



CONCEPT NOTE

African School of Evaluation / École Africaine d'Évaluation

PROFESSIONALISING AFRICAN EVALUATION PRACTICE

02 FEBRUARY 2025



African Evaluation Association
Association Africaine d'Évaluation

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF
AFRICAN EVALUATION EXCELLENCE

CÉLÉBRER 25 ANS D'EXCELLENCE
DE L'ÉVALUATION AFRICAINE

Context

Evaluation plays an important role in the life cycle of public policies, helping to make informed decisions on the choice of projects and programmes to be designed, implemented or scaled up. The 2030 Agenda reinforces the role of evaluation at the heart of political reforms and development initiatives, especially in Africa, where the need to strengthen national evaluation capacities is more pressing. Indeed, the development of national evaluation capacities is not only intended to satisfy the requirements of donors, but more importantly to contribute to good governance (UNEG, 2012) in a context of declining standards of governance. According to the Ibrahim Mo Global Governance Index, a number of African countries (60%) are lagging behind in terms of good governance, with accelerated deterioration in some of them.

The growing demand for evidence to inform policy decisions and optimise resource allocation is accentuating the need for evaluation expertise in Africa. ¹However, although training courses have been set up, their impact on improving capacity remains insufficiently measured (Morkel and Rabasobama, 2017). ²These training courses, focus mainly on developing individual skills, without any systemic or structured approach (Masvaure and Fish, 2022). Furthermore, capacity building in evaluation in Africa is hampered by several obstacles: the lack of financial and human resources, the absence of adequate infrastructure and qualified trainers, and the lack of university courses dedicated to evaluation. In addition, the lack of regional coordination between training initiatives makes the offer even more fragmented (Michele, 2014), forcing countries to call on foreign experts, which increases costs and limits the sustainable development of local skills.

In view of the important contribution that evaluation could make to improving governance and public policy in Africa, there is an urgent need to create a favourable environment and opportunities for developing countries' individual, collective and national capacities. As a network representing the whole of Africa, the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) wants to co-create, with its partners, evaluation training courses meeting the thematic or disciplinary needs of stakeholders, through the African School of Evaluation (ASE) project.

This in-service training school will contribute directly to the professionalisation and autonomy of the evaluation practice in Africa, and hence to good governance. The ASE thus represents a strategic investment for AfrEA and its partners, who will benefit from the emergence of local skills in evaluation, and from the positive long-term impact on governance and development on the continent.

The following sections give a brief presentation of AfrEA, the rationale for the ASE, the objectives of the ASE, the expected results and their sustainability, the modalities of resource mobilisation and implementation, the selection process of participants, the awarding of scholarships, the timetable of the project as well as the proposed budget for the opening of a thematic class.

1 Measuring the effect of evaluation capacity building initiatives in Africa: a review, African Evaluation Journal Vol. 5, No. 1
<https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-6f350d017>

2 Strengthening and measuring monitoring and evaluation capacity in selected African programmes, African Evaluation Journal vol.10 n.1
10.4102/aej.v10i1.635

Presentation of AfrEA



AfrEA, founded in 1999, is the leading evaluation capacity building and advocacy organisation in Africa. Headquartered in Accra, Ghana, AfrEA serves as a coordinating body between national voluntary organisations for professional evaluation (VOPEs), evaluators and institutions across the continent. AfrEA is rich in the diversity of its membership, which has grown considerably since its inception. With 40 VOPEs across the continent, AfrEA supports the creation and growth of national evaluation associations. In addition, AfrEA has over 3000 individual members and enjoys partnerships with 14 development organisations. AfrEA is multilingual, representing English-, French- and Portuguese-speaking Africa, with a significant number of members from Arabic-speaking North Africa. The organisation has an impressive track record of 11 successful conferences in various African countries. Its latest edition, held in Kigali, Rwanda, in March 2024, once again underlined the organisation's ability to bring together key players and create memorable events.

AfrEA is dedicated to



Supporting evaluation that contributes to real and sustainable development in Africa.



Promoting African-rooted and African-led evaluation by sharing African evaluation perspectives.



Encouraging the development and documentation of high quality evaluation practice and theory.



Supporting the creation and development of national evaluation associations or VOPEs.



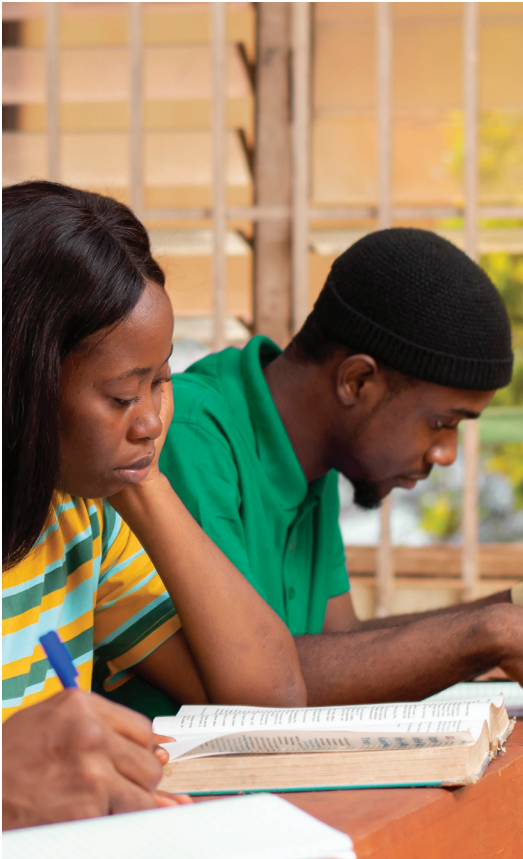
Facilitating capacity building, networking and sharing of evaluation theories, techniques and tools between evaluators, policy makers, researchers and development practitioners.



Encouraging the development and documentation of high quality evaluation practice, innovation and theory through the African Evaluation Journal.

In 2013, AfrEA launched the African Journal of Evaluation to enrich the body of evaluation knowledge on the continent. This indexed journal aims to promote a culture of peer-reviewed publication in the field of evaluation in Africa, stimulate knowledge networks and strengthen continent-centric collaborations, as well as give Africa a stronger voice in evaluation.

Rationale for the African School of Evaluation



The increased demand for evidence-based data on the continent, coupled with the shortage of evaluation skills, creates a major gap that the ASE aims to fill. In Africa, notable challenges such as the lack of specific training and the low number of degree programmes mean that many professionals acquire evaluation skills informally. The ASE initiative is aligned with AfrEA's strategic objectives, which aim to further professionalise the evaluation practice in Africa in order to strengthen local capacity and fill the expertise gap. The ASE therefore fits in with the Made in Africa Evaluation trend, which aims to think about evaluation in the African context by and for Africans (Chilisa, 2015).

The demand for evaluation in Africa has increased due to the failure of many projects and the desire to adopt results-based management, inspired by the Paris Declaration (2005). However, a weak evaluation culture and low local capacity limits informed decision-making and leads to heavy reliance on foreign experts (Smith and Morkel, 2018). Although several countries have taken steps to promote evaluation, African capacity remains insufficient to meet this demand (Walker, 2020). This skills gap, particularly in the public sector, hampers the effectiveness of development policies and highlights the need to train local evaluation experts to meet governance and development needs. Indeed, the lack of degree courses in evaluation in Africa contributes to the shortage of qualified professionals (Mbeck, 2018).

In French-speaking countries, specific training courses are rare, and are often limited to project management or public finance modules. Existing training courses, such as those offered by CLEAR FA, the West Africa Capacity Building and Impact Evaluation Programme (WACIE) or the École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP, Quebec), are mainly of short duration and do not meet the need for training in evaluation, particularly on specialised topics. Although some African universities (including the International University of Rabat in Morocco and the African School of Economics in Benin) offer degree programmes in partnership with foreign

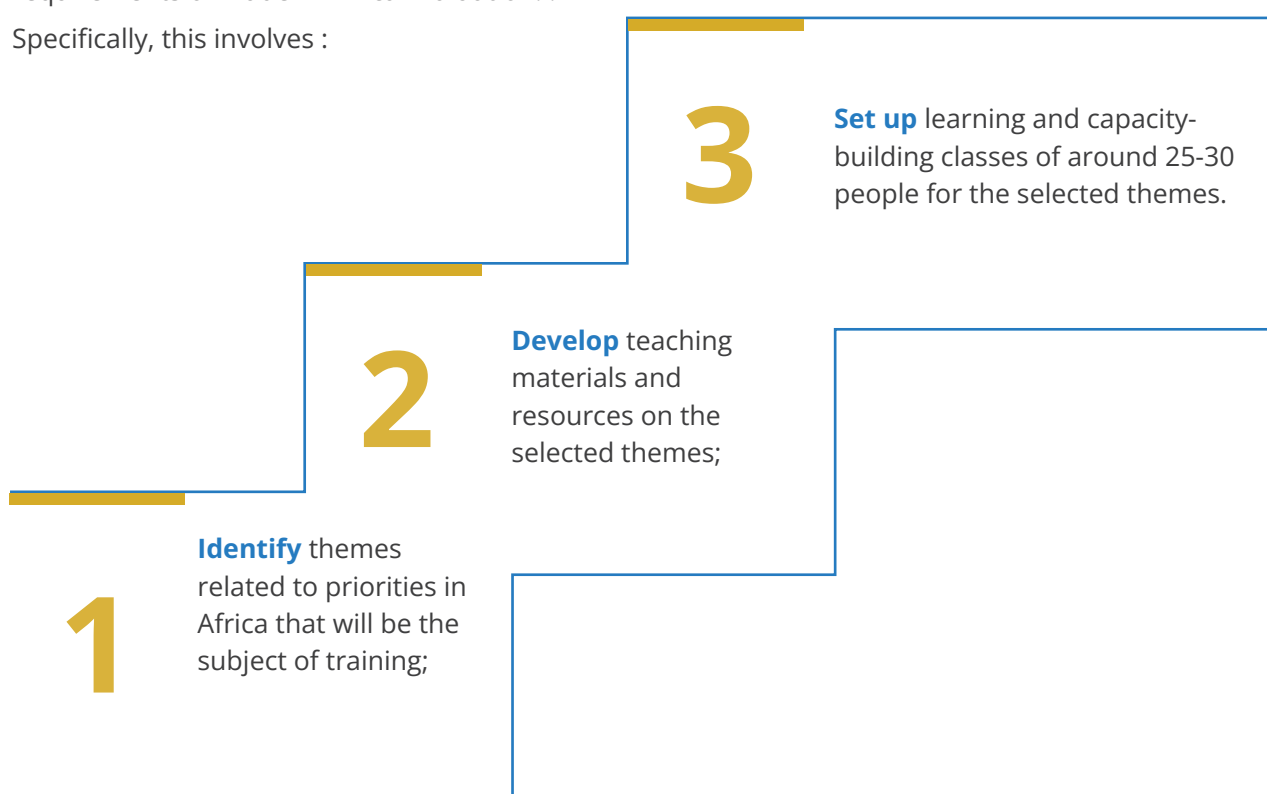
institutions, their number remains low and their programmes, which are often limited, struggle to meet the growing demand. As a result, ASE is emerging as an alternative way of building evaluation capacity in Africa.

In contrast, English-speaking African countries benefit from a much more developed and specialised training offer in evaluation, thanks to several key factors. Firstly, these countries established a tradition of evaluation earlier, integrating the practice into their performance management systems and public administration programmes. Secondly, regional initiatives such as CLEAR AA (Center for Learning on Evaluation and Results - Anglophone Africa) have strengthened local evaluation capacity by offering training programmes tailored to the specific contexts of each country. In addition, some universities, such as the University of Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town in South Africa, offer degree courses in evaluation. Finally, English-speaking countries benefit from strong partnerships with specialised international institutions, giving them access to high-quality training and international expertise. In addition, there are extensive resources available in English on evaluation that promote learning and the development of skills in this field.

Objectives of the African School of Evaluation

The overall objective of the African School of Evaluation is to train a new generation of certified evaluators capable of carrying out quality evaluations that meet local needs and international standards, and the requirements of Made in Africa Evaluation. .

Specifically, this involves :



Expected results

At the end of each session, the following results will be achieved:



Priority areas for evaluation training are identified;



Material and teaching resources are available for each theme of the School of Evaluation;



African evaluators have developed evaluation skills in the areas covered by the School of Evaluation;



A community of practice for the evaluation school is up and running.

Target audience

These courses are aimed at evaluators and anyone else wishing to develop specific skills in evaluation issues.



Date, duration and location

The training courses will take place in July or August of each year for a period of one week. The venue will be determined in agreement with the partners.

The first edition of the ASE will be held in November 2025 in Accra (Ghana)

in order to capitalise on the regional commitment to evaluation. With this in mind, the University of Accra is a strategic partner for this first session.

Resource mobilisation and implementation arrangements

Funding for the first edition will be provided by technical and financial partners through sponsorship of the opening of thematic classes. Sponsorship of the thematic class will provide full funding for the participants and cover all related expenses. Subsequent stages will include the search for additional funding to guarantee the continuity of the training courses and the sustainability of the activities.

The topics will be selected on the basis of needs and priorities in Africa and in consultation with technical and financial partners to ensure that the training meets not only their expectations, but also the demand for evaluation of public policies and development programmes, while aligning with AfrEA's strategic plan for skills development.

Participant selection and funding procedures

A call for applications will be launched to enable interested candidates to submit their applications. A selection committee will be responsible for analysing each application according to criteria (including gender, African regions, etc.) previously established and validated by AfrEA and its partners. A limited number of scholarships will be awarded to encourage the participation of professionals from a variety of geographical and socio-economic backgrounds, with a particular focus on countries less represented in the field of evaluation. Paid registration will be available if demand exceeds the number of scholarships available. Successful candidates will receive a training certificate in evaluation, which will be credited towards AfrEA certification in evaluation following three ASE participations. This will enhance the employability and professional credibility of the beneficiaries.

Durability

Depending on the feedback from the first edition, a sustainable funding model will be considered for future editions, including paying options from the second year. The creation of an African School of Evaluation community of practice will also be dedicated to monitoring and evaluation. The aim is to bring together expertise, knowledge, ideas and networks, sharing a common foundation rooted in AfrEA.

ASE Scientific Committee

A scientific and academic committee will be set up to steer the pedagogical and methodological aspects and ensure compliance with AfrEA quality standards.

ASE's scientific and academic committee will be responsible for managing the pedagogical and methodological aspects of the training courses, in order to ensure their quality and relevance. Its main tasks will include defining quality standards, developing training content and ensuring alignment with development priorities in Africa. It will also have to define and validate teaching materials and teaching methods, and ensure that training courses are practical and focused on the development of concrete skills. The committee will also ensure compliance with AfrEA standards by setting up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It will also play a key role in the selection of trainers, guaranteeing their expertise and their ability to adopt appropriate teaching approaches. Finally, it will foster the creation of a community of practice by encouraging the sharing of experience and collaboration between trained evaluators, thereby contributing to the sustainability of skills and the establishment of an evaluation culture in Africa.

Draft calendar for the first edition of the ASE

Step	Description	Period
1. Initial planning	Drawing up the detailed project plan, setting specific objectives and setting up the project management team.	March 2025
2. Choice of training themes	Define the main themes in collaboration with the technical and financial partner, in line with the priorities of AfrEA's strategic plan and the evolving needs of the evaluation sector in Africa.	February 2025
3. Selection and validation of trainers	Identification and recruitment of experts/trainers for each theme, validation of profiles and contracting.	April - May 2025

Step	Description	Period
4. Validation of training materials	Development of teaching content and training materials, followed by validation by the scientific/academic committee.	May 2025
5. Logistics preparation	Booking of training venues, necessary equipment (audiovisual, instantaneous translation), and organisation of reception services.	May 2025
6. Advertising and communication campaign	Promotion of the African School of Evaluation via AfrEA channels, including social networks, newsletters and local partners.	May 2025
7. Selection of participants	Call for applications, evaluation and selection of participants according to established criteria, offering scholarships to selected applicants.	July 2025
8. Confirmation of registration	Sending of registration confirmations and logistical information to selected participants.	August - September 2025
9. Final preparation	Checking of final logistical details and finalisation of training schedules.	September - October 2025
10. Course schedule	Implementation of the African School of Evaluation during a week in Accra, with evaluations and feedback at the end of the course.	November 2025
11. Evaluation and final report	Evaluation of the training course, gathering feedback from participants and trainers, drafting of the final report including recommendations for future editions.	December 2025

Proposed budget for the opening of a thematic class

DESCRIPTION	DURATION (DAYS)	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	\$ UNIT COST (USD)	\$ TOTAL (USD)
Plane ticket	1	20	2000,00	40 000,00
Hosting	8	20	150,00	24 000,00
Perdiem	8	20	160,00	25 600,00
Conference room and associated equipment	5	1	3 360,00	16 800,00
Development/ preparation of training modules by trainers	3	2	500,00	3 000,00
Training costs	5	2	800,00	8 000,00
Delegation travel	5	20	60,00	6 000,00
TOTAL				123 400,00



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