The World Bank Group
Carleton University
IOB/Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands

International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET)

Building Skills to Evaluate Development Interventions

Module 10. Putting It All Together

Preface

The International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) program was initiated by the World Bank to meet the needs of evaluation and audit units of bilateral and multilateral development agencies and banks; developed and developing country governments, and evaluators working in development and nongovernmental organizations

The overall goal of this training program is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of participants in development evaluation. It is our intention that by the end of the training program, participants will:

- Understand the development evaluation process
- Be familiar with evaluation concepts, techniques, and issues
- Be able to weight different options for planning development evaluations, including data collection, analysis, and reporting
- Be able to design a development evaluation

The training program is organized into twelve modules as follows:

Module 1.	Introduction to Development Evaluation
Module 2.	Evaluation Models
Module 3.	New Development Evaluation Approaches
Module 4.	Evaluation Questions
Module 5.	Impact, Descriptive, and Normative Evaluation Designs
Module 6.	Data Collection Methods
Module 7.	Sampling
Module 8.	Data Analysis and Interpretation
Module 9.	Presenting Results
Module 10.	Putting it all Together
Module 11.	Building a Performance-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System
Module 12.	Development Evaluation Issues

Each module is intended to stand alone, and includes:

- an instructional introduction
- at least one case example
- application exercises
- references to further reading and resources
- powerpoint presentations from IPDET

Comments and suggestions for improvement of these training modules are invited and may be addressed to:

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Module 10: Putting It All Together

Planning:

The key to successful development evaluations is in planning. If the evaluation is poorly planned, no amount of later analytic sophistication will save it. Example 10-1 shows an example of an evaluation plan that links descriptive, normative, and impact evaluation questions to an evaluation design and data collection methods. An evaluation plan makes it easier to identify the skills and resources needed to carry out the evaluation. Of course, not all evaluations seek to answer all three types of questions, so feel free to adapt the evaluation planning matrix to best suit your needs.

This technique of systematically mapping out the evaluation plan helps you to keep track of all the tasks necessary to answer your questions. It is unlikely that you will have all the information you need as you go through each step of the evaluation planning process. As you get new information, you may have to revise some of your initial ideas and approaches. The evaluation plan is described below.

The evaluation plan is a visual way to map your evaluation. Some people find it helpful since it focuses attention on each of the major components for evaluating a program. Which tool people use to help them think about a program, its context, measurable objectives and data collection and analysis strategies will very. You may decide that you need to create your own. The point to all this is that you find a method that helps you see all the pieces of the evaluation and to ensure they all connect.

It does take a while to fill in all the columns since not all the information you need to know is available to you at the outset. This is a common experience in development evaluation. You will find that planning is an iterative process. Sometimes you will run into dead ends (information you thought should be available isn't) or the best ways are not appropriate or practical for a variety of reasons. Building and streamlining the evaluation plan is an on-going process until all the details have been worked out.

Example 10-1: Evaluation Plan

Questions	Sub-Questions	Approach	Measures	Source of Information/ Data Collection Methods	Sample	Analysis	Comments
What is the intervent-ion doing? (descrip-tive question)	Who is it serving? What happens to participants? How does it work?	Rapid assessment Descriptive research Checking against plan	Number and characterist-ics of people served Description of intervention activities	Program records and documentation Brief observation of activities in intervention Interviews with participants and staff	Snowball sample of a variety of participants; 2-3 staff per site	Frequencies and means Summarize steps in intervention Extract themes from comments	Should docu-ment any discrepancy between intended and actual implemen-tation, and reasons
Is the intervent-ion meeting its targets? (normative question)	Output goals met? Outcome goals met? On time? Within budget?	Multi-site evaluation Comparison of perform-ance against targets	# participants served Improvements in skills relat-ive to targets Timeline Costs	Goal statements (at policy, program, project levels, as appropriate) Program records and documentation Surveys, observations, and expert ratings	Stratified random sample of participants at each site; Selected staff	Comparison of actual perform-ance measures relative to targets Extract themes from comments	Where target exceeded or not met, note size of difference; Make note of any obvious side effects for follow-up
What is the impact of the intervent-ion? (impact question)	On target recipients? On others? Ripple effects? Compared to what?	Consumer-oriented needs-based approach; Open-ended tracking of downstream impacts	Levels of performance assessed against needs Benchmarked against other interventions	In-depth needs assessment → identify key outcomes Survey, observation, expert assessment Focus groups with participants and families	Census – all participants Snowball sample of family members (to track ripple effects)	Comparison of actual needs-related perfor-mance with that achieved by other programs; Cost information	Is this the most cost-effective way of address-ing identified needs? Need recommendation re: implementat-ion in other villages

Guide for Using the Evaluation Plan

You can change the format of the evaluation plan to fit your style and interests. For example, if you are only planning to address a normative question, you might want to write the subquestions in greater detail, and include much more specific measures, and sources for finding them.

For each question, complete all the columns. You want one row for each question. If you have 2 major questions, the design matrix would have 2 rows which specifies how you plan to design your evaluation for each question: the measures that you want to collect, where the information resides, how you will collect, and what analysis you will use.

As mentioned before, the planning process is iterative and it will take time to determine the best way to conduct the evaluation. As you develop your plan, you may find out that some of your assumptions were incorrect. Alternatively, you may be able to state very specifically where the data are: for example, agency report # 2001 issued May 1998 has the data you need. Even if you don't feel you have enough information to fill out all the columns, an evaluation plan can still be enormously valuable for clarifying the main steps involved, and for communicating these to others.

The comment section may be helpful in keeping track of unresolved issues, concerns you have as you go along, or names of contacts that might be helpful. Use it in any way that helps you.

Two useful tools (available online) for planning evaluations are:

- Evaluation Plans and Operations Checklist (Stufflebeam)[1]
- Checklist for Program Evaluation Planning (McNamara)[2]

As with all the tools presented and referenced in these modules, it is often useful to look carefully at several of them, and then create a version of your own that will fit your particular situation, and the way you organize and understand information.

[1] Available for download: http://evaluation.wmich.edu/checklists

[2] Available online: http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/chklist.htm

Reviewing Your Plan

Once your plan is complete, you want to make sure all of the pieces connect and actually will give you the best chance of obtaining the data necessary for you to evaluate a program.

Pre-testing is essential. Every data collection instrument and procedure must be pre-tested. You wanted to find out if anything is not going to work before you begin to actually collect data. If you are pre-testing a data collection instrument, have several people use it in a real setting; then compare what they have found. If your instrument is standardized and structured, they will have collected the same data in the same way.

If you are pre-testing a survey or focus group, conduct them as if they were real. This means that a person being interviewed or being asked to complete a mail survey would actually go through the entire survey as if were the real thing. Afterwards, you will want to have them tell you what worked and what didn't; what was clear and what wasn't. You can ask them how they might fix some of the problems they found and what questions should be asked. Similarly, conduct one or two focus groups with a small group of the people that are likely to be in your study. Go through the entire process. Again, at the end, ask them for feedback and suggestions.

You may also find it helpful to have experts review your plans and instruments. They can provide useful feedback and suggestions.

Lastly, have a cold reader review your surveys to make sure they are clear, grammatically correct, and error free. You will be too close to it to find all the typos.

TOR Revisited

Terms of Reference (TOR) describe the overall evaluation and establish the initial agreements prior to the work plan. The process for developing the Terms of Reference can be very useful in ensuring that all stakeholders are included in the discussion and decision-making about what evaluation issues will be addressed. It establishes the basic guidelines so everyone involved understands the expectations for the evaluation and the context in which the evaluation will both take place.

Terms of Reference typically includes:

- Title: short and descriptive
- Project or Program Description
- Reasons for the evaluation and expectations
- Scope and focus of the evaluation: the issues to be addressed and questions to be answered
- Stakeholder involvement: who will be involved, defined responsibilities, and accountability process
- Evaluation Process: what will be done
- Deliverables: typically an evaluation work plan, interim report, final report and presentations
- Evaluator qualifications: education, experience, skills and abilities required
- Cost projection based on activities, time, number of people, professional fees, travel and any other related costs.

Again, there are some useful checklists available for drawing up evaluation contracts and budgets. In particular, the following resources (available online) should be helpful:

- Evaluation Contracts Checklist (Stufflebeam)[3]
- Checklist for Developing and Evaluating Evaluation Budgets (Horn)[3]

[3] Available online: http://evaluation.wmich.edu/checklists

Assessing the Quality of an Evaluation

The final step in pulling it all together is to critically assess the quality of your evaluation. A good evaluation:

- Meets stakeholder needs and requirements
- Is relevant and realistic scope
- Uses appropriate methods
- Produces reliable, accurate and valid data
- Includes appropriate and accurate analysis of results
- Presents impartial conclusions
- Conveys results clearly – in oral or written form
- Meets professional standards (see Module 1)

There are several useful checklists available for assessing the quality of an evaluation, and it is useful to apply at least two of them as you look over your (or someone else's) work to make sure you are not forgetting anything. Some particularly useful checklists with different perspectives include:

- The Key Evaluation Checklist (Scriven)
- Program Evaluations Metaevaluation Checklist (Based on The Program Evaluation Standards) (Stufflebeam)
- Utilization-Focused Evaluation Checklist (Patton)
- Guidelines and Checklist for Constructivist (a.k.a. Fourth Generation) Evaluation (Guba & Lincoln)
- Deliberative Democratic Evaluation Checklist (House & Lowe)
- Guiding Principles Checklist (For evaluating evaluations in consideration of The Guiding Principles for Evaluators) (Stufflebeam)

Using a Meta-Evaluator

If you can possibly build it into your budget, it can be extremely valuable to hire an experienced meta-evaluator. This is someone with evaluation expertise who is not involved in conducting the evaluation, but who you can use as a sounding board, advisor, and helpful critic at any stage during the evaluation process.

Helpful hint: Meta-evaluation on a shoestring

Can't afford a meta-evaluator? Here are some creative options available for those on a low budget. Perhaps you can think of some more to add to the list!

1. Consider getting a "rapid assessment" meta-evaluator – get an expert to quickly look over your evaluation plan (or report) and identify any gaps and make suggestions. For a stronger enhancement, have two evaluators with complementary skills and perspectives to take a look at your work. The value of the feedback will be much more than double!

2. Offer to act as meta-evaluator/reviewer for someone else, provided they will return the favor sometime. Even a quick look from a fresh set of eyes can add some real value.

Evaluation is a very challenging (sometimes daunting) task, so the more feedback and advice you can get, the better quality product you can deliver to stakeholders. After all, being an evaluator is all about believing in the value of feedback to maximize quality and effectiveness. What better way to convey the importance of this than to do it yourself?

Exercise 10-1
Putting It All Together

Evaluating the IPDET Evaluation Workshop Program[4]

Instructions.

Read the following scenario, complete the evaluation plan (on the following page), and identify the skills required for the evaluation team.

Scenario:

> Five years after the start of the program evaluation workshop program, the donor wishes to conduct an evaluation to determine the success, relevance and cost-effectiveness of the program. The evaluation must be completed within 3 months.
>
> The workshop was delivered in 5 countries annually, with a total of 500 participants (about 20 per class). All were from public agencies and NGOs. Two trainers in each country delivered the workshop each year and 13 are still employed by the program.
>
> The sponsor has maintained some data about the participants:
>
> - 50% of the participants are still in the same places of employment
> - 30% have changed employment
> - 20% are untraceable
>
> A follow-up trainee questionnaire (93% response rate) in 2003 showed that:
>
> - 69% of trainees thought the training was very useful to them in their jobs
> - 11% of the trainees thought the training was somewhat useful to them

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4 Based on an exercise developed by Univeralia—WBI, exercise 9-1.

Exercise 10-2
Evaluation Plan

MAJOR ISSUES	QUESTIONS	APPROACHES	MEASURES	SOURCES OF INFORMA-TION DATA COLLECTION METHODS	SAMPLE	ANALYSIS	COMMENTS
Relevance							
Relevance							
Success							
Success							
Cost-Effectiveness							
Cost-Effectiveness							
Other							
Other							

Further Reading and Resources

Worthen, B.R., Sanders, J.R., and Fitzpatrick, J.L. (1997). Program evaluation, Part Three, pp.187-307. New York: Longman.

Websites

International Development Research Centre (1997). Planning, Monitoring, & Evaluation of Programme Performance. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Online: http://www.idrc.ca/evaluation/documents/rebk1512.pdf

McNamara, C. (1999). Checklist for program evaluation planning. Online: http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/chklist.htm

The checklist project, The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. http://evaluation.wmich.edu/checklists

W.K. Kellogg Foundation (1998). W.K. Kellogg Evaluation Handbook. Online: http://www.wkkf.org/pubs/Pub770.pdf

To continue on to this
Module's Presentation Slides click here

To continue on to the
Next Module click here

To return to the
Main Menu click here