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# Developing Capacity for International Developmental Evaluation

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The process was effective and generated value.

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- 1 “The UK Consortium is a network of over 80 not-for-profit, faith-based and academic agencies based in the UK, with strong links to governments, international and multilateral agencies and civil society networks. [www.aidsconsortium.org.uk](http://www.aidsconsortium.org.uk).
- 2 Intensity was defined as the number of community-based organizations per 100,000 people.
- 3 <http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/levels-of-participation/collaborative-processes-and-partnerships/index.html>.

## DEVELOPING CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

Stewart I. Donaldson and Marco Segone

At the IDEAS Global Assembly this past May in the beautiful island of Barbados we engaged in discussions about improving international development evaluation capacity. With colleagues Tarek Azzam, Matthew Galen and John LaVelle, we discussed multiple initiatives ranging from the use of webinars, knowledge management systems, e-learning applications, massive open online courses, opportunities to use social media to enhance national and international conferences, and a range of university-based capacity development efforts. In this brief article we describe some of those initiatives.

There is a very strong demand for access to affordable and high quality resources by evaluators in developing countries. MyM&E, a web 2.0 platform, is one answer to that demand (MyM&E Website: <http://www.mymande.org/>). MyM&E offers thousands of resources, the possibility for users to upload their own videos and materials; to interact with world-level speakers through live webinars; and to share ideas with peers all over the world through the LinkedIn-based Community of Practice, as well as via twitter and Facebook.

UNICEF and the Claremont Graduate University with support from the Rockefeller Foundation hosted a series of 33 live webinars with leading evaluation experts from around the world on cutting edge evaluation topics during the past two years. The webinars were attended by thousands of evaluators and researchers from around the world and each webinar was evaluated carefully (recorded versions of the webinars are available on MyM&E). Based on evaluation feedback, some of the highlights of the series were used to build a Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for evaluators.

The MOOCs on Development Evaluation were launched in September 2012. Three courses were developed: Equity-focused

evaluation; National Evaluation Capacity Development for Country-led M&E Systems; and Emerging Practices in Development Evaluations. These courses include online lectures, reading materials, multiple choice tests, and access to a dedicated Community of Practice in which participants can interact among themselves, as well as pose questions to the speakers. At the end of each course, if 80% of the participants' answers to the test questions were correct, they were granted permission to print out a certificate of "virtual" attendance.

As of June 1 2013, the MOOCs reached a cumulative total of 12,725 registered participants from 176 countries. While the MOOCs were designed mainly for evaluators in developing countries, they also attracted evaluators from developed countries: 31% hailed from developed countries. Despite concerns regarding low internet connectivity in Africa, the largest group of participants was from that region: 37% were from Africa, 22% from Asia, 22% from Americas (including Latin America & the Caribbean), 16% from Europe, and 3% from Oceania.

The MOOCs participants worked in a variety of organizational settings: 31% were from Civil Society Organizations, 20% from UN agencies, 16% from private sector, 15% from governments, 9% from universities and another 9% are listed as "others". The educational background of participants was also diverse with 61% having a master degree, 23% having bachelor's degree, and 9% having a Ph.D.

Most of the participants reported that they had an intermediate knowledge level (40%), with others reporting to be beginners (27%), advanced (18%), to have no experience (8%), and 7% were experts. Early estimates are that about 40% of registrants complete the entire course, pass the tests, and get the final certificate. Approximately 72% rate

the course as very good or excellent, and 94% declare they are planning to take future courses.

To give IDEAS Global Assembly's participants a sense of the content of the MOOCs, we briefly described a new book "Emerging Practices in International Development Evaluation" (Donaldson, Azzam, & Conner, 2013) that draws on many years of experience, successes and failures in development evaluation in Asia and Africa, and reflects recent work supported by the Rockefeller Foundation on Rethinking, Reshaping, and Reforming Evaluation. The concepts, frameworks and ideas presented in this volume contribute to ongoing efforts at rethinking, reforming and reshaping international development evaluation. Leading thinkers and practitioners in development evaluation, research and academia have recognized that development evaluation must evolve if it is to respond to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and play a meaningful role in social and economic transformation.

Many of the Global Assembly participants told us they were regular participants in our webinars and were fully engaged in the MOOCs. These discussions yielded many insights about how to improve the webinars, MOOCs, and MyM&E resources as we expand our efforts to develop evaluation capacity worldwide. These new initiatives include a new scholarship program for evaluators from developing countries to attend online evaluation workshops free of charge at the Claremont Evaluation Center (<http://www.cgu.edu/pages/465.asp>) and a range of initiatives to build National Evaluation Capacity. To address the National Capacity Development challenge, UNICEF and IOCE founded EvalPartners, the global partnership for National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD).

So far 34 major organizations, including all the regional Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs), multilateral organizations such as UNEG, UNICEF, UNWomen, UNDP and African Develop-

ment Bank, as well as donor countries (OECD/DAC EvalNet Task Force on NECD, Finland, Spain and USAID) and other major stakeholders, such as the Rockefeller Foundation and Claremont Graduate University, have joined the initiative. Stay tuned and learn more about EvalPartners, NECD, and 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation by visiting: <http://www.mymande.org/evalpartners>

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EvalPartners website, available at <http://www.mymande.org/evalpartners>

MyM&E website, available at <http://www.mymande.org/>

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His recent evaluation books include *The Future of Evaluation in Society: A Tribute to Michael Scriven* (2013); *Emerging Practices in International Development Evaluation* (2013); *Social Psychology and Evaluation* (2011); *Advancing Validity in Outcome Evaluation: Theory and Practice* (2011); *What Counts as Credible Evidence in Applied Research and Evaluation Practice?* (2008); and *Program Theory-Driven Evaluation Science: Strategies and Applications* (2007).

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