COMMUNICATING EVALUATION RESULTS

The final phase of the evaluation process involves putting the information generated into the hands of relevant stakeholders. As we saw earlier, however, not all stakeholders have the same information needs. Some stakeholders, particularly those internal to the community-building effort, are interested in information about how the work can be improved. Other stakeholders are more interested in the results of the community-building effort.

Nor do all stakeholders want their information in the same format. Some stakeholders want information in abbreviated formats, with major findings highlighted. Others need more complete reports.

Consequently, developing a communication plan for your evaluation project involves three basic steps:

1. Review the list of stakeholders developed earlier. For which of these stakeholders will you develop a communication strategy? Which groups need or expect a report?
2. Decide which pieces of evaluation data would be of greatest interest to each stakeholder group. Again, revisit the list of stakeholder information needs developed earlier.
3. Decide on the format of the report to be used with each stakeholder group. Consider slide presentations, printed reports, executive summaries, newspaper articles, and oral reports. Include charts, graphs, photographs, and other graphics if appropriate.

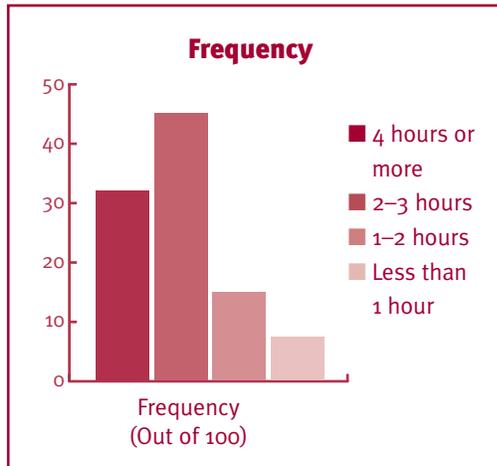## Tips for Involving Youth as Partners

Young people and adults can be involved in the presentation of evaluation results. Consider appointing a team of youth and adults who can present the evaluation results to partner organizations, civic groups, and government. Presentations by young people often captivate an audience of adults more than presentations by other adults do. Make sure that young people have meaningful roles in preparing and presenting the information and are not just tokens.
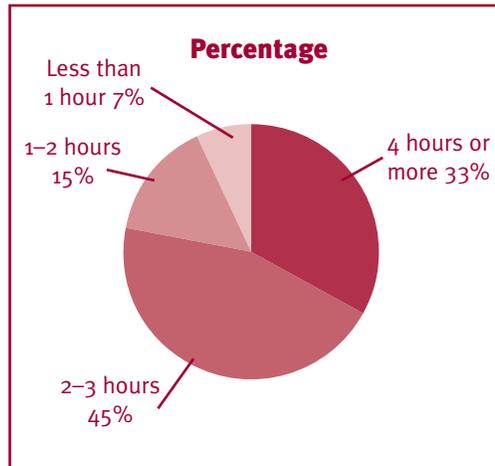
PRESENTING SURVEY RESULTS

Quantitative results are easiest to understand when they are presented as pictures. Spreadsheet software can convert simple statistics (such as a percentage distribution) into bar charts or pie charts.
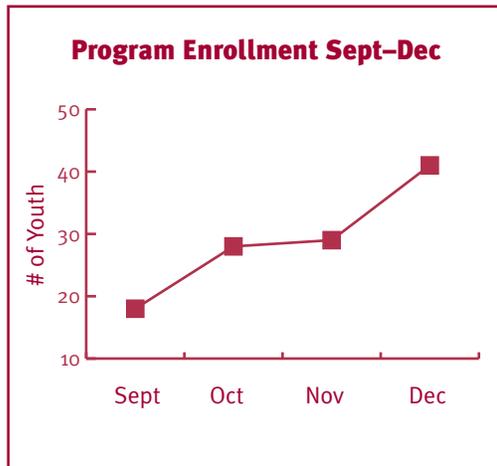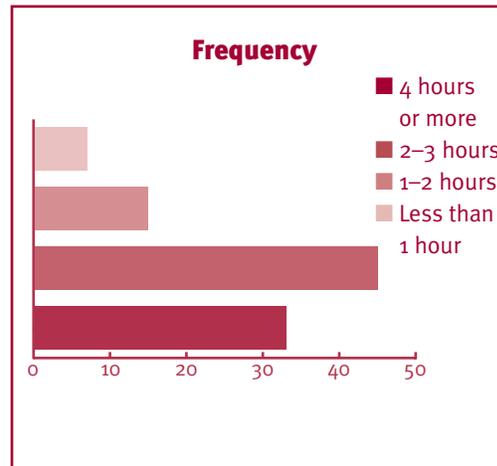
Using an application like Microsoft Excel is straightforward for simple statistics. Just enter your data into a spreadsheet and select the columns you would like to chart. Then, press the "Chart Wizard" icon on the toolbar. The Chart Wizard will ask you questions about what type of chart you would like to create. Choices for chart types include column, bar, pie, line, scatter, and area, among others. You will probably find column, bar, pie, and line charts to be most useful. Here are some examples:

Column Chart

Pie Chart

Line Chart

Program Enrollment Sept–Dec

Bar Chart

Frequency

- 4 hours or more
- 2–3 hours
- 1–2 hours
- Less than 1 hour

Once you create your chart, you can edit fonts, colors, arrangement, and labels. You can copy and paste charts from Excel straight into word-processing documents for your reports. Choose the most effective way to present your data, keeping in mind which chart type will show the greatest change or difference (if that is what you are highlighting.) Also, be selective about what you decide to chart. Only chart the data that you think will be most useful for funders and other stakeholders to see.

NEXT STEPS

Evaluation findings can be used in several ways to modify existing practices in an organization. The first might be to set targets to identify your goals in program modification. Involve multiple program stakeholders in a "visioning" process, imagining where your organization should be on core outcomes and indicators (e.g., higher rates of retention, increased youth knowledge of community) at various points in time (1 year, 3 years, etc.).

Then, *create an action plan* for achieving program improvement, which includes identifying someone to oversee the process, a timeline, an assessment of program resources needed to bring about change, and evidence of the accomplishment.

Next, *make commitments*—set tangible and realistic commitments to changing program practices that will help you reach your targets (e.g., extending the volunteer network, increasing "one-on-ones" with new youth participants).

Using the "Goal Planning" worksheet (page 90) , have stakeholder groups set targets, create action plans and commitments, and identify appropriate time frames for reaching your new goals.