



Experience of Promoting VOPEs

Lessons from the
Community of Evaluators

Status of Evaluation

- Genesis
 - Need to establish evaluation as a separate discipline in South Asia.
 - Limited opportunities for knowledge exchange, interaction and learning
 - Absence of a regional platform
 - Limited research, documentation, dissemination of experiences

Status of Evaluation

- Present Status
 - Diverse realities; similar development challenges;
 - Evaluation getting increasing attention
 - Absence of national level Evaluation Policy – Except Sri Lanka
 - Difference in approach to evaluation between government and civil society;
 - Absence of unified standards, ethics and protocols for the region
 - Institutionalised capacity development on evaluation – slowly emerging

Experiences: Advocating for relevant public policies

- Very little collaborative work between the government and the civil society;
- National evaluation policy - limited to Sri Lanka
- Outcome monitoring is gaining prominence in government work
- Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) established by Government of India

Experiences: Strengthening Organisational Capacities

- Central challenge – Absence of formal institutional identity.
- No strategic planning
- Anchored by Host Organisation
 - Has legal identity, management expertise and experience in the sector

Experiences: Enhancing skills of individual evaluators

- Dedicated CB events leading to increased knowledge and skills
- Regular practice, documentation of learning and dissemination beyond the conclave - not evident.
- Theory and practice – western in origin; limited practice opportunities and absorption.
- Knowledge products – yet to be developed and marketed.
- Absence of regional level capacity building needs assessment.

Results Achieved (1)

- Established identity as a Regional Platform.
- 37 Individual and institutional members.
- Edited volume on evaluative practices in South Asia – documented - will be published soon.
- Regular conduction of events – Evaluation Conclave, Regional Events.
- Strong networking – EvalPartner & CLEAR.

Results Achieved (2)

- Website used as an interactive medium
- Focussed CB events and Discussion threads to develop individual capacities;
- Improved understanding of different approaches, tools and techniques.
- Clarity and agreement on institutional form; registration will be done soon.

Challenges and How addressed (1)

- CoE without a formal identity
 - Host Organisation brought in to provide support
- Absence of decision making mechanism
 - Strategic Advisory Team facilitates decision making
- Members dispersed over a wide area; not actively involved in day-to-day activities
 - Dedicated task teams, practice tracks
 - Regular communication

Challenges and How addressed (2)

- Absence of institutionalised effort to build capacity
 - Use of focused CB effort to build capacities of individual members.
- Reaching scale to address large numbers of practitioners in all the countries of South Asia
 - Membership drive to be initiated with Responsibility and Incentives Framework

Success Factors

- Continued Core Funding from IDRC with strong technical support and backstopping.
- Host Organisations, with experience in managing networks, sector and discipline
- Participatory visioning - accommodating emerging views and expectation of members.
- Member driven platform

Learning (1)

- Effort to institutionalise should go hand in hand with effort to deliver the key results.
- Role of Host Organisation with relevant experience and expertise is important.
- Secretariat – important to facilitate delivery of key functions; role should be nuanced, clear and agreed
- Members contribution should be guided by tangible give and take (Responsibility and Incentives Framework)

Learning (2)

- Continue engagement with more successful members; encourage contribution from the less successful ones.
- Recognise contribution; share responsibilities to avoid pressure on individual members.
- Donor support is a start-up capital; design and pursue a self-generating business model for sustainability.
- Ensure regular communication and engagement with members through a range of online and offline options.
- Take difference of opinion positively and strive for accommodation, diversity and common goal.



*If you want to go fast, go alone
If you want to go far, go together*

- African Proverb