

From the President's Desk

I am happy to introduce IOCE's first Newsletter, and I hope the number one of a long series. Our thanks to Soma De Silva for editing it. For some



time now, we have identified communication as one of IOCE most difficult challenges and yet one of its most powerful tools to promote evaluation around the world. It all

comes down to restating what IOCE is about, and what is our *raison d'être* and our vision of the role evaluation ought to play in this era of knowledge, economic wealth and human scarcity at the same time.

The world has never been so wealthy overall, knowledge is continuously renewed and extended to new frontiers; yet the world is infested by increasing human despair, deprived by poverty and scarcity, vulnerable to environmental and ecological fragility. The recent crises offer and illustrate that economic and ecological disasters do not need cooperation agreements and treaties to spread over man-made frontiers and barriers, and all of a sudden, humans realize that they are made of the same vulnerable stuff that can be reduced to nothing almost instantly, and they turn to other human beings for rescue. An old African proverb says "*Nit Nitay Garabam*"¹. IOCE's vision is to mainstream cooperation and enhance dialogue, solidarity, and diversity as a way of life. As a matter of fact, solidarity is not only a matter of kindness; rather, it is realism.

No matter how much the increase in catastrophes is a reality or the result of a more systematic tracking of information, it is nevertheless important to understand the pivotal role of information and communication in today's world. IOCE is committed to communicate better and more effectively, and this newsletter is just one of the means we intend to use for that purpose.

¹ A proverb in Oulof which means in French "*l'Homme est le remède de l'homme*" and in English "Humans are the best medicine for Humans."

IOCE's core mission is about using evaluation as a device to build knowledge on the drivers that explain the success or lack of it, of any public action or activity. Our main role and mission is to bring together evaluation stakeholders worldwide to share knowledge and join forces to help mainstream evaluation as a fundamental and effective instrument of development. In this first issue, we will focus on networking. IOCE is the only international organization that brings together national, regional and international organizations, around the common interest of using the knowledge generated by evaluation to respond to the challenges and apparent paradox of human development highlighted above.

IOCE puts the role of civil society at the heart of its strategic vision and action, which makes another unique feature and principle of action. Evaluation networks that IOCE embraces include a wide range of stakeholders of different categories, from scholars to researchers, managers of public programmes, policy makers and oversight bodies, consultants and the private sector, to the citizen who remains the "Boss"² by any means, all committed to provide the optimal answers to improve the lives of people.

Our hope is that this world network stands as one to channel knowledge and knowhow to nurture the ways policies aim to address today's challenges.

Oumoul Khayri Ba Tall
 President of the IOCE Board of Trustees



Highlights of IOCE 2009 AGM

IOCE held its 2009 Annual General Meeting in two phases, using a live one-hour webinar followed by a week-long online discussion forum via e-mail. Minutes of the webinar and e-discussion are posted on the IOCE website at www.ioce.net and summarized here:

² I borrowed this word from the president of SAMEA in his intervention at the closing plenary in Cotonou

Discussion Forum

President Oumoul Ba Tall opened the forum recalling the IOCE goals and describing the discussion topics for the AGM.

The participants endorsed the Board of Trustees’ proposal to extend the term of President Oumoul Ba Tall and Vice-president Burt Perrin to December 2010 in order to develop a succession plan and to allow them to continue their contribution to the growth of IOCE. It was recognised that there is a need to retain the expertise of members leaving the Board as was done in 2009 when two former Board members Jean Serge Quesnel and Marco Segone agreed to act as Senior Advisors to the Board.

The participants agreed on the following.

1) Facilitating better communication

The Board needs to enhance its communication to members of its activities and news of other associations while constraints exist. Marco Segone offered to coordinate an information hub using Wiki and other Web 2.0 technology. Soma De Silva volunteered to edit the newsletter and Victor Manuel Quintero and Barbara Rosenstein volunteered to assist.

2) IOCE agenda on Impact Evaluation and next steps to the NONIE guidance

While resource constraints prevented the IOCE Board from updating its members on issues such as the NONIE guidance on Impact Evaluation, the Board is committed to providing a more representative cross section of the experiences of the membership in the next iteration.

3) Promoting partnerships among evaluation associations

IOCE could support regional networks by entering into corporate agreements to enhance access to technological resources and to share synthesis of knowledge generated from meetings, conferences and books.

4) Strengthening IOCE

Despite a strong volunteer base and commitment, financial and human resources remain constraints to implementing its work plan.

5) Activities for IOCE value adding to its membership

a) Establish a Committee to the Board in 2011 on current endeavours to professionalise evaluation. Jean Serge Quesnel volunteered to lead the project with Ada Ocampo assisting.

b) Contribute to the development of quality products for the international evaluation community. Pablo Rodriguez Bilella volunteered to assist with the Spanish version of the book on Country Evaluation Capacity and the books and videos on evaluation associations.

c) Make an assessment of the current demand for evaluation while continuing IOCE’s role of advocacy and demonstrating that institutionalized evaluation supports program development.

6) Supporting capacity building in developing countries

Develop a strategy to widen the IOCE membership to help fund-raising as a broad-based organisation.

IOCE Governance

While the by-laws (posted on www.ioce.net) require revision, the Board considered this not a priority for its limited resources. Bali Andriantseheno volunteered to review the bylaws and return his assessment to the Board.

President Oumoul Ba Tall closed the virtual AGM on December 23rd, thanking all participants and committing IOCE to considering all their ideas.



IOCE Partnerships

IOCE and UNICEF, in partnership with UNDP, WFP, UNIFEM, IDEAS and the World Bank, have published a new book "From Policies to Results: Developing National Capacities for Country M&E Systems". The aim of this publication is to share good practices and lessons learned based on the recognition that national capacity development for monitoring and evaluation systems is an essential part of the broader support to policy reform and to promoting national ownership of evidence-based policy making.

This publication offers a number of strong contributions from senior officers in institutions dealing with national monitoring and evaluation capacity development, as well as senior government representatives responsible for the national monitoring and evaluation systems in countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

A series of live webinars were held on “Developing capacities for country M&E systems” with the authors of the book. In addition to watching live presentations, participants had the option to ask questions and provide comments.

Also launched is the MyM&E portal, a new social platform for development evaluation www.mymande.org

MyM&E is an interactive web 2.0 platform to share knowledge on Country-led M&E systems worldwide. In addition to being a learning resource, the platform is a valuable tool for creating a global community, as well as identifying good practices and lessons learned, on Country-led M&E systems.

For further information and for copies of the book, please contact Marco Segone, Evaluation Office, UNICEF, at msegone@unicef.org.



Capacity-Building in Evaluation: MES Experience

Internalised self-evaluation and long term foundation building through evaluation is a multi-disciplinary subject in universities. Internal evaluation capacity building in the public sector is a major concern for developing countries and donors alike. The sad fact remains that there is limited or no evaluation capacity within the public sector in many developing countries including in transitional economies like Malaysia's. Thus, there is an urgent need to upscale evaluation to assist governments deal more effectively with their development agenda.

The Malaysian Evaluation Society (MES), acknowledging this challenge, especially based on its experience in developing countries, has embarked on a program to build sustainable evaluation capacity, both in Malaysia and countries which have been collaborating closely with the MES. These initiatives form part of the evaluation advocacy and capacity building agenda of the Center for Development & Research in Evaluation (CeDRE) International based in Malaysia. Two such initiatives are described below.

1. Internalised Self-Evaluation (ISE)

The project, one of the earliest initiatives of MES and CeDRE was first piloted in 1999 in the government of Malaysia in close cooperation with the Ministry of Finance. On a pilot basis, a few major departments were selected to carry out summative evaluations³.

³ Under the Malaysian Results-based Budgeting system introduced in 1990, a summative evaluation is mandatory once

The underlying principle of ISE is that all program managers should have knowledge of evaluation and skills to use evaluation for better management of programmes. The main focus is on improving program performance through internally conducted evaluations as a much more efficient, effective, and sustainable way to improve program performance than external evaluations⁴.

In ISE, internal evaluation teams are trained and guided by external evaluation experts to implement evaluation in all phases. This approach has resulted in higher levels of utilisation of evaluation findings. It is now being considered by the government for use in annual formative evaluations in all ministries under the 10th Malaysia Plan.



Participants at a MES workshop

2. Long-Term Foundation Building in Evaluation

This initiative addresses the long-term evaluation training in developing countries especially at the graduate level, a key entry point into the public sector labour market. It is planned to introduce evaluation as multi-disciplinary. The main goal is to make available a pool of evaluation professionals for intake into the public sector. MES and CeDRE are liaising with the education authorities in three countries in Southern Africa and three countries in Asia. Initially, evaluation is to be offered as a multi-disciplinary subject on an elective basis, then as mandatory in specific

every five years for all major Activities in the Ministries. The ISE was introduced as a cost-effective but sustainable way of carrying out such evaluations.

⁴ This conclusion is based on the author's experience in carrying out external programme and project evaluations in many countries in Asia, Middle East, and Africa. In all cases, there is documented evidence that the external evaluations have not led to building evaluation capacity or improvements in programming. A recent three-country M&E assessment also drew the same conclusions.

schools such as public administration and public management. Students from all disciplines will be encouraged to take evaluation as a subject for 3 credits at the basic degree level. Plans are under way to introduce evaluation as a Diploma and Masters program, commencing in Malaysia and Vietnam on a trial basis in 2011.

The MES is proud to be able to contribute in this small way to the evaluation advocacy and utilization agenda and believes that it would contribute significantly to the “managing for development results” initiative that all major donors have embarked upon for some years now.

Prepared by:

Dr. Arunselam Rasappan Ph.D.

Hon. Secretary, MES

E-Mail: admin@mes.org.my

Internet: www.mes.org.my



Teaching Evaluation in South Asia

Teaching Evaluation in South Asia (TESA) is a project to establish post graduate diploma level evaluation training in academic institutions. A consortium of academic institutions in the region, supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), is implementing the project. Sri Lanka Evaluation Association (SLEvA) coordinates the implementation.

The strategy of TESA is primarily to enhance the institutional capacities for initiating the training programmes in evaluation. Co-development of the curriculum by the senior academic staff of the South Asian institutions and a few external resource persons is a key component of the strategy. The co-development is expected to ensure that the curriculum reflects the state of the art in the knowledge and practice of evaluation training and at the same time situates it in the South Asian cultural and development context. The establishment of the administrative and management structures for the regular delivery of the diploma course in the participating institutions is the second prong. Implementation of both these components is carried out as professional contributions of the senior faculty members to the cause of strengthening the academic training opportunities in evaluation.

The curriculum is being designed to provide an understanding of the development environment in South Asia, evaluation design, evaluation

approaches, quantitative and qualitative methods, ethics and standards in evaluation, and communication in evaluation. An important element of the training is the practical application. Possible strategies for making the practicum relevant and useful as a contribution to the knowledge base will be experimented.



TESA members at the curriculum development meeting in Aug 2010

Following the completion of the curriculum, academic staff will be trained on its delivery. The curriculum is expected to be available to other institutions who would like to establish evaluation training.

We welcome comments, suggestions and sharing of experiences from those who have conducted similar exercises. We invite institutions who would like to establish evaluation training at post graduate level. More information can be obtained by contacting SLEvA at www.sleva.lk.

Soma De Silva

President, SLEvA



La première édition des Journées Béninoises d'Evaluation (JBE) s'est tenue à Cotonou, du 14 au 16 juin 2010, à l'initiative du Ministère chargé de la Prospective, du Développement, de l'Evaluation des Politiques Publiques et de la Coordination de l'Action Gouvernementale. Ces journées ont porté sur le thème « Evaluation des Politiques Publiques : enjeux et défis pour le Bénin », et ont permis aux 138 participants de prendre connaissance des actions réalisées et envisagées par le Bénin, pour appuyer le processus de renforcement de la pratique d'évaluation dans le pays, notamment : (i) L'organisation et les résultats de l'étude diagnostique sur les capacités évaluatives au Bénin, (ii) l'évaluation du

fonctionnement de l'administration publique, réalisée en 2008 par le Bureau d'Évaluation des Politiques Publiques (BEPP) maître d'œuvre des JBE, (iii) Les initiatives sur l'institutionnalisation de l'évaluation dans le secteur public, notamment le projet de Politique Nationale d'Évaluation (PNE). Les participants ont été favorablement impressionnés par le niveau et la qualité des contributions et des débats. Le Ministre d'État, dans son discours, a notamment rappelé l'ambition du gouvernement d'ériger l'évaluation au rang de priorité nationale, et a promis que la prochaine édition des JBE sera l'occasion d'en mesurer l'avancement. Parmi les activités envisagées à cet effet, il ya l'institutionnalisation de l'évaluation, selon un procédé adapté au contexte du pays, le développement des capacités locales et nationales, la mise en place d'un cadre de concertation regroupant les différents acteurs au niveau national pour capitaliser sur les expériences avérées des uns et des autres, et assurer la synergie des idées et des actions, l'implication plus significative du parlement, ainsi que de la société

civile. Sur ce sujet, les débats ont mis en relief le rôle non négligeable joué par la société civile dans le contrôle citoyen de l'action publique, lequel n'était pas toujours connu des autorités (cas de Social Watch). Enfin il a été proposé que ces initiatives contribuent aussi à mettre en valeur le rôle non négligeable joué par le Réseau Béninois de Suivi et d'Évaluation, qui pourrait/devoir servir de catalyseur et surtout assurer une implication et une appropriation effectives des acteurs nationaux, tout en maintenant la synergie souhaitée avec les autres réseaux régionaux et internationaux.

Les rapports détaillés sur les travaux sont disponibles sur le site de l'IOCE

Par Oumoul Khayri Ba Tal
Présidente de l'IOCE



Evaluation and Politics

From: Cracknell, B. 2000, *Evaluating Development Aid*, Sage, page 183:

First, it is plain that evaluation takes place within a political context. The policies and programs that are being evaluated are proposed, defined, debated, enacted and funded through political processes. The evaluation itself has a political stance because it makes implicit political statements about issues such as the legitimacy of program goals and project strategies, and the usefulness of various implementation strategies' (Carlsson et al., 1994). Evaluators need to concern themselves not only with (formal) program objectives but with organizational objectives as well. And one of the most pervasive of organizational objectives, which affects almost all aid agencies, is the pressure to spend the funds allocated for aid within a given time frame.

The way evaluation results are received and acted upon will often depend on the status and function that recipients of the evaluation results in the aid hierarchy have. Senior management will look to evaluation to help strengthen the organization vis-à-vis its external environment, especially those authorities to which it is most accountable. But the operational departments are more likely to be looking to evaluations to safeguard their interests, especially vis-à-vis conflicts with other operational

departments. In fact, the further away from the 'workface', the more dispassionate will be the recipients' viewpoint about evaluation results. Operational staff will be very concerned about efficiency of implementation, and performance assessments, and very aware of the impact that the evaluation reports could have on their own career prospects. They tend to be less interested in impact aspects, whereas senior management will look to evaluations as early warning signals, guides to the effectiveness of policies and strategies, a source of new ideas and concepts, and as raw material for debates about future directions.

It is common experience of aid agencies that often little notice is apparently taken of evaluation findings at the policy level, and this can be ascribed to the fact the evaluators often make the mistake of addressing only departmental goals, and tend to overlook the political ones. In practice, evaluation findings are only one among a number of inputs that go into the reformulation of aid policies. They have to be weighed against influences coming from outside the agency (such as pressures from specialist NGOs, or the media, or treasuries), as well as the power structures and delicate coordination/ conflict balance within the organization itself.

Evaluators are being naïve if they expect their findings to result immediately in the aid organization changing its policy. Policy changes are the net result of the interaction of many influences and sometimes evaluation findings may

be used merely to legitimize decisions already about to be taken on other grounds. What is needed (from evaluation) is information that supports negotiation, rather than information calculated to point out the “correct decision” (Carlsson et al., 1994).

Submitted by Scott Bayley



Upcoming Events

- The 9th European Evaluation Society (EES) International Conference "Evaluation in Public Interest – Participation, Politics and Policy" **October 6 - 8, 2010, Prague, Czech Republic**
- The South Asian Community of Evaluators (CoE) “Global Evaluation Conclave” will take place 25-28 October, New Delhi, India. IOCE and a number of evaluation networks will be participating in this event. For more information visit www.evaluationconclave.org.
- The American Evaluation Association’s annual conference **will** be held Wednesday, November 10, through Saturday, November 13, 2010 in San Antonio, Texas. Visit the AEA 2010 Conference website for more information: <http://www.eval.org/eval2010/default.asp>

Update on IOCE membership:

IOCE expresses its gratitude to those evaluation organizations that have already submitted dues and contributions so far in 2010:

- Agencia Brasileira de Avaliacao
- American Evaluation Association (AEA)
- Bangladesh M&E Network (MDMEN)
- Development Evaluation of India (DESI)
- European Evaluation Society (EES)
- International Program Evaluation Network (IPEN)
- Pakistan Evaluation Network (PEN)
- ReLAC (Latin America & Caribbean)
- Society for Monitoring and Evaluation, Nigeria (SMEAN)
- UNICEF (Sponsor)

We know that AfrEA and CES and others will be making their contributions soon. If your organization has not given yet this year, we invite you to “do the necessary” to renew its membership or become a new member in order to support the mission of IOCE.



IOCE Board of Trustees to Meet in Prague

IOCE Board of Trustees will have a face to face meeting in Prague when they attend the European Evaluation Association meeting in October this year. Following the President’s report, financial report and review of institutional memberships, the meeting is scheduled to discuss issues in moving the 2010 work plan forward as well as plans for 2011. Important new agenda items will be the succession of new leadership including new representatives to the IOCE Board selected by member organizations/regions, election of the Executive Board, as well as related issues of updating by-laws and managing the Secretariat. A highlight will be the roundtable sharing and discussion on organisational updates and the EvaLeaders Forum, especially reflecting on putting it to better use. The meeting will also prepare for the 2010 Annual General Meeting.

President: Oumoul Khayri Ba Tall (Africa/ AfrEA/Mauritania)
 Vice- President: Burt Perrin (Europe/EES/France)
 Secretary: Frankie Jordan (North America/ CES/Canada)
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Other members of the Board Of Trustees:
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 Soma De Silva (Asia/Sri Lanka)
 Scott Bayley - (Australasian Evaluation Society/ Australia)
 Nino Saakashvili - (Eastern Europe/IPEN /Georgia)
 Vacant – (Asia 2nd representative)
 Vacant - (Africa 2nd representative)



IOCE Board members’ meeting in Cairo, Feb. ‘09

For information about IOCE visit www.IOCE.net