

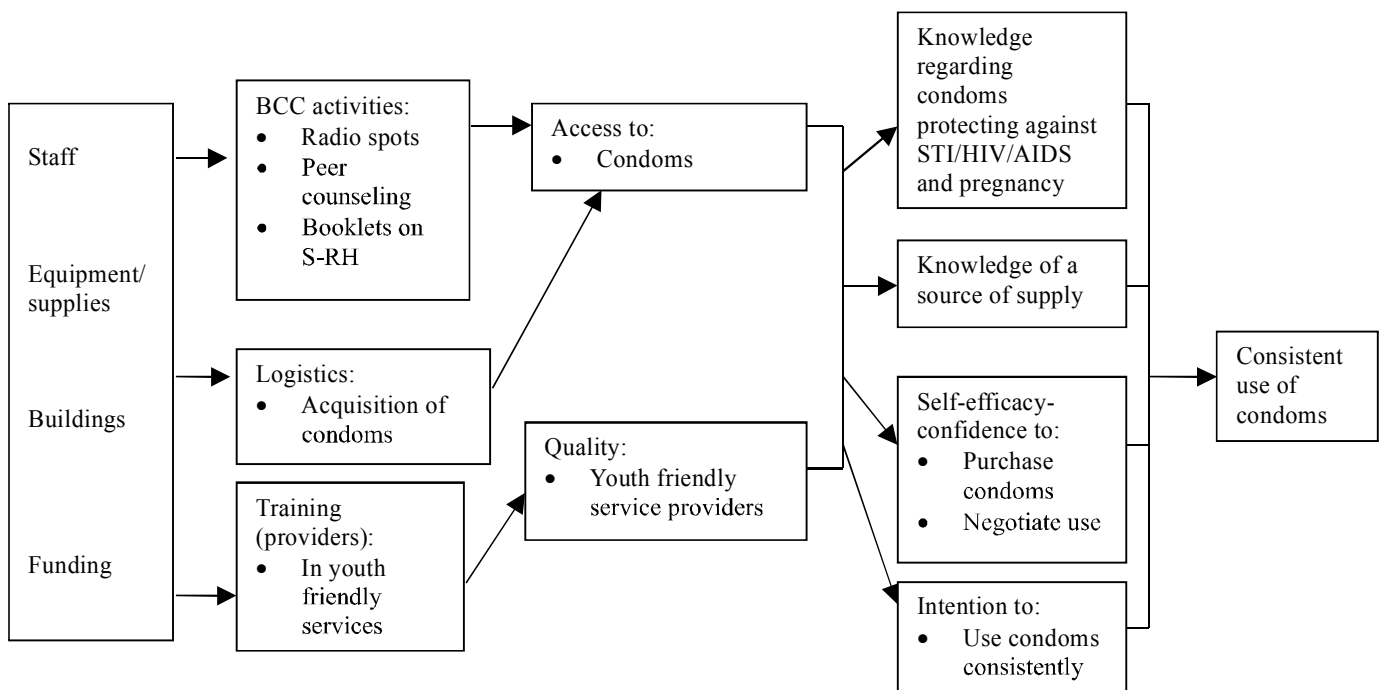
TIPS FOR SELECTING INDICATORS

One criticism of indicator handbooks is that they do not provide sufficient guidance on the selection of indicators. Those new to the evaluation process may wonder how to select from the many different indicators presented in this *Compendium*. To address this issue, we provide a “how-to” guide, intended to show the process in its most basic form. The four main steps in selecting indicators are as follows:

1. State (or formulate) the objectives of the program;

Example: increase percent of sexually active males 15-19 years old who “consistently” use condoms in city “x” in a two-year period.

2. Review the activities to be carried out in pursuit of the objective(s);
3. Develop a simple framework to show how the program will work; that is, how the activities will lead to the desired objective(s) (see framework below).



4. Select indicators that measure progress for each (or some) of the boxes.

Example:

Process/functional outputs:¹

- Number of radio spots produced
- Number of diffusions of radio spots per month
- Number of booklets produced/distributed
- Number of providers trained
- Number of peer educators trained
- Number of peer educators active in program

Service outputs (access and quality):

- Number of outlets that sell/provide condoms to youth in catchment area
- Number of youth friendly facilities in catchment area that counsel youth on sexual and reproductive health
- Quality of service for youth (specific measures will need to be developed)

Results²

- Percent of sexually active males 15-19 who:
 - Know that condoms protect against pregnancy and against STI/HIV/AIDS
 - Know a source of supply for condoms
 - Feel confident they could purchase a condom
 - Feel confident they could negotiate condom use
 - Intend to use condoms for every sexual relation
 - Report they always use a condom for sexual relations

Other considerations in selecting indicators:

- Are the data needed to measure the indicators available? If not, are they feasible to collect? (Alternatively, what indicators can be measured with available data?)³
- What is the time frame for the evaluation? How often will the program report on the different results? Will the data be available by donor or by program-imposed deadlines?
- What financial support is available for evaluation? Does the organization have funds to conduct a survey? Or does the budget dictate the use of existing data such as service statistics?
- What are the requirements of the donor agency (if applicable)?

For a more detailed discussion of indicators (e.g., how to use multiple indicators, what to measure, how to identify data sources), see Bertrand, Magnani, and Rutenberg, 1996, pages 29-36.

¹ Note: Although some organizations track the number of activities completed (i.e., functional outputs), those with greater evaluation capacity focus on results instead. Thus, the BCC section of this *Compendium* (Section II.F) omits “counts” of activities completed.

² These results would be considered “outputs” if measured at the program level (among participants/clients in the program) or “outcomes” if measured at the level of the population (among the representative sample youth 15-19 in the general public).

³ This question represents the “last resort.” Whereas the evaluator ideally identifies what a program should measure, he/she may have to settle for what a program can measure and/or use data that has already been collected.

