

EvalForward Talks

Remote evaluations during COVID-19: What are common challenges and how could we cope and adapt?

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Remote evaluations during COVID-19

Managing teams

Challenges

- ▶ Stress and underperformance due to psychological or physical problems
- ▶ Remote data-collection requires more time, interaction and planning
- ▶ Sudden leave of team members with no time for replacement or re-doing that part of the data-collection
- ▶ Limited experience in remote evaluations: e.g. presenting on zoom, using new software such as Mural, MS Teams

Possible solutions

- ▶ Be a sounding board: frequent check-ins
- ▶ Allow extra time and days (budget & planning permitting) use a communication platform to exchange efficiently
- ▶ Move contract days to other team members (time/expertise/language permitting) or acknowledge limitation in report
- ▶ Invest time in coaching and dry-runs



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Managing expectations & building trust

Challenges

- ▶ Rapidly changing context and restrictions → longer timeline, more risks and limitations
- ▶ Project rejects certain findings as “the team did not *see or understand the field reality sufficiently*”
- ▶ Difficulty in gaining trust through a computer screen
- ▶ Project delays and is not always able to submit latest data in time

Possible solutions

- ▶ Be transparent in Terms of Reference of consultants and evaluations (e.g. planning subject to further clearance, payment based on actual days, etc.)
- ▶ Increased consultations and more detailed debriefing
- ▶ “Visit” project area on Google street view to understand project environment / no recording on Zoom
- ▶ Clear cut-off for data-collection and scope: where do we draw the line?

Expectations



VS

Reality



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Discussion

- ▶ Which challenges are you facing?
- ▶ How are you coping and adapting to this new way of working?
- ▶ What tools and actions are helping you?
- ▶ How do you ensure safety and trust during in-person or remote meetings?
- ▶ How do you conduct focus-group discussions at community level?

