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*THE CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION*

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, AMHERST



TWaweZA INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDIES

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Overview of the Qualitative Case Studies

Overview of the Evaluation

As part of the five year evaluation plan for Twaweza, six case studies are to be conducted per country in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania in years 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2014, with some targeted studies to take place in 2012 (which may or may not be primarily qualitative in methodology). This year, we will implement baseline six case studies in each country at the community and group levels. The findings from these will be reported on separately and integrated into the full baseline study (due December 2010). Additional case studies will be conducted in 2011, 2013, and 2014.

While articulated more fully in the Overall Evaluation Design document, it is worth repeating here the goals and purposes of the evaluation, the key evaluation questions, and the principles of the mixed methods design, as this latter situates the qualitative case studies within that framework.

Goals

As the independent evaluator, CIE is charged with four primary goals: 1) verification of Twaweza's outputs; 2) identification of outcomes/effects; 3) analysis of the relation between outputs and outcomes/effects; and 4) review of the appropriateness of Twaweza's theory of change.

A secondary goal is to contribute to Twaweza's learning and communications processes by making rigorous analyses which invite probing questions and discussions available on a regular basis to the Learning & Communications Team. This is often referred to as 'formative evaluation', although that concept trivializes the depth of interaction and supported questioning that Twaweza is committed to. These analyses and discussions will focus on 'what is working well', on 'what needs re-positioning or re-calibrating', and on 'what is just not working at all.'

Overall, CIE is charged with assessing broad changes and impacts in society over time. That is, to assess whether there appear to be ecosystem effects across three key elements in Twaweza's Theory of Change logic:

- Access to information
- Citizen agency
- Service delivery

Effects at the service delivery level (that is, changes in the provision of basic services in education, health care, and clean water) will not be rigorously assessed until the end of the second five-year period. However, trends may be identified towards the end of the first five-year period. To that end, measurement in these areas will be part of the baseline study.

Purposes

Given these broad goals, the purposes of the evaluation are:

- To describe and analyze broad changes in citizen engagement in the public sphere;
- Should such changes occur, to infer how Twaweza partners' contribute to fostering this ecosystem of change;
- To contribute robust analyses to Twaweza's learning and communications agenda;
- To make public and transparent the evaluation design, instruments, and analyses;
- To seek regular critical feedback on design and instruments; and
- To contribute to debate and discourse about social change and evaluation.

Key Evaluation Questions

The following are preliminary key questions to frame specific approaches and methodologies. More specific implementing questions are in Annex A of the Overall Evaluation Design document.

- How does the political, economic, social, environmental, and governance context shape, nourish, and constrain citizen agency?
- What constitutes engaging, ‘meaningful’ information for citizens? How is information used creatively, shared, transformed? How does information ‘disturb’ citizens and groups, and lead to public action?
- How does expanded access to or generation of information enhance citizen agency?
- How does citizen agency work through groups, associations, and social networks, especially the five networks or institutions, to create a climate for social action and institutional response?
- What influences institutions to notice and pay attention to citizen action? What are the institutional responses? Do those responses transform institutional policy/practice to engage with citizens and to provide improved services? What is the time frame for this process?
- What evidence is there that public services (water & sanitation, health, and education) extend their reach and improve in quality? What impact does this have on citizen agency and action? Is the process sustained?
- Are improvements in the access and quality of services most dramatic and visible for populations which are otherwise under-served and marginal?
- What has been the reach and scope of Twaweza partners’ work? What externally-driven initiatives in the ecosystem of each country might have played a role? What government initiatives may have contributed to changes? What unpredictable events may have contributed (failed elections; earthquakes; crop failures; widespread violence; pandemic disease outbreaks; for example)?

Components of the Mixed Methods Design

As articulated in CIE’s proposal, the overall design of the evaluation is for a *mixed methods approach* for the Twaweza initiative. The first year’s methodological implementation will follow a “sequential explanatory design”¹ where quantitative data gathering precedes qualitative data gathering and informs it. In this model, quantitative analyses inform subsequent qualitative data gathering, data are analyzed separately, and the two sets of analyses are integrated during the interpretation phases. With this approach, qualitative analyses are generally used to explain or elaborate on quantitative analyses. This approach can be especially useful when there are unexpected or surprising results from the quantitative analyses that call for ‘stories’ of experience and personal perspectives to more fully understand the analyses. A matrix of the evaluation components and timing is provided in Annex B.

We adopt this approach because it is relatively straight-forward and the purposes of data gathering at each phase are clear. Further, this approach moves well beyond the mere triangulation of data for purposes of

¹ Creswell, 2003, p. 213.

corroboration which has been soundly critiqued on ontological and epistemological grounds². More generative triangulation purposes include elaboration, development, and initiation³. Of these, elaboration and development map neatly on the sequential explanatory design. In elaboration, analyses from qualitative methodologies “illuminate ... different facets” of the phenomena under study⁴. In development, qualitative methodologies (often focus and sampling) develop from quantitative analyses and are directly linked.

The integrative analyses will be informed by discussions, on-going scholarly research, public policy documents, and other events of importance that may shape the strength of the inferences drawn (eg, the World Bank loaning billions of dollars for clean water development). Also embedded in integrative analyses will be secondary analyses of such databases as World Governance Indicators, Transparency International’s African Education Watch; AudienceScapes studies of media and communication; DHS, Afrobarometer, PETS, and the like, as relevant.

Within these integrative analyses, the qualitative case studies will be crucial for exploring gaps in our understanding, generating stories of ordinary citizens as they imagine possibilities for themselves and their families, learning how they make choices and shape their own lives, and understanding how media foster and encourage small acts of courage.

The Case Studies

“The best way to find things out is not to ask questions at all. If you fire off a question, it is like firing off a gun – bang it goes, and everything takes flight and runs for shelter. But if you sit quite still and pretend not to be looking, all the little facts will come and peck round your feet, situations will venture forth from the thickets, and intentions will creep out and sun themselves on a stone; and if you are very patient, you will see and understand a great deal more than a man with a gun does.”⁵ (Elspeth Huxley, *The Flame Trees of Thika*)

The qualitative case studies will be guided the principles articulated by Elspeth Huxley and those of Appreciative Inquiry⁶ which rests on assumptions of assets-based approaches to evaluation. Further, we will adhere to the highest standards of ethical practice⁷, including

- To create close, intimate relationships;
- To capture people’s stories as they narrate them;
- To honor individual and collective sensibilities;
- To protect those participating from undue harm;
- To respect privacy and confidentiality; and
- To listen.

The overall qualitative approach will be to conduct a series of case studies focusing on groups, neighborhoods, and issues of concern to ordinary citizens. Some of these will be modeled after the

² Rossman & Wilson, 1994.

³ Rossman & Wilson, 1994. See also Rallis & Rossman, 2003, and Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003.

⁴ Rossman & Wilson, 1994, p. 321.

⁵ Huxley, E., 1982.

⁶ See the Appreciative Inquiry Commons at <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>.

⁷ See Rossman & Rallis, in press, and Rallis & Rossman, in press.

Reality Checks⁸ methodology which entails in-depth mini-ethnographies of communities. Within this approach could be more traditional methods such as participant-observation, in-depth informal interviews, focused observations. Other methods may be Body Mapping, PhotoVoice⁹, and the Most Significant Change interviewing approach¹⁰. It should be noted that the specific methods will be collaboratively identified with our university partner teams and reviewed by key qualitative methodologists.

Purpose of the Baseline Case Studies

We envision four broad purposes for the baseline case studies:

- To generate, through narrative inquiry, observation, and other methods, ***the stories of challenges and successes*** that ordinary citizens encounter in everyday life. These stories will specifically explore concerns and action in the areas of health, education, and water and sanitation, knowing full well that these are only some of the areas that hold great meaning for individuals and groups. The stories will also focus on ways citizens use media and how the media effect their lives;
- To build ***close relationships to particular communities*** be able to capture ‘portraits of community change’ over time;
- To document these events/experiences/challenges and ensure ***a number of voices are heard***, especially the most marginalized; and
- To create learning and greater understanding on ***why and how people make the choices they do***, how and under what conditions they take up action, and what is the response to those actions.

Key Intriguing Questions

Given the overall goal of capturing stories, we will design the case studies to be able to respond to the following (others to be identified):

- What matters to ordinary citizens in terms of schooling for their children? What do they value? What opportunities are open or closed to them? What are the realities of schooling that they face?
- What choices do citizens take around schooling and why? How are decisions taken? What are their main concerns?
- How do they understand the schooling opportunities for their children as compared with those of others? With what they should have access to?
- How do these comparisons resonate? Do they prompt a new imaginary? Do they prompt action?
- What the stories they tell about taking action? What are the risks, opportunities? How does taking action threaten their security?
- What are the main health issues of concern for ordinary citizens and what are believed to be causes of these problems?
- What matters to ordinary citizens in terms of the health care that it available? What is most important to them? Are traditional healers most accessible, more trusted?

⁸ See Shah, 2007, and Bangladesh Reality Check Annual Report, 2008.

⁹ See PhotoVoice at <http://www.photovoice.org/>

¹⁰ Davies & Dart, 2005.

- What choices do citizens take around health? How are decisions taken? What actions do citizens and/or their communities take around these issues?
- What changes are the media and modern technology making in the lives of citizens? Specifically, what changes are these fostering among urban youth?
- What the stories do they tell about taking action? What are the risks, opportunities? How does taking action threaten their security?
- What stories do citizens tell of reprisals? How are they themselves, family or community members ‘punished’ for speaking out? How does this shape their sense of ‘agency’?
- How do the most marginalized ‘get by’? What resources do they draw on? How does their community shape their experiences of marginalization?

Overall Approach

The overall approach will be guided by two principles:

1. To build a close relationship with some communities – a ‘trusting’ relationship, allowing those with whom the relationship is being built to open up and discuss issues over time as they become more familiar with the researchers; and
2. To target some communities/groups/neighborhoods for specific focuses. These might be youth and SMS, or mothers and health, or children and school, among others).

A longer-term engagement provides the research teams with the opportunity to capture ‘portraits of community change’- real change taking place in communities over time in terms knowledge, imagination, attitudes, expectations, agency or action, and improved basic services.

One approach we are considering is to stay with families, if this is also welcomed by those households, as in the Reality Check methodology. Whether in a household or a local guest house, the researcher teams will be in the village as much as possible, to observe, socialize, have informal conversations with individuals, and – above all – to listen to them.

Sampling

Sites: We intend to select areas which are representative of the countries (coastal, lowland, highland, etc.) and, within those areas, identify communities to visit. Central to this work (as well as that of the baseline household surveys) is defining not only what we but also what participants mean by ‘community’. For six baseline case studies, we are considering selecting three rural communities, two peri-urban communities, and one urban neighborhood.

In selecting the areas and ‘communities,’ we will critically examine what we collectively about the purpose of each case study. That is, What do we want to learn?, What difference do we think it makes looking at a region or identifying communities based on livelihood (agriculture, fishing, pastoralists, etc.)?. With our University partners, we will explore the following:

- Do we want to work with coastal communities, to better understand fishing communities?
- Do we want to focus on agricultural communities?
- Do we want to learn more from communities who are relatively isolated?
- Do we want to understand more about youth living in urban areas as opposed to more rural areas?

In principal, Twaweza's work should be reaching all areas; not targeting any specific geographical area. Given this, one could argue that selection of sites for case studies does not make much difference. A counter-argument is that the selection strategy for case studies implies 'representation.'

Communities: We are considering selecting one district and, within that district, selecting one or two villages/neighborhoods (e.g. 1 rural and 1 peri-urban). This rationale would provide us with a bit of stability from the district context, while allowing us to explore in-depth the experiences of people in both rural and peri-urban areas. Within each village/community/neighborhood, researchers will be working with important stakeholders/those with power, other important groups, those who are 'invisible', various individuals (see below), and also be working at household level. Within each site, we are considering how many households to approach; the fundamental issues will be 'receptivity' on the part of the household. The Reality Check methodology focuses on visiting one household and learning in-depth; we are considering this in-depth, immersion approach for some of the case studies.

Process and Methods

All districts will be visited prior to actual data collection. Research teams will meet with District Officials (DC office), Ward committee/WEOs, and village committees/VEOs to explain their purpose and presence in the area. Mapping exercises will take place (perhaps a few with different groups to cross check information).

Mapping and key informant or perhaps focus group discussions will be done at District and Ward levels prior to actual research. This will help establish the structure and dynamics in the area (e.g. number of villages, number of schools, secondary schools, resource centers, organizations present, etc.).

These steps in the process are crucial to understand the kind of direct support from District officials - extension workers, community advisors (who actual are responsible for particular wards - how often they visit), and what kinds of other 'services/support' do the District and ward offer directly at village level. This step is also important for learning about recent events: crop failures; power failures; new initiatives by government and other agencies/organizations. We are trying to understand how people 'take up' new opportunities or respond to 'disasters' - all ways of inferring 'agency' - how they cope and respond, what resources they draw on (personal, communal).

Once villages are selected, community mapping exercises will assist in giving a good idea about what facilities are available, what organizations (and what their purpose is) are active, and institutions are central to the village/community functioning. Mapping will also be important to establish key leaders in the community, key groups, relationships, and key issues. All of this will provide information in planning whom to approach and involve in more depth in the case studies. Households working closely with researchers can then also do household mapping as a means for understanding genograms, family structure, network, assets, distance to key services, and so on.

What is crucial is that the 'stories' are captured and that there is a great deal of observation which will entail noting what is said and what actually is observed to take place. Some useful methodologies might be body-mapping, Photovoice, spatial mapping, and generic participant observation. Examples of 'findings'/results from a two-site case study employing Most Significant Change methods with body-mapping are found in the attached document.

We are committed that, within the case studies, the research team have conversations with, elicit stories from, a variety of groups, especially the most marginalized. Our commitment to hearing from/listening to these different groups - women, men, elders, youth, children - helps to ensure many voices and views will be heard. For political and protocol reasons, key stakeholders and leaders in the community will also be approached as will key committees (village committee, PTA,). Researchers also need to physically

move in the area, visit facilities and institutions, and have extraordinary listening and observing skills, skills in asking questions, as well as a stance of respect, non-judgment, interest, and curiosity, and the highest commitment to ethical research practice.

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