

Participatory Impact Monitoring - PIM : Selected reading examples

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Dear reader

The information package on Impact Monitoring & Evaluation by NGOs was designed to serve as a resource guide to evaluators, NGO staff, librarians and anyone who is interested in becoming more familiar with this very important part of project management by self-help organizations. The complete package comprises the General Information Folder, the Annotated Bibliography with indexes and some Selected Reading Examples.

If you are not in possession of one of the modules and would like to obtain a copy, please write to:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH
- GATE -
P.O. Box 51 80
Dag-Hammarskjold-Weg 1-2
D-65726 Eschborn
Tel: (+ + 49) 6196 / 79 - 0
Federal Republic of Germany
Fax: (+ + 49) 6196 / 79 - 7352

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Reading example no. 1:

GOHL, Eberhard & GATE: Participative impact monitoring - A position paper, Stuttgart (Germany), 1993. (For more information please refer to MFN 1)

0. Abstract

Participative Impact Monitoring (PIM) is a process-oriented, project-steering procedure that is carried out by the people themselves who are involved in the project. PIM deals primarily with socio-cultural impacts and learning processes. It evolved as a method to complement the traditional application of planning, monitoring and evaluation.

PIM can be best implemented in cases in which the population has created self-help organizations and is externally supported by projects carried out by self-help promotion organizations (frequently NGOs).

The PIM concept is based on the strength of the processes inherent in grassroots-oriented projects (e.g., self-help promotion, Appropriate Technology). Therefore, PIM places less emphasis on planning and evaluating and stresses intensive monitoring instead. (Monitoring components)

PIM is interested in the learning processes, in the ability to act self-determinedly. Thus, PIM's approach does not place emphasis on comparisons between targets and the actual state or technological-economic success, but rather concentrates on the socio-cultural changes, the impacts or multiplier effects arising from the project's activities. (Impact components)

PIM promotes self-determined decisions and actions. That is why the monitoring is not carried out from without, externally, but rather by the actors themselves - the self-help groups and the local promoters. Its instruments are manifold; in the beginning they have to be simple and then grow with the group's experience. (Participation components) PIM has two actors and, thus, two strands: "Group-based Impact Monitoring. by the self-help organization and "NGO based Impact Monitoring. by the local promoters of the self-help promotion organization. The two strands periodically mirror each other.

Continual situation and impact analyses are the crucial basis for steering a project by means of PIM. Thus, PIM supports the activities by means of continual (self-) observation and periodical reflection.

1. The problem

Deficiencies in the applied planning and steering concepts

Particularly in the case of the Non-governmental Organizations, (NGOs) that are engaged in self-help promotion, there is considerable uncertainty as to how to design a practicable process for planning, monitoring and evaluating their projects. Many problems are not recognized until the implementation phase so that the project is carried out in an entirely different way than had been planned. This leads to the following consequences:

General consequences

- the plans do not always supply a realistic orientation for the implementation

- the significance of planning as a basis for monitoring and evaluation is overrated; or monitoring is regarded as useless from the very beginning
- the significance of the processes themselves in the development of the projects is underestimated

Quality of planning

- the self-help group and the social environment are not included early enough or to a sufficient degree in the planning
- the actors have unrealistically high (and usually disparate) expectations and tend to overplan
- the plans do not reflect the interests of the grassroots organization
- the information base was not good enough
- the working plans are incomplete

Dynamics of the process

- the actors are unable to make adequate use of their experiences, their views or the knowledge of the environment they gained in the course of the implementation of the process while carrying out the project
- the internal situation of the involved organizations changes frequently
- the external framework conditions change rapidly

Monitoring and evaluation

- many problems in planning are carried over into the monitoring and evaluation system
- significant congruence between the plan and its implementation is regarded as success of the project
- indicators are frequently superficial and technocratic

Adjusting the plan

- Mistakes are recognized and corrected too late

Overemphasis of orientation on results

Project logic to date foresees as a rule that a project is not implemented unless there is a concrete problem. The project defines itself as a solution to the problem in which specific inputs lead to certain outputs. The project becomes a technical-economic construction. Thereby, the technical-economic successes are placed in the foreground, whereas the socio-cultural components, if they fit into the current logical target system at all, are found in the supra-goals and framework conditions. This overemphasis of the orientation towards results can also be found in the AT projects and integral development projects.

For a sustainable development process, acute solving of the problem is not the most important factor. Because other people's problems cannot be solved from without in the long run, but rather have to be definitively solved by the people concerned themselves, the following aspects should be correspondingly promoted: the ability of the people to help themselves (self-help), and action competence should be increased, as well as promotion of the learning processes and their evaluation.

Limited recognition of the achievements in self-help promotion

As the planning goals are frequently not realistic and are not achieved due to many various reasons and because the technical-economic goals are, hence, only poorly fulfilled, those involved are quickly regarded as failures. The NGOs and the experts working in them and, in some cases, the

grassroots organization seem to have achieved only very little. The self-help promotion organizations have legitimation problems towards the funding agencies, and the people involved lose their motivation.

Those involved often are successful in many aspects, but their success is indeed not easy to recognize. In particular the democratic decision-making processes take a lot of time in self-help promotion. The organizations, which are not yet stable, have to develop their own rules. The "psychological work. that has to be carried out is frequently overlooked and not acknowledged.

In particular, NGOs and their members are interested in the proof of their achievements for their own sake as well as for others. Knowledge and recognition of their own achievements is very motivating.

The gap between emancipatory ideas and carrying them out

In the AT movement and self-help promotion, an emancipatory approach is considered today to be the obvious approach. One no longer finds drafts for projects that do not include statements declaring such intentions.

Reality, however, is frequently quite different. Emancipatory ideas alone do not suffice to turn them into reality. Participative behaviour has to been learned, practicable concepts and instruments are hardly available on the spot, and (self-) critical reflection regarding the activities can only be rarely found. Many organizations that are oriented towards self-help need and want new impulses.

2. Definition and targets of PIM

PIM is a process-oriented, project-steering process maintained by those involved. Constant observation of the (chiefly socio-cultural) impacts leads to a better understanding of the processes within the project. Collective reflection makes it possible for the activities to be adapted to the changing goals of the self-help organization. Thus, PIM makes systematic monitoring of the grassroots organizations understandable and makes it possible for the members to take over more and more responsibility.

The goal of PIM is the improvement of project implementation by means of

- orientation towards the socio-cultural impacts,
- autonomous activities among the population and
- increased flexibility and interaction on the part of the project team and the population.

This is tied to certain characteristics that should be valid in the case of participative impact monitoring:

Participative impact monitoring

- is not derived from planning alone,
- adapts to the process character of self-help initiatives,
- influences the self-help processes (and their promotion),
- concentrates on the socio-cultural impacts,
- can be employed as needed at the village level or in the NGOs,
- is action oriented and emancipatory,
- promotes collective learning among the various actors and
- begins simply and can mature along with those involved.

Topical learning processes grow out of the specific situation. In addition, the following practical skills for project steering are learned by the self-help group and the NGO project team:

Observation

To observe changes

- formulate hypotheses
- identify examples and indicators
- measure changes
- observe unexpected changes
- document findings

Reflection

Analyse cause-effect reciprocity

- identify actors
- collectively interpret observations with other actors
- recognize reciprocity
- check hypotheses

Action

Devise processes and structures

- recognize one's own role
- make collective decisions
- develop structures and rules
- act responsibly

In this way, the continual actions are accompanied by observations and regularly scrutinized on the basis of reflection; this, on the other hand, leads once again to action.

PIM is, thereby, an instrument of observation and reflection that promotes action.

3. PIM's two strands

PIM should be, as the definition states, an instrument to steer projects and be maintained by those involved. It must, in other words, be designed to fit the self-help organization's working methods as well as harmonize with the interests and abilities of the self-help promotion organizations.

Thus, the first PIM strand is "Group-based impact Monitoring," which can be applied autonomously by the self-help groups and, according to the experience gathered to date, easily adapted to the structures and practices of the groups.

In addition, PIM has a second strand which consists of impact monitoring carried out by the self-help promotion organizations which will be called here, to make things simpler, "NGO- based Impact Monitoring.. It takes into account the need of the NGOs to make the socio-cultural impacts of their work visible.

Both involved groups observe the changes independently at first. In periodic reflection workshops, the findings of the impact monitoring are reciprocally reflected upon whereby, on the one hand, joint successes are made visible and, on the other hand, analyses are carried out concerning which aspects those involved have to correct their actions in.

3.1. Group based Impact Monitoring

Group-based impact monitoring is developed by the group - as a rule initially with the support of a NGO. First indicators of an impact can be gathered by asking questions as to the expectations and fears of the group with respect to the "project". The group observes changes, documents and analyses them and makes decisions.

For this to take place at all, group-based impact monitoring must itself be adapted to the socio-cultural setting. The individual steps can and should, thus, be adapted regarding their concrete organization and design to the already existing organization culture of the group. In essence, group-based impact monitoring consists of the following steps:

1. Expectations and fears:

The group establishes at the beginning which changes are important to them:

- What are our expectations?
- What are our fears?

2. Indicators:

The group supplies examples that are as concrete as possible to illustrate their expectations and fears. Out of these, simple indicators are chosen.

3. Observers:

The group designates observers to observe the indicators/examples and decides how the observers should make their reports concerning them (e.g., by means of posters, in the meetings).

4. Monitoring report:

Each group meeting begins - before the agenda for the day is decided upon - with a brief report:

- a. How have the indicators changed? (This makes it possible to correct and refine the indicators which have been chosen up to the time.)
- b. What other important factors have changed? (This can indicate whether in the future other additional indicators should be observed.)

5. Analysis:

If there is a need, the group analyses the changes using, among others, questions such as the following:

- a. What have the involved people (ourselves, the NGO, others) contributed to the changes?
- b. Which additional impacts / conclusions result from this?

6. Decision making:

Following the analysis, the group decides on the agenda for the day and makes decisions.

7. Documentation: The indicators and their characteristics, the analyses and the decisions are constantly documented.

The following deliberations can only briefly explain and substantiate this procedure here:

Group-based impact monitoring can be introduced without any problems in the ongoing group meetings; thus, the additional time factor is very small. As it should be carried out by the group members themselves, the concretization of the individual steps is left open.

The introduction is based on the assumption that the expectations and fears are all in all important for the group and that they are a significant motivation for the participation of the group members in the activities. That is the reason why continual observation of the possible changes should be the foundation for steering.

The declared expectations and apprehensions that are mentioned at the beginning are, naturally, only the peak of an iceberg, so that the concept specifies that

- they should be continually corrected and improved;
- open questions should investigate the actual, unforeseen changes;
- additional significant expected or feared changes are included in the monitoring;
- it is possible to differentiate between various subgroups that have deviating expectations and personal targets;
- the group meetings begin with questions referring to the observed changes in order to produce steering decisions through the group.

This method of dealing with the investigation of the expectations in which the original statements are monitored is to a certain degree in contrast with many of the self-evaluation procedures in which situation analysis is carried out by means of open questions. Our procedure in PIM allows, in addition, more continuity due to the indicators and, hence, an improved elucidation of the development of the group and its situation.

An important argument against asking questions referring to expectations is the fact that they cannot define the "real" impact. This is correct: the further away the recipient of a monitoring report is, the more abstract the impact designation. However, PIM is based on bringing out the fact that there are various actors with differing points of view. In an introductory meeting of a self-help initiative, it is neither possible nor desirable to perform a theoretical clarification of the terms "impact" and "monitoring.. External participants must accept the fact that the group initially formulates the indicators.

The questioning carried out by the group as to their expectations can, it is true, not supply the intended pre-definition of the socio-cultural impact. However, the group-based impact monitoring does not lack the factors the PIM concept aims at: we can indeed on the one hand presume that with respect to the expectations technical, economic changes will be mentioned as a rule; on the other hand, we can presume that the fears will partly refer to skills, competence in the field, dealing with group processes, or the inner structure of the group and, thus, socio-cultural impacts.

More comprehensive knowledge concerning the socio-cultural impacts can only be obtained, however, in connection with the two components of PIM - the reciprocal reflection of the observations made by the group and the NGO.

3.2 NGO based Impact Monitoring

The following reasons speak in favour of active participation in impact monitoring on the part of the self-help promoting organization:

- in the case of any type of self-control it is a good idea for the actors to be confronted by the viewpoint of external agents who regularly hold up a mirror for them to see themselves in;
- we cannot presume any internal harmony within the group, but the promoting organization can sound out the unbalanced factors within the group, observe them and, if called for, make the group aware of them;

- the PIM concept is not concrete enough as an instrument - external participation by a facilitator also has the function of making it easier to implement;
- as we presume the fact when developing our PIM concept that the projects are externally promoted, whereby there is always (more or less desired) collaboration with respect to control, it is a good idea to include the promoters consciously in the impact monitoring on the basis of similar principles;
- the interaction between self-help groups and promoters offers many points in which a joint learning process can take place and is an interface that is consciously perceived by all of the participants;
- the steering of the promotion should also be oriented towards the socio-cultural impact.

NGO-based impact monitoring takes the needs of the self-help promotion organizations - here abbreviated as NGO - more strongly into account. It continues in the tradition of existing monitoring and is based on the experience of the NGO with similar groups and projects.

In essence, NGO-based impact monitoring should only play a supplementary role and complement the conventional monitoring of the goal structures, resources and framework in which the activities take place. It is even possible that indicators for socio-cultural changes can already be discovered there.

In those cases, however, in which conventional monitoring is not carried out in the NGO, but where there is despite this fact interest in its being introduced, PIM can also be an opportunity to orient the organization of the monitoring system on similar "flexible" principles, i.e. more on processes than plans, and let it grow with the NGO's already existing control and reflection mechanisms.

NGO based impact monitoring has 3 elements:

1. Deliberate monitoring of the socio-cultural changes in the group

The project team can - similar to the self-help group - collect a few of the expectations and fears at the beginning of the work. These should as far as possible refer to the socio-cultural impacts: skills and learning processes in the group. The following questions are helpful thereby:

- Which socio-cultural impacts resulted from similar projects?
- In particular: which were hardly registered by other monitoring instruments?
- On the basis of which factors could one clearly recognize them?
- Which socio-economic indicators should we be aware of to steer this project?

In view of the work burdens project teams are faced by, it is not necessary to introduce more than three to five indicators. Due to the fact that in the case of NGO project teams as well terms such as monitoring and indicators are frequently quite abstract terms, practitioners should be encouraged to report on the basis of their experience how they recognize that their "target group" has learned and changed. We can presume that the team working at the grassroots level has a broad basis of knowledge in this field that is seldom referred to and lies more or less fallow. Concrete examples of how the social environment changes can be presented by each team member.

Not all changes in the self-help group are consequences of the NGO project team's activities. But following the initial collection of material, the causes for these changes can be analysed and the most vivid examples can be chosen for illustrative purposes. Insofar as it is not possible to abstract indicators out of these examples right away, in NGO based impact monitoring descriptive examples can also be observed and commented instead of quantified indicators.

2. Joint reflection workshops with the group

At the same time, the NGO also has the task of guaranteeing the interaction with the self-help initiative in PIM. That signifies above all - holding up a mirror before the group - letting the group reflect on the NGO's results.

This reciprocal reflection takes place in workshops, for instance, every 6 months. It appears to be important for the group and the project team to meet periodically outside the influence of the daily hectic involved in the implementation and evaluate and question the impact of their joint efforts.

The reflection workshops should not be led by the project team, but rather be moderated by a facilitator. Ideally, an external person functions as the facilitator - an extension worker from the NGO, for instance; in praxis, however, it is frequently easier to find someone from among the NGO personnel so that it can be appropriate and to the purpose to let them be responsible for the monitoring.

With respect to the reflection workshop, there are a few key questions that might possibly be more strongly structured during the operationalization of the concept in order to make individual workshop meetings comparable. The following questions should be discussed between the self-help initiative and the NGO project team:

- a. What has changed?
 - What did the group observe?
 - (Introduction and discussion of group-based impact monitoring.)
 - What did the NGO observe?
 - (Introduction and discussion of NGO-based impact monitoring.)
- b. To what extent have these activities increased?
 - What is our group's present situation? (internal - external, quantitative - qualitative) (so-called integral multiplier effects)
 - Which new activities has our group begun in addition to the original? (so-called vertical multiplier effects)
 - What similar activities have other groups begun that they have learned from us? (so-called horizontal multiplier effects)
- c. What conclusions do we have to draw?
 - What should the group members do?
 - What should the project team do?
 - What should the other involved people do? Who should be brought in additionally?
- d. Potential improvements in PIM
 - Appropriateness of the criteria and indicators
 - Appropriateness of the observation and evaluation systems
 - Analysis of the reflection workshops

When observing changes, there are two levels:

1. The material changes: what technological and economic success did we achieve? What have we accomplished?
2. The "invisible" changes: what has changed in the group itself? What were the changes and developments in the collaboration between the group and the NGO?

Both levels of change have to be mentioned in the reflection workshops; as, however, the material aspects are always in the foreground in the project workday routine, it is important when leading the discussion during the reflection to distill the socio-cultural change processes.

3. Accompanying the PIM process

PIM does not take place without the initiative of a self-help promotion organization: initially it will also not function without it nor develop. Only if the organization feels that it is responsible for creating the necessary framework can participative impact monitoring as described here exist at all. Therefore the third element of NGO-based impact monitoring that has to be mentioned is that the PIM process must be continually accompanied.

4. Prerequisites for PIM

PIM is not appropriate for every project. As was mentioned at the beginning, it was developed for self-help projects and appropriate technology projects. As a rule, the following prerequisites should be met before implementing PIM:

Compatibility (project and monitoring instrument)

1. Participation: the project must be based on the active participation of the population in decision making. It must aim at increasing the autonomy of the self-help group. Any other situation would put a strain on the relationship between the group and the NGO.
2. Process orientation: the concept of the project and the planning should leave enough room for the process to be organized and changed during its course by the people participating in it.
3. Complementary instruments: as PIM has been conceived as a complement to the conventional monitoring of goal structures, resources and action frameworks, these criteria should continue to be monitored. In addition, it should also be checked whether other already existing instruments used by the self-help group and the promoters contradict PIM or would be unnecessarily doubled.

Risks

4. No "political" projects: self-help and AT projects that are of a political nature or where a lot of money is involved (a large amount of the financing based on loans, for instance) are subject to, as a rule, internal and external power struggles. The risk that PIM could be misused in this case is large.
5. No "stuck" projects: PIM is based on fundamental, reciprocal trust between the self-help group and the promoting organization. There is doubt as to whether PIM is suitable to solve conflicts. Therefore, PIM should not be implemented in projects that are already strained by problems in which the mutual trust has been clearly shaken.

Work Expenditures

6. No overburdening of the project team: if the project team does not have any room left for additional activities, PIM should not be implemented.

Instead, the extent to which "action" can be replaced by "reflection" should be assessed. PIM necessitates an additional expenditure of work, but controlled reflection can make some action superfluous. The motivation to work with respect to those involved in self-help promotion can be increased, however, if previously invisible results of the work are made visible by PIM.

5. Critical Questions Concerning PIM

PIM appears to be a blueprint model.

Is it just another set of directions on the topic of "monitoring.?"

PIM is indeed new, but it was not developed as a blueprint model in Germany. The development of the concept is a joint process with GATE cooperation partners. The strategies were tested step-by-step by the partners abroad and improved jointly in a continual evaluation process.

The PIM guidelines do not present, in accordance with its emphasis on the processes themselves, instructions as to which activities are to be carried out and how one should behave, but rather, it is a concept.' That means:

- they present a simplified concept of a complex process,
- they are limited to an easy to grasp number of dynamic elements,
- they permit a planned and methodological procedure,
- they have to be tested and adapted to the local situation,
- they serve as a first step in a learning process and
- they contain an interim truth.

Is PIM then something new?

Very similar concepts are being discussed and implemented throughout the world.

Yes, it is true: the elements contained in PIM are not completely new. Fortunately, similar emancipatory concepts are being developed and furthered, tested and implemented by many people in many places.

From our point of view, here are good reasons to continue to work on PIM:

1. PIM is new in the sense that the actors at various levels - grassroots organizations, NGOs and funding agencies - attempt to collaborate in order to reciprocally reflect the impacts.
2. Many partner NGOs have until now scarcely developed any such instruments. Conventional monitoring is hardly known. On the other hand, they have a need for it. It is frequently difficult for the NGO workers to prove the impact of their work to the NGO; and the NGO is interested in seeing the impact of their own work and being able to present it to the funding agencies, in particular if it was not possible to fulfil the working plans for whatever reasons. As many theoretical concepts as there are, still too few attempts are made to operationalize them.
3. The control regulations of the grassroots organizations vary greatly; they are partly very formal, and partly deliberately emancipatory. In those cases in which they are unsystematic, however, their functioning is very dependent upon the individuals involved. PIM is an attempt to improve the internal functioning -to structure it so that it is process oriented. It is designed to be compatible with many grassroots democratic structures and promote them.
4. The funding agencies similarly want to see the impacts of their promotional efforts as a success control. Such approaches have been discussed too rarely in their case; until now there have been hardly any experiments that are known which were dedicated to the question of impact monitoring.

Is it really possible to monitor impact at all?

By impact, the effects are usually understood that stand for long-term and sustainable results. In ZOPP, or Logical Framework, they correspond to the level of the top goal. Since it is much easier to discover which effects are long-term and sustainable years after the project has been terminated,

impact is assessed in ex-post evaluations. Thus, monitoring - continual immediate assessment of the impact for the purpose of controlling and steering processes may appear to be absurd.

On the other hand, already at the beginning of a project, it is possible to say which impact is expected. This results from

- the type of project (e.g., self-help, AT),
- the "philosophy" of the involved promotion and funding agencies,
- the situations analysis (carried out jointly with those involved in the project) and
- the goal structure of the project.

The anticipated impact is a known factor, in other words, and those involved are aware of it - however, it is not always explicitly formulated and closely scrutinized.

The PIM concept is built up on the hypotheses that

- the anticipated impact can be illustrated by concrete examples,
- the anticipated impact can be observed,
- socio-cultural changes that were not anticipated can also be observed,
- the impact can be described or even quantified,
- the impact analysis can serve to steer the project and
- the people involved from the self-help group and NGO can do this to a large extent themselves.

To this extent, one can really speak of participative impact monitoring. There can be no doubt, however, that there are also other impact dimensions and that even more information in this sense can be won by means of ex-post evaluation.

The procedure in which actors observe the impact of their actions and draw conclusions from them is completely normal and takes place in self-help projects as well. This process is, however, not automatically carried over into a project or organization structure. So that it does not expire, it receives the label "PIM" here and flows productively in the interest of all those involved into the decision-making structures.

Reading example no. 2: Understanding evaluation

FEUERSTEIN, Marie-Therese: Partners in Evaluation. Evaluating Development and Community Programmes with Participants, London (U.K.), 1986.

(For more information please refer to MFN 23)

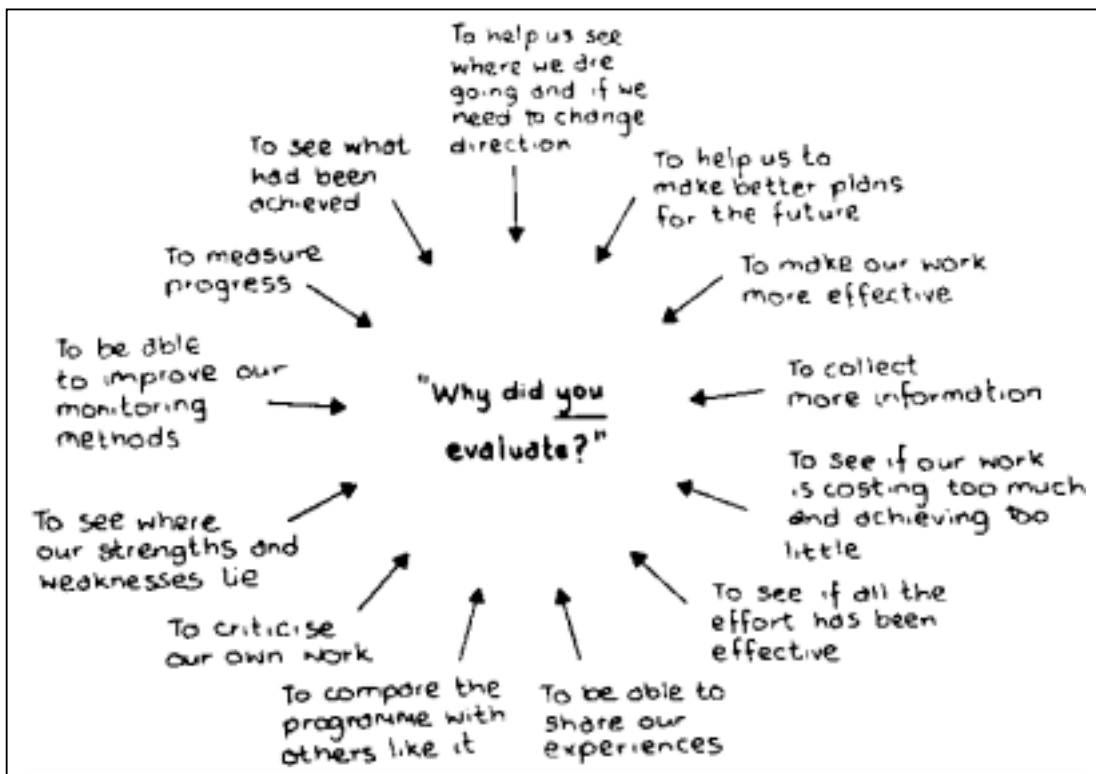
This chapter begins by looking at what the word evaluation means, why people do it, and what they expect to learn from it. A wide range of people have taken part in evaluation. However, this range has not often fully included the participants near and at community level. There are many different ways in which such group of people can take part in evaluation

Deciding when and where evaluation should take place how much it will cost and who it belongs to are also explored in this chapter.

1. Why evaluate?

First of all, what does the word evaluate mean? It means simply to assess the value of something. In this book, it means helping those who are involved in many different kinds of development programmes to assess the value of what they are doing. Many of them are already monitoring their own work and may have taken part in evaluating it in a systematic way.

When you ask people why they evaluate their work, different people give different answers. Here are some of the actual answers people have given:



Why did you evaluate?

From the answers given by people to the question 'why did you evaluate!' ten key reasons emerged. These were to do with:

- Achievement (seeing what has been achieved)
- Measuring progress (in accordance with the objectives of the programme)
- Improving monitoring (for better management)
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses (to strengthen the programme)
- Seeing if effort was effective (what difference has the programme made?)
- Cost benefit (were the costs reasonable?)
- Collecting information (to plan and manage programme activities better)
- Sharing experience (to prevent others making similar mistakes, or to encourage them to use similar methods)
- Improving effectiveness (to have more impact)
- Allowing for better planning (more in line with the needs of people, especially at community level)

Some of these key reasons are easy to understand: some are more difficult. When you are working with those at community level and helping them to participate in evaluation, it is necessary to use words and meanings that are even more simple and clear than those given above. One way that you can start to do this is by telling a story about other people's actual experience, such as the one below.

From experience

In one country some community development workers compared evaluation to taking a bus journey along an unknown road. While they could see through the glass windows they were happy because they could see that they were making progress. Then rain forced them to put wooden shutters over the windows and they could no longer assess their progress. They knew they were moving forward but could not tell along which road, how fast, or even whether they were nearing their destination,



A truck

Evaluation is like looking to see where and how fast you are going, and then estimating when you are likely to reach your destination.

So, from the answers that people gave it is clear that evaluation has been carried out mainly as a way of looking at: programme activities, human resources, material resources, information, facts

and figures; in order to: monitor progress and effectiveness, consider costs and efficiency, show where changes were needed, and help to plan more effectively for the future.

However, there is also another group of reasons for evaluating, and these are a little different.

Here are some of those reasons, which become clearer if we look at the answers that people have actually given.

- 'Because our funding agency asked for it.'
- 'Because the ministry asked for it.'
- 'Because our sponsors wanted to see whether they wished to go on supporting our programme.'
- 'Because the researchers wanted to try out new evaluation techniques.'
- 'Because new material was needed for publicity purposes.'

From this group of answers it is clear that evaluation has been carried out for another group of reasons. However, these reasons may not have been clear to all those who were actually involved in the evaluation.

For example, evaluations have been carried out with some programme participants believing that the results would be used to make decisions about the further funding of a programme, when in reality the decisions on further funding had already been taken by the programme funders before the evaluation began. So the evaluation results did not really make any difference to the decisions that had to be made on funding.

Evaluation has also been used in some cases as a way of justifying a weak or unsuccessful programme, or as a way of trying to cover up areas of programme failure. For example, some evaluations have looked only at those parts of a programme that were successful, not at the whole programme. If only the successful parts of a programme are being looked at, there is less chance that the weak parts will be noticed.

A few evaluations have even resulted in the destruction of programmes. This has happened, for example, where a programme had powerful individuals or powerful groups of people who did not agree with the activities or the objectives of the particular programme being carried out.

Fortunately, the vast majority of programme evaluations are not carried out for these kinds of reasons. However, they are worth remembering.

2 What evaluation can (and cannot) do

People usually expect a lot from evaluation. Sometimes it provides clear indications of programme successes and achievements. Sometimes it provides a great deal of useful information for decision-making and planning. However, it is often the case that too much is expected of evaluation. It seems almost as if the evaluation is expected to ask every possible question and to be able to provide every possible answer.

The questions that an evaluation 'asks', and the 'answers' that it can be expected to provide, must be very carefully chosen.

Remember, evaluation is not a medicine to cure all ills.

Looking at success and failure

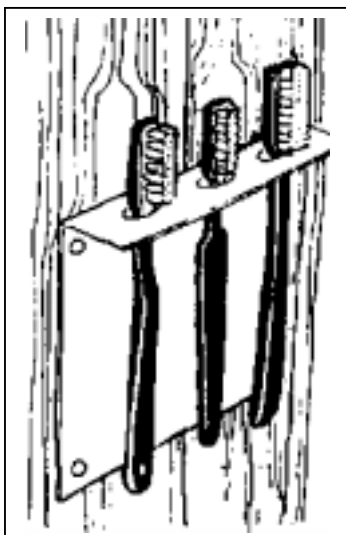
People usually expect evaluation to be able to show clearly whether success has been achieved, but it is often very hard to show clear evidence of success. In fact, it is often easier to show failure. However, failure is not popular, especially where future funding may be at stake.

One of the reasons why it is difficult to show success or failure is that success or failure can mean different things to different people. For example, what might be regarded as failure at one time can be regarded later as partly successful. Look at the following examples from the field.

From experience

In Brazil a rural development programme was set up to improve local agriculture, education and health services, It failed, largely because of the failure of a local community council.

However, a year later one of the programme organisers resumed to the area for a short visit. He found that the programme had produced some results, particularly in the health field. People were using the new medicines that had been introduced for malaria, dysentery and other common diseases. Some people were still boiling and filtering their drinking water and using their latrine. Small tin racks with toothbrushes were a common feature in many homes.



Tooth brushes

So, in the case of this Brazilian programme there were actually areas of success, despite the failure of the programme as a whole.

On the other hand it is wise to be cautious when claiming success. What can appear at first to be a success may change later into a failure. Consider, for example, two cases where latrines were built to improve community health in two South American countries.

At first the latrines in the programme area were considered a success, but as time passed the latrines were used less and less. They were never cleaned or repaired. Eventually they became health dangers, instead of health benefits.



Health dangers

In another programme in a very poor area, latrines were built of bricks and had locks on their doors. However, the houses did not have locks on their doors, so people used the latrines, not for sanitary purposes, but to store their valuables, such as bicycles and chickens. As far as the people were concerned the latrines were a great success - for storing valuables.



Good latrines

Evaluation looks at quantity and quality

Every evaluation deals to some extent with things that can be counted and/or measured. For example it may be the number of people involved in the programme, the number of products or services produced, the amount of material resources available or required, the financial cost of running a programme or the extent of an area cultivated.

These numbers, amounts and quantities are often described as the quantitative aspects of evaluation.

It is often not too difficult to determine the quantitative aspect of an evaluation. For example, a two-month vaccination programme may aim at reaching a certain number of children with a certain vaccine by a certain time. When the programme is complete it is possible to say exactly how many children were in fact reached by the programme.

However, programmes do not only consist of factors that can be counted and/or measured. They also consist of factors that are hard to count or measure, but which influence programme success or failure in important ways. These include: people's behaviour, abilities, qualities, attitudes, values, and motivations; and how people relate to one another and to the programme. These are described as the qualitative aspects of evaluation because they relate to the quality of what is being evaluated.

Such factors are important because they help to explain why a programme in a particular place proceeds in a particular way, and why it has particular strengths and weaknesses, problems and solutions, expected and unexpected outcomes. They also influence programme success or failure. Evaluation should look at the whole character or 'nature' of a programme.

Knowing why a programme succeeds or fails is even important than knowing it does.

In answer to the question of what evaluation can do, we can see clearly that it cannot be expected to do everything. However, what it can often do is to:

- show the main achievement or failings;
- show where and how changes need to be made;
- show how strengths can be built upon;
- provide information and increase skills for planning and decision making; and
- help those involved to see the wider context and implications of their own work.

3 Who can evaluate?

Until fairly recently it was thought that only 'experts' could carry out evaluation. Undoubtedly there are still many evaluations that are better carried out by specially-trained evaluators. These are mainly the kinds of evaluation carried out in or from laboratories, institutions, universities or hospitals.

However, what about the monitoring and evaluation of large- or small-scale community-based development programmes?

A wide range of people involved in health, agriculture, community development and adult education has been using regular monitoring methods in such programmes for a long time. These methods very often involve community-level participation of some kind or another.

However, although people at community or district level do provide or collect information and statistics relating to their own work, they usually play little or no part in analysing them. In fact, they often do not know exactly why such information is being collected or where it will go. They do not usually expect to see the results of their analysis.

Even when they do get to see the evaluation reports, they have difficulty in understanding the specialist evaluation words and complicated ways in which the statistics and information have been presented. For community-level workers, and those who supervise them, the feeling often persists that evaluation and reports of that kind are planned and carried out for 'somebody else'. They are certainly not carried out for them.



Difficulty in understanding

The ways in which programme staff and community-level workers commonly monitor and evaluate their own work includes keeping records, participation in regular meetings, discussion groups, workshops to assess the progress of activities, and the writing of regular reports (weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly).

Some programme staff, such as technical and professional workers, may have had special training or experience in evaluation. Sometimes the 'evaluator' or 'evaluators' are not part of the normal programme staff. They may work singly or as a team, and come from either within or outside the country in which the programme is being carried out. They may perhaps have been asked to carry out an evaluation themselves or they may possibly have been asked to advise others how to carry out an evaluation.

Such evaluators, who are not normal programme participants, are generally known as external evaluators.

External or internal evaluator: who can give the clearest picture?

An external evaluator is said to be a person who is able to take a fresh look at a programme because he or she is not involved personally, and so has nothing personal to gain or lose from the evaluation. For example, such an evaluator will not be influenced too much by programme staff or funders, personal friendships or dislikes. Therefore, he or she is said to be less likely to be biased and more able to be objective.

An internal evaluator is a person 'inside' the programme or one who knows the programme very well. He or she already knows the way in which the programme functions, and its objectives, problems, strengths and weaknesses.

However, because they know the programme it is supposed that they may find it hard to produce an evaluation report that is not biased. For example, they may be influenced too much by their feelings, likes, dislikes, personal friendships or even their own ambitions. In other words, they may be too subjective, which is the opposite of being objective. Being subjective is not a bad thing in itself, but in evaluation a subjective attitude can destroy clear thinking and honest reporting. These points will become clearer if you look at the list given over-leaf.

The advantages and disadvantages of external and internal evaluators

External

- Can take a 'fresh' look at the programme.
- Not personally involved, so it is easier to be objective.
- Is not a part of the normal power structure.
- Gains nothing from the programme, but may gain prestige from the evaluation.
- Trained in evaluation methods. May have experience in other evaluations. Regarded as an 'expert' by the programme.
- An 'outsider' who may not understand the programme or the people involved.
- May cause anxiety as programme staff and participants are not sure of his or her motives.

Internal

- Knows the programme only too well.
- Finds it hardest to be objective.
- Is a part of the power and authority structure.
- May be motivated by hopes of personal gain.
- May not be specially trained in evaluation methods. Has no more (or only a little more) training than others in the programme.
- Is familiar with and understands the programme, and can interpret personal behaviour and attitudes.
- Known to the programme, so poses no threat of anxiety or disruption. Final recommendations may appear less threatening.

Increasing people's confidence in their own abilities

Sometimes programme staff and participants feel that they do not have sufficient skill and ability to evaluate the work they are doing. Building on their normal monitoring and/or management methods can increase their skill, ability and confidence.

Particularly at community level people may feel that because they 'never went to school' or 'only got primary grades' or 'have difficulty with mathematics' they can play little or no part in evaluation. They may also have difficulty in expressing their opinions, particularly in public.

They may find it difficult, at first, to understand people from outside their own community. They frequently feel that they themselves are not clearly understood by such people, whether those people belong to their own country or whether they come from outside the country. These feelings arise not only because of a difference in language, culture and education; sometimes they are due to the fact that anyone who has not lived at or close to community level cannot know what it is really like.

One way of helping people at community level to see that they do have various advantages and capabilities when it comes to evaluation is to help them realise that:

- they already know a lot about the area, its characteristics, benefits and disadvantages (for example, the type of land and its seasons)
- they know how people live; who is related to whom; who holds power and why; how people feel; what they most value; how they cope with problems; and what they hope for or fear.
- they know what people feel they can do; what they wish to avoid; what they wish to learn; and how they wish to use what they learn.
- they already know a lot about a programme (for example, its past and its present, and even its future, plans.).
- (On the other hand only programme staff may know about certain details like financing.)
- they may already be familiar with regular programme monitoring, such as collecting statistics and information, carrying out surveys, writing reports and holding meetings.

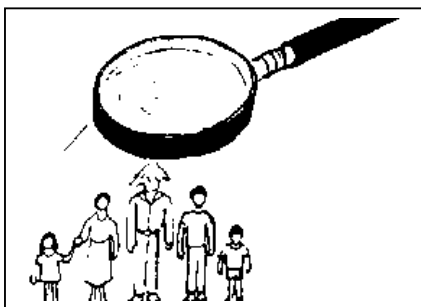
The challenge is to find the best ways in which people can be helped to make their own contribution when participating in evaluation.

4 Participating in evaluation

We need to look more closely at what is meant by 'participating' or taking a part in evaluation. This can take many different forms. For example, people participate in surveys by answering questions. However, they may have taken little or no part in the decision to carry out the survey or in deciding what questions to ask. What they are actually doing is co-operating rather than participating. Their role is mostly a passive one.

The different ways in which people do participate in evaluation can be seen more clearly from the following four examples A to D.

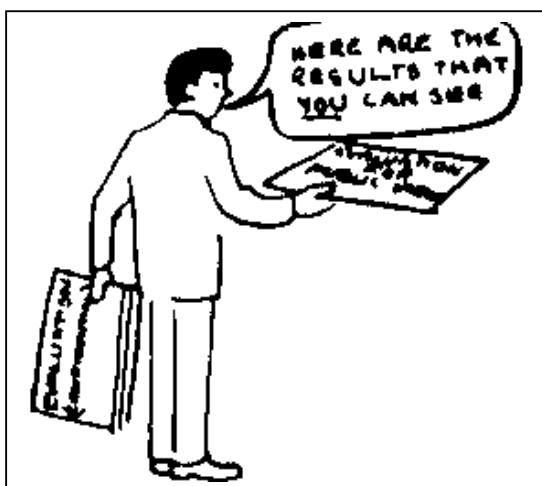
Example A The 'Studying Specimens' type of evaluation



Example A

People are only expected to play a very small part in the evaluation. When the evaluator or evaluating team have explained briefly the aims of the evaluation, people agree to be counted, examined, questioned, and so on. They are not asked, or expected, to do more. (If they did more it could be thought that they might spoil the evaluation.) The evaluation results are then removed by the evaluator(s). There is no feedback of the results to the people, and they do not expect any feedback.

Example B: The 'Refusing to Share Results' type of evaluation



Example B

Some of the objectives of the evaluation are explained to the people. They then answer questionnaires and may even take a small part in analysing the information collected. They may also take part in other evaluation procedures.

At the end of the evaluation people receive carefully chosen feedback, but only the feedback considered suitable by the evaluator or evaluating team.

Example C: The 'Locking up the Expertise' type of evaluation

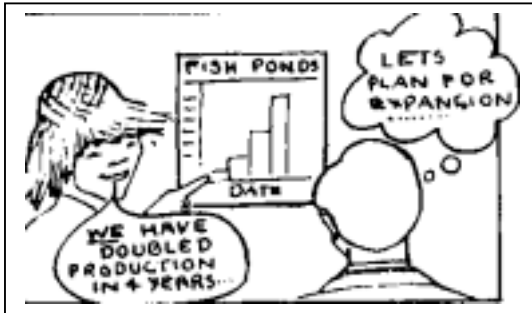


Example C

People take part in the decision to evaluate and in selecting the aims and methods of the evaluation. They participate in carrying out the evaluation and in analysing its results. They also take part in feedback of the results to the wider community, and in putting into practice changes recommended.

However there is not a really effective monitoring system built into the programme to enable staff and participants to proceed by themselves. People are still very dependent on external help if they wish to carry out another evaluation.

Example D: The 'Real Partnership in Development' type of evaluation



Example D

People take a part in deciding when and how to evaluate; in selecting the methods to be used; in collecting and analysing facts and information; in preparing reports; and in deciding how to use their results and put their recommendations into practice.

Where regular monitoring methods are not already being used or are inadequate, new or improved methods are built into the programme. Participants are then more able to assess regularly their own progress and to carry out periodic evaluation.

5 Who is evaluation for:

Sometimes evaluation is carried out because a ministry or national agency has asked for it, perhaps because they need more information to see whether past policies and activities have been successful.

Sometimes a funding agency asks for an evaluation for similar reasons, and because it feels a responsibility to be able to assure donors that their money has been spent usefully.

Community-level programme staff may see the main purpose of evaluation as being a practical one. They want to know what their programme has achieved, whether efforts are being effective, and whether resources are being used efficiently to achieve the objectives of the programme.

Sometimes a university is involved, and the staff and students participate in the evaluation to gain more knowledge about community-level evaluation methods. They may publish books and articles about them or use the evaluation experience for their own special studies.

When an evaluation takes place, the various people who participate in it may well have very different personal objectives or motives for being involved. They may also have different expectations or hopes. Does this matter?

Well, if we compare the progress of an evaluation to the progress of a bus, it is clear that some confusion is going to result if the people involved start off with different ideas about why they are there, what they expect and where they want to go.



Before an evaluation begins, it is essential to know what different expectations people have.

Sometimes it is difficult to find a good solution where there are many different needs and expectations. The particular situation and realities of a programme will determine what can be done about this problem. What is important is to make sure that the different needs and expectations of those at community level are not neglected. The evaluation objectives, methods, and results should also be closely related to their needs, realities, problems and expectations.

Ministries, departments, organisations, universities and agencies also have needs and expectations from evaluation. It is usually difficult for a single evaluation to provide all the information that is required at both community and other levels (which may include national and international levels).

6 When should it be done?

Besides regular monitoring, which is (or should be) built into an ongoing programme, there is a need for evaluation at regular intervals to prevent the piling up of information and also to obtain a clearer picture of programme progress and impact. For some programmes a two-to-three year gap between evaluations works well.

However, the decision about when to evaluate will depend, in each case, on many factors affecting a particular programme. For example:

Has the programme got long-term objectives? If it has, it will be useless to try and evaluate progress too soon. Perhaps less than two years is too soon? Has the programme got short-term objectives (like a two-month vaccination programme)." In this case, evaluation usually takes place when the programme ends. What kind of monitoring methods are already used? Do records need to be gathered from places far away before the evaluation starts? Are there going to be many records to look at? Will extra time be required to do this? Are external evaluators to be involved in the evaluation? If so, this will affect timing. When are they able to come and how long will they take to get to the programme area? How long can they stay? What about climate and seasons? In the rainy season is it possible to reach isolated communities? In the dry season rivers may dry up and communities cannot be reached by boat. In a city people may find it harder to concentrate on evaluation in the hot season. What about people's times? During harvest time will people have time and interest to spare for evaluation? At certain times of the year people have less food and money.

Is it possible to choose a time when people may be more relaxed and willing to give time and attention to evaluation? What about the time of the programme staff? They also have particularly busy times. Which is the best time for them? What about ministries and outside agencies (such as departments, funding agencies and organisations)? They will also have specific ideas about timing.



When should it be done?

7 Where should it be done, and why:

An evaluation is often planned and prepared outside the area where it is to take place. For example, an external evaluator may arrive carrying a plan, and with a clear idea of which methods should be used in the evaluation. Questionnaires may already have been prepared, even though these will be tested first at community level, before they are used on a large scale.

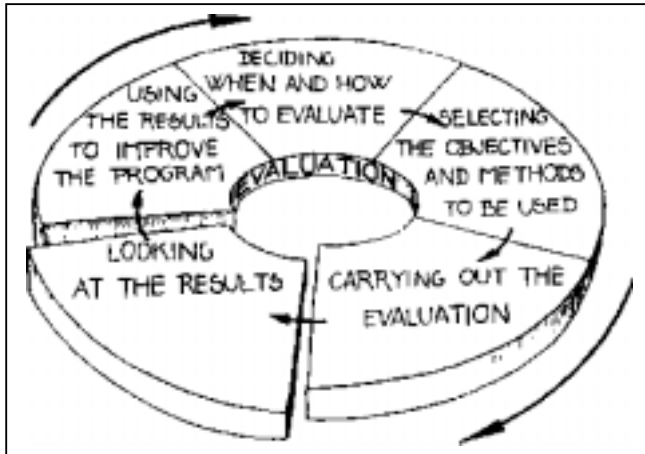
At the end of an evaluation the information collected is often taken away to be analysed and reported, usually in the form of a written report. This is often the case where a computer is used to analyse the information.

Sometimes the evaluation results are taken away, not only out of the area, but out of the country. For example, an external evaluator may not have enough time to write up the results before leaving for home. Where this happens people who have participated in planning and carrying out the evaluation are not able to take part in one of its most important and interesting stages - that of producing its results.

By taking part in analysing and reporting the results of evaluation, participants gain a deeper understanding of programme progress, strengths and weaknesses. They can see where and why changes are needed, and can plan how to put them into practice.

The process of evaluation should be circular, like a wheel. All the parts should fit together so that the wheel can move along smoothly.

If one part of the wheel is missing, it is no longer useful. Participants need to be involved in all parts of the evaluation process. If they are left out of one part, it is like breaking the wheel.



Evaluation is like a wheel turning. Don't let the wheel be broken.

Using materials and resources from 'outside'

It is likely that some of the documents and materials used in the evaluation will come from outside the evaluation area. The greater the use of outside materials and resources, the harder it will be to develop self-reliance.

8 How long will it take?

Some evaluations have taken only a few days, while others have taken many months; some have taken years. The length of time that an evaluation is likely to take will depend on many factors, some of which are listed below.

The length of time the programme has been in operation. Are there many records to look at, or only a few? The number of people involved. Are there a hundred, many thousands or more? Whether the programme is spread over a wide area. Are there long distances to cover between one area of the programme and another? The number of people who can devote time to evaluation and the amount of time they can devote. Are the evaluation activities extra to normal ones? If programme staff only are to be involved they will know who is free to do what and how long it is likely to take. If external evaluators are involved they may be able to stay for only a certain time and they need time to get to know the programme. The preparation and testing of evaluation materials (like questionnaires and survey forms). This takes time. Material resources (like paper, transport and fuel). These will be necessary and their availability influences the scope of an evaluation and the time it takes to carry it out. The speed with which ministries, organisations and agencies need to know the evaluation results. They may be relying on the results to help them in deciding policies and plans. Others. These depend on the particular programme.

The factor of time also relates to the next question: how much will it cost ?

9 How much will it cost?

Some evaluations have cost many thousands of dollars, francs, pesos, marks, yen, pounds, or other currencies. Other evaluations have cost much less. In some evaluation reports the cost is not mentioned.

The cost of an evaluation will depend on many factors, some of which are listed below.

The amount of money that is available for the evaluation and its source. For example, is the programme paying, or is an agency or ministry going to pay the bill? The objectives and scope of the evaluation. Is it to be a small-scale or large-scale evaluation and will travel be a large expense? The material resources involved (like paper, writing materials, typing, copying, petrol, laboratory materials, correspondence, telephones, and so on). Whether programme staff expect extra pay for the extra work involved. Whether other people at community level who do a lot of extra work for the evaluation expect to be paid. Whether external evaluators are involved. Will they expect travel and accommodation costs? Others, depending on the particular programme.

Counting the entire cost of evaluation.

The financial cost of an evaluation is only one of its costs. Evaluation should also be costed in terms of the amount of effort and labour put in by the people involved.

In many development programmes people often work long hours, either as voluntary workers or for minimal pay. No financial cost is usually estimated for this kind of labour.

In order to estimate correctly the costs of participatory evaluation this kind of time and effort should also be included.

Evaluation costs a lot more than money.

10 Who does it belong to ?

Who does an evaluation belong to? Does it belong only to those who paid its financial cost? What about those who carried it out?

Evaluation really belongs to all its participants, including those who paid for it (in many ways, such as with their time, effort or money) and those who carried it out.

So, the answer to this question needs to be carefully worked out before evaluation begins; afterwards is too late.

Reading example no. 3:

SALMEN, Lawrence F. - World Bank:

Listen to the People. Participant-Observer Evaluation of Development Projects, Washington (USA), 1987. (For more information please refer to MFN 30)

Appendixes

A Steps in Conducting Participant-Observer Evaluation

1. Become familiar with the background of the project. What are the project's objectives? Why and how was the site or the target population chosen? How did the executing agency and beneficiary population come together? Sources for this information are documents and interviews with key representatives of funding and executing, agencies and with beneficiary leaders at the time of the project's initiation.

2. Learn the general characteristics of the population' group benefiting from the project. Determine the history of the area and of the people-their places of origin, reasons for coming to the area or project site' and length of residence. In obtaining a socioeconomic profile of population (age, sex, education, employment, income, health), be sure to sample for major internal divisions determined by such factors as location. status. and political affiliation.

3. Choose a place of residence with care. Live in a fairly central location; in an area that is being upgraded rent a place somewhat better than average, one that offers the basic comforts and a separate entry. For a single person it is best to live in association with a family. yet clearly independent of it. so as to blend more easily into and become a part of the community.

4. Get to know the leading actors in the project well. The important contacts will be with the beneficiaries in general. their formal and informal leaders, and the main administrators of the implementing agency Attempt to keep relations with each of these groups somewhat discrete. The manner of relating should be adapted to each-more professional with project administrators, less so with community leaders. and more informal with beneficiaries Although everyone will know the reason for the observer's stay in the neighborhood, the official nature of that stay should be most apparent to the project personnel, with whom a certain degree of personal distance must be maintained to avoid bias, real or alleged, intentional or unconscious. The leaders will also be aware of the motive for the observer's presence, especially at the outset but less so over time. In some cases it may help credibility to have a letter signed by a government authority-not the executing agency but a more distant, neutral body The people, however, should view the participant observer primarily as a neighbor and, to varying degrees, as a friend. At this level the relationship is far more personal than professional, although the people should be duly informed of why the observer is living among them.

Cultivate a few close contacts in diverse segments of the population representing various income groups, political factions, or other significant entities (such as youths, female heads of households, owners, and renters). Never be overly identified with any one arc up. but remain open and accessible to all: diplomacy at the neighborhood level.

Attempt to participate in community organizations and activities but without becoming overly committed The observer's goal should be to demonstrate his involvement and have his efforts and interest appreciated, but to retain his independence.

5. Inject issues of concern into discussions with residents after winning their confidence. These issues will have been identified with funding and executing institutions before the observer's entry into the community and will be refined by the participant observer in conjunction with the executing agency while at the project site. These issues should be introduced into conversation, or spontaneous discussion of them encouraged, and the talk should be guided to focus on the project—all in as unobtrusive a manner as possible. The aim is always to serve as catalyst and to provoke the most honest response possible.

For instance, one issue that affected the diffusion of project benefits and even the viability of the upgrading projects themselves was the nature of community leadership in 8 de Diciembre and Guasmo. Although a sensitive topic, it had to be addressed to find out why certain project activities did or did not take place and why some people benefited but not others. Direct references to this issue at the outset of our stay, before we had gained the people's confidence, would surely have produced distorted responses.

Do not neglect the power of observation: Who actually participates in community improvement work? How are houses being improved? What is the quality of work performed by the executing agency? Photography will help illustrate observations.

6. Elaborate one or more simple survey guides to help substantiate or determine what appear to be key findings. This should be done in consultation with the implementing agency after becoming thoroughly familiar with the community and the way it has been affected by the project. Sample sites should be barely representative, large enough to be taken seriously, not so large as to attract undue attention in the community. The data should be simple enough to process manually and in little time (not more than a week).

7. Prepare a report. The final report should include a description of the actual situation, key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Before writing in discussions should be held with community leaders and informants to verify the thrust of the report and with the implementation agency to understand issues from its perspective. If the report is to go to the funding agency, it should be shared first with the executing agency, not only as a matter of courtesy and ethics, but also to help win the agency's cooperation. Disagreements of the project implementors, if any, should be reflected in the report sent to sponsors.

Reading example no. 4:

DAVIS CASE, D'Arcy - FAO: The Community's Toolbox. The Idea, Methods and Tools for Participatory Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation in Community Forestry, Rome (Italy), 1990.

(For more information please refer to MFN 51)

The Idea

Participatory Assessment Monitoring and Evaluation (PAME) is an idea whose time has come. It offers new and promising ideas for sustainable and appropriate community forestry development

PAME "flips" the traditional "top-down" development approach to a "bottom-up" approach which encourages, supports and strengthens communities' existing abilities to identify their own needs, set their own objectives, and monitor and evaluate them.

The PAME approach focuses on the relationship between the beneficiaries and field staff and the beneficiaries and the community. It builds on two-way communication, clear messages, and a joint commitment to what "works" for the community.

PAME is a combination of three interlinked parts: the IDEA, the METHODS and the TOOLS. While it may not always be possible to adopt the whole PAME approach in every project, it is possible to experiment with some activities to see if PAME works. Try it, adapt it, play with the ideas presented here, and observe the effects,

Sustainable development can be built on the foundation that PAME sets out, especially when approached with the sense of adventure and creativity that is called for by new ways of thinking!

The Tools

The tools of PAME are the instruments that are used to gather, synthesize, and analyse information in a way that is appropriate and participatory.

The tools should be approached with an open mind; they may have to be adapted and re-thought for each situation. Think of them as "ideas" to be developed to respond to the field reality. Experiment with them to determine what will work, what will be more participatory. Combine the tools in different ways. For example, use some of the Ranking, Rating, and Sorting "games" to make Surveys more interesting. Combine a Case Study with Popular Theatre or a Puppet Show.

Many of the tools work individually to gather and analyse information, while helping develop communication skills. Drawing and Discussion is one example of such a tool. Other tools are more specific, such as Survival Surveys.

All of the tools, because they are developed with and for the community, serve also as extension and learning tools. Be flexible! If one tool is not working well, re-think it or suggest another one.

Choosing the best tool for a situation is a unique and creative process. To assist in narrowing the choices of appropriate tools from the wide range of possibilities offered, some tips on determining which tool the community might find most useful are discussed in Chapter Eight, along with a list of the main characteristics of tools and some sampling methods.

Chapter Eight presents the tools in a way which seeks to encourage creativity and flexibility. The following descriptions are brief, as most are adaptations of tools with which most field staff are familiar. There are methodological texts for many of these tools and the following is not a substitute for more detailed instruction on sample selection, sample size, or research design. This description is focused on how the tools may be or may have been adapted to strengthen local participation.

Enjoy the tools! PAME should be an exciting, dynamic learning experience for everybody.

Some guidelines for choosing the most appropriate tool for a community.

Watch and listen

Become aware of how community members think and communicate information. This will give clues as to what tools might work best. For example, ask a number of people directions to the next village, and observe the ways they relay this information. People from some cultures may draw a map on the ground. This could mean that visual tools would work best for them. People from other cultures may give instructions such as "go 17 kilometers down the road then turn left". These people may be comfortable with the written tools.

A third culture might respond: "Go to the village marker, and when you see the coal merchant's store, go down the road beside it until you come to a leaning tree with a large branch hanging down. There are two roads there. Take the one which has two tracks." People from this community might find the story-telling and drama tools the most appropriate.

Observe

Do they have books and magazines in their homes? Do they have pictures decorating their homes? Do they use symbols to decorate their implements? These kinds of observations will give clues as to which communication type (written, oral or visual) is basic to the community.

Ask

Ask how information is relayed around the community. Is it exclusively by word-of-mouth? Are there newspapers? Posters?

Reflect

Think about which extension efforts have worked well (or not so well) in the community in the past.

Knowing which methods of communication are most commonly used in a community will help the field worker to "short list" tools that are likely to work in a particular setting. From this "short list" the community can choose.

The following list shows the main characteristics of tools (visual, oral or written). Each (ú) is the value of the tool within each characteristic. For example, meetings have value to all characteristics, but mainly in the oral category.

An overview of the tools.

Tool	Visual	Oral	Written
1. Group Meetings	*	****	*
2. Drawing/Discussion	***	**	*
3. Murals/Posters	*****	*	
4. Flannel Boards	****	*	*
5. Open-ended Stories		*****	*
6. Linearized Posters	****	**	
7. Community Case Study		****	**
8. Historical Mapping	***	**	*
9. Semi-structured Interviews		****	**
10. Ranking, Rating, Sorting	****	**	
11. Community Environmental Assessment	**	**	**
12. Survival Surveys	***		***
13. Participatory Action Research	**	**	**
14. Maps and Mapping	****	*	*
15. Farmer's Own Records	***		***
16. Nursery Record Books	***		***
17. Community Financial Accounts	***		***
18. S.W.O.L. Analysis	*	****	*
19. Popular Theatre	***	***	
20. Puppet Theatre	***	***	
21. Community Directed Visual Images	****	**	
22. Community Directed Tape Recordings		*****	
23. Community Directed Video	***	***	

Sampling methods

When collecting some kinds of information it is important to choose the sample (usually the people from whom you are going to obtain information) that will provide the most accurate information. If statistically valid information is required, rather than "a pretty good idea", it is best to get assistance with sampling methods.

Systematic sampling

Every person/house/seedling, etc. is given a number. Then every fifth, tenth, etc. person/house/seedling is chosen for the sample, until the required sample size is obtained.

Simple random sampling

Where records or lists of people/households/seedlings exist, a certain number of them can be chosen using a random sampling method. Assign each sample a number. Put all the assigned

numbers of the people/households/seedlings in a basket and pick (without looking!) one by one, from the basket until the desired sample size is obtained. Random sampling methods are used IO reduce bias.

Stratified random sampling

Groups or strata of the population of people/households/seedlings are separated (for example people with land and landless people/large households and small households/ fruit tree species of seedlings and fuelwood species). Then each group/strata is treated as a separate ease, and a sample established for each group/strata.

Cluster sampling

People/households/seedlings are chosen in groups or clusters and not on an individual basis. For example, a particularly dry area with poor growing conditions might provide one "cluster", while an area with rich soil and higher rainfall might provide another "cluster". Within each "cluster" a random sampling method is used.

Multi-stage random sampling

Samples are selected using simple random sampling. but at different times or stages. For example, one stage may be 100 farms. A random sample would be chosen from these 100 (it would be 15). The next stage would be seedlings planted. On these IS farms there are 15,000 seedlings planted. A sample of seedlings would be 750 (5%), or 50 seedlings from each of the IS households. Another sampling method (every 10th seedling in the field) can be used for each farm surveyed, so that there will be as little bias as possible in choosing which seedling to "survey".

Quota sampling

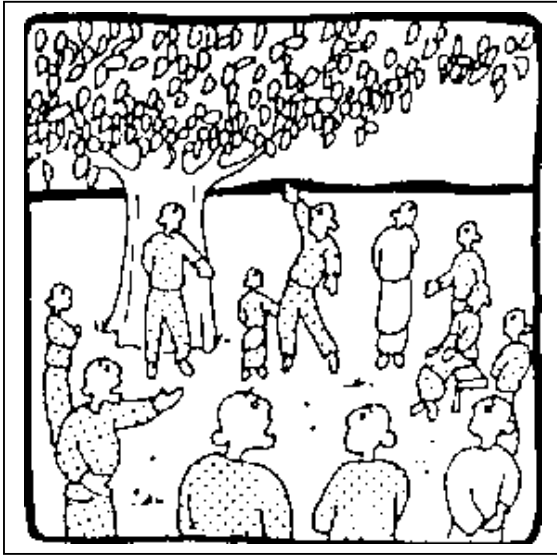
A certain number of samples (people/households/seedlings) or quota are required. The person taking the information goes out looking for information, and stops when the quota is reached. For example, going to the market and questioning people who are willing IO talk until the necessary quota has been completed. This method relies on personal judgement, such as who is willing IO talk and who is al the market The information can thus be biased.

Sample size

The following tables can help you to decide the sample size that is needed.

Total sample	Suggested sample	Percentage
100	15	15%
200	20	10%
500	50	10%
1000	50	5%

Tool 1 - Group Meetings



Group meetings

Tool description

A meeting is a coming together of people for a specific purpose. The meeting can involve a large number of people, or a smaller (under 10) number of people who focus on a specific problem or purpose. Meetings generally have a facilitator who encourages two-way communication. Smaller focus group meetings can be made up of people with common concerns (women, herders, people who are poor) and can speak comfortably together, share common problems and a common purpose. The outputs from focus group meetings can be presented to larger group meetings, giving a "voice" to those in the community who are unable to speak up in a larger meeting.

Purpose of the tool

- Give and receive information
- Discuss issues of relevance to the community
- Receive community agreement on an issue
- Help identify problems and solutions
- Plan activities and negotiate conflicts
- Validate evaluation results and formulate recommendations

Major benefits

- A large number of people can be reached in a relatively short period of time.
- Meetings are usually the first and most consistent exposure of the project staff to the community as a whole. It may very well be here that the cohesion and trust of the community is gained.
- Community meetings with open invitations can mean that all those who wish to participate may do so.

- Focus groups meetings can bring together those who have a particular problem; those who cannot speak up at large meetings (such as women or minority groups) or those who are peripherally involved, such as nomadic herders.
- Regular small group meetings can foster group discipline, encourage a co-operative approach to identifying and solving problems, provide a forum for decision making by consensus, provide a practical means of developing shared leadership, promote activities, and make it possible to share experiences.

Using the tool

A lot of careful planning goes into a successful meeting. Two way communication must be fostered, interest must be maintained and "work" must get done. These steps can help to plan a good meeting:

1. Have a clear purpose. Know what the meeting is to accomplish, from both outsiders' and insiders' perspectives. Obtain the approval and involvement of the local leaders. Be aware of the customs and protocol of the village.
2. Prepare a calendar of dates to help check day-to-day preparations.
3. Arrange a convenient time and place for the meeting. Consider the size and composition of the group. Remember that people have different time constraints, women may not be available to attend at the same time as men.
4. After establishing a time when most can attend, let people know about it well in advance.
5. If outsiders are involved, they may require accommodations and food.
6. Inform the community or the group of the purpose of the meeting using posters, home visits, public announcements, radio, telephone and/or word of mouth.
7. If entertainment is planned, ensure that it does not distract from the purpose of the meeting, but lends itself to the topic.
8. Plan/prepare handouts/materials to be distributed. Plan a method of distribution.
9. Plan focus groups and feedback mechanisms if necessary.
10. Plan a strategy to encourage discussions. For example: prepare leading questions; stop the slide show or film in the middle and open discussions; or have insiders create their own "endings". Think always of TWO-WAY communication, and how to adapt extension aids from one-way to two-way communication.
A community person such as a schoolteacher or local leader, with experience in meetings, can help facilitate the meeting. Consider that there may be factions of a community (women for example) who are unable or unwilling to speak up. Separate meetings with these people can be held, and their perspectives as a whole brought back to the larger meetings.
11. Expect that there will be high turnout at the beginning with decreases over time as only those especially interested or involved will attend. A focus group meeting can usually handle activities, with large meetings periodically to inform the whole community. If the turnout at meetings changes abruptly, look for the cause.

When facilitating meetings it is important to:

- prepare and check visual aids, audio aids, and electrical outlets or generator power well before meeting;
- ensure that there is a comfortable, pleasant atmosphere. Arrange snacks/drinks when appropriate;
- make the introduction brief, and tailor it specifically for those attending,
- make the purpose of the meeting clear in the introduction and place that purpose in the context of past, present and future events;
- begin and end at more-or-less the stated time;
- start with items/topics/issues on which it is easy to get agreement or acceptance of differences of opinion;
- allow conflicting opinions to emerge and try either to have these difference resolved or accepted by the group;
- summarize the proceedings, outline the decisions that have been made and identify "next steps". Confirm time and place of next meeting;
- try to end on a high " positive" note.

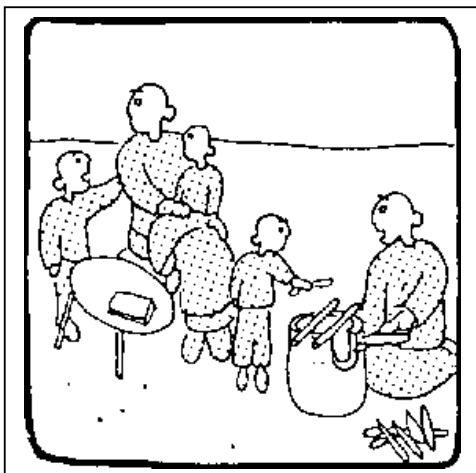
Precautions in using the tool

Beware of hidden agendas, groups who might use the meeting to bring up their own concerns. The facilitator might side-step this by saying. "That's not the purpose of this meeting, you might want to hold another meeting to discuss that issue".

The facilitator of the meeting must have enough authority to keep the meeting on track, but enough sensitivity to include as many people in the discussions as possible.

The community or group may put the facilitator in a position of "expert" and expect them to carry the whole meeting. Develop methods that foster participation.

Tool 9 - Semi-structured Interviews



Semi-structured interviews

Tool description

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication. They can be used both to give and receive information.

Unlike the questionnaire framework, where detailed questions are formulated ahead of time, semi structured interviewing starts with more general questions or topics. Relevant topics (such as cookstoves) are initially identified and the possible relationship between these topics and the issues such as availability, expense, effectiveness become the basis for more specific questions which do not need to be prepared in advance.

Not all questions are designed and phrased ahead of time. The majority of questions are created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the person being interviewed the flexibility to probe for details or discuss issues.

Semi-structured interviewing is guided only in the sense that some form of interview guide, such as the matrix described below is prepared beforehand, and provides a framework for the interview.

NAME _____		INTERVIEWER _____	
DATE _____			
VILLAGE _____			
ACTIVITY	AWARENESS	PROBLEMS	SUGGESTIONS
COMPOUND PLANTING	_____	QUESTIONS ABOUT PROBLEMS WITH COMPOUND PLANTING	_____
VILLAGE WOODLOT	QUESTIONS ABOUT AWARENESS OF VILLAGE WOODLOT	_____	_____
		_____	_____

A matrix

Purpose of the tool

- Obtain specific quantitative and qualitative information from a sample of the population
- Obtain general information relevant to specific issues, (ie: to probe for what is not known)
- Gain a range of insights on specific issues

Major benefits

- Less intrusive to those being interviewed as the semi-structured interview encourages two-way communication. Those being interviewed can ask questions of the interviewer. In this way it can also function as an extension tool.

- Confirms what is already known but also provides the opportunity for learning. Often the information obtained from semi-structured interviews will provide not just answers, but the reasons for the answers.
- When individuals are interviewed they may more easily discuss sensitive issues.
- Help field staff become acquainted with community members. Outsiders may be better at interviewing because they are perceived as more objective.
- Using both individual and group interviews can optimize the strengths of both.

Using the tool

1. Design (facilitator and/or interview team) an interview framework such as the matrix example. Include topics or questions for discussion.
2. Establish the sample size and method of sampling.
3. Interviewers can conduct a number of practice interviews with each other and/or with a few community members, to become familiar with the questions, and get feedback on their two-way communication skills.
4. Record only brief notes during the interview. Immediately following the interview elaborate upon the notes.
5. Analyze the information at the end of each day of interviewing. This can be done with the interview team or group.
6. Discuss the overall results of the analysis with community members so that they can challenge the perceptions of the interview team. This can make the process even more participatory.

Precautions in using the tool

A lot of extra information may surface during interviews. Team meetings can help identify similarities in responses.

Assure that, in a personal interview, the person being interviewed understands and trust that the responses will be confidential.

It may take some practice for the interviewer to find the balance between open-ended and focused interviewing.

In a semi-structured group interview people may interrupt one another or "help one another out,- or not take turns. They may get off the topic completely.

Interviewers need some skills. The most common problem with interviewers is asking leading questions. Other problems are: failure to listen closely; repeating questions they have already been asked; failure to probe when necessary; failure to judge the answers; and asking vague or insensitive questions.

Tool 20 - Puppet theatre



Puppet theatre

Tool description

Puppets are used to represent characters which act out the issues and/or story determined by insiders. If an outside professional puppet group is used, the assistance of insiders to develop scripts around the issues is required.

Purpose of the tool

- Puppet theatre has the same purpose as Popular Theatre (Tool 19), but because the puppets are not viewed as "real people", they can often deal with sensitive situations and more easily obtain feedback from the audience.
- Puppet theatre has high entertainment value in some cultures, and can reach and receive feedback from a wide audience.
- This tool is multipurpose. It can be used for Assessment, for collection of qualitative information; as an extension tool, and for presentation and communication of results.
- By using this tool continually, an ongoing process of audience feedback exists. This strengthens the group analysis.

Using the tool

1. Meetings of insiders/outside and the puppet group (if applicable) will be needed to identify key issues, and design a presentation that will encourage response. After the messages and key issues to be communicated are identified, it should be determined how this can best be done. For example the puppets can tell a story or act out a drama.

The puppet group will require manual dexterity, voice and story telling abilities. If local people are going to be the puppet group, they may require some training and rehearsal.

2. Construct puppets and stage if not available. To build puppets and stage, local materials should be sought: gourds can be used for puppet heads, stages can be made of local cloth and scrap wood, and lighting systems can be constructed from old tin cans. Often, however, these are not of good quality and materials have to be purchased.

3. Select characters and begin designing the script

4. Rehearse the shows with a small group playing the role of audience.

5. Present the puppet show to the larger group. Record responses so that they can be used to develop the message and story in the future. See Popular Theatre (Tool 19) for further suggestions.

Precautions in using the tool

Puppeteers must handle a variety of unexpected and often sensitive responses.

Recording the responses for future use may be difficult. A tape recorder can help, or a number of people can take notes.

Ensure that the messages/issues are relevant to the community (there is one example of a puppet group which encouraged farm tree planting to a group of landless people!). When the issues and messages are decided upon by insiders, this problem is reduced.

Reading example no. 5:

RUGH, Jim - World Neighbors: Self-evaluation. Ideas for Participatory Evaluation of Rural Community Development Projects, Oklahoma City (USA), 1986.

(For more information please refer to MFN 24)

Communicating the findings/making decisions

Once results have been obtained, what should be done with them? With whom should they be shared? How? What decisions will they influence?

Because of the way the TAHID project's self-evaluation was carried out, the staff, village representatives in the Association and community volunteers were all a part of the process of collecting and analyzing the information. Thus the findings were already communicated to quite a wide circle of people.

To formalise the process, a series of community meetings was called. At these meetings the results of the survey were discussed. In the process, even more ideas were brought forward. As all of these issues were openly discussed and analysed, the implications became more and more evident.

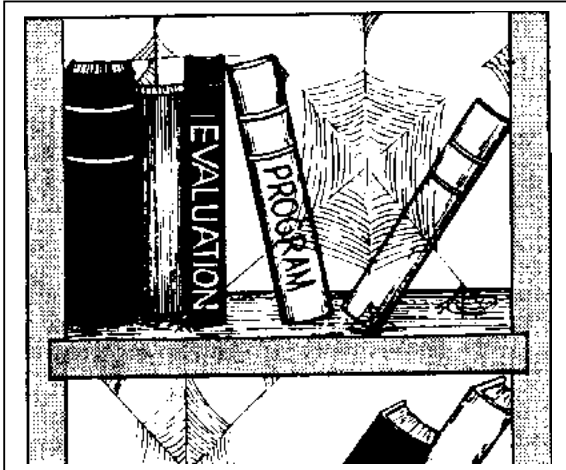
Decisions were made which affected the project's activities and directions. These included some changes in staff, plans to provide others with opportunities to attend workshops to improve specific skills, ideas for involving villagers more in training others, a reassessment of the subjects on which training courses should be offered. dropping some activities and focusing more on others, and steps to expand the project to reach others who had previously been left out.

There was a feeling of consensus that these decisions would make the project more effective and useful. There was wide agreement that the process of self-evaluation should continue, and be even further improved, in order that future refinements could be made in the project. And, what may be most important, the whole process, involving so many of the partners in this project, enhanced a feeling that it really does belong to the community.
Spreading the word and acting upon it

The self-evaluation reported above for the TA HID project appeared to have involved only staff and community members. Communication was mostly oral and interpersonal, through direct involvement of individuals and through community meetings. It enabled those at that level to make appropriate decisions.

In many cases others would also be involved in carrying out the evaluation, and/or interested in learning of its findings. Other forms of communication would probably be required.

Too many evaluations have ended up in the form of a voluminous report which virtually nobody took the time to read. Though the evaluation exercise itself may have revealed valid, reliable, and vital information, if the evaluators rely upon only the final, written report to communicate the findings, the potential users (including community leaders, managers and administrators) may be either too intimidated by its size, or lack the time required, to fully read the report and assimilate the information. It would thus fail in its major purpose-to influence decision-making.



Nobody took the time to read

Before discussing a number of ideas which would help in communication. Let us recall (from Chapter 2) the list of the various groups Interested in the results of evaluation:

1. Community members involved in the project:
2. Community members not yet reached by the project:
3. Project staff (including extension agents, as well as management);
4. National headquarters of the implementing organization:
5. International agencies supporting the project:
6. Donors who provide funding:
7. Other development agencies: and the
8. General public.

What are some of the considerations for communicating evaluation findings? Here are a few:

1. Make sure it reaches the right people. Who needs to know what? By when? To make what decisions? Consider the needs of each of the groups listed above. Though the form of communication should be tailored to suit each, be certain the required information gets to them.
2. Use a form of communication which catches the attention of the intended audience. "My mind is already made up -don't bother me with the facts" may be the unacknowledged attitude of persons in decision-making positions. How can the findings of evaluation be brought to their attention?
3. Keep it simple! A great volume of complicated statistics is probably less likely to be read than a short presentation which contains just the essential facts, clearly stated. (The trick is deciding which facts are "essential," especially when a report is addressed to a wide audience. This is often a difficult dilemma-like the one which faced this author as he compiled this manual!)
4. Make it as understandable as possible. This includes communicating in the language of the intended audience (not only a question of English, French, Swahili, or whatever, but also of technical jargon understood by only a few professionals). This may require different languages (and forms) for different audiences- as long as the essential meaning of the findings is not altered in the translation or condensation.
5. The evidence presented should be convincing. Those not directly involved in the collection of the findings, especially, will need to be convinced that what is being presented represents not just the opinions of a few, but substantiated facts.

6. The findings must be timely, -to reach those who make decisions in time to provide them the needed inputs before those decisions have to be made. Otherwise the whole exercise would have been a waste of time. (Some of the findings of an evaluation process may need to be communicated at different times than others for this reason.)

7. People need to be involved in the communication. It would be at cross-purposes with the basic philosophy of the participatory approach for the beneficiaries not to be aware of the results of an evaluation. not to be a part of deciding what and how to communicate to other interested parties.

Since written reports will probably be the most common form of communication, let us consider a few more suggestions as they pertain specifically to this medium:

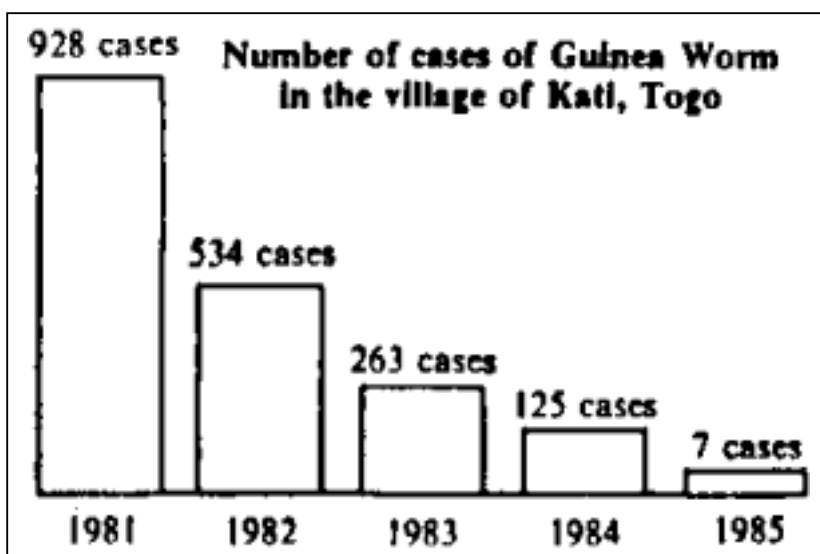
8. Keep it short! "Small is beautiful!" And much more likely to be read.

9. Make it easily readable. A long, dry narrative may lose your readers. So will one which is too complicated.

10. Edit out irrelevant information.

11. Whenever possible, use tables, charts and illustrations. They can communicate a considerable amount of information in a small amount of space.

12. Organize the report in a logical, easy-to-follow outline, which helps the reader find what he is interested in.



Graphics help communicate the findings of an evaluation. This graph, from an annual report of Togo's Agu Community Health Program, is a good illustration.

Here are some very simple guidelines for decision makers (which apply equally to the chairman of a village health committee as to the president of a Private Voluntary Agency):

1. Identify what you will need to know before a decision is to be made.

2. Involve as many people in obtaining that information as possible-solicit various points of view; listen.

3. Learn all you can learn in the time allowed.

4. Then, have the guts to make decision!

Evaluations which are well carried out and well communicated to those who make plans can contribute greatly to the evolution of a project. As evidence indicates that progress has been made in achieving the first level of objectives, we are able to make decisions about subsequent phases of our work, and set new objectives. An example of the evolution of project objectives is provided in Guidelines for Self-Evaluation, produced by Community Aid .

There is much more that could be said here about forms of communication and about the process of decision-making consequent to learning the findings of an evaluation . . . but in a brief attempt to follow the above considerations, we will cut it short!

What we have tried to say in this chapter is nicely summarized in the following quote from the ACVAFS Evaluation Sourcebook:

The object is to create a steady flow of information essential to make decisions adequately, without overloading the system. (And) just as a runner does not finish a marathon until he has taken the last step across the finish line. so evaluation is not complete until judgements and decisions have been made and action implemented.

Conclusion

That, dear reader, is all we have space to say in this manual, except for the summary, references and the appendix. The rest is up to you!

More should be added to this manual. We solicit your suggestions and ideas as to what else should be added, or what deleted or changed from what we have presented on these pages. Most importantly, we solicit case studies of self-evaluation exercises undertaken by community groups. We invite you to write to us so that we can share your experiences with others. so that v,e all can learn to do better self-evaluation, and thus help improve the quality of life of each of us participating in this process we call development.

Reading example no. 6: Training for Participatory Evaluation

D'ABREO, Desmond A.: Training for Participatory Evaluation. In FERNANDES, Walter & TANDON, Rajesh - Indian Social Institute: Participatory Research and Evaluation, New Delhi (India), 1981.

(For more information please refer to MFN 27)

Development programmes are multiplying all over the country with an incredibly rapid momentum. Funds from the country itself whether from government or private sources and from abroad are easily made available for those who want to launch out on development programmes. But the impact of these programmes is far less in proportion to the resources poured into them. The reasons for this disproportion are numerous but an outstanding one is the lack of proper and regular evaluation of these programmes.

There is indeed evaluation but it is carried out in a one-way, downward communication. It is carried out from outside and concentrates mostly on the upper strata of the personnel implementing the programme, and only obliquely touches the real people at the grass-roots, who, as a matter of fact, should constitute the real agents of their own development. In most programmes, rural or urban, the masses are more the object than the subject of their evaluation, so much so that they look on an evaluation as a 'checking up' by outsiders on the agency which is implementing the project. The people are neither involved in the programmes as planners and agents of their own development process, nor are they involved in any evaluation of their programmes.

Today the emphasis is gradually and steadily shifting in some development programmes to involve people in planning and implementation of their own development. A dialogical relationship is being built up between people and programme-initiators. An important part of this dialogical relationship is the evaluation that is done in collaboration with the people, not on or for them.

However, in order that the people be capable of participatory evaluation, it is essential that they be trained to do so. They have to see the importance of evaluation, its goals and limitations, its requirements and its components. They must be aided to develop the skills required for fruitful evaluation. This paper will discuss one such programme—the training method we follow at 'Development Education Service' (DEEDS). Without pretending to propose it as a model, we hope that the principles we try to follow will be of help to others.

Training for whom?

Community development work must be implemented by the community, rather than by any external organisation or outside persons. The people in a community are endowed with the abilities to think, organise themselves and make their own decisions. It should be the planning and implementing agency of its own development processes. However it is not possible to involve the whole community equally in any development process however grassroots-oriented that programme might be. It is commonly accepted that whenever any change is conceived for a group of people however large or small there is only about five per cent who are ready followers of the plan for change. Around fifteen to twenty per cent will follow after a certain amount of persuasion and reflection. Thirty or forty per cent will hesitate till they see concrete results of the changes from the new plan. Another twenty per cent will follow when they see that the rest are not toeing the line. The remaining minority will not bother whether there is change or not and are ready to adapt to both ways.

To try to train persons indiscriminately from such a diversity of attitudes would be a waste of time and resources besides causing a diffusion of enthusiasm among those who might be ready for training and new action. Hence, it is important to work along the lines of a 'nuclear growth process'. The training should first concentrate on those five per cent of people who are ready to accept education for change. These would be persons

who are dissatisfied with the present situation who have a certain degree of commitment to the community, who are acceptable to at least some part of the community especially the poor and the oppressed, and who are found to have a certain perseverance. It is these people that the animator or field worker should try to select through a process of identification with the community and personal rapport. He should concentrate on training this core group intensively. After their training is over the trainees will in turn select those persons from their community to whom they are acceptable and train them. This process will create a sizable number of people who could affect the thinking and behaviour of the larger community and be starting point of change process that can lead to a mass movement.

The preliminary training of the core group who constitute the cadre of local activists should focus on critical awareness-building process starting from a deep analysis of their community's basic felt need. This training can give them a vision, of development, a clear ideology and understanding of an effective approach to be adopted in the development of their community. It should also give them the requisite skills of group discussion, working in collaboration with others who build a strong team spirit elements which are essential requirements for participatory evaluation.

It is only after these activists have been identified and trained through a process of reflection and action that they can be exposed to a training programme for participatory evaluation. Without this prior training and experience in the field the effectiveness of any training for participatory evaluation should be very limited. It would end up being a mere academic exercise which would not bear much practical fruit since it would not have the foundation of a real experience of working in community development. In brief, it is our contention that there can be no training in participatory evaluation unless there has been a training and active experience in genuine community development.

There is another consideration that needs to be made when conducting a training programme on participatory evaluation. Generally when a training programme for development is conducted participants come from different organisations that are already involved in some form of development activity. We feel that it is not fruitful to give such a mixed group a training in participatory evaluation. In the first place, these are generally development workers, not activists. Secondly, they are individuals from various development agencies. However, much as the training might have changed their attitudes, values and ideas, it cannot result in participatory evaluation of their programmes, since on re-entry, they realise that others working in the programme back home have not changed, and their ideas on participatory evaluation will be accepted neither by the other personnel of the implementing agency nor by the people at the grassroots. We therefore feel that it is much more practical and meaningful to restrict the participants of a training programme on participatory evaluation to activists working in the same community.

Nature of training

We believe that the usual training programmes conducted in most training centres are not suitable for training activists who are to be involved in participatory action and evaluation. According to traditional lines, training (and education, for that matter) is seen to be transfer of selected information, knowledge and skills from the trainers to the trainees. The trainers teach, the trainees are taught. They are mere objects of the training, neither given the opportunity to choose the programme content or methodology, nor the chance of being consulted about it. The trainers enforce their choice and are active, while the trainees are given the mere illusion of acting through action of the trainers. This kind of training, whose content, methodology and ambiance are decided beforehand by the trainer, are basically hierarchical, undemocratic and non-participatory. The outcome of such a training is unlikely to lead to participatory action and evaluation.

After such a training programme, the trainees can only be expected to adopt the attitudes and roles of the trainers in their own work. They also become 'trainers' in their relations with people, deciding for them, planning for them, not taking them into their confidence about the programme and its

phases! and worst of all, considering them as people to be taught because they are ignorant, unprepared and incapable of trying the responsibility for their own development.

Being aware of all these serious shortcomings of the traditional training processes, we realise that the training for participatory evaluation must find itself on a totally different orientation. Since our ultimate aim is participatory evaluation, the first requisite of a training programme for activists should be that it be a process of group interaction and formation of team spirit. Group discussion and group work facilitates the acquisition of attitudes, knowledge and skills which activists need for effective functioning as persons who identify and work with the people.

Secondly, evaluation demands an open mind which implies questioning and not taking things at their face value. Hence, this attitude must be an outcome of training. The training programme and its setting should create an atmosphere where the trainees discover knowledge for themselves in a situation of group dialogue, where everyone participates with a questioning and open mind. It is important that this open and questioning attitude be manifest not only in the trainees but also in the trainers. This, as we have indicated earlier, implies a basic and deep humility and patience.

It is in this area that the greatest difficulty is encountered in initiating this type of training. Most training or educational programmes that begin with a sincere attempt to work on learner-oriented participatory lines, gradually degenerate into lecture sessions that are primarily teacher-oriented. This is because it requires much more imagination, preparation and hard work to have dialogical learning. It demands a real knowledge of the trainee, his centres of interest, his stock of knowledge which is to be the starting point of the educational process. It involves a keen personal observation and closer interpersonal relationship between the trainer and the trainees. It is far easier to prepare and give lectures. Besides, a lecture can cover a lot more material which will require more time if attempted in a dialogical discovery process.

The objective of our training is participatory research and evaluation. For such activities, it is necessary that those who participate in evaluation draw out the conclusions through a process of personal reflection on the data they receive, observe and verify. They cannot be satisfied with merely collecting statements and accepting them without personal thought and assessment. (They can be prepared for this reflection by the methodology of training offered to them. We must realise that education is not what we give to the trainees, not a banking system in which we deposit a certain amount of data in their minds, but rather a process in which their potentialities are drawn out and their experiences reflected upon in order that they arrive at their own vision and convictions with regard to development and change.

It must be admitted that there are a lot of difficulties in attempting this style of training. To begin with, the trainees, who are from the grassroots, are not prepared for this kind of exercise. Most of them are semi-literate, or if they have been to school, are products of an educational system that gears people to rote objects, at the receiving end and with no allowance for initiative in the learning process. Much less are they prepared to think and to control what and how they learn. Hence, their evaluatory powers are totally neglected and are generally atrophied. To break down this passivity and the audience/performer relationship requires a lot of practical activity in which the trainer is neither controlling nor being the focus of attention.

This leads to the next requirement of such a training programme for participation in evaluation. The distinction between trainers and trainees is reduced to the barest minimum. The role of a trainer is to be a facilitator who creates an environment in which all the participants can express themselves freely, can ask questions, express doubts, attempt solutions and learn without any hesitation or inhibition. The trainer too realises in such a process that he is a learner with others. The reality is discovered, analysed and studied by all in common and is not handed down by one individual to the rest. The relationship between trainer and trainee has to be a genuine dialogical one so that it can later on be realised in their work of evaluation. No longer should they make a dichotomy between the evaluator and the people as objects of evaluation. They will make evaluation a process of dialogue.

This identification of trainer with trainees is enhanced if both share in the living conditions and avoid disparities of food, accommodation, etc. These things make a lot of difference, for the activists who come from a poorer stratum of society will be encouraged by these external details to lose their fears and inhibitions and will gain in self-confidence. This equally is a very tangible way of deepening the attitude of democracy and participation.

A fourth requirement of training for participatory evaluation is that it aims at acquiring and strengthening a set of values which differ totally from those underpinning the present social system. The training must incorporate the values that underlay participatory evaluation-values of sharing cooperation, humility, open-mindedness and patience to learn from the people, objectivity in judgment, justice, equality, team spirit and honesty. The acquisition of such values is essential for working among the oppressed for helping them to bring about a radical change in the society and for an objective and constructive evaluation of their programmes. If these values are not preceded but exercised and actively emphasised during the training programme, new energies will be created or released in the trainees as well as in the trainers to act with conviction and courage in their various struggles at different levels. If the training programme is patterned on democratic participatory and non-hierarchical lines it will already set the foundation for the acquisition and deepening of many of these values. A concrete example of sharing and team spirit of dialogue and equality will be manifested when the participants are involved in decision-making about most if not all aspects of the training programme.

Finally, it is important that a training programme for activists should enable them to develop a questioning and analytical mind in order to have a scientific approach to the understanding of the reality around them. The starting point of such a programme will be the reality as experienced by the participants in their life and work. From the known they will proceed to the unknown. For this purpose, the problems and issues to be discussed should be determined not beforehand, but in consultation with the participants according to their needs and expectations.

Methodology of training

The training methodology outlined here consists of two parts: one a foundation training as development activist and another a specific training in participatory evaluation. Both are described below.

Reading example no. 7: The ten commandments of evaluation

PATTON; Michael Quinn: Creative Evaluation, Newbury Park (USA), 1987.

(For more information please refer to MFN 52)

(1) Thou shalt have no other gods before evaluation-not planning, not policy analysis, not applied social science, certainly nor basic research or theory or sociology or psychology or any other ology or ism because the fields of research are confused enough already and if evaluators don't put evaluation first, then who will?

(2) Thou shalt not worship any idols or other graven images whether they be rock stars, politicians, TV personalities, big-name academics, or any other stakeholders because stakeholders put their pants or skirts on one leg at a time just like evaluators, so if evaluators start worshipping stakeholders, then stakeholders will get to thinking they're better than evaluators and they won't accord us the proper respect - which, if you have noticed, is already in pretty damn short supply.

(3) Thou shalt not take the name of evaluation in vain. (If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all, unless of course you're writing a final evaluation report - then give 'em hell.)

(4) Remember the day your report is due, to keep it holy. Six days (metaphorically) you may gather your data, but the seventh day is set aside to report and apply findings. (There is no day of rest for evaluators.)

(5) Honor your stakeholders and data providers, so that you may continue to find more work to do.

(6) Thou shalt not kill. (Remind stakeholders often of this commandment - especially as it applies to bearers of bad news.)

(7) Thou shalt not commit adultery with stakeholder spouses. (This tends to threaten validity, reliability, objectivity, and your life. If you fail to heed this commandment, and get caught, refer the offended stakeholder back to commandment 6.)

(8) Thou shalt not steal other evaluators' contracts - data maybe, but never contracts.

(9) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. (In other words, don't fudge the data. It's not nice.)

(10) Thou shalt not covet thy stakeholder's house or thy stakeholder's spouse, or servant, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your stakeholders, including especially thy stakeholder's stake, which if you coveted it and actually got it would make you the stakeholder rather than the evaluator, which just goes to show you the trouble that can come of this coveting business to begin with - so don't.