

Executive Summary

An independent external review of SAMS was conducted in June of 2009 by Michael Kendrick PhD of Kendrick Consulting International. A variety of findings of note are briefly summarized here below.

The independent review of SAMS indicated that SAMS represents some of the most advanced thinking and practice in consumer centered evaluation and that SAMS has established itself as credible, ethical and competent in conducting not only basic monitoring of service quality but also in developing a variety of catalysts that are designed to influence and enhance quality. In international terms, SAMS was seen as being in the ranks of the leading edge of evaluation approaches that directly involve service users and families in conducting evaluations.

Standards and Monitoring Services (SAMS) had been conducting development focused evaluation for well over ten years prior to the term “developmental evaluation” being “coined” by Michael Quinn Patton in 1996. Various publications attest to SAMS pioneering many of the concepts and practices now associated with “developmental evaluation”ⁱ. For thirty years, SAMS has promoted and practiced: an individual outcome focus to evaluation, the full inclusion of disabled people and families as evaluators, partnership approaches and the use of evaluation as a primary strategy for service and sector development.

In addition to conducting developmental evaluation, SAMS has developed and delivered values based training in New Zealand for over two decades. From the late 1980s, SAMS has strongly promoted aspiration based personal planning as a foundation for creating effective, individualized services. The combination of SAMS providing developmental evaluation, sector resources, leadership training for disabled people and families as well as targeted values based education has been a significant contributor to positive change over the years in New Zealand.

SAMS has quite properly recognized the importance of engagement, values, attitude, ideology and theory in the complex processes involved in achieving quality as well as the core necessity for people to voluntarily commit to quality and the role of consciousness raising in achieving this outcome.

SAMS is very much in sync with both the intent and detail of the UN Convention on Human Rights and the New Zealand Disability Strategy and has been so well before the Disability Strategy or Convention were conceived of. In effect, the conduct of SAMS is as many have said, is that of an exemplary proponent of the rights and dignity of people with disabilities.

The widely held perception of SAMS is that it is competent, has talented staff, is responsible and conscientious, fair and even handed, diplomatic, exemplary in their values and responsive when issues arise. The evaluation

SAMS has recently expanded the number of partners it now works with as well as began relationships with some entirely new partners. The fact that these relationships are growing and that they are regarded by the partners as being fruitful suggests that SAMS is respectful of its partners and is a good collaborator. It also strongly suggests that there is symmetry between what it has aimed to do by way of respectful collaboration and what it has actually achieved in practice. This integrity between aims and conduct has the result of giving the organization a reputation for authenticity and credibility.

SAMS:

- has demonstrated that it can not only “create from scratch”, it can move these creations into implementation and sustain them as ongoing efforts,
- was described as being positive, encouraging, affirming, supportive and this defines SAMS as being well within a “strengths based” orientation,
- is seen as a trusted ally and good resource. People with disabilities and their families were distinctly pleased with the supportive attitudes of SAMS,
- is an initiative that many could identify with as being a positive contributor to the future of the sector in New Zealand and possibly elsewhere.
- is current and up to date at least in regards to generally accepted practice. It is also obvious that SAMS has been a pioneer in many ways and its views would still be considered by many in New Zealand as being challenging to established practice in terms of service quality.

Summary of areas for potential development

- Ensuring there is a clear rationale and systems to safeguard quality when considering any future expansion
- Increase technical expertise so as to offer a greater variety of specific voluntary evaluation services
- Exploring the most effective ways to develop and deliver values based training and leadership
- Formalise appraisal and development processes for SAMS staff, contractors and Board members

- Continue in its efforts to improve the efficiencies in evaluation costs by attempting to have longer term schedules for evaluations and gradually phase in, through negotiation with funders, a pricing adjustment to increase unit evaluation costs so as to be closer in line with industry norms in New Zealand
- Explore ways to ensure that there is appropriate “branding” and increase profile in additional areas.

ⁱ * PREM III Checklist and Procedure. Wellington, NZ: Standards and Monitoring Services, 1987.

Capie, A.C.M. and Forrest, A. (1992). *Ten Years of a Consumer-Led System of Evaluation and Monitoring of Community Services*. Paper presented at the 9th World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Mental Deficiency, Brisbane, Australia.

Benjamin, M., Capie, A.C.M., and Nossin, M. (1997). Evaluating Community Services for People with a Disability: A Training Manual. Wellington, NZ: Standards and Monitoring Services.