

**TOWARDS PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE FOR  
PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT  
EVALUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF  
COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATIONS**

by

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## STATEMENT

I, Tracey Louise Konstant, the undersigned, hereby confirm that the thesis submitted by me in fulfilment of the degree PhD (Organisational Behaviour) to the University of Pretoria is my independent work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at another faculty or university

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Konstant', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

TRACEY LOUISE KONSTANT

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## ABSTRACT

Development asks that the inequity and unsustainability of the widening gap between rich and poor be narrowed, ultimately impacting on households in the most economically excluded communities. Local community-based organisations (CBOs) provide much of the organisational fabric through which development is delivered. Largely resourced by the poorest themselves, many of these CBOs aspire to attracting funds from the development aid industry. In attempting to comply with the rules of these funding sources and compete in funding relationships, organisations become players in the funding game fraught with power imbalance and seemingly contradictory incentives. Neither the funding agencies, intent on disbursement, nor the CBOs in their desire to build organisations and contribute to their communities, seem aware of the true costs of these relationships.

Aid funding is complex, operating at numerous levels, across a multiplicity of varied organisations, stakeholders and contexts. Over the last 60 years, the aid industry has evolved complicated and highly engineered mechanisms to manage relationships with funding recipients, including detailed conventions for evaluation. As part of contractual obligation, criteria for success are pre-defined; outcomes are predicted; and targets are projected. Development, however, is not linear or predictable. It is contradictory and complex. Despite objections and alternatives since the late 1980s, 'conventional' linear, simplistic rationale has dogged the development industry.

The HIV support sector as a focus for funding, capacity building and service contracts from government and international aid agencies, offers rich examples of aid industry dynamics. This research, set amongst small but established CBOs working in HIV/AIDS support in Soweto and Lawley (Gauteng) and Mabeskraal (North West Province), explores alternative evaluation approaches, methodologies and principles, based on grounded evaluation. Two models are tested and compared. Firstly, inward-looking, organisation-based, reflective self-evaluation using Stories and Metaphor. Then secondly, outward-looking, community research using a Most Significant Change approach.

The evaluation processes developed help participating CBOs describe success and outcomes against their own criteria. The approaches use narrative, visual and metaphorical formats. The central purpose of the research is meta-evaluation aimed at an effective process using iterative, cumulative action research based on the principles of grounded theory. Meta-evaluation data included descriptions of the processes and the

nature of evaluation results. They are analysed using reflection, learning and re-design in an action research cycle.

The results provide both practical insights into conducting evaluation, and the principles of effective development in a CBO setting. They demonstrate that grounded evaluation can be used to understand organisational dynamics and programme outcomes. Participatory methods, particularly visual and verbal communication, are shown to be far superior to written communication in this setting. The results demonstrate the mutual compatibility and ethical inseparability of organisation development with evaluation, providing insight into the practice of utilisation-based evaluation. The value of appreciative inquiry and the risks of accusatory inquiry are described. A thread that runs through the results highlights the impact of power, ownership and process use in effective evaluation.

The research has also elaborated some of the intractable contradictions and conundrums in development aid. Money carries the power vested in global economics and market forces. In making funding judgements, evaluators purvey the power of wealth inequity: the very power imbalance which itself purports to address. As a development practitioner, an evaluator's role should be to facilitate pathways out of dependent mindsets. As gatekeepers to financial support, however, their work entrenches distortions in perceptions of wealth and power.

These complex interactions of power and ownership demand moderation and compromise. The industry requires investment of greater energy into theoretical, methodological and practical research. Suggestions for such research are included. Without fresh creativity, development and evaluation will remain frustrated forces within an entrenched, self-perpetuating system of inequity and disparity.

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## ACRONYMS

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ART or ARV	Anti-retroviral treatment
ASO	AIDS Service Organisation
BN	Code given to Case Study 5
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CD4	Blood cell count indicator for immune suppression (<200 requires ART)
CL	Code given to Case Study 6
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DG	Code given to Case Study 4
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HCBC	Home and Community Based Care
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ID	Identity Document
IEC	Information and Education Communication
JJ & JD	Code given to Case Study 2
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSC	Most Significant Change, also used as code for Mabeskraal Case Study
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
OD	Organisation Development
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of AIDS
QN	Code given to Case Study 3
SADF	South African Defence Force
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign (AIDS advocacy NGO)
TB	Tuberculosis
TT	Code given to Case Study 1
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing (for HIV)