

Evaluating and monitoring training seminars

An evaluation of a training seminar can provide relevant information for the organisation responsible for the seminar, for the trainers and the participants. The responsible organisation and the trainers can learn about the following:

- Has the content been relevant for the participants? What issues do participants regard as a priority for future training, seminars, etc.
- Were the format and didactics adequately chosen to pass on the content effectively? (Was it a well matched mix of presentations, discussions and exercises? Were there enough breaks, etc.?)
- Has the seminar been well organised? (Adequate accommodation, etc)
- Has the seminar been well performed? (Clear, understandable presentations, friendly, open attitude of presenters, trainers, etc.)
- What are the participant's further training needs?

For the participants, an evaluation can help them to reflect on their level of knowledge, skills, etc. and on further training needs.

An evaluation of a training seminar can cover a number of different elements. It can be:

- A reaction evaluation, eliciting information about the general response of the participants to the seminar. Did they enjoy the seminar? Did they like the atmosphere in the group? Did they like the presentation style? This will tell you something about the choice of the trainers, the
- choice of composition of didactic tools, the balance of the program, the logical composition of contents, the choice of the target group, the composition of the group, etc.
- A learning evaluation eliciting information about the extent to which the participants learned what they were intended to learn. This type of evaluation covers skills, insight in problems and attitude in addition to knowledge. Again, this will tell you something about the choice of the trainers, the choice of didactic tools, the balance of the program, logical composition of contents, the choice of the target group, the composition of the group, etc. It can also provide insights about the learning aims, about the question of whether participants could relate to the subject and about their needs for further training.



- A performance evaluation, eliciting information about whether the trainers performed well. Were they well prepared? Did they present well? (Understandable and well structured.) Did they behave well? (Friendly attitude, etc.).
- An outcome evaluation, eliciting information about whether the training seminar has had or will have an impact on risk reduction. This type of evaluation will tell you something about the adequacy of the learning aims, and the choice of the target group, but also about the question of whether the participants could relate to the subject, about possible barriers to realising risk reduction (E.g. people know and want to change behaviour but don't have the necessary means to do so), and again, about potential needs for further training.

A training seminar can best be evaluated by an evaluation form. As section "Questionnaire" we have included examples of an evaluation form for use by trainers and participants, both staff and inmates.

However, instead of using forms, one could also opt for a discussion at the end of a course, which would be structured by a series of questions taken from the evaluation forms. This could be achieved in a focus group like set-up, discussing issues such as further training needs.

Another option might be an exam format, using a quiz format similar to those we offer in earlier sections. One can also use observation. A good format here can be a role play or demonstration where participants are requested to show what they learned. This is especially useful in skills training. Finally, for the long-term effects of a training seminar, assignments can be used, requesting participants to work on certain issues after the seminar. In a follow-up meeting the results of the assignments can be discussed.

