

REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

Evaluation is an integral part of most projects . It can and should be an ongoing process throughout the project, not something additional and not something that only happens at the end. Using reflection as a basis for writing about the project and its progress in short reports can help with a final evaluation. You have a cumulative file of short reports, which can be consolidated into a final report. .

Reflecting on what you have done includes careful thinking about how you will achieve your goals at the end of the project. It is important to keep the goals as part of the ongoing process. In this way Reflection and evaluation are closely linked. Evaluation is a way of reviewing progress towards agreed goals. Reflection is the process of thinking about and recording progress and or reasons for lack of progress or changes in direction.

Reflection provides the means for moving into further planning and action and it should be an ongoing process:. Essentially it is a way of thinking about what you are doing and an essential part of any useful evaluation process.

Understanding how the dynamics of reflection work.

Reflective techniques aim to find ways to enhance the quality of and richness of our knowledge generation process by allowing it to be a fully human and creative act while at the same time identifying and taking responsibility for own idiosyncratic contribution

It is important therefore to create spaces for reflection to happen. They might be reference group meetings, among project workers and with participants in the project Reflection can occur at a number of different levels in your project: from personal to group to whole of project. It is important to include as many people as possible in reflecting on the project. This means you have to think carefully about the best ways to engage people in the process.

Processes to help create space for reflection include:

Contextualising meaning. Explicitly describing for oneself and others the context in which action is being undertaken, meaning is being created and theories constructed. Researcher stands aside from the context to describe it. Might also mean looking critically at data: asking questions like what is relevant data for me? What do I even notice? What do I attend to?

Research cycling. Reminds researcher to balance evaluation and diagnosis with action and reality testing by going back to the cycles of action research. This can be done individually or collectively

Drawing out, enriching and constructively challenging meaning Pulling out individual learning and placing it side by side with other individual learning . So that individual meaning is enhanced and extended by interaction with others and constructively challenged by them. This might include open ended interviews, devil's advocate practice and challenging assumptions and practices.

Factors to consider and be sensitive when reflecting on events.

- Time connections leading to engagement of cause and effect relationships or to coupling of ideas and events which may not be related in other ways.
- Need states and emotions of people involved which influence meanings attached to events.
- The need for resolution of incongruence.
- the sense that something is right or wrong, which is influenced strongly by the values of people involved
- Application- we can use the idea in our work
- Novelty or surprise
- Context and source of an event which influences the meanings that may be attached and created.
- Insight the illumination or sense of discovery that is experienced when an idea explains something of importance.
- Cultural associations which are attached to meaning

References

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