Evaluation and Cultural Diversity

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Evaluation Steps

Outcome Articulation → Define Data to Collect → Define Data Collection Method

Provide Feedback → Interpret Results → Fielding

Data Collection Instrument

Outcome Articulation

• What a behavior means may be different across different cultures.
• Norms and cultural expectations guiding the behavior may be different.
• The baseline knowledge level may be different.
Defining Data to be Collected

• Pathways to a particular behavior may be different → the logic model needs to reflect the unique pathways.
• Participation from the affected community is critically important → Work with them!

Data Collection Method

• A data collection method that worked in one community does not mean that it will work in other communities.
• There may be different opportunities. (e.g. cell phones surveys, internet surveys)
• Be mindful of cultural differences. (e.g. gender, age, conformity pressure, social desirability, attitudes toward government etc)

Data Collection Instrument

• Functional equivalence is the key. (e.g. rebelliousness, social interactions)
• Always use back-translation method → poorly translated instrument leads to loss of credibility.
• Be mindful of what kinds of introduction is necessary.
Implementation

- If possible, always work with member from the affected community for implementation of your evaluation.
- Proper training is ABSOLUTELY necessary → Do not assume that the staff has similar understanding/values.

Interpreting the Results

- Cultural contexts needs to be incorporated into the interpretation of results.
- Ask for review/discussion of your interpretation prior to release.
- Budget ample time to do this properly, and pay attention to the comments/feedback.

Providing Feedback
(Closing the loop)

- Often there are issues of trust → It is very important that you properly close the loop.
- Provide the feedback and discuss how they can use this information to improve the program.
- Be mindful that another evaluator will have to work with this group in the future
  → Don’t become a part of the bad experience.
Conclusion

Cultural competence is necessary for scientific integrity of your evaluation, not just for respect for diversity. It is a hallmark of a good social scientist.