Summer Camp Program 2012 Evaluation Report

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REF 770

October 25, 2021

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Part One

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to assess whether the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Program was being properly executed to help the Department of Parks and Recreation in structuring "Best Practices" suitable for the implementation of the Summer Camp Program. Besides, the Department of Parks and Recreation had a keen interest in assessing whether Summer Camp Programs met their youth outcomes. The gathered data was used to determine areas of weaknesses that deserve improvements and the valid strengths of the programs that need to be maintained and even improved further. The study was commissioned by the DC Department of Parks and Recreation that permitted a group of the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services students and other external evaluators to offer such a service to the District of Columbia community.

Part Two

The evaluation addressed various questions. Participant surveys had structured questions to determine information about race/ethnicity, education, age, and Ward of residence. The questions aimed at giving the scope of the sample population (George Washington University, 2012). Also, interview questions were asked about youth motivation, engagement, safety levels, structure, voice, and choice. The assessment also used One City Youth Survey campers asking participants to give opinions about their participation opportunities, the valuable lessons learned during the camp, and the life skills they acquired from the program.

Part Three

The evaluation was formative. Formative evaluation is traditionally carried out to improve or develop a course or program (Elwy et al., 2020). The evaluation that was conducted

aimed at determining how the DPR Summer Camp Program was being implemented to come up with the program's strengths, challenges, and weaknesses. The results were to be used in making concrete recommendations aimed at developing best practices for better results.

The project was an external evaluation. An external evaluation is whereby a specialized individual (evaluator) or agency collects information and other pieces of evidence about a given institution or unit to make a statement about the institution's quality (Gupta et al., 2018). In this project, an external team carried the project. The team included program managers, community services providers, and specialists who worked closely with the Trust to execute the PAAS tool. A group of the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services students prepared the project on behalf of the Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation about their Summer Camp Programs to determine whether they met their youth outcomes. The group used the PAAS (the Program Assessment and Assistance Tools) developed by CYITC (Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation) to act as a resource for improving and expanding opportunities and services for youths in the District of Columbia. The group conducted the study of the DPR site, utilizing both participants and documents to make analysis, conclusions, and final recommendations that were then compiled into a comprehensive report.

Part Four

The evaluation approach that was used was the Behavioral Objective Approach. This evaluation is decision oriented which means the focus is to determine the extent that the program goals or objectives or components of the program theory are achieved or delivered. The founders of this Summer Camp were seeking to find information about how the program could improve, strengths, and weaknesses. This evaluation was also program oriented because it also sought to provide information to make useful decisions about a program. Thus, the CIPP Evaluation Model

(Stufflebeam) model was used throughout the evaluation. The evaluators observed various aspects, for example, emotional and physical safety, staff's professional conduct, and how the staff relates with participants. The evaluation approaches used by the evaluators are the use of surveys and observations to summarize data concerning the Summer Camp Programs. One City Youth Survey was carried out and also analyzed to assess the overall experience of every participant.

Part Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project made various conclusions and recommendations about the program. In general, the project determined that DPR summer Camp programs scored well as far as their objectives are concerned concerning the PAAS tool. With the wide range of programs to provide children in Washington DC an educational and safe experience in the summertime, DPR should use the PAAS tool. The tool's objectives can be achieved if the instructors aspire to include providing an inclusive atmosphere and professional instructions. DPR must rely on-time information about citywide objectives to enable instructors to prepare adequately. Considering that the Ward managers are conversant with the PAAS tool, DPR needs to utilize the 2010 2.0 PAAS tool (George Washington University 2012 p. 27). The tool has a redefined design that has easier scoring and fewer questions. The tool will be valuable in resolving problems during data collection, for example, where an interviewer gave an invalid score. Continuous usage of the tool will enable DPR to monitor trends in their programs over time at the centers. The collected data will reveal how the program meets the set goals and offer insights into the crucial areas of improvement.

In addition, about all centers at DPR met the objectives depicted in the PAAS tool, with Ward 8 having the highest score while Ward 2 scored the least. The Ferebee Hope Center should focus on offering clear learning instructions together with their steps. It was also determined that the DPR design did not give the participants a clear voice. Even though observations by PAAS had a protocol issued to all observers, power outages and severe weather conditions sabotaged the process. Only one structured observation was completed. The report recommends that to ensure better comparison across evaluations conducted in summer in the coming years, a plan of action must be completed to the best of DPR's ability. Whenever unforeseen events unfold, DPR evaluations need to be rescheduled for more accuracy and completeness. The best mitigation would be carrying out two observations per class during summer. There was some likelihood of bias during an interview, as reflected by variations in scores for recreation centers. The Ward manager can curb the expected bias via a keen observation of their programs. The report recommended that DPR staff from the central office execute program assessment to ensure uniformity in the interpretation and answering of questions. Most of the recreation centers exceeded or met performance objectives. This is a valid indication that the summer programs fulfilled their mission (George Washington University 2012, p.28). The project recommended that DPR need continue with its path to enable it to enhance summer programs for kids throughout the city while at the same time redesigning programs that deserve adjustments. Generally, there is a need to put much emphasis on promoting the voice and choice of participants. Ward 2 requires the staff to pinpoint and solve problems in their programming. Some wards also need additional training. They include Volta Park and Langton Park. Before the coming summer, all DPR programs need to train instructors in the appropriate methods to enable participants an active voice.

Youths at DPR reported positive educational experiences, with 90% of the youths stating that they we sometimes or always contented with the experience. 80% of the youths stated that they make referrals for the DPR programs. Such a positive revelation should ignite DPR to refine more of the programs. It should continue utilizing the One City Youth Survey tool to reach a sample of youth participants. The same tool will enable DPR to monitor trends across wards, programmatic years, and ages. Also, participants were able to learn various lessons showcased in the survey but not in others. If DPR wishes the participants to acquire specific skills, such as tackling stress, the report recommends having instructors repeat the same goals throughout the summer. The report gave general recommendations for DPR. They include centralizing the information collection process and also come up with a data cleaning mechanism. The in-depth analysis marked with low levels of bias makes the results valid and also reliable.

Part 6

The evaluation is helpful to both the administrators and the staff in various ways. It offers the staff and the administration insights into the effectiveness of their teaching strategies, techniques, and methods. The feedback is vital in pinpointing strategies and methods that are working and those that need improvement. The feedback from the evaluation can help administrators make valid and informed improvements in the curricula and courses. Also, the identified gaps in knowledge can form a basis for the educational administrators to develop the most appropriate teaching and learning materials with adjusted content.

Every educational system and learning experience are executed based on underwritten goals. Evaluation is a valuable tool for it determines whether the set goals are being met. The insights are helpful for administrators and the staff to understand how much the students have learned. It also helps determine common goal achievements, making it easier for the relevant

parties to think of remedies to improve the situations (Smith & Benavot, 2019). The evaluation enables teachers to determine if the teaching methodologies were effective. The evaluation can help instructors only teach what the learners need to know based on the curriculum and the set objectives. Administrators can also use the evaluation to set the relevant educational standards based on the evidence from the evaluation. This can be done by determining the performances that demonstrate mastery and those that demonstrate knowledge.

Administrators can use the evaluation process and its outcome to determine the funding level in every ward or region based on the inadequacy revealed. If specific schools or regions fail to achieve educational goals due to insufficient resources, such regions or institutions deserve more funding and even human resources (Sandars, 2018). Administrators can rely on the outcomes during the instructor placement process by considering the neediest regions or learning institutions.

Part 7

I would improve the evaluation design by adding aspects of participant orientation approach. By doing this, I would get multiple stakeholders (few or many) in conducting the evaluation to account for many perspectives of the program and its activities. Specifically incorporating the Organizational Learning Approach would allow me to gather information learning needs of individuals, teams, and the organization in general. It seems as if this study did not have much of what the students wanted and needed to make improvements. I would also include gender differences in responses. The element would help the project determine if there were specific challenges that affected either gender during the program's execution. To add, I would have included questionnaires to enable me to get valid answers to specific questions that would otherwise be difficult for the participants to answer while in groups. The questionnaires

would be answered anonymously to guarantee privacy to the participants. Also, I would have preferred the study to extensively use secondary sources from the DPR administration to determine the existing trends and possible challenges and gaps. This could have helped in having a starting point of investigation. In terms of questions, I would have asked about the types of technical skills acquired by participants. The question determines the program's relevance in preparing the participants to fit in the modern digital era. Another question that I would have included is about what participants felt should be excluded from the program. Lastly, I would ask about how the participants learned about the project.

Part 8

Below

References

Elwy, A. R., Wasan, A. D., Gillman, A. G., Johnston, K. L., Dodds, N., McFarland, C., & Greco, C. M. (2020). Using formative evaluation methods to improve clinical implementation efforts: description and an example. *Psychiatry research*, *283*, 112532.

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Smith, W. C., & Benavot, A. (2019). Improving accountability in education: the importance of structured democratic voice. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, *20*(2), 193-205.

Part 8 Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Question or Objective	Info required	Info Source	Data collection Method	Info Collection Arrangements		
				By Whom	Conditions	When
1. What are the technical skills the program instilled in participants? 2. How did you find out about this project? 3. What elements would you wish eliminated from the program? 4. How do the program changes impact participants?	1. Levels of technological competency as stated by the national goals. 2. To determine their level of preparedness for the project 3. Elements that seem problematic in the program. 4. Gender information	1. Learners 2. instructors 3. George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services students and other external evaluators	1. Descriptives 2. Cross-sectional (Surveys) 3. Interviews	1. School Admin. 2. Researchers	1. Face to face interviews 2. b. Online surveys 3. c. Printed questionnaire	1. Nov 2021 2. Dec 2021 3. Jan 2021

Analysis Procedures	Interp. Proc./ Criteria	Reporting of Info		
		To whom	How	When
1. Engage the participants in technical tasks to determine their level of expertise after training. 2. Ask all participants to give their opinions regarding the nature and the outcome of the program. 3. Analyze various aspects of the program and assess the ones with the highest priorities and the ones that should be changed due to their ineffectiveness.	1.Did the participants demonstrate technical skills in respective fields as expected? 2. Did 99% of participants provide positive opinion regarding this program? 3. Did the participants raise any claims regarding ineffective variables of the program?	1. Learners 2. Parents 3. School admins and teachers	1. End of year report 2. Both summative and formative feedback during the program to make necessary changes to improve its effectiveness	1. March 2021 2. April 2021 3. May 2021