

0135

Engagement as the basis for change

S Duckworth

Litmus, Wellington, New Zealand

Government agencies are increasingly requiring evaluations to be informed and credible by seeking to include a diverse range of stakeholders or audiences in the evaluation process, i.e. programme end users (who may be socially isolated), NGOs/community groups, businesses, policy makers, etc. Taking this is a step further we argue that without effective engagement, evaluation is unlikely to contribute to the higher level outcome of desirable social change.

We also recognise that connecting with diverse interests is frequently problematic for evaluators and depends on a range of factors, e.g. time and cost pressures, perceived relevance, expected impact of the evaluation, social isolation, etc. For this reason evaluators need to search for new and innovative techniques to establish meaningful contact with different (often hard to reach) people and groups. Litmus consequently specialises in stakeholder engagement, as the starting in a social change process.

This paper will discuss the unique challenges evaluators face when engaging with these audiences and, the principles, methods and techniques behind effective inclusion of different audiences.