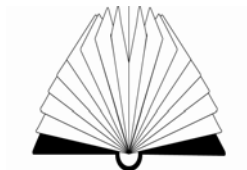


Evaluation

Or



How are we doing so far?



NWT Literacy Council

Evaluation

What is evaluation?

Evaluation is a planning term. When we plan, there are a number of steps we follow:

1. Create the **vision**
2. Assess the **current situation**
3. State your project **goal**
4. Establish **objectives**
5. Develop a **work plan**, with activities timelines and budget
6. **Implement** the plan
7. Evaluate **progress** and **results**

It is very important to include evaluation as part of planning a project, because it can give us all kinds of information.

Evaluation:

- Helps us find out how things are going with our project.
- Allows us to make informed decisions about what we should do next.
- Gives us information we can share with other people.
- Gives people who take part in projects an opportunity to tell you what they think about the project.
- Gives people in the community an opportunity to tell you if the project is worthwhile or not.



Evaluation

Why do we evaluate?

We evaluate projects to:

- Improve what we are doing.
- Know when we need to make changes.
- Figure out what success looks like in our specific project.
- Share the information about our project with others (especially funders).
- Celebrate success.
- Learn from our experience and from mistakes we may have made.
- Show our findings to our supporters and increase our chances of getting more support in the future.
- Find out what people in the project think about the project.
- Find out what other people think about the project.

Why do we sometimes avoid evaluation?

We sometimes carry out projects without doing evaluations. Here are some reasons people give for not doing evaluations.

- We don't feel we have enough time.
- We don't have the money to do it.
- We're not sure how to do it.
- We think it's a waste of time.
- We don't think it's important.

People who don't evaluate are missing out on the opportunity to learn from their experiences. Mistakes can be expensive!



Evaluation

Some evaluation words

A funder may use these words in the proposal template. We don't need to use them, but they're useful to know.



Qualitative – Quantitative

Qualitative information includes people's experiences, opinions and descriptions of activities. We usually collect this information in a narrative form.

Quantitative information is usually reported in numbers and facts. Some examples include the number of project sessions we ran or the number of people who took part.

Internal – External

If people who conduct the evaluation are involved in or know the project, it is 'an **internal** evaluation.' This is a common and effective way to evaluate smaller projects.

If people who conduct the evaluation are not involved in the project and are seen as experts, it is 'an **external** evaluation.' People usually do external evaluations on larger projects that cost a lot of money. External evaluations can be expensive because you often have to hire someone to do them.

Evaluation

Formative – Summative

A **formative** evaluation takes place during a project. It allows us to make changes right away, if something is not going so well.

A **summative** evaluation takes place at the end of the project. It lets us find out what we learned overall and what we need to do next time around.

Goals – Objectives

The **goal** of our project is what we hope to achieve overall. We must be able to measure a goal. Thus 'To improve parents' literacy levels' may not be a measurable goal, unless you give them a test!

The **objectives** are the things we will do to achieve our goal. When we evaluate we check to see if – or how well – we've achieved our goals and objectives.

Outcomes or results

The **outcomes or results** are what we expect to happen as a result of our project. These can be short- or long-term. We also check to see if we have the results we expected.

Indicators

Indicators are the things that show us if we are successful. Examples include the number of people that come to our project, or if people are satisfied with the project.

Sources

Sources are where we get the information from.

Evaluation

Before we begin

Here are a few questions we should think about before we begin to design the evaluation. This will help us to set our evaluation on the right track.

- What are our goals and objectives?
- What outcomes do we expect as a result of our project?
- How will we show that we met our goals and objectives?
- What kinds of information do we want to know?
- How will we gather this information?
- Who will gather it?
- Who will we gather it from?
- What will we do with the findings from our evaluation?
- Who will we share the findings with?
- How will we share the findings with others?



Evaluation

Some evaluation challenges

Even if we conduct a simple evaluation, there can be some challenges. It's better to face the challenges and do a simple evaluation than not do one at all. Here are some of the challenges people sometimes face.

- It's easy to ask the wrong questions. Poorly worded questions will give us wrong or poor information. We need to think carefully about what questions we will ask.
- If we ask people to tell us what areas need to improve, they'll tell us! We need to be prepared for that. But it isn't always easy to deal with negative comments, especially with a project we've designed and run ourselves. Just remember, we want to improve what we're doing. And we asked people to tell us.
- We may try to do it too quickly.
- Some people may not want to hurt our feelings. They may tell us what they think we want to hear, not what they really think.
- People who run projects are busy people. It's not always easy to find – or take – the time to do an evaluation.



Evaluation

Steps in designing an evaluation plan

We are suggesting ten steps that will help us to develop an evaluation plan.

1. State the project goal
2. State the project objectives
3. Identify the stakeholders (people that are interested in the project)
4. State the project activities
5. State the project outcomes or results
6. Identify the evaluation indicators (the evidence of our progress)
7. Decide on what kind of evaluation to do (formative or summative, or both)
8. Choose evaluation questions
9. Choose evaluation tools
10. Create the evaluation design

Evaluation

1. The project goal

The project goal is a broad statement about the purpose of the project. In other words, why are we doing this project?

2. The project objectives

Objectives describe how we will reach our project goal. For example, one objective might be to provide family literacy workshops for parents or caregivers and children.

3. Evaluation stakeholders

Stakeholders are people who have an interest in the project. They may include people who take part in the project, funders and other people in the community.

4. The project activities

The project activities are the things that we do in our projects to achieve our objectives. So an activity to meet our objective above might be: Develop and deliver a variety of family literacy workshops.

5. Project outcomes or results

The outcomes are the results that we get from doing the project. They are changes that happen as a result of the project. It may be changes to people who take part in the project, or it may be to other stakeholders. Outcomes can be immediate or longer-term. For example, the immediate outcome of a family literacy project might be more parents reading to their children. A longer term outcome might be more parents are aware of the

Evaluation

importance of reading to their children. Again, we must be able to measure the outcomes or results of our project.

6. Evaluation indicators

Indicators are things we can measure, or evidence, that show how successful our project is, and show if we have achieved our objectives. They can be quantitative, such as the number of people who took part. Or they can be qualitative, such as feedback or comments. You can also use something you have given out as an indicator. For example, if you developed a tip sheet for parents, that can count as an indicator.

7. How do we identify evaluation indicators?

1. Review the objectives and think about the information we need to show we achieved these.
2. Review the evaluation questions, and then think of the information we need to answer these questions.
3. Review the activities and then think of the information we need to show our progress with these activities.
4. Review the results we expected and then think of the information we need to show we have achieved these.

Here are some examples of different kinds of indicators.

Quantitative indicators

- Response rate to an advertisement e.g. pyjama party

Evaluation

- Number of people (adults, children) who came to the family literacy program
- Number of resources the project produced
- Number of workshops held
- Number of people trained
- Number and types of resources developed
- Number of resources given out
- Workshop materials

Qualitative indicators

- Types of inquiries
- Feedback on family literacy program
- Reported changes in skills, behaviours, knowledge, attitudes
- Types of problems, complaints or suggestions
- Participants' satisfaction with the program

Evaluation

Choosing evaluation questions

Evaluation questions are the key questions that we need to ask to help us understand the success of our project.

Formative evaluation questions

- Are the activities happening as we planned them?
- Is the project reaching the people we wanted to reach?
- Are we getting the number of people we expected?
- How satisfied are the participants?
- Do the activities meet the needs of our participants?
- Should we, and if so, how should we, change the activities to meet the needs of our participants?
- What lessons have we learned so far?

Summative evaluation questions

- Did participants experience any changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes or behaviours?
- Did the changes match what we expected to happen?
- What is the effect of the project on our organization?
- What could be the long-term impact of the project?
- What would have made the project more effective?
- What lessons have we learned for the next time?
- What should we continue with?

Evaluation

Evaluation tools

Evaluation tools are the things we use to gather the information we need.

Evaluation Tool	Description	Formal	Informal
Survey	Either a written document or interview with a select group of people	•	
Interview	A set of questions about the project for a target group	•	
Focus group	A group discussion about the project	•	
Evaluation form	A set of questions for the target group at the end of an activity, such as a workshop.	•	
Project records	Statistics and other information we make notes on	•	
Observation	Notes we take during the project		•
Conversation	Talking to participants about the project		•
Anecdotal information (stories)	Stories about the project from staff or participants		•

Evaluation

Some simple ways to do evaluation

There are all kinds of ways we can evaluate a project. Some are formal, such as interviews. Others are more informal, such as informal conversations. Here are a few simple examples. We can:

Talk to people

- Check in with the group regularly.
- Talk to participants individually. We may call this ‘an interview’.
- Talk to participants in small groups. We may call these ‘focus groups’.
- Talk to the staff who are running the project.
- Ask children who take part in the project what they think about it.
- Talk to people in the community about the project.
- Collect stories from participants about what it was like to take part in the project.



Collect written information

- Ask people to fill in a feedback form/ survey/ questionnaire about the project.
- Keep statistics on the project (how many sessions there were, how many people came, and so on).

Observe what is happening

- We can make notes during the project of things we see.

Evaluation

What we may want to find out from participants

What we will want to find out depends on the kind of project we offer. In general, however, here are a few things that it's useful to think about, and a few questions that might go with each area. You can ask participants these questions orally or get them to write their answers on a written feedback form.

1. What were participants' opinions of the project?

- What did you *think* of the project or the activities?
- Did you *like* the project?
- Which part did you *like best*?
- Which part did you *like least*?
- Would you *recommend* the project to someone else?
- What was *the most interesting* part for you?

2. Was the project useful for them?

- Was the project *useful* for them or their family?
- Was it *relevant* for them?

3. What new things did they learn in the project?

- What *new things* did you learn about (such as new ideas)?
- What *new skills* do you now have?
- What *new things can you do* now that you couldn't do before?



Evaluation

4. How will they apply their new skills?

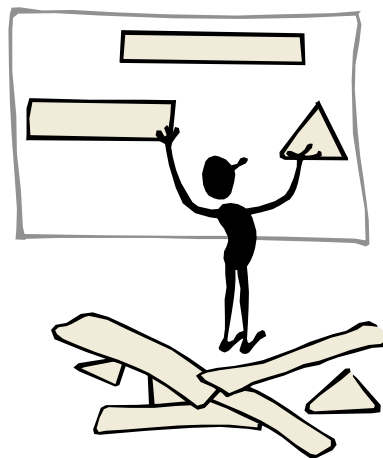
- What will you *do* as a result of taking part in this project?
- How will you *use* your new skills and learning at home/ in your daily life?

5. Are there any changes in their behaviours or attitudes?

- Will you change anything you do as a result of the project?
- Has your attitude changed as a result of the project? (For example, Before, did you think it was important to read to your child? Now do you think it's important to read to your child?)

6. What changes would they make to the project?

- What *changes* would you make to the project?
- Which part of the project was *the least successful*? Why do you think this?
- What would you do to *improve* this project?
- What *advice* do you have for the facilitators?



Evaluation

What we may want to find out from others

Again, what we will want to find out depends on the kind of project we offer. In general, however, here are a few things that it's useful to think about, and a few questions that might go with each area. You can ask people in the community these questions orally or get them to write their answers on a written feedback form.

1. Do they know about the project?

- Have you *heard* about this project?
- What have you *heard* about the project?

2. Do they know someone who went to the project?

- Do you *know* anyone who went to the project?
- What did they *say* about the project?

3. Do they think the project has benefitted the community?

- Do you think the project *benefitted* the families in the community in some way?
- How do you think it *benefitted* them?
- Do you think it has *benefitted* the broader community?
- How do you think it *benefitted* the community?



Evaluation

Ways to ask questions

You can ask questions in different ways. And you can use different types of answers.

A straightforward question and answer

Q: What changes would you make to the project?

A: I would hold it in the evening instead of during the day.

A sentence starter

Q: For me, the most interesting part of the project was . . .

A: . . . learning new songs I can sing with my child.

A rating scale

Q: What did you think of the *Books in the Home* project?
Please circle one. You can use words or numbers.

Excellent Pretty good Needs work Can it!

Or

5 4 3 2 1

(where 5 is the highest and 1 is the lowest)

Evaluation

A checklist







Q: Put a checkmark beside all the ones that apply:

The **three** activities I thought were most useful were:

Learning new songs	x
Learning to tell stories	
Reading aloud	x
The crafts	x
Talking to other parents	

Children's feedback

Children can give you simple feedback too! You can use happy and sad faces. Cross out the face that describes what you think about each thing. (A parent or family literacy provider may have to help them.)

	I like it	It's not bad	I don't like it
My new backpack			
Franklin Goes to School			



Evaluation

Information we can get from our project records

It's a good idea to keep a record of things that happen in our projects. We can go back to the records later to get some important information. Here is some information we can get from project records:

- A copy of the project proposal with the goals and objectives
- The number of sessions in the project
- The number of sessions we ran each week
- The number of families who participated in each session
- The number of different families who came to the project overall
- Who the families were so that we can follow up with them if we need to (this information should be confidential)
- Examples of the kinds of activities we did in the project
- Photographs we took during the project (you may need permission to use them in a public document)
- A list of people or organizations that supported the project



Evaluation

Evaluation Plan



Evaluation Plan

Project name:

Family Literacy Project

Goal: Family literacy providers develop and deliver a wide range of FL programs

	Results (from work plan)	Indicators and data to measure results	Sources of data
<p>Objective 1 Provide training for FL providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FL training institute • FL workshops in 2 communities 	<p>FL providers have improved skills and a broader range of relevant resources to support their programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of participants at training • # of participants at workshops • Training & workshop materials • Level of satisfaction of participants • Feedback from participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project records • Evaluation forms from participants • Focus groups
<p>Objective 2 Develop culturally relevant resources to support family literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Books in the Home</i> program • Annotated bibliography 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and type of resources produced • # of resources distributed • Feedback on evaluation forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project records • Feedback forms in each resource • Evaluation forms

Evaluation

What should we do with the findings?

Many people will be interested in the findings: the funders, people in the project, people in the community, our MLA. We should try to share our information with as many people as possible.

Summarize

People don't have time to go through many pages of information. We can make it easier for them by summarizing our findings so that they have to read only one or two pages.

Share the findings with our funders

It's important to let our funders know how successful our project was. That way they'll be more likely to give us funding again in the future. We can put the findings into a report, or develop a presentation.



Don't forget the people who gave us the information

People often complain that they answered lots of questions, but they never hear back from the people who asked them. We have to make sure to share a copy of our findings with the people who were part of the evaluation.

Evaluation

Writing a report

It doesn't take very long to write a short, simple report. We can include all the information we've collected. Here are some ideas of things to include in a report.

- A background to the project, including the need for this project
- The goals and objectives
- The outcomes of the project
- A description of the project, such as
 - The number of sessions in the project
 - The number of sessions we ran each week
 - The number of families who participated in each session
 - The number of different families who came to the project overall
 - Examples of the kinds of activities we did
 - Photographs we took during the project (you may need permission to use them in a public document)
- Information from the evaluation
- People or organizations that supported the project

For more information, or for help to evaluate your literacy project, contact:

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