



Editors Note

Ford Foundation Supports M&E In Rights & Gender

As development becomes increasingly complex, so is the practice of monitoring and evaluation. In this light, the emergence of gender equality and human rights as key elements of human development must, of necessity, be reflected in the tools and techniques for monitoring and evaluation in Africa.

Failure to align the practice of monitoring and evaluation with emerging global trends would most likely create a disconnect between development activities and how it is assessed. It is from the above perspective that Ford Foundation partnered with AGDEN to build the capacity of African M&E practitioners by equipping them with the skills to practice their profession from the perspective of human rights and gender.

It is encouraging that Ford Foundation is committed towards supporting M&E practitioners in Africa in their quest to take the profession to the next level. The successful completion of the first workshop signals an important step in this journey.

In this 5th edition of AGDENews, we focus on the inaugural workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa, specifically on the training and participants' views on the same. We also insightful pieces based on interviews with Nicky Naylor, FF Human Rights Programme Officer, and Prof. Akos Adomako, an AGDEN member from Ghana.

Enjoy

Alfred



Facilitators and participants pose for a group photo during the AGDEN Ford Foundation workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Human rights and gender equality are widely recognised as fundamental pillars of sustainable development as reflected in international conventions and declarations. In tune with this reality, the Ford Foundation has been active in supporting efforts to strengthen organisations and mechanisms that enforce human rights and gender equality. This is based on the premise that for societies to advance, the value of every citizen must be recognised and each citizen's right to equal opportunity must be secured and upheld. In this respect, the Foundation endeavors to build effective women's networks and human rights organisations in an attempt to rectify structural causes of inequalities and gender discrimination.

As part of the Foundation's efforts to entrench Human rights and gender dimensions in monitoring and evaluation, the organisation, in partnership with the Africa Gender and Development Evaluators Network (AGDEN), has been implementing a project whose aim is to mainstream elements of human rights and gender equality as an integral part of M&E.

A major component of this project is to deliver training workshops to an initial select group of grantees with a view to improving development evaluators' comprehension of human rights and gender equality dimensions and therefore enhance their skills for conducting monitoring and evaluation within such a framework.

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The first workshop, held from Monday 24th – Friday 28th August 2009 in Johannesburg South Africa, brought together eight participants drawn from NGOs, government as well as international agencies.

The workshop was graced by the Foundations' Regional Representative, Alice Brown and Human Rights Programme Officer, Nicky Naylor.

In an interview with AGDENews during the workshop, Naylor emphasised that project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation should morally be participatory, inclusive, transparent, equitable, non-discriminatory and, hopefully, empowering.

However, Naylor stressed that due to the nature of their work, evaluation frameworks for human rights and legal organisations need to be uniquely designed. This is because such organisations frequently develop projects that have less lucid long-term outcome objectives. These factors complicate the design of an evaluation framework. In addition, dealing with issues of human rights and gender development is often ethically troublesome because human participants are involved.

"Project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation should be participatory, inclusive, transparent, equitable, non-discriminatory and, hopefully, empowering. Ford Foundation is fully cognisant of this and as such is interested in encouraging a platform that aids its beneficiary organisations to think about monitoring and evaluation that is human rights focused as well as participatory" she said.

The Ford Foundation representative

pinpointed some of the tensions encountered between donors and grantees regarding reporting requirements. For instance, the Ford Foundation head office now requires its regional offices and their various sub-units to implement monitoring and evaluation protocols amongst beneficiaries - the template for reporting these findings is currently being standardised and made uniform. However, the Human Rights Unit in South Africa realises that its beneficiaries may not always be able to adhere to these rigorous reporting requirements simply because of the nature of their work.

Nevertheless, she said the Foundation is eager to find solutions that foster responsibility and accountability amongst the grantees whilst also allowing them the flexibility to appropriately monitor their projects in a way that yields useful results. This latter point is important because the primary purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to strengthen and improve programme design, functioning and implementation as well as to inform future policy making.

Project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation should morally be participatory, inclusive, transparent, equitable, non-discriminatory and, hopefully, empowering.

Workshop Content

The workshop consisted of three core modules, presented over four days by a variety of trainers and facilitators. Each module was divided into a number of sessions that dealt with a comprehensive range of issues such as 'Introduction to human rights',

Apart from building their capacity to apply tools and concepts to their actual work, participants were engaged in 'evaluative thinking caps' by means of participatory action research to inform and interrogate their current practice.

'History of global engagement', 'Tools for participatory M&E' and 'Integrated gender responsive, rights-based participatory M&E'. Apart from building their capacity to apply tools and concepts to their actual work, participants engaged their 'evaluative thinking caps' by means of participatory action research to inform and interrogate their current practice.

Participant reactions

Sentiments expressed by participants clearly indicated that the workshop was successful not only in the mode of delivery but also the knowledge gained. Participants were unanimous that knowledge gained from the workshop would greatly enhance their work.

One participant described it as a "Cutting edge concept with regards to M&E..... it became clear to me that it is essential".

However, it was the mode of delivery that elicited more applause.

"I liked the participatory approach to teaching and the easy approach/informal way of facilitators to address issues". said one participant while another praised the 'the participatory method and the very many tools and practical examples'.

Let us Strengthen the Network, AGDEN Member Tells Colleagues

Prof. Akos Ampofo, a core AGDEN member, speaks of her experiences, fears and expectations

Tell us about yourself and what you do?

My name is Akos Adomako Ampofo, a professor at the University of Ghana, Institute of African Studies. I head the Center of Gender Studies

What is your view on the application of Gender and Human rights in M&E especially in Africa?

My view is that Human rights and Gender issues have not been integrated in M&E work; it depends very much on an individual and how much he/she has invested in it. It also depends on the organization contracting the consultants or whether the individual is part of that organization or coming in as a consultant. An organization like Action Aid, I happen to be on the board so I know how it operates, is very conscious about Human Rights and Gender issues. In this respect all M&E activities at Action Aid, both external and internal, integrate Gender and Human Rights present. And if Action Aid asks for an M&E activity to be conducted by an external consultant, then the terms of reference will include it. However other organizations don't necessarily ask for it. Since I am core gender person, I always ensure to incorporate gender dimensions in whatever M&E work I do.

In terms of the AGDEN project, what are your expectations?

With the current project am supposed to develop a gender and development toolkit and I will be one of the trainers in the western region, so hopefully a few more practitioners would be sensitive to the issues of Gender and Human rights, so if they are doing an evaluation then they will incorporate it and even if the person asking for their evaluation has not asked for it, they are likely to incorporate it and do their M&E on the



Prof. Akos Adomako Ampofo

basis of that and incorporate it in their assessment. If the number of people trained is large then we are likely to have this kind of thing happening and I imagine people who come for this training are people who think that this is training that they need, so they are self selected and presumably they think it is a good thing and they want to do it.

What changes have you witnessed in the Network since you joined?

I haven't been a very active member of AGDEN, I have to confess that. This is my second event that am attending since 2005, there have been so many meetings, conferences, workshops and I have not been able to attend any of them so am not the best judge, however since Florence took over the driving seat, AGDEN has been much more proactive. Apart from Florence (the former chair), other members have been very instrumental in keeping the network vibrant and focused. When I joined, the focus of the network was a little bit hazy; we wanted to help ourselves and improve our capacities but the 'how to' and the fine tuning was less visible to me.

What would you tell those who want to join AGDEN, potential AGDEN members?

The members need to be active, otherwise there will be no AGDEN, if all of us are missing in action like I have been, AGDEN will collapse; members have to be active, members have to pay their dues, be responsive and try and attend some of the training sessions that would build our capacity. I think that those thinking about joining the Network should expect to have an organization that will improve their skills give them an opportunity to improve their profile and also to earn extra money. Every AGDEN member should commit to making the Network stronger.

Next Interview

In our next Interview, AGDENews will speak with Letty Chiwara, founder and member of AGDEN. She will shed light on the thinking behind the formation of AGDEN and her views on the performance of the Network since its formation in 2002.

Letty Chiwara has more than 20 years of work experience in UN System, Government and NGOs. She is currently UNIFEM's Cross Regional Programmes Manager responsible for programmes on gender and aid effectiveness in 12 countries in Africa, Asia and Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Commonwealth of Independent States in collaboration with the European Commission and the International Training Centre of the ILO. In addition she manages a 6 country programme on Results Based Initiatives on Women's Economic Empowerment in close partnership with the World Bank and the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW).

Project Pace Slows

Since January 2010, the AGDEN FF Project seems to have slowed down. The period leading up to and immediately after the first training workshop in Johannesburg in August last year was quite intense. But after that things have been slow.

Asked about the pace, the Project Administrator, Lizette Kraft, explained that although it might appear that way, work was nevertheless still going on. She explained the situation as follows; *'Reports had to be written. The trainers had to prepare training reports for each Module and the researchers had to prepare the research as well as workshop report. Also the lessons from the training had to be taken in hand and reflected in a whole new set of material. This involved revising and updating the toolkit content. All of this this takes time and because there are 7 trainers all of who live in different countries, it is that much more difficult to co-ordinate.'*

Lizette emphasised that the project is not as simple as it might seem, and that is opening an exciting new area of work for AGDEN and so the Network is being extra careful to ensure success and quality deliverables. In the next volume AGDENews will be reporting some of the findings from the participatory action research which was conducted as an integral part of the Johannesburg workshop.

Quotes Corner

*"The capacity to learn is a gift;
The ability to learn is a skill;
The WILLINGNESS to learn
is a choice."*

-Unknown

AGDENews welcomes your views and comments on M&E, gender and human rights. E-mail: admin@agden.org

AfrEA President Calls for Professionalism in M&E

Speaking during the closing ceremony of the 2nd SAMEA conference held in South Africa August last year, the president of African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), Dr Florence Etta, urged M&E practitioners to reduce incidence of weak or poor evaluations by improving their capacities and skills.

'We as a community have been charged to professionalise M&E, to support more rigorous and participatory evaluation, to move from compliance monitoring, which can sometimes become malicious, to more theory based and country-led evaluation practice' she said.

The AfrEA president commended the strong cooperation between the Public Service Commission (PSC) and SAMEA saying there was need for more of such partnerships.

Dr Etta described the SAMEA conference as successful with a 'huge pass mark' saying it gave the participants a reason to be conscious of their role as evaluators. She however reminded her colleagues of the difficulty of being a good and ethical professional, echoing the sentiments of one participant who said: *"I'm excited but frustrated, because there are so many great ideas here, but then you go out there and then what?"*

She asked fellow M&E practitioners to strive towards enriching the theory and practice of development while being cognisant of professional values in what and how they work.

Apart from giving value for money to clients, she also urged fellow professionals to interrogate and critically examine the methods and approaches they use in their work.

AGDEN Mourns Member



AMAL KUNNA KHAIRY

I can't find the right words to tell you how sad the network members are about Amal's passing away. She was strong, proud and generous. We will miss her a lot as a colleague, a friend and a sister. May she rest in peace.
Nestorine COMPAORE - Chair, AGDEN

Amal will be missed for her contributions to AGDEN, her personality and especially her pride in her heritage. May she rest in peace.
Karin Hyde – AGDEN Member

We loved her but God loves her most. We will continue to remember her contributions to AGDEN. Let God rest her soul in eternal peace. Amen.
Deogratias Lwezaura- AGDEN Member

Amal, a Sudanese by birth and Canadian, lived in Cairo and Canada, was laid to rest in her home town in Sudan. She was the representative of North Africa on the AGDEN Steering Committee. She has two beautiful daughters and a loving husband. She will be hard to replace. May her gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

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