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Module 5:
Considering the
Evaluation Approach

Introduction

- General Approaches to Evaluation
- Challenges Going Forward

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General Approaches to Evaluation

- Evaluation approach: "general way of looking at or conceptualizing evaluation, which often incorporates a philosophy and a set of values" (Duigen, 2007)
- All approaches require the same planning steps

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Evaluation Approaches

- Prospective Evaluation
- Evaluability Assessment
- Goal-based Evaluation
- Goal-Free Evaluation
- Multisite Evaluation
- Cluster Evaluation
- Social Assessment
- Environmental and Social Assessment
- Participatory Evaluation
- Outcome Mapping
- Rapid Assessment
- Evaluation Synthesis and Meta-evaluation
- Emerging Approaches

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Prospective Evaluation

- Evaluation in which a proposed program is reviewed before it begins (ex ante)
- Attempts to:
  - analyze its likely success
  - predict its cost
  - analyze alternative proposals and projections

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Types of GAO Forward Looking Questions

Question Type	Critique others analysis	Do analysis themselves
Anticipate the Future	1. How well has the government projected future needs, costs, and consequences?	3. What are future needs, costs, and consequences?
Improve Future Actions	2. What is the potential success of this proposal?	4. What course of action has the best potential for success?

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Activities for Prospective Evaluations

- Contextual analysis of the intervention
- Review of evaluation studies on similar interventions and synthesis of the findings and lessons from the past
- Prediction of likely success or failure, given a future context that is not too different from the present, and suggestions on strengthening proposed intervention if the decision makers want it to go forward

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Evaluability Assessment

- A preliminary study to determine whether an evaluation would be useful and feasible
- Clarifies the goals and objectives, identifies data resources, pinpoints gaps, identifies data that need to be developed
- May redefine the purpose and methods
- Can save time and help avoid costly mistakes

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Steps in Evaluability Assessment

- Reviewing materials that define and describe the intervention
- Identifying modifications to intervention
- Interviewing managers and staff on their perceptions of the intervention's goals and objectives
- Interviewing stakeholders on their perceptions of the intervention's goals and objectives
- Developing or redefining a theory of change model
- Identifying sources of data
- Identifying people and organizations that can implement possible recommendations from the evaluation

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Advantages and Challenges

- Advantages:
  - helps distinguish between potential implementation failure and design failure
  - increases stakeholder investment in the intervention
  - clarifies measures of program performance
  - clarifies understanding of program
  - increases visibility and accountability of intervention
- Challenges
  - can be time consuming
  - can be costly if evaluation team does not work well together

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Goal-Based Evaluation

- A goal-based (or objectives-based) evaluation:
  - measures the extent to which an intervention has attained its objectives
  - focuses on the stated **outcomes**
  - is used by most development organization project evaluation systems

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Criticism

- Focuses on stated outcomes, misses implicit goals

- Does not look for unintended effects, both positive and negative

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Goal-Free Evaluations

- The evaluator deliberately avoids becoming aware of the program goals
- Predetermined goals are not permitted to narrow the focus of the evaluation study
- Focuses on actual outcomes rather than intended program outcomes
- Goal-free evaluator has minimal contact with the program manager and staff
- Increases the likelihood that unanticipated side effects will be noted

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Multisite Evaluations

- An evaluation of a set of interventions that share a common mission, strategy, and target population
- Considers:
  - what is common to all the interventions
  - which features vary and why
  - differences in outcomes based on those variations

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Advantage of Multisite

- Stronger design than an evaluation of a single intervention in a single location
- Has a larger sample and more diverse set of intervention situations
- Stronger evidence of intervention effectiveness

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Challenges of Multisite

- Need standardized data collection
- Requires well-trained staff, access to all sites, and sufficient information ahead of time to design the data collection instruments
- Requires understanding of implementation differences within each intervention and their communities

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Cluster Evaluations

- Generally look at groups of similar or related interventions – "clusters"
- Focus is on common missions, strategy, and target populations
- Similar to multi-site evaluations but focus on what happened across the clusters and common themes and lessons learned
- Information reported only in aggregate

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Cluster Evaluations (cont.)

- Stakeholder participation is key
- NOT concerned with generalizability or replicability
- More likely to use qualitative approaches
- Disadvantages:
  - Do not show results for individual sites or unplanned variation
  - Show only aggregate information

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Social Assessment

- Looks at various structures, processes, and changes within a group or community
- Brings relevant social information into the decision-making process for program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Used to ensure that social impacts of development projects are taken into account

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Social Assessment (cont.)

- Involves stakeholders to assure that intended beneficiaries find project goals acceptable
- Assesses adverse impacts and determines how to mitigate
- Stakeholder consensus on key outcome measures

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Common Questions during Social Assessment

- Who are the stakeholders? Are the objectives of the project consistent with their needs, interests, and capacities?
- What social and cultural factors affect the ability of stakeholders to participate in, or benefit from, the interventions proposed?

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Common Questions (cont.)

- What is the impact of the project or program on the various stakeholders, particularly on women and vulnerable groups? What are the social risks that might affect the success of the project or program?
- What institutional arrangements are needed for participation and project delivery? Are there adequate plans for building the capacity required for each?

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Tools and Approaches

- Stakeholder analysis
- Gender analysis
- Participatory rural appraisal
- Observation, interviews, focus groups
- Mapping, analysis of tasks, wealth ranking
- Workshops: objective-oriented project planning, team building

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Environment and Social Assessment

- Environment assessment was separate from social, now hand-in-hand
- Environmental not restricted to specific "environmental" projects
- Environment and Social (E&S) assessments addresses the impact of development on these issues
- Development organizations are recognizing the role that local people must play in the design and implementation of interventions for the environment and natural resources

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E&S Assessment (cont.)

- E&S assessment may be the sole purpose of the exercise or it may be embedded in the project evaluation
- Many interventions may have environmental impacts
- Most development organizations adhere to core E&S standards
- Must evaluate potential impact, mitigation strategies, and their implementation and impact

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E&S Guidelines/ Standards/Strategies

- Used to help assess the impact of the intervention
- Sources include:
  - Equator Principles
  - ISO 14031
  - Sustainable Development Strategies: A Resource Book

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Equator Principles

- Set of principles to assist financial institutions in determining, assessing, and managing environmental and social risk in project financing
- Web site:
  - http://www.equator-principles.com/index.shtml

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ISO 14031

- Set of international standards for environment management
- Assists by establishing processes for:
  - selecting indicators, collecting and analyzing data, assessing information against environmental performance criteria, reporting and communicating, and periodically reviewing and improving this process
- Web site:
  - http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=23149

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Sustainable Development Strategies: A Resource Book

- Published by OECD and UNDP
- Contains ideas and case studies on the main tasks in building processes for sustainable development at the national or local levels, as well as for international organizations
- Web site:
  - http://www.nssd.net/res_book.html

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Participatory Evaluation

- Representatives of agencies and stakeholders (including beneficiaries) work together in designing, carrying out, interpreting, and reporting an evaluation
- Departs from the audit ideal of independence
- Departs from scientific detachment
- Partnership based on dialogue and negotiation

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Participatory Basic Principles

- Evaluation involves building participants' skills
- Participants commit to the evaluation and make decisions and draw own conclusions
- Participants ensure evaluation focuses on methods and results they consider important
- People work together promoting group unity
- Participants understand and find meaningful all aspects of the evaluation
- Self-accountability is highly valued
- Evaluators/Facilitators act as resources

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Characteristics of Participatory Evaluation

- More meetings
- Group decisions
- Participants may:
  - be asked to keep diaries or journals
  - interview others or conduct focus groups
  - conduct field workshops
  - write the report

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Comparison of Participatory and Traditional

- Participatory
  - participant focus and ownership
  - focus on learning
  - flexible design
  - more informal methods
  - evaluators are facilitators

- Traditional
  - donor focus and ownership
  - focus on accountability and judgment
  - predetermined design
  - formal methods
  - Evaluators are experts

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Participatory Process

- No single right way
- Commitment to the principles of participation and inclusion
  - those closest to the situation have valuable and necessary information
- Develop strategies to develop trust and honest communication
  - information sharing and decision-making
  - create "even ground"

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Challenges of Participatory

- Concern that evaluation will not be objective
- Those closest to the intervention may not be able to see what is actually happening if it is not what they expect
- Participants may be fearful of raising negative views
- Time consuming
- Clarifying roles, responsibilities, and process
- Skilled facilitation is required
- Just-in-time training

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Benefits of Participatory

- Increased buy-in, less resistance
- Results are more likely to be used
- Increased sustainability
- Increased credibility of results
- More flexibility in approaches
- Can be systematic way of learning from experience

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Outcome Mapping

- Focuses on one specific type of result: outcomes as behavioral change
- A process to engage citizens in understanding their community
- A method for collecting and plotting information on the distribution, access and use of resources within a community
- A tool for participatory evaluation

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Boundary Partners

- Individuals, groups, and organizations who interact with projects, program, and policy at different tiers of intervention
- Those who may have the most opportunities to influence change
- Outcome mapping assumes boundary partners control change

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What Boundary Partners Do

- Control change–hinder or enhance
- Provide access to resources, ideas, or opportunities (or not)
- Facilitate or block alignment

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Outcome Mapping and Other Approaches

- Outcome mapping does not attempt to replace the more traditional forms of evaluation
- Outcome mapping supplements other forms by focusing on behavioral change

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Rapid Assessment

- Bridge between formal and informal data collection
- Intended to be quick while reasonably accurate
- Uses a systematic strategy to obtain essential information
- Best for looking at processes and issues
- Used when there are time and resource constraints or lack of baseline data

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Rapid Assessment Approach

- Observation of the intervention within its setting
- Excellent listening and note-taking skills needed
- Use more than one source of information
- Can use the same data collection methods as others, only on smaller scale

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Evaluation Synthesis

- A useful approach when many evaluations of similar interventions have already been conducted
- Enables evaluator to look across interventions addressing similar issue or theme to identify commonalities
- Useful when you want to know "on average, does it work?"

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Evaluation Synthesis should Include:

- Clearly stated procedures for identifying evaluations and defining scope
- Transparent quality criteria
- Procedures for applying quality criteria
- Citations for all evaluations reviewed
- Summary descriptions of each evaluation included and synthesis and findings on the themes
- Gaps or limitations of the synthesis

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Advantages and Challenges of Evaluation Synthesis

- Advantages
  - uses available research
  - avoids original data collection
  - is cost effective
- Challenges
  - locating all the relevant studies
  - obtaining permission to use the data
  - same group may have done several studies
  - developing a credible measure of quality

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Meta-evaluation

- Meta-evaluation is expert review of one or more evaluations against professional quality standards

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Utilization-focused Evaluation

- Evaluation judged by its utility and how it is actually used
- Evaluators identify and organize decision-makers who use the information from the evaluation

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Empowerment Evaluation

- Use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-determination
- Beyond participatory evaluation, people create solutions from their own experience

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Realist Evaluation

- A "species of theory-driven evaluation" (Pawson & Tilley, 2004)
- Related to theory of change because the TOC is a hypothesis of social betterment
- May also be called Realistic Evaluation

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Inclusive Evaluation

- Involves the least advantaged (who have been traditionally underrepresented) as part of a systematic investigation of the merit or worth of an intervention

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Beneficiary Assessment

- Strong involvement of the ultimate client, the project beneficiaries
- Beneficiaries are key players so they gain ownership and produce needed and desired change

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Horizontal Evaluation

- Combines internal assessment with external review by peers
- Often used to learn about and improve evaluation methodologies that are under development

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Challenges Going Forward

- MDGs have major implications for development evaluation
- Shift from evaluating project goals and objectives to evaluating MDGs
- Should also shift from development organizations doing the evaluating to developing countries receiving aid doing the evaluating

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A Final Note….

"Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted." -- Albert Einstein

Questions?

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