

Evaluations during COVID-19: Challenges and Potential Ways Forward

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Welcome to the conversation!



- COVID update page <https://www.caidp-rpcdi.ca/cover-19>
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- Contact nicole.leguerrier@caidp-rpcdi.ca for inquiries

Objectives

- Discuss challenges and innovative ideas for evaluations during COVID-19
- Discuss how as a community of practice we can continue to learn from each other during this time

What is your biggest concern for evaluations during COVID-19? (1)

Overall Impact on Human Life

- The impact of response given aspects of its transmission, severity and health care efforts
- Catastrophic level of lose of life in developing countries

Overall Impact of COVID-19 on Programs

- That COVID-19 will likely have huge negative repercussions on other health programs
- How do we make sure a multi-sectoral approach to pandemic is prioritized, with programming, response, and for evaluation?
- Regular programming has stopped
- Health Economics implications

What is your biggest concern for evaluations during COVID-19? (2)

Overall Impact of COVID-19 on Evaluations

- How COVID-19 will affect data?
- Programme implementation distortions reducing evaluability
- Practical conduct of evaluation during Covid-19
- Measuring secondary impacts of COVID-19 on program outcomes
- Impact of COVID-19 on results
- Recidivism due to COVID-19 and program results reflecting that
- Delays between intervention and data collection
- Going through the motions of evaluation when it is clearly the wrong time
- Not having enough response information
- Implementation challenges
- How halting interventions for different periods of time impact on evaluations and what should be minimum requirements
- Key stakeholder priorities have shifted

What is your biggest concern for evaluations during COVID-19? (3)

Equity Issues

- Gender, race and class dimensions
- Going beyond elites, hearing the voices of the hard to reach
- Insensitivity to the realities of people in dire straits
- How to ensure that the uncounted are made visible during the research process despite increased mobility constraints
- Inability to reach marginalized and vulnerable people for inclusion in adapted data collection practices
- Food security

Safety Issues

- Putting communities at risk
- Health and safety of workers
- Data collection, safety, security, ethics, field work and observations which are not possible during COVID
- Emotional wellbeing of children

What is your biggest concern for evaluations during COVID-19? (4)

Design and Data Collection Generally

- Data Collection
- Access for data collection
- Field data collection
- Getting the data
- Evaluation design and data collection constraints
- Qualitative data collection on (off) the field
- My biggest concern is how to collect qualitative data during covid-19
- Reaching the right people
- Gathering data from clients
- Interaction with clients/beneficiaries
- L'organisation pratique de l'évaluation dans ce contexte

Adaptation that is Needed (specifically and generally)

- How to rapidly re-scope/re-tool already-begun evaluations to deliver information that helps tackle the pandemic
- Evolving evaluation practices need to align to the new social paradigm
- Adaptation
- Not having knowledge/capacities to respond

What is your biggest concern for evaluations during COVID-19? (5)

Impact of Travel Restrictions

- Inability to travel overseas and collect data
- Travel restrictions preventing us from doing field work
- Travel to and from
- Field verification
- How to carry them out given restrictions on travel, meetings and gatherings
- Not being able to collect data due to movement restrictions
- In-country movement restrictions
- Mobility to conduct evaluations on the ground

Local Data Collection?

- Field data collection and training data collectors
- Smooth transition to localization
- Access and Accountability
- In person data collection
- When can we consider re-starting data collection activities?

What is your biggest concern for evaluations during COVID-19? (6)

Remote Data Collection including Challenges

- Less information is available using ICT for interviews than using site visits and in person
- How to conduct robust research in areas with limited digital access
- How to transition to remote evaluation and closer collaborative linkages with Southern partners
- Collecting data remotely
- Conducting /facilitating innovative approaches through online technology
- How to support capacity building of our colleagues in the south
- How do we effectively evaluate remotely/online?
- I was asked if evaluations interviews can be done online. I personally doubt that and wonder how can we move forward?
- Remotely doing multi country evaluation of community based adaptation and livelihood projects
- -Les moyens de vérification de la fiabilité des données

What is your biggest concern for evaluations during COVID-19? (7)

That Evaluations will not be valued/will not be done/will not be rigorous

- That it will be skipped
- That evaluations will stop
- The importance of evaluation
- Ensure that rigorous evaluations take place to continue informing sound public policies, programs and projects
- Cancellation/ scaled down to the point of evals losing their value
- There are so many other needs at the moment that evaluations will not be given attention needed

Overall Impact on Evaluations and on Businesses

- Business Management
- Lower opportunities for evaluation contracts
- Impact on on-going Monitoring and Evaluation assignments

Options if Field Work has Not Started, or is Underway

- **Cancel field work**
 - Use data from secondary sources (e.g. HMIS, DHS, monitoring data)
- **Delay field work**
 - But challenge is what is impact of COVID-19? (e.g. food insecurity, unemployment, poverty, health)
- **Adapt field work**
 - Who is collecting data?
 - Methods e.g. Telephone surveys, Whatsapp messaging, Whatsapp focus groups
 - Limiting indicators to most critical
 - Shifting focus? How have your questions or problems changed?

How do these options differ if it is baseline, mid-term, or endline?

What about if field work is done and data is being analyzed and reported on?

- Any opportunity to include further analysis on potential impact of COVID-19?
- How best to conduct member checking/KT of results?

Considerations

- **Ethical considerations**
 - Safety of staff and communities where you work
 - “Do no harm”
 - If use national consultants – potential of bringing COVID-19 from capital city into villages
 - If interviewing health professionals, taking them away from the COVID-19 response
 - If applied for ethical approval, have to submit a revised application for any changes (e.g. methods, who is collecting data)
- **Impact on results**
 - How will COVID-19 impact the results from your evaluation?
- **Consider practicality of other methods**
 - Access to internet, phones (and costs)
 - Literacy (e.g. if using messaging, online platforms)
 - Language
- **Document** your decisions and justifications; **communicate** with client/funder

Opportunities

- **Shifting messages and programming**
 - For those already in field (e.g. community health workers) – messages e.g. about hand washing and social distancing
 - Distributing sanitizer (where water and soap are not practical), addressing food insecurity (food distribution)
- Opportunity to adapt to **collect relevant data** to support COVID-19 response
 - health systems strengthening, adaptation to COVID-19

Other Challenges

- Uncertainty of projects (e.g. Will the project continue?)
- Lack of communication between the funders/clients and consultant on status of project and evaluation
- When is too early (or too late) to make a decision on the evaluation? (depending on project status)

Some Resources (1)

- Discussion on the Challenges and Strategies for Monitoring and Evaluation in the Time of COVID-19 (USAID and IDEAL) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZ_iMtEt21M
- How do we adapt our evaluation approach to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic? <https://www.evalforward.org/discussions/evaluation-covid19>
- Michael Quinn-Patton : Evaluation Implications of the Coronavirus Global Health Pandemic Emergency <https://bluemarbleeval.org/latest/evaluation-implications-coronavirus-global-health-pandemic-emergency>
- IAPS Guidelines for Adapting Third-Party Monitoring in the Context of the COVID-19 Outbreak <http://www.i-aps.com/pdf/Guidelines-for-Adapting-Third-Party-Monitoring-in-The-Context-Of-The-Covid-19-Outbreak.pdf>
- Impact evaluations in the time of Covid-19, Part 1 <https://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/impact-evaluations-time-covid-19-part-1>
- Ethical Issues to Consider in Developing, Evaluating, and Conducting Research Post-Disaster <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/funding/grant-writing-and-application-process/ethical-issues-to-consider-in-developing-evaluating-and-conducting-research-post-disaster.shtml>
- UNDP: Evaluation during crisis – COVID 19: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/media-centre/infographics/evaluation_covid19.shtml
- Collecting Data with Mobile Surveys in Low- and Middle-Income Countries During COVID-19 <https://www.rti.org/insights/mobile-survey-data-collection-covid-19>
- Phone surveys in developing countries need an abundance of caution: [https://www.3ieimpact.org/blogs/phone-surveys-developing-countries-need-abundance-caution?utm_source=Subscribe+to+3ie&utm_campaign=5007cb3bb8-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_09-phone-survey-blog&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_58accoa9f7-5007cb3bb8-305162765&ct=t\(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_4_9_2020-phone-survey-blog\)&mc_cid=5007cb3bb8&mc_eid=1135bed8c3](https://www.3ieimpact.org/blogs/phone-surveys-developing-countries-need-abundance-caution?utm_source=Subscribe+to+3ie&utm_campaign=5007cb3bb8-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_09-phone-survey-blog&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_58accoa9f7-5007cb3bb8-305162765&ct=t(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_4_9_2020-phone-survey-blog)&mc_cid=5007cb3bb8&mc_eid=1135bed8c3)

Some Resources (2)

- Advancing Qualitative Fieldwork online (webinar):
<https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/resources/on-demand-webinars/when-the-field-is-online-qualitative-data-collect>
- Doing Fieldwork in a Pandemic: (a crowdsourced document)
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1clGjGABB2h2qbduTgfqribHmog9B6PoNvMgVuiHZCl8/preview#> (Not necessarily as helpful for data collection for those in low literacy or lack of internet access)
- List of resources from European Evaluation Society re: COVID-19 and evaluation:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19uNNOJnAa58dzqkuYg_L-tEBxYQZlokSsALM8jOjAkMQ/edit#gid=0

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Questions

- What support do people need?
- How do we work together to fill that need?