

NEWSLETTER

EES Thematic Working Group I Gender & Evaluation



Dear Colleagues, dear readers,

It is a great pleasure to bring you this European Evaluation Society [Thematic Working Group I - Gender and Evaluation](#) Newsletter. This is the first edition of a biannual initiative with which TWG I aims to celebrate practitioners' achievements, feature their work, and present advancements on methodologies and tools supporting gender responsive and gender transformative evaluation.

We want this newsletter to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and practice among us who promote and advocate for gender responsive and gender transformative evaluation.

We hope you find the following pages engaging and we look forward to featuring your own experience and practices.

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Featured contribution

Evaluators as facilitators for transformative change: An example from South Asia

By Sonal Zaveri, PhD, Independent consultant, co-chair EvalGender+, Regional Coordinator GENSA (Gender and Equity Network South Asia), Founder and Board Member Community of Evaluators South Asia

Can evaluations themselves be transformative? Yes, if they are culturally responsive and empowering!

The humanitarian situation was dire in South Asia with the continued surges of COVID-19 cases in the region from 2020 to 2021, and was particularly devastating for countries in South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) with high poverty rates, inadequate health systems and low levels of preparedness.

While UNICEF conceptualized the evaluation – Real-Time Evaluation of Gender Integration in the UNICEF COVID-19 Response in South Asia - in May 2020, it was actually rolled out in real-time from September 2020 to September 2021, with the programmatic focus being the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Asia i.e. March 2020. At the epicentre of the evaluation was the impact of COVID-19 on gender inequalities in South Asia and UNICEF's COVID-19 response.

Based on evidence gathered from previous global health emergencies and from the incoming COVID-19 monitoring data, ROSA (Regional Office of South Asia) determined early on that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic would not be gender neutral. It was therefore imperative that the policy and programmatic responses to the pandemic

were designed, at minimum, to be gender sensitive, and ideally gender transformative. The overall **rationale** for the evaluation was to document and strengthen gender integration of the response, generate *evaluation* evidence and learning on integrating gender in humanitarian response and guide future investments both in gender in emergencies and in gender mainstreaming at the nexus of development programming.

As the evaluation lead, with another gender expert (who unfortunately had to leave mid-way) and as a member of the Global South, it was imperative for me to address gender and equity, but to do so by paying attention to cultural responsiveness as well.

Transformation does not happen in a vacuum and the evaluator too needs clarity on the process of change, who is included and who is not and how we choose tools and methods to generate evidence.

The evaluation approach was **hybrid**: developmental, learning and use-focused and while carried out by external independent consultant (myself), was conducted in a participatory manner with close engagement of the UNICEF gender programmatic and M&E staff. The evaluation approach included a **unique integration** of the feminist¹ approach and criteria (empowerment, reflective, social justice, participatory and inclusive) with the OECD/DAC criteria (effectiveness, relevance, coherence and connectedness and sustainability). The OECD/DAC criteria was useful to frame the evaluation scope excluding efficiency and impact. Equally important was generating evidence in real-time, sharing it with the country programs in a timely manner and simultaneously informing greater gender and evaluative thinking. The fast-moving unpredictable nature of Covid-19 complicated

¹ "Feminist" means "emphasizing participatory, empowering, and social justice agendas". Feminist approaches are always intersectional and include analysis

of gender, caste, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability, physical appearance, and other vulnerabilities.

the context in which the evaluation was being conducted.

Data collection tools included perception feedback surveys, semi-structured interviews, iterative/interactive peer reviews of findings and self-assessment tools (such as polls). Desk review included COVID-19 surveys and studies around the COVID-19 response. Using the “Fly in the Wall” tool, (virtual) attendance at workshops and meetings provided a deeper analytic understanding of the gender dimension across programs and strategies. *Case studies* were learning-focused and deep-dives, collaboratively with Country Offices, into selected programmatic interventions.

Four reports were generated, disseminated and lessons learned generated at each stage: i) Inception Report (October 2020), ii) Operational review (November 2020), iii) Gender Integration and Gender Effectiveness Review (June 2021) and iv) a Final Report (September 2021), which consolidates the findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations from the first three reports.

In these very difficult times of crises, the evaluation *did* generate a lot of valuable lessons that I personally feel could be meaningful for any evaluator in any part of the world working on gender and equity who wishes to be culturally responsive and transformative. I learned six important lessons as an evaluator:

1. It is really important to **demystify concepts of gender and equity** and especially the feminist or gender transformative approach to evaluation. It was important to use simple tools when working cross culturally and often in volatile situations such as the one that evolved in Afghanistan, as well as the COVID-19 devastation in all countries in the region. I found operationalizing the gender scale² was an easy way for

framing the evaluation design and also contributed to reflection and discussion once the findings were available.

2. **Innovating and adapting evaluation approaches** helps to manage a real-time evaluation with principles of social justice which are at the core of feminist thinking. The evaluation approach as mentioned earlier included a **unique, innovative integration** of the **feminist approach and criteria** into the **OECD/DAC criteria**. The evaluation approach was indubitably gender-transformative and equity driven and very intentional in its implementation to do so and to generate learning while sharing data and findings with gender specialists from the various countries in the region.
3. **Plotting transformative processes** takes time and engagement by the evaluator in a facilitator/listening role. Being immersed for over a year with the gender and evaluation team really helped me as an evaluator to gain a deeper insight.
4. **Timeliness is critical especially in crisis situations** and providing quick feedback, sharing emergent findings and facilitating learning for gendered adaptive management in a complex, dynamic pandemic, through *continuous dialogue* was key. Unless we create a common understanding, it is unlikely that the findings will be used.
5. **There is value in co-creation of tools and evaluation design**, and puts into practice the inclusive and democratic values of a feminist approach. Not only was there ownership by the gender specialists at the country and regional level, but also the co-creation was valuable for the evaluator, myself, as well for my own reflections and interpretations. This ‘evaluative empowerment’ was possible for both evaluator and

² The Gender Scale is a continuum that moves from gender discriminatory, to gender blind, to gender sensitive (targeted) to gender responsive and ideally

gender transformation that addresses structural, historical barriers to inequality.

evaluand, indicating the power of the feminist approach.

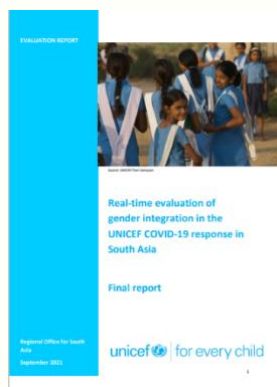
6. **Case studies** in this evaluation were a testimony to the practical application of gender frameworks, through a process of dialogue, mentoring and capacity building that enabled the stakeholders to *themselves evaluate the extent of gender and equity in a particular intervention* and most importantly, *re-design* the interventions to be more gender responsive and transformative. The conscious use of a feminist approach and its inclusive principles in the evaluation opened dialogues of how evidence can transform the lived realities of the most vulnerable in real-time and in observable ways.

My big takeaway was that the evaluation demonstrated that gender transformative approaches and frameworks can be used effectively even in a humanitarian and emergency situation where the focus is on urgent service delivery. Even in resource and time constrained settings, it is possible to ensure that gender and equity can be meaningfully included in evaluation processes and contribute to real-time change and adaptations. Ultimately, it is the ethics and values that the evaluator brings to the table that enables the safe spaces for stakeholders to own the evaluation, the evaluation process and the use of the findings.



Sonal Zaveri, PhD is an experienced evaluator, founder member and Board Member of the Community of Evaluators South Asia; founder and coordinator of GENSA, the Gender and Equity Network South Asia, co-chair of EvalGender+ and member of EvalPartners Coordination Committee. She is also a Board member of IOCE, IDEAS and the IEAc. Sonal's interests relate to how culture, rights, participation and gender intersect in evaluation practice.

Further information:



The UNICEF site also hosts [the report](#), along with the presentation and other reports developed for this evaluation.

IDEAS: Award Category: Evaluation as Transformation

In the category of Evaluation as Transformation, [Real Time Evaluation of Gender Integration in the UNICEF COVID-19 Response in South Asia](#), submitted by Dr. Sonal Dilip Zaveri received an honourable mention. <https://ideas-global.org/award-2022/award-results-2022/>

Evaluation Theory, Tools & Methods

Identifying the exercising and influencing of power using Outcome Harvesting

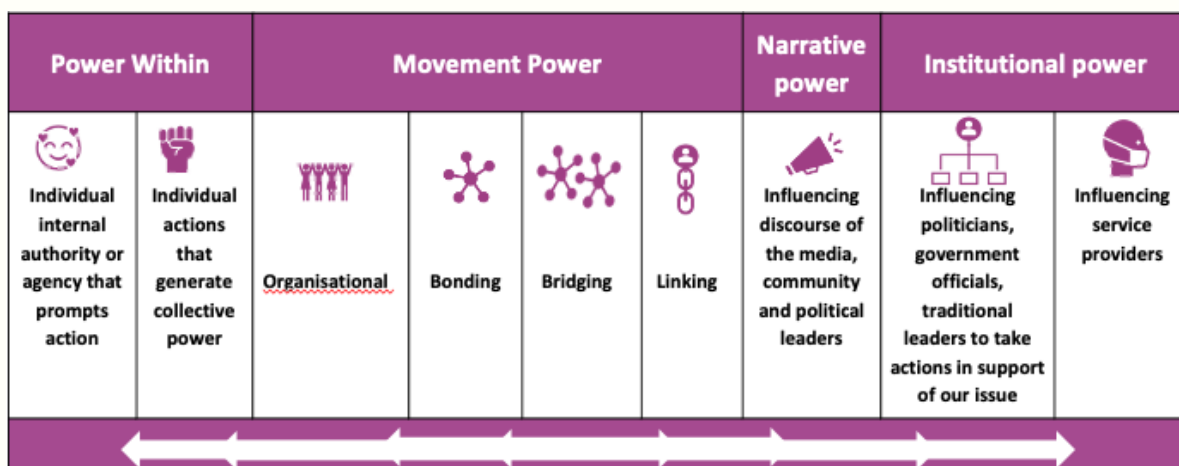
Barbara Klugman, independent consultant providing support to social justice NGOs, social movements and funders in strategy development and evaluation-for-learning

Since March 2020 I have been facilitating a peer learning process among 17 women's rights groups and their partner organisations (including local community-based initiatives, national NGOs, regional and international networks and some small funds) all funded through Comic Relief's Power Up initiative. One of the issues that has emerged repeatedly is how to assess progress in relation to women's empowerment. For example, one of the groups, working with women refugees, is supporting a group of women to use their own voices in addressing their situation as a challenge to being subject to the laws and whims of the state, as well as negative public perceptions. They have taken on the role of researchers engaging other women refugees on the impacts of Covid lockdown and on gender-based violence. They are collectively developing an agenda for advocating for their rights. Staff at the organisation are grappling with how to 'measure' the empowerment that these kinds of changes exemplify. In those discussions I suggested that they consider using an Outcomes Harvesting approach – that is that they document what women are doing differently, that could be considered signs of shifts in women's sense of self, their confidence in themselves and in their right and ability to take action. They could then explore if and in what ways the organisations' activities had contributed to these outcomes.

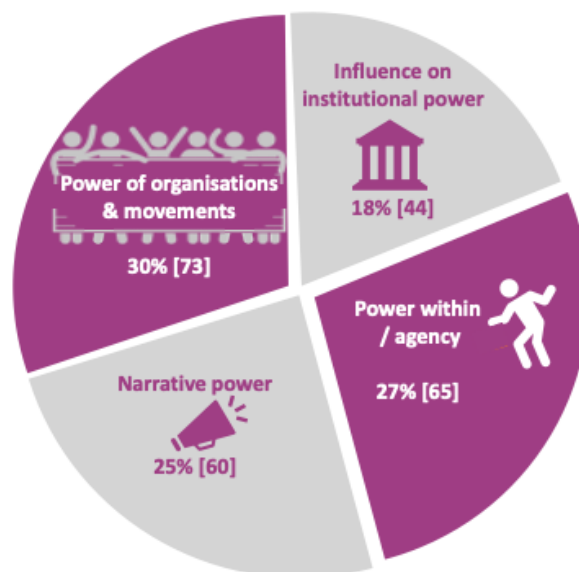
As annual reports from the first year of Power Up came in, Comic Relief asked me to review them to support the charity's learning on the question of "If and how this work is leading to women and girls involved having more power within their contexts?" This question resonated with the discussion on empowerment arising in the peer learning group so I decided to do a test run of using Outcomes Harvesting to see if it could elucidate shifts in women and girls' power. Usually when harvesting outcomes, you categorise who the social actors are who were influenced by the evaluand, and what they did differently. This allows you to understand the patterns of change, more so when you harvest over time. By categorising where changes take place you get a big picture understanding of the terrain that is being influenced – for example is it at individual, household, local, provincial, national, continental or global levels? Both the literature and my own experience as an activist turned evaluator have led me to recognise that irrespective of the topic, efforts to promote social and environmental justice are likely to influence a range of social-movement related outcomes: individuals joining organisations or movements or behaving differently within them, organisations strengthening, increased members of the public joining, or other stakeholder organisations joining or deepening alliances; and advocacy-related outcomes: shifts in media uptake or discourse, in the discourse and actions of non-profits, 'influencers', corporate or duty-bearers' discourses through others using the evaluand's arguments, data, submissions, presentations; increased participation of the evaluand or those they work with in negotiation or decision-making spaces, and actual shifts in policy, laws or through court decisions and in the implementation of these (Klugman 2011). My challenge was if I allocated outcomes from the Power Up groups' annual reports to these types of outcome categories, what would it tell me about shifts in power? I realised that they are implicit, and that applying the Outcome Harvesting methodology to the question of shifts in girls and women's power would mean interpreting the evidence provided by the outcomes accordingly. In other words, it would be about interpreting the significance of the outcomes in relation to power exercised or influenced. The 'usual' outcome categories for social change advocacy that I have noted would surface the facts of the changes

influenced by the Power Up groups. But application of a set of categories around exercising and influencing power would provide interpretive insights to support Comic Relief’s learning question.

With this in mind I reviewed the growing literature on gender and power, and on power and social movements, as well as questions of power raised by the Power Up groups, and constructed a framework that gave attention to the theories of change of most of the women’s rights groups in the Power Up cohort. The literature is described in the full report [How has work funded by Comic Relief’s Power Up programme contributed to shifts in women and girls’ power?](#) That is, that they would put significant effort into building the capacity and confidence of individual women, that is a strengthened sense of internal authority, in psychoanalytical terms, or of ‘power within’ in feminist discourse (Veneklasen and Miller 2002). The hypothesis of the groups is that this ‘process of gaining control’ (Sen 1997) would be seen in how women built their confidence, competence and motivation to join organisations or networks and to take action in support of their issues, individually and collectively, that is ‘power to’. Also usually part of women’s rights groups’ theory of change is that by strengthening organisational systems and capacities, the organisations would gain the power to attract and build constituencies or ‘associational power’ in the labour movement’s ‘power resources’ approach (Schmalz et al 2018); and to build alliances with others in their movements (referred to as ‘bonding’ social capital in the power framework) and beyond their movements (bridging or linking with those with more power) (Hodgson 2020). These are all part of building movement power, including sustaining the involvement of the individuals who have joined. This would in turn enable them to amplify their issues so that others, beyond their immediate network, would pick up on their analyses, framings of the issues, and their agendas for change, resulting in shifts in public and political discourses, or ‘narrative power’. This, plus more direct exercising of individual and movement power, whether through protest or advocacy, would influence the actions of decision-makers and decision-making institutions, whether corporate or the state, that is ‘institutional power’.



This is the power framework I applied when interpreting the interaction between each ‘contribution’ and its related outcome(s). The resultant aggregated analysis provided significant food for thought for both Comic Relief and the Power Up groups. The chart below gives overall categorisation of types of power, but in workshopping the data it was disaggregated by the categories above.



One source of satisfaction was the naming of the power of individuals, that is of their ‘empowerment’ as a relevant and meaningful dimension of their efforts and locating it within the broader process of building and then exercising power. They articulated how the influencing and exercising of power flows in and through the categories in the framework and in all directions. For example, the experience of a woman or group of women who are usually marginalised of, for the first time, having media ask them to tell their stories and state their claims, and validating them by broadcasting their stories and agendas to the world, or for the first time engaging with and being listened to by decision-makers, has knock-on effects as it further motivates those women and strengthens their activism and movements. Another source of interest to many groups was their high level of influence on institutional power, even though all countries have had Covid-19 lockdowns. Participants also valued the way that both the power framework, and the generic outcome categories, enable the naming of the small changes groups influence and hypothesise as being critical steps towards achieving their objectives, such as when a traditional leader for the first time speaks out against gender-based violence, or a parliamentarian quotes their documents in parliament.

At the end of workshopping the data, participants expressed great interest in taking forward this approach of both identifying outcomes to which they had contributed, and assessing the significance of outcomes in relation to their theories of change regarding shifting power. A number of them have started using the power framework and a couple have adapted it to suit their own contexts. Reflecting on this in their reports to Comic Relief after Year 2 of Power Up, comments included:

“The session on ‘power analysis’ strengthened our capacity to analyse the influence of power at the different levels of project implementation (local and regional)”;

“We found that the power framework has helped our thinking. It has further reinforced the need to explore how we shift power in every area of operations.” (Klugman 2022)

One of the funders supported by Power Up has revisited their reporting form, asking grantees:

- *Think about power in the context of the situation, i.e., who (individuals/groups) has power and will benefit by maintaining the situation as it is?*
- *Reflect on the specific intervention you are planning to implement, who actually has power to make the change you seek? How will you influence them? (be as specific as possible to enable an effective strategic intervention)*
- *How will your intervention contribute to the bigger picture of transforming power to advance women’s human rights?” (Hiwot Tedla, Urgent Action Fund – Africa)*

Given that 2021 marked the 20th anniversary year of Outcome Mapping (OM Learning Community 2021), which was one of the three key influences on the development of Outcome Harvesting, it is appropriate to unpack some of the thinking that underlies the approach I used. The emphasis on outcomes from ‘boundary partners’, or those that the evaluand is able to directly influence, was an early articulation of the need to distinguish between sphere of control, influence and interest, and to recognise that those seeking social change were unlikely to be able to predict changes that would be made by those beyond their immediate sphere of influence. This in turn forced a recognition that groups engaged in such efforts could not, and should not, be pushed to attribute such changes to their work alone – hence the use of the language of ‘contribution’ in outcome statements. By implication, evaluators need to bring a mindset to evaluating social change efforts, that assumes these are operating in complex systems with multiple players with multiple perspectives engaging multiple strategies, many of which may plausibly have influenced the same outcomes as the evaluand influenced. While there must be clear and verifiable evidence of what the evaluand did, and a plausible relationship between that and the outcome, it is unlikely that those activities were the only influence on the outcome. Indeed when using the method, I encourage groups to name the other players and their contributions where possible and this is a growing area of exploration in Outcome Harvesting. Schlangen and Coe’s 2019 report, *No Royal Road* offers a typology of the types of roles that a group or network may play in influencing change, enabling one to unpack the nature of their contribution – for example, were they sole actors, initiators, team players or over-the-line-getters? In this way one can understand more about the role of the evaluand’s strategies in influenced the outcome(s), relative to others. This is why the ‘significance’ part of Outcome Harvesting is important – it creates space to reflect on the relevance and value of the outcome and the evaluand’s role in it. Whereas outcome and contribution statements describe the facts of what happened, significance interprets these in relation to the initiative’s purpose and role.

In addition to Outcome Mapping as an influencer of Outcome Harvesting, complexity theory is core to the way it understands change. The approach fundamentally questions the idea that in complex systems one can predict in advance what changes a social change intervention will influence. Instead Outcome Harvesting begins by asking what changed, that is by asking about outcomes, whether intentional or unintentional, positive or negative, and only then assesses if there is a plausible relationship between the evaluand’s strategies and activities, and the outcomes. This is where it is opposite from Outcome Mapping, which in systems thinker Bob Williams’ (2021) articulation, “*assumes that you can reasonably easily direct and control resources to a specific and known result.*” He argues that “[Outcome Harvesting] *assumes the opposite – it fits more closely to a realist paradigm that resources released into a particular situation will have unknown and often unknowable consequences depending on the context and dynamics of that situation.*”

The third key influence on Outcome Harvesting as explained by its originator, Ricardo Wilson-Grau (2019), is that it is a form of utilization-focused evaluation. In other words, a cross-cutting principle of the method is to support use. Hence the importance in the case presented here, where the commissioner, Comic Relief, drew on the analysis to assess its hypothesis that funding women-led organisations to build movements, rather than to deliver specific projects, is key to enabling women and girls’ power, that is their ability to define, decide and do. It similarly provided a framework for the groups themselves to be able to explore or deepen alternative approaches to identifying, naming and reflecting on their influence, and to demonstrating this as part of their accountability both to their constituents and to their funders.

In closing, two considerations. Firstly on this report generalising the population who are the focus of Power Up, as ‘girls and women’: in reality the Power Up grantees work to strengthen the voice and influence of the range of people who are usually considered by their biology and socially constructed norms, roles and distribution of resources as ‘women’, but who suffer discrimination or prejudice not

only because they are women, but often because they are also refugees or indigenous or sex workers or poor or black or lower caste or lesbian or in some way non-conforming. Also a small proportion of resources distributed through Power Up, and of contributions and outcomes, relate to male sex workers or transgender persons.

Secondly, as evaluators, it is worth considering whether outcomes and interpretation of them from a power perspective is likely to answer primary questions about the effectiveness of women's rights movements. In my experience, the approach described here is very helpful in enabling groups to describe the changes they contributed towards, with enough specificity to be verifiable, and to consider what lessons individual outcomes raise and what lessons they can draw from the overall patterns of types of outcomes, and in this case, types of power influenced and exercised. But because challenging power is at the heart of the feminist endeavour, groups may have questions about how they navigate their own power in relation to their constituents, and in relation to their funders and others. So in addition to harvesting outcomes, they may find it useful to conduct a principles-focused evaluation (Patton 2018) for example, to understand to what extent their constituents, or their staff and teams, experience them as practising their principles in the ways they do their work their data-gathering, reflection, learning and adaptation.



Barbara Klugman provides freelance support to social justice NGOs, social movements and funders in strategy development and evaluation-for-learning. She also facilitates two peer learning initiatives, one with women's rights funders and organisations from across the globe and another with evaluators of leadership programmes based in South Africa. She brings together, overlapping with each other, over 40 years of experience as a social justice and women's rights activist and academic, 17 as a funder, 10 as an evaluator. She has published extensively on the theory and practice of conducting, training for, and evaluating policy advocacy, as well as on analysing and addressing gender and rights in health research, policy, activism and communications. In the 1980s she was an anti-apartheid and women's rights activist lecturing in Social Anthropology at Wits University. In the 1990s she directed the Women's Health Project at the School of Public Health, Wits University, which facilitated national consultation and mobilisation contributing towards women's health policy changes in the new democracy. From 2003-2009 she ran the Ford Foundation's international sexual health and rights portfolio from New York after which she started her freelance practice from Johannesburg, South Africa. In December 2017, she completed a six-year tenure on the board of the Urgent Action Fund-Africa for Women's Rights and in 2018 joined the board of the Global Fund for Community Foundations. Current clients include Comic Relief, the African Women's Development Fund, WIEGO, the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership, Gender at Work and Ground Work.

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Food for thought

What do your leadership competencies have to do with gender and evaluation?

By Blanka Bellak, PhD, is Director of Leadership Associates s.r.o., a leadership development and consulting company.

Imagine a hypothetical scenario: A consultancy conducts a large-scale evaluation of a major humanitarian or development intervention program. The experienced evaluators in the consultancy have been trained to conduct highly sophisticated research and the data suggest some uncomfortable findings. Now what?

Chances are that the consultancy will deliver a cautiously worded report that tiptoes around the most uncomfortable findings. This may be, in part, because the evaluators believe that ruffling feathers of the client who might potentially order their next evaluation from you just doesn't make (economic) sense. Perhaps they worry that communicating negative findings directly will affect their prospects for a follow-up job, or perhaps they believe that nothing will change anyway. But more importantly, the evaluators may feel trapped in these "fool's choices" simply because they do not know how to communicate uncomfortable findings effectively.

In the last decade or so professionals involved in evaluation have become more knowledgeable and the technical quality of evaluations has improved overall, mainly thanks to easily accessible professional development opportunities. But too often these courses and programmes focused rather narrowly on the methodological and accountability aspects of evaluations. They did not prepare professionals for taking a deep-dive into analysing inequalities; and for communicating their findings persuasively and for advocating effectively for change.

Yet without these competencies, evaluations will not be able to drive the transformative change that gender and diversity advocates wish to see. In other words: if the people in the hypothetical consultancy from our scenario do not have the practical, embodied skills to navigate the ethical issues and integrity, if they are not willing or able to hold uncomfortable conversations or if they lack the ability to create spaces where communicating evaluation results lead to real change, then evaluation as an instrument of change is missing out on its potential to drive progress and positively impact the well-being of project beneficiaries.

Reflecting on more than 15 years of engagement in international development evaluation, I am convinced that there is a need for capacity development in the areas of personal leadership, communication and facilitation competencies. Evaluators and evaluation managers need to be equipped with skills to communicate evaluation findings and recommendations in a way that is likely to lead to sustainable positive changes in the way programmes are designed and implemented.

In particular, evaluators and evaluation managers need to have the courage, integrity and skills to recognize and navigate the broader organizational and cultural settings and dynamics. They need to have the integrity and courage to engage in high-stakes conversations that involve conflicting views and values and do so in a way that nurtures relationships and constructive interactions with others. Ideally, they should be equipped with skills to create and nurture participatory and collaborative spaces within organizations in which collective knowledge can develop and empowerment can happen.

Research clearly shows that at the heart of well-performing organizations are people willing and able to hold crucial conversations. And that when crucial conversations don't

happen, accountability and overall performance suffer.

Over the past 15 years, I often observed how conversations about gender related or other 'sensitive' results turned emotional and controversial. No wonder. After all, not all of us are well prepared to navigate sensitive topics and gender is often one of them.

When we are exchanging on sensitive topics, chances are that our conversations will get emotional and we will be challenged to deal with our emotions and instinctive reactions. Many people experience such conversations as unpleasant and difficult. But if we are to see the fruits of evaluations, evaluators and evaluation managers need the courage and skills to step into disagreement and turn disagreement into a dialogue for improved relationships and results.

Know what you want to happen

In my experience, the most important ingredients of successful crucial conversations are going in with the right motive and staying focused on what we want to achieve. For me this starts with careful preparation during which I clarify for myself what I don't want to happen - for myself, for the other, and for our relationship, and what we do want to happen - for myself, for the other, and for our relationship.

Move to both / and thinking

What helps me is moving from 'either/or' thinking towards 'both/and' framework. Sometimes, people confuse the notion of staying focused on what we want with the inability to be creative and flexible. In fact, it's the opposite. If the motivation is maintaining constructive relationships and acting in service of gender equality, diversity and integration, then it helps us ground the conversation.

Many crucial conversations do not happen because people believe that if they do bring up a sensitive topic, they will damage their relationship with the client and with that their reputation or chance for follow-up business. Sometimes, people believe that bringing up an issue would not change anything anyway, so they keep silent.

When I notice this kind of binary, 'either / or' thinking, I make a conscious shift beyond it. I intentionally search for wider, more inclusive options. I reflect on how I can bring up the salient issue and at the same time ensure that my relationship with my counterpart will not suffer and in a way that would lead to a follow-up.

Learn and practice in safe environments

This is not easy, but it is possible. I have repeatedly observed that there are colleagues out there who are able to hold a high-stakes conversation in a way that solves problems and builds relationships. Whenever I identified them, I did my best to learn from them and then I practiced with my friends, family and colleagues. And if you would like to learn more about how to become a Jedi of crucial conversations, join [Leadership Associates](#) for one of practical [online workshops](#) or leadership development programmes.

The evaluators from the hypothetical consultancy I mentioned earlier would be happier, and much more impactful if they signed up, too!



Blanka Bellak, PhD, is an international development practitioner and leader with 20 years of experience in the UN, OSCE, civil society, management consulting and think-tanks. In 2017 Dr. Bellak founded Leadership Associates, a consultancy company providing services in organizational change management, leadership development, results-based management and evaluation services; and capacity development. For Leadership Associates Dr. Bellak designs and implements individual and group interventions on leadership development, conflict resolution, capacity and organizational

development. She specializes in neuroscience-based approaches that facilitate personal transformations. Between May 2014 and May 2017 Dr. Bellak served as the Director of the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, a UNESCO award-winning training and research institute on peace and conflict. Dr. Bellak has authored numerous evaluation reports and published books, articles and policy briefs with leading universities (Harvard, Oxford) and think-tanks (CEPS, Oxford Analytica). She can be reached at blanka.bellak@leadership.associates

Spotlight on IMPACT

Transforming Investment Metrics: Using Voice and Storytelling to Support Deeper Social Change

By Impactmapper, a blog originally published on February 28, [here](#).

To attract support and investment, organizations typically must report on their social impact. However, too often, impact reporting and communication processes become basic accountability exercises filled with numbers and short-term thinking devoid of voices from communities and what a real social change process looks like.

Why?

To put it simply, philanthropic and impact investments are too often made through a linear and time-bound approach. While we want to see big bold changes, our processes for investment largely require short-term targets and quick growth. This creates a system where resources are allocated more heavily toward solving surface-level issues, mostly related to outputs, and distracts from funding the deeper social change processes that are required. Take the example of racial discrimination in the US. A centuries-long struggle for equality has been underway, driven and supported by racial justice movements and activists' deeper work of social normative change over generations. This work is critical, and requires substantial investment and support from a long-term perspective given the scale of the problem of racism in the US.

What is needed?

We invest in social impact and movements like Black Lives Matter, women's movements, climate justice activists, because we want to address these complex and deep-rooted societal problems, but we need to be realistic. Organizations set out to create big changes but these changes take longer than a quarter or a few fiscal years to achieve. Social impact measurement and reporting is a powerful tool that can not only support and keep organizations' accountable, but also enable us to make better decisions. Impact tracking tools and metrics can help you, but when used incorrectly, they can hurt you too. In its current form, the short-term thinking attached to funding these organizations receive has led to short-term change measurement, which has brought us to our current state of short-term thinking.

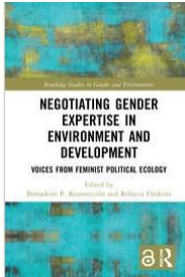
We must transform the current impact measurement paradigm. Over the next few weeks, we will be releasing a series of blogs on the importance of using stories and storytelling to build impact databases and metrics, with real use cases from diverse organizations around the world to support this transformation using methodology and technology.

Impact Data Chats

ImpactMapper is pleased to launch our Impact Data Chat series! Each month, we will hold an Impact Data Chat for people interested in the philanthropic, non-profit, investment and corporate sectors to share ideas and lessons learned. Come ready to share concrete innovations and experiences that you have related to strong impact tracking for social justice. You can also bring your questions to the group and our moderators and participants will share their advice. After the event, we will compile a list of resources that were shared during the conversation to support learning and action in meaningful impact tracking. If you'd like to learn more about impact tracking services or software, set up a [demo with our founder](#) or sign up for ImpactMapper newsletter: <http://ow.ly/Xd5950E2r0H>.

Reader's Corner

A reading list from TWG I members that we would like to bring to your attention in this issue of the newsletter are:



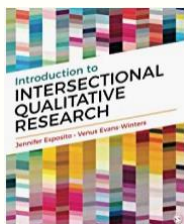
Bernadette P. Resurrección, Rebecca Elmhirst (Eds) (2021) [Negotiating Gender Expertise in Environment and Development](#). Routledge

This book casts a light on the daily struggles and achievements of ‘gender experts’ working in environment and development organisations, where they are charged with advancing gender equality and social equity and aligning this with visions of sustainable development.

Developed through a series of conversations convened by the book’s editors with leading practitioners from research, advocacy and donor organisations, this text explores the ways gender professionals – specialists and experts, researchers, organizational focal points – deal with personal, power-laden realities associated with navigating gender in everyday practice. In turn, wider questions of epistemology and hierarchies of situated knowledges are examined, where gender analysis is brought into fields defined as largely techno-scientific, positivist and managerialist. Drawing on insights from feminist political ecology and feminist science, technology and society studies, the authors and their collaborators reveal and reflect upon strategies that serve to mute epistemological boundaries and enable small changes to be carved out that on occasions open up promising and alternative pathways for an equitable future.

This book will be of great relevance to scholars and practitioners with an interest in environment and development, science and technology, and gender and women’s studies more broadly.

The Open Access version of this book, available at <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781351175180>, has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 license.



[Jennifer Esposito](#) - Georgia State University, USA, [Venus Evans-Winters](#), [Introduction to Intersectional Qualitative Research | SAGE Publications Inc.](#)

Introduction to Intersectional Qualitative Research, by Jennifer Esposito and Venus Evans-Winters, introduces students and new researchers to the basic aspects of qualitative research including research design, data collection, and analysis, in a way that allows intersectional concerns to be infused throughout the research process.

Esposito and Evans-Winters infuse their combined forty years of experience conducting and teaching intersectional qualitative research in this landmark book, the first of its kind to address intersectionality and qualitative research jointly for audiences new to both. The book’s premise is that race and gender matter, and that racism and sexism are institutionalized in all aspects of life, including research. Each chapter opens with a vignette about a struggling researcher emphasizing that reflecting on your mistakes is an important part of learning. Discussion questions at the end of each chapter help instructors generate dialogue in class or in groups. Introduction to Intersectional Qualitative Research makes those identities and structures central to the task of qualitative study.

No Open Access version of this book, available to purchase via various channels.

ON AIR – what you may have missed?

A list of webinars that you may have missed and which we would like to bring to your attention.



Here is a recording from ImpactMapper February webinar on [Getting More of Your Storytelling Data](#)



Here is a recording from APEA [Coffee break: Steps to ensure gender responsive evaluation during COVID 19 Pandemic](#)



Here is a recording from EvalForward and EvalGender+, bringing together experts and practitioners to look into the application of gender responsive and feminist: [Good practices in Gender-Responsive Evaluation for feeding the world.](#)

Upcoming Events



Impact Data Chats for people interested in the philanthropic, non-profit, investment and corporate sectors to share ideas and lessons learned. Register for the next chat on **May 3, 2022** Register [here](#).



[Leadership Development Workshops](#) offered by [Leadership Associates](#) Every first Monday in a calendar month (**on 4 April, on 2 May, on 6 June**), **starting at 16:30 UTC**, Leadership Associates offers a 2-hour online workshop on practical strategies, tips and tricks for everyday leadership. There are 10 discounted places for our community - you can book your place at a special discounted price with this coupon 'LAWITHLOVE'. Places will be given on a first-come, first-serve basis.



[EvalForward Talks: Becoming an evaluation professional: tips and tricks for the journey](#). During this EvalForward Talks session, emerging evaluators will share their journey and engage with the audience on issues such as career paths, evaluators' skills and professional challenges encountered. Thursday 31 March at 2pm CET (Rome/Johannesburg time). Register [here](#).



[Overview of Community-Based Evaluation: Evaluating Sustainable Development Goals for Local Impact](#), taking place on Fri, April 1, 2022 at 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM CEST. Register [here](#).

This webinar is part one of the series. It will provide an overview of community-based evaluation and how it can be used to localize the sustainable development goals. A community-based evaluation approach begins with the work organizations or communities are doing on the ground. No prior knowledge of the SDGs is necessary.



[Laying the Foundation in Community-Based Evaluation: Evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals for Local Impact](#) taking place on Fri, April 22, 2022 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM CEST. Register [here](#).

This webinar is part two of the series. In this webinar, we share how to implement phase one of community-based evaluation. This includes: 1) Identifying stakeholders and building trusting relationships; 2) Identifying assumptions and clarifying roles and responsibilities; 3) Highlighting your theory of change; and 4) Identifying the evaluation purpose. A community-based evaluation approach begins with the work organizations or communities are doing on the ground. No prior knowledge of the SDGs is necessary.



[The role of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in evaluation](#) taking place on Wed 11 May 2022 at 17:00 – 18:30 CEST. Register [here](#)

Although monitoring and evaluation is often thought of as objective, it too can be influenced by these biases. There is increasing recognition that the way data is collected and used can be misrepresentative, exclusionary, and further disadvantage marginalised groups.

Working Group Update

As a working group we have been busy with preparing for the [EES Conference in June](#), which will take place in Copenhagen this year. TWG I is co-creating a few sessions and we will make sure you mark it once the conference agenda is known.



Our GEKIWIKI, an initiative done in cooperation with RMDR, is undergoing maintenance and a new website will be launched in June so please stayed tuned! We promise a more user-friendly interface.

For the ones who are not aware of our GEKIWIKI project, here you will find resources containing information on legal instruments and relevant international standards of particular importance to women's human rights and gender equality, including CEDAW and other foundation laying documents and treaties. You will also find a living list of publications, tools and manuals related to gender-responsive evaluation. On a separate site, you find a collection of past webinar related to gender, intersectionality, evaluation methodologies and tools, and more.

Another section is listing various evaluation reports or links to platforms with evaluation reports and last but not least there is a dedicated thematic expertise section showcasing studies and evaluations from various sectors and mainstreaming gender.

Membership & Contributions

If you are interested in joining our group, please become a member of the European Evaluation Society, you can do so via this [link](#).

Do you want to contribute to the newsletter by sharing your publications, events, or courses, or do you have an article that you consider relevant to share and raise discussion around? Please feel free to send an email to pnovakova@rmdr.eu and we will do our best to include your contribution in our next email update from the Gender & Evaluation working group.

Acknowledgement

Thank you to all contributors to this issue, we value your insights that you decided to share with us as a community of practitioners.

Special thanks you goes to: Sonal Zaveri, PhD; Barbara Klugman; Blanka Bellak, PhD; Karin Kohlweg; Alex Pittman & Tianna Nand

Also, a big thank you to Lauren Weiss and the EES Secretariat for editing and all the work that went into making and sharing this newsletter with you all.