Dear Feminist TIG Members,

On behalf of the Feminist TIG leadership team I would like to extend you a very warm welcome! We hope that you will join us this year in activities to further our understanding of impactful feminist evaluation; learn from each other’s best practices, successes, and failures; and strengthen our collective voice as feminist evaluators.

Ghada Jiha: Feminist Issues in Evaluation Co-Chair¹.

There are a number of ways for you to be involved:

**BECOME INVOLVED!**

Do you have recent work that stands out as particularly helpful in understanding how feminist or gender responsive evaluations have led to positive changes in people’s lives or on the environment or within organizations? Then consider the following important activities that will help to raise awareness about issues that we care deeply about as well as increasing the visibility of the Feminist Issues in Evaluation Topical Interest Group across our AEA membership. *We are looking forward to hearing from you!*

**Write a Blog Post for the Feminist TIG Blog Week on AEA 365**

Contact Ghada Jiha at ghada.jiha@gmail.com.

Feminist TIG Blog week will take place October 4th – 10th.

**Deadline: 1 September 2015**

**Write an article for the Feminist TIG Newsletter**

Contact our Newsletter Editors, Kathryn Mathes at kathryn.mathes@centerstone.org and Donna Mertens at donna.mertens@gallaudet.edu.

**Help us improve our website**

If you have suggestions on how to make our website more accessible and relevant, please contact our Webmaster, MaryFaith Mount-Cors at maryfaith@edintersect.com.

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¹ Ghada is a senior gender specialist with more than 15 years of experience in policy development, program management and evaluation. She has in-depth knowledge of gender equality and human rights-based programming in areas of governance and women’s leadership, women’s legal empowerment and access to justice, and gender equality and HIV. She has previously worked with Save the Children, the World Bank, and has been largely affiliated with UN Women since 2005. To leverage her programming experience, Ghada is keenly interested in engaging and using evaluation to generate the evidence need to improve on policies and programs to achieve gender equality and make a difference in the lives of women and girls.
Join us at the Evaluation 2015 Conference
We will be sponsoring a number of exciting sessions and hope you will attend and connect with us.

Date: November 9th – 14th, 2015
Place: Chicago, IL

Feminist Evaluation – Building a Community of Reflection and Practice in South Asia

BY: Sonal Zaveri, PhD, Secretary, Community of Evaluators South Asia & Advisor/Member of Feminist Network India

The conversations for a special focus on feminist evaluation in India enabled the launch of the project ‘Engendering Policy through Evaluation’ funded by IDRC and Ford Foundation in 2011. Ending in late 2015, it is housed at the Institute of Social Studies Trust, ISST, a premier research institute in New Delhi, India.

Believing that we need to demystify evaluation and promote feminist thought and research – the project is unusual in that it brings together evaluators, researchers, NGO practitioners and policy makers and we together work to build both a body of knowledge on gender and evaluation as well as a network and a community of practice. We have conducted capacity building workshops for practitioners on theories, frameworks, methods and tools of evaluation and contextualized evaluation in the ongoing work of these organizations, making the knowledge transfer both practical and realistic.

To encourage feminist thought in South Asia and contribute to the international discourse, small research grants are provided to conduct reflective research on evaluation. Some of the innovative work out of these grants includes a number of meta-evaluations that use a gender and equity lens to review large-scale government flagship programs on health, education and livelihood. Developing a feminist framework for meta-evaluation has offered insights into gender-responsiveness of program design, implementation as well as impact.

Among other findings, it is amply clear that the evaluation team must include an evaluator with gender expertise to ensure the use of gender transformative methodologies and nuanced gender analysis. Gender and equity in India are tightly intertwined and averages hide the presence of huge disparities. In other words, gender disaggregated data, which is mostly available, pays little attention to the program outcomes for historically excluded populations and social cleavages of caste, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion. In a complex and vast country such as India and for countries in South Asia that share similar contexts, the lack of attention to the most vulnerable excludes them from mainstream growth processes and increases the divide between haves and have-nots.

A toolkit on gendered participatory approaches to evaluation is being finalized and several publications – one on meta-evaluations using a feminist lens and the second on reflections by South Asian feminist thought leaders and practitioners is planned for publication later this year. The feminist network has reached out to evaluators belonging to other networks in the region such as the Community of Evaluators South Asia and EvalPartners and collaborated on grants, workshops and presentations at their biannual Evaluation Conclaves www.evaluationconclave.com. The project has supported participation at a number of evaluation conferences including the AEA, CES, and EES providing South Asian feminist evaluators a platform to share and learn from the wider community. In January 2013, an online community of practice on gender and evaluation open to everyone around the world was initiated, http://gendereval.ning.com/ and is going strong with 1500 members.

Our work is being recognized widely and we just concluded a workshop on ‘Evaluations for Development with Equity and Equality’ on 16th and 17th April with excellent representation from
the evaluation departments, both national and regional, of the former Planning Commission of India (now Niti Ayog). Such knowledge sharing events have not only promoted the International Year of Evaluation but also provided an opportunity to mainstream our work on gender and equity.

**Peer to Peer Collaboration Includes Focus on Gender Equity Evaluations**

*By: Donna M. Mertens, PhD, Independent Consultant, previously Gallaudet University*

A collaboration between Washington Evaluators (WE), AEA, EvalPartners, and evaluation associations in three Central Asian countries: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan was begun in December 2014 and will complete in March 2015. This collaboration has two phases. In phase one, funded for $10,000 by EvalPartners through its Peer-to-Peer (P2P) support program, Dr. Donna Mertens, former president of AEA, visited Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in December 2014 to deliver two workshops. The three-day workshop focused on helping evaluators from four countries (Russia also) develop their personal capacities in transformative mixed methods for gender- and equity-focused evaluations, an area in which Dr. Mertens is an expert.

Almost 40 persons from civil society, government, and the private sector attended this workshop, which was developed only after conducting a needs assessment of participants. For the workshop, her remarks were simultaneously translated into Russian for the benefit of participants. After the workshop, participants lighted the “evaluation torch” being used during EvalYear 2015 and carried the torch back to their own countries. You can find the final report and photos of these workshops [here](click on the "WE Final Narrative" Report document).

Phase two of this collaboration between WE and colleagues in those CIS countries is being funded for $5,000 by AEA through its International Partnership Protocol Program (IPPP). In fact, this is the very first effort being funded through this new AEA program. Four evaluation leaders from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will visit Washington, DC in March 2015 to make presentations to WE members on the state of evaluation in Central Asia. While in Washington, these leaders will also meet with WE officials and representatives of other evaluation-related institutions in the Washington, DC area to share their experiences, seek advice, and discuss possible future cooperation.

**The Heart of M&E: Strengthening Capacity for Systems-Level, Gender-Responsive Change**

*BY: Debra Prosnitz, Technical Specialist, MEASURE Evaluation, ICF International*

The heart of my monitoring and evaluation work is strengthening routine health systems and strengthening the capacity of local organizations to monitor and evaluate their programs. Integrating gender into monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacities and systems is essential to ensuring that programs address the needs of women, girls, men, boys, gender-nonconforming people, and particularly marginalized or vulnerable populations within each of these gender identities. It is also crucial that differential outcomes and impacts are assessed in evaluations; and that women, men, gender-nonconforming people, and vulnerable sub-groups are engaged in conceptualizing, implementing, and helping use and interpret data from monitoring and evaluation activities. My perspective in approaching feminist evaluation is to continually refocus using a gender lens, and to think about gender as inclusive and fluid. I believe there is an urgent need to broaden our thinking and expand advocacy efforts from an M&E perspective to go beyond just thinking about sex differentials between men and women. We need to take a more fluid and inclusive approach to gender, while also recognizing and addressing intersectionality —holding multiple identities that intersect with gender and impact vulnerability, such as race, ethnicity, and disability.
We, as feminist evaluators, have a responsibility to use evaluation to create change through action-oriented evaluation and research. Providing concrete recommendations along with the evaluation findings is key. But also who and how we engage with people throughout the evaluation and its dissemination – the process – is one means of creating change. I believe that using a gender lens means recognizing vulnerability, and this must be taken in careful consideration in developing the evaluation approach and methodologies. Conducting individual interviews with married, adolescent, women about knowledge and beliefs about HIV may be more comfortable and mitigate outside influence or threat as compared to a focus group setting. As applicable and appropriate to the context and program being evaluated, women, men, gender-nonconforming people, and vulnerable sub-groups should be consulted on evaluation questions and methods.

Evaluation questions should address needs of the donor or client, consider differential outcomes and impacts for women, men, boys, girls, and gender-nonconforming people, and also answer questions or provide information requested by the beneficiary population. The client or donor may ask if there has been a change in antenatal care attendance over the course of a program in India. A feminist evaluator will also consider if any changes in ANC attendance were different among women of different ethnicities or castes, and why or why not. How to consult with and collect data from vulnerable groups – for example, men who have sex with men in Uganda, a country that criminalizes homosexuality -- also carries important ethical obligations and requires specific skill sets. For more on these issues I recommend perusing the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) series of webinars and written guidance that address gender and equity, including Donna Mertens’ webinar on Enabling Gender-Responsive Equity-Focused Evaluations.

With USAID’s MEASURE Evaluation project I’m working with colleague Samantha Herrera on an activity where we are building on UNAIDS’s 12 Components M&E Organizational Capacity Framework to ensure that it is gender inclusive and enables countries to consider and integrate gender into their routine health information systems, or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. We are developing concrete recommendations for how to include gender within the current framework via a companion guide to the framework and illustrative gender elements that can be included in each component of the organizational capacity assessment tool.

For Component 5, a Costed M&E Work Plan, we recommend adding the following element: adequate resources are allocated and available to collect, analyze, report and use sex and age disaggregated data and other gender data. Overall our aim through this activity is to assist countries to further strengthen their health information systems by enabling them to collect, analyze, and use gender-related data, with the ultimate goal of providing information that is used to better design and target programs to improve equitable health outcomes. We see this activity as one opportunity through which countries can apply a gender lens to health programming and use routine use of this capacity assessment to institutionalize the use of a gender lens and create change.

For more information on MEASURE Evaluation’s work in gender, see http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/our-work/gender.

Attitudes towards girls’ education: Short or long-term gain?

**BY: Rita Sinorita Fierro, PhD, Independent Consultant**

In the PAGES project for Girlhub Ethiopia, in March 2014, we explored community attitudes about girls’ education. The Afar region of Ethiopia is predominantly desert; the population is predominantly Muslim and nomadic. Most Afar people live in mobile homes made of sticks, mats, and plastic covers that are gathered into a bundle when it’s time to move.

The overall evaluation was a randomized control trial that included 3000 participants. The surveys and interviews in the overall
evaluation revealed that the community had very positive attitudes towards education. When asked if children were “in school” most parents and most children, said yes. School enrollment is mandatory in Ethiopia.

A subset of 100 girls and 100 female caregivers participated in our exploratory study using SenseMaker’s mixed-method storytelling methodology. Grounded in complexity theory (Cynefin Framework), SenseMaker uses more indirect and complex response items to help identify contradictions and complexity.

Here are some:

- While 75% of girls said they were “in school” only 25% attended 5 days a week.
- While 75% participants say that education is more important than marriage to improve a girls’ life, 77% of girls and 57% of caregivers say that child marriage is a barrier to girls’ education.
- While chores (which include walking 5-10 km a day to fetch water) are listed as the biggest barrier for girls’ education (84% of girls and 82% of caregivers say so). Many participants (32%) say that the family’s beliefs about education determine whether a girl goes to school.
- When asked who benefits from a girls’ education, the camp is split. Some it benefits equally the girl, the family, and the community.

Many saw it benefitting the girl first, her family at a later date, and only minimally and in the long term, the community. This perception of long-term gain over short-term gain may explain the gap between attitudes and behavior, between school enrollment and actual attendance. If you had no water to drink today, would long-term gain drive your decisions? One of the recommendations made to PAGES was to add to the school curricula topics that provide helpful information for the family and the community in the short-term, given the challenges of the Afar region.

An infographic summary of results or the full report are available online.

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**RESOURCES & NEWS**

The Independent Evaluation Office of UN Women...  
*is pleased to share with you*

**TRANSFORM**

...*the first magazine exclusively dedicated to gender-responsive evaluation.*

Published by the Independent Evaluation Office of UN Women, it aims to communicate good practices on gender-responsive evaluations, as well as evaluation findings on what works for gender equality. The first issue of TRANSFORM presents a review of policies, systems and practices promoting gender responsive evaluation in the United Nations and national evaluation systems. You will learn how countries, voluntary organizations for professional evaluations and parliamentarians are working together to promote gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems.

- Download TRANSFORM in PDF [here](#)
- Read TRANSFORM on your computer [here](#)
Here is an important announcement from Marco Segone (Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UN Women and co-chair, EvalPartners).

Our online Gender and Evaluation community, hosted by the Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), India, will serve as the EvalGender+’s hub for knowledge sharing. Gender and Evaluation community is part of ISST’s ‘Engendering Policy through Evaluation’ Project supported by IDRC and Ford Foundation.

EvalGender+ is the new global partnership led by EvalPartners, UN Women and IOCE, to promote the demand, supply and use of Gender Responsive and Equity Focused Evaluations. 36 organizations, including 16 United Nations agencies, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation and Women’s Organizations already joined EvalGender+.

http://www.mymande.org/evalgender

Read the details at:


Visit Gender and Evaluation at: http://gendereval.ning.com/?xg_source=mg_msg_network

HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL IN CHICAGO!

Drs. Elizabeth Whitmore and Denise Seigart: Feminist TIG Long Term Members AEA 2013