

December 2011

# EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

## Lecture plan

Please note that:

- The curriculum will follow in a later version. It will be approximately 1000 pages - primarily journal articles and evaluation reports. To obtain 10 ECTS students need to submit 1000-1200 pages, whilst 1500-1800 pages are required for 15 ECTS. The students must in preparation of the synopsis for the exam identify the difference between the curriculum and the required number of pages.
- The course consists of fourteen two-hour sessions. The students are expected to prepare and read before each session.
- The texts in the syllabus can be downloaded on Absalon. Selected texts will be distributed in class.
- The PowerPoint slides presented in class will be made available on Absalon (after each session). Please note, that the slides are not part of the syllabus, nor can they substitute for the syllabus.

Lecturers:

- Ole Winckler Andersen (Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) (OWA)
- Jens Anders Kovsted (FØI, University of Copenhagen) (JAK)
- Eva Jakobsen Broegaard (Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) (EB)

Time and place:

Centre of African Studies, Auditorium 12,

Friday mornings: 09.15 to 11.00 from 10. February to 25. May 2012.

Please note that week 14 (Easter holiday), week 18 (St. Bededag) are exempt from teaching.

#### **10. February 2012: Introduction (OWA).**

The lecture will provide a general introduction to the evaluation of development assistance as well as outline the structure of and motivation for this course. The lecture will include a (short) introduction to the development of and context for evaluation of development assistance. The lecture will also outline and discuss what separates this form of evaluation from other types of evaluation and analysis. The motivation(s) for evaluating development assistance will be discussed, as will the different criteria and standards governing key stakeholders within the area.

#### **17. February 2012: Central concepts and discussions (OWA).**

The lecture will present and discuss central discussions and concepts within evaluation of development assistance. This includes: the notion of causality, the missing counter-factual, and attribution/contribution.

The key question of whether an evaluation should restrict itself to establishing the effect (or lack of) of an intervention, or whether it should seek to understand and explain the outcome will be considered. Discussions of whether (and how) evaluators should proceed to open the “black box” will lead to an introduction of the development results chain that links the activities of an intervention through a series of logical steps of cause and effect to the desired development impacts. Sometimes, this or similar concepts are also referred to as programme theory, a programme theory of change or impact pathways.

The lecture will also provide an overview of the different types of evaluations that arise from the availability and structure of available data and information. This includes “before and after” observations and “with or without control group”. In this context the methodological and conceptual aspects of the trade-off between the desire to measure medium- to long-term effects and the problem of plausible attribution will also be discussed. Finally, the simultaneous use of multiple methods and the possibilities for triangulation will be discussed.

#### **24. February: Quantitative methods, Part I (JAK)**

The past decade has seen a rapid (and continued) proliferation and use of quantitative methods within the evaluation of development assistance. Accordingly, this (and the subsequent) lecture will present the underlying intuition and logic behind the most widely used quantitative methods.

The subjects covered over this (and the subsequent two) lectures are:

- Data. The structure and characteristics of different types of data sets and key ways of describing data.
- Sampling. How can you assess the quality and uncertainty of a sample? What are the different types of sampling and where and how should sampling be considered when evaluating development assistance

- Regression analysis. How can we isolate and assess the relationship between the (desired) impact and the intervention? Regression analysis assists towards this objective by estimating the conditional expectation of the impact variable given the average and fixed value of the other variables describing both the context and the intervention we want to evaluate. In addition, techniques to address challenges related to selection issues (i.e. instrumental variables and discontinuity regression) are also explained.
- Single and double difference. How can we assess developments over time and across groups when we have and when we don't have a control group?
- Matching. Seeking to identify a control group after the intervention (conducting a quasi-experimental evaluation) will typically utilise some form of matching on observables.

In addition, to the above-mentioned methods the lectures will also consider complexities such as: selection bias confounding, spill over effect (externalities), and heterogeneity.

Please note, that the objective of these three lectures is not to enable all students to undertake quantitative evaluations on their own (as this would require a separate quantitative course), but rather to enable the students to understand and critically assess existing quantitative evaluations and to discuss the choice of methods when designing a new evaluation.

## **2. March 2012: Quantitative methods, Part II (JAK).**

See previous lecture.

## **9. March 2012: Quantitative methods + introduction to synopsis and exam, Part III (JAK).**

The lecture will continue from the previous two and provide examples for discussion of the use of quantitative methods in the evaluation of development assistance.

In addition, an introduction to the process of writing a synopsis or a written paper for the exam is described as are possible topics for consideration.

## **16. March 2012: Qualitative methods, Part I (EB).**

The majority of evaluations of development assistance are, despite the recent debate about and relative growth in the use of quantitative methods, still conducted with an emphasis on qualitative methods. This related to the way qualitative methods can allow an evaluation to include a complex range of development interventions and their possible interactions and impacts and – probably not least - to circumvent the lack of quantitative data.

This lecture will present and discuss both the methodological and practical motivations for use of qualitative methods. Some key qualitative methods and approaches used in the evaluation of development assistance will be presented; including the Participatory Rural Appraisal approaches and tools. The lecture will outline how qualitative evaluation methods are used to cover “stan-

standard” impact measures (i.e. income, access and assets) and behavioural responses (i.e. changes in attitudes, empowerment, etc.) as well as changes at the level of local civil society. Further, the strengths and weaknesses of the pragmatic use of qualitative methods in process-focused evaluations will be addressed.

Topics for discussion will include the question of “extractive” vs. participatory methods and the extent to which the methods rely on the empowerment and involvement of the intended beneficiaries in the evaluation of the intervention and the consequences this has for ownership, empowerment and validity (internal and external) of the evaluation. Strengths, weaknesses and considerations for a rigorous practical application of qualitative methods will be discussed.

### **23. March 2012: Qualitative methods, Part II (EB).**

See previous lecture.

### **30. March 2012: Combining qualitative and quantitative methods (JAK).**

The introduction to both qualitative and quantitative methods is the basis for this lecture, outlining the benefits and potential challenges associated with a combination of the two.

The lecture is to a large extent based on the analysis and assessment of actual examples of evaluations of development assistance that rely on mixed methods. Key issues for discussion include the degree to which the two approaches supplement and/or complement each other, and the constraints imposed by the budget demands, required timeframes, and the general comparability of the different methods.

The purpose of this lecture is thus to illustrate how the methods presented in the previous three lectures are used and how they may complement or replace each other depending on context and availability of information.

### **13. April 2012: The design of complex evaluations (EB)**

This lecture will demonstrate how the general considerations and methods introduced in earlier lectures are put to use in complex evaluations, involving multiple stake-holders and objectives in multifaceted programmes that (sometimes also) evolve over a prolonged period of time and are implemented by several different agencies.

Through case studies the following topics will be covered: methods to reduce complexity, the use of programme theory and result chains, the use of mixed methods and considerations regarding the appropriate lag between implementation and evaluation.

The purpose of this lecture is to illustrate to what extent and how the previously covered methods and discussions are put to use when designing complex evaluations, demonstrating the potential gap between theory and practice.

### **20. April 2012: The design of impact evaluations (JAK)**

The most recent trend in the evaluation of development assistance is the increased focus on measuring impact. Over the past decade the number and quality of impact evaluations being conducted by multilateral and bilateral development agencies, private foundations, and NGOs has increased substantially, leading to and often heated debate about whether and how impact should be measured.

The purpose of this lecture is to provide an overview of the factors responsible for the proliferation of impact evaluations, the methods used to conduct impact evaluations and the key strengths and weaknesses of these. Special attention will be accorded to randomised controlled trials and the debate between the “randomistas” and more mainstream evaluators.

As was the case with the previous lecture, the purpose of this lecture is to provide concrete examples of how methods and considerations are applied in real-life impact evaluations.

### **27. April 2012: Supervision of students (OWA)**

This and the subsequent lecture are reserved for student guidance, providing students with an opportunity to discuss the choice of topic, key questions and a broad outline for the synopsis or written paper. A schedule with individual counselling sessions will be made when the constellations across topics and groups are known.

### **11. May 2012: Supervision of students (JAK)**

See previous lecture.

### **18. May 2012: Using evaluations (OWA)**

This lecture focus on what happens after the evaluation has been conducted. This involves both an overview of the institutional and organisational systems in place to ensure follow-up and use of evaluations as well as theories that seek to explain the (perceived and actual) use evaluations.

By implication, the lecture will cover political economy theories, organisational theories and institutional analysis and cases and examples to illustrate potential barriers and how to overcome them. By focusing on the use and relevance of the finished evaluation this lecture completes the introduction to the evaluation of development assistance, enabling students to form a comprehensive, “cradle to grave” perspective on this type of evaluations.

In addition, an evaluation of the course will be conducted

**25. May 2012: Q&A session (All)**

The objective is to provide students with an opportunity to ask questions about the curriculum and the up-coming exam.