

Parliamentarians Forum on Development Evaluation¹

The Parliamentarians Forum on Development Evaluation is a collective of parliamentarians who are committed to development evaluations. This is the first time in the history that:

- Parliamentarians are organized as a formal group to work on development evaluation.
- Parliamentarians are raising awareness on the need for national performance evaluation mechanisms.
- Parliamentarians are taking the lead to advocate for national evaluation policies.

In February 2013, the first ever parliamentarians' panel presented three country experiences (Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh) on building an enabling environment for development evaluation in respective countries at an evaluation conference held in Kathmandu, Nepal. This was historical in that parliamentarians gave voice for national evaluation policies and showed promising commitment to realize these at country level. Based on the response of the panel, the three country parliamentarians decided to establish a forum with a view to addressing the issue collectively at country level. The Forum is now represented by parliamentarians from seven out of eight South Asian countries; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Maldives is in the process of joining the Forum.

The goal of the Forum is to advance an enabling environment for nationally owned, transparent, systematic and standard development evaluation process in line with National Evaluation Policy at country level which ensures aid effectiveness, achievement of results and sustainability of development. The objectives of the Forum are:

1. National evaluation policies endorsed by the respective South Asian governments are in place and effective.
2. Create the space for dialogue between legislators and evaluation community.
3. Improve capacity of parliamentarians who are committed to development evaluation in the country.
4. Establish country level performance measuring mechanisms, in line with national evaluation policies ensuring result oriented and sustainable development.

The core team of the Forum is working on development of country status reports identifying gaps in evaluation mechanisms, establishment of country parliamentarian teams, development of model national evaluation policy and raising awareness towards national evaluation policies.

The Forum participated in a panel on "Why National Evaluation Policies matter in South Asia" at the Sri Lanka Evaluation Association (SLEVA) International Evaluation Conference held in July 2013 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Nine parliamentarians representing six South Asian countries attended the conference proving the interest and commitment in development evaluation². Following the conference, the Forum conducted a strategic planning meeting at the parliament of Sri Lanka. In 2013, the Forum also took an active part in the Third International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities held in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

¹ Additional details are available at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Parliamentarians-Forumon-Development-Evaluation-in-South-Asia/310884062378855>; http://www.mymande.org/evalyear/working_with_parliaments;
http://www.mymande.org/evalyear/parliamentarians_forum

² Afghanistan -2; Bangladesh – 1; Bhutan – 1; Nepal -2; Pakistan -1; and, Sri Lanka -2.

Parliamentarian Group for the Promotion of a National Evaluation Policy in Pakistan³

To bring change in the evaluation culture in Pakistan, the Pakistan Evaluation Network (PEN) is engaging with parliamentarians, primarily Members of the National Assembly from different political parties, to promote better evaluation practices and a national evaluation policy in Pakistan. With support from IOCE, PEN partnered with SLEvA to move in that direction and became a part of the South Asian Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation.

The Hon. Eng. Hamid ul Haq was the first Member of Parliament from Pakistan to participate in these efforts. He is a member of various Parliamentary Committees, such as the Communication and Works Committee, Higher Education Commission Committee, Public Health Committee and the Monitoring Health Committee. He actively took part at the SLEvA conference held in July 2013 in Sri Lanka where he highlighted a possible direction for more accountable governance in Pakistan. Post conference, he shared his report with the Hon. Speaker of the National Assembly and with the Chairman of PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, a political party in Pakistan).

Hon. Eng. Hamid ul Haq has committed to bringing together parliamentarians from various political parties in Pakistan towards drafting and promulgating a national evaluation policy for public institutions. To this end, in consultation with PEN, the Parliamentarians Group in Pakistan, including the Hon. Qaiser Jamal., Hon. Junaid Akber, Hon. Hamid ul Haq and Hon. Sajid Nawaz are discussing a detailed action plan for popularizing a national evaluation policy. The Parliamentarian Group has also established linkages with other parliamentarians of SAARC countries for the preparation of a national evaluation policy at a regional level in South Asia. In addition, the parliamentarians are advocating for incorporation of evaluation as an integral part of the manifesto of political parties.

PEN was able to effectively mobilize the parliamentarians due to two main reasons. The timing was favorable for introducing the concept of evaluation as the change in government came in with promises of transparency and accountability to the people. Moreover, PEN's strong association with different members of the political parties has reduced the time usually required to build trust and rapport. PEN used a conscious and deliberate approach of communicating the evaluation concept initially from a political perspective. This involved studying the political parties' manifestos and placing emphasis on the role of evaluation in strengthening accountability to the people. In addition, the natural competitiveness amongst political parties' was leveraged to encourage more active participation from the parliamentarians. Putting together these efforts then entailed frequent follow-ups with the parliamentarians and being readily accessible to them to provide technical inputs or information on other development related matters. With these efforts, PEN positioned itself as a knowledge resource for the wide and disparate information requirements of the parliamentarians.

PEN's initiative, together with Parliamentarians Forum on Development Evaluation, Community of Evaluators (CoE) and European Evaluation Society (EES) work with parliamentarians is now part of EvalPartners global project 'Engaging Parliamentarians for an Innovative Evaluation Culture'. *For more details on this global project see case study 'Public hearing on Evaluation in Democracy at the European Parliament' ahead.*

³ Case study contributed by Shah Alam on behalf of Pakistan Evaluation Network

Public hearing on Evaluation in Democracy at the European Parliament⁴

The European Evaluation Society organized a public hearing on Evaluation in Democracy at the European Parliament in April 2013. The purpose was to stimulate debate and innovative thinking about the potential role of evaluation in the European Parliament and the European Commission. The event was sponsored by Tarja Cronberg, Member of the European Parliament. She spoke of evaluation as a tool for the empowerment of citizens; a way of promoting social learning, identifying priority policy interventions, and reducing the democratic deficit in the European Union. An evaluation survey was circulated immediately after the event among the event participants. A special edition of Connections, the EES Newsletter, related to the Public Hearing on Evaluation in Democracy was published in June 2013. Hardcopies of this special edition of Connections were distributed to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).

Other advocacy efforts included the development of a proposal for the EvalPartners Innovation Challenge competition.⁵ The first proposal, Towards an Innovative & Sustainable Evaluation Culture (TISEC), was shortlisted together with two other proposals, including from PEN on behalf of Parliamentarians Forum on Development Evaluation and CoE in South Asia. These three initiatives then made a collective proposal 'Engaging Parliamentarians for an Innovative Evaluation Culture' which finally won the competition and received USD 30,000 for the implementation of the project. Following this grant, the initiative will work to engage parliamentarians in Asia, Europe and the Americas to enhance a supportive evaluation environment.

⁴ http://www.mymande.org/evalyear/filling_the_democratic. For additional information, please visit <http://europeanevaluation.org/1366206322-ees-public-hearing-at-the-eu-parliament.htm>

⁵ For more information visit

http://www.mymande.org/evalpartners/evalpartners_announces_the_winners_of_the_innovation_challenge