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Welcome!





Module 4 –


Developing evaluation questions

Evaluation Criteria.
Evaluation Questions.
Descriptive, normative and causal questions.
Selection of questions.












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Values to evaluate







mid 19th century (earlier (mid 18th century) as *evaluation*): from French *évaluer*, from *es-* (from Latin *ex-* 'out, from' + Old French *value* 'value'.











Values






Exercise 4-1 – What do you value?


What values we should use for evaluation?


Value is a concept that has a normative orientation: absence is bad (good), presence is good (bad)





Values





Exercise 4-2 – What is your definition?


Efficiency

Impact

Sustainability

Effectiveness

Relevance







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Discussion




- Do you miss something?









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Other criteria may include




- Equity – assesses how the effects are distributed, as benefit for one target group may generate costs or other disadvantage for another group.
- Feasibility – quality of the project, is it realistic to do the activities?








Evaluation criteria



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- „Classic Five“ criteria (OECD, 1991) could be perceived as slightly obsolete, but still live in practice.
- There is no need to address all criteria in every evaluation.
- Always think what makes sense in your situation.




Watch out for impact



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- „Different people are using different definitions of ‘impact evaluation’. Since this is a purely semantic matter, neither side is right or wrong. The definitions are just different. “*
Howard White. A Contribution to Current Debates in Impact Evaluation. 2010; 16; 153 Evaluation.
<http://evi.sagepub.com/cq/content/abstract/16/2/153>
- Impact refers to the final level of the causal chain (or log frame), with impact differing from outcomes as the former refers to long-term effects. (Observable).
- Impact = the real effect attributable to the intervention („net effect“, not observable in principle).**
- Just be sure what you speak about.

To be discussed in detail in Module 5




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Classic five criticism (radical)



- Effectiveness = **Impact** = Sustainability (all three are about effects, just different variables at different time).
- Efficiency = cost effectiveness (cost per unit of **impact**) = Trivial calculation when you know the **impact**.
- Without relevance, there will be no **impact**.
- => Just impact is enough







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Criteria and questions



Evaluation criteria are the main areas of evaluation questions.












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Criteria and questions






Exercise 4-3 – Criteria and questions






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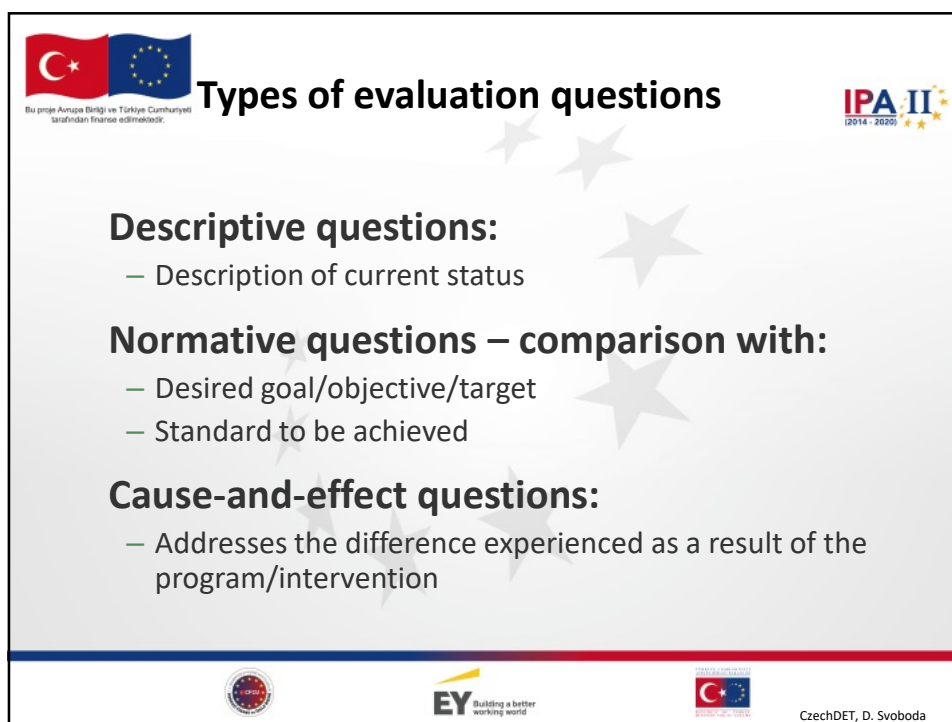
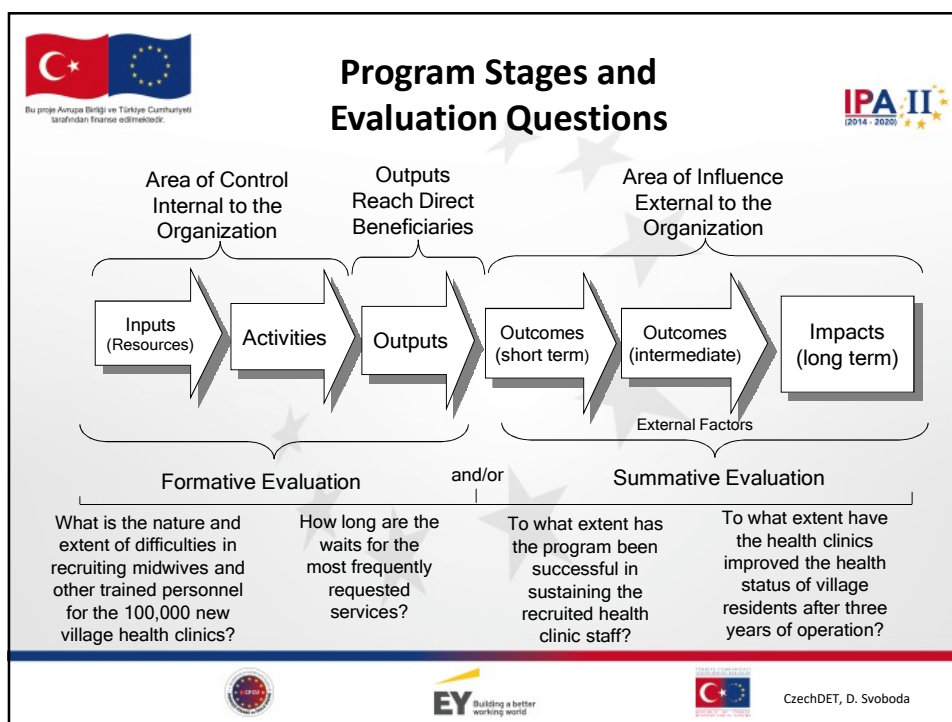
Program Stages and Evaluation Questions




Program Stage	Examples of evaluation questions
1. Prospective	What can be learned from the experiences of similar programs?
2. Early implementation	Is the program operating as planned? What issues are surfacing?
3. Mid-implementation	To what extent are there cross-site variations in how the program is being implemented?
4. Maturity	To what extent have the outcomes been achieved? Can gains be attributed to the program? Has the program had unanticipated positive or negative effects?
5. Ex-post	To what extent did the program contribute to the observed impacts?


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Descriptive questions




- **Represent „what is”**
- **Characteristics:**
 - seek to understand or describe a program or process or attitudes towards it
 - provide a „snapshot” of what is
 - are straight forward questions (who? what? where? when? how? how much/many?)
 - can be used to describe: inputs, activities, outputs
 - Often used to seek opinions from beneficiaries





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Descriptive questions



- What are the goals of the program from the perspectives of different stakeholders?
- What are the primary activities of the program?
- Where has the program been implemented?
- Who received what services?
- What obstacles has the program faced?
- What was the average gain in participant scores?
- To what extent does the program design reflect lessons learned from past similar programs?






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Descriptive questions




- What are the qualifications of service providers?
- When was the program fully implemented?
- What proportion of women participated in the program?
- How does the cost of the program compare with the costs of similar programs?
- What are the informal communication channels inside the organization?
- How useful did participants find the program?






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Descriptive questions




Important notes:

- **Questions about the proportion of clients who find the program useful or the proportion that like the training are still descriptive questions** (unless there is an established norm or standard)
- **Questions about gains or changes over a period of time – whether concerning crop production, traffic flows, trade patterns, test scores, attitudes or behaviors – are descriptive questions** (when no attribution is being sought)






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Normative questions




- **Compare „what is” to „what should be”**
- **Similar to questions asked in performance auditing**
- **Measuring against previously established criteria:**
 - Often found in program document or contract
 - May be indicators with specific targets in monitoring systems
 - May come from accreditation systems, blue-ribbon panels, professional organizations





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Normative questions



- Did we spend as much as we had budgeted?
- Was the budget spent efficiently?
- Were 80% of the nation's children vaccinated as set as a target?
- Did we meet the objective of draining 100,000 hectares of land?
- Was the process for selecting participants fair and equitable?
- To what extent does the program reflect principles of gender equity?







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Causal (Cause and Effect) Questions


- **Seek to determine what difference the intervention makes**
- **Ask whether the desired results have been achieved AND whether it is the intervention that has caused the results**
- **Imply some notion of counterfactual**
- **Impact evaluations focus on cause & effect questions**





Adopted from CzechDET,
D. Svoboda







Causal Questions

- Did the country partnership strategy preserve biodiversity of the affected area while sustaining livelihoods?
- As a result of the training program, do participants have higher paying jobs than they otherwise would have?
- Did the microenterprise program reduce the poverty rates in the townships in which they operated?
- Did the increased tax on gasoline improve air quality?
- Did the increase in financial penalties for violating firms reduce the use of under-age children in the garment industry?




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Model to Question Type



- Questions about changes in outcome measures are typically descriptive questions
- Questions about achievement of outputs are typically normative questions
- Questions about impacts are typically causal questions







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What type of question?





Exercise 4-4 – What type of question?

- Vote here: <http://etc.ch/NMwG>
- Results: <https://directpoll.com/r?XDbzPBd3ixYgg87Owfi7mrUN5cVxn2Q5V4kALzS1Z>

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How to choose right questions...



- **Divergent phase:** make a list of questions
 - Write down all questions (brainstorming)
 - Discuss the questions
 - Group the questions (topics, criteria...)
- **Convergent phase:** narrow it down
 - Select the most important questions
 - Eliminate interesting but not so important questions „nice-to-know“ (no mercy!)
 - Test if questions are answerable and if likely answers will help you





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Group work!






Task 4-A – Questions – divergent phase






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Matrix for selecting questions




Would the evaluation question...	Question # _____
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 ...
1 be of interest to key audiences?	
2 reduce present uncertainty?	
3 yield important information?	
4 be of continuing interest?	
5 be critical to the study's scope and comprehensiveness?	
6 have an impact on the course of events?	
7 be answerable in terms of ...	





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Developing Good Questions




- Begin by identifying the major issues
- Questions that include more than one issue are NOT good
- Questions about an issue can be addressed using all three questions types by adjusting the wording






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Developing Good Questions



- Establish a clear link between each evaluation question and the study purpose
- Make sure the evaluation questions address the issues of greatest concern
- Make sure all of the questions are answerable
- Set a realistic number of questions for the time available for the evaluation
- Consider the timing of the evaluation relative to the program cycle



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Group work!





Task 4-B – Questions – convergent phase







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Task 4-C – What would YOU do?











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Module 4 – Take aways



- Criteria are just areas of typical evaluation questions.
- Try to limit the number of questions (10 is too much).
- Make sure the questions are answerable.




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Exercise for reflection

 **Exercise 4-5 – Reflection of Module 4**



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