

# FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT / RAPPORT TECHNIQUE FINAL DECI-2 FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

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IDRC Grant / Subvention du CRDI: 107064-001-Developing Evaluation and Communication Capacity in Information Society Research (DECI-2)

# DECI-2

DEVELOPING EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION CAPACITY  
IN INFORMATION SOCIETY RESEARCH  
[www.evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.ca](http://www.evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.ca)

LEARNING THROUGH MENTORING

**Project numbers: 107064-001 & 002**

## **Final Technical Report** April 2018

Prepared for  
International Development Research Centre  
Focus: Global South

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## Executive Summary

The rationale for the DECI-2 project was that NE project researchers would gain relevant capacities through an approach that allowed them to design their own project evaluations. In addition, a comparable capacity development rationale was added with the inclusion of Research Communication (ResCom). DECI-2 sought to test a capacity building process whereby researchers received mentoring in both utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) and ResCom; what was later referred to as a hybrid approach. The researchers were members of projects funded by IDRC's Networked Economies Program working on a variety of themes including Open Education, Open Science, Open Data, plus cyber policy topics including privacy and surveillance.

ResCom and UFE appear to share a number of comparable steps. They both dedicate attention, from the beginning, to readiness issues, albeit with complementary attention to evaluation and communication 'readiness'. They are both client oriented rather than product focused. They both pay attention to understanding context before preparing evaluation questions or communication objectives. They both include a pre-testing step, simulation of probable evaluation findings in UFE, and testing communication materials in ResCom. Some steps of UFE enrich ResCom; and the opposite is also true: by integrating ResCom planning from the beginning, projects were expected to consider including a key evaluation question about their communication strategies among other evaluation areas.

The overall objective of DECI-2 was to build capacity in evaluation and communication among global Networked Economies flagship projects. An external IDRC evaluation of DECI-2 confirmed that this goal was achieved to a significant extent with those partners that were able to complete the mentoring with the DECI-2 team. From a capacity development perspective, the on-time mentoring process has proven to be an effective means of training. In terms of methodology, specifically the hybrid approach, an external evaluation confirmed that a combined UFE and ResCom approach emerged as an innovation. The two disciplines share participatory research theory; on the practical side they share an emphasis on collegial decision-making which is reflected in the title of the recently published e-Guide (Evaluation and Communication Decision-making – A Practitioners Guide) that draws on the experience of DECI-2.

From a capacity building perspective, the DECI-2 approach placed much emphasis on mentoring; on being able to await / nurture readiness; on learning with partners; and on creating a trusting relationship (i.e. community development principles: start where people are at, learn at their pace, etc.). The key DECI-2 contributions have been captured in the project's publications and conference presentations. The following are the highlights.

The notion of **readiness** has shed light on the extent to which there is an enabling environment to collaborate with projects. It has become evident that some factors can be enhanced (such as waiting for the projects to overcome the initial workload and committing staff responsible for evaluation and/or communication). Other factors, however, are more difficult to influence (e.g. establishing an organizational culture that is learning oriented/staff that are keen to learn). One of the DECI mentors (Dr. Sonal Zaveri) named the initial readiness discussions Step Zero to underline the value of an early exploration to verify that the partnership will be productive.

It became clear that it is preferable for **Mentoring** to be tailored so that the capacity building process is timed at the pace of the partner. It means that the support is provided when the partner can incorporate the learning and apply it to their project. Mentoring conveys the notion of peer exploration rather than the transmission of a standardized curriculum. The tone in mentoring is ‘let’s figure this out together’ as opposed to ‘let me show you how to do this’; this difference establishes the mentor’s role as a co-learner and places emphasis on the value of adaptive management within the partner organizations.

**Practical wisdom** is about making decisions at the right time and under circumstances that won’t happen again. It is a notion that contrasts with ‘best practices’ in that it recognizes the fact that context is dynamic and the factors that affect a project are often emergent; which means that they will likely not repeat themselves. Practical wisdom captures the capabilities that are central to the mentoring process using the hybrid approach.

**The synergy between evaluation & communication in the hybrid approach** appears to have benefits. Each field invites elements of the other, and they both create a ‘way of thinking’ both among mentors and project partners. This complementarity explains DECI-2’s emphasis on the hybrid as a decision-making approach, which is reflected in the title of a DECI-2’s product – an e-Guide. It highlights the importance of developing/supporting adaptive management strategies within partner organizations – a key conclusion of the DECI-2 experience.

**Gender transformative evaluations.** Dr. Sonal Zaveri, who was part of both DECI projects, was able to build on her vast experience in gender and UFE, especially through the collaboration with a ISIF-2 partner project in Assam, India. This report includes details on three of her publications on the overlap between a feminist approach to development and evaluation.

Among the findings of the External Evaluation of DECI-2 was the observation that many of the project’s teams that were supported by the UFE-ResCom hybrid, developed a space for reflection. This finding emerged from the effort to elicit evaluation purposes and communication objectives, all of which created a moment to review strategy and implementation details. This opportunity, in turn, enabled the projects to gain

confidence in undertaking strategic adaptation. The notion of adaptive management emerged as an unexpected gain from DECI-2, and one that has shaped the focus of the proposed DECI-3.

## **The Research Problem**

The rationale for the DECI-1 project was that researchers would gain relevant capacities through an approach that allowed them to be in charge of designing their own project evaluations. The DECI mentoring process followed the steps of utilization-focused evaluation (UFE). As a result, the researchers were able to prepare evaluation designs and produce evaluation reports. Through the experience, they gained a sense of ownership of the evaluations to the extent that some indicated that they no longer feared evaluation and could embrace it as a learning process. For IDRC, the evaluations were a useful way to capture project lessons. Five case studies were prepared by the DECI team and were reviewed by the projects themselves. These cases provided the key inputs into the production of the UFE-Primer.

During DECI-2, mentoring in UFE was renewed, although with more confidence among those team members who had experienced the approach during DECI-1. In addition, a comparable capacity development rationale was added with the inclusion of Research Communication (ResCom). There was emphasis placed on communication as a process that is planned from the outset. This meant engaging the users of research throughout the project cycle so as to integrate their needs, media preferences and decision-making priorities into the project design. As has been demonstrated in the literature and in the practice of many other agencies, engaging research users from the start is an imperfect science. By exposing Networked Economy (NE) research partners to methods and media from the communication field early on, DECI-2 support helped the project teams create new spaces and opportunities for engagement with possible users of the research.

With DECI-2 it was assumed that there would be comparable challenges to those faced during the preceding project: the approach has proven difficult to convey in a workshop setting because it is best learned through practice (one-off workshops have little if any impact). In addition, learning through practice requires a structured process of mentoring where specific steps are covered in accordance with the needs, pace, and context of the project.

In the field of communication, the research organization / project needed to have a core staff that could be trained to manage the design, appreciate the regulatory context of media, co-ordinate the communication strategy, while subcontracting specialized services. As with UFE, some of these skills may exist and be strengthened within the staff of the organization hosting the project, while others may be contracted out. As

with evaluation, the actual ‘use’ of research findings was considered to be the litmus test of research success.

ResCom and UFE appear to share a number of comparable steps. They both dedicate attention, from the beginning, to readiness issues, albeit with complementary attention to evaluation and communication ‘readiness’. They are both client oriented rather than product focused. They both pay attention to understanding context before preparing evaluation questions or communication objectives. They both include a pre-testing step, simulation of probable evaluation findings in UFE, and testing communication materials in ResCom. Some steps of UFE enrich ResCom, for example Step 11 in UFE about facilitating use can strengthen a ResCom strategy by emphasizing how the project or organization will internalize communication planning. The opposite is also true, by integrating ResCom planning from the beginning, projects were expected to consider including a key evaluation question about their communication strategies among other evaluation areas.

Among the findings of the External Evaluation of DECI-2 was the observation that many of the projects teams that were supported in the UFE-ResCom hybrid, developed a space for reflection. This finding emerged from the effort to elicit evaluation purposes and communication objectives, all of which created a moment to review strategy and implementation details. This opportunity, in turn, enabled the projects to gain confidence in undertaking strategic adaptation. The notion of adaptive management emerged as an unexpected gain from DECI-2, and one that has shaped the focus of the proposed DECI-3.

The overall objective of DECI-2 was to build capacity in evaluation and communication among global Networked Economies flagship projects. This goal was achieved to a considerable extent with those partners that were able to complete the mentoring with the DECI-2 team. From a capacity development perspective, the on-time mentoring process has proven to be an effective means of training. The adult education and community development principles that underlie the approach confirm its place in the family of action-research and training approaches that have been around since the 1970s. In terms of methodology, specifically the hybrid approach, the external evaluation confirmed that a combined UFE and ResCom approach emerged as an innovation. The two disciplines share participatory research theory; on the practical side they share an emphasis on collegial decision-making, which is reflected in the title of the e-Guide (Evaluation and Communication Decision-making – A Practitioners Guide) that draws on the experience of DECI-2.

## **Progress towards milestones**

The table below provides a summary of the results that were established in the original DECI-2 project proposal, and the progress achieved for each one.

Results in the Project Document	Progress achieved by the end of the project
1. A field-tested approach that integrates UFE and ResCom, coupled with case studies and reflections on the conditions and factors that enable or constrain integrated UFE and ResCom mentoring; and the range of outcomes that this combined approach provides.	The DECI-2 approach was summarized through conference presentations, publications, a new Theory of Change, and a video. An e-Guide was produced that captures the approach for practitioners. The DECI-2 approach has been proactively shared with three different communities of practice that seldom overlap: evaluation, communication and facilitation.
2. A cadre of regional evaluation consultants/mentors with experience in the combined concepts and practices of UFE and ResCom identified and engaged.	Over time our mentors' roles shifted towards facilitating the hybrid approach as opposed to focusing on one of the fields. This strategy builds on the notion of a modular building (Lego) approach that adapts to each project context and level of readiness. The PIs felt that, going forward, there could be less emphasis on geographic proximity and more on the mentor's skills sets and compatibility with each project partner; something that was confirmed by the external evaluation.
3. A core of Networked Economies Program project researchers and other Primary Intended Users with UFE and ResCom knowledge and skills.	The 2017 External Evaluation connected with the DECI-2 partners and provided a summary of their achievements, presentations, and papers. Many of these materials were prepared by our partners and they demonstrate the capabilities that they have acquired.
4. Completed UFE evaluations and communication strategies for designated NE flagship projects.	A completed revamped website was uploaded in early 2018. It includes a searchable database as an aid to practitioners of evaluation & communication. The site contains UFE evaluation reports, communication strategies, webinars, and case studies.
5. Methods and media summarizing the DECI-2 project methods, findings and training approach for select audience groups including practitioners, researchers and policy makers.	The new website assembles all of the DECI-1 and DECI-2 materials that have been produced, including a ten-minute video, a Theory of Change, and several papers and conference presentations. The case studies have also been uploaded to the IDRC Extranet.



## Synthesis of research results and development outcomes

### Objectives

The overall objective of DECI-2 was to build capacity in evaluation and communication among global Networked Economies flagship projects. The specific objectives were the following:

1. **Meta-level action-research:** To develop and test-drive a combined approach to UFE and ResCom mentoring.
2. **Capacity development for regional consultants:** To build capacity among regional evaluation consultants (*mentors*) in the concepts and practices of both UFE and ResCom.
3. **Capacity development for project partners:** To provide technical assistance to I&N project researchers, communications staff and evaluators toward improving their evaluation and ResCom knowledge and skills.
4. **Assistance to project evaluations and communication planning:** To contribute towards the completion of UFE evaluations and communication strategies for designated I&N flagship projects.
5. **Sharing lessons:** To communicate the DECI-2 project findings and training approach to practitioners, researchers and policy makers

### Key contributions

From a capacity building perspective, the DECI-2 approach places much emphasis on mentoring; on being able to await / nurture readiness; on learning with partners; and on creating a trusting relationship (community development principles: start where people are at, learn at their pace, etc.). Our key contributions have been captured in our publications and conference presentations. The following are the highlights.

**Readiness**, which was borrowed from the early steps of UFE, has shed light on the extent to which there is an enabling environment to collaborate with projects. It has become evident that some factors can be enhanced (such as waiting for the projects to overcome the initial workload and hire staff able to undertake evaluation and/or communication). Others, however, are more difficult to influence (e.g. establishing an organizational culture that is learning oriented; staff that are keen to learn). One of the DECI mentors (Dr. Sonal Zaveri) named the initial readiness discussions Step Zero to underline the value of an early exploration to verify that the partnership will be productive. We produced a hand-out on Readiness for a presentation at the American Evaluation Association (AEA, Washington D.C. November 2017) that was well received (see Annex 4).

**Mentoring** can be tailored so that the capacity building process is timed at the pace of the partner. It means that the support is provided when the partner is able to incorporate the learning and apply it to their project. Mentoring, as contrasted to teaching, conveys the notion of peer exploration rather than the transmission of a

standardized curriculum. The tone in mentoring is ‘let’s figure this out together’ as opposed to ‘let me show you how to do this’; this difference establishes the mentor’s role as a co-learner and places emphasis on the value of adaptive management within the partner organizations.

**Practical wisdom** is about making decisions at the right time and under circumstances that won’t happen again. It is a notion that contrasts with ‘best practices’ in that it recognizes the fact that context is dynamic and the factors that affect a project are often emergent; which means that they will likely not repeat themselves. Practical wisdom captures the capabilities that are central to the mentoring process using the hybrid approach.

**The synergy between evaluation & communication in the hybrid approach** appears to have benefits. Each field invites elements of the other, and they both create a ‘way of thinking’ both among mentors and project partners. This complementarity explains DECI-2’s emphasis on the hybrid as a decision-making approach, which is reflected in the title of our e-Guide. It highlights the importance of developing/supporting adaptive management strategies within partner organizations – a key conclusion of the DECI-2 experience.

**Gender transformative evaluations.** Dr. Sonal Zaveri, who was part of both DECI projects, was able to build on her vast experience in gender and UFE, especially through the collaboration with a ISIF-2 partner project in Assam India. The following are also worth noting:

- Dr. Zaveri published three chapters on this topic as part of [Resource Pack on Gender Transformative Evaluations](#) (2016, edited by S. Chigateri & S. Saha; Institute for Social Studies Trust, New Delhi).
- Zaveri, Sonal (2018). Using a Feminist Lens for Utilization Focused Evaluations: Lessons Learned. In: Sudarshan, R.M. & Nandi, R. (Eds.). *Voices and Values: The Politics of Feminist Evaluation*, Zubaan: New Delhi (ISBN 978 81 85932 39 7)
- Sonal was one of the facilitators for a blended course on gender, which went on line in February-March 2018, with a trial run in late January using Moodle. It was supported by the Ford Foundation and will be offered to organizations in India working on gender to introduce evaluation to them. One module focused on Outcome Mapping (OM) and UFE - crisscrossing with gender and using the Assam experience (one of the ISIF-2 grantees supported by DECI-2) as an example.

## External evaluation findings

The DECI-2 project started in August 2012 and following an extension, ended in March 2018. During 2017, IDRC commissioned an external evaluation that followed a UFE approach<sup>1</sup>. According to the External Evaluation (2017) the key results of DECI-2 were:

1. Partner organisations are using UFE and ResCom to adapt their project strategies, improve their operations and build better relationships with their stakeholders.
2. Mentors have become more confident in their own area and the opposite area (evaluation or communication).
3. The research and development work by the programme has led to an approach that has proven effective at building evaluation and communication capacity, particularly the approach to readiness assessment and mentoring. (Source: Hearn & Batchelor, 2017 Evaluation Highlights presentation, slide 3)

The positive changes among partners were reported to be:

1. Improved evaluation and communication approaches: gaining knowledge; practicing more informed approaches; and, integrating evaluation into the work.
2. Increased understanding of practice: regular reflection on practice; questioning assumptions; and, becoming aware of blind spots.
3. Improving delivery of objectives; using data to inform decision making; and, developing targeted strategies. (Source: Hearn & Batchelor, 2017 Evaluation Highlights presentation, slide 4)

The positive changes among mentors were reported to be:

1. Improved professional practice (evaluation or communication)
2. Greater confidence
3. Changed understanding of capacity building
4. Improved knowledge and understanding of the other area (evaluation or communication). (Source: Hearn & Batchelor, 2017 Evaluation Highlights presentation, slide 5)

## Methodology

In terms of meta-research, the following benefits were reported:

1. The DECI-2 PIs as well as the mentors have regularly reflected on their own processes and attempted to capture new knowledge through case studies, research reports, journal articles, conference presentations and the e-Guide.
2. The meta research focused mainly on the processes involved in setting up and conducting DECI-2.
3. Two topics in particular were emphasized: the concept of readiness as a key to

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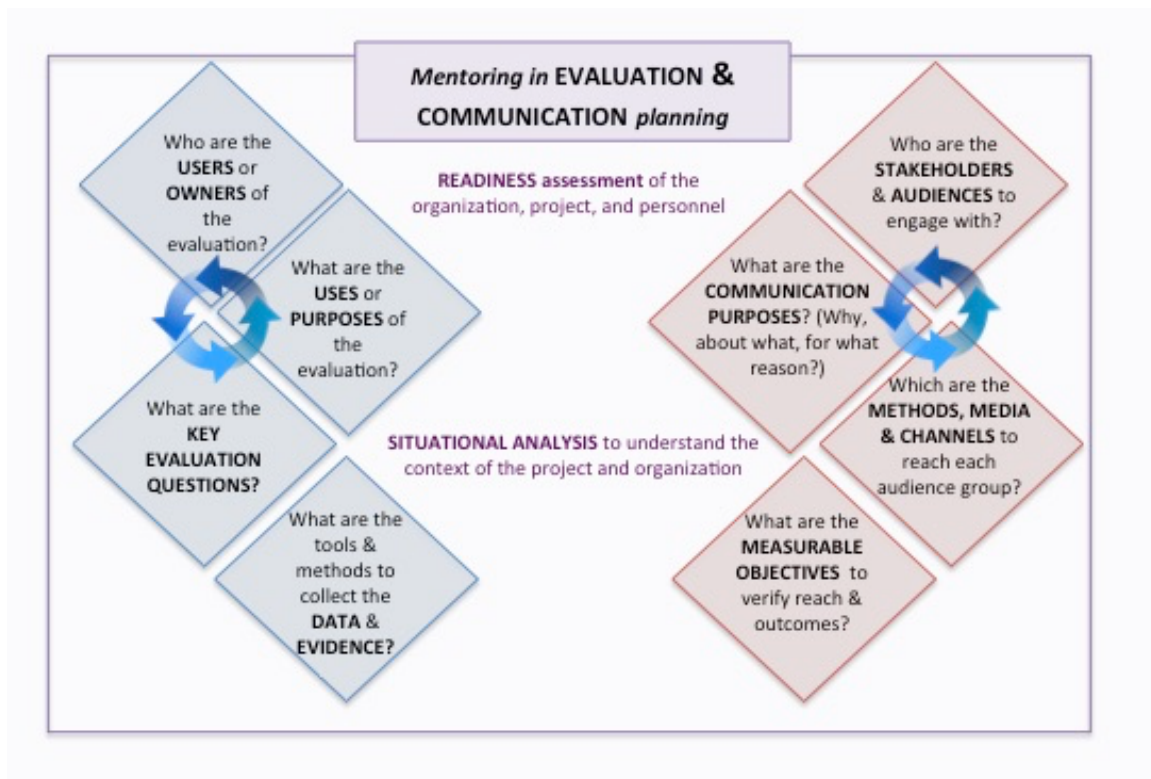
<sup>1</sup> The Evaluation Report is available at: <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/handle/10625/56523>

unlocking a pertinent and useful process for the partner, and the integration of UFE and ResCom into a coherent package than can be communicated clearly to potential partners.

4. The research had positive effects: it supported an adaptive management process, which meant DECI-2 was flexible and sensitive to partners' needs. It also meant the mentors were seen as co-learners rather than experts, which helped the relationship with partners in many cases.

## Simplification

DECI-2 included a methodology-development objective. The DECI-2 Team began by following the original 12 steps of UFE and explored the additional 5 steps that were added in a later version. It developed 12 parallel ResCom steps and explored ways of implementing some of them in tandem. Partners also indicated that a simplification of the approach would be welcome and in response DECI-2 produced a variation which emphasized the most critical steps, with importance placed on flexibility (see the Lego block analogy below).



DECI-2 explored the theoretical overlaps between evaluation and communication and presented this material at an international conference. The similarities with collaborative approaches to evaluation (CAE) were also explored and a chapter will be

published comparing approaches in a forthcoming edited book<sup>2</sup>. The chapter explores in detail the overlap between the principles of CAE and those developed as part of the hybrid approach.

CAE Principles	DECI hybrid approach principles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clarify motivation for collaboration.</li> <li>2. Foster meaningful relationships.</li> <li>3. Develop a shared understanding of the program.</li> <li>4. Promote appropriate participatory processes.</li> <li>5. Monitor and respond to resource availability.</li> <li>6. Monitor evaluation progress and quality</li> <li>7. Promote evaluative thinking.</li> <li>8. Follow through to realize use.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utilization-focused evaluation: a decision-making framework.</li> <li>2. Research communication enhances use of findings for influence.</li> <li>3. Attention is paid to readiness from the beginning.</li> <li>4. Training through demand-driven, just-in-time mentoring.</li> <li>5. Course correction of project strategy is expected and planned.</li> <li>6. Utilization is the focus from initial project design to completion.</li> <li>7. A collaborative, learning and reflective process is embedded.</li> <li>8. Participation and shared ownership are fundamental.</li> <li>9. The process builds individual and organizational capacity.</li> <li>10. Complexity and evolving contexts are addressed.</li> </ol>

The methodological advances from DECI-2 reflected similar principles within the fields of participatory action-research and adult education. They also connect with strategic management and operational research themes, especially those that emphasize the importance of adaptive management. The observation that the hybrid approach had this benefit was reported in the external evaluation and provided DECI-2 with a platform for future work supporting partners to become more reflective, nimble and confident project managers.

## Project Outputs

### Web Site Created

In February 2018, the DECI-2 Team launched a totally revamped [Website](#) that includes a searchable knowledge base with over 80 DECI-related documents. The following audiences were invited to review the website with attention paid to their specific needs:

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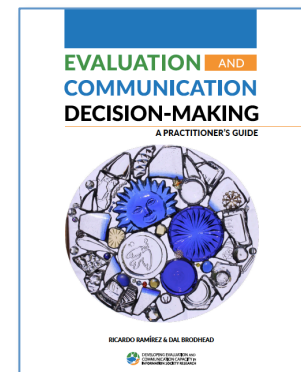
<sup>2</sup> Cousins, J.B. (forthcoming). *Collaborative approaches to evaluation (CAE) principles in practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage

- **Evaluation Practitioners** will find examples of utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) and developmental evaluation initiatives. You will also discover the benefits of introducing communication planning early on into an evaluation process.
- **Communication Practitioners** will find examples of research communication (ResCom) used as a tool to help research projects design their communication strategies early on. You will discover the added value of introducing evaluation questions into communication planning.
- **Mentors and Facilitators of Learning** will recognize the value of just-in-time mentoring, whereby projects receive support at their own pace, when they are ready. You will also discover the importance of a Readiness Assessment early on, to confirm that conditions are present within which demand-driven mentoring will be effective.
- **Project managers and Commissioners of Evaluation** will discover the benefits of the simplified hybrid approach, where evaluation and communication planning enhance each other. You will recognize the value of having project teams gain a sense of ownership over their evaluation and communication strategies.

### E-Guide Published

Also of importance was the release in 2018 of the e-Guide entitled *Evaluation and Communication Decision-Making*. This e-guide responds to an original commitment to produce a DECI-2 Primer similar to that which had been prepared during DECI-1.

The e-Guide constitutes the synthesis of the hybrid approach, as a main output of DECI-2; French and Spanish versions are being prepared and will be uploaded to the site.



### Video summary

With support from the University of Ottawa, the DECI-2 project produced a 10-minute video that summarizes the hybrid approach. This video is available through the website. It can also be viewed through the video collection of the University of Ottawa [Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services](#).

### Open Access Policy

The bulk of the DECI-2 materials presented are designated Creative Commons (BY). At the request of IDRC the website was designated BY instead of its earlier BY-SA status. Several journal articles were accepted in open journals. A chapter was accepted in an edited book, with permission for the release of a pre-publication copy. One chapter that had been accepted for publication in a book was withdrawn following the publishers' lack of willingness to accommodate less stringent copyright conditions. At the time of writing, alternative venues are being sought to publish the chapter.

elsewhere.

### Evolution of the DECI Projects

In looking at the history of DECI, it helps to think in terms of three generations of the concept. DECI 1 being generation # 1, the start-up and initial development in Asia. DECI-2 being generation #2 – the expansion to a global reach, the addition of research communication and the proof of concept; and potentially DECI-3 being the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation which will focus on consolidating a Learning and Adaptation Framework as part of an open development agenda.

Generation	DECI-1	DECI-2	DECI-3
Main focus	Testing UFE	Testing UFE+ ResCom	Strategic adaptation for impact (using UFE, ResCom & other tools)
Regions	Asia	Global	Global
Support	Networks	Networks & grantees	Institutions
Mentors	All in Asia region	2 per region (with variations)	Emphasis on both skill-set and geographic location
Objectives	Methodological testing Mentoring & research, Capacity development of mentors & partners	Methodological testing Mentoring & research, Capacity development of mentors & partners	Consolidating a Learning and Adaptation Framework to support NE partners
Outcomes	Proof of UFE value	Proof of UFE & ResCom value; benefit of hybrid approach; capacity building gains; partner's adaptive capacity	Strategic improvement/learning process with projects Field building in capacity development integrating evaluation, communication & adaptation Mentoring capacity expanded and deepened
Project audiences	Information & Networks program & partners	Networked Economies program & partners	NE program, partner institutions, IDRC, funders

## Lessons learned from the emerging challenges

The External Evaluation identified the following challenges:

### Communicating what DECI is and what to expect

The external evaluators observed that partners were not sure what they were getting in to; the objectives and benefit for the partners was not clear at the start. This finding means that more effort is required in conveying the mixed objectives of DECI going forward. It was reported that not all the partners were comfortable with the action-learning aspects of DECI; for some it would have helped if there had been a clearer



differentiation between those aspects that were to be tested (the UFE-ResCom hybrid) relative to those that were better known (the benefits of UFE). **Lessons:** This assertion also reinforces the value of a clear explanation of the DECI-2 role to partners and to POs at the outset, as it is new to some and unique. DECI-2 experience also suggests that a face-to-face visit by the PIs at the start of the relationship goes a long way to improving communication, and trust.

### **Tension between research and capacity building aims**

The external evaluators observed that while the general research objectives of the programme were clear, a weakness was that it was not always clear if a particular exercise was for DECI benefit or intended to be for the benefit of the partner. This point was a fair critique: at one point the DECI team proposed templates to capture progress in evaluation and communication planning; but the partners already had their own formats and the value of the templates was not evident. **Lesson:** In at least one case, this practice was abandoned when the partner developed its own formats - which worked for their purposes.

### **Regional mentoring model**

In DECI-1, three India-based mentors worked with five Asia-based projects. The mentoring model for DECI-2 was expanded to other regions with two mentors based in each of Asia, East Africa and Latin America. In each region, one mentor had a background in evaluation and the other in communication; and they were both expected to support projects as a team. As DECI-2 included a capacity building objective for its mentors, it was incumbent to match them as much as possible with projects in their regions. An initial challenge was the realization that several of the NE partners were based in the global north (Cyberstewards, and part of OCSDNet in Ontario; and Privacy in London), but reach out to the global south. The Latin American team was matched with Cyberstewards and the East African with Privacy. In both cases, however, a principal investigator took on a mentoring role, in some cases due to geographic proximity (Toronto). In another instance, a PI did so at the request of the E. African mentors who felt that the Privacy project would respond more readily to the PIs and the communication advisor with the regional mentors playing a supportive role. A further challenge was the higher level of confidence demonstrated by the mentors in UFE due to their prior experience (especially, the Asian and Latin American ones) relative to ResCom where the mentoring process was new. **Lesson:** The external evaluation suggested that in future (DECI-3), the matching be less based on geography and more on a natural affinity between partner and mentor.

### **Lack of explicit written theory of change**

DECI-2 set out to test-drive the combination of UFE and ResCom and did not have a Theory of Change to start with. **Lesson:** Following the external evaluation, a ToC was assembled and provided a summary of the changes experienced by partners, along with a diagram that reported on the capacity gains by mentors. The ToC is embedded in the



new website and it helped shape the ToC for DECI-3. Annex 2 includes the Theory of Change.

### **A lack of detailed discussion about explicit written down graduated (testable) outcomes**

DECI-2 did not initially produce a detailed set of outcomes against which to test its achievements. From a UFE perspective, utilization of findings and process were the default markers of success. From a ResCom perspective, ensuring that communication strategies were audience and media specific was a measure of success. The external evaluators' observation was more focused on the capacity gains by the mentors; in which case a set of capabilities could have been formulated (for instance, those used by the Canadian Evaluation Society). **Lesson:** This dimension was added to the Theory of Change (see Annex 2).

### **Language of capacity building and evaluation**

DECI-2 works with researchers in the ICTD world, while some projects may be familiar with capacity building and evaluation terminology, their understanding of these concepts was often limited. In particular, the perception of projects of evaluation may also be associated with negative experiences of the past due to imposed and top-down processes. This confusion may explain the external evaluation finding that the DECI- 2 language was confusing for some partners. **Lessons:** The DECI-2 team has made an effort to simplify the approach, and it has ensured that each partner is able to review the case studies on each experience prior to finalization. The DECI-2 experience is that UFE and ResCom are best learned through experiential learning, and that building a new language is part of this process.

## **Administrative Reflections and Recommendations**

The I&N (subsequently NE) Program deserves credit for enabling the DECI-2 Team to design a flexible and responsive project which could be tailored to the needs of its project partners, as well as being a research project. It took a hands-off approach to its implementation while providing support at important points in the process. The External Evaluation commissioned by IDRC confirmed the value of this approach and identified the innovations that resulted. Thus, the broad scope of the initiative was a key success factor.

The addition of DFID resources from the INASSA budget was an important factor in enabling DECI-2 to undertake more extensive analysis and documentation of its experiences. It meant that the DECI-2 Team was able to meet once in a face-to-face workshop focused on an analysis of the practice and the deepening of its collective capacity.

Of note was the importance given in the design of DECI-2 to making its duration of sufficient length so as to enable the DECI-2 mentors to wait for the readiness of projects. On-time delivery of DECI-2 support was a key factor, but the absence of a time pressure to complete the work was essential to the innovations that followed.

The approval of a sufficient, but tailored budget, was important and the multi-year carry-over provisions were a recognition of the need to be flexible when involved in an innovative research project. Willingness to extend the completion date was also helpful (given the availability of unused project funds).

The accountability requirements were found to be realistic and the production of regular Technical and Financial Reports were not overly onerous. The support from the IDRC administration section was helpful, especially as some challenges were encountered in utilizing the financial reporting workbooks. Several workbook program glitches created problems, which were resolved through joint discussions.

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## Annexes

### Annex 1 – DECI-2 Case Studies & Primer

1. Navas, J. 2018. *DECI-2 Case Study. U-FE as a strategic framework for scaling-up the adoption of ICTs in schools in Colombia*. DECI-2 Project. [upload pending final edit]
2. Nyangaga, J.; Brodhead, D. & Ramírez, R. 2018. *DECI-2 Case Study. Learning, planning and adapting UFE and ResCom according to emergent need*. DECI-2 Project. <https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/learning-planning-and-adapting-ufe-and-rescom-according-to-emergent-need/>
3. Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2017. *Evaluation and communication decision-making: A practitioner's guide*. Metcalfe, Ontario: DECI-2 Project. <https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/e-primer/>
4. Dhewa, C.; Quarry, W.; Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2017. *DECI-2 Case Study. Mentoring the "Research on Open Education Resources for Development" Project in evaluation and research communication*. DECI-2 Project. <https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/case-study-roer4d-mentoring-the-research-on-open-education-resources-for-development-project-in-evaluation-and-research-communication/>
5. Navas, J. 2017. *DECI-2 Case Study. ADC: Integrating U-FE & ResCom to develop an evidence-based communication plan*. DECI-2 Project. <https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/integrating-u-fe-rescom-to-develop-an-evidence-based-communication-plan/>
6. Navas, J.; Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2016. *DECI-2 Case Study. Mentoring the Citizenlab & Cyber Stewards Project in evaluation and research communication*. DECI-2 Project. <https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/mentoring-the-citizenlab-in-evaluation-and-research-communication/>
7. Quarry, W.; Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2016. *DECI-2 Case Study. Mentoring Privacy International in evaluation and research communication*. DECI-2 Project. <https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/privacy-international-communication-strategy/>
8. Zaveri, S.; Ramelan, V.; Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2016. *DECI-2 Case Study. Mentoring three ISIF-funded projects in evaluation and research communication*. DECI-2 Project. <https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/mentoring-three-isif-funded-projects-in-evaluation-and-research-communication/>

9. Navas, J. 2016. *DECI-2 Case Study. Evaluating CONDATOS: A web-based U-FE experience that beat the odds*. DECI-2 Project.  
<https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/evaluating-condatos-a-web-based-u-fe-experience-that-beat-the-odds/>

## Annex 2 – DECI Publications & Presentations

The following presentations and papers made reference to DECI-2 or to lessons emerging from the research (this is a cumulative list):

1. Ramírez, R. & Quarry, W. 2018 (in press). Communication and evaluation: Can a decision-making hybrid reframe an age-old dichotomy? In: Enghel, F. & Noske-Turner, J. (Eds.). *Title pending*. Rethinking Development Series. Routledge.
2. Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2018 (under review). Comparing the validity of two sets of evaluation principles: Adding value to both. In: Cousins, B. (Ed). *Title pending on Collaborative Approaches to Evaluation*. University of Ottawa Press.
3. Ramírez, R.; Brodhead, D. & Quarry, W. 2018 (in press). Readiness in evaluation: Second nature to managers who are committed to learning. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 33(2).
4. Ramírez, R.; Quarry, W.; Brodhead, D. & Zaveri, S. 2018 (in press). Evaluation & communication mentoring: A hybrid decision-making framework. *Journal of Knowledge Management for Development*.
5. Zaveri, S.; Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2017. Confirming readiness for collaborative evaluation. Paper presented at the American Evaluation Association Conference, 8-10 November. Washington, D.C.  
<https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/confirming-readiness-for-collaborative-evaluation/>
6. Zaveri, S. 2017. How evaluation embraces and enriches adaptation: A UFE approach. *BetterEvaluation.org* blog. <http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/blog/using-UFE-for-adaption>
7. Nyangaga, J. 2017. Utilization focused evaluation and research communication – what exactly is the combo in DECI? *Strategy, innovation & evaluation blog*  
<https://julesnn.wordpress.com/>
8. Ramírez, R. 2017. Un marco decisional en evaluación y comunicación: Resumen de investigación-acción. *Evaluación y monitorización de la Comunicación para el Desarrollo y el Cambio Social - EvalComDev*. Cadiz, España, 9-11 mayo, 2017.  
[https://connect.idrc.ca/Central\\_Outputs/107064-001/Ramirez-Cadiz%20copy.pdf](https://connect.idrc.ca/Central_Outputs/107064-001/Ramirez-Cadiz%20copy.pdf)

9. Ramírez, R. 2017. Un marco decisional en evaluación y comunicación: Resumen de investigación-acción. *Commons: Revista de Ciudadanía Digital* 6(1): 23-22.  
<https://revistas.uca.es/index.php/cayp/article/view/3371>
10. Dhewa, C. & Nyangaga, J. 2017. How combining Utilization Focused Evaluation and Research Communication can contribute to achieving SDGs. Paper and poster presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> *AfrEA International Conference*, 27 –31, March 2017, Kampala, Uganda.
11. Ramirez, R.; & Kora, G. & Brodhead, D. 2017. Translating project achievements into strategic plans: a case study in Utilization-Focused Evaluation. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation* 13(28): 1-23. <http://jmde.com>
12. Ramírez, R. 2017. Utilization-focused evaluation: A decision-making framework. Lecture for the *IDSC07HS3 Project Management II class (led by Dr. Mona Ghali)*, Centre for Critical Development Studies, University of Toronto, Scarborough. 7 February.
13. Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2016. Evaluation & communication capacity building: practical wisdom in research organizations. Roundtable presentation at *Evaluation 2016, the American Evaluation Association Conference*. October 23-29, Atlanta, GA, USA.
14. Zaveri, S. 2016. *Evaluation of the action for equality program*. A case study profiled in the betterevaluation.org Feminist Evaluation theme. <http://ecf.org.in/wp-content/uploads/ECF-Evaluation-report-of-Action-for-Equality-Programme-Final-version-by-Sonal-Zaveri.pdf>
15. Dhewa, C. & Navas, J. 2016. *Building capacity among regional evaluation and communication consultants*. DECI-2 Research Paper.
16. Nyangaga, J. & Ramela, V. 2016. Capacity gains in utilization focused evaluation and research communication. DECI-2 Research Paper.
17. Zaveri, S. & Quarry, W. 2016. Learning with and using DECI materials: lessons learned. DECI-2 Research Paper.
18. Ramírez, R. 2016. *Evaluation + Communication = ?* Knowledge for Development Presentation to the Oxfam UK learning and MEL team. Oxford, April 29.
19. Ramírez, R. 2016. *Comunicación para [ ] en España: Un seminario de intercambio de perspectivas*. Presentation at the Universidad de Cadiz for researchers belonging to the *research project*: "Evaluación y monitorización de la Comunicación para el

Desarrollo y el Cambio Social en España". Jerez de la Frontera, May 10.

20. Ramírez, R. 2016. *The DECI-2 experience*. Presentations to the Evaluation, Learning and Communication unit of INASP, Oxford; and the staff of INTRAC, Oxford., April 28-29.
21. Zaveri, S. 2016. *Use of evaluations in a gender and equity context*. Webinar posted May 21. <http://gendereval.ning.com/profiles/blogs/use-of-evaluations-in-a-gender-and-equity-context>
22. Zaveri, S. 2016. Co-author of several chapters in: Chigateri, S. & Saha, S. (eds.) *A resource pack on gender transformative evaluations*. New Delhi: Institute of Social Studies Trust.  
[http://www.isstindia.org/publications/1465391379\\_pub\\_ISST\\_Resource\\_Pack\\_2016.pdf](http://www.isstindia.org/publications/1465391379_pub_ISST_Resource_Pack_2016.pdf)
23. Dhewa, C. 2016. eMKambo: Converting knowledge into goods and services. A blog on knowledge transfer. <https://emkambo.wordpress.com/2016/07/>
24. Walji, S. 2016. Engaging with audiences early: The role of social media and networks in developing a communications strategy for a global research project (WIP). Presentation made at the *Association of Business Communication Conference*. 6-8 January, 2016.
25. Ramírez, R., Quarry, W. & Guerin, F. 2015. Community Note. Can participatory communication be taught? Finding your inner phronēsis. *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* 11(2): 101-111.  
<http://journal.km4dev.org/index.php/km4dj/article/viewFile/286/364>
26. Quarry, W. & Ramírez, R. 2015. Two practitioners look 10-years back (A reflection). *Glocal times* #22-23, 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue.  
<http://ojs.ub.gu.se/ojs/index.php/gt/issue/view/418>
27. Strengthening the Utilization focused evaluation approach using a Communication Strategy: Case Studies from Asia (P-15) Moderator: Sonal Zaveri [DECI-2]. Panellists: Vira Ramelan [DECI-2], Barnabas Kindo & Jacqueline Chen [DECI-2 partners]. Panel presentation, *Evaluation Conclave*, Kathmandu 23-27 November, 20015.
28. Innovative Experiments for Evaluation Use and Policies (P-21) [*Community of Evaluators, South Asia*] Moderator: Pramod Kumar Anand; Panelists: Chelladurai Solomon [DECI-1], Ganapati Ojha & Sonal Zaveri [DECI-2]. Panel presentation, *Evaluation Conclave*, Kathmandu 23-27 November, 20015.

29. Ramírez, R., Brodhead, D. & Quarry, W. 2015. *Verifying and communicating impact* (Vericom). Presentations, workbooks and templates developed for World Bank communities of practice mentoring workshops. Washington DC.
30. Zaveri, S. & Ramelan, V. 2015. Emerging benefits from utilization focused evaluation and research communication. Demonstration presentation. *ICTD2015 Conference*. Singapore.
31. Walji, S. 2015. 'Open, ready and agile': Developing a communications strategy for the Research on Open Educational Resources for development (ROER4D) in the Global South project. Paper presented at the *Open Education Global Conference Banff*, Alberta, Canada from 22-24 April.
32. Ramírez, R. & Quarry, W. 2015. Can participatory communication be taught? Finding your inner phronesis. Paper presented at the Participatory Communication Section of the *IAMCR-2015 Conference*, Montreal, 12-16 July.
33. Ramírez, R., Kora, G., & Shepherd, D. 2015. Utilization focused developmental evaluation: Learning through practice. *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation* 11(24): 37-53 [http://journals.sfu.ca/jmde/index.php/jmde\\_1/index](http://journals.sfu.ca/jmde/index.php/jmde_1/index)
34. Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2015. How to get started in evaluation. A one-day workshop offered at the Social Economy Centre, OISE, University of Toronto. 10 April. (a repeat of the same event offered in 2013)
35. Walji, S. 2014. Developing a research communication strategy: Audience analysis findings. Presentation to the ROER4D researchers' bimonthly Adobe Connect Session. <http://meeting.uct.ac.za/p14riat0at9/>
36. Phillips, J. 2014. Debunking Utilization-focused evaluation (U-FE): Lessons learned applying UFE theory to practice. Presentation made at the 25<sup>th</sup>. *Edward F. Kelly Evaluation Conference*, Nov. 7, OISE, Toronto, Canada.
37. Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2014. Learning our way into utilization-focused evaluation: the DECI experience. A presentation and summary paper resented at the [\*Conference: Improving the use of M&E processes and findings\*](#), organized by the Centre for Development Innovation at the University of Wageningen, the Netherlands 20-21 March 2014.
38. Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2014. [\*Readiness& mentoring: Two touchstones for capacity development in evaluation\*](#). A presentation and summary paper resented at the [\*Conference: Improving the use of M&E processes and findings\*](#), organized by the Centre for Development Innovation at the University of Wageningen, the Netherlands 20-21 March 2014.

39. Ramírez, R. 2014. "Mentoring in evaluation and communication: the DECI project experience". A presentation to the [Glocal Classroom](https://glocalclassroom.wordpress.com/about/project-documentation/)<sup>3</sup> hosted by the University of Guelph on 22 May (2014) that connected with communication for development students in South Africa, Sweden and Australia.  
<https://glocalclassroom.wordpress.com/about/project-documentation/>
40. Ramírez, R. & Brodhead, D. 2013. Mentoring researchers in evaluation & communication: Examples in the making. Politics & Ideas Blog  
<http://www.politicsandideas.org/?p=1284>

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<sup>3</sup> An on-line graduate program in Communication for Development that brings together the University of Guelph (Canada), Flinder University (Australia), Stellenbosch University (South Africa) and Malmö University (Sweden).



### Annex 3 – DECI -2 Theory of Change

The development of DECI-2 Theory of Change followed an iterative process involving its entire team. The Theory of Change is presented using a sequence of diagrams that illustrate what has been done and how, the trajectory of change experienced by partners, and the capacity development gains by mentors, and some of our partners.

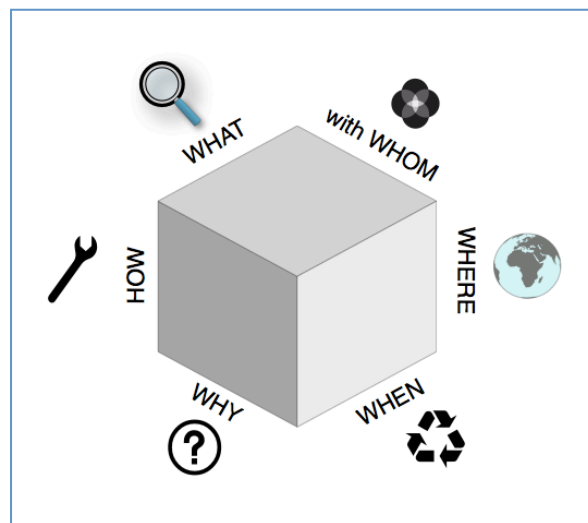
DECI-2 has been an action-research project that has combined three objectives:

1. Service provision to IDRC Research Partners in evaluation & communication.
2. Methodological innovation in the combination of evaluation & communication to positively influence development practice.
3. Capacity development of mentors and partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

#### OUTCOMES confirmed by the External Evaluation

- ✓ The DECI-2 process has helped partners adjust their strategies as they have witnessed emerging findings and changing contexts.
- ✓ The approach has been purposeful: taking time to modify strategies, clarify outcomes, and strengthen relations with stakeholders. The process has been a means of inviting and legitimizing participatory-action-learning.
- ✓ DECI-2 has worked well with partners who have been implementing experimental and learning oriented projects – it has helped them adjust the outcomes during implementation.

#### *SIX Dimensions of the Process*



## WHY



Most of the partners supported by DECI-2 were experimental and learning-oriented projects; their outcomes often evolved during implementation. The DECI-2 project has provided mentoring that allows projects to clarify directions, collect evidence, learn systematically and course-correct.

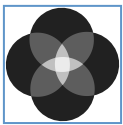
## WHAT



The DECI-2 Team provided MENTORING in Utilization-Focused Evaluation and Research Communication; we combined these areas like Lego blocks - depending on the project needs. The evaluation mentoring helped projects CLARIFY their OUTCOMES, ASSUMPTIONS, and their THEORY OF CHANGE.

The communication mentoring helped the project defined its COMMUNICATION STRATEGY to address: relationship building, networking needs, dissemination efforts, and policy influence. Our support helped our partners become adaptive and more able to manage complex issues or emerging change.

## With WHOM



The DECI-2 team worked directly with our partner project staff. These people are professionals who managed RESEARCH NETWORKS, as well as smaller grantee level RESEARCH PROJECTS that were hosted by a wide variety of ORGANIZATIONS including think tanks, universities, and advocacy

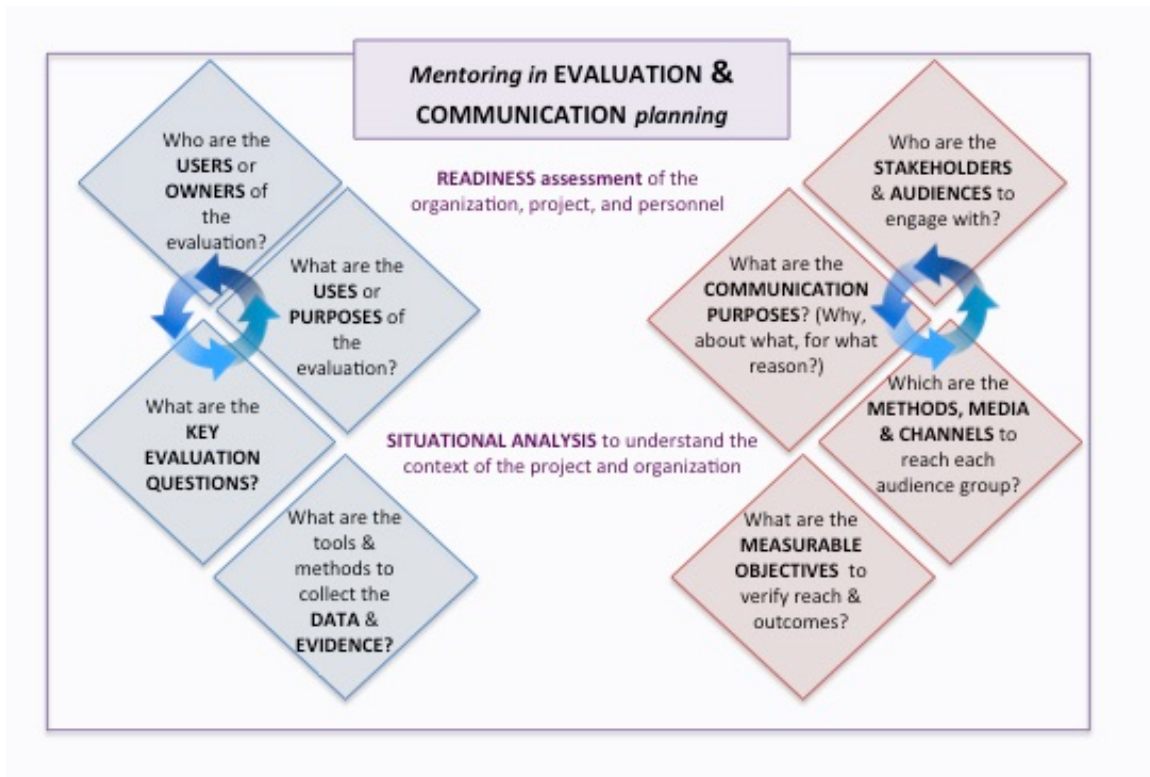
groups.

## HOW



The Team provided COACHING and MENTORING in evaluation and communication. We offered to work with projects from the FORMULATION stage, during implementation and finally in REPORTING RESULTS. Our SKILL TRANSFER strategy was applied by walking with the partner through the steps for utilization-focused evaluation and research communication. The Team actively FACILITATED access to information resources and interaction with other partners. It also leveraged a projects' ADAPTIVE CAPACITY through evidence-based learning to adjust strategies as conditions required.

The following were identified as the MENTORING steps, with emphasis placed on the iterative and modular aspects of this work. Towards the end, the Team allocated time to work with the partner to facilitate the use of the findings and reflect on the process. A Case Study was produced to summarize the collaborative process and outcomes.



## WHEN



The process was best when started as early as possible - beginning at the formulation stage of our partners' projects. The Team agreed with the partner to provide mentoring in UFE and Research Communication at a pace that was based on the partner's schedule of work. We called this approach JUST-IN-TIME MENTORING. This mentoring was iterative, earlier assumptions were often revisited to help the teams adjust to change.

## WHERE



The Team aimed to do a site visit to the partner's location at least once, and ideally twice, in order to become aware of the situation and context of the project. Otherwise the mentoring was done remotely, often using Skype.

The team identified the following guiding principles for its work:

### Guiding Principles

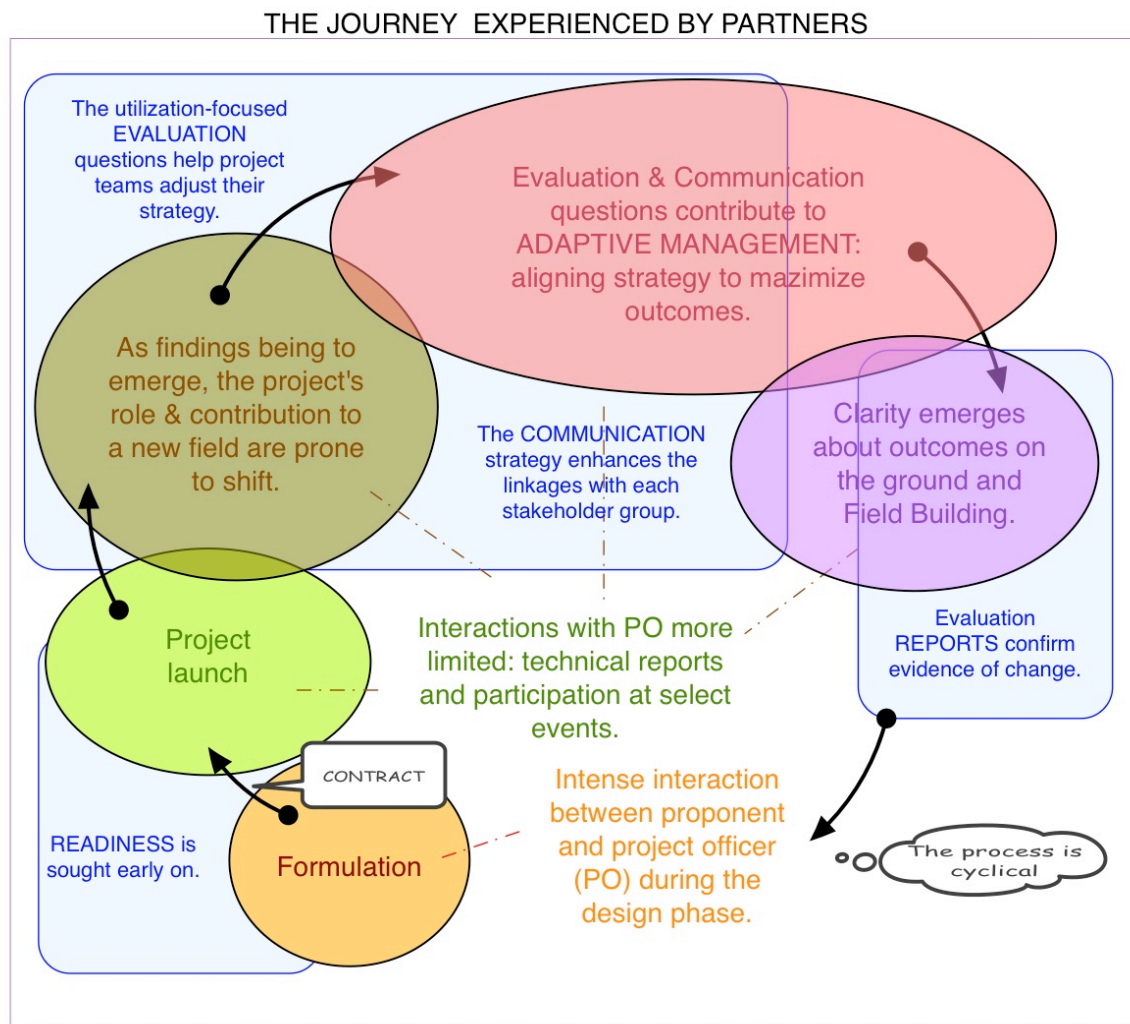
- Utilization-focused evaluation: a decision-making framework
- Research communication: enhances use of findings for influence
- Attention is paid to readiness from the beginning
- Training through demand-driven, just-in-time mentoring
- Course correction of project strategy is expected and planned
- Utilization is the focus from initial project design to completion
- A collaborative, learning and reflective process is embedded
- Participation and shared ownership are fundamental
- The process builds individual and organizational capacity
- Complexity and evolving contexts are addressed

The mechanisms by which change occurs and by which partners and program were strengthened include:

Guiding principle	Mechanism by which it enhances the partner
Utilization-focused evaluation: a decision-making framework	By focusing on evaluation <b>uses</b> or <b>purposes</b> , and on <b>key evaluation questions</b> , partners discussed and refined their own ideas about why their own projects were being carried out and how – and their hopes for verifying their own outcomes.
Research communication: enhances use of findings for influence	By focusing on evaluation purposes and stakeholders, partners discussed and refined their ideas about the different audiences for their research – who was it that will use the research results, and how could they engage with them throughout their program of work.
Attention is paid to readiness from the beginning	The mentoring was most effective when the projects had senior management buy-in, adequate resources allocated to evaluation and communication, and staff who were keen to learn about the approaches.
Training through demand-driven, just-in-time mentoring	Just-in-time mentoring allowed the partners to receive support at the key moments that coincided with their project schedules. The mentors were able to adjust the support to each specific moment and circumstance.
Course correction of project strategy is expected and planned	In research and other experimental efforts, the unexpected arose frequently, and by discussion and refinement, the partners were able to adjust the trajectory of their work for maximum impact.
Utilization is the focus from initial project design to completion	The ongoing attention to actual use enabled the mentors and the partners to focus the effort on the purposes that were urgent and of interest to the primary evaluation users.
A collaborative, learning and reflective process is embedded	Person-to-person discussion was a mechanism by which ideas were refined and 'improved'. By embedding reflection, partners enhanced their work and took it forward – especially by clarifying assumptions about how change was expected to unfold.
Participation and shared ownership are fundamental	UFE and ResCom are participatory by nature: they enable the primary evaluation users and the project teams to own the design of their strategy.
The process builds	When project teams 'owned' the decision-making process to design

Guiding principle	Mechanism by which it enhances the partner
individual and organizational capacity	evaluation and communication, they gained capabilities in both areas, which in turn strengthened the organizations that hosted the projects.
Complexity and evolving contexts are addressed	Action research in the real world is based in complexity and changing contexts; by acknowledging this and embracing it as a reality, the partners' research remained grounded, evolving and changing to remain relevant.

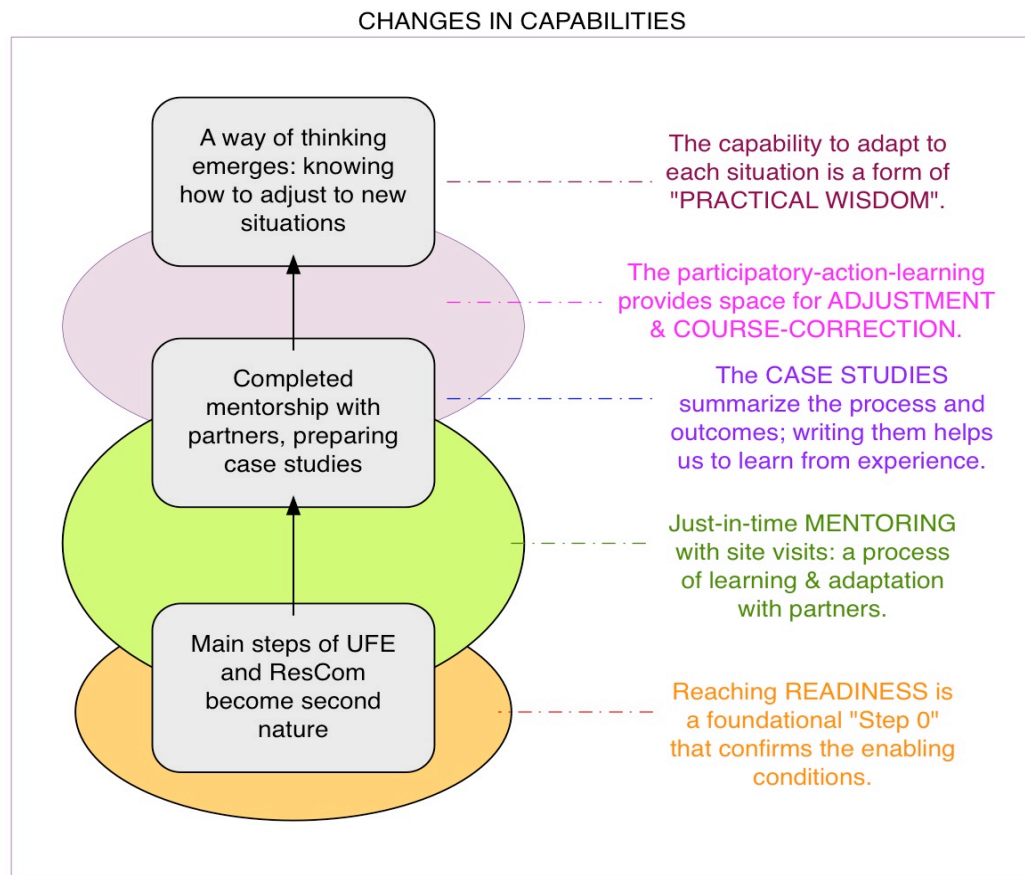
The DECI-2 process has helped partners adjust their strategies as they identified emerging findings and changing contexts. This approach is about being purposeful and taking time to modify strategies, clarify outcomes, and strengthen relations with stakeholders. The process is a means of inviting and legitimizing participatory-action-learning.



Annotations on the diagram:

- By 'proponent', we referred the group or institution that was seeking to work with IDRC and was engaged in a project design phase with an IDRC Project Officer (PO).
- The DECI Team has also learned that, beyond an early discussion about READINESS, it was often best to wait during the Project launch -which was a very intense phase, to begin mentoring in evaluation and communication soon after, when the project partner was less overwhelmed.

The DECI-2 project provided support to partners through mentors based in three continents (East Africa, South and South-East Asia, North and South America). Throughout the process, the Team became familiar with the steps of utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) and Research Communication (ResCom). A number of case studies have been completed to capture the process and outcomes. As a result, the Team has acquired a way of thinking in evaluation and communication. The MENTORING process has been an enabler, a place to learn and adapt the DECI-2 learning partner style. The participatory action-learning aspect of the project has provided the space to course-correct. The Team has witnessed how several of the partners have developed adaptive capabilities.



The capabilities that DECI-2 sought to enhance emphasized adaptation and flexibility - which were useful attributes when working in complex and emergent areas of action-research. Some of the capabilities listed below were gained by the mentors, and often by the partners as well.

### **Capabilities that were enhanced include:**

The capability to act and self-organize (Vision, Volition, Strategy, Agency)  
The capability to generate development results (Programmatic Outcomes, Achievement of Mission)  
The capability to relate (Networking, Collaboration, Advocacy Mobilizing Resources, Relevance)  
The capability to adapt and self-renew (Learning, Change Management)  
The capability to achieve coherence (Innovation, Flexibility, Resilience)  
The capability to ask questions that generate hidden answers.

Source [of the first five items]:

Baser, H. & Morgan, P. 2008. *Capacity, change and performance: Study report*. Wageningen: ECDPM.



## Annex 4 – Inassa Indicators

Project Title: DECI-2

Date of Report: April 2018

Indicator	#	Supporting Link	Notes
<b>Broad Outcomes (priority)</b>			
New or reformed policies or programs informed by INASSA supported projects' research evidence in target SSA or Asia			
# of media mentions of research providing new perspectives on policy in SSA or Asia	1	Cook Islands newspaper cover	A challenge is to separate what some projects do as a whole vs. DECI-2 related.
<b>Key Outputs</b>			
# of articles published in peer reviewed journals	6	3 are in press	See Appendix 1
# of journal articles co-authored by Asian or SSA researchers.	1		Sonal Zaveri on UFE and feminist approach.
# of published books	2	The UFE Primer was based on DECI-1; the e-Guide from DECI-2	<a href="http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/53204/1/IDL-53204.pdf">http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/53204/1/IDL-53204.pdf</a>
# of book chapters in (others than in project books) books	3	2 are in press	
# of book chapters (others than in project books) co-authored by Asian or SSA researchers	4	(from DECI-1)	<a href="http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/53204/1/IDL-53204.pdf">http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/53204/1/IDL-53204.pdf</a>
# of conference pieces/ presentations	14	See Appendix 2	
# conference pieces/ presentations co-authored by Asian or SSA researchers	4	See Appendix 2	
# of journal/conference papers co-authored by Asian or SSA women researchers	3		
# blog posts authored or co-authored by Asian or SSA researchers	3	See Appendix 1 and 2	
No. of evidence syntheses (e.g., systematic reviews, meta-level analysis and synthesis across themes, and working papers)	11	See Appendix 1	
# of citations (in google citation)	25	<a href="https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Ramirez,+R.+%26+Brodhead,+D.+2013.+Utilization+focused+evaluations:+A+primer+for+evaluators&amp;hl=en">https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Ramirez,+R.+%26+Brodhead,+D.+2013.+Utilization+focused+evaluations:+A+primer+for+evaluators&amp;hl=en</a>	The UFE Primer was read 404 times (English version) and 63 times (French version); 5 in Spanish from: <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ricardo_Ramirez13">https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ricardo_Ramirez13</a>
# of research outputs cited by media or policy makers	3		Media mention of Cook Islands ISIF project; and of Assam, India health



Indicator	#	Supporting Link	Notes
			app.
# of events/policy forums where partners communicate research to policy makers or practitioners			Most of our projects are hubs and focus UFE and ResCom on their networks
# of <b>Asian or SSA women</b> researchers who have increased their research and communication skills through participation in project activities	9	Sukaina, Sarah, Tess, Cheryl (CapeTown); Patricia, Gaelle (Mauritius); Jackie (Cambodia); Sukdi (Assam); Maureen (Cook Is.)	
# of <b>Asian or SSA women</b> sub-project researchers in network and/or trained by DECI-II		As above.	As above
# of <b>Asian or SSA women</b> trained and with positive self-reporting training evaluation			n / a

## Annex 5 – Readiness Handout

### Confirming readiness for collaborative evaluation

Presenter & co-author: Sonal Zaveri; co-authors Ricardo Ramírez & Dal Brodhead

Session 1583: Skills Building Workshop; 45 min.

Fri, Nov 10, 2017 (03:30 PM - 04:15 PM): Roosevelt 5

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

## 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.