ED 222 658                                                      CE 033 955

AUTHOR        Spaulding, Seth
TITLE         Evaluation of Adult Nonformal Education Programs: An
              International Perspective.
PUB DATE      Mar 82
NOTE          18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
              Comparative and International Education Society (New
              York, NY, March 18-21, 1982).
PUB TYPE      Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE    MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   *Adult Education; Adult Literacy; *Adult Programs;
              *Developing Nations; *International Organizations;
              Literacy Education; Needs Assessment; *Nonformal
              Education; *Program Evaluation; Rural Extension

ABSTRACT
        During the past 20 years, international and bilateral
assistance and funding agencies have become increasingly involved in
evaluation activities in adult and nonformal education, especially in
developing countries. The adult education field pioneered many
approaches now advocated by specialists in program and project
evaluation. Beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, United States
agricultural extension specialists did extensive studies on farmer
extension practices. In the 1950s and 1960s, international efforts
began to build on some of the earlier agricultural extension
concepts. Needs assessments, evaluation of adult education booklets,
and evaluation of UNESCO adult education, literacy, and reading
materials were all conducted. The UNESCO Experimental World Literacy
Program conducted 11 projects in the late 1960s to mid-1970s that had
built-in evaluation systems. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the
governing bodies of most international organizations stipulated more
evaluative efforts to provide data on the impact of various
organizational activities. Such evaluation efforts sensitized project
and program personnel in international agencies and in national
governments to the need for participatory evaluation specifically to
improve projects and programs. (A list of references is appended.)
(YLB)

EVALUATION OF ADULT NONFORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Seth Spaulding

University of Pittsburgh

Paper presented at the

Annual Meeting

of the

Comparative and International Education Society

New York

March 18-21, 1982

2

In education, until recent years, the term "evaluation"
has been exclusively identified with the measurement of student
achievement. In the sixties and seventies, however, the notion
of project and program evaluation has gained momentum, largely
because of the increasing pressures from legislative bodies of
nations and governing bodies of national and multi-national
organizations to account for funds invested in education.

By the eighties, literature on project and program
evaluation was vast. Scholars in every social science discipline
from economics to anthropology, sociology and psychology and in
professions from education to public administration to social
communications have been involved in attempts at conceptualizing
what evaluation is and should be all about. If there is any con-
sensus among practitioners it is that evaluation can mean many
things to many people.

The most general (and perhaps useful) description of
evaluation is that it is the collection of information useful
in decision making, but there are those that also so define
educational planning (Spaulding 1974, 1979). This would suggest
a close symbiosis between evaluation and planning. Evaluative
activities, in such a context, involve collecting information
useful in project and program design ("needs assessment" and
"institution building" analyses); useful in making mid-course
corrections when the project is underway ("formative evaluation");
and useful at the end of the project or at certain major periods

in a program when cumulative information of summary nature would be useful to policymakers and administrators ("summative evaluation").

Other distinctions in various definitions suggest a difference between "norm-referenced" evaluation whereby a program is compared to standards previously set and "criterion-referenced" whereby a project is examined on the basis of whether or not it is reaching objectives it has set for itself (Werdelin 1977). More recently, evaluation specialists are suggesting "qualitative" or "naturalistic" evaluation approaches, as opposed to the highly structured, quantitative designs advocated by a number of economists and educational researchers grounded in econometric and controlled experimental studies (Guba 1981, Patton 1975, Kinsey 1981, Clark and McCaffery 1979). The "qualitative" approach generally stresses participation of all those involved in project and program activity and is thus often called "participatory evaluation." This section will trace the involvement of international and bilateral assistance and funding agencies and groups in evaluation activities in adult and non-formal education and will concentrate on activities in developing countries. No attempt will be made to catalogue evaluation efforts, but rather to identify trends and suggest selected references. Purely domestic evaluation activities, such as those funded in the United States by the National Institute of Education and other groups, are not included as these are well covered in other standard references such as the Encyclopedia of Educational

Research of the American Educational Research Association.

1.    Early Evaluation Efforts in Adult Education

A case can be made that the adult education field, broadly defined, has pioneered many of the approaches now advocated by specialists in program and project evaluation.

In the twenties and thirties, agricultural extension specialists in the United States did extensive studies on the effect of various extension practices on farmers. Generally speaking, such studies indicated that farmers are most likely to change practices when they see a demonstration of a technique on a farm similar to their own. Publications, radio programs, and face-to-face visits of extension workers reinforce efforts to change farming practice, but these various techniques in themselves/missed the mark because the change agent lacked an understanding of what the farmer already knows, thinks, feels, and does. Agricultural education specialists early practiced what would now be called "formative evaluation" when they tried out extension publications in order to see what farmers could read with ease, what words farmers know and use and which ones are used only by agricultural specialists, etc.

In the fifties and sixties, a number of international efforts began to build on some of the earlier agricultural extension concepts. UNESCO's Regional Center for Fundamental Education in Latin America (CREFAL), established in Patzcuaro, México, built into its training program various experiences involving the collection of information on the rural population

to be served by adult education activities. Such approaches
later would be called "needs assessment" and would be considered
important as an element of "formative evaluation."

Also in the fifties, the Organization of American States
(OAS), through its secretariat, the Pan American Union, estab-
lished the Latin American Fundamental Education Press, a program
involving the preparation and try-out of a series of adult educa-
tion booklets designed for adults of limited reading ability in
Latin America. This series included booklets in health, agri-
culture, civics, recreation, and other areas considered at the
time important in Latin American development. The series was
pretested in a number of Latin American countries by surveying
reading interests in village and urban areas; working with a
sample of adults in various socio-economic settings to see what
they could read, understand and remember of the booklets being
prepared; and evaluating the effect of various formats (e.g.,
illustrations and captions with text) on interest and compre-
hension.(Spaulding and Nannetti in Richards 1959).

During the same period, the Inter-American Institute for
Agricultural Sciences, headquartered at Turrialba, Costa Rica,
embarked on a series of activities, in cooperation with the OAS,
involving research and training in agricultural communications.
Again, the emphasis was on "needs assessment" (finding out about
the conditions in the communities to be served), on "formative
evaluation" (pretesting and trying out extension approaches and
materials), and on "summative evaluation" (doing follow-up

studies to ascertain what had happened as a result of the pro-
gram). These early efforts led to the establishment of a formal
department of agricultural communications at La Molina Agri-
cultural University in Perú, which has taken regional leadership
in training and research in this area.

UNESCO work in adult education, literacy, and reading
materials for the new literate during the fifties and sixties
stressed various kinds of evaluative approaches, often described
then as "topic testing," "pretesting," "posttesting," "study of
the environment," etc. (Spaulding 1958). In 1957, UNESCO held a
regional seminar on reading materials for new literates in Ran-
goon, Burma, which entailed the collection of information on village
needs, writing and pretesting of reading materials, and evalua-
tion of the impact of such materials. In 1956, a similar regional
meeting was held in Murree, Pakistan, which outlined evaluation
and research needs in the area of reading materials and literacy
programs (Richards 1959). UNESCO, the Ford Foundation and other
international groups assisted during the fifties a number of
national programs involved in the creation and evaluation of
adult education literature. Among these were the East African
Literature Bureau, the Burma Translation Society, the Bureau of
Ghanaian Languages, and the Marbial Valley Project in Haiti.
The East African Literature Bureau, headquartered in Nairobi,
was the host, in 1962, of a UNESCO-sponsored regional workshop
on the preparation of reading materials for new literates which
included authors, editors, publishers, and artists from both

English- and French-speaking African countries. Participants formed teams and worked in village areas to identify needs as felt by villagers and community development experts. They then designed reading materials which were tried out in villages, revised, and duplicated.

2. The UNESCO Experimental World Literacy Program.

In the mid-sixties, UNESCO proposed massive support for an experimental world literacy program, designed to combine social and economic skills training with traditional communication skills training. The United Nations Development Program (the usual source of support for such projects within the UN system) was approached to help finance the effort, but the UNDP was distinctly cool to the idea. Although economists had begun to treat formal education as investment rather than consumption, development thinking at that time had not made a strong case for investment in literacy and adult education. UNDP finally agreed, however, to finance several pilot, experimental projects, on the condition that UNESCO would build into each project an elaborate evaluative system designed to show how each project affected the behavior of individuals and communities involved in the functional literacy programs (Spaulding 1966).

Ultimately, 11 experimental projects were funded under the experimental effort, most of them becoming operational in the late sixties and terminating by the mid-seventies. Despite the efforts to design comparable evaluative procedures in each project beforehand, the local context of each project was such that

few comparable data were collected. Political problems plagued
the effort in that most governments wished a national literacy
effort rather than a pilot experimental project. Some projects
separated evaluation from program development, and the evalua-
tor (usually a social scientist) kept his or her distance from
the operational staff, while others considered evaluation to be
more of a formative variety, with the evaluator collecting data
to be shared with program developers in order to help improve
the project as it progressed.

In the mid-seventies, UNESCO established at headquarters in
Paris an "evaluation unit" which labored without success for some
months in an attempt to integrate-incomparable data of the-11
literacy projects into some kind of comparable reporting design.
Finally, two educators were invited to examine each case, to
summarize the findings of each, and to report on trends that were
evident between and among cases. The result was a joint UNDP/
UNESCO report which was generally well-received by the scholarly
community, but was somewhat controversial within UNESCO because
of its unbiased reporting of the problems as well as the suc-
cesses of the experimental program (Spaulding and Gillette 1976).

The report looked at the political and policy problems that
plagued the various projects; the administrative and organiza-
tional problems; the staffing problems; the cost of the projects;
the nature and effectiveness of the teaching materials and methods
used; and the apparent effect on people and communities.
Essentially, the report highlights the complexity of any attempt

to make major changes in an adult population through any one adult education or literacy effort; the need to adjust any such program to local conditions; the need to get policy-level support at the highest levels for success of any program; and the need to integrate such efforts into broader development plans. In terms of changed behavior on the part of participants, the adults in the various projects would adopt new practices only if they did not take much time, effort, or resources to accomplish.

3. Current Evaluation Activities

During the seventies and early eighties, the governing bodies of most international organizations called for more evaluative efforts in order to provide data which shows the impact of the various activities of the organizations. Both UNDP and UNESCO established offices of evaluation which, in turn, undertook to jointly evaluate a number of educational projects. UNESCO published guidelines on project evaluation to help short-term consultant teams brought in to do mid-term project evaluations (UNESCO 1979) and a manual on how to do structured evaluations of literacy programs (Couvert 1979). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) established, in October 1979, a major division for project evaluation which has produced a remarkable series of reports on various USAID-assisted projects in rural education, rural development and related fields, most with adult education components (i.e., Giovanni, Armstrong and Jansen 1981).

USAID has also supported a variety of evaluation efforts
through contracts with universities and consulting agencies.
The Stanford University Institute for Communications Research
and Academy for Educational Development undertook a series of
evaluative studies of the out-of-school education efforts in the
Ivory Coast, a program linked to a major television-based pri-
mary school reform in that country (Grant and others n.d.).
USAID has also funded the Center for International Education at
the University of Massachusetts which has developed collaborative
non-formal education programs in a number of countries, most with
evaluative approaches built into the programs (Kinsey 1978, 1981).
World Education, Inc., in New York City, has pioneered in needs
assessment and participatory evaluation approaches in non-formal
education in a number of countries and has similarly received
USAID support (e.g., Farmer and Papagiannis 1975). USAID, for a
number of years, supported work at Michigan State University
which included a Clearinghouse on Non-Formal Education within
which a number of project reports and evaluative studies have
been deposited (Non-Formal Information Center 1981). In 1976,
USAID funds helped establish the Institute for Development Anthro-
pology at Binghamton, New York, which has as its goal the appli-
cation of social sciences in development work. It has undertaken
a number of evaluative studies for USAID of rural and community
development efforts (Institute for Development Anthropology 1981).

Major studies funded by USAID and others include a three-
year effort by Florida State University to evaluate the extensive

11

work of Acción Popular Cultural (ACPO) in Colombia. ACPO, over

the years, has evolved a radiophonic education effort which

includes publications, volunteer monitors in many villages, and

a variety of adult education activities which are supported by

the communications infrastructure. The complexity of developing

and managing such a program and attracting continuing interest

of participants has been highlighted in this study (Bernal,

Masoner, and Masoner 1978, Morgan Muhlmann and Masoner 1980).

USAID also initiated in the early eighties a major demon-

stration of the uses of satellites to improve communication in

rural and community development. This effort will have a major

evaluation component. Liberia is the location of the first of

several country projects, each of which emphasizes the role of

communication in adult education. This effort is consistent with

an increasing concern of a number of funding agencies for the

integration of adult education services into comprehensive com-

munity development efforts (Coombs 1980).

The World Bank has an office which undertakes evaluations

of projects funded by the various regional bureaus of the Bank,

but most of these "audits" are for internal use only and are not

made public. Recently, however, the Bank began to encourage bor-

rowing nations to build into each project it funds a continuous

evaluation system which will provide information useful in

improving project performance as it progresses as well as cumu-

lative information to help in the ultimate summative evaluation

of the effort. The first such built-in feedback evaluation

mechanism, to cost several million dollars over a seven-year period, was developed in Papua New Guinea in 1980 as part of a primary education reform loan (which also included a small adult education component). An earlier such evaluation effort in a Bank-supported project in Pakistan was abandoned.

The Bank, in the mid-seventies, assisted the Saudi Arabian Government in a major evaluation of their adult education and literacy efforts, with the help of faculty from the International and Development Education Program of the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Linköping in Sweden, Ain Shaims University in Cairo, World Education, Inc., and other groups. This led to a major revision of the curriculum and materials used in the Saudi program, but the Saudi Government has never released the various evaluative and research reports prepared during the project.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has participated in a variety of evaluation efforts, often in cooperation with the International Council for Adult Education in Toronto and the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa (International Council for Adult Education 1979). The Swedish International Development Authority has similarly funded a variety of adult education projects with an evaluative component, including one to train adult educators in Portugal undertaken by the University of Linköping (Erasmie, Norbeck 1978). The Overseas Development Authority in the United Kingdom has funded a number of such overseas projects, especially through the University of Reading, which has a long-standing interest in agricultural and

rural development (Bowers 1977).

Finally, a joint UNESCO-UNICEF program of studies has issued an extensive series of reports which includes evaluative material on a variety of non-formal projects and programs for children, youth and women. And the UNESCO Regional Office in Asia hosts the Asian Program for Educational Innovation and Development (APEID) which has networked a number of institutions involved in evaluative studies of educational innovation in the region.

4.   Institutional Evaluation Policies

As can be seen from the selective review, above, most international evaluation efforts in non-formal and adult education have been motivated by multi-national and bilateral funding and assistance organizations. As yet, however, there is little agreement among and between agencies and governments as to what evaluation is all about.

Some in the agencies see evaluation as an exercise whereby "experts" are sent for a few days or weeks to look at a project in progress to decide whether or not it is meeting its objectives and whether or not any changes are needed in the project plan. Governing boards of international and funding organizations, in turn, see evaluation as a means of providing data to help them set priorities as to what should be funded in the future. National governments, project administrators and groups involved in projects, however, are more attracted to the idea of evaluation as a kind of management information system which can help pro-

vide data for ongoing improvement in project management and
design.

The picture is further complicated by the internal structures
of international and funding organizations.  Within the opera-
tional arms of many organizations, in-house evaluators (some-
times called "inspectors general" or "auditors") are often viewed
as meddlers.  If the evaluation unit of the organization is not
placed at a high enough level in the organization, and given suf-
ficient resources, autonomy and authority to do its work, its work
will be limited and its information will be little used in policy
making and operational decisionmaking.

Perhaps more importantly, evaluation efforts, to be effective
in improving program and project performance, must be built into
program and project activities with the idea of helping answer
questions which participants have.  External evaluations done by
evaluation specialists may serve a function, but until evaluation
is a state of mind shared by all participants in a program,
evaluation results will be less than fully effective.  For this
reason, a major function of any in-house evaluation unit should
be to help operational units within the organization in the
design of their own self-evaluation efforts.

5.  The Future

The past two decades have sensitized project and program
personnel both in international agencies and in national govern-
ments to the need for evaluative data on project and program
activities.  With increasing interest world-wide in non-formal

and adult education, there will be increasing interest in
evaluation efforts designed to provide information for the
constant improvement of projects and programs. Evaluation
models will increasingly stress participation of the target
audiences of non-formal and adult education efforts. Such
participatory evaluation in itself will be a powerful adult
education medium, consistent with current priorities on the
development of community-based non-formal education efforts
reflecting the needs and interests of local communities.

References and Further Reading

Bernal H, Masoner P, Masoner L 1978 Acción Cultural Popular:
    Pioneer Radiophonic Education Program of Latin America,
    1947-1977. International Division, Acción Cultural
    Popular, Bogotá, Colombia. Available from Learning Sys-
    tems Institute, Tallahassee, Florida   32306.

Bowers J 1977 Functional adult education for rural people:
    Communications action research and feedback. Convergence
    10 (3): 34-43.

Clark N, McCaffery J 1979 Demystifying Evaluation. World
    Education, Inc., 251 Park Avenue South, New York, New
    York   10010.

Coombs P H 1980 Meeting the Basic Needs of the Rural Poor:
    The Integrated Community-Based Approach. Pergamon Press,
    New York.

Couvert R 1979 The Evaluation of Literacy Programmes. UNESCO,
    Paris.

Bhola H S 1979 Evaluating Functional Literacy. Hulton Educational
    Publications, Ltd., Raans Road, Amersham, Bucks., England.

Erasmie T, Norbeck N 1978 Annual Report 1977/78: The Portugal Project.
    School of Education, Linköping University, Sweden.

Farmer J A, Papagiannis G 1975 Program Evaluation. World
    Education, Inc., 251 Park Avenue South, New York, New
    York 10010.

Giovanni R S, Armstrong L T, Jansen W H 1981 Thailand: Rural
    Non-Formal Education - The Mobile Trade Training Schools.
    U S Agency for International Development, Washington, D. C.
    (Project Impact Evaluation No. 25, PN-AAJ-171).

Grant S, Klees S, Lenglet F, McAnany E n.d. Final Report:
    Economic Studies and Out-of-School Education Program
    Evaluation for the Ivory Coast. Academy for Educational
    Development, 1414 Twenty-Second Street, N. W., Washington,
    D. C.

Guba E, Lincoln Y S 1981 Effective Evaluation. Jossey-Bass,
    San Francisco, California.

Institute for Development Anthropology 1981 Development Anthro-
    pology Network. 1(1):8 Bulletin of the Institute, P. O.
    Box 818, Binghamton, New York 13902.

Kinsey D C 1978 Evaluation in Non-Formal Education. Center for
    International Education, University of Massachusetts,
    Amherst, Massachusetts 01003.

Kinsey D C 1981 Participatory evaluation in adult and non-formal
    education. Adult Education 31(3): 155-68.

Non-Formal Education Information Center 1981 NFE Core Bibliogra-
    phies. Institute for International Studies in Education,
    Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824.

Patton M Q 1975 Alternative Evaluation Research Paradigm.
North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation Monograph Series.
University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota 58201.

Spaulding S 1958 Appraisal of publication effectiveness: Pre-
testing and posttesting. Fundamental and Adult Education
(UNESCO) 10(3): 124-34.

Spaulding s 1966 The UNESCO world literacy program: A new
strategy that may work. Adult Education 16(2):70-84.

Spaulding S 1974 Life-long education: A modest model for plan-
ning and research. Comparative Education 10(2): 101-113.

Spaulding S, Gillette A 1976 The Experimental World Literacy
Programme: A Critical Assessment. The UNESCO Press, Paris.

Spaulding S 1977 Educational planning: Who does what to whom,
and with what effect. Comparative Education 13(1): 55-67.

UNESCO 1979 Evaluation of Technical Cooperation Projects in
Education. Document ED-79/23/159. Paris.

Richards C G 1959 The Provision of Popular Reading Material.
UNESCO, Paris.

Werdelin I 1977 Evaluation. Manual of Educational Planning 9,
School of Education Linköping University, Sweden.

Seth Spaulding

International and Development
Education Program

University of Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh, PA 15260 USA