



Showcasing AGDEN work in the Global South

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Systems approach to transformative gender studies

Background to presentation on AGDEN studies

The Global Evaluation Agenda 2020 calls for evaluation Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) within an equity-focused and gender-responsible lens. Most of the methodologies and materials come from the Global North. However, gender issues and evaluation capacity in the Global North do not necessarily match with those in the Global South. The Global South has rich experiences related to equity and gender.

Experience in assessing and building competencies for Gender transformative evaluations in Africa Gender transformation in Africa is slowly building momentum and evaluations and evaluators need to develop skills and competencies to ensure they can assess progress and challenges of programmes, but also capture excellence. The presentations highlighted capacity assessments and efforts in gender transformative evaluation on the following levels: Individual (evaluators including young and emerging evaluators skills and needs), organizations (including voluntary e.g., national VOPEs), and national level competencies (e.g., gender assessments of national evaluation plans, frameworks, and systems) across different cultures. Sharing of the results and the captured needs and available resources and curricula not only serves Africa, but also similar contexts in the Global South.

Theoretical basis

Gender transformation in projects/programmes/systems/communities need transformation (lasting systems change) of evaluations to include gender. Thinking systemically about transformation in gender evaluation necessitates a model with interrelated subsystems. Key systems principles such as Interrelatedness, Perspectives and Boundaries are important when considering gender transformation. These are all functioning in a specific context.

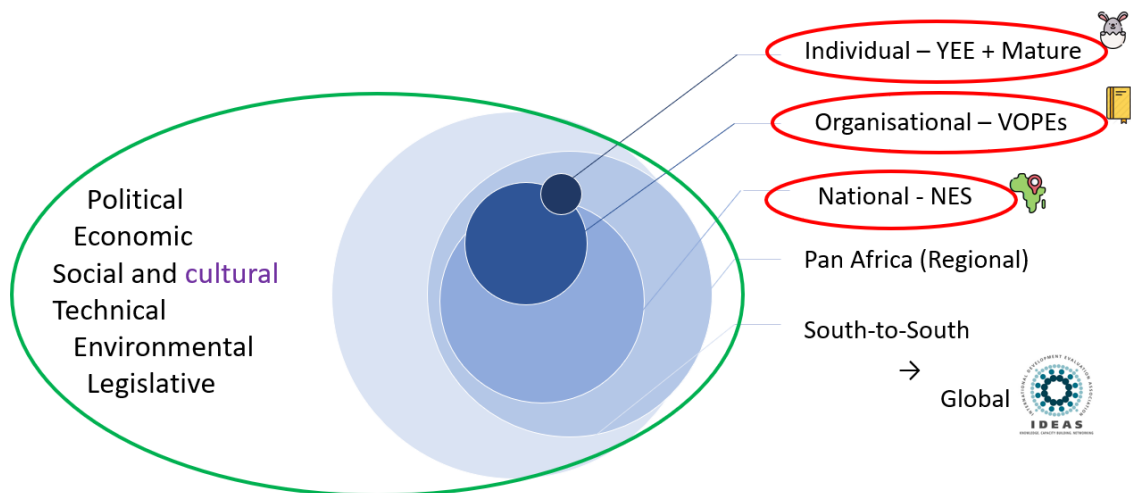


Figure 1: Interrelated systems in Gender transformation evaluations (based on Bronfenbrenner, 2009)

The following sub-systems were included in the discussion, using a synthesis of some of AGDEN's work on the African continent:

- Individual level: the needs of young and emerging evaluators regarding gender evaluation training, - based on Phase 2 of Peer-to-Peer project
- Organisational level: Capacitating Voluntary Organisations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs),
- National level: Gender assessment of national evaluation systems.

AGDEN studies included for the presentations

The studies formed part of the **EvalPartners / EvalGender+ Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Project** on Capacity Development on Gender Transformative Evaluation with Cultural Relevance: A Global South-South Collaboration: Interregional Learning: Comparative Report of the three regions of the Global South. This project had two phases:

Phase 1: Investigated the AGDEN curricula and adjusted it in relation to the needs expressed by African evaluators and identified from documents and conference proceedings.

Phase 2: Focussed on the needs of Young and Emerging evaluators

The study done by AGDEN for **CLEAR Anglophone Africa** to develop a diagnostic tool to assess the gender responsiveness of national evaluation systems (frameworks and policies) in South Africa, Uganda and Benin was included in the presentations for the national level discussions.



Individual: Young and Emerging Evaluators training needs

An important group to target to build capacity are young and emerging evaluators (YEE). This study investigated the needs of YEE in Africa regarding gender responsive evaluation training. This was part of the 2nd phase of the Peer-to-Peer project of South Asia and Latin America and Caribbean (LAC).

A total of 72 respondents from 23 African countries completed an online survey that was administered over a seven-day period. The quantitative survey was self-administered in French and English and distributed through existing VOPEs and Youth evaluators forums.

Most of the respondents were YEE from mostly the public sector (some were from civil society and the private sector). Many (36%) of the respondents did not self-identify as YEE and were unclear about their career trajectory. Only one-third (34%) of respondents have participated in training programs on Gender Transformative Evaluation or a gender focus on evaluation. Virtual trainings has not been used. This provides an opportunity in current Covid-a9 restrictions for training online. Topics included evaluating gender focussed interventions (gender analysis and developing recommendations) and also gender transformative aspects of evaluation studies in general (including applying gender perspective to all types of policies, programmes and projects and participatory approaches to ensure gender equity and empowering of communities).

Key lessons learned:

- YEE are looking for practical skills and “learning by doing”. Mentorships can play a critical role in this transfer of knowledge.
- Skills needed to apply to all sectors (Health, Education, Agriculture, Climate change, etc.) It is important for YEE to have gender transformative skills to apply to evaluate projects cross-sectionally.
- The topics the YEE identified as most critical are:
 - Applying the gender perspective as **a quality criterion** to all types of policies, programs, and projects.
 - Applying participatory **methods** for the construction of collective knowledge and the empowerment of communities.
- There is a dual function for the training: Having a gender lens to evaluation projects and also having evaluation skills to evaluating gender projects.



Organisational: Development of Equity Focussed Gender Responsive (EFGR) evaluation training curriculum for VOPES

This was part of the 1st phase of the Peer-to-Peer project with South Asia and Latin America and Caribbean (LAC). Both Anglo and Francophone countries (12 in total) participated in the study. The focus was to identify needs to revise the AGDEN curriculum, to gather best practices to develop into case studies (from across the African continent) to be used in the training.

The following Modules were included in the curriculum:

1. Context and Culture
2. The role of evaluation in gender equality and social equity

3. Key concepts, frameworks, approaches and theories in evaluation
4. Methods, Tools and Techniques
5. National Evaluation Policies and Systems
6. Partnerships in evaluation (stakeholders and institutions)

The case studies were developed around three topics (presentations were developed with the curriculum).

Topic 1: Participatory methods to enable gender responsive qualitative data collection for evaluations: Case study 1: Girls Education Challenge: Ethiopia

Topic 2: Mixed methods for gender responsive and equity-focused evaluation of SDGs: Case study 2: Community monitoring for better health and education service delivery in Burkina Faso

Topic 3: Awareness of gender responsiveness and transformative national M&E systems and policies and cultural contexts: Case study 3: Gender assessment of NM&ES of South Africa, Uganda, and Benin

Key lessons learned:

Not only were good practice identified throughout the continent, but the experience across Africa could be developed into case studies to supplement the AGDEN training curriculum.



National: Evaluation Systems: Gender diagnosis of National Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (NM&ES) in South Africa, Benin and Uganda

This study formed part of an AGDEN assignment to develop gender responsiveness assessments of NM&ES for CLEAR AA.

The Diagnostic Tool included:

- Three **dimensions**:
 - National M&E policy
 - Systems (framework and institutional arrangement)
 - Advocacy
- Seven gender responsive **criteria**:
 - Gender equality
 - Participation
 - Decision making
 - Gender budgeting
 - Evaluability
 - Review and revision
 - Sustainability

The main challenge identified in the application of the tool was measuring gender responsiveness in a *standardised and consistent manner*, yet keeping the *local context and environment* in mind.

Lessons learned:

- **Context is critical for countries** with different levels of M&E systems, gender mainstreaming, gender machinery, relationships between role-players.
- **Defining gender** is critical for each context and being flexible in the application of definitions. This includes definitions ranging from binary to a continuum.
- Gender evaluations should always focus on **relationships** especially considering power in the relationships.
- **Readiness** and preparing for gender assessments is critical to ensure resistance is managed properly.

Conclusion

In conclusion lasting transformative change regarding gender in general and gender evaluations in particular is possible. The studies on the different subsystems highlighted the following key considerations to ensure that we look at systems when assessing or planning for gender transformation in Africa:

- 1) The need for balance between the theory and the practical aspects of knowledge transfer.
- 2) The need for constant reflective practice and considering how to include gender and cultural transformation in evaluations.
- 3) The importance of assessing and explicitly documenting and adjusting for context and specifically cultural considerations in gender.
- 4) Systemic change of the evaluation “system” is needed. We need to consider all subsystems from the individual evaluator, organisational level, national levels, regional and global levels (with specific focus on Made-in Africa and Global South efforts). A valuable entry point to enhance the individual, organisational and nation levels will be the VOPEs (whether regional, national or special thematic groups).

Reports on the studies

AGDEN 2017. *Developing a Culturally Responsive Curriculum on Gender Transformative: Evaluation based on best practices: A South to South Collaboration: AFRICA*. Unpublished report. Africa Gender and Development Evaluators Network (AGDEN)

Fabiola Amariles Erazo (Colombia) -General Coordination & REDWIM-, Madri Jansen van Rensburg AGDEN - Sonal Zaveri CoE SA, Silvia Salinas Mulder & Pablo Rodríguez-Bilella RELAC 2018. *EvalPartners / EvalGender+ Peer-to-Peer (P2P): Project on Capacity Development on Gender Transformative Evaluation with Cultural Relevance: A Global South-South Collaboration: Interregional Learning: Comparative Report of the three regions of the Global South*.

Hoosen, F., Jansen van Rensburg, M.S., and Loye, A. 2018. *Developing a Culturally Responsive Curriculum on Gender Transformative Evaluation based on best practices: A South to South Collaboration AFRICA: Africa Gender and Development Evaluators Network (AGDEN) Including the voices of Young and Emerging Evaluators*, unpublished report. AGDEN.

Etta, F., 2016, *Gender responsiveness diagnostic report of national monitoring and evaluation systems in Benin*, unpublished report. AGDEN.

Jansen van Rensburg, M.S., 2016a, *Gender responsiveness diagnostic report of national monitoring and evaluation systems in South Africa, Uganda and Benin*, unpublished report. AGDEN.

Jansen van Rensburg, M.S., 2016b, *Gender responsiveness diagnostic report of South Africa government-wide monitoring and evaluation system*, unpublished report. AGDEN

Sibanda. A., 2016, *Gender responsiveness diagnostic report of national monitoring and evaluation systems in Uganda*, unpublished report. AGDEN.

Presentations 2021

Madri made presentations about this work for:

Canadian Evaluation Society Conference 2021: 12 May

Panel: Utilization for Transformation: Southern Gender-Focused Evaluation Experiences and Proposals.

Panelists: Fabiola Amariles (Latin America and the Caribbean), Sonal Zaveri (South Asia), Madri Jansen van Rensburg (Africa).

Madri Presentation: Experience in Assessing and Building Competencies for Gender Transformative Evaluations in Africa.

This panel aimed to showcase the work done and the continued effort by partners of the 2018 and 2019 Peer-to-Peer project working South-to-South.

gLocal Evaluation week: International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) 2021: 2 June

Panel: Experiences and reflections on Gender Transformative Evaluation for development.

Panelists: Cristina Magro, Madri Jansen van Rensburg, Fabiola Amariles.

Madri Presentation: Experience in assessing and building competencies for Gender transformative evaluations in Africa.

This panel was done as part of the collaboration of the Transformative Change and Transformative Evaluations (TCTE) and Gender and Equity-focussed IDEAS thematic interest groups (ITIGs).

Articles published on the studies

Jansen van Rensburg, M.S., and Loye, A.S. Young and Emerging African Evaluators' need for Gender Transformative Evaluation Training. Submitted and currently under peer review: *African Evaluation Journal*.

Tirivanhu, P. and Jansen van Rensburg, M. (2018). An Assessment of the Gender Responsiveness of National Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in South Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, 35(2): 163-178 <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0376835X.2017.1396443>, published online 11 Nov 2017

Jansen van Rensburg, M.S., and Blaiser-Mapitsa, C. (2017). Gender Responsiveness Diagnostic Methodological Reflections. *African Evaluation Journal*, 5(1):109 - <http://www.aejonline.org/index.php/aej/article/view/191>