

Program Evaluation in Tamil Nadu, India Using a Participatory, Utilization-Focused Approach: Srinivasan Services Trust (SST)

Lindsey Miller, MSW Candidate

Field Location & Agency Information

Location: Padavedu, a rural village in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu is a state on the southern coast of India and the state's primary language is Tamil.

Agency: Srinivasan Services Trust (SST) is a Corporate Social Responsibility program through TVS Motor Company. SST focuses on village development in 5 key areas: health, education, economic development, infrastructure and environment.

Global Field Placement Description

Evaluated SST's model for working with Women's Self Help Groups in villages surrounding Padavedu, Tamil Nadu; specifically assessing SST's processes and its projected outcomes for Self Help Groups at different stages in the intervention.

- Conducted participatory observations & interviews with 27 Self Help Groups.
- Compiled field observations, key findings reports & presented results to SST leadership.
- In Fall 2014, compiled & finalized the final evaluation report for the utilization of SST leadership.



Skills Utilized/Developed

- Utilized translation to conduct key informant interviews and observations.
- Designed an evaluation approach to meet the needs and evaluation goals of SST.
- Adapted evaluation methods by incorporating staff feedback and accounting for constraints or limitations.

Classroom Connections

- Field Placement with Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group. My evaluation projects provided me with the foundational methods and theories for collecting qualitative data; as well as how to disseminate and report results.
- SW 683 Program Evaluation

Lessons Learned

- The importance of having in-depth program knowledge and cultural understanding when collecting qualitative data in another culture.
- The importance of actively checking assumptions and seeking feedback to ensure I am accurately capturing program processes and participant information.



Career Connection

I attained foundational skills for cross-cultural evaluation, which I intend to further develop as I pursue a career focused on monitoring programs that directly serve and empower women.

Advice

- Take every opportunity to become oriented on the organization.
- Be comfortable asking questions!
- Always show appreciation, evaluation requires other's help and time.

Acknowledgements

- Office of Global Activities, Funder
- Professor Lawrence Root
- Taha Rauf
- Sue Ann Savas, CC-PEG
- John Seeley, CC-PEG