Evaluating
Coalitions &
Partnerships

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Coalitions & Partnerships

- **Coalition**: group of individuals representing diverse organizations or constituencies who agree to work together to achieve a common goal (Feighery & Rogers, 1990)

- **Partnership**: Implies business-like arrangement whereby **two or more** partners agree to work toward for common goal or interest – strategic alliance, joint venture

- Terms often used interchangeably
High Expectations for Performance

- Network & share information
- Plan & coordinate
- Implement specific projects
- Provide technical assistance & training
- Advocate
Coalitions and Evaluation

- Each partnership is unique – developed within context of its community
- Coalition’s main role is to facilitate issues & initiate projects with diverse member organizations
- To ensure that time & resources are used effectively, coalitions must evaluate what they do
- Yet, most coalitions do not routinely evaluate themselves or their programs unless mandated by funder
Why Evaluate Coalitions & Partnerships?
Why Evaluate Coalitions?

- Builds capacity within coalition & community
  Do partners use coalition approach or tools for other issues?
- Determines whether objectives are achieved
  Did coalition achieve goals?
- Improves coalition interventions
  Were programs effective?
- Provides accountability to community, funding agencies & stakeholders
  Are members satisfied & contributing? Were resources used wisely?
Why Evaluate Coalitions?

- Increases community awareness & support
  
  *Is community aware of coalition efforts? Do they support coalition?*

- Contributes to scientific base
  
  *Does partnership approach work?*

- Informs policy decisions
  
  Did elected officials support policies or legislation proposed by coalition?
Challenges of Evaluating Coalitions

- Takes time & resources - not built into coalition’s process
- Each coalition is unique - Design & methods are complex & generalization difficult
- Evaluation not based on plan – ‘do it yourself’
- Staff motivated to make coalition & programs ‘look’ good
Steps to Evaluating Coalitions & Partnerships
Step 1: Plan the Evaluation

- Engage stakeholders (professionals & lay persons)
- Establish evaluation team and resources
  - Implementers – initiate & monitor program
  - Partners - actively support program
  - Participants - served/affected by program
  - Decision-makers – make program decisions
- Obtain buy-in & commitment to evaluation
Step 2: Describe Coalition or Program

Stage of coalition/program
• Planning or formation
  • Implementation
  • Maintenance

Statement of problem
• Nature & magnitude?
• Causes & trends?
• Consequences?

Create logic model
Coalition & Program Logic Models

- Describes core components of coalition/program
- Shows connection between program/coalition components & expected outcomes
- Includes key information about context (or influencing factors)
Components of a Basic Logic Model

**INPUTS**
Investments or resources (e.g., time, staff, volunteers, money, materials)

**INFLUENTIAL FACTORS**
Surrounding environments in which the program exists (e.g., politics, other initiatives, socioeconomic factors, staff turnover, social norms and conditions, program history, stage of development) that can affect its success either positively or negatively

**ACTIVITIES**
Events or actions (e.g., workshops, curriculum development, training, social marketing, special events, advocacy)

**OUTPUTS**
Direct products of program (e.g., number of people reached or sessions held)

**INITIAL OUTCOMES**
Short-term effects of program (e.g., knowledge, attitude, skill, and awareness changes)

**INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES**
Medium-term results (e.g., behavior or policy changes)

**LONG-TERM OUTCOMES**
Ultimate impact (e.g., environmental or social change)

**GOAL**
Mission or purpose of program
Program Evaluation Logic Model: Tobacco Use Policy Change

**Inputs**
- Coalition members
- Time
- Funding
- Partners: Local, Regional, State
- Effective practice strategies
- Local media outlets

**Activities**
- Establish baseline for policy change in community with help from youth
- Educate youth and adults on policy change options and how to achieve them
- Identify partners, including youth serving organizations and schools, for engaging youth in policy change
- Develop strategy for and promote engagement of youth in policy change
- Assist with development of youth advocacy skills
- Promote community support for youth involvement in community affairs/policy change

**Reach**
- Community organizations, businesses policy makers
- Adults
- Youth serving organizations
- Schools
- Youth

**Short**
- Increased # youth, community members who:
  - Understand tobacco use issues in their communities
  - Know how to advocate for policy change
- Increased # youth wanting to be involved in advocating for policy change
- Increased # youth skilled in being able to advocate for policy change
- Increased support for youth involvement in policy change

**Intermediate**
- Increased # of youth actively engaged in advocating for policy change
- Increased # of activities or increased intensity of activities that involve youth to accomplish policy change
- Increased adoption of policies that involve youth in the policy change
  - Counter industry influence
  - Promote clean indoor air
  - Decrease availability of tobacco products in community

**Long**
- Increased number of tobacco policies in community
- Social norms less supportive of youth tobacco use
- Delayed average age at first use; reduced initiation

**Outcomes**
Community Coalition Action Theory
Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002

Lead Agency/Convener Group
Coalition Membership
Operations & Processes
Leadership & Staffing
Structures
Synergy
Pooled Resources
Member Engagement
Assessment & Planning
Implementation of Strategies
Community Change Outcomes
Community Capacity
Health/Social Outcomes

Formation ➔ Maintenance ➔ Institutionalization
Step 3: Focus the Evaluation

Ask stakeholders what they need to know about:

- Coalition
- Programs & activities
- Outcomes
- Members & participants
- Coalition impact
- Influencing factors
Coalition Evaluation Questions

- Are we meeting our members’ needs?
- Do our work groups function well?
- Which strategies are effective?
- Are we on track to accomplish goals & objectives?
- Are we reaching our priority audiences?
- Are we influencing policies & practices?
- Are we building community capacity?
- Could we improve? Are we making a difference?
- Are there external factors that affect our work?
- What unintended outcomes are occurring?
Step 4: Choose Methods & Collect Data

- Use mixed methods (qualitative & quantitative) to assess parts of coalition or project
- Use well-defined, measurable, acceptable indicators
- Collect enough data to be reliable, but consider response burden
- Don’t try to measure everything – Plan for use of data you collect!
Levels of Coalition Evaluation

- **LEVEL 1**: Process - coalition effectiveness
- **LEVEL 2**: Impact - coalition programs
- **LEVEL 3**: Outcome
  - Changes in community environment, policies & practices
  - Changes in health/social status
Free/Low Cost Evaluation Manuals & Websites

- The Community Toolbox: http://www.ctb.edu
- Empowerment Evaluation Website: http://www.stanford.edu/empowermentevaluation
  http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub770.pdf
Free/Low Cost Evaluation Tools

- Survey Monkey: $200./yr  http://www.surveymonkey.com/
- Online Evaluation Resource Library: Create surveys, interviews, observation guides:  http://www.oerl.sri.com/
- United Way Outcome Measurement Resource Network: Downloadable or low cost (< $50. tools & instruction)  http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/resources/
Instruments & Tools

- Coalition Effectiveness Inventory (CEI)
- Meeting Effectiveness Inventory (MEI)
- Teamwork surveys
- Collaboration & Inclusivity Checklists
- Member Satisfaction Surveys
- Member & Leader Interviews
Step 5: Analyze & Interpret Data

- **Analyze data**
  - Enter data - check for errors
  - Tabulate/stratify data
  - Compare & format clearly

- **Interpret results**
  - Are results as expected?
  - Comparable to other programs?
  - Same results from several indicators?
  - Limitations of evaluation?
Step 6: Communicate & Ensure Use of Findings

- **Summarize**: Methods, stakeholders’ roles, strengths & weaknesses results (tables & graphs)
- **Recommend**: Action-oriented, relevant & useful
- **Share Results**: Media, mail, web sites, list serves, forums, newsletters
Overcome Challenges

- Get training & technical assistance
- Enlist partners’ help
- Begin where your partnership is
- Be realistic - evaluate “something”
- Use innovative methods
- Evaluate promising strategies
- Develop measurable outcomes at all levels
Change is good as long as I don’t have to do anything different.
References


