

**International Program for Development Evaluation Training
IPDET**

Evaluation of Program Impact
(Volume 2: Case Studies)



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is Volume 2 of an impact evaluation of the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) an international evaluation capacity building program that has been operating since 2000 and has attracted more than 2,000 participants from over 75 countries around the world. IPDET is sponsored by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank in conjunction with the Carleton University (Faculty of Public Affairs). This is the second impact evaluation of the program, the first having been conducted in 2004 (Buchanan, 2004).

Through consultation with IPDET management, the following set of evaluation questions were agreed:

1. To what extent has IPDET met its objectives of (a) knowledge and skill development and (b) networking with others in the broader evaluation community?
2. To what extent are IPDET clients able to apply learned knowledge and skill in the context of ongoing evaluation work in their home workplace?
3. What features of IPDET (e.g., core course, workshops, listserv network) do IPDET participants consider most important to its potential impact?
4. To what extent is the transfer of knowledge and skill to the home context mediated by contextual factors? Which factors and conditions are most powerful in explaining successful application of knowledge and skill?
5. To what extent has IPDET had an impact on the organizations to which clients belong? What sorts of effects can be attributed to IPDET?

A non-comparative, retrospective design was employed, using multiple lines of evidence. Two primary sources were an on-line questionnaire survey of IPDET alumni who had attended IPDET since its inception (achieved N=230) and a multiple case study that involved two organizational cases (located in Ottawa and Geneva) and three country-level cases (Botswana, China, Sri Lanka). Cases were selected on the basis of an expectation for demonstrable IPDET contribution to evaluation capacity building (ECB) or evaluation community building. Content analyses were done of two secondary data sources to augment the findings which included: email communications to IPDET (solicited and unsolicited) from alumni; and a recent six-month sample of IPDET listserv traffic.

Whereas the main findings for the evaluation integrated across data sources are reported in Volume 1 (main report) the current Volume 2 provides detailed reports of each of the five case studies selected for the evaluation. A brief introductory section summarizes case selection criteria and the methods used for the case study component of the evaluation and then each of the case reports is presented in detail. A synthesis and integration of the finding across cases is beyond the scope of this report. The reader is referred to Volume 1 of the report to consider the integration of these case reports into the main evaluation. A summary of the individual cases follows.

A. International Development Research Centre (IDRC) (Ottawa, Canada)

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a Crown corporation created by the Parliament of Canada in 1970 to help developing countries use science and technology to find practical, long-term solutions to the social, economic, and environmental problems they face. Based in Ottawa, Canada, IDRC was selected for inclusion in the case studies for a number of reasons, the most salient of which were its commitment to evaluation capacity building and its long history of sponsoring staff and field based partners to participate in IPDET. The case study was based on interviews with staff and partners, and document analysis based on website information, and published and evaluative reports. The findings of the case study were clearly positive and summarized according to the main objectives of the evaluation:

- Knowledge and skill development: The evidence indicates that both staff and partner expectations coming into IPDET were met.
- Networking: Networking fostered by IPDET was a benefit noted by IDRC partners within the broader community but not so much with IDRC staff;
- Knowledge and skill transfer: Participants reported that they were able to apply knowledge and skill learned at IPDET in their respective workplaces.
- Effectiveness of features of IPDET: Participants commented on a variety of strengths (i.e., small group activities, workshops, resource materials, guest speakers) and areas for improvement (i.e., pedagogical approach, content, textbook) for IPDET as well as future directions.
- Mediating effects of context: A range of contextual variables were identified that either foster knowledge transfer and ECB (e.g., learning culture, focus on outcomes, champions) or inhibit it (i.e., fear of evaluation, time-sensitivity)
- Organizational impact of IPDET: Participants provided considerable evidence to show the existence of organizational capacity to do evaluation. IDRC staff and partners had different perspectives on identified uses of evaluation and both groups commented on additional effects of evaluation.

All of the participants valued their learning experience at IPDET. The scholarship recipients were extremely appreciative of having the opportunity and financial support from IDRC to be able to attend such an internationally renowned event. They also felt that they had acquired a greater understanding of the different approaches to development M&E which they would be able to immediately apply in their work environments. Several participants – IDRC staff and partners – believed that they had acquired ‘a new way of thinking’ from IPDET. They felt supported in their workplaces and did not identify any insurmountable barriers to knowledge transfer. They also felt “linked in” to a new, global evaluation community. For many, this consisted primarily of “passive” use of the listserv; but nonetheless, this was highly valued. In the case of a few participants, IPDET had served as a catalyst in building a very active evaluation network. The IDRC staff were extremely positive about the ‘learning culture’ in which they

work and the way in the evaluation unit works as a partner with them in continuously seeking new and improved ways to utilize M&E.

B. Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD) (Geneva, Switzerland)

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD), a multilateral not-for-profit organization established in 1998, is dedicated to the elimination of anti-personnel mines and for the reduction of the humanitarian impact of other landmines and explosive remnants of war. Among its many activities aimed at augmenting performance in mine-action, GICHD has an overt commitment to evaluation capacity building in the sector. In 2005 it formed an ongoing relationship with IPDET providing workshops in 2005 and 2006 in Ottawa and partnering in delivering mini-IPDET training sessions in the mine-action sector. To date, three such regional sessions have been offered and more are planned. The case study focused on IPDET's role in assisting GICHD in developing its evaluation capacity building strategies. The case study was based on interviews with Centre staff, IPDET training participants, and others associated with mine-action in addition to website and document analysis. IPDET's role in helping the Centre is summarized under the overarching questions guiding the overall evaluation:

- Knowledge and skill development: GICHD is satisfied that people it sponsored to attend IPDET achieved desired knowledge and skill objectives. Participants corroborated this observation.
- Networking: Networking outcomes were relatively limited mostly due to the unique aspects of the sector and the relatively small community of members within it.
- Knowledge and skill transfer: Participants were able to apply knowledge and skill learned at IPDET; some are working in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) roles including many who have been recruited by GICHD to participate in regional evaluation projects.
- Effectiveness of features of IPDET: Participants commented on a variety of strengths (i.e., small group activities, on-site networking) but were particularly appreciative of sector specific workshop materials. Suggestions for improvement centred on expanding the curriculum to include more exposure to technical tools (e.g., SPSS).
- Mediating effects of context: Respondents identified mediating variables that enhance knowledge transfer (e.g., organizational and senior administrative support, nature of work in the sector) and impede it (e.g., competing demands on time, lack of expertise in the area, resource limitations)
- Organizational impact of IPDET: We concluded that GICHD has developed its capacity to provide evaluation leadership and training in the area and that IPDET has played a role in such development. IPDET alumni also indicated evaluation-related developments and uses in their own organizations.

The case study is unique in that it focuses on a partnership between IPDET and a multilateral not-for-profit organization whose mission is to provide leadership in the elimination

of land mines and anti-personnel explosive devices. The sector is small and very highly specialized. Yet it is recognized as a development context given the significant social and economic consequences of this pervasive global problem. IPDET's association with GICHD over the past five years has been highly fruitful. IPDET has played a key role in helping develop sector-specific evaluation training materials and has aided greatly in helping the Centre with its evaluation capacity building agenda. IPDET will continue to assist with the delivery of mini-IPDET regional training opportunities and will also help with the Stage 3 of GICHD's strategy: country-level training and capacity building. This activity will involve the translation of evaluation training materials into country-specific languages which promises to extend the reach of evaluation capacity building. It will also involve IPDET and potentially mini-IPDET alumni in training delivery and evaluation practice.

C. Republic of Botswana (Gaborone, Botswana)

Botswana has a national strategic plan (*Vision 2016*) that implicates government, civil society and private sectors with an end-date in 2016 timed to coincide with the country's 50th anniversary of independence. It is no coincidence that after an initial connection in 2003, many Botswana nationals, mostly from government, have been sent to Ottawa to participate in IPDET (usually in the full 4-week program). For these reasons, and because IPDET has had other indirect influences within the local M&E community, Botswana was selected as a country-level case within which substantial impact of the program was anticipated. The case study was supported by website and document analyses, but was mostly based on individual and group interviews with members of the Vision Council – an arm's length organization with M&E responsibilities – government staff, and local evaluation community members. Most of these individuals are IPDET alumni. The findings revealed considerable IPDET-stimulated awareness building about M&E in Botswana and some support for ongoing system development. The findings are summarized according to the overarching program impact evaluation objectives:

- Knowledge and skill development: Most of the members attending IPDET were interested in developing their knowledge and understanding of M&E for management or systems development purposes. Respondents said that IPDET was highly effective for these purposes.
- Networking: IPDET has played a noteworthy role in fostering networking at the international level and more indirectly at the local level.
- Knowledge and skill transfer: Conceptual benefits of having attended the IPDET training were apparent. Many respondents associated themselves with M&E systems development and RBM management; the observed transfer was mostly knowledge and understanding as opposed to skill building. A few respondents subsequently became actively involved in actually *doing* evaluation after having attended IPDET.
- Effectiveness of features of IPDET: strengths, shortcomings and suggestions for improvement of IPDET were identified. Respondents reported that on the whole the program was highly effective and professionally satisfying.
- Mediating effects of context: The primary themes that emerged were historical context, a growing demand for evaluation, and political considerations that may mitigate capacity

development. Reported shortages in the supply of evaluation expertise and local training alternatives mitigate against long term evaluation capacity development.

- Organizational and community impact of IPDET: Considerable progress in developing M&E systems was observed and a mostly indirect role for IPDET was identified. Despite evident promising signs capacity building and the prospects for building organizational capacity to *use* evaluation has been slow. IPDET has played a definite role in fostering local evaluation community development, but progress in this area (e.g., establishment of local evaluation society) also has been quite slow to date.

Botswana is a fascinating case site within which to explore the capacity building impact of IPDET. Interest in M&E capacity building has grown enormously due to the national development strategy, Vision 2016, and a concomitant promise from government to make a significant shift to an RBM perspective. The release of NDP-10, the most recent government development plan, will only continue to augment this interest. Given such growing demand, IPDET has been embraced as a highly relevant and viable training alternative. Not only have many Botswana nationals in key positions been sent to IPDET for training but IPDET co-directors have offered additional professional development within the country.

The challenge of developing M&E systems are enormous and IPDET has played a role in both demystifying the challenges through helping develop realistic understandings and expectations and through indirect means such as providing support for such development. Yet there are local contextual forces at play that to some extent may mitigate the impact of such input. Despite significant progress in M&E system development, it is clear that the local supply of evaluation expertise continues to be modest and that ongoing training needs are increasingly evident. Attempts to develop local training initiatives have been relatively unsuccessful so far, and despite considerable interest, momentum toward developing a national evaluation society had slackened somewhat. Still it is clear that, as a collective, IPDET alumni in Botswana have a definite presence and are helping to define the future of M&E in the country.

D. People's Republic of China and the Shanghai International Program for Development Evaluation Training (SHIPDET)

The case study is unique in that IPDET is simultaneously involved in stimulating M&E capacity building in the People's Republic of China (PRC) through its main program in Ottawa as well as a direct partnership with the Shanghai International Program for Development Evaluation Training (SHIPDET). SHIPDET, housed by the Asian-Pacific Finance Development Center (AFDC), has been operational since 2007 and offers evaluation training sessions twice per year: once in the spring to Chinese nationals (generally government employees) and once in the fall to people from over 26 countries, mostly in Asia. The case study was based on interviews with program developers, trainers, and training participants, as well as document analysis based on website information, and other related program documents and evaluative reports. The

findings of the case study were clearly positive and are summarized according to the main objectives of the evaluation:

- Knowledge and skill development: There was affirmative evidence that training objectives for participants in IPDET and SHIPDET were met, although respondents' recognized that instruction is at a fairly basic level, tailored to participants with very limited background in M&E.
- Networking: There was some indication that networking had occurred, particularly at the training events but the extent to which post-training connections endured, was variable.
- Knowledge and skill transfer: Participants were able to apply knowledge and skill learned at IPDET in their respective workplaces. There was some indication that the training was effective in developing a conceptual understanding for M&E, perhaps more so than developing technical skills.
- Effectiveness of features of IPDET: Participants commented on a variety of strengths (i.e., practical applications, on-site networking, resource materials) and, to a limited extent, general shortcomings (e.g., lunchtime presentations at IPDET; adaptations of curriculum to Chinese context for SHIPDET). Suggested improvements were also identified, many of which align with strategic directions for SHIPDET.
- Mediating effects of context: Several context variables were identified as mediating not only the transfer of training but also, prospects for M&E capacity building in the PRC (e.g., impetus for capacity building, current status, cultural considerations, prospects for alternative training options, leadership, resources).
- Organizational impact of IPDET: Much of the discussion of organizational capacity development focused on strategic directions for AFDC and SHIPDET. There was modest evidence to show other organizational impacts but it was generally acknowledged that M&E capacity building in China is in its infancy and that it will be some time before it is fully integrated in to major systems of governance.

This case study is unusual to the extent that IPDET has had two distinct interests, one being the provision of training to mostly government managers and people with M&E responsibility, the other being to work in partnership with other organizations in support of a local version of the IPDET program, namely SHIPDET. It is clear that SHIPDET has attained some prominence in the region and is becoming recognized as a leader in the provision of M&E training. For the most part, people attending SHIPDET are satisfied that their learning goals are attained although it is recognized that the program is targeted at a very basic level and that it can only reasonably be expected to lay a good foundation for future development. Although it is changing slowly, it would appear that the context for ongoing training and development in M&E is encouraging. This is perhaps best indicated by the healthy strategic directions under consideration by SHIPDET and AFDC.

E. Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (Columbo, Sri Lanka)

Sri Lanka was selected as a case study in order to test IPDET management's impression that the program has had positive direct and indirect effects on the development of government systems for M&E and the development of a local community culture of evaluation. This had been the overwhelming impression, despite the relatively small number of nationals that have attended IPDET in Ottawa. In combination with Ottawa-based training, other elements and forces associated with IPDET (i.e., networking, provision of guidance and professional development, a study tour) may have produced substantial growth in evaluation capacity at the country level, as well as within the South Asian region.

The case study was based on website and document analysis, but mostly on individual and group interviews with government staff and partners, IPDET alumni and local evaluation community members. The findings of the case study confirmed substantial growth in evaluation capacity at the local country level as well as the involvement of IPDET alumni and local evaluation community members in regional evaluation capacity building. The findings are summarized according to the main questions guiding the overall evaluation:

- **Knowledge and skill development:** There was good evidence that learning expectations for IPDET were met despite an observed range of expectations of members coming into the program.
- **Networking:** IPDET fostered networking at the international, local and, to a lesser extent, regional levels.
- **Knowledge and skill transfer:** We observed that some participants applied IPDET knowledge and skill to doing evaluation as well as performing system design/implementation and training.
- **Effectiveness of features of IPDET:** Respondents reported that on the whole the program was highly effective. In addition to program strengths, they identified shortcomings and suggestions for improvement of IPDET.
- **Mediating effects of context:** The primary themes that emerged were historical context, growing demand for evaluation, and supply shortages. Local IPDET alumni who were involved as evaluation champions were an important element in building capacity.
- **Organizational and community impact of IPDET:** Participants provided considerable evidence to show IPDET has played a role in helping to develop government capacity for evaluation and, indirectly, in the development of the local evaluation community. There are promising signs of continuing progress, although the capacity for the use of evaluation use remains underdeveloped.

Despite only a relatively small number of Sri Lankan nationals having attended IPDET, it would appear that the program has had positive direct and indirect effects on the development of government systems for M&E and the development of a local community culture of evaluation. This is partly attributable to members attending IPDET and successfully transferring knowledge back to the country, but also through ongoing interaction with IPDET colleagues and IPDET co-

directors over time. International, regional and local networks of evaluators and people interested in M&E have been established and evidence that IPDET has played a significant role in facilitating networking – international and local – was observed in the case study.

M&E has not yet been institutionalized in Sri Lanka but there are many positive signs in this direction. Leading in this respect is the former MPI which has taken up the challenge of growing a very sophisticated and now renowned M&E system and taken steps to implement it in such a way as to foster its regular use and integration into the government’s policy and planning cycle. But the government has also made strong connections with donor partners, NGOs and academia in ways that will foster the growth of the local evaluation community and help to ameliorate the current shortage of trained evaluation personnel available in the country.



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AEA	American Evaluation Association
AfDB	African Development Bank
AsDB	Asian Development Bank
AFDC	China's Asia-Pacific Finance Development Center
CLEAR	Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results
CES	Canadian Evaluation Society
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CUEE	Canada's Consortium of Universities for Evaluation Education
DfID	United Kingdom's Department for International Development
ECB	Evaluation capacity building
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-Mining
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IPDET	International Program for Development Evaluation Training
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MoF	Ministry of Finance, People's Republic of China
MPI	Ministry of Plan Implementation, Sri Lanka
NONIE	Network of Networks for Impact Evaluation
PM	Performance management
RBM	Results-based management
SHIPDET	Shanghai International Program for Development Evaluation Training
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WB	World Bank



INTRODUCTION

This report is Volume 2 of an impact evaluation of the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) an international evaluation capacity building program that has been operating since 2000 and has attracted more than 2,000 participants from over 75 countries around the world. IPDET is sponsored by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank in conjunction with the Carleton University (Faculty of Public Affairs). This is the second impact evaluation of the program, the first having been conducted in 2004 (Buchanan, 2004).

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1. To what extent has IPDET met its objectives of (a) knowledge and skill development and (b) networking with others in the broader evaluation community?
2. To what extent are IPDET clients able to apply learned knowledge and skill in the context of ongoing evaluation work in their home workplace?
3. What features of IPDET (e.g., core course, workshops, listserv network) do IPDET participants consider most important to its potential impact?
4. To what extent is the transfer of knowledge and skill to the home context mediated by contextual factors? Which factors and conditions are most powerful in explaining successful application of knowledge and skill?
5. To what extent has IPDET had an impact on the organizations to which clients belong? What sorts of effects can be attributed to IPDET?

A non-comparative, retrospective design was employed, using multiple lines of evidence. Two primary sources were an on-line questionnaire survey of IPDET alumni who had attended IPDET since its inception (achieved N=230) and a multiple case study that involved two organizational cases (located in Ottawa and Geneva) and three country-level cases (Botswana, China, Sri Lanka). Cases were selected on the basis of an expectation for demonstrable IPDET contribution to evaluation capacity building (ECB) or evaluation community building. Content analyses were done of two secondary data sources to augment the findings which included: email communications to IPDET (solicited and unsolicited) from alumni; and a recent six-month sample of IPDET listserv traffic.

This volume presents the five case study reports. Each case study was guided by the same evaluation questions identified above and by the conceptual framework laid out in detail in Volume 1 (see pp. 6-7). The framework permitted an analysis of the effects of IPDET in terms of knowledge and skill development, networking, the transfer of knowledge and skills to development contexts, the role of context in mediating the impact of capacity building and IPDET's role in contributing to organization and evaluation community development. The results were analyzed across cases and integrated into the main evaluation report (Volume 1) of this evaluation. The present volume focuses only on case level findings.

CASE SELECTION

The design of this element of the impact evaluation called for the identification of case sites where IPDET's contribution to development ECB was likely to be evident. The case sites would provide rich contexts within which capacity building effects could be examined and studied in detail. The design feature permitted us to understand in greater depth than would be possible through surveys or other broad-based data collection schemes the contributions of IPDET to local capacity building in evaluation.

In addition to the annual training program offered in Ottawa, IPDET has played a significant role in the collaborative development and delivery of development evaluation training in several developing country contexts. Specifically, since 2007 IPDET co-directors have collaborated in the establishment of a biannual regional version of the training program in China (known as Shanghai IPDET or SHIPDET) as well as several mini-IPDET programs that have been offered in Asia and Eastern Europe. Over the years, IPDET co-directors have also contributed to ECB through offering or otherwise participating in professional development activities (e.g., study tours, conferences) and training sessions (e.g., workshops and input sessions) in local development country contexts. These considerations were taken into account in the identification of organizational and country-level case sites for the impact evaluation. In consultation with IPDET management we decided on five case sites for the study: These are described below, the first two being organizational cases and the remaining being country-level case sites.

International Development Research Centre (IDRC) (Ottawa, Canada)

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a Crown corporation created by the Parliament of Canada in 1970 to help developing countries use science and technology to find practical, long-term solutions to the social, economic, and environmental problems they face. They are based in Ottawa, Canada and were selected as a case organization for a number of reasons. Over the years IDRC has sent many staff and project partners to IPDET. Overall, it has sponsored well over 50 participants to attend the program. It is also of interest because ECB is an overt aim of the organization. To that end, IDRC recently conducted file-based tracer study on IPDET's ECB. At the time of the present study, IDRC was moving toward an important performance evaluation exercise, which provided the opportunity to gain important insights into its focus on evaluation, both internally and externally.

Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD) (Geneva, Switzerland)

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD) was established in 1998 as a multilateral, not-for-profit NGO based in Switzerland that is funded by over 20 countries and organizations. The Centre's mission is twofold: (1) the elimination of anti-personnel mines and the reduction of the humanitarian impact of other landmines and explosive remnants of war and (2) increase the performance and professionalism of mine action. GICHD

has a very strong commitment to ECB in the sector and was selected as a case study site based on its longstanding relationship with IPDET. Taking a multi-staged approach toward its ECB agenda, GICHD delivered workshop training at IPDET in Ottawa in 2005 and 2006 and co-sponsored 15 people from several mine-affected countries to attend. Subsequently, GICHD has cosponsored with IPDET and other partners regional mini-IPDET training programs and it plans to continue with this program as well as focusing on country-specific training and capacity building. GICHD also provides IPDET graduates with an opportunity to participate in evaluations of mine-action programs and regional training initiatives.

Republic of Botswana (Gaborone, Botswana)

Botswana was selected as a country-level site for the study because a substantial number of people from that country have attended IPDET in Ottawa over the years. Approximately 15 individuals – mostly from government, but also from civil society – have attended an IPDET training since 2004. Through the auspices of the Vision Council, an arms-length organization that represents the interests of government, private sector and civil society, IPDET alumni have been directly involved in enabling ‘Vision 2016,’ the strategic plan for the national government. Part of the mandate of the Vision Council is to carry out monitoring to check progress against the targets laid out in ‘Vision 2016.’ Over the past number of years, IPDET has been informally involved in helping to develop the local evaluation community through participation in ongoing evaluation planning and local professional development. Several IPDET alumni have been active in developing the local evaluation community.

People’s Republic of China and the Shanghai International Program for Development Evaluation Training (SHIPDET) (Shanghai, PRC)

The People’s Republic of China was selected as a country-level case study because IPDET has two distinct interests here. First, IPDET has provided evaluation training to mostly government managers and people with M&E responsibility through training in its regular program in Ottawa and through a specialized training session in Beijing in 2006. Second, IPDET (through the World Bank) has a direct partnership with the Shanghai International Program for Development Evaluation Training (SHIPDET). SHIPDET is housed by the Asian-Pacific Finance Development Center (AFDC) and has been operational since 2007. It offers evaluation training sessions twice per year to 50-70 participants: once in the spring to Chinese nationals (mostly government employees) and once in the fall to people from over 26 countries, mostly in Asia. SHIPDET was set up on a pilot basis and has recently been renewed for a multi-year period.

Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (Colombo, Sri Lanka)

Only eight individuals from Sri Lanka – mostly from government but also from civil society – have attended IPDET over the years and one person has returned to IPDET to teach in the program. Yet Sri Lanka was selected as a country-level site for the case study because of considerable growth in the local evaluation community, likely due to the contributions of specific

individuals. For example, one person has contributed extensively to teaching in the IPDET program, and others organized a study tour in Sri Lanka in 2009 attended by over two dozen IPDET alumni, many from Africa.

METHODS

The data collection methods were harmonized across cases. For each case the primary sources of data were either key informant interviews or focus group discussions with informed people. To that end, each case site involved a direct site visit by a member of the evaluation team. Given the international mandate of the two organizations involved only relatively few interviews were conducted on-site, with the remainder being carried out via telephone or Skype.

Before site visits were conducted, advance scanning of relevant web sites was done so as to provide the evaluator with relevant contextual information. In many cases, web searches identified documents or data of interest for the respective case study. The site visit then followed with interviews being arranged locally and over distances with the aid of technology. In some cases focus groups were scheduled. The sampling of individuals for interviews and focus groups was decided on a case-by-case basis. We relied on IPDET records to help identify IPDET alumni who would be of interest to include as data sources. We also identified other individuals on a modified snowball sampling basis; interview participants would often help us to identify and recruit additional people to be interviewed. In many such cases, these individuals were not IPDET alumni; rather they held key organizational positions or otherwise familiar with evaluation community building and ECB within the case site.

All participants were required to review and sign off on letters of informed consent before the interview began (see Appendix A). The basic interview guide that we used appears in Appendix B. This interview guide was adapted by the evaluator as needed depending on the organizational location or role of the individual being interviewed. The interviews were conversational in tone and generally lasted from 40 minutes to 60 minutes. The majority of interviews were audio-recorded, including several of the telephone and Skype interviews. Where interviews were not audio recorded copious field notes were taken by the evaluator and these were reviewed and clarified following the meeting.

In most cases, supporting documentation was also gathered during site visits. Sometimes documents were identified on websites and were accessed electronically. Generally, the role of supporting documentation was corroborative, used mostly to verify or provide further evidence in support of themes and issues emerging. Other documents were used to augment the description of the case and the context in which ECB was occurring.

All interviews were summarized by members of the evaluation team, for the most part by the person doing the interview. Data summaries took the form of 4-5 page single spaced documents that described the content of audio-recorded versions of the interview or field notes. As the analyst compiled a given data summary selected illustrative verbatim quotations were identified and delineated directly in the summary.

Each case was analyzed and written by the evaluation team member assuming responsibility for the case. While some of the analyses relied on a manual review of data summaries, most of them were analyzed with the aid of NVivo data analysis software. Interview and focus group summaries were imported into the software. Then the content of the interview summaries was associated with each of the questions guiding the evaluation and with variable codes associated with our conceptual framework. Several additional codes emerged as the analysts worked through the content. We then compiled the draft case reports which were structured by the guiding questions. Within each section, we integrated findings across data sources (individuals, documents, websites) and where appropriate augmented claims with illustrative quotations. Draft reports were then reviewed for clarity by evaluation team members and IPDET management. Table 1 provides an overview of data gathered at each site.

Table 1: Data Sources and Sample Information by Case Study Site

Evaluation Question	IDRC Ottawa Canada	GICHD Geneva Switzerland	Botswana	Peoples Republic of China	Sri Lanka
Document and website review	-website review -tracer study -activity report -publications	- website review -on-line examination of documents such as posted evaluation studies	- website review - Government policy documents - Vision 2016 progress report - Vision Council annual report	- website review - evaluation report - policy paper	-website review -on-line MIS review -government policy documents
Interviews and focus groups	-N=13 - 2 staff including head of eval. - 6 IDRC staff alumni - 5 partner alumni (scholarship recipients)	-N=10 -3 GICHD staff including head of eval. and senior admin. - 3 alumni (scholarship recipients) - 4 members of devel. eval or mine action community	- N=11 -3 staff of Vision Council including head -2 external consultants - 4 IPDET alumni working in government - 2 IDPET alumni working in civil society organizations	-N=13 -Focus group with SHIPDET staff (3) - Head of host organization - 1 SHIPDET manager/trainer* - 1 external trainer -3 IPDET alumni - 5 SHIPDET alumni	-N=12 -Focus group, Ministry of Planning and Impl. staff (4) - Focus group (2) IPDET alumni - Focus group (2) eval community members - 3 IPDET alumni - 1 member of sponsoring agency

*This person also participated in the group interview.

Further details specific to methods can be found within each case. We now turn to a presentation of individual case reports. The reader is reminded that Volume 1 of the report provides an integration of the findings of these case studies into the main evaluation. For our present purposes, detailed findings associated with the respective cases are reported below.

The cases are presented in sequence with the two organizational cases (IDRC, GICHD) followed by the three country-level cases (Botswana, PRC, Sri Lanka). The presentation of the reports, followed by appendices, brings to a conclusion Volume 2 of this evaluation report.

CASE STUDIES

A. International Development Research Centre (Ottawa, Canada)

Catherine J. Elliott & J. Bradley Cousins

BACKGROUND

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a Crown corporation created by the Parliament of Canada in 1970 to help developing countries use science and technology to find practical, long-term solutions to the social, economic, and environmental problems they face. The Centre is based in Ottawa, Canada and was selected as a case organization for a number of reasons. Over the years IDRC has sent many staff and project partners to IPDET. Overall, it has sponsored well over 50 participants to attend the program. It is also of interest because ECB is an overt aim of the organization. To that end, IDRC recently conducted file-based tracer study on IPDET's ECB. At the time of the present study, IDRC was moving toward an important performance evaluation exercise, which provided the opportunity to gain important insights into its focus on evaluation, both internally and externally.

The Centre supports the development of local research communities whose work will build “healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies”¹. In keeping with its mission, IDRC sponsors a multitude of projects in many locations around the globe; and it recognizes the critical role that evaluation plays in the effective management of these research projects and in producing usable, relevant results. In 1992, the organization established its own evaluation unit to help coordinate and support the Centre's evaluation efforts. Consistent with the Centre's philosophy towards evaluation, the evaluation unit promotes an approach that is learning-oriented, but also recognizes the need for accountability.

IPDET has been attractive to IDRC for a variety of reasons. First, it is locally run (in Ottawa) and therefore relatively low cost for headquarters staff. As such, IPDET provides an opportunity to “piggy-back” meetings and networking for IPDET-sponsored attendees around the conference timeframe. IPDET is also specifically focused on development evaluation and is therefore highly consistent with IDRC's mandate. IPDET also attracts as presenters and instructors some of the best evaluators in the field. From the beginning, IDRC has tried to recruit both partners from IDRC-funded projects and project officers (PO's) from IDRC headquarters to participate in IPDET. The intention is to create an opportunity for dialogue around evaluation and to get the partners and PO's to a shared level of understanding about the meaning of development evaluation.

According to IPDET records, 72 IDRC sponsored and affiliated people have attended IPDET over the last 9 years, including both IDRC staff (31) and partners (41). The latter have

¹ IDRC, retrieved from http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-8513-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html, June 1, 2010.

been supported by generous scholarships offered by IDRC. The organizational culture of IDRC is one which values learning; and evaluation and monitoring processes are integral to this philosophy. In keeping with this learning culture, IDRC has continuously reviewed its involvement with IPDET, both formally and informally. In 2006, a Tracer Study was conducted to “determine whether IPDET is the best method of building this capacity” (2006, p. 7). This study was a thorough review of the previous 5 years, and the conclusions were:

Overall, the study found the IPDET program to be an effective way for IDRC partners and staff to build their evaluation capacity... The majority of IDRC-sponsored participants stated that the IPDET program had either moderate or great influence over their work, organization and career... Most surveyed participants stated that they returned to their organizations and implemented their new knowledge and skills in evaluation into projects. Although the course is one focused on capacity building and evaluation, networking was an additional aspect of significance to all participants surveyed.

Based on these results, IDRC has continued to support staff and partners to attend IPDET. In addition, the evaluation unit also gathers feedback on an annual basis and reviews their level of involvement in light of changing organizational conditions, (e.g., training/scholarship budgets, organizational strategy and priorities, alternative training vehicles/venues available)².

METHODS

The case study was guided by the conceptual framework and the evaluation questions specified for the overall follow-up evaluation study, and it involved the following steps for data collection and analysis:

- *Review of documentation* – Because of its commitment to evaluation for organizational learning, IDRC has conducted several evaluations over the 9 year period in which it has been involved in IPDET. These include the IDRC *Tracer Study Report* (2006), and most recently, the *Group Report by IDRC Staff Participants* (2009). We reviewed these documents as well as other relevant documents from the IDRC website, and published material (e.g., Amo & Cousins, 2009; Carden & Earl, 2007) with the intent of garnering further information about the organization, its programs, structure, and culture.
- *Individual interviews* – Interviews were conducted, in person and by telephone with IDRC employees who had attended IPDET and with IDRC-sponsored alumni. In total, 11 alumni were interviewed, representing a cross section of years (2001, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009). Of these 11 interviewees, six were IDRC staff and five were partners (scholarship recipients, IDRC project coordinators working in academic or NGO settings). All of the IDRC staff had attended only the two-week core program. Among scholarship recipients, one had attended for three weeks (the core plus one week of workshops); two had attended for four weeks; and two attended workshops (two weeks) only. The five partners represented

² For example, in July 2009, 12 IDRC staff prepared a report reflecting on their experiences at the 2009 IPDET (IDRC 2009).

five different countries and several regions of the world (China, Uganda, Argentina, Ecuador, and Philippines – international NGO- with Headquarters in U.S.). With respondents' permission, all interviews were audio recorded.

FINDINGS

Findings for the case study are organized according to the over-arching evaluation objectives for the follow-up evaluation.

- Knowledge and skill development;
- Networking;
- Knowledge and skill transfer;
- Effectiveness of features of IPDET;
- Mediating effects of context; and
- Individual and organizational impact of IPDET.

Knowledge and Skill Development

The participants were asked about their expectations going into the IPDET course. We summarized their responses according to staff or partner categories.

IDRC staff

Among IDRC staff, there was a slight variation in responses. All of the POs/Specialists³ wanted a comprehensive overview of the field of evaluation, but some had additional, more specific objectives. For example, one wanted to gain a greater appreciation of the terms of reference (ToRs), an understanding of the “standards out there for evaluation”, and an increased ability to deal with external evaluators. Another wanted to acquire some “concrete tools that I can use in my work”. This respondent had a particular project in mind, one which required significant evaluation.

Were these objectives met? In general, the answer is affirmative. One PO believed that he received the general overview that he was looking for, but he did not learn about “*the tool(s)*” (emphasis in original) that he wanted for his project for the evaluation. However, he admitted that this expectation may have been unrealistic:

I would say that I got exposed to a lot of tools, to a lot of approaches, but after I would say I was not able to say ‘yes, I have THE tool and I have THE approach and I know how I will evaluate this project now.’...I think that I was probably putting the wrong expectation on the wrong problem! Because my understanding after I went to IPDET, it’s not the place where you can really master a tool or two and apply them.

³ Throughout this report, IDRC IPDET participants will be referred to as “IDRC staff” or “Project Officers/ PO’s”, when referring to participants who were *not* evaluation specialists. While the program personnel were in a variety of roles, PO’s is the generic term which will be used to maintain confidentiality of personnel and their roles.

The other IDRC PO, however, was very pleased with his increased confidence in dealing with external evaluators. In his words,

I also wanted to see things from the other side, which is very helpful when we deal with consultants... since I took the course I have had an evaluation of a big project that we sponsored, which was a tricky thing because the team that was being evaluated wasn't very receptive. So, I had to mediate between a team of 2 evaluators and the project itself and also renegotiate different aspects of the evaluation. So, that [IPDET] was helpful...

Two of the other POs specifically mentioned that they appreciated the opportunity to share ideas with such a highly educated, international audience. However, they had “mixed” feelings insofar as they imagined that this knowledge/experience could be better leveraged:

...it was a very rich audience and very knowledgeable audience too - very international too. So I enjoyed these roundtables and group work because you get to talk to evaluators - they are all evaluators. I am not an evaluator - so I found that very enriching. I thought that since it was a very educated audience (most had Masters and above) the instructors did not take full advantage of that. So I have this nagging feeling that there was a critical aspect of the teaching that was missing. Just the key principles but they didn't really go on to discuss what are the challenges in each evaluation approach, what are pitfalls.

Partners⁴

Among the IDRC partners, their learning objectives were varied as well, but primarily they were twofold: 1) to improve their understanding of evaluation in general; 2) or to learn more about a specific aspect of evaluation. The latter tended to be those who attended only the workshops; and this group reported that they had more targeted intentions in attending the training. They also tended to have a higher skill level (they rated themselves with a personal evaluation capacity of “high”). As one explained her objectives:

...Strengthening my knowledge around different evaluation methodologies... I wanted to learn more sophisticated methods. To hone the methodology aspects...

The timing of IPDET training for IDRC scholarship recipients seemed to be opportune, likely due to IDRC's thoughtful screening/application process. For most of these participants, their IDRC-funded projects were just beginning, and they would be able to apply the training immediately. One participant described her objectives in attending IPDET:

The very practical reason is that I need to know later how they would evaluate this project and how will they monitor this project – that is the basic reason.

Were their objectives met? In a word, yes. The partners were unequivocal and positive in their responses. For those who were entering with an advanced evaluation capacity, they selected

⁴ Throughout the report, the term “partners” or “scholarship recipients” will be used to describe the IDRC scholarship recipients who attended IPDET. Of these partners, all had part-time responsibility for project coordination of IDRC-funded projects at the time of IPDET. Two also had academic roles and the remainder worked for NGO's as project coordinators/managers. Evaluation was one of their responsibilities.

their workshops carefully to suit their areas of interest (e.g., case study methodologies, environmental sustainability). For those who were newer to evaluation, they felt that the course delivered what they needed to fulfill their evaluation roles as research officers on their IDRC-funded projects. As an RO described,

Right now, I am the coordinator for an IDRC-funded research project... and once you do research, actually either after or during this project, we need to evaluate our work. As the project leader, I have this knowledge and I think it is very useful for this work – to ensure that we are managing this project well. Also some key concepts, like the output and the impact. This is very useful for my work...

Networking

Another means of building capacity is through the development of a community of practice, by fostering the growth of professional networks for creating and sharing evaluation knowledge. These can be either local or global, particularly with the aid of technological tools such as the internet. To learn about the degree to which IPDET aided in this type of capacity building, the participants were asked to describe their networks and whether IPDET contributed to their development and how.

IDRC staff

For POs from IDRC, IPDET did not have an impact on their networks. A few “stayed in touch” with other IPDET participants due to similar interests or personal affinities, but in general, they did not perceive the evaluation network to be *their* network. As one summed up, “It’s not really of direct value to me.” They do not perceive themselves to be evaluators; rather, they affiliate with other project managers in their areas of development expertise. Furthermore, they have a built-in ‘centre of excellence’ for evaluation at IDRC - the Evaluation Unit can provide them with resources, expert advice or support. As one PO described,

So, we fund research, the people we interact with are researchers, so I was...I guess...most of the people from IDRC were part of a different crowd than the evaluation crowd.

Notwithstanding this lack of community affiliation, as mentioned earlier, the POs felt that they benefited greatly by the evaluation expertise at IPDET. The collective expertise and experience in the room was significant; and the knowledge sharing was greatly appreciated.

Partners

In contrast, most, but not all, of the scholarship recipients reported that they had greatly expanded their network due to IPDET. One participant was extremely enthusiastic, citing IPDET as the reason that he got involved in IDEAS and AfrEA, two organizations from which he has subsequently gained much (he is now a life member with IDEAS). IPDET also provided a forum for him to meet other African colleagues with whom he kept contact back home and with whom he subsequently collaborated on different projects. He described IPDET as a type of hub or catalyst:

The interesting thing about networks is that you start at the node and the node starts expanding by linking up to different nodes and that takes you a little bit away from the area...so, for example, evaluation. *But the most important starting point has been IPDET...*I have been able to get connections with people in different areas, for example climate change... (emphasis in original)

IPDET also provided an opportunity for scholarship recipients to meet up with IDRC contacts. Through the actual training or through associated meetings or social events, some were able to build stronger personal bonds. As one mentions, “I think that it helped me to solidify my contact with IDRC”. The Listserv was also mentioned as an excellent vehicle for networking or just “keeping in touch”. All of the partners mentioned this benefit; and one talked about sharing this information with her colleagues in China, as there are few listserv members from this area of the world.

Two of the scholarship recipients who attended only the workshops reported less network development, possibly due to less time in the “the core” training. Both of these participants also mentioned that they deal with a very narrow field of practice which may circumscribe their community to some degree. Due to language barriers as well, one reported keeping in touch with only one other person – a Spanish-speaking colleague. Nonetheless, both of these participants maintain a connection through the listserv: “But I do keep on the listserv and see what work is going on, available, and when I need to inform myself about new contracts, conferences, etc.”

Knowledge and Skill Transfer

The participants were asked about knowledge transfer – from IPDET to their home work environment. This included a discussion of the role of contextual factors in either helping or hindering the application of knowledge into their workplace. An additional theme that was addressed was perceptions of personal capacity to do evaluation and IDPET’s role in fostering that.

IDRC staff

Among IDRC staff participants, all POs felt that they developed knowledge or skills that were relevant to their workplace. Those who were evaluation specialists found that they already had a fairly high level of competence and therefore, they reported less learning and less transfer (due to time constraints, unfortunately, IDRC staff only participated in the two week core workshop; attending the specialized workshops may have helped to rectify this issue). Several of the POs indicated that IPDET had provided them with a new way of approaching new research (and evaluation) projects. It also familiarized them with the Theory of Change (ToC) and other “log frame”, results-based management (RBM) approaches, which are not commonly used at IDRC, but that are very helpful to understand when dealing with other donors, to appreciate their perspectives, or even when negotiating partnerships. Two PO’s described their new perspectives:

I learned, I would say, from the whole training, I learned something...that I apply in my work. When I have a new project, I ask the partners or the researchers, ‘what do you want to change?’ So, this question for me is important now, because I want to know their theory of change - if they want to change their world. In fact, it is a different way of asking ‘why are you developing this project?’...I mean, I learned how to apply it in terms of evaluation, this ToC, this concept of ToC, but not as a tool - as a starting point for discussion about evaluation.

I look at [a] ToR from a different perspective now...and to be more rigorous in considering what are the evaluative questions that we want to consider...I think before one has some vague ideas but [isn't] discipline[d] to articulate those things. So, in that sense, all the effort that the course puts into exactly being clear about each aspect and defining it and trying to explain why that is - is very useful.

Partners

Partners also reported that knowledge transfer did occur. Similar to the POs comments above, one believed that it influenced her “way of thinking”; “this course will help guide us” through a research project over the next 3 years. Because of the optimal timing, (mentioned above), another found that he could “immediately” use the skills he developed on participatory evaluation as project leader of a 4-year IDRC-sponsored project. He also developed useful networks with other colleagues from his country and they used the IPDET workshop materials to develop a “framework for the parliament” and to use the ‘Citizen Report Card’. A third came home to develop evaluation workshops and hosted discussions with other colleagues: “one of the things that we did ourselves was talk about the difference between research and evaluation...I have “echoed” some of the material and the debates that were happening – Michael Quinn Patton was very good at this in our workshop”. A fourth used it to develop or enhance her teaching materials at the University: “very much [for] teaching (the written material was very useful to me for organizing my classes)”

Personal capacity

All of the respondents, except one, considered their own personal capacity to *do* evaluation (post IPDET) to be either medium or high. (The exception considered himself to be fairly low – an “apprentice”). This result included both partners and IDRC staff. Interestingly enough, excluding the evaluation specialists from IDRC, the partners were slightly more likely to view themselves as ‘high capacity’ than were the IDRC POs. In part, this may be explained by the partners’ perceptions of ‘relative’ competence. That is, they were by far the most highly skilled evaluators within their geographic area or domain. In contrast, the IDRC POs had an internal “centre of excellence” against which to compare themselves; and, therefore, were more likely to rate themselves as ‘low’ or ‘medium’. As two of the POs explain,

I’m getting better at it. I still feel very much inclined to liaise with my evaluation unit. Luckily, I sit beside them, so that helps. I really wouldn’t presume to be an authority to develop a framework myself...

I mean I am not an evaluation specialist – I am not an evaluator. I am not required to be an evaluator – it’s not my job. It is a part of my job to know what evaluation is; it is part of my job to know how to do evaluation and how to hire evaluators and how to encourage researchers to evaluate their work.

As noted previously, the majority of participants believed that IPDET had a key role in helping to increase their capacity. For project officers, it revolved around an increased understanding of different approaches to evaluation (particularly ToC, RBS and other ‘log-frame’ methodologies), a new way of thinking about project management and evaluation, an increased confidence in dealing with external evaluators and/or other donors or partners. For partners, it meant having the knowledge to be able to evaluate their IDRC-funded projects appropriately, (a “new way of thinking”), to share knowledge with others in their community (or university), to select new methodologies or approaches in their sectors of expertise (e.g., case studies, qualitative approaches, environmental sustainability, gender or health-care)

Effectiveness of Features of IPDET

We categorize findings associated with this evaluation objective into strengths, areas for improvement and future directions.

Strengths

IDRC staff and partners believed that there were certain features of IPDET that contributed most to the acquisition of new M&E skills. These fell into three main themes: small group activities, workshops, resource materials and guest speakers.

Small group activities – For those who only attended two weeks of the core IPDET training, the preferred activity for most was the small group activities (4 people). This was the case, for example, for all of the IDRC Project Officers. Some of their comments include the following:

... we could really learn from each other, discuss and challenge others, learn new things, it was the opportunity.

...One thing that stood out at the time was in the second week of the course we were asked to break into group work and bring forward some programs/projects that we could debate as a group – develop a real evaluation for a specific development program/project... I liked that. It was so real for me. It was well beyond the theory.

I really liked the practical exercise that still stands out for me. We had to propose a case study and work through it step by step and I thought that was very useful.

Workshops – for those who had the opportunity to attend the IPDET workshops, these were identified as the most effective for learning (identified by all five IDRC partners). For example, two participants mentioned the workshop on qualitative methods (Michael Quinn Patton), two mentioned the workshop on case study methodology, another described the workshop on environmental sustainability and yet another felt that the workshop on hidden and marginal populations was particularly relevant. As one summarized, “the workshops are great- diversity and very high quality, so it was really hard to decide which one to chose”. An additional benefit was the increased knowledge sharing and personal interaction that was

possible in this format. As one participant describes how he developed invaluable (international) contacts:

It was very useful - I acquired a lot of information but I also met with colleagues who were starting on similar projects at the same time that we were going to start - from Chile, from India and Columbia. So we maintained a relationship and communication with them about methodologies and environmental sustainability – that was the most valuable. This was the IDRC funded project that I was going to deal with for the next 3 years.

Resource Materials – Most of the participants found the resource materials to be very useful for future reference. The textbook was described as “informative”, and a good overview of the traditional approaches to evaluation; the workshop materials were also found to be very relevant and useful. Some of the alumni comments include:

I also bring the materials to the office – so the others can share. We have a smaller library, so they are all there...

Yes, they gave us a lot of materials – the lecture notes and readers in all the workshops – they gave us all of them - in soft copy and hard copy. I have them on my desktop as reference materials...

I still use the manuals –I do go back to it. And the list of books I use too.

...the book is useful as a reference material. It is like a dictionary. I use it when I need to know more.

I still have on my shelf the ‘10 steps to the RBM system.’ I refer to this off and on. And they gave us the little OECD translation guide ...And I use that all the time. It is like a pocket translation guide – very useful for travelling....

Guest speakers – One participant identified the guest speakers as being a highlight of the lecture component of IPDET. This participant liked the fact that the guest lecturers could go into more depth on their topics; of particular interest was the topic of outcome mapping.

Areas for improvement

The participants offered some suggestions for possible improvements to IPDET. Their suggestions revolved around three main areas:

Pedagogical Approach – Some participants felt that a greater variety of instructional approaches could be used during the first two weeks of core training. The traditional didactic, lecture style of teaching could be shortened and/or supplemented with other methods. For example, several of the participants felt that IPDET could take better advantage of the opportunities for dialogue and sharing knowledge among the many participants in the room. By leveraging the attendees’ wealth of experience, it would be possible to explore more of the issues and challenges associated with different approaches to M&E and discuss real life case examples and practical solutions. As one participant suggested, the course should include an opportunity to “problematize” what they are teaching. In his own words:

There is very strong emphasis on the ToC, but there are many ways to approach evaluation – when does it work, when does it not? - Less descriptive and more analytical...And then bring in the critical analysis of it too. Because at least 80% of the people have a masters degree – such a highly educated audience.

Content – While the core training exposes participants to different theories and models of evaluation, they are presented at a fairly “superficial level” in a fairly structured manner; and only one model was explored in more depth – the Theory of Change. Participants suggested that other, less linear log frame models could have had more coverage (e.g., outcome mapping or developmental evaluation). These alternative approaches are based on different philosophical principles and values which would also be useful to discuss with participants. Furthermore, when the participants are involved in their group projects, they could be encouraged to employ *different* approaches, not just the ToC to analyze their cases. This would enable them to select from a broader array of methods - depending upon their projects and evaluation questions. Related to this comment was a participant’s suggestion to complement the linear, static ToC model with other models that can better explain the complexity which many project managers/development evaluators must deal with: “for very complex interactions between the social, environmental and health dimensions”.

Textbook – While the textbook and other resource materials seemed to be well used and valued by participants, there were a few participants who made some comments and/or suggestions about its use. For example, one idea was to send the book out several months in advance and even recommend pre-requisite reading for new evaluators to “get up to a level playing field”. Another felt that an overview of more sophisticated evaluation approaches should be added to the text as it provides only a basic overview. A third respondent felt that textbook readings were “somewhat repeated in the lectures”; therefore, the content in the lectures should add to, explain, discuss, or challenge the textbook readings.

Future directions

There were several suggestions for IPDET to consider in moving forward. To continue building M&E capacity in the developing world, it was suggested that IPDET employ a “second generation” or “open source” approach in certain areas of the world rather than a “technical transfer” approach. That is, look at what exists in the different regions in the south and try to connect with those groups (e.g., universities and institutes) and work in collaboration to build capacity. In the words of two participants:

...looking at the centres there – what are they doing? ...so more of an iterative approach that looks at building curriculum and content there with local partners, building on their work...

...then you can get local people and people can adapt it....

Working with IPDET alumni to develop such training opportunities could be one way of moving ahead. The participant from China expressed significant interest in such an approach:

...yes, they could come here and localize the course design. China is still very weak in evaluation...it *should* be important to us, but we are still weak....

In other areas, where there is very little local evaluation capacity, (e.g., Afghanistan or Nepal), IPDET might be best advised to continue in its current “first generation” model, with external trainers and a more standardized course content. There is a lot of interest in some of these geographic areas, but not necessarily as many strong existing groups.

IPDET could also consider bringing in some expertise from the developing world to Ottawa so that “capacity can move out”. This way, the curriculum can be shared and future leaders and instructors can emerge. These people could then serve as key contacts in their home locations.

The cost for participation is high and can be prohibitive. IPDET could consider ways of reducing the costs such as alternative delivery methods. For example, technology could be leveraged to deliver certain modules (e.g., introductory content, specialized topics and/or pre-requisite training). Offering local training is another way to minimize costs and maximize participation in different parts of the globe.

Finally, IPDET could consider introducing a diploma or certificate type of program. A partnership could be valuable in this regard with other recognized bodies which have demonstrated experience in this area (e.g., universities, the Evaluators Institute).⁵

Mediating Effects of Context

Participants were also asked about the degree to which different contextual factors helped or hindered the application of their learning. These included elements such as organizational policies, collegial support, leadership, rewards and recognition, resource allocation, and the like. To identify any other factors which may impact the degree to which evaluation is used, the participants were asked the following question: *What factors or forces help to integrate evaluation and monitoring into the organizational culture?* Similarly, they were asked to comment on the flip side of the coin: *What sorts of barriers or forces inhibit the integration of evaluation and monitoring into your organization culture?* The responses follow for IDRC staff and partners, respectively.

IDRC staff

The responses were overwhelmingly positive from IDRC staff towards all contextual factors at IDRC. All of the participants described how the environment and culture at IDRC supports evaluation and learning. As a result, they feel entirely supported in applying any or all of their new knowledge/skills. The transfer is simple and seamless. Moreover, the evaluation unit

⁵ It should be noted that the Diploma in Program Evaluation at Carleton University already existed at the time of data collection and that IPDET had formed an agreement with Carleton concerning IPDET graduates. It seems likely that respondents were thinking about opportunities abroad.

is very highly regarded; and participants feel that they are supported in applying their new knowledge because they can request ‘expert’ assistance anytime. The evaluation unit also encourages experimentation with different approaches; as evidenced by one participant’s example of a ‘collaborative study’ that they are implementing – a “mini-competition for projects that are ongoing and want to improve their M&E”. Typical comments from the participants included:

...in IDRC, I would say that nothing hinders us to evaluate or to use this knowledge. The contrary, it is helping us – it is a helping environment...The context encourages me to use the new knowledge.

Oh, I would say it is very helpful – very conducive! I would say that IDRC is one of the more supportive places for Monitoring and Evaluation that I have ever encountered. We have a dedicated unit, right? And it is their job to research better practices, to disseminate that to staff and beyond – outside IDRC - so that is quite innovative in itself. And we have a tremendous amount of systems and processes that are embedded with our Centre and are endorsed by senior leadership – which require that we be engaged in M&E.

While IDRC is extremely supportive, the POs do encounter other contextual issues with some of the projects in their portfolio. For example, it is difficult to encourage learning-oriented evaluation in all situations, particularly when dealing with certain donors and when attitudes towards evaluation are biased towards rigid accountability and judgment-oriented. As one PO explained,

M&E is seen to be a demand from donors...so even when things are not working, they are worried to not report that things are not working. So it is trying to find a way of making people more confident that it is not always about judging whether something is right or wrong but what can be learned about it!... This is where I see the difference in the institutions or even the mentality of the people.

The following themes emerged from the participants with regard to other mediating factors, either enablers or barriers.

- *Learning culture* – Once again a predominant theme that emerged from IDRC staff was the importance of IDRC’s learning culture. Evaluation for organizational learning is a philosophy that pervades the organization, and it is driven from the top: “reinforcement of the value of evaluation and learning and evidence from the top down – management creating an open culture”. And this culture of openness, risk-taking, and learning is not new - one participant described how it has “always been this way”, since he joined the organization almost 10 years ago. Another participant contrasted IDRC’s approach with the negative attitude which prevails in many organizations:

I think, you know, monitoring and evaluation is like...as a tradition it is seen like auditing – a judgment approach. And it is not really a loved approach by a lot of organizations. A lot of colleagues I know and friends [say] they *hate* evaluation because it is considered as a punishment. You are evaluating the project meaning you will be ‘checking’, ‘auditing’. But at IDRC, the culture of learning is helping us. Yes, we do indeed believe that we are evaluating because we want to learn. There is no negative... (emphasis in original)

- *Focus on outcomes* – Another factor that facilitates the creation of an evaluative culture is the focus on outcomes at IDRC. Rather than just focusing on the outputs (number of publications, citations, etc.), the organization is interested in change. This is motivating for staff and for recipients; and it focuses on the main project rationale. As this project officer describes,

We are evaluating what we are changing...and if you are changing for the better, you are valued for that. And at the same time, you feel that you are doing something...And if you are achieving something you want to be evaluated – you want to value what you are doing. I think that this is one of the elements of the culture of the organization.

- *Evaluation unit* – The evaluation unit is seen to be a true centre of excellence for monitoring and evaluation at IDRC, one that provides support, guidance, and resources for IDRC personnel. As one participant describes: “They really have a championing role at the Centre. They make it really clear that they are coaches and they are a resource...” IDRC staff believe that the evaluation unit is working *with* them on projects; they are not only evaluating IDRC work, they are helping IDRC partners acquire skills in evaluation; as such, they are a capacity building team.
- *Senior management support* – Evaluation is positioned at a very high level in the organization, in the President’s Office. This demonstrates, structurally and symbolically, that it has a critical role, it has the President’s support and attention, and it is ‘neutral’ (organizationally not beholden to any particular organizational unit). As one participant reinforces, “...and, of course it (evaluation and monitoring) is *seriously, seriously*, supported at the senior management level....all the way to the top, absolutely”.

There were only two barriers that were mentioned by IDRC staff; and both had to do with project partners. As this evaluation specialist succinctly describes these challenges:

With project partners, making sure that it addresses their needs, their uses, etc....we need to come up with designs that address the questions but are also “good enough” evidence, a reasonable amount - those types of balancing questions. I think also sustaining it over time too – you can run out of steam, and want to move on to another set of questions...but we have found that when we keep working with findings and results and trying to integrate them, we find more uses for the them.

Partners

The partners, across the board, felt that their organizations were quite receptive to evaluation and supportive in terms of facilitating knowledge transfer. Two of the partners were operating in university environments, where they were using IPDET materials to develop or update their curricula. They were also responsible for IDRC-funded projects and felt that they had a lot of freedom and control over how it was operated. The resourcing seemed to be adequate. As one described,

...right now my Centre is a very independent one. I am the Director, so, I can make a decision. Also, we have the full support from the University - they will give us whatever support that we need. I can do whatever I want – I think that the environment is very good!

One of the NGO's was quite sophisticated in its evaluation practices, and this participant noted that the evaluation function within the NGO itself could use some dedicated resources: "...within [the organization] itself, it is still a challenge. If you want a continuing evaluation function that is strong you need a .5 person or full-time". However, the same respondent felt that there was a lot of interest in learning about evaluation, that there were strong, supportive policies and an openness to experimentation with different approaches. Another participant from an NGO concurred – the environment was open and supportive; however, the NGO itself was much more in its infancy with evaluation practices. This participant also pointed out that the national culture is more of an orally-oriented culture, so learning to systematically document and collect data presented a cultural challenge.

The IDRC partners also identified a number of enabling factors that are relevant to their organizations. They include the following:

- *Champions* – One of the participants mentioned that there is a need for champions in the organization to promote an understanding of monitoring and evaluation. They need to have strong expertise in evaluation and act as resource people for others. Related to this fact is the need for senior management to have an understanding of evaluation and its benefits. (Although not mentioned by the participants, it seemed that many of them were beginning to play this type of a leadership role in many of their respective organizations.)
- *"Mainstreaming"* – Another participant suggested that donors need to ensure that M&E is part of the MOU, so that it becomes an accepted, integral part of the project. This would, over time, serve to "mainstream" evaluation.
- *Evaluation design* – Evaluations need to be designed so that they are accessible for decision-makers and users. As one participant shared her experience,

it can be seen as too technical, and not accessible... we have used *several* methods sometimes and there are too many requirements (it is too hard to do!) Or you use too many different terms...so evaluation can't be too cumbersome or complex if you want to promote its use.

Also, sometimes the organization can lose sight of the intention of the evaluation. If you make it too complex or comprehensive, the intent is lost in the process. And this is easy to do!

Overall, there were only three barriers mentioned by both IDRC partners. The first was a "fear" of evaluation and the negative attitudes which exist in some organizations towards evaluation, particularly those emphasizing judgment-oriented aspects. To combat this problem, participants suggested promoting "openness" towards evaluation - a learning-oriented approach. The second barrier was time-sensitivity; and the third was resource constraints. One participant described the difficulty with encouraging use when timeliness becomes an issue:

With respect to the barriers, why would we use evaluation when it is time-bound? There is always a difficulty with getting everything done. And then, when we have finished one evaluation and we have recommendations and things that we have learned, there is much time between this project and the next, so unfortunately, the lessons from the old project are often not carried forward. That knowledge from the evaluation can be lost.

Organizational Impact of IPDET

Participants were asked to describe the capacity to do evaluation, in terms of their organization's general capacity to perform or support evaluative inquiry. Consistent with our operational definition of capacity, participants were also asked about the capacity to use evaluation. The extent to which such affects are attributable to IPDET is debatable but we attempted to ground discussions in this vein. The findings are organized around these categories.

Organizational capacity

As might be expected, organizational capacity was described by respondents as consistently 'high' by IDRC staff (for their own organization) but 'low' to 'medium' by partners. All IDRC participants stated, in definitive terms, that IDRC's evaluation capacity was "absolutely" high; and most mentioned that that it was "part of the culture". As expected, the partners' organizations had a lower perceived capacity to *do* evaluation, but the participants were very optimistic that capacity was building, it was moving in the right direction; as well, resourcing was not mentioned as a significant stumbling block. As one participant described her NGO,

We still have quite a bit to do, so it's not quite 'high'. But, in the last 5 years, we have really developed our capacity. And we are now setting up our systems so that we can continue to monitor as well.

Another felt that the organization had a lot of "implicit" capacity in the sense that it was research-based, open-minded towards evaluation, and had a participatory approach to development research. Such observations are well corroborated in published documents on evaluation capacity (Amo & Cousins, forthcoming; Carden & Earl, 2007). The challenge was moving beyond the cultural barrier of making evaluation a more "explicit practice", one that is more systematic and deliberate.

What types of evaluation were being typically practiced by IDRC and those partners whom it funds? The participants were asked to describe "typical" evaluation and monitoring activities in which they engage.

At IDRC, evaluation and monitoring is performed at multiple levels. As noted earlier, the focus is on evaluation for organizational learning; however, that is not to say that accountability evaluation is not performed. Because IDRC operates on a five- year cycle, (each program develops a 5 year prospectus), all programs are externally evaluated before they are renewed. This is also true of partnerships. All projects are also monitored – this is the lowest level of

M&E. Essentially, M&E “happens across the board”. This was nicely summed in the words of an IDRC evaluation specialist:

I would say that we have a unified, sort of common approach that focuses on USE. That is the “typical part” – there is a strong learning orientation. Beyond that, we don’t have a standard method, framework, log frame that we use for project level evaluation. So the methods flow from the questions....Impact evaluations or RCT’s – don’t tend to use this typically for the work that we do to evaluate IDRC work. However, it can inform research projects that we support.

Outcome mapping is used fairly frequently because “we work in development” and it provides a strong theoretical approach; and IDRC has provided training in outcome mapping for program officers and recipients of research grants. Externally commissioned evaluations are also performed – sometimes to evaluate a particular thematic issue across several projects. These are “carried out by actual experts in that theme” (subject matter experts more than professional evaluators). In terms of its research partners, IDRC strongly encourages capacity building efforts because “internal evaluation is always a good thing to do” for learning and continuous improvement of the project. IPDET, of course, is one method of capacity building.

Partners, on the other hand, described a range of different approaches. One mentioned case studies as the preferred method; another mixed methods; another participative; and the fourth provided a list of different types – outcome mapping, TOC, case studies and Most Significant Change (MSC). Finally, the last partner described their approach as “ad hoc qualitative and donor reporting”. In many cases, the recipients have little latitude in the selection of approaches, as they are quite clearly dictated by the donor. As this RO describes the donors’ preferences:

... each one evaluates differently. Which methodology I don’t know exactly – but I have to just follow the proposal. One is in the proposal; and another one, when they make the announcement for the project funding, they tell us what type of evaluation they are using...

Capacity to use evaluation

M&E is used in many different ways at IDRC. As noted above, utilization is a prime focus at the Centre, so evaluations are designed to maximize use. And performance data is used in a number of ways – for learning and continuous improvements, for program development, for strategy development, and for decision-making regarding programs and projects (including renewals, extensions, and major changes). Evaluation is also emerging in the partnership sphere where it is beginning to be used for accountability and risk mitigation. With respect to monitoring, different “programs are trying different approaches at a program level, but with a bias on outcomes...”. The PO’s are regularly interviewed and there are monitoring visits to the field. Project Completion Reports are also prepared and these are reviewed by the project leaders and Program Area Director. These affect the future of the project.

On the other hand, partners felt that M&E data are used primarily for donor reporting, for internal learning and project improvement, for input to the strategic plan, and for decision

making. One participant described how their annual report and strategic plan is evaluative in nature: "...we find it to be very useful each year to make our annual report evaluative in nature". However, one participant raised a negative issue about use. He pointed out a pervasive negative attitude that exists in many organizations and serves as barrier towards the positive utilization of evaluative information. In his words,

When evaluation is performed by a professional evaluator, the organization expects results in their favour. But often it is hitting "hard punches" on the organization. So they have this attitude that it is policing and it is seen to be negative. This happened in the previous organization and they did not like it very much, so this can be negative. However, it is positive if you have any critiques to the program, and you can make changes to the program – this is a good, professional way for it to be viewed and for it to be used.

The participants identified other effects of evaluation, some of which were more subtle and some of which were 'unintended consequences.' One PO, for example, described how a new partnership arose with IDRC because of a future partner reading an evaluation report: they "gave us a huge amount of funding...it was not expected." An IDRC evaluation specialist also spoke to "process use", the fact that people develop inquiry skills by virtue of being involved in the process of evaluation (Patton, 1998). She commented that: "we see [the development of inquiry skills] in the process of involving managers in defining questions, analyzing some of the findings or organizing learning events..." Another interesting effect was due to an initiative sponsored by the evaluation unit. In deciding to translate outcome mapping into Arabic (in the Middle East), there is now a community of evaluators that is steadily building. While this is not an effect of evaluation per se, it is related to evaluation capacity building efforts.

All of the IDRC partners felt that their inquiry skills were developing on their teams and/or in their organizations. However, they had difficulty expressing how this was happening and how it manifested itself. As one participant aptly said, "I am sure that it happens, but it is difficult to observe, I think". Another expressed a similar sentiment: "I am sure that [the research team members] have changed. I can feel it, even though I never asked them". For the team in China, part of their learning was also around familiarizing themselves with the international way of evaluating and "of how to do a project – how to run organizations". For another participant, it was around building capacity for evaluative thinking about gender issues as well as about development M&E.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

All of the participants valued their learning experience at IPDET. The scholarship recipients were extremely appreciative of having the opportunity and financial support from IDRC to be able to attend such an internationally renowned event. They also believed that they acquired a greater understanding of the different approaches to development M&E which they would be able to immediately apply in their work environments. Several participants – IDRC staff and partners – felt that they had acquired a 'a new way of thinking' from IPDET. They felt supported in their workplaces and did not identify any insurmountable barriers to knowledge transfer. They also felt "linked in" to a new, global evaluation community. For many, this consisted primarily of "passive" use of the listserv; but nonetheless, this was highly valued. In

the case of a few participants, IPDET had served as a catalyst in building a very active evaluation network. The IDRC staff were extremely positive about the ‘learning culture’ in which they work and the way in the evaluation unit works as a partner with them in continuously seeking new and improved ways to utilize M&E.

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B. Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining (Geneva, Switzerland)

J. Bradley Cousins & Nathalie Gilbert

BACKGROUND

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD) was established in April 1998 as a not-for-profit NGO based in Switzerland. The Centre was established by Switzerland in partnership with several other countries and is funded by over 20 countries and international organizations. The mission of the GICHD is as follows:

The GICHD works for the elimination of anti-personnel mines and for the reduction of the humanitarian impact of other landmines and explosive remnants of war. The Centre is committed to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

The GICHD, in partnership with others, strives to provide capacity development support, undertake applied research, and develop standards, all aimed at increasing the performance and professionalism of mine-action. In addition, the GICHD supports the implementation of relevant instruments of international law⁶.

The Centre provides technical assistance to mine-affected countries around the globe in a number of different capacities including technical de-mining expertise, land release, and knowledge management and dissemination. As part of its knowledge management and dissemination responsibilities, the Centre also assists mine-action organizations around the world. In 2004, GICHD created the new position of Head of Policy Research and Evaluation to enhance its role in conducting evaluations in the sector as well as to promote evaluation capacity building in the mine-action community. GICHD has become a centre of excellence in the sector and describes its evaluation role in the following way:

Document the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of mine-action programs, providing appropriate recommendations for performance improvements, and generating lessons learned for future guidance⁷.

Since 1998, GICHD has conducted, or contracted out, a large number of evaluations of mine-action projects, programs and activities in different parts of the world, including annual evaluations for the German Foreign Ministry. Forty evaluations authored by the Centre and 261 additional sector-specific evaluations on the GICHD website were consulted. No doubt, a good many evaluations have not been posted at the request of clients for various reasons.

⁶GICHD website <http://www.gichd.org/about-gichd/overview/>

⁷ GICHD website <http://www.gichd.org/about-gichd/overview/>

To help achieve its aim of improving mine-action program effectiveness, GICHD committed to capacity building in evaluation. A three-staged process has evolved since 2005:

- **Stage 1:** Providing professional training in development evaluation via IPDET's annual four week program in Ottawa each summer. In 2005 and 2006, GICHD provided full or partial sponsorships to 15 people from mine-affected countries to attend IPDET, as well as delivering a training module, 'Evaluating Mine-action Programmes.'
- **Stage 2:** In partnership with IPDET and others, provide a stand-alone English-language training workshop (5 days) – Evaluation for Mine-action – provided on a regional basis and using IPDET graduates from the region as trainers. Since 2009, workshops have been conducted in Bangkok, Tbilisi and Ljubljana. More are planned.
- **Stage 3:** Country-specific training workshops – adapting the training workshop to national laws and systems, and translating training materials into local languages so it can be offered to more people (using previously trained individuals from that country as translators & trainers).⁸

GICHD entered into partnership with IPDET in 2005 to offer M&E training as part of the Ottawa Week 3 and Week 4 workshop program. This represented the Centre's foray into direct evaluation capacity building in the sector and the first of three phases of activities in this vein. The training was offered in two streams: evaluator skill development, and evaluation management.

The sector-specific workshop was offered again in 2006. With the assistance of donor agencies, the Centre had sponsored several participants to attend IPDET over these two initial years. Most of these individuals were recommended by national authorities in various regions; all worked in the mine-action sector and/or were known to GICHD as good candidates for the program.

Since 2009, workshops that were co-sponsored by IPDET (i.e., mini-IPDET training sessions) have been conducted in Bangkok, Tbilisi and Ljubljana, and more are planned. Together, the co-directors worked to adapt the evaluation training to the mine-action sector. Country-specific evaluation training sessions in which IPDET will partner are also planned. The first will be for people working in mine-action in Afghanistan.

METHODS

This case study was one of five case studies conducted as part of a follow-up evaluation of IPDET. The conceptual framework for this evaluation included specific evaluation questions and methods for data collection, which took place in late 2009 and spring 2010.

⁸ <http://www.gichd.org/operational-assistance-research/evaluations/enhancing-evaluation-capacities>

The following steps for data collection and analysis were conducted:

- *Review of GICHD Website and Documents:* To familiarize ourselves with the Centre, we scanned its website to get an overview of the kind of work conducted in relation to mine-action.⁹ The website was also reviewed to gain an understanding of GICHDs overall work and the types of evaluation activities in which it is involved. All of the documents that were examined were located on the website. These included training program outlines, PowerPoint decks used for evaluation training, a sample of GICHD produced evaluations and other evaluations produced in the sector.
- *Individual interviews:* We used the case study interview guide as a basis for interviews, with some alternations made depending on the role of the interviewee. Interviewing began with the Head of Policy Research and Evaluation. This person assisted with identification of other people to be interviewed, including staff, consultants who worked with GICHD (some of them having received IPDET training), associates of the Centre who work in evaluation and/or mine-action policy and other alumni of IPDET mine-action training programs (Ottawa workshops). Where possible, interviews were audio recorded with the respondent's permission. We did some face-to-face interviews but many were conducted over the telephone or using Skype. Two participants requested to have the questions sent to them in advance and they returned their written responses via email.

In the end, we interviewed

- One senior administrator at GICHD;
- Two staff of GICHD associated with the Policy Research and Evaluation Unit, one having taught at IPDET in Ottawa, the other having attended IPDET in 2008.
- Three IPDET alumni who had maintained an ongoing relationship with GICHD; two of these provided written responses to interview questions (as opposed to participating in an interview) due to health or scheduling considerations.
- Four additional face-to-face interviews were conducted in Geneva with associates of GICHD who were either members of the international mine-action community or the international evaluation community.

FINDINGS

Findings for the case study are organized according to the overarching evaluation objectives for the follow-up evaluation.

- Knowledge and skill development;
- Networking;
- Knowledge and skill transfer;
- Effectiveness of features of IPDET;

⁹ GICHD website <http://www.gichd.org/about-gichd/overview/>

- Mediating effects of context; and
- Organizational impact of IPDET.

Knowledge and Skill Development

When asked about expectations heading into IPDET, one past participant shared that he already had some basic M&E knowledge and was hoping to consolidate some of those skills. He described himself as having a very “open mind” and therefore was very open to acquiring new knowledge and skills that he could apply in his mine-action role.

Others recalled that prior to arriving at IPDET, they hoped to gain some knowledge on how professional evaluators perform their daily work. This type of comment was quite common among past participants; they hoped to have some practical/hands on interaction with experienced evaluators. Furthermore, they indicated that they already had some evaluation experience and were, therefore, hoping that the IPDET training would help them consolidate some of their skills and obtain a better of understanding of evaluation theory. In the words of one respondent:

[I] wanted to find out what was happening in this field and learn as I had no formal training in M&E but over time had acquired a lot of practical experience.

Did IPDET meet those objectives? One participant shared that “my expectations were fully satisfied... [following IPDET training] I understood what I wanted to do with M&E when I returned to work”. This workshop dealt with specific issues relevant to the evaluation of mine-action programs (e.g., treaty, international laws, evaluation timing: conflict situations, crisis management, priority reconstruction phase).

Another participant found the training to be beneficial enough to change her travel plans. “I originally registered for three weeks but decided to stay for a fourth even though I couldn’t really afford it.” She went on to write about how IPDET helped her to become a more critical and knowledgeable practitioner:

Yes, [it] helped to systematize what I was sort of doing in practice and to look with a more critical eye at the material I work with, including e.g., the original project document and how it is often not conducive to good monitoring and evaluation (e.g., confusion of outputs and objectives, demanding more than what can be delivered or demanding too little). Pointing out aspects and approaches that colleagues are missing. In fact, I think, contributing considerably to work with teams of international consultants who also have no training, but think they know it all.

Yet, another individual was responsible for overseeing 10 research/training projects, which required a solid understanding of statistics and data analysis. Greater emphasis on statistical software programs for data analysis would perhaps have benefitted him in terms of confidence building to meet all of his responsibilities upon his return to his organization. He indicated that 70% of his expectations were met.

The remaining 30% that the course could not provide me is in the area of utilizing computer programs to analyze the data (If you are not strong in computer programs to analyze data, then you are [only] partly a monitor/evaluator).

Another participant who has had the opportunity to contribute in a teaching role to mini-IPDET courses following her own IPDET training shared the following,

Most of my expectations were met, but I just had the feeling after two weeks that it required much more time to learn the theory. It was a lot in two weeks to try and integrate what you learned in your everyday work. That is why for me there was a high benefit to continuing with the mini-IPDET, where I was not just teaching, but at the same time continuously repeating and learning more and more of the content through repeatedly listening to [the IPDET instructor].

We can see here the importance of consolidating learning after training. In this case, such consolidation took place both through involvement as a trainer on mini-IPDETs and evaluation practice.

Networking

Mixed reviews were received about post-training networking. One participant said that she is the only IPDET graduate in her country and therefore has not been able to develop a national network of IPDET graduates. However, in her current role at GICHD she does have a network of approximately six IPDET trained consultants internationally with whom she collaborates on mine-action evaluations on a regular basis.

On the other hand, regular monitoring of the listserv has been an important activity for a few of the respondents in helping them stay current with M&E activities that are occurring around the world. Neither indicated that they post on the listserv, one suggesting that the evaluation of mine-action would not be relevant to most IPDET listserv members. Yet another offered that if he did have a question he would feel comfortable posting it on the listserv. “I follow the IPDET listserv but more because of the issues raised than [for networking with] people” was how a third respondent put it.

Since his IPDET training one respondent said that he has stayed in contact with a few IPDET alumni but has not had the opportunity to collaborate on any M&E activities with them thus far. Currently, he has two IPDET graduates living in his community whom he sees and with whom he speaks with on a fairly regular basis. Although they have discussed doing some collaborative work together, due to time restraints on each of their parts this has not been possible to date. Another respondent said that he has not heard of anyone within his country that has attended IPDET, but that he would greatly appreciate making connections with IPDET past-participants for collaborative M&E opportunities or projects. As he put it,

I would love to hear from someone from my country who had attended IPDET, but so far there is no information at all. In addition to that, I want to organize a team of evaluators to work professionally by utilizing the skills that we had learned from IPDET. Please be informed that without forming a

professional team to work, it is hard for us to win a contract thus it is hard to utilize the skill[s] that [have] been provided by IPDET.

Similarly, another participant has had only sporadic contact with IPDET alumni. In her words,

...we don't keep in touch except on the occasional work issue.... Lots of good intentions at the time, but we were all busy people.... Only continued intermittent contacts with [GICHD contact] and through him [received] information on other members of the "mine-action" IPDET group.

Knowledge and Skill Transfer

The participants were asked to what extent they were able to apply what they had learned from IPDET in their own workplace. Since having completed the IPDET training in 2005, one person believed that he was able to transfer some of his knowledge, but underscored the importance of adapting what he had learned to his own context. In his own words,

I applied the knowledge to some extent, I could say, because it was not possible to implement the exact methods and tools in my current job or in my previous one. I had to adjust to my situation, e.g., sometimes I would combine two IPDET tools into one.

This participant indicated that he refers to his '*Mine-action Evaluation Manual*' on a very regular basis at his work. In his current role, he is responsible for serving as a resource person to program staff who are conducting evaluations (more on this below under organizational capacity). He rated his personal capacity to do evaluation as 'high' and felt very confident that he can conduct and oversee M&E activities within his organization. When asked to describe some of his strengths in conducting M&E, he shared that being open-minded and flexible has served him very well as an evaluator. He credited IPDET for making him a better evaluator.

It is clear that a good number of the IPDET alumni in our sample are actively involved in evaluation practice, although for some, this is relatively small scale: "Highly relevant to my work, even though it is not on the scale of many of the kinds of exercises presented in the course." Another respondent participates in in-house evaluations related to market analyses and assessing, for example, the effects of promotional activities. Another respondent emphasized that in his role as 'Director of Training Research and Development' within his mine-action organization he uses M&E skills regularly. "I hope you understand how much [evaluation] is used in research and development."

Another participant felt similarly in terms of her ability to conduct evaluation in the area of mine-action, but did qualify her statement by saying she would not feel as competent performing M&E outside of the mine-action sector. We learned that another respondent has "fully utilized the skills" that he learned from IPDET training but, as mentioned above, emphasized his limitations in using statistical software programs in contributing to some of his challenges in meeting the expectations of his role. Below is an excerpt of what he said:

The lack of software-related skills such as SPSS, Access and others hindered my skill to apply the knowledge that I had learnt at IPDET.

We come back to this point under mediating contextual variables.

In contrast to the statements above, one participant shared that it has been difficult to transfer some of the knowledge she learned from IPDET in her workplace as a result of time pressures. As she framed it,

I wish [I might have applied] more; it's really a matter of time. It was a huge load of information and I feel I only applied a fraction of it, but when talking about capacity building courses, there we continue to apply it in a way. In terms of doing evaluation myself, I haven't applied it yet because I just haven't had the time to go back to the material and think through how I could improve my evaluations because of a lack of time.

This sentiment was evidently not isolated. Another participant shared that he has benefitted greatly from IPDET training, but that he has a large number of projects that he is solely responsible for evaluating and monitoring. The lack of other M&E trained staff to assist him makes the demands for his skills quite high, but also challenging since he cannot share the workload. Here is how he put it:

I am the sole evaluator of Japanese-made de-mining machines (Komatsu and Hitachi) which are the first kind from Japan (during R&D phase I and Phase II). I also evaluate other products related to mine/UXO clearance.

Effectiveness of Features of IPDET

We asked respondents for their perceptions of IPDET strengths and weaknesses. The responses fell into two categories depending on the individual's role: that is, some participants talked about IPDET training they had received in Ottawa, others about GICHD-sponsored mini-IPDET sessions from the perspective of training providers.

Strengths

IPDET Alumni- Respondents were positive overall when it came to IPDET's ability to contribute to the acquisition of new M&E skills. When asked what features of IPDET were most helpful to gaining those skills, one participant responded that "everything was helpful." When probed for anything that might have stood out as being most helpful, he referred to the 'Mine-action Evaluation Manual' that he had received and emphasized the following,

Everything that you learned in the course is in that manual. I use that manual on a very regular basis and use it for training staff.

Another respondent identified small group activities, and having the opportunity to learn from one other. He went on to identify specific workshops as being particularly beneficial: survey development and cost/benefit analysis. Still another concurred with appreciation for small group activities but would have appreciated having less of them. He favored written resources

provided during the course and in-course networking, as the two most beneficial aspects of the course from his perspective.

GICHD staff- One of the reasons that GICHD entered into partnership with IPDET was because it was well recognized as offering quality M&E training. According to one respondent, IPDET would have the ability to cover material in a more effective and efficient manner than GICHD would because the Centre has sector-specific expertise and is developing its evaluation capacity:

The relationship with IPDET has been extremely useful for us because they are the evaluation experts and we've been able through this partnership to combine it with our own sector expertise.

Related to this are comments about the content focus of IPDET as opposed to observed norms in the field.

It is just all about... promoting learning and improvement, to get away from inspection or a 'them against us' type process and to have a more positive attitude about evaluation. And I think we are succeeding, we're starting to get more people educated and more people looking at it from that way.

Areas for improvement

Several suggestions for improvement of IPDET were forthcoming from some of the past-participants. For example, IPDET does not provide the depth of coverage that some would prefer. According to one graduate, the data analysis component of the course "was covered so superficially; there was not enough detail to learn how to apply it," albeit this was not a significant concern since she does not typically engage directly in very sophisticated data analysis in her role. She described her evaluation reports as being very descriptive in nature. Another area that could be improved according to this participant was the structure/sequence of the course. At times, she found it difficult to follow the sequencing of the modules and wished the presenters had been more specific about on which area of evaluation the module was focusing. The following comment is illustrative:

Sometimes I found the structure of the course confusing. The sequence of modules I could not always follow and I discussed this with other colleagues and they were confused as well. For example, they did not always differentiate clearly are we talking about doing an evaluation, commissioning the evaluation or setting up an M&E system.

Another respondent stated that "group activities are good, but having too many group activities is not so useful. I found that some [participants] are not active enough to contribute to the group."

It was also suggested that refresher courses might be offered to past participants after a certain lapse of time or opportunities for experience. Although the manual he received has been well used, he guesses that there are many new developments in M&E since he completed the IPDET training. He feels that he would benefit greatly from refresher course opportunities, as might others.

Finally, a respondent wrote that class dynamics may have intruded in undesirable ways at some intervals, and underscored the need for strong facilitative leadership in breakout groups.

Quite definitely, the least useful was the group work around a project brought by a participant. We were warned beforehand that there would be a lot of heated arguments and there were, but without guidance and in many instances the blind arguing with the blind, especially when a) participants do not have much experience (in my group predominantly project managers/staff, NGO people), b) people missing sessions and after they return restarting arguments people thought had finished, c) absence of guidance from the chair who was as inexperienced as everyone else and spent most of the time defending the project under study, of which he was the manager. Occasional visits from lecturers were not very helpful. This was not just my assessment – conversations with colleagues from other groups said they found the experience very frustrating and did not learn much.

No specific suggestions for improvement were forthcoming from GICHD staff, but they had many ideas and comments about strategic direction for the centre in its evaluation capacity building objectives. These are presented below under organizational impacts of IPDET.

Mediating Effects of Context

Participants were also questioned on whether there were any contextual factors that either helped or hindered them in their ability to apply evaluation and monitoring knowledge and skills that they had learned. These included elements such as organizational policies, collegial support, leadership, rewards and recognition, and resource allocation.

One participant said that the IPDET training was “extremely relevant, because I am doing and teaching evaluations.” This person teaches in some of the mini-IPDET courses for mine-action organizations and shared that in terms of building capacity for evaluation and monitoring that she has good support from the organization as well as good partners.

Senior management and organizational support

Respondents shared that they feel supported in their M&E roles within their organizations and work very closely with management when planning and decision-making takes place. Respondents also said that they have the autonomy to conduct M&E activities according to their best judgment as long as it meets the information needs of the organization. One past participant shared that he felt very valued and respected within his organization. He did emphasize, however, that in order to accomplish his M&E responsibilities he does need to be flexible at times with certain people,

I have to be flexible because sometimes the people are not concerned by my academic interests and they want to see the results. They think about outputs and not about the process, so I need to be flexible in meeting their needs as well.

He continued to say, however, that he feels very supported in his role and has been given a significant amount of autonomy to proceed with M&E activities that he determines most

effective, for example, “at present I have some freedom in choosing my instruments for doing M&E.”

Respondents shared that most colleagues who are involved in M&E are highly engaged in wanting to do quality work in order to produce M&E results that are meaningful to the organization’s decision-making and planning needs.

Nature of the work

One respondent shared that the nature of his organization’s work is very dangerous and, therefore, the organization values the information that M&E brings in ensuring the safety of their employees and clients. As a result,

The dangerousness of the work helps M&E to get integrated into the organizational culture.

State-of-the-art of the field

One enabling factor ties in with GICHDs mission and strategic interest. The Centre is proud to be recognized a centre of excellence in M&E for mine-action organizations as this is a perceived gap in the sector. It has exercised sector-leadership on many fronts (e.g., treaty compliance monitoring, technical support, global information data base development and maintenance). It also wishes to become the recognized centre of expertise for evaluation in the sector - motivation that drives its interests in evaluation capacity building, and dissemination of mine-action knowledge (e.g., a wide collection of internal and external evaluation and policy research reports posted on the web).

Senior management has taken steps towards reaching this goal, such as creating a new position for Head of Policy Research and Evaluation, partnering with IPDET to provide additional training for mine-action organizations, the development of a mine-action evaluation manual and a set of international standards on evaluation, etc.

This partnership with IPDET allows the GICHHD to strengthen M&E capacity in mine-action organizations around the world. Without this partnership, GICHHD would not have the capacity to offer these types of training sessions

Time and workload demands

Despite overt claims of organizational support to do evaluation, as mentioned above, more than one participant indicated that available time and workload demands intrude on their ability to apply and develop evaluation knowledge and skill. In the words of one, “Too much pressure on government/local organizations with limited capacity that put all their efforts into the job(s) at hand and then move on to the next one(s).” A related challenge would be the availability of expertise in the area.

Lack of M&E qualified staff and expertise

One of the greatest challenges for organizations in the sector to further embrace M&E use is the lack of qualified and knowledgeable staff in the area of M&E. In many cases respondents claimed to be the only IPDET-trained staff within their workplace. In the absence of a solid network of expertise from which to draw, it can be challenging at times to try and be the “champion” for M&E and at the same time build greater M&E capacity within the organization. Another past participant revealed that a similar circumstance exists in her country.

As there is no M&E culture in the country. It needs someone at the top to push for it and thus also to prepare people able to do it.

Lack of resources

One respondent shared that the lack of budgetary and human resources devoted to M&E in his organization has had an impact on the quality of M&E results. Here is an example of what was shared:

Lack of budget resulted in lack of qualified staff to perform the work, thus required strong supervision and monitoring. Lack of budget and time resulted in R&D being conducted in a hurry, which resulted in poor/incomplete data for analysis.

Organizational Impact of IPDET

Responses about organizational capacity to do and use evaluation have been included in the points raised about the sector in general (coming mostly from IPDET alumni). While there is little doubt that other factors have contributed to capacity development, it is clear that IPDET has played a significant role. We begin with a look at the strategic growth of GICHD and continue with other observations about other IPDET influences on organizational capacity to do evaluation and evaluation use.

Strategic direction in evaluation for GICHD

There is a tremendous thrust within the organization to become the leaders in mine-action evaluation. As would be expected, the organizational capacity to do evaluation is quite high at GICHD, the Centre being considered a centre of excellence in the area of building evaluation capacity and assisting/collaborating in evaluation projects of mine-action organizations. The Head of Policy Research and Evaluation is an expert in the field. Prior to coming to GICHD, he worked as a private consultant in mine-action, with much of his work being evaluation, which positioned him well for the new role at GICHD. His primary role at GICHD is to build evaluation capacity within the mine-action community and to conduct or oversee some periodic evaluations.

GICHD has some longstanding commitments to do evaluation, the best example being a series of annual evaluations carried out in Germany each year. According to one respondent,

[The] classic process would be the German [Foreign]Ministry who would request GICHD to do an evaluation of their projects. I prepare a proposal and a budget for them, then we distribute the work, so I would do some of them and others would do some of them as well, depending on what is requested. Then we try and find the local consultant that would go on the team...we do the evaluation, prepare the report and present the results at the Foreign Ministry.

Another example would be that GICHD has been recruited by the EEC to evaluate their mine-action policies and strategies, which were set up under two regulations. It was specified that a global assessment would be done every three years, and more in-depth work on a regional basis. The EEC required evaluations but had no human resources to manage the evaluations themselves. They were able to ‘sole source’ to GICHD because the Centre is mentioned in the regulations. In the words of a Centre administrator,

We got a contract to do the EEC-funded mine action program....This is where we think we have got something to offer, looking at the bigger picture. Are we going in the right direction and how can we improve the whole sector?

In addition to these evaluation activities, GICHD manages two to three other evaluation projects per year. One is with Swedish SIDA who has available resources but the evaluation process is somewhat cumbersome for them. These could be full evaluations or related to discrete program activities. They might also be joint evaluations with other organizations.

GICHDs interest in doing evaluation varies. Direct engagement in evaluation raises the profile of the Centre as a leading evaluation resource in the sector. But there may be other more strategic reasons for doing evaluation related to the broader mission of GICHD:

We don’t chase evaluations. We do some ourselves [but] only if we think we have something to learn from it or if it is otherwise in our interest (more the broader aspects of national strategies, etc.). We use our own staff or we use consultants.

Direct evaluation activities are not really viewed as a revenue stream and are generally done on a cost-recovery basis; sometimes GICHD will even contribute to evaluation costs, depending on strategic benefits, as suggested by this respondent:

[We] use it strategically more than anything else. [Such as] where we have not been able to get a look at a program through other means and it is an important program that we want to inform ourselves and make sure there is information about it in the wider industry....Or, because it meshes tightly with other work that we may be doing.

GICHD is consciously trying to do less evaluations and more capacity building, such as offering mini-IPDET training. Ideally, the Centre will do fewer evaluations and emphasize its capacity building role more. “This is a better role for us.... We should seek to lead, not dominate.” GICHD wants to break the cycle that it is always responsible for doing mine-action evaluations, and part of this means integrating direct evaluation and capacity building initiatives. Sponsoring candidates from selected countries to attend IPDET and then to subsequently involve

them in evaluations is the primary way in which such integration takes shape. The following comments illustrate the point,

Part of our overall initiative in evaluation capacity development is that whenever it is possible we hire these [IPDET alumni] for evaluation work either in that country or in that region. We've been able to hire a number of them.

We use the graduates of those courses on our own evaluation teams. We have faith in them, and we put our money where our mouth is... and use the people that were trained.”

In addition, two people who did mini-IPDET training applied and got accepted to do the full IPDET program with sponsorship.

Since 2004, when the Centre created the Head of Policy Research and Evaluation position, there has been a significant amount of work focusing on building greater M&E capacity within the mine-action community. According to one person,

[We are] trying to measure the impact of the work that has been done... Originally ... you counted how many mines you cleared or how many square meters you released, how many people were given safety education, and so on. We wanted to take that a bit further. That's where [the Evaluation Head's] work came about.

The organization has been extremely supportive of the three stage process proposed by the Head of Policy Research and Evaluation for building capacity in mine-action organizations. They include:

1. Sponsorship of people to IPDET and participation in it;
2. Deliver one-week stand alone workshops on evaluation of mine-action (mini-IPDET courses); and,
3. Support country-level evaluation capacity building and IPDET alumni to translate materials into languages of their own countries (Phase 3 has not yet been completed).

The first phase or Stage 1 was viewed as quite expensive and perhaps not overly cost-effective. Yet it enabled GICHD to train a cadre of people working in the sector who could then become involved in training in later phases (Stage 2 and 3) or directly contribute to regional program evaluation activities. It also helped tremendously with the development of sector-specific training materials: “IPDET was good, it validated our module. We got really good feedback on that module”.

Finally, in its capacity building role, GICHD recognizes the role of developing knowledge among program communities in the sector about the power of evaluation.

Most of these people and most of our audiences are actually not going to be specialist evaluators in the near future. They are really program planning and management types. They are more likely to be the subject of an evaluation at some point.

Other organizational capacity building

One of the respondents currently working in the private sector rated his organization's ability to conduct or oversee M&E as low to medium. He shared that he views one of his primary roles within the organization as being a "champion" for M&E and trying to shift the organization's attention away from results and outputs to learning about processes and how they can be improved. As a mentor to many employees he said that "they are very committed and want to do a good job". By encouraging key decision makers to perform M&E, he is hopeful he will witness more and more evaluation use and learning within his organization. This participant commented that he often provides M&E training and uses the principles that he learned through IPDET as well as the materials he received to build evaluation capacity within his organization.

Another respondent commented that his organization's capacity to do evaluations is very limited; he is the only IPDET trained employee in their organization. Despite M&E being extremely valued within his organization, he finds it a challenge to meet all of the evaluation needs with such limited M&E capacity in his workplace.

Capacity to use evaluation

GICHD is very much interested in the development and promotion of effective programs in the sector and are keen to see program results and evidence of success. Of course, they are also interested in the effectiveness of their own programs. To that end, GICHD has engaged in self-evaluation for accountability and learning purposes. GICHD sees such studies as more of an evaluation of its projects and programs (e.g., training workshops, applied research on mine-detecting dogs, de-mining machines, and information management for mine-action) than as institutional evaluations. One was completed in 2006 and others are planned. Reports go directly to the Council of Foundation, where the externally contracted evaluator makes a brief presentation. The evaluation of mini-IPDET training programs, other than post-training questionnaires, has not really occurred to date, but according to one staff person, it is possible that it will become the focus of thematic evaluations over the next little while. "So I can imagine that we would add evaluation to this list in a year or two and evaluate it to see how effective it has been."

Internal uses of this information correspond to what the Centre hopes to see in the field. "We would like to see some results of the program itself Once it is on paper, it is not just coffee room talk." The Centre also has an interest in program and project cycle management. Evaluation can be used to help control internal direction.

You think you know most of it, but you haven't been able to focus yourself and work through the consequences and do all that kind of thing. And it's just good practice to have an independent person ... take a look at that and pull it together...by having the opportunity to think it through to its logical conclusion instead of having all this day-to-day stuff that you've got to do.

Also noted was that self-evaluation offers a common language and gives people a common way to talk about things, especially across stakeholder groups.

In addition to comments on internal uses of evaluation, another Centre staff person commented on the extent to which GICHD evaluations are used. His response was somewhat mixed, but he suggested that use extends somewhat beyond the symbolic.

It is difficult. Sometimes it is just a tick in the box. The donor just wants it done. I think some, especially about national programs, strategic priorities, the EEC evaluation, we were critical but they were grateful for future strategies. We see some areas where it is having an impact.

In addition to raising issues about use with IPDETs training partner, we also asked IPDET alumni about their own organizations use of evaluation results.

One respondent was quite positive about what his organization does with evaluation findings/reports. He indicated that he works in an environment where learning is valued and M&E are seen as key contributors to learning and improving. This respondent is not necessarily always involved directly in all evaluations, but he does oversee them. He strongly encourages all evaluation leads to prepare an evaluation report of their findings in order “to capitalize [on] the knowledge in the organization.”

Other IPDET participants also shared how their organizations use M&E results on a very regular basis to plan for future activities based on recommendations they have developed. One indicated that evaluations are rolled up into a single report and are used by managers to review and improve business processes within the organization. Another wrote this response to the question,

Due to the nature of our dangerous work (de-mining), top management in our organization really needs evaluation reports for various reasons:

- To ensure that the product meets our SOR (Standard Operating Requirement): cost effective, cost efficient, safety standard, provides confidence to user.
- To ensure that the work [in the] field meets maximum safety level.
- Evaluate the knowledge of the staff to provide training (part of Training Need Assessment)

From the excerpt above, it appears that M&E is done on a regular basis within this organization and that results are being used for planning, decision making and for ensuring safety standards are being met.

Yet not all comments were positive in this regard. Speaking at the level of country-wide developments one participant commented about how the M&E culture remains largely symbolic.

The M&E work done is predominantly that required by donors with recommendations that either obviously improve work pursued or, and in particular, those that affect donor support: No real culture of M&E as a tool.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The case study is unique in that it focuses on a partnership between IPDET and a multilateral not-for-profit organization whose mission is to provide leadership in the elimination

of land mines and anti-personnel explosive devices. The sector is small and very highly specialized. Yet it is recognized as a development context given the significant social and economic consequences of this pervasive global problem. IPDET's association with GICHD over the past five years has been highly fruitful. IPDET has played a key role in helping develop sector-specific evaluation training materials and has aided greatly in helping the Centre with its evaluation capacity building agenda. IPDET will continue to assist with the delivery of mini-IPDET regional training opportunities and will also help with the Stage 3 of GICHD's strategy: country-level training and capacity building. This activity will involve the translation of evaluation training materials into country-specific languages which promises to extend the reach of evaluation capacity building. It will also involve IPDET and potentially, mini-IPDET alumni in training delivery and evaluation practice.



C. Republic of Botswana (Gaborone, Botswana)

J. Bradley Cousins with Nathalie Gilbert

BACKGROUND

The Republic of Botswana is a small, landlocked country in southern Africa with a population of about 2 million people. Formerly a British protectorate, Botswana became an independent democratic republic and a member of the Commonwealth in 1966. Since independence, Botswana has experienced substantial economic growth and prosperity (Government of Botswana, 2010) but remains heavily dependent on donor funding for development.

In 1996, the government launched a long-term national development plan called *Vision 2016*. The plan was designed to provide strategic national direction until the year of the 50th anniversary of independence. Eventually harmonized with the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), *Vision 2016* was founded on seven essential pillars:

- Educated, Informed Nation
- Prosperous, Productive and Innovative Nation
- Compassionate, Just and Caring Nation
- Safe and Secure Nation
- Open, Democratic and Accountable Nation
- Moral and Tolerant Nation
- United and Proud Nation

The Vision Council is a high level, arms-length institutional mechanism established to monitor and evaluate the effective and timely implementation of *Vision 2016* by all stakeholders as well as to drive the popularization of *Vision 2016* (Vision Council, 2003). The twenty-one member Council is appointed by the President and comprised of high profile individuals of public, civil society and private sectors. The Council is supported by a secretariat and includes in its structure a forum to permit deliberation and debate among citizens of the nation.

Botswana has been sending individuals to Ottawa for IPDET training since 2004, mainly as a result of a personal connection made at a Malaysian evaluation conference in March of 2003 between one of the IPDET co-directors and the newly appointed coordinator of the *Vision 2016 Council Secretariat*. According to the coordinator, the description of the training offered by IPDET struck him as being fully aligned with the current national initiatives in Botswana and represented a prime means of helping to meet the country's needs for capacity building in monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

The country was selected as a case site for the IPDET evaluation of program impact because 17 individuals, recommended by the Vision Council and mostly from government, had attended IPDET training in Ottawa since 2004. More recently, an intra-governmental structure

was also set up by the President to monitor and stimulate development program and project implementation (Government of Botswana, 2008). The Deputy Director General of the Government Implementation Coordination Office (GICO) and several public servants from the Ministry of Finance and Development have also participated in IPDET. IPDET has also been implicated in on-going evaluation planning in Botswana in more informal ways: through in-country, one-off training sessions and assistance in technical assistance recruitment. It was, therefore, anticipated that IPDET most likely had an impact on the development of M&E systems, as well as the local evaluation community in Botswana.

METHODS

Listed below is a sequence of steps taken to gather data for the case analysis. As a matter of design, this case study was guided by the conceptual framework specified in Volume 1 of this report and the evaluation questions specified for the overall impact evaluation study. Evidence for the case derived mostly from direct interviews but these were supported by website and document analysis.

- *Advanced consultation and website review* – A Canadian M&E consultant based in Ottawa had been contracted by the Vision Council to assist with M&E system design and development and the preparation of the first progress report on Vision 2016 . This individual consented to an interview in advance of a site visit by the evaluator. Subsequently, websites of the national government¹⁰, the Vision Council¹¹ and its host organization, the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA)¹² were reviewed for advance information.
- *Individual on-site interviews* – Interviews were conducted on-site in Gaborone, mostly in-person (some by local telephone) with members of the Botswana evaluation community who had attended IPDET and with other local evaluation community members recommended by their colleagues as being key informants. An adapted version of the interview guide was used for this purpose. The non-alumni interviewees were generally aware of IPDET and in a good position to elaborate on the development and evolution of the local evaluation community. In the end, we conducted 11 interviews:
 - Three members of the Vision Council, one of whom was the head. All three were IPDET alumni;
 - Four members of government, all of whom were IPDET alumni.
 - Two external consultants, one located in Ottawa, one in Gaborone;
 - Two evaluation community members, both being IPDET alumni, one formerly having worked with the Vision Council.

¹⁰ E.g., <http://www.finance.gov.bw/index.php>

¹¹ <http://www.vision2016.co.bw/index.html>

¹² <http://www.bidpa.bw/index.html>

- *Document and website re- review*: While on-site various documents (e.g., program specific evaluation reports, Vision 2016, NDP-10) were collected for review and others were referenced on websites. Websites were reviewed once again after the site visit.

FINDINGS

The objectives and conceptual framework for the impact evaluation provided the structure for data analysis and reporting. The findings are summarized under the following areas.

- Knowledge and skill development;
- Networking;
- Knowledge and skill transfer;
- Effectiveness of features of IPDET;
- Mediating effects of context; and
- Organizational and community impact of IPDET.

Knowledge and Skill Development

Of the many people attending IPDET most were managers and/or involved in M&E systems design. Expectations tended to centre on the development of general knowledge about M&E as opposed to skill building in order to be able to *do* evaluation. In Botswana, as foreshadowed by the development of the impending national development plan, (NDP-10, Government of Botswana, 2010), a strong emphasis was to be placed on M&E and a shift to occur from monitoring program processes to more of an outcome focus. This change is evidenced by the following quotations from participants, whose learning expectations were primarily: 1) to differentiate evaluation from monitoring; and/or, (2) to differentiate between monitoring program processes, implementation and outputs to monitoring outcomes or results.

Process vs. Results:

[we had been looking at things like how many schools had been built] but not looking at whatever became of the schools, in terms of the quality of education, how has this changed the lives of people.

IPDET was a big eye opener for me....it was a very exciting moment for me in terms of broadening my scope as to how I should be dealing with issues.

Nowadays our focus is on outcomes; outputs, yes they are part of the process, but you want outcomes because you are spending people's money.

Evaluation vs. Monitoring:

My understanding was very low; I had not been exposed to issues of M&E. What I knew was how to start a project and how to complete it, but how to go about monitoring a project I had no idea at the time...I wanted to know what is really involved in monitoring. What is involved in evaluation? Why should we evaluate? Why should we monitor?

I wanted to enrich my knowledge in M & E and also one never knows because evaluation is a new thing. One day when you leave government that is an area that one can venture into.

Given the role that I was now in, I was just so desperate ... getting to know evaluation issues and the concepts to also to know the practice and the process. So IPDET came in very handy, because, right now it has given me a level of confidence...because at least it has given me the guidance and the skill that I need to also guide others.

One participant commented that, during his 5 to 6 years at the Vision Council, the emphasis was on monitoring and not evaluation. However, when he left the Vision Council, he felt that people were starting to move towards more of an evaluation philosophy; people were beginning to understand the difference between the monitoring and evaluation.

Almost uniformly, participants found the IPDET training to be a positive and worthwhile experience that met their expectations “fully!” As one person put it, “It gave me a good base. Now, one has to continue... to improve what you learned from IPDET”. Another, who was on maternity leave at the time of the interview quipped, “The ten steps is so good I can use it with my family.” Yet another commented that it enabled her, indeed empowered her, to critique so called experts and consultants.

As much as I was feeling they [consultants] were not doing the right thing, I was unable to tell them off ... not able to tell the people that “You are not doing this right. This is what I expect.” Because if you are managing an evaluation and you don’t know what you should get, honestly you are as good as ... you know.

Despite the level of satisfaction with IPDET, there was definitely a sense from three or four participants that they wanted more, perhaps in terms of a refresher course or more advanced training. One person indicated that she was very interested in the Graduate Diploma program at Carleton University but was disappointed to know that the program is not offered on-line. Some had also expressed interest in actually doing evaluation in the future and recognized that more training and guidance would be necessary.

Networking

Networking is an important aspect of IPDET and respondents had a great deal to say about it. They framed their responses in terms of on-site networking while attending IPDET as well as ongoing networking that has occurred or continued post-training.

On-site networking

Most participants mentioned that they enjoyed the opportunity to meet different people from different parts of the world at IPDET. One person mentioned that prior to attending IPDET some of his colleagues who had attended the training shared some of what they had learned about M&E. While this was beneficial at the time, he only began to fully appreciate what is involved in M&E and the potential benefits after attending IPDET training. In the year that he attended, there were three others from Botswana, which provided a great opportunity to develop

a common understanding. He also connected with colleagues from Uganda, Benin and Cyprus, as well as other countries.

Post-training international networking

Some of the participants maintained relationships with colleagues they met at IPDET after the training. While such connections were enduring for some, (mostly through email communications), this was difficult to sustain for some.

We [colleagues who met at IPDET] communicated during the first few months and then after it collapsed.

Another colleague mentioned that she remains in touch with people that she met at IPDET through the listserv. She believes that she does not contribute enough on the listserv but she learns a lot from the discussions on the listserv and some of the materials posted. A few others mentioned such positive benefits as well, in addition to their appreciation to IPDET for maintaining the listserv:

[IPDET co-director] is always sending mail, like people who are needing assistance or if people have requests.

The network [listserv] that is given by IPDET is very helpful to me because the questions that those guys are asking are the same questions that I am asking. And the material that they are posting is good.

Another participant shared that he had posted a couple requests himself and they were answered. He asked for information on studies that have been done or how to go about doing certain studies that he wanted to undertake. One or two others admitted to being more passive users of the listserv, aware of it and continually receiving postings but not particularly taking advantage of it. One found that much of the material posted took the form of job announcements.

International networking has also been fostered by IDPET through incentives for alumni to join the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS). Interestingly, none of the participants mentioned that they had attended the IDEAS conference in Johannesburg (geographically close in South Africa) in spring 2009, although two said they were aware of it and a third mentioned that she could not go because she had already attended the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) meeting in Niger in 2006 and the joint AfrEA and Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE) meeting in Cairo in 2009. She had been sponsored to present in Niger by IDEAS. Another person missed the IDEAS conference, but did attend another African Monetary Evaluation conference in Pretoria, South Africa.

One participant indicated that he is not a member of any evaluation organization currently, but had been a member of IDEAS upon his return from IPDET in 2005-2006.

Local networking

The majority of the respondents mentioned that they know many of the members who have attended IPDET through professional interactions in Botswana.

Most of them are from the government and there was a reason for them to go there; so they can help us push the M & E system here.

A local consultant, who did not attend IPDET, knows many of them as well. He commented about the reality of how many people are working in M&E in government and have not had any formal training in this area and that the IPDET graduates number among the 40% or so who have had such training.

The coordinator of the Vision Council has recruited some of the IPDET graduates to participate in the development of a national evaluation association. While some draft work has been done on a constitution for that society, momentum seems to have tapered off at this point (more on that below).

Knowledge and Skill Transfer

As mentioned, many of the people who attended IPDET did so with the intention of enhancing their M&E knowledge and understanding, as opposed to skills for doing evaluation. Many of these people have been called upon to apply their skills back in their workplace through enhanced management capabilities, M&E systems design and management/oversight and so forth.

Evaluation oversight

One person working in the Office of the President commented on how she had tried to set up an M&E unit at the previous ministry where she had worked; unfortunately, she was transferred before it was completed. However, in her current role as the Performance Improvement Coordinator, she is fully supported in her M&E activities: “they plan, they monitor, give feedback and have plans reviewed regularly.” The following comment about ex-post evaluation tendencies attests to her grasp of important concepts.

The only one challenge that I still see for us here is the “system” - we evaluate at the end. Sometimes there isn't much we can do really because the project is complete. That might be one thing we can change within the NDP-10.

Others are involved in doing M&E to a certain extent but knowledge transfer from IPDET is limited primarily to oversight responsibilities.

[Currently] everything that I do relates to monitoring and evaluation because I have to monitor peoples' performance by using monitoring tools, by using meetings, by using reports, by using all [of] those [tools].

To a certain extent yes [there is good transfer], especially in my new job because I am managing consultants, so you have to understand what you want from a client to manage people. If you don't know what you want or you don't have the skills, then you can't manage the evaluators.

The second individual quoted expressed some frustration in working with consultants indicating that he has to work closely with them; otherwise, he does not receive quality evaluations. He referred, for example, to participating in evaluation tool development and validation:

You are basically doing the work, but once you have the instrument right, then at least you know you will have quality data that you will be able to analyze.

A manager of a government organization concerned with M&E commented that the organization is benefiting from all the different skills that participants learned at the different IPDET workshops - for example, the 'balanced score card.' However, he indicated that they continue to struggle with a lack of capacity within the government. Finally, a member of the Vision Council secretariat referred to a resource book that is an integral part of the IPDET curriculum indicating that, "The 'ten step process' is our Bible here".

Evaluation practice

One of the IPDET alumni moved on from his role at the Vision Council and became actively engaged in evaluation practice in projects on information technology in HIV- AIDS prevention sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Most of his expectations for IPDET were met, but he stated that applying the newly acquired knowledge and skills is more difficult when you return to your workplace. He did acknowledge feeling comfortable doing evaluations, especially quantitative analysis, but does not feel as comfortable with the qualitative aspects of evaluation, such as focus groups, interviews, qualitative data analysis, etc.

Several other participants indicated that they are eager to become directly involved in evaluation practice but that their current roles do not permit this. For example,

I was involved in part of an evaluation of a country program.... And my boss said "Yes ... I hear you." I wanted to be part of it, but she said "Let her [external consultant] do that because you want her to be independent. Because when dealing with government you don't want to be seen like you are raising offence." It seems like I'll only be able to [practice evaluation] when I am not working for anybody.

Two individuals speculated that they believe IPDET has given them what they need in order to become evaluation practitioners. One commented that two to four weeks gives a good foundation. Others were more cautious in their response to this question.

I think it does, but it depends on the level of the participant. For someone at my level, I felt that it was truly appropriate, but I'm not sure and I doubt... at the level of the undergraduate it remains to be a big challenge. This is something that I noticed, some people were struggling with some of their issues and they needed a lot of help.

No, that's what I am missing most. I think I have grasped the concepts, but if you don't get involved in the studies hands on, it becomes pretty difficult to say you are well aware of the issues of evaluation.

The latter comment underscores the need to consolidate knowledge through practical application. One government manager wished she had learned about M & E earlier in her career, so she could have had the opportunity to go into the field and do evaluations rather than simply oversee them. She believes her lack of ability to do evaluations has somewhat limited how quickly she can learn M&E concepts and skills. Sometimes she goes into the field, especially when she is writing a report, just to get a feel for the project and how it is going.

Effectiveness of Features of IPDET

IPDET alumni were asked to reflect about strengths, shortcomings and suggestions for improvement of the IPDET training they received. Most were very content with and appreciative of the training.

Strengths

Chief among the strengths identified were the small group assignments where teams of participants analyzed case studies and worked on evaluation design frameworks. An important element of this was the diversity in the groups and the expertise, knowledge and background that sometimes came with it. One woman commented on their case analysis of a post-Rwandan genocide intervention:

We had someone in our group that had evaluation experience, so it was very helpful.

Another group focused on the evaluation of an agricultural project in Honduras. Once they had completed the framework, they presented it and he very much appreciated the extensive interaction among group members. Another person commented on the virtues of using the ‘ten step model’ for this purpose.

Group interaction is an important aspect of the practical group work and it relates to the networking element and social aspects of the IPDET experience. Part of this experience included interaction with members of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES). One person shared that through networking, a consultant from Canada was ultimately hired to do an organizational assessment in Botswana. In general, people remembered on-site networking as being quite valuable.

I would say the first two weeks [was the most valuable], because it included the group work where you get to interact with all sorts of people from all walks of life. As you are aware, the way M & E is done, you have to do it in an environment where there’s a lot of people who are different and you have to interact with them.

The networking, of course, [was a strength of the program] and the fact that networking is also helpful because you don’t stop when IPDET stops; you can continue the dialogue.

Two others highlighted the diverse social activities that IPDET organizes for the students and liked the fact that they were optional.

Another identified a strength related to the available choices of workshops one could participate in: qualitative evaluation, citizen score card and participatory evaluation were three that were mentioned explicitly.

[Qualitative evaluation] was my favourite workshop actually; we have been concentrating a lot on quantitative, so it was interesting sitting with someone and talking about qualitative decision making, qualitative evaluation, etc. Everyone thinks [that] there are no qualitative measures, even in performance management. So I started to look at things a little differently - to say okay, there is quality in everything and quality can be measured. These unintended benefits and intended can be measured.

More often than not, the government thinks [it] know[s] what people want, so they impose things on the communities. I found it very interesting that communities can give feedback to government on their performance [using the citizen scorecard].

One person mentioned that she appreciated the workshops, but felt there was not always enough time to really grasp all the information and apply it.

Finally, two respondents mentioned resources and materials provided at IPDET as being most helpful. One made reference to the *Road to Results* as being one resource to which she frequently refers at work.

Shortcomings

When asked explicitly about the shortcomings of the IPDET program, one person responded that there really were none. Another was dissatisfied with a particular workshop but agreed that the rest of the program was fine. From yet another, two main themes emerged: limited spare time and the range of knowledge/expertise within the classroom.

Four separate individuals indicated that they enjoyed the core and workshop program but believed that they would have benefited from more time, especially in practical workshops. A general sentiment was that “the program is too tight” and that there was not much “down time”.

I really felt as much as I appreciated the variety that it [the program] is overloaded.

The program is really good and even on the social side they really try, but again, I just feel that it is overloaded.

One of the respondents mentioned that there was a lot of material given, so after class often students would go back to read and there was no time to network. She felt very tired when she returned from IPDET and would have appreciated receiving some of the reading before going to Ottawa.

The other issue had to do with the variation in knowledge and ability of participants coming into the program. One person believed that he had a slight edge over some of the other students because he has completed his PhD, so he was able to keep up with the work and

understand it. However, he witnessed other students that did not have any other type of training in evaluation or research and he felt they really struggled to understand some of the material presented and complete the assignments. Two others commented explicitly about the wide range of differing skills among IPDET students, one of them observing,

For me it was quite okay, but [for] other people who had not done any prior research, it was quite difficult.

One of the suggested improvements related to this theme.

Areas for improvement

One person suggested that IPDET would better serve their students if they grouped students according to certain criteria (more differentiated instruction) – i.e., educational level, M & E experience, etc. – instead of grouping the full range of knowledge and expertise together and having everyone learn at the same rate. The only other suggestion was to provide access to some of the material before IPDET begins as this might alleviate the pressure felt at the training venue.

Mediating Effects of Context

Several factors were identified as drivers for evaluation in the local context and they are likely to have played a role in mediating the impact of IPDET training in the country. Our data suggested that six themes were important contextual considerations: Historical context and developments in governance, local demand for evaluation, local political tensions and issues, organizational culture considerations, supply of evaluation expertise and the availability of training.

Historical context and governance developments

Botswana, long known in the international community for responsible governance, has been the recipient of donor aid for decades and is therefore sensitive to donor accountability demands, including monitoring and evaluation. As described above, Vision 2016, the national strategic plan for economic and social development was developed in 1997 and is to end in 2016 to coincide with the 50 year anniversary of the country's independence. NDP-10, the government's National Development Plan, was prepared to meet the goals defined in Vision 2016 and was approved by parliament in December 2009. Unlike its predecessor, NDP-9, the new national development plan covers a seven-year period instead of the usual six years to coincide with Vision 2016.

NDP-10 adds value to its predecessor in many ways, not the least of which is a more concrete focus on M&E in keeping with the theme 'accelerating the achievement of Vision 2016'.

NDP-10 is results-based and accords various sectors and stakeholders the opportunity to pay more attention to practical expectations and impacts of programmes and projects that they are expected to deliver. (Government of Botswana, 2010, p. xxv)

When the Vision Council secretariat was operationalized in 2002, the government was in the final stages of writing NDP-9. According to one of the interview participants, NDP-9 consisted mainly of the vision, but did not include the strategies required to reach that vision. NDP-10 provides that level of focus. Hence, one of the main challenges faced is trying to get those involved in the programs to look beyond the outputs and look at the result, which is the main focus of NDP-10. In the words of government officials,

NDP-10 is aligned to the Vision...first we started with the Vision Pillars. What is it we are trying to achieve? Then ... how are we going to achieve that pillar; then we developed some goals and then we developed some policies, etc.

This plan is results-based, it's a big shift from the other plans in the respect that usually we are concentrating on projects, not on making sure that those projects did deliver the intended benefits...so we make a turn now to say, now let's try and focus our plans. Let's budget for results, not for projects.

Although the Vision Council is funded by government, its mandate extends well beyond government programs to the activities of civil society and the private sector in helping to achieve Vision 2016. The Vision Council is envisaged as an arm's length instrument and intended to independently track progress toward the national strategic vision. Its mission is,

To effectively and efficiently promote, drive, monitor, evaluate and report on the attainment of the Vision 2016 goals, ensuring active involvement and participation of all stakeholders.
http://www.vision2016.co.bw/html/aboutvision_council.shtm

The Government Implementation Coordination Office (GICO), on the other hand, was set up in 2008 with the expressed purpose of monitoring government program and project implementation and to stimulate progress toward national development plan goals. Both of these organizations have very central M&E responsibilities and therefore are heavily invested in the development of M&E systems. The development of such systems involved the recruitment of external technical expertise from Canada and Malaysia, although some people were not satisfied with the quality of the Malaysian consultants. In 2009, with the support of a Canadian consultant, the first Vision 2016 performance report was published (Vision Council, 2009). The report addressed each one of the seven pillars of Vision 2016 and commented on progress on the basis of the best available evidence. The report was widely disseminated throughout the country and underscored the country's commitment to results-based management.

These historical developments within Botswana carry with them important implications for M&E capacity building. With such an overt move to a results-based approach, the demand for enhanced capacity in terms of systems development and local skills development was underscored. It is within this context that many individuals, especially from government, have been sent to IPDET and it is within this context in which such people are expected to apply M&E knowledge and skill.

Local demand for evaluation

The aforementioned developments within the country speak to the increased demand for M&E expertise.

You see in this country we have government that comes up with good policy, but the problem has always been poor implementation of government policies. So the idea was that if we have a robust monitoring and evaluation system maybe that problem could be addressed.

From an operational perspective it is necessary for the government to develop M&E systems and to establish structural units with responsibility for M&E. According to one respondent, “What we are saying is that in each ministry there should be an M&E system in place or an M&E unit”. An interview participant associated with the Vision Council described the switch in emphasis to RBM but expressed concern about feasibility:

It is very difficult now, because many individuals are monitoring their programs, but most of the monitoring is in the form of outputs. Most programs also have too many indicators [that are not always] appropriate.

But interview participants also described how the demand extends beyond monitoring to include evaluation.

Where [the Vision Council] could monitor performance and report on trends, it would be even more useful to be able to understand why or why not progress was being made i.e., evaluative type issues.

Also considered was the prospect of the Vision Council establishing a Centre of Excellence for evaluation. The idea would be for the Council to manage or commission evaluations so as to identify and flag areas from national level performance reports so that in the next cycle they could be better informed about program exigencies.

Similar sentiments were associated with government operations as well. An external consultant commented on GICO’s increasing interest in evaluation, as opposed to just monitoring. The following quotation from a government department head, who had been sent to IPDET, illustrates growing demand for evaluation as part of the RBM framework.

A substantial amount of money is spent on agriculture just to try and address the food security situation, so it is important that we be able to account for those resources in terms of what is on the ground. So this is now our focus, increasingly our evaluations are focused on outcomes and impacts in our studies.

The increased demand for evaluation within the country provided a strong impetus for the Vision Council and the government to send key individuals to IPDET for training. Without question, the development of knowledge and expertise about M&E systems and RBM was required, but there was also an increasing sense of the importance of learning to differentiate evaluation from monitoring and to move towards a more comprehensive integration of evaluation into new RBM systems.

Political context

In many ways, the shift to RBM has been quite substantial and dramatic in Botswana. As might be expected, along with the changes came some level of confusion and questioning of roles and mandates. According to a member of the Vision Council, the Coordinator of the Secretariat went to brief the *Economic Committee of Governance*, which consisted of the ministers, the president and the parliamentary secretaries.

The idea of IPDET and M&E was new to [them], ... At some point the president asked the parliamentary secretaries if what [the coordinator] was saying was making any sense to them. He said that some of the people sitting at the table appreciated what he was talking about, but some were confused.

On the one hand, most people were able to articulate the distinction between the Vision Council and GICO, however, some raised concern about potentially overlapping mandates and an emphasis by the Vision Council on government activities and programs. On the other hand, a government official commented that the Vision Council is responsible to them because they are funded by the government. According to a local consultant who is well-connected with the development community:

GICO is still trying to figure out where it wants to go... They are looking more inside at government but development is much broader, including civil society. What is the role they want play?

He also expressed concern that the Vision Council tended to be more government-focused- “not seeing the bigger picture about how M&E applies more broadly to civil society and private sector.” A respondent from Vision Council clarified the breadth of its operation and mandate underscoring its focus on government.

The Vision Council projects are here. It is their mandate to run the ‘Vision Pillar Report’ and the progress on the vision pillars for the whole country, government, everybody, every stakeholder. They have to indicate their state on driving the Pillars and we have to report on progress and their achievement. But as we take it further, we have to report on government activities to ensure alignment of all government activities for the Vision Pillars.

Further complicating matters, following a change in government leadership in 2008, there were speculations about a possible relocation of the Vision Council within government, potentially within the Office of the President where GICO was located.

There are so many people involved in this [M&E] thing, so they think they should be coordinated from one point...rationalize the activities.

As mentioned, the Vision Council is “a non-partisan body and independent – although it draws its funds entirely from the government”, was housed within BITPA, an independent policy research unit. A possible move within government raised concerns among members of Vision Council about its perceived credibility and independence. Would there be a conflict of interests?

According to some, such uncertainty has had a dampening effect on M&E capacity building.

The Centre of Excellence is on hold right now until the discussions of [incorporating] ...the Vision Council ...into the government are clarified.

Recently, GICO and the Public Service Reforms Unit (PSRU) were amalgamated to form the National Strategic Office (NSO); they are now operating as one in the Office of the President¹³. An IPDET alumnus working in government suggested that GICO and PSRU could work together, despite not having an evaluation body at the moment; this could be one way of building capacity. To date the Vision Council remains located at BITPA and a new Memorandum of Understanding between the government and BITPA was recently formalized (NSO & BITPA, 2010). It remains to be seen how the different roles and mandates of these various organizations are sorted out, but such issues will have continuing implications for M&E capacity building.

Organizational culture

Progress and developments in capacity building are also a function of bureaucracy and organizational culture. Some IPDET alumni commented on the slow progress being made since the inception of Vision 2016.

Progress has been relatively slow, considering that they first briefed the *Economic Committee of Governance* in 2003-2004 and the buy-in only occurred approximately one to two years ago.

The progress could have been faster, but it was made slow by the bureaucratic government.

Another IPDET alumnus observed that in government practice, there is more monitoring being conducted than evaluation. She speculated that the organizational culture may be a factor.

As the implementers, we concentrate on the M [monitoring]; I think it's because we don't want to see our failures

Yet she went on to add that change is coming and that it will take time. A member of the Vision Council concurred.

The NDP-10 is fairly new, so people have to adjust to the new expectations being placed on them. We are not there yet, that is all I can say. At least now the attitude is different, it's all about attitude. Our attitude towards [the change] is good, but in terms of capacity we still have to develop it. We may need to be hand-held for a while.

Yes, actually, slowly, slowly it is getting there, but you know to change the mindset sometimes it takes time

¹³ <http://www.gov.bw/en/News/Govt-Implementation-Coordination-Office-GICO-renamed>

Local supply of evaluation

Despite the increasing demand for evaluation as a result of Vision 2016 and associated developments, evaluation capacity in Botswana was viewed by most interviewees as being quite low.

With limited evaluation expertise in the area, government and NGOs often rely on those with associated training in research methods, including internal government staff and faculty from universities. The solution is seen as being quite limited. “They don’t have [the] skills for when you want to evaluate a problem, knowing what exactly what you have to look at.” As mentioned previously, one observer believes that the majority of people working in M&E have had little to no training in M&E. This is a particular problem, especially for government and the Vision Council in the light of rather significant moves toward RBM and evidence-based decision making. As one manager in government explained,

My main challenge is [that] the expertise is not there.... Resources, I think resources are there, but they are not enough; we are struggling with what we have. These resources were there to help, but we cannot do the whole government, you need everybody to be involved to change the mindset. This is where we are going, but now doing that is a challenge.

Others also commented about the low level of available evaluation expertise,

It is the critical missing link. The one thing I would say about the evaluation shops ... I certainly had a sense that people did not feel comfortable enough to actually be going out and doing evaluation. They understood the concepts, their understanding and knowledge have been raised to a certain level; they need some stronger hands-on support, mentoring, whatever.

There are people that are doing M & E, but they don’t have the right tools or the requisite skills for undertaking M & E. You were called a monitoring and evaluation officer, but you don’t really have the appropriate skills for you to do the job.

Within government, staff turnover is also becoming a problem. People who do receive M&E training are often re-deployed or move to other departments on their own volition. One manager, herself IPDET-trained, had three IPDET trained staff leave the department for other opportunities. The Vision Council has also experienced staff turnover with some trained individuals moving to consultant roles. As one IPDET alumnus put it, “The Vision Council would be better placed to do M&E, but I still believe they don’t have capacity.”

At least two participants commented that evaluation is more advanced in civil society, particularly in the context of HIV-AIDS interventions, mostly because of the demands of donor agencies as the following remark attests.

... because initially it came with donors, “Because I am giving you this money and you have to account for it” ... it is part of the funding arrangement.

However, even in that sector, staff retention is a huge problem: “The biggest problem is that the

majority of people working in M&E are expatriates, many of them are only here temporarily.” This interviewee’s biggest concern is the “level of transfer of skills”; according to him, there is not really a commitment to make people permanent in these roles.

Training opportunities

Alternative training opportunities to IPDET have been somewhat hit-and-miss, and mostly located outside of the country. There have been efforts to set something up at the University of Botswana, such as short courses offered in the evening to enhance access. The Vision Council has approached the University to develop some M&E courses and training programs “so that when they graduate from the university they will be cognizant of M&E.” To date none of these ideas has taken root.

Currently, the University is not much in this thing; it seems as if it’s government business. So, if we can rope them in to also develop capacity, they might be of good help to us.

There have been some training programs offered by NGOs but these were reportedly short-term and did not continue after the initial year due to a lack of leadership capacity to sustain it. There was also an attempt to set up a training partnership with the University of London, using distance education, but this did not get much past the idea stage before losing government support due to a leadership change. According to one evaluation community member,

The biggest challenge in the context of M&E is that we have not developed a critical mass of people at a level that makes a difference.... The group that is critical is still not there... and probably the opportunity for training is challenging.

Such sentiments bode well for training programs such as IPDET as does for the hunger for more on-going, advanced-level training expressed by some IPDET alumni. Without such opportunities developing locally, there is a concern that M&E specialists will amount to little more than technicians with reliance, for example, on internationally approved indicators and limits. However, their ability to construct their own quality measures at the local level may be underdeveloped. One participant expresses this sentiment: “at times when you use internationally approved indicators, you are alright, but when you get confronted with having to construct your own indicators, you are in trouble”.

Having developed a deeper understanding of the context in Botswana for the transfer of knowledge and skill from IPDET, we now turn to our final question about the contributions of IPDET to local organizational and evaluation community development.

Organizational and Community Impact of IPDET

While it is difficult to ascertain IPDET’s direct role in the development of local organizational and community capacity for evaluation, we did encounter some indication of the training program’s contribution in this regard.

Organizational impact

We have described enormous challenges facing the Botswana government and the Vision Council in not only developing M&E systems, but in changing the mindset of people in government, civil society and private sectors toward a more results-based perspective. It is clear that M&E systems are being developed and implemented as confirmed by people associated with GICO and the Vision Council, and corroborated by the production of the first ever performance report (Visions Council, 2009). IPDET's role in fostering this movement is difficult to discern.

IPDET provides training that is highly relevant to local needs and Botswana has taken advantage of this by sending several people to Ottawa over the past 7 years. Part of the benefit to local organizations has been educational. For example, one observer offered that the Minister of Finance and others in government have developed a more realistic perspective as a consequence of IPDET's contribution. The following remark underscores the significance of this.

I think if there was maybe one association with IPDET, they probably had a better appreciation for what was and was not do-able, at least in the short term, in part, if not large part, from their IPDET training. That is not a small item. In fact that is a huge item.

Another participant commented on how IPDET has provided relevant and needed focus on M&E in the context of RBM.

So we make a turn...to say, "now, let's try and focus our plans." Let's budget for results, not for projects. So that means that IPDET courses become handy...because most of the people went to IPDET.

Previously we observed that some of the IPDET participants had commented on learning the distinction between evaluation and monitoring, something particularly beneficial to the Vision Council according to one respondent.

When I left the Vision Council late last year, the Vision Council was now moving into the 'E' [evaluation] part because now we at least have the minimum skills to understand what the difference between 'M' [monitoring] and 'E' is.

IPDET has also contributed indirectly to enhancing conceptual understanding. In addition to helping recruit technical support for M&E system design, IPDET co-directors have travelled to Botswana on multiple occasions to present, for example, the ten-step approach to staff and decision makers who have not had the opportunity to participate in IPDET. One of the IPDET co-directors was brought in to present to senior officials from different ministries some of the challenges and implications of building an M&E system. Following this presentation, they developed some training strategies, so that when NDP-10 rolled out, people would be familiar with some of the concepts of M&E. Yet according to one observer, there was some resistance with this approach from senior officials, because NDP-10 had not yet been developed, so they were trying to conceptualize something that did not yet exist.

Another factor in local organizational capacity building has been IPDET alumni providing services to others in the region. One alumnus commented on how last year she had done some work with youth on HIV-AIDS prevention and was asked to assist another organization to develop indicators, a youth development index and to help tie the indicators into Vision 2016.

Capacity to use evaluation

Since M&E capacity building in Botswana appears to be developing relatively slowly, we can expect the capacity to use evaluation to develop slowly as well. Two respondents were of the opinion that with the establishment of GICO the prospect of developing capacity for use may be fast-tracked. The following remarks suggest that positive experience with M&E results will serve to fuel interest.

I think on the level of usage, it would also depend on the stakeholder appreciating M&E... They are concerned about the levels of poverty in this country, but with the advent of this Results Based Management, we think that once evaluations are done they will be able to appreciate evaluation in order to see how they can use the information from M&E to better the lives of their citizens.

For us here in the Ministry, personally I am very happy... We just briefed our minister last week and they were so excited looking at the results and we were also excited. They were saying how is this program touching the lives of people, we are talking about impact, and we had data.

Over time, as more evaluations are being done and people start to pay attention, they are more likely to realize their value. Another person suggested that his organization will use M&E information if it has the potential for impact. He suggested that it could be highly complementary to the Central Statistics Office but that, although this is the intention, at this point it is too early to tell. He observed that most institutions do not use evaluation and may, at some level, be “stuck in a rut”. They need to embrace ‘systems thinking’ to a greater extent.

An independent consultant and IPDET alumnus agreed. He believed that a lack of ‘systems thinking’ is a significant barrier to be faced. He has struggled with his own staff to get them to document evidence, so they can demonstrate the links that lead to change.

Yes, that is my problem actually. I think even those I am working with.... they don't like to use information for some reason or they don't see the value of information... I am trying to instill the culture of using information, of gathering information for decision making. When we have to write a report we struggle....so now, even on a weekly basis, I say at least on one key indicator “what happened here?” and on qualitative data, “what were the issues that week?”

We now turn our attention to capacity building within the local community in Botswana, and what role or contributions IPDET may have made.

Evaluation community development

With a concerted effort on behalf of the Vision Council to encourage participation at IPDET, and its success in recruiting government departments and international donors (e.g., UNDP, WB) to sponsor individuals to attend, the potential for IPDET to contribute to local evaluation community capacity building is high. In fact, we did observe some community building in this respect, but it has been somewhat limited, probably due to some of the contextual constraints identified earlier.

First, people who attended IPDET played an active role in local networking in the interest of M&E community building upon their return. The following quotations touch on the perceived benefits of IPDET for capacity-building:

I think it is all about trying to network ourselves. It's not necessarily about resources but its like if I need this, there is a resource person I can bring on board.

The whole idea is that when someone comes from IPDET, they should be able to champion monitoring and evaluation in our institutions.

We also encountered some positive indications that these expectations were being met, at least to some degree. First, the Vision Council has continued to play a strong role in promoting M&E training, especially at IPDET. However, not all of the alumni attended IPDET on the recommendation (direct or indirect) of the Vision Council. One person mentioned that he had met other government workers who had attended IPDET and highly recommended that he and his colleagues attend. Another heard about the program through a relationship with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); and this same participant was also aware that others from Gaborone had attended.

Locally, IPDET alumni do connect with one another to some extent but not to the satisfaction of everyone. According to one person,

... for the groups like the ones that have gone through [IPDET], all of have come back and gone to different organizations, doing the work they need to do – and I think doing it very well. [But] there is not sufficient space. We have not created that space where we can meet, share information, check out with each other, “how are you doing this?”, “how are you doing that?”

Another individual acknowledged that the evaluation community is growing, but it remains somewhat disjointed. Given the number of IPDET alumni in Botswana, he was surprised that they had not yet been successful at collectivizing towards an active evaluation community. In his words,

You see, monitoring and evaluation is at the infancy stage in this country, there is virtually nothing and so the more we engage people, the more you realize that you need to do more.

Another person, an IPDET alumnus, is advocating very strongly for the Vision Council to continue to send other people to IPDET because she sees the program as a way to “gain

momentum within the country.” She thinks the Vision Council is doing a good job of keeping the dialogue going.

Indeed, the Vision Council has been actively promoting the idea of formalizing a national evaluation association or society and IPDET alumni are very much involved. IPDET has explicitly encouraged the establishment of such associations and to some participants the idea is attractive. As one explained,

I thought if we could go ahead and do the society... because that is what most countries have done.... That is something that we learned from the [IPDET] training, that some countries have been able to stay afloat because they work within a society like Canada, for example. When you have a coordinating body, then you are able to progress; you are able to evaluate yourselves.

At present, a draft constitution has been formulated but the initiative seems to have lost momentum. Moreover, several interviewees were aware of this initiative but seemed relatively indifferent. They were unsure of the benefits of participation, the role and purpose of such a society; they were also not convinced that people would be attracted. The individual who had tried to promote the idea commented,

My own feeling is that when you don't work for yourself, you don't really feel obliged, that kind of thing.

Yet others recognized the potential, for example, for enhanced professional development. For the moment, however, the momentum may have stalled. As summarized by the following comment,

No, that is where I think we are lacking behind. It's true that there have been a quite a number of people that have gone to IPDET in this country, but I think locally we don't have networking sessions or activities.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Botswana is a fascinating case site within which to explore the capacity building impact of IPDET. Interest in M&E capacity building has grown enormously due to the national development strategy, Vision 2016, and a concomitant promise from government to make a significant shift to an RBM approach. The release of NDP-10, the most recent government development plan, will only continue to augment this interest. Given such growing demand, IPDET has been embraced as a highly relevant and viable training alternative. Not only have many Botswana nationals in key positions been sent to IPDET for training but IPDET co-directors have offered additional professional development within the country.

The challenge of developing M&E systems are enormous and IPDET has played a role in both demystifying the challenges through helping develop a realistic understanding and expectations and through indirect means, such as providing support for such development. Yet there are local contextual forces at play that, to some extent, may mitigate the impact of such input. Despite significant progress in M&E system development, it is clear that the local supply of evaluation expertise continues to be modest and that ongoing training needs are increasingly

evident. Attempts to develop local training initiatives have been relatively unsuccessful so far, and despite considerable interest, momentum toward developing a national evaluation society had slackened somewhat. Still it is clear that, as a collective, IPDET alumni in Botswana have a definite presence and are helping to define the future of M&E in the country.

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D. People's Republic of China and Shanghai International Program for Development Evaluation (SHIPDET) (Shanghai, PRC)

J. Bradley Cousins

BACKGROUND

The People's Republic of China (PRC) was selected as a country-level case study site since several individuals from the country had attended IPDET in Canada, and IPDET has been directly involved in offering evaluation training in China. The engagement has been a joint venture for development evaluation training operating in Shanghai since 2007. The Shanghai International Program for Development Evaluation Training (SHIPDET) regularly offers training activities that are jointly funded by the Government of China's Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank and the Asia-Pacific Finance Development Centre (AFDC).

Since IPDET began in 2000 in Canada, a limited number of individuals (8) from China have attended. In 2006, a mini-version of IPDET was offered in Beijing with about 60 people in attendance. Many of these participants were from the National Centre for Science and Technology Evaluation and several others were from a variety of Chinese federal government departments. Over the last decade or so, governance in China has been evolving toward results-based management (RBM) and a new public management framework. As such, there is increasing interest in monitoring and evaluation (M&E). In the words of Premier Wen Jiabao: "Performance evaluation, as the basis and prerequisite of administration accountability, can guide the efforts of the government and its staff to perform their tasks responsibly."¹⁴ The international department of the MoF has taken a lead role in promoting the development of M&E capacity in the PRC. In 2009, the Central Government made explicit their intention to move toward a performance outcome approach and involved 27 of 31 provinces in a pilot evaluation project.

SHIPDET has been operating since 2007 on the basis of a memorandum of understanding between the ADB, the World Bank and MoF. The IPDET co-directors have played a lead role in the design and delivery of the training since its inception. The training is given at the AFDC in the Shanghai National Accounting Institute. This Centre was established by the Chinese central government in 2001 and aims to promote capacity building in finance for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). AFDC has been an ideal partner with whom to do evaluation capacity building as it had five years of training and development experience when the idea for SHIPDET came along.

¹⁴ SHIPDET website: http://www.afdc.org.cn/shipdet/about_shipdet.asp

SHIPDET holds two sessions annually. The spring session is reserved for Chinese nationals, generally government officials whose work is most directly related to monitoring and evaluation. Usually about 50 people attend this session; the language of instruction is Chinese and simultaneous translation is used. The fall program in October is for international participants from Asian countries, although it is also open to English-speaking Chinese applicants. Normally, 70 participants attend the training, and over the years, over 26 countries (mostly Asian) have been represented. The language of instruction is English. The sessions are shorter than the regular IPDET program - 9 days and 12 days, respectively (compared to 14 days for the core program and 2 weeks' worth of workshops for IPDET). It includes much of the same format and curriculum as IPDET with a core component and specialized workshops (e.g., impact evaluation). There are, however, some interesting differences. For example, a local field trip is sometimes arranged to an organization with evaluation needs. All participants learn about the program or project and then use it as a case study to prepare evaluation designs and plans as a course assignment. It has sometimes been possible to compare the products of this assignment with the authentic evaluation design that had already been implemented.

The partner organizations have different responsibilities; the MoF is responsible for coordination with international partners and local departments, such as provincial financial bureaus. The Ministry is very much involved with identifying and sponsoring Chinese nationals to attend the training program. The World Bank provides technical expertise- mainly speakers and evaluation training experts. The ADB is responsible for selecting and sponsoring people to travel to Shanghai for the fall training; it has a technical assistance program for Asian countries, such as Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In some cases, individuals apply to attend SHIPDET and it is possible for them to receive partial support from ADB (travel) or AFDC (accommodation). AFDC operates and manages the program, including registration, accommodations and program development and delivery. Over the years, the some participants from other continents, such as Africa, have been sponsored to attend SHIPDET.

In addition to SHIPDET, AFDC has been involved in providing development evaluation training in other domestic contexts. Specifically, training was offered to participants in Guangdong province, considered to be a "pioneer of 'official evaluation' in China." The training was offered in Shanghai in an abbreviated format (2 days of the core program, 3 days of workshops), although some consideration has been given to offering the program on-site in Guangdong in the future. Similar training opportunities have been provided to members of other provinces in western China, a relatively impoverished region of the country.

In 2009, a collaborative decision to continue SHIPDET for another multi-year period was reached by the partner organizations. The decision was largely based on self-evaluation information from SHIPDET and ongoing priorities set by the Central Government.

METHODS

The case study was guided by the conceptual framework, including the evaluation questions, and involved the following steps for data collection and analysis:

- *Review of documentation* – SHIPDET routinely evaluates its own training sessions and reports to the MoF. Some of these documents were shared in the form of reports (written in Chinese) and Excel spreadsheets. We reviewed these documents as well as other relevant documents from the SHIPDET website¹⁵, including program structure and content. In addition, one of the staff at AFDC provided a report that she had written on results-based performance management in the PRC.
- *Individual and group interviews* – Interviews were conducted, in person and by telephone/Skype, with one group and several individuals in a variety of roles:
 - ADFC staff and administration with direct responsibility for SHIPDET participated in a group interview (three people)
 - Two ADFC staff and administrators (one of whom participated in the group interview) participated in in-depth individual interviews; one of these people had attended IPDET 2008 in Ottawa;
 - Two face-to-face interviews were conducted with SHIPDET alumni; one having participated in the spring 2008 session of SHIPDET (for Chinese nationals) and the other having attended an international session offered in fall 2009.
 - An additional SHIPDET alumnus provided an email response to an adapted set of questions from the interview guide.
 - Two telephone interviews were also held with alumni who had attended IPDET in Ottawa. One of these was with an eight-year member of the National Centre for Science and Technology Evaluation (NCSTE) who had attended IPDET in Ottawa in 2007. Another was a former member of a UN agency's Beijing office, now working in the USA. He did the four week program at IPDET in 2005.
 - Two Skype interviews were held with SHIPDET alumni who had participated in the first international cohort in Shanghai in 2007. One person was located in Pakistan, the other in South Africa.
 - Finally, a professor at a university in Shanghai who participated as a trainer in AFCD evaluation training programs consented to a telephone interview. He had delivered half-day sessions on public budgeting for participants from Guangdong Province and Beijing.

In the end 13 people provided input to the case study. All face-to-face and most telephone / Skype interviews were audio recorded; where telephone interviews were not recorded, extensive field notes were taken. Many people attending the Chinese national version of SHIPDET, most often coming from Beijing, were unable to speak English and were, therefore,

¹⁵ <http://www.afdc.org.cn/shipdet/index.asp>

not approached. Members of ADB were invited to participate in telephone interviews but, ultimately, we did not succeed in scheduling these.

FINDINGS

Findings for the case study are organized according to the overarching evaluation objectives for the follow-up evaluation.

- Knowledge and skill development;
- Networking;
- Knowledge and skill transfer;
- Effectiveness of features of IPDET/SHIPDET;
- Mediating effects of context; and
- Organizational impact of IPDET/SHIPDET.

Knowledge and Skill Development

Generally participants attending either IPDET or SHIPDET were quite satisfied that their learning objectives had been met. Most attended IPDET to learn more about RBM and performance monitoring and evaluation, some explicitly stating that they had never had the opportunity for formal training in evaluation. In some cases they were identified by the MoF to attend the training. One person based in Shanghai lobbied to attend the fall 2009 session of SHIPDET because he was unable to take the spring session and he was aware that the three-year agreement to offer SHIPDET on a pilot basis was coming to an end. He was successful in obtaining sponsorship to attend and commented that he subsequently learned that a new multi-year arrangement was being agreed.

The international program in the fall was a 10-day program. Due to time logistics, the workshop began with a full day workshop on impact evaluation given by an instructor from the ADB. According to the participant sequencing was an issue.

It was arranged on the first day before the course; a lot of people did not even have the basics.

We learned that this was an isolated event arising as a consequence of competing demands on the instructor. Overall, however, the SHIPDET learning experience for this individual was quite rewarding, particularly in terms of developing knowledge of essential concepts. In his words,

Yes, I thought the whole course was very well designed, even though time was a bit short, especially for me because I did not want to get all the details. The concept[s] [are] probably more important than the hands-on details. I found the course very rewarding. Before attending the course I did not really know the details of, for example, Theory of Change.

One of the AFDC staff attended IPDET in Ottawa in 2008 partially sponsored by AFDC (travel) and the World Bank (residence) and subsequently had opportunities to consolidate

knowledge by participating as part of the teaching team in two of the subsequent programs. The following remark reflects a positive learning experience

I am very happy, very, very satisfied with IPDET. IPDET is the ideal pattern for SHIPDET.

People attending IPDET in Ottawa tended to follow workshops on performance measurement, program logic models, and performance budgeting. All of these topics were considered to be highly relevant in the current context in the PRC. But other topics mentioned provided for more well-rounded perspectives (e.g., adult learning, evaluating in real world contexts).

Networking

In the year that one participant attended IPDET in Ottawa there were five others from PRC: two from the MoF in Beijing and two others with the Ministry of Science and Technology. This person found it interesting to attend the international training session and to meet so many people from around the world. She indicated that she has had more follow up with individuals from other countries following the training than with her domestic colleagues.

I receive news about IPDET. I have made several friends. We often talk by MSN or by email about evaluation things or family things. ... I also attended the IDEAS international meeting this year in South Africa. I met a lot of friends in IPDET who went to that meeting. IDEAS came up with scholarships, we all met together and we could discuss our jobs very deeply. [This was] very good for me.

She further commented on the formal relationship between the two organizations – “Every IPDET graduate can be a member of IDEAS automatically.” – the benefits of which, in terms of networking, are quite apparent. This participant indicated that she does continue to follow the IPDET listserv but admitted to only posting to it one time, an announcement about an upcoming event. On the other hand, a respondent from Beijing working at NCSTE indicated that several people with whom he works had received evaluation training and that some connections continue through work. Yet another found that such connections were difficult to maintain after returning to Beijing due mostly to job demands and variable interests.

Like IPDET, SHIPDET provides participants with ample opportunity to meet and get to know others with similar interests. “[You] get a chance to ask questions and network with those from other countries.” Yet evidence about post-SHIPDET networking was a bit thin, as suggested by this respondent,

Unfortunately, not too much networking so far. I think this was an intention however. I think the IT guys are doing this. One of my colleagues from ADB had explicitly intended to set up a network after the course. [I] have not followed up.

This respondent also gets the regular IPDET listserv but claimed not to really use it much. He found it to be mostly just advertisements of events and sharing and had never posted anything. Another SHIPDET alumnus actually knew some individuals attending the 2007 international

training session before he went. SHIPDET served to strengthen ties and he continues to keep in touch with people in Nepal, Philippines, Australia and India.

Knowledge and Skill Transfer

The question of the transfer of knowledge and skill is sometimes difficult to address, depending on the learning objectives one brings to the training opportunity. For example, as mentioned above, one participant was more interested to learn about relevant concepts and theory than hands-on techniques for doing M&E. Has he had the opportunity to transfer learned knowledge to his work function? In the end, it is difficult to say, but if so, it was likely in an indirect sense. On the other hand, this person spoke at length about a colleague who had attended the SHIPDET training and is now working on a significant assignment: one of the MoF sponsored pilot evaluation projects that are taking place in 27 provinces around the country.

The pilot study was on a water treatment project that ended in 2001 or 2002, which turned out to be a significant challenge for the evaluation because so much time had passed; it was retrospective. The colleague had trouble even identifying relevant stakeholders, and the focus for evaluation was on the second phase of the project, whereas the 3rd phase was almost finished. No doubt, the retrospective nature of the evaluation could provide a challenge to stakeholders and to intended beneficiaries. Yet it was a successful application of the framework learned at SHIPDET with different tiers of indicators.

Apart from aforementioned difficulties, the colleague coped fairly well in the eyes of the respondent. Even still the design of the evaluation was quite pedestrian, only comparing changes so far through monitoring data and interviews with project staff.

When I say she coped well, you need to understand that we did only one type of evaluation. The main challenge is the design. You need to explain variation. We did not do anything like that. We did not do the difficult bit. If we did there could be more problems.... These technical bits were not very well explained in the course. That was just a very brief mentioning of techniques you can use. Just very brief, just one morning session. You cannot do anything just relying on that. Need to go further with the statistical part.

And so, while transfer from the course was evident to the respondent, the question as to the adequacy of the training for this sort of work remained. Naturally, only basic material can be covered in a 10-day program. By implication, there would appear to be a need for more advanced-level training opportunities in order to assist alumni in developing their expertise and methodological sophistication.

Another SHIPDET alumnus has had the opportunity to apply the design matrix approach to systems design in his jurisdiction. As the following quotation reveals, it seems that this person was relatively easily able to consolidate and apply knowledge learned at SHIPDET,

Oh yes, my approach to systems design has really changed, especially my approach to evaluations. I would tell you one thing that probably in the last three years I am the first person who has really introduced the design evaluation matrix, which I learned there.

Another respondent spoke about her developing reputation as an expert in the field and how her training in Ottawa, augmented by experiences with SHIPDET, has fostered it. She spoke about being recruited by a group of professors to play a key role in a study of land use performance in economic development zones. Also, this person was involved in coordinating the SHIPDET self-evaluation and during our time together, she asked for input on a draft questionnaire.

I just finished designing the questionnaire [that] will go out via email. [I am] not sure how good it is. I have read lot of the IPDET reports and [I'm] not sure how mine compares, but I am learning.

While the draft appeared fairly comprehensive and well developed, improvement of a number of basic formatting and design feature would lead to better quality data collection. Again, such observations point to the need for ongoing training opportunities in technical aspects of doing M&E. Yet association with IPDET and SHIPDET can have quite significant positive influences on profile development.

I am the consulting expert for the financial department and international department of the MoF because they are both carrying out pilot projects on evaluation and they wanted to invite some people who know international theories. So I am one of the team. Just tomorrow, I will go to Beijing to discuss the ToR of the pilot projects in the 27 provinces. In the end, we will pick up 3 or 4 of the best practices and put them in a book to be sent out to the provinces.

Effectiveness of Features of IPDET/SHIPDET

Participants were asked to comment on their experience with the training programs and to isolate features that they found to be particularly effective. In their responses some suggested improvements also emerged. The results are categorized into strengths, general shortcomings and suggested improvements.

Strengths

Respondents identified several aspects of IPDET and SHIPDET training that fostered a learning of new knowledge and skills. The responses fell into three categories: practical applications, on-site networking, and materials.

Practical applications – Respondents generally favored the design of the training programs, specifically have practical workshops following input sessions and ending up with opportunities to discuss and consolidate knowledge. As one participant put it,

It's not just learning, you are actually doing, For example, after a course on indicators you are asked to design indicators. When you are doing [the task] there are various misinterpretations that you can ask about; it's really quite effective.

Small group activities were found to be particularly effective for this sort of practical focus, especially with regard to the analysis of case studies.

The spring offering of SHIPDET with Chinese nationals has integrated field trips and site visits. Generally, the field trips are to International Finance Institute (IFI) projects, so that participants can see first-hand the implementation of such projects. These projects are normally evaluated by World Bank personnel. Following the field trip, according to this trainer, the instructors would,

ask everyone to design an evaluation framework for the project. On the last day of the program we ask the evaluation officers from World Bank to tell us how they actually evaluate the project and we compare.

This feature of the SHIPDET domestic project is clearly well received. One can appreciate, however, that it would be difficult to orchestrate with the international SHIPDET group, given language barriers. Field trips are also not part of the curriculum in the Ottawa IPDET curriculum, although the feature may bear some consideration.

On-site Networking – Both IPDET and SHIPDET bring people together from a variety of contexts and backgrounds, yet with common learning objectives. The training venues naturally offer ample opportunity for people to network with one another on-site thereby enriching the learning experience. SHIPDET program developers who were interviewed revealed how they try to exploit this opportunity.

We try to create [an] opportunity for people to share experiences among each other because the participants are coming from different countries, from different backgrounds. We invite, shall we say, SHIPDET alumni – people who participate in 2007 we invite them to come back in 2008 and 2009 – to share their understanding, their experience their feeling and how do they apply their knowledge to practice.

On the face of it, this represents an excellent pedagogical practice. We can see how such a practice would transcend merely getting perspectives from different people. By recruiting alumni who have not only been through the training, but have had considerable opportunity to consolidate knowledge through transfer and application, participants would have an opportunity to learn through the practical experience of alumni.

Resource Materials – Mentioned above are favorable reception of case study materials that are used in SHIPDET small group assignments. One of the participants elaborated on this element.

They give us about 10 pages of information on the project including indicators and asked students to select information from the case study: what kind of data can be used for baseline, mid-term and after comparing the two data sets, whether you can say the project is successful or not. I think it is useful.

These materials were said to be useful subsequent to the training program in the running of the pilot evaluation sponsored by the MoF. Yet not all comments about curriculum materials were complimentary (more on this below).

Shortcomings

As an approach to getting at which aspects of the IPDET/SHIPDET programs were effective, we asked participants about shortcomings and suggested improvements regarding the training. It is a testament to the training program that most respondents either explicitly indicated that they could not identify shortcomings or had to think quite seriously about the question. After a long pause, one respondent indicated that she liked all aspects of IPDET in Ottawa except, perhaps, for the lunchtime presentations.

Just my own opinion...The lunch presentations were too short. It was hard for me to catch the main ideas. It is more helpful with PowerPoint; otherwise I miss much of the presentation.

We can see that limits on linguistic facility can pose a challenge for some participants and how support materials can help to offset this challenge. Another person, commenting on SHIPDET, also had to consider his response to the question. In the end, he was quite realistic and approving about what can be expected from the training format.

Not really. This course, the objective was not to solve all your problems but to provide you with a basic framework. I don't think the course can provide you with all the answers but it gives you a very solid foundation when you want to continue to do something in this area.

On the other hand, a professor who taught half-day workshops at SHIPDET as well as in the alternative evaluation training offered by AFDC to participants from Guangdong raised some concerns about the curriculum. Specifically, he acknowledged that the Central Government has shown an affinity for the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) developed by the US Office of Management and Budget¹⁶ and is supporting its use in performance assessment. He acknowledged that the ten-step process used as a basis for IPDET training is not at odds with the PART framework and that it is being translated into Chinese. He did not find the ten-step process “terribly practical in Chinese context. It could be four to six steps; ten is too many, too complicated.” He went on to underscore the importance of applying and using the process on real Chinese examples.

Areas for improvement

According to one of the SHIPDET program developers, “We need to improve the program on a continuous basis.” She acknowledged that not enough break time for people had been arranged in past courses, “to let them relax a little bit.” Social activities and receptions are routinely organized, but people coming to Shanghai want to see more of the city than just what they encounter on the field trip. Arrangement for a half-day or one-day break after five days of

¹⁶ PART “was developed to assess and improve program performance so that the Federal government can achieve better results. A PART review helps identify a program’s strengths and weaknesses to inform funding and management decisions aimed at making the program more effective.”
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/rewrite/part/index.html>

teaching is being considered.

Another focus for improvement is the amount and frequency of training. According to the program developers,

In many cases, people come to talk to us. They say our training is not enough. We want to have more opportunities to learn the latest theories and practices.

We have tried. We organized workshops on performance budgeting, environmental evaluation and so on. But we found that we may need to put more energy into working on the improvement of SHIPDET.

Part of this might involve the development of regional centres for SHIPDET and to work toward expanding the range of different topics for training. The SHIPDET curriculum, as was acknowledged above, is tailored to a novice audience and therefore quite basic. A participant suggested that the curriculum “could give more variety, for example, a focus on impact evaluation.” Options for additional advanced-level training need to be explored. One SHIPDET alumnus argued for a practicum component, although such an element would no doubt have significant cost implications.

Somehow, to give more hands on training ... participants should be involved in some sort of assignments ... maybe not paid work but it would also give you lots of confidence to carry out various evaluations and also in designing M&E systems.

It was also acknowledged that it is important to bring in new and different speakers. The thinking was that speakers need not be from other countries but it is extremely important to assure quality. “There is always some risk if you do not know the people.”

Finally, some suggestions had to do with the materials and the curriculum, through simplifying the structure and content and developing local cases for study and application. It was mentioned that trainers should cooperate with practitioners to set up case materials for the workshops. Material used from foreign countries needs to be adapted and some parts need to be omitted. “Examples from Africa may not be appropriate” and it is important to train people in China to deliver the material.

Mediating Effects of Context

In discussing the mediating effects of context, the conversation expanded from a focus on just the transfer of knowledge and skill from training to a wide range of contextual factors that link to M&E capacity development within the country (and in the Asian region). The following themes are addressed below in sequence: impetus for M&E capacity development, the state-of-the-art of evaluation capacity, cultural considerations, prospects for evaluation training alternatives, leadership and resource availability.

Impetus for M&E capacity development

Historically, the government in the PRC does not pay much attention to the results of its projects although this is developing, according to most participants. And as interests develop, evaluation will become more important. Interest has been mostly on inputs and some on outputs (e.g., roads and highways). “Is money used in [the] right way?” One participant joked that outcome conclusions are not evidence based. “‘Data-free results’, yes very true.”

Yet it is quite apparent that M&E is gradually drawing people’s attention. This is at least in part due to gradual pressure from the public concerning public expenditure. Even now, according to one respondent, there is “not a great deal of transparency.” But many people and organizations are demanding more and more information from government.

It seems that much of the interest in RBM and M&E is in the science and technology sector as opposed to programs and policies for human and social services. From enrolment records, certainly many Chinese nationals attending both IPDET in Ottawa and SHIPDET are working in this field. One IPDET Ottawa alumnus working as an ex-patriot in Beijing commented,

[China is] interested to develop the expertise to evaluate science projects or large scale... other kinds of projects. Not really social development programs.

He reflected that practically speaking there are no national NGOs with the exception of the environment sector where the government has allowed it. But definitely not in other areas that touch on human rights. He indicated that there are quasi governmental organizations but believed they many may not be truly independent from the Central Government.

Yet not all participants embraced this view. Some suggested that the Central Government appears to be motivated to move toward improved accountability, to “justify what you have spent.”

Many senior officials pay a lot of attention to the effects or outcomes of public spending. They [know that] public investment can promote economic development but also they hope it can promote social development; to bring some benefits to public.

In this context, the MoF is now focusing on how to manage public money and this is its main interest in evaluation, with the most distinguished trend in the MoF being performance budgeting. To that end, the MoF is sponsoring wide ranging evaluation pilot projects in a majority of the provinces. Participating provinces must do evaluations of significant projects for the MoF. In Guangdong, for example, projects over 5M Renminbi (RMB) are being evaluated.

But China is also very poor and evaluation is only one part of the whole government public management system. Only when Chinese improve the quality of public management and then evaluation will have a very good opportunity to develop.

This respondent was quite realistic about the state-of-the-art of reform in governance and its implications for evaluation capacity. We now turn to the state-of-the-art of evaluation capacity in China and in the Asian region.

State-of-the-art of evaluation capacity

“The capacity of evaluation in China is now in its infancy” is the message given by SHIPDET presenters and well understood by participants. A program developer commented on the importance of M&E training.

We find it quite important to promote [evaluation] capacity building... for China and other countries. Accountability is an important consideration but in many Asian countries there is a lack of M&E capacity.

Yet it is clear that there is pressure on AFCD to strengthen its own capacity as quickly as possible. “We will continue to rely on international speakers” but it is understood that the World Bank has expectations that Chinese or Asian speakers will continue to be recruited and cultivated for participation in SHIPDET training delivery.

The country-wide pilot project sponsored by the Central Government reflects its intention to move to a “performance outcome” approach. Yet there exists a lack of knowledge and skill in the provinces and local government agencies are trying out evaluation projects more or less at their own discretion. One respondent identified the need to develop a central evaluation policy and looked to the pilot studies as an opportunity to inform and shape policy development.

At the organizational level, we can appreciate the current status of and interest in ECB. An organization that participated in a site visit in Shanghai sent staff to a SHIPDET training but does not have its own evaluation division. It was explained that other units within the organization are doing performance assessment but everyone is doing it differently.

There is no uniform framework.... There is no authoritative, or shall we say, proven framework so far.

Therefore, the organizational units draw from a very wide range of experiences and although there is some consistency across units, it is not uniform. In the organization, a respondent acknowledged that the World Bank has historically paid much more attention to performance management, checking very detailed information, paying attention to safeguards, and reviewing baseline information twice per year. The organization has only very recently begun to focus on this. “Now this is changing... and the Central Government is now paying more attention to [it]”.

A respondent affiliated with a government department in Beijing commented that before attending IPDET, he had attended special training session in Beijing with IPDET presenters, so he had some good prior knowledge. He subsequently became involved in an evaluation with the Dutch government on a joint venture and realized that he needed to learn much more about evaluation, especially about logic models. His subsequent attendance at an IPDET workshop helped him to develop his knowledge and skill with logic models.

Cultural considerations

In the interviews, some participants commented on cultural considerations and traditions and their implications for reform in governance toward RBM and the role of M&E. Here is how the issue was framed by some,

People need to have a changed mindset. Must look at results.... If they don't change their mindset it is difficult to change [their behavior].

Regionally, people have this kind of concept but they may not have the systematic understanding.

Related to this issue is the observation that almost all the participants in SHIPDET are based in government organizations. In the PRC, there is not yet a strong presence of civil society, particularly at the level of domestic NGOs. While domestic NGOs are “in their infancy in China”, there is some movement in this regard and there is a presence of international NGOs. Nevertheless, funding for prospective non-governmental training participants is limited at the present time. In the words of this respondent, we can expect change over time in this regard, although it is clear that a market will have to be built.

In future, with more NGOs in China, they will become a force and will provide a critique of the government and will push evaluation.

It is noteworthy that much activity and interest in M&E is related to science and technology. An IPDET alumnus remarked that such interests may be at least partially linked to cultural considerations. In his words,

What I do know about China is that they are acutely interested in innovation, wanting to explore anything they can in order to improve their systems. There is a very heavy focus on science and technology.

Prospects for evaluation training alternatives

Several participants commented on the basic level of training offered by IPDET and so we inquired about training alternatives and prospects for more advanced level training. One possibility would be to involve the universities, but the suggestion was met with some skepticism. A reaction to the concept of developing graduate certificate or diploma programs in M&E was,

That is possible, but it would be better to start a degree program right from the start, because people prefer to have a degree after they finish.

Yet there was some consensus that developing and delivering a degree program at a Chinese university it is quite difficult.

You need to get approval from the Ministry of Education; it is not easy to do that ... it is very strictly regulated. It might be possible if the MoF and AFDC and Carleton University wanted to deliver a program together... [they] cannot do it independently.

It was explained that there may be a big market for this sort of program, but it would need to be endorsed by the government. “Without this, it would be very difficult to do.” But not everyone was skeptical. Consider the following commentary,

[It] may not be too difficult if you have a university that is interested. Maybe in the ... MPA, [with a] focus on evaluation. But you need to have qualified professors so there is capacity building to do at that level. The demand for that sort of education may not be too big.

Another respondent concurred about the need for capacity building for university teachers, who generally do not have much practical experience in applying M&E and may be comparatively, too theoretical in their perspectives.

In terms of other training and professional development alternatives, it was suggested that they are mainly informal and depend mostly on personal initiative. Individuals need to actively seek out colleagues, reports and training materials.

Leadership

As with most cultures, the importance of involving bosses in the SHIPDET training was emphasized because, “in China, in the bureaucracy, if the top bosses think it is very important and push the job forward, it is very easy to reach the goal.” Conversely, if only relatively low level staff think it is important, there is no way to push such change forward. One respondent reflected on how this might come about.

What would it take for that to happen? I believe that, as is the case in other countries, there needs to be an exposure of senior leadership to international best practices.

He went on to offer that one way to do that would be to develop programs for senior leaders to show them and explain to them how evaluation has been used and how it is useful, especially in sectors such as education, justice, etc. “This could be the most efficient and effective way to increase the use and integration of evaluation in China.”

Within the local organization in Shanghai mentioned above, there was said to be some sharing across divisions at lower levels. At higher levels, administrators understand the importance of evaluation and ask staff to learn more about it. But, at lower levels, they would implement evaluation but pretty much independently from senior staff. Lower level staff have their own channels of cross-division communication and there may be differences arising due to this.

Resource availability

Finally, resource availability did not surface as a significant contextual constraint but there was some evidence to suggest that limits on resources may affect training delivery. A program developer commented on how one of the SHIPDET partners had been unclear in terms of its sponsorship for SHIPDET training participants. The result is the creation of some uncertainty for SHIPDET which can be a problem. Moreover, every year many people apply to participate in SHIPDET but are turned back especially because of international travel fees and the relative expensive of coming to China. We now turn to the final set of themes, those associated with organizational capacity.

Organizational Impact of IPDET/SHIPDET

As with the other case studies, the question of attribution is an important one. That is, to what extent are observed individual and organizational changes in evaluation capacity attributable to the training program? In the present case, we applied the theme of organizational growth to SHIPDET and its host organization, AFDC. The growth and strategic direction of the training organization, given its prominence in the PRC, is an important aspect of impact. IPDET's role in stimulating the growth and development of SHIPDET has been quite direct.

In the case study, there was some evidence that fell into an organizational evaluation capacity theme, but really there was little evidence associated with the capacity to use evaluation. This is not surprising given that M&E in the PRC is “in its infancy”. It will be interesting to examine the capacity to use evidence as M&E becomes integrated into organizational structures over time.

Strategic direction for SHIPDET and AFDC

Strategic direction for SHIPDET has both international and domestic dimensions. On the international front, a program manager commented.

Actually we want to continue with capacity building internationally... You know China is basically the biggest market, so most of our participants come from China. But we will continue with SHIPDET since we have agreement from ABD and WB and MoF.

This person also mentioned an initiative proposed by the World Bank. They proposed the establishment of centres of excellence in evaluation, that is, a Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR), under which they would create four regional centres (i.e., Africa, East Asia, South America, South Asia). In theory, the East Asia centre would be located in Shanghai. In this event, AFDC will definitely continue to work with evaluation capacity building in the region.

But the organization will also will pay close attention to the domestic market as evaluation in China is in its infancy. There are at least two distinct strategic interests in this

regard. First, in keeping with MoF's evaluation pilot initiative, AFDC wishes to pursue the development of tailored, specialized training opportunities.

[We] will expand to Guangdong and the western provinces in five years. [This training is] not called SHIPDET because it is not supported by ADB or the MoF. This is customized to domestic China. It will be funded through resources from the provinces and the NDRC.

[We] organized two customized courses this year. You can tell that the demand is there.

The Guangdong short course took the form of a reorganized core course designed to help participants do evaluation within the MoF pilot project framework. It was a shorter version - only two days long. According to one trainer,

They came here because they want to evaluate the pilot projects and to organize it very well. Also the province has a division of evaluation and want to develop their capacity. So they sent people here to take very short core course and workshops... very condensed.

The AFDC also has recognized the importance of targeting senior managers in training initiatives, which is consistent with the points raised above on the leadership context. According to one manager,

It is important for us to continue with SHIPDET (International and Chinese nationals). But, also, [with] a short program for senior government officials and maybe we can provide some customized programs for the western China area, or for some provinces in China.

The short course for senior level managers would be for educational purposes. These people will not be doing evaluation.

It is good for policy making strategy for their departments.

In addition, we should create some courses for senior level officials. Not just middle level, because for senior level – let's say DG or even above – if they have a better understanding about evaluation, it is much easier for the whole society, whole department, and whole industry to follow in the evaluation practices.

In future, we want to focus a lot of energy on supplying such seminars to high level officers because in China, if you carry out evaluation, the first stage is to get your boss' support. Then you can get the financial and human resources to do the evaluation jobs.

Another aspect of capacity building is to develop local trainers in China, so that, possibly in the years to come, only one of the principal trainers will come and the other trainer will be a local person. It would be a phasing-in approach. Ostensibly, they could train some local people to deliver the core SHIPDET program and then bring in international experts to deliver other courses and specialized workshops.

Or, another idea was to develop a network of trainers. “We are also thinking in the future that maybe we can provide some programs for trainers ... training of trainers.” AFDC wants to help regional centres themselves to develop local capacity. “It’s part of our mandate.”

Expanding the focus to include specialized topics is another strategic direction under consideration as reflected in this comment,

The current program is results-based evaluation. We are also thinking about delivering some new programs. For example, we might focus on impact evaluation or some other topics.

Other initiatives are the creation of platforms on the internet to create opportunity for sharing experiences, getting some resources. SHIPDET is also trying to build a stronger team, perhaps by bringing in some university professors and encouraging them to put more energy and resources into evaluation at the university; evaluation can be integrated into their curriculum. Further, some western resources, such as the ‘Road to Results’, are being translated by the AFDC to complement the courses and power point slides.

Other organizational capacity building

It is clear that the MoF has embraced the notion of capacity building for M&E across the country by initiating and sponsoring evaluation pilot projects in 27 provinces. While funds for the undertaking are directed toward the evaluations, it is not clear how much support for M&E capacity building has been made available. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see such a significant nation-wide investment.

A local organization we visited in Shanghai is evidently early in the development of its organizational capacity for M&E yet there are some obvious signs of such development, as have been shared above. This organization, for example, has taken responsibility for the MoF-sponsored evaluation pilot project in the Shanghai district. While inter-unit communications and vertical communication on M&E have not been terribly well coordinated, there is definite evidence of capacity building as a result of having three members attend SHIPDET. And there is promise of ongoing internal capacity building, as conveyed by the following observations.

The [organization] is going about this systematically. We may coordinate this at some point. We were asked to give training packs to newly recruited staff on performance assessment. This puts pressure on my staff to get educated. We have prepared some materials but have not yet started training.

Budgeting is the most important job. Some colleagues are being asked to do some evaluation for budgeting... the effective use of money. Maybe some other evaluation [activities] are going on in other departments, I am not sure. [The] international department [of the] MoF is interested in evaluation, probably there are some other departments in MoF that are interested in evaluation, I am not sure.

Capacity to use evaluation

To what extent is there evidence to show the development of the capacity to use evaluation in the PRC? It would seem that at this moment the MoF is keener on building the

capacity to do evaluation, which is natural given the relative state of capacity development. Participants shared that China is not at the stage where people actually do evaluation reports as a matter of routine. People are trained in evaluation methods and logic and they get to do evaluations, but M&E is not yet integrated into the system. Yet SHIPDET continues to try to mobilize senior government officials to think and learn about evaluation. As one program developer mentioned,

We think it is very useful for them to make decisions, to make policies. And then, help them to push evaluation proper around China

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The case study in the PRC is unusual to the extent that IPDET has had two distinct interests: one being the provision of training to government managers and people with M&E responsibility; the other being the work in partnership with other organizations in support of a local version of the IPDET program - namely, SHIPDET. It is clear that SHIPDET has attained some prominence in the region and is becoming recognised as a leader in the provision of M&E training. For the most part, people attending SHIPDET were satisfied that their learning goals were met although it is recognized that the program is targeted at a very basic level and that it can only reasonably be expected to lay a good foundation for future development. Although it is changing slowly, it would appear that the context for ongoing training and development in M&E is encouraging. This is perhaps best indicated by the healthy strategic directions under consideration by SHIPDET and AFDC.

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E. Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (Colombo, Sri Lanka)

J. Bradley Cousins with Nathalie Gilbert

BACKGROUND

Sri Lanka, a developing country and island state, is geographically situated in the Indian Ocean off the southern tip of India and has a total population of over 21 million people. The country was hit hard by the tsunami disaster of December 2004 and, as a result, attracted considerable disaster relief funds from bilateral and multilateral aid agencies. Over the years, only a relatively modest number of Sri Lankans (N=8) have attended IPDET, yet according to impressions held by IPDET management, the contribution of IPDET is likely to be strong due, primarily, to the government's longstanding interest in development monitoring and evaluation (M&E), the active role of specific individuals and ongoing interactions with IPDET. IPDET alumni have spearheaded the design and implementation of M&E systems in government and coordinated training and capacity building initiatives. One member from the Sri Lankan community has taught in specialized IPDET workshops in Ottawa after having completed the program in 2003.

While most activity in M&E has been in the government sector, there is a growing community of Sri Lankan evaluators that also includes members of the civil society and academia. In 1999, the Sri Lankan Evaluation Association (SLEvA) was founded by members from these various sectors as well as the private sector and the Association has been active ever since, with a current membership of 159 and a fourth international biennial conference planned for June 2011.

Several national and international training and professional development activities have occurred in Sri Lanka in recent years, some in which IPDET has had a direct connection or role. For example, an international conference on M&E was hosted in Colombo in 2009 at which IPDET core faculty participated. Also in 2009, Sri Lanka played host to an IPDET-sponsored study tour in which about two dozen IPDET alumni from a variety of mostly developing countries came to learn about local M&E initiatives in the country.

METHODS

The case study was guided by the conceptual framework and the evaluation questions specified for the overall evaluation study. It involved the following steps for data collection and analysis:

- *Advance review of web documentation* – Given the headway being made in government in M&E and its relationship to Managing for Development Results (MfDR), Sri Lankan government websites were scanned with a particular focus on the former Ministry of Plan

Implementation (MPI).¹⁷ Another website that was examined in advance was the local evaluation association site SLEvA.¹⁸

- *Individual and group interviews* – Most interviews were conducted in-person, but there were a few conducted by telephone. People interviewed included IPDET alumni who are members of the Sri Lankan evaluation community as well as other local evaluation community members who were recommended by their colleagues as key informants. An adapted version of the interview guide was used for those who had not attended IPDET. To varying degrees non-alumni were aware of IPDET and were able to elaborate on the development and evolution of the local evaluation community. We conducted the following interviews:
 - Group interview held at the MPI with the Director General (an IPDET alumnus) and three of his associates and staff.
 - Joint interview with two IPDET alumni, one a parliamentarian, the other employed by a multilateral agency in an M&E role. The latter individual consented to a follow-up, more in-depth interview.
 - Joint interview was held with two members of SLEvA including its current president.
 - Two in-person individual interviews, one with an IPDET alumnus, the other with a member of a multi-lateral donor agency.
 - Two interviews were conducted by telephone after the site visit, one with an IPDET alumnus and the other with a founding member of SLEvA who has been employed by a multilateral aid agency for the past 6 years.

In total 12 people were interviewed for the case study.

- *Document and system review*: While on-site various government documents and related memoranda were collected and reviewed. Also a user name and password were established to give the principal researcher access to the on-line M&E system developed by the MPI.

FINDINGS

Findings for the case study are organized according to the overarching evaluation objectives for the follow-up evaluation.

- Knowledge and skill development;
- Networking;
- Knowledge and skill transfer;
- Effectiveness of features of IPDET;
- Mediating effects of context; and
- Organizational impact of IPDET.

¹⁷ Now known as the Department of Foreign Aid and Budget Monitoring (FABM) of the Ministry of Finance <http://www.fabm.gov.lk>

¹⁸ <http://www.sleva.lk>

Knowledge and Skill Development

IPDET alumni were attracted to the IPDET program for a variety of reasons. At least two individuals were interested in expanding their knowledge about evaluation, having had a good grounding in monitoring. One person had attended training in various international locations but the emphasis had always been on monitoring. He was interested to learn more about approaches to evaluation and to gain some recognition as someone who had such expertise.

[At IPDET] you talk about different types of evaluation and how to do evaluation... at IPDET you mostly talk about evaluation, not monitoring.... One of my expectations was the recognition.

In discussing his career trajectory, he revealed that he had actually given up a post with a UN agency in order to apply for IPDET sponsorship to attend the training in Ottawa. He did so with great confidence that such training would give him a desirable edge in the job market.

Another participant was also interested in extending his knowledge about evaluation but his interests were very much system development-oriented. For many years the Sri Lankan government has been actively seeking and receiving development funds, multilateral agencies such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As a consequence, significant investment was made towards results-based monitoring (RBM) and the systematic use of development project evidence for accountability and decision-making needs. Yet evaluation, as distinct from monitoring, was comparatively underdeveloped. In his words,

Evaluation was taking off in a gradual way; there was a need to move this along quicker.

Another alumnus had a solid experience in health policy evaluation and looked to IPDET workshops to add value to this knowledge base. She was involved in national-level evaluation for a multilateral agency and felt the need to know a lot more about evaluation. Her background gave her lots of training in sampling and research methods, but she believed that her evaluation-specific knowledge was lacking. In addition, the prospect of obtaining the certificate was attractive, potentially useful for employment opportunities. Another alumnus was serving as a parliamentarian and had a very strong interest in how M&E information was being used in the legislature. His interests were two-fold: (1) to enhance his capacity as legislator to use M&E as a tool to support parliamentary work; and (2) thinking ahead to life after politics, to strengthen his capacity to be an evaluation consultant in RBM. A third person had some evaluation experience going into the program and found this experience to be a great basis for reflection as he worked his way through the week of modules he had attended. (He regretted that resources did not permit longer participation at IPDET).

Networking

Stimulating the development of networks is an important IPDET objective. In the Sri Lankan case, there was considerable evidence to show that significant progress had been made in this regard. Four specific themes emerged: on-site networking; post-training international networking; local networking within the Sri Lankan evaluation community; and regional networking. IPDET was seen by participants to play at least an indirect role in network development at each of these levels.

On-site networking

Networking while at IPDET was perceived as a positive benefit. Two of the participants explicitly acknowledged that they were interested in connecting with others from different countries who shared common interests in M&E, and they were particularly pleased with this aspect of the experience. As one person shared,

[IPDET was] a community of practice in a way, because we were sharing and learning together, case studies, discussions, formal/informal, outside normal hours. Even IPDET listserv which takes us forward with various information, networking, and all [It] gave us a lot of capacity building which helped to put evaluation in a more focused perspective; especially in RBM.

Another alumnus concurred that networking was an important aspect of the training - having the opportunity to meet different participants as she shifted from one workshop to next. This person had only participated in Week 3 & 4 workshops and remarked that she was at somewhat of a disadvantage as others had already established relationships through participation in the core course.

In 2008, one of the IPDET alumni developed friendships with participants from other countries – relations that have endured and, indeed, formalized over time.

I appreciate networking very much because, like I said, I formed friends with people in the Philippines and Palestine. Now we have an international consulting firm.

Post-training international networking

Some alumni indicated that they do follow the IPDET listserv and two mentioned having asked questions or posted problems for consideration. Other indications were of passive use. There was good evidence, however, of interest in attending international evaluation conferences. One participant attended the joint meeting of the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) and the Network of Networks for Impact Evaluations (NONIE) in Cairo, 2008 and mentioned that many IPDET alumni were in attendance and gave input at the meeting. Further, one person mentioned attending the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) meeting in Johannesburg in 2009. This person explained that “when IPDET alumni come together at conferences, there is a lot of sharing that goes on during those meetings.”

Local networking

As mentioned above, SLEvA was founded in 1999 and currently has many members on the governing council who have had IPDET training. In its relatively short 10 year history, it has managed to host three high profile conferences: in June 2001 (international), January 2003 (national), and April 2009 (international), and has another international conference planned for June 2011. In the 2009 conference, at least two IPDET alumni made direct presentation contributions.

Another event in which IPDET had direct involvement was a study tour organized in February 2009. While attending IPDET a participant suggested that alumni from various countries come to Sri Lanka to learn about the successes and challenges of Sri Lanka's new national-level M&E system. He ran the idea past IPDET organizers and received a favorable response. The idea was floated to 2008 IPDET participants and about 80 people expressed interest in attending. He then worked with Sri Lankan IPDET alumni to bring the study tour to life. The tour was hosted by the former MPI with SLEvA playing a role. Only 23 individuals from nine countries made the trip, along with IPDET co-directors, possibly due to intensifying conflict in Sri Lanka at the time. While in Sri Lanka, the IPDET co-Directors "organized an additional small gathering for alumni to share memories and further establish their networks" (IPDET newsletter, winter 2009).

Regional networking

According to respondents, two regional evaluation initiatives had at least indirect input from IPDET. The first is the burgeoning Community of Evaluators (CoE), an informal yet active regional network that involves six countries in South Asia. The first meeting of the CoE was in New Delhi in late 2008, the second in Sri Lanka and the third in Bangalore India. The CoE meeting in Colombo was piggy-backed on the 3rd international conference hosted by SLEvA. Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has been a driving force behind this initiative and the principal contact with IDRC's South East Asia Office is also an IPDET alumnus. At the meeting in Colombo, IDRC sponsored a team of Afghan evaluators to come to the conference and to have a separate meeting with Sri Lankan evaluators. It is noteworthy that the CoE recently hosted its first ever 'Evaluation Conclave' in New Delhi, in October 2010 and that several IPDET alumni from Sri Lanka were in attendance.

Another initiative involves the academic sector in the region, including one of SLEvA's former board members and IPDET alumni. In collaboration with IDRC and the IPDET alumnus mentioned above, representatives from a variety of South Asian countries have worked together to form a consortium of universities in the interest of developing graduate degree programming in evaluation. Another IPDET alumnus is on the advisory panel for this initiative and is networking with others from South Asia to develop the university consortium. The project is called, 'Teaching Evaluation in South Asia (TESA)' and a first meeting was held in Nepal in 2008. Responding to demand in the region and high interest in evaluation credentials, members of the consortium have decided collectively on a common curriculum. Again, there is a perceived

knowledge gap in evaluation, with many people doing monitoring at, for example, the level of domestic and international NGOs.

Knowledge and Skill Transfer

The transfer of knowledge and skills developed at IPDET was discussed in terms of the development of evaluation practice, application to systems development and ongoing training delivery in the region.

Evaluation practice

Not many of the IPDET alumni are directly involved in doing evaluation, several having attended to expand their knowledge and expertise or to consider developments at a systems level or even to work as ambassadors of evaluation within their community. One alumnus described the variety of interests among people who attend IPDET and how they may return to their home countries not to conduct evaluations but to manage and use them. He reflected that

...they have changed attitudes when they go back from the training.... Those IPDEters who finish the course could be like a brand ambassador. If that network is properly made use of, then it takes the message around to the users...

One individual who was interviewed has practiced evaluation quite directly since having been trained in Ottawa, despite not having done evaluation before attending IPDET. He found the challenges to be quite daunting, mostly due to political exigencies and ethical issues. In his words,

After IPDET, I learned how to design evaluations, choose methodologies, things like that. Then I started undertaking evaluations. I did some small evaluations in Kabul and free-lance back in Sri Lanka.

He spoke of evaluations that were particularly troublesome. One was a final project evaluation that was done too early to assess impact and the commissioning organization wanted him to do the evaluation from a learning perspective. The problem arose when discrepancies emerged between his data and data submitted by program managers concerning, for example, outputs.

They were asking me to remove data. How can I remove data? I have to say this number of pre schools built up, this number of children coming, this number of mothers educated, because how can it be an evaluation? Then I went for a discussion with them. They were worried about the discrepancies.... I did not change my things. I checked that they were right. This is for learning. This is not 100% bad, this is 10% of things that need to be improved. This is my frustration.

While it was clear that he relied on standards of professional practice, consistent with the IPDET curriculum, the quote highlights how isolated new evaluators can feel when confronted with such challenges. When asked if he had anyone to discuss the matter with professionally, the answer was negative, but the participant did believe he had handled the situation in a professional way and was confident in his data and his report.

Another IPDET alumnus working in government works to facilitate the increased implementation of evaluation and use of evaluation in ongoing program and development project decision making. He has had some practical experience doing evaluation but indicated that he mostly outsourced the evaluations required by his organization.

Involvement in evaluation training

In addition to actively practicing evaluation, the person mentioned above was also very much involved in training others, as is the case with at least two other IPDET alumni.

My current assignment is for [the] development of [an] M&E system for this special fund and [to] build the national capacity. I trained UNFPA staff separately, and evaluation staff for the special fund ... I used learning points from IPDET for these trainings...materials, ideas, slides grabbed from IPDET.

We can see here the direct transfer of knowledge and materials acquired at IPDET. He mentioned that he has also done a short course training for NGO's and that although he tries to keep numbers to about 25, he sometimes exceeds that due to high demand.

Another IPDET alumnus had taught a workshop module at IPDET in Ottawa and planned to do so again in 2010, but a recent promotion did not allow the necessary time to do so. He has also done training in the region mostly in the form of workshops or conference presentations. A third alumnus is part of the academic community and is regularly involved in training. She is mostly involved in 'training the trainers', including those in government, but does give small modules to undergraduates and graduates with a focus on monitoring, tools, questionnaires, etc.

Effectiveness of Features of IPDET

IPDET alumni were asked what they found to be particularly effective about IPDET training as well as possible shortcomings and suggestions for improvement.

Strengths

Several virtues of the IPDET program were mentioned by the various respondents. These included continuous learning principles and practices, as well as program content and structure. Yet diversity among the participants makes it difficult to differentiate instruction. As one respondent put it,

It is not easy because people are at different levels (qualified, experienced vs. novice).

Yet he was of the view that IPDET struck the right balance. Another commented on the effectiveness of the group project in the core course; this was the first time he had learned to design an evaluation under supervision and with feedback, even though he had had to do this before in the field.

Comments were also made about access to the foundational principles of evaluation as well as the excellent choice in workshops offered for those wanting to develop certain specializations. In addition to choice others mentioned the variety of different instructors and teaching methods used. “People can ask questions and have conversations with the group.” The latter was framed by a different person as learning from peers coming from donor partners, developing country partners and developed country partners. This point was highlighted by most of the respondents.

You don’t listen to one or two people throughout. You learn from people with different backgrounds, different perspectives, all from [the] M&E field and with different expertise.

Such learning was not restricted to the classroom as more than one person mentioned connecting after sessions or during some of the social events sponsored by IPDET.

We had a chance to meet people from everywhere. [IPDET organizers] always promoted interaction, parties, going out: Thousand Islands, creation of friendships. Social capital is very high.

Shortcomings

While there were obvious payoffs to IPDET-sponsored social events, not everyone framed them in entirely positive terms. One person thought of them as a bit of a distraction. He mentioned that perhaps sometimes there was a “bit too much partying” but admitted that people enjoyed it.

Generally, people did not highlight many concerns with their IPDET program experience. One person stated that the number of people in plenary sessions in the core was a bit daunting: “...with such a huge number, you don’t really get a chance to share ideas”. He commented that the small group format of the final two weeks is better. One other person mentioned organizational and content problems with one of the workshops. Another suggested that sometimes materials and examples could be adapted to specific contexts; examples from Africa may not be very applicable in China, for instance.

Areas for improvement

IPDET alumni did not have a great deal to offer by way of suggested improvements but some ideas surfaced. One person was of the opinion that examples of M&E in the health sector were under-represented, while another raised a concern about the lack of information for some of the workshop options that led to a poorly informed choice.

One suggestion was to introduce a practical element into the program; for example, a practicum where participants could work under supervision. “That part might take you to the level of an evaluator.” He also lamented that there are limited opportunities to study M&E at the graduate level and wondered about developments along these lines.

Finally, an alumnus acknowledged that it continues to be important for IPDET to bring the partner country perspective into the training (he identified this as current practice).

People want to learn from the partner countries. Differences across regions. What are the challenges?
Practical issues, what is being done? What can we learn?

Mediating Effects of Context

In many ways, Sri Lanka provides unique contextual conditions that have implications for the transfer of evaluation knowledge and skills and the development of a local evaluation community. From our data analysis, six themes emerged: historical context and governance developments, local demand for evaluation, local supply of evaluation, employment experience and prior training, evaluation champions and organizational and community culture. We now turn to an examination of these contextual factors and their implications for evaluation capacity building.

Historical context and governance developments

Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948 as the Dominion of Ceylon and the country was renamed to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in 1978. Since independence, the country has been consistently dependent on development aid and, therefore, subject to the usual accountability demands that come with it. It comes as no surprise, then, that M&E activity has been part and parcel of Sri Lanka's long history with donor states and agencies. As one respondent from a donor agency described,

Sri Lanka has a long history of evaluation because Sri Lanka has been getting development funds for more than 50 years, since independence (with the Colombo Plan coming up in the 1950's). The majority of the capital expenditure is donor funded, so each and every project is attached to M&E; it's part of the package.

Another participant, working in government, commented on why M&E is valued in the country. He suggested that it dates back to the 1970s when there were concerns about development projects being implemented on a large scale in health, education, poverty alleviation and other areas of social and economic need. According to this interviewee, there was a need to coordinate and fast-track large scale project delivery; as a result, monitoring was the fundamental instrument to ensure that projects were implemented in a timely manner.

In Sri Lanka, a separate ministry for M&E was created making the country somewhat unique. "A senior minister has been entrusted to report back to government on the progress of development projects." The former MPI (now known as FABM, see footnote 1) has been in existence for quite a number of years and has always reported directly to the President. Along with changes in other jurisdictions, Sri Lanka embraced RBM in 2000 with assistance from several donor agencies, including the UNDP and the ADB. MfDR, with its focus on monitoring development project outcomes and results, has become firmly entrenched within contemporary Sri Lankan government structures.

Along with such developments in governance, the MPI took a global leadership role in developing and implementing a very sophisticated multi-faceted electronic management system. Government departments and ministries are required to submit quarterly reports that are incorporated into the Integrated National Development Information System (INDIS). Two complementary electronic tracking systems have been developed and installed: first, the Project Monitoring System (e-PMS) tracks the progress of all foreign-funded development projects and programs implemented by the government; and, second, the Evaluation Information System (EIS), a web-based central evaluation database, captures the findings and lessons of all on-going, ex-post and impact evaluations of the development interventions implemented with domestic and aid funds.¹⁹ These M&E systems have attracted great international interest, including from the 2009 IPDET study tour as well as from delegations from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Afghanistan, Caribbean countries and others.

As mentioned previously, the DG of MPI stated that his interest in attending IPDET in 2003 was to strengthen his knowledge of evaluation. From his perspective, evaluation was lagging well behind monitoring in terms of Sri Lankan M&E systems. Similar sentiments were shared from a parliamentarian who took part in the 2008 IPDET program. To him, monitoring results clearly showed that most public sector development projects were not achieving their targets and, yet, this was essential to ensuring value for money and accountability to constituents. He came to realize that parliamentarians did not understand evaluation - evaluation had not permeated into parliament. Whereas bureaucrats were the ones who conducted evaluations and data did find its way into the legislative decision making process, “there was no action being taken as a result of the data.”

We can see, then, that the local historical and governance context provided an impetus for growth and development within the local evaluation community, while at the same time presenting challenges to such community development.

Since its inception, SLEvA, which was created as a non-governmental development organization, has enjoyed a very healthy and collaborative relationship with government. Indeed, members of government have and continue to occupy council positions within the organization, along with others from voluntary, academic and private sector organizations. When asked about this symbolic relationship, the former president of SLEvA remarked,

I can answer that question, but before I answer that you must answer this question. Who is the biggest investor in the country in development? If you look at the consolidated budget, it is almost 90% government funding.

Local demand for evaluation

There was widespread agreement across interview participants that donor agencies have really driven much of the demand for monitoring and, to some extent, evaluation in the country. That foreign-funded projects require evaluation for accountability purposes is well understood.

¹⁹ See <http://indis.fabm.gov.lk>

Yet there seems to be a growing concern that evaluation for local use and consumption is increasingly important, particularly from the point of view of lessons learned and program and project development and improvement. The following quotation by the SLEvA President illustrates the reality of M&E being mainly driven by donor interests, despite the fact that the funding they provide is minimal compared to the government.

At that point in time [late 1990s], we found that there was a big gap in project implementation and most of the projects which were supported by donors meant that any kind of M&E was donor driven. They [recipients] never did it because they wanted it. So we thought we needed to build up a culture of evaluation in the country in a professional way so that the ultimate beneficiary is reached .

A senior ministry official commented that evaluation is the ‘why?’ and that monitoring does not get at relevance, effectiveness and efficiency; there is a strong need for this information in addition to meeting donor needs.

On [the] one side [is] the need to learn from past experiences and get into that sort of assessment. And on the other side, the donors were doing on their own evaluations...let’s also learn our own way of doing evaluation and see what we can learn from it.

He noted that the ADB came out with a technical support document in the early 1990s in an attempt to strengthen post-evaluation capacity building for the ministry.

Finally, a respondent who works mostly in the NGO sector commented on potential resistance in the mindset of program managers and decision-makers to an emergent culture of evaluation and the need to structurally integrate evaluation .

In practice, people hate it... people are scared, it is like policing. It is like when you have gender coordinators in a program then gender gets isolated. But if you incorporate gender into everything, then it is better. [It’s the] same in M&E, if you have a separate officer it can be like that. The organization should have a different system where all managers are required to have technical [evaluation] knowledge.

It would seem that demand for evaluation is growing in Sri Lanka, and such growth is facilitated by the combined efforts of government and the professional society, but it is clear that ground remains to be covered. Another key contextual element is the supply side of the equation.

Local supply of evaluation

In a word, evaluation supply in Sri Lanka is ‘wanting’. Many respondents made this observation in addition to comments about struggles to find adequately trained evaluators. This appears to be equally true in the voluntary as well as government sectors.

There is a problem most of the evaluation managers and consultants have. They [evaluation managers] require evaluation consultants not monitoring consultants. Managers have to assign evaluators.

One participant mentioned that he has often had to invest a lot of time into correcting some of the work done by evaluation consultants who were hired on projects. The difficulties that he faces with the work of consultants is not so much the findings or the methodology, but the way the findings are being presented or how the report was pulled together.

One of the problems that I am having is finding good people to do evaluation; there is a bit of a shortage. I need someone who knows the correct way of analysis and correct way of reporting.

Another respondent mentioned that he sometimes contacts SLEvA to hire consultants, but says that not all members of the association are good evaluators. He says they do not have much experience in “the real world”, only know one way of doing evaluations and do not really understand the benefits of using multiple methods. Another participant described how, as is often the case, an expert in the field (e.g., an MD in the health sector) will be participating in an evaluation but he emphasized the importance of having an experienced evaluator guiding the process. “The evaluator can assist the field expert in developing good M&E plans.”

The supply of evaluators working in government is also problematic. According to group of interview participants, many of the people who have been trained in M&E have retired or are planning to do so soon, putting increasing pressure on government to renew the field.

After training a number of officers, they have retired and moved out. We are now young, and we need to build the next generation of people. This is an urgent requirement.

And so it would seem that the supply of evaluation expertise, while growing, is far from adequate to meet the increasing demand in various sectors. The situation bodes well for IPDET alumni interested in participating directly on evaluation projects, as practical evaluation knowledge and skills training is at a premium.

Employment experience and prior training

As one might expect, prior training and experience with evaluation was found to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skill developed at IPDET. Most of the respondents who actually work as evaluators began doing so with minimal training, or they would engage in training along the way - “on the job”.

One participant worked on evaluation projects with specialists on the M&E of projects and impact assessments from London.

I learned from them and from experiences. I did not have much formal training at the beginning.

Yet he underwent training along the way, finding opportunities to attend short courses and workshops on monitoring. Frequently, these were outside of the country. For example, he attended a 3-week course in Thailand on monitoring and another in the Netherlands on participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Another participant shared that he has been involved with colleagues working in the field of evaluation for years. He started training as an economist and worked as a consultant, primarily in the education sector. He then worked with a private sector consulting firm with a very strong emphasis on RBM. Another participant had prior training in medicine and therefore had a solid understanding of research concepts prior to attending IPDET. All of these experiences gave participants an excellent knowledge base coming in to IPDET. They generally found the training and workshops offered by IPDET to be quite valuable, but as one person put it, the need for practical experience is pivotal.

...even with all that support I still feel that it is important to get your hands dirty.

Locally, many people have been trained to conduct evaluation by donor agencies, as well as from IPDET. According to one observer, if they need some support/technical assistance with an evaluation they can obtain it from someone in MPI or a free-lance evaluator. This assertion seems contradictory to prior comments made about the limited supply of evaluation expertise in the country.

Sometimes, training targets specific needs. According to one respondent, differentiating between outputs, outcomes and results chain is a constant challenge within his organization, as well as understanding the concept of contribution.

It has been a challenge for the team, which is why we had [a specific workshop session] a few months back – giving clarity, tips on how to negotiate/identify proper outcomes, etc., – but people are coming around now.

Evaluation champions

A strong mediating variable related to the transfer of evaluation knowledge and skill into practice would be local champions of evaluation, some of whom have a history with IPDET. Described above are IPDET alumni in leadership roles in government and academia who have had considerable influence in the region. The former DG of MPI has been instrumental not only in growing a sophisticated M&E system in government, but also in connecting and stimulating the development of the local evaluation community. This includes the formation of partnerships with donor agencies to help stimulate community growth and development. For example,

UNICEF has a range of programs operating in the country at any given time: sanitation, health, child protection, education. These are evaluated and findings are used to design programs for the next cycle.

Such partnerships have helped to garner resources for growing M&E systems and the evaluation community. Resources for these purposes, according to members of a group interview, are not really a cause for concern. UNDP, ADB and UNICEF were all mentioned as multilateral agencies that are eager to support such developments.

Another alumnus is an academic and is playing an essential role in developing evaluation education in the region. She is representing a Sri Lankan university as a member of the TESA

consortium and has been very active with that group. She has made significant headway in that regard given that evaluation, to this point, has not become integrated into the university culture. In her words,

The University administration has never heard of evaluation or evaluation quality assurance.

The evaluation society has also demonstrated strong leadership over the years and is now part of the CoE mentioned above. Both TESA and the CoE have benefited from the sponsorship and support of IDRC, mostly under the direction of another IPDET alumnus working in New Delhi.

We now turn to the final question of interest: the contribution of IPDET to the development of organizational and community capacity.

Organizational and Community Impact of IPDET

In this final section, we asked participants about the organizational capacity to *do* and *use* evaluation and we also learned a great deal about the development of the local evaluation community. While it is difficult to ascertain IPDET's direct role in such development, some interesting conclusions can be made.

Organizational impact

The organizational capacity to do evaluation is limited but growing with the development of an M&E system. Some respondents argued that organizational policies are in place but that much needs to be done before M&E is properly institutionalized. There is some resistance based on the political culture and the lack of trained people to support users in taking the message forward.

Nevertheless, the M&E system that has been established is quite impressive. According to participants in a group interview, the system was established to ensure that the entire national development plan is implemented and carefully monitored and, where necessary, that programs/projects are evaluated. "Findings and lessons are translated and fed back into the planning, budgeting and policy process." As the following quotation reveals, M&E principles learned at IPDET were incorporated into the system.

We created a lot of enthusiasm and subsequently this ministry [MPI] took the initiative of institutionalizing 'managing for development results' ...some of those principles that we learned from IPDET were translated and put into project components. So the project was not a supply-driven project from UNDP but more of a demand-driven project... because now, after IPDET learning, we are fairly knowledgeable and strengthened in terms of our capacity and what our needs are.

It is of interest to note that an IPDET alumnus working in the non-governmental sector is aware of the creation of the system and attributes design features, at least indirectly, to IPDET.

...little by little they are growing the system. [An IPDET co-director] is the mastermind of the development of this system. [The Director General] contacted him because of IPDET, one of the networking aspects.

It was acknowledged that MPI is very much concerned with developing organizational capacity and that it has taken steps to develop training opportunities to that end. For example, within the training division of government, M&E has been included in the curriculum and MPI invited as a resource team to deliver that component. Reference was also made to a linkage between MPI and the Sri Lanka Institute for Development Administration (SLIDA). MPI worked with the post-graduate Institute of Management, which has included monitoring of development results as part of their curriculum. According to participants, the introduction of an M&E module into their program was a success.

Therefore, the capacity to do M&E is well on its way within government but much remains to be accomplished. In addition, there is another important aspect of evaluation capacity - the ability to *use* evaluation. We also asked questions about this dimension.

Capacity to use evaluation

The capacity to use evaluation? Yes I think that has to be improved. We produce evaluation reports and these are to be used for quality improvement of programs. ... [MPI] always emphasizes the use of evaluation. ... My observation: it is doubtful what has gone into the minds of people because we don't observe that people make good use of evaluation findings.

These are the words of an IPDET alumnus who is well acquainted with M&E in government. He holds the view that, regardless of whether the organization is in government or the voluntary sector, "we need to promote the evaluation culture."

If people use evaluation, they can benefit from it and the organization can benefit, get publicity for doing quality work...lots of benefits if you have this culture.

Asked about IPDET's role in promoting such culture, the response was "IPDET can influence authorities or people who have authority, or sensitize organizations... it's like advocacy." Working with the DG of MPI was cited as a good example.

It means working with the minister and the permanent secretary. [IPDET co-director] knows these people and that is influence. The permanent secretary of the ministry at least talks about the use of M&E. She talks about ... improving it. Because of IPDET's influence, or [IPDET co-director's] influence. So I think that IPDET can play a role in that.

A parliamentarian and alumnus of IPDET made several references to the context for use within the legislature. He suggested that parliamentarians do not know what questions to ask and that an M&E unit within parliament should be established.

If you [have] both this M&E unit and capacity building and have a system going, then they [parliamentarians] should be able, with assistance, to get focused and ask the right questions, and then their interests builds up. Their interest does not build up in the subject because they think once or twice when

they tried to get engaged and they can't understand it. Parliamentarians feel "ok we are displaying our ignorance so let's just stay out of it."

Yet, according to a group of participants from MPI, the system is simple to use. Cabinet ministers will meet to review what is going well, what is not, and why.

Reports are tabled to the Cabinet and it helps to discuss [the] progress of development projects . And also it helps to motivate the relevant ministers to get back to their ministry and say our projects and programs x, y, and z are not in line and we may need to do something.

Evaluation becomes more of a learning type. What went wrong? Why?. What has gone right, what is the best program we have?

Another point that was underscored by this group was the need for evaluation to be *timely* and to provide streams of evidence rather than specific reports, a concept admittedly taken from IPDET. The MPI endeavours to synthesize bullet point highlights from evaluation findings in 1-2 pages in an attempt to make them accessible to senior officials with limited time. They also talked about planned sector-level syntheses, as well as individual level synopses and were optimistic that, once fully operational, policy makers will be using it more.

People like to hear success stories, and evaluation in that spirit gives you in-depth information and comes out with valuable lessons. I think it makes the recipient of this message more interested, than just monitoring... [It] brings out the value of evaluation.

The group also referred to ownership by stakeholders, and the essential importance of involvement. There is a need to train policy makers to understand the differences between evaluation and monitoring and the strengths and weaknesses of each (e.g., the former can provide more in-depth information, requiring a longer timeframe whereas the latter can be more timely). Another participant commented that MPI is listening to the users, learning more about their needs and trying to adapt the system to better meet the needs of the users.

Finally, the former president of SLEvA, shared some positive experiences of working with policy- and decision-makers who do not necessarily do evaluations. She has had some success where some of the learning from the evaluation has been used to help them in their decision making. However, she did not believe that this was necessarily the norm.

In conclusion, it would appear that only modest use is being made of evaluation evidence but that the prospects look promising given existing M&E structures and directions in which those responsible for them are moving. It would also seem that IPDET has played a role, at least indirectly, in helping to shape this context.

Evaluation community development

In addition to organizational capacity we also inquired into the evolution and development of the local evaluation community and IPDET's role in contributing to this. Participants mentioned an IPDET presence in the Sri Lankan community, mostly through

occasional visits of IPDETs co-Directors for conferences, workshops and learning events, but also in reference to the IPDET study tour.

From time to time he [IPDET co-director] came and did some lectures for SLEvA members or SLEvA conferences. [The DG of MPI] introduced [IPDET co-director] to SLEvA. So the network is there.

It was mentioned that on some visits by the IPDET co-director the focus was very much on educating parliamentarians and senior policy makers. Perhaps inadvertently the study tour also helped to broaden the spread of M&E awareness.

Last year, IPDET organized a small study tour of IPDET colleagues here in Sri Lanka. Having brought together different people, there was fairly good publicity, so there was more focus on evaluation than at that time. There have been a number of workshops and events that have been here. Those things help a lot, when you have international workshops more people get attracted to the field and you see people who have not connected with IPDET or have not connected before coming to those.

Despite being hosted by MPI, study tour organizers ensured that the opportunities for developing the network were not missed. “As president of SLEVA, I was invited to participate”. The Ministry invited her to do a presentation, so she could share her experiences with IPDET visitors.

It was recognized by one community member that the development and establishment of SLEvA was the opportunity for the NGO sector to get very much involved with evaluation; SLEVA represented not only government agencies but “everybody else”. According to one observer, in the last five years Sri Lanka has “come from nothing to a fairly decent level of activity as far as M&E is concerned”. Despite the accolades, this observation was subsequently qualified.

It has been achieved because of SLEVA, because of MPI, the national policy just put in place. But it has been limited to a few selected stakeholders. It has not permeated into the whole of government. It has not been able to get into the parliament. Legislators are far removed from the concept of M&E

SLEvA, too, has benefitted directly from local visits by an IPDET co-Director.

[I] had a connection with [him] from the past through SLEvA when he was working for the World Bank; he has presented in the past at a SLEvA training program which consisted of approximately 40 participants.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned constraints in terms of evaluation supply, there is a growing evaluation community in Sri Lanka. This will no doubt be propelled and sustained through regional connections, such as the CoE and TESA, but also through ongoing relations with key partners in the country including donors, NGOs, and government. An evaluation community culture has been established whereby evaluators seek help and assistance if need be.

If I call any of these people now, they are interested in helping or assisting each other. It's not always official, but friendly.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite a relatively small number of Sri Lankan nationals having attended IPDET, it would appear that the program has had positive direct and indirect effects on the development of government systems for M&E and the development of a local community culture of evaluation. This is partly attributable to members attending IPDET and successfully transferring knowledge back to the country, but also through ongoing interaction with IPDET colleagues and IPDET co-directors over time. International, regional and local networks of evaluators people have been established and evidence that IPDET has played a significant role in facilitating networking, especially internationally and locally, was observed in the case study.

Monitoring and evaluation has not yet been institutionalized in Sri Lanka but there are many positive signs in this direction. Leading in this respect is the former MPI, which has taken up the challenge of building a very sophisticated and now renowned M&E system and taken steps to implement it in such a way as to foster its regular use and integration into the policy and planning cycle. But the government has also made strong connections with donor partners, NGOs, and academia in ways that will foster the growth of the local evaluation community and help to ameliorate the current shortage of trained evaluation personnel available in the country.

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APPENDIX A

Sample letter of informed consent



Université d'Ottawa / University of Ottawa

January 26, 2010

Dear IPDET Participant:

Greetings! We have been contracted by the Carleton University and the World Bank to conduct an impact evaluation of the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) and we would like to invite you to participate in the study. You have been identified as someone who has participated in the IPDET program in Ottawa and have an ongoing professional interest in program evaluation. If you agree, your participation would be voluntary and would involve no risks or significant inconvenience to you. You may withdraw from the study at any time. Please note that there would be no consequences to you for choosing *not* to participate or to withdraw from the study. As you no doubt have many questions, we have tried to anticipate some of them and have provided a response below:

What are the objectives of this research? Overall, the purpose of our research is to learn about the impact of the IPDET training in various contexts around the globe. We are specifically interested to know the extent to which IPDET has contributed to the capacity to do and use evaluation and monitoring and the development of professional evaluation networks. We want to understand the factors and conditions under which evaluation and monitoring are conducted and used in your organization and what evaluation capacity building initiatives may have been implemented.

The larger study will involve document review and a questionnaire survey of IPDET alumni as well as a multiple case study of IPDET participants located in various countries. Given significant interest in evaluation and monitoring in your country it has been selected as one of the case site locations. We are seeking your involvement in the case study portion of the research.

The knowledge generated by this research will be valuable to IPDET in its efforts to plan and deliver ongoing effective and responsive evaluation training to members of the international evaluation community. The research will also assist IPDET management in meeting accountability needs.

Who is the research team? This research is being carried out independently by myself and my associate Catherine Elliott of the University of Ottawa, under contract with Carleton University and the World Bank (sponsors of IPDET).

What does participation imply? If you agree to participate we would ask you to be involved in an individual interview of about 60 minutes to help us explore the impact of IPDET training in your setting.

The private interview would be conducted a time and location convenient to you; and it would, with your permission, be audio recorded to ensure accuracy. We would also like to collect from you with permission documents that may relate to involvement in evaluation and monitoring by you or your organization.

How would the data be treated? All discussions are considered to be private and all of the information collected would be treated as **confidential**. We can assure you that only members of the University of Ottawa research team would have access to the data. Verbatim quotations may be included in reports arising from the research, however, your anonymity and that of your organization would be assured (i.e., personally identifying information would be removed and the contents of the quote would not reveal individual identities). Audio recordings and/or fieldnotes from the interview will be securely kept in my office for a period of five years.

What would be the potential benefits of participation for you? Once we have collected and analyzed all of our data, we would compile a technical report on IPDET evaluation, summarizing the results of the case studies, survey and document review activities. A summary report will be prepared and distributed study participants, including yourself (directly if you so desire). We are hopeful that this information would be useful to you and your colleagues for your own decision making and evaluation practices and in making them even more effective. Other possible uses from this research would be to aid in designing evaluation capacity building training programs with greater impact and help to better integrate evaluative inquiry into organizational practice.

Thank you for considering this request. **Please confirm with me at bcousins@uottawa.ca of your willingness to participate at your earliest convenience.** We would be happy to provide further information if necessary.

The University of Ottawa, Research Ethics Review Board, has approved this research. Inquiries or any questions dealing with ethical conduct of this research can be addressed to the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research 1-613-562-5841 (email: ethics@uottawa.ca). Please sign two copies of this consent letter. One is for your own records.

I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Brad Cousins, Ph.D and Catherine Elliott MBA

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(613) 562-5146 fax
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c.c. C. Elliott

I agree to participate in the study.

_____ / _____
print name *signature*

- I agree to having the interview audio recorded

Summary report – Please check:

- Please email me a summary report: Email address: _____

APPENDIX B

IPDET Impact Evaluation: Interview Protocol

Introductions; overview of IPDET evaluation; letter of consent. Permission to tape record.

A. Introduction & Context

A1 What is your current role? To what extent and how does it relate to evaluation and monitoring?

A2 To what extent is evaluation and monitoring valued here in [XXXXXX]? Is this changing? How and why?

A3 To what extent are training programs like IPDET of interest here in [XXXXXX]? Why?

A4 What has been your experience with IPDET? *Prompt: if repeat participant, evolving goals, expectations?*

Attended	Date/Specifics/Workshops taken
Core	
Week 3 workshops	
Week 4 workshops	
Other (specify)	



A5 Are you aware of others from [XXXXXX] who have attended IPDET? Do you keep in touch professionally with these people? Elaborate.

B. IPDET Program Objectives

B1. What were your expectations heading into IPDET? (i.e., why did you go?) Were your expectations unique in any way?

B2 To what extent were your expectations met? Elaborate.

B3 To what extent have you developed networks with IPDET alumni here in [XXXXXX]? With others from outside [XXXXXX]? Explain. (nature/extent of networks, frequency/type of communication, topics discussed, degree to which it has helped on the job)

Domestic:

International:

C. IPDET Features

C1 What features or aspects of the IPDET course do you feel were the most useful to your acquisition of new evaluation / monitoring knowledge and skill? Why? (*Prompts: Written resources, lectures/presentations, small group activities, networking with colleagues, specific workshops, listserv*)

C2 What features or aspects of the course were the least useful to your acquisition of new evaluation/monitoring knowledge and skill? Why? (*Prompts: Written resources, lectures/presentations, small group activities, networking with colleagues, specific workshops, listserv*)



D. Transfer of Knowledge and Skill

D1 To what extent do you believe that you have been able to apply the E&M knowledge and skill that you acquired at IPDET here in your own workplace?

(Prompt: Very much so, somewhat, a very little, not at all) Elaborate.

D2 To what extent are the knowledge and skill that you have developed relevant in your workplace? In what ways have the following either helped or hindered your ability to apply evaluation and monitoring knowledge and skill learned at IPDET?

Direct Prompts:

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Organizational policies (in relation to evaluation as a source of information and knowledge);	
Provision of time (to adequately implement evaluation);	
Collegial support (in carrying out the evaluation);	
Resources (availability in terms of human and fiscal resources);	
Protection from intrusions/allocation of time (minimization of competing demands on those charged with doing evaluation);	
Openness to experimentation (organizational cultural readiness for evaluation);	
Supervisory leadership and support (facilitative support to engage in evaluation activities);	
High-level administrators' leadership and support (overt organizational support for evaluation);	
Recognition of success (incentives for engaging in evaluation knowledge production).	

Other	
Other	

E Capacity to DO Evaluation

E1 Describe your personal capacity to *do* evaluations and monitoring. (*Prompt: High/Med/Low*)
Elaborate. (*Prompt: strengths and weaknesses*)

E2 Describe your organization's capacity to do evaluation and monitoring (*High/Med/Low*)
(*Prompts: infrastructure, human resources, fiscal resources*) Is evaluation part of the
organizational culture? Elaborate.

E3 Describe typical evaluation and monitoring processes (*Prompts: in-house vs. external; std
methodology/approach; stakeholder involvement*).

F Capacity to USE Evaluation

F1 In what ways is evaluation and monitoring used in your organization by managers and decision makers? *Prompts: Support for decisions? Learning about programs, organization, functions, etc.? (Symbolic, persuasive and political uses?)*

F2 What sorts of effects have evaluation and monitoring processes had on your organization? *Prompts: Process use? development of inquiry skills? development of evaluative thinking? Creation of new positions?*

F3 What sorts of factors or forces help to integrate evaluation and monitoring into the culture of organizational culture?

F4 What sorts of barriers or forces inhibit the integration of evaluation and monitoring into your organizational culture?

G. Other

G1. To what extent and how has IPDET led to other evaluation-related activities here in [XXXXX]? *(Prompts: training and professional development, development of infrastructure; networking; unanticipated consequences).*

Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. A summary of our findings will be made available to you.

