

# 7.EVALUATING PROJECTS

Evaluation is often thought about as an indispensable nuisance, which has to be conducted at the end of a project. Empowerment evaluation, which was described in the chapter about concepts, shows that evaluation can be fun and inspiring. If you want to have good feedback of your management efforts and style as well as of your gradual outcomes, you better start thinking about your evaluation design at the beginning of your project.

Evaluation from the gender perspective is the generic term for assessing a project or a programme from the point of view of gender equality. The evaluation itself can use different types of methods, such as gender analysis or mapping (diagnosis of the context), gender impact assessment (evaluation of the potential or real impact for women and men of a policy proposal) or gender proofing (formal verification of the gender impact assessment).

If you are in the gender mainstreaming process, it is important to establish whether gender is relevant to the policy you are trying to influence or the programme or project you are working with. The following key questions might help you *determin the gender relevance* (European Commission, 1997):

- Does the proposal concern one or more target groups? Will it affect the daily life of parts of the population?
- Are there differences between women and men in this policy field (with regard to rights, resources, participation, values and norms related to gender)?

If the answer to one of these questions is positive, gender is relevant to your issue.

The design of an evaluation starts with efforts to grasp the context and object of the project by asking what are the purpose, the scope, main stakeholders, and available resources. It is also important to think about your stance i .e. how closely you want to mix with the stakeholders of the project or at what stages you will get involved with the assessment, at the beginning, during the process or only at the end.

It is useful to define an evaluation strategy, which means writing a general plan for the guidance of the following choices:

- Why and for whom do you evaluate?
- What will be evaluated (results and/or process)?
- What are the key questions and criteria of the evaluation?
- What resources are available?
- How and with what methods will you evaluate?
- How will the results be disseminated and utilised?

The choice of key evaluation questions depend on the subject area and the context. The key questions for instance in the evaluation of structural fund interventions from the gender perspective in Finland, dealt with

- the relevance of the programme and its objectives,
- the roles of women and men in the different phases of development (programming, implementation and monitoring),
- the effectiveness of the programme in terms of achieving the objectives and
- the significance of the impact on women's and men's conditions.

In small projects the system of evaluation can be quite simple consisting of a table of objectives or desired results with appropriate indicators which can be monitored at specific phases of the project. For instance, the Mainstreaming project of the Finnish Government used the following table to monitor its progress, every three or four months:

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Objectives	Indicators of achievement	Stategies/methods
1. To develop a methodological mainstreaming package	A report of models and methods	Creative workshop Gender analysis
2. To make visible gendered practices in the ministries	A diversity of examples of socio-cultural praxis presented in the media	Gender analysis Lobbying Press-conferences
3. To produce new administrative praxis	New types of functional equality plans, Organisational models and changes	Continuous deconstruction and reconstruction of working habits

Similar kind of tables can be created for process aims. This toolkit contains many examples and methods for conducting evaluation.

Reference:

Liisa Horelli (1997) Engendering evaluation of European regional development: Shifting from a minuet to progressive dance! Evaluation, Vol 3(4): 435-450.

European Commssion, DG V (1997) A Guide to Gender Impact Assessment. Brussels.

## EVALUATION SKILLS AND METHODS

Evaluation skills can only be learnt through practice but the stepwise design of the evaluation and the answering of the basic questions about “Who does what, why, how and with what consequences” do assist in carrying out the evaluation procedure. The importance of writing down a few key questions with appropriate criteria and/or indicators which should be answered in the evaluation, cannot be stressed enough. Only after the preliminary preparations - definition of the objectives, preliminary diagnosis of the context, key questions - can the choice of methods take place. It usually begins by designing the flow or system of the assessment, which serves as a frame for the selection of appropriate methods or tools.

### A Multilevel Design of an Evaluation System

The Guadeloupian women designed in their project proposal a four level evaluation system to monitor and assess their project on local and regional development. It consisted of:

1. A daily timesheet for partners to tap working hours or activities, such as planning and reporting, developing information material, organising events, visiting, dissemination and administration.
2. A phasewise (3 to 4 months) collective work diary and assessment of activities in terms of the aims of the project and aims of the EU IV Action programme. In addition, an appraisal of the involvement of partnerships (frequency and nature of contacts, problems, benefits) was undertaken.
3. An overall self-evaluation of the phase by assessing the achievement of the aims of the project and those of the phase with specific indicators and methods.
4. Final evaluation at the end of the first year and at the finishing of the project, which will take place by assessing the achievement of the aims as well as the quality of the process. The results and the impact will be assessed later on with special surveys.

The criteria and indicators for the potential impact of the development project included the increased know-how of local women about what regional policy is (successful implementation of several projects), new ways of participating in local and regional affairs (application of tools), the improvement of local economy (creation of jobs or economic activity through the projects), and an increase in the representation of women in the decision making bodies of regional councils.

### A Pool of Techniques and Tools

There is a vast array of techniques and tools to choose for conducting evaluations. Feminist evaluation literature often classifies techniques into analytical, participatory and training methods.

**Analytical techniques** are statistics, surveys and forecasts, cost-benefit analyses, checklists, guidelines, gender impact assessments, monitoring, and research.

**Training and educational techniques** comprise awareness-raising and training courses, follow-up action, mobile or flying expertise, manuals, handbooks, booklets and other educational material. Mentoring is a new innovation of educational techniques.

We prefer to call participatory or consultative techniques **enabling tools or methods**. The latter consist of a variety of techniques which enable girls and boys, women and men actively participate in the development of their project or localities. Enabling methods are thus at the core of empowerment

evaluation, since they support the participant’s involvement on different levels according to the needs of stakeholders and the context. Enabling tools consist of different types of methods and techniques ( Horelli, 1997):

1. **Diagnostic methods** are analytical tools to evaluate personal, environmental, economic and socio-cultural situations.
2. **Expressive methods**, on the one hand liberate the participants from the constraints of traditional designs (fantasy trips, sensory walks etc.), on the other hand they provide means for the participants to express their ideas, such as drawing, model building, drama, poetry, computer aided design.
3. **Situational methods** structure the current context in a new way that makes learning and communication easier, for example futures workshops, democratic dialogues, city forums.
4. **Conceptual methods** assist in learning abstract thinking by using models, matrices, theories.
5. **Organisational methods** support the implementation of results of the project.
6. **Political methods** comprise all the techniques by which participants can influence the policy or political decision making.

Figure 22 is a summary-table of the methods described in this toolkit classified into different methodological typologies. The examples of methods are put under the headings which they primarily belong, but in addition an x is ticked for its linkages with the other typologies:

Methodological types with examples	Diagnostic	Expressive	Situational	Conceptual	Organisational	Political	Training
<b>Analytic/Diagnostic:</b>							
Understanding your socio-political context				X	X	X	
Engendering statistics				X	X		
Colour labels		X					
Gender-awareness exercise		X					X
Gender proofing						X	
Stakeholder analysis					X	X	
Actor analysis					X	X	
Web of institutionalisation		X		X	X	X	X
Building from the bottom					X	X	
Autobiography (personal story)		X					
Safety audits		X	X		X	X	X
Participatory appraisal		X	X	X	X		
5 Ws (using the media)				X	X		
EuroFEM diffusion plan				X	X		
SWOT-analysis		X	X				
Making applications for funding				X	X	X	
Writing a business and marketing plan				X	X		

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Methodological types with examples	Diagnostic	Expressive	Situational	Conceptual	Organisational	Political	Training
<b>Expressive:</b>							
Building a common vision	x			x			
The Dream method	x				x		x
Model building (Fundacio)	x		x	x	x		x
Intervention poetry (Seies)	x			x		x	
<b>Conceptual:</b>							
Time planning (focus on time, not space)	x		x		x	x	
Bending agendas (Frauenwerkstadt)	x	x	x		x	x	
Building a succession story	x				x	x	
<b>Situational:</b>							
Futures workshop	x	x			x		
Lobbying	x	x			x	x	
<b>Organisational:</b>							
Northern feminist university	x			x		x	x
Building appropriate org. structures	x	x		x		x	x
Working with women (Fundacio)	x	x		x		x	x
Coping with change	x			x		x	
Surviving political change	x			x		x	
Building networks	x			x		x	
<b>Political:</b>							
Testing the living environment	x				x		x
Project parity	x				x		x
Gender balance and representation	x			x	x		
Proactive strategy	x	x	x		x		
Finding a critical friend	x			x	x		
<b>Training:</b>							
Identifying training issues	x			x	x		
Waltham forest	x				x		
Supporting women Diotima	x	x			x		
Finding a woman's way of doing	x				x		
Mentoring for women in Europe	x		x		x	x	
Innovative training methods at CNDIFF	x	x	x	x	x		
IFOLD (retravailler)	x	x	x	x	x		
Gender training	x	x		x	x	x	