

Technical consultation on assessing the performance and impact of agricultural information products and services

Proceedings of a CTA/IICD/LEAP-IMPACT
Technical Consultation, Bonn, Germany, 9–12
October 2001

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Published and printed by:
Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)

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Summary

Background and objectives of the inter-agency technical consultation

During the last decade, several international development agencies including CTA, IDRC and UNESCO have invested in research aimed at developing appropriate methodologies for evaluating information products and services. Although various approaches have been proposed, there are as yet few methodologies and applications relating to information management and even fewer which have been or could be applied specifically to agricultural information products and services.

The inter-agency technical consultation on ‘Assessing the performance and impact of agricultural information products and services’ therefore provided the opportunity for information and evaluation specialists to further collaborate and exchange a wide range of experiences in an effort to further facilitate the development and use of practical and cost-effective methods. The workshop was organised by CTA and IICD in collaboration with ISNAR, KIT, GTZ, Bellanet and FAKT on 8–12 October 2001, in Bonn, Germany. The main objective of the technical consultation was to facilitate the development and use of practical and cost-effective methods for evaluating the performance and impact of agricultural information products and services. The more specific objectives or *expected outputs* were as follows:

- clarify evaluation concepts and terminology in the context of information for development activities (Output 1);
- draw up an inventory of evaluation frameworks and methods indicating the relative strengths and weaknesses of the various tools (Output 2);
- develop guidelines on ‘best practices’ for evaluating the performance and impact of information products and services (Output 3);
- illustrate the applicability of the ‘best practice’ guidelines to specific categories of information projects and services, such as publishing, training in information management, communication services and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Output 4);
- identify clearly defined approaches among partner organisations for supporting the development and refinement of specific evaluation tools (Output 5);
- publish and disseminate proceedings through print and electronic media (Output 6).

Workshop presentations

An outline of the workshop programme presented by Dr Ibrahim Khadar (CTA) gave an insight into the development of the programme based on the main objective and on the debates in the Steering Committee on the orientation of the workshop. The expectations (outputs) were highlighted, and attention was drawn to the following points:

- gender balance and North-South representation at the workshop;
- specific roles for participants during the workshop, including chairpersons, rapporteurs and moderators;
- guest appearance of the panellists;
- limited time allowed for presentations.

Welcome addresses were given by Professor Modupe Akande (Obafemi Owolowo University, Nigeria), Mr Carl Greenidge (Director, CTA), Ms Lisette Gast, on behalf of Mr Jac Stienen (Managing Director, IICD). Dr Hans-Joachim de Haas (Head, Division of Rural Development, BMZ) also gave opening remarks. The speakers stressed the increasingly important role of information and knowledge as a force for change and of information technologies that facilitate knowledge sharing throughout the world. The challenge for many organisations operating in this field, therefore, was how to manage information effectively and in a way that meets the needs of those targeted.

The panel discussion addressed the question ‘Can measuring results produce results?’ The panel members were Dr Paul Engel (Director, ECDPM), Ms Anriette Esterhuysen (Executive Director, Association for Progressive Communications), Mr Thomas Kuby (Senior Evaluation Expert, GTZ) and Mr Greenidge. The discussion spanned a wide range of topics and also served to expose the participants to the current thinking on evaluation in development agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The LEAP-IMPACT community of practice, set up in June 2001 by the Steering Committee, was introduced by Mr Shady Kanfi (Bellanet). About a month before the technical consultation there had been a three-stage e-consultation, managed by Ms Sarah Cummings (KIT), which enabled the participants to communicate through the LEAP-IMPACT workspace. The e-consultation established that the participants came from diverse backgrounds and institutions, and had a wide variety of expertise on this subject. The level of participation was high, with most participants indicating how much they were looking forward to learning and sharing experiences, as well as laying the groundwork for future networking and institutional collaboration.

The lead paper on the ‘Key issues on the characteristics and role of agricultural information’ presented by Professor Kingo Mchombu (University of Namibia) illustrated the vital role that information and knowledge play in promoting agricultural development. Given the low recognition and priority of information services and products in many developing countries, decision-makers were therefore challenged to

demonstrate the impact of information so that more resources could be devoted to creating, managing and disseminating information. The other lead paper, 'Principles of evaluation' presented by Dr Adiel Mbabu (ASARECA), went one step further, calling on evaluators to use evaluations as a basis for better project management and to promote longer term institutional structures, processes and culture which would potentially deliver longer term impact. Dr Mbabu pointed out, however, that a proper evaluation can be conducted only if the position along the transformational path is known and the right questions are asked, consistent with the appropriate level of aggregation and the timeframe.

The paper on 'Evaluation concepts and terminology: a discussion note' presented by Dr Khadar looked at some of the concepts and terms currently employed by evaluation specialists and consultants. It noted that many of the key evaluation terms have more than one meaning, and that more than one term can be applied to the same concept. Furthermore, very little has been done to develop the definitions of those terms that apply specifically to information products and services. There is therefore a need for consensus on key concepts and terms so that they can be coherently and consistently employed. The paper on 'Conceptual frameworks and methodologies used for evaluating agricultural information products' by Ms Cummings also pointed to the need to understand the various evaluation frameworks that have been formulated. It noted that terms such as 'evaluation framework', 'logical framework', 'philosophical framework' and 'conceptual framework' are often used interchangeably. There is a wide range of frameworks which can be used in evaluations, but it is impossible to find a 'one-size fits all' solution. Various evaluation frameworks need to be examined and the appropriate elements used according to the institutional context.

Three case study presentations were made by Mr Bruce Lauckner, CARDI on Trinidad and Tobago; by Mrs Jane Kanyunyuzi-Asaba, CABI on selected countries in Africa; and by Professor Emmanuel Lufadeju, Lufarmco Investment Co. on Nigeria. The first study involved developing a methodology for measuring the impact of a newsletter and a training seminar in Trinidad and Tobago. The second focused on connectivity in Africa (Ethiopia, Uganda and Zambia), the main purposes being to assess the use, benefits and constraints of electronic communication, and to test the appropriateness of methods for assessing the impact of electronic communication on development. The third paper related to an assessment of CTA's DORA programme in Nigeria. The case studies illustrated the usefulness of monitoring and evaluation studies, as well as the need to commit adequate resources to these studies, to involve all relevant stakeholders prior to a study, to understand the environment before embarking on a study, and to allow longer timeframes for evaluation studies.

The focus of the meeting shifted when the participants were introduced to the case study method, as this gave them the opportunity to put what they had learned into practice. The session was moderated by Dr Byron Mook (ISNAR) and involved looking at seven factors which help in identifying 'smart' practices: identification of actors; objectives; indicators; 'logic model'; SWOT analysis; finding a champion; and being realistic (for more information, refer to the CTA Working Document 8025, *Evaluating information: a*

letter to a project manager). Later, a hypothetical case was used to encourage the participants to develop different approaches that could be used in evaluating such a case.

Other presentations at the workshop included the after-dinner speech by Professor Michel Menou (City University, London), which looked at various aspects of impact assessment, and assessments of the workshop by Dr Khadar, Mr Nathan Ducastel (IICD), Mr Kanfi, Dr Petra Feil (independent consultant) and Dr Andreas Springer-Heinze (GTZ). Mrs Karen Batjes-Sinclair (workshop editor) presented an orientation note on the publication and dissemination of the proceedings and other publications resulting from the consultation, and Mr Kanfi and Ms Cummings presented a review of opportunities for future collaboration.

Conclusions and recommendations

The main conclusions of the workshop pointed to the need:

- for evaluations and impact studies to take all the actors and complexities into consideration;
- to place evaluations in the management and political context as a pre-requisite for the selection of appropriate methods;
- to take the bigger picture into account and be aware of the concepts and terms used as well as their different meanings in different contexts;
- to ensure that planning for an evaluation starts at the outset of the project;
- to consider an evaluation as an essential activity;
- for general frameworks for different types of information products and services;
- for tools and practical examples (Output 4 of the meeting);
- for stakeholders and target groups (“the people”) to be involved from the start of the evaluation;
- to ensure that the information is relevant and valid;
- to understand that impact ideals are not achievable and one has to compromise. Using outputs as indicators of impact is questionable.

Several key recommendations were also made, some of which included the following:

- the inventory on evaluation frameworks presented at the workshop should be revisited, reviewed and additional frameworks added to it;
- given the specific nature of the agricultural sector, more work needs to be carried out to determine if a generic framework will be appropriate for this area or if a specific evaluation framework is needed;

- standardising the existing evaluation frameworks by discipline and harmonising them should be explored more;
- the content of the evaluation frameworks is so rich; different frameworks analyse different conditions. The possibility of using a road map to guide practitioners in defining the goals of the evaluation should be explored instead of using a framework;
- the new ideas generated from the workshop need to be made known and transformed into the intellectual property of all practitioners. There is a need for further collaboration of participants to produce publications and other resource materials. The active participation by all in the form of comments and contributions to the co-publications and publications is encouraged;
- a glossary of the terms used in evaluation should be developed which can be added to (ideally on the LEAP-IMPACT workspace), so that it can be used as a common source for future reference;
- collaboration among the various participants should continue using the LEAP-IMPACT workspace to promote future activities and exchanges of resource materials;
- avoid using evaluation as an end-product; instead go back again and again to the initial planning phase and nourish the implementation phase;
- use all possible channels of communication, the organisations represented, and personal networks for the quick dissemination of the workshop results;
- there is a need to find ways to facilitate the paradigm shift (*from control evaluation to learning processes*) and appropriation of new/ alternative ways of evaluating and thinking about evaluation and impact assessment. Initially, this must take place within the organisations represented at the workshop. To facilitate this process/approach, participants need to start by first negotiating change in their own working environment;
- it is important that the momentum is not lost to contribute to the organisational change. CTA should link individuals who can influence top management and assist organisations with this paradigm shift;
- a follow-up meeting should be planned to review the changes and decide on future action.

Welcome addresses

Opening remarks

Modupe Akande, Research Professor, Obafemi Owolowo University

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to this inter-agency technical consultation on ‘Evaluating the performance and impact of agricultural information products and services’.

We are delighted to see everybody here safe and sound. We give thanks to God that this meeting can still take place, despite the recent happenings that have severely shaken the airline industry. I know of several other meetings that have been rescheduled or cancelled.

We are grateful to our hosts here in Bonn as well as the organisers of the meeting for the preparations that have been made and for making us so welcome. We have already seen the results of their effort and, in particular, we have felt the impact of modern communication technology in the e-mail discussion that we have all taken part in! In this regard, our thanks go to Sarah Cummings who has piloted us through this process and has meticulously given us a summary at the end of each phase of the e-mail discussion. I am sure that you will agree with me that a solid foundation has been laid for a successful technical consultation.

As we have been informed, the aim of this technical consultation is ‘to facilitate the development and use of practical and cost-effective methods for evaluating the performance and impact of agricultural information products and services’. A number of outputs have been listed in our documents whilst the recent electronic discussion has given us the opportunity to also indicate what we would like to obtain from this meeting, both for ourselves as well as for our Institutions.

It is important that this consultation helps to:

- clarify some of the more important concepts and terms for evaluation and impact assessment;
- assist in the choice of performance and impact indicators as well as evaluation procedures, taking account of the different and sometimes conflicting needs of different stakeholders; and
- produce guidelines on “best practices” for evaluating the performance and impact of information products and services.

It is my hope that the outcome of our deliberation in the course of the next three and a half days will meet the expectations of all of us.

As you know, adequate funding is a prerequisite for the success of any meeting and for this we are indebted largely to the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural

Development (CTA) and the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) for providing generous support to make this consultation possible.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are privileged to have the director of CTA, Mr Carl Greenidge with us at this consultation. Mr Greenidge became the director of CTA early last year after a distinguished career in his home country, Guyana, and internationally. He is an economist by training and has worked in Africa and Europe at the Universities of London and Kenya where he taught and undertook research into agricultural and resource economics, public policy and public finance. He has also worked as a consultant in the area of agricultural economics. In Guyana, he worked with the government in various capacities including secretary to the State Planning Board and minister of finance. Prior to his appointment as the director of CTA, he was the secretary general *ad interim* and deputy secretary general of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). In addition he had been president of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers as well as negotiating spokesman for trade and commodity protocols and later served in the same capacity for sugar. He has also published a number of papers in international academic journals and contributed chapters on topical economic issues to several books. It gives me great pleasure to now give him the floor to deliver his welcome address.

We are also privileged to have with us this morning Miss Lisette Gast, representing the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), where she is a project manager. Her main task within IICD is the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of their role as facilitator within their focal countries and the development impact of their supported projects. One of their most important achievements has been the development of a Web-based tool, which gives the possibility to submit, retrieve and analyse quantitative data. She is also responsible for an evaluation project called **ICT Stories**, which uses the power of storytelling for sharing lessons learned. The objective is to capture the learning process that accompanies the introduction and implementation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development. It is my pleasure to invite Miss Lisette Gast to give her welcome address.

Also present with us this morning is Dr Hans-Joachim de Haas representing the German Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ). He is the head of the Division of Rural Development in the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation in Bonn. He oversees strategies and policy in the field of rural development and natural resources management. I now give the floor to him to deliver his welcome address.

On your behalf, I wish to thank Mr Greenidge, Mrs Lisette Gast and Dr Hans-Joachim de Hass for their welcome addresses. The informative and stimulating messages contained in the addresses have set a powerful stage for this technical consultation, on which we should endeavour to build. We are, indeed, most grateful to them and it is my hope that we would continue to benefit from their rich experience in the course of the next few days.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have come to the end of the opening session. I thank you all for your attention.

Welcome address

Carl B. Greenidge, Director, CTA

Madam Chairperson, Professor Akande,
Representative of the German Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ), Dr de
Haas,
Representative of the International Institute for Communication and Development
(IICD), Ms Gast,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to be able to welcome you to this inter-agency technical consultation on behalf of my organisation, CTA. The decision to hold this important workshop in Bonn is a reflection of CTA's commitment to further cement its long-standing and rewarding collaboration with German development agencies operating in the field of agricultural and rural development.

We have been gratified by the interest demonstrated by BMZ and other German development agencies, in relation to CTA activities. Over the years, CTA has collaborated with these institutions in a number of workshops and seminars, studies and publications.

The organisation of this week's workshop has depended heavily on the inputs of staff from a wide range of organisations particularly:

- Bellanet, based in Canada;
- Association for Appropriate Technologies (FAKT), and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) from Germany;
- IICD, the International Service for National Research (ISNAR), the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and CTA from the Netherlands.

Thanks to the power of the Internet and communications revolution, most of you have also been able to join in the later stages of the preparation, *via* the e-mail consultation which was launched at the beginning of September, within the framework of the LEAP-IMPACT community. The composition of the Workshop Steering Committee and the openness of the e-mail consultation have made this technical consultation a genuine inter-agency activity.

CTA's mandate

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would now like to briefly present CTA to you, the Centre's mandate and objectives. As some of you may be aware, CTA was established in 1983 under the Lomé Convention between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States and the European Union Member States. The most recent reflection of the mission of CTA was undertaken under the aegis of the Cotonou Agreement. Article 3 of Annex III of the Agreement signed in June 2000 describes the mission as being, 'to strengthen policy and institutional capacity development and information and communication management capacities of ACP agricultural and rural development organisations.' In this context the Centre has set itself two broad objectives:

- improve availability of and accessibility to adequate, accurate, timely and well targeted information; and
- improve information and communication management capacity of ACP agricultural and rural development organisations.

The core concern of the Cotonou Agreement itself is the reduction of poverty in the ACP countries, particularly through programmes that promote food security. It is also to properly manage our natural resources and to deepen regional integration. CTA supports the agricultural and rural development aspects of this agreement through information and communication programmes for ACP countries.

CTA's strategies vis-à-vis evaluation and impact assessment

As an ACP-EU Technical Centre, we have adopted both the principles of project cycle management and logical framework analysis. As a result, the Centre regularly subjects its projects and services to external reviews, which are carried out by consultants in collaboration with project partners. On average, at least two projects are evaluated per year. The Centre's overall operations are reviewed every four or five years, by a joint team of ACP and EU consultants. We also carry out evaluations at the end of workshops and training courses, although the focus of such an assessment tends to be on the adequacy of the practical arrangements and the general perception of participants regarding the extent to which they think the objectives or their expectations have been met.

Our experience with evaluations over the years has led us to believe that the services we provide are considered to be relevant and very well appreciated by the vast majority of the recipients, at both the individual and institutional level. We have observed, however, that it is very difficult to ascertain the exact manner in which our services have benefited the recipients. It is even more difficult to measure the effects of information services at the level of the ultimate beneficiaries (i.e. the farmers). We are also aware that it would be very costly to engage in annual in-depth evaluation exercises of the same project even on a bi-annual basis.

Faced with the dual challenges of methodological limitations and the high cost of in-depth evaluations, CTA decided about five years ago to start investing in research activities aimed at developing practical and cost-effective evaluation methods that address matters of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact. This investment has been pursued *via* three separate, albeit interrelated, routes:

- This *first approach* involved the setting up of an impact assessment project, which was inaugurated at a workshop, held in the Netherlands in January 1998. I have been informed that some of you present here today, most notably Professor Michel Menou, were present at the Wageningen workshop.
- The *second approach* has been to support relevant research initiated by other organisations. In this respect, we are currently collaborating with ISNAR and other partners in a three-year research project aimed at developing methods for evaluating capacity development projects. The mid-term review of that project took place in Wageningen in July this year. You will find a copy of the report of that review among your workshop documents.
- The *third approach* has been to assist regional partner organisations, such as Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and Conférence des responsables de recherche agronomique africains (CORAF), to engage in a dialogue with national research organisations in order to raise awareness about impact assessment and to assist with the introduction of a sustainable impact and evaluation culture in the national institutions. A workshop was organised jointly by ASARECA, European Consortium for Agricultural Research in the Tropics (ECART) and CTA in Entebbe in 1999 on the impact of agricultural research. The report of that workshop has been published in both English and French. I have been informed that since the Entebbe workshop, ASARECA has succeeded, with the help of ECART members such as GTZ, to formulate a programme aimed at promoting an impact culture in the national agricultural systems in Eastern and Central African countries. We are currently involved in negotiations with CORAF and ECART to organise a similar workshop in West Africa.

The future place of M&E in CTA's work

One of my major preoccupations since becoming the director of CTA in March last year, has been to re-fashion the Centre's short- and medium-term work programmes to better reflect its new mandate and objectives. On the whole, the Cotonou Agreement has placed a strong emphasis on the measurement of impact. As such, CTA is required to demonstrate the tangible impact of its operations. In future, the Centre will therefore be more results-oriented and will seek to, where possible, demonstrate the impact of its operations on various indicators of agricultural and rural development where possible.

At the beginning of next year, a new department termed the Planning and Corporate Services, will be established in the Centre with special responsibility for the methodological underpinning of the work of Centre's (three) operational departments.

The Planning and Corporate Services will seek to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of the Centre's projects and services through:

- research work on the application of relevant findings dedicated to cross-cutting issues (in particular dealing with gender, social capital and ICTs), and their methodological implications;
- needs assessment studies;
- development of impact assessment techniques;
- the adoption of improved M&E practices.

With respect to the last two areas, the Centre will seek to implement more participatory and cost-effective evaluations involving its ACP partners. Similarly, the development of impact assessment methods will be pursued in partnership with other multilateral and bilateral development agencies.

CTA's other programmes and services

During the next four years, the Centre's operational programmes will be implemented through three departments, namely:

- Information Products and Services Department, which will develop and manage activities dealing with:
 - print and electronic publishing;
 - ICT-based information services;
 - distribution of publications in print and electronic format;
 - decentralisation of CTA's information services (including the Question and Answer service).
- Communication Channels and Services Department, which will develop and implement activities dealing with:
 - strengthening of networks (especially at the regional level);
 - ICT-based dialogue and information exchange;
 - location-based seminars and other communication services.
- ICM skills and Systems Department, which will develop and implement activities dealing with:
 - ICM training courses;
 - integrated ICM support to local and national organisations.

All these programmes will build on our current portfolio of projects and services.

I trust that this thumbnail sketch of some of the CTA initiatives will assist you in putting in context your work this week. In closing, I would like to once more express my gratitude to BMZ and other German institutions for agreeing to host this workshop.

I would like to conclude these opening remarks with a very special welcome to the participants, who, despite all the current global uncertainties especially with respect to air travel, have done everything to keep to their promise of coming to this workshop.

I wish you all a very successful workshop and an enjoyable stay in Bonn.

Welcome address

Lisette Gast (on behalf of Jac Stienen, Managing Director), IICD

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the managing director of IICD, Mr. Jac Stienen, I would like to welcome you all to this technical consultation on assessing the impact of information products and services.

My name is Lisette Gast and I am a policy officer involved in M&E for IICD, which is based in the Netherlands.

Introduction – IICD

The mission of IICD is to assist developing countries to realise locally owned sustainable development by harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies.

It does this through a strategy with the following goals:

- empowering local organisations and stakeholders to make effective use of ICTs on their own terms; and
- catalysing learning and knowledge sharing on ICTs by local organisations and the international community.

IICD uses a bottom-up approach in which local ‘agents of change’ *themselves* come up with proposals for ICT applications. Using this demand driven approach, we strive to facilitate realistic applications of ICTs. In our view, local ownership forms an essential basis for sustainable socio-economic development.

Governments are not the only driving force behind the promotion of ICTs in developing countries. Private enterprises, local institutes, centres of expertise, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and financial institutes also form essential drivers in the process. IICD defines its role as an independent advisor and broker between these driving forces in the global ICT market and those with promising initiatives in the South.

Acting as a catalyst, IICD’s three-pronged strategy is mainly delivered through a series of integrated Country Programmes, currently being implemented in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. First, IICD facilitates ICT Roundtable Processes in selected developing countries where local stakeholders identify and formulate ICT-supported policies and projects based on local needs. Second, working with training partners in each country, Capacity Development activities are

organised to develop the skills and other capacities identified by the local partners. Third, IICD draws on its global network to provide information and advice to its local partners, also fostering local information exchange networks on the use of ICTs for development. The best practices and lessons learned in each Country Programme are documented and disseminated internationally through a Knowledge Sharing programme.

In support of these activities, IICD invests in the development of concrete partnerships with public, private and non-profit organisations.

At this time, I would like to highlight the role of ‘Knowledge Sharing’ and ‘Learning by doing’:

Knowledge sharing

IICD supports its country partners by providing information services, advice, access to expert networks, and the results of applied research. In each country, it also supports the development of local information exchange networks on ICT applications for development, as a tool for national capacity development.

At the international level, IICD acts as a global knowledge broker. It generates and collects lessons, ideas, and best practices and shares them with interested parties, especially those in other developing countries and in the development community.

Learning by doing

This is an area with a growing demand for concrete lessons and tools that can be borrowed, adapted if necessary, and applied. IICD’s partners are in a good position to answer some of these questions. For IICD, this means strengthening the M&E mechanisms that can be used by local IICD partners in their immediate projects. It also means generating and disseminating knowledge and lessons that can be used by national policy-makers – to adapt sectoral and national policies – and by wider international communities working in similar areas.

Both iConnect and ICT Stories are important initiatives in this area. The objective of ICT Stories is to capture the learning process that accompanies the introduction and implementation of ICTs in a project. It does this by encouraging the production of exemplary stories. These stories describe good practices and lessons learned from contributors' experiences.

The collected stories are kept in a database on a joint Web site (www.iicd.org/stories) and they are available to anybody interested in projects with ICT components. The ICT Stories deal with a range of problems and opportunities and with a variety of actors, project size, objectives, target groups and regions. By means of a keyword, search stories can be selected by issue or location. Readers are then able to learn from those experiences and, if desired, contact the project implementer. I would like to invite all of you to use and support this initiative by submitting your personal story to this Web site.

M&E as a cross-cutting issue

How is IICD involved in M&E at the project level and self-learning level?

IICD considers evaluation as very important, because it helps to find out what is and is not working in a project. It enables one to learn from past experiences and improve the project. It also shows what a project does and how it benefits the participants. The combination of ICTs and development aid is a fairly new one and unknown area and it is essential that IICD's activities and the effectiveness of the institution are monitored and evaluated in order to learn from past experiences.

As you may have already read in the e-mail discussion, M&E activities form a major part of the activity of country programme managers in the implementation phase of projects and programmes. Projects include those that are IICD-funded as well as projects funded through other enabling partners. The activities carried out are:

- Monitoring and evaluation of **development impact and role of IICD** on the basis of a Web-based M&E tool, followed by focus group meetings, realised by a local M&E partner.
- Monitoring and evaluation of **project output and project owner assessment** on the basis of a traditional evaluation by independent local consultants.
- Regular strategic and operational advice by IICD's country programme managers.

Measuring development impact and role of IICD

The development impact and role of IICD is measured with the help of a questionnaire and a focus group session. For IICD, the crosscutting issues of evaluation centre around network building in the South, linking local partners with similar interests and concerns. Much of this linking will itself make use of new ICTs such as e-discussions and may involve building up Web-based resources and information exchange tools.

Linking also involves bringing partners in the South into contact with sources of expertise found in private, public and non-profit sectors internationally — to knowledge partners. These knowledge partners together are a network that link local and international partners and where expertise and ideas are shared.

Partnerships

As mentioned earlier, partnerships are vitally important to IICD. One of the major issues in tackling the emerging knowledge gap is partnering co-operation through functional relationships. No actor alone has the combination of vision, power and resources needed to guide the revolution in such a way that it advances the general good.

In this respect, IICD and Bellanet and CTA have had ongoing discussions on how to collaborate more closely and this workshop is the first result of an actual co-operation.

I would like to thank CTA and the other members of LEAP-IMPACT, for giving us all the opportunity to truly work together.

In concluding, I hope that together, not only the coming four days, but also in the future we can form a learning organisation, in other words an organisation in which people at all levels, individually and collectively are continually increasing their capacity to produce results they really care about. The level of performance and improvement needed today requires learning – a lot of learning and in most areas and especially the area of information products and services there is no clear path to success, no clear path to follow.

E-consultation and panel discussion

An e-consultation on 'Assessing the performance and impact of agricultural information products and services'

Sarah Cummings, KIT

Introduction

This paper presents the process, content and conclusions of the e-consultation, which was held to support the deliberations of a physical meeting, the inter-agency technical consultation on Assessing the Performance and Impact of Agricultural Information Products and Services. The workshop was preceded by the e-consultation, which ran from 13 September until 8 October. The e-consultation comprised three phases:

- an introductory phase in which participants were encouraged to introduce themselves;
- a second phase which looked at the priorities for evaluation within participants' organisations; and
- a third and final phase in which participants discussed what they wanted to achieve at the technical consultation.

A review on the background to the e-consultation introducing the LEAP-IMPACT platform for the discussion and the objectives of the technical consultation will first be presented. Second, an outline of the different phases of the e-consultation and summarise its deliberations is given. Finally, some conclusions will be made about the content of the e-consultation and its participants, together with a general effort to assess whether the e-consultation was successful given its stated objectives.

Background

The e-consultation was one of the first activities of the LEAP-IMPACT community of practice, which was also responsible for organising the technical consultation. These will both now be described in more detail.

Donor agencies and national governments are continuing to make major investments in information services, projects and products in the South. Consequently, it is important to measure the impact of such information activities in order to establish whether programme objectives have been well set, whether implementation has proceeded smoothly, and whether these activities have met their objectives. Evaluation (or

assessment) of impact is generally regarded as an essential part of the project cycle. New ICTs are increasing the ability to access, collect, process and generate information, but there is also increasing pressure to justify investments and demonstrate results or benefits. This is the background against which the initiatives, described in this paper, have taken place.

LEAP-IMPACT

The [LEAP-IMPACT](#) community of practice, initiated on 9 May 2001 and supported with the launch of a joint Internet workspace on 6 June 2001, aims to improve the institutional performance of M&E practice related to information services, products and projects. LEAP-IMPACT is a joint initiative of six diverse development organisations:

- Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation ([CTA](#))
- International Institute for Communication and Development ([IICD](#))
- [Bellanet](#)
- Royal Tropical Institute ([KIT](#))
- German Agency for Technical Cooperation ([GTZ](#))
- Association for Appropriate Technologies ([FAKT](#))

The IMPACT acronym breaks down, in a rather forced way, to Information Management, Performance and Communication Technologies. It has the LEAP prefix because it has an online workspace on the [LEAP](#) section of the Bellanet Web site. LEAP stands for the Learning Evaluation Action Programme, which was originally set up as part of the Global Knowledge Partnership. LEAP concentrates on the ICT field and the communications' media, primarily the Internet but also other media such as rural radio. It is very much underpinned by the knowledge management approach, aiming to stimulate organisational learning on evaluation and monitoring practice.

LEAP-IMPACT differs from the other LEAP communities, namely [EVALTICA](#), [PANTLEG](#), and [GKLEAP](#), in that:

- it is concerned with the evaluation of information services, information projects and information products;
- it is not focused on the Internet alone, although there will be some overlap in terms of approaches/individuals with the other communities; and
- it is open to all those concerned with the evaluation and monitoring of information services, products and projects.

The workspace for the IMPACT community allows the group to exchange messages, post documents of interest, and share information about forthcoming events and news

items. As part of this, it was decided that the e-consultation, leading up to the community's first physical meeting, should be held on this workspace.

The technical consultation

The technical consultation, in which CTA was the lead partner, aimed to facilitate the development and use of practical and cost-effective methods for evaluating the performance and impact of agricultural information products and services. Six specific outputs were planned:

- Output 1: Clarification of evaluation concepts and terminology in the context of information for development activities.
- Output 2: Inventory of evaluation frameworks and methods indicating the relative strengths and weaknesses of the various tools.
- Output 3: Guideline on best practices for evaluating the performance and impact of information products and services.
- Output 4: Illustration of the applicability of the 'best practice' guideline to specific categories of information projects and services, such as publishing, training in information management, communication services (e.g. market information services) and the use of ICTs.
- Output 5: Clearly defined approaches among partner organisations for supporting the development and refinement of specific evaluation tools (e.g. evaluation frameworks, "best practice" guideline, manuals, IT-based M&E software, etc.).
- Output 6: Publishing and dissemination of the proceedings and other publications resulting from the technical consultation, via print and electronic media.

Participants of the workshop comprised approximately 40 individuals (by invitation only) including: representatives of developing country partner institutions; evaluation experts and practitioners; and representatives of development agencies. As part of the preparatory work, the e-consultation was designed to complement the technical consultation. Its objectives are described in the following section:

The e-consultation

All of the members of the LEAP-IMPACT community of practice were able to participate in the e-consultation, which took place on its e-discussion list at impact@lyris.bellanet.org. This community comprised participants of the technical consultation but also other interested individuals who had joined because of an interest in the subject of evaluation of information.

The objective of the e-consultation was, firstly, to break the ice between the participants in the forthcoming meeting. Secondly, it was designed to start the dialogue between the participants. It was felt that this was particularly necessary because the terminology of

impact assessment and evaluation is particularly complex and the e-consultation would offer participants the chance to calibrate their common language before the meeting. Thirdly, the e-consultation was aimed at introducing the participants to each other to give them a better idea of who to expect at the meeting itself and the institutional affiliation of these individuals. Finally, another objective of the e-consultation was to gather information about these institution's current approach to and experience with evaluation and impact assessment, namely to do some preliminary work of the meeting itself. The success of the e-consultation will be measured against these objectives at the end of this paper.

The first phase

To start on 13 September, the moderator launched the discussion by asking participants to introduce themselves to each other by sending a mail to the community. Participants were asked to take the following issues into account:

- What do you do and where do you work?
- How did you become interested in the topics of impact assessment and evaluation of information services?
- What work experience do you have in this field?

Some 30 individuals responded to the request to introduce themselves, compared to the 40 members of the community of practice (this number reached 47 by the end of the e-consultation). This represented an excellent level of response. Although the e-consultation was aimed primarily at participants of the technical consultation, other LEAP-IMPACT members also introduced themselves.

The 30 individuals responding come from a wide range of institutional settings, including development organisations, international organisations, agricultural research institutes at regional and international levels, as well as from universities, the private sector and NGOs. The majority of participants had a background in agricultural research or agricultural information management. Human rights, social development, enterprise development and gender were also of particular concern to some. Two of the participants were members of a health information network. It was hoped that the wide range of experiences of the participants would cross-pollinate with those in agriculture.

Some five of the responding individuals had extensive experience of undertaking evaluations and impact assessments. Most of the others had some experience and considerable interest. For one participant, M&E was the main job function while for another, although he identified himself as a practitioner he did not consider himself to be an M&E expert. It can therefore be concluded that most of the e-consultation (and workshop) participants were information professionals or managers of information services who undertake evaluations as an occasional part of their main job. A few of the participants, however, were experts in this field and have been at the forefront in the development of methodologies and approaches.

One of the most striking features common to most of the responses was that many participants paid direct reference to the knowledge management/organisational learning approach, which has taken development organisations by storm since 1996. The majority of participants refer to knowledge, learning and best practices. Participants wrote of 'an interest in promoting a continuous learning culture', 'what approaches to open and collaborative learning could best work', 'I am especially interested in learning, evaluation, monitoring and planning frameworks', and 'our objective is to capture the learning process that accompanies the introduction and implementation of ICTs for development'. Another common feature was the emphasis on ICTs. Many participants stressed the role of ICTs and their impact.

The following points were also raised by the first phase:

- In general terms, what characteristics of agricultural information services make them different from other information services? What implication does this have for evaluations/impact assessment?
- What approaches in other fields (health, social development, etc.) can offer most assistance to the evaluation of agriculture-related information services?
- What is the group's experience in involving stakeholders in evaluations? IICD has experience of using focus groups, as does id21. What is the other experience of qualitative approaches?
- The relationship between qualitative and quantitative assessment.
- The impact of information upon (agricultural) research.

After the close and summary of the first phase, the moderator proposed two further themes for discussion: evaluations/impact assessment in participants' own institutions for the week 25 September–1 October (second phase); and what participants expect to learn from and achieve at the Bonn meeting for 2–8 October (third phase).

The second phase

During the second phase, participants were asked to address five questions about evaluation/impact assessment in their own organisations.

- How much evaluation/impact assessment has been carried out by your organisation in the past few years?
- What evaluation tools have you or your institution used or developed?
- What priority does evaluation receive in your institution, and can you illustrate this in terms of resources?
- Do you feel that evaluations have been undertaken for the purpose of accountability or organisational learning?
- Are these evaluations made public?

Some 16 members of LEAP-IMPACT responded to this round of questions, compared to a total list membership, which had now reached 47. This was a good level of response and many of these responses were very detailed.

This phase established that some institutions had carried out 'few evaluations and no impact assessment', others had carried out mid-term and end of project evaluations. Another had carried out seven evaluation exercises in the past three years. In general, the group appeared to have had more experience with evaluations than with impact assessment. One participant noted that his/her institution had been evaluated twice, a case of the biter being bit. Other institutions were probably also being evaluated on a regular basis by their funders.

Participants noted that they used questionnaires, focus group interviews and country visits as the basis of their evaluations. Notably, there was considerable experience with focus groups. Some institutions had even developed their own methodologies for carrying out evaluation/impact assessment including development of: a conceptual framework, online M&E tools; and the Peer Assist/After Action Review methodologies. In general, however, evaluations seemed to be performed on an adhoc basis, not informed by a particular framework or methodology.

Most, but not all, participants noted that evaluation/impact assessment was receiving high priority: ranging from 'top priority', 'key priority', 'a lot of attention' to 'probably too much attention'. One respondent noted this in terms of resources – two staff days per month. Some thought that evaluations had primarily been undertaken for reasons of accountability while others considered that there was a greater emphasis on organisational learning. One respondent remarked, 'a separation of the traditional evaluation process into autonomous processes, one for audit purposes and one for learning, helped us to move forward on both'. This was reflected by another participant who argued that her institution did evaluations for the purposes of accountability and learning but that a less formal process was used when the emphasis was on learning.

Participants indicated that the results of some evaluations were only available internally or were accessible only to 'key stakeholders'. Other institutions made the results of their evaluations public, often by making them accessible on their own Web site.

Phase three

The third phase of the e-consultation was dedicated to finding out what participants and their institutions wanted to achieve at the technical consultation. Participants were asked:

- What do you as an individual plan to get out of the Bonn meeting in concrete terms? General answers to this question may include learning and partners for collaboration, and you have probably mentioned this already, but you may also have very specific targets which it may be useful to share beforehand.
- What do you want to get out of Bonn for your institution?

Most respondents emphasised the learning opportunities of the Bonn meeting:

- I want to come away with some clear ideas for project impact evaluation which I can utilise in my institution.
- I want to learn how to use evaluations to stimulate impact orientation at the organisational level.

Future collaboration and networking were also mentioned by some: One intervention sums up these aspects:

I look forward to further interactions with colleagues, sharing experiences with them and laying the groundwork for future networking and institutional collaboration.

Conclusions

The conclusions are divided into two sections. The first part presents the conclusions from the e-consultation while the second section provides an informal assessment of the e-consultation's success.

Conclusions from the e-consultation

A wide variety of organisations were represented in the e-consultation: development organisations; international organisations; agricultural research institutes at regional and international level; universities; NGOs; and the private sector. Thus, the whole spectrum of development institutions was represented. Not only were the institutional settings different, the evaluation-mindedness of these institutions varied considerably. Some have had 'few evaluation, no impact assessment', representing one end of the scale, while others have had discrete and wide-ranging evaluation programmes. For the organisations in the middle range of the continuum, evaluation appears to be of growing importance.

Individuals generally had a background in agricultural research or agricultural information management, although some had experience in the fields of human rights, health, gender and enterprise development. There was also considerable variation in their evaluation experience: ranging from very little (although a considerable interest to learn) to a small number of experts in the field. Most were information managers whose work included occasional evaluations.

The participants and organisations involved in the e-consultation were also using a wide range of evaluation tools. To collect data, they were using questionnaires and focus groups. Methodologies used included a variety of conceptual frameworks. On the whole, however, it is possible to conclude that their approach was often rather adhoc.

The main conclusion is that the participants and their institutions are characterised by their diversity rather than their similarities. This is a strength but also a weakness. It is a strength because the different experience is complementary but it is a weakness in terms of looking for a methodology, for example. It will not be possible to find a 'one size' fits all solution to meeting the evaluation challenges that all these organisations are facing.

Informal assessment of the success of the e-consultation

This informal evaluation is qualitative, based on the experience of the moderator and the response of the participants by e-mail but also during the technical consultation. This method was chosen because it was not felt that the e-consultation was separate enough from the technical consultation or substantive enough to warrant an evaluation process of its own.

To recap, the main objectives of the e-consultation were: breaking the ice between participants; starting the dialogue; introducing participants to each other; and undertaking some preliminary information gathering. The e-consultation did meet these general objectives and, in some areas, it achieved more than was expected of it. In particular, information gathered about the participating individuals and their institutions went far beyond these expectations. The main explanation for this relative success was felt to be the unusually active group of participants.

Individuals participated to a high degree in the e-discussion and often adding messages of great complexity including political dimensions about their institutions. This indicates that participants were willing to trust each other to collaborate. One reason for this is that some of the participants have had personal contact with each other, having been active in this field for some time. It is not that all participants know each other but rather that there is enough acquaintance to make participants feel safe to contribute. In addition, in the personal opinion of the author, this was also illustrative of the quality of participants: some of these participants represent the foremost thinkers and doers in this field internationally. Some have been active in this field for almost ten years. Another factor which was helpful came from one of the first active responses to the substantive questions, came from a participant who stated:

Please note that the above informal comments are not necessarily official policy of [my organisation]. They sometimes represent a personal opinion on the situation and were only intended to help people learn from our experience.

Others were able to follow this lead and to place frank messages about their own organisations.

The e-consultation was therefore active as a result of the enthusiasm and calibre of the participants. As a result of this, problems which had been anticipated, such as difficulties with the complex terminology, did not arise. In fact, this problem also did not arise during technical consultation, probably for the same reason.

Can measuring results produce results? – Panel discussion

A panel discussion was convened at the beginning of the workshop, which helped set the stage for ensuing workshop discussions. The discussion centred around the theme ‘Can measuring results produce results?’ and was chaired by Dr. Khadar. The members of the panel were specially invited guests who have had considerable experience in the fields of development cooperation and evaluation. They included:

- Dr Paul Engel (Director, ECDPM);
- Ms Anriette Esterhuysen (Executive Director, Association for Progressive Communications);
- Mr Thomas Kuby (Senior Evaluation Expert, GTZ);
- Mr Greenidge Director, CTA.

Dr Khadar’s introductory remarks highlighted many of the problems facing practitioners in the information field:

- The multiplicity of approaches available and the dilemma of not knowing which one to use;
- The lack of proper definitions and clarity in the concepts used; controversy over the choice of performance and impact indicators and evaluation procedures;
- the need to define some of the frontiers of the discipline, frontiers which relate to the actual role of evaluation. Based on CTA’s experience in executing projects, there are many organisations where there are sceptics at the senior level who question the role of evaluation and this has led to project failure in some cases.

He also pointed to the importance of stakeholders participating in the whole process and the need to look for cost-effective methods to ease the adoption process.

The discussion spanned a wide range of topics and also served to expose the participants to the current thinking on evaluation in development agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The participants’ questions included:

- Does evaluation give the results required and which evaluations are being sought?
- Which evaluation methods should be applied at the different levels of intervention – project, programme, and institution?
- How sensitive is evaluation to the local environment?

- What are the expectations relating to impact assessment?
- From whose point of view are impact assessments conducted?
- Who are the audiences of impact assessments?
- At what point of the life cycle of the project or the programme should the evaluation be conducted? Who decides the duration of the process?
- In the interpretation of the results of such assessments, which itself requires considerable skill, what elements should be considered in order to minimise error?
- How can there be evaluation in the absence of an evaluation unit? Can organisations evaluate themselves?
- Is it possible to get good results from the application of simplified models?
- Is evaluation part of the problem or the solution? What is the implication of the two scenarios?

The discussion was thought provoking and although some of the perspectives varied in parts, there was general consensus on views, which transcended the whole meeting:

- There was a re-confirmation of the complexity in measuring impact.
- Measuring results can produce results. These results can often be used in designing better projects and programmes, providing that the indicators used are appropriate.
- There is a need to change the way people think about evaluations in terms of their successes or failures. Go beyond metaphors as they tend lead to a certain mind-set, and ask yourself continually what the ‘metaphor’ is in your head.
- The notion of ‘best practices’ problem tends to be based on the idea that there is a ‘best practices’ approach. However, no such best approach exists and instead one should look for **smart practices**.
- To measure impact, one has to study all the aspects of the information. It is important to be clear on what is to be measured and why. There is a need to spend a lot of time to get it right. The concept of impact is best kept for more fundamental changes.
- Although the value-base of an evaluation is unspoken, it is important.
- The temporal dimension is important – there is a need to allow for a meaningful time lapse for impact assessment to be measured.

Technical papers

Key issues on the characteristics of agricultural information

Kingo Mchombu, DIS-University of Namibia

Introduction

Information and knowledge are increasingly being seen as the new ‘factor of production’, partially replacing the traditional factors of production – land, labour, and capital (World Bank Report 1998/99). Pradervand (1980) has called the information need, the most basic of all basic human needs. The implication of this thinking is that the agricultural information position has to be upgraded and taken more seriously than before, particularly, in developing countries wishing to accelerate their development, by applying the ‘green revolution model’ from South East Asia.

We have to recognise, however, that agricultural knowledge/information still has a low status in most developing societies by policy-makers and small-farmers alike. According to Stone (1993), some of the reasons for this paradox where knowledge is seen as a ‘critical resource’ but yet at the same time it is given very little priority and low investment include:

- weak linkages between information/knowledge flows and agricultural/rural development;
- decision-makers need concrete demonstration of the impact of information on agricultural development to persuade them to invest more in the creation, management and dissemination of information to accelerate agricultural development given the large number of societal needs that they face.

Two-phased study

This presentation is based on two studies carried out in Eastern and Southern Africa. The first study was done between 1990 and 1992 and sought to determine the information needs and seeking patterns of rural people and extension workers. The second study (phase 2), which was a follow-up to the first study, was conducted in the same region, and sought to provide information and measure its impact on rural development with a view to developing a rural development information centre model.

First phase

For many rural people, agricultural information needs was an abstract concept and as a result they could not state accurately their own needs for information (29–31%), the lower the level of education, the greater the difficulties were in articulating information

needs. However, when the questioning was couched in practical language concerning the things people were doing, most could state what additional information they wanted in relation to an agricultural practice or any other activity.

The findings of the study showed that in the communities studied, agricultural information registered the highest demand (13–37%), while for health information it ranged from 17–22%, and for adult literacy it was 3–34%. The communities obtained and used information in situations where people were gathered together – drinking places, churches, schools, health centres, and bus stops. Social networks therefore played a significant role in the gathering, exchange and validation of information/knowledge.

The characteristics of the rural information environment were also studied. Most of the respondents had restricted access to external information (from research centres, and other centres of knowledge worldwide). The majority of the respondents had also not seen an extension worker for over a year, but this was offset by the fact that most of the respondents had access to indigenous knowledge (IK). A drawback of the IK system however, is that over the years, it has suffered from political, religious, and other forms of neglect and there was a crisis of confidence among respondents regarding its usefulness. Indeed, when questioned if they still used IK, the first response of most respondents was negative, it was only after in-depth discussions that it emerged that the use of IK was still high and functional in all the communities – a large component of IK centred around agriculture and animal husbandry.

Phase 2– impact assessment

Impact assessment was carried out during the second phase of the study. The framework used was based on the action research model largely developed by Michel Menou (1993), and also influenced by the work of Tandon (1981) and Dervin and Nilan (1986). In their studies, Menou and Dervin *et al.* have called for the need to research information impact from the users reality and their point of view.

Phase 2 of the study followed the sequence of events outlined below:

- negotiating with communities to enlist their participation;
- setting up community information centres;
- appointing and training information facilitators;
- developing information dissemination services;
- creating village newsheets;
- obtaining information on agriculture, health, literacy/education, and income generation.

The following channels through which information was disseminated included:

- inter-personal communication (information facilitators);

- video shows;
- reading/borrowing materials;
- meetings and discussion groups;
- newspaper reading room;
- joint activities with extension workers;
- games and cultural activities;
- networking of groups around common problems.

The methodology used for measuring impact in this research project was both qualitative and quantitative. There was continuous recording of measurements throughout the process itself. The argument used was that if the process is not implemented as planned, then there will be no impact in the end. Some of the information facilitators who were deployed to help with the study, complained that this process of recording information was too cumbersome and time consuming, taking them away from giving service to the communities – which they regarded as their primary task.

There was a major collection of data at the end of the three-year period to measure the impact of the project activity. The approach taken, was to find out from the sampled respondents:

- who had participated in the information strategy activities;
- who had received/exchanged information in the various subject areas;
- the perceived benefits;
- implemented ideas/information received.

Impact findings

The findings indicated that in each of the main subject areas there were distinct impacts identified by respondents.

- Agriculture information provision

Agriculture information was provided to many of the respondents and most of that information was directed towards cash crop farming rather than food crop farming (subsistence).

The benefits mentioned by respondents were:

- improved farming techniques for cash crop farming (coffee, tobacco and coconut);
- proper use of manure/fertilizer;

- livestock breeding – in relation to high-breed stock;
- environmental issues;
- increased productivity – new crops, better control of crop diseases etc.

The agricultural information supplied was within the modernisation paradigm of government policies – programmes that have the support of the government. There was some gender bias however, in terms of the level of access of information, with males having better access than females.

- Educational and literacy information

Between 25–48% of the respondents received information pertaining to literacy. The main purpose of the information given was:

- for the acquisition and maintenance of literacy skills;
- to support formal education – in particular addressing the shortage of qualified teachers. To act as a substitute to some extent for teachers;
- to provide literacy primers on simple farming manuals (which were popular with the respondents).

The respondents mentioned that they received the following benefits:

- the information environment improved;
- school education of children improved (e.g. increased access to educational materials and learning to speak and write better English);
- increased respect and appreciation of African culture.

- Health information provision

Between 33–63% of the respondents received information on health (7–19% said they did not receive any health information). The information provided concentrated on:

- sexually transmitted diseases (STD)
- HIV/AIDS
- child healthcare
- family planning
- prevention of infectious diseases.

Some of the information was crisis management related, for example with respect to outbreaks of cholera, rabies, HIV/AIDS. Once again, government programmes appeared to motivate a lot of the information disseminated through vaccinations, family planning programmes, and STD control.

Lessons learned

Several lessons were drawn from these studies:

- The role of information/knowledge in a developing society is still a ‘novel’ concept and in order to increase the level of awareness of its importance in all segments of society, sustained social marketing is essential.
- The flow of agricultural information in society is tied to the overall information environment, as well as societal habits in seeking and using information.
- High impact can only be achieved if the over-arching environment is taken into account and a good strategic analysis employed to take advantage of favourable factors and minimise the effect of the negative factors. Overall, agricultural information will flow well and make an impact if one mimics existing channels of information exchange in the community, including traditional channels of information exchange.
- For fast-forward development to be achieved, one requires sensitisation of the population, policy-makers, and extension workers to become high information users through agricultural information literacy campaigns and programmes, starting with easily recognisable value-adding information such as market information, crop disease control, etc.
- To achieve the above, the rural development information centre model is being advocated, which could lead to information provision having an impact on rural development. Factors which appeared to have had some influence on the achievement of the impact of information on rural development include:
 - The contribution of information facilitators – where they were proactive, with an active programme of leveraging the flow of rural development information through interpersonal communication covering the whole community, the level of impact was high. Where the information facilitator was passive, concentrating mainly on the reading room services, the level of impact was low. This suggests therefore that the skills of information workers require revision if they are to become credible players in rural development.
 - The lack of provision of information in the income generating sector and the consequent low-level impact of information in this area in contrast to the agricultural, health, and education sectors highlighted the need to provide information where there are gaps to promote all facets of rural development.

The model should therefore have as its basis:

- Information facilitators who can organise, manage and facilitate rural development information flow into and within the community;
- A broad development information strategy which includes a resource centre, a range of information exchange and sharing activities;

- A multi-channel approach to facilitate a two-way flow of information, including oral, audio visual, print and traditional channels;
- Participation of different rural groups in prioritising information requirements and managing the affairs of the information strategy.

Acknowledgement

International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Eastern and Southern Africa Office, Nairobi, Kenya funded the research material used and reported on in this article.

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Principles of evaluation

Adiel Mbabu, ASARECA

Introduction

When I was requested to write on the subject of evaluation, what came to my mind first was donor-funded projects which are often associated with externally commissioned studies, mainly focusing on either mid-term or end of project evaluations, and often inclined towards methodological rigour, rather than the utility of the study findings to the practitioners. While conceding that this scenario may be exaggerated, I am inclined to think that it characterises the predominant mode of evaluations in contemporary project management. Thus, the issues the scenario raises may lay important ground for study and reflection on the concept of evaluation in this meeting. For purposes of discussion, I will highlight some of these issues as I see them related to some of the donor-funded projects with which I have been associated. This should not be construed to suggest that all donor-funded projects are associated with the issues at stake, or even that non-donor funded projects are free from the same issues.

First, in many organisations, donor-funded projects tend to be short-term oriented, despite the fact that they aspire for long-term impacts. Second, donor funded projects tend to be stand-alone, detached from other related projects in the same organisation, thus depriving them of the synergies that could possibly contribute to greater impacts. Third, evaluations on donor-funded projects tend to emphasise more on accountability than longer-term institutional structures, processes and culture, which would potentially deliver longer-term impacts. Thus, although evaluation is about outcomes, the tendency is to dwell on outputs because that is what donor-funded projects are more likely to deliver, given their operational timeframes.

Further, in relying on externally commissioned evaluation teams, donor funded-projects tend to treat evaluation studies as separate entities from the original planning and monitoring processes. One obvious constraint imposed by this separation is that project implementation teams do not feel obliged to collect the necessary data for effective evaluation in the course of project implementation. Consequently, with time limitations and other resource constraints, the evaluation teams tend to limit themselves to what is 'doable' rather than what is required for better management of the project for greater impact. As if to compensate for this limitation, evaluation experts tend to indulge in greater methodological rigour and more elegant reports, ironically with only modest utility to the practitioners.

To respond to these challenges, this paper argues that for evaluation to serve the complementary roles of accountability and enhanced management decisions, it is necessary to institutionalise it as an integral part of a planning, monitoring and evaluation system. Indeed, the three elements should be iteratively linked. The paper also argues that for increased use of evaluation findings among practitioners and the funding

agencies, it is necessary for the content of the study to drive methodological choices, rather than the other way round. Finally, the paper submits that, in dealing with the content of evaluation, it is necessary to carefully determine the unit of analysis; which in turn is a function of both the level of aggregation and time.

What is evaluation?

Evaluation is judging, appraising, or determining the worth, value or quality of something (D. Horton, *et. al.* 1993). Thus, evaluation can only be done against an agreed set of values and objectives. For example, organisational efficiency can be assessed against operational cost effectiveness. Relevance can be assessed against appropriateness of the outputs to the needs of the end-users. Similarly, effectiveness can be determined by the extent to which goods and services meet the expectation of the end-users.

If then, an evaluation cannot be done without clear specification of the intended objectives, the question is, who should define those objectives and at what point in the project cycle? Ideally, these specifications should be agreed upon among key stakeholders at the planning stage of the project, upheld in the implementation process through project monitoring, and eventually evaluated at the end of the project to affirm accomplishments of the set objectives. Thus, evaluation should sequentially and logically follow from planning and monitoring processes. As Figure 1 illustrates, evaluation results should also feed back into future planning activities to ensure incorporation of 'lessons learned' for more effective future projects and programmes.

Thus, evaluation exercises that attempt to define evaluation objectives in the middle or at the end of the project life, risk altering the rules of the game unduly, or moving the goal posts in the middle of the game. By so doing, such exercises are likely to alienate the project implementers and lose the advantage of the accumulated experience and data from the project implementation process. The cumulative effect of this approach is likely to reduce the potential use of the evaluation findings by the project implementers.

Why is evaluation necessary?

The two most commonly cited reasons for carrying out evaluations are:

- to meet accountability requirements; and
- to improve management decisions.

With respect to accountability, two levels are often distinguished:

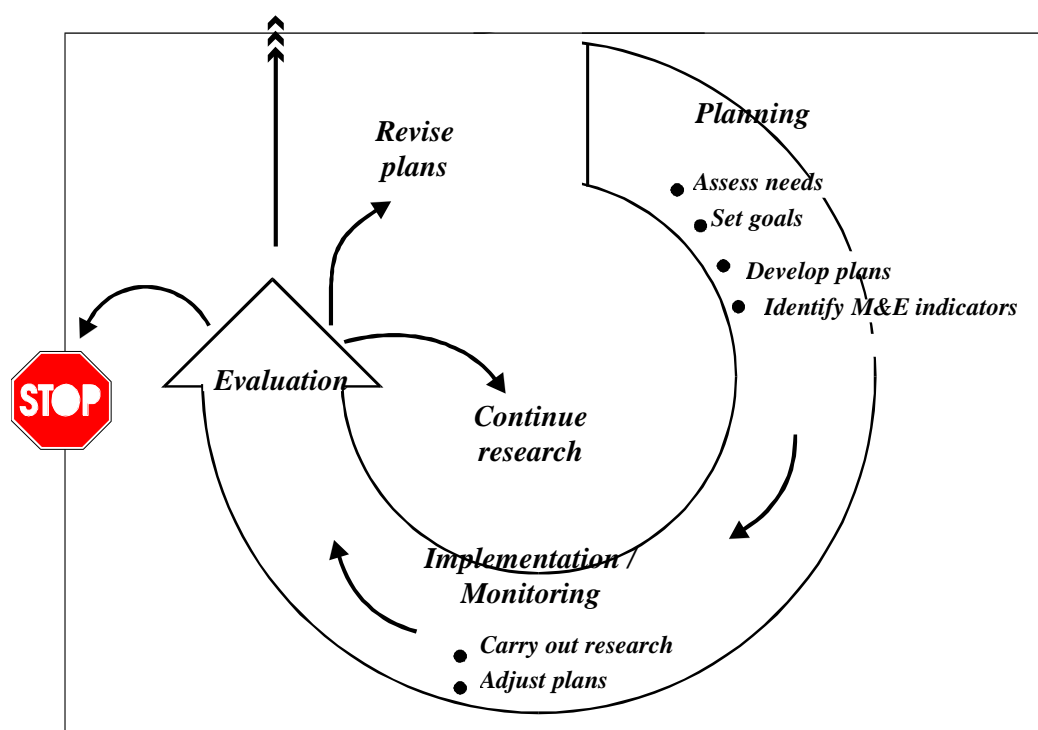
- use of available resources according to laid down rules and regulations; and
- use of resources for the intended purposes.

Regarding the improvement of management decisions, the focus shifts to effective planning, monitoring and evaluation systems.

Accountability test

Traditional evaluation has tended to focus on internal accountability requirements. This exercise generally assesses the extent to which available resources have been spent according to laid down procedures and for the intended activities. In the final analysis, this turns out to be a test of the efficiency and the integrity of the management system.

Figure 1: Management cycle¹



1. Adopted from D. Horton *et. al.* 1993 page 8.

While this perspective may meet the requirements of the funding agencies, it tends to obscure the purpose for which the resources were allocated in the first place. Thus, these evaluations tend to give new leases of life to organisations that generate goods and services with little relevance to potential users.

Largely due to this shortfall, interest has increasingly grown to broaden accountability tests to include responsiveness to client needs. Thus, the scope of evaluation missions are now increasingly widening to include assessment of the relevance of goods and

services; and more often than not, even pushing further to assess the utility of these goods and services to the end-users. In the circumstances, project implementers are increasingly becoming accountable to the clients and stakeholders, besides the funding agencies.

Improving management decisions

In assessing the extent to which management decisions have improved, evaluation teams tend to focus on the process by which the organisation continuously expands its capacity to 'create its future' (Senge, 1994). This basically entails systematic planning, reflective monitoring and participatory evaluation.

Systematic planning involves participatory processes that involve clients and stakeholders in assessing an organisation's **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats (SWOT); and based on the findings, define institutional objectives (e.g. goal, purpose, outputs and activities). Planning processes also specify indicators of success, means of verification, and the assumptions that should hold true for the attainment of the stated objectives. Project plans form the basis for resource allocation, an important management decision indeed. Thus, planning processes in themselves entail a form of evaluation, albeit in an *ex ante* view; but also lay the foundation for subsequent evaluations in the implementation process, as well as post implementation.

Reflective monitoring processes, on the other hand, involve continuous assessments of the extent to which progress is being made towards expected targets. Should any unexpected anomalies arise, reflective monitoring processes should initiate appropriate interventions to ensure that the implementation process remains on course. This approach contrasts sharply with the traditional monitoring processes that tend to police implementation processes; more inclined to discover villains than to enhance management decisions.

Participatory evaluation processes conclude the implementation process in the same spirit as it started. Clients and key stakeholders, more often than not with assistance from evaluation experts, re-converge to assess the extent to which previously set objectives will have been met. In the course of the evaluation, the team registers 'lessons learned' for use in subsequent planning processes. Again, this approach contrasts sharply with the traditional evaluation missions which bring experts on mission with limited experience in the implementation process, and who subsequently depart with the insights gained in the evaluation process. Of course, part of the insight is retained in the reports that they may have left behind, but which are not readily available to all the project implementation teams.

Challenges in evaluation

The perennial challenge in the evaluation practice is two-fold – what to measure and how to measure it. Surprisingly, professional evaluators have tended to take the first part of the challenge for granted (what to measure), and to dwell more on the second part of the question (how to measure it). Taking this approach, a nagging problem has

Figure 2: Transformational path (Agricultural research and development model)

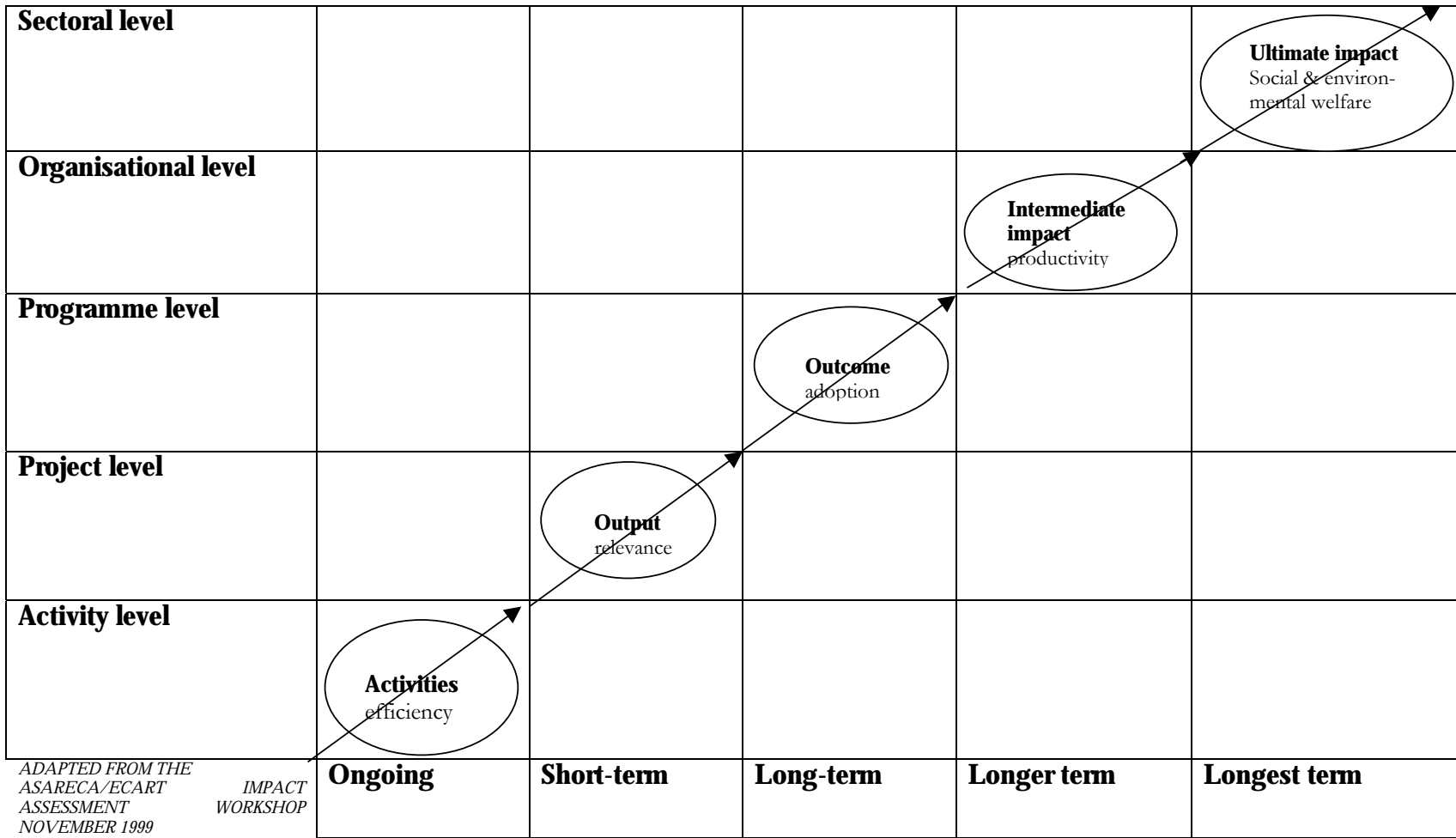


Figure 3: Units of analysis for evaluation (Agricultural research and development model)

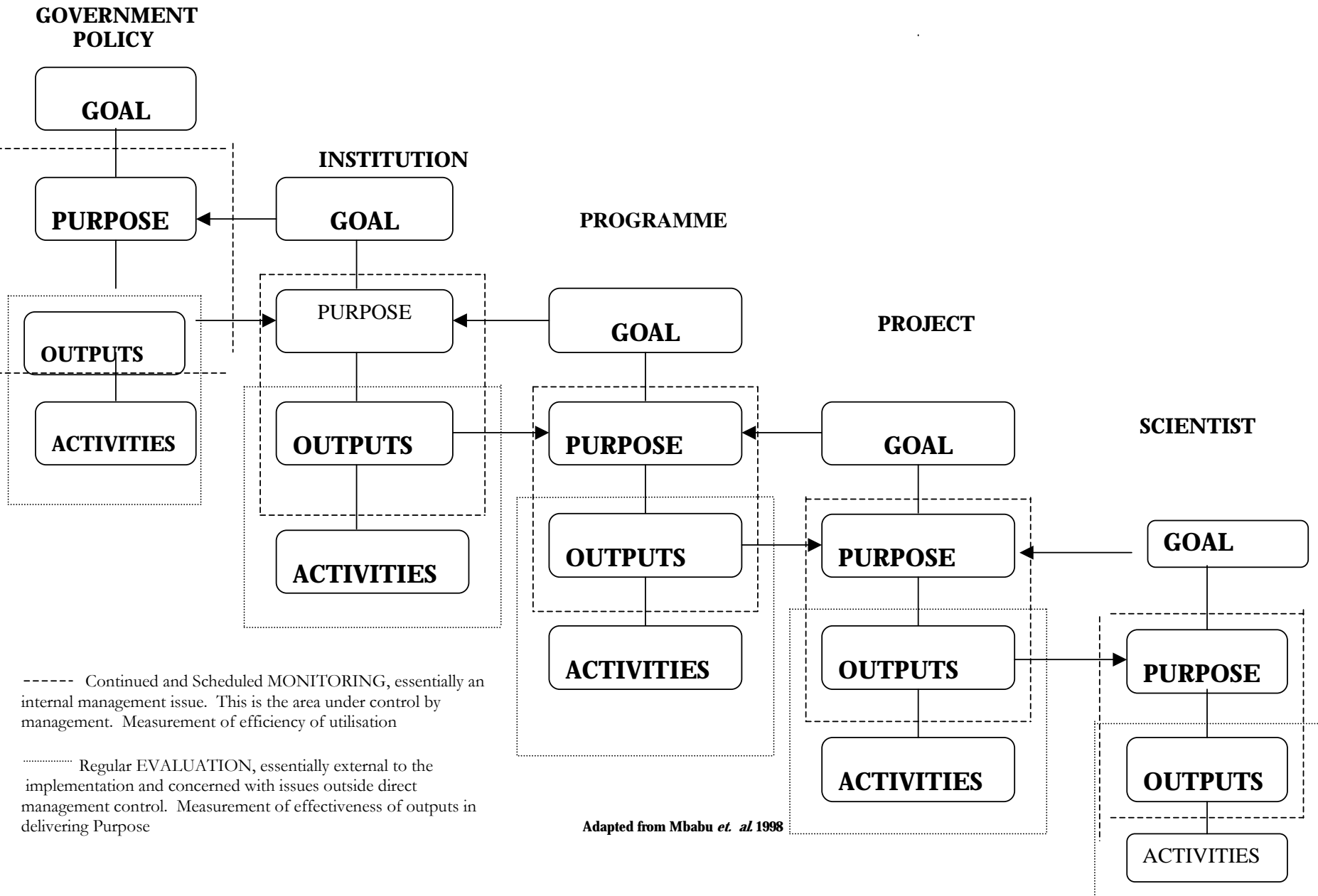
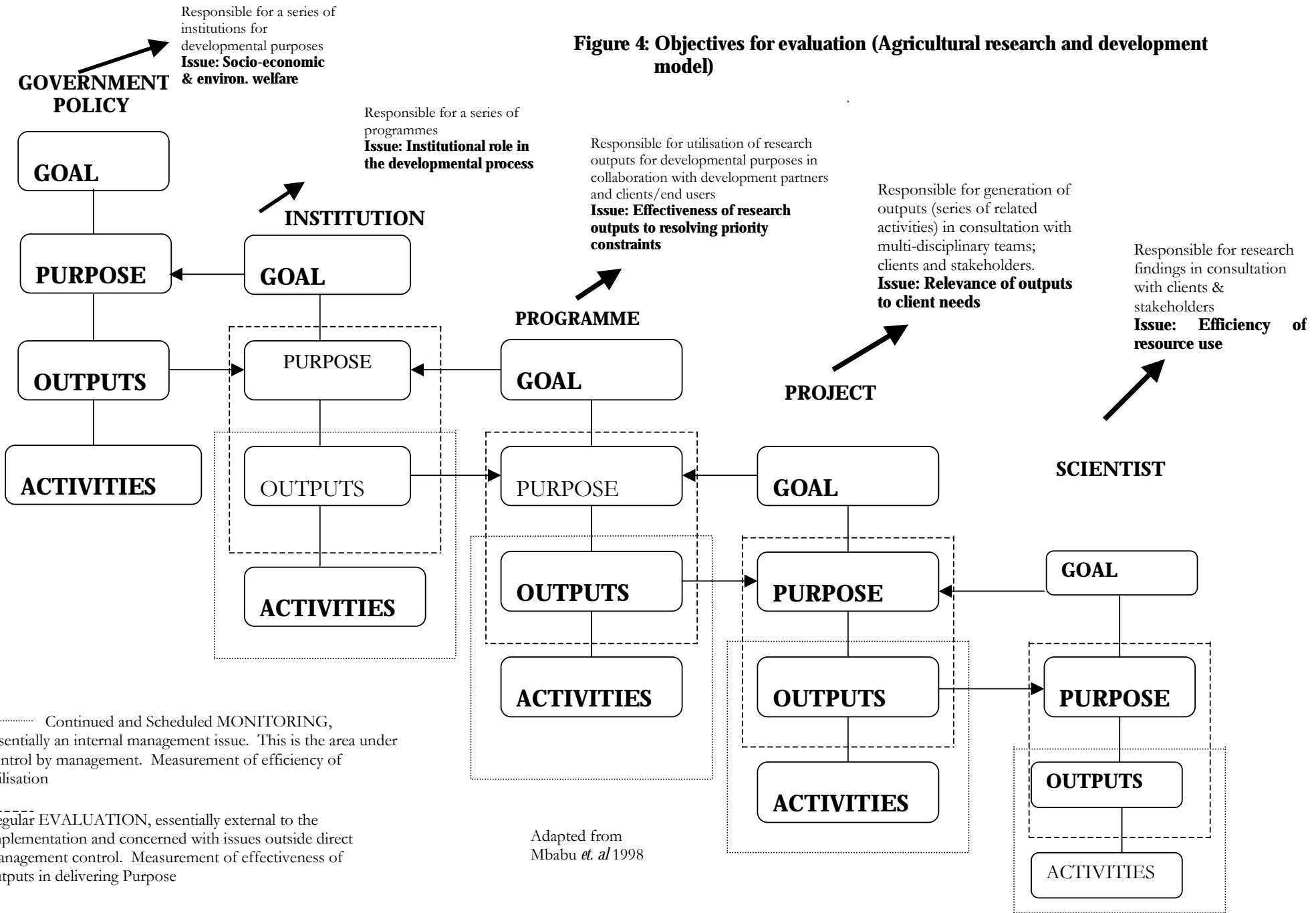


Figure 4: Objectives for evaluation (Agricultural research and development model)



continued to be that of ‘attribution’. Indeed, how can we be sure that the changes that we see can be directly attributed to the outputs of the project under evaluation? In our view, this challenge is particularly pertinent in situations where there is a discrepancy between project objectives and the expectations of the stakeholders from the evaluation. Ironically, most projects are designed with relatively short-term horizons but expected to deliver long-term objectives. To deal with this challenge therefore, it is our view that we have to pay as much attention in managing the process to cause desired impact, as we need to sharpen the tools to measure it. In other words, we need to deal with impact orientation that addresses issues pertaining to the causal path (transformational path) and measurement of impact simultaneously.

Transformational path

In determining what to measure in the evaluation process, it is absolutely necessary to be aware of the stages an idea must go through before visible impact is attained at people level. To use an example from agricultural research and development, to transform an idea into a technological option and eventually adapt the option into a preferred intervention among specific end users, and to do so in large numbers, is a process that takes time, several transformations and multiple actors. As Figure 2 illustrates, one has to contend with efficiency issues at the activity level, relevance at the output level, effectiveness at utility level, productivity gains at the level of intermediate impact, and social environmental welfare at the level of ultimate change. To manage the process, one has to deal with issues of aggregation – project, programme, organisation and the sector; and timeframes for delivery – short-term, medium-term and long-term. Thus, in determining what to measure, one has to be located at the right point along the transformational path and be sure to ask the right questions, consistent with the appropriate level of aggregation and time frame.

Units of analysis

In thinking of the right unit of analysis in the evaluation process, there is a tendency to focus on ‘projects’ without defining the concept adequately. It is important to bear in mind that different people, and in many instances same individuals, use this concept to describe different phenomena. For example, projects are often used to describe discrete studies (activities), a set of interrelated studies (project), and even a set of interrelated projects (programmes). Considering that each of these levels of operation reflects different levels of complexity, time frames and even objectives, it is important to clearly distinguish them in the analytical process. Further, as Figure 3 illustrates, in an impact-oriented organisation, it is possible to logically link different operational levels through a hierarchy of objectives to systematically contribute towards a shared ultimate goal. In such an arrangement, the goal of each activity would tie to the purpose of the host project; the goal of each project would tie to the purpose of the host programme; and the goal of each programme would tie to the institutional purpose. Finally, the institutional goal would tie to the purpose of the host sector. Thus, since all the levels of aggregation are logically tied towards a common goal, it is possible to make a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the whole system.

As Figure 4 illustrates, in an impact-oriented organisation, scientists at the activity level would be responsible for research findings in consultation with clients and stakeholders. An important evaluation question at that level would concern the extent to which the available resources are utilised efficiently in generating pertinent research findings. Project leaders on the other hand, would be responsible for the generation of outputs in relation to a pertinent problem/constraint in consultation with multi-disciplinary teams, clients and stakeholders. It is noteworthy that these outputs are generated through a series of interrelated activities. The critical evaluation question to project leaders would concern relevance of the outputs they generate in response to client needs. At the level of programme leadership, the responsibility would shift towards utilisation of research outputs for developmental purposes in collaboration with development partners, and end-users. Thus, the key evaluation question at this level of aggregation would relate to intermediate impacts. In the case of agricultural research and development, this would entail adoption and productivity gains. At the higher level of aggregation, where institutional leaders are running a series of programmes, the challenge would become even greater, to what extent research and development contributes to socio-economic welfare and sustainable development. In summary therefore, it is important to emphasise the need to be sure where one is located along the transformational path, before evaluation questions are conceived and articulated.

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper emphasises the centrality of objective driven evaluation processes. To avoid changing the rules of the game mid-course, it is argued that evaluation objectives ought to be defined at the project design stage and verified through the monitoring processes. It is also emphasized that evaluation exercises ought to be dependent on the data and experience gained in the course of project implementation, just as much as evaluation results ought to inform subsequent planning processes. Thus, evaluation ought to be iteratively linked to planning and monitoring processes.

Further, the paper notes that although evaluation exercises are often justified by the dual need to meet accountability requirements and to inform management decisions, they have tended to respond to the former more than the latter. Consequently, with weakened management processes, project designs have tended to deliver far less than expected by the clients and stakeholders. Apparently faced by this discrepancy, evaluation experts have tended to hide behind the so called “attribution gap”.

This paper takes the view that one way of resolving the perennial problem of attribution is to boldly address the twin objectives of meeting accountability and management needs. It is argued that one of the ways to accomplish this objective is to integrate planning, monitoring and evaluation systems in such a way as to gain a more holistic view of the transformational path necessary to deliver impact at the people level. In such a comprehensive approach, it is possible to retain both short and long term views to evaluation; thus delivering more credible results. In this context it is important to bear in mind that the transformation process involves a series of activities, projects and programmes, all logically linked in time and space; and all deserving appropriate evaluations in their own right. Thus, in carrying out an evaluation, one needs to be sure

of the stage at which the process has reached before determining what issues to raise and consequently what methodological approach to take.

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Evaluation concepts and terminology: a discussion note

Ibrahim Khadar, CTA

Introduction

Research and development (R&D) organisations are increasingly keen on sharing the findings of evaluation studies with each other, as well as with the public at large. This represents an encouraging and potentially beneficial move from the tendency in the past to keep evaluation messages to a limited audience often comprising the staff and supervisory authorities of the organisation being evaluated. Sharing of evaluation feedback can enhance the establishment of an organisational learning culture, and lead to the development of more cost-effective methods for evaluation and impact assessment. Nonetheless, there is a serious danger that these benefits may never be fully realised because of communication difficulties relating to widespread confusion and disagreement over the meanings of evaluation terms and concepts employed by various organisations and experts.

In order to shed some light on this fairly complex issue, this concept note attempts to highlight the problem by showing how a number of leading R&D organisations differ in their use of terms such as *evaluation*, *performance* and *impact*. The note also identifies a number of areas where future efforts should be directed in order to develop more conceptual coherence and greater consistency in the usage of evaluation terms.

Problem statement

In addressing the issue of evaluation concepts and terminology, a number of concerns come to the fore:

- The multiplicity of concepts and terms currently employed by various specialists and consultants constitutes a serious constraint to the development of a coherent body of (evaluation) literature (Workshop announcement).
 - Key evaluation terms have more than one meaning or more than one terminology apply to the same concept.
 - Various writers recognise the problem (Noel Boissière, Meadow and Yuan, McConnell, etc.).
- Limited attempt has been made to develop the definitions of these terms and concepts that apply specifically to information projects, products and services.

Illustration of the problem

As stated in the introductory section above, problems with concepts and terminology can be effectively illustrated by focusing on specific examples. The examples employed here, concern the terminology 'evaluation', and the concepts 'impact' and 'performance', two of which appear in the workshop title 'Assessing the performance and impact of agricultural information products and services'.

Example 1: *Evaluation*

For various international institutions this term can have a different meaning (see also Table 1). Examples include:

- Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) and ISNAR (in a 1993 publication) imply that an evaluation should cover issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact.
- The World Bank Group (in a 2001 publication) indicates that an evaluation should cover issues of relevance, performance, efficiency and impact.
- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD; in a 2001 publication) notes that an evaluation should cover issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.
- IDRC (in a 2001 publication) stipulates that an evaluation should cover issues of performance, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit and impact.

Table 1: Definition of evaluation and the corresponding agency

| Institutions | Relevance | Effectiveness | Efficiency | Impact | Sustainability | Performance |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ISNAR/ CABI | X ¹ | X | X | X | | |
| World Bank Group | X | | X | X | | X |
| OECD | X | X | X | X | X | |
| IDRC | | X | X | X | | X |

Source: *Khadar, CTA, 2001*

¹ X implies that the indicator is explicitly included in the definition of the term evaluation, while a shaded area implies that the indicator is not explicitly included.

Example 2: *Impact*

- Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR, 1999) – Impact = broad, long-term effects (economic, social and environmental) anticipated or unanticipated, positive or negative at the individual or organisational level;
- ISNAR (2001) – Impact = any effect anticipated on unanticipated, positive or negative brought about by a development intervention at the individual or organisational level.

While the CGIAR definition of impact focuses on broad, long-term changes, the definition provided by ISNAR can be interpreted to include short-term or intermediary changes such as "increased satisfaction from using a service". In effect the two definitions are significantly different.

Example 3: *Performance*

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 1997) – Performance = services or activities carried out by a rural resource centre;
- World Bank – Performance = operations impact, outcome and outputs monitored to assess progress towards objectives achievement;
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – Performance = how well a programme is achieving its objectives.

Although these three definitions of performance are closely related, in the sense that they all refer to the service or outputs being generated through a given set of activities, significant differences can be easily spotted among them. The UNESCO definition, unlike the other two, does not make any reference to the achievement of objectives. The USAID definition is closer to the World Bank's since they both focus on the achievement of objectives, but the World Bank also makes matters quite confusing by including impact in its definition.

Discussion points

The three examples above, relating to the different uses of the terms "evaluation" "impact", and "performance" illustrate lack of consistency in the definition of evaluation terms, compounded in some cases by significant conceptual gaps such as in the case of the two meanings given to the term "impact".

The search for practical and meaningful solutions to this problem should be structured around three main areas:

- Development of guiding principles for effective communication of evaluation results (this would be the basis for establishing a suitable communication strategy)
- Investigating the origins of concepts and terms (in order to better understand the differences in meaning);
- Consensus on the use of key concepts and terms.

Various suggestions aimed at taking the debate forward, in each of the three areas, are presented below.

Communication of evaluation results

- Evaluation terms and concepts should be coherent and employed in a consistent manner;
- The standard meaning of terms and concepts should be adhered to as much as possible;
- It should be possible to relate, with minimum difficulty the concepts and terms used in a specific study or report to the (standard) meanings and usage in the evaluation literature.

Origins of concepts and terms

Understanding the origins of concepts and terms can help clarify some of the confusion in evaluation literature. This is because evaluation terms and concepts can be traced to various disciplines, such as management, economics, agricultural sciences (including extension and knowledge management), and interdisciplinary studies. Particular attention should be paid to the "Logical framework analysis" concept, to which several evaluation terms can be easily traced. The interdisciplinary nature of evaluation should also be further investigated, since it is likely that disciplinary preferences might hamper the search for a common definition of certain frequently employed terms and concepts.

The need for consensus

The key issue here is whether or not evaluation should retain its multidisciplinary trademark, or be developed as a separate discipline that can stand on its own. The first steps towards improving the disciplinary status of evaluation would involve the search for answers to questions such as:

- Which elements make up an evaluation?
- Whether impact implies broad, longer-term effects or any effects?
- What meaning should be given to the term performance?

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Conceptual frameworks and methodologies used for evaluating agricultural information products and services

Sarah Cummings, KIT

Background

Making evaluations do-able does not mean making them easy. Evaluations are usually complex. To give simplistic short cut advice might denude and simplify a genuine body of knowledge and skill to the extent that the processes undertaken in its name are crude and unreliable. However, the attempt to promote access to and confidence in evaluative activity is laudable enough. (Saunders 2000)

This bibliography represents an input into the inter-agency technical consultation on ‘Assessing the performance and impact of agricultural information products and services’, which was held in Bonn, Germany, on 9–12 October 2001, in which CTA was the leading partner. The bibliography served to support two of the outputs of the technical consultation, namely the clarification of evaluation concepts and terminology in the context of ‘information for development’ activities (Output 1) and an inventory of evaluation frameworks and methods indicating the strengths and weaknesses of the various tools (Output 2).

The bibliography has two components, firstly a discussion note on the nature of evaluation frameworks; and, secondly, an inventory of key literature on the impact assessment and evaluation of information services, projects and products (refer to the Annexes). The inventory includes a wide range of evaluation frameworks but also contains other key literature. Many of the documents referred to in the discussion note and the inventory do not relate directly to agricultural information services but are relevant to them as they are to other information services with the objective of ‘development’.

The objective of this bibliography is not to simplify a complex subject, but rather to make the field more accessible to entrants and to increase their confidence when tackling this area. Access to the complex body of knowledge surrounding this subject has often been difficult for non-specialists. In keeping with this, the discussion of the frameworks, the first part of the bibliography, does not represent the perspective of an expert in this field but, rather, it is informed by the perspective of an information manager, aiming to provide pointers for other information professionals who are concerned with the

evaluation of information services, projects and products, but for whom evaluation is not a main task or function.

It is intended that this bibliography will also specifically add to the knowledge base of members of the LEAP-IMPACT community of practice. Members of this group range from leading experts in the field of evaluation of agricultural information services to new entrants. The majority of the currently 48 members are information professionals or agricultural researchers with experience of or a professional interest in the evaluation and impact assessment of agricultural information services, projects and products. These members formed the core of participants at the Bonn meeting mentioned above. The LEAP-IMPACT community of practice has a World Wide Web (WWW) workspace on the Bellanet Web site at: <http://www.bellanet.org/leap/impact>

Frameworks: a discussion note

Introduction

This discussion note will begin by presenting a variety of definitions of evaluation frameworks and their related indicators, identifying key elements. It will then describe some evaluation approaches followed in development, with emphasis on health, information management and ICTs. This will be followed by more detailed consideration of four frameworks, which have been selected either because they have particular pioneering features or because they demonstrate an approach that might be of particular interest to information managers working in the field of agriculture.

Before going further, it is important to emphasise here that most of these frameworks do not have a particular agricultural focus. In fact, from an evaluation point of view, agricultural information services do not have specific characteristics that distinguish them from other information services with a development objective. However, it is possible that practice from other sectors, notably health, might be able to inform the evaluation and impact assessment of agricultural information services.

Definitions

Specialists in this field use the terms 'evaluation framework', 'logical framework', 'philosophical framework' and 'conceptual framework', often interchangeably and sometimes without defining them. Collinson (1998) considers that 'an evaluation framework is a well-defined group of questions on which the structure of the inquiry is based. They form the specifications that map the route the evaluation must follow'. Saunders (2000) argues that 'a framework should provide a generic context for action in which some recognisable shaping characteristics are evident but within the shape, a wide range of actions is possible... It should be based on the practices of an evaluation community and serve a practicality ethic.'

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD defines a logical framework as:

A management tool consisting of a set of interlocking concepts which must be used together in a dynamic fashion to permit the elaboration of a well-designed, objectively described and evaluable (programme or) project. It makes it possible to summarise the elements of a programme or project (inputs, outputs, purpose, goal), the cause-and-effect relationship among the operational aspects (resources, activities, outputs) and development considerations (purpose, goal), and thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of the programme or project.

This definition and many of the other approaches are strongly influenced by the Logical Framework Analysis or LogFrame, which was developed by USAID in the 1970s. According to McCaul (2000), the LogFrame is the most commonly used project design and management tool amongst the international development community. It is used as a tool to plan new projects and programmes, and is helpful during evaluations to assess the logic and progress of an existing project. McCaul argues that used effectively, the LogFrame can encourage commitment to a transparent, structured, participatory and flexible development process. Used inappropriately, however, it can add to the burden of already over-stretched staff, detrimentally simplify what are sometimes complex interventions, and become a control mechanism where activities are executed according to a pre-designed matrix rather than being adapted to local conditions.

A further definition of an evaluation framework calls it a 'framework of indicators', emphasising the importance of indicators to each framework (Baruah 1998). Indicators have been widely defined and these definitions have many similar features. Rossi and Gilmartin (1980) define indicators as 'repeated measures of the same phenomenon over time... the time series allowing the identification of long-term trends, periodic change and fluctuations in rate of change'. Konkin (1991) defines an indicator as a 'summary measure, a tool for monitoring change, which carries with it a degree of implied causality'. Hodge (1994) defines an indicator as 'a measurable descriptor, qualitative or quantitative, of normative interest which facilitates assessment of the past, current or future state or performance of system constituent parts.' The major limitation of indicator-based approaches is that they cannot cause change by themselves since they are merely measurements of trends and patterns.

In summary, a conceptual evaluation framework is a management tool with the following characteristics:

- the framework forms the structure of an evaluation;
- the framework clarifies planning and operational stages of an evaluation;
- the framework facilitates a summary of the programme or project;
- each framework is founded on specific indicators which measure pre-determined aspects of performance over time;
- most frameworks have been informed by the LogFrame approach;

- most frameworks use a specific, defined terminology which allows the user to be at ease with the different technical terms; and
- a framework should be based on the practices of a community of practice.

Types of frameworks

Baruah (1998) suggests that there are six general types of frameworks commonly being used in a development context. These are as follows:

- domain-based frameworks based on key dimensions of sustainability, namely the environment, economy and society;
- goal-based frameworks which focus on social well-being, economic prosperity or meeting basic human needs;
- sectoral frameworks focusing on housing, health, or information;
- causal frameworks emphasising the causal relationship between, for example, human health, air quality and pollution reduction;
- issue-based frameworks based on popular current issues, such as ICTs;
- combination frameworks, which use two or more of the above.

The frameworks applied in development have diverse origins and represent different types of frameworks. In development cooperation, almost all of the large bilateral and multilateral development organisations have their own evaluation methodology. For example, the Department for International Development (DFID), the Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and GTZ all have their own frameworks for evaluating projects and programmes.

In the information management field, frameworks have been developed to evaluate Web sites, libraries, extension (outreach) programmes and publication programmes. In the field of information management for development, a number of specific tools have been developed, including the Preliminary Framework (PF; Menou, 1993), linear structural relations model (LISREL; Tague-Sutcliffe *et al.* 1995), the UNESCO framework for the evaluation of rural information services (Correa *et al.* 1997) and the framework recently developed by Mook (2001). Related to these approaches, there has been considerable effort in that past five years to develop frameworks which consider the role of ICTs, particularly in terms of telecentres. These approaches come from the Leyland Initiative, the Acacia Initiative of IDRC, the Lanfranco framework (Lanfranco 1997), also from IDRC, and the International Telecommunications Union (Ernberg 1998). These approaches generally look at the impact of the Internet, ICTs and telecentres, but the emphasis is on the channel and not on the information itself.

Among the sectoral frameworks, it is felt that the field of health information has developed particularly interesting approaches. One example of this, is the Burroughs *et.*

al. (2000) manual which considers health outreach in the USA. This approach, for example, pays considerable attention to models of behavioural change. At the 1999 London meeting, organised at the close of the IDRC research project on this subject, many participants felt that the information management field missed these more theoretical underpinnings (personal observation).

Four evaluation frameworks

To illustrate the nature of frameworks, some four approaches are covered here in more detail. These frameworks include a general one which is frequently applied to information services; two information management approaches, one of which has come from the field of development; and finally an example of an ICT-oriented approach. The examples comprise:

- RUFDATA, a general framework developed for the British Council;
- the PF, pioneering work from the information management for development field;
- outcomes assessment applied to academic libraries in the USA; and
- ICT's life-cycle approach.

It is worth noting that all the evaluations are informed by some form of framework, although the precise nature may be difficult to distinguish when an evaluation report focuses on operational aspects.

RUFDATA

The RUFDATA framework was developed by Murray Saunders of the University of Lancaster, United Kingdom, for the British Council. Although it is not specifically aimed at information services, it is probable, given the activities of the British Council, that it is frequently being applied to information programmes and projects. RUFDATA is an example of a 'practical planning tool' or a 'meta-evaluative tool', which was designed to meet the needs for evaluation of a dispersed organisation. It aims to chart evaluation practices currently undertaken by members of staff and to develop evaluation capacity.

RUFDATA is an acronym for the procedural decisions, which shape evaluation activity in a dispersed office. It stands for the following elements:

- **R**easons and purposes
- **U**ses
- **F**ocuses
- **D**ata and evidence
- **A**udience
- **T**iming

- **Agency**

RUFDATA provides the basis for a series of decisions which can frame evaluation activity at two levels in an office. Level one concerns the development of a policy statement or position paper on the approach the office wishes to adopt on evaluation overall. Level two concerns the evaluation of a specific activity. These decisions invoke the tacit decision-making which a group of experienced evaluators undertook in planning and thinking about an evaluation, accessing their embodied knowledge for considerations useful in starting up an evaluation. The process does not stop there, because once this practice is captured and represented in a more systematic form, it becomes reified as a kind of procedure and thus emerges as imbedded knowledge.

One particularly interesting aspect of the RUFDATA approach is the emphasis Saunders places on the development of communities of practice for evaluators, namely groups of practising evaluators. These communities of practice, such as LEAP-IMPACT, share common attitudes, approaches, methodologies and skills. For LEAP-IMPACT, the emphasis is on the management of evaluation and impact assessment of information services.

PF

Menou's PF for impact assessment (1993) is based on work by Griffiths and King and complemented the results of a computer conference undertaken in 1992 and discussions at a post-conference workshop. It was elaborated on as part of an IDRC research project on 'Assessing the impact of information on development', which covered the 1992–2000 period.

The PF contains four major components: the object of evaluation and evaluation perspectives; generic measures; derived measures or indicators; and interactions and external factors. The methodology can be summarised in four stages:

- Preparatory steps: training participants, defining the user community, describing the information use environment and identifying the target audience.
- Planning and design: consulting users and beneficiaries, identifying primary objects, identifying critical internal/external factors, defining indicators, establishing methods for data gathering and for capturing anecdotes.
- Monitoring and measuring: data gathering, measuring inputs/outputs, identifying benefits/costs, and calculating indicators.
- Communicating results: packaging results and presenting findings to the target audience.

Menou identified five different types of indicators:

- performance indicators relating inputs to outputs;
- effectiveness indicators relating outputs to usage;

- cost-effectiveness indicators relating inputs to outcomes;
- cost-benefit indicators relating inputs to outcomes;
- impact indicators relating usage to outcomes and domain characteristics.

As McConnell (2000) notes ‘the PF methodology is potentially vast in its scope, and therefore challenging to apply’. The methodology was tested in seven case studies of which the results were mixed. Although most of the case studies were able to benefit from using information and/or information technology, there was frequently ambiguity over the primary object of assessment and whether the perceived benefits were indications of impact or merely user satisfaction. Very few case studies were able to develop quantitative indicators and these were also suspect. As McConnell states ‘it would not be possible to conclude that a reliable, replicable model for measuring the impact of information on decision-making has been established’.

In addition to these shortcomings, none of the case studies followed the methodology in exact detail which is, in itself, ‘a commentary about its limitations when attempting to apply it in full in real situations (McConnell 2000). It was always anticipated that that the generic PF would need to be adapted to local circumstances but considerable changes began to compromise the value of the methodology for comparative analysis and as a result its usefulness was questioned. Although a few of the changes were made for reasons, which had nothing to do with the framework, most tended to fall into two categories: conceptual difficulties and operational demands. These two serious shortcomings when searching for a practical model for application by information managers.

Despite these shortcomings, the PF has been a valuable contribution to this field. As Shadrach writes, ‘Michel Menou’s work in 1993 has clearly inspired the design of impact assessment techniques in the recent past’. In addition, Bellamy (2000) in her literature review on the subject, commissioned by CTA, has rightly described the work as ‘pioneering’.

Outcomes assessment

This approach was developed by the Association for College and Research Libraries, USA, in 1994. It is featured in this discussion note because it comes from the information management field and because of its interesting emphasis on the selection of a small number of key outcomes and the possibility of perceptions acting as proxies for analytical data. This framework was designed for academic libraries in the USA, but has wider implications.

A Task Force on Academic Library Outcomes Assessment was asked to develop a philosophical framework for assessing libraries in terms of desired outcomes; to develop a prototype for such assessment; and to recommend processes for implementation with a timeframe for completion. The terms, including outcomes, inputs and standards, are defined:

- **Outcomes** are the ways in which library users are changed as a result of their contact with the library's resources and programmes.
- **Inputs** are the raw materials of the library programme: money, space, equipment and staff.
- **Standards** should directly address the quantity, quality, extent and levels of suitability of programmes, services, and staffing.

Outcomes assessment is an integral part of the institutional effectiveness cycle of planning, implementation, assessment and improvement. There can be no one set of universally desirable outcomes for all academic libraries because outcomes must depend on the institution's nature and mission. Assessment of outcomes need not address every possible aspect of each library service:

Cameron (1978) demonstrated that a survey of administrators' perceptions of organisational effectiveness, compared with verifiable data (e.g. graduation rates) showed that perceptions tended to be accurate. Therefore, properly conducted surveys of perceptions can accurately serve as proxies for analytical data.

Cameron and others recommend selecting a small number of no more than half a dozen key outcomes for the area to be addressed, with relevant criteria of quality.

ICTs life-cycle

The ICTs life-cycle framework was developed by Baark and Heeks (1998) for evaluation of the ICT component within four Chinese technology projects. This conceptual framework is derived from praxis rather than theory, and it serves to identify critical benchmark events (choice of technology, purchase and installation, assimilation and use, adaptation, diffusion and innovation), each of which determines the subsequent course of the process. The projects to which the approach was applied aimed to map Beijing's geology and seismic activity; establish an operational information system for the retrieval and management of meteorological satellite data; address the effective utilisation of ICTs and software; and increase the quantity of high quality software being produced in China. Using this life-cycle approach, some shortcomings are identified within the various technology projects. This approach is not intended to be a contribution of theoretical depth to the process of technology transfer evaluation. What it aims to provide, is a clear and logical framework around which data can be gathered and information presented about ICT transfer. It is also applicable to projects, like the first and second case studies, where the emphasis of project objectives was on the diffusion of information rather than on technologies themselves. This is the main reason that it was considered here in more detail.

Conclusion

The key to successful outreach activities is the use of theory to guide intervention and evaluation. Theories cut the guesswork, increase efficiency and allow one to ask why the intervention is or is not working (Witte, cited in Burroughs et. al. 2000).

This paper has provided an introduction to the attached inventory (*see* Annexes), highlighting some of the salient issues relating to the use of frameworks. From this review, it becomes clear that evaluation frameworks are primarily useful because they remind those undertaking evaluations of the structure of the evaluation process; the different planning and implementation phases involved; and, most importantly, what indicators are most appropriate for measuring which aspects of performance. In this sense, as Saunders says, frameworks are able to encapsulate the knowledge of evaluators in a way in which it can be used by others. Frameworks are also useful in that they discourage woolly thinking: a good framework will define its terms and minimise confusion between, for example, user satisfaction and impact. In addition, use of the same framework in different contexts should make it possible to compare different projects and programmes. Despite the fact that the PF was not successful in this regard, it must remain one of the potential advantages of using the same approach.

Given these findings, it is also possible to conclude that there are several frameworks, but that it is impossible to find a 'one size fits all' solution, applicable to all contexts. Each information manager needs to examine the applicability of particular frameworks from an individual perspective and reach conclusions regarding potential application to his/her institutional context. Saunders (2000) argues that approaches low in fidelity are most appropriate to complex dispersed organisations. Here he is referring to one organisation, the British Council, but this recommendation probably also applies to meeting the diverse needs of a community of practice. To reach a decision about which framework to select, it is desirable to bear in mind the criteria identified by British Council staff for preferred operating characteristics of an evaluation framework:

- designed for users;
- terse and clipped in style;
- bullet pointed;
- checklists;
- supporting explanation or notes;
- non-elaborate;
- adaptable to local circumstances;
- malleable;
- flexible;
- pulling in the same direction;
- working for us;
- involving everyone;
- helping us all to know where we are going.

The inventory

The inventory contains some 41 key articles, books and book chapters, and reports (*see* Annexes). For each record, the universal resource location (URL) is also provided for online access, where available. Each record, in addition to bibliographic details, is complemented by key words that identify the main subject coverage of the document; indicate geographical location; and list the institutions concerned. The records are listed in alphabetical order of authors' names.

Many of the documents in the inventory comprise methodologies related to information services. There has also been considerable effort taken to collect examples dealing with the Internet, telecentres and ICTs in general as they illustrate a strongly linked approach. Both in the areas of information services and ICTs, some effort has been taken to be reasonably comprehensive, particularly as far as conceptual and operational frameworks are concerned. A few of the examples come from the health sector which is considered to have particularly interesting approaches which could be used to inform the approach taken by agricultural information services.

As far as unpublished documents are concerned, many development agencies have relevant but confidential documents which are not open to public scrutiny. It would be very welcome if these agencies, in the interests of cross-fertilisation of ideas, would be willing to share these approaches and results with others, particularly where they represent the results of past evaluations which are no longer of direct operational relevance.

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NB The documents which do not appear in the inventory are listed here in italics.

Case studies

Assessing the impact of information emanating from a newsletter and a training seminar

Bruce Lauckner, CARDI and Ranjit Singh, UWI

Introduction

The authors of this case study were commissioned by the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) to carry out an impact assessment of two information products. NAMDEVCO is a state owned enterprise in Trinidad and Tobago and manages four wholesale markets for fish and fresh agricultural products and seeks export opportunities. NAMDEVCO also provides information products for persons in the agricultural sector.

The two information products assessed in this study were a newsletter and a training seminar. The study was funded by CTA.

Objectives

NAMDEVCO and CTA regarded this work as a pilot study. The terms of reference included:

- Developing a methodology for assessing the impact of agricultural information.
- Applying the methodology developed in assessing the impact of information emanating from the following:
 - the newsletter of NAMDEVCO, specifically Volume 2, No. 1.
 - the hot pepper training seminar hosted by the corporation on May 8th, 1999.
- Developing a methodology that would have general application both to future projects/information dissemination by NAMDEVCO as well as to similar information-related activities of agricultural institutions in ACP countries. It was also important that the methodology developed should be practical, easy for institutions to apply and low cost.

Table 1 shows a list of the activities and tasks proposed for the NAMDEVCO seminar and newsletter evaluations. Work commenced in January 2000.

Table 1: Schedule of activities proposed for the seminar and newsletter evaluations.

| Activity | Tasks involved | Time required (weeks) | Schedule (weeks) |
|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Develop methodology | Evaluate existing methodologies. Develop a generalised model characterizing the information and communication systems of NAS. Review information and communication activities of NAMDEVCO. Develop the generalised methodology for impact assessment of agricultural information. Use the generalized methodology to derive the specific method for the pilot testing of NAMDEVCO's Hot Pepper Seminar and Newsletter. | 3 | 1-3 |
| Develop sampling instruments | Develop instruments for assessing the impact of NAMDEVCO's Hot Pepper Seminar. Develop instruments for assessing the impact of NAMDEVCO's Newsletter. | 1 | 4 |
| Sample selection | Obtain a list of participants for the Hot Pepper Seminar and circulation list for Newsletter Select samples | 1 | 4 |
| Conduct surveys | Pre-tests of questionnaire re: Hot Pepper Seminar participants and Newsletter circulation. Conduct survey of participants of Hot Pepper Seminar. Conduct survey of Newsletter recipients. | 3 | 5-7 |
| Analysis | Data entry and validation re: Hot Pepper Survey. Computer analysis of Hot Pepper survey data. Data entry and validation re: Newsletter Survey. Computer analysis of Newsletter survey data. | 3 | 6-8 |
| Impact analyses | Impact of the Hot Pepper Seminar. Impact of the Newsletter. | 1 | 9 |
| Validation of methodology | | 1 | 10 |
| Final report | | 1 | 11 |

Methodology

We developed our own methodology, which was based on our own experiences and knowledge. The existing methodologies that were reviewed could not be used; however, if more time had been available, it is possible that we may have found a methodology, which followed similar procedures to those that we used.

We were asked to carry out an impact assessment of two quite different products. One of these was a face-to-face training seminar on hot pepper, production, processing and marketing. The objective of this seminar was to increase the volume and quality of hot pepper and its products, and thus improve the income of participants. Specifically the workshop attempted to stimulate participants to make positive changes to their production systems. Clearly the process involved here takes a time period of one to two years.

The other information product was a newsletter. These are usually read within a short time and then discarded. The information in a newsletter tends to be topical and may not be relevant for an extended period of time. Thus, we drew up Table 2, which outlines ideal methodologies for evaluation of the two types of product.

From Table2, it can be seen that we recognised four different response phases:

- Reaction: immediate.
- Learning and information internalisation: 0–2 weeks after receiving information.
- Trial and adoption: 1–12 months after receiving information.
- Impact: 6 months–2 years after receiving information.

In the case of the newsletter, it is only possible to measure response at phases 1 and 2. As mentioned earlier, newsletters are read and discarded; response at phases 3 and 4 is possible, but the respondent may not be able to attribute the response to the product (newsletter). As happened, the NAMDEVCO newsletter, which was reviewed, was not mailed out until late in 1999, so we were able to measure responses during our study which took place in the early months of 2000.

For the seminar, there was a problem. We started work some eight months after the event, so measurement at phases 1 and 2 was not possible. However, the time was ideal to measure response at phase 3. Clearly our 3-month study period would not allow us to get very far into the study of the impact phase.

Table 2: Types of evaluation proposed for the various response phases for training and information activities

| Response Phase / level | Type of evaluation | |
|--|---|---|
| | Face to face Type Activity | Information dissemination (Distance communication) Type activity |
| Reaction | <p>Course evaluation at the end of activity.</p> <p>Individual action plan during and at the end of course.</p> <p><i>(This represents the intended initiative as a result of training and will serve as a benchmark for the evaluation of the activity at subsequent phases).</i></p> | <p>Any of the following or combination to ascertain reaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tear-off questionnaire in the case of the newsletter to be returned via the mail. • Telephone survey (brief). • Face to face interview. |
| Learning and information internalisation | <p>Quiz before and after training activity to determine the gains from the activity with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Knowledge • Skills • Attitude | <p>Use of the questionnaire referred to above to also ascertain benefit with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Knowledge • Attitude |
| Trial and adoption | <p>An evaluation questionnaire conducted after 6 months to ascertain whether there has been trial and adoption with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techniques/technology • Management processes • Systems • Investments <p>(The benchmark for the above evaluation would be the action prepared during the activity)</p> <p>Repeat of the above evaluation after one year.</p> <p>Note: The choice of medium for the proposed survey would be informed by nature of the target population and the particular environment.</p> | N/A |
| Impact | <p>A survey conducted initially one year after the event to determine whether there were changes in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production • Yield/productivity • Acreage or size of operation • Volume of output • Quality • Unit cost • Income • Profitability <p>• Repeat the above at the end of 2 years.</p> | N/A |

Two questionnaires were then developed. The questionnaires first ascertained that the respondent had in fact received the information (i.e., attended seminar or received newsletter). In the case of the newsletter the respondent was asked whether he/she had read the product.

In the surveys, respondents were asked to name the most interesting sessions from the workshop or most interesting articles from the newsletter. The enumerators were instructed not to do any prompting here, so that the sessions or articles named were really those that had impacted on the memory of the respondent. If several topics or articles were mentioned two or three of greatest interest were identified.

For the articles of greatest interest, specific questions were asked as to what was learned and whether the information was or will be used. More detail of this was sought for the seminar than for the newsletter.

In the case of the seminar only, a section on impact asked if the information gained had led to any benefits and also whether any benefits were expected in the future. For the seminar, we also asked which sessions did not adequately cover the topic.

For both surveys a random selection of respondents was selected. NAMDEVCO provided a list of participants at the workshop and also the mailing list of newsletter recipients. To save costs interviews were conducted by telephone as far as possible.

Data were collected by trained enumerators and entered into the computer by experienced data entry staff. SPSS was used to generate summaries of responses; the open-ended questions (e.g. what benefits have you had?) were examined individually.

The number of persons who attended the seminar was 138, of which 77 were surveyed. The newsletter mailing list contained over 800 names; 151 of these were surveyed. Survey was by telephone interview where possible; persons without a telephone contact were interviewed face to face.

Main results

Seminar

All of the persons interviewed remembered attending the seminar; only 10% were unable to recall information on the workshop sessions. The sample respondents found that three of the ten sessions (pest management, disease management and food processing/regulatory requirements) were found to be more interesting than the others. Respondents felt that the sessions on marketing and processing did not adequately cover the topics. Delivery and content of material was thought to be average.

With respect to questions relating to information gained, again the same three sessions indicated above as the most interesting were also identified as having provided the most information. With regard to trial and adoption, about a half of the participants had already used some of the knowledge obtained from the workshop. The others were planning to use the knowledge in the future.

Despite the limitations of a 'one shot' survey to assess impact, NAMDEVCO can take some heart from the fact that about 35% of the respondents reported that knowledge gained from the workshop had already yielded benefits; around 74% anticipated benefits in the future.

Newsletter

This newsletter is circulated by mail to farmers and others on NAMDEVCO's mailing list. The survey results indicated that 70% of the sample read at least some of the newsletter. This can be considered a fairly high readership, given the fact that recipients do not specifically request the newsletter.

There were 17 articles/items in the newsletter and the top six items were identified in the final report. Where an article was identified as interesting, most respondents indicated knowledge gained from the article. However, of those who found an article interesting, the percentage planning to use the information gained from the article was only about one third. At the time of the survey (within a month of the release of the newsletter), trial, adoption and impact were negligible. As stated above, attempts to quantify this for a publication such as a newsletter are unlikely to succeed, as an individual copy of a newsletter may not be clearly recalled after a certain period of time.

Lessons learned

- Evaluation of the impact of a seminar should be a continuous process starting from the time of the workshop and continuing for two to three years.
- In both surveys, contacting respondents by telephone was used as far as possible. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, if the respondents did not have a telephone contact. Nearly all persons attending the workshop had telephone contact numbers. The newsletter analysis of the differences between telephone and face-to-face responses indicated that the former appeared more likely to read and gain knowledge. It was felt that the response to the newsletter survey was much more reliable than if a mail in questionnaire approach had been utilised.
- The approach of asking about sessions or articles in general without any prompting with names of sessions or articles was felt to be successful.
- A newsletter and a seminar are two different activities and require a different approach to impact assessment.

Discussion points

- Was the survey approach correct?
- Were the sample sizes adequate?
- Are the assumptions/suggestions that a seminar evaluation needs to be a long-term process valid?
- Is the assumption that a single copy of a newsletter cannot be evaluated for long-term impact valid?

- Our approach was heavily weighted with questions such as:
- Which topics were interesting?
- With regard to (an interesting topic) have you adopted any of the techniques suggested?
- Have you seen any benefits of this adoption?
- Do you expect to see any benefits in the future?
- Is this approach correct?
- How well must the enumerators be trained and how reliable are they even when trained?
- When is the optimum time for evaluation?

Final remarks

We were fairly satisfied with the approach taken, given the limitations of time and budget. These two constraints were beyond our control. In responding to the discussion points above, the budget constraint is very important; we would emphasise the need for the time constraint to be removed if possible.

Connectivity in Africa: use, benefits and constraints of electronic communication

J. Frances Kanyunyuzi-Asaba, CAB International, Africa Regional Centre

Background

This study on the ‘Use, benefits and constraints of electronic communication in Africa’ was carried out in 1995–97 under a project known as Capacity Building in Electronic Communication in Africa (CABECA) of the former Pan African Development Information System (PADIS) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA). The study was a component of the second phase of the research programme on the *Impact of information on development*, sponsored by IDRC. The objective of the impact programme was to investigate ways in which the impact of information on development could be assessed systematically. Its first phase activities (1992–1993), attempted to identify key issues and formulate a preliminary framework for future investigations on the impact of information, while the second phase activities (1994–1998) were to test the preliminary framework and attempt to tackle the problems associated with impact investigations. Initially the study was called ‘Impact of electronic communication on development in Africa’. However, the research team later changed the title to match the actual scope and expected outcome of the study.

Objectives of the information services evaluated

The CABECA project was initiated in 1993 to help in establishing low-cost (Fido technology based) and self-sustained nodes in order to provide access to electronic mail in some 24 African countries, which included the four impact study countries, Ethiopia, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia. Through the establishment of Fido nodes and in some cases Bulletin Board Services, training of systems operators and users, and the provision of technical backstopping, the project aimed at bringing about sustainable computer-based networking in Africa at affordable prices, accessible to a wide variety of users from both the private and public sectors. Assessing the impact of these services was therefore necessary to complement this effort.

Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the use, benefits and constraints of electronic communication, and to test the appropriateness of the methods for

assessment of the possible impact of electronic communication on development in Africa.

Planning and financing of the evaluation

Selection of countries

It was not possible to include all 24 countries of the CABECA project in the impact study. Selection of countries was made on the basis of:

- the duration of CABECA's operation in the country (where the longer the duration, the more the users and the higher the chances that the benefits and constraints of electronic communication would be clearly perceived);
- the best possible mix of key characteristics, namely, language spoken, culture, stage of network technology, types of telecommunications networks and access to them and types of facilities available to end-users. Other minor characteristics were related to the distribution of users among the sectors and the geographic distribution of users' constituencies.

Due to a number of constraints including the human and material resources available, the geographic coverage of the study was limited to four countries only: Ethiopia, Uganda, Zambia and Senegal. Each country represented a geographical region in addition to specific features with regard to the above key characteristics. The study was planned to take two years (1995-1996), however it took longer. The total budget was CD\$128,500, covering personnel, travel, three workshops for the study team, communication costs and overheads.

The study had two phases. The first phase was devoted to the design of the instruments and sampling, a baseline survey and first round of interviews. The second phase dealt with a second round of interviews and preparation of the final reports. The main steps in the initial work plan and the subsequent changes are shown in Table 1.

The project team

The project team consisted of:

- Dr. Nancy Hafkin, Officer in charge, PADIS - Project leader;
- Dr. Michel J. Menou, Consultant – Research coordinator;
- Five national investigators (1 Ethiopia, 1 Senegal, 2 Uganda, 1 Zambia) – all were practicing information professionals and one was a graduate student of Information Science.

The desired profile for the national investigators was outlined as: residents of the respective project countries, who were familiar with the situation regarding the information use environments, the information and communication cycle and electronic networks. They also needed to be experienced in user and social surveys in general, and

had to be available for the surveys, the seminars, the preparation of the reports and other project activities. The selected team members met most of these requirements.

The national investigators were supposed to get assistance from the administrators of the CABECA nodes in the form of background data from the traffic records, users registration, feedback, remarks in users meetings, etc. Communication among the team members was by electronic mail and the use of a restricted listserve, established by IDRC for the needs of the projects on the *Impact of information programme*.

Table 1: Project work plan

| Phase 1 | Phase 2 (Planned) | Phase 2 (Actual) |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan-Feb 1995: Appointment of the national investigators • March 1995: Initial meeting and preparation of the work plan • March 18 – May 27 1995: Identification of users in cooperation with the systems operators and determination of structured samples for the surveys and interviews • March 27 – May 22 1995: Finalization of survey instruments • May 31 1995 – Jan. 30, 1996: Baseline survey • June 10 1995 – Jan. 30, 1996: First series of users' interviews • Feb. 1996: Preparation of the draft reports for phase 1 • Feb. 28, 1996: Completion of the mid-project workshop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 10, 1996 – Sept.15, 1996: Second series of users' interviews and interviews of stakeholders • Sept. 30, 1996 – Dec. 30, 1996: Preparation of the draft final reports • Dec. 20, 1996: Final workshop to review the findings of the project • Jan. 1997: Completion of the final reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March – Late 1996: Restoring the lists of subscribers to be surveyed and/or interviewed • Early 1997: Complementing the baseline survey with a simplified questionnaire • Mid 1997 – Early 1998: E-mail survey of all subscribers about the use of Internet • Late 1997: Second series of interviews with the same respondents as in the 1st phase. • Jan–Feb 1998: Preparation of the draft final reports • Mid-March 1998: Final workshop to review the findings of the project • April 1998: Revision of final reports • May 1998: Formal completion of project. |

Methodology

Sampling

Categorising users was based on two factors:

- the intensity of use of e-mail; and
- type of organisation.

The intensity of use of e-mail

As the patterns of traffic differed from country to country, a single yardstick could not be used to determine average traffic. A formula based upon a point of reference for each country, called H, determined as the average number of messages per subscriber per working day was used. Four categories were identified:

- low-use ($0 - H/2-1$);
- medium-use ($H/2 - H-1$);
- high-use ($H - 2H$);
- very high-use (above $2H$).

Low-use ranged from 1–9 messages in Uganda to 1–30 in Ethiopia, while very high-use ranged from 40 to more than 121 messages in the same countries. In all four countries, traffic data of the two months of January and February 1995, considered representative of the usual traffic, were used for the calculations. In all countries, the majority of users were in the very low-use category (up to 69.4% in both Ethiopia and Senegal), while Senegal led in the very high user category with 13.9%.

Type of organisation

Five types of organisations were identified: academic and research, government, non-governmental, international (e.g. UN agencies, embassies and bilateral-aid agencies), and private organisations (including individual subscribers). There was some overlap among categories such as research and government organisations.

Questionnaire survey

The baseline questionnaire was sent by e-mail to all subscribers who were active during the reference period. The intention was to gain an insight into the demographic and professional characteristics of the population as well as into its patterns of electronic communication before undertaking interviews. Because of the communication difficulties faced by the national investigators, pre-testing of the questionnaire was superficial in all countries.

Interviews

A tentative target of 50 persons to be interviewed in each country was defined. It was assumed that this was the maximum number of interviews that the national investigators could conduct. In order to structure the samples for the interviews, the percentage distribution during the reference period of subscribers in the five types of organisations and across the four levels of use, was calculated and applied to the target figure to give the number for each subset (*see* Table 2).

Table 2: Structure of the target samples

| Country | Level of use | | | | | Organisation |
|----------|--------------|--------|------|-----------|-------|----------------------------------|
| | Low | Medium | High | Very high | Total | |
| Ethiopia | 11 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 16 | Private |
| Uganda | 9 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 20 | |
| Zambia | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | Individual |
| Senegal | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 8 | |
| Ethiopia | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 8 | |
| Uganda | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 12 | Academic |
| Zambia | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 10 | |
| Senegal | 11 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 16 | Research |
| Ethiopia | 11 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 15 | |
| Uganda | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 5 | NGOs |
| Zambia | 6 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 19 | |
| Senegal | 11 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 16 | |
| Ethiopia | 5 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 7 | |
| Uganda | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | Inter-governmental organisations |
| Senegal | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | |
| Ethiopia | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | |
| Uganda | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 10 | Government |
| Zambia | 7 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 13 | |
| Senegal | 5 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 7 | |

A protocol inspired by a sense-making theory and method of Brenda Dervin (Dervin, 1983) was chosen for the interviews, which sought to identify the critical activities and communication problems associated with them. Further analysis of each problem was done in respect of its nature, cause, effects and possible solutions before and after using electronic communication. Accordingly, impacts related to connectivity, the information obtained, how it was used (actions) and the results of those actions were noted.

Implementation of the project

The first phase proceeded in accordance with the schedule. However, the target numbers for the responses to the baseline survey and for the number of interviews were not met. At the mid-project workshop, it was decided to try and complete the data collection exercises of phase 1 between March and June 1996, before proceeding with phase 2 activities.

A major disruption in the work plan occurred however, when full Internet access became available in all countries through competing commercial service providers. Tracking of the user population became extremely difficult and it was no longer possible

to limit the investigation to its original scope and an Internet extension (questionnaire) was added to the survey instruments. Later, an additional questionnaire on the use, benefits and constraints of electronic communication was distributed using e-mail, post and hand delivery. The planned investigation into non-users and managers of the organisations was cancelled. Subsequently, there was a delay in implementing phase two activities. The response rates were highest in Senegal (92.45% in the survey and 100% for both the Internet questionnaire and interviews) and lowest in Uganda (15.85% for the Internet questionnaire and in Zambia (19.53%) for the survey (Table 3).

Table 3: Response to the questionnaire and interviews

| | COUNTRIES: | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------|
| | ETHIOPIA | UGANDA | ZAMBIA | SENEGAL |
| Reference Population 106 | 206 | 164 | 90/256(2 nd | Phase) |
| 1st Phase Survey 92.45% | 49.03% | 29.27% | 25.56% | |
| 2nd Phase Survey | n.a | 34.67% | 19.53% | 92.45% |
| 2nd Phase Internet | 28.15% | 15.85% | 19.53% | 100% |
| 1st Phase Interviews 100% | 66% | 76% | 40% | |
| 2nd Phase Interviews 100% | | 52% | 100% | |

Main results

User characteristics

- Male 62–88%
- Age 30–45 (in the majority)
- Expatriates 26–56%
- University Education 80–100%
- Private sector 6–8%
- Experienced computer users 20–78%
- Less than 3 years using e-mail 65–100%

Note: % indicates the range from the lowest to the highest in the four countries

Patterns of use of e-mail

- 78–88% of the respondents had their communication expenses paid for by the organisation
- 31–70% of the respondents had adequate information facilities in the organisation
- 67–97% had access to e-mail from their offices
- 55–95% had personal access
- 4–36% had high use (above average/user/working day)
- 18–43% used e-mail once a day
- 66% sent messages out of Africa.

Note: % indicates range of use from the lowest to the highest in the four countries

The main purposes for which e-mail was being used included interpersonal communications, receiving advice and exchanging documents.

Benefits and constraints of electronic communication

The majority of respondents (64–96%) indicated that communication was essential for conducting their businesses. The key benefits mentioned were: saving costs and time, security and ease of communication and access to resources including the ability to share large amounts of information and shareware. Others were: access to current information, more collaborative work, less dependency on other types of communication, improved professional productivity, improved quality of work and reduced bureaucracy.

Major constraints/difficulties brought about by using electronic communication

Increase in the cost of maintaining the facilities or services, inadequate or often unreliable infrastructure (telephone lines, modems, computers), lack of training in the use of computers and information overload. Others were lack of confidentiality, delayed/undelivered messages, more time spent on communication and handling files, rise in training and backstopping needs, among others.

Impact indicators

It was too early to reach any credible conclusions on indicators. However, the study identified both positive and negative impacts in relation to connectivity, the information obtained and its use in solving problems (action) and to some extent, the subsequent changes. These impacts appear as benefits and constraints given above. From these impacts, it is possible to obtain indicators such as: cost saving for an equivalent size of transactions, increase in volume of transactions, increase in number of external correspondents, diversification of the correspondents and others. However, given the nature of the findings we did not proceed to this stage.

Lessons learned and implications for the future

Lessons

In light of the rapidly changing electronic communication environment, resource limitations and to some extent, the design of the study, there were a number of drawbacks during the implementation process:

- volatility of users;
- fast technological and market changes;
- poor level of response to e-mail surveys;
- bureaucratic controls / attitudes regarding electronic communication facilities;
- inadequate representation of the CABECA countries in the study;
- insufficient resources for testing the methodology, training of researchers and ensuring adequate backstopping throughout the project period;
- inappropriate timing – the study duration was too short and done too early in the life of the CABECA project, thus the outcome of use of electronic communication could not be captured;
- lack of involvement of Internet service providers and other stakeholders in the project design, led to inadequate cooperation from them during implementation;
- insufficient time and resources did not allow for dissemination of research findings to stakeholders.

Implications for future impact studies

- Conduct appropriate analysis of the background situation prior to embarking on study in order to ensure that the research approach incorporates all the necessary elements.
- Establish ties with all relevant stakeholders so as to elicit their cooperation during implementation of study.
- Commit adequate resources e.g. funds for training investigators and users, backstopping and sufficient time before assessing impact in order to develop 'communities of users'.
- Conduct longitudinal studies to investigate conceptual and behavioural changes.
- Train investigators in order to harmonise their perspectives, stream line procedures and ensure full control of the survey instruments.

- Make impact assessment an integral part of the strategic management of organisations and train beneficiaries of information services in the use of simple tools for M & E.
- Focus on a problem or need and work backwards to the information resources and activities that are related to the problem or need, rather than focusing on the information service.

Discussion points on the evaluation methodology/ framework

- Should impact assessment be tried at the regional level?
- What is the best way to study impact? Single sector /single user group?
- How do we ensure cross-comparisons where universes have very little in common?
- How do we ensure a 'closed environment' in a fast changing world?
- How do we identify impacts from mere effects of information?

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Impact assessment of CTA's Dissemination of Agricultural Reference Books (DORA) programme in Nigeria

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Background

The DORA programme was set up to assist ACP countries to have better access to agricultural information by making available relevant information and documentation to serve as a resource base for agricultural and rural development. The main objective was to make sources of information available to rural development practitioners; thereby enabling them to find their own solutions to the technical, socio-economic and human problems, which they face on a daily basis. DORA operates through three main partners – CTA, agencies acting for CTA in connection with DORA, and the ACP taking part in the programme as beneficiaries. Since 1996 about 17 libraries in Nigeria have been beneficiaries of book donations under DORA.

Objective of this study

The main objective of this evaluation of the DORA programme, was to determine the impact of DORA on the performance of beneficiaries (teachers, students in participating institutions) in Nigeria so as to facilitate necessary improvements in the efficiency and usefulness of the programme. The specific objective was to determine the benefits resulting from DORA and the recipient institutions.

Purpose

Twenty-one institutions in Nigeria have been participating in the DORA programme. They receive books mainly in agriculture, through the Intermediate Technology Publication (ITP) based in the United Kingdom.

Training institutions in most ACP countries – Nigeria is no exception, suffer from a lack of access to technical documents (books, journals and periodicals), as well as low-level utilisation of modern communication techniques (i.e. use of computers – e-mail and Internet access). Further, poor networking in terms of communication between institutions and a lack of financial resources due mainly to an acute shortage of foreign exchange have affected the ability of libraries and information centres in institutions of higher learning (universities, colleges of agriculture, polytechnic institutes) to update their literature.

In light of the increasing interest in the provision of information services in developing countries, it is appropriate to ascertain from the standpoint of beneficiaries whether the information provided is relevant and/or appropriate. It is also important to investigate the extent to which the information services offered contribute in the actual sense to the empowerment of people and higher productivity. Issues such as accountability and sustainability need to be examined. Providing convincing answers will enable international agencies concerned with information dissemination to developing countries to improve programme funding.

Methodology

As has been mentioned, this evaluation was designed to determine the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency and the level of satisfaction derived from the use of CTA-DORA publications donated to selected agricultural institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Consequently, information with respect to the views of stakeholders was gathered using questionnaires, interviews, site visits, focus group discussions and structured observations. The participating institutions were classified into five zones in line with the geo-political and agro-ecological patterns and the information gathered and analysed accordingly.

Interviews

Structured interviews were conducted at two levels. At the first level, ITP personnel managing DORA were interviewed to give their opinion about the programme, to determine the impediments (if any) in the implementation of the programme. The second level of interviews was administered to librarians in charge of the institutions where DORA books and other information materials were kept. Here, an effort was made to get an overview of the linkages and networks operating within and outside the respective institutions, so as to suggest ways to improve service delivery and reduce costs. Other aspects of the interview involved obtaining information on their ability to:

- assess the needs of users;
- communicate with users;
- create demand for services;
- teach users;
- provide specialised services.

Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were carried out with students and lecturers, in order to obtain information, which structured interviews or questionnaires could not give. Further, the sessions were used to gain an insight into dynamic relationships of attitudes, opinions, motivations, concerns and problems related to current and projected usage of DORA publications and other information materials including the electronics media. Two

group sessions were held at each institution; one focused on teachers of agricultural subjects, and the other was conducted for students. The groups varied in number from 5–10 persons.

Survey method using questionnaires

The survey research method was employed to measure the needs of users and potential users of information system and to measure the level of success of these systems in response to these needs. This involved collecting data systematically to measure identified variables across a sample of cases in order to determine the existence of patterns. Random sampling was used to collect information for the study. The structured questionnaires used to collect data for the study were pre-tested on both students and staff. A total of 1,000 questionnaires were administered nationwide in all five zones. Approximately 60% of these questionnaires were administered on students and 40% on the lecturers.

Together with the people managing DORA centres in all the participating institutions, the key indicators used in this study were defined. The indicators included:

- personal information;
- study situation;
- frequency of information use;
- relevance;
- satisfaction;
- needs assessment;
- appropriateness;
- effectiveness;
- access;
- adoption;
- use of agricultural technologies;
- priority setting;
- programme formulation;
- efficiency;
- networking;
- reduction of duplication.

The data collected from the institutions were very detailed. The statistical analysis of survey data involved basic descriptive univariate statistics (frequency count, percentages and means) that were successfully used to classify the respondent in line with major parameter being examined. Bivariate analysis (cross-tabulation and chi-square), was used to assess the extent of the relationship between the dependent variables and a number of other independent variable with the view to determine the degree of association for all these major important parameters. This approach helped to determine the impact of CTA-DORA books among students and staff in the various institutions.

Main results

Interviews and focus group discussions – findings

- All the participants are familiar with the CTA-DORA books in the library.
- The programme is good and affords users the opportunity of sharing most recent information with people outside the country.
- New areas of research are promoted in the books and new laboratory techniques are learned.
- The books are of good quality and current. The programme should therefore be continued. However, more disciplines should be covered. For example, there were not many books on animal breeding and agricultural extension.
- Creating more awareness of the books and computerisation of the library operations to facilitate easy book search will improve access to CTA-DORA books in the library.
- Some participants felt that the libraries performed below expectation for the following reasons: lack of infrastructure facilities; poorly trained library attendants; lack of recent books and journal acquisition except those from CTA-DORA.
- CTA-DORA books have been the only new books acquired within the last two years. There has been no subscription for journals and text books in the last two years. The programme should therefore be extended to include journals and other informative periodicals. More than one copy of each book should be given to the libraries so as to give an opportunity to users to borrow books – especially since DORA books are primarily kept in the reference section.
- There is a need for more specialised and relevant books printed by other publishers not listed by ITP.
- The books are regarded as excellent sources of information, appropriate and well written for general readership.
- New areas of research are promoted in the books and also new laboratory techniques are learned.

- Users believe that the books are excellent, very useful and up-to-date. However, there should be a system for notifying staff and students when new books arrive.
- The CTA publication ‘*Spore*’ is very popular. For example, it has village-type practical pest control strategies, which are appropriate for rural areas. It sometimes contains periodic articles on pest management, environmental protection, which are useful for crop protection classes.
- The DORA programme needs to be better promoted within the library system, possibly through placing the books on separate shelves in separate rooms.
- In order to meet the demand for more books, book donations to individuals should be discouraged.
- Global cooperation and inter-dependence in all areas of human endeavour is fast becoming a normal phenomenon where communities, organisations come to the aid of one another for the development of humanity. From this standpoint, the DORA project, which is aimed at helping ACP countries to gain better and timely access to agricultural information through the provision of relevant agricultural literature, is a welcome development.
- The material sent is relevant to the curriculum, and this can be attributed to the fact the books requested are based on lists prepared by the various departments.

Table 1: Finding CTA-DORA books in the library

| | Always | Sometimes | Never |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| | % | % | % |
| Through Friend or Colleague | | | |
| Students | 26 | 41 | 6 |
| Lecturers | 23 | 51 | 2 |
| Using subject index | | | |
| Students | 19 | 50 | 11 |
| Lecturers | 9 | 66 | 1 |
| Using Catalogue | | | |
| Students | 16 | 62 | 6 |
| Lecturers | 15 | 63 | 3 |
| By Browsing | | | |
| Student | 18 | 58 | 5 |
| Lecturers | 8 | 65 | 6 |

Table 2: What hinders your use of the books?

| | Not available (%) | Cannot locate book (%) | Borrowing not allowed (%) | Always on loan (%) |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Students | 40 | 28 | 24 | 14 |
| Lecturers | 42 | 30 | 10 | - |

Survey questionnaires

Seventy eight per cent (78%) of the students and 68% for the lecturers responded to the questionnaires. In terms of the response rate from the various regions, 65% (334) responded in the Southwest, this was followed by 30% (141) from the Northeast, while 20% responded in Middle-Belt and the Northwest. The lowest level of response was from the Southeast 11%(54), and this was attributed to fact that there were fewer DORA participating institutions there.

Lessons learned

Deplorable conditions of libraries

A major finding of this study was the deplorable state of libraries in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The federal government and those managing the institutions should therefore make an effort to upgrade the library facilities, for instance:

- assistance should be extended to computerise the libraries;
- better reading spaces with the proper supply of electricity need to be provided;
- participating institutions should conduct orientation programmes in an effort to educate students about the use of the library;
- clear charts indicating the location of books in the library should be provided. There should also be proper markings of shelves to ease book search;
- students should be trained in using the catalogues;
- books should be continuously replaced on the shelves after use, so that they can be easily found;
- new books need to be specially displayed.

Concentration of efforts by CTA

In order to achieve the desired impact, CTA should concentrate all programmes dealing with agricultural information dissemination into one major programme. Interviewees were unanimous in their assessment of CTA as a caring organisation. However, the

respondents indicated that CTA needs to provide more new books to institutions rather than to individuals. There should also be an increase in the number of popular books provided and recommended textbooks and books authored by local experts should be included in donations.

Publicising agricultural information

In general, radio is considered to be the most effective means of disseminating information and creating public awareness in Nigeria. Other forms of dissemination include newspapers, extension information leaflets, posters and handbills. These are supplemented by indigenous information systems (town criers) and word of mouth. CTA should initiate programmes in these areas, which focus on small farm-holders providing information which can improve productivity, dispel superstition and empower the people. Dissemination of information using local languages would also be highly beneficial.

M&E

So as to ensure the usefulness of DORA books, M&E should be built into the management of the programme. This should help to ensure that the donated books are being utilised efficiently as well as meeting the needs of the students and staff of the participating institutions. Further, it will allow CTA to have a better grasp of the problems and difficulties facing the participating institutions. This may however be difficult to do, given the fact that many institutions do not bother to return evaluation forms and even those that are returned, are badly completed with no clear understanding of what is expected of them. One way of addressing this problem, would be for the agency administering the questionnaires to follow up and assist the institutions in understanding what is required of them and why it is important.

Hypothetical case study

Byron Mook, ISNAR

Dr. Kumar could hardly believe his eyes. He had just received an e-mail from the president of the university! He did not often get such messages, and this time he did not particularly enjoy what he was reading. The president wanted him to conduct a full-scale evaluation of the university Web site! Not only that, but she was requesting him to submit a plan for this evaluation by next Monday morning. Today was Wednesday.

Dr. Kumar was the Chief Information Officer at Mikuni State Agricultural University (MSAU). His "Department of Information Services" included the university computer centre, the library, and the publications office. Colleagues recognised him as a successful manager and the DIS was involved in an ever-expanding agenda of activities – the campus-wide local area network, provision of scientific and technical information to staff and students, new uses of IT for on-campus teaching, dissemination of information about the university to audiences outside, extension, distance learning. The list seemed to get longer each week.

Two years ago, Dr. Kumar had asked staff in the computer centre to create an MSAU Web site. He had wanted the university to be on the WWW, though at the time MSAU did not even have its own Internet connection. His solution had been to ask the national Ministry of Education to provide hosting services. The DIS had developed materials in Mikuni, sent them to Ministry headquarters on CD-ROM, and the computer centre there had provided a Web site manager (at cost). This "outsourcing" arrangement seemed to have worked well. In the meantime, MSAU had undertaken extended negotiations with alternative ISPs, and finally, just three months ago in fact, the university had gotten its own connection! A bit slow, sometimes down, but Dr. Kumar was enthusiastic! His plan now was to test this connection for just a bit longer before actually moving the Web site to one of his own servers.

What was on the Web site? Dr. Kumar and his colleagues had had long discussions on this subject, but since no one in MSAU had had much Internet experience, the DIS had not received much input. Dr. Kumar had therefore looked at numerous models from other countries, had drawn up lists of pluses and minuses, and had finally made plans for six main types of content. He was proud that MSAU had been able to make a significant start on each of them:

- a description of the university;
- messages from the Minister of Education and the MSAU President;
- short biographies of members of the Board of Trustees;
- an organogram, with hyperlinks to those departments or institutes that had already developed their own Web sites (also hosted by the Ministry);

- a staff directory;
- photo for each staff member (if available);
- postal address;
- telephone number;
- e-mail address;
- the weekly MSAU newsletter, with hyperlinks to past issues;
- announcements;
- recent happenings;
- an upcoming events calendar;
- the academic programme, with a list of courses offered;
- the research programme, with a list of projects receiving university support (including the name of the project leader and a short statement of objectives);
- the publications programme;
- a catalogue;
- a printable order form;
- electronic versions of selected research reports and extension brochures.

Now Dr.Kumar wondered what he should do about the request that he had just received from the president. He admitted that he had not thought much about evaluation principles or methodologies, and he certainly had not paid much attention to them when he was thinking about creating the Web site. He wondered where he should look for models. He guessed that "dot.coms" probably had some kind of evaluation criteria, maybe number of hits, or merchandise sold, but he doubted that such examples were very relevant to MSAU. The best that he could think of at the moment was to call some of his colleagues to a brainstorming meeting. He sat down at his screen and started to type...

Dear Colleagues:

I have just received an e-mail from our president. She would like to organise an evaluation of the MSAU Web site. She notes that we have been busy with this project for two years, and she thinks that now we should take stock of where we are, where we have been, and where we would like to go. She has given me three specific reasons why she would like to have this evaluation carried out as soon as possible.

The Ministry has asked MSAU to develop a 5-year information plan, and she wants to know how our Web site is likely to relate to our other information activities.

MSAU is running a budget deficit this year, and she is looking for activities on which she can make savings.

She is not pleased that MSAU still has its Web site hosted by the Ministry, particularly when other universities are running their own.

I would like to have a meeting tomorrow morning (Thursday) to get your ideas as to how we should proceed. I suggest that we might use the following list of five questions to structure our discussion, though I am not at all sure if these questions are the right ones. If you have others, or if you think that we should start from a completely different perspective, please feel free to make your points tomorrow.

- What will be our objectives for this evaluation?
- What kinds of things should we measure in order to meet our objectives?
- What will be the best "indicators" of whatever we decide for the objectives
- Where are the most relevant data likely to be?
- If we have to ask questions of individuals, whom should we ask?

I'm sure that this list could go on... But, one last thing, I suppose that we should "hope for the best and plan for the worst". What are the 2-3 things that could go wrong? If we can think of those things now, maybe we can take steps to make sure that they don't happen.

We will obviously have enough to talk about. I would like to keep our meeting to one hour if at all possible. Please come prepared.

Best regards,

Kumar

The analysis

Following the presentation of the case study, small groups were formed and asked to analyse Dr Kumar's position and the approach he should take in evaluating the Web site. The participants were then brought together to discuss the case as a whole.

Dr Mook presented seven issues along with key questions, which were identified as 'smart' practices to be used as guidelines in evaluating the MSAU Web site. During the course of this presentation there was much debate with respect to the need for a value statement about the site; the difficulty in measuring objectives and the focus of the evaluation, whether it is from a management or impact perspective.

• Issue 1: Identify the actors who will be involved in the evaluation process

What is the value-base of the evaluation?

- Where is the push for the evaluation coming from?
- Who is paying for it?
- Who is managing it?
- Who is implementing it?

- Who are supposed to be the beneficiaries?
- **Issue 2: Decide on the objective(s) of the evaluation**
 - What are you evaluating? The impact on the intended users or management, etc.?
 - Why are you doing it? Is it to improve performance (learning); increase accountability (control)? To determine impact to measure benefits (outcomes)?
- **Issue 3: Decide on the indicators**
 - Where are you measuring? If the evaluation is to focus on impacts, what are the trade-offs between the indicators at the levels identified below:
 - level 1: Attitudes, knowledge, skills (short-term);
 - level 2: Behaviour (medium-term);
 - level 3: Organisational and/or socio-economic change (long-term).

A note of **caution** – recognise that there are intervening variables, there is therefore the need to determine what can be achieved under what circumstances.

- **Issue 4: Spend time on a “logic” model**, refer to ‘Evaluating information: a letter to a project manager’. The steps identified include:
 - Inputs
 - Activities
 - Outputs
 - Outcomes
 - Add a new column “Actors”— actors can help if they are included. For the process to really work, they should be included at all stages.

There is the need to ‘suss out’ the complexities. Get them out to management. A process of trying to make the connections between inputs/outputs needs to be put in place. However, a mechanistic process should be avoided. The process needs to be thought through.

- **Issue 5: SWOT analysis**
 - Strengths — e.g. a good plan.
 - Weaknesses – e.g. political opponents, unclear objectives, poor data.
 - Opportunities – e.g. improve performance, build coalitions.
 - Threats – e.g. management failure, lack of use.

Evaluation should be thought of as an integral part of the project. SWOT is part of the plan. More creativity is needed and more backward planning is needed. There is a need to focus on what is to be achieved, then work backwards to figure out what needs to be put in place.

A **risk** is that the evaluation is larger than life instead of a being treated as a piece of the project. It should be treated as an activity, an important part, built in to the project.

- **Issue 6: Find a champion(s) to do the evaluation**

Find a true believer; someone who:

- wants to learn about evaluation;
- is willing to spend time on it;
- will fight and win political battles; and
- has the ability to raise money for it.

- **Issue 7: Be realistic (ABC)**

There is a need to:

- build **A**lliances;
- make **B**argains;
- **C**ompromises are sometimes needed.

Case discussion points

The following questions/statements were posed to start off the discussion:

- Are we on the right track?
- Where do I start?
- Were the five questions (in Kumar's letter) the right questions?
- Look at the context, the value-base, who is pushing, who is paying?
- Is there a need to evaluate?
- Is it possible to have an effective evaluation?
- Should we go back and say that we want to manipulate it so that it serves our purposes and gives us opportunities to learn?

- Be positive, be proactive. Treat it as an opportunity. Stand back and ask what we can get out of it. Do a SWOT Analysis – focus on opportunities.

The participants were challenged by the case approach and the questions posed. In response, a number of suggestions were made and questions asked to clarify particular points of debate:

- It was suggested that the Letter to the project manager model does not work in the order that it was presented. Why are we evaluating? The type of evaluation (value-base) should be before the ‘nuts and bolts’. SWOT and champion should be much earlier – they should be before the nuts & bolts. We need to get the order of our questioning right.
- A concern raised was that the evaluation would be focused on the management of the site and not its impact. What kinds of material should be brought in to ensure that it doesn’t?
- *Theory versus practice.* What we practice is not necessarily what is done in theory. Dr. Kumar should have created a value statement prior to developing the site. Pointing out objectives is difficult if one doesn’t have a value statement. We do not know whether or not he actually assessed anyone’s needs. Dr. Kumar needs to create a value statement about his site that includes needs and users – it will have to be created as an after thought.
- The issue of measuring objectives was raised. It is difficult to do because objectives are changing because of learning.
- Key operating details:
 - have you been efficient or objective?
 - need indicators to show that you run a tight ship;
 - cost-effectiveness is a key.

Working group discussions

Working group discussions

The Working group themes were derived from the panel discussion, the plenary presentations and the 'buzz' groups. The 'buzz' groups had been organised in order to give the participants an opportunity to discuss and identify critical areas of concern that they would like to see addressed during the workshop. The Working Group themes were:

- perception of evaluation and impact concepts;
- design, content and subject of an evaluation;
- stakeholder involvement in the design of an evaluation;
- evaluation framework and method;
- use of evaluation results.

A separate working group addressed each theme. The working groups were asked to indicate the most important:

- conceptual issues and;
- practical issues.

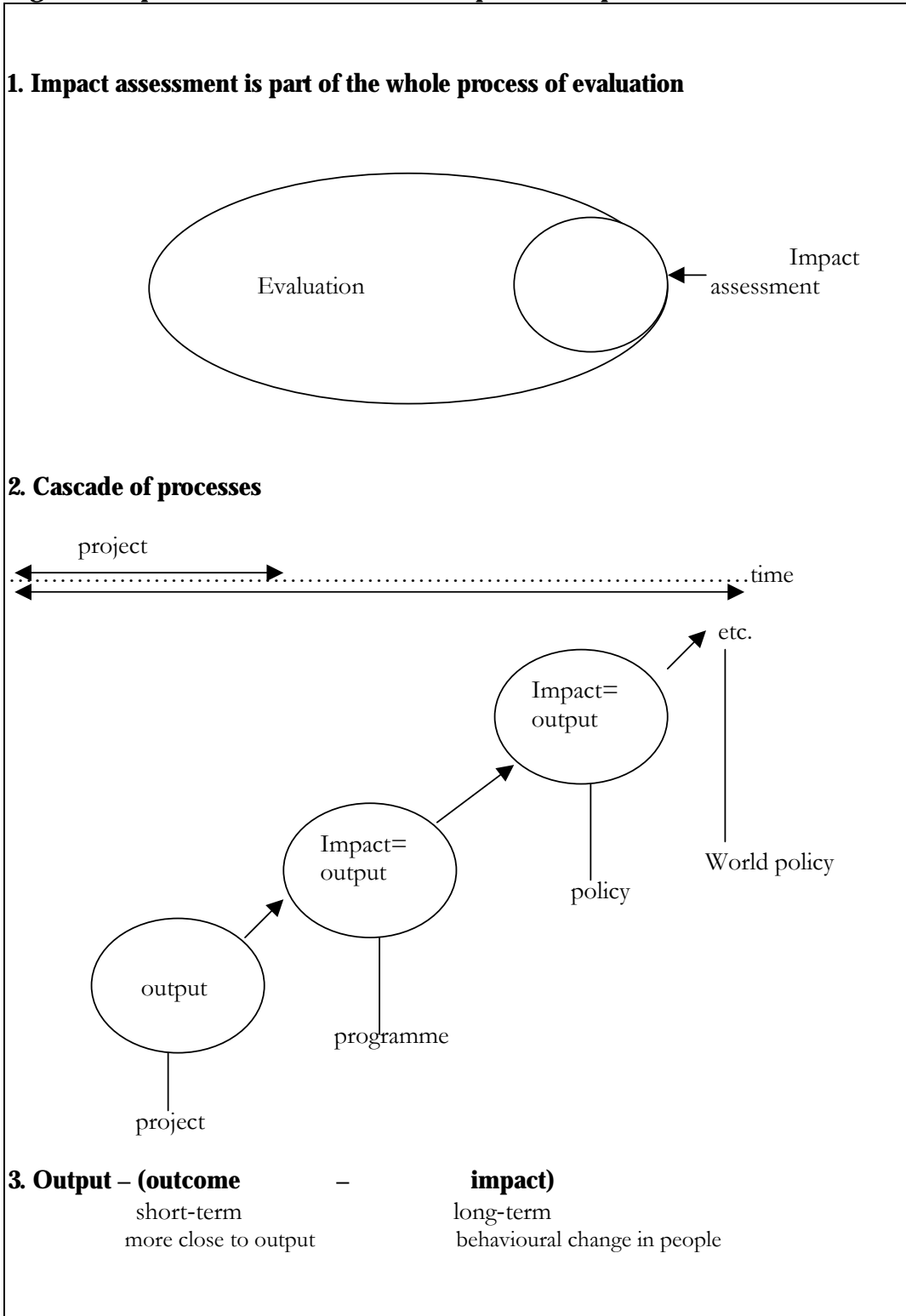
The reports of the working groups were presented in the plenary setting, which facilitated further discussions.

Theme 1: Perception of evaluation and impact concepts

Theoretical aspects of impact assessment

Impact assessment is part of the whole process of evaluation, it is considered to be a subset of the evaluation process. In evaluating the impact of any given project/programme, it is necessary to be aware of the fact that impact is generated through a hierarchy or sequence (cascade) of processes or stages over time (short- and long-term) at different levels of aggregation, from project, programme to sectoral (policy) levels, *see* Diagram 1. At the project level, often in the short-term, we may only be able to measure output. However, over time, project output may lead to intermediate impact at a programme level, and to a final impact at the sectoral/policy or people level.

Figure 1: Impact assessment, evaluation, input and output



Towards a practical application

- In practical terms, impact assessment can mean different things to different people. It should therefore be defined within a given context and in relation to a given product or service in question. Having said that, evaluating impact is only feasible after some time lapse beyond the life of a project or after achievement of some project output. There is no single method for evaluating impact. In fact there are quite a variety of quantitative and /or qualitative methods which can be applied, depending on the context, product or service in question.
- There was much debate about the fact that different donors used different means to evaluate projects, however, it was determined that the differences among donors were derived more from differences in reporting rather than from differences in the principles applied in their evaluations.
- Often projects are set up without any thought for the need to evaluate its progress/ impact. To ensure sustainability of the impact of a project, evaluation should be planned as integral part of the project design, and should not be assumed or regarded as a consequence of the project.

Theme 2: Design, content and subject of the evaluation

Conceptual issues

Evaluation and learning are two different types of action. *Evaluation* refers to the requirements of administrative control and can often block learning processes rather than stimulating them. The design and methods used to foster learning differ from those for evaluation. Learning tends to build on the facilitation of self-evaluation, creating ownership. Learning should therefore take precedence over evaluation.

There are crucial conditions determining the worth of a client satisfaction study: It should be:

- part of a learning cycle;
- linked to a reflection on context and relevance for the wider development objective;
- include a check on the assumptions necessary for further impact. Otherwise it is likely to be a mere fulfilment of formal requirements.

The mechanisms and procedures for allocating funds of donors are too rigid, bureaucratic and control-oriented, an effort should be made to advocate making them more flexible and friendly to taking advantage of opportunities and supporting a long-term process of development.

Practical issues

Information services are broad in scope and can have unpredictable usages. In order to circumvent this:

- the full range of uses and implications of information services, including unexpected benefits should be explored.
- rely on the expression of demand for your services

There is a tension/contradiction between short-term services and long-term effects — do not pretend that you can resolve the contradiction, instead move to a learning paradigm.

Theme 3: Stakeholder involvement in the design of the evaluation

Three factors were singled out as having an influence on the design of evaluations:

- People
- Content
- Environment

People

From the onset of the project, one should have a good understanding and definition of all the terms related to the concept of stakeholders or partners or owners (i.e. actors, strategic partners, clients, beneficiaries). The various roles, expectations, power relationships, ownership and goals should also be clarified. Questions that are pertinent to this process include:

- Who are the stakeholders? Beneficiaries? Actors?
- How are the stakeholders identified?
- What is their role?
- When do you think about them?
- What is the value-base, (for example, is it donor-driven? – North-South)
 - Who is driving it?
 - What ideology?
- Key stakeholders and their values shape evaluation. Do they have an influence on sustainability?

Content: Language – Socio-cultural context

The terminology used, culture and the different perspectives all shape the way in which the evaluation is designed. Stakeholders should therefore be included at the very beginning; they must be part of process of whole project. Evaluations should:

- take into account the cultural context;
- have a more ethnographic approach;
- push for better initial project design in identifying and including stakeholders.

This can be done by:

- putting together a multidisciplinary team of specialists; stakeholders – internal, external so as to:
 - define the parameters of the evaluation, its goals, objectives, beneficiaries etc.;
 - design the evaluation as a team;
 - benefit from the many perspectives;
 - draw stakeholders into design;
 - overcome problems of language, culture.
- continuous feedback – this is often cost effective and it is also a good way of including stakeholders in the evaluation process. A large impact study is not always necessary or possible.

Environment: Information use flow pattern

The information product should enhance existing information habits. End-users should therefore be recognised as producers and disseminators of information.

Promoting the effective involvement of stakeholders requires hands-on, face-to-face data collection in the field. Face-to-face meetings, telephone, focus groups are excellent ways of encouraging the involvement of people. Questionnaires (self-completion) are not a good way to get stakeholder participation. Additional ways of including stakeholder participation are:

- allocating adequate resources aimed specifically for this purpose;
- allowing for a feedback of results to stakeholders;
- making tangible benefits to stakeholders clear;
- clearly indicating future plans, next steps;
- facilitating linkages, knowledge-sharing between stakeholder groups.

Theme 4: Evaluation framework and method

The cost of the evaluation should have a bearing on the approach used in the evaluation. However, very often evaluations are costly exercises, sometimes exceeding the cost of the project itself. So as to reduce these costs, the various actors involved should be equipped with the skills required to conduct evaluations.

Three elements were identified as necessary to determining the method used in an evaluation:

- framework;
- indicators;
- data collection.

Framework

A question that dominated discussions in the workshop was whether or not a single framework could be used to evaluate and assess the impact of agricultural services and products. Should the framework used be control-based or should it be learning oriented? For a number of reasons it was determined that no single framework was appropriate. What was perhaps more appropriate or useful was to draw on however, was a combination of frameworks. The choice of framework(s) would be dependent on the:

- timeframe of the evaluation;
- key elements identified.

It is important that the timeframe be determined before rushing to use a model(s). To do so, a needs assessment would first have to be conducted in order to determine this. During the planning phase, clear objectives need to be developed and linked to the different indicators as well as linked to a timeline chart.

A point worth noting is this, if planners carry out the evaluation on their own, the evaluation strategy is one of control, however, if stakeholders are involved in the planning process then the learning process will be employed.

Indicators

It is often difficult to find appropriate tools for measuring the impact of communication projects, as the data collected are often not meaningful. One way to address this is to measure different levels of the transformation process.

Indicators used can be both qualitative and quantitative. However, important elements, which should be considered, include the level of reliability and validity of the indicators used and attribution.

Validity

Evaluation methods are considered valid and reliable if they measure what they are supposed to be measuring. The question therefore that one should be asking is, whether or not the correct tool is being used? For example, if a questionnaire is being administered, the main concern here would be to find out if the correct questions are being asked, it could be that the questions being asked do not give the answers needed to conduct the evaluation. Other questions that should be asked include: Are you measuring the right thing? And what do you attribute the results to? What is the effect of a non-response?

Superimposing timeframes should help to differentiate between different types of objectives (i.e. outputs, outcomes and impact) as well as the identification of the various indicators.

Attribution

The problem of attribution is of particular concern. How can one be sure that the changes seen are directly related to the outputs of the project being evaluated? Many times an agreement is made to measure x, but it is not possible to do so at that particular point in time. Adopting the transformational path allows one to measure the right parameters at the right time. If the information activity is not linked to the actors, it is not possible to measure or demonstrate the impact. Thus further highlighting the need to further develop partnerships with other organisations at the implementation or impact level.

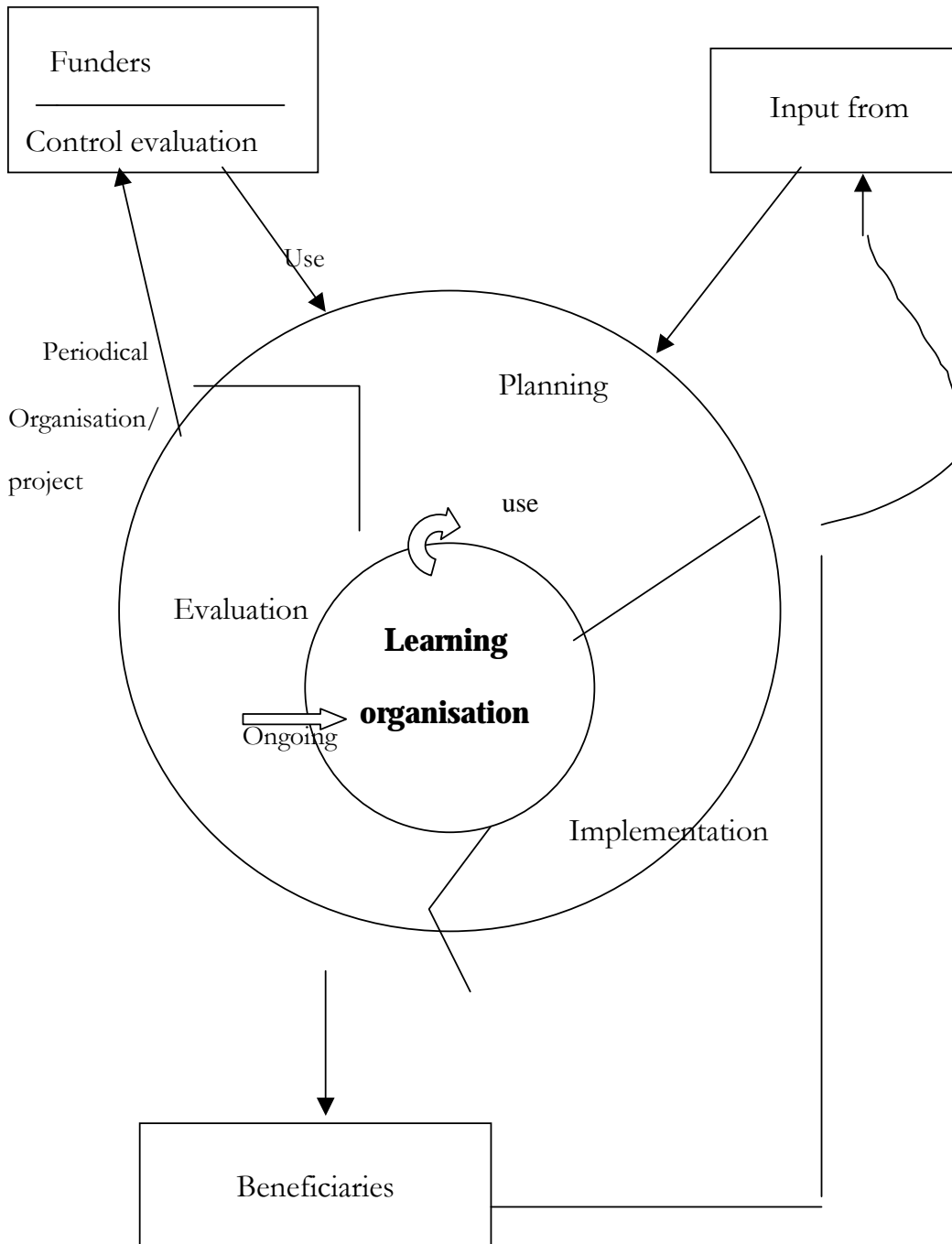
Data collection

If the data collected are not considered reliable and of good quality, then the whole evaluation process will be brought into question and the results of the evaluation will not be used by those it was meant for. As such, the use of reliable sampling techniques and appropriate instruments for qualitative and quantitative assessment cannot be overemphasised.

Theme 5: Use of evaluation results

Evaluation is essential to a learning organisation. It is part of the whole process of planning and implementation, see Figure 2. The user of the evaluation is the project or organisation, it is not the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries benefit from the change in the project due to the evaluation/learning organisation. The beneficiaries however should have an input into the evaluation process.

Figure 2: How to become a learning organisation



The stakeholders/partners have an equal power relationship, but they have different roles. The differentiation between funders, managers, implementers and beneficiaries will help to clarify processes and identify tensions and results.

Push for a change in thinking

- Different parties use evaluations for different purposes. Some donors use the evaluations for accountability purposes – did the project spend the money correctly? Were the targets met? And so forth. Instead these organisations should be learning from the results of the evaluation.
- Differentiate between different roles of the various stakeholders.
- There is a need to think beyond the timeframe of the project. It is desirable to have an aggressive future orientation. The user community is often different at the end of the project compared to the one at the beginning.
- See the whole cycle – do not look at the evaluation alone.
- In a learning organisation, the project does not learn all the time.

General discussion of the five working group themes

Evaluation is often seen or perceived by donor recipients as a means of control by funding agencies. This perception is most probably inextricably linked to the notion that information is power. However, organisations on the receiving end need to move beyond this, and lobby for a change in donor attitudes, pushing for a share in the information and decision process by all the stakeholders, so as to facilitate a better understanding on both sides. Even more so now, given the increasing recognition by funding agencies of the need to learn from the evaluation process as well as the context in which the evaluation process takes place.

Other issues which came to the fore were:

- The relationship between control and learning evaluation should be remembered, evaluators should not be inclined towards control and those being evaluated should also contribute to the paradigm of control without pointing their fingers too much at the donors.
- Need to be proactive and use evaluation as a management tool;
- One should be careful not to put too much a premium on evaluation for learning to the detriment of management, rather the latter should inspire the other;
- Some people believe that performance assessment has very little to do with learning. This perception often has to do with who is managing the evaluation process. The

concept of the learning evaluation however, involves building up a relationship and should be built into the assessment.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

Broader picture and general conditions

- The participant came from different backgrounds and had different expectations; hence there was no one way of evaluating, which could satisfy their needs. However, there was general appreciation of the complexity of the problem and recognition that a range of methods and approaches are needed to fit into specific situations. The Technical Consultation served to highlight the importance and urgency of evaluations and impact studies taking in to considerations all actors and complexities.
- Placing evaluations into the management and political context is the prerequisite for choosing methods.
- The bigger picture must be taken into account, be conscious of the concepts and terms used, and be aware of their different meaning in different contexts.

Evaluations within the project cycle

- Ensure planning for the evaluation from the start of the project.
- Arguments and evidence are needed to convince people to build-in evaluations from planning stage as a continuous process.
- Evaluations should not be seen as a project in itself but rather as an essential activity within any information project.

Frameworks and methods

- General frameworks ought to be provided for different types of products/ services. However, there are a variety of legitimate alternative approaches to evaluations.
- There is still a need for tools and practical examples (Output 4 of the meeting).
- Stakeholders and target groups (“the people”) should be involved from the start of the evaluation.
- Ensure that the information is relevant and valid.

Impact

- Impact ideals are not achievable and one has to compromise. Using outputs as indicators of impact is questionable.

Recommendations

Framework

- The inventory on evaluation frameworks presented at the workshop should be revisited, reviewed and additional frameworks added to it.
- Given the specific nature of the agricultural field, more work needs to be carried out to determine if a generic framework will be appropriate for this area or if a specific evaluation framework is needed.
- Standardising the existing evaluation frameworks by discipline and harmonising them should be explored more.
- The content of the evaluation frameworks is so rich; different frameworks analyse different conditions. The possibility of using a road map to guide practitioners in defining the goals of the evaluation should be explored instead using a framework.

Resource materials

- The new ideas generated from the workshop need to be made known and transformed into the intellectual property for all practitioners. There is a need for further collaboration of participants to produce publications and other resource materials. The active participation by all in the form of comments and contributions to the co-publications and publications is encouraged.
- Based on the deliberations at the workshop, a group statement should be developed and presented in the workshop report and posted on the Web page.
- A workshop synthesis report should be produced so that practitioners can use it as a resource book. This will involve drawing on experts and practitioners in the field of evaluation. It is envisaged that the report will highlight the following:
 - the necessity of looking for smart practices;
 - abridged versions of the workshop papers;
 - key discussions and conclusions;
 - institutional experiences (successes and failures).
- A glossary of the terms used in evaluation should be developed which can be added to (ideally on the LEAP-IMPACT workspace), so that it can be used as a common source for future reference.

General

- Collaboration among the various participants should continue using the LEAP-IMPACT workspace to promote future activities and exchanges of resource materials, *see* the Annexes for a more detailed account.
- Avoid using evaluation as an end-product; instead go back again and again to the initial planning phase and nourish the implementation phase.
- Use all possible channels of communication, the organisations represented, and personal networks for the quick dissemination of the workshop results.
- There is a need to find ways to facilitate the paradigm shift (*from control evaluation to learning processes*) and appropriation of new / alternative ways of evaluating and thinking about evaluation and impact assessment. Initially, this must first take place within the organisations represented at the workshop. To facilitate this process/approach participants need to start by first negotiating change in their own working environment.
- It is important that the momentum is not lost to contribute in the organisational change. CTA should link individuals who can influence top management and assist organisations with this paradigm shift.
- A follow-up meeting should be planned to review the changes and decide on future action.

Future LEAP-IMPACT collaboration

“We are all involved and we are part of the LEAP-IMPACT community. The group of organisers came together on what is the vision, and what is the current thinking on evaluation. We would like now to invite all the participants, and practitioners to take the lead and to plan together future actions.” (Shady Kanfi, Bellanet)

The following points outline the next steps:

- A newsletter will be produced that will capture the hot issues, activities in an effort to keep the participants up-to-date on recent developments in the field. This will also include a bibliography and references.
- The content of the workshop report will be posted on the LEAP-IMPACT Web page.
- The Web site will be interactive, so that those who want to can add an interesting link or a document.
- The on-line discussion will continue.
- In six months time there will be check on promises and expectations and plans for the future.
- Ms Sarah Cummings will be our contact person.
- Possibilities to include individuals in the LEAP-IMPACT community who do not have access to the Internet will be explored.
- Promises have been made to some ACP members that communication problems will receive more attention.

Annexes

Assessment of the workshop

Evaluation of the workshop was carried out in two parts:

- Achievements of the workshop based on the outputs set out earlier in the introduction. This was done by Ibrahim Khadar.
- Evaluation from the perspective of the participants. This part of the evaluation was carried out by Nathan Ducastel, Petra Feil, Shady Kanfi and Andreas Springer-Heinze.

Achievements of the workshop

Towards the end of the workshop an analysis was done to determine whether or not Outputs 1–4 were achieved. It was not possible to measure the achievements of Outputs 5–6 at the time of presentation, given the nature of the outputs.

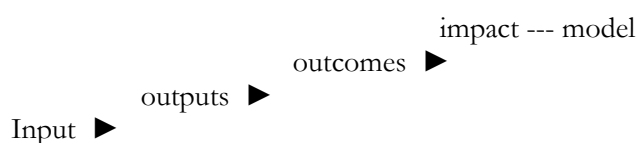
Output 1: Clarification of evaluation concepts and terminology

The participants were now more confident with the term *evaluation* and called for a separation of the terms evaluation for learning and evaluation for control/accountability purposes. Depending on the objective of the evaluation the one element should receive less attention and priority than the other.

Other terms that meant more to the group included *performance* and how inputs are transformed to *outputs* and *outcomes* and ultimately *impact*.

Output 2: Inventory of evaluation frameworks and methods

It was recognised by all that no institution will ever use only one framework for all of its evaluation activities. However, a widely used evaluation model may look like this:



A basic component that should be incorporated into every evaluation model is the appropriate time framework.

Output 3: Guidelines for best practices

The development of guidelines for best practices was one of the stated objectives of the workshop, however based on discussions which took place at the workshop, it was generally accepted that there are no best practices. What is required in fact is a compilation of smart practices.

Further, the guidelines offered in the CTA Working Document, *Evaluating information: a letter to a project manager* received a fruitful feedback from the participants. The following points were identified as requiring more attention to be expanded upon or amended:

- Structure
- Validation
- Ownership
- Priority to performance assessment

Output 4: Illustration of the applicability of the “best practice”

Given the outcome in Output 3, an illustration of the applicability of “best practices” could not be carried out. A useful strategy that was put forward instead was to apply the specific smart practices to specific information product or services and avoid the uninformative, mainly general conclusions that can easily apply to any product anywhere.

Evaluation of the workshop

Four members of the Steering Committee formed the evaluation team and interviewed 30 participants. All the participants were asked the same two questions: “What have you found useful, positive in the workshop?” and “what have you found negative in the workshop?”. A quick analysis of the questions on the portrait of the participants that were focused on the participants’ expectations from the workshop was also done

- Expectations

The participants considered that their personal and organisational interest in participating in the workshop was to obtain information (recipes/instructions) for their practical work. Seven participants mentioned that they were interested in improving their own work, and hoped to gain a better understanding of theoretical issues, conceptual issues and to get as many as different possible perspectives. Twelve participants valued the learning experience gained from each other as well as the knowledge and experiences shared. They also emphasised the need to improve communication among the group and transform the group to a subject-related community/network.

- Positive aspects:

Those interviewed found that the participants of the workshop were well chosen and there was a good balance between theory and practice in the workshop programme. There was also excellent interaction and collaboration among the participants. The participants valued the diverse disciplinary background of the group.

- Negative aspects

Some of the issue identified were:

- there was a need for more emphasis on theoretical issues;

- Working Group discussions lacked structure and mainly the strong voices were heard in the groups. The participants did not always take up the ideas and approaches presented in the working groups.
- time constraint did not always allow for in-depth discussions.
- Main conclusions
 - the framework used by the evaluation team for the workshop evaluation received positive feedback. It showed the need for interaction and consultation among the stakeholders involved.
 - the guest panellists would have contributed more fruitfully to the workshop discussions if they have stayed during the whole workshop.

The twelve rules of impact assessment

(Excerpt from the opening dinner speech by Dr Michel Menou)

At the reception of the workshop, Dr Menou was specially honoured by his peers for outstanding work in the field of information and communication. The following list represents useful pointers on impact assessment that were taken from his speech, which should be considered before undertaking an evaluation:

- Impact should be clearly defined, and all the steps leading to it named differently.
- Impact is a lasting transformation in people's ability to cope.
- Impact is a process which should be observed as such.
- The input into this process is a complex combination of many different factors.
- Conditions and circumstances are as important as “voluntary” factors – and luck is not the least one. The question is not what works? But what are the conditions under which X or Y work?
- Impact should be appraised by the “beneficiaries” and from their own perspective.
- Ambivalence is at the core of impact phenomena; both positive and negative aspects must remain tied together.
- Assessing impact can only be a continuing process from long before to long after.
- A variety of methods and perspectives should be used concurrently in the study of impact.
- For the funding agency or operator a good programme should be a programme that has a positive impact in the eyes of the beneficiaries.
- Impact assessment should be made a collective, participatory and continuing learning process among all stakeholders – rather than the pseudo management tool that it is too often.
- Include people as the central piece of your concern and analysis.

Orientation Note on Output 6

Publishing and dissemination of the proceedings and other publications resulting from the technical consultation

Karen Batjes, Technical editor

Background

Very few methodologies and applications have been developed which can be used to assess the performance and impact of agricultural information products and services. As such, this workshop is playing a pivotal role in facilitating the development of a coherent body of literature on evaluation theory and practice.

Past outputs and focus

In 1998, CTA hosted a workshop on impact assessment, the main challenge then was to facilitate the development of practical cost-effective approaches for assessing the impact of information and communication management on institutional development in the national agricultural systems in ACP countries. The main output of the workshop was the proceedings, which contained papers which tended to focus more on the theoretical aspects of impact assessment. There were two major recommendations cited here:

- The need for CTA to tap into the global network of information systems to look for ‘best practices’ on impact assessment; and
- ACP organisations should be empowered to carry out their own impact assessment.

Another major work was that of IDRC, which undertook a multi-year study in an effort to ‘...sharpen issues related to the evaluation of information programmes’ (Mook, 2001). The main output here was a report on ‘Defining and Assessing the Impact of Information on Development’. The main recommendation of this report was the need for a practical guide, written in plain, simple language.

The way forward

In an effort to determine the kind of information product(s) that will most adequately reflect the needs of the workshop, participants have been actively sought out to assist in the further preparation of this note. In addition to this, feedback from the e-conference and comments from the workshop participants as a whole were used to determine which products would most appropriately meet the needs of the workshop, as well as establish real inputs for the report in the process.

Results of the process

Two main points were identified as being important to process of evaluation and impact assessment and these were:

- the need for guiding principles;
- the need for clarity in key concepts and approaches.

Issues to be addressed

- Impact assessment aspect is not generally taken into consideration in the evaluation process.
- Given the limited sources of information on relevant terms and concepts, should an effort be made to publish a dictionary/glossary dedicated to ICM and related evaluation terms and concepts?
- A profusion of information exists on evaluation, but the information is not specific to agriculture. There is a lack of commonality in approaches. Consequently, there is a strong need to develop methodologies which take into account the specific characteristics of the discipline. There is also a strong need for a practical guide for practitioners in the field. How can this be addressed?
- Impact assessment is a dynamic field, how can partnerships be strengthened and deepened so that the information remains current and accessible?
- How should the information be disseminated – a primary consideration should be ease of accessibility of information.

List of proposals of agricultural products for the workshop to consider

Given the above issues/ concerns, here is a range of possibilities for consideration:

- A condensed workshop report in a book format looking at:
 - Smart practices;
 - Abridged versions of the workshop papers;
 - Key discussions and conclusions;
 - Snippets of institutional experiences.
- Special articles in newsletters such as CTA's *Spore*, annual reports, oral presentations.

- Summary report.
- Main report of the workshop.
- Glossary dedicated to ICM and related evaluation concepts.
- Co-production of the publication “Evaluating information: A letter to a project manager” with ISNAR.
- Linking the various outputs with the LEAP-IMPACT workspace, sharing publications.

Inventory: Conceptual frameworks and methodologies used for evaluating agricultural information products and services

Sarah Cummings, KIT

Reference: 0001

Title: Evaluation and Learning System for Acacia. A report based on a consultative meeting held in Johannesburg, February 12–14, 1997.

Author: Acacia Initiative

Keywords: evaluation; organisational learning; frameworks; Acacia

Description: The Evaluation and Learning System for Acacia (ELSA) attempts to shed light on a number of key evaluation issues in the Acacia Initiative. The evaluation framework will be further refined during the Acacia launch phase to allow exploration of the most relevant projects and action lines (appropriateness); to test whether the Initiative is being initiated in a smooth and efficient fashion (efficiency); whether the goals of the projects and programmes as a whole are being attained (effectiveness); and whether the scale and range of programme impacts is acceptable (impact). The central features of the ELSA framework are that it distinguishes between four levels: policy (national and IDRC); programme (Acacia operation); project implementation; and the people/communities at the heart of the programme. The framework introduces two elements, which focus primarily on two levels: the programme and project levels. The framework contains a number of data collection and results reporting links which together constitute learning loops, integrating the 4Ps and evaluation elements into an ELSA. The framework also demands the involvement of key actors in the evaluation process and the sharing of information/lessons learned among them. It comprises real-time evaluation which will be conducted as part of Acacia and all its programme planning and activities. The main objective of ELSA must be to ensure that the overall experimental design of Acacia's projects and activities are captured within a learning system and that research hypotheses are continuously generated and tested. Four components have been identified: evaluation exercises; continuous learning; research studies; and multi-stakeholder interaction. Two figures illustrate the evaluation issue cycle; and the ELSA activities and outcomes.

Date: 1997

Pages: 9pp.

Type of document: paper; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.idrc.ca/acacia/03230/16-elsa/>

Reference: 0002

Title: Task Force on Academic Library Outcomes Assessment Report

Organisation: Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), USA

Keywords: methodologies; frameworks; libraries: USA

Description: This report comprises the results of deliberations by the Task Force on Academic Library Outcomes assessment, set up by the ACRL in 1994. The Task Force had been given three charges: to develop a philosophical framework for assessing libraries in terms of desired outcomes; to develop a prototype for such assessment; and develop a recommendation for one or more processes for

implementation of the former with a timeframe for completion. It concerned with academic libraries in the USA but has wider implications. Outcomes, inputs and standards are defined: outcomes are the ways in which library users change as a result of their contact with the library's resources and programmes; inputs are the raw materials of the library programme: money, space, equipment and staff; and standards should directly address the quantity, quality, extent and levels of suitability of programmes, services, and staffing. Outcomes assessment is an integral part of the institutional effectiveness cycle of planning, implementation, assessment and improvement. There can be no one set of universally desirable outcomes for all academic libraries, because outcomes must depend on the institution's nature and mission. Assessment of outcomes need not address every possible aspect of each library service. It is argued that: Cameron (1978) demonstrated that a survey of administrators' perceptions of organisational effectiveness, compared with verifiable data (e.g. graduation rates) showed that perceptions tended to be accurate. Therefore, properly conducted surveys of perceptions can accurately serve as proxies for analytical data.

Cameron and others recommend selecting a small number, no more than half a dozen, of key outcomes for the area to be addressed with relevant criteria of quality. The literature search conducted for this report revealed that there has been considerable work done by librarians in this area. Specifically germane is the work of Bonnie Gratch Lindauer (1997) which is used to provide an example. In a chart, the process of outcomes assessment is illustrated: determination of desired outcomes in this case following from the objectives of a specific course; establishment of indicators that the outcomes have been met; and methods of collecting the data that reveal whether the outcome has been achieved. Finally, the Task Force envisions next steps in several areas that might be undertaken by the Association to promote the development and use of outcomes assessment for academic libraries.

Publisher:

Date: 1998

Pages: 16pp.

Type of document: paper; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/outcome.html>

Reference: 0003

Title: Evaluation of donor-funded information technology transfer projects in China: a life-cycle approach

Author: Baark, Erik; Heeks, Richard

Author's affiliation: Institute for development Policy and Management, University of Manchester, Precinct Centre, Manchester M13 9Gh, UK. Tel: +44 161 275 2800. E-mail: idpm@man.ac.uk; URL: <http://www.man.ac.uk/idpm>

Keywords: evaluation; methodologies; China; ICTs; information projects; frameworks

Description: This paper presents an evaluation of the ICT component within four Chinese technology projects. The evaluation is structured around a framework: the information technology transfer life-cycle. This conceptual framework is derived from praxis rather than theory, and it serves to identify critical benchmark events (choice of technology, purchase and installation, assimilation and use, adaptation, diffusion and innovation), each of which determines the subsequent course of the process. The four projects were concerned with mapping Beijing's geology and seismic activity; establishing an operational information system for the retrieval and management of meteorological satellite data; addressing the effective utilisation of ICTs and software; and increasing the quantity of high quality software being produced in China. Using this life-cycle approach, a number of shortcomings are identified within the various technology projects. The IT transfer life-cycle approach is not intended to be a contribution of theoretical depth to the process of technology transfer evaluation. Instead, it aims to provide a clear and logical framework around which data can be gathered and information presented about ICT transfer. It is also applicable to projects, like the first and second case studies, where the emphasis of project objectives was on the diffusion of information rather than on technologies.

Date: 1998

Pages: 33pp.

Type of document: working paper; online

Language: English

Identifier: http://idpm.man.ac.uk/idpm/di_wp1.htm

Reference: 0004

Title: Assessing the impact of information and communication management on institutional performance. Proceedings of a CTA workshop. Wageningen, The Netherlands, 27-29 January, 1998.

Author: CTA

Keywords: seminar proceedings; institutional performance; impact assessment; CTA; NARSs

Description: The main objectives of the workshop were to identify the relationship between information/communication and the performance of organisations with particular reference to effectiveness, efficiency and 'connectedness'; to determine the indicators that can be employed to illustrate this relationship; to find the best way of collecting information on the indicators; to assess the significance of such information; and to determine what should be done to develop a practical and cost effective approach for measuring the impact of information and communication on institutional performance. It was argued that:

Assessing the impact of information and communication management on institutional performance is highly complex, with quantitative techniques not well defined and the development of appropriate indicators still at an early stage.

The workshop was therefore timely as it offered a platform for various experts in the field to share their experiences with a view to developing a workable framework for evaluating the impact of information. There was general recognition that the workshop topic was indeed challenging, given the complexity of the concepts, the paucity of practical methods, confusing definitions, and the multidisciplinary interest in the subject. The working groups recommended that CTA should pursue its goal of developing a cost-effective method for impact assessment by carrying out pilot studies in collaboration with organisations in the national agricultural systems of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries. CTA should also tap into the global network of information systems to look for best practices in impact assessment.

Publisher: CTA, Wageningen, Netherlands

Date: 1998

Pages: 111pp.

Type of document: book

Language: English

Identifier: ISBN 92 9081 1994

Reference: 0005

Title: Approaches to impact evaluation (assessment) in agricultural information management: selective review of the issues, the relevant literature and some illustrative case studies.

Author: Bellamy, Margot

Organisation: Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)

Author's affiliation: Information for Development, CABI,

Keywords: literature reviews; impact assessment: CTA

Description: This review examines the background to impact evaluation (or assessment) and its application as indicated in the literature of a range of disciplines. It considers why it is needed in general terms and, more specifically, its application in agricultural information management in developing countries. The value and relevance of the methodology so far available, and the findings of relevant case studies, are examined in relation to lessons and guidelines for future evaluation and impact studies in CTA. The review does not seek to be exhaustive but rather to select from the available general and applied studies the most

interesting pointers to future methodology and analysis. It draws selectively on the literature of development economics, environmental and social impact assessment, information science and management, and agricultural research management. Particular effort has been made to select references which themselves review definitions, trends, methodologies, and applications in their respective fields, and which in many cases also provide extensive bibliographies. There are also some important recent examples of applied work done in information management in developing countries which indicate the state of the art, and some of the pitfalls, but also help to define the way forward.

Date: 2000

Pages: 33pp.

Type of document: paper

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.agricta.org/pubs/wd8021/>

Reference: 0006

Title: Measuring the difference: guide to planning and evaluating health information outreach.

Author: Burroughs, Catherine M.; Wood, Fred B.

Author's affiliation: National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Pacific Northwest Region, Box 357155, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195-7155, USA. E-mail: cburroug@u.washington.edu

Keywords: evaluation; health; methodologies; manuals: USA

Description: Health information outreach programmes are based on the commonly held assumption that access to information results in improved delivery of health care.

This guide presents ideas for planning and evaluating these outreach programmes to help improve and document their success. It was developed by the US National Library of Medicine. It presents a programmatic and goal-oriented approach to outreach in which activities are directed towards the accomplishment of goals and objectives. Six stages are identified in planning and evaluating outreach: conducting a community assessment; developing goals and objectives; planning activities and strategies; planning evaluation; gathering data and assessing results; and utilising and reporting results. Various tool kits are provided at the end of each stage, such as lists of additional resources, work forms, and a case example about the fictitious Gowan Library outreach programme to illustrate key points of the respective stage. The guide considers that:

Overall, evaluation helps programmes refine and sharpen their focus; provide accountability to funders; improve quality so that effectiveness is maximised; and better understand what is achieved and how outreach has made a difference.

In Stage three, the manual introduces several theories from the field of health education and health communications that explain what can influence and motivate changes in behaviour including: Social Learning Theory; Extended Parallel Process Model; Diffusion of Innovation Theory; and Community Organisation. The premise for introducing these theories is that successful outreach requires sustained adoption of new information seeking behaviour by the targeted audience.

According to Witte, the key to successful outreach activities is the use of theory to guide the intervention and evaluation. Theories cut the guesswork, increase efficiency, and allow one to ask why an intervention is or is not working.

The evaluations, designs, methods and tools described in this guide are meant to provide an overall picture of what can be involved in an evaluation process. For example, the rigour of experimental designs with randomised control groups will be beyond the resources or need of most projects. However, a discussion of experimental design and comparison with less rigorous approaches is provided as a point of departure. Similarly, although questionnaires are frequently used in evaluations and needs assessment, other types of data collection (such as focus groups, interviews, and feedback forms) may be appropriate depending on the purposes of research.

Publisher: National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Washington, USA

Date: September 2000

Pages: 75pp + appendices

Type of document: handbooks

Language: English

Identifier:

Reference: 0007

Title: CIDA evaluation guide.

Author: CIDA

Keywords: evaluation; manuals; frameworks; CIDA

Description: This guide was prepared to document CIDA's current approach to evaluations. It describes management's expectations of results, provides guidelines for achievement, and identifies standards and essential requirements. It has been designed as a training tool; an easy-to-use reference for learning something specific; and as a comprehensive compendium on CIDA's approach to evaluations. It is divided into two main parts: setting the foundations; and performing evaluations. CIDA's evaluation framework is described at all managerial levels. The institutionalisation of results-based management has resulted in the Performance Framework and the Performance Measurement Framework becoming fundamental to planning and design. Guidelines for success are also provided. Preparing terms of reference, evaluation workplans, and evaluation reports is outlined. Chapter 10 deals specifically with information collection and analysis.

Publisher: CIDA

Date: 2000

Pages: 113pp.

Type of document:

Language: English

Identifier: http://www.acdi-ida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/c05a8621fd763c158525667a00587307/885586346d7f49f1852568a200589bfe?OpenDocument

Reference: 0008

Title: Rural information provision in developing countries: measuring performance and impact.

Author: Correa, Antoinette F.; Ndiaye, Djibril; Mchombu, Kingo J.; Rodriguez, Gloria M.; Rosenberg, Diana; Yapa, Neil Upali.

Organisation: UNESCO

Keywords: manuals; information services; rural development; performance; standards; indicators; impact assessment; Africa; UNESCO

Description: This is a reference tool for rural library and information professionals in developing countries. It suggests ways in which the performance and impact of rural resource centres might be measured. Qualitative and quantitative standards have been developed, together with technical guidelines and performance measures of all sorts of rural library and information services. By drawing on the experiences of authors working in Africa, Asia and Latin America, it is intended that the measures will be applicable throughout the developing world.

The inspiration of this publication came from the IFLA-ALP seminar in Botswana:

Among the conclusions reached by participants of the seminar was the need to stimulate a culture of critical analysis, research and ongoing evaluation of information services to African rural communities.

The proliferation of experimental rural information delivery systems means that there is now a good deal of data about information provision to rural communities in developing countries. What is not available, is an accepted way of assessing whether or not the provision of information has had any impact on the rural community in terms of its development or even what nature of impact is expected.

There is a need for criteria against which the performance of services can be measured and against which the impact of the provision can be evaluated.

The remit of the Working Group was setting standards for the measurement of performance (i.e. outcomes or effectiveness) and for the assessment of impact of rural information provision. It found that:

Quantitative or prescriptive standards are ill-suited in the context of information provision to rural communities where needs and resources can vary widely.

It was decided to establish the generic aims and objectives of rural information support systems and then to devise a series of simple and appropriate indicators against which the established expectations could be measured. These indicators are not intended to be punitive but would rather measure and monitor progress, encourage improvement of services and highlight good practice. It was found to be difficult to design and develop indicators in the abstract and it was therefore decided to use the concept of the rural resource centre as the context of application. Twelve expectations of rural information provision are drawn from a variety of sources. This is followed by 24 indicators that are designed to measure whether the rural information system is meeting expectation. The indicators cover information availability (accessibility, volume, subject range, diversity of formats, local information, and external information sources); indicators of use (visits, membership, consultations, loans, activities); indicators of user satisfaction (user needs, community needs); indicators of local control over information flow (localisation of management, finance); indicators of economic and social impact (new skills, income generation, health and nutrition); indicators of knowledge base (awareness of national issues and infrastructure, literacy, examination pass rate, and indigenous/local knowledge); and indicators of participation in government and its programmes (participation in government, participation in extension programmes). For each indicator, its purpose, measures, data required, method of calculation and extra notes are provided. Many of the indicators require identical data. Guidance on the statistics that any service should collect and methods of collection are provided in Appendix One.

Date: 1997

Pages: ix + 116pp

Type of document: manual

Language: English

Identifier: UNESCO No. CII-97/WS/11 and

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001115/111532eo.pdf>

Reference: 0009

Title: Integrated rural development and universal access: towards a framework for evaluation of multipurpose community telecentre pilot projects implemented by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and its partners.

Author: Ernberg, Johan

Author's affiliation: ITU. E-mail: ernberg@itu.int

Keywords: rural development; telecentres; evaluation; frameworks

Description: The document contains the methodology currently being developed to evaluate the pilot multicentre community telecentre projects currently being developed by ITU and partners as part of the Buenos Aires Action Plan adopted by the World Telecommunication Development Centre 1994 (WTDC '94) Programme 9 and the Valetta Action Plan adopted by the WTDC '98. The multicentre community telecentres (MCTs) introduced in the pilot projects provide facilities and support for a wide range of services and applications responding to the needs of the local communities. A common framework for evaluation of these pilot projects including research questions to be answered, indicators and tools is being developed by the partners. In May-June 1998, the first field test was carried out by the ITU in an evaluation of the ITU MCT pilot project implemented in 1996 in Suriname. The proposed framework focussed on the following questions: does access to ICTs in rural areas contribute to social, economic and cultural development; what, if any, are the adverse effects; do MCTs provide a sustainable way of providing access to ICTs; and what are the best practices for the set-up, organisation, management and operation of MCTs. The proposed framework comprises a formative evaluation which refers to

continuously monitoring with a view to identifying problems and opportunities so as to remedy shortcomings and improve strategies during the project; and summative evaluation which refers to end of project assessment, cost-benefit analysis and impact of the project. Each of these will include product evaluation and process evaluation. The methodology calls for a combination of participatory case studies, focus groups and data collection across projects, before (base-line data), during and after the pilot projects. In the Suriname pilot project, two basic telecentres, each comprising public telephones, a fax and a computer were established in Bownsweg and Gujaba villages. Preliminary findings from these centres indicate that they had a small customer base, limited service offering and relatively high operational costs, making them not commercially viable. The projects were also not found to have achieved their objectives. Comparative studies of similar communities which do not have MCTs are, at present, not feasible. A large number of qualitative and quantitative indicators at national, institutional and community levels have been proposed and can be seen in Annex 2. It is expected that, by trial and error, some of this initial list of indicators will need to be further specified and 'some of them will turn out to be too difficult or impossible to measure or monitor'. Annex 3 contains questionnaires that have been developed to map current information and communication processes.

Date: 1998

Pages: 27pp.

Type of document: paper; unpublished

Language: English

Identifier: Doc Version: 07/20/01 3:1A7/P7 and <http://www.devmedia.org/documents/Ernberg.htm>

Reference: 0010

Title: Assessing the impact of information and communication to NAMDEVCO's clientele through its newsletter and a Hot Pepper Seminar.

Author: Gangapersad, Ganesh

Organisation: National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), Trinidad and Tobago

Keywords: newsletters; training; workshops; frameworks; evaluation; NARSs: CTA

Description: This research was undertaken on behalf of NAMDEVCO as part of a CTA pilot project to develop a framework for assessing the impact of agricultural information. Two events were selected for evaluation: a training workshop on hot peppers conducted in May 1999; and NAMDEVCO's newsletter 'The NAMDEVCO marketplace' (Volume 2, No. 1) distributed in December 1999. The nature of the response by target individuals to a training or information event is assumed to vary with elapsed time after delivery of the event. The possible response phases for information events may include all or some of the following: initial reaction phase; learning and assimilation of information phase; trial and adoption phase; and the impact phase. Given the nature of the response to training or information, an evaluation of effectiveness and benefits of such activities must necessarily comprise a series of evaluations corresponding to each level or response phase. A different procedure was developed for the face-to-face activity (synchronous communication) of the training course; and the information dissemination activity (asynchronous communication) of the newsletter. The sample size chosen for the newsletter survey was 150 or just under 10% of the population. For the workshop, a random sample of 75 participants of the total number of 139 was selected. It was concluded that the newsletter was a relatively effective instrument for disseminating market and agribusiness information. Impact in terms of discrete activities is low. The survey of the participants of the workshop indicates that the impact was high when measured in terms of the percentage of the participants who plan to take business action based on the knowledge gained.

Date: 2000

Pages: 62pp.

Type of document:

Language: English

Identifier: http://www.bellanet.org/leap/docs/Case_study_NAMDEVCO_T&T.doc

Reference: 0011

Title: Enchanted by telecentres: a critical look at universal access to information technologies for international development.

Author: Gómez, Ricardo; Hunt, Patrick; Lamoureux, Emmanuelle

Organisation: IDRC

Keywords: telecentres; IDRC; development

Description: Telecentres are now the focus of much attention in international development discourse. Hailed as the solution to development problems by providing desperately needed access to ICTs, telecentre-type experiences are increasing rapidly in Africa, Latin America and Asia. There is great variety in the way telecentres are funded, owned and operated, as well as the way in which they serve different users and utilise different technologies. Five types of telecentre experiences/models are proposed: basic telecentre; telecentre franchise; civic telecentre; cybercafe; and multipurpose community telecentres (MCTs). Evaluating the social impact of telecentre in the communities they are intended to serve is no easy task. At present, more resources are being dedicated to setting up pilot telecentres than to understanding their uses and impacts. A notable exception is the effort by the ITU's Johan Ernberg in 1998 to devise a framework for the evaluation of MCTs. Concerted effort is required in a number of areas to conduct in-depth research on: the demand by people for telecentre services; community involvement, participation and use; gender and cultural issues; training needs and materials; marketing and operation; price, trade and regulatory issues; technological choices and developments; sustainability; and the social impact of telecentres and their actual contribution to human development.

Date: 1999

Pages: -

Type of document: paper; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.idrc.ca/pan/enchanted.html>

Reference: 0012

Title: Telecentre evaluation: a global perspective.

Author: Gómez, Ricardo; Hunt, Patrik

Organisation: IDRC

Keywords: telecentres; seminar proceedings; evaluation; IDRC

Description: The contributions in this volume are the result of an international working meeting on telecentre evaluation, held at Far Hills, Quebec, Canada, on 28–30 September 1999. The objectives of this meeting were to explore in depth the challenges and opportunities of telecentre evaluation in Latin America, Asia and Africa; to understand and compare emerging evaluation frameworks and methodologies; to assess the needs and resources available for telecentre baseline evaluation, monitoring, and impact assessment; to identify salient issues affecting telecentre performance; and to provide an opportunity for telecentre operators, project leaders, and researchers to exchange experiences and lessons across regions. A number of the individual papers have also been abstracted. The workshop also identifies guiding principles of telecentre evaluation.

Publisher: IDRC

Date: 1999

Pages:

Type of document: book; online

Language: English

Identifier: http://www.idrc.ca/telecentre/evaluation/nm/00_Cov.html

Reference: 0013

Title: Telecentre evaluation and research: a global perspective.

Author: Gómez, Ricardo; Hunt, Patrik; Lamoureux, Emmanuelle

Organisation: IDRC

Keywords: telecentres; evaluation; reviews; Acacia; IDRC; impact assessment; social impact

Description: While there is no single definition of telecentres, a common characteristic is a physical space that provides public access to ICTs for educational, social and economic development. Telecentres are being introduced as a development tool to bridge knowledge, social and economic gaps. Evaluating the social impact of telecentre experiences is no easy task. To-date, more resources have been dedicated to setting up pilot telecentres than understanding their uses and impacts. Early tentative steps in the field of telecentre implementation and evaluation are now underway. In addition to describing the diverse telecentre experiences being supported by Acacia in Africa, the Acacia telecentres evaluation framework outlines basic guidelines to evaluate this array of experiences. Other organisations are also developing impact assessment and M&E methodologies. Experience of evaluation from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean is reviewed. Despite the euphoria surrounding ICTs and development, as yet there is little understanding of their social impact. Initial results of evaluations are not as positive as expected.

Publisher: IDRC

Date: 1999

Pages: -

Type of document:

Language: English

Identifier: http://www.idrc.ca/telecentre/evaluation/nn/06_Tel.html

Reference: 0014

Title: Impact of electronic communication on development in Africa.

Author: Hafkin, Nancy; Menou, Michel J.

Keywords: electronic communication; questionnaires; case studies; Ethiopia; Uganda; Zambia; Senegal; IDRC; UNECA

Description: CABECA is a three-year project to promote computer-assisted networking throughout Africa, executed by PADIS of UNECA. In 1993, IDRC sponsored the CABECA project, which aimed at introducing low cost connectivity (Fido-based) to some 24 countries. By mid-1995, CABECA had worked to initiate or strengthen electronic communication systems in more than 20 countries. The objectives of this case study were to contribute to the development of indicators and to assess the impact of electronic communications on development. Four countries were selected for study: Ethiopia, Uganda, Zambia and Senegal. The study was intended to involve the following steps: design of the study and detailed work plan; investigation of the investigators; start-up workshop; sampling; development of the survey instruments; test and revision of the survey implements; initial surveys; ongoing monitoring of impact factors; ongoing backstopping of investigators by e-mail; mid-way workshop of the investigators; final surveys; comparison of the result of the initial and the final surveys; interpretation; production of interim national reports; compilation of the national reports into an interim overall report; final workshop of the investigators; revision of the interim reports; production of the final report; editing for presentation to the target audiences at institutional, national and regional levels; and analysis of feedback and presentation of the results to the target audiences. The study called for two sets of data to be collected: data about the initial situation at the national level and the expected impact of electronic communication; and identification by the users of the individual and institutional benefits gained in the various possible categories. The start up workshop took place in March 1995. It was expected that the final workshop would be held at the end of December 1996. The chapter presents the situation up to the time when the initial data had been collected and arranged by frequency of use. The appendices list the draft questionnaire comprising Part 1 for collecting baseline data and Part 2 for interviews. A questionnaire on the potential benefit of electronic

networking, distributed at the Regional Symposium on Telematics for Development in Africa which was held on 3–7 April 1995, is also included.

Date: 1996

Pages: -

Type of document: chapter; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.idrc.ca/books/focus/783/hafkin.html>

Projects:

Capacity Building for Electronic Communication in Africa

Reference: 0015

Title: Impact of the Semi-Arid Tropical Crops Information Service (SATCRIS) at ICRISAT.

Author: Haravu, L.J.; Rajan, T.N.

Author's affiliation: Library and Documentation Services, Information Management and Exchange Programme, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Patancheru PO, Andhra Pradesh 502 324, India.

Keywords: information services; evaluation; questionnaires; ICRISAT; IDRC; NARSs

Description: SATCRIS, established in 1986 and developed with financial and technical support from IDRC, has been providing information services to national agricultural research systems (NARSs). The case study presents the methodology and preliminary results obtained from evaluating the impact of SATCRIS on the research and related community. SATCRIS services comprise: a bibliographic database; an automated Selective Dissemination of Information service; document delivery; information analysis and consolidation products; software; and locational tools. An impact assessment study, funded by IDRC, was begun in late 1994. It was decided that the impact study should determine to what extent the SATCRIS services contributed, directly or indirectly, to a number of specified development goals. This was restated by determining how SATCRIS products and services (the input variables) contributed to (or accounted for) the variation in a number of output variables, related to 'capability'. An important parameter in impact assessment is the delineation of the target group, compared to the recipients and beneficiaries of SATCRIS products and services. In addition to the mailed questionnaire, the study used structured and unstructured interviews. A Logical Framework Analysis was made of the SATCRIS services. Preliminary results of the evaluation are presented. The appendix comprises the questionnaire used for the evaluation of the SATCRIS search service.

Publisher: IDRC

Date: 1995

Pages: 15pp.

Type of document: chapter; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.idrc.ca/books/focus/783/haravu.html>

Reference: 0016

Title: Evaluating telecentres within national policies for ICTs in developing countries.

Author: Harris, Roger W.

Author's affiliation: Faculty of Information Technology, University Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan, Malaysia. E-mail: roger@fit.unimas.my. URL: <http://www.unimas.my/fit/roger/>

Keywords: telecentres; evaluation; frameworks; national development

Description: This discussion paper addresses the significance of the telecentre movement within the national policies for ICTs in developing countries. It provides two frameworks that are used to locate the

telecentre concept within the wider consideration of the deployment of ICTs for national development: the framework of IT-led development, developed by Dedrick and Kraemer (1998); and a framework for evaluating the contribution of telecentres to national diffusion of ICTs and its economic benefits. In the latter framework, two classes of evaluation criteria are identified, input measures and output measures. Input measures relate to activity as opposed to results and include resources (accommodation, equipment, people). A second class of input measures is concerned with the services that the telecentre provides: computing, Internet, telephone, training, technical support etc. Output measures relate to the achievements of the telecentre within the community it serves. Such measures include: community-based indicators (socio-econometrics and stories) and sustainability measures (ownership, replicability, and responsiveness).

Date: -

Pages: 7pp.

Type of document: chapter; online

Language: English

Identifier: http://www.idrc.ca/telecentre/evaluation/nn/18_Eva.html

Reference: 0017

Title: Section 9: monitoring and evaluation. In: Resource centre manual. How to set up and manage a resource centre.

Organisation: HealthLink World-wide

Keywords: manuals; health; evaluation

Description: This section on monitoring and evaluation is part of a manual on setting up a resource centre, aimed at the health sector on developing countries. It is designed for newcomers to M&E. Monitoring means keeping records of different resource centre activities. Evaluation means using these records and other information, such as user surveys and focus group discussions, to review performance at set intervals and to identify ways to improve the resource centre and its services. The manual gives advice on what to monitor with suggestions on what information to collect in each of these areas. A sample monitoring form is also provided. The data collected through monitoring, questionnaires and discussion can be used to answer questions such as: what impact does the resource centre have on users; and how far does it meet users' needs. For each question, suggestions are made on how this information can be obtained using qualitative and quantitative data.

Publisher: HealthLink

Date:

Pages: 13pp.

Type of document: chapter; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.healthlink.org.uk/rcman/Section9.html>

Reference: 0018

Title: Gender analysis of telecentre evaluation methodology.

Author: Holmes, Rebecca; Emmett, Melody; Esterhuysen, Anriette; Boezak, Sonja.

Author's affiliation: Women'sNet, SANGONet, 13th Floor, Longsbank Building, 187 Bree Street, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa. E-mail: rholmes@sn.apc.org; URL: <http://www.womensnet.org.za>

Keywords: gender analysis; telecentres; methodologies; Africa

Description: This paper explores how the issue of gender can be meaningfully integrated into telecentre evaluation methodologies. It is animated by African experience and specifically by South African experience. Women'sNet, a South African member of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) Women's Network Support System developed the contents of this document in consultation with

both the African and global programmes of the APC via electronic mailing lists. In addition to this virtual process, Women'sNet convened a brainstorming session in Johannesburg with a group of experts in this subject area. The most critical reason to incorporate gender analysis into telecentre evaluation is to evaluate whether or not gender is an issue for telecentres and, if so, in what way. Women'sNet experiences suggest that while gender analysis is a useful theoretical framework and gender equity is the ultimate goal, a women's empowerment strategy is the first step in reaching this goal:

By improving appropriate infrastructure, tools, information and training, telecentres have the potential to empower individual women and women's organisations by giving them options and opportunities and the capacity to take opportunities.

Appropriate questions and evaluation methodologies are proposed to analyse national policy and planning; the selection of telecentre sites; ownership of telecentres; telecentre managers; services offered by telecentres; women as information creators through telecentres; and differences between users/non-users of telecentres.

Publisher:

Unpublished:

Date: -

Pages: 9pp.

Type of document: chapter; online

Language: English

Identifier: http://www.idrc.ca/telecentre/evaluation/text/19_Gen.html

Reference: 0019

Title: Defining and assessing the impact of information on development: building research and action agendas.

Author: Horton Jr., Forest Woody (Editor)

Organisation: FID; IDRC

Keywords: research; impact assessment; IDRC

Description: This is the final monograph published in what has been perhaps the largest and most complex research investigation ever attempted on the far reaching impacts of information and information resources on the political, economic and socio-cultural development processes in developing countries.

This monograph presents the final results of the research project, Building on IDRC's Research Programme on Assessing the Impact of Information on Decision-Making, which was undertaken in 1992–2000. In 1997 it was transferred to the International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID) in order to complete the final phases of the project and bring the research to a successful conclusion, although funding still came from IDRC. The main text is divided into seven phases, based on the stages that the project passed through. The first chapter describes the context, challenge and complexity of the project. The second covers early IDRC planning. The third chapter, 'Developing the methodological framework', focuses on the work begun in Nairobi in 1994 to develop a preliminary methodological framework to guide the investigators in the 8 field case studies. The fourth chapter then covers how the case studies were selected and implemented. The fifth chapter aims to review the lessons learned in the case studies. The sixth addresses the need for additional research and tries to identify the stakeholders involved, including the roles they could play in the future. The seventh and final chapter also identifies future needs in terms of actions rather than research. Appendices also include: a synthesis of the project by the two principal consultants, Michel Menou and Noel Boissière; a metasyntesis of the project performed by Paul McConnell; a report of the activities and recommendations of the meeting which took place in London in 1999; and a list of project documents and related bibliography. Some of the chapters and annexes have been individually abstracted.

Publisher: FID

Date: 2000

Pages: xii + 136pp.

Type of document: monograph

Language: English

Identifier: ISBN 92 66 00 720 X

Projects: Building on IDRC's Research Programme on Assessing the Impact of Information on Decision-Making

Reference: 0020

Title: Designing research for telecentre evaluation.

Author: Hudson, Heath E.

Organisation: Acacia Program, IDRC

Keywords: telecentres; evaluation; research; IDRC: Acacia

Description: The chapter considers issues that need to be taken into account in the evaluation of telecentres. It does not present a single methodology, as such, but is more in the nature of a checklist. This list would also be useful in the evaluation of information services. It first defines a telecentre and the role of information in development:

Information is critical to development; thus ICTs as a means of sharing information are not simply a connection between people but a link in the chain of the development process itself.

Evaluation can be formative, commenting on performance and providing feedback, or summative. When planning the evaluation, it is important to understand the context, identifying objectives; making the objectives explicit; examining the chain of inference, namely the degree of a causal relationship; and determining short-term versus long-term impacts. Research design is concerned with indicators and usage data; turning goals into hypotheses; and testing hypotheses. A number of methodologies for testing hypotheses include: after only; before-after; adding a control group; multiple measurements; sampling; pre-testing; training; and spot checking. In thinking about users and potential benefits, two concepts from diffusion theory of innovations and the impact of communications may be relevant: the 'two-step flow' model; and the early adopter model. Other issues considered include: the content; sustainability; and evaluation as learning.

Date: -

Pages: 13pp.

Type of document: chapter; online

Language: English

Identifier: http://www.idrc.ca/telecentre/evaluation/nn/20_Des.html

Reference: 0021

Title: Report of evaluation of HealthNet service.

Author: Kidane, Seyoum

Author's affiliation: Nuffield Institute Health Resource Centre, University of Leeds, Sheffield, UK.

Keywords: health; evaluation

Description: In the late 1980s in order to bridge the information gap, an initiative was taken by SatelLife by adopting low earth orbit satellite, which allowed health professionals in sub-Saharan Africa to access electronic health information. Getting access to the electronic information assisted health care providers in improving their performance within the health care delivery service. This evaluation gives a snapshot on the current role of the HealthNet service in delivering health information to health professionals. The HealthNet service was evaluated by distributing a questionnaire, corresponding via e-mail, visiting the SatelLife Web site and using the documents received from SatelLife HQs. To obtain the above information, 130 questionnaires were distributed at the end of March 1998. HealthNet services are being used by approximately 19,500 healthcare workers in more than 150 countries (<http://www.healthnet.org/hnet/hnet.html>). However, the results of this survey showed that 26 of the 49

respondents in sub-Saharan Africa do not have any access at all to electronic information and most of them are dependent on library resources. The survey revealed that the service is used sparingly by sub-Saharan health professionals. This suggests that HealthNet does not currently meet the information needs of professionals in health and related fields.

Date: - Pages: - Type of document: paper; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.icml.org/posters/post50/poster50.htm>

Reference: 0022

Title: A meta-level conceptual framework for evaluating projects involving information and communication technology (ICT).

Author: Lanfranco, Sam

Author's affiliation: Bellanet, Canada. E-mail: lanfran@bellanet.org

Keywords: methodologies; frameworks; ICTs; health; projects: Bellanet; IDRC; CIDA

Description: This framework was designed to learn more about the role and impact of ICTs on the behaviour of projects and the achievement of project objectives. The framework situates ICTs within organisational structures and social processes. It is based on the concept that ICTs produce an electronic or virtual workspace that has the ability to cross traditional organisational structures and workspaces. This ability is based on the fact that ICTs can store and process digital information, and also transmit and retrieve this digital information both quickly and at increasingly low cost. As a result, new types of organisations and social processes, based on asynchronous collaboration, are evolving. The framework was developed to help evaluators to ask questions and collect appropriate data and can be applied at several levels of analysis. Three levels: the entity itself; its components; and the entity in relation to its stakeholders. The entity under evaluation can be an organisation, project, task or individual. The framework assumes that ICTs operate within and between four quadrants that can characterise the activities of any entity: administration (Northwest); research and learning for internal capacity building (Northeast); products and services (Southwest); and communications with and beyond the entity (Southeast). Each quadrant can be treated as an entity at the micro-level and is subject to analysis using the same conceptual framework. ICTs enable activities in each of these quadrants, and they operate over three electronic domains (e-mail, group work, and stored digital objects) within this workspace. The actual ICT components (hardware, software and communication facilities) provide the technical infrastructure for the electronic venue that supports this virtual workspace. The ICTs underpin three new capacities: a virtual workspace within the entity; a communications corridor for the entity to access remote sites; and a communications corridor for remote sites to access resources within the entity. These three capacities constitute the central focus of the framework. The framework is intended to complement traditional evaluation of the entity. In order to make the meta-framework easier to understand, it is applied within the context of a research centre, which was the subject of a 1996 evaluation, by IDRC. The Navrongo Health Research Centre (NHRC) in northern Ghana was started in 1988 as a field site for a study of vitamin A supplements for children. Using the example of the NHRC as the core entity, and the CIDA 'Framework of results and key success factors' as an evaluation strategy, the purpose of the meta-framework is to complement the CIDA and IDRC evaluation strategies, not to replace them.

Publisher:

Unpublished:

Date: 1997

Pages: 26pp.

Type of document: paper; electronic

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.bellanet.org/partners/ldia/lessons/evalfram.htm>

Projects: Navrongo Health Research Centre, Ghana

Reference: 0023

Title: The African Books Collective.

Author: Magnusson Ljungman, Cecilia; Singh, Tejeshwar

Author's affiliation: Department for Democracy and Social Development, SIDA, S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel: +46 8 698 5000; E-mail: info@sida.se; URL: <http://www.sida.se>

Keywords: evaluation; case studies; publishing

Description: Since 1990, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has provided core support to the African Book Collective (ABC), located in Oxford, UK, amounting to a total of SEK 2.4 million. The ABC, founded in 1989, is a self-help initiative by a group of African publishers to distribute their books outside Africa. In 1997, SIDA felt that an evaluation was necessary before it could consider continued long-term support. The evaluation was conducted during September 1999–February 2000. The evaluation team used a participatory approach to data collection and analysis. The evaluation consisted of the following components: initial desk study of documents; SWOT workshop and in-depth discussions with the Oxford office; the development of a questionnaire which was sent to all ABC's member publishers; interviews with partners, donors and end-users in the North; fact-finding missions to Ghana and Kenya; and presentation of preliminary findings to SIDA. Appendixes 4 and 5 cover respectively the SWOT workshop report and the questionnaire that was developed. It was concluded that ABC plays a unique and vital role in being the most important commercial provider of African books in the North, disseminating African culture and heritage. It is an unusually efficient mechanism for supporting African publishing. ABC's work supports many of SIDA's policies.

Publisher: SIDA Evaluation 00/6

Date: February 2000

Pages: 73pp.

Type of document: report; online

Language: English

Identifier: ISBN 91 586 8906 0; ISSN 1401 0402; URL: <http://www.sida.se/Sida/articles/4300-4399/4317/pdf/UTV00-6.PDF>

Projects: African Books Collective

Reference: 0024

Title: Building on IDRC's research programme on 'Assessing the impact of information on decision-making': a metasynthesis.

Author: McConnell, Paul

Organisation: FID

Keywords: research; IDRC; impact assessment; frameworks

Description: This report is characterised as a metasynthesis because it represents a synthesis and extension of several preceding analyses and summaries during this current review of the IDRC Impact Project:

Simply stated, the declared goal [of the research programme was to devise and apply a methodology for measuring the benefits and impact of information on development. Over the years, the concept of 'decision-making' has been substituted for 'development'.

It begins with two brief sections to help set the scene and provide context. Next is an introduction to the two impact assessment methodologies that formed the core of the IDRC research programme: LISREL path analysis; and the PF. An overview of the findings from these test methodologies is then presented, together with a section on the extent of compliance with the PF. The next several sections describe in depth a range of observations and issues arising from the studies. Looking to the future, there follow two lists of suggested actions, one proposes changes to the Preliminary Framework; and the other identifies additional work that could be undertaken on impact assessment. Reasons for pursuing research to understand/demonstrate/measure impact of information are outlined: the convincing demonstration of benefits could bring about shift in attitudes in the South; a clearer understanding of the relationship

between project inputs, outputs and outcomes could improve the design of systems and services, as well as help select the most cost-effective options; and recognition of the social and economic returns on investments is likely to strengthen their financial viability and sustainability. Specific objectives and outputs of IDRC's Impact Project comprised: detailed description of a tested methodology; compilation of documented case studies; a practical handbook or similar; contributions to the scientific literature of lessons learned; and an international network of individuals and institutions.

Although differing in their mechanics, both of the tested methodologies share the common objective of trying to demonstrate objectively that the use of information has positive impact on decision-making and development. Both the PF and LISREL seek quantifiable measures of outcomes via indicators or observed variables. Both, but especially the PF, make use of qualitative surveys to assist interpretation of data. Both acknowledge the existence and influence of external, non-information factors. LISREL is dependent on masses of data while PF benefits from more data but is not dependent upon it. LISREL is a more objective approach; the PF is subject to the risk of bias through its use of subjective user surveys. LISREL has its place as a research tool but is likely to be: too complex and demanding for application by information managers.

In addition: *The PF methodology is potentially vast in scope, and therefore challenging to apply.*

The external consultant associated with three of the case studies (ALIDE, CARICOM and ISER) was asked to assist them in developing a more manageable version of the PF, known as 'The indicator method'. Instead of the multi-variable PF, this method focuses primarily on the 'information factor' and focuses primarily on impact indicators. It still involves many of the same preparatory steps, still attaches high priority to the participation by users and still comprises quantitative as well as qualitative assessment, with the latter playing an essential role in helping to interpret the statistical data and provide additional insights. In this methodology, data for impact assessment is obtained via three surveys:

- interviews to establish user profiles;
- the central measurement survey: a questionnaire providing the basis for quantitative assessment in which users indicate the categories and degree of benefit derived from information use; and
- interviews encouraging free response by users.

The abridged methodology has to make compromises. For example, it is not a long-term approach that would be capable of identifying impact changes over time. Without additional objective measures of benefit and impact, its reliance on the perceptions of users may lead to somewhat subjective results. A number of issues are also considered: impact on development, or decision-making; the purpose of the research programme; the impact of changes at IDRC; and struggling with concepts. It is argued that:

Despite IDRC's efforts at the start of the research programme, experience with the case studies reveals there has still been some confusion and inconsistency among participants over their understanding of concepts relating to impact. This has led to somewhat uneven approach to the studies and their findings. Data/information/knowledge/indicator/impact/output/benefits/outcomes/decision-making/development – each of these items is subject to different interpretation by participants (and the users of their information services).

In addition, the following issues are considered: merits of information services, or the consequences of use; information content, or information channel; actual benefits or perception of benefits; how important is information in decision-making; complex methodology has practical operational constraints; diversity of case studies; better preparation, training and technical support required; the need for a pilot project; and the need for a practical handbook. It is concluded that: If the impact assessment research programme is to maintain any momentum, it seems that the most visible and useful step would be to publish a practical guide that spells out more clearly the impact concepts and methods.

Publisher: FID

Date: 2000

Pages: 73-97

Type of document: chapter

Language: English

Identifier:

Reference: 0025

Title: Impact of information on rural development: background, methodology and progress.

Author: Mchombu, Kingo

Author's affiliation: Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana, Private Bag 0022, Gaborone, Botswana.

Keywords: rural development; Botswana; Malawi; Tanzania; Southern Africa; information needs; projects; IDRC

Description: A project to identify information needs of rural communities in three Southern African Development Community member countries (Botswana, Malawi, and Tanzania), called Information Provision for Rural Development (INFORD) was carried out during 1990–1992 with funding from IDRC. When INFORD 2 was designed, issues of assessment of information on rural development became predominant. INFORD 2, carried out in the same rural communities as the previous phase, was planned for the 1994/5-1996/7 period. Two types of measurement were taken into account: evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness; and impact, namely the socio-economic effects of the application of information. It was argued that: the potential for impact is much greater in those cases where few other inputs are needed, for example, information impact on agriculture is usually limited by the need for non-information inputs such as fertilisers, seeds, and tools, whereas in health, most ideas may be put into practice at low cost.

INFORD 1 established that rural information needs fall into two categories: information needs common to all communities; and needs that are location specific. To link information needs to impact assessment, benefits of information under each need, type of service, and product groups have to be proposed, together with indicators for measuring them and resultant impacts. A tentative elaboration of selective information needs is made. To disseminate the information, community information centres will need to be established. At the time of writing this paper, this had not yet taken place.

Publisher: IDRC

Date: 1995

Pages: 11pp.

Type of document: chapter; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.idrc.ca/books/focus/783/mchombu.html>

Projects:

Information Provision for Rural Development 1

Information Provision for Rural Development 2

Reference: 0026

Title: Indicators and assessment methods.

Author: Menou, Michel

Organisation: IDRC

Keywords: indicators; methodologies; IDRC

Description: In selecting indicators, consideration should be given to the following: data collection and analysis should be as simple as possible; interpretation of the indicators should be straightforward; the indicators should point to benefits that are usually given attention by policy- and decision-makers; and the indicators should lead to straightforward conclusions which should be intelligible to those who are going to act upon them. It is helpful to identify each proposed benefit and indicator according to its target group. At least two categories of user should be considered: policy-makers (general level) and technical decision-makers (operational level). Including scholars in the latter group or forming a third one should be considered. Four types of indicators are proposed: operational performance indicators which relate to output (such as productivity, efficiency, cost per output etc); effectiveness indicators which relate output to

us (such as user satisfaction, turnover rate, satisfaction by attribute level); cost-effectiveness indicators which relate output to use ratios (such as cost per use, cost per user and cost by satisfaction level); and impact indicators which relate actual to potential use (such as market penetration). Once a constituency or a segment of one has been identified, basic data about the population are needed to allow adequate interpretation about observations. A revised and expanded model of the information use environment (IUE), developed by Taylor (1991) is proposed with seven sets of background data. The Benefit Indicators used by the US General Accounting Office when assessing information activities were considered as an example of a framework for investigating benefits from information projects. There are many facets to specific development issues and there are three possible solutions to this problem: using a nested hierarchy in which the final product and its benefits are disaggregated; considering which lower level inputs are information dependent; and measuring the value of benefits directly related to information. Systematically collecting a large number of examples, or anecdotes, about the use of information and its effect on problem solving within specific and well-defined IUEs is a promising approach. Forcing users to pay for information might be the most straightforward away of assessing its use.

Publisher: IDRC

Date: 1993

Pages: 63-79

Type of document: chapter

Language: English

Identifier: ISBN 0 88936 708 6

Reference: 0027

Title: Preliminary framework for impact assessment.

Author: Menou, Michel

Keywords: methodologies; frameworks: IDRC; impact assessment

Description: All efforts at developing indicators for the assessment of information activities and projects must be based on three sets of assumption dealing with the nature of information, its role, and the concepts and functions of indicators. Indicators are also needed to determine the degree to which a project or activity succeeds or fails in meeting stated general needs and objectives, in using resources efficiently, and in achieving expected results.

Impact assessment should be based on the following principles: the process must be beneficiary or user driven; the target audiences (those who will use the results of the assessment) should be clear from the outset; not all indicators will apply in any given situation; assessment is a continual process; and assessment should be built into project formulation and not as an afterthought. Before undertaking an impact assessment, a number of prerequisites should be met. The overall structure for the framework, based on Griffiths and King 1993, is outlined. It contains four major components: the object of evaluation and evaluation perspectives; generic measures; derived measures or indicators; and interactions and external factors. Five types of assessment indicators are included: performance indicators; effectiveness indicators; cost-effectiveness indicators; cost-benefit indicators; and impact indicators. For each input category, a list of main characteristics that should be reflected in appropriate indicators is proposed. A matrix of the input categories and output benefit areas was prepared to provide a canvas for identifying the interactions between them.

Publisher: IDRC

Date: 1993

Pages: 89-103

Type of document: chapter

Language: English

Identifier: ISBN 0 88936 708 6

Reference: 0028

Title: Impact of the Internet: Some conceptual and methodological issues, or how to hit a moving target behind the smoke screen.

Author: Menou, Michel

Keywords: Internet; impact assessment; ICTS

Description: The growing concern for demonstrating the impact, assumedly positive, of ICTs, the Internet, Information, etc., seems to be primarily driven by the need to justify urgent and massive investments in these areas. This approach might be short-sighted and of limited productivity. The notion of impact itself is floating on a continuum of assessment perspectives ranging from mere market penetration to lasting social transformation and beyond. It needs to be carefully mapped. The Internet is itself a far from explicit object. It covers infrastructures, resources, transactions, and the outcome of their use. Ordering the various facets would help positioning what it is that one wants to investigate and how this relates to other universes. It is for instance questionable whether the Internet can be studied independently from other ICTs which it may only substitute or refresh. The Internet users community is a not less elusive and volatile object of study. It seems, at least in a cross-cultural perspective, to be hardly amenable to standard methods of investigation. Further, it only represents a minority fraction of the constituencies which are supposed to show evidence for 'impacts'. Impact studies have a natural tendency to try and show the changes between an initial situation, though it is more often than not described in rather vague terms, and a new situation, and to do so as quickly as possible. The result is often disappointing. It is also useless because it is the process of change by which stakeholders move from one to the other which needs to be understood in order to learn from this endeavour and take more effective action in the future. To make things worse, only vague attention is paid to the characteristics of the people, and their own needs and views, although they are the determining piece of any information or communication system. Based upon experience drawn from a series of impact studies, the paper offers some practical directions to cope with these vexing problems.

Publisher: The paper was originally published in: Nicholas, D. & Ian Rowlands, (Editors) The Internet: its impact and evaluation.—London, UK, Aslib.

Date: 1999

Pages: 12pp.

Type of document: paper; online

Language: English

Identifier: http://www.idrc.ca/telecentre/evaluation/nn/24_Imp.html

Reference: 0029

Title: Information and development: the information effect.

Author: Møller Rasmussen, Anja

Organisation: DANIDA

Keywords: information; development

Description: It is very difficult to measure the information effect, namely the impact that the use of information makes on development, at national, organisational or individual level. A considerable amount of work has been done, most notably by IDRC, in an attempt to develop methods and measures that make it possible to evaluate the impact of information. It is argued that:

... we are still far away from having techniques that will enable us to produce clear, quantitative assessments that are required by decision-makers.

The challenge is to identify meaningful parameters or indicators, qualitative or quantitative, by which the overall socio-economic impact of information can be assessed.

To measure the value of information in the development context, it is necessary to begin by defining the concepts of development, data, information, knowledge, and impacts and benefits.

Rather than considering the impact of information on development, one should look at its impact on the goals and objectives, decisions and actions, intellectual equipment and overall skills of precisely identified categories of the population in relation to their most critical problems.

It is possible to identify aspects of development to which information can contribute: social and democratic development; education and research; micro-economic development; and macro-economic development. In each of these aspects, it is necessary to strengthen the information infrastructure in order to enable the information effect:

The information effect is critically determined by: (a) the extent to which the country is able to train and deploy specialist information workers and (b) the extent to which it is able to develop the general information handling capacity of the people in the country.

Publisher: Information Development 17(1)

Date: 2001

Pages: 12-17

Type of document: paper

Language: English

Identifier: ISSN 0266 6669; URL: http://www.bellanet.org/leap/docs/p12_RASMUSSEN_article.pdf

Reference: 0030

Title: Evaluating information: a letter to a project manager.

Author: Mook, Byron

Organisation: CTA , <http://www.agricta.org>

Author's affiliation: ISNAR

Keywords: manuals; evaluation; information projects; frameworks; CTA; ISNAR

Description: This manual has been written for the practical project manager, emphasising how to do an evaluation; taking into account the special features on information projects; and paying attention to the cultural and organisational issues in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. The need for a practical guide, written in plain and simple language, has been identified in the literature. It considers that:

For the evaluation of most information projects, there will never be a substitute for a good questionnaire. Project impacts such as new values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and even behaviours cannot usually be measured economically in any other way.

The impacts of information projects are classified into: short-term (changes in attitudes, values, knowledge and skills); medium-term (changes in behaviour); and long-term (changes in organisational and socio-economic conditions). Before undertaking an evaluation, it is necessary to accept the three following propositions that: evaluation data will be mainly collected by questionnaire; questions will focus on changes in values, attitudes, knowledge and skills (short-term impacts); and the assumption will be made that these short-term impacts will lead eventually to changes in behaviour which will in turn lead to organisational and socio-economic change. The methodology proposed is based on: the approach to project evaluation developed by the United Way of America; and a simple scheme formulated by the author for the management of information projects. The United Way conceptual chain is a variation of a 'black box' model: inputs provide the basis for activities, which lead to outputs which create outcomes. Possible steps in the evaluation include: securing funds to carryout the evaluation; agreeing on a list of stakeholders; forming an evaluation management committee; filling in the needs, beneficiaries, activities, outcomes (NBAO) framework and analysing risks; defining content and agreeing on a logic model; formulating specific evaluation questions; collecting data; aggregating the data and analysing results; and preparing the evaluation report. A worksheet is a prerequisite if main project management techniques, such as Gantt charting, flow charting or critical path analysis are to be used. A SWOT analysis can finally be used as a means of highlighting general lessons learned from an evaluation and pointing in new directions.

Date: 2001

Pages: 46pp.

Type of document: paper; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.bellanet.org/leap/docs/ACF11E.doc>

Reference: 0031

Title: Evaluation feedback for effective learning and accountability.

Author: DAC–OECD

Keywords: evaluation; organisational learning; OECD

Description: This publication is composed of two parts. The first part is the report of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Working Party on Aid Evaluation workshop, hosted by the Japanese Government in Tokyo on 26-28 September 2000. The purpose of the meeting was to share experience among members and other participants, and to draw lessons from current practices in the area of feedback mechanisms. The second part outlines the main concerns and challenges facing evaluation feedback and is based on the analysis of questionnaire results and a review of previous initiatives in this area. The workshop concluded that there are now excellent opportunities for development agencies to improve their evaluation feedback for effective learning and accountability. Evaluation departments are alert to the need for better evaluation feedback, particularly given their changing and widening area of responsibilities. Many agencies have taken steps to address this, but most recognise the need to do more, and to be enabled to do more. Some of the key challenges facing evaluation departments include: resolving the contradictions between the dual roles of evaluation feedback, namely learning and accountability; responding to the shift from project evaluations to the new generation of broader-based evaluations focusing on themes or sectors; further improving dissemination strategies; finding better ways to institutionalise lesson learning; reinforcing the reputation of evaluation units as a source of useful learning; increasing participation and stakeholder involvement in evaluations; and responding to the growing problems of information overload. The main opportunities identified were harnessing the Internet as a means of improving transparency and facilitating lesson-learning within and between agencies; tapping into new organisational management agendas of knowledge management and managing for results to enhance learning and accountability; and responding to the wider challenge presented to development agencies by the International Development Goals. Many agencies will have to step up a gear if they are to capitalise fully on these opportunities.

Publisher: OECD

Date: 2001

Pages: 117pp.

Type of document: report; online

Language: English

Identifier: Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness No. 5

Reference: 0032

Title: Knowledge is like light – information is like water.

Author: Parker, Stephen

Keywords: research projects; reviews; IDRC

Description: This articles reviews the results of the IDRC research programme on Assessing the impact of information on decision-making. The programme began in 1992 with an exploratory workshop, held at IDRC, which was designed to explore the feasibility and scope of a substantive investigation into the impact of information on development.

Publisher: Information Development 16(4)

Date: 2000

Pages: 233–236

Type of document: paper; online

Language: English

Identifier:

Reference: 0033

Title: Beginning an evaluation with RUFDATA: theorising a practical approach to evaluation planning.

Author: Saunders, Murray

Organisation: Centre for the Study of Education and Training, University of Lancaster

Keywords: evaluation; knowledge management; frameworks; British Council

Description: This article draws on research into evaluation and on the tacit practices used in an evaluation agency to develop an approach to initiating new evaluators into evaluation planning processes. Using these two sources as a base, this article suggests that it is possible to conceptualise evaluation as a series of knowledge-based practices. These knowledge-based practices form the resources of communities of practice, i.e. a group of practising evaluators. In that this conceptualisation refers to any job, work or occupation, beginning to be an evaluator, just like beginning any job or work, requires the novice to be inducted or socialised into the community of practice. Understanding evaluation activity in this way should provide the basis for some enabling tools for thinking about an evaluation design. The learning as an outcome of process use is, in fact, the way we might prompt access to a reservoir of experiential and other knowledge in order for evaluations to be carried out by new evaluators, within the normative frame of a group of evaluators. In essence, it involves a process of reflexive questioning during which key procedural dimensions of an evaluation are addressed, leading to an accelerated induction into key aspects of evaluation design. It enables initial planning to occur and an evaluation to 'get off the ground'. RUFDATA is the acronym given to questions which consolidate this reflexive process. To that extent, the approach is a 'meta-evaluative' tool. It outlines RUFDATA, designed for the British Council, as an example of such an approach, and demonstrates its use by a mini-case study.

Publisher: Evaluation: the International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice 2000 6(1)

Date: 2000

Pages:

Type of document: article

Language: English

Identifier:

Reference: 0034

Title: Impact assessment of appropriate and innovative technologies in enterprise development.

Author: Shadrach, B.; Wakelin, Oliver

Author's affiliation: Transparency International

Keywords: ICTs; impact assessment; poverty alleviation; enterprise development; frameworks

Description: ICTs have the potential to play a substantial role in poverty reduction but further knowledge and work on realising benefits and understanding the impact of ICTs is needed. It is argued that:

Impact assessment is the systematic analysis of lasting or significant changes – positive or negative, intended or not – in people's lives brought about by a given action or series of actions.

Several methodologies for impact assessment are presented and their relevance to ICT projects in the field of enterprise development is assessed: LISREL; the Lanfranco framework, developed by Bellanet and applied by IDRC; an IDRC framework for assessing and evaluating the impact of community telecentres in Africa; the CIDA ICT framework; and Menou's PF. Conventional approaches to impact assessment focus on whether a project has met its stated objectives and contributed to the overall project goals. While this may be a cost effective method, a number of factors may make it a ceremonial exercise with no or little feedback to the project itself. Although the participatory approach is clearly favourable to

conventional approaches, the guiding principle of the methodology should be based on the sustainable livelihood framework with input from the human rights approaches' three cross-cutting principles of participation, inclusion and fulfilling obligations. This will provide a systematic approach which gives a clear link between ICTs, enterprise development and poverty reduction. A combination of methods (qualitative, quantitative and participatory) suits ICT projects. Standardising such a methodology for each stage of the project cycle can minimise the reporting needed.

Date: -

Pages: 36pp.

Type of document: paper

Language: English

Identifier:

http://www.bellanet.org/leap/impact/index.cfm?fuseaction=dsp_document_details&doc_id=182&cat_id=92

Reference: 0035

Title: The impact of information and communications technology in Africa.

Author: Souter, David

Organisation: Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation

Keywords: ICTs; impact

Description: This short paper argues that the current impact of ICTs in Africa has been underestimated, and that the nature of the social and economic impact has been misunderstood by the development community. The broad contribution of ICTs to national development lies in three areas: in facilitating inward investment by international businesses; in facilitating development of local businesses; and in facilitating social and economic cohesion and the sharing of resources between individuals and communities.

Date: 1999

Pages: 4pp.

Type of document: paper; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.cto.int/aboutcto/publications/articles/ict.html>

Reference: 0036

Title: Using LISREL to measure the impact of information on development: London site pilot study.

Author: Tague-Sutcliffe, J.; Vaughan, L.; Sylvain, C.

Organisation: IDRC

Author's affiliation: Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Western Ontario, London ON, Canada N6G 1H1.

Keywords: frameworks; LISREL; enterprise development; IDRC

Description: This chapter reports the results of a pilot study conducted at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. The pilot study is part of a project on 'Measuring the Impact of Information on Development: a Path Analysis Approach', funded by IDRC. The project's principle goal is to perform an exploratory study of the feasibility of quantitatively measuring the impact of information on development. It develops and tests a mathematical model that will indicate, for each of a set of input variables, their relative importance in accounting for the variation in a set of output variables. To gain experience with the methodology before testing it in the small business sector in Shanghai, China, a pilot study was conducted in London. The LISREL model is a computer programme that analyses covariance structures. LISREL for Windows (v. 8.12) by Scientific Software International was used for the study. The LISREL model involves a number of steps: identifying the variables to be used; collecting data on these

variables; developing the model; testing the module against the data; and revising the model if necessary and re-testing it. In April–June 1995, 184 questionnaires were collected from a sample of 982 small businesses in London. Two of the most common problems with the data were answers between categories and multiple selections of categories for a given question. Path co-efficient analysis made it possible to assess the impact of information on business success when the contributions of other factors (business type and business environment) are considered together with the use of information. The London pilot study was ‘not very successful’ but the following lessons were learned: business success is a very complex phenomenon involving many variables; nominal data (yes and no) are not allowed in LISREL so these questions should be avoided; and determining the appropriate output variables (indicators of business success in this study) is extremely important for the LISEL model to work.

Publisher: IDRC

Date: 1995

Pages: 11pp

Type of document: chapter; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.idrc.ca/books/focus/783/tague.html>

Projects:

Measuring the Impact of Information on Development: a Path Analysis Approach, IDRC

Reference: 0037

Title: Beyond circles in square boxes: lessons learned from health communication impact evaluations.

Author: Robin Vincent

Organisation: Exchange, HealthLink Worldwide

Keywords: health; information projects; newsletter; resource centres; evaluation; reviews

Description: The paper draws out lessons learned from HealthLink’s evaluations, focussing on project partners, newsletters, and consultancy work done for other organisations. A consistent feature of the newsletter evaluations was the value placed on practical, easy to read, accessible information that was relevant and based on up-to-date research. Subsequent developments at HealthLink have seen the organisation move towards a more partner support and capacity building role, resulting in the phasing out of newsletter production in the North in the near future. These evaluations pointed to important constraints, some of which are not amenable to the kinds of changes that are possible at project level. HealthLink has tended to approach evaluations as an opportunity for improving future work, inviting a productively critical approach:

Ultimately the great potential of documenting lessons learned, in the form of more or less formal monitoring and evaluation indicators, is that it allows both strengths and weaknesses to be identified, and the possibility that they can usefully inform subsequent work...

Addressing some of the issues of power and levels of context holds out the possibility of a more complete process of learning. Such an evaluation process would be democratic, reflexive and would provide a means of constantly building on best practice. The Exchange programme is hosted by HealthLink Worldwide, previously AHRTAG, and is funded by DFID. Exchange is a network for brining together and sharing the lessons being learned in health communication. It works with a number of partners, including INASP Health.

Date: 2001

Pages:

Type of document: paper

Language: English

Identifier: <http://nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis/iis/papers3.htm>

Projects:

Child Health Dialogue [newsletter];
Health Action [newsletter];
AIDS Action [newsletter];
Resource Centre Project, Kenya AIDS NGO Consortium (KANCO) [resource centre];
Centre for Development in Health, Tanzania [resource centre];
Communication for Integrated Learning Project, Namibia [resource centre];
Health Development Information Project, Palestine [resource centre];
School Health Action and Training Project, India.

Reference: 0038

Title: An online impact assessment tool for research information: some preliminary concepts.

Author: Vogel, Isabel

Author's affiliation: id21,

Keywords: evaluation; methodologies; focus groups; research; policy-makers; online; id21

Description: The online development information service, id21, has been communicating development research to a global audience of policy-makers since 1997. It was established to make policy-related research findings accessible to decision-makers, particularly in the South. However, evaluating the ways in which this type of information feeds into policy processes remains elusive. The paper presents preliminary ideas on the design of an online feedback methodology modelled on focus groups, as well as the challenges foreseen, with the aim of eliciting feedback and comments from colleagues. The first section discusses the background to assessing the impact of information projects; the second discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the focus group approach; while the third section outlines some of the methodological challenges involved in designing an online feedback tool.

Publisher: [Information Development](#) 17(2)

Date: 2001

Pages: 111-113

Type of document: paper

Language: English

Identifier: ISSN 0266 6669

Reference: 0039

Title: Indicators in telecentre studies.

Author: Whyte, Anne

Keywords: indicators; telecentres; Acacia; IDRC

Description: This chapter provides guidelines for the elaboration and use of indicators in telecentre evaluation. Key criteria in the Acacia Initiative are local relevance and reliability, together with robustness when used for comparison of one project or country with another. The suggested indicators are first generation indicators for telecentres. Some were borrowed from other evaluation studies with similar goals and research hypotheses, and others were developed from Acacia research projects and applied in the baseline studies. The basic approach to creating indicators involves four steps: identify what is to be measured; develop trial measures; assess each trial indicator using agreed criteria; and selection of the best possible indicators for a specific project. The proposed indicators fall under four main categories with several sub-categories: telecentre performance indicators; sustainability indicators; content indicators; and impact indicators. The lists of indicators in these guidelines are checklists, not definitive and include alternatives.

Publisher: IDRC

Date: 1999a

Pages: 30pp.

Type of document: chapter; electronic

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.idrc.ca/books/focus/916/04-chp03.html>

Reference: 0040

Title: Understanding the role of community telecentres in development.

Author: Whyte, Anne

Organisation: Mestor Associates, Canada

Keywords: research; evaluation; telecentres; IDRC; Acacia

Description: This paper is based on a longer report, 'Acacia research guidelines for assessing community telecentres'. It aims to provide ideas on research and evaluation of community telecentres in Africa that are being undertaken by the Acacia Initiative of IDRC and its partners. It is based on good practice, starting from consideration of the underlying conceptual models, research design, data collection, data analysis, and communicating the results. Key questions facing the research and evaluation team are considered; alternative solution and best practice are proposed based on experience from similar field situations; and a common reference and starting point is provided to facilitate comparability between pilot projects. It is argued that:

Indicators are at the heart of any evaluation, and they require considerable effort to first identify, then to refine and ultimately agree on. Indicators for assessing telecentres are a common thread linking project objectives, key concepts and data collection across the telecentre projects in the rest of the world. Having common indicators for telecentre assessment is the key to comparative research.

The process of indicator development is seen as a combination of brainstorming, borrowing the ideas of others, multi-stakeholder discussions, being clear about definitions, criteria, goals and priorities; and finally being very parsimonious with the number of indicators that are selected. The proposed indicators are grouped under: basic telecentre parameters; indicators of demand for services; service performance; and indicators of use, behaviour and perceptions. Indicators of financial, policy, and human resources sustainability are then proposed. Application and information content indicators are also proposed. Impact indicators relating to economic impact, social impact, impacts on organisations are examined. Four principles for data collection are proposed: the information needs of the stakeholders should be built into the design of data collection; facilitating learning at all levels should be part of the data collection design; approaches which facilitate comparisons of results across telecentres and between countries should be adopted; and data sets should be shared in a common data base or data repository. Methodologies for collecting data include: performance reports; questionnaire surveys; observation techniques; group techniques (focus groups and Delphi techniques); scenarios; participatory and self-assessment approaches; household budgets and diaries; and questions to review after data collection and before analysis.

Date: 1999b

Pages: 22pp.

Type of document: paper; online

Language: English

Identifier: http://www.idrc.ca/telecentre/evaluation/nn/30a_Und.html

Reference: 0041

Title: Internet counts: measuring the impact of the Internet.

Author: Wilson III, Ernest J.; Daly, John A.; Griffiths, José-Marie

Organisation: National Research Council, Office of International Affairs, Committee on Indicators of Internet Impacts on Development, USA

Keywords: Internet; Africa; frameworks; indicators: Ghana; Senegal

Description: This report aims to provide a framework to analyse and better understand the impacts of Internet access and use, based on case studies undertaken in Ghana and Senegal. Since the penetration of the Internet in Africa is still limited in some areas, the report proposes an approach that seeks to infer the indirect impacts from extrapolation of the direct impacts on users and organisations. Indicators are presented which measure the competitiveness of the market and provide clues to the sustainability of Internet development and growth within a country, as well as the quality and quantity of Internet service. Indicators are also presented which analyse the number of users, and the reasons for which they are using the Internet. The Internet can also have impact upon sectors and on the development goals central to those sectors. Indicators are presented for the impacts on education and on the broader development goals associated with education, such as increased literacy and employment. Indicators are also presented for the impact on the private sector, the government, and NGOs and civil society. Many of these indicators would also be applicable in a macro-scale assessment of the impact of information services.

Publisher: Washington DC, USA, National Academy Press

Date: 1998

Pages: 104pp.

Type of document: book; online

Language: English

Identifier: <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9845.html>

Workshop programme

Tuesday 9 October 2001

Tuesday 9 October 2001

09.00 – 09.30 Registration of participants

09.30 – 10.15 Opening plenary session

Welcome addresses by
Professor Modupe Akande (Chairperson), Mr Carl Greenidge, Director, CTA; Ms Lisette Gast (on behalf of IICD); Dr Hans-Joachim de Haas (on behalf of BMZ)

PLENARY SESSION

Chairperson: Ibrahim Khadar
Rapporteur: Yohannes Gebre Medhine

11.00 – 11.20 Introduction to LEAP-IMPACT and an overview of the e-consultation
Shady Kanfi and Sarah Cummings

11.20 – 12.30 Panel discussion on the theme: *Can measuring results produce results?*
Carl Greenidge (CTA), Paul Engel (ECDPM), Thomas Kuby (GTZ), Anriette Esterhuysen (Association for Progressive Communications)

PLENARY SESSION

Chairperson: Andreas Springer-Heinze
Rapporteur: Nathan Ducastel

14.00 – 14.20 Presentation of the Workshop programme
Ibrahim Khadar

14.20 – 14.40 Characteristics and role of agricultural information
Kingo Mchombu

14.40 – 15.00 Principles of evaluation
Adiel Mbabu

15.00 – 15.30 Discussions

PLENARY SESSION

Chairperson: Jim Flanagan

Rapporteur: Marjon Hagensaars

16.00 – 16.20 Case study (Newsletter/ training)
Bruce Lauckner

16.20 – 16.40 Case study (ICTs)
Jane Frances Kanyunyuzi-Asaba

16.40 – 17.00 Discussions

18.00 Reception

Wednesday 10 October 2001

PLENARY SESSION

Chairperson: Shady Kanfi

Rapporteur: Christine Kalume

09.00 – 9.20 Case study (Book donation scheme)
Emmanuel Lufadeju

09.20 – 10.00 Discussions

10.00 – 10.15 Evaluation frameworks
Sarah Cummings

10.15 – 10.30 Evaluation concepts and terminology
Ibrahim Khadar

PLENARY SESSION

Moderator: Petra Feil

11.00 – 11.30 Discussions

11.30 – 12.00 Presentation of TOR for Working Groups/ Creation of Working Groups

14.00 – 15.30 WORKING GROUP SESSION

PLENARY SESSION

Chairperson: Michel Menou
Rapporteur: Joyce Adupa
16.00 – 17.00 Presentation of Working Group reports

Thursday 11 October 2001

PLENARY SESSION

Moderator : Byron Mook
Rapporteur: Alison Hewlitt
09.00 – 9.30 Issues in identifying “smart practices”
09.30 – 09.45 Discussions
09.45 – 10.00 Introduction to the Case method
10.00 – 10.30 Reading of the Case (Individual)
11.00 – 12.00 **WORKING GROUP SESSION**
Discussion of the Case in small groups

PLENARY SESSION

12.00 – 12.45 Discussion of the Case
14.00 – 18.00 Field Visits

Friday 12 October 2001

PLENARY SESSION

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Moderator: | Petra Feil |
| 9.00 – 9.30 | Outputs/ Achievements of the workshop <i>Ibrahim Khadar</i> |
| 9.30 – 10.20 | Conclusions <i>Monika Redecker</i> |
| 10.20 – 11.00 | Publication and dissemination of results <i>Karen Batjes–Sinclair</i> |
| 11.30 – 11.45 | Review of opportunities for future collaboration <i>Shady Kanfi and Sarah Cummings</i> |
| 11.45 – 12.00 | Presentation of Evaluation results <i>Nathan Ducastel, Petra Feil, Shady Kanfi, Andreas Springer-Heinze</i> |
| 12.00 – 12.30 | Closing remarks <i>Monika Redecker – FAKT, Jim Flanagan – CTA, Kingo Mchombu – participants</i> |

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Acronyms

| | |
|---------|---|
| ABC | African Book Collective (UK) |
| ACP | Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States |
| APC | Association for Progressive Communications |
| ARIS | Agricultural Research Information Service |
| ASARECA | Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa |
| BMZ | Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung |
| CABECA | Capacity Building in Electronic Communication in Africa |
| CABI | Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International |
| CARDI | Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| CGIAR | Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research |
| CORAF | Conférence des responsables de recherche agronomique africains |
| CTA | Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee (OECD) |
| DANIDA | Danish International Development Assistance |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| DORA | Dissemination of Reference Books on Agriculture (CTA) |
| ECART | European Consortium for Agricultural Research in the Tropics |
| ECDPM | European Centre for Development Policy Management |
| EIARD | European Initiative on Agricultural Research for Development |
| ELSA | Evaluation and Learning System for Acacia |
| EU | European Union |
| FAKT | Fördergesellschaft für Angepasste Techniken |

| | |
|----------|---|
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| FID | International Federation for Information and Documentation |
| GTZ | Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit |
| IAR&T | Institute of Agricultural Research and Training |
| ICM | information and communication management |
| ICRISAT | International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics |
| ICT | information and communication technology |
| IDRC | International Development Research Centre |
| IDS | Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex |
| IICD | International Institute for Communication and Development |
| IK | indigenous knowledge |
| INFORD | Information Provision for Rural Development |
| ISNAR | International Service for National Agricultural Research |
| ISP | Internet service provider |
| ITP | Intermediate Technology Publication |
| ITU | International Telecommunication Union (ITU) |
| IUE | information use environment |
| KACE | Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange |
| KIT | Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Institute for the Tropics) |
| LEAP | Learning and Evaluation Action Program |
| LISREL | linear structural relations model |
| M&E | monitoring and evaluation |
| MCT | multicentre community telecentres |
| MSAU | Mikuni State Agricultural University |
| NAMDEVCO | National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation |

| | |
|---------|--|
| NARO | National Agricultural Research Organisation |
| NARS | national agricultural research system |
| NGO | non-governmental organisation |
| NHRC | Navrongo Health Research Centre (Ghana) |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PADIS | Pan African Development Information System |
| PF | Preliminary Framework |
| R&D | research and development |
| RUFDATA | reasons and purposes, uses, focuses, data and evidence, audience, timing, agency |
| SATCRIS | Semi-Arid Tropical Crops Information Service (ICRISAT) |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Agency |
| STD | sexually transmitted diseases |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats |
| UNECA | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| URL | universal resource location |
| USA | United States of America |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| WAICENT | World Agricultural Information Centre (FAO) |
| WTDC | World Telecommunication Development Centre |
| WWW | World Wide Web |
| ZADI | Zentralstelle für Agrardokumentation und Information |