

Concept note 2020

Fostering Sustainability During and Long After Projects End

Learning from dozens of evaluations of development projects' long-term sustained impact, Valuing Voices helps organizations select, design, implement, monitor and evaluate global development projects for impacts long after funding ends.

It does so by Valuing Voices of funders, implementers and country nationals at all levels.

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Proverb

International development has taught hundreds of millions of 'beneficiaries' to fish over the last century. Do we know how well they are feeding themselves now? Do we know our return on investment from taxpayer dollar investments, or on the investment of our participants – their time, energy and hopes for improvement? Maybe.

We know during the duration of our projects, and that we know rigorously. But after projects end? Not so much. We have so little information about what projects they were most able to self-sustain, what unexpected results came from our help... this is Valuing Voices aim, to learn from local experts, the communities themselves what worked best and how to do more of it, and expand that knowledge nationally and internationally.

Our Mission:

- * **Mobilize** for Sustained Impacts. Apply this to inform next generation project design. This is good stewardship
- * **Magnify** the voices of local participants, implementers and governments and funders.
- * **Manifest** return on investment through greater program effectiveness

Why we exist:

- We are here on behalf of communities across the world that are 'beneficiaries' but not currently drivers of development. Donors typically design Requests for Proposals. Western Implementer Agencies design proposals. National non-profits and communities implement them, and everyone rigorously evaluates success/ failure until projects close. Then almost no one returns to see how well communities could sustain the results to foster sustainable development.
- Nearly \$2 trillion has been spent on international development by the EU alone since 2000.
- \$277 billion has been spent on development projects by USAID alone since 2000...yet 99% was evaluated ex-post project closure. What about your portfolio?
- Of that, \$50 billion spent on Measurement & Evaluation during projects (3% average of total), we estimate far less than 0.1% (\$1.6 million) was spent on Measurement & Evaluation 2-10 years after any project.

We don't go back so don't know how sustainable development is.

- Imagine if we knew which of 2014's 100 billion [dollars/euros](#) funded projects were most sustained and what to invest more into in subsequent years - & what programming was unsustainable to avoid
- Valuing participants' voices for how sustainably this is spent depends on [us](#).
- We are here, along with national evaluators, to optimize the most resilient development, learn to do it right: make it country-led and further self-sustainability globally.

Who we are and what we do:

We have a [global team](#) in Europe/ US, Africa and Asia, a [growing database](#) of ex-post evaluations that valued voices of local participants and partners, [a blog](#) and more.

Valuing Voices offers Sustained and Emerging Impacts Evaluation (SEIE) on projects that have been completed for 1-15 years. Sustained impact and effectiveness can be measured only by returning after projects close. Exploring what expected outcomes and impacts remained, looking for unintended results as well as those that emerged from the efforts of country nationals illuminates what worked, what didn't why, and what should be done differently. impacts, both positive and negative.

Valuing Voices advises organizations on how to design, implement, monitor and evaluate to make sure results could become sustainable. Project design and midterm sustainability assessments help anticipate data and information needs during and beyond the project cycle. It documents outcomes that emerged from local efforts.

Valuing Voices supports your organizational success using over 100 years of collective learning in global development. We advise through document review, telephone consultations, and online trainings, proposal reviews, M&E design, conference presentations, customized to meet client needs.

For example:

- *Design and assess current projects for self-sustainability and suggest low-cost adaptations such as feedback loops to foresee future self-sustainability*
- *Train your staff and national evaluators to lead in-country, and replicate this model elsewhere*
- *Do post-project evaluation on any food security/ livelihood, health, education, natural resources management/ environment, or safety net project*
- *Revisit impact evaluations your organization has done (post-project success or lessons-learned), newly assessing with communities what actual self-sustainability resulted*
- *Present to non-profit staff, national development professionals, impact investors, advocates, etc.*
- *Advocate to national governments and civil society organizations to hear their own citizens' voices, especially the youth whose future we are helping create.*



Revisiting the Project Cycle:

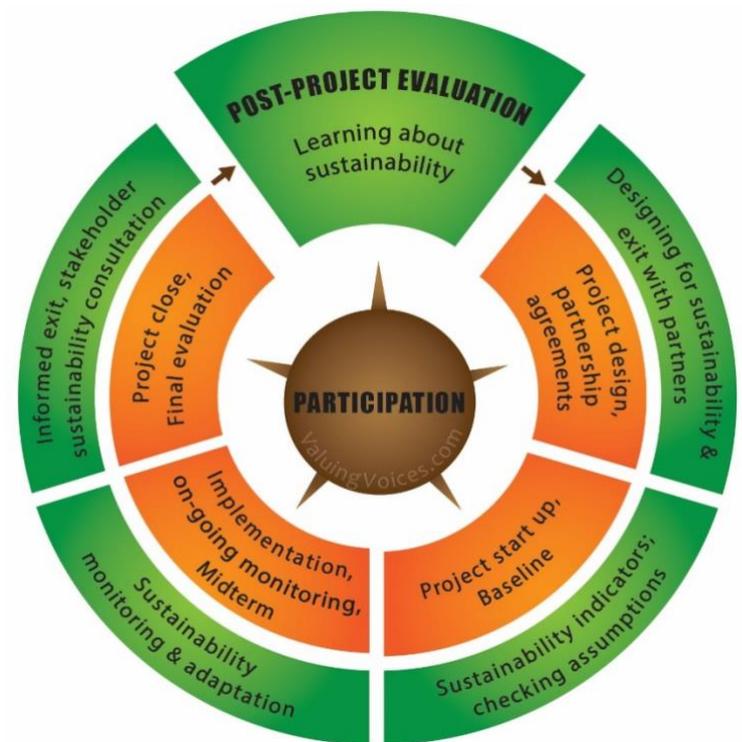
- The typical **project cycle** starts with design, moves to start-up/ baseline evaluation, then implementation/ midterm evaluation and ends at closure/ final evaluation.
- We believe that by returning to do (Ex-) **Post project Evaluation and learning** about sustainability, implementers and donors learn better ways to design for sustainability. They can check assumptions made through indicators tracking it, monitor and evaluate it, and make informed exits through stakeholders tasked with sustaining results and true long-term impact.
- We have innovated by creating mixed-method [Sustained and Emerging Impacts Evaluations](#).

Embedding Sustainability in the Project Cycle

How can we collaborate:

- Do you already have a project where Valuing Voices can bring sustainability support during or after the project?
- Do you need to incorporate participatory listening feedback loops now?
- Do you have a group of projects by sector or in a country that would benefit from Valuing Voices and its national evaluators to help you understand projected sustainability?
- Are you doing strategic planning and want to start designing with country-led development in mind?

We can help.



What Valuing Voices advocates for:

- The 'radical' view that international development project participants are our primary clients, rather than our donors
- The way to maximize billions of public development dollars and private funding by evaluating the long-term self-sustainability of project activities after projects close via the real Return on Investment (ROI) from project participants views
- Knowledge capture, retention, and sharing at the national level, by national evaluators, communities, and local organizations, with we international experts learning from what they believe to be the most successful...
- We must do more of what works in the view of participants (expected and unexpected) and less of what is not self-sustained. Right now we don't know
- We must do locally sustainable development, where international resources (funds, technical know-how) are channeled and directed by local experts, prioritizing what they most need, not what we are willing to give.

[Contact us, we are ready to help foster sustained and emerging impacts!](#)



VALUING VOICES

at Cekan Consulting LLC

Sustainable Solutions for Excellent Impact

Jindra@ValuingVoices.com
St. Petersburg, FL 33704, USA
+1-202-848-4783

www.ValuingVoices.com

[@WhatWeValue](https://www.instagram.com/WhatWeValue)
Prague 130 00, Czech Republic
+420 727 980 535