



This is an abridged report of a need assessment carried out by the Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa and funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to determine the demand and supply side aspects of impact evaluation in five East African countries namely; Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

NIERA is an independent network of East African scholars who conduct rigorous evaluations of social and economic development programs. NIERA's vision is to improve lives and advance inclusive and sustainable development in Africa and a mission to advance [Decision-Focused Impact Evaluation](#) of development programs through capacity building, evidence generation and policy outreach.

Defining impact evaluation;

This study applied Gertler (2011) definition of impact evaluation as “an evaluation that tries to make a causal link between a program or intervention and a set of outcomes. It answers the question of whether a program is responsible for changes in the outcomes of interest¹.”

The Project was Undertaken to;

- Establish stakeholders' demand for impact evaluation.
- Document gaps and identify opportunities for decision focused impact evaluation.

Methodology;

A combination of desk review and semi-structured interviews with ninety eight key informants from Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Ethiopia was undertaken in 2019. The informants were active participants in the development programs eco-system; government, development institutions, academia, think tanks, research networks, consultants and private sector. Thematic analysis was applied to address the broad lines of inquiry while allowing flexibility to document emerging issues in each country. A composite report was then extracted to depict the East African situation.

Findings

- There is **general interest and appreciation by government and development partners to demand use of impact evaluation** in policy making and evaluation.
- Most impact evaluation **activities are implemented in partnership with development partners** in health, education, agriculture, energy, trade and infrastructure.
- The **demand for impact evaluation is pushed by development partners** who require rigorous evaluation and determination of social impact and value for money on projects that they support.
- Institutions of higher learning, private consultants, research networks and program implementers have a **need to build substantial institutional capacity to conduct impact evaluations**.
- There is **limited use and uptake of impact evaluation across all the countries** due to limited financial resources, inadequate quantity and quality of technical skills, paucity of studies and low awareness and prioritization.
- There are pockets of **negative mindsets on usefulness of impact evaluation** with arguments that it is used as a tool to further political interests, has higher chances of inability to address ethical considerations.
- Most **policy makers do not have clarity on the difference between monitoring and evaluation and impact evaluation**.
- Governments in all the five countries have **intensified efforts and invested resources in monitoring and evaluation systems** in the last five years.

Conclusions

There are opportunities for;

- Raising **awareness and demonstrating value-add** of impact evaluation to policymakers and other stakeholders.
- Advocacy for **mainstreaming of impact evaluation** in national planning.
- **Situating impact evaluation as an integral practice in policy formulation** as well as project planning and management among practitioners.
- Exploring and fostering **strategic partnerships amongst professionals** who are conversant with impact evaluation methodologies, evaluation associations, sector working and technical working groups.

Recommendations

“The Supply side should focus on awareness generation, capacity building, decision-focused evidence generation and policy engagement to service demand in the impact evaluation space”

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