This is to certify that the

thesis entitled
THE ROLE OF EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT IN SUGGESTING PROGRAM EVALUATION STRATEGIES FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS:
A CASE STUDY OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS VOLUNTEER CORPS

presented by

Shawn Thomas Lock

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Masters of Science degree in Resource Development

Major professor

Date May 18, 1992

THE ROLE OF EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT IN SUGGESTING PROGRAM EVALUATION STRATEGIES FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS: A CASE STUDY OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS VOLUNTEER CORPS

By

Shawn Thomas Lock

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Resource Development

1992

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT IN SUGGESTING PROGRAM EVALUATION STRATEGIES FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS: A CASE STUDY OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS VOLUNTEER CORPS

By

Shawn Thomas Lock

This thesis investigates the use of evaluability assessment (EA) as an evaluation tool for experiential learning programs, using the International Students Volunteer Corps (ISVC) as a case study. The study consisted of focus group interviews using a modified version of EA, and a review of project documents and previous participant interviews. Outcomes were a program logic model that specified the important decisions, activities, and implications of the ISVC, and a list of potential items for further research and evaluation.

The results of the study indicate a need to add a goals/outcomes and assumptions components to the program logic model to enhance its utility. EA as an evaluation tool was seen as particularly useful to resource-constrained program staff. Recommendations include the need to develop a primer on EA for program staff with little evaluation experience, and the need to develop appropriate training mechanisms to instruct program staff on the use of EA.

To my mother,

Mary E. Lock,

for her endless support through all my journeys,

and

in memory of

Joseph W. Lock

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my friends and family for their support throughout my whole academic career. Their companionship helped to pull me through what sometimes seemed an endless process.

I would like to thank my thesis committee, Frank A. Fear, David Horner, and George Rowan, for their participation, encouragement, and good humor throughout the writing process. I am especially indebted to Frank Fear, who, as a mentor and friend, has always been there to help me in my personal, academic, and professional growth.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my parents, who have always allowed all of their children the freedom to be themselves.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Contribution of Evaluability Assessment to Program Evaluation

Program evaluation involves the measurement of program performance indicators, and the testing of the logic behind a program that links resources and activities with expected outcomes (Wholey, 1987). Program staff and policymakers can use program evaluation results to improve program performance in future efforts.

Wholey (1987, pp. 77-78) identified four problems that prevent the utilization of program evaluation:

1. Lack of definition of the problem addressed, the program intervention, the expected outcomes of the program, or the expected impact on the problem addressed.

2. Lack of a clear logic of testable assumptions linking expenditure of program resources, the implementation of the program, the outcomes to be caused by that program, and the resulting impact.

3. Lack of agreement on evaluation priorities and intended uses of evaluation.

4. Inability or unwillingness to act on the basis of evaluation information.

Evaluability assessment (EA) is a tool that helps clarify a program's structure, establish the plausibility of its

activities in reaching intended goals, determine the evaluability of the program, and enhance the utilization of the evaluation results (Smith, 1989). EA was first developed by Joseph Wholey and his associates at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. (Nay & Kay, 1982, Smith, 1989). It was developed to address the perceived inadequacies of program evaluation. First used as a summative evaluation tool, EA is now used to assess all aspects of the program process.

In brief, EA involves gathering an evaluability assessment team that can help gather materials and develop a program logic model that outlines the resources and activities necessary to reach the program goal. Throughout the process, individuals who have a vested interest in the program -- stakeholders -- are identified and interviewed to produce additional information. After developing the program logic model, a decision is made on what aspects of the program can be evaluated, and which aspects are most important for evaluation. Developing an evaluation strategy that results in findings that can and will be used by stakeholders is a key component of EA.

Evaluability Assessment in Experiential Education Programs

Program evaluations conducted with experiential programs in higher education appear to have the same deficiencies that prevent utilization of evaluation findings. One significant set of experiential activities in higher education is cross-

cultural learning programs. Cross-cultural experiences occur in a number of ways. Many academic programs require undergraduates students to participate in a cross-cultural experience as part of a liberal arts education. Given the growth in worldwide communication and interaction, cross-cultural skills will most likely become increasingly important. Consequently, it is important to have effective evaluation tools to assess such programs.

Evaluation of experiential programs have concentrated more on assessment techniques, rather than on overall program evaluation. Such evaluations have focused on the importance of developing clear objectives, preparing the student for placement, monitoring the experience, and then judging some final product (Duley & Gordon, 1977). Program evaluations have often been implemented in the form of checklists describing the steps involved from initial student intake to final assessment, in which the evaluator then matches the program against the ideal checklist (Knapp & Sharon, 1975, Permaul & Miko, 1977). The EA process helps to examine implementation questions that answer issues related to the plausibility of program goals and implementation activities. EA represents an effective method for looking at broader programmatic issues to assess program performance.

Study Purpose

Evaluability assessment (EA) has been used successfully in many Cooperative Extension Service and other governmental programs. Many of these programs involve adults in learning programs. Given the limited attention paid to program evaluation efforts in adult experiential learning programs in higher education, and the narrow focus of existing research, there is a need to utilize existing evaluation methods to improve program performance review.

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Determine the usefulness of the evaluability assessment process in suggesting appropriate evaluation methods for experiential learning programs.

2. Suggest guidelines that program staff can use to adapt evaluability assessment to fit individual needs/programs.

3. Highlight the utilization-enhancing characteristics inherent to evaluability assessment, and suggest additional guidelines.

This study uses the International Students Volunteer Corps (ISVC) as a case study in which to apply the EA process. The ISVC was a cross-cultural volunteer program conducted twice during two academic years, 1989-1991. This study will focus on the first year of the ISVC. This choice is necessary due to several changes that occurred during the second year:

1. Although the recruitment phase of the second year was quite successful, retention was low. Out of 80 students that originally registered for the program, only five students continued on a regular basis.

2. The students that remained in the program had limited english speaking skills. The majority of students had just started their first year at MSU, and several were still attempting to pass their english competency test, before being granted full admittance into the university. The time necessary to master english skills and fulfill the program requirements at the same time proved to be too difficult, and students were unable to start the actual volunteer phase of the program.

3. Due to other commitments, a reduction in program responsibilities, and fewer staff meetings, faculty staff members played a less prominent role in the project. As a result, there is less information available on the program valuable to others, both from an experiential aspect on the part of the staff, and in the form of written feedback from the students.

4. The program was terminated early when attendance continued to drop even further, and students were unable to complete the program requirements.

The first year of the program was successfully completed, closely following the program process as outlined in the funding proposal. Several evaluative activities occurred during the first year, and staff met on a weekly basis to reflect on the program's current activities and on its long term implementation. The program staff's high level of participation during the first year resulted in more information on which to conduct a more complete evaluation, and provide information relevant to the study objectives listed above.

As a case study, the ISVC offers several additional opportunities. Increasing world communication and travel bring peoples of diverse backgrounds in contact with each other on a regular basis. Developing peoples' ability to

communicate effectively in other cultures is essential. The ISVC represents one program that helps students, and local volunteer agency workers, develop a broader understanding of other cultures. Applying EA procedures to the ISVC will provide an example for other cross-cultural programs.

As an experiential program, the ISVC offers an opportunity to test the EA process. The lessons learned in this application could be adapted for other programs needing a similar evaluation mechanism.

Overview of the Case Study

The International Students Volunteer Corps (ISVC) was a cross-cultural volunteer program conducted at Michigan State University (MSU) during the 1989-90 and 1990-91 academic years. The ISVC was a collaborative effort among several academic and administrative units at MSU. The primary objective of the ISVC was to enhance international students' conceptual and practical understanding of American society through American volunteerism. Secondary objectives included:

1. strengthening interdepartmental networking among the academic units at MSU;
2. expanding upon those units' linkages with local public and private agencies;
3. supplementing the personnel resources available to local agencies; and
4. exposing local agencies and volunteers to the cultures represented by MSU students.

The ISVC was comprised of three phases. Phase One. The first phase involved recruitment, project planning, and the pre-field orientation. The pre-field orientation occurred as a series of two-hour seminars held over a five week period. Topics in the seminars included the concept of volunteerism in the U.S. and its development in the local community, elements in a successful volunteer experience, such as writing learning objectives and job descriptions, and aspects of cross-cultural communication in the workplace.

Phase Two. In phase two, students began their volunteer experience in agencies they identified during phase one. Students' placements included such organizations as the Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, the Voluntary Action Center, the Capitol Area Literacy Coalition, and the Council Against Domestic Assault. During this phase, students attended bi-monthly reflection seminars.

Phase Three. Phase three consisted of students efforts to evaluate the ISVC project and their experience. Students participated in group sessions focusing on their experiences, and a group of nine students presented papers at a closing symposium, "International Students: Sharing the Wealth with the Community".

Participants in the ISVC came from a range of countries, including: Nigeria, South Africa, Malawi, Trinidad & Tobago, Malaysia, India, China, and Taiwan. Their academic disciplines were equally diverse, ranging from Agriculture

Economics, Education, and Soil Sciences, to Sociology and Resource Development.

During the project, several evaluative activities were conducted. At the end of phase one, students filled an evaluation form covering the recruitment and volunteer placement process, and the pre-field curriculum. At the end of the program, students filled out a final program evaluation form. During this time, a graduate assistant assigned to the project also conducted interviews with each student or her/his academic advisor or her/his volunteer supervisor.

Organization of the Study

A review of literature sources relevant to evaluability assessment (EA), as it pertains to program performance, occurs in Chapter Two. The EA process is described, along with critical elements associated with conducting a successful EA. Elements of an evaluation that enhance utilization of the results are discussed, as well. The ISVC is described in detail in Chapter Three. The methodology for the study is outlined in Chapter Four. The methodology details the steps for conducting a preliminary EA that is suitable for cross-cultural, experiential programs. The study results are presented in Chapter Five. Summaries of the program logic model process, interviews, and document analysis are used to suggest an "utilizable" evaluation process. In Chapter Six, the suitability of EA for cross-cultural programs is

discussed, along with a consideration of questions and issues associated with further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the first chapter, a brief overview of program evaluation was presented, along with a description of the International Students Volunteer Corps (ISVC). Though several programs have systematically introduced students into new cultures, evaluation and assessment have focused on awarding credit, rather than looking at programming aspects (Duley & Gordon, 1977). Evaluability assessment (EA) was proposed as an appropriate method to develop evaluation strategies for cross-cultural learning programs.

Chapter two describes those aspects of evaluability assessment (EA) that relate to developing evaluation procedures of cross-cultural experiential programs. The first section outlines the actual process in EA. The second section links EA to the notion of utilizing evaluation results for program improvement. The final section provides a general overview of cross-cultural learning programs in higher education.

Evaluability Assessment

Historical Perspective

Evaluability assessment (EA) has evolved over time from a mostly summative technique, to one that can be used during program development or program monitoring (Smith, 1989, pp. 13-14). Joseph Wholey and his associates are credited with developing EA at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. (Nay & Kay, 1982, Smith, 1989). The EA process arose from a desire by researchers at the Institute to match program rhetoric and practice, and whether or not program rhetoric could actually be measured in an evaluation (Nay & Kay, 1982, p. 225). In 1984, EA was adopted in five states in a practical effort to define the EA process, largely from a summative viewpoint (Smith, 1989). It is now frequently used as part of the program development process in many Cooperative Extension System efforts (Mayeske, 1991).

Selecting an EA Team and Defining the Boundaries of the Program

As stated above, EA is a process of matching program rhetoric to reality, and then devising a strategy to measure program rhetoric. The EA team is responsible for developing the program model, described below, that links program rhetoric to reality. They are involved throughout the process, from identifying the EA strategies to analyzing results, drawing conclusions, and making recommendations

(Smith, 1989, p. 33). The EA team is composed of program staff, policy makers, and administrators. Individuals on the EA team should have subject-matter expertise related to the program, and experience with the clientele (Mayeske, 1991). Members of the EA team are stakeholders, persons with a vested interest in the program, but they are only a subset of the stakeholder group. Further discussion on stakeholders in the EA process occurs later in the chapter.

A program is a set of resources and activities used to accomplish one or more goals (Mayeske, 1991, Rutmam, 1980, Smith, 1989). Boundaries need to be established for a program in order to link evaluation findings to an easily identified intervention and its results (Rutman, p. 45). Otherwise, evaluation results are tied to an imprecise set of activities, and contribute little to further program development. Smith (1989) suggests two criteria for determining program boundaries. First, EA should focus on major programs. Major programs represent a significant commitment in resources. Second, the nature of the questions to be answered determine the size of the program boundaries. Those questions that are most important determine the direction and extent of EA activities.

Developing the Program Theory

After developing an EA team and defining program boundaries, the next step is to develop the program theory or

program logic model. Building a program logic model is a process of: 1) determining means-ends, cause-effect relationships in a program as defined by the program staff (Smith, 1989, Mayeske, 1991); 2) identifying clearly defined program components that can be implemented in a prescribed manner; and 3) specifying plausible goals and effects (Rutman, 1980). Wholey (1987, pp. 78-79) describes program theory as an if-then expression:

> If the following program resources are available, then the following program activities will be undertaken... If these program activities are to occur, then the following program outcomes will be produced... If these activities and outcomes occur, then progress will be made toward the following program goals.

The program logic model is developed as a flow chart by the EA team. The model developed by the EA team is refined by reviewing project documents, site visits, and further interviews (Wholey, 1987). Depending on only one source may lead to an overemphasis on a particular component of the model, such as outcomes. Gathering information for a variety of resources and individuals will help to bring out most components of the program (Nay & Kay, 1982).

The final model should contain information on key components, or intermediate objectives, that precede the main goal(s), the activities and resources necessary to accomplish each component, and the indicators of success (Smith, p. 53). Mayeske (1991) also emphasizes listing the potential barriers

at each component, methods to reduce barriers, intervening events that the staff will have no control over, and spin-offs from each component - good or bad. The model can be presented in any format that the EA team desires, but it should be easily understood by all stakeholders, and should break the program down into distinct components for final analysis (Smith, p. 53).

Program theory is essential to the EA process, because it outlines the assumptions and activities that lead to the program goals. The evaluator can look at the program theory and actual implementation to see if there is a fit. In other words, did actual activities follow what was intended in the program theory (Scheirer, 1987)? Before the actual evaluation process begins, analyzing the degree of implementation and resulting outcomes, a comparison of the program logic model and implementation can determine whether or not the program, as originally proposed, is evaluable. Thus, the program theory stage gives valuable information in whether an evaluation effort should continue.

Finally, the process of building the program logic model requires that key actors, or stakeholders, come together and agree on the program's theory. This process builds consensus among the EA team, and gives each participant similar views and expectations of the program (Smith, 1989, Mayeske, 1991).

Identifying and Interviewing Stakeholders

Stakeholders are anyone who have a vested interest in the program or evaluation results (Patton, 1986). Stakeholders have valuable information about the program, and can make the program logic model more reflective of the program's original design (Mayeske, 1991). Some stakeholders play a role on the EA team, while others may be targeted for interviews to further define the program theory and/or provide information during the actual evaluation process as it arises out of evaluability assessment. Thus, stakeholders not only utilize evaluation results, but are affected by them; their own interests may depend on the evaluation results (Smith, 1989).

Both Smith (1989) and Mayeske (1991) suggest that the two most important items to determine about stakeholders is their awareness of the program, and their interest in it. Questions generally include asking a stakeholder about her/his knowledge of the program, its goals and activities, the perceived benefits, and any general comments related to the stakeholder's personal observation on the efficacies of such programs. Stakeholders provide information on what information may be most important to collect for utilization. Consequently, the less a person knows about the program, the less likely that person is a true stakeholder (Mayeske, 1991, p. 6 - 4).

Utilizing Evaluation Results

Issues of Utilization in Evaluability Assessment

Wholey (1991) suggests that EA is a process for achieving consensus on how to utilize evaluation results. The EA process specifies evaluation priorities and intended uses, such as stimulating improved program performance, communicating the value of the program to stakeholders, and efficiently allocating program resources. The process of building a program logic model should result in a hierarchical list of evaluation priorities. The EA team, and additional stakeholders, can choose the most important priorities on which to focus the evaluation.

EA is an evaluation needs assessment that helps determine if an evaluation is appropriate and whether the program is evaluable (Patton, 1991). If the necessary information is not available to make that decision, the evaluator and/or the EA team may need to collect preliminary information. Wholey (1991) outlines a rapid-feedback evaluation process, similar to EA, to help gather preliminary results to determine potential evaluability and utilization. Rapid-feedback evaluation involves reviewing available information, collecting new data if necessary, conducting a preliminary evaluation, and determining the potential for a full-scale evaluation. The potential evaluability is highly dependent on its likely uses.

The results of the EA process should indicate the potential data that can be produced, and whether stakeholders are willing and/or able to utilize the evaluation results. Smith (1989, p. 136) suggests five choices in determining utilization:

1. Decide to evaluate the program
2. Decide to change the program
3. Decide to take no further action
4. Decide to stop the program
5. Do not decide and ignore the EA.

The option(s) selected often depends on the purpose of the EA, i.e., whether the EA is for program development or evaluation. When the main purpose is program performance evaluation, the EA process, especially the program logic model and stakeholder interviews, may reveal that there is little desire to utilize the results, and an evaluation may be an inefficient use of resources. Deciding to stop the program, or to not take further action, would be appropriate at this time. However, the EA process may reveal a need to change the program, rather than evaluate, if the program was not designed properly.

Making the Evaluability Assessment Process Utilizable

Determining utilization before the evaluation can help save valuable resources. Patton (1991) suggests several steps to determine utilization. An evaluator can conduct a mock utilization session in which stakeholders and/or the EA team are asked to show how they plan to use the results. Major findings could be anticipated, and participants would have to

show how those findings would be used in the program or with key policy makers. Having stakeholders write down what findings they anticipate, and keeping those statements for comparison at the end of the evaluation, helps them to pay more attention to the final results. Finally, involving major stakeholders at all stages of the evaluation raises their investment in the process and the likelihood that they will use evaluation results.

The evaluator should take a proactive role in promoting utilization (Patton, 1990). Patton recommends that the evaluator negotiate with stakeholders-- to facilitate an agreement on which questions are most important, and then be held accountable for delivering the information on those questions. In addition, the evaluator may need to uncover any fears or stereotypes stakeholders may have about evaluation before she is able to negotiate the process. Uncovering stakeholder fears or stereotypes can be done through small group exercises and answering questions anonymously submitted on paper (Patton, 1991).

In a series of discussions and debates on evaluation (Alkin, 1990), panelists agreed that an evaluation is not effective unless there is proof of utilization by the intended users. EA has the potential to bring stakeholders together in agreement on a program's direction, and the priority evaluation issues, but it is effective only if the results can be utilized by stakeholders. Utilization, then, is an

essential product of EA, but it is also an ongoing focus throughout the process.

Using Evaluability Assessment in Cross-Cultural Learning Programs

Overview

Experiential learning can be viewed from the perspective of learning from life experiences, such as skills learned on-the-job or self-directed learning from a hobby or sponsored experiential learning occurring in an guided, academic program. This study is concerned mainly with sponsored learning. Experiential learning involves not only observing and reading about an activity, but also directly participating in the activity through volunteerism and internships (Keeton, 1978). Kolb's work on the learning cycle is often used as a theoretical framework for experiential learning programs (Kolb, 1976a, cited in Doherty, et al., 1978). In this framework, students reflect on concrete experiences to help build concepts and generalizations for testing through further experiences.

Experiential learning takes place in several forms with several goals. The forms range from independent study, to group projects conducted as a class requirement, to graduation requirements and service learning centers. The goals of the programs include career exploration and development, institutional analysis, personal growth and development, field research, social/political action, and cross-cultural

experiences (Duley & Gordon, 1977). Skills often found most helpful include: observing and recording information, gathering information orally, reflecting on activities, problem solving, and cultural analysis (Duley, n.d.).

Cross-cultural experiences occur in a number of ways. Programs such as the now defunct Justin Morrill program at Michigan State University required undergraduates students to participate in a cross-cultural experience, whether in the U.S. or abroad, as part of a liberal arts education. The Experiment for International Living and its School for International Training represent institutions whose primary mission is the training of individuals for international careers (Batchelder & Warner, 1977). A great deal of their training, such as language and field research, is devoted to cross-cultural learning.

Program Evaluation of Experiential Learning

To justify the validity of experiential learning in traditional academic institutions, researchers have concentrated more on assessment techniques, rather than on overall program evaluation. Assessment activities stress the importance of developing clear objectives, preparing the student for placement, monitoring the experience, and then judging some final product (Duley & Gordon, 1977). Some programs may attempt a follow-up interview to gauge the extent to which students have integrated the experience. Techniques

used to assess the end product include: simulations, performance tests, essay examinations, interviews, self-assessment and product assessment (Knapp & Sharon, 1975). Diaries or journals and periodic questionnaires represent the main method of monitoring the experience in process (Permaul & Miko, 1977).

The overwhelming focus is on creating competencies. While literature does exist for program evaluations, these are often presented in the form of checklists describing the steps involved from initial student intake to final assessment. The evaluator then matches the program against the ideal checklist (Knapp & Sharon, 1975, Permaul & Miko, 1977). In addition, there appears to be a gap in the literature dealing with experiential learning. Recent literature addresses the experiential aspects of teaching english as a second language, designing training programs for foreign teaching assistants, and developing international education programs.

EA offers a process to determine effective evaluation strategies for cross-cultural programs. Evaluation efforts that monitor the program while it is in progress, such as those methods mentioned in this chapter, have an important role in overall program assessment. Patton (1986) classifies these efforts as implementation evaluation-- activities that answer what actually happened in the program. EA, however, allows the evaluator and the EA team to go one step beyond implementation questions to answer issues related to the

plausibility of program goals and implementation activities. EA also assists stakeholders in developing evaluation procedures to determine program performance (Wholey, 1991), including both expected and unexpected outcomes (Patton, 1991).

Because evaluation efforts have concentrated on implementation issues, there is a need to look at overall programmatic issues. Looking at cross-cultural programs from a programmatic perspective can provide information on the worth of programs in a student's educational experience. The International Students Volunteer Corps (ISVC), described in the next chapter, provides a rich setting in which to answer the question of worth. As a completed program, the ISVC represents a case study to apply the program performance assessment function of evaluability assessment.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with background on the International Students Volunteer Corps (ISVC). The program description follows a sequential format, from the program proposal through the first year and into the second year. Special emphasis is given to program development and implementation. The evaluation process is briefly described. However, a more detailed discussion is presented in the next chapter, and the results from the evaluation are discussed in Chapter 5.

Phase I: Program Proposal

The program proposal to the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA) resulted from previous efforts undertaken by two faculty members in the Department of Resource Development at Michigan State University. Their efforts grew out of a desire to help international students integrate their academic experience, with practical experience in the local community. They observed that international students often completed their education without experiencing the local culture:

> Traditional Instructional methods -- exposure to pertinent literature, site visits to agencies, and guest lectures by members from the surrounding communities -- typically provide international students with only a glimpse into the dynamics of American culture... Significant problems can emerge if a graduate later transfers elements of a misunderstood system into her or his country. (Fear & Axinn, 1989, p.1)

The proposal emanated from a desire to provide a comprehensive educational experience for international students. Because the Department of Resource Development had a tradition of volunteer work in the community, volunteerism became the vehicle by which students would gain a greater understanding of the local culture. The objectives of the program were designed to benefit both the students and the community. The original project objectives were to:

1. enhance international students' conceptual and practical understanding of American society through American volunteerism,

2. strengthen interdepartmental networking among the academic units at MSU,

3. expand upon those units' linkages with local public and private agencies,

4. supplement the personnel resources available to local agencies, and

5. expose local agencies and volunteers to the cultures represented by MSU students.

Incorporating international students into volunteer activities was a new priority for NAFSA during 1989. The ISVC proposal was the only program selected for funding during that year. NAFSA staff chose the ISVC as a prototype effort -- a potential model for other educational institutions to adapt in

years to come. The ISVC was funded for $14,100.00 for the academic year 1989-1990. A no-cost extension was later sought and granted, so that the project timeline was extended to December 1990. Additional funding came from MSU's Urban Affairs Program for a half-time graduate assistantship. Faculty members time was an in-kind contribution, and amounted to $22,500.00. The total cost for the first year (funds raised and contributed) amounted to $49,600.00.

Formation of Core Staff

The core staff represented an effort to fulfill one of the program objectives -- strengthen interdepartmental networking -- in that it brought staff together from several different units across campus. Members of the core staff represented the Department of Resource Development (College of Agriculture and Natural Resources), the Center for Urban of Affairs (Urban Affairs Program), the Office for International Students and Scholars (International Studies and Programs), and the Service Learning Center (Student Affairs and Services). In addition, the core staff included 1/4-time and 1/2-time graduate assistants responsible for student recruitment and program management, respectively.

The core staff was responsible for overall program development, implementation, and evaluation. They met on a weekly basis to review current activities and plan future events. Each member was responsible for one or more of the

seminars conducted for participants (described later in this chapter) as well as coordinating a learning group of three to five participants throughout their volunteer experience. The first year of the ISVC required an intensive time commitment from the core staff in the form of planning, implementation, and supervision.

Phase II: Program Development

Focus Group Sessions

In the process of developing the ISVC, the core staff conducted two focus group sessions during August, 1989. The first focus group involved several volunteer supervisors from local volunteer agencies, such as the Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, and the Voluntary Action Center. The meeting concentrated on several issues, including: incorporating international students into a volunteer organization, determining a minimum time necessary for an effective volunteer experience, and discussing the cost-benefit issues related to extra training/orientation times for international students.

Overall, focus group members were highly supportive of the ISVC. Their support arose from positive experiences with the Center for Urban Affairs and the Department of Resource Development, which had historically involved international students in community projects through a field study class. Several participants at the meeting became members of the

advisory committee, formed during the project implementation phase.

The second focus group meeting involved international students. The students were able to provide their perspective on issues related to developing the ISVC to meet the particular needs and circumstances of international students. Issues discussed included: presenting the concept of volunteerism to individuals from another culture, adapting program requirements to meet students' constraints, developing links with international student groups, and motivating students to participate in the ISVC.

During the meeting, one student expressed the frustration that she was unable to participate in the United States Peace Corps due to her international status. A faculty member suggested that this program could be an opportunity for interested students to experience American culture --a "reverse" Peace Corps of sorts-- and the name of the "International Students Volunteer Corps" was coined.

Curriculum and Program Development

Both focus groups provided valuable information that was incorporated into the curriculum and program development process. The original program proposal outlined a three-phase effort, pre-field, in-field, and post-field. The curriculum for the in-field was initially drafted by one graduate assistant, and then modified on an ongoing basis by the core

staff. Refinements to the process outlined in the original proposal occurred during the recruitment process. Similarly, throughout the life of the program, changes were made in response the needs of students and the demands of program implementation. A sequence of project activities is listed in Appendix One.

Phase III: Program Implementation

Recruitment

Several strategies were used to recruit students for the program. During an open house for new international students, an information booth was set up to distribute brochures and answer questions. The university's Office for International Students and Scholars, whose director was on the core staff, had an information display. Notices were sent to the presidents of each international student group, and an article was written in the university newspaper.

In addition to these formal attempts, informal networks were used by the core staff. They contacted students they knew whom could benefit from the program. The graduate assistant in charge of recruitment relied extensively on networks she had developed in the graduate student population. Informal contacts were often the most successful recruitment tool. However, each method helped to attract a unique group of students.

Twenty-five students participated in the program at different levels. Twelve students were able to participate in all three phases of the program, the remainder participated in varying degrees, but were unable to complete the full program. Participants in the ISVC came rom a range of countries, including, Nigeria, South Africa, Malawi, Trinidad & Tobago, Malaysia, India, China, and Taiwan. Their academic disciplines were equally diverse including agriculture, economics, education, soil sciences, sociology, and resource development. All participants were graduate students, with the majority at the doctoral level.

Pre-Field Seminars

In the first phase, students were to attend 10 sessions on American volunteerism, the American human service network system, and American and human social problems. During the program development process, a cross-cultural communication emphasis was added to acquaint students with possible challenges in their volunteer experience. In addition, a component on learning objectives was inserted to help students establish personal goals for their volunteer placement. Although the original proposal called for students to develop work plans on a particular aspect of volunteerism, it was not emphasized during actual implementation. Instead, students were encouraged to reflect on their experience in preparation for a year-end symposium.

Because initial recruitment efforts resulted in a low turnout, an orientation seminar was developed to explain the program and make it easier for students to join the program. In addition, a social get together was planned while students were on Winter Term class break in order to develop a sense of community within the participants. A small meal was given at each seminar to encourage a social atmosphere, and to entice students to come to meetings on a regular basis.

Several changes were made in the curriculum throughout the pre-field to adjust to the students' needs. More time was spent on explaining the volunteer system in America, due to students' unfamiliarity with the system. As a result, less time was devoted to cross-cultural communication. The three major topics covered were the American volunteer system, designing an effective learning experience, and cross-cultural communication. Additional assistance was provided by local volunteer agency supervisors. They presented material through guest lectures and provided real-life examples during each session. Students also spent a significant amount of time contrasting and comparing volunteerism to social institutions in their own countries. A full description of the seminars is in Appendix Two.

In-Field Volunteer Experience

The second phase consisted of students' field placement. The proposal called for a minimum of 5 hours of volunteer time

per week. Actual volunteer time varied, depending on the students' and the particular agencies' needs. The placement process began during the in-field phase. Students were asked to identify interest areas (e.g., work with the elderly), and the graduate assistant responsible for placement then suggested possible volunteer agencies. Many students were able to begin their placement by the end of the in-field phase. A full list of placements is in Appendix Three.

Several students attended the majority of the seminars, during both the pre-field and in-field phases, but did not find a volunteer placement. This occurred either from dissatisfaction with their first placement, an inability to work out a placement in their interest area, or from scheduling conflicts. During the in-field phase, students attended bi-monthly sessions to discuss activities at their placement site. Concepts discussed during the pre-field were reviewed in light of their new experiences. Volunteer agency supervisors provided feedback and suggestions to students concerning their experiences. The supervisors also gained a greater understanding of an the students' goals and the challenges of volunteering in a cross-cultural situation. Students were encouraged to keep in mind a possible writing topic -- related to their placement, concepts in the pre-field, and similar activities in their own country -- for presentation at a program-closing symposium. Core staff also kept in contact with students in their learning group to

monitor students' volunteer experience.

Post-Field Seminars

The post-field phase focused on a closing symposium, International Students Volunteer Corps: Sharing the Wealth with the Community which was held in August of 1990. Nine students presented papers, or summarized sessions, describing their volunteer experiences, and comparing them to aspects of volunteerism in their own country. Volunteer supervisors from local agencies presented their impressions of the experience, and concurrent sessions were conducted on issues of international students and volunteerism (e.g., cross-cultural communication and recruitment). A symposium proceedings was produced, along with a short video on the ISVC with footage from the symposium. The Table of Contents for the symposium proceedings can be found in Appendix Four.

Dissemination and Program Evaluation

Dissemination of the ISVC program to other practitioners included presentations at conferences and written articles. The symposium proceedings were distributed nationwide via two networks: the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, and the Michigan Campus Compact. The Michigan Campus Compact funded several ISVC activities including the symposium and symposium proceedings. Core staff members gave presentations at conferences in Michigan, Washington, D.C.,

and Canada. Articles appearing in NAFSA's newsletter drew inquiries from several schools across the U.S.

Program evaluation consisted of a participant questionnaire pertaining to the pre-field seminar format, the placement process, and recommendations for future years. In addition, interviews were conducted with selected groups of students, their volunteer supervisors, and their academic supervisors. Details on both the program evaluation questionnaire, and the interview format, are discussed in Chapter Four, and the results are presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The literature review in Chapter Two focused on the importance of evaluability assessment (EA) and the steps necessary to conduct an EA. Experiential learning programs were discussed as one programming activity that might benefit from the EA process. Chapter Three described in detail the International Students Volunteer Corps (ISVC), a cross-cultural experiential learning program at Michigan State University. In this chapter, the EA process is used to develop a methodological framework to propose an evaluation strategy for the ISVC. The first section discusses the steps that will be taken to conduct the EA, along with the rationale for each step. The second section reviews the EA process in light of the research questions stated in Chapter One.

Evaluability Assessment

Selecting the EA Team and Defining the Program Boundaries

As stated in Chapter Two, The EA team is responsible for developing the program model that links program rhetoric to reality. They are involved throughout the process. The EA team can be composed of program staff, policy makers, and

administrators. Members of the EA team should have subject-matter expertise related to the program and the clientele (Mayeske, 1991).

The EA team in this study includes program staff members and selected volunteer administrators from participating agencies. The EA team represents a diverse set of individuals, including a chairperson of an academic department, a director of an international students office, a director of an urban outreach center, and various volunteer coordinators in charge of programming and volunteer training. Each of the members contributed to the ISVC throughout its implementation in such activities as program planning, conducting seminars, and evaluating activities.

The purpose of the study is to use the EA process to suggest evaluation strategies, and to assess the applicability of EA to experiential programs, using the ISVC as a case study. The EA team's primary responsibility is to develop an accurate program logic model. Consequently, the members of the EA team need to be familiar with the ISVC from start to finish. Although student participants and other faculty members were involved in the program, they were not involved in conceptualizing, planning, and monitoring the program. In terms of conducting the EA, the students and faculty members represent stakeholders whose views and experiences can help to validate the program logic model, rather than help to construct it.

In addition to selecting the EA team, it is important to define the program boundaries. Boundaries are necessary to link evaluation findings to an easily identified intervention (Rutman, p.45). Smith (1989) suggests that boundaries be determined by the nature of the questions asked about the program, by focusing on major programs, or by those that represent a significant commitment in resources. This study establishes as its boundaries the first year of the ISVC. The reasons for this decision can be summarized in two points:

1. The first year of the ISVC was the only year in which the program was conducted as proposed in the funding proposal. The program was terminated before completion during the second year, and thus there is insufficient information to answer the research questions in that year.

2. The first year represents the more significant commitment of resources in terms of funding, staff, and evaluation effort.

The EA team will focus solely on the first year of the ISVC for the purpose of building the program logic model. Each member was involved on a regular basis in program activities, and participated in an evaluation focus group at the end of the first year. Their input, and information from other sources, will be used to develop the program logic model in order to suggest possible evaluation strategies.

Developing the Program Logic Model

Building a program logic model is a process of determining means-ends, cause-effect relationships in a program as defined by the program staff (Smith, 1989). This

study will take a multi-method or triangulation approach (Gorden, 1980) and use three separate sources to build the program logic model. The three methods are: 1) a modified focus group process; 2) document analysis; and 3) interviews with stakeholders and program participants.

Focus Groups. A focus group is an interview with a group of people on a specific topic. The length of the interview generally lasts up to two hours (Patton, 1990). One advantage of focus groups is that each participant, or interviewee, hears other interviewees' comments, and so can make additional comments or revisions to their initial response. However, because of the large size of the group, fewer questions can be asked (Patton, 1990). Two focus groups will be conducted within a one-month period in which the program logic model will be built.

Krueger (1988) states that focus groups are normally composed of individuals who do not know each other. Close associations between participants can result in information that arises from past experiences that may cause people to withhold some knowledge. In addition, the focus group moderator, or interviewer, is often a stranger to the participants, and not affiliated with the subject under discussion. Building a program logic model with a program staff requires modifications of these basic characteristics of a focus group. The EA process specifically brings program staff together to reflect on a program in ways they may never

have before. Krueger emphasizes that, if the participants do know each other well, they should be reminded that the focus group is a reflective activity, and not that it is not an actual planning or evaluation meeting.

The focus group moderator was the graduate assistant responsible for day-to-day program management. While a focus group moderator usually does not have as close an association with the topic in question, in this effort it was not abnormal for him to fulfill such a role in the course of his duties as program manager. Previously, he had conducted an evaluation focus group with volunteer administrators and program staff. Focus group participants were accustomed to seeing him in a similar role, and so it was concluded that the results of the focus group would not be negatively impacted by his taking the moderator role. However, as moderator, there was no substantive input from him regarding the building of the program model.

The purpose of the first session was to build the program logic model. It consisted of a three-stage process that focused on slowly refining the model. Participants were asked to provide the following information:

1. Please list the key components of the ISVC program-- from the first program activity by staff to the final closing meeting. Your responses are not confined to any particular source of information. You can draw from knowledge of the funding proposal and/or your experiences. You are encouraged to confer with each other. Total agreement is not necessary. Any disagreements will be noted and indicated in the final model.

2. For each key component just mentioned, list the activities and resources necessary to accomplish the activity. Indicate what event determines that the component has been successfully completed.

3. For each key component, list the potential barriers, methods to reduce barriers, possible events that the staff had no control over, and any spin-offs.

The entire session involved refining the requested information, and the final results were developed into a program model. The model was then distributed to participants for their personal review prior to the second session.

The second session involved the same group of participants, and consisted of two separate discussions: 1) a review of the program logic model; and 2) a mock utilization exercise. The review part of the session was an opportunity for participants to suggest changes in the model as a result of their reflection process conducted outside of the group. Participants were also asked to respond to any items found in the document analysis and interviews, as presented by the moderator, that suggested additional interpretations of the program than found in the model. Finally, participants were reminded of the third review session in which they would have an opportunity to respond to the evaluation strategies proposed based on the program model, and to critique the EA process as a whole.

Document Analysis. Patton (1990) regards program documents as an invaluable evaluation tool. He describes two main roles for document analysis: 1) as a basic source of

information about program activities and decisions; and 2) as a source of questions that the evaluator can pursue in interviews with participants and stakeholders (p.233). While documents can be subject to interpretational bias, they are not as likely to be influenced by the evaluator's bias as are observational and interview data (Smith, 1989). While access to program documents is often a concern (Smith, 1989), this did not happen in the current study. As the program manager, the writer was responsible for managing all documents associated with the projects.

Document analysis was used to review the program logic model designed by the ISVC staff. The documents reviewed include the program proposal, staff meeting minutes and agendas, seminar outlines and notes, evaluation reports, and correspondences with the program funder. Any discrepancies that occurred between the documents and the model were brought to the attention of the staff during the second focus group session. Participants were asked to reflect on the discrepancies and determine if there was a need to modify the model based on the document analysis.

Interviews with Stakeholders and Participants. The primary reason for interviewing stakeholders and participants is to obtain program information that can be used at a later date to influence decisions related to the program (Smith, 1989). Interviews help to bring out common themes relevant to the program of which the program staff may be unaware, and to

help accurately construct the program logic model (Mayeske, 1991).

Interviews for the ISVC were originally conducted in the summer of 1990. The original interviews were developed and conducted with a different research question in mind, one that pertained to the effects of the ISVC experience on students' cross-cultural knowledge. Consequently, the interviews may be considered a subset of the document analysis process with information specific to students' and stakeholders' perception of the program.

The original set of questionnaires was developed by the writer and the program director, a faculty member at MSU. A student, her/his volunteer supervisor, or her/his academic advisor, were interviewed using three separate interview forms, one for each specific group of interviewees. The questions relevant to this study were used to determine the interviewees' knowledge of the program, for the volunteer supervisor and the academic advisor, and the interviewees' recommendations on program design. The questionnaires are presented in Appendix Five.

Sixteen students were selected as possible interviewees. Students had to match three criteria to be considered for interviews. First, the student must have attended at least one pre-field seminar, and continued to express interest in the volunteer experience. Second, a student must have attended at least one in-field seminar, and maintained contact

with the ISVC staff. Third, a student must have volunteered at least four times over a time period of at least one month.

The sixteen students who possessed the necessary attributes were ordered alphabetically and assigned numbers one through sixteen for the purpose of a simple random selection. Using a table of random numbers, the students were re-ordered into a list of sixteen. The list was divided into three sets. The academic-adviser and agency-supervisor interview groups had five persons. The student group had six persons. The extra person was assigned to the student group due to the special emphasis of original study's intent, i.e., the impact of the experience on the students' cross-cultural knowledge.

Interviews generally ranged from 1/2 hour to 1 1/2 hours in length. Interviewees' responses were written down by the interviewer during the interview itself. Questions were read directly from the interview guide, and interviewees were prompted, when necessary, to explain statements not understood by the interviewer.

Although Smith (1989) recommends that the interviewer not be associated with the program, the interviews were conducted by the graduate assistant working with the ISVC. One initial intent of the interviews was to generate information for program planning. Because programming activities were a main responsibility of the graduate assistant, the decision was made to have him conduct the interviews. As the interviews

are used as a subset of document analysis in this study, any interviewer bias regarding program design issues in the interviews can be compensated for by the focus group meetings and other document analysis results.

Enhancing the Utilization of the Evaluability Assessment

Several steps were taken to enhance the utilization of the EA process. The purpose of this study was to use EA to suggest possible evaluation strategies and to critique the process. The efforts taken to enhance utilization can be critiqued only in the sense that they facilitated the EA process. It will not be possible to determine their effectiveness in actually promoting utilization.

The first step taken to enhance utilization was a mock utilization session conducted during the second focus group meeting. The purpose of the mock utilization session was to determine what the stakeholders-- the EA team --intend to do with the results of any evaluation efforts, and what information was most relevant to them in their current work. The following questions were posed to the group:

1. If the ISVC, or a similar program, were to continue, what information would you be most interested in learning about to help you with future programming tasks?

2. What information about the ISVC would be most helpful to you in other work in which you are currently engaged?

3. In what ways will you use the information, (e.g., for future funding proposals, student recruitment)?

4. In what form would the information be most useful for you, (e.g., reports or graphs)?

The second step taken to enhance utilization was a review session at the end of the EA process with the EA team. The purpose of this session was to review the entire EA process, present the results of the EA, and solicit feedback from the EA team regarding their impressions of the process and the results. At this time, the EA team was given an opportunity to rethink any issues related to utilization. The following questions were posed to the EA team:

1. Now that you have seen the proposed evaluation strategies, do you think that these methods will produce information that you can use?

2. Are there additional issues related to utilization that were not apparent during the mock utilization session?

3. In what ways has the EA process affected your thinking about the ISVC?

4. Now that we have reviewed the EA process, please critique the value of this process in evaluating experiential programs such as the ISVC.

5. As discussed earlier, Smith (1989) suggests five choices for determining utilization. Three of these choices are relevant in this study:

    1. Decide to evaluate the program
    2. Decide to take no further action
    3. Do not decide and ignore the EA.

    Which choice do you feel is appropriate for this study?

Link to the Study Objectives

As stated in Chapter One, the objectives for this study are:

1. Determine the usefulness of the evaluability assessment process in suggesting appropriate evaluation methods for experiential learning programs.

2. Suggest guidelines program staff can use to adapt evaluability assessment to fit individual needs/programs.

3. Highlight the utilization enhancing characteristics inherent to evaluability assessment, and suggest additional guidelines.

Although each activity described in this chapter addresses each research objective, the study can be divided into two phases that answer different aspects of the objectives. The first phase is the actual conduct of the EA. This involves the first two focus sessions in which the program logic model is developed and utilization needs are determined, and the analysis of program documents and interviews is conducted. During this phase, the evaluation methods are proposed. Completion of this stage provides information for research objectives 1 and 3.

The research objectives are reflective in nature. Their purpose is to facilitate review of the EA process, and its results, as a mechanism for evaluating experiential learning programs. The appropriateness of the evaluation methods are dependent on the EA team's satisfaction that the methods will produce utilizable results. The objectives help to critique

the process of developing evaluation methods acceptable to the appropriate stakeholders-- in this case the EA team. The objectives are not meant to critique the actual evaluation methods per se.

The second phase of the study is the actual reflection process. It consists of the review session in which the EA team critiques the appropriateness of the evaluation methods and the EA process in general. This phase also consists of the writer's review of the EA process, and a final assessment of the use of EA with experiential learning programs. This phase addresses each research objective, and forms the majority of Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5

STUDY RESULTS

Overview of the Methodology

As described in Chapter Four, the study methodology consisted of three main activities: focus groups, document analysis, and stakeholder interviews. The results of the study are presented in this chapter, and are discussed in light of the research questions in Chapter Six.

Focus Groups

Overview

Three focus groups were conducted over a three-week period. Each session was two hours in length, and was organized in three sections: an opening presentation, a description of the purpose of the session, and a group discussion regarding the main topic. The results of the first and second sessions were summarized and presented back to the group at the following session for further discussion.

Participants in the focus groups consisted of university faculty and administrators, and local volunteer agency representatives. Due to scheduling conflicts among participants, attendance varied throughout the three sessions. Those who were unable to attend the first session were sent a

written summary of that meeting.

Discussions throughout the first two sessions were dominated by the participants with the focus group leader participating only when necessary. The final session followed a review format in which the focus group leader summarized the two previous sessions for final feedback from participants.

Focus Group Results

Focus Group I

The purpose of the first focus group was to introduce the main concepts of evaluability assessment, and to build a program logic model of the International Students Volunteer Corps (ISVC). The first draft of the program logic model is shown in Figure 5.1.

Participants were asked to describe the key components associated with the events, activities, resources, indicators, and barriers of the ISVC. The program logic model, as presented in Figure 5.1, summarizes the discussion. The first row of events largely follows the program proposal with the addition of the first two stages-- develop program proposal, and develop program with stakeholders. The activities, resources, indicators, and barriers connected to each event help to explain its role in the program.

The activities and resources rows indicate what was necessary to complete an event. Constructing these two rows required a fairly straightforward recall of project history.

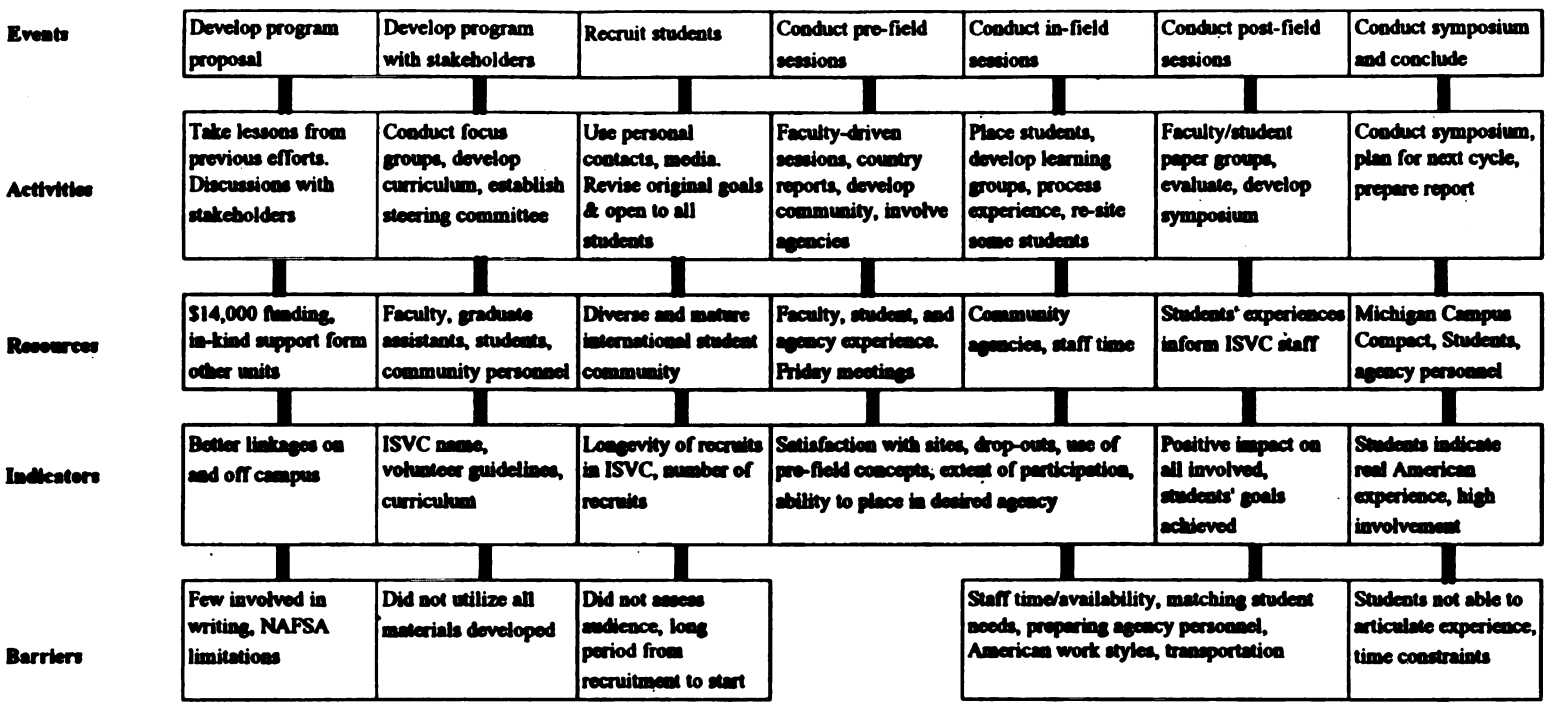

Figure 5.1 ISVC Program Logic Model: Session I

For instance, in order to develop the program proposal, it was necessary to use previous experiences from similar programs to develop a program plan and a set of objectives. The resources needed to conduct the symposium included outside funding and the input of those involved in the ISVC.

The indicators and barriers rows involved more reflection on the implications of each event for subsequent events, and an actual evaluation of how successfully an event was completed. Completing the row of indicators required the most prompting from the focus group leader. The resulting list of indicators include both the goals of the program, as in the first event's indicator of better linkages on- and off-campus, as well as the completion of intermediate steps, such as the number of students recruited during the recruitment stage.

The information in the last row--barriers--provides information on the difficulty of moving forward from one event to another. Participants spent a significant amount of time discussing the barriers associated with student recruitment and its effect on several events following the recruitment stage. A similar amount of time was spent discussing the problems encountered in matching the students with the correct volunteer placement, and preparing agency supervisors for international student volunteers.

Figure 5.1 displays that, for each event, there were associated activities, resources, indicators, and barriers that affected not only the particular event, but also

subsequent events. A barrier for one event could affect a later event, as well. For example, the event of developing the program with stakeholders had implications for conducting the in-field sessions, and the potential barrier of volunteer retention. Thus, the program logic model reveals how events, resources, etc., are linked throughout the project.

Participants focused mainly on the first half of the project's lifespan: those events starting from developing the program proposal to conducting the pre-field sessions. Although the session focused on the first year of the ISVC, participants used the experiences from the second year to contrast the first year and bring out the unique elements in it. They used similar experiences from other projects to help emphasize different aspects of the ISVC, as well. Participants drew upon their particular professional and academic backgrounds to highlight different aspects of the project.

Focus Group II

After the first session, the focus group leader summarized the discussion in a chart, and then distributed it to the participants for their review before the second session.

The purpose of the second session was to review the program logic model developed previously, make any necessary changes, and conduct a mock evaluation utilization session.

The mock evaluation exercise was the primary objective of the session. However, the participants felt that an analysis of the program logic model was crucial to any further activities. The participants proposed several additions to the model. The revised model, Figure 5.2, includes two additional rows for goals/outcomes and assumptions. None of the other rows were modified from the original program logic model.

A row for goals and desired outcomes was added at the top of the model. As the events and activities flow directly from the goals, the participants felt it was necessary to add the row to explicitly state them. The goals arose mostly from the program proposal, but also revealed additional goals that developed throughout project implementation. Thus, the row results from a review of project history and a reflection on the evolving nature of the program over time.

The participants felt that the model focused on process to the exclusion of the underlying assumptions, thinking, and rationale that guided the choice of program events and activities. The assumptions form an important part of the cause-effect thinking that influenced the choice of events, and link the rows of events and activities with the goals/outcomes row. The assumptions were also seen as revealing more about which indicators were chosen to show the completion of an event. The barriers often reflect where the assumptions were incorrect.

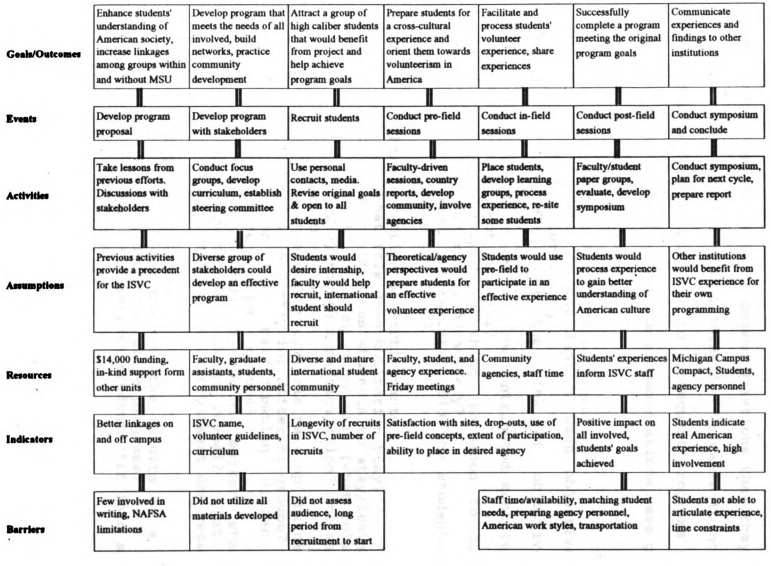

Figure 5.2 ISVC Program Logic Model: Session II

The second activity of session two was to conduct a mock evaluation utilization session. The purpose of this exercise was to have participants recommend questions that they felt, if answered, would provide information valuable to not only the program itself, but also to subsequent programs with a similar focus and audience. The recommendations were grouped into the three categories:

1. Issues in a Project's Lifespan?
   - What is the link between objectives and decision-making?
   - What are the link of objectives to activities?
   - Which activities contributed most/least to project outcomes?
   - What, if anything, happened to agencies positively or negatively?
   - What, if anything, did the students learn from each other?

2. Characteristics of Participants
   - What role does motivation play?
   - What motivates students to stay/leave?
   - What role does money play (what role would it play) to begin participation? to maintain participation?
   - What elements/criteria make up the decision to join and stay for different groups?
   - How will participation differ among different student groups?
   - What will a social market study of international students reveal? What effect would that have on recruitment and retention?

3. Programming Issues
   - How does one use the results of a social market study in future programs?
   - How can American students fit into similar programs?
   - What will a social market study of agency groups reveal?
   - What is the difference between agencies having experience with international students or clientele and those without such experience?

- Is volunteering an effective mechanism to enhance knowledge of American culture?
- What other mechanisms are effective?
- What impact does volunteerism in the international context have on students' experience in an ISVC?
- The ISVC is an American process; how can it be developed as a cross-cultural process?
- What are the effects of cross-cultural dynamics on learning?

One issue transcended the three categories: the need to know more about the audiences that would participate in projects similar to the ISVC. Focus group participants were most interested in knowing more about students and agency personnel. Information on students was needed to better conduct recruitment efforts and increase retention. Information on agency personnel was needed to better match students to a volunteer site and orient both the student and agency personnel about the cross-cultural implications of the experience.

A second issue arising from the questions was: How could the information or lessons learned from the project be used to improve other programs? Several questions arose regarding whether a different mechanism, other than the ISVC, would help international students learn about American culture.

Focus Group III

The purpose of the third session was to review the program logic model for any final revisions, and to review the suggested evaluation strategies for the evaluation needs suggested in the second session. The final review of the

model provided a last opportunity to reflect on the ISVC. Although no changes were made to the model, participants reiterated the importance of having a row placed in the model that explicitly stated the assumptions behind goals, events, and activities. Participants stressed that assumptions lead to the choice of the particular events. The discussion also reinforced the importance of selecting agencies capable of hosting an international student volunteer.

Participants raised long-term programming issues, such as the need to determine if volunteerism was the most effective mechanism to accomplish the program goal of helping students learn more about American culture. Finally, they discussed the issue of program sustainability, and the importance of support from the University and the community for such experiential programs.

The focus group leader then summarized the evaluation needs/questions posed by the participants in the second session, and presented several examples of the types of activities that could be taken to look at those questions. The recommendations are summarized below:

1. Issues in a Program's Lifespan
   Design and process questions:
   - Conduct a more extensive evaluability assessment process through a consultant or dissertation study

   Outcome questions:
   - Initial interviews with students and agency supervisors in the ISVC suggest insufficient information for further study. Project activities that contributed mostly to project outcomes would be studied in an extensive EA as recommended above

2. Characteristics of Participants
   - Encourage thesis or dissertation research
   - Develop a sample from a social market survey possibly conducted by an advertising, business, or psychology student
   - Conduct additional focus groups or surveys, or collect information from other accessible university records
   - Compare students across categories (i.e., years in school, country) for recruitment and retention data
   - Administer pre-post tests during a program

3. Programming Issues
   - Utilize many of the same activities from above
   - Use results of above to conduct EA as a program design tool
   - Stakeholder interviews should target individuals who can address issues of experiential learning settings
   - Many issues of adapting an American tradition within a cross-cultural experience can be done through applied research
   - Conduct a "lessons learned conference" on experiential programming for international students and cross-cultural learning

Several factors influenced the recommendations. One, funding available to conduct further evaluation efforts likely would be limited. Consequently, any recommended evaluation strategies should recognize this limitation (e.g., using doctoral students to conduct evaluations to fulfill their research requirements). Two, the ISVC had been finished for over a year at the time of the focus groups. Thus, the results of any evaluation activity should have relevance for similar activities in the future that could benefit from the lessons learned in the ISVC.

The focus group discussions indicated that a more in-depth evaluability assessment process could explore issues

such as student recruitment in further detail with benefit to several units at the University. The discussions also brought up the need for increased networking among units during program development. Conducting applied research with participants during an actual program could provide information on retention and the constraints encountered by participants and staff.

The final segment of the session focused on a review of the evaluability assessment process. Participants suggested that a primer be developed for use by other groups constrained by resources and/or evaluation expertise. The EA process provided an opportunity to reflect on a project outside of the normal day-to-day activities. Participants felt that staff considering similar projects would benefit not only from the results of the study, such as the program logic model, but also from knowing about the reflection process that was necessary to develop the model. It could be particularly helpful during program development. Finally, most of the participants felt that the EA process was a helpful reflection process that provided valuable information for future activities, and emphasized the importance of developing a module that other program staff could use to review their own programs.

Document Analysis

The document analysis process consisted of a review of the program proposal, reports to the funding agency, notes taken at meetings, and articles written by staff and students. The purpose of the document analysis process was to determine the level of consistency between what was written about the project and the program logic model developed by the focus group participants.

Program Proposal and Reports to the Funding Agency

The program logic model parallels the program proposal. The reports to the program funder, NAFSA, elaborated on each stage of the project and described any variations from the proposal. For example, a major variation occurred during student recruitment. The original program brochure required students to submit a letter of interest along with a letter of support from their advisor. Students were then to go through a series of interviews before being accepted into the ISVC. However, a low student turnout convinced the program staff that the requirements were to strict and recruitment efforts changed to open participation up to anyone who was interested in the program. Changes, such of the type described here, were communicated to the funder to inform them of lessons learned throughout the project.

Staff Meeting Notes

Notes from the staff meetings generally parallel the discussions on the activities, assumptions, indicators, and barriers listed in the program logic model. A major part of each staff meeting, conducted nearly every Friday throughout the project, was devoted to planning ongoing activities, but also involved discussions on barriers, such as student recruitment. Towards the end of the project, the meetings more on planning towards the future.

During the focus groups, participants remarked that while the Friday meetings afforded an opportunity to reflect on the project, the meetings may not have allowed the quality time that was necessary to look at the program "from a distance." They suggested that the EA process would have helped program staff had it been conducted during the program as a formative evaluation tool.

Articles Written by Staff and Students

The articles written about the ISVC fall into two categories, descriptions of the program and student, and staff reflections. Descriptions of the program were written mostly by the graduate assistant in charge of daily programming and closely follow the program proposal.

Articles written by the staff often discuss the implications of the ISVC based on both years of the project. Thus, the articles go beyond the time frame of the program

logic model, but reinforce the importance of recruitment, volunteer placement, and close working relations with community agencies. Staff articles more closely reflect the evaluation questions that arose during the mock evaluation utilization exercise during the second session.

Student articles provide information regarding the barriers encountered in volunteering, as well as indicators of the program's goals. Each student stated what they had learned from both the classroom sessions and the actual volunteer experience. The experience provided them an opportunity to reflect on their own countries, and the possible impact of American-style volunteerism, as well. While the students' articles provide an account of their experiences, they provide little in the form of analysis on the program process that could be used to modify the program logic model.

Stakeholder Interviews

The stakeholder interviews were originally conducted with a different set of research questions. Consequently, they provide little information relevant to the program logic model. The interviews are more outcome- than process-oriented. However, during the final focus group session, participants recommended that any further study of the ISVC include interviews with those stakeholders not interviewed during the initial interview process, which would include

mostly agency supervisors.

Conclusion

The evaluability assessment process conducted for this study consisted of three focus sessions, document analysis, and stakeholder interviews. Participants in the EA study were able to develop a program logic model which they felt accurately described the ISVC, and suggested possible research/evaluation questions for further study. The participants felt that the EA process was an effective means of reflecting on a program, and suggested that it would be valuable both as a formative evaluation tool and as a program planning tool for others starting similar projects. Given these conclusions, the results of the EA process in light of the research questions, and the implications for the future use of EA in similar programs, are considered in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Study

Problem Statement

Program evaluation involves the measurement of program performance indicators, and the testing of the logic behind a program that links resources and activities with expected outcomes (Wholey, 1987). Wholey (1987, pp. 77-78) identified four problems that prevent the utilization of program evaluation:

1. Lack of definition of the problem addressed, the program intervention, the expected outcomes of the program, or the expected impact on the problem addressed.

2. Lack of a clear logic of testable assumptions linking expenditure of program resources, the implementation of the program, the outcomes to be caused by that program, and the resulting impact.

3. Lack of agreement on evaluation priorities and intended uses of evaluation.

4. Inability or unwillingness to act on the basis of evaluation information.

Evaluability assessment (EA) is a tool that may help clarify a program's structure, establish the plausibility of its activities in reaching intended goals, determine the evaluability of the program, and enhance the utilization of the evaluation results (Smith, 1989). EA was first developed

by Joseph Wholey and his associates at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. (Nay & Kay, 1982, Smith, 1989).

EA involves gathering an evaluability assessment team that can help gather materials and develop a program logic model that outlines the resources and activities necessary to reach the program goal. After developing the program logic model, a decision is made as to what aspects of the program can be evaluated, and which aspects are most important for evaluation.

Research Questions

Given the limited attention paid to program evaluation efforts in adult experiential learning programs, there is a need to explore existing evaluation tools in more detail. This study used the International Students Volunteer Corps (ISVC) as a case study in which to apply the evaluability assessment process. Focusing on the first year of the ISVC, the objectives of this study were to:

1. Determine the usefulness of the evaluability assessment process in suggesting appropriate evaluation methods for experiential learning programs.

2. Suggest guidelines that program staff can use to adapt evaluability assessment to fit individual needs/programs.

3. Highlight the utilization-enhancing characteristics inherent to evaluability assessment, and suggest additional guidelines.

Methodology

This study took a multi-method or triangulation approach (Gorden, 1980) and used three separate sources to build a program logic model. A program logic model is a process of determining means-ends, cause-effect relationships in a program as defined by the program staff (Smith, 1989). The three methods were: 1) a modified focus group process; 2) document analysis; and 3) interviews with stakeholders and program participants.

Three focus groups were conducted over a three-week period. Participants in the focus groups consisted of faculty, university administrators, and local volunteer agency representatives. The main purpose of the focus groups was to develop the program logic model and determine the primary evaluation and research concerns of the participants.

The purpose of the document analysis was to determine the level of consistency between what was written about the project--program proposal, reports to funding agency, and meeting notes--and the program logic model developed by the focus group participants. The stakeholder interviews were originally conducted with a separate set of research questions, and so provided little information valuable to the program logic model.

The following sections present the main findings of the study by each research question. Important issues are raised in using EA as a program review tool. An EA primer is

presented as an aid to help other program staff adapt the process to their activities, as well.

Main Findings

1. Determine the usefulness of the evaluability assessment process in suggesting appropriate evaluation methods for experiential learning programs.

Because the ISVC had been completed for over a year, the focus group participants focused more on research issues that would provide information for future and similar programs, rather than on evaluation methods. Nevertheless, the EA did provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on the ISVC and to suggest critical program activities that require further research. The research questions were listed in Chapter Five, and included questions pertaining to student characteristics and motivation, student and agency supervisor preparation, and overall program structure.

EA acts as a discussion-promoting tool in that it can bring staff together to reflect on a project. The process of building a program logic model requires that program staff reflect on a program differently from that which takes place at regular staff planning meetings. It provides an opportunity to step outside day-to-day programming issues and look at the program from a holistic viewpoint, and to analyze the assumptions that guide program goals and activities. Programs staffed by individuals from diverse academic backgrounds benefit from learning how their backgrounds

influence their assumptions and program decision-making styles.

The focus group participants felt that the EA process offered a program evaluation/reflection process that could be conducted by program staff with little expertise in program evaluation. The EA process requires very few resources, and so represents a valuable option for resource-constrained projects. The last section of this chapter summarizes the EA process so that it can be used by a variety of project staffs.

2. Suggest guidelines that program staff can use to adapt evaluability assessment to fit individual needs/programs.

The EA process conducted in this study represents an adaptation of EA as proposed by Smith (1989) and Mayeske (1991). Changes were necessary to fit the needs and constraints of the study, i.e., time and funding. Many project staff will face similar constraints. Thus, it is important to assess the available expertise and resources that will be available to conduct an evaluation. EA offers a process that can be adapted to meet the evaluation needs of a project staff. In this study, the process was condensed into three focus group sessions that permitted the program reflection process important in an EA. It also allowed for a quicker process--one that provided information on the program to the staff. Program staff interested in using EA should determine their goals and information needs, and adapt the EA

process accordingly.

This study used EA as a program reflection tool for a completed program. The stage of a program's lifespan in which a staff use EA will influence how they adapt EA to fit their needs. An EA conducted while a program is in process will affect the information and the resulting activities needed by program staff. For example, the EA conducted in this study resulted in research questions important to broader issues involved in designing and implementing future programs. An EA conducted during a project's implementation may result in recommendations for specific evaluation tools and activities necessary to design upcoming events. Program staff should adapt the EA to fit the stage of a program's lifespan and their evaluation needs.

An important part of the EA process is choosing the EA team. The choice of who should be on the team is affected by the stage of the project's lifespan when the EA is conducted and the goals of the EA. The EA team should contain program staff and stakeholders who know about the project, who have an interest in the program's success, and/or who wish to conduct similar programs in the future. An EA conducted halfway through a program's lifespan may have an EA team composed mostly of staff and stakeholders who know about a project. An EA conducted at the end of a project may have an equal mix of program staff, stakeholders interested in a program's success, and those interested in conducting a similar program or with

expertise in similar programs. The composition of the EA team should reflect the goals of the EA. Finally, while EA team members may differ on various aspects of the program, each team member should be committed to making the EA a positive process that benefits the program staff and current and future stakeholders.

The choice of the EA coordinator should reflect the information needs of the program staff and any program constraints, as well. A focus group leader familiar with the project may have biases that affect decisions made throughout the EA. A external focus group leader may be more objective and able to point out inconsistencies to the EA team. However, an internal EA coordinator may have greater access to program documentation and be able to develop more trust and cooperation among the EA team. The decision of whether to use an internal EA coordinator, as was used in this study, or an external person will depend on the resources available to the program staff and their assessment of what will help them achieve their goals for the EA.

3. Highlight the utilization-enhancing characteristics inherent to evaluability assessment, and suggest additional guidelines.

The findings for the two research questions listed above point to the ease with which EA can be adapted to fit a particular program staff's needs. As an evaluation approach, EA offers an alternative that individuals can adapt to their

information needs, rather than using a method which is available, but does not directly address program needs. Using a method that can directly address program needs helps to insure the relevance of the information and its utilization in future activities.

The importance of the EA team was discussed above. Carefully selecting team members can enhance the utilization of the EA results. Stakeholders who have a vested interest in continuing the same or similar programs are more likely to participate fully in the EA process, and use the results.

Activities such as mock utilization sessions focus the evaluation on those questions that will provide the most useful information for stakeholders. The process of building the program logic model may provide useful programming information that will require no further investigation. After developing the program logic model and reflecting on the final product, the EA team may be able to list those questions that are most important given constraints, such as time, personnel, and funding.

Finally, the way in which the EA results are packaged can influence their utilization. Long written reports may not be read by those who have limited time, while information presented in charts allow a potential user to quickly review key points. Evaluation summaries can be packaged to provide information to potential users conducting similar projects. Handbooks that highlight essential points that cut across

programming areas provide resources that can be used beyond the life of the original project. The EA guidelines presented in the last section of this chapter provide one example.

Recommendations

Four practice recommendations arise from the evaluability assessment (EA) process conducted in this study. Each recommendation is geared towards enhancing the use of EA.

1. A goals/outcomes row and an assumptions row should be added to the program logic model. The addition of these two project descriptors will help the EA team to more clearly understand the thinking that guided program activities, and possibly contributed to program barriers. If a primary goal of the EA is to list the assumptions behind goals and activities, an external EA coordinator may be the most helpful in walking the EA team through the program logic model.

2. A resource guide explaining the EA process is needed for the resource-constrained projects mentioned above. A resource guide should be brief, but provide sufficient description of EA and indicate the steps necessary to conduct a successful EA. Appendix Six contains an example of an EA primer for small-scale projects.

   The primer in Appendix Six will be distributed to a group of potential users for their review. The targeted group will include a faculty member involved in evaluation, university administrators involved in small-scale projects, and individuals working in community agencies. The purpose of distributing the primer is to have the group recommend modifications in the primer that will increase its usefulness to resource-constrained project staff.

   After revising the primer, it will be distributed as part of a publication series through the Department of Resource Development. The publication series reaches extension staff throughout the state of Michigan, who work often with small-scale projects. The publication will be

distributed to the National Association for Foreign Students Affairs (NAFSA), as well.

3. The ease with which EA can be adapted to fit the particular needs of a program staff makes it especially useful for application in resource-constrained environments. Programs with minimal funding may be hard pressed to reserve funding for evaluation efforts. EA represents an effective method of evaluation for projects with personnel and monetary constraints.

   Recommendation 2 listed a process for revising the primer in Appendix Six to be used by small-scale project staff. In addition, a training seminar will be developed to help project staff use EA with their programming efforts. Often, project personnel may avoid program evaluation because some evaluation methods involve a strong reliance on quantitative tools. Evaluation is often seen as a task requiring an individual with special skills.

   The training seminar will consist of three components. The first component will explain the process of using EA as outlined in the primer. In the second component, the facilitator will lead the group through a practice EA of a hypothetical case study. The practice session will highlight the major phases of EA. The third component will be a review of EA in light of the practice session to discuss any questions or concerns, and talk about the use of EA in the participants' projects.

   The training seminar could be conducted as a half-day program, or conducted over several sessions, depending on participants' time constraints. Individuals who participate in the sessions could train others in their organizations. In this way the seminars can be viewed as a training of trainers.

4. While the training seminars will help to inform a wide range of program staffs about EA, it is important to develop training materials that program staff can use to train new staff members and review periodically. Several educational technologies exist that can serve this purpose.

   The primer can easily be packaged with a video that contains the most important aspects of the training seminar. The video would summarize EA, show highlights of a group conducting a practice EA with

a hypothetical case study, and review the most important parts of the practice EA as a final review. Increasingly, hardware is being developed for the personal computer that allows the editing and production of videos. This technology can be used on a regular basis to update the training video as more experience is gained with EA.

More and more college and university campuses are being equipped with satellite uplinks that allow them to broadcast classes, seminars, and conferences to other locations on a regular basis. This form of distance learning could be used to train groups in the process of EA. A project staff or community group interested in using EA could arrange to have an EA trainer present the material through the satellite system at a designated time, and use a conference call process to conduct a question and answer period while still on camera.

Expert systems represent another avenue to extend EA to small-scale projects. An expert system is a computer program written to provide training or information on a particular topic. Users respond to a series of questions posed by the program. The program then applies the answers to a database of information and provides users with recommendations for next steps. An EA expert system would help users learn about EA and recommend a process to follow in conducting the EA.

The technology chosen to present EA depends on the circumstances of the program staff requesting assistance. An important characteristic of EA is its ease of use by staff without extensive evaluation experience. The educational technology chosen to present EA should not interfere with the primary purpose of helping program staff to better design, modify, and learn from ongoing programs with their clientele.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

August 1989
- Program Planning
  - focus group meetings with agency supervisors and students
  - development of contact agencies
  - development of pre-field seminars
  - development of recruitment plan

September 1989
- Program Planning
  - pre-field seminar design continued
  - contact agencies continued
- Recruitment
  - Welcome Week fair in the International Center
  - article in campus newspaper, State News
  - brochure developed and distributed
  - phone and personal contact of prospective students

October 1989
- Recruitment
  - information meeting for interested students
  - phone and personal contact continued

November 1989
- Recruitment
  - membership/information meeting

December 1989
- Program Activities
  - first meeting with advisory committee
  - evaluation of recruitment phase
  - program introduction meeting with students
  - Christmas get-together with students

January 1990
- Pre-field Seminars
  - introductory seminars on volunteerism and cross-cultural communication
  - beginning work on volunteer placement

February - June 1990

In-field Phase

- **volunteers at placement site**
- **monthly seminars**

Program Activities

- **evaluation of pre-field seminar**
- **second meeting with advisory committee**
- **planning process for symposium**

July - September 1990

Program Activities

- **conduct symposium**
- **evaluate first cycle of ISVC**

ISVC Cycle II

- **design and conduct recruitment**
- **revamp and organize new weekend pre-field seminar**

APPENDIX TWO

IN-FIELD SEMINAR OUTLINES

SEMINAR TITLE: PRE-SEMINAR ORIENTATION

DATE/TIME: NOV. 22, 5:00-7:00, Rm. 201 International Center

FACILITATOR: STAFF

OBJECTIVE: By the end of this session participants will be able to describe, in group discussion, the ISVC, their roles and activities as members of the group and the timeline for activities.

ACTIVITIES:

I. Introduction and Purpose of Seminar
   1. Get to know each other
   2. Learn details of the ISVC
   3. Learn of timeline
   4. Express any misgivings/hopes
   5. Identify next meeting time

II. Introduction of Participants
   Each participant identifies his/herself stating: 1) Name 2) Major 3) Nationality 4) Why they decided to participate. 5) What previous volunteer experiences have they had. 6) What are their interests. 7) What do you hope to get out of this.

III. The ISVC Program and Purpose
   Program Summary - By this point the participants may have attended the October social and/or read the proposal. during this process of clarification, it may help to have a participant explain the program as he/she knows it. The staff and other participants can fill in the detail. Having a participant sum it up will help us to know if the group has really got it.

Advisory Committee - Summarize role of committee and point out members on roster sheet.

IV. ISVC Program: Nuts and Bolts

1. Program Benefits
2. The Reader and Curriculum/Timeline
3. Staff Expectations - seminar attendance....
4. In-class activity: a one page description of the ideal internship. Areas to focus on might be:
   a. job and agency description
   b. the skills a person would learn
   c. the skills a person would bring
   d. the benefits they would get personally
   e. the benefits they would bring back to their country or future work
   f. set-up next meeting for processing exercise.

V. Country/region Presentations

We should make specific references to the country/region presentation. In the presentation they may wish to cover:

1. Short description of country and people
2. Typical trouble spots or ease which people encounter when coming to the U.S.
3. What are some of the typical reactions people get from U.S. residents
4. Reference to the day's class as it bears on the particular country
5. Map - refer to map of the world, indicate logical groups and identify group for the December 8 meeting.

VI. Possible Activity

1. Looking Forward/Apprehension List

   Participants make their own list of looking forward/apprehension ideas, compare them with others in small groups and then share them with the larger group. The exercise helps to get out misunderstandings or concerns which the staff can work with right then or throughout the course of the seminars. See attachment.

VII. Final Announcements

1. Identify next meeting time - December?

SEMINAR TITLE: WINTER BREAK

DATE/TIME: DECEMBER 18, 5:00-7:00, RM. 201 INTERNATIONAL CENTER

PURPOSE: By the end of this meeting the staff and students should have a better idea of the students' goals for the program, and what modifications may be needed in the curriculum. In addition, each activity should begin to promote greater communication between all involved.

ACTIVITIES:

I. Introduction and Purpose of Seminar
   1. Discuss the results of the internship exercise.
   2. Conduct the Looking Forward/Apprehension Exercise.
   3. Solicit ideas on a group T-shirt.

II. Processing the Internship Exercise
   The results of the internship exercise serve three functions: 1) Gives each other a sense of what the other participants want to get out of the ISVC, and to see where they fit in based on their replies. 2) The items they stated as important to learn can be compared with our curriculum to see if they want to suggest changes. 3) Allows them to think about their ideas on their placements and may give Bassey more information.

III. Looking Forward/Apprehension Exercise
   Participants make their own list of looking forward/apprehension ideas, compare them with others in small groups and then share them with the larger group. The exercise helps to get out misunderstandings or concerns which the staff can work with right then or throughout the course of the seminars.

IV. T-Shirt Design
   1. There's gotta be an artist somewhere in the group.

V. Final Announcements
   1. First Seminar - **Monday, January 8, 5:00-7:00p.m., Rm. 201.**
   2. Country/Region Presentations by: Malaysia/Mainland China

SEMINAR TITLE: THE CONCEPT OF VOLUNTEERISM

DATE/TIME: WEEK OF JAN 8, 5:00-7:00, Rm 201

FACILITATORS: Staff

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

1. define and contrast the related terms voluntary action, volunteering, and voluntary association.

2. describe the role of the United Way in the Lansing Area.

3. describe a case example of how one organization administers its volunteer program.

4. compare and contrast the role of volunteerism in the U.S. with similar institutions in their own country.

ACTIVITIES:

I. Introduction/Purpose of Seminar

II. Country/Region Presentation

III. The Concept of Volunteerism

1. The Terms

a. Each participant should take five minutes to write their own definition of what a volunteer is. They can use the definition as a comparison to the following discussion, and the staff can use it to draw them into dialogue.

b. Next the facilitator (Frank/Shawn) discusses the terms **voluntary action**, **volunteering**, and **voluntary association**. As each term is discussed, the students should compare their definition to see where it fit in with the above terms.

2. The Characteristics of Volunteers

a. Income
b. Education
c. Gender
d. Marital Status

e. Predominant volunteer activities

IV. Volunteerism at Work in Lansing
1. The United Way
2. The Role of Local Social Service Agencies
3. Case Example - how one agency administers its volunteer program

V. Reflecting on Ourselves as Volunteers

The students should form into groups of three as they occur along the tables. They should take about fifteen minutes to discuss the three questions listed below. We can discuss their responses for twenty minutes to see how well they have understood the basic concepts and how it fits with their expectations. The discussion should flow easily into the country overview with the presenters describing how the concepts fit into their own societies.

1. How does the first hour's discussion fit with your idea of volunteering in the U.S.?
2. What issues would you like the panelist to touch on next week?

VI. Final Announcements
1. Choose next week's country/region presenters

SEMINAR TITLE: VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS IN THE LANSING AREA

DATE/TIME: WEEK OF JAN. 15, 5:00-7:00, Rm 201

FACILITATORS: Moderator: John; Agency Reps: Sharon Radtke, Mary Joseph, Mary Edens

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

1. describe and contrast the different methods by which agencies administer their volunteer programs.

2. describe a case example of how one organization administers its volunteer program.

3. compare and contrast the role of volunteer administration in local agencies with similar institutions in their own country.

ACTIVITIES:

I. Introduction/Purpose of Seminar

II. Country/Region Presentation

III. Volunteer Programs in The Greater Lansing Area

1. Each Agency Rep should give a short description of how they utilize volunteers and their importance to the agency's everyday activities. Topics to include:
   a. Volunteer Recruitment
   b. Job Designing and Contracting
   c. Volunteer Training
   d. Volunteer Management
   e. Volunteer Evaluation
   f. Student Concerns
   g. role of agency in community

2. The students should then interact with the agency reps about their concerns and questions based on the agency reps' descriptions and personal items of interest. We should have the list of concerns ready and possible questions to get the ball rolling if the students are slow in jumping into discussion.

V. **Final Announcements**

1. student status with agency placements
2. committee to set up agency reps seminar
3. how's the food?

SEMINAR TITLE: LINKING THE VOLUNTEER CONCEPTS TO ISVC ACTIVITIES

DATE/TIME: JANUARY 22, 5:00-7:00p.m., Rm 201

FACILITATORS: FRANK, DAVID, AND STAFF

OBJECTIVES: The Participants will be able to:

1. Summarize the major concepts from seminars 1 and 2.

2. describe the process of establishing their volunteer placement with the agency contact person.

3. list the rights, responsibilities, and ethics of volunteers.

ACTIVITIES:

I. Introduction/Purpose of Seminar

II. Country/Region Presentation

III. Linking the Concepts of Volunteerism

a. A summary of the concepts from seminars 1 and 2. This section also includes a distinction of the formal and informal volunteer sectors. If Sharon Radtke is present, she can help to draw examples from the community.

IV. Establishing the Volunteer Placement

a. Using the overhead, establish a uniform process for contacting the agency representative. List the information students should be collecting.
b. Reinforces the timeline for the ISVC.
c. Volunteer Ethics and Responsibilities.
d. Go over with each student where they are in the process of contacting their placement site so far.

V. Final Announcements

SEMINAR TITLE: STRUCTURING THE VOLUNTEER LEARNING EXPERIENCE

DATE/TIME: JANUARY 29, 5:00-7:00p.m., Rm 201

FACILITATORS: Frank/Staff

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

1. describe the elements of a well-written job description.

2. describe and compose a learning agreement.

3. compare the existence of learning contracts, formal and informal, with that of their own country.

ACTIVITIES:

I. Introduction and Purpose of Seminar

II. Country/Region Presentation

III. Volunteer Placements

IV. Elements of a Well-Written Job Description

V. Constructing A Learning Agreement

1. Distinguish between the job description form and the learning agreement.
2. Identify important aspects of the learning agreement.
3. Set up timeline to write learning agreement.

VI. Staff/Student Groupings

V. Final Announcements

APPENDIX THREE

VOLUNTEER PLACEMENTS

Alice Changa — **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION SERVICES**
- child care for children 6 wks - 6 yrs.

Shu-Hui Chan — **INGHAM COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICES**
- nutrition assistant
- help low-income families with children to eat better with the resources they have available.

Clifford Akujobi — **INGHAM COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICES**
- community 4-H coordinator
- assist in implementation of the 4-H youth program in Ingham County
- responsible for planning, supervision and evaluation of the community education program at Walnut St. School.

Emmanuel Badu — **AMERICAN RED CROSS**
- clerical duties

Surasena Batagoda — **ECONOMIC CRISIS CENTER & The SALVATION ARMY**
- provide temporary shelter and food to homeless families
- computer work
- stack up food
- clerical duties

Djibo Hamidou — **LANSING NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**
- coordinate neighborhood concerns
- attend neighborhood meeting/activities
- public relations
- environmental issues

Titus Singo — **LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE**
- assistant ballroom dancing instructor

Chia-Ying Chao — **WOLDUMAR NATURE CENTER**
- environmental education
- computer work
- gardening
- sales

Rosnah Mat Dahan **SENIOR DAYTIME CENTER**
- provide recreational activities to recovering seniors

Naihua Zhang **NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN & COUNCIL AGAINST DOMESTIC ASSAULT**
- civil rights organization to advance the rights of women
- demonstrations at the capitol
- talk to legislators
- educating women about their rights

Pav Govindasamy and Jey Sundram **GATEWAY COMMUNITY SERVICES**
- diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of health care needs
- counseling

Aigun Liu **EAST LANSING PUBLIC SCHOOL**
- enrichment program for families

Sunethra Karunaratne **ST. LAWRENCE HOSPITAL**

Sobha Ramanand **EAST LANSING MAYOR'S OFFICE**
- environmental task force

Li-Wei Wang **WESTMINISTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Annette Duncan **LITERACY COALITION**

APPENDIX FOUR

TABLE OF CONTENTS:
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: SHARING THE WEALTH WITH THE COMMUNITY

Section 2: Agency Reflections

Section 3: Staff Reflections

Section 4: Appendices

APPENDIX FIVE

MSU FACULTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you aware of the ISVC? How did you find out about the program?

2. To what extent were you aware of your advisee's participation in the ISVC?

3. Do you feel programs like the ISVC are an important part of an international student's academic experience?

4. Have you noticed any impact this program has had on your advisee?

5. To what extent have you and the student interacted about the ISVC, its potential benefits, and its relationship to the student's program of study or academic experience?

6. Has your association with the ISVC resulted in increased linkages with or awareness of any public and private agencies in the East Lansing/Lansing area?

7. Do you have any recommendations for the ISVC staff as it designs next year's program?

MSU Student Questionnaire

1. Why did you decide to participate in the ISVC?

2. What do you hope to get out of the ISVC in terms of skills and knowledge in the short and long term? Did your goals change as you learned more about your placement/had more experience?

3. Do you feel your placement experience was successful in meeting your goals? Why or why not?

4. To what extent was there a cultural exchange at your placement between you and your supervisor/co-workers/clients?

5. Have you discovered any new aspects of American culture as a result of your experience with the ISVC? Has the volunteer experience helped you in other cross-cultural situations?

6. Has the ISVC experience prompted any thoughts about your own country? Comparisons and/or contrasts?

7. Have you benefited from the ISVC?
   - professionally?
   - personally?
   - academically?
   - other?

   Do you think this experience will give further benefit after it is over?

8. Have you learned more about the ways in which an organization functions? Have you compared or contrasted that with organizations back home?

9. What recommendations would you make for the ISVC next year?

Agency Supervisors Questionnaire

1. How did you learn about the ISVC?

2. To what extent have you utilized international persons/students as volunteers in the past in your agency?

3. What role has the student played as a volunteer in your agency?

4. What considerations affect your decision to use an international student volunteer that are different from those used in utilizing American volunteers?

5. Has his/her being an international student brought any unique or new ways to analyze a problem or suggest new ways to do work at the agency?

6. To what extent has a sharing of cultures occurred in this experience?

7. Has your agency expanded its linkages with departments within MSU as a result of your participation in the ISVC?

8. What recommendations do you have for the ISVC staff for the next year's program? (i.e., student preparation, agency supervisor preparation, or placement)

APPENDIX SIX

EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT: A PRIMER FOR SMALL-SCALE PROJECT STAFF

What is Evaluability Assessment?

Evaluability assessment (EA) is a tool that helps program staff clearly describe their program's structure (i.e., its goals and activities), establish the plausibility of its activities in reaching intended goals, determine the whether the program is evaluable, and enhance the utilization of the evaluation results (Smith, 1989). The EA process helps a program staff to step away from the project, describe what actually happened, determine whether the program can be evaluated and how, and suggest ways to best use the results of the evaluation.

EA was first developed by Joseph Wholey and his associates at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. (Nay & Kay, 1982, Smith, 1989). It was developed to address the perceived inadequacies of program evaluation. First used as a summative evaluation tool, EA is now used to assess all aspects of the program process. This primer will focus specifically on the use of EA as a summative and reflective evaluation tool. The list of selected references at the end of the report contain in depth discussions on EA, and describe

the additional use of EA as a program design tool.

In brief, EA involves gathering a group of individuals knowledgeable about the program, called an evaluability assessment team, that can help gather materials and develop a model of the program that describes the resources and activities necessary to reach the program goal. Throughout the process, individuals who have a vested interest in the program -- stakeholders -- are identified and interviewed to produce additional information. After developing the model of the project, a decision is made as to what aspects of the program can be evaluated, and which aspects are most important for evaluation. Developing an evaluation strategy that results in findings that can and will be used by stakeholders is a key component of EA.

Why Use Evaluability Assessment?

EA has several characteristics that make it easy to use for small-scale projects. The process used to conduct an EA, described below, can be adapted to fit the individual circumstances of any project. For example, EA is normally conducted over several day-long workshops. However, if time is a limited resource, the sessions can be adapted into shorter focus group sessions. When adapting the EA process, staff members need to be aware of any compromises in the process that may affect gathering information pertinent to their goals for the EA.

EA does not require significant experience with program evaluation. The action steps described below, and the references listed in listed at the end of this report, should provide most program staff with the information they need to conduct an EA. If the results of the EA show the need for further evaluation activities that require specific expertise, the program staff can decide which alternatives to pursue based on the available resources.

EA provides several levels of information. First, it results in a program description that explains the cause-effect relationships in a program from project design, to project implementation, to project completion. Second, it provides immediate information on the plausibility of a program and where it might be modified to achieve its goals. Third, it results in a series of evaluation questions and potential evaluation methods that can be carried out if so desired. Program staff benefit from one or all of the levels of information. The decision on which information to use will depend on the available resources. For example, some suggested evaluation needs may be beyond program funding at the time of the EA, but may be pursued later on as funding becomes available. Thus, EA provides a range of information for program staff to use according to their needs and resources.

How Do I Conduct an Evaluability Assessment?

This section presents an outline of the basic steps involved in conducting an EA. The selected references listed at the end of this report can be used to adapt the outline to specific needs.

1. Choose to conduct an evaluability assessment.

   EA is an evaluation option appropriate for resource-constrained programs, and/or when a program staff is uncertain as to which aspects of the project should be evaluated and how. However, if the program staff has already identified a specific area in need of evaluation, an EA may not represent an efficient use of program resources.

2. Choose an EA coordinator.

   The EA coordinator is responsible for conducting the focus groups, overseeing any stakeholder interviews that are necessary, arranging for an analysis of program documents, and suggesting next step evaluation methods.

   Whether or not an internal or external EA coordinator is chosen depends on the needs of the program staff. An external coordinator may be better for programs whose staff have had strained working relationships, or are divided on which aspects of the program are most important for evaluation. An internal coordinator may be better when the program staff are most concerned with reflecting on the lessons learned in a program for use with similar programs in the future. An internal coordinator may be more cost effective; however, depending on the scope of the EA, a program staff may be able to find an external coordinator within the host institution who has not been involved in the program.

3. Choose an EA team.

   The EA team should be comprised of program staff and those individuals who have a vested interest in the program, or stakeholders. Examples of stakeholders include upper-level administrators,

representatives of organizations that benefit from the program, and individuals familiar with the program's target audience. Stakeholders should have knowledge of the program from its inception. If a stakeholder continually needs to be updated about the program during the EA, then s/he may not have information to contribute to the EA process.

Besides participating in the focus group to build a model of the project, the EA team may have additional responsibilities such as conducting interviews with other stakeholders. Thus, they should be able to commit the necessary time to complete the EA process.

4. Conduct Phase One: Explain the EA process and develop a program logic model.

The first stage in the EA is to explain the EA process to the EA team, so that each person knows how the process will be conducted and what the goals are for the effort. Next, the EA coordinator explains the use of the program logic model and its role in the EA. This phase may conducted in one session, or over several sessions, depending on the time constraints of those involved. Figure A.1 lists an example outline for this session that can be used as overheads.

Building a program logic model is a process of describing the cause and effect relationships in a project, identifying the program components that bring about the cause and effect relationships, and specifying the intermediate and final goals and effects of the program. Wholey (1987, pp. 78-79) describes program theory as an if-then expression:

> If the following program resources are available, then the following program activities will be undertaken... If these program activities are to occur, then the following program outcomes will be produced... If these activities and outcomes occur, then progress will be made toward the following program goals.

Building the program logic model can be the most significant part of the EA process, because the process may alert program staff about important issues that they were unaware of while conducting the program. The model may point out next steps

Figure A.1
Sample Overheads for the First EA Session

Overview of the Sessions
- Session 1: Building a Program Logic Model
- Session 2: Reviewing the Model & Conducting a Mock Evaluation Session
- Session 3: Review Proposed Evaluation Process & Critique EA

Overview of Evaluability Assessment
- As a Program Planning Tool
- As a Formative Evaluation Tool
- As a Summative Evaluation Tool
- These focus groups will focus on EA as a summative evaluation tool

Key Points in an Evaluability Assessment
- Program Staff
- Program Logic Model
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Document Analysis
- Evaluation Proposal
- Evaluation Decision-Making

Program Logic Model
- Specifies cause-effect relationships
- Specifies outcomes
- Specifies resources
- Specifies obstacles and alternatives
- Specifies how our activities will help us reach the outcomes we have targeted in our program proposal

Steps in Building a Program Logic Model
- Outline major phases
- List two to three most significant activities to accomplish each phase
- List resources needed to successfully conduct each

that make any formal evaluation process unnecessary.

The program logic model contains seven rows: goals and outcomes, program events, program activities, assumptions guiding the first three rows, resources needed to conduct events, indicators of successful completion of an event or goal, and barriers to the completion of a goal or event. The rows are linked to one another through the stage in which they occur in a program. For example, each event requires certain activities and resources, is designed to bring about a particular goal or set of goals, and will have indicators of success and potential barriers. Thus, the program logic model not only indicates the sequence of events throughout a program, but also the associated outcomes, activities, etc. An example of a program logic model can be found in figure A.2 of this report.

If the discussions indicate that there are other stakeholders who need to be interviewed, the EA coordinator should arrange for those before the second phase of the EA. The EA coordinator may also conduct an analysis of program documents for additional information about the program. The main purpose for the stakeholder interviews and document analysis is to generate information from other sources that can confirm the program logic model, or suggest additional aspects that the EA team should consider.

5. Conduct Phase Two: Review the program logic model and conduct a mock evaluation-utilization session.

In the second meeting, or set of meetings, the EA team reviews the program logic model that the EA coordinator has developed from the first session. At this point the EA team can make any changes to the model and discuss any further information the model indicates relevant to the evaluation. The results of the stakeholder interviews and document analysis should be discussed to determine if any additions are needed to the model, or if there is any conflict between information in the model and that found in the additional research. If changes are made to the model, the EA coordinator will incorporate them and present the model at the next session.

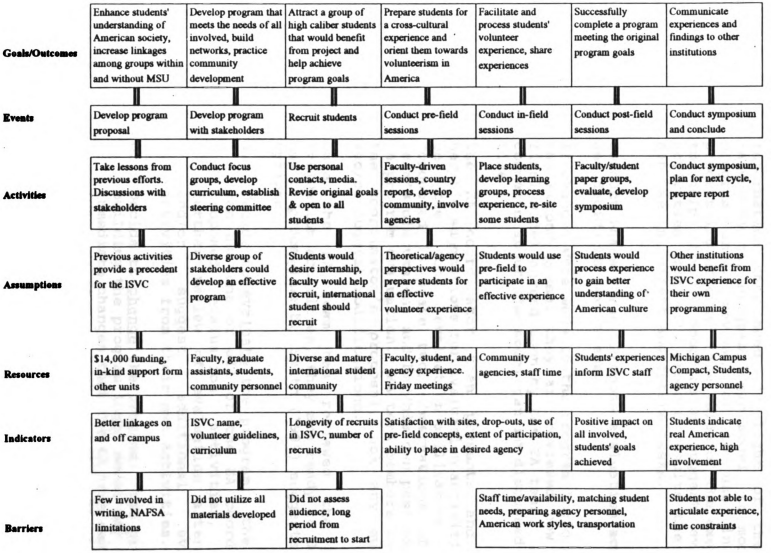

Figure A.2 Example Program Logic Model: The ISVC

The second activity in phase two is to conduct a mock evaluation- utilization session. The purpose of this activity is to have the EA team suggest possible evaluation needs. The team lists information they need, in light of the issues raised by the program logic model, to modify the program under review, or to use in future programming efforts. The value of the exercise is to help the EA coordinator suggest evaluation activities that will produce results the EA team can use in current and future tasks.

6. Conduct Phase Three: Propose evaluation activities and decide on next steps.

   If changes were made to the program logic model in the second phase, they are reviewed now and the final model agreed upon by the EA team. Any last comments about the model can be discussed at this time.

   The EA coordinator then presents and reviews her/his suggestions for evaluation activities based on the mock evaluation-utilization session conducted in phase two, observations of the EA team's discussion, and her/his own past experience in program evaluation. EA team members can review the coordinator's proposal, ask any questions, and/or suggest modifications.

   Once the EA team has reviewed the proposed evaluation activities, they are ready to decide on how to proceed next. Smith (1989) suggests several options:

   a. Decide to <u>evaluate</u> the program: the EA team can use one or all of the EA coordinator's proposed evaluation activities, suggest further review of evaluation alternatives, and/or suggest additional evaluation activities from their own activities.

   b. Decide to <u>change</u> the program: the process of building the program logic model may indicate immediate changes that the EA team can make to improve the program. The EA team can implement the changes and then conduct a later EA to determine if the changes produced the intended effects.

   c. Decide to take <u>no further action</u>: the EA team

may decide that any evaluation activity would not produce results significant enough to justify the resources expended, or that the program is proceeding as desired so that no changes or evaluation is needed at the present time.

d. Decide to stop the program: the EA may indicate that the events, activities, and/or resources are insufficient to bring about the intended goals and outcomes, and that further resources are not available to change the program. In this case, the EA team may decide to stop the program and use present resources in other ways.

Whether or not the EA team decides to proceed with an evaluation, the EA process gives program staff and stakeholders an opportunity to build consensus about the program's goals and activities. It can help to increase communication among different units within an organization and develop new ideas for present and future programs.

Selected References for Evaluability Assessment

Bickman, L., (ed.) (1987). Using Program Theory in Evaluation. New Directions for Program Evaluation, No. 33, Spring 1987. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gorden, R. (1980). Interviewing: Strategy, techniques, and tactics. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press.

Krueger, R. (1988). Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Mayeske, G. W. (1991). Program design: An evaluation approach. Washington, D.C.: Extension Service. U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Nay, J., Kay, P. (1982).Government oversight and evaluability assessment. Lexington, Massachusetts: LexingtonBooks.

Patton, M. (1986). Utilization-focused evaluations. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Rutman, L. (1980). Planning useful evaluations: Evaluability assessment. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Smith, M. F. (1989). Evaluability assessment: A practical approach. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

LIST OF REFERENCES

LIST OF REFERENCES

Alkin, M. (ed.) (1990). Debates on evaluation. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Batchelder, D., Warner, E. (1977). Beyond experience: The experiential approach to cross-cultural education. Brattleboro, Vermont: The Experiment Press.

Doherty, A., et al. (1978). Toward a theory of undergraduate experiential learning. In M. Keeton, Tate (Ed.), Learning by experience - what, why, how: New directions for experiential learning (1) (pp. 23-36).

Duley, J. (n.d.). Basic skills for experiential learning: What skills do students need to make the most of experiential learning opportunities [Papers on Learning and Teaching]. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.

Duley, G., Gordon . (1977). College-sponsored experiential learning - a CAEL handbook. Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service.

Fear, F., Axinn, G. (1989) "Linking Scholarship with Reality: Helping Graduate Students Understand the Dynamics of American Volunteerism." A proposal to the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs.

Gorden, R. (1980). Interviewing: Strategy, techniques, and tactics. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press.

Keeton, M. (1978). introduction. In M. Keeton, Tate (Ed.), Learning by experience - what, why, how: New directions for experiential learning (1).

Knapp, J., Sharon. (1975). A compendium of assessment techniques. Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service.

Krueger, R. (1988). Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Mayeske, G. W. (1991). Program design: An evaluation approach. Washington, D.C.: Extension Service. U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Nay, J., Kay, P. (1982).Government oversight and evaluability assessment. Lexington, Massachusetts: LexingtonBooks.

Patton, M. (1991). Utilization-focused evaluation. Pre-session workshop at the 1991 American Evaluation Association Annual Conference.

----- (1990). Qualitative evaluation research methods. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

----- (1990). The evaluator's responsibility for utilization. In Alkin, M. (ed.), Debates on evaluation. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

----- (1986). Utilization-focused evaluations. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Permaul, J., Miko. (1977). Documentation and evaluation of sponsored experiential learning. UCLA: CAEL.

Rutman, L. (1980). Planning useful evaluations: Evaluability assessment. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Scheirer, M. (1987). Program theory and implementation theory: Implications for evaluators. In L. Bickman (Ed.), Using program theory in evaluation (pp. 77-92). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Smith, M. F. (1989). Evaluability assessment: A practical approach. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Wholey, J. S. (1991). Planning useful evaluations: Getting evaluations used. Workshop at the 1991 American Evaluation Association Annual Conference.

----- (1987). Evaluability assessment: Developing program theory. In L. Bickman (Ed.), Using program theory in evaluation (pp. 77-92). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.