

ORIGINAL PAPER

Evaluation of the Social Welfare Sector Services/Programmes in Cyprus

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Abstract

Background: Evaluation is used in almost every activity and particularly in processes where the control of reliability and effectiveness is purposefully incorporated in the implementation of the process, as well as in the final outcome. It is a process related to the assessment of the outcome.

Aim: The way in which the evaluations are implemented and the extent to which the outcome of the provided service is evaluated constitutes the subject matter of this research in regard to services and programmes provided in the Republic of Cyprus.

Methodology: The investigation results of the effectiveness of the social sector services in Cyprus are presented with the formulation of specific research hypotheses/questions, which were examined by using the method of qualitative data analysis. The method was used for data collected during structured interviews, as well as archival material and service/administration documents of the agencies.

Results: The majority of the organization of the social sector believes, that they implementing evaluation process, focuses on the technical/financial audit by the relevant state services and in annual activity reports. Contrary to this result, less than 25% take actions after the completion of the evaluation, a significant indication of not conducting evaluations. Furthermore the majority considers that the administrative audit from the relevant state services covers the issue of the existence of experts. However, the results of the longitudinal analysis indicate the opposite. Although the agencies claim to conduct evaluations on an almost regular basis, in reality this does not happen.

Conclusions: For the majority of the organization the evaluation is a type of audit which takes place exclusively to control specific operational parameters with the intention to impose sanctions in case of deviations. What actually happens is a partial, simple recording of the work done in activity reports, as well as the standard audit of accounts and safety issues by state services. These are conventional audits which are not related to conducting scientific evaluations and are confused with them. The research questions and the processing of the results revealed that for the majority of organizations, who they took part, an evaluation culture does not yet exist.

Key Words: Evaluation, effectiveness, feedback process, social sector