

**Comments and insights following workshops and discussions
with Anita Baker on ECB,
October 23-25 2014, Israel**

It is possible to present evaluation concepts in a three hour professional meeting to create awareness and understanding of "what it is" and "how can it help me ". Such an encounter minimizes the "mystery" around evaluation and may encourage demand for evaluation by NGO leaders.

This conclusion is based on Anita's workshops for NGO managers that took place on Thursday morning in cooperation with "Midot" and on Wednesday morning with the "Enosh" managing team.



Workers in social organizations can learn to perform small-scale evaluations on their projects, in their organizations, even if they did not obtain formal academic training for this. Doing so requires commitment over time but it is feasible. It also seems that people who practice this type of evaluation believe it to be useful and helpful. This belief is sustained over time.

This conclusion is based on our encounter with Anita who described her ECB efforts over the last 20 years.



Evaluating training for NGO workers should include a theoretical and an experiential component. Apparently, a combination of these two elements together (such as "Maslul Matan") or starting with theory followed by practice and application (such as Anita's training), are both effective. Currently we know of successful training programs of 6 months or 18 months duration .

So far, we do not know enough about the way such training contributes to a better quality of programs, or to the development of better new programs. I am certain that understanding evaluation concepts and principles and implementing evaluative thinking, improve organizational processes and performance. I can formulate a good "theory of change" for this and also have many examples from my own experience. However I do not know of research or empirical examination showing this.

Increasing awareness to evaluation, experiencing small scale evaluations, as well as adopting some evaluation practices within an organization, are likely to increase the demand for more elaborate evaluation processes and for professional evaluation.

This is because staff and managers in NGOs will know what can be gained and what are the limits of their internal abilities. They will also know how to commission and interpret external evaluation services better.



Funding:

The role of philanthropic foundations and infrastructure institutions in ECB and in evaluation use more generally, came up several times during Anita's visit. Currently there is no foundation or institution which promote evaluation, and the lack of funding is a serious barrier to any change.

With funding, the social field in Israel could benefit in the following ways:

- ECB for NGOs
- ECB for Foundations managers
- Professional training for new evaluators entering the field (focusing on young professionals coming from minority groups)
- Advanced training for practicing evaluators
- Subsidize evaluations for important programs



Currently there is no academic training for evaluation in the social field in Israel and most of the senior academics in the field have retired without a new generation taking over.

Anita's visit was a wonderful present to so many people in the social field in Israel. We have received so many thanks and compliments after the workshops. Many leaders of NGOs and foundations, as well as professional evaluators, learned about Evaluative Thinking thanks to Anita's participation in the Behaaracha Raba conference and the manuals that were presented to everyone.

I personally am grateful to both of you, Beth and Anita, and am looking forward to many more opportunities to be in touch.

TODA RABA !!

Gila Melech