



INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP
Open Budgets. Transform Lives.

How CSOs can institutionalize learning for organizational effectiveness?

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Based on the experience of IBP network

- International network of citizens organizations
- Working for budget transparency, participation and pro poor budgets and taxation



“Dear Mr. Gandhi, We regret we cannot fund your proposal because the link between spinning cloth and the fall of the British Empire was not clear to us.”

Written by *M. M. Rogers* and illustrated by *Artiv R. Fatzal, Wahyu S., Ary W.S.*
Creative team for Search for Common Ground in Indonesia

Implementation isn't learning

- Being a smart activist is great, but it isn't learning
- To learn you need to reflect on implementation
- To do this you need a clear and shared understanding of what happened and why

Learn about what?

- Our work is about convincing government to do things that they wouldn't have done otherwise
- We believe that learning should be about how to do this better
- Finding out what convinces government under which circumstances

M&E isn't Learning

- Many people hate learning because they think they will be judged
- But M&E is about whether you did your work and whether you had impact
- While learning is about understanding why you succeeded or failed and what to do next time

Its not about the tool

- If you are absolutely sure THAT you want to learn and WHAT you want to learn about....
 - *Almost any learning tool is adequate*
- If you are not sure (like when you “learn” to report to a donor)...
 - *No learning tool will seem worth the effort*

It doesn't have to be complicated

- Or expensive
- Generally best to start with whatever planning or reflection processes you already use (strat plan, annual strategic meetings etc)
- But add space to agree on what happened last year and what to do differently

Nobody learns if the Boss isn't learning

- An newly appointed M&E officer can't lead learning
- Real learning means you'll change what you do
- Learning demands some time, money and effort

So what have we learnt

- Networks and coalitions, not individual organizations
- Partnerships with accountability institutions like parliament, auditors etc
- Media a double edged sword
- Elections, other political shifts and the need to change
- It takes consistent work - sustainability misunderstood?