SUBJECT: Evaluating Public Issues Education
(Lesson Plan to supplement pages 44-48)

CONTENT: Evaluation allows one to stand back and assess how well things are working and to make adjustments as needed. It also helps to communicate the purposes, reality and accomplishments of public issues education to policy makers and citizens. Evaluation is most effective when it integrates program planning with program effectiveness in an ongoing process.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES: At the completion of this lesson, learners will be able to:

1. Identify relationships among the program planning stages in the policy-making process as they relate to the program effectiveness. (See models on pages 7-12 and specific example on page 48 in *Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues.*)

2. Distinguish between measures for evaluating individual and program policy impacts. (See pages 45-46 in *Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues*).

BEFORE PRESENTING THIS MATERIAL:

1. Review pp. 44-48 in *Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues* as stated in previous segments.

2. Prepare a transparency of "Benefits of Evaluation" and "Articulation of Program Theory." Prepare "Articulation of Program Theory" worksheet.

3. Think about how you will establish the importance of evaluation to the program planning process. Continually remind participants to ask themselves a "So what?" question as to what would be different if the educational program/effort had not taken place. Asking "So what?" throughout helps in framing the key questions that participants will need to ask as they experience program planning integrated with evaluation of program effectiveness.

4. Begin to develop your own working definition for outcome indicators. Identify outcome indicators as a documentation of the impact of your program activities on the individual and/or community.

MEETING AGENDA:

1. Opening Exercise: Ask each participant to briefly introduce themself by stating what they hope to accomplish by being part of the group or becoming involved with a public issue. Record on a flip chart for later review. (Refer back to these statements throughout the public issues education process to help participants determine whether interests are being met).

2. Review the benefits of evaluation with the transparency, "Benefits of Evaluation", or page 44 of *Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues.* Use these examples to identify how evaluation has been used in other public policy projects and to apply similar principles to your own project.

3. Using transparency and the worksheet "Articulation of Program Theory" and "program theory" questions on page 45 of *Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues,* work in small groups to state what you hope to accomplish, the activities you will carry out, and the effect you expect your activities to have on your goals. The worksheet, "Articulation of Program Theory," is a good way to illustrate whether your activities have met your goals.

(ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER:)

- Divide into groups of two or three people to specifically design evaluation methods. Consider at what stage of the process various methods would be most appropriate. (See page 48 in *Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues.*) Use the methods listed by participants in addition to any of the following:
  a. paper and pencil surveys
  b. participant ratings of speakers or activities
  c. participant assessments of their increased knowledge, changes in attitudes, and plans for follow-up action
  d. informal self-evaluation of progress made
  e. project activity journal documenting implementation activities and decisions
  f. telephone interviews with participants
  g. internal assessment by stakeholders at various stages of the project
  h. counting the number of people participating
  I. counting the number of people trained and those trained by trainers
  j. clipping all newspaper articles and recording radio/TV announcements about the project in the media

- Study the questions on page 48 of *Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues* to ask at each stage as the issue evolves. After determining the stage of the process for the issue in which you're involved, talk about the success you've had in moving your issue from one stage to the next. Outcome indicators for each stage can help participants know whether they are making progress toward issue resolution and whether to move on to educational interventions appropriate for the next stage.

- Ask participants to list the various methods of evaluation they have experienced. After methods are listed, work with the group to categorize the methods into these lists:
  a. outcomes personal/individual compared to policy process
  b. outcomes pre-determined prior to activity compared to being designed to pick up whatever impacts may emerge
  c. outcomes representing acceptance of existing policy-making processes compared to change-oriented processes
  d. outcomes based on progress made in moving issues toward resolution in ways that reflect the perspectives of policy makers and affected parties on all sides of the issue.

(Note the possibility of these being used with Phase 3 Worksheet: "Learner Objectives and Program Design," item 6, page 22 in this Inservice Guide).

BENEFITS OF EVALUATION

⇒ **Mid-course adjustments**

⇒ **Identifying project impacts**

⇒ **Lessons/Recommendations**

⇒ **Occasions for reflection**

Source: Dale, D. D. & Hahn, A. J. (eds.). (1994). Public Issues Education: Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues. Public Issues Education Materials Task Force of the National Public Policy Education Committee and PLC and PODC subcommittees of the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin-Extension.

ARTICULATION OF PROGRAM THEORY

What You Hope To Accomplish*	Activity to Reach Goal
G **O** **A** **L**	 ——————————— Documentation of Effectiveness (Outcome Indicator or Impact)

*   Things that happen to individual participants in your program
AND/OR
Things that happen to the issue, or the process for addressing the issue.

Source: Stevens, G. L. & Vance, K. L. (eds.). (1995). <u>Inservice Guide, A Supplement to Public Issues Education: Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues</u>. Public Issues Education Materials Task Force of the National Public Policy Education Committee and PLC and PODC subcommittees of the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.

ARTICULATION OF PROGRAM THEORY

What You Hope To Accomplish*	Activity to Reach Goal	Activity to Reach Goal	Activity to Reach Goal
G O A L	_____ Documentation of Effectiveness (Outcome Indicator or Impact)	_____ Documentation of Effectiveness (Outcome Indicator or Impact)	_____ Documentation of Effectiveness (Outcome Indicator or Impact)
G O A L	_____ Documentation of Effectiveness (Outcome Indicator or Impact)	_____ Documentation of Effectiveness (Outcome Indicator or Impact)	_____ Documentation of Effectiveness (Outcome Indicator or Impact)
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*   Things that happen to individual participants in your program
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    Things that happen to the issue, or the process for addressing the issue.