



Southern Hemisphere

SUPPORTING MEANINGFUL CHANGE

A New Way of Conveying a World of Data: Infographics

What is an infographic?

Information graphics or **infographics** are graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge intended to present complex information quickly and clearly. Infographics create a new way of seeing the world of data, and they help communicate complex ideas in a clear and beautiful way.

Why are they amazing?

As the world gets more complex and more data emerges, information graphics are more useful than ever. Data visualization often deals with an enormous amount of data, with the goal of discovering patterns. Huge amounts of data are very difficult to sort through, but infographics make information presentable and digestible to a general audience. They allow for the distribution of vast amounts of information in an interesting and engaging manner.

Infographics in the world of development

Infographics convey serious issues pertaining to things such as world hunger, disease, access to education and even economic empowerment in a way that truly conveys the impact of the phenomenon. An array of infographics has been created on development topics. Southern Hemisphere is increasingly using infographics to share data.

Southern Hemisphere and infographics

Southern Hemisphere worked with Working For Water and a graphic designer

to create an infographic for the SAMEA conference in Johannesburg in 2013 to describe an evaluation process that we had undertaken together.

The focus of the poster was to illustrate the improved utilisation of evaluation findings by means of building the end users' confidence and trust in the evaluation process, including evaluation methods. [1] The infographic described the process of the evaluation and strategic planning, and showed the aspects strengthened the utilization of evaluation recommendations.

Explanation of the infographic

The top half of the circle depicts the participatory process that was followed for the evaluation and strategic planning. The bottom half of the circle shows which elements of the process contributed to building or losing confidence in the results of the evaluation and strategic planning process. Each element is linked to factors such as relevance, transparency, accessibility, relationship building, credibility and reliability. It is contended that by strengthening these factors, the process we follow enhances the use of evaluation recommendations.

The participatory process steps that enhanced confidence were a workshop to determine the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the evaluation, a planning/inception workshop, and a feedback and recommendations workshop. The use of a mixed method approach to improve users' buy-in of the evaluation process is also highlighted.

There were, however, a number of factors that negatively impacted on the use of evaluation findings. The broad participation in the development of the raised some unrealistic expectations of what should be evaluated and budget considerations meant that the scope had to be decreased. The second barrier was that due to the length of the participatory planning process (4 days), many senior managers could not attend. This affected the quality and credibility of the strategic planning process. Senior managers are perceived to be the real drivers and decision makers of strategic documentation.

Figure 1: Southern hemisphere Infographic

INCREASE UTILISATION THROUGH PARTICIPATION BUILD EVALUATION INTO THE PLANNING CYCLE

BACKGROUND

This poster highlights how the utilisation of evaluation findings can be enhanced if the process is participatory and if it is combined with a planning process. The participatory, mixed methods evaluation of the Social Development and Training programme of the Working For Water Programme of the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) took place in 2012 and was followed by Strategic Planning in 2013.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants included National and Provincial staff of the WFW programme. Senior management participated in the early stages of the evaluation process.

PROCESS



LESSONS LEARNED

- Participation enhances buy-in and understanding
- Enhance planning skills to increase uptake of evaluation recommendations
- Hierarchy in government influences participation and buy-in: if senior management aren't involved, people lose confidence in the process
 - Need to have the right mix of people participating – implementers and senior managers
 - Facilitate participation for senior management – must not be too time intensive
- Evaluation should be commissioned by the senior managers, even if coordinated by Monitoring and Evaluation

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build evaluation into the planning cycle
- Address resource & capacity constraints to enhance participation (mainly time & planning skills)
- Senior management must lead evaluation and planning processes

Some resources on infographics:

[*Ten steps to making your own info graphic*](#)

[On Think Tanks- Data Visualisation](#)

[Visual.ly: Info graphics and Data Visualisation](#)

[Infogr.am- Make an infogram online](#)

We were inspired by this blog from the AEA - A Tip-a-Day by and for Evaluators: <http://aea365.org/blog/?s=infographic&submit=Go> and thank Marc Wheeler and Salem Valentino from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America for sharing their infographic with us.

[1] Lomofsky D., Wessels, W and Waters, K., 'Increasing utilisation through participation & building evaluation into the planning cycle' *SAMEA Conference document* (2013)