EVA-protocol – A monitoring instrument to assess capacity building in setting-based participatory approaches

This template…

- helps document the development of specific capacities ("capacity building") in newly founded participatory stakeholder groups (round tables, working groups, cooperative planning groups …) and also helps monitor them over time (*process evaluation*)

- is suitable for facilitated groups that come together on a regular basis, and are intended to operate independently (without experts) in the long run

- should be filled out by a (facilitating) researcher, moderator or observer who attends the group meetings regularly

- has been developed specifically for the topic of promoting an active lifestyle, but can also be used for health promotion in general (e.g. mental health, nutrition, substance abuse…)

- is best to be filled out by two people who can discuss their subjective impressions based on the protocol's dimensions

Date:	Author:
Purpose and subject of the meeting:	

I.   Description of the group

1.   Who is participating in the participatory stakeholder group?

For example, representatives of the target group, members of city council, key persons, staff of local companies, teachers of adult education programs, external partners, others

no change in group composition

2.   Do the participants dispose of relevant competences needed to address the problems and challenges at hand?

For example, expertise in sports or nutrition, insider knowledge of typical community characteristics, political influence, access to vulnerable groups.

no change in group composition

3.   Why do the group member participate in the group meetings? What are their motivations and / or vested interests?

Citizens committed to physical activity, sport clubs hoping to raise membership numbers, kindergartens expecting a positive image etc.

no change in group composition

II. Dimensions of Capacity Building

Participation
Participation is a core domain of capacity building. It refers to the group members' active involvement in the discussions and decision-making processes. Ideally, important stake-holders and key players are represented in the group, and all group members have a say during the meetings.

In this meeting: Which strategies were undertaken to promote *participation*?

Example: The facilitating researcher takes care that all participants in the task force can speak up. Since some participants tend to dominate the discussion, the group was asked to split up in three smaller groups to work on separate topics in today's meeting. Thereby, the existing power imbalances could be broken up, and participants obviously were more confident expressing their concerns and ideas.

This capacity was not addressed in this meeting

4. Are all relevant institutions and organizations who may contribute to the topic represented in the task force meetings? If no: why not?

    Example: No representatives of the parents' council attended today's meeting of the "school vital" task force. The headmaster was also excused for this meeting. On the other hand, the school caretaker, who runs the school kiosk, participated in the meeting for the first time. He had been explicitly invited by the facilitating health promoter.

    no change

5. Are all participants involved in the group discussions and decision-making process, do they all have a say? If no: why not?

    Example: Similar to the last two meetings, the representatives of the school canteen dominate the group meeting; it is hard for other participants to speak up. Decisions are strongly influenced by the interests and needs of the school canteen.

    no change

Leadership
Single participants of the stakeholder group commit themselves to the topic and the group and advance the decision-making processes. They take over responsibility for the group and start setting the agenda for the meetings.

In this meeting: Which strategies were undertaken to promote *leadership*?

Example: Before today's meeting, Mrs. Smith, a motivated participant of the task force, was asked by the facilitating researcher whether she would like to co-chair the next meeting.

This capacity was not addressed in this meeting

6.   Do some group members show leadership skills? How?

Example: A committed participant of the school working group "Smarter Lunch", a mother of two kids who attend the school, is very interested in healthy nutrition. On her own initiative, she had checked last years' school menus and in the last meeting, she presented a list of all high-caloric meals she had identified. She suggested to check on alternative catering companies. Today, she introduces two options for alternative companies that advertise to deliver healthy meals, prepared with regional products. Their offers will now be handed over to the headmaster to discuss a possible change of supplier. Mrs. Smith will also be present at this meeting.

no change

Problem assessment & solution
The stakeholder group can identify problems and carries out actions to resolve the problems; the assessment is used to strengthen planning processes.

In this meeting: Which strategies were undertaken to promote *problem assessment*?

Example: The researchers conducted a needs assessment among community members with regard to physical activity (survey). The data is now analyzed, and the results are presented in today's group meeting. The participants of the group were asked to comment on the results, identify important needs, and bring up ideas how these needs can be addressed.

This capacity was not addressed in this meeting

7. Do the participants identify underlying problems that should be considered when planning interventions?

> Example: The group discuss the low registration numbers of local sport activities offered for senior citizens. They agree that the poor accessibility of sport facilities may be an important barrier, especially for people with limited mobility.

no change

8. Do the participants develop solutions independently and plan further steps for implementing project measures?

> Example: The task force decides to provide a shuttle service for senior citizens, taking them to sport activities. Some participants of the task force volunteer to contact the local taxi company with the aim of booking a weekly shuttle service. In addition, other members have suggested modifying the sport clubs' registration forms, so as to highlight the new shuttle service option.

no change

Critical awareness/ asking why
The stakeholder group can reflect on assumptions underlying their actions, and self-analyse and improve their activities over time. They evaluate their interventions and reflect on their own work.

Which strategies were undertaken in this meeting to promote **critical awareness**?

> Example: The stakeholder group „School on the move" has produced a video clip demonstrating classroom gymnastics to be shown during school lessons. A couple of pupils have tested the video; they were asked to join the next group meeting and give feedback to the stakeholders. Based on the feedback, the content of the video was critically examined within the group, and changes regarding sound quality and length of the video were made.

This capacity was not addressed in this meeting

9.   Does the stakeholder group reflect on decisions and implemented interventions? Did they assess whether the intervention yielded the intended outcome, and whether it could be optimized?

no change

Resource mobilisation
The stakeholder group can raise resources and decide on fair distribution. The resources can refer to competences and assets from within the group (e.g. specific knowledge, facilities) and to external resources (e.g. meeting sites/venues, technical support, funding).

In this meeting: Which strategies were undertaken to promote *resource mobilization*?

Example: The task force „happy employee, happy company'' plans to provide height-adjustable tables for its staff. The company, however, has no funds for purchasing these tables. The facilitating researcher points out that some health insurances financially supports measures for workplace health promotion. Two group members volunteer to check up on that possibility with a local health insurance office.

This capacity was not addressed in this meeting

10.   Do the participants plan on or succeed in mobilising resources that can contribute to the planned interventions? In what way?

Example: The stakeholder group of a daycare center would like to offer a weekly cooking course for children and their parents. A group member brings up the idea of asking a friend who runs a restaurant in the village; she might be able to make the facilities available for the kids on Monday, its closing day. The group agrees.

no change

Links to others
The stakeholder group establishes partnerships and coalitions between their group and others, thereby generating resources and recruiting new members. Links or partnerships include the exchange of services, the pursuit of joint ventures or a common interest initiative to change public structures.

In this meeting: Which strategies were undertaken to promote *links to others*?

11.   Do the participants suggest contacting certain organizations that could help implement planned interventions?

> Example: The working group "Addiction Free School" doubts that there are other local associations or organizations that can be really helpful for their aim to raise awareness on drug dependency among students. The group hesitates to establish contact with the local drug counselling service, as "this just makes it sound so dramatic!". Until next meeting, the participants will consider which other stakeholders may serve as partners.

no change

12.   Are the established contacts helpful for implementing project activities?

> Example: A participant of the task force "mental fit" in a retirement home has contacts with a local kindergarten. It is agreed that the children of the institution visit the residential home once a week to play and make music together with the elderly residents.

no change

13.   How is the relationship between the established contacts and the group?

> Example: The kindergarten teacher who has volunteered to accompany the kids to the retirement home has often been on sick leave over the last two months. Due to staff shortage, no other person could cover up for her on this activity. As a consequence, the planned get-togethers had to be cancelled several times. Today, the kindergarten management expresses doubts about whether the cooperation could be maintained.

no change

Relationship with facilitating experts / health promoters

The facilitating health promoters (or researchers, or experts) need to transform power relationships to the stakeholder group, such that the stakeholder group gradually assumes authority and makes their own decisions. The experts may play an important role in the beginning of the group processes, e.g. by giving an overview of the available evidence, presenting examples of good practice, or giving support and guidance for organizational tasks (e.g. wording of a proposal to apply for funding). Over time, the experts should reduce their contributions, for the stakeholder group to gain more power of their discussions and decision-making. Thus, it is important to have clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the group, so the group is able to manage itself independently.

In this meeting: Which strategies were undertaken to change the power *relationship to the facilitators / experts*, and to transfer more power to the group members?

Example: In the first meeting of the task force, together with the participants, the facilitating researcher has elaborated wishes and expectations of the participants towards him and which competences and task they would like to assume on their own. Named tasks and responsibilities of all participants were documented. In addition, it was defined which skills for the successful implementation of the program should be provided to the participants in the following meetings so that they can organize and lead the project as independently as possible at a later stage.

This capacity was not addressed in this meeting

14.   How is the relationship between the group members and the facilitator / expert / health promoter?

Example: A company's task force on mental health has come up with several ideas about interventions that could be implemented in their enterprise, e.g. a staff survey on stress level during work, a yoga course, or a mental health counselling service. The group continuously asks the facilitating researcher to tell them, "as you are the expert", what should be done first, or as priority. Today, the facilitator asks the group which topics should be included in the survey, and whether it was better to use an online survey or a printed questionnaire. The participants remain rather passive, "we don't have expertise, we don't know what's best".

no change

15. How can the participants' role in the programme planning and implementation be described?

Example: Today's meeting was again managed and maintained by the facilitating researcher. This means that new meetings are called up by the facilitating researcher and the agenda is also set by her. The preparation of the respective transcript of the meeting is alternately conducted by one of the participants and sent to the rest of the group after every meeting.

no change

III. Capacity Building: Specific competences (related to the health topic of the stakeholder group, e.g. promotion of physical activity in a setting)

16. Have the participants gained competences that are important for future work on the issue?

   Example: Last week, the participants of the stakeholder group "children on the move" were given new ideas from a guest lecture: a fitness trainer demonstrated how the everyday life of children in kindergarten could be changed as to invite more physical activity. Today, the group members discussed ideas that were prompted by the trainer's talk, and developed two interventions they plan to implement soon.

   no change

17. In which way do the participants target the built environment or infrastructural conditions in the setting?

   Example: A physician in a nursing home reports about a dance course for elderly and senior citizens, in which she had participated privately. Today, she offered to adapt and implement such a dance program for the nursing home as well, so it could be offered on a regular (e.g. weekly) basis.

   no change

IV. Other comments on the meeting

18.   What are the key results of the meeting?

19.   Which tasks were assigned to the group members in this meeting?

Further notes: