

Program Evaluation and Program Improvement: Improving Programs through Evaluation

An Online Educational Module Based on
the Citizen-Driven Performance Measurement Project
Sponsored by
The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Teaching Notes:

Citizen-Driven Government Performance: Lessons from Dayton Case

Class Use Objectives: As a case addressing citizen-driven government performance, this case allows students to look at efforts associated with developing indicators to measure citizen involvement in government reform and productivity. Instructors may choose to focus on: evaluation methods to assess citizen involvement; instrument development that captures citizen involvement; and whether citizen involvement in the form of priority boards is feasible and productive. This case focuses on challenges and opportunities associated with instrumentation development to measure citizen participation.

Pre-Requisites: Familiarity with the concept of citizen-driven government activities and program evaluation.

Discussion Questions: Here are some questions that highlight key issues in the case and are likely to foster meaningful discussion among students might include:

1. What type of evaluation would you use for the Dayton Case? Why?
2. Name the quality of life indicators identified by the Dayton Priority Boards? Would you add any additional indicators? Would you delete any indicators?
3. How would you institutionalize the indicators versus the Dayton strategy to annually publish the indicators within the city of Dayton Planning Department?
4. How can evaluation help the citizens of Dayton reach their goals; especially as it concerns the Priority Boards? Are their goals realistic? Why or why not? How would you measure citizen involvement in Dayton as it concerns the Dayton Case?
5. What challenges are associated with evaluating the Priority Boards attempts to create indicators to assess the degree of citizen participation in the life of Neighborhoods and Priority Boards? What suggestions do you have to mitigate the challenges faced by the Priority Boards?

Activities: These are suggested classroom activities appropriate for small groups of students.

1. Have the groups review the purpose and meaning of Dayton's Priority Boards. Divide groups into seven Priority Boards. Check to see if Dayton Priority Boards have grown or decreased. Have the groups develop Quality of Life Indicators for Dayton. How are the Priority Boards structured?
2. Asks the groups to develop indicators to measure citizen participation in the life of neighborhoods and Priority Boards. Have them identify ways to increase citizen-driven government in Dayton. Compare and contrast the mission of each Priority Board? Has any Priority Board been more successful than the other? If so, why? Discuss the pros and cons of Priority Boards. After discussing the pros and cons of Priority Boards, ask each group to discuss the feasibility of Priority Boards being incorporated in Newark.
3. Based on the mission of the respective Priority Boards, ask the students to assess the mission of their classmates Priority Board. Have the students report design Priority Boards for Newark. Have the groups develop mission statements for their boards and quality of life indicators for Newark.