

GUIDELINES FOR LEARNING PROCESSES, REVIEWS AND EVALUATIONS OPERATION DAY'S WORK

This document provides guidelines for learning processes, reviews and evaluations of Operation Day's Work (ODW) programmes. The guidelines are intended as a basis for dialogue between ODW and the Norwegian cooperating partner organisations. They can also be useful in dialogue with local partner organisations.

The document includes

- Introduction – why do we need action learning processes, reviews and evaluations
- What have we learnt so far?
- Guidance for future learning processes

Introduction – why do we need learning processes, reviews and evaluations?

ODW supported programmes are funded and chosen by Norwegian students and ODW and cooperating partners are accountable towards them.

ODW needs to ensure that the programmes are of good quality and that the funds are used in the best way possible. Norwegian cooperating partners need to work towards good quality programmes for all the ODW supported work.

The learning processes, reviews and evaluations should generate important learning for ODW. Relevant results should be shared with volunteers and students in Norway.

Since ODW's cooperating partners have their own guidelines for monitoring and evaluation it is necessary for ODW to agree what processes are most useful and practical for both parties.

What have we learnt so far?

We believe that the process of learning is usually more important than the final product – the report. This means that participation and involvement of the stakeholders are central in learning processes, reviews and evaluations.

ODW have also learnt that it is important to include youth, being the primary target group of the programmes, in all the phases of the programme cycle; including planning, implementation and evaluation.

Internal learning and evaluation processes can be as useful as external and more formal evaluation processes.

Some of the benefits of internal evaluation processes seen are that they create a lot of learning for those involved - this might also boost the motivation for the work. It is also easier to detect what one needs to do differently in the future because of the collective learning. However, internal processes need to be planned and led in a clear and systematic manner.

Some of the benefits of external evaluations are that they include systematic documentation of the processes and the results. The external "eye" might always observe things that are not easily seen internally. External evaluations might be more objective than internal processes but it cannot guarantee that all the critical issues are exposed and discovered.

ODW has experienced that some of the external evaluations have been very costly. Not all the reports have satisfactory quality.



When it comes to transferring learning from one ODW program to another, this has mainly taken place between programs managed by the same Norwegian cooperating partner.

Guidance for future learning processes

The purpose of learning processes, reviews and evaluations could be

- learning in order to adjust and by that improve the programme implementation
- learning in order to be motivated and inspired to do better
- to verify the need for change
- to document results (planned/not planned, positive/negative) for use internally and for dissemination externally
- to control the organisation that is responsible for the implementation

All learning processes, reviews and evaluations should be carried out in a participatory manner.

The contract between the Norwegian cooperating partner and ODW should indicate what processes for learning and evaluations should be carried out during the lifetime of the programme. It is not mandatory to include external evaluations. However, ODW can ask for external evaluations if it is found necessary.

The learning processes that might be included can be well-planned internal and external evaluations. Other forms of learning processes involving exchange of knowledge and experiences internally within an organisation and between cooperating partners and local partners can be included. Impact evaluations carried out after the ODW programme has been finalised can also be considered.

A minimum of one well-planned learning process/evaluation needs to be included during the lifetime of the programme. The timing for such processes might be mid-term or towards the end.

A programme can also consider including a combination of various learning processes and evaluations. Youth should as far as possible be consulted and/or involved in the planning and implementation of all the learning processes and evaluations.

ODW suggests that learning processes focus on what we need an answer to. This might mean that the processes are concentrated on a few prioritised issues.

All learning processes and evaluations ought to include assessments of youth participation, inclusion of disabled youth and gender.

Follow up and concrete plans for follow up of the agreed recommendations from learning processes, reviews and evaluations are essential.

The terms of reference needs to be developed in cooperation with the relevant stakeholder, including ODW. The budget is to be approved by ODW.

Documentation from the learning processes and evaluations should include a summary with conclusions and recommendations and the report should not normally exceed 30 pages.

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