

NGO-IDEAs

Examples of Outcome and Impact Assessment by NGOs

Kasese Tool: Persons with Disabilities in Western Uganda

(Bernward Causemann, George Cottina, November 2010)

Experiences: Description for Practitioners

Context

((Sector, region, type of project, implementing NGO))

Kasese is a town in Western Uganda. A group of persons with disabilities (PWD) formed a group in 2007 trying to promote their specific concerns. The group of about 50 members works to raise awareness about disability in the Kasese district. It promotes economic empowerment for its members by running group income generating projects and trains its members on relevant employment skills. Members run three income-generating activities: Hiring out catering equipment, a tailoring shop that also offers training for members and the wider community and a small pharmacy stocking essential drugs.

The group was started by a young man who had attended a COMBRA training course to become a Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) worker. On returning, he mobilised the group. A second young man was trained later and joined the group. They also receive government support. COMBRA is a training institution for CBR workers mostly from East Africa, placed in the Ugandan capital, Kampala.

The group wanted to know: To what extent have we reduced discrimination of persons with disabilities (PWD) in the community?

Introduction of Tools

((A brief description of the tool and sources where to get a more detailed description.))

Using a facilitated process, people share their objectives for change and then discuss to what extent they have achieved this change already, and what desired change has not happened yet. Individual members assess this on a numerical scale (0-10). In this case, the desired change was the reduction of discrimination of PWD in the community.

The tool is described in the NGO-IDEAs Overview of Tiny Tools, www.ngo-ideas.net/tiny_tools.

Procedure of Application

((How did it work exactly? (Lists of indicators, data collection instruments, process of data collection etc.) Possibly describe steps.))

The facilitator was introduced as a COMBRA staff member and that COMBRA wants to learn about change and what people have achieved.

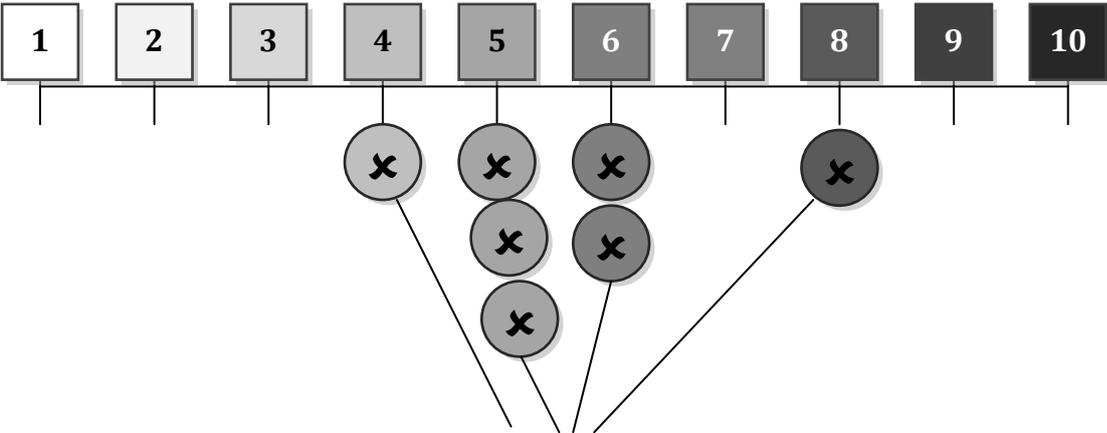
Step 1: People were asked: What change did you want to achieve? In the discussion it became clear: They wanted to reduce discrimination of PWD.

Step 2: The reduction of discrimination was likened to a journey that they were undertaking. The question posed to them was: "Imagine you started a journey to reduce discrimination. The journey has 10 steps. You started at 0. Where are you now, at this point in time, between 0 and 10?" Group members were given cards on which they could write the number where they now stood.

Step 3: People shared where they were and gave reasons in two parts: “What is it that you have achieved that makes you be here? Why do you say you are not at ten?” The facilitator captured the data on a chart using a graph with a scale from 1 to 10. For each member, the number was marked. The explanations for what was achieved were noted to the left, what was not achieved was noted to the right. Comments that were repeated were not noted again.

Note: In Kasese, it was not recorded who had scored how. That would make sense if the group wants to compare later.

Of the twelve group members, nine scored 5, three 6 and one 8 points. This individual had children that initially did not go to school, and he thought that was due to discrimination. Now all three children go to school. This meant, for him discrimination has greatly reduced. The list of achievements and things not achieved is given below.



What have you achieved that makes you be here?	Why do you say you are not at 10?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Graph by Petra Strauch

Step 4: What was written on the board was then discussed: What are the key achievements, what are the key areas still to be achieved.

Step 5: On the things still to be achieved, it was discussed: What were the factors that stop them from achieving this? How could they be overcome?

Step 6: An action plan was devised: What does the group want to achieve as next steps? Agreements were taken for things to immediately work on. What are longer-term aims?

Step 7: People were asked: What they thought about this process?

The exercise lasted about one hour.

Changes Observed

((What outcome/impact have been observed - positive/negative, intended/unintended))

A long list of achievements and things still to be achieved was produced. Here are the points that people prioritised.

Key successes: “Why we say we have moved”

- COMBRA CBR training gave us the knowledge and skills to work with PWDs.
- PWD are organised in a group. This has created the following successes:
- Community members interact with them and appreciate them. This is shown by, e.g.
 - a) as a group they have cooking utensils that they hire out at a cheap price. At the beginning people would hire the utensils elsewhere, now they come to them.
 - b) They run tailoring and computer literacy classes, for which there is a great demand.
- They are doing business with others in this border town. People now understand that.
- Members received special permits from the administration to cross into the DR Congo and get goods from there. This shows recognition by the administration that they have special needs and that they have potential to do business in spite of their disability.
- People understand disability better.

Key challenges: “What we still need to overcome”

- We are expected to line up with everybody at the local health centre (and necessary treatment gets delayed or denied).
- Some parents are still not open about their children with disabilities.
- One disabled girl could not pursue science in high school.
- “Rent for our office is such a constraint.”
- “We are constructing our office but we lack funds to complete it.”

Added Value of the Tools

((How did people think of the tools, how did they make use of them?))

People reflected on the application of the tool. A member said they knew that they were achieving something but that they had never sat down to assess what they had achieved. This process helped them to see more clearly where they wanted to go. It helped them to identify specific needs or aspirations of members and discuss them, possibly also to help each other.

One member reported about a neighbour who is still hiding a child with disabilities. This helped them to take action on this situation.

One member wanted to take a science course but had not met the minimum admission requirements. This led to a discussion if PWD should request special treatment.

As a consequence of the exercise, the participants formed a committee to engage the health centre management to provide more disability sensitive services.

After this exercise, COMBRA will continue to discuss other disability objectives with the group and continue their support. The group has designed a new work plan according to the evaluation that was conducted during the visit.

Reflections for leaders and experienced M&E persons

Background

((What is the background to the application of the tools? What factors played a role in making it a success (or – partial – failure)? What did the facilitators aim at? What did they achieve?))

COMBRA the Community Based Rehabilitation Alliance is a non governmental organization established in 1990 by a group of Ugandans with a mission; to empower and advocate for and with persons with disabilities for their sustainable development through community based rehabilitation. The head office is located in Kiwanga - Seeta, Goma Sub-county, Mukono District, and 18 km from Kampala city centre off the Jinja highway. COMBRA is administered under a Board of Directors made up of nine members who are the policy makers. COMBRA is recognized as a leading training institute nationally and internationally for community based rehabilitation workers and volunteers to work with individuals with disabilities through the CBR approach.

COMBRA has a procedure for following up the previously trained CBR workers through support supervision, by finding out what has been achieved since they returned home, what challenges they are facing and what COMBRA can do. Student's reports are also occasionally reviewed. From the supervision visits and reports COMBRA has been able to develop refresher workshops for previously trained students.

Community Based Rehabilitation worker (CBR) training involves skills of management, prevention of disability, concepts of discrimination and inclusion, production of disability aids etc.

The group is registered with the District Disability Office (DDO) and gets advisory and financial support from it. The group started the income generating activities with this support. Some money comes from German Leprosy Relief Association (GLRA) through the DDO. GLRA also supports COMBRA and cooperates with the Ugandan government on issues of disability and inclusive development.

During the session described, the group only measured the extent to which they have reduced discrimination. The group has other goals, particularly economic ones, and the awareness raising of parents of children with disabilities. This could be measured at a later stage.

During the session, not everybody wrote a number on a card – some just shared their situation. The group had suggested the use of cards. They were used to cards and felt that was convenient for people with mobility difficulties. An alternative would be using seeds or sticks or stones, so the tool works also with illiterate people.

A factor that makes this tool succeed: People develop a desire to know if they have made progress or not. The visualisation and quantification of progress satisfies that need in people. Because of this, people take it seriously and give valid information.

Benefit of the Tool

((What is the added value of the tools? What did people learn? Did they change their practice? What did the NGO learn? Has it adapted its practice since?))

The tool gives people a quick, value-for-time-invested idea of what they have achieved, makes them feel more empowered to assess their own situation and encourages them to do more. It helps people to reflect on the negative and to specify issues they see as important.

Generally people think that they need to be helped to change. The process of self-assessment helps people to see that they can take charge of change, that they can influence things. This means, a responsibility goes with it: The process needs to be facilitated in a way that people can come to conclusions and action. Steps 6 and 7 need to happen, otherwise it is not complete.

The tool also gives outsiders a good, quick idea of what achievements have been made and how people rate these achievements compared to their overall aspirations. Of course, aspirations will change over time, and so will the standards against which they assess progress. So numbers cannot be taken as absolute. Still, comparison between groups can be done on the issues raised and on the numbers: If this is done in a number of groups, the supporting programme could see: which ones assess the achievements high on the scale, which rate low, and why?

COMBRA and GLRA learned what effects their work had. The exercise made them aware what expectations and opportunities there were in working with this kind of group. It helps development organisations to justify their work towards funding organisations as well as to the beneficiaries.

The tool could be repeated any time without much effort. If the old records are kept (or available as a photo), the results can be compared. The original papers should remain with the group to enhance ownership.

COMBRA enhanced its engagement with the group. After this exercise, COMBRA will continue to discuss other disability objectives with the group and continue their support. COMBRA invites two of the old students to attend training in social economic rehabilitation and appropriate technology – a refresher workshop. This is to increase their knowledge and skills in self sustainable projects for PWDs.

Lessons Learned

((What have we learned about the tools? What can be drawn as a general lesson for participatory M&E? What advice to give for people who want to apply the same tool? What are its limitations? This could also refer to the four purposes of impact assessment.))

The Kasese tool can be applied in most sectors. It can stand alone to assess change. It can also serve as an introduction into SAGE and PAG (see NGO-IDEAs Impact Toolbox). And it can serve to assess past change when the Impact Toolbox is introduced, as SAGE and PAG cannot measure impact retrospectively.

This tool was applied in a community based organisation (CBO). But many factors came into play: The COMBRA training, the government, GLRA are mentioned here, there will be others, particularly in the community. So there is no 100% attribution of the change. This tool measures changes, and it is plausible to assume that the group and those supporting it contributed a lot to it. To analyse the contribution, different tools will be needed. From the Tiny Tools that could be Theory of Change or Influence Matrix.

It is important to record the stories. It requires one or two people to do the documentation. NGOs could do this exercise in different groups (also groups of non-disabled persons) and then compare results. One could observe when and how people give their votes, to see if they are influenced by others. It needs some facilitation and patience. The vote changes through discussion. Possibly have a control group from the community who are not PWD, to get a community perspective. It is important for the group to see: they can determine where they are and think about where they want to go.

It would be possible for visitors to discuss the results later to see if the statements of the individual sound credible.

Purposes of Impact Assessment

((Rating is not on the tool itself. It is about the experience with the tool described in this example. It reflects the assessment of the NGO staff or advisers applying it.))

The four purposes of impact assessment on a range: 1 (very little use) to 5 (very useful):

Purpose	Level	Rating	Reason for rating
Learning from experience	CBO, NGO	4	High learning effect, but only maybe once a year
Steering by NGO	NGO	3	Important information, but needs a group exercise, no automatic information to NGO management, and cannot be done very frequently
Empowerment of beneficiaries	CBO	5	Groups become aware and activated and gain confidence to set goals and assess their progress
Upward accountability	NGO	4	A validated information, but needs skills to aggregate. Acceptable for accountability only if the views of beneficiaries are accepted as sources of information.

*George Cottina is regional consultant for NGO-IDEAs East Africa.
Bernward Causemann is one of two project leaders of NGO-IDEAs. He works as a freelance consultant.*

References:

This describes field experience in the context of NGO-IDEAs: www.ngo-ideas.net/publications. The NGO-IDEAs tools (SAGE, PAG, Well-being Ranking, PIAR and Tiny Tools) can be found there.
The four purposes of impact assessment are drawn from VENRO, the German NGO Umbrella, position paper “Quality before Proof”, <http://www.venro.org/628.html/>

The authors thank Josephine Nalugo of COMBRA for additional input to this text and the Kasese PWD group for permission to make their experience public.

v 6