

## Perceptions and Expectations by Participants of Monitoring and Evaluation Short Course Training Programmes in Africa

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**Abstract :** Background: At the core of the demand to utilize evidence-based approaches in the policy-making cycle, prioritization of limited financial resources and results driven initiatives is the urgency to develop a cohort of competent Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practitioners and public servants. The ongoing strides in the evaluation capacity building (ECB) initiatives are a direct response to produce the highly-sought after M&E skills. Notwithstanding the rapid growth of M&E short courses, participants perceived value and expectation of M&E short courses as a panacea for ECB have not been empirically quantified or measured. The objective of this article is to explicitly illustrate the importance of measuring ECB interventions and understanding what works in ECB and why it works. Objectives: This article illustrates the importance of establishing empirical ECB measurement tools to evaluate ECB interventions in order to ascertain its contribution to the broader evaluation practice. Method: The study was primarily a desktop review of existing literature, juxtaposed by a survey of the participants across the African continent based on the 43 M&E short courses hosted by the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) in collaboration with the Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) Results: The article established that participants perceive short course training as a panacea to improve their M&E practical skill critical to executing their organizational duties. In tandem, participants are likely to demand customized training as opposed to general topics in Evaluation. However, the organizational environments constrain the application of the newly acquired skills. Conclusion: This article aims to contribute to the 'how to' measure ECB interventions discourse and contribute towards the improvement to evaluate ECB interventions. The study finds that participants prefer training courses with longer duration to cover more topics. At the same time, whilst organizations call for customization of programmes, the study found that individual participants demand knowledge of generic and popular evaluation topics.

**Keywords :** evaluation capacity building, effectiveness and training, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) short course training, perceptions and expectations

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