

# CASE STUDY: Fifth generation Evaluation of an HIV/AIDS prevention programme among LGTBI<sup>1</sup> in 15 countries Africa and Latin America

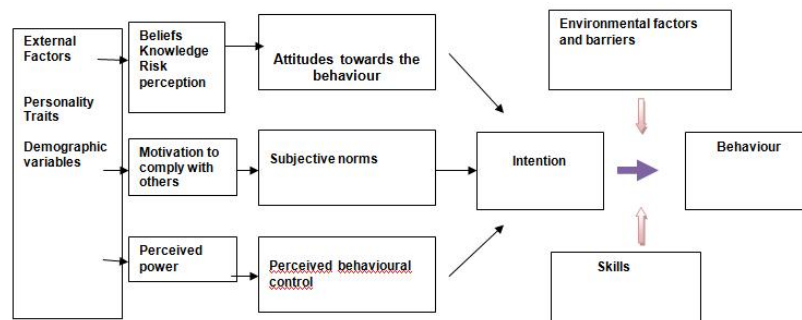
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## 1. Description

This case study describes the application of a Fifth Generation' methodology<sup>4</sup> to the evaluation of the International programme of Schorer Foundation, Amsterdam.

Schorer foundation (financially) supported 15 *counterparts* in HIV/AIDS prevention in Southern Africa and Latin America between 2007 and 2010. The theory of change of the Schorer International programme is anchored in the (human) right to sexual health and its core concept is "healthy sexuality"<sup>5</sup>. How this is pursued is informed by a thorough (participatory) needs assessment that is integral part of Schorer's approach. A key strategy towards healthy sexuality is health promotion among LGTBI. "Health promotion stands for a broad approach that also takes the underlying causes of individual behaviour (e.g. social, cultural and economic factors) into account. It therefore encompasses health education, the empowerment of individuals and groups, lobbying and advocacy, legislation, and the adequate provision of health services."<sup>6</sup>

Besides these activities promoting health among LGTBI people, the "Schorer approach" has two other pillars: *mainstreaming* LGTBI health concerns, and *capacity development* of LGTBI organizations. The three pillars take different shapes in each country case, taking into account the potential of each counterpart organisation and the local contexts and the outcomes of the needs assessments. A - part – of Schorer's theory of change related to health promotion is reflected in figure 1 below.



<sup>1</sup> LGTBI referring to Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bi-sexual and Intersex people

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<sup>4</sup> see: Guba & Lincoln (1990) *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, Sage, London, for 5<sup>th</sup> generation see next page.

<sup>5</sup> As different from "safe sex"

<sup>6</sup> The Schorer Approach, International Collaboration on, HIV/STI Prevention , for MSM, WSW and Transgenders through Health Promotion, Mainstreaming and Capacity Strengthening, *Version 1.0, June 2010*

## 2. Evaluation Process and Methodology

The evaluation process organized reflection upon a number of questions that can be summarized in two broad groups: *'Have our goals been met?'* and *'What worked, what did not?'* This was a (semi) final evaluation conducted one year before the end of a four-year programme. The main objective was -for the donor- to learn from its experience and improve its practice in the future. The evaluation also had to satisfy evaluation requirements and standards required by the back-donor, the Dutch government.

We label the evaluation approach we use '5<sup>th</sup> Generation Evaluation' (more about it can be found on the [www.evaluation-5.net](http://www.evaluation-5.net) and [www.BWsupport.nl](http://www.BWsupport.nl) websites). The Fifth Generation Evaluation is based on the Fourth Generation Evaluation, and is participative and responsive to the stakeholders and fundamentally constructivist in its methodology.<sup>7</sup> In this approach developing a *negotiated, shared truth* is the leading principle and the design of that process gains importance.

Features of our version of a Fifth Generation Evaluation<sup>8</sup> are:

- The use of an evolving list of Claims, Concerns and Issues (CC&I) to inform the process of the evaluation: if there is consensus about the 'good outcome – this is a *claim*; if there is consensus about the need to change things: that would be a *concern*; all the rest (where people differ opinions) are *issues*; they need to be discussed in a stakeholder meeting in such a way that an agenda for the future emerges.
- In an *iterative process* all information is analysed by different *stakeholders*, not simply by a central expert unit (the evaluators).
- Subjectivity is used rather than avoided. *Stakeholders and an Advisory group* identify and discuss the CC&Is. Subjectivity is made accountable through transparency to develop *inter-subjectivity*.
- *Learning* is an important objective for this evaluation, but learning takes predominantly place *during* the process itself, in *stakeholder meetings* and not by only applying an end-product – the report of the evaluators.
- The evaluators explicitly are stakeholders as well; so *they* reflect and learn too...
- The whole chain of stakeholders is -preferably- included in the evaluation, including the donor.
- Web 2.0 tools and images are used whenever deemed feasible and relevant to include all perspectives.

To evaluate this particular programme on three continents not all countries could be visited and an analytical framework and an organizational set-up is needed that acknowledges the differences between the *visited* and *not-visited* projects/countries.

A desk study (that looked at *all* funded projects) was conducted together with a qualitative analysis of five "case stories". In addition telephone – skype – interviews were conducted with stakeholders that could not be visited, or could not participate in meetings.

The case studies – selected by the evaluation team in consultation with the donor and conducted on the ground - also applied elements of the overall approach identifying and negotiating with relevant stakeholders Claims, Concerns and Issues for each particular country cases. The qualitative research methodology in the cases provides a 'thick

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<sup>7</sup> See also: Shuttlebeam (2007) *Evaluation*, and Guba & Lincoln (1990) *Fourth Generation Evaluation* as well as Bob van der Winden (2004) *'Do not beat a drum with an axe' – Responsive evaluation in an International Context*

<sup>8</sup> With this methodology we conducted several evaluations in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Egypt, Brazil, Zambia, Ecuador, Honduras and the Netherlands

description<sup>9</sup> that allows reading opinions, interpretations and expectations of the interviewed themselves.

All findings are *validated* through *triangulation* (comparing different sources) and negotiation. In that way the Claims, Concerns and Issues constantly evolve in an *iterative* (repetitive) and *interactive* way: from the kick-off workshop, via the desk study, with staff in Amsterdam and at country level when developing the case stories and with the involvement of others; again with staff, with other counterparts and an Advisory Group by posting the case stories to the - limited access - on-line forums. The whole process culminated in a broad stakeholder meeting in Quito (Ecuador) where cases were presented and a final version of the CC&I's was reviewed.

The methodology to review the "issues" in the final stakeholder meeting builds on a special type of *socratic dialogue* called in Dutch "toveren" or magic<sup>10</sup>. This methodology start by asking participants to formulate questions regarding the issue; than the facilitators invite group members to share experiences they have addressing these questions. Based on this, the facilitator helps the group to discover the real question behind the questions. Through this process normally part of an "issue" becomes a new shared "concern" or "claim" and the "issue" is generally reframed (or sometimes disappears completely as such).

### 3. Implementation of the Evaluation Process

The implementation schedule of the evaluation was roughly as follows:

- August 2010: Inception meeting, desk study and kick-off meeting
- September: 5 case studies in Gaborone, Pretoria, Tegucigalpa, Quito, Fortaleza
- October: (telephone) interviews other counterparts, staff etc.
- November: Final Stakeholders meeting (Quito) and Final Report

An advisory panel of experts in the field of prevention and LGTBI, who are familiar with the topic was formed in August. The final stakeholder meeting in Quito, Ecuador was facilitated by two members of the evaluation team, attended by 8 representatives of Schorer counterparts (four of them representing organizations whose experience was documented in the case stories) and 3 Schorer staff members. One member of the Advisory Group attended the final stakeholder meeting in Quito.

To make documents accessible and host the online access forums, we used a 'Ning'<sup>11</sup>. Access to the Ning was limited. Schorer staff, counterparts that were involved in the evaluation, Advisory Group members and evaluators could edit, upload and read all materials on the Ning. They could start and follow discussions, comment on case stories and Claims Concerns and Issues. Of the Schorer International team all 8 members actually used the Ning. From the advisory group 3 out of 4, the visited counterparts 3 out of 5 and all the evaluators. From the counterparts who were invited for the final stakeholders' meeting only 3 out of 8 accessed the Ning.

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<sup>9</sup> Denzin, Lincoln (2000) Handbook of Qualitative Research, Thousand Oaks

<sup>10</sup> Kessels, Jos, Erik Boers, Pieter Mostert (2008) Vrije Ruimte Praktijkboek: Filosoferen in Organisaties, Boom, Amsterdam

<sup>11</sup> see: [www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com)

## 4. Outcomes of the evaluation

A final list of *Claims, Concerns and Issues – CC&I* (constructed by the stakeholders in their final meeting in Quito) was the basis for the evaluators' conclusions and recommendations: see annex 1. They were translated into English, Spanish as well as Portuguese.

In this evaluation approach the *iterative discussion* of the formulated CC&I is an important feature: this discussion took place in the *kick-off meeting*, in the country case studies, as well as finally in the *stakeholders' meeting* in Quito. Here we will highlight the genesis through this process of one **Issue**: the (not) planned exit of Schorer from the process (due to lack of funding): in the case studies the issue was formulated by a host of partners as: "How can Schorer support counterparts X,Y,Z further after funding has ceased?" (September 2010).

After all counterparts had been interviewed and the desk study as well as case studies had been conducted, the advisory panel had reacted, the evaluators reformulated this issue as: "Schorer does not seem to have had an 'exit' strategy as from the beginning of the programme, which is now painfully visible. There is a great need for such an exit strategy to be developed between Schorer and the different partners. This can also lead to possible other terms in role sharing and other contributions between Schorer and the counterparts. Developing new ways of cooperation (e.g. including – mutual - support to access to other funding) should start sooner rather than later." (October 2010).

In the final stakeholders' meeting this issue was – in the 'toveren' discussion, see earlier in this paper – unpacked and reformulated as:

"The *essence* of the issue is twofold: the future capacity of *all* to fundraise, in their context and in these different capacities find 'joint ventures' one way or another with *Schorer in a new role*. It is necessary to develop options with all counterparts, at the latest in beginning 2011". *During the evaluation* the most contentious issue was thus (heavily) debated and a reformulation was found, allowing *Schorer and counterparts* to find a joint *agenda for the future*.

### Main findings of the Evaluation

After the final stakeholders meeting, the evaluation team presented the main findings in an end-report, which were – in summary - as follows:

**A.** It is safe to say that the *Schorer Approach* worked in the various diverse contexts. There is evidence from several different sources showing that plan-based prevention (or for that matter advocacy), mainstreaming and capacity building have found a firm base in the overwhelming majority of the counterpart organisations. It is also clear that the Schorer approach hitherto could be contextualised to all kind of different counterparts (as in context, target group, strength, history, language, political and security situation etc.). It is recommended to work towards a *systematic* differentiation of (groups of) partners, which might also be helpful in making choices necessary in the (near) future.

**B.** One of the main strengths of the programme is the *empowerment of people*. The case stories illustrate how LGTBI people are emancipating and empowering themselves, making themselves visible, demanding *adjusted prevention* for their own needs. If anything is *sustainable* in the end it is this: participating LGTBI are unlikely to give up.

**C.** In this regard the unique position of Schorer as a donor and at the same time as a peer comes to the fore. The value of *embedding* people fighting for their rights and empowerment in an international *family* (organised by Schorer in numerous occasions) should not be

underestimated. Almost *all* counterparts mention the learning and the enormous boost they obtained from the international (expert) meetings. A (partly unexpected) finding was that two-way-learning took place. Interviews with Schorer staff show that they also learned from (working with) their counterparts in several ways: lessons learned from the counterparts are now brought into practice in the Netherlands. Schorer might very well be a precursor for future International Cooperation, where a larger role can be expected for organisations with their own practice in the North!

**D.** A serious *concern* is systematic planning, monitoring and evaluation: in only 7 of the 15 counterparts meanwhile some form of *effect research (Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation)* has come of the ground, three counterparts are still struggling with it, and in 5 counterparts there is no sign of it. It also touches upon the difference between results/outcomes and impact and the question that was *not included* in the ToR, the question about *behaviour change among target group*: 'Did all these efforts in the programme in the end cause *behaviour change* in our target group?' Is there really better *prevention*, not just better *prevention activities*! Obviously after 2-3 years that question cannot yet be answered. However it is very important to (continue to) develop a common data gathering practice with partners in order to make better *effect research* possible.

**E.** Schorer's role changed from partner to donor: this caused confusion and in some cases tension, both within Schorer and with the counterparts. Schorer 'grew' into that role, and now needs to leave it again because it lacks a back donor. There is a *joint* responsibility here for Schorer and the counterparts and the remaining year can – and should - be used to find solutions.

## **5. Challenges and obstacles in connection with 5<sup>th</sup> Generation Evaluation as applied to this case**

- The value of the evaluation methodology is the built in co-creation, iterative process and 'negotiated truth' in the final meeting. The main challenge is that in such a large, multi-country programme never *everybody* – not even all partners – can be involved.
- Throughout the process there was observable influence exercised on the overall conclusions by only 7 of the 15 partners. The other partners were willing to answer questions but had little or no intent to influence the end conclusions. None of the products produced in the course of the evaluation process actually is an evaluation of an individual project implemented in the context of the programme. However, since the cases were carefully selected by the evaluators (in concordance with stakeholders), the end result does give a relatively good *representation* of the programme.
- In the final stakeholder meeting participants from seven countries, including two members of the evaluating team participated at considerable cost. Combining travel schedules of the evaluators allowed for this. Having two members of the evaluation team present allowed one of them to act more as a stakeholder, participating in the negotiation, while the other assumed the role of facilitator, mediating the negotiations among stakeholders. Since evaluators *are* stakeholders this helped juggle the stakes.
- The main advantage of the used methodology is in the end the *negotiated truth* about achievements and results. There is no need to hide findings, to either choose for the donors or the partners or evaluators judgement. In this process, everybody is recognised as a stakeholder, including the team of evaluators.

- With everything on the table there is inevitably disagreement. Throughout such disagreement is promoted and sought by the evaluators, to start with in the choice of respondents (through so-called *hermeneutic circles*<sup>12</sup>). The use of the label ‘issues’ where it is clear there is no consensus allows to describe different positions and keep them on agendas, without the need to come to consensus or let one of the involved parties ‘win’ the argument.
- At the same time, the commitment to build an ‘agenda for the future’ promotes learning from the evaluation with the involved stakeholders. In this way, a realistic view of the results of an intervention can be obtained, and there are few incentives to either play them down or exaggerate them.
- Initially they are all based on observable and ‘hard data’ from the desk studies uncovered by the evaluators. But these ‘hard data’ are only *necessary*, they are not *sufficient*: in the end the results negotiated among the stakeholders have even more value and are as such ‘harder’ than unilaterally established end-results by the evaluation team only.

## 6. Some lessons learnt

Some of the lessons applying the methodology to this case are:

1. the selection of case studies/stories in such a large programme is paramount
2. the *behaviour* of evaluators is of considerable influence on the overall process as well as on the content of the case stories and the resulting *negotiated truths*.
3. the case study approach makes an *evaluation framework* (not dealt with in this paper) necessary in order to be able to include information from *all* countries / projects.
4. the format and informal tone of the case stories is helpful but further development of ways to convey case studies (by means of visuals or otherwise) is necessary in order to involve other programme partners whose stories are not documented.
5. related to that, further development of (internet) means and skills to exchange and promote exchange of information during the evaluation and e.g. stakeholder meeting by teleconference would be an enormous boost for the methodology, since travelling costs limit research and involvement of stakeholders.

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<sup>12</sup> see: Guba & Lincoln (1990) *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, Sage, London

## Annex 1: Final list of 'Claims, Concerns and Issues'

### Claims

1. *Needs assessment very useful.* The needs assessment (a tool developed by Schorer) brought forward new insights that were reflected in the later prevention projects for virtually all organisations. This 'planned or evidence based' part of the Schorer approach was manageable and successful.
2. *LGBTI became leaders through the project.* The assertiveness of LGBTI has received an enormous boost, many becoming volunteers and leaders in the prevention activities. LGBTI (certainly the hundreds of directly involved activists) stand up for their rights, use preventive measures: they have become *subjects* again... In many countries groups became *politically visible* through this empowerment.
3. *International embedding and peer-learning.* The international linking of counterparts has been a success and much was (peer) learned from it by virtually all. Expertise from Schorer (and vice versa from counterparts) was as important as money (from Dutch government).
4. *Mainstreaming leads to more understanding.* Training service providers leads to more understanding of the special prevention needs of LGBTI. In several countries it even led to alliances with government institutes ... Counterparts thus also became *players* in the field.
5. *Cooperation with Schorer makes counterparts 'fundable'.* After this experience, Schorer counterparts were a more serious counterpart for other funders.
6. *Capacity enhancement (in the chain) works.* Training (on several places 'in the chain') was generally of high quality: organisations are stronger internally as well as externally.
7. *Successes of contextualised 'Schorer approach'.* Generally speaking working with (LGBTI) *communities* was fruitful: almost all counterparts used their existing networks (or created new) of LGBTI... Clearly this part of the Schorer approach (if adapted to the *context*) worked in many *communities*, be they physical or virtual: contextualisation opened opportunities.
8. *Learning cycle is complete.* Schorer staff learned from (working with) their counterparts: several 'lessons' are now implemented in the Netherlands!
9. *Regional cooperation* Quite some regional cooperation came off the ground regionally, but *interregional cooperation* is still a concern.

### Concerns

1. *Research.* In various countries more research into LGBTI is needed, for which there are little funding possibilities. Far too little information is collected. Also capacities have to be created among counterparts to make better use of existing information.
2. *LGBTI communities.* Generally speaking the MSM<sup>13</sup> communities are relatively well represented in programmes, to a lesser extent also the WSW communities. But most organisations could pay more attention to the need to be *inclusive* for transgender.
3. *Schorer Role.* In 2007 Schorers role changed from partner to donor; this caused confusion and tension in the first years, both within Schorer as well as among counterparts. Schorer has grown into its a donor role but very much remains to counterparts an ally and advisor.
4. *Capacity enhancement.* It is too early to say that the Capacity enhancement programme (that in fact started in 2009) is successful; there are successes but at the same time achievements have not (yet) been embedded.

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<sup>13</sup> Men having sex with men; WSW stands for women having sex with women, LGTBI stands for Lesbians, Gay, Transgender, Bi-sexual and Intersex.

## Issues

- 1) *The Schorer exit and funding* There is indeed a range of concerns of all counterparts about their ongoing *concrete* activities and how to fund them in the future. The *essence* of the issue is twofold: the future *capacity* of *all* to fundraise and *Schorer in a new role*. It is necessary to develop options with all counterparts, at the latest in beginning 2011, e.g.:
  - a) Schorer's advisory support to be funded through the (strong) partners
  - b) Counterparts and Schorer can apply together for funding
  - c) For LGBTI communities suffering human rights violations, Schorer (and counterparts) should develop specific projects.
- 2) *Planning and monitoring in the Schorer approach. Systems to monitoring activities* have generally speaking developed in counterparts' organisations. However monitoring needs to be more focused on *outcome*. The challenge is threefold:
  - a) a (feasible) system for planning, monitoring and planning is strictly necessary
  - b) The way of integration of planning and evaluation should make all counterparts enthusiastic to include it in the 'Schorer approach'
  - c) Partners need to develop stronger monitoring capacities while Schorer needs to find a better way to integrate their reporting needs into a joint system.
- 3) *Contextualisation and diversification of the Schorer approach*. Counterparts are very different - there are not two very similar organisations in the counterpart group. Schorer can work with the strong organisations but needs to diversify its approach to work with weaker organizations in more fragile security-poor contexts where LGBTI rights are systematically violated.