

KAMPALA EVALUATION TALK

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

HOW CAN TRANS-BOUNDARY / REGIONAL EVALUATIONS BE RELEVANT TO ALL PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES?

To be responsive to different contexts, policies, politics, local aspirations and communities' ways of doing things

John Kockas OGWANG

Independent Development Design and Evaluation Regional Expert

Paper Abstract

Global and Regional Programs, as opposed to discrete national programs, are increasingly important in development programming. It is recognized that greater benefits, efficiency and effectiveness can be achieved through a regional approach to channelling development assistance, on account of reduced delivery costs, a common approach, etc., among Development Partners, and on account of the increased significance of regional economic blocks for recipient countries to create larger markets, better trade, negotiating power, etc. Flexible program designs are necessary for the responsiveness and relevance of regional interventions, which usually entail setting up a new organization at Regional Level with a governance structure and management unit for implementation. Setting up multi-country projects take time and implementation pace is different in each country. The varied Political, Policy, Financial and Regulatory landscapes and risks of each of the countries involved greatly affect the levels of implementation. Usually a large body of professionals from across the region are collectively engaged in implementation, and bringing these together can be time consuming and costly, and yet information and knowledge sharing and dissemination is one of the common objectives of regional interventions.

The evolving evaluation approaches, designs, practices and methods need to recognize these variations and thus the special complexity in evaluating regional programs as over-arching regional interventions, rather than as discreet country projects. The realities on the ground – particularly in Africa – are that the countries receiving development assistance do not have much convergence. While the assessment of the **contribution** of a specific development intervention observed during impact evaluation may pose less difficulty, **attributing** impact at community/grassroots level – or even a particular country level – to a specific regional intervention can be daunting when dealing with multifaceted countries each with multifaceted groups, communities, and a multitude of often overlapping development programs, donors, target groups and other key stakeholders.

Recognition that multiple and contextually diverse complex problems do not have generalizable solutions brings in the need for multiple solutions. This paper titled; ***“how can trans-boundary / regional evaluations be relevant to all participating countries? – Being responsive to different contexts, policies, politics, local aspirations and communities' ways of doing things”*** is meant to stimulate increased “regional” thinking in evaluation design.