

M&E of Impact Evaluation

MEASURE Evaluation provides regional training workshops to meet a great need in developing countries for professionals with M&E skills

Demand for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) skills is particularly acute in government agencies and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that implement reproductive health programs. Unfortunately, there are few places in developing countries where professionals can seek training to increase their M&E skills. This is particularly true of program impact assessment skills.

Many developing countries commit substantial resources for program implementation. The rationale is that high-quality and widely accessible reproductive-health services, along with program activities that enhance knowledge and promote healthy behavior, add up to a strong positive influence on the health status of men, women, and children. In a context of limited resources and growing concern about the performance of public programs in general, evaluation plays an important role by providing concrete evidence of the impact of program actions on target populations.

Despite widespread interest in the effectiveness of health programs, there have been few rigorous evaluations of their impact on health. Yet, careful evaluation of program impact is essential if policymakers and managers are to make informed decisions about whether or not to continue existing programs or to make program changes aimed at improving effectiveness.

One of MEASURE Evaluation's capacity-building activities is aimed at establishing partnerships in developing countries with selected universities and training/research centers to offer M&E training programs and related activities. To build the capacity of professionals, MEASURE Evaluation and its institutional training



partners offer three-week non-degree courses that provide training in assessing program impact.

To deliver these workshops, MEASURE Evaluation relies on partnerships with several training institutions, including Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública (INSP) in Mexico, and the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) in India. Between 1997 and 2005, MEASURE Evaluation also collaborated with East West Center in Hawaii and the University of Costa Rica to offer these workshops.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

These workshops provide intensive training in program-evaluation concepts and state-of-the-art tools and techniques for evaluating program impact. The goal is to provide researchers and other professionals responsible for the evaluation of reproductive-health programs with appropriate conceptual frameworks, quantitative methods, and result-interpretation skills. The key objective is to develop criteria for choosing the appropriate evaluation and estimation strategy given different scenarios of data availability and program characteristics.



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Summary of Program Impact Evaluation Workshop Participation, 1997-2008

Region/Location	No. of Workshops	No. of Applicants	No. of Participants	No. of Countries Represented	No. of MEASURE Evaluation-funded Participants
ANE/Hawaii	2	154	36	14	13
LAC/Mexico	5	367	84	11	26
LAC/Costa Rica	4	158	61	14	24
Total	11	679	185	27	63

WORKSHOP CONTENT

Participants begin by reviewing the basic concepts for developing sound, practical M&E plans, including the role of impact evaluation for decision making, conceptual frameworks, data systems, and selection of health indicators. Participants also review experimental and observational procedures for estimating program impact, with emphasis on practical applications of impact evaluation strategies. There are also sessions on survey sampling and household survey design, calculating and interpreting reproductive health indicators, techniques for measuring socioeconomic status, and designing samples for facility-based surveys. These workshops include intensive training on statistical techniques for evaluating program impact.

Focusing on the practical application of these skills, participants work in small groups to conduct analyses using real data sets and present their results back to the workshop. Participants are encouraged to bring data sets related to evaluations they are conducting in their own countries.

PLANNED WORKSHOPS FOR 2009

- Latin America, at INSP, Mexico, July 6-24, 2009
- Asia, at PHFI, India, August/September 2009

COMMENTS FROM RECENT PARTICIPANTS

"The workshop helped me initiate a way of assessing the impact of food and nutrition programs in my city Medellin, and although the issue of financing is complex, we have already received positive responses from

several public and private enterprises to develop them with this kind initiatives."

— INSP workshop participant (Mexico, July 2007)

"I think the workshop was very useful and has helped in improving the process of analysis of the research project *Characterizing Primary health in municipalities that joined the Programme for Family Health (PSF) in the State of Bahia* regarding both the conceptual aspects regarding the qualitative and quantitative techniques of investigation."

— INSP workshop participant (Mexico, July 2007)

"Yes, the workshop has contributed very positively to my understanding of impact evaluation. As an anecdote, when I analyze reports of previous evaluations, work colleagues spoke of the impact of their programs; however, when I provide feedback to them that the changes obtained by the program could also be due to a series of other external factors that have not been considered, they have accepted my feedback and proceeded more cautiously in their statements regarding program impact. This confirms that our previous understanding of program impact was limited, and that we were looking for a reduction or global increase without considering the context."

— INSP Workshop Participant (Mexico, July 2006)

ONLINE

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