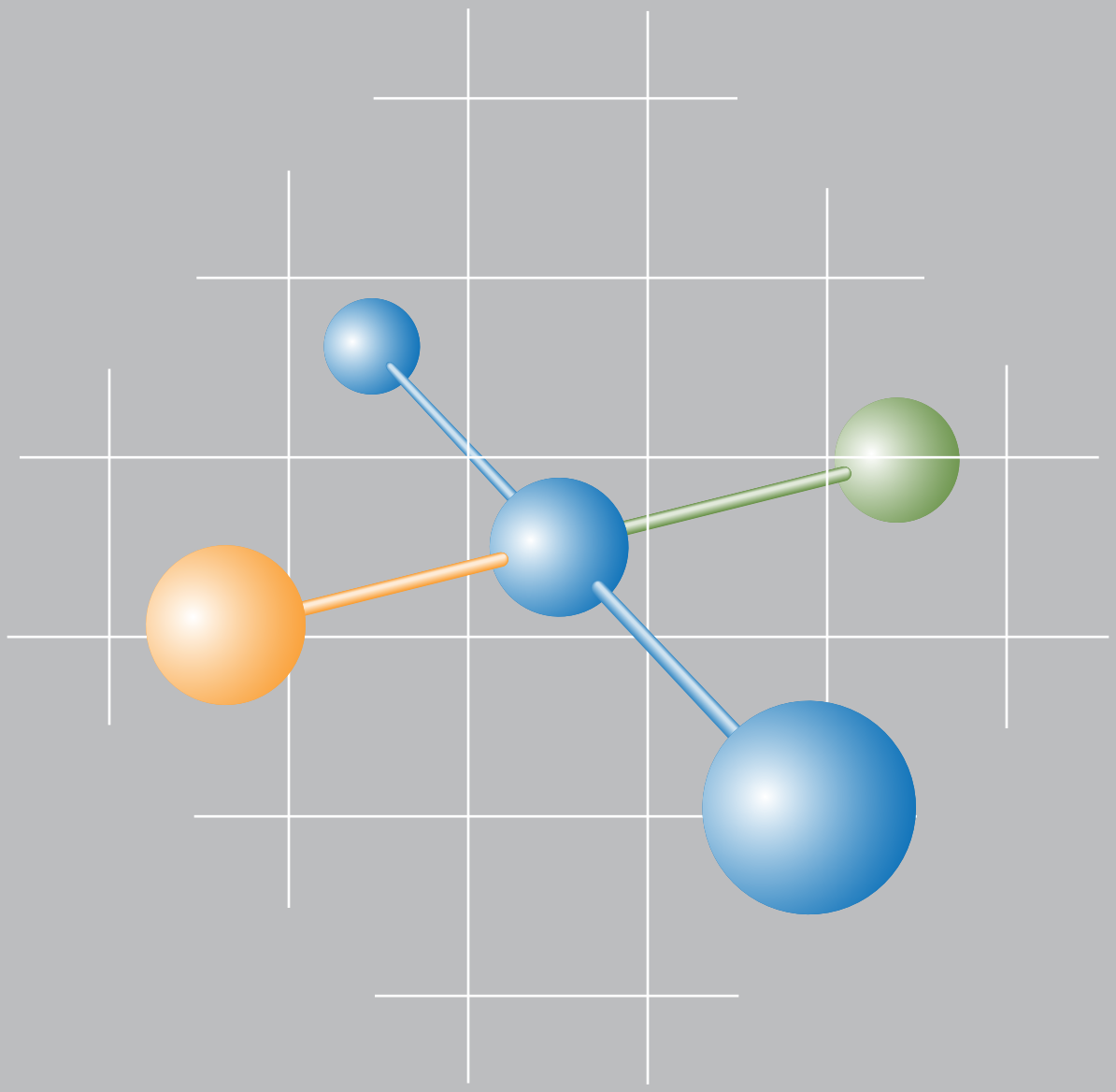
Youth Peer
Education Toolkit

Performance Improvement:

A Resource for Youth Peer Education Managers



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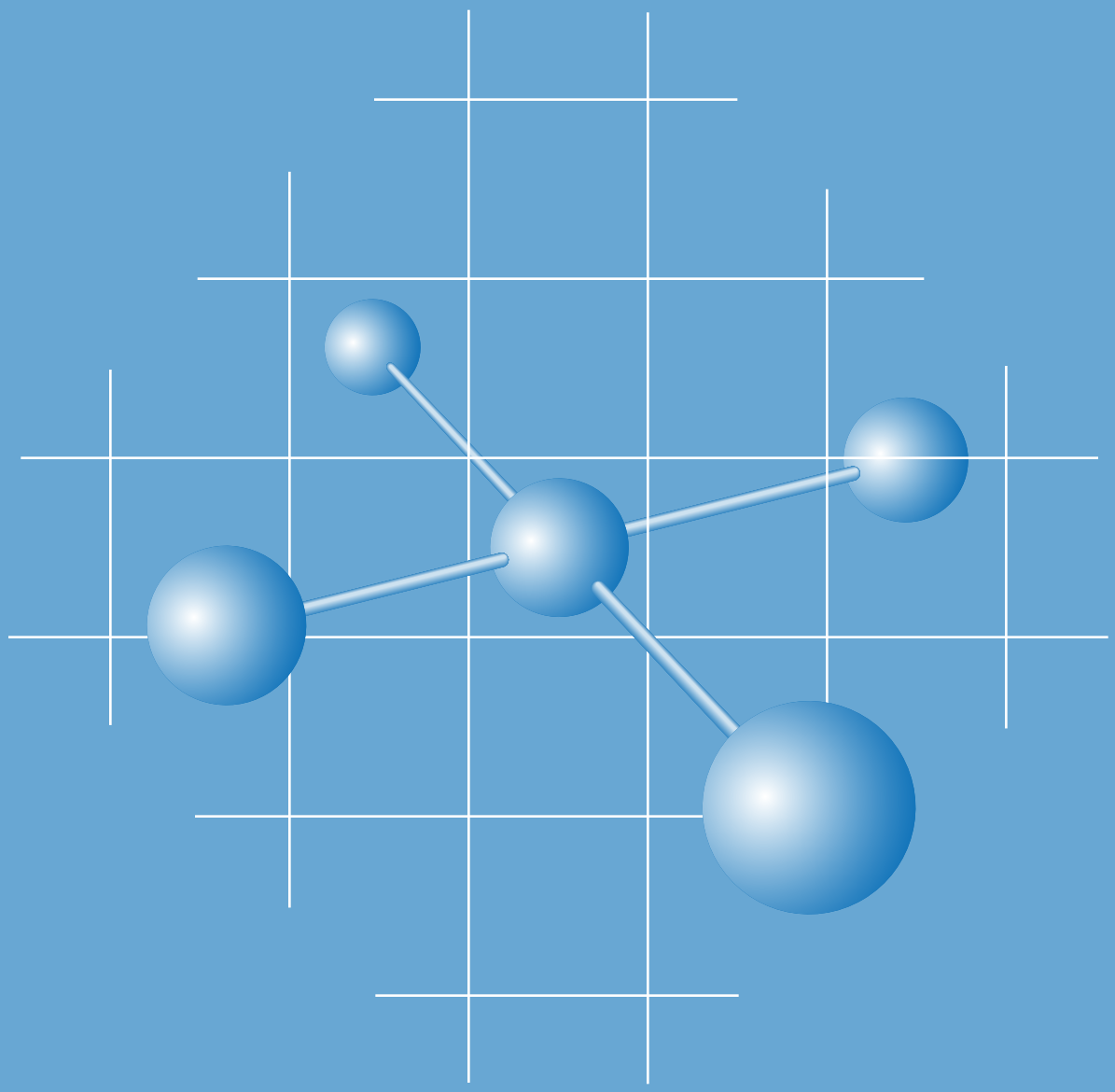

YPEER
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This publication is part of a Youth Peer Education Toolkit, developed by Family Health International(FHI)/YouthNet and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for the Y-PEER (Youth Peer Education Network) Programme. The full toolkit can be viewed on the FHI Web site at: *http://www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/Publications/peeredtoolkit/index.htm*.

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UNFPA is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man, and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

The Y-PEER Programme has worked since 2001 with country partners to build the capacity of national non-governmental organizations and governments to implement, supervise, monitor, and evaluate peer education programmes to prevent HIV/AIDS and improve reproductive health. The Y-PEER initiative has been spearheaded by UNFPA in partnership with FHI/YouthNet, the United Nations Children's Foundation (UNICEF), and others. Y-PEER, launched in 27 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, is now spreading to other regions of the world, including the Arab states and Africa.

The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the policies of UNFPA, USAID, or FHI. The principles and policies of United Nations agencies are governed by the relevant decisions of each agency's governing body, and each agency implements the interventions described in this document in accordance with these principles and policies and within the scope of its mandate.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 4

Introduction 5

Section 1. Performance Improvement Tool 11

Step 1. Prepare for Performance Improvement 11
Step 2. Define Desired Performance 16
Step 3. Document Actual Performance 20
Step 4. Analyze Findings 28
Step 5. Select Interventions 34
Step 6. Take Action and Monitor 36

Section 2. Management Activities for Peer Education Programmes 45

Section 3. Basic Programme Management Skills 63

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However, no similar resource existed specifically for peer education projects. To fill this gap, YouthNet adapted the methodology used by Prime II to create *Performance Improvement: A Resource for Youth Peer Education Managers*. The Y-PEER programme also provided inspiration in the development of this publication.

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Introduction

Strong project management skills are essential for working with peer educators, trainers, and other staff and for ensuring that quality activities take place according to schedule. Most managers are accomplished in their technical areas but not specifically trained in management and may find that they are lacking skills that could make them more effective in the workplace. Some managers may be excellent peer educators themselves, yet not know how to supervise other peer educators or run programmes. Also, the popularity and success of peer education programmes attract professionals from many fields. Even though these people value the opportunity to improve young people's lives, they may have little experience with the logistics of programme management.

I got involved and hooked on peer education while at school and then left to be trained as a journalist. But I came back to peer education and today I'm managing a large peer education project across Russia for UNFPA.
– Olesya Kochkina, Russia

I'm a social worker by training but got involved with peer outreach in secondary school through church work. In my life I had a dream of leading and managing a youth initiative. I really allocated my time for voluntary work, attending short courses, reading books, and learning from other managers. Now I am leading a youth-led organization.
– Juliana Bwire, Tanzania

As a medical student and former peer educator, I had no background in management. I took additional courses and dedicated time for self-learning. Work was stressful, it took a lot of time and had varied results – like playing a game that sometimes hit and sometimes didn't hit the target for no obvious reason.
– Jelena Curcic, Serbia

Word sense

Are you a manager? Perhaps you are called a director, coordinator, associate, or officer. Or maybe you have some other title for those who run youth peer education activities and support peer educators. No matter what your title is, if you direct, supervise, coordinate, manage, or control how peer educators are selected, trained, supported, and monitored, you are considered a **manager** for the purposes of this document.

People take many different paths into positions that manage peer education programmes. While the job and goals may bring great personal satisfaction, many of those managing peer education programmes lack background information about management. All programme managers need basic information about management and techniques for assessing and improving staff performance.

What is performance improvement?

Performance improvement (PI) is a methodology used to analyze performance problems and construct systems to ensure high-level performance. Performance improvement is most effective when applied to groups who have similar jobs or work in the same organization.

When managers notice a performance problem, they can choose to address the problem or ignore it. In their haste to address the problem, they might choose an intervention without completely understanding the issue or determining if the intervention is likely to succeed. Managers working for organizations with limited budgets might ignore a problem without realizing that some problems require relatively little funding or staff time to solve.

With performance improvement, managers use a systematic methodology to find the root causes of a problem, involve stakeholders to find solutions (interventions), identify a specific action plan for each intervention, and monitor the process of correcting problems.

Who is the target audience for this publication?

Performance improvement principles are relevant to workers in any field, but this publication is specifically intended for use by managers and staff of peer education projects of any size, working with any youth audience. 'Staff' refers to anyone who is employed by your organization or contributes to implementing project activities, whether salaried or unsalaried. Most of the staff will be peer educators themselves.

This publication will be useful even if your organization has not identified severe or even moderate performance problems; successful managers recognize that there is always room for improvement. Likewise, peer educators themselves should be regularly updated in order to do their best work, as should the systems that support these peer educators.

Word sense

In this publication, the terms **programme** and **project** are used interchangeably.

How to use this publication

This publication is divided into three sections:

- Section 1. Performance improvement tool
- Section 2. Management activities for peer education programmes
- Section 3. Basic programme management skills

Performance improvement requires a facilitator to guide the process and a PI team to share in exploration and decision-making. Throughout the process, a wider group of stakeholders will be invited to participate and provide guidance.

The PI facilitator might be an external consultant or the programme's manager. If you are serving as the PI facilitator (and are not the programme manager), you might need to read only this introduction and Section 1. If you are a programme manager, we recommend reading the entire publication. The sections on management activities and skills will be helpful in your day-to-day work and as you implement the PI process.

The PI process is composed of six main steps:

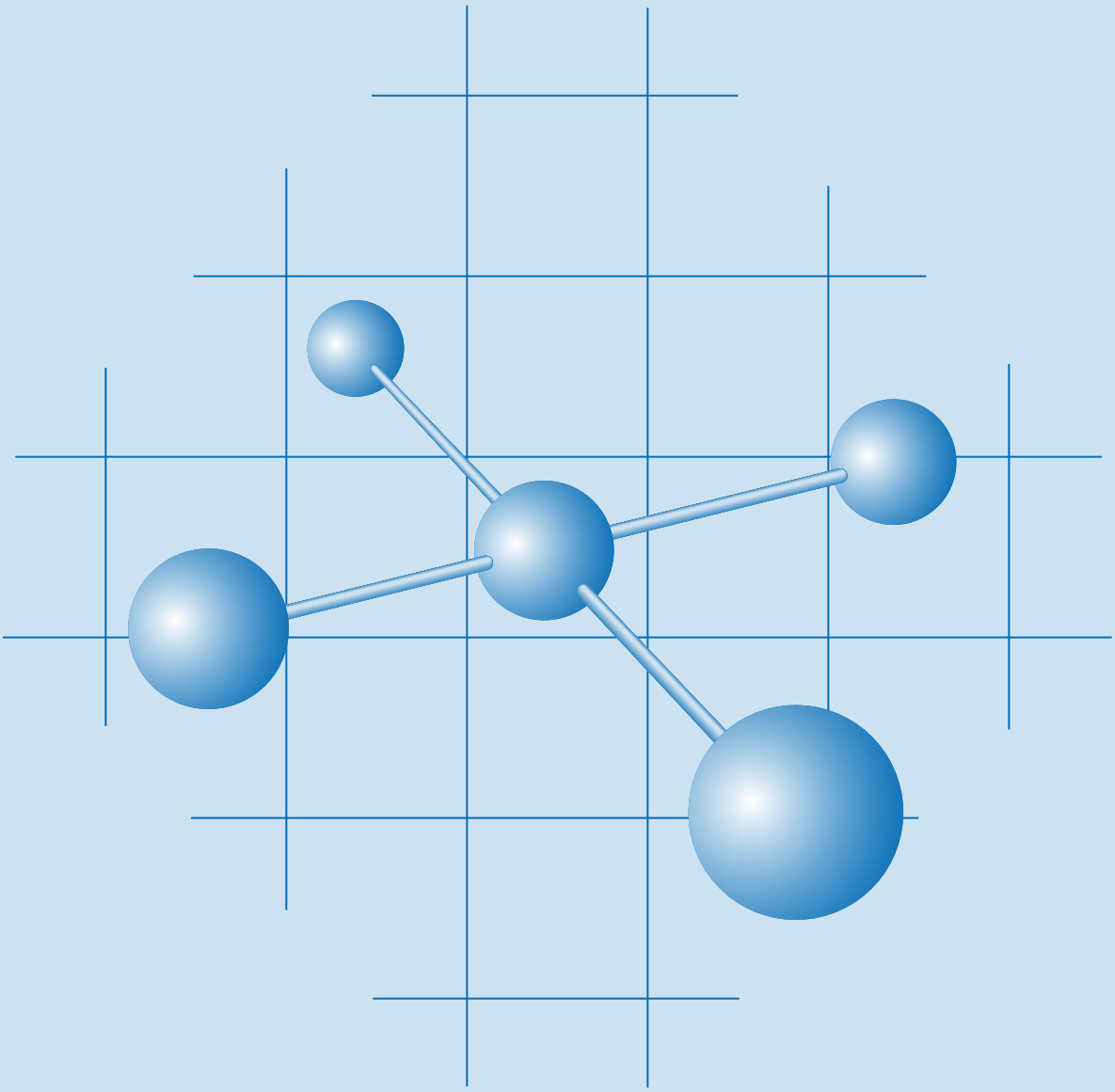
- Prepare for performance improvement
- Define desired performance
- Document actual performance
- Analyze findings
- Select interventions
- Take action and monitor

The following table outlines the specific components of each step. Each component is described in greater detail in Section 1. Also, because PI requires extensive collaboration, the PI tool recommends appropriate times in the process to hold key meetings and provides sample agendas for each.

This tool is intended to help your organization meet standards of peer education in the field. It should be adapted to local needs and engage relevant stakeholders for maximum benefits.

Performance Improvement Process		
Event	**Activities**	**People responsible/attendees**
Step 1. Prepare for Performance Improvement		
Preparation	Select a facilitator	Project manager
	Examine factors that affect performance Create a PI team and identify other stakeholders Plan meetings	PI facilitator
Meeting 1	Inform gatekeepers (key stakeholders, such as donors and partners)	PI facilitator, PI team, project manager, gatekeepers
Meeting 2	Sensitize stakeholders about the PI process and elicit support for future interventions	PI facilitator, PI team, project manager, and stakeholders
Step 2. Define Desired Performance		
Preparation	Identify any existing standards Learn to write effective performance statements Develop a strategy for managing Meeting 3	PI facilitator, PI team
Meeting 3	Work as a group to define desired performance	PI facilitator, PI team

Step 3. Document Actual Performance		
Preparation	Determine how information will be gathered Decide who will gather information	PI facilitator
Meeting 4	Prepare the PI team	PI facilitator, PI team
Collection of information	Collect information on actual performance	PI facilitator, PI team
Summary of information	Review all collected information and summarize it	PI facilitator, PI team
Step 4. Analyze Findings		
Meeting 5	Identify gaps Determine root causes Brainstorm interventions Prioritize interventions	PI facilitator, PI team
Step 5. Select Interventions		
Preparation	Prepare for meeting with stakeholders, organize information about PI process	PI facilitator, PI team
Meeting 6	Present findings about performance and proposed interventions, select interventions together	PI facilitator, PI team, project manager, stakeholders
Step 6. Take Action and Monitor		
Preparation	Draft an action plan for selected interventions	PI facilitator, project manager
Meeting 7	Finalize a detailed action plan for selected interventions	PI facilitator, PI team, project manager
Field work	Build an implementation team Monitor performance Inform stakeholders	Project manager



1 Performance Improvement Tool

Step 1. Prepare for Performance Improvement

Event	Activities	People responsible/attendees
Preparation	Select a facilitator	Project manager
	Examine factors that affect performance Create a PI team and identify other stakeholders Plan meetings	PI facilitator
Meeting 1	Inform gatekeepers (key stakeholders, such as donors and partners)	PI facilitator, PI team, project manager, gatekeepers
Meeting 2	Sensitize stakeholders about the PI process and elicit support for future interventions	PI facilitator, PI team, project manager, and stakeholders

Preparation

Select a facilitator

A PI facilitator coordinates and guides the process, usually with the assistance of a few key staff people. Facilitators can come from within or outside of the organization, depending on available funding. An outside facilitator might manage the entire process or the first parts, such as sensitization, assessment, and intervention selection. The programme manager might then have responsibility to monitor and evaluate the interventions. In small organizations with little funding, the programme manager or another senior staff member might act as the facilitator.

An internal facilitator is usually less expensive, and this approach has more potential for greater shared ownership and follow-through. However, an internal person often does not have extra time and may be biased towards certain issues or resolutions. While usually more expensive, a PI process with an external facilitator may take less time and explore wider issues, without internal institutional biases. However, staff could feel unduly judged or investigated – the organization's leaders should make sure to sensitize all staff to the work of the

PI facilitator, acknowledge fears, and call for active participation. Any facilitator, whether internal or external, should study the PI tool and be familiar with the recommended activities and associated background information. Facilitators are encouraged to use their own expertise, integrate culturally appropriate techniques, and apply local understanding of relationships among stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Word sense

Throughout most of the PI tool, **you** refers to the PI facilitator.

Examine factors that affect performance

Quality assurance and improvement specialists have found that the success of staff, including peer educators, depends on the following factors:

- Clear job expectations
- Clear and immediate performance feedback
- Adequate environment, including proper resources, supplies, and workplace
- Motivation and incentives to perform as expected
- Skills and knowledge required for the job
- Organizational support

At this step in the PI process, begin to examine the extent to which these factors are in place at the target programme. If peer educators are not performing as well as expected, try to determine which factors are lacking.

For example, if peer educators are not educating frequently enough, is it because they lack motivation? Or are they unaware of how frequently they should be holding education sessions? If peer educators are unclear about job expectations, an intervention could be to refresh the peer educators with a copy of their job descriptions or provide verbal instruction.

However, the PI process encourages improvement at an organizational level, not just an individual level. It considers the entire system, both the workers and the organization for which they work. So using PI, the organization would strive to ensure that all peer educators consistently understand what is expected of them. To do so, the organization might create a written policy detailing responsibilities or institute a system under which peer educators sign a contract that outlines their roles.

Managers using the PI process should not presuppose any particular intervention. Instead, they should use PI to determine a problem's root cause and then select appropriate interventions in a collaborative way with stakeholders.

Create a PI team and identify other stakeholders

A PI team will be involved in activities and decision-making throughout the process. Although many people might want to be a part of this team, keep the group to a manageable size (less than 10). The team should be a mix of stakeholders, including representatives from the project itself, partners, peer educators, trainers, and other workers. Pay attention to the balance of gender and age, ensuring that youth are well represented. Each member brings specific expertise and will be expected to contribute fully throughout the process.

Engaging stakeholders. Some stakeholders may not be interested in the process. Community-level donors, rather than higher-level donors, may be more accessible and interested. Look for allies everywhere possible and remember that information will flow in many ways. Ultimately, changes made to improve the performance of peer educators and actions of an organization can show results to various stakeholders.

If the programme manager is not the facilitator and is not part of the PI team originally, he or she should be involved as a stakeholder and be prepared to accept more responsibility later. The programme manager is generally the person responsible for making sure that selected interventions are implemented and monitored. If the organization has a monitoring and evaluation specialist on staff, this person should also be involved in order to monitor the PI process and results.

Plan meetings

Because PI is so collaborative, you will likely hold many meetings to encourage a continuous dialogue among stakeholders. Some things to consider when planning the meetings include:

- Have you invited everyone who should to attend? Consider having a colleague or someone from your partner organization review the invitation list. You can create hurt feelings or suspicion by inadvertently excluding a stakeholder from your meetings.
- Have you prepared and distributed an agenda? Following an agenda will help you keep meetings on track and end them on time. Allot amounts of time for each topic on the agenda. Leave some room for flexibility, but try not to let meeting participants wander too much from the topics at hand.

- Do you have all the materials needed to run the meeting effectively? Consider creating handouts, charts, computer presentations, or other visual aids if they will help convey information. Be sure the meeting room is equipped with necessary supplies, such as a flip chart and pens, chalk board and chalk, or audio-visual equipment.
- Would a little practice help? If you will be making a presentation, you might benefit from practice in front of some colleagues. Ask for feedback on the content and presentation of your talk. Did it make sense? Did you talk too quickly or too softly?

Meeting 1: Inform gatekeepers

Early in the process, hold a meeting with donors and partners to explain PI and to ask for explicit permission to proceed. Keeping these gatekeepers regularly informed of the findings and involving them in decisions will foster continued support. In the meeting with your gatekeepers, you should answer the following questions:

- What is the PI process and how will it be used to determine performance problems and solutions?
- How will PI activities fit within the goals of the organization or specific project?
- Who are the PI team members and other stakeholders? How were they selected?
- How will gatekeepers be informed of progress?

Your gatekeepers might have questions about your anticipated budget and timeline before granting permission for you to proceed. Be prepared to offer estimates, but caution them that your projections might not be accurate and that you will know more once specific problems are revealed and solutions agreed upon. In some places, expenditures for transportation, refreshments, or meals are essential to engaging stakeholders and gatekeepers in the process.

Once you have received permission to begin the PI process, follow up after the meeting with a written memo or meeting minutes summarizing what the gatekeepers have agreed to support. Distribute the document to all who attended the meeting, as well as to any of your organization's senior managers who were not able to attend. Doing so will minimize misunderstanding later.

Sample agenda

- Discuss goals of the meeting and review the agenda
- Introduce yourself and meeting participants, provide:
  - name, title
  - area of expertise or skill(s) they bring to the team
- Introduce performance improvement
  - explain the framework
  - explain how PI fits into the project's goals or organization's mission
- Ask for permission to proceed with PI plans
- Discuss next steps

Involving gatekeepers. What if gatekeepers simply do not have the time or interest in PI or meetings? This is a real issue that should not delay the process. One approach is to update these gatekeepers on the process regularly with e-mails, letters, or individual visits as needed.

Meeting 2: Sensitize stakeholders

Once your gatekeepers have learned about the PI process and given permission to proceed, you will need to meet with other stakeholders to provide them with information about PI and an opportunity to discuss ideas and ask questions. The PI team can decide how best to impart information, whether in a large group or in separate, smaller meetings.

Your stakeholders will likely be more involved in the PI process than will gatekeepers. They need to know much of the same information as the gatekeepers, as well as their role in the process. During the meeting, the team should answer the following questions:

- What is the PI process and how will it be used to determine performance problems and solutions?
- How will PI activities fit within the goals of the organization or specific project?
- Who are the PI team members and other stakeholders? How were they selected?
- How will stakeholders be involved? What is their specific role? How much time will they need to devote to the process? How will they be informed of findings and next steps?

Sample agenda

- Discuss goals of the meeting and review the agenda
- Introduce yourself and meeting participants, provide:
  - name, title
  - area of expertise or skill(s) they bring to the team
- Introduce performance improvement
  - explain the framework
  - explain how PI fits into the project's goals or organization's mission
- Invite stakeholders to be involved and discuss your expectations of them
- Choose the date and time of the next meeting

Step 2. Define Desired Performance

Event	Activities	People responsible/attendees
Preparation	Identify any existing standards Learn to write effective performance statements Develop a strategy for managing Meeting 3	PI facilitator, PI team
Meeting 3	Work as a group to define desired performance	PI facilitator, PI team

In this step, the PI team determines what standards peer educators and the programme should strive to meet. This is called 'desired performance'. The team will work together in Meeting 3 to draft a document defining desired performance. But first, as PI facilitator, there are some things you should do to prepare for that meeting.

Ideal versus desired performance

Ideal performance might be unreachable at present, and aiming to achieve it could discourage rather than encourage improvement. Desired performance is more realistic, attainable, and dynamic and reflects the current expectations of stakeholders.

Preparation

Identify any existing standards

If your project has some existing standards, it will be relatively easy to define desired performance. If you have a written standards document, use it as a starting point and expand upon it as necessary.

Resources are available to help peer education projects develop and adopt standards. See: UNFPA, Family Health International/YouthNet. *Standards for Peer Education Programmes*. Arlington, VA: UNFPA and Family Health International, 2005. Available: *www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/Publications/peeredtoolkit/Standards.htm.*

Learn to write effective performance statements

The goal of this step is for the PI team to define desired performance in a measurable, results-based way and express it in concise 'performance statements'. Performance statements should address some of the following measures:

Quality. How well does the performance or activity meet a specification or standard? For example, are core HIV prevention messages being delivered clearly, accurately, and consistently by peer educators to peer audiences?
Quantity. How many times or how often should the performance or activity occur? For example, how many contacts with peers are peer educators expected to make?
Time. When should the performance or activity occur? For example, should peer educators report on their work monthly? Quarterly?
Cost. How much does the performance or activity cost? For example, how much does it cost to prepare one peer educator for outreach?

Good definitions of performance should also:

- State specific desired accomplishments or behaviour of the performer
- State accomplishments or behaviour that can be observed or measured
- Elicit questions about performance that can be answered with a clear, unambiguous, yes-or-no answer (e.g., do peer educators lead three education sessions per month?)
- State accomplishments or behaviours that are under the control of the performer

Word sense

Performer is the staff member, often a peer educator, who is expected to perform the task.

The following chart provides poor examples of performance statements and shows how these statements can be improved.

Poor example	Problem	Better example
Peer educators should be supported by local community members.	Support not controlled by the performer.	Programme manager prepares the community to support peer educators by holding an open public meeting.
Peer educators should be trained.	Not measurable.	Peer educators must attend an initial five-day peer education training and two-day refresher workshops every quarter thereafter.
After training, peer educators are certified to perform peer education.	Ambiguous. What does certification mean?	Certified peer educators have been evaluated and have successfully demonstrated communication skills, technical knowledge, and group facilitation.
Peer educators reach 50 peers per month.	Not clear how those 50 people are to be reached. Does '50' mean 25 people twice per month?	Peer educators conduct 16 weekly one-hour sessions with two groups of 25 peers.
Peer educators provide one-on-one education to 10 people per month.	Not controlled by the peer educator. What if only five peers ask for help?	Peer educators provide one-on-one education to any who approach them; they work with these peers for 15 minutes after each scheduled group session.
Youth are integrated into the programme.	Not measurable. How are they integrated?	Two youth are members of the organizational board. Youth representatives attend monthly staff meetings.
A peer educator provides correct information.	Ambiguous. What constitutes correct content?	When talking about HIV, peer educators provide information about: • methods of HIV transmission • HIV prevention, including ways to prevent sexual transmission of HIV
Peer educators respect the confidentiality of their peers.	Not observable. The term `respect´ is ambiguous.	Peer educators first ask if they may talk openly to peers or offer to meet in spaces that afford more privacy.
Adults respect the contributions and input of youth.	Not observable. The term `respect´ is ambiguous.	Adults listen to youth during meetings as they would colleagues, allowing them to contribute without interruption.

The level of detail addressed during this process of determining desired performance will vary by project. Depending on your starting point and available time, you may first decide to define *basic* performance, recognizing that you will continue the definition as you progress.

Develop a strategy for managing Meeting 3

Your team has much to accomplish in Meeting 3. The discussion could become chaotic or unproductive unless you decide in advance how best to manage the meeting.

Before the meeting, think about:

- Splitting the team into smaller groups – you might ask each small group to determine performance standards for specific functions, such as training of peer educators, recruitment, education of peers, adult and youth interaction, and community outreach. Or, consider splitting the team into smaller groups by job function, such as managers, trainers, and educators.

- Providing an initial draft – develop a rough draft of some performance statements (based on what you already know about the organization and on the organization's existing standards) to provide to attendees. It can be easier for a group to revise your draft than to start from nothing.

- Developing techniques to keep the discussion moving – groups have a tendency to get off topic. Think about ways to return their focus. You might designate a time-keeper or walk around the room and ask whether they have questions or whether they want to report on their progress.

Meeting 3: Work as a group to define desired performance

The purpose of this meeting is to develop performance statements that relate to your project.

Sample agenda

- Discuss goals of the meeting and review the agenda
- Explain the purpose of defining performance and the difference between desired and ideal performance
- Outline the components of good performance statements, provide examples
- Divide the PI team into groups and give assignments
- Collect the groups' work and collate into one cohesive list of desired performance statements
- Choose the date and time of the next meeting

Optional Meeting 3: Define desired performance with other stakeholders

Often stakeholder organizations send only one or two representatives to meetings held early in the process. If Meeting 3 was sparsely attended, you might need to bring the performance statements to a larger body of stakeholders to gain a broader perspective and ensure buy-in. You might also need to discuss ways to ensure greater attendance from stakeholders at this meeting.

Sample agenda

- Discuss goals of the meeting and review the agenda
- Explain the purpose of defining performance and the difference between desired and ideal performance
- Outline the components of good performance statements, provide examples
- Explain what happened in the previous meeting and provide the draft list of performance statements
- Divide into smaller groups to review, revise if necessary, and approve the list
- Collect the groups' work
- Choose the date and time of the next meeting

Step 3. Document Actual Performance

Event	Activities	People responsible/attendees
Preparation	Determine how information will be gathered Decide who will gather information	PI facilitator
Meeting 4	Prepare the PI team	PI facilitator, PI team
Collection of information	Collect information on actual performance	PI facilitator, PI team
Summary of information	Review all collected information and summarize it	PI facilitator, PI team

The goal of PI is to narrow the gap between actual and desired performance. In Step 2, you defined your staff's desired performance. Step 3 shows how to document your staff's actual performance.

Preparation

Determine how information will be gathered

There are several ways in which to gather and document information about the performance of your programme's peer educators. (You can also use this step to document the performance of your paid staff, but this tool primarily focuses on peer educators.) You and your team might interview peer educators, stakeholders, peers who have attended education sessions, and others. You may choose to observe peer educators in action. Or you could review existing reports, such as progress reports, that your programme might send to donors. All of these methods can uncover valuable information; choose any or all that are appropriate to your circumstances.

No matter which methods you select, you must ensure that your team is equipped with the necessary forms, notebooks, and perhaps recording equipment with which to gather information. Be prepared to teach PI team members how to use forms and collect information, and practice with them before sending them out with assignments.

More details about information-gathering techniques are provided on pages 22-26.

Decide who will gather information

Consider who among the staff are the most appropriate to gather the information you need. If you have the luxury of selecting specific people from a large PI team, consider choosing the most outgoing people to do interviews and perhaps the more detail-oriented people to review reports. Introverted people might be more comfortable being observers rather than interviewers. Interviews with top-level stakeholders, such as partners, ministries, and donors, may require more skillful techniques than interviews with peers, so choose seasoned, senior staff for the task. A pair of interviewers might be another approach to getting the needed information.

To make the best use of your team and to create a clear picture of performance in your organization, encourage people of different age groups to interview each other. Have adults collect information from peer educators, as well as other adults. Similarly, ask peer educators to interview adults, as well as other peers. This mix will give various perspectives and shed new light on issues.

Meeting 4: Prepare the PI team

The purpose of this meeting is to prepare the PI team to gather and document information on the performance of your programme and your peer educators.

Sample agenda

- Discuss goals of the meeting and review the agenda
- Review the documentation process
- Discuss information-gathering techniques
- Allow for practice and learning
- Provide assignments and data collection materials
- Assign deadlines
- Choose the date and time of the next meeting

Collection of information

At this point, your team should be prepared to collect information using interviews, observation, or record review, as described below.

Interviews

Interviews can be conducted one-on-one or in small groups. Group interviews should have fewer than 10 participants so that everyone will have time to express their opinions. These interviews differ from focus group discussions in that interviewers seek specific answers, not general discussion. For a successful interview, be sure to:

- Write down your questions (see samples, page 23) before the interview and give them to interviewees in advance, if possible.
- Practice before the interview so that you will be comfortable with all the questions.
- Begin by introducing yourself and the organization you represent.
- Put interviewees at ease. Explain the purpose of the meeting and how the information you are gathering will be used.
- When appropriate, ask them for anonymous examples and assure them that what they say will be kept confidential.
- Bring something to record interviewees' responses. You might use a pre-designed form, notebook, or tape recorder.
- Be prepared to follow up or be referred to others if your interviewees cannot give complete answers.

Sample Interview Questions. Before conducting your interviews, prepare your questions in a logical order, considering the audience. A list of sample questions follows:

Organizational issues

- Are you familiar with peer educators working on this project? If so, which group of peer educators? (Providing some geographic and demographic information is helpful to make sure you and the interviewee are discussing the same group.)
- Can you share the mission and goal(s) of your organization, so we can understand the context within which the peer educators operate?
- How does peer educator performance affect the organization's goals?
- How would improved peer educator performance help you reach your goals? (Even if the interviewee is unable to clearly describe desired performance, these responses will provide useful information.)

General performance

- What would a desired performance look like? What do you want peer educators to do?
- What results are you trying to achieve through peer education?
- What indicators would exemplify effective performance?

Actual performance

- How well are peer educators doing their job?
- How do you gather information about their performance?
- What standards do you currently use to measure performance? How well do people in the field know the standards? How do they find out about them?

Factors affecting desired performance

- What helps peer educators do their work well?
- What hinders them from doing their job well?

Depending on these answers, you might need to ask follow-up questions about other factors that affect the ability of peer educators to perform to the organization's standards.

Expectations

- Do peer educators know what is expected of them?
- Do they know the mission of the organization and goals of the project?
- Can they tell you if they are doing their jobs correctly?
- Can they explain their job responsibilities without being prompted?

Feedback

- Do peer educators know how they are performing against the standards you have set?
- Do they understand any feedback they receive?
- Is feedback provided in a positive and constructive way?

Incentives (and retention)

- If peer educators perform well, does their level of responsibility increase? (Are they given more work?)
- If peer educators perform well, do they receive any sort of reward?
- If these are both true, do rewards outweigh increased work responsibilities?
- If they do their job well (or poorly), does anyone notice?
- Are incentives contingent upon performance?
- Are incentives working? Do they retain peer educators for the expected performance period?

Tools and environment

- Do peer educators have all the tools they need to do their job?
- Is the work environment helping (or hindering) peer educators to achieve desired performance?
- Is performance connected to tools or environment?

Organizational support

- Are project goals included in the organization's mission?
- Are organizational systems conducive to achieving desired performance?
- Does adherence to policies and procedures allow for desired performance?

Skills and knowledge

- Do peer educators have the knowledge to achieve desired performance?
- Do peer educators have access to quality information about essential topics?
- Do peer educators have the skills to achieve desired performance?
- Is training adequate?
- Does an exemplary performer have a 'trick' that no else knows?

After you have conducted several interviews, you might mention issues brought up by other interviewees to see how widely held their opinions are.

- Another person I interviewed mentioned that [this issue] is important to performance. How do you see this issue? Do you agree?

Close by telling the interviewees to feel free to contact you with any other ideas.

Additional interview tips

- **Be persistent yet diplomatic in encouraging people to be descriptive, specific, and clear when they respond.** Mid- or top-level employees might be reluctant to discuss areas needing change or find it difficult to describe how they want things to change. The art of these interviews is to know when, how, and how much to press for specifics.
- **Use results-oriented questions and be prepared to follow up.** People might be more comfortable telling you what peer educators need, rather than what parts of their performance could be improved. For example, if the interviewee states that peer educators need more training, ask questions such as, 'What would be improved if peer educators got more training?' The interviewee might answer that training would improve the accuracy of messages that peer educators are delivering. In this way, you will have determined a possible performance problem, not just a vague need.
- **Record your interview.** It can be easy to become absorbed in the conversation, but make sure you document the responses. At the very least, take short notes during the meeting and organize them later, but while the conversation is still fresh in your mind. Your notes need to be thorough and clear so that you can refer to them later for patterns or themes.
- **Ask why.** A useful tool during any interview is to ask, 'Why?' You might think you already know the answer, but asking why helps the interviewee reach his or her own conclusions. In the following example, 'A' is a peer educator being interviewed and 'B' is the interviewer:

A: Peers don't listen to our advice.
B: Why don't they listen to your advice?
A: I'm not sure. Some say they are tired of hearing about AIDS.
B: Why are peers tired of this?
A: Maybe because we talk about it a lot.
B: Why do you talk about it a lot?
A: Because AIDS kills, and this is all we were trained to talk about as peer educators.

In this example, the interviewer asks why in order to understand why peers do not listen to the peer educators. The educator's answers help uncover a performance problem, which is a lack of variation or depth in topics.

Observation

Observation provides direct evidence of performance and can reveal issues not addressed by other information-gathering methods. This method is especially useful for noting the performance of peer educators, trainers, and supervisors in the field and on the job.

Tips for observation

- Arrange observations and get permission to conduct them in advance.
- Explain to workers and peer educators the purpose of your observations.
- Make a list of specific things to which you should pay attention during your observations.

Review of project records and data

All projects generate records and reports, some of which contain information on performance. Some might have data about training or peer educators' evaluations, outreach activities, and attendance. One challenge of using project reports to document performance is to locate those that are relevant and have quality information. As a result, this activity may be best suited for the PI facilitator or a top-level PI team member, who might be most familiar with the organization's reporting system.

Tips for reviewing project reports

- Make sure you understand how the information was gathered for the report and what the data mean.
- Ensure that the data are current. Old data can be more harmful than no data at all.
- Be clear about restrictions on data use. Unauthorized use of confidential data can be illegal or harmful to the organization.

Summary of information

The following table, using sample data and dates, shows how information collected from multiple sources can be summarized. Assemble all information from Step 3 for use in Step 4. Again, the goal of the PI process is to narrow the gap between desired and actual performance. So it is helpful to construct the table in a way that compares the desired performance agreed upon by your stakeholders (outcome of Step 2) with the actual performance the PI team has documented during its information-gathering process.

Desired performance	Data collection method	Actual performance	Notes
Two youth representatives attend each monthly staff meeting.	Interviews	Adult staff interviewed said that youth have attended meetings, and they appreciated their attendance.	Youth say they are unsure why they are invited, since adults do not listen to their ideas.
	Observation	Two youth were present at the staff meeting on Nov. 9, 2005.	Youth commented they had not been to meetings recently and weren't sure how to contribute.
	Meeting minutes	Youth have been represented since the new policy started, six months ago.	The same youth do not attend every meeting. Eight senior peer educators rotate attendance.
When talking about HIV, peer educators provide information about: • methods of HIV transmission • HIV prevention, including the ABC approaches	Interview	When asked, 'What information about HIV should peer educators provide to peers?' nine out of 10 peer educators provided the correct information.	Peer educators spoke confidently about their responses one-on-one. One person did not mention abstinence (A) or being faithful (B) during interviews.
	Observation	Seven out of 10 peer educators observed provided information correctly.	Three of the 10 provided prevention information specifically about condom use, but not about A or B.
	Records	Show that 987 sessions have been conducted by peer educators on HIV over the past 10 months.	Peers are trained to provide specific content but are not observed after training.

Step 4. Analyze Findings		
Event	**Activities**	**People responsible/attendees**
Meeting 5	Identify gaps Determine root causes Brainstorm interventions Prioritize interventions	PI facilitator, PI team

The goals of Step 4 are to identify gaps in performance, determine the root causes of those gaps, suggest interventions that address those causes, and organize your suggestions for eventual presentation to donors and other stakeholders, who will decide whether they should support your recommendations.

Meeting 5: Analyze findings

This step can take a good deal of time; rather than hold one meeting, you might convene a workshop or hold a series of meetings. However, the same group of people should work together to do all the activities in this step, because earlier decisions affect future directions. To involve new people along the way can complicate the process and slow your progress.

Sample agenda

- Discuss goals of the meeting and review the agenda
- Present results of documented actual performance; provide copies of summarized information (Step 3 results)
- Identify gaps (described on page 29)
  - generate a complete list
  - if the list is long, decide if all gaps should be considered
- Determine root causes (described on page 29)
  - teach a technique to help groups determine the cause (e.g., the why chart, page 30)
  - link root causes to performance factors
- Brainstorm and agree upon general interventions to recommend to stakeholders and donors (described on page 32)
- Prioritize and organize interventions in preparation for presenting recommendations to stakeholders (described on page 33)
- Choose the date and time of the next meeting

Identify gaps

Now that you and the PI team have defined desired performance and documented actual performance, you will begin to identify gaps between them.

Having collected information from multiple sources and with different methods, you should be able to develop a detailed assessment of performance among peer educators. However, you may see some contradictions as well. If so, simply return to the information's source to get more details and try to clarify any discrepancies.

To begin to identify gaps, create a chart similar to the one below.

Desired performance	Actual performance	Gap
Two youth representatives attend each monthly staff meeting.	Youth representatives attend monthly staff meetings.	None when measured by desired performance indicator.
	Irregular attendance. Lack of participation by youth.	Consistent attendance and meaningful participation.
When talking about HIV, peer educators provide information about: • methods of HIV transmission • HIV prevention, including the ABC approaches	Seven out of 10 peer educators in the field delivered complete information.	Three out of 10 peer educators are not providing standardized information to peers in the field.

As you continue the process, you and your team might develop a long list of gaps. Try to keep the list organized and avoid duplication. If the list becomes too long and complex, your group might become frustrated. If this happens, discuss whether the group wants to work on all the gaps, or only the most pressing ones. Consider the size of the gap. How wide or narrow is it? How does the gap affect the organization's ability to meet its goals? Some gaps may not deserve further attention now. Agree as a group to postpone addressing minor issues, while concentrating on the most frequent, serious, or urgent gaps.

Determine root causes

Find the root causes of each gap in performance to help you select appropriate interventions. One method of identifying root causes is the 'why chart', which is easy to understand and facilitate. Essentially, you start with the gap and ask why it exists. Then continue to ask why until you break the gap down to its most basic cause. The following illustration demonstrates how this process works.

Why chart

Example gap:
Three out of ten peer educators are not providing standardized information to peers in the field.

You are likely to uncover multiple root causes for any gap, some of which might be beyond the scope of your project or abilities. However, do not let this limit your examination of any problems you uncover. Instead, keep an open mind, so that your group can discover causes that may not be obvious or may be easier to address than anticipated.

All root causes can be linked to one of the six key performance factors discussed earlier (see page 12):

- Clear job expectations
- Clear and immediate performance feedback
- Adequate environment, including proper resources, supplies, and workplace
- Motivation and incentives to perform as expected
- Skills and knowledge required for the job
- Organizational support

Once you identify a root cause, state it in terms of a performance factor. As in the why chart, suppose you identified one gap to be that three out of ten peer educators are not providing standardized information to peers in the field. Then suppose you determined that one root cause of that gap was that no one thought to offer any refresher training to peer educators. You could assign this to the performance factor 'organizational support', since no one in the organization planned for refresher training. The benefit of doing this exercise is that you have a better idea what kinds of interventions will be useful.

Here are a few more examples of how root causes can be matched to performance factors:

- Peer educators do not know how to participate during staff meetings, although adults view their contributions as meaningful: *lack of understanding of job expectations*
- Peer educators do not know if they are doing a good job: *no immediate performance feedback*
- Supervisors do not know what to look for during monitoring visits: *lack of tools required for the job*
- Peer educators do not want to volunteer so much of their time: *lack of incentives to perform as expected*
- Peer educators do not know essential information they should provide: *lack of knowledge required for the job*
- Managers spend a lot of time negotiating for meaningful youth participation with senior management: *lack of organizational support*

Brainstorm interventions

After you and your team have identified the root causes of the performance problems and linked the causes to the six performance factors, interventions should begin to become clear. Divide the larger group and assign each smaller group a specific performance gap to address. The goal of this step is to agree on some general interventions, not to develop detailed processes for implementing them. A table like this will help groups organize their ideas:

Root cause of gap in performance	Performance factor	Possible intervention
Peer educators do not know how to participate in staff meetings.	Lack of information – job expectations are unclear	Let performers know what is expected of them: • provide clear verbal instructions • review job description, contract, or letter of understanding
Peer educators do not know if they are doing a good job.	Lack of information – no clear, immediate performance feedback	Provide clear feedback on work performance as soon as possible: • observe and monitor performance, providing verbal feedback soon after • establish a mentoring system • regularly tell peer educators how they are doing
Peer educators do not want to volunteer so much of their time.	Lack of incentives to perform as expected	Provide incentives contingent upon performing to standards: • offer verbal 'good job' for good performance • give peer-educator-of-the-month award • provide public recognition • provide opportunities for volunteers to assess their personal growth and professional skills gained on the job
Peer educators do not educate frequently because of poor peer attendance at sessions.	Poor work environment or tools	Provide the tools, environment, and supplies necessary to do the job: • arrange a friendly space, with room and materials to prepare sessions • make session materials available, such as computers, flipchart, markers, tape, etc. • sensitize communities to the work peer educators are doing

Managers spend a lot of time negotiating for meaningful youth participation with senior management.	Lack of organizational support	Provide organizational support: • rewrite mission statements • restructure organization • restructure reporting relationships • enable meaningful youth participation
Peer educators do not know essential information they should provide.	Lack of skills and knowledge	Provide learning opportunities and activities: • job aids • self-study materials • reference and informational materials • on-the-job training • peer training • workshops

Prioritize interventions

After you have generated a list of possible interventions, it is time to prioritize them. This process, done collaboratively, gives the team a unified voice and helps guide decision-making later.

When prioritizing interventions, consider the following:

- How urgently is the intervention needed? Can it wait?
- How serious is the problem? Does it compromise the quality of the programme?
- How often does the problem occur?
- How much will it cost to implement the intervention? Is funding available?

A gap may need multiple interventions, but you should be realistic about your project's limitations. Use your judgment in selecting essential interventions and prepare your team for the possibility that funding will not be available for all of them. In this case, the team should be ready to proceed with interventions they can do without additional support.

Cost-benefit analysis

Cost-benefit analysis, also known as cost-effectiveness or cost-utility analysis, is a method to estimate actual or estimated costs and their relationship to results. Cost factors to be considered include salaries, benefits, travel, per diem, materials, equipment, and any other direct or indirect cost. This analysis should help reduce the risk of implementing a costly intervention that produces small performance gains.

Input		Output		Outcome
Cost Staff time Meetings Production of brochures Monitoring trips Report writing	+	**Cost** Decrease in incomplete information delivered by peer educators	=	**Benefit** Increased knowledge about the ABC approaches to HIV prevention

For additional information about cost-benefit analysis, see: Prime II. *Cost and Results Analysis, Volume 2 – Toolkit*. Chapel Hill, NC: IntraHealth International, 2003. Available:

http://www.prime2.org/prime2/pdf/9-11_BP_CRA_Toolkit_Web.Swf.

Step 5. Select Interventions

Event	Activities	People responsible/attendees
Preparation	Prepare for meeting with stakeholders, organize information about PI process	PI facilitator, PI team
Meeting 6	Present findings about performance and proposed interventions, select interventions together	PI facilitator, PI team, project manager, stakeholders

In Step 4, the PI facilitator and team analyzed findings about the programme's actual performance and developed a list of potential interventions to minimize the gaps between that and desired performance. Most interventions will require stakeholder approval and support, so in Step 5, you will present your findings to your stakeholders and, with them, select interventions to implement.

Preparation

Your meeting with stakeholders will likely include some who have not been very involved in the PI process. To help them and others understand what the PI team has accomplished, present information in a logical manner, highlighting interventions that can be implemented without additional support and those that may require their help. Be careful not to assume that your current donors would be the only candidates likely to provide support, since a number of other stakeholders probably also will be present.

Consider presenting information in a chart, such as the example below.

Desired performance	Gap to be addressed	Root causes	Suggested interventions

The process of revealing gaps in performance and selecting interventions takes some skill and diplomacy. It is a challenge to admit that some things are not going as smoothly as your organization would like. Be honest about problems that are the responsibility of staff and offer ways to solve these problems. Remember, your organization's credibility is at stake.

As a result of examining performance, you and your team might also have identified problems your organization did not anticipate. In this case, your chances of receiving additional support depend on the donor's willingness and ability to provide more funding. Your team should be organized, present solid evidence, and propose solutions. Understand, however, that negotiation will occur, and some of the interventions you recommend may be rejected. The benefit of having a larger stakeholder group present is that it might take your cause to heart and be willing to provide support. At worst, the lessons learned from the PI process should help in the future when your organization submits proposals for new projects. You will have a clearer idea of problems that could arise and be better able to ensure that you are requesting adequate resources to address them.

Meeting 6: Select interventions

The purpose of this meeting is to share with stakeholders your team's progress thus far and agree upon selected interventions

Sample agenda

- Discuss goals of the meeting and review the agenda
- Introduce the participants
  - name
  - title, organization
  - area of expertise or skill(s) they bring to the meeting
- Present key results of documented actual performance, provide copies of summarized information
- Identify key gaps (that have been prioritized by the group)
- Explain root causes
- Share prioritized interventions and reasons they were recommended
- Invite group to ask questions
- Decide upon selected interventions together
- Discuss next steps and choose the date and time of the next meeting

Step 6. Take Action and Monitor

Event	Activities	People responsible/attendees
Preparation	Draft an action plan for selected interventions	PI facilitator, project manager
Meeting 7	Finalize a detailed action plan for selected interventions	PI facilitator, PI team, project manager
Field work	Build an implementation team Monitor performance Inform stakeholders	Project manager

Preparation

Draft an action plan for selected interventions

After agreeing upon interventions with your team and stakeholders, develop a plan to put the interventions into action. The plan should provide specifics about how gaps in performance will be closed. When drafting your plan, you might choose to follow the structure of an existing work plan. Providing a draft allows participants to spend more time focusing on the issues and less on the language used to describe the issues. If your action plan is similar to your work plan, the format also will be readily understood by staff and donors.

You might need to adapt your existing work plan's structure to make sure that the following questions are answered:

- How will desired performance be achieved by meeting each objective?
- What activities will achieve each objective?
- When should they start? How long should they take?
- Who is responsible?
- Who will be involved?
- How will you monitor progress?

Meeting 7: Take action

The purpose of this meeting is to develop an action plan for implementing performance improvement interventions.

Sample agenda

- Discuss goals of the meeting and review the agenda
- Present selected interventions from Meeting 6
- Provide copies of the draft work plan
- Divide the group into smaller groups; assign each an intervention from the draft plan to review and revise as needed
- Discuss next steps and choose the date and time of the next meeting

Field work

Build an implementation team

At this point in the process, the emphasis switches from planning to implementation, and responsibility shifts from the PI facilitator to the project manager (unless, of course, these two people are one and the same). When we address 'you', we are now referring to the project manager.

Just as a team was assembled to carry out PI, you should now create a team to implement your action plan. Although you might delegate to team members a large part of the responsibility for implementing interventions, you will need to ensure that your team has the resources, authority, and support needed to complete these tasks. When deciding whom to put on the team, consider those who will be directly involved with implementation. You also might require assistance from others outside of your organization, such as consultants or people from other private companies or organizations.

When working with consultants or private companies, you will likely have a contract for work to be completed. If your collaboration with other organizations does not involve payment for services, you should formalize their support by writing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). An MOU is a signed contract that summarizes decisions and documents details of the organization's commitment. It helps minimize confusion about expectations or responsibility as implementation occurs.

For example, suppose an intervention requires information from a service provider or clinic in your peer educators' area. A clinic might agree to collect information from youth clients about referrals received from peer educators in your project. This type of aid usually does not cost money, because your peer educators are also doing a service by referring clients to their clinics. With a formal MOU, you can be more assured that the information you need is collected correctly and on time.

Sample MOU design

To: [Representative's name, organization]
From: [PI facilitator or programme manager]
Date:
Re: [Name of programme]
cc: [Donor representative, organization]

We are happy to have your talents added to the [programme name]. Your expertise will undoubtedly promote the programme's overall success that is so important to [clinic's name]. To ensure that we are all in agreement about deliverables and timelines, this document summarizes the outcomes of our [meetings/telephone calls] of the past few [days/weeks/months].

The intervention your organization will help implement was selected and designed specifically to close a performance gap found during a performance needs assessment.

Desired performance: [describe]
Actual performance: [describe]
Gap: [describe]

The intervention will be considered successful to the extent that the intervention changes the performance from the current to desired level.

In order to complete your part of the project, you will receive the following from us by the dates indicated:

Items [that your organization will provide to your partner]	Date
A copy of the entire performance improvement action plan	
Draft referral card to be distributed by peer educators	
Updates following training on how to refer peers to your clinic	
An estimate of the number of referral cards being distributed	

We expect that you will deliver the following items on the date(s) indicated:

Deliverable [items that your organization will need from your partner]	Date
Comments on draft referral card	
Information on the number of referrals received at your clinic from our peer educators	
Information on the types of services sought by referred peers	

We agree to provide the deliverables specified above on the dates noted.

Signature _____ Head of Organization _____

Title _____ Date _____

Before implementing the first intervention, hold meetings to share the overall implementation plan with staff. By the end of the meeting, all parties should be familiar with the plan, clear about how they should prepare to implement it, and understand everyone's role in the process. This is the opportunity to create systems that will ensure the long-term quality of your project.

Monitor performance

Monitoring PI interventions. As with all project activities, interventions should be monitored. Monitoring is the routine and systematic process of collecting data and measuring progress towards project objectives. Monitoring helps to answer the following questions:

- Are planned activities occurring?
- Are objectives being met?

It is the project manager's role (with staff) to track activities as implementation begins. You should assess goals, provide feedback, and solve problems. Costs should also be monitored; this may be especially important if timelines change and costs increase as a result. If deadlines slip, the timelines should be recalculated and implementation team members informed of the changes.

To get started, write a report that clarifies your objectives and the expected results of interventions previously discussed with your PI team. For each objective, list inputs, outputs, and indicators that will help you measure your success in meeting the objective. From there, you can prepare a monitoring plan.

A monitoring plan might look like this:

Objective	Indicator(s)	Method/instrument	When	Person(s) responsible
To improve the quality of supervision	Number of supervisors trained on supervision skills and informed of standardized questioning Number of supervision visits	Project records	Quarterly	Supervisors (to provide records)
	Number of peer educators who report that standardized supervision questions have been asked	Interviews with peer educators	Quarterly	Peer educators (to provide feedback)
To improve the delivery of key messages	Number of peer educators trained in message delivery	Training records	Quarterly	Supervisors
	Number of trainers	Observation in the field	Monthly	Peer educators
	Number of peer educators who correctly deliver HIV prevention message	Reporting by peer educators	Monthly	Peer educators

Plan to collect information on these indicators and report on your progress to the PI team and stakeholders.

Why not evaluation? The evaluation process is much broader in scope than monitoring. It is the process of systematically assessing an entire project's merit or effectiveness. Evaluation answers the question: Does the project as a whole make a difference in the lives of the young people it is intended to serve? Typically, evaluation is conducted by external research groups.

Your peer education programme might be just one component of several in a programme geared towards supporting and sustaining healthy behaviours of young people. This does not, however, preclude you from contributing to the evaluation process. You could help collect information on some of the following indicators from young people who have been reached by your peer educators:

- Knowledge of HIV transmission
- Knowledge of health services available
- Use of available health services
- Attitudes towards using services
- Intention to abstain, reduce the number of partners, or use condoms
- Risky sexual behaviours
- Number of sexual partners in the last three months
- Attitudes towards condoms
- Confidence about saying no or refusing risky behaviours

Monitoring the PI process. In addition to monitoring the interventions, it is a good idea to monitor management of the performance improvement process itself. Create your own indicators to assess leadership by asking:

- Is the leadership currently supportive?
    - Do leaders with formal, top-level positions (directors, supervisors) provide public verbal support for implementation and continue to allocate appropriate resources?
    - Have any necessary committees or other mechanisms been established and are they active?
    - Have informal leaders been involved in previous stages and are they influencing key formal leaders to support interventions?

- Do the target groups (usually peer educators) accept and use the interventions?
  - Have peer educators been genuinely involved in the intervention design stage?
  - Have the interventions been pre-tested?
  - Does monitoring show that performance is changing?

- Are there external conditions that may affect implementation?
  - Do plans exist to manage any external conditions that could affect implementation (for example, new policy, an upcoming election, or changes in organizational leadership or structure)?

- Are the resources needed for implementation in place?
  - Are human and financial resources available?

- Does capacity exist to implement the interventions? If not, is there a strategy in place to develop capacity?
  - Has staff capacity been assessed? Are there adequate numbers with the needed skills, resources, and knowledge of systems and procedures to meet objectives?
  - Are work plan deadlines being met?
  - Has a capacity-building plan been developed and implemented?

Inform stakeholders regularly

Informed and supportive stakeholders can greatly enhance the improvement process. Regularly update them about progress and any issues related to institutional changes and external influences. Even the best-designed interventions will not succeed unless there is continuous support from management and stakeholders.

The box on the next page is a sample of a report one could use to communicate plans to stakeholders.

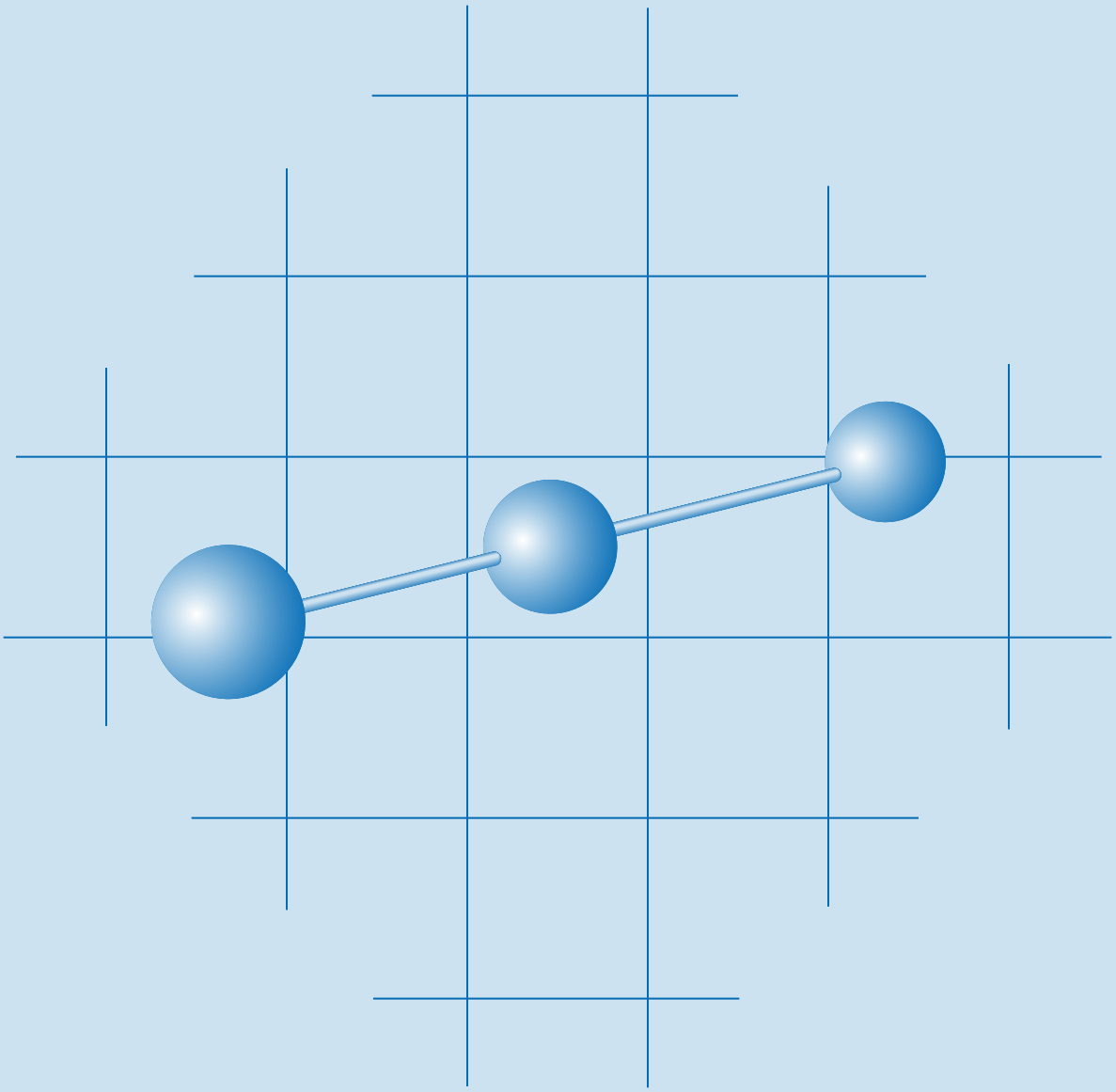
Sample communication tool

In this example, if:

- the **desired performance** is quarterly supervision of peer educators (supervision includes on-the-job observation, followed by feedback and discussion)
- and **actual performance** shows that peer educators are supervised about once a year, then
- the **gap** is lack of supervision three out of four quarters, and
- the **cause** is lack of information on expectations of organization and how to go about the supervision process

Gap/cause	Intervention(s) selected	Small-group members	Testing procedures	Due date
Lack of supervision of peer educators • no supervision tools • no supervision schedule	• Create supervisory tool • Train supervisors on how to use new tools • Plan for use • Monitor use		Pre-test new tools created with supervisors and monitoring forms with peer educators	
Explain the gap in terms of measurable indicators	Describe the type of intervention selected	List members who have selected intervention	Describe generally how the intervention will be tested; specific plans can be developed later	Intervention completion date

Testing. You may need to test interventions to make sure they fill the gap and provide expected results, especially if they are new. That is why it also important to have a diverse body on the PI Team. For example, if interventions are suggested that will directly affect the workload of trainers, then there should be representation of trainers who can provide insight and suggest realistic ways to address the issue.



2 Management Activities for Peer Education Programmes

This section provides possible activities for managers who are charged with starting a new peer education programme or improving an existing one. This list is not exhaustive, but all programmes could benefit from implementing these activities. These activities are also meant to enhance the performance improvement process.

- Clarify job responsibilities
- Write a code of conduct
- Monitor and provide feedback to peer educators
- Facilitate recognition and career development
- Create a peer education resource center
- Provide creative incentives
- Plan for meaningful youth involvement
- Hold additional trainings or workshops

Clarify job responsibilities

As peer education projects have proliferated, their managers have become more savvy. They are evaluating potential peer educators and trainers by comparing their skills to lists of required competencies, rather than simply taking anyone who volunteers. They are formalizing relationships with peer educators by signing letters of agreement or contracts and by providing detailed job descriptions. If you did not utilize these documents at the start of your project, it is not too late. These documents describe the relationship between the organization and its peer educators, and they can minimize confusion about expectations and responsibilities:

Letter of agreement. A document that outlines agreements between a peer educator and a project or organization. After the peer educator has read and discussed the document with his or her supervisor, both should sign it.

Contract. A document that outlines the responsibilities of a peer educator to a project or organization. It should be signed by both the peer educator and the supervisor.

Job description. A document that describes a job, its responsibilities, and its performance expectations and is given to youth when they agree to the job of being a peer educator.

Whichever documents you use to formalize the organization-educator relationship, ensure that they cover the following details:

- Key responsibilities (What will the peer educator do in this position?)
- Contribution (How will the peer educator contribute to the project's goals and objectives?)
- Experience (What previous knowledge, education, or experience do peer educators need to do their job?)
- Type and nature of contacts (With whom will peer educators meet, and how often will meetings occur?)
- Working conditions (Where will peer educators work? What tools will be provided to them to support their work?)
- Compensation (Is there any compensation for the work? If not, what nonmaterial benefits are offered?)
- Timeline (How long are peer educators expected to work in this position? What will happen if they decide to leave earlier than agreed upon?)

Terminology can be confusing or misleading. The phrase 'job description' might imply employment with compensation. If yours is strictly a volunteer programme, use of this term might be inappropriate. The term 'contract' may be culturally relevant in signifying importance in the role of a peer educator and a certain degree of commitment. What you call these documents is not as important as using some form of them. Be creative, involve former and current peer educators in the process, and choose the documents and terms that work best for your project.

These documents, once agreed upon by all involved, provide a basis for assessing and ensuring quality work. After all, how can you recruit peer educators effectively without knowing what they are expected to know and do? How can you become frustrated with peer educators for complaining about compensation if they never understood that they would not be paid? How will you know how much turnover you actually have if you never considered the duration of peer educators' assignments to begin with?

Write a code of conduct

A code of conduct is essential to maintaining high standards. A code is not difficult to create and can help improve your project in two main ways. First, it makes clear to peer educators the attitudes and behaviours that are expected of them in the field. Second, it can help assure community members and other stakeholders that there is indeed a high standard of conduct among the peer educators they support.

Here is a list of items you might include in your code of conduct:

Assured confidentiality	Peer educators hold information about peers and their concerns in confidence. Confidentiality is assured, except in cases where the young person is in danger or involved in illegal activity.
Respect for values	Peer educators pledge to respect all values of peers, regardless of whether they differ from their own. One person's values should not be forced on another.
Respect for diversity	Peer educators respect the diversity of peers, regardless of sex, sexual preference, language, ethnicity, or culture.
Provision of updated, correct, and unbiased information	Peer educators always provide correct and factual information to peers.
Promotion of gender equity and equality	Peer educators promote gender equity and equality by providing the same information in similar manners to both young men and young women.
Avoidance of personal misrepresentation, while respecting disclosure boundaries	Peer educators are encouraged to be honest about their own situations and behaviours but recognize that they are not obligated to share personal experiences. 'I am not here to talk about myself. I'm here to help you think for yourself.'
Awareness of individual limits and the role of referrals	Peer educators acknowledge that their education has limits. Their work can, but will not always, increase knowledge, affect attitudes, and change behaviour. Referrals to specialists will be made when needed.
Avoidance of abuse of their position	Peer educators commit to using their skills and knowledge to improve the health of young people and agree to refrain from using their position at the expense of others.

To develop your own code of conduct, gather a group to begin brainstorming. Remind group members about the project's goals and objectives. Then allow them time to discuss, debate, and draft a code of conduct that fits the project. Writing it together ensures that it can be easily understood by peer educators and addresses the practicalities of work in the field.

As a group, decide how to implement and enforce the code. You will not be able to anticipate all potential abuses of the code in your discussion. However, you will make it clear that corrective action will be taken when necessary.

Once your group has developed an approved code, ask peer educators to review and sign it, which will indicate that they agree to adhere to it. Lastly, plan on monitoring adherence, and review and revise the code as needed.

Monitor and provide feedback to peer educators

Regular monitoring is essential for maintaining continuous quality in a peer education project. Monitoring is the routine and systematic process of collecting performance data and measuring progress towards the project's objectives. Every project has some basic reporting systems in place through which various performance data are collected and then relayed to donors. These existing systems can be a starting point for your project's monitoring plan.

The two main questions that monitoring activities seek to answer are:

- Are planned activities occurring?
- Are the objectives being met?

When monitoring peer education programmes, your organization might ask you to collect the following kinds of qualitative information:

- Number of peer educators (by sex) trained
- Number of peers educators attending project meetings
- Number of training workshops held
- Number of youth participating at various levels of the project
- Number of outreach activities by peer educators (by type)
- Number of educational materials distributed (by type)
- Number in target audience (by sex) reached
- Number of peer contacts (by type)
- Number of referrals to other health services

But numbers alone cannot adequately describe a programme's success. To get a better idea of a programme's *quality*, peer educators should be observed and queried while they are working in the field. Before observing them, however, make sure that they are aware of your expectations and that they know what will be monitored. Here are some things you can observe and monitor:

- Which messages are being delivered to peers? How?
- What information is being provided to peers?
- What kinds of questions are peer educators commonly asked? Which topics are most interesting to their peers?
- Which of the peer educators' skills are strongest? Which still need practice?
- How do peers react to educational sessions in the field? Are they effective?
- What other tools or information do peer educators need?
- What makes peer educators successful? How do you define success?

- Do peer educators feel supported? Appreciated? Is it enough?
- Who has helped them to be successful in the community?

Monitoring is one of the most time-consuming and expensive components of a project. This is especially true if there are many peer educators and a limited number of people to monitor them. Develop a plan to delegate data collection.

Giving feedback

Monitoring also offers an opportunity to provide feedback to peer educators on how well they are doing their jobs. Immediate feedback is critical to achieving desired performance. Also, like most people, peer educators want to know that someone cares about them and their work.

Observation and feedback might periodically be handled by managers, but more often they will occur in the field by people who have more direct contact with the peer educators, such as mentors, trainers, or volunteer coordinators.

Feedback should:

- Refer to specific examples
- Provide helpful alternatives
- Be honest, yet respectful
- Focus on things that can be changed

Any negative feedback should be constructive, so that it serves to improve or advance the performance of a peer educator. Most of all, negative feedback should be presented in a way that helps the peer educator accept the information and plan to make positive changes.

When providing feedback, be wary of saying one positive thing and then following up with a *long* list of negative comments. If someone is doing his or her job that poorly, you might need to reassess whether the person is a good fit for the position. However, allow for some individuality and different styles of working. Peer educators *should* be different, so that they can appeal to and successfully reach different types of audiences. Some might be very energetic, some funny, others authoritative. In the end, standards need to be met, and you cannot compromise on performance standards such as providing correct information.

You can help peer educators receive feedback by letting them know that they:

- Should be open minded
- Do not need to respond to negative comments or become defensive

- Should not take comments personally
- Can always assume you have good intentions (to help them improve and succeed)

After you have provided feedback, discuss how peer educators can improve. Then offer them the opportunity to discuss their work. Ask questions such as:

- What successes have you had since our last meeting?
- How have you done on meeting your goals?
- What challenges have you encountered? How have you been able to overcome them?
- How are you feeling about work in general?
- How can I help you?
- Is there anything else that you would like to talk about?

Take notes and thank them for their contribution.

Feedback to a chair?

If you are relying on your staff to provide feedback to peer educators, make sure they know how to give feedback in a constructive way. Try this exercise.

Place a chair on top of a table in front of the group that will be providing feedback. Ask group members to rate the chair's 'work performance' by giving three types of feedback: negative, neutral, and positive. Record their feedback on a flip chart. Here are examples of feedback the group might give the chair:

Negative. 'Dumb chair. Chairs don't belong on tables. Don't you know better by now? Good chairs sit on the floor, beside or under tables.'

Neutral. 'Chairs don't belong on tables. Sit on the floor from now on.'

Positive. 'I can see you're working hard to be creative and productive, but I think you'd be more successful if you chose a position on the floor, either beside or under the table. Is there anything I can do to help make your job easier?'

Because the chair really does not belong on the table (hence, is not doing its 'job' correctly), your staff will benefit from learning how to be positive while still pointing out how the chair's performance could be improved.

Facilitate recognition and career development

Peer educators need their contributions and accomplishments to be recognized and applauded publicly and in ways that foster community support for volunteerism. Monitoring will help any manager better understand people's motivations and interests. Peer educators gain many skills on the job that can be applied as they develop their careers and enter into adulthood. Thus, monitoring is especially important to help peer educators grow and to enable communities and parents to understand and acknowledge the contributions of peer educators.

Hold a community event to publicly acknowledge the service of volunteers. Invite speakers (local officials, those affected by activities, and peer educators) to talk about the contributions and assistance provided by peer educators. Ensure that family members of peer educators attend, such as parents, guardians, and brothers and sisters. Give out certificates and let communities know the length of service, hours volunteered, number of sessions provided, and any other information that gives reference to scale and level of commitment.

This is also a good time to let communities learn about programmes designed for them and the standards put in place to ensure that these volunteers provide accurate information and dedication on the job. For extra excitement, let peer educators get involved in planning. Following a formal event, use private-sector connections to secure space for a party, cake, dancing, and other fun.

As peer educators complete their work or service, hold a workshop. The goal of this workshop should be to enable peer educators to consider and successfully transition to the next phase in their lives – whether that is further education, work, apprenticeships, or starting a family.

Depending on the type of programme and target audience, peer educators can have different needs. Prior to the workshop, find out if peer educators:

- Have thought about their next steps after being a peer educator
- Have thought about what they will do next year or in five years
- Have prepared or updated their resumes
- Know whom to contact as a reference for a job or school application
- Have ever practiced interviewing for a job
- Have skills in looking for work or an apprenticeship

During the workshop, focus on skills acquired through peer education that are applicable in future jobs, such as:

- Community outreach and mobilization
- Preparation and planning
- Public speaking and communication skills
- Working with non-governmental organizations (and perhaps donors)
- Monitoring and reporting

Some organizations with established peer education programmes develop networks to link former peer educators. This workshop could explain such support structures or encourage their development.

SWOT box

As a manager of peer educators, you can help them self-evaluate and formulate career plans. The SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) approach focuses on internal and external factors that shape their plans. Use this box to help them outline these factors:

Internal	your **strengths** (and likes)	your **weaknesses** (and dislikes)
External	**opportunities** in your career or education	**threats** in your career or education

Create a peer education resource center

If peer educators repeatedly ask for additional information about certain topics, and if this information can help them do their jobs, consider developing a resource center. Some managers hesitate to do so, however, because resource centers cost money, need someone to manage them, and can become outdated quickly. However, these factors need not prohibit you from creating a resource center, especially if potential contents are deemed essential to job performance.

In larger peer education projects, a space dedicated to supporting peers is often considered necessary and is planned in advance. Some have computers and might provide access to the Internet. They might have cassette or compact disc players or a television for viewing videos or DVDs. Most usually have shelves for new publications, pamphlets, tools, and other resources. The space should be designed for comfortable reading, with tables and chairs, computer desks, and couches.

Personal computer use

Some managers worry that peer educators will use the computer and Internet for personal, rather than work, use. While there is a potential for abuse, this should not be the reason you decide against having a computer in your resource center. First, be sure that accessing information will help solve any performance problems identified. Then, discuss your concerns with peer educators and explain what behaviour is acceptable. Develop a schedule for use, explain what kind of computer work takes priority over others, and consider using computer time as a reward for good performance. With careful monitoring, you will be able to check that computers are used appropriately.

For smaller peer education programmes with fewer resources, use existing space and instill shared ownership to diffuse the burden of creating and managing a resource center. Most importantly, get peer educators involved in the process. Ask them what they want, allow them to design and decorate the space, and teach them how to develop a budget and procure resources.

You can help them plan by asking the following questions and encouraging them to seek answers from their fellow peer educators:

- On what topics do peer educators need more information to do their job better?
- What types of resources are most needed by peer educators?
- How will they access them? Can they get copies?
- How will peers know which new resources are available?
- What will you do when resources are out of date?
- Who will manage the resource center? Maintain it?
- What is needed to arrange the space? Who can do it?
- Who can follow up on budgets and ordering materials?

Once peer educators have the resource center running, monitor their progress and help them manage the facility. Be wary if few people are involved in managing or using the center; resource centers can quickly fall into disuse. If the resource center is run by a group, maintaining shared responsibility will be important to success.

Monitor the center's success by asking those running it:

- How many peers use the resource center each month?
- What kind of feedback have you gotten from peer educators?
- What has been successful?
- What has been challenging? Were you able to overcome these challenges? How?
- Are there any current issues?
- What will you do over the next month or quarter?
- Do you need support from me to accomplish this? What kind?

Requesting free resources. Help stock your resource center by identifying organizations that can provide free materials. Public health organizations look for resource centers that will disseminate the information and will welcome the initiative. Use the sample letter (see next page) to guide peer educators on how to request materials and be put on a mailing list.

Sample letter for requesting resources

[Date]

Dear Publications Officer:

My project, [insert name], recently established a youth peer education resource center. We are very excited about this initiative and would like to stock it with current and appropriate resources and reference materials. Our project focuses on providing information and skills on reproductive health and HIV [insert information about your project, who it serves, and how it benefits the community].

We would appreciate being put on any mailing lists that provide free materials to organizations such as ours. Our e-mail address is: [insert e-mail address to receive updates].

Additionally, we [found in an online search, noticed a colleague with, etc.] your publication called [insert name], which would be a very useful tool to add to our center. Is it possible to order a copy or request one for free? If so, please let us know how to order, or send it directly to [insert contact and complete mailing address].

Thank you in advance for your support. [organization's name] is well known and respected for its quality publications, and we would like to make its publications available to our peer educators.

Sincerely,
[name]
Youth Resource Center Manager

Provide creative incentives

In many cases, peer educators volunteer a great deal of their free time to contribute to the health and well-being of their peers. This is time they could have spent being with families, friends, studying, playing sports, or other activities. Their volunteerism is an asset that should not go unappreciated or prevent them from achieving their own personal career goals.

Research has shown that community participation and endorsement helps projects retain peer educators, especially during times when their organizations are experiencing financial hardship and can provide little, if any, monetary incentives. When community members such as parents, teachers, local leaders, and donors are involved and supportive, peer educators feel proud of their work.

However, incentives are still an important way to help motivate peer educators and encourage them to maintain their commitment to the programme. Incentives come in many forms, so be creative. Below is a list of incentives, categorized by cost, that were generated by a group of peer educators from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Use this list to help generate ideas, but also ask your own peer educators what kinds of incentives they would appreciate. Personal interests will influence the incentives that keep strong peer educators in your programme. Becoming aware of these interests can help the project to retain these educators and to contribute to their self-development.

High cost. You might ask a donor or local business to sponsor these kinds of incentives.

- Large quantities of high-quality educational or promotional materials (e-games, T-shirts, pens, notebooks, brochures, manuals, etc.)
- Sponsorship to big conferences, meetings, or presentations that occur at the international, national, or regional level
- Internships or job opportunities at donor organizations
- Opportunity to represent the organization at national and regional events
- Contests with big prizes (such as a free weekend somewhere)
- Fancy annual party for those involved with the programme (peer educators, trainers, staff, partners, donors)
- Administrative and technical equipment (computers, photocopiers, software)

Lower cost. You could ask your sponsoring non-governmental organization or someone at the local level to fund these items, but your donor might also be willing to assist.

- No- or low-cost access (for peer educators) to administrative and technical equipment (computers, fax machines, phones, Internet)
- Implementation of peer educators' ideas using their creativity and skills for newsletters, Web site, promotional materials, etc.)
- Regular monitoring visits to show peer educators that supervisors are interested in their work
- Invitation to donors, non-governmental organizations, and partners to watch peer educators work in the field
- Low-cost, basic health services, such as family planning, counseling, or distribution of commodities (pills, condoms, etc.)
- Training via a short refresher course
- Continuing education and access to additional reference or resource materials

- Payment of small sums of money, such as per diem on work days
- Money for local transportation
- Promotional materials (bags, T-shirts, pens, etc.)

Very little/no cost. You may be able to find a small amount of money or energy to offer these incentives.

- Verbal recognition of good work or successful completion of assignments (one-on-one, in meetings, especially at community events)
- Awards (peer-of-the-month, annual certificates, competitions) and recognition of award winners throughout the community
- Refreshments during or after meetings
- Invitation to peers to present their work at higher-level meetings or workshops
- Invitation to peers to attend regular staff meetings to learn more about the project
- Incentives contributed by private businesses (restaurant gift certificate, clothing, free entry to a club, phone cards, or cash awards)

Also, ask peer educators if they have suggestions. They will enjoy being involved in the process and can likely recommend creative and cost-effective incentives.

Competitive incentives?

Creating competitions and using incentives can be a great idea to stimulate quality peer education. But beware of competitions that encourage quantity in lieu of quality. A competition to educate the 'Most Peers Reached' could start a race in which educators quickly deliver incomplete information. So be careful how you structure any incentive schemes.

Competitive incentives might be implemented to increase the number of youth who actually make use of services to which peer educators have referred them. Two possibilities are:

1. Hold a meeting with peer educators to talk about when and how to effectively communicate so peers can be better served. A competition could be held to develop the best promotional idea to get peers into services. Winners work with the project to implement their idea.
2. Hold a meeting with peer educators to talk about when and how to communicate effectively so peers can be better served. Distribute referral cards and create a competition to get the most peers (who need services) into services. Then help service delivery points track appropriate referrals. Ask them to report back about who referred the most clients and whether your competition increased the number of youth clients.

Monitor how incentives are working. Perhaps incentives you are already providing help motivate and retain peer educators. In this case, use monitoring to document the incentives' success and ensure that they are employed in other projects.

Peer educators can also learn how to monitor incentives. Have them survey their peers to find out how any new incentives make them feel. Do they improve morale for the group? Make individuals feel proud? Provide something that will help their careers later?

Plan for meaningful youth involvement

Research has shown that one thing highly successful peer education projects have in common is their meaningful involvement of young people. These projects:

- Promote shared ownership of the project and accomplishments
- Teach youth about the project, including budgeting and prioritization
- Value and respect input from youth
- Include youth in decision-making processes when possible; when impossible, make the process transparent
- Treat youth fairly and equally
- Avoid manipulation and tokenism of youth

A peer education project might either be the primary project (stand-alone) or part of a project with numerous activities (integrated). Stand-alone projects may have an easier time involving youth. By design, they tend to be less hierarchical and engender more contact between project staff and peer educators. Youth participating in integrated projects may be more segregated from the rest of the staff and may need to work harder to overcome this division. Integrated projects should consider including youth on their advisory board and creating ways to stay connected with youth educators.

Whose side are you on?

As a manager, you may find yourself pulled between peer educators and senior management. For example, suppose you are assigned the task of planning an event for World AIDS Day. You want to involve peer educators because you believe they are the ones most likely to create an event that effectively reaches their peers. You also know there is a limit to their volunteerism. You find a group of peer educators who are willing to help if your project can supply them with flip charts, lunch, snacks, and a room in which to hold the event. However, senior management thinks this cost is wasteful. You will have to negotiate between the two groups and try to find common ground.

Institutional mechanisms (policies, guidelines, mission statements) that advocate for balanced youth-adult participation can be challenging to create in an organization with little experience working with young people in this way. But it is important to promote youth involvement, open communication, transparency, and mutual respect as deeply embedded values of the organization, rather than simply as catchphrases.

For more information, see: Family Health International. *Youth Participation Guide*. Arlington, VA: Family Health International, 2005. Available: *http://www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/rhtrainmat/ypguide.htm*. This is a training curriculum to help institutions assess, plan for, and improve youth-adult partnerships.

Hold additional trainings or workshops

Everyone needs to be well trained in order to do their job effectively. Sometimes managers identify training or workshops as their preferred way to solve performance problems. But training will only fix a knowledge or skills gap. If workers already have the knowledge needed for their job, more training is not likely to help.

Think carefully about these questions before planning a training:

- What do you want to get out of this training? Increased or correct knowledge about a topic area? New skills that educators will use on the job?
- Will this training meet the expectations and needs of your participants?
- Can it solve the problem?

While trainings can be expensive, you can organize them in an economical fashion if you have ample time to plan. Consider these suggestions:

- **Exchange services for space.** Contact stakeholders and negotiate to find quality space in local schools, churches, or government buildings. If they are not willing to donate the space, perhaps your educators can provide sessions to their youth in exchange for the rooms.
- **Be creative.** Find ways to minimize the cost of transportation, meals, and housing. Transportation costs can be lowered or eliminated if workshops are held after a regularly scheduled meeting or if training takes place locally. A family member or friend might be willing to cater snacks or meals at less cost than a business would charge. A residential training does not have to be expensive if participants agree to stay at each other's homes during training.
- **Ask for donations.** A venue is the most common donation, but there are others. You can ask for financial contributions from the private sector.

Restaurants can provide food or catering. Shops can provide flip charts, markers, and tape. Bus companies can provide transportation. Printers can provide printing services. Support can quickly turn into partnership if you publicly recognize donors and express appreciation for their generosity. Praise sponsors in a newsletter and mention them in meetings and informal conversations with stakeholders and others.

- **Refuse pressure to meet excessive participant demands.** Training should not be treated by participants as a chance to make money on per diem or to go on a vacation. It should be an activity to which interested and committed participants come to learn. If participants make unrealistic demands, assure them you are doing your best to meet the objectives of the training within the limits of your budget. And if the training is optional, be sure to let them know that too.

While there are ways to save money when planning workshops or trainings, some things should not be compromised:

Facilitation. At least two trainers are needed for workshops longer than three days, and trainers must be qualified. Find out about their past experience and check references. Are they familiar with learning theory and participatory methodologies? Have they done similar trainings or worked with comparable participants? If you have the opportunity, watch them conduct a training before you hire them to lead your workshop.

You should provide trainers with clear goals. If this is a new training or adaptation of a previous workshop, trainers should work with you to create an agenda and plan for follow-up. The agenda should arrange sessions sequentially and provide objectives that describe the purpose of each session.

Size. Consider the size of your training group to make certain that participants will get the attention and time they need. For participatory training, where participants will learn new skills, groups typically have no more than 28 participants. If you plan to hold informational trainings, where participants learn via lectures, your group can be larger. Remember, the larger the group, the easier it is for participants to feel too intimidated to ask questions. In this case, instead of holding one large question-and-answer session, break into smaller groups and add facilitators.

Workspace. If the venue is not conducive to productive participation, do not use it. Rooms that are too small or dark are poorly suited for training. If you anticipate that participants will be straining to see a video or have little room, look for

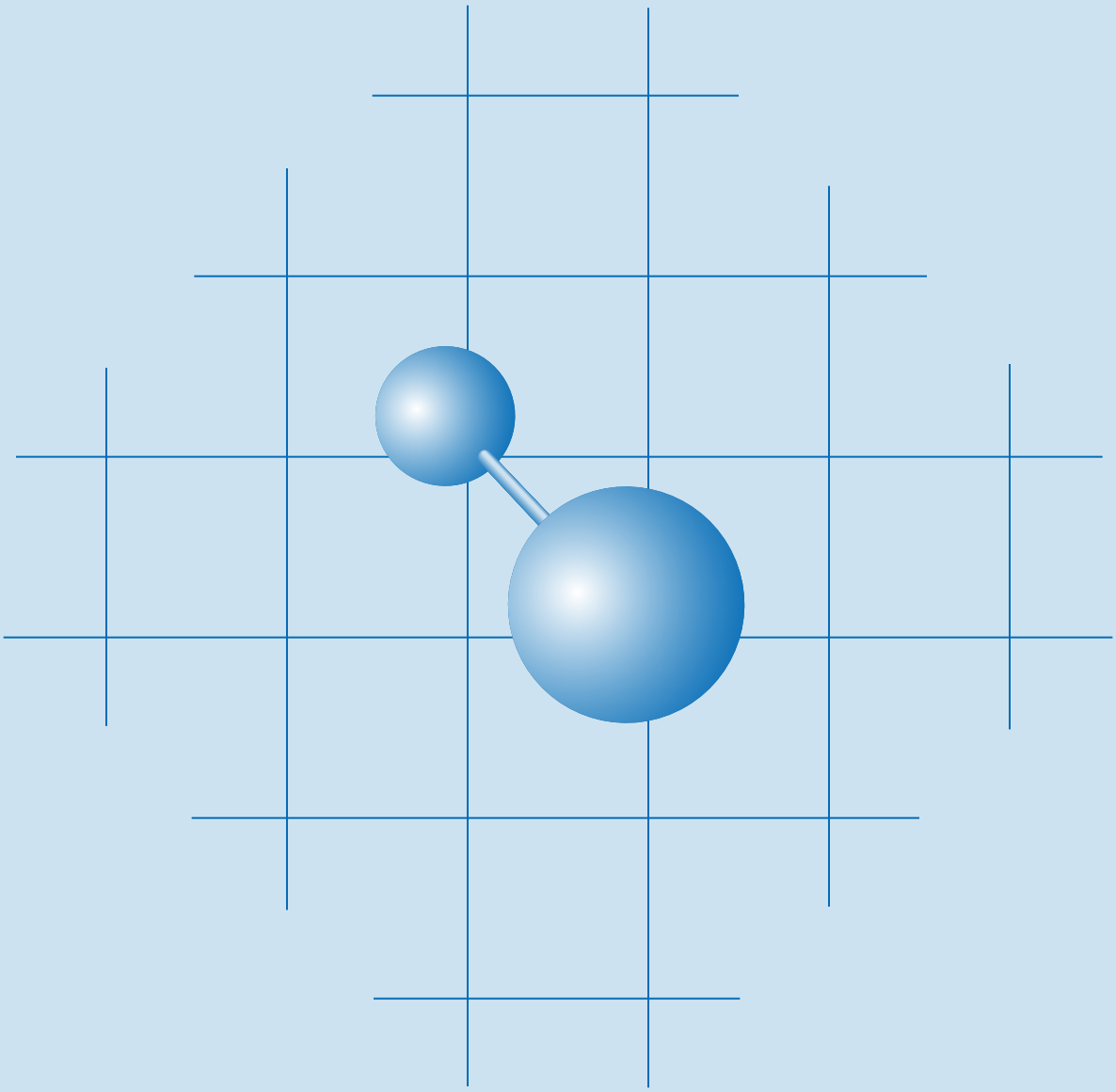
solutions: Is there a seating arrangement that could work better? Can participants go outside to break up the sessions and get some air?

Resources. Participants should be provided any resources (documents, guidelines, information, forms, and other materials) they need to be successful during and after the training. If they will eventually be expected to train others, do they have training kits with a curriculum, markers, tape, and flip chart of their own?

Follow-up. A training might be very successful, but without proper follow-up, participants might have difficulty applying what they have learned once they are back on the job. If they have been asked to change the way they perform, how will those changes be encouraged and monitored? How will you inform managers and stakeholders of what peer educators need to succeed?

Additional peer education training resources

The Y-PEER Toolkit includes two training manuals called *Training of Trainers* and *Theatre-Based Techniques for Youth Peer Education*. Both of these manuals provide information, exercises, and an extensive set of resources covering guidelines for peer education, research, training manuals, Web sites, and more. See: *http://www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/Publications/peeredtoolkit/index.htm*.



3 Basic Programme Management Skills

Many people become managers by promotion, and they may have little actual management experience or training. There is also an assumption that if you were a peer educator yourself, your knowledge about peer education should readily evolve into an aptitude for management, which is not always the case.

This section provides an overview of basic programme management skills for managers of youth peer education activities. Included in this section is information on:

- Managing activities
- Leading people
- Encouraging teamwork
- Mentoring
- Delegating

Additional programme management resources

Buckingham M, Coffman C. *First Break All the Rules – What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1999.

Beich E. *Training for Dummies.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2005.

Harvard Business School. *Working Knowledge* (Internet resources). Available: *http://hbswk.hbs.edu/*.

Loeb M, Kindel S. *Leadership for Dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 1999.

Management Sciences for Health. Management and leadership resources (Internet resources). Available: *http://www.msh.org/what_msh_does/clm/resources.html#top*.

Nelson B, Economy P. *Managing for Dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2003.

Managing activities

Exercise

Programme management. Take out a sheet of paper and make a list of all the things that you manage in your job. Do not leave out small tasks or ones that you manage only occasionally. Is your list long? How is it organized? By priority? Deadline? Activity? Perhaps the list is not well organized at all. If not, is the lack of organization reflected in the way you approach your job?

Experts cite seven steps to effective management:

1. **Review project goals and objectives.** Keep these fundamental ideas in mind as you do your day-to-day work. This awareness will help you remember how various tasks contribute to the 'big picture' and motivate you if you begin to feel overwhelmed by details.

2. **Organize your projects.** Before you can effectively manage activities, you have to organize them. Good managers develop systems that allow themselves and others to track plans and projects. One method is the Gantt chart, which shows activities and timelines in a bar chart, indicating overlaps.

Activity	Month							Person responsible
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1. Recruitment								Manager, peer educators
2. Pre-Training assessment								
3. Training								Consultant

3. **Define expectations.** To help meet your project's goals, staff and peer educators need to be aware of your expectations of them. To make sure your expectations are understood, you might simply ask the team: 'Do you know what is expected?' Look for understanding, but do not let a simple yes answer suffice. People want to appear to know the answer, even if they are unclear on the details. Probe a bit to see if they can name some things that are expected of them.

   An even more effective way of communicating your expectations is to periodically meet with staff and peer educators to:

- Explain the project's goals and objectives (or refresh them on this information if they are not new to the project)
- Communicate your expectations
- Check for understanding by asking participants to summarize information
- Clarify misunderstandings
- Repeat key information

Also check whether peer educators can answer these questions:

- How does your work contribute to the goals of the project?
- How often are you expected to conduct peer education sessions?
- How long will you be a peer educator?
- How are you expected to monitor your work? Report to supervisors?

Both peer educators and staff will likely be grateful that you clarified your expectations and feel more comfortable knowing exactly what you expect them to do.

4. **Assign responsibilities.** Assigning others responsibility for certain tasks (known as 'delegation') frees a manager's time to fulfill his or her primary role as a manager and to work on tasks that staff might not be capable of completing. (See the section on delegation, page 74, for more information.)

   Accepting responsibility can prove rewarding for staff and peer educators. They can develop a deeper understanding of the process and the organization and take pride in ownership of their projects.

   However, be wary of those who only want to get involved with new and seemingly exciting activities. Sometimes staff members get bored and begin to think that their ongoing responsibilities are less important than new initiatives. Staff might also think that new activities will propel them to better opportunities. Either way, if a staff member's involvement in new activities is reducing his or her overall productivity, talk to the person. Find out why he or she thinks new tasks are better and look for ways to meet both of your needs.

5. **Set deadlines.** Setting deadlines is crucial, even if they need to be revised from time to time. There are often very good reasons for delay. Perhaps a consultant could not do the scheduled training, a printer lost your order, or your only accountant went on vacation. Placing blame is usually not helpful; instead, use what you learned from the delays to better plan future projects. Answer questions about events that might affect their deadlines, such as: How much advance notice do consultants need to plan training? Who reviews a

final draft before it is sent to the printer? How can you schedule vacations so that work is not interrupted?

There are other external pressures, such as donor requests or new funding opportunities, that could conflict with your deadlines but could also potentially benefit your programme. Be aware of opportunities and their responsibilities while balancing your existing workload. Saying yes to every opportunity is not always in your or your staff's best interest. Review your goals and objectives to make sure new opportunities provide clear benefits and complement existing work.

When possible, strive to avoid over-scheduling. When a project is chronically behind deadline, it usually means that staff are overextended. Although most people can work this way for a short period of time, if it happens frequently, your management of the project might be called into question. Staff might ask why you are not aware of the level of effort needed to complete the work. The worst result is if staff feel they are expected to work faster or longer hours without compensation and with no relief in sight.

6. **Provide material support.** What if you asked your peer educators or other employees, 'Do you have all the tools you need to do your job?' Would they answer yes?

   Perhaps you have not asked them lately. Or, you might be worried that they will ask for things you cannot provide. Or, maybe you do not agree with their assessment and you want to avoid a potentially uncomfortable discussion.

   However, avoiding this topic can lead to disgruntled staff. How can you expect them to work effectively or to complete the contract or agreement if they do not have the tools they need?

   So, ask staff about their needs, even if management cannot immediately support the request. Being aware of staff needs allows you to revisit your work plan and budget, and propose potential solutions: Can you ask your donor for additional support? Can a private business donate anything useful?

   If your organization failed to request adequate support from donors at the outset of the project, donors will still hold you, your peer educators, and your staff responsible for activities you promised to conduct. If necessary, meet with donors and present a strong argument for additional resources so that you will not have to compromise the quality of your project.

The needs of salaried versus unsalaried staff

It is striking that project managers worry that costs associated with supporting volunteers will scare donors from funding their work. If your accountants told you they could not perform their job without a calculator, would you refuse to buy one? Probably not, since calculators are considered a basic necessity for an accountant's work. Peer educators probably have their own ideas of what they consider basic necessities for their jobs. Be prepared to listen to peer educators and support them, if you agree.

7. **Monitor progress.** As with all of your programme's activities, management also needs to be monitored.

   Management can be judged, in part, by the success or failure of an intervention or activity itself. For example, after training has been held, pre- and post-training evaluations are submitted by participants, and trainers report back on the activity. You can monitor management of that activity by reviewing those documents and asking, 'Did the training happen on time, according to the work plan? Were evaluations good? Did participants have complaints about the room or the trainer? Did the trainer have all the needed materials?' Answering these questions can help you judge your own success as a manager. Also, with the help of your monitoring and evaluation specialist, you will likely need to report much of the same information to donors as well.

   There are other, informal ways to monitor management activities. For instance, throughout the process, you will receive updates from staff responsible for preparing and coordinating logistics. While this information can be helpful, the potential downside of using this informal method is 'impaired memory', meaning that when recounting a past experience, people may forget some of the pitfalls or challenges. Also, sometimes the person who completed the task is no longer present and cannot report on its success. Occasionally, people may feel pressure to succeed and present a more positive report than warranted.

   When monitoring management progress, consider:

   - Level of effort (How much time did it *really* take staff to prepare and implement the activity?)

- Effectiveness (Did a new process or certain technique increase effectiveness? What was it? Could it be replicated?)
- Obstacles (What challenges occurred? Were they expected or unexpected? How were they overcome?)
- Successes (What went really well? How did you know it was a job well done?)
- Replication (What would you do differently the next time?)

Create a mechanism to keep track of valuable lessons learned. Allow those who spent time and energy on the task to relay their expertise to the team. Concentrate on the positives and be sure to provide an environment free of blame or guilt. Focus on things that could improve future activities, rather than on what has passed. Staff meetings can be a time for staff to report on successes or challenges. Take minutes of the meeting or make sure that lessons learned are recorded elsewhere.

Leading people

Peer educators offer energy and eagerness in support of your organization's cause. Leaders who can find a way to harness this energy will certainly unlock a formidable youth force.

A project manager who leads staff and peer educators:

- **Energizes.** Makes sure that people are continually inspired to do their job and excited to be part of a team effort.
- **Empowers.** Instills the programme's vision and goals, and supplies training and tools in order to delegate power and distribute ownership to others. This does not mean that you stop managing, rather you change the way you manage in order to share responsibility.
- **Listens.** Actively pays attention and listens to ideas, opinions, needs, and sentiments of staff and peer educators.
- **Supports.** Makes resources and training opportunities available; provides guidance, coaching, and emotional support when needed.
- **Provides feedback.** Regularly tells staff and peer educators how they are doing and provides constructive feedback.
- **Acts as a role model.** Provides leadership by modeling teamwork, supporting others, listening to colleagues, sharing credit, and demonstrating a strong work ethic.

Informed decision-making

Has an employee or peer educator ever arrived at your desk, out of breath and asking you to make a decision on the spot? Making decisions is an important task for a manager, so take steps to make the best decision possible.

Do not be tempted to make a hasty decision if you really need more time to consider the question. If the answer is not immediately clear, promise to think it over and provide an answer in a specific amount of time.

Investing time with staff and volunteers?

Spending time with your staff and volunteers is essential to the success of your project. Depending on the number of staff you supervise, this may take a considerable portion of your time.

Exercise

Balancing your time. Use this exercise to see how you are investing time in your staff. Take out a sheet of paper. On one side, make a list of your staff in order of high performers to low performers. On the other side, create a scale representing time, at the top write 'lots' and the bottom 'very little'. Now, draw a line between the names of your staff and the amount of time you invest in managing them. Do the lines frequently cross? If so, you are spending more time with your low performers.

Many managers spend more time with low performers while allowing their high performers to work with limited supervision. They assume high performers do not need help, since they already do fine work. Some managers speculate that extra time spent guiding and supporting low performers will increase the group's overall performance. This might be true in the long term, but in the short term, you may simply find yourself spending extra time on people with little potential to excel.

Some people argue that the fact that high performers commonly do well with little supervision is exactly the reason to invest more time in them. If not challenged, high performers might leave in search of better opportunities.

When spending time with a low performer, you will learn about the challenges or problems with their job, but when spending time with a high performer, you will find out what works. They might already have found quick solutions to the things low performers see as problems. Those high performers could be model mentors or could revolutionize your project, so give them more of your attention.

Encouraging teamwork

A team can be called together to solve a problem, share knowledge, generate new ideas, or reach common goals. Peer education is frequently a group-driven process.

Successful teams are driven by productivity. Members seek to complement each others' skills and share the workloads. Teammates are respectful, allow everyone to contribute, and are sensitive to the needs of others. They seek to cooperate, knowing that they will be rewarded for their efforts.

Teams can be categorized into three groups: formal, informal, and self-managed:

Formal teams are purposefully organized by a project or organization. They can provide a means of communication in an institutionally approved manner (command teams), be assigned to accomplish a task (task forces), or play a role on a long-term or permanent goal (committees).

- **Command teams** follow typical hierarchical structure, where a manager or supervisor leads a team of employees that report directly to him or her. This person leads based on information provided by senior managers, who provide the larger goals to be achieved.
- **Task forces** are brought together for a limited time to address a specific problem or issue. They usually have a deadline and are asked to report their recommendations to management.
- **Committees** are created to perform ongoing organizational tasks. This could be a youth advisory committee, where youth serve for a period of time (a year or two), providing ongoing input to an organization.

Informal teams develop naturally. These are the groups that, for example, form bonds during training and continue to maintain friendships thereafter. Team members also share personal challenges and offer empathy or solutions in a 'safe space'. At the office, the informal team might be the group that eats lunch together and shares information about organizational changes. Informal teams seek to solve their own problems, share information, or communicate outside of organizational structures.

Self-managed teams combine attributes of both formal and informal teams. Sometimes created by organizations, self-managed teams find their own solutions to common problems encountered on the job. Generally these teams are relatively small (fewer than 30 people), comprised of various members from different parts of a project, self-managed and empowered to act, and multifunctional.

Each kind of team has its own strengths. Be aware, however, of the following potential problems:

- **Too many leaders.** A team with too many leaders can take a long time to accomplish a task, and the leaders may even fight with each other. The first task the team takes on together will be its toughest, since team members are learning how to work together. If there is no urgent deadline, give the team time to see if it can work out problems on its own. If it cannot, approach the dominant members to see if they can think of ways to diffuse the situation. As a last resort, or if time is an issue, you might need to remove some members from the team.
- **Too many members.** A team that is too large or has too few leaders might be less productive or efficient because it will take longer to discuss ideas and make decisions. If so, look for ways to reduce size and divide goals. If lack of leadership is the problem, talk to the team members. Are they clear about their goal and timeline? Could they become more efficient? How? Can they nominate or vote on a leader? Can they divide leadership?
- **Personality conflicts.** Personality conflicts can arise. Before changing team construction, seek resolutions by asking team members to think of ways to diffuse the situation.
- **Teams without power.** When feasible, teams should be empowered to make decisions and implement their ideas. If a group with the task of creating an incentive programme for peers delivers a plan but is not given the responsibility to follow through, the team may feel let down. Because empowerment may not always be practical, be honest and explain that management will be grateful for the team's suggestions but might not implement them.

Can you be a manager, leader, and team member at the same time?

This seems like quite a challenge, but it is not impossible. A team is made of all types of people, playing different roles at different times. Team members should not be afraid to speak their minds even if their supervisor is on the team. Likewise, supervisors must allow others to express themselves; they cannot assume that they are too important to take on a team task.

Inspire volunteer leaders

Peer education projects attract many energized, committed young people as volunteers. These volunteers are not a resource to be overlooked.

Some project managers tend to call upon volunteers when paid staff members do not have the time or inclination to complete a task. While youth peer educators may welcome the opportunity to help, you should ask if this management style is the best way to generate youth-adult partnerships, model good management, and foster skill development.

Instead of automatically assigning peer educators to tasks that staff do not want to do, plan volunteer leadership opportunities in advance. Create self-managed teams of peer educators and give them useful goals such as promoting healthy youth-adult partnerships, increasing opportunities for skills development, or generating ideas for expanding outreach to youth in their communities. After the teams present their suggestions, be clear about next steps. How will you use these ideas? Who will you share them with? If you agree to implement some or any of the ideas, empower the team to make them a reality.

Mentoring

Mentoring is one of the most important things you can provide to your peer educators. Young people watch everything, look for role models, learn from each experience, and want to develop skills that will help launch successful careers. And though they might not all strive to become managers of peer education projects, their careers can certainly benefit from the public-speaking, time management, organization, information-seeking, and communication skills they can develop as peer educators.

A mentoring programme pairs experienced workers (mentors) with less experienced staff to promote professional development. Mentors can provide friendly tips, offer workplace and career advice, and encourage their partners. As they work together, they share experiences and insights. The best mentors offer honest criticism and constant support and enhance their own leadership skills in the process.

Mentorship programmes can be traditional junior-senior level exchanges, matches made across skill sets, or team mentorship, where someone is assigned several people to mentor. Traditional methods that pair a newer peer educator with an experienced peer educator can be highly effective.

Mentoring programmes can be informal or formal:

Informal programmes have flexible schedules and are defined by the individual pairs, rather than by any standard guidelines. Although these informal programmes should be monitored (as any programme should be), it may be difficult to compare pairs that develop and respond uniquely.

Formal programmes require more time and energy to implement, but the extra work is worthwhile. Typically, they begin with an introductory meeting or training to provide information on communication and mentorship. Participants should agree upon styles of communication and scheduled contact. This type of programme decreases the chances that people being mentored will perceive their mentor as being too busy to spend time with them, because the amount of contact is scheduled and agreed upon at the start.

Reverse mentoring

It is not only experienced or senior workers who can provide mentoring. Sometimes a new hire, with a fresh perspective, can provide suggestions to improve programmes. Adults can benefit from having youth mentors, who can explain how their peers think and act. Youth-adult mentor relationships can also help your organization increase youth participation.

Mentors are special people. They are good listeners who know the difference between advice and commands. They are able to guide, instead of direct, the people they are mentoring. Mentors should also be good role models. They take their jobs seriously, but not too seriously, and can help other staff find that same balance.

A good mentor:

- Has proven leadership ability, especially communication and technical skills
- Shows empathy towards others
- Displays a positive attitude
- Enjoys his or her job
- Knows his or her position, responsibilities, and role
- Wants to encourage and help others
- Can give positive feedback and constructive criticism

Before starting a mentorship programme in your workplace, know your goals.

- Do you want to help someone who is underperforming but is capable of better work?
- Do you want to speed professional development and growth of a specific, promising staff member? Have you noticed a junior staff member who is smart and talented? Pairing him or her with a mentor could prepare this person to become a more senior member of your team.
- Will you soon need more staff to fill certain positions? Training internal candidates, on the job, can be a great investment.
- Has your programme experienced high turnover among newer peer educators? Maybe they do not feel the same commitment that experienced peer educators do. Pairing them allows the experienced peer educators to explain the benefits and joys of the job.

Once you have decided to start a mentoring programme, develop a plan of action to meet your goals. Clarify expectations and assign specific responsibilities to mentors and their partners. Set deadlines, provide support, and monitor the programme's progress.

Additional information about mentorship can be found online at:

- **The Mentoring Group –** mentoring ideas and tips.
  http://www.thementoringgroup.com
- **National Mentoring Center –** a start-up kit for youth mentoring programmes.
  http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/startup_toolkit.pdf

Delegating

Managers are called upon to do multiple things, such as attend meetings, write reports, and plan and supervise activities – often all at once. You might find the number of tasks overwhelming, even if you have mastered the art of handling several jobs at once.

Have you learned to delegate? Effective management is derived from the sum of all the efforts of your team members. The benefits of delegation can be enormous. From a practical perspective, your own job depends on it. If you are a manager, you were hired to manage and not do the jobs of your employees. Delegation provides an opportunity for your staff to get involved in the organization and to accept responsibility and authority. Most importantly, it provides a chance to develop your employees. As they gain control and ownership of certain tasks, and

learn more about the organization's systems, they will become more connected to the organization and more effective in their roles.

Through delegation, you assign responsibility for completing a task or tasks to staff. This might sound simple, but delegation also requires that your staff understand your expectations and timeline for completion and accept responsibility. As a manager, your role is to then ensure that your staff have the authority and resources needed to complete the task and to monitor their progress.

Authority. The person to whom you have delegated work has the power to accomplish the task. As the one doing the delegating, you should:

- Introduce the staff member to those he or she will be working with during this assignment
- Let others know this person is now 'in charge' of this task

Resources. A person assigned to complete a task needs proper resources. This could be training, a book, or simple knowledge about completing necessary paperwork. Moreover, people to whom tasks have been delegated need their manager to be a resource and to guide them when they need help. Managers must make themselves available to their staff.

Monitoring. Conduct regular updates on progress. However, asking staff members what they are doing at *every* step of a task is called micromanaging. Finding the right balance between not enough and too much monitoring can be challenging. Some staff might feel the need to update you often to make sure they are on the right track. Others might interpret frequent monitoring as a lack of faith in their abilities.

Myths of delegation

The following are commonly held beliefs of managers who resist delegation:

Your workers cannot be trusted to complete the job successfully and on time. Imagine how you would feel if someone thought this of you, after they had assessed your capabilities and decided to hire you. Trust your employees to do their jobs well, but also remember that delegation does not entail simply giving commands and walking away. Delegation involves support and monitoring too.

Delegation gives control away. Managers do not give away control when they delegate. They help balance the work load (mostly their own) and carefully monitor progress. Good managers provide leadership and support when needed

and know that there can be many ways to complete a task successfully. Giving someone else responsibility allows for the possibility that he or she will find a better, faster, less expensive way to accomplish the task.

You can do the work faster yourself. This could be true, but do you want to do every task yourself? Do you have time to complete all tasks? Be honest with yourself and consider factors such as whether a deadline is as pressing as you imagine.

Are you a natural leader?

Have you ever heard someone say, 'She's a natural leader'? It is such a common phrase that one could believe that there are many such natural leaders in the world. Some personality traits lend themselves to leadership, such as eagerness, honesty, persuasiveness, altruism, resourcefulness, and assertiveness. But being a leader also requires acquired skills, such as listening, communication, and diplomacy. One must continually hone these skills, using a combination of theory and practice.

Applying management techniques, such as those described in this resource, and your own intuitive sense and experience will make your peer education programme strong and effective. Providing potential leaders the opportunity to develop and practice their leadership skills will also improve your programme and strengthen their commitment. Do not be afraid to be the leader in applying the performance improvement methodology to your programme – the benefits will be immediate and lasting.

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