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in United Nations evaluations

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in the post-2015 agenda

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Dear Readers,

Self-reflection, critical assessment, continuous improvement. These are successful practices of any individual, organization or government. That is why the evaluation function is so important to UN Women. UN Women regularly evaluates its own work to enhance accountability, inform decision-making and contribute to learning on the best ways to achieve gender equality while strengthening the capacity of United Nations agencies and governments in designing, managing and using gender-responsive evaluations.

This new magazine, developed by UN Women's Independent Evaluation Office, aims to make more accessible good practices and lessons learned on what works for gender equality as identified by corporate evaluations managed by the Independent Evaluation Office, as well as in managing gender-responsive evaluations.

In this first issue, we present a review of policies, systems and practices promoting gender-responsive evaluation in the United Nations and national evaluation systems. You will learn how the United Nations as a system, as well as its individual entities, have been able to make progress in ensuring gender equality is being integrated in evaluation systems. You will also learn how countries, notably governments, voluntary organizations for professional evaluation and parliamentarians, are working together to promote gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems.

The proposal to include gender equality in the post-2015 agenda as a stand-alone goal and integrated across all other goals elevates the strategic importance of gender-responsive evaluations. We hope the review presented in this magazine will help the evaluation community move forward and ensure gender-responsive evaluation is integrated in the post-2015 agenda.

Last but not least, I'd like to express my appreciation and thanks to the colleagues from EvalPartners, EvalGender+ and United Nations Evaluation Group who supported this review.

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Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.

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Promoting gender-responsive evaluation systems



What is gender-responsive evaluation?

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LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

Gender-responsive evaluation in the post-2015 agenda

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Gender-responsive evaluation

*Greater equality
for generations to come*

The year 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Considered the most comprehensive blueprint on advancing women's rights, the 1995 Beijing roadmap was adopted by 189 governments. But 20 years on, a review of its implementation found that the commitments made have only been partially fulfilled.

Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, declared that “creating a world with greater equality for generations to come is the defining and most urgent challenge of this century. Gender equality and the realization of women’s and girls’ human rights are fundamental for achieving human rights, peace and security, and sustainable development and must be central to the post-2015 development agenda. We have set 2030 as the expiry date for gender inequality. Achieving this will require unprecedented political leadership, dedicated and vastly increased resources, and new partnerships

across the whole of society. I urge all our partners to give close attention to the recommendations of the review [\[link\]](#) and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform, as we turn now to develop and then implement the new post-2015 development agenda.”

One of the findings of the above-mentioned Beijing review was that implementation has been hampered by, among other issues, the absence of strong accountability mechanisms. As a result, the review called for strengthening this aspect, which includes evaluation, to accelerate progress.

The proposal to include gender equality and women’s empowerment



UN WOMEN/CHAU DOAN

“Creating a world with greater equality for generations to come is the defining and most urgent challenge of this century.”

— DR. PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA

UN Women Executive Director
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations

in the post-2015 development agenda as a stand-alone goal, as well as integrated across all other goals, further elevates the strategic importance of establishing gender-responsive evaluation systems.

The United Nations General Assembly also underscored the importance of building national capacity for the evaluation of development activities and invited United Nations entities—with the collaboration of national and international stakeholders—to support, upon request, efforts to further strengthen the capacity of Member States for evaluation, in alignment with their national policies and priorities.

As a result, the international community has called for accelerated progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women, including by strengthening the capacity of evaluation systems to inform the implementation of the Beijing declaration and platform for action, as well as the gender-related goals in the post-2015 agenda. However,

this poses a number of important questions: To what extent are existing evaluation systems—within the United Nations and national governments—gender-responsive? Is the United Nations prepared to further strengthen the gender-responsiveness of its evaluation systems? When requested to do so, how can the United Nations best

partnership with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), EvalPartners, EvalGender+ and International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), has commissioned this review of the policies, systems and practices in place to promote gender-responsive evaluation. By taking stock of existing gender-responsive evaluation systems within

Including gender equality in the post-2015 development agenda further elevates the strategic importance of establishing gender-responsive evaluation systems.

engage with national governments and stakeholders to strengthen capacity for gender-responsive evaluation systems? What have we learned from developing and implementing gender-responsive evaluation systems to date?

As a contribution to answering these questions UN Women, in

the United Nations and Member States, it provides information on the opportunities that can be addressed to strengthen these systems in the future, individually and collectively.

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<http://bit.ly/Beijing20review>

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Join me at HeForShe.org

I am one of billions of men who believe equality for women is a basic human right that benefits us all. Now it's your turn to join the solidarity movement for gender equality. Are you HeForShe?



UN Women is the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Photo credit: Celeste Sloman

What is gender-responsive evaluation?

Evaluation, as an agent of change, should bring attention to often overlooked gender equality issues.

According to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), gender-responsive evaluations “provide a holistic and meaningful assessment of how an intervention is guided by human rights and gender equality approaches... [It] draws upon established and well-known approaches, techniques and methods to design, implement and use evaluations. However, performing human rights and gender-responsive evaluations goes beyond technical issues. It

mandates directed at... advancing gender equality.”

In most cases, when gender equality is not the focus of an intervention, this dimension is overlooked in the planning, design, implementation and monitoring phases. It is then not surprising that it is often overlooked in the evaluation phase as well.

However, given evaluation’s role as an agent of change, it can bring attention to this common oversight so that it can be corrected

Evaluations that neglect or omit considerations of gender equality risk depriving stakeholders of evidence about who benefits (and who does not) from interventions, may contribute to perpetuating discriminatory structures and practices, and may miss opportunities for demonstrating how effective interventions are carried out. Furthermore, an evaluation that overlooks gender equality dimensions may be seen as less credible since it failed to regard this crucial aspect relevant to all development interventions and draw out potential differential effects related to gender.

Gender-responsive evaluations aim to integrate gender equality mainstreaming principles within the actual evaluation process.

is not about one design or set of methods, but [about the] lens or standpoint that influences choices made in design and methods... they align the work of the evaluators with binding international

or improved within future interventions. Evaluation can provide important learning and accountability for mainstreaming gender equality that supports strengthened implementation.

What do gender-responsive evaluations assess?

The intervention’s gender equality:

 Design

 Programming

 Results

WHAT DO I NEED
TO KNOW TO
MANAGE OR
CONDUCT AN
EVALUATION AT
UN WOMEN?

HOW CAN
EVALUATION BE
A DRIVER FOR
CHANGE TOWARDS
GENDER EQUALITY
AND WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT?

HOW IS GENDER-
RESPONSIVE
EVALUATION
DIFFERENT
FROM OTHER
EVALUATION?

HOW TO MANAGE GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION

EVALUATION HANDBOOK



Find out how UN Women manages gender-responsive evaluation
with the new UN Women Evaluation Handbook:
How to manage gender responsive evaluation.

The Handbook is available at:
<http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org>



Integrating gender equality in United Nations evaluations: *A three-fold approach*

Within the UN system, there has been increased attention to the need for conducting gender-responsive evaluation since 2005. Cognizant of the challenge, a three-fold approach has been implemented at both the system-wide and individual entity level: strengthening normative frameworks, institutional systems and individual capacities.



1

A solid United Nations normative framework

At the system-wide level, the normative framework has been strengthened through the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review; the recently constituted Independent System-wide Evaluation Policy; and the foundational documents of UNEG, an inter-agency professional network that brings together the evaluation units of 46 UN entities.

The 2012 **Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review** resulted in the General Assembly explicitly calling for or requesting the UN system to strengthen gender-responsive evaluation by:

- » Instituting greater accountability for gender equality in evaluations conducted by country teams by including gender perspectives in such evaluations
- » Continuing to work collaboratively to enhance gender mainstreaming within the UN system, including by ensuring that the various existing accountability mechanisms of the UN system provide for more coherent, accurate and effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting on gender equality results
- » Encouraging the use of the UNEG norms and standards (including those related to gender-responsive evaluation) in the evaluation functions of UN funds, programmes

and specialized agencies, as well as in system-wide evaluations of operational activities for development

- » Fully implementing the UN system-wide Action Plan, including its evaluation performance indicator.

The General Assembly also called for development of a policy for independent system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the UN system. Developed in 2013, the policy not only commits to an evaluation of UN system efforts to mainstream human rights and gender equality, but it also states that all system-wide evaluations will adhere to the UNEG norms and standards and make use of UNEG guidance and tools, including explicitly the guidance related to integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation.

The **UNEG norms and standards** for evaluation in the UN system constitute the key normative framework for evaluation within the United Nations. An issues paper on the revision of the UNEG norms and standards developed in 2013 found that the absence of a stand-alone norm on gender equality was the most recurrently referred gap, and concluded that “there is a clear and justified need for a norm on gender equality and UNEG should consider developing such a norm.” While there are fairly substantive provisions for gender-responsive evaluation in the UNEG standards, the UNEG norms contain only one gender-responsive provision related to



UNEVALUATION



evaluation ethics. It is not included as a key principle for overall evaluation processes.

At the individual level, UN entities have translated the UNEG norms and standards for evaluation into **evaluation policies** that are tailored to each entity’s specific mandate and context. A review of 30 evaluation policies developed from 2005 to 2014 revealed that 57 per cent include at least one reference related to gender equality (or related principles, such as those pertaining to human rights, equity, and participation and inclusion for marginalized or vulnerable groups). Almost one third of those entities with evaluation policies have included gender equality as a central principle guiding evaluation. Provisions in the ethics (26 per cent) and design and methodology (23 per cent) policy areas were also more prevalent in the sample reviewed. Also of note, some policies explicitly reference the UNEG guidance documents related to integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation and the UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator technical note and scorecard.

There is a clear and justified need for an evaluation norm on gender equality.

How have UN entities incorporated gender-responsive evaluation principles in evaluation policies?

57% 

Have at least one reference to gender equality or related principles

Almost **1/3**

of those with evaluation policies have included gender equality as a central principle



26%

addressed gender equality in the **ETHICS** area



23%

addressed gender equality in the **DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY** area

Based on a review of 30 evaluation policies developed between 2005-2014



United Nations institutional systems: *Making gender responsiveness happen*

To be able to operationalize the previously-mentioned normative frameworks, the United Nations has developed systems informed by clear operational guidance, the implementation of which is quality-assured and reported back through accountability systems.

UNEG has developed a series of issue-specific **guidance documents** that explain how to implement the UNEG norms and standards. The recent guidance “Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation” devoted exclusively to human rights and gender-responsive evaluation is a major contribution to operationalize gender-responsive evaluations. In addition, other UNEG guidance documents include sections addressing how to integrate gender equality in specific types of evaluations (e.g., impact evaluations, evaluations of normative work, etc.) UN entities have also developed entity-specific evaluation guidance that incorporates gender equality. These are normally aligned with and drawn from the UNEG resources, tailoring them to the entities’ specific context and needs.

To further guide entities in the implementation of the UNEG norms and standards, gender equality was integrated in the UNEG

quality checklist for evaluation reports. Not only is gender equality a stand-alone parameter with five criteria in the checklist, but also two additional parameters include gender equality criteria.

A number of UN entities have also incorporated similar parameters or criteria in their own quality assessment criteria. In addition, while some UN entities may not have integrated gender equality explicitly in their qual-

In the future, quality criteria may be developed for other aspects of the evaluation process beyond the report phase. For example, a UNEG-endorsed quality checklist for evaluation terms of reference and inception reports exists that also includes a specific parameter on gender equality and human rights. Although this review was aware of only few formal quality assessment criteria for evaluation terms of reference and inception reports at the entity level, if momentum to develop such systems grows in the future, inclusion of gender equality as a specific parameter and/or as cross-cutting criteria would further

UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS INCLUDE:

Operational guidance
Quality-assurance
Reporting mechanisms

ity assessment criteria, meta-evaluation reports may still include sections related to the assessment of both gender equality performance and its integration in evaluation practice.

support and ensure integration of gender equality in evaluations at both the design and the reporting stages.

While quality checklists are necessary, they are not sufficient



TRENDS AND GOOD PRACTICES IN UN ENTITIES

to ensure full integration of gender equality in evaluation systems. The endorsement of the UN System-wide Action Plan **reporting mechanism** in 2012 with an evaluation performance indicator provided further impetus to institutionalize the gender equality in UN evaluation systems. The benchmarks used for the UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator are the gender-related UNEG norms and standards, and UNEG guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation. With UN entities required to assess progress against the indicator and report on an annual basis, UNEG developed a technical note and scorecard to harmonize reporting criteria amongst its members.

Policy

Several UN entities have adopted gender-responsive evaluation provisions into their evaluation policies, strategies and guidance, with several other entities indicating their plan to do so for upcoming policy revisions.

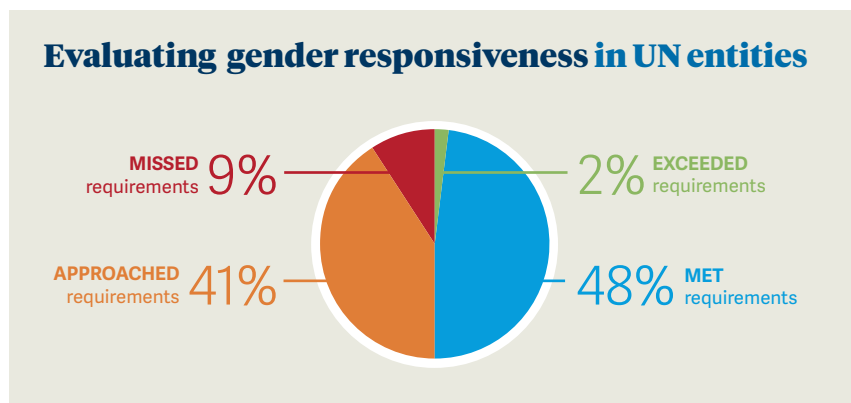
Quality assurance

Some entities have identified promising practices such as: developing peer review mechanisms for evaluations that engage the gender units/teams of the entity in the review of evaluation terms of reference and reports; committing to assess the extent to which integrating a gender perspective in all evaluation activities and products supports gender equality overall in a specific region; and conducting regular spot-checks of evaluations to ensure gender equality is integrated.

Capacity-building

Some UN entities delivered training on gender-responsive evaluation not only for evaluation officers, but also for project managers involved in evaluation. In one instance, several entities jointly conducted a training for their evaluation staff.

In 2014, UN entities reported against the UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator for the second time. Out of 69 entities that were required to report, a total of 62 entities reported on their performance. Of the 62 entities, 28 (45 per cent) utilized the UNEG endorsed UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator technical note and scorecard (compared to 21 entities—or 34 per cent—in 2013), demonstrating a progressive shift from self-perception reporting to more systematic and harmonized reporting. Though encouraging, the use of the UNEG endorsed UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indi-



Action Plan evaluation performance indicator was perceived as a powerful tool to raise the importance of integrating gender equality in the evaluations conducted by the different UN entities.

can build support for gender mainstreaming in other work of the entity. Examples include development of gender-responsive monitoring systems, investments in strengthening the gender-related evidence base, and development of an organizational gender equality strategy.

In these and potential other ways, the UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator reporting process is strengthening compliance and accountability by creating an environment that challenges UN entities to further strengthen their gender-responsive evaluation practice at the organizational level.

Finally, the UNEG has also developed and implemented a **professional peer review** framework for evaluation functions within the UN system that acts as both an external quality assessment and accountability mechanism for evaluation functions. While the framework is meant to provide an independent and professional assessment on the extent to which the UNEG norms and standards have been adopted, the framework does not cover these comprehensively and the gender-related principles are not included as an area of assessment.

The UN System-wide Action Plan reporting process creates an environment that challenges UN entities to further strengthen their gender-responsive evaluation practice.

cator scorecard should be further promoted to improve comparability across UN entities.

Out of the 62 UN entities that submitted a report, 16 reported that the indicator was not applicable to them either because no evaluations were conducted by the entity or they did not have an evaluation function. Of the 46 entities that reported against this indicator, 22 entities (48 per cent) reported “meeting requirements”, 18 entities (41 per cent) reported “approaching requirements” and 4 entities (9 per cent) reported “missing requirements”. Only 1 entity (2 per cent) reported “exceeding requirements”. Overall, the UN System-wide

In addition, entities have also reported on internal steps and remedial actions taken to further incorporate the gender-related UNEG norms, standards and guidance within their evaluation practice with an aim to improve performance within the next and future years.

Finally, there is some evidence of the UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator reporting process—and the initiatives it prompts for strengthening gender-responsive evaluation—being leveraged to engage internal stakeholders (such as gender units, strategic planning units, executive offices, etc.) in ways that

PERSONAL VOICES

Leveraging support for gender mainstreaming beyond evaluation



Ramla Khalidi

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

In 2014, Ramla Khalidi, Chief of the Strategy, Evaluation and Partnership Section at the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), began building a team to better integrate gender equality within every aspect of the team's work, with a particular focus on evaluation. The Strategy, Evaluation and Partnership Section works on forging the organization's partnership and resource mobilization strategy; managing external, internal and discretionary evaluations of the Commission; and promoting interdisciplinary and strategic initiatives. By emphasizing the learning potential of evaluations—particularly with regards to promoting gender mainstreaming—ESCWA became a great advocate for gender-responsive evaluation within the UN system.

Over the course of the past year and a half, ESCWA has made great progress against the UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator, moving from “not meeting requirements” to “meeting requirements”. Ms. Khalidi explains this scoring progress by several factors. The revision of ESCWA's Evaluation Policy in July 2014 to integrate more adequately gender equality and human rights principles was a key milestone. Used as a springboard to influence gender mainstreaming across ESCWA, the Evaluation Policy furthered engagement from other parts of ESCWA. ESCWA senior management made an organizational commitment to ensuring that ESCWA complies with the highest standards on gender equality and has taken a number of steps in this direction, including assigning a UN System-wide Action Plan Special Advisor. “This has resulted in an improvement in ESCWA's performance on the UN System-wide Action

Plan overall. Nine out of the 15 performance indicators saw an improvement, allowing ESCWA to score ‘exceeding requirements’ on 33 per cent of indicators, compared to 0 per cent in 2013”, Ms. Khalidi says.

The Evaluation Policy also stipulates that consultants undertaking evaluations should have knowledge of and commitment to human rights and gender equality. Hence, the Strategy, Evaluation and Partnership Section evaluation function made a standard practice out of using the “UNEG guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations” by systematically discussing the UNEG guidance with every evaluator prior to undertaking an evaluation.

When it comes to quality assurance mechanisms for evaluation, ESCWA has developed other promising practices. Ms.

Khalidi mentions: “Our team has put in place systematic checks for gender concerns, including ensuring that sampling methodologies are gender sensitive, data is disaggregated, drafts of inception and evaluation reports have sufficient analysis of gender considerations, and that recommendations take into account gender considerations when possible.”

With a commitment to institutionalize and strengthen gender-responsive evaluation within ESCWA, the Strategy, Evaluation and Partnership Section team helps build practice for gender-responsive evaluation within the UN system and acts as an agent of change for gender equality.

“Our team has put in place systematic checks for gender concerns.”



UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR
WESTERN ASIA, EVALUATION WEBSITE
<http://bit.ly/escwaevaluation>

3 Creating gender evaluation experts

While normative frameworks and institutional systems to strengthen gender-responsiveness of evaluation systems are paramount, they are likely to fail if individual capacities to implement them are not in place. This is why gender-responsive evaluation has not only been mainstreamed within UNEG evaluation capacity development efforts, but also addressed through separate initiatives.

At the system-wide level, UNEG promotes the professionalization of evaluation through the **UNEG ethical guidelines and code of conduct**, which both include requirements for considering gender roles in cultural context,

experience and competency with gender issues, and gender balance among evaluators.

However, there is a critical gap in the fact that they do not address gender-related ethical issues that may arise.

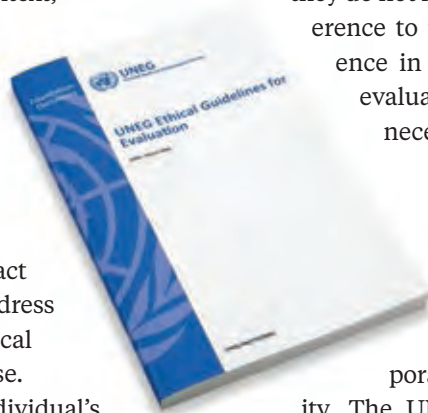
For example, an individual's participation in an evaluation may potentially create harm depending on his or her gender, and evaluators should look for ways to minimize such risks to participants.

UNEG has also developed **core**

competencies and job descriptions for heads and staff of evaluation offices. While both the competencies and job descriptions include knowledge of gender equality as part of the overall UN context requirement, they do not include specific reference to training or experience in gender-responsive evaluation, which is a necessary component.

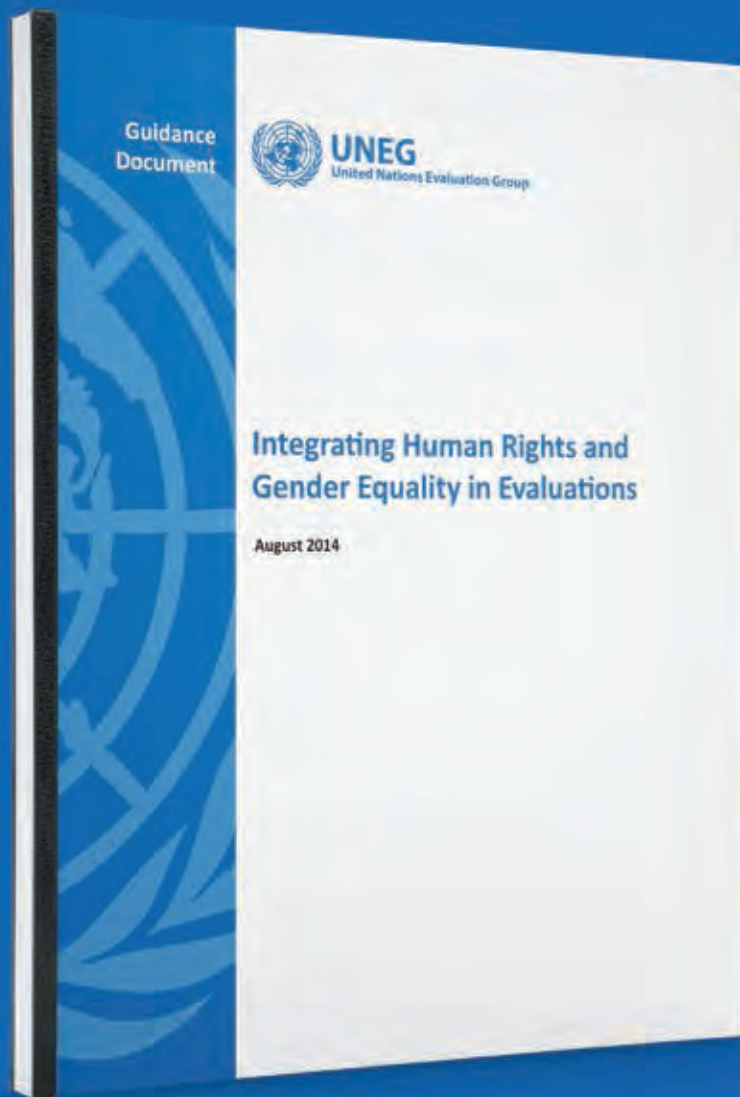
UNEG has also undertaken different **capacity development initiatives** that have incorporated gender equality. The UNEG course titled "What a UN evaluator should know" included a specific module on gender-responsive evaluation. In collaboration with EvalPartners, UN Women and UNICEF, a free e-learning series on equity-focused

and gender-responsive evaluations was developed as part of a massive open online course, of which the total cumulative number of registered participants was 22,000 people from 178 countries, including UN staff, government officials and civil society representatives. An e-learning course is also being developed as part of the roll-out of the UNEG guidance on human rights and gender equality.



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How can the evaluation community improve human rights and gender equality responsive evaluation within the UN system and beyond?



The latest guidance from the United Nations Evaluation Group can help you navigate the process to integrate human rights and gender equality into evaluation. Read *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*—A guidance document to improve human rights and gender equality responsive evaluation throughout the UN system.

Available at www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616



UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group



How can we strengthen the UN evaluation system?

At the system-wide level, normative frameworks, institutional systems and initiatives to strengthen individual capacities on how to implement gender-responsive evaluation are in place. They have benefited from the convergence of system-wide efforts to improve evaluation practice and increase accountability on gender equality that are taking place simultaneously.

The existing system-wide frameworks and guidance available provide a foundation for guiding and harmonizing UN entities' initiatives in this area. However, at present, the systems in place at the entity level are not as robust or consistent.

Still, there is strong potential for improvement with the UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator reporting process providing needed impetus and the UN system is poised to capitalize on a number of opportunities to further strengthen gender-responsive evaluation.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE UN SYSTEM



Gender equality in UNEG norms and standards

There are a number of UNEG products that are slated for forthcoming review and revision including the UNEG norms and standards. The inclusion of gender equality as a specific norm and the strengthening of gender equality in the standards to reflect current thinking and practice were recommended by the issues paper on the revision of the UNEG norms and standards developed in 2013, which has been further supported by a survey among UNEG members conducted in 2015. Such a norm would provide further impetus for strengthening gender-responsive evaluation in both system-wide and entity-level evaluation documents. More specific or further guidance on how to integrate gender equality in different types of evaluations (e.g., humanitarian, etc.) would also be welcome.



Gender equality in UNEG peer reviews

As the UNEG framework for professional peer review of evaluation functions is also slated for revision, this process provides an important opportunity to incorporate gender equality in the assessment of UN evaluation functions. This would provide a more comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the full UNEG norms and standards and could complement and provide triangulation for UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator reporting. More importantly, it would also provide an important avenue for learning and exchange of practice on gender-responsive evaluation among UN entities.



Gender equality in UNEG core competencies

Given that gender-responsive evaluation is integrated in quality assurance and accountability systems for evaluation, it is also becoming a necessary competency for evaluators in the UN system. Therefore, specific requirements regarding knowledge of gender-responsive evaluation could be included in the planned revision of the core competencies and job descriptions for evaluators in the UN system. This requirement is supported by the development of gender-responsive evaluation guidance and e-learning courses, which provide an avenue for evaluators to gain such competency and strengthen individual competencies.



Gender equality in quality assessments

Efforts to assess the quality of phases of the evaluation process beyond the reporting phase should be pursued to provide a more comprehensive and consistent assessment of evaluation quality. Quality assessments at the design and conduct phase of evaluation that integrate gender equality can uncover the key bottlenecks faced in gender-responsive evaluation practice so that these can be overcome. This could potentially lead to significant improvements in overall evaluation quality at each phase.



Gender equality at the entity level

At the entity level there should be a focus on continued internalization of system-wide gender-responsive evaluation policies and guidance to strengthen entity-specific systems. The UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator reporting process provides a key opportunity for reporting on advancements and sharing lessons learned, challenges and good practices on the road to gender-responsive evaluation that should be fully exploited and fed back into system-wide and entity-level systems.



Tracking results of gender-responsive evaluation

While there is necessarily a focus on institutionalizing and strengthening gender-responsive evaluation within the UN system at present, as practice builds and gender-responsive evaluations are increasingly conducted, efforts to track the results of employing the approach should also be undertaken to fully analyse and understand how and in what ways this approach is serving as an agent of change in progress towards gender equality.



FOCUS ON NATIONAL ACTORS

How is gender-responsive evaluation promoted at the national level?

1

Is gender integrated in national evaluation policies and systems?

National evaluation policies refer to formal policies defining the purpose, responsibilities, functions and organization of the public-sector evaluation function in a particular country. In some cases, the national evaluation policy is legislated, while in other cases, it may be defined in documents issued by central government agencies such as the ministry of finance or the ministry of planning.

National evaluation systems are systems put in place to implement national evaluation policies. National evaluation policies and national evaluation systems complement each other. National evaluation policies give the normative framework, while national evaluation systems refer to the mechanisms that operationalize the principles dictated in the national evaluation policies. National evaluation policies and systems refer to the entire normative and operational framework that guides the evaluation of major national development strategies, policies and programmes in a given country.

While some countries have a comprehensive and well established national evaluation policy and system that covers all sectors, in many countries the national evaluation policy and system is still at a relatively early stage of development

or currently only covers certain sectors. With the recent impetus to develop more formal national evaluation policies and systems, the need and interest to integrate gender-responsive evaluation within such systems from their inception has

This is in contrast to the close to universal ratification of the key international normative framework on gender equality—Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women—and the presence of gender equality policies and action plans in many countries.

Some factors that may be contributing to this scenario include:

- » The focus of many national evaluation policies and systems on describing the overall structure

There is a promising trend of promoting gender-responsive evaluation within national evaluation policies and systems, voluntary organizations for professional evaluations, and parliamentarians' forums for evaluation.

been highlighted by a number of studies. However, at present, only a small minority of national evaluation policies and systems include direct references to gender equality.

and organization of evaluation systems, rather than describing the overall principles that are intended to guide the national evaluation policy and system



» The difficulty of mainstreaming gender equality in non-gender specific national policies and systems in general (i.e., the understanding of gender equality as a sector-specific issue, rather than a cross-cutting issue central to public policies in all sectors)

The recent EvalPartners, International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation and UN Women publication on national evaluation policies and systems found three potential scenarios that could provide a stronger enabling environment, and therefore opportunities, to facilitate the inclusion of gender-responsive evaluation in national evaluation policies and systems:

- » Presence of a national gender equality policy
- » Integration of gender equality as a core aspect of national development strategies and their monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- » Conduct of ad hoc or sector-specific gender-responsive evaluations

However, even when one or more of the above supportive scenarios exist within national contexts, this may not automatically translate into

development of more formal gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems. Some common challenges related to translating supportive scenarios to more formal gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems include:

- » Greater emphasis placed on monitoring and reporting on gender equality specific indicators, but more limited prioritization of/follow through to the evaluation stage
- » Limited communication or coordination between national gender equality machineries and national evaluation systems
- » Limited development of whole-of-government national evaluation policies within which gender-responsive evaluation can be integrated systematically across all government sectors,

rather than undertaken against only those public policies with explicit objectives or outcomes related to gender equality

While addressing the above challenges may help to pave the way for gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems, additional steps may still be needed, such as undertaking advocacy for prioritization of and raising awareness on the need for gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems and strengthening national evaluation capacity to undertake such evaluations. On these last two points, the engagement of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation and parliamentarians' forums for evaluation can be instrumental to bridging this gap.

*Only a small minority
of national evaluation policies
and systems include
direct references to gender equality.*

PERSONAL VOICES

Applying gender analysis to inequalities



Thania de la Garza

National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy

Thania de la Garza is the Director of Evaluation at the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL), Mexico City, Mexico. CONEVAL is a Federal Public Administration with autonomy and technical capability to generate objective information on the socio-political situation and the measurement of poverty in Mexico to allow for better decision making on these matters. Its main functions are to regulate and coordinate the evaluation of national policies, programmes and actions, and to establish guidelines and criteria in this regard.

Ms. de la Garza recognizes the importance of generating useful information for making decisions to improve the welfare of the population, especially for vulnerable and poor people, “because inequality implies differential access to resources and assets, both public and private, resulting in differences in the exercise of fundamental rights.” She adds that “in order to advance in these matters, it is important to include a gender perspective in evaluations, as it has been found that gender analysis explains some of the inequalities we look to eradicate.”

In her experience, an important step towards institutionalizing gender mainstreaming in the design and implementation of public policies is the inclusion of a strategy in the National Development Plan for this purpose. Conducting studies and evaluations to identify the incidence of inequality between women and men and understand the causes and consequences of this inequality has helped to highlight the problem and its importance for development.

Ms. de la Garza has also engaged in initiatives to strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems in the wider Latin America and the Caribbean region (LAC) that have a special focus on gender equality and human rights. In particular, in 2014 she became an active party

to the joint initiative “Engender national monitoring and evaluation systems in the LAC region” managed by UN Women in collaboration with EvalPartners; the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation; the Latin American and the Caribbean Network for Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization; and representatives of the national monitoring and evaluation systems of Colombia (SINERGIA) and Peru (Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion). The main objective of this joint initiative was to incorporate gender in national monitoring and evaluation systems in the LAC region through training on gender-responsive evaluation and technical and methodological support to integrate a gender equality perspective in the evaluations of public policies and programmes.

Headed by Ms. De la Garza as part of the core team, CONEVAL will continue its research agenda on poverty and gender issues, seeking to provide inputs that contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of social development policy

to promote equality between women and men. She also places specific importance on the dissemination of evaluation results in order to place gender issues on the public agenda and raise awareness about its importance for social development.

Ms. De la Garza explains that “Evidence matters. Not only to account for women’s key contributions to development but to recognize the pending challenges to achieve full equality. Evidence based policies—and the political will to implement them—are the fast track to take full advantage of women’s contributions and tackle long standing inequalities.”

“It is important to include a gender perspective in evaluations, as gender analysis explains some of the inequalities we look to eradicate.”



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Shaping the evaluation landscape: *Voluntary organizations for professional evaluation*

Voluntary organizations for professional evaluation (VOPEs) are formally organized societies or associations, or, in some cases, informal networks; some at global and regional levels, many at national levels. Their members come from a variety of perspectives and organizations (including government, UN entities, academia, non-governmental organizations, private firms, etc.) that have a common interest in promoting the production and utilization of evaluation.

In recent years, the number of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation has been increasing significantly (see Figure 1), and the collaboration and coordination among them improved. They are strategic actors for national evaluation practice precisely because they include such a wide range of evaluation professionals, constituting both the demand (evaluation commissioners) and supply (evaluators) side of the evaluation equation. This makes them crucial forums for dialogue, debate and action. Voluntary organizations for professional evaluation are becoming important stakeholders in gender-responsive national evaluation

policies and systems, and a number of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation have begun to play a consultative role in national evaluation policies and systems, both in providing technical expertise and in generating demand for evaluations.

The documentation reviewed on voluntary organizations for professional evaluation demonstrates a trend towards greater inclusion of gender-responsive evaluation as a priority issue within voluntary organizations for professional evaluation at the global and regional level, evidenced by the increasing number of dedicated and active sub-groups focusing specifically on this issue. At the national-level, there was more limited information on

the extent to which voluntary organizations for professional evaluation have prioritized gender-responsive evaluation among the documentation reviewed and therefore, a specific trend was not yet discernible, despite strong integration in some national voluntary organizations for professional evaluation.

In the past, these voluntary organizations for professional evaluation sub-groups dedicated to gender-responsive evaluation have concentrated their efforts mainly in the following three areas of work:

- » Mainstreaming gender-responsive evaluation within voluntary organizations for professional evaluation
- » Gender-responsive evaluation capacity development
- » Advocacy for gender-responsive evaluation among commissioners of evaluation

As professional evaluation networks that reflect larger society, voluntary organizations for professional evaluation themselves often require specialized efforts **to mainstream gender equality within their structures and operations.** In 2015, a “Guide to including a gender+



UN WOMEN/URIASI RUDRA



perspective in voluntary organizations for professional evaluation” was developed through a collaboration facilitated by EvalPartners between the Monitoring and Evaluation Network in Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Evaluation Society. The guide provides a structured and comprehensive tool for voluntary organizations for professional evaluation to conduct gender self-assessments organized around a set of questions related to three key areas for a voluntary organization for professional evaluation: organizational structures, professionalization initiatives and advocacy initiatives. Conducting such an assessment is meant to identify and prioritize areas of actions in individual voluntary organizations for professional evaluation. Use of the guide can assist voluntary organizations for professional evaluation in refining efforts in this area and also work to

raise awareness among membership through participation in the self-assessment process.

The majority of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation manage **evaluation capacity development activities** and develop guidance and tools to improve the evaluation practice of its membership, including gender-responsive

evaluation. They normally also have the added benefit of being tailored or contextualized to regional or national contexts.

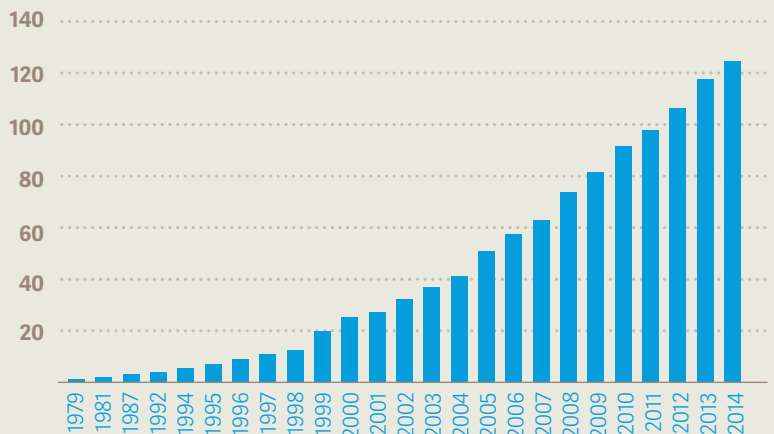
With a growing interest in increasing the demand side for gender-responsive evaluation, a number of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation have shifted their attention to **advocacy efforts** with



FIGURE 1

Number of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation globally

BY YEAR



Source: International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation, 2015.

TAKING IT TO THE TOP

Voluntary organizations for professional evaluation are targeting evaluators as well as commissioners to include and improve gender-responsive evaluations.

commissioners of evaluation. One illustrative example is the experience of the International Program Evaluation Network, a regional voluntary organization for professional evaluation covering the Commonwealth of Independent States region. The network implemented an initiative to enhance the conduct of gender-responsive evaluation in nine countries. However, the efforts were mostly met with a lack of interest by evaluation commissioners. The experience highlighted that initiatives that target evaluators are not sufficient. Awareness raising and advocacy initiatives for gender-responsive evaluation approaches also need to target commissioners of evaluation in order for the approach to be adopted in practice. The Community of Evaluators South Asia is now taking this approach forward and

is working in close cooperation with parliamentarians and governments in the region to promote awareness on the need for gender-responsive evaluation. Such efforts will complement initiatives targeted towards evaluators, or the supply-side.

Last but not least, there is a trend for voluntary organizations for professional evaluation to come together

and implement initiatives in **partnership**. One such example is EvalPartners, [the global partnership](#) co-led by UN Women and International Organization for Cooperation

in Evaluation, that aims to “enhance the capacities of civil society organizations to engage in a strategic and meaningful manner in national evaluation processes, contributing to improved national evaluation systems and policies that are equity-focused and gender-responsive.” Furthermore, in an effort to enhance partnerships and leverage the array of existing initiatives addressing gender-responsive evaluations undertaken by voluntary organizations for professional evaluation and other actors, a new global partnership is being launched under the umbrella of EvalPartners: EvalGender+ [\[link\]](#). Its aim is to further strengthen the movement for gender-responsive evaluation by

EvalGender+

*A new global partnership
to strengthen gender-responsive evaluation*

providing a platform for coordination, knowledge sharing, networking and the development of common global initiatives among the 36 organizations that have currently joined the network, including regional voluntary organizations for professional evaluation, 16 UN entities and 2 multilateral banks.

Examples of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation capacity development activities:

The **African Gender and Development Evaluators Network** [\[link\]](#) has an objective to enhance members’ capacities through delivery of trainings and workshops and the development of tools and guidance. It developed a toolkit on gender and human rights responsive monitoring and evaluation in 2012 and has organized training workshops in Anglophone and Francophone Africa.

The **Community of Evaluators South Asia** developed a guideline for gender-responsive evaluation and, most importantly, for gender-responsive national evaluation policies that is responsive to local contexts in South Asia.

The **EvalGender+** global online community of practice [\[link\]](#), managed by the Institute of Social Studies based in India, unites 1,478 evaluators from all over the world to facilitate collective and individual learning and collaborations on gender-responsive evaluation.

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PERSONAL VOICES



Engendering policy through evaluation

Rituu B Nanda
Institute of Social Studies Trust

Rituu B. Nanda currently works with the Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi, India, under the project “Engendering Policy through Evaluation”. She is also part of the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex Participatory Action Research project in India.

One of Rituu’s life mantras is “Sharing experiences is one of the best ways to learn and grow.” She demonstrates this in practice as the facilitator of the “Engendering Policy through Evaluation” project’s knowledge sharing component: an online community of practice on different aspects

of gender and equity-focused evaluation that brings together both a national and international audience of evaluators, researchers, government officers, policymakers, donors and academia. Set up in February 2013, this online community of practice also emerged as the knowledge sharing hub for EvalGender+, a global partnership for gender-responsive evaluation.

“By offering members tools such as blogs, discussion forums, events, photos and videos under one roof, we are effectively empowering them to become content creators and participants in the discussion around the issues they work on”, says Rituu. For example, the “Toolkit on participatory evaluation with a gender lens”, provoked rich discussion among members and the Toolkit has become a living document that is constantly receiving comments and feedback. The regular contributions on gender-responsive evaluation from UNWomen, EvalPartners,

and the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank are also attracting a lot of interest from members. With these discussions and the training opportunities offered, the community is making a difference in enhancing the capacity of its members.

A community spirit is also developing among members who not only pose queries in the forum, but also go out of their way to help each other. Offline connections have been fostered and strengthened and new connections have been developed that did not exist before.

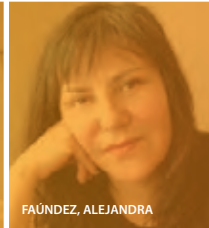
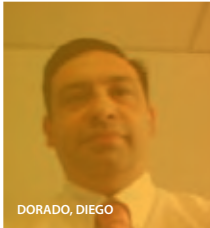
“We have seen a surge of new members each time the community has been presented”, says Rituu. Some members are even taking on the role of champions for the community, encouraging new members to join the network.

“Our dream is to use this platform to influence policy changes on gender and equity”, says Rituu. “We believe that if we continue to nurture a space that our members value, members can become the biggest advocates for gender equality and gender-responsive evaluations.”

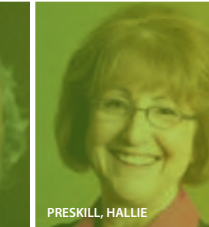
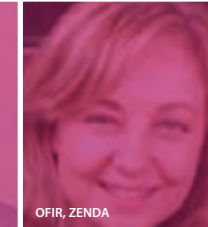
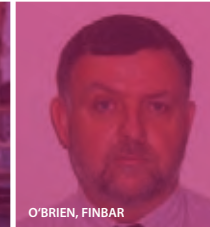
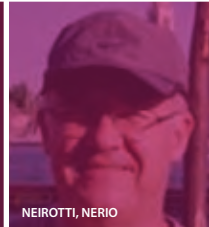
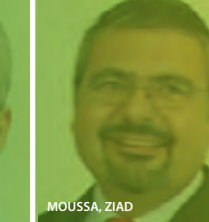
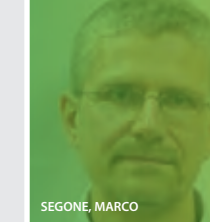
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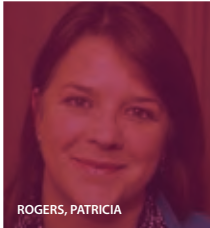
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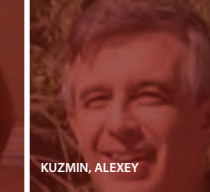
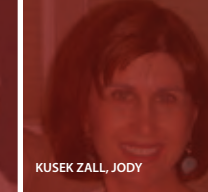
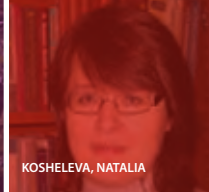
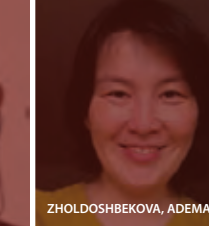
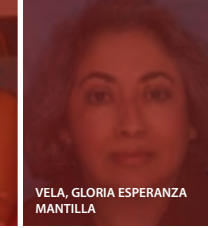
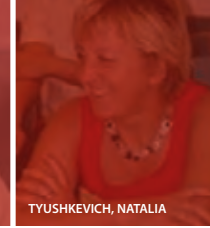
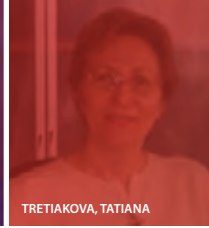
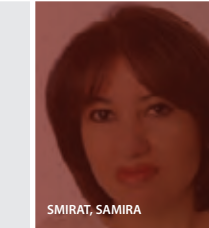
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Parliamentarians taking action

There has been growing recognition that to increase the conduct of national evaluation and its utility, an increase in the demand for evaluative evidence by policymakers is needed. To this end, a number of regional parliamentarians' forums for development evaluation have arisen. As the newest actors in national evaluation, such forums engage parliamentarians directly to strengthen demand for credible national evaluation and their use in policymaking.

These forums mainly focus on strengthening parliamentarians' understanding of and role in evaluation and increasing the country-driven demand for evaluation. They bring members together for discussion and dialogue. They are often organized in partnership with voluntary organizations for professional evaluation, international organizations (including UN entities) and other similar forums from different regions to promote South-South exchange.

While parliamentarians' forums are mostly in their nascent stages, they have shown remarkable openness and engagement on gender-responsive

evaluation issues. Further engagement with these groups by voluntary organizations for professional evaluation and all those interested in strengthening gender-responsive national evaluation can represent a key opportunity to strengthen their understanding on why gender-responsive evaluation is needed, promote the development of gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems, and promote the use of gender-responsive evaluation results to improve progress towards gender equality and broader sustainable development.

To date, three regional and one global forum are currently in

different stages of establishment and vary in the extent to which gender-responsive evaluation has been raised as a key issue for action: Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation in South Asia, launched in Sri Lanka in 2012; the African Parliamentarians Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE), launched in Cameroon in 2014; the Linking Evaluation to Decision Making—Arab States Regional Parliamentarians' Initiative, launched in Jordan in 2014; and the Global Parliamentarian Forum for Evaluation to be launched at the Parliament of Nepal in November 2015. These forums have focused on the following key activities to promote gender-responsive evaluation.

Commitments in formal declarations and statements

Parliamentarians' forums can create formal declarations and statements that explicitly include commitments to develop gender-responsive national evaluation policies.

PARLIAMENTARIANS PROMOTE:
*formal commitments, prioritization,
tailored resources, South-South cooperation*



In 2014, APNODE developed the Yaoundé Declaration of African Parliamentarians on Evaluation that was signed by parliamentarians from seven countries (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda). The declaration committed them to developing a national evaluation policy and system that ensures evaluations are “responsive to social, political, economic, gender equality, minorities and environmental concerns, in support of inclusive growth and greater development effectiveness” and that “both men and women parliamentarians are committed and engaged in this debate, are demanding and making use of evaluative evidence.”

Integration in constitutional documents

Inclusion of gender-responsive evaluation as a key objective or mission within constitutions or similar documents of the forum is another way to keep the commitment to gender-responsive evaluation central to its work.

For example, the APNODE draft constitution contains not only a specific objective to “support parliamentarians in ensuring that evaluations at

Parliamentarians’ forums have shown openness and engagement to gender-responsive evaluation.

country level are responsive to concerns of gender equality, vulnerable groups, and equitable development results,” but also that its Executive Committee is gender balanced.

Developing tailored resources

The development of gender-responsive evaluation resources tailored to the specific needs of parliamentarians is a key opportunity provided by the creation of parliamentarians’ forums.

For example, the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation has developed case studies on gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems and a guidance note suggesting concrete commitment to demonstrate an election candidate’s support for developing a gender-responsive national evaluation policy and system.

South-South cooperation and knowledge sharing

Organizing regional consultations to facilitate South-South cooperation and knowledge sharing among

parliamentarians has been effective in raising gender-responsive evaluation on their agendas. In 2014, three such meetings took place: two at the regional level and one at the global level.

For example, a regional workshop brought together female parliamentarians from six countries in the Middle East and North Africa region to increase their commitment to engage in advocacy for advancing the institutionalization of evaluation in their countries. The workshop had a specific focus on the importance of ensuring that evaluations are equity-focused and gender-responsive as a means to determine if development outcomes reach vulnerable/disadvantaged groups. Another regional consultation on national evaluation policies was organized by the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation, focusing on how to integrate gender equality and social equity in national evaluation policies and systems using a model gender-responsive national evaluation policy developed by EvalPartners and UN Women.

PERSONAL VOICES

Bridging the gap between supply and demand for evaluation



Hon. Khabir Hashim

Leader of the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation

Hon. Kabir Hashim is a Sri Lankan politician and economist. He is currently serving as Minister of Highways, Higher Education and Investment Promotion, but until recently he was a Member of the Parliament of Sri Lanka for more than 18 years.

Hon. Hashim initially became involved in gender-responsive evaluation while working for UN Women in Afghanistan. This is when he “realized how effective a tool it could be to shape public policy”, he says. In his view, there has been a huge disconnect between the evaluation community and policy makers. “Both need to supplement each other”, says Hon. Hashim.

Led by Hon. Hashim, the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation did just that in South Asia by providing a bridge between evaluators (the supply side) and parliamentarians (the demand side).

Since its inception, Hon. Hashim has been at the forefront of the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation initiatives as the leader of the core team of parliamentarians managing the forum. Before the creation of the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation, giving a voice to the call for national evaluation policies and promises of country-level commitments by parliamentarians was unheard of in the region’s history. As one example of the many Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation initiatives, the first ever parliamentarians panel presented three country experiences from Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh on the enabling environment for development evaluation at the

Evaluation Conclave in February 2013 in Nepal.

More recently, the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation has increasingly included a gender equality and equity perspective in its work.

For example, in 2015 the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation released both an updated “Global mapping report: Status of national evaluation policies” that included

information on the gender-responsiveness of the policies reviewed and individual case studies of equity-focused and gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation systems of four countries: Australia, Nepal, Philippines and Sweden.

Taking the lead to advocate for the development and strengthening of national evaluation policies, Hon. Hashim also strives to promote South-South cooperation. He has participated in meetings of parliamentarians forums for evaluation in other regions to share the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation experience and lessons learned, as well as to promote dialogue. As a result, a parliamentarians’ forum in Africa and women’s group of parliamentarians in the Middle East and North Africa region was initiated in 2014. The aspect of gender-responsive national evaluation policies has been a feature of these discussions.

“
Gender-responsive evaluation
is an effective tool
to shape public policy.”



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How can we strengthen national evaluation systems?

Despite the growing interest and number of actors involved in developing and strengthening gender-responsive national evaluation, there is still much work to be done in this area before formal and more comprehensive gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems are in place.

The recent emphasis on the importance of national evaluation policies and systems provides a unique opportunity to introduce and prioritize gender-responsive evaluation when developing national evaluation policies and systems. This is an opportunity that voluntary organizations for professional evaluation, parliamentarians' forums and UN entities working on national evaluation capacity development have recognized and have been acting on, capitalizing on a number of opportunities to strengthen gender-responsive evaluation.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNTRIES



Case studies or mappings

Given the early stage of most national evaluation policies and systems, case studies or mappings that analyse national evaluation policies and systems and/or their development processes have the potential to provide very useful information on experiences, challenges, lessons learned and good practices. The recent focus on specifically analysing the integration of gender equality in existing and emerging national evaluation policies and systems by the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation and others is a welcome change from past studies that were silent on this issue.



Multi-stakeholder strategies

Coordinated and multi-stakeholder strategies are developing to support the integration of gender equality in national evaluation policies and systems. Such strategies need to target evaluators, parliamentarians, voluntary organizations for professional evaluation and gender advocates who can all contribute in important ways to gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems.



Evaluations of national gender policies

Evaluations of national gender policies, strategies and plans—if prioritized and undertaken—would likely help strengthen integration of gender equality across all sectors by providing important learning and accountability for progress. It would also likely strengthen understanding and accountability for the need to evaluate the gender equality aspects of all national policies and programmes, thereby improving the evidence base on progress towards gender equality.



Parliamentarians forums for evaluation

The different parliamentarians' forums for evaluation that are currently coalescing also need to be made more robust with key deliverables and outcomes in mind. They present an important opportunity to advocate for and increase the demand and funding needed for gender-responsive national evaluation policy and system.



Support to voluntary organizations for professional evaluation

While global and regional voluntary organizations for professional evaluation have become increasingly active on gender-responsive evaluation, more information is needed on the level of integration among national voluntary organizations for professional evaluation, whose prospects of influencing national evaluation policies and systems and national evaluation may be the most tangible. Support to national voluntary organizations for professional evaluation in countries where national evaluation policies and systems are being developed could be crucial for introducing gender-responsive evaluation in a sustainable manner. This would complement and support the enhanced coordination and collaboration taking place among international and regional voluntary organizations for professional evaluation.



Gender-responsive evaluation in the post-2015 agenda

In 2014–2015, the international community has been reflecting on the experience of the Millennium Development Goals and is now on the verge of adopting a more comprehensive set of Sustainable Development Goals that attempts to incorporate the lessons learned from the past.

Gender equality and women's empowerment is set to continue as both a central and cross-cutting development goal given the recognition that both women and men must benefit equally from future development initiatives and that there can be no sustainable development without gender equality.

As the review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for action has shown, there is still much to be done if we are to eradicate gender inequality by 2030. Furthermore, the UN system as a whole has been asked to improve its fit-for-purpose to support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, including through evaluation and support to

national evaluation capacity development efforts.

Achieving this will require strengthening gender-responsive evaluation systems within the United Nations and among national governments. In recent years, significant efforts to strengthen capacities to demand, supply and use gender-responsive evaluation to inform policymaking has produced important results. UNEG has been mainstreaming gender-responsive evaluation in its normative guidance, institutional systems and individual capacities of UN evaluators. At the national level, more and more countries are developing and implementing national evaluation policies



A UN fit-for-purpose:
*Strengthening gender-responsive evaluation systems
within the United Nations
and among national governments*

and systems in collaboration with voluntary organizations for professional evaluation, parliamentarians and other key stakeholders.

The increased attention and interest in gender-responsive evaluation, coupled with a growing number of different actors working on this issue, is a welcome and needed change. However, much more needs to be done if evaluation is to support the Beijing and post-2015 agendas.

The possibilities for cross collaboration and learning on gender-responsive evaluation are truly multi-fold (e.g., between UN entities, between UN entities and voluntary organizations for professional

evaluation, between voluntary organizations for professional evaluation and national evaluation policies and systems, and between national evaluation policies and systems) and should be further tapped to reap benefits. Additional coordination and collaboration of efforts is also needed to avoid unnecessary duplications and maximize potential impacts. The limited resources and capacities available should also be utilized strategically, and in this vein, initiatives such as EvalGender+ may be able to play a needed and strategic role.

UN Women has a specific role in promoting and supporting

gender-responsive evaluation within the UN system and among national evaluation systems. Working in close collaboration with partners and helping to facilitate linkages (i.e., acting as a hub), it should continue to respond to challenges emerging from the UN System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator reporting analysis and requests from countries, while facilitating South-South cooperation and synergies among different stakeholders.

Although the global evaluation community, led by EvalPartners, declared 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation to strengthen an enabling environment for gender-responsive evaluation and mainstream evaluation in the post-2015 agenda, gender-responsive evaluation remains a nascent priority. All stakeholders need to partner, as appropriate, to accelerate the process of making gender equality a priority in national and organizational evaluation policies and systems.

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