CREATING AND DEVELOPING EVALUATION ORGANIZATIONS
Lessons learned from Africa, Americas, Asia, Australasia and Europe

Editors:
Marco Segone
IOCE Vice-President
Interim Board of Trustees 2004-2005

Ada Ocampo
ReLAC Board member 2004-2006

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Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo
León de la Fuente 110. Lima 17 - Perú
(51-1) 613-8300
www.desco.org.pe

IOCE
International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation
secretariat@ioce.net
(1-613) 722-8796
www.ioce.net

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  • The Importance of Evaluation Associations and Networks (J. S. Quesnel)
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Last but not least, the editor would like to thank J. S. Quesnel, Director, and Ada Ocampo, Programme Officer, at the UNICEF Headquarters Evaluation Office for their invaluable support, encouragement and technical and financial support in producing this compilation. A special thank to Shreya Dhawan consultant and to M. Zeballos Manzur, President, Desco, for the final editing and printing.
Preface

By IOCE President

E-mail: crofters@clara.net

It is a pleasure to welcome readers to this IOCE collection of case studies that highlight the importance of evaluation societies and associations in the international evaluation community. This is the first part of a larger ‘organization pack’ that IOCE will be producing in stages over the next year or so, intended to support new evaluation societies and strengthen those that already exist.

At the core of the IOCE vision is the belief that evaluation as a practice can best be strengthened by the collective and professional efforts of colleagues working together in organized ways. Whether in terms of the development of new knowledge through comparison, reflection and the cross fertilization of ideas; or in terms of the development of skills through training, professional development and the transfer of knowledge, IOCE places at centre stage associations and societies including those fledgling organisations that begin their lives as more informal networks.

Evaluation associations, societies and networks are also a means to ensure the independence and authority of evaluators. Whether in stable or emerging political systems, values of openness, democratic accountability and adaptability — the willingness to learn and improve — must always be cherished and sometimes defended. This is one of the reasons that these case studies often emphasize the importance of democratic organization — the election of board members and officers — and active membership participation in evaluation societies and associations.
themselves. Evaluators need to demonstrate in their own behaviour the values of democracy and transparency that their work represents. In the IOCE we are aware how important this is to ensure the growth of successful and vibrant societies.

This publication represents the collective efforts of many people from many countries, regions and cultures. At the same time, nothing included here constitutes an official IOCE view, as IOCE sees its main role as that of offering a platform for the leaders and activists in the international professional evaluation community to voice their views and exchange their experiences. I am confident that this publication does just that.

Whilst many have contributed to this publication, I would like to single out Marco Segone, one of the Vice-Presidents of IOCE, for his stalwart efforts and personal commitment to making this happen. His contribution is part of a wider commitment of UNICEF and its head of evaluation Jean Quesnel to the IOCE vision. We are all very grateful for UNICEF’s valuable support in finalizing and producing this publication.

Many who read this will already be familiar with IOCE and indeed may even be active in evaluation associations and societies that are already IOCE members. If you are not already in our ‘supporters’ team’ I would encourage you to join up! You can learn more about IOCE by visiting <www.ioce.net>. We are especially keen to hear from people with ideas about other ‘products’ that IOCE can develop in the future that will be of potential use to evaluation associations, societies and networks throughout the world.

Elliot Stern  
President,  
IOCE  
Interim Board of Trustees  
August 2005
The Importance of Evaluation Associations and Networks

By Jean Serge Quesnel

Who’s Who?

Greater professional recognition for evaluation is in the making. When one draws a map of existing and emerging evaluation associations, groups and networks, it becomes evident that evaluation is increasingly being valued. From the seminal purpose of sharing experience and mutual learning has grown a more professional rallying, as evidenced by the growing consensus about evaluation deontology in the various evaluation associations.

The diagram below illustrates existing evaluation groups. This holistic view shows quite an impressive picture, especially when taking into account the fact that there has been an accelerated development of evaluation groups over the last five years. The arrows show where membership comes from. Presently, more than 60 groupings of evaluators can be tallied.

The private sector has its own evaluation systems within the respective corporate structures. It also sponsors foundations and research centres, each with an evaluation capacity. There exist several centres of excellence in evaluation, such as the Evaluators Institute, Center for European Evaluation Expertise (EUREVAL) and the Performance Assessment Resource Centre (PARC).

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1 E-mail: jquesnel@unicef.org
3 See <http://www.eureval-c3e.fr/english/>.
4 See <http://www.parcinfo.org/index.asp>.
Evaluation Associations and Networks
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have developed strong evaluation capacity and have their own networks sharing amongst themselves, also linking local, national, regional and international entities. In addition, institutions have partnerships and networks most often based on a discipline, a sector or a particular topic of interest. They support excellent publications, fostering knowledge-building in evaluation and enhancing methodological rigor.

No doubt, governments have been the main protagonists of evaluation. They use evaluation for the purpose of good governance, accountability, learning by doing, re-engineering ways and means for improving performance, value-for-money and assessing taxpayer satisfaction. Many governments have evaluation units within each of their ministries/departments, as well as internal governmental networks linking governmental units, fostering joint work and harmonizing evaluation approaches. Many governments also have evaluation units independent from the executive, serving the legislative bodies. These independent units have their own networks often associated with other oversight functions, such as INTOSAI. Noteworthy as well are the many evaluation offices of the European Union and its Commissions.

Through international development and cooperation activities, governments have made a significant contribution to the mainstreaming of evaluation across the world. The main body that introduced greater professionalism in the evaluation of official development assistance was the Expert Group on Evaluation of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and

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5 For an example see the CCIC website at <http://www.ccic.ca/e/home/index.shtml>.
6 For an example see Oxfam's website at <http://www.oxfam.org/>.
7 For an example see the Canadian Government's website at <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/>.
8 INTOSAI is the professional organization of supreme audit institutions (SAIs) in countries that belong to the United Nations or its specialist agencies. SAIs play a major role in auditing government accounts and operations, and in promoting sound financial management and accountability. See <http://www.intosai.org/>.
Development (OECD). The Expert Group was created in 1982 and subsequently became the DAC Working Party on Evaluation. This Working Party is now known as the DAC Network on Development Evaluation.\(^\text{10}\) It provides a forum for evaluation specialists from 30 governmental and multilateral agencies to work together to improve the relevance and effectiveness of development cooperation. One of its aims is the promotion and support of evaluation capacity development.

Another potent leverage used by governments for greater systematization of the use of evaluation is the system of international financial institutions. These institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group,\(^\text{11}\) regional\(^\text{12}\) and sub-regional multilateral development banks or international funds, are governed by assemblies of government representatives. Each organization has an evaluation unit. The Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG)\(^\text{13}\) brings together the heads of evaluation of the global and regional organizations. They have done much to harmonize and develop new evaluation approaches in response to evolving development policy challenges.

Governments are the member states forming the UN System, supporting its secretariat and many specialized offices, agencies, programmes and funds. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)\(^\text{14}\) brings together some 38 heads of evaluation across the UN System. UNEG aims to improve the use of evaluation within the UN System, to contribute to harmonization and simplification and to undertake joint evaluation work, especially at the country level. The General Assembly of the UN adopted a resolution requesting that the UN provide support to member countries, enabling them to evaluate their programmes and activities. Hence, evaluation capacity strengthening is an important part of UNEG’s work programme.

\(^{10}\) See <http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_34435_1_1_1_1_1,00.html>.

\(^{11}\) See <http://www.worldbank.org/oed/>.

\(^{12}\) For an example see the African Development Bank at <http://www.afdb.org/>.

\(^{13}\) See <http://www.ecgnet.org/>.

\(^{14}\) See <http://www.uneval.org/uneg/>.
In Latin America and the Caribbean regions there is a network of governments working together with multilateral banks to improve the performance of the public sector. The Latin American Center for Development Management (CLAD)\(^\text{15}\) and its Integrated Analytical Information System on Public Sector Reform (SIARE)\(^\text{16}\) plays a significant role in the promotion of the use of sound evaluation approaches in the good governance of the public sector.

The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)\(^\text{17}\) is an international, interagency forum working to improve learning, accountability and performance across the humanitarian sector. It rallies both governmental and non-governmental partners and has made exponential progress in the application of evaluation in emergency and unstable situations and has gone a long way in generating lessons learned for better policy and programme design.

The most open fora where evaluators meet are the evaluation associations and networks. Evaluation members are involved in many aspects of evaluation and performance measurement. Members include interested individuals, evaluation practitioners, managers, consultants, teachers and students, officials from all levels of government, educational institutions, research agencies, civil society organizations and businesses. Members meet regularly through groups at local, national and international levels. The hierarchy of evaluation associations and networks is illustrated in the chart below.

At the global level there are two associations, notwithstanding ALNAP’s network mentioned above. These are the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) and the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS).

IOCE\(^\text{18}\) was launched at an Inaugural Assembly held in Lima (Peru) at the end of March 2003. Representatives from 24 evaluation groupings

\(^{15}\) See <http://www.clad.org.ve/>.
\(^{17}\) See <http://www.alnap.org/>.
\(^{18}\) See <http://www.ioce.net/>.
from Latin America, Africa, Australasia, North America, Asia, Europe and the former Soviet Union attended the Assembly. Observers from various sponsor organizations were also present. Support for the Assembly was received from W.K. Kellogg Foundation, UNICEF, the World Bank, UK Department for International Development, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Global GreenGrants Fund as well as from the American Evaluation Association, the Canadian Evaluation Society and other national and regional groups who sent their representatives.

The IOCE has a major role to play in the professionalisation of evaluation. This organization is the ‘world umbrella’ of evaluation associations and networks. The mission of the IOCE as stated in its constitution is:

To help legitimate evaluation and support evaluation societies, associations and networks so that they can better contribute to good governance, effective decision making and strengthen the role of civil society.

IOCE believes that evaluation is best strengthened through national and regional organizations. It is a loose coalition of regional and national evaluation organizations from around the world; membership is made up of organizations and not individuals. IOCE aims to promote cooperation between national and regional evaluation societies, associations or networks. As an international organization, the IOCE is committed to cultural diversity, inclusiveness and bringing together different evaluation traditions in ways that respect this diversity. It is dedicated to building leadership and capacity in countries, fosters cross-fertilization of evaluation theory and practice around the world, and supports evaluation professionalisation.

IOCE seeks to legitimate and strengthen evaluation societies, associations or networks so that they can better contribute to good governance and strengthen civil society. It aims to build evaluation capacity, develop evaluation principles and procedures, encourage the development of new

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19 For the list see <http://internationalevaluation.com/members/eval_associations.shtml>.
Evaluation Associations and Networks: International, Regional, National and Local Levels

International Level
- International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation – IOCE (Organizational Membership)
  - International Development Evaluation Association – IDEAS (individual membership)

Regional Level
- ReLAC
- IPEN
- AFeEA
- AES
- EES

Sub-Regional Level
- ACE

National Level
- 13 Countries: AEA, CES
- 5 Countries
- 36 Countries
- 7 Countries: AES
- 10 Countries: EES

Sub-National
- NWEA, SEA, WIREN, SQEP
evaluation societies and associations or networks, undertake educational activities that will increase public awareness of evaluation, and seek to secure resources for co-operative activity.

IDEAS\textsuperscript{20} held its first conference in New Delhi (India) in April 2005. IDEAS was created with the support of the World Bank and the DAC Network on Development Evaluation for the purpose of attracting individual members from all over the world (particularly from developing countries and transition economies), who will:

- promote development evaluation for results, transparency and accountability in public policy and expenditure;
- give priority to evaluation capacity development;
- foster the highest intellectual and professional standards in development evaluation; and
- encourage national and regional development evaluation groups.

In addition to the two global evaluation associations, there are five regional associations/networks.

The American Evaluation Association (AEA)\textsuperscript{21} was the first national association to be created. De facto, it also acts as the North American regional convener. AEA has approximately 4,000 members representing all 50 states of the United States as well as over 60 countries. In October 2005, AEA together with the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES)\textsuperscript{22} held a joint meeting in Toronto where some 2,500 evaluation practitioners participated in more than 525 concurrent sessions dealing with evaluation themes and issues. Many participants took advantage of the more than 50 pre and post-conference training sessions in evaluation. The CES also has provincial chapters.\textsuperscript{23} The Quebec Programme Evaluation Society (SQEP),\textsuperscript{24} an independent association, collaborates with the CES and acts as a provincial chapter for that province. Similarly, the American

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See <http://www.ideas-int.org/>.
\item See <http://www.eval.org/>.
\item See <http://evaluationcanada.ca/>.
\item For example see <http://www.evaluationontario.ca/>.
\item See <http://www.sqep.ca/index.htm>.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Evaluation Association has sub-national associations such as the Northwest Evaluation Association,\(^25\) the Southeast Evaluation Association\(^26\) and the Washington Research and Evaluation Network.\(^27\)

The Australasian Evaluation Society (AES) was the first regional association to be established. It has some 700 individual members from the region. Most are from Australia and New Zealand. AES collaborates particularly with the Malaysia Evaluation Society\(^28\) and the Sri Lanka Evaluation Society.\(^29\)

The African Evaluation Association (AfrEA)\(^30\) will have its fourth biennial conference in Niger in January 2007. At the time of the creation of AfrEA in 1999, evaluation associations or networks existed in only six African countries. At present at least 18 such associations or networks\(^31\) have been developed or are in the process of development, all with the common goal of promoting evaluation on a national basis in their respective countries.

The European Evaluation Society\(^32\) (EES) was founded in The Hague in 1994. The first official board was elected in autumn 1995 and started its work in January 1996. The primary goal of the EES is to promote the theory, practice and utilization of high quality evaluation, within, but not exclusively in, the European countries. This goal is obtained by bringing together academics and practitioners from all over Europe and from any professional sector, thus creating a forum where all participants can benefit from cooperation and bridge building. National evaluation associations and networks also exist in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom.\(^33\)

\(^{26}\) See <http://www.bitbrothers.com/sea/>.
\(^{27}\) See <http://www.wren-network.net/>.
\(^{29}\) See <http://www.nsf.ac.lk/sleva/>.
\(^{30}\) See <http://www.afrea.org/conference/>.
\(^{31}\) See <http://www.afrea.org/conference/>.
\(^{32}\) See <http://www.europeanevaluation.org/>.
\(^{33}\) See list of websites at <http://www.ioce.net/members/evalassociations.shtml>.
In October 2004, the Latin American and Caribbean Evaluation Network (ReLAC) was launched in Peru. Present members are the Brazilian Evaluation Association, the Central American Evaluation Association and networks from Chili, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. ReLAC plans to hold its second biennial conference in Colombia in May 2007.

Last but not least is the International Program Evaluation Network (IPEN) composed mainly of evaluators from the former Soviet Union countries. IPEN was founded in 2000 and the fifth conference was held successfully in Almaty (Kazakhstan) in September 2005. About 150 participants from 20 countries from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States attended the conference.

The Crucial Role of Evaluation Associations and Groups in Evaluation Capacity Development

Evaluation Associations play a crucial role from the local to the international level in evaluation capacity development. For example, one should not underestimate the influence that the Washington Research and Evaluation Network and the Ottawa Chapter of the CES had in strengthening the evaluation function in their respective capitals and by extension on the development of their national evaluation systems and the governmental use of evaluation by the legislative and executive.

The AEA’s mission is to:

• improve evaluation practices and methods;
• increase evaluation use;
• promote evaluation as a profession; and
• support the contribution of evaluation to the generation of theory and knowledge about effective human action.

34 See <http://www.eval-net.org/>.
35 See <http://www.eval.org/aboutus.asp>.
For many years the AEA served as the North American and international convener on evaluation. Needless to say, most founders of national, regional and international associations have had an exposure to the pioneering work of the AEA.

Another dynamic network of evaluators promoting evaluation capacity building is the Expert Group on Aid Evaluation of the OECD-DAC. Together with the multilateral development banks, the Group has sponsored evaluation capacity development.

In March 1987, a seminar with evaluators from countries across the world was held in Paris under the auspices of OECD-DAC. The seminar provided an opportunity to engage in a capacity development programme. It was agreed that conducting a series of seminars on a regional basis would be useful in generating exchanges based on the needs and specificities of each region of the world.

The first regional seminar on evaluation in Africa was jointly sponsored by the OECD-DAC Expert Group on Aid Evaluation and the African Development Bank. It took place in Abidjan in May 1990. Its objectives included the clarification of evaluation needs of African countries. The seminar explored the ways and means of strengthening African evaluation capabilities and of increasing awareness of evaluation as a key tool for effective management. Participants gained new understanding of evaluation issues in the African context.

In November 1998, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), together with the agencies of international cooperation of Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and Sweden organized another Pan-African seminar. This seminar, also held in Abidjan, was specifically on evaluation capacity development in Africa. Close to 100 participants from 12 African

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36 The summary report of the discussion, ‘Evaluation in Developing Countries: A Step Towards Dialogue’, was published by the OECD in 1988.

countries, donor countries, international and regional institutions attended. The objectives of the Abidjan seminar included: (i) providing an overview of progress in evaluation capacity development in Africa, including the sharing of lessons learned; (ii) building consensus on the purposes and elements of evaluation in support of development; (iii) identifying strategies and resources for building evaluation demand and supply in African countries; (iv) helping country teams, representing the 12 participating African countries, develop a preliminary action plan for developing evaluation systems in their countries; and (v) supporting the creation of country and regional networks to encourage follow-up work. This provided support for the creation of national evaluation networks and the AfrEA.

The Regional Workshop and Seminar on Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Development in Africa held in Johannesburg (South Africa) in September 2000 was a follow-up to the regional seminar held in Abidjan in 1998. The event brought together 56 participants from 11 sub-Saharan countries and 32 from multilateral and bilateral agencies. They represented governments, NGOs, research institutions, universities and the private sector. The event was hosted by the Development Bank of South Africa, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the International Development Research Centre, UNICEF, UNDP, USAID and AusAID. The two main objectives were: (i) the definition of the requirements and capabilities of monitoring and evaluation in the context of good governance and accountability for better results; and (ii) the development of a collaborative strategy and infrastructure for a pan-African monitoring and evaluation network.


participants included 38 senior representatives from 17 developing countries, 43 representatives from 17 donor countries and 6 multilateral institutions. In addition, 16 senior officials of the Government of Malaysia attended as observers. Through a series of well-prepared papers on evaluation practices and issues, the seminar brought the participants up-to-date with the latest thinking on evaluation. The understanding of both the recipients and donors was broadened with respect to the range of institutional capabilities, evaluation strategies, models, systems and resources. The seminar reviewed practical evaluation experiences of participant countries. Recipient countries’ plans to strengthen evaluation capacities were discussed. The seminar concluded with an Action Plan for strengthening performance evaluation through closer cooperation between recipient countries and aid agencies.

In June 1995, the Asian Development Bank hosted a Regional Workshop on Strengthening Post-evaluation Feedback System in Manila. Fourteen developing countries prepared country papers for this workshop, outlining the status of post-evaluation in their own country. Much of the Workshop discussion focused on issues relating to the countries’ commitment and priorities for post-evaluation and the difficulties encountered. An Agenda for Action was also developed, intensifying efforts to support evaluation outreach programmes for the benefit of the public sector in the participating countries.

In November 1993, some 80 participants representing 26 governments of Latin America and the Caribbean attended a Regional Seminar on Evaluation in Quito, together with some 30 participants from the Expert Group on Aid Evaluation of OECD-DAC. The Seminar was sponsored by OECD-DAC and the Inter-American Development Bank. The aim of the Seminar was to further sensitize partners in

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development to the importance of evaluation as a management and planning tool and to broaden the understanding of the utilization of evaluation in government. There was an exchange of experience and the identification of opportunities for closer collaboration between countries. The adoption of an Action Plan to strengthen the evaluation function in the region was a tangible result of the Seminar.

In October 1994 the Inter-American Development Bank, in collaboration with the Caribbean Development Bank, hosted a Regional Seminar for the Caribbean countries in Barbados. Representatives from 17 Caribbean and regional governments participated in the Seminar. The results were: (i) increased awareness on the role of evaluation in the process of public sector reform; (ii) development of a regional strategy for enhancing the role of evaluation and strengthening evaluation capacity; and (iii) preparation of a collaborative plan of action among development assistance organizations.

In December 1994, the Central American Evaluation Association, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration hosted an Evaluation Seminar for Central American countries, Panama and the Dominican Republic in San Jose (Costa Rica). The main theme of the Seminar was the role of evaluation in the modernization of the State and in the achievement of greater efficiency in public investment management. There was a review of national experiences which provided an opportunity to identify ways of strengthening evaluation capacities. The consensus was to: (i) promote an evaluation culture in government by establishing and strengthening

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42 The proceedings were published by the Inter-American Development Bank in a document entitled 'First Evaluation Seminar for Central America, Panama & The Dominican Republic', 1995.
national evaluation units and systems; (iii) strengthen the skills and expertise of the human resources engaged in evaluation activities; and (iii) support the mission of the Central American Evaluation Association as a facilitator in the region.

In October 2005, the Second Regional Evaluation Seminar was organized in Tegucigalpa by the Honduras Evaluation Network with the collaboration of ReLAC, the Central American Evaluation Association, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and UNICEF.

In July 1996, the Colombian National Planning Department and the Inter-American Development Bank hosted a meeting in Cartagena on Results-Based Evaluation and Control of Public Management for the benefit of South American countries.

The consensus was that a gradual and systematic process of retooling the public sector was required, seeking more suitable administrative and management mechanisms for efficient, responsive and user-oriented performance. A cultural change would lead to the transformation of public institutions, and this change hinged on the concepts of transparency and accountability. It was obvious to the participants that evaluation plays a key role in the process of public sector reform.

Finally, one has to single out the tremendous contribution of the World Bank in evaluation capacity development. Particularly noteworthy are the bi-annual conferences held at the Bank headquarters and hosted by the Evaluation Office. The World Bank Series on Evaluation and Development are indeed a much sought reference source. The series of conferences has attracted and involved evaluation practitioners from all over the world. The conferences are a tremendous forum of exchange and stimulation for the progress of development evaluation. One must also recognize the catalytic role the World Bank played in the

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43 The proceedings were published by the Inter-American Development Bank in a document entitled ‘South American Meeting on Results-Based Evaluation and Control of Public Management’, 1996.
establishment of the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) at Carleton University in Ottawa.

**Concluding Remarks**

The experience of the evaluation community in general shows that the success or failure of evaluation capacity development depends greatly on three conditions:

- the awareness and appreciation at the governmental decision-making levels of the importance and necessity of evaluation — in other words, the existence of a demand for evaluation;
- the institutionalization and meaningful integration of the various evaluation functions in the government machinery at national, sectoral, programme/project and sub-state levels; and
- the development of human and financial resources to support a professional, dedicated, and effective cadre of evaluators and evaluation managers.

The framework for international cooperation exists to:

- establish an international consensus on the legitimacy and credibility of evaluation as part of civic responsibility and participation;
- increase the systematic utilization of evaluation internationally and support evaluation societies in the utilization of evaluation in national and local policy decision making;
- build capacity through the provision of opportunities for reciprocal learning amongst established and newly formed or emergent evaluation societies;
- develop general principles, procedures, ethics and codes of conduct for evaluation and commissioning practice;

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44 See <http://www.ipdet.org/>.
• provide a forum for the exchange of good practice in evaluation theory and practice and develop new evaluation knowledge through cooperative research and other activities; and
• increase and support cultural specificity in evaluation design and practice by encouraging pilot approaches in diverse cultural settings.

To sum up, there is tremendous potential for the professionalisation of evaluators in an open and global perspective with the benefit of cross-fertilization of ideas; this is the mission of the IO CE.
Part I
The International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)
Creating and Developing Evaluation Organizations
Overview of the IOCE

By Ross Conner,* IOCE Board

IOCE is an international coalition that brings together regional and national evaluation associations, societies and networks. It was launched by representatives from 24 evaluation associations and networks from around the world at an Inaugural Assembly in Lima (Peru) in March 2003. Through partnerships with national and regional evaluation bodies, IOCE aims to:

- build evaluation capacity and strengthen evaluation skills;
- encourage the development of new evaluation societies, associations and networks;
- undertake educational activities that will increase public awareness of evaluation;
- develop standards and ethical codes in support of evaluation good practices;
- increase understanding of evaluation in different cultural and institutional settings;
- secure resources for and facilitate cooperative international and interregional evaluation activity; and
- provide a forum for the exchange of useful and high quality methods, theories and effective practices in evaluation.

IOCE is a platform for worldwide cooperation and partnership in evaluation, fostering the cross-fertilization of ideas, high professional standards and an open and global perspective among evaluators.

* E-mail: rfconner@uci.edu
Mission

IOCE's mission is to help legitimize evaluation and support evaluation societies, associations and networks so they can better contribute to good governance and effective decision making, as well as strengthen the role of civil society. As an international organization, IOCE is committed to cultural diversity and inclusiveness, and it accomplishes this by bringing together and respecting different evaluation approaches and traditions.

How the IOCE works

The IOCE functions primarily through its Board, a group of 10 individuals who reflect all of the major regions of the world. Based on ideas and input from IOCE members and others working to advance evaluation around the globe, the Board establishes IOCE priorities, then develops and implements an annual work-plan. This typically includes holding targeted, specialist events in different regions of the world in partnership with national and regional evaluation societies and associations. The Executive Committee of the Board, composed of the IOCE officers, coordinates all IOCE activities and oversees IOCE matters. There is a yearly General Assembly where members review IOCE priority directions and activities and provide suggestions for future priorities and events. The IOCE Board of Trustees is officially selected at the General Assembly. Many IOCE activities are 'virtual', using web-based resources where possible, thus keeping IOCE costs as low as possible.

Membership

IOCE believes that evaluation is best strengthened through national and regional organizations. IOCE membership is comprised of organizations rather than individuals.
There are four categories of membership:

**Full members**: formally recognized regional and national evaluation societies, associations and networks. These are the voting organizations of the IOCE.

**Associate members**: societies, associations or networks that are at an earlier stage in their development.

**Institutional partners**: organizations, public bodies and foundations that support the mission and objectives of IOCE.

**Affiliate partners**: sectoral groups, sub-national organizations and others groups that support the mission of IOCE and want to participate in its activities.

Membership fees are modest and also make allowances for organizations or networks from developing regions and countries.

Members of IOCE are part of an international movement that:

- advances evaluation networks and collaborates worldwide;
- facilitates access to international evaluation developments;
- challenges evaluators to push forward the frontiers of knowledge in evaluation theory and practice;
- increases the utilization of evaluation internationally;
- builds capacity among emerging associations; and
- helps to establish international consensus on the legitimacy and credibility of evaluation as part of civic responsibility and participation.

**Overview of the Case Studies**

At a meeting in Sao Paulo (Brazil) in 2003 and based on its objectives the IOCE interim Board developed a business plan that included the development of an ‘organization package’ consisting of resources for creating and developing evaluation organizations. The aim of this organization package was to help establish and/or develop successful evaluation organizations through the wide dissemination of case studies from all over the world on how such organizations can be created and
managed. The case studies that form the core of this document provide this guidance.

There are 14 case studies presented here. Seven of the organizations are regional or national organizations from developed countries; the other seven are from developed countries. Table 1 below presents an overview of the case studies and a few characteristics of each organization, based on information provided in 2004.

In preparing the case studies, each organization or network was asked to address the following issues:

- general information about the organization, including organizational structure, number of members, and number and types of activities;
- background on how the organization started and how it developed;
- three aspects or characteristics about the organization that work best and three challenging aspects;
- three major challenges met and their solutions;
- three major lessons learned; and
- three key recommendations or tips on how to develop evaluation organizations of this kind.

The case studies provide a wealth of information on these topics. In her paper in this publication that synthesizes the information provided by the 14 organizations, Lise Kriel has used two major factors to organize the information: organizational motivation and organizational capacity. She defines ‘organizational motivation’ as “the driving forces of the organizations and ... specific issues concerning their historical development, their vision, mission and objectives, and their maintenance and growth.” Kriel defines ‘organizational capacity’ as “leadership, membership, services, finances, human resources, inter-organizational linkages, and the overarching organizational structures that bring these resources together.” Using these two factors, she presents a picture of the strengths and challenges of the 14 organizations. Here are some of the conclusions she makes:

- Dedicated individuals and “passionate participants” are the driving force behind establishing and maintaining successful evaluation organizations.
Table 1. An Overview of the 14 Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Year Started</th>
<th>Membership Reach</th>
<th>Geographical Size</th>
<th>Country/Region Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Evaluation Association (AfrEA)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Evaluation Association (AEA)</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasian Evaluation Society (AES)</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazilian Evaluation Network</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Approx. 250</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Evaluation Society (CES)</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Evaluation Society (EES)</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS)</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Approx. 200</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Program Evaluation Network (IPEN)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Approx. 360</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israeli Association for Program Evaluation (IAPE)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian Evaluation Association (AIV)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya Evaluation Association (KEA)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysian Evaluation Society (MES)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation Network of Niger (ReNSE)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Evaluation Society (SES)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Approx. 96</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Successful organizations have been instigated by evaluators from within the country or region represented, as well as by those located outside the country or region but with an interest in developing monitoring and evaluation (M & E) capacity there, such as multilateral donor organizations.
• The personal qualities of the evaluation champion, such as the person's skills and motivation, are important factors in determining the orientation and success of the organization, regardless of whether the champion came from inside or outside the country or region.

• Cultivating and maintaining a feeling of ownership among the stakeholders of a new or ongoing evaluation organization is critical to success.

• Slow, thoughtful and careful development is recommended before an informal network is changed into a formal organization. As one case study author notes, slow success is always better than fast failure.

• The objectives a group develops should reflect a shared understanding of the mission and vision of the group, as well as match the resource level available to the group.

• Dedicated leadership is critical to the growth and development of evaluation organizations. As Kriel says, “Most successful associations and networks are, in effect, labours of love undertaken by dedicated, passionate and dynamic champions.”

• Many case studies mention challenges with membership, from recruiting new members, to maintaining old members and fostering member participation. There are a number of suggestions in the case studies about ways associations and networks have met these challenges.

• Services that associations provide to their members vary from organization to organization. Across the 14 organizations, Kriel displays the services that the organizations provide, the services they plan to provide, the services they recommend providing, or the services they do not recommend.

• The most commonly-provided service is facilitating networking and communication among members. This occurs through meetings, newsletters, listservs and other modes. Organizations with members operating in several languages face special challenges and extra expenses in accommodating all language speakers equally.
• Finances are important, but many case study authors report that people are a more important initial consideration.
• Organizations and networks require some financial resources to support their work. Developed associations tend to have annual conferences that provide a major source of income. Developing associations and groups tend to rely on membership fees.
• Associations in developing countries and regions have different views of the desirability of receiving funding from external partners, such as donors. The majority of case study authors attribute their success to the financial support of external partners, but other case study authors caution against accepting any donor funding.
• As Kriel states, “all of the organizations agree that ‘people are everything’.” Volunteers are the backbone of all of the organizations, and this presents both pros and cons. Volunteers provide cost-free services and good commitment on issues that excite them, but, for the critical routine day-to-day operations of an organization, it is not advisable to rely on volunteers.
• The case studies illustrate both formal and informal structures for evaluation organizations. Their discussions of the pros and cons of formal versus informal structures will be useful to those developing an evaluation group.

The Kriel paper has fuller discussions and additional details about all of these issues. Readers are encouraged to review the case studies and Kriel’s paper, most of which are in English in this publication. For readers who would prefer another language or who need assistance with the French or Spanish case studies, we encourage accessing the case study texts and Kriel’s paper on the IOCE website. Using the electronic versions of the texts and an Internet-based translator, such as <www.altavista.babelfish.com> or <www.freetranslation.com> the cases can be available to all. As the summary above demonstrates, there are many ideas, suggestions and lessons in the case studies that can benefit those working to develop evaluation organizations around the world.
History of the Creation of the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)

By Craig Russon¹ and Arnold Love²

The purpose of this case study is to illustrate the approach that was taken by the founders to organize the IOCE. In retrospect, the approach adopted by the founders was very much like the ‘creative tension model’ put forward by Robert Fritz (1989) and popularized by Peter Senge’s book, The Fifth Discipline (1990). The essential idea behind this model is that the gap between the current reality and an organization’s vision creates a structural tension that can either drive the organization to achieve its vision or lead to the erosion of performance.

At the time of the 1995 International Evaluation Conference in Vancouver (Canada), there were six regional and national evaluation organizations: American Evaluation Association, Australasian Evaluation Society, Canadian Evaluation Society, Central American Evaluation Association, European Evaluation Society, and the United Kingdom Evaluation Society. International cooperation was restricted primarily to conference speaking engagements. Evaluation had not developed a strong voice internationally because resources of the evaluation organizations were focused primarily on domestic concerns.

Evaluation in developing countries was undertaken largely by expatriates or by contract evaluators brought in by large donor organizations. By and large, evaluations in developing countries remained at the project level and had limited impact at the programme or policy levels. Regional disparities in evaluation capacity increased and the

¹ E-mail: russon@complink.net
² E-mail: ajlove1@attglobal.net
evaluation associations and networks in developing countries were largely informal and had limited impact. The fundamental issues of trust, international standards, or access to evaluation resources were not addressed in a meaningful way (Love & Russon, 2000).

The vision for the IOCE emerged gradually and with input from many sources. In 1997, a discussion took place on EVALTALK, AEA's listserv, on the international nature of the evaluation profession. One of the principal issues discussed was the creation of a federation of national evaluation organizations. The vision was further refined during a plenary panel of the 1998 AEA conference, when six regional and national evaluation organization leaders discussed the creation of a worldwide evaluation community.

With the support of a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, a residency meeting was held in Barbados (West Indies) from 18-20 February, 1999 to discuss the issues associated with creating this worldwide community. This meeting was attended by the leaders of 15 regional and national evaluation organizations from around the world. During the meeting, what had been an informal vision was finally committed to paper. The vision, as enunciated by this group was, “The IOCE is an over-arching framework to promote cooperation between national and regional evaluation societies, associations or networks” (Saunders, de Silva, Hawkins, Mertens, Mugaju, Ocampo, & Rasappan, 2000).

Underlying this simple statement was the notion that independent regional and national evaluation organizations would establish formal linkages that permitted a high degree of international cooperation in order to secure collective benefits. Such benefits might include raising professional standards and professional identity, technical assistance, speaking authoritatively about the experience of evaluation in other countries, increasing the visibility and stature of evaluation, discussing policy issues, and responding to the global challenges of the day (Love & Russon, 2000).

The gap between the current reality and the vision of the IOCE created a structural tension that provided a strong source of creative
energy (Senge, 1990). In this situation, there were two major ways that the structural tension could resolve itself — the founders could lower the vision of the IOCE to accommodate current reality or they could raise the current reality to achieve the IOCE vision (Senge, 1990). The choice was dependent on whether or not the founders would hold true to the vision of the IOCE. To their credit, the founders chose the latter course of action.

At the conclusion of the Barbados meeting, a drafting committee that represented the diverse nature of the group was selected to develop a charter for what would come to be called the IOCE. It took nearly a year for the charter to be endorsed by all of the organizations that were represented at the Barbados meeting. The charter was then presented to regional and national evaluation organizations around the world. With the support of the worldwide community of evaluators, a second proposal was developed and additional funding was obtained from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Members of the drafting committee met from 8-10 March, 2002 in the Dominican Republic and formed an Organizing Group to plan the inaugural assembly of the IOCE. The principle issues discussed by the Organizing Group included participation, format, agenda, advanced processes, location and secretariat. These efforts culminated in the inaugural assembly of the IOCE in Lima (Peru) from 28-30 March, 2003. It was attended by 40 leaders from 26 regional and national evaluation organizations from around the world (Russon & Love, 2004).

During the inaugural assembly, the delegates endorsed a provisional constitution and elected an interim Board of Trustees. The authors believe that the IOCE vision guided the creation of these structures within the newly formed organization. Other examples of IOCE structure include committees, policies, procedures, processes and budgets. It was assumed that these structures would, in turn, determine the IOCE’s performance (Kim, 2002).

Although still young, the influence of the IOCE is already being felt. As one example, several new Latin American evaluation organizations were formed in advance of the IOCE inaugural assembly (e.g., Brazil,
Creating and Developing Evaluation Organizations

Colombia and Peru). In turn, these new evaluation organizations have joined with the Programme for Strengthening the Regional Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Poverty Alleviation Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (PREVAL) and Asociación Centro-Americana para Evaluación (Central American Evaluation Association, ACE). Together, they launched a regional organization called the Network for Monitoring and Evaluation of Latin America and the Caribbean (ReLAC) in Sao Paulo (Brazil) in September 2003. ReLAC and its member organizations are all affiliated with the IOCE.

A second example is the recent conference of the Malaysian Evaluation Society that was held in Kuala Lumpur from 29-31 March, 2004 and was attended by nearly 200 participants from over 20 countries in South and Southeast Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. The IOCE played a prominent role in the MES, acting as a catalyst for increasing evaluation capacity and promoting diversity in evaluation theory and practice worldwide.

Through the IOCE, a vision of a system of evaluation organizations is being created that will help reinterpret the work that has been done during the past decade. The vision suggests ways of carrying out our current activities by building cooperative international relationships that lead to strong evaluation leadership, growing evaluation capacity, and the cross-fertilization of evaluation theory and practice around the world. Lastly, the evolving vision of the IOCE may provide some insights into where we want to take this work in the future.

References


Part II

Case Studies of Professional Evaluation Organizations Worldwide
Africa: The African Evaluation Association (AfREA)

By Mahesh Patel *

Introduction

Looking back five years, I feel a bit strange writing about the AfrEA. I founded it and ran it for three years — with a lot of help from some very able and dedicated people— but then left rather suddenly when I was transferred to the European Regional Office. I am not African, and it still puzzles me how I came to lead first a Kenyan and then an African organization. I am not really sure how we succeeded in creating so many national associations, as well as a continental one, so rapidly. It was as if so many countries were ready for this initiative; all that was needed was a spark, and of course quite a bit of hard work as well.

History

In 1996, I was working in the UNICEF Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa in Nairobi. I had recently attended the annual conference of the American Evaluation Association and greatly enjoyed discussing evaluation issues with such a large number of interested people. Keen to continue these discussions in Nairobi, I sent out an open invitation to attend a meeting to discuss organizing a series of seminars. The people who came the first time invited others to the second meeting, and soon we were holding regular meetings, once or twice a month. At each meeting, one of the people in the network would present on a subject of

* E-mail: mpatel@unicef.org
interest and the group would then ask questions and hold a discussion. Each person had expertise in a different area, so we all learned a lot. It was an excellent education.

I had been organizing the Nairobi Evaluation Network for a few years and had greatly enjoyed the interesting seminars we held. During the course of my assignment, I covered 23 countries and in every country I visited, I explained how much we learned from the discussions and trainings in Nairobi. People were always attracted by the idea. I would meet with a group of about 8 to 12 people, ask them what they would like to gain from such a network and encourage them to talk about their work. We would discuss the advantages of peer-to-peer training and of having purchasers and providers of evaluation services learning together. Using their own descriptions of the evaluations they had done, I would ask people what they thought would be interesting topics for the next two or three seminars.

The principles of most of these networks were based on those of the Nairobi Network: zero budget, use only free rooms (generally provided by UNICEF or other UN Agencies), start on time, send invitations by email only to reduce administration costs, include in all invitations a request to forward it to others who might be interested, and at each seminar, identify one or two topics for the next seminar.

I still think that these basic principles are very good ones. Experience from many countries shows that groups that started developing constitutions and collecting membership fees too soon ended up being led by administrators, rather than by evaluation enthusiasts. Many of these groups had more meetings on administration than seminars and training sessions. In most of these cases, the initial enthusiasm soon disappeared. The burden of administration became too much, and these groups made little progress.

Before long, we had six working national networks, out of which four were Francophone groups. I was in the process of handing over the Nairobi Network, which by then had an email list of about 350 people, to a national leader. In 1999, Karen Odhiambo became its first President,
and it became known as the Kenya Evaluation Association. At the same time, I was looking for a way to get more networks started without having to visit every country in Africa. Having an all-Africa meeting seemed a natural way to go.

I had wanted to bring Michael Quinn Patton to Africa since 1997. At the time, he was very busy, but he said he could manage September 1999, which thus seemed a good time to hold a meeting. A key element in the creation of AfrEA was support from international development agencies. All the agencies wished to show that they were serious about evaluating their programmes. Many were ready to bring their best people to present their work and to learn from others.

As with the national evaluation networks, we aimed to maintain AfrEA as a low cost organization. Each agency was asked to make its own travel and hotel reservations, while AfrEA organized the meeting rooms and the translation. So another key item was our core support budget — the money for the tea, the cleaners, and some paper, which was mostly provided by UNICEF, and for interpretation, which was provided by La Francophonie.

We soon had over 80 paper presentations planned in 12 parallel strands, an uncommon meeting structure in Africa. We did not refuse anyone. If an agency was ready to send someone to Nairobi to present their work, we trusted that it would be of good quality. We organized topic strands according to the mandates of the participating agencies. About 300 people attended, from about 35 countries.

**Some Dos and Don'ts**

For me, some of the best elements of the AfrEA Conference were the people, the enthusiasm, the papers and training, and the song. I did not get the chance to attend all the paper presentations. Some people complained that there were too many papers presented at the same time. Others thought that it was good to have a choice, so they could attend the presentations that interested them the most.
I do have some dos and don'ts that helped me through both the 1999 and 2002 Conferences, and that I now wish to pass on to Zenda Ofir, the President of AfrEA, for the 2004 Conference.

Do: Keep logistics to a minimum. Just provide a list of hotels. Participants should make their own hotel and travel arrangements.

Don't: Do not handle money, especially in small amounts as this takes up a lot of time. Aim for zero fee if at all possible.

Do: A strong group of Strand (Topic) Coordinators is key. They should be heads of evaluation agencies, and be aiming to bring their professional staff to make presentations and to act as Strand (Topic) Coordinators.

Don't: Strand Coordinators should not exclude papers sourced from outside their agencies and should aim to create a conference strand that is visibly oriented to the topic, and not just about their own organization. Do not be tempted to use experts who may have academic standing in their field and access to good networks, but do not have the resources and commitment to bring people to the conference.

Do: The leaders of national networks should have clear roles and responsibilities for preparation during and between conferences.

Don't: Some leaders of national networks and associations are not very effective in organizing meetings or otherwise serving members. One or two have been leaders of networks that rarely meet. The constitutions that require annual elections are sometimes ignored. I myself led the Nairobi Network, and then AfrEA, for two to three years each. This is not a good thing. AfrEA should perhaps require that a new leader is selected every two years, and exclude the network from AfrEA if this is not done. This may seem harsh, but these ‘networks’ are usually just a one-person organization, and do not serve the country or the members.

Do: An interagency local organizing committee is very helpful, especially if Strand Coordinators ensure participation by their local office, as they have the strongest interest in the success of the Conference.

Don't: Do not give presentation/meeting rooms to Strands for the whole week. Stay flexible. Keep adjusting the amount of room time
given to a Strand (generally in quarter-days) according to the number of confirmed paper presentations.

Do: Local volunteers were recruited with the assistance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and were generally readily available and helpful. Having one volunteer per room did help run things smoothly, as they carried messages about glitches such as missing flip charts and projectors that did not work.

Don't: Do not use too many volunteers. Their supervision is very demanding, especially of those who do not have previous work experience.

Although a great deal of AfrEA’s activities are centred around its conferences, it also carries out several other important and interesting activities.

Goals of AfrEA

The first conference set up six objectives in 1999. At the second conference held in 2002, we reported on progress as follows:

- foster creation of networks and associations: 6 in 1999, 14 in 2002;
- develop a sustainable structure to link new evaluation networks: AfrEA and the website performed these functions;
- review (US) Programme Evaluation Standards (PES) for adoption/adaptation: done, results presented at the second conference and published with co-authorship by the following networks: Nairobi, AfrEA Secretariat, Niger, Cape Verde, Madagascar, Comoros, Eritrea, Malawi, Burundi, Rwanda, UNICEF (Eastern and Southern Africa);
- create a database of evaluators: done, over 400 evaluators listed on the Internet and over 1,000 visits to the site;
- invite contributions to the annotated bibliography: done, 100 contributions published on the website; and
- publish papers and proceedings: not done.
Challenges

The website is a key resource to keep things turning over. The consultant database on the web was visited over a thousand times in its first year. I think people were surprised that we were able to register almost 400 African Evaluators so quickly, but basically, almost everyone who signed up for the Conference agreed to have their details listed on the website database. Most also agreed to be available as consultants. The information that consultants provided on their experience and skill profile was quite specific and detailed. As an example, we had 73 people who used SPSS (a statistics software) and 23 who could calculate the sample size for a survey, in our database.

Our big step forward was the move from entering the details of new members onto the website ourselves, to the automatic electronic online registration of new members. This was a big move because I was able to create the first website myself, with the help of a little handbook and a December holiday at home. Offering online registration meant calling in professional programmers, and although this cost a bit, my secretary was happy not to have to type handwritten forms into our database.

One less successful initiative was to include abstracts of evaluations on our website. This was done with great enthusiasm by the local network of evaluators in Nairobi, but not many people were interested in reading them. In contrast, there was a strong interest in conference papers, and not just from the authors. We tried to get the conference papers for both conferences published, but this proved quite difficult and to date, we have not succeeded. Several problems arose. Often, presenters did not have their papers ready before the conference. At the conference, they often did not have electronic versions readily available; sometimes people presented drafts that they wanted to tidy up after the discussions at the conference.

For the second conference, we decided to publish only the two or three best papers in each strand. The idea was to make paper collection and editing easier. The Strand Coordinators did a great job collecting
papers over the months after the conference, and producing introductions to, or summaries of, the discussion on their topic or strand. One organization committed to producing a printed publication of these materials, and so requested that the papers not be put up on the website. But then they got stuck in the editing processes, and their office had to move to a different country due to deteriorating security, and the years passed and some of us got older and greyer.

Another area of activity that attracted a lot of interest was the African version of the PES — the African Evaluation Guidelines. I had presented some first thoughts on this topic at the inaugural conference of AfrEA. Between the first two conferences, we embarked on a long process involving 10 national evaluation networks in Africa. Each of these groups held at least one, and in a few cases as many as four, meetings to discuss various versions of the draft and make proposals and revisions to the text. Finally, after two years, we published the ‘African Evaluation Guidelines: 2002’ in the journal Evaluation and Programme Planning.

Many of us consider these guidelines to be a significant improvement on the original PES, and indeed some senior members of the PES taskforce are (informally) of similar opinion. These guidelines have been used for quality control of several major evaluation studies in Africa, and are also mentioned in the training manuals of some international agencies. My favorite example of their use was in Eritrea. The UNICEF programme there administered selected guidelines in the form of a questionnaire to almost 70 senior government, university and agency participants in the mid-term progress review of their five-year plan. This process produced excellent and very specific observations on the draft evaluation.

At the second AfrEA conference, a group of gender-oriented evaluators suggested that the African Evaluation Guidelines should be ‘genderized’. Some people thought this was a very good idea, while others felt that it either was not needed or was not possible. In any event, no genderized version has been produced so far, though it is certainly interesting to think about what this might entail. This is a challenge that we have not yet resolved.
The next meeting of AfrEA is due to take place in Cape Town in December 2004. AfrEA is now ably being led by Zenda Ofir, and I strongly recommend that all who have the chance should attend the meeting. The AfrEA meeting is more informal than those that tend to occur in economically richer countries. There are plenty of jokes and laughter, dancing and singing. One song we used is set to the tune of Jambo Bwana, which will be familiar to anyone who has spent more than a day in East Africa. While you are supposed to have drums playing and dance while you sing the song, perhaps just the lyrics may convey some of the spirit of AfrEA.

VERSE 1
Let's do Evaluation
It's essential For every nation We need
We need to know why We are successful But only sometimes

VERSE 2
If an outcome Evaluation Will raise the curtain Assess it and analyse it
Evaluation will mobilize it

REFRAIN
Information Communication Publication Dissemination Social - Mobilization Evaluation - Utilization
Australasia: Australasian Evaluation Society (AES)

By Penny Hawkins

General Information

The AES is a professional organization for people involved in evaluation. Members include evaluation practitioners, managers, teachers and students from all levels of government, educational institutions, research agencies, community organizations, businesses and interested individuals. Members meet regularly through Regional Groups in major cities in Australia and New Zealand.

The Society aims to improve the theory, practice and use of evaluation through promoting ethics and standards in evaluation practice; providing a forum for the discussion of ideas including Society publications, seminars and conferences; linking members who have similar evaluation interests; providing education and training in matters related to evaluation; recognizing outstanding contributions to the theory and/or practice of evaluation; acting as an advocate for evaluation in Australasia; and conduct other activities consistent with the Society’s aims. The Society maintains a website (www.aes.asn.au) where details of the Society’s structure, constitution, activities and publications can be found.

Date of establishment. The AES was established in 1986 and officially registered as a society in 1987.

Structure. The AES is an Incorporated Association with a formal constitution. A Board of management provides overall governance and is elected annually from the membership with representation from all levels of government, educational institutions, research agencies, community organizations, businesses and interested individuals.
regional groups in Australia and New Zealand. The Executive comprises the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and a fifth member responsible for strategic issues. The other Board members are the Regional Representatives and the Chairs of Standing Committees. There are currently 19 Board members. An up to date list of members is available on the AES website. Each Board member, including the office bearers, are elected for a maximum of three terms. The Board and Executive meet alternately six times a year through a combination of face-to-face meetings and teleconferences.

Most AES activities take place in the regions. The Regional Representatives act as a conduit between the Board and the regional groups and communicate in both directions. The Standing Committees support the work of the Board. At present there are five such Committees: Awards, Ethics and Standards, Professional Development and Training, Publications and International Relations.

The AES is supported by a Secretariat based in Canberra (aes@aes.asn.au). At present there are two part-time staff in the office who manage the day-to-day operations of the Society, support Board activities and field enquiries from members and the public. The Secretariat also has a major role in the organization of the annual AES international conferences.

Number of members. The AES currently has about 700 members, most of whom are from Australia and New Zealand, but also includes around 20 members from other countries.

Number and type of activities. The Society’s activities aim to achieve the following objectives:

**Objective 1:**
To be the major authority on, and principal advocate for, evaluation in the Society's sphere of influence.

**Objective 2:**
To exchange evaluation knowledge, skills and values between practitioners, organizations and evaluation societies.
OBJECTIVE 3:
To establish and utilize links between evaluation interests for practitioners.

OBJECTIVE 4:
To accept and promote professionalism in the practice of evaluation by organizations, practitioners and societies.

OBJECTIVE 5:
To optimize membership of the Society in order to meet its aims.

OBJECTIVE 6:
To conduct the management of the Society’s affairs in an efficient and cost effective manner.

The major event each year is the annual conference, which is preceded by two days of full or half-day training workshops. The conference is usually held in turn in each state of Australia and New Zealand. Attendance at conferences is usually between 250-350 people. Conferences are a major source of funding for the Society.

The AES publishes the Evaluation Journal of Australasia twice a year. The purpose of the Journal is to further the aims of the Society by publishing articles of professional merit on any subject connected with evaluation, together with news and information of professional interest to AES members. The Journal is intended to be critical and intellectually rigorous, but at the same time readable and accessible to the widest possible range of scholars and practitioners. An electronic newsletter, E-News, is also published quarterly. An archive of these publications is maintained on the AES website.

A series of regional workshops are also offered. The topics for these are chosen and the events are organized by the regional groups with assistance from the AES Secretariat. The workshops provide high quality professional development, attract new members and are a source of additional income for the Society.

The AES has also developed and published ‘Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluation’ and a ‘Code of Ethics’ for use by members.
A Membership Directory is published each year that includes a ‘Yellow Pages’ database of consultants who offer evaluation services.

Networking at regional levels is encouraged through regular meetings and seminars held by the regional groups. Joint activities are sometimes undertaken with other professional bodies such as universities, other professional organizations and evaluation societies.

Each year the AES runs an annual awards process. The aim of the Awards is to encourage the development of evaluation and high quality evaluation practice in Australasia. The Awards are presented at the annual conference. Details on the Awards can be found on the AES website at <www.aes.asn.au>.

A recent development is the creation of the status of Fellow of the Australasian Evaluation Society. The purpose of the Fellowship is to further the aims of the AES by establishing a category of membership for the Society’s most esteemed members to further enhance the Society’s image as a professional body. The first Fellowships were awarded in 2003.

**How the Organization Started and Developed**

The genesis of the AES can be traced back to the first two evaluation conferences organized in Australia in 1982 and 1984. The AES was formally established following the third conference in 1986; it was the third regional professional society to be established after the CES and the AEA. The development of the AES has been linked to developments in evaluation in the government sector in Australia and New Zealand.

**Aspects that Work Best and Challenges Within the Organization**

Central to the life of the AES is a critical mass of dedicated people who volunteer their time and energy to keep the organization functioning well. The regional groups, where most activities take place, function through the commitment of members who donate their time to organize events and to participate in them. It is these groups that allow the AES to function and develop. The Board consists of a group of dedicated
volunteers who work together to further the aims of the Society. The AES would not function well without a competent Secretariat to keep the day-to-day affairs running smoothly. The annual conferences and regional workshops are consistently well attended and successful.

The AES has had its fair share of challenges over the years. One of these has been maintaining the regular publication of a professional journal run by volunteers. It seems to be getting harder with each year that passes for people to find the time required to take on the necessary tasks.

**Major Challenges Met and Relative Solutions**

Several years ago the AES suffered the financial failure of an annual conference. It took a number of years of prudent financial management and strategic financial planning to get back on track. In order to accomplish this, the Board set financial targets to work towards and diversified the income sources. After three years the Society was in an even better financial position than before the problem occurred. The AES now maintains a financial reserve to guard against any future financial shocks.

Another challenge is increasing the membership. The AES has seen fluctuations in membership numbers over the years. Recruitment is not usually a problem but retention issues have resulted in a steady turnover of the membership. The reasons for this are not well understood but one possible explanation could be that many people move to evaluation, stay a few years and then change to another type of work. Striking a balance in the membership fee is important given the limited services the AES can provide and the need for income.

**Three Major Lessons Learned**

Even with the advent of email, maintaining good and positive communications at all times can be a challenge. Avoiding the problems and delays that can occur when communication breaks down requires
constant vigilance and good leadership. Good communication is also required to maintain positive organizational dynamics.

A further challenge is to maintain good records and clearly recorded policies that are accessible to members. This avoids misunderstandings and wastage of resources through going over old ground. Related to this is the need for good succession planning for changes in office bearers and Board members.

A strategic approach to financial management is advisable. Over-reliance on one major source of income is risky, so diversification of income sources is more prudent.

It is also critical to monitor workload by maintaining an appropriate balance between a reliance on volunteer time and work undertaken by a paid Secretariat. In addition, the work should be kept to an appropriate scale for the size of the organization by not over-reaching relative to the available resources. The right balance of work helps avoid ‘burn-out’ of both volunteers and the Secretariat.

**Three Recommendations on Developing Evaluation Organizations**

The factors affecting the development of evaluation organizations are the same as for most other groups. These are some of the elements that the AES has learned from its experience:

1. Vision and leadership: the people leading the organization must be able to generate a vision and then must have the capacity to carry it through into action. They also need to have realistic expectations of what can be achieved by a professional organization run mainly by volunteers.

2. Good communication: low cost and frequent and accurate communication both within and between the Board and members is a key factor in the healthy functioning of the organization. Regular publications and open reporting are an essential part of this.
3. Dedicated people: a critical mass of willing and energetic people who donate their time generously to undertaking the tasks of running the organization is essential. They need to be people who have the right skills and who are able to function well in a group and contribute positively to group dynamics.

Creating and Developing Evaluation Organizations

Brazil: The Brazilian Evaluation Network

By Rogério R. Silva,¹ Daniel B. Brandão,² Thomaz K. Chianca,³ Thereza Penna Firme,⁴ Eduardo Marino,⁵ Paulo Henrique Lustosa⁶ and Cristina Meirelles⁷

General Information

A Country of Contrasts

Brazil is the largest country in Latin America and is a federative republic comprised of 27 states with a population of more than 170 million. Although the 11th largest economy in the world, Brazil suffers from a highly inequitable distribution of wealth: nearly 70 percent of the wealth is concentrated in the hands of 20 percent of the rich, while the 30 percent of the poorest have only 2 percent of the wealth. This is one of the major reasons why Brazil is ranked 68th in terms of the human development index. The reasons for this unacceptable social imbalance are complex and are certainly rooted in the widespread culture of oppression and exploitation that was established when the country was first colonized in the 1500s. The several centuries of colonial domination by the Portuguese crown were followed by strong civil regimes and dictatorships that invariably governed only to protect the interests of the country’s elite. Democratic governments with some explicit commitment to address challenging social issues were only elected in the mid 1990s. Important progress has been made since then, but there

¹ E-mail: rrsilva@fonte.org.br
² E-mail: daniel@fonte.org.br
³ E-mail: thomaz.chianca@wmich.edu
⁴ E-mail: therezapf@uol.com.br
⁵ E-mail: eduardo.marino@uol.com.br
⁶ E-mail: ibrad@ibrad.org.br
⁷ E-mail: mcmeirelles@uol.com.br
is still a long way to go before the huge gap between economic and social development in Brazil can be diminished.

A Favourable Environment for Evaluation

Brazil has had a stable democracy for the last two decades, and this has fostered relevant changes in the three main sectors of society — government, private and non-profit — that have pushed evaluation to a central position in society. In the government, several reforms in the state, influenced mainly by liberal (e.g. small and efficient state) and social control (e.g. transparency and participation) ideas, prompted the government to establish M & E as a key element to ensure the propagation of such ideas. In the private sector, the concept of social responsibility was widely adopted by several companies in the country, resulting in a significant increase in their investments in social development initiatives. Their culture of close control over activities and focus on results also contributed to a push for more evaluative activities within the newly funded social initiatives. Finally, the growth and professionalization of civil society organizations, several of which rely on support from international organizations including foundations and cooperation agencies, resulted in a call for greater effectiveness (better use of scarce resources) and accountability (transparency of expenditures and results). Both aspects are clearly related to better M & E systems.

How the Organization Started and Developed

Initial Steps

Within this favourable context for evaluation, leadership from government, private and non-profit sectors started concomitant movements to discuss evaluation in their specific contexts. There was an increase in the number of books and papers dealing with evaluation issues. Study groups and research teams that focused on evaluation were created in non-profit organizations and in universities. Training courses as well as seminars on evaluation were offered more frequently in different regions of the
country. Eventually, evaluators with leading positions in these different sectors started to look for ways of working together. The establishment of a nation-wide network of evaluators seemed to be the most feasible strategy to accomplish this goal.

**Official Debut**

A first meeting to concretely discuss the creation of a Brazilian Evaluation Network took place in June 2002, involving representatives from UNICEF, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Ayrton Senna Institute, and the Department for International Development of the government of the United Kingdom (UK-DFID). By the end of 2002, one state (São Paulo) and the Federal District of Brasília created the first chapters of the Network. In 2003, the states of Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco and Bahia also created their own chapters, and in the first half of 2004 the state of Minas Gerais did the same. Currently, the Network has six chapters and approximately 250 members that have connections to government institutions, non-profit organizations, universities and private companies.

**Structure**

The Network has a horizontal and informal structure. Each state chapter defines the strategies that will work best for them to congregate local evaluators and promote discussions to advance evaluation in their own states. A national committee with elected representatives from all chapters was formed to articulate the Network at the national level and to support the creation and development of new state chapters. Given the size of Brazil and funding constraints, the national committee met twice in 2003 and scheduled a third meeting for mid-2004. The Brazilian Evaluation Network is not yet registered as an official entity. Therefore, basic administrative support to get the Network running has been provided by the Fonte Institute and UNICEF. Other institutions that have provided important support to the Network’s activities include UNESCO, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Care-Brasil, Vitae, Cesgranrio.
The Network’s Mission, Objectives and Values

Mission

To develop and strengthen an evaluation culture and evaluation practices related to public issues in Brazil through the articulation of people and organizations, knowledge production and dissemination, professional development, and evaluation advocacy as a political transformative tool.

Objectives

1. articulate people and organizations directly or indirectly involved in practicing and/or debating evaluation;
2. construct, produce and disseminate knowledge related to evaluation;
3. promote professional development in the field of evaluation;
4. advocate the use of evaluation as part of the planning and managing strategies of public, non-profit and private organizations; and
5. strengthen and broaden the Network’s structure.

Values

Evaluation:
• needs to be understood and developed as a learning process;
• should be understood and practiced to empower evaluation stakeholders;
• must be accessible to all stakeholders;
• needs to be an instrument for strategic management;
• will be more relevant if understood and practiced as part of the organizational culture;
• benefits from participation;
Creating and Developing Evaluation Organizations

• must generate sound information;
• should promote accountability; and
• needs to be a politically transformative action.

The Network’s Activities

State Chapters

Each chapter has the autonomy to establish its own work agenda. Usually there are frequent meetings (monthly or bi-monthly) that are open to wide participation. Such meetings invariably include technical and administrative discussions. Case discussions of evaluations conducted by members, or theoretical discussions about specific issues in evaluation encompass the technical part of the meetings. Topics related to organizational aspects of the chapters and the national network are also discussed in these meetings. It is estimated that so far, more than 20 chapter meetings have taken place. The chapters, with support from the national committee, have also organized workshops and seminars with internationally known evaluators including Eliot Stern, Rita O’Sullivan and Michael Patton.

National Meeting and ReLAC

The first national meeting of the Network was held in October 2003 in São Paulo. Approximately 300 people were present at the official launch of the Brazilian Evaluation Network. During the meeting, the Network, along with the Colombian and Peruvian M&E Networks and the Costa Rican Evaluation Society, launched the basis for the creation of ReLAC.

Communication

The Network has a website in Portuguese and English (www.avaliabrasil.org.br) that describes its history and features current updates on the network and each of its chapters. The site also offers a series of evaluation documents produced by the network members and
links to useful evaluation resources available online. An electronic discussion list allows frequent interaction and collaboration among members.

Aspects That Work Best and Aspects That Work Worst Within the Organization

Three Aspects That Work Best

- the democratic climate and horizontal decision-making process;
- steadily growing membership and state chapters; and
- increasing support from influential organizations in Brazil.

Most Challenging Aspects

- the informal structure does not permit direct leveraging and administration of resources;
- lack of a structure to manage the basic activities of the Network (e.g. updating website and membership and organizing meetings) — all the work is done by volunteers with very limited time;
- organizing and assuring participation of members in national committee meetings with no budget available; and
- reaching evaluators in the less affluent regions/states in Brazil.

Three Major Lessons Learned

- democratic contexts create a favourable environment for the development of evaluation networks;
- given their support for the independence and autonomy of their members, networks are a better strategy for organizing evaluators than establishing a full organization with a hierarchal structure; and
- a major component of a successful network is people with fresh ideas who are motivated to work. Money is important, but not as important as the people.
Canada: Canadian Evaluation Society (CES)

By Jennifer Carey, Nancy Porteous, Gerald Halpern, Gwen Keith and Kathy Jones

Canada is a land of vast distances and rich natural resources and is home to approximately 32 million people. Maintaining a confederate government with a parliamentary democracy, Canada represents the administrative division of 10 provinces and three territories. English and French are Canada's official languages.

CES is a Canada-wide, bilingual, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of evaluation theory and practice. CES represents a broad-based multidisciplinary membership of almost 2,000 members from across Canada and other countries involved in research, management, consulting, policy and teaching.

Background

Beginning with two years of informal discussions and meetings with knowledgeable peers, the seven original founders of the CES wanted to create a Society that would be a forum for exchange of expertise. The first CES conference took place in May 1980. The Letters Patent, under Part II of The Canadian Corporations Act, formalized the following five objectives on 29 May, 1981:

1 E-mail: jcarey@jcareyconsulting.ca
2 E-mail: Nancy_Porteous@phac-aspc.gc.ca
3 E-mail: gerald.halpern@farfindings.com
4 E-mail: keithg@cec.rcss.sk.ca
5 E-mail: kathy.jones@thewillowgroup.com
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1. to provide a forum where programme managers, administrators, policy makers, consultants and university professors can discuss the theory and practice of evaluation in Canadian society;
2. to promote the practice of high quality evaluation in public and private programmes throughout the country;
3. to develop the theories, standards and practices of evaluation;
4. to promote training programmes in planning the design, strategy, methods, analysis and application of results for all types evaluation; and
5. to provide a forum for the exchange of policies, practices, applications and sources of funding for evaluation.

CES Today

In May 2001, CES refined its goals:

1. Leadership — to provide leadership to individuals and organizations in support of evaluation theory and practice in Canada and in the global community.
2. Knowledge — to improve the state of evaluation theory and practice.
3. Advocacy — to promote the importance of an evaluation culture.
4. Professional development — to promote and facilitate the enhancement of evaluation capacity for both members and non-members.

CES consists of a volunteer National Council plus 12 regional chapters, supported by paid part-time secretariat staff. The CES National Council is comprised of 16 volunteers from the CES membership. It is made up of officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and past President) plus one representative from each of the twelve chapters. There are four standing committees: Administration, Member Services, Professional Development and Advocacy.
Successes and Challenges

Annual national conference

The annual national conference is recognized as the major professional development event of the year for most CES members. Made up of workshops, panels and poster presentations, these conferences have promoted good evaluation practice on an annual basis since 1980. It is through this forum that members have the opportunity to discuss topics of interest and share their experiences.

Professional development and services to members

- Standards and ethics — the CES adopted its own Guidelines for Ethical Conduct which are used by many as a touchstone for good practice, competence, integrity and accountability. The CES is also one of 16 associations that sponsor the Joint Committee on Standards for Education Evaluation.
- Professional development courses — the CES considers professional development to be a key service to its members. Therefore, it conducts research on professional development requirements and develops a series of courses available to all members through the individual chapters. Non-members are permitted to enroll when there is available space.
  - Core Body of Knowledge — this research project identifies the benefits of programme evaluation, the outputs necessary to achieve those benefits, and the knowledge and skills needed to produce the outputs. The study results inform the selection of professional development courses to be made available to the membership of the Society.
  - Essential Skills Series — this is a four-day introductory overview of evaluation to enhance programme evaluation knowledge and skills. The specific objectives of this series are to increase knowledge of programme evaluation concepts, procedures and standards of professional practice; to apply this knowledge in
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practical hands-on programme evaluation activities; and to reflect on the role of programme evaluation in programme planning and development.

- Programme Logic Models — this is a one-day intermediate level workshop designed to build capacity to assess and develop logic models for planning and evaluation.

- Survey Research — this is a one-day intermediate level workshop designed for evaluators who wish to hone their skills in the design and development of survey research. It covers a range of elements including survey design and implementation plus data collection and analysis.

- Support to other associations — professional organizations in other countries have expressed interest in the professional development model used by CES. To date, we have freely responded to all requests for information.

Outside of the professional development activities, CES also offers various other successful services to its members via its Member Services Committee including:

- Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation — promotes the theory and practice of programme evaluation in Canada by publishing articles on all aspects of the theory and practice of evaluation including methodology, evaluation standards, implementation of evaluations, reporting and use of studies, and the audit or meta-evaluation of evaluation.

- Website — contains current news items, reference material and discussion forums. The site also features cross-Canada information on conferences and professional development events, initiatives in programme evaluation standards, student opportunities, and much more. There is a weekly automatic email broadcast service that highlights upcoming events or new resources. There is also a free subscription-based broadcast service that announces job postings, contracts and collaborative opportunities.
Student Initiatives

• Student Case Competition — provides post-secondary students with intense, hands-on experience in the fundamental aspects of evaluation, such as assessing and condensing information, as well as presenting observations and recommendations to a decision-making body.

• Student Paper Contest — provides exposure to promising Canadian students who study or have an interest in evaluation by granting an award for the best paper written by a graduate student in the field of evaluation.

• Conference Travel Subsidies — provides some financial support (depending on grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) to individuals affiliated with Canadian post-secondary institutions.

• Canadian Evaluation Society Scholarship Foundation — registered as a charitable organization in 1990, the purpose and goals of this foundation are: to promote the advancement of education in the field of evaluation in Canada; to raise funds from Canadians and non-Canadians including individuals, companies, associations and other organizations; and to disburse scholarships to students at Canadian universities for pursuing studies in fields related to programme evaluation.

Despite its continued successes, however, CES is not without its challenges. Among the most difficult are:

Resources

Like many non-profit organizations, financial sustainability is a constant preoccupation of the National Council. The CES tries to keep membership fees modest while attempting to appropriately balance the mix of volunteer time and effort with paid secretariat support. Fundraising and grant writing are priorities. Nonetheless, the Society
remains relatively dependent on the profits of its annual national conference to maintain operations.

Effective communication with the membership

CES has moved from predominantly print-based to online communication through its website and email broadcasts. Dedicated volunteers from the CES membership have designed, developed and continue to maintain the website. This is an invaluable in-kind contribution that would not have been possible if this service had to be purchased. Although volunteers maintain the CES presence online, securing content for communication products such as a newsletter is difficult when relying on volunteer input. An additional challenge in the CES context is communicating effectively in both official languages, English and French. The costs of translation are high and the quality of translation is often an issue.

Lessons Learned

It is volunteers who have made the CES the strong and vibrant organization that it has grown to be. CES does its best to recognize the time and efforts of its volunteers, including individual members who organize chapter events, the organizing committees for the annual national conference and Student Case Competition, members of the Journal editorial board, judges for the Student Case Competition and Paper Contest, the Regional Chapter Executives, and members of the National Council. In addition, CES has an annual Service to the Society Award that recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to the work of the Society at the regional, national and international level over a number of years.
Recommendations

Forming a National Society or Association

There are two elements that are required. First, there must be a compelling need. Evaluators must already be in place before an association can be formed to provide a forum to represent and support their needs. Second, there must be a core group of people prepared to design, champion and then implement the society or association.

This initial core group will need resources. They must either be prepared to initially fund the activities with their own volunteer time and in-kind resources plus some modest finances, or they must find a funding agency that will underwrite the costs until such time as there is a dues-paying membership, if this is feasible in their context.

Maintaining a National Society or Association

Mechanisms are needed to encourage those with an interest in evaluation to join the Society, pay dues and (for at least some of the members) work on its behalf. The most effective way to achieve this is to learn the perceived needs of the membership, add to these (if necessary) the corporate needs of the profession, and then meet these two needs to ensure that the membership is aware of the services being provided. In other words, the membership should be able to recognize that there is value in membership.

Conclusion

The CES has managed to survive and grow during the past quarter century through its dedication to continually renew itself, refining not only its structure, but also the ways in which it reaches out to the evaluation community.
For further information regarding the CES, please visit our website at <www.evaluationcanada.ca> or contact our Executive Secretariat at:

1485 Laperriere Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 7S8 Canada
secretariat@evaluationcanada.ca
Tel.: +1 613 725.2526
Fax: +1 613 729.6206
Europe: The European Evaluation Society (EES)

By Nicoletta Stame

General Information

Date of establishment. The EES was founded in The Hague (Netherlands) on 1 December, 1994.

Structure. The EES is run by a Board of six members (with up to an additional three members who can be co-opted in order to improve representation of important regional or sector constituencies). Board members are elected for four years, on a rotating basis (three members are elected every two years). The President is elected by the Society members for a mandate of two years, as is the Vice-President, who takes over the Presidency. The Board elects the General Secretary and the Treasurer.

Board members share tasks, but there are no topical interest groups. However, there have so far been working groups on training and education in evaluation, on standards and guidelines, and for the organization of bi-annual conferences. For more detailed information, please refer to the EES Statutes available on the EES website.

Membership. The EES has a membership of around 400 people, coming from the different corners of Europe. Its membership reflects its history, and the shifting locations of its conferences.

Number and type of activities. The main activity of the EES is the organization of the bi-annual conference. This conference usually gathers around 400 people and offers a state of the art account of evaluation in

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1 E-mail: nicoletta.stame@uniroma1.it; nstame@aconet.it
the various fields and across Europe. Every conference has a general theme around which keynote speakers and round tables are organized. Conferences also provide an opportunity for an updating of evaluation issues in many fields.

Past conference themes have been:


Seminars on specific topics are organized on the occasion of the Annual General Meeting in the years when the conference is not held: in 2003 a seminar was organized in Brussels on evaluation standards, guidelines and ethical codes.

The EES has long debated its role of providing training and education in evaluation. Training sessions are usually organized at the beginning of the conference. In the fall of 2003 a five-day professional development workshop was organized in Denmark.

The EES publishes a newsletter (previously only printed, but now also available on the website) and manages a website (www.europeanevaluation.org) where one can find news about the Society, the network of the European evaluation community, information on recent and future events, official documents, and papers from past conferences.
How the Organization Started and Developed

The EES was born thanks to the convergent efforts of a group of enlightened auditors from northern Europe national audit offices, and experts who were familiar with the practice and theory of programme evaluation through their exchanges with the other side of the Atlantic. The EES has been open to various inspirations and policy domains, and has become the home for people coming from the profession, government, academia, NGOs, etc. At the same time, the shifting location of conferences has attracted people from different areas: from the north (Netherlands, Sweden) to the south (Italy, Switzerland, Spain). The next move is spreading to the east, as the location of the sixth conference in Berlin (Germany) shows. Thus, the actual membership is quite balanced.

Aspects That Work Best and Aspects That Work Worst Within the Organization

Aspects that work best

• the organization of conferences; and
• networking among evaluators from different countries.

Worst aspects

• communication in ordinary times — for instance, it is difficult to get people to send news for the website;
• the language problem — only people who have a good knowledge of English participate in the activities of the EES; and
• funding.

Three Major Challenges Met and Relative Solutions

The special nature of the EES is itself a challenge. It is a supranational organization, covering a vast cultural and geographic area, Europe, while
most of the evaluation practice takes place at a national level. The three main challenges facing the EES arise from its special nature:

1. the meaning of ‘European evaluation’;
2. relationships between EES and national evaluation societies; and
3. evaluation capacity building at a European level.

The meaning of European evaluation

This could be understood in several different ways, each of which has represented a special challenge, and has met some solution.

In the first place, there is the challenge of multiculturalism: there is no such thing as ‘European’ evaluation, rather there are different evaluation traditions from various countries, arising from the way evaluation was introduced in successive waves in different contexts. Going by the famous waves in evaluation institutionalization,\(^2\) forerunner evaluation mandates took place in the seventies in Germany and Sweden as a follow up to the first wave; then, during the second wave in the eighties, evaluation was introduced in the UK and in northern European countries as a way of warranting value for money and accountable governments, which has now given way to a widespread diffusion of principles of new public management and looking at results; in the third wave in the nineties, evaluation became widespread as a result of the European Union (EU) Structural Funds and other programme requests, which were also transferred to national programmes and policy instruments. At the same time, most European countries have adhered to these general principles by adapting their different institutional settings (more or less centralized; with different administrative traditions, different welfare states, etc.).

The EES has offered a space for making comparisons among these different situations and for appreciating the need to learn from each other and not imposing a single evaluation perspective on everybody.

But a greater awareness of the need for such comparative work is required if we really want to have a constructive dialogue. And this will be all the more needed with the participation of people from eastern European countries that have become EU members, in the activities of the EES.

In the second place, we can detect some unifying tendencies. Foremost among these is the push from the EU Commission for the evaluation of programmes supported by the Structural Funds and other community initiatives. This push has been very important for the diffusion and institutionalization of evaluation throughout Europe, and will certainly play a role in the countries that have recently become EU members.

Structural Funds have constituted the main market for evaluation in Europe, and have spurred the development of evaluation capacity building. On the demand side (in the commissioning agencies, evaluation units of ministries, etc.) it is necessary to understand that evaluations can be a useful resource for enhancing the governing bodies' abilities; on the supply side (where most contractors still come from a restricted number of consulting firms or research centres) it is necessary to develop specific evaluation skills and methodologies.

The EU evaluation units set the pace with guidelines, standards and concept papers mainly devoted to the clarification of the role of evaluation inside a 'rational' administration, and to methodology. The whole process is top-down from the EU Commission, although the latter solicits the contribution of lower-level governance and of external actors among research centres, consulting agencies, etc. Thus, the real challenge is how to favour a two-way dialogue, bringing to the fore the contribution of the vast evaluation community that is working at the local and intermediate level where programmes are implemented. In other words, the challenge is to be able to act in such a way that the unifying tendency doesn't turn into a levelling one.

The EES has been involved in a dialogue with the EU evaluation officers in different ways. On the one hand, most of the external people who have interacted with the various General Directories evaluation
units and have contributed to the elaboration of these documents belong to the EES. For instance, the Evaluation of Socio-Economic Programmes or MEANS guides (European Commission, 1999), a must read set of six volumes on which most European evaluators of Structural Funds have been trained, were realized under the direction of Eric Monnier and Jacques Toulemonde, who were among the founders of EES; the MEANS guides were presented at EES conferences and EU conferences to which EES Board members were invited to participate. The new guide (2004) that has recently been completed in order to incorporate policy challenges and disciplinary advancements has been prepared by a group of people under the direction of Elliot Stern, who was an EES founder and was the EES President from 2002-2003.

On the other hand, the EES has always regarded the official EU documents as interesting materials that are available to the evaluation community in the same way as official documents from other international agencies and scholarly papers and publications are available. In this spirit, we have always appreciated the participation of EU commissioners and experts in the debates that take place at our conferences, where we try to have an audience composed of people from different evaluation roles and environments.

Last but not least, we could ask whether there is a specific European contribution to evaluation. Since evaluation originated outside, we have all been learners more than teachers, and we have chosen what to learn in accordance with our special interests, disciplinary background or field of practice. Thus all the main approaches and trends are well represented in European evaluation.

At the same time, there is an approach that since the beginning has been a landmark of sorts of European evaluation: realistic evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). This was presented as a European contribution in a special issue of Knowledge and Society (1995) that was devoted to the founding of the EES, and the second EES conference had as its theme ‘Evaluation: What Works for Whom’, which is a typical realistic evaluation question. Of course, realistic evaluation is an approach that belongs to the social science tradition in evaluation (as the use of concepts
such as ‘context’ and ‘mechanism’ shows; but one could also say that its favourable reception may be due to its being so well suited to analyse the problems of diversity and complexity that characterize the European setting.

**Relationships Between EES and National Evaluation Societies**

When the EES was founded in 1994, only the UK Evaluation Society existed. At present there are some 15 national evaluation societies or networks. While the EES has enabled the creation of these national societies, its relationship with them is not clear.

Evaluation practice takes place mostly at the national level, where demand for evaluation meets its supply, and where people communicate in the same language within a given institutional space.

A couple of questions that arise are what can a European society offer to evaluators, and what is the value added of a supranational society? On the one hand, the EES can offer a forum for the exchange of ideas and benchmarking, thus helping national societies to gain an ‘outside’ perspective of themselves, and to learn from this comparison. For example, the EES is devoting great attention to the development of evaluation standards, guidelines and ethical codes in various environments; recognizing that they refer to national practices, the EES favours reciprocal knowledge and debate about standards without imposing its own European ones.

On the other hand, the EES provides occasions for the creation of a real European evaluation community, helping evaluators to create networks for exchange among professionals, and between professionals and administrators.

At the moment we are fostering a dialogue with national associations in order to find out the best methods for coordination and division of labour. By adding the membership of the national societies, we could

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3 These problems have been tackled in a document issued in 2002, ‘EES Futures’, which can be found in www.europeanevaluation.org

4 A document on the EES policy on standards can be found on the EES website.
reach a few thousand members, while the EES membership still amounts to a few hundreds. One possibility is that of having a joint membership EES-national, with a reduced fee for the second one.

One obstacle to full participation is language. The EES working language is English, in which most European evaluators are not very fluent. At conferences, only the keynote addresses are translated into the language of the hosting country, which is not sufficient. We are exploring a language sensitive approach, asking those who can speak other languages to volunteer for helping people formulate their questions and for translating relevant messages.

Training

Most European evaluators have acquired their expertise by playing some role in evaluation, be it as commissioners, professionals or users. As for a specialized education in evaluation, there is no dedicated university curriculum, only single courses in various faculties of sociology, economics, education, statistics, etc. Some research centres or training agencies offer short, ad hoc courses for special interests, or for people working in given institutional settings.

The EES is well aware of the need for contributing to training and education. Initially, it simply offered opportunities for education at pre-conference training workshops run by keynote speakers or contributors to the conferences. In 2003 a professional development workshop was organized that was attended by 30 people coming from 10 European countries and working in different settings with different roles. The workshop aimed at transferring the main themes debated at the previous conference ('Three Movements in Evaluation: Theory, Evidence, Learning') into a proper curriculum.

The experience was considered positive by the attendees, and a working group within the Board is planning how to proceed. The following alternatives are being considered: agreeing on a curriculum that can be proposed to universities and education institutions (something of this kind has been proposed by the German evaluation
society DeGEval, and will be debated at the Berlin conference); sponsoring partnerships among European universities for a post-graduate course in evaluation; and creating a permanent evaluation institution linked to the EES.

**Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

Having a mixed membership of professionals, administrators and people conducting research on evaluation, there was the risk of a separation between practitioners and academics. This has been overcome by trying to bring the two communities closer through an emphasis on the special nature of evaluation and the links between theory and practice, rather than on factors that make them separate.

**Recommendations on Developing Evaluation Organizations**

Structures and management systems: For the first nine years, secretarial services were generously provided by the Audit Offices of the Netherlands (1994-96), of Sweden (1997-99) and of Belgium (2000-2003). Since January 2004, the EES has established an agreement with the University of Southern Denmark for a part-time secretarial position.

Membership structure: The Individual members fee is 95 euros. Benefits include a one-year subscription to the Evaluation Journal and substantial discounts on EES conference fees.

The Institutional members fee is 1,200 euros. Benefits include a five-year subscription to the Evaluation Journal.

It is possible to subscribe on the website.

Conference planning and implementation: The following is a possible schedule:

- **October**: selection of site of conference and agreement with local organizers;
- **December**: call for papers for the conference;
- **March (end)**: deadline for sending abstracts;
• April: selection process of abstracts (the Board members and the local organizers act as referee, a form for referee is attached);
• May: the programme is finalized (paper presentation sessions, round tables, etc.);
• September (beginning): papers are sent to discussants; and
• September end - early October: conference.

Newsletters and website: Please visit <www.europeanevaluation.org>.
General Information

• Date of establishment: IAPE was established in the summer of 1998.
• Structure: a non-profit association with Chairperson and Executive Committee members and an annual general meeting.
• Number of members: the average core number of members is 70, with 50 floating members (i.e. those who sign up one year, but do not renew the following year because they forget or for other reasons).
• Number and type of activities: one annual conference alternating between one and two days; three to four professional workshops a year; newsletter with two issues a year (except for 2003); and a website.
How the Organization Started and Developed

The development of IAPE followed the model below:

Initially, there were two of us who were very keen on establishing an evaluation organization. We did a lot of ground work trying to drum up interest from evaluators in both academia and the field of practice, and we had to use our own funds to organize an initial meeting. At this meeting we enlisted the help of others and formed key committees. We then received a grant from the Ben Gurion University to hold our first conference, during the course of which we held our first general assembly meeting and elected the Executive Committee and Chairperson. Both have since changed twice through bi-annual elections. The Association has been functioning in the same way since its first conference. We have held six annual conferences, published six newsletters, maintain an active website and hold approximately three professional workshops a year on a variety of subjects.
Aspects That Work Best and Aspects That Work Worst Within the Organization

Positive aspects

• broadening the professional knowledge of members;
• establishing a professional identity;
• participating in workshops and conferences;
• exchanging information; and
• email communication among the members.

Negative aspects

• top heavy management — most of the work is done by a few devoted members;
• continuity of membership — we should be able to maintain members and facilitate the membership joining procedure; and
• missed audiences — there are areas of evaluation practice that we have not yet reached (broad medical fields, business, management, etc.).

Three Major Challenges Met and Relative Solutions

1. Sustainability of membership — it is important to keep members interested and active and thus encourage them to renew their memberships.
2. Sustainability of activities — there is a great deal of dependence on volunteers, many of whom have limited time and energy; an effort must be made to find subjects of common interest with other organizations in order to hold joint activities (e.g. conference on evaluation in drug prevention programmes, evaluation in the social services, etc.).
3. Fund raising — the predominant source of funds is membership dues, which are kept low to attract and keep members; there is a need to look for support from local enterprises.
Major Lessons Learned

- It is possible to organize and maintain an organization with limited funds with the help of an enthusiastic group of organizers.
- It is however difficult to do much more than that. For larger initiatives we need money that we do not have.
- New activities stimulate interest and should be introduced as often as possible.
- Members should be contacted frequently with updates and be given the opportunity to express their opinions and present their work.

Recommendations on How to Develop Evaluation Organizations

Just do it! Contact interested people and get moving.

Outcomes of the Organization

- Contributed to the professional development of members (and non-members) via workshops, study days and lectures.
- Developed a professional identity.
- Raised awareness of evaluation practices among our membership and in the institutions in which they work.
- Encouraged greater participation of our members in international forums.
- Facilitated networking among our members.
- Raised recognition of evaluation as a profession.

Major Issues and Questions

- What kind of professional association do we want? Certifying, training, networking and/or advocacy?
• Who are our members? New evaluators, veteran evaluators, evaluation users, stakeholders interested in evaluation, other professionals interested in evaluation?
• What kind of evaluation do we want to conduct? Programme/project, achievement, personnel, policy evaluation, evaluative information?
Italy: Italian Evaluation Association (AIV)

By Claudio Bezzi

General Information

The Italian Association for Evaluation (Italian acronym: AIV) was founded in Rome during 27-28 October, 1997 at a Founding Congress which was attended by about 300 participants.

The AIV Charter does not provide for local branch offices or thematic divisions, even though no specific impediments exist; the AIV, thus operates through a national governing body (the Board of Directors) consisting of nine members who are appointed for a three-year term. Every year three directors leave office, and the members’ assembly elects three new directors from a pool of candidates who stand for the position. This turnover system allows both institutional memory and acquired experience to be preserved. The Board of Directors appoints from among its own members the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary and the Treasurer; it also appoints, choosing from among qualified members of the Association, the Editorial Council, which manages the collection of monographs.

The AIV’s membership has fluctuated between 200 and 300 and has a high turnover rate. About a third are sociologists or people with similar professional qualifications; another third are economists. As far as professional positions are concerned, about one third are university professors, another third are consultants and the remaining third are students, civil servants and ‘other’.

E-mail: bezzi@valutazione.it
The AIV has explicit cultural intents. It is neither an association of professionals (as stated above, it also includes scholars, civil servants and students), nor a lobby promoting specific policies; the very first lines of the Association Charter read as follows:

The Association aims at promoting the culture of evaluation, by supporting the spreading of evaluation practices concerning public policies and any public or private programme, project and decision-making process, the debate over evaluation methods and techniques, the training of evaluators.

Following this outline, the AIV has devoted all its resources to the organization of cultural and training activities such as:

- An annual Congress where all members are invited to submit a report. During the Congress an annual Assembly is held, which approves the budget, discusses changes to the Charter, if any, and appoints the three new members of the Board of Directors.
- Scientific initiatives on specific themes handled by specially invited lecturers. Such initiatives can take the form of a congress or a more restricted seminar; the AIV aims to promote one such event every year.
- The summer course (since 2003 this was accompanied by a winter course as well), which is an intensive, week-long study of evaluation issues.
- Qualified editorial activity, which initiated the publication of three yearbooks and four monographs, among other things.
- The RIV — Rassegna Italiana di Valutazione (Italian Evaluation Review) — a quarterly publication launched independently from the AIV, but recently acquired and transformed into the scientific body of the Association. It publishes theoretical and methodological essays, case studies, information notes and reviews. The RIV celebrated its eighth anniversary of activity in 2004.
- Despite their unique occurrence, it is worth mentioning the training courses organized in 2000-2001 for the Department of Public Office for the staff of regional and national administrations.
Furthermore, the AIV has a website (www.valutazioneitaliana.it) which, apart from information about the association, also offers different materials that visitors can download for free (the first four volumes of the RIV, reports submitted at the Congress, etc.).

Up till now, an AIV member is granted:

• the right to participate in the Assembly and to vote;
• discounts on AIV activities (Congress, courses, other meetings);
• an electronic newsletter, which updates members on the AIV’s activities;
• the quarterly review RIV, which is issued by one of the major Italian publishers and is free for members; and
• discounts on the editorial collection sponsored by AIV and the opportunity to publish a work in such a collection.

How the Organization Started and Developed

When the AIV was founded in the mid 1990s, Italy was going through an interesting period. A great effort was being made to renew the Italian public administration — although with varying success and through processes that were not always straightforward — which raised expectations and enthusiasm in various sectors and among the well-trained and the youth. At the same time, evaluation issues were being tackled in some professional areas, even if through different and un-coordinated initiatives: development policies based on European Structural Funds were beginning to include evaluation issues more and more frequently; the public health sector had long been subject to international cultural stimuli concerning evidence-based medicine, the quality of health services and evaluation issues, while such interests — given the structure of the Italian welfare system — were moving from the health sector to the social services field; territorial planning and the universities were beginning to tackle the evaluation issue, thus joining other more mature sectors such as the development cooperation field, which otherwise had no opportunity to step into the limelight and stand as an example.
In such a varied context characterized by different impulses, a group of scholars and professionals sharing a common interest in evaluation met in Perugia in 1996, on the occasion of four seminars on evaluation sponsored by the Umbria Regional Institute of Research (Italian acronym: IRRES), following the publication of a series of guidelines on evaluation edited by the IRRES itself (1995). The high quality seminars were very successful and were attended by people from all over Italy. During the seminars, the first issue of RIV was presented to the public (at that time the review had an electronic format only) and some of the promoters thought the time was ripe for an association that would give evaluation practices a decisive impulse and foster communication between their numerous components.

During the last of the four seminars, therefore, the formation of an executive committee, which undertook to promote the foundation of the association, was announced; the committee gradually co-opted potential members from among scholars who had published texts on the issue and professionals interested in evaluation. The group worked on a Charter and a Deontological code, discussing the intents of the association, the role of its members and its organizing procedures.

Once the executive committee had accomplished its task, a Founding Congress was convened in Rome. The executive committee explained the criteria adopted for co-opting potential members for the Association and the reasons for its choices, stimulating an in-depth debate among the participants. On the basis of this discussion, and legitimized by a mandate from the wider community of interested people, a temporary Board of Directors continued the debate concerning the Charter and the Deontological code. The final drafts for these were subsequently drawn up, complying with the laws on the matter of associations.

Finally, at the first Congress in Venice held in 1998, the Assembly of AIV members (at the Founding Congress in Rome there were no actual members with the right to participate in a formal assembly, since the AIV itself did not yet exist) approved the association documents (Charter, Regulations and Deontological code), elected the first Board of Directors consisting of nine members, and discussed the AIV’S programme.
It is worth noting that such a process, which lasted two years altogether, was consciously chosen by the first group of promoters in order to avoid the foundation of an association spoilt from the very beginning by partisan interests; gain legitimacy/credibility in a very differentiated and fragmentary context where evaluators did not communicate among themselves; and give the Association a collective character immediately, which is necessary for an organization that aims to bring together academicians, professionals, civil servants, sociologists, economists, trainers and planners, established professional evaluators and young students.

This two-year process led to several results that were not quite expected at the beginning, and some of which raised a debate on different possibilities:

• an Association that should be clearly oriented towards the development of an evaluation culture in Italy, and not a lobby (even though any organization of this kind is somewhat a pressure group) or an exclusive, corporate association defending professional interests; an Association not interested in developing professional evaluation activities, on its own or through its members;

• an Association of people rather than of corporate groups (which are not allowed to join in by Charter), in order to avoid any possible ambiguity between the Association’s cultural intents and the inevitable bordering on professional issues peculiar to the members;

• an Association of equals — there are neither different levels of membership, nor differences of any kind concerning members’ rights (with one exception: only members with at least five years of evaluation experience, acquired in various ways, are eligible for election to the Board of Directors).

Up till now these remain the unquestionable principles of the AIV, although the considerable evolution of the subject matter in Italy provides new challenges and requires taking new themes into consideration: at present the evaluation market connected with Structural Funds in Italy is oriented in favour of some companies only, which hinders improvements
in the quality of evaluations; following the spread of evaluation practices, many operators have entered the market but they are not always adequately trained, which suggests the need for a reconsideration of the AIV’s role as a guarantor of ‘proper evaluation’ and promoter of methodological standards of a more general value; these and similar issues have emerged during the last few assemblies and the Board of Directors has begun tackling them while designing a new scheme of services to be provided to AIV members.

Three Aspects That Work Best and Three Aspects That Work Worst Within the Organization

The following are perhaps the best characteristics of AIV (not mentioned in order of priority):

• It is an open, not exclusive Association, always seeking to establish a dialogue with other communities; it regards as praiseworthy the non-adherence to a specific school of thought and the attempts to encourage the expression of different or even opposing ideas (through the review RIV as well). Although the actual success of this open approach is hampered by several organizational circumstances, such a guideline is unanimously accepted and recognized as unquestionable.

• It has remarkable editorial activity, which includes both the editorial collection and the quarterly review; the collection has always avoided low or medium quality publications and each text proposed is read by an anonymous referee who can substantially change its structure. The review, initially launched and managed independently from the Association, became the property of the AIV two years ago and, thanks to a competent Editorial Council, guarantees a qualified editorial line, sensitive to innovative themes and open to different approaches.

• The mechanism adopted to elect the Board of Directors, which provides for a turnover of three members out of nine each year,
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Prevents the consolidation of an inefficient and ineffective managing body; such a mechanism allows room for a revision of the programme as well as of AIV’s top management on an annual basis. This system of guarantees, however, does not function perfectly in practice, because in a small association such as the AIV some inertial factors may lead to slowing-down phases and a decrease in commitment. On the other hand, as proved by the last assembly in 2004, the turnover mechanism has allowed the candidature and subsequent election of qualified and motivated colleagues, who aim at starting a new cycle of activity.

As far as negative characteristics are concerned, the following aspects can be mentioned:

• The membership basis is still uncertain, with a high turnover rate among members. Since there are no internal conflicts to account for this (the AIV is open, the turnover within the Board of Directors makes it easy for members to stand for the position), the causes for such a stagnation in the membership basis can be traced mainly to organizational circumstances. Obsolete membership procedures, together with a policy not sufficiently sensitive to the provision of specific services to members, may have led to the periodic desertion of members.

• The excessively sporadic occurrence of cultural and training events. The reasons for this are again of an organizational nature; the AIV is small and based on the voluntary participation of professionals who cannot always devote large amounts of time to the organization of activities. This circumstance has consolidated the habit of concentrating efforts on the annual Congress, and relying on local initiatives for any other kind of activity.

• A sporadic ‘institutional’ presence. The AIV has not yet been able to acquire a stable and identifiable role as interlocutor of public institutions and thus as promoter of widespread evaluation policies.
Three Major Challenges Met and Relative Solutions

The main challenge concerns the development of evaluators’ professionalism.

In Italy, the evaluation market provided by the Structural Funds is mainly the prerogative of four or five big companies, while the growing demand in other sectors is not yet met by an adequate professional capacity; in some cases the request for quality improvement procedures (ISO certification, which is noticeably widespread in Italy) creates confusion and it fosters competition with evaluation.

Many young people, willing to learn, turn to universities and to the few available courses (also privately promoted), but the training offered is still sporadic.

In all probability, the above mentioned problems require a concerted solution, which would help in developing adequate university programmes and higher training courses (with the contribution of the AIV) in order to create a cadre of highly qualified evaluators who are able to mark the difference from other professionals and promote the importance of evaluation practices within the public administration, a process which the AIV itself should encourage.

Three Major Lessons Learned

Undoubtedly, the main merit of the AIV is its multidisciplinary, inter-professional and non-ideological character. This, however, does not prevent AIV macroeconomists from deriding sociological approaches focused on quality aspects and sociologists from being ironic about macroeconomists’ methods used to establish quantitative indicators; all of them, however, belong to the same association and attend the same congress. Over time this fosters a kind of osmosis, a dialogue that is essential to evaluation, which cannot be either ‘economic’ or ‘sociological’.

The second merit lies in the importance given to publishing activity. The collection and the review, to a greater extent, are a point of reference
for many evaluators, civil servants, teachers, students as well as non-members.

Furthermore, in a context such as Italy, which has not yet taken up the evaluation culture, there is already a solid, trustworthy and officially recognized pool of evaluators who can manage the AIV in turn, steering younger members, drawing up clear guidelines, promoting an in-depth theoretical debate and providing guidance to the institutions.

**Three Top Recommendations on How to Develop Evaluation Organizations**

- Avoid the foundation of an association that is not supported by the consent of the majority of different professional and disciplinary components involved; take as much time as needed to debate, negotiate and co-opt members before the association is founded.
- Provide services to members and non-members, paying particular attention to communication and training: websites with downloadable materials, newsletters and, where possible, scientific publications.
- Stress the pluralist nature of the association, avoiding exclusions; evaluation practices give better results if scholars and professionals, sociologists and economists, constructive and realistic people handle them.
Introduction

KEA started in 1997 as the Nairobi Monitoring and Evaluation Network. Some of the people involved in the network were Dr. Ann Kinyua, Karen Odhiambo (both of Nairobi University), Mahesh Patel, Ebel Mugenda and Kate Spring (then employees of UNICEF, Nairobi office).

Kenyans in the Network felt the need to convert it into a national professional M&E body. The name Kenya Evaluation Association was suggested and a constitution was developed to enable its registration. It is a legal requirement by the Attorney General’s office (read Kenyan government) that an association must present a constitution to govern it before it can be registered.

After fulfilling this statutory requirement, the KEA received a certificate of registration in 1999. The certificate conferred upon KEA a legal entity or status and with it the ability to sue or be sued. The implications of this status were that KEA was able to:

- hold meetings in public;
- open a bank account and obtain other facilities such as a post office box, offices, etc.;
- conduct recruitment drives; and
- raise money.

* E-mail: gitonga35@avu.org
The constitution also helped to lay down procedures for running the Association. The following sections present the highlights of KEA’s constitution.

**Highlights of KEA's constitution**

KEA’s constitution is made up of 15 articles or sections. The following is a highlight of each of the sections.

Article I gives the name of the Association and outlines its prime goal, which is to promote evaluation practice in terms of knowledge and techniques.

Article II outlines the general goals, which are 11 in number. These goals revolve around promoting evaluation as a profession based on sound knowledge, methods and ethics.

Article III dwells on the objectives of KEA. Objectives are stated as action statements of the goals.

Article IV outlines the types of membership available and who qualifies for each. These are:

(a) Ordinary membership — open to individuals who are over 18 years of age and have acceptable academic and professional evaluation qualifications. Note that the statement on academic and professional qualification is vague, in that what is acceptable is not defined.

(b) Institutional membership — open to public or private agencies that conduct evaluations of development activities. This is again a bit limiting because there are other types of evaluations besides development.

(c) Honorary members — nominated by the members of the KEA and are subject to approval by the Association’s Executive Committee.

(d) Student membership — open to students registered in an academic institution that awards certificates, diplomas or degrees in areas relevant to the practice of evaluation.
This article also outlines the procedures to be followed in cases of resignation or expulsion of members from the KEA.

Articles V, VI and VII deal with office bearers. Article V lists the offices. The major weakness of this section is that names of individuals were incorporated into the constitution. Article VI outlines the duties of the office bearers. It is evident from this section that the Chairperson wields enormous powers. The Association can either fail or succeed depending on the qualities of the Chairperson. It is hoped that in the proposed new constitution the period a person can serve will be limited to four or five years. A defined period of leadership will give hope for renewal of leadership. Article VII outlines the functions of the committee.

Articles VIII and IX deal with procedures to be followed in meetings. They are mandatory procedures laid down by the Government of Kenya and are included in the constitutions of all associations and societies registered in the country. The mandatory agenda for the annual general meetings is:

(a) minutes of previous annual general meeting must be confirmed;
(b) accounts of the association must be considered;
(c) elections must be conducted; and
(d) auditors for the association's books for the following year must be appointed.

While the above requirement is noble sounding and associations are supposed to file returns every year, the government does not enforce this rule. The result is that less active associations that are oblivious of the law often do not fulfill the requirement. In fact, they rarely hold regular annual general meetings.

Article X deals with people who are in charge of the Association's property (the trustees). KEA does not have any worthwhile properties.

Articles XI and XV Article XI deals with the management of funds. Though KEA does not have a lot of funds, this article guides the transparent management of whatever funds are raised.

Articles XIII and XIV deal with the amendment of the constitution and the remote possibility of dissolving the Association, respectively.
Structure

KEA’s structure can be summarized in terms of administrative structure, membership, and goals and activities:

**Administrative structure**

The constitution outlines an Executive Committee to manage the affairs of the Association. It is composed of:

- Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Assistants

The Executive Committee formulates the activities of the KEA, but convenes a meeting of the full committee for approval before implementation. In annual general meetings (for all members), bylaws and resolutions to give direction to the Association are supposed to be debated and passed in addition to the agenda cited in Articles VIII and IX.

**Membership**

Currently KEA has a total of 40 core members. Core members are those who are based around Nairobi and are committed to the KEA and attend most of its functions. The core members come from different job backgrounds and have different training needs. Table 3 shows details of work places of the members while Table 4 shows the training requirements of the members.

Core members of the KEA have formed focal points. Focal points consist of members who come from a given general area and share similar interests in evaluation. Members of a focal point can and do meet regularly to carry out activities independent of the Association. They (focal points) are proving useful to the KEA in communication and sharing tasks. The main focal points are:
• Kenyatta University - convened by James Kaire.
• Industrial area - convened by Emanuel Okwach.
• Life spring counseling - convened by Newton A. Mukilwe.
• Westlands Nairobi - convened by Charles Wanjohi.
• Central business district - convened by Douglas Okwach.

Table 1. Workplaces of the Core KEA Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional background of core members</th>
<th>Approximate percentage of members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate programme</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private companies</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-governmental organizations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Training Background of KEA Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of training</th>
<th>Percentage of members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal training</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops, discussion groups and seminars</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No training at all</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need training</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need experience</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goals and activities In its last meeting, KEA formulated the following goals:

• advocate for evaluation through the network;
• develop training programmes to increase professionalism;
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- provide forums for evaluation activities, for example, seminars;
- avail information on new developments in the field;
- develop a consensus on an evaluation behavioral code;
- link KEA members with associations with similar interests;
- provide evaluation support to needy charity institutions; and
- develop a code of ethics for KEA members.

The activities planned to attain the stated objectives are as follows:

- training workshops;
- national symposium on M&E;
- support for an office;
- building partnerships;
- instituting sustainability of KEA’s operations; and
- establishing a built-in M&E mechanism to assess the operationalization of KEA.

Fit of the Nairobi M&E Network

The Nairobi M&E Network was not completely transformed into KEA. Some elements of the Network remained and to some degree it carried out a few activities independent of KEA. On the other hand, KEA refused to sanction some of the Network’s innovations, such as the Kenya M&E guidelines.

Gradually however, the Nairobi M&E Network has almost completely ceased to function. KEA on the other hand is growing and will hopefully develop into a national association of M&E professionals.

Challenges Faced by KEA

KEA’s major challenge is that it is led by individuals who are in the formative stages of their careers, which are outside of the KEA. The effect of this is that planning and execution of KEA activities comes second to the officers’ careers. For this reason, most of the planned activities are not implemented. Meetings are not regular and are convened at the convenience of the Executive.
The other challenge emanates from KEA’s constitution. Terms of office bearers are not limited. The reality dawning on the Association is that despite the provision to elect officials annually, the process can be manipulated. Such manipulation can result in a one-man show, leading to stagnation of KEA because of a lack of fresh leadership and ideas. To this end, KEA is reviewing its constitution in order to put in place guidelines that will promote dynamism in the Association.

In conclusion, while KEA faces challenges in leadership, finances and training, it does have a future.
Malaysia: Malaysian Evaluation Society (MES)

By Aru Rasappan

General Information

The MES was officially formed in September 1999 when it was registered under the Malaysian Registration of Societies Act, 1957. The management functions of the MES were undertaken by an interim management committee.

The objectives of the MES are as follows:

- to facilitate and promote the exchange of ideas, experiences and resources pertaining to matters of mutual interest related to all aspects of evaluation;
- to represent the evaluation profession in Malaysia at relevant regional and international events and forums;
- to plan and analyse the status and future directions for evaluation research, training and development in Malaysia and internationally;
- to form strategic alliances with other public and private sector organizations involved in evaluation activities;
- to facilitate the formation and effective operation of a national and international network for information exchange pertaining to evaluation;
- to promote and facilitate research and development efforts and publications related to evaluation, subject to the prior approval of the authorities concerned;

* E-mail: artd@nasioncom.net
Creating and Developing Evaluation Organizations

• to provide assistance and advice on evaluation policy matters at all levels; and
• to represent members on evaluation policy matters affecting them.

The MES is made up of members from various professions and fields. The members comprise public officials, educationists, academicians, engineers, architects, evaluation consultants, environmental consultants and senior government officials. Since the first Annual General Meeting in July 2000, a formal Management Committee has taken over all functions of the MES. One of the priority activities since then has been a membership drive to recruit more members and to promote MES among individuals and organizations involved with evaluation.

Date of establishment

The MES was formally established in September 1999 when it was registered under the Malaysian Registration of Societies Act, 1957.

Structure

The MES was initially made up of 10 members who came from 7 different states within Malaysia — this was a requirement under the Malaysian Registration of Societies law that required representation from at least seven states for an association to be called a ‘Malaysian’ society.

The management of the MES is vested in a Management Committee that comprises the following positions: President, Deputy President, Secretary, Treasurer and three ordinary members.

Due to the limited number of members, it was not possible to form sub-committees. However, each committee member was given the responsibility for specific tasks such as the creation of the MES web page, newsletters, membership drive and publicity.

Number of members

The MES initially started off with 10 founding members. Since then the membership has grown to only 15 over the years, with a few members
dropping off and some new ones signing up. This group, though relatively small, had a great deal of interest in evaluation and thus much staying power, which saw the MES through its difficult formative years. Unofficially, there were about 30 public sector officials who were directly involved with evaluation activities in their agencies; they were indirectly supported by the MES, but were not members of the MES. For various reasons, including the issue of fees and their position as public officials, these officials did not join the MES as members despite special concessions and incentives. However, they were involved with evaluation activities that had MES input or support in one way or another.

With the successful completion of its first annual evaluation conference in March 2004, the MES expects to have more individuals joining during the course of the year. The target is to get at least another 50 members by the end of the year.

**Number and type of activities**

The activities of the MES initially focused on trying to build awareness and appreciation of evaluation among both private and public sector agencies. These initiatives were more successful in the public sector due to the interest and support from the Ministry of Finance, which had also embarked on a programme of evaluation capacity-building under its results-based budgeting system. The various activities planned since 1999 either directly under the MES or in collaboration with other partners, cover the following:

- membership drives with special incentives of reduced fees and waiver of entrance fees;
- MES web page;
- MES newsletter;
- establishment of Govteval, the Internet global evaluation discussion forum (in collaboration with ARTD Malaysia);
- monthly evaluation forums on select topics featuring guest speakers (in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance);
• exposure workshops on strategic M & E approaches, tools and techniques for local project implementers (in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Malaysia);
• evaluation capacity-building workshop series for public sector agencies (in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance); and
• collaborative initiative to build internal evaluation modalities and relevant capacities within the public sector (in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and ARTD).

How the Organization Started and Developed

The history of the MES dates back to 1994. The idea for an evaluation society was initially discussed in December 1994 by two key persons involved with evaluation during an evaluation and performance measurement workshop held in Kuala Lumpur. Active discussions on how to promote and build evaluation capacity continued to be held in 1995 and this led to the setting up of Govteval in mid-1995 and its formal launch during the International Evaluation Conference, held in Vancouver in November 1995.

The launching of Govteval, continued discussions during the 1995 Vancouver Evaluation Conference, and participation in the 1996 AES and 1997 AIC Evaluation Conferences all helped to further promote and encourage the formation of a dedicated evaluation society in Malaysia. An informal discussion on possible assistance, cooperation and affiliation between the proposed MES and the AES was also held during the AES Board meeting in 1996 at the AES Conference in Wellington.

However, efforts to form an evaluation society were extremely slow due to the lack of adequate exposure and prominence of evaluation in the country, though evaluation was being practiced in the public sector since the 1960s.

As an initial step towards helping to build greater exposure and appreciation on the need for and importance of evaluation (and the eventual formation of an evaluation society), an evaluation and
performance measurement conference was planned and held in Kuala Lumpur in mid-1997 with the endorsement and support of the Ministry of Finance. The purpose of this conference was to help provide greater visibility and create awareness and knowledge on evaluation and performance measurement with particular focus on the public sector.

This conference helped to provide much visibility and prominence to evaluation. However, interest in evaluation and the agenda for the formation of an evaluation society was not pursued actively in 1997 as the prime mover for the evaluation initiatives in Malaysia was out of the country. It was particularly difficult to get and sustain individuals’ interest in evaluation as this was not a well established and high-profile discipline.

In 1998 and in early 1999, with the sustained efforts of the prime mover and a small number of interested individuals, a number of meetings and discussions were held to strategize and draw up an action plan for the formation of the much-awaited evaluation society. A draft constitution was drawn up and a membership drive was held to obtain the requisite number of members from the various states. This again was a difficult task as it was difficult enough to find people interested in evaluation in Kuala Lumpur, leave alone from seven states.

Finally, the MES was formed in September 1999. The entire process, from the conceptualization and strategization stages to its official registration, took almost five years.

The chronology of events leading to the formation of the MES is as follows:

- December 1994: initial discussions on programme evaluation and performance measurement initiatives and strategies between Jerry Winston of PPSE, the RMIT University (Australia) and Arunaselam Rasappan from Malaysia;
- January - August 1995: discussions on designing and forming an Internet-based global discussion forum on public sector evaluation;
- September 1995: setting up of Govteval, the global Internet discussion forum, in Kuala Lumpur;
November 1995: formal launch of the Govteval discussion list in Vancouver during the inaugural International Evaluation Conference;

February 1996: discussions with AES on possible collaboration to support the evaluation initiatives in Malaysia and the eventual formation of an evaluation society in Malaysia;

July 1997: inaugural Evaluation and Performance Measurement Conference in Kuala Lumpur organized by ARTD (Malaysia), with support and participation from international speakers and the Ministry of Finance;

July 1997 – July 1998: advocacy initiatives to gather support for the formation of the evaluation society;

August 1998: formation of a working group of individuals in Kuala Lumpur to carry out preparatory work for the formation of an evaluation society;

September 1998 – March 1999: preparation of a draft constitution and required membership drive for formation of a Malaysian society;

April 1999: submission for registration to the Registrar of Societies, Malaysia;

September 1999: formal registration of the Malaysian Evaluation Society.

Three Aspects That Work Best and Three Aspects That Work Worst Within the Organization

Positive aspects

• sustained interest among the small group of members;
• adequate representation of public sector officials in the MES, which has helped to build both evaluation profile and support from the government; and
• while there is a division of labour, there is also close cooperation between various members in the implementation of activities.
Negative aspects

- Interested members often cannot devote enough time to undertake and sustain much-needed capacity-building activities;
- Lack of adequate financial resources due to low membership and lack of institutional financial support from any external organizations; and
- Limited activities do not provide adequate publicity and profile for encouraging more individuals to join the Society.

Three Major Challenges Met and Relative Solutions

- The limited time members can devote to active participation in evaluation activities — this is a major problem as many members are either very busy or frequently out of the country. The only way to address this is to broaden the membership base so as to spread out the workload for evaluation activities among many members, as in the case of the bigger and older evaluation societies in other countries.
- Lack of interest in evaluation among potential members — there is an urgent need for intensifying high profile and high impact evaluation activities that will encourage more people to join the Society.
- Difficulty in carrying out high profile and high impact evaluation activities due to limited finances and time — there is a need to identify and carry out specific activities that can raise sufficient funds to finance small but focused and visible evaluation activities such as evaluation technical advisory services and help resource centres, and web-based technical support.

Three Major Lessons Learned

- Need for one or more champions with sufficient interest, dedication, commitment and time to lead the evaluation
movement and stay with it, particularly through the early years when most of the problems arise.

- Close support from one or more institutions to help build and sustain the initial momentum in the evaluation initiative. Very often in the initial stages, when there is inadequate or insufficient visibility and no clear agenda for evaluation, it is extremely difficult to even get the initiative started.

- Need for institutional support from external institutions to help create and build suitable publicity, visibility and a legitimate agenda for evaluation capacity-building in a country.

Three Recommendations on How to Develop Evaluation Organizations

- The formation of evaluation associations is always a difficult task and often a long and arduous process. It is very helpful to seek and form strategic alliances and networks, both internally as well as externally, that can help to support and sustain evaluation organizations. Besides assistance with financial and technical resources, these networks and alliances can help to raise much needed awareness, appreciation and the needed profile for evaluation in a country.

- It is always useful to have one or more champions to initiate and support the process of starting up, forming and sustaining an evaluation organization.

- The processes leading to the formation of an evaluation organization require adequate time and resources; usually, more of the latter are needed for building the initial interest, capacity and agenda-building that often requires funding that is not available or forthcoming in the initial stages due to lack of membership and institutional support. Sufficient time should be planned for the formation and take-off of the organization depending on the environment in the country concerned.
Part II. Case Studies of Professional Evaluation Organizations Worldwide

Newly Independent States (ex-USSR): International Program Evaluation Network (IPEN)

By Alexey Kuzmin*

General Information

IPEN was established in August 2000. It is an informal organization; IPEN’s official website is <www.ipen21.org> and the Coordination Council’s email is <ipenlib@ipen21.org>. IPEN’S working language is Russian, but one can write to the Coordination Council in English as well.

Mission

To promote the professional growth of programme evaluators in the former republics of the USSR through the development of contacts between and among them and with professional communities outside the former USSR; information support; and conferences. The network operational mode is virtual. The essence of IPEN’S work is exchange of information.

Structure

IPEN has a horizontal and flexible structure, based on self-organized working groups. It has five sponsors from Georgia, Russia and Ukraine who provide resources and support the network’s virtual environment. These sponsors nominate their representatives to the IPEN Coordination Committee. The core task of this Committee is system administration. Their main task is to sustain the network environment.

* E-mail: alexey@processconsulting.ru
The major projects and programmes are implemented by the self-organized working groups. For example, there is a permanent Newsletter Editorial Board that includes representatives of six countries. To prepare and conduct annual conferences, IPEN forms a conference organization committee that exists till the end of the conference. Any IPEN member can initiate and form any working group.

Membership

IPEN’s membership is individual. Any person who agrees with the Network’s goals and objectives and is ready to meet the professional programme evaluation standards accepted by the Network can join as a member. To join IPEN, the prospective member should provide information about himself/herself in the standard format. There are no other restrictions for becoming a member.

By 2004, there were over 360 members from 10 countries.

Services provided to members

• annual international conference on programme evaluation with pre-conference professional development workshops;
• access to the database on programme evaluators in the former republics of the USSR;
• electronic newsletter Program Monitoring and Evaluation (quarterly);
• access to the IPEN listserv;
• information on evaluation tenders in the region and abroad;
• information on international and national conferences on programme evaluation;
• information on evaluation methods and instruments (e-library);
• access to electronic conferences on evaluation;
• contact information of foreign professional associations of evaluators; and
• in 2004 IPEN provided travel awards to a few conference participants on a competitive basis (funds remained from the 2003 conference fees).
No evaluation business on behalf of IPEN

IPEN exists outside its members’ businesses. The Network’s activities are entirely non-profit. It does not promote programme evaluation services, does not provide any such services, and does not advertise evaluators or the organizations they represent. Thus, IPEN is neutral in respect of any evaluation organization or specialist.

How the Organization Started and Developed

IPEN was initiated by a group of people interested in the development of programme evaluation in the Newly Independent States (ex-USSR). After intense distance consultations, the group met in June 2000 in Moscow (Russia). Ten people from Moscow and Novosibirsk (Russia), Kiev (Ukraine) and Tbilisi (Georgia) participated in the meeting.

The initiative group developed the IPEN concept, strategy and action plan. By August a simple website had been launched and IPEN started its operations.

The milestones in IPEN’s development were the annual conferences.

- In November 2000 IPEN, along with the Siberian Center for Civic Initiatives, sponsored its first annual conference in Novosibirsk (Siberia, Russia). By that time a better website had also been developed.
- In November 2001 IPEN, along with the Siberian Center for Civic Initiatives, sponsored the first Programme Evaluation School in Novosibirsk (Siberia, Russia).
- In March 2002 IPEN, along with the Southern Russian Center for Civic Initiatives, sponsored its second annual conference in Sochi (Russia).
- In September 2003 IPEN organized its third annual conference in Moscow (Russia). It was the first IPEN conference where participants paid a registration fee ($50) and had to pay for their travel and accommodation as well. IPEN had no institutional partner in 2003, although several organizations provided their assistance.
In September 2004 IPEN held its fourth annual conference in Kiev (Ukraine). Both the conference and pre-conference workshops were self-supported.

The number of members increased considerably in the initial stages and after each of the conferences.

Three Aspects That Work Best and Three Aspects That Work Worst Within the Organization

Positive aspects

- The ‘no evaluation business’ principle. IPEN is recognized as a neutral organization that is not competing with evaluation service providers in the region. We had no conflicts inside the Network regarding domination.
- An informal structure proved to be an excellent solution. It is very cost effective and flexible, and there is no need for external funding and no control from the donors.
- Annual conferences stimulate evaluation capacity development in the countries and regions where they take place. The preparation process is very refreshing for the entire Network in general and for the organization committee in particular.

Negative aspects

- IPEN members tend not to write about their experiences or share evaluation news. It appeared to be more difficult to find out about evaluation developments abroad than in our own region.
- It is difficult to insist on anything since the structure is informal and activities are 100 percent volunteer-based. So, in some cases it takes a long time to solve simple problems and people do not take their obligations seriously enough.
- There is a high dependence on the Internet. In fact, we once faced a serious technical problem with the server and the entire network
was paralyzed for about a month. Also, we cannot invite people who do not have Internet access.

**Three Major Challenges Met and Relative Solutions**

- **How does one stimulate activity and initiative of IPEN members?**
  Solution: do not hurry, it takes time. Support initiative and develop and encourage the core group of volunteers who are willing and able to work well.

- **What does one do when donors offer money? (Several international donors suggested that IPEN should apply for grants.)**
  Solution: relax and refuse. Informal networks do not need money. Money could destroy the network, especially if the amount is considerably large.

- **What does one do when some money is needed?**
  Solutions:
  - Address the Network members and work out a solution. We had a huge problem with sending at least one representative to the IOCE inaugural conference in Peru, but ultimately one of the IPEN members found a source of funding that would cover the costs.
  - Charge the Network members for some services. It was not too difficult to raise enough money to cover conference expenses last year; we even have some money remaining for travel grants.

**Three Major Lessons Learned**

- **People are everything.** The success of IPEN depends on the people involved and on the core volunteers in particular.

- **Set up realistic goals and develop the network step by step.** It is much better to achieve unpretentious goals than to fail in achieving ambitious global goals.

- **Network.** Networks are created for networking. Good communication between the network members, information sharing,
informal links and working groups are positive aspects of networks and are very popular.

**Three Recommendations on How to Develop Evaluation Organizations**

- Select the right people, invest in people and encourage them, support their initiative.
- Be realistic while setting goals. Consider the existing circumstances, resources available, cultural and political contexts etc.
- Support active communication between people, help them network, develop and nurture the culture of networking.
Niger: Réseau Nigerien de Suivi Evaluation (ReNSE)

Par Jean-Charles Rouge

Genèse

Le Réseau Nigerien de Suivi Evaluation (ReNSE) a été créé en août 1999 avec l’appui du bureau local de l’UNICEF. Son existence se justifiait alors à deux niveaux. Au niveau national d’abord, où les capacités en suivi et évaluation, que ce soit dans les administrations, les organisations non gouvernementales, ou encore au sein du vivier grandissant de bureaux d’études et de consultants indépendants, étaient faibles. Peu d’institutions d’apprentissage proposaient, par ailleurs, de curricula en évaluation de projets de développement. Parallèlement à ceci, un contexte global de raréfaction des ressources des partenaires au développement s’accompagnait (et s’accompagne toujours) de la recherche d’une plus grande efficacité dans l’utilisation des aides publiques au développement. Cette demande pour un usage plus efficace de ressources en baisse exigeait de renforcer durablement les capacités nationales en suivi et évaluation et de développer une culture de l’évaluation à tous les niveaux. La création d’un réseau, assurant entre autre une fonction de forum de discussion, trouvait alors sa raison d’être. A un niveau régional cette fois, la préparation et la tenue de la première conférence de AfrEA à Nairobi en septembre 1999, accueillant 300 spécialistes et praticiens du suivi évaluation en Afrique, a permis de prendre conscience qu’il était nécessaire d’engager les pays dans une dynamique de renforcement durable de leurs capacités en évaluation. La création de réseaux ou associations de suivi évaluation en fut l’une

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1 E-mail: jean-charles.rouge@missioneco.org
Des principales recommandations, à l’instar du Kenya et du Rwanda qui furent les premiers à créer leur réseau de suivi évaluation avec l’appui des bureaux de l’UNICEF.


Objectifs du ReNSE

L’objectif global du Réseau nigérien de Suivi Evaluation est d’engager un processus durable de renforcement des capacités nationales en matière de suivi et évaluation par la mise en place d’un forum qui contribuera à la définition de normes, de méthodologies et de pratiques professionnelles dans le domaine du suivi et évaluation au Niger.

Le réseau a pour objectif spécifique:

- Le développement d’une culture de suivi et évaluation et des compétences nationales en Suivi évaluation.

Cet objectif sera atteint à travers une série d’actions:

- Faciliter l’apprentissage informel par l’échange d’expériences et de compétences.
- Organiser des sessions de formations formelles.
- Faciliter l’échange d’informations.
- Faciliter la rencontre entre la demande et l’offre dans le domaine du suivi évaluation.
• Créer et maintenir une banque de données sur les évaluateurs.
• Promouvoir des normes et des pratiques professionnelles.

Adhésion, Nature des Membres et Services Offerts

Toute personne travaillant dans le domaine du suivi évaluation, utilisatrice des résultats des évaluations, ou intéressée et souhaitant se développer professionnellement dans cette discipline, est invitée à s’inscrire en tant que membre.

Est considéré comme partenaire stratégique toute structure, nationale ou internationale, au Nigéria ou à l’étranger, ayant déjà réalisé ou étant potentiellement intéressée à soutenir des activités du réseau, telles que la location de salles de réunions, le financement de pauses café, de reprographies, de participations de membres à des événements internationaux sur le suivi évaluation (conférences, séminaires, formations), le financement de l’impression d’un ou plusieurs numéros de la Lettre du ReN SE, etc.

L’adhésion au réseau est gratuite. Le réseau offre un certain nombre de services (gratuits) à ses membres et ses partenaires stratégiques:

• Une insertion dans la base de données nationale d’évaluateurs pour être potentiellement sollicité pour des missions d’évaluation.
• La réception par email d’appels d’offres, d’appels à candidature, d’avis de recrutement, d’offres de communication relatifs au suivi évaluation.
• La réception par email de brèves sur les activités en cours du réseau et des informations importantes sur différents types d’opportunités à saisir.
• Les invitations systématiques aux réunions thématiques formelles du réseau.
• L’accès privilégié au fond documentaire de la bibliothèque virtuelle du réseau en suivi évaluation, comprenant plus d’une centaine de titres et de modules d’auto-formation.
• La mise en contact avec des membres d’autres communautés d’évaluateurs en Afrique et à l’étranger.
• Des opportunités continues de “networking” professionnel entre membres et avec les partenaires du réseau.
• Une association prioritaire aux différentes activités du réseau qui sont développées au cours de l’année.

En retour de la mise à disposition de ces services, il est attendu des membres une participation et contribution effectives aux différentes activités du réseau qui visent le partage d’expériences, le partage d’informations, la promotion de méthodologies, de normes et standards de suivi évaluation, et la proposition éventuelle d’articles à publier dans la Lettre du ReNSE.

Structure Organisationnelle du ReNSE

Le comité de coordination (CC) est l’unique organe assurant l’animation, la coordination, la planification des activités, la mobilisation des ressources, la transmission des informations. Ce comité, élu tous les 2 ans par les membres du réseau en réunion formelle, est composé de cinq personnes représentatives de cinq catégories d’acteurs du suivi évaluation au Niger: l’Administration, les Institutions d’apprentissage, les O N G et les agences bilatérales de coopération, le Secteur privé, les Agences des N ations U niès.

Un réseau informel se distingue principalement d’une association de deux manières: il n’est pas enregistré formellement auprès des services administratifs; il n’adopte pas de relations hiérarchiques verticales mais plutôt une structure horizontale (il n’y a ni président, ni vice-président, ni trésorier dans son CC).

Depuis sa création en 1999, les membres du CC du ReNSE désignent d’un commun accord, après chaque élection, la personne parmi eux la plus apte, la plus disponible et disposant de moyens suffisants (en relation avec sa structure d’appartenance) pour assurer les fonctions de secrétaire et coordinateur. C’est pourquoi, il a été proposé à la suite de l’élection du second comité de coordination (CC) en novembre 2001, de loger le
Graph.1. Structure organisationnelle du ReNSE

Partenaires Stratégiques → CC → Comité Scientifique → Antennes régionales

GT 1 → GT 2 → GT 3 → GT 4 → GT 5 → GT 6 → GT 7

Forum de discussion
Secrétariat du réseau au niveau du bureau du PNUD Niger, qui supporte à ce titre les coûts relatifs à l’administration du réseau (lancement des invitations, téléphone, internet, reprographies, site internet, base de données nationale des évaluateurs).

Le CC élabore un plan d’action pour la durée de son mandat qu’il présente et fait valider par les membres du réseau lors d’une réunion formelle. Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de ces plans d’action successifs, la recherche permanente de partenariats techniques et financiers durables avec des acteurs nationaux et internationaux en vue de la mobilisation de ressources occupe une place prépondérante dans les fonctions du CC.


Les groupes thématiques sont au nombre de sept.2 Chaque groupe est coordonné par un membre se portant volontairement candidat, et qui bénéficie de l’appui de sa structure d’appartenance, pour assurer des fonctions d’animation, d’impulsion, de coordination, afin que son groupe se réunisse à intervalles réguliers pour échanger des informations relatives à son secteur, travailler sur un projet annuel réaliste et enrichissant, et organiser une réunion formelle d’argie à tous les membres du réseau pour le partage de bonnes pratiques dans son domaine.

Les coordinateurs élaborent, en étroite collaboration avec le CC et les membres de leur groupe, les termes de référence de leur groupe qu’ils font valider par l’ensemble des membres du réseau lors d’une réunion formelle. Au cours de la période 2001-2003, deux de ces groupes thématiques se sont particulièrement engagés dans des activités d’appui-conseil au gouvernement dans la conception de dispositifs de suivi


Les antennes régionales du réseau sont au nombre du six (Dosso, Tahoua, Maradi/Dakoro, Agadez, Zinder, Diffa). Elles ont été identifiées grâce à un partenariat avec Care International Niger. Les points focaux sont les représentants de Care International dans chacune de ces localités. Leurs fonctions visent à transmettre l’information de Niamey vers les membres travaillant dans les régions pour rompre leur isolement et leur permettre d’accéder aux différents services du réseau.

Les réunions formelles du réseau sont le lieu privilégié d’échanges d’information et de bonnes pratiques en suivi évaluation entre membres. Ce forum de discussion est également l’outil privilégié par le CC pour transmettre des informations d’ordre général sur d’éventuelles opportunités professionnelles et sur la vie du réseau. C’est également au cours de ce forum que sont débattues ouvertement les questions importantes sur les orientations stratégiques du réseau et où un consensus est recherché pour les prises de décision. En moyenne, une réunion formelle se tient tous les deux mois.

**Principes Fondamentaux du Fonctionnement en Réseau**

Le ReNSE est un réseau animé et coordonné par des volontaires spécialistes du suivi évaluation, résidents au Niger et exerçant par ailleurs des fonctions dans une organisation/structure nationale ou internationale. Aucune rémunération matérielle ni financière n’est procurée aux membres du CC pour le temps qu’ils acceptent de consacrer à la coordination et l’animation du réseau. Leur structure d’appartenance accepte également qu’ils puissent dévoyer un certain pourcentage de leur temps de travail à leurs responsabilités de membres du CC. De manière plus générale, ce principe de volontariat s’applique à toute personne, membre ou
personnalité extérieure, qui contribue de manière effective aux activités du réseau (présentations lors de réunions, coordination de groupes thématiques ou du comité scientifique, animation des antennes régionales, administration du site web, etc.).

Ce principe de volontariat s'accompagne d’une approche “budget zéro”, en ce sens que le réseau n’a pas de compte en banque et ne gère pas directement de ressources financières. Les activités à financer, auxquelles bien sûr des coûts sont attribués, sont prises en charge par des partenaires stratégiques intéressés par le thème traité (s’il s’agit d’appuyer l’organisation d’une réunion thématique formelle du réseau), ou par d’autres types d’activités, telles que la prise en charge d’un participant à une conférence internationale en évaluation. Le respect strict de cette approche permet aux membres du CC de se concentrer sur une activité fondamentale pour le réseau, à savoir la dissémination du savoir en suivi évaluation et le partage d’informations, et laisser la gestion des ressources et l’exécution physique des différentes activités aux partenaires eux-mêmes.

Ce volontariat et ce non-intérêt financier ou matériel des membres du CC et du réseau est contre-balancé par une valorisation professionnelle forte. La publication d’articles, la publicité de travaux spécifiques réalisés ou de présentations faites lors de réunions par des experts via les canaux de communication existants (mailing list, Lettre du ReNSE, site internet), les invitations à participer à des conférences internationales sur le suivi évaluation, doivent permettre aux membres de juger utile et enrichissante leur participation aux activités du réseau.

Un certain nombre d’experts nigériens s’étant inscrit dans cette démarche ont pu être identifié par des bailleurs de fonds pour participer à des conférences internationales sur l’évaluation, notamment celles de l’Association africaine d’Evaluation et de la Société française d’Evaluation. Le Secrétariat du réseau ne joue qu’un rôle d’interface entre les membres et les organisateurs de ces événements internationaux.
Enseignements Tirés de Quatre Années D'expérience

Créé en 1999, le ReNSE a pu réaliser une évaluation de ses activités en décembre 2003 par une équipe de consultants nationaux indépendants. Cette étude permet de tirer 3 enseignements sur la manière dont le ReNSE a fonctionné depuis 4 ans, à savoir:

- Opter pour une structure informelle de réseau simplifie le mode de fonctionnement et accélère les processus de prise de décision. La coordination se concentre ainsi sur les activités de substance sans risquer d’être bloqué par une longue recherche de consensus sur l’établissement d’une charte, d’un règlement, d’une constitution, ou dans la gestion de ressources financières courantes. La nature informelle du réseau n’a pas entravé son fonctionnement interne. Cette forme organisationnelle ne représente pas non plus un facteur de gêne pour ses partenaires;

- La recherche et le maintien de partenariats stratégiques diversifiés est une clé du succès dans l’obtention de financements et d’appuis pour la réalisation d’activités programmées dans les plans d’action. La communication externe est un élément important dans ces recherches de partenaires;

- Le coût d’opportunité que représente une participation volontaire aux activités du réseau par rapport à son propre travail (présence aux réunions, partage de documentations et d’expériences, etc.), peut détourner du réseau un grand nombre de spécialistes hautement qualifiés qui ne voient pas l’intérêt à court terme de leur implication dans la vie du réseau et dans sa dynamique. Un membre apportera au réseau une contribution de qualité s’il a le sentiment que sa participation au réseau valorise son expertise et ses travaux au-delà de son simple milieu professionnel. C’est pourquoi, le réseau doit lui permettre de publier et diffuser ses travaux et ses recherches, d’enrichir son travail en l’exposant à une critique constructive, de se mettre en contact avec d’autres professionnels pour développer des projets, etc.
Par ailleurs, si le ReNSE a de nombreux succès à son actif, il a aussi enregistré quelques échecs, qui sont autant de défis à relever dans l’avenir pour le réseau :

- Le caractère informel du réseau a été un des obstacles dans la mobilisation de ressources auprès de partenaires pour la réalisation d’un séminaire annuel de formation en suivi évaluation. La flexibilité des procédures financières des partenaires par rapport à la structure actuelle du réseau atteint ses limites lorsque sont proposées des activités d’appui d’un montant important. Cette activité, qui figure dans les plans d’action depuis 1999, n’a toujours pas été réalisée et figure dans les priorités du nouveau comité de coordination. Des solutions alternatives permettant de contourner ces difficultés existent et seront rapidement mises en œuvre ;
- Depuis 1999, l’ancrage national du réseau reste un défi majeur et la condition sine qua none de la pérennité du réseau. Si, jusqu’à aujourd’hui, le réseau a pu tirer profit de ce que peut apporter une structure informelle en terme de rapidité, simplicité et flexibilité, d’une part, et d’un fort appui des agences des Nations Unies (l’UNICEF puis le PNUD), d’autre part, le dynamisme du réseau est relativement fragile car il repose sur des éléments fluctuants tels que la personnalité de ses coordinateurs, ou le soutien financier exceptionnel accordé par ces deux agences dans la couverture, entre autres, des frais de secrétariat, de communication interne et externe, et d’hébergement. C’est pourquoi, s’il est souhaitable que le ReNSE s’ancre plus formellement dans la société civile nigérienne, il est d’autant plus important de pouvoir gérer efficacement la transition, et faire en sorte que la nouvelle forme organisationnelle ne casse pas la dynamique du réseau mais constitue, au contraire, un nouvel élan ;
- Même le succès que représente le partenariat mis en place avec Care International Niger et qui a permis d’identifier 8 points focaux régionaux du réseau à l’intérieur du pays (voir plus haut), l’animation et la coordination de ces points focaux s’est avérée
insuffisante au cours du mandat du second comité de coordination. Manifestement, l'expansion du réseau dans les régions ne peut être effective et efficace que si le comité de coordination effectue des missions de sensibilisation et d'impulsion sur le terrain, rencontre directement les acteurs locaux du suivi évaluation, et anime des réunions sur place. Les points locaux n'ont pas été suffisamment équipés en documentation “prêt à emploi” et les problèmes de communication et de disponibilité sont importants, à la fois du côté du comité de coordination que du côté des points locaux. La re-dynamisation de l’expansion du réseau dans les régions nécessite des ressources financières particulières dont le réseau ne dispose pas pour le moment.

- Il n’existe pas, à l’heure actuelle, de système permettant de capitaliser l’ensemble des discussions, des échanges d’expériences et de bonnes pratiques qui ont animé les différents fora thématiques qui se sont tenus depuis 1999. Le défi est aujourd'hui de mettre en place un tel système et permettre de doter le réseau d’une “mémoire” facilitant la recherche ultérieure d’informations, de données ou de contacts.

**Conclusion et Recommandations pour le Lancement de Nouveaux Réseaux Nationaux de Suivi Evaluation**

Le ReN SE a fourni à la communauté nigérienne et internationale d’évaluateurs une large gamme d’activités et de services qui lui ont permis d’acquérir une notoriété certaine. Ainsi, au plan national, le ReN SE émerge comme le principal acteur de la société civile en matière de suivi et évaluation et est explicitement pris en compte dans les stratégies de renforcement des capacités en suivi et évaluation de plusieurs intervenants. Sur le plan régional, il est l’un des principaux animateurs du processus de constitution d’une communauté africaine d’évaluateurs forte. Le dynamisme du ReN SE se caractérise principalement par la régularité de son forum de discussion, ses capacités de mobilisation de ressources et de partenariats, ses capacités de mobilisation de l’expertise...
nationale, ses capacités de communication interne et externe et ses capacités à produire des publications à caractère scientifique (la Lettre du ReNSE).

Les recommandations pour le lancement de nouveaux réseaux nationaux de suivi évaluation peuvent se résumer ainsi:

- Adopter une structure informelle dans un premier temps afin de lancer rapidement un noyau d'activités substantives et de mobiliser l'ensemble des catégories actives au niveau national dans le domaine du suivi évaluation;
- Constituer un organe de coordination représentatif de la communauté nationale d'évaluateurs. Dans le cas du ReNSE, l'Administration, le Secteur privé, les ONG, les agences bilatérales de coopération, les Institutions d'apprentissage et les agences des Nations Unies sont représentées au comité de coordination et chacun de ces représentants pèse de manière égale sur les orientations stratégiques du Réseau;
- Animer de façon régulière un forum de discussion dont l'objectif premier est l'échange d'information et de bonnes pratiques en suivi évaluation. Il est particulièrement important pour le comité de coordination de veiller systématiquement à la qualité des contributions et des présentations qui y sont faites pour que les membres du réseau tirent profit de ces échanges et soit, par là même, incités à contribuer également à ce processus de renforcement de capacités.
Spain: Sociedad Española de Evaluación (SEE)

Por Carmen Vélez*

Origen y objetivo de la Sociedad Española de Evaluación

La Sociedad Española de Evaluación de Políticas Públicas (SEE) se creó en julio de 2001 con el objeto de contribuir al desarrollo, en España, de la cultura de evaluación de políticas públicas como instrumento de mejora de la eficacia, eficiencia y utilidad social de la intervención de las Administraciones Públicas.

La idea nació de un grupo de académicos que, conscientes de la necesidad de trabajar en forma conjunta para promover la investigación, el análisis y el intercambio de experiencias en evaluación, tomaron la iniciativa de crear la SEE.

El contexto en España de las políticas públicas, al igual que en otros países europeos y latinoamericanos, y de la necesidad de la evaluación como mecanismo legitimador de la intervención pública, está caracterizado por factores como:

- Proceso de Modernización de la Administración Pública que implica, entre otras cuestiones, utilizar técnicas y metodologías para buscar mayor coherencia en la planificación de sus actuaciones y dar transparencia a la gestión y ejecución de sus programas (información, aprendizaje y retroalimentación).
- La descentralización político-administrativa y la consecuente multiplicidad de entes territoriales con crecientes competencias, que exige mayor control de la actividad pública para buscar su

* E-mail: carmenvelez@idr.es
coordinación y evitar de esta forma duplicaciones y la utilización poco eficiente de los recursos.

- Necesidad de controlar el gasto público y gestionar de forma más racional los recursos de la sociedad, para lograr el mayor impacto posible en la realidad sobre la que se quiere intervenir.
- La toma de conciencia por parte de la sociedad de su derecho a conocer en qué se gasta su dinero y qué mejoras sociales se derivan de dicho gasto.

Desde su creación, la SEE ha considerado imprescindible elevar la calidad de la práctica evaluadora, fomentar la investigación científica y la difusión de experiencias entre los agentes e instituciones implicados en todos los ámbitos —universidad, función pública, empresas y profesionales—, para contribuir al logro del importante papel que la evaluación debe desempeñar para la sociedad.

Por otra parte, la SEE se constituye como un foro de encuentro entre instituciones análogas en otros ámbitos territoriales a través de su participación en eventos y proyectos de carácter nacional o internacional que estén relacionados o contribuyan a los fines perseguidos.

En la SEE se reúnen especialistas tanto de las Administraciones Públicas como de cualquier otro organismo que aplique la evaluación en la gestión de sus proyectos, propiciando la comunicación y el debate entre sus miembros para incrementar el uso de esta herramienta y confrontar experiencias sobre los resultados de la evaluación, convirtiéndose de esta forma en un referente para el aprendizaje continuo en temas de evaluación.

Con este fin se abrió la posibilidad de participar como socios a todas aquellas personas o instituciones cuya actividad esté vinculada a la evaluación de políticas públicas y estén alineados con los objetivos de la Sociedad.

Actualmente, la SEE cuenta con más de 96 socios activos en las tres modalidades que contempla:

- Socios Promotores, que son los que firmaron el acta de constitución de la Sociedad.
Part II. Case Studies of Professional Evaluation Organizations Worldwide

- Socios Ordinarios (individual o institucional).
- Socios Honoríficos.

La estructura de la Sociedad está representada en el siguiente organigrama:

Principales acciones realizadas por la SEE

En sus tres años de existencia, la SEE ha tenido una activa participación y compromiso en diferentes actos con el objeto de lograr los fines para los cuales se creó.

Para su presentación pública se organizaron las Jornadas de Presentación de la Sociedad (octubre de 2001 en Sevilla), en las que contó con un importante apoyo institucional: la Subsecretaría del Ministerio de Administraciones Públicas, el Presidente del Parlamento de Andalucía, el Consejero Mayor de la Cámara de Cuentas de Andalucía, el Presidente de la Sociedad Europea de Evaluación y la Presidenta de la Sociedad Italiana de Evaluación.
En octubre de 2002, colaboró en la organización de la V Conferencia Bienal de la Sociedad Europea de Evaluación “Tres momentos en la evolución contemporánea: aprendizaje, teoría y evidencia”, en Sevilla. A dicha conferencia asistieron 450 congresistas de diferentes países europeos y los temas propuestos fueron: (i) cómo puede contribuir la evaluación al aprendizaje en un entorno multicultural; (ii) contribución de la teoría a la evaluación de la política de empleo; y, (iii) problemas de capacidad para generar evidencias de evaluación.

Otro evento en el que participó la SEE fue la Euroconferencia “La Evaluación de Políticas Territoriales”, celebrada en Barcelona los días 2 y 3 de diciembre de 2002. El objetivo fue conceder más atención a la evaluación de las políticas públicas locales y regionales en pro de una creciente conciencia de su necesidad en todos los ámbitos de la Administración Pública (desde la Unión Europea y sus instituciones), además de contribuir a impulsar la sensibilización y la capacitación de los diversos actores de la vida pública en la verificación de los resultados, los efectos reales de los programas y de las iniciativas y las políticas territoriales desarrollados por las diversas instituciones.

Hasta la fecha, el último acto institucional en el que estuvo presente la SEE fue la Conferencia “Los retos teóricos y metodológicos de la evaluación en los sectores de empleo, educación y el desarrollo”, que tuvo lugar en Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz) en noviembre de 2003.

Con la celebración de estas Jornadas se pretendía ahondar y avanzar en el análisis y difusión de diferentes experiencias y propuestas metodológicas para el tratamiento de los problemas relacionados con la política de empleo, y la evaluación de sus impactos.

### Participación de los socios en el desarrollo de la SEE

Los socios, individualmente o en el ámbito de las instituciones en las que realizan su trabajo, han llevado a cabo actividades de promoción de la SEE y de difusión de las prácticas de evaluación.

Como mención, el Instituto de Desarrollo Regional (IDR), en su labor docente, ha visitado la Universidad de Osorno (Chile), la de Yucatán...
en Mérida (México) y la de Rosario (Argentina), en las que ha impartido un curso introductorio de Evaluación de Políticas Públicas. En estos países se ha hablado de la oportunidad que supone crear una red o asociación en materia de evaluación y se ha presentado la creación y objetivos de la IOCE, sentándose las bases de la creación de estas redes con el envío de los estatutos de constitución de la Sociedad Española y el estrecho contacto con ellos.

Con el propósito de incentivar la participación de los asociados en las actividades de la SEE, en la última Asamblea General de la Sociedad se les entregó un cuestionario para conocer sus necesidades y preferencias, de manera de planificar y organizar las actividades futuras de la Sociedad sobre la base de sus respuestas.

Del análisis de los cuestionarios se puede concluir que una de las actividades más demandadas por los socios (véase el gráfico) es la organización de la Conferencia anual, lo que viene ocurriendo desde que se constituyó la Sociedad.

Los asociados coinciden en un 90 por ciento en que la organización de las actividades se desarrolle a distancia, preferentemente a través de Internet, y como recomendaciones proponen:

- Fomentar, desde la Sociedad, una mayor ética en la evaluación.
• Potenciar la mejora de la calidad de las evaluaciones de manera indirecta (fomentando el intercambio de experiencias, métodos y técnicas).
• Ser una asociación plural que actúe como foro de debate, acercando el debate teórico académico a la realidad.
• Promover acciones de formación.
• Fomentar las relaciones institucionales: Administraciones y otras Sociedades de Evaluación.
• Fomentar encuentros y sesiones de trabajo en los que participen socios y no socios.

Retos de la SEE para el desarrollo de la Evaluación de Políticas Públicas

La Sociedad Española de Evaluación se enfrenta a retos de diversa índole, desde los de carácter metodológico y de calidad de la evaluación, de integración y coordinación con los múltiples agentes que interactúan en los “partenariados”, hasta retos sociales y políticos relacionados con la posibilidad de institucionalizar la evaluación como herramienta de participación, diálogo y aprendizaje.

Por eso, la SEE se plantea como medidas para los siguientes años realizar actividades que ayuden a prestigiar y hacer más atractiva la pertenencia a esta Sociedad y, con ellas, motivar a sus socios a mantener una colaboración activa.

A continuación se detallan estas medidas:

• Elaborar estándares de evaluación que contribuyan a elevar la calidad de las evaluaciones. En España, no se ha llegado aún a un desarrollo global de la práctica de la evaluación, y la SEE tiene como compromiso contribuir a este desarrollo. Para ello se propone la elaboración o participación en la creación de guías orientadoras, principios directores y parámetros de referencia (“benchmarks”) sobre la base de las experiencias exitosas y aquellas que fracasaron.
• Realizar publicaciones periódicas que estén disponibles en la página web de la Sociedad, para contribuir a su mayor difusión, y que
sean de interés para todos los asociados. Entre estas publicaciones se consideran prioritarias la Guía de Recursos en Materia de Evaluación Nacional y la Referencia de Evaluación Comentada.

• Intensificar la labor formativa para dos grupos de interés: (i) profesionales de la evaluación que mediante foros o grupos de trabajo reducidos debatan sobre un tema específico en cualquier ámbito de evaluación; y (ii) personas que quieran iniciarse en el área de evaluación, para las cuales se impartan cursos o seminarios.

• Organizar la conferencia nacional. Los resultados obtenidos en la encuesta y otros medios de contacto con los asociados muestran su preferencia por una conferencia bianual, para coordinarse con las de carácter supranacional (europeas o latinoamericanas) y así poder contribuir en mayor grado a la nacional.

• Instaurar un sistema interno de evaluación de la propia Sociedad para poder medir y valorar en qué medida se están alcanzando los objetivos establecidos, y poner a disposición de los socios la información que se obtenga.

Se está iniciando la implementación de estas medidas y se espera que conduzcan a la mejora continua y el aprendizaje de todos los que formamos la Sociedad.

Retos de la SEE para su desarrollo como Sociedad

Al analizar el funcionamiento interno de la SEE, se detectan ciertos aspectos que deben ser mejorados para que la Sociedad cumpla sus objetivos. Entre ellos:

• La estrategia de difusión y captación de socios, que hasta el momento no ha logrado los resultados esperados.

• El sistema de información y comunicación de la Sociedad hacia los socios y viceversa.

• Implicación activa de los socios en la organización y dinamización de actividades.
Entre los factores positivos del funcionamiento de la Sociedad se destacan:

- La SEE cuenta con la confianza y el apoyo de la Administración Pública para la organización de sus eventos.
- La organización y participación en eventos, con el objeto de ser un punto de encuentro en el que todos los profesionales de la evaluación se hallen identificados.

**Recomendaciones para la futura creación de Redes de Sociedades de Evaluación**

Para crear Sociedades de Evaluación que puedan desarrollar exitosamente sus funciones, se recomienda:

- Crear redes y sociedades multidisciplinares desde el punto de vista profesional, y con un enfoque territorial amplio, donde estén representados todos los agentes locales, regionales y nacionales.
- Contar con el apoyo de la Administración Pública, el evaluado, pues es condición indispensable para la creación y desarrollo de la cultura de la evaluación.
- La apertura de vías de comunicación y cooperación entre las distintas Sociedades nacionales.
- La organización de eventos internacionales, como foros, jornadas, reuniones y seminarios, que reúnan tanto a representantes de las múltiples Sociedades de Evaluación como a profesionales de diferentes entornos y países, con el objetivo de fomentar el debate y el intercambio de experiencias.
U.S.A: American Evaluation Association (AEA)

By Ross Conner*

Preface

This case study has been written for those about to start a new evaluation organization, association or network. Because the AEA is so large and is many years past its establishment, some current aspects of AEA’s organization may have limited relevance to readers in different circumstances. Consequently, this case study focuses on those issues that would seem to be most relevant and timely for those in the early stages of forming an evaluation organization. Also, the views expressed here are mainly those of one person, although others who are knowledgeable about AEA have provided input and suggestions. Nonetheless, the assessments presented here come from one person, albeit one who has had a long and deep involvement in evaluation and its professional development in the United States. This includes involvement in the organizations that preceded AEA’s formal establishment in 1986 and in the development of AEA, not only as President in 1989, but also in other roles. Consequently, the views expressed here are not necessarily those of the official AEA leadership.

General Information

Date of establishment

AEA was formally established in 1986.

* E-mail: rfconner@uci.edu
**Structure**

AEA's structure consists of a Board of Directors, a set of Committees, a set of Topical Interest Groups (TIGs), and a small professional staff. In addition, there is a small group of regionally-based evaluation organizations that have 'affiliate' status with AEA. The Board of Directors has 16 members, the majority of whom (President elect, current and past, and general representatives) are elected by the general membership for three-year terms; there are three ex-officio (non-voting) members of the Board who are appointed by the other Board members.

AEA also has a set of committees who assist the Board in its work. There are 11 standing committees, generally composed of three persons each; AEA Presidents appoint the committee representatives, usually at the time the President is first elected to the Board. Currently, there are also three special committees and two Board liaisons (for TIGs and local affiliates). A listing of the current Board members, committee titles and chairs is available at [http://www.eval.org/ContactInfo/board.htm](http://www.eval.org/ContactInfo/board.htm).

AEA has 35 TIGs that focus on special topics and interests within the evaluation field (e.g. Business and Industry, Health Evaluation, Needs Assessment, Evaluation Use). AEA members belong to as many as five TIGs. TIGs generally have their own structure and leadership and are active in soliciting and selecting papers and panels for each AEA annual meeting. For a listing of all the TIGs, with a description of their focus areas and their Chairs and Programme Committee Heads, go to [http://www.eval.org/TIGs/tig.html](http://www.eval.org/TIGs/tig.html).

There are 18 local affiliate organizations, all geographically based. These are independent organizations that usually have their own memberships and activities, but are also associated with AEA. For a listing of the affiliates and for more information about them and their leadership, go to [http://www.eval.org/aboutus/organization/affiliates.asp](http://www.eval.org/aboutus/organization/affiliates.asp).

Finally and importantly, AEA has two full-time staff in its national office. These paid professionals handle the daily operations of the Association and provide assistance to the Board members, the committee
members and TIG leaders. They interact with local affiliate representa-
tives and serve as the first contact with the Association for many people,
both in the U.S. and abroad. These staff members are also centrally
involved in planning and conducting each year’s annual meeting.

Number of members

There are currently approximately 3,000 members from over 50 countries.

Number and type of activities

The annual meeting, lasting four and a half days, is the primary activity
of the AEA. The annual meeting features a variety of general plenary
sessions each day, plus specialized paper and panel sessions, an awards
luncheon and two general receptions (one of which has an international
theme and is a fund-raiser to support attendance at future meetings
by evaluators from abroad). All AEA members are eligible to attend
and recently, the registration has totaled about 2,000 people. These
meetings are held in major cities in the U.S., with the location changed
each year to different areas of the country. On occasion, AEA has held a
joint meeting with the CES; the next joint meeting will be in 2005 in
Toronto.

As a supplementary part of the annual meeting, the AEA offers half
and one-day training workshops on a variety of topics. These are proposed
and taught by AEA members and require a small additional fee.

Membership in the AEA includes subscriptions to two journals, the
American Journal of Evaluation (three editions per year) and New Direc-
tions for Evaluation (four times per year). AEA members also have access
to the AEA Job Bank and Membership Directory and receive periodic
newsletters and updates. For additional information about membership
benefits and fees, go to <http://www.eval.org/MembershipApplication/
membership.htm>.

AEA also supports the online discussion listserv, EVALTALK, and
occasionally undertakes special activities or produces special reports that
address national policies on topics related to evaluation. A recent report focused on the area of testing in education. AEA has developed and continues to review a set of Guiding Principles, which provide standards for an evaluator's conduct. These are available on the AEA website at <www.eval.org>.

How the Organization Started and Developed

The origins of an evaluation association in the U.S. began in the 1970s, when several small networks and groups of people working in evaluation began to form. The Evaluation Research Society (ERS) was formed from two smaller groups, one anchored mainly in academic-based social science departments and the other anchored in private research firms conducting evaluation activities for the government. The merger of these two small organizations was fairly easy to accomplish, since the overlap in focus and interests was great and the economies of joining the two groups was clear, not only in terms of eliminating the duplication of resources but also in terms of fostering more intellectual exchanges among a wider group of people working in evaluation. The Evaluation Network (ENet) was another of the evaluation-focused organizations that developed in the 1970s and was anchored mainly in the education area.

AEA was formally established in 1986 via articles of consolidation that recorded the merger of ENet and ERS. This merger occurred after several years of discussions among the members of both organizations, whose membership overlapped to some extent. The merger was not an easy process as each organization had its special focus areas (for example, ENet concentrated on educational evaluation topics) and specific ways of operating (for example, ERS had more formal annual meetings, which followed other professional societies in the U.S. in terms of paper/panel submission, review procedures and costs). After several joint meetings, the two associations voted to merge and AEA was formed. So, the origin of evaluation associations in the U.S. goes back about 30 years.

AEA operates on the basis of a set of bylaws, which can be viewed at <http://www.eval.org/Bylaws.htm>. In addition, AEA has a Policies and
Three Aspects That Work Best and Three Aspects That Work Worst Within the Organization

The best aspects of the AEA are its strong and growing membership base, its ability to incorporate a diversity of individual interests via the TIGs, and the variety of services and products provided to members.

The worst aspects (or, perhaps more accurately, ‘challenging’ aspects) of the AEA are its large size, its reliance on volunteers for the majority of its work, and its lack of involvement in national-level policy related to evaluation.

Three Major Challenges Met and Relative Solutions

- The creation of TIGs allowed AEA to form a large, general organization, while at the same time meeting the special needs and interests of its diverse members. So, for example, those interested in health evaluation, those interested in educational evaluation, particular methodologies or specialized audiences have a home within the organization, with other members who have the same experiences and are concerned about the same issues.
- As AEA grew, it became impossible for the volunteer leadership to undertake all of AEA’s business. AEA first hired a part-time management firm to assist with its activities, but, after a disappointing relationship, hired its own full-time staff. Although this arrangement has worked well, as AEA grows even larger and as its structure of Board members, committees and TIGs (which are staffed by volunteers) becomes more complex, additional staff may have to be hired.
- AEA earns the majority of its income from proceeds from the annual meeting. In 1989, an earthquake disrupted AEA’s annual meeting in San Francisco, resulting in a significant economic loss.
to the organization, not only for that year but for several years after (because the Board allowed a credit for members who had paid for but missed the annual meeting). Through prudent management by the Board, this financial challenge was overcome. AEA now maintains a reserve to meet any future financial challenges. The Board is careful, however, to limit the size of the reserve to what would reasonably be needed to continue the organization in case of unexpected events. Dues and meeting registration fees are kept as low as possible and changed infrequently, only after very careful deliberation.

Three Major Lessons Learned

• Volunteers are a valuable resource but they are also a fragile and unreliable one. Paid staff members, even if part-time, more than compensate for their salary costs by increasing the productivity of the organization through reducing volunteers’ time commitment but increasing their effectiveness.
• It is important to provide opportunities for diversity within a large organization. This diversity can be by topic or interest area or by geographical location. The TIGs and the Local Affiliates have successfully addressed this challenge.
• The annual meeting can provide a steady, reliable source of organizational financial support. Be sure, however, to have a reasonable reserve set aside to cover unanticipated events.

Three Recommendations on How to Develop Evaluation Organizations

The three lessons above provide the best tips on developing an evaluation organization:

• hire a staff member, even if part-time, to make the work of the Board and volunteers more effective;
• provide opportunities for evaluators with similar interests or geographical locations to meet and share ideas; and
• use revenues from meetings to support the work of the organization.

Note: The AEA website (www.eval.org) has links to many of its resources and tools for those interested in more information about AEA’s structure and operation.
Introduction

This case study is an unfolding story of how IDEAS emerged as a voluntary association of professional evaluators, development institutions and civil society organizations committed to promoting the theory, methods and practice of development evaluation globally. The case study chronicles the changing context of development thinking and practice that underscore the founding of IDEAS, describes the shaping of its mission, and examines the emerging lessons of this embryonic experience in organization building.

Context of Development and its Evaluation

Development thinking in the recent past has been strongly influenced by the importance of adopting a people-centred approach to development. Development is no longer seen as uni-dimensional where progress is measured primarily in terms of economic growth and an accumulation of wealth. There is growing consensus that development is about enhancing individual freedoms, expanding human capabilities, widening choices, and assuring citizens their basic human rights. The human development paradigm specially recognizes the close inter-connections between the fulfilment of social and economic rights and political and civil rights.

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1 The opinions in this case study are entirely those of the author, and do not in any way reflect the official views of IDEAS and its Board. E-mail: sulleygariba@hotmail.com.
In many parts of the world, particularly in developing countries, the frameworks, skills and capacities to monitor and evaluate progress in development are not commensurate with both the emerging consensus about the direction of development and the demands for more accountable governance and more effective use of development resources. If evaluation is to overcome this deficiency the 'development' dimension of evaluation needs to be strengthened significantly. Moreover, developing and transition country evaluators must become central to the process of development evaluation if it is to be owned by developing countries and become a truly effective instrument of learning and accountability.

**Emergence of IDEAS**

IDEAS was conceived to help respond to this challenge. During three years of discussion and preparation, two specific events led to its creation. First, a meeting in London on 8 May, 2001 of 40 evaluators and development professionals who issued the London Declaration that outlined a vision of IDEAS. Second, a Constituent Assembly held in Beijing on 8 September, 2002 where over a hundred participants debated and adopted a constitution and elected a Board of Directors. In between these two events was the establishment of an interim steering committee that developed the mechanics of an emerging organization, laying some basic principles, defining broad parameters for membership and re-affirming the need for such a global endeavour.

In meeting the challenges of development evaluation IDEAS aims to be:

- global — serving development evaluators everywhere;
• voluntary — membership, participation and professional contributions are voluntary;
• inclusive — membership is open to all who are interested in development evaluation;
• democratic — the leadership is elected;
• educational — advancing evaluation for the benefit of all through education and training;
• pluralistic — encouraging multiple theories, methods and perspectives;
• responsive — assessing and meeting the needs of development evaluators; and
• participatory — all members are encouraged to participate actively.

Mission and Strategy

The mission of IDEAS is to improve and extend the practice of development evaluation by refining methods, strengthening capacity and expanding ownership, particularly in developing and transitional countries. IDEAS’ strategy is to serve as a catalyst for enabling and convening a global development evaluation constituency, while observing the principle of subsidiarity, especially with respect to the emerging community of evaluation practice among Country Evaluation Associations. The activities of IDEAS are designed to expand both the supply of and demand for evaluation. With respect to supply activities, priority is given to evaluation capacity development using a range of instruments including brokering knowledge, providing platforms for training and debates (e.g. conferences and workshops), networking and alliance building, and small grants for local development evaluation initiatives. With respect to demand, IDEAS’ activities are intended to build ownership of evaluation by

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4 In its constitution IDEAS' objective is defined as "The advancement of education for the public benefit in the theories, methods and practice of evaluation in order to improve and expand the capacity for understanding and standards of evaluation predominantly in developing countries." Clause 3, Page 1, Memorandum of Association and Articles of Agreement, London, 3 January 2003. Mimeo.
Evolution of a Vision

A fundamental step in the formation of a professional association is the evolution of a vision. For IDEAS, this process has been a dialectical one. Visions emerge out of an objective analysis of the prevailing situation of society and the postulation of a future state of wellbeing and progress beyond what is presently attainable. In the unfolding experience of IDEAS, the vision has been one of a global community of practice in development evaluation, in which there is an increased demand for accountability in development results and outcomes and a corresponding increase in the capacity of those who are most affected by development to monitor and evaluate this. The London Declaration stated this vision more instrumentally, “... we believe that IDEAS would serve as an effective platform for advocating development evaluation as a key tool for managing for results, promoting transparency and accountability in decision-making and governance processes, and facilitating knowledge-learning on evaluation and development issues at the global level.” Yet those who led the formulation of this vision are not now central to the organization’s membership and its leadership.

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6 Participants in the London meeting were practitioners and heads of Evaluation Units in major international development organizations. In some respects, they made positive contributions to the analysis of the situation of development and the role of evaluation in this. Yet, by the nature of their positions, most felt that they needed to support IDEAS indirectly rather than take a “front-seat” in the running of the new organization.
Giving Form to the Vision

At the launch of IDEAS in Beijing in September 2002, the precise form that the organization might take was at best vague. Various options were already crystallizing prior to the launch date. While some saw a centralized agency-type organization with a strong secretariat capable of developing and managing major projects in development evaluation and capacity building, others viewed the challenge as one of creating a looser network of practitioners and stakeholders in development evaluation, defining concepts, articulating best experiences in practice and promoting global networks and associations.

The Lure of a ‘Start-up Grant’

The initial impulse for a centralized organization with a secretariat and capacity for designing and implementing programmes and projects was urged on by the lure of an initial start-up grant promised as part of the transition arrangements by the institutions that helped in the foundation stages. As it turned out, this grant became one of the first major challenges faced by the organization. A chicken and egg tussle ensued, in which, on the one hand, the managers of the fund wanted evidence that IDEAS would ‘fly’. On the other hand, IDEAS needed the funds to build the nest in which to lay its eggs! Eighteen months and two winters after the idea of IDEAS was launched, the fund is still being processed.  

This experience catalysed a process of re-examination of what the priorities of the organization ought to be, and how to proceed.

Transforming the Mission into Programmes

As an African saying goes, “when you have been delivered as a child, you must prove your worth to be recognized in society”. This was precisely

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7 A final agreement was signed for the release of the fund in April 2004, exactly 20 months after IDEAS was launched.
the moment of reckoning for IDEAS, and it came with a series of retreats of the Board and its Advisors, held to fashion out the specific niche of the new organization. In the process, IDEAS decided to focus on adding value, first and foremost to the process of ‘re-thinking development evaluation’, by engaging with thinkers and practitioners to stimulate fresh ideas, reform the practice of development evaluation and reshape the landscape of goals, standards, capacities and methods. Having established this as a fulcrum of initiatives, the programming directions became apparent; a systematic work and programme strategy has now been developed and a fundraising strategy associated with this is being marketed in four main strategic areas:

- re-thinking development evaluation;
- governance, accountability and evaluation — emphasizing the role of parliaments, evaluation organizations, public sector reform efforts and public-private partnerships in evaluation;
- poverty and environment, including the evaluation of the emerging consensus on development assistance (Millennium Development Goals — MDGs— and PRSPs), and in particular the role of civil society in these efforts; and
- development biennial conferences as venues for sharing ideas and expanding knowledge and capacities.

**The Substance is in the Engagement**

An important lesson from this unfolding experience is that it is important to first answer the question “what should we do and how?”, before determining what form the organization should take. In developing a mission and programme that reflects the intellectual capacities of the members and Board of IDEAS, it has now become apparent that a centrally-managed organization with a strong secretariat is not the most appropriate structure to begin with. Rather, a decentralized system, based on members’ initiative and supported by a flexible arrangement of professionals engaged on short-term contracts to support strategically-focused programmes will be ideal for initiating programmes and actions.
In the long-run, it may well be that new forms of organization will emerge, as the imperatives of programming require.

**Lessons in What to Do and Not Do in Building a New Organization**

It is a bit premature to be prescriptive about how to or how not to start an organization. This is because the experience of IDEAS is still unfolding and is in its infancy. Moreover, every organization will have its own dynamics and characteristics peculiar to its membership and leadership. Therefore the first thing to avoid is to copy other peoples’ developmental path, as doing so will stifle the human ingenuity of creativity and innovation. That said, let me provide a couple of pointers:

- The first major lesson is to avoid the trap of funding at the first instance. It is important for any emerging organization to determine what it wants and where it sees itself as adding value, before embarking on a fund raising strategy.
- Second, and this is a personal experience, working with a geographically dispersed Board is a phenomenal challenge that can be avoided in the very initial stages of the organization. With a 10-member Board from 10 separate countries and four continents, the full participation of all Board members has been less than optimal. Any global organization that is starting up should use the period of its interim steering committee/board to establish more definitive programme and organizational strategies, including modes of communication and decision-making, before moving to a fully representative Board. Such formative steps are important to give direction and meaning to the work of the first substantive Board.
These challenges notwithstanding, the experience of IDEAS’ formation reveals two very positive trends

- The first is the force of ideas behind IDEAS. Through its first two years, exchange and debate among the founding members has been vibrant. The participation of leaders of civil society including evaluation professionals, academics, development bankers and mainstream development organizations from developing and developed countries has made for a ‘mixed masala’ of ideas about the direction of development and of its evaluation. The result has been leading-edge concepts that will challenge the thinking and practice of development and its evaluation for years to come.
- The second and growing pillar of IDEAS is the expression of interest and growth in membership and partners. In just two years, membership stands at over 200 from over 60 countries. Partners committed to supporting the organization with intellectual input and funds are also growing. This combination of membership enthusiasm and partners’ goodwill provides a sound locomotive for take-off, but also poses the biggest challenge for a voluntary organization whose raison d’être is to use its members to do what needs to be done for development evaluation, a challenge that will form the next chapter in the unfolding story of IDEAS.

Conclusion

It is dawn yet, and the sun is just rising in the emergence of IDEAS. As the day unfolds, the events that are yet to shape the form and substance of IDEAS are just now being developed. It is therefore premature to write a conclusion of this case study; rather, we are looking towards a challenging future for development evaluation.
Part III

Comparison of the Cases and Experiences
Creating and Developing Evaluation Organizations
How to Build Evaluation Associations and Networks: Learning from the Pioneers

By Lise Kriel, \(^1\) Secretariat, AfrEA

Background

During 2004, leaders of 14 evaluation associations and networks produced case studies for IOCE on the development and current status of their organizations. The leaders were requested to include the following information:

- general information about the organization, including the date of establishment, organizational structure, number of members, and number and type of activities;
- background on how the organization started and how it developed to its current status;
- three aspects or characteristics about the organization that work best and three challenging aspects;
- three major challenges met and their solutions;
- three major lessons learned; and
- three key recommendations or tips on how to develop evaluation organizations of this kind.

These case studies, generally written from the perspective of the individuals who pioneered each organization, served as the basis for this analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to provide an overview of the development of these organizations, looking at the contexts within which they were created and how they grew, exploring the processes that proved

\(^1\) E-mail: lise@evalnet.co.za
successful, and indicating the potential difficulties that might be anticipated and avoided when building evaluation associations and networks.

The courses of development of these organizations were diverse, which is understandable given their contextual variations. The challenge in this type of analysis is thus to highlight aspects of the development of evaluation associations and networks that cut across context, as well as to identify those that are context-bound.

This analysis should be read in conjunction with the case studies themselves, which are included in this publication. Due to the varying contents of the case studies, we were unable to do a complete analysis. We therefore point out some useful aspects while recognizing that more detailed versions of these case studies could provide more in-depth insights.

The Case Study Organizations

The 14 organizations chronicled in these case studies are demographically diverse and can be differentiated in terms of size, age, geographic location, distribution and reach. These demographic characteristics of the organizations are summarized in Table 1. The summary is based on information provided in the case studies, current in 2004. More recent developments, particularly in the younger organizations, are therefore not reflected.

Seven of the organizations are regional or national organizations from developed countries; the other seven are from developed countries. The set of cases reflects the fact that evaluation as a profession emerged, grew and matured in the developed world, and the oldest organizations continue to be a powerful force directing evaluation approaches and methods. The AEA and the AES have both existed for 18 years in their current form. The CES is the oldest, having been established 24 years ago. The EES is 10 years old.

The size and representation of the membership of these four well-established evaluation organizations indicate why they have the potential
### Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Sampled Evaluation Associations and Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Date of establishment</th>
<th>Size(^1)</th>
<th>Age(^2)</th>
<th>Geographic reach</th>
<th>Country status</th>
<th>Official status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Evaluation Association (AfrEA)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Evaluation Association (AEA)</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasian Evaluation Society (AES)</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazilian Evaluation Network</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Approx. 250</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Evaluation Society (CES)</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Evaluation Society (EES)</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS)</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Approx. 200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Program Evaluation Network (IPEN)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Approx. 360</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israeli Association for Program Evaluation (IAPE)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian Evaluation Association (AIV)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya Evaluation Association (KEA)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysian Evaluation Society (MES)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation Network of Niger (ReNSE)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Evaluation Society (SES)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>approx. 96</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. Membership statistics in 2004 (overall, national organizations indicate individual membership figures and regional organizations indicate institutional membership figures; informal organizations do not have official membership figures and available figures are estimated numbers of individuals and organizations that participate in the activities of the organization).

2. In years from date of establishment to 2004.
Creating and Developing Evaluation Organizations to exert a strong influence on how evaluation is conceptualized and conducted across the world. In 2004 the AEA had more than 3,000 members, CES had 2,000, AES 700 and EES 400 members, each with members from well beyond their borders. For example, AEA represents the American evaluation community, yet includes members from 50 countries from all parts of the world. The AES membership is mainly from Australia and New Zealand, but also includes members from 20 other countries, mainly in the general South Asian region.

Associations are still emerging in the developed world. Three of the seven case studies are relatively new, and have been in existence between three and seven years. These are SES, IAPE and AIV.

Four national evaluation organizations in developing environments are included. Such organizations are a relatively new phenomenon in developing countries in spite of the fact that the developing world has been a target for evaluation for decades. None has existed for more than seven years and they can have as few as 15 members, as is the case of MES. In spite of having been established seven years ago, KES has only 40 members. Other national efforts included in the case studies are the Brazilian Evaluation Network and ReNSE.

Regional organizations have also emerged, mainly due to the need for collaboration between individuals or networks, to strengthen efforts in a particular region and to share experiences in related contexts. In some cases, such as that of AfrEA, they have been catalysts for the establishment of national networks. AfrEA is an umbrella organization for 17 national evaluation associations and networks across Africa as well as for individual evaluators in African countries where these organizations do not exist. EES has more than 400 members from all over Europe, from Sweden to Italy, including countries new to the European Union. IPEN, based in Russia, has members in a number of countries of the former USSR.

A very recent development is the emergence of two global umbrella organizations, namely IDEAS, which has individual members and focuses on development evaluation, and IOCE, which is an umbrella organization for evaluation associations and networks across the world.
Both these organizations were established in 2003, and both are involved with promoting good practice, collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Today there are more than 50 evaluation associations and networks around the world. The fact that these global organizations exist is a sign of an evolving and maturing profession, and it suggests that there is a need and a desire to share evaluation approaches and experiences among the many players now involved in this field across the world.

**Critical Issues for Consideration When Establishing an Evaluation Organization**

This section captures the strengths and weaknesses, the challenges and solutions, and the major lessons and recommendations reported by the case study authors. The external context of each organization has not been analysed in depth, but the contextual information reported in the case studies provided a backdrop for an investigation of their organizational dynamics and internal functioning.

Two categories of organizational functioning were used as a broad framework for the analysis, namely organizational motivation and organizational capacity. Organizational motivation refers to the driving forces of the organizations and is focused on specific issues concerning their historical development, their vision, mission and objectives, and their maintenance and growth. Organizational capacity refers to leadership, membership, services, finances, human resources, inter-organizational linkages, and the overarching organizational structures that bring these resources together.

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2 For further details on this framework, see *Organizational Assessment. A Framework for Improving Performance*, by Charles Lusthaus, Marie-Hélène Adrien, Gary Anderson, Fred Carden, and George Plinio Montalván. Published jointly by the International Development Research Centre (Ottawa) and the Inter-American Development Bank (Washington), 2002. The electronic version of this book may be downloaded free of charge at <http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-23987-201-1-D0_TOPIC.html>. 
Organizational Motivation: The Driving Forces

Organizational motivation is critical in the foundation phase of an evaluation association or network, and also in sustaining the organization once it has been established. Organizations that operate within a participatory paradigm seem to have the most success in their endeavours. Subsequently, passionate participants are the central driving force behind successful evaluation organizations.

Reasons for Establishment

Two distinct groups emerge from an analysis of the historical development of the case study organizations, based on the reasons for their establishment.

The first group consists of those organizations that were formed to organize and provide structure for an existing but fragmented community of evaluation stakeholders. These organizations were formed in response to a need for networking and cooperation opportunities within an already existing stakeholder community. Some case study authors believe that an organization has little chance of success if such an informal community is not already in place. The perceived need to provide structure to an existing evaluation community has been a driving force for the establishment of the majority of the developed country organizations and also for some in developing parts of the world. In almost all cases, dedicated individuals or groups who were already active in the stakeholder community identified the need and took the initiative of establishing an evaluation association or network.

The second group includes organizations that were formed to raise awareness and, in effect, build a community of evaluation stakeholders. This was a driving force mainly in developing areas where the profile of evaluation was low and where the importance of the use of evaluation as a tool for improved accountability and resource management needed to be highlighted. It is interesting to note that an increased focus on M&E by international donor organizations, local governments or local
Part III. A Comparison of the Cases and Experiences

Academics often stimulated the establishment of these organizations. The initiators of these organizations were very often from outside the country or region, for example, they were representatives from external multi-lateral development and donor organizations. In a limited number of cases, the initiators were individuals who were leading figures in evaluation in their own countries and who, in the absence of a substantial local evaluation community, had become part of an international evaluation community.

Champions, Leaders or Initiators

In all cases, the person who championed the establishment of the organization was also the person who identified the need for it. As noted above, the leaders or initiators of the case study organizations appeared either from within an existing local evaluation community or from outside the country or region. However, the personal qualities of the champion, such as skills, motivation and profile, were always more relevant factors in determining the orientation and success of the organization, rather than whether he or she came from inside or outside the country or region. (This issue is elaborated upon in the organizational capacity section of this discussion.)

Effective Maintenance and Growth

The process of securing a feeling of ownership with all evaluation stakeholders is critical. Without stakeholder ownership, an organization has little chance of eliciting active participation from its members. To this end, a number of the more established organizations recommend a slow and steady pace during the establishment phase, before formalizing the organization. This approach is also advocated for the process of maintaining an established organization and for expanding its activities and reach. Establishing and maintaining an evaluation association or network requires time and patience, but, as one case study author notes, slow, step-by-step success is always better than fast failure.
Ownership of Vision and Mission

It is not surprising that clear, well-defined statements of vision and mission shared by existing members and attractive to potential members are decisive prerequisites for success. In this process, the interests of a variety of stakeholders need to be considered. Whether an organization is conceived within an existing evaluation community or initiated in order to build such a community, the consensus remains that it should not be exclusive to a particular stakeholder grouping (for example evaluators only). This then becomes an important consideration when a mission statement is formulated, as it should resonate with all the different evaluation stakeholder groups.

A developing organization can facilitate ownership by allowing opportunities for all stakeholders to participate in the formulation of vision and mission statements. In this way, a shared vision and mission may emerge organically from the needs of the growing evaluation community rather than be artificially introduced from outside.

Realistic Objectives

It is obvious that the stated objectives of an organization must reflect a shared vision and mission. But objectives should also be realistic and in line with available resources. Organizations have found that while ambitious, idealistic goals may be noble, they are of no real value if the organization does not have the motivation and the means to achieve them.

Organizational Capacity: Structure and Resources

A number of practical issues relevant to the establishment, maintenance and growth of evaluation associations and networks emerges from the case studies. These issues relate mainly to structure and resources. Aspects such as leadership, membership, services, finances and human resources are especially relevant once an organization needs to formalize its activities and structure, but these also prove to be critical implementation issues for informal evaluation organizations.
LEADERSHIP

Most successful associations and networks are, in effect, labours of love undertaken by dedicated, passionate and dynamic champions. With one notable exception, the organizations in this set of case studies did not seem to experience significant leadership problems. However, the case studies stress the critical importance of good leadership, as the leaders usually generate and carry the vision of the organization and therefore shoulder a large burden of responsibility for its success. Whether an organization is small or large, formal or informal, national, regional or global, the personal qualities, enthusiasm and dedication of the leaders remain a decisive factor in its success or failure. This is particularly important as the leaders work on a volunteer basis and thus do not get any financial benefit from their work.

This idea is demonstrated very well by some of the organizations from developing countries where actual and potential vulnerability is associated with leaders who are not fully committed to the vision of the organization and who do not invest enough time and resources in their leadership role. In the experience of the authors of the case studies, leadership style has often been found to be responsible for an organization’s failures, specifically where the leaders are artificially equipped with absolute power through formal structures and policies.

MEMBERSHIP

The issue of membership seems to be problematic for the vast majority of the case study organizations. Almost every author reported problems with recruiting new members, maintaining old members and/or encouraging member participation. The main challenges related to membership issues emerging from the case studies are:

• recognizing and clearly defining the potential membership base;
• accommodating the diverse needs of all these potential members — related to different stakeholder interests, methodological practices, subject areas or topics, and geographical location;
• raising awareness among these potential members;
• providing the type and number of relevant services that members need and value;
• setting membership fees at a level that is realistic when judged against the actual services provided; and
• maintaining high-quality and inclusive communication services.

These challenges indicate two interlinked areas for discussion, namely the membership base of the organization and the services provided by the organization.

Defining the membership base

Different evaluation associations and groups have different target audiences within the evaluation community. In most of the case studies, the potential membership base is already defined by a large existing stakeholder community in the area. Others decide in advance who may be members of the group, depending on the organization’s mission and objectives.

In the chapter on evaluation capacity building, Bamberger identifies five groups of evaluation stakeholders who are actively involved in the evaluation process, each with a different role and each possessing different sets of skills and knowledge. These include (but are not necessarily limited to):

• agencies that commission and fund evaluations;
• evaluation practitioners who design, implement, analyse and disseminate evaluations;
• evaluation users (those who use the results of evaluations to inform decision-making);
• groups affected by the programmes being evaluated; and
• public opinion (the general public, the academic community, civil society).

This continuum of evaluation stakeholders is an important contextual consideration to keep in mind when building an evaluation association.
or network. They may include all these groups or may be limited to only one.

The important issue is that an organization should be clear about whom it aims to attract as potential members, and why. The most successful organizations aim to be as inclusive as possible and attract members from all stakeholder groups and subject areas in a belief that the cross-fertilization of ideas and methodologies is essential for the harmonization and development of evaluation practice.

Accommodating Diverse Needs

A large and diverse membership base might be desirable, but it poses the very practical problem of accommodating diverse needs and interests within one organization. Most large organizations have solved this problem by stimulating the formation of smaller interest groups within their membership (e.g. formal Topical Interest Groups in the AEA and informal regional focal points in ReNSE). These interest groups are usually small, self-sustained networks within the larger organization and are often maintained only by the level of enthusiasm of those belonging to the group. They may be based on any topic of interest that is shared by a large enough group of members and may be formal or informal.

As an organization grows, these interest groups seem to be an important tool not only in maintaining membership but also in attracting new members to the organization.

Raising Awareness

Raising awareness is a critical issue for many young associations and networks. In countries and regions where evaluation already enjoys a recognizable profile and where organizations grew from a fragmented yet identifiable community of evaluation stakeholders, this is not a challenging task. But some organizations are established with the main objective of bringing much-needed attention to the fundamental necessity of ensuring evaluation practice in a country. For organizations facing this task, the support of external partners (who can almost be described
Creating and Developing Evaluation Organizations

as ‘custodians’) is crucial. This issue will be discussed in further detail in the section on inter-organizational linkages.

**SERVICES**

Services denote the actual activities that the organization engages in, such as meetings and seminars, training events, knowledge deposits and exchanges, contact databases and so forth. Table 2 provides an overview of the reported services of the case study associations and networks. There is a vast array of services being provided, including diverse types of networking opportunities (e.g. conferences, newsletters, communication facilities and evaluators’ directories), capacity development activities (e.g. training workshops, seminars, resource libraries and scholarships) and actions aimed at promoting quality in evaluation.

**Membership Needs and Membership Fees**

Membership and service issues are very closely related. One of the most common recommendations given by established groups is that the services of the organization must be matched to the needs of the members as well as to the membership fees. The relationship between services and membership fees must be reciprocal: on the one hand it is very important to conceptualize services based on sound knowledge of the real needs and professional activities of all evaluation stakeholders; on the other hand it is equally important to be realistic in terms of the services that can be offered considering the available infrastructural, financial and human resources of the organization.

In practice this means that an organization cannot expect to maintain a strong, fee-paying membership base if it does not serve the actual needs of its members. Members will only be prepared to pay a fee for a service that they recognize as essential to (or at least highly supportive of) their work and other professional activities.

For example, an organization offering a training workshop for young evaluation practitioners, in an area where there is a perceived lack of
Table 2. Reported Services of Sampled Evaluation Associations and Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>AfrEA</th>
<th>AEA</th>
<th>AES</th>
<th>Brasil</th>
<th>CES</th>
<th>EES</th>
<th>IDEAS</th>
<th>IPEN</th>
<th>IAPN</th>
<th>AV</th>
<th>KEA</th>
<th>MES</th>
<th>ReNSE</th>
<th>SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual conference or formal meeting</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
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training services, will not have any problems soliciting the necessary funding to organize and execute this activity. Similarly, members who find that a discussion listserv offers them the opportunity to make contact with like-minded evaluators or to solicit information pertinent to their work will be happy to pay a nominal subscription fee. However, offering a seminar on advanced evaluation methodology to a group of stakeholders whose primary interest is the use of evaluation results to inform decision-making would presumably be less successful in soliciting funding.

The issue remains one of supply and demand: the execution of activities that serve the members’ needs will not be hampered by a lack of resources, since members will contribute whatever is necessary to facilitate the gratification of their actual needs. The challenge is to determine which services are in demand, and if this demand is high enough, for members to provide the resources needed to deliver these services.

**Communication Services**

The single most common service provided by evaluation organizations is opportunities for networking and communication within the evaluation community. Facilitating networking is the basic objective of many of these organizations. The majority are initiated for this purpose and, as can be expected, networking services do not get very far without effective communication systems.

As organizations and networks grow and membership increases, a number of factors influence the efficiency of their communication systems. Two major issues to consider in terms of communication services are language and communication tools.

Language is an important factor that can exclude potential members to the detriment of what the organization wants to achieve. It is an issue in all organizations with a diverse cultural membership (e.g. EES, CES and AfrEA). Translation services are costly and most organizations cannot afford to provide all their services in the preferred language of their prospective members. It is the single most important factor that limits recruiting members and ensuring their active participation.
While many groups rely on the goodwill of members who are prepared to act as translators, this voluntary approach can easily lead to a lack of quality translations as well as the possibility of miscommunication and misunderstanding.

The tools of communication may also lead to exclusion. While the majority of organizations promote the use of electronic communication tools as efficient, low-cost solutions, a significant number report that over-reliance on the Internet and email lead to the exclusion of potential members who do not have Internet access. This problem is generally limited to those developing areas of the world where information and communication technologies are not yet well established.

**Quality**

There seems to be a growing call from both external and internal stakeholders for evaluation associations and networks to provide services aimed at promoting capacity development and encouraging high-quality evaluation practices. Many organizations provide capacity development services (e.g. workshops and seminars, scholarships and travel grants, and employment opportunity postings) and some provide quality control guidelines (e.g. evaluation standards and ethical codes of practice, qualified editorial activities, and achievement awards).

However, many organizations are hesitant to institute a form of quality control in their communication and knowledge exchange systems. Understandably, when one is aiming to increase reach and participation, it would be counterproductive to set criteria for participation that may alienate potential members who cannot live up to very high standards. This would also be counterproductive to the goals of capacity development.

The majority of organizations allowed for the generic development of a type of networking quality control, leaving the responsibility of deciding what are and what are not ‘good quality’ contributions with their members. Whether this is a good strategy remains debatable. However, some organizations that implemented top-down quality control measures at an early stage seem to have less success in their efforts.
Finding a solution for this sensitive issue is a major challenge, especially in developing countries where evaluation has not yet been established as an academic discipline and where appropriate official accreditation criteria for evaluation training and practice do not yet exist.

**FINANCES**

It is quite possible and in many ways desirable to manage evaluation associations and networks in a manner that requires a minimum of financial resources. A dominant message emerging from the case studies is that money is important, but not as important as people. One case study author even reports that an informal network does not need any money at all. However, most organizations require funding at one stage or another and different organizations have developed interesting and innovative solutions for their financial problems.

The more established organizations depend mainly on income generated through profitable annual conferences (e.g. AEA, CES and AES). When well planned and managed, a single event can generate enough funds to sustain an organization throughout the year. However, these organizations caution against total dependence on a single source of income, such as conference revenue, as one unexpected incident (such as the 1989 San Francisco earthquake in the case of the AEA) may result in a significant economic loss, paralysing the entire organization. Shrewd strategic financial management thus becomes critical as organizations grow and become financially self-reliant.

Developing organizations find the issue of fundraising to be a real challenge. Many rely heavily on membership fees and financial support from donor organizations. In the light of the issue of membership fees being matched to members' needs, as discussed earlier, reliance on membership fees to support the actual services provided by the organization is a feasible solution. However, the 'invisible' administrative functions of the organization usually cannot be supported in the same way.

There are two opposing points of view among developing organizations on the issue of external funding. Some attribute much of
their success to the financial support of external partners, while others warn quite vehemently against accepting any donor funding.

One case study author describes his dealings with donors as a “chicken and egg tussle”, referring to the donors’ need for evidence that an endeavour will succeed while the organization requires funds to develop this evidence. This view and experience are shared by a number of other organizations and seem to be based on the terms and conditions that must be met by an organization in order to qualify for donor funding. Understandably, some organizations feel pressurized to adopt a prescribed vision and method of establishment to secure funding, and this may include premature formalization. The case studies show that formalizing a fledgling organization simply to facilitate fundraising does not deliver positive results in the long term.

However, a significant number of organizations found their experiences with donor organizations to be predominantly positive and report that the financial and in-kind support received from multi-lateral development organizations played a pivotal role in their success.

To summarize, the main recommendations in terms of financial issues are that organizations should:

• find (or invent) zero-budget solutions wherever possible;
• make the most of enthusiastic volunteers;
• exploit external support but guard against external prescriptions which may not be compatible with the vision or context of the organization;
• avoid financing the core administrative functions of the organization primarily through annual membership fees; and
• solicit funding for specific services and activities from those who will benefit directly from these services, both inside and outside the organization.

**Human Resources**

Without exception, all of the organizations agree that “people are everything”. The vast majority agree on the key challenge in terms
of human resources: the inherently fragile and unreliable nature of volunteers.

The keystone of these evaluation associations and networks is groups of volunteers. Subsequently, their most valuable resources are the time and efforts of people, and the extent of success or failure of the organizations is very much dependent on the amount and quality of these in-kind contributions. It is therefore understandable that almost every one of the case studies regard dedicated individuals — at every level, from leadership to management to membership — as the one essential ingredient in building an evaluation association or network.

The main problems with over-reliance on volunteers are associated with the day-to-day operational management of the organization. The case study authors refer mainly to the difficulties in maintaining their communication systems (e.g. generating updated content for newsletters and websites and moderating discussion forums) and maintaining regularity of events (e.g. organizing regular seminars and meetings).

Two main solutions emerge from the case studies. The first is to encourage and reward a culture of volunteerism wherever possible. The biggest challenge is to inspire individuals with the appropriate skills: individuals who understand group dynamics and who are willing to commit themselves to the cause of the organization. Some of the more established associations nurture excellence in volunteerism by giving official recognition to exceptional volunteer work (e.g. awards given at annual events).

The second recommendation is to guard against overloading willing volunteers, a situation which may result in ‘volunteer burn-out’. A suggested solution is to supplement the work done by volunteers with paid support personnel. This may be on a full- or part-time basis, depending on the needs and resources of the organization. Some of the organizations in the study obtained this type of paid administrative support through their strategic partners, whereby a permanent employee (in a government department, for example) is seconded to act as the part-time secretariat for the evaluation association.
The important issue to bear in mind is to strike the appropriate balance when dividing the workload between volunteers and paid staff. Providing support to volunteers through a paid secretariat prevents burn-out and keeps volunteers motivated.

**Inter-organizational Linkages**

As mentioned earlier in this discussion, raising awareness is a critical issue for many young organizations. This is especially relevant where organizations are initiated with the main objective of bringing much-needed attention to the fundamental necessity of evaluation. For these organizations, inter-organizational linkages are crucial.

Many organizations attribute their success to the support that they received from large, multi-lateral development organizations as well as from their local government structures in the initial stages of their development. These groups stress the importance of finding common interests and building solid partnerships with significant local and international institutions in order to develop a prominent, stable profile. Strong horizontal and vertical inter-organizational linkages also assist in generating funding and other resources to facilitate the activities of the evaluation association or network.

A problem that may be addressed through formal partnerships is that of facilitating dialogue between local, implementation-level evaluation practice and national policy issues related to evaluation. The potential influence that an evaluation association or network can have on national policy is often determined by the level of internal representation from government and other influential institutions.

Many of the organizations note capacity building and professional standards as part of their overall objectives, but few evaluation associations and networks have any realistic means of implementing quality criteria for evaluation training and practice. One solution is to tackle the problems associated with adequate capacity building and professional evaluation standards by establishing clear partnerships with local or regional tertiary education institutions.
Finally, associations and networks should be clear about their intentions, expectations and the roles they can play before entering into inter-organizational partnerships. Even though the rewards of strong linkages are numerous, a significant number of the case studies caution against changing the initial mission and objectives of the organization in order to attract partners, citing appropriate partners and custodians as those who share and support the primary vision of the organization.

**Structure**

Almost all the issues highlighted so far become manifest in the structure of the organization. Leadership, membership, services, finances, human resources and inter-organizational linkages are the critical elements that constitute organizational structure. These elements may be organized formally or informally, through policies and procedures, through management styles, through activities and the tools of service provision. Problems may be created, avoided or solved with the appropriate organizational structure.

*Informal Versus Formal Structure*

The majority of the case study organizations were initiated as informal networks and only embarked on a process of formalization once this became necessary. Formalization refers to the process whereby an informal network becomes a formal association. It is characterized by the adoption of a formal constitution, registration as a legal entity, and the collection of membership fees. Formalization usually becomes necessary once a critical mass of dedicated informal members has been established.

The first important concern is to decide when and why a formal structure is appropriate for an organization. The case studies provide a number of arguments for and against formalization. The six main rewards and pitfalls associated with an informal as opposed to a formal structure are summarised in Table 3.
Any decision to formalize requires adequate consideration of all the pros and cons and their relevance to the existing situation and needs of the organization. Organizations that rush into premature formalization often become caught up in bureaucratic systems and procedures, neglecting the essential networking functions and services of an evaluation association. This has led to the demise of more than one fledgling organization.

*Services, Leadership and Membership*

Whether formal or informal, the structure of the organization should be developed around the central function of the organization as a communication and networking platform for evaluation stakeholders. A formalization process must therefore revolve around protecting

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**Table 3. Pros and Associated Cons of an Informal Organizational Structure**

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<td>Supports independence and autonomy of members</td>
<td>Limits accountability and (therefore) participation of members, since all participation remains voluntary</td>
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<td>Is cost-effective and does not require substantial funding</td>
<td>Does not allow for formal financial procedures and resource administration (e.g. does not permit membership fees being charged and obstructs resource mobilization and fundraising)</td>
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<td>Accelerates decision-making processes</td>
<td>Depends heavily on the personality of the convenor for strategic decisions</td>
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<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Fragile (e.g. does not allow for the firm anchoring of the organization in civil society)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circumvents issues of control by external partners and supporters</td>
<td>Hinders extension and the establishment of secure partnerships</td>
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<td>Simplifies functioning by allowing for decentralized systems and secretariat functions based on members’ initiative</td>
<td>Cannot hold management and administration structures accountable</td>
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and solidifying this critical service. Consequently, a tried-and-tested communication strategy and knowledge exchange system is a crucial component of a formalized structure.

Formal systems of leadership should be well thought through and should be appropriate to the goals and activities of the organization. The majority of the case studies recommend a procedure whereby leaders (for example a Board of Directors and a Management Committee) are volunteers who are democratically elected for a fixed term by the membership of the organization. Sound succession planning for changes in leadership should ensure that newly elected Board or Committee members serve together with existing members in order to preserve ‘organizational memory’ and acquired experience (i.e. knowledge from old lessons learned transferred to new leaders) while fostering inventiveness and allowing for renewal. Equal representation from all stakeholder groups within the body that determines the strategic direction of the organization is also recommended.

Formal membership policies and procedures should be realistic and simple. Care should be taken not to inadvertently exclude important stakeholders through restrictive membership criteria. Membership fees should be comparable to benefits provided in exchange for dues paid. The development of a sound member recruitment strategy is an essential part of any formal membership procedure.

**Conclusion: What Can You Do?**

The previous sections described and explored the actual issues reported by those who develop and lead evaluation associations and networks, drawing attention to areas of shared experience. In this section, I would like to offer my personal view of what an evaluation association or network can do to contribute to the profile and practice of M&E.

I will attempt to give a brief list of priority activities for developing evaluation associations and networks. I include practical examples, drawing from the lessons learned in the case studies as well as from my own experience with organizations of this kind. However, I wish to make...
it clear that every evaluation organization must tailor its objectives and activities to the needs and requirements of its own target audience, its available resources and the natural networking opportunities in its local environment. By basing goals on needs, maximizing the utilization of resources, and taking advantage of existing structures, you dramatically increase your chances for success.

Make Sure That You Know Your Target Audience

The first thing an evaluation organization should do is to assess the needs and the environment of their current and/or potential members. To begin with, an organization’s target audience will usually be a local community of stakeholders that includes active participants as well as interested spectators in the diverse field of M&E.

Depending on resources and opportunity, a needs assessment may be completed electronically, telephonically, via postal services or face-to-face. The process may include targeted surveys, interviews, focus groups, conferences or other relevant discussions. A thorough review of existing activities (e.g. other organizations, literature and training) is also advisable to complete the picture.

Create a Communication Platform

In my opinion, the central task of an evaluation association or network is to provide a credible, stable, active and inclusive public forum for communication and knowledge-sharing. The goal is to create an appropriate space, easily accessible by the entire target audience, where individuals and groups can participate in critical discussion and where they can exchange information.

The tools of such a platform will be dictated by the characteristics and resources of an organization’s target audience, but initial options include electronic discussion forums or chat rooms, print or electronic newsletters, email discussion lists or listservs, electronic or conventional meetings and conferences, and websites.
**Identify and Include all Relevant Stakeholders in the Evaluation Community**

Effective communications platforms are of no real value if they do not allow and inspire the participation of all relevant stakeholder groups. An evaluation organization should be proactive in identifying the major role-players and decision-makers in every evaluation stakeholder group and then actively kindling their participation in public forums and knowledge-sharing activities.

The leaders of evaluation organizations usually identify and engage leaders from other stakeholder groups through personal contact and are therefore the critical players in this task.

**Promote Quality in Monitoring and Evaluation**

Even though it is a challenging issue, it is important for an evaluation association to present and uphold a high standard of evaluation training and practice. The task of promoting quality requires innovation and sensitivity and relies upon the credibility of the organization. By investigating the evaluation environment in your target area (and beyond), you may find appropriate examples of ‘best practices’ in M & E that could be used for promoting quality in training and, often more essentially, in the professional practice of evaluation.

Many organizations use the quality standards or guidelines of more established evaluation organizations (e.g., the AEA’s Guiding Principles for Evaluators and the popular Evaluation Standards of the US Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation). If you decide to use this option, you must first ensure that the standards or guidelines are relevant to your local evaluation context before endorsing them.

**Developing Your Local Culture of Evaluation Practice**

This activity is closely related to the promotion of quality. By uncovering and stimulating the local culture of evaluation practice, evaluation associations and organizations can support the development of indigenous
M&E methods. The reasoning behind a search for successful indigenous methodologies is this: evaluation practices that have emerged from within the local context are often more appropriate, more effective, more easily accepted and therefore easier to implement. The goal is not to abandon effective foreign methods, but to discover and integrate home-grown proven success stories into current practices.

Examples of locally initiated and executed ‘best practice’ evaluations and high quality M&E methods should be actively sought out, encouraged and rewarded through, for example, competitions and awards, peer-reviewed journal publications, and invitations to present sponsored lectures or to act as expert reviewers.

Facilitate Evaluation Capacity Development

This is a popular activity and should be closely linked to the promotion of quality and encouragement of the local evaluation culture. Organizations can facilitate evaluation capacity development by providing training opportunities, exposure to local and international expertise, work experience opportunities, resource libraries and publishing opportunities.

Practical tools include organizing workshops and seminars, highlighting employment and internship opportunities, creating deposits of information (including toolkits, guideline documents and ‘best practice’ papers), and editing publications such as peer-reviewed journals compiled from members’ contributions.

Draw From the Experiences of Others

The experiences and ‘lessons learned’ by the pioneers of these types of organizations are a valuable resource for any person who is planning to establish a new evaluation association or network. Organizations that were established within similar contexts often experience similar problems, and by identifying those that share your vision and mission, you can avoid a process of reinventing the wheel, so to speak.
I would therefore like to conclude by encouraging all the champions, leaders and initiators of evaluation networks and societies around the world to submit their experiences as case studies to be included on the IOCE website. In this way, you can contribute to the goals of an organization committed to promoting worldwide cooperation and partnership in evaluation.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Zenda Ofir, Vice President of the IOCE, for her invaluable comments and encouragement during the preparation of this chapter. Furthermore, I would like to thank all the evaluation association and network leaders who prepared the case studies used in this analysis.
Part IV

Perspectives from other Evaluation Organizations
OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation

By Hans Lundgren

In 2004, a number of recently created national evaluation societies planned to hold their first conferences. This development takes place both in industrialized and in developing countries. The recent rapid growth in national societies follows a relatively long period during which there were only a few, relatively well-established national evaluation societies in some of the more advanced industrialized countries.

Consequently, a rather diverse group of evaluation societies now co-exists. This diversity is not only due to their more or less recent creation and history, but is also in part caused by specific factors related to the interests of individual lead members or groups interested in certain themes or fields of evaluation.

Against this background, it is a most useful undertaking by the IOCE to promote cross-national and cross-regional sharing of experiences in creating and developing evaluation organizations.

This paper will highlight some of the experiences of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) Network on Development Evaluation and discuss issues related to the interaction with national and regional evaluation societies.

1 E-mail: hans.lundgren@oecd.org
What is the DAC Network on Development Evaluation?

The DAC Network on Development Evaluation brings together representatives from 30 bilateral and multilateral development agencies working together to improve evaluation for more effective development assistance.

The DAC Evaluation Network seeks to improve evaluation practice by elaborating technical guidance and sharing methods and experiences among practitioners from national and multilateral development agencies. The Network contributes to improving aid effectiveness by providing relevant operational and policy lessons from evaluations and joint multi-donor synthesis studies and by facilitating joint evaluation and collaboration among donors and partners.

To put this work in context, official development assistance from OECD countries to developing countries totaled USD 68 billion in 2003 (according to the latest available data provided to the DAC High Level Meeting in 2004). Evaluation has acquired a significant role in development assistance, partly because funds are spent outside the domestic constituencies of individual donor countries and also because of its significance for a considerable number of developing countries and people. There is also often a debate on the effectiveness of aid and hence a clear demand exists for evaluation of the results of development aid programmes.

The Network is also committed to enhancing evaluation capacity development in partner countries for increased transparency, accountability and development effectiveness.

Approximately 60-70 participants from development agencies attend a typical meeting of the DAC Evaluation Network. Informal workshops and seminars, often hosted by an OECD member country, bring together

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2 Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, EBRD, UNDP and IMF.
development evaluators from civil society and developing countries, and
sometimes also from UN specialized agencies or regional development
agencies. The workshop on Partners in Development Evaluation:
Learning and Accountability, held in 2003 and co-sponsored by the
DAC Evaluation Network and France, which brought together about
300 development evaluators, is an example of this interaction. The DAC
Evaluation Network is committed to continuing such constructive
dialogue and to building bridges among the various strands of the
evaluation community.

Network Activities go Beyond Information Sharing and
Exchange

The sharing of information and exchange of methods, approaches and
lessons is an important and essential element of the Network’s agenda.
Moreover, the Network, through joint undertakings with member
countries, produces synthesis studies and reports. An example is the
recent synthesis study on lessons learned in donor support to
decentralization and local governance.

An important achievement was the development of a Glossary of
Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, published in 2002.
The Glossary clarifies concepts and reduces terminological confusion
and ambiguity in the field of evaluation. A printed version is available
in the original trilingual version (English, French and Spanish). Chinese,
Italian, Japanese and Portuguese versions can be found on the website

The DAC Principles of Evaluation of Development Assistance is
also a fundamental frame of reference for the Network. This set of
Principles provides an agreed basis for individual OECD members’
evaluation systems and their management, and is also important for the
peer review process. The DAC peer review mechanism involves a review
of a donor country’s development cooperation policies and programmes
by two other member states, with the support of the Secretariat. The
evaluation system is part of this review and the set of agreed Principles is
the key standard against which an evaluation system can be assessed. The Principles are useful not only for the peer review process, but they also play an important role in countries where efforts have been made to strengthen aid evaluation. They have also been used, in a more defensive way, as an internationally agreed text when attempts have been made to seriously weaken the evaluation function and its work.

Some Key Lessons of Cooperation Within an International Evaluation Network

It may be of interest to highlight some of the experiences of making an international network of development evaluation managers function smoothly. Some of these experiences may not be relevant or directly transferable to the national evaluation level or to other networks, but may still be useful if re-cast in applicable ways to the specific context. Highlights of the experience include:

• strong ownership by the members of the network is essential;
• a mandate provided by the political level is needed for an inter-governmental group to exist, and support from the senior management level is needed for it to be able to function effectively;
• a Secretariat is needed to support activities and to take the work forward;
• networking among members is important, but an overly restrictive approach is not recommended; outreach and openness toward other communities is needed;
• there needs to be a clear focus on the value added of joint efforts for network members;
• joint efforts add generally to quality and credibility but are more cumbersome to administer and implement than single agency efforts;
• particular attention needs to be given to the process of collaboration, with inclusive opportunities, but active membership should involve contribution and results focus;
Part IV. Perspectives from other Evaluation Organizations

• it is important to work respectfully with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds;
• adaptability to different administrative and political settings in which evaluation operates is important;
• leadership and initiative is often connected to an individual’s drive and capability and networks can be useful ways of mobilizing resources for initiatives that relatively small players cannot implement on their own; and
• it is important to establish principles and good practice to codify agreed understandings and lessons in evaluation. However, standard setting should not be an aim in itself and should be exercised with care so as not to stifle innovation and experimentation.

Perceptions on the Need for Evaluation Societies in Developing Countries

The recent strong growth in the number of evaluation societies provides new opportunities for useful dialogue and interaction on development evaluation. As noted above, promoting evaluation capacity development is part and parcel of the mandate of the DAC Evaluation Network. In the 1990s, a number of evaluation capacity development initiatives were implemented by the Network (then called the DAC Expert Group on Aid Evaluation). This included regional workshops/seminars co-organized with regional development banks and partner countries. It was difficult however to identify development evaluators to collaborate with in planning and implementing these events and joint follow-up activities. There is still a perception among many donor evaluation organizations that it is difficult to identify development evaluators in the South to work with in joint evaluations. Hence, there is a need for more evaluation capacity in the South to dialogue, collaborate with and to participate in joint work. Increasingly, this will become easier with the growth of national evaluation societies and strengthened domestic capacities. National evaluation societies can usefully assist in furthering
this development. The most important feature will be the ability to strengthen national capacities to improve transparency, results accountability and the allocation of scarce domestic development resources. From a donor development evaluation perspective, the recent growth in national evaluation societies is a most positive element that brings hope for sounder, increasingly partnership-based evaluations of development assistance activities in the future.
Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie (AIF)

Par Jack Batho

Brève Histoire de L'évaluation dans L'espace Francophone

Depuis maintenant plusieurs années, on assiste, aussi bien dans les pratiques des bailleurs et des organisations internationales, que dans la gestion moderne des politiques publiques, à un rapide développement des outils de suivi et évaluation (S& E), qui, au-delà de leur simple dimension technique, illustrent bien les nouvelles exigences en matière de gestion des affaires publiques et de qualité de la gouvernance, en permettant une meilleure mesure des résultats de l'action publique ou un meilleur contrôle de l'efficacité des programmes d'aide.

Suivant avec un décalage plus ou moins grand ce développement des outils et pratiques d'évaluation, le milieu professionnel impliqué dans ce nouveau domaine de compétences (à la fois les organisations commanditaires, tenues de rendre compte du bon usage des fonds publics qui leur sont confiés, les instituts de formation et de recherche, ainsi que les experts consultants eux-mêmes) a lui-même commencé à s'organiser à partir des années 80, d'abord en Amérique du Nord (au Canada pour ce qui concerne la Francophonie), avant de s'étendre à l'Europe au cours des années 90, puis enfin, peu à peu, au reste du monde.

Mais force est aujourd'hui de constater un certain retard des pays francophones, notamment du Sud, et particulièrement en Afrique, à la
fois dans l’appropriation de ces pratiques et dans l’organisation de
communautés d’experts. Malgré un développement important des
pratiques de suivi et d’évaluation, sous l’impulsion des bailleurs et des
agences d’aide, et malgré aussi l’émergence de nombreuses compétences,
on observe que les sociétés nationales d’évaluation formellement
constituées sont encore très peu nombreuses en Afrique francophone,
même si le mouvement semble désormais s’accélérer, alors qu’elles
existent, et parfois depuis longtemps, dans la quasi-totalité des pays
anglophones d’Afrique. Dans plusieurs pays francophones, comme par
exemple au Niger, au Sénégal ou au Burkina Faso, c’est plutôt d’ailleurs
sous la forme de réseaux informels, créés le plus souvent à l’initiative de
responsables locaux de l’Unicef et parfois du PNUD ou plus largement
des organisations du système des Nations Unies, que s’organisent les
débats sur les expériences et les pratiques d’évaluation. Dans d’autres
cas, comme au début de 2004 en Mauritanie, c’est par la création d’une
ONG nationale que le réseau national d’évaluation a choisi de se
constituer formellement. Dans de nombreux autres pays francophones,
come au Rwanda, à Madagascar ou aux Comores, des réseaux ont
existé ou existent encore mais semblent actuellement en veilleuse. Enfin,
des initiatives individuelles sont en cours pour fédérer des réseaux
informels, parfois sous forme de listes de discussion, comme en
République démocratique du Congo ou au Cameroun. Sous ces diverses
formes ces nouveaux réseaux francophones sont aujourd’hui en train de
rejoindre, la dizaine d’autres structures nationales anglophones plus
anciennement constituées, qui constituent AfrEA.

Comores, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominique, Egypte, France, Gabon, Guinée, Guinée-
Bissau, Guinée équatoriale, Haïti, Laos, Liban, Lituanie, Luxembourg, Macédoine, Madagascar,
Malawi, Maroc, Mauritanie, Moldavie, Monaco, Monako, Mozambique, Namibie, Nauru, Niger,
Polynésie française, République démocratique du Congo, République tchèque, Roumanie, Rwanda,
Sainte-Lucie, Sao Tomé & Principe, Sénégal, Seychelles, Slovaquie, Slovénie, Suède, Tchad, Togo,
Timor Leste, Togo, Tuvalu et Vietnam (les pays africains sont indiqués en caractères italique).
Le Développement de l’évaluation et l’accès aux Financements Internationaux


On constate en effet que, faute d’une prise en compte suffisante des nouvelles contraintes qui apparaissent, liées au respect du principe de la diversité culturelle et linguistique, l’usage quasiment exclusif de l’anglais dans l’élaboration des concepts, des systèmes et des outils qui structurent l’ensemble des politiques d’aide au développement, ainsi que dans la plupart des formations délivrées au plan international, un biais embarrassant s’est peu à peu installé dans la pratique des organisations, qui consiste à favoriser très largement l’implication des experts, et donc des pays qu’ils représentent, issus des pays qui maîtrisent le mieux la langue anglaise. Or on sait aujourd’hui qu’une bonne maîtrise de ces mêmes outils de suivi et d’évaluation, qui structurent la plupart des documents de présentation des demandes d’appui financier, constitue souvent un préalable déterminant dans la façon de formuler les demandes d’aide ou pour répondre de manière efficace aux appels à propositions des organisations internationales ou des grands bailleurs. Ceux-ci ne sont en effet rassurés, quant à la capacité des pays ou organisations bénéficiaires de l’aide, à la gérer efficacement par rapport aux critères établis, que si les experts partenaires maîtrisent parfaitement le vocabulaire, les outils et les pratiques qui ont structuré en amont leur offre de coopération.

Ceci revient à dire, a contrario, qu’en terme de renforcement des capacités, les pays francophones d’Afrique n’ont pas, à ce jour, pu bénéficier des mêmes facilités de formation et de la même bienveillante attention de la part des organisations internationales que les pays anglophones faute de disposer de viviers de fonctionnaires et d’experts
qui, au-delà de leurs capacités professionnelles, de leurs connaissances de plusieurs langues nationales et de leur maîtrise du français (le plus souvent langue officielle), seraient également capables de participer, si l’on peut dire, “à armes égales” aux discussions ou négociations qui se déroulent aux tables des principaux bailleurs internationaux.

**Le Développement de L’évaluation comme Condition et Preuve de la Bonne Gouvernance**

Dans son option générale d’appui aux politiques nationales, la Francophonie, en tant qu’organisation multilatérale, a donc fait le choix d’aider ses membres du Sud à s’approprier les outils de suivi et d’évaluation de manière à leur permettre de gérer plus efficacement leur relation avec les bailleurs et les agences d’aide, sur la base de critères d’appréciation et de standards négociés et non plus imposés, de manière aussi à ce que l’intégration de ces pratiques d’évaluation dans la gestion des politiques publiques puisse, en se généralisant, renforcer la bonne gouvernance, les mécanismes de prise de décision et la société civile dans son ensemble.

La récente initiative pour le développement de l’Afrique (Nepada/Nepad) a d’ailleurs clairement indiqué cette voie en installant, au cœur de son dispositif, un “mécanisme africain d’évaluation par les pairs” (MAEP) qui a pour mission de mettre au point les critères d’évaluation des résultats qu’obtiendront à l’avenir les pays africains dans les quatre domaines prioritaires que sont la démocratie et la bonne gouvernance, le développement économique et social, la bonne gestion économique et financière, et la politique d’intégration.

Mais il est clair aujourd’hui que, au-delà des déclarations d’intention visant à renforcer la bonne gouvernance, le développement de l’évaluation passe par des modes d’organisation d’un milieu national de compétences, une “communauté” d’expertise, pourrait-on dire, qui fait des réseaux nationaux, régionaux et continentaux des parties prenantes essentielles du développement des pratiques d’évaluation. De ce point de vue la création et le renforcement de ces réseaux, leur
participation à la réflexion conduite au sein d’instances plus larges, comme celles qu’offrent l’Organisation internationale de coopération en évaluation (IOCE) ou encore IDEAS, constituent la meilleure garantie pour que les bonnes pratiques et les outils soient partagés, pour que l’information circule et pour que la culture d’évaluation et les exigences qu’elle installe en terme de gestion publique se diffusent le plus largement au sein des administrations et des cercles de décision politique.

**Une Stratégie Francophone de Développement des Capacités en Evaluation**

C’est dans ce contexte que l’Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie, opérateur principal de l’OIF, entend ainsi favoriser, à travers un nouveau programme de renforcement des capacités en évaluation de politiques publiques, inscrit dans la durée, la promotion et la mise en réseau des initiatives et ressources francophones en évaluation et d’y impliquer fortement les experts du Sud, notamment africains.

Ce programme, que l’Agence entend mettre en œuvre au cours des prochaines années, poursuit deux objectifs:

- favoriser le développement des pratiques de suivi et évaluation des programmes et politiques publiques dans les pays du Sud par le renforcement des compétences des experts et par le réseautage de leurs communautés;
- renforcer également la présence de réseaux ou d’experts issus des 55 pays membres de la Francophonie, tant du Nord que du Sud, dans les instances internationales consacrées à l’évaluation: Organisation internationale de coopération en évaluation (IOCE), Association internationale pour l’évaluation du développement (IDEAS) et associations continentales (Association africaine d’évaluation - AfréA.), de même que dans les enceintes internationales (comme par exemple à l’OCDE) où les questions d’évaluation sont abordées, de manière à leur permettre d’être parties prenantes des orientations qui y seront adoptées.
Pour atteindre ces deux objectifs, l’Agence entend déployer ses interventions selon 4 axes qui se veulent complémentaires:

- le soutien à l’émergence et au renforcement de réseaux nationaux de suivi et évaluation, quelle que soit leur forme, de manière à favoriser la structuration de ces nouvelles communautés d’experts, dans toutes leurs composantes (administrations, experts indépendants, organisations internationales, formateurs, etc.) et de manière aussi à leur permettre de participer à l’ensemble des discussions qui se développent au niveau régional, comme au niveau international au sens le plus large, sur des questions comme, par exemple, celles liées à l’évaluation de l’aide;
- le développement à moyen terme d’une session de formation internationale de haut niveau sur les outils de suivi & évaluation;
- le soutien, par la prise en charge d’experts, à la présence francophone dans les instances internationales consacrées à l’évaluation et dans les réunions internationales qui abordent ces questions.

Conclusion

Comme on le voit, il n’entre aucunement dans les intentions de la Francophonie de créer un réseau formel de l’évaluation francophone, nouvelle organisation qui viendrait encombrer un paysage international déjà passablement rempli au cours des dernières années et qui ferait courir à ses membres tous les risques d’un “ghetto”. Il s’agit plus modestement
d’aider les communautés d’experts de nos pays membres à participer le plus largement possible aux débats internationaux en cours, en occupant leur place dans les organisations régionales, continentales ou mondiales qui existent déjà. Mais il s’agit aussi, de manière plus ambitieuse, d’illustrer sur ce terrain particulier, la préoccupation nouvelle d’une bonne partie de la communauté internationale de défendre concrètement, si possible en l’illustrant, le principe de diversité culturelle et linguistique, qui est un des principes fondateurs de l’espace francophone.
Part V
Evaluation Capacity Development
Target Groups for Evaluation Capacity Building

Although discussions of evaluation capacity building often focus on strengthening the technical skills of the evaluation practitioners who design and implement evaluations, it is important to appreciate that at least five groups of actors are actively involved in the evaluation process. The success of most evaluations is dependent on the support and understanding of all of these stakeholder groups, each of which have different roles in the evaluation process and require different sets of skills or knowledge. An evaluation capacity building strategy should define ways to strengthen the evaluation skills of each of these groups:

- Agencies that commission and fund evaluations. These include donor agencies, foundations, government budget and funding agencies, and national and international NGOs.
- Evaluation practitioners who design, implement, analyse and disseminate evaluations. These include evaluation units of line ministries, planning and finance ministries, national and international NGOs, foundations and donor agencies, evaluation consultants and university research groups.
- Evaluation users. These include government, donor and civil society organizations that use the results of evaluations to help formulate policies, allocate resources, and design and implement programmes and projects.

* E-mail: MikeJBamb@aol.com
• Groups affected by the programmes being evaluated. These include community organizations, farmers’ organizations, trade associations and business groups, trade unions and workers’ organizations and many other groups affected directly or indirectly by the programmes and policies being evaluated.
• Public opinion. This includes broad categories such as the general public, the academic community and civil society.

Required Evaluation Skills

Each of the target groups is concerned with different aspects of the evaluation process and requires different skills or knowledge. Some of the broad categories of skills and knowledge include:

• knowing when evaluations are required;
• understanding what evaluations can and cannot achieve and knowing what questions to ask;
• defining what evaluation clients ‘really want to know’;
• assessing the cost, time and technical requirements for an evaluation;
• knowing how to promote, commission or finance evaluations;
• knowing how to design, conduct, analyse and disseminate evaluations;
• understanding how to use evaluation findings;
• designing evaluations that will be used;
• knowing how to assess the quality and utility of evaluations; and
• adapting ‘ideal’ evaluation methodology to real-world constraints.

Table 1 summarizes the types of evaluation skills typically required by each of the five target groups. While there is obviously some overlap, the focus of the evaluation capacity needs is significantly different for each group. For example, the agencies that fund evaluations (Target Group 1) require skills in:
Part V. Evaluation Capacity Development

- identifying evaluation needs and determining when evaluations are needed and what questions should they address;
- evaluating and selecting consultants;
- assessing evaluation proposals;
- estimating evaluation resource requirements (funds, human resources, time, access to computers, transportation etc.); and
- understanding what questions an evaluation can and cannot answer.

On the other hand, the groups affected by programmes and policies (Target Group 4) must be able to:

- define when evaluations are required;
- negotiate with evaluators and funding agencies on the content, purpose, use and dissemination of evaluations;
- ensure that the right questions are asked, that information is collected from the right people and that the questions are formulated so as to avoid bias;
- understand, use and disseminate the evaluation findings; and
- conduct an independent evaluation if it is necessary to challenge the findings of the ‘official’ evaluation.

Designing and Delivering Evaluation Capacity Building

Evaluation capacity building can be delivered in many different ways, formally and informally, through extensive university or training institution programmes or very rapidly. In many cases the target groups may not think that they are involved in an evaluation process and may not even recognize that they are in a capacity-building exercise.

Some of the common evaluation capacity-building approaches include:

- a formal university or training institute programme, which can range from one or more academic semesters to seminars lasting from several days to several weeks;
Table 1. Evaluation Skills Required by Different Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Evaluation Skills Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Funding agencies</td>
<td>• Donor agencies</td>
<td>• Defining when evaluations are required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Finance departments</td>
<td>• Evaluating evaluation consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Foundations</td>
<td>• Assessing proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• International NGOs</td>
<td>• Estimating evaluation resource requirements (budget, time, human resources)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Evaluation practitioners</td>
<td>• Evaluation units of line ministries</td>
<td>• Defining client needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluation departments of ministries of planning and finance</td>
<td>• Adapting theoretically sound designs to real-world budgets, time, data and political constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluation units of NGOs</td>
<td>• Understanding and selecting from among different evaluation designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluation consultants</td>
<td>• Collecting and analysing data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Universities</td>
<td>• Sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Supervising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Institutional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adapting evaluation methodologies to the real world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Evaluation users (target groups)

- Central government agencies (finance, planning, etc.)
- Line ministries
- NGOs
- Foundations
- Donor agencies
- Assessing the validity of quantitative evaluation designs and findings
- Assessing the adequacy and validity of qualitative and mixed-method evaluation designs

### 4. Beneficiary populations

- Community organizations
- Farmers’ organizations
- Trade associations and business groups
- Trade unions and workers’ organizations
- Defining when evaluations are required
- Negotiating with evaluators and funding agencies on the content, purpose, use and dissemination of evaluations
- Asking the right questions
- Understanding and using evaluation findings
- Conducting participatory evaluations

### 5. Public opinion

- The general public
- The academic community
- Civil society
- Knowing how to get evaluations done
- Conducting participatory evaluations
- Making sure the right questions are asked
- Understanding and using evaluation findings
workshops lasting from less than a day to 2-3 days;
- distance learning and other on-line programmes;
- mentoring;
- on-the-job training where evaluation skills are learned as part of a package of work skills;
- part of a community development programme; and
- part of a community or group empowerment programme.

Table 2 illustrates different methods for evaluation capacity development and how they can be applied to different audiences. For example, evaluation users can strengthen their capacity to understand and use evaluation findings through briefings and short workshops, often with additional documentation available on websites. Examples of debriefing workshops include:

- beneficiary assessment studies conducted for government line ministries to assess the attitudes and experiences of intended beneficiaries (community groups, local government agencies etc.) regarding public service delivery programmes (housing, health, education, microcredit etc.); and
- workshops to disseminate the findings of national MDGs or human development studies.

An example of distance learning is the Brazilian Interlegis programme organized by the Brazilian Senate to train municipal government functionaries on the use of social development indicators and evaluation studies to help identify priority areas for action. A particularly important function is helping mayors and other elected officials to use social indicators to compare their municipality with neighboring municipalities on key indicators such as school attendance, infant mortality, unemployment and crime. This is useful both to identify priority areas and also to evaluate performance. For functionaries at this level it is more meaningful to compare progress with neighboring municipalities than to try to understand and use the overwhelming amounts of information available from national MDGs or human development reports.
Table 2. Examples of Different Capacity Building Approaches Customized for Different Audiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Type of training</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding agencies</td>
<td>Workshops and seminars</td>
<td>½ - 3 days</td>
<td>• International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) three-day workshop on Real World Evaluation. How to assess the validity and adequacy of evaluation designs and how to estimate budget, time and human resources to conduct the evaluation.¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Chile: briefings to the Ministry of Finance and the Parliamentary Budget Committee on the findings and recommendations of the evaluations of government programmes.²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation practitioners</td>
<td>Short courses combining theory and practice in evaluation tools and techniques</td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
<td>• IPDET two-week course. Review of evaluation methods and approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation users</td>
<td>• Debriefing workshop presenting the findings of an evaluation</td>
<td>½ - 1 day</td>
<td>• Beneficiary assessment studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Distance learning</td>
<td>Short sessions once a week over a period of several months</td>
<td>• National MDG workshops, supported by mass media campaigns, publications and websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Case studies and other short publications on how evaluations are used</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Brazil: Interlegis distance learning programme for municipal governments on the use of social development indicators and research findings to identify priority areas of action.³</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘Influential Evaluations’, eight case studies of evaluations from around the world where there is convincing evidence that the results influenced policy formulation or programme design.⁴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ [Source: International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) website]
² [Source: Chile Ministry of Finance and Parliamentary Budget Committee]
³ [Source: Brazil Interlegis Distance Learning Programme]
⁴ [Source: ‘Influential Evaluations’ case studies]
Box 1 gives an example of a 4-5 week evaluation capacity building course for evaluation practitioners from central government agencies. An important part of the programme is the inclusion of field visits in which participants test the different evaluation tools and also conduct rapid assessment studies on completed or ongoing projects.
### Box 1. Example of an Evaluation Capacity Building Course for Central M & E Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience:</th>
<th>State from central government agencies and possibly major NGOs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>3-5 week basic course possibly followed by shorter, specialized workshops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives:</td>
<td>To provide M&amp;E staff with the technical skills to carry out their work and help them understand how their work at the centre is linked to evaluation activities at the provincial and project levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content:</td>
<td>The organization and functions of the different elements of the national M&amp;E system;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• the importance of government/ NGO coordination on M&amp;E;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• the contribution of M&amp;E to national development planning;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• M&amp;E and the project cycle for government and donor-funded programmes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• design and utilization of different kinds of studies;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• methods for data collection and analysis;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• principles of sample design;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• research designs for estimating project impacts;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• creation and utilization of M&amp;E data bases (meta-evaluation, sector reviews and prospective evaluation); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• management of data bases: quality control, ensuring feedback and rapid utilization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology:</td>
<td>• reading assignments followed by lectures and discussion;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• small group exercises and discussion;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• preparation and use of case studies; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• field exercises to gain practical experience with different data collection methods and to conduct rapid assessments of completed or ongoing projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Joseph Valadez and Michael Bamberger, 1994, ‘The organization of M&E training’, Chapter 13 of ‘Monitoring and Evaluating Social Programs in Developing Countries’, Economic Development Institute, The World Bank (the chapter includes similar outlines for all the major target audiences).
Potential Roles for IOCE

As IOCE member organizations are in contact with most of the national evaluation target audiences, IOCE can potentially play an important role in evaluation capacity building at the national, regional and international levels. Through its national, regional and international networks IOCE can mobilize experience, documentation and resource persons to provide support in many of the areas outlined in Tables 1 and 2.
National and Regional Evaluation Organizations as a Sustainable Strategy for Evaluation Capacity Development

By Marco Segone, Mahesh Patel, Jean-Charles Rouge and Craig Russon

Abstract

A surprisingly rapid and multinational process of strengthening M&E capacities has taken place over the last five years. Before 1997, only half a dozen national M&E organizations existed, all of which were based in developed countries. By 2002 this number increased to about 30, with most of the new organizations located outside Western Europe and North America. At the same time, governments, donors, UN Agencies and NGOs have all demonstrated a substantively enhanced interest in and support of M&E as well as M&E capacity development initiatives.

The aim of this paper is to examine some of the characteristics of this proliferation of organizations, interests and initiatives and to present some tentative sketch of lessons learned that might help to make new organizations effective, low in cost and simple to run. A large part of the analysis is based on the experiences of AfrEA and national associations and networks in Africa, especially those in Niger, Kenya and Rwanda.

The four-year experience of the Niger M&E Network is used to test the joint UNDP–UNICEF conceptual framework on capacity development.

Extrait

Depuis ces cinq dernières années, le renforcement des capacités nationales en Suivi Evaluation s’est formidablement accéléré à travers le monde. Avant 1997, seule une demi-douzaine d’organisations nationales de Suivi Evaluation existait, toutes situées dans des pays industrialisés. En 2002, ce chiffre est passé à environ trente organisations, dont la plupart sont localisées hors Europe de l’Ouest et Amérique

1 E-mail: msegone@unicef.org
2 E-mail: mpatel@unicef.org
3 E-mail: jean-charles.rouge@missioneco.org
4 E-mail: russon@complink.net

Le but de cet article est d’examiner les caractéristiques propres à cette prolifération d’organisations nationales, d’intérêts et d’initiatives, et de tirer les enseignements de certaines de ces expérience afin que les nouvelles organisations soient efficaces, peu coûteuses et simples à gérer. Une grande partie de l’analyse est basée sur les expériences de l’Association africaine d’Evaluation et de réseaux africains de Suivi Evaluation, notamment ceux du Niger, du Kenya et du Rwanda.


Introduction

M & E capacity is increasingly being acknowledged as a key to improved public sector management. Russon and de Silva (2001) identified several trends in governance to which evaluation is contributing, including:

- democratization by promoting citizen participation in government through inclusion, dialogue and deliberation (House & Howe, 2000); and

- de-bureaucratization by promoting public accountability, responsiveness, transparency and efficiency.

Evaluation is also being viewed as an instrument of organizational learning. Segone (1998) found that international development agencies have been focusing on evaluation as a strategic tool for knowledge acquisition to facilitate decision-making and organizational learning. The World Bank (Picciotto, 1998), in parallel to internal performance for accountability purposes, is connecting evaluation to knowledge management to achieve organizational learning. Similar developments are taking place throughout the development community in agencies such as UNICEF, UNDP and the World Food Programme.
Meanwhile, the traditional roles of international agencies and NGOs in promoting evaluation work and capacity development are being supplemented by civil society organizations of evaluators. These new actors are developing innovative strategies. The efforts of the long-established associations in developed countries (the American Evaluation Association, Canadian Evaluation Society, Austral-Asian Evaluation Society), as well as the newer ones (European Evaluation Society, Associazione Italiana di Valutazione, Société Française d’Évaluation, etc.) are being increasingly supplemented by this rapid proliferation of professional associations and networks of evaluators in developing countries. These developing country groups are adopting some innovative strategies based on lessons learned from the experiences of the more established institutions.

Historical Background

The first functional networks of evaluators in developing countries were the ACE, founded in 1995 with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency, and PREVAL, a listserv-based network serving Latin American countries, run by Ada Ocampo and started in 1996. The first formal group that met regularly was the Nairobi M & E network, which was started by Mahesh Patel in 1997. The Nairobi M & E Network was soon joined by the Rwanda Network, started by James Mugaju in 1998, and the Niger Network, started by Marco Segone in 1999. By end of 1999, there were nine national evaluation associations and networks in Africa and one in Sri Lanka. (In almost every case, the local — usually national— UNICEF/M & E Project Officer member called the first meeting of evaluators. The UNICEF staff member usually continued to run the group for about a year, after which the group was mostly self-sufficient and under local national leadership.) In 2002 there were 16 such associations and networks in Africa and several in developing countries elsewhere.

Recognition of the potential benefits of evaluation has also led to efforts to establish international organizations of evaluators. Two
fundamentally different approaches have been proposed: IDEAS and IOCE. A short description of each approach may be found below and will serve as a context for the ReNSE case study.

The history of IDEAS dates back to a regional seminar on evaluation that was held in Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire) in 1990 (African Development Bank, et al., 1998). The seminar was jointly organized by the African Development Bank (ADB) and the OECD-DAC. The purpose of the seminar was the clarification of evaluation needs as perceived by African countries themselves and the exploration of ways and means of strengthening self-evaluation capacities.

In 2000, the World Bank and UNDP introduced their plans for IDEAS. IDEAS would be a membership-based organization like the CES, exclusively dedicated to international development evaluation. It would seek to provide opportunities for professional networking; spread evaluation experience and best practices; organize conferences and workshops; facilitate the development of evaluation training programmes; raise evaluation standards and promote the exchange of development evaluation skills across countries and cultures. A conference to launch IDEAS was held in September 2002.

The history of the IOCE dates back to the international evaluation conference that was jointly organized by the CES and the American Evaluation Association (AEA) in Vancouver (British Columbia) in 1995. Sometime after this conference, a discussion about the international nature of the evaluation profession was held on AEA's listserv, EVALTALK (Russon & Russon, 2000). One of the principal issues discussed was the creation of a federation of regional and national evaluation organizations.

This discussion ultimately led AEA's International & Cross-Cultural Evaluation Topical Interest Group to organize a plenary session of the 1998 AEA conference during which the presidents of several regional and national evaluation organizations discussed the creation of a worldwide evaluation community (Russon & Love, 1999). The panel was moderated by former CES President, Arnold Love. This event served as a catalyst for some informal evaluation networks in developing
countries to take the step to become formal associations and societies — a step that had mixed consequences for some.

One of the outcomes of this plenary session was the decision of the presidents to move slowly ahead with the effort to create a worldwide evaluation community. Funding was obtained from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for a strategic planning meeting that was held in 2000 in Barbados (West Indies). During the meeting, 15 official representatives identified purposes that might orient a loose coalition of their regional and national evaluation organizations, established broad organizational principles that might guide a coalition, and developed an extensive list of activities that might be undertaken by a coalition (Mertens & Russon, 2000). Each representative took the subsequent proposal back to his or her organization’s policymaking body for endorsement.

Additional funding was received from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for a meeting held in the Dominican Republic in 2002 to plan the inaugural assembly of the IOCE (visit <www.ioce.net>). The two-day assembly, as envisioned by the organizing committee, would be attended by formal and informal evaluation organizations from around the world that are committed to pursuing the IOCE principles of openness and inclusion. The purpose of the assembly was to affirm the IOCE’s Terms of Reference, determine a system of governance, establish a decision-making mechanism, plan activities, and address substantive international issues. The inaugural assembly was scheduled for March 28-30, 2003 in Lima (Peru).

Africa is a key stakeholder within this global M&E empowerment process. A large number of African countries are seeking to build national M&E capacity through civil society initiatives. In 1999, AfrEA (visit <www.afrea.org> for additional information) was launched during a conference organized by Mahesh Patel in Nairobi. This conference accelerated the formation of national evaluation groups in Africa. Kenya, Niger and Rwanda had already formed their own national association and, as a part of preparations for the inaugural conference of the AfrEA, national networks were formed in the Comoros Islands, Eritrea, Ethiopia,
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Madagascar and Malawi. After the conference, focal points for constituting national networks were identified in Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. The Zimbabwe network was formed the day after the conference ended — the first national group in Africa to call its inaugural meeting without UNICEF-initiated support and facilitation.

In September 2001, the World Bank and the ADB (World Bank, 2002) organized the second round of the African Conference on M&E capacity development in Johannesburg (South Africa). In June 2002, a second AfrEA Conference was held in Nairobi (Kenya). Each of these Conferences had about 300 participants with presentations of about 100 papers. Funding for the first Conference was largely by donors and for the second, mostly by international development agencies and NGOs.

As mentioned above, the first three groups of evaluators from developing countries to formally meet were those from Kenya, Niger and Rwanda. The shared experiences of these groups led to an exchange of lessons learned on the listserv for evaluators in developing countries – XCEval.

The Nairobi M&E Network was initiated by Mahesh Patel, the M&E Officer of the UNICEF Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa in 1997. This group held about 50 meetings over a three-year period. The meetings took place on UN premises and participants were from a range of UN Agencies and NGOs, the University of Nairobi, and sometimes from various government departments and donors. In 2000, work started on the development of a constitution and the formal registration of the Kenya Evaluation Association. This work took precedence over the previous seminar and training activities and resulted in a cessation of activity of that type until 2002. In 2002, formal registration was obtained. Donor funding has been promised and it is hoped that seminar and training-based activities will now resume under national leadership and outside UN premises.

The Rwanda Network started in 1998. The first 12 meetings focused on the development of a constitution. The inaugural meeting was called
by James Mugaju, the (Rwandan) UNICEF M&E Officer in Kigali, and had senior level governmental participation. The early focus on constitutional issues led to a drop off in attendance by those who were looking for training and personal development and the somewhat reduced group is now mostly governmental in orientation, including in its leadership.

The Niger M&E Network (ReNSE – Réseau Nigérien de Suivi et Evaluation) was initiated by Marco Segone, the UNICEF M&E Officer based in Niger. This group held 15 meetings on M&E technical issues over a four-year period and it now has more than 200 members from public administration, the University, UN Agencies, NGOs and the private sector. The Niger experience is described in detail below as a case study of the conceptual framework developed by UNDP and UNICEF for capacity development and so is not elaborated here.

The common elements of these and a number of other early networks are: initial meetings were called by UNICEF M&E Officers; meetings were held on UN premises; no funding was required or requested (although UNICEF tended to facilitate photocopying and often provided tea and coffee); and principles of openness and inclusion of membership were practiced. In most cases, a transfer to local national leadership was achieved within a year or two.

**Conceptual Framework for M&E Capacity Development**

This section will briefly describe a conceptual framework developed by a group of UN Agencies in support of capacity development in developing countries and then assess how closely experiences in development of M&E capacity match what one would expect from the conceptual framework.

In 1999, UNDP and UNICEF held an international workshop on Planning and Monitoring of Capacity Development (UNDP/UNICEF, 1999) in Harare (Zimbabwe). Both organizations had been advancing work on capacity assessment and the M&E of capacity development. In view of their potentially complementary efforts, UNICEF and UNDP
undertook this joint workshop, funded primarily by the UK-DFID, to analyse and draw lessons from the different conceptual approaches and field experiences in planning and monitoring of capacity development.

The objectives of the workshop were: (i) to reach an agreement on the characteristics that define capacity development in practical terms useful to programme or project planners and managers; and (ii) to identify the elements for simple, practical and flexible guidelines (including operational steps, methods and tools) for planning and monitoring of capacity development interventions in a wide variety of contexts. The workshop brought together country offices from eight countries: UNDP – Egypt, Madagascar and Niger; UNICEF – Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam; and both UNDP and UNICEF – Nicaragua and Zimbabwe; as well as representatives of partner organizations from Madagascar, Nicaragua and Vietnam.

Based on a literature review, a background paper prepared in consultation with UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and case studies prepared by each of the participating teams, the workshop proposed a definition for capacity and capacity development respectively. Capacity was defined as the ability to define and realize goals, where defining goals entails identifying and understanding problems, analysing the situation, and formulating possible strategies and actions for response. Capacity development is about creating conditions that support the appropriate actors in assuming the appropriate roles in this process of identifying problems and defining and realizing goals. More specifically, capacity is derived from establishing effective processes (functions, roles, responsibilities and tasks) for identifying problems or issues, and formulating and realizing goals; these processes are carried out by appropriate actors (individual and collective) who are organized in effective structures for accountability, management and collective voice, and have the motivation, knowledge, skills and resources to perform effectively; the actors are supported in doing so by rules or norms (formal and informal, economic, social and political) that exist within
organizations (public, private and civil society), in social groups and across society.

The above view encourages the use of a systems approach to identify, define and achieve goals. This means that it is necessary not only to look at actors at different levels and across sectors but also, crucially, the network of relationships or connections between them. Such a viewpoint illustrates the fact that weaknesses in capacity at any level or with any key actor, whether at the community level, nationally, or somewhere in between these levels, will affect the capacity of the whole system to deal with a problem in order to achieve a goal.

This conceptualization of capacity underlines the importance of identifying and understanding the system relevant to achieving a goal as a basis for determining who needs to do what in order to achieve that particular goal. Capacity is neutral in terms of the nature of the goals pursued. However, the reference to ‘appropriate actors’ does indicate that a value-based choice must be made in terms of whose involvement is appropriate in what roles. The choice may be dictated by considerations of effectiveness, such as who has the necessary knowledge and skills, or who has leadership and energy.

In bringing the ‘appropriate actors’ together, their interests and broader societal norms are critical factors to consider. Interest and norms shape how different actors in society — individuals, groups and organizations — interact with one another and determine who is linked in formal and informal networks, and in what roles. Resources in this equation are of course also important. Access to and control over financial, material, technological, information and human resources are vital issues and, in their absence, potentially constraining.

In addition, capacity must be understood in terms of a specific cultural, social and political context. Capacity must be understood as something that exists in degrees at all levels of society – community/national, individual, household, institutional and system. Capacity can exist without outside intervention, though it may be very constrained. This implies that one must first understand capacities or elements of capacity that exist before engaging in any effort to build on or strengthen them.
ReNSE Case Study Application of the Capacity Development Conceptual Framework

ReNSE (visit <http://www.pnud.ne/rense> for additional information), an informal group of M&E professionals, was created in August 1999. Its creation was in response to two processes:

• on the local level, the growing demand for M&E highlighted the necessity of a sustainable local organization to coordinate, facilitate and advocate M&E culture and function;
• on the global level, it was important for Niger to fit into the African process of constituting national networks, and the global process of constituting a world M&E community, in order to benefit and contribute to the exchange of experiences and competency at an international level.

ReNSE decided to adopt the UNDP/UNICEF capacity development framework as a means of conceptualizing and planning its goals and activities. It was the only evaluation group to do this and so is unique as a case study and test of the conceptual framework. The list of concepts considered essential for the development of capacity described above is assessed in the following paragraphs in relation to the experience of the ReNSE.

Regarding the criterion of identification and definition of goals, ReNSE adopted its general and specific objectives in 1999. The general objective is to support a national sustainable process of M&E capacity development through the implementation of a forum that will contribute to the definition of norms, methodologies and professional practices in Niger. The specific objectives are:

• to facilitate informal learning by sharing experiences and skills in the field of M&E;
• to organize formal training sessions;
• to facilitate information sharing (meetings, training sessions, scholarships, grants, books and manuals, newsletters, international electronic networks, etc.).
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- to bring purchasers and providers of M&E services together to promote a mutual understanding of evaluation needs;
- to create and maintain a database of evaluators containing information on areas of expertise, experience and recent publications; and
- to facilitate the definition of professional norms and practices.

Regarding the criterion of effective processes for formulating and realizing objectives, it was decided that ReNSE’s processes should be participative and transparent. For this reason, it was decided that the General Assembly composed of all members should take all major decisions by consensus. A website was created and is regularly updated to post, disseminate and make all major decisions and activities related to the Network freely and openly available. Moreover, ReNSE facilitates a ‘networking’ process through the creation and development of contacts and relationships among different institutions, ministries and agencies.

One strategic decision was to adopt a ‘rotation’ approach for the hosting of ReNSE’s meetings. Each meeting is hosted by a different organization (to date, meetings have been hosted by the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Water Resources, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, SNV and Cermes). This enables ReNSE’s members to get to know new institutions, and also helps different institutions get to know and appreciate ReNSE. A list of the network’s members (including telephone, email and address) was created and is updated every two months, and emailing is used to disseminate day-to-day messages.

Regarding the involvement of appropriate stakeholders, it was decided that ReNSE should adopt the principles of inclusiveness and an empowerment-based approach. The network’s meetings are open to every person and organization interested in M&E, regardless of position covered, institutional belonging, seniority or experience. Every member is asked to contribute, on a voluntary basis, their time, particular competency and technical skill, to the network’s activities. Internal working groups were organized to widen the possibility of active participation and to optimize the potential of each member.
Regarding the criterion of effective structure, a Coordination Committee was established through a democratic process. It was decided that the Committee should be elected every two years by the General Assembly. The first Coordination Committee was elected in 1999 to cover the period 1999-2001. A second Committee was elected in 2001 to cover the period 2001-2003. To assure motivation, knowledge, skills and resources, the principle of broad representation was adopted. It was decided that the Coordination Committee members should be chosen to represent different categories connected to M & E, notably:

- the national public administration;
- the United Nations System;
- civil society;
- learning and knowledge institutions (University, National School of Administration, etc.); and
- the private sector (independent consultants).


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5 The first Coordination Committee was composed of Mr. Marco Segone, M & E Officer, UNICEF (United Nations System); Mr. Ben Adjikamadou, Project Coordinator at the Ministry of Planning (public administration); Ms. Mary White-Kaba, Project Coordinator GTZ-Alafia (civil society); Mr. Galy Abdel Kader, University of Niamey (learning and knowledge institutions); and Mr. Maman Sani Sanda, freelance consultant (private sector).

6 The second Coordination Committee was composed of Mr. Zakou Djibo, Programmes and Projects Monitoring & Evaluation Division, Ministry of Economy and Finance (public administration); Mr. Jean-Charles Rouge, Economist, UNDP (United Nations System); Mr. Amadou Sayo, Agriculture and Natural Resources Division, CARE International (civil society); Mr. Attaher Kamed Ibrahim, Director, National School of Administration (learning and knowledge institutions); and Mr. Maman Sani Sanda, freelance consultant (private sector).
Regarding the criterion on rules and norms, the network recognized the importance of shared values and understanding. The network adopted the following shared values:

- Emphasis on usage of local capacities. Niger has an important potential for local capacities. For this reason, the network is based on local experience and knowledge, and its focus is on national M&E capacity development. At each bi-monthly meeting, local institutions and/or specialists are invited to present their own experiences and systems. A database with the curriculum vitae of national evaluators was created and the network’s web page is hosting calls for African evaluators from development agencies.

- Country-led and owned. The network is based in Niger and its objectives and activities are relevant to, and implemented in, Niger. Most of the network’s members are Nigerien M&E specialists.

- Common understanding. Evaluation, whatever its ultimate and appropriate nature may be for a given developing country, must have a clear set of concepts to which all can agree in principle. According to Barbarie (Barbarie, 1998), achieving this clear set of concepts should be considered an essential early step for a M&E capacity development effort. For this reason, one of the first network priorities was the organization of a meeting to discuss and reach clear terminology and a common understanding of M&E.

The joint UNICEF-UNDP Conceptual Framework on Capacity Development was validated through its application in Niger from 1999 to 2002. It helped ReNSE develop its strategic vision, capacities and activities. Nevertheless, some potential implications for the future evolution of the Conceptual Framework were noted:

- It is not necessary to have resources, skills and knowledge available internally. In the case of ReNSE for instance, there were no financial resources available at all, and human resources were available only on a voluntary basis. Thus, adequate financial
resources, skills and knowledge were not assured. To face this challenge, strategic alliances and partnerships with external institutions were established. To date, ReNSE has succeeded in building up numerous strategic alliances with a diversity of institutions from the public sector. These institutions share a common interest in national evaluation capacity development and believe ReNSE can make a difference, based on its previous achievements and its own dynamism. So far, UNICEF and UNDP Niger hosted the first two ReNSE Secretariats (1999-2001 and 2001-2003, as scheduled). Improved services to members have been supported through a number of UNDP commitments, such as free Internet access for all members at the UN Documentation Centre in Niamey, regular access to its conference room for internal and formal meetings, the funding of the first issue of the ReNSE Newsletter, and the funding of an international consultancy for one month each year for network members' (training) needs. The ReNSE website is currently hosted free of charge by the Research for Development Institute office in Niamey (IRD, formerly ORSTOM), but due to its own development needs (creation of a discussion forum, insertion of the CV database, etc.), the UNDP Niger web server will ultimately host the website.

Regarding the participation of ReNSE members in international evaluation conferences, several institutions regularly facilitate the funding of such activities. For instance, the World Bank, the ADB and the Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie (AIF) funded the participation of four members in the last AfrEA conference held in June 2002 in Nairobi (Kenya). AfrEA itself invited one member to its 1999 conference in Nairobi. AIF also funded the participation of one member in the French Evaluation Society annual conference in 2000. Moreover, due to strengthened relationships with the CES and the Société Québécoise d’Evaluation, new initiatives are being explored, among them the participation of ReNSE members in their annual conferences and the publication of Nigerien evaluators' articles in their Journals.
Regarding training, building strategic alliances with partners willing to support training initiatives is a priority because of the strong demand by Nigerien evaluators. The French Cooperation Office in Niamey invited three ReNSE members to a one-week training in ‘M & E of Agricultural Projects’ held by an international expert in Niamey in November 2002 during his evaluation mission. A formal ReNSE meeting will be held with him at the end of his mission.

The ReNSE National Coordinator has identified and met contact persons at the UNDP Evaluation Office in New York, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, the Canadian Evaluation Association and Société Québécoise d’Evaluation in Ottawa to link any evaluation mission organized by these institutions in Niger to a formal ReNSE meeting with the mission participants. On a more sustainable level, the ReNSE Coordination Committee, along with a Scientific Committee composed of the University of Niamey, Niger National Public Administration School, and representatives from the administration and NGOs, developed the curriculum of a two-week training seminar to be held in Niamey and are currently seeking funds to support the project. The objective is that a seminar on advanced M & E techniques would be held for ReNSE members on a yearly basis.

- An important factor missing in the conceptual framework is ReNSE’s capacity to carry out activities. To date, ReNSE has organized 15 meetings and participated in the French Evaluation Society Conference and AfrEA Conferences. ReNSE members meet every two months and a discussion forum takes place. This forum can be thematic and provides working groups’ members with the opportunity to make presentations on M & E issues, share best practices and teach the M & E techniques they used to achieve their results. Members can also hold meetings for feedback on participation in international or national conferences. Some meetings were devoted to discussing ReNSE management issues.
In its early stage, meetings were held to adopt ReNSE objectives, discuss M&E norms and standards for Niger, elect the Coordination Committee and formulate the Action Plan (every two years), adopt each working groups' terms of reference, etc.

- It is important to enhance an enabling environment. In evaluation, a crucial aspect of an enabling environment is consonance between supply (M&E technical skills) and demand (M&E culture in government and agencies). Different international organizations (Segone, 1998) have discovered that the key bottleneck is not always technical capacity, but a weak evaluation culture. The World Bank (Picciotto, 1998) suggests that the fact that an enabling evaluation culture has been only incipient is a formidable obstacle to evaluation capacity development. Participants at the UNICEF workshop on Programme Orientation, Process and Guidance (UNICEF, 1997) recognize that a pro-evaluation culture would improve programme performance, enhance accountability, and serve as a basis for decision-making and programme modification. UNDP (UNDP, 1997) and the World Bank (World Bank, 1999) believe that the most fundamental challenge is the frequent lack of genuine demand within countries for evaluation and ownership of results. Creating technical capacities for evaluation makes little sense if undertaken in isolation from the essential processes of decision-making. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB, 1997) explains that the first challenge to developing evaluation capacity is to produce a genuine evaluation culture. Moreover, the main purpose of several national evaluation organizations, including ReNSE, is to strengthen the evaluation culture within their respective countries, and not just the evaluation technical capacity.
Lessons Learned

ReNSE has been active for four years and is currently the most active evaluation group in a developing country. Its membership increased from the initial 40 to more than 200 experts. During these four years of activities, a number of important lessons have been learned:

- Focus on technical issues and not on internal organizational issues. M & E specialists are more interested in capacity development than in internal organizational issues. ReNSE was able to organize itself during its first two meetings with the adoption of objectives and a Plan of Action, selection of themes to be discussed at future meetings, and the election of the Coordination Committee. From the third meeting onwards, the core themes presented and discussed were technical, and organizational issues have been kept to a minimum.

- Keep the structure as light as possible. ReNSE is based on the voluntary work of its members. For this reason, its structure has been kept to a minimum level. The secretariat was assured by UNICEF from 1999 to 2001 and by UNDP from 2001 to 2003.

- The Coordination Committee should have a central role. The Coordination Committee is extremely important in assuring ReNSE’s function and development. It proposes new strategies and activities, facilitates their discussion and adoption, monitors their implementation, and reports to the General Assembly.

- Be open and transparent. ReNSE is based on trust within the membership and credit among external institutions. To ensure a personal commitment to the network’s objectives and activities, every major decision has to be taken openly and transparently.

- Keep focused on the openly discussed and adopted objectives. Members are experts interested in M & E capacity development. To optimize the limited resources available and to keep interest high, the Coordination Committee ensures that ReNSE’s activities are relevant to the openly discussed and adopted objectives.
• Look for strategic alliances with similar institutions. ReNSE, being representative of different stakeholders, has the potential to advocate and mobilize strategic alliances in order to strengthen M&E within the country. The real value-added of ReNSE is its capacity to coordinate and facilitate synergies and potentials already existing within the country and abroad.

Experiences of the most long-standing networks in Africa — those in Kenya and Rwanda— mostly confirm the above analyses. In 2001, an extended discussion between leaders of national groups took place on lessons learned and there was a strong consensus that work on constitutions actually hindered the development of networks. Formal constitutions were generally too high an overhead to carry, especially during the first few years of a network. That ReNSE managed to carry that off is much to its credit, but its case must be regarded as exceptional. Indeed, their conclusion that paperwork must be kept to a minimum was strongly endorsed by other groups. The process of formulating constitutions arose out of an attempt to copy the form and structure of national associations in developed countries (which generally do have formal constitutions), rather than focusing on developing local solutions. The ‘Presidential’ leadership model for an association as adopted by developed country associations also caused some difficulties and was largely abandoned after a few false starts. The concept and model of a ‘Chairperson’ of a network was generally preferred.

Additional common factors were that most networks managed to continue without a funding line while under UNICEF leadership, but the transition to national leadership did result in a small budgetary requirement. Part of the ‘cost’ of national ownership is that networks must finance their own room rentals (rather than use UN premises for free), cover costs of tea and coffee, and pay small fees to trainers. Some groups have continued to use UN premises for meetings, where these were conveniently located. In some countries, UN premises provided a safe haven for the discussion of ideas that might have been considered contentious by national governments. In others, UN premises provided
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actual physical safety – meetings of the Burundi network took place while gunfire was being exchanged on the streets of Bujumbura. In both cases, the existence of a national evaluation network provided a much needed opportunity for intellectuals and specialists to meet and exchange ideas.

Conclusions

The establishment and evolution of groups of evaluators in Africa has been rapid and dramatic. Over a period of just five years, 16 national groups have come into existence, several with over 200 national members. These groups are effectively supported by a continental umbrella organization — AfrEA. The costs have been minimal. While impact on capacity development has not been formally assessed, demand for services has been high and continues to increase. International agencies, particularly UNICEF, adopted a lead role early on, but seem to be successfully transferring leadership to national entities and achieving sustainability (which is not always the same thing) in most cases. The AfrEA, for example, is now being run by the South African Evaluation Network, rather than by the UNICEF Regional M & E Officer.

Of the 16 national associations in Africa only two are still being led by UNICEF staff, although UNICEF staff (and in the case of ReNSE, UNDP staff) typically continue to play key supportive roles. During preparations for the 2002 AfrEA Conference, the number of UN organizations extending active support increased to about half a dozen, with a somewhat larger number of NGOs also playing key roles. It is expected that support for these initiatives will continue to grow and that it will do so from an increasing broad base.

Considering our case study, ReNSE has been able to organize itself in an efficient manner, accomplishing its meeting schedule and raising interest among partners. It has greatly benefited from the dynamism of its coordinators and its members, all voluntarily involved in ReNSE activities. To ensure that ReNSE continues to share M & E best practices and teach professionals, its Coordination Committees must maintain
ReNSE’s dynamism so that every meeting (presentations, teachings and debates) is of a high caliber. If not, the network’s raison d’être and the overall objective of strengthened national M & E capacity development will be jeopardized. Parallel to that, the interest of members and strategic partners that are financially and logistically supporting ReNSE’s development activities will shrink over time. Under these circumstances, the individual coordinating such an organization faces the ever-present challenge of initiating changes and motivating people, whose response is, so far, in the case of Niger, very encouraging and rewarding.

The experience of ReNSE is an important example of how to develop M & E capacities at the national level in a sustainable manner. In 2001 the Canadian mission of Universalia, funded by the World Bank, carried out a Diagnosis on the status of M & E in Niger. Thibault (2002), a member of the diagnostic team, stated that recent initiatives of the civil society in Niger in favour of M & E constitute a positive advancement in this discipline. The creation of ReNSE is, without a doubt, the most important event in this context. ReNSE is a positive forum that allows stakeholders with different perspectives to conduct a dialogue to find common strategies and share their professional experiences. In the final report of the Diagnostic (Universalia, 2001), Universalia states that ReNSE is growing very quickly. The network grew from the initial 40 members in 1999 to about 150 in 2001. Moreover, ReNSE’s activities are carried out based on the voluntary contributions of its members and without external financial contributions. The leadership of the network rotates to different members while its initial donor, UNICEF, has withdrawn from financing follow-up activities. ReNSE now has independence and autonomy, which encourages the dynamism and the initiative of its members.

It is hoped that the analysis of experiences and lessons learned provided in this article will facilitate the creation and development of new national M & E networks and will improve understanding of the rapidly spreading empowerment process.
References


Appendix

Websites Relevant to the Evaluation of Development Programmes and Projects

- American Evaluation Association http://www.eval.org/
- Asian Development Bank Online http://www.adb.org/evaluation
- Associazione Italiana de Valutazione http://www.valutazionetaliana.it/
- Canadian Evaluation Society http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/
- Centre for Programme Evaluation, University of Melbourne http://www.peu.unimelb.edu.au/
- European Evaluation Society http://www.europeanevaluation.org/
- Evaluators Institute http://www.evaluatorsinstitute.com/
- Evaluation Center of the Western Michigan University http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/
- Evaluation Cooperation Group http://www.ecgnet.org/
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN http://www.fao.org/peb/
To access the websites of national and regional evaluation networks, please visit the IOCE site at <http://www.ioce.net>.