

COMMUNICATIONS

General documents

Chambers, R. (2002) Participatory Workshops: a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities.

This is for all who try to help others learn and change...There is something here for participatory teachers and trainers; for organizers, moderators and facilitators who want their conferences and workshops to be interactive; for staff in training institutes who want to enliven their courses; for faculty and teachers in universities, colleges and schools who would like to enable students to do more of their own analysis; and for those engaged in management training who want to widen their repertoire."Making participation real requires workshops, training and learning that are themselves participatory. This sourcebook presents the results of the author's vast experience in the form of twenty-one sets of ideas, activities and tips, both serious and fun, for topics such as getting started, seating, forming groups, managing large numbers, analysis, feedback, evaluation and ending.

Grayson, L. and Gomersall, A. (2003) A difficult business: finding the evidence for social science reviews.

The rise of evidence based policy making in social fields has led to growing interest in the potential of research reviewing as a way of identifying useful lessons about 'what works' from existing documented knowledge. The need for change in the practice of reviewing has been accepted, with social scientists drawing on the experience of evidence based medicine to develop a more rigorous approach that includes comprehensive searching for literature on the defined topic. This paper focuses on searching, identifying some key differences between the social sciences and medicine, namely: a more diverse literature; the greater variety and variability of secondary bibliographical tools; the increasing availability of material on the internet; and a less precise terminology. These factors complicate the process of information retrieval, and experience from the ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice suggests that competence in this vital area may sometimes be lacking among the research community, with potentially damaging consequences for review quality. Some of the Centre's information retrieval activities are outlined, and the paper concludes with suggestions designed to improve the quality of the literature searching phase of research reviewing. These cover training, project funding and timescales, abstracting and indexing, and transparency in the review process. This resource can be found at:
<http://www.evidencenetwork.org/Documents/wp19.pdf>

Horton, D. et al. (2003) Evaluating Capacity Development: Experiences from Research and Development Organizations around the World. ISNAR.

The international aid community is placing a growing emphasis on developing local capacity as the key to alleviating poverty and hunger in the developing world. Although ensuring the effectiveness of a capacity building effort requires appropriate use of evaluation, few organizations have implemented a system for monitoring or evaluating the changes taking place during organizational development. In January 2000, ISNAR began the ambitious 'Evaluating Capacity Development Project', which aimed to improve capacity development efforts in research and development organizations through the use of evaluation. This resource can be found at: http://www.cgiar-ilac.org/system/files/private/Articles/Horton_ECDbook.pdf. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Lim, D. (2002) Quality Assurance in Higher Education A Study of Developing Countries.

This book by David Lim looks at universities in the developing world adopting quality assurance in an effort to improve processes. Early chapters examine the relationship between economic development and education in developing countries, principles of quality assurance, and quality assurance systems in the UK and Australia. This resource can be found at:
http://www.acu.ac.uk/adverts/academic_update/aprilmay2002/reportsandbooks.html

Lloyd-Laney, M. (2003) Advocacy Impact Assessment Guidelines. CIMRC.

DFID's major advocacy activities focus on influencing agencies and governments to invest in infrastructure. However, it is hard to find concrete evidence of the contributions that advocacy makes towards poverty eradication. Here we provide guidelines for an approach that many NGOs take to assess advocacy impacts. Being clear about the changes you want to effect means that you can develop measurable advocacy objectives. Designing indicators that act as milestones towards the achievement of your objectives provides a basis in your search for evidence. There are different types of advocacy impacts, known as different dimensions of change, and we describe some indicators for the following dimensions: changes in policies and their implementation, private sector change, strengthening civil society, aiding democracy and improving the material situation of individuals. Participatory monitoring and evaluation asks the people being affected by a project whether it has made a difference. However, this is often more complex than standard evaluation systems and you need to be clear about the goals of the process and who should be involved. In order to assess impact, you need to know the existing situation prior to advocacy. This can be determined by identifying your target's Awareness, Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour (AKAB) on your issue, and progress can then be monitored by AKAB re-evaluation. Once you have the information, it needs to be analysed. Lessons can then be learned and evaluation results used to demonstrate that advocacy works. This resource can be found at:

<http://www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/ICCIMIImpactassess.pdf>. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Nair, K. N. and Menon, V. (2002) Capacity building for demand-led research: issues and priorities ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 45. ECDPM .

In the context of the failure of past development experiences and the knowledge asymmetry between North and South, this paper examines the various dimensions of the concept of demand-led research. In view of the knowledge gap and the poor material conditions in many countries in the South, considerable support from the North is required for them to build up the necessary capacity. Even with such support, these nations face an uphill task in realising 'capabilities', a higher stage of subjective intrinsic abilities built up on the vital foundation of objective conditions laid down in the process of capacity building. Under conditions of freedom and civil liberties, individuals with such capabilities could actively participate in democratic processes in order to come to their own decisions on 'patent injustices' and how to rectify them. Demand-led research can generate the empowering knowledge that will enable individuals to reach the level of capability to make informed choices of their own, without intellectual inputs from the North. Such knowledge generation can come about by mainstreaming mode 2 knowledge generation, in which societal needs and the interaction between research and supply are emphasised, and knowledge utilisation is considered as an important constituent of knowledge generation. Although there is a tendency to equate mode 2 with demand-led research, the two are not synonymous. However, mainstreaming mode 2 research will take us closer to realising demand-led research. The paper suggests some actions that various agencies in the North and the South could take to promote demand-led research in the South. This resource can be found at: http://www.nepadst.org/doclibrary/pdfs/doc07_112002a.pdf. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Sorian R, Baugh T. (2002) Power of information: closing the gap between research and policy. When it comes to conveying complex information to busy policy-makers, a picture is truly worth a thousand words. Washington, USA: Georgetown University Institute for Health Care Research and Policy.

States play an increasing role in setting U.S. health policy. A survey of 292 state government policymakers finds that officials are overwhelmed by the volume of information they receive and have a strong preference for information that is concise and more relevant to current debates.

Younger officials are more likely to use electronic information, while older policymakers prefer printed material. Organizations of government professionals are trusted sources of information, and state agencies are a key source of data and information. Policymakers expressed a strong desire for tools to help them identify research on specific topics.

Struyk, R. J. (2002) *Managing Think Tanks: A practical guide for maturing organisations.*

This book provides advice tailored to the specific needs of think tank leaders in ten critical management areas: motivating and retaining staff; maintaining quality control; developing new products and services and identifying new business opportunities; creating strong team leaders; working successfully with the Board of Trustees or Board of Directors; structuring the research staff; communicating results effectively; determining an accurate overhead rate; deciding what information the think tank's leadership needs on a regular basis; and ideas on meeting staff training needs. This resource can be found at: <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=410454>. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Taylor, J., INTRAC (2001) *Evaluating the Internet as a Medium for the Dissemination of Development Research. Occasional Papers Series, Number 37. INTRAC.*

Evaluations of the Internet and Development have tended to focus on the extent to which website content has affected development activities. This research examines the usage of the medium itself, by conducting an applied evaluative study of selected websites disseminating development research findings. The paper describes how the evaluations were undertaken and informs readers of the methods and tools needed to conduct their own studies. This resource can be found at: <http://www.intrac.org>. Last accessed 4/14/2009