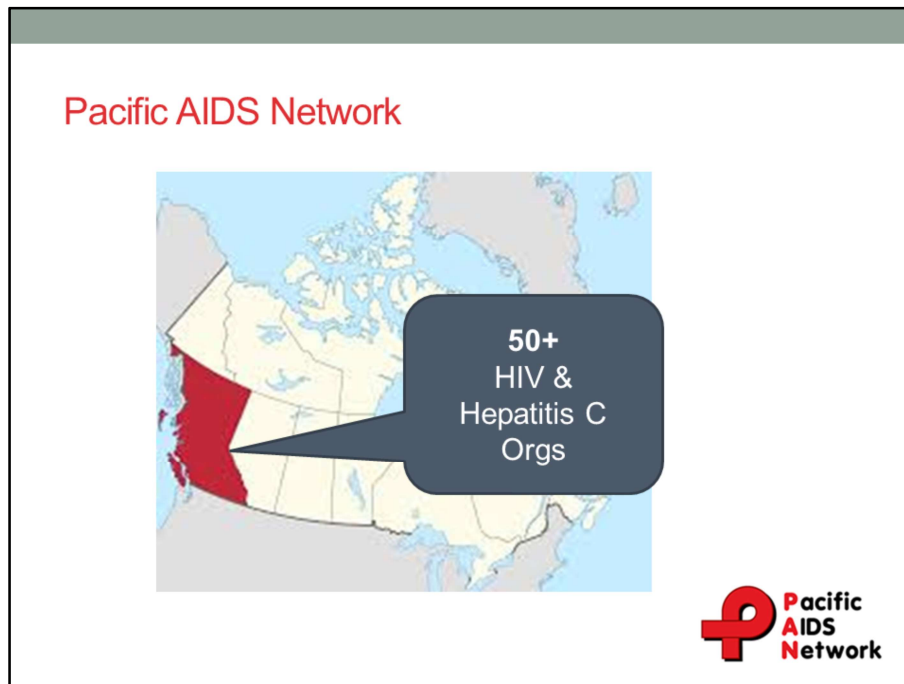


PEER EVALUATORS: PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION ON THE FRONTLINES

Presented by: Candice Norris (Peer Evaluator) and
Janice Duddy (Director of Evaluation and CBR)
Pacific AIDS Network
Monday, May 1st, 2017





JANICE

Community-based network organization supporting 50+ HIV and HCV organizations in BC.

By way of background, PAN is a pro-active member-based coalition that provides a network to the abilities and efforts of its over 50 member organizations to respond to HIV, hepatitis C and related issues in British Columbia. We facilitate communication and the sharing of best practices, and we provide professional/workforce development and leadership training to our members and people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs) from throughout BC. PAN acts as a voice for the community-based response to the HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C epidemics. We also: provide face-to-face networking opportunities, opportunities for mutual support; education and skills development; conduct community-based research (CBR) and participatory evaluations; and undertake collective action to influence public perceptions and policies affecting persons living with HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and those most "at risk."

Positive Leadership Development Institute (PLDI)

- Supporting people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) to:
 - Realize leadership potential
 - Increase capacity to participate meaningfully in community life



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The PLDI is a three module leadership program:

1. Core Leadership Training – Who am I as a leader?
2. Bored? Get on Board! (Board governance training)
3. Communication Skills Training

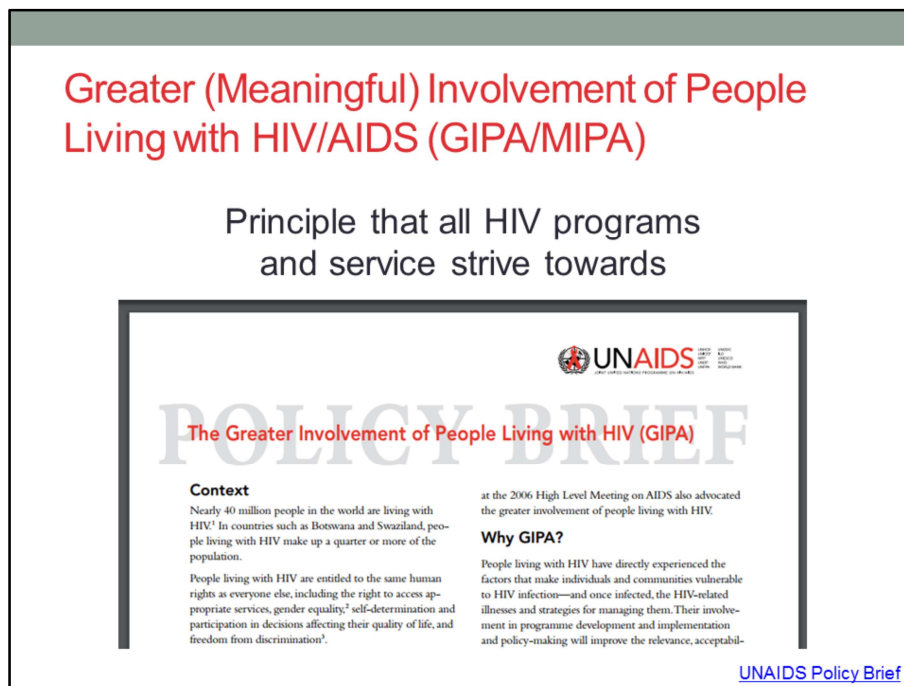
Some recent exciting developments in PLDI: the delivery of Mental Health First AID Training to PLDI grads; partnering with Interior Health to deliver a Core Training in the interior



JANICE

The PLDI team and Steering Committee realized that it had completed 20 trainings, had over 160 PLDI participants or grads, and had been running for over seven years and felt it was time to take a deeper dive in understanding what kind of impact this program was having across the province.

The purpose of evaluating the PLDI program is to determine whether it is meeting its short, intermediate, and long-term objectives and to get some concrete data about PLDI participants' experiences since and as a result of the training, including data about PLDI participants' leadership activities in their communities and across the province. This evaluation is also an opportunity to determine what can be done to improve and grow the program.



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It is a principle that aims to realize the rights and responsibilities of people living with HIV, including their right to self-determination and participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives. In these efforts, GIPA also aims to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the HIV response.

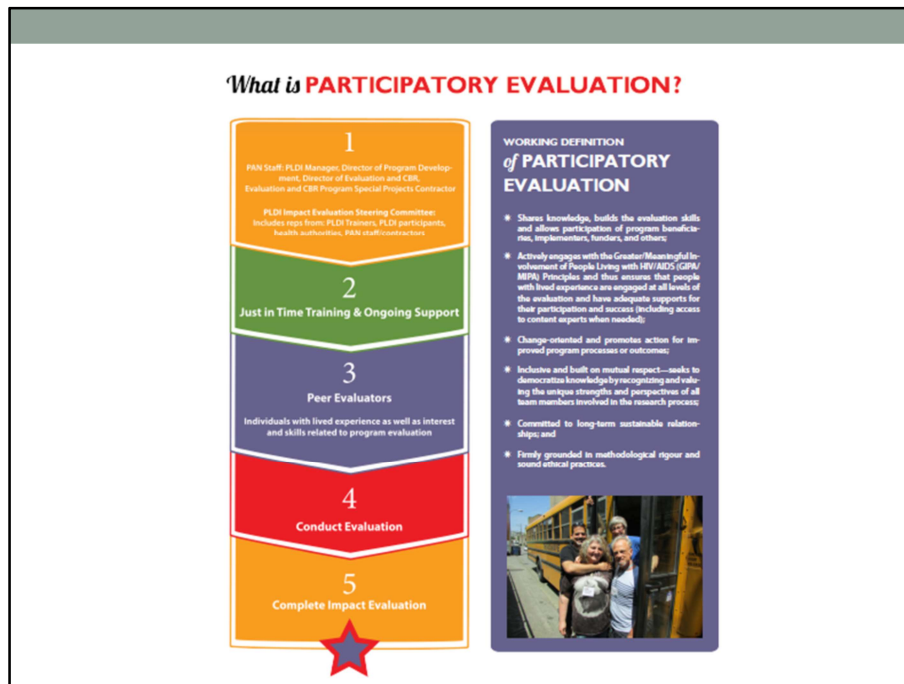
Given this principle and the work of PLDI we felt a very engaged participatory process was the way to go.

- under the guidance of a steering committee and led by a team of four Peer Evaluators
- Led by a team of four Peer Evaluators



CANDICE

- People living with HIV who had an interest in gaining leadership skills around evaluation
- Of the four Peer Evaluators – 2 had participated in PLDI and 2 had not
- Representation across the province (one outside of Vancouver) and across the priority populations most impacted by HIV
- None of the Peer Evaluators had any experience with evaluation prior to starting
- This process was also considered a capacity-bridging activity, as the Peer Evaluators that were hired had a strong interest in evaluation but had limited experience with conducting evaluation projects at the time of hiring. Therefore, the Peer Evaluator role was both a training opportunity and an employment experience.
- PAN developed a Peer Evaluator Training Manual to offer 'just-in-time' training, whereby the Director would facilitate a session on a relevant module immediately prior to the Peer Evaluators implementing the training provided by the module. For example, the team reviewed a module on designing a stakeholder engagement plan, and then immediately went to work drafting this plan for the PLDI Impact Evaluation.
- The Peer Evaluators had access to support and evaluation throughout their work and the whole team worked very closely together to move the project forward



CANDICE

Our team decided to use the following definition of Participatory Evaluation:

- Actively engages with the Greater/Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA/MIPA) Principles, and thus ensures that people with lived experience are engaged at all levels of the evaluation and have adequate supports for their participation and success (including access to content experts when needed);
- Is change-oriented and promotes action for improved program processes or outcomes;
- Is inclusive, built on mutual respect, and seeks to democratize knowledge by recognizing and valuing the unique strengths and perspectives of all team members involved in the research process;
- Is committed to long-term sustainable relationships; and
- Is firmly grounded in methodological rigour and sound ethical practices.



CANDICE

Between July 2016 – March 2017 the Peer Evaluator Team:

- Developed evaluation plan and collected data using 4 tools that we designed and started some preliminary data analysis

PEER EVALUATORS:

- Build the logical model and evaluation plan
- Stakeholder engagement plan
- An online survey for PLHIV and key PLDI program stakeholders (n=81),
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews with PLDI participants (n=15) and key stakeholders (n=11),
- A focus group with PLDI trainers and trainers-in-training (n=5),
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews with 'Champions' key to bringing the PLDI program to BC and supporting its ongoing development (n=2)
- A framework for analyzing historical evaluation data
- Data synthesis – supporting the team's understanding of what the key themes were coming out of the data collection process
- Participatory analysis

Reflections on
Engaging in a
Participatory
Evaluation
Approach...



Meta-Evaluation

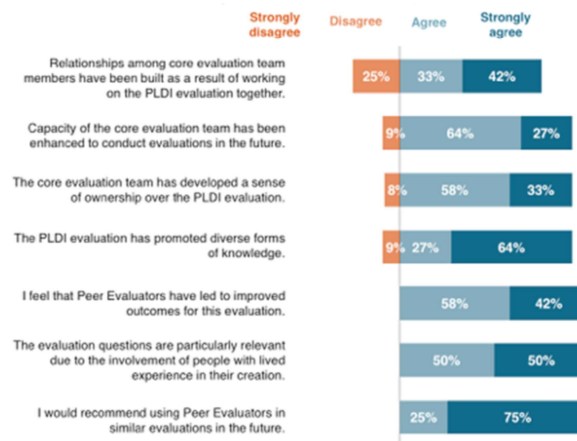


JANICE

Given the uniqueness of this impact evaluation approach, PAN contracted Catalyst Consulting to conduct a meta-evaluation of the PLDI impact evaluation process (i.e. an evaluation of the PLDI evaluation process itself). The core PLDI evaluation team (PAN Staff, Steering Committee and Peer Evaluators) was invited to participate in an online survey to assess the successes and challenges of adopting a participatory evaluation approach involving Peer Evaluators.

We have completed a mid-point survey but we are intending to conduct interviews with the 13 members of the evaluation team in the coming months.

Survey respondents' level of agreement with statements assessing the benefits of adopting a participatory evaluation involving Peer Evaluators (n = 11 to 12)



JANICE

Lessons Learned When Doing Participatory Evaluation

- Peer Evaluators' richness of insights and range of perspectives contributed immensely to the evaluation
- Does take significantly more time and resources that need to be built from the start of the process :
 - Extra time built into the work for the Steering Committee, staff and Peer Evaluators
 - Training and capacity-building resources
 - Tools to engage a team spread out over geography
 - To carefully consider budgets and work plans
- More learnings coming out of our meta-evaluation



JANICE to start and CANDICE to add

- Peer Evaluators' richness of insights and range of perspectives contributed immensely to the evaluation
- Does take significantly more time and resources to conduct a project that is as participatory as possible and engaging people in different geographic regions
- need to consider time and resources for Steering Committee members, staff, and Peer Evaluators
- Need to consider training and capacity-building resources
- Need to carefully consider budgets and work plans, building in resources early on, to ensure a successful outcome when engaging in a highly participatory process.
- Our team felt that the quality of the data and data analysis achieved through this process in the course of this project, more than outweighed the additional time it took to reach decisions as a group. As the saying goes, "you can go quicker alone, but farther together."
- We will have further learnings coming out of our meta-evaluation

Acknowledgements

PAN wishes to thank the Public Health Agency of Canada (the views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Public Health Agency of Canada) and REACH 2.0 for the financial support to conduct this impact evaluation.

The impact evaluation presented here was designed by a Steering Committee comprised of people living with HIV (PLHIV), key stakeholders, PAN staff and contractors, as well as a team of four Peer Evaluators hired to conduct this project. A big thank you to this team and to all the participants who contributed their time to this evaluation!

If you have questions or want to learn more please contact:

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