



Evaluation units as knowledge brokers: Testing and calibrating an innovative framework

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Abstract

Evaluation units, located within public institutions, are important actors responsible for the production and dissemination of evaluative knowledge in complex programming and institutional settings. The current evaluation literature does not adequately explain their role in fostering better evaluation use. The article offers an empirically tested framework for the analysis of the role of evaluation units as knowledge brokers. It is based on a systematic, interdisciplinary literature review and empirical research on evaluation units in Poland within the context of the European Union Cohesion Policy, with complementary evidence from the US federal government and international organizations. In the proposed framework, evaluation units are to perform six types of brokering activities: identifying knowledge users' needs, acquiring credible knowledge, feeding it to users, building networks between producers and users, accumulating knowledge over time and promoting an evidence-based culture. This framework transforms evaluation units from mere buyers of expertise and producers of isolated reports into animators of reflexive social learning that steer streams of knowledge to decision makers.

Keywords

evaluation use, evidence-based policies, knowledge broker, know–do gap, organizational learning

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Yours sincerely

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