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## ***Evaluator-evaluated: broadening the engagement***

THINK.  
CHANGE.  
DO





## *Evaluator-evaluated: broadening the engagement*

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# Key messages in this presentation

1. The influence of evaluative processes can be broadened and deepened through establishing a longer term relationship between evaluators, 'evaluatees' and clients
2. Benefits include trustful, constructive relationships and "nuanced" knowledge built up over time
3. Challenges include ambiguity caused by evaluators playing multiple roles and queries about maintaining 'independence'



## The conventional model has limitations...

- > Conventional model:
  - Independent
  - Short-term engagement
  - Narrowly focused ToR
  - Rarely includes on-going presence or follow up
  - “So long and good luck”

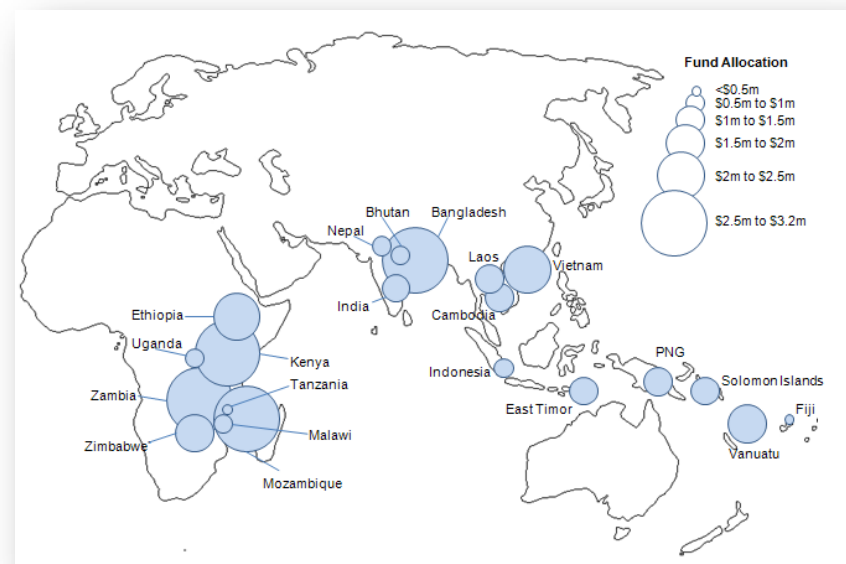


Conventional model is often 'all care, no responsibility'

# Monitoring Review Panel (MRP) model has wider scope...

## > MRP model:

- Engaged for life of the program
- Broad and flexible ToR
- Resourced M&E capacity building role
- Balanced focus between donor and implementers
- Design AND make it work (PAF, reporting etc.)
- Consistent long-term team



*11 civil society organisations  
Working in 21 countries*

MRP model 'all care, **with** responsibility'

## Benefits of trustful relations...

- > Example:
  - We designed the reporting requirements
  - Concern was raised over progress reports from one NGO
  - Monitoring trip took place
  - Follow-up mentoring and support was offered



*“I really appreciate the way the MRP has approached this monitoring and that has delivered positive results for us.”*

### Benefits

The NGO performance issue was addressed, which reduced the risk to the client  
NGO received capacity building in M&E, suggestions about new ideas from other parts of the Fund  
Relationships and trust was maintained on both sides  
More generally, trustful relations contributes to validity of findings

# Benefits of nuanced knowledge...

## > Example:

- During a monitoring trip, an evaluatee reported that only “20% of the target group were poor”.
- MRP made judgement and recommendation about the appropriateness of target criteria
- Established working relationship (strengthened through mentoring role) enabled a conversation to clarify issue
- Deeper discussion revealed variable definitions of poverty



## Benefits

The NGO was able to raise their voice in the evaluation process

The issue was resolved without the evaluatee 'losing face' with the client

Relationships and trust were maintained



## Benefits of nuanced knowledge...

### > Example:

- Knowledge of projects by MRP progressively developed over life of program
- Monitoring trip to Kenya identified additional areas of commonality between partner projects
- Facilitated linkage between partners to share approaches/lessons



### Benefits

Evaluators involved at key points and with clear on-going responsibility (so remain engaged)

Detailed knowledge of partner projects enabled facilitation of cross-linkages

Project performance and overall Fund performance enhanced



## But there are also challenges... firstly, the ambiguity created by playing both 'cop' and 'coach'

- > Experience for NGO, can be confusing, what to divulge or not
- > The same relationship has to bridge support given towards improving M&E, and a monitoring visit which is also to judge the activity
- > Personal relationships/trust generated could be compromised
- > Experience for MRP is having two clients (NGO and donor) and also can be confusing what to divulge or not



### How to manage this complexity?

MRP is careful to be constructively critical of programs and practices  
NGOs need to be open, avoid being defensive, take a learning attitude  
Client needs to trust that MRP will act in their interests

## And what about 'independence' and 'impartiality'?

- > Do the 'multiple roles' we take on compromise 'independence'? Does this matter?
- > MRP model is in line with the views of various authors on these issues (Patton, 1997; Markiewicz 2008; Taylor and Bulloch 2005; Mohan and Sullivan 2007; Liverani and Lundgren, 2007)
- > Professional integrity is potentially what is most important



### How to manage this complexity?

Client respected evaluation processes (eg mid-term review) and didn't apply pressure for certain findings

Maintained credibility and rigour in monitoring visits through methodology (eg consulting a range of stakeholders in-country)

Internal peer review to counter unintentional bias of findings

## Success may be personality dependent...

- > MRP as a 'model' contingent on members
  - Common outlook but diverse perspective within MRP
  - Respectful and constructive engagement with NGOs and donor
  - Healthy and respectful dialogue among MRP members...and good fun!



How to manage this complexity?

High level of professionalism is needed to negotiate the potential ethical dilemmas that arise

Client needs to be aware that the combination of personalities and perspectives in the team will strongly affect the model's success

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# Thank you

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