



From the Evaluator General's desk

The evolution from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has injected renewed vigour into the international development world and given us food for thought in IDEV. In addition to providing indicators of sustainable impact on the environment, human rights, partnerships, equity and gender equality, we should above all now encompass the moral principle that no-one, no group and no country should be left behind.

SDG challenges are everyone's challenges. The responsibility is not limited to countries receiving official development assistance, but shared by developed and developing countries alike. In the context of the SDGs, evaluators need to adapt their methodologies to measure and compare the inequalities which trap individuals, communities and entire countries in cycles of poverty and exclusion. Even in the most advanced economies, growth has not always been inclusive. Why are some left behind and how can they escape the poverty trap?

Evaluation is acknowledged in Agenda 2030 as crucial to the follow-up and review processes for SDG progress – which will be informed by country-led evaluations ►

► and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely and reliable. Evaluators can, and should, make a real difference to SDG achievements by helping point in the right direction for investment efforts.

At IDEV we are strengthening our efforts to provide countries with the capacity to effectively evaluate their strategies at national level so that they can pursue their own sustainable development with a solid evidence base for their decisions.

Discussing the demand for capacity development in the evaluation area earlier this year with Caroline Heider, IEG Director-General, led to some good ideas. One of the ways forward is to increase resources focused on capacity-building programs. The Government of Finland is already supporting IDEV in strengthening capacity in both Ethiopia and Tanzania. But much more is necessary. Since the SDGs' need for strong M&E will not wait, ensuring close involvement of countries in our own evaluation processes – from design, through conduct to applying lessons - can also support capacity development.

The idea behind dedicating this edition of Evaluation Matters to evaluating the SDGs was to provide a gateway for development stakeholders to voice their views on how evaluation can help Africa meet its SDG objectives and for them to share suggestions of pragmatic ways forward. Authors have seized the opportunity. There is strong underlying consensus among the contributors ►

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► *that evaluators should tackle the over-arching SDG prerogative of eradicating extreme poverty. One author has chosen to share case studies in his country, Ghana, while another advocates lesson-learning from countries which have succeeded in meeting MDG challenges. From insight into water and sanitation sector development to exposing issues in leadership and methodology, we hope you enjoy the wide range of inputs to the SDG evaluation discussion in this edition of IDEV's Evaluation Matters.*

There is ample evidence that evaluations can change the trajectory of development efforts. If evaluation plays its role well, it should be able to contribute to significant progress towards achieving the SDGs by 2030.

Happy reading!

About the Evaluator General

Rakesh Nangia is the Evaluator General for Independent Development Evaluation at the African Development Bank. Prior to joining the AfDB, he spent 25 years at the World Bank, where he held several positions including Director of Strategy and Operations for the Human Development Network and Acting Vice-President for the World Bank Institute. He attended the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi and Harvard University and holds degrees in business administration and engineering.