**Strategizing Engagement of Student Community in Evaluation Panorama**

**Rashmi Agrawal**

Engaging students and the youth in development evaluation can be a transformative educational experience for them, promoting critical thinking, analytical skills, and a deeper understanding of real-world challenges. Development evaluation also needs to be responsive to the present-day needs that involve assessing the effectiveness and impact of programs and projects to promote social and economic equity and equality. The youth can play a vital role in this context, bringing creative approaches and finding innovative solutions. The presentation will be based on experiential learning and will discuss strategies where students’ involvement can bring substantial change. It will also showcase how students were involved in various evaluation activities and how it stimulated a two-way learning process.

For effective engagement of students in evaluation, their understanding of evaluation and its applications, capacity building is necessary. It is not enough to do this by explaining the theoretical concepts and techniques, students should also be given opportunities to participate in actual evaluation activites. This can be facilitated through partnerships with development organizations, academia, NGOs, or citizens. By working on real-life evaluations, students can apply theoretical knowledge to practice, which enhances learning and retention. Workshops, simulations, and case studies can make learning about evaluation more dynamic and engaging. For instance, playing the roles of different stakeholders in a project can help students understand diverse perspectives and the complexities of evaluation which they can use in their evaluation pursuits.

Students bring bubbling energy and innovative ideas and can use diverse participatory approaches. They are also generally more adept at using technological applications in their engagement. Utilizing software tools for data collection and analysis, and interactive platforms for collaborative work can make the evaluation process more accessible and interesting. Online discussions and forums can also provide platforms for students to share insights and learn from each other.

Mentorship and guidance from experienced evaluators can greatly benefit students. Having professionals share their experiences and provide feedback on students' work can inspire and guide students, making the learning process more impactful. Their efforts can lead to tangible improvements in the well-being of communities and contribute to social change. Finally, fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment encourages participation. Ensuring that students feel valued and capable of contributing can enhance engagement and promote a collaborative learning culture. The coming generation is a torch bearer and holds the future of evaluation. How hand-holding can go a long way in listening voices and inclusion will be the focus of the presentation based on experience.

Engaging students in the evaluation panorama poses some challenges as well. While they can be an asset, they require practical experience, interactive and innovative approaches, effective use of AI, mentorship, and, above all, motivation to get involved in this field. Their future professional role would require a convincing professional career path for them. Is the world ready for their progressive advancement in this field?Top of Form

Bottom of Form