



Editor's Note

Rights Based M&E Taking Root in Africa

After two exceptionally informative and educative training workshops on gender and human rights in Monitoring and Evaluation, a clear picture is emerging from the silhouette of rights based M&E in Africa, at least for me, and hopefully for all those who attended the trainings; or is it?

Looking at the two workshops, it is amazing how we in the M&E fraternity - or rather those who claim to be in this field - have been going about our business without including a vital ingredient of the recipe: Gender and human rights principles.

The purpose of the AGDEN FF project, which has been running for close to two years, is to sprinkle gender and human rights into the pot of monitoring and evaluation in Africa. Towards this end, two training workshops have already been held - the first in Johannesburg, South Africa in August last year and the most recent in Nairobi last month.

We bring you the talking points of the workshop and excerpts of interviews with some of the participants, who I must say, were over the moon with what was on offer.

Finally, we bring you interesting updates on new developments within the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) and other pertinent M&E news across the globe.

Enjoy!

Alfred



AfrEA President, Dr Florence Etta (Left), H.E. Professor Judith Bahemuka (centre) and renowned gender activist in Kenya, Ms Betty Murungi during the participatory M&E workshop held from 14th June to 16th June, 2010 in Nairobi

A cross-section of M&E professionals and practitioners in Africa joined their gender and human rights counterparts to propel an emerging wave that aims to integrate gender and human rights principles in monitoring and evaluation in the continent.

The professionals, practitioners and activists drawn from an array of Civil Society Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations and the private sector from across the continent converged at the Fairview Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya for a gender equality and rights based participatory M&E workshop held from 14th June to 16th June, 2010.

This was the second such meeting under the auspices of the Africa Gender and Development Evaluators Network (AGDEN) Ford Foundation project; and what combustion of ideas it turned out to be!

An intensive three-day training on human rights and gender punctuated by heated discussions and ingenious activities around the theme of the workshop makes it one of the most memorable workshops in recent times. The workshop was officially opened by Ford Foundation's Programme Officer, Dr Susan Kaaria. The opening day and ceremonies were graced by eminent personalities.

Continued pg 2

Continued from pg 1

Ms Betty Murungi renowned gender activist and H.E. Professor Judith Bahemuka were in attendance. Judith Bahemuka, Professor of Sociology and UNESCO Chair (UoN) holder, gave the keynote address which set the tone for the rest of the discussions, highlighting the fact that AGDEN had created a paradigm shift with its work on gender, development and M&E.

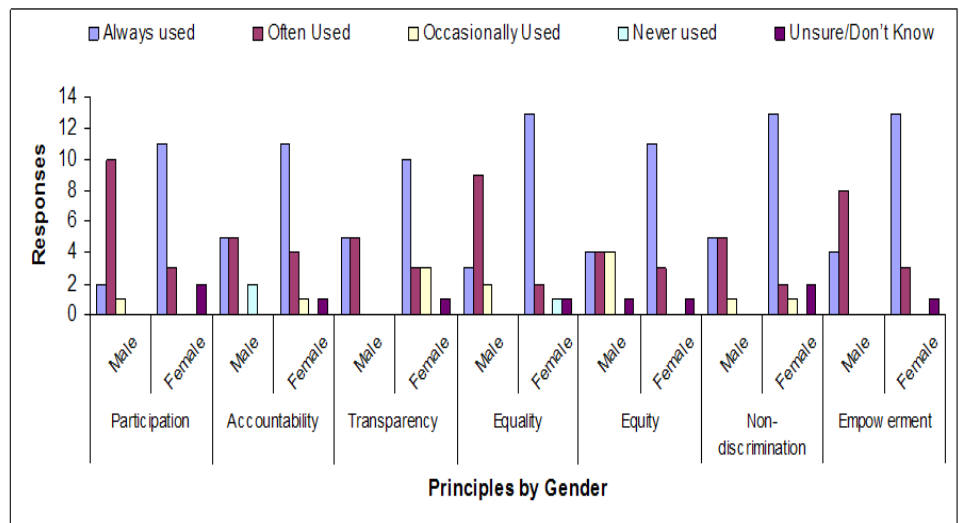
Dr Kaaria reiterated Ford Foundation's commitment to support gender and human rights initiatives in Africa, particularly in Monitoring and Evaluation.

Participants were taken through Key concepts of human rights and global rights instruments and their application in project development, planning as well as Implementation; gender equality,

An intensive three-day training on human rights and gender punctuated by heated discussions and ingenious activities around the theme of the workshop makes it one of the most memorable workshops in recent times

empowerment and development; and application of key concepts in project development, planning and implementation. Just like the previous workshop in Johannesburg, participatory action research was conducted among the participants that yielded interesting results.

For example, it emerged that although concepts/notions of gender & development, rights based approach and participatory monitoring and evaluation are often mentioned in strategic plans, they were rarely implemented.



A graph depicting how often participants applied key principles of participation, accountability, transparency, equality, equity, non-discrimination and empowerment. From the above graph, it appears that more women applied the principles compared to their male counterparts.

This could either mean that participants used other people (consultants) to plan their programmes or did not fully understand these concepts.

Meanwhile, it was found that more women than men reportedly applied concepts or notions of gender & development, rights based approach and participatory monitoring and evaluation in planning their programmes or projects.

This could be attributed to the fact that more women have undergone training than men. It was also evident that most M&E practitioners often use the concepts in planning without necessarily understanding them.

With regard to principles of participation-accountability, transparency, equality, equity, non-discrimination and empowerment - the findings reflected those obtained during a similar survey of participants who attended the Johannesburg workshop last August.

Although most of the participants thought they used the key principles in their planning, further discussions indicated otherwise. For example, accountability mostly focused on donors and not project beneficiaries. From the findings, it appears that though the key principles of participation have almost become cliches in the field of development programming, a significant number of practitioners do not fully understand how to apply them.

it emerged that although concepts/notions of gender & development, rights based approach and participatory monitoring and evaluation are often mentioned in strategic plans, they were rarely implemented

In the next edition of AGDENews, we publish further research findings pertaining to the practice of M&E in Africa.

Great platform for sharing knowledge and experiences

Chikumbutzo Ngosi - Malawi

The workshop was great and informative; It was a great platform for sharing knowledge, experiences, especially how we can integrate the gender, and the human rights approach into the different programs that we are implementing. Most importantly, I think it was a good platform to clarify most of the misconceptions that do exist within the human rights team and even human rights family.



What excited me most was the whole idea of the participation which was well demonstrated by the facilitators especially how to apply it in our day to day activities.

The workshop was very important and enlightening especially the manner in which facilitators were able to demonstrate key principles in gender and human rights and how to apply them in project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. For me, the lesson learned is: "Hey this is something that I also have to apply in my work while working with the communities."

I think there was a lot of content but the time was so limited. Most of the time the facilitators were forced to rush through because the time was not enough. If it were possible, it would have been nice to either reduce the content or increase the number of days to make it more effective. Otherwise the content was excellent and very relevant. The facilitators were knowledgeable and engaging.

The workshop brought out our diversity

Nermine Wally – Egypt

I am a member of the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), so this workshop is very relevant to the kind of work and activities that we carry out within AfrEA.

One of the highlights of the training is the close linkages that the trainers have drawn on the human rights and gender mainstreaming, and looking at gender from human rights approach and at the same time integrating that to the kind of work that we do in evaluation.

Another very strong highlight that came out of this workshop is the diversity that our continent brings to the table; the different experiences and practices, the opportunities and the challenges that we face on both the field and our

programmes while designing and putting them into practice.



I think one of the topics that stood out was the role of national structures and institutions in putting the gender issues on top of the national agenda and confronting the challenges that come up after legislation is passed.

However, though legislation is important, you need to have activists, support from partners and donors. Finally, you need to be very sensitive to the communities you are working with.

I had to unlearn so as to learn again

Michael Illesanmi – Nigeria

I work for Communications For Change (CFC), an NGO based in Lagos Nigeria as the program manager in charge of editorial and research, this workshop has been really important to me, it has been an eye opener to how things should be done, and it is really timely and relevant, because I have just come on board and so I have been looking for a training workshop or course to develop my M&E skills.



Our organisation is transiting from its formal model of contracting research to actually doing it in house; or at

least having an expert monitoring and evaluation to help us with some of these issues.

The most important part was the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME). It is really something that one has to think about when designing the program.

Also, I thought I was knowledgeable on issues of gender and human rights and it has turned out that I don't know anything and that is where the conflict arose.

I had to unlearn so that I can learn again, but it has been a great experience, it has been quite challenging and tasking and I really believe it is what I need. I thank all the facilitators and participants for their cooperation and commitment.

Evaluation Society of Kenya Unveiled

It is now official the Evaluation Society of Kenya is the new home for the Monitoring and Evaluation professionals and practitioners in Kenya. The new outfit was unveiled during a meeting held at the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (MED) offices of the Ministry of Planning & National Development in Nairobi on July 9, 2010. The following are the officers of the ESK caretaker committee:

Chairperson: Julius Nyangaga
Vice Chair: Rekha Shori
Secretary: Jennifer Mutua
Assistant Secretary: Afram Pete
Treasurer: Makali Mulu
Ass. Treasurer: Steve Mogere
Member: James Mwanzia

The Society is yet to be formally registered. In the meantime and in order to register ESK and steer forward with its objectives, an interim Care taker Committee was formed. The committee will guide and coordinate ESK activities until formal elections are held. Along with the Caretaker Committee, four Sub-Committees/working groups were formed to steer the affairs of the society.

Ethiopian Evaluation Association Established

There is a new kid on the block! The newly formed Ethiopian Evaluation Association is requesting all Ethiopian professionals in the Theory-Based Evaluation community to join the association and other colleagues to share their experiences. The association is set to play a role in encouraging the development and publications of high quality evaluation practice, research and theory development based on Ethiopian experience and expertise.

For more information please contact the secretariat at eeva2000@hotmail.com or fasikak@yahoo.com

University to Host AfrEA?

When the Institute for Policy Alternatives (IPA) in Accra Ghana reversed its initial offer to host AfrEA in May AfrEA could not afford the high cost, discussions were commenced with a number of other potential hosts. Last month, the Institute of African Studies of the University of Ghana, Legon- Accra came closer to saying yes to hosting AfrEA for an initial 12-month period. The agreement is waiting for the Vice Chancellor's seal of approval. AfrEA has been operating virtually since 2007. This agreement, when concluded will bring to an end the wholly virtual phase in the life of the 10-year old institution marking a new beginning; one that we all look forward to with huge expectations, hopes and dreams.

Change of Hands in AfrEA

AfrEA has a new 'Acting' Secretary. At the end of July, the resignation of the first elected Secretary of the Association, Benita Williams (South Africa), took effect. The Board unanimously selected Nermine Wally, a member of the Board to act in this position until such a time when the election for a replacement can be conducted. The election will be publicised on the AfrEA list. Do watch out for more information in this regard.

AfrEA Welcomes Project Manager

In July, Tina Asante-Apeatu accepted the position of Project Manager with AfrEA's Institutional Strengthening Project. The 12-month Project is being supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. The resources provided supported the strategic planning exercise which came to a head in January 2010 with a workshop in Accra Ghana. The Strategic plan is close to completion.

Are you member of AfrEA? Have you declared your task team membership yet? Join one today! Email info@afrea.org

AfrEA to Publish Newsletter

AfrEA with funds from the Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation is gearing to publish its maiden newsletter volume in August, 2010. We hear that it shall have both English and French editions and it promises to be breathtaking. The project under whose wings the newsletter is being published is managed by members of the Information and Communications Task Team.

The European Evaluation Society Conference

Under the over-reaching theme "Evaluation in the Public Interest: Participation, Politics and Policy" the European Evaluation Society has almost concluded plans for its Biennial Conference. This event will be hosted in the beautiful city of Prague in Czech Republic, between 6 and 8 October 2010. The event will comprise 2 days of professional development workshops, 4 – 5 October 2010, followed by 2.5 days of the main conference. AGDEN will be offering a one-day workshop on Gender & Rights Based Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation; one of 25 on offer at the conference. The conference will have a combination of plenary sessions and five streams of parallel sessions that may take the form of paper presentations, panel discussions or roundtables. This conference will be one of the major international evaluation events of the year 2010 and should not be missed. It offers the opportunity to meet colleagues in the international field of Evaluation.

Editorial Board

Managing Editor: Dr Florence Etta
 Editor: Alfred Oduor
 Technical Editor: Justin Mochama
 Editorial Advisor: Harry Hare