LEAD4innovation Toolkit Facilitator’s Guide

**What is this guide for?**

This guide provides briefing notes on how you, as a facilitator, can support small-grant and innovation fund recipients to use the LEAD4innovation toolkit to plan and manage their evaluation. The guide is designed to be used alongside the toolkit.

**Why was it developed?**

This guide was developed to accompany the toolkit to assist facilitators to effectively support capacity development, especially when encouraging funding proposals from grassroots and community organisations with little or no experience of evaluation. The idea is to connect evaluation into the early design of project proposals.

**Who and what is a facilitator?**

The role of the facilitator is an important one. Facilitators are observers, listeners, negotiators, supporters and coaches. We might think of facilitators as people who can help and assist us by asking more detailed questions about what we want to do. Facilitators might help us to understand different perspectives and ways of thinking about a challenge or goal. Facilitators are not experts; instead their key role is to draw out the expertise that exists among participants.

In the context of a small-grants or innovation funds, the facilitator will usually be part of the managing or funding organisation, in the role of capacity development, monitoring and evaluation, or any other position with an interest in supporting the recipients of funds to design and manage their own project design and evaluation. However, we hope that the toolkit and the accompanying facilitator’s guide can be adapted for use beyond this original context.

**How should I use this guide?**

The structure of this guide follows the structure of the LEAD4innovation toolkit, which is organised into 8 modules. In addition, there are some additional ‘facilitator’s tasks’ to support meta-evaluation over a number of projects. These may be useful if a funding program wants to draw together individual evaluations in order to learn from and about the program as a whole.

The overall structure of this toolkit is based on the Rainbow Framework from BetterEvaluation.org. It also draws from June Lennie and Jo Tacchi’s (2013) book, *Evaluating Communication for Development: A Framework for Social Change*.

Each section begins with a summary of the module, with suggestions of some questions that you, as a facilitator might raise with project teams at appropriate times. Although the sequence of modules has been designed to offer a logical progression from planning through to analysis, you and project teams can adapt the order to suit your purposes.

# Module 1: Introduction to the Learning, Evaluation and Design for innovation (LEAD4innovation) toolkit

# Module 1 provides an introduction and discusses the C4D Evaluation Framework. The image below is a more detailed version of this framework. It uses extended key-words that are associated with the seven principles to illustrate what each concept means. In this guide we highlight when or where different principles might be relevant and how they connect to specific tools and activities. Many facilitators will find it helpful to refer to this framework to raise questions or help grant recipients to think about their approaches to evaluation.



# Module 2: Stakeholder Mapping

Participatory: Local participants and experts often all have experiences and knowledge about your project that will be useful for learning and evaluating. How can you involve all kinds of stakeholders in the design and evaluation process?

**Stakeholder Mapping Group Exercise**

Stakeholders are people or organizations who are in some way involved in the project. These may be people who can help to create change, or who may be affected by the changes. The success of a project often depends on active involvement of stakeholders.

Stakeholder mapping is a useful process for grant recipients at the beginning of a project to develop project designs in ways that are more participatory and sustainable, and can set the foundations for thinking of how stakeholders might be involved in evaluation. You can support grant recipients in this process by:

* talking them through the process in person, over the phone or via skype
* asking them to send photos of their stakeholder map and using it as a discussion point
* encouraging them to send a video where they explain to you the stakeholders on their map.

**Communicating with stakeholders**

Effective communication is vital for successful projects and for learning. Grant recipients will all have different levels of access to information, whether that information comes from people with experience in their focus area or from sources on the internet. Grant recipients will need some guidance on:

* who to talk to about what kinds of issues
* know the kinds of things they can ask you for help with
* and understand what kinds of communication you expect from them.

Looking at the stakeholder map, it may be useful for you to discuss how grant recipients plan to communicate with you and with other stakeholders. This is an opportunity to openly discuss:

* How often will you be communicating, and how you will communicate? This may change throughout the project.
* What are the best ways for us to communicate? (Skype, email, phone, meetings, face-to-face)
* What are the potential barriers to continuous, two-way communication?
* What are the most effective and appropriate ways to share results with different stakeholder groups?
* What is the most appropriate form for these to be presented? (for example, text, video, digital stories, photos, postcards?) Do you have templates to guide their presentations?

# Module 3: Ethics



Critical: what are the differences in age, gender, language, education, community group, community status that might lead to differences in power and confidence to speak? Awareness of these differences help you choose the best approach.

##### **Ethics in projects**

Many grant recipients may not have thought a lot about ethics considerations prior to applying for the funding. In our field of communication there are many important aspects of ethics to consider, especially in relation to personal image and representation. You can help in this area by sharing examples of how previous projects have included processes to inform participants:

* what the project is about?
* what they want to film or record?
* what they want to do with the media? Is there a risk the information provided may have negative consequences for communities? (for example, legal consequences for discussion of abuse or violence or other illegal activities?)
* how this media can be accessed and by whom?

This toolkit will include a template that grant recipients could adapt to suit their own purposes. You may also discuss other ways of getting consent orally or in other culturally appropriate ways.

**Ethics in evaluation:**

In doing evaluation we also often collect data from people to use in reports and on websites. You can help grant recipients by explaining how you would like to use data they collect. You should discuss and find out from them:

* What is the culturally appropriate way to ask people their feedback and observations about the project?
* How can grant recipients help people to feel comfortable to give open feedback (for example in workshops, in questionnaires?)
* Will they ask people’s names on surveys or questionnaires?
* Will you use people’s names when you use things they say in reports? What is the best way to explain this?

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| Facilitator’s tasks: Develop evaluation capacity*How can you support individuals, groups and organisations to strengthen their ability to conduct and use their evaluations?** *Link new grant recipients with other C4D organisations (ideally former grant recipients to form a “community of practice” or “Learning Circle”, mentor or buddy project)*
* *Ongoing coaching, review and reflection*
* *Encourage grant recipients to share their emerging findings for a “peer review”*
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# Module 4: Planning data use

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***Learning Based:*** Evaluations should be focused on being useful and supporting learning. Learning depends on good communication, cooperation, collaboration and trust between all those involved.

**Data-Use Calendar**

Time passes quickly when busy organisations are doing lots of small projects, so it helps to have a plan in advance for how and when the data will be used. A data use calendar can be helpful here. This calendar should note major milestones, such as when data will be collected, when the activities are, and when reports are required. Grant recipients can then fill in the optimal times to analyse the data, use the data to inform improvements, and use the data in reporting to stakeholders.

You can follow up on this section by asking them if they are able to share their data-use calendar with you. You can encourage grant recipients to think about how they can integrate time for reflection on the project into their existing schedules, such as including as an item on meeting agendas or at community events.

**Planning how to share findings**

When it comes time for the grant recipients to send their reports it sometimes helps to encourage alternative ways for these to be shared. For example, you may get better insights if the grant recipients share their progress reports in the form of videos. A group interview or conference call addressing the key areas may work. One very accessible and simple way we have suggested in the toolkit is a multi-media postcard. This enables grant recipients to be able to quickly see the questions you have, and reply using the kinds of media they find easiest to use to communicate. Using postcards to communicate means you are likely to get richer information more often. Some postcards may also be appropriate for your website and in your annual reports.

## Facilitator’s tasks: Develop planning documents for the evaluation

*Now that the stakeholders interests, basic reporting milestones, project design, evaluation questions, and methods, have been explored, you may want to document these decisions in an evaluation plan. The types of documents you might use include:*

· Aide memoire

· Evaluation framework

· Evaluation plan

· Evaluation work plan

· Gantt chart

· Inception report

*These may or may not be shared with the grant recipients themselves, depending on whether they will be useful, or whether they may have an interest in commenting on the proposed plans.*

# Module 5. Define: What are we trying to do, how are we trying to do it?



***Holistic:*** Successful and sustainable C4D projects are designed with an understanding of the local communication context (or communicative ecology) and other social, cultural, economic, technological, organizational and institutional systems and contexts.

Although the grant recipients will have written a project description in the application, often these ideas evolve and develop throughout the project design and evaluation process. You can play a key role in shaping the process of change.

When they have finished mapping their project using the excel or paper-based tools in this section, you can ask if they are able to share the representation with you, and you can talk through the results and discuss the implications. This will be useful for future reference, and across a funding program it can demonstrate the range and spread of projects and their emphasis.

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# Module 6: Ask Questions

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***Emergent:*** Remember that projects often need to change (due to changes in priorities, new information). It is a good idea to return to this exercise throughout the project to see if you have new questions or different priorities.

##### **Uses and Users of evaluation**

Evaluations should be focused on being useful, and this means having a clear understanding of who the users are and what they might use it for. You can help grant recipients keep their evaluation plans useful and realistic by referring back to their stakeholder map. You can also help them to identify ways they could involve the community in the evaluation design, data collection and analysis.

##### **Specify the key evaluation questions**

This is often one of the most challenging parts of designing an evaluation. It is important that the questions match the project design and answer questions that will be useful for stakeholders.

The grant recipient’s toolkit includes an activity to help identify the questions that matter to them the most. These questions may be different from the questions that matter to you.

Where possible it is ideal if you can participate in this activity with the grant recipient. Where it is not possible, you might ask them to take a photo of the map of questions so that they can explain it to you over skype or phone. In particular, review the links between the design and the types of questions being asked, and prompt critical thinking where this may be helpful.

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# Module 7: Planning information and data collection for evaluation and learning

**Realistic:** The most effective evaluation approaches are ones that are simple, practical, responsive, robust and useful.

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**Complex:** The outcomes and social changes relating to C4D projects are complex and often unpredictable. For this reason it is important to be flexible in designing and evaluating, and to stay attuned to unexpected things that occur, both positive and negative.

##### **Collecting data**

There are many options for collecting data. Some take a lot of time and resources, while others can be quite easy to integrate. When you’re helping grant recipients choose methods for collecting data it is important that these are useful, and that they will help to understand the project in relation to the priority questions. It is also important that they are realistic and that it won’t take too long or be too expensive. Ideally they will have completed the activity in Module 7 of the toolkit, and you can review it with them afterwards.

##### **Unexpected Event Reporting:**

In addition to the main methods for collecting data, it is a good idea to plan ways to keep track of unusual or unexpected events. The toolkit for grant recipients suggests ways of keeping track of these as they occur. You may discuss ways of sharing this information. Many organisations use email, Dropbox, Google Drive or Google Forms to record these events.

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# Module 8: Making sense of data

**Manage Data:**

 It is important to keep good records of all the data that is collected. During your calls with the grant recipients you may discuss:

* Tips on labeling data with the name, basic demographics (e.g. male/female), date, where it was collected from, and the methods used. Ways to store the data, including backups.
* Whether it is ethically reasonable for them to share raw data with you

##### **Analysing data**

Grant recipients may be overwhelmed with how to analyse their data. For their purposes it is important that they focus on reviewing the data in relation to the priority questions, and that they also ask:

* What things are working well?
* What things are not working well?
* What thing are unexpected?

If they are willing for you to access the data, you might be able to do a more in-depth analysis of what they have collected. You may also be able to visualise parts of their data, using graphs, piecharts, wordcloud or geographical mapping, which might help them interpret and understand their own projects. See <http://betterevaluation.org/plan/describe/visualise_data> for resources on data visualisation.

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| Facilitator’s tasks: Verify findings and identify potential contributions to impacts It is often hard in development to understand and explain change, who has caused the change (attribution) or how a project’s or person’s actions may be contributing to change. This is because there is often an interplay of complex events, activities and persons contributing to change. You may wish to explore the potential changes resulting from some of your grant recipients. To understand change you could:* conduct key informant interviews to gather evidence supporting attribution or contribution
* explore exceptions to change to understand other factors. This means treating the data that doesn’t fit the expected pattern not as outliers but as potential clues to other causal factors and then seeking to explain them.
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| Facilitator’s tasks: Synthesise data across evaluationsThe projects funded in small-grants programs are likely to vary considerably, in terms of design, local context and other differences in circumstances. We have found that it is more effective to take a ‘realist’ approach to the synthesis of data across projects and their associated evaluations. This means that the most important question is ‘what works for whom in what circumstances’. The following steps have been adapted from resources available on the BetterEvaluation.org website, taking advantage of the information that will have been generated through the use of the toolkit.Step 1: The first step is to review the scope of the synthesis. Ideally, all projects would be included, but if there are some limitations, transparency on the decisions about what to include and exclude should be recorded.Step 2: Next, it is important to identify comparison groups. A good place to start is by reviewing the project design visualisation (from Module 5) for all the grant recipients to be synthesised. The four different C4D focus areas (content, dialogue, capacity building and infrastructure) will have some similarities in terms of the underlying theory, and this can be analysed through the question: what works for whom in what circumstances. If there are projects that don’t seem to fit, start a new pile called ‘other’.Step 3: For each group of projects, start extracting the data from the project documentation. This is likely to be a process of continual review, or iteration, and a messy process of highlighting and editing summaries of projects.Step 4: Compare and contrast the evidence under each group using the following question as a guide: ‘what is it about this kind of intervention that works, for whom, in what circumstances, in what respects and why?’Step 5: Draw conclusions and make recommendations |

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# Issues to Consider: application, selection and design process for small-grant programs

Our research has shown that there are some common features among small-grants programs. These include the application and mentoring processes that can promote innovation, experimentation, continual improvements, and learning-based evaluation. More specific recommendations include:

1. Developing a concept note at application stage. A concept note is a short expression of interest (EOI) from applicants and could include text, videos, digital stories and other mediums. EOIs should outline the idea and respond to key questions:
	1. What do you want to do?
	2. How are you going to do it?
	3. How will you know how well the project is going?
2. Reviewing concept notes or EOIs should occur with a select group of people or reviewers. The reviewers should look for promising ideas that could be developed.
3. Notifying promising applicants should take place with enough time to further develop the project design. The LEAD4innovation Toolkit will be useful during this period because it provides a process for applicants to a) develop the idea into a clearer project design b) reflect upon the requirements of the stakeholders, contexts and objectives; and c) connect the design of the project to the evaluation in ways that are learning-based and proportionate to the project.