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Title of the abstract	Bridging the Gap: Designing M&E Training Programs for Enhanced Evaluation Capacity in Latin America and the Caribbean
Conference session	X Stream A. Responsive National Evaluation Systems □ Stream B. Inclusive National Evaluation Systems □ Stream C. Future Driven Systems and Approaches
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Preferred format:	X Formal presentation (maximum 10 minutes) □ Participation in a panel discussion where the experience can be shared □ Participation in an interactive session where the example can be shared, without a formal presentation □ Other (please specify) _____
I will need to apply for bursary support, if selected.	□ Yes X No
Language to be used for presentation	X English □ French □ Spanish □ Chinese

Abstract Text (max. 500 words)

Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region is essential for low-income countries aiming to strengthen their Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) national systems. A robust M&E system is crucial for evidence-based decision-making, enhancing

public budget efficiency for programs and initiatives through quantitative and qualitative indicators and tailored evaluations.

Tailored training for public servants or individuals interested in M&E is vital to improve the overall performance of the M&E system by enhancing the practical knowledge of the individuals involved. However, there is a noticeable lack of accessible information regarding the needs and availability of M&E training opportunities in these countries, complicating the design of training initiatives.

To address this gap, the Center for Learning on Evaluation and Results for Latin America and the Caribbean (CLEAR-LAC), a longstanding M&E trainer for LAC governments, conducted a qualitative study to assess governmental M&E needs and the training available to them in five representative Spanish-speaking countries: Colombia, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Paraguay. The primary objective was to study gaps between actual needs and training offerings to design a pertinent M&E training program.

The study involved two main components: demand and supply studies. The demand study included qualitative analysis of interviews with government M&E authorities and/or specialists from international or local agencies, as well as a review of the National Evaluation Capacities Index (INCE). The supply study entailed desk research of over 40 training services conducted by international or national institutions across the countries. Each identified need and training program was categorized and tabulated in respective databases, which were then merged into a "gap matrix" to visualize shared needs and deficiencies in supply by the dimensions of interest.

The findings revealed that supply often relied on postgraduate programs focusing on legal and administrative structures at the country level. In contrast, demand primarily focused on technical skills development, particularly in sectoral assessment, evaluation utilization, and developing relevant monitoring indicators. Additionally, the INCE analysis highlighted a critical need for evaluation networks in M&E for students.

The gap study underscores the need for country-specific training, which includes linked courses with intermediate certifications, addressing sector-specific thematics and the significance of M&E networking. These findings are crucial for enlightening the design of future training programs in the analyzed countries and the broader LAC region, ultimately contributing to developing more effective and efficient M&E systems.