

Evaluation

A Systematic Approach

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Chapter 1: What Is Program Evaluation and Why Is It Needed?

What is Program Evaluation?

- Evaluation is usually focused on social interventions.
- Can be used in a variety of sectors
 - Politics
 - Advertising
 - Government work

Why Is Program Evaluation Needed?

- Ensuring that the program meets outcomes
- Main tasks of program evaluation:
 - Assess the effectiveness of social programs
 - Identify the factors that drive or undermine their effectiveness

Why Systematic Evaluation?

- The relativity of program effects
- Difficulty in identifying program effects brief
- Confirmation bias: the tendency to see things in ways that favor preexisting beliefs

Systematic Program Evaluation

- **Program evaluation:** applying social research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs
- Peter H. Rossi was a pioneer in the field.

Application of Social Research Methods

(1 of 2)

- The concept of evaluation entails:
 - A description of the performance of the entity being evaluated
 - Some standards or criteria for judging that performance

The Effectiveness of Social Programs

(2 of 2)

- A program evaluation generally involves assessing one or more of five domains:
 - (a) the need for the program
 - (b) its design and theory
 - (c) its implementation and service delivery
 - (d) its outcome and impact
 - (e) its efficiency

Adapting to the Political and Organizational Context

- **Evaluation sponsor:** person who commissions the evaluation
- **Stakeholders:** individuals, groups, or organizations with a significant interest in how well a program is working.

Influencing Social Action to Improve Social Conditions

(1 of 2)

- Purpose of an evaluation:
 - Provide useful answers to questions about a program
 - To influence action

Influencing Social Action to Improve Social Conditions

(2 of 2)

- **Demonstration programs:** social intervention projects designed to test the value of an innovative program concept.
- The findings are significant because of what they reveal about the program concept and how promising it is

The Central Role of Evaluation Questions

(1 of 3)

- The Purpose of the Evaluation:
 - Help management improve a program
 - Support advocacy by proponents or critics
 - Gain knowledge about the program's effects
 - Provide input for decisions
 - Respond to political pressures

The Central Role of Evaluation Questions

(2 of 3)

- The Evaluator-Stakeholder Relationship:
 - Decision-makers, Program sponsors, Evaluation sponsors, Target participants, Program managers, Program staff, Program competitors, Contextual stakeholders, Evaluation and research community.

The Central Role of Evaluation Questions

(2 of 3)

- The Evaluator-Stakeholder Relationship
 - Independent evaluation
 - Participatory or collaborative evaluation
 - Empowerment evaluation

The Central Role of Evaluation Questions

(3 of 3)

- Criteria for Program Performance
 - Performance criterion
 - Professional standards
 - Specific program objectives

The Central Role of Evaluation Questions

(3 of 3)

EXHIBIT 1-C

MANY CRITERIA MAY BE RELEVANT
TO PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

The standards by which program performance may be judged in an evaluation include the following:

The needs or wants of the target population

Stated program goals and objectives

Professional standards

Customary practice; norms for other programs

Legal requirements

Ethical or moral values; social justice, equity

Past performance; historical data

Targets set by program managers

Expert opinion

Preintervention baseline levels for the target population

Conditions expected in the absence of the program (counterfactual)

Cost or relative cost

The Five Domains of Evaluation Questions and Methods

(1 of 7)

- Need for the program
- Program theory and design
- Program process
- Program impact
- Program efficiency

The Five Domains of Evaluation Questions and Methods

(2 of 7)

- Need for the Program: Needs Assessment
 - First step in planning a new program
 - Provide guidance for improvement

The Five Domains of Evaluation Questions and Methods

(3 of 7)

- Assessment of Program Theory and Design
 - Must reflect valid assumptions about the nature of the problem
 - Must represent a feasible approach
 - Often in the form of a logic model

The Five Domains of Evaluation Questions and Methods

(4 of 7)

- Assessment of Program Process
 - Process evaluation or an implementation assessment
 - Program monitoring
 - Outcome monitoring

The Five Domains of Evaluation Questions and Methods

(5 of 7)

- Effectiveness of the Program: Impact Evaluation
 - Gauged by the change it produces in outcomes
 - Asks whether the desired outcomes were actually attained

The Five Domains of Evaluation Questions and Methods

(6 of 7)

- Cost Analysis and Efficiency Assessment
 - Cost analysis
 - Efficiency assessment
 - Cost- benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis

The Five Domains of Evaluation Questions and Methods

(7 of 7)

- The Interplay Among the Evaluation Domains
 - Implementation failure
 - Theory failure