

Chapter 5 Evaluation

The development of an evaluation strategy is an important part of the planning process for the intervention. The purpose of doing an evaluation is to provide those involved in the project (project staff, participants, and funders) with the information necessary to decide whether or not the intervention was successful in reaching its goal, how it can be improved, and whether or not it should be replicated. However, many project managers are intimidated by evaluation, and do not develop a good evaluation plan, thinking they can “do the evaluation” at the end of the project. Do not wait until the project is over to begin thinking about evaluation. Unless you have planned for the evaluation and collected data from the beginning of the project, you cannot conduct an evaluation. Indeed, the steps we have laid out for you in this guide should assist you with the development of an evaluation plan early in the development of the project. For example, all of the data you collect, from the initial needs assessment through the end of the project, will be used in the evaluation. The indicators of success you established when developing your workplan will serve as “measuring sticks” once you analyze the data.

In this manual, we do not attempt to provide you with all the information you need to plan and conduct the evaluation of your programme. Instead, we try to give you a general orientation to issues you should consider when planning the evaluation of your programme. If you are not familiar with conducting an evaluation of health promotion programmes, we suggest you locate someone in your area with this expertise, and make that person part of your team. In addition, you can refer to the Resources List at the end of this manual for more information.

The first question to ask in planning an evaluation is: what is the purpose of the evaluation? The evaluation will be easier if the intervention objectives are very clear and if each objective only has one desirable result. For this reason we set very specific objectives when developing our workplan. The definition of the purpose of the evaluation also needs to include a plan on how the evaluation results will be used.

The next step is to decide on the evaluation methodology. The ultimate use of the evaluation will dictate the methodology of the intervention. One important factor to consider in deciding on the evaluation methodology is the cost of the evaluation compared to that of the intervention. When doing process evaluation, you must

choose methods that will provide you with quick results so you can use the results in re-directing the project. Some methodologies such as surveys and other quantitative methods require more lead time and therefore may not be suitable for every situation especially if results are needed within a short period of time.

* Methodologies fall into two major categories: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative methods include interviews, observation and group discussions. Qualitative methods will give you information about how people think or feel. Quantitative methods will give you numbers, for example how many people do or think a certain thing. The most popular quantitative method is the survey. For more information on how to design the most appropriate evaluation strategy and how to select the proper methodology for your project please see *Tools for Project Evaluation: A Guide for Evaluating AIDS Prevention Programs* by AIDSTECH/Family Health International.

Outlined below are the techniques and indicators commonly used for formative, process and outcome evaluations in interventions designed to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Formative evaluation:

Formative evaluation techniques employed during the design and early implementation stages of a project serve a valuable function. They permit project collaborators to determine the need for an intervention, learn more about the target population, and compare the relative benefits of possible interventions. Your needs assessment is a type of formative evaluation.

Techniques:

focus groups
in-depth interviews
short surveys

Examples of Indicators:

interviewer information
demographic characteristics of respondents
sources of information on AIDS
AIDS and STD knowledge
sexual practices
STD history

Process Evaluation:

Process evaluation techniques are used primarily as project management tools to determine what the intervention has done since its implementation (i.e. how many people the intervention has reached, how has it reached them, etc.) As described in Chapter 5, the information provided through ongoing process evaluation allows project staff to identify problems and make the changes needed to insure that the project meets its objectives.

Techniques:

direct observation
focus groups
interview and survey of project staff and participants
project documents and records

Examples of Indicators:

number of clients in clinic
number of people tested for STDs in laboratory
number of people found positive
training sessions held (for staff or participants)
number of sites visited
number of people contacted at the sites
number of condoms distributed

Outcome Evaluation:

Outcome evaluation techniques permit project collaborators to identify and measure changes that can be attributed to the intervention.

Techniques:

cross-sectional surveys
sentinel surveillance

Examples of Indicators:

increase in condom use
reduction in the number of partners
changes in knowledge of HIV/AIDS transmission or prevention
reduction in the incidence of HIV or other STDs