

IM4DC

Action Research Report

SUMMARY

Researchers:

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School/Centre:

Accelerated Learning Laboratory

University/Institutions:

The University of Western Australia

Key themes:

Governance and Regulation
Community and Environmental Sustainability
Operational Effectiveness

Key countries:

General application

Completion:

March 2015

Research aims:

This evaluation project sought to understand how IM4DC educational and development programs have impacted program deliverers by:

- contributing to their knowledge
- contributing to their development
- providing broader-level benefits

For further information on this action research:

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IM4DC Evaluation of Impact: The Program Deliverers' Perspective

This evaluation project aimed to assist the International Mining for Development Centre (IM4DC) to understand how its various educational and developmental programs have benefited program deliverers and contributed to their work and development, and if broader-level impacts have been achieved. The information generated should complement other evaluation initiatives that IM4DC has been engaged in to provide a broader picture about the impact of IM4DC activities.

A mixed-method evaluation design was adopted using online surveys and interviews to collect data from program deliverers. The surveys and interviews were designed to solicit comprehensive and in-depth feedback from key staff members who were closely involved in the design and delivery of various IM4DC activities including educational programs, action research projects and fellowships. Initial contact was made with 87 staff members, primarily from the University of Queensland and the University of Western Australia, the two key academic institutions conducting IM4DC activities. Completed survey responses were obtained from 53 staff members and interviews were successfully conducted with 7 of them. As well as analysing impact, the report provides information on staff motivation to engage, input, activity and outputs.

A broad range of positive outcomes for staff were recorded, including:

- 1) intellectual outcomes – where many staff developed new cultural knowledge and understanding and improved their research and practice
- 2) reputational outcomes – where many staff actively engaged in knowledge generation and dissemination, with some already producing high-impact academic publications
- 3) financial outcomes – where some staff actively built on their IM4DC work to apply and obtain additional funding
- 4) social outcomes – where many staff formed new collaborations and networks within their institutions and across institutions, as well as with government and industry

Positive signs of broader-level organisational and social impact were also seen, as staff suggested that IM4DC involvement has contributed to the reputation and capacity building for their university, for their community of practice and for Australia as a whole. An additional finding concerns the unique value propositions of universities in delivering IM4DC activities. Staff commonly believed the key strengths of universities lie in their multidisciplinary expertise, objectivity, credibility, and the long-term commitment towards knowledge generation and dissemination through education and research. Several staff provided anecdotal examples of how their university status allowed their work to be positively perceived by various stakeholders they were working with.