

EVALUATING AN OPEN RESEARCH PROJECT: SOME PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM THE ROER4D PROJECT

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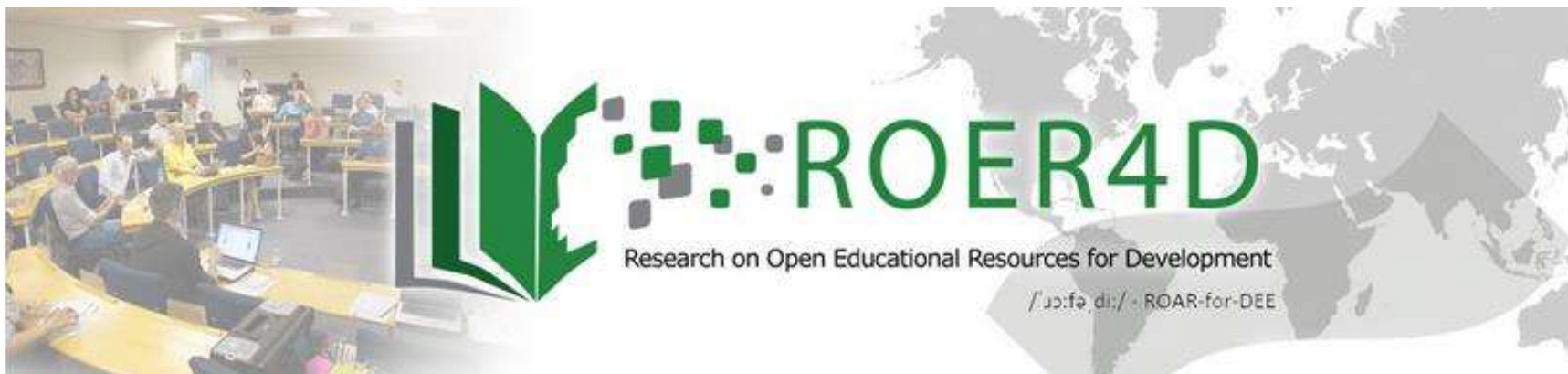
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Evaluating an open research project: Some practical lessons from the ROER4D project

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Outline

- The project being evaluated: ROER4D
- Evaluation framework
- Benefits and challenges of being “open”
- Discussion & conclusion

THE ROER4D PROJECT

Research on Open Educational Resources for Development

- In what ways, and under what circumstances can the **adoption of OER** address the increasing demand for accessible, relevant, high-quality and affordable education and what is its impact in the Global South?*

A world map with a light gray background. The landmasses are shown in a darker gray. A large, semi-transparent blue area highlights the 'Global South' regions, which include South America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia. The text 'in the Global South' is written in green over this blue area.

in the Global South

<http://roer4d.org/>

Research on Open Educational Resources for Development in the Global South

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL POLICY, PRACTICE and RESEARCH in developing countries
by better understanding the use and impact of OER

August 2013 - February 2017

PROJECT CLUSTERS

- OER Desktop Review
- OER Survey
- Academics' adoption of OER
- Teacher educators' adoption of OER
- OER adoption in one country
- OER impact studies
- Baseline educational expenditure



roer4d.org

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ROER4D

Research on Open Educational Resources for Development

/ˈɔːr.ə.ɪ.ˈdɪ/ - ROAR-for-DEE



Centre de recherches pour le
développement international



created by Rondine Carstens and the ROER4D team



ROER4D has 100+ researchers across 18 sub-projects in 26 countries
across 16 time zones

ROER4D Objectives

1. Build an empirical knowledge base on the use and impact of OER in education
2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers
3. Build a network of OER scholars
4. Communicate research to inform education policy and practice
5. Curate output as open content



EVALUATING ROER4D

ROER4D Key Evaluation Areas

1. Build an empirical knowledge base on the use and impact of OER in education
2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers
3. Build a network of OER scholars
4. Communicate research to inform education policy and practice
5. Curate output as open content

EVALUATION



**Using the utilization
focused evaluation (UFE)
framework**



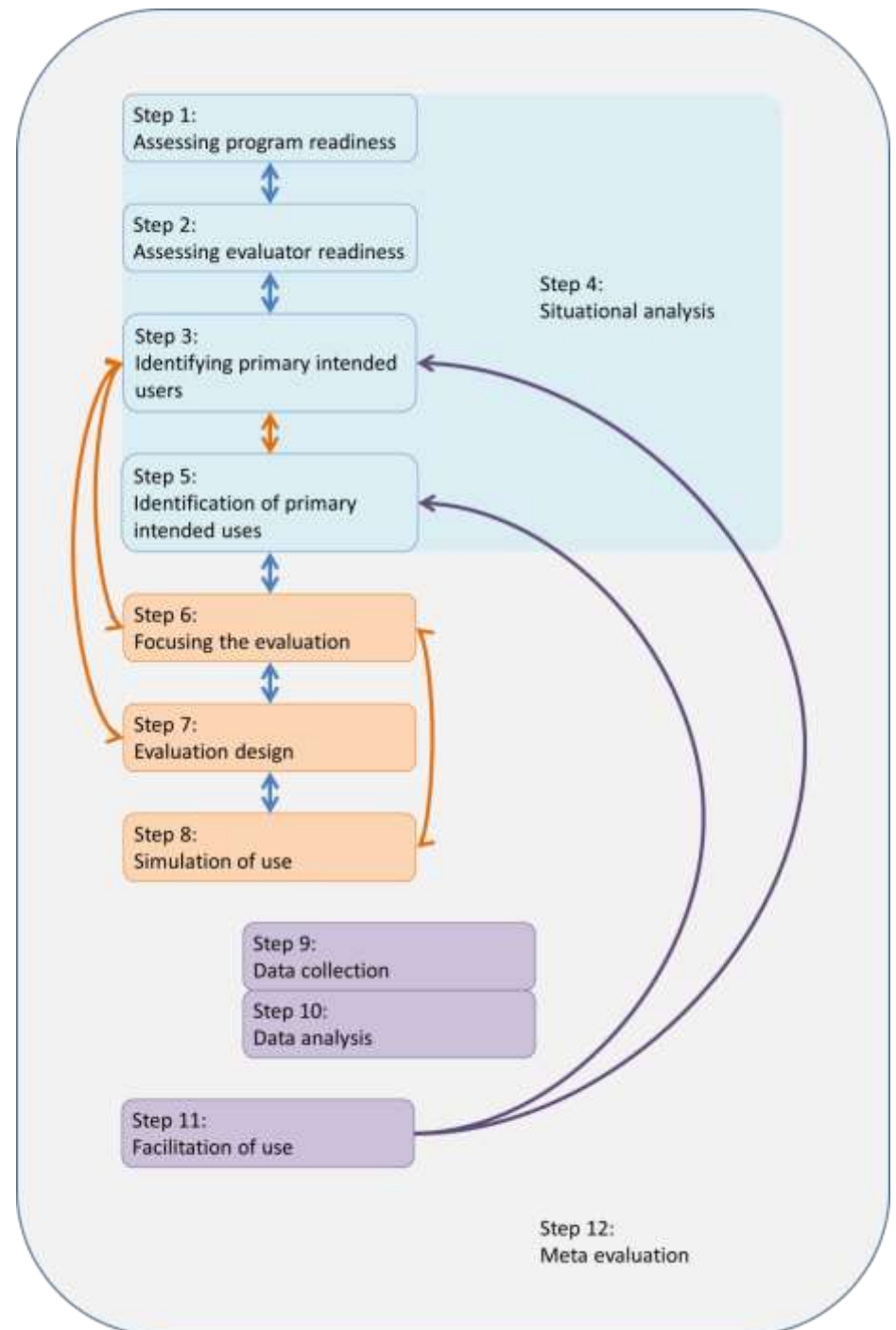
What is utilization focused evaluation (UFE)?

UFE is centered around intended use by intended users

- What do the users (key stakeholders) want to know?
- How will answers to the evaluation questions potentially help to improve the project?

UFE in 12 steps:

Steps are *iterative*,
not linear



Utilization Focused Evaluation
Framework (Adapted from Ramirez
& Brodhead, 2013)

Evaluation work guided by...

- Intended use by intended users
- Propriety = a key guiding standard in evaluations
 - Is it legal?
 - Is it ethical?
 - Is it fair?

Project work guided by...

- Principle that research is only valuable if it is used
- Make open
 - by default, keep closed by exception
 - if it adds value
 - if it is ethical
 - if it is legal

Benefits of being “open”

- ✓ The team dynamic in the network hub is very open and inclusive. (Transparency, Adaptability)
- ✓ The open and dynamic nature of the project can also result in opportunities - new activities and outcomes related to the priority objectives will provide new windows of insight (Adaptability)
- ✓ Benefit from the other components of the evaluation work being undertaken (Reciprocity)

Examples

2. Develop the capacity of OER researchers

- Evaluation data showed that the initial series of webinars (run in 2014) experienced varying degrees of success:
 - Decreasing attendance over the series
 - Several barriers to attendance (e.g. timezones)
 - Researchers found supporting materials & session recordings helpful

Changes in timing and number of sessions
implemented in 2015 webinars

Examples

4. Communicate research to inform education policy and practice

- Tracking analytics on a regular basis has helped to shape the project direction in terms of which communications platforms are working and what it may be good to focus on

Challenges to being “open”

- ✘ Evaluation work, by its nature, cannot always be conducted in the open - what can and can't be shared openly and at what stage? (Propriety, Vulnerability, Liability)
- ✘ The geographical distance between the hub and many of the sub-projects - differences in time-zones, language, ICTs available (Connectivity, Temporality)

Examples

General

- Assumption of keep closed by default, make open by exception
- Many evaluation outputs have not been shared openly; different process to other project outputs
- Where possible, preparing evaluation outputs specifically for different audiences (internal/external): what level of data could be shared?
e.g. processes, methods and/or high-level findings and recommendations

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Key points

- **Key benefit:** good fit between open and inclusive team dynamic and the participatory UFE framework
- **Key challenge:** evaluation work cannot always be conducted in the open

Take care in evaluation output production and consider carefully what can (and can't) be shared openly and at what stage.

Propriety needs to be at the heart of
Evaluation design and implementation

Thank you!



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Excluding images,
screenshots and
logos and/or
unless otherwise
indicated on
content

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Further reading:

About ROER4D:

- Hodgkinson-Williams, C. (2013). *Research on Open Educational Resources for Development in Post-secondary Education in the Global South (ROER4D) - Scoping Document*. Available online: <http://hdl.handle.net/11427/8430> [Last accessed 10 February 2015].
- Hodgkinson-Williams, C. and Cartmill, T. (2014). *Research on Open Educational Resources for Development in the Global South: 1st Technical Report 23 June 2013 to 27 August 2014*. Available online: <http://hdl.handle.net/11427/9695> [Last accessed 11 February 2015].

About evaluation:

- Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation*. California: Sage Publications Inc.
- Ramirez, R. and Brodhead, D. (2013). *Utilization Focused Evaluation: A Primer for Evaluators*. Penang: Southbound.
- Scriven, M. (1991). *Evaluation Thesaurus*. California: Sage Publications Inc.