Combining External and Self Evaluation: The ‘Critical Friend Approach’ as an Option

Andreas Balthasar
Department of Political Science, University of Lucerne

Abstract

Based on a certain amount of discontent with the quality of the results from self evaluations on the one hand, and the use of results from external evaluations on the other hand there has been an increased demand for intermediate forms of evaluations in recent years. In response to this, the ‘critical friend approach’ was developed. This approach aims at providing targeted and direct support to individuals in charge of political programs and projects by means of an evaluation. In this article the ‘critical friend approach’ will be presented based on the example of the evaluation of the outreach social work in the city of Lucerne and will be discussed using experiences from other areas of application.

Keywords: Critical Friend Approach, External Evaluation, Self Evaluation, Use of Evaluation