

Evaluation Activities in Africa

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Africa has seen a significant growth in Evaluation networking in the past five years with the founding of the [African Evaluation Association \(AfrEA\)](#) in 1999. As of this writing, AfrEA has 16 national associations under its umbrella, each with evaluator networks supporting their respective countries. The associations are in a wide disparity of development maturity, but are all aimed at supporting socio-economic development programs in their countries, as in this description of the Uganda Evaluation Association as posted in www.kabissa.org.

The major purpose of the association is to build individual and institutional capacity in policy, program and project evaluation in Uganda through local and global networking, training, skills development and other avenues for professional development in evaluation practice¹.

The first conference of the African Evaluation Association, held in Nairobi in connection with the creation of AfrEA, was attended by more than 300 evaluators from 35 countries. Michael Quinn Patton was invited as keynote speaker, promoting a focus on ethics and guiding values for professional evaluation associations. He also emphasized the need for a culturally defined set of standards for evaluation and the necessity for utilization-focused evaluation.² Patton referred to the historically poor “expatriate” evaluations with poorly briefed evaluators, performed too quickly, with inadequate reports.

¹ <http://www.kabissa.org/contact/index.php?action=view&id=519>

² Full transcript of Patton’s lectures are available at <http://www.afrea.org/>.

It appears that these lectures, the training seminars, and 80 papers that were submitted on evaluation, helped to ‘jumpstart’ the development of the national associations. Although there does not appear to be any evaluation journals specific to or published in Africa, AfrEA has worked on several projects to increase evaluation capacity and foster a consistent professional approach for evaluators. In 2002, the association completed the "African Evaluation Guidelines", a cultural adaptation of the US “Program Evaluation Standards”, published in both English and French.

At the 2nd AfrEA conference in 2002, a variety of international evaluators were invited, including keynote speakers Prof. Anna Madison of Cornell University, USA, Ada Ocampo, Leader of the Latin American Evaluation Network, and Penny Hawkins, President of the Australasian Evaluation Association. After 5 days of trainings and paper submissions, the association recommended that the African Evaluation Guidelines (AEG) be adopted by all the National Networks, by Government and Public bodies, and by UN Agencies and other Multinational Organizations performing evaluation in Africa. The AEG provides a checklist of 30 items essential for quality control in evaluation and it has now been used by several national governments in major development program evaluations.

The [Niger Network of Monitoring and Evaluation \(ReNSE\)](#) has over 140 documents (in English or French) and in 2004 has published their first newsletter (in French), available from their website, to promote expertise in Nigerian evaluators.

AfrEA supports dissemination of monitoring and evaluation resource materials focused on Africa in the areas of Agriculture, Conservation, Gender, HIV/AIDS,

and Poverty. Additionally, AfrEA encourages members to participate in the Xceval listserv, a discussion forum for evaluators from developing countries.³

AfrEA has significant connections with international organizations and has activities currently sponsored by:

African Development Bank (AfDB)

Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie

Catholic Relief Services

Canadian Institutes for Health

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

CARE International

Danish Agency for Development Assistance (DANIDA)

Family Health International (FHI)

International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

World Conservation Union (IUCN)

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

UNAIDS

UNCHS

UNDP

UNICEF

UNIFEM

World Bank

³ Xceval-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

The third national [Conference](#) of the African Evaluation Association will be held in Cape Town, South Africa, from December 1st through December 4th, 2004, and is looking for speakers and attendees.