

Executive Summary

In September of 2007, Gads Hill Center contracted the services of a team from the University of Illinois at Chicago's Public Administration Capstone Course to perform a program evaluation of its Club Learn Program, and the logic model developed for the Program. Club Learn Program has four objectives, 3 of which need to be evaluated at the end of the first implementation year. The four objectives are 1) developing and improving positive life skill, 2) providing opportunities for leadership development, 3) improving homework completion, and 4) providing children the opportunity to participate in recreational and physical activities.

While the Club Learn Program is an effective and positive part of their participating children's lives, and reached most of the targets set fourth, the Evaluation Team has the following recommendations not only to improve the measurement methods and the logic model itself, but also the programs' operations in general:

1. For better coordination and tracking of results Club Learn should: use standardized sign-in sheets for all activities; utilize one person to input data; track outcomes by Club; consider having two logic models (one for Cullerton/Ogden sites and one for Chavez site); consider deleting from their goal the objective of improving nutrition for the children and youth participating in the Club Learn Program
2. For Objective 2, Club Learn should directly relate the activities to expected outcomes and targeted results specified as indicators and train the staff to track and report the results. For instance, activity "leading life skill training and recreational activities" and activity "participating in democratic process to select Club topic" should have outcomes and indicators. Additionally, Club Learn should revise the indicators and directly relate them to activities to allow for more accurate measurement. For instance, indicator "80% of the children will conduct topical research" should be clearly linked to a specific activity and state how much research will be done, and in what period of time.
3. For Objective 3, the following is recommended: For book reporting, indicator of "five books" should be changed to "at least 4 books," constituting one book report per quarter. For the indicator, the current calculation method needs to be revised to eliminate erroneous reporting resulting from counting book reports turned in instead of counting children that turned in the reports. Also, new activity should be added to the objective that would state "staff will implement 1 hour of homework time a minimum of four times per week during the academic year." In addition, if tutors become available, the indicator should be changed to "80% of the children will maintain or improve their grades." The calculation for the indicator should only take into account the "children in attendance."
4. For Objective 4, Club Learn needs to track children that scored 3 or more on the tool by only taking into account "children in attendance" to avoid the inaccurate reporting as in the homework completion activity. In addition, for accurate and a standard evaluation, Club Learn should train staff to improve their evaluation skills and have strategies in place to help children follow rules and practice team cooperation.