Participative Learning for Evaluation: A systems approach to the development of evaluation capability in community health projects[1]

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Abstract: This paper describes a participative project which sought to build capacity for evaluation across the community, voluntary and statutory health sectors in three authorities within Greater Manchester, UK. A systems methodology was adopted, which emphasised the inclusion of marginalised groups, multiple stakeholder involvement and participative methods. Five action research stages were identified. A needs analysis in which 55 community based projects participated was followed by nine multi-agency learning events, each of which explored, in participatory ways, issues identified by the projects. Three further multi-agency workshops explored new ways of working together in order to practice evaluation for the benefits of the local community. A follow up survey examined how the project had led to longer term outcomes for projects, and currently a number of feasible ideas for mutual support for evaluation practice are being explored. Overall some 150 groups from across three authorities, all with an interest in improving community health (broadly defined) participated in the project.

This paper reports the processes and outcomes of the needs audit and the first, foundation learning event, both of which shaped the rest of the project. These stages contributed to joint understanding of what local groups find difficult in terms of prioritising, undertaking and using evaluations, and what contributes to the development of evaluation capability; joint understanding of how constructive inter-agency approaches to evaluation might be developed; and joint assessment of the utility of different models of systemic evaluation for groups with different stakes in their communities.

Finally, the paper illustrates how important continuing support for projects will be, and attempts to develop an evaluation support resource are underway.

Introduction

In the UK there are a number of Government initiatives which seek to help people "maximise their opportunities for health and well-being by addressing health inequalities, approaching health through communities' understanding of their own concerns, and working through local agencies' (Meyrick and Sinkler, 1999 p. 5). This has led to the development of interests and actions for health and well-being by local community and voluntary sector groups. In those areas of greatest social deprivation and health inequality, Health Action Zones were established to "tackle health inequalities and modernise services through local innovation, … develop and implement a health strategy that cuts inequalities, and delivers …measurable improvements in public health and health outcomes … increase sustainability by developing contacts …" (HAZnet, 2003, 1). The HAZ approach claimed to represent a "new approach to public health - linking health, regeneration, employment, education, housing and anti-poverty initiatives to respond the needs of vulnerable groups and deprived communities" (HAZnet, 2003, 2). The HAZs were charged with taking a whole systems approach to the management of change and to involving local communities in their activities.

The emphasis on outcomes and change was inevitably linked to the practice of evaluation. Whilst there were national evaluations of the HAZ initiative (XX) the capacity of local projects to evaluate their own work was also seen to be important. In Summer 2000, Manchester, Salford and Trafford Health Action Zone (HAZ) commissioned our interdisciplinary team to undertake a project to support capacity building for evaluation. The primary aim of the project was to "facilitate learning, which encourages sustainable, positive change in the work practices of all participating organisations, which will enhance understanding of each other's needs in relation to the practice of evaluation" (MAST HAZ Tender Document, 2000). The project was to take a whole systems approach, and to provide a series of collaborative, action learning events that would bring together participants from the voluntary, community and statutory sectors to explore the relevance, purposes, functions and tools of evaluation in relation to their own projects.

The learning events were to be informed by exploration of the experiences and needs for learning about evaluation of the voluntary and community sector, so that the entire project was grounded in the experiences of those most marginalised, both by health systems in general, and in terms of access to learning and development about evaluation more specifically. The project was to culminate by bringing participants together design a forward strategy for evaluation as well as to evaluate the project itself. We adopted an action research approach to the work, identifying and implementing five cycles for change.

> Cycle 1: Audit of the needs of a wide spectrum of community and voluntary sector projects' needs for learning about evaluation;
> Cycle 2: design and implementation of five different types of learning event;
> Cycle 3: collaborative exploration of needs and possibilities for further capacity building;

Cycle 4: follow up exploration of how being involved in the project impacted upon local projects;
Cycle 5: development of sustainable supports for evaluation.

A summary of the first three cycles is available (Boyd et al., 2001); and the fourth cycle Boyd, 2002). The fifth stage is still in progress. This paper describes the 'needs audit' cycle, as well as the first series of learning events which emerged from it.

Our starting point
Our team was made up of 7 people, each with different discipline backgrounds, including management, operational research, industrial chemistry, health and safety at work, psychology, nursing, and community work. We had not worked together as a whole team before although different combinations of the team had done so. What we shared were interests in whole system working, flexible and pluralistic approaches to project evaluation, concern with the link between planning and evaluation, participatory methods of working. Some of us began with - and all of us ended with- a commitment to work in participatory ways with people who are marginalised by the social system. We spent a lot of time discussing and exploring issues, processes and the interpretation of data throughout the project.

Cycle 1: Audit of learning needs of local projects
Altogether, we consulted with 50 voluntary organisations, community groups and statutory services about their views on evaluation and what they wanted from a series of learning events. By using a snowballing technique (contacting a random sample of projects known to the HAZ and then other groups recommended by them), we were able to reach groups not known to the HAZ, as well as those that were. As we set up meetings, we collected equal opportunities monitoring data so, when we reached the half way stage, we were able to correct any imbalances that were apparent in terms of diversity amongst the groups.

When we approached groups and organisations, we asked them to participate in a three-hour workshop. We requested that as many staff as possible attend, and also (if it was a service) some users. However, if getting together a large group was difficult for people, we said that we would prefer to talk with just a small group than nobody at all. Sessions varied from one-to-one meetings between a member of the local community and a researcher, to large-scale workshops with 125 participants (mostly service users). However, in the majority of cases, there were around 5-10 people involved.

The facilitators used a set of guidelines and questions adapted from Ulrich's (1983) planning methodology called Critical Systems Heuristics.
to structure the workshops, and these are presented in Figure 1. Local contingencies meant that we had to depart from these on occasion. We used as our guide for deciding whether or not to stick with the pre-prepared agenda the comments made by participants in the workshops: we wanted to ensure that they got something useful out of the event. We started with questions about people's current situation; how they think of and use evaluation; and what immediate plans they have to do things differently. We moved on to explore with participants where they wanted their organisation to be moving to in the future. We asked people to imagine that they had

woken up this morning to find that their group or organisation had disappeared, and they had been brought together to redesign it from scratch. They had only three constraints: their designs should be *feasible* (no magic solutions), *viable* (financially sustainable by the agencies given the responsibility of funding them) and *adaptable* (not creating an inflexible bureaucracy). This gave people an ideal, but feasible, vision that they could realistically work towards (if they chose to do so). This visioning approach was adapted from Ackoff's (1981) method of Idealised Planning. We mostly focused our questions about the ideal on planning issues, as evaluation should interface with planning.

Looking back over the experience of facilitating these workshops, and taking into account the evaluation feedback, we consider that this was a useful approach to managing the consultation process. Focusing on the ideal future of people's groups and organisations (especially on how they should set up planning) enabled people to consider a wide range of issues (e.g., how to encourage the participation of stakeholders) which had a direct bearing on the conduct of evaluation. Importantly we found that, in most cases, people gained a great deal from taking time out to vision the future of their group or organisation that they said would be directly useful to them (regardless of whether they took the issue of evaluation any further).

People's Current Situation
Introductions.
Can you tell us about what you or your service/organisation does?
How do you know when you have made a difference?
What do you understand by 'evaluation'? Do you think of it as the same as, or different from, how you already know you've made a difference? (If people use a different word from 'evaluation', use their language).
Open discussion on evaluation covering who does it; how they do it; when they do it; how information is recorded and reported, and to whom; what use is made of the information.

Possible Future
Imagine your organisation has disappeared. If you could start from scratch, what would you do? (Explain feasibility, viability, adaptability).
If something goes wrong, who should be able to step in and put things right? (This is about accountability: if necessary, give an example relevant to the group/organisation).
Ideally, who should help in planning what your group/service/organisation is going to do in the future? How should they participate?
Apart from those already mentioned, who else might be affected by what you are saying you might want to do? Should any of these people be involved in planning?
Review responses to questions 6-9 and identify implications for evaluation.
Summarise responses so far and check interpretations.

Link to Learning Events
What other groups/organisations/services/could benefit from learning about evaluation? (Explain that it doesn't matter whether these are formal or informal groups).

Invite to learning events ***and clarify what, if anything this project might contribute to the events***.
Give out and collect our own evaluation questionnaires.

Figure 1: Guidelines and questions used in workshops

Learning from Cycle 1 and Designing the Learning Events
The flip charts generated in the workshops, containing information about specific projects, were regarded as confidential to those projects, and they along with summaries were returned to them. Therefore, after each of the workshops, the facilitator drew on the flip chart information to complete a one-page summary sheet of the issues relevant to evaluation. This was the information used to inform decision making on the design of the learning events.

All of the summary sheets were brought to a one-day meeting, attended by the project team and three members of our Steering Group, drawn from local projects. We divided them amongst ourselves, and each of us went through our sheets extracting short statements about evaluation issues that could be written on post-it notes. All the post-it notes were then stuck onto a large white board, and we spent most of the day clustering issues in different ways until we were happy that they were in groups that could be addressed by discrete learning events. This was a process of collaborative interpretation and re-interpretation of the data. We made no attempt to organise the data hierarchically, but instead retained collective meanings within the data. (It is important to recognise, though that this data had already been extracted from the original workshop flip-charts, which were, themselves agreed summaries and interpretations of discussions within each workshop.) Table 1 summarises these categorisations.

1. Relationships with others	2. Toolbox	5. Links between relationships with others (1.) and toolbox (2.)
Involving others to get ideas	Quantitative	
Bias of always involving same people	Helping funders to understand local priorities better	Handling tension between evaluation for funders and evaluation for self
User involvement	Using the informal and existing information	Reporting system to amalgamate diverse results
Participation	Qualitative - meaningful	
Finding out from community - stepping back	Formative, on-going	**6. Links between relationships with others (1.) and things to be evaluated (4.)**
Building relationships	Quantitative/qualitative mix	
If funders have different priorities, how do you deal?	Flexible planning with evaluation feedback	Reflect as a team
Dealing with others' constraints	When to use an external consultant	
How to elicit feedback from non-assertive people	Wider variety of statistics	**7. Links between relationships with others (1.) and way it should happen (3.)**
Developing agendas WITH stakeholders (with different goals)	Evaluator as mentor	
Managing external relationships	Developing skills, methods, deal with complexity	Enabling users to take over project
Complaints system (independence)	More appropriate targets	
Information about systems needed	Convince funders to negotiate qualitative measures	
Tension between staff Vs user views	Funding organisations not clear about criteria	
	Monitoring against pre-set targets is not enough	
	Challenging systems that don't	

Where do we get funding for core costs? Relationships between funder and funded	work Web, tv, other resources Evaluating future of organisation rather than small projects	
3. Way it should happen Communicating evaluation results Acting on evaluation Dealing with fears (Eg crime and change) Tyranny of measurement Evaluating cost-effectively Barriers: time and resources Balance: evaluation and provision Reflective, fun Comprehensive across organisation Knowing own limits LEARN from mistakes Understandable, well-organised, clarity Streamlined, integrated Building in evaluation from the start	**4. Things to be evaluated** 'Best Value' Network connections, collaboration and partnerships Multiple levels of activity Cultural appropriateness Evaluating difficulties facing and posed by clients Risk Evaluation of personal circumstances Safety assessment Evaluating seamlessness Self-appraisal of users Evaluating barriers to participation Evaluating "helping people" Moving between organisational structures Evaluating community development Evaluation of interests and identities	

Table 1: Issues arising from the needs audit of community projects categorised into themes

Following this discussion, the group split down into three and explored the important issues to take into account for the design of learning events. A number of considerations for the design of learning events were agreed, including:

- Aim for fairly large events to maximise shared learning (up to 50 people) with scope for subgroups;
- All events should be fun, enlivening, engaging, energetic, participative and challenging, yet instil confidence - help people to learn;
- The workshops should be mixed rather than explicitly targeted at a particular audience, such as funders, even if this is what statutory organisations would prefer -This may help participants to come across new ideas;
- Stress partnership and collaboration;
- Different groups will make different demands, so we will need flexibility to respond;
- The events will take a broad view of evaluation that includes, for example, planning;
- Materials should be sent out in advance and as a follow up;
- Publicity should be attractive and refer to specific "hot" concerns (e.g. relationships - will they fund you again?), while not giving misleading expectations about what the events can achieve;
- There will be 3 sets of events:

1. Introduction to evaluation / exploration of evaluation / taking the fear out of evaluation / making evaluation accessible, using practical examples that participants bring ;
2. Developing evaluation - visions and practice. Introducing models for evaluation e.g. goal/organisational/stakeholder; why/what/how/who "wheels";
3. Addressing key evaluation issues e.g. planning, stakeholder.

Prior to the consultation exercise, in our proposal to the HAZ, we had suggested that the events might be structured round a set of evaluation approaches (Midgley et al, 2003). However, it was apparent that simply training people in the use of these approaches would not be sufficient to address all the issues raised by the groups and organisations we had spoken with. We therefore designed the learning events from scratch, confining the three approaches to just one of them.

It was clear that we needed a foundation learning event for people who had no previous formal knowledge of evaluation, or who were put off by the concept. We had spoken with a number of voluntary organisations and community groups who had said that they found the subject boring, or were terrified by the complexity of it. They were unaware of the possibility that evaluation could be participative and even *fun*, so we decided to call the first event "Facing the Fear and Finding the Fun!" We anticipated a large market for this event, which proved to be the case. This learning event was seen to be key to developing capacity, for unless local people engaged with the task of evaluation, methods and designs of evaluation would be irrelevant. The event was aimed at those unfamiliar with formal evaluation work and was seen as a key capacity building learning event (Tandon, 2000). A description of this learning event follows: details of the others can be found Boyd et al., 2001).

 Facing the Fear and Finding the Fun!
As with all the learning events, each session was structured so as to ensure that participants were able to meet and discuss issues arising from their own projects with others from different projects. Participant lists were distributed within each event to help people collect contact information and maximise the networking opportunities. Music was played during arrivals, breaks and during the feedback time at the end.

The event was designed to stimulate interest in how evaluation might be incorporated into the work of projects in ways that are interesting and enjoyable to those participating in it, and at the same time overcome fears people might have about evaluation as something that is difficult to do. With this in mind we decided to link evaluation to people's everyday experiences, in order then to explore the basic questions underlying the evaluations of people's own projects.

In the morning we worked in small groups exploring what evaluation is and could be. We did this in a way that drew on everyone's common experience of 'What makes for a good cup of tea?' We asked people to is look at different ways in which evaluation issues can be explored and presented, and offered a choice of groups for people to join. We suggested that participants joined with people other than those from their own projects, and to choose an activity that they had not thought of doing before in terms of evaluation. There was a choice of five groups, each with a different task see

figure 2, and the aim was to prepare an evaluation of a 'good cup of tea', in the form of the task, to present to the whole group.

> **(1) Devise a 'coat of arms' which captures the essence of a good cup of tea;**
> **(2) Make up a song, rap, poem or a mime about the value of a good cup of tea – what makes for a good cup of tea, and how do you know it is good?;**
> **(3) Prepare a 'public information' broadcast or some other kind of sketch about the key aspects of a good cup of tea;**
> **(4) Draw pictures or cartoons on a poster which summarises aspects of a good cup of tea.**
> (5) **Prepare a formal presentation designed to capture the essence of a good cup of tea (maybe plan something like a sales pitch – why tea rather than coffee?);**

Figure 2: Tasks within which the 'good cup of tea' was to be evaluated

There was approximately one and a quarter hours for this task. After half an hour, prompt cards were given to each group, addressing key evaluation issues (Figure 3). The groups were asked to ensure that their finished products included consideration of these issues. These prompt cards served to encourage participants to explore a wide range of themes which could be included in any project evaluation.

> **(1) Costs: for example, ingredients and time; skills of tea maker**
> **(2) Outcomes: Who gains and loses from this cup of tea; what do the tea drinkers think? What do the tea producers think?**
> **(3) Stakeholders: What is a cup of tea (to different people); process of serving tea – what are the steps?**
> **(4) Measures: What hard measures of inputs and outcomes might you use (for example quantities, temperature, time, costs)?; resources: what is the quality of hardware (e.g. cups, kettle)**
> *(5)* **Context: What else might have led to people's satisfaction with the tea; what else might affect the making of the tea**

Figure 3: key issues in evaluation used as prompts for groups

At the end of the time period, each group presented their evaluations to the larger group and any comments or questions raised were discussed. After these presentations, we drew attention to the central evaluation issues and reminded participants that the different media are available in real project evaluations. The process of evaluation of projects is similar to the process we use to assess the cup of tea! The different merits of different forms of collecting information and presenting the results were discussed.

After lunch we reminded everyone that the central questions to ask of any evaluation were very simple: they were *Who? What? Why? How? When* and *Where?* It was these questions that we asked participants to consider in relation to their own projects. Different small groups were formed, and each member of the group given a card with a role label (Figure 4)

> *(1) the project presenter*
> *(2) the Who? Questioner*

> *(3) the What? questioner*
> *(4) the Why? questioner*
> *(5) the How? questioner*
> *(6) the When? and Where? questioner*

Figure 4: Evaluation roles for project discussions

Each person took a role and spent 20 minutes talking about a project, with the questioners trying to stick only to their question. After 20 minutes the cards were passed on one place and everyone took a different role. If there were less than six people in the group, two questioner roles were combined. If there were more than six in the group the remaining people could ask any question. Each person was given a grid within which to record their discussions if they wished. After each project discussion, the groups identified which were the most difficult and insightful questions to ask and to have asked. .If time they went on to discuss how different, 'fun' ways of doing evaluations might be used within each project. Each group member identified some aspect of evaluation they would take back for further discussion or action within their own projects.

Throughout each session, further participative techniques were used to encourage feedback and information about the workshop but also to illustrate other methods of participative evaluation. These included the 'growth of a tree on evaluation' (for which each person was issued with leaf shaped pieces of paper on which to write (i) their expectations for the event; (ii) any insights or thoughts they had during the event) and (iii) pledges for action on leaving the event. As each event progressed, these leaves were put on a tree-shaped chart and provided a growing understanding of the collective view on evaluation by the end of the event); the use of photographs; wallpaper facilitation; and a graffiti wall.

Issues Arising from the Foundation Learning Events
People working in thirty two projects attended these foundation learning events and feedback was extremely positive. Participants gained from opportunities to think differently about evaluation in an enjoyable way, to meet and discuss issues with other people and to spend time thinking about how evaluation may work differently and more usefully within their own projects. Comments included in the feedback included:

> *I will focus more on evaluation in the future and have some good ideas to take back to the project.*

> *Day was thought provoking for new creative ideas to use as methods of evaluation.*

> *I am now clearer of how and why evaluation works over a project.*

> *I have broadened by outlook regarding evaluation.*

> *The practical activities demonstrated the value and success of different evaluation techniques.*

(it has made) the whole process of evaluation less of a headache.

Simple approach - yet enough information about techniques

Networking (was good) the diverse group helped give ideas I hadn't considered

Group work was good. Sharing ideas with other people … (as well as) the free and liberal approach to learning

Time flew! I am looking forward to other events

The team's reflections of the day were that it had been a success and had served a useful purpose in stimulating thought amongst a wide range of different projects. IN particular, those people from projects with little experience of evaluation left with a positive attitude towards evaluation and ideas about how evaluation might work in their projects' interests. We met some participants later on in the project and they were able to give us illustrations of how they had used learning from the event to convince others in their projects about the value and some methods of evaluation. We were satisfied that the learning events had led to learning. However, we also realised how little many people , particularly from the community and voluntary sectors knew about evaluation, and how little confidence they had in their own abilities to undertake evaluations. As in the needs analysis, most people thought of evaluation as an 'expert' activity to be done by experienced evaluators.

This was a theme we were able to pick up in the following learning events, and build into our thinking about what kind of ongoing support might be necessary in the future, to build on and sustain the momentum gained in the project. Most particularly, the *Facing the Fear and Finding the Fun* learning event highlighted how important it would be to continue to find ways of valuing the local experiences and the latent expertise of local people working in a variety of projects, and to encourage commissioners of projects to appreciate diverse approaches to evaluation.

Figure 5 shows how valuing local expertise is the foundation to a comprehensive, co-ordinated system of evaluation for health. It is the development of support for just such a system that is currently being developed in the fifth action research cycle of the project.

Whilst it might appear easy to say that a comprehensive evaluation system can only be built on participants at all stages in the system being valued, it is not so easy in practice. The third action research cycle sought to identify the obstacles to supporting evaluation in the longer term.

purpose:

Projects

Local people and those involved with the project

Clarity and negotiation

Commissioners

resources:

Within the project:
experience
skills and knowledge
information
time
contacts

Outside the project:

Funding

Training and advice

Availability of external evaluators

Information and networks

activities:

Involvement
co-ordination
data collection
analysis
records or reports

outputs:

Information and impact:

| impact of projects on local health and wellbeing | Information about what works well and what works not so well | Effective interagency working | Full and meaningful participation of all affected by project | cost-effective-ness |

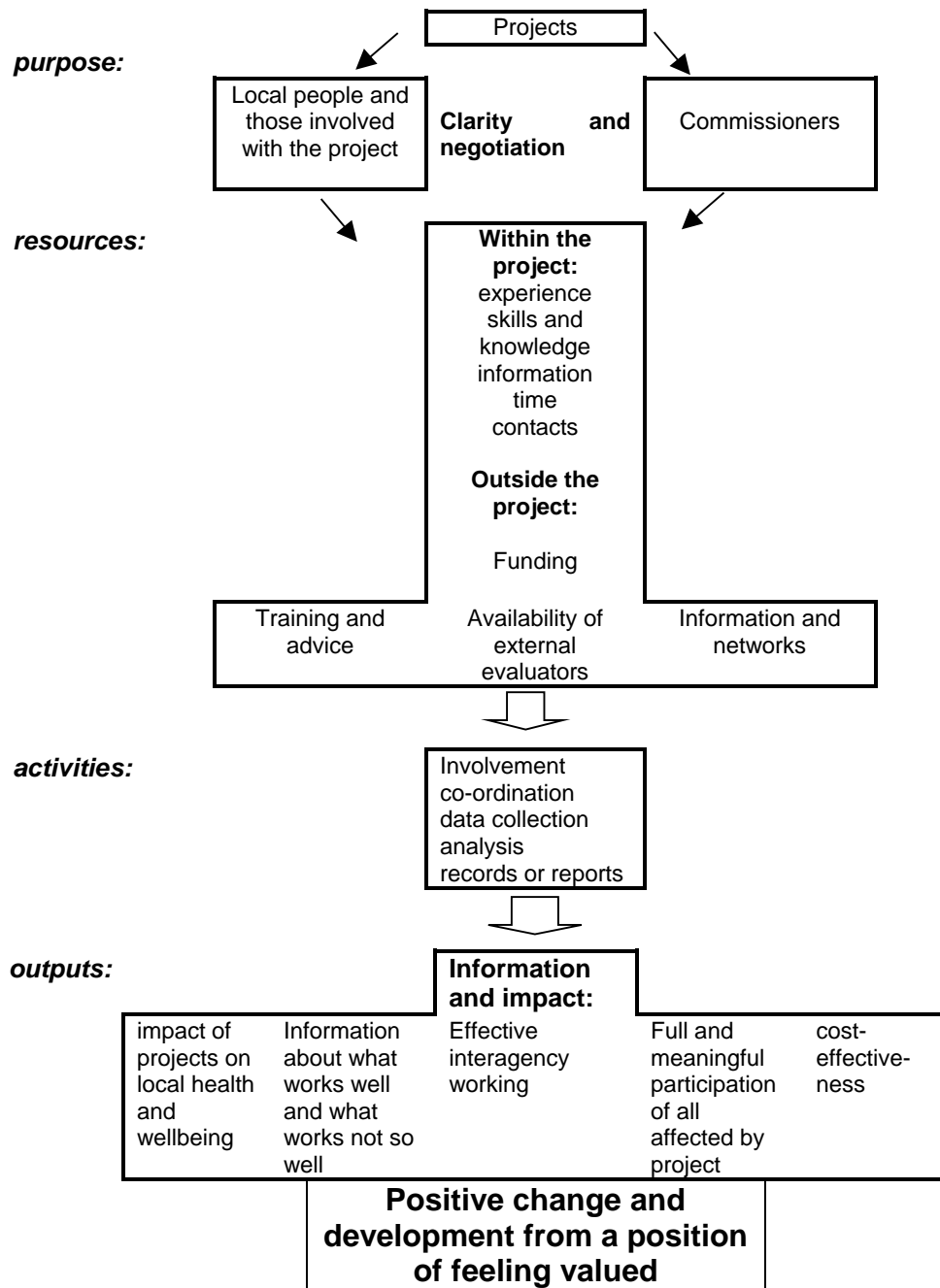**Positive change and development from a position of feeling valued**

Figure 5: The vision of an effective evaluation system 5 years on

Obstacles to change in the longer term

Figure 6 summarises the balance of opportunities and obstacles to developing an effective system of evaluation.

Figure : The balance of opportunities and obstacles to an effective system of evaluation

Opportunities		Obstacles
Purpose Modernisation targets Government policies (for participation and relevance) local strategic partnerships Gain service users' expectations Mainstream has to evaluate too (Best Value) Some longer term funding Sure Start gives model for joined up evaluation Set joint targets and undertake joint evaluations Some awareness of multicultural issues Healthy Living concept Voluntary sector able to influence state sector	ð ð ð ð ð ð ð ð ð ð ð	ï ï ï ï ï ï ï ï ï ï	**Purpose** Medical models of evaluation dominate Funding requirements (e.g. short term, matched funding) Difficult to engage funders in dialogue Different outcomes required for funders Organizational boundaries Management boards can hold back People resistant to change Hidden agendas Emphasis on objectivity Gaps and diversity of expectations Lack of holistic approach to services Quality of life not recognised as purpose of evaluation
Resources Networking Lots of funding bodies and cash around Training Changes in top personnel Lots of learning organisations Open to new learning Multi-agency and cross boundary working Maximise contributions different people can make Use resources of different stakeholders Some specialists available re. Methodology Voluntary sector mobilisation around evaluation	ð ð ð ð ð ð ð ð ð ð ð	ï ï ï ï ï ï ï ï ï ï	**Resources** Inappropriate timescales Lack time Lack information and updated knowledge Amount of competition (& attitudes and beliefs about competition) Lack expertise (re. Evaluation and gaining funds) Participative evaluation time consuming Some apathy due to constant change and some demoralisation and demotivation Lack of translators and interpreters Professional barriers Culture of rubber stamping
Activities Peer evaluation Build in to everyday practice Sharing information Qualitative work becoming acceptable Dynamism with listening skills Empowerment of users Commitment, enthusiasm to evaluate Opportunities to be creative in evaluation Co-ordination so as not to swamp stakeholders	ð ð ð ð ð ð ð ð	ï ï ï ï ï ï	**Activities** Current practice – fear of change Lack knowledge about change from number crunching to include soft data Data collection – lack knowledge and time Pressures to focus on quantitative – how to balance this with qualitative Lack knowledge of different ways to help people participate Bad habits difficult to break Not enough space to learn from evaluation Lack of commitment
Outputs Purposeful outcomes Increased recognition of qualitative reports Learning and acting on evaluations Appropriate and relevant evaluations Open to positive and negative learning from evaluation	ð ð ð ð	ï ï ï ï ï	**Outputs** Cynicism Difficulties dissemination information in interesting ways Blame culture – cannot admit mistakes Fear – consequences of failure for funding Unsustainability

current system of evaluation: ñ   *An effective system of evaluation:* ñ
opportunities hindered by obstacles   *opportunities outweigh obstacles*

ðto move towards an effective evaluation system, the opportunities need strengthening and the obstacles reducing

In the series of learning events that articulated these opportunities and obstacles to change a number of ways of building on the opportunities were identified, and these are presented below. ('We' in these summaries refers to participants in the learning events, not the facilitators.)

Opportunity: to build on the benefits of joined up working co-ordinating and moving forward together

Actions that depend on Us:	Actions where we must rely on Others
Write a proposal and secure agreement Develop a partnership agreement Agree on how decisions are made and who does what	Joint editorial board Joint working. Identify lead agencies Agree in principle for joint working Joint Audit It was agreed that a newsletter would be a good idea – proposal for action

Opportunity: to improve collaboration on evaluation

Actions that depend on Us:	Actions where we must rely on Others
Build on existing partnerships	Develop communication infrastructure **Actors:** VSSAN (Voluntary Sector Services Action Network).

Opportunity: to build on evaluation networks that help to increase confidence, sharing of skills, information and co-operative working

Actions that depend on Us:	Actions where we must rely on Others
To do something today ie share contact details at the end of the day from each other. In future : we would participate in a network	To identify a named lead in Trafford, Salford , Manchester: HAZ The Report of this meeting should feed back that there is a request for an evaluation network and this should be shared with participants of workshops There is a need for a Co-ordinator : gathering evidence, sharing information, experience, leading co-ordination production of newsletter, other communication links eg telephone network. Produce a list of members, publish and distribute it.

Opportunity: to help people from different cultures get involved in evaluation

Actions that depend on Us:	Actions where we must rely on Others
Use an appropriate venue Use existing networks more effectively Valuing Community Knowledge and contacts. Involve community groups in project planning Make information understandable to everyone and use less jargon. It is our responsibility to put things in clear and understandable terms. Create an inclusive environment, e.g. safety, confidentiality, catering, timing.	Language: translating / understanding technical terms **Actors:** Interpreting services. Make information understandable to everyone and use less jargon **Actors :** Everyone Identify and commission translation work **Actors ::**translation services, ethnic community groups with training. Use indicators that are not culturally biased **Actors**: All evaluators and commissioners

Opportunity: to make evaluation more enjoyable

Actions that depend on Us:	Actions where we must rely on Others
Creating a menu of more creative methods of evaluation **Actors**: Everyone.	Run a training programme **Actors**: Manchester Community Information Network.

Opportunity: Involve users in evaluation

Beneficiaries	service users, project workers(ex users), all services bought by project eg child care, caterers , transport, landlords, all project staff, contacts of service users eg family, carer ; cascading of benefits
Actors	project staff, paid / volunteers, service users (we hope) : representatives on committees , training, value users views.
Transformation	Involve users in planning Involve users in implementation Training to change attitudes users
Worldview	training must be realistic, understand barriers re access Inclusivity Accessibility Challenging negative attitudes and beliefs Dignity / respect / trust Empowerment Empathy

	Valuing service users and building positive relationships
Owners	Service Users (Apathy, Hostility, and Previous Bad Experience) Funders Management / workers
Victims	competition – other service providers not funded Potential beneficiaries we decide not to help Service users iof let down – lack of funding – provide for service Local services we decide not to use
Environment	Weather Staffing issues / service users issues Ill health of service users Local area eg crime rate , public transport Government

Opportunity: to Evaluate Partnerships

Actions that depend on Us:	*Actions where we must rely on Others*
Coming together to agree the defined purpose of the partnership whilst preserving the individuality of the partner Partners need to agree in advance what elements need to be included within the evaluation mechanism	Agreeing meaningful objectives of the partnership **Actors** Users Owners and Commissioners Act as a catalyst to encourage partnerships

Opportunity: to work with government and local priorities in meaningful ways

Actions that depend on Us:	*Actions where we must rely on Others*
Raise the Issues Empower people to raise the issues Lobby civil servants, politicians and academics Be prepared to take risk	

Opportunity: to involve service users in evaluation to ensure meaningful participation

Actions that depend on Us:	*Actions where we must rely on Others*
Offer regular and honest feedback on a regular basis Develop an appropriate environment	provide funding to support participation service-users prepared to get

both physical and social Make relevant information accessible and interesting Publicise and encourage that the evaluation is taking place	involved with support if needed Flexibility from funders as projects develop Be prepared to act on listen to other points of view – change your beliefs / attitudes The group proposed a model for funding which divided resources as follows: Development 20% Effectiveness 60% Innovations 20%

Opportunity: to learn from Evaluation

Actions that depend on Us:	*Actions where we must rely on Others*
Sharing and questioning Critical analysis of the process / outcome of the evaluation	Development effectiveness innovation and less conservatism **Actors :** Funders and Policy Makers

Overview of Possibilities for Further Capacity-Building

Several messages come out clearly from the future orientation learning events.

1 A need for the recognition by providers of funds that a much broader approach to evaluation would improve the value of the services which are provided with their funds. This recognition should come in the provision of funds for evaluation, and in a readiness by funders to agree with providers at the start of the project the type of evaluation that would meet the needs of a wider range of stakeholders

2 Such a wide approach to evaluation would make evaluation much more accepted (and even fun !) and would enable evaluation of stakeholders and organization as well as goals.

3 Mutual support should be encouraged, both by the creation of networks for evaluation, and also by encouraging partners and partnerships assist one another in evaluation.

4 A final priority is training, both in different techniques of evaluation, and also to enable those who have difficulty accessing services (because of disability or identity) to be empowered.

Postscript

The lesson from the project, described in part in this paper, that underpins our approach to support for evaluation, is captured by something that Marie-Thérèse

Fuerstein wrote, in her classic manual: "*People are usually more committed to plans and activities which they themselves have had a part in making. Participatory evaluation is not just to do with the development of things. It is to do particularly with the development of people*" (Fuerstein, 1986, xi).

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