

EVALUATION UTILIZATION AND COMMUNICATION

1. Evaluation utilization

- Instrumental use
 - An evaluation which has direct effect on decision making e.g. policy change or adoption of new program initiative (based on direct observable effect including implementation of recommendation).
- Conceptual use (enlightenment/clarification)
 - It refers to cases where an evaluation is used to influence the thinking of the client about a program, but does not lead to decision making related to the program.
 - Over time, a series of evaluation could cumulatively affect decision making about a major policy.
 - A series of individual evaluation had a conceptual impact, while the sum of the individual conceptual impacts could lead to an instrumental impact.

2. Conceptual use of evaluation

- Understand the background and content of program operation.
- Stimulate reverse of policy.
- Focus attention on neglected issues
- Provide new understanding of the causes of social problems.
- Clarify their own thinking.
- Reorder priorities.
- Make sense of what they have been doing.
- Offers ideas for future direction
- Reduce uncertainties
- Provide rethinking of taken for granted assumptions
- Justify actions

- Support positions
- Persuade others
- Provide a sense of how world works

3. Dissection of enlightenment

- Reception
 - Utilization takes place when:
 - Policy makers or adviser receive policy relevant information.
 - The communication comes to rest in the 'in-basket', so that the data reach the policy maker rather than remaining on the analyst's desk or in the in-files of a distant consultant firm, reception has occurred.
- Cognition
 - The policy maker must read, digest and understand the study for cognition to occur.
- Reference
 - If the frame of reference is criterion, then utilization somehow must change the way the policy makers sees the world.
 - If information changes his or her preferences or understandings, utilization is reality.
 - Altering frames of reference is important because in the long run, the policy maker's new vision will emerge in different policy priorities.

4. Dissemination (report)

- The term dissemination is a sign that evaluators need to initiate strategies designed to encourage the spread of information resulting from the evaluation.

- Dissemination means the use of deliberative strategies for informing identified audiences about aspects of the evaluation including its conduct and findings
- Dissemination is used in preference to diffusion, as the latter connotes a more general and less interventionist percolation of the findings to interested parties.

5. Communication

- In a well executed evaluation the client is kept informed about all aspects of the study
- Findings of the study include:
 - Evidence
 - The data and other information which has been collected during evaluation.
 - Conclusion
 - The synthesis of data and information. This involves evaluators in the processes of the data display, data reduction and verification.
 - Judgment
 - In which values are placed on the conclusions e.g. the program is good or bad, or the result are positive in the direction desired, or below expectation.
 - Recommendations
 - Suggested courses of action, advice to policy makers, program managers or providers about what to do in the light of evidence and conclusion.
- All evaluation involves the collection and analysis of evidence and the reaching of conclusions.
- There are variations from study to study regarding the degree to which findings incorporate the making of judgment or recommendation.

- In proactive evaluation, evaluator's role could stop at conclusion drawing stage. Whether or not recommendations are included is something that should be negotiated during the planning stage of the evaluation.
- Recommendation relate to what to be done in the future, while most other findings relate to what is or what has been done.

6. Strategies for reporting

- There is a little point in executing an elegant evaluation design if the findings are too late to influence decision about the program.
- It is not always possible to anticipate the timing of information needs of audience.
- In some cases evaluator must release information in response to audience request before the final analyses are completed.
- There is then a need to compromise between completeness and utility.
- The norm is that to build in to the evaluation design strategies that will allow dissemination in installment rather than as a single end of evaluation tome.
- An audience is more likely to read smaller reports and to absorb in the essential message.
- In the case of reports management, there is evidence that due to work pressure, bureaucratic find it difficult to absorb large amounts of complex information.

7. Types of reports

- Written vs. oral
- Progress vs. final
- Substantive (main report) vs. secondary (technical details of data management).
- Summary vs. main report
- Formal vs. informal

- Descriptive vs. recommendatory

8. Styles of reporting

- In reporting findings, issues which need to be decided include
 - Strategies of reporting
 - Types of reports
 - Effective ways of presenting material within these reports

9. Formats of reports

- This includes acceptable professional writing and less formal styles, perhaps without referencing and composed in more vernaculars.
- Other forms such as oral reports, displays, and photography or videos may be used
- Displays in form of graphs and charts can summarize and present large amount of information in an attractive way.
- Detail of reporting vary and should be negotiated during the planning stage.
- Combination of reporting methods is necessary, to take into account the needs of different audiences.