



VEPR Pilot Review Report

Laura Trofin

VEPR Review Report

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| <p>Reviewee details <i>Reviewee name:</i> Laura Trofin <i>EES membership number:</i> 19350 <i>Email contact:</i> laura.trofin@qures.ro</p> | | |
| <p>Reviewer details Lead Reviewer <i>Full name:</i> Riitta Oksanen <i>Email contact:</i> ri.oksanen@kolumbus.fi Second reviewer <i>Full name:</i> Ian C Davies <i>Email contact:</i> idavies@capacity.ca</p> | | |
| <p>Review details <i>Date/s of review meetings:</i> 15.03.2017 <i>Medium of review meeting/s:</i> Skype <i>Comments:</i> Nil</p> | | |
| <p>Review focus areas (summarised in 25 words maximum)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Determinants of evaluation use: “(overly)rigorous methodology” versus “relevance to the needs of the evaluation beneficiary Approaches for setting aside the challenges posed by poor data quality/availability | | |
| <p>Capabilities explored</p> <p>2. Knows how to engage constructively with all stakeholders (1.23) / Reaches out to clients and stakeholders (3.2) / Responds to legitimate stakeholders’ needs and concerns (2.11)</p> | <p>Learning by reviewee (total 750 words)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality only does not trigger evaluation use, which is essential for the overall success of evaluation. Further than quality and a conducive environment, the “relevance” of the evaluation results to the needs of the decision makers and the manner in which the evaluator manages to convince the stakeholders, including decision-makers, of the benefits of the evaluation carried out are also of major importance. Each evaluation exercise carried out (by me/QURES) will maximize the consultation rounds with the stakeholders, to adequately understand their needs and the evaluation methodology and dissemination approach will be designed coherently with these needs. I should refresh/improve my abilities on public speaking/strengthen them through the means of a dedicated course. To make sure that the population benefits of evaluation carried out, we should monitor more closely the extent to which evaluations’ | <p>Reviewer comments on reviewee learning</p> <p>RO: Laura’s self-reflection resulted in her thinking about evaluation beyond its technical quality. She developed approaches for understanding the information needs of the users of evaluation results. She also identified ways of following-up the effects of evaluations. She foresees professional development mainly through adopting new approaches in her evaluation practice.</p> <p>ID: Laura has broadened and deepened her thinking and approach to “the value of evaluation” as well as identified communication as a key factor to promote evaluation use.</p> |

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| | <p>recommendations were followed up/implemented and if this triggered effects on this target group</p> | |
| <p>3. Data collection and analysis (1.31)/ Indicators, rating and monitoring systems (1.35)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (My own reflection, after listening to the discussion one more time: when I am developing evaluation designs I should always try to fit a face-to-face or at least a phone survey in the budget at disposal). • “Evaluability assessments” (EAs) should be carried out systematically, for each evaluation theme planned under 2014-2020 and see if costs of data collections counterbalance the need for information. To investigate whether this can be done together with students in the MA & PhD evaluation programme in Bucharest. • EAs do point out problems, clarify why data is lacking and can make recommendations to increase the evaluability of an intervention but existing conditions will never be perfect thus the key point is actually to identify, through EAs, approaches which would allow the evaluation to be carried out in unfavourable conditions/lack of favourable conditions, e.g. lack of data or poor quality of data. • In this particular regard (data/indicators) it is true that “monitoring is a management task” and inadequate monitoring mechanisms indicate management gaps. The evaluation should adapt to the capacity of the management and without overburdening it, provide something useful to the management. This can be done if evaluators (me) understand why data is missing and identify the approach to compensate for this situation and still come up with useful results / add value, as well as by involving (if possible) in the evaluation and its follow up the actors who may determine/decide on a change (to be determined on a case by case basis). To integrate this directly in the TPs under preparation. | <p>RO: Laura is thinking about evaluability assessments as a means to address situations where she meets e.g. data challenges. Her thinking of how evaluations can support management is developing.</p> <p>ID: Laura has deepened her understanding of the practical considerations that are involved in methodological choices, and clearly outlined how evaluation and management (including monitoring) are distinct yet complementary and mutually reinforcing.</p> |
| <p>4. Understands program theory and its implications for evaluation (1.14)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I added this capability from the EES framework because indeed I think it is essential to (re)construct the ToC for the interventions evaluated. We have done it before and we will mainstream this approach into all our evaluations. | |

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| <p>Other gains from the VEPR review</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The biggest gain from the VEPR was having the focus of my professional activity “rebalanced”: I am shifting from a rather “narrow” focus on methodological aspects to a more complete picture in which I develop “selling” strategies for a good product (=a good evaluation). Communication would be a main part of the “selling” strategy. <p>Quality&use of evaluation overall Going deeper into some matters (a process triggered by the questions asked) I realised the key aspects which determine my discontent with evaluation quality. Among these, the aspects which I can work on (short run, up to 1 year):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the data analysis methodology and dissemination methodology need to be thoroughly developed and applied (and by this I mean comprehensively, completely, applying innovative techniques, addressing all stakeholders through specific channels and with specific messages for each category of stakeholders in order to INFLUENCE evaluation culture) – I have started to work on both matter with a collaborator of mine, young graduate from the Evaluation MA and PhD programme in Bucharest I mentioned to you during our discussion. The output of these two pieces of work will be taken up in technical proposals but also in the QURES newsletter, to be issued every 3 months, and sent to the evaluation community in Romania (b) (re)constructing the Theory of Change should be the starting point of each evaluation, no matter if this is required. This (re)construction should help the beneficiary to better articulate his/her’s intervention in the future, not to change its objectives, the way they were initially set. Some sectoral expertise will be needed in certain situations, when we do not have it in the house – Qures network needs to extend. <p>Seeing things in a wider perspective, and in medium/long run, INFLUENCING evaluation culture is as important as quality of evaluation for the evaluation use and, consequently, for an increase of</p> | <p>RO: This was an interesting review because the two reviewers had different views on some of the issues. I ended up doing some self-reflection myself, particularly on the relationship between evaluation and management, and how important it is to continuously develop that relationship. It is however often very difficult to do that in an on-going evaluation process because of real world pressures. How can we best organise time and space for developing the evaluation function? Great learning opportunity!</p> |
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| | <p>the number of evaluations carried out and evaluation capacity.</p> <p>While “I cannot do everything alone”, I can be a pebble in a pond. I am drafting a light “action plan” to pursue this matter, which will include a couple of new ideas “crafted” of the concept of “influence”, such as: getting in contact with my network on evaluation in Romania and see what is the status-quo in terms of “community” and desire/interest to become part of it, both private and public (the two organisations in Romania are not very active at this point); organise workshops on evaluation with relevant NGOs (to contribute to the pressure on decision makers to carry out evaluations); continue with QURES data base, set up QURES newsletter, create “kids” corner on evaluation and maybe organise some programmes in schools; think about the best approach to influence decision-makers on the matter of evaluation (inwith the support of the stakeholder analyses which constitute the basis for dissemination/communication strategies – specific tools to be developed for this specific stakeholder group).</p> <p>Involve young evaluators in these actions.</p> <p>Learning new evaluation methods is also a short term challenge, this will be addressed through the measures presented in the portfolio</p> | |
| <p>Other comments on the review outcomes or process</p> | <p>Very useful, many thanks to VEPR manger and distinguished reviewers!</p> | <p>RO: Thanks to both Laura and Ian for the opportunity to learn together.</p> <p>ID: I’m pleased to have participated and contributed to this process which, again, has also provide me with insights and different perspectives to reflect on. Many thanks to my colleagues Laura and Riitta.</p> |
| <p>Declaration We declare that the VEPR review for Laura Trofin was completed on 12.6.2017 to the satisfaction in all aspects of the reviewee and the two reviewers.</p> <p>Signed Laura, Ian and Riitta have agreed on the report through e-mails.</p> | | |