



What is baseline data?

Definition

Baseline data is basic information gathered before a [program](#) begins. It is used later to provide a comparison for assessing program impact.

Discussion

If your program has specific [goals](#) and [objectives](#), the needed baseline data will be quite obvious. If the goals and objectives are vaguely defined or undefined, you will find it difficult to know what kind of baseline data to gather.

See: [Literacy program planning](#)

Kinds

There are two kinds of baseline data:

- *Determinate baseline data* is closely related to the proposed program and is clearly indicated by the goals and objectives of the program.
- *Indeterminate baseline data* is not obviously related to the goals and objectives of the program but provides useful background awareness of the sociolinguistic and cultural [context](#) of the program.

Examples

Here are some examples of baseline data.

Determinate

If a project has the following goals and objectives:

- Achieve 20 percent literacy
- Train 100 teachers
- Encourage all literacy program graduates to read something at least once a day

Then the appropriate determinate baseline data would consist of the following:

- Assessment of current literacy rates
- Information on the number of trained teachers already available
- Data on current reading habits of people in the community

Indeterminate

For the project described above, some appropriate indeterminate baseline data might be as follows:

- Information on the number of people who have traveled to the national capital in the last 12 months.
- The average number of children per family
- The number of schools in the area

- The attitude of the people towards the use of the [language of wider communication](#)

See also

- [Gathering baseline data](#)

Context for this page:

- Concept module: [baseline data](#)
- In overview module: [Glossary \(Literacy\): B](#)
- In modular book: [Glossary of literacy terms](#)
- In document collection: Reference materials
- In bookshelf: [Literacy](#)

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