



“learning to make room”: Evaluation in Aboriginal communities

International Evaluation Conference
7-19 September 2016, Perth, Australia



(KALACC 2006)

Dr Victoria Hovane
E: info@tjallaraconsulting.com.au
M: 0417 928 216

Acknowledgement




(KALACC 2006)



The Context: Ongoing oppression

- Systemic discrimination
- Imposition of solutions via programmes, service delivery models, and evaluation methods
- Aboriginal voices, perspectives and theoretical frameworks often excluded



Why is Law and Culture important? It's the Law of this ground. People were born and lived in this land and they treated it according to our Law. All the Law and stories we were taught by the old people. A person's own country is just like a mother. Important ground alright. That's why we need to teach everyone the Law for that ground.



The Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan

- High proportion of Aboriginal people living in the Kimberley
- Disproportionate number of Aboriginal people affected by family violence
- Respects Law and Culture
- Includes Cultural Responses



Operationalising Cultural Responses

- A focus on
 - Cultural Bosses (Law People);
 - Elders;
 - Aboriginal community members.



Consultations

- Approximately 130 people (women and men)
- Kununurra, Wyndham, Warmun, Halls Creek
- Fitzroy Crossing, KALACC, Derby
- Broome, One Arm Point, Djarindjin
- Lombadina, Beagle Bay, Bidyadanga
- Walmajarri Women's Cultural Camp (Ngumpan, Wangkatjunka, Kurnangki, Fitzroy Crossing)



Example: Family Violence Policy & Practice

Privileged White voices have influenced the conversation about FV and sexual assault, thereby asserting power and claiming the platform to decide solutions ... solutions which can end up being destructive and harmful to Aboriginal people.



Aboriginal Perspective

Aboriginal people have own theory/story of FV, what causes it, maintains the problem and how to address it

⇒ breakdowns in culture, intergenerational trauma, ongoing racial inequality

⇒ gender inequality not the primary driver.

Women and Men have equally important roles and responsibilities



“...(W)e’ve got it strong boss womans. They got authority to say whatever, whatever we doing” (KALACC, 2006, p.26).

“...I can’t speak for woman. Brother and I, we work for woman, we do things for woman, but we can’t touch their ground” (KALACC, 2006, p.26).



Implications

- Accurate and ethical interpretation of community feedback?
- Ensuring judgments that are made as a result of the evaluation and any related actions are based on sound and complete information (AES, 2013; Guideline B)?



Evaluation: “learning to make room”

“Do with not do to us. Imposing a program on us does not work, we need to decide what works for us ... what the priorities are” (Community leader, 10/2/2016).



Evaluation: “learning to make room”

- Including Aboriginal world-views and protocols;
- Participatory Evaluation Framework (e.g., National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013).

All processes must be acknowledged and respected in our world (Community leader 10/2/2016)



Clarifying the role of Aboriginal people: Partnership –

- Local people and evaluators planning with each other
- Interactive participation or co-learning
- Share responsibility and knowledge to analyse, develop action plans and form or strengthen local groups.
- Evaluators are facilitators.
- Local people have a stake in maintaining the groups, actions and projects



Participatory elements:

- Engagement
- Readiness
- Needs
- Cultural Governance
- Values and Principles



Engagement

- Process of establishing a mutually respectful, trustworthy and collaborative working relationship with communities;
- Implicit within this process is the valuing of local knowledge whilst being cognisant of universal knowledge.



Readiness

Understanding a community's capacity, within the context of local values, norms, attitudes and perceptions.




Needs

- Existing local knowledge, and human, financial, physical, and technological resources within a community;
- Identification of gaps in available resources;
- Helps paint a picture of a community.



Cultural Governance

Refers to Cultural Bosses managing Law and Culture on a daily basis for education, health, community and cultural governance, self-esteem and the management of country.



Aboriginal values, visions, rights and aspirations for Country; the protocols bound in ownership and seniority, of recognised cultural practices and Aboriginal cultural governance, are a daily prioritised cultural and political reality ...

This leadership, in turn, retains and upholds values bound in relationships with and responsibilities to Country ...

These processes are crucial to the success of social ventures, social reconstruction and employment development programmes.




Values and Principles

- Respect
- Integrity
- Inclusion
- Deliberation
- Shared Understanding
- Commitment
- Accountability



Respect

- Engagement is genuine, open and honest.
- Cultural authority, governance and protocols are respected by working with and being guided by local Cultural Bosses, Elders and leaders.
- Holistic perspectives and approaches are respected.
- Lived experiences of disempowerment and trauma are acknowledged, respected and taken into account when planning, developing, implementing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating responses.
- The right of Aboriginal people to be self-determining is respected.



“It’s critical that we don’t transmit this legacy (of trauma) on to subsequent generations. We need to find a place for the trauma so we can heal, move forward and live our own lives. But I know and don’t forget these are the things that took my family on this path (Community leader 10/2/2016)”




Integrity

- There is openness, honesty and transparency about the scope, purpose and process for engagement and participation.
- Preserving the cultural integrity of Aboriginal people, families and communities is a priority.



Inclusion

- Being open to hearing all of the information – the full story.
- There are opportunities for a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely and fairly expressed and heard.



“We are looking at all of our issues in all of its entirety. We are walking in two worlds.”
(Community leader, 10/2/2016).

“They can’t just look at DV but at the whole situation. You can’t go over it, you can’t go under it, you have to go straight through it otherwise you’ll end up in the same place as you started.”
(Community member, 21/3/2016).




Deliberation

- Engagement takes time.
- Sufficient and credible information for dialogue, choice and decisions is provided.
- Sufficient time and space to weigh options, develop common understandings and to appreciate respective roles and responsibilities is provided.



Shared understanding

- Two-way learning is valued.
- Creating shared understanding supports cross-community ownership and the relevance of activities.
- The purpose scope and timeframes are clear.
- Decision-making processes and boundaries are understood.
- Information and communication is understood by all.



“We need two-way working ... set up strong elders group ... make sure you talk to the right one so that we can do what we can, then go policeman way” (Community leader, 18/5/2016).




Commitment

- Two-way engagement must be ongoing and not just up-front or in a tokenistic way.
- Policy, processes and practice are endorsed, implemented and properly resourced.
- Enough time is given for practices to change and for outcomes to improve.



Accountability

- Aboriginal ownership of and participation in creating/co-creating solutions is valued.
- Processes are negotiated, agreed and adhered to.
- Changes are negotiated and communicated.
- Decision-making is sustainable (economically viable, technically feasible, environmentally compatible, publicly acceptable).
- Ongoing evaluation is used to inform and improve policy, practice and outcomes. Aboriginal people have input into how evaluations are conducted and the type of data that is collected.
- Feedback is provided in an easy to understand format, to keep the community informed of processes and outcomes.



We are a unique group of people. We don't just see things in the kartiya way. We might enjoy what's available, but we don't want to compromise who we are – and why should we? We have a right to our identity (Community leader, 10/2/2016).



Summary

- Including Aboriginal world-views and protocols;
 - Clarifying the role of Aboriginal people - Partnership
 - Participatory Evaluation Framework:
 - Engagement
 - Readiness
 - Needs
 - Cultural Governance
 - Values and Principles
-)



Future directions: Implications for stakeholders

- Developers of strategies, programmes and services in or for Aboriginal communities;
- Commissioners of evaluations;
- Evaluators - need to be culturally competent;
- Communities need to be able to have confidence in evaluations.



Thank you

Questions?