



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# UNESCO EVALUATION INSIGHTS

## IOS EVALUATION OFFICE

# #7

MARCH  
2017



**EVALUATION INSIGHTS** provides a snapshot of UNESCO's work in evaluation. Its purpose is to share insights and ideas with all interested stakeholders and to feed into ongoing discussions about the contribution of evaluation to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

The Seventh edition of **EVALUATION INSIGHTS** is dedicated to the establishment of a UNESCO Evaluation Focal Point Network under the new UNESCO Evaluation Policy.

### UNESCO Evaluation Policy

The UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2014-2021 provides a normative framework for ensuring a stronger and more integrated system within UNESCO. The policy defines the evaluation system as consisting of two distinct yet complementary types of evaluation: *corporate evaluations* conducted/managed by the Internal Oversight Service's Evaluation Office and *decentralized evaluations* managed by UNESCO programme sectors at Headquarters and in Field Offices.

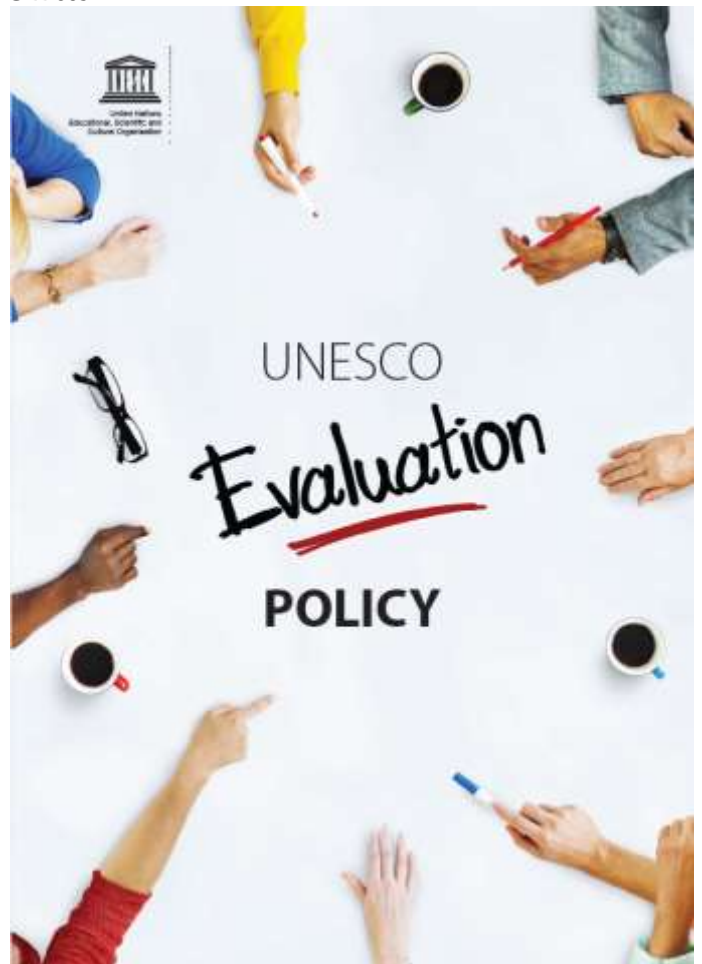
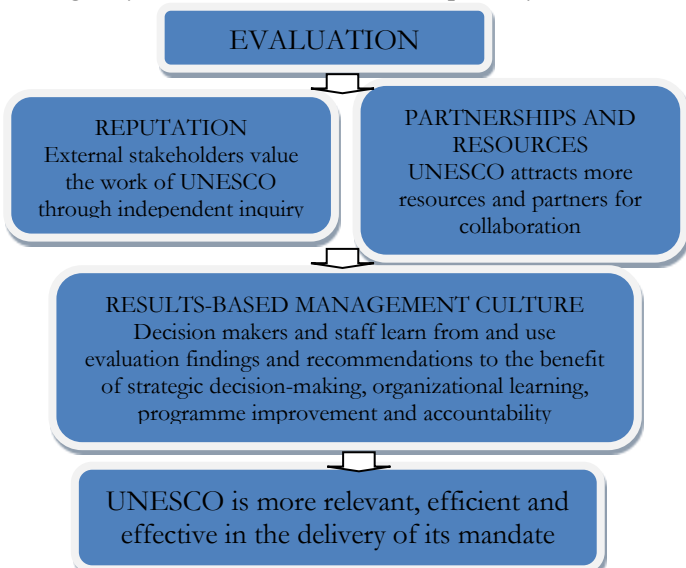
### What is evaluation and why is it important for UNESCO ?

Evaluation in UNESCO is defined as 'an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy...[that] focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand the achievements or the lack of.' (United Nations Evaluation Group)

Evaluation helps determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of interventions... (UNESCO Evaluation Policy)

It aims at providing evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, and at enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes.

Evaluations at UNESCO share the dual purpose of organizational learning and accountability. By generating evidence on what works, what doesn't and why, evaluations enable programme managers, senior management and UNESCO's Governing Bodies to make informed decisions about policy development and programming, to plan strategically and to allocate resources optimally.



### Who are Evaluation Focal Points?

UNESCO recently established a network of Evaluation Focal Points in order to strengthen staff capacities in managing decentralized evaluations across the Organization. Approximately 70 staff have been nominated to serve as focal points in every programme sector, field office and Category I Institute, each with an alternate.

Access the [UNESCO Evaluation Policy](http://www.unesco.org/ios) on our website: <http://www.unesco.org/ios>

## Why an Evaluation Focal Point Network?

A key challenge emerging from the different IOS studies and initiatives to strengthen decentralized evaluation practices has been the lack of a formal structure to ensure a more coordinated approach to planning, management and reporting of decentralized evaluations. Moreover, the capacities for managing decentralized evaluations are uneven across the UNESCO system.

By establishing an Evaluation Focal Point Network, IOS aims at strengthening evaluation capacities across the Organization through the provision of training, evaluation guidance and tools, and the establishment of a community of practice.

The benefits of the network to the Organization include higher quality and better use of evaluations, thus better evaluative evidence and learning on how programmes are making a difference; greater visibility of the Organization's work through more effective communication of evaluation findings; and better outreach to key partners and donors thereby creating opportunities for enhancing resource mobilization in support of the evaluated programmes.

## What are the roles and responsibilities of Evaluation Focal Points?

Evaluation Focal Points are not responsible for undertaking decentralized evaluations themselves. They are, however, expected to support the planning, management, quality assurance and use of decentralized evaluations for which their Sector, Office or Institute is responsible.

Evaluation Focal Points and their alternates are to liaise with programme specialists, other focal points and the IOS Evaluation Office to exchange information, experience and findings on past and future evaluations. They are further expected to maintain an annual evaluation plan of all extrabudgetary projects subject to evaluation and to assist with communicating evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned to wider audiences.

## What are the roles and responsibilities of the Internal Oversight Service Evaluation Office?

The IOS Evaluation Office is responsible for establishing an effective evaluation system to promote organizational learning and accountability for results. The Evaluation Office staff regularly backstop decentralized evaluations and will support and coordinate UNESCO's Evaluation Focal Points in managing and quality assuring evaluations.

Evaluation Focal Points and other UNESCO staff can turn to the Evaluation Office for guidance on evaluation procedures and methodologies, on past and future evaluations as well as for access to rosters of experienced evaluators.

## IOS Course on Managing Evaluation at UNESCO

UNESCO staff across the Organization have varying degrees of experience with managing evaluations. To ensure a more coordinated approach to planning, management and reporting of decentralized evaluations, IOS has launched a training course on managing and quality assurance of evaluation. A pilot course was organized at UNESCO Headquarters during 16-17 March 2017 for 16 staff from programme sectors and central services. Animated by Dr. Michele Tarsilla, an experienced evaluator and trainer, with the input and participation of staff from the IOS Evaluation Office, the two-day course aimed at providing participants with a sound knowledge of the main steps in the evaluation process, as well as methodologies and practices that can promote the conduct and use of evaluation across the Organization and beyond.

Feedback provided during the evaluation of the course confirmed that the training fully met and even exceeded participants' expectations, and was peaking their interest in evaluation, which was a rather vague field for many prior to the session. Among others, the participants appreciated the rich expertise and approach of the trainer, the chronological sequence, and the detailed examples and practical exercises. The need for more learning by doing through group work and more readily available resources and materials on evaluation methodologies and practices were also identified. The feedback from the pilot session will feed into improvements for the upcoming training sessions for colleagues in field offices.



## Upcoming training courses in evaluation

The IOS Evaluation Office is organizing a series of training courses for Evaluation Focal Points in UNESCO Field Offices.

Beirut: 9 – 11 May 2017

Nairobi: 28 – 30 June 2017

Dakar: 3 – 5 July 2017

Bangkok: 13 – 15 September 2017

Santiago: 25 – 27 September 2017

Paris: additional dates to be decided

IOS Evaluation Office staff look forward to meeting the Evaluation Focal Points around the world and building this important community of practice together!