

CULTURAL COMPETENCE *BY DESIGN*

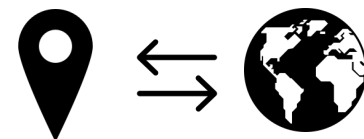
Lessons Learned from an Evaluation of Youth
Programs in India

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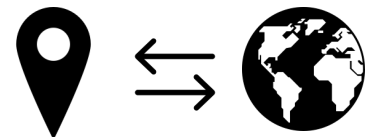
Introduction + Session Goals

- **Public Profit:** Oakland, CA-based evaluation firm specializing in youth development- and after school-focused projects
- **Goals:** by the end of the session you will have learned...
 - **About our project** in India and how we approached the evaluation design + prep work in a culturally competent way
 - About some of the realities we encountered on the ground, and **how we designed to adjust**
 - About our **key takeaways and lessons learned**, which we encourage replicating in your own contexts
 - About those **things that cannot be planned around**, designed away, or otherwise easily addressed



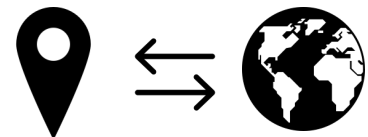
Session Agenda

1. **SOME BACKGROUND:** Quick info about Prayasam and our evaluation project to set the scene.
2. **ACTIVITIES PLANNED; LESSONS LEARNED:** Key takeaways and techniques from each phase of the evaluation project, from planning through reporting.
3. **AND YET....:** Things we could not have anticipated and couldn't plan around.
4. **YOUR TURN:** Our chance to learn from your about how cultural context can factor into and impact your evaluations.



Some Background: Evaluating Prayasam

- **Based in Kolkata, India:** Prayasam is a locally-founded, locally-run nonprofit providing training and services to youth from slum neighborhoods
- **The OnTrack program:** High school-age youth workforce development, SEL, and skill building
- **Evaluating OnTrack:** At the end of the program's first 3-year program cohort
- **Field work + beyond:** ~3 weeks of field work, with several months of US-based work bookending our time in Kolkata



Lessons Learned: Planning



- **Cushion your timeline.**

- *Practically:* time zone differences have a huge impact.
- *Competence key:* culturally-held conceptions of time and expectations around time can also affect planning.



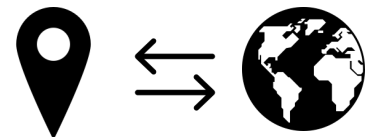
- **Be open to new tools + documents.**

- *Practically:* international clients may need to use documents or tools that will speak to major funders.
- *Competence key:* balance your expertise as an evaluator with the client's and/or beneficiaries' expert program knowledge.



- **Get comfortable with the unknown.**

- *Practically:* try to minimize the project's unknowns.
- *Competence key:* know that it's not possible – or desirable – to know everything before you get there.



Lessons Learned: Evaluation Design



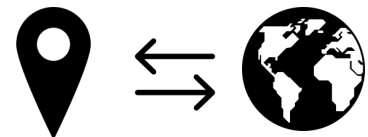
- **Flexibility is the watchword.**

- *Practically:* develop an evaluation plan that crystallizes the likely/recommended tools, methods, and periodicity.
- *Competence key:* ...but be sure to suggest a Plan B, C, and D... for all tools, schedules, respondent groups, data collection modes, etc.



- **Plan for pilots.**

- *Practically:* build data collection pilots into the evaluation plan.
- *Competence key:* let the evaluation design process be iterative and shared amongst several staff to make sure many eyes and minds are weighing all the implications.



Lessons Learned: Instrumentation + Data Collection



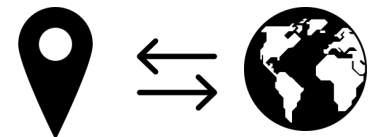
- **Ask for input.**

- *Practically:* consult the client about respondents' preferred language(s), literacy, and ability to write or complete surveys.
- *Competence key:* clients who are a part of the local culture, and who are also a part of the organizational culture, can be your best experts on what is likely to work.



- **Collect, adjust, repeat.**

- *Practically:* use multiple modes to get the same kind of data from respondents.
- *Competence key:* plan for the unexpected to be the project norm – and don't lock yourself into "needing" to get certain kinds or quantities of data.



Lessons Learned: Analysis + Reporting



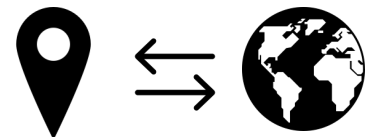
- **Know your audience.**

- *Practically:* ask early and often about who will read the findings report – things may change as you go.
- *Competence key:* heavily participatory programs may have non-traditional audiences; factor them into analysis and report planning.



- **Be inclusive.**

- *Practically:* text-heavy reports limit the findings to high-literacy populations.
- *Competence key:* experiment with visual ways to represent or complement your findings to make them more widely accessible.



Your turn: Learning from *your* work

Now tell us about your experiences! Brainstorm first...



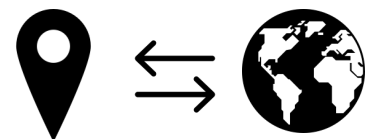
Pair share: Based on your experiences and the context in which you work, share with a partner or two next to you about:

Some challenges or successes you have had in using culturally competent techniques.

...and then:



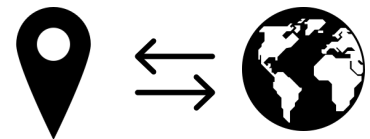
Report back: Share with the group any challenges you've experienced or tips you have.



Conclusion: So what?

Why cultural competency? Why does it matter?

- It matters to the populations we evaluate
- It improves the data we collect and what we can say about them
- It is integral to the profession of evaluation



QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

BE IN TOUCH!



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