

Publishing M&E Data

Massive socio economic data to analyse and share with others in referred journals, in the form of papers. Any ideas on how I can publish M&E work?

John Ngigi Kuria

Process for publishing data:

1. Needs to analyse the data
2. Establish the trends that make sense.
3. Write papers
4. Peer reviews
5. Publishing, submit them when papers are called, or them send to journals.

Charles Nkolo

Publishing, especially scientific publishing is not easy. It takes a lot of preparation and the information you present should be exposing a new trend of phenomenon or new knowledge. In Nairobi, at the University of Nairobi, School of Biological Sciences, there is a center, referred to as the Training Center for Communication (TCC). This centre offers a very useful course; Effective Scientific Communication and Publishing at very competitive rates and only for 1-2 weeks!

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Charles Warria

I am attaching a report on how to write papers for publication. It is very basic but may give some useful tips

[http://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/NDARCWeb.nsf/resources/TR229-233/\\$file/TR.231.pdf](http://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/NDARCWeb.nsf/resources/TR229-233/$file/TR.231.pdf)

Dr Kate Dolan

Feedback Mechanism/ Loop in M&E

I am currently working on the revision of an M&E and learning system for a sustainable agriculture programme in Eastern Indonesia. Can anyone share some good documents, papers or articles on feedback loops/ mechanisms in M&E processes?

Steff Deprez

Try to find someone who has a good reputation in the area and see if you can collaborate with them. You will find that many of them have moved more towards simulation rather than static maps of relationships because the point of studying feedback is to understand the dynamics of how different feedback mechanisms work rather than just mapping them out.

A good place to start would be the folks at Wageningen, who are increasingly exploring system ideas in the use of sustainable agriculture (although not especially focusing purely on feedback issues).
<http://portals.wi.wur.nl/navigatingcomplexity/>

Another place to start would be the Sustainability Institute, who rely perhaps just a little too much on feedback issues. They are more US based, but have a huge amount of experience in the natural sciences and agriculture. <http://www.sustainer.org/>

The STEPS Centre has also done some work using system dynamic ideas in terms of sustainable agriculture. Check out their publications:

<http://www.steps-centre.org/index.html>

<http://www.steps-centre.org/ourresearch/agriculture.html>

I suggest you have a look at the IFAD M&E guide. It is good on feedback and learning
<http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/guide/index.htm>

Edward Mallorie

Strategies and Tools for Educating the Public about Evaluation

What strategies and tools are available to educate public and clients on evaluation?

Elisabetta Micaro

I do not have tools to suggest, but I believe a communication strategy should articulate use of, target audiences etc; But how?

The focused evaluation approach of Patton try to internalise the non-exclusive dimension of evaluation by ensuring that they fit one decision-maker's interest and need of information: being focused. The more focused, the more exclusive the evaluation became, hence because it was less relevant for other users. For instance, recommendations are for a particular decision-maker circumscribed in time and space. Not for the public in general. And because of their public nature (like knowledge), public sector and non-profit organisations tend to under-invest in evaluation. The non-rival is also addressed by the focused approach, the more focused, the less relevant to other users (circumscribed in time and space) the evaluation is. If one decision-maker implement the recommendations, then they cannot most likely be consumed again.

Denis Jobin

In this exchange you may want to emphasise that MQ Patton's focus was on getting evaluations to be used - hence the actual name of his key contribution to evaluation known as "Utilization- focused Evaluation", developed during the 80s and very relevant still today for those of us who are interested in ensuring that evaluations actually empower people.

It almost sounds as if you meant he intended making evaluations exclusive (that is, not a 'public good', or something not relevant to several decision-maker or stakeholder groups), when his focus was on ensuring that an evaluation actually gets used by those that can benefit most from it.

I am sure that this is not what you meant, but for those who do not know Patton's work it might be helpful to give some additional information. His work is especially pertinent for us in developing countries where evaluations are often conducted to satisfy one powerful stakeholder (or, as Denis would say, decision-maker), more often than not the "donor" or "development partner".

Patton proposed that there are a variety of "primary" and "secondary" stakeholders whose needs can be satisfied in an evaluation. He promoted the idea that different stakeholders (and not just one dominant one) should benefit from evaluations, and that the "primary stakeholders" (there are usually several such groups) are of particular importance and hence should be critical in focusing the evaluation in a manner that will make it useful to them.

This will help ensure that an evaluation is actually used rather than stacked on a shelf - as still happens a lot today.

A problem has been that so many evaluations are not made publicly available by those who commissioned them, very often due to poor quality or 'unpleasant' results. It is therefore very good to see that so many agencies are publishing their evaluations these days - for example the very useful OECD DAC website resource and others that I am sure you know well.

My view is that much is available, but few of us have - or take - the time to read to learn from them, and even less so the public/citizens.

One of our main challenges therefore lies in understanding what we can learn from evaluations and how we can apply this learning to our contexts - and especially, getting evaluations reported in formats, media and ways that make them more accessible to both specialists and the public.

Zenda Ofir

RE: Defining what we mean by evaluation

Again, Evaluation should be defined. I define evaluation for the purpose of this discussion as a management tool for the decision-maker (read operational information, not Policy-making information), in other words evaluation within result-based management (RBM).

RE: Patton

You are indeed correct, Zenda. But I wasn't trying to synthesize what Patton said but to translate some of his message into economic terms: Public Good Theory (PGT).

Strategies and Tools for Educating the Public about Evaluation, *continued*

Hence I am sure Patton didn't mean to be exclusive in the common way of defining exclusive, but by focusing the evaluation on Stakeholders needs of information, he contributed un-intentionally to make it 'exclusive' in the PGT jargon sense. The more information needs and decision-making related evaluative information is (i.e. for one particular client/manager), the less this evaluative information has characteristics of public good (without never losing completely its PG characteristics I must say).

RE: stakeholders

I would make a distinction between decision-maker and stakeholders. Risking an oversimplification, the decision-maker is the manager of a project, while stakeholders would be the funding agencies...

RE: Primary and secondary stakeholders

I agree. And perhaps this can provide insights into the question of who owns the evaluation...

Denis Jobin

As a person who works for a NGO, I would like to share some of my views on this. It is not that NGOs do not understand the value of evaluation- we definitely do! But the issue is that most evaluations are often donor led as a result of which it becomes linked to future funding rather than to learning. Donors are often interested in knowing the results of their financial investment rather than what the NGO has learnt out of it. I think while NGOs do internally debate on learning from evaluation studies, very often donor led development forces them to put their learning on the back burner and again seek funding for projects to be implemented in a similar manner.

While I do agree that NGOs need to document learnings (we do that very systematically) to make sure that it remains in the institutional memory, it is also important that donor- NGO fora are created to share and debate on learning and ensure that the feedback mechanism takes into account further funding availability for projects that are designed to fail.

Meera Sundararajan

Evaluating Partnerships and other methods for PME and Impact Assessment

We have recognised the problem with international development of having many stakeholders who, in order to be successful, have to collaborate on project design, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation.

After four years we have developed an online, live, interactive, simultaneous working environment where any stakeholder (with password) from any location in the world can work with others or individually on any part of the project or programme cycle. Using a single server database where all design, project proposal, budgets, implementation plans, monitoring, analysis and evaluations are all done in one place.

Its called project.live, it is based on Result Based Management and PCM and can be easily customised, is lightweight and can be accessed via 3G, WiFi or broadband lines.

Project.live will enable all stakeholders to work collaboratively on the same project from any location in the world and provide online real time mentoring and training. And while project.live won't automatically solve the "battle" it provides a framework on which organisations can develop more collaborate ways of working.

To view a demonstration, please download a copy at:

http://www.uk.locallivelihoods.com/Moduls/WebSite/Page/Default.aspx?Pag_Id=145

If you require further information please contact Freer Spreckley at info@locallivelihoods.com

Freer Spreckley

I am a RBM/iRBM consultant based in Pakistan and working as a consultant on an (results based management) iRBM program for Pakistan's largest democratic governance reform NGO implementing the program.

I am a Free & Open Source Software FOSS advocate and Evangelist developing the mentioned RBM system in FOSS. The system will be complete by the end of this year and will also be available for testing around the world to interested individuals, organizations and contributors.

The basic database design, system specifications, prototyping is underway after researching and exploring a SDC and CIDA funded national level program involving 2500 organizations. The scope of the project is both single organization user to an enterprise level usage.

The system FOSSRBMS will be available both as a free download (complete source code) in PHP/MySQL as well as capable of running on both MS and Linux platforms provided the underlying installer is used.

Fouad Bajwa

Sometime ago I asked your help in compiling a list of methods for evaluating partnership and other projects. The result of this compilation is now available in our website, under resources.

The website is www.cgjar-ilac.org

Please send us your feedback on the lists of methods and also help us to disseminate the resources to those who can benefit from it. We are looking forward receiving more methods from you, especially examples how you have used or adapted them.

Cristina Sette

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