Building Institutional Capacity Within AEA: Opportunities and Challenges in Building Policy for International Engagement

Rodney Hopson, 2012 AEA President
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Layout of Presentation

- AEA Mission, Vision, and Values @ International
- AEA @ International
  - Focus on Policies
  - Focus on Membership
  - Focus on Strategy & Implementation
- Bottlenecks/Challenges
- Progress & Results
- Key Factors
- Lessons Learned
- Next Steps
**MISSION:** The American Evaluation Association’s mission is to improve evaluation practices and methods, increase evaluation use, promote evaluation as a profession, and support the contribution of evaluation to the generation of theory and knowledge about effective human action.

**VISION:** The American Evaluation Association’s vision is to foster an inclusive, diverse, and international community of practice positioned as a respected source of information for and about the field of evaluation.
VALUES

We value high quality, ethically defensible, culturally responsive evaluation practices that lead to effective and humane organizations and ultimately to the enhancement of the public good.

We value high quality, ethically defensible, culturally responsive evaluation practices that contribute to decision-making processes, program improvement, and policy formulation.

We value a global and international evaluation community and understanding of evaluation practices.

We value the continual development of evaluation professionals and the development of evaluators from under-represented groups.

We value inclusiveness and diversity, welcoming members at any point in their career, from any context, and representing a range of thought and approaches.

We value efficient, effective, responsive, transparent, and socially responsible association operations.
1. Evaluators: AEA will help its members to do its goals A-H; Specifically, AEA will work towards achieving the Evaluators Goals Policies through the following activities and programs:
   - 1.8 Internationally Focused Programs: AEA will offer internationally-focused programs and services. (Goals A, H)
   - 1.8.1 AEA will designate a representative to a major international organization.
   - 1.8.2 AEA will offer a joint membership program with the Canadian Evaluation Society.
   - 1.8.3 AEA will offer a range of other internationally-focused programs.

4. AEA: AEA as an organization will:
   - B. collaborate with national, regional and international organizations that are aligned with AEA’s values to promote evaluation as a profession, improve evaluation practice, and increase evaluation use;
   - C. collaborate with national, regional and international evaluation user groups and audiences to promote evaluation as a profession, improve evaluation practice, and increase evaluation use and influence;
1. Evaluators: AEA will help its members to:

A. form a community that spans culture, discipline, and geography;
B. develop continuously as knowledgeable, effective, culturally competent, contextually sensitive, and ethical professionals;
C. teach and learn evaluation in diverse professional settings;
D. develop new knowledge about evaluation and disseminate and transfer it widely;
E. use a multicultural lens to engage diverse communities in evaluation effectively and with respect, and to promote cultural, geographic, and economic inclusiveness, social justice, and equality;
F. promote communication with and meaningful use of evaluation by stakeholders;
G. develop the capacity of communities and organizations to engage in evaluation; and
H. enrich the life of the association, as well as that of other organizations, fields, and disciplines that are aligned with the association’s mission.
Currently Underway

- Partnerships: AEA/CES Joint Membership, EvalPartners, International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), Statistics Without Borders, Catholic Relief Services
- Annual Conference – Reception, Silent Auction, Travel Awards, Conference Professional Development Workshops
- Virtual: LinkedIn, eLearning, International Coffee Break Demo Series, eStudy
- Topical Interest Groups (see chart on following pages)

Committed and Planning

- Virtual: Aea365, Headlines and Resources List, eLibrary
- Professional Development: International Development M&E Webinars
- Partnership: Pyongyang Summer Institute Planning Team
EVALUATION 2012

EVALUATION IN COMPLEX ECLOGIES
RELATIONSHIPS
RESPONSIBILITIES
RELEVANCE
AEA Membership by Year
MEMBERSHIP (n = 7755)

- International
  - 16%
- Students
  - 13%
- New
  - 16%
- Men
  - 31%

CONFEERENCE (n = 2824)

- International
  - 11%
- Students
  - 16%
- New
  - 36%
- Men
  - 28%
International Listening Project Task Force of Board, November 2010 to “develop strategies for learning what appropriate roles might be for AEA in the international community”

  - provided focus on institutional collaboration, communication, international presence, and evaluation capacity building

- Nobles Report (Jan, 2012): qualitative analysis of survey
  - suggested reciprocal global partnerships model and identified outcomes: strengthen evaluation field, improve U.S. evaluation, increase rigor of international evaluation, and improve AEA

- Parsons Report (July, 2012): interviews of key international stakeholders
  - offered critique that strategies and activities suggested BUT policy directions were unfulfilled
International Priority Setting and Engagement Task Force of Board, September 2012 - present

- Facilitate priority-setting and engagement strategies for Board for Priority Setting for FY 14 (Kuo, Julnes, Newcomer)

- Consult with Michael Q. Patton in planning Board meeting in October, 2012
  1) Offered reflections leading up to Board observation
  2) Provided observations and reflections at Board meeting
  3) Gave feedback and final reflections on Board focus “to resolve the broadest or largest policy issue”, need for Board’s focus on evaluation, and continued to delineate Board from ED roles and responsibilities
Bottlenecks/Challenges

- Underestimated transition to Policy Based Governance
  - Minding gap between policy and operations
  - Board continual understanding of policies

- Underprepared for International Listening Project efforts
  - ILP became ILP I, II, and III
  - ILP has tested Board patience in doing international work

- ED faces multiple requests from international individuals, groups and associations but without clear Board priority
  - Current AEA/ED Transition slowing priority efforts
Considerable sweat equity from Board and consultants regarding international listening and engagement

Groundswell of international projects, people, and plans currently and underway

AEA Board support and partnership of EvalPartners, including meetings in Beirut (July, 2012) and Chiang Mai (Dec, 2012)

AEA Board support of Chiang Mai Declaration
Key Enabling Factors

- AEA mission, values, goals, policies comprehensive and far-reaching
  - Examples and models of developing Evaluation Policy Task Force to assist and influence international engagement
  - Opportunity to learn from ways in which evaluation standards and guiding principles are influencing larger national environment

- Committed effort and support from President and Board leadership to place international listening as strategic priority

- Increasing and timely international issues reinforce importance of evaluation globally
Lessons Learned for other VOPE Leaders

AEA’s commitment to international engagement has focused on ensuring our internal policies and priorities are clearly defined.

AEA’s institutional capacity in international engagement efforts are primarily low-hanging fruit (i.e. targets or goals which are easily accessible and which do not require a lot of effort).

Developing more target or goals not considered low-hanging fruit require more investment, strategy, and continual vetting with key stakeholders.
Next Steps

- January and February, 2013 Board discussions on international priority setting and engagement
- ED in process of developing more low-hanging fruit for consideration to international membership to present to the Board in January, 2013
- Pay attention to AEA Board and Executive Director/AMC Transition during March-June, 2013