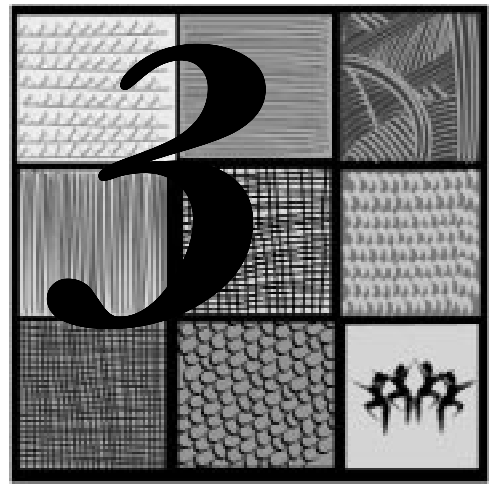

DEVELOPING AN ARH MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

- Defines program goals, outcomes and objectives
- Helps you define the scope of your ARH monitoring and evaluation effort
- Offers guidance on how to plan and conduct a monitoring and evaluation effort, using the rest of this Guide

Establishing Goals, Outcomes and Objectives for Youth Reproductive Health Programs

This section discusses the goals, program outcomes and objectives of an adolescent reproductive health program, which form the basis of your M&E effort. Each is a different expression of the reproductive health outcomes the program is trying to achieve.

Goals define the overall impact your program hopes to have.

A goal states the impact a program intends to have on a *target population.* The target population is the specific group of individuals your program is trying to affect, and can include youth as well as the adult service providers, teachers, family members or community members who interact with young people. ARH programs often have the general goal of improving the reproductive health of young people. Goals may be stated more specifically depending on the reproductive health needs of the youth population.

Note

Terminology

People working in evaluation use many different terms to describe what they do. The existing evaluation terminology is often interpreted differently in different settings, and sometimes evaluators spend too much time debating which term is best to use. In this Guide, we use terms and concepts that are intended to reflect the stages and components of youth programs as they are implemented in the field. We have defined them in ways that we hope will be understandable and accessible to those who do not have a research background.

Program outcomes are the specific results that your program hopes to achieve.

Your program's intended outcomes are related to your established goals, such as a decrease in STI rates or improvement in nutritional status. To produce these outcomes, programs focus on intermediate behavioral changes, such as the delay of sexual initiation, increased use of condoms or contraception or increased breastfeeding. Programs can establish short-term, intermediate and long-term program outcomes, as detailed on the next page.

Goal: To Improve Young Women's Reproductive Health		
Short-Term Outcome	**Intermediate Outcome**	**Long-Term Outcome**
Improve the quality of interactions between parents and youth ages 10–19 in our district.	Increase the average age at sexual initiation among youth ages 14–19 in our district.	Decrease pregnancy rates among youth ages 14–19 in our district.

Objectives are explicit, measurable statements of program outcomes.

There are two kinds of objectives: *population-level* and *program-level.*

Population-level objectives state intended results in terms of the target population and are directly related to the outcomes identified by your program. They describe what impact your program hopes to have in the youth population it aspires to reach, influence or serve. For example:

- Increase the average age at sexual initiation among youth ages 14–19 in our district by one year.
- Increase the percentage of youth ages 14–19 in our district who are actively involved in youth organizations that provide leisure activities.

Program-level objectives state intended results in terms of the structure, management or operations of a program. They describe the activities you will undertake to achieve the impact your program hopes to have. For example:

- Train 30 peer educators to provide quality counseling to youth every six months.

Measuring Objectives

How you conceptualize and express your objectives and their measures will frame your actions.

The measure of an objective should be stated in terms of targets.

Targets are the level of the objective you plan to achieve within a stated time.[1] Targets may be either *quantitative* (numeric) or *qualitative* (descriptive), depending on the nature of the activity and the indicator chosen to measure it.[2] Targets may express quantity (how much), quality (how well) or efficiency (least cost per outcome produced).

The target of population-level objectives should be defined by referring to baseline information.

Baseline information describes the current status or situation in a community before an intervention takes place. Baseline information is important because it provides points of comparison against which you will measure whether your objectives were accomplished. If baseline information is not available, you may need to collect information about the target population and its needs before your program begins. This will provide you with starting measures that can be the basis for an outcome or impact evaluation that the program undertakes later.

[1] Targets are quantitative estimates that are used for the purpose of budgeting, planning and tracking changes in outcomes. They should not be understood as quotas, or used as a basis to coerce any individual to accept services, such as contraception, that are inconsistent with his or her moral, philosophical or religious beliefs. Targets should not be used as a basis for compensation of service providers. All youth reproductive health programs should, of course, safeguard the rights, health and welfare of all individuals who take part in the program

[2] Indicators are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The source of baseline information could be:

- ➤ a survey of youth prior to the intervention;
- ➤ data documenting prior youth program experience;
- ➤ external measures collected by another organization, government agency or donor, such as government health facility utilization data;
- ➤ information on youth reproductive health obtained from a national survey, such as a Demographic and Health Survey (DHS); or
- ➤ the professional judgment of those who work with youth.

For example, your prior program experience may tell you that only 5 percent of youth are seeking counseling services from peer educators in the schools where your program functions. However, you are aware that a partner organization in a neighboring district found that 8 percent of youth sought counseling. Referring to this baseline information, you might determine that your program objective should be "Increase the percentage of youth ages 10–19 who seek counseling services from peer educators to 10 percent within one year."

- ➤ The target of program-level objectives should be defined by program experience.

To determine targets of program-level objectives, such as numbers of peer educators who should be trained, refer to program experience and resources. For example, you might determine that to reach the 500 youth in your target population, you would ultimately like to train 40 peer educators. Since your budget only allows for one training every six months, and experience has shown that training 20 peer educators at a time is most effective, you might want to set your target as training 20 peer educators every six months.

Monitoring and evaluation requires an understanding of measurement and indicators.

Measurement is the use of methods and procedures for systematic observation and assessment.[3] A variety of methods and procedures are used to collect information about your program and its target population.[4]

To measure how a program is functioning and what outcomes it is having in the target population, you will use *indicators.* An indicator is a measure of program objectives and activities.[5] Changes in indicators demonstrate that a program is functioning and the effect—positive or negative—it is having on the target population.

Information is collected on some of your objectives—both program-level and population-level—in order to measure whether a program's activities are being implemented, the quality of program implementation, to what extent the program is being utilized, or the changes that are taking place in your target population, if any. In general, information collected during a process evaluation will measure program-level objectives. Information collected during an outcome or impact evaluation will measure population-level objectives. To measure changes in objectives, baseline information is compared to data collected after the program has been operating for some period of time.

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[3] Green and Lewis, 1986.

[4] Data collection is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

[5] Indicators are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

How to Translate Goals and Outcomes Into Objectives		
Goal: • Improve the reproductive health of youth ages 10– 19 in our district.	To translate to outcomes, describe the specific results your program hopes to achieve.	**Outcomes:** • Increase condom use among sexually active youth ages 15– 19 in our district. • Increase the number of sexually active youth under the age of 19 who discuss condoms with their partners.
Outcomes: • Increase condom use among sexually active youth ages 15– 19 in our district. • Increase the number of sexually active youth under the age of 19 who discuss condoms with their partners.	To translate outcomes into population objectives, refer to baseline data: The most recent DHS found that 5 percent of youth ages 15– 19 in your district use condoms at first intercourse. A baseline survey conducted by your organization found that 15 percent of sexually active youth ages 15– 19 have ever discussed condoms with their current sexual partners.	**Population-level objectives:** • Increase condom use at first intercourse by youth ages 15 – 19 in your district to 10 percent within one year. • Increase the number of sexually active youth under the age of 19 in your district who have ever discussed condoms with their current sexual partner to 25 percent within one year.
Outcomes: • Increase condom use among sexually active youth ages 15– 19 in our district. • Increase the number of sexually active youth under the age of 19 who discuss condom use with their partners.	To translate outcomes into program-level objectives, describe the activities you will undertake to achieve the outcomes.	**Program-level objectives:** • Train 25 peer educators to hold skills-building sessions with youth ages 15– 19 about condom use and negotiation. • Hold 30 skills-building sessions with youth ages 15– 19 about condom use and negotiation.

Monitoring, process evaluation, outcome evaluation and impact evaluation involve the following steps:

- ➤ agreeing on the scope and objectives of your M&E plan with stakeholders,
- ➤ selecting indicators,
- ➤ systematically and consistently collecting information on those indicators,
- ➤ analyzing the information gathered,
- ➤ comparing the results with the program's initial goals and objectives, and
- ➤ sharing results with stakeholders, including youth.

A strong M&E plan should use indicators to measure both population-level and program-level objectives.

Population-level objectives relate most directly to the sexual and reproductive health outcomes your program hopes to achieve. However, they are often difficult to measure because they deal with sensitive issues, such as whether or not young people are having sex. You should always try to measure population-level objectives related to intermediate behavioral outcomes, but you may have difficulty doing so.

Measuring short-term objectives related to the risk and protective factors your program thinks influence young people's behavior is important for two reasons. First, in the absence of showing changes in behavior, the achievement of short-term objectives is a good sign that your program is producing outcomes. Second, measuring short-term objectives also helps test your assumptions about the factors that influence the behavior and decision making of young people. This information may provide insights into how your program strategy is working, or not working, to influence the behavior that produces the long-term reproductive health outcomes you are concerned with.

Measuring program-level objectives is an important part of understanding how your program is working. Program-level objectives are measured during a process evaluation, and provide information on how a program is functioning. A process evaluation may offer insights into why your program is having an impact (or not) and is important if you plan to scale up or replicate the strategy your program uses.

Defining the Scope of an M&E Effort

Scope refers to the extent of the activity you will undertake in a monitoring and evaluation effort. The scope of your M&E effort is determined by several factors. Ask yourself six key questions:

- What should be monitored and evaluated?
- When should ARH programs be monitored and evaluated?
- How much will M&E cost?
- Who should be involved in M&E?
- Who should carry out the evaluation?
- Where should M&E take place?

Each is discussed below.

What Should Be Monitored and Evaluated?

M&E can measure each stage of your program's development: design, systems development and functioning, and implementation. After you have developed goals, objectives and activities, your next step is to make decisions about M&E in each of these stages. Your M&E effort can measure each stage to determine how the program is working and its impact on the target population. You can review each stage for ideas and options for M&E efforts.

Program design is measured by process evaluation.

A community needs assessment often forms the basis for program design. The process of program design involves developing a strategy or systematic approach to address the community's needs, identifying actions and activities required to implement the strategy, and identifying the resources needed to carry out the activities. Assessing how well a program has been designed is one aspect of process evaluation because the program design affects the success of a program. Documenting the problems with program design will help explain why a program did not achieve its objectives; conversely, if a program is successful, documenting will help explain what key design elements contributed to its success. Those elements can then be used to expand or replicate a program. Chapter 5 includes information on how to monitor and evaluate the design stage of a program.

Worksheet 3.1 Identifying Program Goals, Outcomes, Context and Objectives	
1. What are the program' s goals?	
2. What short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes does your program hope to achieve?	
3. What short-term, population-level objectives does your program hope to achieve (including objectives related to antecedent factors)?	
4. What intermediate, population-level objectives does your program hope to achieve?	
5. What are the program-level objectives? How will you achieve the population-level objectives stated above?	
6. What activities will be implemented by the program?	
7. Who are the stakeholders of the program?	
8. How might the local political or cultural context affect the program?	
9. Will current economic conditions affect program implementation or participation by youth?	

Systems development and functioning is measured through monitoring and process evaluation.

Systems development involves the creation of a management and support system to carry out the program. Support systems include MIS, financial management systems, personnel systems, and commodities and logistics systems. Conducting preparatory activities such as recruiting and training staff, developing curricula, drafting service guidelines and developing IEC or behavior change communication (BCC) materials is an important part of systems development.

Systems functioning involves the ongoing performance of the systems used to operate the program and includes issues such as how decisions are made within the program, whether internal and external communication channels are functioning well, how well coordination between regional programs and headquarters is conducted, whether training and supervision are ensuring quality performance, and personnel job descriptions and job performance.

If you are able to document how a program's systems are functioning, this will help explain why a program is—or is not—working. To determine how a program's systems are functioning, monitoring and process evaluation should:

- ➤ document the development of support systems and determine if they are actually operating once program implementation begins;
- ➤ assess the performance of support systems; and
- ➤ measure how effective the preparatory activities are in readying program personnel for program implementation.

Implementation is measured through monitoring, process evaluation and outcome/impact evaluation.

Implementation is the process of carrying out program activities with the target population and providing services to them, i.e., the actual performance of your planned activities. For example, the activities of a youth center may include hiring and training staff and volunteers, holding educational sessions at the center, involving youth in developing leisure activities and providing counseling services to young people.

Documenting the problems with program design will help explain why a program did not achieve its objectives and—if successful—what key design elements contributed to the success.

Monitoring and process evaluation reveal how program implementation is occurring. Outcome and impact evaluation help determine whether your program is achieving its objectives by measuring changes in outcomes in your target population. Together, this information should help you explain why the program is—or is not—reaching its objectives, and contributes to an understanding of program outcomes.

Activities	Monitoring & Process Evaluation	Outcome & Impact Evaluation
Design Stage • Determine whether peer educators are an effective way to reach your target population.	• Were youth in the target population consulted about whether they thought peer educators would be effective?	N/A
Systems Development & Functioning Stage • Develop curricula to train peer educators. • Recruit, select and train peer educators.	• How many peer educators are recruited, selected and trained? • What is the quality of the training provided to peer educators?	N/A
Implementation Stage • Peer educators provide counseling three afternoons a week in five health clinics.	• How many youth are counseled by peer educators? • What is the quality of the counselin provided by peer educators?	• Do changes in knowledge, attitudes and behavior occur among youth who are counseled by peer educators?

The goals, objectives and activities of your program shape the scope of what will be monitored and evaluated.

By identifying every activity your program has undertaken at the design, systems and implementation stages, you define the scope of your M&E effort. At each stage, your activities should be monitored and/or evaluated. The table on the next page illustrates how activities undertaken at each stage of a peer education program might be monitored and evaluated. Identifying your activities at each stage and defining the possibilities for M&E is the first step in determining scope.

How you plan to use M&E information shapes what will be monitored and evaluated.

Your intended use of M&E information will help you determine the scope of your M&E effort. Possible uses include the following:

➤ **Ensuring that program activities are carried out as planned:** If so, you will need to track changes in program-level objectives through an effective monitoring system.

➤ **Assessing how well activities are being carried out and making improvements as needed during the course of program implementation:** If so, you should undertake a process evaluation.

➤ **Determining whether changes in outcome indicators are occurring in the target population for your program:** If so, you should conduct an outcome evaluation. If you have more resources and are interested in showing how much of the observed change in outcome indicators is due to your program, then you should conduct an impact evaluation.

Reasons to Monitor and Evaluate: Different Needs for Different Stakeholders

By developing consensus among stakeholders about what information should be collected, given your available resources, you can make an M&E effort more manageable.

Program Managers and Staff	Funding Agencies and Policymakers	Communities and Youth
What M&E Measures: • Quality of activities and/or services • Why some sites are less successful • Capacity in M&E techniques • Program coverage	**What M&E Measures:** • Evidence of achievement of program objectives • Program outcomes and impact • Program cost-efficiency • Data about youth reproductive health	**What M&E Measures:** • Youth behaviors related to reproductive health • Young people's needs • How program funds are being spent • The process and impact of community participation
What M&E Results Identify: • Priorities for strategic planning • Training and supervision needs • How to improve reporting to funding agency • Feedback from clients • Why program is not accomplishing what it set out to do	**What M&E Results Identify:** • Priorities for strategic program funding • Programs that qualify for donor assistance • Best practices that donor should require of youth programs • Impact of donor assistance	**What M&E Results Identify:** • Actual and potential benefits of youth programs • Need for new and better youth services • Community resources that can be used to support ARH programs • Need for local support for ARH issues and action
What Decisions Are Guided by M&E Results: • Resource allocation • Replication and scaling up of interventions • Fund-raising • Motivating staff • Policy advocacy • Community mobilization	**What Decisions Are Guided by M&E Results:** • How much funding should be allocated to ARH • What types of youth programs should be funded • Which program approaches should be presented as models • New strategic objectives, activities or results packages • Replication and scaling up of successful programs	**What Decisions Are Guided by M&E Results:** • The degree to which community members and youth should participate in and support the program • How to better coordinate community actions to address ARH • How many and what type of local resources should be allocated to ARH

➤ **Responding to donors' requirements:** Some donors may require programs to undertake outcome or impact evaluations.

➤ **Understanding how your program is performing and what outcomes it is influencing:** This will help you decide whether to continue, change or expand your program strategy.

When Should ARH Programs Be Monitored and Evaluated?

Monitoring and process evaluation should occur throughout the life of a program. The information you collect can be used to ensure that you are meeting objectives, to improve program performance and to provide feedback and support to staff and program participants.

If You Start M&E Too Late . . .

- you may not have baseline information on the status of your target population before your program began;
- the information you collect will be less meaningful;
- the information will not be useful to make improvements in program strategy; and
- your evaluation results will be less conclusive about whether changes in outcomes occurred, or whether changes can be attributed to your program' s activities.

Outcome and impact evaluations are usually done near the end of a program, although they often use baseline information gathered at the program's start. An impact evaluation has to be included in a program's design from the beginning or you will not have the type of baseline information needed to measure changes in outcomes and then attribute them to your program.

It is very important not to conduct an outcome or impact evaluation prematurely. For some intended outcomes, such as changes in risk behaviors, program activities need to be carried out for some time, perhaps several years, before changes in the target population can be observed. In this case, outcome or impact evaluation may take place after the program has been fully functioning for some time.

When to conduct evaluations should be based on your program's objectives, the needs of various stakeholders for information about the program, your knowledge of the program, available resources and your judgment as a manager. The point in your program at which you start an M&E effort will determine the type of monitoring and evaluation you can undertake.

Starting M&E at the beginning of a program is ideal.

Monitoring and evaluation should be planned—and started—at the beginning of any new program. Early planning allows you to define your M&E effort based on your objectives and activities, and to be strategic about what you plan to measure. It also enables you to find existing information and collect baseline information at the ideal time—your program's starting point. This will allow you to conduct either outcome or impact evaluations with greater ease and enhances your ability to measure the program's true impact. Starting monitoring and process evaluation early also allows you to use M&E results to make improvements in the program as it is being implemented. Finally, starting early allows you to ensure that M&E costs are adequately covered by your budget.

Flow of an M&E Effort Started at the Beginning of a Program			
Stage of Program	**Monitoring**	**Process**	**Outcome/Impact**
Early	Set up monitoring system (MIS); identify indicators and instruments; plan for tracking program, data analysis and reporting.	Assess systems development and functioning, including training and supervision of staff. Provide early feedback. Assess if program is responsive to youth or if it needs any additions.	Identify objectives and indicators. Take baseline measurements. Create an outcome or impact evaluation plan.
Middle	Assess MIS and data. Modify if original system is inadequate or if program adds new components. If program is not performing as planned, launch process evaluation.	Conduct more formal mid-term process evaluation to assess quality of program performance. Determine coverage, or whether the program is reaching its intended audience.	Take mid-term measurements. Analyze short-term outcome measures, such as changes in knowledge, increase in use of programs and changes in contextual factors. Provide feedback to program.
Late	Analyze data from tracking system to conclude if you conducted the program as planned. Prepare and submit reports.	Analyze end-of-program measurements. Determine what was done to improve quality of program' s implementation. Make recommendations for program replication or expansion.	Take end-of-program (follow-up) measurements. Examine evidence of changes in outcomes. Depending on study design, conduct impact analysis to conclude whether outcomes are attributable to program activities. Report to donors and other stakeholders.

Some activities can still be measured if M&E is started in the middle of a program.

You may realize that you need an M&E plan later—after the program has started. If you start your M&E effort in the middle of your program, its scope will probably be limited. It may still be possible to conduct an outcome evaluation, but you will probably have to use baseline information taken after the program's start. While the results may not be as clear and strong, they may still be useful. While an MIS can be set up mid-program to track monitoring and process evaluation results, it will be less useful than one launched at the beginning.

Even fewer activities can be measured if M&E is started toward the end of a program.

Some program managers may not think about what they are going to monitor or evaluate until the program is almost complete. If you start your M&E effort at the end of your program, your options are severely limited. First, it is of little use to set up a monitoring system at the end of a program. While you can assess program activities in retrospect (by soliciting participant and stakeholder feedback after the program is well underway), you may produce biased results. Finally, while an outcome evaluation is possible, it will have to rely on external standards—estimates of the plausible status in your community before the intervention took place—as comparison data. These standards may or may not accurately reflect the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of your target population before the program began, thereby limiting your ability to demonstrate change in outcomes.

How much will M&E cost?

Your financial resources will influence the level of evaluation you take on. Program managers must determine whether the time, effort and cost of an evaluation are justified in light of the expected benefits. If you have no staff capable of conducting an evaluation—or cannot release trained staff from other duties to concentrate on doing sound M&E—and if you cannot afford to hire an outside evaluator, you may elect to carry out only a very basic review of your program's progress.

> ***An impact evaluation has to be designed into a program from the beginning or you will not have the type of baseline information needed to measure changes in outcomes and attribute them to your program.***

If you have few resources, your first priority should be to establish a monitoring system.

The best use of limited resources is to establish an effective monitoring system, so that you can ensure and document that your program was implemented according to plan.

If additional resources are available, undertake some form of process evaluation.

Some types of process evaluation can be done quite inexpensively, e.g., by having supervisors periodically observe service delivery or interview program clients as part of their duties. More systematic process evaluations (such as conducting focus groups with youth) require more resources.

Outcome evaluations require a moderate to high level of resources.

You will need to decide early if you are going to do an outcome evaluation so that you can budget accordingly. The cost will largely depend on how many outcomes you want to measure and the level of difficulty involved in measuring them. It will also depend on what data sources already exist and how much new data you will need to collect. The following steps can help you contain the costs of an outcome evaluation:

- ➤ Limit the outcomes to be examined to only the most important ones for your program.
- ➤ Choose outcomes that can be measured using less costly data collection methods.[6]
- ➤ Choose indicators for which data already exist.

Impact evaluations require an even higher level of financial and technical resources.

Impact evaluations should only be undertaken when there is a compelling reason for doing so, such as to demonstrate the efficacy of a program strategy in a particular target population, or to meet government or donor requirements.

[6] Data collection methods are discussed in Chapter 7.

Whatever resources you have, be creative in using them.

There are many ways to collect data. Programs often collect too much data, either collecting data about too many issues, collecting data that does not relate to their objectives or activities, or using different methods to collect the same data from the same target population. Spending a lot of resources on data collection does not guarantee that you will end up with results that help you better understand your program and participants.

Managing an M&E effort requires planning and creativity. Think carefully about the types of information you need to collect. Find ways to collect data that relate to the outcomes you hope to achieve, the meaning of your program for participants and the factors that influence why your program is succeeding.

Budgeting for an M&E effort is an important part of planning.

The worksheet on the following page will help you think about how to calculate the costs of each category in an M&E budget and can be used as a reference when preparing detailed estimates for each budget item. However, some decisions—such as what indicators and data collection methods will be used, and the frequency and timing of data collection—will be based on material discussed in Chapters 4–8 and should also be considered before you finalize your M&E budget.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN M&E?

M&E efforts should involve many stakeholders, as many people in the community have an interest in M&E. Stakeholders may include program staff, youth, school administrators and teachers, parents, community leaders, local government officials, service providers and donors. They may be active or want to be involved in some or all phases of an evaluation: planning and design; collecting and analyzing data; identifying the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of an evaluation; disseminating the results; and, finally, planning how evaluation results can be used to improve a program.

It is important to involve staff and stakeholders such as community members and youth in the discussion of how M&E information will be used.

Stakeholder involvement can make M&E efforts more relevant and effective.

Participatory evaluation facilitates the identification of local needs and priorities, and places evaluation issues in the context of people's lives. Involving stakeholders can help you achieve the following M&E goals:

- Develop consensus about the key issues to be addressed in an evaluation.
- Identify what information stakeholders need about the program.
- Ensure that program staff understand the need for evaluation, their role in its implementation and how the results will be used to improve the program.
- Avoid intrusive or inappropriate evaluation methods.
- Create open lines of communication among stakeholders for later dissemination and discussion of evaluation results.

Worksheet 3.2
Preparing an M&E Budget

Item	Amount of Funds Needed	Source of Financial Support	Source of In-Kind Support
Salaries: For the personnel needed for technical assistance, data collection, data entry and analysis (staff, interviewers, supervisors, drivers, etc.)			
Per diem: Daily costs for lodging and food Travel: Bus or taxi fares, gasoline, vehicle rental and maintenance			
Printing: Survey questionnaires, interview guides, final reports, etc.			
Equipment: E.g., bicycles and computers (and including maintenance)			
Communication: Telephone, fax, computer, radio, postage, etc.			
Supplies: Paper, computer diskettes, pencils, portfolios, etc.			
Dissemination activities: Seminar or conference costs, refreshments, materials, portfolios, presentation supplies, etc.			
TOTAL			

Stakeholders can also help increase the knowledge of external evaluators about the program context and develop opportunities for continued contact between those conducting the evaluation and those affected by it.[7]

Participatory evaluation is one way to involve the most important stakeholders—youth.

Young people targeted by the program are its most important stakeholders. However, some adult program managers and staff may find it difficult to work with youth on a regular basis, given the many differences that can exist between the generations in terms of attitudes, behaviors and beliefs.

Participatory evaluation is a set of techniques that emphasize community involvement in gathering knowledge and help place issues of concern in the context of people's lives. This experiential knowledge aids in directing appropriate responses and defines the array of services offered. Participation generally takes place throughout all phases of the evaluation: planning and design, gathering and analyzing data, disseminating results and preparing an action plan to improve program performance.[8] Program planners in the United States have found some effective strategies for working with youth that have application across many social settings, and which are presented in the box at right.

Tips for Involving Youth in Participatory M&E[9]

Tip	Examples
Integrate young people into program efforts and M&E planning.	Schedule meetings in accessible locations. Maintain communication and convey needed information. Encourage full participation and voting rights.
Be open and nonjudg-mental about young people's insights and suggestions.	Guard against dismissing or reacting negatively to young people's suggestions. Make time for them to feel comfortable and participate fully. Solicit their ideas and opinions.
Take advantage of the expertise young people offer.	Encourage youth to share their knowledge and perspectives about positive or negative program effects.
Be honest about expectations for the program, young people's contributions and benefits of youth participation.	Do not claim that the program can solve all problems. Be realistic about what you can tackle.
Offer support for young people.	Provide mentoring, financial assistance, transportation, training, supervision and information.
Make work interactive and fun.	Be creative and allow youth to be creative. Design programs that are informative, fun and fulfilling.
Help build young people's skills so they can become more involved.	Provide information and build skills that increase youth's confidence. Allow them to practice ways to communicate with different audiences.

Involving stakeholders and youth can raise problems.

Disadvantages to involving stakeholders, especially those from other organizations, include the following:

- It may be difficult to be objective in selecting representative young people and organizations to participate in the evaluation.
- Stakeholders may not know much about how a program works.
- Organizations may hold competing perceptions and concerns that are difficult to resolve or prioritize.

[7] Lawrence, 1989.

[8] USAID CDIE, 1996.

[9] Adapted from Clark, Haughton-Denniston, Flinn, et al., 1993, cited in Brindis and Davis, 1998b: Volume 4, p. 49.

- The ability of an evaluation to be independent may be compromised by including diverse organizations.
- More participants may require a greater allocation of your staff time and resources.[10]

WHO SHOULD CARRY OUT THE EVALUATION?

Evaluations can be done by your own staff, by those outside your program or by a combination of the two. When deciding who will carry out an evaluation, you should consider several issues. First, what is the most appropriate structure for the evaluation team? Second, what is feasible? What are you able to afford, given your budget? You may find that it is simply too cumbersome or inefficient to involve all stakeholders in every M&E activity.

Funding agencies sometimes require that evaluations be carried out, at least in part, by outside evaluators.

Using staff to carry out evaluation has advantages.

In-house staff members are familiar with the program and can be trained quickly. They also may be aware of particular program strengths or weaknesses that require attention. Finally, the results of the evaluation will be most useful to program staff, who are positioned to modify and improve the program accordingly. Using staff may also be more financially feasible, as outside evaluators are often more expensive. Also, for financial or logistical reasons, outside evaluators may only be available for a limited time.

Using outside evaluators is more appropriate in some situations.

Funding agencies sometimes require that evaluations be carried out, at least in part, by outside evaluators. Since they have less stake in the outcome of the evaluation, outside evaluators are perceived to be more objective in drawing conclusions and tend to have more credibility. However, while maintaining objectivity, outside evaluators must be sensitive to program goals and the local context within which the program is implemented. Rather than posing a threat, evaluators should be considered in light of their role as part of the support system for the program.

When staff resources are limited, using outside evaluators may be more feasible.

Whether to use in-house staff or outside evaluators also depends on the available time and expertise of your program staff, as evaluations can be very demanding. You will need to assess the experience and skills of your staff in conducting M&E, and how much time they will have to spend on these efforts. You will also need to consider which staff must be involved, how vacations and holidays may affect their availability, and whether you need any outside help. Ideally, youth and other significant stakeholders should participate to the extent possible. In some cases, evaluation may be coupled with technical assistance as part of a broader approach to enhance the effectiveness of the program and to train in-house staff.

[10] Lawrence, 1989.

WHERE SHOULD M&E TAKE PLACE?

If your program has only one or two sites or covers a small geographic area, you can more easily conduct monitoring and evaluation efforts for the entire area or set of sites. However, if your program covers a larger area or multiple sites, you may need to narrow the geographic scope of the effort. How you select the sites or areas to be included in your M&E effort will depend on your information needs and financial and human resources.

Make an effort to monitor each program site.

As monitoring is essential for effective program management, you should try to include all program sites in the collection of basic information—such as whether planned activities have been completed and the number and sex of clients that have been served by your program. This will provide a picture of how program implementation is progressing, as well as allow you to compare how sites perform in relation to one another. If some of your program sites have greater capacity to collect data than others, you might consider having them gather additional monitoring data that will be helpful in answering other questions about program implementation.

If it is not possible to collect the same monitoring data from all sites, you probably should not implement a program there unless you are absolutely sure that the strategy will work without monitoring. For many strategies—for example, peer education— monitoring is essential to ensure that the program is being implemented as planned. If you determine that monitoring is not needed for a program to work well, you can choose to monitor only parts that you think are “representative” of the sites in your program. How to choose a representative sample of sites is discussed in Chapter 6.

You probably will have to limit data collection for evaluation.

For example, it is rarely possible in process evaluations to evaluate every service contact or obtain feedback about the program from every participant. In larger programs, you might also have to limit process evaluations to only a sample of your program sites.

The advantage of using in-house staff members is that they are familiar with the program and can be trained quickly.

Most outcome and impact evaluations also require that some restrictions be applied about where data will be collected. This is especially true when program objectives pertain to outcomes measured for the general population of youth. Here, it will usually be necessary to collect data from youth in only a sub-set or sample of the geographic areas covered by a program.

Choosing sites for conducting evaluations requires careful consideration.

Sometimes a program does not have a clearly defined geographical area of influence. If the area of influence of a program is defined very broadly, such as an entire city or region, then it may be more difficult to measure changes in objectives even if the program performs optimally.

In choosing sites or geographic areas for conducting evaluations, ask yourself these key questions:

- What geographic area does the program reach?
- How many sites or geographic areas do I need to conduct a strong evaluation?
- Do these sites represent the characteristics of the youth target population and the program being implemented?
- How many observations do I need per site or geographic area?
- How should I go about choosing the sites or geographic areas?

Many of these issues are addressed in Chapters 5 and 6. The following practical considerations will also likely influence your decision about where to evaluate:

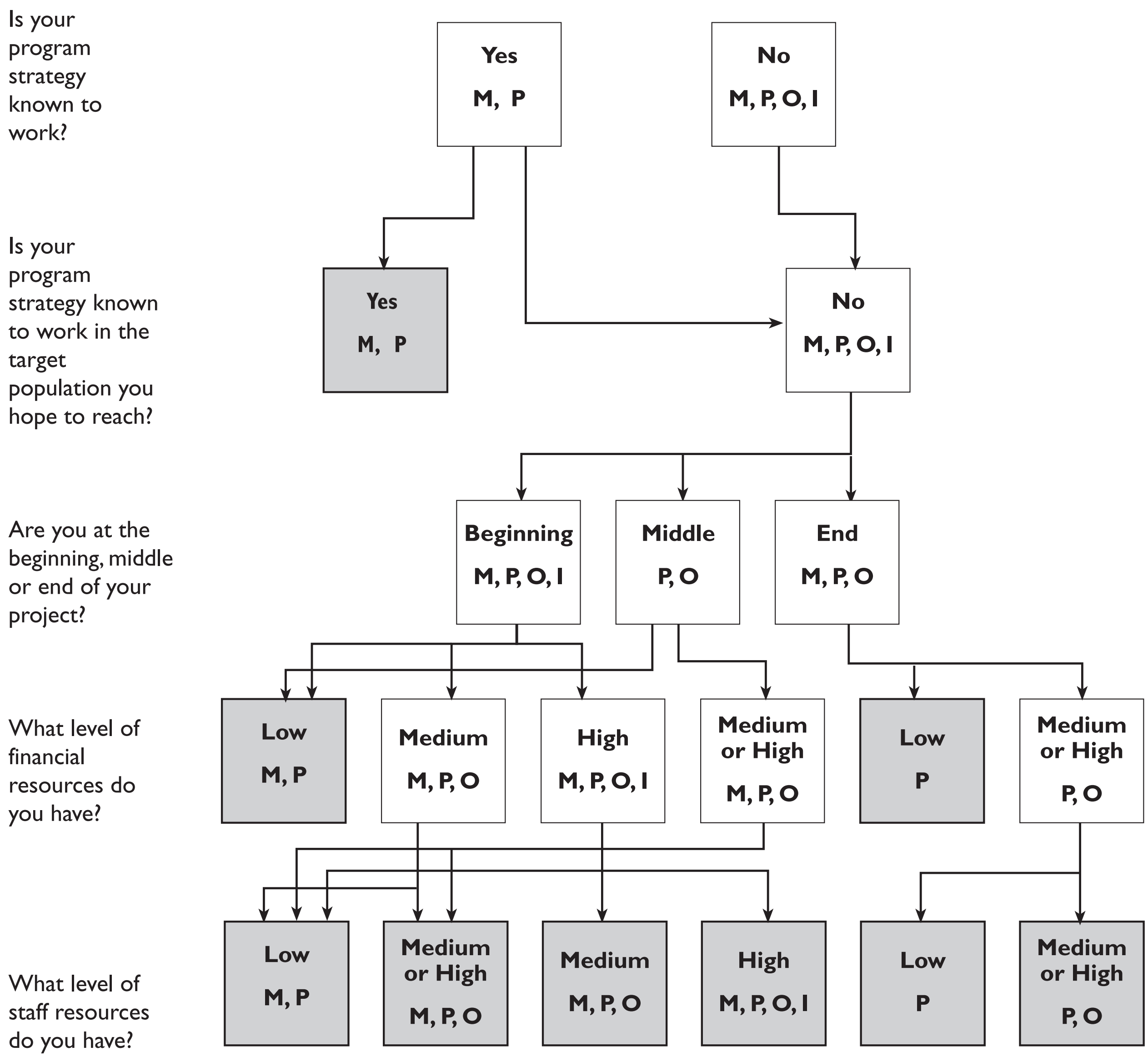
- Are existing data available in all sites?
- How easy is it to collect new data in each site?
- How will data collection affect the performance of regular program activities?
- Are there any other resources available to help collect and analyze the data (e.g., local universities or research groups)?

Determining the Type of M&E Effort You Undertake

The following checklist and flow chart can be used to help you determine the type of M&E activity you might undertake. Complete this checklist before using the flow chart:

- ❑ Are the goals of your program clear?
- ❑ Are your objectives related to your goals and intended outcomes?
- ❑ Are your objectives expressed in measurable terms?
- ❑ Are your activities defined?
- ❑ Do your activities relate to your program objectives?

Use this flow chart to determine the type of M&E effort you should undertake. When you get to a box in bold, this is the most appropriate type of M&E effort for your program.



M = Conduct Monitoring
P = Conduct Process Evaluation
O = Conduct Outcome Evaluation
I = Conduct Impact Evaluation

What Is Involved in Carrying Out Each Type of Evaluation? (How to Use the Rest of This Guide)

The table on the opposite page will help you determine how to use the rest of this Guide. Depending on the scope of your M&E effort, it guides you to relevant ARH indicators (Chapter 4 and Indicator Tables), data sources and data collection methods (Chapter 7) and corresponding instruments (Part II of this Guide). For outcome and impact evaluations, study designs are suggested in Chapter 5. The table refers to relevant sampling issues, which are explained in Chapter 6, and to types of analysis, described in Chapter 8.

How to Use the Rest of This Guide							
	Level of Resources Needed	Selecting Indicators (Chapter 4)	Data Sources, Methods and Collection (Chapter 7)	Instruments and Data Collection Tools (Part II of this Guide)	Study Design (Chapter 5)	Sampling (Chapter 6)	Data Collection and Analysis (Chapter 7 & 8)
Monitoring	Low	Indicator Table II: Program Systems Development and Functioning Indicators; Indicator Table III: Program Implementation Indicators	Service statistics; administrative reports and documents; event logs; other types of logs; surveys	Instrument 2: Tally Sheets; Instrument 3: Reporting Forms; Instrument 5: Composite Indices; Instrument 6: Inventory of Facilities and Services	N/A	Limited use	Comparing systems development and functioning and implementation indicators against targets; comparing indicators for different program sites; assessing trends of indicators over time
Process	Low to Moderate	Indicator Table I: Program Design Indicators; Indicator Table II: Program Systems Development and Functioning Indicators; Indicator Table III: Program Implementation Indicators	Administrative reports and documents; event logs; other types of logs; document review; site visits; direct observation; interviews with key informants (e.g., service providers, managers); unstructured feedback from clients; exit interviews with clients; mystery clients; focus groups or informal listening sessions	Instrument 1: Checklists; Instrument 2: Tally Sheets; Instrument 6: Inventory of Facilities and Services; Instrument 7: Observation Guide for Counseling and Clinical Procedures; Instrument 8: Interview Guide for Staff Providing RH Services; Instrument 9: Guide for Client Exit Interview; Instrument 10: Questionnaire for Debriefing Mystery Clients; Instrument 14: Assessing Coalition Effectiveness Worksheet	N/A	Choosing samples of program sites, participants, service providers, service transactions, etc. for the measurement of systems development/ functioning and implementation indicators	Comparing systems development and functioning and implementation indicators against targets or standards; comparing indicators for different program sites; assessing trends in indicators over time
Outcome	Moderate	Indicator Table IV: Program Intervention Outcome Indicators	Service statistics; surveys; population surveys; focus groups or informal listening sessions	Instrument 3: Reporting Forms; Instrument 6: Inventory of Facilities and Services; Instrument 11: Community Questionnaire; Instrument 12: Comprehensive Youth Survey; Instrument 13: Focus Group Discussion Guide for In-School Adolescents	N/A	Choosing samples of youth, program sites, communities, etc. for the measurement of outcome indicators	Comparing outcome indicators against targets; comparing indicators for different program sites; assessing trends in indicators
Impact	High	Indicator Table IV: Program Intervention Outcome Indicators	Service statistics; surveys; population surveys; focus groups or informal listening sessions	Instrument 3: Reporting Forms; Instrument 6: Inventory of Facilities and Services; Instrument 11: Community Questionnaire; Instrument 12: Comprehensive Youth Survey; Instrument 13: Focus Group Discussion Guide for In-School Adolescents	Chapter 5	Choosing samples of youth, program sites, communities, etc. in each experimental or comparison group for the measurement of outcome indicators	Comparing outcome indicators for "treatment" and "control" groups

PHOTO: Harvey Nelson