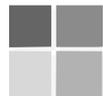**IPDET**

Module 6:
Developing
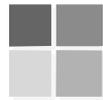# Evaluation Questions &
Starting the Design Matrix

Introduction

- Sources of Questions
- Types of Questions
- Identifying and Selecting Questions
- Developing Good Evaluation Questions
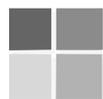- Designing the Evaluation

IPDET © 2009

2

Evaluation Questions

- Give direction to an evaluation
- Reflect key issues
- Critical element to help make decisions

IPDET © 2009

3

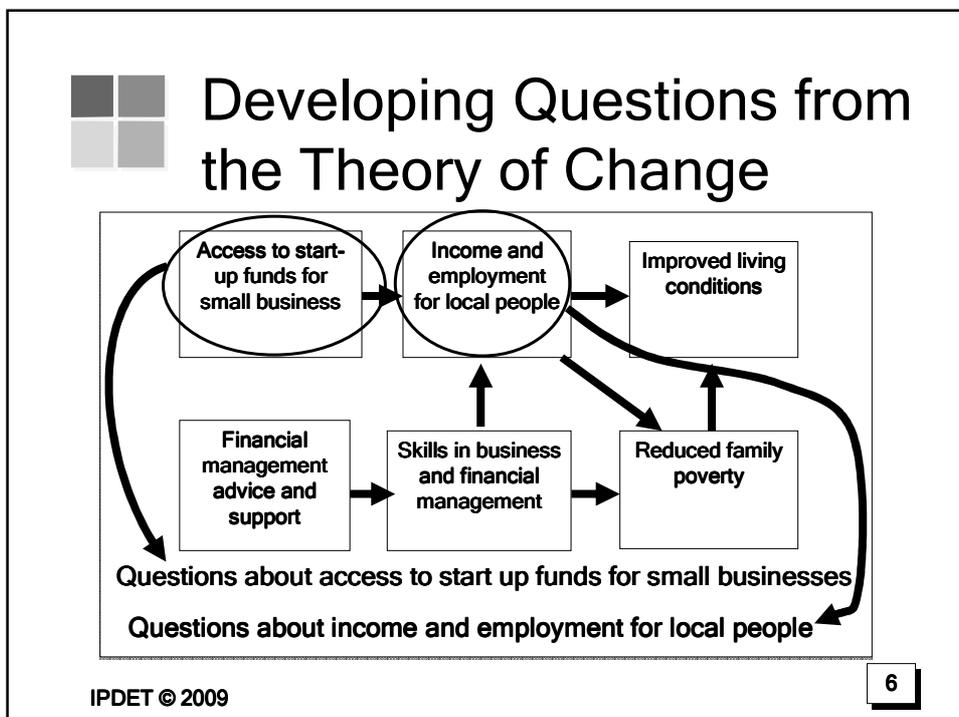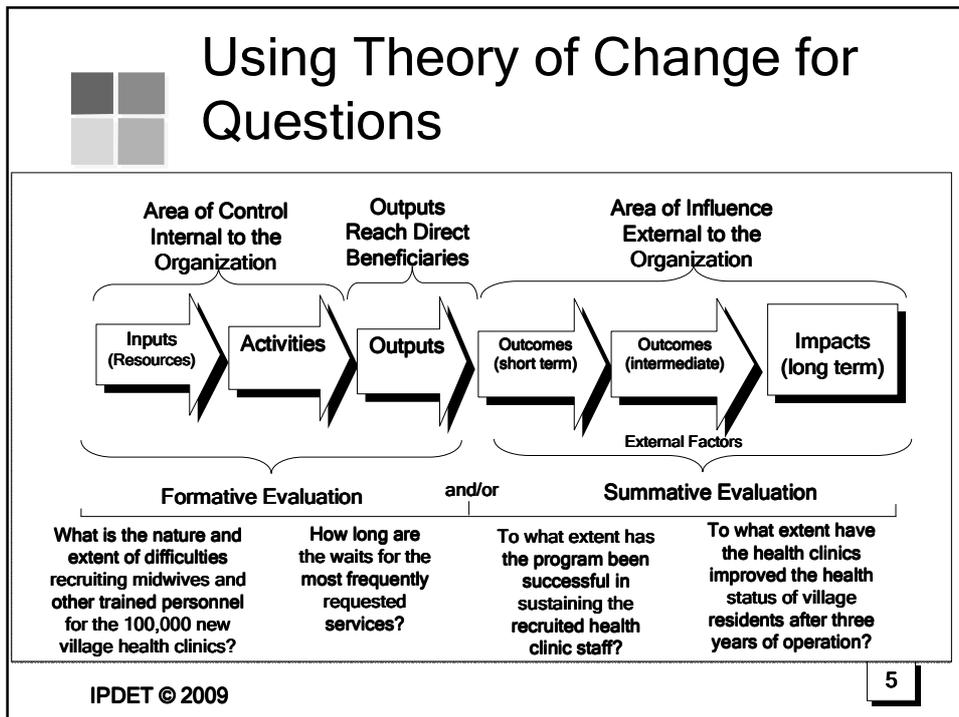# Sources of Questions

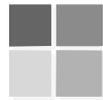- Findings from prior evaluations of *this* intervention
- Findings from prior evaluations of *similar* interventions
- Assumptions and contextual factors identified in developing the theory of change
- Clients and stakeholders concerns and issues
- Professional standards, checklists, guidelines
- Views and knowledge of expert consultants
- The evaluator's own professional judgment

IPDET © 2009

4

Using Theory of Change for Questions

Area of Control Internal to the Organization	Outputs Reach Direct Beneficiaries	Area of Influence External to the Organization

Inputs (Resources) → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes (short term) → Outcomes (intermediate) → Impacts (long term)

External Factors

Formative Evaluation   and/or   Summative Evaluation

What is the nature and extent of difficulties recruiting midwives and other trained personnel for the 100,000 new village health clinics?	How long are the waits for the most frequently requested services?	To what extent has the program been successful in sustaining the recruited health clinic staff?	To what extent have the health clinics improved the health status of village residents after three years of operation?

IPDET © 2009

5

Developing Questions from the Theory of Change

Access to start-up funds for small business → Income and employment for local people → Improved living conditions

Financial management advice and support → Skills in business and financial management → Reduced family poverty

Questions about access to start up funds for small businesses

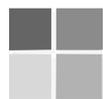Questions about income and employment for local people

IPDET © 2009

6

Types of Questions

- Descriptive questions
- Normative questions
- Cause-and-Effect questions

IPDET © 2009

7

Descriptive Questions

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

IPDET © 2009

8
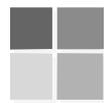
Examples of Descriptive Questions

- What are the goals of the program from the perspectives of different stakeholders?
- What are the primary activities of the program?
- Where has the program been implemented?
- Who received what services?
- What obstacles has the program faced?
- What was the average gain in participant scores?
- To what extent does the program design reflect lessons learned from past similar programs?
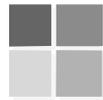
IPDET © 2009

9
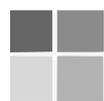
More Examples

- To what extent are there systematic differences across sites in how the program has been implemented?
- What are the qualifications of service providers?
- When was the program fully implemented?
- What proportion of women participated in the program?
- How does the cost of the program compare with the costs of similar programs?
- What are the informal communication channels inside the organization?
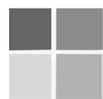- How useful did participants find the program?

IPDET © 2009

10

Important Note 1

Questions about the proportion of clients who find the program useful or the proportion that like the training are still descriptive questions*

* Unless there is an established norm or standard
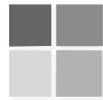
IPDET © 2009

11

Important Note 2

Questions about gains or changes over a period of time- whether concerning crop production, traffic flows, trade patterns, test scores, attitudes or behaviors- are descriptive questions*
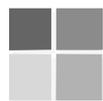
*When no attribution is being sought

IPDET © 2009

12

Normative Questions

- Compare "what is" to "what should be"
- Similar to questions asked in performance auditing
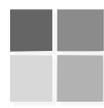- Measuring against *previously* established criteria

IPDET © 2009

13

Standards for Normative Questions

- Often found in program authorizing documents
- May be indicators with specific targets in monitoring systems
- May come from accreditation systems, blue-ribbon panels, professional organizations
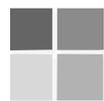
IPDET © 2009

14

Examples of Normative Questions

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

IPDET © 2009

15

If there are no standards, can
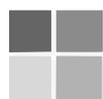
the evaluator set them?

IPDET © 2009

16

Cause and Effect Questions

- Seek to determine what difference *the intervention* makes
- Ask whether the desired results have been achieved AND whether it is the intervention that has caused the results
- Imply before & after and with & without comparisons
- Impact evaluations focus on cause & effect questions
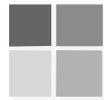
IPDET © 2009

17

Examples of Cause and Effect Questions

- Did the three-country partnership strategy preserve the biodiversity of the affected area while sustaining livelihoods?
- As a result of the job training program, do participants have higher paying jobs than they otherwise would have?
- Did the microenterprise program reduce the poverty rates in the townships in which they operated?
- Did the increased tax on gasoline improve air quality?
- Did the government increase in financial penalties for violating firms reduce the use of under-age children in the garment industry?
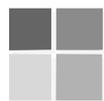
IPDET © 2009

18

To Determine Cause:

- Theory of change
- Time order
- Co-variation
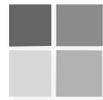- Elimination of rival explanations

IPDET © 2009

19

Identifying and Selecting Questions

- Two phases:
  - divergent phase: develop a comprehensive list of questions
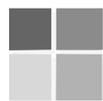 - convergent phase: narrow down the list

IPDET © 2009

20

Divergent Phase

- Generate questions
- Examine the questions
- Organize the questions
  - classify each question as it fits into the main study issues or other organizer
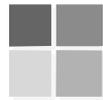
IPDET © 2009

21

Model to Question Type

- Questions about changes in outcome measures are typically descriptive questions
- Questions about achievement of outputs are typically normative questions
- Questions about impacts are typically cause and effect questions
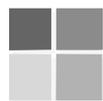
IPDET © 2009

22

Convergent Phase

- Be selective in identifying the study questions
- Eliminate interesting but not essential questions

IPDET © 2009

23

# Suggested Criteria to Narrow Down to Essential Questions

- Who would use the information? Who wants to know? Who would be upset if the evaluation question were dropped?
- Would an answer to the question reduce uncertainty or provide information? Would it have an impact on the course of events?
- Would the answer to the question yield important information? Would it have an impact on the course of events?

(continued on next slide)

IPDET © 2009

24
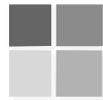
Suggested Criteria (cont.)

- Is this question merely of passing interest to someone, or does it focus on critical dimensions of continued interest?
- Would the scope or comprehensiveness of the evaluation be seriously limited if this question were dropped?
- Is it feasible to answer this question, given financial and human resources, time, methods, and technology?
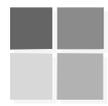
IPDET © 2009

25
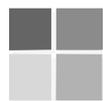
Matrix for Ranking and Selecting Questions

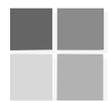| Would the evaluation question…	Question # _____							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 …
1 be of interest to key audiences?								
2 reduce present uncertainty?								
3 yield important information?								
4 be of continuing interest?								
5 be critical to the study's scope and comprehensiveness?								
6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

IPDET © 2009

26

Developing Good Questions

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

IPDET © 2009

27

Writing Better Questions

- Establish a clear link between each evaluation question and the study purpose
- Make sure the evaluation questions address the issues of greatest concern
- Make sure all of the questions are answerable
- Set a realistic number of questions for the time available for the evaluation
- Consider the timing of the evaluation relative to the program cycle
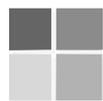
IPDET © 2009

28
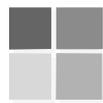
Evaluation Design: A Process for Developing:

- major evaluation issue or question
- general evaluation approach
- specific evaluation questions and subquestions

- the operationalization, data sources, and methodological strategies for type of data collection
- the analysis planned
- the dissemination strategy

IPDET © 2009

29

Approach to Development Evaluation

Focus the Evaluation
- Identify and meet with stakeholders
- Agree on purpose – meeting with the client
- Study other studies and program documentation
- Create theory of change
- Specify evaluation questions
- Create terms of reference

Design & Methodology
- Evaluation questions
- Develop measurement strategy
- Adopt data collection design
- Adopt data collection strategy
- Adopt sampling strategy
- Develop data collection instruments
- Develop analysis plan
- Brief client and stakeholders
- Involve stakeholders

Use Evaluation
- Develop communication strategy
- Brief on evaluation design
- Update on evaluation process
- Communicate Findings
- Solicit and incorporate f feedback
- Make decisions
- Create action plan
- Follow-up
- Make recommendations
- Tracking

Report Findings
- Write report
- Review findings and conduct and quality checks
- Make recommendations
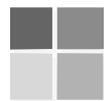- Incorporate feedback/ refine findings
- Deliver

Gather & Analyze Data
- Test instruments
- Develop protocols
- Train as needed
- Gather data according to protocols
- Prepare data for analysis
- Analyze data
- Interpret data
- Hold message conference
- Draft statement of findings

IPDET © 2009

30

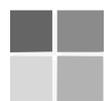# Design Matrix

- An organizing tool to help plan an evaluation
- Organizes questions and the plans for collecting information to answer questions

IPDET © 2009

31

Matrix Elements

- Main evaluation issue
- General approach
- Questions and subquestions
- Type of questions and subquestions
- Measures or Indicators
- Target or standard (if normative)

- Presence or absence of baseline data
- Design strategy
- Data sources
- Sample or census
- Data collection instrument
- Data analysis and graphics
- Comments

IPDET © 2009

32

Main Evaluation Question/Issue:					Page 1 A
Questions	Sub-questions	Type of sub-question	Measure or Indicator	Target or Standard (if normative)	Baseline Data?

IPDET © 2009

33

General Approach:					Page 1 B
Data Source	Design	Sample or Census	Data Collection Instrument	Data Analysis	Comments

IPDET © 2009

34
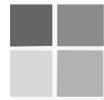
A Final Note….

"Every why has a wherefore."
-- William Shakespeare

Questions?

35