



Event Outcome Report

Impact Measurement

Setting up programmes and activities for success

Event Date: 30 April 2018

Event Location: King Khalid Foundation, Riyadh, KSA



Executive Summary

The workshop, held as part of the 'Governance in the Philanthropic and Non-Profit Ecosystem' programme, brought together representatives from foundations, CSR divisions and social enterprises to understand and discuss the value of impact evaluation as well as the different ways to measure impact. The workshop was led by AbdelRahman Nagy, Senior Policy and Research Manager, Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) Global.

Impact evaluation was identified as a key area for improvement across the ecosystem. Donors and implementing organisations have a responsibility to track the outcomes of their activities and contributions. Currently, mainly outputs are being tracked and measured, with less focus on outcomes. This is due to several reasons including the lack of technical expertise and knowledge. The workshop looked at the different means to measure impact with a particular focus on randomised control trials (RCT).

Workshop Facilitator¹:



AbdelRahman Nagy
*Senior Policy and Research
Manager*
J-PAL Global

¹ For his full biography, please refer to Annexure 1.



Introduction

AbdelRahman commenced the workshop with analysis on why impact evaluation is important. The traditional solution to ending poverty was for the rich countries to provide aid to the poorer countries. This approach had no impact on the poorer countries' overall GDP, which meant that they needed something more than just money. Looking at India as an example, it did not receive as much funding as other countries and yet over the years its GDP has been rising. Hence, studying the impact of interventions is critical to designing effective policies that help end some of the world's most pressing social problems.

What is impact?

Impact is defined as a comparison between the outcome sometime after a programme has been introduced and the outcome at the same point in time had the programme not been introduced. Impact evaluation is about assessing change in outcomes as a result of a specific intervention. This kind of analysis informs more effective programmes and ultimately, better policies.

Case Study 1 – Primary Education in India

- Despite the fact that 96% of children in India are enrolled in school, learning levels are low. To understand why learning levels are low, the impact of adopting different solutions has to be analysed. For example, contrary to what others might think, research in Indonesia found that increasing teachers' salaries had no impact on learning levels of the children.

“Policies built on good intentions are simply not enough to solve social problems. What we need today are policies informed by evidence.”

- AbdelRahman Nagy

Components of Programme Evaluation

Looking at water, sanitation and health in a low-income country as an example, the facilitator took the audience through the five components of programme evaluation.

- Needs Assessment:
 - What is the source of the problem?
 - If solutions were previously proposed and implemented why did they fail?
 - Who is in most need?
- Theory of Change:
 - How will the programme address the needs put forth in the needs assessment?
 - How does the programme intend to target or circumvent shortcomings?
 - What is a potential solution to this problem? What are alternative solutions?
- Process Evaluation:
 - Was the programme carried out as planned?



- Are basic tasks being completed?
- Is the intervention reaching the target population?
- Impact Evaluation:
 - How well did the programme work?
 - Did the programme create a change in an outcome?
- Cost Effectiveness Analysis

Case Study 2: Youth Unemployment (hypothetical)

The facilitator engaged the participants in designing a programme to solve youth unemployment in Riyadh by going through the five components of programme evaluation.

- Needs Assessment:
 - Currently, there is a 40% youth unemployment rate in Riyadh.
 - The problem has been going on for six years.
 - The source of the problem is education, training and skills in youth. There is also a problem in the availability of jobs in the market.
 - Suggested solutions: providing job opportunities for 2000 young adults.
- Theory of Change:
 - After assessing the needs, the participants came up with a proposal that looks to provide training and jobs to 2000 individuals (as a pilot programme).
 - There was a general disagreement on the number of people to be provided training. The majority believed that only 2000 should get the training, while some thought a bit more should be receiving the training because some might drop out of the programme. One of the participants considered providing training to more than 2000 is bad planning.
 - The programme would also provide career counselling and transportation to youth. On the other hand, it will also provide information to companies about the youth they are training.
- Process Evaluation:
 - After the completion of the programme, most agreed to measure the success of this programme using a results framework, which answers the basic question of what has changed since the start of the programme and what could have been done better.
- Impact Evaluation:
 - Measuring the outcomes of the programme – so moving beyond the 2000 that now have jobs, has information about labour markets increased?
 - Each table was asked to reflect on how they would evaluate the impact of the programme. Most agreed that the best way was to survey the 2000 individuals 6 months after their training.



Methods of Impact Evaluation

Difference-in-difference

- The difference-in-difference method of assessing the impact of programmes focuses on results from pre-intervention and post-intervention research and survey results.
- This kind of analysis does not account for interfering factors that could have also played in a role in creating the desired outcome. It is also the least scientific method of measuring impact.
- A vast majority of the audience rely on this method of impact evaluation. Moreover, as foundations, they don't rely on the non-profit organisations to report on the impact their initiatives had on the beneficiaries, rather they get in touch directly with the beneficiaries through phone calls and surveys.

Randomised Control Trials

- A randomised evaluation is a type of impact evaluation that uses random assignment to allocate resources, run programmes, or apply policies as part of the study design. In practice, this means comparing outcomes of two groups, one that received the programme and one that didn't.
- Like other impact evaluation methods, the challenge to implementing RCTs is the cost.

Open Discussion

- The facilitator asked the audience to engage in open discussion and share challenges in their journey to measure impact:
 - The majority of foundations and corporations present in the workshop measure impact internally – only a couple use a third party to evaluate the impact of their programmes.
 - To overcome the challenge of budgeting for impact evaluation, a suggestion was made to include costs for impact evaluation as “admin fees” in all grant applications received from non-profit organisations. Moreover, the need to strategically plan out programmes was highlighted as a key driver for effective impact evaluation.
 - Sharing success stories can be a key driver to increase impact measurement. Currently, the donor community in the Gulf Region has not been too keen on sharing success stories.
 - Another challenge amongst foundations is their internal policies. They have to abide by Sharia Law and have a responsibility to be engaging in certain activities, such as printing and distributing religious books and the impact of this is never measured. Some foundations are hesitant to measure the impact of these more religious activities even if the intention is to enhance these programmes and activities.
 - Lastly, foundations expressed the need to be sharing tools and resources with the non-profit organisations they fund to enhance and develop their capacity and encourage greater transparency and accountability in non-profit organisations.



Annexure 1

Biography of AbdelRahman Nagy

AbdelRahman Nagy is a Senior Policy and Research Manager at J-PAL and manages J-PAL's partnership activities in Egypt. He works to establish partnerships and disseminate evidence from J-PAL evaluations to support international and local organizations to base their programs on research outcomes. AbdelRahman also manages J-PAL research projects in Egypt. He works closely with J-PAL partners, policymakers in Egypt, and J-PAL affiliated professors to find new solutions to alleviate poverty.

Prior to joining J-PAL, AbdelRahman worked for more than a decade in the monitoring and evaluation field with Egyptian donors and many international organizations such as Aid to Artisans, Save the Children, and USAID. He also worked as a consultant with Social Contract, USAID, and the World Bank. He is a co-founder of the Arab Foundation for Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality, and El Haya Erada, an NGO focused on sustainable development.

AbdelRahman received several postgraduate diplomas in economics, public policy, and research methods. He is currently a PhD candidate in research methods at Cairo University. In addition, he is completing his master's in international and comparative education at the American University in Cairo.