CAPACITY BUILDING IN M&E: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

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Topics to cover

- Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), UNDP
- Challenges in Nat’l Evaluation Capacity Development
- Lessons: Ways Forward – Issues for Consideration
UNDP/IEO: Principles

- Custodian of the evaluation function w/in UNDP
- UNDP Evaluation Policy (2011)

Key Guiding Principles

- Independence
- Transparency
- Utility
- National ownership
UNDP/IEO: Work

Key Areas of Work

- Independent evaluations (country-, regional-, global-level; thematic; policy)
- Standards & guidelines; Support to “decentralized” evaluations
- Support to UN Evaluation Group (UNEG)
- Sharing, exchange of lessons
- National Evaluation Capacity (NEC) conferences
UNDP/IEO: Nat’l evaluation capacity

UNDP Evaluation Policy (2011) on Nat’l Evaluation Capacity:

Programme Units to:

⇒ “promote South-South/trilateral cooperation in support of capacity-building for evaluation at the country level...”

IEO to:

⇒ “support national evaluation capacity development and provide a forum for discussion of evaluation issues confronting countries”
⇒ “facilitate the preparation of the ground for formulation of long-term initiatives to strengthen nat’l capacity for public policy evaluation through S-S/trilateral cooperation.”

*It takes both programme offices and the evaluation office to promote it.
UNDP/IEO: NEC Conferences

- **Casablanca, Morocco (2009)**
  Theme: “National capacity for public policy evaluation,” co-hosted by the Nat’l Observatory for Human Development, Morocco (55 participants from 30 countries).

- **Johannesburg, South Africa (2011)**
  Theme: “Use of Evaluation in Decision Making for Public Policies and Programmes,” co-hosted by the Public Service Commission of South Africa (80 from 20 countries)

- **São Paulo, Brazil (2013)**
  Theme: “Solutions related to challenges of independence, credibility and use of evaluation,” with Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (160 from 63 countries)
Challenges

- Development/implementation of transparent evaluation framework
- National statistical/data systems
- Appropriate institutional set-ups in evaluation (reflecting national context and cultural dimensions)
- Partnerships between national evaluation actors (e.g. government, parliament, professional evaluation associations, private sector, etc.)
- Ensuring stakeholder involvement while maintaining independence
- Availability of evaluation standards in local languages
- Assignment of appropriate evaluation budgets
- Use of local universities/research institutions for technical expertise to complement missing gaps
- More institutional capacities to develop evaluation policy and coordinate evaluations at the national level
- Ensuring use of quality assurance mechanisms in evaluation
- Facilitation of evaluation-related networks

1 Key examples from NEC conferences, 2009, 2011, 2013. The 2013 conference produced 18 ‘commitments’ by the participants.
Challenges (Cont’d)

Looking at UNDP internally,

- More country offices have a dedicated, full-time M&E Specialist, but:
  - Regional disparity exists; and
  - Some regions experiencing downward trends.
- Some country offices have not conducted/commissioned a single evaluation in a year.
- Many project evaluations; Less emphasis on outcome-level evaluations.
- Quality in decentralized evaluations varies.

\(^2\)Annual Report on Evaluation 2013 (Draft)
Lessons and Ways Forward: Issues for Consideration

- Need for continued support in evaluation capacity building at the country level

- Keep the ‘momentum’ - Global movement and interest exists (e.g. 2015 designated as “International Year of Evaluation”) => Opportunity in joining the forces, promoting accountability in own capacities.

- Attention to evaluation principles and emerging issues:
  - Upholding the concept of independence, transparency
  - Participatory/inclusive nature in conduct
  - Consideration for “Use” of evaluation
  - Consideration for country/cultural context
  - Diversified areas in human development principles (gender, human rights, etc.)

- Ultimate goal – Improved development results at the country level
  => “Evaluations need to respond to ‘goals’ of the organization and not the interest of the organization” (NEC participant)
Thank you.

Please visit us at UNDP/IEO website:

http://web.undp.org/evaluation/