Insights from Webinar Two: Rethinking Evaluation Criteria at the Policy Level: Implications of Inequities and Sustainability for Training Policy Evaluators

TECCHI's second webinar on evaluator competencies was viewed by many participants as deeply disruptive to traditional ways of practicing and thinking about evaluation and evaluator competencies. The table below aims to capture the essence of this rich and thought-provoking discussion by highlighting some of the comments and questions shared by webinar participants in the chat. These comments and questions include ideas around critically interrogating the ideologies and historical legacies underpinning interventions and the evaluation of such interventions, how inequities can be perpetuated by the words and data used in research and evaluation, the need to include the voice of communities, especially marginalized communities, while recognizing that there are multiple diverse voices in such communities, and the importance of including reach in our thinking about impacts and inequities.

"[…] We are finding exactly the same thing in the pilot that I am looking at — so owned by the cities and the stakeholders, hard to separate the project with the whole fabric of activities going on."
"This session underlines for me that being 'relational' as compared to 'transactional' works on so many levels!"
"[…] We need more serious use of this approach so severely. And, critical interrogation is/should be a key evaluative thinking skill and evaluator competency."
"[…] Super spreader picture was particularly moving. We are seeing similar discussion around super spreader events in COVID where one event is labeled as super spreader and other is not."
"Some really interesting discussion points here. I mainly conduct evaluations on behalf of […] government departments, so there is a real emphasis on 'quantifiable' measures and impacts to enable these departments to secure future funding. Therefore, these programmes of work rarely include the voice of communities/community need."
"My research and evaluation of […] a project on preventing violent extremism arrived at the colonial past and its effect on these populations and the expectations for them to form "states" and "democracies" based on the Western model. I have been asked to remove or tone down references to colonialism and Western anything to the point of not saying anything meaningful to this end."
"Whom did you listen to in the community? Were there structures already set up? How did you make sure you are not considering the "loudest" people?"
"Completely agree […], we always have to squeeze the findings on reach and target group partly in relevance and partly in efficiency - yet it is fundamental to the evaluation of benefits."
"Unfortunately, usually the most vulnerable in the community are not making the decisions…unless there is some mechanism that is conscious of that and does something about it."
"From a teaching perspective, my students are more focused on passing the assessment rather than on the nuances and application of evaluation methods. I feel that some of this is partly to do with the UK education system that very much focuses on 'coaching to assessment' rather than 'learning'."