EVALUATING DIGITAL CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT
A PRACTICAL WORKSHOP

Group presenter
You have a project where you have been using, or would like to use, digital citizen engagement. You will tell people about the project and answer their questions. Then working together as a group, try to come up with ideas for what to do next in developing an evaluation framework for your work.

Instructions
The timing described here is approximate. The workshop facilitator will tell you when it is time to move to the next step.

1. Very briefly present your project.
   a. What is your project trying to accomplish (in general / non-digital terms / in digital terms)?
   b. Why is it important to engage people (citizens) in it?
   c. Where are you in the process of planning, implementing, and assessing it?
2. People in your group will each take on a lens role or persona and as a group you will work through the issues raised by that person.
3. As a group each Lens will take a turn asking you questions. Answer questions from each of the Lenses as best you can with input and ideas from all group members. It is okay if there are not answers to all the questions.
4. Work with the group to complete the evaluation and scoping notes sheet to help guide the evaluation thinking around your project.
5. Listen to what all group members are saying and collectively develop ideas and suggestions.
6. Prepare to present back at the end of each lens session.

Timing
Reading through instructions and project introduction 10 minutes
Each lens questions and discussion 20 minutes
Each lens report back and discussion 10 minutes
Scribe & time keeper

You are the person who writes down what other group members say. This can be hard, so I hope you are good at listening well, summing up, and writing quickly!

Instructions

The timing described here is approximate. The workshop facilitator will tell you when it is time to move to the next step.

1. The Presenter will talk about her/his project. Capture a summary in the notes sheet provided or on a flip chart.
2. Each Lens will take a turn asking questions with group discussion and ideas from all. Capture the answers as best you can – again use the notes sheet or a flip chart.
3. Listen to what all group members are saying and capture ideas that are collectively developed.
4. Prepare to assist the presenter during report back at the end of each lens session.

Timing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading through instructions and project introduction</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each lens questions and discussion</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each lens report back and discussion</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation and scoping notes sheet

Project name:

Description of the project:

Objective (logic):
What are the goals of the DCE, and how well is the project designed to achieve those goals?

Control:
Which actors exert the most influence over the DCE design and implementation, and what are the implications of this?
Participation:
Who participates in the DCE, and to what extent is their level of participation in line with their needs and expectations?

Technology:
How appropriate was the choice of the technology, how well was the technology implemented?

Effects:
What effects did the project have at the individual, collective and national level, and to what extent can this impact be attributed to technology?

High level research questions:
1.
2.
3.
4.
Lens: Objective

Your role
You are the “objective” lens!
Your role is to lead the questioning about understanding and unpacking the objectives of the project that your group is working on.

Instructions
The timing described here is approximate. The workshop facilitator will tell you when it is time to move to the next step.

1. The Presenter will talk about her/his project. Ask clarifying questions as you see fit.
2. Each Lens will then be looked at in turn in the order; objective, control, participation, technology, effects.
3. On your turn, ask one or more questions from the list below, and give the presenter and other group members time to respond after each question. Feel free to develop your own questions as things develop. You will probably run out of time before asking many questions.
4. Work with the presenter and group to complete the evaluation and scoping notes sheet to help guide the evaluation thinking around the project.
5. Listen to what all group members are saying and collectively develop your questions and ideas.

Reading through instructions and project introduction 10 minutes
Each lens questions and discussion 20 minutes
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Sample questions and lines of enquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Interest</th>
<th>What to explore at the Scoping stage</th>
<th>What to consider at the Design stage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LENS 1: Logic (What is the logic of intervention and is it appropriate?)</strong></td>
<td>Seeking to understand the explicit logic of the program and the wider environment, including the planned impact</td>
<td>The gaps in knowledge of the logic (is the logic explicit, or does it need to be inferred?), the arenas to explore further, and what counterfactual to use (if any).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The logic and goals of the engagement</strong></td>
<td>Are there specific goals available that explain the project?</td>
<td>Do the goals appear reasonable, practical, sensible?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there a clear logic in the project linking (e.g.) activities, objectives, goals?</td>
<td>Do the goals and related documents/discussions demonstrate that those in charge of the program appear to understand the nuances required to set effective goals for DCE e.g. consider</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Specific goals related to the technology aspects of the program *(N.B. note link/overlap with Lens 4)* | Is there clear rationale for both why technology was chosen as an engagement tool, and for the specific choice of technology platform?  
Is it clear what the goals are for the technology itself and do these goals align with the wider engagement goals of the program? | The gaps/questions here are likely to tie to questions related to Lens 4 in **Toolkit 1** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sound logical theory grounded in reality | What is the external reality of the program?  
How does the program relate to/tie in with other initiatives?  
With technological developments?  
Is there evidence of lessons from other DCE projects being incorporated? | Are the links reasonable and well thought out between activities and expected results in the (stated or implied) logic of the program?  
Do these links and their underlying assumptions appear to be grounded in reality or based on evidence and research?  
Are there falsifiable hypotheses which can be tested? |
| Different views of the program goals *(N.B. Link/overlap with Lens 3)* | How do the different stakeholders view the program goals? | What are the implications of this for the program (see also questions related to Lens 3 in **Toolkit 1**)? |
| What is the counter-factual? | Is there a valid ‘control’ group or data which the program can be evaluated against? | What might have happened if no (D)CE engagement took place at all? |
Lens: Control

Your role
You are the “control” lens!
Your role is to lead the questioning about understanding and unpacking the objectives of the project that your group is working on.

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2. Each Lens will then be looked at in turn in the order; objective, control, participation, technology, effects.
3. On your turn, ask one or more questions from the list below, and give the presenter and other group members time to respond after each question. Feel free to develop your own questions as things develop. You will probably run out of time before asking many questions.
4. Work with the presenter and group to complete the evaluation and scoping notes sheet to help guide the evaluation thinking around the project.
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Reading through instructions and project introduction 10 minutes
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<tr>
<td>Types of involvement of different groups at different stages of the program</td>
<td>To what degree are citizens, stakeholders, beneficiaries, end-users... engaged in the initial decisions, the design of the DCE process, the design of the technical</td>
<td>To what extent do people feel involved or in control?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who controls and influences the digital engagement process?</td>
<td>Who is involved in decision-making at what stages; the mechanisms that exist to ensure fairness and equitability; what evidence of stakeholders’ influence already exists</td>
<td>How to evaluate the extent of different stakeholders’ influence on the program and the implications of that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What to consider at the Design stage</td>
<td>How do expectations of the level of participation measure against reality?</td>
<td></td>
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| What is in place to ensure the DCE program’s processes are fair and equitable? | Are there vigilance mechanisms in place and suitable levels of transparency to protect against corruption?  
What mechanisms are in place to ensure that decisions are implemented and decision-makers are held to account? | How effective are these mechanisms?  
Is there evidence of abuse, corruption or cheating the system by participants, program staff or decision makers? |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Factors that influence the ability of different stakeholders to influence the process | Who selected the technology?  
Are intermediaries (e.g. civil society groups, technology intermediaries) involved?  
What data-points are used, influencing what is collected, reported and given importance? | How familiar are people with the platform?  
How does it affect their participation?  
How does the mediation affect the participation?  
How much control is actually wielded by distant funders, by private sector technology partners, by industry experts etc.?  
How were the data points defined? Who made those decisions? |
| How is the sphere of influence of the program being decided? | What ambition does the program have to influence others and to what extent is this reflected in program design? (may tie in with Lens 1- logic of intervention) | To what degree are the decision-makers genuinely open to being influenced by the results?  
Which aspects of this process been institutionalized or enshrined in law?  
How much influence do citizen participants genuinely have and is this capacity being built if it needs to be? |
Lens: Participation

Your role
You are the “participation” lens!
Your role is to lead the questioning about understanding and unpacking the objectives of the project that your group is working on.

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<th>LENS 3: Participation</th>
<th>Who participates and how?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Areas of Interest</td>
<td>What to explore at the Scoping stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and targeting</td>
<td>The target audience(s), their characteristics, how they are reached; the opportunities provided by the program for them to participate and at what level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What to consider at the Design stage</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How to assess the effectiveness of the program in enabling participation, and whether the level of participation achieved met the expectations of participants and best practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and targeting</td>
<td>Does the program target the entire population or specific sub-groups?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Are participants self-selecting or being recruited via intermediaries</td>
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<td>Is the opportunity to engage promoted equally to all potential participants, or is it reaching more of certain groups?</td>
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<td>What are the implications of the chosen</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Why are some groups engaging or not?</strong></td>
<td>What characterizes the target audience in terms of (e.g.) availability, environmental/societal influences, access to the engagement technology, desire to participate?</td>
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<td>What incentives has the program used to encourage engagement?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How has technology changed the engagement dynamics?</strong></td>
<td>What technology has been used for engagement by the program, and why (note overlap with Lenses 1 and 2)?</td>
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<td>What engagement strategies has the program developed?</td>
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<td><strong>What times/spaces for meaningful engagement exist?</strong></td>
<td>What opportunities (spaces and times) does the program provide for people to become informed about relevant issues and deliberate them?</td>
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</table>
Lens: Technology

Your role
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Reading through instructions and project introduction
Each lens questions and discussion
Each lens report back and discussion

10 minutes
20 minutes
10 minutes

Sample questions and lines of enquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LENS 4: Technology</th>
<th>How effective and appropriate is the choice and delivery of the technology?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Areas of Interest</strong></td>
<td><strong>What to explore at the Scoping stage</strong>&lt;br&gt;The technology used and the reasons for its selection, the cost;&lt;br&gt;How privacy issues are managed;&lt;br&gt;How the overall program was managed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choice of technologies</strong></td>
<td>Which specific technologies were chosen and why, were other possibilities explored, was a non-technical option assessed?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Data management and privacy | How does the program handle privacy issues resulting from citizen data being kept on a technical platform? | How effective are these safeguards?  
Does the program understand the potential for abuse of the system or the data and have processes in place to mitigate against this? |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Use of time and resources   | What is the total cost of engagement of the program? | How is the program cost different than it might’ve been using different platforms or no technologies?  
What trade-offs have been made between quality and scale due to the technology?  
What would the costs have been in the counter-factual and how many citizens might have been engaged with? |
| Overall program management and learning | What capacity does the program have for managing the technology?  
When problems occurred (technical or otherwise), how were they handled?  
Are systems in place to extract meaningful data from the systems and use this to monitor and seek to improve activity?  
What quality and accountability mechanisms are in place? | How suitable is the technology, how well is it managed, how good is its user experience, how accessible is it?  
How well is the wider program managed and delivered?  
How well have the relevant institutions and individuals learned from their experience?  
How suitable are the systems and how well are they managed? |
Lens: Effects

Your role
You are the “effects” lens!
Your role is to lead the questioning about understanding and unpacking the objectives of the project that your group is working on.

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4. Work with the presenter and group to complete the evaluation and scoping notes sheet to help guide the evaluation thinking around the project.
5. Listen to what all group members are saying and collectively develop your questions and ideas.

Sample questions and lines of enquiry

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LENS 5: effects</th>
<th>What difference is made to the stakeholders, processes and outcomes?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Areas of Interest</strong></td>
<td><strong>What to explore at the Scoping stage</strong>&lt;br&gt;The evidence (even anecdotal) that already exists of intended or unintended impacts; whether a 'control group' was identified or not; availability of baseline data; nature of the DCE project (e.g. designed as an RCT?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How have citizens / participants changed as a</strong></td>
<td><strong>What expectations does the program have for individual change (relates to Lens 1)?</strong> (e.g. DCE can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What tangible difference has the program made to the nature of life in its area?</td>
<td>What impact (even anecdotal) has been noted on bigger issues such as inequality and poverty reduction, impact on specific indicators in the relevant sector such as educational attainment or maternal health outcomes? (these impacts are potentially hard to measure, and extremely hard to attribute direct causal effects to).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the program changed the way citizens organize collectively?</td>
<td>Did the program seek to build the capacity of civil society or advocacy groups? If so, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How have decision-makers been impacted?</td>
<td>What evidence already exists of changes to decision-makers/decision-making processes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The result of the program?</td>
<td>make people more aware of their rights, give people a sense of possibilities and an opportunity to build their confidence, to challenge injustices) – have any of these improvements been observed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What direct impact has been noted on service delivery by the program?</td>
<td>healthcare, or result in specific tangible actions such as fixing a faulty water pump.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What difference can be attributed specifically to the technology?</td>
<td>Have any differences due to the technology been noted or suggested so far?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>