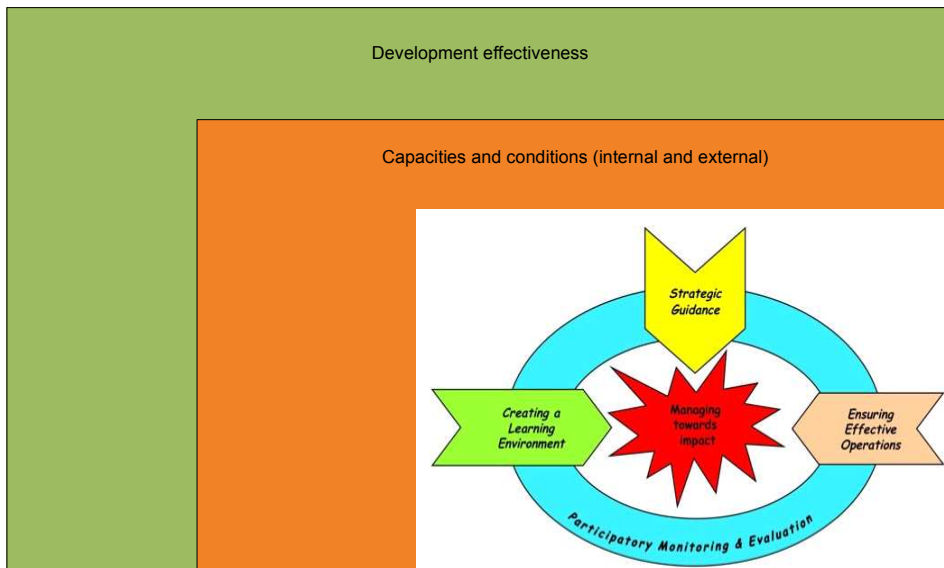


Getting the most out of evaluations. Designing and facilitating evaluations that matter.

Cecile Kusters, Mine Pabari

'Evaluating a program can be nightmare. Outsiders, who know little about an area or the people rush in with their quick evaluation plans. They proceed to ask many questions while giving you little chance to talk about your ideas and experiences. In no time, the program is assessed on its successes and failures. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made. The report goes to a shelf and gathers dust. Meanwhile, life goes on as usual.

If we are committed to bringing about change in the lives of the people we work with, we will seek to turn these external evaluations into processes where the community members can tell their story so we can see what went well and what needs improvement from their perspective. We will seek to together generate and share conclusions that will be easy to act on after an evaluation'.



- Follow up from 2008:
 - interviews with Wageningen International to learn lessons on approaches for evaluation whereby maximum benefit can be gained from these evaluations;
 - Literature review;
 - Internal review workshop.
- 2009:
 - Adapting booklet integrating feedback 2008 workshop;
 - Further literature review;
 - Internal workshop
 - Editing and publishing

The extent to which evaluations are designed and implemented such that maximum benefit is created, is the focus of this document. Evaluations can play an important role in organisational strengthening, programme development, policy influencing or proving and improving impact. The aim is not to be complete but rather to provide an overall framework that points out key issues. This document aims to provide evaluators, funders, policy makers, project managers and M&E officers a guide to strengthen current evaluation practice, by bringing together existing concepts, methods and experiences.

Key principles:

- Stakeholder engagement
- Shared learning
- Negotiation
- Flexibility
- Open process
- Credibility
- Substantiating findings and using feedback loops