



NEWS

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
MARCH/APRIL 2014 ISSUE

MONITORING & EVALUATION in the Public Service



VISION

A champion of public administration excellence in democratic governance in South Africa.

MISSION

To promote the constitutionally enshrined democratic principles and values of the Public Service by investigation, research, monitoring, evaluating, communicating and reporting on public administration.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Desk of the Editor	2
Contemporary M&E Developments in Oversight Institutions	3
Developments in Government: Developing a National Evaluation System in South Africa	6
South African monitoring & evaluation	10
The importance of evaluation for South African civil society	14
The Importance of Evaluation for South African Leadership	17
The international evaluation partnership initiative towards strengthened evaluation capacities	20

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FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR



Mr Humphrey Ramafoko
Editor: PSC News

Government introduced various measures to strengthen coordination and development of monitoring and evaluation in South Africa. Oversight institutions such as the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), the National Treasury (NT), and the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) were created to help government in its quest to evaluate performance and identify factors influencing accountability as well as fast-tracking service delivery in all tiers of government.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) on the other hand is responsible for establishing a high standard of service delivery, monitoring and good governance in the Public Service. To this end, the PSC has produced a first edition of the Public Service Barometer, which is an indicator-based assessment of the State of the Public Service against the nine values in section 195 of the Constitution.

In September 2013, as part of discussing emerging trends and dynamics in monitoring and evaluation, the PSC in partnership with South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) and the DPME hosted a successful fourth (4th) Biennial SAMEA conference. It is against this background that the focus of the eighth (8th) edition of the PSC News is on M&E, with particular focus on papers which were presented at the SAMEA conference.

We kick-start this edition by reflecting on contemporary M&E Developments in Oversight Institutions. In this article, a former Commissioner of the PSC, Mr Paul

Helepi, highlights the unique and challenging oversight roles played by the Chapter 9 and 10 institutions in South Africa.

The second article by Dr Sean Phillips, Director-General and Dr Ian Goldman, Head of Evaluation and Research at the DPME in the South African Presidency, trace some of the developments of the national evaluation system in South Africa. Similarly, Mr Ephraim Sogoni: Chairperson of Standing Committee on Appropriations (SCOA) touches on the importance of M&E systems and tools and its relationship with the parliamentary oversight function.

The South African Constitution is one of a few in the world that gives an explicit and justifiable commitment to the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights within available resources. In an attempt to highlight some of the principles and values vital for the realisation of human rights, sustainable development and an effective democracy, Mr Jay Kruuse: Director and Mr Abongile Sipondo: Head of the Advocacy Impact Programme at the Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) looks at the importance of evaluation for South African civil society.

In another article, Prof Alan Hirsch, of the Centre for Governance at the University of Cape Town, highlights the importance of evaluation for South African leadership. We also take a closer look at the international evaluation partnership initiative towards strengthened evaluation capacities. In this article, Dr Jim Rugh, Coordinator of the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)/ UNICEF EvalPartners highlights measures to facilitate the formation of a global partnership with the broad goal of raising the profile and importance of evaluation for evidence-based policies and programmes.

We hope that readers will find this edition of the PSC News useful and reader-friendly. On this note, we would like to encourage the M&E community and the Public Service to use PSC News to stimulate debate on issues pertaining to good governance in the Public Service.

Happy reading, till next time!

DEVELOPMENTS IN OVERSIGHT INSTITUTIONS



Mr Paul Helepi

Former PSC Provincial Commissioner in the Free State

The “oversight” institutions, also called “institutions supporting democracy”, created by the Constitution (Chapters 9 and 10) have a unique and challenging role to play. They all have specific mandates and powers, and therefore face different challenges, but it is safe to say that all of them are constantly looking for ways to make their roles more meaningful and make a bigger contribution to the welfare of society through fulfilling their mandates.

We live in a dynamic world and there are many developments in institutions such as the PSC. Since it is not possible to cover all of the developments, only the following three in relation to the PSC are highlighted:

- Increasing the use of our evaluations or the impact of the work of the PSC
- Responding to the specific needs of Parliament
- The specific focus of the work of the PSC (or the PSC's niche)

Mandate and Independence of the PSC

The PSC has a mandate to monitor and evaluate public administration against the nine values in section 195 of the Constitution. This gives the PSC a very wide mandate to evaluate and advise on a range of public administration issues, including ethical administration, effectiveness, equity, accountability and representivity. The PSC advises organs of state, and does this independently from government.

The Kader Asmal report on Institutions Supporting Democracy says independence is about “(the avoidance of) direct and indirect interference with the programme and decisions of the PSC, and not about the participation of the PSC in government activities”.

The PSC should, therefore, participate and be an activist Commission, that is, a Commission that actively pursues certain outcomes in public administration. In this regard, the PSC provides Parliament in particular and all the decision-makers with powers with regard to public administration in the Public Service generally, with information, technical analysis, proposals and advice to strengthen public administration.

Work of the PSC

In responding to its mandate the PSC has undertaken a variety of evaluations, including:

- Evaluations of the integrity system;
- HR good practice evaluations;
- Programme evaluations;
- Institutional assessments, using a specific M&E Tool developed by the PSC;
- Evaluation of the State of the Public Service against the nine values;
- Citizen focused evaluations; and
- Evaluations of service delivery and service delivery models.

Increasing the use of our evaluations or the impact of the work of the PSC

An evaluation of the work of the PSC and the Kader Asmal report on Institutions Supporting Democracy have found that the PSC produces a lot of good reports but that the impact of these reports, to effect real change in public administration, has been limited.

In response to this finding, the PSC embarked on a re-engineering exercise of all its processes and products. The aim was to improve the impact of the PSC's products by shifting the current weight of emphasis from evaluation to providing its clients with solutions to real-world public administration problems. This meant

shifting the weight from evaluation to the quality of the PSC's recommendations and advice.

In developing solutions to the problems pointed out by an evaluation as much attention, regarding both methodology and effort, must be given to the formulation of proposals and advice as to the initial evaluation. When developing solutions, the PSC's approach will be that-

- solutions should be developmental and not just enforce compliance with existing prescripts; and
- whilst compliance is the hygiene on which good administration is built, the appropriateness of the regulatory framework will also be considered. (A diagnosis of some of these "framework conditions" is contained in the National Development Plan (NDP).

Moving from evaluation to solution places a huge demand on the skills-base of the PSC, since solutions can address a variety of administrative practices, including planning, performance management, professionalising the Public Service, human resource practices and accountability frameworks. In fact, in many instances, it is not about evaluation, but about solving practical problems. A variety of analytical and innovation methodologies are needed for this.

It also places demands on how the PSC engages with departments, because solutions need to be developed in cooperation with line and central departments. The rigorousness of the work should convince departments of the workability and cost-effectiveness of the solution offered.

Responding to the specific needs of Parliament

Parliament decided in 2011 that –

- (a) the PSC should report on the implementation of Section 195(1) of the Constitution by the administration of all spheres of government, organs of state and public enterprises in South Africa every year; and
- (b) the report of the PSC should be inserted into the annual report of the entity that the PSC is reporting on every year. This will allow users of PSC reports to match the governance of their administration

with the performance of the administration for the same period of time. Over time, the style of reporting will allow greater comparability, monitoring, evaluation, and oversight of the progress any particular government entity makes in implementing Section 195(1) of the Constitution.

This decision of Parliament places a huge demand on the PSC to comprehensively define and clarify its standards with regard to each of the nine values governing public administration (section 195 of the Constitution), refine its indicators, and collect data that can convincingly show the progress that public entities are making with regard to their conformance to the nine values.

In its promotion of the values, the PSC will also have to indicate the direction of change in public administration for it to increasingly reflect the ideal represented by the values. This will require the PSC to become a centre of excellence with regard to administrative practice under each of the values. It will also have to house the data that forms the basis of its evaluations.

The specific focus of the work of the PSC

The NDP envisages a capable and developmental state.

The nature, character, and strength of its institutions is one of the main defining attributes of a developmental state. The strength of its institutions determines a country's capacity to formulate and implement a development agenda in a coherent and binding fashion. An institutional architecture that provides incentives for citizens and organisations (both public and private) to realise their capacities have accounted for developmental success. Conversely, institutions that create disincentives for citizens and organisations have resulted in developmental failure.

Another key feature of the developmental state is its organisational and technical capacity, specifically its human resource capacity. The way public servants are recruited into the Public Service and how their careers develop, is therefore specifically important.

The NDP contains many proposals about the administrative system interspersed through all the chapters. The implementation of most of these will require considerable change in the administrative system and culture to implement.

In this regard, if the PSC is to play a developmental role in public administration, it should take up some of the proposals and develop real solutions that take account of the various contexts of the different departments and will complement and strengthen the NDP.

A selection of such proposals is the following:

- Make the Public Service and local government careers of choice
- Professionalise the Public Service
- Improve interdepartmental coordination
- Strengthen delegation, accountability, and oversight
- Ensure procurement systems deliver value for money
- Mainstreaming citizen participation
- Complement traditional hierarchical accountability with a bottom-up approach where citizens hold public officials accountable for the level of service delivery
- Improving performance management
- Improving incentives

The PSC will, therefore, increasingly focus attention on the evaluation of such administrative determinants of performance, rather than, for instance, policy or programme design, which are many times the main focus of evaluation.

To undertake such evaluations will require unique methodologies, because the causal path from administrative practice to performance is complex. It is a huge challenge for a small organisation like the PSC, outside the hustle and bustle of day-to-day public administration, to make a significant impact. Indeed, this applies to any of the central institutions like the Department of Public Service and Administration, National Treasury or the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.

Our challenge is indeed to make evaluation meaningful and promote results.

“Custodian of Good Governance”



DEVELOPMENTS IN GOVERNMENT: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA



Dr Sean Phillips¹
Director-General at the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the South African Presidency



Dr Ian Goldmam²
Head of Evaluation and Research at the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the South African Presidency

During the 2000s some departments such as the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) and Public Service Commission (PSC) started undertaking evaluations, but this was sporadic with no national system or standards. The Government Wide-Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System document of 2007³ foresaw evaluation as one of three (3) major domains, but this work was not taken forward until the creation of the DPME in 2010⁴. Although most departments have M&E units, in practice the work that has been undertaken is primarily monitoring.

The DPME was created in 2010, with its initial mandate on the outcomes system. Later on Cabinet requested additional systems to be developed, on Front-Line Service Delivery Monitoring (FSDM), Management Performance Assessment, and evaluation in 2011. According to the 2011/12 Management Performance Assessments, in 2011 only 13% of departments were undertaking or planning to undertake evaluations.

The DPME conducted a survey in 2012 of national and provincial departments to understand how M&E is viewed (Goldman et al, 2013)⁵. In terms of culture-based barriers, more than half of the respondents (54%) indicated that problems are not treated as opportunities for learning and improvement, and

M&E is regarded as the job of the M&E unit rather than all managers (44%), M&E is seen as policing and controlling (39%) and M&E units are seen to have little influence. These all point to the challenge in using M&E as a strategic function to inform policy and decision-making.

In order to learn from the experience of similar countries undertaking evaluation, in 2011 a study tour was undertaken to Mexico, Colombia and the US, led by DPME, but also involving departments with evaluation experience including the PSC, Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Department of Social Development (DSD). The visit provided very valuable lessons on the establishment of a National Evaluation

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³ DPME (2007): "Policy Framework for the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System", Pretoria, Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.

⁴ Department of Performance and Monitoring (2010).

⁵ Goldman, I, Ntakumba, S and Jacob, C (2013): "Reflections on the South African Experience with Evaluation and the use of evaluative evidence to orient public policy formulation", paper for the UNDP Evaluation.

System (NES), and the participants proceeded to draft a National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF), which was adopted by Cabinet in November 2011⁶.

Some of the key elements of the NEPF are:

- A focus on implementation of the recommendations in evaluation reports, so that evaluations improve performance and accountability;
- Moving away from a punitive approach which would generate malicious compliance behaviour to one promoting wide ownership of the evaluation system, and demand-driven evaluations;
- Evaluations are made publically available unless there are security concerns;
- A recognition of the limited capacity in government and so starting initially on strategic priority programmes and policies to evaluate, linked to the priority outcomes. These strategic evaluations are expressed in a National Evaluation Plan (NEP) which is rolled on an annual basis, the plan is approved by Cabinet, and evaluation reports are fed back to Cabinet;
- The evaluations are primarily of programmes, with the first policy evaluations scheduled for 2014/15;
- Creating an Evaluation and Research Unit to provide core technical capacity in DPME to drive the system, and support all evaluations under the NEP. The Unit had 15 staff as at 1 December 2013;
- The evaluations are implemented as a partnership between the custodian department and DPME. DPME part-funds the evaluations (with an average of R750 000 per evaluation from 2014/15); and
- The definition of evaluation not only as a historic activity, but as potentially undertaken at all stages of the programme cycle, i.e. including diagnostic, design, implementation, economic and impact evaluations.

To ensure independence and so the credibility of the findings, evaluations are implemented as a partnership between the department(s) concerned and DPME. A Steering Committee makes decisions on the evaluation and external service providers undertake the evaluation. Therefore, in order to ensure quality, thirteen (13) guidelines and templates have been developed to provide minimum standards and there are peer reviewers (normally two (2)) per evaluation. An evaluation panel has been developed for procurement of service providers to conduct the evaluations and evaluation standards have been developed. A suite of

short training courses has been put in place, timed at the point in the evaluation cycle at which the outputs of the course are relevant, and so with a strong learning-by-doing focus. In addition, based on the standards, a quality assessment tool has been developed and the evaluations are quality assessed once completed. This set of tools makes up the NES.

Progress with evaluations

The first evaluation which piloted the system was on Early Childhood Development (ECD), which was completed in June 2012. The first six (6) monthly progress reports on implementation of this Improvement Plan have been received, showing progress in implementing the recommendations.

The first National Evaluation Plan with eight evaluations was approved by Cabinet in June 2012. Final reports have been approved on four of the evaluations, one on the reception year of schooling (Grade R), one on a Business Process Outsourcing Incentive Scheme, one on the Land Recapitalisation and Development Programme, and one on the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme. Presently, fifteen (15) evaluations for 2013/14 are underway or in procurement phase and another 15 for 2014/15 have just been approved by Cabinet. The full list of evaluations is in Annex 1.

As well as commissioning new evaluations, an audit has been taken to identify existing evaluations undertaken between 2006 and 2011, and these have been quality assessed. The total number of seventy (70) of the evaluations passed the minimum quality standards and the reports are available on an evaluation repository which has attracted huge interest, with 70 000 searches between 1 October and 30 November 2013. The repository can be accessed at <http://evaluations.dpme.gov.za/sites/EvaluationsHome/SitePages/Home.aspx>⁸.

Building demand for evaluation

To help change the culture and demand for M&E evidence, in November 2013, DPME piloted a three day course for Directors-General (DG) and Deputy Directors-General (DDG), focusing on the use of evidence for policy and implementation, including M&E evidence. In addition, intensive work is being undertaken with Parliament. DPME reports to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Appropriations (SCOA).

⁶ DPME (2011): "National Evaluation Policy Framework", Pretoria, Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.

⁷ <http://evaluations.dpme.gov.za/sites/EvaluationsHome/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

⁸ <http://evaluations.dpme.gov.za/sites/EvaluationsHome/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

The Study tours have been undertaken with SCOA to the US, Canada, Kenya and Uganda to strengthen the understanding of the Committee around M&E. DPME has done presentations on evaluation to the chairs of all portfolio committees, to parliamentary researchers, and to specific portfolio committees, to increase their awareness of how they can use evaluations in their oversight role. DPME is now undertaking an extensive programme with Members of Parliament (MPs) so they can use DPME's M&E information to support their oversight function.

From the NEP to evaluations across government

As well as working to promote a limited number of strategic evaluations, DPME is encouraging provinces and departments to develop provincial and departmental evaluation plans. Two provinces have now developed provincial evaluation plans (Gauteng and Western Cape) and four other provinces are working on provincial evaluation plans (Limpopo, North West, Mpumalanga and Free State). Three departments have now developed departmental evaluation plans which combine internal evaluations with those proposed for the NEP (Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Trade and Industry (dti) and Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR)). DPME is planning to progressively spend more time on supporting these provincial and departmental plans and the wider national evaluation system, which can in turn mean that fewer but more strategic evaluations can be conducted as part of the NEP.

Emerging challenges and responses

One of the challenges emerging is the very weak design of implementation programmes which makes evaluations difficult, but is also in itself a major limitation on programme performance. DPME issued a guideline in July 2013 on Planning Implementation Programmes, with requirements for diagnosis, theory of change, standard logframe, risk analysis etc. This has the potential to have a major effect in improving programme design. Arising

from this, another guideline will be developed on Design Evaluation, whereby M&E officials will review the design of new programmes to see that they are robust and likely to achieve their intended objectives. A course to support this planning process and design evaluation has been piloted in 2013.

Another challenge is that some senior managers are wary of evaluation and do not see it as an opportunity to improve the performance of their programmes. There are examples of gaming behaviour from some departments, including running evaluations in parallel. Departments are not yet planning ahead for evaluations, which is very important for impact evaluations in particular where it is important to plan at least three years ahead, so as to be able to compare results with/without the intervention.

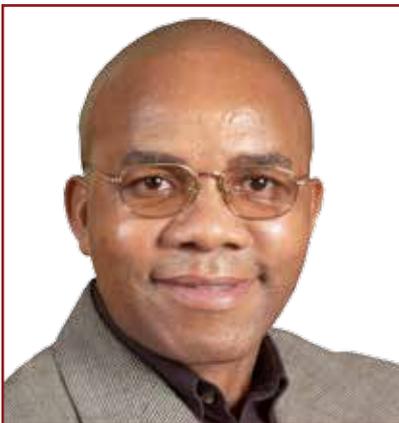
Conclusion

Interest in evaluation is growing with more departments involved, more provinces, and more types of evaluation. According to the Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) results, departments using or planning evaluations have risen from 13% in 2011, to 19% in 2012. Some thirty-seven (37) evaluations are underway or planned, comprising at least R40 billions of government expenditure. The development of a guideline for planning implementation programmes and for departments to do design evaluation will potentially have a major impact. The work with Parliament is also significant, and committees are starting to request departments to present evaluation results to them. However, challenges are emerging as the evaluation reports are finalised and raise challenges with some departments sensitive about the results. The next stage is to see how departments implement the recommendations of the evaluations. To practice what it preaches, DPME is also carrying out an evaluation of the impact of evaluations, to see what impact evaluations are having on programme performance.

All DPME Guidelines, templates, standards, competencies etc. are available at <http://www.thepresidency-dpme.gov.za/dpmewebsite/Page.aspx?Id=146>.

Annexure 1: Evaluations completed, underway or planned

NEP	Name of Evaluation	Department(s) responsible
2011/12	Diagnostic Review of Early Childhood Development (ECD)	DSD, DBE, Health
2012/13	Evaluation of Business Process Services Programme	dti
	Impact Evaluation of Grade R (reception year of schooling)	DBE
	Implementation Evaluation of Land Recapitalisation and Development (RECAP) programme	DRDLR
	Implementation Evaluation of Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP)	DRDLR
	Implementation Evaluation of Nutrition Programmes addressing under 5s	Health, DRDLR, DSD, DAFF
	Implementation Evaluation of Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG)	DHS
	Implementation Evaluation of Integrated Residential Development Programme (IRDP)	DHS
	Impact evaluation of National School Nutrition Programme (stopped and included again in 2014/15)	DBE
2013/14	Implementation Evaluation of Government Coordination System (clusters/MinMECs and Implementation Forums)	Presidency
	Implementation Evaluation of the Export Marketing Investment Assistance Incentive Programme (EMIA)	dti
	Evaluation of the Support Programme for Industrial Innovation (SPII)	dti
	Evaluation of Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP)	dti
	Evaluation of Military Veterans Economic Empowerment and Skills Transferability and Recognition Programme	Military Veterans
	Evaluation of Tax compliance cost of small businesses	SARS
	Evaluation of Land Restitution Programme	DRDLR
	Evaluation of Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme	DAFF
	Evaluation of Advanced Manufacturing Technology Strategy (AMTS)	DST
	Evaluation of Community Work Programme (CWP)	DCOG
	Evaluation of Provision of State Subsidised Housing (Assets)	DHS
	Evaluation of Access to the City	DHS
	Evaluation of Upgrading of informal Settlement	DHS
	Evaluation of Impact Evaluation of the Outcomes Approach	DPME
	An Impact Assessment (quantitative) of the Micro Agricultural Financial Institution of South Africa (MAFISA)	DAFF
2014/15	Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Environmental Governance in the Mining Sector (EEGM)	DEA
	Design Evaluation of the Policy on Community Education and Training Colleges (PCETC)	DHET
	Impact Evaluation of the Social Housing Programme (SHP)	DHS
	Evaluation of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy (IKSP)	DST
	Diagnostic Evaluation/Programme Audit for Violence Against Women and Children (AVAWC)	DSD
	Diagnostic Review of Coordination of the Social Sector Expanded Public Works Programme	DSD
	Economic Evaluation of the Incremental Investment into the SAPS Forensic Services (SAPS)	SAPS
	Impact evaluation of Land Restitution Programme	DRDLR
	Impact Evaluation of the Ilima Letsema Programme/Irrigation Schemes	DAFF/DRDLR
	Impact evaluation of MAFISA	DAFF
	Policy Evaluation of Small Farmer Support	DAFF/DRDLR
	Evaluation of the Funza-Lushaka Bursary Scheme	DBE
	Implementation evaluation of the Management Performance Assessment Tool	DPME
	Impact/implementation evaluation of the departmental strategic planning and APP system	DPME
	Impact evaluation of National School Nutrition Programme	DBE



Mr Ephraim Sogoni

Chairperson of Standing Committee on Appropriations

In 2009, the South African Government adopted an outcome based approach⁹. The Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) was created to amongst others:

- facilitate outcomes;
- carry out institutional performance monitoring; and
- to carry out monitoring of frontline service delivery¹⁰.

The aim of this approach was to increase strategic focus in government by getting different departments and spheres of government to work together to achieve the performance outcomes as well as emphasis on the value of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in achieving service delivery¹¹. This was in addition to the already existing constitutional institutions such as the Public Service Commission (PSC), Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA), National Treasury (NT) and Legislatures. The M&E approach is a relatively new practice, which tends to be informed by varied ideologies and concepts¹². Therefore, it is always imperative to ensure that the end users of the M&E information have a broader understanding of these concepts.

The importance of M&E Systems in the Parliamentary Oversight process-SA

The M&E System - "*refers to all the structures that are put in place to ensure the effective discharge of M&E within an organisation*"¹³. The M&E information that generates and enriches public awareness on government performance outcomes is generated by M&E systems. It is always vital to understand such distinction to ensure that systems are effectively designed and implemented to provide accurate and reliable evidence. Moreover, this is especially important in the context of the National Development Plan and other government priorities. The evidence-based public discourse prompted by M&E information helps in inculcating a culture of informed and responsible citizenry. This ensures improved citizens' inputs and submissions to Parliamentary Committees, thus enhancing Parliament's scrutiny and oversight.

M&E tools and its relationship with parliamentary oversight function.

The introduction of M&E tools and M&E or its policy frameworks brings more policy certainty in the South African M&E terrain. A number of performance and evaluation tools and mechanisms have been developed and introduced. These include the following MPAT, which sought to inform government and Parliament about the status of management practice across government¹⁴, Municipal Assessment Tool (MAT) which sought to inform government and Parliament about the management status of local government¹⁵, the Development Indicators which employ quantitative measures which enable Parliament to track progress in the policy implementation, the NEPF and NEP which seeks to provide credible and useful information to answer specific question to guide decision making in Parliament¹⁶, the FSDM which affords citizens an opportunity to express their views around the service delivery. This compliments the work of Parliamentary Committees where Parliament through its

⁹ Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (2010).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Basic Concepts in Monitoring and Evaluation: Public Service Commission, South Africa. 2008.

¹³ Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2001) *the practice of social research*: Cape Town, Oxford University Press.

¹⁴ Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (2011).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Committees assesses the progress on service delivery (Parliamentary oversight).

Parliament uses Taking Parliament To the People (TPTP) and People's Assembly to encourage public participation and involvement. This is the programme where Parliament through National Council of Provinces (NCOP) and National Assembly engage directly with citizens on issues related to service delivery. So, all these public participation initiatives combined provide comprehensive support for Parliament to conduct effective oversight. Furthermore, M&E are at the center of sound governance arrangements. They are necessary for the achievement of evidence-based policy making process, budget decisions, management, and accountability. However, according to the World Bank "there is no "best" model of what a government M&E system should look like but it much depends on which of the several potential uses of M&E information constitute the main reasons for building such a system"¹⁷.

In the context of the developed and introducing M&E mechanisms in South Africa to enhance oversight, the following Big Questions should be asked:

- Whether Parliament has adequate capacity to analyse the M&E results for meaningful decision making?
- Whether Parliament is able to effectively use the M&E results to enhance its oversight?
- And whether Parliament has adequate time to analyse this information and begin to shape it the way it's required for effective oversight?
- Whether provincial legislatures committees do take serious the usage of M&E results to strengthen their oversight given that most policies are implemented at that level?

Moreover, initiatives such as integrated M&E human capacity development and M&E learning networks were established to ensure capacity and awareness about M&E process and as capacity building mechanism. The Committee's view is that M&E should be institutionalised as a culture to ensure that every government official monitors and evaluates his or her work. The Committee

views M&E as a necessary instrument for government to identify correct interventions. Furthermore, the Committee's view is that departments need to be frank about their weaknesses for correct interventions to be identified. That will allow Parliament to make accurate recommendations leading to corrective actions (plan of actions).

After its inception, the DPME was assigned to the Committee as an additional responsibility for oversight. This arrangement allows the Committee to link both budget expenditure and performance information during oversight. The Committee has been inviting the PSC to give submissions around key policy priorities prior to the departments' hearings. This process assists the Committee to identify policy gaps in government and strengthens engagements. When the M&E system is well designed and implemented, it provides wealthy information on the performance and impact¹⁸. In the past, departments used to commission evaluation studies in a lesser structured manner even though government-wide monitoring and evaluation has been part of the system prior the NEPF. Furthermore, M&E is of great important in contributing towards effective decision-making process especially since Parliament is a final arbiter for policy-making process, accountability and public engagement through its committees and its two Houses (NA and NCOP). Section 55(2) of the Constitution requires Parliament to hold the executive accountable and maintain oversight¹⁹. In order for Parliament to achieve these Constitutional imperatives, there is a need for accurate and reliable information at its disposal. The combinations of reports from different constitutional agencies are used to ensure effective oversight. It is always important for such reports to be tabled before Parliament as early as possible in order for Parliament to act meaningfully.

International lessons: Canada, United State of American, Uganda and Kenya

During 2012 and 2013, the Committee undertook different study tours on M&E systems to the above mentioned four countries where some lessons were learned:

¹⁷ Mackay, K (2007) *how to build M&E systems to support better government: Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank.*

¹⁸ Jisting, A (2013) *the use of evaluation results government: what works, what doesn't and what can be improved? Johannesburg, South Africa.*

¹⁹ *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996).*

◦ Canadian M&E:

In Canada, the Federal government and provincial governments have separate M&E systems²⁰, unlike in South Africa where a national department was established to provide overarching policy certainty in the M&E terrain. The standardisation of M&E policies, frameworks and systems bring policy certainty, alignment and avoids unnecessary duplications. In Canada, programmes get evaluated on a five year basis meanwhile using other monitoring tools during the short-medium term to assess progress and the achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated resources²¹.

In Canada, the Treasury Board is the custodian of the performance M&E in the Federal government²². The Board also prescribes Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) and an instrument called Programme Alignment Architecture (PAA)²³. The PAA provides members of Parliament with information to understand government programmes and performance. This has proved to have enhanced oversight process as more members begin to understand government performance. Of note is that, in Canada it is not compulsory for provincial departments to develop PAAs since they have their own jurisdiction as per their Constitution. This means that there is no integrated overarching M&E policy framework between national and provincial government in Canada.

Canada does not use participatory evaluation models as a traditional method but there are community surveys which are done to source data with regards to performance information.

◦ Canadian lessons for South Africa:

- South African Parliament should create necessary awareness about the implementation of M&E reports produced by different agencies to enhance oversight.
- Needs to use M&E systems to ensure proper alignment between predetermined objectives, proper planning and budgeting process. This will ensure that money is being spent for its intended purpose;
- South African government needs to use

M&E systems to identify challenges faced by ordinary citizens instead of relying on reports from officials;

- South African government needs to first ensure that adequate M&E capacity is created and all departments understands the M&E concept before introducing any M&E legislation framework; and
- Canadian government incentivises departments which do not often change their programmes to allow for historical trends to be identified (i.e. 3 year trends).

◦ United State of America M&E:

Congressional Parliament has managed to build and consolidate stronger institutions to support Congress to evaluate and monitor government programmes. These include Government Accountability Office, Congressional Budget Office, Support staff and Inspector-Generals but it's still difficult to enforce the implementation of its recommendations. For instance there is a well co-ordinated approach to evaluate performance of programmes in the US i.e. Government Accountability Office, Congressional Budget Office, Committee Research Support and Inspector-Generals have an integrated approach where these institutions share performance information amongst each other (there is no silo approach).

In the US, members of Parliament can request the Government Accountability Office to conduct a performance audit in any government department. Whilst in SA the tradition is that AGSA normally initiates the audit processes at the end of each financial year.

◦ United State of American Lessons for South Africa:

- To improve oversight Congressional Parliament receives a report called High Risk Series on a bi-annual basis which highlights all major issues such as high risk of waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement of funds from GAO;
- World Bank plays a very critical role in supporting the development of M&E systems across all democracies²⁴. South African Parliament can consider using World Bank

²⁰ Standing Committee on Appropriations (2012) Committee Report on study tour to the US and Canada. Parliament: South Africa.

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Mackay, K (2007) how to build M&E systems to support better government: Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank.

to build member's capacity around M&E to bolster oversight. This can be recommended for any other institutions where M&E capacity is needed;

- Congressional Parliament work very close with M&E institutions and research commissions in order to make use of their empirical evidence as opposed to relying on department's reports. This enriches the interaction between the government department and the Committees of Parliament;
- In the US, media is regarded as part of the M&E mechanism. The US uses media to exposed non performance in government; and
- To understand the purposes and uses of M&E in the public sector some lessons can be drawn from the NGO sector like in the US.

◦ Ugandan lessons for South Africa:

In Uganda, the Committee observed the appreciation of M&E as the crucial ingredient for successful parliamentary oversight²⁵.

Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) oversees the coordination and implementation of various M&E initiatives across government. Some lessons were learned:

- There is a monitoring database for all projects in the country; which tracks project procurement, implementation timelines, budgets, contract management and key outputs. The database strengthens Parliamentary oversight role because without reliable information oversight is weakened;
- There is a National Integrated M&E System

(NIMES) to ensure that sound evidence based data and information is available to inform decision making in the national policy frameworks and effective use of public resources, it enhances M&E capacity across government;

- There is a unique community-based accountability programme known as *Baraza* which is conducted twice a year across 68 districts. This initiative provides an opportunity for the communities to hold government leaders accountable; and
- The OPM in produces the Government Half-Annual Report and Annual Performance Reports and sectoral evaluations; for Parliament.

◦ Kenyan lessons for South Africa:-

In Kenya, the Committee observed the following M&E lessons for successful Parliamentary Oversight:-

The M&E is spearheaded by the M&E Directorate (MED).

Additional to the NIMES and one of Kenya's key M&E initiatives is the electronic reporting and on-line publication of all information on projects through the Electronic Project Monitoring Information System (e-ProMIS). The e-ProMIS enables the tracking of progress on implementation of various activities based on the funding allocated to determine funding levels for the subsequent financial year.

Kenya also has Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS), which monitors and track the flow of public resources by determining how much of the originally allocated resources reached the targeted.

²⁵ Standing Committee on Appropriations (2013) Committee Report on study tour to Uganda and Kenya, Parliament: South Africa.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION FOR SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY



Mr Jay Kruise²⁶
Director of the Public Service
Accountability Monitor (PSAM)



Mr Abongile Sipondo
Head of the Advocacy Impact
Programme at PSAM

An active civil society is one of the cornerstones of any healthy democracy. Where civil society is able to speak out in ways that ensure that government and other key decision-makers act more accountably, it promotes good governance, greater transparency and importantly greater public trust in the decisions and actions of public office bearers. The advancement of such principles and values are vital ingredients in any endeavours concerned with the progressive realisation of human rights, sustainable development and more effective democracy.

The South African Constitution is one of a few in the world that gives explicit and justiciable commitment to the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights within available resources. Despite this fact and that South Africa is the continent's largest economy, according to the World Bank, the country remains one of the most unequal societies in the world, with a gini index of 63.1.

Whilst South Africa has excellent laws to promote accountability especially around the use of public resources, the AGSA has annually detailed at great length (as required by the Public Audit Act) that there continues to be widespread non-compliance with public finance management laws and that this is not restricted to any one arm or tier of government. Corruption is endemic in the country and the National Development Plan 2030 initiated by the National Planning Commission (NPC) within the Presidency has noted the significant threat that corruption poses to South Africa's development especially in the manner in which it undermines good governance. The National

Development Plan rightly recognises that overcoming corruption requires "political will, sound institutions, a solid legal foundation, and an active citizenry that holds public officials accountable"²⁷.

Unfortunately, efforts by organised civil society to truly hold public officials accountable have failed to produce the kind of compelling results hoped for, especially in the last 5 years. The same can also be said for the efforts introduced by government and a business, with interventions largely of a sporadic nature and corrective action limited or of little or no deterrent effect. The situation is compounded further by fragmented and often ineffective monitoring and evaluation by officials, Parliamentary Oversight bodies, and civil society. This is especially evident at the provincial and local levels of government across large areas of South Africa²⁸. This state of play has resulted in an increased and unsustainable burden being placed upon constitutional oversight bodies such as the Public Protector, South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and AGSA who are often constrained by budget resources²⁹.

²⁶ Jay Kruise is the Director of the Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) which is based at Rhodes University whilst Abongile Sipondo is the Head of the Advocacy Impact Programme at PSAM. For more information please visit www.psam.org.za.

²⁷ National Development Plan 2030, Chapter 14, p.446.

²⁸ See for instance PSAM research which is available at www.psam.org.za and which draws upon the findings of the Auditor General in different departments in the Eastern Cape.

²⁹ It has also led to an increased tendency to litigate on matters placing further strain on an already heavily burdened judiciary.

Why monitoring and evaluation is important for civil society?

For government and civil society to meaningfully address the complexity and extent of the countries challenges (especially surrounding unemployment, good governance and sustainable development) require considerable improvements to their M&E capacities in ways that ensure grounded and well thought out and intentioned enhancements to their decision making and leadership responsibilities. This of course needs to occur in a context where both government and civil society have experienced significant budget constraints, especially since 2008 following the economic recession, which has constrained their ability to expand the reach and impact of their policy objectives.

Reduced funding of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)³⁰ has necessitated that both donors and grant recipients become far better equipped at understanding what type of advocacy is producing impact and why. This environment has required that CSOs interrogate more regularly and closely their operating environment, mandates, and the various assumptions underpinning their advocacy and policy interventions. This reality and the often rapid transformation of political landscapes (as is occurring in South Africa) has necessitated that CSOs concerned with state service delivery, governance and accountability become far more skilled at revising or transforming their intervention strategies so as to maximise the potential for impact to be achieved. As Teles and Schmitt³¹ have emphasised, CSOs should have the ability to read the shifting environment of politics for subtle signals of change, to understand the opposition, and to adapt deftly. Effective advocacy interventions are characterised not by their ability to proceed along a predefined track, but by their capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. In the PSAMs experience, a failure to regularly detail and act upon the results and lessons emanating from routine

monitoring and evaluation of advocacy interventions will invariably result in a CSO becoming less relevant and influential which in turn tends to erode its efforts to attract and retain the kind of funding to enable its work to be continued, let alone expanded upon.

CSOs that focus their efforts on enhancing state service delivery, governance and accountability often face additional challenges surrounding impact indicators in that it is often extremely difficult to directly attribute change to their specific advocacy interventions. As Alnoor and Rangan³² have noted, "impacts are likely to be affected by multiple factors and actors, and that attribution is much less likely in complex programs such as those targeting civil and human rights".

All too often civil society advocacy work in this area requires long-term commitment and there are rarely easy or quick wins. The environment is often non-linear and change is the result of a complicated interplay of events, people and conditions present in a given situation³³. Civil society needs a profound familiarity of and a feel for the politics of the issues, strong networks of trust among the key players, and a sense for the right time horizon against which to measure accomplishments. They must learn to recognise the complex, foggy chains of causality in politics³⁴.

It is therefore important for civil society to routinely reflect upon its strategic capacity to read the shifting environment of politics for subtle signals of change and opportunity, and to understand the opposition and its deftness in devising and executing adaptations. It should not stick with 'business-as-usual'. If a civil society organisation is not clear about the changes it aims to make, then it will be extremely difficult to measure impact. The objectives need to be focused and the organisation needs to think through the steps needed to achieve change over time, and also to think through milestones³⁵.

³⁰ The authors concur with the definition of civil society as articulated in Review of the State of Civil Society Organisations in South Africa, February 2008, which was produced by CASE, Planact and Afrika Skills Development for the National Development Agency and which regards civil society as possessing the following criteria: For public benefit; having a common purpose, usually (but not exclusively) around service delivery, social watch, advocacy, research or education; private (occupying the space outside of the state or market); self-governing; and does not distribute profit. The report in question is accessible at http://www.nda.org.za/docs/___CaseReport.pdf.

³¹ Teles, S. & Schmit, M., 2011, "The Elusive Craft of Evaluating Advocacy", http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_elusive_craft_of_evaluating_advocacy/.

³² Alnoor, E. & Rangan, K.V., 2010. "The Limits of Nonprofit Impact. A Contingency Framework for Measuring Social Performance." Cambridge: Social Enterprise Initiative/Harvard Business School.

³³ Smith, J.A. 2004. "Evaluating Local Economic Development Policies: Theory and Practice." In *Evaluating Local Economic and Employment Development: How to Assess What Works Among Programmes and Policies* edited by Alistair Nolan and Ging Wong. Pp. 287-332. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

³⁴ Teles, S. & Schmit, M., 2011, "The Elusive Craft of Evaluating Advocacy", http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_elusive_craft_of_evaluating_advocacy/.

³⁵ Smith, J.A. 2004. "Evaluating Local Economic Development Policies: Theory and Practice." In *Evaluating Local Economic and Employment Development: How to Assess What Works Among Programmes and Policies* edited by Alistair Nolan and Ging Wong. Pp. 287-332. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

A selection of monitoring and evaluation lessons learnt by PSAM³⁶.

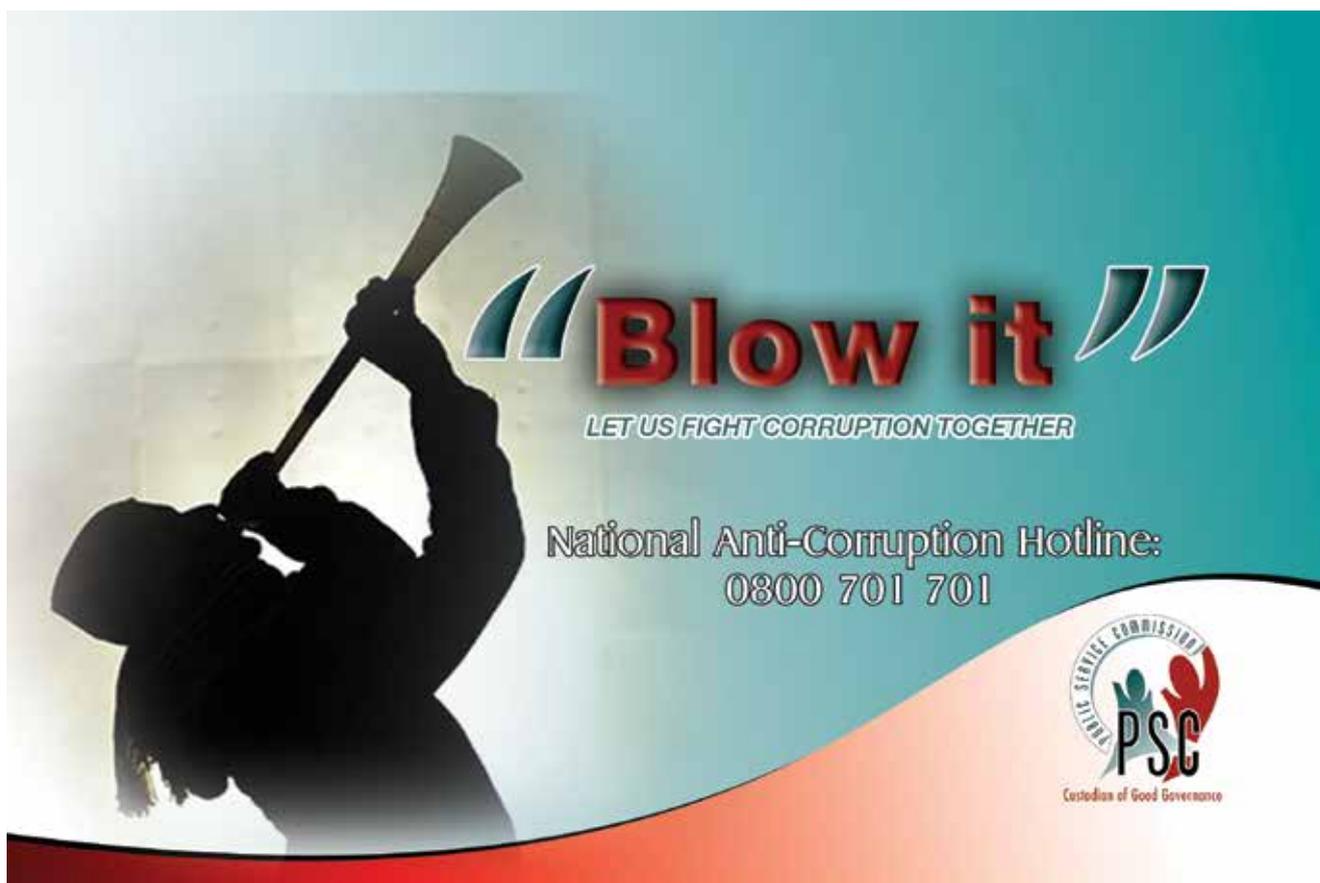
Successful advocacy is a result of work at multiple levels, across tiers of government, at various community levels, via multiple civil society networks, media platforms, and via social movements. Grassroots and high level strategies should intersect. Moreover, successful advocacy often involves massive amounts of work, some of which results in wastage. Often there is no “best practice”. This emphasises a point made above that a linear model of measuring change is therefore an oversimplification; there is a complex relationship between project inputs, outputs and impact. “It is through understanding the greater setting in which civil society works that it can completely understand what types of intervention work under which circumstances”³⁷.

Often advocacy success on one issue has positive knock-on effects elsewhere and therefore it is important to

harness these opportunities and promote collaboration. Incorporating other dimensions of success, such as gains in the strength of grassroots organisations or increased opportunities for civil society to get involved in future decision making, allows a more complete analysis and understanding of a campaign’s effectiveness and potential for long-term impact³⁸.

CSOs need to dedicate time on a regular basis to allow for collective organisational learning to occur; where advocacy strategies, assumptions and interventions are reflected upon in ways that will ensure that they produce maximum impact and also promote knowledge creation.

To conclude, in the hands of civil society, improved monitoring and evaluation practices enable change, improvement and enhanced accountability, both internally and externally.



³⁶ The PSAM consists of three programme areas, a Monitoring and Advocacy Programme whose work is primarily focused on the Eastern Cape, a Regional Learning Programme which provides training and in-country support to groups across Southern Africa and thirdly an Advocacy Impact Programme which is primarily concerned with learning from the impact and effectiveness of social accountability advocacy in sub-Saharan Africa

³⁷ Smith, J.A. 2004. “Evaluating Local Economic Development Policies: Theory and Practice.” In *Evaluating Local Economic and Employment Development: How to Assess What Works Among Programmes and Policies* edited by Alistair Nolan and Ging Wong. Pp. 287-332. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

³⁸ Chapman, J. and Warneyo, A. (2001) *Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: A Scoping Study*. ActionAid. London.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION FOR SOUTH AFRICAN LEADERSHIP



Prof Alan Hirsch

Centre for Governance at the University of Cape Town

It is no secret that South Africa has a problem when it comes to delivery in some institutions and regions. This is not common to all of our institutions—all countries have some implementation problems.

But let us accept that some institutions are riddled with political complexities or administrative or technical weaknesses, or some or all of those. Sometimes these weaknesses are caused by poor planning or accidental developments. At other times they are due to unwelcome interference of one kind or another.

As senior officials, how should we identify the nature of problems in delivery and how do we address them?

We need to conduct our activities within a framework that draws attention to problems in design or implementation.

Evidence-based policy making is a suitable form of discipline:

- Firstly it says: let us be sure that when we implement a plan we know what it is meant to achieve and how to measure it;
- And then it says let us make sure that in the implementation of the programme we have the systems in place that will allow us to measure performance and pinpoint problems; and
- When monitoring and evaluations are done they are essentially technical exercises, but they can help to address all kinds of problems, technical and otherwise.

The advantage of having institutionalised systems of evidence based policy making is that officials do not need to engage overtly politically—you have technical systems that will reveal problems. So, evaluation systems can become a way of protecting institutions from decay or abuse, a kind of insurance policy or safety shield and inappropriate allocation of resources.

What is Evaluation for?

1. Improving performance (evaluation for learning): this aims to provide feedback to programme managers. Questions could be: was this the right intervention for the stated objective (relevance, fit for purpose), was it the right mix of inputs, outputs, was it the most efficient and effective way to achieve the objective?
2. Evaluation for improving accountability: where is public spending going? Is this spending making a difference? Is it providing value for money?
3. Evaluation for generating knowledge (for research): increasing knowledge about what works and what does not with regards to a public policy, or programme, which allows governments to build an evidence base for future policy development.
4. Decision-making – policy-makers, planners and finance departments need to be able to judge the merit or worth of an intervention. Is the intervention (be it a policy, plan, programme, or project) successful - is it meeting its goals and objectives? Is it impacting on the lives of the intended beneficiaries? Is the intervention impacting differentially on different sectors of the population? Are there unintended consequences? Is it worth expanding it or closing it?
5. In addition, if the evaluation shows that the programme or policy is not formulated correctly to achieve the desired objectives, a good evaluation report should lead to a change in policy.

It is very important that these technical systems are strongly planted in the institutional fabric of the institution.

Why is it important for leaders to understand evaluations?

Leaders, both senior officials and members of the executive, need to ensure that good evaluations are regularly conducted, that the evaluations are well-designed for the task concerned and they should be able to interpret the results of the evaluations.

Leaders should know how to ensure that the results of the evaluations are acted upon—they should have a sense of how to establish if recommendations have been acted upon. Moreover, they should be able to assess whether the actions to reform the policy or programme have been effective.

In short, leaders in government (or in the private sector or NGOs) should be educated consumers and users of information.

What do leaders need to know about evaluations? They should know about the different types of evaluations—design/formative, on-going/process/mid-term, summative.

They should have some knowledge of the different evaluation methodologies (use of administrative data, statistical surveys, sample surveys, randomised controlled trials, in-depth interviews, focus groups etc). And leaders should know how best to measure effectiveness, efficiency and outcomes, not just outputs.

Ideally, senior officials and members of the executive should know more or less how to conduct evaluations, but they also need to make sure that the evaluations have the impact they should.

What they do have to know is how to ensure that the operational staff and the key stakeholders will take the findings on board, how to ensure that they will formulate recommendations in a constructive way, and how to resist obstruction from parties that are attached to the status quo—evaluations can be a good way of undoing the capture of government programmes.

In conclusion, evaluations are very valuable management tools, but, they are not only technical tools. Well-used

evaluations are effective political tools too—they can help to engage with issues that senior officials might otherwise be afraid to confront head-on.

Forms of Evaluation as set out in the National Policy Evaluation Framework

Diagnostic Evaluation

This is preparatory research (often called ex-ante evaluation) to ascertain the current situation prior to an intervention and to inform intervention design. It identifies what is already known about the problem at hand, the problems and opportunities to be addressed, causes and consequence, including those that the intervention is unlikely to deliver; and the likely effectiveness of different policy options. This enables the drawing up of the theory of change before the intervention is designed.

Timing: At key stages prior to design or planning

Design evaluation

Used to analyse the theory of change, inner logic and consistency of the programme, either before a programme starts, or during implementation to see whether the theory of change appears to be working. This is quick to do and uses only secondary information and should be used for all new programmes. It also assesses the quality of the indicators and the assumptions.

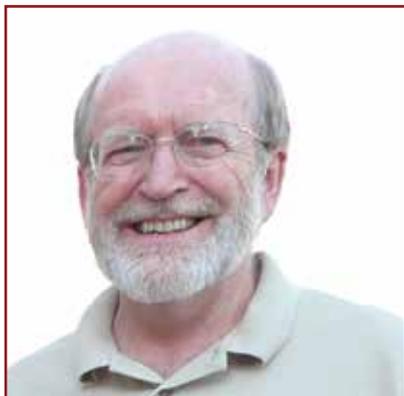
Timing: After an intervention has been designed, in first year, and possibly later

Implementation evaluation

Aims to evaluate whether an intervention's operational mechanisms support achievement of the objectives or not and understand why. Looks at activities, outputs, and outcomes, use of resources and the causal links. It builds on existing monitoring systems, and is applied during programme operation to improve the efficiency and efficacy of operational processes. It also assesses the quality of the indicators and assumptions. This can be rapid, primarily using secondary data, or in-depth with extensive field work.

Timing: Once or several times during the intervention implemented early, impact checked at key stages e.g. 3/5 years

THE INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE TOWARDS STRENGTHENED EVALUATION CAPACITIES



Dr Jim Rugh

Coordinator of International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) / UNICEF EvalPartners Initiative at the EvalPartners

The launching of EvalPartners and its first two years of activities

During the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) conference in Accra, January 2012, the Board of IOCE met with Marco Segone of UNICEF's Evaluation Office and Riitta Oksanen of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. They agreed that the time had come for a more proactive campaign to strengthen the capacities of Civil Society, in particular Voluntary Organisations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs), not only to enable their members to produce quality evaluations, but to work collaboratively to address the enabling environment for evaluation. In other words, to facilitate the formation of a global partnership with an over-all broad goal of raising the profile and importance of evaluation for evidence-based policies and programs.

EvalPartners made remarkable progress during its first two years of existence. Its initial activity was to produce an updated mapping of VOPEs around the world. That mapping exercise brought to light the remarkable growth of professional evaluation organisations around the world. The number of national VOPEs grew from

7 in 1994 to more than 104 verified VOPEs in 92 countries by late 2013, with aggregate membership totals of over 37,000 individuals³⁹. And many of them are evolving from informal networks to formally organised professional associations. This mapping exercise provided a clearer picture of the capacity of the evaluation community and its interest in exchanging country-driven solutions, ideas and experience to support capacity development in evaluation.

The first major international event organised by EvalPartners was the International Forum on Civil Societies Evaluation Capacities, held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in December 2012. There were 82 participants from 42 countries, representing national and regional VOPEs as well as governments and many international development agencies. Highlights of the Forum included the signing of the Chiang Mai Declaration and the formation of key task forces. See <http://mymande.org/evalpartners/forum> for additional information.

The International Forum identified the following priority areas for future work:

- Enabling Environment;
- Institutional Strengthening;
- Equity and Gender;
- Knowledge Management; and
- Peer-to-Peer partnerships.

Task Forces were created for each priority areas (<http://mymande.org/evalpartners/taskforces>)

Many of the leaders of EvalPartners met again in Kathmandu, Nepal, in February 2013, during the 2nd Conclave organised by the Community of Evaluators (CoE) of South Asia. The next face-to-face meeting was in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in late September-early October, during the 3rd National Evaluation Capacities conference

³⁹ Verified VOPEs are those that have responded to the IOCE survey. IOCE maintains a database of VOPEs on its www.ioce.net website, including an interactive world map showing the locations of and contact information for national and regional VOPEs. All together IOCE has identified 158 VOPEs in 124 countries, though some of them have not responded to the IOCE survey questionnaire.

co-organised by UNDP, the Brazilian Ministry of Social Development, and EvalPartners. For a report see <http://www.nec2013.org/downloads/NEC-2013-summary.pdf>.

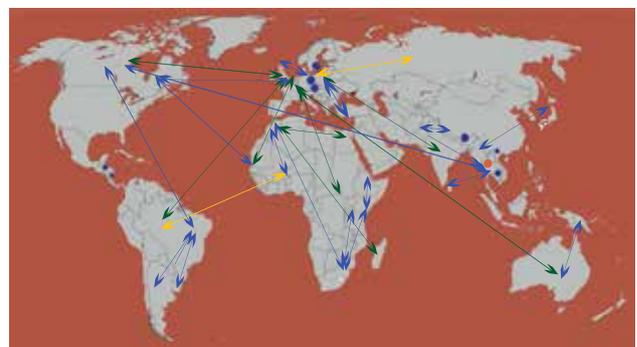
Certainly such face-to-face meetings offer opportunities for decision-making and progress. However, given the geographic diversity of the participants in EvalPartners, most of the progress is being conducted via virtual communications. And most of that progress is being led by the various Taskforces, as described below.

- The **Enabling Environment Taskforce:** Thirty-four major organisations, including all the major/regional VOPEs, multilateral organisations such as UNEG, UNICEF, UNWomen, UNDP, African Development Bank, as well as donor countries (OECD/DAC EvalNet TF on NECD, Finland, Spain and USAID) and other major stakeholders, such as the Rockefeller Foundation, have joined the initiative⁴⁰. This wide and diverse partnership is working together to advocate for an environment that enables enhanced use of evaluation at international, regional and national levels. An EvalPartners' Advocacy strategy to strengthen enabling environments for evaluation was developed during a workshop in New York City in January 2013. The Advocacy strategy includes declaring 2015 as International Year of Evaluation (EvalYear)⁴¹ (see more below), as well as developing a toolkit for VOPEs to develop their own advocacy strategies. Indirect impact has also taken place on the enabling environment in which EvalPartners has been the vehicle for discussions with regional Parliamentary structures. For example, EvalPartners has been supportive of the creation of the South Asia Parliamentary Forum on Development Evaluation and for advocacy on evaluation's place in Democracy in the European Space in a recent Parliamentary Hearing at the European Parliament.
- In collaboration with the South Asian Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation, a consultant, Barbara Rosenstein, was asked to conduct a mapping of the status of NEP. Out of the 112

countries from which she obtained information, 23 have written, legislated evaluation policies. Of the remaining countries, 90 have no policy, but 21 of them are developing national policies, and 32 conduct evaluations routinely without a NEP.

- The **Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Taskforce** launched a call for proposals for in March for its first round of small-grant funding. After a thorough review process, 25 proposals were approved for \$5,000 grants each. Encouraging and significant progress is being made by these projects, involving partnerships among 32 national and 6 regional VOPE networks. South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) was part of three P2P partnerships, with VOPEs in Kenya, Uganda and Morocco.

Subsequently, a second grant mechanism was launched, called Innovation Challenge, with average grants of \$15,000 each. Eventually 5 proposals were approved, involving VOPEs in 30 countries plus 6 regional networks. See the graphic below to get a visual impression of the extent of these partnerships among VOPEs around the world.



Key: **Dark blue arrows** = P2P partnerships among National VOPEs; **Gold arrows** = P2P partnerships among Regional VOPEs; **Green arrows** = partnerships among VOPEs engaged in Innovation Challenge programs.

Here are just a few examples of what some of these P2P partnerships are working on:

⁴⁰ See <http://www.mymande.org/evalpartners> for additional information.

⁴¹ See http://www.mymande.org/evalpartners/2015_EvalYear.

- Share experiences in promoting governmental evaluation policies and systems;
 - Engage parliamentarians from neighbouring countries in using evaluation governmental transparency;
 - Provide guidance in the strengthening of VOPE institutional capacity;
 - Organise workshop to develop national ethical evaluation standards and guidelines
 - Training of individuals in evaluation methodologies;
 - Share what regional networks can do to support national VOPEs in their regions; and
 - Participation in one or the other's conference (in many cases leading to plans for continued collaboration).
- The **Institutional Capacity Toolkit Taskforce** has engaged a consultant (Benita Williams of South Africa) to develop a toolkit that would be used by VOPEs to help strengthen their institutional capacities.
 - The **Equity-Focused and Gender-Responsive Taskforce** assures that all EvalPartners materials clearly promote evaluations guided by such values. In addition, the EFGR TF recently launched its own Innovation Challenge grant mechanism, looking for two especially innovative proposals to promote EFGR evaluations. Also, the EFGR task force has launched a webinar series to promote the integration of EFGR in evaluation. The first webinar took place in August and focused on institutional capacity building of VOPES on gender and equity.
 - The **Knowledge Management and Communications** taskforce, facilitates effective and efficient communication about all that EvalPartners does. The EvalPartners website (www.MyMandE.org/EvalPartners) was developed, as well as several social media channels.
 - **Publications:** Good practices in managing VOPEs have been identified, selected and published in two books: The first book, *"Evaluation and Civil Society. Stakeholders' perspectives on National Evaluation*

Capacity Development," contributed to international discussions on how different stakeholders can create synergies and partnerships to contribute to equity-focused and gender-responsive country-led evaluation systems. The second book, *"Voluntary Organisations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs): Learning from Africa, Americas, Asia, Australasia, Europe and Middle East,"* is focused on case studies highlighting the experiences of regional and national VOPEs. Both books are available for free download at http://mymande.org/evalpartners/selected_books. One of the case studies highlights the exemplary collaboration between SAMEA and the Government of South Africa.

- **E-Learning** to promote individual capacities: An introductory e-learning on development evaluation, including equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations, was developed based on material developed and launched by MyMandE and thirty three (33) world-level speakers contributed. A cumulative total of 12,000 participants from 175 countries registered for the three courses offered. Seventy two (72%) stated that they were satisfied with the experience, and 88% declared they would register in other e-learning offered by EvalPartners. The e-learning proved to be very cost-effective, with a cost of less than 2 USD per participant⁴².
- Though a separate taskforce has not been established, a major initiative that is being promoted by EvalPartners is the promotion of the **International Year of Evaluation (EvalYear)**. This will involve a wide variety of commitments and activities by many countries and organisations leading up to and during 2015. This became a major theme during the NEC conference in Brazil. EvalPartners and many others have already declared 2015 as International Year of Evaluation. The UNEG General Assembly endorsed the decision and joined the initiative.

Guiding principles

The EvalPartners Initiative is guided by the following principles:

⁴² For additional information on the e-learning webinars and courses, please visit <http://mymande.org/evalpartners/e-learning-on-development-evaluation>.

Strategic partnership

Major stakeholders (especially Core Partners) have contributed to the conceptualisation and implementation of the initiative. In addition to IOCE and UNICEF, these include UNEG, UN-Women and other UN agencies; OECD/DAC Evaluation group and bilateral donors, especially the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and USAID; global and regional VOPEs; and IFI such as the Banks. In addition, based on the Busan's new Partnership for effective development cooperation, new emerging donors/Middle Income Countries, as well as International NGOs and Private Foundations, are also becoming engaged in this growing partnership.

Innovation

Taking advantage of the power of new technology and social media, innovative methods of engagement and democratic participation are being used, including social networks, webinars and Communities of Practices conducted through www.mymande.org.

Inclusion

While the focus of the initiative is on VOPEs, other CSOs, including universities and local training institutes engaged in national evaluation capacity development, as well as people interested in setting up new or strengthening emerging VOPEs in their own countries,

are welcome to join in this global collaborative movement.

Focus on Human rights, Gender equality and Social equity

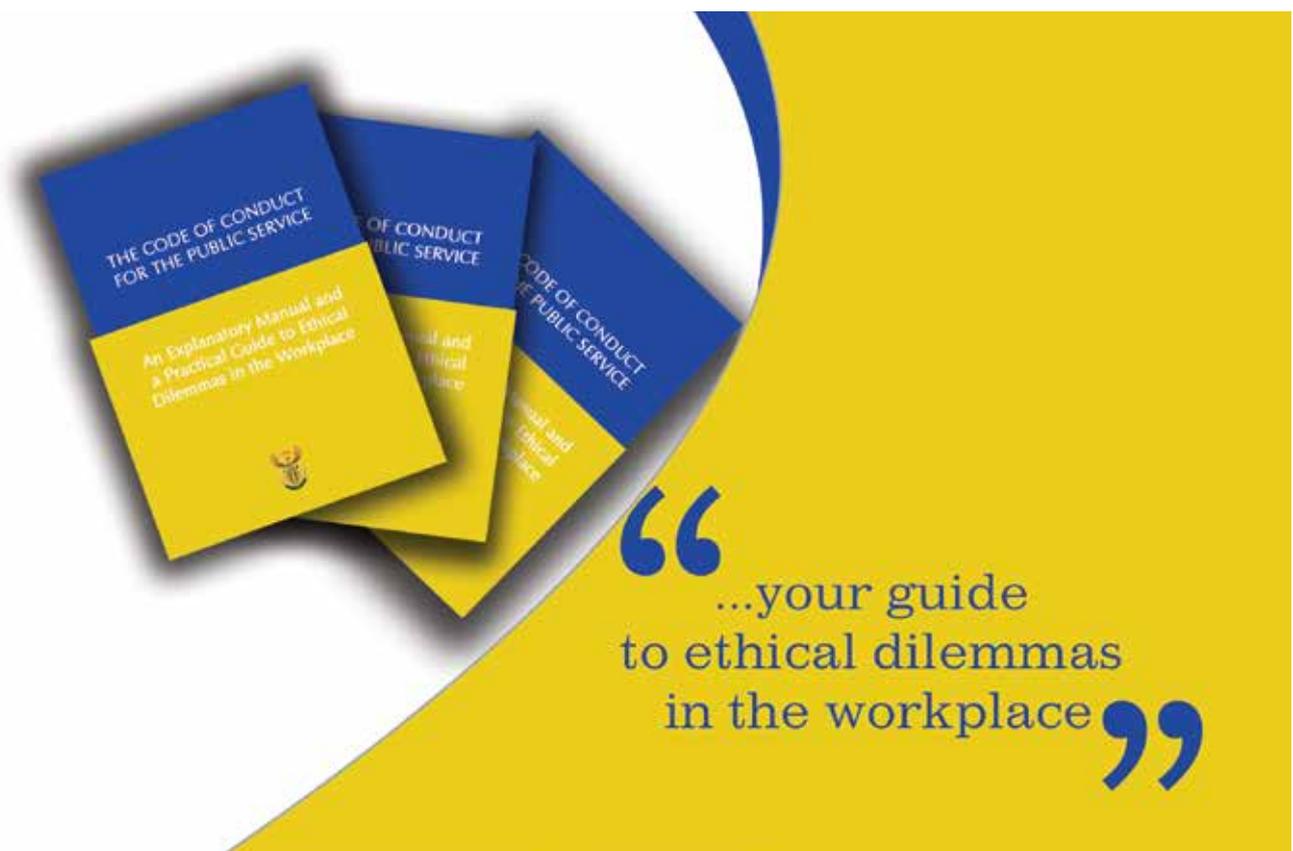
EvalPartners is guided by principles of Human rights, Gender equality and Social equity, with a special focus on the evaluation function and community.

Governance

While UNICEF has been responsible for the management of funds and for reporting to donors, a 5-member Executive Committee and a 24-member Management Group composed of representatives from IOCE and other selected stakeholders ensure implementation proceeds according to the plans. An International Advisory Group (IAG) provides overall guidance and recommendations on the conceptualisation and implementation of the initiative.

Synergies and complementarities with other key stakeholders

EvalPartners will continue to seek synergies and complementarities with key stakeholders active in National Evaluation Capacity development, including World Bank, CLEAR centers, UNDP-led International Conferences on Capacity Development and IDEAS, among others.



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