

Victoria BCCIC Peer Circle: Learning about How to Involve Young People through M&E

On March 14th members of the BC Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) gathered at the University of Victoria for a learning circle hosted by the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD). The focus was on child-centered monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and was the second circle of a three-part series to bring together BCCIC members together to promote shared learning and practice. Participants focused on the key monitoring and evaluation challenges to involve community stakeholders. They also swapped ideas, strategies and experiences, and were introduced to some of IICRD's tools and approaches from the field.

“Chaotic, inadequate, complex, discovery and new” - these were a few words chosen by participants to describe how they felt about M&E during an icebreaker activity. Participants were in agreement that, due to the increased level of reporting required for international development, the M&E process was a challenge worth addressing. In particular, they noted that there is often a big disconnect between donor reporting and the real changes happening on the ground. Other challenges that were addressed during the session included: the need for culture-specific M&E strategies, the importance of integrating quantitative and meaningful indicators into reports, and the difficulty of reporting to donors, or others, who were unwilling to receive criticism.

When the discussion turned to Results-Based Management (RBM), Keith Oglivie from GeoSpatial/SALASAN Consulting suggested that “the purpose of RBM has nominally been learning, but this has rarely been applied. Rather, it has become only a task to check off your list.” What is really needed is a monitoring and learning process to help advance the project with southern partners. Rebeccah Nelems, M&E Practitioner and IICRD Associate offered an example from their [Child Protection Partnership](#) project that combined RBM's logic model with outcome mapping targets and approach, developed in collaboration with local partners.



*Web of Protection, Thailand
CAPE project, IICRD*

“There are several benefits to engaging young people in the monitoring and evaluation process,” says the BCCIC Peer Learning host, Elaina Mack. “Engaging young people as evaluators engages them to think critically to create change in their own communities.” Rebeccah and Elaina shared examples from IICRD's experience to involve young people, drawing on its [Circle of Rights](#) methodology that helps children and other stakeholders to identify key challenges and to propose concrete solutions to address them. Monitoring and evaluation is “really an opportunity to engage young people and to ensure that they have a voice,” added Rebeccah. Participants learned about a

variety of M&E tools from the [Child-Centred Accountability and Evaluation](#) project that could be applied to diverse BCCIC member projects.

Participants also reflected on many practical and ethical issues involved in child-centered M&E including: top down vs. bottom up accountability, assumptions about well-being and risk, deficits vs. strength-based approaches, giving voice and ensuring for adequate follow up support. We need to reflect on how we can look at measurement and how we can represent that work in a stronger way,” explains April Ingham of the Pacific People’s Partnership.

The session concluded with a shared commitment to strengthening the practice and culture of M&E to meaningfully involve Southern partners and stakeholders. Yogi Carolsfeld from the World Fisheries Trust reflected on this point: “we have champions that emerge out of the programs and they are the ones that really create change.”

Story prepared by Jenn Farquarsen, IICRD Volunteer