PROGRAM EVALUATION FOR PUBLIC AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. BASIC CONCEPTS

Summary: *Evaluation of projects and programs in the non-governmental field is a specific stage, extremely useful in planning and management, a research technique and a tool successfully used by responsible with NGO and public institutions' management, the coordination of projects and programs supported from public or private funds. NGO managers, program directors and coordinators of projects use various evaluation models to notify, in due time, the effects of interventions they implement or intend to implement. The aim is to seize and to counteract the unwanted effects for the groups of people, communities and society and to encourage the positive elements of programs and projects.*

Key concepts: *evaluation, NGO management, program, project, monitoring, audit, relevance, efficiency, efectiveness, sustainability, impact*

Evaluation study is relatively new, especially in Romania. It started as a practice field and became a recognized discipline of scientific research since 1960. During its evolution as a scientific domain, there were a series of disputes over terminology, methodology and ethics of evaluation. In 2004, Fitzpatrick, Sanders and Worthern have identified nearly 60 models published between 1960 and 1990 (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and

Worthen, 2004). 1965 meant the start of massive U.S. programs to combat poverty (War on Poverty - the general name of the set of programs) (Sorin Dan Sandor, 2005: 73).

Great Society. Watts riots. War against poverty

A package of reforms in education, health, social welfare and environmental protection were part of President Johnson's plan to rebuild America as a Great Society (The Great Society). Initially, it has the full support of public opinion. Great Society to represent the most comprehensive reform of the New Deal promoted by Ronald Reagan. In 1960, despite the climate of prosperity, almost a quarter of American families lived below the poverty line. Whole regions have not reached economic prosperity in the postwar period. Moreover, technological developments in the industry leave jobless people unprepared. In 1964, 44% of people over 65 had no health insurance. The poor state of health with age due to their automatic entry cause among the poor. In fact, more than one in three Americans under 65 lived below the poverty line. Therefore, President Johnson held that "the war against poverty" (War on Poverty) should occupy the center of concerns for building large companies. A significant impetus to initiate war against poverty have been the Watts' riots. Riots in Watts (Watts' Riots) were a series of large-scale civil conflict, which erupted in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, in the south of the United States of America. They started in 11 August 1965 and lasted six days. In the end, 34 people were killed, 1100 injured, 4000

personnel were arrested, 600 buildings were burned and there were about 100 million dollars damage. Most of the damage were recorded for businesses that have caused resentment in the neighborhood due to perceived social injustices. Homes were not attacked, but took some heat because of proximity to other buildings on fire. A government commission was appointed to investigate the riots. The main cause has been established as unemployment, poor schools and other inferior living conditions.

Costs caused by the war in Vietnam, with the costs of reform programs have resulted in greater pressure on the U.S. economy. With the decline in popularity of the war in Vietnam, President Johnson lost his political capital necessary to continue reforms.

Critics claim that the Great Society reform programs had effects far beyond the expected, if not reverse, despite the large public investments. There were created only new bureaucratic systems that have swallowed money without producing results. The best example is circulated welfare reform that has produced a fragmented city, with the most harmful consequences. It was responsible for creating welfare dependency among the poor, to create vicious circles of poverty.

Large sums of money were invested to eradicate social problems, but desired results were still not present. It was concluded that there was not enough money to solve all problems. It was also noted that regarding the problems faced by communities, money is not the only problem. Evaluation of programs launched by assuming these two constraints (Michael Quinn Patton, 1997) by the budgeting process-Programming

Planning Budgeting System (PPBS), which encourage monitoring and evaluation. Public opinion has become increasingly cautious, seeking evidence for the success of programs that would be supported by public money. In these circumstances, evaluation experienced a real boom, the number considered essential for the success of a program dramatically increased.

As anticipated (Chelimski, Shadish, 1997) evaluation methodology is continually diversifying, beyond national borders, and is extremely useful in a broad range of growing concerns.

Raw material for program evaluation

The raw material of evaluation consists in projects, programs and public policies, activities and strategies, etc. Project level is the reference evaluation level. A project is conceived as an organized effort to implement an idea. Of course, we mean in this particular study the socio-economic development projects. Key elements of a project include: goals, objectives, actors (initiators, direct and indirect beneficiaries, donors, etc.), activities, timing, resources and multiplier effects. Projects may be initiated and implemented by various entities including: government institutions, NGOs and even companies in the private sphere. Usually projects are implementing programs or specific objectives of programs. The program has the degree of generality higher than the project, but respects a similar structure. Implementation of a program is achieved through several projects, detailing and implementing one or more of the

objectives of the program. Public policy is the drive with the highest degree of generality, corresponding to a strategic action in a particular field. As an example, building administrative capacity of public administration in Romania is a specific public policy. A program corresponding to this policy is the Modernization of Local Public Administration. One of the projects implementing this program is Program Evaluation in Public Administration. The project is applied at the level of municipalities and apply an objective of the program: increased accountability for spending public money. Programs and projects can be funded by institutions of central and local government, international organizations (EU, World Bank, etc..), nonprofit organizations and other entities. Usually, the sponsor is interested in project results, evaluation of proposed objectives. In many cases, public institutions are co-financing partners in development projects that affect groups of people, communities and the whole society. Furthermore, good management involves organizing public institutions work on a project basis, to be more easily managed, improved, monitored, evaluated and controlled. This trend is supported and encouraged throughout the European Union. Need assessment in the administrative system is growing. Public administration reform and administrative capacity development requires the development of evaluation capacity. This can be achieved by creating a legal framework, the institutional capacity and human resource necessary for evaluation issues.

Definitions of evaluation

Throughout its evolution, evaluation has received many definitions. A summary of the different dictionary definitions for evaluation reveals some key terms: determining merit, value, estimation, appreciation, etc.. Evaluation of projects or programs is closely related to the meaning of those terms. The assessment definitions also appear as a constant number of elements of the methodology.
In his book on "Analysis and research in public administration", Dan Sandor describes synthetic evaluation programs that relate to a systematic analysis to see how well projects and programs were implemented as intended and achieved their objectives.

European Commission proposes five criteria relevant to the evaluation: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. On this basis, we define evaluation as the process by which, using methods and instruments, we can measure the degree to which project objectives and results were relevant, economic resources are consumed to achieve the objectives, weather the project is likely to continue after funding ends, the extent to which activities reach their target group and whether their impact is felt long after the implementation process ends.

The key to a correct understanding the difference between systematic and continuous in evaluation of the resulting difference between evaluation and (sequential- conducted systematic but in certain moments in the life of a program) and monitoring (continuous data collection during the implementation of a program). "The term evaluation refers to the

collection, analysis and reporting on information that can be used to change attitudes and improve a project or program." (Allum, 2000: 3)

Summarizing, we emphasize the following key elements of assessment:

- Assessment is a useful tool in management policies, programs and projects;
- It involves judgments based on criteria;

- Assessment is useful in any stages of developing a program: In the design stage, before implementing a program (ex-ante); During the implementation of a program (interim); After implementation (ex-post).

- Assessment is an explanatory process: based on some questions for which answers are found;

- It is more comprehensive than monitoring;

- Evaluation involves a systematic and scientific analysis (collecting data, analyzing them, comparing them based on certain criteria);

- Assessment is based on granting information and explanations about the program assessed for decision-makers that can lead to alteration of design or modification of the implementation process. Such decisions may concern the continuation, modification or end of the program.

According to one of the classical authors in the evaluation field, Michael Quinn Patton, assessment is the systematic collection of information about activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs in order to be used to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness and to make decisions appropriate in connection with the programs "(Michael Quinn Patton, 1997: 23). This definition, if not understood properly can cause confusion. The key to a correct understanding is the correct understanding of the difference between systematic and continuous that has been explained before.

To understand what evaluation is, one need to distinguish between evaluation or assessment and other terms sometimes incorrectly used as interchangeable. Different authorities or agencies give different meanings to the same terms. As we live within the general context of European Union and we refer to the evaluation of programs in the public sphere, we adopt the terminology used by the European Commission in assessing the programs.

Monitoring

Monitoring refers to quantify the project or program implementation results in real time throughout the development of objectives, resource consumption, reaching the target group, systematic quantification of changes arising from implementation of the program or project. As a result of thr monitoring process, one can permanently seize the input – output report, income, expenses, planned activities, activities conducted,

proposed target group, reached target group, recording any discrepancies. Assessment explains why these discrepancies exist (if any). Monitoring is descriptive, while evaluation is explanatory. The link between monitoring and evaluation is very strong. Evaluation cannot be done (or can be performed extremely difficult), if there is no coherent monitoring system. This usually involves a set of indicators and a monitoring plan. Specific resources should be allocated the monitoring process. Usually, human resources are mobilized for monitoring project implementation. But it is possible, especially for large projects, that the monitoring activity to be performed by qualified personnel from outside the project team.

Audit

The audit is a review of the financial provisions of a project and the extent to which these criteria are met in accordance with legal and technical requirements. European Commission auditors and agents assigned to the audit period a much wider range of meanings: verify project need, the extent to which project or program activities and results justify the financial investment, the existence and visibility in place of a plus-value generated by the project or program (Hughes, 2000: 3).

Evaluation

Evaluation is a process by which to measure program performance and identify solutions to existing problems. More specifically, the assessment may be, among others, to analyze the results of a program to compare its costs, to help authorities respond to the citizens for their actions to help

the allocation of resources and help improve their programs.

Data derived from an assessment are valuable for improving program implementation, as well as the decision-making. The effectiveness of projects and programs is determined by the answers one gives to the following questions: What works?, For whom? and Under what circumstances? The assessment also supports the planning of future activities, the distribution of human and financial resources, etc.

Evaluation Criteria

What does the evaluation team measure? The answer is simple: the evaluation criteria. The EU Commission approach (Tavistock Institute et all, The Evaluation of Socio-Economic Development: The GUIDE, 2003) is based on five main criteria:

- Relevance

- Effectiveness

- Efficiency

- Impact

- Sustainability

Relevance refers to the extent that the program meets the real needs of those concerned. It also takes into account any changes in context that may result in some changes in the type of needs that the program should

address or change in their hierarchy. A program that is relevant throughout its implementation take into account these changes in context, has the flexibility needed to replicate as many times as necessary to meet the needs it targets. And a program becomes irrelevant when, during its existence, fails to meet the need that is proposing to cover or cover them incorrectly, reported in the original plan. One aspect of relevance is the need for certain programs to be supported by public money. What are these programs? What are the reasons why the state should be involved in its implementation? Private or nonprofit sector has failed to meet the needs of stakeholders? Why? To find out if a program is relevant and to what extent, the evaluation team must consider all these elements.

Effectiveness considers the extent to which programs achieve their objectives. Also, the degree to which project results meet the needs identified in the design phase is a measure of program effectiveness.

Efficiency takes into account an additional, essential element in the existence projects and programs: the financial issue. Moreover, efficiency takes into account the following aspects:

• Could be obtained the same results, in the same circumstances, with fewer resources?
• Unit costs are too high?

• Even if goals are met, is the project / program too expensive to be continued?

The net **impact** is the effect produced exclusively by a program. Because of the nmerous external variables distorting the impact of a project, is difficult to calculate accurately the net impacts. It is difficult to differentiate the effect derived exclusively from a program in an extremely complex socio-economic context. However, using appropriate methods it is possible to give the answer to the following questions, with an assumed margin of error:

• What changes have resulted from the program?

• Are there other benefits of the program, along with the expected ones?
Another sense of the impact considers the long-term effects of a program.

Sustainability refers to the continuity of the program after withdrawal of funding from the original source.

• The effects of programs continue after the end of the implementation?
• Can there be identified alternative sources of funding?

Sustainability gives, along with other criteria to measure performance of a project or program.

Besides these criteria, others can be mentioned just as important for assessing program performance. First, we refer to equity and community involvement.
Equity refers to issues such as access to services provided by the project regardless of age, gender, social and material conditions. Usually projects are promoted to discourage discrimination of any kind.

Community participation is another criterion to be taken into account in evaluating certain projects.

All these criteria, along with others that we have not mentioned, but can be just as important, are used in evaluation process.

In addition to consideration of as many of the criteria listed, the evaluation should be analytical, systematic, reliable, focused on issues or users, depending on the model used for evaluation.

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CHAPTER II. EVALUATION TYPES AND SYSTEMS

Summary: *There are many classification criteria that can be used in order to present the types of evaluation: the objectives of the assessment, the time when the evaluation takes place during the life of a program, after the unit of analysis, the position of the evaluation team members, etc.*

Key concepts: *formative and sumative evaluation, ex-ante, interim and ex-post evaluation, reactive and pre-determined evaluation*

From the perspective of the objectives of the assessment:

Formative evaluation is usually done during the implementation in order to analyze the situation and to facilitate program improvement.
This terminology was first used by Michael Scriven (Scriven,1991), after being taken from all relevant sources in the field.

Summative evaluation is used for analyzing the results at the end of the program or at the end of a stage in the development of the program in order to determine program performance and to estimate its progress in reaching the objectives.
Robert Stake offers an extremely suggestive definition of summative and formative assessment: "When the cook tastes the soup, it is formative assessment, and when the guests taste the soup it is summative evaluation" (Stake, 2003: 52).

Robert Stake, evaluator of educational programs in the United States of America in the '60s and '70s, is one of the first advocates of the use of qualitative methods in evaluating social programs. Stake perceives evaluation as a service and as a reflection of values.

Shadish, Cook and Levinton consider that programs should be evaluated selectively, and defines evaluation as "an approach that sacrifices some accuracy in the hope that selection would increase the value of discovery for people outside and within the programs" (Shadish Jr., Cook, Leviton 1999: 278).

From the perspective of methodological flexibility: Pre-determined and reactive assessment

Robert Stake differentiate between pre-determined assessment recognized by: focus on objectives, using objective tests, use of standards held by program managers in designing the research and evaluation reports and reactive type, characterized by the following elements:

• Put more emphasis on program activities rather than his intentions.
• Focus on the public needs.

• Perspectives on the value of actors are taken into account in reference to program failures and successes.

The term "reactive" (derived from the relationship stimulus - response) promotes the idea of a methodologically flexible evaluation process. One of the main disadvantages of pre-assessment is that researchers (traditional quantitative) focuses on variables that can not be controlled by management, thereby losing utility. Standardized indicators generated by initial evaluation design proved often less relevant than the indicators that are built spontaneously in the program (by contact with side players, or according to further discussions that were pursuing an activity, etc.).

Some key features are specific to responsive assessment: focus on observation and flexibility, preference for qualitative methods and focus on improving local practices.
Reactive evaluation has several advantages and disadvantages. Benefits include: highlighting important variables of the program, change the role of those involved in a program to encourage increased local control. However, "pre-defined assessment should be preferred to reactive evaluation when it is important to know whether certain goals have been

met, certain promises were kept and the hypotheses to be investigated have been tested. We can expect ... predetermined measurements are more objective and reliable." (Shadish Jr., Cook, Leviton 1999: 283) In conclusion, both types should be considered depending on the methodological flexibility needed.

Reactive evaluation has a number of common features with formative assessment, while pre-defined evaluation partly overlaps summative evaluation.

Characterized by some critics as being "superficially attractive" (Shadish Jr., Cook, Leviton 1999: 317), reactive-predefined distinction remains valid in theory because it highlights certain aspects of the evaluation, that remain otherwise in the shadow: the importance of methodological flexibility usefulness of qualitative methods, the emphasis should be placed on activities, not only on targets etc. Both are considered relevant and useful to the public.

3. According to the time of evaluation:

- Ex-ante evaluation

- Interim evaluation

- Ex-post evaluation

Ex-ante evaluation

Ex-ante evaluation (Tavistock Institute, 2003: i, ii) is an assessment made in the first stage of a program or project cycle (planning and design

phase), before being implemented. Ex-ante requires a SWAT analysis, in which will be considered the defining characteristics of the locality, region, state that implements the project, a needs analysis and some simulations of socio-economic effects. This assessment ensures relevance and coherence of the program depending on context.

If it must be selected a program to be implemented first from several programs, which will be selected by tender, the ex-ante evaluation helps determine project selection criteria and the selection of projects to be financed. Also the new status of Romania as an EU member state should be in accordance to specific compliance regulations and EU standards in providing quality goods and services.

Interim evaluation

Interim evaluation is performed in the second stage of a project or program cycle: during implementation. The purpose of this assessment is to improve the design and the implementation of a project or program. Interim evaluation has in common with formative assessment several elements: the progress of the objectives until the assessment, how well the schedule and the budget has been respected, utilization of other resources, etc. By comparison with the initial situation, in the interim evaluation can be highlighted certain relevant changes in the socio-economic context that can affect the program. Interim evaluation use information from monitoring and from the ex-ante assessments. Usually interim evaluation involves peer review of the interim results of the project, but it is recommended as well a detailed analyze of the likely impact that has not

yet had time to manifest, but is inherent. Based on the findings, peer can improve both design and program management and any predictable negative impacts can be prevented.

Ex-post evaluation

Ex-post evaluation is an analysis of the entire program considered primarily from the perspective of comparison to the initial results and in terms of impact. There are many common elements of ex-post evaluation and summative evaluation. In addition to results and impact analysis, the ex-post can use the following methods: benchmarking, cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness, process analysis and multi-attribute analysis.

The purpose of ex-post is multiple: quantifying the intentional or non-intentional results and effects of a program, qualitative and quantitative analysis of performance, learning lessons to improve future management programs, evaluate program performance in comparison with the performance of other similar programs, etc.

From the perspective of the position of the evaluation team members

From the perspective of the position of the evaluation team members there are two basic types of evaluation:

- Internal evaluation

- External evaluation

Internal evaluation is an evaluation performed by the personnel implementing the program within the institution. Usually, the implementing institution has qualified staff and data necessary for the evaluation. However, in Romania, there are many institutions (if we consider the public sector) or organizations (if we take into account the non-profit) that do not have the internal evaluation capacity (people not specialized in evaluation), although there are experts in the various sectors relevant to the project under evaluation. These institutions will use, even for internal evaluation program evaluation services of outside experts, preferably independent (without any connection with the project team evaluated or with the project).

Purpose of internal evaluation is to provide an analysis from the perspective of implementation team who has access to data easier than any other actor involved (either donor or external evaluator). Therefore, this type of evaluation is extremely rich in data and the evaluation report is very clear and explanatory. Those who have implemented know the best program theory, processes and results and why certain changes were implemented in the initial design, possible reasons for which the original schedule was not met, for the exceeded budget or, conversely, for not having used the resources that have been alocated, along with the distorting elements and what effects have these items on the program.

Internal assessment is very suitable for formative assessment, helping to control quality assessment and develop internal evaluation capacity. Disadvantages of internal evaluation are: lack of sectoral expertise and

lack of independence.

External assessment is the evaluation performed by independent evaluators, usually outside the institution or organization implementing the program or who are among the actors participating in the program. The main advantages of this type of evaluation are independence and potential of a wide range of expertise. External evaluation is especially appropriate for summative assessments. The disadvantages of this type of evaluation are possible pressures that can limit independence, it does not help internal evaluation capacity development and the high costs involved.

Other types of assessment

Besides the types of assessment mentioned above, the literature mentiones other types of assessment as well, including participatory evaluation and assessment based on theory.

In **participatory evaluation**, the evaluator's perspective is on equal footing with the actors involved in the program perspective. The intention is to have an evaluation with conclusions and recommendations relevant and useful for future projects of the actors involved. This type fits with both the summative evaluation and the formative one. Involvement of all participants on equal footing usually brings a significant addition of information in the evaluation process. Participatory evaluation is often presented as a modern assessment and evaluation is presented as opposed

to traditional (Sorin Dan Sandor, 2005: 81)

Evaluation based on the theory is applied by some researchers in the field of addictive substance abuse (Chen, 1990) or evaluating comprehensive community initiatives (Weiss, 1995). This type of evaluation is characterized by the lack of statistical analysis of data, mostly because of their diversity. Therefore, there are used mainly qualitative research methods. Usefulness of this type of evaluation is especially evident in the evaluation of community initiatives whose effects can not be analyzed statistically, but can provide information about the efficacy of this type of initiative. Some researchers (Schorr, Kubisch, 1995) argue that, by combining data about the results of a program with information on the process of project implementation, we can obtain valuable information on the effects of the program and its impact.

Evaluation based on the theory assumes that any social intervention or program is based on a theory about how a particular process, under what conditions will achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness, etc. This theory can be implicit or explicit. Theory of a program is roughly equivalent to its logical model that explains how it works. This evaluation provides many enlightening information on how to implement similar complex programs, indicating risks, key elements and lessons learned during implementation.

Impact assessment. In the analysis of impact there are measured on the one side the net effects of the intervention (net impact) and, on the other, program's or project's effects on medium and long term. The main problem of determining the net impact is differentiating the effects of the program and those due to other causes/variables. The net impact can be

determined both before implementation (estimated impact), during implementation and after. Medium and long term impact can be anticipated prior to implementation and can be calculated during and after implementation. Determining whether the net impact or medium and long term effects, impact assessment can be extremely useful for improving current and future projects' design, to base decisions on continuing or stopping certain initiatives. A comprehensive approach to impact analysis will be presented during the second part of the book.

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CHAPTER III. PROGRAM EVALUATION MODELS

Programs and project evaluation models can be extremely useful in project planning and management. The aim is to set the right questions as soon as possible in order to see in time and deal with the unwanted program effects, as well as to encourage the positive elements of the project impact. In short, different evaluation models are used in order to minimize losses and maximize the benefits of the interventions upon small or large social groups. This chapter introduces some of the most recently used evaluation models.

Key-concepts: *evaluation models, evaluation focused on beneficiaries, on experts or on different stakeholders, realistic evaluation, theory-driven evaluation, utilization-focused evaluation*

The knowledge stage in the area at international level

Presently, the knowledge stage in the area on international level is extremely advanced, in spite of the relatively short time passed since the first systematic approaches in the field have appeared.

The essential contributions come from the academic research, from the non-profit sector and from the international organizations, implementing a series of programs and projects in numerous states and communities (The European Union Commission, The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), The World Bank (WB), The International Monetary Found (IMF), The Organization for Economic Co- operation and Development (OECD), The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) etc.)

Academic research

The research regarding programs and project evaluation models developed extensively in the last years. The design of the evaluation models and the selection of the right evaluation model for a certain project or program became the aim of numerous investigations. This is specific to the classical authors in the field: Michael Quinn Patton, Michel Scriven, Peter H. Rossi. They were joined by an increasing

number of researcher most of them coming from the academic research field: Daniel Stufflebeam, Egon Guba, Yvonna Lincoln, Ernest R. House, Kenneth R. Howe, Hanne Foss Hansen etc.

The toolkit is vast: formative and summative evaluation, evaluation focused on beneficiaries, on experts or on different stakeholders, realistic evaluation, theory- driven evaluation, utilization-focused evaluation are just a few examples.

An evaluation model stipulates the question or the set of questions that a specific evaluation seeks to answer. It also involves a certain methodology to set up the criteria for assessment (Hansen, 2005). The literature on programme evaluation and that on organizational effectiveness offer several typologies of evaluation models. Hansen (2003, 2005) and Scriven (2003) propose some of the most recently appeared and comprehensive typologies. These mainly consists in six different categories of models that are common at some point to other authors as well such as Birkmayer and Weiss (2003). The six categories are: results models, process models, system models, economic models, actor models and programme theory models.

The results models are interelated with summative evaluation and they focus especially on the results of a programme. Among the

subcategories of the results models there are: *goal-attainment model* and *the effects model* . The *goal-attainment model* results are measured according to the goals that have been set. The main question is: Have the set goals been achieved? The *effects model* focuses on consequences of the evaluated program. It is about both the desired and not desired consequences. In this case, the question is: What are the effects of the program? What are the positive and negative consequences of the program?

Process models focus on the processes involved by a program. This is an explanatory model. Process evaluation is done usually concomitent with the implementation phase of the program (in real time), or by historical analyses. The main questions are: How are the the activities implemented? Are there any delays? If so, How are they motivated?

The system model uses a system perspective. What matters here is: input, structure, process and outcome in terms of results. The evaluation consists in comparisons of planned and realized input, structure, process and results or in benchmarking. In this case, the main question is: How has the program functioned as a whole?

The economic models (Cost-efficiency model, Cost-effectiveness

model, Cost- benefit model) are considered related to the system perspective. (Hansen, 2005) The question specific to *cost-efficiency model* is: How is productivity? Is it satisfactory or not? The question connected to the *cost-effectiveness model* is: How satisfactory is the effectiveness? The *cost-benefit model*, focus on utility: How satisfactory is economic utility?

Actor models (Client-oriented model, Stakeholder model, Peer review model), are based on the actors' perspective. The *client-oriented model* focuses on the clients' perspective. Are clients satisfied? *The stakeholder model* focuses on all the relevant stakeholders perspective. Are the different groups of stakeholders satisfied with the program? The *peer review model* focuses on the opinions of professionals. Does the program respond to professional standards?

The programme theory model focuses on assessing the validity of the programme theory on which the given intervention occurs. The target of the programme theory model is to continually improve program theory acording to the changing context. The main questions are: What works as established? What exactly has changed as a consequence of the changing context?

In 1997 Vedung had already depicted evaluation models as being organized into three main classes, very similar to the above-mentioned categories (E. Vedung, 1997). Definitely, there is an increasing number of models proposed by the proffesional literature. Beside the models already presented, the next evaluation models are relevant due both to their actuality and their possibility of being applicable to the Romanian Public Administration.

The CIPP model (Stufflebeam, 2002) - context, input, process, product- focuses on effectiveness and sustenability, metaevaluation and synthesis. Therefore, the starting question: Is the program a success or a failure? Did the program reach the target group? What are the needs that have been satisfied by the program? etc. The evaluation criteria are derived from the aim and the objectives of the program.

The constructivist model promoted by Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln in 2001, (Egon Guba & Yvonna Lincoln, 2001), is based on three fundamental assumptions: ontological, epistemological and methodological. According to this model, the main questions are: Who is going to use the evaluation?, What is the perspective/What are the perspectives of the evaluation? etc. The evaluation criteria are established by agreement by the actors involved in the program.

The qualitative model presented by Michael Q. Patton in 2003, (Michael

Q. Patton, 2003) focuses on the utilization of qualitative methods (observation, individual interview, focus-group, Delphi method) for evaluating programs, especially when it is about finding out more details about the specific program. The questions specific to this evaluation model are naturally of qualitative nature: What was the manner in which the objectives have been accomplished? Why certain objectives have been dropped?

Utilization-focused evaluation model (Michael Q. Patton, 2002) has many similar features with formative evaluation. According to this model, the evaluation process starts together with the design of the project, and ends after its implementation. The focus is on the different utilities given to evaluation by the stakeholders. According to these, more specifically according to the aim and the objectives of the evaluation, the structure of the evaluation takes shape. The main questions are: Who are the users of the evaluation?, What are their objectives? What are the pieces of information they need? etc. The evaluation criteria are established by the users of the evaluation.

International Organizations

The Commission of the European Union, The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), The World Bank (WB), The

International Monetary Found (IMF), The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) etc. use evaluation to guide their investment and intervention projects in different geographical areas and fields of activity.

The World Bank uses evaluation at large scale. With an entire department engaged in evaluation, WB makes such studies for each of the projects it finances. WB experts assess the impact following rigorous methodologies, clearly stated. On the web site of the WB there are presently 134 documents that can be accessed and that contain elements of evaluation. There are made available to the public the methodology, the data collection and their sources, and, selectively, certain evaluation studies organized according to the type of impact and to the country where it has been studied. Numerous evaluation studies are catching the eye due to their diversity of methods and of the projects under investigation. A series of handbooks are being presented, that explain the methodology and processes involved by an evaluation. Among the most significant is Judy Bakers' Evaluating the Impact of Development Projects on Poverty: A Handbook for Practitioners, *Directions in Development*, World Bank, Washington, D.C edited in 2000. In S*ourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies*, World Bank, Washington D.C., appears during the same year *Monitoring and Evaluation* written by Prennushi, G., G. Rubio, and K. Subbarao . An impressing series of articles written by

WB experts among who we can mention James J. Heckman, Jeffrey A. Smith, Nancy Clements, Christopher Taber Grossman, Jean Baldwin Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Anne C. Kubisch and James P. Connell and many others.

The distinctive feature consists in the fact that the vast majority of studies are made on WB projects focused on the fight against poverty. Therefore, considerable stress is placed upon the economic dimension of evaluation. But, from the perspective of the evaluation models, the socio-economic profile of World Bank projects promotes the complementary use of three evaluation models: economic (which focus on the financial input), result models and qualitative model. It is quite natural, considering the mission of the WB is fighting the poverty. There is no major difference between the models use by the World Bank and those proposed and used by the academic community.

Otherwise, there is no major distinction between the tools used by WB and those built by the academic community.

Still, the wide geo-political and cultural area of action is obvious in the methodology used by the WB and especially in the diversity of variables and tools.

Recently, the EU Commission published a guiding catalogue of indicators that should be considered in evaluation. Among these, there are: Social Cohesion (social integration, poverty or extreme poverty dimensions, the risks of poverty or social exclusion, geographical social cohesion, long term unemployment, the accessibility of services of general interest), Employment Quality (occupational health and safety arrangements, the rights of the workers, labor market organization, the balance between personal and professional life, employment opportunities, integration through employment, etc) Social Protection and Social Services (levels of social protection, accessibility etc.), Consumer Interests, Education, Social Capital, Livable Communities, Fundamental Human Rights, etc.

As well on the site of the Commission, there is a Handbook for the implementation of evaluation: www.evalsed.info. This explains, step-by- step, the procedure that must be used for an evaluation study within the European Union. Still it must be particularized for each country and cannot be applied as such. The evaluation models promoted by the European Union Commission are mixed, at the intersection between economic model (which focus on the financial input), result models and qualitative model.

The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

The Non-Governmental Organizations, especially the grant makers are

usually interested in evaluation. The main donors developed their own toolkit for evaluation and use their own models. For instance, Ford Foundation, USAID, Rockefeller as well as others have made public their instruments for evaluation, accompanied by numerous case-studies. One of the goals is, for sure, the accountability of their actions. It is worth mentioning though, that their evaluation toolkit is in perfect agreement with the methodology specific to the academic research and to international organizations. Certainly, the evaluation models and the research methods and techniques for social sciences need not to be reinvented. But their application is in accordance to the interests of the financing entities and to the cultural background of the researchers who conceive the instrument and effectively realize the research.

The present knowledge stage in Romania

Regarding the program evaluation models, the Romanian scientific literature is relatively scarce. There are studies regarding the evaluation models, but most often they refer to technical evaluation, strictly economic evaluation (such as the country risk indicators) or specific to other fields (constructions, environmental protection, software etc.) and not program evaluation, or program evaluation financed or co- financed from public money: country risk evaluation models, evaluation models for the safety of the buildings, evaluation models for the polluting agents dispersion into the atmosphere,

evaluation models for the cost of software testing, etc.

Trends

Worldwide, the tendency is to use more than one evaluation model at a time (Hansen, 2005:448). But they have to be carefully chosen and adjusted. Evaluation studies and reports have to answer to more and more questions regarding the process and the results of the projects; it is of interest at the same time economic effects and social impact effects. Especially in the case of the projects financed from public money the tendancy is to use evaluation models that focus on results and models that focus on the beneficiaries' (citizens') perspective. To accomplish this, it is necessary the use of some evaluation models focused both on results and on the actors involved. These are complex models generated by the selection analysis and synthesis of simple evaluation models.

The evaluation models that are used in order to evaluate a certain program must fit the evaluation objectives, the project development stage. On the other hand, the evaluation methods and the research methods should be carefully chosen, in perfect agreement with the evaluation models and the evaluation objectives.

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The present chapter aims at presenting the logic behind Counterfactual Impact Evaluation (CIE). It starts with a semantic disclosure, continuing with asserting the the main counterfactual theories and their application in the Program Evaluation field and ends with the construction of a Counterfactual Evaluation Model. The chapter intends to present, in an introductory manner, some of the possible and probable uses of the CEM. The main question is: does it make any sense to go counter to the facts in Program Evaluation?

Key-concepts: *counter factual evaluation, program evaluation, causal models*

Introduction

The new public management theories encourage strategic abilities and functionalities. “Limiting public management to the execution function is a continuation of the old dichotomy (legal/managerial approach) and is not in line with the new public management approach seen in all western countries” (Mora, Ţiclău, 2008: 96). This strategic perspective can be achieved in the presence of an accurate image of actions, interventions, programs and projects. We refer mainly to a clear image of their short-, medium- and long-time effects. This accuracy is possible if program evaluation tools are being used systematically. One of the most dynamic evaluation model is the counterfactual one. It is fit to the new public management paradigm from the perspective of its complexity and dynamism. “Even though management and leadership have a common basis and share key characteristics there are significant differences that make a managers and leaders job different”. (Hinţea, Mora, Ţiclău, 2009: 90) Part of the common basis is the use of program evaluation and of the counterfactual evaluation, particularly.

According to The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, *counterfactual* is an adjective meaning “Running contrary to the facts”. More explicitly, Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged reveals for the same adjective a meaning related to Philosophy or Logic “expressing what has not happened but could, would, or might under differing conditions”. The most relevant synonyms are: *contrary to fact* and *conditional*. The concept has been successfully

imported in the field of Program Evaluation through the Counterfactual Impact Evaluation (CIE). CIE mainly refers to an evaluation methodology that compares the effects of a program or of an intervention to the estimated effects of a scenario where the program and intervention are not present.

Counterfactual Theories

There are several main theories explaining the concept of *counterfactual*. Most of them have their basis in Philosophy.

The first attempts

The first explicit definition of causation in terms of counterfactuals was formulated as early as 1748 by Hume. He refers to counterfactuals when defining cause and effect relationships: "We may define a cause to be *an object followed by another, and where all the objects, similar to the first, are followed by objects similar to the second*. Or, in other words, *where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed*." (1748, Section VII). This early definition is a synthesis of what is meant nowadays by counterfactual, in Program Evaluation as well as in other fields of research and study. But, few empiricists have tried to explain causation via counterfactuals mainly because they have felt mainly uncertainty and subjectivity. A counterfactual statement of the form "If it had been the case that A, it would have been the case that *C*" is true if and only if there is an auxiliary set *S* of true statements consistent with the antecedent *A*, such that the members of *S*, when conjoined with *A*, imply the consequent *C*. The set *S* generated much controversy. (Goodman

1947.) Most empiricists agreed that *S* would have to include statements of laws of nature, while some thought that it would have to include statements of singular causation. (Menzies, 2009)

Rigorous counterfactual analyses

The late 1960's brings the first rigorous counterfactual analyses. (Lyon 1967) This is a fruitful decade for the research and practice of program evaluation as well. For this timeline it is relevant especially the contribution of J. L. Mackie with his book "*The Cement of the Universe*" (1974). Mackie brings into attention the concept of causation as intrinsically related to the background conditions.

Beginning with the early 1970s, David Lewis elaborates on the counterfactual theory of causation. In 1986 he collects all relevant articles in "*Philosophical Papers: Volume II*" published at Oxford University Press.

The original theory of David Lewis, published in 1973, directly approaches, among other subjects of great interest for the counterfactual impact evaluation the counterfactual and casual dependence, the asymmetry of casual dependence and chancy causation. (Lewis 1973a and 1973b).

Comparative similarity between worlds

Comparative similarity between worlds (Lewis 1973a) stands as the central concept in the worlds semantics Lewis uses in explaining the

counterfactual causality. According to this theory, one world A is said to be *closer to actuality* than world B if the first resembles the actual world more than the second does. Consequently, any two worlds can be ordered with respect to their closeness to the actual world, while the actual world is closest to actuality, resembling itself more than any other world resembles it.

The causal dependence between events

The causal dependence between events plays a central role in Lewis's 1973 theory. Schematically expressed, event number 1(E1) and event number 2 (E2) are two separate possible events; E1 is the cause for E2 if and only if when E1 occurs, E2 occurs as well and if when E1 does not occur, E2 does not occur either.

In his theories, Lewis conceives "a cause as something that makes a difference, and the difference it makes must be a difference from what would have happened without it. Had it been absent, its effects — some of them, at least, and usually all — would have been absent as well." (1973b, p.161)

Counterfactual in Program Evaluation. Towards Building a Counterfactual Evaluation Model

In the field of Program Evaluation, the counterfactual theories and analysis has been adopted in the Impact Assessment area.

Impact assessment refers mainly to (1) the effects of programs and projects on medium and long term and (2) the net effects of programs and projects as distinct from the effects of other factors, variables or events.

Whatever type of impact we may choose to measure, social, economic or environmental, related to a program, we have to assess effects. And effects are naturally related to causes. That is why, counterfactual analysis is fit for impact assessments. In this context the counterfactual analysis becomes a method of evaluation. Its instruments are the diverse scenarios that can be built as "different worlds".

In Program Evaluation in general and in Impact Assessments in particular we may use the images of different worlds as scenarios to compare.

The Counterfactual method of evaluation is infinitely generous in instruments and options from this standpoint. On the one hand we have the real world, scenario number 0 (S0), and on the other hand, we may have an infinite number of imaginary scenarios S1, S2, S3 ...Sn, many of which are possible and some of which are even probable. The great refinement of the counterfactual method is to be able to distinguish first between the impossible and the possible, and then, between the possible and the probable. Once this distinction is completed, the counterfactual method of evaluation can be a valuable information source for the funding entities, for the implementers and for the (potential) beneficiaries of programs and projects. The necessary distinctions are to be made in close relationship to the background and to other similar projects and programs.

What is more, derived from the counterfactual theories, not only a method, but even an evaluation model can be recognized. As we have shown in another article, (Gârboan, 2008: 45), an evaluation model stipulates the question or the set of questions that a specific evaluation seeks to answer. It also involves a certain methodology to set up the criteria for assessment (Hansen, 2005). The literature on programs' evaluation and that on organizational effectiveness offer several typologies of evaluation models. Hansen (2003, 2005) and Scriven (2003) propose some of the most recently appeared and comprehensive typologies. These mainly consists in six different categories of models that are common at some point to other authors as well such as Birkmayer and Weiss (2003). The six categories are: results models, process models, system models, economic models, actor models and program theory models. The counterfactual evaluation model is part of the seventh category of evaluation models: the causation models. These derive from causation theories in philosophy and logic. The counterfactual model relays on the counterfactual causation theories of which we have already mentioned Lewis's. The main set of questions to which an evaluation done in the framework of the counterfactual model is supposed to answer are related to the following: are the results of the program, project or intervention significantly different from the results of the non-intervention? What are the most plausible/probable scenarios in the situation of the non-intervention? Is there any possibility to deduce and approximately measure their results? What are the advantages and the disadvantages of each probable scenario (for intervention and non-intervention)? Which is the most desirable scenario? Which is the worst-

case scenario? Where does the actual reality scenario situates on a continuum between worst-case and best-case scenario?
The evaluation criteria are set within the counterfactual model by all the participants in the evaluation process: evaluator and experts from different fields.

There are several methods to approximate the counterfactual and the consequences of every scenario: (i) comparing the effects observed on beneficiaries with those observed on *non*-beneficiaries; or (ii) using the outcome observed for beneficiaries *before* they are exposed to the intervention, (ii) logic modeling methods and bench marking . However, caution must be used in *interpreting* these differences as the "effect" of the intervention.

The building of a CEM starts from finding a feasible way to approximate the effects of counterfactual scenarios. Then, CEM involves the building of counterfactual scenarios and analyzing them. It ends with the writing of the evaluation report.

In the present chapter we will focus on the existing methods of approximating the effects of counterfactual scenarios in line with the classical experiment methodology: comparing the effects of an intervention observed on beneficiaries with those observed on *non*-beneficiaries.

The main difficulty of this method would be the correct selection of the two groups: the beneficiaries and the non-beneficiaries. The two groups should be as similar as possible. As there is a complex variable system, a number of steps should be followed to ensure the comparability:

The first step: Make a list of all possible variables relevant for the evaluation. There are going to be two sets of relevant variables: set number 1-socio-demographic variables-that helps in building the comparison group/groups and set number 2-program/intervention comparison variables-characteristics specific to the program or intervention relevant for measuring its results and impacts.

The second step: Order the variables in the two sets according to their relation to the investigated program or intervention. A strong relation would recommend the variable for the top of the list, while a weak relation would send the variable to the end of the list.

The third step: Make a list of the beneficiaries or of the sample of beneficiaries specifying for each of them the values of the relevant characteristics (variables)for comparison, using the set number one of variables.

The forth step: Identify a group or several groups of non-beneficiaries as similar as possible to the group of beneficiaries. The greater the number of non-beneficiary groups, the more counterfactual scenarios can be determined and the greater the probability of reaching relevant conclusions in the evaluation process.

The fifth step: collect the data necessary to compare the values of the second set of variables for the group of beneficiaries and the group/groups of non-beneficiaries. For this step, an important concept should be

considered: globalization. During this process, globalization can intervene as an important data source or as a wedge that stimulates change (Loessner, Hinţea, and 2005:58). The impact of globalization can be small or large according to the type and specificity of the investigated intervention and of the constructed scenario. The variety of comparable outcomes „can be attributed to characteristics of local institutions and the adaptability and relative entrepreneurial character of their managements" (Loessner, Hinţea, 2005:65). In collecting the necessary data an increasing role can be attributed to the narrowing of the digital divide. In an article presenting data from a research that tries to measure the level of the digital divide existing in Romania, Dan Şandor reveals that: digital divide is continually narrowing in terms of access to technology and communication, and also in terms of computer literacy (Şandor, 2006: 154). This means increased acces to the necessary data for counterfactual program evaluation as well.

These five steps are the first five steps in the process of building a counterfactual evaluation model. To be complete, the model should also involve the following steps:

The sixth step: scenario-building-describe the actual reality scenario and the counterfactual scenarios based on the data collection realized at step number 5.

The seventh step: scenario-analysis. The analysis of the scenarios built at step number six. The analysis is based on the two sets of variables. According to the scenarios built, the variable systems can be completed.

The eight step: writing the evaluation report.

Practical use of CEM:

The CEM can be used for the evaluation of programs, projects and interventions of socio-economic developments in all stages of implementation.

It can be of great help in assessing the quality of activities, programs and projects. CEM logic could also be applied in the assessment the effects of using other evaluation models, such as *Total Quality Management* (TQM). „TQM is comprised of a set of principles, tools, and procedures that help accomplish the mission of the organization both from a qualitative and quantitative standpoint. TQM is a managerial philosophy that is accomplished within the framework of a managerial system that promotes a continuous improvement with regard to all the activities within an organization. The process of continuous improvement involves three key dimensions: focus on the client; betterment of processes; and total involvement" (Şandor, 2005: 88). CEM could be used in finding the extent and the nature of TQM application impacts.

Another possible use of CEM is to anticipate the desirable organizational change. "The mission of any organizational change process is to be successful (without successful results change processes are simply a waste of the organizations resources), meaning reaching the goal set by the change process, using resources as efficient as possible and perceiving the

whole process as positive as possible by the entire organization" (Baba, Cherecheş, Ţiclău, Mora, 2009a). What is more, CEM could also assess the effects of organizational change.

CEM should be a used in the governance process as well. " Governments have been under increasing pressure to change the way they interact with citizens, open up and increase access to services provided" (Baba, Cherecheş, Ţiclău, Mora, 2009b) CEM can be perceived as a driver of change, inspiring governments to find increasingly better scenarios in facing citizens' requests.

Another possible use of CEM is in the process of designing and creating new public structures such as those necessary for public marketing. As Ţiclău, Mora, Ţigănaş and Bacali argue, creating the structure in the public field is the condition for every new paradigm to be implemented "because we are talking about public administration, for a successful implementation of public marketing the necessary organizational structures needs to be created. Without a marketing bureau/department on the organizational chart no funding can be allocated legally, thus even being open and willing to carry out marketing activities public managers have to rely on financial "tricks" in order to fund these activities. (Ţiclău, Mora, Ţigănaş and Bacali, 2010). The use of countefactual logic in the design of the new structures refers to the conception of several scenarios of the creation and evolution of the structure, based on the available data and experience.

The main advantage of using this CEM is its comprehensive approach. It helps answering an extremely relevant question for every program: does it make a difference? It contribute to estimating casual effects of programs, projects and interventions, measuring intended and unintended effects, for different actors and in diverse circumstances.

In order to add to the accuracy of the analysis, and to the benefits of the counterfactual method of evaluation, step number 6 can be further developed and enriched with step 6.1: building the best case scenario and the worst-case scenario. This artifice will help creating a continuum an which all the other scenarios can find a place. What is more important is that on this continuum, we can establish the *average treatment effect,* especially because *is the basis for cost effectiveness calculations.* (White, 2009)

Limitations and pitfalls

One of the main limitations is the subjectivity of the model. This is because the different scenarios compared with the actual reality are constructed in a hypothetical manner. Subjectivity can be limited to a certain degree by using reality-based data from different program evaluations or case-studies.

But as Stryczynski mentions, even with these data, collected from reality, we need to work with caution: “We will need our more qualitative, "traditional" evaluation techniques to understand to which interventions

these findings can be transferred and what determines the degree of transferability*" (*Stryczynski, 2009*).*

Another important limitation of the counterfactual model is the lack of data. Especially in countries without a well-established evaluation culture and capacity such as Romania (Malan, 2004, Curley, Perianu, 2006, Gârboan, Şandor, 2007), the lack of data from other evaluations or from other case-studies related to programs or projects, could be a pitfall in the way of using counterfactual evaluation model. Data from other countries can be used only with great care, if the situations are comparable from different relevant perspectives.

Conclusions

The CEM offeres a multymethod toolkit to perform program evaluation. It involves the qualitative and quantitative paradigm, experimental and non-experemental evaluation designs. A comprehensive and cultural effort is needed for a change to occur at all levels of the public administration. (Mora, Ţiclău, 2008: 96) This effort can be made even more fruitful by using the counterfactual evaluation model. Recent evaluation theory and practice has proved that the main counterfactual theories find an extensive application in the Program Evaluation field.
*(*EVALSED:http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/sourcebooks/method_techniques/counterfactual_impact_evaluation/index_en.htm (31.01.2012). *It does make sense to go counter to the facts in Program Evaluation.* But extensive attention should be rendered to the limitations and pitfalls of CEM.

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CHAPTER V. CONCEPTS OF RESEARCH METHODS AND STATISTICS USED IN PROGRAM EVALUATION

This chapter introduces aspects related to the relation between Evaluation on the one side and Research methods and Statistics on the other side. Because of the interdisciplinary profile of program evaluation as a theoretical and practical field, sometimes the importance of using the appropriate research methods and the adequate statistical methods is regarded as having a secondary importance. Based on our own observations and on some other assessments, we are able to state that the use of research methods and of statistical methods should be at the core of program evaluation.

Key-concepts: *research methods, statistics, program evaluation, qualitative and cuantitative methods*

Introduction

According to the European Union Commission, program evaluation can be defined as "a judgment of interventions according to the results, impacts and needs they aim to satisfy" (EU Commission). We also refer to program evaluation as to "the process of assessing the extent to which project, program or policy objectives have been achieved and how economically and efficiently" (Mulreany, 1999). More than that, the UK Treasury defines evaluation as "a critical and detached look at the objectives and how they are being met" (UK Treasury). Even if generically it is named "Program Evaluation", it applies to policies, programs, projects and other types of interventions. Program evaluation usually involves judgement on basis of criteria based on data collected with the help of research methods and techniques. When numeric data are involved, the judgments relay on statistical arguments.

The link between evaluation and research methods

Evaluation models are usually used to define the objectives of an evaluation, what variables and indicators to study, and the methods needed to collect and interpret the data. At the beginning of each evaluation study a model should be structured in order to carry out a program evaluation systematically and easily. There are numerous models that are being used. Synthetically, the majority use the following steps: (1) identifying the evaluation objectives/initial questions, (2) establishing the indicator system, (3) collecting the data, (4) analyzing the data, and (5) reporting the results.

An interesting five step model used by Community Action Resources for Inuit, Métis and First Nations is presented in Figure 1.

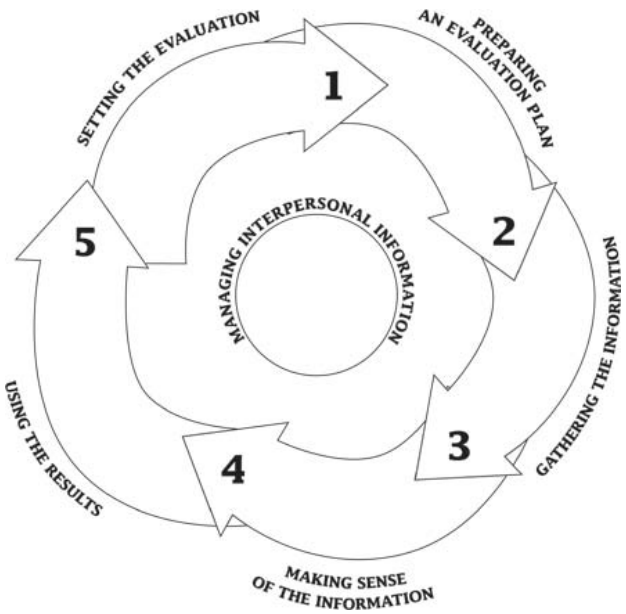

Figure 1. Evaluation model. Source: Community Action Resources for Inuit, Métis and First Nations, http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca

The diagram presents a dynamic version of the activities that take place during an evaluation. The activities involved are: setting the context of the evaluation, preparing an evaluation plan, gathering the information, making sense of the information and using the results. At the core of evaluation process is the idea of data or information.

Information is supposed to be used in order to improve the program, project or policy evaluated. Evaluation is one of the most important steps

in Program Cycle Management, beside Programming, Identification, Formulation and Implementation. Its purpose is to learn through systematic data collection and analysis how to improve programs' and projects' design, how to properly implement interventions, the way we should address accountability concerns, how to make the best decisions concerning the allocation of resources.

As the result of an evaluation several types of decision could be taken: the continuation of the program according to the original design, the continuation of the program with more or less significant changes in the original design, the termination of the program or the changing of future programs or projects according to the lessons learned. Any of these decisions is based on data collected with the help of social research methods and interpreted either qualitatively or statistically, according to the type of the data.

Research methods are involved in every stage of the evaluation cycle as well. We collect and interpret data before the program is implemented (ex-ante evaluation), in order to improve allocation of resources and program design, during the implementation (interim evaluation), in order to analyze weather the program is reaching its objectives and the possibilities to improve the design and the management of the program or project. Data is needed to assess the project or the program after the implementation stage as well (ex-post evaluation) when we can see what the results of the program are, quantitatively and qualitatively.

Research methods in program evaluation

We have already established that research methods are extremely useful in every model and in every stage of the evaluation cycle. Now we have to establish what the most useful research methods are, and when do we use them in the evaluation cycle?

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in Program evaluation. The accent is placed upon the complementary use of the two research paradigms and of their subsequent methods. Therefore program evaluation uses the multi-method research model and the preponderance of qualitative or quantitative is decided by several criteria such as: program implementation area, program dimension, number of beneficiaries etc.

Quantitative methods are used especially for the large-scale programs, when there are numerous beneficiaries and when the objectives of the evaluation involve finding out the perspective of the target group. The aim of using quantitative methods is to reach statistically significant results.

Qualitative methods are used mainly in medium and small-scale programs and sometimes in complex programs in order to refine instruments and to find out as many

details as possible on different aspects of the program. Qualitative research methods such as individual interview, focus-group, qualitative

observation and document analysis are frequently used as well in assessing the programs with a significant social component.

Differences between Evaluation and Research

Even if a strong relation between evaluation and research can easily be perceived, as shown above, several differences must be stressed. As Palumbo had shown (Palumbo,
1987), Carole Weiss illustrated a series of criteria that help distinguishing between the two (Table 1). Some of the most important criteria are the aim, the area of interest, the priorities, the audience, the autonomy, the possibility to generalize the findings etc.

According to these criteria, Evaluation is oriented especially to practical problem- solving, while Research aims mostly at knowledge development. Their target is different even if they may use a common methodological toolkit. The area of interest of evaluation is decided either by the decision maker, by specific actors that might ask for the evaluation, such as the financing entity or the implementing unit.

Selecting Appropriate Statistics

When quantitative analysis is used, several criteria must be considered to ensure selecting the most appropriate data analysis technique in the case of a specific program evaluation. The most frequently used criteria refer to questions, measurement and audience.

Question criteria refer mainly to the evaluation questions and stress whether they are about a casual relationship between a specific cause and effect, or they rely on quantitative variables.

Measurement criteria are concerned with the level of measurement of the variable used, and the level of precision of the measurements etc.

Audience criteria are related to the type of audience of the evaluation. Elements like the expectances of the audience regarding the presentation of data, the precision requested etc. are very important. A target group of the evaluation that is not highly qualified in statistics will expect to see graphs or simple frequency tables, while a statistics qualified target group will definitely expect to see more sophisticated statistical analysis.

Selecting a statistical technique to be used in evaluation

When evaluators collect numerical data to address the evaluation questions, they may have to use statistical techniques to analyze the data and to reach reliable conclusions regarding the program. With the help of statistical techniques, evaluators can find information about the relationship between the program, as a cause, and an alleged effect (e.g. by using association). Evaluators may also find out whether and to what extent a group of beneficiaries has been reached by the program (e.g. by using frequency tables). Or, they may find out whether the results of the program are mainly due to one or another characteristics of the program (e.g. by using regression).

Still, the manner in which the variables (characteristics) are measured limits the number of statistics available to evaluators. For instance, in order to analyze a relationship between two variables, when the variables are measured at nominal and ordinal level, evaluators can use association tables (cross tabulation) and as a test for statistical significance, they can use Chi-square test with the computation of lambda or gamma coefficients respectively. But, in the same situation, when the variables are measured on a scale more complex then the ordinal one, on an interval scale, for example, beside the chi-square test evaluators can use the *t*-test.

In order to assess a program impact, evaluators may use regression, but only with variables measured on a more complex scale then the ordinal one (e.g. interval). In this situation, the appropriate measure of magnitude of the relationships will be shown by R-square and beta weights.

Evaluation, Research methods and Statistics expertise in the Romanian Public Administration

When talking about the relationship between evaluation and research methods and statistics, we would like to take a look at the way these fields relate in practice. We have measured evaluation capacity in Romanian public institutions at regional and locallevel (Gârboan, 2007) and, among other aspects we tried to find out real data about the existence of personnel trained in Evaluation, Research methods and Statistics.

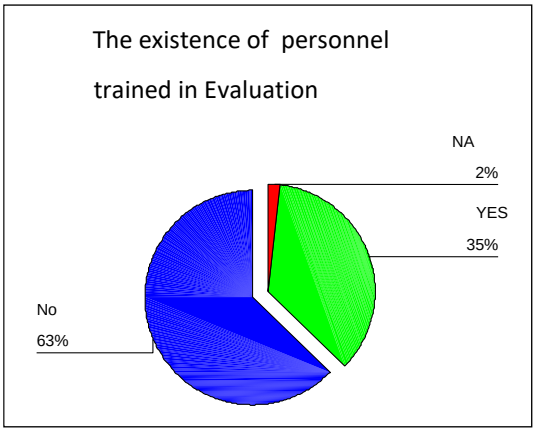

***Fig. 2*. The existence of personnel trained in Evaluation**

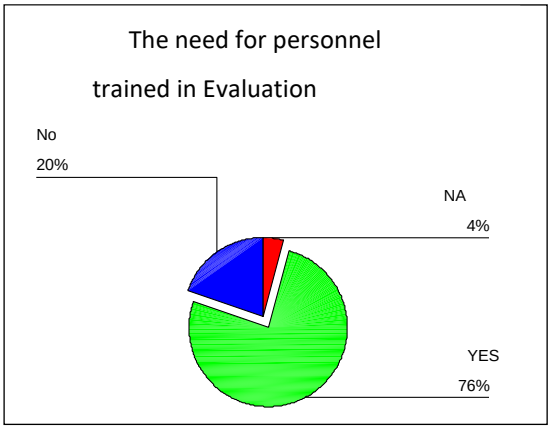

***Fig. 3*. The need for personnel trained in Evaluation**

The fact that 63% of the public institutions which were questioned don't

have in their structures specialized personnel in evaluation field (Figure 2) and 76% are aware of the existence of this need (Figure 3), shows the tendency to develop the capacity of evaluation in Romanian public institutions.

And because the capacity of evaluation doesn't require only human resources specialized in Evaluation, but also personnel which is specialized in social sciences, Research methods and in Statistics we measured the existence of specialists in these fields in the Romanian public institutions.

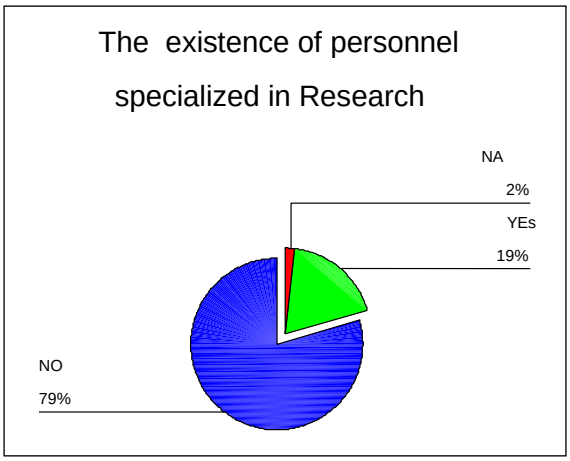

Fig. 4. **The existence in the institutions of the personnel specialized in Research**

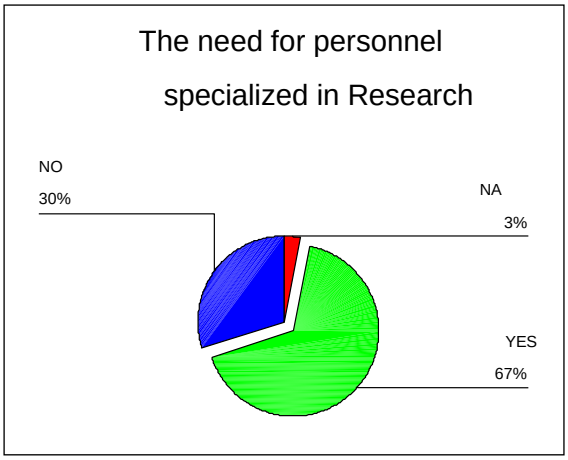

Fig. 5. **The need for personnel specialized in Research**

Regarding Research, 79% declared that they don't have employees trained in Research Methodology (Figure 4), but only 67% are aware of the need for this type of personnel (Figure 5), fact which reveals that Program evaluation field is not known in his essence. Programs which have the role to inform the institutions that there is no possibility to make evaluation unless they have personnel trained in research methods are very welcomed, this aspect being even more important in the public sector where the social impact must be considered a reference point.

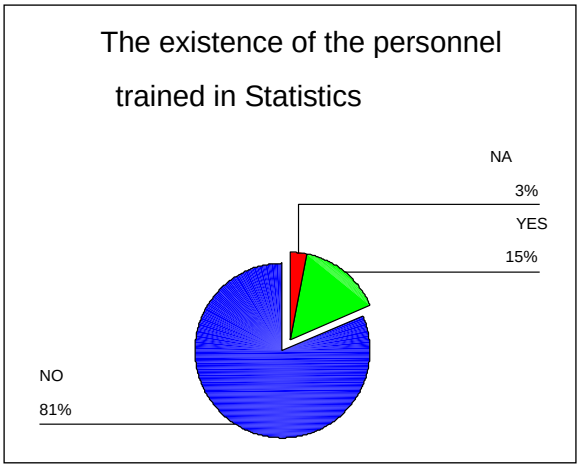

Fig. 6. **The existence of the personnel trained in Statistics**

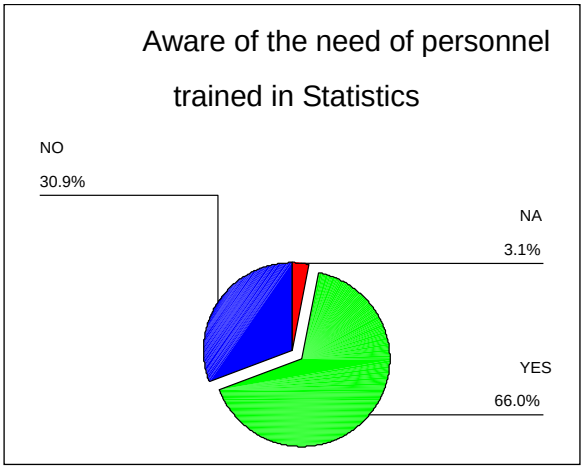

Fig. 7. **Aware of the need for personnel trained in Statistics**

This situation is even more visible in the case of Statistics. About 81% of the institutions

realize the lack of trained personnel (Figure 6), but only 66% are aware of

the real need for this type of personnel (Figure 7). Or it is known that evaluation of programs cannot be done without statistics, especially when we talk about complex programs.

Conclusions

Based on our own observations and on some other assessments, we are able to state that the use of research methods and of statistical methods should be at the core of program evaluation. The existing evaluation capacity cannot be improved without real commitment towards learning from evaluation. And in order to learn from evaluation and to see all its benefit we must fundament our evaluations on arguments that relay on real data collected with the help of research methods and analyzed, when numbers are involved, with the help of statistical methods. Without it our evaluation reports will stick to the "educated guess level or even at the common sense level which is not always quite convincing.

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CHAPTER VI. SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT - THE STATE OF THE ART

The present research is coming to deal with a constant need within the present-day Romanian institutional framework: building a model for Social Impact Assessment of programs and projects mainly for the public field. Social impact assessment (SIA) refers to the quantification of the net effects of a program upon groups, communities and upon the society in general. The objective of this study is to scan the most recent literature in the field, and to identify a social impact assessment model that can be used to assess a program financed from public money. The present study highlights useful information regarding the theory and practice of social impact assessment.

Key-concepts: *social impact assessment, indicators, effects, community*

Introduction

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is a specific type of evaluation extremely useful in project planning and management, a research technique and a public policy instrument successfully used all over the world by those responsible with institutional and organizational management, with the coordination of projects and programs financed from public or private founds. High public officers, politicians, managers, institutions' or organizations' leaders, program directors and project coordinators etc. use the SIA in order to notice in time the effects of the interventions they implement or they intend to implement. The aim is to see in time and mitigate the unwanted effects on the groups of people, on communities and on society, as well as to encourage the positive elements of the impact. In short, SIA is used in order to minimize losses and maximize the benefits of the interventions upon small or large social groups.

Background

People have tried to foresee the effects of their actions since ancient times. Predicting and assessing the consequences of change on society has been part of the political landscape since the Oracle of Delphi (Backer,1997: xi)

The roots of SIA, as most recently investigated by Christopher Barrow, "lie, in part, in research carried out since 1950s by

anthropologists and sociologists who feared that proposed developments might have serious negative side-effects…"(Barrow, 2004:2). As a specific concept, SIA originated with the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act of the USA (NEPA)(Vanclay,2003). SIA has been promoted side by side with the notion of Environmental Impact Assessment, and they had a parallel evolution.

The impact of induced social change upon man is perhaps most succinctly outlined by C. P. Wolf in his description of the *curious transposition* by which culture has come to dominate nature: the problem of social impact assessment is not so much what we are doing to the environment; it is what we are doing to ourselves through the medium of environment by technological misapplications. (C. P. Wolf 1974, p. 3).

The actual knowledge stage in the area on international level

Presently, the knowledge stage in the area on international level is extremely advanced, in spite of the relatively short time (35 years) passed since the first systematic approaches in the field have appeared.

The essential contributions comes from the academic research (closely in touch with the practitioners from local and central governments in numerous states, from the Non-Profit sector (that finances different interventions with impact on individuals, on groups, on communities and societies), and from the International

Organizations, which, in their turn, implement a series of programs and projects in numerous states and communities (The European Union Commission, The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), The World Bank (WB), United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) etc.)

Concerning the technical issues, the methodology used, there is a certain agreement among professionals. Social Impact Assessment involves the use of sociological research methods, both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (observation, interview, case-studies, etc).

For Social Impact, a varied methodology has been developed, according to the socio-economic, cultural and organizational context, according to the nature of the intervention, the necessary variables to be measured, the available budget, and also according to the research capacity and a series of other factors involved.

Out of the most recent publications in the field, a catalogue of the research designs for impact assessment can be presented, according to the intervention assignment, the type of controls used, and the data collection strategies (Rossi et al., 1999, p.261). Therefore, randomized experiments, quasi- experiments, simple analysis before and after intervention, cross-sectional studies for non-uniform programs, panel studies: several repeated measures for non-uniform programs and time-series: many repeated measures, can all be included

in SIA toolkit.

The Academic Research

The academic research have a sound impact on the actual knowledge stage in SIA field through researchers such as Christopher Barrow, Frank Vanclay, Hank Becker, Rabel J. Burdge, Allan Dale, Nicholas Taylor, Marcus Lane, Bryan Hobson and Colin G. Goodrich, and many others. They promote the study of SIA theoretically and practically through the many publications in the field, through the IAIA-International Association for Impact Assessment, and inside this, through numerous activities such as teaching, organizing workshops, conferences, discussion lists, editing professional publications, through permanently updating the domain web site: www.iaia.org.

A special feature of recent contributions is the stress placed on the practical applicability of the information proposed. That is why, a good part of the newly-appeared publications focus on definitions, justification, and they come with methodologies that, followed step by step, lead to the practical implementation of SIA. A recent example in this way is the book of Christopher Barrow: "Social Impact Assessment: An Introduction", published in 2004, at Oxford University Press. Endowed with more practical aims then theoretical ones, SIA has at least three generally accepted objectives: to inform about changes in norms, believes, perceptions, values and their effects, to anticipate possible impacts of actions both negative and positive, to

suggest development alternatives to avoid. In short, it is meant to reduce or mitigate problems and maximize benefits. (Barrow, 2004:3)

Another example is the contribution of Rabel J. Burge, "A Community Guide to Social Impact Assessment", 3rd Edition, 2004. The Guide is a tool for practitioners at all levels - social scientists, agency employees, community leaders, volunteers - to complete social impact assessments (SIA's) efficiently and effectively. The Guide is a how-to manual that provides the users with a step-by-step process easily followed by persons with minimal social science training. Burge organizes the information into three sections: the first part (Chapters 1 to 6) he provides the background, a short history, the conceptual model, the SIA scoping process and an explanation as to how to obtain data to measure SIA variables. The second part (Chapters 7-11) corresponds to the five categories of SIA variables- population change, community and institutional arrangements, communities in transition, individual and family impacts and community infrastructure needs. In the final part of the book (Chapters 12-13) Rabel J. Burge provides worksheets for summarizing SIA variables, and how resulting data may be used in the SIA mitigation/enhancement process of the respective programs/projects under analysis. Still in 2004, Rabel Burge publishes another book, *The Concepts, Process and Methods of Social Impact Assessment*, that comes to complete the guide we have presented above. This book develop the SIA concept, presents the different SIA processes and methods, some case studies recently done, describes the link between SIA and Public

Participation, and in the end presents SIA in an International context.

Frank Vanclay is situated in the same paradigm. Together with other authors from IAIA, he published in 2003, International *Principles for Social Impact Assessment*. "Today, the objective of SIA is to ensure that the developments(or planned interventions) that do occur maximize the benefits and minimize the costs of those developments, especially those costs borne by the community" (Vanclay, 2003:1). He mainly refers to externalities, costs that are not properly taken into account. The decision makers, regulatory authorities and developers fail to consider them partly because they are not easily quantifiable and identifiable (Vanclay, 2003). Vanclay also brings into attention the importance of the participatory process in order to get better consideration to what appropriate development for a community may be. Vanclay acknowledges that there is a significant difference between assessing a social impact in fairly different environments from the perspective of the degree of development. Also, it is stated that for the less developed countries, there is little methodology developed for social impact assessment. (Vanclay, 2003)

This is the explanation, at least in part of the duplication in the scientific literature on international level, duplication that I will bring into attention a bit later. At the same time, this explains the precarity of the Romanian literature in the field, that I shall approach in the second part of the study (The Actual Knowledge Stage in Romania).

C. Nicholas Taylor, C. Hobson Bryan and Colin G. Goodrich publish in 2004 *Social Assessment: Theory, Process and Techniques*. What is new in their approach the strategic use of SIA: *Strategic application of social assessment also occurs in the development and implementation of programs and policies* (Taylor et al. 2004:16). The authors, experienced practitioners, hold numerous lectures and trainings in the field for public, private, non-profit national and international organizations. This too is a handbook explaining SIA implementation step-by - step.

Even if they arise from a vast array of sources, directions and experiences, the papers that were reviewed have the following typical structure:

1. Definitions of SIA

2. Identifications of key impacts of particular activities in particular environments

3. Identification of existing tools

4. Development of new tools

5. Development of routinized procedures for performing SIA

6. Identification of methods to integrate SIA with other planning or decision-making efforts

A four step model could be identified at the crossroad of all presented approaches:

A) The first step is a descriptive one. It refers to the program being analyzed and tries to answer as completely as possible questions like: What was the scope of the program? Who are the stakeholders? How many beneficiaries were involved? What were the resources used? Which was the distribution on services? What were the time and place coordinates? What were the results of the program?

B) The second step refers to the impact assessment methodology. The questions it tries to address are: What was the methodology used?(detailed approach) How were the participant and non-participant sample selected? How was the control group identified? What is the profile of the participants and of non-participants?

C) Impact assessment results are being underlined. It answers questions like: What was the impact of the program? What were the net results (if possible)? (Establishing the confounding factors). What are the results of the impact?

D) Conclusions and recommendations section highlights the main findings of the social impact assessments, the learned lessons and the main future directions of action.

Results indicate that few individual efforts involve all these topics. Certainly, every author focuses mainly on certain issues. It is significant that despite these differences in substance, the similarity in definitions, tools, and checklists was surprisingly high. This consistency points to some consensus regarding needs and methods, but also suggests some duplication which stress a real need to contextualize the methodology according to coordinates such as: geographical location, historical background, the type of culture etc.

The duplication is partially explained by the fact that this assessment tool has been used predominantly by entities from the *developed countries*, having a certain type of culture, a democratic tradition, with a clear and established (predictable, less dynamic) organizational and institutional culture.

The so-called *developing countries,* in transition towards a democratic regime, with a huge dynamic of the institutional organization, such as Romania, or the *less developed countries*, still under a totalitarian regime and with a rudimentary organization of the institutions didn't benefit from a research infrastructure in SIA field.

The international institutions and organizations have implemented the only research of this kind here and the national characteristics and the national interest have not always been considered.

International Organisations

The Commission of the European Union, The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), The World Bank (WB), The International Monetary Found (IMF), The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) etc. use SIA to guide their investment and intervention projects in different geographical areas and fields of activity.

The World Bank uses SIA at large scale. With an entire department engaged in Impact Assessments, WB makes such studies for each of the projects it finances. WB experts assess the social impact following rigorous methodologies, clearly stated. Numerous SIA studies are catching the eye due to their diversity of methods and of the projects under investigation. A series of handbooks are being presented, that explain the methodology and processes involved by a SIA. Among the most significant is Judy Bakers' *Evaluating the Impact of Development Projects on Poverty: A Handbook for Practitioners, Directions in Development*, World Bank, Washington, D.C edited in 2000. In S*ourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies*, World Bank, Washington D.C., appears during the same year *Monitoring and Evaluation* written by Prennushi, G., G. Rubio, and K. Subbarao . An impressing series of articles written by WB experts among who we can mention James J. Heckman, Jeffrey A. Smith, Nancy Clements, Christopher Taber Grossman, Jean Baldwin Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Anne C. Kubisch and James P. Connell and many others.

The distinctive feature consists in the fact that the vast majority of studies are made on WB projects focused on the fight against poverty. Therefore, considerable stress is placed upon the economic dimension of the social impact.

Otherwise, here is no major distinction between the tools used by WB and those built by the academic community. Still, the wide geo-political and cultural area of action is obvious in the methodology used by the WB and especially in the diversity of variables and tools.

Recently, the EU Commission published a guiding catalogue of indicators that should be considered in SIA.

Among these, there are: Social Cohesion (social integration, poverty or extreme poverty dimensions, the risks of poverty or social exclusion, geographical social cohesion, long term unemployment, the accessibility of services of general interest), Employment Quality (occupational health and safety arrangements, the rights of the workers, labor market organization, the balance between personal and professional life, employment opportunities, integration through employment, etc) Social Protection and Social Services (levels of social protection, accessibility etc.), Consumer Interests, Education, Social Capital, Liveable Communities, Fundamental Human Rights, etc.

Barrow stressed the link between SIA and sustainable development. “Increasingly, SIA and related fields like strategic

environmental assessment (SEA), are being explored as aids to achieving sustainable development" (Barrow, 2004:2).

The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

The Non-Governmental Organizations, especially the grant makers are usually interested in SIA. The main donors developed their own toolkit for SIA. For instance, Ford Foundation, USAID, Rockefeller as well as others have made public their instruments for social impact assessment, accompanied by numerous case-studies. One of the goals is, for sure, the accountability of their actions. It is worth mentioning though, that their social impact assessment is in perfect agreement with the methodology specific to the academic research and to international organizations. Certainly, the research methods and techniques for social sciences need not to be reinvented. But their application is in accordance to the interests of the financing entities and to the cultural background of the researchers who conceive the instrument and effectively realize the research.

The present knowledge stage in Romania

Studies regarding the social impact have been published in Romania since 2002. These are mostly the contributions of the researcher or the co-operators of The Research Institute for Quality of Life (ICCV). Be it about books, specific chapters, articles, papers presented on the

occasion of conferences or research works conducted for a third party, most of the Romanian contributions approach only adjacently the Social Impact Assessment issue.

In 2002, S. Ilie has written about *Formal and informal incomes of the Romanian Households* in a book coordinated by Rainer Neef and M. Stănculescu: *The Impact of Informal Economies in Eastern Europe*, Ed. Ashgate U.K. In the same volume, the study *Households economic strategies between state, market and the informal economies* by M. Stănculescu appears. Both papers bring information for Social Impact Assessment, but not methodological issues specific to the social impact.

In 2003, it is published at Editura Institutul European, a bilingual edition of *Impactul pre-aderării. Politici de coeziune si dezvoltarea regională economică si socială a României/Pre-Accesion Impact Studies. EU Cohesion Policy and Romania's Regional Economic and Social Development* having M. Stanculescu among the authors. Again, the Romanian contribution is limited to data provision and making analysis indirectly connected to the Social Impact Assessment. In Quality *of Life in Romania* and in *Politica Socială. Studii 1990-2004*, published at Expert Editing House, Ioan Marginean identifies certain social indicators useful for an impact analysis.

Little works or research published are directly approaching the issue. And this happens when third parties, usually international

institutions (mostly The European Commission or the World Bank) request it. Havinh M.S. Stanculescu among its authors, *Toward Country - Led Development. A Multi-Partner Evaluation of the Comprehensive Development Framework. Findings from Six Country Case Studies: Bolivia, Burkina, Faso, Ghana, Romania, Uganda, Vietnam* makes direct references even if short ones to the social impact, through the variables analysis. It is also worthy mentioning D. Chiriac and C. Huma who published *Impactul socio-economic al fenomenelor naturale dezastruoase în România - inundatii, alunerări de teren, secet*ă a 62 pages study in Probleme Economice vol. 20-

21/2002 CIDE, where issues of SIA methodology are approached in the context of socio-economic development analysis. Some papers presented to conferences, debates and workshops are worth to be noticed, where the authors refer, among other issues to social impact. It is the case of S.Vonica Rădutiu, *Impactul integrării europene asupra fortei de munc*ă *din România si tările candidate*, Masă rotundă despre politicile sociale. Seminar la Universitatea Lucian Blaga, Sibiu , 7-8 iunie 2002 and of D. Chiriac, *Influenta habitatului asupra calităţii vietii populatiei din România 2001 - 2003. Ecologizarea localităţilor - indicatori de calitate a vietii*, Sesiunea anuală de comunicări stiintifice a I.C.C.V, 29 februarie 2002, I.C.C.V., Bucuresti.

In 2003, the city of Cluj-Napoca hosts the debate *The Impact of European Enlargement on Cluj Community*. The goal of the research that fundamented the debate was to reveal socio-economic and

institutional changes generated by the pre-accesion process that Romania experienced, and that involves reaching a certain degree of convergence between the Cluj community and the EU. Even if research methods and techniques specific to social sciences are applied, the methodology of social Impact Assessment is still intuitive, in a stage more or less of *educated guess*.

This is because, at that time as now, there is no such methodology at hand for the Romanian researchers. None of the imported methodologies cannot be taken without further adjustments. Their design of SIA models is specific to the societies that produced them. The specific feature is that they apply only to an institutional framework where there are planning and monitoring activities for all programs and actions. At this time, in the public field, the plans and the strategies, if any, are more or less formal. And the issue of monitoring and other evaluation types is out of the question, most of the time. Still another premis of foreign methodologies is the existence of a legal framewok in the field, that regulates and requests periodic monitoring and evaluation for the activities. In Romania, so far, we lack this type of legislation. And still, we need impact assessments to anticipate the effects of our actions and to mitigate the unwanted effects or, on the contrary, to encourage the positive ones. The variables analised by foreign research need to be adjusted and re-evaluated.

In *International Handbook for Social impact assessment* (2003), Vanclay and his cooperators note this shortage and are trying to

build an instrument that can be applied internationally. This is still a mission impossible, considering the low degree of convergence worldwide, and the still huge socio- cultural, political and economical differences around the world. There is an initiative convicted to a high degree of generality. The need is still here: Vanclay acknowledges that there is a significant difference between assessing a social impact in fairly different environments from the perspective of the degree of development. Also, it is stated that for the less developed countries, there is little methodology developed for social impact assessment.

Presently, there is no metodology for Social Impact Assessments adapted to Romanian realities and particularities.

Trends

Worldwide, the trend is to associate SIA to the sustenable development. Vanclay links directly SIA with the sustainable development issue. This way, he defines SIA as „ the philosophy towards development and democracy (that spots) the development patologies (e.g. harmful impacts) development gols (like the poverty reduction) and the development process (e.g. participation and capacity building) (Vanclay, 2002: 388) sustainable development "Increasingly, SIA and related fields like strategic environmental assessment (SEA), are being explored as aids to achieving sustainable development" (Barrow, 2004:2).

Methodologically speaking, SIA is conceived as the process of analyzing and managing the intended and unintended consequences on human environment of planned interventions (policies, programs, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions so as to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment.

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CHAPTER VII. SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT MODELS

The aim of impact assessment in the public domain is to estimate accurately the largest possible extent to which interventions or actions achieve their objectives. Such estimates are, inevitably, to a certain degree plausible. But as the model used is more rigorous, the results will be more accurate. But what is a rigorous model for social impact assessment? And, most importantly, what model would be appropriate to estimate the social impact for the public sector in Romania? This chapter is meant to analyze the main trend of models for social impact assessment in public sphere in general and in Romanian public administration in particular.

Key-concepts: *social impact assessment models, public sphere, social needs, social problems*

Introduction

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) process usually begins with an analysis of the context in which the project is implemented, during which the status quo problems are identified and all possible alternatives are described. Social impact assessment process continues with the social factor analysis of the basic problem and the estimation of social change associated with each of its alternative solutions. SIA process ends when the analyst prepares its assessment of the impact, and those who have the necessary powers integrate results of the evaluation of social impact in running projects and/ or activities.

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Methodology

Social impact assessment involves the use of classical methods of sociological research, both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (observation, interviews, case studies etc.).

Each EIS will involve research into context: community size, the group of direct and indirect beneficiaries, the social, educational, economic and ethnic backgrounds, values and needs. Expertise is usually required. Interaction with affected communities and groups is critical since the social and cultural context and individual values are intrinsically related. There are many methods by which this interaction is feasible. From participatory observation (in which the

analyst lives in the community to learn how it works) to group interviews, individual and opinion polls. Choice of methods will be based on the time and financial resources available, depending on the type of community and experts' opinion towards the social problems and the community needs.

Experts agreed that SIA methodological design must take account of at least two competitive pressures: on the one hand rigorous assessments that lead to clear conclusions are necessary and, on the other hand, practical constraints, relating either to resources (time, money) or institutional and interregional cooperation or to the protection of subjects are felt. These constraints considerably limit the options of design and methodological procedures that can be used to assess the social impact. (Rossi and Freeman, 1993)

Given the ultimate goal of public decisions – the wellbeing of individuals - naturally, the specific impact assessments in public field will have a design methodology specific to social and human sciences. For example, analysis of the impact of a program which provides social housing can be achieved by comparing the information obtained from subjects involved in such a project, with information obtained from subjects not involved, repeated measurements on participants or by measurements made before and after intervention - methods used successfully to analyze the impact of organizational changes in organizational socio-

psychology, or even a new treatment in psychology and medicine. Just as the analytical results in these areas are based on a particular implementation of large-scale change (the need for corrections to strategy changes, modifications or maintenance treatment, etc.), the results of impact assessments in the public sector can be based on decision amending a draft law, amending some decisions or projects, to extend their application or termination of their implementation.

Social Impact Assessment Models and Stages

There are many approaches to specific stages of a typical SIA. Especially when it comes to small actions or projects relatively simple, if SIA is necessary, it can be done relatively quickly. It is based on existing documents and data sources easily accessible in public institutions, in the libraries, on the Internet and on brief consultations with stakeholders in the project. The project and its effects are more complex with the SIA will be more complex. Social impact assessment involves the use of classical methods of sociological research, both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (observation, interviews, case studies, etc.).

Although each project is different and each SIA is unique, in most cases certain standard steps of analysis are agreed in order to reach the goal. Most sources suggest in some form the following eight steps used by the World Bank including:

1. Identification of needs and social problems;

2. Identification of participants and beneficiaries;

3. Identify and describe the action;

The alternatives are designed based on the scope and need for action. EIS analyst must determine the alternatives and gather the data necessary for each. The following basic information needs to be identified:

- Location;
- Laws and regulations under which the project falls;
- Infrastructure needs;
- Implementation timetable;
- Size of the workforce;
- Necessary size and nature of facilities (if any);
- The need for local labour;
- Institutional resources.

4. Defining initial conditions then establishing methods of interaction with affected groups and obtaining basic data for each alternative. The analyst is supposed to define conditions in each of the areas potentially affected. In short, it is necessary to analyze the social context. Analyst will seek answers to some of these questions:

- What groups of individuals will be affected? Are they concentrated or dispersed?
- How does each group fit to its environment of life?
- What is the historical context of each group?
- What kind of cultural values and attitudes characterize each

group?

- What are the demographic and economic characteristics relevant?
- Is there access to utilities? education? transport?
- Are there any stable patterns of immigration and/or emigration?

Of course, this is are the minimum necessary information. Data can be gathered from official documents or from previous research published, by consulting the experts and the community. For a more complex project further research is needed.

5. Measuring the direct impact of the project or program by analyzing data obtained through monitoring system. But what happens when there is no monitoring system? In this issue we should try to identify a solution in the impact assessment model that we propose, adapted to the Romanian institutional context.

6. Assessment of indirect and cumulative impacts of the project;

This is seen as a step in the analytical process but it is rather a part of several steps. It is often not about a direct social impact. It may become evident long after project implementation. It is also possible that the impact is felt in areas and locations not directly connected with the project.

7. Recommendation for alternative action;

With the identification of a significant negative impact should be

offered alternatives that could improve the situation. By working closely with project coordinators and stakeholders evaluators should observe weather these alternatives can be implemented. Before that, however, the social impact of these alternatives has to be examined.

8. Developing a plan to counter the effects of undesirable social effects; Undesirable effects can be counteracted by project coordinators and by the involvement of the affected groups. While for monitoring programs there must be developed a plan to ensure implementation of changes. Collection and use of information that leads ultimately to understanding the impact of intervention requires a methodological design that fits the type of investigated project. This requires first a careful formulation of questions which identify the specific impact of the project that is going to be investigated. Subsequently, it is necessary to define the key problems, to specify the significance of various types of impact and to identify cases in which social impact can be measured. These operations are followed by: identifying methods and techniques of data collection, obtaining necessary data, preliminary analysis of the impact and integration of study results in intervention.

A new assessment model adapted to the Romanian realities

The study of the applicability of several methods in Romanian public institutional context, proposes the following model to evaluate the social impact of a program especially when we can not rely on a monitoring system and we can not apply experimental methods.

The proposed assessment includes the following ten stages:

1. Presentation of the program/project

The Romanian Government has not yet made the transition to a budgeting system based on projects and programs (PPBS). But Romanian NGO's are generally respecting the PPBS. Hence numerous activities of public institutions, and some of the activities of NGOs were not designed in the form of projects or programs, but activities could be evaluated and monitored. They are non-standardized projects that do not have clear objectives, activities, and timetable. In order to be evaluated, these non-standardized projects need to be standardized.

Standardization of the activities

Standardization of the activities of an institution is required whenever we want to transform the activities into programs or projects in order to assess and monitor them, or to attract additional financial resources. Standardization of the activities is a necessary first step in order to move to the budgetary system based programs. Standardization process is done by completing a project record or a project sheet. Project sheet must contain elements related to the context of the program: a brief history of the program (details on origin, initiator), a summary of activities and methods of delivery/information on similar programs conducted by the same

institution or by other institutions/organizations, and details of the uniqueness of the program.

Another element of the program schedule is the organizational structure (distribution of responsibilities), program documents, which have extracted information on: the purpose and program objectives, strategies to achieve goals and objectives of the program implementation plans, the short-term, medium and long-term list of performance indicators, the monitoring results of previous actions, etc. For program schedule, the assessor should not miss the description of program activities which will be included, elements relating to the name of all the project activities, location, initial schedule of activities and any changes in the current state of progress of activities. The project record will disclose all available information related to the actors involved, the resources employed, the results expected, internal and external evaluators, marketing and advertising methods (where applicable). A scoreboard is appropriate to include a section of comments and additional notifications. Project sheet must be completed by repeated interviews with the parties.

The initiators of the program can provide information about the program context. Organizational details will be provided for those who implement the program. They will be those who can give information about the program documents, and may even make these documents to reach the evaluator. Documents of a program may

refer to: demand for establishing a program and/or application for funding, contracts signed for grant funding, for contracting and subcontracting activities, methodological tools used to implement the reports and annual work plans, budget and budget implementation and other reviews conducted previously. After analyzing all this information, we have an overview of the program and we are ready to move on to design the evaluation of the social impact. Information categories that we propose are not fixed. Depending on the specific program under investigation, the type and purpose of the evaluation, these categories of information may be modified, detailed or cancelled.

2. Specifying the objectives of social impact assessment study

At this stage there are presented social impact assessment objectives. Sometimes, quantifying the net impact of a program can not be achieved, mostly due to lack of monitoring systems, and to the weak control of external variables. However, in these circumstances we can measure some aspects of impact, such as software effects perceived by a group of people, actors involved in the program development. Multiple perspective is required when social impact is assessed (the perspective of beneficiaries, the perspective of all actors involved, the perspective of the financier, the implementer, etc.). Here it should be noted if it is desired the quantification of direct and indirect impacts, of the positive and negative impacts or other specific types of social impact. By these

provisions we can set the scope of the investigation.

3. Conclusions of previous reviews

Where there have been some previous assessments, we need to specify their summary of findings. It is useful to be stressed particular strengths and weaknesses previously identified. In previous social impact evaluations category we may have self-evaluations and interim and ex-post evaluations.

4. Construction of a system of indicators and indices for measuring social impact

The indicators and indices can be built through the process of turning the basic concepts into quantifiable variables. This is a specific case of social research methodology. The first step is to turn concepts into variables. Variables obtained are indicators of the future monitoring and evaluation model. Based on their calculations can be made and can be derived indices to express, condensed, different trends. Also, in this stage we should determine the type of indicators (impact, net impact, efficiency, effectiveness, performance, etc.).

5. Selection and application of research methods used in assessing the social impact of the program

From the research methodological arsenal there can be used both quantitative research methods and qualitative ones. Moreover,

according to the type of program, different combinations of quantitative and qualitative methods may be used. It is therefore preferable in the paradigm of multi-classification method.

6. Interpretation of data and expanding the system of indicators

Data is interpreted with either statistical methods and/or qualitative data interpretation methods. The purpose of this process is to complete and validate the system of indicators.

7. Assessment of direct and indirect impacts and of positive and negative impact

Even if done in a brief social impact assessment, the system of indicators is absolutely necessary in order to achieve reliable results.

8. Developing a plan to counter the undesirable effects

This is a process that is rather related to internal management of the institution. The social impact assessment may be without a significant in-put, without explanation of the things which do not work, which have a positive impact and have a negative impact. However, the plan to counteract negative effects is not part of the assessment itself.

9. Drafting of the social impact evaluation report

The final report should include a summary of the social impact evaluation study. It does not make part of the assessment itself, but is a document very useful for the management of institutions, for donors and those involved in the decision-making process. The evaluation report should include elements related to the purpose and methodology of assessment, with an emphasis on evaluation findings.

10. Drafting a plan for integrating social impact assessment results to design future activities and programs

Drafting a plan for integrating social impact assessment results to design future activities and programs is useful in order to counteract negative effects and extremely useful for improving performance in future activities.

These models used for social impact assessment have specific elements from different evaluation models such as the Program Theory Model (Birkmayer and Weiss, 2003), the CIPP Model (Stufflebeam, 2002), the Qualitative Model (Patton, 2002) and from Utilization-focused Evaluation Model (Patton, 2002)

When the social impact is not measured

Social impact is not always measurable. The main reason that can prevent us from measuring the social impact of a program could

be the lack of necessary data or data sources. Sometimes there is a political decision, or a community choice. When community members see no need for all the efforts involved in undertaking a social impact assessment, they may decide not to identify the net social results of a project or of a program. However, in order to make public data related to the living standards, in order to make comparisons and benchmarking and in order to identify implications of projects on public policies, a quantification of data is necessary. This is not the case when the measurement itself is arbitrary and artificial that the results produce more questions then answers.

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CHAPTER VIII. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The decision of not organizing a Program Evaluation System at country level government has many negative implications as far as the decision-making process is concerned. The lack of political responsiveness, fiscal discipline and institutional effectiveness are part of the effects. The government does not require a coherent, solid evaluation system and, in exchange, it gets 'Bleak House'- type reports. Program evaluation offers the adequate tools to do evidence-based decision-making on social priorities and public resource allocation.

Key-concepts: *program evaluation, decision-making process*

Introduction

The lack of culture and capacity in program monitoring and evaluation involves the lack of tradition to assess performance in the public, non-profit and private sphere. Romania has been characterized by an increased dynamic of legislative change during the past 20 years. But, willingly or not, the regulations concerning Program Evaluation field has been left aside. The Romanian National Evaluation Strategy is an important step forward in acknowledging the importance of Program Evaluation in the decision-making process. But further steps are required in order to turn strategic thinking into reality. The Government should strive to introduce Program Evaluation as a component of decision-making process. Internationally, Results-Based Management and Results-Based Reporting are presently on focus. Successful reform of public administration necessarily involves the evaluation of programs and performance. There has been no regime able to manage its fiscal resources effectively if its programs and its performance were not constantly measured, evaluated and improved.

The paradigm

This paper is conceived according to a paradigm proposed by Michael Quinn Patton and illustratively called 'the paradigm of the practical use of program evaluation' (Patton, 2002). It focuses on the diverse possibilities of using evaluation results by different types of actors. Without practical use, there is no aim for program evaluation. Evaluation process should begin according to Patton's

paradigm when the design of the intervention (program, project, activity) is being created. Decision-making at all governmental levels is one very important field where evaluation results could be of great use. The condition is that relevant actors in the decision-making process understand the multiple benefits of a solid evaluation system.

Data evidence

Evidence practically means data. And for the decision-making process there are two types of empirical data sources: systematic research and practical experience. There are several entities responsible for the accomplishment of systematic research in public administration: universities, research institutes (private or NGOs), other private organizations and NGOs involved in the delivery of public services and public administration institutions themselves. The data sources from the practical experience should be delivered by all the actors involved in the wide process of Public Administration, beginning with the government (national, regional and local), the private entities and NGOs involved in public policy and public services. A coherent and comprehensive data system for both research and practical experience is extremely difficult to accomplish. But, a Data Management System for the public sector should be considered and efforts should be made in building it. Presently, the data gaps in this area are tremendous. They are due partially to the lack of strategic orientation and partially to the lack of infrastructure and human resources. The problem with the

human resource trained in data gathering and interpretation is severe. In 2007 we conducted an initial research focusing on the evaluation culture and capacity in Romanian Public institutions at regional and local levels (The research method was the questionnaire survey and the instrument, the questionnaire.

In the pilot study the questionnaire was applied to five public institutions and the research itself, the sample was represented by 97 public institutions across the country, mostly mayors of cities, municipalities and county councils). Among the results there were statements referring to the lack of legislation and institutional support. Evaluation capacity requires not only trained human resource in Program Evaluation, but also in Social Science Research Methods and in Statistics. Starting from this premise, we included in the questionnaire a few items that relate to the existence in the Romanian public institutions of personnel trained in Research Methods and Techniques and in Statistics.

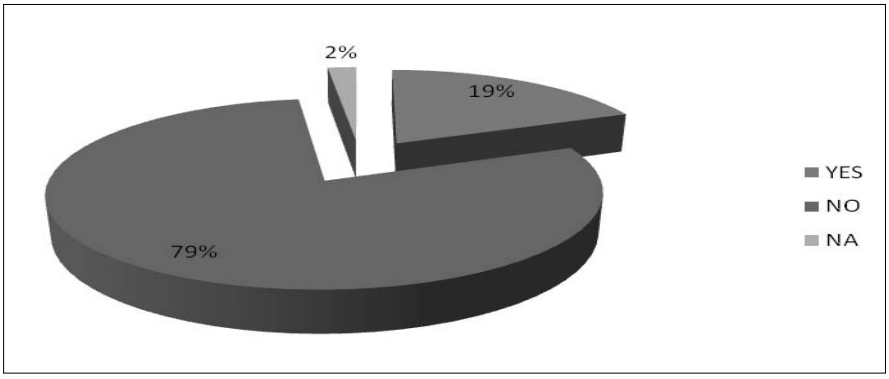

Figure 1: Personnel trained in Research Methods and Techniques

For the Research Methods and Techniques area, in 2007, 79% of the institutions admitted they do not have trained employees. This gap is even more serious when it comes to Statistics.

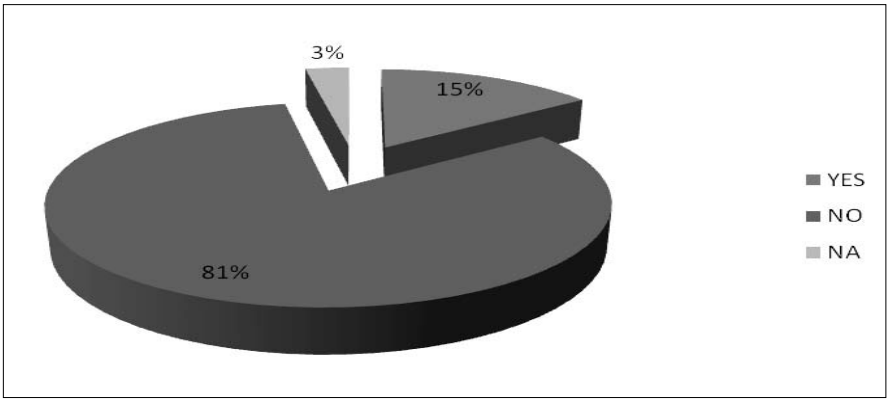

Figure 2: Personnel trained in Statistics

About 81% of the institutions notify the lack of such specialists. Without statistical expertise, there can be no program evaluation or performance measurement. The importance attached to the use of evidence in decision-making is beyond any discussion or interpretation especially when public funds are supporting the decision. Program Evaluation is a link between empirical data and the decision that is being made. It provides the necessary explanatory tools in order to perceive the different views towards administrative realities.

Strategic assumptions

The subsequent question to which this paper tries to provide an answer is what should be done at a strategic level in order to ensure

that empirical data evidence of performance is systematically pursued and used as a guiding principle in governmental decision-making? Even if, in time, the benefits of program evaluation are sometimes under-estimated, the 'new public management models were seen as providing fresh opportunities for evaluation to become a more significant element' (Halligan, 2003, p. 80). Several questions should find their answers before our initial question can be given an answer. Some of those questions have been often transparent in the literature regarding public management or the governance reform. Some have already been given answers which are to be understood from the perspective they have been written in. For instance, to a question regarding the limits of Program Evaluation application in the decision-making process, Di Francesco finds an explanation in the political pressure: 'the onset of fatigue in the application of evaluation to policy advice finally acknowledged the external political constraints facing program evaluation at every level' (Di Francesco, 2000, pp. 45-46). Some questions are still waiting to be asked and answered. This paper will try to highlight some of these questions and their answer as perceived in 2009-2010, in Romania, during a research in the framework of a governmental research program we participated in. These questions are: 'Who are the actors at the origins of the decision-making process?' and 'Who influences the most the decision-making process?'.

During 2009 and 2010 we have been involved in a research conducted by the members of the Public Administration

Department of Babeş-Bolyai University trying to analyze the decision-making process in the Romanian public institutions. The questionnaires were applied to top level civil servants and public officials. Among the results there are several data that could provide answers to the above-mentioned questions.

Who are the actors at the origins of the decision-making process?

The answers to this question were given on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 meaning 'never' and 5 meaning 'very frequently'. We will present the results through the perspective of the Mean scores and the Standard Deviation.

Table 1: Actors at the origins of the decision-making process

			Standard
INT.1.	Local/County Councillors	3.45	1.1
INT.2.	The Mayor/The President of the County	4.41	0.8
INT.3.	The Vice-Mayors/The Vice-Presidents of	3.32	1.1
INT.4.	Political parties	2.48	1.2
INT.5.	Civil servants and public employees	2.91	1.1
INT.6.	Other public institutions at the central or	2.48	1.
INT.7.	Citizens	2.36	1.2
INT.8.	Mass-media representatives	1.	0.9
INT.9.	NGO representatives	1.91	1.0
INT.1	Civil servants and public employees	1.96	1
INT.11	Unions representatives	1.96	0.9
INT.1	EU and EU institutions	2.32	1.2

The results clearly show that the Mayor and the President of the

County Council are the most prominent actors at the origins of the decision-making process in the Romanian public institutions, with a **Mean (X)** of 4.41 on a 1 to 5 scale. The next most important actors at the origins of the decision-making process are Local and County Councillors (X=3.45) followed very closely by the Vice-Mayors and the Vice-Presidents of the County Council (X=3.32). Therefore, in order to make sure that empirical data evidence of performance is systematically used in governmental decision-making these categories of actors should be made aware of the importance of using the data results of evaluation. Actors generally assumed as evaluation users and consumers are graded, unfortunately, as having among the lowest influence scores in originating the decision-making process: NGO representatives (X=1.91), private sector representatives (X=1.96) and unions representatives (X=1.96). These categories of actors should be encouraged to participate more at the origins of the decison-making process. Generally, the decison-making process should become more participatory, especially in the public field, where public money is involved. The participation of more actors usually adds value to the decision-making process, as more perspectives are focused on the same generally important issue. The importance and benefits of multi-actor decision-making is also highlighted by Pierre and Peter (2005) in order to develop a common set of priorities for society, coherence, steering and accountability.

Interpreting the **Standard Deviation (SD)** scores we notice that the

highest agreement between the investigated subjects has been reached in the case of the Mayor and the President of the County Council (SD=0.82), while the lowest level of agreement is connected to the political parties being at the origins of the decision-making process. This indicates a high level of controvercy towards the issue of the political parties'role. The low score of SD in the case of the Mayor and the President of the County Council stresses the importance of making these actors aware of the importance of using data and evaluation in order to make better decisions.

Who influences the most the decision-making process?

It is important to know whether the actors at the origins of the decision-making process are also the most influential. The answer to this question should tell us what other actors should be made aware of the importance of the practical use of evaluation.

Table 2: The influence of actors in the decision-making process

			Standard
ILD.1.	Local/County Councellors	7.15	2.
ILD.2.	The Mayor/The President of the County	8.81	1.8
ILD.3.	The Vice-Mayors/The Vice-Presidents of	6.58	2.6
ILD.4.	Political parties	4.83	2.8
ILD.5.	Civil servants and public employees	4.98	2.
ILD.6.	Other public institutions at the central or	4.27	2.4
ILD.7.	Citizens	4.09	2.6
ILD.8.	Mass-media representatives	3.01	2.0

ILD.9.	NGO representatives	2.	2.1
ILD.1	Civil servants and public employees	3.12	2.2
ILD.1	Unions representatives	3.12	2.1
ILD.1	EU and EU institutions	4	2.9

The influence of actors in the decision-making process ranks again the Mayor and the President of the County Council on the first place with a Mean of 8.81 on a 1 to 10 scale. This is supported again by the lowest score of SD (1.89), meaning the highest homogenity or the highest degree of agreement among the investigated subjects. The next score was obtained by Local and County Councillors (X=7.15), while the other categories of actors scored far less (Table 2). This data set confirms the importance of involving the Mayors and the Presidents of the County Council as well as Local and County Councilors into the evaluation process. It also reveals the importance of increasing the relative importance of other categories of actors in the decision-making process.

Conclusions

The Mayors and the Presidents of the County Council are at the origins of the decision-making process in Romanian public institutions and influence it the most. In order to make sure that empirical data evidence is used in governmental decision- making these categories of actors should be made aware of the importance of using evaluation toolkits. Actors generally assumed as evaluation users and consumers are graded, unfortunately, as having a very low influence in originating the decision-making process. The decison-

making process should become more participatory and organizing a Program Evaluation System should be one of the priorities of governments at all levels for its improvement. It could mean an added value to political responsiveness, fiscal discipline and institutional effectiveness if designed and applied properly.

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CHAPTER IX. LEVERS SUPPORTTING PROGRAM EVALUATION CULTURE AND CAPACITY: LEADERSHIP

Program Evaluation culture and capacity is at the very beginning of its development in Romania. In this chapter we highlight one of the fundamental, but not always obvious, connections that support a sustainable Evaluation culture and capacity building and development: the link between leadership and program evaluation. If properly used, program evaluation results can be a strong instrument in leadership, just as leadership can fundamentally encourage the development of evaluation culture and capacity. More precisely, we identify the ways in which different power sources can help leaders in developing evaluation culture and capacity.

Key-words: *evaluation culture, evaluation capacity, leadership*

Introduction

Usually, leadership is referred to as "capacity of persons holding senior positions ... to influence the subordinates. This is assumed to be greater if based on one or more power sources." (Hinţea et al, 2010). Program evaluation refers to the process of assessing whether objectives of specific programs, project or interventions are reached, and whether the anticipated results have been achieved. Evaluation is highly explicative. It tries to elucidate why certain objectives have not been reached, why, different indicators have other values at the end of the interventions then those anticipated. A mutual relationship of support can be established between leadership and program evaluation through the evaluation culture and capacity. If properly used, program evaluation results can be a strong instrument in leadership just as leadership can fundamentally encourage the development of evaluation culture and capacity.

Evaluation culture and capacity

Evaluation culture is considered to be "one of the institutional obligations to learn from evaluation." (USGAO, 2003: 3) The same source defines evaluation capacity as involving, beyond a strong culture of evaluation, elements such as monitoring systems, analytical expertise and communication networks (USGAO, 2003). Evaluation culture is sometimes seen as a prerequisite for the development of evaluation capacity. In practice, evaluation culture expresses itself through systematically assessing how well programs and projects are working,

what changes need to be done in the design and implementation techniques. The relationship between the evaluation capacity and the evaluation culture one of subordination

Evaluation capacity has been defined from different perspectives, starting from diverse sets of variables. In the study *„Assessment of the Evaluation Culture in Romania",* Hilary Curley and Eugen Perianu perceive *evaluation culture* in Romania, from a different perspective. It is not necessarily seen as a key element in the constitution of evaluation capacity at country level. The variables they consider in measuring the evaluation culture are: the frequency of the commissioning of evaluations, the existence of Romanian evaluation experts, the dissemination of the evaluation outside the management group, the exposure of the evaluation findings, the extent in which evaluations make a significant impact on the accountability debate or through "lessons learned" improvements in planning; the existence of institutionalizing factors (e.g. regulation) and strong non-formal drivers (e.g. civil action groups), the development of outcome/result based monitoring. (Curley, Perianu 2006). Another study benchmarked in 2004 the evaluation capacity in the EU new member states as compared to the 15 older member states. Jack Malan, a researcher in the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services reached a series of conclusions relevant for the Romanian public institutions, and defined *evaluation capacity* starting from the following variables: the number of evaluators with necessary skills, the existence of support from public authorities, the existence of an evaluation culture, the existence of information and support on evaluation, such as guidelines, methodologies

and best practice examples, the presence of commercial incentives to improve evaluation capacity and expertise, the ability to ensure that evaluation results feed into policy making, the presence of baseline data and of the defined targets and performance indicators and the quality of evaluation reports. (Malan, 2004).

In the present chapter we investigated, at a theoretical level, weather leadership could be one of the answers.

The link between Leadership and Evaluation

Regarding the connection between leadership and evaluation our perception is based on the following principle:

Power sources can help leaders in developing evaluation culture and capacity and evaluation culture and capacity can help leaders in fulfilling their mission.

The underlying rationale for this principle is that leaders could use power-sources levers to help develop evaluation culture and capacity. The benefits leaders could have from the results of evaluation are multiple: knowledge-based thinking and decision-making is one of the most important.

Following the above-mentioned study**,** we came to many unanswered questions. One of those questions is: what levers should we use to develop evaluation culture and capacities? What methods would be most

effective? The benefits of evaluation have been asserted so often (Patton,1997), (Shadish, Cook, Leviton, 1999), (Stake, 2003), (Weiss, 1995). Why, in the case of Romania, its development is delayed.

One of the answers at hand is the social, political, cultural, organizational history. We refer mainly to the lack of data collection and transparency traditions. We also have to consider the fear of punishment that was specific to every evaluation (perceived as control) process in the communist regime. But, we further investigate whether some controllable levers, methods and instruments could be used in order to prevent a further delay in the development of evaluation culture and capacity in Romania and in the countries with similar traditions.

In the present study, we propose a debate on whether leadership could be one of the levers that could help the development of the evaluation culture and capacity. Why leadership? Because it is one of the most flexible and most influential organizational realities.

Leadership capacity is greater if based on one or more power sources. These sources of power derive, on the one hand, from specific job title within the organization structure and, on the other hand, from the personal skills of the leader.

Let us present the way different sources of power could lead to the development of evaluation culture and capacity. In doing this, we'll use the definitions and classifications given by John French and Bertram Raven (1959).

Reward is one of the fundamental sources of power. It is based on the belief that a person has the ability to reward another person in exchange for loyalty and obedience. Speaking of organization, the reward may be materialized in the form of salary increases, promotion, or another form of recognition. Leaders can use reward to stimulate the subordinates. Can leaders contribute to the development of the evaluation culture and capacity? The answer is yes, they can. In the same time, they could stimulate the capacity of the subordinates to improve their performances and be more competitive for the rewards.

Leaders could encourage subordinates to:

- use detailed plans for operational activities,
- set concrete and measurable objectives of their actions and interventions,
- systematically collect data for every intervention they are involved in,
- use the information they collect to figure out how things work,
- make the information accessible for all those interested in,
- make transparent the degree of accomplishment of the objectives all across the intervention, or in charge of,
- permanently monitore activities specific to an intervention they are involved in or responsible of,
- make transparent the expenses of an intervention they are in charge of every moment of the implementation process. This way, leaders can encourage the development od the evaluation culture and capacity.

What would be the gain for such an effort? Leaders could use the information generated by the monitoring and evaluation system in order to reward their subordinates. Consequently, they can improve their leadership capacity and power. At their turn, subordinates could be more successful in finding the best ways to perform their activities and to compete for rewards.

Coercive power is based on the belief that a person has the ability to punish the other person to convince it to follow an order. This can be used to stimulate subordinates to do the actions mentioned above by limiting their privileges when they do not comply.

Expertise and information are two of the most important sources of power for leadership, especially in a complex and technically evolved environment as today's society. Program evaluation can deliver both expertise and information. Evaluation reports can reveal the necessity of continuing, interrupting or changing the implementation of an intervention. These are relevant information pieces for the leadership process. What is more, evaluation can filter pieces of valuable information from those unnecessary.

The leaders' authority is subjective, psychological and moral in nature as opposed to the forms of influence based on material resources or physical coercion. In an organizational framework, the development of an evaluation culture and capacity can both support and be supported by leadership.

People are willing to follow certain rules and to obey those in leadership. Leaders can use the information rendered by program evaluation system in order to increase their power. And they can use the power in order to support the development of the evaluation culture and capacity.

In Romanian socio-economic environment, the evaluation capacity is at the very beginning of its development. Leadership could be a fundamental lever in this development. Just as in Max Weber's typology time, precedent and tradition legitimize the leaders in the eyes of his subjects, program evaluation findings can legitimize the leaders not only in the eyes of the clerks they lead, but in the eyes of the citizen as well.

Personal qualities of the leaders (according to Max Weber, part of the charismatic authority) definitely have greater impact if supported by data and facts extracted from evaluation reports. When we refer to the third type of authority postulated by Weber as specific to the modern civilizations, namely rational legal authority it can easily be understood that program evaluation can bring valuable information and expertize to the leaders to increase their influence and power. Legal-rational authority comes, from a position based on internal rules of the organization. But when a person has a job that gives authority, but this position is overshadowed by factors such as lack of professional competence, we may speak only of official authority, and not a real one. In this case, program evaluation can be a good instrument to turn the official authority into a genuine one.

Conclusions

Program evaluation is not the ultimate solution for any problem in public or non-profit organisation, but its results can help influencing process in organizations. This is often associated with the use of forms of coercion (threats, sanctions).

Program evaluation and leadership does not imply the use of force, but the ability to make people really understand their mission and want to reach for their goals. There can be established a mutual relationship of support between leadership and program evaluation. If properly used, program evaluation results can be a strong instrument in leadership just as leadership can fundamentally encourage the development of evaluation culture and capacity.

Program evaluation can deliver both expertise and information which are two of the most important sources of power for leadership, especially in a complex and technically evolved environment as today's society.

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