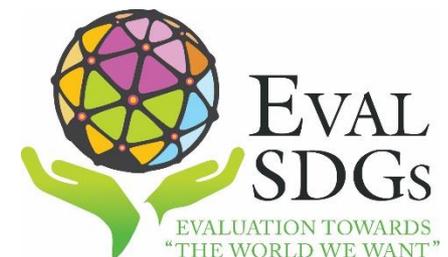


# UNICEF Evaluation Office and EVALSDGs Webinar

## Evaluation and the SDGs

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# Webinar Format

1. Administrative announcement
2. Introduction- Colin Kirk-UNICEF EO Director
3. Presentation Part 1
4. Question and Answer
5. Presentation Part 2
6. Summary of key themes- Scott Chaplowe
7. Question and Answer
8. Closing remarks

# Outline

1. The importance of the SDG evaluations
2. The unique focus of the SDG evaluations
3. Challenges
4. Opportunities for innovative evaluation
5. Promising approaches
6. What would a good SDG evaluation program tell us by 2030?

# 1. The importance of the SDG evaluations

- a. SDGs are the major international development commitment for at least the next 15 years
  - Essential to know if it works and if the money is well spent
  - Against a backdrop of many people claiming aid does not work
- b. Do the investments reach and benefit the poorest and most vulnerable groups?
- c. How could development assistance be improved:
  - a. During 2017 – 2030
  - b. After 2030

## 2. The unique focus of the SDG evaluations

- a. Universality
- b. Sustainability
- c. Complementarities among all SDGs
- d. A systems approach to understanding the SDG environment
- e. The centrality of gender equality and equity as cross-cutting themes
- f. Focus on underlying causes of inequality – not just measuring targets
- g. Participatory approaches – giving voice to vulnerable groups
- h. Focus on inclusion, equity and social justice

# 3. Challenges for the evaluations

- a. The program is huge and complex with multiple actors, objectives and programs at all levels
- b. Currently the SDG evaluation design focuses on monitoring and much less on evaluation
- c. Many people do not believe it is possible to evaluate the SDGs
- d. Most agencies focus on a particular sector. Intersectorality is very difficult to evaluate and for most agencies a low priority
- e. Top down (New York, to regions, to central government) design combined with bottom-up rhetoric

- f. Can many different kinds of organizations work together on an integrated evaluation?
- g. Vulnerability and exclusion difficult to measure
- h. Most agencies focus on results-based approaches with little attention to sustainability
- i. Gender analysis not well integrated in most evaluation programs
- f. Need for stronger learning mechanisms

# The SDG evaluation lens

1. Context and history
2. Complexity and emergence
3. Exclusion and social control
4. Intersectionality
5. Emergence
6. Trajectories of change
7. Sustainability and resilience
8. Causality: attribution and contribution

Does the evaluation community  
have the tools to address these  
broad and complex questions?

## 4. The SDG framework offers unique opportunities for innovative evaluations

- a. The SDGs Focus the world on broad questions about the effectiveness of development aid  
What works? For whom? Where? Why?  
How?
- b. Bringing together many different kinds of organization and talents
- c. Giving voice to vulnerable groups and grass-roots organizations
- d. Unique access to world-wide platforms for the dissemination and utilization of evaluation findings

# Question and Answer Session 1

- Please write your questions in the side chat bar

# 5. Promising evaluation approaches

- a. Mixed and multiple methods
- b. Theory-based approaches that incorporate:
  - Emergence
  - Unintended outcomes
- c. New approaches to case studies (QCA)
- d. First stages of a complexity-focused evaluation are being developed
- e. Trajectory analysis

- f. Gender responsive evaluation and empowerment evaluation
- g. Social exclusion and ways to identify who is excluded [“left behind”]
- h. Unintended outcomes and the analysis of secondary and tertiary outcomes [effects not identified in project design]
- i. Promising developments in systems analysis
- j. New information technology [big data, data analytics and ICTs]

# NOTES ON PROMISING EVALUATION METHODS FOR THE SDGs

Michael Bamberger

# 1. Mixed and multiple methods

- Combines data collection and analysis methods across and within disciplines
- Helps understand behavioral change, implementation processes, social control mechanisms and empowerment
- Triangulation helps strengthen validity and depth of interpretation
- The full benefits of MM requires a systematic and integrated approach where quantitative and qualitative methods are systematically integrated at all stages of the evaluation

## 2. Theory based approaches [including theory of change - TOC]

- Provides a framework for identifying key questions and defining and testing hypotheses
- Helps clarify the processes through which change is expected to occur
- Weakness of most TOC is that they do not include a rival hypothesis
- Most TOC tend to be static and are not good at studying emergence or complexity
- Important to identify potential unintended outcomes and not just test the results framework
- Should include contextual variables

# 3. New approaches to case studies

- Cases are a great tool study lived experiences and how different groups respond to, and are affected by the changes produced by the project
- Important to ensure cases are selected to be representative and that they are linked to quantitative aspects of the study
- Rigor is required in how cases are analyzed. There is a danger of “cherry-picking” where quotes are selected to prove a theory
- Ideally case should be longitudinal and not just based on a single interview

# Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) case studies

- A relatively new approach that makes it possible to use cases for analysis of causality
- Each case is considered a unique sub-system which is different from normal surveys where cases are considered identical (or similar)
- A matrix is constructed with columns to describe different attributes of each case (individual, household, group etc) and the outcome variable. This information is collected for each case and the analysis then identifies the configuration (set) of attributes required for the outcome to be present
- Useful for the analysis of complexity
- Can be used with small samples of cases (50 or less)

# 4. First stages of a complexity focused evaluation

- No well tested evaluation designs for the analysis of complexity have yet been tested and are widely available
- Bamberger, Vaessen and Raimondo (2016) propose an approach where complexity is broken down into complexity derived from:
  - The nature of the intervention
  - The context in which it operates
  - Interactions among different implementing agencies and stakeholders
  - Non-linear causality
  - Each dimension can be analyzed separately and then recombined to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of complexity

# 5. Trajectory analysis

- Program outcomes evolve over time in different ways (trajectories)
  - In some cases outcomes increase steadily over time (e.g. as more farmers get access to fertilizer, more children are immunized)
  - Sometimes outcomes increase steadily during the early years when supervision is stronger. Then they begin to decline when maintenance problems arise and are not addressed (e.g. minor irrigation programs)
  - Sometimes there is no regular pattern or there are cyclical patterns (e.g. the impacts of microcredit can fluctuate according to weather and market conditions)
- Trajectory analysis should be used to project the most likely trajectory as this should affect the timing of the evaluation

# 6. Gender responsive evaluation and empowerment evaluation

- Many tools for gender equality and empowerment have been developed and tested.
- However, they are not yet widely used in most agencies and their implementation still faces economic, methodological, ideological and political challenges.
- The resource references provide an overview of the available tools and analytical techniques.

# 7. Social exclusion analysis – who is left behind?

- Quantitative models are now being used by agencies such as WHO, FAO and UNICEF to identify interactions among the different economic, geographic, demographic, ethnic, gender and age factors that determine who is excluded from access to different services
- More use needs to be made of ethnographic and other qualitative methods to identify the voiceless and to locate the excluded groups
- Many groups are invisible because they do not appear in directories and sampling frames used for many evaluations.

# 8. Unintended outcomes and secondary and tertiary effects

- Many evaluations only try to measure whether intended (primary) project outcomes, defined in the results framework have been achieved.
- Most widely-used evaluation designs only assess intended outcomes and fail to identify unintended outcomes. This is also true for RCTs
- Evaluations should also assess;
  - secondary outcomes (other effects on the target population)
  - Tertiary outcomes on wide population groups

# 9. Promising developments in systems analysis

- Systems analysis uses models and maps to help understand the complex interactions among the different components of the system within which a program operates
- Useful tools include
  - Systems map [maps to show all of the agencies or groups within the program system and the formal and informal linkages among them. Dynamic system maps can analyze how these linkages change over time]
  - Sociometric analysis [identifying communication patterns, power and friendship among different groups within a community or population]

# 10. New information technology

- ICT, Big Data and smart Data Analytics provide new ways to reduce the cost and time required for the collection, analysis and dissemination of monitoring and evaluation
- Resources such as satellite images and remote sensors, analysis of social media (e.g. twitter), analysis of electronic financial transactions (ATM), audio and video images and phone and radio communications – dramatically increase the range of data available
- Evaluation offices have been slow to take-up the use of these sources.

## 6. What would a good SDG evaluation program look like in 2030?

- Addressing the following questions:
  - How have people's lives been affected by the SDGs?
  - Was the massive investment of resources worthwhile?
  - Who has benefited and who has not? Who has been left behind?
  - What lessons can we learn from the multi-sectoral approach
  - What is the value-added of a multi-sectoral approach?

# Useful resources

- Bamberger and Segone (2011) *How to design and manage equity-focused evaluations*. UNICEF Available at: [http://evalpartners.org/sites/default/files/EWP5 Equity focused evaluations.pdf](http://evalpartners.org/sites/default/files/EWP5_Equity_focused_evaluations.pdf)
- Bamberger, M; Segone, M. and Tateossian, F (2016) *Evaluating the sustainable development goals within a “no-one left behind” lens through equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations*. Eval Gender, UN Women, UNICEF, UNEG. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/29216199/Evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals with a No one left behind lens through equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations](https://www.academia.edu/29216199/Evaluating_the_Sustainable_Development_Goals_with_a_No_one_left_behind_lens_through_equity-focused_and_gender-responsive_evaluations)
- Bamberger, Vaessen and Raimondo (2016) *Dealing with complexity in development evaluation*. Sage Publications.

**Good luck with your  
SDG evaluations!**

**Thank you**

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# Summary of key themes

# Question and Answer Session 2

- Please write your questions in the side chat bar

# Closing Remarks

