

Conclusion: Using Your Evaluation Constructively

As a feminist organization, CWIT emphasizes the importance of ongoing critical reflection and modification of its practices. Program evaluation plays a key role in this process of reviewing, assessing and improving existing programs and policy initiatives, as well as developing new projects that aim to make the trades more available to and equitable for women and girls. Indeed, while evaluation is often a requirement of funders, the primary purpose of your evaluation is to help you and other program staff understand and improve your program and further CWIT's the mission.

Using your evaluation constructively involves applying your evaluation results, conclusions and recommendations towards program improvement, dissemination, advocacy, and possibly research. Think of the evaluation report as a document you have prepared for the benefit of the program, CWIT, current and potential funders, policy makers, and other organizations interested in your program as a model.

Program evaluation can be used to:

- Provide a rationale for support from program funders and partners for program continuation or expansion.
- Introduce a plan to improve the program in the future.
- Share information about the program and how the program is doing with stakeholders, including participants, staff, partners and policymakers. The format you use to inform others about your evaluation depends on your audience. For example, you may wish to present the results of your evaluation orally to program staff and participants, while providing partners with a written summary.
- Promote the program to new participants, community leaders and other potential stakeholders.
- Justify continued participation of participants.
- Benefit similar organizations or programs by sharing evaluations with these programs to add to the understanding of what has and has not worked. For example, an evaluation report can be used to disseminate information about a model program.
- Contribute to research by adding to the knowledge about the benefits and challenges of women's entry into and participation in trades professions.

After your evaluation is completed, present your results to a group of program or agency staff and other relevant stakeholders. Assign the group the task of creating an "action plan" that addresses recommendations developed in your evaluation. In your action plan, determine what the desired action is, who will be responsible for tasks, and when tasks will take place. Those responsible for taking action should meet periodically to ensure tasks are being completed and address difficulties.

After you have conducted multiple program evaluations over a period of time, your evaluations may also be used in the following ways:

- When planning a new program, review past evaluations for a reminder about lessons learned that might be applicable to the new program.
- New staff members can read past evaluation reports to become more familiar with past programs.
- Multiple evaluations conducted over a period of time can be used as research evidence for assessing the long term impact of your program.

Reference: Health Canada. (1996). Guide to Project Evaluation: A Participatory Approach. Minister of Health & Welfare Canada. Available: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/phdd/resources/guide/>