

THE ILLINOIS AFTER-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Outcomes Work Group Meeting

March 16,2005

Members in Attendance: Deyon Dean, IDHS; Erica Harris, Chicago Public Schools; Angela Farnham, CPRD, Kristen Allen, Springfield Boys & Girls Club; Mindy Lanum, Evaluation Research Institute/ICVP

Staff in Attendance: Jennifer Becker-Mouhcine, Hester Richardson

MOTT Framework Update/Feedback

Jennifer updated the group on her discussion with Mott when providing our feedback gathered at the last meeting on the Quality Framework. In discussing our feedback with Ms. Chung at Mott, these were the main points she made:

- The framework is intended to be a document to demonstrate to programs the Theory of Change, and expect programs to be working with someone with evaluation expertise when putting it to use. It was not intended as a stand-alone document that would guide programs through the steps.
- They had also considered the possibility of adding examples in each area that showed how to make some connections, as we suggested. However, because the research isn't strong enough to really show how activities link to outcomes in all areas, and because there are so many ways an activity could link to various outcomes, that they decided to leave out examples.
- Similarly, they decided to not tie specific research to outcomes/indicators. They started to do so, but realized the document would become too long and unwieldy, and so went back to the original form. Ms. Chung thought that this would be an excellent addition or supplementary document, and thought Priscilla Little may be able to help with this piece, if we wanted to take that on.
- Many program types and ages served were considered, and as the document was simply meant to provide examples programs could use in their own planning, the activities, outcomes, and sources were not selected per se, but recommended by various members of the group, and were pretty inclusive of what was suggested. There wasn't a narrowing down process, or a way deemed any of these outcomes more appropriate than others.

Group Response

The group discussed the feedback from Mott. The group determined that there were some pieces we would want to supplement the Mott Framework with as it is rolled out in Illinois. These include:

- Attaching research: it was determined that this would be helpful information for providers and it would be worth it to talk to Priscilla at HFRP to gather some of her information. However, it was noted that this document would serve a separate purpose from the Theory of Change Framework and materials, and it would be important to be clear about how to make use of the information.
- A second supplement would help providers with the "How to" information to go along with the Mott Framework. The group determined that it would be good to tag some examples of where activities connect to outcomes and measures. It was noted that it would be important to stress that these are examples, and that pieces can be put together in various ways. This is especially important since outcomes can be so inter-related. We can also discuss what other pieces of further information should be connected to the Framework, and what how they relate to all of the tools and supports the group has identified as important to make available to the field. For example, some of the information about logic modeling reviewed in this meeting can help fill in some of the information about questions programs should ask when thinking about their own theory of change and how to approach the process of connecting the dots for their own programs.

The group determined that it was more of an immediate priority to look at the "How To" and examples piece, since the Mott Framework is coming out and we would like to attach that information.

There was some conversation about the state agencies expectations of activities for grants and their link to outcomes. One suggestion was for funders to be able to look at the Mott Framework and the tools we will be working to attach to it, and take guidance from there as to which activities be recommended for grantees to reach the expected outcomes.

Tools and Supports/Logic Model Resources:

The process of gathering materials in the following areas, Logic Models/Theory of Change information, Evaluation Readiness Assessments, Evaluation Utilization, Evaluation Planning and Implementation, Evaluation Framework is underway. The first set of materials gathered was in the area of Logic Models, which were emailed to the group. The group discussed the best process to follow in reviewing the various pieces of information for this area as well as the others, and to determine more specifically what our ultimate goals were.

Materials Review: The group determined that having a few group members review each of the recommended materials was a good idea to get a range of input. The folks reviewing the resources could use common criteria to create feedback to bring back to the group.

Criteria: The group began to think about what criteria should be used for reviewing resources, and the first list brainstormed. It was noted that some of the criteria need to be fleshed out and may vary depending on what area we are looking at. This initial list is:

- Is the content valid and consistent with our work?
- Is the document or materials easy to understand for various levels of practitioners?
- Is the length and format manageable?
- Does it come from a reputable source?
- Does the material give guidance on how to use the information in the programs?

The following example was discussed: for content criteria for logic models, the statement was made that a good logic model tool should talk about outcomes as short, intermediate and long term to help providers think about what to expect and when, explain the importance of the program having a theory behind how their activities connect to their outcomes, and to show how community influences activities as well as reaching outcomes. So a review of the logic model information would pay attention to if these basic components were included.

The group volunteered to review various resources. One task will be to review the resource against the list of criteria above. The other task is to think about the criteria being used and see what other questions should be added to the list, as this first list of criteria is “tested”.

Volunteer	Resource to Review
Mindy Lanum	University of Wisconsin Extension-On-line course
Erica Harris	Kellogg Model
Angela Farnham	Harvard Family Research Project
Kristin Allen	Innovation Network Model
Jennifer & Mindy	United Way Workbook
Jennifer	Will be the second reviewer for all

Beyond Review: The group stressed that this should not just be an exercise in materials review to highlight the best or create our own, but instead as a first step to assess the materials in each area that can serve as resources, but then really explore what the Partnership can do to help providers access and really make use of the information. This step goes beyond finding written resources, but means exploring on-line trainings or other training needed, how our website can provide interactive help and information, what funders may require or provide in terms of logic model development, evaluation guidance and resources, etc. For each area, we can identify the resources that meet basic criteria alongside our recommendations for how to support providers in implementation. These recommendations can then go to the Full Partnership and Leadership Team for input and response.

Next Meeting April 19th at 10:00