Sustaining educational development projects in developing countries: Changing the form of evaluation

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Abstract
Achieving sustainable development is not an easy task. The international community has been attempting to address global issues such as climate change and poverty, while advancing opportunities for primary education. Setting up the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the internationally-agreed set of time binding goals in 2000, reaffirmed commitment by the international community to the issues in developing countries. Hence, the role of evaluation for Official Development Assistance (ODA) enterprises has become more important than ever particularly with limited funds, which in turn has put pressure on effective and efficient implementation of projects including their transparency and accountability. To date, however, monitoring and evaluating outcomes of aid projects during the project duration only have been the main endeavours of international aid agencies. Evaluations gave little attention to aspects of sustainability and educational impact of these projects. Indeed, sustainability of a project after the termination of such interventions was under scrutiny and as a result, there has been consideration of changing from outcome-focused evaluation led by international aid agencies to process evaluation conducted largely by local stakeholders. The study reviewed theoretical and practical issues surrounding the evaluation for educational reform projects, and explored, as a case study, the evaluation process employed by an Egyptian education reform project implemented by United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). This study found that process evaluation is a potential alternative evaluation method for educational development projects since it is likely to be locally embedded, which may produce long-term sustainability. Further investigations into the appropriateness and potential of process evaluation need to be conducted to provide more guidance for evaluating educational development projects.
Introduction

A term “sustainable development” was coined in the 1970’s as a key word particularly when considering environmental problems such as global warming (Saito, 2005). However, as the coverage of “sustainable development” has been widened, it requires the integration of action in three key areas, namely, economic growth and equity, conserving natural resources and the environment, and social development, which includes education (United Nations, 2002). Tackling issues in developing countries has become a high priority. In 2000, various countries and principal development aid agencies gathered and set the eighth Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as common objectives for our society in 21st century. These goals range from poverty eradication and achieving universal primary education to ensuring environmental sustainability (United Nations, 2008). The challenge is to achieve these goals through unprecedented efforts by 2015. However, wealth disparity exists widely in the world (Saito, 2005). Notwithstanding the significant efforts and investment made by the international community to date, “aid fatigue” was felt by the international community in the 1990s as expected results were not apparent (Takachiho, 2005). Reflecting on this trend, evaluation through official development assistance (ODA) has drawn increasing attention (Nagao, 2003). Concurrent with the above shifting context in international development, evaluation practices for educational reform projects in developing countries need to sustain the impact of their interventions (Courtney, 2007; International Development Center of Japan & Koei Research Center Co., 2004; Nagao, 2003; Riddell, 1999). The study explores a pragmatic evaluation practice for sustaining educational development projects in developing countries.

Contextual Shifts in International Development

Recognition of “aid fatigue” and failure emerged in the 1990s among the developed countries as a result of poverty in many regions of the world and financial difficulties among donors (Mabuchi & Kuwajima, 2004). One of the main reasons for aid failure is the balance between strong donor initiatives and the lack of ownership from the recipient (Horigane, 2006; Mabuchi & Kuwajima, 2004). The development projects hardly reflect real local needs, and
the ownership is not nurtured within developing countries. Consequently, technical cooperation aimed at by many development projects neither spread around nor took root in the society in those countries as the projects faded out (Horigane, 2006). Given the difficulties of the development projects, developed countries started reducing their assistance to developing countries overall and introduced Results-Based Management (RBM) to seek more effective aid approaches (Mabuchi & Kuwajima, 2004). RBM is “an approach to improve programme and management effectiveness, efficiency and accountability, and is oriented towards achieving results” (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2006, p. 1). Since RBM is based on the results derived from a cause and effect relationship (UNFPA, 2006), both measuring changes and identifying the causality as the logical basis for managing change are crucial (Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA], 2000). Thus, program process as the cause has been highlighted to produce a better result (UNICEF, 2003) with involvement of key stakeholders (CIDA, 2000; Nagao, 2003). The importance of local ownership and capacity development has been recognised as “new solutions to the old problems” (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes, & Malik, 2002, p.vi). Smith (2005) argues that stakeholders are required to participate in decision-making and that leads to strong and substantial commitment to initiate change. Capacity development as the other “solution” for international assistance is a participatory long-term process of dynamism and interdependence between the multi-layers of capacity, that is, individuals, organisations, institutionalisation and society (Browne, 2002; Mabuchi & Kuwajima, 2004). The Department for International Development (DIFD), a bilateral aid agency dealing with ODA in England, also maintains that capacity building needs to take account of both institutional and organisational contexts since both contexts can allow technical cooperation to work (DIFD, 2003), particularly for sustainability. The changing practices of technical cooperation based on capacity development assume that much of the knowledge on development resides in the developing countries and not in the developed countries while such knowledge not only resides in individuals but also institutional experiences and databases. It is presumed that local capacity development can occur through learning by doing (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes, & Malik, 2002). Given the contextual shifts discussed above, both international aid agencies and recipient countries need to change the conventional technical cooperation including the evaluation practice so as to address the global challenges (Hilderbrand, 2002; Mabuchi & Kuwajima, 2004).
A Shift from Outcome Evaluation to Process Evaluation

Despite the importance of evaluation in international development, the literature criticises some downsides of conventional evaluation practices currently employed in international development. To date, monitoring and evaluating outcomes (effectiveness) of aid projects during only the project duration have been the main concerns of international aid agencies for a long time (Bamberger, 2000; Picciotto, 2003). Due to this, the outcome-focused evaluation gave little attention to aspects of sustainability and impact of the projects that need to be assessed in a long perspective (Bamberger, 2000; Chapman, 2002; Minamoto & Nagao, 2006). Another downside is that international aid agencies are still powerful and influential in evaluation practices and utility for development projects, even if not suitable for local context, since they are sponsors of both projects and evaluations (Bamberger, 2000). In addition, conducting evaluation by the international aid agencies is for purposes of the agencies’ internal compliance requirement, rather than to develop local evaluation capacity and to establish an evaluation system responding to local needs (Bamberger, 2000; Picciotto, 2003). Hence, it is warned that the internal outcome evaluation dominated by an international aid agency can put transparency and accountability of the evaluation at risk (Minamoto & Nagao, 2006).

Due to the downsides of conventional evaluation practices, process evaluation is being considered as an alternative pragmatic evaluation method for educational development projects in developing countries (Minamoto & Nagao, 2006). Process evaluation is defined as “an evaluation of the internal dynamics of implementing organizations, their policy instruments, their service delivery mechanism, their management practices and the linkages among these” (Development Assistance Committee, 2007, p. 30). Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) argues that one of main objectives of process evaluation is to provide feedback to participants and a manager about the extent to which they are carrying out activities on schedule as planned and how efficient the activities are being implemented. Another one is to guide participants to determine evaluation procedures and purposes leading to improving the implementation plans. Patton (2004) emphasises the importance of the use of process
evaluation since individuals change their thinking and behaviour through high-quality process involvement leading to high quality and useful evaluation. For example, by participating in the process, stakeholders are exposed to and have the opportunity to learn the logic of evaluation, skills and knowledge relevant to problem solving and a research method. Additionally, this process can enable stakeholders to understand a program better, bring their support and participation to the program more and strengthen organisational capacity (Stufflebeam, 2000). Subsequently, this can have a long-term impact which results in raising a chance to use the findings from an evaluation study by intended users (Patton, 1997). These strengths of process evaluation are closely linked with local capacity development - one of the new solutions in international development – in which local stakeholders are required to participate in evaluation process consisting of different stages, namely evaluation design, data collection and analysis, and utilising findings. Hence, the process evaluation allows the participants to strengthen their evaluation capacity as well as to take the ownership of the project (Independent Evaluation Group, 2007; Minamoto & Nagao, 2006). Moreover, process evaluation is a useful tool for an evaluator due to the day-to-day management supervision and the correction of original plans and activities to improve a program (Patton, 1997). This process may also make the project possible to track the causal chain between inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes, which can facilitate the RBM. As a result, process evaluation can enhance the sustainability of the project’s activities (Minamoto & Nagao, 2006).

These changing contexts in international development are imperatives to be taken into account when evaluating educational reform projects (Minamoto & Nagao, 2006; Riddell, 1999; Smith, 2005). Riddle (1999) maintains that evaluation should not only measure the improvement of quality education and its attributes as project’s goals but also it should measure and enhance national evaluation capacity through the project. This is because the local capacity can make it possible for the impact made by the project’s intervention to be sustained after project completion. Hirosato (2001) also contends that strengthening local capacity is crucial since it should diagnose, design, manage and implement educational reforms in a continuous and sustainable manner. Ishida (2007) also contends that involving the project’s participants in the process of evaluation design, implementation and analysis can
draw on the participants’ empowerment, which, in turn, raise the participants’ ownership. Hence, process evaluation has drawn attention as a potential evaluation method for educational development projects. Despite the various strengths of process evaluation, Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) warn that a sound process evaluation by project participants can be carried out only by assigning an process evaluator to bring objective perspectives into assessment since process evaluation is internally conducted by only project participants.

**A Case Study of UNICEF Community Project in Egypt**

In spite of the significant and continuous investment in the education sector by donor agencies, developing countries are struggling with both quantitative and qualitative aspects of quality enhancement in education (UNESCO, 2004). However, Egypt, the case study for this research, has succeeded in its expansion of education during the 1990s by increasing students’ enrolment numbers in pre-university education from 12.8 million in 1990/91 to 15.6 million in 2000/2001 (UNICEF Egypt Country Office, 2002). Despite significant improvement in the quantitative aspects of its education since 1990s, Egypt has not yet resolved many of the qualitative aspects of its education system (Ministry of Education in Egypt, 2001; World Bank, 1996, 2002). In addition, there was no schooling services provided in the communities in the southern half of Egypt in the early 1990s, (USAID, 2006). To address these issues, UNICEF initiated the community project in four deprived hamlets of a southern Egyptian governorate in 1992, introducing “a structure with multiple stakeholders, a child-centered pedagogic model and a strategy that targeted economically marginalized and rural population” (Sidhom & Al Fustat, 2004, p.7). The overall objectives were “to demonstrate a replicable approach for increasing access of girls to primary education in remote rural areas where no schools exist, and develop innovative learning methodologies which can be applied to the formal educational system” (Zaalouk, 2004, p. ix). Over the project’s life, the number of schools has grown to 202 in three governorates in the southern Egypt, recording a total enrolment of 4656 children including 3259 girls in 2000 (Zaalouk, 2004) and the school model has been locally embedded as part of formal education in Egypt (Sidhom & Al Fustat, 2004). Furthermore, the project has been successful in building an unprecedented partnership
among main different stakeholders: UNICEF, the Egyptian Ministry of Education (MOE), local communities and NGOs. The stakeholders’ partnership has enabled the project to attend to the education needs of the socio-economically marginalized areas in the southern Egypt and has eventuated in the project’s sustainability (Zaalouk, 2004). This study carefully looks at the UNICEF project to devise a pragmatic evaluation framework for educational development projects in developing countries. The research question is: What is a pragmatic evaluation for sustainability of educational development projects in developing countries?

**Research design**

This study employed a case-study research design (Creswell, 2002) to investigate international reform projects for developing countries as “a bounded system” (Stake, 1997). The case study was convenient to illuminate the contextually-embedded evaluation process by using multiple data sources. This study used three data sources to triangulate one against another: (1) archival and relevant documents including the UNICEF project evaluation reports, (2) a survey questionnaire, and (3) interviews.

This study made literature-based assumptions to “succinctly qualify research questions by directing attention to key issues” (Yin, 2003, p. 22). Therefore, the proposed assumptions (Table 1) linked with pivotal issues were reflected on questions for a questionnaire survey and interviews in the research. The study specified the units of analysis of the case, which were closely tied with the research question as well as the research assumptions (Table 1). The unit of analysis “is related to and shaped by the way you define your initial questions” (Yin, 2003, p. 23). Setting up the research assumptions and the units of analysis, the following sub-questions were employed for the interviewees and the questionnaire:

(i) Who should be involved in the evaluation process?
(ii) When should the evaluation be conducted?
(iii) Why should the evaluation be conducted?

These questions were also applied to the archival documents to illuminate the process of evaluation adopted by the UNICEF community project in Egypt.
### Table 1

**Link between Research Question, Research Assumption and Units of Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Research Assumption</th>
<th>Units of Analysis</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A cross-check approach between external outcome evaluators and on-going process evaluators by local stakeholders should be employed.</td>
<td>Evaluator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cross check, between periodical outcome evaluation and ongoing process evaluation from the beginning of project to even after the project, should be conducted</td>
<td>Timing of evaluation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation should be conducted not only to measure outcomes of a project but also to enhance local evaluation capacity.</td>
<td>Reasons for evaluation</td>
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Six different stakeholders involved in the UNICEF project were invited to participate for a purposeful sampling. These stakeholders included UNICEF staff, members who had designed and implemented the project, an official from the Egyptian Ministry of Education, NGO’s staff members who played a central role in implementing the project in a rural area, teachers who were working for the community schools, and students. Data collection from the key stakeholders aimed to seek various viewpoints on evaluation for educational development projects at a primary education level. As these different stakeholders of educational reform projects may own different perspectives, collectively they can better effect a change (Riddell, 1999). However, the questionnaire survey was not administered to students, as they were only interviewed since it was expected that they might have had difficulties answering the questions without considerable explanations. Table 2 shows the categories and number of project stakeholders involved in this research. There were 15 survey responses collected and a total of 18 interviewees.
In this study, the Japanese researcher used English and Arabic languages to access the participants. The survey was developed in English and translated into Arabic. The interviewing was undertaken in English languages with which the researcher is conversant, and in Arabic through two interpreters. The two interpreters, who were Egyptian bilingual researchers in education, assisted the Japanese researcher in interpreting these interviews in Arabic into English by cross-checking each other to ensure the accuracy since Burns (2000) and Silverman (2000) emphasise that if two or more people have similar interpretations, the reliability of the interpretation can be enhanced. The researcher sought and obtained ethics approval from all the interviewees and survey respondents for participating in this research.

**Results**

The archival documents from the UNICEF project in Egypt revealed how the project was evaluated during the project while the empirical data from the survey and interviews
indicated how the project should have been evaluated during the project implementation or should be evaluated in a similar project in the future. A summary of the findings including the key themes and responses is presented in Table 2. This summary is organised according to the three units of analysis, namely, the evaluators, timing of evaluation, and reasons for evaluation. However, only the key themes and responses are displayed (Table 2).

Table 2

*Three Data Sources on Evaluating Educational Development Projects*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Survey*</th>
<th>Interview Data **</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluators</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institutes</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central MOE</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timing of Evaluation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular ongoing evaluation even after the project</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the beginning of the project to the end</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons for Evaluation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide feedback for teacher improvement</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess the effectiveness</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve a problem</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess the project’s progress progresses</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable participants to conduct self-evaluation</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Average percentage of all participants who agreed and strongly agreed (n=24)

** The number of citations by interviewees
UNICEF documents on the community school project in Egypt showed that the UNICEF projects had two types of evaluators. The first group of evaluators conducted nine thematic outcome evaluations between 1992 and 2004 (Zaalouk, 2004). Four internal evaluations were carried out by UNICEF Egypt offices while five evaluations were conducted by external organisations such as the Egyptian Ministry of Education and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). These evaluations focused on certain themes of the project and the project’s outcomes. For example, the 2001 evaluation were centred round the quality of learning and effective schooling. The National Center for Examinations and Educational Evaluation (NCEEE), a research institute affiliated with the Egyptian Minister of Education, and CIDA played a central role in evaluating the project (National Center for Examinations and Educational Evaluation [NCEEE], 2001; Program Support Unit, 2001). The second evaluation group was comprised of the local project participants carrying out ongoing monitoring and evaluation on a regular basis. They not only provided the data that the outcome evaluations used to judge as evidence, but also were successful in embedding the evaluation practice locally. The participants included students, educational committees consisting of members from such as local community and parents, teachers, supervisors, NGOs’ management, research institutes, regional education offices and the central Ministry of Education (Zaalouk, 2004). Despite a varying degree of involvement among these stakeholders, they were involved in monitoring and evaluation activities at different levels, namely designing monitoring and evaluation, assessing their activities, collecting and recording data, reporting them and re-designing monitoring and evaluation activities (ibid.). Thus, the UNICEF community project in Egypt established a cross-check evaluation system employing both external thematic-focused outcome and internal process evaluators.

UNICEF empirical data from the questionnaire survey and interviews accorded with various stakeholders’ involvement in evaluation for educational projects (Table 2). More than 90% of the questionnaire respondents favoured that teachers, schools, educational institutes, UNICEF and the central MOE should be part of evaluation process as evaluators. The interview data also manifested importance of the project’s evaluation by
various participants. One interview said, “all the members should evaluate the project because they are playing different, but important roles in the project.” Additionally, it should be noted that three interviewees recognized third organization as a potential evaluator for the project. One interview claimed, “we need have extra experiences from external evaluators. Because they can tell us points which we can not see from inside the project.”

A relevant document on the UNICEF community school project in Egypt showed that two types of monitoring and evaluation activities were carried out. One was conducted by a variety of local participants. Monitoring and evaluating the project’s activities was conducted on a regular basis since the initiation of the project as part of the intervention (Zaalouk, 2004). On the other hand, the nine thematic outcome evaluations by both internal and external evaluators were occasionally conducted between 1992 and 2004. According to Zaalouk (2004), as the thematic outcome evaluations were carefully designed and set up, most of the evaluations yielded the productive and timely results as good lessons for the project. However, this study could not find how UNICEF decided the best possible timings for those thematic evaluations by examining the UNICEF relevant documents on the community project.

Empirical data on the UNICEF community project indicates the importance of conducting process evaluation from the beginning and even after the life of the project (Table 2). Almost all respondents of the questionnaire survey data agreed that evaluating an educational project should be conducted regularly from the beginning of the project to the end and should be continued by the project participants even after the project. Interview data supported process evaluation even after the project’s period. One interview stated, “It is very important for teachers and other participants to do on-going evaluation by ourselves to increase educational and evaluation skills, so that we can continue to use them . . . also, it is important to deal with a problem by ourselves during the project until problems become bigger.” One of each interviewee mentioned the importance of evaluation at the end of the project and prior to the project.
According to relevant documents of the UNICEF community project in Egypt, each thematic evaluation investigated the project focusing on a theme. For example, the 2001 evaluations led by CIDA and NCEEE focused on measuring the effective aspects of the community schools and how far the project has achieved its initial milestones, whereas the 2004 evaluation by a consultant was set to assess the sustainability of the community projects. However, the common purposes of all the thematic evaluations were to examine the merit and worth of the project. Separately, on-going monitoring and evaluation activities by the participants in the UNICEF community project were recognised as essential part of the interventions (Zaalouk, 2004). Hence, the on-going monitoring and evaluation is not only an end of the project but also a means to acquire evaluation skills and knowledge by the local participants, which is expected to improve outcomes of the project. This “means-end” idea of monitoring and evaluation for the UNICEF community project was part of the project’s initial conception. Furthermore, this project regards evaluation as an essential opportunity to advocate and diffuse the project’s activities (ibid.).

Empirical data on the UNICEF community project showed several reasons for the project evaluation (Table 2). More than 90% of the survey respondents agreed to the following reasons: enabling participants to acquire evaluation skills and knowledge, providing feedback to teachers to enhance their capacity, identifying and solving a problem, assessing the progress and effectiveness of the project. Interview data corroborated these findings from the questionnaire survey adding further reasons for evaluation such as determining strengths and weaknesses of a project. The reasons found from both the questionnaire survey and interviews data on the UNICEF project may be consolidated into two main reasons. One was to examine the worth and merit of the project while the other was to utilise results and process of evaluation to enhance the project’s implementation and the capacity of the project’s participants. These two reasons correspond to the “means-end” conception of the UNICEF evaluation practices in Egypt.
Discussions

Evaluators employed by the UNICEF thematic outcome evaluations were UNICEF Cairo office staff and varied external evaluators hired periodically while local stakeholders implemented on-going process evaluations at different levels. Vertical reporting systems among the local stakeholders were practiced on a regular basis. UNICEF empirical data indicated that a project should engage the projects’ participants as internal evaluators and recruit an external evaluator. These research findings align with current literature on evaluation. Fitzpatrik, Sanders and Worthen (2004) contend that as modern evaluation needs to be responsive to a wide range of local needs, it is difficult for a single entity to meet all the needs as this sort of participatory approach can give voice to the intended project participants. These participants are often underrepresented in the identification, and design and management of the project (Bamberger, 2000; Holte-McKenzie, Forde, & Theobald, 2006). The high degree of participation tends to improve a program and facilitate subsequent evaluation after the project’s termination (Minamoto & Nagao, 2006). As a result, the impact of the project can be sustainable inasmuch as utilisation of the evaluation can be enhanced (Minamoto & Nagao, 2006).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned strengths of process evaluation, evaluation for educational projects also requires an external outcome evaluator since employing process evaluators have disadvantages. For example, as project’s participants carry out process evaluation, they can be too close to their project to bring objectivity into evaluation (Fitzpatrik et al., 2004). On the contrary, an external outcome evaluator can bring outsider perspective and raise accountability and tend to possess wider and deeper expertise on evaluation and knowledge of other similar projects (ibid.). Hence, it is clear that a preferred approach should use cross-checking by an external evaluator and local various stakeholders. Data indicated validity of research assumption 1 (Table 1). Regarding “timing of evaluation” over UNICEF’s nine thematic outcome evaluations, empirical data suggested that conducting on-going process evaluation from the beginning to after the project’s conclusion was critical. On-going process evaluation require project’s
participants to be involved in collecting, analysing, and interpreting data for the project analysis and enhancement (Holte-McKenzie et al., 2006). This process may allow tracking of the casual chain between inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes. This is closely linked with RBM, and can, in turn, lead to enhancing their ownership of the project (Minamoto & Nagao, 2006). The evaluation also allowed the participants to strengthen their evaluation capacity (Independent Evaluation Group, 2007; Minamoto & Nagao, 2006). On the other hand, Bamberger (2000) and Picciotto (2003) point out that international aid agencies that provide funds for recipient countries need to assess effectiveness of projects produced by their intervention for their compliance. For this reason, periodical outcome evaluations need to be replaced with on-going process evaluations. Due to these findings, the research assumption 2 (Table 1) was also attested.

In terms of “reasons for evaluation”, the nine UNICEF evaluations were conducted to examine the merit and worth of the project even though each evaluation assessed the project on different topics. The evaluations were also thought as an opportunity to disseminate the activities and outcomes inside and outside the project. In contrast, on-going monitoring and evaluation activities by the participants of the UNICEF project were not simply a means to check the effectiveness of the initiative but a mandatory activity for the participants. Hence, they were supposed to take part in the evaluation process and to enhance their evaluation capacity. Those findings shown above were reflected on the empirical data that may be consolidated into two reasons for evaluating projects. The first reason was to examine the worth and merit that the project has produced while the second one was to utilise results and process of evaluation to enhance both capacity of the project’s participants and the project’s implementation. These two purposes of evaluation are underpinned by current program evaluation theories. For example, Vedung (1997) argues that the major purposes of program evaluation needs to include accountability, intervention improvement and basic knowledge advancement. Similarly, Rossi et al. (2004) claim that program evaluations are performed mainly for program improvement, accountability and knowledge generation. These features can fit the changing context in international development (e.g., accountability, Nagao, 2006). Also, it
corresponds with the Result-Based Management (RBM) model that focuses on outcomes produced by interventions and the implementation process of a project (CIDA, 2000). The second reason was concurrent with local capacity development that the recipient country was keen to develop in order to sustain the impact of the interventions (Nagao, 2006). Thus, research assumption 3 (Table 1) was affirmed.

Conclusions
The current practice of evaluation for educational development projects seems not to assist the sustainability of a projects’ impact. As the changing context in international development such as RBM and capacity development has emerged as a solution, so is the evaluation practice for educational development required to change. Both the findings of the research and current literature indicated that the changing context requires international donor agencies to shift from outcome evaluation for their intervention activities to process evaluation conducted largely by local participants. Process evaluation involves different layers of participants in the evaluation processes at the initiation of intervention, so that they can not only acquire and improve evaluation skills on a learning-by-doing basis, but also understand more about the projects. This practice is likely to lead to improving national evaluation capacity as a whole, being locally institutionalised, and eventually sustaining the impact of the projects in a long-term. Therefore, this study concludes that educational development projects in developing countries should adopt process evaluation to enhance sustainable futures in developing countries.

References


