EVALUATION DURING A CRISIS: COVID-19

As COVID-19 spreads globally, it is a massive health, humanitarian, and development crisis. The IEO of UNDP remains operational and is adapting the way it works and conducts independent evaluations. Our priority is the safety of our staff, consultants and stakeholders. These are our tips on evaluating programmes during crises.

1. RETHINK EVALUATION PLANS & TEAMS

The COVID-19 pandemic will have a profound impact on the methods and key indicators used for evaluation. Evaluators will need to rethink their evaluation plans, designs, methods and users. In cases of technical, and other barriers associated with working remotely, consider delaying the evaluation. To ensure the safety of our teams, hiring national consultants should be avoided unless remote. Terms of reference for contracted consultants should be revised to reflect remote arrangements, desk reviews and changes in deliverables.

2. EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Delayed or cancelled evaluations during this crisis will provide an opportunity to re-prioritize evaluation strategies and mobilize evaluative knowledge and lessons from which our organizations can gain insights. Initiatives such as evaluation synthesis or real-time evaluations assessing COVID-19 preparedness, response, and recovery will be critical in gathering data, evidence and identifying solutions for informed policy making.

3. COLLECT DATA REMOTELY

In the absence of field visits and lack of local evaluation team members data could be collected remotely. Skype interviews, mobile questionnaires, online surveys, collaboration platforms (slack or yammer) and satellite imagery could be used to gather data. Stakeholders that are dealing with existing emergencies should be given advance notice and an adjustment of evaluation timelines can be expected.

4. ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS VIRTUALLY

Stakeholder engagement ensures the effective communication of an evaluation and its uptake. We have successfully led several virtual (Zoom, Skype) stakeholder meetings to disseminate evaluation findings and recommendations. Do a test run and factor in emergency settings and time zone differences.

5. SHARE EVALUATIONS GLOBALLY

At a time of social distancing, social media can help bridge the gap. Social platforms enable connecting, networking and engaging with target audiences such as stakeholders, governments, donors, partners, and decision makers. Global outreach on these platforms along with the use of a website is valuable to drive discussions, promote evaluations, increase accessibility and amplify reach.

6. CONNECT WITH EVALUATION NETWORKS

Stay connected with other evaluation offices, networks and associations. Collectively, we can help each other adapt to evolving evaluation approaches, methods, technologies and tools that are needed to continue our work during crises.

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