

Program/Policy Evaluation and Assessment


Key Concepts and Issues in Program Evaluation

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History of Program Evaluation

- ▶ Has Roots in the 17th century, but systematic evaluation research relatively modern
 - ▶ Systematic evaluation of social programs first common in education and public health
 - ▶ After World War II, due to large expenditure, demand for “knowledge of results” (evaluation) grew
 - ▶ By the end of 1950s, program evaluation was commonplace
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History of Program Evaluation


- ▶ Evaluation activities increased dramatically during the Kennedy and Johnson presidencies
 - ▶ In the 1970s evaluation research emerged as a distinct specialty field in the social sciences
 - ▶ First journal in evaluation, *Evaluation Review*, launched in 1976 by SAGE Publications
 - ▶ Evaluation now sustained by funding from policymakers, program planners, and administrators
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Policies and Programs

▶ *Policy:*

- Statements of intended outcomes/objectives and the means by which concerned entities will go about achieving these outcomes
- Clear statement of goals/ends and methods/means

▶ *Program:*

- Means–ends chains that are intended to achieve some agreed–on objective(s)
 - Unit to implement policy
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Program/Policy Evaluation

- ▶ Structured process to create and synthesize information intended to reduce the level of uncertainty for decision makers and stakeholders about a given program or policy
- ▶ Trans-Disciplinary process
 - Incorporate principles, theories, and methods from multiple disciplines

Question for the Class

- ▶ What programs and policies can you think of?

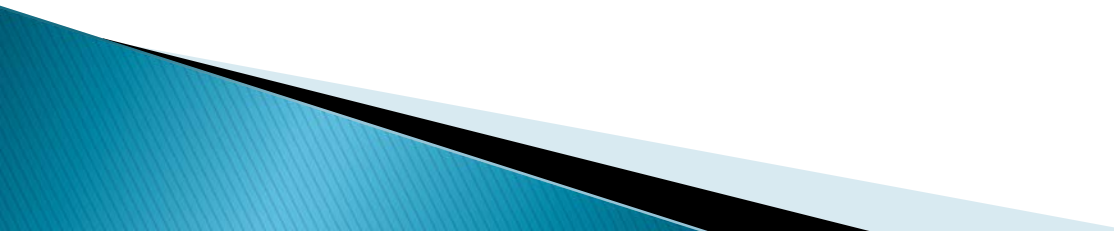
Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement

- ▶ Distinction between Program evaluations vs. performance measurement
 - Program Evaluation: More rigorous than Performance measurement; need to have external reviewers and sound research designs
 - Performance Measurement: Are intended objectives achieved? Performance Management is the key

Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement

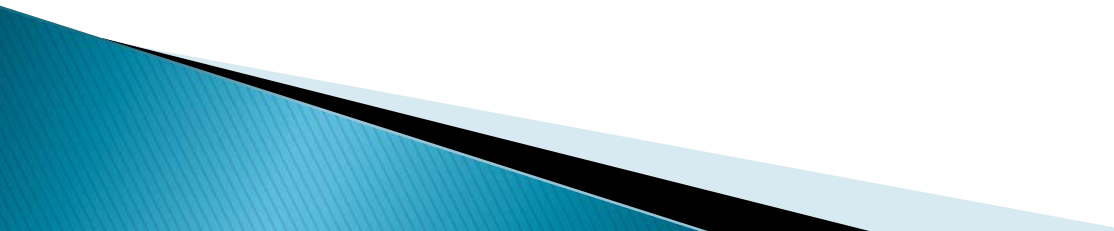
- ▶ Performance measurement is a tool for managers – an aspect of organizational management
- ▶ Performance measurement is straight forward
 - program objectives and corresponding outcomes
- ▶ **Connecting performance measurement and program evaluation**
 - both are considered result-based management
 - contribute information that informs management decisions

Why Evaluations?

1. Effectiveness of programs/policies
 2. Decision-making purpose
 3. Expand or terminate programs
 4. Needs assessment
 5. Test of hypotheses
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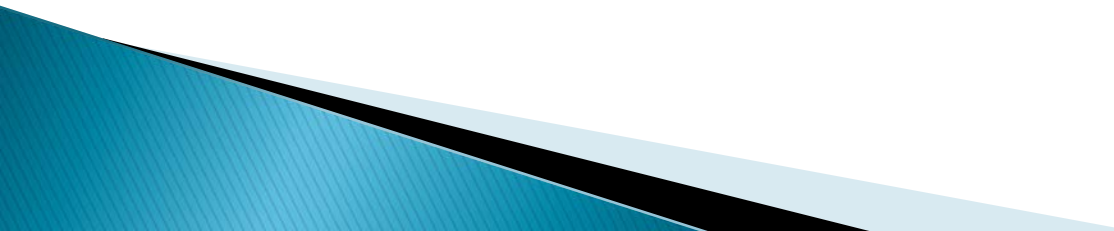
Why Evaluations?

1. Effectiveness

- ▶ Most common reason for conducting an evaluation
 - ▶ Program achieved its intended goals/objectives?
 - ▶ Are observed outcomes due to the program?
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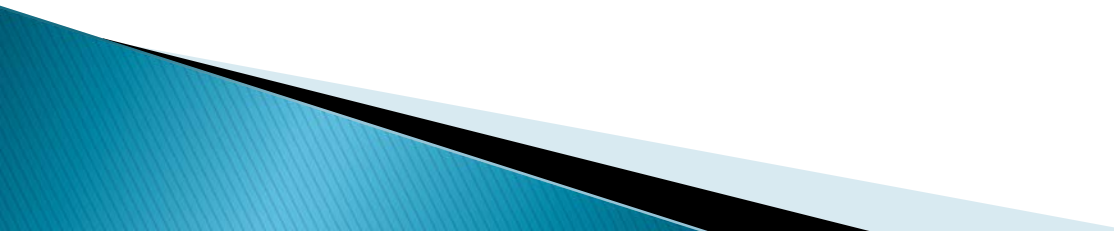
Why Evaluations?

2. Decision-making

- ▶ Goal Setting
 - ▶ Clear Objectives
 - ▶ Strategies
 - ▶ Management System
 - ▶ Performance Measurement
 - ▶ Consequences
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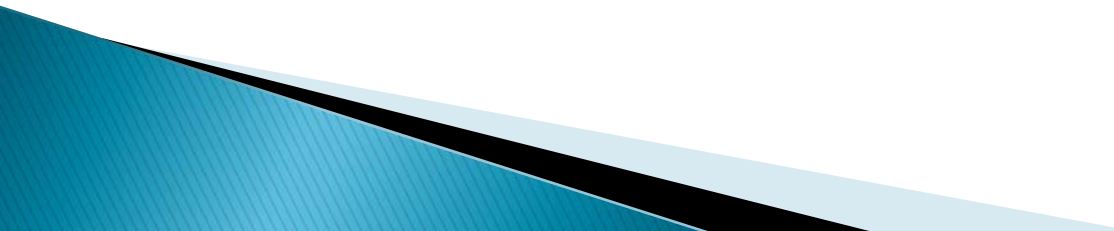
Why Evaluations?

3. Expand or terminate programs

- ▶ Cost–benefit analysis
 - ▶ Budget planning
 - ▶ Match between performance and organizational missions
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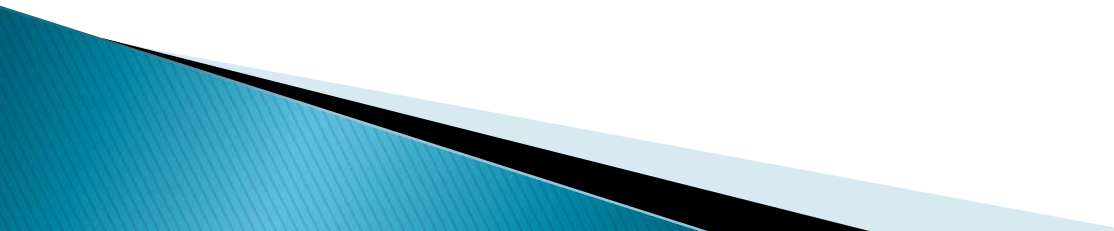
Why Evaluations?

4. Needs Assessment

- ▶ Explore need of a specific program
 - ▶ Explore target populations
 - ▶ Formative vs. Summative Evaluation
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Why Evaluations?

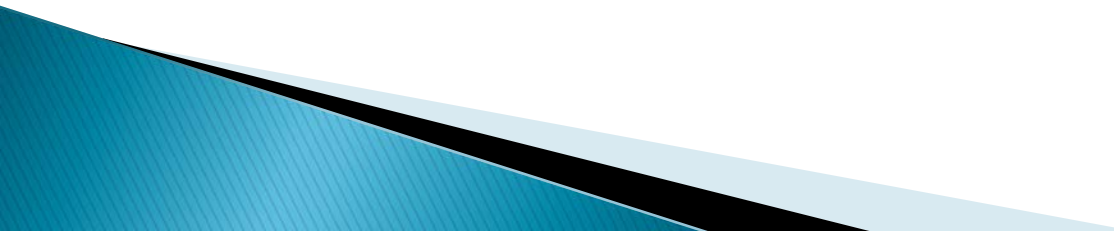
5. Hypothesis Testing

- ▶ Compare two groups (intervention and control groups)
 - ▶ Pre- and post-test of program implementation
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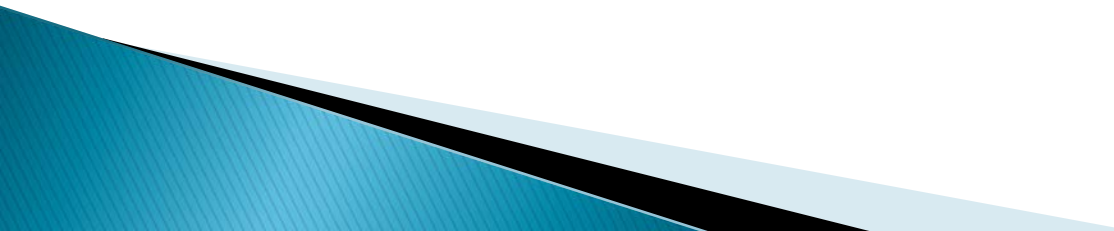
Question for the Class

- ▶ Evaluation Terminology:
 - Efficiency and effectiveness – are these two concepts the same?

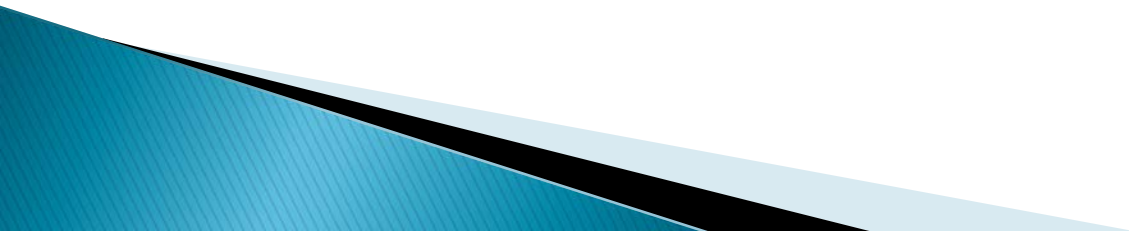
Evaluation Methods

- ▶ Survey
 - ▶ Focus group
 - ▶ Face-to-face interviews – in depth
 - ▶ Content/archival analysis
 - ▶ Mixed methods
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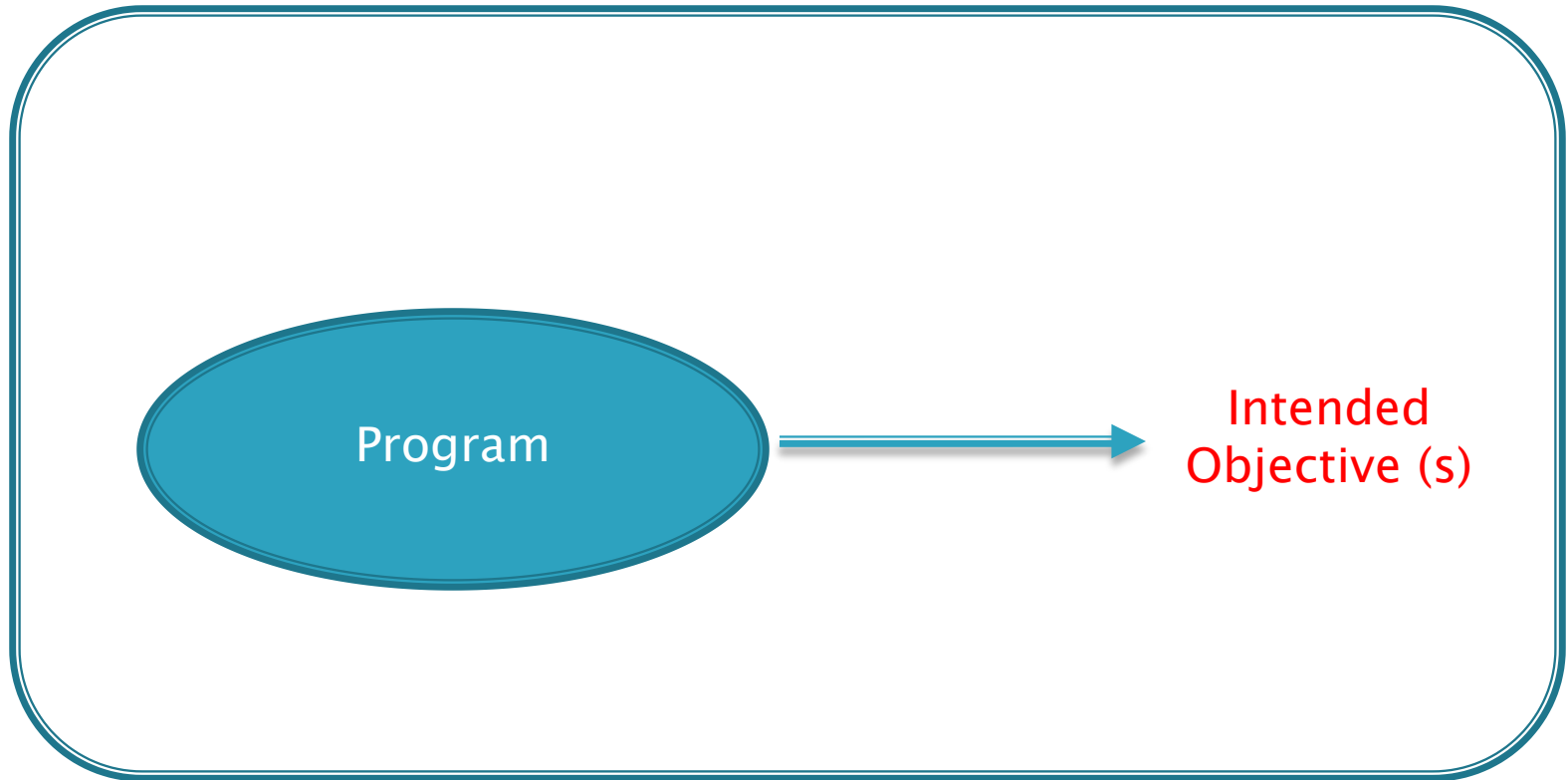
Selection of Evaluation Methods

- ▶ Based on experience
 - ▶ Purpose of evaluation (formative vs. summative)
 - *Ex ante vs. Ex post* evaluation
 - ▶ Timeline and budget
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SESSION TWO

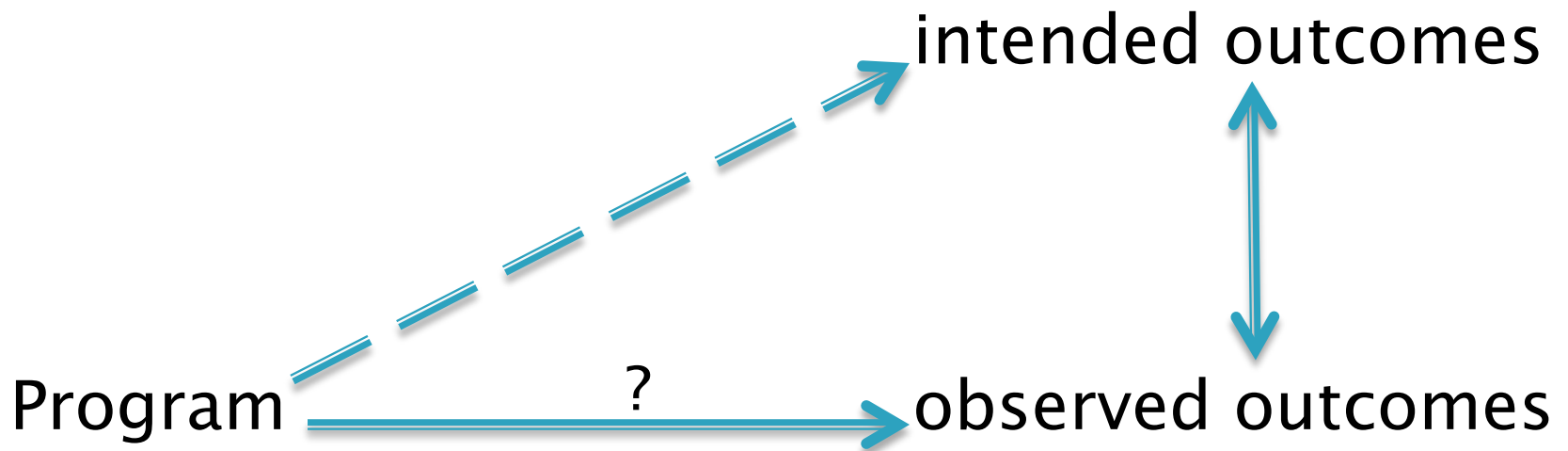


Key Concepts in Program Evaluation



Was the program effective (in achieving its intended outcomes)?


Key Concepts in Program Evaluation



Attribution
question?

Key Concepts in Program Evaluation

▶ *Key Questions:*

- To what extent, if any, were the intended objectives met?
 - **Was the program effective in achieving its intended outcomes?**
 - To what extent, if at all, was the program responsible for the observed outcomes?
 - To what extent, if at all, are the observed outcomes consistent with intended outcomes?
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Ten Key Evaluation Questions

1. What is the need for a program?

- ▶ Conduct needs assessment before options are developed (*ex ante* needs assessment)
 - gather information: quantitative or qualitative
 - compare existing programs and services with the needs
 - identify gaps to be addressed


Ten Key Evaluation Questions

2. Is the program relevant?

- ▶ Examine the original and the current directions of the program
 - ▶ Compare with current and future priorities
 - ▶ Program relevance is affected by social, economic and political issues
 - ▶ Priorities change when stake holders change
 - ▶ Relies substantially on the experiences and judgment of evaluators and stakeholders
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Ten Key Evaluation Questions

3. *Was the structure/logic of the program appropriate?*

- ▶ Focuses on the structure that is intended to transform resources into results
 - ▶ Scope and reach of the program depends on the complexity of the problem
 - ▶ Researching options e.g. comparing how similar issues were previously solved
 - ▶ Constraints in selecting the most appropriate option: time, resources and prevailing political view
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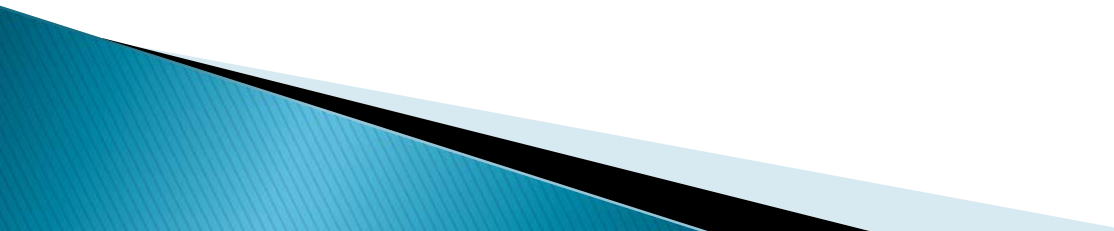
Ten Key Evaluation Questions

4. Was the program implemented as intended?

- ▶ How has the environment affected the program
 - ▶ Program objective guide the design and implementation e.g. citizenship program for seniors
 - ▶ Components/Inputs ---Activities--- and outputs
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Ten Key Evaluation Questions

5. Was the program technically efficient?

- ▶ Assesses the productivity of the program
 - ▶ Assess cost per unit of output
 - ▶ Comparing inputs with output – e.g. maximizing output while minimizing input
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Ten Key Evaluation Questions

6. *Was the program/intervention responsible for the outcomes that actually occurred?*

- ▶ Were observed outcomes due to the program or a combination of other factors

7. *Did the program achieve its intended objectives?*

- ▶ Compares activities with the outcomes that actually occurred
- ▶ Note: attaining intended outcomes is not equivalent to saying the program caused these outcomes


Ten Key Evaluation Questions

8. Cost-effectiveness – was the program cost effective?

- ▶ Compare the cost of the program with the outcome
- ▶ *Ex post* cost–after program implementation
 - Actual cost with actual outcomes
- ▶ *Ex ante* cost–before implementation
 - Compares expected cost with expected outcomes

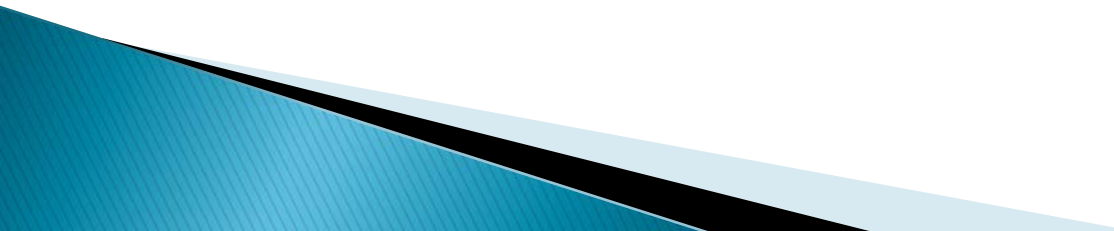
Ten Key Evaluation Questions

9. Cost-benefit analysis– was the program cost-beneficial?

- ▶ Compares the cost and the benefits of the program
 - ▶ All outcomes are converted into monetary value
 - ▶ Difficult to conduct cost benefit in public sector projects and non-profit organizations
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Ten Key Evaluation Questions

10. Was the program adequate?

- ▶ Did the program resolve the problem?
 - ▶ Was the overall objective achieved?
 - ▶ Note: Even technically efficient, cost-effective, and cost-beneficial programs may not resolve the problem for which it is intended
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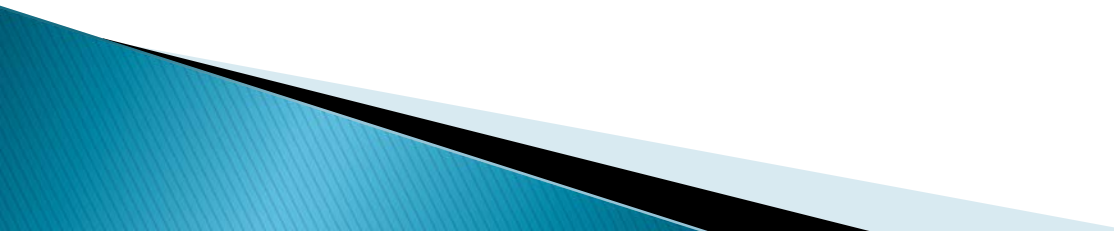
Formative and Summative Evaluation

Formative Evaluation

- ▶ Analysis of program implementation
 - ▶ Provides program managers and other stakeholders with advice intended to improve the program
 - ▶ Purpose:
 - Program improvement
 - Assesses program processes
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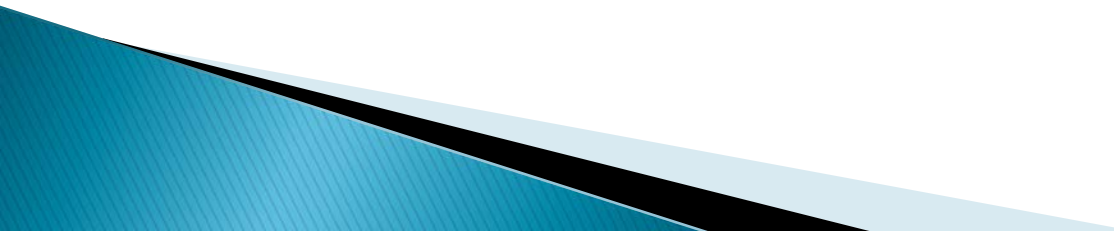
Formative and Summative Evaluation

Summative Evaluation

- ▶ Did the program achieve intended objectives
 - ▶ Purpose:
 - Assessment
 - Answer tough questions
 - Accountability
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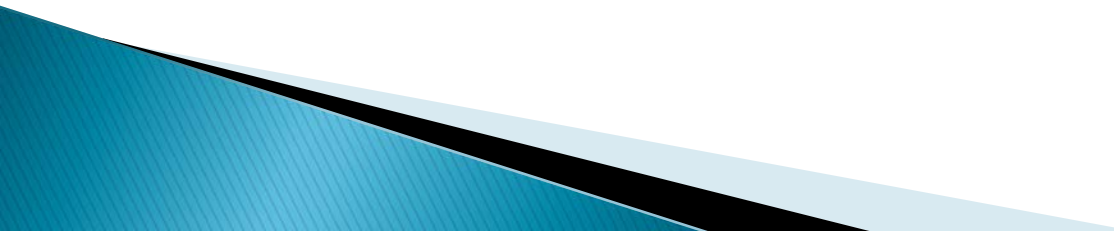
Ex ante and ex post evaluations

▶ ***Ex Ante Evaluations***

- *Conducted before program implementation*
 - Choosing one option from several alternatives
 - Cost–benefit analysis commonly used
 - Provide baseline measures
 - Useful in scaling up of pilot programs
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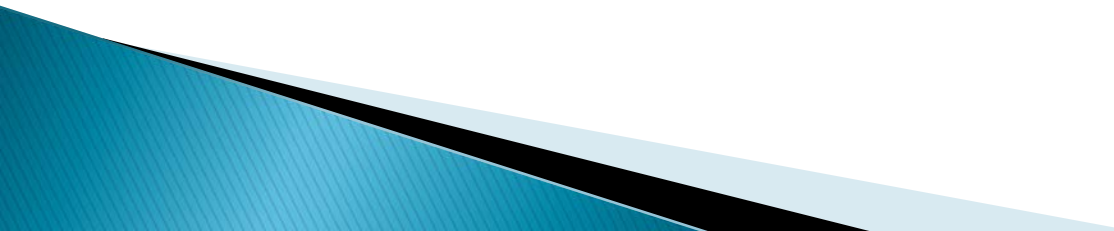
Ex ante and ex post evaluations

▶ *Ex Post Evaluations*

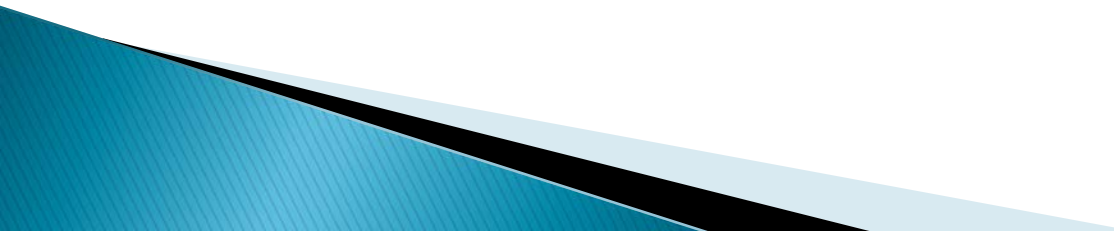
- Conducted after program has been in place
 - Rarely baseline or comparison groups are available
 - May rely on information sources that may or may not be ideal for evaluation questions at hand
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Causality in Program Evaluations

Key Theme in Evaluation:

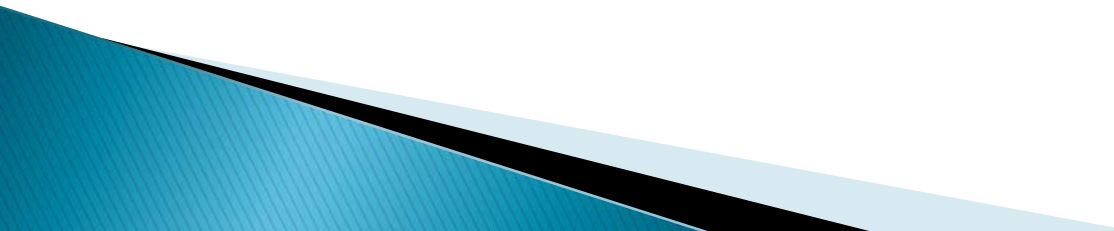
- ▶ Effectiveness of the program
 - ▶ Did the program cause the observed outcomes
 - ▶ Attribution of observed outcomes is core issue
 - ▶ Distinguishes evaluation from related disciplines
 - ▶ Evaluation act as “transmission belt” between academic and policy making
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Causality in Program Evaluations

- ▶ Conditions for observing causal relationships:
 1. Program has to precede the observed outcome
 2. Existence of correlation between the program and the outcome
 3. No other plausible explanation for the correlation
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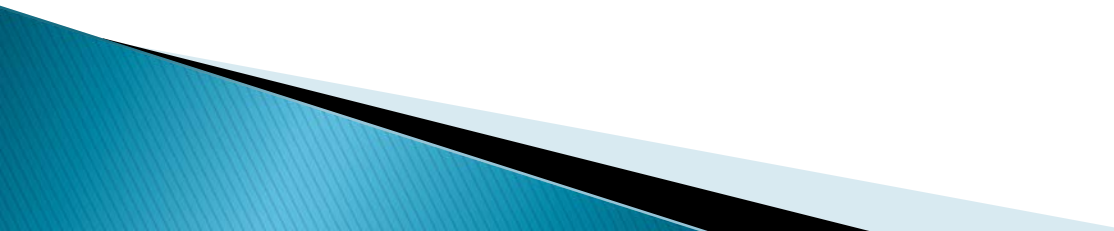
Steps in Conducting Evaluation

▶ *Assessing the Feasibility of the Evaluation*

1. Identify the clients
 2. Questions and issues driving the evaluation
 3. Available resources to conduct the evaluation
 4. What do we already know, what evaluation work has been done previously
 5. What is the program structure – Logic models
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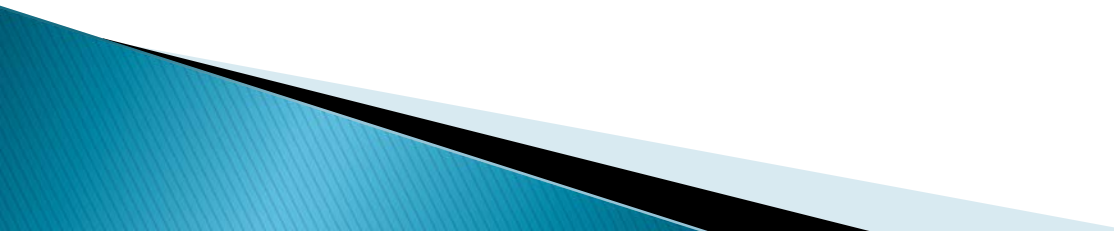
Steps in Conducting Evaluation

Assessing the Feasibility of the Evaluation

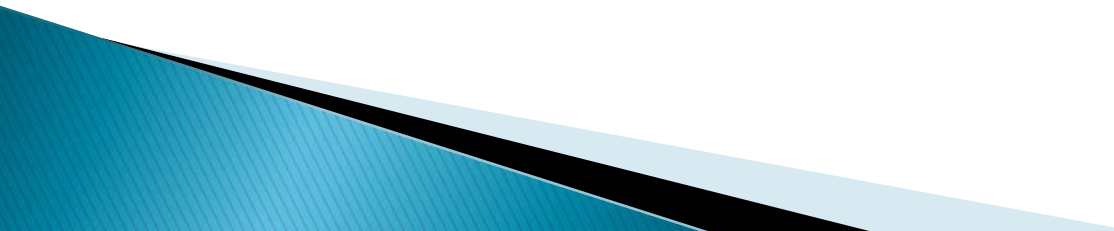
6. What kind of environment does the program operate in
 7. Research design options desirable and appropriate
 8. Data sources: availability and appropriateness
 9. Most feasible and defensible evaluation strategy
 10. Is it necessary or feasible
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Steps in Conducting Evaluation

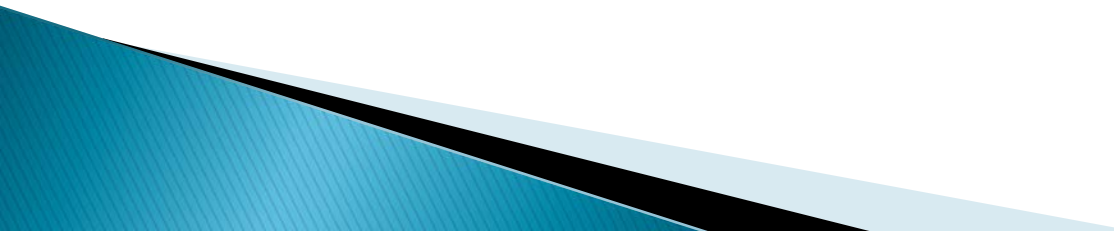
► *Doing the evaluation:*

1. Develop data collection instrument
 2. Collect appropriate data
 3. Analyze the data– focus on answering the evaluation question
 4. Write, review and finalize the report
 5. Disseminate the report
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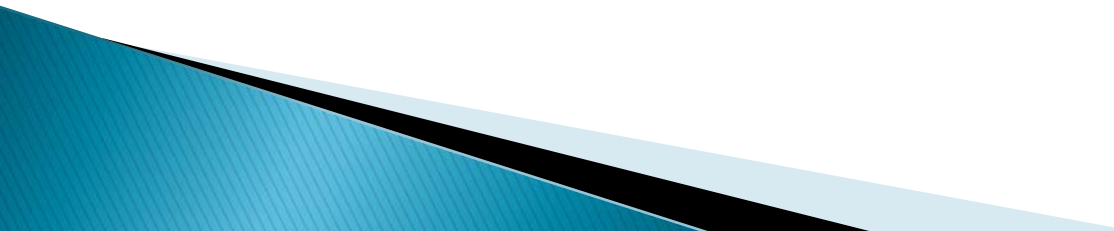
Identify Clients –Stakeholders

- ▶ Program managers
 - ▶ Agency executives
 - ▶ External agencies
 - ▶ Recipients
 - ▶ Funders of the program
 - ▶ Decision makers– governing bodies
 - ▶ Community leaders
- 


Identifying Issues and Formulating Questions

- ▶ Identifying and formulating the questions is critical
 - ▶ Role of decision makers and stakeholders in question formulation
 - ▶ Role of the evaluator
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Topics for Discussion with Stakeholders

- ▶ Why is an evaluation needed?
 - ▶ What are the program goals and objectives
 - ▶ What are the most important questions for the evaluation to answer
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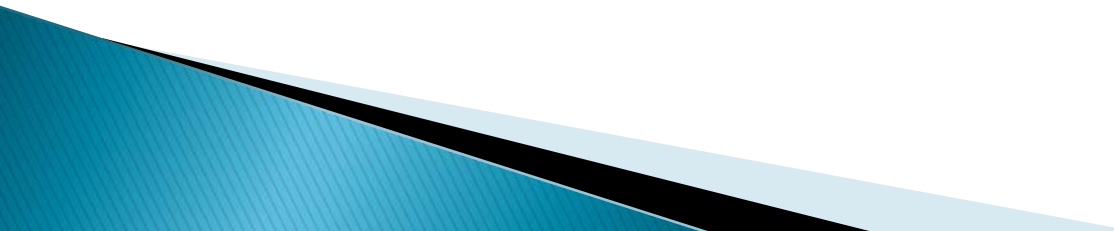
Good Evaluation Questions

- ▶ Focus on the issues that are key for decision makers and stakeholders
 - ▶ Questions –able to guide the design of data collection procedure
 - ▶ Reasonable and appropriate – relevant to the expectations of the stakeholders
 - ▶ Must identify performance dimensions – program accomplishments
 - ▶ Must be answerable – specific, concrete, practical and measurable
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Question for the Class

- ▶ Can you think of any examples of good evaluation questions?

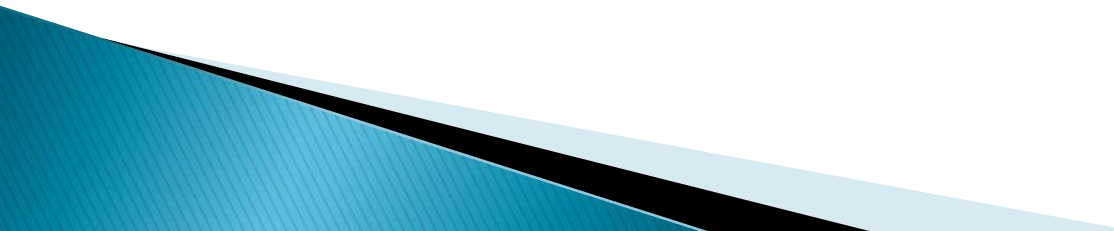
Examples of Good Evaluation Questions

- ▶ Are the counselors in a drug prevention program sufficiently caring in their relations with clients?
 - ▶ Are our education and outreach services successful in informing the public about the risk of AIDS?
 - ▶ Do our services benefit the right recipient?
 - ▶ Does a shelter for battered women empower them to take control of their lives?
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The Evaluation Hierarchy



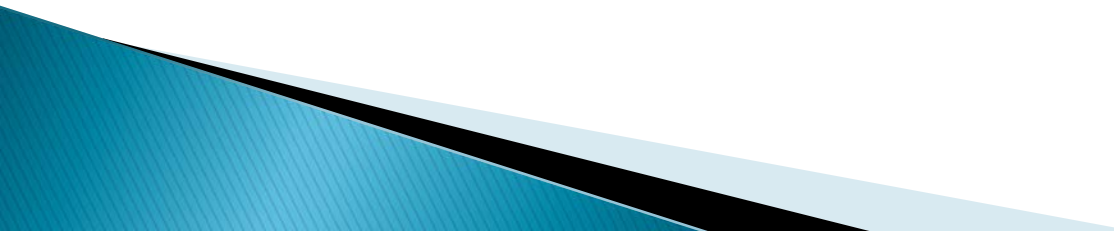
Level 1 – Needs Assessment

- ▶ Is the program needed?
 - ▶ What is the nature of the problem?
 - What is the magnitude?
 - What are the needs of the population?
 - What services are needed?
 - How much service is needed?
- 

Level 2 – Program design and theory

- ▶ How is the program designed
 - Are the planned activities the best ones/appropriate?
- ▶ Can the program reach its goals?
 - How is program designed?
 - Are the resources adequate?

Level 3– Process and Implementation Assessment

- ▶ How does the program operate?
 - ▶ Are the objectives being met?
 - ▶ What are the activities?
 - Are the activities implemented as intended?
 - Are services being delivered to target population?
- 

Level 4– Outcome/Impact Assessment

- ▶ How effective is the program?
 - Is the program meeting it's goals?
 - What are the effects on the target population?

Level 5– Cost efficiency

- ▶ How is the program performing in relation to it's cost?
- ▶ Can similar program benefits be accomplished with less cost?