



Editor's Note

AGDEN Ford Foundation Project Comes to a Close

As we celebrate the successful completion of the AGDEN Ford Foundation project, we take cognisance of the fact that though the task was grueling, the fruits are tantalising; we fought a good fight, finished the race and kept the faith. And, yes, apart from the intangibles, we have something to show for it: A practical M&E rights based toolkit, increased AGDEN membership and, of course, ten volumes of AGDENews.

Therefore, on behalf of the editorial board of AGDENews, I thank all who contributed in one way or another to ensure that we achieved our goal of publishing the ten volumes, a feat never before achieved. We thank the Ford Foundation for supporting the initiative; the AGDEN Secretariat for lubricating the process; and the entire AGDEN family not only for providing the raw materials from which we extracted the information but also for the warmth and camaraderie that so defines the network.

Finally, the AGDEN Ford foundation project may have come to a close; but it marks a new dawn in the development of the network and the subject matter. We now have a critical mass of development experts equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge necessary to spearhead a revolution in how we think about development and M&E in particular.

Alfred



Participants at the last AGDEN Ford Foundation Project workshop in Nairobi, July 2010.

The AGDEN Ford Foundation project has finally come to a close after almost 3 years of research, advocacy and capacity building in the areas of Human Rights, Gender & Development and Monitoring & Evaluation.

The successful implementation of the landmark initiative is set to change the development landscape not only in Africa but globally.

It is expected that the ripple effect from the series of training conducted during the life of the project will improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation in Africa, especially rights based approaches.

The training has strengthened the

values and understanding for many of the participating organisations who acquired vital skills that would vastly improve the manner in which they go about their professional duties of monitoring and evaluation in their various capacities.

The capacity of over 50 individuals has been enhanced in the area of Rights & Gender Responsive P, M&E through this project. This number includes all workshop participants, trainers, researchers, other consultants and project staff.

Another unique product of the project is the M&E toolkit, whose contents encompass the three areas of Human

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Rights, Gender & Development and M&E. The toolkit, the first of its kind, is expected to redefine how we assess development initiatives by looking at aspects hitherto ignored.

The Toolkit is a valuable contribution to the field and a path-breaker. Although plans are afoot for testing and further refining, it has a place of its own in the history of this young/new area of work and investigation.

The research component of the project (Participatory Action Research) brought a new and revealing experience in research to participants and consultants. The conventional face-to-face interviews and online questionnaires provided useful information and findings that could be used to enrich the quality of future versions/edition of the toolkit.

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The above output and outcomes have been made possible by a committed team drawn from the AGDEN fraternity under the leadership of Dr Florence Etta and supported by the AGDEN secretariat consisting of Lizette Kraft, Grace Wangechi and Justin Mochama.

The trainers included, Adeline Sibanda, Ednah Karamagi, Enid Kaabunga, Professor Akosua Adomako Ampofo, Olaronke Ladipo, Lulu Hayanga, Susan Mathai while the researchers were Dr Edward Ontita, Beatrice Nyamwamu, Sara Compion and Benita Van Wyk.



Project Human Rights Trainer, AGDEN Ford Foundation Project Susan Mathai (left), with AGDEN members, Lulu Hayanga (middle) and Samuel Wachira

The AGDEN journey so far: some opinions

Grace Okonji: "We now have a functional Secretariat"

AGDEN is now a registered entity with a bank account and physical address in Nairobi. This gives the network credibility and ensures that its activities are conducted in a professional manner. And if this can be sustained, then AGDEN is destined for greater things.

I was involved at the inception stage of the AGDEN –Ford Foundation project. Now, I am providing quality assurance for the toolkit. To me, the best outcome for this project is the establishment of the secretariat, which never existed prior to the project.

Secondly, the M&E toolkit developed in the course of the project is an excellent document for development practitioners.

However, more work still needs to be done to ensure that the toolkit is



Grace Okonji, Former Senior Gender and Conflict Advisor for UNDP, Southern Sudan

implemented as it should. It should not just be seen as an output to satisfy the demand of donors. No. It must be put to use. And for this to be done, we as AGDEN, must train Trainers of Trainers for this tool to be effectively disseminated and applied effectively. AGDEN must also find a way of monitoring how this tool is used.

AGDEN Set to Change the Complexion of Monitoring and Evaluation

The Executive Director of AeRC, Harry Hare, Upbeat about The Network's Future



The Executive Director of African eDevelopment Resource Centre (AeRC), Harry Hare

Harry Hare, the Executive Director at African eDevelopment Resource Centre (AeRC) spoke to the editor in an interview about AGDEN.

How are you associated with AGDEN and when did it start?

We host AGDEN's secretariat in Nairobi. AeRC is among the first organisations to see and share the vision of AGDEN and therefore accepted to host the secretariat from its inception to date. Over the years we have seen AGDEN grow in both size and stature to a highly respected organisation in the region, something that we take pride in.

What has it been like working with AGDEN?

We have had a good working relationship with both the AGDEN Board and the Secretariat. It has been especially fulfilling working

with the team at Secretariat, whom we consider part of our team.

In your Opinion would you say what AGDEN is doing is useful or valuable? Why?

AGDEN has done a commendable job in the few years that it has been in existence and the various tools that it has championed and developed in the Ford Foundation project are a case in point. Other than that the networking opportunity it has provided for Gender and M&E practitioners is priceless.

What hopes do you have for the future of AGDEN?

I see AGDEN's future as bright as its leadership. There is a whole world of

opportunities for its work out there and it will be difficult for AGDEN not to succeed and become one of the most respected organisations in this space.

Any other words or thoughts?

Just to wish AGDEN well and to assure the leadership and other stakeholders of our support whenever that is required.

AeRC was initiated to develop the much needed capacity in the region in utilization of ICT for catalyzing and enhancing development efforts by governments, private sector and non-governmental actors.

Enid Kaabunga: "Let's disseminate the Toolkit"

I was part of the AGDEN FF project team mainly involved in basic Monitoring & Evaluation training.

In the Johannesburg workshop, most participants came from a non-M&E background and therefore knew very little about the subject; some even felt that their projects should not have anything to do with M&E. However, we took them through the sessions and at the end of it, they were convinced about the need to incorporate M&E in their projects.

The Nairobi workshop, the situation was different; majority of the participants were knowledgeable about M&E and the sessions were more of discussions and sharing of experience rather than training per se.

This project provided a good forum for development practitioners from diverse backgrounds to share experiences about their work, organizations.

Now that the toolkit has been developed, it is our responsibility to ensure it does not gather dust on the shelves; we need to disseminate it widely by having more trainings on how to use it .

Are you member of AfrEA? Have you declared your task team membership yet? Join one today!

Email info@afrea.org

AGDEN Extends Steering Committee Life

It was revealed during a Steering Committee meeting held late last year in Nairobi that the 6-member AGDEN Steering Committee which acts in the place of the Board had its life extended until the next AfrEA Conference in 2012.

A general meeting of AGDEN held at the same venue and preceding the Steering Committee meeting held a minute's silence for its dearly departed English Secretary- Amal Kunna Khairy. Rosebell Chege is currently acting as Secretary.

The AGDEN Chairperson, Florence Etta, presented activity and financial reports of the Network for two years 2008-2010. The reports generated a lot of discussion. One immediate result of the discussions was the setting up of three ad hoc committees to produce further guidance and guidelines on human resources, elections and Network membership. It was resolved that recruitment should be improved by the Secretariat.

During the meeting, held at the Sankara hotel in Nairobi, the Steering Committee was informed that the Secretariat was being run with a staff of three; two part timers and only one full time staff member. It is hoped that the new policy/guidelines will address the staffing level.

The handover of the mantle of leadership of the Network from Florence Etta to Nestorine Sangare-Campaore was also endorsed with a few conditions.

UN WOMEN (UNIFEM) Continues its Partnership with AGDEN

Plans are at advanced stage for an AGDEN project with support from UNIFEM. Conversations which began in 2009 culminated in a project development workshop

late in 2010. The workshop outputs have formed the basis of project documentation whose approval is eagerly being awaited by AGDEN.

International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET)

The International Program for Evaluation Training will be held from June 13-July 8, 2011. Visit <http://www.ipdet.org> for more.

IDEAS Global Assembly 2011

The International Development Evaluation Association is holding its biannual conference this year. With the theme of; 'Evaluation in times of turbulence: the crisis of food, fuel and finance' the assembly is planned for 11th – 15th of April 11-15 in the beautiful city of Amman, Jordan. Deadline for registration is March 15. No word has been heard about bursaries yet. We sure hope there will be a few at least.

3ie Conference

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, 3ie as it is popularly called, in collaboration with the National Institute for Public Health in Mexico, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Center for Labor and Social Distributive Studies as well as the Impact Evaluation Network and the Poverty and Economic Policy Network will co-host the conference in Cuernavaca; June 15 -17, 2011. The theme of the conference is; "Mind the Gap: From Evidence to Policy Impact".

Early bird registration is now open. Developing country nationals are encouraged to apply for

bursaries to cover the cost of their participation. The deadline for bursary applications is March 18.

6th AfrEA Conference

The 6th AfrEA conference will be held from 9th - 13th January 2012 in Accra, Ghana. Making the announcement Dr Florence Etta the 6th President of the continental body reported that AfrEA had already secured initial partial funding support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for conference management. The board is seeking other partners and funders to make the conference a success.

5th NONIE Meeting 28- 29 March 2011– Paris

The Network of Networks for Impact Evaluation is comprised of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Evaluation Network, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG), and the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)-a network drawn from the regional evaluation associations. The meeting focuses on lessons learnt from undertaking impact evaluations and is open to members as well as non members with interest in impact evaluations.

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