

4. TYPES OF EVALUATION



Throughout your project, you will use different types of evaluation.

STAGE 1: FORMATIVE EVALUATION

WHEN TO USE:

- during the development of a new programme; or,
- when an existing programme: 1) is being modified; 2) has problems with no obvious solutions; or, 3) is being used in a new setting, with a new population, or to target a new problem or behaviour.

WHAT IT SHOWS:

- whether proposed messages are likely to reach, to be understood by, and to be accepted by the people you are trying to serve (e.g., shows strengths and weaknesses of proposed written materials);
- how people in the target population get information (e.g., which newspapers they read or radio stations they listen to);
- whom the target population respects as a spokesperson (e.g., a celebrity or local dignitary); and,
- details that programme developers may have overlooked about materials, strategies, or mechanisms for distributing information (e.g., that the target population has difficulty reaching the location where training classes are held).

WHY IT IS USEFUL:

- it allows programmes to make revisions before the full effort begins; and,
- it maximises the likelihood that the programme will succeed.

STAGE 2: PROCESS EVALUATION

WHEN TO USE:

- as soon as the programme begins operation.

WHAT IT SHOWS:

- how well a programme is working (e.g., how many people are participating in the programme and how many people are not).

WHY IT IS USEFUL:

- it identifies early any problems that occur in reaching the target population; and,
- it allows programmes to evaluate how well their plans, procedures, activities and materials are working, and to make adjustments if necessary.

STAGE 3: SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

WHEN TO USE:

- after the programme has made contact with at least one person or one group of people in the target population.

WHAT IT SHOWS:

- the degree to which a programme is meeting its intermediate goals; and,
- changes in the target population's knowledge, attitudes and beliefs.

WHY IT IS USEFUL:

- it allows management to modify materials or move resources from a non-productive to a productive area of the programme; and,
- it tells programmes whether they are moving towards achieving their goals.

STAGE 4: IMPACT EVALUATION

WHEN TO USE:

- for ongoing programmes (e.g., science education classes offered each year), at appropriate intervals; and,
- for one-time programmes (e.g., a once-off STEM public engagement event), when the programme is complete.

WHAT IT SHOWS:

- the degree to which the programme has met its ultimate goals.

WHY IT IS USEFUL:

- it allows programmes to learn from their successes and failures, and to incorporate what they have learned into their next project; and,
- it provides evidence of success for use in future requests for funding.

