PERSPECTIVES ON IMPACT EVALUATION: Approaches to Assessing Development Effectiveness

Description

Tweet

An International Conference in Africa for policy-makers, program managers, evaluators, sponsors and other stakeholders in evaluation and development

Date: Sunday 29 March â?? Thursday 2 April 2009
Venue: Semiramis InterContinental Hotel, Cairo, Egypt

OUR INVITATION

How do we know when â??developmentâ?? is truly successful? What can evaluations tell us about which policies, programs and projects work, why, for whom and under what conditions? How can such evaluations best be conducted to help to bring new hope and opportunities to many millions in Africa and beyond?

It gives us great pleasure to invite you to participate in one of the most exciting evaluation events ever held in Africa. The African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), the Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE) and the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) have joined forces to bring to Africa some of the best expertise from all continents on one of the most discussed topics among evaluation and development communities worldwide.

For the conference we define impact evaluations as those studies which concern themselves with determining and understanding the short, medium and long term outcomes or impacts of projects, programs and policies. We do not limit the term to any specific methodology in any particular discipline.

We therefore invite submissions for participation from everyone with a keen interest in how evaluation can address complex development challenges â?? from development practitioners to policy-makers, from researchers to the funders of evaluation and of development, from evaluators to the users of evaluation, from students to the most experienced.

Participants will come from many disciplines, sectors and perspectives to make this a truly â??multi-stakeholderâ?? event. They will share practical experiences, discuss innovations, craft new ways to collaborate and devise plans to improve policy and practice.

The Conference will be international but will also provide an opportunity for Africans to come together to examine the frameworks, methods and tools that guide impact evaluation practice. This is in line with the statement released at the Fourth AfrEA Conference in Niamey (2007), which urged stakeholders to ensure that the foundations for Africa-rooted and Africa-led evaluation are strengthened by focusing on African values and ways of constructing knowledge.

THE CONFERENCE FORMAT

The Conference will be comprised of 2.5 days of 15-18 professional development workshops for different levels of experience, offered by some of the best in the world, followed by 2.5 days of the main conference. There will be many side events as well as many opportunities to interact, network and reflect.

The Conference will have a combination of plenary sessions and five streams of parallel sessions. They will be in various exciting, often inter-active formats â?? panel discussions, think-tanks, roundtables and paper presentations, including expert papers.

SCHOLARSHIPS

AfrEA, NONIE and 3ie and their partners will make available a large number of travel scholarships for evaluators from developing countries. Preference will be given to those who will contribute by presenting a paper, participating in a panel discussion or leading a roundtable or think-tank. Details will be available soon on the Conference website (see below).

WHO ARE THE PARTNERS?

NONIE is a powerful partnership between four international networks that encourage and support good quality and relevant impact evaluations:

*the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) â?? the evaluation offices of UN organisations,

*the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Evaluation Network,

*the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) which consists of the evaluation offices of the international development finance institutions (World Bank; regional banks), and

*the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) â?? the global umbrella network for national and regional evaluation associations.

AfrEA is a regional umbrella body for more than 20 national evaluation associations as well as individual members from countries without evaluation networks. Since 1999 it has worked to strengthen evaluation capacity in Africa and provide a concerted voice for African evaluation internationally. It has advised national associations, facilitated the development of African evaluation guidelines, established an electronic news and discussion forum, raised funds for many workshops and opportunities for African evaluators, and formed special interest evaluation subgroups. It has organized four Africa-wide conferences on evaluation, twice in Nairobi, in Cape Town and in Niamey. This event serves as the Fifth AfrEA Conference in view of the importance of the topic of impact evaluation in Africa.

3ie is a new international body that will promote improved development effectiveness through better evidence from impact evaluations. To achieve this goal, 3ie will finance high-quality, influential impact evaluations of development programs and carry out advocacy campaigns around emerging policy messages. Evaluations will be commissioned to address enduring questions in development and requests for proposals on priority themes issued annually. 3ie encourages proposals led by developing country institutions or that include strong collaborative relationships and on-the-job capacity building. It seeks to improve the lives of poor people in low- and middle-income countries by providing, and summarising, evidence of what works, when, why and for how much.

These three core partners will be joined by many other organisations as partners who will sponsor or organise specific sessions or streams.

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

A submission can be made in any category (paper, panel, round-table, think-tank, expert paper), but each contribution should fit into one of the Conference Themes described below.

The proposal should be no more than 500 words. It should give the title of the contribution(s), the presenter(s), the theme(s) under which it is proposed and a summary of the substance.

The closing date for proposals is 15 December 2009. They should be sent to contributions@impactevaluation2009.org

Details about fees, workshops and logistics details will soon be available on the Conference website.

CONFERENCE THEMES

1. Improving development effectiveness: the role of impact evaluation

Recent interest in impact evaluation has expanded the evaluation toolbox. When is it appropriate to conduct an impact evaluation, and in the context of what evaluation approaches should it be used? How important and effective has it been, and can it be in improving development policies and strategies? What particular interventions are most amenable to different impact evaluation approaches? When would impact evaluation be inappropriate and what can it perhaps not tell us? What are the particular challenges of conducting rigorous impact studies in Africa and other low-income regions?

2. Impact evaluation: Approaches and methods

The workshops and conference will encompass the full range of approaches to, and perspectives on impact evaluation. Presentations in this theme will explicitly lay out one or more method or approach, often through the use of case studies. Presenters are particularly encouraged to compare and contrast different approaches, identifying the potential for mixed methods and combined approaches. The Conference will provide an opportunity for discussing ideas on the rigorous evaluation of new approaches to development, such as partnership-based programs. It will also encourage innovation in methodology that draws from the rich pool of knowledge in diverse disciplines often unrelated to evaluation practice. Presentations which examine the concepts of rigor and credible evidence in impact evaluation, as well as the issue of quality standards in impact evaluation are also welcome.

3. Institutionalizing impact evaluation: demand, production and use

These presentations will examine the experiences and challenges of African and other developing country governments, development agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector in managing, doing, commissioning, resourcing and using impact evaluation, monitoring impacts, and developing an organisational culture that values and supports the necessary organizational learning and accountability conditions for effective impact evaluation. Presentations will include a range of experiences from developing countries, agencies and organizations which have explored a range of approaches to institutionalising impact evaluation. Country governments and civil society organizations just embarking on this process will also be included.

4. Achieving influence: reporting, outreach, learning and policy impact

The purpose of impact studies is to enhance development effectiveness through better policies, programs, institutional arrangements, partnerships and networks, including enhanced civil society awareness, action and engagement in impact evaluation aimed at social change from grassroots to national, regional and international level. Presentations under this theme will discuss how the context, production process and dissemination strategy for impact evaluations can increase their policy and institutional impact (both within and outside the commissioning agency) and how civil society engagement in the evaluation of impact can contribute to improved wellbeing and sustainability. Presentations on how to promote the use of impact evaluation by a range of stakeholders are also welcome.

5. Capacity building for impact evaluation

Policy impact will be enhanced by ensuring that impact evaluations are demand-led by the full range of stakeholders, including citizens, parliaments, civil society organizations, governments and development agencies. For this to be the case, further capacity development is required. Presentations in these sessions will highlight successful experiences in building capacity, and provide information on the resources available for capacity development. The focus should be on the development of impact evaluation approaches that are rigorous yet practical and useful given the real world constraints and demands of development.

6. Impact evaluations of policies, programs, projects, partnerships and networks

These presentations will present findings from actual impact evaluations of policies, programs, projects, partnerships and networks, and synthetic reviews of such studies. Case studies are expected to demonstrate the application of a range of different approaches.
We look forward to seeing you in Cairo!
Zenda Ofir, AfrEA

Howard White, 3ie

Nick York, NONIE

http://www.impactevaluation2009.org/

Category

1. Conferences
2. Types of Events

Tags

1. aid effectiveness
2. impact assessment

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