Chapter 8

STAGE ONE

EVALUATION PREPARATION

This section contains:

1. The Actors Involved in Evaluation Preparation

2. The Core Preparation Decisions and How They Relate to Each Other
   - *Evaluation Objectives*
   - *Audience*
   - *Type of Evaluation*
   - *Evaluator's Role*
   - *Evaluation Approaches*
   - *Evaluation Scope*
   - *Type of Evaluator*
   - *Timing of the Evaluation*
   - *Budget*

3. Length of the Evaluation Preparation Process

INTRODUCTION

"The first step to getting the things you want out of life is this: Decide what you want."

- BEN STEIN

Evaluation Preparation is part of the conflict transformation project design process.

Evaluation preparation is part of the conflict transformation project design process. By making the core decisions at this stage, it not only aids the proposal process by providing clear answers to the evaluation section within donor proposal forms but also enables the project budget to incorporate a reasonably accurate financial projection to fund the evaluation. Making key decisions now also saves time later, when the project is underway, since these decisions inform many of the evaluation terms of reference. Most importantly, it reinforces to the project team the areas where more information would allow for improved decisionmaking and the value of continuous learning.

Preparing an evaluation is much like designing a conflict transformation project. Start with what the project team wants to achieve and for whom, then address the practicalities of how, when, who, and at what cost. As illustrated on page 99, Evaluation Preparation Decision Flowchart, the decisions are interdependent such that changing one affects many of the others.

Evaluation preparation starts with determining what the team wants to learn from an evaluation. The outcome of this deliberation will be a set of evaluation objectives that will achieve the learning goal. This decision about what the team wants to learn is often tied very closely to who the audience is for the evaluation. In some situations, perhaps as a result of donor requirements or organizational needs, an agency may choose to start the evaluation preparation process with determining the audience first and then shifting to the evaluation objectives.

Once it has been determined why the team is doing the evaluation and who is the primary audience, other more practical decisions can be made: evaluation type, evaluator role, methods, type of evaluator, and timing. Finally, it is important to ensure that the budget is adequate for the process that has been designed. Very often, the development of the evaluation budget functions as a reality check requiring the organization to revisit earlier decisions. The two most common parts of the evaluation process to reconsider in terms of their impact on the budget are the evaluation objectives and the methods. Leaving the financial decisions until the core evaluation design decisions have been made enables greater creativity, which can be beneficial since it provides time for deeper reflections on what is truly needed by the program.

The benefits of making these core evaluation decisions during the project design stage are immediate. Most donor proposal formats require an explanation of the intended evaluation. Much of that explanation will come as a result of working through the decisionmaking flowchart. In turn, the project budget will accurately reflect the financial needs of the evaluation.

Who should be involved in the evaluation preparation?

Without question, the project team must lead the decisionmaking in the evaluation preparation. If the evaluation is to contribute to learning and improvement it must be grounded in the realities of the project, the organization, and those intent on learning. Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation (DM&E) Technical Assistants are helpful in providing the pros, cons, and ramifications of different options within each decision. The outcomes of these conversations need to be incorporated into the proposal and budget process; hence, including proposal writers in the process is also helpful.

If the evaluation is to contribute to learning and improvement it must be grounded in the realities of the project, the organization and those intent on learning.

Another option is to hire an evaluator whose engagement would start at the project design phase. Ideally, this would be the same person who would later return to conduct the evaluation(s). This person's role could include any or all of the following:

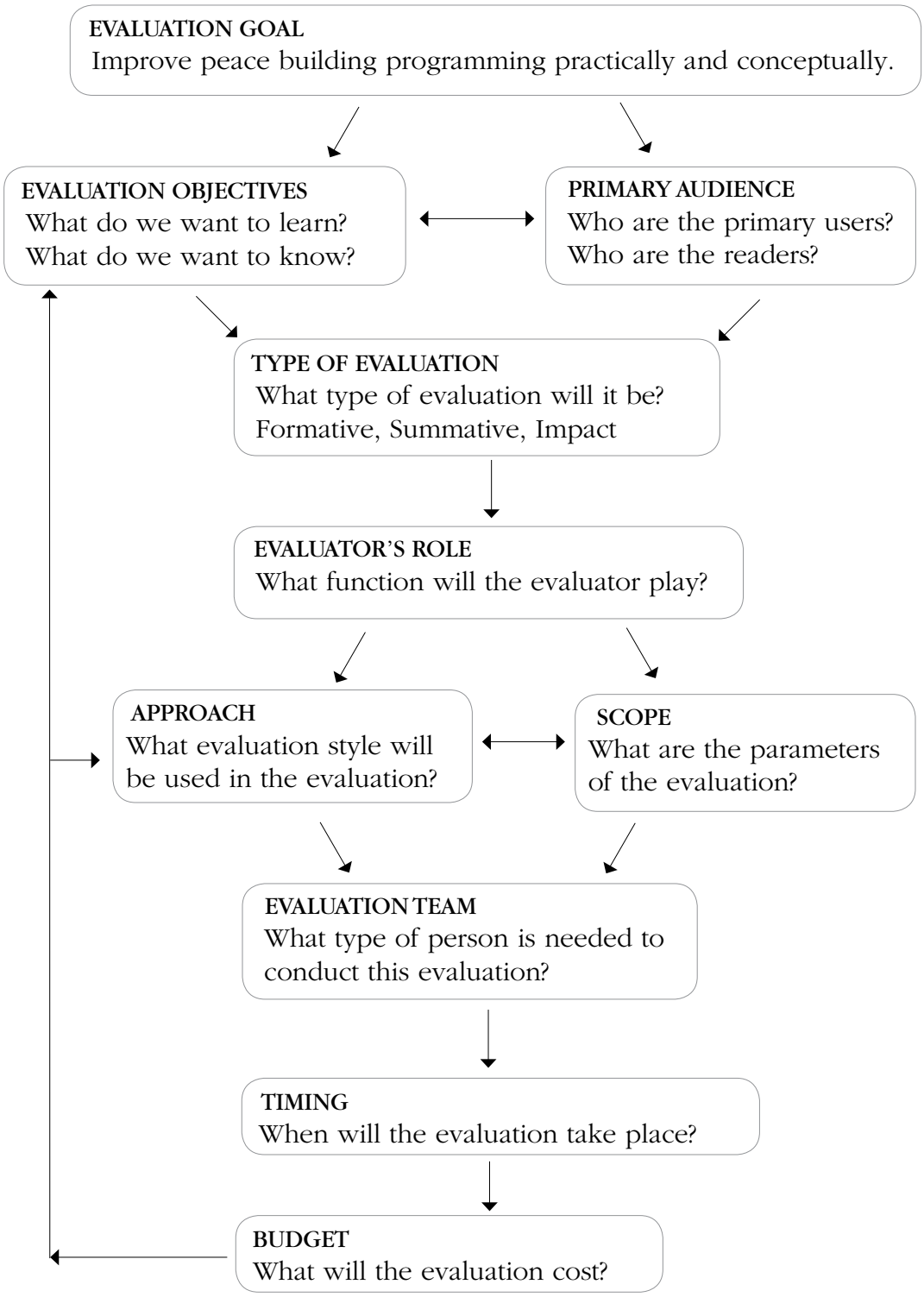
- Assisting the project team in making the evaluation preparation decisions.
- Contributing to the project logic development, indicators, and means of verification.
- Establishing the monitoring system and training staff in its implementation.
- Conducting the baseline.
- Conducting a mid-term (formative) evaluation. More information on formative evaluations may be found on page 110 of this chapter.
- Conducting a final (summative) evaluation. More information on summative evaluations may be found on page 110 of this chapter.

Preparation for the evaluation occurs in the project design stage

When does the evaluation preparation occur?

Preparation for the evaluation occurs in the project design stage. The decisions made should be specific enough to provide direction while remaining flexible enough to adapt to changing needs as the project progresses. These decisions will be reviewed and altered, if necessary, when the evaluation is implemented.

Evaluation Preparation Decision Flow Chart



I. DECISION: EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

What do we want to learn?

There are many different areas in which an evaluation can facilitate greater learning. Selecting the areas for learning is part of the process of determining the evaluation objectives. An evaluation objective is the criteria by which a project will be evaluated. These objectives can range from the traditional, such as identifying results, to the less traditional, such as determining if the activities of a project are in alignment with the organizational vision. Spending time identifying what information the project management needs to inform decisions, improve future performance, and understand more deeply how and why the project is effecting change sets the stage for an evaluation to contribute to the organization and its mission.

An evaluation objective is the criteria by which a project will be evaluated.

In some cases, there may be donor requirements that need to be included in the evaluation objectives. Frequently, donor requirements can be modified or expanded to include other issues by discussing options with the donor.

What are the existing criteria or frameworks we can use to guide our thinking?

The Conflict Transformation Evaluation Framework[13] used in this manual compiles the possible evaluation objectives and is grouped into three main themes. The first theme explores why and how the agency is conducting this type of intervention. The second theme considers how well the intervention was implemented, and the third covers the results and how long they will last.

Conflict Transformation Evaluation Framework

Theme	Evaluation Objective
Why and how is the agency conducting this intervention?	Appropriateness Consideration Strategic Alignment
How well was the intervention implemented?	Management and Administration Cost Accountability Implementation Process Appraisal
What were the results of the intervention and how long will they last?	Output Identification Outcome Identification Impact Assessment Adaptability of Change

[13] Modified from *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions: Framing the State of Play* by Cheyanne Church and Julie Shouldice, (INCORE, 2002) [hereinafter "Church and Shouldice, *Framing the State of Play.*"]

An evaluation does not need to cover all evaluation objectives. Rather, the framework's "purpose is to offer stakeholders an instrument …to organize their thinking and constitute the aims, objectives and terms of" an evaluation.[14] Practitioners should also not feel limited by the framework, and if there are other objectives that might benefit learning, those should be utilized.

An evaluation does not need to cover all evaluation objectives.

An overview of two related concepts has been provided because there is a great likelihood that practitioners will come across them in their evaluation efforts. The first on page 105 is the OECD Development and Cooperation (DAC) criteria, which are widely used in the humanitarian field. Although called criteria, they can be used in the same way as evaluation objectives. How the five criteria relate to the Conflict Transformation Evaluation Framework is also described in that section.

The second concept, developed by the Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP), found on page 107, is specifically focused on evaluating a project's achievement towards peace writ large. Although also called criteria, these are of a slightly different nature than the DAC criteria because they cannot replace evaluation objectives. These criteria could be used as part of an evaluation whose objective is impact assessment if the definition of impact related to peace writ large. At the time of writing, the criteria are still in the testing stage, and one should check with RPP to get the most up-to-date rendition.

Can the evaluation objectives in the conflict transformation framework be explained further?

APPROPRIATENESS CONSIDERATION reviews whether the intervention strategy is the best for the situation and desired goal. Included in this objective is a review of the theory of change and whether the strategy is based on the needs or opportunities of the target population as determined by the conflict analysis.

This objective is useful for those operating in a rapidly changing environment who want external input into the relevance of their strategy. It also provides commentary on the quality of the conflict analysis and can be helpful in facilitating additional thinking on theories of change. Appropriateness consideration is most usefully included in a formative evaluation since readjustments are immediately possible, although there may be scenarios where it is valued in summative as well. To fully understand the effectiveness of a strategy, this objective should be paired, at the very least, with Outcome Identification.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT addresses whether the activities of an organization are in line with the organization's mission and principles.

[14] Church and Shouldice, *Framing the State of Play.*

For an organization to effect the change articulated by its mission, it must allocate all its resources and attention to that change rather than scattering its efforts among many different valuable but unrelated projects.

This objective helps project teams ensure that their work embraces the core principles of the implementing organization. If gender equality is considered a core principle of an organization, the evaluation would examine if that principle was being incorporated into the project. It also considers if projects are within the mandate of an organization. For instance, should an organization with a mission to reduce violent conflict start implementing projects on HIV/AIDS or girls education? This objective can also look at the country office level to see if the projects within one office are strategically aligned.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION considers how well the project was organized and run. It covers the supervision, communication, and implementation aspects of the program.

This objective helps provide input into better management systems to more effectively implement projects. It can be very useful as part of a formative evaluation for project teams that have not worked together previously or in offices that have recently been opened. It can also provide some input into why a project is not advancing the way it was expected.

COST ACCOUNTABILITY reviews the manner in which funds were utilized and accounted for by the organization. Depending on the conflict context, there will not always be an expectation of achieving the desired ends for the lowest cost.

Often reviewed along with the management and administration objective, cost accountability provides insight into financial decisions and processes. This objective looks at who has responsibility for financial decisions and how they affect the implementation of the project. It also considers whether other choices could be made that would avoid harm to the project yet save resources. Although there are overlapping elements between these two objectives, cost accountability should not be confused with a financial audit because it does not review technical accounting practices. This objective is useful for projects that are either extremely multi-faceted or highly dynamic, and require many project changes.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS APPRAISAL examines the quality of the conflict transformation techniques used in the implementation of the project. This objective considers the merits of the "process" utilized in the intervention. The process involved in doing a training, for instance, includes the agenda development, participant selection, and the training techniques used such as creating a safe space for learning, utilizing games to highlight key points, or providing information in different formats.

This is a valuable evaluation objective for a pilot project that is using an innovative model. It provides insights into the mechanics of what is working and what is not, and helps foster the ongoing development of the model. The benefits of this objective can be increased significantly if it is included in a formative evaluation. This objective is also useful if a model is being adapted to a new cultural context or the project staff members are still developing their skills.

OUTPUT IDENTIFICATION considers the immediate, often-tangible results of the activities undertaken. It tallies the number of "things" that have been produced by the project's work thus far. These things might include the number of people trained, the number of pamphlets printed, the number of mediation cases handled, or the number of radio minutes produced.

Donors, as part of their accountability requirements, often mandate this evaluation objective. It would rarely be the sole evaluation objective, however, since the information it provides would normally be insufficient to inform and shape decisionmaking. The exception would be a mid-term (formative) evaluation done so early in the project that outputs are all that can be realistically expected. Coupled with outcome identification (below), this objective can provide a great deal of useful information.

OUTCOME IDENTIFICATION explores the changes that result from the project's activities. These changes include shifts in processes as well as the unintended positive and negative effects. Examples of outcomes range from a decrease in violence to an increase in collaboration between communities.

This evaluation objective is highly informative for project teams both during and after a project. It provides data on the success of the project to date in terms of the changes achieved. If utilized in a formative evaluation, the timing of that evaluation should ensure that it is reasonable to expect outcome-level changes. It is commonly coupled with output identification.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT investigates the consequences or changes resulting from an intervention in the conflict situation or in a component of that situation. The scope of the impact assessment varies with the scale of the project – from "peace writ large" down to a local community – and should include the unintended positive and negative effects. This assessment often involves identifying the transfer[15] of changes from the target group to others.

Impact assessments are difficult to conduct and often require greater time and financial backing than other evaluation objectives. In the field of conflict transformation at the time of writing, few methodologies have

[15] For further information on the idea of transfer, see *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions, Part II: Emerging Practices & Theory* by Cheyanne Church and Julie Shouldice, (INCORE, 2003) [hereinafter "Church and Shouldice, *Part II.*"]

been developed to adequately answer the impact challenge. Adopting this evaluation objective will require that resources be allocated to allow for both new methodology development and the evaluation implementation. If successful, an impact assessment objective would be highly informative to the project team. This objective applies to summative and impact evaluations.

ADAPTABILITY OF CHANGE reviews whether the changes (outcomes or impact) created by the project can adapt over time to shifts in the context and to different stresses and demands. This objective implies more than sustainability of results throughout a phase of the conflict. Instead, it suggests that the results or changes should evolve appropriately to meet the demands of a new phase in the conflict.

This evaluation objective would have significant value for program design; however, as with impact assessment, it is a new area of evaluation whose methodologies have yet to be tested. If adaptability was to be the focus of an evaluation, sufficient resources to develop the methodology would need to be allocated. A much longer time period than the average project cycle would also need to be used.

Illustrated by *Ariv Russanto, Windi, Wahyu S., Ary WS.*
Creative team Search for Common Ground in Indonesia

Do we need to use all of the evaluation objectives in the framework?

It is not necessary to include all of the evaluation objectives in every evaluation. Project teams should select the ones that will help them improve the project. How many evaluation objectives are feasible is dependent on the size and scope of the program, the difficulty of data collection for each objective, the size of the budget, and the type and number of lines of inquiry included within each objective. Additional information on the lines of inquiry is outlined in Chapter 9 Evaluation Management page 142.

If the information cannot be utilized in any way, it is merely interesting, which indicates that this evaluation objective should be moved to the bottom of the priority list

Curious practitioners will often find all of the potential evaluation objectives interesting. At the end of a discussion about what the team wants to learn, the complete list of objectives may appear; however, evaluating all of them is often well beyond the financial means of the evaluation. One way to help decipher which objectives to keep is to ask, "Will the information resulting from inquiry into this evaluation objective be useful or just interesting?" If the information cannot be utilized in any way, it is merely interesting, which indicates that this evaluation objective should be moved to the bottom of the priority list. If the resulting information could effect changes in a project, then it is useful, and the evaluation objective should rise to the top of the priority list.

Consider, for instance, a project with a goal of decreasing violence against Roma in Ireland. One objective is to decrease negative stereotypes of Roma held by young Irish men. The project team has listed process implementation appraisal, strategic alignment, and outcome identification as its evaluation objectives, yet there are insufficient funds to thoroughly explore all three. Asking themselves which of these evaluation objectives would produce interesting or useful information can help to set priorities. This project will continue even if the results of the strategic alignment indicate it does not fall within the mandate of the organization. Understanding that nothing will change as a result of their review helps the project team remove strategic alignment from the list of evaluation objectives. The other two objectives will provide useful information and will be kept.

Advanced Concept

A Comparison: DAC Criteria & Conflict Transformation Framework

The Development and Cooperation Directorate of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD DAC) created the most widely used set of evaluation criteria in the humanitarian and development field. These criteria are utilized in the same way as the evaluation objectives in the Conflict Transformation Framework.

The table below includes the official definitions found in the OECD DAC Criteria column. Note that these are not the definitions of the evaluation objectives within the Conflict Transformation Framework. Since these criteria are sometimes referred to outside the humanitarian/development realm, the table below illustrates how the DAC Criteria relate to the Conflict Transformation Framework. This does not mean that the terms refer to the exact same concepts; instead, it shows where they are conceptually similar. In other words, "efficiency" does not translate exactly to "management and administration"; rather, those concepts are broadly aligned.

Strategic alignment and implementation process appraisal from the Conflict Transformation Framework are not included in the chart because there are no equivalent concepts in the DAC Criteria.

Distinguishing OECD DAC Criteria and Conflict Transformation Framework

OECD DAC[16] Criteria	***Conflict Transformation Framework***
RELEVANCE.The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.	*Appropriateness Consideration*
EFFECTIVENESS. The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.	*Output Identification Outcome Identification*
EFFICIENCY. A measure of how economically resource/inputs(funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.	*Cost Accountability Management & Administration*
IMPACTS. Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.	*Impact Assessment*
SUSTAINABILITY. The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.	*Adaptability of Change*

[16] Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Working Party on Aid Evaluation, *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management,* Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2002, http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf.

Five Criteria of Effectiveness for *Peace Writ Large*[17]

The Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) process produced five criteria of effectiveness (listed below) by which to assess, across a broad range of contexts and programming approaches, whether a program is (or is not) having meaningful impact at the level of "peace writ large." These criteria can be used in program planning to ensure that specific program goals are linked to the large and long-term goal of peace writ large. They can be used during program implementation to reflect on effectiveness and guide mid-course changes, and as a basis for evaluation after the program has been completed.

It is important to note that the criteria are in the process of being tested in terms of gathering data to confirm that they provide the right information for decisionmaking with regard to peace writ large.

1. ***The effort contributes to stopping a key driving factor of the war or conflict.*** *The program addresses people, issues, and dynamics that are key contributors to ongoing conflict.*

2. ***The effort contributes to a momentum for peace by causing participants and communities to develop their own peace initiatives in relation to critical elements of context analysis: what needs to be stopped, reinforcement of areas where people continue to interact in non-war ways, and regional and international dimensions of the conflict.*** *This criterion underlines the importance of "ownership" and sustainability of action and efforts to bring about peace, as well as creating momentum for peace, involving more people.*

3. ***The effort results in the creation or reform of political institutions to handle grievances in situations where such grievances do, genuinely, drive the conflict.*** *Peace practice is effective if it develops or supports institutions or mechanisms to address the specific inequalities, injustices and other grievances that cause and fuel a conflict. This criterion underlines the importance of moving beyond impacts at the individual or personal (attitudinal, material or emotional) level to the socio-political level. This criterion must be applied in conjunction with a context analysis identifying what the conflict is NOT about and what needs to be stopped. To reform or build institutions that are unrelated to the actual drivers of a specific conflict would be ineffective.*

[17] Taken from Reflecting on Peace Practice: Five Criteria of Effectiveness Working Paper, http://www.cdainc.com.

4. ***The effort prompts people increasingly to resist violence and provocations to violence.*** *One way of addressing and including key people who promote and continue tensions (e.g., warlords, spoilers) is to help more people develop the ability to resist the manipulation and provocations of these negative key people.*

5. ***The effort results in an increase in people's security and in their sense of security.*** *This criterion reflects positive changes both at the socio-political level (in people's public lives) and at the individual/personal level, as people gain a sense of security.*

These criteria can best be thought of as intermediate-level benchmarks of success applicable to the broad range of peace work being done.

THE CRITERIA ARE ADDITIVE: *The experience gathered through RPP suggests that the effectiveness criteria are additive. Peace efforts that meet more of them are more effective than those that accomplish fewer of the changes.*

II. DECISION: AUDIENCE

Who is the primary audience for the evaluation?

There are two audiences for every evaluation: users and readers. Users are those who will apply the findings and recommendations while readers are those who would be interested in the report to stay informed. Every evaluation must have a user, whereas readers are optional. Identifying the primary audience – the user – generally occurs in tandem with determining the evaluation objectives. One decision is dependent upon the other and, as such, it becomes a blended conversation.

It is common in these discussions to confuse the two groups since there may be as many as five or six different potential readers who would be interested in the evaluation findings, but generally no more than two users of an evaluation. Having more than two users is not impossible, but it may pull the evaluation team in too many directions to be feasible.

When preparing an evaluation, it is important to make a clear distinction between the two groups (users and readers). With regard to users, maintaining this distinction provides direction to the evaluation team. For

instance, knowing the user group helps the evaluators tailor the recommendations, highlight issues of key importance to that audience or select the language in which the final report should be written, such as Bahasa Indonesia or Swahili.

When a donor initiates an evaluation, specific information is often needed to inform its decisions. In such a scenario, the donor is the primary audience. It is possible, however, that the donor will be open to jointly developing the evaluation objectives with the implementing partner such that both would be the audience. Remember, the audience sets the objectives that dictate for whom the evaluation will be useful. Therefore, NGOs should not be surprised when they find evaluations initiated by donors of their work to be interesting but not useful to them. In such a case, the NGO is the reader rather than the user.

Example

IDP-Host Community Conflict

Part 1: An agency recently started working in Sudan, where it is developing a two-year project with a goal of transforming the daily conflicts between leaders among internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities in one state (wilayat) from violent means of resolution to cooperative means. The degree of ongoing violence and the rapidly evolving conflict dictate that the project needs to catalyze these changes as soon as possible.to cooperative means.

The organization is committed to conducting evaluations as a way to foster learning. As a result, the project team and the wider organization are the primary audience for those evaluations. The donor is very interested in seeing the results of the evaluations but is not the intended user. It is therefore one of the readers. This means that the evaluation objectives will be based on what the users – the project team – need to learn.

The organization recognizes that it has adapted its techniques to a new target group (IDPs) within a new cultural context for the organization. Therefore, obtaining more information on the quality of the process within specific activities would be valuable in making improvements. Since the team wants to learn how well the adaptations to the model have worked and how to improve them, the first evaluation objective is implementation process appraisal.

Because the effectiveness of a model is limited not only to the quality of implementation but also to the degree of progress that it catalyses, the organization has identified output and outcome identification as two additional evaluation objectives.

III. DECISION: FORMATIVE, SUMMATIVE OR IMPACT

What type of evaluation will it be?

There are three different types of evaluation: formative, summative, and impact. Formative evaluations are generally undertaken to determine progress to date and how to improve the project. Summative evaluations provide an overarching assessment of a project's "value."

Formative evaluations occur around the middle of a project, and summative evaluations take place near or at the end of a project. Impact evaluations, on the other hand, occur some time after the project is complete to assess its results and, if feasible, the adaptability to change of those results. This manual focuses on formative and summative evaluations.

Deciding Between Formative and Summative

Benefits of Formative Evaluation	Benefits of Summative Evaluation
• Contributes to reporting and accountability requirements during the project	• Helps project sum up what it has achieved
• Provides information to improve project before it is too late to make changes	• Checks achievements against plans and obligations to donors and participants
• Provides structured opportunity for reflection so that staff and resources are focused on the project	• Provides information as to why and how change occurred
• Helps clarify program strengths and weaknesses	• Generates important information to drive learning
• Can provide information that assists realignment of project to the changing conflict context	• Can create documentation that captures approaches and lessons to be used in the wider organization

Example

IDP-Host Community Conflict

Part 2: The project team has determined its evaluation objectives to be 1) output identification, 2) outcome identification, and 3) implementation process appraisal of specific activities. Because the project is a new application of old techniques, it is important for the team to obtain information on its evaluation objectives while there is still time to make adjustments. To do this, the team will conduct a formative evaluation.

Neither type of evaluation – formative or summative – should be seen as exclusively backward looking.

Neither type of evaluation – formative or summative – should be seen as exclusively backward looking. In some cases, these exercises can also be used to gather information as part of an ongoing context monitoring effort to inform the project looking forward. Formative evaluations are generally better suited to adding questions that identify needs and opportunities for the future.

Example

IDP-Host Community Conflict

Part 3: The majority of the formative evaluation will focus on the three evaluation objectives identified by the organization. However, in such a rapidly changing context, there is value in allocating a small portion of the evaluation to taking a look ahead to identify the needs and opportunities within the host and IDP communities. This information, added to the other context monitoring data, can inform the organization of changes in the conflict that might be addressed within the existing project or that require a different initiative.

While it is important to understand the differences between the evaluation types, they should not be seen as separate events. Rather, the design, baseline, monitoring, and formative/summative evaluation should all be seen as part of the multi-step evaluation process. The baseline is essential for the evaluation, monitoring data can inform either type of evaluation, and a summative evaluation may contain formative elements if there will be a subsequent rendition of a project.

Finally, there are impact evaluations, which seek to determine the change in the conflict catalyzed by a project. These evaluations almost exclusively look at impact identification and adaptability of change, although other evaluation objectives may also be included. They are implemented at points ranging from several months to several years after the project is finished.

IV. DECISION: EVALUATOR'S ROLE

What role will the evaluators play?

There are three roles that an evaluator can adopt for an evaluation: operative, consultant, and learning facilitator.[18] "It is important for the stakeholders not only to be aware that evaluators' [roles] can differ but also to take the time to determine which role is best suited for each evaluation."[19]

The operative role involves a more traditional approach to evaluation such that the evaluator remains within the boundaries of implementing the evaluation. This role ends with the writing of the report. An organization that has either a clear system for utilizing evaluations or a summative evaluation based upon quality monitoring information and previous formative evaluations may find an operative role to be effective.

The operative role involves a more traditional approach to evaluation

The role of consultant has a broader remit and encompasses not only what the operative evaluator does but also a significant contribution to the "use" of the evaluation. This contribution may be in the form of developing practical recommendations, facilitating workshops with staff or working with the project team to develop an implementation plan based on the evaluation. This is the most common role for evaluators at present.

The role of consultant encompasses a significant contribution to the "use" of the evaluation.

Finally, the learning facilitator has the broadest mandate of the three. In this role, the evaluator does everything that the other two do while also seeking to link the project learning into both the broader organization and into the development of the next phase of the project. This could include:

- Development of lessons or questions that are applicable beyond the project
- Presentation of results to headquarters
- Development of an ongoing learning system for the project team
- Assistance with new program development

The learning facilitator has the broadest mandate of the three.

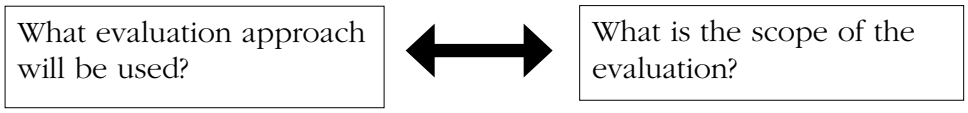
[18] Adapted from Church and Shouldice, *Part II*. pp.10-11.
[19] Church and Shouldice, *Part II*.

Example

IDP-Host community conflict

Part 4: After considering the evaluation objectives, the intensive nature of the work plan, and the capacity needs of the staff, the project team chose the learning facilitator role for their evaluator. They want to be certain that the learning from the evaluation informs the project's second half as well as the wider organization. With staff schedules so tight, however, and no in-house experience in utilizing evaluation results, they thought it best to include the learning responsibility in the evaluator's role.

Introduction to Decisions V and VI: Approach & Scope



During the evaluation preparation, there are two key decisions that provide the basis for selecting the evaluation methods. One, the evaluation approach, asks the project team, "What evaluation style will be used?" The other, the evaluation scope, considers the question, "What are the parameters of the evaluation?"

As with all the other decisions at this stage, these answers need to be as specific as possible, while keeping them sufficiently flexible to meet changing needs, particularly as the program draws closer to the evaluation date. Whether the evaluation approach or the scope should be addressed first will be unique to each evaluation and largely dependent upon the evaluation objectives.

Once the approach and scope are determined, the decision will be made regarding which methods to use. Although most methods apply to most approaches, some are less well-suited than others. For instance, if self-evaluation is selected as the evaluation approach, large-scale surveys would not be the most appropriate method to use because they require specific expertise for their development and analysis. Alternatively, if the scope of the evaluation is national-level, generalized conclusions, choosing participatory learning actions and techniques as the methods would not be appropriate in most cases. More information on methods can be found in Chapter 11 Methods page 201.

V. DECISION: EVALUATION APPROACH

What is an evaluation approach?

An evaluation approach provides the framework, philosophy, or style of an evaluation. Consider someone who dresses as a "hippie." This person does not wear the same clothes everyday, but the style of a hippie informs her/his choices such as where to go shopping, what types of clothes are attractive, or what jewelry to wear with an outfit. An evaluation approach is similar; it is the style of the evaluation.

An evaluation approach provides the framework, philosophy, or style of an evaluation.

The Evaluation Approaches section does not include a comprehensive listing of all possible approaches. Rather, it offers a broad range of options that might be useful to conflict transformation practitioners. All but one of the approaches listed have been developed by evaluators and are not specific to the conflict transformation field.

The approaches are not entirely distinct or unique from each other since many have similar concepts. Empowerment evaluation and self-evaluation, for instance, can be considered from the same family. Listings for further reading on the approaches listed may be found at the end of this chapter.

Action Evaluation

Action evaluation is an iterative goal-setting process facilitated by an evaluator throughout the life of a project.

Action evaluation is an iterative goal-setting process facilitated by an evaluator throughout the life of a project. Essential to this approach is the assumption that goal setting is a process that continues until the end of the project. With the guidance of an evaluator, project teams set project goals and explore the underlying assumptions and value-basis of why those goals are important. This exploration enables all members of a project team to be fully in step with the purposes of the project and to avoid the pursuit of competing understandings of the goals. Action plans are then created based upon those goals and are used to inform the next goal-setting discussion. In this process, goals are redefined, if necessary, based on changing contexts.

There are three stages to an action evaluation. Stage one involves articulating success, developing common definitions within the project team, and developing subsequent action plans. Stage two sees the implementation of those action plans and the adjustment and monitoring of definitions and actions. By reflecting on the project experience to date, the team refines goals and develops strategies for overcoming obstacles. Stage three

involves asking questions about the intervention and whether it has met its goals based on the criteria for success developed by the team. This discussion also explores why the project did or did not reach its goals and how things could have been done differently.

Supporters of action evaluation maintain that projects using this approach become more successful by reaching consensus about what they seek to accomplish, why, and then how. Action evaluation is useful for long-term projects operating in highly dynamic conflict contexts that need to be nimble if they are going to effect change. It is also a useful process for those who wish to instill "reflective practice" into their work. In terms of results measurement, this approach is best used in conjunction with other evaluation approaches that focus more on the "classic" evaluation component of data collection and judgment.

Empowerment Evaluation

The empowerment evaluation approach is designed to help people help themselves and to improve their programs using a form of self-evaluation and reflection. It uses both qualitative and quantitative methods and can be applied to individuals and organizations (although it is best used on projects). In this approach, the intervention participants and staff jointly examine issues of concern, while an external evaluator performs the role of a coach or extra facilitator depending on the needs and capabilities of the participants.

The empowerment evaluation approach is designed to help people help themselves and to improve their programs using a form of self-evaluation and reflection.

The approach recognizes that contexts, populations, goals, and knowledge shift and so too must the evaluation in order for it to remain current to the context and project so that it continues to gather relevant and useful information. As such it seeks to become an ingrained process within the intervention rather than a step within the project cycle.

There are five main facets to an evaluation that follows this approach: training, facilitation, advocacy, illumination, and liberation. The facets illustrate the experience of many who use this approach. In some cases, these facets may be treated like steps, though this is not their intended use. The training facet involves the staff and participants of an intervention being trained in how to conduct a self-evaluation. The training seeks to demystify evaluation and to help organizations internalize the principles of evaluation. The second facet, facilitation, sees the evaluator take the role of a coach whose task is to provide useful information and keep the evaluation on track. The evaluator also may play a significant part in the evaluation design process to ensure it meets the needs of the organization.

Advocacy, the third facet, sees evaluators acting as advocates for the intervention. This can include writing opinion articles for the newspaper, speaking to elected officials, or disseminating results to decision

makers. Of course, this assumes that the evaluation showed the program was of merit. The fourth facet, illumination, refers to the process of identifying new opportunities or connections for the project. It is often the combination of the previous four facets that allow for the fifth facet, liberation, to occur. In this facet, individuals involved are freed from pre-existing roles or ideas and new conceptualizations are developed for the project.

The benefits of this evaluation approach come to the organization that wants to incorporate monitoring and evaluation into its programming, but whose staff view evaluation as a foreign concept and question - if not reject - its usefulness. The costs come in terms of additional staff time, the ongoing presence of the external evaluator, and, potentially, in credibility – though that depends on the intended audience. If a more traditional donor is the primary audience, and the purpose is to prove progress toward results, this may not be the best model. In this case, if capacity building is still highly important, increasing the involvement of the external coach may be helpful. Empowerment evaluation advocates would maintain that this approach produces highly credible results because bias is minimized due to the broad range of stakeholders involved who then serve as a check on individual members' biases or agendas.

Goal-free evaluation focuses on the actual results of a program rather than verifying achievement of the intended results.

To capitalize on this approach fully, integrate it during the design stage so that the approach instructs the monitoring data collection, baseline as well as the evaluation. Using this approach does not exclude more traditional evaluation methods and, in fact, can be combined with them since the empowerment evaluation activities can provide a rich source of data.

Goal-Free Evaluation

Goal-free evaluation focuses on the actual results of a program rather than verifying achievement of the intended results. The goal-free approach evaluates a program with no knowledge or exposure to the predetermined goals and objectives of the program. The evaluator concentrates on what has actually happened as a result of the program rather than on the specific results intended by the program team. The results identified are then compared to the needs of the affected population to determine if the program was effective.

To undertake this approach, the evaluator has minimal contact with the program staff and intentionally avoids becoming familiar with the goals and objectives of the program. The data collection effort is open-ended and is intended to seek out all effects, positive and negative. Questions such as, "Have any changes in your community occurred over the past six months and why?" are used instead of, "After participating in the training, what changes occurred as a result in your community?"

It is maintained that goal-free evaluation minimizes bias in the evaluation process because it is not based on the project logic of the program team. It is argued that, if the project logic is flawed, significant and valuable changes that have resulted from a project may be missed in a goal-based evaluation since it is an approach that seeks to determine if the pre-set goals have been accomplished. Moreover, informing the evaluator of the goals can consciously or unconsciously limit their perceptions consequently missing important information.

Goal-free evaluation is generally more costly than an approach using a goal-based approach because the evaluation team must inquire into a far broader set of issues with a wider range of stakeholders. On the other hand, the goal-free approach offers a true accounting of what difference a project has made because it is not dependent on the design staff being entirely accurate in their project logic. This approach is particularly effective in situations where the project logic has not been articulated or even considered as well as in innovative pilot projects where the project logic is based upon an as-yet-untested hypothesis not yet tested.

Self-evaluation is an internally led review process that uses the same skills, standards, and techniques as all evaluations.

Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation is an internally led review process that uses the same skills, standards, and techniques as all evaluations. The evaluator and those evaluated are identical. This approach has three core objectives: becoming aware of the complete picture, learning from experience, and adapting.

Self-evaluation can be done for individuals, teams, institutions, and projects. It is best for a group to initiate it, although it should be led by an individual. Qualitative and quantitative methods can be used with this approach. In addition to the methods listed in the Methods chapter on page 207, self-examination and reflection are also key sources of data.

The various self-evaluation approaches each involve different steps. Generally speaking, however, one starts with identifying the person who will be responsible for coordinating the process. Since all participants in a self-evaluation should have equal roles, care should be taken to avoid mirroring the organization's hierarchy in selecting a coordinator. In other words, it is not necessary for the self-evaluation leader to be the team leader for a team evaluation or for the organization president to spearhead an institutional evaluation. Rules of engagement or ground rules should be established for the participants in the evaluation, such as voluntary participation, freedom of speech, respect for others, agreement on the results, and dissemination of the results.

The next step is for those involved to develop a common understanding of the current situation. The key to this is to look back at the project's history. Be sure to allow all perceptions and viewpoints to be articulated so as to understand the full picture of the present situation. Analysis of the state of that situation comes next (i.e., where we are versus where we would like to be). As with all evaluations, this type of analysis requires the development of standards against which the work can be assessed. Setting norms or standards is essential to creating a truly effective process yet this is a step that is often missed in self-evaluations.

Self-evaluation differs from everyday or spontaneous reflections on the quality of the project's work and the difference that work makes because the latter often lack the critical distance necessary to gain a deeper and more accurate reflection of the mechanics of the situation. If done properly, self-evaluation provides a platform or conceptual basis that enables those involved to achieve the necessary distance.

Theory-based evaluation focuses on why and how changes occur in programs.

At this point, discussions should be held on the basis of the information gathered and the standards set to seek agreement about the state of the current situation. This agreement will be the foundation for the project's new orientation that will result from the self-evaluation. Once agreement is reached, the next stage is to turn talk into action by incorporating what was learned into the new programming.

Those who use self-evaluation reap the benefits of an internally led assessment process in which staff integrate the value of questioning, setting goals, and assessing progress into daily practice. On the other hand, self-evaluation can cause internal conflict that, if not handled well, may continue to disrupt the working environment. It also requires substantial staff time to implement the process, and the process may lead to the collective bias of those involved, which can influence the conclusions. For teams and projects, self-evaluation is often a useful complement to monitoring systems in which a self-evaluation exercise is one element.

Theory-Based Evaluation

Theory-based evaluation focuses on why and how changes occur in programs. This approach focuses on the "black box" of programs, which is the space between the actual input and the expected results of the project. That space is called the black box because, in the effort to address highly complex and urgent social issues, program designers often gloss over how and why their intervention will address the issue at hand. This approach seeks to identify, articulate, explain, and then test the transformation process between input and results.

This transformation process is commonly referred to as a theory or theory of change, which can be broadly defined as a set of beliefs about how change happens. See page 14 in the chapter on Understanding Change

for more information about theories of change for peacebuilding. The theory-based evaluation approach is based on the assumption that social change programs select and structure their interventions on the basis of some articulable rationale. Advocates for this approach maintain that, by purposefully identifying the assumptions on which programs are based, the design, implementation, and subsequent utilization of the evaluation will be better.

The theory underlying the program is located at the centre of the evaluation design. The first step in the evaluation, then, is to make the theory explicit, which may involve a process in and of itself if the theory has not previously been articulated or if there are conflicting ideas as to what underpins or creates change as a result of the program. All possible theories must be brought to light. The project team then selects which of the theories will be tested in the evaluation. Once the theory is articulated or selected, the next steps in the evaluation are built around it.

The theory-based approach can provide a project team or organization with an important facilitated process to unearth the "why" behind the projects that they implement. Understanding the rationale or theory upon which projects are based is essential for advancing our thinking as a field. Additionally, this approach allows us to test if the intervention was ineffective because of poor implementation or because the theory was flawed. For organizations lacking explicit theories of change, a theory-based approach will require some up-front work with the full team. Consequently, both the evaluation team and the project staff may need to allocate more time to the evaluation.

"Utilization-focused evaluation begins with the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use..."

Utilization-Focused Evaluation

According to Michael Patton, the author of this approach, "utilization-focused evaluation begins with the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use; therefore, evaluators should facilitate the evaluation process and design any evaluation with careful consideration of how everything that is done, from beginning to end, will affect use." Patton's approach offers a process by which the evaluator and the intended users can collaboratively reach agreement on how the evaluation will meet the needs of the project team. In this manner, the evaluator works with the primary intended user to facilitate the users' decisionmaking on use, method, model, and theory.

The evaluator begins the process by spending significant time with the project team to establish a common definition of evaluation. She/he ensures that the team has a clear understanding of what is involved in an evaluation process. While developing this common understanding, the team is encouraged, through a variety of exercises and games, to express any fears or concerns about the evaluation. The team is also

invited to consider the incentives and barriers to engaging honestly in the evaluative process. As these issues are raised, the evaluator discusses them openly so that they can be handled constructively and jointly.

Utilization-focused evaluation is based on the premise that an evaluation will not be utilized if the user does not have ownership of the evaluation from the start. Ownership can be fostered through an increased understanding of the benefits of evaluation. It can also be engendered through confidence that the process will support and help rather than challenge and criticize. The first stage of the utilization-focused approach is intended to build ownership.

The evaluator then works with the project team to identify exactly who will be the primary user of the evaluation. Again, this is a facilitated process in which the evaluator works collaboratively with the project to jointly reach an answer. Once this has been identified, the process moves toward identifying the actual intended use by generating questions. There are five criteria used to develop utilization-focused evaluation questions. First, data can be collected that directly answers the question. Second, there is more than one possible answer to the question. Third, primary intended users care about the answer and want information to help answer it. Fourth, primary users want the answer to the question for themselves, rather than just giving it to a second party such as a donor or the press. Fifth, the users can describe how the answer may change actions in the future.

There are no predetermined methods for this approach and it blends very well with other approaches. It is a good choice when there is a high degree of resistance to evaluation among the project team. The utilization-focused approach is also useful in situations in which there appears to be a large number of evaluation objectives that the team is unable to limit or decrease. While valuable for both formative and summative evaluations, this approach requires that time be allocated for the preparation process described. This is the approach most heavily drawn upon in this manual.

Evaluation Approaches: Pro-Con Framework

Approach	Pros	Cons
Action Evaluation	• Facilitates project adaptation to changing environments • Ensures goal agreement within team	• Primary focus is on the design element of the process and less on the gathering of evidence to prove results
Empowerment	• Builds staff M&E capacity • Combines internal and external expertise and perspective	• May be deemed less credible due to internal contribution by staff • Not all evaluators will be comfortable playing an advocacy role
Goal-Free	• Captures unintended negative and positive effects • Limits bias of project team and evaluator	• Requires more time and funding than other approaches • Results may not be sufficiently concrete to act upon
Self-Evaluation	• If resources are allocated to skills development, this approach builds internal M&E capacity • Owned and implemented by staff • Should reflect the real needs and questions of the team	• May be deemed less credible by external audiences • Has potential for bias • No outside perspective to challenge assumptions • Susceptible to internal political pressure
Theory-Based	• Articulates assumptions that underpin the work • Uncovers differing views on theories of change or the "why" • Allows the flaws in theory to be distinguished from poor implementation	• May have a heavy up-front time commitment if the theory of change has not been articulated • Innovative programs may not have the theory accurate yet. The focus on flawed theory my overlook changes that the program is effecting
Utilization- Focused	• Increased likelihood that evaluation results will effect change in the project or organization • Decreases emotional barriers to the idea of results and measurements that will last beyond this evaluation	• Requires more time at beginning of process • May backfire if the evaluator does not have the necessary facilitation skills

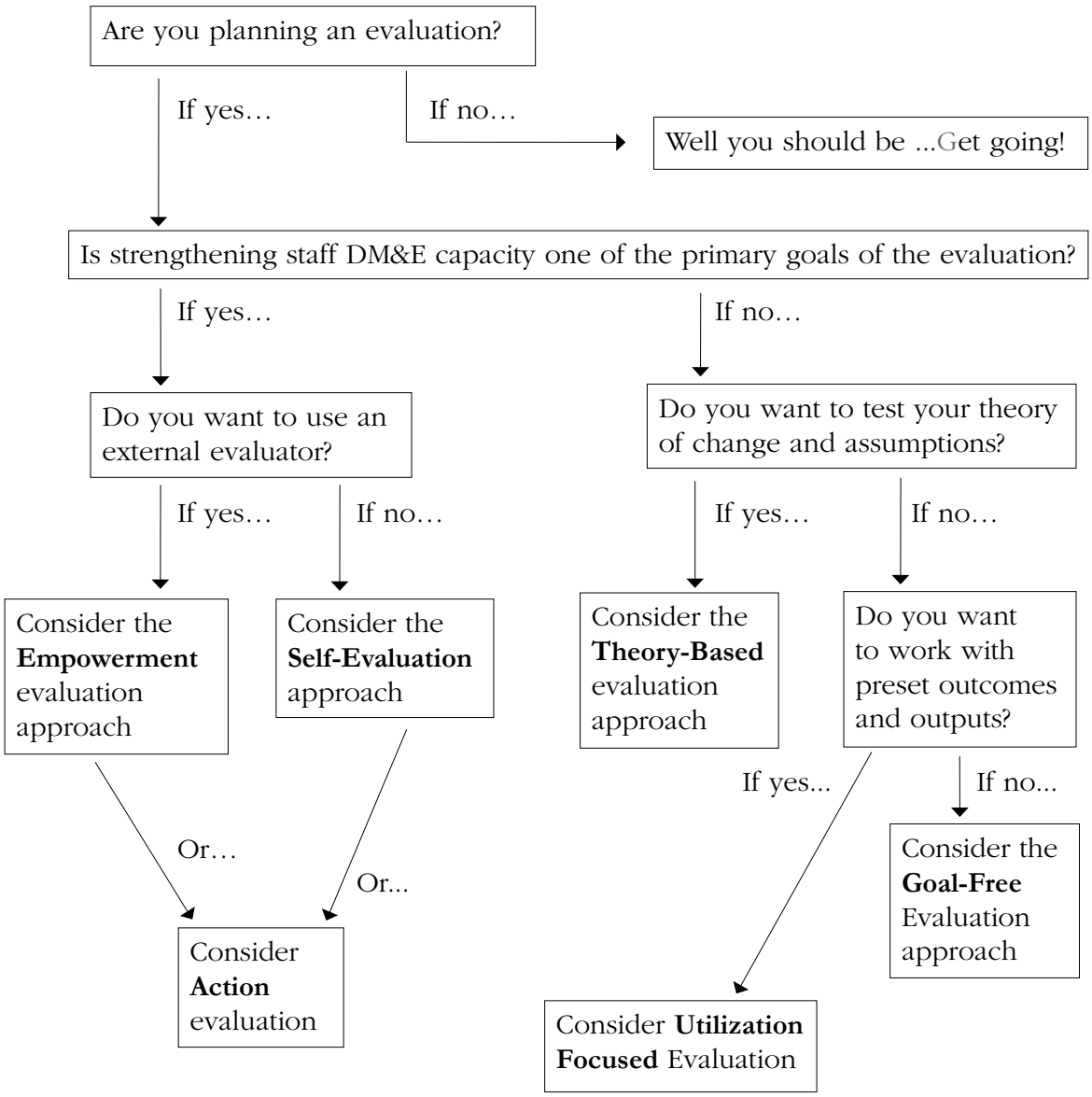
What should I consider when selecting the approach?

When considering approaches, reflect on the evaluation objectives since they should be the point of first departure for this decision. For instance, if implementation process appraisal is the evaluation objective and the team wants recommendations for improvement, the utilization-focused approach best meets those specific needs. On the other hand, if the same team feels that it has not explicitly examined its underlying assumptions behind the intervention, a theory-based approach is a natural choice.

Sometimes there will be natural and direct fits between the evaluation objective, the scope, and the approach. When that does not occur, however, feel free to mix and match among the approaches to pick the components that best meet your needs. For instance, one could blend the evaluator coach found in empowerment evaluation with the theory-based articulation and testing of the theory of change. If one uses a blend of approaches, it is advisable to discuss this with the evaluation team before making a final decision. This allows the evaluator to advise the team on the feasibility and implications for cost and time of different combinations. Also, keep in mind that any increase in the number of components blended implies the need for a broader skill set from the evaluators, which may make it more challenging to recruit qualified individuals.

To help with decisionmaking, a decision flowchart is located on page 123. For the sake of simplicity, the flowchart only asks core questions, although this is not meant to diminish the importance of other variables.

Evaluation Approaches Decision Flowchart



Example

IDP-Host community conflict

Part 5: We know that the project team is planning an evaluation; therefore, we can proceed along the "yes" arrow. Strengthening DM&E capacity is not a primary focus of this evaluation process, so we can follow the "no" arrow. Although the team is interested in the theory and underlying assumptions of the project, the team members do not think they will make changes at this stage of the project. Thus, they do not want to test theories and assumptions. They do wish, however, to establish whether or not their objectives are being met as originally drafted. Consequently, the team will select a utilization-focused approach to this evaluation.

VI. DECISION: EVALUATION SCOPE

What is the scope of the evaluation?

The notion of scope encompasses two inter-related aspects: geographic coverage and the degree to which conclusions will be generalized. Each of these should be considered for every evaluation objective. Sometimes the geographic coverage of the evaluation is the same one as the intervention itself. Consider a project that seeks to change the relationship from a negatively charged one to a cooperative one between the Morley tribe of First Nations people and the neighboring rural communities in a municipality in Alberta, Canada. The geographic coverage of the evaluation could be the entire municipality, which would be the same coverage as the project.

If there was a specific area or location within the municipality that seemed to be either progressing exceptionally well or regressing, it could be singled out as the sole focus of the evaluation. Here, the evaluation geographic scope would be less than the project geographic scope. Conversely, that scope could be far greater if the team wanted to understand whether or not there were any transfer or ripple effects beyond its immediate working location.

The second aspect of evaluation scope is whether or not the conclusions need to be generalized to include the entire population, be it a tribe, village, community or country. To generalize in this way requires that there be "enough" data sources to draw a conclusion that could represent that entire population. Called statistically significant conclusions or generalizations, what constitutes "enough" data sources is determined by the size of the population. This type of information can be extremely valuable, but acquiring it has significant cost and time implications.

Take, for instance, an intervention in the form of a television edu-drama aimed at young men (ages 15-25) and broadcast across Palestine that challenges Palestinian attitudes on obstacles to the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. The project team wants information from the evaluation that is representative of all young men in Palestine. This will require evaluators to gather "enough" data to draw generalized conclusions that can speak for the target population. If the evaluators do not gather "enough" data, they can only draw conclusions for the people who participated in the evaluation.

In this case, the geographic scope and the project scope are the same. Generalized conclusions are not tied to national geographic coverage. One can request generalized conclusions for any group as long as the group is well defined.

On the other hand, if the project team felt that it would be more useful to learn about the views of those who live in the most violent area or on the border, the geographic scope of the evaluation would be smaller than the scope of the intervention. The evaluators would only go to those areas in the country that were violent or near the border. Within this more limited scope, the project team may still want conclusions that apply to the entire population of those defined areas (e.g., a border region). Alternatively, the ability to generalize may not be relevant to the evaluation. If, for example, there is an evaluation objective of strategic alignment, it may not be necessary to have generalized conclusions to inform the project team about that objective.

Where conclusions cannot be generalized because of the small number of people involved in the evaluation, it is important to indicate that the conclusions cannot be applied to the wider group.

It is often not possible, due to time, cost or security limitations, to gather enough data to generalize conclusions for large populations, such as the citizenship of an entire country. Where conclusions cannot be generalized because of the small number of people involved in the evaluation, it is important to indicate that the conclusions cannot be applied to the wider group. As the need to generalize expands to larger groupings, so too does the cost and time required. In addition, the evaluators will need to have the expertise suitable to ensure that the methods used are credible. It will also require a careful assessment of security measures to ensure that the evaluation team can access a broad enough range of locations to gather the necessary data.

Example

IDP-Host Community Conflict

Part 6: The NGO has decided that the geographic scope for all objectives of the evaluation is the locations of the communities that have IDPs. At this stage, the project team's number one priority is the immediate target group. The type of information the team seeks is, therefore, best given from this group. In terms of the process implementation appraisal objective, the project team does not feel it is necessary to have generalized conclusions. For the outcome identification objective, however, the team does want to have conclusions that are representative of the entire target population. This is important for the project team because its members want to be certain that the changes are occurring throughout their target group. For this project, the target population is the IDP and host community leaders for each worksite.

VII. DECISION: EVALUATOR QUALIFICATIONS

Who should conduct the evaluation?

At this stage, it is necessary to have a broad understanding of the type of person needed to conduct the evaluation. Of course, this does not mean either writing down the required qualifications in detail or actually selecting the person. This decision about the type of evaluator needed informs the budget structure and provides an indicator of the difficulty there will be in recruiting a qualified individual. The latter point is important if a highly specialized person is required, because recruitment will need to start earlier than normal.

The internal-external categorization is dependent on the relationship of the evaluator with the organization; it does not refer to where the evaluation originated.

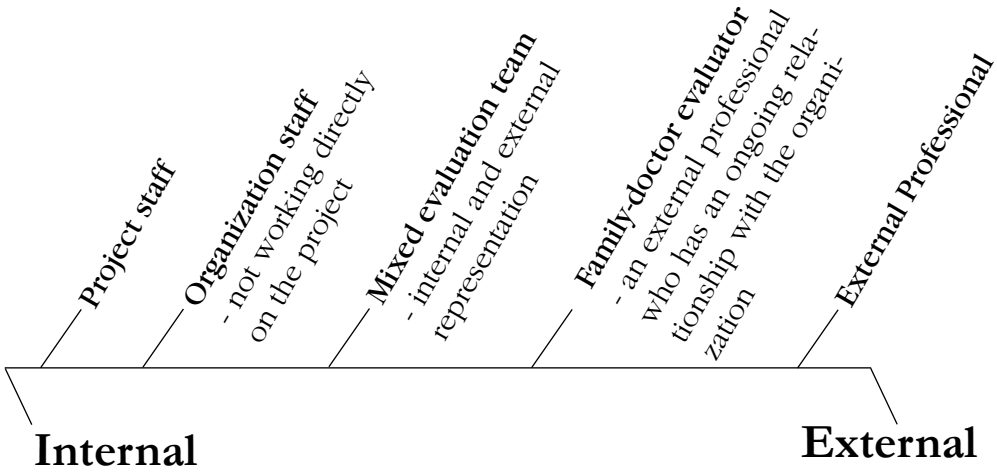
- Will the evaluators be internal to the organization or external?
- What type of experience is required?
- How many evaluators are needed?
- Will the evaluators be local hires or recruited internationally?
- Will they need translation services?

There are many more decisions to be made regarding specific qualifications but those can be left to page 140 of the chapter 9, "What do the Terms of Reference contain?"

Will the evaluators be internal to the organization or external?

The first step is to determine whether the evaluators will be internal to the organization (staff) or external (professional). The internal-external categorization is dependent on the relationship of the evaluator with the organization; it does not refer to where the evaluation originated. The internal-external notion is actually a continuum,[20] with project staff members doing their own evaluation (i.e., self-evaluation) on one end and an external professional who has never worked with the organization on the other end.

[20] Modified from Church and Shouldice, *Part II*.



The approach and scope desired for the evaluation may set capacity requirements that exclude many internal staff.

In deciding which of these relationships is best for the evaluation, there are several considerations to keep in mind, not the least of which are practical considerations in terms of costs, capacity, and time. The internal end of the spectrum is often less expensive for the organization, but it does require a level of skill that is not commonly available internally. In terms of time, staff members would need to be able to leave their regular duties for a period of time to undertake some parts of the evaluation. In addition, for evaluations in identity-based conflict areas, internal staff may not be able to enter certain communities or obtain factual answers from members of the "other" community or identity group.

One of the benefits of using internal staff members is that the learning (such as evaluation skills and experience) and the programmatic conclusions that may be applied to their own projects stay within the organization. Furthermore, staff members are familiar with the organizational history, approach, and assumptions, which allows for a shorter learning curve in this area.

The external end of the spectrum, on the other hand, has higher associated costs and requires more time to recruit and orient the team. That said, external evaluators can be highly effective in challenging implicit assumptions and organizational norms that have become standard practice, and they offer a broader range of expertise, which can be of great benefit. In addition, externals are generally deemed to be more objective and removed than internal evaluators, which can give the final product greater credibility.

Take for example, the evaluation objective strategic alignment. Someone internal to the organization but not on the project staff may be best placed for this assignment because she/he has a deep understanding of the organization's mission and principles. Conversely, if the evaluation objective is to conduct outcome identification, an external evaluator may be better suited for such an assignment because she/he will not be bound to the assumptions behind the desired changes.

The approach and scope desired for the evaluation may set capacity requirements that exclude many internal staff. This is an important point

since evaluation conclusions are only as good as the implementation of the data collection techniques. If internal staff do not have the necessary skills, and it is deemed valuable to build in-house capacity in this area, then creating a mixed team might be useful. If this approach is adopted, extra time should be factored into the evaluation for the external professional to coach the staff person in her/his role.

Example

IDP-Host community conflict

Part 7: A mixed team (staff and external professionals) would be a good choice for this evaluation. The implementation process appraisal aspect would benefit from a staff person from outside the project team who is knowledgeable about the organization's model and techniques for this type of work. On the other hand, an external evaluation professional would offer new insights and challenge assumptions on this aspect of the evaluation. The output and outcome identification objectives would capitalize on the external evaluator's experience in data collection and would benefit from the credibility lent by that external professional. Since the outcome identification objective also requires generalized conclusions, the external evaluator will need to have expertise in this subject area. The staff team member would benefit from the experience as they would build her/his skills in these areas.

What type of experience is required?

At this point in the evaluation preparation, there are three factors that assist in determining the type of experience required:

- Evaluation Objective
- Approach and Scope
- Evaluator's Role

If, for instance, the organization has identified appropriateness consideration as an evaluation objective, the evaluator should have knowledge of peacebuilding theories of change and an in-depth understanding of the conflict context. If the second evaluation objective was outcome identification and the organization required generalizable conclusions (scope), the evaluator hired would need to have statistical expertise and quantitative research experience. Finally, if the evaluation required a learning facilitator, the evaluator would need facilitation skills and, ideally, conflict transformation program design experience.

How many evaluators are needed?

The number of evaluators needed is directly related to the amount of work involved, how much time is available, and the variety of skills needed to accomplish the evaluation. One or two people could do an evaluation that was national in scope in Burundi if it were limited to one evaluation objective and nine months in which to conduct it. The same evaluation, if needed in a month, might require a team of five. In a country the size of Indonesia, the same evaluation might need double the staff of the previous example. If the evaluation is complex, a broader set of skills are often required, which may demand a team approach in order to have all skills represented.

Will the evaluators be local hires or recruited internationally?

This question depends on the location of the program and the availability of local professionals. Local professionals understand the culture and history of the conflict, yet they also may identify too closely with it. Outside North America and Europe, local professionals are often a more cost-effective option for an NGO. Evaluation as a profession is still relatively new, however, which means the pool of qualified candidates is more limited, though this is changing rapidly.

Where possible, utilizing a mix of local and international evaluators can offer an effective blend of cultural sensitivity and external "neutrality" while also maximizing the skill set on the team.

Example

IDP-Host Community Conflict

Part 8: This evaluation team will consist of three individuals. One of them will come from the NGO staff and will be familiar with the model and techniques used elsewhere in the organization. This person will focus on implementation process appraisal. Ideally, the person would be located in the Sudan office, but would not work on this project directly. Another will be an external evaluator, recruited internationally but with experience in the region, who will be the team leader and who will provide direction and input to both evaluation objectives. The third individual will also be an external evaluator, recruited from Sudan, who will focus on outcome identification. This person's role will be essential in ensuring the cultural sensitivity and accuracy of this aspect of the evaluation. Three evaluators are required for this project due to the added workload that comes with providing generalized conclusions (because far more people will need to be included in the data collection). If that had not been the case, two evaluators would suffice.

Will translation be needed?

The need for the evaluator to speak the local language depends upon the people from whom the evaluator will be predominately accessing information and the data collection tools (e.g., surveys and interviews) that will be utilized.

If the evaluation approach includes extensive interaction with local communities, an ideal scenario would be for the evaluator to speak the local language(s). This facilitates greater access to the community, better mobility, and a more nuanced understanding of expressions and terms. If a qualified person cannot be found, the organization may wish to consider working via a translator(s).

The intricacies of successful translation are often not fully considered, which can negatively affect the quality of the evaluation conclusions

The intricacies of successful translation are often not fully considered, which can negatively affect the quality of the evaluation conclusions. One should consider the individual's experience as a translator as well as her/his background as it relates to the conflict. Nuance and choice of language are critical to most qualitative evaluations and, as such, can be subconsciously altered by an amateur translator who has strong opinions or biases regarding the subject matter. Furthermore, if the work is in an identity-based conflict, the translator's identity must also be considered. In Kosovo, for instance, one would find it difficult to obtain honest responses from the Kosovar Serbs if working with a Kosovar Albanian translator, despite the quality of the translation.

A translator can also act as a gatekeeper for a community.

A translator can also act as a gatekeeper for a community. This can be positive in that it can facilitate unprecedented access for the evaluator in some cases. On the other hand, the translator may feel obligated to represent the community in the best light possible and, as such, direct the evaluation team to individuals who paint a particular portrait of the situation.

One common approach, when there are financial or capacity restrictions, is to assign a project staff person to be the translator. This has the benefits of being both cost effective and providing the evaluator with a ready source of project and community information. However, it can adversely affect the interviews if project participants do not wish to say something negative in front of the project staff. The politics of evaluation can become very clear in this case, if, for instance, the project participants feel that ongoing participation could be contingent on their answers.

Using an internal translator is not a recommended strategy; however, if financial or capacity restrictions require this approach, the evaluator should try to interview some people without using the translator by using a common language such as French or English to see if different answers are given without the translator's presence. Where possible, have

staff members involved with participants that they do not know or work directly with so that the personal relationships do not restrict what the individuals say.

Undoubtedly there are conflict areas where access to individuals or key groups cannot be obtained without the presence of project staff who have built trust and relationships. In these cases, the ability to access key people may outweigh the potential changes in answers of having project staff present. That said, the evaluator should either identify a means to control for this or, at a minimum, acknowledge it in the report.

VIII. DECISION: TIMING

When will the evaluation take place?

With the decision regarding formative, summative or impact evaluation type already made, the question of the evaluation date becomes quite straightforward in many cases. That said, evaluation planners should review the proposed timing with a conflict lens to ensure that the evaluation will not take place during a time of predictable unrest or jubilation since this could affect the evaluation conclusions. Memorial days, election, and anniversaries of peace accords are examples of predictable events that could either spark tension or create unsustainable optimism.

In Northern Ireland, for example, it would be unwise to plan an evaluation during the summer months due to the tension caused by the annual marching season. These events may not only change the attitudes and behaviors at that time, they can affect the ability to gain access to places due to violence in extreme cases or people's willingness to speak with outsiders.

There are also some practical concerns to take into account:

- Will key staff be in the country and available to the evaluators during the proposed evaluation period?
- Is there a strategic planning date that the evaluation findings should inform?
- Are there any weather conditions, such as a rainy season or extreme snow, that might limit the evaluator's ability to travel to different parts of the country?

- Will the program participants be accessible? For instance, it would be difficult to conduct a peace education program in schools during the summer months when children are out of school.

- Does this conflict with any major events or deadlines within the project being evaluated?

Example

IDP-Host Community Conflict

Part 9: The evaluation is formative so it needs to happen broadly in the middle of the project, which offers a window of September-February. A careful look at the calendar suggested November as the best month. That date avoids the local elections scheduled for mid-September and the rainy season which comes in late spring. In addition, all staff will be in the office in November and the next donor report is due February 1st.

IX. DECISION: BUDGET

What will the evaluation cost?

Budgeting is the last decision at this stage. All the decisions preceding this one affect the budget. Is the evaluation national in scope or limited to one or two communities? To fulfill the evaluation objectives, does it require a multi-faceted evaluation team or one individual? Is the evaluator's role to engage with the project team and build capacity along the way or to implement the evaluation? Once clarity has been reached on these decisions, it is time to create the budget estimate so it can be included in the project proposal.

There is an argument that one should start with the maximum budget predetermined so that the preparation is realistic from the beginning. Though seemingly practical, this approach limits creativity and often a true unearthing of the needs and learning desired from the experience.

The Evaluation Budget Worksheet on page 133 details those line items commonly found in an evaluation budget. Not all of these line items will apply every time, particularly because different data collection methods have different costs associated with each. One can also use the rule of thumb that the baseline, monitoring, and evaluation costs will constitute 5-10% of the project budget.

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Although it is not necessary to select the methods in the evaluation preparation stage, this worksheet includes an illustration of those costs. It includes expenses typical of a hard-copy questionnaire disseminated by post and focus groups. An evaluation that uses surveyors, for example, would need to include the fee to hire the surveyors plus the costs associated with training them such as rental of the training venue, meals, and equipment (clipboards, ID cards, flashlights, etc.). To do the budget estimate, one would insert a broad estimate in that portion of the worksheet based on what is already known about the approach and scope.

Budget Worksheet

Common Budget Line	Description/Comment
Evaluator Day Rate (fee)	This is the fee paid to the evaluator. It is most commonly determined on a daily rate, though it could be computed as a lump sum amount. In 2005, daily rates of Western European/ North American NGO evaluators ranged from US$250-700.
Return Economy Airfare to Home Country	Pre-booking and staying over Saturday nights are effective means to keep this cost low.
Visa Cost	Often forgotten, this can be as high as US$300, so it is worthwhile to include this cost.
Immunization Cost	Not all countries require shots; however, most African countries do and the cost can add up.
Evaluator In-Country Travel	This line item can include renting a vehicle, hiring a driver, domestic flights or even boats.
Evaluator Per Diem	The per diem is the amount given to cover the evaluator's daily food and incidental expenses and, in some cases, hotel as well. Since different countries and organizations have different norms for what is included in the per diem, detailing in the contract what your per diem includes will reduce the chance of a misunderstanding.. The U.S. government posts its official per diem rates online at: http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/prdm/2004/29997.htm
Evaluator Hotel	Number of nights in a hotel multiplied by the price per night, if not included in the per diem.
Translator Day Rate	This is the fee for each day. The average price range varies from country to country. Note that if language differs between parties to the conflict, consider whether two translators will be required.

Budget Worksheet

Common Budget Line	Description/Comment
Translator In-Country Travel	Be sure not to double count. If the cost of a rented vehicle has been included already there is no additional cost for the translator. A domestic airplane seat, however, would need to be included.
Translator Per Diem	Same concept as the evaluator per diem. If the translator lives nearby, she/he does not need the full per diem since she/he will be returning home at the end of each day. However, the translator is often expected to eat lunch and even dinner with the team because those are working meals. In such cases, it is equitable to provide the translator with a portion of a per diem.
Translator Hotel	Number of nights in a hotel multiplied by the price per night, if not included in the per diem.
Data Collection Tool Costs:	**Questionnaire & Focus Groups**
Questionnaire Translation	The cost of translating the questionnaire into the local language.
Photocopying	Cost of copying the questionnaire.
Postal Charges	Costs include envelopes, postal charges, and providing stamped return envelopes.
Venue Rental	Focus groups often need a venue that is beyond the capacity of the local NGO to provide. Note that in conflict settings one community may not be able to travel to an NGO office that is located in the "other" community. In other contexts, focus groups may be hosted outdoors at no cost.
Food or Beverages	Focus groups are often supplied with a beverage, at a minimum.
Data Entry	For large questionnaires, sometimes data entry companies or individuals are hired to enter the data for statistical analysis.
Participants' Time Compensation	In some places, the time used to attend a focus group is time taken away from earning the next meal. In these cases, providing some form of compensation in the way of a meal or transportation costs should be considered.
Administrative Expenses	This includes all basic administrative costs such as conference calls with the project team and evaluation team or shipping final bound versions of the evaluation to offices.
Total	

How long does this process take?

The length of the evaluation preparation process depends on the complexity of the project, the number of decision-makers on the project team, the familiarity of the project team with evaluation concepts, and the understanding they have of the relationship between concepts as depicted in the Evaluation Preparation Decision Flowchart. As the complexity of project and team increases, so too does the time needed to work through this flowchart.

Assuming that there is a reasonably detailed outline of what the project will entail, the evaluation preparation process for those teams on which all actors are familiar with the concepts - and the interconnectedness of those concepts - can be handled in one session. The length of the session will depend on the issues referenced above.

If the actors are not familiar with the concepts, they should, ideally, work with an evaluation facilitator to remedy their lack of knowledge, which will decrease potential frustration and time needed for explanation in the future. In this case, it normally takes two separate sessions – although sometimes three – to first explain the concepts and then the pros and cons of the different options. In addition, newcomers to these ideas should be offered the chance to reflect on their decisions between sessions to ensure that the evaluation truly meets their needs.

Keep in mind, however, that the time spent in the project design stage is time saved later when the proposal writer doesn't have to struggle to fill in the evaluation section or during the project implementation, as the team starts to consider the evaluation.

Further Reading

Johanna Birckmayer and Carol Weiss, *Theory-Based Evaluation in Practice: What Do We Learn?,* Evaluation Review, SAGE Publications, Vol. 24, No 4, August 2000.

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Jay Rothman, "*Action Evaluation"* in *Beyond Intractability*, Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess (eds.), October 2003. http://www.beyondintractability.org/m/action_evaluation.jsp.

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