



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Umsombomvu Youth Fund Impact Assessment and Programme Evaluation of the Business Consultancy Service Voucher Programme

Date Evaluation was completed: 01 December 2007

Name of assessor: Wilma Wessels-Ziervogel

Evaluation Number: 202

Date Assessment Completed: 18 February 2013

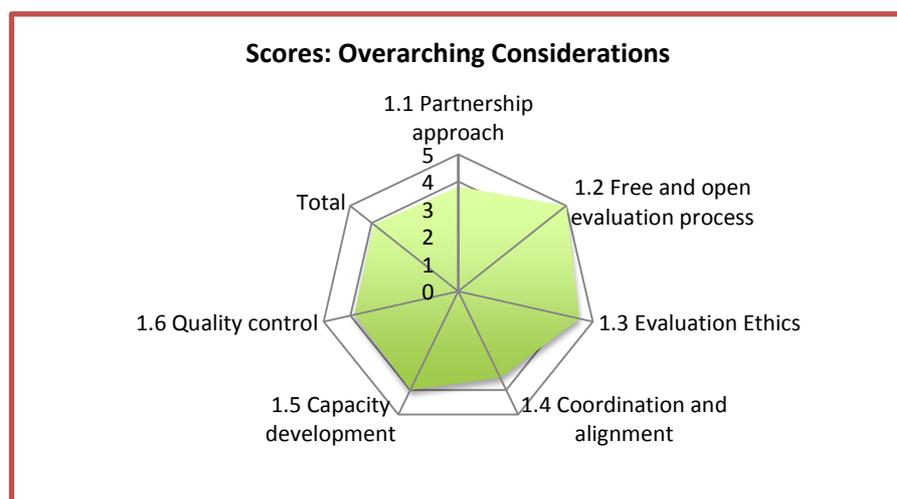
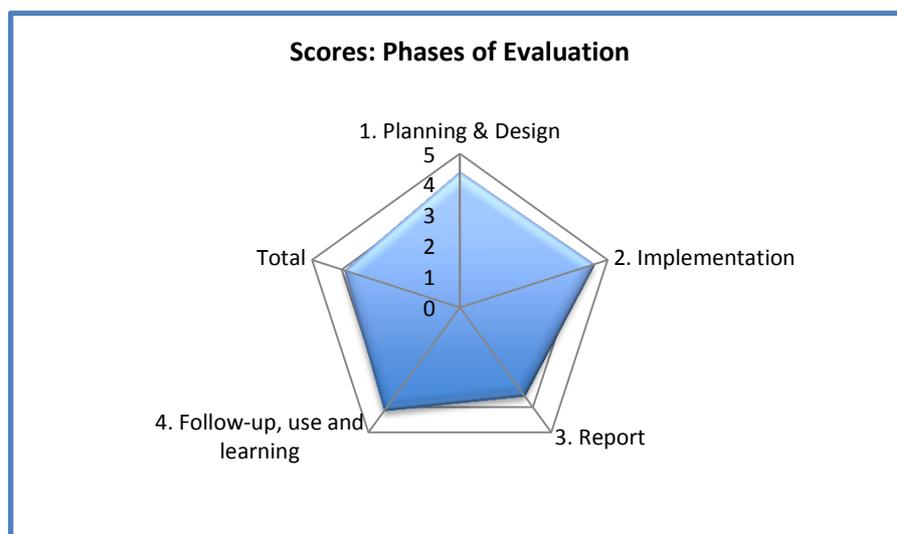
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	Umsombomvu Youth Fund Impact Assessment and Programme Evaluation of the Business Consultancy Service Voucher Programme
Completion Date of Evaluation	01 December 2007
Name of Assessor	Wilma Wessels-Ziervogel
Evaluation Number	202
Completion Date of Assessment	18 February 2013
Initiated by	Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF)
Evaluation undertaken by	ECI Africa Consulting
Evaluation area / sector	Trade, industry, enterprises
	<i>Additional</i>
National Outcome	Outcome 5
	Outcome 6 <i>Additional</i>
Type of Evaluation	Implementation
	Impact <i>Additional</i>
What is being evaluated	Programme
	Programme <i>Additional</i>
Geographic Scope	National
Period of Evaluation	April to December 2007 (8 months)
Known Cost of Evaluation	Between R 500k and R1 million

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	4.43
Implementation	4.56
Report	3.55
Follow-up, use and learning	4.14
Total	4.00

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.82
Free and open evaluation process	5.00
Evaluation Ethics	4.50
Coordination and alignment	3.50
Capacity Development	4.00
Quality control	3.86



1. Planning & Design

1.1. Clarity of Purpose and Scope in TOR

STANDARD: *The evaluation was guided by a TOR with at least the following sections explicit: purpose, scope and objectives; expectations regarding design and methodology; resources and time allocated; reporting requirements; expectations regarding evaluation process and products.*

Comment and Analysis

The ToR detailed the purpose, scope, objectives, design, methodology, time allocation, reporting requirements, process and expected deliverables for the evaluation.

Rating 5

STANDARD: *The purpose of the evaluation was clear and explicit in the TOR*

Comment and Analysis

The purpose of the evaluation was clearly articulated.

Rating 5

STANDARD: *The evaluation questions were clearly stated in the TOR and appropriate to addressing the evaluation purpose*

Comment and Analysis

Evaluation themes to be explored were covered in the ToR under the scope of the evaluation. These were relevant to the purpose of the evaluation. Specific evaluation questions were however not detailed in the ToR.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR

Comment and Analysis

The approach taken was appropriate for the purpose and scope of the evaluation. The ToR required the evaluator to consult multiple stakeholders influenced by or influencing the programme. A mixed method approach was also encouraged.

Rating **5**

STANDARD: Intended users and their information needs were identified in the TOR

Comment and Analysis

Intended users and their information needs were not identified, however information needs were communicated via purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation.

Rating **3**

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and determining the purpose of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and Senior Manager in the Product Division were responsible for scoping the ToR. No other stakeholders were included (e.g. implementers).

Rating **3**

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocated

Comment and Analysis

3 months were allocated for the evaluation. This was not deemed reasonable for the evaluation process.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget

Comment and Analysis

The budget allocated was adequate.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation team had appropriate skills to conduct the evaluation.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Where appropriate, the evaluation planned to incorporate an element of capacity building of partners/staff responsible for the evaluand

Comment and Analysis

No capacity development was done with UYF staff. The commissioned Service Provider partnered with local Service Providers (including one youth organisation who was also a beneficiary of the programme) to assist with the evaluation process within the relevant province. Thus, the evaluation planned to incorporate capacity building as part of the evaluation process, although this was not necessarily directed towards UYF staff.

Rating 3

1.3. Alignment to Policy Context and Background Literature

STANDARD: There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators

Comment and Analysis

A thorough document review covering the policy and programme context was conducted. This seemed to influence some of the evaluation questions explored.

Rating 5

STANDARD: There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators

Comment and Analysis

The document review covered relevant literature, particularly related to the concept of the "voucher" system and its theoretical underpinnings.

Rating 5

1.4. The evaluation methods planned were appropriate to the project

STANDARD: There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the planning of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The theory of change was communicated through the ToR. Certain aspects of the theory of change were however lacking, particularly in terms of making explicit how certain outcomes were to be achieved through programme implementation (outputs and activities). The report indicated that there was no "programme design document", however since the Evaluator had previously been involved in the programme (as an evaluator and technical expert), the programme theory was well understood.

Rating **3**

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The service provider and commissioning organisation were involved in designing the methodology. Other stakeholders involved in the evaluation (e.g. implementers) were however not involved.

Rating **3**

STANDARD: The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked

Comment and Analysis

Using a mixed method approach, combining quantitative, qualitative and document/literature review was ideal in terms of the evaluation questions.

Rating **5**

STANDARD: Planned sampling was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation made provision for all key role players to be included in the sample. This was deemed adequate to address the purpose of the evaluation.

Rating 5

STANDARD: There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation prior to undertaking the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The utilisation of findings was not made explicit in the planning process.

Rating 1

1.5. Inception phase

STANDARD: The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented

Comment and Analysis

The objectives and scope of the evaluation were negotiated and agreed during the inception phase. UYF were open to discussing the conditions of the contract.

Rating 5

2. Implementation

2.1. Ethical Review and Considerations

STANDARD: *Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, appropriate clearance was obtained through an ethics review board; e.g. in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance, and situations where assurances of confidentiality was offered to participants*

Comment and Analysis

No ethical clearance was necessary for this evaluation. The evaluators adhered to the necessary research ethics (e.g. confidentiality, anonymity, right to withdraw/withhold information, informed consent.)

Rating 5

2.2. Evaluator independence

STANDARD: *Where external, evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference*

Comment and Analysis

Once the objectives and scope were agreed in the initiation phase, the evaluator was able to conduct the evaluation without interference.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest***Comment and Analysis***

Although the evaluator had also previously been a technical advisor to the programme, no conflict of interest was evident. The evaluator presented a balanced argument which took into account both the strengths and challenges of the voucher programme.

Rating 5

2.3. Key stakeholder involvement***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement during the evaluation******Comment and Analysis***

Although a committee was not assigned, the Programme Manager and M&E Officer provided ongoing support to the evaluator. The M&E Officer was particularly useful as a guide in the evaluation process. Meetings/feedback was provided fortnightly.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand was incorporated into the evaluation***Comment and Analysis***

Capacity was developed with local service providers and one youth owned enterprise (a beneficiary of UYF). Subsequent partnerships between the commissioned service provider (ECI Africa) and these local service providers happened as a result of the capacity building process. Follow up partnerships revealed an improvement in the capacity of local service providers to conduct evaluations - a positive outcome of the capacity building process. A lesson learnt however is that capacity building processes take time and can often delay an evaluation process. Sufficient time needs to be allocated for this. Also, very specific skills are needed by the Service Provider if capacity building is to be their responsibility.

Rating 5

2.4. Methodology

STANDARD: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned

Comment and Analysis

The planned methods were used.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Data collection was not compromised by fieldwork-level problems or unplanned diversions from original intentions

Comment and Analysis

Some fieldwork challenges compromised the depth of data available, particularly in relation to the cost-benefit analysis conducted. Generally however, the triangulation of data sources and methods used allowed for accurate and reliable data to be gathered. Limitations with the participant database meant that certain sampling challenges were experienced.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The data gathering techniques used were appropriate. It allowed for triangulation, and the case study approach was particularly useful in understanding the impact of the programme.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The data analysis approach and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

SPSS was used for quantitative analysis. A thematic analysis was employed for qualitative data. Qualitative data was however quantified and analysed through SPSS, which is not an appropriate tool.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology

Comment and Analysis

Stakeholders at various levels (i.e. commissioning organisation, implementers, beneficiaries, etc.) were engaged as part of the methodology.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information

Comment and Analysis

Beneficiaries were appropriately engaged through survey interviews.

Rating 5

2.5. Project management

STANDARD: The evaluation was conducted without shifts to scheduled project milestones and timeframes

Comment and Analysis

There were shifts in the timeframes (by 5 months) due to data collection challenges.

Rating 2

3. Report

3.1. Report was well-structured and presentation was clear and complete in each of these areas

STANDARD: Executive summary captured key components of the report appropriately

Comment and Analysis

The executive summary was well written.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The context of the development intervention was explicit and presented as relevant to the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The development intervention context was well outlined through a comprehensive literature review.

Rating 5

STANDARD: There was a clear rationale for the evaluation questions**Comment and Analysis**

There weren't evaluation questions but rather thematic areas. The rationale was not clearly indicated.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The scope or focus of the evaluation was apparent in the report**Comment and Analysis**

The report did not adequately describe the evaluation objectives, evaluation themes or scope.

Rating 1

STANDARD: A detailed methodology was outlined in the relevant section of a report (full report or 1/3/25) to the point that a reader could understand the data collection, analysis and interpretation**Comment and Analysis**

The methodology was vaguely described in the report and omitted important information on the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. The sample was not clearly described. It was challenging to differentiate between the general description/profile of the stakeholder group being interviewed, and the actual sample selected. Findings were also reported in the sample section. Analysis and interpretation processes were not articulated in the report.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Key findings were presented in a clear way; they were made distinct from uncertain or speculative findings; and unused data was not presented in the body of the report

Comment and Analysis

Key findings were clearly communicated in the report.

Rating **5**

STANDARD: *Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated*

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions (seemed to be titled "discussion of findings") were well structured, although pointed, conclusive statements were not made. Recommendations were clear although the evaluand could have benefited from more detailed recommendations. Some recommendations were identified in the conclusions, however these were not reiterated and clarified in the "recommendations" section of the report.

Rating **2**

STANDARD: *Acknowledgement of limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings were clearly and succinctly articulated*

Comment and Analysis

Limitations were described in the executive summary but not in the main report.

Rating **3**

3.2. Writing and presentation

STANDARD: *Quality of writing and presentation was adequate for publication including: adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions (e.g. tense, perspective (first person, third person); levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc)*

Comment and Analysis

The report was well written and presented.

Rating 5

STANDARD: *Appropriate conventions were used in presentation of data (e.g. use of appropriate statistical language; reporting of p-values where appropriate; not reporting statistically insignificant findings as significant; clarifying disaggregation categories in constructing percentages; not using quantitative language in reporting qualitative data, etc.)*

Comment and Analysis

No statistical language (e.g. p-values, significant differences) was used for reporting quantitative data although confidence levels were reported upfront. Disaggregation categories were clear.

Rating 3

3.3. Presentation of findings

STANDARD: *The use of figures and tables was such that it supported communication and comprehension of results; and data reported in figures and tables was readily discernible and useful to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions*

Comment and Analysis

Figures and tables were used wherever possible. These helped to illustrate findings.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed

Comment and Analysis

On the whole data analysis was well executed. Qualitative data was however quantified and analysed using SPSS, which is not an appropriate tool for data analysis. It is unclear whether the qualitative data was combined with quantitative data for analysis.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence

Comment and Analysis

Findings were generally based on evidence, but in some instances anecdotal evidence was used where hard evidence was lacking.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The evidence gathered was sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument

Comment and Analysis

A good argument was presented based on evidence.

Rating 5

STANDARD: There was appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations

Comment and Analysis

Where necessary, alternative interpretations were considered.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The report appeared free of significant methodological and analytic flaws

Comment and Analysis

Methodologically the evaluation was well conducted. There may have been an overemphasis on quantitative data, as even qualitative data was quantified and analysed in SPSS.

Rating 3

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions were based on evidence gathered.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Conclusions took into account relevant empirical and/or analytic work from related research studies and evaluations

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions were based on the findings of this evaluation and not other work.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions covered the evaluation purpose and themes, particularly in relation to implementation issues. However information on outcomes (which was part of the original ToR) were limited, which left a gap in terms of meeting the original purpose/intention. This was however reportedly negotiated upfront.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Conclusions were drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change

Comment and Analysis

Since no clear programme framework was available at the time that the evaluation was conducted, the extent to which the conclusions could be drawn in relation to this was limited.

Rating **2**

3.5. Recommendations

STANDARD: Recommendations were made in consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts

Comment and Analysis

Based on interviews conducted, consultation with a technical expert and literature review, recommendations were drafted and presented to the commissioning organisation, who then provided input into this.

Rating **5**

STANDARD: Recommendations were shaped following input or review by relevant government officials and other relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

No government officials were included in drafting recommendations.

Rating **1**

STANDARD: Recommendations were relevant to the policy context**Comment and Analysis**

Recommendations mainly focussed on operational issues. Although these were relevant in terms of policy implementation, recommendations were limited in terms of its strategic focus.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Recommendations were targetted to a specific audience sufficiently - were specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable**Comment and Analysis**

Recommendations were too summarised and did not adequately consider the feasibility of implementation. Recommendations were however discussed subsequent to the evaluation process.

Rating 3

3.6. Relevant limitations of the evaluation have been noted**STANDARD: Relevant limitations of the evaluation were noted****Comment and Analysis**

Limitations were described in the executive summary but not in the main report.

Rating 2

3.7 Protection of participants and risk considerations

STANDARD: The full report documented procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent where this was needed (in some cases this is not needed - e.g. evaluation synthesis - in which case N/A should be recorded)

Comment and Analysis

The report did not describe ethical considerations adhered to, although these were described by interviewees.

Rating 2

STANDARD: There were no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website

Comment and Analysis

There were no risks to participants in disseminating the findings.

Rating 5

STANDARD: There were no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website

Comment and Analysis

There were no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the findings.

Rating 5

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

STANDARD: Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

Preliminary results were presented to the commissioning organisation and some implementing organisations. The final report was presented to the Executive Committee. Findings were however not disseminated or presented to other important stakeholders who could have benefited from the evaluation (e.g. Department of Trade and Industry, Arts and Culture).

Rating 4

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was not completed within the allocated time.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was completed within the allocated budget.

Rating 5

4.3. Transparency

STANDARD: The report was publicly available (website or otherwise published document), except where there were legitimate security concerns

Comment and Analysis

The report is available on the NYDA website and internet.

Rating 5

4.4. Lessons learnt

STANDARD: After completion of the evaluation, a reflective process was undertaken by staff responsible for the evaluand to reflect on what could be done to strengthen future evaluations

Comment and Analysis

This was not conducted.

Rating 2

4.5. Symbolic and conceptual value

STANDARD: The evaluation study was seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme (eg raised its profile)

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was of value however the lack of properly formulated conclusions and recommendations limited its usefulness beyond the evaluation.

Rating 3

STANDARD: *The evaluation study was of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice*

Comment and Analysis

Although policy was not explicitly discussed in the findings and recommendations, one can deduce certain implications for policy from the findings.

Rating 3

4.6. Utilisation of findings and recommendations

STANDARD: *There was clear evidence of instrumental use - that the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented to a significant extent*

Comment and Analysis

Two recommendations were taken forward from the evaluation which changed the operations of the branch and capacity of the staff. The evaluation was also reportedly used for strategic planning.

Rating 5

STANDARD: *There was clear evidence that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, its stakeholders and beneficiaries over the medium to long term*

Comment and Analysis

There was clear evidence that the evaluation positively influence UYF and its stakeholders. Key recommendations made influenced the roll out of the programme.

Rating 5

References

Umsobomvu Youth Fund, 2007, "UYF Impact Assessment and Programme Evaluation of the Business Consultancy Services Voucher Programme".

Umsobomvu Youth Fund, 2007, "Terms of Reference for Impact Assessment and Programme Evaluation of the Business Consultancy Services Voucher of Umsobomvu

List of Interviewees

Golden Mahove, Author: ECI Africa, Telephonic Interview, 14/2/2013.

Conrad Sebego, Senior Manager-M&E: National Youth Development Agency (Previously Umsobomvu Youth Fund), Telephonic Interview, 15/2/2013.

Mercy Mureithi, (Ex) Programme Manager: National Youth Development Agency (Previously Umsobomvu Youth Fund), Self-completion Interview, 20/2/2013.