

APPROACHES OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

1. 5 common approaches of program evaluation:

- Proactive evaluation
 - Proactive evaluation takes place before a program is designed.
 - It assists program planners to make decisions about what type of program is needed.
 - The major purpose is to provide input to decisions about how best to develop a program in advance of the planning stage.
 - Proactive evaluation places the evaluator as an adviser, providing evidence about
 - What is known about policy development.
 - What format of program is needed.
 - How an organization may be changed to make it more effective.
 - It provides leaders 'just in time' advice for making
 - Key decisions which affect the future or
 - Even survival of an organization
 - Major types which are consistent with this approach include
 - Need assessment or need analysis
 - Research review.
 - Review of best practice, and the creation of benchmarks.
- Clarificative evaluation
 - Clarificative evaluation concentrates on clarifying the internal structure and functioning of a program or a policy.
 - It refers to the causal mechanisms, which are understood to link program activities with intended outcomes.
 - This is sometimes described as the theory or logic of a program.
 - The needs to outline or define the logic arise when a program has not been fully specified or described, even though it is operation.
 - Clarificative evaluation can occur

- When there is pressure for developer to implement an intervention without an opportunity to think through its underlying structure and rationale.
- Or when those responsible for delivering a program are in conflict over aspect of its design.
- The feature that differentiate program planning from Clarificative Evaluation is that
 - In the latter, the collection and analysis of data are essential
 - Generally it involves the use of interview, observation and document analysis.
- Major types consistent with this approach include
 - Logic development or evaluability assessment
 - Accreditation
- Interactive evaluation
 - Interactive evaluation provides information about
 - Delivery or implementation of a program
 - Selected component/element or activities
 - It can be concerned with the
 - Documentation or incremental improvement of an innovation or
 - Establishing what is happening to help staff to understand more fully how and why a program operates in a given way.
 - This form of evaluation supports programs which are constantly evolving and changing.
 - Evaluator working within this approach provide information oriented toward improving the program; there is therefore, a strong formative flavor.
 - Major types consistent with this approach include
 - Responsive evaluation
 - Action research
 - Developmental evaluation
 - Empowerment evaluation

- Monitoring evaluation
 - It is appropriate when a program is well established and on-going
 - The program may be on
 - Single site or
 - May be delivered at several sites, remote from senior management
 - Staffs are aware of
 - Specified goals or intentions
 - Have identified program target and
 - Implementation is taking place
 - There is usually need for managers to have an
 - Indication of the success or
 - Otherwise of the program or one or more of its components.
 - Evaluations within this form are likely to be management driven.
 - This is likely to be linked to the expenditure of program funds
 - Evaluators are likely to be internally located in large scale organization
 - Major types consistent with this approach include
 - Component analysis
 - Developed performance assessment
 - System analysis
- Impact evaluation
 - It is used to assess the impact of settled program
 - Typical approaches include the
 - Extent and level of attainment of specified objectives
 - Determination of the level of performance on simple outcome indicators or
 - Examining both intended and unintended outcomes
 - If the intention of the evaluation is to make a decision about the merit or worth of the program
 - Evaluation of this forms are described as summative evaluation.
 - While the emphasis in summative evaluation is on outcomes

- A good summative evaluation may also include a review of the implementation characteristics.
- The program is then known as process-outcomes evaluation.
- Major types consistent with this approach include
 - Objective-based evaluation
 - Process-outcomes studies
 - Need-based evaluation
 - Goal-free evaluation
 - Performance audit
- Summary:
 - Major approaches of program evaluation are
 - Proactive approach takes place before a program is designed.
 - Clarificative approach refers to the casual mechanism, which link program activities with intended outcomes.
 - Interactive approach which provides information oriented towards improving the program and has strong formative flavor.
 - Monitoring approach is likely to be management driven.
 - Impact approach is used to assess the impact of a settled program and has summative flavor.

2. Steps in program evaluation:

- Step 1 – Engaging Stakeholders
 - Fostering input, participation, and power sharing among those persons who have an investment in the conduct of evaluation and the findings.
 - It is especially important to engage primary users of the evaluation.
 - To ensure their perspective are understood.
 - To address stakeholders concerns and values.
 - 3 important stakeholder groups:
 - Those involved in program evaluation.
 - Those served or affected by the program.
 - Primary users of the evaluation.
- Step 2: Describing the program

- Scrutinizing the features of the program being evaluated, including its purpose and place in a larger context.
- Convey the missions and objectives of the program being evaluated.
- Details of program goals and strategies.
- Description includes information regarding the way the program was intended to function and the way that it actually was implemented.
- Program description includes:
 - Need
 - Expected effects
 - Activities
 - Resources
 - Stage of development
 - Context
 - Logic model
- Step 3: Focusing the Evaluation Design
 - Planning in advance where the evaluation is headed and what steps will be taken.
 - Focus is important to assess the issues of greatest concern to stakeholders while using time and resources as efficiently as possible.
 - Items to consider:
 - Purpose
 - Users
 - Use
 - Questions
 - Methods
 - Agreements
- Step 4: Gathering credible evidence
 - The evaluation should strive to collect information that will convey a well-rounded picture of the program so that the evaluation's primary users.
 - Depends on the questions being posed and the motives for asking them.

- Having credible evidence strengthens evaluation judgement and the recommendations that follow from them.
- Aspects of evidence gathering that typically affect perceptions of credibility include:
 - Indicators e.g. exam result
 - Sources e.g. contents
 - Quality e.g. ISO certification
 - Quantity e.g. number of student pass
 - Logistic e.g. facilities
- Step 5: Justifying Conclusion
 - Making claims regarding the programs that are warranted on the basis of data that have been compared against pertinent and defensible ideas of merit, worth or significance.
 - Conclusions are justified when they are linked to the evidence gathered and consistent with the agreed on values of stakeholders.
- Step 6: Ensuring use and sharing lessons learned
 - Ensuring that:
 - The stakeholders are aware of the evaluation procedures and findings.
 - The findings are considered in decisions or actions that affect the program (i.e. findings use)
 - Those who participated in the evaluation have had a beneficial experiences (i.e. process use)