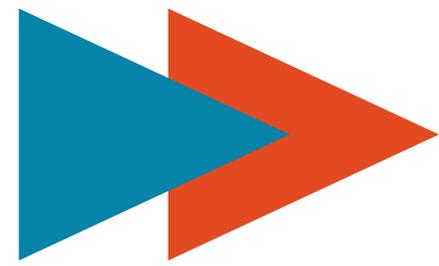


Developing a User Profile

Aide for Action



Introduction

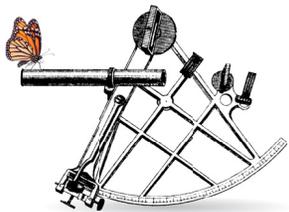
One of the central challenges of any evaluation is to get a strong grasp of what the primary user of the assessment wants to explore and how the evaluators can organize the evaluation so that its most useful for them.

The User Profile Worksheet and User Profile Card explore the primary users' questions, what kind of decisions they will make with the answers to the questions, their preferences for how the assessment should be conducted, and when they need the evaluation feedback.



The Steps

- 1 Confirm the names, organization and role of the primary users of the evaluation.
- 2 Interview each primary user using the questions posed on the User Profile Worksheet
- 3 Compile their questions in a user profile format which the evaluation team can refer to when designing the evaluation scope of work and evaluation instruments.



User Profile Worksheet

Primary User	QUESTIONS: What are your evaluation questions?	USE: What kinds of decisions will you make with the answers to these questions? (See Tip 1)	PREFERENCES: What are your preferences for you how we design the evaluation or communicate its findings? (See Tip 2)	WINDOWS: When do you need the evaluation findings?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Tips

- 1. See the Evaluation Table on the following page.
- 2. If primary users are stuck, ask them to share their best evaluation experience, what made it positive, and what they would like to see repeated. Alternatively, ask them about their worst experience with evaluation, and what we should avoid in this assessment.

Examples of User Profile Cards

Hypothetical Wrap Around Project in Schools for At Risk Youth



NAME: Ralph Smith
ORGANIZATION: Community Foundation
ROLE: CEO

QUESTIONS:

1. To what extent is the program resulting in better outcomes for kids' grade three reading rate?
2. Do local schools really want this, or, are we forcing it on them?

USE:

- To determine if – and how much to extend the three year grant to project.
- To begin exploring the implications for scaling to new schools.

PREFERENCES

- Likes testimonials from students.
- Do not include Social Return on Investment Data – board had bad experiences it.
- Likes strong executive summary – rarely looks at full report.

WINDOWS

- Funding decisions at the end of June, so Foundation staff needs report by May 1.
- Would like to present results to local funders forum in September.



NAME: Mary Pickford
ORGANIZATION: Rydale High
ROLE: Principal

QUESTIONS:

1. Is this making a difference in the academic outcomes of kids, particularly in grade three literacy levels?
2. How much time is this project taking from teachers? Do they feel it helps or hinders their work?

USE:

- To sustain and expand support for the collaboration within the school staff and district leaders.

PREFERENCES

- Does not want academic metrics outside those already used by school - pleads that we don't spend time on new indicators.
- Would prefer a lunch hour focus group with teachers rather than surveys or interviews.

WINDOWS

- School planning takes place in late May so that they can send next year's plan to the District level for approval: they would like evaluation findings by late March if possible.
- Would like to present results to local funders forum in September.



NAME: Casey Finnigan
ORGANIZATION: Family Services Bureau
ROLE: Program Director

QUESTIONS:

1. What is working well and not well in our wrap around model with community agencies and staff? How can we improve it?
2. Will we be spread too thin to make our targets if we expand to another school?

USE:

- To improve the delivery model in the original pilot site.
- To begin exploring the implications for scaling to new schools.

PREFERENCES

- Has had success using the Collaboration Factors Inventory as a self-assessment tool in past
- Wants evaluations findings first, and then a facilitated session where collaboration partners develop conclusions and recommendations together.

WINDOWS

- The collaboration members meet in April to do planning for the next year: its best to have results ready for this session.

Five Evaluation Types

Different types of evaluations are organized to assist different 'primary users', answer unique questions, to help them make specific decisions.

Evaluation Type	Typical Questions	Decisions
Developmental To assist social innovators create – or radically adapt – a program based on trial and error.	What is happening in the context in which the program operates? What can we control and not control? What is developing? What are the early effects of the our efforts? What are the options for the next iteration of the program?	What are our next steps in the creation or adaptation of this emerging program?
Formative To assist program administrators improve the design and delivery of an existing program.	What is working and what is not? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? What works for whom, in what context, and why? How can results be increased and costs reduced?	How can we improve the design and delivery of this program?
Summative To help social innovators, funders and policy makers judge the value of a program.	To what extent does the program achieve its goals? Does the program have value for money? How do outcomes and costs compare to other options? To what extent can outcomes be attributed to the interventions?	Will we continue, discontinue or scale up the program?
Accountability To help external authorities account for how well administrators are managing and implementing a program.	Are funds being used for intended purposes? Are goals and targets being met? Are problems being handled? Is implementation following the approved plan? Are quality control mechanisms in place and being used?	Will we continue, discontinue, or expand political and financial support for the work? What changes will we require the program team to make in the future?
Monitoring To help program administrators keep track of the general operations of a program.	Are inputs and processes flowing smoothly? What are participation and dropout rates? Are these changing? Are outputs being produced as anticipated and schedule? What bottlenecks emerging? What are variations across sub-groups?	What areas will we investigate more deeply?