

Does it work? Can we know?

Evaluating Public Policies and Programs

API6339K – Capstone

Christoph Zürcher

Fall 2018

COURSE OUTLINE

Class schedule:	Monday	14:30 – 17:30
	Room	6004
Professor's office hours:	upon appointment	
	Office	FSS 6036
E-mail:	Christoph.zuercher@uottawa.ca	
On virtual campus:	Yes	

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

One of the catchwords of domestic and international public policies is “evidence based policy”. But how can we know whether a policy or a program works? Who wants to know and why? And what happens with this knowledge?

This course investigates these questions. Students will learn about the basic methodological principles of evaluating policies or programs, dissect a range of evaluations, get insights of what is typically happening with this type of knowledge in the maelstrom of bureaucracies, and learn how to collect, analyze and synthesize evidence which is useful for policy makers.

GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students understand the logic of causality and attribution
- ✓ Students gain a better understanding of the objectives of impact evaluations
- ✓ Students are familiar with various methods for conducting evaluations and are able to assess the quality of evidence
- ✓ Students learn how to collect and analyze evidence

Experiential Learning / Collaboration with German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Afghanistan / Pakistan country desk

For this course, we will collaborate with the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Afghanistan / Pakistan country desk. The Ministry plans to conduct an evaluation of its assistance to Afghanistan in 2019. A systematic review of international assistance of other bilateral and multilateral donors to Afghanistan will serve as an important background for the evaluation.

Our group will systematically identify and assess relevant assessments, audits and evaluations of bi-lateral and multilateral aid, such as the country level evaluations of Canada, UK, Sweden and Norway, evaluations of programs by World Bank , Asian Development Bank and UNDP, various stabilization and civil-military programs, and select programs by NGOs.

In order to identify reports by aid donors and scholarly literature, we will conduct systematic searches in relevant data bases.

Students will work in small teams. Throughout the course, we will interact with representatives from the Ministry. Towards the end of the course, students will present their findings to the Ministry.

The course is an exercise in experiential learning. The main objective is to produce real insights on real questions for real policy makers. Much of this class will feel like an applied research project, with ample room for independent scholarly work. Prior knowledge of the field of development is not required. Important are: the ability to work independently in teams, high flexibility, good time management, able to keep tight deadlines, good writing and presenting skills. An important first step will be to translate the questions which the Ministry is interested in into a series of manageable research projects. The exact structure of our final “products” will follow from there.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Participation (25 %)

Students are expected to: regularly attend courses; be able to summarize major points of assigned texts; participate in class discussions; demonstrate that they can apply concepts and theories to topics under discussion; deliver useful feedback on the work of their peers, work independently in groups on their own research project, keep deadlines, and contribute to the final report(s)

Written group assignment: Provide a search strategy (15%)

Students will develop in groups a search strategy for data base searches (based on the workshops in sessions 2 and 2). The strategy is due on September 20 at 23 pm and must be uploaded to Virtual Campus as pdf. Late submissions get 0%.

Individual written assignment: Critique of an impact evaluation (20%)

Students will independently choose one impact evaluation and critically review it. Length: 6 – 10 pages. The exam is due on October 9 at 23 pm and must be uploaded to Virtual Campus as pdf. Late submissions get 0%.

Written group assignment: Final report (40%)

Students will in groups work on an assigned part of the final report. The exact format of the final report will be determined during class, taking into account the needs and interests of our partner.

If you want to get a head start

I recommend that you read in preparation for this class the following texts:

William D. Savedoff, Ruth Levine and Nancy Birdsall. 2006 (May). *“When Will We ever learn? Improving Lives through Impact evaluation”*. Report of the Evaluation Gap Working Group. Center for Global Development. Washington, D.C.
http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/7973_file_WillWeEverLearn.pdf

Mark Petticrew and Helen Roberts (2008). *Systematic reviews in the social sciences: A practical guide*, ch. 1. Why do we need systematic reviews?”, available here:
here: <https://login.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/login?url=http://doi.org/10.1002/9780470754887.ch1>

Ravallion, M. (2001). "The Mystery of the Vanishing Benefits: Ms Speedy Analyst’s Introduction to Evaluation." *World Bank Economic Review* 15(1): 115 - 140.

NORAD 2016. Country Evaluation Brief 7/2016. Afghanistan
https://www.norad.no/contentassets/d0f097b6ecc34cc888dae33e94ff741c/7.16-ceb_afghanistan.pdf

Components of Final Mark

Evaluation format	Weight	Date
Participation	25 %	
Search Strategy	15%	September 20, 23:00
Written assignment	20%	Due Oct 9, 23:00
Final report	40%	December 12, 23.00

SCHEDULE

1) Sept 10: Welcome; introduction; plan of the seminar

2:30pm – 3:50 pm: What are Evaluations? Why do we need them?

Readings:

William D. Savedoff, Ruth Levine and Nancy Birdsall. 2006 (May). *“When Will We ever learn? Improving Lives through Impact evaluation”*. Report of the Evaluation Gap Working Group. Center for Global Development. Washington, D.C.

http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/7973_file_WillWeEverLearn.pdf

White, Howard. 2009. Some reflections on current debates in impact evaluation. *3ie working paper 1*, April 2009

(http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer/2012/05/07/Working_Paper_1.pdf)

Linda G. Morra Imas and Ray C. Rist. 2009. *Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations*. Washington, DC: World Bank, ch.1

Available online at

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/2699/52678.pdf?sequence=1>

4pm – 5:20pm : Planning a systematic review

Workshop with Patrick Labelle, Social Sciences Research Liaison Librarian

This workshop introduces the systematic review as a research methodology and distinguishes it from other types of reviews. Students will learn the various steps involved in conducting a systematic review. After identifying previously published relevant systematic reviews, students will begin listing keywords and synonyms that could be used in the context of the course assignment.

2) Sept 17: 2:30pm to 3:50pm : Developing effective search strategies

Workshop with Patrick Labelle, Social Sciences Research Liaison Librarian

This workshop focuses on building effective search strategies that will gather useful results. Students will review database thesauri as well as various search operators used for developing comprehensive strategies. Students will then draft in groups a search strategy that incorporates best practices as shared during class. If time permits, students will peer-review another group’s strategy using elements of the PRESS checklist. All groups will upload their search strategy to Virtual Campus by September 20, 23:00. Research strategies will be graded.

Readings:

Mark Petticrew and Helen Roberts (2008). *Systematic reviews in the social sciences: A practical guide*, ch. 1. Why do we need systematic reviews?", available here:
here: <https://login.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/login?url=http://doi.org/10.1002/9780470754887.ch1>

Waddington, Hugh, Howard White, Birte Snilstveit, Jorge Garcia Hombrados, Martina Vojtkova, Philip Davies, Ami Bhavsar, et al. 2012. "How to Do a Good Systematic Review of Effects in International Development: A Tool Kit." *Journal of Development Effectiveness* 4 (3): 359–87. doi:10.1080/19439342.2012.711765.

Examples of systematic reviews / read *one* of these:

van Rooyen, C., Stewart R., de Wet, T. 2012. "The Impact of Microfinance in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Systematic Review of the Evidence". *World Development*, vol 40, 1:2249–2262

World Bank Independent Evaluation Group. 2013. Delivering the Millennium Development Goals to Reduce Maternal and Child Mortality: A Systematic Review of Impact Evaluation. Available at https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/Data/reports/mch_eval.pdf

Zürcher, Christoph. 2017. What Do We (Not) Know About Development Aid and Violence? A Systematic Review. *World Development*, volume 98, October 2017, pp. 506-522

September 19, 9:15am to 11:45am, FSS 4006: Lessons from U.S. and Canadian Stabilization and Reconstruction Efforts in Afghanistan and other States in Fragile Situations. An event with John Sopko, SIGAR

3) Sept 24: Running searches and exporting results

Workshop with Patrick Labelle, Social Sciences Research Liaison Librarian

At the beginning of the class, feed-back on the submitted research strategies will be provided. Then a suggestion about the final search strategy is made.

The workshop then provides time for students to run searches in various databases using the final strategy. Students will then export results to Covidence, an online tool that can be used to manage systematic reviews. Once results have been imported in Covidence, title and abstract screening can take place using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The final search strategy is adopted

4) Oct 1: About Causality

Readings:

Ravallion, M. (2001). "The Mystery of the Vanishing Benefits: Ms Speedy Analyst's Introduction to Evaluation." World Bank Economic Review 15(1): 115 - 140.

Patricia J. Rogers, RMIT University (Australia) and Better Evaluation: 2012. Introduction to Impact Evaluation (Impact Evaluation Notes No. 1. March 2012)
<http://www.interaction.org/document/introduction-impact-evaluation>

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. The Fundamentals of Political Science Research. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, chapter 1, pp. 1-22

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. The Fundamentals of Political Science Research. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, chapter 3, pp. 45-67

Bruce D. Meyer (1995). "Natural and Quasi-Experiments in Economics." Journal of Business and Economic Statistics. Volume 13, Number 2 (April), pages 151-161.

Searches are being run by students in groups

5) Oct 8: No class / Thanksgiving / Time for reading for October 15

6) Oct 15 A primer on Aid

Keely, Brian. 2012. From Aid to Development: The Global Fight against Poverty- OECD Insights, OECD Publishing. Esp. chapters 1, 3, 7
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264123571-en>

Also, consult these websites:

www.aidflows.org

<http://stats.oecd.org/qwids>

<http://dashboard.aiddata.org/#/advanced/analytic-dashboard>

<https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1#>

Discussing the final inclusion and exclusion criteria

Reread: Waddington, Hugh, Howard White, Birte Snilstveit, Jorge Garcia Hombrados, Martina Vojtkova, Philip Davies, Ami Bhavsar, et al. 2012. "How to Do a Good Systematic Review of Effects in International Development: A Tool Kit." *Journal of Development Effectiveness* 4 (3): 359–87.
doi:10.1080/19439342.2012.711765.

The searches are concluded and one data set is compiled. Screening and inclusion/ exclusion begins

7) Oct 22: reading week / no class

8) Oct 29: International State-building in Afghanistan

Suhrke, Astrid. 2011. When More is Less. The International Project in Afghanistan. New York: Columbia Press. Chapters 1, 5, 8

SIGAR 2016. Conference Report. Lessons from the Coalition. International Experiences from the Afghanistan Reconstruction.

<https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-16-59-LL.pdf>

NORAD 2016. Country Evaluation Brief 7/2016. Afghanistan

https://www.norad.no/contentassets/d0f097b6ecc34cc888dae33e94ff741c/7.16-ceb_afghanistan.pdf

9) Nov 5: Aid for Stabilization

Fishstein, Paul, Wilder, Andrew. 2012. Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan. Feinstein International Center (available online)

Zürcher, Christoph. 2017. What Do We (Not) Know About Development Aid and Violence? A Systematic Review. *World Development*, volume 98, October 2017, pp. 506-522

Winning 'Hearts and Minds' in Afghanistan: assessing the effectiveness of development aid in COIN operations (WP1022). Wilton Park Conference Report.

<https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/wp1022-report.pdf>

SIGAR. SIGAR-18-48-LL Stabilization: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan (INTERACTIVE) 2018.
<https://www.sigar.mil/interactive-reports/stabilization/index.html>

We have compiled a bibliography of all the texts which we will synthesize. Writing on reports begins.

- 10) Nov 12: Work on Group Assignment
- 11) Nov 19 : Work on Group Assignment
- 12) Nov 26: Work on Group Assignment
- 13) Dec 3: Work on Group Assignment
- 14) Dec 5: TBC : Presentation of findings to the Ministry

We have final drafts of the report(s).

Useful websites and resources

Linda G. Morra Imas and Ray C. Rist. 2009. *Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available online as a PDF through the World Bank's Open Knowledge Portal at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/2699/52678.pdf?sequence=1>

3ie funds impact evaluations and systematic reviews that generate evidence on what works in development and why. Evidence on development effectiveness can inform policy and improve the lives of poor people.
<http://www.3ieimpact.org/>

The **DAC Network on Development Evaluation** intend to contribute to better development results using evaluation to build a strong evidence base for policy making and for learning.
<http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/>

The **Development Impact Evaluation Initiative** is a World Bank-wide program to generate knowledge on the effectiveness of development policies

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDEVIMPEVAINI/0,,menuPK:3998281~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:3998212,00.html>

BetterEvaluation is an international collaboration to improve the practice and theory of evaluation by creating and curating information on choosing and using evaluation methods and processes, including managing evaluations and strengthening evaluation capacity. BetterEvaluation supports three connected areas of activity: evaluation practice, evaluation capacity strengthening and research and development in evaluation.

<http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/about>

Terms of Reference for our final report

In preparing this course, our cooperation partner, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and I have discussed possible TORs for the final report. Here is what we came up with:

1. Background and Objective

Department 312 (Afghanistan, Pakistan) within German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is planning an evaluation of GC in Afghanistan for the period 2014 until 2017 in 2019. It shall encompass the portfolio of GC for the given time period. A number of other countries and donors have had their development portfolio in Afghanistan evaluated.

To gain insights and learn from the experiences of previous evaluations, a meta-analysis of the existing evaluations shall be conducted. The results will serve as valuable background information for the upcoming evaluation of the BMZ's Afghanistan portfolio and provide insights into potentials and limitations for evaluations in development cooperation in fragile contexts.

Based on existing evaluations of outcomes and impacts of civil and civil-military development assistance in Afghanistan a meta-analysis will be conducted to shed light on the following questions:

1. Which evaluation methods have been used? Which have proven to be suitable? Which ones have not? What were the factors / conditions limiting a successful evaluation? Which were conducive factors / conditions?
2. Which are the evaluations' results? Which development instruments have proven to be effective; which have not (which are positive and intended results of the respective interventions and which are negative unintended consequences?)? What indications have been elaborated for factors influencing the respective negative / positive and intended / not intended results? Are there specific factors from civil-military development assistance influencing the respective negative / positive and intended / not intended results?
3. What are lessons learnt for future evaluations in Afghanistan?

4. What are general lessons learnt for evaluations of development interventions in fragile contexts?

2 Deliverables

The “contractor” will deliver the following working results:

1. Inception report by end of October
2. The final report should be no longer than approximately 30 pages (appendices not included). All **deliverables** shall be handed to BMZ and GIZ MEK until December 20th, 2018.
3. Appendices and list of references

3 . Tasks

1. Literature research
 - Identification and review of relevant evaluation studies and audits covering the time period 2008-2018
 - Consideration of the following studies:
 - Bilateral country level evaluations (Canada, Norway, Sweden, US, Denmark; UK, Japan, Germany, others)
 - Evaluations by multi-lateral donors, such as World Bank (especially relevant evaluations of multi-donor funds such as ARTF), ADB (inter alia AITF), UN organizations
 - Evaluations and audits by selected national organizations, such as SIGAR
 - Evaluations and audits by selected NGOs such as: Mercy Corps, AKF, DWH
 - Evaluations of selected Afghan national development programs such as NSP
 - Impact evaluations published in academic journals between 2008 and 2018
 - Additional relevant literature should be considered
2. Analysis of relevant literature
 - The respective literature shall be systematically analyzed based on the questions mentioned above
 - If during the analysis additional informative research questions arise, these shall be considered as well
3. Systematic depiction of the results of the analysis and suggestion of lesson-learnt for a future evaluation of the GC portfolio in Afghanistan
4. Deriving lessons-learnt for evaluations in fragile contexts and civil-military cooperation and development assistance in general.

Systematic Literature Review on Evaluations of Civil and Civil-military Development Assistance in Afghanistan / Sources

As of: August 22, 2018

Notes:

- We will have to search the websites of all the listed donors for evaluation reports. These could be evaluations of their own work (“SIDA on Sweden's aid”), or evaluations of other programs (“SIDA on ARTF”)
- We will later also add the results from our systematic search.
- We will have to decide to what extent we will include project or program level evaluations. Rule of thumb: Include if the program is really big (ARTF; EQUIP; NSP), or when the evaluation is methodologically very strong

Donor type	Donor / Organization	Program	Availability / Source
County Level Bilateral Evaluations			
	Canada / GAC		http://www.international.gc.ca/departement-ministere/assets/pdfs/evaluation/2015/adp-pda-eng.pdf
	Norway /NORAD		https://www.norad.no/globalassets/import-2162015-80434-am/www.norad.no-filarkiv/vedlegg-til-publikasjoner/norad_afg_web.pdf
	Sweden / SID		https://www.sida.se/contentassets/c97a7cbac06f4d5aacdec955/15537.pdf
	Denmark /DANIDA		https://www.oecd.org/countries/afghanistan/Afghanistan--Final-WEB.pdf

	UK / DFID		https://www.oecd.org/countries/afghanistan/49962808.pdf https://www.oecd.org/countries/afghanistan/47107291.pdf
	US / USAID		Not aware of any county level evaluation. Search for programs?
	Japan / JICA		? Not aware of country evaluation. There is a number of project evaluations here: http://www2.jica.go.jp/en/evaluation/index.php?anken=&country1=Afghanistan&area2=&country2=&area3=&country3=&field1=&field2=&field3=&start_from=&start_to=&search=Search
	others?		
	SIGAR	Lessons Learned Program	https://www.sigar.mil/lessonslearned/lessonslearnedreports/index.aspx?SSR=11&SubSSR=60&WP=Lessons%20Learned%20Reports
		Quarterly Reports	The often contain a section on one particular sector. https://www.sigar.mil/quarterlyreports/index.aspx?SSR=6

Multinational Donors	World Bank	ARTF	https://www.sida.se/contentassets/9ab22a067b0a4422883101dd16c7878a/15545.pdf
		EQUIP	?
		NDP	?
		Others ?	?
	UN	UNDP Afghanistan	http://www.oecd.org/countries/afghanistan/46817736.pdf
		UN-OCHA	?
		UNAMA	?
		UNHCR	?
	Asian Development Bank	AITF	?
		others?	Country Assistance Program Evaluation Report for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/evaluation-document/35980/files/cape-afg-web3.pdf
INGO	Medecins sans frontieres		?

	OXFAM		?
	CARE		?
	Mercy Corps		?
	World Vision		?
	Aga Khan Development Network AKDN		?
	Welthunger Hilfe / Agro Action		?