Working with micro-narratives in evaluation: Participatory Narrative Inquiry and Sensemaking

Steff Deprez
Voices That Count
"If people are interviewed, they're answering our questions; if they tell a story, they tell us what's important to them"
Share a recent experience about a challenge that you faced and how you have dealt with it? Describe what happened?

(Evaluation Tipping Point, Bangladesh)
Self-interpretation of the story

A set of follow-up questions that allow storytellers to make a primary assessment of their own stories and by doing so provide additional layers of meaning to their narratives.
Self-interpretation of the story

2. What type of conflict is described in your story? (max. 2 responses)

- Religious conflict
- Ethnic conflict
- Armed Conflict
- Political conflict
- Civic conflict
- Resource-based conflict
- Family / Domestic Dispute
- Gang violence
- Conflict induced by displacement of people
- Terrorism
- Gender and/youth-related conflicts
- Other

7. In your story, people's actions were driven by...

11. The story reflects...

The way we have always dealt with this kind of situation(s)

A completely new or different way of dealing with this kind of situation(s)

- N/A

Tradition / Culture

Law / Rules

- N/A
Generating patterns

Feeling associated with the story

In my story, the project mainly assisted in creating ...

my professional relationships

my professional relationships

my skills and abilities  my self-confidence

my skills and abilities  my self-confidence

I feel in full control of my professional future

I feel other factors will decide my professional future

n = 322  N/A = 17  Title n = 332  N/A = 1009  Title N/A = 17

I complied to rules and procedures

I had to bend the rules and be creative

D4LooseControl

DistributedProcedures X EDIEmployees Y

n = 328  N/A = 11  Filter n = 328  N/A = 100%

n = 328  N/A = 11  Filter n = 328  N/A = 100%

n = 328  N/A = 11  Filter n = 328  N/A = 100%

n = 328  N/A = 11  Filter n = 328  N/A = 100%
Use of dashboard for easy access and real-time analysis and sensemaking
Use of participatory inquiry and sensemaking

Supporting strategic planning & policy formulation

Citizen engagement initiatives

Real-time monitoring

(Impact) evaluations
Using micro-narratives for evaluation

Most often within mixed-method evaluation approaches

Make it a participatory process
Representational > Instrumental > Transformational

!! It’s not a survey

Seeking surprise
Further reading

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