

IPDET

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM FOR
DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION TRAINING

Tracer Study 2014-2020 Executive Summary



The IPDET program | As an executive training program the International Program on Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) aims to provide decision makers, managers and practitioners with the tools that are required to commission, manage and evaluate policies, programs, and projects at the local, national, regional, and global levels as well as use those evaluations for decision-making. Since its beginning in 2001, more than 4,000 professionals from around the world have participated in the IPDET program. They see themselves not only as participants in a training program, but also as part of a multi-disciplinary network committed to the vision that better evaluations contribute to the creation of a better world. Based on IPDET's Evaluation Capacity Development Strategy¹, IPDET consists of the three different streams of capacity building activities: On-site Program in Bern, Online Workshops, Global Outreach²; which are framed by overarching Community Building activities.

“IPDET is the best training program on M&E that I have attended. The split of the training into a core program and specialized courses on a variety of topics is a great approach. The opportunity to choose the specialized courses and tailor a curriculum to the needs of the trainee is giving you a sense of satisfaction and desire to cover as many topics as possible in consecutive years.” – Participant from 2016

The Tracer Study | The overall objectives of the Tracer Study were to provide the IPDET management with information on the achievement of its goals, formulated in its Program Theory. Additionally, it was supposed to support a development process, as it promotes internal and external communication on the results and with this, in the end, further improvement. Lastly, it aimed to create transparency on the programs implementation and be accountable towards its stakeholders.

Based on these objectives, IPDET defined the following categories guiding the Tracer Study: demographics of alumni and organizations, increased knowledge and skills and commitment to produce and use evaluative evidence, and grown community that is actively sharing learning and collaborating. The timeline defined was 2014-2020, to represent equal number of program years to represent both Canada and Switzerland as venues of the IPDET programs. For the implementation a multi-step mixed-methods approach, using qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods, was applied for this Tracer Study.

Result 1: IPDET is reaching a diverse target audience in the international community | Results of the demographic analysis of the alumni database and survey respondents have shown that IPDET attracts and reaches a diverse target audience in terms of gender balance, regional distribution, income classification and type of organization.

- In terms of **gender distribution**, the participation trend from 2014 to 2020 showcased a distribution that favors participation from women with an average of 58% female participation.
- Most participants at the time of their IPDET attendance were coming – based on work country – from *Europe and Central Asia* (29%), *Sub-Saharan Africa* (23%) and *North America* (15%). Comparing the **regional distribution** between the two venues revealed that proximity to the venue seems to play a role in the regional distribution of participants: participation from *Europe and Central Asia* significantly increased in 2018 and 2019 compared to 2014, 2015 and 2016. Also, though smallest in percentage, participants working in the *Middle East and North African* region doubled 2018 to 2019 from an average of 2.7% to 5.4%. On the other hand, participants from the *North American* region have significantly reduced from an average of 21.1% (2014-2016) to 12.4% (2018 to 2019).

¹ <https://ipdet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/IPDET-ECD-Strategy-Paper.pdf>

² https://ipdet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/IPDET_GlobalOutreachStrategy.pdf

- An average of 45% were awarded an **IPDET scholarship** between 2014 and 2020. The availability of IPDET scholarship helped facilitate participation to IPDET trainings for participants coming from low, lower-middle-, and upper-middle-income countries. Furthermore, the **online format** offered by IPDET since 2020 seems to have helped increase participation and accessibility for participants coming from *low-* and *lower-middle-income* countries.

“Without scholarship I would have probably participated only on the Core Course. With the scholarship I was able to add one week workshop to my training, which was very good.” – Participant from 2019

- In terms of **type of organization**, about a third of alumni were working in *government organizations* during their IPDET participation. The most striking difference between the two venues is reduction to more than half in the number of participants working in a *government agency*. The reduction of government agency participants also means increase of participation from other types of organization from 2018 to 2020, namely from the *UN (specialized agencies), NGO and foundation, other international/regional or multilateral organizations*, and from the *World Bank Group*.
- Majority of alumni are still currently working in the same type of organization they were working at when they participated at IPDET. However, it is worth noting that there has been a 5% increase of *self-employed* among the survey respondents.
- While IPDET is reaching a diverse target it seems to be difficult so far to convince most sending organization to send more than one participant or attract past participants to attend other (more advanced) workshops in succeeding years.

“I work in several positions not only in consultancy, I’m teaching in a graduated university also, and a great part of my professional activity is in voluntary basis with VOPEs like ACEVAL, ReLAC and now IEAc. The most important impact that I had from the IPDET course is in my students, because I can teach them how to evaluate development cooperation and national programs.” – Participant from 2015

Result 2: Participation in IPDET training increases the knowledge and skills of its alumni | Based on the self-assessment of IPDET alumni, an overwhelming majority of the survey respondents (strongly) agreed that their IPDET participation has **increased their knowledge and skills** in evaluation and **increased their interest to further deal with the subject**. Further data from interviews and comment section of the survey spoke highly of the quality and usefulness of the knowledge and skills participants could gain from IPDET trainings. Thereby it can be concluded that **IPDET program is achieving its objective to enhance the capacity of its participants**.

“The IPDET program was for me an important step in my education as an evaluator since there is no official higher level education program available in my country nor region. It provided a structured overview of the topic, contributed to the development of my evaluation skills and use of evaluation methodologies. In terms of intercultural cooperation, I am deeply thankful in getting the opportunity to meet and learn from peers from all over the world. What a wonderful experience and opportunity to share knowledge.” – Participant from 2018

Result 3: IPDET alumni are able to apply their IPDET training in their work and boost their personal and professional development | The majority of alumni were able to **apply their acquired knowledge and skills in their work**. From the point of view of the organizations interviewed, familiarization of terminologies used in evaluation, uniform use of methodology, and understanding technical proposals

and reports are some of the useful knowledge and skills acquired by their staff, especially for beginners in the field.

Their IPDET participation was also **useful in terms of personal and professional development**. Almost all respondents (strongly) agreed that attending IPDET was useful for their personal development. A majority claimed that **their evaluation related tasks/responsibilities were extended** and their job opportunities in the field of evaluation increased. Moreover, majority of respondents who currently work as consultants claimed to have received more consulting jobs after participating in an IPDET course. Finally, qualitative data revealed that the program was useful not just for those working in the field of evaluation but also provided **transferrable skills** for those who are now working in other field of profession.

“I may not have been an evaluator or fully practicing in evaluation but IPDET provided me with the knowledge that gave me success as a business developer. I doubt that applications to the EU and similar organizations would have been as successful without that training. I was further able to help my organization with the development of their ToC and other tools as a direct result of the IPDET training. I am truly grateful.”

– Participant from 2015

Result 4: The IPDET brand as a reference for high quality training | The positive self-assessment of survey respondents with their capacity building is consistent with the result that majority of the survey respondents perceive **IPDET as a high-quality evaluation training program**. More than a third of survey respondents chose *“reputation of IPDET as a high-quality evaluation training provider”* as reason for participating in IPDET. Furthermore, **almost all respondents end up recommending the program to their networks** after participating. Finally, a little more than half of survey respondents who attended other evaluation trainings found **IPDET to be more useful**.

“I think IPDET is a tremendous initiative that has filled a real need. I hope it continues to grow and prosper and reach even more people – particularly in developing regions. I have benefited enormously from being part of the IPDET family, and I look forward to attending more of the specialized sessions, and doing whatever I can to support to its future development for my organization and my professional background.”

Participant from 2016

Result 5: The networking opportunity and IPDET’s community-building format is a unique and an important aspect of IPDET | Through its different community building formats, IPDET offers participants and alumni several opportunities to network, collaborate and share knowledge during the training as well as different online platforms to keep the alumni community active. Results from both quantitative and qualitative analyses provided evidence to the extent that IPDET has **successfully contributed to fostering an active evaluation community** during and after its trainings. This was verified by the results of the survey where two-thirds of respondents (strongly) agree that their **intercultural awareness was raised and understanding of different fields of evaluation practice was broadened** through their exchange with other participants. A majority of the survey respondents claimed they still have contact with other alumni members, some regularly exchange (also on evaluation topics), and some have worked on joint evaluation activities with other alumni members.

“What distinguishes the IPDET 2014 training program is the face-to-face coexistence with the various participants from all over the world. The discussions that took place in the evenings on the university campus after the formal training in the halls had a very prominent role in exchanging knowledge and exchanging cultures, and this in turn developed the personality of the evaluators to understand the reality of the evaluation in other countries around the world. [...] Eternal friendships are built from coexistence

face to face with each other. [...] To this day, we exchange experience and knowledge in the field of evaluation.” – Participant from 2014

Recommendations |

Relating to types of courses:

- IPDET should **consider designing appropriate follow-on courses**, both, online and on-site to encourage alumni to enroll again in IPDET courses.
- This goes hand-in-hand with the identification and testing of **different course formats for different audiences**, e. g. shorter courses, hybrid-formats, flipped classroom, etc.
- Moreover, IPDET should **take further advantage of online workshops** as it offers the important opportunity to target individuals, more specifically those who are normally unable to attend the On-site Program, to enroll.
- To further strengthen the position of IPDET as a high-quality training provider, IPDET should **investigate offering micro-credentials** or other types of university certification.

Relating to content:

- IPDET should **continue to offer fundamentals in evaluation**, including a solid foundation in methodology and theory, **as well as cutting-edge topics** in the field of evaluation.
- To keep its program up-to-date, IPDET should **stay flexible and able to adapt** to the changing needs of different audiences (public, private, non-profit, academic sector).

Relating to scholarship:

- To respect different socio-economic backgrounds, **partial and full scholarships need to be considered**, to grant individuals with insufficient financial means access to IPDET.
- Applicants who are rejected during the selection process, should be **encouraged to join other IPDET formats** (i. e., virtually, free of charge).

Relating to online courses:

- In order to further assure a professional implementation of the online format, IPDET should **continue investing in digital didactics**.
- To offer more intense opportunity to connect with other participants, IPDET should **strengthen networking opportunities** for online participants.

Relating to community-building:

To offer them more ownership of the IPDET community, IPDET should **make alumni more engaged and increase their role in the activities and events offered** by the community.

Relating to type of organization:

IPDET should **look into new organizations who have not yet sent participants** to IPDET courses and investigate how to best market IPDET to these organizations.

Relating to Tracer Study design and implementation:

- In order to keep tracing alumni pathways, IPDET could benefit from **conducting regular tracer studies**, e. g. every three years. **Further tracer elements** can be included in regular communication with its alumni, e. g. via data retrievals or status reports.
- Future tracer studies should put more **focus on the extent of acquired knowledge and skills, and the usefulness and impact** of IPDET in alumni's career.