# The â??Real Bookâ?• for story evaluation methods

## Description

Tweet

Marc Maxson, Irene Guijt, and others, 2010. GlobalGiving Foundation (supported by Rockefeller Foundation). Available as pdf. See also the related website.

[â??Real Bookâ?• = The Real Book is a central part of the culture of playing music where improvisation is essential. Real books are not for beginners: the reader interprets scant notation, and builds on her own familiarity with chords. The Real Book allows musicians to play an approximate version of hundreds of new songs quickly]

About this book
â??This is a collection of narratives that serve to illustrate some not-so-obvious lessons that affected our story pilot project in Kenya. We gathered a large body of community stories that revealed what people in various communities believed they needed, what services they were getting, and what they would like to see happen in the future. By combining many brief narratives with a few contextual questions we were able to compare and analyze thousands of stories. Taken together, these stories and their meanings provide a perspective with both depth and breadth: Broad enough to inform an organizationâ??s strategic thinking about the root causes of social ailments2, yet deep and real enough to provoke specific and immediate follow-up actions by the local organizations of whom community members speak.

We believe that local people are the â??expertsâ?• on what they want and know who has (or has not) been helping them. And like democracy, letting them define the problems and solutions that deserve to be discussed is the best method weâ??ve found for aggregating that knowledge. Professionals working in this field can draw upon the wisdom of this crowd for understanding the local context, and build upon what they know. Community efforts are complex, and our aim is not to predict the future, but help local leaders manage the present. If projects are observed from many angles â?? especially by those for whom success affects their livelihood â?? and implementers use these perspectives to mitigate risks and avoid early failure, the probability of future success will be much greater.â?•

See also:

- Making Sense of SensemakerÂ®: Evaluating Development Initiatives through Micro-Narrative Capture and Self-Tagging in Kenya. Presentation to the American Evaluation Association Conference. November, 2010. Dr. Irene Guijt, Learning by Design, John Hecklinger, GlobalGiving
- Amplifying Local Voices: GlobalGivingâ??s storytelling project turns anecdotes into useful data. By Suzie Boss, Summer 2011, Stanford Social Innovation Review

**RD comment 1**: See also a different perspective on the Global Giving experience: Networks of self-categorised stories, by Rick Davies

**RD comment 2**: What I like about this doc: 1. Lots of warts and all descriptions of data collection, with all the problems that occur in real life, 2. the imaginative improvement on Cognitive Edgeâ??s use of triads as tools to enabling self-signifier tools, a circular device call the story marbles approach. This

enables respondents to choose which of x categories they will use and then indicate to what extent each of these categories apply to their story. It meets the requirement the author described thus: â?? *What we need is a means to let the storyteller define the right question while also constraining the possible questions enough that we will derive useful clusters of stories with similar question frames*.â?•

**Tags**

1. complexity
2. Conference papers
3. Guides
4. guijt
5. narrative

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