

G. Extra-Evaluation Agendas

Occasionally you will encounter situations in which some of the parties involved will want to use your team and the evaluation to achieve an objective that is only marginally related to the purpose of an evaluation. Many of these extra-evaluation agendas are legitimate, and you may be able to make a genuine contribution without compromising your own responsibility. However, in some cases they are simply attempts to use you and your task for ends that have little relevance to your task and could be harmful to your job.

You have to rely on your own judgment (1) in recognizing these agendas and (2) in deciding how to handle them.

In some cases, even a legitimate request may be outside your responsibility. For example, either the implementing agent or the donor, may want an evaluation of an implementing team member. This is clearly outside what one should expect from an evaluation. It may be completely legitimate, in which case you can decide what to do as an individual, outside the evaluation. However, such a request could be part of an ongoing personality conflict in which your contribution could do as much harm as good. In other cases conflicts between two persons result from fundamental differences in viewpoint on technical criteria, and the issue may have to be faced.

Some guidelines may be useful.

Only one evaluation report should probably be written. It can treat squarely and in a straightforward manner, many problems that appear delicate or sensitive if rapport has been established and if the issue is handled objectively and according to fairly specific criteria. If a separate report seems needed or has been requested, consider very carefully before writing it. Consider the alternative of an oral report--if the need and request is legitimate and seems needed. Let the requester, in a memo of conversation, write it down if he needs it written.

In some cases the request is clearly more than can be expected of an evaluation team, and your best alternative is simply not to grant it.

You may have experience or make observations that interest you as an individual and have value in another context. Handle these cases by your own criteria. They can be handled or responded to but outside the framework of the evaluation.

In some cases ignorance is your best strategy. If you sense trouble on an issue not important to the evaluation task, the best alternative may be to ignore it and all the data presented to you.