

Ukrainian Evaluation Association (UEA)

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UEA Development, Membership and Management

The Ukrainian Evaluation Association (UEA) is a non-governmental professional association in the field of evaluation of projects, programs, policies and organizational development in Ukraine. It was created in July 2011 as an informal network of professionals, until in June 2013 it was officially registered. UEA has developed from a Facebook group to a wide network of people sharing one common mission and common goals.

The mission of the Ukrainian Evaluation Association is to support development, dissemination and use of evaluation in Ukraine, to improve decision-making in public, non-governmental and private sectors and to contribute to the development of evaluation culture. UEA operates based on the principles of independence, transparency and legitimacy, ethics and corporate social responsibility, professionalism and efficiency, using the best international practices in the evaluation area. UEA acts on the basis of its statutes, which stipulate the principles of functioning, management and structure, membership procedures, decision-making mechanisms and the strategic plan for 2013-2015.

According to the UEA statutes, membership in UEA is individual and voluntary. Members are accepted on the basis of: personal application, completion of a membership form, and payment of membership fees. The vast majority of activities are done on voluntary basis. Official membership and the membership fee that amounts to 25 Dollar per year were introduced just at the end of 2013. In September 2013, the UEA had 13 members, a Facebook-group with 203 participants and an email contact list with 142 contacts. At the moment, the UEA has 32 official members and 256 followers on Facebook.

The UEA has a board and secretariat. Each member of the board is responsible for different aspects of the UEA development, including strategic planning, fundraising and communication. The UEA holds regular meetings with its members to exchange M&E experiences, and it has formed seven Topical Interests Groups (TIGs) (Evaluation of Social Programs, Evaluation in Public Sector, M&E Ter-

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minology, Evaluation of Environmental Programs, Training in M&E, Evaluation Standards, National M&E System) to facilitate discussions in particular fields of interest of its members.

UEA Activities and Achievements.

Due to the need of fostering common understanding of the usage of the monitoring and evaluation terminology in third, private and governmental sectors, from February to October 2012, the Ukrainian Evaluation Association conducted *the baseline study* “State of Evaluation Capacity Development in Ukraine: demand, supply, institutionalization.” In addition, the UEA organized, in partnership with the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), round-table and presentation of this baseline study in November 2012.

The study showed that the evaluation capacity in Ukraine currently is on quite a low level, and there are different interpretations of the key M&E terms in Ukrainian language by local representatives of business, donors and NGO sectors. Therefore, UAE members established a working group, and in April 2013 they started, with grant support by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Ukraine, a joint project on the development and adjustment of the key M&E terminology in Ukrainian language, with equivalents provided in English and Russian.

For July 2014, the team has already completed the final draft of the M&E glossary in Ukrainian language, which includes recommendations of four peer reviewers. In addition, it conducted 27 team meetings, prepared and revised 13 glossary drafts in total, and organized an open discussion of the M&E glossary on May 27, 2014 in Kyiv. Project updates were made public regularly and presented to experts of the field in the context of the UEA’s monthly meetings in 2013-2014. The completed draft of the M&E glossary is now in the final stages of editorial proofreading and is to be disseminated for the wide audience in autumn 2014, in order to contribute to reaching an agreement and common understanding of evaluation terminology with the aim of standardizing evaluation practice in Ukraine.

As a result of starting the activities on the M&E glossary development and the contact with international communities during a set of international European and US evaluation conferences, the Ukrainian Evaluation Association came into a process of identifying and codifying its own national system of evaluation standards.

In June 2013, the UAE has joined the international peer-to-peer support program called “The joint process on revisiting the DeGEval Standards for Evaluation and the SEVAL Standards for Evaluation: Lessons learned on using standards and recommendations for the implementation of standards in a young evaluation Society.” The project involved the DeGEval – Gesellschaft für Evaluation e.V. (Germany and Austria, DeGEval), the Schweizerische Evaluationsgesellschaft/Société suisse de l’évaluation, Switzerland (SEVAL), and the Ukrainian Evaluation Association (Ukraine, UEA); it includes discussing the revision of the DeGEval and SEVAL standards, exchanging documents, and conducting a workshop held in Berne, Switzerland on November 1, 2013.

As a result of attending the workshop in Berne by the Ukrainian side of the project, information obtained on challenges and advantages of the usage of evaluation standards for professional evaluation were presented to all members of the Ukrainian Association of Evaluation in November 2014. The discussion of lessons learned covered questions like: are there any national aspects of evaluation standards and a quality definition in Ukraine? Does the young democratic society have enough qualified experts in evaluation to spread evaluation culture in Ukraine? And what are the best practices of societies experienced in developing a system of professional evaluation (e.g. in Canada, Germany, France, Switzerland, USA, taking into account the workshop in Bern with the DeGEval and the SEVAL)?

The UEA working discussion resulted in establishing a working group on UEA evaluation standards in late November 2013. The first draft of UEA standards was prepared and processed by the working group from December 2013 to January 2014. The second draft of UEA standards with additional edits and comments was to be reviewed by UEA members in early February 2014. Due to lessons learned during the workshop discussion in Berne, the UEA members decided to start the process of preparing the UEA evaluation standards by formulating its key principles, including a clarification of basic terms of evaluation as well as national specifics of evaluation practice in Ukraine.

Moreover, based on experiences of the DeGEval and the SEVAL, presented in shared documents, protocols and in detailed discussions in the workshop on revising evaluation standards in Berne, the UEA understands that the basic steps for young societies in developing evaluation standards are:

- scrupulous clarification of a glossary for evaluation key terms with taking into account the national context and the audience to whom this information will be presented;
- studying best practices and preparing a checklist to develop a specific, systematic, concise, and understandable set of evaluation standards that meets quality standards;
- understanding the applicable meaning of evaluation standards as an instrument for professional evaluation and adapting evaluation principles from theory to practice;
- language of evaluation standards should be understandable and clear;
- process of elaborating evaluation standards should be as open and inclusive as possible to include all possible stakeholders to build a shared understanding of the key principles;
- consideration of the need to spread the culture of evaluation and evaluation standards in wider collaboration with academic institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations through a number of public trainings, conferences and presentations as well as the application of a creative approach to introducing evaluation standards to evaluators and the general public, promoting evaluation culture as a part of democratic values and freedom.

Starting the development of evaluation standards, the association should decide on a general approach to evaluation standards (general principles or detailed standards),

the structure of the standards, the process of elaboration (working group, discussions, procedures) and a dissemination strategy.

From June 2011 to September 2013, the UEA held 19 working meetings. Due to the political situation in Ukraine, the UEA held only two meetings in 2014.

The UEA organized and conducted a Skype conference with the Slovak Evaluation Association; conducted an assessment of the needs and interests of UEA members; developed – in partnership with the Ukrainian Philanthropists Forum – a training course in M&E called the “Alphabet for Evaluation of Charitable Projects and Programs” and conducted two series of trainings for representatives of Ukrainian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in 2013 and 2014; developed a strategic plan for 2013 to 2015; became a member of the Ukrainian National Platform of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership and prepared two public annual reports.

In May 2014, the NAPA annual conference included the special section “Enhancement of M&E system of public policies, programs and projects.” The UEA invited the international expert Alexey Kyzmin to give a presentation in this section.

The Ukrainian Evaluation Association is a member of the Network of Evaluation Societies in Europe (NESE), the Eurasian Alliance in Evaluation and signed the “Chiang Mai declaration of civil society on uniting efforts aimed at improving evaluation” at the International Forum by the EvalPartners initiative (December 3-6, 2012, Thailand).

UEA future

Currently, the UEA works under political and financial constraints in Ukraine. Many activities were slowed down in winter and spring 2014. Ukraine passed through Euromaidan revolution and the election of a new president. Presently, there is an armed conflict in the Ukrainian regions of Lugansk and Donetsk in the East. Civil society is mainly focused on the assistance to the Ukrainian army, the injured people in hospitals and displaced persons from unsafe regions. On the one hand, due to increased budget expenses on military forces and economic crises, the state does not have any extra financial resources for program evaluation. The state budget has been cut considerably. On the other hand, public resource management has to be more efficient and effective. The current government seems to be more reform-oriented than the previous one. It promises new opportunities for evaluation development in the public sector. In spite of the difficult times in country and society, the UEA has survived and pursues its mission in new conditions.

The UEA’s main objectives for the coming two years are the following ones:

- organization of the National Evaluation Conference and Evaluation Year 2014;
- development of the UEA website;
- development of a fundraising plan and communication strategy;
- development of evaluation standards and an evaluators competencies framework;
- development of the concept of the National M&E system and its advocacy among representatives of the public sector;
- formation of an evaluators database and of an M&E Library.

UEA basic information:

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