Promoting our results
Lessons learned and best practices
ACTIF working group

The following lessons learned and best practices have been documented through the activities of the ACTIF working group. This working group brings together Canadian organizations that have received funding from the ACTIF Fund to carry out, in partnership with organizations in the South, projects that strengthen the respect, protection and fulfillment of the human rights of LGBTQ2I people.

Lessons learned

There are results at every stage of a project, including the beginning.

At the start of a project, partners are often reluctant to talk about results. While it is generally difficult to measure concrete advances in LGBTQ2I rights at this stage, progress made at the start of a project should be valued. For example, in the early months, developing relationships between organizations or engaging LGBTQ2I people in identifying their own needs are important outcomes. There's no need to wait until the end of a project to promote these successes.

Unexpected results are important

A project can go in many directions, sometimes far beyond planned activities and anticipated results. It's important to document and report these unexpected results, even if they don't necessarily fit into our Theory of Change or indicators. For example, even if this was not the primary objective, a project may lead an organization to work differently or with new partners, which are potentially important outcomes.

Disseminating results promotes project improvement

Documenting our results shouldn't just be about reporting. There is added value in opening up spaces where partners can share their results more widely and explain how they achieved them. For example, organizing a webinar where a partner from the South explains how it used a community-based approach to document the priorities of trans and intersex people is a way of promoting an innovative approach to work and inviting other organizations to draw inspiration from this good practice. Disseminating the results both enhances the work of partners and improves projects for the rights of LGBTQ2I people.

1 **Analyze risks and plan mitigation strategies before disseminating results**

For some partners, talking openly about their work is risky. It is important to strike a balance between the need to promote our results and the need to ensure the security and privacy of all those involved. Some mitigating measures may be considered, such as :

- Provide funding for additional safety measures, if required;
- Ensure informed consent from the people and organizations directly involved before distributing photos, quotes, statistics or other project-related data;
- Avoid naming the people or organizations involved, or use pseudonyms;
- When the risks are very high, use a human rights respectful language in our communications, emphasizing that all people have the same rights, without necessarily naming any particular group;
- Carry out joint communication actions, including local allies and/or international organizations, so as not to focus too much attention on a single organization;
- Exercise caution with social media, to avoid having your project suspended or receiving hate mail;
- Etc.

2 **Ensure that the message (and the way it is communicated) is determined by the people directly involved.**

The promotion of results must involve all partners, especially those directly involved. The people and organizations involved in the activities should have the final say on what results will be disseminated, to whom, in what ways and when. For example, an organization working in different rural areas for the first time might want to emphasize this aspect of the project. It's important to center and to amplify the voice of those involved, and to promote what they see as innovative aspects and important results of their work.

3 **Sharing not just results, but how they were achieved**

Explaining how our results have been achieved helps spread good practice to other organizations, funders and governments, and influence the way projects are funded, designed and run. For example, pointing out that the success of certain initiatives can be explained by the fact that they were planned and run by LGBTQ2I people helps to convey the importance of funding organizations run by LGBTQ2I people, and not just services aimed at them.

4 **Recognizing the work of the people and organizations directly involved**

In a collaborative project, certain results are the fruit of the concerted efforts of several organizations. However, all lvery organization, and especially those with more power, must be careful not to appropriate the successes of its partners, and to recognize the work of the people and organizations directly involved in achieving the results.

Valuing different types of results **5**

It's important not only to document the scale of a project with quantitative data, but also to collect qualitative data that demonstrate concrete results in people's lives and the learning they've done. For example, while it's interesting to know how many people are involved in an activity, it's just as relevant to collect comments from an LGBTQ2I person who explains how the activity helps them break isolation and build self-confidence. Quotes, testimonials and lessons learned should not be seen as anecdotal but valued as real results from the projects.

Integrate the collection and dissemination of results into planned activities (or reporting cycles) **6**

Since resources are limited, it's important to be realistic about the effort that can be devoted to collecting and disseminating results. Often, documenting the impact of an activity several months after it has taken place is neither possible nor desirable, hence the idea of integrating the collection of information, and even the reporting and reporting and sharing of certain results, to the activity itself. For example, during a conference, interviews can be scheduled to document how the event fosters alliance-building, and this information can be integrated into a press release, and then - ideally without over-formulating these results - into the project report for the donor. An "integrated" approach to results makes for greater efficiency and avoids duplication!

7 **Accepting mistakes**

Promoting our results doesn't just mean sharing our successes! The challenges we faced and the lessons we learned from activities that didn't work out so well are also very interesting to share. Giving ourselves the right to make mistakes allows us to learn from our experiences, but also to take "riskier" decisions, explore new approaches, involve people who are harder to reach, and so on.

8 **Celebrating success... big and small!**

We sometimes dream of grandiose projects that will have an impact on millions of people. In reality, we often work in contexts hostile to the advancement of rights, where every little step... is a big success! It's important to celebrate each step forward and recognize the commitment of our partners in making it happen. In some environments, simply getting together to discuss what LGBTQ2I people are going through is an achievement in itself. Celebrating successes is a way of valuing the work accomplished, reinforcing solidarity and maintaining hope.

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