Mainstreaming Youth Participation in Development Project Cycles: A Cambodian Case Study

Rebecca Stark and Edith Fahey
Presentation Overview

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Oaktree and Youth Participation

**Vision:** A world where all people have the opportunity to thrive

**Mission:** Young people leading, demanding, and creating a more just world
Youth Participation at Oaktree

- Organisational structure
- Domestic work - advocacy programs
- International work - education & empowerment programs
- *Oaktree & ACFID Practice Note: Youth Participation in Development,*’ (2016).
Cambodian and Program Context

- ‘Youth boom’
- Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE)
- Girls Education Initiative (GEI)
  - Scholarships
  - Student council support
  - Livelihood support
  - Career counselling*
Reasons for Youth-led Evaluation

- Youth population
- Improve evaluation outcomes
- Building capacity of young people
- Early investment for long term change
- Young people have a right to participate

‘Nothing about us without us’
Purpose of Case Study

- Demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of youth participation within monitoring and evaluation
- Develop organisational understanding of and expertise in youth-led processes to strengthen future work
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Area 1</th>
<th>Learning Area 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of youth participation within program evaluation to capacity building and youth empowerment</td>
<td>Contribution of (beneficiary) youth participation in evaluation to development evaluation effectiveness</td>
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</tbody>
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## Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation(s)</th>
<th>Evaluation trainers</th>
<th>Evaluators</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Type of Participation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation 1 and 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oaktree staff</td>
<td>Counselling and support</td>
<td>Group evaluation activities</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Support: Interpreter</td>
<td>Peer counsellors</td>
<td>Group evaluation activities</td>
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<td>Teacher Counsellors</td>
<td>Group activities and one-on-one interviews</td>
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<td>Evaluation 3</td>
<td>Oaktree staff</td>
<td>Eight Year 12 students at a GEI</td>
<td>Counselling and support</td>
<td>Group evaluation activities</td>
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<td>beneficiary school</td>
<td>Peer counsellors</td>
<td>Group evaluation activities</td>
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<td>Teacher Counsellors</td>
<td>One-on-one interview</td>
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</tbody>
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Methodology

- Facilitators train students in evaluation methods
- Students form evaluation framework & questions
- Students collect data
- Students analyse data & create recommendations
- Students present findings & recommendations
Methodology

- **Learning Area 1 - capacity building & youth empowerment**
  - Goals set before evaluation, reflected on after
  - Personal development survey post-evaluation

- **Learning Area 2 - development evaluation effectiveness**
  - Student-led findings compared with findings obtained by Oaktree-led evaluation
Findings

● Learning Area 1 - youth empowerment and capacity building
  ○ Evaluation knowledge and experience
  ○ Transferable skill development
  ○ Increased confidence
  ○ Goal setting
  ○ Increased understanding of GEI’s counseling program

Around 50% of student participants reported feeling more ‘confident’

All student evaluators noted that they could use skills developed in their future studies or work

30% of student evaluators reported improved goal setting abilities
Findings

- Learning Area 2 - development evaluation effectiveness
  - Consistent findings between Oaktree- and student-led evaluations
  - Unique findings and recommendations - subsequently, counselling services required better promotion
Discussion

● **Learning Area 1 - youth empowerment and capacity building**
  ○ Building capacity of individuals and community
  ○ Increased program ownership

● **Learning Area 2 - development evaluation effectiveness**
  ○ Advantages of beneficiary-led evaluation
  ○ Advantages of peer evaluation
  ○ Advantages of youth-led evaluation
Reflections

- Michael Patton - ‘Utilisation-Focused Evaluation’
- Shifting traditional power dynamics
- Participatory Action Research and Empowerment Evaluation learning cycles
- Realities of youth participation
- Value of youth facilitators and peer-to-peer training
- KAPE’s reflections
Next Steps

- Implementing learnings & refining process
- Further youth-led evaluations in Cambodia & Timor Leste in 2018
- First youth-led scoping workshop in TL in 2018
- Mainstreaming youth-led processes in new project with KAPE
- Continued efforts to increase youth participation in our own, and others, development work
Find the Case Study at:
www.oaktree.org

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