DEVELOPING EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION CAPACITY IN INFORMATION SOCIETY RESEARCH

DECI-2 Case study

Mentoring Privacy International in evaluation and research communication

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Contents

About the Series

This series of case studies emerged from an action-research project entitled Developing Evaluation and Communication Capacity in Information Society Research (DECI-2). The predecessor DECI-1 project focused only on evaluation mentoring in Asia. The subsequent DECI-2 project collaborated with research networks and grantees supported by IDRC's Information & Networks Program between July 2012 and 2017. This particular case summarizes work with Privacy International, based in London, UK.

The initial DECI-2 road map consists of a sequence of planning steps in evaluation and communication, some of which were clearly complementary. During the preceding DECI-1 project, we witnessed how utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) works as a decision-making framework within which numerous evaluation approaches can co-exist. The communication steps turned out to be no different, as the planning sequence challenged project managers to be clear about their communication purposes, audiences and expected changes.

As evaluation and communication were linked together, we discovered that both processes created a structure for project partners to express and agree on their assumptions, expectations, and outcomes. The approach creates a pressure on stakeholders to make the implicit, explicit and consequently helps teams clarify their Theory of Change. With research projects and with experimental initiatives, this process can take time as emergent outcomes can provide feedback to adjust project objectives and strategies. We think of it as a hybrid decision-making framework where evaluative and communicative thinking work as two sides of the same coin. All this work to re-discover human nature: as soon as you encounter exciting news you feel compelled to share it.

DECI-2 was developed as an action-research project in capacity development. We tested mentoring as a way of providing evaluation and communication support to our partners. Regional mentors based in Asia, Africa, and Latin America provided the bulk of the mentoring. While our main partners were IDRC-funded research networks (part of the Information & Network program), we have also tested the approach with projects in other fields.

Introduction

The DECI-2 Team has developed an integrated approach that combines Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE) and Research Communication (ResCom) as complementary processes that can help research projects improve their long-term outcomes.

U-FE

In simple terms, U-FE is an evaluation approach proposed by Patton (2004)[1] that seeks to generate useful evaluation. In order to attain such a goal, U-FE follows a series of iterative steps from the early stages of a project that needs to be evaluated. The purpose of the steps is to help the evaluator facilitate a process that enables her/him to implement the key elements of the approach that includes:

- Identification of primary evaluation users;
- Identification of primary evaluation purposes and uses;
- Formulation of key evaluation questions (KEQ) in a systematic way;
- Identification of relevant/cost-effective data collection tools and analysis processes;
- Facilitation of findings use.

Although Patton, the original proponent of the U-FE approach, subsequently increased the number of UF-E steps to 17 (Patton, 2011), for the sake of simplicity the DECI-2 team preferred to follow the original 12-steps process (Patton, 2004).

ResCom

Research Communication (ResCom) refers to the use of communication strategies to support project planning, including networking, engagement and making research findings available, in a timely, relevant and useful way to policymakers and stakeholders. This approach is especially relevant for projects seeking to influence public and institutional policy. Although ResCom did not have a step-by-step process as in the case of U-FE, the DECI-2 team proposed a similar 12-step planning process for ResCom. Such a process is based largely on the RAPID framework[2] and on the common and complementary aspects of ResCom and U-FE. In the same ways that U-FE tries to make evaluation “useful”, ResCom focuses on clarifying a range of communication purposes from the start of a project.

Why combining U-FE and ResCom makes sense?

As indicated earlier, DECI-2’s central assumption for combining U-FE and ResCom is that such a combination can help programs improve their long-term outcomes. As described on the DECI-2 website, from a practice perspective DECI-2 combines U-FE and ResCom because:

[1] Michael Quinn Patton, *Essentials of Utilization-Focused Evaluation,* Sage, 2012

[2] http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/2764.pdf

- They share some common planning steps (situational analysis, stakeholder analysis) that can enable complementary preparatory efforts.
- Making explicit what to evaluate focuses on the essential purposes of a research project, and this work in turn clarifies and narrows down a few communication objectives.
- Both approaches call for researchers to “listen” to what partners, stakeholders and audiences need, what is relevant to them.
- The emphasis on “use” in UFE is comparable with the emphasis on targeted messages in communication planning.
- The emphasis is on “facilitating use” in UFE, where the evaluators ensure the evaluation findings get utilized (as opposed to being left to chance) and it reminds us that communication activities and products need follow-up to heighten their effectiveness.
- The integration of evaluation and communication processes ensures that projects focus on communication objectives and development results that are realistic, traceable and measurable in terms of reach and short-term outcomes.

Despite these complementarities, there are also some significant differences that can make it challenging to utilize the U-FE – ResCom combination. Some projects simply need evaluation or communication support and not both; so the framework has become flexible to welcome such needs. Staff with a research background often find that the UFE approach resembles a research project in that having clarity in Key Evaluation Questions is as critical as clarity in research defining questions. Staff with a background in communication, especially Communication for Development, quickly recognize the same elements in planning (audience research, targeting methods, media and channels to each group’s preference, pre-testing of communication materials.) Large projects can afford to have staff assigned to each of these fields, however smaller ones may have a single person covering both evaluation and ResCom areas, which can be a challenge.

The DECI Mentoring approach

UFE and ResCom are both learned through practice: experiential learning is at the core[3]. Both require an accompaniment that matches learning moments. This timing is one reason why the impact of workshops is limited: people are often neither ‘ready’ nor able to absorb the information because they lack the knowledge of how to implement the learning in their project context. In DECI-2, we have been experimenting with a combination of coaching (that follows an established set of steps associated with the UFE and ResCom frameworks) with mentoring (that focuses on guiding, adjusting, and trouble-shooting together). We have learned that we may do a bit of both. In addition, this supportive process in our project takes place through regional mentors who are, in-turn, learning themselves.

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[3] Kolb, D.A. 1984. *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Mentoring is central to facilitating learning: it is a pivotal concept in the capacity development literature, especially the observation that blueprints tend to fail[4] and that capacity development requires action-research-reflection [5]. We find that our touchstones are the principles of adult education and community development. We start with where the learner(s) are at; engage them on their terms; enable them to discover and own the learning process.

Our project support to partners in UFE and in research communication, is spread over a calendar that is agreed with the project partners. Most of the mentoring takes place via Skype, though we may fund up to two face-to-face meetings to coincide with major design and decision-making moments during the evaluation and communication work plan of each project. Since DECI-2 brings added challenges in terms of combining mentoring in evaluation and communication, we have added more support at the start to review or encourage readiness.

Overview of Privacy International

Privacy International (PI) is a registered charity based in the U.K. whose goals are to defend and promote the right to privacy across the world. Simon Davies started Privacy in 1990. Privacy International registered as a not-for profit company in 2002, but remained without an office and mostly volunteer staff until 2009[6]. In 2011 Gus Hosein became its Executive Director and remains in that position today (2016). PI now has a staff of 19, two fellows, a raft of volunteers and an office in central London. It also supports more than 20 privacy organisations around the world.[7]

Mentorship expectations

Members of the DECI-2 team first met former PI staff member, Carly Nyst in an IDRC funded partners meeting in Rio de Janeiro, December 2012. She had recently been named the M and E advisor, but had limited experience in that area. Carly was interested in mentoring in evaluation from the DECI-2 team. She was less clear about the need for communication assistance. Since, PI was an advocacy organization, there was a sense that they knew all they needed to know about communication. However, given that PI had recently expanded its staff from 4 to 8 people and that the newly hired communication staff person would arrive in the February 2013, she agreed that the UFE – ResCom relationship could be explored when she and the new communication staff

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[4] Horton et al., 2003. *Evaluating capacity development: Experiences from research and development organizations around the world.* ISNAR, CTA, IDRC: The Hague, Wageningen, Ottawa.

[5] Lennie, J. & Tacchi, J. 2013. *Evaluating communication for development: A framework for social change.* Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon, UK & New York.

[6] In January 2011 Morris Lipson completed an external evaluation of PI that recommended, among other items, a formalization of the group.

[7] IDRC grant

person met with the DECI-2 team in Southern Africa later in October, 2013. A few months later, the DECI-2 regional communication mentor, Charles Dhewa, was able to meet with Privacy Director, Gus Hosein and many of the staff in London when he was there for another meeting in March 2013. At that time, the Director corroborated Carly's earlier view and noted that Privacy was an organization that possessed a 'communication common-sense.'

Up to that point, it was assumed that Charles Dhewa (Harare) and Julius Nyangaga (Nairobi) would become the mentors for communication (Charles) and evaluation (Julius) and that Dal (evaluation) and Wendy (communication) would backstop the process. The meeting in Harare changed the focus. The DECI-2 team[8] met with Carly Nyst and Mike Rispoli (the new PI communication lead) in Harare in October 2013. The DECI Team had assumed that mentoring would be focused on Privacy's partners. However, both Carly and Mike made it clear that they expected to be the ones to first receive the support, and that they would then pass on the knowledge to their partners. At the time, Privacy's relationship with their partners seemed to be focused on identifying which partners would receive grants, rather than viewing them as a recipients of capacity building support. Given that both Mike and Carly were working out of London, it was decided that Dal and Wendy would take the lead and that Julius and Charles would take over once the mentoring reached out to Privacy partners based in developing countries.

Reaching Readiness

Evaluation readiness was limited at the start due to a lack of clarity on who would be the Primary Intended Users, as well as uncertainty on evaluation uses or purposes. Additionally, workload pressures complicated matters due to the pressures of implementing a research project (by specific staff who were expert on advocacy work). In addition, PI had funding from the Adessium Foundation whowas also interested in a separate evaluation. Worth adding, is that IDRC also commissioned a separate external evaluation of the PI Project that further distracted attention from the DECI-2 support. Though PI claims to be great supporters of evaluation, this was happening at a time of flux for the organisation where the people responsible were the wrong people, the cascade of evaluations had to be differentiated by the variety of purposes, and the organisation was facing a period of strategic drift due to significant changes in their field.

From the beginning of the DECI-2 process, the communication person showed an interest in learning in preparing a communication strategy. On our part, the fact that there was a designated staff person for each component (evaluation and communication) was a sufficient indicator that the organization was 'ready' to receive our support. We discovered later as our early mentoring sessions began to take shape,

[8] October, 2013. Charles, Julius, Wendy and Dal (Ricardo had flown back to Europe for family reasons).

that despite being the full time person designated to manage communication, Mike did not have a budget for this purpose or any staff to work with him to support the process, nor did he appear to work that closely with Carly to coordinate with evaluation (despite the small size of staff).[9] Privacy's modus operandi had become primarily reactive, driven by events, leaving little time for pre-planning or strategy building [10]. This was despite having a strategic plan, established in 2011 when they were two members of staff – but with the significant growth, the strategic imperative to continue the growth, and the dramatic shift in the field – notably the documents revealed by Edward Snowden, the intelligence analyst – PI's readiness actually decreased dramatically.

Readiness lessons

On the UFE side, it took some time to settle on the Primary Evaluation Users, and the list included Carly herself, which in hind-sight may have led to some role confusion between being the internal evaluator and being a user of the findings and process. Readiness was slowed down by the competing pressures from the Adessium Foundation and the IDRC external evaluation).[11] The image below summarizes the evolution of the USES:

Evolution of our Primary Intended Uses

November 2013

Making Choices - To assist Privacy to develop a policy that will guide its choice of issues to work on.

Learning from Experience - To identify the lessons learned from its contributions to effecting change.

Uniqueness - To identify the uniqueness of the role played by Privacy

Organizational Sustainability - To contribute to the planning of the future organizational structure and resourcing

Short and Long Term Balance - To validate the current balance struck between short term responses and longer term strategic interventions (reactive - proactive balance, e.g. fire-fighting vs long term issues)

Partnership Relations - To assess the value that Privacy brings to its partners.

November 2014

Use 1: To assess the extent to which PI has enabled and/or contributed to enriching the work of the partner organisations.

Use 2: To assess the extent to which Privacy International achieves its organisational mission by working with partners.

Use 3: To assess how effective Privacy International has been in fostering and building a community dedicated to enhancing privacy-related legal protections, building community respect for privacy, conducting policy-directed research, and/or increasing privacy committed stakeholder engagement at the local, national, and regional level in the 'Global South'

Use 4: To assess which type of funding arrangement between the 'Global North' and 'Global South' is the most appealing to donors and most effective at capacity-building.'

[9] See UFE notes – understanding and assessing the impact of communication did become one of the UFE uses

[10] This took place shortly after the Snowden revelations

[11] To add: a note about the outcomes and use of the "Firetail Evaluation"; we need details.

On the ResCom side, while Mike showed his commitment to the communication work, he initially worked on his on, and only began to share the process and outcomes with his colleagues later the process. Unsurprisingly, having not been consulted, the rest of the staff were somewhat unprepared and objected to the direction that some of the work was taking.

Lessons to be learned from this scenario include the recognition that 'readiness' implies much more than simply having a staff person(s) designated to be responsible for evaluation and communication. Rather, the entire organization (particularly when it is such a small and flat organization) needs to be brought into the process to understand what (mentoring) is underway. Ideally, managers and staff need to be given a synopsis of what the work will entail and its expected results. While DECI-2 included "senior management buy-in" as a readiness requirement, we also learned that this aspect is difficult to sustain over time and needs to be ongoing. This participation would have paved the way to a much better future acceptance of the proposed communication strategy across the organization[12].

PI began to recognise the drift – and the loss of direction in the evaluation had helped to identify the challenge. While PI's work with partners in the Global South, through IDRC support and then from January 2014 Sida, was integral to its purpose and valued by partners, there was some staffing drift in focus. When key steps were due to be made in the evaluation and there was a noticeable lack of attention and interest from the relevant staff, other staff stepped in to push the process forward. Notably the Executive Director, Development Director, and staff members who more regularly and directly engaged with the partners took informal ownership of the evaluation.

The evaluation process then fed much internal activity and interest in the organisation's prioritisation of its work with partners, in the global south, the value of running a network. This resulted in not only changes to the evaluation – it spurred dramatic changes in the organisation at a time when it was developing its new strategic plan. By the end of 2014, in part as a result of the various evaluations aimed at the partner work, PI's new draft strategic plan established this work as one of three organisational priorities. Significant internal reorganisation occurred as a result and the new users of the evaluation were in the suitable positions to make the most of the evaluations.

Initiating the process

In the UFE context, by September 2014, the following evaluation uses had been defined:

[12] The ResCom checklist does ask if the organization is behind the process but we took this to mean – was there a person dedicated to Communication and was he/she committed to the process?

- **Use 1:** To assess the extent to which PI has enabled and/or contributed to enriching the work of the partner organisations.
- **Use 2:** To assess the extent to which Privacy International achieves its organisational mission by working with partners.
- **Use 3:** To assess how effective Privacy International has been in fostering and building a community dedicated to enhancing privacy-related legal protections, building community respect for privacy, conducting policy-directed research, and/or increasing privacy committed stakeholder engagement at the local, national, and regional level in the 'Global South.'
- **Use 4:** To assess which type of funding arrangement between the 'Global North' and 'Global South' is the most appealing to donors and most effective at capacity-building.

The ResCom mentoring took place via Skype in 2014 and lasted approximately for one year. When it started, Mike had been with the organization just under a year. By that time, Privacy had increased from the original staff complement of two individuals (in 2011) with no office to a staff of four in an office (in 2012) and then, with this cohort the staff figures jumped to eight by 2013. By the time Mike left in the spring of 2015, Privacy International had a staff of 16. Privacy went through significant change for a small organization in a short time and these abrupt changes had a great deal to do with the strengths and weaknesses of the ResCom mentoring experience.

In the beginning, Mike was solely responsible for Privacy's communication work and given its role as an advocacy group, this communication centred on large campaigns[13], social media and press interaction. Mike himself was a former journalist with a Master's Degree in Strategic Communication, but at that time had little experience in actually developing a communication strategy.

At the meeting in Harare, Mike had given the DECI-2 mentors a run down on the Privacy communication approach and it was very impressive. That evening he was asked to read the ODI RAPID[14] material and it was suggested that he prepare to tell us a story. It was to illustrate when and how Privacy had utilized a rough RAPID framework intuitively without knowing it. The next day he described how Privacy had been able to prevent a company responsible for manufacturing surveillance equipment from relocating in Switzerland. The story was replete with relationship building with both media and politicians, with timeliness and ability to capture information to be run through their contacts in Swiss media to politicians and other influential people to finally win the case. It was a perfect example of how legal knowledge and communication 'know how' could have an enormous timely effect.

[13] With titles such as: "Big Brother"

[14] https://www.odi.org/programmes/rapid

Implementation

UFE

As a result of internal changes and the prioritisation of the value of this work more generally, the UFE process received a major boost to the process with the recruitment of Emily Mahoney (Sep. 2014) as a data collection and evaluation support person, and specific individuals internally with whom she would work – buy-in was re-established. . With her engagement, the evaluation plan took shape. Based on the four USES defined, the following Key Evaluation Questions were developed:

Use 1: To assess the extent to which PI has enabled and/or contributed to enriching the work of the partner organisations.

1.1 Before the organisation engaged with Privacy International, to what extent was privacy a component to the partner organisation's work?
1.2 What changes have occurred regarding the partner's work on privacy?
1.3 What are the most pressing privacy needs in the partner country and through what mechanisms and to what extent has Privacy International helped the partner organisation target those needs?

Use 2: To assess the extent to which Privacy International achieves its organisational mission by working with partners.

2.1 What are the advantages and disadvantages for Privacy International to have partners in the 'Global South?'
2.2 How if at all, does Privacy International's staff employ the respective organisation's work in their own work?

Use 3: To assess how effective Privacy International has been in fostering and building a community dedicated to enhancing privacy-related legal protections, building community respect for privacy, conducting policy-directed research, and/or increasing privacy committed stakeholder engagement at the local, national, and regional level in the 'Global South.'

3.1 Do partners/staff feel they are a part of a community and what do they think Privacy International's role is within that community?
3.2 What are the best ways to communicate across the community and about the community [partners/staff]?

Use 4: To assess which type of funding arrangement between the 'Global North' and 'Global South' is the most appealing to donors and most effective at capacity building.

4.1 What funding arrangement do funders and partners prefer?
4.2 How do partners feel about Privacy International being the 'middle man' as compared to their respective relationship with other partners and funders?

She was able to work with the DECI-2 team to detail the data / evidence needed, and the relevant data collection instruments (see Annex 1). Emily was successful in helping the Primary Intended Users discover that the UFE process was theirs, and that it could serve as a complement to the external evaluations that were required by the other two funders. She led the data collection process during October and November (2014), which relied to a large extent on gathering views and information from the staff (as an example, see Annex 2 with a focus group guide)[15].

Privacy completed a staff survey and interviews with both partners and funders. Emily transcribed the funder interviews and anonymized them (there are 12 hours of recorded interviews). During a Skype chat with the DECI-2 mentors in November, it was suggested that some KEQs might require a second data collection phase, especially for questions that seek to track a change over time. Emily did not synthesize any of the data collected. Subsequently in November, Carly advised us that she was most likely going to ask the users to take on portions of the analysis. On Dec. 10th, Carly mentioned that the five primary users had been combining their efforts through the data collected by Emily. She also mentioned that they would hold a "DECI Super Session" on Tuesday Dec. 16th, 2014 to undertake a joint analysis which was then summarized into a single presentation.

In the summary produced by Carly, the following decisions were informed by the UFE process:

1. *"Because of our UFE finding that partners want more frequent and genuine opportunities to engage with PI and with each other, we have established a new communication platform, the "Privacy International Network", which has a more accessible interface allowing partners to communicate with each other and with PI more easily and effectively. We have also adopted an approach whereby at least one PI staff member posts to the Network each day, and where PI staff members are encouraged to respond quickly and fulsomely to postings by partners, in order to encourage dialogue and conversation.*

2. *As a result of our UFE finding that PI staff that do not work directly with partners feel somewhat disconnected from them and their work, we structured our 2015 Global Partners' Meeting to enable staff from all reaches of the organization to interact with partners with similar skill sets or areas of interest, to encourage the*

[15] For one Key Evaluation Question of doubtful relevance, the DECI-2 team encouraged Emily to apply a Simulation exercise (step 8 in UFE). The KEQ focussed on whether the staff was aware that they had field partners, and upon simulating the findings, she and Carly agreed to reword it as the answer was to a large extent known.

opening of dialogue between partners and staff and cement ongoing relationships. We have also insured that all staff members receive emails from the Privacy International Network and are able to post to it, whereas previously only those staff in the GSMA team (which works directly with partners) were members of the communication platform.

3. Following on from our findings that both staff and partners value the role of PI as a middle man between funders and organizations, we have decided to continue adopting this model of work going forward, and have placed it at the centre of forthcoming funding proposals and discussions. However, due both to the evolving capacity of grantee organizations, and to the findings of the UFE process, we are moving more towards a peer-led network, rather than a PI-led community, in order to enable those organizations with greater capacity and expertise to begin to step up, create their own funder relationships and garner more recognition as equal leaders in this field."

ResCom

When he arrived, Mike was introduced to the ResCom template prepared by DECI-2 a few months earlier. The visual reality of this template immediately resonated with him, particularly since we had been able to walk through the different boxes in the template together. It was relatively easy to come up with "Purposes and stakeholders." The entire raison d'etre of Privacy Inc. is to advocate for greater control over citizen privacy and to raise citizen awareness about the need for that privacy.

> *We are 'out there' and known as the 'go to' resource for everyone. In a sense 'leading the conversation' resembles Privacy's form of 'branding.' Okay there are a couple of things that have to work together to make this possible – one is the fact that the Privacy staff have to keep 'on top of the game' through continual (effective) research, through legal research and so on. The research results have to be packaged and put out there through media (and you say the general public but how) which means maintaining: a) Privacy's reputation and; b) relationship building with media (*Mike Rispoli, May 2014*).*

Mike's description of the Privacy approach to communication that immediately led to a listing of key stakeholders or 'audiences,' resonated with the ODI RAPID Framework. The DECI-2 mentor stressed that it would be useful to Mike to take advantage of the proximity to ODI and suggested he visit the office to talk over communication strategy building with some of the staff. It took a while but he did eventually make the connection.

The visit turned out to be important. Mike explained that it had allowed him to meet with people who understood some of the issues he faced on a daily basis. This connection made him feel that he could use them as a sounding board and discuss things he didn't get a chance to discuss with anyone else. RAPID had further suggested that Mike consider 'institutionalizing' communication within Privacy - in other words, communication should/could be seen not just as his responsibility but, given its advocacy orientation, it should be everyone's responsibility in every aspect of their work. This approach, Mike agreed, would also get people out of seeing communication as a product (media package, campaign etc.) and would help them realize that it is part and parcel of all they do (it is an ongoing process).

Throughout these sessions, the DECI-2 ResCom mentor asked Mike whether he had found a time to discuss this work with Carly Nyst (evaluation) or with other members of the Privacy team involved in communication support. For example, two new staff members had been assigned to work with Privacy partners in Africa and Asia and one of them, (Matt), was designated the communication lead. The DECI mentor asked if he could join our sessions, but Mike preferred to meet him one on one and assured her that he always spoke to Matt after each session to fill him in on the gist of the discussion. After his meeting with ODI and a few sessions on in the mentoring discussions, he stated that one of the purposes of a communication strategy was to focus on organizational communication. He noted that the volume of internal communication was considerable and that the various roles and responsibilities for different aspects of the communications mandate needed to be discussed and understood by the staff.

It took some time for Mike to write up the strategy. Privacy had had a 'communication plan' from the start of his tenure, but it was vague and did not contain the details identified by DECI in its communication template. Privacy noted that the DECI mentoring began in early 2014, but that the actual writing of the Strategy didn't begin until August of that year – eight months into the mentoring process.

Right from the beginning of the Privacy expansion, the organization had instituted the idea of a 'Master Class' that took place after work once a week. The point of the *class* was to offer a venue where staff could meet after work to discuss a given topic outside of the pressures of day-to-day management. Mike had talked about offering a 'Master Class' on the idea of the communication strategy for some time, but didn't get around to it until fall 2014.

Mike began with a presentation that led to what he called, "*a huge discussion."*

a) Review of work we had done
b) Overview of draft communication strategy
c) Review of what we could do better – how can the organization adopt and adapt
d) How can we look more into who does what
e) Discussion

The entire staff presented lots of questions around the whole issue of the need for a communication strategy, the concept of organizational communication and the role of advocacy within the organization. It also queried the idea that the Communication advisor would in any way have a role to play in capacity building for partner organizations.

To begin with, they queried Purpose # 1, *Leading and promoting the conversation on Privacy* insisting that there is a difference between corporate communication (the role they assigned to Mike) and all the other forms of communication. They looked to Mike to lead the management of communication with a capital 'C', that his job was to promote the organization and to promote the issues, but nothing else. Mike was uncomfortable that it was assumed that all he needed to do was to wait for the material from everyone else, package it and send it out. He realized that this approach was very much a management issue that still needed to be resolved. This all fed directly into PI's strategic planning process at the time and had the immediate impact on new job descriptions for new staff.

Reflections

For Privacy International, the IDRC-supported research project meant a steep learning curve in that the organization had an advocacy tradition. In addition, the funding coincided with a period of substantial organizational growth. The challenges described above in reaching readiness were not surprising, and as already mentioned, were exacerbated by the other evaluations that coincided with the DECI-2 support.

In terms of UFE, Carly Nyst was interested from the start, even though she did not have an evaluation background. What she did have was a significant workload that kept her attention away from the UFE. The arrival of Emily Mahoney in late 2014, albeit for a short duration, was an effective remedy, when it combined with other staff in the organisation rising to the opportunity of using the evaluation process to identify ideas for strategic development. The new users were the drivers of the interest in the evaluation, supported Emily, and were developing the new strategic plan accordingly. Emily spearheaded the data collection stage and Carly then engaged the staff in a joint analysis of the raw data. This exercise led to them becoming familiar with the details and therefore, to gain a perspective on the utilization of the evaluation findings.

During a debriefing session with Emily, the DECI-2 team asked her about the enabling factors and barriers. She mentioned the challenge of not having been part of the process from its inception. She also felt that the organizational buy-in was limited, as if the process had never been seen as something to own; at the same time she observed that PI was handling many funders, each with their own requirements. She did feel that in the end, Carly was able to take ownership along with some of the staff. When asked about the DECI-2 approach, she noted that while the process is organized, it can be alienating especially for non-researchers. Nevertheless, she indicated that now that she had seen the process close to completion, she would be willing to use it again.

With respect to ResCom, Mike started meeting with other staff members to point out the role he hoped they would play in involving themselves in the communication work. He also drafted a series of Communication Principles to share with everyone at Privacy. These Principles were drawn from the DECI-2 steps: be clear as to what you are trying to do; figure out your audience; put time into audience research; try to identify outcomes etc. He met with each Privacy team member to discuss the proposed principles and suggested that he would get back to them in 3 months to see how they were doing. He held a follow up meeting in February and initiated work with the staff to collectively draft Goals for the communication work - or outcomes.

There was continuing resistance to the idea of actually writing down a communication strategy. Mike acknowledged that at first he had felt the idea of a written strategy (and even the RAPID Framework) was, in itself, a bit academic. He was used to doing everything by intuition and found the idea of actually planning and writing a strategy counterintuitive. By working through the DECI-2 communication planning steps (to fill in the boxes), he gradually came to see that there might be something worth pursuing.

Together with the DECI-2 ResCom mentor, he quickly moved through a listing of communication **purposes**, key target **audiences,** but hit a bit of a stumbling block when it came to actual **audience research**. Experience had taught the DECI-2 team that many organizations assume that the press releases, social media, websites and on-line platforms etc. that constitute communication work are actually used by the audiences they hope to reach. Many organizations make this assumption without confirming who uses what and for what purpose. When this point was discussed, Mike was interested, but he was reluctant to send out any form of questionnaire to the Privacy stakeholders. Questionnaires, he pointed out, are just the kind of thing that they had previously warned their partners to avoid so he didn't feel he could turn around and start asking questions. Together with the DECI-2 mentor, he discussed other ways of getting at the needed research (meeting and chatting with people at conferences) that would supplement a brief survey questionnaire that Privacy was using with stakeholders. He then moved on to a focus on **methods and media**, a relatively straightforward reference to the usual web material, press releases, conferences etc. This brought the process back to the 'audience research' and the possibility that Mike could discuss 'what worked and what did not work' in terms of methods and media with different partners.

The partnership workshop in Manila that took place in early fall 2014, offered Mike the opportunity to interact with Privacy's partners and to have conversations about what methods and media suited each organization. Mike later said that he did not get to speak to the partners about these issues since another staff person was clearly responsible for this type of interaction. Partners had apparently made it clear that they wanted to be more involved in the development of communication material coming out of Privacy, but Mike was somewhat sceptical that there would be follow up.

What worked and what didn't work and why

Lesson #1 – an implicit communications strategy is not enough

Privacy International is an organization dedicated to raising awareness amongst the public, the media and the policy makers about issues related to Internet privacy and surveillance. As such, it is dedicated to advocacy and communication and is embedded with a type of 'communication common sense' not found in many places. The lesson learned was that no matter the level of expertise within the organization, the chance to have a facilitated discussion on communication strategy building is of use to both the organization and its communication person**.**

Lesson #2 – organizational readiness is essential

Timing is probably more important than inherent 'know how." As noted, the Privacy communication mentoring took place for just over a year from 2013 to the end of 2014. During this period, the organization was evolving rapidly as it grew, changed shape and added more and more staff. In hindsight, it is clear that it was probably not the optimal time to introduce a new way of looking at things. The communication mentoring was perhaps unfortunately focused on one staff member. Organizationally, *Privacy* was likely just not '*ready*' in terms of the stability of the organization and the readiness of its management. But in a final interview with the Executive Director, he stated that the fact that PI wasn't ready shouldn't be a reason to not do the process: had the evaluations not been taking place it is possible that the strategic prioritisation of the work would not have occurred. So the process of readying the organisation, with all the bumps and bruises, is essential particularly as the 'ready' status fluctuates over time.

Lesson #3 – management and staff engagement is vital

It is important to understand the dynamics of the organization and the role of each staff member prior to taking on a mentoring role**.** Given the fact that growing or new organizations are often the ones to want to be mentored, it is important to ensure that more than one staff member is part of the process and that management is involved. It is important to take the time to make sure that everyone in the organization is aware of the process and able to ask questions at any time to ensure that he/she is comfortable with the shape of the communication strategy.

Lesson #4 – linking UFE and ResCom mentoring

The mentoring process was very much appreciated and it was felt that the process would have been better served **if there had been more interaction between the UFE mentoring and the ResCom mentoring**. The fact that the mentors had had a chance to meet face to face with the Privacy contacts was beneficial. It was suggested that more than one meeting would have been useful.

Postscript

The integration of UFE and ResCom was still a work in progress within the DECI-2 project. For the DECI-2 team, this and other experiences pointed towards the need to allow flexibility and to encourage synergies between the two approaches, but not to require it.

Subsequent to the DECI-2 mentoring process, both the evaluation and communication contact persons have left the organization. The communication person has been replaced by more than one person – the new communication head is known as the Director of Campaigns and Development to bring the need for Communication and Campaigning, public fundraising and branding closer together with a former role in strategy development. He will be supported by a team and with the potential to bring communication and research communication into each staff person's role. There may be scope for this case study to serve as a source of reflection and learning from the new staff.

Annexes

Annex 1: Table with Uses, Key Evaluation Questions, Data Sources and Methods

Use	KEQ	Data/Evidence to Collect	Data Collection Method (*)
1. To assess the extent to which PI has enabled and/or contributed to enriching the work of the partner organisations.	1.1 Before the organisation engaged with PI, to what extent was privacy a component to the partner organisation's work?	Examples of work that organisation/ individual did prior to partnership with PI	- Qualitative interview with partner organisation - Collect examples from partner on previous work
	1.2 What changes have occurred regarding the partner's work on privacy?	Examples of change (work product, policy, organisation's mission etc.) that the organisation has undergone since working with PI	- Qualitative interview with partner organisation - Collect examples from partner on current work
	1.3 From the partner's perspective, what are the most pressing privacy needs in their country and through what mechanisms and to what extent has Privacy International helped the partner organisation target those needs?	Partner organisation opinions/feelings on most pressing privacy needs and information on whether/how PI have helped partner organisation target those needs	- Qualitative interview

2. To assess the extent to which PI achieves its organisational mission by working with partners.	2.1 How does having partners help PI achieve the right to privacy globally and halt unlawful surveillance in the 'Global South?'	Staff opinions/feelings on what partners bring to/provide PI Evidence of change on these issues in partner country	- Focus groups with staff - Key informant interview (Matt/Alex) for case studies (examples of change in legislation/policy, stakeholders)
	2.2 How, if at all, does PI's staff employ the respective organisation's work in their own work?	Evidence of staff using work, through what mediums, and the frequency of using that work	Survey
3. To assess how effective PI has been in fostering and building a community dedicated to enhancing privacy-related legal protections, building community respect for privacy, conducting policy-directed research, and/or increasing privacy committed stakeholder engagement at the local, national, and regional level in the 'Global South.'	3.1 To what extent do partners/staff feel they are a part of such a community and what do they think PI's role is within that community?	Staff opinions/ feelings on whether they feel part of a community dedicated to the enumerated goals and PI's role within it Partners' opinions/ feelings on whether they feel part of a community dedicated to the enumerated goals and PI's role within it	Focus group for staff; skype interviews for partners

	3.2 How do staff/partners communicate within this community and how do they feel about their communication?	Staff opinions/ feelings on their communication with partners Partners' opinions/ feelings on their communication with PI	Survey to ascertain how they communicate and focus group for feelings for staff; skype interviews for partners
	3.3 How do partners/ staff communicate about the community?	Evidence of staff/partners communicating about the community	Survey to ascertain how they communicate; skype interviews for partners; key informant interview with Mike
4. To assess which type of funding arrangement between the 'Global North' and 'Global South' is the most appealing to donors and most effective at capacity-building.	4.1 What funding arrangement do funders and partners prefer?	Partner and funders opinions/feelings on their preferences regarding funding arrangements and why	Qualitative interview
	4.2 How do partners feel about PI being the 'middle man' as compared to their respective relationship with other partners and funders?	Partner and funders opinions/feelings on PI being a 'middle man' as compared to their experience with other funders/and partners	Qualitative interview

Annex 2: Staff focus Group Questions

1. RAISE OF HANDS, how many of you have used a PI partner's work in your work, from making a reference to their existence as PI's partner in for example an email, interview, or presentation, to using their work extensively for your research or in preparing a cause of action?
    a. Those that raised their hands, please explain.

2. What do you like/find exciting about PI having partners?

3. What do you dislike/find frustrating about PI having partners?

4. What do you think would happen if PI did not have partners? How do you think not having partners would change PI's work?

5. Sharing: has anyone here worked in another organisation prior to PI that also worked with partners or had similar funding relationships?
    a. Compare/contrast the partnership relationship at that organisation to PI's.

6. How would you describe PI's relationship with partners?

7. How do you feel when you talk to/interact with partners?

8. How would you describe feeling like you are part of a community committed to a certain cause, with examples. [what would you do, what is your role etc.]

9. Would these definitions you shared apply to how you feel in your work and/or PI's work with partners? Why/why not?

10. How do you think a community committed to enhancing privacy globally could be nurtured/fostered?

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