



MEASURE FOR IMPACT

Landscaping Learnings and Insights on Impact Measurement & Evaluation, Efforts and Approaches in the field of Adolescent Health and Well-being

KEY LEARNINGS AND TAKEAWAYS

INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVE

India is home to more youth than any other country. Yet, this group faces social and economic challenges that affect their transition from childhood to adulthood. With a focus on outcomes and measurable results, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) is essential for the alignment of all stakeholders to enable innovation and holistic action for the youth.

The 10to19 Collaborative continues its pursuit to bring forth learning circles and forums to ensure we create spaces for various stakeholders in the sector to come together and understand other Indian and global frameworks surrounding similar impact pathways and outcomes; in an effort to share promising practices, challenges and insights so we can learn, grow and move towards our shared goals.

For the 4th edition of gLOCAL Evaluation Week, the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI) hosted a forum in collaboration with J-PAL – South Asia to share monitoring and evaluation (M&E) knowledge and bring together government, citizens, and experts to support countries in strengthening evaluation and monitoring systems and capacities. This year, the Dasra 10to19: Adolescents Collaborative curated a roundtable and invited practitioners and experts that play an integral role within the ecosystem of youth-led participatory approaches (YLPA), to shed light on learnings and promising practices from measuring impact for youth in a collaborative and participatory manner. As a multistakeholder platform that accelerates youth-first approaches, the 10to19 Collaborative has been focused on building systems of accountability internally that are aligned with outcomes, keeping a collaborative ethos in mind. To share learnings that could benefit various stakeholders, the Collaborative highlighted best practices and disseminated knowledge through the gLOCAL platform.

The current global M&E ecosystem needs to further focus on frameworks, methodologies and tools that capture data through YLPA. Adapting M&E approaches to include participation of the beneficiary, in this case youth, will allow a deeper understanding in areas related to youth health, education and wellbeing and make accessible the limited knowledge which only key players within the sector currently have.

The intention of this roundtable was to encourage dialogue around YLPA so participants could take back and implement the insights, recommendations and tools from funders, technical experts, on-ground practitioners & civil society organizations. By creating a conducive space for collaborative learning, the roundtable focused on what it takes to improve measurement of outcomes and indicators for the youth in India.

This roundtable was aimed at addressing the following key questions:

What are YLPAs and why do they matter in the measurement of impact and evaluation?

How can measurement and evaluation systems be effectively built to incorporate the youth's voices and needs?

As we envision the role of key players, along the spectrum of measuring outcomes for the youth in a participative and collaborative manner, what are the few key pathways through which we can truly move the needle towards participation on ground?

KEY TAKEAWAYS



Working with young people helps organizations develop a more youth-oriented lens, thoroughly contextualize and understand the data and bring their values, identities and cultural dimensions to M&E, leading to their involvement as active participants within the process.



Participatory approaches at all stages of programs are necessary to understand complex and sensitive issues youth face; by building trust, tools that are accessible to youth and including representative youth groups, organizations can better understand and solve youth issues.



Meeting youth where they are, recognizing them as equal partners and co-creating inclusive tools for participation are crucial to implementing participatory approaches on ground.

KEY NOTE SESSION

Demystifying Youth Led Participatory Approaches

To reiterate the importance of YLPA and to unpack what it means, our key note speaker, Dr. Chidambaranathan, a development professional with over two and a half decades of experience in research, evaluation and direct field interventions highlighted that:

- The youth bring their values, identities and cultural dimensions to M&E and involving them as active participants within the process allows the ecosystem to better address the youth's needs.
- YLPA models can include partnerships with organizations or independent youth-led approaches that require capacity building.
- Including youth helps contextualize and understand the data collected more thoroughly and enables a more inclusive dataset of often underrepresented segments.
- Working with young people helps organizations develop a more youth-oriented lens and it is important to involve youth in all aspects of the program; starting with design and extending to evaluation.

Youth-led participatory evaluation is an interactive process that involves the youth as an active partner in all stages of evaluation. This process enables them (the youth) to have a voice in knowledge production that brings out the concerns and issues that impact their life.

Dr. Chidambaranathan

To further delve into the nuances of youth led participatory approaches, this session was followed by two multi-stakeholder panels that brought in focus on aspects of adoption and translation of this approach from a systems led and field practitioner point of view.

STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS FOR PARTICIPATORY IMPACT MEASUREMENT

The first panel of the event included individuals who are responsible for the strengthening of systems that enable YLPA. We heard from experts in the field of research to better understand the issue, the perspective of funders, the role of an aggregator like the 10to19 and from a young person herself. Some of the key takeaways from this panel were:

Recognizing diversity, intersectional identities and layers of vulnerability within the youth demographic

- Participatory approaches are necessary to understand complex factors such as norms, agency and empowerment that underpin and contribute to youth outcomes. Having a gender focused lens and acknowledging that these factors are influenced by context is essential when conducting research and creating interventions.
- Collaborating with youth to understand the barriers they face, methods to overcome them and correct tools to measure the improvement will help organizations grow and adapt to the youth's interpretation of data.
- While polling data is not generalizable, it is a quick and efficient way of collecting large amounts of data that allow stakeholders to course correct in real time.

Building meaningful relationships with the youth and meeting them where they are:

- The use of technology and the internet is a youth-friendly way to encourage participation that goes beyond surveys and focus groups.
- Leveraging the youth's voice is complex and requires multiple touchpoints; building trust and relationships with youth allows for deeper exploration of sensitive topics such as sexual and reproductive health and enables tracking of youth for future interactions.
- To engage with young people in all stages of interventions, stakeholders must create a space and cadence that is safe and comfortable for the youth.

The importance of local partners and collective action from all stakeholders:

- To implement effective interventions, organizations must select local evaluation partners, treat young people as equal partners and keep communities at the center.
- Stakeholders must share the insights and learnings they have with one another to encourage further exploration and inculcation of YLPA.
- Through diverse and representative Youth Advisory Groups, young people can provide recommendations and strategic input on various stages within a program's implementation.
- The youth need to be equipped with suitable skills such as decision making, leadership and communication skills so they can participate in M&E meaningfully and effectively.

As this diverse set of panelists shed light on the continued need to create platforms where youth have a space to share their issues, recommendations and inputs with stakeholders for more effective problem-solving, this panel also set the stage for the upcoming session around key pathways to operationalize, and discuss tools to ensure effective translation of this theory into reality.

IMPLEMENTING PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES ON GROUND

To understand the journey from systems and planning to implementation, the second panel invited experts² from organizations that focus on the implementation of interventions on-ground.

A few of the key highlights from this panel included:

Recognizing diversity, intersectional identities and layers of vulnerability within the youth demographic

- Interventions must focus on teaching the youth skills they have a desire to learn such as problem solving and integrative design thinking, as these skills add value to young people's lives and relationships.
- Applicable skillsets enable young people to build their identities and enable them to reposition themselves in society.
- For young people to be able to engage in M&E, organizations must be aware and supportive of the facilitation and support they require, and build their capacity.

Building meaningful relationships with the youth and meeting them where they are:

- Keeping the youth's context in mind while designing programs and considering them as more than recipients is essential to meet outcomes and create effective programs.
- Community and dialogue is integral, as development is more likely to happen when there is a collective shift in mindset across segments.
- Giving fair weightage to the lived-experiences of the youth, regardless of age and extent of education must be communicated to stakeholders who can tailor their efforts to the needs of the youth.
- Youth voices are significant and relevant forms of evidence that can be used at the policy level to make changes.

The importance of local partners and collective action from all stakeholders:

- Creating inclusive, participatory and accessible technology-based tools that enable conversations that can be contextualized, allow communities and organizations to gather valuable insights.
- Platforms can grow exponentially when tools and platforms are interactive, community-driven and created in a manner that makes the youth feel safe to have conversations and gain perspective.
- Using technology enables organizations to gain feedback from the ground in real time, adapt interfaces to the community's needs, and facilitate conversations that eventually lead to individual and collective action.
- When disseminating information through platforms, organizations must be cognizant to share actionable and verified information and explain certain nuances to the users.
- It is always important to make sure that all learnings and knowledge generated through platforms is relayed back to the youth in an engaging and relatable format. This enables the youth to harness the data generated to hold their communities and governing bodies accountable.

When young people are able to articulate the issues they see as most pressing, and organizations help to improve those problems through actions, is when change occurs.

Nilanjana Ghosh, CINI

We need to make the youth a part of the conversation which means ensuring they are given a space where they can share their perspectives, thoughts, opinions and be a part of the broader narrative; be it in terms of individual level impact or community level impact.

Vijay Singh Pratap, Gram Vaani

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Through this roundtable discussion, there emerged an impending need for us, as an aggregator but also additional stakeholders who are key players within the youth development sector, to strive to be more participatory and collaborative in our measurement and evaluation approaches. Through the conversations and insights that emerged, the documentation from across the sector highly suggests that when you include young people, when they are more engaged, when they are protagonists, programs can become more sustainable, effective and grounded in young people's realities.

Recognizing the potential risks and challenges in this journey, it is imperative now, more than ever to move beyond the barrier, take the first step in the right direction. As seen above, there is adequate evidence around the need to ensure that we work towards learning from each other and lean on each other to proactively work towards creating robust mechanisms around youth led participatory approaches. Hence, to help take the first step towards making it happen, please find below a list of resources, tools, reading material developed by our panelists and the participating organizations, on promising practices for stakeholders across the sector to read, learn and adopt around participatory approaches in measurement, evaluation and learning.

ANNEXURE

Key tools and methodologies around participatory impact evaluation for youth:

- A practical guide to measuring women and girl's empowerment in impact evaluations [here](#) (J-PAL, South Asia)
- Case study of digital dashboard initiative by the MTV Alive Foundation [here](#)
- Case study of the TEGA initiative by Girl Effect [here](#)
- A key insights document on Hackathon- an initiative using participatory approaches to work with young people [here](#)
- Participatory approaches around enabling social protection entitlements [here](#)

Note : Above material is the contribution of organisations J-PAL South Asia, Databoom , Gram Vaani and Quest Alliance

Resources on strengthening collaborative partnerships towards participatory and inclusive measurement and evaluation

- The collaborative's key learnings and progress achieved so far [here](#)
- An overview of 10to19's strategic priorities for the upcoming 5 years of implementation [here](#)
- Visioning exercise for inclusive Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics [here](#)

Note : Above material is the contribution of the 10to19 Dasra Adolescent Collaborative and Participatory Research in Asia

Learnings from the Ground around youth led participatory approaches

- Learnings on digital storytelling- a participatory initiative to work with Bal Sansad Members [here](#)
- A video on 'Our Health, Our Voice', a participatory action research with adolescents in Gurugram [here](#) & [here](#)
- A blog post on Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics and the vision for the future [here](#)
- Researcher's Diary on health care for adolescents at the margin [here](#)
- From challenge to opportunity- shifting community-based research online: [here](#)
- A UNESCO-Pearson Initiative for literacy, that documents the case of Mobile Vaani: [here](#)
- A video on 'Meri Awaaz Meri Pehchan', an initiative around enabling women to inspire each other and express themselves [here](#)
- An infoline on sexual and reproductive health, created in partnership with CREA, TARSHI, and several others, to provide accurate information and expert answers to young people's questions on sexuality [here](#)
- A concept note on Gram Vaani's work on voice-based conversational interfaces [here](#)

Note : Above material is the contribution of organisations Quest Alliance, Gram Vaani and Participatory Research in Asia

General Resources:

- Speaker Bio's [here](#)