ASSESSING EVALUATION EDUCATION IN AFRICAN TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: OPPORTUNITIES AND REFLECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The demand for knowledge from evaluations to inform evidence-based policy making continues to rise in Africa. Simultaneously, there is increased recognition of the role tertiary education institutions can play in strengthening evaluation practice through high quality evaluation education. This article investigates the status quo of evaluation education in selected tertiary institutions in Anglophone African countries. The article utilizes a mixed methods research methodology that blends secondary data review, an online survey using a structured questionnaire and two regional workshops. Data was collected from 12 Anglophone African tertiary education institutions. Findings indicate that evaluation education in Anglophone African tertiary institutions is mostly in the nascent stages and there are mixed feelings on the appropriate entry levels (undergraduate or postgraduate). The study highlights the need for developing a specialized evaluation curriculum as evaluation education still borrows from theories and methodologies from the North. Institutional, operational and policy-related challenges are highlighted as well as the potential for collaboration among various stakeholders in strengthening the design and implementation of evaluation education. Key tenets for strengthening evaluation education are highlighted and discussed.

Key Words: Anglophone Africa, evaluation capacity development, evaluation education, monitoring and evaluation, tertiary education institutions

INTRODUCTION

There is growing demand for knowledge through evaluations that informs evidence-based

decision making in Africa. For a long period, the demand for evaluations has been generated by international funding and development agencies to justify financial investments in development projects and programs (Khan 1998). The commissioning of evaluations by these agencies elevated the dominance of external evaluators from the global North as preferred professionals since African evaluators were generally viewed as lacking the required scholarly credentials for credible evaluations. This is rapidly shifting due to a growing recognition by policy makers on the need for competent African evaluators. Such a scenario is mostly a result of the adoption of the New Public Management (NPM) approach to governance by many African governments which emphasizes results and the need for improving accountability and transparency. Evaluation has *thus* been viewed as a key performance management tool (Abrahams 2015; Mouton 2010). Further demand is now being driven by African evaluation practitioners advocating for the professionalization of evaluation. Professionalization aims at enhancing the required competencies, standards and guidelines that inform professional evaluation practice. These developments, coupled with the need for participatory and complexity-based approaches for evaluating policies, programs and projects have sparked an increase in the demand for evaluation education in Africa (Govender 2016, 264).

The bulk of evaluation education and training work conducted in Africa remains donor-driven and focused on training of individuals and/or technical assistance to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and government departments. Although tertiary education institutions can potentially contribute towards filling the evaluation supply gap, most African higher education institutions have traditionally been found lacking in professional resources for evaluation education coupled with limited capacity of methodological skills in evaluation (Bhola 1989). In recent years there has been an increase in evaluation capacity building efforts within public sector organizations under the rubric of Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) i.e. the deliberate approach for skills and knowledge enhancement to improve the ability to conduct and utilize evaluations (Labin et al. 2012; Beere 2005, 251). However, there are contestations on the definition and conceptualization of evaluation capacity development, leading to a diversity of approaches and tools (Naccarella et al. 2007). ECD has in most instances, focused on the supply side (improving technical expertise) at the expense of the demand side i.e. utilization of results (McDonald, Rogers and Kefford 2003).

Some research has been conducted on ECD in Africa by amongst others, Tarsilla (2014), World Bank (2009), Mackay (2002) and Bhola (1989). However, there is a general agreement among some of the African evaluation practitioners that most of the knowledge disseminated through strategies based on evaluation capacity development in Africa is generated in the North with very little, if any, real “Made-in-Africa” evaluation methodologies (evaluation tools and

paradigms rooted in African knowledge philosophies). This, according to Tarsilla (2014), has ignored the existence of evaluation capacity in Africa which can be strengthened and utilized. In addition, ECD has been dominated by short-term training, which has not allowed adequate institutionalization of evaluation capacity in mainstream policy-making and program design. The perceived short supply, in sub-Saharan Africa, of a highly skilled, experienced, and indigenous cohort of professional evaluators has subsequently spawned a myriad of training offerings, often run opportunistically for income generation rather than contextually adapted programs for building deep evaluation capabilities.

The issue of strengthening African-rooted evaluation capacity continues to receive attention by evaluators. It has been observed for example that, although there are several social science research textbooks with chapters on program evaluation (Abrahams 2015), very little is to be found in the literature about accredited evaluation education and training programs offered by higher education institutions. Although some African tertiary institutions are starting to give attention to evaluation education (see for example Basheka and Byamugisha 2015), more research is required to inform strategies for enhancing evaluation education in African tertiary institutions.

WHAT ROLE CAN TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PLAY IN EVALUATION EDUCATION?

There is a growing realization that growth in sub Saharan African economies significantly requires the need for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practitioners to build requisite competencies for generation of knowledge that advances socio-economic development (Saint, Lao and Materu 2009). This scenario has led to policy-makers acknowledging the need for promoting economic growth strategies that are informed by knowledge to enhance competitiveness. Within this context, evaluation education is central in providing knowledge that drives innovation in both the private and public sectors.

Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa are expanding their tertiary education sectors, for example, the World Bank estimated that in the mid-2000s, enrolment in tertiary education institutions in Africa expanded by 8.7 per cent annually (World Bank 2009). However, the higher education sector faces many challenges including the need for developing requisite leadership capacity (Mouton and Wildschut 2015). In addition, the decline in the allocation of financial resources and the worsening conditions of service for staff has resulted in poor teaching and research quality (UNESCO 2003). Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2013) believe there is an acknowledgement by African governments of the urgency to strengthen their higher education sectors, and they have started increasing the amount of public funding allocation

accordingly. For example, there was an average increase in national budget allocation to education from 17.5 per cent in 2007 to 18.2 per cent in 2009 in sub Saharan Africa (UNESCO 2010; World Bank 2009).

In this era of global competitiveness, universities must ensure appropriate curricula that meet both national and international market requirements. The new market requires graduates who are able to deal with the practical rather than purely theoretical concerns. Being relevant has also included looking at ways of incorporating indigenous knowledge and traditions into the content and delivery modes. Bunoti (2010) states that complex factors, grounded in commercialization, funding models and growth in human population are influencing service provision in tertiary institutions. Policies that are relevant and locally trained professionals in academic and administrative positions are needed to enhance higher education quality in Africa.

The growing demand for evaluation knowledge and other types of evidence for decision-making requires tertiary education institutions to train highly qualified and skilled evaluators who can produce high quality evaluations and improve the ways in which the findings are utilized by policy-makers or governments. A consensus view however, holds that a number of systemic challenges and capacity constraints exist. Firstly, there is a limited existence of well-designed, well-run, affordable, customized-for-the-African-context education and training opportunities, providing the basis for quality life-long professional development that is cumulative. Secondly, there is a noticeable lack of a "body of knowledge" and minimum educational curriculum requirements for a course for evaluation suitable to the African context. Thirdly, the locus (location of evaluation courses in university faculties) and focus (lack of common methodological agreement) for evaluation courses in African universities have been observed. Fourthly, there is inadequate infrastructure for teaching evaluation courses to a 21stcentury audience especially using blended-learning technologies (Tarsilla 2014; Porter and Goldman 2013). An important question remains, namely how an evaluation education agenda can be enhanced in Africa.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING EVALUATION EDUCATION IN AFRICA

The conceptual framework used in this article borrows from the theoretical constructs for valid evaluation for reviewing curriculum effectiveness, adapted from Confrey and Stohl (2004). The framework allows for the articulation of the theory of change for evaluation education which provides a context for the assessment of a program, implementation and secondary components in line with training outcomes (see Figure 1). The Program Theory outlines the intervention process between program delivery and the manifestation of outcomes (Weiss 1997). An

exploration of the evaluation education literature does not provide an explicit theory of change. Given this background, this study borrows from the tenets of evaluation capacity development in the public sector. These tenets include the following: (a) it empowers recipients to understand the supply and demand for evaluations (McDonald et al. 2003); (b) it equips recipients with the technical expertise for conducting valid evaluations; (c) it provides professional development through building knowledge, beliefs and skills (Taylor-Powell and Boyd 2008); (d) it takes into account organizational factors that breed or inhibit an "evaluative environment"; and (e) it elucidates the myriad of roles of managers and practitioners in the planning/evaluation cycle, to allow for an understanding of how to integrate the use of evaluation into public service action.

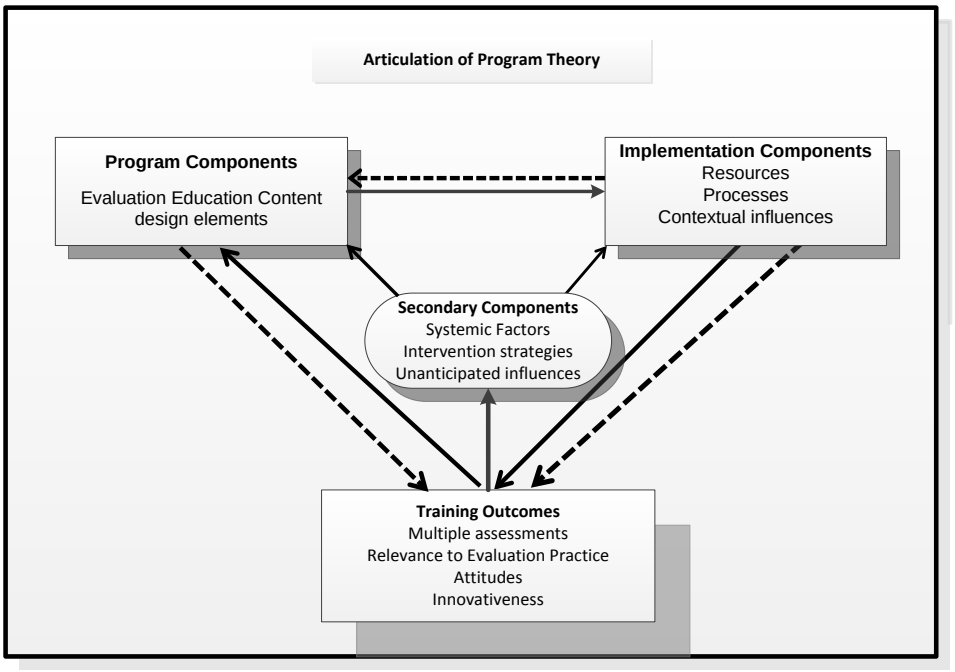

Figure 1: Primary and secondary components of evaluation education (Source: Adapted from Confrey and Stohl 2004, 40)

The program components

The program components of the evaluation education design consider the importance and quality of the design. With regard to the quality of evaluation education in Africa, a number of program component factors are outlined in the literature and a few are discussed here. Firstly, M&E as a discipline is viewed as facing major challenges, including the fact that there is a limited pool of academics with a general research background and the ability to adapt their methodological skills to evaluation. This might affect the methodological rigor included in curriculum development and delivery. Secondly, it is argued that evaluation training programs have traditionally taken a formalistic approach which has not been context specific, with

methodological shortcomings that result in failure to adapt positivist approaches to current culture and context (Bhola 1989, 251). This calls for a need for academic institutions to develop tools and methodologies that are contextually relevant to the people they are teaching. Thirdly, the interdisciplinary nature of M&E poses challenges in curriculum development within discipline-based tertiary education systems (Abrahams 2015). Finally, there are wide-ranging debates on the status of evaluation as a fully established discipline with sources of authority (Basheka and Byamugisha 2015, 83–86). Such debates have impacts on how evaluation can borrow content from other established disciplines with regards to harmonizing different disciplinary paradigms. An evaluation education curriculum may need to be designed through an integrated approach with contributions from various disciplines with room for maintaining disciplinary focus.

Implementation components

Basheka and Byamugisha (2015) provide a synopsis on the state of evaluation education in Africa through assessing academic programs at fifteen African universities. Some of the identified variables impacting on evaluation training, include resource allocation (personnel and equipment) and the "focus" and "locus" which define standing within the wider university. The findings indicate that, with regards to locus, evaluation education is scattered around various departments with no defined "home". In terms of focus, evaluation is viewed as a new field with old practices, with most curricula lacking theoretical grounding. Some universities lack supervision capacity, and resources to nurture theoretical knowledge, for instance allowing participation in high level evaluation conferences. Evaluation education programs are enacted in a variety of institutional settings. Implementation studies further reveal that implementation is complicated due to varying social contexts. With regards to evaluation education, the duties of different stakeholders require universities, private training institutions and "think tanks" or organizations that promote policy related research to grapple with the disciplinary location and focus of M&E provision with the social sciences.

Kaija (2015) contends that most research with relevance to policy in Africa is undertaken by universities and think tanks. They are both important knowledge generation stakeholders in Africa hence understanding the relationship between these two institutions is important in creating and enhancing a synergistic relationship to advance evaluation education. Findings from a Partnership for African Social & Governance Research (PASGR) study across 10 countries showed complementarity of the different skills and resources brought by universities and think tanks (PASGR 2016). A complex relationship exists between these two institutions with regards to multiple social, economic, cultural and political facets. They found that

collaborative complementarity existed in research and training but less so in policy dialogue and consultancy. Sustainability of collaborations is enhanced by the existence of clear and common goals by the involved partners. Lessons from this research are important in informing collaboration between African universities and other M&E training institutions to enhance evaluation education.

Secondary components

Secondary components are factors that lie outside the intended and enacted evaluation education program. Such factors can include university-wide standards and accountability systems during implementation (Confrey and Stohl 2004). In addition, M&E research finds itself dominantly grounded theoretically and methodologically in the American tradition with models and approaches dominated by American authors (Basheka and Byamugisha 2015, 76; Stockman and Meyer 2013, 16). As stated earlier, such a situation calls for innovative intellectual inputs for ensuring relevance to African contexts. In recent years there has been an upsurge in beliefs around “Made in Africa Evaluation” (Chilisa and Malunga 2014). It advocates for evaluation theories, methods and tools anchored in African beliefs, values, knowledge and paradigms for example, post-colonial indigenous paradigm. These beliefs will likely have implications for evaluation education design.

Although the evaluation field has various approaches and models, there are no agreed scientific theories. This has implications for evaluation education, if evaluation is to be taken as a scientific discipline; it needs the ability for theory testing. Additionally, every scientific profession requires a basis for knowledge and evaluation theory will provide such a knowledge base (Shadish 1998, 1). The issue therefore remains on the extent to which evaluation education can contribute towards enriching existing theories and theory building. Lastly, some universities in African countries find themselves trapped in contexts where there is limited political and administrative will with regards to the recognition of the benefits of evaluation in socio-economic development. Such environments may need innovative ways by universities to advocate for increased investments in evaluation education.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This study applied a mixed methods research methodology, utilizing secondary data review, online structured questionnaire and workshops.

Online questionnaire

A database was constructed, with key contacts from all organizations that offer higher education

and training in M&E across Anglophone Africa. An online survey was conducted via all available evaluation related contact listservs in Africa using SurveyMonkey. The survey faced challenges that are typical with online surveys, namely lack of sampling frame and low response rate (Wiersma 2013). It is impossible to estimate exactly how many people received the survey (sample frame) as the listservs are open access. A total of 47 responses (n=47) were received with the majority of respondents working in universities (46%), private training institutions (10%), Think tank (2%), vocational training institutions (2%), Voluntary Associations for Professional Evaluators (VOPEs) (7%), private consulting firms (9%), NGOs (14%) and public sector institutions (10%). The survey focused on some of the following variables: institutions represented; whether specialized training was offered; number of graduates since inception; sources of course material and structure of delivery. Validity was enhanced through triangulating data from the online survey with data from two regional workshops (described in the next section).

Regional workshops

The Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results for Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA), in partnership with the Kenya School of Government (KSG) and the Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), invited targeted individuals from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Public Sector Training Institutions (PSTIs), government agencies and Voluntary Associations for Professional Evaluators (VOPEs) to participate in workshops as part of the scoping exercise towards a collaborative intervention for evaluation education and training across Anglophone Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and PSTIs. This was done as part of a larger program to strengthen national evaluation systems through the Twende Mbele initiative.

One workshop was held at the KSG premises in Nairobi, Kenya for Southern and East African representatives and another at the GIMPA campus in Accra, Ghana for West African representatives. The Nairobi workshop had representatives from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Accra workshop had representatives from Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria. These workshops were held on 1–3 March 2016 and 8–10 March 2016 respectively. The workshops had the following objectives: to create a platform for knowledge sharing and exchange between M&E relevant thought leaders, employers and educators; to explore current offerings in evaluation education and the challenges facing the education and training community in Anglophone Africa; and to identify modalities for future collaboration in M&E education and training in the region. A total of 40 people from 31 institutions attended the two workshops. Workshops were run in a participatory manner to elicit

maximum ideas and feedback from participants and notes were recorded by two separate note takers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Program components

Evaluation education design

The study collected data on 12 countries with higher education and training offerings through both the online survey and workshops (Botswana, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). It was noted that M&E qualifications are very new in West Africa, and possibly most established in Southern Africa. There are, for example, no dedicated postgraduate qualifications in M&E in Ghana. In most cases, West African countries reported that M&E was taught within another postgraduate program as a specialization, e.g. in Management or Public Health. Results indicated that no West African country offered M&E at an undergraduate level, however in excess of twenty different certificate courses were identified, which were being offered in either M&E or some aspect of M&E practice. In contrast, a number of institutions in Southern Africa offered evaluation education at the graduate and postgraduate levels. For example, some of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa offering M&E qualifications were identified as: University of Cape Town in the Faculty of Management Studies; Rhodes University linked to HIV/Aids research; University of Witwatersrand within the School of Governance; University of Johannesburg in the Departments of Sociology and Public Management and Governance; University of Pretoria in the School of Health Systems and Public Health and the Department of Curriculum Studies.

An analysis of the level at which courses/qualifications were offered from the online survey, indicated that 42 per cent of respondents ran certificate courses relevant to program management, monitoring or evaluation; 21 per cent ran Bachelors' degrees; 34 per cent ran Postgraduate diplomas; 3 per cent ran Honors degrees; 50 per cent ran Master's degrees and 26 per cent ran PhD programs. An analysis of the delivery structure indicated that, the postgraduate diploma was offered as full-time course work and/ or research (25%); part-time course work and/or research (8%); block release with course work/ research (33%); distance learning/correspondence (17%) and blended, E-Learning (17%). With regards to the Master's degree, 59 per cent indicated that it was offered as a full-time course work and/ or research; 59 per cent indicated part-time course work and/or research; 12 per cent identified block release

with course work/ research; 6 per cent mentioned research only; and 11 per cent identified blended e-Learning.

During the Accra workshop held on 8–10 March 2016, there were debates on whether M&E qualifications were more appropriate at undergraduate or postgraduate levels. Although there were mixed feelings, it was agreed that tertiary education institutions needed to consider the financial viability of courses before introducing them, as well as the paucity of scholars with the ability to supervise students at various levels. Those who argued for earlier exposure to M&E qualifications indicated that some students were not adequately prepared for the demands of postgraduate level courses in M&E and early introductory courses would stimulate interest and the development of appropriate skills. Others felt a need for students to develop specific discipline knowledge and/or experience (e.g. health, education, agriculture, etc.) before engaging in M&E as a transdisciplinary field. They argued that undergraduate education should be used to build strong foundations in social science research skills to develop critical thinking. These sentiments are echoed by the following quotation by one of the participants:

> "Quite a lot is happening in Nigeria in terms of M&E. Let all disciplines offer basic degrees and then add M&E content and skills. The methodologies borrowed from different disciplines can be problematic. These should be open to improvement and change."

A discussion on respondents' perspectives on core courses as well as electives for a postgraduate diploma and Master's degree in M&E for the West African workshop recorded 27 core modules and 34 electives for the postgraduate diploma and 30 core courses and 31 electives for the Master's degrees. As discussed earlier, such diversity can be attributed to the transdisciplinary nature of evaluation. Generally theory and methods were biased towards feeder disciplines, e.g. health, education, etc. Only six countries had a formal postgraduate degree in M&E namely, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Some countries offered certificate and diploma level courses in M&E, while other countries, like Botswana and Nigeria, offered M&E as a specialization within another degree such as education or health. While it is difficult to say what the priority focus of most M&E-based qualifications is, most respondents indicated that evaluation was an equal focus to other subjects within the universities. Some respondents (21%) highlighted that evaluation had an exclusive focus while 26 per cent indicated that evaluation was the priority subject. The rest indicated that M&E courses were subordinate to the courses they offered.

The "locus" of M&E programs within universities was identified to include faculties of Population Studies, Education, Environment and Development Studies, Public Administration, Policy Studies, Agriculture/Environment and Health Studies. Basheka and Byamugisha (2015,

88) argue that such "homelessness" of evaluation as a discipline poses methodological and operational challenges. Figure 2 shows the departmental location of M&E training centers for the sampled universities.

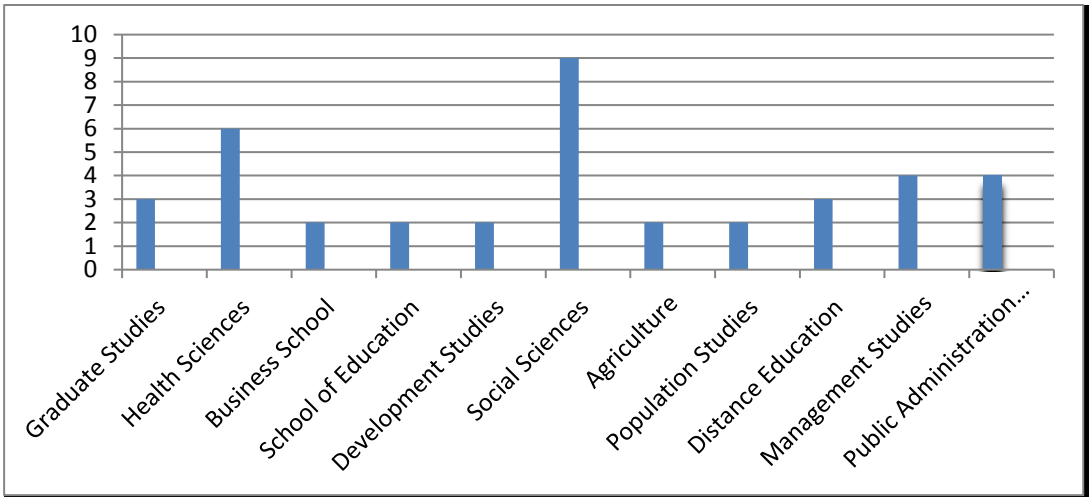

Figure 2: Departmental locations of M&E offerings at selected African Universities (Source: Research results)

The majority of the respondents (66%) indicated that their institutions utilized a combination of open source materials, materials from international development partners and original materials to design their courses and curricula. With regards to the suitability of courses or materials for the African context, 39 per cent of survey respondents indicated that they had structured the courses to meet the needs of Africa and 24 per cent included more than 30 per cent context-specific material and structured the courses to meet the needs of Africa. Conversely, over a quarter (29%) of participants indicated they had not done either of these actions, i.e. not made any attempt to tailor the courses to what they perceived to be the "needs of Africa". Further, workshop participants lamented that there were no African theories of evaluations to shape African evaluation practice and strengthen the emerging discipline in the African context. However, some scholars such as Tarsilla (2014) argue that local evaluation capacity already exists in Africa, which can be harnessed for evaluation capacity development. It therefore remains a challenge for tertiary learning institutions to utilize such knowledge in developing African grounded evaluation education curricula.

Implementation components

Who facilitates learning and under what circumstances?

In general, workshop participants were concerned about the poor quality of trainers and

lecturers and the lack of opportunities for professional development. There was no consistency of the prerequisite training or experience for teaching staff, with some lecturers reportedly teaching at Master's level without a Master's degree or extensive experience in the field. Most organizations had fewer than 5 teaching staff (42% of surveyed respondents), 32% reported that their institutions had between 6–10 staff and 21 per cent reported having more than 10 teaching staff. This scenario was viewed as not congruent with required student output given the large number of reported yearly graduates at some institutions. With regards to the socio-economic and demographic characteristics, most of the students enrolled by the sampled tertiary institutions were mature working professionals with families (58.6%) mostly from the resident countries (see Table 1). Although no specific reasons were given for this scenario, explanations can be explored from social learning theories of career decision-making (see for example: Mehboob, Shah and Bhutto 2012).

Table 1: Characteristics of M&E students

Category of students	Frequency
Mostly international and regional (African) students	0.00%
A mix of national, international and regional (African) students	48.28%
Mostly from resident country but not town/city where learning institution is located	44.83%
Mostly from city/ town where learning institution is located	13.79%
Mostly male	13.79%
Mostly female	13.79%
Mature, working professionals with families	58.62%
Mostly younger than 35	24.14%
Mostly have no previous working experience in monitoring and evaluation	31.03%
Other	20.69%

Source: Research results

Collaborative partnerships in evaluation education

Discussions from the Nairobi workshop held on 1–3 March 2016 indicated a strong appeal for more collaboration between universities, governments and Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluators (VOPEs) in advancing evaluation education. Respondents felt that collaboration should be centered on curriculum development and advocacy for appropriate M&E policies. Respondents felt that, without relevant government policies to guide actions and functions, there will be gaps between the demand and supply of appropriate M&E services. The government and private sector could arrange internships for university students. Respondents felt a need for introspection on the part of universities, VOPEs and government with regards to: quality control; expectations from graduates in line with required competencies for meaningful contribution to evaluation practice; and feedback mechanisms on curricula to enable continuous improvement. Some respondents felt that universities needed to explore

potential partnerships with think tanks in the areas of research, training, policy dialogue and consultancy in evaluation.

Online survey results indicated that only 31 per cent of the institutions collaborated with other organizations to deliver their curriculum. On the other hand, 65 per cent indicated that they were willing to collaborate if opportunities were created. It was indicated that collaborations were mainly with government departments and donor agencies. Collaborations with international universities were highlighted as important e.g., in the case of Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU), a long-term collaboration with a European university resulted in M&E courses being delivered online. There are several other examples of collaboration among African universities that were highlighted, including the Collaboration in Higher Education for Nursing and Midwifery in Africa (CHENMA). This brought together universities from North, South, East and West Africa, including Francophone universities. The consortium of universities accepted the guidelines and principles on which the capacity building project on teaching a Master's degree program would be based (Mogobe, Bruce and Meyer 2009). It was agreed that such ongoing collaborative efforts were important in providing lessons for future collaborative work.

Secondary components

An institutional analysis exercise was conducted during the two workshops to identify secondary components that interact to shape the design of evaluation education in African tertiary institutions. The exercise borrowed from the Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (www.wur.nl) framework, where "institutions" refer to "cultural values, legal frameworks, market mechanisms and political processes" i.e. the "rules of the game". The focus of institutional analysis is normally biased towards formal rules, such as policies and laws but this framework allowed for the interrogation of a broader set of variables.

The context for the analysis was that, evaluation in Africa is a nascent "discipline" or field of study that aims at satisfying the applied side or practical application needs in the field. This ephemeral space has developed as a result of external and internal pushes and pulls, rather than a secure discipline establishing itself in the academic phalanx within any given qualifications framework. The external demands include the real consequences of globalization, the interplay of market forces, the politics of migration and immigration, global development initiatives such as the sustainable development goals (SDGs), the New Public Management movement, the changing political landscape on the African continent and many other forces. The internal pressure(s) relate to institutional and individual desires to adequately respond to the external demands through the provision and acquisition of relevant services and skills.

It was observed that, as more and more governments in Africa take ownership of the governance value that the application of M&E systems can offer, there is a shift to moving the provision of M&E qualifications from the certificate "margins" to the mainstream degree offering. This is evident in countries like South Africa, Uganda and Nigeria. However, the location of M&E courses and qualifications in Faculties of Business Management is an indication of growing private sector utility of M&E skills and expertise. The existence of the many private service providers in Africa, some not necessarily based in Africa, alludes to an opportunistic economic exercise aimed at satisfying emerging needs on the continent.

As a discipline, evaluation can be associated with a number of characteristics. For example, according to workshop participants, M&E is a full-time activity for professionals located within a university or school setting. A profession demands local or national association with codes of professionalization and these are in place in some countries. It also involves prolonged training, special skills and needs high level education; a "professional", according to them, is independent of the content knowledge.

Within the framework of institutions as ways of making meaning of how M&E is perceived and used, discussions indicated that a largely negative contextual "meaning" has been assigned to M&E in relation to government(s) particularly with regard to improving accountability and combating corruption. This has resulted in M&E being poorly financed and used as a punitive tool. In some cases, M&E is widely regarded as a subset of the administration budget, and not seen as an important part of some governments' performance or strategy. Universities or training institutions have also been accused of being too theoretical and delinked from practice or the workplace. The teaching has been considered as being of poor quality, causing a low demand for local professionals. Perhaps because of some of these perceptions, in many instances, governments have ignored local experts in favor of external consultants.

CONCLUSION

This study explored evaluation education in selected tertiary education institutions in Africa. Research findings indicate that evaluation education in tertiary institutions is in its nascent stages in most institutions. This scenario found most tertiary education institutions wanting, in line with the growing demand for knowledge from evaluation in most African countries. This increasing demand has been due mainly to the performance-focused governance and the need for improved accountability by most African governments. There is a growing recognition of the potential role that tertiary education institutions can play in evaluation education. Within this context, a number of imperatives emerged from this study. Firstly, there are debates regarding the entry level for evaluation education within universities, i.e. whether evaluation

qualifications are more appropriate at undergraduate or postgraduate levels. This study indicated mixed feelings backed by various justifications. Such a scenario calls for more deliberations and research into curriculum design informed by evaluation practice as well as regular and structured opportunities for exchange between the "supply" and "demand" sides with respect to evaluations. Some of this is being done, for example by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in South Africa, around bringing together VOPEs, government and HEIs to deliberate on improved professionalization of the evaluation community. Secondly, the curriculum design has varying course content among the various tertiary institutions, influenced by the transdisciplinary nature of the evaluation field. Research findings from this study brought out arguments for specialized evaluation degrees. This brings the need for the interrogation of existing curricula among various tertiary institutions in line with the evaluation demand within various African contexts. Thirdly, it became apparent from this research that evaluation education within tertiary learning institutions is largely driven by theories and methodologies from the north. This further reinforces the current debates on "Made in Africa" evaluations. Lastly, the importance of collaboration became evident, among universities, VOPEs, the private sector and government with regards to curriculum development and policy advocacy to ensure the production of contextually relevant curricula.

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