SASKATCHEWAN POPULATION HEALTH AND EVALUATION RESEARCH UNIT

Introduction to Community-Based Participatory Evaluation: Basics for Communities

Prepared by the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU)

Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan

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Introduction to Evaluation

What Is Program Evaluation?

Most program managers assess the value and impact of their work continually, through asking questions, consulting partners, making assessments, and obtaining feedback. The information they collect is used to improve programs. Such informal assessments and insights gained fit nicely into a broad definition of evaluation as an "examination of the worth, merit, or significance of an object" (Scriven, 1998).

What Are Guiding Principles for Evaluation?

Box 1 shows general principles for evaluation that should be considered and agreed upon in every evaluation undertaken. All stakeholders should have a clear understanding of these principles before starting an evaluation.

Box 1 General Evaluation Principles

Evaluation:

- *is intended to improve program planning and delivery;*
- *is not a generic or singular action, but rather is flexible and collective;*
- *is intended to lead to action;*
- *enlists the participation of relevant stakeholders through inclusion and through all stages of design and delivery;*
- *should be an asset for those involved in the evaluation;*
- *must respect different interests and negotiate different realities;*
- *should leave behind an increased capacity to use the findings; and*
- *must meet ethical standards.*

Program evaluation can be defined as "systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future program development" (Patton, 1997).

What Makes Program Evaluation Different from Informal Assessment?

The main difference from informal assessment is that evaluation is conducted according to a set of guidelines (protocols) that are systematic, consistent, and comprehensive so that we might repeat the process to compare results. Program evaluation does not occur in a vacuum; rather, it is influenced by the real-world. Evaluation should be practical and

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doable and must be done considering resources, time, and political context. It should serve a useful purpose, be conducted in an ethical manner, and produce accurate findings. Evaluation findings should be used both to make decisions about program implementation and to improve program effectiveness. We choose to carry out program evaluation rather than rely on informal assessment because it is rigorous, it is based on evidence, and it is grounded in reality.

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Evaluation Questions

Many different questions can be part of a program evaluation depending on how long the program has been in existence, who is asking the questions, and why the information is needed. In general, evaluation questions fall into one of the following groups:

- **Implementation:** Were your program's activities done as originally intended? If not, what changed?
- **Effectiveness:** Is your program achieving the goals and objectives it was intended to accomplish? Are there unexpected achievements?
- **Efficiency:** Are your program's activities being produced with appropriate use of resources such as budget and staff time?
- **Cost Effectiveness:** Does the value or benefit of achieving your program's goals and objectives exceed the cost of producing them?
- **Attribution:** Can progress on goals and objectives be related to your program, as opposed to other things that were going on at the same time?

All of these are appropriate evaluation questions and might be asked with the intention of documenting program progress; demonstrating accountability to your community, funders, and policymakers; or identifying ways to improve the program.

Why Evaluate Programs?

Data gathered during evaluation helps managers and staff create the best possible programs, make program changes as needed, monitor progress toward program goals, and judge the success of the program in achieving short-term and longer-term objectives (see *Box 2*). Most community programs aim to change behaviour in one or more target groups and to create an environment that allows these groups to sustain these changes, since changes in environments and behaviours can improve community health status. Through evaluation, we can track changes and, with careful evaluation, assess the effectiveness and impact of a particular program, intervention, or strategy in producing these changes.

Box 2 Key Reasons to Evaluate Programs

Evaluate programs to:

- *monitor progress toward the program's goal(s);*
- *determine whether the program is producing the desired progress on it's objectives;*
- *enable comparisons between programs or within a single program over time;*
- *find opportunities for continuous quality improvement;*
- *ensure that effective programs are maintained and resources are not wasted on ineffective programs; and*
- *justify the need for further funding and support.*

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Being an Evaluator and Becoming an Evaluation Team

An initial step in the formation of a team is to decide who will be responsible for planning and implementing evaluation activities. At least one person should be assigned as the lead evaluator, in charge of coordinating program evaluation efforts. This person should be responsible for evaluation activities, including planning and budgeting for evaluation; developing evaluation objectives; addressing data collection needs; reporting findings; and working, if applicable, with consultants. The lead evaluator is ultimately responsible for involving stakeholders, consultants, and other collaborators, who bring skills and interests needed to plan and conduct the evaluation.

The evaluation team members should clearly define their roles (see *Box 3*). Informal consensus may be enough, although certain teams prefer written agreements describing who will conduct the evaluation and the specific roles and responsibilities of each team member. Regardless, the team must take time to clarify and reach consensus on the:

- purpose of the evaluation;
- evaluation approach; and
- potential users of the evaluation findings and plans for dissemination.

Evaluations take time, money, and people. Tasks done by the evaluation team generally include:

- establishing a relationship with stakeholders;
- designing the evaluation;
- data collection;
- data analysis;

- compiling and summarizing information; and
- report writing.

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Box 3 Characteristics of a Good Evaluation Team

A good evaluation team:

- *has experience in the type of evaluation being undertaken;*
- *is comfortable with qualitative and quantitative data sources and analysis;*
- *is able to work with a wide variety of stakeholders, including representatives of target groups;*
- *can develop innovative approaches to evaluation while considering the realities affecting a program, such as a small budget;*
- *can incorporate evaluation into all program activities;*
- *can understand both the potential benefits and risks of evaluation;*
- *can educate program personnel about designing and conducting the evaluation;*
- *can adhere to principles of;*
- *has strong coordination and organizational skills;*
- *can explain material clearly and patiently;*
- *can respect all levels of personnel;*
- *can communicate well with key personnel;*
- *can exhibit cultural competence; and*
- *can deliver reports and protocols on time.*

There are many things to consider when undertaking evaluations or acquiring the services of an evaluator, such as the *Guidelines for Ethical Conduct*. At this time in your evaluation process, it is also important to focus on the issues of integrity (please refer to this section in *Box 4*).

Integrity relates both to the evaluator and the evaluation process. It requires honesty and transparency in all aspects of the evaluation process. Integrity includes consideration of the strengths, weaknesses, interests, and conflicts of the evaluator(s), stakeholders, and the community, in order to create an open and ethical foundation for the evaluation. An ethical evaluation will include steps to accurately collect, assess, and report all findings in a respectful and appropriate manner.

Box 4 Guidelines for Ethical Conduct

COMPETENCE

Evaluators are to be competent in their provision of service:

- *Evaluators should apply systematic methods of inquiry appropriate to the evaluation.*
- *Evaluators should possess or provide content knowledge appropriate for the evaluation.*
- *Evaluators should continuously strive to improve their methodological and practice skills.*

INTEGRITY

Evaluators are to act with integrity in their relationships with all stakeholders:

- *Evaluators should accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge.*
- *Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to clients before embarking on an evaluation project and at any point where such conflict occurs. This includes conflict of interest on the part of either evaluator or stakeholder.*
- *Evaluators should be sensitive to the cultural and social environment of all stakeholders and conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the environment.*
- *Evaluators should confer with the client on contractual decisions such as: confidentiality, privacy, communication, and ownership of findings and reports.*

ACCOUNTABILITY

Evaluators are to be accountable for their performance and their product:

- *Evaluators should be responsible for the provision of information to clients to facilitate their decision-making concerning the selection of appropriate evaluation strategies and methodologies. Such information should include the limitations of selected methodology.*
- *Evaluators should be responsible for the clear, accurate, and fair written and/or oral presentation of study findings, and limitations, and recommendations.*
- *Evaluators should be responsible in their fiscal decision-making so that expenditures are accounted for and clients receive good value for their dollars.*
- *Evaluators should be responsible for the completion of the evaluation within a reasonable time as agreed to with the clients. Such agreements should acknowledge unprecedented delays resulting from factors beyond the evaluator's control (Canadian Evaluation Society).*

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Stakeholders Are Important to an Evaluation

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Every program has many stakeholders who need to be considered in the evaluation process (see *Box 5*). Stakeholders take on particular importance by ensuring that appropriate evaluation questions are identified and that evaluation results will be used to make a difference. Stakeholders are much more likely to support an evaluation and act on results and recommendations if they are involved throughout the evaluation process. Without stakeholder support, an evaluation may be ignored. To be ethical and accurate, we need to include those who participate in the program, deliver the program, and are affected by the program or its evaluation.

Box 5 Potential Program Stakeholders

Potential program stakeholders can include:

- *program managers and staff;*
- *local and regional coalitions interested in the issue;*
- *local and national advocacy partners;*
- *funding agencies, such as national and provincial governments;*
- *provincial or local government departments;*
- *education agencies, schools, and other educational groups;*
- *universities and educational institutions;*
- *privately owned businesses and business associations;*
- *religious organizations;*
- *community organizations;*
- *people who use the service(s);*
- *program critics; and*
- *representatives of populations disproportionately affected by the issue.*

Roles of Stakeholders in an Evaluation

Stakeholders can be involved in an evaluation at various levels. Stakeholders may be part of the formal evaluation team, serve in an advisory capacity, or provide input by request. Stakeholder input gives a clear analysis of the program's activities and outcomes from their perspective. Stakeholders may also have insights on the most effective and appropriate ways to collect data from target groups.

It is critical that stakeholders be recognized as having a role or roles in the evaluation process. This must be clearly stated and built into the evaluation plan so that the evaluation team can ensure stakeholder involvement (see *Box 6*).

Box 6 Checklist for Engaging Stakeholders

Steps in engaging stakeholders include:

- *identifying stakeholders using the following three broad categories:*
    1. *those affected,*
    2. *those involved in operations, and*
    3. *those who will use the evaluation results;*
- *incorporating key stakeholders with a role in program implementation, advocacy, or funding/authorization decisions;*
- *creating a plan for stakeholder engagement and identifying areas for stakeholder involvement; and*
- *targeting stakeholders for participation in specific steps, including writing program descriptions, suggesting evaluation questions, choosing evaluation questions, providing and analyzing data, and disseminating results.*

Notes

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Introduction to Logic Models

What Is a Logic Model?

Logic models (see *Box 7*) are graphic representations (pictures) of the **relationship** between a program's activities, its **intended** objectives, and its **ultimate** goals.

Relationship: Logic models tell us about the activities that comprise a program and the interrelationship of those activities as well as the link between activities, objectives, and goals.

Intended: Logic models depict "intended" or "expected" objectives of a program's activities, rather than reality at any point in time. As the starting point for evaluation and planning, the model is a road map showing the logic behind the program (i.e. why it should work). Of all activities that could have been undertaken to address this problem, these activities are chosen because, if implemented as intended, they should lead to the **ultimate** goals desired. Over time, evaluation and day-to-day experience will increase our understanding of what does and does not work, and our logic model will change accordingly.

Box 7 Other Names for Logic Models

Other names for a Logic Model include:

- *theory of change;*
- *model of change;*
- *theoretical underpinning;*
- *causal chain;*
- *weight-of-evidence model;*
- *road map;*
- *conceptual map;*
- *blueprint;*
- *rationale;*
- *program theory; and*
- *program hypothesis.*

Why Are Logic Models Useful?

Logic models are a useful way of helping stakeholders understand the overall structure and function of a program (i.e. the "big picture"). Logic models are a useful resource for program planning and evaluation. A well-developed logic model is like a road map: it defines boundaries, highlights important features, shows clearly marked "pathways," and suggests alternate routes.

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How Do Logic Models Support Program Evaluations?

Logic models have many components (see *The Process for Developing a Logic Model* on page 24) which guide the development of program evaluations by:

- matching activities with your program's objectives and indicators of success;
- providing a useful blueprint or template for evaluation design;
- serving as a resource for "evaluability assessment," which is the process of determining if a program is ready to be evaluated (i.e. a program may not be ready for evaluation if there is no clear relationship between its activities and objectives);
- identifying success indicators, which are critical for program evaluation;
- showing program sponsors how specific program activities contribute to the achievement of program objectives and goals;
- demonstrating accountability within the program; and
- facilitating the involvement of stakeholders in a participatory evaluation.

When Should a Logic Model be Developed?

Given their multi-purpose nature, logic models can be developed at different stages of the program planning and implementation processes, including:

- **early in the planning process** to serve as a resource for initial visioning and priority-setting exercises;
- **later in the planning process** to validate draft goals and objectives or to assess the "fit" between program objectives and proposed strategies; and
- **during the implementation** of a program to assess the "evaluability" of a program or to develop a visual diagram explaining the program for ease of communication (Centre for Heath Promotion, 2001).

What Do Logic Models Look Like?

There is no standard format for logic models. They vary depending on the nature of the program and the needs and preferences of its stakeholders. The format and complexity of a logic model can also vary according to its intended purpose.

Logic models are usually depicted in chart form with lines or arrows indicating the relationship between key program features, such as activities, objectives, and population(s) of interest. To provide an effective

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"blueprint" for understanding a program, logic models are most effective when they are printed on a single page.

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Why Are Ethical Guidelines Important in Evaluation?

In evaluation, ethical guidelines provide clarity on the rights and responsibilities related to the project with respect to collecting, accessing, disseminating, and protecting information. Generally, these contribute to the "A B Cs" of ethical evaluations:

Adding accountability to the evaluation

Ethical evaluations ensure fairness, accuracy, timeliness, and appropriateness in all phases of design and delivery.

Building integrity into the evaluation

Ethical evaluations involve honest and transparent efforts to reflect stakeholder needs, sound evaluation methods, disclosure (i.e. conflict of interest), and clear ownership of the process and its outcomes.

Contributing to confidentiality and privacy

Ethical evaluations are respectful and responsible to the participants, stakeholders, community and protect individual rights and community rights through strategies such as informed consent and voluntary participation.

What Are Specific Ethical Considerations in Community-Based Evaluation?

Community-based evaluations bring about a number of unique ethical challenges and opportunities. Although these do not represent all aspects of ethical considerations in evaluation, we would like to consider a few key elements: community control and approval, consent, confidentiality/anonymity/privacy, voluntary participation, and data management.

Community Control and Approval

Genuine collaboration is developed between evaluators and communities when it promotes a **partnership** based on mutual trust and cooperation. This relationship-building process promotes shared power, equitable resourcing, and mutual understanding. A collaborative approach will help the evaluation proceed in a manner that is community appropriate, relevant, respectful, responsive, equitable, and reciprocal with regard to the benefits shared between all parties.

Communication, transparency, and meaningful consultation with the community are essential to establishing a partnership. If an evaluator does not have an existing relationship with the community, the process begins by identifying people who can provide guidance on an appropriate process of community consultation. Community consultation will mean discussing

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the evaluation with appropriate individuals, in groups, and in other ways that will become apparent from these initial discussions (such as public meetings in the community).

A community's **control** over the conduct of evaluation should be understood and respected. Any evaluation must comply with any bylaws, policies, rules, and procedures adopted by the community. For example, an Aboriginal community may have its own Research Ethics Board or community research protocols. In such a case, the community may require that evaluations conducted in its region or territory respect these protocols.

Communities may have expectations regarding what the evaluator should do in order to be prepared for, and to be accepted by, the community.

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Box 8 Community-Based Ethical Evaluations

Communities can ensure ethical evaluations in their community by:

- *monitoring and controlling evaluations conducted in or about their community;*
- *actively collaborating in the evaluation process;*
- *developing ethics review procedures for the community; and*
- *engaging in a community consent process (which could include an MOA).*

Consent and Participation

Community Consent

Evaluators should work with community leaders and stakeholders to determine the best method(s) to obtain consent. In some cases, especially when the evaluation touches on traditional or sacred knowledge, it may be necessary to first obtain community consent. For example, such consent may come from formal or traditional leaders or it may come through a process which includes many community members in the decision to proceed.

Voluntary, **prior**, and **informed** consent must be obtained from individual participants.

Box 9 Voluntary, Prior, and Informed Consent

*Individuals must **consent voluntarily** to participate in an evaluation. In addition:*

a) The evaluator must emphasize that the decision of the community to participate is voluntary. At any time during the evaluation there must be the option to withdraw from the involvement without any penalty or consequences to the community.

b) Voluntary participation protects communities and individuals from being coerced into participating and also allows them to withdraw if they feel uncomfortable with the direction and/or delivery of the evaluation process.

***Prior consent** indicates that consent is sought before you start evaluation activities and respects time requirements for any community or cultural consultation/consensus processes.*

***Informed consent** suggests that the information provided includes:*

a) explanation of project:

- *the reason(s) or purpose(s) of the project or activity;*
- *the procedures that the project may entail;*
- *sources of project funding and support, as well as obligations to these sources (oral or written); and*
- *nature, size, pace, reversibility, and scope of any proposed project or activity;*

b) the complete disclosure of the risks and benefits to individuals and to the community of participation in the research evaluation; the benefits should outweigh the risks;

c) the conditions for collection, use, retention, and disclosure of personal data; and

d) the personnel likely to be involved in the execution of the proposed project (including Aboriginal people, private sector staff, research institutions, government employees, and others).

Anonymity, Confidentiality, Privacy

The evaluator and the community should discuss their respective expectations regarding the anonymity and confidentiality of information obtained and data produced.

Anonymity means that no one can link the information to the person who provided it.

Confidentiality means that only persons who are authorized will know the source of the information, and they will keep it private.

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Together the adherence to anonymity and confidentiality in a specific evaluation will result in how **private** the identity of the community and individual participants remains.

Typically, anonymity is not possible in a community-based evaluation. Where there are limitations, they should be clearly communicated to participants and the community by the evaluator. An individual or community may not wish to be identified in relation to certain conclusions reached in the evaluation. Conversely, a community that actively participates in the evaluation may wish to be identified and acknowledged. The level of participation by a community in the planning and implementation of the evaluation project and in the interpretation of the data should be acknowledged appropriately, if that is the desire of the community.

The evaluator, individual participants, and community should have a clear understanding of anonymity or confidentiality of the individual or community participating in the evaluation, as well as the extent to which data and results will remain confidential to the evaluation team. In other words, the evaluator should, early in the process, discuss with the individual and the community the measures that will be taken to protect the privacy of individuals and ensure compliance with any laws surrounding disclosure of information.

There are some data collection methods which may make dealing with anonymity or confidentiality difficult. For example, focus groups involve multiple individuals, and it is impossible to control the sharing of information beyond the group. However, the evaluator or focus group facilitator should stress to all participants that information heard within the group should be treated as confidential.

Data Management

Data may include interview information, computer files, audio and video tapes and files, questionnaires, and notes. There are ethical considerations as to how the data from an evaluation must be handled, stored, secured, and shared. The general principle is that all data must be handled, secured, and transferred in ways that ensure privacy and security. Usually, individuals and communities involved in data collection or analysis should sign an agreement to ensure privacy and security of the information. Many organizations, such as universities, have policies about the length of time that data must be stored. Check for the specific requirements with your partners.

Interpretation and Dissemination of Results

An individual or community retains the right to participate in the interpretation of data and to review conclusions drawn from the evaluation. By doing this, communities and individuals improve accuracy and enhance the appropriateness and sensitivity of the interpretation. Communities and evaluators may not always agree on the interpretation of data and conclusions drawn. Many research and evaluation agreements

have dispute regulation mechanisms built in to them. The community decides how its contributions to the evaluation should be acknowledged. Community members are entitled to credit and to participate in the sharing of results. Publications should recognize the contribution of the community and its members, where appropriate, and adhere to principles of anonymity and confidentiality. Expectations about co-authorship and copyright should be set out in the evaluation agreement.

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What are Specific Considerations respecting Aboriginal Community-Based Evaluations?

Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP)

The principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) underscore Aboriginal approaches to research, evaluation, statistics, monitoring, cultural knowledge, and other forms of information gathering.

OCAP is defined as follows:

Ownership
Ownership is the relationship of a First Nations community to its cultural knowledge, data, and information. The community or group owns information collectively (group/collective data) as an individual owns their personal information.

Control
Control refers to First Nations people and their communities seeking to control all aspects of research, evaluation, and information management processes which impact them. This means that they should be involved from the time of conception of the work to its completion and sharing.

Access
First Nations people must have access to information and data about themselves and their communities. This means that these groups must be able to use and make decisions about the access to their collective (group) information.

Possession
Ownership (described earlier) is about the relationship of the people and their data. Possession is about protection and stewardship of the data.

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Introduction to Collecting Information/Data

The focus of your evaluation will guide the types of information that you will need to collect. Generally, there are two types of data: information that already exists or is already being collected, and new information that is collected for the evaluation.

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Collecting Existing Data

Program Data

Program data is information about the program itself: its goals, objectives, and its operation (i.e. things like eligibility requirements for a service offered by the program). Program data may include basic data about the number of users of a program and budgets for the program. Some information can generally be found in public documents (either in hard copy or via the Internet), such as material distributed by those running the program, and documents held by the organization delivering the program and/or by funders of the program. Such documents include:

- briefing notes;
- government decision items;
- budget documents of both the funder and the delivering organization;
- minutes of meetings of the board of the organization delivering the service, or between the organization and the government, or meetings pertaining to the program held inside government; and
- reports (annual and interim).

Access to documentation about the program (other than those that are freely available to the public) would come from direct request to the organization itself or via Access to Information requests filed formally through the government.

Administrative Data

Administrative data is more detailed information about the actual operations and usage of the program by individuals and/or groups. This data is recorded by the delivery agency and compiled either by the agency itself or by funders of the program. This data may include:

- details on users of the services of a particular program;
- what services were delivered to which clients;
- who delivered the services; and
- when services were delivered.

Over time, one can track changes in both clients and the use of specific services under a program and get a long-term picture of how service delivery and the client base has changed. This data is usually provided stripped of information that would identify particular users and providers, following ethical approval.

Collecting Your Own Data

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Although existing information is inexpensive, it is often limited in its range and scope. You will likely need to add to the information by collecting your own data. Once you have decided what types of information needs to be collected, your next step will be to select the method(s) to collect this information.

The following sections outline some different data collection methods that can be used to collect your own data for the evaluation.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a tool which asks a series of questions and uses other prompts to gather information. Frequently questionnaires are mailed out to large numbers of people, but they can also be completed over the telephone, electronically via the Internet, or in a face-to-face interview.

Types of questions in a questionnaire can include:

Open
An open question has a series of lines (or a blank space) in which respondents are encouraged to write, in their own words, how they feel about the topic.

Closed
A closed question provides a set of answers that the designer of the survey considers will accommodate the majority of potential responses.

Structured
A common example of a structured question is a Likert Scale (*Box 10*). Structured questions have respondents tick a box, circle a response, or place a cross along a line.

Box 10. Sample Likert Scale

Example:

How often do you go out to a restaurant for dinner?

Never	*Sometimes*	*Average*	*Often*	*Very often*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Box 11. Questionnaire Layout Tips

- *There is a balance in the use of* **white space** *(between questions and sections) to give improved readability, without increasing the apparent size of the survey. The survey needs to have a* **preamble** *that explains the overall aim of the survey; this can be part of the covering letter or at the head of the actual questionnaire.*
- *There should be general instructions to the respondents, placed usually at the beginning of each section.*
- *It is usually a sound practice to number questions and, if the questionnaire is divided into sections, to have the section designation as part of the question numbering system.*
- *There should be specific instructions associated with each question to aid in the correct completion of the questions. These might include phrases such as "Please tick one box only," "Tick as many boxes as necessary," or "Put a cross at the appropriate place on the line."*
- *Wherever appropriate the respondents should be able to skip questions (or whole sections) that are not relevant to them. This can be achieved by using filter questions combined with instructions, such as "If you answered YES to Question 8, please move directly to Question 12 (that is, do not answer Questions 9-11)."*
- *If respondents are unsure about whether to answer a question, or which answer is the most appropriate, they should be provided with a 'let out' such as "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable." When a large number of respondents choose such options, it is time to examine whether the question is poorly worded or in the wrong place in the questionnaire.*

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Interview

A widely-used technique is the interview. There are basically two types of individual face-to-face interviews: impromptu and scheduled. Impromptu interviews take place wherever there are people who are likely to have an opinion of, or knowledge about, the topic. Scheduled interviews are usually conducted at home, or at work, or at the location of the program or service.

A third type of interview is called a **focus group** (or discussion group), which is a group interview completed with small groups of people (usually 6-8 people).

Sharing Circle

The sharing circle, an Aboriginal oral tradition for sharing information and stories, is a culturally-appropriate alternative to a focus group (Berthelette, Raftis, & Henderson, 2001). It is a way of reclaiming the authority of the oral tradition: Indigenous peoples want to tell their own stories, write their own versions in their own ways, for their own purposes

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... a need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying (Smith, 1999).

By using sharing circles, everyone is included as co-researchers and co-evaluators in the project. The sharing circle stresses that "every issue has many aspects that can be viewed from both the inside and the outside and, at the same time, everything is connected." Essential to the sharing circle is an environment that is respectful and equal. Sharing circles let the participants share information, connect, and seek balance and harmony. Within the sharing circles, every individual decides if and when to contribute. Also, each person must use active listening as an important part of the work of sharing circles. All members of the sharing circle stick to the matter under discussion and, in this way, honour other people's time and commitment for being there (CAAS, 2002).

Photovoice

Photovoice is an evaluation technique where people take pictures of aspects of their lives to illustrate and bring attention to the issues they face. The pictures can be supplemented by short stories that interpret the picture through the eyes of the photographer. It is a tool where community members are able to actively participate by documenting issues that are important to them. This technique can be very empowering for those who take part as well as a very effective communication tool for community change. The pictures are often displayed publicly, providing an opportunity to communicate with the general public and policy makers that other methods do not offer.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a basic form of human communication. It can be an essential part of our everyday lives. We often think, speak, and bring meaning to our lives through stories. What generally happens when we tell a story from our own life is that we increase our working knowledge of ourselves because we discover deeper meaning in our life through the process of reflecting and putting events, experiences, and feelings into oral forms.

In many cultures, including Aboriginal cultures, storytelling is a traditional practice that sustains the community and validates people’s experiences. It offers people the chance to share historical/ancestral knowledge, cultural ideas, and oral traditions and encourages them to use these stories and knowledge to examine and make sense of current events and realities.

Many would like to tell the whole story, but of course you cannot because the whole story exceeds anyone’s knowing and anyone’s telling. If using storytelling in evaluation and research, one must decide what parts of a story are to be included (or shared) and what parts can be left out. It is important that the evaluator seek the advice and direction of the person(s) providing the story. The goal is to best represent the story in a respectful and holistic manner.

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Translation is a special challenge in storytelling, especially as some ideas or stories may be altered or changed in the process.

Diaries

Over a period of time, the respondents themselves record data about what they are doing in a log, journal, or diary format. These entries then become part of the information about the program or service from that person's perspective.

Observation

In observation, we record events and activities during the study. Types of observations could include participant observation and environmental scans. Observations take significant amounts of time, and this should be considered in choosing this approach.

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Resources

Photovoice website: http://www.photovoice.com

Survey Monkey: http://www.surveymonkey.com

Organizing and Managing Information Collected

Notes

In organizing and managing the information you collect, you will see there are different concerns and issues when considering different data sources. However, both **qualitative** and **quantitative** information require that we take precautions on data safety, security and back-up. You must plan these strategies before you start on the road to evaluation. These protect you and your sources, and respectfully show that the information given is valued and valuable. It also allows you to get optimal understanding from the data collected.

Quantitative

Quantitative data is all about numbers and statistics. It is the type of information you often see in reports and newspapers. Most of us see quantitative information and are confused by it. It often looks complicated and may not be easy to interpret. However, quantitative information does not need to be difficult. There are some basic steps that will help us understand and use quantitative data.

In quantitative work, data collection, data organization, and data analysis are all separate processes. This means you complete one stage, and then the next, and so forth. Once you carry out data collection, the evaluator takes the time to organize the data and prepare it for computer entry. At this point, the evaluator identifies any missing or questionable data and then completes the information set. The data analysis begins once all data is collected and organized for computer entry. This may involve statistical tests, or graphs and charts, both often accomplished by computer program.

The important thing to remember about organizing and managing quantitative information is that it has to be useful to you and placed in a program that is simple. You can do some quantitative work on programs like Microsoft Excel™.

Qualitative

What does qualitative data look like? It can be “words” or text, pictures, and artifacts, such as blankets and beadings. Qualitative information is often easier to understand because it is familiar and common to most individuals. In the Aboriginal context, there is a greater comfort with qualitative types of information because the population values stories, photos, and traditional ways of knowing. As in the case of quantitative data, there are some basic steps that will help us understand and use qualitative data.

In qualitative evaluation, data collection, data organization, and data analysis occur together. This seems sensible if you consider the goal of understanding information as we become aware of it. As we acquire data, we start the process of organizing it for manual or computer analysis – yes, there are computer programs that allow us to analyze text. The coding and arranging of the data are very important in qualitative work. Extra care must be taken to properly capture information and confirm that what is captured is what was stated. You can use familiar programs such as Microsoft Word™ or Corel WordPerfect™ to help with qualitative data analysis. These programs allow simple tasks such as frequency counts and cut and paste of similar phrases.

Notes

The Process for Developing a Logic Model

Notes

The four steps to developing a logic model include:

1. *preparing to develop your logic model (project management);*
2. *developing and/or assembling the necessary information for your logic model;*
3. *creating your logic model; and*
4. *reviewing and revising your logic model.*

(Centre for Health Promotion, 2001)

Step 1: Prepare to Develop Your Logic Model

Step one is essentially logic model management. The logic model developer must manage a number of elements throughout all stages of logic model development, including:

A. participation of key stakeholders;

B. decision-making; and

C. data gathering, interpretation, and dissemination.

As with the construction of an evaluation tool, this requires resources and time.

A. Participation of Key Stakeholders

The importance of stakeholder participation in the development of your logic model must be seriously considered. Identify key stakeholders (i.e. the project team, funders, and community partners) and consider their roles (i.e. provide relevant information about program goals, objectives, activities, etc. and revise draft versions). Consider the following questions about stakeholder participation:

- Which stakeholder(s) should work with you to develop the logic model?
- Which stakeholder(s) need to review and comment on the logic model after it is developed (Centre for Health Promotion, 2001)?

B. Decision Making

Before beginning work on any part of a logic model, it is important to clarify the decision-making process. When project coordinators or other stakeholders are unclear about the decision-making process, it can cause conflict, confusion, and unnecessary backtracking. For example, consider the following questions:

- Who has decision-making power over what is represented in the logic model about the program (i.e. Who has played a role in determining program goals?)?
- By what process will a logic model be accepted as representing a program (i.e. consensus, voting, or one person's decisions)?

Notes

C. Data Gathering and Interpretation

In preparation for logic model development, it is important to explore what sources of information are available to you about the program at the outset. Consider:

- funding proposals, work plans, previous logic models, etc.; and
- people with previous experience with the program.

Step 2: Develop or Assemble Information

Step two involves collecting the information needed to complete your logic model. Information must be collected on the program's:

A. goal(s);

B. target groups;

C. short- and long-term objectives and indicators;

D. strategies, activities, and associated indicators; and

E. available resources.

Information about these elements may already be available in visual or narrative format, such as in a funding proposal, work plan, or operational plan.

A. Goal(s)

A program goal summarizes the direction or desired outcome of a program. Most programs have a single goal, but complex programs may have several goals.

B. Target Groups

Target groups refer to the populations served by a program. For each goal, you may have a different target group.

C. Short and Long Term Objectives and Indicators

An objective is a brief statement about the desired impact or effect of the program (i.e. how much of what should happen, for whom, by when) (See *Box 12*).

An indicator is a variable that can be measured in some way. For the purposes of program planning and evaluation, indicators are used as benchmarks or measures to assess how well objectives have been met. Matching objectives to indicators in a logic model helps to ensure the availability of relevant data sources for program evaluation.

Box 12 Creating Program Objectives

Program objectives should:

- *align with the overall goal;*
- *describe an outcome that is realistic and for which you will be held accountable;*
- *describe a change (i.e. use words like increase, decrease) rather than an action step;*
- *identify a specific population of interest;*
- *be priorities (i.e. be a good fit between needs, capacities, and mandate); and*
- *be SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Reasonable, and Timed.)* (Centre for Health Promotion, 2001)

Whether an objective is short- or long-term relates to the length of time needed to achieve the program goal. As a general rule, the timeframe for short-term objectives can range from 2-3 months to 2 years. The time frame for longer-term objectives is typically 2-5 years.

Short-term objectives specify the short-term, or intermediate, results that must occur to bring about sustainable longer-term changes. For example, changes in knowledge must take place to bring about long-term changes in health-related behaviours. Decision makers need to support a healthy public policy before it can be implemented. Note that short-term objectives are different from activities or strategies (i.e. actions needed to achieve the objectives).

Short-term indicators measure the direct impact of a program on the target group(s). When selecting indicators for short-term objectives, it is important to ensure that the necessary data is available (Centre for Health Promotion, 2001).

D. Strategies, Activities, and Associated Indicators

Strategies refer to major activities (see *Box 13*) that will help the evaluation team achieve their objectives and overall goal.

Box 13 Examples of Strategies

Examples of strategies include:

- *communication;*
- *education;*
- *community Development;*
- *organizational Development;*
- *policy Change; and*
- *advocacy.*

Notes

Activities describe the specific ways that strategies will be approached. Activities are the specific actions taken within a certain time period. In a logic model, activities usually appear as one- or two-word descriptions of steps taken to explain and make the strategies workable.

Indicators are developed to track and monitor the implementation of program activities. These indicators measure the quantity, duration, and efficiency of program activities (see *Box 14*).

Box 14 How Indicators Are Used

Collecting information on indicators can provide data to enable decision-making, set priorities, or evaluate the progress of a plan or program.

Example: *Measuring the level of participation in sports activities can help determine whether a desired participation level is being met or if a specific program is having the desired effect. (Jeffery, et al. 2006)*

E. Available Resources

Logic models often contain a link between the program, objectives, indicators and activities to the resources available for implementation.

Step 3: Create Your Logic Model

Step three focuses on the creation of a logic model. There are many different ways to design a logic model. The logic model may vary in:

A. scope (i.e. how much it covers); and

B. number and description of elements included.

A. Scope

It can be difficult to decide how much information to include in a logic model. A logic model will not be an effective planning and evaluation tool if it is not meaningful, useful, and relevant for key program stakeholders. The model should contain all necessary information to sufficiently reflect what the range and scope will be.

B. Number and Description of elements included

The logic model discussed in this workbook includes many elements, such as goal, population of interest, long- and short-term objectives and indicators, strategies, activities, process indicators, and resources. Often, logic models include only some of these levels. For example, some logic models do not include goals, some may choose not to describe resources, and sometimes indicators and objectives are combined. What is included should be based on what is most needed by those who will be using the logic model. There is no standard set of labels for a logic model (i.e. "naming the rows of boxes") (Centre for Health Promotion, 2001).

Notes

Notes

Direction of Information Flow

The way the logic model displays information flow usually follows one of two paths:

- The first option has the flow starting with resources at the top and moving down toward objectives and an overall goal (programmer bias).
- The second option moves from left to right starting with either resources or long-term objectives.

Amount of Text

The amount of text included in a logic model varies greatly between logic models. It can be sparse and in point form or highly detailed. Again, this is a matter of preference and based on the function the logic model is designed to serve.

Visual Layout

As with elements discussed above, there are many ways to approach visuals and overall layout. Sometimes a software/computer program may assist in creating the layout (see *Box 15*). Visual presentation is a highly subjective issue, but an important one as good visual design can help users understand the logic model. Poor layout or unnecessary visuals can add clutter and create confusion (Centre for Health Promotion, 2001).

Box 15 Software Tips

Some software options for creating a logic model include:

- *Microsoft Visio and Excel ™;*
- *Microsoft Project™;*
- *Corel Draw™;*
- *Adobe™; and*
- *Open Source.*

Step 4: Review and Revise Your Logic Model

Step four is the final stage of logic model development. At this stage, it is recommended that you:

A. review;

B. present and discuss with stakeholders;

C. revise; and

D. take action!

Notes

A. Review

Review for Completeness

The review for completeness should focus on answering the following questions, and perhaps other questions that the team identifies as important:

- Have you included all appropriate elements?
- Have you included all relevant populations of interest?
- Have you identified short- and long-term objectives?
- Are the objectives clear and measurable?
- Are your major activities listed under an appropriate strategy?
- Are indicators included for objectives and activities?
- Do the indicators get at what you need to know in order to determine if program objectives have been met?
- Do your strategies reflect a range of programming efforts delivered to the identified population(s) of interest?
- Have you addressed all key stakeholder concerns and questions (i.e. will they be satisfied?) (Centre for Health Promotion, 2001)?

Review for Logic

The review for logic focuses on the arrows or direction of information flow. Consider the following:

- Will the short-term objectives lead to the long-term objectives?
- Have you chosen the most logical set of strategies?
- Are the activities appropriate for the population of interest?
- Are the chosen activities likely to result in meeting the short-term objectives?
- Are your resources sufficient to drive strategies and activities?

Review for Presentation

When reviewing the presentation of the logic model, consider the following design elements:

- Are there too many boxes on the page?
- Is it easy to follow the arrows and flow of logic?
- Is there enough white space?
- Are the levels in an order that is useful for you and your stakeholders?
- Is the model user-friendly and easy to follow (Centre for Health Promotion, 2001)?

Notes

B. Present and Discuss with Stakeholders

You must present the logic model to the stakeholders or a representative group of the stakeholders. Seek their feedback and discuss how the evaluation will use the logic model.

C. Revise

Review the feedback from the stakeholders to revise the logic model.

D. Take Action

The evaluation can begin!

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Resources

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