

Developing a manual to guide project evaluation for RainWater Cambodia

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ABSTRACT: *This manual will help the non-government organisation RainWater Cambodia (RWC) with project evaluation. This manual has been created to help post-project evaluation, but can also be used for project development and mid-project evaluation. It has been designed to be used by RWC but other companies and NGO's in developing countries can use it as well. The manual has been made understanding that there is not much money or time available in completing project evaluation in developing countries.*

KEYWORDS: PROJECT EVALUATION MANUAL, GUIDELINES, RAINWATER CAMBODIA, IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

INTRODUCTION: This manual was written to help RainWater Cambodia (RWC) with project evaluation with the help of volunteers from Engineers Without Borders (EWB) Australia. It was created to address the lack of access to clean drinking water in Cambodia. The main reasons for not completing project evaluation in developing countries are due to little funding, resources and time. This manual attempts to address these issues.

Research in Cambodia found that a simple project evaluation guide made available online was required. This guide is a logical step-by-step process that RWC can use to evaluate projects.

METHOD: This manual has used information from work conducted in the past, in particular the following documents have been used: Evaluation of the Development of the Biosecurity Strategy for Victoria; Program Evaluation Training and Water Quality Project Evaluation: A Handbook for Objectives-Based Evaluation of Water Quality Projects.

EVALUATION:

Step 1: The first step is to create an evaluation team. This section guides the reader through what to consider when gathering an evaluation team. The team should have as many relevant stakeholders as possible. For RWC these include: staff, project participants, village health volunteers, council members, local entrepreneurs and WASH committees.

Working with these stakeholders is important to the success of the evaluation. To do this, it requires informing them of the benefits of taking part in the process. Some of the reasons for conducting Project Evaluation include:

- Identifying areas for improvement
- Assessing how sustainable and suitable the project is
- To understand how the budget will be spent

Step 2: This step involves assessing the situation through understanding the reasons for the initial evaluation and then to determine what they are trying to achieve. An example of this

would be RWC would like to determine the level of education of their staff and to see if they are able to expand and maintain the projects at present.

Step 3: This step determines what problems may occur that may prevent the success of the evaluation. It then tries to supply solutions to overcome these limitations. In this step it is important to decide if the evaluation should go-ahead. This should be a group decision involving all participants.

Step 4: This section is designed to question certain areas of learning, for example:

- How can the project be improved?
- Is there demand for the project?
- What worked for people and why?

Performance Indicators (PIs) are designed to assess the project on a statistical basis. For RWC an example of this may be to determine the number of rain-water harvesting systems that are built and installed by newly trained local entrepreneurs.

Step 5: Once Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) are determined the data collection method must be chosen. This method should be based on how well it answers the KEQs and the resources available.

VALIDITY: One method to determine how well the audience understands this evaluation is to run the same pilot test several times – gathering the same group of people. This way proven methods can be determined.

Step 6: This step guides the reader through reporting and analysing their results; a step that is important when determining the limitations of the project. This step will help find explanations for why results appear to be the way they are. It is good to have someone from outside the company to evaluate these results to ensure that they make sense.

Step 7: The final step is to communicate the results to the audience involved in the evaluation. This is so decisions can be made based on the results obtained and actions can be taken for certain areas. A verbal presentation or workshop is recommended as it reaches a wider group of people and is easily absorbed.

CONCLUSIONS: This guide enables the readers to teach themselves how to evaluate projects. It provides a method to learn and conduct evaluations. This guideline has used the help of other reports and the local knowledge that RainWater Cambodia have provided.

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