CONFIRMING READINESS FOR COLLABORATIVE EVALUATION.

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Confirming readiness for collaborative evaluation

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The learner of evaluation (Organization)	The Evaluator Mentor	The Donor/Funder
Time – Does the organization have the time to learn evaluation? Can their assigned roles include time to "learning by doing" evaluation?	**Expertise** – to innovate and guide according to the organization's needs and context; ability to demystify evaluation; excellent communication & facilitation skills	**Willingness to address** the Learning function of evaluation – this usually means that the accountability function has been addressed through other systems e.g. monitoring data, periodic reports are available
Capacity – Analytical capacity not necessarily evaluation specific	**Agility** to respond to unique and changing needs and context	**Willingness to ask:** WHY is it working in addition to: IS it working?
Buy in from management – to provide resources – human and material for the evaluation	**Nudge** – perceptiveness about when to nudge	**Respectful** of their partners' capacity and work
Value – that the evaluation process, involvement of the organization will improve and strengthen their work	**Flexibility of time** – the mentoring relationship is longer with variable levels of interaction	**Flexible resources** for the evaluation learning process
Synergizes with other evaluation priorities – the organization should not be conflicted with other evaluation demands	**Cultural and contextual competence** – to guide the mentee to address a variety of stakeholders	
Continuity – of staff	**Continuity of evaluator**	**Continuity of Donor**

Dimensions of readiness

a) Readiness means having a sense of what is doable within specific organizational or project situations.
b) The notion of assessing project or organizations' **readiness** for collaborative evaluation, as well as the evaluators' own **readiness** to play a facilitation role comes from Patton's work on utilization-focused evaluation (2008).
c) The extent to which the client is ready for a collaborative, utilization-focused evaluation is often taken for granted.
d) Readiness has a connotation about who decides on the purposes of an evaluation, what room there is to learn, and the extent to which the organizational culture embraces change.
e) When readiness is established and maintained, it creates a reference map to monitor and course-correct the collaborative process.
f) We have learned to address it head on: the level of **readiness** is a lynch pin that shapes subsequent steps in the process.
g) We have also learned that readiness is best nurtured through a mentoring process.
h) **Our skills building proposition: readiness gives a name to the enabling and limiting factors behind collaboration, and there are strategies to assess it, nurture it, and make it your ally.**

Three take home elements

The power to design.
*   In the non-profit world, and in international development assistance, the funding agency normally holds the prevailing power in the relationship with the grantee.
*   In contrast, in collaborative evaluation where utilization is a priority, the power to design is open to more stakeholders.

The commitment to learn.
*   When a team of primary evaluation "users" is faced -for the first time- with the opportunity to shape an evaluation, they get that deer in the headlights expression. *"You mean I can decide what this is for?"*
*   Having the space to decide on the purposes of an evaluation is liberating; and scary. It is about taking ownership of a process that has the historic connotation of external control and imposed parameters. However, the antidote is the second readiness element: a commitment to learn.

Building an evaluation culture.
*   At the heart of our evaluation work is learning-by-doing; or experiential learning.
*   When the evaluation users are engaged in deciding what to evaluate, what questions to ask, what evidence to seek, and what tools to use to collect and analyze findings, they learn about evaluation. They also take ownership of the results.