

## A five-step process to designing an evaluation in human rights education

Evaluation is sometimes described as a total experience because ideally it is part of our human rights education (HRE) work from the very beginning to the very end. Included as part of all the phases of a project, evaluation should reflect the totality of everything that we do in a Human Rights Education project. As such, evaluation needs to be developed in line with each specific training session. Evaluation should be inspired by the HRE activity itself and enhance our capacity to achieve our goals.

There is no single format for effective evaluation. In fact, the art of evaluation is choosing a process that both gives you the information you need and is, at the same time, feasible for you and your group or organization to carry out. Equitas operates a model in designing and implementing an effective evaluation process for human rights training that encompasses five basic steps:

- Step 1: Understand the change that is needed – Training needs assessment
- Step 2: Describe the desired change – Define results and develop objectives
- Step 3: Increase effectiveness – Conduct formative evaluation
- Step 4: Determine the changes that have occurred in the short, medium and longer term – Conduct end-of-training summative evaluation and transfer and impact evaluations
- Step 5: Determine how to best communicate results to different stakeholders in order to highlight the changes that have occurred – Prepare evaluation report

This *Equitas Shares It* is the **third of a five-part series** that will explore each of the five steps of the process to designing an evaluation in human rights education. In this edition of *Equitas Shares It* we will cover *Defining results and develop objectives*.

### Step 3: Increase effectiveness –formative evaluation

Formative evaluation is the third step in the evaluation process. It refers to the set of evaluation activities that take place as training is being developed or before it is implemented. Formative evaluation is the process of assessing training while it is “under formation”.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes training sessions are piloted or pre-tested explicitly with the purpose of improvement. This also involves formative evaluation.

Formative evaluation enables human rights educators to verify whether or not the overall learning strategy or approach, the learning objectives, as well as the methods, techniques and materials they have planned to use in the human rights training session they have designed are indeed the most appropriate to effectively meet the goal. A formative evaluation allows the human rights educator to check whether or not the chosen activities can produce the desired results among the particular group of learners.<sup>2</sup>

Typically, formative evaluation is made up of several different reviews, each from a different perspective. Learners, content experts and other stakeholders are key sources that can provide critical feedback related to the appropriateness and the potential effectiveness of the human rights training. The information that is gathered through formative evaluation enables educators to make informed decisions about their training sessions and provides a rationale for any adjustments and improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> Carliner, Training Design Basics.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Dick and Lou Carey, The Systematic Design of Instruction, 4th ed. (New York, Harper Collins, 1996).

## Key notions in increasing effectiveness

Here are some of the key notions to increase effectiveness through formative evaluation.

### What is formative evaluation

A type of evaluation that is conducted during the development phase, that is, while the human rights training session is being developed, to assess its potential effectiveness.

### Why?

Formative evaluation helps human rights educators identify areas for improvement to the content and process of their training session and to make the appropriate adjustments while the training is still under development. Asking for feedback through formative evaluation not only helps improve the training session, but also ensures that stakeholders are included in the development process.

### How?

- The process for conducting a formative evaluation is the same as for any type of evaluation:
- Define the purpose
- Determine the right questions about the content and process of the training
- Collect information from the right sources to answer your questions; analyse the data to make your recommendations
- Act on the information – this involves introducing changes to the content and process of the training based on what you learned through formative evaluation

The three main information-gathering activities of a formative evaluation for HRE are:

- **Design review:** review of the basic premise or rationale for the training session as well as the coherence with the learning needs
- **Expert review:** review of the content, the educational approach, the activities and the appropriateness of these for the target population
- **Learner review:** review of the accessibility and appropriateness of the training session for individual learners or groups of learners

**Real-time formative evaluation** can be conducted even as a training session is being implemented. Daily debriefs provide an opportunity for adjusting the activities, the process and examples to the needs of the learner group.

### Result

Information gathered through these three types of reviews will help us to improve the design of our training session and increase its effectiveness.

## Example of defining results and developing objectives

### Situation

In order to meet its requirements under the country's National Plan for Human Rights, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) of the country is required to integrate human rights into the Ministry's work. The Ministry determined that training in human rights would be needed for all its staff, starting with senior officials in the Ministry. To this end MOSA officials contacted The Rights Way, a national human rights NGO with extensive experience in HRE, to develop and implement a human rights training session for the Ministry's senior officials. The Rights Way agreed to work with the Ministry on this training and began by conducting a training needs assessment. Based on the findings of the training needs assessment, The Rights Way has prepared draft training materials for review.

### The formative evaluation

#### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the formative evaluation is to identify weaknesses in the training that The Rights Way is designing for MOSA senior officials. These officials are a new target audience for the NGO, therefore The Rights Way needs to verify that the training it is developing demonstrates a good understanding of the new learners and conveys the content effectively for this group.

#### 2. Determining the right questions and getting the answers from the right sources

Some of the critical questions that this particular formative evaluation should address are listed below.

##### (a) Design review (by a colleague)

- Does the goal of the training session match the goal that was identified in the training needs assessment?
- Does the training session have a coherent structure? Does it have clear objectives? Is there coherence between the objectives and the content (i.e., in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes) of the training?

##### Sources and tools for the design review

To gather information about the design and coherence of the training session, The Rights Way staff member developing the training took the following action:

- Asked a colleague within The Rights Way to review the training session outline and materials

##### (b) Expert review (by a content expert)

- Is the content up to date? Is it accurate? Is anything essential missing? Is there any information that is unnecessary or irrelevant that can be eliminated?

##### Sources and tools for the expert review

To gather information about the content, educational approach and appropriateness of the training session, The Rights Way took the following action:

- Discussed the scope of the content orally with a national/local expert
- Compared the content with an additional resource:

*Human Rights and Social Work: A Manual for Schools of Social Work and the Social Work Profession.* Available online at:  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/PublicationsResources/Pages/TrainingEducation.aspx>

(c) **Learner review (by a learner expert)**

- Is the content accessible and appealing to MOSA officials? Is it equally accessible to men and to women?
- Are the activities and examples appropriate for MOSA officials?

**Sources and tools for the expert review**

To gather information about the appropriateness of the training session for the learners, The Rights Way took the following action:

- Sent, by e-mail, an outline of the training session to the trainers who had worked previously with MOSA senior officials and were very familiar with the target audience

**3. Analysing the data and acting to implement changes**

Based on the information gathered through formative evaluation the human rights educators from The Rights Way were able to determine, with the help of various colleagues and experts, how they could improve the training session in order to increase its effectiveness and appeal to the target audience.