthwhile, they will be asked to leave the red card behind. Respondents can also be asked to clarify their rating on the card, or to bring up any other issues or questions, by writing a note on the card before leaving it.

(4) Human Surveys. Another form of alternative survey uses participants directly in response. In human surveys, respondents are asked to indicate their answers by moving themselves to a particular location in a room (e.g., the right corner of the room is for those who found the program very effective, the left corner is for those who found it somewhat effective, and the center of the room is for those who did not find the program effective at all). Standing and sitting can also be used to indicate agreement with certain statements on a "survey." These surveys are somewhat limited to respondents who do not have mobility challenges, and to surveys that are fairly simply in design, but they provide an interesting option to the written survey, especially if respondents want opportunities to move around.

2. The Survey "Goof"

On the following page there is an example of a survey with many coding and formatting errors. Duplicate this survey and have trainees determine where the errors are. Use the survey construction guidelines in the previous section as a reminder about how surveys are best developed. This activity also invariably leads to a discussion of the importance of language. Many of the "terms" on this survey (e.g., the categories selected for racial/ethnic identification, or indicators such as enthusiasm, confidence) require additional definition. The reading level and appropriateness of language can also be discussed using this example.

3. Phone Surveys and Electronic Surveys

The appendix provides additional information about how to develop and conduct both phone surveys and electronic or web-based surveys.

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SOAR Afterschool Arts Program: PARENT SURVEY

THE FOLLOWING SURVEY WAS ADAPTED FROM A REAL PROGRAM SURVEY TO ILLUSTRATE SOME COMMON SURVEY FLAWS AND TO ALLOW EVALUATION LEARNERS TO ASSESS SURVEY DESIGN. REVIEW/ASSESS THIS SURVEY AND SEE IF YOU CAN FIND THE ERRORS. THINK ABOUT HOW YOU MIGHT HAVE DONE A SURVEY LIKE THIS BETTER. THINK ABOUT OTHER SURVEYS IN YOUR AGENCY AND CONSIDER WHETHER THEY HAVE SIMILAR FLAWS.

Instructions: Please help us learn about the SOAR afterschool arts program by answering these questions. We need to know what you think. Thank you for your help.

Site:_____ Today's Date:_____

1. Which best describes you?

Black ❒ Hispanic
Asian ❒ White
Multi-racial/Mixed-race

2. Would you recommend this program to a friend or relative?

❒ No ❒ Maybe ❒ Yes Definitely

4a How enthusiastic is your son/daughter about what he/she learns in this program?

❑ enthusiastic ❑Sort of enthusiastic ❑ not enthusiastic

4b Does your son/daughter ever try at home any of the techniques s/he learns in the program?

❑Not really ❑Sometimes ❑Yes, often

5. How satisfied are you with: (Pick one for each)

	Poor	Adequate	Excellent
a. activities available for your child(ren)	❍	❍	❍
b. how your child(ren) are treated by staff	❍	❍	❍
c. discipline at the program	❍	❍	❍

6. Do you think the activities at the SOAR afterschool arts program helps your child(ren) .....

	Definitely	Sort of	No	Don't Know
a. Concentrate better	❍	❍	❍	❍
b. Work better with other youth	❍	❍	❍	❍
c. Learn about drawing or painting	❍	❍	❍	❍
d. Learn about music	❍	❍	❍	❍
e. Learn about dramatic performance	❍	❍	❍	❍
f. Learn new ways to express him/herself	❍	❍	❍	❍
g. Get better grades at school	❍	❍	❍	❍
k. Feel more confident about themselves as a student	❍	❍	❍	❍
l. Make friends	❍	❍	❍	❍
m. Use art to relax and enjoy him/her self	❍	❍	❍	❍

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7. Please write below any suggestions you have for improving this program.

Survey Administration Plan Activity: Things to Think About

1. Who and where are your target group(s)? Do they require any special assistance to respond to the survey (e.g., translation, a reader)?

2. Which type of survey will be best to use with your target group?

3. How often will the surveys be administered? Annually, once only? Will the surveys be administered in a pre/post (before and after) design?

4. Will they be **anonymous** (no identifying information used) or **confidential** (identifying information is coded)?

5. How much time will be required?

6. What specific fielding strategy will be used -- where will the surveys be administered, by whom, how and when? Will there be incentives for completing the surveys?

7. How will you track who receives a survey and who completes it? How will you provide ample opportunities for all members of the survey target population to respond?

8. Will you use active or passive consent? Whose consent is required/ desired?

9. How will you store and maintain the confidentiality of the information?

Developing A Codebook for Your Survey (Fill in some steps below)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

See also the survey administration plan in the appendix.

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Interviews

An interview is a one-sided conversation between an interviewer and a respondent. Questions are (mostly) pre-determined**,** but open-ended. Respondents are expected to answer using their own terms. The purpose of conducting interviews is to enter into another's perspective and therefore to obtain meaning and elaboration about observations or about things which can not be observed. This allows the interviewer to obtain information about feelings, thoughts, intentions and behaviors that took place at some previous point in time (or to project into the future), and to learn about how people organize and attach meanings to their experiences

Methodological Decisions

Participatory evaluators must make the following methodological decisions before initiating data collection through interviews.

(1) *What type of interview should you conduct?*

- **Unstructured** (informal interviews): questions emerge from the immediate context. There is no pre-determination of question topics, wording, or order.
- **Semi-structured**: topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and wording as interview proceeds.
- **Structured** (standardized open-ended interview); the exact wording and sequence of the questions are determined in advance; all respondents are asked same questions in same order.
- **Intercept interviews** (structured or unstructured): Very short interviews (1 - 5 questions) asked of participants who are coming or going to events of interest.

(2) *What should you ask, how will you word and sequence the questions? What time frame will you use* (past, present, future, mixed)

(3) *How much detail will you seek and how long will the interviews be?*

(4) *Who will be your respondents? How many interviews will you conduct, on what schedule?*

(5) *Will the interviews be conducted face to face, on or off-site, by phone?*

How to Conduct and Record your Interviews

1. Before the Interview
   - Clarify the purpose for conducting the interviews
   - Specify the methodological decisions
   - Select the potential respondents – sampling is generally purposeful, not random (see previous)
   - Collect background information about your respondents (if possible)
   - Develop a specific protocol to guide your interview (except for the informal interview)

2. During the Interview (see also effective interviewing)
   - Use the protocol (guide) to record the responses (tape record if appropriate and feasible)
   - Use probes and follow-up questions as necessary to solicit depth and detail
   - Ask singular questions
   - Ask clear, and truly open-ended questions

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3. After the Interview
   - Review interview responses clarify notes where necessary. [Transcribe if feasible.]
   - Record observations about the interview (where possible), evaluate the results, and determine need for follow-up (for example, the interviewer may note that a respondent seemed hesitant to complete the interview, or that the interview was rushed, interrupted, or very through).

Suggestions for Effective Interviewing (adapted from Patton 1987)

1. Select the type of interview (or combination of types) that is most appropriate to the purposes of the evaluation. Communicate clearly what information is desired, why that information is important, and let the respondent know how the interview is progressing.

2. Remember to ask single questions and to use clear and appropriate language. Check (or summarize) occasionally to be sure you are hearing and recording the respondent's responses accurately. Avoid leading questions.

3. Listen attentively and respond appropriately to let the person know he or she is being heard.

4. Understand the difference between a depth interview and an interrogation. Qualitative evaluators conduct depth interviews; police investigators and tax auditors conduct interrogations.

5. Recognize when the respondent is not clearly answering the question and press for a full response.

6. Maintain neutrality toward the specific content of response. (You are there to collect information not to make judgments about that person.)

7. Observe while interviewing. Be aware of and sensitive to how the person is affected by and responds to different questions.

8. Maintain control of the interview.

9. Treat the person being interviewed with respect. Keep in mind that it is a privilege and responsibility to peer into another person's' experience.

10. Practice interviewing. Develop your skills.

11 An interview is not a conversation. You should not interrupt the respondent (unless you need to regain control or move the interview along), and you should not share your opinions about the questions or the person's response. You need to cover all the questions on your protocol and you need to deliver them in an order that makes sense.

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Analyzing Interview Data and Reporting Findings

Like survey analysis, analysis of interview data requires time and forethought. At a minimum, the following steps should guide efforts to summarize findings from interviews.

(1) Read/review completed sets of interviews. Record general summaries – e.g., most respondents were positive about the program, most were negative, there were mixed responses, etc.

(2) Where appropriate, encode responses (e.g., this answer is an example of desired behavior post program exposure, or respondent identifies as _____ type of worker).

(3) Summarize coded data (e.g., *most interview respondents indicated that.....*, or *there was little agreement among respondents*).

(4.) Pull quotes to illustrate key findings.

Examples of Interview Summaries

The following were excerpted from an evaluation project that used interviews as a key data collection strategy. Results are bulleted lists of findings with examples.

Structured interviews were conducted with all 8 board members. Protocols are available upon request.

- **All interview respondents were able to identify multiple strengths of the Professional Association, including commitment to member satisfaction, quality programming, accurate and timely information and connections to the community, and providing a neutral and nurturing space for members to convene.** Individual board members also reported the following as Professional Association strengths:

    - diversity of members, but equality of voice
    - deep understanding of nonprofit members
    - assistance for those who are isolated in their jobs

- **Board members also identified three major weaknesses: lack of programming for senior members; tension regarding the role of the Professional Association (i.e., whether it should be only a member service organization or whether it could also play an advocacy role in the community); and potential financial instability due to the current dues structure and the potential loss of corporate members.** There were clearly differences of opinions about Professional Association weaknesses, especially regarding direction: a few board members described the current focus as too broad and others indicated it was too conservative. Additionally there were some concerns that were raised by individual members:

    - *there is a lingering perception of exclusivity among the membership*;
    - *part-time staff force a lot of priority juggling;*
    - *the organization appears very grass-roots, nonprofessional – especially regarding communications which also need to be streamlined*;
    - *there is too much focus on process*.

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- **The consensus among board members was that the organization is currently stable and well managed, and very responsive to the membership. They were particularly positive regarding the efforts of the Executive Director.** There were concerns from some board members, however, that member responsiveness and overall stability were dependent on the current Executive Director. Specific comments regarding stability and responsiveness included the following.

  - *Necessary management systems are in place.*
  - *Professional Association is getting good visibility especially through special projects and newspaper coverage.*
  - *Member-initiated programs are particularly effective regarding member responsiveness.*

- **There is consensus among board members that the current Executive Director is a good manager and the board and especially the chair are knowledgeable and active**. Specific comments included the following.

  - (The Executive Director) *is a good leader. I don't always agree with her ideas, but she has pushed us to think about goals.*

  - *The board is the anchor, the conscience of the organization.*

  - (The board) *is representative of diversity of philanthropy in the community. The chair is a very dynamic, strong leader who has an agenda and will take the organization somewhere.*

- A few board members had concerns, however, that the board was not diverse enough (inclusive of communities of color), that they have not fully coalesced, and been used in a consultative fashion.

- **Most of the board members agreed that the level of member involvement was about right given the community, but most could also identify some important absences.** Specifically they mentioned that they were missing (specific types of organizations are named here)..... **Overall, however, the board members indicated that efforts to get and keep members had been effective.**

- **Board members indicated that there has clearly been a shift of involvement (from one type of organizational member to another), but also indicated that there are core groups within each important sector. They clarified that decreasing organizational involvement is a function of conditions at the organizations where there is less time and staff dedicated to (professional association type business).**

- **Board members described the Professional Association as good at recruiting (specific type of organizational members) but acknowledged the current difficulty connected with recruiting (other types of organizational members).** Individual members suggested that improved publications would help and that it might be valuable to increase membership among the smaller (types of organizations).. **Most board members also indicated that the Professional Association had been effective at retaining members and were especially positive regarding recent efforts to maintain members, but they also acknowledged the need to develop specialized programming for senior members.**

Note these results came from a recent Impact study of a Professional Association The assessment was conducted using five core data collection strategies: surveys of members and non-members, interviews with all board members and a sample of other key informants (media and representatives from public and private funding organizations, and nonprofit organizations).

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Evaluation Focus Groups: A Special Type of Interview

Focus groups have been borrowed by evaluators from marketing professionals. For evaluation purposes, focus groups are usually conducted with a semi-structured protocol or list of topics (focuses). The respondents are asked to discuss the topics, and the interviewer facilitates, records and later analyzes the discussion. (Often two participatory evaluators are required to facilitate and record results from focus groups.) The following are suggested guidelines for effective focus group data collection.

(1) Carefully recruit focus group participants. This will require:

- systematic recruitment procedures
- selection of 5 to 10 people per group
- selection of similar types of people, but not close friends
- operation of 3 to 4 groups per topic

(2) Provide a proper meeting environment

- Neutral setting
- Circle seating
- Materials for recording responses (such as multiple easel pages so respondents can review facilitator's records, and/or tape recorders to store actual response data). Note that if focus groups are taped, PERMISSION MUST BE GRANTED BY RESPONDENTS.

(3) Use a skillful moderator. The following are qualifications for skillful moderators.

- Trained, has adequate knowledge of the topic, appears like the participants,
- Has a smooth and snappy introduction that includes a welcome, overview and ground rules
- Uses pre-determined questions, uses pauses and probes (such as "would you explain further")
- Uses an assistant moderator to handle logistics and take notes
- Establishes a permissive environment, controls verbal and nonverbal reactions to participants
- Uses subtle group control (manages experts, dominant talkers, shy participants, ramblers)
- Uses 3-step conclusion -- summarizes with confirmation, reviews purpose and asks for missing data, thanks participants.

(4) Conduct appropriate data analysis, report findings accurately.

- Use systematic analysis similar to that conducted with interview data.
- Summarize trends identified by focus group respondents and clarify where there was agreement and disagreement among participants. Where necessary encode the discussions ensuing from each focus, and then summarize encoded findings.
- Use excerpts (quotes) from focus group discussions to clarify summary statements and provide examples.

Additional references about focus groups are available in the appendix.

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Interview Activity

If appropriate, use the following protocol to have trainees practice systematic collection of interview data. (If your trainee group is not composed of program directors, change the wording of the questions as needed.) Identify one set of trainees who will serve first as "interviewers." The others are "respondents." After they have conducted the interview and used the protocol to record responses, the trainees can: (1) switch positions so that the respondents are now interviewers; (2) develop their own short interview protocols and try the activity again; (3) summarize the findings from the interview activity.

1. Tell me something about yourself and your background. How did you end up as a Program Director at _____(Probe for: relevant experience, credentials, tenure)

2. Who are your different funders and what requirements/demands does your agency have to face with them regarding evaluation? (Probe for reporting requirements, evaluation planning/approval, outcome or indicator identification)

3. What types of challenges has your agency faced with funders regarding evaluation?

****In addition to this activity, trainees should develop their own interview protocols and practice interviewing multiple types of respondents using the protocol they have developed. For example: have trainees interview a program manager, a line staff member and a participant from the same program about some aspect of its effectiveness, or about some barriers that are occurring.**

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Activity: Analyzing Interview Data

Using the interview samples in the appendix of this guide (or other available interview responses), have trainees complete the following simple analysis activity.

1.) Read/review completed sets of interviews. Record your general summaries below about the SOAR project – e.g., most respondents were positive about the program, most were negative, there were mixed responses, etc.

2.) Write two or three key quotes to illustrate the overall summary statements about the SOAR project

3.) Check for and encode (i.e., indicate whether it is there and + or -) the following; Respondent could give an example of how the project was valuable to the school; Respondent could give an example of how the project helped students with school. Write a summary statement below about the encoded data (see examples in the guide to help you formulate this).

4.) Summarize responses about the director of this program – what did respondents have to say about her role?

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Observations

Observations are conducted to view and hear actual program activities (see also Patton, 1980). They can be focused on programs overall or participants in programs. The purpose of conducting observations is to describe the program thoroughly and carefully, and in sufficient detail so that users of the observation report will know what has occurred and how it has occurred. Observations involve **looking and listening.** A particular strength of observations is that data are collected in the field, where the action is, as it happens. Other advantages include the following:

- the trained observer is better able to understand program context,
- the trained observer gets first hand experience with a program which allows him/her to see things first hand rather than piecing things together from other descriptions, responses, etc.
- the trained observer has the opportunity to: see things that may routinely escape conscious awareness among participants in the program; learn about things that the program participants may be unwilling or unable to talk about in an interview
- observations permit the observer to move beyond the selective perceptions of others, and to present multiple perspectives
- the impressions and feelings of the observer become part of the observation data and the observer's knowledge and direct experience can be used as resources to aid in assessing the subject program [OBSERVER'S REACTIONS MUST BE KEPT SEPARATE]

Unfortunately, the process of observing, like all other types of data collection, often affects regular program operations. The participatory evaluator must be able to monitor the effects and take them into consideration when analyzing data.

Methodological Decisions

Participatory evaluators must make the following methodological decisions before initiating data collection via observations.

(1) What should be observed and how will you structure your protocol? Specifically, what will the observation focus on, an individual or an event or setting?

(2) How will you chose what to see (i.e., what is your sampling strategy)?

(3) Will you ask for a "performance" by the subject or just attend a regular session, or both.

(4) Will your presence be known, or unannounced? Who should know? How much will you disclose about the purpose of your observation?

(5) How much detail will you seek (can a checklist observation do the job)?

(6) How long and how often will the observations be?

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How to Conduct and Record your Observations

1. Before the Observation

- Clarify the purpose for conducting the observation
- Specify the methodological decisions you have made
- Collect background information about the subject (if possible/necessary)
- Develop a specific protocol to guide your observation (see following page for example, see also appendix for example of an observation checklist)

2. During the Observation

- Use the protocol to guide your observation and recording of observation data
- BE DESCRIPTIVE (keep observer impressions separate from descriptions of actual events)
- Inquire about the "typicalness" of the session observed.

3. After the Observation

- Review observation notes and make clarifications where necessary. Be sure to clarify any abbreviations you have used in your notes and to elaborate on details if necessary. [Transcribe if feasible or appropriate.]
- Evaluate the results of the observation (e.g., observer's opinion about whether the session went well, whether the focus was covered, or if there were any barriers to observation) then determine need for follow-up.

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Program/Session Observation Protocol

Program Name:
Observer's Name:
Date: _____ Time Observation Began: _____ Time Ended:

Before the observation begins, briefly describe in #1 below, what you expect to be observing and why you have selected it.
1. Subject of the Observation.
At the very beginning of the observation, describe the setting. Be sure to note any changes in setting as the observation proceeds. Also note how the session begins.

2. Describe the **program setting** (color, size, shape, number of desks/tables, number of windows, furniture or equipment in the space room, temperature, noise level)

3. Describe **how the session begins** (who is present, what exactly is said to initiate)
4. Describe the **chronology of events** in regular intervals (e.g., every 15 minutes for an hour-long session)

5. Describe the **interactions that take place during the observation.** *(Be particularly aware of interactions that involve the main focus of the evaluation – i.e., who or what you are observing.)*

5A. Who is interacting? *Consider pre-determining some codes for this section, such as those below.*

Youth with Adults	Youth with Youth	Adults with Adults
Girls with Girls	Boys with Girls	Boys with Boys
Youth of different racial/ethnic backgrounds		

5B. How do they interact? Describe examples.

5C. Are there any **changes in patterns** during the observations.

6. Describe how **decisions** are made during the observation period.
6A. Who makes **decisions**? (*Again use pre-determined codes like the following where applicable*)

Only Adults	Mostly Adults	Only Youth
Youth and Adults	Mostly Youth	

6B. How are decisions communicated? (e.g., written, verbal,).
6C. Document examples of decisions that are made during the observation. *(Be sure to record who is making the decision.)*

7. Describe **Nonverbal communication** (How do participants get attention? How much do they fidget, move around?How do participants: dress, express affection, physically place themselves in the setting?

8. **Describe program activities and participant behaviors**. (8A Youth and 8B Adults)

9. How did participants respond or react to what was happening in the program during the observation? **Roughly what proportion (some, most, all) are actively engaged?**

10. **How does the program end?** (What are the signals that the activity is ending? Who is present, what is said, how do participants react, how is the completion of this activity related to other activities?)

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Reporting

Summarizing observation data is challenging but very valuable. If it is done well, the results can really help stakeholders know more about what actually happens in the program being evaluated. The following steps are necessary for simple observation analysis.

(1) Make summary statements about trends in your observations (e.g., *every time we visited the program the majority of children were involved in a literacy development activity such as reading, illustrating a story they had read or written, practicing reading aloud*).

(2) Include "snippets" or excerpts directly from field notes to illustrate summary points.

Examples of Observation Notes

Vague and Overgeneralized Notes	Detailed and Concrete Notes
The new client was uneasy waiting for her intake interview. She fidgeted a lot and seemed nervous.	The client sat very stiffly on the chair next to the receptionist's desk. She picked up a magazine and let the pages flutter through her fingers very quickly without really looking at any of the pages. Then she set the magazine down, looked at her watch, pulled her skirt down, and picked up the magazine again. This time she didn't look at the magazine. She set it down, took out a cigarette and began smoking. She watched the receptionist out of the corner of her eye, and then looked down at the magazine, and back up at the two or three other people waiting in the room. Her eyes moved from people to the magazine to the cigarette to the people to the magazine in rapid succession. She avoided eye contact. When her name was called, she jumped like she was startled.
The client was quite hostile toward the staff person. She seemed very angry about the situation, yelled at the staff member and left abruptly.	When the staff member told her that she could not do what she wanted to do, the client began to yell at the staff member, telling her that she (the staff member) "can't control (her) life." that she (the staff member) is "nothing but on a power trip." Then she yelled that she would like to "beat the crap out of her." She shook her fist in her face and stomped out of the room leaving the staff person standing there with her mouth open, looking amazed.

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Examples of Observation Notes (Con't)

Vague and Overgeneralized Notes	Detailed and Concrete Notes
The youth was very excited and relieved about figuring out how to handle a family issue that had been bothering him and keeping him from fully participating in the group. He applied the good decision-making skills that the group has been working on, and made sure that everybody that was important to him knew all about it.	Tony came running into the program today. He was on time and smiling for the first time in a while. He sat with a group of his friends and had a quick conversation with them before the activities started. A couple of the guys gave him a high five and slapped him playfully on the back. He continued to smile throughout the opening exercises and during group sharing time, he volunteer to go first. He told the group about the letter he wrote to his father's ex-girlfriend, and then he read part of it out loud for everyone to hear. [The letter explained why he hadn't returned her calls, out of respect for his dad, and also said that he was sad that they had broken up. It also said that he still wanted to be able to talk to her, and that he had decided that he could be her friend even if his dad had ended their relationship.] Several group members said they thought he handled it well and hoped that he heard from her soon. In response, Tony said that it had been very hard for him to write the letter, but that he was glad he had done it and that he felt better already. When the group leader told him how proud she was of him and how important it was to maintain positive relationships, and to make decisions for yourself, Tony beamed. Throughout the rest of the group sharing session he smiled, tapped his foot slightly, offered encouragement or feedback, and stared intently at each presenter. Every so often he checked his back pocket to make sure the letter was still there.

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Observation Activity

Staged Observation. Develop or identify a scenario to demonstrate features of the subject program. These features can be strengths or challenges or a combination of both.

(1) Have staff members or selected trainees learn about the scenario and the observation exercise, and prepare to role play the scenario for observers. If using a real scenario, visit the program in advance to inform stakeholders about the observation activity.

(2) Have observers develop a brief observation protocol/guide or distribute one hat has been constructed in advance.

(3) Conduct the role play or visit the identified program so that observations can be completed using the protocol.

(4) Summarize findings from the observation.

(5) Have trainees share their findings, and develop or add to the list of observation strategies to undertake before, during and after observations.

**** To better understand how evaluation observations work, have trainees also do the following.**

(1) Develop a protocol for observation of an upcoming staff meeting or program session.

(2) Conduct multiple (e.g., 3) observations of program-related activities (such as staff meetings, program sessions, etc.)

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Documenting Program Strategies/Assessing Implementation/Service Delivery

Defining and Assessing Implementation/Service Delivery

Implementation involves following a design to deliver planned strategies. To assess implementation and/or program delivery, you must be able to accurately describe what a program looks like in operation. You may also want to determine if the description matches the intended program design. For outcomes evaluation, it is important to document program strategies, and/or assess program implementation, so that you can address the relationship between program outcomes and program services.

Collecting Implementation Data/Documenting Program Strategies

Assessment of implementation involves use of all the evaluation data collection strategies described in this guide. Specifically, the following should be undertaken to accurately describe program implementation/service delivery.

- Review documents (program descriptions, proposals -- remember, labels are not good enough)
- Conduct Observations (to determine fidelity and quality)
- Conduct Interviews (ask about the features described below)
- Collect self-reported data (construct surveys or activity reports, collect or inspect logs, participation records)

Focus on the following when collecting implementation data/ documenting program strategies:

- Background and Contextual Information about the Program
  - Origin of the program
  - Nature of the program sites (demographic characteristics, breadth of participation)
  - How need for the program was determined
  - Historical background of the program
  - Background, qualifications and activities of program personnel
  - Administrative features (including finances where appropriate)

- Critical Features of the Program
  - Target group
  - Activities, schedule, organization
  - Frequency/duration

- Barriers or Problems associated with implementation

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IV. PROJECTING LEVELS OF EFFORT, TIMELINES AND BUDGETS

To effectively plan for and develop evaluation designs, participatory evaluators must be able to project how long it will take to conduct evaluations, when data collection and analysis tasks will occur (including preparation), who will be involved in evaluation, and what it will cost. This section of the guide provides straightforward lists to accomplish all these, and an example of a task-specific budget and timeline for a hypothetical evaluation project.

Projecting Level of Effort (LOE)

Level of effort (LOE) projections are often summarized in a table or spreadsheet. To estimate how much labor and time will be needed for an evaluation project:

- list all evaluation tasks
- determine who will conduct each task (will you need help from a colleague, or program staff? -- if so what are their levels of training and availability)
- use the following list to estimate time required to complete each task in day or half-day increments.

Time Estimates

- A day of data collection requires a day of data analysis.
- Site visits require preparation time that is roughly equivalent to about half the projected time on-site, especially for first visits.
- Writing is one of the most time-consuming activities, if you have lots of written deliverables, be sure to include substantial amounts of time for analyzing data and preparing written summaries.
- Since participatory evaluation requires review by primary information users/key stakeholders, and probably some training of staff, be sure to account for that in time estimates, specifically identify time required for protocol and proposal review, as well as for draft reporting and sharing of preliminary and final findings.
- Plan to develop multiple products where necessary (executive summaries, briefings, presentation notes) and multiple copies for all primary information users and key stakeholders
- Be sure to build some flex time (1 or 2 days) into the level of effort projections for general project management and unintended events, also plan to be available for consultations and general interactions with primary information users/key stakeholders -- they will want and need your services.

** If your level of effort estimates are too high, remove whole tasks and associated days from the plan, don't just lop off days and assume you will make up the difference somewhere. Be frugal but reasonable, you will have to live with the projections over time.

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Projecting Timelines

1. Assign dates to your level of effort, working backwards from overall timeline requirements.

2. Be sure that the number of days required for a task and when it must be completed are in sync and feasible.

3. Check to make sure your calendar is in alignment with the program calendar -- i.e., don't plan to do a lot of data colleting or meeting around program holidays, don't expect to conduct interviews or observations only between 9:00 and 5:00, many program operate on different schedules.

Projecting Budgets (this is particularly useful if you are commissioning external evaluation)

1. Determine rates for all "staff" to the project; (note in solo evaluation management there are no fringe benefit or overhead projections, the daily rate includes those costs, if you are using participatory staff or other colleagues, however, some of those costs may be required, or may be provided in-kind; be sure to clarify).

2. Calculate the total labor costs by multiplying LOE totals by "staff" rates;

3. Estimate other direct costs (ODC) such as copying, mail/delivery costs, telephone use, and facilities use (again, some consultants prefer to include these costs in their daily rate and not itemize);

4. Estimate any travel costs (subways, taxis, any ground or air travel to get to the data collection site or meetings);

5. Calculate the subtotal of direct costs including labor, (fringe where appropriate), ODC, and travel;

6. Estimate additional indirect (overhead) costs, where appropriate, as a percentage applied to the direct costs.

7. Apply any other fees (profit) where appropriate.

8. Sum all cost projections to determine the total cost of the project.

   NOTE: If the cost projections exceed the available budget, do not reduce costs without also reducing associated tasks.

9. Establish a payment schedule, billing system and deliverables (be sure there are clear understandings about how and when payments will be made).

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Proposed Workplan for the Beehives Project, Phase I							
Submitted to: One Economy Submitted by: Evaluation Inc.			**FALL 2003**				
October 23, 2003	TIMELINE	Proj. Dir.	Consultant	AA	Adviser	Client	TOTAL
Discuss sampling and other administration strategies*	by 10/24	0.5					
Locate Host for E-Surveys	by 10/29	0.5					
Design Draft Survey Instrument							
Develop draft with questions for Beehive, Money and Jobs users	by 10/27	1			X		
Review with T. Burns/E. Banfield	by 10/27	see above					
Review with One Economy staff person	by 10/27						
Conference regarding revisions/piloting	by 10/27						
Address Incentives							
Meeting/Call with OE stakeholders, others re incentive choices	by 10/31	0.25				X	
Devise incentives options plan, send to OE	by 10/31	0.25					
Conduct Mock Survey Launch							
Conduct meeting with Chris Willey via phone, re: strategy	by 10/27	0.5				X	
Convert paper survey to electronic format	by 10/28		1				
Review and annotate mock e-survey	by 10/29	0.5					
Launch mock survey and obtain feedback	10/29 - 11/5	1	0.5		X	X	
Revise and Pilot Survey Instrument**							
Review and finalize electronic format	by 11/4	0.5					
Acquire pilot respondent list	by 11/5	0.5					
Launch pilot	by 11/6	0.5	0.5		X		
Close out pilot, produce summary report including suggested rev.	by 11/14	1	0.5				

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Proposed Workplan for the Beehives Project, Phase I							
Launch Survey for 30 Days		Proj. Dir.	Consultant	AA	Adviser	Client	TOTAL
Make final revisions to survey text, launch	by 11/17		1		X	X	
Develop analysis plan, obtain approvals	by 11/17	0.25			X		
Determine follow-up strategy	by 11/21	0.25			X	X	
Survey site management	as needed	0.5	2			X	
Conduct follow-up activities	on 12/1	1.5	1		X	X	
Develop Survey Results Summary ***							
Draw down e-survey data	by 12/17		1				
Convert data as necessary	by 12/18	0.5	0.5				
Analyze data according to plan	by 12/22	1	1		X		
Produce results summary	by 12/23	2			X	X	
Develop Survey Report & Executive Summary	**separate budget**						
Team Meetings/Management	ongoing	2		2			
Total Personnel		15	9	2			
Daily Rates		$650	$400	$120			
TOTAL PERSONNEL$		$9,750	$3,600	$240			$13,590
Travel (2 trips to Philly, 1 trip to DC)							$250
Other Direct Costs (duplication, postage, phone, computers $100/mo)							$300
Vendor Costs (survey service, web hosting)							$750
Incentives							$2000
SUBTOTAL OTP							$3300
TOTAL							$16,890
* All figures are based on a census sampling strategy, with 3000 names							
** The initial version of the survey will be in English only, with a loop to capture email addresses of those wanting a Spanish language version							
*** Results summary will be an unbound, brief document. Distribution will include email and five hard copies to One Economy.							

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Evaluation Design: Planning guide

1. What is the subject of your evaluation and why have you chosen it? (insert from program description)

2. How are key services delivered for your selected program (or program component) – (see insert above)

3. What are your evaluation questions? (Remember between 2 and 5 questions – more than 5 is unmanageable).

4. What strategies will be used to collect data? (complete the attached chart).

5. When will evaluation data collection and other activities take place and who will conduct evaluation activities? (complete a level of effort and timeline chart here).

6. What would your evaluation cost? (Optional - budget)

7. What are the proposed products of your evaluation (e.g., evaluation report, executive summary, charts, action steps, presentation , etc.)? Who will receive them, how will they be used?

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Evaluation Design Activity Continued: Complete this: Table of Proposed Data Collection Strategies

	Q#	Who?*	What is the Focus?	When?
Surveys				
Interviews				
Observations				
Record Reviews				
Other				

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V. EVALUATION REPORTING

The final section in this basic guide to evaluation for non-profit organizations and their evaluation partners includes a few general tips about data analysis and some specifics about writing evaluation reports. While other products such as Findings Briefs, Executive Summaries and Powerpoint presentations are now commonly developed, the Evaluation Report remains the most common tool for communicating about evaluation findings.

Completing Data Analysis

Specific data analysis strategies for record reviews, surveys, interviews and observations were presented in Section III: Collecting and Using Evaluation Data. The following reminders are not strategy specific.

The Most Important Things to Remember About Data Analysis

1. Develop a plan before you analyze data.

   - Specify how good is good enough (i.e., clarify targets and how you will decide whether outcomes are favorable/positive, negative, or neutral).
   - Specify what you will do with each kind of findings, including when you will combine categories and how you will present results (e.g., as numbers, %'s or categories).
   - Clarify how you will handle missing data.

2. Develop dummy tables, lists and outlines for your analyzed data – share with others in advance.

3. Identify the most important findings from your data, summarize them, and then use the specific results (e.g., a table or list of data) to clarify the summarized findings. The most important findings are those that "answer" your evaluation questions. Like evaluation questions, the number of key findings should be limited/focused (i.e., usually between about 3 and 10 findings are key).

4. Present your analysis in an orderly, meaningful, straightforward way.

Things to Avoid When Analyzing Data

1. Including response rates and problems with your methodology as part of your findings.

2. Reporting both numbers and percents unless one is needed to make the other clear.

3. Listing in a sentence or a table, all of the response choices for every question on a survey in the order they appear on the survey. [Don't do this with interview data either]

4. Reporting your results with excessive precision – most of the time you can just round to the nearest whole number when reporting percentages.

5. Feeling compelled to keep your results in the same order as they appeared on the survey or the interview protocol. It is the job of the analyst to order things in the best way to clarify the findings – you are NOT REQUIRED to present things in the order you asked them.

6. Including any action steps or conclusions that are not clearly developed from your findings.

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Developing Evaluation Reports (**Begin the Process During Data Collection)

Getting started is the hardest part. The following should be done to initiate the process of evaluation report writing.

1. Determine the needs, purposes and probable audiences for Evaluation Reporting. (Remember your key stakeholders here. How should you report to clients, staff, funders, others?)

2. Develop a report outline (be sure it includes the following)
   - **a.** Subject Project description
   - **b.** Clear statement about the evaluation questions and the purpose of the evaluation.
   - **c.** Description of actual data collection methods used
   - **d.** Summary of key findings (including tables, graphs, vignettes, quotes, etc.)
   - **e.** Discussion or explanation of the meaning and importance of the key findings
   - **f.** Suggested Action Steps
   - **g.** Next Steps (for the program and the evaluation)
   - **h.** Issues for Further Consideration (loose ends)

3. Determine which reporting formats will be needed (written document, electronic document, written or electronic presentation materials, executive summaries, consumer reports, etc.) and develop a report production timeline with writing assignments, and a dissemination plan.

4. Share the report outline, audience list and suggested reporting formats, proposed timeline, and dissemination plan with Key Stakeholders.

5. Revise the report outline and all other report plans to incorporate key stakeholder suggestions.

The only thing harder than getting started, is completing the report. Do the following to get the work done. *(Note the items on this list may need to be repeated or duplicated depending on decisions regarding audiences and needs)*

1. Collect all sections and develop the first report draft.

2. Share the draft with appropriate stakeholders

3. Make revisions as needed

4. Finalize and present the report according to dissemination strategy

5. Begin planning for future efforts as needed

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Important Things to Remember About Report Writing

- Follow the report writing outline described above. Feel free to be somewhat flexible with the order, but don't leave out whole sections (see also the appendix).

- Make your own internal outline including who is responsible for which sections. Be sure that you leave time for stakeholders to help you with editing/making revisions.

- Be economical in your decisions about what to include in your report. Shorter is better.

- Avoid excessive use of jargon.

- Read your work – if you can't understand it, chances are others won't be able to either. Think, in simple terms, about what you are trying to say, and then write that. Use complete sentences and standard English grammar conventions. You can rely some on bullets and be limited in your transitions, but be sure your reader can follow your logic.

- Formatting is your friend. Use headers and sections to help your reader know what is happening in your report. Be consistent about where and how they appear (centered, bold, underlined, side headings etc.). Number the pages. If you're generating a draft think about double-spacing.

- Use tables and Graphs to help illustrate findings. All tables and graphs must have titles, labels and legends or footnotes so that they stand alone (see also the appendix).

- Use quotes and vignettes or snippets from field notes to illustrate your findings. Remember quotes should have quote marks around them and be attributed to the speaker (or type of speaker – e.g., a participant) or writer. If you are presenting field notes, be sure they are clearly identified and in context.

- Be consistent in your use of language, capitalization, punctuation etc. For the most part, evaluation reports should be written in the past tense – only report what you actually did and what you found. The action steps or Issues for Further Consideration sections can include references to future actions.

- Do not introduce totally new topics into your report in the final sections. Do not use the report to explain why you changed your design, what you didn't do, and what should be happening with a program regardless of the findings presented in the report.

SUMMARIZE..SUMMARIZE..SUMMARIZE..SUMMARIZE..SUMMARIZE..SUMMARIZE..

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A Final Note About Useful and Practical Recommendations/Recommended Action Steps

The final section of many evaluation reports is the recommended action steps. These should be carefully crafted together by program officials and participatory evaluation partners. The following is a list of tips about useful and practical recommendations.

- The nature and content of the final report, including how recommendations are to be addressed, should be negotiated at the onset of the evaluation and reviewed periodically.
- Recommendations should clearly follow from and be supported by the evaluation findings.
- Distinguish recommendations about primary or central issues from those of lesser importance.
- Consider suggesting multiple options where applicable.
- Focus on actions within the control of intended users, and exercise political sensitivity.
- Be careful and deliberate in wording recommendations.
- Allow time for the target group to respond to the recommendations. Plan for follow-up.

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Evaluation Quiz: (See Appendix for Answers)

For the following: select which vocabulary term is correct (2 points each)

outcomes	indicators	reliable measures
targets	benchmarks	valid measures

1. Performance data used for comparison purposes. _____

2. Repeatable under similar conditions. _____

3. Observable, measurable characteristics of change that represent elements of an outcome. _____

4. Changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, condition or status that happen during and/or after programs. _____

5. Accurately measure what they are intended to measure. _____

FILL IN THE BLANKS

6. Name four primary strategies for collecting program evaluation data. (4 points)

7. Name at least 2 ways targets for outcome accomplishment can be set. (2 points)

_____ _____

8. Name four categories of program evaluation stakeholders. (4 points)

9. Name at least one criterion of an evaluation question. (2 points)

TRUE/FALSE (2 points each)

____ 10. Surveys are best when you have small groups with whom you have regular contact.
____ 11. Funders are the primary stakeholders of evaluation work.
____ 12. Drawing a 30% sample is a good rule of thumb to ensure representativeness.
____ 13. Program evaluation often focuses on causality.
____ 14. Program evaluation can be used to facilitate program improvements.
____ 15. Conducting cross-tabulations of responses is a common strategy used when analyzing interview data.
____ 16 Stakeholders can be involved in multiple aspects of program evaluation projects.
____ 17. The evaluator must have a lot of substantive expertise to do an evaluation of a program.
____ 18. Quantitative data are always better than qualitative data.
____ 19. Multiple reports are often produced from a single evaluation project.

EXTRA CREDIT: (8 POINTS) (Use reverse)
List seven key components of an evaluation design. Identify at least 1 good way to involve stakeholders in evaluation.

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Evaluation Bibliography

Cousins, J. B. & Whitmore, E. (1998). *"Conceptualizing participatory evaluation". In E. Whitmore (Ed.). Participatory Evaluation Approaches, New Directions in Evaluation. No. 80. (pp. 5-23). San Francisco : Jossey Bass.*

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, 2nd Edition, (Sage, 1990)

Patton, M. Q. (1997) *Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text* (Sage, 1997)

General Evaluation Books

The following all provide good introductions to, and practical guides on, evaluation (books with an "*" are strongly recommended).

Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-assessment and Accountability, by D.M. Fetterman, S. Kaftarian, and A. Wandersman, (Sage Publications,1996)

Community Impact Evaluation, by Nathanie; Litchfield (University College, London Press -- UCL Press, 1996)

Evaluation, 2nd Ed., by Carol H. Weiss (Prentice Hall, 1997)

Evaluation: A Systematic Approach, 5th Ed., by Peter Rossi and Howard Freeman (Sage Publications, 1993) (A textbook)

Evaluation for the 21st Century, by Eleanor Chelimsky and William R. Shadish (Sage Publications, 1997) (A reader)

Evaluation Strategies for Communicating and Learning: Enhancing Learning in Organizations, by R. Torres, H. Preskill and M.Piontek, Sage Publications, 1996.

Evaluator's Handbook, by Joan L. Herman, L. L. Morris, and Carol Taylor Fitz-Gibbon (Sage Publications, 1987) (Very basic)

**Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*, by Joseph S. Wholey, Harry P. Hatry, and Kathryn E. Newcomer, Editors (Jossey-Bass 1994) (A reader)

Impact Analysis for Program Evaluation, by Lawrence Mohr (Sage Publications, 1992)

**Program Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines*, by B.R. Worthen, J.R. Sanders, and J. Fitzpatrick (Addison, Wesley, Longman, 1997) (A textbook)

**Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies*, 5th Edition, by Emil J. Posavac and Raymond G. Carey (Prentice Hall Humanities/Social Sciences, 1997)

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Evaluation Guide Books

A Field Guide to Outcome-Based Program Evaluation, by Jane Reisman, 1994. The Evaluation Forum, 1932 First Avenue, Suite 403 Seattle, Washington 98101 206 269 0171

Assess for Success: Needs Assessment and Evaluation Guide, Girls Incorporated. 30 East 33rd Street, New York, NY 10016 (212) 689-3700.

Evaluator's Handbook, by Joan L. Herman, L. L. Morris, and Carol Taylor Fitz-Gibbon (Sage Publications, 1987) (Very basic)

How to Manage and Analyze Data for Outcomes-Based Evaluation, by Marc Bolan, Kimberly Francis, and Jane Reisman, 2000. The Evaluation Forum 1932 First Avenue, Suite 403 Seattle, Washington 98101.

Key Steps in Outcomes Management, 2003. The Urban Institute Press 2100 M. Street, Washington, D.C., 20037.

Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach, (The United Way)

Outcomes for Success! 2000 Edition. The Evaluation Forum 1932 First Avenue, Suite 403 Seattle, Washington 98101.

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The Managers Guide to Program Evaluation. By Paul Mattessich (Wilder Research Center, 2003)

W.K. Kellogg Foundation: Evaluation Handbook. 1998. One Michigan Avenue East; Battle Creek, MI 49017-4058. 616 968-1611

Focus Groups

Morgan, David L., ed. *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art*. Sage Focus Edition.

Stewart, D.W., and Shamdasani, P. N. *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice.* Applied Social Research Methods Series, Volume 20.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Fitz-Gibbon, C.T., and Morris, L. L. 1987. *How to Analyze Data.* Newbury Park, Californa: Sage Publications.

Morris, L.L., Fitz-Gibbon, C.T., and Lindheim, E. 1987. *How to Measure Performance and Use Tests.* Newbury Park, Californa: Sage Publications.

Welch, S., and Comer, J. 1988. *Quantitative Methods for Public Administration: Techniques and Applications*. Chicago: Dorsey Press.

Wright, D.B. 1997. *Understanding Statistics: An Introduction for the Social Sciences.* Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.

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For a large list of other evaluation publications, see the following Internet list compiled by the Grantmakers Evaluation Network (GEN) at http://hogg1.lac.utexas.edu/Gen/Booklist.html. If you do not have access to the Internet, contact GEN care of Ralph Culler, Hogg Foundation, P.O. Box 7998, Austin, TX 78713.

Evaluation Web Sites
The Internet is a great place to get information about evaluation. The following sites on the Internet offer a range of information and resources for evaluation. Many have links to other evaluation-related sites:

General Sites
http://www3.sympatico.ca/gpic/gpichome.htm.
A site that offers links to many web resources on evaluation brought to you by Government Performance Information Consultants.

http://www.eval.org/
The Home Page of the American Evaluation Association, an international professional association of evaluators devoted to the application and exploration of program evaluation, participatory evaluation, personnel evaluation, technology, and many other forms of evaluation. The Participatory evaluation page has links to several "how-to" guides.

http://www.unites.uqam.ca/ces/ces-sce.html
The Home Page of the Canadian Evaluation Association (La Société Canadienne D'évaluation), which is dedicated to the advancement of evaluation for its members and the public (Dévouée à l'avancement de l'évaluation pour le bien de ses membres et du public).

http://www.unitedway.org/outcomes/
The United Way's Resource Network on Outcome Measurement: A guide to resources for measuring program outcomes for health, human service, youth- and family-serving agencies. Order their manual, Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach, here.

http://www-leland.stanford.edu/~davidf/empowermentevaluation.html
The American Evaluation Association has a Collaborative, Participatory, and Empowerment Evaluation topical interest group that is dedicated to the exploration and refinement of collaborative, participatory, and empowerment approaches to evaluation.

**http://www.innonet.org/
Innovation Network, Inc., (InnoNet) is an organization dedicated to helping small- to medium-sized nonprofit organizations successfully meet their missions. The purpose of their site is to provide the tools, instruction, guidance framework to create detailed program plans, evaluation plans and fund-raising plans.

**www.cyfernet.org
Includes the very basic" Program Evaluation: A Five-Hour Training Curriculum

http://www.seirtec.org/publications/ncdpieval.html
This site contains excellent rubrics that can be used to evaluation any short or long term technology program.

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http://hogg1.lac.utexas.edu/Gen/
The Grantmakers Evaluation Network (GEN) is an affinity group of the Council on Foundations. The purpose of GEN is to promote the development and growth of evaluation in philanthropy. GEN will seek to leverage, expand, and diversify the sources of philanthropic dollars for evaluation and to build the capacity of members and others in its pursuit.

http://www.socio.com
This is Sociometrics' Home Page. Click on "Evaluation Resources" for evaluation resources available from Sociometrics.

http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/
The Evaluation Center, located at Western Michigan University, is a research and development unit that provides national and international leadership for advancing the theory and practice of evaluation, as applied to education and human services.

Educationhttp://ericae.net - A site listing many education-related links for assessment and evaluation.

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