Ethical Community Led Evaluation

Experiences with Peace and Conflict Evaluations: An Practitioner’s Perspective.

Collen Zvandasara
Ethical Issues

• Trust building
• Safety and Security
• Relationship building
• Do no harm Approach
What does our experience working with grass root communities tell us

What we see is just a symptom-
Example of a case of Zimbabwe:

- A close reflection on the situation in Zimbabwe beams a scenario where one can fail to see the direct and immediate presence of violence, lack of economic, social and political stability has drifted people away from the hope of better life, directing them to hatred, animosity and violent reactions even towards each other.
What does our experience working with grass root communities tell us

- That conflict can be protracted and destructive without even becoming violent—non-cooperation, poor state of services, hunger and low income are all very important indicators of conflict.

- The real indicators of peace will only surface after trust building and knowledge sharing. It is only ethical to take time building trust and relationships before any intervention. That way people will give you the correct position.
What does our experience working with grass root communities tell us

The African Context and Culture and many other cultures makes it difficult for real in-depth evaluation... A whole lot of things are Unethical..
Including Asking the Question like “...are you ok.”

Community led evaluation should start with the basics:

The real Basics like:

• Are you happy?
• Are you safe?
• Are you hungry?
• Are you confident?
• Can you go to the bank?

If communities can answer these questions safely and freely.. They are participating:
The Food Question
What does our experience working with grass root communities tell us

Peace building evaluation is a socio-anthropological phenomenon:

• Indicators are not always clear-
• People do not always speak their mind-
• The conflict is the same but the needs differ-
• Security is not always the priority-
• Even if it’s a small conflict within a ward, or village. Someone is always benefiting-

Thus it requires going deeper, exploring emotions, feelings and needs that do not always come clear
Do the reported programming results always reflect on the work that has been done in Zimbabwe?

- In the context of our work it is difficult for people to share with you their problem - trust building takes time and in some cases months. Rarely do project implementation time move inline with conflict resolution. (how do we balance between the donor requirements and intervention requirements - without lying)
- Conflict transformation moves in its own stages - from latent to semi latent to Open transitioning through willingness to engage until it reaches the sustainability stage. (People give you what you want.. And when you discover that Later.. How do you Admit?)
- At each stage it is important to evaluate change of attitude, Behaviour, relationships, interactions and a whole lot more-
Summary of Ethical issues

- If you don't give them something. You don't get anything.
- If you give them more.. They tell you what you want to hear.
- If you make them participate freely and they ask for more.. What then?
- How do you ensure they participate freely and safely.. (safety is primary).
- If you don't speak their language, eat their food, respect their culture, accept their tokens and seat on their chairs.. They won't seat on yours!... You don't get what you want.
- Do you need to be the voice.. Or provide a microphone( well a voice can be heard, but does can a microphone be measure?)
And Lastly.. How do you Include them.. How do they Participate?