



Re-imagining capacity building to “shift the power” in M&E



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CREATE MEANINGFUL CHANGE

Instructions for exercise

1. On your own, read the questions below and jot down your thoughts on a piece of paper (2 mins)
2. In your groups share your ideas in response to the main questions and the challenge (see next slide). (15 mins)
3. Select one key takeaway to share with the rest in plenary (2 mins)

Questions for discussion

1. What is value of shifting the power through M&E ?
2. What capacity is missing in the sector to do so?
3. What needs to change for M&E to shift the power?

MAIN CHALLENGE:

What opportunities do YOU see to shift the power through M&E?

Each group to bring 1 main key takeaway from the group discussion

Specific questions as triggers for discussion (slide 1/2)

Evaluation indicators and measures used by INGOs reflect those preferred by the industry and donors rather than how success is understood in the local context and on the ground.

- What is the value of locally-defined indicators?
- How can INGOs involve communities in designing programmes and defining indicators?
- What needs to change in how we build capacity in evaluation around programme and indicator design to shift the power?

Learning questions are often set by the programme designers during the theory of change process before the project is approved. It is very often the funder who does this.

- What is the value of having indigenous knowledge informing learning questions?
- How should learning agenda's be determined? And how can INGOs ensure that there is flexibility to change indicators
- What needs to change in M&E capacity building to create this change?

Slide 2/2)

Adaptive management

- What is the value of giving local implementers greater power to make decisions about implementation?
 - what is the linkage between embracing local knowledge and getting greater impact or success from adaptive management
- How can INGOs embrace adaptive management as part of our programming and how can we embrace failure as part of learning, and what do evaluators need to know to embrace adaptation in their value systems.
- What needs to change in M&E capacity building to create this change?

Accountability

- what is the value of encouraging greater accountability to communities rather than to donors?
- What needs to happen to shift away from NGOs PROVING a vision of success to donors, to embracing learning and improvement through evidence (including local knowledge, practitioner experience and data)
- What needs to change in M&E capacity building to create this change?

Resources

- what is the value of local NGOs having more resources for MEL, and commissioning their own evaluations?
- what needs to change in the system, to create more trust, for NGOs to invest more in M&E
- what needs to change in M&E capacity building for this to happen?

Group 1

Use of MEL to strengthen Implementation rather than donor reporting .

Creating a learning community with standardised learning practices

Setting mandatory rules of engagement in the engagement in the sector

Use of the Government stakeholders in evaluation where this applies

Group 2

- M&E is part of a broader system of international development where programmes are designed in isolation, with pre-defined indicators - can M&E change without the broader system changing?
- International development as a sector evaluates the most which creates an opportunity, especially if it is done in the right way
- What is measured, who measures, how do you ask questions How can we design indicators around what matters to local communities
- I think we can still do evaluation in a way that is empowering and strengths based within the boundaries of the system
- There are many evaluators who are more focused on collecting data, and having quantitative measures of the achievements of the activity to their managers/ donors
- Need have a mind-set that encourages evaluations to be empowering, perhaps include this in the evaluation criteria of a good evaluation, and include it in the curriculum for evaluators
- In the UNEG there is something about communication and facilitation.

Group 3

Group 4

- 1. What is value of shifting the power through M&E ?**
- 2. What capacity is missing in the sector to do so?**
- 3. What needs to change for M&E to shift the power?**

Group 5

What is value of shifting the power through M&E ?

- To engage better with communities
- To achieve results for broader community betterment

What capacity is missing in the sector to do so?

- Science influence on M&E particularly quantitative data collection not giving a chance to civil society to engage appropriately.
- Weak linkages between policy makers and M&E associations, each of them works separately (mostly)

One key takeaway per group

Valuing local knowledge and getting people on the ground to collect data and this would empower them, and build and sustain their interest in the project

Use appropriate language and respect inter-generational relationships

Have relevant, evidence based decision making that comes from the people who we are making decisions for (with ????)

Training of evaluators must include soft-skills that teaches them how to engender respect and foster collaboration

How can we integrate empowerment into the evaluation principles at an institutional level

How can we encourage this in a system which is highly powered and structured and where evaluators do not have the power in the system - maybe include values or principles e.g. that evaluators should behave in certain ways

M&E should be part of project management and support the teams to integrate M&E and project management to help achieve impact.

Implementing partners can do baseline data collection - this was established by necessity in covid conditions, and proved to be useful, and they could be supported to do the analysis. The evaluator works with the local implementing organisations as a guide, and you are building capacity and it is more sustainable because the skill stays in the local context

Gathering success stories of organisations implementing good ME systems

M&E should not be a function of donor reports, shifting that accountability for improving interventions and not using M&E as a mechanism to report on donor mandates.

It would be important to create a learning community and shift towards outcomes orientation

How can smaller organisations partner and align with other organisations to ensure that all the pathways of the theory of change can be addressed at a community level.

How can we encourage learning with the communities that we are working with? Ask them to think through their past, current and future, and helps them to question what has changed, and how it itschanging

It starts with programme design, and engaging people in communities to reflect on the success and failures of interventions, and to learn from failure, not hide it.

Are not seeing donors who are willing to create space for greater empowerment in evaluation - we can focus on this in our capacity building.

Need to reflect on our language - we talk about doing things TO communities, and recognise that we can learn from them, and they can learn from the evaluation, the learning is mutual.

African evaluation principles - encourage people who are doing evaluations in Africa to inform our evaluation.

Ensure that the training methodology is also empowering and inclusive.

Document and share case studies of evaluation that shifts the power

RESOURCES - Share resources and URLs if possible

Barefoot guide: <https://www.barefootguide.org/>

African Evaluation Journal latest Made in Africa Evaluation issue:
<https://aejonline.org/index.php/aej>

Popular Education / Training for Transformation:

<https://www.populareducation.org.za/content/training-transformation-tft>

<https://www.peacedirect.org/publications/timetodecoloniseaid/>