MONITORING & EVALUATION

Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation

Guidelines and Tools

by Valerie Stetson

American Red Cross

CRS
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Since 1943, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has held the privilege of serving the poor and disadvantaged overseas. Without regard to race, creed, or nationality, CRS provides emergency relief in the wake of natural and manmade disasters. Through development projects in fields such as education, peace and justice, agriculture, microfinance, health and HIV/AIDS, CRS works to uphold human dignity and promote better standards of living. CRS also works throughout the United States to expand the knowledge and action of Catholics and others interested in issues of international peace and justice. Our programs and resources respond to the U.S. Bishops' call to live in solidarity—as one human family—across borders, over oceans, and through differences in language, culture and economic condition.

The American Red Cross helps vulnerable people around the world prevent, prepare for, and respond to disasters, complex humanitarian emergencies, and life-threatening health conditions through global initiatives and community-based programs. With a focus on global health, disaster preparedness and response, restoring family links, and the dissemination of international humanitarian law, the American Red Cross provides rapid, effective, and large-scale humanitarian assistance to those in need. To achieve our goals, the American Red Cross works with our partners in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other international relief and development agencies to build local capacities, mobilize and empower communities, and establish partnerships. Our largest program is currently the Tsunami Recovery Program, which is improving community health and preventing disease outbreaks, supporting communities as they rebuild their lives and reestablish their livelihoods, and helping affected Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their communities develop disaster preparedness capabilities.

Published in 2008 by:

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This module was produced by CRS and the American Red Cross with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Food for Peace (FFP) grants: CRS Institutional Capacity Building Grant (AFP-A-00-03-00015-00) and American Red Cross Institutional Capacity Building Grant (AFP-A-00-00007-00). The views expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the USAID or FFP.

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Preface

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are core responsibilities of American Red Cross and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) program managers and help ensure quality in our programming. *Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation* is one in a series of M&E training and capacity-building modules that the American Red Cross and CRS have agreed to collaborate on under their respective Institutional Capacity Building Grants. These modules are designed to respond to field-identified needs for specific guidance and tools that did not appear to be available in existing publications. Although examples in the modules focus on Title II programming, the guidance and tools provided have value beyond the food-security realm.

Our intention in writing *Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation* was to provide readers with information that helps private voluntary organization staff facilitate learning among individuals, groups, and organizations by communicating and reporting evaluation processes and findings more effectively, so all stakeholders get the most out of program evaluations. The module has leaned heavily on Torres et al. (2005) for its inspiration and ideas.

Please send comments on or suggestions for this module via e-mail to m&efeedback@crs.org.

Recommeded Citation: Stetson, Valerie. 2008. "Communication and Reporting on an Evaluation." American Red Cross/CRS M&E Module Series. American Red Cross and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Washington, DC and Baltimore, Maryland.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all who contributed to this document for their ideas and insights. The author would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the reviewers, namely, Guy Sharrock (CRS/Baltimore), Alice Willard (formerly with the American Red Cross), and Carolyn Fanelli (CRS/Zimbabwe). Finally, we would like to acknowledge the work of Dina Towbin (consultant), whose editorial work helped to shepherd the document through its final stages, and Joe Schultz (CRS) and Jeanne Ivy, who were responsible for the graphic design work.

Acronyms

AEA	American Evaluation Association
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
FFP	Food for Peace
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
PRA	Participatory rapid appraisal
PVO	Private voluntary organization
SCF	Save the Children Federation
SOW	Scope of work
UFE	Utilization-focused evaluation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WV	World Vision

Glossary

Evaluation audience is those individuals who receive information about the evaluation and its findings. Audiences include, but are not limited to stakeholders, (e.g., staff from other private voluntary organizations [PVOs] who would benefit from information about a particular program).

Communicating/communication can be defined as "a linear transmission of information from a sender, through a channel to a receiver" to "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals." In this module, communication is viewed as a dynamic continuous process of meaningful interaction among evaluation stakeholders.

Critical reflection is when individuals or groups are invited to interpret, reflect on, make sense of, and analyze information—such as evaluation findings—in a respectful open atmosphere. Critical reflection promotes dialogue, an exchange of ideas and opinions that produces new learning and raises awareness of underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions.

Dissemination means the communication of the actions by written, oral, and/or audio-visual reporting of evaluators to foster knowledge of the evaluation findings among all right-to-know audiences. Dissemination is not use, although it is an important action that can encourage use.

Evaluation manager is the PVO staff—often the head of the M&E unit or head of programming—designated by senior management to manage the evaluation. His/her main responsibilities usually include preparing the evaluation (compiling a briefing book, drafting a scope of work [SOW]), supporting the evaluation team and team leader during the evaluation, and facilitating the use of the evaluation. The evaluation manager is usually in charge of ensuring communication and reporting of the evaluation.

Knowledge management is how findings and information are captured, organized, and shared in a timely manner.

Organizational learning is a continuous and dynamic process of growth and improvement that uses information (such as evaluation findings) to make changes.

Reporting is the presentation of information resulting from an evaluative activity. Evidence-based reporting is an approach to report writing in which statements made about the progress of a project are supported by verifiable information. Some reports have strong statements about progress made but little supporting evidence to justify the claim.

Evaluation stakeholders are the individuals, groups, and/or organizations that may influence and/or be affected by the evaluation planning, activities, or findings.

Utilization-focused evaluation is an approach that offers a practical framework for designing and conducting evaluations to enhance use. It concerns both how stakeholders apply evaluation findings and how they experience the evaluation process.

Executive Summary

A communicating and reporting strategy includes a final written evaluation report as well as other interactive communication and reporting formats to help ensure understanding and use.

Understanding and learning occur when evaluation processes and findings are effectively communicated and reported. Active involvement of evaluation stakeholders in all phases of an evaluation ensures ownership and use. A communicating and reporting strategy includes a final written evaluation report as well as other interactive communication and reporting formats to help ensure understanding and use.

Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation aims to help PVO staff facilitate learning among individuals, groups, and organizations by communicating and reporting evaluation processes and findings more effectively. Successful experience shows that communicating and reporting an evaluation needs to be planned from the start, assigned a budget and resources, and include activities to be conducted throughout the evaluation process. Reporting formats should be varied, tailored to what the audience needs to know, and provided at the right time. Written formats should use clear, jargon-free language and include visuals such as graphs, charts, tables, photos and/or illustrations.

To plan an effective communicating and reporting strategy, PVO staff should consider the characteristics of the evaluation stakeholders and audiences, the purpose of communicating with them, and how best to communicate with them. A communicating and reporting strategy considers activities during all evaluation phases. For example, during the evaluation, progress and preliminary findings are reported; after the evaluation, the report is disseminated to outside audiences.

A final report is the most important way to communicate an evaluation. Other formats to consider include short communications such as brochures or newsletters, verbal presentations at debriefing meetings, and creative formats such as drama. Critical reflection events—such as working sessions—use facilitation methods to help stakeholders and audiences actively engage with evaluation findings. Electronic formats can help to disseminate reports to a wide audience; synchronous electronic communications, such as web conferencing, allow dispersed evaluation stakeholders to read and discuss an evaluation.

Introduction

Evaluation plays an important role in results-based development programming and is a catalyst for organizational learning (McMillan and Willard 2008; Torres et al. 2005; Willard 2008). Many PVOs now have an organizational learning agenda and staff to support that agenda. Patton (1997) emphasizes the use and application of new knowledge coming from an evaluation and suggests that an evaluator's responsibility is to both facilitate use and disseminate findings.

Communicating and reporting both the evaluation processes and findings are the focal points for understanding, learning, and use to occur. Yet evaluators continually complain that their evaluation reports are not read or shared and in some cases, the report's recommendations are not used (Torres et al. 2005). Evaluators, managers, or organizational leaders often assume that people will understand, agree with, care about, or plan to take action on an evaluation's recommendations (Rochow 2005).

Communicating and reporting both the evaluation processes and findings are the focal points for understanding, learning, and use to occur.

Organizational learning is a continuous and dynamic process of growth and improvement that uses information such as evaluation findings to make changes.

Knowledge management is how findings and information are captured, organized, and shared in a timely manner.

Evaluation use means how people apply evaluation findings and also how they experience the evaluation process.

Evaluation understanding, ownership, and use are fostered by active involvement of evaluation stakeholders from beginning to end (Patton 1997). While final written reports are the most important evaluation product, additional communicating and reporting formats help ensure understanding and use (Torres et al. 2005).

Purpose and Intended Users of this Module

Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation aims to help PVO staff facilitate learning among individuals, groups and organizations by communicating and reporting evaluation processes and findings more effectively.

Nearly all PVO staff have monitoring and evaluation (M&E) responsibilities and some may head an M&E unit. In addition to their day-to-day work, senior management often appoint an M&E PVO staff member to act as the evaluation manager for major mid-term or final evaluations conducted by an external expert or team. Armed with guidance for effective communicating and reporting, PVO evaluation managers can better manage external evaluators and facilitate the exercise to enhance use.

This module completes a three-part evaluation series, namely

1. *Preparing for an Evaluation*
2. *Managing and Implementing an Evaluation*
3. *Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation*

Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation considers all phases of an evaluation—from early planning through to final reporting and follow-up. Ideas for communicating and reporting on an evaluation appear in the first and second modules. This module builds on these ideas by giving detailed practical guidance on communicating and reporting strategies.

Communicating and Reporting Evaluations to Promote Use

All three modules reflect the utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) approach to maximize understanding, ownership, and use of findings by intended users. As stated above, research shows that evaluation use is increased by active stakeholder involvement from beginning to end (Patton 1997). Additional benefits of involving evaluation stakeholders in all phases of an evaluation include sensitizing the outside evaluator to the local program context, improving accuracy of the findings, and identifying feasible recommendations (Torres et al. 2005).

UFE evaluations begin by identifying primary information users and the information they need, often called an evaluation stakeholder analysis. These stakeholders participate in the evaluation's key activities and decision-making which range from

Program Evaluation Standards Related to Utilization-Focused Evaluation

Stakeholder identification: Those involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed.

Evaluation impact: Evaluations should be planned, conducted, communicated, and reported on in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders, so that the likelihood that the evaluation will be used is increased.

Source: Joint Committee on Standards 2004.

drafting the evaluation scope of work (SOW) to developing or reviewing evaluation recommendations.

Roles of the External Evaluator and Evaluation Manager

Applying the UFE approach in the context of learning requires evaluators to work collaboratively with stakeholders. This has implications for the role and expertise of PVO staff and external evaluators in terms of how they undertake an evaluation and how they communicate and report on an evaluation. Trust and respect are vital. Collaboration is achieved through a series of meetings and small group work, requiring evaluators to use facilitation skills to promote reflection, dialogue, and action.

Effective Communicating and Reporting

By knowing what the wider evaluation community has learned over time, PVO staff can apply good practices and be aware of (and then prevent or mitigate) potential challenges.

How can evaluation results be effectively communicated and reported on? What hinders success? By knowing what the wider evaluation community has learned over time, PVO staff can apply good practices and be aware of (and then prevent or mitigate) potential challenges. Reflect on your own positive experiences of communicating and reporting on evaluations and then compare it to the knowledge summarized below.

This section of the module reviews successful practices and challenges, and highlights selected ethical evaluation practices linked to communicating and reporting.

Successful Communicating and Reporting Practices

A study of evaluators' communicating and reporting practices revealed a number of practices responsible for successful experiences. One of the most essential practices is that communicating and reporting do not wait for the end of the evaluation (Torres et al. 2005). Table 1 below further describes effective practices.

Table 1. Effective Practices

Timely and Frequent Contact	**From the start,** plan for effective communicating and reporting and assign a budget for these tasks. During the evaluation, report and communicate on evaluation progress. Towards the end of the evaluation, communicate and report preliminary evaluation findings and negotiate recommendations. **Frequent and ongoing communication** is one way of showing respect. Negative evaluation findings are much harder to accept and to use constructively if they come as a surprise.
It's the Users!	All reporting and communicating formats must be **tailored** to what the audience needs to know. Evaluators need to understand how different stakeholder individuals and groups learn and process information. Avoid producing overly-long, academic-style reports for busy decision-makers or neglecting illiterate or less powerful evaluation stakeholders.
Variety is the Spice of Life	A **variety** of reporting formats helps ensure understanding. These range from the final evaluation report and executive summary to working sessions, and drama or poster sessions. Table 6, below, provides a more complete list of reporting format options.

Keep Content Clear and Simple	Written formats such as reports, executive summaries, and fact sheets must use **clear, jargon-free language** and include **visuals** such as graphs, charts, tables, and illustrations to quickly communicate information and findings. Quantitative data should be presented alongside qualitative data. Recommendations should be prioritized, concrete, specific, and feasible.

Plan from the Start

Planning for communication and reporting evaluation processes and findings should begin at the first meeting with stakeholders. Evaluators can significantly increase an evaluation's usefulness and impact on the organization by planning for communication, reporting, and dissemination from the start (Torres et al. 2005). See the section on guidelines and tools, below, for practical steps and guidance on this process.

Collaborate and Interact

Communicating is a two-way street. Collaboration is powerful—not only does it increase ownership and enhance use by stakeholders—it also is respectful of others and can lead to better evaluation recommendations. Use Table 2 to determine if your communicating and reporting strategies and formats include interactive methods that involve stakeholders.

Table 2. Continuum of Interactive Communicating and Reporting Formats

Least Interactive	Potentially Interactive	Most Interactive
Written communications and evaluation reports	Verbal presentations	Working sessions
News media communications	Poster Sessions	Synchronous electronic communications
Web site communications	Drama	One-on-one discussions

Source: Adapted from Torres et al. 2005.

Collaboration can be threaded throughout all phases of an evaluation. For example, possible reporting format options can be discussed during the planning phase, stakeholders can be involved in interpreting preliminary findings during the implementation phase, and meetings can be held to share draft reports during the final phase. Remember to include time and other required resources, such as meeting costs, for example, for these types of collaborative activities in the evaluation plan.

Evaluation Ethics and Communicating and Reporting

The rights of human subjects in an evaluation are protected when evaluators apply ethical practices and simple common sense and courtesy. In communicating and reporting, an evaluation team should make every effort to do the actions listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Ensuring Ethical Practices in Communicating and Reporting

Action	Example of this Action
Understand the cultural and social values of all participants	Use small groups in evaluation working sessions if subordinate staff are hesitant to speak critically about a program in front of their supervisors
Ensure communications are in the appropriate language	Translate the final evaluation report (sent in English to the donor) into the local language, such as French in Senegal, so that national staff can easily review the report
Never disclose identities of participants in reporting evaluation findings	Use pseudonyms for respondents, not their real names
Guard against other parties using the collected data for purposes different than those agreed to by the persons who provided the data	Use common sense in sharing evaluation results with the press; keep original data secure
Pay attention to the disclosure of evaluation findings, either through written or verbal communication	Disseminate written reports in a way so that they cannot be altered; provide reports fairly to all groups affected by the evaluation
Protect children's and adolescent's rights	Invite an independent local stakeholder group to monitor evaluation communication activities with children

Sources: Joint Committee on Standards 2004; Schenk and Williamson 2005.

Communicating and Reporting throughout an Evaluation

Think about communicating and reporting when first planning the evaluation. It's important to do this from the start.

Planning for communicating and reporting an evaluation begins at the first meeting with evaluation stakeholders and continues throughout all three phases of an evaluation.

Phase 1: Planning and preparing for an evaluation
Phase 2: Implementing and managing an evaluation
Phase 3: Using the evaluation results

Traditionally, evaluation stakeholders view the final report as the climax and the report's dissemination as the major mechanism for use (Patton 1997). Too often, the donor is singled out as the most important audience. While acknowledging the importance of a final evaluation report and a program donor, a more comprehensive communicating and reporting strategy is needed to promote learning and use. Practice shows that a continuous process of involving stakeholders (i.e., not forgetting local partners and communities) and discussing the evaluation leads to greater support, ownership, interest, and use (Torres et al. 2005; Guijt and Woodhill 2002).

The next section provides guidance on communicating and reporting throughout all phases of an evaluation.

Four Steps to Effectively Communicate and Report on Evaluation Results

The *Preparing for an Evaluation* module describes evaluation stakeholder analysis as an important step of evaluation planning. Evaluation stakeholders can range from the project donor to a community women's group. They may have access to broadband Internet or be illiterate and live in an isolated village with no electricity. They may want to track evaluation progress, learn how to improve conditions, or make a funding decision based on evaluation results.

Communicating and reporting strategies should respond to the various situations and needs of different evaluation stakeholders and audiences. The steps below will help you to develop a responsive communicating and reporting strategy. Note that these steps are one part of the overall evaluation plan.

Evaluation stakeholders are individuals, groups, or organizations who may influence and/or be affected by the planning, activities, or findings of an evaluation.

Evaluation audiences are those who receive information about an evaluation and its findings. They include stakeholders but others as well —for example, PVO staff in other countries who manage similar programs.

Step 1: Identify Communication and Reporting Challenges

The first step is to identify communication and reporting challenges so that the stakeholders can learn from the results. Table 4 lists the obstacles and challenges.

Table 4: Obstacles and Challenges

Obstacle or Challenge	How It Affects Communicating and Reporting
General evaluation anxiety	▪ Just the word "evaluation" can provoke anxiety among staff and cause resistance since the results can affect decisions about staffing or resource allocation. ▪ External evaluators, who need time to establish trust and relationships, may increase anxiety.
Failure to plan from the start	▪ Not communicating regularly with stakeholders can cause disengagement, disinterest, and ultimately non-use of findings. ▪ Evaluation teams find out too late that no budget was allocated to report production, verbal presentations, or dissemination.
Less-than-optimal organizational culture—defined as the management operating style, the way authority and responsibility is assigned, or how staff are developed	▪ Staff may view negative or sensitive evaluation results as shameful criticism and resist discussing them openly. ▪ Communication may be inefficient due to loss of institutional memory because of rapid staff turnover or other reasons. ▪ Dissemination of performance findings is hindered by leaders who are uncomfortable to share performance information in open meetings. ▪ Ongoing communication during an evaluation is inhibited by the organization's dysfunctional information-sharing systems.

Overcoming Challenges

In theory, anxiety and resistance should be lessened by the participatory UFE approach and mitigated by a focus on evaluation as dialogue and learning, rather than judgment only. Treating evaluation stakeholders respectfully, in a way that protects their dignity, will also help.

To mitigate challenges, evaluation teams should consider investing the time to:

- Understand an organization's context and culture
- Involve and seek support from decision-makers and senior management
- Prepare stakeholders for possible negative findings by asking them "what if?" questions at the beginning (such as, "What if the evaluation shows that the project did not achieve its objectives?")
- Plan for communicating and reporting from the start
- Maintain frequent and close contact through interim memos, draft reports, and meetings throughout the evaluation (Torres et al. 2005, Patton 1997).

In the end, however, there are factors not under the evaluation team's control. Communicating and reporting evaluation findings will lead to learning and change only if the organization and individual stakeholders are ready and willing (Torres et al. 2005).

Step 2: Define the Communication Purpose

Once stakeholders are identified, learn more about them to see what communicating and reporting strategies best meet stakeholders' and other audiences' needs and promote use. To do this, think about individual or group characteristics by answering the questions, below:

For each individual or group, ask the following:

1. Do they need to be informed about evaluation activities? And if so, when and for what reason?	❑ To build awareness ❑ To gain support ❑ To show respect
2. Do they need to review interim or final findings? And if so, when and for what reason?	❑ To review evaluation progress ❑ To learn and improve ❑ To promote dialogue and understanding among partners
3. Do they need to be involved in decision-making? And if so, when and for what reason?	❑ To assess the likelihood of future support ❑ To help develop recommendations ❑ To ensure use of the recommendations

Step 3: Select the Communication Methods

Now that the audience needs have been identified, the next step is to select the best communication method. Review the evaluation purpose from the evaluation SOW and consider expectations expressed by the stakeholders. Then, ask the individuals or group of stakeholders the following questions:

1. What is their familiarity with the program or project being evaluated?	❑ Very familiar ❑ Somewhat familiar ❑ Not at all familiar
2. What is their experience in using evaluation findings?	❑ Long experience ❑ Some experience ❑ No experience
3. What is their reading ability?	❑ High ❑ Mid ❑ Low or non-reader (illiterate)
4. What language(s) do they use to communicate?	❑ ______ for writing ❑ ______ for reading
5. How accessible are they?	❑ Easily ❑ With some effort ❑ Isolated

Source: Adapted from Torres et al. 2005.

Step 4: Develop a Communication and Reporting Strategy

With this assessment of stakeholder characteristics and knowledge of their information needs, the next step is to develop a responsive communication and reporting strategy. The strategy should describe who, what, when, and how to communicate. Use Table 5, below, to plan the strategy.

Table 5: Sample Planning Communication and Reporting Strategy Worksheet

Stakeholder and audience group or individual and summary of characteristics and purpose	Program donor, located in Washington, DC, needs to review final evaluation report for decision-making on future funding
What information (content) do they need?	Findings and recommendations
What format is best for them?	Final evaluation report with executive summary Debriefing meeting to be held at donor offices to present findings, recommendations, and intended actions

When do they need it?	June 15th - Evaluation Report June 30th - Debriefing Meeting
Who will prepare and deliver the information?	Evaluation team to prepare written reports; PVO headquarters staff to prepare debriefing meeting agenda and presentation
What are the costs?	Printing costs for 25 copies of written report; travel costs of staff to Washington, DC, for meeting; time for preparation of debriefing meeting

The Importance of Budgeting

Remember, it's important to budget for all evaluation costs upfront.

As shown in the far-right column of Table 5, above, evaluation costs are an important part of the planning strategy. Evaluation planners often forget to allocate costs for printing, meetings (travel and venue), and disseminating evaluation findings. When resources are scarce, it becomes all too easy to ignore reporting back to communities or other stakeholder groups. Costs for translation and for printing and packaging can vary, depending on the country and printing facilities. Discussing costs early on will help to ensure that the communication and reporting strategy is realistic and that it does not dip into the budget for other necessary evaluation activities.

The final piece of the communication and reporting strategy is a variety of formats and activities to be done throughout the evaluation, depending on available time and resources. Consult Table 6, below, for a menu of formats, descriptions, and tips to communicate and report on an evaluation.

The communicating and reporting strategy almost always include a final written report. At the start, develop a report outline that is responsive to users and other audiences. This outline helps structure the evaluation, acts as a checklist of topics to cover, and helps the evaluation team get ahead in this time-consuming task. For example, program description and methodology sections can be written right after the evaluation starts. Also, let stakeholders know early on how and when the team will be communicating with them.

Continue Communicating and Reporting with Stakeholders during the Evaluation

During evaluation implementation, include plans to inform or thank stakeholders for participating in data collection, communicate with them and report on evaluation progress, and present and discuss interim findings with these individuals or groups.

The communication and reporting activities with stakeholders may include:

- Meetings with village leaders and beneficiaries to set up interviews and feedback meetings at a convenient time for them
- Short periodic meetings where the evaluation team updates a small group of key stakeholders (such as a PVO country director) on progress
- Weekly evaluation e-mails from the field-based evaluation team describing progress and sharing preliminary insights that are sent to capital city or headquarters-based stakeholders
- Monthly roundtables to update and inform a larger group of stakeholders (for example, PVOs and their partners).

From the Field: Communicating Evaluation Progress
In one country program, the project team worked closely with consultants who had developed a weekly status report to communicate progress to project staff. A cover e-mail was sent to the organization's director and project manager with an attached report in a Microsoft Excel workbook. Color coding was used to highlight which evaluation tasks were complete (green), which were ongoing (yellow), and which were late (red); a column for comments and action was also included.

For more detailed information on communicating and reporting an evaluation during an evaluation, please refer to Willard (2008).

Promote Evaluation Use through Communicating and Reporting

Key activities in this phase include the development, communication, and reporting of evaluation findings and recommendations. Recommendations are the formal linkage between an evaluation and its use and are often the most visible part of an evaluation report (Torres et al. 2005; Patton 1997).

Program Evaluation Standards related to Recommendations and Reporting

Solicit feedback from a variety of program participants about the credibility of the evaluation's interpretations, explanations, conclusions, and recommendations before finalizing the report. Discuss common misinterpretation and inappropriate inferences that may be drawn from the information collected.

Source: Joint Committee on Standards 2004.

The utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) approach involves stakeholders in developing recommendations. The evaluation team presents draft recommendations to stakeholders for review, discussion, and modification. Structured time spent in facilitated analysis and interpretation of findings can pay off in greater understanding of and commitment to using results. Another advantage of this approach is that negative or controversial findings can be communicated early on. In turn, the quality of the evaluation improves as evaluators can learn from stakeholder interpretation of data, often leading to more realistic and feasible findings (Patton 1997; Guijt and Woodhill 2002; Torres et al. 2005).

Even large numbers of people can be consulted through small group tasks to invite their input on the report's clarity, accuracy, and format and the appropriateness of its conclusions and recommendations. Through these kinds of consultations, stakeholders are already considering (and "using") evaluation results (Torres et al. 2005; Patton 1997). At a minimum, evaluation stakeholders should always be given the opportunity to comment on evaluation findings or review the draft version of a final report. Also inform the stakeholders as to how the evaluation will be disseminated. Once evaluation findings and recommendations are finalized, they can then be communicated to other stakeholder groups, such as funding agencies, government agencies, and peer organizations.

From the Field: Involving Stakeholders in Developing Recommendations

In an evaluation by World Vision, following the field work, the evaluation team produced a preliminary evaluation report. They structured a two-day data interpretation meeting, where the team had program staff work with the data. The team answered specific questions, gave feedback to the report authors on items that were unclear, and challenged findings that seemed unlikely to them. Flip charts were used to facilitate group work on the data and capture ideas. The outcome of this process was that project staff really knew the evaluation data. The evaluation team was confident that this process would ensure staff would thoroughly understand the results and use and refer to the report.

Source: Personal communication with Jamo Huddle, World Vision International.

Promote Learning through Dissemination

Disseminating an evaluation to outside audiences is an important part of a reporting strategy. Dissemination promotes learning and can also promote coordination and cooperation among peer organizations. Wide dissemination of evaluation recommendations can help ensure these recommendations are not overlooked. Advocacy is another common dissemination goal—to increase government or donor support for a particular program or promote action by citizens.

Program Evaluation Standards Related to Dissemination

- In planning the dissemination of findings, consider a variety of methods such as executive summaries, printed reports, audiovisual presentations, hearings, meetings, conferences, interviews, panel discussions, and newspaper accounts.
- Significant interim findings and evaluation reports should be disseminated to intended users, so that they can be used in a timely fashion.

Source: Joint Committee on Standards 2004.

Dissemination can be built into the evaluation process—for example, by involving partners in an evaluation—or done after the evaluation is completed. Dissemination strategies may include circulation of written reports and fact sheets, PowerPoint presentations, or publication of scholarly papers.

From the Field: Tsunami Response Evaluation Dissemination

A joint PVO program in Indonesia, which evaluated its response to the tsunami, disseminated findings and results as follows:

- Organizing a multi-stakeholder roundtable where findings and results were shared with other international nongovernmental organizations, government officials, and community leaders; and
- Submitting the evaluation report on the tsunami to the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) evaluation database, which is available to the public.

Source: Author.

Regularly Revisit Evaluations

Communicating doesn't stop right after the evaluation is completed and the final report disseminated. Smart evaluators never assume evaluation recommendations will be adopted without further action. There is debate within the evaluation community about the evaluator's role in ensuring use, beyond the completion of the evaluation. Some suggest that active follow-up is usually necessary to implement recommendations and to incorporate lessons learned in future decision-making processes (Kusek and Rist 2004; Patton 1997); others disagree saying that this is beyond the evaluator's responsibility.

From the Field: Evaluation Review and Program Planning
A joint, multi-site PVO program called the Consortium for Southern Africa Food Emergency (C-SAFE), conducted a final evaluation. The process for producing the final report included two-day workshops for nongovernmental organization members in all countries to get feedback and validate the findings. At the same time, the PVO members were planning new programs and used the evaluation findings to adjust their plans for the coming year. *Source*: Maunder 2005.

Guidelines and Tools for Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation

When individual and organizational learning is the goal, the communicating and reporting strategy must consider how people and organizations learn best.

Building on the four steps, mentioned above, this section includes practical guidelines, tools, and tips to communicate and report on an evaluation effectively. It focuses on presentation of data and information to different users according to their characteristics and information needs.

Effectively Present Evaluation Information

Commonly-used formats for presenting evaluation information are written reports, executive summaries, and verbal presentations. External evaluators may make conference presentations and submit evaluation results for publication. Other formats include critical reflection events, drama, and short communications such as newsletters and brochures (Torres et al. 2005).

When individual and organizational learning is the goal, the communicating and reporting strategy must be to consider how people and organizations learn best. Research shows that people learn more when they are engaged with the learning material, when they see, hear, and do something with the content, and when they integrate new knowledge with something they already know (Torres et al. 2005).

Whatever format is used, the aim is to present information succinctly in a way that is easily understandable and that engages the audience. Communicating and reporting findings using as many formats and methods as appropriate will help reach diverse stakeholders and promote the use of the evaluation findings. As stated earlier, reaching a range of diverse stakeholders requires early planning to ensure that this is supported by a budget and other resources.

Simplicity and Clarity: Reporting Standards

Whatever the medium used for reporting, clarity is essential for audience understanding and report credibility and application. For an evaluation to be useful, it must be easily understood. Stakeholders

An evaluation report should be clear and straightforward. Try to avoid unnecessary literature reviews or lengthy discussions of theories and methodologies (Davidson 2007).

should readily understand the evaluation purposes, what was evaluated, how the evaluation was conducted, what information was obtained, what conclusions were drawn, and what recommendations were made (Joint Committee on Standards 2004).

Simplicity as a Virtue

An evaluation can use sophisticated techniques to confirm the strength of its findings, but the next step is to think creatively about how to translate those findings into simple, straightforward, and understandable presentations. This process will focus the presentation and highlight the most important findings. Distinguish between the complexity of analysis and the clarity of presentation. Present the full picture without getting bogged down in details.

Source: Adapted from Patton (1997).

Reporting Menu of Options

A final written report is an important way to communicate and report on an evaluation, but other formats should also be considered (Patton 1997). It is rarely a "one or the other" choice in selecting formats. Formats are usually combined and sequenced to promote collaboration—for example, drafting a report with preliminary findings and then conducting a working meeting with key evaluation stakeholders to validate the findings. Select the formats that are the most appropriate to the scope of the evaluation. Sequencing a series of communication formats in a skilful way can be very influential in communicating a report's findings and recommendations (Torres et al. 2005).

Evaluation report audiences may range from individuals in government departments and donor staff to community groups. It is difficult to produce a single evaluation report that will meet the needs of all the users and stakeholders, so the solution is to consider presenting results in different ways. The full evaluation report is distributed to program staff, partners, government officials, and donor agencies. Other formats can be used to share evaluation results with wider audiences; these include brochures, debriefings, panel presentations, print and broadcast media, video presentations, drama, posters sessions, working sessions, or synchronous electronic communications.

Table 6 below presents a wide range of reporting options to consider and is followed by descriptions of each reporting option. Use this information to choose the formats that best fulfill the evaluation purposes and meet the needs of different stakeholders and dissemination audiences (Patton 1997).

Tools & Resources

Evaluation Report Checklist

Table 6. Evaluation Reporting Menu

Written Reporting	Verbal Presentations	Creative Reporting	Critical Reflection Events	Reporting Using Electronic Formats
▪ Final evaluation report ▪ Executive summary ▪ Interim or progress reports ▪ Human interest, success and learning stories ▪ Short communications such as newsletters, brochures, memos, e-mails, postcards ▪ News media communications (print media)	▪ Debriefing meetings ▪ Panel presentations ▪ Broadcast media (radio or television) ▪ Informal communication	▪ Video presentation ▪ Dramas or role-plays ▪ Poster sessions ▪ Write-Shops	▪ After Action Reviews ▪ Working sessions	▪ Web site communications ▪ Synchronous electronic communications such as chat rooms, teleconferencing, video and Web conferencing

Sources: Patton 1997; Torres et al. 2005.

Written Reporting

The final evaluation report presents the full view of the evaluation. It serves as the basis for the executive summary, oral presentations, and other reporting formats, and is an important resource for the program archives. Many program donors have a prescribed format for required reports; follow this format carefully. However, many PVOs have their own generic report formats if the donor does not have a specific format; if so, the PVO format should be used (see Stetson et al. 2007).

See Annex II for an evaluation report checklist that can help guide discussions among evaluators and stakeholders regarding the content of evaluation reports.

To effectively communicate negative or sensitive findings, it is important to present them in a way that promotes problem-solving so that stakeholders will not take a defensive position. Consider presenting positive findings first and then listing the negative findings. Use terms such as "accomplishments," "success," or "on target" for positive findings and then "making progress," "needs improvement," or "things to work on" for less-than-positive findings (Torres et al. 2005).

An executive summary is a short version—usually 1 to 4 pages—of the final evaluation report, containing condensed versions of the major sections. Placed at the front of the final evaluation report, it communicates essential information accurately and concisely. Executive summaries are typically written for busy decision-makers and enable readers to get vital information about the evaluation without having to read the entire report. The executive summary may be disseminated separately from the full report and should be understandable as a stand-alone document.

The executive summary usually highlights evaluation findings and recommendations, but may also include a brief overview of the evaluation purpose, major questions, and research methods (Torres et al. 2005; Kusek and Rist 2004).

> "I'm sorry that the letter I have written you is so long. I did not have time to write a short one."
>
> George Bernard Shaw

Condensing 50 pages of a final report into a 1-page summary can take considerable time. Use the tips in the box below to make this job easier.

Tips for Writing an Executive Summary
√ Read the original document from beginning to end
√ Start the executive summary with conclusions and recommendations
√ Underline all key ideas, significant statements, and vital recommendations
√ Edit the underlined information
√ Rewrite the underlined information
√ Edit the rewritten version by eliminating unnecessary words and phrases
√ Check the edited version against the original document to ensure that the essential information is captured, including project successes and challenges
√ Ensure that only information from the original report is presented

Interim or progress reports present the interim, preliminary, or initial evaluation findings. Interim reports are scheduled according to specific decision-making needs of evaluation stakeholders. While interim reports can be critical to making an evaluation more useful, they can also raise issues if interpreted incorrectly. To avoid this problem, begin interim reports by stating the following:

- Which data collection activities are being reported on and which are not
- When the final evaluation results will be available
- Any cautions for readers in interpreting the findings (Torres et al. 2005).

Human interest, success, and learning stories are different ways to communicate evaluation results to specific audiences.

- Human interest stories document the experiences of individuals affected by PVO projects and help to personalize the successes and challenges of PVO work.
- Success stories are descriptions of the "when, where, what, why, and how" a project succeeded in its objectives.
- Learning stories narrate cases of unanticipated project difficulties or negative impacts, how these were identified and overcome, and what was learned that may be helpful in the future or to others (De Ruiter and Aker 2008; Long et al. 2008). These can be included in the final report or provided in an annex.

Putting a Human Face on M&E

In 2003, USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP) requested that short narratives of Title II activities and impacts be included as part of annual results reports. Other donors are also increasingly interested in putting a human face on M&E data in reports. These short narratives or stories may also be used for advocacy in media campaigns (De Ruiter and Aker, 2008; Long et al. 2008).

For more information on how to write these stories consult *Human Interest Stories* (De Ruiter and Aker 2008), *Success and Learning Stories* (Long et al. 2008), and *Writing Human Interest Stories for M&E* (Hagens 2008).

From the Field: Stories to Document Peacebuilding
PVO field workers in West Timor used storytelling as an evaluation report process. A book was produced that documented best practices from PVO and partner experiences integrating peacebuilding with relief for East Timorese refugees in West Timor. The book contained short story narratives by field staff and a synthesis of lessons learned. *Sources*: Lederach et al. 2007; Visser 2004.

Short communications—such as newsletters, bulletins, briefs and brochures—serve to highlight evaluation information, help to generate interest in the full evaluation findings, and serve an organization's public relation purposes. Their format can invite feedback, provide updates, report upcoming evaluation events, or present preliminary or final findings. These formats may be less useful if the evaluation is primarily qualitative, and when a full description of the evaluation context is critical to interpreting results (Torres et al. 2005).

These short communications differ from each other in the following ways:

- Newsletters use a newspaper format.
- Bulletins are very short, frequently-circulated updates.

Tools & Resources

Bridges of Hope Brochure

- Brochures grab attention with an attractive multi-color cover.
- Briefs use photos, data, graphs, and stories to present evaluation results.

These formats should be made visually attractive through use of color, layouts and varied headings and graphics. For example, evaluation progress can be reported in bullet points under the headings: work completed, work in progress, and upcoming work, making it easy for the reader to understand progress at a glance. Desktop publishing software makes developing eye-catching and attractive newsletters, bulletins, and brochures easy (CDC 2007; Torres et al. 2005).

Annex IV includes a brochure that CRS developed with its partners for Bridges of Hope, an HIV/AIDS Project in Cambodia.

E-mails, memos, faxes, and postcards help maintain ongoing communication among evaluation stakeholders using brief messages. These formats can be used to update audiences about evaluation progress, invite them to participate in upcoming evaluation activities, follow up on decisions made at working meetings, and/or communicate how an evaluation's recommendations will be used or implemented. Be aware that use of e-mail communication raises concerns about confidentiality and it's useful to include a disclaimer at the bottom of e-mail messages. If feedback is being solicited on controversial or confidential evaluation information, these mediums are not the best choice (Torres et al. 2005).

From the Field: Postcard Update on Survey Data Collection

The survey is now completed; there was a 79 percent response rate. In terms of rating the program, the responses were as follows:

- 39 percent: very helpful
- 42 percent: somewhat helpful
- 11 percent: not too helpful
- 8 percent: not at all helpful.

The full analysis will show what categories of participants found the program more or less helpful and why they rated it as they did.

Source: Torres et al. 2005.

News Media Communications

Evaluation results may be disseminated to the news media by sending copies of the evaluation report or press releases or through interviews of evaluation team members or evaluation stakeholders (Torres et al. 2005). Using the news media helps the project reach a large audience, such as the general public or a specific professional group.

Use of media can also be tricky—there are no guarantees of what will actually be communicated. For this reason, contact the media only after other key stakeholders have reviewed the evaluation findings—no one likes to be surprised to read by reading about their program in the press.

Guidance on Writing

Useful evaluation reports get straight to the point. Users should not have to wade through theory and methodology searching for the answers to what they need to know (Davidson 2007). Whatever type of written report is done, ensure it is readable and uses a writing style that promotes understanding. Tips for writing clearly are listed in the box below.

Tips for Writing Clearly

- √ Avoid technical terms that the audience may not understand
- √ Know the audience and choose the appropriate style of writing
- √ Define key terms when necessary
- √ Adopt a conversational style if appropriate for the report (not those published in scholarly journals)
- √ Use only as many words as necessary to make your point (limit consecutive prepositional phrases).
- √ Choose words that the readers will understand
- √ Write short sentences and check clarity of longer sentences by reading the text aloud
- √ Consider using bullets to break up long sentences
- √ Write in the active voice and avoid passive language
- √ Use word processing tools for spelling, grammar and writing style (and the word processing thesaurus), although proofreading is still required
- √ Develop a logical structure for longer communications and reports (consistent formats, subheadings, and so on)
- √ Use bullets, boxes, text boxes, tables, and charts to convey information
- √ Avoid long footnotes
- √ Write and rewrite based on constructive feedback and according to the evaluation SOW
- √ Use collaborative writing to stimulate creativity and reduce individual workloads
- √ Allow time for writing several drafts, getting feedback, and proofreading.

Sources: Torres et al. 2005; CDC 2007.

Most evaluation reports are written by an individual or by a small team. Reporting may also be an opportunity to strengthen staff or partner capacity. For example, some national team members may be more comfortable and produce better chapters if they write them in the local language (McMillan and Willard 2008).

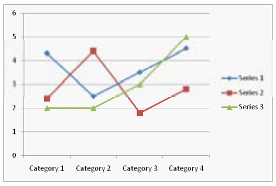
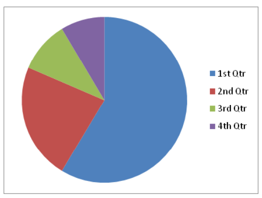
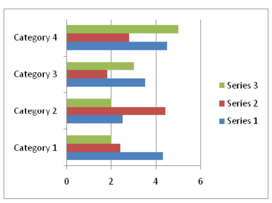
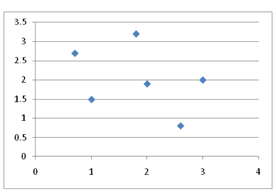
Guidance on Graphics

Excellent graphics can communicate complex ideas with clarity, precision, and efficiency. Often the most effective way to describe, explore, and summarize a set of numbers is to look at pictures of those numbers (Tufte 1989). Data graphics visually display numbers and quantities by using points, lines, a coordinate system, numbers, symbols, words, shading, and color. Reports, executive summaries, and handouts or PowerPoint slides used in verbal presentations all benefit from accompanying graphics to capture attention, communicate key information at a glance, and increase understanding and memory retention. Think of graphics as giving the reader the greatest number of ideas, in the shortest time, with the least ink, in the smallest space (Kusak and Rist 2006; Patton 1997).

It is important to present graphics with written or verbal explanations to ensure the correct interpretation. If including graphics within the text of a report, describe the information to be found in them or interpret the meaning of the data presented (Torres et al. 2005).

Table 7, below, presents an overview of graphics options, the types of information each option communicates, and tips on using graphics effectively.

Table 7: Overview of Graphics

<table>
<tr><th>Type of Graphic</th><th>Information Communicated</th><th>Tips</th></tr>
<tr><td>Line graph
</td><td>▪ Shows trends over time, movements, distributions, and cycles</td><td>√ Label lines rather than using a legend
√ Try and use three lines at most
√ Use different colors or different textures if in black and white</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pie chart
</td><td>▪ Shows parts of a whole</td><td>√ Use six or fewer slices
√ Arrange slices from largest or most important from “12:00 o’clock”
√ Use bright contrasting colors
√ Label pie slices</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bar chart or cluster bar chart
</td><td>▪ Compares differences between similar information (for example, percent distribution)
▪ Cluster bar chart compares several items</td><td>√ Use as few bars as possible
√ Use color or texture to emphasize data aspects
√ Place numbers showing bar values at top or inside the bar</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other charts (flow, time series, scatter plot)
</td><td>▪ Show processes, elements, roles, or parts of some larger entity</td><td>√ Use white space effectively
√ Convey the message in the title
√ Add the data source</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tables<table><tr><th>Data 1</th><th>Data 2</th><th>Data 3</th></tr><tr><td>Item 1</td><td>Item 1</td><td>Item 1</td></tr><tr><td>Item 2</td><td>Item 2</td><td>Item 2</td></tr><tr><td>Item 3</td><td>Item 3</td><td>Item 3</td></tr><tr><td>Item 4</td><td>Item 4</td><td>Item 4</td></tr></table></td><td>▪ Describe, tabulate, show relationships and compare
▪ Conveniently present large quantity of data</td><td>√ Assign each table an Arabic numeral
√ Place the title immediately above the table
√ Clearly label rows and columns
√ Show the data source</td></tr>
<tr><td>Illustrations (diagrams, maps or drawings)
</td><td>▪ Effectively convey messages or ideas that are difficult to express in words
▪ Show organizational structures, demonstrate flows
▪ Show direction
▪ Use flow charts to show issues
▪ Use map charts to show results comparable across geographic regions or countries</td><td>√ Keep it simple—if a lot of explanation is needed, use text instead
√ Use illustrations creatively as they help to communicate
√ Include a legend to define any symbols used
√ Use white space</td></tr>
</table>

Sources: Torres et al. 2005; Kusek and Rist 2004; Tufte 1989.

Where the level of literacy is very low, tables with words and basic numbers can be turned into symbols or pictures. Use familiar round objects, such as oranges, coins or melons, to make a pie chart. These familiar symbols help people to see, understand, and remember the results (Feuerstein 1986).

Drawings or photographs can be used in evaluation reports to help visualize important aspects of qualitative data. As with graphics, make sure that the meaning of drawings or photographs are clearly described in the report.

From the Field: The Power of Drawings

An evaluator asked program staff to draw images of the old organization and what they hoped for in the new organization, as part of an evaluation for intended organizational changes. At the end of the evaluation, the findings were presented to organizational leaders and a few of these drawings were shared, as they illustrated some of the evaluation's key findings.

The leaders were struck by the drawings and were surprised to see staff reactions towards the planned changes; the leaders admitted that they had not considered the staff's potential negative feedback.

It is unlikely that the evaluation finding—communicated through words alone or even supported with verbatim quotes—would have had the same impact on these leaders.

Source: Torres et al. 2005.

Photographs help explain, clarify, and strengthen a written report narrative by illustrating project activities (such as people pumping water) or the project context (such as a classroom). Photographs also help to tell stories of program participants.

Ensure photographs are shrunk to the appropriate size within the text. Also note that some field programs have difficulty downloading reports with too many photographs. (See De Ruiter and Aker [2008] for tips on taking photographs.)

Verbal Presentations

Verbal presentations help communicate evaluation progress or findings to stakeholders and other audiences. The advantage is that audiences can ask questions and communication is more interactive. Verbal presentations that include facilitated discussions can lead to dialogue among stakeholders and commitment to actions (see the section below on critical reflection events for more information) (Torres et al. 2005).

Debriefing meetings typically begin with a brief presentation, followed by discussion of key findings or other issues. Ongoing debriefing meetings may be held to communicate evaluation progress to program managers. A final debriefing meeting can be held with stakeholders to share and discuss key findings and recommendations from the final evaluation report. Panel presentations and community meetings are other examples of more formal debriefing meetings. Panel presentations can be used to bring together evaluation stakeholders to present key evaluation findings and recommendations or other evaluation components. Usually composed of three to four panelists; each individual makes a short presentation on some aspect of the evaluation. A moderator then facilitates discussion among panelists and between panelists and the audience (Kusek and Rist 2004). Community meetings bring the community stakeholders together with the evaluators or project staff to discuss the evaluation findings and get stakeholder feedback.

Much important evaluation reporting is interpersonal and informal. Communication about evaluations can occur during hallway conversations, over coffee or tea, during "brown bag lunches" (where each person brings his/her own lunch), before and after meetings, over the telephone, and through informal networks.

Broadcast media can be useful when evaluation findings need to be disseminated beyond the primary stakeholders. In illiterate societies, radio is a very effective way to disseminate information; community radio stations (with a mandate for development) can provide low-cost production and often have local language translation capacity.

Guidance on Verbal Presentations

Verbal presentations can be used alone or with a written report. When preparing the presentation, keep in mind what kind of information the audience will be most interested in and how best to engage their attention. Speak clearly and avoid presentations of detailed data. One well-known rule of thumb for verbal presentations is to "tell the audience what you will say, say it, and then summarize what you said."

Look for ways to make verbal presentations a learning event. For example, when presenting the data, guide the audience through the analysis from beginning to end and conclude with the findings and recommendations, explain why one recommendation was preferred to alternative options, and encourage audience feedback and participation (Casley and Kumar 1987).

Consider these ideas for engaging an audience during a verbal presentation:

- At the beginning, solicit expectations and questions
- Ask open-ended questions to audience members, written on flip charts, and then note their answers
- Adjust the presentation to audience reaction and nonverbal cues
- Allocate time for questions, answers, and discussions in small groups
- Get audience member reactions to the presentation and ask what additional information they need (Torres et al. 2005).

Handouts or PowerPoint presentations provide visual support and increase audience understanding. Do not distribute full evaluation reports at the beginning of a verbal presentation as the audience will then spend their time reading the report rather than listening to the presentation (Torres et al. 2005). Short handouts, however, given before the presentation can reinforce the presentation.

Tips for developing and presenting PowerPoint slides are included in the box below.

Tips for PowerPoint Presentations
√ Use the same style and formatting for each slide
√ Use a design template that supports the information and does not distract from it
√ Present information in phrases on the slide, not full sentences (except when quoting)
√ Do not read from the slides
√ Use a large, 20-point or larger size font
√ Time the presentation at one slide per minute
√ Set all the equipment up beforehand and test to make sure everything is in working order before the presentation begins.

Creative Reporting

Consider using creative, but less-traditional communication formats to report evaluation findings. These formats can be crucial when reporting information to illiterate stakeholders, as they show respect for local communication traditions such as oral history. Information on using video presentations, critical reflection events, dramas or role plays, poster sessions, write-shops, after action reviews, and working sessions are presented below.

Video presentations bring the combined power of visual imagery, motion, and sound. Videos can be shot in digital formats, edited on computers, and disseminated in CD-ROM or digital videodisk (DVD) formats. Although it is advantageous to have a presenter, videos can be distributed and viewed by wide numbers of audiences. Videos are especially useful for the following:

- Presenting qualitative evaluation findings, such as interviews
- Documenting evaluation processes
- Presenting evaluation findings about new programs
- Sharing evaluation findings with groups who cannot read evaluation reports (Torres et al. 2005).

Tips to produce and present videos are included in the box below.

Tips for Video Production and Presentation
√ Establish the video purpose and criteria for selecting program events to be filmed
√ Obtain permission from program participants before videotaping
√ Ensure the videos planned for standalone pieces include sufficient background information about the program and the evaluation
√ Consider the intended audience when determining the video length; shorter videos (20-30 minutes) have a better chance of being included in meeting agendas.

Critical reflection events help to validate information coming from the evaluation, analyze findings, and then use this knowledge to inform decision-making. Critical reflection can occur throughout the evaluation process, for example, during weekly review meetings or at the end, during a lessons-learned workshop.

Sequenced open questions are used in critical reflection to encourage people to discuss, reflect, and analyze information. Authentic dialogue also requires that a facilitator or group establishes an environment of trust, respect, and collaboration among evaluators and stakeholders. Critical reflection is enhanced when people:

- Ask pertinent questions and display curiosity
- Admit what they do not know
- Uncover and examine beliefs, assumptions, and opinions against facts, evidence and proof
- Listen carefully to others
- Adjust opinions when new facts are found
- Examine successes and problems closely and deeply.

Dramas and role playing are powerful ways to portray evaluation findings and to illustrate potential applications of recommendations. Torres et al. (2005) describe three theatrical formats where evaluation findings are presented and used to spark dialogue, as follows:

1. **Traditional sketches** are developed from evaluation data (especially interviews and focus groups) and may also portray evaluation findings. Actors perform a sketch and then exit. The sketch is followed by a discussion among audience members guided by a facilitator.
2. **Interactive sketches** are provocative vignettes that engage audience members in thinking and talking about evaluation issues and findings. Following an interactive sketch, the audience discusses their reactions with the actors, who stay in character, again guided by a facilitator who also provides data from the evaluation. After the facilitated discussions, actors repeat the sketch, changing it according to the outcomes of the audience discussion.
3. **Forum theatre workshops** use role-playing. A facilitator presents evaluation findings; participants can be both actors and audience members. Participants create mini-scenes based on evaluation findings and their own experiences. These are dynamic in that participants can move in and out of acting roles, and actors can change strategies mid-scene. A facilitator then elicits questions and leads discussions about each mini-scene.

Drama is followed by a sequence of open questions, such as: *What did you see happening here? Why does it happen? How does it happen in our situation? What can we do about it?* It is a powerful way to communicate evaluation findings, especially those on sensitive topics to groups. For example, these kinds of role plays have been used in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa to communicate findings on stigma related to HIV and AIDS.

Poster sessions provide quick, visual, and easily-read information to audiences with little or no knowledge about a program or organization. A poster can be combined with a verbal presentation. Posters typically include photographs, diagrams, graphs, tables, charts, drawings, and text on poster-size boards. Poster sessions are often used at large, multisession conferences to display condensed evaluation information. Audience members can view the displays or stop for brief discussion. Evaluators can be present at poster sessions to communicate key ideas and issues, and elicit questions, but poster sessions can also be set up to stand alone (Torres et al. 2005).

Tips for Poster Sessions
√ Audiences should be able to read a poster from a distance. √ Posters should convey main ideas clearly and concisely, for example, using headings of the report with bulleted points. √ Posters should include visuals and graphics and attract attention through color. √ Consider juxtaposing pictures of participants next to direct quotes from interviews. √ When making posters on a budget, use lined flip chart paper and extra broad markers to write clearly. *Source*: Torres et al. 2005.

A write-shop is an innovative technique to involve low-literate project stakeholders in report writing. It helps program participants to be active information creators –not just passive information-providers. Write-shops consist of two- or three-day workshops where program participants, PVO staff, and artists work together. PVO staff interview participants and elicit stories that highlight evaluation findings, best practices, or lessons learned. These are transcribed and edited. Artists prepare illustrations as per participant instructions. The reports are then published and drafts reviewed by participants and the PVO facilitators for content, language, and appropriateness (see text box, below).

After action reviews are a sequence of reflective activities that can be used during an evaluation to process an evaluation team's initial findings or to review progress or obstacles in the evaluation process. As with other critical reflection events, after action reviews need to be conducted in a safe environment where people can express their ideas openly; a facilitator is used to pose open questions and lead the group discussion.

After action reviews are conducted while memories are still fresh. The facilitator asks a series of sequenced questions as follows and records key points made by the group, such as:

- What was supposed to happen?
- What actually happened?
- Why were there differences?
- What did we learn?
- What were successes or shortfalls?
- What should we do to sustain successes or improve upon shortfalls?

Working sessions with evaluation stakeholders are the hallmark of a collaborative participatory evaluation and can be conducted at any time during the evaluation (Torres et al. 2005). Effective working sessions apply adult learning principles, such as those used for workshops.

Guidelines to Planning and Facilitating an Effective Working Session

- √ Clearly define the session purpose
- √ Prepare an agenda
- √ Choose appropriate procedures—such as brainstorming and small group tasks—and prepare all necessary materials, such as flipcharts or whiteboards and markers to record ideas, handouts, and documents
- √ Set up the meeting room to promote exchange and discussion
- √ Choose a meeting time that is convenient to participants
- √ Share the agenda well in advance and review it at the start of the meeting
- √ Use short games to help participants to get to know each other
- √ Invite participants to set ground rules or norms for how everyone will work together
- √ Clarify roles such as who is facilitating, who is recording ideas, and so on
- √ Use facilitation techniques or hire a competent facilitator to paraphrase comments, synthesize and integrate ideas, encourage diverse viewpoints to surface, manage time, invite the group to refocus when necessary, and build consensus
- √ Balance dialogue with decision making
- √ Plan and articulate next steps
- √ At the end, ask for feedback and use this information to improve the next working session.

Source: Torres et al. 2005.

May Their Tribe Increase

This illustration is from a Write-Shop that CRS held in India for a story entitled, "May Their Tribe Increase." Women belonging to Self-Help Groups (that receive CRS assistance) developed stories about their responses to a 2004 flood in Gujarat. The story described findings that villages receiving help from the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) coped better with the disaster because people received necessary aid in time and were not displaced.

Using Electronic Formats

Web site Communications

Written evaluation reports and evaluation documents can be disseminated to a wider audience by posting them on appropriate Web sites or distributing them via a listserv that are often linked to Web sites. Web sites may be hosted by a donor, a particular development community (relief, peacebuilding, public health, communications, and so on), a PVO consortia, a UN or government-hosted working group, and/or a resource center. Possible Web postings include reports, video presentations, PowerPoint presentations, newsletters, meeting schedules, and press releases. In the peacebuilding community, a number of Web sites have begun to post evaluations of peacebuilding projects (Lederach et al. 2007).

Synchronous Electronic Communication

Collaboration to communicate and report on an evaluation during all of its phases can be done with stakeholders in different locations through Web communication systems and conferencing products. Face-to-face meetings, small meetings, and live Web conferencing virtual meetings can be done online, allowing stakeholders who may be located across the globe to work together easily (Torres et al. 2005). Here are some options:

- **A chat room** is an area on the Internet where two or more people can have a typed conversation in real time; this method is ideal for routine conversations about data collection or evaluation procedures.
- **Teleconferences** can be arranged through communication service providers. A single number is given to participants to call; speakerphones are used to accommodate many people. Teleconferences are especially useful for discussing and getting feedback on evaluation documents that are distributed and reviewed by participants prior to the call.
- **Videoconferences** are meetings between people at different locations using a system of monitors, microphones, cameras, computer equipment, and other devices. Videoconferences can be used with evaluation stakeholders in place of a face-to-face meeting. Note that reliable videoconferencing technology can be costly to use and that technical expertise or information technology professionals are needed to facilitate a successful videoconference.
- **Web conferences** are meetings between people at different locations conducted through an Internet connection that allows them to view the same document or presentation on computer screens simultaneously, along with audio communication. Features of Web conferencing software vary and may include a chat room feature or allow for video and/or audio communication. Web conferences can be used for planning, presenting information, soliciting input and reactions, and editing evaluation plans and reports. Web conferences

can be arranged through companies specializing in the service or through Internet.

- **Podcasts** are a series of digital media files that are distributed over the Internet for playback on portable media players (e.g., iPods) and computers. Podcasts enable evaluators to communicate and report information with stakeholders at any time. For example, if a stakeholder is unable to attend a final debriefing meeting, a meeting podcast allows him/her to download the podcast of the event. Although rarely used at present, this electronic format holds much promise for the future.

From the Field: Sharing Results Online
Save the Children uses an online format to share program results across Africa, part of a new Design, Monitoring and Evaluation initiative that was launched among its country offices. The online format encourages learning among program teams located in different countries.

Annex I

References and Suggestions for Further Reading

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Annex II

Evaluation Report Checklist

EVALUATION REPORT CHECKLIST

Gary Miron
September 2004

The Evaluation Report Checklist has two intended applications that are related to evaluation management: (1) a tool to guide a discussion between evaluators and their clients regarding the preferred contents of evaluation reports and (2) a tool to provide formative feedback to report writers. Evaluators can self-rate their own progress during the writing phase. They can also use the checklist to identify weaknesses or areas that need to be addressed in their evaluation report(s). When two or more persons work on the same report, the checklist can serve as a tool to delegate, coordinate, and monitor progress among the contributors.

This checklist is not intended to be used as a metaevaluation tool. Evaluation reports differ greatly in terms of purpose, budget, expectations, and needs of the client. If one were to use this checklist to evaluate actual reports or draw comparisons across reports, one would need to consider or weight the checkpoints within sections and to weight the relative importance and value of each section.

This checklist draws upon and reflects *The Program Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994).

Instructions: Rate each component of the report using the following rubrics. Fill in the circle or place a check mark in the cell that corresponds to your rating on each checkpoint. If the item or checkpoint is not applicable to the report, indicate the "NA" cell to the far right. Additional checkpoints may be added as agreed upon by those using the checklist.

1=Not addressed, 2=Partially addressed, 3=Fully addressed, NA=Not applicable

	1	2	3	NA
1. Title Page				
A. Title is sufficiently clear and concise to facilitate indexing	①	②	③	○
B. Author(s)' names and affiliations are identified	①	②	③	○
C. Date of preparation is included	①	②	③	○
D. Title identifies what was evaluated, including target population, if applicable	①	②	③	○
E. Name of client or funder(s) is identified	①	②	③	○
F. Text and material on title page are clearly and properly arranged	①	②	③	○
G.	①	②	③	○
Comments:				

	1	2	3	NA
2. Executive Summary				
A. Description of program/project	①	②	③	○
B. Evaluation questions and purpose of the evaluation	①	②	③	○
C. Brief description of methods and analytical strategy (if appropriate)	①	②	③	○
D. Summary of main findings	①	②	③	○
E. Implications of findings	①	②	③	○
F. Recommendations, if appropriate	①	②	③	○
G.	①	②	③	○
Comments:				
	1	**2**	**3**	**NA**

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Evaluation Report Checklist by Gary Miron (Excel)

http://crs.org/publications/appendix/CommunicateReportEvaluation_AnnexII.xls

Annex III
Sample Executive Summary

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Following the earthquake in Yogyakarta on May 27, 2006, CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Save the Children (SC) and World Vision Indonesia (WVI) responded separately to the disaster. Although the agencies worked independently of each other, it was felt that a joint evaluation (JE) of the response would demonstrate greater accountability and the results would be taken more seriously.

The objectives of the JE were to assess individual agencies on:

- The impacts of their responses and identify promising practices and indicators on impact measurement.
- The appropriateness of agency responses.
- Whether the responses had helped the recovery of people and communities.
- The level of agency accountability to local people.
- Organisational preparedness to respond to emergencies.

In addition, learning on joint evaluations was assessed.

2. The Context

The Yogyakarta earthquake killed an estimate 5,700 people and injured 27,000. Over 300,000 houses were destroyed or severely damaged and a further 200,000 suffered minor damage. 1.6 million people were left homeless. An additional 1.1million people were affected[1].

Recovery is now well underway in the affected areas, as those affected have been provided with some form of shelter assistance, health and education services are operating, and children are back in school and say they feel less traumatised. However, many gaps still remain, particularly due to the limited recovery of economic livelihoods.

3. The Response by the four agencies

At the time of the earthquake, three of the agencies had teams on the ground responding or preparing to respond to a potential eruption of the Mount Merapi Volcano. They began assessments and redeployed NFI kits from the Mount Merapi crisis to earthquake-affected areas. The fourth agency began their response on May 29th 2006.

Many staff employed in Yogyakarta had worked in their agency's emergency response program in Aceh Province. They were able to apply their learning from Aceh to the more recent disaster in Java

1 Source: UNDP: The Cluster Approach in Yogyakarta and Central Java One Year Review, 2007, p.1.

A Joint Evaluation of the Yogyakarta Earthquake Response July 2007 vii and work more effectively with local government and community structures in distributing aid to affected people.

All four agencies were credited with working in remote areas that were damaged severely. The agencies carried out rapid assessments and NFI distributions of shelter, hygiene, clothing, household and clean up kits. WVI provided extensive support to reactivate health services at sub-district and village levels. CRS, SC and WVI implemented activities to protect children and reduce their trauma. SC and WVI provided support for elementary schools to restart classes in mid-July 2006 as well as support for schools to operate effectively. CARE, CRS and WVI implemented transitional or permanent housing programs, while water and sanitation activities were implemented by CARE and CRS. The largest activity by each agency was NFI distribution and collectively the agencies reached around 20% of all affected people with shelter and other NFI kits.

4. Conclusions

Conclusions are based the views expressed most frequently by aid recipients, local government officials and staff from village level up to district level.

Appropriateness: Most activities were considered appropriate and justified. The friendliness of staff was appreciated and the fact that all these agencies arrived at the start of the emergency and responded quickly. Agencies were also commended for the high quality of the goods they provided and the fact that they tended to monitor distributions, the selection of beneficiaries and the use of their assistance regularly.

Concerns raised were related to the overall response and distribution process. Oversupply and undersupply occurred in some villages. In addition, officials and villagers noted that assessments were carried out in the same location by different agencies, indicating a lack of coordination. Respondents said coordination between agencies on their emergency response needs to improve.

Another concern was about the way agencies work with affected people. While noting the positive impacts of assistance, informants said assistance created conflict and dependency in some village locations. Concerns over distribution, and the importance of it being fair and not creating conflict were raised in seven out of the nine villages visited.

Impact[2]: Agency activities did contribute to positive impacts. As there were many agencies and actors responding to the emergency, impacts cannot be attributed to the specific agencies who participated in this evaluation.

The impacts mentioned most often by recipients and village leaders were:

- NFI support helped meet the basic survival needs of affected people.
- CRS, SC and WVI children's activities helped to reduce children's trauma and increase their self-esteem and confidence.
- SC and WVI elementary school support ensured that schools could restart in mid-July and work effectively thereafter.

2 The definition of impact used is from the Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies: The Good Enough Guide, page 4. The Guide also informed the team's review of accountability.

- WVI's health sector support helped ensure that local people had access to basic health care services quickly.
- CARE and CRS water and sanitation activities helped to improve people's access to clean water and increase their knowledge of hygiene.
- Agencies implementing shelter programs helped families to have a place to live that is more earthquake resistant.
- CARE and CRS were credited with working in ways that helped increase cooperation and solidarity at community level.

Recovery: Agency activities did help affected people and communities to recover. Recovery levels reflect the support provided by all emergency responders and not just these agencies. Villagers said the contribution by the Government of Indonesia (GOI) to recovery was 50-60%, by the NGOs 25-30% and by others around 10%.

Villagers and leaders said that the elementary school system is 90% recovered. The work of SC and WVI was credited with contributing to this level of recovery. The children's activities implemented by CRS, SC and WVI were credited with helping children to recover from trauma and respondents said trauma had decreased, though no percentage was given.

Drinking water sources were said to be back to normal though sanitation and access to latrines was said to have recovered by only 50%. In most villages housing reconstruction is only between 30-50% and similar figures were given for economic recovery.

Accountability to local people: The four agencies did work with local leaders and involved them in assessments, planning, monitoring and decision-making while at the same time involving the communities to varying degrees in these processes.

However, women in villages where three of the agencies worked said they wanted to be more involved and have more information on agency activities. All informants stressed the importance of regular information to all in a community, backed up by on going monitoring of the assistance programs implemented to ensure fairness and to avoid conflicts.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Of the regular M&E activities, there were some good practices which are exemplary. Of note was the child-led evaluation carried out by SC, in which children were trained to actually do a program evaluation. Other agencies had carried out internal reviews and one agency also conducted an external evaluation of their post emergency program. All agencies were able to produce solid input and output data, and some like CRS had some easy to use outcome level indicators.

Emergency preparedness: The overall speed at which the agencies responded to the disaster was significant, mainly due to the fact that three of the agencies were already mobilized on the ground in Yogyakarta to respond to a potential eruption of the Mount Merapi Volcano. Otherwise, the response time may not have been so swift.

Joint evaluation: The joint evaluation had advantages, in bringing together the organizations involved and providing them opportunities to learn from one another about each other's programs. Results are more holistic than a single agency evaluation. The way the process was carried out enabled these agencies to be accountable to government, affected people and others working in

A JOINT EVALUATION OF THE YOGYAKARTA EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE JULY 2007 ix the Yogyakarta response. However, such evaluations need to be done one or two months after an emergency program work ends.

Recommendations

Recommendations on activities for future sudden onset emergencies

a) Continue to do the type of programme activities carried out in this response. Carry out assessments to ensure aid meets the needs of affected people and to agree with them procedures for distribution and beneficiary selection. Provide good quality items, distribute quickly and follow simple procedures.

b) Better coordinate NFI programs between all actors/stakeholders to ensure equal distribution across areas and application of distribution methods that promote fairness. Monitor the assistance well by ensuring that staff participate in distributions and beneficiary selection processes.

c) Carry out joint assessments so that the same information is not collected a number of times in the same location by different organizations.

d) Start recovery activities earlier e.g. transitional and permanent housing plus activities to restore livelihoods.

e) Complete a study on the transitional and permanent housing designs and approaches used by these four agencies, other INGOs and the GOI in Yogyakarta to draw out learning that can be applied in Indonesia when responding to future emergencies where shelter is a huge need.

Recommendations on economic recovery activities

a) Provide more support in helping affected HHs and communities to restore their economic livelihoods.

b) Learn from work done in other countries prone to sudden onset emergencies to identify appropriate economic livelihood activities to support in future emergencies in Indonesia.

Recommendations on local accountability

a) Provide information to the wider community: men, women, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, on a regular basis so that people are aware of the work being conducted by the agency with them so reducing opportunities for misuse of information.

b) Establish a complaints system that clearly defines how people can complain about the work being done by an agency if they need to do so.

c) From the start, involve women as well as men in planning, implementation and evaluation of programs.

Recommendations on emergency preparedness

a) Complete country emergency preparedness and contingency plans and ensure that all staff are aware of their existence and content. This could be done through country program emergency

x A JOINT EVALUATION OF THE YOGYAKARTA EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE JULY 2007 response simulations, followed by an interagency simulation once all agencies are comfortable with their own plans.

b) Create a joint database on the capacity of different agencies regarding the location and type of pre-positioned NFIs. Examine the feasibility of holding joint stock in shared warehousing.

c) Better prepare staff who do not have emergency experience and ensure new hires receive appropriate training and supervision.

Recommendations on joint evaluations

a) Once joint assessments are complete, plan for a joint evaluation to start within one to two months of emergency program completion. Use the Good Enough Guide s to inform the JE process.

b) Commit enough experienced program staff to the entire period[3] of the JE so that the team has sufficient experience for an in-depth review of a few sector specific activities.

3 The two CRS team members were highly qualified emergency staff and did an excellent job. Transfer of knowledge as one member turned over their work to the other in the middle of the evaluation proved challenging.

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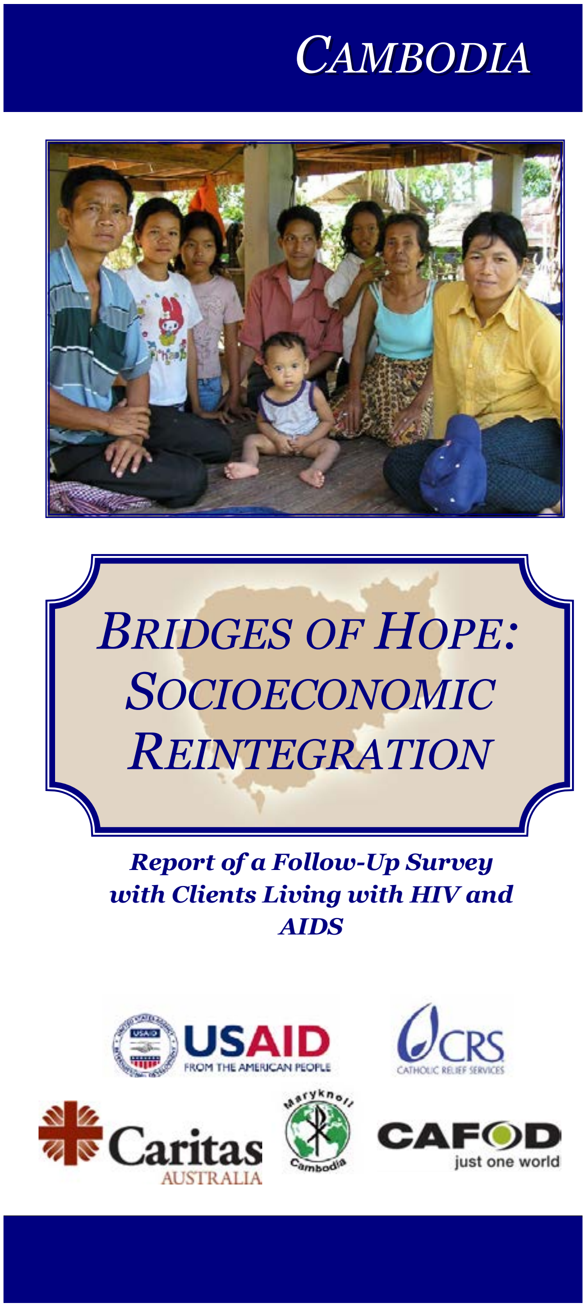
Annex IV

Bridges of Hope Brochure



CAMBODIA

BRIDGES OF HOPE: SOCIOECONOMIC REINTEGRATION

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