

Investing in culturally sensitive evaluation in Africa increases acceptance of evaluation and its results¹

AfrEA has worked on cultural sensitivity and evaluation on the continent. The discussions have led to the concept of “Making Evaluation our Own”, which has evolved to what is known as “Made in Africa Evaluation” or “African-Rooted Evaluation.” It is generally considered that colonization has dismissed African knowledge, know-how and skills, but now the paradigm is changing. There are indigenous ways of thinking and doing evaluation within several African communities. Therefore, it is a professional and intellectual obligation of African evaluators to reveal these skills and knowledge to the rest of the world. The successive boards of AfrEA have worked on developing this concept further.

Strengthening the representation of indigenous and South Pacific voices in evaluation in Australia and New Zealand²

Australia: The development of indigenous evaluation is a priority for the Australian Evaluation Society (AES). An AES Indigenous strategy supports the aims of: increasing the numbers of Indigenous people in evaluation; strengthening the capacity of evaluators to produce high quality, ethical work in indigenous contexts; and, increasing knowledge, skills and competence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous evaluators. Key initiatives in this area include: (a) support grants for indigenous evaluators to participate in the annual conference and workshops programme; (b) developing a registry of indigenous researchers and exploring mentoring/training pathways and promoting partnerships between the AES and indigenous organizations, people, groups; and (c) a range of seminars and workshops, conducted by regional groups, and focused on indigenous programmes and on conducting responsive evaluation in indigenous contexts.

New Zealand: The Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association’s (ANZEA) efforts to bring voices of Maori indigenous peoples into evaluation include the following:

- The inclusion and representation of Maori on the ANZEA board is a constitutional requirement.
- The leadership of key projects (such as the evaluation competency development project) sponsored by the association have had joint leadership responsibility between Maori and non-Maori members and board members.
- Support for the development of indigenous evaluation methodologies and resources is a strategic priority for ANZEA, and one effort that can be easily accessed is the digest of indigenous New Zealand evaluation resources published by the association. http://www.anzea.org.nz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=107&Itemid=115
- Scholarships are offered at every conference for indigenous delegates to attend.
- ANZEA conferences are preceded by a Maori meeting (hui), that is lead and attended by Maori and other indigenous colleagues.
- Maori practices (tikanga) are embedded into the way ANZEA conducts its business, for example, all meetings and conferences are opened and closed using Maori protocols and language.

ANZEA is now working on a strategy to promote policy dialogue about evaluation, evaluation culture and thinking among institutional champions and leaders across New Zealand. A step taken by ANZEA towards strengthening the enabling environment for evaluation in New Zealand has been the development of a set of evaluation competencies for Aotearoa/New Zealand. The approach taken by ANZEA, has been to ensure the competencies have the broadest application, i.e., enhancing the knowledge and demand for quality evaluative evidence by funders and commissioners of evaluation, as well as building the quality of the supply of evaluators to provide evaluative evidence.

¹ Adapted from UNICEF, EvalPartners, IOCE in partnership with Cooperacion Espanola, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, UNEG, UNWomen. (2013). *Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs): Learning from Africa, Americas, Asia, Australasia, Europe and Middle East*, available at http://www.mymande.org/voluntary_organizations_for_professional_evaluation

² UNICEF, EvalPartners, IOCE in partnership with Cooperacion Espanola, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, UNEG, UNWomen. (2013). *Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs): Learning from Africa, Americas, Asia, Australasia, Europe and Middle East*, available at http://www.mymande.org/voluntary_organizations_for_professional_evaluation

Strengthening equity-focused and gender-sensitive evaluation systems in Africa³

Strengthening equity-focused and gender-sensitive evaluation systems and evaluations in general is the core mandate of Africa Gender and Development Evaluators Network (AGDEN). Through its toolkit on Gender and Human Rights Responsive M&E, training workshops, conference presentations, and online discussions, AGDEN conducts research studies, discusses, advocates and gives training on integrating the key principles of gender and human rights (empowerment; equality; non-discrimination; transparency; accountability; and, participation) in the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of development interventions, programmes and/or policies. AGDEN has constructed a model for how these principles can be integrated with the five OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

Raising feminist issues in evaluation⁴

The Feminist Issues in Evaluation Topical Interest Group (TIG) consistently strives to present sessions and workshops each year at the Annual American Evaluation Association (AEA) conference. These sessions discuss the integration of gender-responsive evaluation approaches and methods that integrate feminist theory. In the past, the TIG newsletter was used to disseminate information about feminist evaluation efforts, highlighting individual practitioners. On occasion the TIG has asked members to attend annual meeting sessions not typically open to feminist ideas, to raise questions about gender or social equity. In the past several years, TIG have co-sponsored sessions with other TIGs interested in issues of social justice in order to encourage others to think about gender equity as well as to continue to push for its own thinking and practice. In addition, publishing is one of the strategic actions TIG has undertaken as a means of disseminating information to practitioners and students about how to do feminist evaluation, as well as encouraging others to rethink their practice. TIG has also developed a volume on feminist evaluation and research that can be used by professionals and as a textbook in university classrooms.

³ UNICEF, EvalPartners, IOCE in partnership with Cooperacion Espanola, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, UNEG, UNWomen. (2013). *Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs): Learning from Africa, Americas, Asia, Australasia, Europe and Middle East*, available at

http://www.mymande.org/voluntary_organizations_for_professional_evaluation

⁴ Ibid