

GLOCAL EVALUATION WEEK 2026

Event Report

Exploring AI-enhanced Efficiency in Qualitative Assessment of Adolescent Life skills

Date: 3 June 2026

Organized by: Magic Bus India Foundation

Event Type: Knowledge Sharing Session under GLocal Evaluation Week 2026

Mode: Virtual

Executive Summary

As part of GLocal Evaluation Week 2026, Magic Bus India Foundation organized a global knowledge-sharing session titled *“Exploring AI-enhanced Efficiency in Qualitative Assessment of Adolescent Life skills.”* The session highlighted the organization’s innovative approach to combining rigorous qualitative evaluation methodologies with emerging Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies to strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) systems.

The event brought together researchers, evaluators, development practitioners, academic institutions, donor agencies, and international organizations from across the globe. A total of 136 participants attended the session, representing diverse sectors including education, youth development, public policy, research, technology, and international development.

The presentation showcased Magic Bus India Foundation’s experience in designing and implementing a robust life skills measurement framework, conducting qualitative field assessments, and integrating AI-powered tools for transcription, translation, thematic coding, narrative synthesis, and data visualization. The session demonstrated how AI can improve efficiency, reduce turnaround time, and enhance analytical capacity while maintaining methodological rigor through strong human oversight and quality assurance mechanisms.

Participants actively engaged in discussions on life skills measurement, AI-assisted qualitative analysis, multilingual data processing, ethical considerations, and emerging opportunities for integrating AI into development evaluations.

Background

GLocal Evaluation Week is a global initiative that promotes evaluation knowledge-sharing and learning among practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and development organizations. The platform provides opportunities to showcase innovative evaluation practices, discuss methodological advancements, and strengthen evidence-based decision-making.

Recognizing the increasing demand for efficient and scalable evaluation approaches, Magic Bus India Foundation used this platform to share its experience in integrating Artificial Intelligence into qualitative assessment processes. The session focused on the evaluation of life skills programmes implemented among adolescents and explored how AI can support the collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of qualitative evidence.

About Magic Bus India Foundation

Magic Bus India Foundation is one of India's leading organizations working to equip adolescents and young people from underserved communities with the skills and opportunities needed to complete education, transition successfully into adulthood, and secure sustainable livelihoods.

The organization currently works across 22 states in India and reaches approximately 3.5 million adolescents through partnerships with state governments, schools, communities, and development partners.

The programme targets adolescents aged 12–18 years and focuses on strengthening life skills, gender equity, education continuation, employability, and career readiness.

Objectives of the Session

The session was organized with the following objectives:

- To present Magic Bus India Foundation's life skills measurement framework.
- To demonstrate the role of qualitative assessment in understanding behavioural and social change among adolescents.
- To showcase the integration of Artificial Intelligence within qualitative evaluation workflows.
- To discuss quality assurance mechanisms that ensure reliability and validity of AI-supported analyses.
- To facilitate learning and exchange among evaluation practitioners globally.

Participation Overview

The session witnessed strong national and international participation.

Total Participants

136 registered participants

Participant Profile

Participants represented:

- Development organizations
- Academic and research institutions
- Monitoring and Evaluation professionals
- International NGOs
- Government and policy stakeholders
- Technology and AI professionals
- Donor agencies
- Youth development practitioners

Organizations Represented

Participants joined from a diverse set of organizations including:

- Magic Bus India Foundation
- J-PAL (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab)
- UNICEF
- Microsoft
- ShikshaLokam
- Mantra4Change
- Shiv Nadar Foundation
- IFMR
- Welthungerhilfe
- Aangan
- IT for Change
- Universities and academic institutions
- International development organizations

Geographic Reach

The session attracted participants from multiple countries including:

- India
- Kenya
- South Africa
- Sri Lanka
- Nepal
- Malaysia
- Guatemala
- Brazil
- Ecuador
- Costa Rica
- Ethiopia
- Trinidad and Tobago
- United States of America
- Other countries represented through global development networks

Internal Participation

More than thirty-five participants represented various departments and state teams of Magic Bus India Foundation, including programme, research, impact, monitoring and evaluation, and leadership teams.

Session Proceedings

Moderators- Santosh Kumar Sharma

Presenters- Somenath Ghosh, Sukanya Bose and Ajay K Singh

Opening Remarks

The session commenced with a welcome address by Santosh Kumar Sharma, who introduced the objectives of the session and provided an overview of Magic Bus India Foundation's work in adolescent development and life skills education.

Participants were informed about the importance of qualitative evidence in understanding behavioural change and the growing relevance of Artificial Intelligence in strengthening evaluation systems.

Understanding Life Skills

The presenters highlighted the importance of life skills in supporting adolescents to navigate social, emotional, educational, and economic transitions.

Life skills were defined as transferable competencies that enable young people to effectively deal with everyday challenges, make informed decisions, build relationships, and contribute positively to society.

The framework adopted by Magic Bus India Foundation is informed by international evidence and draws upon guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The curriculum is organized around three interrelated domains:

Emotional Domain

This domain focuses on self-awareness, emotional regulation, resilience, confidence, and self-efficacy.

Cognitive Domain

This domain encompasses critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and future planning.

Social Domain

This domain includes communication, teamwork, empathy, leadership, collaboration, and relationship management.

Across these domains, Magic Bus has identified 11 core life skills and approximately 40 competencies that guide programme implementation and evaluation.

Life Skills Measurement Framework

A significant portion of the presentation focused on the development of Magic Bus India Foundation's life skills assessment framework.

To systematically measure life skills outcomes, the organization developed a Situational Judgment Test (SJT).

The development process involved:

- Extensive literature review
- Expert consultation
- Item development
- Psychometric validation
- Reliability testing
- Factor analysis

Initially comprising 50 items, the assessment tool was refined through rigorous testing and reduced to 24 vignette-based scenarios.

Each scenario presents adolescents with realistic situations requiring judgement and decision-making. Responses are scored using a four-point proficiency scale that categorizes participants into novice, intermediate, and advanced levels.

The SJT serves as a robust quantitative tool for measuring life skills outcomes across programme locations.

Role of Qualitative Assessment

The presenters emphasized that while quantitative tools provide measurable indicators of change, they are often insufficient for understanding how and why change occurs.

Qualitative assessments enable researchers to capture:

- Behavioural shifts
- Changes in attitudes and perceptions
- Self-confidence and agency
- Decision-making processes
- Gender norms and attitudes
- Aspirations and future planning
- Contextual influences on programme outcomes

To capture these dimensions, Magic Bus conducts Quarterly Field Assessments (QFAs) as part of its broader Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework.

The QFAs provide real-time insights into programme implementation and adolescent development outcomes, enabling continuous learning and adaptive management.

Qualitative Assessment Methodology

The qualitative assessment tool includes multiple respondent groups to facilitate triangulation and contextual understanding.

Adolescents

Individual interviews explore experiences, aspirations, confidence, communication skills, and behavioural changes.

Parents

Interviews focus on observed changes in adolescents, family relationships, educational aspirations, and decision-making dynamics.

Teachers

Teachers provide insights into student engagement, classroom behaviour, participation, and leadership.

Life Skills Educators

Educators share implementation experiences, observations of change, and challenges encountered during programme delivery.

Observation Checklists

Researchers document participation patterns, classroom dynamics, facilitation quality, and learning environments.

Data collection is supported through audio recordings, detailed field notes, observation records, and structured facilitation protocols.

AI-Integrated Qualitative Analysis Workflow

The central theme of the session was the integration of Artificial Intelligence within qualitative analysis processes.

The presenters described a hybrid workflow that combines AI-enabled automation with human expertise.

Step 1: Data Collection

Field teams collect audio recordings and detailed field notes during interviews and discussions.

Step 2: AI-Assisted Transcription

Audio files are processed using Eleven Labs to generate draft transcripts.

Step 3: Human Verification

Regional teams review transcripts, correct inaccuracies, and incorporate field notes.

Step 4: AI Translation

Regional language transcripts are translated into English using AI-assisted translation tools.

Step 5: Translation Validation

Researchers verify translations to ensure contextual and linguistic accuracy.

Step 6: Thematic Analysis

ChatGPT is used to conduct inductive thematic analysis and identify emerging themes and illustrative quotations.

Step 7: Data Integration

Qualitative findings are combined with quantitative assessment results and programme data.

Step 8: Narrative Synthesis

Claude AI is utilized to generate narrative summaries and evidence synthesis.

Step 9: Visualization

Napkin AI supports the development of visual summaries, concept maps, and infographic designs.

Step 10: Final Reporting

Outputs are refined and consolidated using Canva before dissemination.

Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The presenters stressed that AI serves as an enabling tool rather than a substitute for evaluators.

Several safeguards are embedded within the workflow:

- Mandatory human verification of transcripts
- Validation of translated outputs
- Sequential probing during interviews
- Cross-checking against quantitative findings
- Comparison across assessment rounds
- Triangulation across respondent groups
- Case-study validation
- Expert review of AI-generated outputs

These mechanisms ensure analytical rigor and contextual accuracy.

Benefits of AI Integration

The organization reported several benefits from integrating AI into qualitative assessment processes.

Improved Efficiency

AI significantly reduces the time required for transcription, translation, coding, and report preparation.

Faster Turnaround Time

Quarterly assessments can be completed more quickly without compromising quality.

Enhanced Consistency

Preliminary coding and theme generation become more systematic across datasets.

Better Visualization

AI tools support the creation of compelling and accessible evidence products.

Increased Scalability

The workflow enables processing of larger volumes of qualitative data across multiple states and programmes.

Greater Research Productivity

Researchers can dedicate more time to interpretation, synthesis, and utilization of findings.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

The presenters also reflected on challenges associated with AI-enabled qualitative analysis.

Contextual Understanding

AI may not always capture subtle cultural meanings and contextual nuances.

Dependence on Prompt Quality

Outputs are highly influenced by prompt design and researcher expertise.

Language Limitations

Transcription and translation accuracy vary across languages and require verification.

Analytical Depth

Human interpretation remains essential for understanding implicit meanings and complex narratives.

Capacity Building Needs

Researchers require training in AI tools, prompt engineering, and quality assurance practices.

Interactive Discussion and Participant Engagement

The session concluded with an interactive discussion where participants raised questions regarding:

- Life skills conceptualization and measurement
- Validation of Situational Judgment Tests
- AI transcription accuracy across Indian languages

- Quality assurance protocols
- Human versus AI coding consistency
- Emerging AI tools for qualitative research
- Experiences with Atlas.ti and other software platforms

The discussion highlighted growing interest among evaluation practitioners in responsible and effective applications of AI within development programmes.

Key Takeaways

The session generated several important insights:

1. Artificial Intelligence can substantially improve the efficiency of qualitative evaluations.
2. Human oversight remains essential throughout the evaluation process.
3. Hybrid AI-human approaches provide the strongest balance between efficiency and rigor.
4. Qualitative methods remain indispensable for understanding behavioural and social change.
5. Effective use of AI requires strong quality assurance systems.
6. Capacity building is critical for successful adoption of AI-enabled evaluation approaches.
7. AI should be viewed as a tool that augments evaluators rather than replacing them.

Conclusion

The GLocal Evaluation Week session successfully demonstrated how Artificial Intelligence can strengthen qualitative monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems within large-scale adolescent development programmes. By integrating AI into transcription, translation, coding, synthesis, and visualization processes, Magic Bus India Foundation has created a scalable and efficient model for qualitative evaluation while maintaining methodological rigor through human oversight.

The strong participation and active engagement from national and international stakeholders reflected the growing relevance of AI-enabled evaluation approaches across the development sector. The session contributed valuable practical insights for organizations seeking to responsibly leverage AI to generate deeper evidence, improve learning, and enhance programme effectiveness.

Acknowledgements

Magic Bus India Foundation extends its sincere gratitude to all participants, presenters, moderators, partner organizations, researchers, and development practitioners who contributed to the success of this GLocal Evaluation Week 2026 session. Their active engagement and thoughtful discussions enriched the learning experience and strengthened the collective dialogue on the future of AI-enabled evaluation.