Evaluation Community of India (ECOI)

ECOI News Letter: Issue No. 4, August, 2016

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Events

ECOI : Launch of State Chapter Maharashtra @ RISE 2016

First State Chapter of ECOI is being launched in Maharashtra at The Responsible Impact Summit & Expo (RISE) 2016 on 21st September in Mumbai. The State Chapter will seek membership from the community of evaluation practitioners in the region and a convening is planned at the RISE Summit for ECOI members from Mumbai and Pune. Members of ECOI are welcome to attend the 3 day event.

RISE 2016 is an open platform designed as one-of-its kind summit with a focus on value and outcomes. The distinctive feature is the interactive format - Roundtables, Workshops, Chat-tables, Potential to Partner (P2P) meetings, Display areas and Social Tours that will enable cross-sectoral dialogue, collaboration and capacity building in the sector. It will be held on 21st – 22nd September in Mumbai and a Social Tour on 23rd in Pune.

The event is complimentary but requires pre-registration [to attend or any queries kindly email priyanka.sharma@idobro.com].

National Consultation on SDGs - Focus on goals 8 and 9

A National Consultation was organised on 2-3rd August to discuss Industrialisation and Employment for Sustainable Growth in India. The event was conducted jointly by NITI Aayog, Research and Information Systems (RIS) and UN organisation in Delhi. Discussions were very fruitful. Deliberations of the event will be available shortly.

United Nations Evaluation Group Launches updated Norms and Standards for Evaluation

Contributed by B.V.L.N. Rao, Independent consultant and member ECOI

In June 2016 the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) brought out a new set of evaluation norms and standards that replace the earlier version of 2005, reflecting the developments and new demands in the field of evaluation during the last decade and more particularly in the past two years. These norms and standards are to govern all evaluations in the UN system, but are expected to inspire evaluations in a wider area.

The revised version includes 10 general norms, namely,

- Internationally agreed principles, goals and targets
- Utility
- Credibility
- Independence
- Impartiality
- Ethics
- Transparency
- Human rights and gender equality
- National evaluation capacities
- Professionalism

In addition, there are 4 Institutional Norms on i) Enabling Environment; ii) Evaluation Policy; iii) Responsibility for Evaluation Function, and iv) Evaluation Use and Follow up

The Standards add detailed prescriptions on:

- Institutional framework;
- Management of evaluation function;
- Evaluation competencies;
- Conduct of Evaluations;
- Quality

For more details, see United Nations Evaluation Group (2016). *Norms and Standards for Evaluation,* New York: UNEG at http://unevaluation.org/2016-Norms-and-Standards

UNEG 2016 EvalWeek

From 25-29 April, UNEG Evaluation Week was organized in Geneva, Switzerland by 11 UNEG members (WIPO, ILO, IOM, ITC, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNCTAD, UNECE, UNHCR, WHO and WMO). The event stressed on a significant opportunity to bring evaluation to the forefront of development and humanitarian work particularly within the framework of the SDGs and the "no one left behind agenda" and the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit. For more details, see http://www.uneval.org/event/detail/448

Knowledge Products

Using Participatory Statistics to Examine the Impact of Interventions to Eradicate Slavery: Lessons from the Field

Oosterhoff, P., Bharadwaj, S., Burns, D., Raj, A.M., Nanda, R.B. and Narayanan, P. CDI Practice Paper 16; Publisher IDS

This paper (available here) reflects on the use of participatory statistics to assess the impact of interventions to eradicate slavery and bonded labour.

It deals with:

1. the challenges of estimating changes in the magnitude of various forms of slavery;
2. the potential of combining participatory approaches with statistical principles to generate robust data for assessing impact of slavery eradication; and
3. the practical and ethical questions in relation to working with people living within a context of modern slavery

The paper draws lessons from the realities of using participatory statistics to support the evaluation of a slavery eradication programme in North India.

Reflections

Impact Analysis of CSR in India

Contributed by Karon Shaiva, Founder & Chief Impact Officer of Idobro and member ECOI

The Companies Act was revised after almost half a century. And with it, came in some people's opinion, the draconian Section 135. Much has been written on the mandated CSR component, who it applies to and how it is to be implemented. I would like to focus on one element of the ACT which has been mentioned more in the passing – Monitoring & Evaluation and its raison d'être - Social Impact. M&E and Social impact assessment (SIA) are often used interchangeably and yet they are distinct tools and processes to achieve different objectives. While M&E is used to identify how a programme is/was implemented (in keeping with a pre-defined plan or not), SIA is to appreciate the consequences of the programme – intended or not.

➢ The Companies Act & SIA

The Companies Act has made M&E a core program requirement and a key responsibility of the CSR committee. Corporates have been gearing up to meet the mandate, especially those with one person departments who traditionally use to outsource all CSR activities. Others have huge resources allocated to manpower

alone and outlay for programmes runs into hundreds of crores. Both need to measure impact so that they can report the same as required by the ACT. Transparency and Disclosure is critical to be in compliance with the law.

We have undertaken M&E and SIA for significant corporate group companies and have seen a rise in request for tools to be designed that can not only help Corporate do more effective CSR projects that benefit the communities but also advance the knowledge and interest of the business. We have also seen a plethora of technology solutions for CSR project management, employee volunteering, data collection and more. The use of technology for monitoring remote locations has increased the efficiency of both the NGO implementation partner as well as the corporate field staff. Perception analysis of a brand and NGO ranking for a Performance Index are some ways that combine Social Impact Assessment with traditional Market research and stakeholder relations.

➢ The Quant v/s Qual debate

Measuring Impact will never be easy and monitoring a process that is fraught with subjective issues like culture, behaviour, attitudes etc, will always require deep thought and understanding. One of the biggest reason that Qualitative research and ethnography were being used a whole lot more in the Social space was to counteract the huge reliance on numbers by quantitative research. More and more qualitative tools like PRA were developed that could unearth layers to social needs and impact. It also helped differentiate between output and outcomes of a programme as per "The theory of Change". With the mandated reporting of CSR activities, the fear is that there is a return to the "number game", something Corporates are very familiar with and follow with gusto as a management practice. And will the "numbers game" dilute impact on the ground is a question that remains to be answered.

➢ The low hanging fruit

Designing and implementing CSR activities will always be a balancing act for Corporates. Maximum impact and least spends. More importantly, the ACT requires them to be "seen" to be doing good. How then can programmes meet the real needs of their constituents and also align with national priorities while not be seen as drain on Corporate resources? Needs assessment, Baseline surveys and research are key to designing for long term outcomes and impact. Compliance and visibility may be sacrificed for change on the ground, and true impact at the altar of quick wins, to show results while implementing projects. But this is a topic that demands far deeper introspection than possible here.

➢ Time to RISE

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has released a number of amendments, notes and FAQs since April 1st 2014 when the ACT came into force to clarify the various provisions and make it easier for Corporate India to do their "duty". Strategic CSR and creative CSR are words being bandied about in our growing circles of RISE conversations organized by Idobro. The exchange at such forums is based on the RISE framework for brainstorming and prioritizing CSR spends.

Most Corporates that come under the CSR demand criteria, will be undertaking CSR projects for the first time and the collective opportunity to change India and the lives of billions is an exciting if daunting goal. We are confident that together with the development sector, government and not forgetting academia, Corporate India will rise to the challenge!

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This is an extract of the original article written for the magazine - CSR Mandate. Idobro is a social enterprise that specializes in Monitoring & Evaluation, Advocacy and Engagement on Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainability.

Ethical Review of Evaluation Protocols

Contributed by Alok Srivastava, Director, CMS India and member ECOI

Most common way of defining "ethics" is 'norms for conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behavior'. In fast growing and expanding sector of evaluation (and research) with big and small organizations, individuals and institutions undertaking evaluations, relevance and importance of practicing ethical norms is very critical as it ensures objectivity, promotes fair practices in conduct of evaluation and provides ground for acceptance of findings by stakeholders.

While on one hand, evaluation involving human participants must not violate any universally applicable ethical standards, on the other hand, an evaluator (consultancy firms) needs to consider local cultural values when it comes to the application of the ethical principles to individual autonomy and informed consent. Important ethical issues include voluntary participation and informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and accountability in terms of the accuracy of evaluation design, analysis and reporting.

The main reason for considering ethical norms in evaluation is because it prohibits immoral approach towards information/data collection. Further, restricts misrepresentation of information/data and restricts evaluators from being biased. Also, to an extent, emotional conflicts of surveyed population are addressed properly. On evaluators' part, accountability towards the community gets ensured and last but not least, institutions/organizations more likely to fund evaluations can trust the quality and integrity of evaluation outcomes.

A step further, the ethical norms include efforts for dissemination and utilization of evaluation findings i.e. follow-up with donors/implementing agencies.

Who ensures? An institutional review board on ethical issues (IRB) is primarily a duly recognized committee that is formally designated to approve, monitor, and review evaluation involving humans. The purpose of an IRB review is to assure, both in advance and by periodic review, that appropriate steps are taken to protect the rights and welfare of humans participating as subjects in the evaluation. IRBs attempt to ensure protection of subjects by reviewing protocols and related materials.

Initially, IRBs were committees at academic institutions and medical facilities to review research studies involving human participants. However, in India, Institutional Review Board on ethics for non-clinical research is few, almost non-existent. Mostly universities in India have duly-constituted ethics committee but their review is limited to research by their faculty and students and not to research done outside the University purview. But now many independent non government agencies have IRBs to provide services for review of protocols from ethical perspective. Evaluation or research on non-clinical health issues do follow some basics of ethical clearances but in most of the cases it is more of a voluntary choice and less as a pre-requisite for initiating an evaluation or research. Further it has been observed that evaluation of programmes and initiatives concerning juvenile, social groups, differently-abled, prisoners or on issues such as domestic violence, human trafficking among other sensitive issues is rarely reviewed to ensure ethical appropriateness of the research design and protocols. The pointer for thought, how best can we sensitize, facilitate and help each other towards improving and ensuring practicing of ethical standards in evaluation and social research, particularly in context of India.

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The International Year of Evaluation 2015: What is Significance for India?

Contributed by I. C. Awasthi, Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow and member ECOI

The year 2015 was declared as the International Year of Evaluation. United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the Mission of Fiji to the United Nations assembled in a small group with Member States, UN partners and Evaluation Partners to celebrate the adoption of resolution on national evaluation capacity development on 17th December, 2014. This kicked off the celebrations of the International Year of Evaluation. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution approved the capacity building for the evaluation of development activities at the country level during the UN General Assembly Second Committee meeting held on 3rd November, 2014 and subsequently this was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in the plenary session of 19th December, 2014(UNGA Resolution A/RES/69/237).

This was the result of the efforts by the evaluation partners to launch a global movement to strengthen the national evaluation capacities. The Evaluation Torch, a symbol of spreading evaluation culture, travelled in different Evaluation Year events organized by the evaluation partners around the world. The evaluation torch had symbolically passed on to international and national evaluation partners during many evaluation events organized since then. The torch was passed on to India and the Indian Evaluation Week was celebrated in New Delhi during January 19-23, 2015. As many as 30 Evaluation Year events were organised to receive the evaluation torch with a view to strengthening the Global Evaluation Agenda. United Nations also joined to light the torch by Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General at the UNEG Evaluation Week on 9th March, 2015. Evaluation Torch finally travel Kathmandu, Nepal where Global Evaluation Week and Evaluation Partners' 2nd Global Forum was held at the Parliament of Nepal in November 2015.

➤ India and the Evaluation Year: Some Reflections

There are inherent problems with regard to evaluation of projects, programmes and policies in our country. The first and foremost problem is that there is no national evaluation policy and without policy it is difficult to assess the impact of programmes and policies. Evaluation policy framework helps improve the effectiveness and measures the impact of government programmes and policies, thereby reflecting on the credibility of the work done.

There has been a severe disconnect between implementation framework and outcome framework or results. Our monitoring and evaluation set up has been obsessed with providing information on implementation as opposed to effectiveness of the development programmes and heavily preoccupied with "are we doing the thing right" rather than "are we doing the right thing".

Report of the Evaluation Gap Working Group (2006:16) aptly described, "most of these resources are directed towards monitoring the use of funds, deploying and managing personnel, and producing outputs and services. By contrast, relatively little is spent in rigorously assessing as to whether the programmes are having the desired impact beyond what would have occurred without them". Obviously, there is a need for building institutional capacity, developing capabilities and competencies and strong demand for ownership of an evaluation system in order to spread evaluation culture as part of economic reforms.

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Members' Column

ECOI encourages formation of thematic and activity specific interest groups open to ECOI members. The following groups have been constituted, and a discussion space has been provided on the Gender and Evaluation platform

(http://gendereval.ning.com/group/eval-com-india).

ECOI Action Group	Coordinator	Update
1. Evaluation field building with various stakeholders	R.S. Goel	There is plan to organize series of events across the country involving various stakeholders for evaluation field building and hand holding
2. Indian Evaluation Policy framework	Rashmi Agrawal	An outline of the Policy Framework has been prepared. Write up in progress. Members and others are invited to join
3. Capacity building in Evaluations	Shubh Kumar-Range	Consultations are on
4. Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation	Rituu B Nanda, Paul Kojo Asare	To be activated this month
5. Evaluations in context of SDGs – framework, measures and mechanisms beyond surveys	Nabesh Bohidar	To be activated this month
6. Repository for Good Evaluation Practices	Rajib Nandi	To be activated this month

More people are welcome to join the various groups.

Three members namely Rajib Nandi, Rituu Nanda and Shachi Joshi will represent ECOI in EES 2016 and present papers. Another member namely Shyam Singh will be participating in the training programme on 'Strengthening National Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities and Use: National Evaluation Societies as a Driving Force' at University of Antwerp, Belgium in October 2016. ECOI congratulates them and wishes them all the best.

International News

Arunaselam Rasappan has been felicitated with the EvalPartners Award 2015. Responsible for initiating the evaluation advocacy movement in Malaysia in 1996, he also organized the first international evaluation conference in 1997 before the formation and launch of the Malaysian Evaluation Society in 1999. Internationally, he has been involved with initiatives such as the launch of GovtEval (a global evaluation discussion forum) in late 1994 and was a founder member of the team that designed and launched the IOCE.

Capacity building & Training

Diploma in Monitoring & Evaluation (September 7- November 29, 2016)
The course will be organized by the National Institute of Labor Economics Research and Development (NILERD) from September 7 to November 29th 2016 for international participants fully sponsored by Government of India. In addition to teaching traditional M&E concepts and approaches, the course also focuses upon new and emerging knowledge including impact evaluations, strength-based approaches, social audits, etc. More information is available at http://iamrindia.gov.in/

IRMA Impact Evaluation Summer School Workshop (September 26-30, 2016)

This training program aims to introduce participants to several experimental & quasi-experimental techniques as well as qualitative methodologies and to develop their research and consulting skills while using these methods. More information is available at https://www.irma.ac.in/pdf/mdp_cal_pdf/574.pdf

Getting involved

Active participation is possible through innovative ideas, discussion forums, blogs, networking, sharing knowledge, feedback, latest information on M&E, future activities, strategic inputs, capacity building, and other contributions.

Membership drive

All professional evaluators, scholars, practitioners, development officials, young professionals, project managers, implementers, civil society, academicians and students interested in the field of development and evaluations are welcome to join. The membership is open to individuals.

How to be a member?

Please fill the registration form and pay Indian Rs. 500 or US $15. For more details please contact at the addresses mentioned below.

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