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The evaluation and non-evaluation of recruitment initiatives

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26 Swedish projects

- 35 % not evaluated at all
- 42 % superficially evaluated
- 23 % more or less effect evaluated

- None evaluated in relation to cost



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Technopolis, 56 mentoring and ambassador schemes across Europe

- **We have succeeded if:**
 - **Participants are satisfied**
 - **We have many participants and we're growing**
 - **We've been around a long time**
 - **Others are interested in us**
 - **Impartial evaluator finds us a success**



Evaluating promising practices (USA)

123 initiatives answered a survey: Which practices work best?

- Evaluation was done on 109 the programs
 - Reports to financiers
 - Improvements in program

- Evaluation was mentioned only by 7 as important for success
 - Secure financing, identify program outcomes, effectiveness



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Why so little evaluation?

Difficult to evaluate

- **Time and money**
- **Difficult to evaluate in long term perspective.**

We need to believe in positive results

- **Evaluation is used to convince stakeholders**
- **We so much want to succeed**



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The two evaluation questions:

- Do we deliver a quality product?
- Do we reach our goals?



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Goals: Target group

Target new groups or
Support those already interested?

Which group do we want to target?
Which group do we actually target?



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Goals?

Attitude change

Increase interest in technology

Increase interest in engineering as a career

Increase self-confidence

Behaviour change

Apply to engineering programs

Knowledge increase about engineering subjects



Example: Marra & Bogue

One week camp for high school girls to recruit them to enroll in engineering at Penn State university

Before camp 5% wanted to be engineers, after camp 100% wanted to be engineers. Out of 15 senior girls, 13 planned to study engineering at Penn State

In reality, 2 applied to engineering at Penn State and 1 was admitted

Evaluative scrutiny of the camp also revealed that only 10% of the time was dedicated to engineering activities.

=> Reorganization of the camp to become more effective



Evaluation, long term

- Long term initiatives – follow up individuals
Anderson & Gilbride & Bajaj:
Telephone surveys
 - 31% of girls attending camp were in engineering education
 - 49% of these said that camp was decisive for their choice
 - ⇒out of 189 girls, camp had been decisive for 29, somewhat influential for 27.



Evaluation, long term

- Long term initiatives – follow up statistics
 - Statistics on 231 KomTek participants during 8 years
 - 21% in region choose technical education, 44% of KomTek participants
 - 22% of girls and 65% of boys from KomTek chose technical education



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What have we been doing?

We have been happy to get money to work on our initiatives.

We have been happy to get all the positive feedback from participants.

We have employed and activated quite a number of people

But is this the best way to use our energy and creativity?



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Goals – once again

Girls into engineering – because they also should have a share of the money and the status

Or

Girls into engineering - because engineering needs to be changed.



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What have we been doing?

Not challenging the discipline

recruitment efforts are based on giving a positive image of engineering – and we need to believe in that

Not challenging the educational system

Not challenging power



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Our efforts seen as part of reproduction

Presenting engineering only in positive terms.

Not questioning fundamentals.

Working in short projects which never really threaten the masculinity of the field.

Helping token women into engineering.

Bourdieu: For the legitimacy of the educational system, it is necessary to make it possible for some members of the underprivileged group to succeed.



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Are we part of the solution to gender gap in engineering?

How can we know with so little evaluation?

Could it be that we also are part of the problem?

What should we do in that case?



References

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