

An International Workshop Agreement on Evaluation Capacity Development

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Authors

Bayley, Scott
Ben Younes Chaouch, Samia
Bilinsky, Paula
Brown, Antoinette
Crail, Jon
Hsu, Lee-Nah
Krapp, Stefanie
Kuzmin, Alexey
Mouafo, Dieudonne
Peter, Solly
Pujol, Halimah
Rasappan, Arunaselam
Rijneveld, Wouter
Rodriguez-Campos, Liliana
Russon, Craig
Russon, Karen
Whitsitt, Scott
Williams, Bob
Winston, Jerome
Yarbrough, Donald
Zaveri, Sonal
Zegers-Febres, Luis

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The organizers appreciate the dedication of all who participated in the workshop, some of whom attended at their own expense.

The Workshop Chair, Bob Williams, deftly achieved the challenging task of guiding workshop participants through the process of creating a shared vision for ECD. Bien fait, well done.

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Executive Summary

Most agree that there is an acute need to develop evaluation capacity. However, resolution of the problem has not been possible because there is no agreement on HOW to develop evaluation capacity.

According to empirical studies on M&E and ECD, a vicious ECD circle has been occurring: stand alone, piece-meal and one-off assistance funded by donors had not been able to adequately develop and sustain evaluation capacity. The result has been a superficial understanding and appreciation of ECD. Many have considered ECD to be synonymous with training of individuals.

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) and the Evaluation Capacity Development Group (ECDG) proposed to bring a broad cross-section of stakeholders together for an International Workshop to facilitate action to resolve the problem.

Workshop participants determined that evaluation capacity development (ECD) involves activities and processes that help create, strengthen, and sustain evaluation for individuals, teams, groups, networks, communities, organizations, sectors, countries and regions.

Such activities and processes may include training, mentoring, coaching, learning by doing, technical assistance, sharing practice guidelines, developing organizational policies and infrastructure, supporting communities of practice, preparing legislation, and promoting a favorable political environment to sustain evaluation.

Workshop participants identified a set of principles for undertaking ECD. The following four principles are believed to be both necessary and sufficient for sound and fair ECD interventions:

- Ownership
- Relevance
- Integration
- Usefulness

A systems-based framework was developed to enable one to see the different ways that a situation can be viewed and allow one to work out the logical consequences of each perspective and compare it with the messiness of reality.

An International Workshop Agreement on Evaluation Capacity Development

Introduction

In a statement to the 2007 ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment, Ad Melkert, UN Under-Secretary General affirmed that

The issue and concerns of *capacity development* are no longer a matter of debate, nor is it limited to a conversation on concept and theory... As expressed in the UNDG Position Statement of December 2006, capacity development is the business of all governments, non government entities, civil society and the UN development system.

One of the many capacities that need to be developed is that of monitoring and evaluation¹. Currently, many organizations have very little capacity to conduct evaluation of their programmes. As a result, efforts to demonstrate accountability and to improve programmes have not been as effective and efficient as they might be.

Everyone agrees that there is an acute need to develop evaluation capacity. However, resolution of the problem has not been possible because there is no agreement on HOW to develop evaluation capacity.

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) and the Evaluation Capacity Development Group (ECDG) proposed to bring a broad cross-section of stakeholders together in an International Workshop that would facilitate action to resolve the problem.

A proposal was submitted to ISO, approved by resolution of the ISO Technical Management Board on 21 June, 2011, and publicized in early July. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI)—a member body of the ISO—was the Secretariat of record. ECDG provided the Administrative Secretariat on behalf of ANSI.

Funding

The Canadian International Development Research Centre, IDRC, provided support for evaluators from the south to participate. The German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ, provided financial support and sent a

¹ The Working Party on Aid Evaluation of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (2002) has

representative to participate in the workshop. ECDG also made a financial contribution to the event.

Participating Organizations

Within the funding constraints, the organizers tried to ensure participants encompassed the broadest possible perspectives and geographical areas. Annex A lists organizations contacted to promote the IWA. Registration was required for participation to prevent individuals from joining during the middle of the deliberations. A list of participants and the organizations that they represented can be found in Appendix B.

Pre-workshop Activity

A moderated discussion took place on the listserv XCeval prior to the workshop as a means by which to solicit input prior to the event (See Appendix C). A concurrent discussion took place with the Latin American and Caribbean evaluation community, ReLAC, via its listserv. Thus, there was real-time feedback during the workshop (See Appendix D). Participants came with their own ECD perspectives, those of their constituents, and the input of the greater evaluation community.

Programme of Meetings

The workshop took place 17-21 October, 2011. The venue was the John Knox Center, Geneva, Switzerland. Bob Williams was nominated by the organizers to be Chair and approved by the participants to facilitate the event. A full description of the workshop can be found in a subsequent section. Daily updates, including video clips of participants, were posted to ECDG's Facebook page.

The IWA on ECD is unique because it was organized by neutral parties and conducted in a neutral setting. This helped to mitigate the dominant influence of interested parties whose biases have controlled the agenda and tone of past initiatives².

This workshop was an opportunity for ECD and standards experts to directly participate in the creation of a voluntary, consensus-driven agreement³.

² The Evaluation Capacity Development Group is neither a donor organization nor an evaluation practitioner. Its mission is to advance the understanding and use of evaluation capacity development. Also a 501(c)3 nonprofit, JCSEE is a coalition of major professional associations concerned with the quality of evaluation.

³ For the purposes of determining consensus, the workshop chairman shall apply the following definition contained in ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996: "General agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Consensus need not imply unanimity." The workshop deliverables shall

Participants spent a week debating the meaning and characteristics of high quality ECD interventions. The diversity of thinking by workshop participants created a marketplace of ideas.

When the workshop began, many of the participants viewed ECD as a system comprising individual, organizational and national levels. For them, a paradigm shift occurred when a contextual framework for perceiving ECD emerged which was a transformative moment in the workshop.

Over the ensuing three months, following the October workshop, participants worked online through a designated IWA listserv, and in work groups, to produce the document for anticipated publication by ISO in January 2012⁴.

Output

The output of the meeting was an International Workshop Agreement (IWA). As the name implies, the document was produced through a workshop rather than through the full ISO technical committee process.

Process

Because this document is a product based on the interactions and conclusions of the individuals going through a process of discovery together, we include a day-by-day description of the workshop so that readers may gain a sense of the struggle that the group went through.

Monday

In his welcome, the ECDG Board Chair expressed a desire to develop a new model of ECD by quoting Buckminster Fuller who said, “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

After introductions, in which participants expressed their hopes and fears for the workshop, the group looked at the history of international development, evaluation and ECD. It was observed that because of the devolution of responsibility for development, greater complexity of programmes, and the diversity of evaluation approaches, there is a need for some principles on ECD. The group then constructed

contain a description of the workshop consensus achieved including any recommendations for possible future actions or revisions to the workshop deliverables. The deliverable resulting from the workshop will proceed to publication based on the consensus of the workshop without additional reviews or approvals by any other body, except in the case of an appeal on such a deliverable.

⁴ The IWA was developed as an ISO deliverable. ISO ultimately chose not to publish the Agreement. Therefore, it was made available on the ECDG website and by participants of the workshop.

a mind map to try to explore the dimensions that could be represented by such a set of principles.



Lastly, there was a dialogue about process versus product. Some participants were comfortable going through the process and waiting to see what kind of product would emerge. Others expressed a desire for more structure around the International Workshop Agreement, so that participants would have a well-developed deliverable at the end of the workshop.

Tuesday

If Monday was a day of conversation, Tuesday was a day of conceptualization. One participant explained that the ISO deliverable would be an agreement among the workshop participants who came from diverse nations. Thus, it is an International Workshop Agreement—not a standard.

Small groups developed a description of a desired future for ECD. An example of one envisioned future was a common understanding of evaluation capacity and evaluation capacity development informed by diversity.

Later, a presentation was made on the current state of ECD, based on results of recent work. According to the presenter, ECD:

- * Has a donor driven agenda
- * Is externally imposed
- * Has misconceptions about evaluation
- * Has an aversion to the topic so one can not use the term evaluation
- * Is confused with training
- * Is about training of public officials, no other stakeholders
- * Is not looked at as an internal process, only external

- * Is conducted almost exclusively at the project level
- * Considers only monitoring, not evaluation
- * Is conducted only for compliance purposes
- * Has no cohesive approach or institutionalization
- * Has no budget
- * Has indigenous ways of determining merit and worth
- * Has an emerging demand at the local level

The task for the workshop was to determine how to move from the current state to the desired future. The task involved several activities: describing evaluation capacity; identifying the principles and components of ECD; planning workshop follow-up.

Wednesday

The participants reviewed the work of a work group that met the previous evening to develop a preliminary definition of ECD. It was decided not to include a definition in the IWA because to define is to limit. All definitions of ECD will be accepted and principles will be identified that can be used to determine the adequacy of each.

Two small groups formed to identify principles. Participants discussed if the principles should be normative statements, rules of emergence or something else. One group decided that the principles should be fundamental assumptions that transcend capacity development at various levels.

Another small group worked on a framework and guidelines for describing EC and its development. Its work would be reviewed the following day. The representative from GIZ also made a presentation about the concomitant debate about ECD taking place in the ReLAC⁵ listserv. According to her, the main issues were:

- * The necessity to construct international standards in a participatory manner
- * Is this a scheme to make money on ISO certificates?
- * Should ReLAC formulate a statement?
- * For whom is IWA? Companies? Consultants?
- * What is the purpose? Improving efficiency? Effectiveness and impact?
- * Should there be a normative body like the Joint Committee?
- * The goal of the workshop should be conceptual clarity and guidelines.
- * Opportunities for participation
- * There should be consensus by regional and national evaluation organizations on the final product.

It was agreed that someone in the workshop would send a brief note to ReLAC to let

⁵ Latin American and the Caribbean Network for Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization

them know that their concerns were heard and would be attended to. The day ended with a discussion of follow-up which could include:

- * sharing documents
- * creating a repository
- * liaising with regional and national organizations
- * conducting field trials
- * creating a secretariat.

Thursday

The small group that worked on a framework and guidelines for describing EC and its development presented its work. Some in the workshop thought that it represented a paradigm shift.

What was suggested was that the "system" is very contextual. It is this context that determines the constituent elements of the system and how these elements relate to each other. So when a UN agency is trying to develop national evaluation capacity, a system containing individual, organizational and national subsystems may be appropriate.

However, when one is trying to develop ECD in a community, there may be a system with different subsystems to which one may apply. Individual, yes. Organizational, yes. Municipal, yes. National, no.

To develop individual capacity, one could include training and mentoring. To develop organizational capacity, one could include OD-like interventions. And to develop municipal capacity, one could include something else.

It was the hope of the group that the IWA agreement on ECD will provide tools to help people identify the constituent elements of a relevant system and also a menu of interventions for developing their EC.

The remainder of the day was devoted to planning the next day's schedule and follow-up over the next three months and beyond.

Friday

The participants revisited the principles that would underpin their work. The outline for the IWA was discussed. The format might include an introduction, principles, framework and guidelines, and future steps.

There was considerable discussion over the role of "outsiders". Workshop participants who were helping to draft the IWA might seek input from outsiders. However, there was a concern that sharing draft documents could be detrimental to

the process of document development. There was also considerable discussion about intellectual property rights.

The workshop participants formed into work groups to continue work on different parts of the document during the ensuing three-month period.

Lastly, the Chairs of ECDG and the JCSEE awarded certificates crediting the participants with being co-creators of the IWA on ECD.

Current Situation

During the workshop, findings from two regional studies on M&E and ECD were shared with the group. One of them was an M&E situational analysis involving three countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region, undertaken through the Asian Development Bank as part of its initiative on ECD⁶. The second study covered the M&E and ECD situation in five Asia-Pacific countries commissioned by the UN Evaluation Development Group for Asia and Pacific (UNEDAP)⁷. These empirical results served as a baseline of current reality in the field in these areas.

Major findings from the studies on the ECD situation in developing countries included:

Interpretation & Understanding of Basic Terms and Concepts

The studies demonstrated that, despite a substantial amount of donor-funded M&E training, there was a wide range of confusion over basic terms and concepts. The source of the problem may be that donors hire external consultants to conduct most evaluations. Lack of demand has de-incentivized the creation of a supply of local personnel with adequate knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Interpretation & Understanding of ECD

The results showed that there was superficial understanding and appreciation of ECD. Many thought that ECD was synonymous with nothing more than training of individuals. The implication of this finding is that it is impossible to facilitate evaluation capacity development if one does not understand what it is.

⁶ Rasappan, Arunaselam (2009), "Evaluation Capacity Development: Country Assessment", Final ECD Report on Three GMS Countries, Asian Development Bank, Manila

⁷ Rasappan, Arunaselam (2011), "Regional Thematic Study of National M&E Systems in Asia and the Pacific", Final Report of Special Study on ECD, United Nations Evaluation Department Group for Asia and Pacific (UNEDAP) Bangkok, Thailand

Interpretation & Understanding of EC

The study found that EC was often equated with increasing the capacity of public officials to manage the evaluations conducted by external consultants brought in by donors, rather than actually doing evaluations themselves. This understanding of EC was consistent with the practice of conducting external evaluations exclusively for accountability purposes instead of conducting internal evaluations for policy and programme improvement.

Understanding of ECD for Individuals, Groups & Organizations

The results indicated that most ECD was focused on the individual level. Few countries could provide evidence to show that their ECD efforts were structured or systematic. There was an absence of understanding, systematic analysis, strategies, and treatments that took into account the differences between the individuals and the groups and the context in which they work.

Holistic and Well-Focused Approach for Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) in Governments

The study revealed that the stand alone, piece-meal and one-off assistance provided by donors had not been able to develop and sustain evaluation capacity. *Ad hoc* funding to improve individual capacity through M&E training was not able to bring about the desired improvement in evaluation capacity at any particular level or across levels. ECD required a more holistic, comprehensive, well-focused, planned and continuous intervention. However, as the resources were limited for such an intervention, innovative approaches such as joint support and pooling of resources for common M&E capacity building needed to be explored.

Leadership and Demand for Information are the Key for ECD

Many of the countries studied make limited use of evaluation information for policy decision-making and resource allocation. There was little evidence that evaluative information was being used systematically or intentionally for policy formulation and program adjustments. So long as there is no demand for information and there is an absence of a culture of informed decision-making, it is doubtful that a country could develop and sustain its evaluation capacity.

Willingness to Adopt Internal Self Evaluations

Evaluation practices in the studied countries were mostly donor driven. In most cases, there was a good appreciation of the need for and usefulness of internal evaluation capacity development to enable agencies to improve their performance. However, it was also clear that the donors' agenda and resources provided very little to support this goal.

Integrated System for Planning, Budgeting and M&E

Past empirical inquiry has shown that the bane of public sector management has been the lack of an integrated approach. Most countries that were studied had not adopted an integrated approach to development planning, budgeting, personnel performance, M&E, and other critical aspects that are an integral part of managing for development results.

Sustainability & Resourcing off/for Evaluations

The study showed that evaluation and evaluation practice were not sustainable. Most countries that were studied claimed they had been doing evaluation for decades. However, most of the time, they were undertaking only donor-mandated monitoring, not evaluation. If monitoring and evaluation were not mandated, it is doubtful the M&E would continue. This raises many questions about the sustainability of evaluation within developing countries.

Planning For Evaluation Within/By Government Agencies

Finally, none of the countries studied had a mandate for government Ministries and agencies to plan for evaluation as part of their strategic performance planning initiatives. Much of the current problematic situation in developing countries generally, and donor-aided programs/projects specifically, would benefit immensely if evaluation planning were mandated, as well as building an adequate capacity for it to be planned, implemented, used and reviewed.

Principles for Evaluation Capacity Development

Evaluation capacity development (ECD) involves activities and processes that help create, strengthen, and sustain evaluation for individuals, teams, groups, networks, organizations, communities, sectors, countries and regions.

Such activities and processes may include training, mentoring, coaching, learning by doing, technical assistance, sharing practice guidelines, developing organizational policies and infrastructure, supporting communities of practice, preparing legislation, and promoting a favorable political environment to sustain evaluation.

The following description of ECD principles is intended to provide a basis for ongoing discussion about criteria for successful development of evaluation capacity and the attributes of quality evaluation practice.

Workshop participants identified a set of principles for undertaking ECD. The following four principles are believed to be both necessary and sufficient for sound and fair ECD interventions:

- Ownership
- Relevance
- Integration
- Usefulness

Ownership

The Ownership principle is intended to ensure that key stakeholders take active responsibility for the ECD intervention. This requires an ongoing commitment by individuals, groups, institutions, and national systems as appropriate. Ownership requires:

- Self-determination. Stakeholders' participation in ECD programs in order to meet their own needs and act on behalf of themselves.
- Political support. Powerful interests with control over objectives, priorities and resources supporting the ECD agenda.
- Control. Those whose capacity is being developed guide and supervise the process of ECD.
- Leadership. ECD efforts being lead by common agreement between suppliers and beneficiaries.
- Ethics. Safeguarding the rights of stakeholders to self-determination.
- Mutual recognition. Stakeholders' acknowledgement and appreciation of others' contributions to the ECD effort.

Relevance

The principle of Relevance recognizes that ECD interventions need to be grounded in a local context and aligned with Ownership priorities. Relevance requires:

- Pertinence. The ECD intervention is consistent with locally identified aspirations, and aligned with expressed needs and social and behavioural norms of the cultures involved.
- Importance. The planned ECD intervention is considered to be both meritorious and a current priority.
- Strength. ECD interventions aim to build upon local strengths and target functional needs.
- Engagement and equity. ECD requires that people actively participate in the process and that the views of all participants are respected.
- Advocacy. Encouraging decision-makers and public opinion to value the benefits of ECD.

Integration

The Integration principle emphasizes that effective ECD interventions are designed from a system-wide (not fragmented) perspective. They may include changes and developments within the wider governance system and are linked into related processes. Integration requires:

- Purpose. The ECD intervention has clearly specified objectives including functional results to be achieved.
- Diagnostics. ECD interventions are based on sound diagnostics, while taking an adaptive / flexible approach to development.
- Comprehensiveness. ECD interventions consider the full scope of capacity-building (supply, demand, and institutional infrastructure), across a range of levels (individuals, groups, organizations or national systems). The final ECD design then forms part of a comprehensive system of governance.
- Coherence. ECD should be based on evaluation policies and practices in government that form a logical framework of interlocking relationships and processes.
- Commitment. Stakeholders understand the implications of the ECD intervention and are ready to join forces within the context of these principles.

Usefulness

The Usefulness principle specifies that ECD is not an end in itself, but rather a means for mainstreaming the ongoing production and use of effective evaluations.

Usefulness requires:

- Application. In particular ECD leads to evaluation activities that support improvements to:
 - Policies and programs, and/or
 - Program management, and/or
 - Resource allocations, budgeting, and/or
 - Government control, coordination, and/or
 - Accountability and transparency, and/or
 - Participation by civil society.
- Demand. ECD guides the supply of evaluation feedback that matches the demand from stakeholders and their ability to make use of evaluation results. As demand increases over time, this is responded to with greater levels of supply and institutional infrastructure.
- Anchoring. ECD supports evaluation functions located (or anchored) where the demand and users are, in order to support use.
- Flexibility. Different countries/agencies have different starting points, constraints and aspirations, and hence rigid blueprints for ECD reform are

not appropriate. Cautious evolving experimentation is the way to proceed, as ECD is not a linear process.

- Perception of value. Stakeholders see the benefits from ECD as outweighing the costs.
- Sustainability. The benefits of ECD continue over time even as governments and officials change.
- Result focus. ECD initiatives are regularly monitored and evaluated in order to promote a focus on results and accountability.

These four global principles are a guide for those who plan and design ECD interventions, those who evaluate such interventions, those who make use of the results of these evaluations, and those who wish to contribute to the ongoing discussion of ECD principles. This IWA acknowledges that these principles are not all equally applicable to all ECD interventions. Professional judgment must be applied, and practitioners are encouraged to carefully consider the importance of each principle in each particular ECD context.

Framework for Addressing Evaluation Capacity Development

A work group was tasked with developing a framework for describing ECD⁸. The framework aligns context, interventions, assessment, problems, needs, terms and concepts. It identifies the different ways that a situation can be viewed and allows one to work out the logical consequences of each perspective and compare it with the messiness of reality⁹. The examples used in this section are hypothetical and were created for pedagogical purposes. As such, they are necessarily simplistic.

Step 1. Develop a description of the situation in which you want to develop evaluation capacity.

There is a diversity of situations in which evaluation capacity can be developed. A partial list of the possible situations includes: individuals, teams, groups, networks, organizations, communities, sectors, countries and regions. This framework could be applied to any of these situations.

A rich description of the situation in which ECD is to take place is required. The description should include at least the following elements: structure, process, people, conflicts, culture/climate and issues. The situation should be described

⁸The developers of the ECD Framework acknowledge their intellectual debt to Peter Checkland and his Soft Systems Methodology (SSM).

⁹ Williams, B. & Hummelbrunner, R. (2011). Systems concepts in action: A practitioner's toolkit. Stanford, CA; Stanford Business Books.

without privileging, predetermining, or presuming one particular perspective or point of view¹⁰.

A technique used by the Chair with great success during the ISO International Workshop was to help the participants to construct a mind map. As the picture of this mindmap in the process section shows, the participants worked together to map a large number of elements that could be found within a wide variety of situations. The end result was a map that covered an entire wall of the workshop venue!

Step 2. Who are the key stakeholders and how does each stakeholder group view the situation?

Once the evaluation capacity development situation has been richly described, the different ways in which the stakeholders perceive the situation should be established. As an example, in a national situation:

- Donors may see the situation as one in which ECD can be used to control development assistance.
- A government may see the situation as one in which ECD, or a lack thereof, is a means of avoiding accountability for development assistance.
- Citizen groups, who are the beneficiaries of projects funded by development assistance, may see the situation as one in which ECD is an opportunity for participation and empowerment.
- Evaluators may see the situation as one in which ECD offers employment opportunities.

The next task is to write a statement that describes the transformation in evaluation capacity that would be realized if the stakeholder's perception were carried out to its logical conclusion. The statement should be expressed in terms of the change in state (what), the manner in which it would be accomplished (how), and the motivation behind the transformation (why). For example, in a national situation, donors may see ECD as:

“A system by which donors seek to control development assistance in order to optimize the value for money on behalf of their taxpayer constituents.”

A national government may see the situation as:

“A system to be neglected (or possibly even to be sabotaged) by recipients of development assistance in order to avoid accountability to donors and to optimize the discretionary use of development aid.”

¹⁰ Ibid

Similar statements could be constructed for each of the various stakeholder perspectives.

Step 3. Describe the ECD process implied by each of the statements from Step 2.

The next step is to describe the ECD process¹¹ implied by each of the statements written to describe the various stakeholder perspectives (see Step 2).

For donors, the ECD process may be to provide training to national government officials to manage the logistics of parachuting-in an international evaluation consultant to conduct a one-week evaluation and to make future development aid contingent on implementation of the recommendations of the report.

For a national government, the ECD process may be to send high-level government officials to exotic locations to receive evaluation training and to provide low-level government officials, who experience high rates of job turnover, with a modicum of training.

Step 4. Compare each ECD process that was modeled in Step 3 with the others and with the rich description of the situation in Step 1.

The next step is to compare each ECD process that was modeled in Step 3 with the others and with the real world. These comparisons would seek to answer questions such as: How are the ECD processes implied by the various stakeholder perspectives the same, and how are they different? How well does each model correspond to the real world? Special attention should be given to recurring themes and to contradictions.

For example, if one were to compare the donor and the national government models of ECD that are presented above, it is obvious that there is a contradiction around the issue of accountability. The national government leaders may resist external accountability as vigorously as donors try to impose it. Therefore, donors' and the national government's attempts to develop evaluation capacity may be working at cross-purposes and may nullify each other.

The next comparison would be the models with the real world. Let us suppose that the description of the situation identifies citizen groups demanding government reform as a potential group whose capacity could be developed. One would then go through another iteration of modeling and comparison¹².

Citizen groups may see the situation as:

¹¹ Process is defined as a series of actions conducting to an end.

¹² There may ultimately be several iterations of modeling and comparison.

“A system to be used by citizens who are the ultimate beneficiaries of development assistance to empower themselves in order to ensure that government uses development assistance to fund projects that are relevant, efficient, effective, impactful and sustainable.”

For citizens groups, the ECD process may include participating in the evaluation of development assistance-funded projects as a way of getting on-the-job training in how to conduct an evaluation and, perhaps more importantly, how to use the results to make government accountable, transparent and responsive.

The ultimate aim of this step is to describe a version of the “real” situation and ways to improve it that will accommodate the interests of different stakeholders with different perspectives¹³.

A real situation that may accommodate the interests of all stakeholders could be one in which donors seek to promote the ECD of citizen groups to hold their national governments accountable for the use of development assistance as an alternative to having external accountability imposed by donors. As Buckminster Fuller once said, “Don’t fight forces. Use them.”

Step 5. Based on these comparisons, identify the relevant and effective ways to develop evaluation capacity.

Based on the analysis conducted in Steps 1-4, leverage points can be identified to make changes in the situation. Leverage points¹⁴ may include:

Structures—for teams, organizations, communities, institutions and national governments, changes in structure can be very effective. The elements of structure that are amenable to change may include (i) division of labour, (ii) authority, (iii) departmentalization and (iv) span of control.

Culture—this is the collective personality of a team, organization, community, institution and national government. A computer can be used as a metaphor. If structure is the hardware of the computer, then culture is the operating system that enables all of the programmes to work.

Processes—The structures and culture that are put in place, in large measure, determine the processes and procedures that can be implemented successfully. Special attention should be paid to putting feedback mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate changes in the situation.

¹³ Checkland, P. & Poulter, J. (2006). Learning for action: A short definitive account of Soft Systems Methodology and its use for practitioners, teachers and students. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

¹⁴ Russon, K & Russon, C (2005). Evaluation Capacity Development Toolkit. Kalamazoo, MI; ECDG.

The IWA Future

This section contains a statement about the future of the International Workshop Agreement (IWA). As such, a work group engaged in a visioning process, using a *scenario planning* technique developed at Royal Dutch/Shell¹⁵ as described in the ECDG Toolkit¹⁶ for developing alternative visions of the future.

The steps involved: (a) determining the question to be answered; (b) identifying factors associated with the question; (c) exploring the forces that drive those factors; and (d) using the most important and variable drivers to construct alternative visions of the future.

The work group determined that the future of the IWA, in large measure, depends on the support that it receives. Therefore, the question that these participants sought to answer, using the scenario planning technique, was, “What kind of mechanisms should be in place to support the IWA?”¹⁷

There are many factors that would need to be considered when answering this question, including: awareness, commitment, institutionalization, utilization, etc.¹⁸ The work group identified two important forces driving these factors: coordination and resources. These drivers were included in the 2x2 matrix found below.

¹⁵ Schwartz, P. (1996). *The art of the long view*. New York: Currency Doubleday.

¹⁶ Russon, K. & Russon, C. (2005) Evaluation Capacity Development Group Toolkit. ECDG, Kalamazoo, MI.

¹⁷ Note the question refers to the IWA and NOT evaluation capacity development.

¹⁸ Scenario planning is a form of qualitative analysis and, of course, different analysts will arrive at different conclusions. The work group that wrote this section identified resources and coordinated effort as the drivers (latent factors) of the IWA's future. Other drivers might include relevance, legitimacy, diversity and flexibility.

2x2 Visioning Matrix for IWA Future Scenario Planning

	Box C. High level of coordination		
Box A. High level of resources	Box 1. Teamwork	Box 2. Bread line	Box B. Low level of resources
	Box 3. 1000 points of light	Box 4. Fight over crumbs	
	Box D. Low level of coordination		

The scenarios:

Fight over crumbs: In this scenario, the lack of coordination and the low level of resources would lead to competition among ECD stakeholders for funding to support the IWA. The implication of this would be that there would be little awareness about the document and no effort to promote institutionalization of its principles.

*1000 points of light*¹⁹: In this scenario, the ECD stakeholders would solicit large amounts of funding to conduct disparate activities in support of the IWA. However, because of the lack of coordination, it would NOT be possible to create positive reinforcement loops that would accelerate the institutionalization of the IWA.

¹⁹ *Thousand points of light* was a recurring phrase in speeches given by U.S. president George H. W. Bush. He said, "I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good."

Bread line: In this scenario, ECD stakeholders would coordinate their efforts but there would be low levels of resources to fund their activities in support of the IWA. The implication of this is that there would be the capability but not the opportunity to refine and further develop the IWA. Thus, the IWA would not achieve its full potential for influencing evaluation capacity development.

Teamwork: In this scenario, ECD stakeholders would coordinate and there would be high levels of resources to fund their activities in support of the IWA. The implication of this is that ECD stakeholders and donors would collaborate with each other to enable the IWA to achieve its full potential for influencing evaluation capacity development.

In the view of the work group, Box 1, Team Work, would be the most desirable scenario and should be the one toward which ECD stakeholders work.

Conclusion

A large banner advertising an IT exhibition hung along the side of the convention center that was visible to participants as they arrived at the Geneva airport prior to the workshop. It stated, "Shape the future."

The organizers of the International Workshop to draft an Agreement on ECD jokingly told participants that they had made arrangements for the banner on their behalf because that was exactly what the workshop was all about – shaping the future of ECD.

The IWA contains a number of innovations that break with conventions of the past and will help shape the future. The IWA intentionally does not define evaluation capacity development. To define is to limit.

The IWA contains universal principles and a dynamic framework, based on systems thinking, that can be applied to any ECD situation – be it individual, team, group, network, organization, community, sector, country or region.

Application of the principles and framework will enable practitioners to use systems thinking to reveal different models of ECD, use them to inform thinking about "real world" situations and ways to improve them that will accommodate the interests of different stakeholders with different perspectives.

The modest desire of the international workshop participants is to make a small contribution to changing the paradigm of evaluation capacity development and, in some way, to help totally revolutionize a corner of the evaluation profession.

Let the future begin.

Appendix A – Organizations Contacted for IWA Promotion & Participation

Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)
African Evaluation Association (AfrEA)
Aga Khan Foundation
American Evaluation Association (AEA)
Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)
Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Aid
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Brazilian Agency for Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Relations (ABC)
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Community of Evaluators in South Asia (CoE)
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA)
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
European Evaluation Society (EES)
Geneva Evaluation Network (GEN)
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Humanitarian Charter & Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (SPHERE)
International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS)
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Monitoring & Evaluation News (mande)
Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS)
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
Red de Seguimiento, evaluacion y sistematizacion de America Latina y el Caribe (ReLAC)
Rockefeller Foundation
South African Monitoring & Evaluation Association (SAMEA)
Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (AECID)
Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation (SADEV)
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL)
United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
W. K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF)
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
XCeval listserv

Appendix B – Participants List

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Bayley, Scott	Australasian Evaluation Society & International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation	scottbayley56@yahoo.com.au
Ben Younes Chaouch, Samia	National Institute For Standardization And Industrial Property (Tunisia)	innorpi.formation@planet.tn
Bilinsky, Paula	Centre for Development Innovation Wageningen University	paula.bilinsky@wur.nl
Brown, Antoinette	Independent Consultant	abbrown47@gmail.com
Crail, Jon	Phrisk	joncrail@gmail.com
Hsu, Lee-Nah	International Labour Organization	zeehsu@gmail.com
Krapp, Stefanie	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	stefanie.krapp@giz.de
Kuzmin, Alexey	Process Consulting Company	alexey@processconsulting.ru
Mouafo, Dieudonne	United Nations Volunteers	dieudonne.mouafo@unvolunteers.org
Peter, Solly	South African Bureau of Standards	peterm@sabs.co.za
Pujol, Halimah	Association française de normalisation	halimah.pujol@afnor.org
Rasappan, Arunselam	Malaysian Evaluation Society	arasappan@cedre.org.my
Rijneveld, Wouter	Partos	wouter@resultante.eu
Rodriguez-Campos, Liliana	University of South Florida	liliana@usf.edu
Russon, Craig	Evaluation Capacity Development Group	craigwrusson@hotmail.com
Russon, Karen	Evaluation Capacity Development Group	russon@ecdg.net
Whitsitt, Scott	One-to-One Service.com	scott@1to1service.com
Williams, Bob (Chair)	Independent Consultant	bob@bobwilliams.co.nz
Winston, Jerome	Program for Public Sector Evaluation International	ppseinternational@hotmail.com
Yarbrough, Donald	Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation & University of Iowa	d-yarbrough@uiowa.edu
Zaveri, Sonal	Community of Evaluators, South Asia	sonalzaveri@gmail.com
Zegers-Febres, Luis	Acumanage	zegersl@acumanage.com

Appendix C – Preworkshop Discussion on XCeval

6 July, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

A proposal prepared by the Evaluation Capacity Development Group (ECDG) and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) to create and International Workshop Agreement (IWA) on evaluation capacity development (ECD) was recently approved by the International Standardization Organization (ISO).

We are now organizing a workshop that will be held 17-21 October 2011 in the John Knox Centre, Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop will use a systems approach to develop an IWA that integrates ECD at the individual, organizational and national levels. I am particularly pleased to inform you that a leading expert in systems-based evaluation, Bob Williams, has consented to facilitate the event.

As per the procedures explained in Annex SI of the Supplement to the ISO/IEC Directives, ANY organization with an interest in evaluation capacity development can register to send a representative to the workshop. Limited support may be available. To learn more about the workshop and to register please go to <http://www.ecdg.net/>

Best Regards,

Karen Russon

24 Sept, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

We would like to invite you to participate in a discussion about evaluation capacity development in advance of the workshop to draft an ISO International Workshop Agreement on the topic.

Dr. Arusalem Rasappan, Director of the Centre for Development and Research on Evaluation (CeDRE), has graciously offered to pose questions to guide the discussion.

This will be an opportunity for those of you who cannot be physically present at the workshop to have input into the process. Many thanks in advance for your

participation.

Best Regards,

Karen

26 Sept, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Pursuant to the note from Karen Russon (copy below), I would like to draw our attention to the upcoming IWA where issues surrounding ECD will be discussed and hopefully come up with agreement on these issues. I have been requested to pose some questions relevant to the above for joint deliberation prior to the IWA meeting in Geneva from 17-21 Oct., 2011. Since many of us cannot join the group for the IWA in Geneva, it would be extremely useful for a wider group of us involved with evaluation and more specifically with ECD, to have an opportunity to highlight and deliberate on some key issues surrounding ECD.

While no means comprehensive, I have tried to pull together the main issues surrounding ECD and some key questions under them. If there are other issues that have been inadvertently omitted, please feel free to raise them and we can add them to the list.

Listed below is the suggested list of issue areas and some key questions surrounding ECD which we would like to seek your thoughts on.

ECD Issue Areas & Key Questions for Discussion:

A. ECD Dimensions & Interpretations

1. What exactly do we mean by ECD and what are its' key dimensions or components?

B. Need for ECD & Standardization

2. Why is ECD a problem or a need in the first place? What are the consequences if we do not address ECD?

3. What are the key outcomes desired from/through ECD?

4. Do we even need to worry about standardization of ECD? What is the problem (if any) if we don't?

C. Strategies for ECD

5. What is it that needs to be addressed in/through ECD?

6. What is the suggested approach, methodology, intervention strategy for ECD?

D. Responsibilities for ECD

7. Who should be responsible for ECD?

8. How does ECD link/interface with other related efforts (MfDR, RBM, Accra

Action Agenda, Paris Declaration etc)?

Some Pointers for the Discussion:

- a. You may choose to respond to only **one or more questions**. If you do not have time, try to respond to what you think are the most critical questions related to ECD.
- b. If your views are extensive, you may wish to put down your thoughts in a brief position paper for deliberation by the wider group of members. Please make the paper brief as many people may not have the time to read through lengthy papers.
- c. Even if you have sent in a paper, you can still continue to help deliberate on follow-up issues as they come up during the course of the two weeks.
- d. When presenting viewpoints, try to support them with concrete examples or real-life situations/challenges/issues (especially within the context of developing countries).
- e. Please address all questions, comments, and viewpoints on this to this list only.
- f. The discussion would be open for **2 weeks** before we synthesize and draw up a preliminary set of thoughts on the ECD.
- g. Discussions on the issues above will need to be completed by **10 October, 2011**.

Co-Facilitators for the Discussion:

I will be joined by two other co-facilitators for this discussion, who are: **Jerry Winston** and **Bob Williams**.

Thank you for your time and contribution to the above discussion. We highly appreciate your time, effort, and inputs into this effort.

Kind regards

Aru Rasappan
Senior Advisor
Center for Development & Research in Evaluation (CeDRE) International
Malaysia

Dear Colleagues:

Many thanks to Dr. Aru for posting these questions to help us think about evaluation capacity development (ECD). I would like to share my views regarding a few of his questions.

I cannot think of a more fragmented topic in the field of evaluation than ECD. For some, it means training individuals; for others, it means organizational development; and yet for others, it means embedding evaluation into national

governments. I believe that there is a need to integrate these perspectives and a systems approach great promise.

With regard to the questions about standardization: I think that, at this point the use of the term "standards" may be a bit premature. We could just as easily refer to the contents of the ISO deliverable as guidelines, good practices, or helpful suggestions. I hope that we will not become distracted by the terminology.

I have read many definitions of ECD and many have two dimensions in common: process and results. So I think that it might be helpful to have guidelines that address both of these dimensions.

I have always believed that stakeholder participation in evaluation is desirable. Without ECD, stakeholders will not have the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to participate effectively. I think there is shared responsibility for ECD among all parties involved in the process.

Best Regards,

Craig

Dear Friends,

Thanks Dr. Ara for setting out many pertinent questions regarding the how, what and who of ECD.

I write with a Southern perspective about the need for ECD, who should deliver and what standards it should adhere to. The growing need for evaluation in the region has also identified the lack of a rigorous program, standards and benchmark for good ECD. Kind of chicken and the egg, who comes first? - who should deliver ECD when the quality is itself amorphous which results in questionable ECD delivered. Standard curricula, a clear strategy to ensure quality and fidelity in capacity building, and opportunities for lifelong learning are critical.

Evaluators in the region have had different entry points, not necessarily with a theoretical background. But there is richness in experience, that is awaiting to be translated into theory and best practice. How to garner these strengths should also be a challenge for ECD.

Because many countries in the South are large and complex, a devolution of expertise is essential to make a difference on the ground. How this may be done is difficult and perhaps innovative (and cost effective) methods would have to be considered including a growing use of technology and internet. Real change in ECD is possible only by increasing substantially the expertise of evaluators (a critical

mass) and providing opportunities for dialogue with other more experienced evaluators or groups of evaluators. If we ensure respectful dialogue, communication and sharing - we are sure to contribute to the learnings of both North and South evaluators.

Regards
Sonal

29 Sept, 2011

Colleagues:

Thank you Dr. Aru and all for initiating this conversation. I look forward to participating and learning.

ECD Dimensions and interpretations

Terminology: There are a number of terms in use to capture what I think are similar concepts: evaluation capacity development (seems to be more popular in international context), evaluation capacity building (seems more popular in US context), M&E capacity development; evaluation capacity strengthening. Are there others in use? Can all be brought under the same umbrella?

Definitions: Do we also need a definition of 'evaluation' at least for the purpose of this exercise? I find lots of nuances when we use the term 'evaluation' and I think it influences how we think about/define ECD. Does 'M&E capacity development' add clarity?

Purpose of ECD – expected outcomes: I think this is a critical component and probably influences how we define ECD. I tend to see the long-term outcomes (impact) in two ways: social betterment; improved governance with sustainable evaluation practice as the means for getting there....a long-term and ongoing process!!

I agree that there is a lot of fragmentation within the ECD field probably because the contexts in which we work are so different. I think it is about (1) levels: individual, team, program, organization, government; and (2) sectors and contexts: non-profit, public, philanthropic, private; small – large systems; less complex to more complex.

All for now. I look forward to the ongoing dialogue.

Ellen

Ellen Taylor-Powell, Ph.D.
Etp Consulting
Distinguished Evaluation Specialist Emeritus
University of Wisconsin-Extension

30 Sept, 2011

Dear Aru and colleagues,

Thank you very much for initiating this important discussion. Its process and outcome will be important to inform future initiatives in this area. Regarding your first question on ECD dimensions and definition, at UNICEF we came up with a conceptual framework that address some of these issues. It is available at http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/index_51109.html

In addition, the recording of a series of webinars on National valuation Capacities is also available at <http://www.mymande.org/?q=content/developing-capacities-country-monitoring-evaluation-system&x=cl>

I am looking forward to a rich discussion.

Best regards

Marco Segone
UNICEF Evaluation Office

1 Oct, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

Many thanks to Marco for sharing these valuable resources with us. UNICEF, as an institution, and Marco personally, have made many theoretical contributions to evaluation capacity development (ECD).

What is more, UNICEF's support of regional and national evaluation organizations around the world has actually done a lot to put that theory into practice.

I think that the way that UNICEF views the evaluation capacity development system, as depicted in Figure 3 of the materials Marco sent, corresponds quite closely with the way that ECDG views the system.

We may call things by different names, for example, UNICEF calls the three levels: enabling environment, institutional and individual, while ECDG calls them national,

organizational and individual. However, for all intents and purposes, it's the same.

Part of ECDG's philosophy is that the structure of a system determines, to a great extent, the processes that the system is able to carry out. For more information, please go to <http://www.ecdg.net>

With this principal in mind; the issue that we have always had with Figure 3 is that it is a static diagram. It shows the structure well. HOWEVER, it gives no indication of the manner in which the three levels interact.

Nobody else, to our knowledge, has adequately addressed this inter-relationship issue either. Without this information, we will only have a partial understanding of evaluation capacity development.

To a great extent, the purpose of the workshop is to draft an ISO agreement on evaluation capacity development that addresses this issue and extends the good work that has already been done by UNICEF and others. We welcome comments by Marco, by the discussion moderators and by all XCeval subscribers.

Best Regards,

Craig and Karen

Dear colleagues,

Following Karen's e-mail this morning, I'd like to contribute some further ideas even if these will not yet answer all the eight questions posed by Dr Rasappan.

Marco's picture caught my attention immediately as it explains the various levels and organisational forces and human environments that operate, take action and responsibilities within the systemic approach. I would like to share with you a picture I have been using for the last 10 years in my training courses on process efficiency and effectiveness mainly with non-for-profit organisations and SMEs. It is based on the same concepts as that of UNICEF's but focuses on the systemic responsibilities for production and delivery of products and services that respond to requirements identified by stakeholders (considering that a stakeholder is anyone with an interest in the process). These are in fact, the areas I look into when I receive an evaluation mandate.

In a couple of days I will be sharing with you a short paper trying to reply to the eight questions. However, I guess sharing the picture below with you now adds to Karen's comments and I didn't want to delay this:

Best regards to all,

Luis

Luis L. Zegers-Febres, BA, MSc.

Thanks Luis for your feedback and for your effort with the short paper. Your feedback is interesting and thought provoking as well. You have also raised some new dimensions on some of the issues which would be useful to consider.

However, would it be possible for us to discuss a little deeper on the question #1 on the meaning of the term "ECD"?

It is important to nail this down first before going into the other questions.

Any further thoughts on this.

Thanks

Aru Rasappan

3 Oct, 2011

Dear Aru

I wanted to offer a few ideas about ECD based upon my understanding of the international literature plus my own experiences in Asia (often working with people such as yourself and Jerry!).

1. In terms of definitions, I quite like the following:

The UNDP (2002) defines capacity as the ability of people, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and achieve their goals. ECD refers to activities and initiatives taken to mainstream a regime that supports the ongoing production and use of evaluations.

2. Why do it?

Governments and organizations build evaluation systems because they believe such systems will help them to improve their means and methods of governance. In particular ECD can be used to support:

- Planning & policy making
- Program management
- Resource allocations, budgeting
- Government control, coordination
- Accountability
- Participation by civil society.

3. What is successful ECD?

- The production of appropriate quality evaluations
- A high level of utilization of evaluation findings
- Country/agency ownership
- Sustainability over time as governments & officials change.

4. Strategies for ECD. We need to be clear about whose capacity we are talking about and for what functional purpose e.g.

- Legislatures
 - Federal/state governments
 - Sectors, eg. health, education, water, agriculture, justice
 - Agencies that commission and fund evaluations
 - Individual evaluation practitioners and networks
 - Those who use the results of evaluations to help guide their policy making and management activities, govt agencies, donors, NGOs
 - Groups affected by the programs being evaluated
 - General public, the academic community, civil society.
- (for planning purposes, budgeting, accountability, learning, etc)

5. What works in ECD? (my thoughts on emerging themes)

a) ECD is a political task with technical implications and not vice versa!

ECD is about organizational change

ECD creates winners and losers, which means supporters and opponents in a politicized environment.

b) Start with good diagnostics.

local context and history matter

aim to build upon local strengths and target functional needs rather than correcting deficiencies as judged by some western model.

c) Building and capitalizing on demand is the key.

seek to match the supply of evaluations to current demand and their ability to use performance feedback

seek to further build demand over time, and then match this with supply and institutional infrastructure

attempting to force the creation of an evaluation culture through legislation or a supply side push or new evaluation policies simply doesn't work

d) Institutionalize evaluation in a way that aligns supply to demand.

the evaluation function needs to be located (or anchored) where the demand and users are

we have a matrix arrangement to support accountability in government. Evaluation would benefit from a similar approach.

e) Learn from others but avoid best practice models.

different countries/agencies have different starting points, constraints & aspirations and hence we should search for adaptable ideas, not blueprints for reform
Cautious evolving experimentation is the way to go, ECD is not a linear process.

f) ECD is a long term process

5 to 10 years for agencies in more developed countries

10 to 20 years in developing countries

political and organizational interest in evaluation is cyclical and hence ECD is an ongoing process, not a one time event.

6. Interesting reading:

-Abonyi, George. 2002, Toward a Political Economy Approach to Policy-based Lending. ADB.

-Boyle, Richard, and Donald Lemaire, eds. 1999, Building Evaluation Capacity. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

-Lahey, Robert. A Framework for Developing an Effective Monitoring and Evaluation System in the Public Sector: Key Considerations from International Experience

-Mackay, Keith. 2007. How to Build M&E Systems to Support Better Government. World Bank.

cheers

-Scott Bayley

Melbourne, Australia

Dear Scott,

Many thanks for sharing your useful thoughts on this topic and the questions posed.

The points you make on the issues raised on ECD are certainly pointing to the complexity of ECD that we are dealing with.

I am tempted to jump into the discussion but prefer to hold back until we can all get some deeper understanding and appreciation on the definition and meaning of ECD in its deeper context.

Why? If we do not have a clear picture and understanding of ECD and what it really means, then all of the other issues raised and the responses to them may become out of context. The UNDP definition quoted seems ok I guess but then some others may argue otherwise! Should we also define "development"? And what happens when we put them all together? Does it now mean something like: the ability to utilize evaluation to achieve specific ends and how to develop this ability? (am not suggesting this definition but just for argument!).

Are we getting closer? Further thoughts on this?

We will come back to the other issues after we examine this in some depth first!

Rgds

Aru Rasappan

4 Oct, 2011

Karen,

Thanks for sharing this. I think it is very exciting and important.

A month ago, Claremont hosted a symposium celebrating Scriven's career and contributions. I did the keynote on the topic he chose as the focus: The Future of Evaluation. I used the framework of a top 10 trends list. Counting down from 10 to 1, number 1 was the increased importance of capacity development. Incorporating a systems perspective into how we approach capacity development was part of my point. (Number 2 on the list was systems thinking.) So, bravo!

Michael

Michael Quinn Patton
Utilization-Focused Evaluation
Saint Paul, MN

Dear Karen,

Thanks for sharing this with the group. It's interesting that we seem to have general consensus on the importance of capacity development in evaluation. It would be interesting if we could also see the Michael's count-down list of ten items.

However, as with the findings from the SAMEA Conference mentioned by Scott Chaplowe earlier, what was Michael referring to when he had "evaluation capacity development" at the top of his list? If he was not referring to training and exposure to evaluation as ECD, then what else was he alluding to?

Any thoughts on this? Not sure if Michael is a member of this forum but if he is, would be interesting to hear further from him on this.

Regards

Aru Rasappan

Very interesting and relevant.

I was recently in South Africa, presenting a professional development workshop on Participatory Project Reviews (PPR) at the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) international conference. During the workshop, we needed an example question to work with to illustrate participatory methods that elicit and analyze opinions from participants. South Africa, (and Africa as a whole), is at a fascinating stage in the evolution of the practice of evaluation, and it seemed an interesting opportunity to work with this question:

“What do you recommend SAMEA should prioritize in the next 10 years?”

Participants used an anonymous, confidential method to identify and prioritize responses (recommendations). In our group of 35 participants, there were 13 distinct responses (recommendations) and the top response was “M&E capacity building,” which received more than double the votes (27) than the next highest rated response (“Facilitate M&E in higher learning and through networks,” – 10 votes).

Scott Chaplowe

M&E Senior Officer, Planning and Evaluation Department (PED)
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Dear Scott,

Greetings and glad to get feedback from you.

Thanks for sharing this with us. Certainly there seems to be all around agreement on the importance of M&E capacity building. Even the seven country ECD study that I'm doing/done in Asia shows the same trend.

Could you share with us if the group at the conference discussed or defined what they meant by M&E capacity building? During all of my sessions with the African Community of Practice (AfCoP) and the APCoP, there was also general consensus on the need for and importance of M&E capacity building in government. Sadly though, most of the time, they all meant training and exposure for the people involved with M&E. There has always been a focus on how people can be trained in M&E. This stand is the same in all the countries I've worked in. While training is certainly important, it is by no means the end as far as ECD is concerned, as it is much broader and complex than that.

I wonder if the group at SAMEA discussed further on this topic. Please share with us any other thoughts that were discussed on M&E capacity building.

May we also urge other members who have had such experiences, especially in practical country situations and any other form of fora, to share the discussions and findings/experiences with us? We need all the feedback we can get to get a deeper insight into ECD.

Many thanks

Aru Rasappan

Thanks for your follow-up, Aru.

My workshop was not a true evaluation where participants were able to adequately spend time analyzing elicited recommendations – emphasis was on training in the PPR methodology, and examples such as this were used illustratively for training purposes. However, recalling the other recommendations and related (albeit brief) discussion, “capacity” seemed to focus on the technical understanding and skills to plan for and conduct useful evaluations.

I understand that there is a wider discourse (often polemic) regarding what should be included in M&E capacity building and/or development. Indeed, (as in an evaluation itself), it is important to clearly define the scope of what is to be investigated – in this case “capacity.” Already there has been some very good input in this regards on this XCeval forum, ranging from individual to organizational capacities, and from advocacy to resources (human, logistical, financial, etc.)

As to whether SEMEA discussed this topic further, yes, it did. However, I do not feel I could accurately represent what was discussed as I was not always present during such discussion, etc. I do recall in the closing plenary session one participant raised concerns that “capacity building” can be disempowering semantics, implying that there is a lack of capacity among people/institutions - (much as “beneficiary” is often shunned upon as framing people as passive recipients rather than active partners). On the flip side, I heard a hallway conversation outside the session responding to the disempowering semantics comment, warning that people should not get stuck in a post-modernist, semantic tangle.

My own opinions? They are still formulating – I continue to learn from such discussion here on XCeval, and I hope to make it to the ECDG workshop later this month]

Scott Chaplowe

M&E Senior Officer, Planning and Evaluation Department (PED)

From my own humble experience (both as a consultant and also as a UN official) of M&E capacity building at country level I tend to see the concept as a combination of initiatives (advocacy, human resources development through different kinds of training on M&E methodology, formulation and institutionalization of M&E structures and systems with required logistics and resources etc.) that are relevant to **internalization** of an effective and efficient M&E practice within the frameworks of public governance systems and institutions that enables tracking of and providing feedback, with empirical evidence, on progress of implementation of public policies and programmes on a timely and regular basis.

M. Adil Khan

Professor

School of Social Sciences

University of Queensland

Brisbane, Australia

AND

Retired Chief, Socio-economic Governance and Management Branch

Good day Adil. Good to hear from you. Did not realise you had retired.

Thanks for sharing your thoughts on ECD with us. Your definition certainly alludes to the fact that ECD is much more than just training of human resources or some simplistic interventions, especially in the context of developing countries.

As in your case, I've worked as consultant and advisor in many countries. My experience in the field however, has been a nightmare to put it mildly. Donors and donor agents in the field come up with some of the simplest of **solutions** to M&E and put in loads of money into training and simplistic and almost naive exposure intervention activities.

Sadly, this has also been the case with the Communities of Practice (CoP) that have been going on in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. I've lost all my hair (I mean it) trying to convince stakeholders from the donor side as well as the developing countries on what ECD should cover and focus on but the effort has seen limited results only in some countries and even then in bits and pieces. In most cases, the reason for this is due to the donor entities operating in the field! Believe it or not, the biggest culprits are actually the donor entities! There is a big disconnect between the policy level within donor entities and the implementation at their field offices in the developing countries. I will come back to these issues later after we hear from more colleagues.

But I want to thank you for bringing in detailed dimensions into/for ECD that will require much more indepth discussion and deliberations. You have worked in the field and am sure have a lot of examples to share with us. I especially like your use of the word *internalization* and if I may also add on the word *integration or integrated*, it would bring out even more angles to ECD. The integrated approach to ECD is something worth considering and I will come back to this later.

I would urge our colleagues on this forum to share their experiences and/or work in this area so that we can all benefit from your experiences. Please support your arguments with real-life examples if possible as we would like to document as much evidence as possible when we deliberate this ECD animal. Some of us have varied conceptual understanding and interpretations of ECD and it is good to share these for discussion but it would be most useful to relate them to actual practices and experiences on the ground, and especially within the context of developing countries.

Best regards.

Aru Rasappan

5 Oct, 2011

On evaluation capacity: The idea of bringing us together to grapple with the question of evaluation capacity is a welcome one.

There are many perspectives on what capacity means and this opportunity to share them will make us all richer in our understandings.

For my part I have made it a point, in reaction to seeing capacity development reduced to training, to make a distinction between what I have come to call individual capability and organisational capacity. The former being a necessary but not sufficient condition for the latter.

I use the term organisational capacity to mean different types of purposeful social organisation such as national governments, ministries, civil society organisations, agencies, bilateral and multilateral organisations, private firms, etc

So to some extent when UNICEF talks about enabling environment, institutional and individual, and when ECDG talks about national, organisational and individual, I find that I can accommodate those parts in both schemas that have to do with social, i.e. collective, organisation.

What I don't quite find fits my world view is, in the case of UNICEF, the enabling environment because it is not purposefully organised to enable sustainable

evaluation, and in the case of ECDG because it appears to conceive of individual capability as a “level”, i.e. national, organisational, etc.

I think there is only one capacity receptacle: the organisation, whatever it may be. Not the individual. The day machines will be able to exercise judgment, i.e. never, we will have organisational capacity without messy human beings. This said I hope you appreciate the rhetorical value of this fictional example.

When I think about organisational capacity I think about sustainability. In fact, when grappling with the sustainability criterion that seems to have permeated the more common and standard evaluation criteria, e.g. OECD-DAC, various UN agencies, etc., I have not found any other meaningful way to attempt to come to grips with that construct (and I don't think sustainability is about whether there will be continued funding.)

So why is it that, despite the fact that no individual that worked for Coca Cola at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century still works there, the company is still successful? Yes, capacity.

Which means that evaluation capacity is important if we want our grandchildren to be evaluators!

So how do we develop it?

Cheers,
Ian

Ian C. Davies
President, European Evaluation Society
www.europeanevaluation.org

Ian twitched a number of threads in my own work. I have a deep interest in organisational development (my route into evaluation actually) and currently an even deeper interest in matters of sustainability. I'm currently doing a job in the US where we are increasingly linking capacity development with sustainability ... and drawing together and blending the available evidence about how you achieve both. We are also asking ourselves the question about what is the role of evaluation in assisting the development of capacity and ensuring sustainability.

I've also done a lot of work in the health and safety field, and one of the most powerful models in that area was developed by James Reason. He has researched what creates and sustains healthy and safe organisations ... and yes, individual skills come relatively low in the hierarchy of factors. Training is a long way from the silver bullet - in some cases not even in the firing range.

Without wanting to add yet another distinction to the alphabet soup, Jim Woodhill - the Director of the Centre for Development Innovation at Wageningen University in the Netherlands - has developed some interesting ideas about looking at things from an institutional level. He uses the word "institution" in its sociological meaning ... evaluation is an "institution", "international development" is an institution, "teaching" is an institution. What I like about this perspective is that it moves away from distinctions about individual, organisational and national (which are interesting but like Ian I remain unconvinced are going to help us move forward from the current situation), replacing it with a focus on evaluation itself in all its form of capacity.

Cheers

Bob

BOB WILLIAMS
bob@bobwilliams.co.nz

Hi:

I have been reading this discussion with interest as someone with mostly domestic (US) rather than international experience in evaluation. I am glad Kerry brought up the role of individuals and the human resource capacity into this conversation. One of the things I experience in my evaluation training and capacity building work, as well as in my work with NGOs, is the tremendous impact of staff turnover within these organizations. The non-profit field doesn't pay much and people come and go all the time. When you spend training resources working with individuals who then leave the organization, the knowledge usually goes with them unless it is institutionalized and internalized at the upper levels, which tends to be more settled.

I wonder if this is also the case in the government sectors international evaluators work with, and if so, what is done to create a culture of inquiry and learning that is passed down from the top and that is immune to turn over.

On a more practical level, I always remind myself and my colleagues that every couple of years, we may need to go back to the beginning and offer a refresher "Evaluation 101" again to ensure new hires have the knowledge they need to implement evaluation procedures and policies implemented before their time.

Thanks for the opportunity to listen in to your interesting conversations.

Marcela

Dear Collègues,

I found the discussion interesting. Thanks. I kind of agree with previous post that the Capacity needs to be well defined as well as evaluation. Well Unicef and ECDG model seem to have similarities, nonetheless of Ian comment, I believe it make sense to have it at these 3 levels. However the organisational level is first among equal.

1- My problem is it appears that these model have took out the individuals from the model. It is assumed- like many performance assessment framework available - that the interest of the individuals with this system is completely aligned with the model. This is absurd. Individuals, especially within organisation obey to a different logic than the one the organisation is establishing. It is not because we are in a context of budget restrictions (environmental contextual) have an evaluation policy (institutional) or have a competent evaluators (individual) that evaluation will be carried out. And evaluation of quality. Games are play, since human is a big player. Something more is needed. According to the new institutional theories, individuals will pay attention to the rules of the game. The rules being either formal (policy, grant requirement, etc) or informal (the famous 'culture' or put differently the culture for learning, accountability and performing). By paying attention to the institutions - the micro institutional elements that shape human interaction - that are integrated within ECD, and the different transaction costs produced by the institutional arrangements , one will be better able to tackle ECD concept I believe. Also, by paying attention to the rule of the game, the incentives produced by the micro institutional elements that stimulate human interactions, one will be able to address sustainability as mentioned by Ian.

2- Also, defining evaluation. We speak of evaluation like it is unique. Evaluation is multiple. Research evaluation, Impact evaluation, objectives based evaluation, evaluation for accountability, Need assessment, etc. Which capacity are we dealing with then?

3- Finally, if one talk about evaluation capacity development, one would think of a continuum. From low or no capacity to high capacity. If low capacity is easy to tackle with; what do we mean by high evaluation capacity? What is the top? The *nec plus ultra*? What is this situation to which one can conclude that: ok we did it! (of course I am caricaturing here)

4- Evaluation is not alone! Evaluation is not an end, it's a mean to a greater purpose. Then how does it related with Auditing, Controllershship and RBM and research. These are all activities carried out by organisations to gather different type of information, about one single thing: the performance of a given entity.

Hope this helps,

Cheers
Denis Jobin

On 6/10/2011, at 7:42 AM, Denis Jobin wrote:

Also, by paying attention to the rule of the game, the incentives produced by the micro institutional elements that stimulate human interactions, one will be able to address sustainability as mentioned by Ian.

Nice point Denis. There's a powerful systems model based on Activity Theory developed in Finland and the US that blends individual motivational and institutional factors (in the broad sense) factors such as "rules". I came across it in my work on health and safety (where it has been used extensively) and use its ideas all the time.

2- Also, defining evaluation. We speak of evaluation like it is unique. Evaluation is multiple. Research evaluation, Impact evaluation, objectives based evaluation, evaluation for accountability, Need assessment, etc. Which capacity are we dealing with then?

Absolutely. It is important to distinguish between "evaluation" - a process that everyone does all the time usually pretty competently and "Evaluation" - this strange little amalgam of applied social research and operational research that we call our own.

Cheers

Bob

BOB WILLIAMS
bob@bobwilliams.co.nz

Kerry Abbott²⁰ wrote:

"I also have noted that capacity development methodology has not been well considered, in general, and CD is often equated with training or information exchange. While this may build on the knowledge base of an already informed individual, it does not mean that the individual then has the power or influence to transform the system in which he works. Nor can one assume that would become

²⁰ I was not able to retrieve the entire text of Kerry Abbot's message

his prime assignment, especially within a complex institution that has staff, policies and programs in place to satisfy varied vested interests and political concerns.” Well said Kerry. I’ve always distinguished between capacity and capability.

There is an interesting article in the latest edition of the Journal of American Evaluation from a Danish study of Evaluation Capacity. Rather than the usual collection of opinions, frameworks and anecdotes the authors present a model used in the Danish public sector to map evaluation capability and then test that model for face, content and construct validity. If anyone else has read that piece, I’d like their views on it. I’d also like to know if anyone has done anything similar ... actually evaluated the models and frameworks for evaluation capacity.

The reason I ask this is that I sense we are awash with opinions, frameworks and anecdotes about evaluation capacity and evaluation capability. What I see very little of is actual evidence that this capacity generates or significantly contributes to improved evaluation impact (other than the tautology of defining what evaluation is and then calling it capacity if we see it). I suggest that if we are to move beyond competing frameworks towards some kind of standards then we need more than agreement we need good evidence and good judgement of what that evidence demonstrates. Otherwise we risk building on sand or perpetuating evaluation myths.

Cheers

Bob
BOB WILLIAMS

Perhaps I can pick up on Bob’s comments. What I take from the work of Robert Brinkerhoff, likely selectively and with no guarantee of fidelity to Robert’s views; is that capacity gains largely occur at the place of use, not the place of training. The key to improved capacity is the opportunity to use the new “stuff” requiring opportunities, support from supervisors, etc. And one of the key things for gains at the place of training is proper selection to the training, thus a link to the place of use. This aligns with what I am seeing from the evaluation of a particular class of training conducted over the past three years with over 60 individual trainings.

With reference to the observation reported by Scott from his SAMEA training, some participants in the training I provided at SAMEA suggested that they did not just need training but also mentoring or technical assistance to gain competency through use of the techniques at their place of work.

I am very skeptical of efforts that focus on training alone. However I also know that we need to ramp up capacity and rapidly. Hopefully we can do better than just roll out more and more training. Around the world most evaluators learn their craft

through work experience, and training can have an important role in this. However supply side training initiatives are usually based on the “faith based” assumption that major gains can be realized at the place of training. Perhaps we would do better to start to explore demand side training responses that are more strongly linked to the place of use.

Best

Andy Rowe

Without wanting to introduce another concept into the confusing array we already have, I think the key is to understand how to ramp up *capability* rather than ramp up *capacity*. Capability for me is the actual ability to undertake evaluative interventions that will have a useful impact on people’s lives and the interventions that affect those lives. You can have massive capacity and little or no capability; you can have relatively small amounts of capacity but with smart timing, opportunism, good luck and entrepreneurial spirit you can have significant capability.

Cheers

Bob

BOB WILLIAMS

I would like to support Andy's comments about the importance of demand side considerations. To my way of thinking, stimulating and then supporting functional demand is the key to ECD.

In relation to Bob's previous observation about the lack of research evidence to guide/inform ECD activities, I completely agree. I would also add that the World Bank's evaluation group has undertaken studies of the impact of selected training programs and the findings were often consistent with the view that training individuals does not automatically lead to improved organizational practises/ functionality.

cheers

-Scott Bayley

Melbourne, Australia

I would strongly support Andy's comment regarding the importance of use in ECD. From my point of view, the ability to conduct evaluation does not necessarily mean that evaluation capacity exists. Some time ago I proposed an 'evaluation capacity formula' as a metaphor to emphasize the importance of use in ECD: $EC=C*P$. EC is evaluation capacity. C is competence or capability. P is ongoing

evaluation practice. The formula could be read as follows: "if you don't use it, you don't have it".

Thus, evaluation capacity building is indeed more than just development of ability to conduct evaluation. We also need to make sure that the ability (potential) is used and create conditions for that. It goes beyond an evaluation training.

Speaking from a practical point of view (as an ECD practitioner), I would support ECDG's model with 3 levels (individual, organizational and national). When you need to develop a strategy for ECD, consideration of the level is crucial. I think that ECDG is more consistent than UNICEF in describing levels of ECD as individual - organizational - national. UNICEF's model does not explicitly address national level. It introduces the notion of "enabling environment".

But Organization also constitutes Environment for an Individual. And it could also be enabling or disabling. We should also keep in mind that there is environment for the national ECD, which is not explicitly represented in the UNICEF's model.

Regards,
Alexey Kuzmin

Hi everyone,

I have really been enjoying this discussion on ECB. I'm sure the discussions at the workshop will be really productive.

One idea that I've found helpful in my work is moving to language of the field building. In an AJE piece I did last year, I define evaluation field building as the range and diversity of efforts to strengthen practice, capacity, and use. I argue that field building includes, but is distinct from, evaluation capacity building or professionalization. Field building encompasses an understanding that these dimensions exist in a broader context that can support or weaken efforts to strengthen practice, capacity, or use. field building view brings focus and attention on ways to shift the system of elements (whether through work on various elements or a set of interconnected elements).

The idea of field building emerged from literatures of sociology of knowledge, sociology of professions, and organizational development. Much of that work relates to building professional or organizational fields "where a field is an area of specialized practice carried out by trained practitioners. The idea of field building in evaluation I developed draws on that work but also integrates ideas from work on building fields of action. Groups may work to strengthen the capacity to do good evaluation, but without reshaping the system that surrounds evaluation, it may

make little difference to processes that evaluation should be informing and improving.

Writing of philanthropic field building, Hirschhorn, notes that, institutions surrounding the focal practice strengthen the practice if their goals reinforce one another (2004, pg. 32).

Parts of the system influence other parts of the system. There can be positive pull factors and elements of the system also create drag or weaken other elements. A simple example might be training government evaluation officers “if they have no incentives for doing evaluation or the tendering system does not encourage quality evaluation “ their training may bring little change.

Parts of the system co-evolve within broader contexts that are also co-evolving. Building the field of evaluation entails understanding the connections between and co-evolution of key elements a field of practice. I suggest that when strengthening efforts encompass the institutions and settings that surround and reinforce evaluation practice, it has shifted from evaluation capacity building to the deeper and broader effort of evaluation field building.

In case useful I’ve also laid out elements of the evaluation field “ I started with 7 elements but ultimately collapsed my groups into 4. I found 4 was adequately detailed for my purposes:

1. A field has people: trained practitioners, researchers, and leaders. A field also has incentives for supporting leaders.
2. A field has spaces or forums for building the knowledge, skills, and credentials of members. A field has organizations that facilitate coordinated action, spaces for information exchange and analysis, and systems, guidelines, and norms.
3. A field has a knowledge base, or credible evidence of results, derived from research and practice, on issues of relevance.
4. A field has systemic or institutional support, such as appropriate public policy, and adequate financial and other resources including constituencies and advocates.

Again – I’ve found the language and strategies of field building very helpful in thinking about how to support and strengthen this evolution in evaluation practice in South Asia. I hope some of you may find it helpful in your work! I’d be very keen to hear reactions and thoughts on this idea.

The papers I mention are available here:

wpeg.wits.ac.za/main_site/files/Hay_Front_Page.pdf

<http://aje.sagepub.com/content/31/2/222.full.pdf+html>

Best –Katherine

Katherine Hay

Senior Program Specialist, Evaluation
International Development Research Centre

I think this is another useful example of the importance of perspective in this discussion. I am using perspective in its systems use of the word; one that implies ways of seeing, ways of making sense of the interrelationships present in a situation. Inter-relationships on their own have no meaning - or at least in human situations very little. It's not until you bring in perspective do you begin to get any sense of meaning or of significance. To me, evaluation capacity is a means not an end. The end will depend on which perspectives I bring to the table.

I often use the metaphor of an apple. If evaluation capacity is the apple - signifying its full potential - then the ways we observe that apple, as nutriment, as projectile, as regeneration, as decoration, as fertiliser, as symbol of health, as source of intoxication each give different meaning to its components. A rotting apple's pith may have little potential use when seen from the perspective of decoration, but great potential as intoxicant, the seeds are useless from the perspective of a projectile but critical in terms of regeneration.

I want to stress these are perspectives, not purposes. The apple as a projectile has no purpose, but I can use my understanding of an apple as a projectile to facilitate my purpose of hurting someone.

There's been quite a bit of talk about developing an understanding of evaluation capacity (and capability) using systems concepts. It will therefore come as no surprise that for me the most important of those concepts is not how things inter-relate but the perspectives we bring that gives meaning to those inter-relationships. As the great systems thinker C.West Churchman stated, "a systems approach begins when you first see the world through the eyes of another" ... and Churchman was not thinking merely of stakeholder views but a much more profound set of viewpoints.

These are conceptual niceties but they are also important pragmatically. My view is that unless we address the question of what is evaluation capacity *for*; what are the core perspectives that give use, value and meaning to the evaluation enterprise, then we risk being devoid of criteria by which to judge the quality of that evaluation capacity as well as the capability of a situation to use that capacity. In a funny and perhaps ironic kind of way, this workshop may end up identifying criteria by which to assess the value of evaluation.

Cheers

Bob

BOB WILLIAMS

6 Oct, 2011

Group –

I'm a board member of the Evaluation Capacity Development Group, but am an outsider to ECD and have no experience in M&E. My background is in Accounting/Auditing and IT, two fields that have quite an extensive history of standards and frameworks.

As I read the dialogue here, I can see some clear analogies to how my industries have developed over the past many decades and how you all are working to define a similar aspect of your own industry. It might be useful to look at what has transpired within accounting/audit/IT to gain some insight into the path you want to take for ECD.

Reviewing the past hundred years of development of accounting principles is likely beyond the capacity of this group to bear ... especially if described by me. But, I think within the area of Information Technology, and IT Governance in particular, there might be some interesting parallels that are easier to grasp.

IT Governance has become quite important over the past decade. This has been driven in the US as a result of high profile financial reporting failures at Enron, MCI, and others. Various standards and methodologies (including ISO, ITIL, etc.) have been around for some time, but regulatory requirements affecting US companies have only become critical to companies in the past ten years or so (Sarbanes-Oxley, HIPAA Security Rule, etc.). These regulatory requirements have forced companies to adopt specific frameworks (CobIT, HITRUST, etc.), that in turn help them adhere to the various standards and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

These frameworks have been used by auditors (both internal and external auditors) to create their own approach to assessing how well an organization is adhering to these various standards (similar to M&E in your world). And since the firms have based their methodology on a common framework, their approach is universally consistent.

Also, a capabilities maturity model (CMM) has been developed to assess where the entity is in the lifecycle of their ability to adhere to these standards (similar to Capacity in your world). This CMM approach, originally developed to measure

ability to develop software, has been adopted throughout various segments of accounting, auditing, and IT.

Most of the frameworks in the IT space are comprised of three primary elements: People, Process, and Infrastructure. This same breakdown is also typically used to describe the various aspects of IT systems. When I help companies improve their overall IT Governance, or “capacity” to manage themselves, it typically involves training (people), revising workflows and procedures (Process), and implementing technology (Infrastructure). Interestingly, these are the same themes that I am seeing discussed in these XCeval threads with regards to ECD.

I’m admittedly naïve about the scope of the problem you are trying to address, but it’s likely that a similar structure exists in another industry from which we could find a way forward. I’ve always found that if I’m looking for a better way to do something, it’s often best to look outside of my space to find the answer.

Cheers -

Scott Whitsitt
Founder and CEO, CPA, CISA
One-to-One Service.com, Inc. | IT Compliance Experts

Dear all,

Thanks for the useful contributions. I would like to add that capacity or capability still would have to consider the networking of resources as well as the support from those who may not have the technical 'know-how' but have significant influence on how much could be achieved by the use evaluation capacity or capability. Without attempting to be overly controversial, I would say that the dynamism will be to 'tolerate' the contribution of non-ECD approaches to achieve expected results while being mindful not to compromise quality and integrity.

Cheers

Thomas A. N. Wobill
M&E Consultant
World Bank EFA/FTI/BEP
Monrovia, Liberia

7 Oct, 2011

Dear all

I somewhat agree here with Bob, with metaphors you can prove anything. What we desperately need are models. I think there is too much confusion about what we mean with capacity building. Working in this field for some years now, I often feel that capacity building is synonymous for training. Just experienced it again in Afghanistan working for USAID.

As a former lecturer organization sciences I learned a lot working with the 'Excellence Model' of the European Foundation of Quality Management and 'transformed' this model towards CSO's in a developing context. The Excellence model is based on the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM). The Excellence model is currently used by 30.000 organizations in Europe and slowly takes off in the world of CSO's. It's an organizational self assessment tool in which management and staff measure the development state of it's own organization in five phases.

This model looks into five enablers: Management, Organizational Policies and Strategies, Human Resources Management, Physical and Financial resources and the primary processes (what I loosely translate as PCM). Their are also the result areas of course: society results, donor and partner feedback, staff feedback and feedback from the target groups (Key results) . And yes I know, not all is perfect. I still need to trim the model.

In a perfect world all nine elements should score in the same phase, but in reality this is hardly the case. Looking at the raw data, you quickly see where the weaknesses are and where you have to start building or strengthening the capacity. The management discusses the action to be taken. This can be done with a series of training of course, but is hardly the case. Training only takes place when it's functional to the whole.

In most cases, putting systems in place already solves the problem. Sorry for a lot of consultants who think training is the answer for all problems.

What I like about the model is that using it correct it gives you the baselines of the phase in which an organization performs. It gives you also an action plan developed on real data and a tool to measure progress and in the end a tool for an objective and verifiable evaluation. It gives you a holistic approach working with CSO's in a changing environment. More important it is very participatory and based on CSO's own findings, not the consultants, including a plan of action to improve the performance of the organization.

And that is exactly what I miss here. We don't seem to be scientists but witchdoctors. Like talking in metaphors to hide our shortcomings. We need to

develop models, based on organisational research and sciences. And lending them from the commercial sector is not a sin. It's better than nothing.

Hopes it helps a bit.

Drs Johannes Reinier Schot (Msc)

Unicorn International Consultancies (UIC)
Strengthening Civil Society Organizations and Institutional Fund-raising

Bob,

An ECB related model is presented in my article on the use of evaluation training in ECB:

<http://www.mymande.org/?q=content/policies-results> (part 2, pages 240-251).

Alexey

Alexey Kuzmin, Ph.D.
Director General, Process Consulting Company

10 Oct, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Re. the above, thank you very much for your active participation and for sharing your thoughts and experiences with the issues and questions that we had posted (see copy below). Many of your points and reservations have been noted and we will certainly take them into account during the IWA.

To ensure that we have covered all of the issues raised earlier in my note, may I urge you to review the issues and questions again and to share with us your thoughts on those issues/questions that have **not** been touched on very much. I think thus far, we have had good discussions on issue area "A" but I would invite more discussion on **Issue Areas B, C, and D**. In particular, we need more feedback on questions B3, C6, and D7, D8.

Many thanks and we look forward to your comments. To those who have already sent in feedback on the other issue areas, please do not hesitate to add on to your earlier comments/ views.

Please note that the discussions on these issues will be completed by this **Friday 14th Oct.** and I'd urge you to send in your feedback by that date.

Many thanks
Aru Rasappan

Dear Colleagues,

Let me share some thoughts related to the questions mentioned by Dr.Rasappan.

B3. WHAT ARE THE KEY OUTCOMES DESIRED FROM/THROUGH ECD?

It depends in the level. I think that ECD at the national level can be defined as the development of evaluation into a mature profession. Such a definition provides additional insights into possible ECD goals and strategies. Let me refer to the nine Worthen's (1994) criteria of maturity of the evaluation profession:

1. Need for evaluation specialists.
2. Content (knowledge and skills) unique to evaluation.
3. Preparation programs for evaluators.
4. Stable career opportunities in evaluation.
5. Certification or licensure of evaluators.
6. Appropriate professional associations for evaluators.
7. Exclusion of unqualified persons from those associations.
8. Influence of evaluators' associations on pre-service preparation programs for evaluators.
9. Standards for the practice of evaluation.

These criteria could be used as a basis for formulating the key outcomes desired from/through ECD at the national level.

C6. WHAT IS THE SUGGESTED APPROACH, METHODOLOGY, INTERVENTION STRATEGY FOR ECD?

In most general terms it should include development of evaluation competencies and creating/maintaining conditions for on-going use of those competences (evaluation practice).

D7. WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ECD?

It depends on the level of ECD intervention. The key players are: individuals (those who are involved), their managers/supervisors, leaders of organizations, evaluation associations, governments.

Regards,
Alexey Kuzmin

Alexey Kuzmin, Ph.D.
Director General, Process Consulting Company

Dear Alexey - thanks for your thoughtful inputs. Some of the criteria you referred to from Worthen's work certainly merits more scrutiny with reference to ECD.

Are you able to share the approaches taken in your part of the world (and elsewhere you are familiar with) with ECD? Were these issues looked at and addressed? How did the government/s and/or other parties working with/in ECD deal with them?

Thanks again and look forward to your experiences and perhaps challenges faced when dealing with ECD matters.

Aru Rasappan

Dear Aru,

As for strategies for CD, I found in my fields of economics and conflict analysis, both are heavily bound by references to theory. In my projects on capacity development, I find a focus on methodology much more useful. In evaluation that means concentrating on monitoring and reporting ...that is how one builds evaluation capacity with practical experience. It teaches how to identify what is important, how to observe results, instituting corrective measures, thinking about what to report in a coherent way that will be applicable, etc. And it means adequate evidence is available later for a thorough evaluation.

Minds formed in the classroom by theoretical models have difficulty forming fresh analytical frameworks in the field, according to the specificity of the setting. Such evaluators tend to try to fit evidence from the field into the model already impressed on their minds, as proof of their capability. My evidence of capacity comes from the quality of their observation, the rigor of their field methods and follow-up, and the coherence of the final report in presenting a clear picture of a solved puzzle.

Ultimately evidence of how much capacity exists in a process is whether the findings reflected an adequate understanding of the system and were applied, or were shelved.

Best wishes,
Kerry Abbott (Ms)

Dear Kerry,

Many thanks for your feedback.

I'm confident that when we deal with individuals, one of the many key factors that helps support ECD is practical experience and related to that, various forms of interventions with approaches, methodology, utilization etc. But I am also reminded of public officials muddling through M&E and especially evaluation, in the field and creating more damage than good due to lack of proper knowledge, skills, etc. Even if they had them, there is a host of other factors in that environment that may negate the evaluation practices in the field.

Apart from the individual level, could you share with us what might work or what are the challenges at the other levels eg. organization and what may be the strategies, approaches, methods etc that may work to support ECD in a meaningful way?

Thanks

Aru Rasappan

Hello Everyone,

My apology for not participating in your discussion much sooner. Discussions have explored CD and EC, including methods. A number of people have raised questions about the extent to which we are able to be clear about the meaning of terms like capacity, capability and evaluation.

Part of our exercise in Geneva may involve building more understanding of the meaning of these terms...and the different ways in which they are being used.

We may find it quite easy to achieve a moderate level of agreement about some broad, general areas where evaluation capacity is needed, such as the capacity to identify relevant evaluation questions, collect relevant data, analyse data appropriately and report evaluation results effectively,

-- However, we may then find that different evaluation practitioners, consultants and advisers have developed their own personal opinions about which specific capabilities are necessary for there to be adequate evaluation capacity and capability.

In a postscript, below, I mention some examples of the different kinds of advice that I have received during the past decade or so – from acknowledged evaluation "experts" -- about which specific capabilities are absolutely vital in order for an organisation or team to develop suitable evaluation capacity.

My conclusion (below) echoes what is already being written: that people who have different professional and organisational experiences may have somewhat different

opinions about which evaluation capacities are more or less important.

Jerry

PS. A few examples of the differing advice that I have received from accepted evaluation experts who have specialised in particular aspects of evaluation development, design, implementation, and reporting:

* I have been advised by economists that organisations must have sufficient capacity to ask certain kinds of (economic) evaluation questions, collect certain types of (economic and other) data, analyse data in particular ways, and reporting about certain topics in final reports.

-- By contrast, this advice from economists is frequently very different from advise that I have been given about capabilities by evaluation experts from such fields as social research, operations research, data modelling, psychology, market research, epidemiology, etc etc.

* I have been advised by experts in the field of public health evaluation that they would expect an organisation to accept the case-control and cohort designs for data collection.

-- By contrast, I have met many evaluation experts whose training was in such fields as educational evaluation or social program evaluation who assure me that they have never been introduced to the use of case-control or cohort designs in evaluation.

* Some experts in evaluation assure me that it is vital in order to achieve successful development of organisational capacity in evaluation for there to be people in leadership roles who have appropriate knowledge about (a) leadership, (b) adult learning and/or (c) personal preferences in decision making.

-- Other experts in evaluation have assured me that they have little or no need for knowledge about one or more of these topics.

Conclusion: What one group of evaluation practitioners advises me is very important to include within an organisation's capacity for developing and conducting evaluations another group assures me is of limited, if any, importance.

Dear Aru,

Great questions! Let me try to be short. This is about ECD in organizations. I think that it is relatively easy to conduct a good inspiring evaluation training and help people understand that evaluation could be and should be useful + it could be fun.

The main challenge we face though is that the environment is not really supportive in many cases and people cannot find proper ways of incorporating their new knowledge into practice. Thus, evaluation capacity grows only in organizations where the leaders understand the importance of evaluation, support it and institutionalize it.

Hence I do believe that in order to build EC it is crucial to find the ways of evaluation awareness raising among the leaders, helping the leaders make evaluation useful and build systems to incorporate evaluation into the everyday life of organizations.

Regards,
Alexey

Dear Colleagues,

Alexey made an important point when he said, "Evaluation capacity grows only in organizations where the leaders understand the importance of evaluation, support it and institutionalize it."

I'd like to build on the concept of institutionalizing evaluation. Evaluation tools are also used every day by nonevaluators to gain a better understanding of projects, programs and policies. These may include program managers, upper management, boards/governing bodies and volunteers (an underutilized source of organizational learning). Volunteers interview and conduct surveys of target populations. Evaluation activities are part of the job description of some program managers. Focus groups are led by non-evaluators. Evaluations of external processes like competition or collaboration of service delivery and internal processes such as new technology rollout or conflict management are, likewise, valid means of integrating evaluation into the heart and soul of an organization (ECD).

The more evaluation activities are integrated into the daily tasks of all staff, the more it will be embraced in the organizational culture. When evaluation is relegated to a sub-unit of an auditing department in an outlying branch of an organization chart with a purpose of accountability, the richness of what evaluation has to offer is lost. But Alexey's right. Decision makers must realize the importance of evaluation and actively foment it or it becomes just a rote exercise or worse, a dreaded one.

The discussion so far has been concentrated on large complex organizations. ECDG has always espoused the notion that developing evaluation capacity is just as important for small NGOs. I look forward to the sharing of experiences and understanding of the essential elements, the basic principles and building blocks that are applicable for any organization to grow its own evaluation capacity that will be meaningful no matter its size or the sector in which it operates.

Best regards,
Karen

I'd like to follow that thread a little more. Well actually split it into two strands.

As I think I mentioned in an earlier email, there are two meanings of the word "institution" in the English language. One is essentially a synonym for organisation. Thus a "school" is an institution. The other is a set of rules, roles, and traditions associated with a certain set of activities. Thus "teaching" is an institution.

I think what we may be engaged in is something that spans both meanings. We wish to embed "evaluation" as an institution into organisations as institutions.

Now if we only consider evaluation in the organisational institutional frame, then Karen's concern is extremely appropriate since much of the conversation focuses on the needs, resources and structures of large organisations. Having worked extensively on evaluation work associated with health and safety issues the differences in how small and large organisations handle this is profound. ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 just do not work with small firms.

But now let's look at "evaluation" as an institution. Jim Woodhill - the Director of the Centre for Development Innovation at Wageningen University in the Netherlands - has developed some interesting ideas about looking at things from an institutional level. Jim describes institutions as a set of beliefs and values, frameworks for understanding, formal and informal rules, organisational arrangements and specific patterns of behaviour. Like a zillion others he has a model, in this case one that explores how "institutions" (like evaluation) relates with motivations, goals and actions of key actors.

What I like about Jim's approach is that it avoids what I call Evaluation Arrogance. What we call "Evaluation" is really just a combination of applied social research and process management that happens to be focused on notions of "worth". It's a very small part of a much larger range of ways in which people judge "worth" - our arrogance is that our version of "evaluation" is the standard to which all evaluative activities should be subsumed. I stumbled into the field of Evaluation because I was interested in promoting evaluative activity - good assessments of the worth of complex endeavours, and frankly I find a lot of (good quality) Evaluation clunky, wasteful, of questionable value and built on assumptions of causality, accountability and organisational dynamics that are unrealistic and inaccurate. Give me a manager's or community worker's quick, professional judgment based on a mix of experience, professional standards and limited data any day over a superbly constructed, carefully planned but largely irrelevant piece of applied social research.

Perhaps I'm unusual in the field, but I'd prefer to promote the capacity for evaluative practice as a means to an end than push Evaluation as an end in itself.

Bob

Hence my earlier suggestion that we should focus on demand driven efforts, not supply driven. Focus on the place of use, not the supplier or place of training.
Andy Rowe

11 Oct, 2011

Colleagues

Following on from Karen's comments on 'institutionalizing' evaluation.

It seems to me that in addition to having evaluation policies, plans, dedicated resources, etc in place; the key is linking evaluation into an organization's mainstream policy-making, planning, budgeting, reporting and accountability systems. This helps to 'lock in evaluation', rather than to be entirely dependent on the support of evaluation advocates who will come and go from the agency over time.

The other aspect is for the evaluation function to create "value" for the organization so that evaluation is perceived as worth supporting over time. Value in this sense is a political construct that can be quite different than a rational/mechanical approach to producing outputs/outcomes. In this context we can talk about agencies having official and unofficial program objectives, political objectives, as well as whole of agency system objectives such as survival and good PR. These various objectives will often be in conflict!

cheers
-Scott Bayley
Melbourne, Australia

Karen,

I work a lot with local institutions, including NGOs/CSOs, because they are the repository of development experience that will sustain results. Foreigners eventually move on to a new crisis/theme.

A lot of these NGOs are given development resources by donors who want to cultivate a practical and policy alternative to a government that is seen as ineffective. Unfortunately, this divides capacity development. I focus on partnerships that join gov't strengths with the less cumbersome processes of local NGOs.

NGO salaries often are higher, faster response rates reflect the lesser bureaucracy, but political affiliations still hinder results and motives.

Evaluation capacity can be easier to develop, but such NGO projects are donor driven, so there is no increased likelihood that the findings will be utilized, or that the NGO will be sustainable if foreign funding is cut. NGOs supported by local resources would be a better scenario.

Best wishes,
Kerry Abbott (Ms)

Kerry - wonderful feedback and many thanks. You have in your reply touched on a range of other factors that could/also influence or impact ECD - ranging from the organization, operating systems, the institutions and norms etc etc.

You have also helped to link these with the development agenda in aid recipient countries, which is something that we would like to narrow the ECD down to as well.

Many thanks and do share more of your thoughts and stand on such issues.

Rgds

Aru Rasappan

Dear Colleagues,

The discussion on « institutionalisation » of evaluation prompts this response:

- First of all, Evaluation is a process within an already existing system (call it management system of a project, programme, partnership or any kind of intervention in human activity at micro, meso or macro levels);
- The Evaluation process inputs come from other processes or sources e.g. Planning, Baseline data, Monitoring data from Execution/Implementation, Research, QC data, QA data, User satisfaction surveys.

- Evaluation is performed by people, usually specialists, say Evaluators who, based on their evaluation work propose conclusions and recommendations to decision-makers who have the power to make changes.
- The value of the evaluation process depends on its quality and the latter on the evaluators capability to perform.
- In order to ensure that evaluators do the job right, they need the continuous institutional support of: Education and Standards, say institutions that can Manage and Share Knowledge, link humans with the interest in performing evaluation well, and protect the principles of the profession of Evaluator, in real time.

There are many educational institutions teaching evaluation, and not only educational institutions, but practitioners themselves and organisations that need evaluation processes to be performed.

Drafting and succeeding an ISO/IWA should provide the opportunity to create that initial institution (the global pole of expertise in ECD that I mention in my Working paper para. C.6.iv.a.) which can eventually channel the expertise on evaluation from a global platform, providing direction based on inputs from all (including changing trends), and managing the work to establish the standards that may be needed to avoid confusion and ensure continuous improvement.

Best greetings to all,
Luis

To participants in the ECD discussion:

This has been a very interesting discussion, starting with training as capacity building, to building capability, to embedding “evaluation” as a practice within institutions, with the discussion moving from supply side to a focus on the demand side of the evaluation market. If nothing else it has brought to my attention the great array of serious, experienced thinker/practitioners who ply our craft around the world!

It might be useful for this group to know what the USG is doing with respect to its foreign assistance evaluation processes. The various categories, issues and conceptual ideas found in this discussion have been very much on the minds of the people in USAID, and more recently the Department of State, who are charged with restoring evaluation systems and processes in the foreign assistance and foreign policy arena. USAID’s new Evaluation Policy of January 2011 is on the web and worth a look. The Department of State has also issued its own evaluation policy.

USAID is currently engaged in rebuilding, through training, the capacity of individual officers to understand the requirements of good evaluations, to more effectively plan and contract for more rigorous evaluations, and to carry through

with better utilization of evaluation results. This is being done through two training courses, one for evaluation process managers, and one more intensive course for “evaluation experts”. The trainings are reinforced with a variety of on line tool kits, and a “practicum” for those who wish to earn a certificate of expertise. While focused on building skills, there is a second more difficult agenda which focuses on institutional capability. There is a hoped for nexus between capacity and capability, as individuals trained to become sophisticated consumers managing USAID’s evaluation process are also charged with building capability within their specific organizations. To provide overall policy and guidance, a central office dedicated Learning, Evaluation and Research has been re-established. The leadership of Dr. Rajiv Shah, USAID Administrator, as well as Sec. of State Hillary Clinton has been an essential ingredient in this effort.

Another thread in this effort has been the increased attention over the last year to USG efforts to adhere to Paris Declaration and Accra Accord principles, among which are greater country ownership, better donor coordination, and strengthened mutual accountability. These principles have, or should have, a direct influence in shaping donor and host country evaluation capability development.

Up to now, it is fair to say that more progress has been made on the individual capacity supply side than on the institutional demand side, not to speak of the very difficult challenges of developing country ownership, participation, and utilization of evaluation results. This is not too surprising, as institutional processes, in both senses of the word, are difficult to change, and when change does occur, the pace is slow and there can be some surprising unintended effects. Nevertheless, the demand for external evaluations had increased substantially, and evaluation scopes of work are showing signs of greater consumer sophistication in their designs, the questions asked, and the budgets provided. Clearly the call for Impact Evaluations has been heard. But, simply requiring more evaluations, or setting a budget target for the amounts to be spent, does not guarantee that evaluation results will have greater influence or impact on decision making, especially with regard to the kinds of difficult and highly politicized environments in which much of the USG foreign assistance takes place.

The “theory of change” behind this effort at rejuvenation is that strengthened capacity and capability will lead to more rigorous and credible evaluation findings which will in turn be used by decision makers (at all levels) to design and implement more effective assistance programs as well as strengthening meaningful accountability to the executive, the congress and the public.

There are a number of interesting issues that come to mind when thinking about this “theory”. To mention a few, is there much empirical evidence to support the idea that more rigorous and credible evaluations will actually influence decisions, especially in the foreign assistance, foreign policy domain? Even if we nail “cause and effect” through a rigorous RCT evaluation, will the reports be timely enough and

sufficiently relevant to fit into the often unpredictable timing of decision making sequences. Can credible evaluation results overcome “dogma” and “ideology” that frequently determine program policies and strategies? Who is in fact under the rather broad tent called “decision makers?” Are international and local NGO leaders there? How about the country Ministry of Health, or the Prime Minister’s office? Participants in this discussion will have their own lists.

These are not new questions, but after following this long and spirited discussion, I am even more convinced that we need to have a better understanding of just how one goes about assisting, fostering, facilitating or strengthening the many parts of an appreciative evaluation culture and set of institutional arrangements that actually values and uses the results of our ever improving efforts as evaluators. Are we convinced that people in power really want and will use better data, analyses, conclusions and recommendations about what works, what doesn’t, and why?

These observations are strictly my own, and do not reflect or represent the official position of the U.S. Government, or those of my employer, Social Impact, Inc.

Richard Blue
Vice President for Evaluation Services
Social Impact, Inc.

I think you raise an important issue Richard. While evaluators spend a lot of time worrying about ToCs for interventions, it is a rare thing to see a ToC for the evaluation itself.

Clearly there are many potential ToCs for “evaluation capacity building”, depending on the nature of the context and the different ways in which to frame what capacity building is all about.

It would be interesting to think of a few good possible ToCs that are more than just boxes with a few arrows between them.

Bob

Dear Richard

Thank you for your thoughtful comments which have nicely summarized several key issues. I appreciate you raising the assumed theory of change for evaluation capacity development which is often based thinking such as "if we supply evaluations this will result in better decision making and improved outcomes". I feel confident in stating that the international literature shows this assumption to be very tenuous (it

didn't work in Australia for example). Demand side considerations are they key, supply-side push strategies simply don't work without functional demand in place.

The author Thomas (attached) does a good job of pointing out many of the barriers to agencies making use of performance information to improve services.

cheers
-Scott Bayley
Melbourne, Australia

Dear Richard

You ask great questions!

"If as Thomas concludes (paper attached) that PPM has been less than successful, for a variety of reasons he spells out, will the same reasons prevail once we rebuild the stock of good quality evaluation reports? Is there something deeper going on that promotes resistance to evidence, qualitative or quantitative (or both), among decision makers, whether of the bureaucratic type, or political appointees? I'm sure the answer lies in the political context in which public policy decisions are made. But what can evaluators do about that? Should we become whistle-blowers? That would be an interesting discussion."

XCeval colleagues, I would be greatly interested in hearing your views on this topic.

cheers
-Scott Bayley
Melbourne, Australia

14 Oct, 2011

Dear Scott,

Unfortunately, the very factors that prevent organizations for accepting critical feedback means that those comments will probably not be in the final report. but buried in the draft report.

There could be an evaluation oversight group within each organization (like the UNEG in the UN system) that asks evaluators to rate their experience so that the evaluation culture within agencies can be monitored. However, it is difficult to envision such a group would be given any real authority over agency operations.

Ultimately, someone needs to be charged with addressing recommendations and how they can be implemented, clarifying those points during the evaluation

presentation. I have never met anyone who has the power to implement findings, nor the budget to do so--even in mid-term evaluations.

There needs to be a post-evaluation assessment by the office team as to how they will implement findings, makes changes in admin processes, etc. so that they can actually make use of the vaunted "lessons learned."

For a government agency, one could make public the information, in the hope of some sort of accountability, but breach of confidentiality even in the public interest might just undermine the use of external evaluators. Rewarding the use of evaluations for improved performance instead of making staff fear they will be blamed for poor results could encourage a real learning culture.

Best wishes,
Kerry

Dear Discussion Participants,

I have followed with immense interest, the discussion on ECD. Very impressive ideas, and thoughts, and I am amazed at the interest generated by this topic. Personally, I think it is a very timely discussion. Richard has outlined USAID's renewed effort to strengthen evaluation within the agency, an effort initiated by the release of the evaluation policy in January 2011. An important element of the policy related to the topic under discussion, is that the policy states that, "USAID will place priority within its sectoral programming on supporting partner government and civil society capacity to undertake evaluations and use results generated." In operationalizing this policy requirement, USAID will support local evaluation performance, through institutional leadership, management systems, and personnel skills improvement. The policy also states that "to the extent possible, evaluation specialists, with appropriate expertise from partner countries, but not involved in project implementation. Will lead and/or be included in evaluation teams."

Within this context, I have been working on a local evaluation capacity strengthening strategy, that will focus on developing the ability of individuals and organizations to define and conduct high quality evaluations of USAID programs, working with USAID in support of the development goals of their country, through institutional leadership, improved management systems, and personnel skills improvement that will contribute to USAID's results and country-level impact.

Winston J. Allen, PhD
Senior Evaluation Specialist
U.S. Agency for International Development

In reference to the thought below...

I'm sure the answer lies in the political context in which public policy decisions are made. But what can evaluators do about that? Should we become whistle-blowers?

In my view, it depends on the objective the evaluator wishes (or needs) to attain, or at what point the evaluator comes in or is invited in. Is the evaluator sufficiently independent financially? Sufficiently well-connected politically? Guided by what principles?

Is it to work out how best a result can be attained ("lessons learned")? or Is it to make sure the steps are executed right along the way ("standards"). These are not mutually exclusive, but let me expand on the thoughts from my observations in the field.

What happened when housing standards were not applied in Port-au-Prince for about 20 years? Result in 2010. Houses fell. Lives were lost. Hundreds of thousands, during an earthquake of a magnitude that did not phase out Chile. Where were the standard bearers? Were they muffled in their time? Were they simply not there?

What happens when funds are tight for the build-back? New housing meets Someone's standard. It does not meet Someone Else's (say the evaluator's). The political desire to achieve visible results NOW is high, by government and by donors. "Do more with less." Dont forget, people are still sleeping in tents in difficult conditions nearly two years after the earthquake. Are there whistle blowers? Are they getting, or will they get an audience or the political will behind them in this climate?

What is the alternative for the evaluator? It comes back to Richard's question. All I know is that 20-20 hindsight is excellent. But what about now? Documenting it and saying "I told you so waaay back then" will not change what happened in the end. Hopefully it will prevent future missteps. In the meantime, where does the evaluator go from here?

Kate Spring

Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

16 October, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Re. the ongoing discussions on ECD, as planned, we have now officially ended the discussions.

The past 2 weeks of discussion and sharing of experiences, opinions, perceptions, and stand on ECD have been most useful. On behalf of the ECDG and my fellow discussion facilitators, I wish to thank all of you who have participated for your time and effort in assisting us with these discussions. The discussions generally did focus on the main issues and questions on ECD I had raised for discussion. However, some of the issues were not dealt with in sufficient depth and especially the challenges being faced by developing countries, though some of us did touch on this. But interestingly, other angles to ECD have also surfaced touching on the conceptual aspects to the practical experiences. Perhaps, like my colleague Jerry was saying, this might lead us to even move our mind-sets away from traditional notions of ECD and the issues surrounding it? I for one would like to see new angles and approaches to ECD, not because of wanting a change for the sake of change, but more because of being demand-driven by the dynamic and intricate environment which we are dealing with, whether as a country, a donor entity, or just about anyone dealing with evaluation in the real world.

I would like to assure you that the points shared by you on ECD will be shared with the group meeting here in Geneva for the IWA. I am confident that we are better informed and better supported by your ideas, thoughts, and suggestions and that the IWA will see some useful outcomes.

Though this online discussion is now officially over, we would invite you to send in any more/other ideas and thoughts on the issues at hand throughout this coming week. But I would urge you to send them in soonest possible to be able to be useful for our discussions.

May I take this opportunity on behalf of ECDG and my co-facilitators to thank each and every one of us who has participated and contributed to the discussions on ECD in one way or another. You should be hearing more from us in the near future.

Best wishes

Aru Rasappan

Dr. Arunaselam Rasappan Ph.D.

Senior Advisor

Center for Development & Research in Evaluation (CeDRE) International

Hi Dr. Aru and Karen

Thanks for initiating this important discussion.

I enjoy very much the discussion in this thread. I did pick up and learn some key points raised by all who contribute in this thread which I found interesting.

Different thoughts and perspectives from different contributors in this thread help me structure my understanding about ECB from different view

Though I am late, allow me to jump in the discussion and try to respond to Dr. Aru's questions.

My responses are mainly based on my observation during a couple of years working in a team in an organisation here in Indonesia. Our team has specific task for building the evaluation capacity of the organisation. We call it an Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) program, which is just another different labelling to 'ECD' in this discussion.

I think I will not use my limited theoretical knowledge from literature to argue whether what we have been doing is a 'true' ECD/ECB or not, but perhaps I can share a little bit of background about this specific ECB/ECD program that I have been involved in.

The initiative was somehow initiated by our consultant who did some observation and analysis back then around 2006-2009 to the situation in our organisation and found there was some issues around how our organisation perceived evaluation and managed the evaluation process/activities (including managing the use of the product of the monitoring and evaluation), at the individual staff level, middle manager level, up to executive top management level. Those issues include:

- evaluation process is perceived as what we call a non-work work, not part of the whole program management, just another additional non-significant work burden.
- evaluation process/activity is conducted merely for ticking the box fulfilling a requirement of organisation, only to meet the compliance required by the rules and regulation of the organisation
- no demand for a high quality evaluation process/activity

Our consultant did the observation while at the same time providing advise, supports, random trainings to the whole staff, in come-and-go basis.

It took a while and huge effort to make all people believe and see the issues before deciding that the organisation needed to do something about it and it was obvious that giving trainings (randomly, unstructured, ad-hoc) will not make any change to the situation, at all.

So, in late 2009, the organisation agreed to invest in adding more resources and establishing a unit (where I am now) that has a task for bringing some changes to the organisation.

Then, the first thing we did is designing this ECB Program (with a program logic). Although it's called ECB, our final aim is about institutional change. It's about changing organisational behaviours in managing the evaluation process to produce high quality (monitoring and) evaluation products.

In developing/designing this ECB Program, I believe it is essential to understand the nature/characteristic of organisation in related to M+E. In this case, our organisation has main specific roles/tasks related to M+E. Our organisation is mainly about purchasing M+E service. So, we are mostly not the one who "do the M+E directly" but mainly "procure, manage and supervise and assess the quality of" the Evaluation (and Monitoring) process/product. So almost all M+E activities are conducted by our contractors for the program, although there is some but very few unit in our organisation doing the M+E directly.

With this ECB Program, we aim at an institutional change of perception and behaviour which are:

The organisation generate a quality information which can be considered as credible, based on evidence to be used as a basis for any decision making for improving the whole programs managed by the organisation. (I would love to call this an evaluative practice, but others might think not)

Obviously, in the design of our ECB program, we do have training packages. But those are not the first and not the only thing we have.

At the very beginning of the program what we did first is developing the Standards for M+E that help staff understanding what quality element of each M+E related products which covers

1. Design (the M+E aspect of it)
2. M+E System
3. Progress Reporting
4. Evaluation (Evaluation TOR, Evaluation Plan/Method, Evaluation Report)
5. Supervision/Monitoring Visit (a kind of internal mini evaluation)

The Standards was developed based on the acknowledgement that we didn't really a basis/reference that we can use when articulating what actually constitutes a good quality of the M+E Products/process.

It's often that staff provide random interpretation of the quality features which confuse everybody.

We do have previously (until now) some rules and tools on how to manage the processes related to M+E but those rules and tools just help staff on how to get through the process (ticking boxes of each steps of a process) but not helping them in thinking and understanding what actually they want out of the process, what the quality end products would look like coming out from that process.

Then we develop the training packages which consists all aspect in the Standards. So, basically we run the training that try to help staff in understanding the standards and apply it. So through the training we want them to use the standards on every performance/evaluative discussion (internally within our organisation, and with external parties: contractors, consultan, implementing partner, and Government Partner).

Our approach in delivering the training is a combination of 'lecturing and facilitating a self-learning'. We don't assume that staff have a low capacity, we think that they just need to be guided on how they use their capacity. We assume that they already did some evaluation practice, but it just need to be structured in a systematic way, and help them in connecting the dots of all their thoughts and practice and injected some more evaluative thinking. (Hope you see what I mean here)

The training is accompanied by an application session. We require people, after attending our training, to come back some time later with us in an application session. In this case, they should bring their own real works/tasks/document in the application session and facilitate them in applying the knowledge so they can develop their skill. We believe that people will get more learning and retain it if they have the opportunity to practice what they learn.

Beside those training package, we also did several thing.

1. Baseline assessment: to get overview of the current issue, identify gaps and set some targetting.
2. Case Study: where we try to show case best practice, to show others that it's possible to do a little bit more evaluative practice and it's worthwhile.
3. Engagement with senior management: to gain their support, encourage them to provide an incentive.
4. Engagement with the Program Implementer, and the M+E service provider (the Contractor, Consulting Company, M+E specialist of the program): to introduce the standard to them so they can get familiarised and learn what we expect from them

Now we are in the second year of the program, and while we have scaled up the coverage of the training, we have only some cases where the staff actually apply the knowledge and skill, but most of them already got some awareness and knowledge.

(Yeah, we need a proper measurement for this, but this is based on our observation during our continuous interaction with staff).

Now getting back to the question below:

ECD Issue Areas Key Questions for Discussion:

A. ECD Dimensions Interpretations

1. What exactly do we mean by ECD and what are its' key dimensions or components?

-->>> ECD (or ECB) is not only about training. It should be an efforts aiming for an institutional change.

They key components of ECD/ECB are:

- identifying what
- training accompanied with application
- enabling environment (incentive scheme)

B. Need for ECD Standardization

2. Why is ECD a problem or a need in the first place? What are the consequences if we do not address ECD?

-->>>

- there's a risk on the credibility of the organization if we don't improve our evaluation practice, meaning. If our organization need to make some important decision about the program and don't use a credible basis generated from an evaluation practice, that's very serious.

3. What are the key outcomes desired from/through ECD?

-->>>

- the key outcome from ECD is an institutional change behavior, towards more quality evaluation practice,.... and it depends on the nature of the organization, its role and function and core operation/tasks.

4. Do we even need to worry about standardization of ECD? What is the problem (if any) if we don't?

-->>> I don't see any need to standardize the ECD,.... there's no blueprint for effective and efficient ECD,... it depends on the characteristic of the organization/institution, and its people within it that form that characteristic.

C. Strategies for ECD

5. What is it that needs to be addressed in/through ECD?

6. What is the suggested approach, methodology, intervention strategy for ECD?

-->>>

- proper analysis of the gap is necessary as a basis for designing a program of ECD/ECB. I believe it would be essential to have the programlogic and ToC for that ECD program design

- training is not enough, coaching and mentoring and on-the-job application with lots of repetition is the key also
- make sure you got support from management, and have some incentive schemes
- there should be balance between playing a good cop vs a bad cop. First we play as a good cop, more encouraging style, and more persuasive style,.... but sometimes you need to play hard with people, boring them to comply with the standards requirement. It's still our challenge in our case.

We still try to figure out what is the possible incentive scheme for people. Meanwhile we thought that the best incentive schemes are: encouraging the senior management to demand good quality information from the evaluation practice and allocating intellectual space and time for the staff to perform their evaluation practice/tasks.

D. Responsibilities for ECD7.

Who should be responsible for ECD?

-->>> There should be a dedicated person who is responsible in implementing ECD, and have sufficient resource to operate.

8. How does ECD link/interface with other related efforts (MfDR, RBM, Accra Action Agenda, Paris Declaration etc)?

-->>> Not sure about this, but somebody should be able to bring the ECD to relate with that related efforts, but I guess that's not really a priority at the moment. It's a good rationale, but not the main aims of the ECD.

Hope it's useful, although it's kind of late already.

cheers.

B. Dwiagus Stepantoro

<http://id.linkedin.com/in/bdwiagus>

Dear Colleagues,

Many thanks to Dr. Aru and the other moderators for facilitating this engaging discussion. And thanks to those who shared their perspectives.

Even though the discussion is now closed, we invite you to go to ECDG Facebook page at <http://Facebook.com/ECDG.net> to receive daily updates from the ISO workshop to draft an Agreement on Evaluation Capacity Development that begins tomorrow, 17 Oct.

Best Regards,

Karen

PS: Follow ECDG on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ECDGupdates>

18 Oct, 2011

Group –

ECDG will be posting updates about the ISO IWA on evaluation capacity development that is being crafted this week at the following locations.

ECDG YouTube Channel - <http://www.youtube.com/ecdgupdates>

Facebook – <http://www.Faceboon.com/ECDG.net>

Twitter – <http://Twitter.com/ECDGUpdates>

Document Repository - <https://ecdg.iservicecrm.com/FindAnswers.aspx?topicID=4>

Cheers -

Scott Whitsitt

President & CEO

One-to-One Service.com, Inc.

Appendix D – Discussion of Workshop on ReLAC

18 Oct, 2011

Estimados amigos y colegas,

los invito a visitar el post del blog EVALUATECA donde su autor, Rafel Monterde-Díaz, comenta sobre una actividad en desarrollo esta semana en Ginebra, la cual puede haber pasado algo desapercibida en la comunidad internacional de evaluación hispanoparlante, y que bien puede ser el germen de algo realmente importante en el futuro de nuestra profesión.

Se trata del taller para impulsar el proceso de creación de un Estándar para el Desarrollo de Capacidades de Evaluación. Es un primer encuentro de profesionales pertenecientes a instituciones y redes internacionales de evaluación, con el objetivo de trazar los pasos para arrancar con el proceso formal de desarrollo de un estándar dentro de ISO (International Organization for Standardization).

Información más completa y sugerencias para seguir durante su mismo desarrollo este importante evento, la encontrarán en el siguiente link de Evaluateca:

<http://evaluateca.wordpress.com/2011/10/17/estandares-para-el-desarrollo-de-capacidades-en-evaluacion/>

Saludos cordiales,

Pablo

Muy buenos días. Me parece interesante la idea de la ISO para nosotros, pero muy peligrosa redactada por medios poco participativos y estrechos. Muchas veces las Certificadoras, pienso yo, son cosa de plata, cobran y cobran duro.

Si nosotros democráticamente la diseñamos y popularmente la impulsamos sería de considerar, pero si no es así, igualmente sería de considerarlo, pero muy enserio.

Mil saludos.

VMQuintero, Cali, Colombia

Me parece muy interesante este tema y considero que deberíamos debatirlo en función de establecer una posición de nuestra red al respecto.

En el momento estoy evaluando el impacto de una metodología en el mejoramiento de la productividad en las PYME. La condición básica de desarrollo de la metodología es el tener ISO, es decir un sistema de gestión de calidad que asegure la cultura de mejoramiento continuo. Pero por lo que se a partir de esta experiencia, es que ISO es para las empresas, no para los consultores de las empresas (internos o externos).

En tal sentido me parece que podría ser interesante crear una Norma Internacional de estandarización de capacidades en evaluación al interior de las organizaciones como parte de su desarrollo organizacional o institucional, pero no de los consultores en evaluación. Planteo que podría ser interesante lo de estandarización en las organizaciones, porque es una manera de homologar enfoques o crear “mínimos” en los cuales todos deberíamos estar de acuerdo para continuar avanzando con cierto equilibrio en el desarrollo de los enfoques de evaluación, por ejemplo, es increíble que todavía hoy existan organizaciones de gestión del desarrollo que se planteen la conveniencia de la evaluación participativa.

Ahora bien, las normas ISO son para mejorar la eficiencia, en la eficacia y efectividad (la productividad de una empresa) se requieren metodologías más que normas. En tal sentido no creo que una norma resuelva el problema de la eficacia de la gestión del desarrollo. Considero que nuestra gran labor como consultores, además de nuestros servicios, es aportar en la construcción de metodologías que contribuyan a la eficacia de la gestión del desarrollo, con base en los principios en los que nos vamos poniendo de acuerdo a nivel internacional, como los que se establecen en los foros sobre la eficacia en la cooperación al desarrollo.

Un abrazo,

Rubén Darío Espinosa

Estimados colegas:

Tal como le comentaba a Rafael, me parece muy interesante la iniciativa de plantear estándares de calidad a los topicos clave de nuestra gestion como evaluadores. Desde hace algunos meses participo de la iniciativa de discusion y redaccion de la norma ISO 21500 planteada para Project Management y considero que este tipo de trabajos se debe extender a otros campos de nuestro quehacer.

Creo que deberiamos organizar equipos de discusion para estos puntos y, en caso que se genere el interes suficiente, desarrollemos equipos de redaccion de propuestas.

Quedo a vuestra disposición para iniciar este importante trabajo. Seguimos en contacto.

Saludos cordiales.

Jose Antonio

Hola todos!!! Lo mejor!!!

Coincido con el Maestro Quintero, Hay necesidad de construir estándares internacionales para los evaluadores... Sin embargo considero que debe ser un trabajo participativo, de mucha colaboración, sobre todo de los que tienen tanta experiencia y reconocimiento en toda la región... de otra forma una norma de gran magnitud pero sin considerar la aportación de todos los interesados o cuando menos una mayoría, acotaría el quehacer.... De antemano hay que tomar en cuenta que un trabajo producto de un consenso...lleva mucho tiempo...pero se tiene que dar ese paso se lleve el tiempo que se lleve.

Me uno a los trabajos que se tengan que realizar....

Felicidades a todos!!!

Maria Esther Gonzalez

Estimados,

Estoy participando en el taller en Ginebra hasta mañana, pero más como una observadora para la cooperación internacional de Alemania. Tenemos mucho interés en el tema porque como ustedes ya probablemente saben estamos implementando un programa nueva de ECD en Centro America con la sede central en Costa Rica (es una cooperación entre el nuestro ministerio, la BMZ, la GIZ, MIDEPLAN y la UCR).

Bueno, puede ofrecerles entregar los comentarios y las preguntas de ustedes mañana en el taller. Al mismo tiempo sería importante que ustedes participen activamente en facebook hasta este viernes (posiblemente en inglés)! En mi opinión es muy importante que los miembros de ReLAC pueden expresar sus opiniones, experiencias, sugerencias y también dudas! Sobre todo en el taller no hay representantes de ningún asociación/red de evaluación! Que lastima ...

Además tengo que clarificar algo importante: Estoy leyendo los comentarios de ustedes y tengo la impresión que todo está esperando estándares de ECD al final de esta semana!? Este es un malentendido. El producto del ECDG será un documento de cualquier manera (basicamente un entendimiento junto entre los participantes de este grupo, puede ser una guía, pueden ser principios etc. - vamos a ver!). Este documento se llama "International Workshop Agreement", nada más! A partir de

viernes el grupo tiene 3 meses para entregar este documento a ISO. ISO va a publicarlo. Después 3 años (!) es posible revisar el documento. Tal vez después hay una decisión sobre estándares de ISO!

La pregunta que yo quiero levantar es, si es realmente necesario tener estándares de ISO (algunos de ustedes ya hablaron sobre los implicaciones negativos!) sino más bien algunos principios, específicamente para crear más atención en el tema y aprobación para invertir más en ECD!?

Saludos (y disculpen mis errores en español!)
Stefanie

Dra. Stefanie Krapp
Unidad de Monitoreo y Evaluación
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ
Alemania
www.giz.de

Estimada Stefanie:

Tiene toda la razón. Los procesos ISO tienen un tiempo prolongado de maduración. En las normas ISO para la gestión de proyectos (Project Management) estamos manejando tiempos aproximados.

Con respecto a la necesidad de manejar la categoría ISO debo comentar que tienen sus pros y sus contras, como todo. Yo lo considero importante por dos razones: la primera, de cara a obtener una institucionalización oficial, reconocida internacionalmente. Y la segunda tiene que ver con los niveles de exigencia en el proceso mismo de elaboración. Las etapas del procedimiento son meticulosas y exigen de altos niveles de afinamiento. Esa forma de hacer las cosas es muy necesaria para que el producto que obtengamos tenga la máxima calidad posible.

Ahora bien, esto no impide que el proceso de elaboración sea gradual (tiene que ser así). Quiero decir, que en el camino hacia la ISO podemos (y debemos, creo yo) ir elaborando un cuerpo normativo que contenga también niveles altos de exigencia progresiva y que tenga un fuerte carácter aplicativo, sin necesidad que tengan en ese momento categoría ISO. Esta "normativa propia" será el insumo para aspirar a la ISO en algún momento, pero no quiere decir que porque no tenga categoría ISO no podemos ir aplicándola desde el momento mismo que la consensuamos. Este es un debate que debemos iniciar, haciendo el balance de las ventajas específicas del proceso ISO para este caso concreto. Por mi parte, me comprometo a participar activamente en él y aportar todo lo que este a mi alcance para optimizar nuestros procedimientos de gestión permanentemente. Seguimos en contacto. Saludos cordiales.

Jose Antonio Monje | Coordinador Regional de Monitoreo y Evaluación para América Latina y el Caribe | Save the Children España

19 Oct, 2011

Estimados todos,

Esta tarde Karen Russon ha publicado en Facebook una breve reseña del segundo día del taller que venimos comentando. A continuación va una rápida traducción de su comunicación (y más abajo la versión original para chequeo y mejora:). Ojalá este aporte nos sirva para seguir preguntándonos y preguntándoles a los amigos que están en Ginebra sobre estos temas...

saludos cordiales!

Pablo

Estimados colegas:

Gracias por socializar la información (gracias pablo por la traducción). Coincido con José Antonio, en la necesidad de intercambiar ideas y consensos respecto del desarrollo de capacidades en evaluación y los estándares de su medición, como parte de un proceso de mas largo plazo, que podría o no incluir la certificación ISO. Creo que una buena base para empezar la discusión podría ser los resultados del taller en Ginebra y ver si se aplican ao no para nuestra realidad latinoamericana.

Saludos

Carlos Frías Coronado
Gerente
Área de Control de Calidad y Desarrollo de Proyectos

Estimados(as) colegas:

Gracias a Pablo Rodríguez-Billela por compartir e informarnos sobre el taller de ECD. El tema de desarrollo de capacidades en evaluación debe ser abordado pensando en un horizonte mayor al de un taller o de un ISO y coincido con quienes se han expresado en ese sentido. De otro lado, los avances del taller de Ginebra reseñados por Karen Russon en Facebook son alentadores porque presenta conceptos amplios sobre desarrollo de capacidades en evaluación y establece los límites y alcances de sus conclusiones. Considero que ReLAC es el espacio para debatir y recoger los aprendizajes alcanzados en nuestra región en este tema, por lo

que un grupo de trabajo a su interior podría ser el canal más apropiado para continuar.

Saludos

Emma

Emma L. Rotondo
Directora Ejecutiva
Plataforma Regional de Desarrollo de Capacidades en Evaluación y Sistematización

Estimadas/os colegas/os:

Me uno a los agradecimientos a Pablo Rodríguez por socializar la información de este evento. Sin duda es un tema clave y es necesario que desde la comunidad evaluadora en español participemos aportando nuestra visión y nuestras experiencias, que como señala Emma también son significativas.

Me gustaría comentar algunos aspectos que han ido surgiendo a raíz de las aportaciones de los/as colegas en la lista, así como algunas notas que me han dejado en EVALUATECA aprovechando el artículo de ayer en el que informaba del evento (<http://wp.me/p4oZ9-7U>)

Una primera cuestión está relacionada con un comentario vertido por Stefanie Krapp, participante en el evento de Ginebra, sobre el proceso del estándar ISO. Este taller de trabajo tiene como objetivo clarificar el concepto de desarrollo de capacidades ("capacity development") para poder empezar a trabajar sobre el desarrollo del estándar ISO. Para crear el estándar en sí, ISO establece la creación de un Acuerdo para un Taller Internacional (IWA en sus siglas en inglés). Ese es, estrictamente, el arranque del trabajo con ISO, y no este taller. Cualquier persona u organización puede participar en el proceso de IWA una vez establecido el taller (un descripción más detallada de este protocolo puede encontrarse en la propia web de ISO: (<http://bit.ly/ox9465>).

Por tanto, este grupo de trabajo preliminar no va a desarrollar un estándar, ni si quiera ha empezado el trabajo con ISO. Como bien decía Stefanie Krapp a este respecto y José Antonio Monje sobre ISO en general, es un proceso largo y en el que se requiere un alto grado de consenso. Así pues, tanto por el proceso en sí (tal y como está definido por ISO) como por los impulsores de este taller preliminar, creo que no hay que preocuparse sobre las posibilidades de participar y llevar nuestra voz y nuestra experiencia. Más bien al contrario.

Una segunda cuestión que quería comentar es la mezcla de conceptos "desarrollo de capacidades" con capacidades/competencias de evaluadores. Quizá el hecho de

hablar de una norma ISO tiende a centrar el tema en las cuestiones de la profesionalización de la evaluación, acreditación/certificación de profesionales, etc. Si bien es un tema importante (comento algo más adelante), el "desarrollo de capacidades" de evaluación abarca mucho más, y en especial incluye una dimensión organizativa/institucional. Y de ahí la necesidad que los/as promotores/as de este taller del que estamos hablando estos días tienen de establecer con claridad sobre QUÉ se va a normar (si finalmente se da el caso) en ISO.

Sobre la pertinencia o no de una norma ISO en este sentido creo que también hay espacio para el debate. Personalmente, creo que la existencia o no de una norma no es un problema en sí mismo. De hecho, la profesión de la evaluación ya se ha dotado de normas, estándares, principios guía, para el correcto desempeño de su función. ¿Qué sentido tendría entonces tener otra norma más? De entrada, un consenso internacional (si es que esto es posible), ya que los estándares disponibles han sido desarrollados por redes/sociedades de evaluación nacionales o como mucho regionales (además de instituciones como por ejemplo las agencias de NNUU). Y en segundo lugar, y en eso coincido con José Antonio, la fuerza que ISO tiene en el mundo ligado a la idea de "estándares". Así, una norma ISO podría ayudarnos a promocionar mucho más el uso de estándares para llevar a cabo procesos evaluativos, cosa que en estos momentos, seamos francos/as, ocurre muy poco (acaban siendo más expresiones institucionales de buena voluntad que herramientas prácticas).

Entiendo la preocupación por la posible "mercantilización" del proceso al ligado a ISO. Yo también soy muy excéptico con la deriva en el uso de, por ejemplo, las normas ISO de calidad, de gestión ambiental, etc. En España, mucho en la implantación de normas de calidad ha sido, simplemente, un proceso burocrático para obtener un sello por razones de imagen social. Y es cierto que existe el riesgo. Pero creo que la diferencia no la existencia o no de una ISO, sino la madurez del sector. Preguntémonos cuán madura es la profesión, y si todos los actores somos capaces de participar en el proceso de creación con aportes significativos, y más importante aún, si seremos capaces de usar la ISO y no "ser usados" por agentes que nos obliguen a pasar por un aro que no nos sirve para mejorar nuestro desempeño evaluativo.

Finalmente, un comentario acerca de la profesionalización y procesos de certificación, acreditación, etc. Si bien ya he comentado que no hay que confundir "la parte por el todo", es cierto que este tema es una cuestión crucial, y no nos engañemos, ha estado y sigue estando en la agenda internacional, constantemente. Y aquí sí creo que en la comunidad evaluadora en español hemos tenido hasta la fecha una importante deficiencia de debate y de posicionamiento. No conozco ningún documento específico generado en esta línea por personas o instituciones de nuestro ámbito (agradecería si lo hay que me dieran la referencia). Sin embargo, en otras áreas geográficas sí se ha hecho (el caso más reciente, por ejemplo, es el de la Sociedad Canadiense de Evaluación en 2010:

(<http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/site.cgi?en:5:6>). Sin que ello signifique prescindir de un debate más amplio sobre todas las dimensiones del desarrollo de capacidades de evaluación, creo que nos hace falta tener cuanto antes un posicionamiento sobre la profesionalización de la evaluación. En la Sociedad Española de Evaluación tenemos este tema como un punto pendiente. Creo que sería muy bueno que pudiéramos sumarnos a un trabajo en este sentido impulsado desde ReLAC.

Disculpas si finalmente la aportación fue muy extensa.

Saludos a todos/as,

Rafa Monterde

Quiero sumarme a este conjunto de opiniones diciendo que concuerdo con lo expresado por Rubén Darío ("podría ser interesante crear una Norma Internacional de estandarización de capacidades en evaluación al interior de las organizaciones como parte de su desarrollo organizacional o institucional, pero no de los consultores en evaluación"). Pienso que todos hemos tenido que sacar adelante evaluaciones al interior de organizaciones con visiones muy distintas sobre cuál debe ser el rol de las evaluaciones y cómo deberían llevarse a cabo. En muy pocas experiencias he encontrado, por ejemplo, que la evaluación se considere un ejercicio indispensable en el cual observadores externos a la organización examinan con objetividad aspectos específicos de la forma en que dicha organización busca alcanzar ciertos objetivos. Lo más frecuente (todavía) es que se considere a la evaluación como una condición en realidad impuesta por los donantes pero que no tiene repercusiones en el trabajo de la organización, y no es infrecuente que la organización que es evaluada tome los resultados del ejercicio como un ataque, y no como una oportunidad para reflexionar, aprender y mejorar su quehacer. Y esto sucede tanto en una pequeña ONG como en un proyecto ejecutado por el estado y financiado con recursos de un organismo multilateral o un banco de desarrollo. En cuanto a estándares para los evaluadores, pienso que se trata de una cosa distinta. En el campo de la evaluación hay (¡felizmente!) amplia diversidad de posiciones sobre qué debe tomarse en cuenta, qué enfoque y qué metodologías, cómo obtener la información que se necesita, cómo devolverla a la organización, entre otros temas. Hablar de estándares necesariamente implica que esa diversidad sería abandonada, lo cual en mi opinión empobrecería más bien que mejorar nuestro trabajo. Concuerdo también aquí con Victor Manuel, "interesante la idea de la ISO para nosotros, pero muy peligrosa redactada por medios poco participativos y estrechos". No es solamente el tema del costo de la certificación, sino también "quién certifica al certificador".

s.e.u.o.

Saludos cordiales,

Teobaldo Pinzás

Estimados colegas y amigos/as:

Ciertamente ha aclarado mucho la participación de Rafael Monteverde y de Stefanie Krapp porque ya se iban construyendo ideas que se estaban escapando de lo que realmente comprende el largo camino que significa llegar a una ISO, cuando este es un Taller que busca un acuerdo en el tema a partir de su revisión, para iniciar con el proceso formal de desarrollo de un estándar dentro de ISO, como se ve que se esta exponiendo gracias a lo difundió por Pablo Rodriguez sobre los resultados del día 2.

Definitivamente la existencia de una norma ISO permitiría un consenso o si se quiere un marco internacional sobre Evaluación así como ya la hay en Responsabilidad Social, por ejemplo: La Norma ISO 26000:2010 de Responsabilidad Social NO ES UNA NORMA CERTIFICABLE pero proporciona orientación sobre los Principios y Materias Fundamentales de Responsabilidad Social que ayudan a integrar un comportamiento socialmente responsable en cualquier organización del sector privado, público y sin fines de lucro, independientemente si son grandes, medianas o pequeñas y operan en países desarrollados o en países en desarrollo.

Pero AENOR la entidad líder en España en certificación de sistemas de gestión, productos y servicios, y responsable del desarrollo y difusión de las normas UNE (Normas Españolas) ha sacado la Norma RS 10 (Sistema de Gestión de la Responsabilidad Social) CERTIFICABLE que ofrece la posibilidad de sistematizar e integrar la gestión de la Responsabilidad Social, y de esta manera contribuir al desarrollo sostenible y lograr la satisfacción de las necesidades y expectativas de los grupos de interés mediante. ¿Por qué implantarla? Pues entre las cosas que señalan es la de posicionar a la organización como socialmente responsable, diferenciándola de la competencia y reforzando, de manera positiva, su imagen ante clientes y consumidores. Como podemos ver este es un sello que responde a razones de imagen social que es interés de toda organización, pero por otro lado es también, como señalaba Rafael, una norma que ayudaría a promocionar mucho más el uso de estándares para llevar a cabo procesos evaluativos, cosa que no ocurre en las proporciones que se deberían y como he podido encontrar en el Seminario sobre Experiencias de Evaluación de Programas y Políticas realizado en Madrid <http://bit.ly/pg0yid>

En el mundo de las ISO hay dos términos importantes y que a su vez se confunden con frecuencia, estos son: acreditación y certificación. Se CERTIFICAN los procesos, los productos, los servicios y la gestión; pero se ACREDITA a los técnicos, profesionales, laboratorios, entidades u organismos que tras una evaluación dan CONFORMIDAD. De lo primero se encarga una ISO, ¿pero de lo segundo?

El curso que ya está teniendo la evaluación en el mundo ISO exige no solo preocuparnos del contenido y la labor de Evaluación sino también de los Evaluadores y esto si que demanda mayores esfuerzos de organización, no lleguemos tarde.

Un abrazo,

Miriam

Hola Rafa, Pablo y nuestros colegas de ReLAC:

Muchas gracias por su apoyo para el esfuerzo a embordar un ISO acuerdo sobre desarrollo de capacidades en evaluación.

Estamos muy atentos de los debates en ReLAC. Stefanie Krapp dio una presentación durante el sesión del taller este tarde.

Estoy escribiendo para contestar algunas preguntas que han surgido. (Lo siento por mi español malo.)

No estamos embordando estándares. Embordamos un acuerdo que tal vez sería como un precursor a un estándar.

Todavía falta mucho. Pero por favor, asegúrense que no vamos a proceder sin tener participación de LAC.

No tenemos fines de lucro. El acuerdo que embordamos no tiene certificaciones porque no es un estándar técnico.

El acuerdo tendrá amplia aplicación. Será útil para ReLAC, consultores, entrenadores, etc.

Estamos poniendo hincapié en traer claridad conceptual al tema y formular un método que se puede utilizar en muchos contextos diferentes.

Será un placer colaborar contigo en el futuro en este trabajo importante. Saludos desde Ginebra

Atentamente,

Craig

Estimado Craig,

Muchas gracias por tomarte un tiempo y poder sumar tu voz y tus aclaraciones en el contexto de esta lista de ReLAC. Como hemos notado, el interés por la temática del desarrollo de capacidades de evaluación, y su tratamiento en el taller de Ginebra, ha tocado alguna fibra importante para la comunidad Iberoamericana (así integramos a los amigos y colegas hispano y lusitano parlantes :))

De los puntos que mencionaste en tu email, me resultó particularmente curioso (o más bien, encendió mi curiosidad) el siguiente:

>Estamos poniendo hincapie en traer claridad conceptual al tema y formular un metodo que se puede utilizar en muchos contextos diferentes.

Ojalá que puedan seguir compartiendo los avances que aparezcan al respecto, y lo hagan en el idioma que sea, no faltarán voluntades en ReLAC para traducirlos!

Saludos cordiales,

Pablo

20 Oct, 2011

Estimadas/os compañeras/os:

Visto el interés que ha despertado el tema, parece pertinente pensar, como sugerían algunos/as compañeros/as, emprender un proceso post-Ginebra, en el seguir profundizando en el tema, así como preparar la futura participación en el proceso ISO-IWA. Lanzo el guante a los/as responsables de ReLAC, para por ejemplo habilitar un espacio en la Red Social de ReLAC que tan bien está funcionando en los grupos de trabajo.

Me gustaría aprovechar también para agradecer a Craig Russon y por él a todos/as los participantes/es, la sensibilidad que han mostrado en tener en cuenta los aportes del exterior, por medio de las redes sociales, y en particular lo discutido en esta lista. No conozco precedentes de este tipo en nuestra comunidad evaluadora. Aplaudo la decisión y espero que podamos mantener el pulso de esta interesante dinámica.

Sólo un par de aportes más, en relación a temas que surgieron en nuestra discusión los días pasados. Miriam Venegas comentó acertadamente la necesidad de distinguir el "para qué" de la norma ISO, citando las diferencias entre "certificación" y "acreditación" como ejemplo (una Buena descripción de estos y más conceptos ligados a las normas en evaluación se encuentra en el ya clásico trabajo de Altschuld

para la American Evaluation Association a finales de los 90 - The Certification of Evaluators: Highlights from a Report Submitted to the Board of Directors of the American Evaluation Association, American Journal of Evaluation, September 1999 vol. 20 no. 3 481-493)

Craig Russon hacía mención hoy también a esta cuestión, sobre la característica no certificable. De entrada creo que es clave que haya consenso en esta cuestión, y parece que las vías apuntan (incluso antes de empezar en sí el proceso) a una norma que sea referencia internacional con un amplio consenso pero con vocación no obligatoria. Miriam también citaba el caso de la norma de RSE, que en el caso español ha traído una controversia tremenda, por el claro interés de AENOR en simplemente hacer negocio con ello (a diferencia del proceso ISO, que fue ampliamente consensuado por los actores participantes). Tenemos un caso similar en evaluación en España, la Certificación de Excelencia de Organizaciones de la AEVAL (Agencia de Evaluación y Calidad), un proceso absolutamente contrario al espíritu colaborativo del ECDG (próximamente comentaremos el tema en EVALUATECA, pero si no lo conocen pueden echar un vistazo aquí: (<http://bit.ly/oEtcLS>).

La otra cuestión que me gustaría mencionar es acerca precisamente de la participación de los diferentes actores de la comunidad evaluadora internacional. Ha sido constante la mención al tema en esta lista, a mi juicio demasiado escéptica en algunos casos. Yo personalmente confío en que los impulsores de este proceso van a abrir el espacio, como creo que están demostrando estos días. Pero por otra parte, si queremos un proceso rico y consensuado, nos tenemos que autoexigir una participación de calidad. Y como bien sabemos de nuestras experiencias locales, parafraseando al famoso musical "Fame": la participación cuesta. Y cuando empiece el proceso de trabajo, si queremos participar, lo vamos a tener que sudar. El espacio hay que ganarlo. Creo que en la comunidad "iberoamericana" (usando palabras de Pablo) tenemos los mimbres, la experiencia, especialistas, y lo mejor, tenemos la práctica de trabajar participativamente. No nos perdamos este tren.

Para terminar les dejo, por si gustan, el enlace a una entrada que hemos hecho hoy en EVALUATECA, recopilando y comentando algunos de los avances de estos días en el taller: <http://wp.me/p4oZ9-85>

Un abrazo a todos/as desde Buenos Aires,

Rafa

Estimado Rafa y colegas,

cuántos temas has planteado en tu email anterior así como en la entrada de ayer en el blog!

<<http://evaluateca.wordpress.com/2011/10/20/estandares-para-el-desarrollo-de-capacidades-en-evaluacion-2%C2%AA-parte/>>

Acertado estás en que cada uno de ellos merecería una entrada particular en el blog. De algún modo, y retomando la metáfora que decíamos en la lista ReLAC en cuanto parece que el tema del Desarrollo de las Capacidades de Evaluación tocó alguna fibra sensible, esa fibra parece también el hilo de un tejido, del cual los evaluadores tiran, tiran, y siguen tirando, y no dejan de aparecer temas relevantes ubicados en el centro de nuestro quehacer.

Retomando dos puntos que señalás en la entrada:

1) posición abierta y de escucha, no dogmática ni top-down, sobre la concepción del Desarrollo de las Capacidades de Evaluación y el alcance del taller ISO IWA sobre el tema. Es cierto -y entendible diría yo- que una reacción lógica es cierto escépticismo sobre los alcances del trabajo, pero también confío que el trabajo en curso es profesional del bueno, y diría que más orientativo que normativo per se. Claro, cuando hay que afinar el lápiz, los temas que planteas (indicadores? resultados? participación? cuántos más!), hay que ver cómo se cocinan...

2) redes sociales y su presencia en el taller: si se me permite la confesión, debo decir que esto hasta me ha emocionado un poco... Que nuestras voces y opiniones, nuestros intercambios y dudas, planteados en ámbitos como una lista de discusión, un par de blogs, facebook y twitter, haya resonado en el mismo taller, durante el mismo taller, y llevando a que se nos comentara y se nos diera alguna respuesta a las cuestiones que aparecían, es realmente fantástico. Vamos conociendo en el mundo de la evaluación más y más aportes de su vínculo con la web 2.0 (y me saco el sombrero ante los aportes de Evaluateca al respecto)... Con seguridad, podemos avanzar más...

Un abrazo,

Pablo

26 Oct, 2011

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Estimados colegas:

He estado pendiente de las diferentes opiniones acerca de la certificación ISO para determinar la capacidad o competencia de los profesionales para poder ejercer su función de Evaluadores. Como bien lo dice Rafael Monterde Díaz, nuestra profesión ya ha sido dotada de normas, estándares, principios, guías. Lo importante es que la

evaluación no se visualice como un proceso aislado y que se olvide que el mismo se origina en otro proceso, como es la planificación. Los procesos de planificación pueden estar cimentados en el desarrollo de una política pública, de ahí que los planes, programas y proyectos tomen diferentes matices o características para su ejecución, según sean multisectoriales o interinstitucionales y por consiguiente los procesos de evaluación tendrán que ajustarse a cada modalidad. Menos complejas son las iniciativas aisladas y espontáneas para diseñar y ejecutar programas y proyectos, que también deben ser evaluados. Por tanto la evaluación tiene diferentes situaciones, enfoques y abordajes.

En las líneas precedentes, estamos hablando de planes, programas y proyectos de desarrollo o de carácter social, pero también es importante considerar otros ambientes o contextos en que se desarrollan los procesos de evaluación que pueden estar orientados a la empresa privada, a la industria y otros.

Los evaluadores puros no existen. Es necesario haberse formado en áreas específicas para comprender la esencia de lo que se va a evaluar, utilizando metodologías y técnicas que ya han sido probadas como efectivas en el área específica de evaluación. Es así que si hacemos un mapeo o inventario de las capacidades profesionales, de los integrantes de las diferentes redes o asociaciones de evaluación nos encontraremos con una diversidad de disciplinas académicas y técnicas, diferentes grados de certificación como son los doctorados, maestrías, licenciaturas, así como diferentes niveles de experiencia, etc. Podríamos profundizar más en el tema, pero mi conclusión es que para llegar a un acuerdo ISO en el Desarrollo de la Capacidad de Evaluación (ECD), no es fácil y que se tiene que tener una visión muy clara de las implicaciones y trascendencia que esto tendría.
Pablo un agradecimiento por tu magnífica labor.

Magdalena Ordóñez Alonzo
Red Hodureña de Evaluación

31 Oct, 2011

Estimado Craig,

Muchas gracias por tomarte un tiempo y poder sumar tu voz y tus aclaraciones en el contexto de esta lista de ReLAC. Como hemos notado, el interés por la temática del desarrollo de capacidades de evaluación, y su tratamiento en el taller de Ginebra, ha tocado alguna fibra importante para la comunidad Iberoamericana (así integramos a los amigos y colegas hispano y lusitano parlantes :))

De los puntos que mencionaste en tu email, me resultó particularmente curioso (o más bien, encendió mi curiosidad) el siguiente:

>Estamos poniendo hincapie en traer claridad conceptual al tema y formular un metodo que se puede utilizar en muchos contextos diferentes.

Ojalá que puedan seguir compartiendo los avances que aparezcan al respecto, y lo hagan en el idioma que sea, no faltarán voluntades en ReLAC para traducirlos!

saludos cordiales,

Pablo

Estimado Pablo

Muchas gracias por su amable mensaje y por ser el porta voz del taller ISO a LAC. El taller fue una experiencia transformadora para mí. Al entrar en el evento, yo creía que sabía mucho acerca de DCE.

Una semana más tarde mi forma de pensar acerca de DCE se habia cambiado. Me di cuenta de la contextualidad de DCE.

Por ejemplo, trabajo para una agencia internacional. Quería aplicar un sistema formado por los niveles nacional, organizacional e individual a todas las situaciones. Sin embargo, la construcción de DCE al nivel de la comunidad nos obliga a identificar a un sistema diferente, con diferentes perspectivas, las fronteras y las interrelaciones.

La construcción de DCE de un proyecto requiere la identificación de sistema diferente a los dos ya mencionados. Una misma talla no sirve para todos.

Personalmente estoy investigando la aplicacion de la metologica de "soft systems" al deber de desarrollar capacidad de evaluacion. Saludos a Rafa y todos mis amigos de ReLAC.

Estare' en contacto muy pronto.

Saludos,

Craig

3 Nov, 2011

Estimado Teobaldo:

Gracias por su bondadosa mensaje. Abajo, intento a proporcionar unas respuestas breves en mi espanllol malo (disculpa). Tendria interes en continuar la conversacion consigo, Pablo y Rafa y los de mas de nuestros colegas de ReLAC.

Attentemente,

Craig

>>> <tpinzas@etcandes.com.pe> 21/10/2011 06:33 >>>

Estimado Pablo:

Muchas gracias por enviarnos el mensaje de Karen Russo traducido al español y en su versión original en inglés. He leído ambos y debo decir que no llego a entender bien lo que el grupo de trabajo está tratando de hacer

Me parece que están proponiendo definir estándares de capacidad evaluativa (CE) para individuos (los que se dedican a la evaluación), organizaciones (de qué tipo??), gobiernos locales y nacionales.

CR El proposito del taller en Ginebra no fue a establecer estandares. Los participantes estan desarrollando un acuerdo entre ellos mismos. El acuerdo busca traer claridad conceptual al tema de DCE. Luego van a ofrecer guianza en como se puede hacer DCE basado en pensamiento de sistemas. No estan en la onda de establecer estandares mandatorios para certificacion.

Es decir, se parte de que se requiere desarrollar la CE a varios niveles (y, como se menciona en el mensaje, en diferentes contextos).

Visto así, me parece un propósito interesante. Lo que no entiendo es porqué se piensa en términos de ISO (que abarca certificación o acreditación, la diferencia me parece sutil).

CR Para mí la principal ventaja de trabajar a por medio de la ISO es que ningún grupo puede reclamar el acuerdo como su propiedad para fines de lucro. No ECDG, no el BM. No el PNUD. Nadie. ISO sostiene el acuerdo como un bien público para el beneficio de todos.

En el mismo video que incluye en su blog Rafael Monteverde la persona que habla dice que entre los integrantes del taller hay los que se interesan en la evaluación de procesos y los que quieren resultados.¿Quiere esto decir que sería necesario definir ISOs para ambos grupos de evaluadores? No tiene sentido, ¿verdad?

CR Los procesos determinan los resultados. No es posible separarlos

sin correr riesgos.

Otra duda se refiere a que hablar de desarrollar la CE en organizaciones, gobiernos locales, etc. en realidad sería parte de todas las capacidades que hay que desarrollar. De tener políticas, en primer lugar. De planificar y coordinar. De ejecutar con eficiencia y efectividad.....y de evaluar.

CR Verdad. Una orientación sistémica dice que hay que trabajar de una manera integral.

Saludos cordiales,

Teobaldo Pinzás