

Evaluation Management in South Africa and Africa

Fanie Cloete, Babette Rabie & Christo de Coning

EDITORS

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Foreword

Africa is flourishing – and so is the evaluation profession on the continent.

Evaluation is a challenging, exciting endeavour. If well positioned for use, it has the power to change many lives for the better – or for worse. Mediocrity is therefore not an option. Evaluation has to build reliable, useful knowledge through credible, insightful practices. It calls for evaluators and evaluation managers with a unique combination of expertise. They need to be technically well versed in research as well as the evaluative methodologies unique to the profession. They need to work across boundaries – whether disciplinary, sectoral, geographic, cultural, social or political. They have to be smart, realistic about real life and constantly searching for what lies beyond the obvious. They need to integrate, consider systems and understand the notion of complexity. Integrity is a non-negotiable imperative. And they have to commit to doing their best to help make the world a better place.

Well-designed and well-executed evaluations are therefore particularly important in countries with fragile institutions and large swathes of vulnerable populations. In such countries a strong tradition of evaluation in the public sector tends to be absent, and in particular evaluation based on local expertise and indigenous values and ways of thinking and working. And without sufficient academic nodes, opportunities to cultivate innovation and deeper engagement with evaluation issues in theory and practice – providing “thought leadership” to advance the profession – remain limited.

This is still the case across much of Africa, although the fledgling evaluation profession that emerged on the continent at the turn of the century has been expanding impressively – driven by often unsung pioneers working in demanding social or political circumstances, or doing their best to promote and strengthen the profession in spite of heavy workloads and other challenges.

This book is the result of one such effort. It is to be applauded and valued as one of the very first scholarly books on evaluation to emerge from Africa and solidly placed within the African context. It is of interest to all those who care about evaluation for development in Africa, irrespective of where they are based in the world.

It is unique in its focus on and advocacy for an Africa-centred, public sector driven engagement with evaluation as an integral and essential part of management for development. The importance of this approach cannot be overstated on a continent where the real value of evaluation will only emerge if this is achieved.

The authors highlight key practices and issues related to the institutionalisation of evaluation with this focus. They acknowledge that much can still be added, yet succeed in illuminating critical concepts and components related to evaluation management for development, placing them within the historical and current context in Africa.

The authors also provide valuable new insights into how evaluation has evolved on the continent in tandem with international trends and events. Among others, they emphasise the normative purpose of evaluation, and the need to move away from simplistic approaches and solutions when dealing with the evaluation of development within diverse societies with culturally distinct practices and value systems, and very different and dynamic contexts. They challenge those who believe in simple quantitative indicator-driven monitoring and evaluation that neglect that which is less tangible. They reinforce the need for institutional arrangements that facilitate participative approaches and recognise the value systems that support evaluation, and call on the state to use evaluation to improve the nature of its governance approaches in order to fulfil its functions effectively. They advocate for arrangements at the apex of government, civil society and business to enable reflection on the merit and value of evaluations, and promote their use.

The authors might not agree on all aspects at all times, but where there are differences, they open avenues for consideration and debate.

The occasional emphasis on South Africa is not out of place. It has been a leader on the continent in terms of the dynamism of its evaluation community as well as in the efforts of, among others, its Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Ministry and Department of Performance M&E (DPME) in the Presidency to institutionalise evaluation for the benefit of government performance. Future editions can strive to include and expand similar information from all African regions.

Since 2007, starting with the release of a position statement at the Fourth African Evaluation Association Conference in Niamey, different groups of Africans have called for a greater emphasis not only on “Africa-led”, but also on “Africa-rooted” evaluation – challenging African evaluators to consider what evaluation would be like if it had originated in Africa, and to ensure that African knowledge systems and ways of doing inform current monitoring and evaluation initiatives. The authors reinforce this call to action for the development of theories and practical examples that can help anchor evaluation in global good practice informed by African cultures and value systems – and vice versa. This should inspire African evaluators and, perhaps more importantly, those with the power to commission and guide such studies and evaluations. A next edition will be well positioned to display such advances in evaluation on the continent.

It is appropriate that the book has been published at a time when evaluation is becoming increasingly prominent. The UN declared 2015 as the Year of Evaluation, and there are calls for a more prominent role for evaluation in the post 2015 global development agenda. All these initiatives – and the information drawn together in this book – should spark the interest of young as well as experienced, smart, ambitious Africans to pursue evaluation as a worthwhile career.

The book is also well positioned to help build capacity among prospective and practicing evaluators, as well as among evaluation funders, commissioners and managers in- and outside Africa who want to learn more about monitoring and evaluation in the African context, and who might want to hone their approaches and skills to ensure better quality development through better quality evaluation results.

Evaluation – in synergy with monitoring, its sister activity – has to contribute to the empowerment of Africa. Evaluators as well as evaluation funders, commissioners and managers have a responsibility to ensure this. Yet, if evaluation is to fulfil its potential and promise to support development in Africa, much still has to be done. May this book inspire us all to help ensure that evaluation takes its rightful place in management systems for the benefit of national development efforts across the continent.

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21 April 2014

Preface

The purpose of this book is to systematically record, analyse and assess for the first time in a single volume the implications of the global development and management of professional evaluation for the African continent. The main focus is on South Africa, with comparisons to similar or different developments in other African countries where systematic, professional policy, programme and project evaluation is the most advanced. The book therefore comprises an exploratory study that does not pretend to be the final word on the topic, but is in fact the start of a process to build up institutional memory about the origins and state of evaluation in Africa against the background of international developments in this field. A secondary aim of the book is to provide some motivation and encouragement as well as core documentation and other tools that might be useful for purposes of evaluation capacity building and institutionalisation to organisations that decide to utilise the potential of systematic evaluation as a strategy to improve their policy, programme or project performance and results.

The editors and other contributors are all actively involved in the conduct, management and capacity-building of professional evaluation skills at local, national and international levels, and have over time gained extensive experience on different evaluation-related issues. We decided to produce this book after consultation with a number of different stakeholders in the field, who all seemed to be increasingly concerned about the lack of suitable contextualised capacity building materials to promote the professionalisation, quality and utilisation of evaluation lessons specifically within the South African and African environments. The project soon gained widespread support in professional evaluation practice and academic evaluation circles, and will be the first text of its kind published in Africa.

The book comprises a collective effort by the editors, assisted by a number of evaluation specialists that have contributed various inputs on different themes and issues. These specialist contributions ensured that the views of prominent actors in the field were captured and contextualised in the book. At the same time, however, the editors attempted to provide a conceptual coherence and integration of all material based on specific themes that are clustered in the respective chapters.

The following clusters of themes are dealt with in the book:

- The Context of Evaluation Management
- Historical Development and Practice of Evaluation
- Theories of Change and Programme Logic
- Evaluation Approaches and Models
- Evaluation Designs and Methods
- Indicators for Evaluation
- Institutional Arrangements for M&E
- Evaluation Professionalisation and Capacity building
- Evaluation in SA and in different African countries
- Lessons for Integrated Evaluation Management

Each of the identified clusters of themes above contains discussions of theoretical issues illustrated with one or more short case studies, while selected longer case studies and other relevant documentation are also taken up in annexures at the end of the book.

The book therefore comprises a blind peer reviewed guide to best M&E practices for purposes of systematic policy, programme and project evaluations. It is suitable for both professional M&E institutionalisation and capacity building projects as well as for evaluation information dissemination and education at different levels in the public, private and voluntary sectors in society, especially in a developmental context.

Fanie Cloete, Babette Rabie & Christo de Coning
Editors

21 April 2014

Acknowledgements

The Editors wish to acknowledge the substantive support and contributions received during the conceptualisation, writing and compilation of *Evaluation Management in South Africa and Africa*. In many ways our evaluation networks that contributed to this book should rather be called a Community of Practice, as the development of this book has emerged almost in a natural way through developing partners and good cooperation between ourselves and researchers as well as practitioners in the field in many countries over the last 10 years. The emerging evidence-informed paradigm of policy analysis, management and evaluation has been very influential in directing and shaping our approaches to attempt to improve the processes, content and results of policy decisions aimed at sustainable development, generally in developing countries and especially in Africa. The emerging nature of this paradigm implies that it is not always practised everywhere, and that significant awareness and marketing of the need for more rigorous approaches to policy decision-making, implementation, evaluation and learning therefore have to be undertaken to ensure optimal efficiency and effectiveness of good governance in these settings. The openness and willingness of various African governments, business enterprises and NGOs to adopt and prioritise these perspectives and approaches indicated to us that the time is right if not long overdue for a book like this.

These developments in public policy processes led to our increasing involvement in the consolidation and promotion of SAMEA and AfrEA in various ways as well as the publication of three editions of the book *Improving Public Policy* since 2000 because M&E has become increasingly prominent. This book especially came about through the facilitation of the Executive Capacity-Building Programme on *Monitoring and Evaluation in the Public Sector* by the *School for Public Leadership (SPL)* at the University of Stellenbosch and the graduate Policy Evaluation Degree Programmes at the SPL and the Department of Public Management and Governance at the University of Johannesburg. Through these programmes we have been involved in the training and establishment of M&E capacity and systems in almost all National Government Departments and Provincial Governments in South Africa over the last decade, responsive to the demands of notably the South African public sector where rapid progress in the field of M&E has been apparent, especially through the initiatives of DPME and SAMEA. We have also been able to follow international trends and good practices and have incorporated these important research and practices in *Evaluation Management in South Africa and Africa*.

Our involvement in M&E also empowered us to develop generic frameworks, processes and methods for application in NGO environments. The editors have been involved in the design and establishment of M&E systems in a number of NGOs locally and abroad and this has allowed us to broaden our Community of Practice to a cooperative governance level where the relationship between state and civil society regarding M&E design and practise have shown that intergovernmental as well as society-based approaches have become essential requirements for results-based M&E. Our interaction with evaluation specialists and managers in all fields have been tremendously valuable in shaping the direction and content of this book in our attempt to assist with the creation or improvement of capacity in these circles to empower individuals and organisations to understand and apply

good governance processes and outcomes more successfully through better monitoring and evaluation. In this process we hope that we have contributed with this book to some extent to clarifying the relatively complicated issues around evaluation as a higher order management function and how to synchronise the theoretical foundations of good monitoring and evaluation with concrete practices and results, especially in developing contexts on the African continent.

As the reader will note from our list of contributors and their affiliations, a large number of researchers and practitioners contributed to this initiative. We want to express our gratitude to all of them for their ideas, assistance and sacrifices in producing the necessary results to enable us to achieve the publication of this book. Particular thanks go to Zenda Ofir for her willingness to comment and provide critical ideas on our initial drafts and to write the Foreword. Also to Ian Goldman and his colleagues at DPME for their participation, as well as to the various Board members and other members of SAMEA and AfrEA who had contributed in a number of ways to the end result. Our gratitude is also extended to the international organisations involved in evaluation who allowed us to use some of their case studies and other content on evaluation. A special word of appreciation goes to CLEAR-AA, EVALPARTNERS, UNICEF, UNDP, WB-IEG and DFID in this regard.

We also want to thank the anonymous reviewers who undertook a blind peer review of the semi-final version of the manuscript, and whose constructive remarks for further improvement of the text have been accommodated as far as possible in the final version of the book. We further wish to explicitly acknowledge the cooperation of the Department of Public Management and Governance at the University of Johannesburg that allowed Prof Cloete to write, compile and edit the final manuscript during his six months sabbatical leave from January to June 2014, as well as the School of Public Leadership at Stellenbosch University for its logistical management support for this project. A final word of thanks goes to the publishers of the manuscript, SUN MeDIA Stellenbosch whose innovative business model made it relatively easy to market and assess the book both in an e-book format or in a paper version printed on demand across the world and especially in African countries.

All the above-mentioned contributions have only improved the book, while the editors take full responsibility for any remaining weaknesses. We found it in many instances for many reasons very difficult to decide what to include or exclude from the text, and in the end we have to acknowledge using our discretion in the interests of space, time and costs, with the explicit understanding that we will revisit these decisions for purposes of a revised edition after feedback from our readers. We would for example like to include in future versions more African evaluation contributors, thought, case studies and results as well as dealing in more detail with appropriate African and other generic evaluation methodologies which we unfortunately could not fit into this first version of the book.

However, we trust that the current version of the book will be useful to promote more systematic and rigorous capacity-building for and understanding, practices, management and outcomes of evaluation in African countries, and especially in South Africa.

Fanie Cloete, Babette Rabie & Christo de Coning

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22 December 2014

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Fanie Cloete is Emeritus Professor of Policy Management in the Department of Public Management and Governance at the University of Johannesburg. Before this appointment he was an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of Stellenbosch, Professor of Public Policy Analysis and Director of the School of Public Management and Planning at that University, where he is still an Extraordinary Professor.

He has had extensive career experience in the South African public sector, inter alia as Chief Director of Legal Administration in the Department of Development Planning, and Director of Constitutional Planning in the Office of the President in Pretoria. He has travelled, studied and published widely on public management issues on every continent. He is an advocate of the SA Supreme Court, a former member of the Presidential Review Commission on the Restructuring of the Public Service in South Africa, the former Chair of the Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management (ASSADPAM), of the national SAQA SGB on Public Administration and Management, and of the Western Cape Provincial Demarcation Board. He is also a former Chair of the SA Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) as well as of the Board of Trustees of the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) and a former M&E Curriculum and Training Advisor to PALAMA.

He is a general consultant and training specialist in both the public and private sectors on strategic and operational policy monitoring, evaluation and other management issues.

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Dr Babette Rabie is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Public Leadership, Stellenbosch University. She specialises in public sector monitoring and evaluation, performance management and policy evaluation. She is involved in numerous formal academic and practical executive training programmes on public sector performance management, including the design of M&E systems, and advanced courses on indicator development and evaluation design and management. Training delegates include parliamentarians, strategic and programme managers and evaluation specialists from all spheres of government, as well as the NGO and private sectors. As part of these training programmes she has reviewed the M&E systems, policies and indicator frameworks from various departments, programmes and units and has suggested changes and improvements to these.

She has published several articles on public sector performance management, including an integrated framework for managing performance at local government level, a proposed typology of M&E approaches, an exploration of the emerging M&E policy framework in South Africa, and a framework for evidence-based local economic development policy. The core contribution from her doctoral thesis entitled *“Outcome and Output Indicators to measure the success of Local Economic Development Strategies”* was presented at the 2010 Conference of the European Evaluation Society and was recognised as one of the three best papers presented at the conference. She served on the Board of Directors of SAMEA (the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association) for the period 2010-2013 and is the immediate past-Chair of the association (2012-2013). She is the current head of the Masters Programme in Public Administration at the School of Public Leadership at the University of Stellenbosch.

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As an academic and practitioner in evaluation, he has designed and offered Masters classes at Wits, UCT and UWC and has conducted a number of evaluations. In the more recent past these included the Quinquennial Reviews for the Council for Higher Education (CHE) of the Graduate School of Public and Development Management (P&DM) and the Stellenbosch Graduate School of Public Management and Planning (SOPMP). He has successfully completed a number of Medium Term Reviews namely the GTZ PSRP in Mpumalanga, the evaluation of the *African Governance Facility (Australian Aid)* and acted as the Principal Evaluator for the National Treasury in the assessment of the *Infrastructure Development Improvement Programme (IDIP)*.

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UNDP: United Nations Development Programme. (<http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=7086>)

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Emergency Fund. (http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Final_Ipelegeng.pdf)

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Chapter 1

The Context of Evaluation Management¹

Babette Rabie and Ian Goldman

1.1 Introduction

This book deals with the management of evaluations of public policy, programmes and projects – i.e. interventions carried out by public sector agencies to achieve particular desired objectives – although the book deals with many generic issues and principles that are also largely applicable to evaluations undertaken in the NGO and business sectors. Evaluations involve systematically reflecting on and learning lessons from the nature, processes and consequences of decisions and actions by an organisation in order to improve the performance or results of a particular intervention.

Whether the intervention is a policy, programme or project, an evaluation always involves the systematic assessment of the envisaged or implemented response of a decision maker to improve a perceived “problem” or to take advantage of an opportunity.

The evaluation could focus on a *policy* area – what has been decided to do in order to improve a situation that the decision maker wishes to change. An example would be what needs to be done by the government to reduce the negative consequences of smoking, by an NGO to assist refugees to adapt better to their new environment, or by a business enterprise to contribute more effectively to social transformation issues.

On the other hand, evaluation can focus on how the intervention is implemented and the processes involved. This may be through a *project*, e.g. a governmental project to educate the public about the negative consequences of smoking, through financial assistance by the NGO to refugees or through an intensive marketing initiative by the business enterprise of the product it wants to sell.

The evaluation can also focus on a coordinated series of projects or activities in the form of a *policy programme* by the government to supplement education projects with higher prices for tobacco products and restrictions on places where smoking is allowed, or by supplementing the NGO’s financial assistance to refugees with information and training in different skills and languages, and by product improvements and more retail outlets by the business concerned. Programme and project evaluation often focus on how effectively and efficiently resources (inputs) are converted through various processes (activities) into concrete deliverables/results (outputs) and ultimately outcomes.

¹ The M&E part of the chapter draws heavily on Rabie (2011) and Rabie & Cloete in Cloete & De Coning (2011). The section on the public sector draws heavily on Goldman (2001) and through the emergent work of South Africa’s Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.