

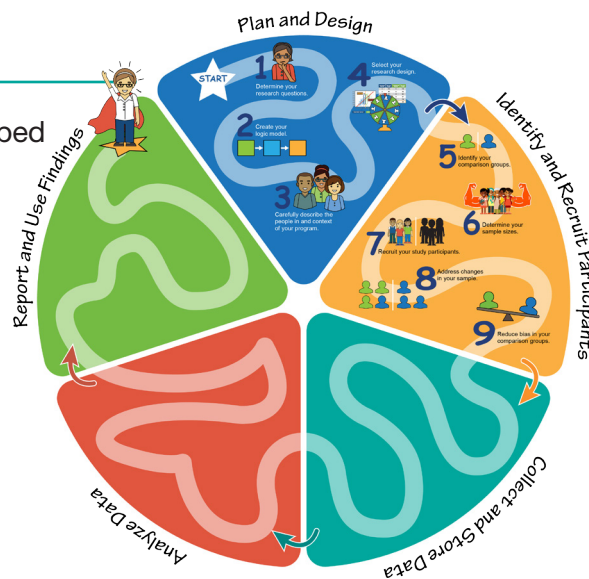


Pathway to Effective Evaluation

Step by step guidance through the evaluation life cycle

Stage 2: Identify and recruit participants

Now that you have determined your research questions, developed your logic model, described the people and context of your program, and chosen an appropriate research design (steps 1 through 4), it's time to do the actual work of identifying and recruiting study participants. This requires 5 interrelated steps:



Step 5. Identify comparison groups

Step 6. Determine sample sizes

Step 7. Recruit study participants

Step 8. Address changes in your sample

Step 9. Reduce bias in comparison groups



STEP 5. Identify comparison groups.

In order to assure that your evaluation yields meaningful results, you will need to choose a comparison group that is as similar to the group of participants you are evaluating as possible. This concept is known as baseline equivalence and is most important in QEDs and RCTs with high attrition.

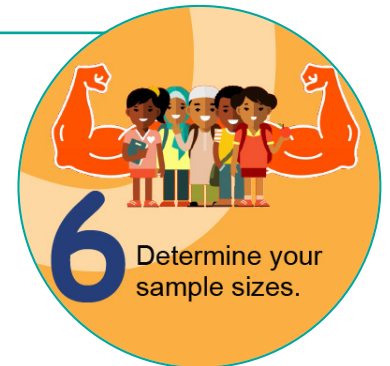
For more information, see [WWC's short brief about baseline equivalence](#).



STEP 6. Determine sample size.

Your sample size is the number of participants in your study. Several factors, including the Minimum Detectable Effect (MDE) and your study design, will help determine what size sample you should use to produce reliable results.

Two 5 minute videos “The Power of Sample Size [Part I](#) and [Part II](#)” detail how different decisions affect the number of people you need. You can also check out this two page [brief](#).



STEP 7. Recruit people to participate in your study.

To conduct a successful study, you will, of course, need study participants! Where and how you should recruit your participants will depend on your study design and the program you are evaluating.

Take a look at this [excerpt](#) about recruiting participants and find [tips and tricks](#) for recruitment in this document.



STEP 8. Address changes in your sample.

Attrition, or loss of participants from the study, disrupts the baseline equivalence that was established in your study between the intervention and comparison groups. When examining attrition, the WWC looks at two types: overall attrition, which affects the whole sample, and differential attrition, which is the difference in attrition between the intervention and comparison groups.

WWC's [brief](#) about attrition provides more information.



STEP 9. Reduce bias in comparison groups.

Sometimes it can be hard to determine whether differences in outcomes are due to the intervention or other factors. These other factors are called confounding factors. If your study includes confounding factors, then it is impossible to determine whether an outcome was caused by your program or an intervention.

Read this WWC 3 page [brief](#) to learn more about confounding factors.

