A CAN OF WORMS? IMPLICATIONS OF RIGOROUS IMPACT EVALUATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

Description

Tweet

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Abstract
â??Development agencies are under great pressure to show results and evaluate the impact of projects and programmes. This paper highlights the practical and ethical dilemmas of conducting impact evaluations for NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations). Specifically the paper presents the case of the development organization, International Child Support (ICS). For almost a decade, all of ICSâ?? projects in West Kenya were evaluated through rigorous, statistically sound, impact evaluations. However, as a result of logistical and ethical dilemmas ICS decided to put less emphasis on these evaluations. This particular case shows that rigorous impact evaluations are more than an additional step in the project cycle; impact evaluations influence every step of the programme and project design. These programmatic changes, which are needed to make rigorous impact evaluations possible, may go against the strategy and principles of many development agencies. Therefore, impact evaluations not only require additional resources but also present organizations with a dilemma if they are willing to change their approach and programmes.â?•

[**RD comment**: I think this abstract is somewhat misleading. My reading of the story in this paper is that ICSâ??s management made some questionable decisions, not that there was something intrinsically questionable about rigourous impact evaluations per se. In the first half of the story the ICS management allowed researchers, and their methodological needs, to drive ICS programming decisions, rather than to serve and inform programming decisions. In the second half of the story the evidence from some studies of the efficacy of particular forms of participatory development seems to have been overriden by the sheer strength of ICSs beliefâ??s in the primacy of participatory approaches. Of course this would not be the first time that evidence has been sidelined, when an organisationâ??s core values and beliefs are threatened.]

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. 3ie
2. impact evaluation
3. NGOs

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