

DESIGNING & CONDUCTING AN EVALUATION PLAN

1. Introduction:

- Management often wants to know everything about their products, services or programs.
- Limited resources usually force managers to priorities what they need to know to make current decisions.
- Regarding evaluation of a program, if a plan is not negotiated what to/ why need, how to get, when to get, etc. an unsatisfactory practice is likely to be the outcome

2. Objectives of the topic:

- To recognize the key dimensions in negotiating an evaluation plan
- To identify the issues concerning the design and conduction of a program evaluation plan.
- To evaluate the importance of negotiating an evaluation plan

3. Key dimensions in negotiating an evaluation plan

- Negotiation requires a set of social skills on the part of evaluator
- Fundamental to ideal of negotiation is the concept that evaluator perform a service to clients who require answers to specific questions about a given program or policy
- Evaluators must be prepared to acknowledgement the interest framework of the clients, so that the knowledge they produce has salience to ensuing decisions about the evaluation under review
- Evaluation is not something the evaluator does without reference to stakeholders, and in particular the clients those who can be regarded as the primary audience for the study
- Attention must be given to client involvement in the planning stage of an evaluation, before any data collection or analysis take place.
- There must be reasonable agreement between evaluator and client about the broad parameters of the evaluation so that the parties are clear as how it will proceed, and aware of what the evaluation might realistically be expected to achieve.

- While evaluation plan can have a variety of approaches, we need to have a framework or to consider some key issues for designing and conducting an evaluation plan

4. Key issues in designing and conducting an evaluation plan

- Specifying the evaluation
 - What the objectives/focus of the evaluation?
 - How was it developed?
 - How long has it been in existence?
 - What is the nature of the evaluation?
 - Policy/program/organization/product
- Orientation of purposes of the evaluation
 - Why the evaluation being done?
 - Synthesis of the information to aid program development
 - Clarification of the program
 - Improvement of the implementation of a program
 - Monitoring program outcomes
 - Determining program worth
- Client/primary audiences
 - Who will receive and use the information
 - To whom will the findings be directed
- Resources
 - What human and material resources are available to undertake the evaluation
- Evaluation focuses
 - Which elements of the program will need to be investigated?
 - Program context, program design, program implementation, program outcomes or a combination

5. Primary audience and negotiating

- Primary audience is an individual or group that is most likely to use the knowledge, in form of findings, conclusion or recommendation, produced by the evaluation

- Primary audience is not necessarily identical to the commissioners of evaluation group that initiates and provide resources for the evaluation
- Identification of primary audiences implies that it is difficult for a given evaluation to provide information needs of a wide range of stakeholders
- Key individual who has influence in an organization during the course of an evaluation can significantly effect the utilization of evaluation findings
- However, on the basis of working cooperatively with clients in organization we have also found that there is often key small group within an organization for which the evaluation has particular meaning
- Thus an individual or a small group of individuals may have influence over the decisions relating to the program under review and their involvement is vital during the negotiation stage of the evaluation.

6. Importance of an evaluation plan

- If a plan is not negotiated, an unsatisfactory evaluation is practice is likely to be the outcome

7. Conclusion

- To design and conduct an evaluation plan one should consider the
 - Object of evaluation
 - Purpose of evaluation
 - Audiences
 - Negotiation and client involvement
 - Key questions
 - Data management
 - Time line and resources implications
 - Reporting
- The issues should be turned into a set of evaluation questions which serve to focus the evaluation more and provide a direction for the collection and analysis of data