

# IOCE EvalPartners profile survey of Voluntary Organizations of Professional Evaluators (VOPEs)

## I. Basic profile information

<b>1. Name and acronym of organization (VOPE)</b>	<b>Azerbaijan Evaluation Network (AEN)</b>
<b>2. Geographic scope of organization</b>	<b>National: Azerbaijan</b>
<b>3. Contact Details</b>	Name of main contact person: Sabina Rustamova, (MSW), Samaya Jafarova E-address: <a href="mailto:sabina_rustamova@yahoo.com">sabina_rustamova@yahoo.com</a> , <a href="mailto:azerisamaya@yahoo.com">azerisamaya@yahoo.com</a> Postal address: 5 Radjabli street , Apt14 , Baku, Azerbaijan AZ 1052 Telephone:+99451 9267010, +99455 7185832 VOPE website URL: <a href="http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/azerbaijan.evaluation/">http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/azerbaijan.evaluation/</a>
<b>4. Current membership – numbers of individuals, by their affiliation (if known; please at least give total)</b>	Government:3 NGOs/CSOs:19 Academics:4 Private sector (consultants):9 Other:10 <b>Total membership: 45</b>
<b>5. Year VOPE was founded</b>	2011
<b>6. Current status (identify which)</b>	• <b>Informal network</b>
<b>7. Information about growth: evolution of the number of members or financial resources in the last 5 years.</b>	Since May 2011 number of members increased to 45
<b>8. Purpose and mission of VOPE</b>	Main purpose of the network is to strengthen and improve program evaluation process in Azerbaijan through mobilization, sharing experience and mutual learning between professionals in evaluation field. In addition, the network will increase public awareness of monitoring and evaluation, will improve system of evaluation, and will build partnerships and networking with other evaluation professional groups. Members of the network can be interested individuals, evaluation practitioners, managers, consultants, teachers and students, officials from all levels of government, educational institutions, research agencies, civil society organizations and businesses. Members will meet regularly through the network.
<b>9. Current strategy and emphasis</b>	To promote and enhance evaluation profession in Azerbaijan
<b>10. Organizational capacity:</b> Please describe your governance structure, leadership, services provided, finances, human resources, linkages with other organizations, etc.	AEN cooperates with the Caucasus Research Resource Center- Azerbaijan, the latter provides facilities (classrooms, computer, projector) to carry out regular quarterly meetings and workshops of AEN members and guest speakers.
<b>11. Means of communication with members, e.g. newsletter, listserv, publication, website</b>	Emails, list serve, page on Facebook <a href="http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/azerbaijan.evaluation/">http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/azerbaijan.evaluation/</a>
<b>12. Past events (e.g. during past year)</b>	Impact assessment; Evaluations vs inspection and uses of evaluation results; Measure of social capital through behavioural games in community development projects
<b>13. Forthcoming key events/ conferences – dates, location</b>	Regular meeting of evaluators, May, 2012
<b>14. Name and e-address of person submitting this information</b>	Sabina Rustamova (MSW), Independent Consultant in Research and Program Evaluation <a href="mailto:sabina_rustamova@yahoo.com">sabina_rustamova@yahoo.com</a>

15.Date of this update	5 April 2012
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## II. Experience with Evaluation Capacity Building

<p><b>1. Background:</b> Please provide a brief history of the formation of this organization (VOPE).</p> <p>1.1 Who were/are the key players?</p> <p>1.2 How many members do you have on your governing board/ committee?</p> <p>1.3 What are the main existing strengths that your VOPE is trying to capitalize on?</p> <p>1.4 What are the main challenges that your VOPE is trying to address?</p>	<p>Program evaluation is crucial and is required of non-profit organizations to measure the impact of the program's services and their effectiveness. Through my experience working in social and development programs within local and international non-governmental organizations, as well as from the key informants' interviews, I have identified an urgent need for a comprehensive training in program evaluation for different stakeholders in Azerbaijan. The idea of the formation of Azerbaijan Evaluation Network came along with organizing Outcome Based evaluation training for representatives of local NGOs and specialists of national governmental organizations interested in evaluation issues in Azerbaijan. The training was organized by me (Sabina Rustamova (MSW)) and Elena Krylova-Mueller (MA in Governance and Development) with the financial support of Open Society Institute and Caucasus Research Resource Center-Azerbaijan. Ms. Krylova-Mueller is a specialist in governance, evaluation and development management issues with 15 years working experience in the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. After training the participants were given evaluation forms to fill where they expressed a willingness and interest to organize more events like this and in addition to create/ form a group/ network of evaluators in Azerbaijan.</p> <p>1.1 The key players are 2 persons / professionals in evaluation field</p> <p>1.2 Three members in governing board</p> <p>1.3 The main existing strengths are capacity and willingness, motivation of the board members to develop further the network and expand list of activities as well as to register the network officially</p> <p>1.4 Main challenges are to register the network officially in the Ministry of Justice, lack of finance to create and maintain a website, and invite guest speakers/ international experts to provide lectures/ workshops to local specialists.</p>
<p><b>2. Organizational motivation:</b> What were/are the driving forces of the VOPE and its historical development?</p>	<p>The collapse of the Soviet Union, the economic situation in the country, and the armed conflict with Armenia led to the increasing number of international relief agencies and developing and implementation a new social programs Azerbaijan. The approaches for program evaluation of social programs in different agencies (government and non-governmental organizations) in Azerbaijan are different from agency to agency. Often the agencies in their final annual reports focus more on reporting the intermediate and final outputs (types and number of services provided, number of clients served, etc.), and lack information on quality outputs and outcomes (proximal and distal) measures (personal observation). The actual problem is that the agencies rarely implement systematic mid-term and final program (outcome-based and impact) evaluations due to lack of knowledge, qualified experts or finances.</p> <p>It was challenging for me to find any information on program evaluation trainings or approaches that agencies use while doing program evaluation in Azerbaijan. During need assessment stage through interviews with the key-informants, people who have experience in this field, I tried to learn the current situation with program evaluation in Azerbaijan, what type of program evaluation the agencies use, what type of program evaluation the agencies/ potential participants of the training would be interested to learn, and what organizations provide any services in program evaluation.</p> <p>Therefore, to respond to this issue and to improve the program evaluation process in Azerbaijan, first I decided to organize a training program to teach relevant organizations how to do outcome-based evaluation. The development of the training program was based on programs of existing successful similar trainings implemented by other non-profit (human services) organizations and institutions taking into account the specifics of the country and participants.</p>
<p><b>3. Evaluation Capacity</b></p>	<p>1. Organization of meetings and workshops/ trainings with participation of</p>

<p><b>Building:</b> What has your VOPE done to promote evaluation (M&amp;E) capacity?</p>	<p>local and international professionals in this field 2. Sharing relevant information (vacancies, biddings, conferences, methodological tools, etc.) on Facebook page</p>
<p><b>4. Context / target entities:</b> More specifically, who are the persons or institutions your organization seeks to influence (to strengthen evaluation capacity)? For example:</p> <p>4.1 Technical capacities to <i>supply</i> quality evaluations, partnering with experts, local universities or others to provide training for members, etc.;</p> <p>4.2 Strengthening VOPE organizational capacity itself;</p> <p>4.3 Enhancing the enabling environment for evaluation, including strengthening the <i>demand</i> for and use of evaluations by policy makers;</p> <p>4.4 Influencing governmental policies related to evaluation, evaluation designs and implementation of M&amp;E systems, etc.</p>	<p>4.1 Khazar University and Caucasus Research Resource Center – Azerbaijan (<a href="http://www.crrc.az">www.crrc.az</a>), International Development <i>Evaluation Association</i> (IDEAS), International Programme Evaluation Network (IPEN), International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation 4.2 Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan 4.3 Ministry of Economic development of the Republic of Azerbaijan 4.4 International and local NGOs, Ministry of Economic development of the Republic of Azerbaijan</p>
<p><b>5. Public accountability:</b> Is your VOPE helping to strengthen oversight and transparency of government programs? If so, in what ways? Can you share any success stories of evaluators or others promoting public accountability?</p>	<p>Not yet</p>
<p><b>6. More specifically, what are some of the key themes for which you advocate?</b> For example, are you promoting issues related to cultural sensitivity, equity, social justice, empowerment, transformation, gender, environment, poverty? If so, please describe or attach relevant documents.</p>	<p>The key themes for which AEN advocates are improved program evaluation performance of evaluation professionals that will further impact their agencies programs' accountability and effectiveness, and better design of future social programs in governmental and non-governmental agencies.</p>
<p><b>7. Methods:</b> Experiences in strengthening skills of individual members, by (for example):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organizing workshops led by local experts;</li> <li>• organizing webinars with international speakers;</li> <li>• designing and delivering e-learning programmes;</li> <li>• administering mentoring programmes; etc.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organizing workshops/ meeting with participation of local and international experts</li> <li>2. Knowledge and experience sharing</li> </ol>
<p><b>8. Standards:</b> Has your VOPE developed professional standards/ ethical codes/ competencies (or adheres to those developed by others)? If so, please provide documentation.</p>	<p>Not yet</p>
<p><b>9. Job opportunities:</b> Do you</p>	<p>Yes</p>

share employment/ consultancy opportunities with evaluators on your database?	
<b>10. Progress and results:</b> What progress has been achieved so far in any of the above or other domains? What are expected and unexpected results achieved?	Participants of workshops/ meetings have improved program evaluation knowledge and performance. Program evaluation process and programs' accountability and effectiveness in the agencies where these participants work has improved The international and local agencies can easily find and approach a pool of the evaluators through online page.
<b>11. Lessons learned:</b> Recommendations/ tips to others for good practices on how to organize and sustain VOPEs like yours.	First of all motivation, enthusiasm and commitment to the profession are the main driving forces to promote the profession, create a network and mobilize people/ professionals in this field. On the other hand to ensure sustainability active participation and contribution of all members, human and technical capacity are needed.
<b>12. Next steps:</b> What does your organization plan to do next?	Register AEN as an official organization; more workshops and trainings, inviting guest speakers
<b>13. Willing to share with other VOPEs?</b> For example, would you be interested in forming peer-to-peer partnerships with one or more other VOPEs to share lessons learned, advise each other? If so, describe what you would be willing to share / advice you would seek.	Yes, it would be interesting to learn how these organizations ensure sustainability and design fundraising strategy. On the other hand AEN can share and present findings on the social programs and program evaluation process in Azerbaijan.
<b>14. Suggestions:</b> What ideas do you have for what should be included in activities of the EvalPartners Initiative?	To assist with organizing a professional seminars and inviting evaluators/ experts to provide lectures for evaluators in developing countries
<b>15. Want to be actively involved?</b> Does your VOPE want to be actively involved in EvalPartners? If so, in what ways?	Yes, to be part of a bigger professional evaluation association/ network; to participate in annual meetings and conferences; to contribute to improvement of evaluation process in the country and across the world