

Local Evaluation in Communities for Children sites

Rachel Robinson & Kristy Muir

Introductions

- Rachel Robinson
- Kristy Muir

Panel

- Sue Christophers, Onkaparinga
- Bernadette Barry, The Smith Family
- Sue Hayes, FaCSIA

Outcomes sought

- Diversity of approach to LE is shared
- Learnings and challenges of LE are shared
- LE linked with and learn from each other
- Facilitating Partners receive information to assist in managing and utilising the LE role
- The relationship between the local and national evaluation is understood
- The role of local evaluation in sustainability planning is raised

Process

- Report Back
 - Session 1 – Diversity
 - Session 2 – Learnings and challenges
- Reflections, moving forward
- Response from the panel
- Questions / comments from the floor

Limitations

- No baseline
- Initially edgy, uncomfortable, unexpected
- As much information as can be collected in <2 hours, analysed overnight, presented <30 mins
- Not all sites represented
- Limited consultation with Facilitating Partners
- Data Managers and Local Evaluators present
- Not a focus group, manager and note taker have other roles, not independent
- Ability to reflect back limited

Diverse Role of the Local Evaluator

- Develop Program Logic
- Data collection and drill down
- Data management
- Analysis, translation, report writing
dissemination
- Support Facilitating Partners
 - Critical thinking
 - Debriefing / supervision

Diverse Role of the Local Evaluator

- Education
 - Why evaluation is important
 - Language of evaluation
 - Outcomes vs outputs
- Mentor, trainer, capacity builder, critical skills developer
- Creating a dialogue between FPs, CCC and CPs

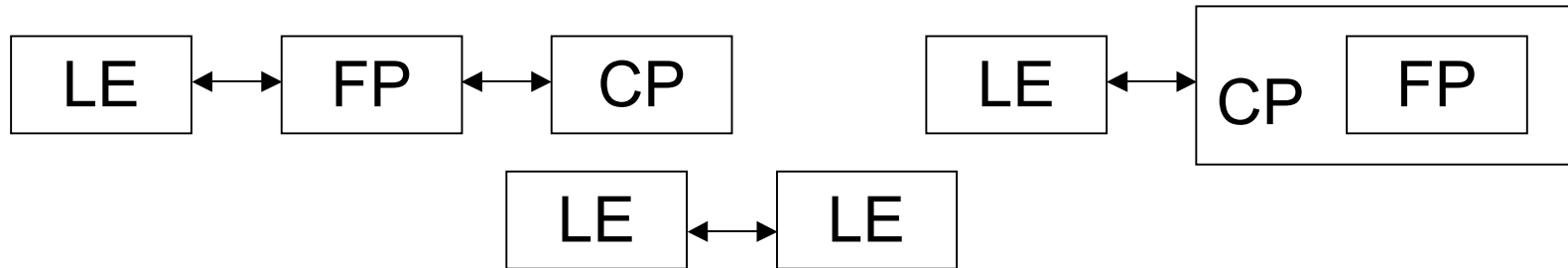
Diverse Approach

- Flexible
- Culturally appropriate, relevant to diversity across projects
- Multi-method (triangulation of data)
- Summative and/or formative (reflective practice)
- A mix of dialogue and reports
- Can involve data managers and Local Evaluators

Diverse Approach

- Based on definition of who it is for and outcomes sought
- Designed for and contextualized to the community
- Diversity within and across sites
- Tailored to meet the multiple needs
- Dependent on site, FP and resources – budget, time, capacity and skills

Relationships



- Note that there are a number of data managers - they may also be facilitating partners
- Collaboration between FP and LE to meet multiple needs
- Based on a dialogue

Relationships work well when...

- Facilitating Partners have a clear vision
- There is trust between LEs, FPs and CPs
- There is clarity about what can and can't be achieved within the resources available
- There is open, effective communication (both formal and informal)
- A formalised approach and strategies to work together exists

Relationships work well when...

- LEs have a presence in the community
- Encouraging, respectful and supportive
- FPs and CPs have established relationships
- Clear strategy and alignment of activities
- Staff stability (both LE and FP)

LEs and Sustainability Planning

- Embedding reflective practice
- Formative approach - “engine of sustainability”
- Reporting on sustainability, engaging stakeholders
- Advocacy
- Strategies
 - Asset mapping, recognise what exists
 - Use of partnership tools
 - Grant writing
 - Matrix approach
 - Strategy meetings and workshops

Challenges

- Perceptions of evaluation, reticence to engage and need for attitudinal change
- Resources constraints and location issues
- Reporting: formal reporting and publishing
- Understanding that it is mutually beneficial
- Competitive funding environment
- Seasonal and other restrictions, turnover
- Relationship with FaCSIA and National Evaluation

Moving Forward: What can be done now?

- Ensure role clarity and complementarities
- FPs the hub of communication
- Initiate strategy meetings (face-to-face)
- Conduct joint reviews of program logic and associated outcomes
- Promote links between LEs (address isolation)
- Share successes
- Use resources available (AIFS etc)
- Develop a relationship between LE and FaCSIA and National Evaluation

Existing Resources

- AIFS library / help desk
 - SFCS website & e-discussion, *CAFCA-chat*
 - Project support
 - Resources
- *E-evaluate*
- Publications
- Instruments / questionnaires / FAQ
- SFCS network resources
- SFCS Evaluation resources - Indigenous / Children and youth
- Local Evaluators Extranet

Lessons for the future

- Increase understanding about the role, structure and importance of LE
- Structure LE in from the start
- Appropriate resources for remote sites (creative/intensive)
- Bring together all stakeholders more often and earlier
- Target communication strategy for LE
- Local evaluation part of the National Evaluation
- Commitment to reflective practice
- Shared skill development across key stakeholder (LEs, FPs, STOs, CPs)
- Improved communication and sharing of outputs

Key Messages: establishment

- It's all about the community, for them and with them
- Useful for evaluation to be part of the process from the beginning (establish baseline)
- Evaluation should be planned and adaptive
- Needs to be tailored for the resources (people, money, place, skills) available
- Have agreed roles, expectations and communication strategy

Key Messages: ongoing

- Review roles, expectations and communication strategy
- Communicate within and beyond the site
- Recognise importance of formative and summative evaluation
- FPs and LE work together to collect quality summative data
- Reflective practice is important
- Develop an approach to translate the richness to FaCSIA and link to the National Evaluation

The Panel

- Sue Christophers, Anglicare SA
Health Families, Strong Communities
consortium – Onkaparinga site
- Bernadette Barry, The Smith Family,
Fairfield, Raymond Terrace, Brimbank,
Townsville West, Kwinana, Mirrabooka,
Katherine
- Sue Hayes, FaCSIA

Questions for the Panel

- What is it about the Local Evaluation model that enables Facilitating Partners and Community Partners to benefit from Local Evaluation? How can that be enhanced, what resources are needed?
- Can we draw together information nationally without compromising the trust in the relationship between FPs, CPs and LEs?
- How can we draw on the collective knowledge and wisdom of the local evaluators?