

# SECTION 4

TESTING AND

EVALUATING

OUR WORK



## WHY EVALUATE?

This is an important part of any project or initiative, as it is our opportunity to examine the effectiveness of our strategy. Testing and evaluating our work ensures that our material does not miss the mark, and is not wasteful or risky. This is important because we do not want to alienate the intended audience or stir up opposition.

Furthermore, careful pre-testing and research of our materials can give solid evidence to present to policy makers and opinion leaders showing that the approach we have taken is sound and not overly controversial. In some cases it will provide us with information to compare with once our project has started.

There are three main reasons for evaluating our work:

### **To help us plan:**

to tell us whether or not the message is reaching the right people at the right time, and if we are achieving what we set out to do. It can also tell us whether and how our strategy should be modified, and what we should do next if our current objectives have been reached. In an area of constant change, it is important to monitor the suitability of the material we are using, as what worked well last year may not be suitable this year.

### **To learn from our experience:**

to evaluate what we have been doing and how well we have been doing it is a rich source of learning for individuals and groups, and helps us to understand new things about the area we are working in and what we are trying to achieve. It also helps us to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of our work. It helps us to know if we have used our time and resources as well as we could, and if we haven't, what changes we can make.

### **To meet reporting requirements:**

this is important if we have received funding from any outside source, or if we wish to convince policy-makers or opinion leaders about the value of the approach we have taken.

## WHAT TO EVALUATE?

In relation to the material/message we have produced:

- was the message seen and heard? Did it communicate the right message?
- what effect did the message have on the attitudes and behaviours of the young people we were trying to reach?
- did the young people do anything as a result of being exposed to our message/material?

In relation to the project overall:

- what were we trying to do?
- what did we do?
- what happened?
- what was successful and what didn't work?
- what do we do next?

## HOW TO EVALUATE?

**T**here are three main levels of evaluation:

- process evaluation (what went on) – measures the activities of the strategy, and who it is reaching;
- impact evaluation (what it did) – measures the short term effects of the strategy – whether the group understood the message, how relevant the message was to them, and so on;
- outcome evaluation (what happened as a result) – measures the long term effects of the strategy, and whether we have succeeded in getting the target group to change as a result of our strategy.

We can evaluate our strategy using a variety of methods. We don't necessarily have to undertake a three-month research project! We could make use of any of the following in our evaluation:

- questionnaires handed out to people targeted by our material or project, which asks them for feedback on various aspects of the material or project;
- interviews with individuals or groups who were involved in planning and conducting the strategy, and also those who were targeted by the strategy;
- a review of the strategy – overall comments on the success of each part of the strategy;
- statistics – to provide hard evidence to back up your review;
- focus groups, using selected members of the target group, to discuss various aspects of the material or the issues our material addressed.



## RESOURCING AND EXTENDING OUR WORK

**D**eveloping effective materials and projects will be limited by the resources available for the task. (And by our imagination!) Resources include human resources (such as knowledge, skills and labour), material resources (such as equipment, paper and postage) and time available.

Some ideas for extending our resources and networks include:

- working with talented local people, for example musicians and composers, who may be prepared to help promote a positive and healthy image to other young people through their work;
- developing networks with similar organisations who are working towards the same goals, so that we can share resources and ideas;
- lobbying to get increased public support for our work, particularly from influential people;
- starting small, gaining some practical experience, and then building upon successes;
- timing activities to coincide with other programmes or already existing programmes that are compatible to our message;
- asking local business to donate specific materials that may be needed, for example, paper and paint;
- looking for the community to provide space free of charge in which to perform drama or puppet theatre, for example, workers associations, church halls, and schools;
- approaching local universities or institutions to help with evaluating the project or activity;
- asking local art schools or colleges to allow their students to help with the project as part of their course of study.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### **Health Promotion Unit**

UNICEF HQ,  
UNICEF House, 3 UN Plaza,  
New York NY 10017  
Telephone: 212 326 7000  
Facsimile: 212 326 7336

### **Adolescent Health Unit**

World Health Organisation,  
CH1211, Geneva 27, Switzerland,  
Telephone: 41 22 791 3361  
Facsimile: 41 22 791 4189

### **Health Education and Health Promotion Unit**

World Health Organisation,  
CH1211, Geneva 27, Switzerland,  
Telephone: 41 22 791 2111  
Facsimile: 41 22 791 0746



## DETACH AND RETURN

**SEND IN THIS EVALUATION FORM AND GET ANOTHER PUBLICATION FREE!**

**E**valuation is an important part of any activity. Your help in evaluating this publication would be greatly appreciated. CYP is continuously trying to improve its publications and any information that you provide on this evaluation form will be used to inform the development of future CYP projects and publications.

Name of publication \_\_\_\_\_

1 With what age group and in what settings have you used this publication?

Please tick boxes in a) and b) as appropriate:

- a)  School age youth  Out of school youth (up to 30 years)  
 Adults (over 30)  Other (please specify)
- b)  Youth club  Religious organisation  
 School  Further education establishment (ie college or university)  
 Special training facility (please specify)  Other (please specify)

2 What do you regard as being the strengths of this publication?

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3 What do you regard as being the weaknesses of this publication?

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Further comments

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Please continue overleaf...

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