

# TRANSFORM

## Gender Responsive Evaluation: A call for action to leave no one behind

Gender-responsive evaluation:  
A key to accelerating  
progress on the Sustainable  
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## Dear Readers,

As we enter 2016, we also officially enter the era of the 2030 Agenda. This means we need to collectively shift from planning for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to implementing them. Evaluation, and more specifically gender-responsive evaluation, has an important role to play throughout the implementation process in ensuring that these ambitious targets are met, while leaving no one behind.

However, gender-responsive evaluation can only play this role if evaluators and the global evaluation community agree to integrate gender equality in their evaluations. In this issue, we look at how global partnerships for evaluation, UN system-wide coordination on evaluation and UN Women's evaluation function can all contribute to making this a reality. We hope you find this information useful for better understanding the importance of gender-responsive evaluation in the context of the SDGs and how the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office will be working to support its integration at the global, regional and national level.

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## *Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.*

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## Gender Responsive Evaluation: A call for action to leave no one behind

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# A key to accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals

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**By PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA**

*Executive Director, UN Women*

*We kick off 2016 with a strong focus on implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We worked hard to place gender equality at the heart of this new global agenda through a standalone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment (Goal 5) and the integration of gender equality targets within the other goals. Our focus now must be on harnessing that momentum and ensuring that we are on track to deliver on our commitments.*

Crucially, the 2015 reviews also showed that our monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the MDGs were not robust enough to alert us to the slow pace of implementation and the bottlenecks faced, and did not provide sufficient insight into how to overcome these barriers. At UN Women, we place strong emphasis on the importance of evaluation and regular reporting on results. Close scrutiny can be uncomfortable, but it is an essential aspect of well-managed progress. Using gender-responsive evaluation for the SDGs gives us the tools to monitor our commitments and ensure that words become actions.

We now begin SDG implementation with targets and indicators that are more gender-responsive and a global focus on improving national capacities on data, statistics and evaluation among all stakeholders. This will give us evidence-based insights into what is working and raise alarm bells when the pace of progress is too

slow so that we can course-correct. It will give us a better understanding of how to overcome obstacles, while identifying the ingredients that sustain gender equality and women's empowerment across all SDGs in the long-term.

In addition to our internal evaluation function, UN Women also advocates for and supports coordination of gender-responsive evaluation within the UN system and among national evaluation policies and systems. This helps us all to align, strengthen, and prioritize all of our work, in line with supporting the achievement of the SDGs.

We have made bold commitments, and now is the time for action, implementation and evaluation. If evaluations conducted by governments, UN system entities, civil society and the private sector all integrate gender equality and women's empowerment, together we can ensure that our ambitious goals become reality.



## A group of approximately 20 people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are posed in two rows. They are holding up white signs, each featuring a colored square with a white icon and a number, representing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The signs are arranged in a grid-like fashion. The background is a light-colored wall with logos, including the 'Global Evaluation Year' logo and the 'Partners for the Goals' logo. The text 'Global Evaluation Year' is visible on the right side of the background. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

EvalAgenda, which builds on the success of the International Year of Evaluation, is further impetus to the global trends described below.

Until 15 years ago, the best national evaluation systems were in the global North (i.e., the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada). The big majority of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation (VOPEs) were in the global North. The demand for evaluation was in the global North. Today, this is changing dramatically. Several excellent national evaluation systems are in the global South (i.e., Mexico, Colombia, Chile, South Africa, Morocco, Benin, Kenya, Uganda and Malaysia). The big majority of the existing 150+ VOPEs



**By MARCO SEGONE**

*Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UN Women  
Chair, United Nations Evaluation Group  
Co-founder, EvalPartners*

are in the global South. Regional parliamentary forums for evaluation now exist in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America (but not in Europe or in North America). In the future, demand, supply and use of evaluation will truly be universal.

## **Stronger demand for evaluation, particularly equity-focused and gender-responsive ones**

The first ever Global Evaluation Event held in a national parliament is a strong signal of the new trends of policymakers' demand for evaluation. The official launch of the Global Parliamentary Forum at the Parliament of Nepal is a clear indication that parliamentarians are becoming new evaluation leaders. In parallel, the strong call by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for leaving no one behind and, accordingly, the positive response by the evaluation community with equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations, is another positive development. This led to the creation of EvalGender+, a multi-stakeholder movement to ensure evaluation will meet the expectation to inform policies that leave no one behind. EvalGender+, led by

*In the future, demand, supply and use of evaluation will truly be universal.*

UN Women and the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), and whose members are the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), VOPEs, 16 UN agencies, multilateral banks and the Global Parliamentary Forum for Evaluation, is launching an inclusive process to develop guidance to evaluate the Sustainable Development Goals with an equity-focused and gender-responsive lens. In the future, demand for equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation will be the norm.

## **Complexity is the new normal**

The 17 goals and 169 targets included in the 2030 Agenda are interconnected and synergic. While this is necessary, it also adds complexity. In addition, the focus on "no one left behind" means that socio-cultural-political contexts, as well as power relationships, are critical to evaluating sustainable and equitable development. In the future, evaluation theory and practice will decisively move to the evaluation of complexity, adopting system-thinking and network analysis.

## **A stronger movement for professionalizing evaluation**

The challenges noted above will accelerate the need to professionalize evaluation. Several VOPEs (including the European Evaluation Society, the UK Evaluation Society, the Canadian Evaluation Society, the Japanese Evaluation Society and the International Development Evaluation Association), are leading this process. UNEG is exploring this area too, and UNEG members (i.e., UN Women and the International Labour Organization) already launched professionalization initiatives. In the future, evaluation will become a mature profession.



## 92 events of the EvalYear



Events organised:

- by Evaluation Associations (VOPEs)
- by UN agencies
- by Governments
- by Parliamentary Forum
- by Multilateral Banks
- by Universities
- by Think Tanks

## A more and more diverse multi-stakeholder community

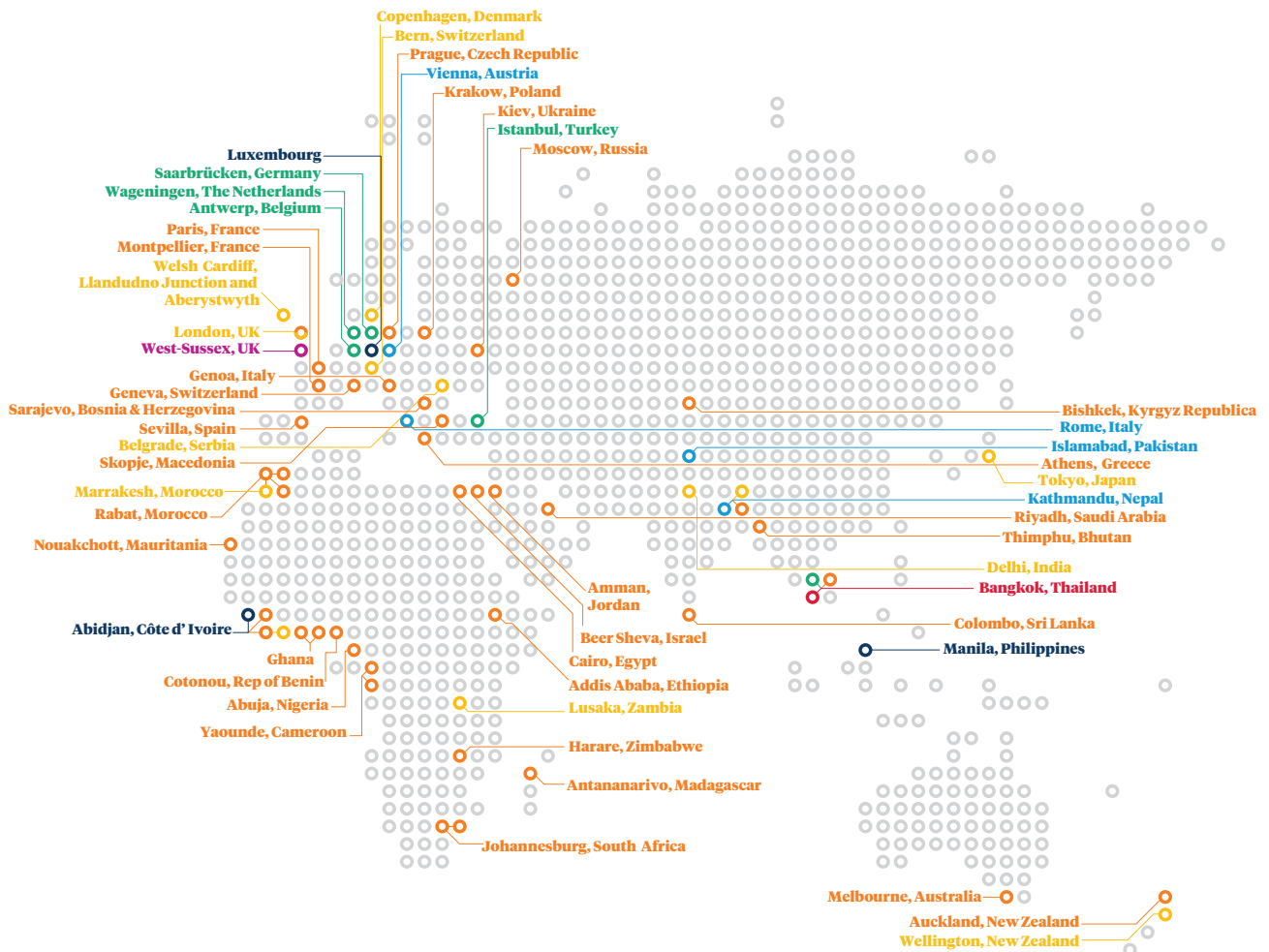
In the past, national governments, VOPEs, UN agencies, multilateral banks and bilateral donors were the main actors in the evaluation community. Today, new stakeholders are emerging. In addition to the

above-mentioned parliamentary forums, local governments (at the state and municipal level, i.e., San Paulo in Brazil and Johannesburg in South Africa) are developing and strengthening local evaluation systems. Impact social investment, which generates billions of dollars and is already more significant than the official development aid, is also engaging with evaluation. In the future, the evaluation community will be truly made up of multi-stakeholders.

## Multi-stakeholder partnerships will become the most meaningful, influential and impactful approach

To address the new opportunities and challenges of leaving no one behind





in a complex world, multi-stakeholder partnerships will increasingly become the most meaningful, influential and impactful approach. EvalPartners, the global partnership for national evaluation capacities, brought together IOCE (the network of VOPEs), UNEG (the network of evaluation offices of UN agencies), EvalNet (the network of evaluation offices of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee

[OECD/DAC] countries) and several other stakeholders. This generated the International Year of Evaluation and EvalAgenda, among other things. It is now time to expand the partnership to welcome new actors, as well as new challenges.

***In the future, evaluation will be an agent of change*** for the world's 193 nations committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To be

sure, the EvalAgenda for the next four years is broad and complex, but procrastination is not a sensible option.

***That is why 2016 must be the year to do the "right thing," and leave no one behind.***







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**Why evaluation  
matters for  
gender equality**

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**By CAROLINE HEIDER**

*Director General and Senior Vice President,  
Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank  
and Chair of the UN Women Global Evaluation Advisory Committee*

**Despite the progress made during the last two decades, gender disparities persist in many countries today. Women still lag behind men when it comes to economic opportunity, education, employment and participation in decision-making. This is further evidence that bringing about gender equality is a tough job. The issues of gender equality have a lot to do with behavior. These behaviors are determined by mindsets, which in turn are formed by longstanding traditions and cultural factors. Influencing these social norms is hard enough without a critical voice that reminds us that results have not (yet) been achieved or things could have been done better. That's where evaluation comes in.**

One could argue that if there is one organization where evaluation is an essential part of the mandate, it is the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). As a global leader, UN Women's normative, operational and coordination roles provide a powerful combination of responsibilities to accomplish the challenging goal of gender equality. Advocacy and partnerships expand reach and influence well beyond the bounds of the organization. Research provides the necessary underpinnings to inform operational choices and shape normative

work. Plus the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals provides both the political will and a platform from which to leverage further support.

All of this sounds like a perfect combination, so what could evaluation possibly add?

Evaluation strengthens our ability to achieve gender equality in three important ways. First, it enables us to take a critical look at existing social norms and corresponding policies and programmes to ask whether or not we are doing the right things. Second, evaluation allows us to review operational

results in order to understand what has worked and why. And third, it provides a window through which we can compare results and experience across the UN system and beyond, to share knowledge, build on success and avoid repeating mistakes.

All this sounds like standard fare for evaluation. But, here is what is different: Gender roles and relations are rooted in deeply held, often sub-conscious norms, which define what success looks like in rather diverse ways across the globe. Achieving gender equality challenges us to put these social norms to the test and calls for evaluations to demonstrate whether or not they change, why they change, and how these changes affect the well-being of men and women, girls and boys, and progress and prosperity of communities and countries. It also creates an imperative for the Independent Evaluation Office at UN Women to innovate and rise to another level of evaluation practice to better capture transformative changes in gender equality.



## Choosing a different yardstick

Evaluating whether or not things have gone according to plan assumes benchmarks that tell us what's right and wrong without questioning whether the plan is right. Evaluations undertaken in this way ask whether or not objectives set at the beginning were achieved. This is no doubt an important question. An equally or maybe even more important question for gender equality is whether or not the underlying assumptions of an intervention were right. This means evaluating whether or not a project was a good fit with government policy. Many evaluations tend to stop at assessing relevance—but they don't have to.

Another important question that evaluation needs to answer is whether or not an intervention is “fit for purpose.” For instance, existing policies might perpetuate inequality; at times to reinforce existing traditions, at

other times without even intending to do so. Therefore, it is essential that evaluations probe the values embedded in both the context and interventions to unpack overt and hidden assumptions about gender roles, how they are changing, and the role that interventions play in that process.

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*An equally or maybe even more important question for gender equality is whether or not the underlying assumptions of an intervention were right.*

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Such an approach challenges the evaluation practice to query the values it uses—explicitly and implicitly—in its assessment, as each judgment presupposes value systems that serve as benchmarks to assess results and performance. Unpacking social and cultural norms as part of

an evaluation process with the participation of stakeholders can create the space to share and listen to each other's underlying assumptions and value systems. Valuable in itself, such exercise might lead to choosing a different yardstick for defining what success looks like.

In this way, evaluation complements research that informs UN Women's normative work with insights into underlying values, changes to them that occur as a delib-

erate or unintended consequence of interventions, and the way in which we view success and failure. Such insights will contribute to dialogue and facilitate the difficult process of transforming gender relationships, resulting in greater gender balance and equality.

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*When people can see how measures to strengthen gender equality affect their lives, communities and prosperity, it becomes easier to accept and implement them.*

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## Creating positive incentives for change

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Research has shown that gender equality, while desirable in itself as a human right, also positively impacts growth. Both reinforce each other, as empowering women economically also enhances their voice and vice versa. Projects need to translate this promise into operational reality. Evaluation can help illustrate which interventions worked and give us a sense why and under what circumstances.

Once more, sounds rather run-of-the-mill evaluation practice, so what's so special at UN Women?

The development and evaluation practices very often use rather broad brushstrokes for various stakeholders—policymakers, decision makers, public sector, private sector, beneficiaries, non-governmental organizations—as if they were monolithic and without differentiation.

When it comes to people affected by interventions—from changes to policies, programmes and projects—very few differentiate within stakeholder groups, even less among women and men, boys and girls. Unless, of course, these are targeted programmes such as increasing girls' school enrollment rates or improving maternal health. However, there are many other factors that may affect female and male parts of the population, community and households in different ways, and those influences may be positive or negative, deliberate or unintentional.

While research shows us what can happen, evaluation tells us what actually has happened, why and what the consequences are. When people can see how measures to strengthen gender equality affect their lives, communities and prosperity, it becomes

easier to accept and implement them. Learning, as these measures are implemented, about what works, why and to what end, can make sure timely adjustments are made to prevent mistakes and increase good results. However, this works only if there is ongoing decentralized evaluation in place and its results are reflected upon and used.

It is when programmes go on for too long while having negative effects that harm is done and reputations are damaged—not when a justified critical reflection signals early on how to do better.

But it will take changing the discourse—the language in which leadership, management and staff speak about evaluation and attitudes—to get to that place. And evaluation will need to prove that it can deliver: not positive programme outcomes, but positive incentives for change.

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## Creating multiplier effects for transformational outcomes

UN Women's system-wide responsibility has received a further boost with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. Gender equality is a stand-alone goal and also embedded in many of the other goals. Partnership is one of the five pillars on which successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda rests.

As much as we recognize the importance of partnerships, it is no secret that it takes time and resources to do things together, often negotiating difficult arrangements and contrary views to arrive at hard won compromises.

### How can evaluation help in such a difficult undertaking?

In a first instance, evaluation can help us understand better how well partnerships have worked and how they affected programme efficiency.

But, more importantly, evidence from evaluation can help translate collective action into transformational outcomes. As with governments, communities and people, it will require active engagement and convincing evidence to bring partners along in embedding gender equality in their work. Creating a greater collective understanding

At the same time, it will be a challenge for evaluation, which needs to play its role in embedding gender equality in evaluation methods and approaches, to assess what has worked and why—especially with many stakeholders playing diverse roles. UN Women and its Independent Evaluation Office can play a leading role in bringing partners together to continuously develop better methods and practices. It is a tough challenge, but it can serve as an example for those who are dedicated to serving other disadvantaged, excluded groups

*Evidence from evaluation  
can help translate collective action  
into transformational outcomes.*

of the effects of values and social norms, operational realities and practices, and results will help rally efforts and resources around the shared goals and practical actions.

and will differentiate UN Women as a leader that has demonstrated with hard evidence how the world can be a better place when both genders enjoy equal opportunities.









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**Transforming  
how we assess  
progress against  
global goals**

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**By SHRAVANTI REDDY**  
*UN Women Evaluation Specialist*

More than 150 world leaders attended the historic UN Sustainable Development Summit on 27 September 2015 that resulted in an unprecedented political commitment: the formal adoption of a new global sustainable development agenda for the next fifteen years called “2030 Agenda”. It includes 17 new sustainable development goals with 169 agreed/proposed targets (and 304 proposed indicators) that aim to leave no one behind by 2030.

As we all know, these are not the first set of global development goals. This means that we have had the opportunity to learn from past experience, and there are two lessons that have come across strongly.

The previous set of global development goals—the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—lacked a strong monitoring and evaluation framework. Had this been in place, it’s widely believed that the MDGs would have supported better progress against the goals by generating important evidence for learning,

decision-making, and accountability. The good news is that this lesson has been taken on board. Monitoring and evaluation are now integrated within the Outcome Document entitled *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. [\[1\]](#)

Yet, inclusion of monitoring and evaluation in the official document is only a partial victory. It’s true that common indicators for each target are being agreed upon and energy

it possible to conduct robust evaluations that can tell us more about what results were achieved, how we achieved them and if there might have been a better way to go about it.

There is also much more work that needs to be done to strengthen evaluation capacities. Shoring up evaluation capacities at the national level—given that the SDGs are country-driven—is the ultimate focus. This means building and strengthening national evaluation systems and

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### *The Millennium Development Goals lacked a strong monitoring and evaluation framework*

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is being directed towards shoring up national data and statistics capacities to improving monitoring against them. These are important steps in their own right, but also increase evaluability of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—making

policies. With the United Nations’ role in capacity development, it also means that UN system evaluators need to strengthen their own practices and be ready to support evaluation capacity development needs when called upon to do so.

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But the challenge doesn't end there. Another lesson learned from the MDG era is that progress overall does not mean progress for all. Some groups benefit from progress more than others, while some might not benefit at all—or may end up worse off. Groups of individuals traditionally discriminated, marginalized or excluded in society are at most risk of not receiving the benefits of sustainable development, unless this is pursued with respect to human rights and gender equality and specific targeted measures are undertaken.

This key lesson was also recognized in the adoption of the Sustainable Development 2030 Agenda slogan: “No one left behind!” There is a commitment to ensuring that all groups benefit from development, including, importantly, a special focus on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEEW). There is a dedicated Goal 5 to GEEW and it is also mainstreamed across all 17 goals.

#### SDG GOAL 5

### Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5 GENDER  
EQUALITY



#### TARGETS

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

*From: Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

## Gender equality and women's empowerment mainstreamed across the 2030 Agenda

"Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the goals and targets. The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels. We will work for a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels. All forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls will be eliminated, including through the engagement of men and boys. The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial."

From: *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*



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Combining these two challenges brings us to two key questions now before the global evaluation community:

- How can we collectively ensure that evaluation is planned, undertaken and used to support progress against all 17 goals?
- How can we collectively ensure that evaluation also supports progress on gender equality and women's empowerment?


The first piece of good news is that a vibrant global evaluation community exists—drawn from national governments, UN system, voluntary organizations for professional evaluation (VOPEs), academic institutions and the private sector—and has been galvanizing and coordinating itself to respond to this challenge. Throughout 2015, the global evaluation community has been celebrating the International Year of Evaluation with the aim of advocating and promoting evaluation and evidence-based policy making at all levels.

Existing global partnerships for

evaluation have been strengthened, new partnerships have emerged and ambitious plans are in the works to strengthen gender-responsive evaluation. Within the UN system, entities have been working collectively through the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) to ensure that the UN evaluation functions are also fit-for-purpose to conduct gender-responsive evaluation and to meet demands for evaluation capacity development by countries.

UN Women, with its specific niche in gender-responsive evaluation—given its mandate—is also playing a vital role within global

Internally, UN Women is also working to strengthen its own evaluation function to guide UN Women's work towards the achievement of GEEW within the context of the SDGs, especially at the country-level.

The second piece of good news is that some success has already been achieved. Two examples are specifically worth mentioning. For the first time ever, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution on evaluation (A/RES/69/237), "Capacity building for the evaluation of development activities at the country level."  It acknowledged the call by the global evaluation community to declare

*The first piece of good news  
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community exists*

partnerships and within the United Nations to advocate for the conduct of gender-responsive evaluation.

2015 as the International Year of Evaluation and also called for partnerships to support country-led



*“A positive enabling environment for evaluation exists when all sectors of a country’s society—not just the executive and legislative branches of the national government, but also the judicial branch, civil society, academia, the media, and citizens in general—understand and appreciate the value of evaluation, insist on evaluations being conducted, provide the necessary resources for those evaluations, and use the resulting findings to improve policy and decision-making that supports learning and achieved positive outcomes for all.”*

**EVALAGENDA 2020**

evaluation activities and the strengthening of national evaluation capacity.

This has done much to help galvanize and strengthen support for evaluation throughout 2015, which ended with the celebration of a Global Evaluation Week hosted by the Parliament of Nepal. During the event, a global evaluation agenda that was developed through extensive consultation throughout the year was agreed upon: EvalAgenda 2020.

A 15-month participatory consultation process, involving a wide range of stakeholders from around the world, led to the development of EvalAgenda 2020. It provides a common global framework for the evaluation community to organize. Four new partnerships have already sprouted under its umbrella: EvalSDGs, EvalYouth, EvalIndigenous and EvalGender+. This last partnership, which focuses specifically on gender-responsive evaluation, provides



### **Sustainable Development Goals follow-up and review**

A robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework will make a vital contribution to implementation and will help countries to maximize and track progress in implementing 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to ensure that no one is left behind. Operating at the national, regional and global levels, it will promote accountability to our citizens, support effective international cooperation in achieving this Agenda and foster exchanges of best practices and mutual learning. The follow-up and review processes at all levels will be guided by the following principles:

- They will track progress in implementing the universal goals and targets, including the means of implementation, in all countries in a manner that respects their universal, integrated and interrelated nature and the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- They will be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and will support the reporting by all relevant stakeholders.
- They will be people-centered, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and have a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind.
- They will be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data that is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.
- They will require enhanced capacity-building support for developing countries, including the strengthening of national data systems and evaluation programmes, particularly in African countries, least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and middle-income countries.
- They will benefit from the active support of the UN system and other multilateral institutions.

## EvalAgenda 2020

EvalAgenda 2020 was developed through a consultative process involving 90 events over a 15-month period. It contains the results of global discussions amongst the evaluation community to develop an agenda for evaluation for the first five years of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation. Consensus was reached on two main issues:

- Evaluation has enormous potential to improve society. Evaluation is not simply a value-neutral management tool. In order to reach its fullest potential, evaluation must combine effective methods and techniques and the values that drive policies geared to the public interest. EvalPartners members are united by a shared commitment to promoting and supporting equitable and sustainable human development. Our alliance promotes evaluation processes and criteria grounded in values of equity, gender equality, and social justice, and on shared principles of partnership, innovation, inclusivity, and human rights.

- Evaluation has not yet reached its full potential. Despite its success and growing acceptance in many parts of the world, evaluation has not yet been embraced as widely as it should be. In many organizations and countries, there is inadequate appreciation of what evaluation is, how it differs from policy research, performance measurement or performance auditing, and how it can help improve policymaking and programme implementation efforts on a practical level. It is the gap between potential value and current acceptance that motivates us to work harder towards improving evaluation quality and usefulness and spread its benefits worldwide and across all segments of society, including the private and voluntary sectors.

This led to the development of a vision for Evaluation in the Year 2020. In this vision, four essential dimensions of the evaluation system make up the core of EvalAgenda2020. These are:

- The enabling environment for evaluation
- Institutional capacities
- Individual capacities for evaluation
- Inter-linkages among these first three dimensions

*EvalAgenda 2020 (excerpts from the draft Executive Summary)*

a new space for collaboration, learning and advocacy.


The transition to the agreed EvalAgenda 2020 starts now. The countdown begins. The world has thrown down the gauntlet, metaphorically speaking, to the evaluation community. Are you ready to meet the challenge?

 **2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**  
<http://bit.ly/2030asd>

 **UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION**  
<http://bit.ly/UNevalresolution>

 **EVALUATING SDGs WITH AN EQUITY FOCUSED AND GENDER RESPONSIVE LENS** <http://bit.ly/evalgendersdgs>

## No one left behind: Evaluating SDGs with a gender lens

Progress on social equity and gender equality is fundamental for realizing human rights for all. Social equity and gender equality are the building blocks for sustainable, inclusive and peaceful societies. The SDGs provide a new opportunity to strengthen sustainable development “leaving no one behind”. This is why, following the approval of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the UN General Assembly, EvalGender+, United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UN Women, in collaboration with EvalPartners, Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation, International Organizations for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, Swiss Development Cooperation, Government of Sri Lanka, CONEVAL Mexico and the Government of the Republic of Tunisia have launched a multi-stakeholder consultative process to develop a framework to evaluate the Sustainable Development Goals with a gender lens, and promote gender-responsive national evaluation systems. The framework will be fed by contributions from the “No one left behind” online consultation and the High-Level and Technical Event to be held in New York in March. Following this, training and technical assistance on how to use the guidance will be provided to up to six countries. 

A new **global partnership**  
for **gender-responsive**  
**evaluation**



Join EvalGender+, a partnership of 37 organizations with the intent of promoting gender-responsive evaluation through:

- **SOCIAL MOBILIZATION**
- **PROMOTION OF PRACTICAL INNOVATION**
- **FACILITATION OF LEARNING AND SHARING EXPERIENCES**

Learn more: [www.mymande.org/evalgender](http://www.mymande.org/evalgender)





# Partnerships for 2030 success

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**By INGA SNIUKAITE and FLORENCIA TATEOSSIAN**  
*UN Women Evaluation Specialists*

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for global partnership and international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building and to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources. From EvalPartners to the Global Parliamentary Forum and EvalGender+, partnership is asserted as a key working strategy for wider impact and for achieving transformative results in the evaluation field.

The global multi-stakeholder partnerships are based on the assumption that each one has to play its part: governments, parliamentarians, voluntary organizations for professional evaluation (VOPEs), the United Nations, universities, women's organizations and other interested groups. Only by working together can the change be achieved in the interconnected domains of evaluation capacity development—enabling environment, institutional and individual capacities for evaluation.

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Office actively engages in developing and supporting evaluation partnerships. From 2013 to 2015, UN Women was co-leading EvalPartners with the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE). EvalPartners is a global evaluation partnership for national evaluation capacity development that advocates for environments that enable good quality and gender-responsive evaluations at the international, regional and national levels. EvalPartners made significant contributions in driving the global evaluation agenda by declaring 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation (EvalYear). This was reinforced when the UN General Assembly passed Declaration A/RES/69/237, “Capacity building for the evaluation of development activities at the country level”. The work of EvalPartners on EvalYear culminated in the Global Evaluation Forum in Nepal unveiling EvalAgenda 2020,





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## 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



### SDG GOAL 17

#### Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

- Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the SDGs, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation
- Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries
- Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships
- By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
- By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

From: Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

which further energizes the global evaluation community around the evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In the context of EvalPartners, UN Women also contributed to the launch of parliamentary forums, particularly ensuring that women parliamentarians are at the table in debating and developing national evaluation agendas. With the aim of strengthening national demand and use of evaluation in policymaking, parliamentarians have been invited to engage in strengthening an enabling environment for evaluation.

Under the leadership of EvalPartners and UN Women, and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Development Bank, selected parliamentarians from all over the world met and collectively acknowledged their role in evidence-based policymaking. The Global Parliamentarians Forum for



*In developing this article, Transform talked about the role of evaluation partnerships with Colin Kirk, Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Evaluation Office and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Vice-Chair for Partnerships to get his perspective on exciting moments in partnership development and opportunities and challenges for evaluation in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Colin has recently taken on the role of co-Chair of EvalPartners, succeeding Marco Segone, who was co-Chair from January 2012 to November 2015.*

## Colin Kirk



### Q: What was the most exciting moment for you in the context of your engagement with global initiatives for evaluation?

A: I can recall many exciting moments over the past few years where I have been involved in global evaluation initiatives. Perhaps one of the biggest highlights came in December 2012, when a group of over 80 evaluators representing evaluation associations from all over the world got together in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and pledged to take forward a global effort to build a worldwide partnership on evaluation. There was tremendous excitement and energy, particularly at the moment where each participant signed the Chiang Mai Declaration—quite literally signing the Declaration, as a giant copy had been pinned up on a big roll of paper on the wall of the conference room! I think all of us sensed that this was the beginning of an important global commitment to better evaluation—and better use of evaluation—all around the world. And, of course, that partnership has come to be known as EvalPartners, which has just celebrated a very lively “Evaluation Week” in Kathmandu, involving nearly 500 participants. Participants did commit to taking forward a global evaluation agenda aimed at further strengthening capacities for evaluation, with 2030 Agenda in mind.

### Q: What are the opportunities and challenges for global initiatives on evaluation to support national evaluation systems in the context of 2030 Agenda?

A: First, let me say something about the challenges. For anyone who cares about the future of the planet, the 2030 Agenda is enormously exciting and deeply challenging. It confronts us with fundamental choices we need to make to build a better and more equitable world, not least by eliminating extreme poverty in our own lifetimes. But the agenda recognizes that each country and region faces a distinct set of challenges and will need to find its own solutions. Evaluation, which pays close attention to the specifics of each development situation, provides a set of tools that can help in the search for the most appropriate and effective ways forward, and can support governments, citizens and business in zooming in on affordable solutions which work and which are sustainable.

Country-led development needs country-led evaluation. This is where efforts to build effective national evaluation systems come in. Evaluation evidence has informed the design of major social programmes that have helped to lift large numbers of people out of poverty—for example, look at the success of such programmes in Latin America, underpinned as they are by robust evaluation work. But of course we know that not every country has strong evaluation systems in place. I believe that global evaluation

initiatives have a truly catalytic role to play in providing platforms for sharing experience, knowledge and skills between nations, and in advocating with national and regional decision-makers for increased generation and use of evidence from monitoring, research and evaluation.

UNEG has an important role to play in strengthening technical capacities in evaluation within UN agencies. Beyond the UN, EvalPartners has a key role to play in mobilizing evaluation associations to demand better evaluation, better use of evaluation evidence, and ultimately better policies and programmes which serve to improve the lives of citizens around the globe.

### Q: What would be a major breakthrough for global evaluation initiatives in supporting national evaluation systems?

A: Personally, I am not a believer in the “Hollywood approach”, which looks for a handsome hero to make a breakthrough and save the planet. (And as we know, with Hollywood it does tend to be the hero and not the heroine who gets the starring role.) What I know is that patience, persistence and partnership can bring success. Over the years, I have been involved in various capacity-building initiatives which, when successful, have always centered on joint efforts among trusted partners. The key to success was the long-term, supportive accompaniment of national and local officials in building their skills while getting the day to day job done. I believe the same lesson applies in supporting the development of national evaluation systems. Peer support over extended periods will be the way forward. And I am pleased to say that EvalPartners has already been supporting such a “peer to peer” initiative, which has generated huge interest and is beginning to show practical results. We need to build on this approach and look for opportunities to scale it up, both through work with governmental partners but also through further work with civil society partnerships. And who knows, maybe there will one day be a Hollywood movie that tells this story!

I would like to say a final word on why evaluation matters as a key element of the 2030 Agenda. We have heard a great deal about the need for data and the importance of measurement. And, of course, there do need to be clear targets and indicators to chart progress towards the goals. But we need sensitive analysis of the data; we need to properly contextualize the numbers; and above all we need to hear from people themselves—children and young people, women and men—about development efforts that affect them in one way or another. Evaluation can give meaning to metrics, and it can amplify the voices of ordinary people. If the world listens to these voices, we can be more certain that “no one is left behind” by development efforts in the coming decade.

*EvalGender+ aims to contribute to achieving social equity and gender equality by engendering development policies through equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation.*

Development Evaluation was launched at the EvalPartners Global Evaluation Week organized at the Parliament of Nepal in November 2015.

EvalGender+ (a new multi-stakeholder partnership co-led by UN Women, EvalPartners and the IOCE) was also launched in November at the Global Evaluation Forum. EvalGender+ aims to contribute to achieving social equity and gender equality by engendering development policies through equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation. This partnership also harnesses the opportunities and challenges presented by the sustainable development 2030 Agenda and seeks to better inform the implementation of SDGs at the global, regional and national level with credible gender-responsive and equity-focused evaluative evidence. EvalGender+ intends to coordinate and maximize efforts in strengthening equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation through social mobilization of key actors, promotion of practical innovation, and the facilitation of learning and sharing of experiences.

These three key examples of global partnership supported by UN Women demonstrate the growing influence of multi-stakeholder initiatives in shaping global political support for evaluation. EvalPartners' achievements show that global partnerships were effective in positioning evaluation in global and national evaluation agendas through EvalYear. It also encouraged a new

wave of more targeted partnerships such as Global Parliamentarians, EvalGender+ and others. The challenge of the 2030 Agenda is still ahead, however, according to the EvalAgenda2020 that fully embraces the challenge of SDGs —“Together we can!”



#### SDG GOAL 10

#### Reduce inequality within and among countries

- By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average
- By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
- Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality
- Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations
- Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions
- Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies
- Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements
- Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes
- By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent

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>



Independent  
Evaluation Office



## PERSONAL VOICES

*TRANSFORM approached the three recipients of the 2015 EvalPartners Award to hear their stories. We asked them to tell us a story about their most exciting moment in the context of their engagement with the EvalPartners initiative and their views in supporting national evaluation systems in the context of the 2030 Agenda.*



**Awuor Ponge**

*IDEAS Board Member*

*Member of the EvalGender+ Management Group*

*Recipient of the 2015 EvalPartners Award*

I'd like to share the most important moment in engaging with the EvalGender+ initiative. For me, this was when we were seated there at the Parliament of Nepal, the whole world watching as a dream became reality. This was during the official launch of EvalGender+ among other EvalPartners initiatives to drive the evaluation agenda in the post-2015 era. This was a culmination of long months of working behind the curtains with likeminded persons, who appeared to share with me a dream. It was a great pleasure working with Marco Segone and Rituu B. Nanda. From our respective organizations, we shared a common dream for the establishment of a global partnership to promote the demand, supply and use of equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations. To me, it was a dream come true, especially after my initial work with the Gender and Evaluation Thematic Interest Group at IDEAS, which prompted EvalPartners to see the need for inviting us to the partnership. The vision is one of sustained engagement to ensure that we build the capacity at the individual level and also at the institutional level to be able to not only conduct gender-responsive and equity-focused evaluations, but also to ensure that there is an enabling environment to demand for and facilitate the utilization of evaluation findings. There can be no humbling experience than seeing one's dream come true.

The major breakthrough in supporting national evaluation systems in the context of 2030 Agenda would be when all nations in the world have put in place systems that are able to track and report on the SDGs with a gender-responsive and equity-focused lens. This can only be realized by making EvalGender+ a one-stop shop where all key actors in evaluation will be looking for good practices in evaluations that is cognizant of the differences in access to and benefit from development interventions, based on the principle of social equity. This will be achieved through concerted efforts of like-minded partners to strengthen social equity and gender-responsive strategies within the SDGs, establishing indicators for the targets set for them, while ensuring that in the pilot countries, policies are gender-responsive and focused on equity.



### **Tessie Tzavaras Catsambas**

*President of EnCompass LLC*

*Program Chair of the 2015 AEA Conference focused on the Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020*

*Recipient of the 2015 EvalPartners Award*

The International Year of Evaluation resulted in greater visibility for evaluation throughout the world. We now need to channel this visibility toward continuing to promote the demand and use of evaluation to inform policies and programmes, and, at the same time, promote the supply of good quality evaluations to strengthen the credibility of evaluation. Building on EvalPartners' strengths, we have a continuing important role in facilitating international collaboration and peer-to-peer learning, and maintaining focus and energy for the evaluation agenda. We also need to recognize that those of us at the international level do not know what will actually work at the national and local level; we, therefore, need to continue encouraging inclusive processes that build on local knowledge and support local champions for building national evaluation systems. By integrating an international perspective that sees across boundaries with local, culturally-responsive perspectives, we will best position ourselves to support the 2030 Agenda that calls for leadership of complex, interdependent, multi-cultural and equity-focused approaches.



### **Jim Rugh**

*Co-Coordinator of the EvalPartners Initiative*

*Recipient of the 2015 EvalPartners Award*

I'm amazed by how much influence EvalPartners has had, given the amazingly high profile that evaluation has achieved globally, especially during this EvalYear 2015. There is much evidence of that, including the 92 EvalYear events, the penultimate event in Kathmandu the last week of November, the number of parliamentarians who have shown their interest in promoting evaluation by and of their governments, the launching of the Global Parliamentarians Forum hosted by the Parliament of Nepal, the launching of the new initiatives of EvalSDGs, EvalYouth, EvalGender+, EvalIndigenous, and the increased interest in and promotion of the professionalization of evaluation.

If one narrowly defined EvalPartners as the 24 members of the EvalPartners Management Group, it would be either ludicrous or presumptuous to think this little group of well-meaning individuals could have had that large of an impact. But one must acknowledge the vision and leadership of Marco Segone that has convinced so many organizations to affiliate with EvalPartners as partners; that this has, indeed, become a movement beyond the "control" of any small group like the EvalPartners Management Group. Part of that requires letting go of a tendency to be in control; to letting "one thousand flowers bloom"—promoting (but not controlling) multiple networks of multiple individuals and organizations that are promoting evaluation in so many ways.

We also need to acknowledge that "the stars were aligned" with the adoption of the SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals] during the same year as the International Year of Evaluation (not by coincidence). Thus, at both international and national levels, the promotion of evaluation goes hand-in-hand with the promotion of the SDGs. I anticipate that these two international movements, synergistically, will contribute to the strengthening of national evaluation policies, systems and capacities.

Indeed, this has great potential to take advantage of this special EvalYear of 2015 and go way beyond—let's see as we look back from 2030, and, indeed, evaluate the progress between now and then.







A photograph of a hand reaching out from the left side of the frame, with a blue bracelet on the wrist. The hand is positioned over a vast field of tall, green grass that stretches to the horizon. In the background, there are several trees under a clear sky.

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EVALUATION IN UNITED NATIONS  
**It is time for shifting  
“business as usual”**

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**By SABRINA EVANGELISTA**  
Evaluation Specialist, UN Women



## Adopting a new way of doing business

The UN system has been coordinating its efforts on gender-responsive evaluation to ensure a coherent approach and to enhance awareness and knowledge on how to integrate human rights and gender equality in evaluation, with the aim of facilitating understanding across the UN system about the successes and challenges to achieving gender equality. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG),  an interagency professional network of the evaluation units of the UN system, has been instrumental in facilitating coordination and establishing common norms, standards and guidance for human rights and gender-responsive evaluation. UN Women was established in 2011 with a key mandate to

coordinate system-wide efforts on gender equality. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP)  for gender mainstreaming, managed by UN Women, has created an accountability mechanism through which entities must report on their actions to mainstream gender in their evaluation activities (amongst other issues). Another key development is the establishment of the Interim Coordination Mechanism (ICM) for system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the UN system, established in 2015 to develop and pilot the Independent System-wide Evaluation (ISWE) Policy. The ISWE Policy recognizes the need to evaluate the UN system's efforts to integrate gender


equality and human rights in its work. Together, these system-wide efforts represent important opportunities to promote and implement a coherent approach to gender-responsive evaluation and ensure the gender equality dimensions across the UN system work are evaluated, including its efforts towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNEG, through its Working Group on Gender Equality and Human Rights, co-led by UN Women, has been supporting a coherent approach to human rights and gender-responsive evaluation through the development of the following key products:

- Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation 
- The UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator Technical Note and Scorecard 

 **UN EVALUATION GROUP**  
<http://www.unevaluation.org>

 **UN-SWAP**  
<http://bit.ly/UN-SWAP>

 **INTEGRATING HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER IN EVALUATION**  
<http://bit.ly/hrgeedoc>

 **UN-SWAP PERFORMANCE INDICATOR**  
<http://bit.ly/unswapdoc>

*The UN system has been coordinating its efforts on gender-responsive evaluation to ensure a coherent approach and to enhance awareness and knowledge on how to integrate human rights and gender equality in evaluation*





"The SDGs Agenda 2030 comes with a heightened political declaration of commitments for accountability to people. Strengthening nationally-led evaluations and national evaluation capacity for the systematic follow-up and reviews of results achieved through the SDG commitments are vital for translating such pledges into action. The 2030 Agenda opens an opportunity for UNEG members to rethink current approaches and introduce innovation for systematic assessment of progress towards SDG 5: gender equality and empower all women and girls. In this context, gender-responsive evaluation is important to UNEG members for their engagement in enhancing gender-sensitive evaluation norms, standards and ethical guidelines in light of the SDGs.

UNEG can support the UN system through advocacy and initiatives that generate evidence through gender-responsive evaluations. Within the international humanitarian and development system, there is a high demand for credible evidence on performance and impact of interventions on gender. Evaluation

functions should be drivers or promoters of efforts to meet such demand. UNEG can make a powerful contribution in mobilizing efforts within the United Nations for better implementation of gender-responsive evaluations. Specifically, its Working Group on Gender Equality and Human Rights provides the overall framework and guidance to facilitate progress on gender mainstreaming in evaluations across the UN system via the UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator, exchange workshops and webinars."



Helen Wedgwood  
Director, Office of Evaluation,  
UN World Food Programme  
and UNEG Vice Chair





## How UN entities are changing their way of doing evaluation business

Largely as a result of coordination efforts for gender equality, UN entities are making changes to their evaluation systems and guidance, which is a key step to achieving more gender-responsive evaluation and increasing evidence on what works for gender equality. Two key examples are presented below.

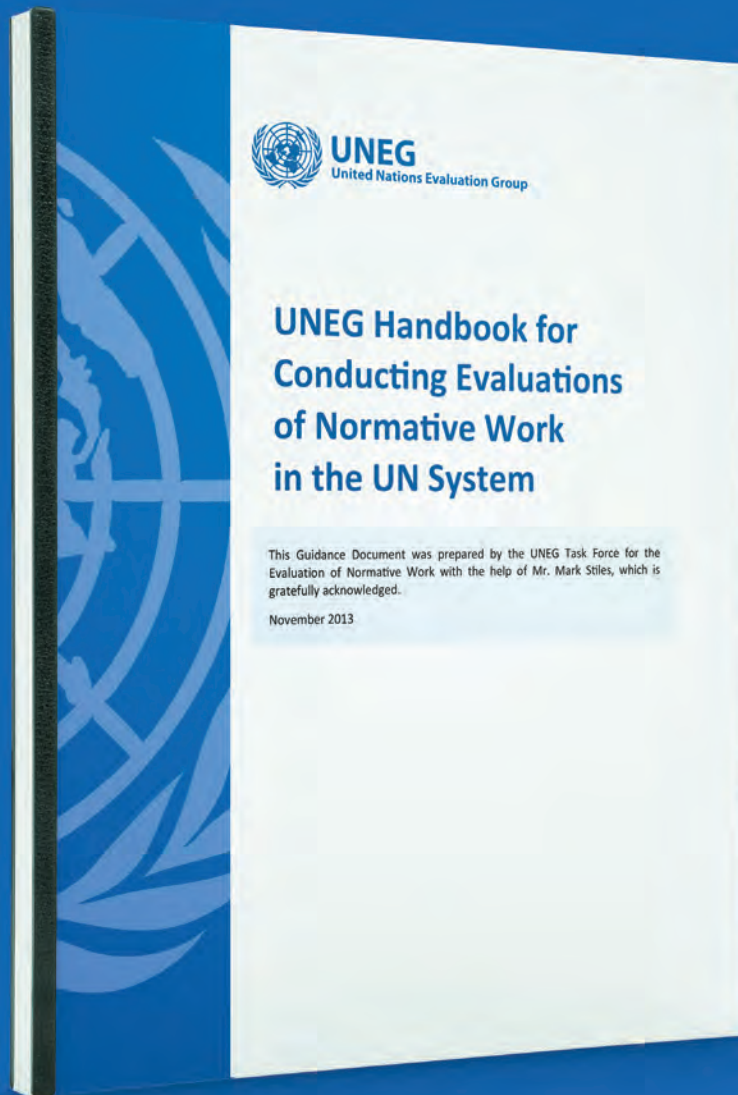
### **Evaluation Office (EVAL), International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

ILO-EVAL has taken a lead promoting gender-responsive evaluation as one of the first offices to develop specific guidance for integrating gender equality in evaluation. It was developed with inputs from the ILO Bureau for Gender Equality and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) members. The guidance specifically refers to the global mandates for upholding human rights principles and the ILO mandate and policy on gender mainstreaming. It also provides practical tools on how to integrate gender equality in evaluation, such as specific evaluation questions that could be adapted. ILO-EVAL has learned that “guidance, by itself, is insufficient to mainstream gender into the evaluation culture of a UN agency.” In order to improve the quality of evaluative information on gender equality, ILO-EVAL has taken several steps including the establishment of an Evaluation Manager Certification Programme, the inclusion of a standard paragraph on gender for terms of reference, and checklists for evaluators.

### **Office of Evaluation (OED), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)**

FAO-OED established a dedicated Gender Team and Quality Assurance mechanism for gender mainstreaming in its evaluation processes. The guidelines issued in 2013 establish that all Terms of Reference and draft and final reports must go through the Quality Assurance mechanism, and established a scoring system with clear criteria for assessing the products. The guidelines also refer to the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). Access the guidelines: [here](#).

# How to evaluate normative work?



The latest guidance from the United Nations Evaluation Group will provide you with an integrated approach to the evaluation of normative work in the UN along with hands-on methodological guidance, concise practical examples and tools for conducting evaluations of normative work.

Available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/2014>  
in English, French and Spanish




**UNEG**  
United Nations Evaluation Group



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## Focusing on building gender-responsive evaluation capacity

Professionalization initiatives present a great opportunity for ensuring across the UN system that evaluators have a set of skills and competencies for gender-responsive evaluation. Currently under development are United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG's) professionalization initiative and an eLearning course dedicated to integrating gender equality and human rights in evaluation. Individual entities have also embarked on their own capacity development efforts building upon UNEG norms, standards and guidance: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in partnership with EvalPartners launched an eLearning course on Equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations,  and UN Women launched a publicly accessible eLearning course,

How to manage gender responsive evaluation,  which is part of its professionalization initiative aimed at building knowledge and awareness of key concepts for evaluation managers. At the regional/country level, UN regional evaluation networks, such as the United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific (UNEDAP), are providing training for individuals on gender-responsive evaluation. These resources, in particular those that are openly accessible to any development professional, are key for supporting capacity to evaluate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a gender-responsive manner.

 **EQUITY-FOCUSED AND GENDER RESPONSIVE EVALUATION**  
<http://bit.ly/equitygendercourse>

### Opportunities for enhancing capacities in gender-responsive evaluation: United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific (UNEDAP)

UNEDAP supports UN country teams in Asia and the Pacific region to conduct more rigorous evaluations of the UN contributions towards national development priorities. It promotes an evaluation culture and strengthens evaluation skills of evaluation focal points and management of UN agencies to ensure that evaluations are of high quality, relevant and useful for the users. Gender-responsive evaluation is integrated into the annual training for UN monitoring and evaluation professionals within the region. To date, 270 UN staff members have received the training module on gender-responsive evaluation. In 2015, this training expanded to the country level for government staff and partners; trainings were held in Cambodia and Laos.

 **HOW TO MANAGE GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION**  
<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org>



## Coordinating with key partners at the national and regional level

The 2030 Agenda presents evaluation units and groups within the UN system an opportunity for coordinating efforts with partners for national evaluation capacity development with a gender-responsive lens, which is highly relevant to the achievement of 2030 Agenda. UN regional groups are already collaborating with parliamentarians to establish forums for evaluation, which include a focus on gender-responsive evaluation. The constitution of the African Parliamentarians'

Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE) established in 2014 explicitly states its commitment to integrating gender equality in evaluation, and the 2015 Forum of Parliamentarians for Evaluation in Latin America engaged in promotion and sharing of knowledge on gender-responsive evaluation. The identification and engagement of key partners at national and regional level can have a multiplier effect and secure integration of gender equality in the evaluation of the SDGs.

### Engaging parliamentarians in thinking about gender-responsive evaluation: United Nations Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Interagency Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation

One of the key activities of the United Nations LAC Interagency Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation from 2015 was the "Parliamentarians Forum on Development Evaluation in Latin America: Evaluation, SDGs and public policies in the Agenda", which took place in September 2015 in Panama. The objective was to promote the demand and use of evaluation for good governance, encourage the establishment of national evaluation policies and systems in Latin America, and contribute to the establishment of a forum of parliamentarians for evaluation in Latin America. The forum also enabled the group to engage in promotion and sharing of knowledge on gender-responsive evaluation.



**Kamolmas Jaiyen**

*Evaluation & RBM Specialist,  
Bangkok Regional Hub, United  
Nations Development Programme  
(UNDP) and Co-Chair UNEDAP*

"Gender equality is more important than ever in the context of the SDGs, as the 2030 goals address the root causes of inequality and discrimination existing in societies, which is multi-dimensional in nature. UNEDAP, being a multi-UN agency network of evaluation specialists and advisors, is in a good position to bring together their organizational expertise and mandates to promote the use of equity- and gender-responsive evaluation as a key accountability and learning tool for the United Nations to become more effective in supporting governments and civil societies in achieving the SDGs."

## Moving beyond “box ticking”

One key recommendation of a UN Women review of evaluations of corporate gender mainstreaming policies is that the UN system adopt a more coherent approach to evaluating corporate gender mainstreaming policies, including assessing both institutional results and development results for gender equality. A coherent approach will enable demonstration across the UN system of how gender equality policies can lead to better development outcomes

Programme (UNDP) evaluation of its Gender Equality Strategy, because it provides an example and tools for evaluation units on how to tease out the gender dimensions of development results. The evaluation team used two analytical frameworks to assess the effectiveness and the type of gender change: the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES), which consists of a five-point scale showing different levels of effectiveness moving from gender-negative towards

assessment are found on the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office web-site. The UN system must step up its efforts to measure and analyse gender equality results if it is to support the achievement of the SDGs.



*A coherent approach will enable demonstration across the UN system of how gender equality policies can lead to better development outcomes for gender equality.*

for gender equality. The UNEG Working Group on Gender Equality and Human Rights discussed this recommendation at a webinar in 2015, highlighting the efforts of the United Nations Development

gender-transformative results; and the Gender@Work quadrant analysis, which enables analysis of four types of change—individual change, formal change, systemic change and informal change. Details of the





## Taking the Sustainable Development Goals on full throttle

It is inspiring to see that the UN system is already organizing events to facilitate a shared understanding of the SDGs and discuss the evaluability of the goals. In November 2015, CGIAR (formerly known as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) jointly organized a technical seminar entitled “Enhancing the evaluability of Sustainable Development Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.” At the

*Gender-responsive evaluation presents a great opportunity for upholding the values and achieving the transformative change envisioned in the SDGs.*

regional level, the LAC Interagency Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation, composed of nine UN agencies, hosted a webinar in December 2015 titled: “Evaluation and SDGs: The challenges of monitoring and evaluation in the context of the new 2030 Agenda.” UNEG is dedicating its annual Evaluation Practice Exchange in 2016 to the topic “Evaluation fit for the 2030 Agenda for sustainable

development: No one left behind,” in which one stream will be dedicated to “No one left behind: The role of evaluation in ensuring equity, equality and non-discrimination.” It is important that these discussions continue and that gender-responsive evaluation is a fundamental part of these and future events organized by the UN system on evaluating the SDGs.

### **The UN system must put human rights and its gender dimensions front and central in evaluation**

Gender-responsive evaluation presents a great opportunity for upholding the values and achieving the transformative change envisioned in the SDGs. This can only be achieved if the evaluators and evaluation systems of the UN system truly adopt and integrate in their work the values enshrined in 2030 Agenda: human rights and gender equality.



## Supporting UN Women contribution to 2030 Agenda: The critical role of the UN Women evaluation function

**The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an ambitious agenda, and success in attaining them will rest, in part, on how well efforts and resources can be directed. It is widely recognized that the SDGs need to be supported by more effective follow-up and accountability processes than were available to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A great deal needs to be done to help realize the SDGs, not only by monitoring the specific indicators, but also by objectively and systematically assessing what it takes to achieve the goals in various contexts.**

Under the rallying call of “Leave no one behind”, the SDGs have placed substantial emphasis on addressing inequalities and increasing gender equality and women’s empowerment. The recognition of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a standalone goal (SDG 5), and the systematic integration of gender-sensitive targets in other goals, is a positive step towards ensuring gender equality by 2030.

The Independent Evaluation

Office of UN Women is a front-runner in advancing gender-responsive evaluation within the framework of the SDGs agenda. The task of advocating for and supporting efforts to ensure a coherent gender-responsive evaluation is further magnified by the need to measure progress at different levels, contexts and complexities. Assessing SDG 5 will be a particular challenge given the complex political, social, legal, economic, institutional and cultural

factors perpetuating gender inequalities and the difficulty in measuring qualitative indicators relating to power relations, gender structures and systems.

To address this, the UN Women evaluation function needs to be “fit for purpose”. Both its corporate and decentralized evaluation functions need to be adapted to support the organization’s efforts and the global aspiration to rigorously evaluate what is working, for whom, and under what conditions. This helps to ensure that investments result in real and sustained change to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and improve citizen’s lives.

### **At the global level....**

UN Women has a mandate that spans normative, operational and coordination work. UN Women





**By MESSAY TASSEW**  
UN Women Evaluation Specialist

*The recognition of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a standalone goal (SDG 5), and the systematic integration of gender-sensitive targets in other goals, is a positive step towards ensuring gender equality by 2030.*



works with countries to help translate international norms and standards into concrete actions and impacts at the national level in order to achieve real change in the lives of women and girls.

Achieving gender equality requires transformational change in the way families, communities, societies, countries and institutions function. This transformational mandate extends to the evaluation function, which remains central to the achievement of UN Women's mission.

UN Women has made evaluation an integral part of the organization. It has acknowledged its strategic role—extending beyond simple compliance into engagement in performance assessment, learning, and strengthening accountability mechanisms, as well as feeding in to policy and decision-making processes.

### UN Women evaluation tools at the global level

**Evaluation Policy:** Governs the independent evaluation function of UN Women and applies to all initiatives supported and funds administered by the organization

**Evaluation Strategic Plan:** Provides a results-based framework to strengthen the evaluation function at UN Women in the context of the Evaluation Policy and UN Women 2014-2017 Strategic Plan

**Corporate Evaluation Plan:** Provides a coherent framework within which useful evaluation evidence is generated systematically on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and, as far as possible, impact and sustainability, of work under the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017

**Evaluation Handbook:** How to manage gender-responsive evaluation: A practical handbook to help those initiating, managing and/or using gender-responsive evaluations

**The Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (GATE)** is a publicly accessible online system designed to enable the dissemination of evaluative evidence and tracking of the use of evaluation, ensuring that knowledge gained from evaluations becomes an integral part of the UN-Women accountability, transparency and organizational learning process.

**The Global Evaluation Oversight System (GEOS)** is a corporate dashboard established with the aim to provide greater oversight and transparency on the performance of the evaluation function within UN-Women. The system is based on a suite of 9 key performance indicators (KPIs).

**The Gender Evaluation Consultant Database (GECD)** is a publicly accessible database which is chiefly devised to provide a link between prospective consultants and institutions in need of evaluators with gender equality expertise.

### **“A programme without a quality evaluation is akin to a stranded ship with no direction”**

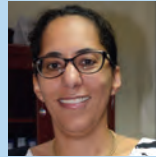
The ever-changing development landscape and emerging challenges require continuous evaluative evidence for directing the process of change and development in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. In this context, decentralized country specific evaluations add great value in responding to the need for providing timely evidence on the ground and making immediate changes where it matters the most.

To have more influence and impact, the decentralized function needs to be responsive to demands for accountability for results and for using evaluative evidence to improve UN Women programmes at the country level. Given the current financial climate, more investment should be made on few and strategic decentralized evaluations capable of providing credible and strong evidence on what works to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Learning and active use of the evidence and knowledge generated from evaluations should remain the main purpose and value of the decentralized evaluation function of UN Women. In this context, technology needs to be taken advantage of so that evaluation findings can be summarized, disseminated

and widely accessed in real time. We also need a system to track the use and impact of these evaluations by both internal and external users as an important driver of positive change towards gender equality.

Within the framework of national evaluation capacity development, the decentralized evaluation function should provide a bouquet of good practices and lessons learned (from the MDG era) to help policymakers at regional and national levels to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and SDG 5 in particular. This ensures value for the investment on evaluation and helps to maximize the relevance and related learning for strengthened effectiveness in the context of the sustainable development agenda.



Simone Ellis Oluoch-Olunya,  
Deputy Regional Director,  
Regional Office for East and  
Southern Africa, UN Women

More specifically, corporate evaluations play a pivotal role in generating evidence and knowledge on normative, operational and coordination work. This complements UN Women’s advocacy and research activities to position gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment at the center of the global agenda.

Within the framework of the UN Women Evaluation Policy and Corporate Evaluation Plan, corporate evaluations will continue to be undertaken and adapted to the changing development landscape and priorities of UN Women. This will help ensure the SDGs are tracked and refined and implementation actions are evaluated. This approach will also help leverage the unique advantages UN Women has in advocating for the evaluability of the performance indicators of the SDGs, particularly Goal 5, and support processes to integrate evaluation into national and global review mechanisms for better

### ***Achieving gender equality requires transformational change in the way families, communities, societies, countries and institutions function.***

outcomes on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

To ensure expanded reach and maximum impact, findings, recommendations and lessons learned from corporate evaluations will continue to be used to improve the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UN Women interventions, UN system-wide performance, and global efforts on Goal 5 and related SDGs. The reports of these evaluations will be publicly available, contributing to UN Women’s transparency as well as to global knowledge on what it takes to bring transformative changes to improve the situation of women around the world.

#### **At the field level....**

While SDGs are universal in character, they need to be adapted to national contexts. Adapting global goals into national targets ensures ownership and promotes an accountability framework that is inclusive, transparent and participatory.

UN Women is a decentralized organization and its decentralized evaluation function is shaped by the need to respond to varying contexts in order to improve performance and accountability for results on gender equality and women’s empowerment. These efforts are complemented by its unique mandate of promoting evaluations that are gender-responsive, nationally owned and inclusive



# ACCOUNTABILITY S LEARNING

## **GATE System:** **The Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use**

An on-line based Public Information Management System, which facilitates UN Women's effort to strategically plan and effectively use evaluations for accountability, management for results, and knowledge management.

>>>> <http://gate.unwomen.org/>



### Results Management System: An opportunity to enhance evaluability of programmes

In order for the evaluation function to play a more critical and influential role, more needs to be done to enhance internal capacity for performance monitoring and the capacity of UN Women partners in capturing and reporting on results. The roll-out of the Results Management System (RMS) provides an opportunity to address the challenges of availability and quality of data and evidence-based monitoring in UN Women. This will not only facilitate the evaluability of UN Women programmes but also provide broader support to countries to track progress towards national sustainable development priorities. The decentralized evaluation function should also take this strategic approach, which would facilitate not only monitoring of SDG 5 and relevant goals, but also be used as a key instrument to raise areas of concern at an earlier stage.

In order to implement changes more effectively, we need to ensure that value added is highlighted, which is something that can be done through solid evaluations of normative and

coordination work, including capturing lessons learned and overall impacts in this area (building on existing evaluations done).

We are becoming better at integrating evaluation as part of our core planning and functions. However, we often get stuck in doing business as usual, because we think it works. In many cases, this is true, but it does not mean that we should negate innovation or new approaches. The SDGs are a tremendous opportunity for all offices to solidify our expertise in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Now we must take on the challenge of building innovative decentralized evaluations that respond to the needs of UN Women and its aspiration to achieve gender equality by 2030.



Mohammad Naciri, Regional Director, Regional Office for Arab States, UN Women

with a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind.

Within the framework of its decentralized evaluation function, UN Women will embark on strategic country portfolio evaluations to systematically assess the contributions made by UN Women to development results with respect to gender equality at the country level. These evaluations will be carried out in consultation with national governments and other stakeholders to ensure the validity of evidence and greater ownership of development results. This approach is believed to have a cascading effect in strengthening regional and national accountability mechanisms, organizational learning and evaluation capacities. This, in turn, contributes to strategic policy and programmatic decisions including tracking progress towards the achievement of SDG 5 and related indicators.

Strengthening the decentralized evaluation function and the

### *Corporate evaluations play a pivotal role in generating evidence and knowledge on normative, operational and coordination work*

suite of decentralized evaluations—thematic, cluster, programme, portfolio and project—will help generate evaluative evidence on what works and what does not to advance gender equality within the framework of the SDGs. UN Women's distinct arrangement and deployment of its regional evaluation specialists at the regional offices, its intensive professionalization programme on gender-responsive evaluation, and its roster of consultants' database will drive fundamental change to national-level capacity for monitoring and evaluation, which in turn, will assist in achieving long-term outcomes.

In addition, UN Women will continue to maintain and expand its knowledge management systems on evaluation, including the UN

Women evaluation community of practice, the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (GATE) system, and the repository of gender-equality evaluations to promote behaviors and incentives that drive better performance and achievement of results.

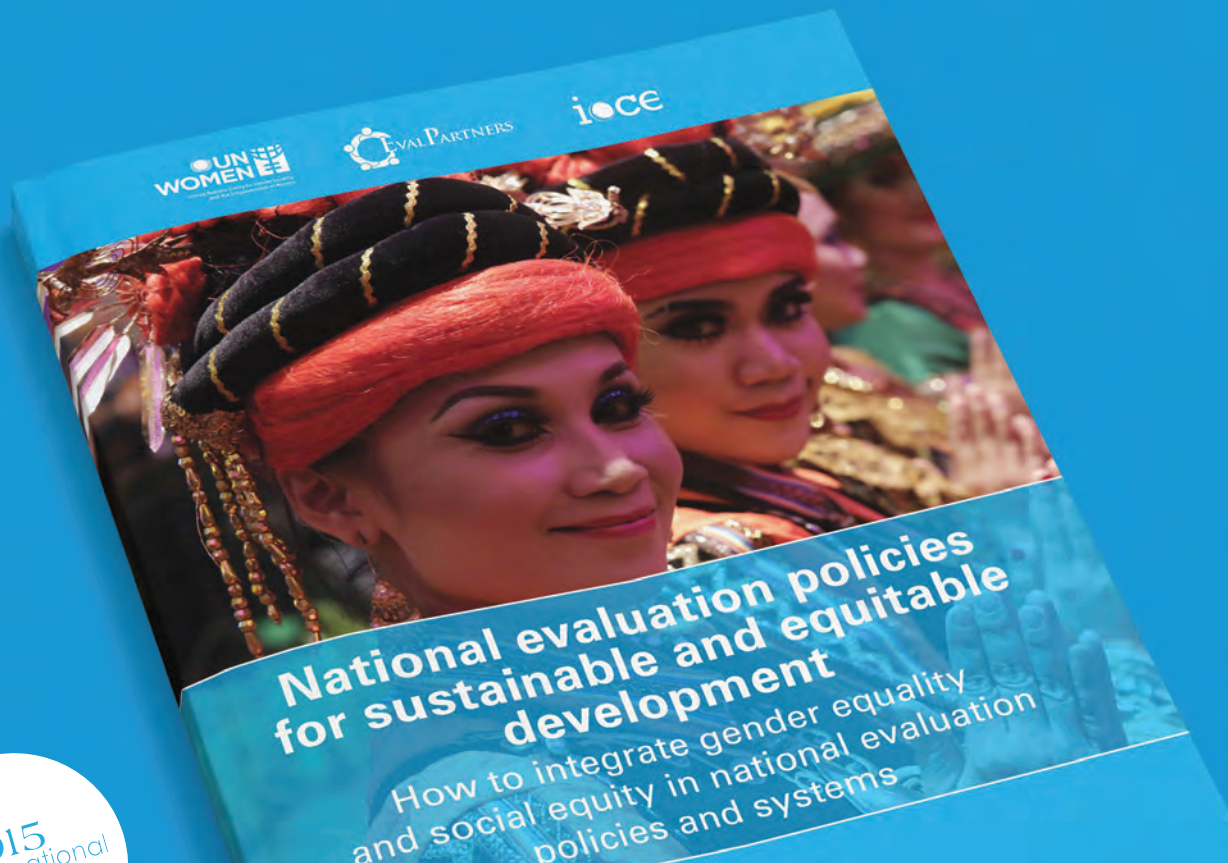
The imperatives of the SDGs necessitate partnership, inclusive approach, government ownership, and flexible accountability and review mechanisms. The Independent Evaluation Office of UN Women should take on the challenge of strengthening its evaluation function to guide UN Women's work towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women within the context of the SDGs, especially at the country-level.

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# How do we integrate gender equality into national evaluation policies and systems?

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**Find the latest guidance and tools to strengthen national evaluation capacities for equitable and sustainable development**



National Evaluation Policies for Sustainable and Equitable Development—Providing guidance on integrating gender equality into national evaluation policies and systems being implemented in an increasing number of developing countries around the world.

**Read more at <http://bit.ly/nationalevalpoliciesbook>**

# I want equality for women and men.

I am **HeForShe**



Join me at [HeForShe.org](http://HeForShe.org)

We're inviting men and boys around the world to stand together in solidarity – with each other and with women – to create a shared vision for gender equality. And it starts by answering a simple question... who are you?

