

Lessons from Test-Driving Utilization Focused Evaluation in Asia

AFREA Conference
Ghana, January 2012

Facilitators:

Sonal Zaveri

Chelladurai Solomon

IDRC Consultants

Panel Agenda

1. *UFE* – What is it? How is it different? Why?
2. DECI'S Process
3. Challenges, Constraints and What we Learned

Introduction to UFE

1. UFE – What is it?
2. How is it different?
3. Understanding the 12 steps

Utilization focused evaluation is...

A decision-making framework for enhancing the utility and actual use of evaluations. (Patton, 2008a: slide 9)

Evaluation Use – Why is it important?

- Engaging users
- Enhancing ownership of the outcomes
- Facilitation of learning and communications
- Transfer or shares control of the evaluation
- Emphasis upon the users

3 Questions for evaluation

WHAT?

What to know?

SO WHAT?

What to act on?

NOW WHAT?

How to use findings?

Challenge is not getting information, it is USING it!

Utilization focused evaluation is...

A **PROCESS** for helping primary intended users select the most appropriate content, model, methods, theory, and uses for their particular situation. However, UFE does not advocate any particular evaluation content, model, method or theory. Situational responsiveness guides the interactive process between evaluator and primary intended users.

Evaluation done for and with specific, intended primary **USERS** for specific, intended **USES**.

“**USES**” refers to the way real people in the real world **APPLY** evaluation findings and experience the evaluation **PROCESS**. (Patton, 2008: 37 - Ch.2)

Engaging users contributes to

Personal **LEARNING** among them.

More **CONFIDENCE** and direct **APPLICATION** of evaluation findings to program practices.

A reduced **POWER DIFFERENTIAL** between evaluators and program practitioners.

More **NEGOTIATED DECISION MAKING** and learning.

Premises of UFE

1. Evaluations should be **JUDGED** by their utility and **ACTUAL USE**.
2. No evaluation should go forward unless and until there are **primary intended users** who will use the information that can be produced.
3. Primary intended users are **involved in the process - commitment**.
4. Evaluation is part of **initial program design**. The primary intended users want information to help answer a question or questions.
5. **Evaluator's role is to help intended users clarify their purpose and objectives**.
6. **Implications for use are part of every decision** throughout the evaluation – it is the driving force of the evaluation process. (Patton, 2008a)

UFE in 12 steps

1. Project / network readiness assessment.
2. Evaluator readiness and capability assessment.
3. Identification of primary intended users.
4. Situational analysis.
5. Identification of primary intended uses.
6. Focusing on evaluation.
7. Evaluation design.
8. Simulation of use.
9. Data collection.
10. Data analysis.
11. Facilitate use.
12. Meta-evaluation.

The First Three Steps

Project Readiness

- Guidance to understand UFE
- Requires active and skilled guidance from a MENTOR

Evaluator Readiness

- Managers and evaluators need skills and willingness to collaborate because UFE effectiveness is judged on actual evaluation use.

Identify Primary Users

- Primary intended users (PIU) have direct, identifiable stake in evaluation and use.
- Evaluator reinforces climate of openness.

ROLES (1 of 3)

EVALUATOR: Person or organization responsible for facilitating / leading the design, the implementation and the utilization of the evaluation. Tasks: organizational development agent, educator, coach/mentor, strategic planner, etc.

ROLES (2 of 3)

PRIMARY USER: People who will use and apply the findings of the evaluation. Patton (2008) suggests the following profiler:

1. Interested.
2. Knowledgeable.
3. Open minded.
4. Represents an important interest group.
5. Has credibility.
6. Teachable.
7. Available for ongoing interaction throughout the evaluation process.

ROLES (3 of 3)

AUDIENCE INTERESTED IN THE REPORT: Actors interested in the unfolding and findings of the evaluation.

The Next Three UFE Steps (Four to Six)

Situational Analysis

- Situational factors are reviewed, such as timing, resources, culture, power and politics
- This is because USE is context specific

Identify USE

- Intended use by primary intended users is the goal of UFE. A menu of evaluation options are reviewed, screened, and prioritized.

Focusing the evaluation

- Detailing key evaluation questions, though difficult, is critical and a pillar of UFE,
- Focus refers to the intended uses of the evaluation by PIUs

MENU OF INTENDED USES (1/2)

Evaluation Purposes

Primary intended uses

Typical primary users

**Overall
summative
judgment**

“To provide data for judging the overall value of a program and deciding whether it is worth continuing with it or not”

Those charged with making major decisions: funders, directors, other adopters of model, etc.

**Formative
improvement
& learning**

“To provide data for program improvement”

Program administrators, staff, those involved in the day-to-day management.

**Knowledge
generating**

“To look across findings from different programs to identify patterns of effectiveness”

Program designers, planners, modelers, theorists, scholars, policy-makers.

MENU OF INTENDED USES (2/2)

Purposes

Intended primary uses

Typical primary users

**Organization /
Program
Development**

*“To provide data for
adapting interventions to
emergent conditions”*

*Social innovators, those
involved in bringing about
major systems change in
dynamic environments.*

Accountability

*“To provide data for
describing and explaining
achievements”*

*Those with administrative
and funding authority,
responsible for resource
use.*

Monitoring

*“To provide information
about key areas that
require managerial
attention”*

*Program managers
responsible for internal
accountability and
information system
management*

Focusing the Evaluation: Key Evaluation Questions

INPUT / RESOURCES

PROCESS or /and APPROACH / MODEL

OUTPUT

OUTCOMES

QUALITY

IMPACT

COST- EFFECTIVENESS

Steps Seven to Nine

Evaluation Design

- Method Selection depends on KEQ & data needed for USE.
- Often mentors step in for coaching and design support.

Simulation of USE

- Before data are collected, a simulation using 'dummy' data to refine KEQ and verify that data will lead to usable findings.

Data Collection

- PIU are always informed and involved

Last Steps: Ten to Twelve

Data Analysis

- PIUs are involved increasing understanding of findings, sense of ownership, commitment to utilization

Facilitation of USE

- Use has to be facilitated , does not just happen naturally
- This step is central to UFE; allocate time and resources

Meta Evaluation

- UFEs evaluated by primary intended users use of evaluation in intended ways.
- Allow users and evaluator to learn from own experience

The ultimate test - USE

- How is the primary user plan to use the findings?
- Disseminate according to plan but also look at other opportunities
- Have you found unexpected results – how will you use them?
- CAUTION! Check for possible misuse
DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW UP!

Meta-evaluation: Evaluating a UFE

- Follow up – how was intended use by user achieved?
- Did additional users/uses emerge?
- Reflect – what actually happened? Were there misuses or other unintended consequences?

UFE IS A LEARNING PLATFORM –
TO DO BETTER NEXT TIME

Important Questions for UFE

Review the evaluation in terms of:

- The **USERS**: were they identified?
- The specific **USES**: were they clear?
- User **Engagement**: how and why?

Thank you!