



Needs Assessment for NGO/CBO

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Minding the gaps

- ▶ Gaps are either opportunities or problems; they instigate action
- ▶ At beginning of any project there are gaps between the way things are and the way things ought to be. At this time the project exists conceptually; before it is planned and executed.
- ▶ Gaps guide on decisions; they define our goals
- ▶ Gaps also determine what results should be achieved by actions taken.
- ▶ These gaps are the NEEDS

Example of housing needs

1. Persons without any housing (homeless people)
 2. Persons with substandard housing because of space (informal settlements)
 3. Persons with handicap in accessibility
 4. Persons who desire more aesthetics
- ▶ What is 'needed' is relative and depends on one's vantage point

Definitions

Allison Rossett- It is the systematic study of a problem or innovation, incorporating data and opinions from varied sources, in order to make effective decisions or recommendations about what should happen next

Simply put...

- ▶ Needs assessment is a tool for making better decisions.

Needs assessment in context of social problems

- ▶ Social problems affect a large number of people.
- ▶ They create hardships and suffering for those affected and present costs for society.
- ▶ Existence of social problems create need for social service organizations and programs to address the problem

The how:-

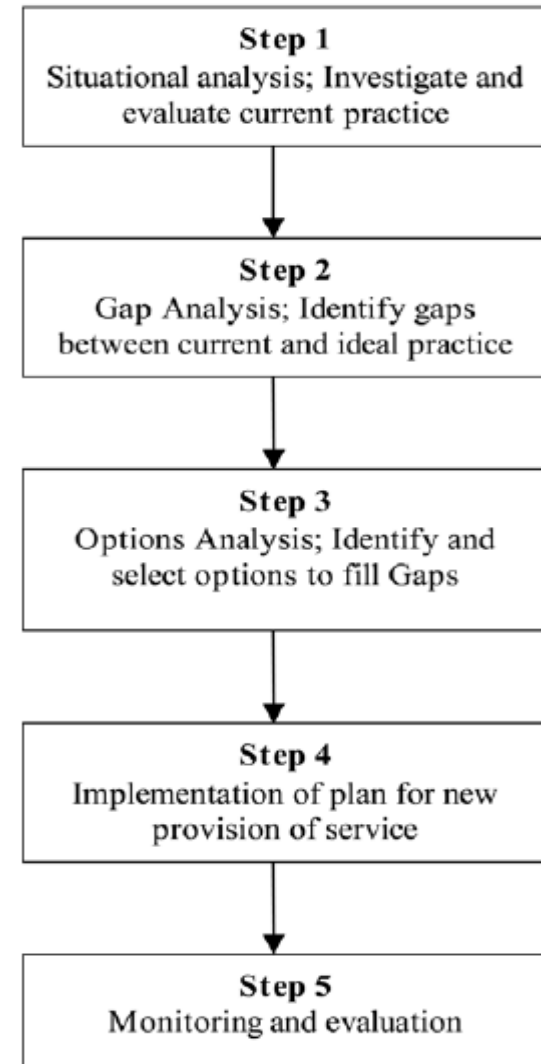
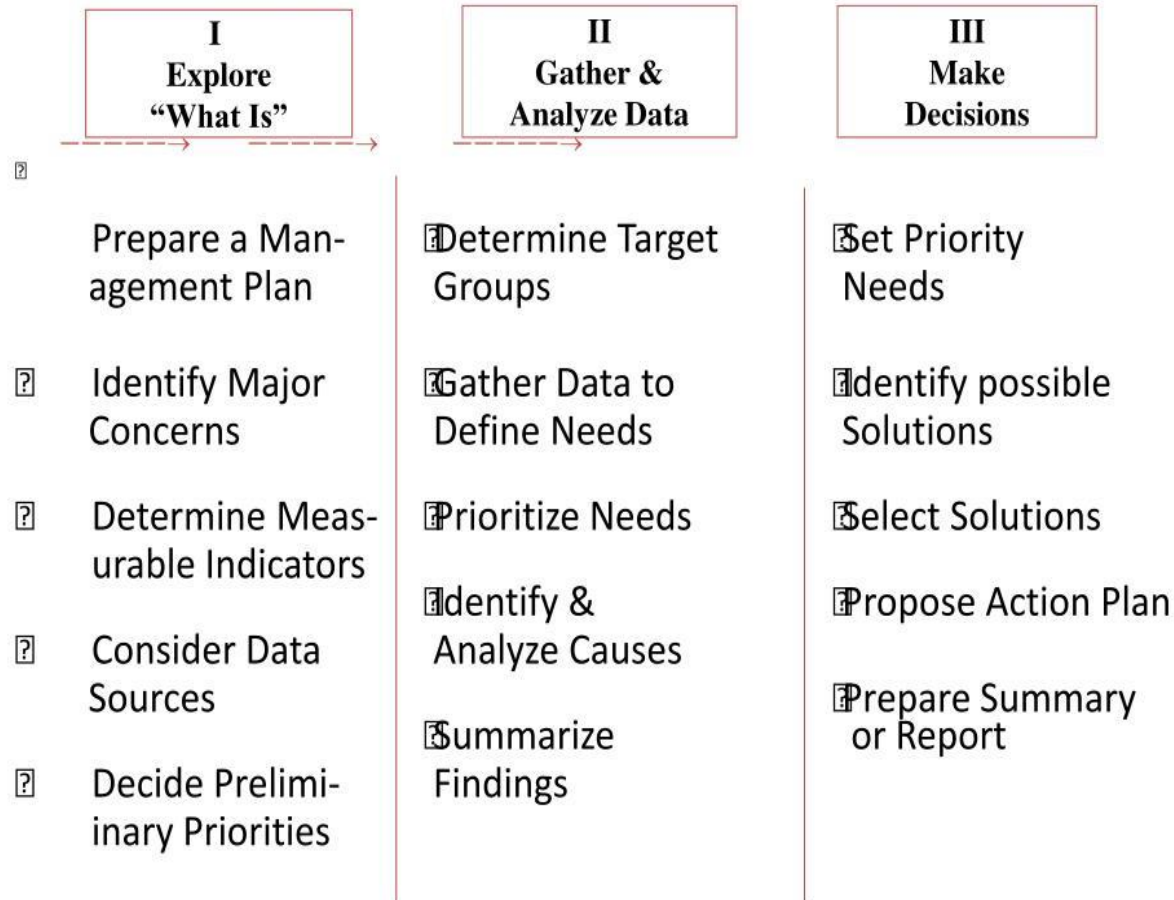
- ▶ Conduct needs assessment to gauge the extent and severity of the problem
- ▶ Once magnitude of problem is know... identify type of intervention best suited to reduce or impact on the problem
- ▶ Evaluate efforts to inform whether the intervention is making a difference
- ▶ After some time the need of the population should be assessed again to determine impact

Benefits of needs assessment

1. Systematic process to guide decision making
2. Provide justification for decisions before they are made
3. Scalability of programs
4. Replicability – provide model for use by novices and experts
5. Systematic perspectives for decision makers
6. Allows interdisciplinary solutions to complex problems

How to conduct basic needs assessment

3-Phase Model of needs assessment



1. IDENTIFY THE NEEDS

- ▶ Identify internal and external partners
- ▶ Determine what data is required to identify needs
- ▶ Determine potential sources of data
- ▶ Make arrangements to collect information that is not readily available
- ▶ Pilot test information gathering tools
- ▶ Collect information using a variety of tools and techniques for varying perspectives
- ▶ Define needs on basis of performance gaps between current and desired results

2. ANALYZE

Links needs with the information required to make decisions about what actions should be taken

- ▶ Establish an initial prioritization of needs on basis of size, scope
- ▶ Conduct needs analysis to better understand what is working and what is not
- ▶ Collect information on the causal factors leading to priority needs
- ▶ Synthesize the information you have collected

3. DECIDE

Make decisions based on the analysis

- ▶ Establish criteria on decisions to be made (cost, time, impact)
- ▶ Identify solutions that in combination could achieve desired results
- ▶ Evaluate each potential performance improvement activity
- ▶ Prioritize the identified needs on basis of cost to meet the need versus cost of not meeting the need
- ▶ Summarize your recommendation in needs assessment report and disseminate the information.

Who should be involved?

- ▶ Needs assessments are rarely successful when performed as an individual activity.
- ▶ Involve others inside and outside your organization to gain multiple perspectives; Needs assessments with a single perspective can be dangerous

Contents of Needs Assessment report

Assessment report	Assessment presentation
Executive summary	Agenda
Introduction	Introduction
Purpose, goals, objectives	Purpose, goals, objectives
Needs	Executive summary
Methods for identifying needs	Needs
Data identifying needs	Methods for identifying needs
Actions considered	Data identifying needs
Methods for identifying alternatives	Actions considered
Data on alternatives	Methods for identifying alternatives
Criteria for comparing	Data on alternatives
Conclusions	Criteria for comparing
Decisions or recommendations	Conclusions
Acknowledgments	Decisions or recommendations
Annex: supporting data	Acknowledgments
Annex: tools and instruments	Additional resources

Tools and technics

- ▶ Document reviews
- ▶ Guided expert reviews
 - ▶ Focus groups
 - ▶ Interviews
 - ▶ Surveys

Document or Data Review

Purpose is to review a variety of existing sources with intention of collecting independently verifiable information

Advantages

- ▶ Info often independently verifiable
- ▶ Can be done without extensive input from other sources
- ▶ Less expensive than collecting data on your own

Disadvantages

- ▶ May represent a perspective that is not aligned to needs assessment project
- ▶ Time consuming process
- ▶ Cannot control the quality of the info being collected

Guided Expert Interviews

Purpose is to gain informed perspective from valued experts

Advantages

- ▶ Allow fresh set of eyes; new ideas and insights
- ▶ Increases credibility of the process
- ▶ Allow benchmarking against similar systems
- ▶ Can be done remotely hence saves time and resources

Disadvantages

- ▶ Challenge in criteria for choice of expert
- ▶ Subjectivity as prior experience affects outcome of the process
- ▶ Can be expensive / difficult to find expert

Focus Group

To collect info from a small group (5-12pax) in a structured format. Facilitator presents participants with questions designed to yield insights into the results- current & desired

Advantages

- ▶ Multiple people involved at the same time
- ▶ Members build on each others comments and reactions
- ▶ Helps people come into consensus (need prioritization)

Disadvantages

- ▶ Group members may not contribute equally
- ▶ Risk of 'Group Think'
- ▶ Discussions may take too long
- ▶ People may not be comfortable sharing sensitive matters

Interviews

To collect information from a single person through a format (structured, semi-structured or unstructured)

Advantages

- ▶ People may offer info they wouldn't in a group
- ▶ Interviewer can observe non-verbal behaviour
- ▶ Allows for follow through questions

Disadvantages

- ▶ Results from multiple interviewees may contradict each other
- ▶ If not done well can get off topic
- ▶ Have potential to reduce scope and sample for data collection

Dual-Response Surveys

To collect info from a large number of people- in multiple locations- regarding perspectives for current and desired performance

Advantages

- ▶ Allows capture of perspectives of multiple groups on a variety of issues
- ▶ Dual response allows simultaneous capture of current and desired levels of performance
- ▶ Gives multiple ways to view, analyze and report findings

Disadvantages

- ▶ Records perceptions of those completing the survey- might not be realistic
- ▶ People get burn out because of extensive use of surveys
- ▶ No opportunity for follow through questions

SWOT Analysis

To identify, organize and prioritize the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that influence planning, design and implementation of programs

Advantages

- ▶ SWOT factors are prioritized in relations to others rather than listing them
- ▶ Engages a group to define relationship among factors

Disadvantages

- ▶ Assigning value can be challenging
- ▶ Requires more time to move from factors to relationship and recommendations

Below is an example of a SWOT analysis for an engineering company:

Strengths

- excellent brand name
- well trained management
- good liquidity position
- customer loyalty

Weaknesses

- high labour turnover of unskilled staff
- declining profit margin
- old machinery
- quality control problems

Opportunities

- new technologies available to improve control production
- new markets for products in Eastern Europe
- recent failure of a major competitor
- demographic change will lead to higher demand for products

Threats

- increasing protectionism in some destination countries
- increasing raw material costs
- risk of a double-dip recession
- new online competition
- local pressure group attempting to prevent factory extension

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Thank You

... go and concur the world!