



WATER FOR PEOPLE

WATER CORPS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Program Evaluations Introductions

Water For People's 2007-2011 Strategic Plan calls for the more effective measurement and analysis of the work Water For People supports internationally. Water For People's International Programs Committee has, over the past few years, developed a strategy to evaluate country program impact. This document sets out a strategy for conducting Water For People program evaluations.

Definitions

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are important components of development work, but the terminology surrounding M&E is often unclear and confusing. To address this, Water For People proposes a set of simple definitions that will serve as the foundation for the development of a comprehensive M&E system.

- **Monitoring:** Monitoring is the continuous and systematic assessment of program/project progress against set targets designed to improve project performance. Monitoring of past project work over time usually involves simple checklists/questionnaires that are filled out each year for a sample of supported projects. Water For People has developed a strategy to realize monitoring objectives entitled Volunteer Opportunities at Water For People, Water Supply and Sanitation Monitoring.
- **Evaluation:** Evaluation is the systematic process of measuring and understanding whether and how a project/program has achieved the objectives, targets, and intended impacts during, at the time of completion, and after the project completion. Evaluations are more complex and detailed than monitoring, and should occur at least every three years.

Program evaluations are a key component of development initiatives. Water For People has grown to a point where its established country programs in Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, and Malawi have a historical track record that requires a deeper analysis to more comprehensively understand the impact of its work.

Volunteer Involvement

To ensure independence and enhance learning within the organization, Water For People believes that volunteers should lead its in-country evaluation processes, although staff from Water For People and local partners will certainly participate in the process and accompany volunteers to field sites.

Water For People proposes an evaluation process that involves a minimum of three volunteers per country program, linked with a local institution, to conduct detailed evaluations of country program activities. Volunteers will be asked to spend one or two days at a training course in Denver to familiarize themselves with the evaluation methodology. The field work will take three weeks in country, including international travel.

Volunteers will be expected to¹:

- Interview Water For People staff and review all relevant documents, including financial reports, project proposals, field reports, and quarterly reports to assess the quality of the management of Water For People's in-country program, staff capacity and skills, and possible gaps that need to be addressed.

¹ This section is drawn from previous work done by the International Programs Committee and a document developed by Lee Roberts and others on program evaluation.



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- Interview Water For People partners and assess the quality of support they are receiving from Water For People, and determine whether they are, as a result of Water For People's work, becoming stronger contributors to the local water supply and sanitation sector. Identify possible gaps in capacity building/support that needs to be addressed so that partners can become stronger in the future.
- Visit a randomly selected sample of field sites to conduct in-depth interviews and focus groups to assess the impact of the program at the local level. This will include evaluating local management structures, local responses to technical, financial, and managerial challenges, as well as the impact of water supply and sanitation support on the local community in areas such as health, education, broader development, and quality of life. The evaluations will also include technical evaluations of the systems in place to assess the quality of the work. The evaluators will suggest improvements they believe are necessary to enhance project impact, to improve design and project supervision, and to replicate positive aspects of the work that can influence Water For People's future work.
- Meet with local and national government officials to determine their perceptions of Water For People's work and identify ways in which identified gaps can be addressed.
- Facilitate an in-country workshop with Water For People staff, partners, and government officials to identify program strengths, weaknesses, and strategies to resolve identified problems. The goal of the workshop will be to learn about what is working, what is not working, and to suggest program improvements that can enhance the work supported by Water For People. Moreover, it will suggest areas where additional support to either Water For People and/or partners may be needed. For instance, if hand-washing remains elusive in a particular country, then we can focus efforts at enhancing staff and partner capacity in hand-washing promotion—with future results verifying whether the support being provided is leading to tangible improvements in the field.
- Present a written evaluation report to the chair of the International Programs Committee for consideration at the conclusion of the evaluation.

It is important to stress that in-country staff and partner involvement are essential to the success of this work. Volunteers will work with in-country staff and partners throughout this process so that learning is enhanced between staff, partners, and volunteers and results are understood and addressed. Volunteers have a critical role to play in all of this, and while leading the work, are expected to work in a collaborative and participatory manner during their time in-country.

Water For People believes that a full program evaluation of each of its country programs is required every three to four years. Country programs should be evaluated and then given the time to make key adjustments in their programming. Moreover, evaluations of new country programs during their infancy will ensure that these programs start off on a sound footing.² As such, a schedule for evaluations is being proposed based on the age of the program and the need to stagger evaluations each year. It is proposed that, for the next three years, the following evaluations occur:

2007:	2008:	2009:
• Honduras	• Malawi	• India
• Bolivia	• Guatemala	• New Country Program (TBD)

Consequently, Water For People will require a minimum of six volunteers per year for program evaluations.

²Refer to the document entitled Volunteer Opportunities at Water For People, Planned Expansion of Water For People Country Programs, for reference to our growth plans.

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Timeframe for Implementation

- Initial acceptance of strategy for evaluations as articulated in this report by the Board of Directors in June 2006 (complete).
- Presentation of this program for discussion and comment (following edits and support from the International Programs Committee, the Local Relations Committee and the Board) to local committees at the summer workshop in 2006 (complete).
- Design of an evaluation terms of reference and evaluation protocol in Denver by the end of 2006 (complete).
- Pilot of evaluation methodology and protocol in Honduras in early 2007, with revisions made for the evaluation of Bolivia in mid- to late-2007
- Revisions to system and rollout in other country programs by the mid-2007.
- Implementation of regular evaluations in all country programs per the schedule above.

Expectations

Evaluation teams will be led by a minimum of three volunteers per country with the support of the International Programs Group in Denver. The team should ideally include at least one person with a social sciences background, one with an engineering/technical background and one with a background in program management/strategic planning.

The volunteer team would ideally have the following capacities:

- At least one person fluent in the official language of the country to be evaluated, although the team will be supported by local Water For People staff.
- Background in some of the following areas: engineering, research methodologies, evaluations, sociology, management, planning, or anthropology.
- A good understanding of rural and urban water supply and environmental sanitation challenges in developing countries (ideally in the country they are to study), or be willing to put some time into learning about the key country-level issues with the support of Water For People–Denver.
- Be able to work with a range of government and nongovernmental stakeholders.
- Be able to co-facilitate learning workshops so that the lessons learned from the monitoring work can be understood and utilized by in-country staff and partners.
- Be independent and able to adapt to the conditions and vagaries of developing countries.
- Be able to spend at least three weeks in the country (including travel).
- Be willing to spend one or two days in Denver to participate in a training workshop to ensure consistency of methodologies across all countries to be evaluated. Water For People–Denver will facilitate these workshops.
- Be goodwill ambassadors for Water For People in the participating countries, and have a sound understanding of Water For People's work and approach.