The multiplicity of Made in Africa products deserves a complex and scientific approach to truly transform African evaluators, who use models of evaluation underpinned by an ideological perspective that does not take into consideration the African experience. This article argues that the creation of authentic Made in Africa evaluation practices requires the identification of the very nature of monitoring and evaluation and a rigorous exercise to interrogate the past, present and future. It suggests that there are four critical steps to decolonizing evaluation in Africa, namely: decolonize evaluation in Africa; evaluate existing models; research into African evaluation models; and develop African centered models in partnership with local communities.
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Key Messages

1. Made in Africa evaluation must begin with a critical decolonization of monitoring and evaluation in Africa.
2. Monitoring and evaluation in Africa should be underpinned by African voices, literature and experiences.
3. Made in Africa evaluation must challenge the very nature of the power relationship in the field of monitoring and evaluation.
4. African evaluators and evaluators serving Africa must critically examine their own bias towards the communities they are serving.
5. Made in Africa evaluation must evolve organically while recognizing institutions and communities as partners.

Introduction

Our philosophy must find its weapons in the environment and living conditions of African people. It is from those conditions that the intellectual content of our philosophy must be created. The emancipation of the African continent is the emancipation of man. This requires two aims: first, the restitution of the egalitarianism of human society, and, second, the logistic mobilization of all our resources towards the attainment of that restitution” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 78).

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) models in Africa are a direct reflection of the relationship between Africa and the Global North. This relationship is uneven and driven by power dynamics that favour knowledge and practices that are developed outside of Africa. Rather than serving as a deterrent to Made in Africa evaluation (MAE) models, this historical fact should constitute a challenge that should be met by creating evaluation models that are truly based on African values, principles and culture, and integrating political, social and economic conditions.

The MAE content and features must consider the multiple stories in Africa. The multiplicity of Made in Africa products equally deserves a complex and scientific approach to truly transform African evaluators who use models of evaluation underpinned by an ideological perspective that does not take into consideration the African experience for a liberated MAE process. Developing an authentic and holistic approach should require a method that includes four key steps that can be repeated along the process and/or also revert temporarily to eventually move forward. They include:

Step 1: Decolonize African evaluation and evaluators. This involves freeing evaluation and evaluation specialists from all the preconceived notions from the Global North;

Step 2: Research into the historical/traditional evaluation models in Africa;

Step 3: Evaluate existing models, primarily western models; and

Step 4: Develop Made in Africa models using the information from the first three steps and in partnership with local community members and other relevant stakeholders.

The following illustration outlines the four critical steps in African Evaluation:
Decolonize African evaluation and evaluators

The decolonization project is historically rooted in the struggles against slavery, colonialism and Apartheid. Decolonization as a vehicle to acknowledge the agency of African people must include the following four key components:

1. **Deconstruction and reconstruction** - The decolonization process must include a comprehensive review of the ideological foundation of current practices and knowledge all of which should be gathered, taken apart, broken up and critically examined to identify their benefits and weaknesses to the people of Africa. The deconstruction process is then followed by the reconstruction of the ideology and philosophy of evaluators and institutions using the data collected.

2. **Self-determination and social justice** - At the root of decolonization is the right and fight for self-determination and social justice. The questions to ask are: How is the current state of African evaluation hindering or supporting the right for self-determining the programs that are being evaluated? How is the evaluation process impacting the individuals that the programs serve? Does our class position impact our relationship with self-determination and social justice? These are questions that can guide the quest for self-determination in the journey for decolonization.

3. **Acknowledgment of indigenous knowledge** - This is paramount to the decolonization process. This does not mean simply acknowledging the presence of indigenous knowledge or positioning it as an add-on to internationally recognized practices. Indigenous knowledge must be recognized as an equal in the global knowledge production conversation.
4. Internationalization of indigenous experiences - This is an essential aspect of the decolonization process as it shows how local experiences can shape the current world. How do we project the experiences of people living, working and residing in the Global South as legitimate and valuable at the global stage? These experiences must not be juxtaposed to a Western analysis of development, but rather contextualized and situated in the cultural, political, geographical, historical and economic conditions of the people.

The fundamental question to address is: why does monitoring and evaluation as practiced by both African and non-African actors need decolonization? Are there universal monitoring and evaluation principles that are being employed around the world?

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The decolonization of evaluation is viewed as the restructuring of the features and curriculum of evaluation tools based on local conditions and cultural nuances. However, it should be viewed as the catalyst for the total restructuring of power dynamics in the global construction and implementation of African evaluation (Bagele, Thenjiwe, Gaotlhobogwe, & Hildah Mokgolodiuch, 2016). This process questions the very nature of monitoring and evaluation in Africa. What is the role of M&E institutions that have the power to fund or de-fund local and national initiatives? How do these organizations decolonize their analyses, views, strategies and ideologies while still meeting their core mandate? Research findings argue that to authentically develop MAE resources, both individuals and the community of evaluators must tackle the question, decolonizing knowledge production and its relationship with evaluation in Africa. "At the center of decoloniality is the idea of remaking the world such that the enslaved, colonized, and exploited peoples can regain their ontological density, voice, land, history, knowledge and power" (Ndlovu-Gatesheni, 2015, p. 23). African evaluation and evaluators must reclaim their voice, which should be a true reflection of African idiosyncrasy and not just a carbon copy of evaluation practices imported to Africa.

Evaluate existing models

Developing Made in Africa evaluations must begin with an investigation of the current and dominant M&E models in order to critically examine their origin in Africa and potential sub-field specific nuances. As pointed out by Chilisa, "Evaluation in the least indigenized approach is dominated by Western evaluation theory and practice. There is, for instance, emphasis on translating evaluation instruments to local languages and indigenizing techniques of gathering data without addressing fundamental questions on worldviews that can inform evaluation theory and practice coming from Africa" (Chilisa, 2015, p. 17).

Monitoring and evaluation research and models generally appear to be dominated by American methods and theory. The global field yields to the expertise of researchers, academics, professionals, institutions and legislation produced in the United States (Basheka & Byamugisha, 2015). It is only logical that these theories and methods carry American specific ideology that may or may not be...
effective in the African context. In a certain sense, M&E policies and vehicles promote a universal and non-political approach to evaluating international projects, national evaluation efforts and local development projects.

The evaluation of M&E programs and models must interrogate the fundamental purpose of the project under evaluation. This is all the more important as evaluation can be both a formal and informal process. However, it should be recognized that the power of the evaluation process can go beyond that of the individual administering the evaluation. “Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or program. An assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, on-going, or completed development intervention” (OECD, 2002, p. 22). The objective of the evaluation process must be based on evaluation review as it may impact the outcome of the actual evaluation.

Evaluation content and features largely depend on key actors or on the funding agency, as it is mostly the case. The stake of development projects is particularly high in the M&E arena. While the use of agency approach has brought about marked improvements, there is still room for growth. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 supported a more balanced approach towards monitoring and evaluation through the consolidation of the already emerging principles. The five principles are: ownership by the host country; aligning activities on the country’s strategies; harmonizing the different strategies and approaches; paying attention to the management of results; and mutual accountability (Colin and Stirrat, 2008). M&E can be used not only to monitor Non-Governmental Organizations, but also to transform the public sector. Some governments are using M&E to ensure that they are efficient, effective and responsive to parliament and the nation’s citizens (Porter & Goldman, 2013).

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The inclusion of multiple types of M&E institutions is important for a better understanding the landscape in a community, but also for questioning the ideology of the organizations under evaluation. Most development projects make it compulsory to include M&E in project plans and to reserve a portion of the budget for evaluation. Such actions have both positive and negative impacts. Indeed, while it is important to monitor and evaluate programs to ensure that they are reaching the intended target, it should be asked if donors request the mainstreaming of M&E and do not obstruct the objectivity of the final product at the same time. Although some international donors consider the recipients of their funding as partners, there is still a power dynamics that exists. The fear of losing funding or the need to increase funding may be a leading factor in the elaboration of reports. This critical factor needs to be scrutinized when conducting research on contemporary development models. The following questions should guide your assessment:

1. Who are the main actors? International financial institutions, government bodies, independent evaluators or evaluation organizations?
2. What ideology does the evaluator/evaluation body follow?
3. How does the said ideology impact their lens?

4. What benefits or consequences will the body face based on the evaluators' report?

5. How do theory and methods dictate the execution of the evaluation process?

6. Are theory and methods rooted in Western or African evaluation thought?

Research African evaluation models

The recent history of M&E points out that most scholars and researchers have adopted the American Evaluation Model. The most recent boost in the field or discipline that is being triggered by the school of thought can be traced to the 1990s. While we acknowledge the history of the current manifestation of monitoring and evaluation, it would be ahistorical to assert that M&E only existed in America and was not practiced by any other people. Historians will readily confess that all present manifestations of these institutions are a result of earlier attempts at evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation are not an exception to this historical fact and evolutionary rule. One must begin to question the root of monitoring and evaluation as it is currently practiced. Did monitoring and evaluation exist in African communities prior to the introduction of M&E in its current form? At this juncture of development of Made in Africa evaluation models, their pre-conceived notion of M&E forms must be shed.

Africa as the birthplace of humanity is a fact that is not disputed by historians, scholars, activists and the general population. What is commonly distorted in the African story is the evolution of “modernity” or “development”. These two markers of the modern state often dictate the contributions of women and men to the world and prescribe their power position. Africa’s history is often claimed to have started after slavery and colonialism, which presupposes that there was no history prior to those foreign interventions. This raises a critical question: What is development? “Development results from the quantitative and qualitative changes modifying the intra-social relationships as well as the relationships between society and nature; as such, it embraces all the aspects of human activity,” Sekou Toure (1978, p. 200) asserted. “We learn from dialectics that change is inherent in the very nature of things,” he continued.

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This definition by Sekou Toure suggests that monitoring and evaluation is a natural component of human development. Quantitative and qualitative changes must at the very minimum stem from an assessment of the positive and negative components of a project or institution. This notion of dialectics must also be applied to the investigation of the Made in Africa evaluation models and practices. One question of interest is if M&E is limited to international financial institutions and/or non-governmental organizations? Limiting M&E to this very narrow scope will hinder its potential to serve as a springboard for development in Africa. Monitoring and evaluation can be also used to interrogate governments, organizations, individuals and cultures.
The interrogation of non-conventional evaluation in Africa can serve as the foundation for an authentic historically and culturally relevant Made in Africa model. The contextualization of African evaluation models requires a clear understanding of African philosophy. In this field, Ubuntu stands out as the most recognized philosophy based on African culture. "Ubuntu is short for an isiXhosa proverb in Southern Africa. It comes from Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu; a person is a person through their relationship to others. Ubuntu is recognized as the African philosophy of humanism, linking the individual to the collective through ‘brotherhood’ or ‘sisterhood’. It makes a fundamental contribution to indigenous ‘ways of knowing and being’.” (Swanson, 2007, p. 55). It is through Ubuntu that African personhood can be interpreted as a key component of evaluation and monitoring. It integrates the notion of both individual and collective responsibility for governance, development, democracy, education and much more (Gnaka, 2009).

The use of the Ubuntu philosophy to situate Made in Africa evaluation will respond to the following critical question: "Whose philosophy and ideology will underpin the evaluation process and tools? It is through the notion of African personhood that the evaluator and the evaluating agency would view themselves as a mere extension of the community or project being evaluated. This humanistic approach to understanding Africa through African philosophy can ensure that African made evaluation can move beyond a rubber stamp. Ubuntu is not the only philosophy or evaluation tool that can be researched; it is an example of how the use of African philosophy, systems and institutions can strengthen the question for Made in Africa evaluation.

Develop Made in Africa Evaluation

The concept of “Made in Africa” and/or the decolonization of knowledge production is not new to the academy or to Africa. Countless well established and seasoned professional evaluators and researchers have laid the foundation for the current debates surrounding evaluation in Africa. The African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) is one of the leading voices in the struggle to ensure that evaluation in Africa reflects the culture, history and peoples of Africa.

This stage is a forward-looking and backward-facing model that evolves over time. It is also important at this junction to note that Made in Africa models are not monolithic and will have different features and practices depending on the community in which the model is operating.

The model must be built on the three previous models specifically using a decolonial mind, philosophy and practice. Evaluators, institutions and communities are expected to use their research and review existing models to construct an authentic, holistic and community-specific model that can be replicated across space and time. The MAE should include most of the following elements:

1. **Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKSs)**
   - This is the first and most important component of MAE. Creating evaluation models based on indigenous knowledge systems is the key to MAE. However, this does not mean taking wholesale the knowledge systems or cultural components that are not positively impacting the community. It is also necessary to distinguish between IKS and traditional African culture. Culture is dynamic and ever changing, as are IKSs with the difference that they evolve based on technology, politics, the
1. Economy and the relationships between humanity and the environment.

2. Localized and led by local actors - The process of ensuring that evaluations are led by local actors may seem out of reach as many evaluations are spearheaded or mandated by funding agencies and/or service providers. This can make it difficult to include local actors as partners in both the service delivery and evaluation. However, this approach will truly reflect its impact on the recipients.

3. Class dynamics - The class position of evaluators, institutions and those being served must be critically examined. Those individuals being served will generally find themselves in the “lower” class, while those serving will by virtue of their position be in the “middle/upper” class. These class positions carry certain views about the other class and these views tend to dictate how we interact.

4. Development projects are based on mutual respect, especially those that are being evaluated. This reinforces the notion of citizen participation in the development process and in policy dialogue.

In summary, it is important for Made in Africa models to become the industry standard for evaluation in Africa. It is not merely enough to have African evaluators, but a new paradigm must emerge that guides all evaluators operating in Global Africa, those in the continent and in Diaspora.

References


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