



Needs Assessment and Logic Models

ScWk 240 – Week 13 Slides



What is Program Evaluation?

- Seeks to answer the overall question of whether a program (or policy, initiative, project, etc...) is effective or not.
- How is program evaluation different from group research designs, which also seek to determine program effectiveness?
 - *Generally larger in scope and goes beyond testing two groups for statistically significant differences on a few outcome measures*
 - *Uses a variety of research methods to assess a variety of questions*



Program Evaluation Tasks

- *Program evaluation also can include research activities focused on:*
 - *collecting information about the needs of a community to inform program development (formative evaluations),*
 - *documenting the types of services delivered, how they are delivered, and the number and type of participants (process)*
 - *As well as short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes.*
- *Used in government and not for-profit organizations. In for-profit organizations it is easy to determine effectiveness since the goal is money, in other programs it may be more difficult to determine what the program should be achieving.*
- **In order to determine program effectiveness, program evaluation strategies usually involve the creation of a logic model.**

+ Logic Models & Program Evaluation

Logic models typically provide a comprehensive description of three core aspects of a program (or policy, initiative, project, etc....):

- **Inputs:** Concrete things that are invested in the program—these are the core aspects of a program that allow the program to actually be implemented (e.g. funding, staff, office space, etc...).
- **Outputs:** Include the activities (e.g. actual services) that are delivered by the program (e.g. counseling, education, training, etc...), and participation in these services by clients.
- **Outcomes:** Includes **short-term outcomes** (e.g. acquisition of knowledge) **intermediate outcomes** (e.g. changes in behavior), and **long-term outcomes** (e.g. larger-scale outcomes related to the ultimate impact on the program).



Logic Model Applications

Logic models can be applied to:

a small program, a process (i.e. a team working together), a large, multi-component program, or even to a large organization or business.



Logic Models – Different Names

- **Theory of change**
- **Program action**
- **Model of change**
- **Conceptual map**
- **Outcome map**
- **Program logic**



Era of Accountability

- What gets measured is often what gets done
- If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure
- If you can't see success, you can't reward it
- If you can't reward success, you're probably rewarding failure
- If you can't see success, you can't learn from it
- If you can't recognize failure, you can't correct it.
- If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support and funding.



Theory of Change

“A theory of change is a description of how and why a set of activities – be they part of a highly focused program or a comprehensive initiative – are expected to lead to early, intermediate, and long-term outcomes over a specified period.”

(Anderson, 2000)



Defining the Situation

What problematic condition exists that demands a programmatic response?

- Why does it exist?
- For whom does it exist?
- Who has a stake in the problem?
- What can be changed?

If incorrectly understood and diagnosed, everything that flows from it will be wrong.

Factors affecting problems: protective factors; risk factors

Review research, evidence, knowledge-base

Traps:

- Assuming we know the cause(s): symptoms vs. root causes.
- Framing a problem as a need where need is actually a program or service. “Communities need leadership training” Precludes discussion of nature of the problem: what is the problem? Whose problem? Leads one to value provision of the service as the result – is the service provided or not?



Common Inputs

What we invest

Staff

Volunteers

Time

Money

Research base

Materials

Equipment

Technology

Partners



OUTPUTS

What we do

Who we reach

ACTIVITIES

- Train, teach
- Deliver services
- Develop products and resources
- Network with others
- Build partnerships
- Assess
- Facilitate
- Work with the media
- ...

PARTICIPATION

- Participants
- Clients
- Customers
- Agencies
- Decision makers
- Policy makers

OUTCOMES

What results for individuals, families, communities.....

SHORT

Learning

Changes in

- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Skills
- Opinion
- Aspirations
- Motivation
- Behavioral intent

MEDIUM

Action

Changes in

- Behavior
- Decision-making
- Policies
- Social action

LONG-TERM

Conditions

Changes in

Conditions
Social (well-being)
Health
Economic
Civic
Environmental



Outputs vs. Outcomes

Example:

- ◆ **Number of patients discharged from a state inpatient mental health hospital is an output.**
- ◆ **Percentage of discharged patients who are capable of living independently is an outcome.**



Logic Model Benefits

- Provides a common language
- Helps us differentiate between “what we do” and “results” --- **outcomes**
- Increases understanding about the program
- Guides and helps focus work
- Leads to improved planning and management
- Increases intentionality and purpose
- Provides coherence across complex tasks, and diverse environments



Additional Benefits

- **Enhances teamwork**
- **Guides prioritization and allocation of resources**
- **Motivates staff**
- **Helps to identify important variables to measure; use evaluation resources wisely**
- **Increases resources, opportunities, recognition**
- **Supports replication**
- **Often is required!**



Cautions and Limitations

- **Can become too time consuming – and just paperwork**
- **May become too focused on outcomes without adequate attention to inputs and outputs and the logical relationships that connect them to end results**
- **May end up perfecting the key to the wrong lock**
--Is the program focusing on the right thing?
- **Mixing levels within one logic model**
- **Attending to context only at front end**
- **Thinking that logic model has to be “correct”**
--you may be looking at the wrong “map”
- **Becomes ‘fixed’ rather than flexible and dynamic**



Needs Assessment

A Needs Assessment Should:

- **Demonstrate and document a known community need**
- **Be carried out in a manner that builds a better understanding of the context or situation**
- **Helps select a strategy or design an educational program to address needs**
- **Have the added benefit of involving the public in problem solving and goal setting**



Questions for Needs Assessment

- **What data exists?**
- **What data is needed?**
- **What resources are available to do needs assessments?**
- **Who should be involved in the analysis and interpretation of the data?**
- **How will the information gathered be used and for what purpose?**
- **How will the results be communicated?**



Methods and Tools for Assessment

- **Collect and Examine Existing Data**
- **Conduct Attitude and Other Surveys**
- **Key Informant Interviews & Information**
- **Community Forums**
- **Focus Groups**



Organizational Assessment

- **Location and Facilities** : How and where are services provided? What type of infrastructure and staff are used to deliver services?
- **Organization Structure**. How are decisions-made? How do clients flow through the organization?
- **Organization Culture**. Values and behaviors of the people in the organization. How do staff treat each other? How are clients treated? How do clients and workers interact with one another?
- **The individual personalities of people in the organization**
- **Communication and coordination**

+ Assessing Cultural Competence

- **Include clients in organization decision-making (seats on boards of directors or advisory committees).**
- **Include clients and staff in designing programs and evaluating services.**
- **Make sure services are culturally competent.**
- **Minimize the power differences among staff and between staff and clients.**
- **Have staff members work in teams rather than have several layers of supervisors.**
- **Help staff feel psychologically empowered (inclusion in decisions; opportunities for professional development among staff).**
- **Increase job satisfaction among workers.**
- **Encourage staff to engage in advocacy for clients and to improve agency services.**
- **Work to increase the power of the organization to advocate for legislation and policies that will help clients and community residents (this includes lobbying the government, asking constituents to lobby, and helping clients become involved in the political process (voter education and registration)).**



Methods for Assessment

- **Interviews with or surveys of organization participants (clients, staff, and board members).**
- **Interviews with or surveys of people in the organization's suprasystem.**
- **Administering standardized tests to clients or staff (there are scales that measure psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, and motivation).**
- **Observing meetings or the social interaction among staff members or between staff and clients.**
- **Review of agency records and data bases.**



Other Sources of Information

- **Mission Statement**
- **Goals and Objectives**
- **By-laws**
- **Annual Budget**
- **Evaluation Plan**
- **Organization Policy Manual**
- **Personnel Policies**
- **Rules and Procedures for Program Operation**
- **Grant Proposals**
- **Annual Report**
- **Web Site**
- **Brochures and Fundraising Letters**



Happy Thanksgiving!

