



Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Support Program

Final Narrative Report

Project ID

P2P Project number	P2P#10	
Project Title:	Academic Teaching of Evaluation for Public Officials	
Project Managed by:	Dr. Arunaselam Rasappan	
Date of this report	31 March 2015	
Focus of the Project: (check all that apply)		Advocacy for enabling environment for evaluation
	X	Academic courses in evaluation
		Strengthening VOPE institutional capacity
	X	Individual members' evaluation capacities
		Capacity to promote equity-focused and gender-sensitive evaluation

VOPEs involved:	Name and acronym of VOPE	Country/Region
#1	Malaysian Evaluation Society (MES)	Malaysia
#2	Malaysia University of Science & Technology (MUST)	Malaysia
#3		
#4		
[insert others if more than 4]		

Project start date	25 Sept 2014
Project end date	31 Mar 2015

Contact person(s) for this project

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What was the purpose of the project? What did the project plan to achieve and how? (Brief description of the project, max 100 words). This project aims to create and sustain a structured and results-based evaluation capacity building (ECB) initiative through a professional evaluation certification program. As there is no official academic program or certificate program on evaluation in Malaysia and especially in any formal higher institution of learning, this project is intended to fill the gap in national evaluation capacity building. The project was implemented in partnership with the Malaysia University of Science & Technology (MUST) with the support and collaboration of the Ministry of Finance, Malaysia and the Center for Development & Research in Evaluation (CeDRE) International, based in Malaysia.

1. **Did the project achieve what it planned to achieve?** Yes, fully. The pilot course in evaluation certification program was designed as an introduction to planning for evaluation under the Integrated Results-based Management (IRBM) environment. The course design and development team was made up of representatives from the MES, the University, Ministry of Finance Malaysia, AES, APEA, and IDEAS. The design team took into consideration the existing limited level of evaluation capacity as well as the implementation of IRBM in Malaysia which requires the adoption and utilization of evaluation for program

performance planning and management. A copy of the course program is attached for reference (Appendix 1). With the necessary approvals obtained from the Curriculum Committee and also from University Senate, the pilot course in evaluation was conducted by the University's School of Business from January–March 2015. Using an action-learning approach, the course consisted of 3 separate but linked workshops totalling 10 workshop days in addition to 2 home-based assignments in between the workshops. To ensure collaborative self-learning, a dedicated online discussion forum was formed, where participants and facilitators interacted among themselves. Course materials and documentation were made available online. This facility combined with the active online discussions and exchanges of information between and among participants and course facilitators, proved to be extremely useful in guiding the participants with their course work and enriching the sharing of information.

The success of this pilot course can be attested from the comments and feedback received from the participants for future improvements to the course program. Among the positive comments received include the following:

- *Course facilitators with sound experience*
- *Relevant content*
- *Good use of real scenario issues for discussion groups [real programmes provided by participants from their own experience]*
- *Timing, scheduling, assignments and group work were well organized*
- *Scheduling of workshops and assignment is appropriate*

Another evidence of the course usefulness is that participants had no hesitation to recommend the course to their colleagues based on the following comments:

- *It is a good introduction to planning for evaluations and should be attended by many*
- *Yes, they need to know the approach / technique of evaluating a programme*
- *Definitely, so that they will be more concerned to achieve appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness*
- *Yes, because the scope of evaluation is wide, so everybody should have knowledge on evaluation*
- *I would recommend my colleagues to attend this course in future as it is a good course that will help them in doing their jobs.*
- *Certainly, this is recommended for all colleagues who are interested in applying a systematic approach in M&E, to apply the concepts & methodology systematically.*

The participants also identified several areas for improvements as seen from the following feedback:

- *Course assignment approach is good, but the technical aspects required to complete the assignments is too complex (for Introductory course)*
- *Large volume of contents for participants to absorb and digest.*
- *Complexity of technical items in content on data collection and management*
- *More participants (needed) from different organizations.*

2. Was the project implemented as planned? If there were changes in the planned activities, why they were necessary?

The project implementation went according to plan. The course program design was completed on time. The endorsement and approvals for the course from both the University Senate and the Ministry of Finance, Malaysia were received according to plan. Minor changes were made related to the actual schedule and dates of one of the 3 workshops proposed by the course program. The change in workshop dates was necessary due to course application deadline being extended by a week and also due to the unavailability of course facilitators on the planned set of dates.

3. What are the main lessons learned from the experience of this project that you would like to share with other VOPEs?

There are several key learnings from this project as follows:

- a. The key to success is to communicate and explain in detail to all project partners about the project's purpose, strategies, work plan as well as its potentials. This is to achieve goal congruence and role clarity amongst the project partners so as to avoid any potential conflict.
- b. The second lesson learnt is to obtain the future commitment and support of all project partners on the possibility of scaling-up and rolling-out of the pilot prior to project commencement. Such a measure is necessary to ensure higher probability of success of the pilot due to commitment from all parties involved. In the case of the MES, there has been good uptake from all partners including the government of Malaysia which actually sponsored its participants for the pilot course;
- c. The third lesson relates to the selection and composition of the course design and development team members. Having a select group of international experts with proven credibility working with the local members who understand the local cultural context immensely contribute to the quality of the course program so as to gain the confidence and trust of the university approving authorities. The design team in this case was made up of key representatives/experts

drawn from MES, MUST, AES, IDEAS, APEA, and from CeDRE International which made the design team well rounded and well represented;

- d. The fourth lesson learnt is on the adoption of a blended learning methodology with a bias towards action-oriented research and learning which has proven to be effective. This is evidenced from the real life examples being created by the participants, which can be used for future training purposes. The program was a good mix between theory and practice with two integrated casework assignments in between the three workshops; The spread of time also allowed the participants time to return to their own organization in between the workshops and to apply their knowledge to identify and develop their own practical case examples;
- e. The fifth lesson is to ensure variety in the composition of the participants for the pilot as this factor is vital to gain different feedback from a diverse group coming from different work background and experience. The pilot course participants were equally balanced in gender representation (3 females and 3 males) coming from government agencies (2), private sector (1), academia (2) and private sector (1).

Three key points to bear in mind are the timing of the course, adequate resources to do the pilot, and the selection of participants. On the timing factor, the pilot course would have generated more participants from the government sector if not for the short notice and also the clash with the public sector budget preparation exercise which occurs in the first quarter of every year. As to the resource issue, attention needs to be paid in budgeting adequately for implementation of the pilot phase. With respect to selection of participants, it is crucial to ensure that participants are fully committed and their supervisors must make arrangement for their replacements at work so as to prevent any attrition. For instance, two participants from the pilot group of 8 persons had to drop out due to exigencies of work.

4. Are there plans to continue or expand collaboration started under the project? If so, please describe.

Guided by the success of this pilot project, the project partners planned to further scale up this introductory course into a full-fledged professional certification course on evaluation practice and also another course on evaluation management subject to approval being obtained from the Malaysian Quality Assurance (MQA) Board by MUST. In addition, the MUST intends to include Evaluation as an elective subject for all its academic courses apart from offering a MBA program specialising in Evaluation. It also intends to accept Evaluation as a field of study in its Ph.D. in Management program.

In addition to the above, the Ministry of Finance is considering making this course a regular annual affair to capacitate two cohorts of twenty public officials each year on a sustainable basis in partnership with MUST and MES.

These project outcomes are sure to impact positively on Malaysia's national evaluation capacity building initiative and the move towards professionalization.

On the regional front, VOPEs such as the Vietnam Monitoring & Evaluation Network and the Cambodian Evaluation Society are also planning to adopt and adapt this introductory course for Evaluation Planning with their own partner universities. Both of these VoPEs have worked closely with the MES to provide inputs into the course content and focus. The VNM&E has worked closely with the MES (under its own P2P initiative with MES), to negotiate and reach agreement with the National Economic University in Hanoi to run the same pilot program under the next P2P program.

All the above mentioned plans can only come into fruition with timely and adequate funding from donors or seed grants such as the P2P grant program. The MES intends to apply for further funding under the next P2P to pilot the intermediate level of this evaluation course under this initiative and eventually to move towards creating a wider pool of evaluation experts in the country both within the public and private sector as well as among civil society.

Please save with P2P# in file name, then send via email attachment to IOCE@earthlink.net

Once approved by EvalPartners, the report will be posted on the IOCE website.