PATHS TO THE FUTURE OF EVALUATION: CONTRIBUTION, LEADERSHIP, RENEWAL

The Role of Evaluation:

Ensuring that No One is Left Behind
AEA Democracy & Governance TIG

Denise Baer, PhD
2018-2019 DG TIG Chair
Director of Evaluation, CIPE
dbaer@cipe.org @PoliticsDrB

CIPE

Presidential Strand Challenge

IF our role as evaluators is to increase our society's capacity, both international and national, to make better decisions based on credible evidence –

and to leave no-one behind!

How do we start the conversation to assess & appreciate the contribution of evaluation to society, consider current societal issues and where we need to bring leadership to ensure the renewal of our profession?

Democracy and Governance
Topical Interest Group

AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION

MISSION: Provide a forum and community of support for the practice of evaluation of democracy and governance.

The founders who worked with the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy were practitioners who work in developing contexts, but the kind of work we do has relevance to and draws upon research in developed countries as well.

EVALUATION CHALLENGE: Our work often occurs in the context of transitioning political systems, and places with limited and constrained political space,

Values, SDGs and Reflecting on Evaluation

	ARE THESE POSITIONS THE ONLY ONES?	
EVALUATOR ROLE	Is it POSSIBLE to separate evaluations and politics?	Is it DESIRABLE to separate evaluations and politics?
VALUE-NEUTRAL EVALUATOR	YES	YES
VALUE-SENSITIVE EVALUATOR	Provisional YES • In providing information • Not fully when providing judgements	Provisional YES • In providing information
VALUE-CRITICAL EVALUATOR	NO	NO

- Is Evaluation a SCIENCE or a PRACTICE?
- Is Equity a HUMAN RIGHTS issue or is there a BUSINESS CASE for inclusion?
- Are we talking about VALUES or STANDARDS or BOTH for our work?

What is Democracy & Democracy Promotion in DG Practice?

An array of approaches that advance freedom and dignity by assisting governments and citizens to establish, consolidate and protect democratic institutions, processes, and values, including participatory and accountable governance, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights, independent media, and the free flow of information.

- Democracy is not an ENDSTATE – it is an ORGANIC PROCESS
- Democracy is a VALUE and requires equity of opportunity

What is Governance & Good Governance Promotion in DG Practice?

Governance: A government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not.

Good Governance: Good Governance = Democratic Governance in DG Practice. Earlier work emphasized "democratic consolidation" at the REGIME level.

- Today anti-corruption projects, enhanced use of data & evidence, decentralization, inclusion and work with individual governing institutions (capacity building) in both the public, private and civil society sectors have grown in prominence to ensure "Democracies that Deliver"

DG Practice Starts With Evaluative Thinking

1. **Generative Causation** – is there overall potential to cause change?

2. **Ontological Depth** – go beneath depth of stated inputs & outputs

3. **Mechanisms** – will competing causal mechanisms affect the change?

4. **Contexts** – do we understand the local context(s)?

5. **Outcomes** – what are outcomes and how are they actually produced?

6. **Context-Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) Pattern Configurations** – do they make sense for transferable & cumulative lessons?

7. **Teacher-Learner Processes** – can we teach policy-makers, practitioners and stakeholders how to evaluable good project implementation?

8. **Open Systems** – how does changing and permeable social world affect the planned change?

- Evaluative thinking well-done is DEMOCRATIC THINKING
- But is EQUITY missing here?

DG Inclusiveness Practices & Goals

➢ *Power dynamics matter and are embedded and often invisible*
➢ *Building local evaluation capacity and ownership*
➢ *Understanding the Contexts including Rights Frameworks Where We Work.*
➢ *Taking special care in equity regarding all people including marginalized communities*
  ➢ Prioritizing conducting assessments before starting programming
  ➢ Using participatory approaches
  ➢ Building evidence through thoughtful data collection tool development and use:
  ➢ Planning ahead and leaving sufficient time.
  ➢ Making sure to ASK THE WOMEN assuming that existing data is incomplete
➢ *Educating Parliamentarians and Public Officials on Responsible Data and Evaluation Evidence.*
➢ *Working with Private Sector & Civil Society on good governance, inclusion & representative practices*

Some Recommendations & Ideas for AEA and the Global Evaluation Community of Practice

If addition to evaluating interventions, evaluation helps to define and assess the worth, merit and significance of national policies in different contexts:

➢ Work to bridge the American & Global evaluation practice divides

➢ Create a new AEA taskforce to address the role of values, science & SDGs

➢ Compile evidence on best practices – common knowledge platform

➢ Add accountability to affected populations to our standards

➢ Strengthen ethics role – should we evaluators be "officers of the court" or have our own "Hippocratic oath"

➢ Educate donors on learning and participatory approaches needed for inclusion and what is needed to "get to impacts"

➢ Reassess existing evaluation standards & evaluation policy to Include Equity and "Do No Harm" approaches.

➢ Address the "Tricky Triangle" of the Independent Evaluator Role to Ensure Responsible Equity-Focused Programming and Adaptive Project Management.

Let's Start the Conversation!