

Basic Principles of
Healthy Cities:

Evaluating a Healthy Cities Project



What is evaluation?

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines evaluation as the systematic assessment of the relevance, adequacy, progress, efficiency, and impact of a programme or project. The evaluation of a Healthy Cities project must therefore be well-planned and, from the outset, be part of the project planning strategy.¹

Why evaluate the Healthy Cities project?

Evaluation is important because it:

- provides a basis for planning by identifying local contexts;
- justifies allocation of resources to funding bodies, policy makers, and communities;
- examines outcome achieved by the project;
- improves practices for future use and reference;
- serves as a tool to refine and improve the project over time; and
- demonstrates the success achieved, thus ensuring sustained community participation.

What should be evaluated?

Structure evaluation, Process evaluation, Output evaluation and Outcome evaluation:

i What is structure evaluation?

Structure evaluation examines the efficiency and the effectiveness of the basic components of the Healthy Cities project. Examples are project office, stable resources, accountable mechanism, communication platform, intersectoral partnerships, community ownership, understanding the community and building capacity.

ii What is process evaluation?

Process evaluation examines how the Healthy Cities project has been delivered as designed. The scope of process evaluation includes setting up of policy statements, level of health-related knowledge gained and opportunities for community participation (e.g. steering committee should comprise all the main sectors such as the local administration, health providers, academic institutions, the business sector, voluntary groups, community leaders with responsibility for the overall management and monitoring of the project activities) etc.

Process evaluation of the Healthy Cities project is useful to raise motivation for the project from community members and to monitor and control the operation of the Healthy Cities project.

iii) What is output evaluation?

Output evaluation assesses the intermediate and medium-term health and well-being outcomes. These would be related to health literacy, social action and influence, public health policy and organizational practices, healthy lifestyles, health environment and effective health services.

iv) What is outcome evaluation?

Outcome evaluation assesses what the Healthy Cities project has achieved in terms of population health. The scope of outcome evaluation includes air quality, morbidity rates of communicable diseases and non-communicable diseases, description and assessment of the effectiveness of existing intersectoral coordinating mechanisms, adequacy of housing facilities and level of perceived health status in a community etc.

Outcome evaluation of a Healthy Cities project can only be possible over a reasonably long period of time and demonstrates the effectiveness of the project.

Process evaluation is important in the planning stage while outcome evaluation is more appropriate when the project is mature.

Setting indicators for evaluating a Healthy Cities project

Indicators are measurements of health and of the factors which influence health.¹ Different indicators at different levels are used as tools for evaluation. Indicators should be chosen with specific relevance to the local community. It uses not only quantitative data but also qualitative data which can reflect the perceptions and feelings of local residents and individuals involved in the project.¹

Information/data can be collected through a variety of means including quantitative and qualitative methods such as questionnaires, face to face interviews, focus groups, and review of project documentation. The extent of evaluation will depend on the resources available.

Who will do the evaluation?

Evaluation is best done by various experts including epidemiologists, health promotion experts, statisticians from both within and outside the healthy cities office:

- external evaluators will add credibility to the evaluation;
- internal evaluators will facilitate the process and make evaluation much easier.

How to evaluate a Healthy Cities project?

A Healthy Cities project can be assessed with respect to structures, processes, output and outcome.

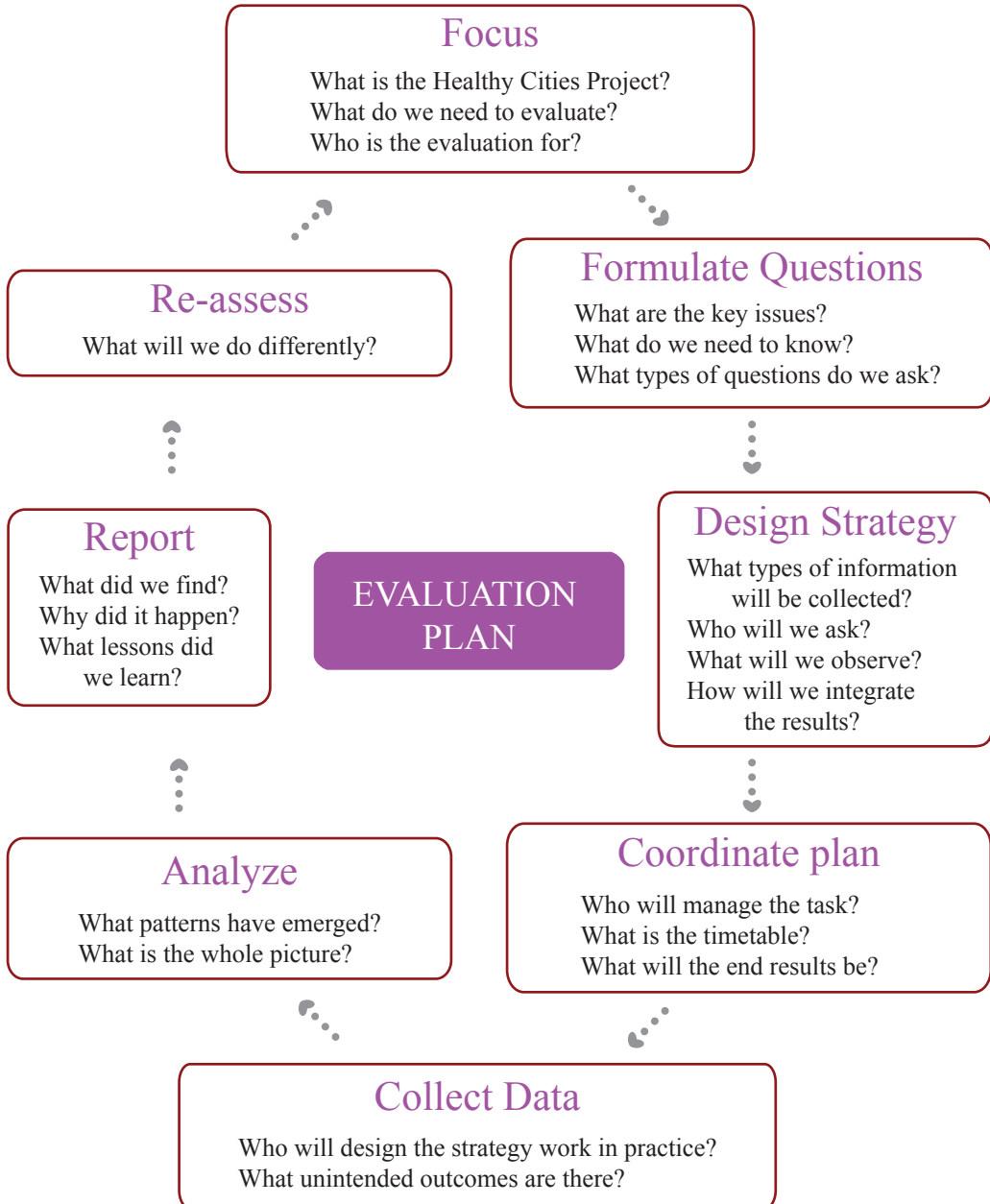
A Processing Framework for Evaluation of Healthy Cities Projects¹

Categories

Structures: Set up	Processes: Activities	Output: Short-term achievements	Outcome: Long-term achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational capacity: Project office, Accountable mechanism Stable resources: Funding, Intersectoral partnerships, Community ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify health needs and target group Plan project strategy Encourage community participation Promote innovation Evaluate project effectiveness Share experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity completed as planned Review project objectives Compare knowledge, attitude and practice change before and after activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underscore the specific individual, communal or environmental health outcomes that are likely to take longer period to achieve
<p><u>Examples of Indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up project office Build a representative steering committee Secure project fund 	<p><u>Examples of Indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the community diagnosis Activities implemented: no. of seminars, workshops No. or proportion of target recipients receiving the intervention 	<p><u>Examples of Indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased no. of schools set up policy on healthy eating Increased level of physical activity of participants Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables by the participants 	<p><u>Examples of Indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decline in mortality and morbidity rates of communicable and non-communicable diseases Improve air quality as demonstrated by decline in air pollution index Decreased overweight and obesity rates

Annex: How to implement evaluation for a Healthy Cities project¹

WHO has developed a process cycle in Healthy Cities project evaluation as follows:



References

1. WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific. (2000). Regional Guidelines for Developing A Healthy Cities Project. Available at:
<http://whqlibdoc.who.int/wpro/2000/a78396.pdf>
2. The Department of Health. (2007). Building Healthy Cities – Guidelines for Implementing A Healthy Cities Project in Hong Kong (2nd ed.). Available at:
http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/Building_Healthy_Cities_Guidelines.pdf
3. The Department of Health. (2005). Guidelines on Health Promotion Evaluation. Available at:
http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/grp_guidelines_on_health_promotion_evaluation_en.pdf
4. O’Neill M, Simard P. (2006). Choosing Indicators to Evaluate Healthy Cities Projects: A Political Task? Available at:
<http://heapro.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/21/2/145>

Copies of this leaflet are available from the Community Liaison Division.
Please direct request to ha2_cld2@dh.gov.hk

This leaflet is also accessible at the Central Health Education Unit’s website
www.cheu.gov.hk and Centre for Health Protection’s website www.chp.gov.hk

