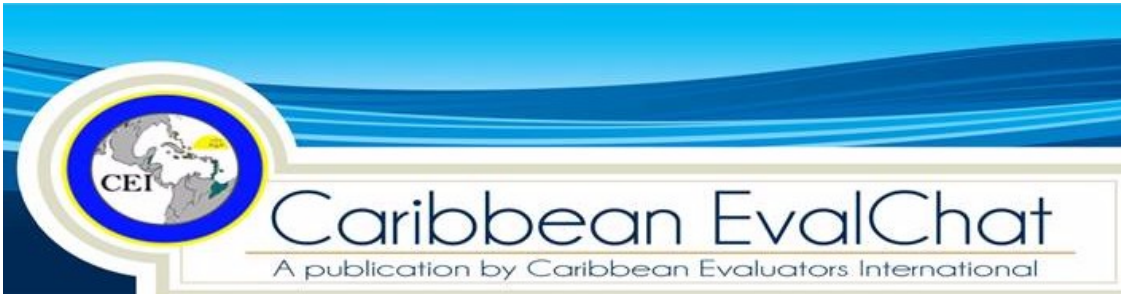


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Volume 3, Number 3  
Winter 2019



## Message from the President

Valerie Gordon

In this  
edition..

Message  
from the  
President

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Report on  
the IDEAS  
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and 3rd  
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Conference  
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n through  
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After Prague

The period since our last newsletter has been quite eventful. Preparations for, and participation in the IDEAS Global Assembly dominated our time and efforts, and for those of us privileged to attend, the event did not disappoint. The period of September 30 to October 4 was full of interesting and informative exchanges and learning, through the pre-conference workshops and the conference itself. The Assembly differed from other evaluation conferences, as this one was focused largely on international development and had a very diverse and global flavor. Both the workshop and the conference sessions were of very high quality overall, and the team took full advantage of the occasion, diving into the activities with gusto. We were gratified by the positive feedback to the presentations delivered by our team; the chapter we prepared alongside our Pacific colleagues for the publication “Evaluation for Transformation Change - Opportunities and challenges for the Sustainable Development Goals” --which was launched in a special session of the Conference; and the informative and stimulating **Joint Caribbean and Pacific Perspectives – Dialogue between Caribbean and Pacific delegates.**

In this edition, we endeavor to reflect some of the experiences of the Global Assembly through a report of the conference; a summary of the presentation delivered by immediate Past President Lennise Baptiste at the conference; and some of my own reflections of the event. We are also happy to include an article on Interviewing as part of evaluation exercises by our colleague, Nadini Persaud.

The period was marked by our continued delivery of professional development offerings, including the webinar “Introduction to Logic Modelling” delivered by Alan Mackie in September, and “Introduction to the Nuts and Bolts of Quantitative Evaluation” by Nadini Persaud, in October. Both webinars were well received, and in response to feedback from participants, more in-depth treatment of both these

considerations on what's next

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Upcoming Events

topics is being planned for the New Year. Unfortunately, November's webinar was postponed, but will also be offered in the New Year.

Activities by national chapters of the CEI have been promising, with the Barbados VOPE being launched in October, thanks to the efforts of Country lead Marcia Brandon, ably supported by Vice President Susan Branker Greene, and Nadini Persaud who was instrumental in securing the facilities at the Cave Hill for the inaugural event. We congratulate the group and pledge our full support for their continued growth and strengthening. The Jamaica VOPE, is also to be congratulated for commencing work in their designated sub committees, and we look forward to supporting the efforts as well as having the first overall CEI subcommittee meetings very early in the New Year.

It is hard to believe that the Board is the end of its first year in office. We have had a number of successes as well as a few setbacks, but are nonetheless pleased with our overall progress. I want to thank the Board and Executive Committee for their stellar participation and work over the period. One change that we oversaw was the smooth transition of the mantle of Director of Marketing and Communication, from Jean Claude Louis to Jan Voordouw in October. The situation in Haiti had made it increasingly difficult for our colleague to function in this very demanding role. As a result, he relinquished the position; however, unwilling to lose him entirely, the Board requested that he continue in the role of Media liaison and focal point for Haiti. We hope for membership growth in that country, once some normalcy (for which we ardently pray) is restored.

Jan came on board just in time to finalise the brochure for our Strategic Plan and this will shortly be available online. We thank him for the energy which he has applied to this task as well as updating our public relations materials and developing our marketing and promotion strategy.

There is much to be done in the remaining days of this year, but as we set about finalizing activities and winding down, I want to take the opportunity, on behalf of myself and the entire Board, to wish you all a Happy and Peaceful holiday season when it comes.



## Notes from the Editor

Ivan Somlai

As the information herein indicates, our executive and some members have been deeply involved in promoting CEI efforts through international *fora*, namely the IDEAS Global Assembly together with the Third International Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development; as well as the inauguration

of the Voluntary Organization of Professional Evaluators (VOPE) in Barbados.

Such opportunities play an additional role by bringing attention to CEI activities and to the sometimes unique evaluation contexts within the Caribbean. Along with the training facilitated by our Director, Training & Professional Development Alan Mackie, these events have surely contributed to our collective growth and more tangible interaction among our membership.

As this edition of Eval Chat is being published later than planned, the timing is just right to wish my fellow CEI members a most memorable, joyful and peaceful Christmas, and blessings of good health, happiness and peace for Chanukkah. May harmony prevail amongst all!

## Report on the IDEAS Global Assembly and Third International Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development



*L-R: Arlene Bailey, Lennise Baptiste, IDEAS President Rob van den Berg, Valerie Gordon, Una McPherson*



*Presenters and participants in the Caribbean Pacific Dialogue, IDEAS Global Assembly*



*CEI team with Michael Quinn Patton. L-R : Valerie Gordon, Una McPherson, Michael Quinn Patton, Arlene Bailey, Anne Bramble, Lennise Baptiste*



*I-R Arlene Bailey, Valerie Gordon, Una McPherson, IOCE President Adeline Sibanda, Lennise Baptiste*

The 2019 IDEAS Global Assembly and Third International Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development was held September 30 - October 4, 2019 in Prague, Czech Republic.

Members of the CEI who benefitted from sponsorship after submitting proposals were Lennise Baptiste, Valerie Gordon and Arlene Bailey. In addition, Una McPherson, longtime member of IDEAS and Ann Bramble also a presenter, and formerly Acting Head of the Independent Office of Evaluation at the

Caribbean Development Bank, rounded out the CEI contingent.

The event was set in the context of the need for transformational change to address the current global crises and the imperative to meet the SDGs, as well as the "need for exchanges between the north and south so as to ensure valuing and fostering diversity and inclusion".<sup>1</sup> The need for evaluation to assume a holistic perspective to addressing complex problems was highlighted through various conference themes which included "transformational change drivers of sustainability, adaptation to climate change, as well as state of the art approaches and methodologies for evaluation".<sup>2</sup>

The Global Assembly included 2 days of preconference workshops, September 30 - October 1; and the conference sessions October 2 - 4, 2019. An estimated 300 persons from all over the world were in attendance.

### Evaluation for Transformational Change Award

A special feature of the event was the first ever **Evaluation for Transformational Change Award** which recognized Evaluations which demonstrated Credibility, Innovation and Influence. The winners were as follows :<sup>3</sup>

**\*Credibility: Evaluation of the CARD and UNICEF Cash Transfer Pilot Project for Pregnant Women and Children in Cambodia**, Team Leader, Ashish Mukherjee

**\*Innovation: Mid Term Evaluation of the Global Climate Partnership Foundation**, Team leader: Antonia Dickman

**\*Influence: Transformational Change in Climate Investment Fund**, Team Leader: Sam McPherson, ITAD

### CEI Participation

The CEI delivered presentations in the session **Evaluation for transformative change (Country Perspectives. Lennise Baptiste presented on the topic: UNESCO Framework for Action (UFA) and the Commonwealth Curriculum Framework (CCF) for the SDGs complementary or conflicting?** These are two high-level tools which countries are being encouraged to use to implement and report on the progress they make towards the achievement of the SDGs. The other presentation, prepared by Valerie Gordon and Arlene Bailey was **Evaluation in the Caribbean: An overview of M&E ecosystems, stakeholders and activities towards transformative change.** It reflected on the various evaluation activities being undertaken in the Caribbean region, the constraints facing M&E and some recommendations for addressing these. It identified the role of the CEI as an agent of change in the evaluation culture of the region.

The team also participated in the Pacific Caribbean dialogue which was specifically established to foster exchanges on experiences between the regions. The session was facilitated by the Government of New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT); and the South Pacific Commission (SPC). The exchange highlighted the areas of similarity between the regions including the stark impact of climate change on the development of particularly the small island states of the region.

### Keynote speeches

The keynote speeches were thought-provoking and elicited a significant amount of interest among our group and others. Among these were:

**\*Sustainability, equity and the politics of transformation: opportunities and challenges for evaluation**, Melissa Leach, Director of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK

**\*Transforming Evaluation to Evaluate Transformation: Blue Marble Evaluation Principles** Michael Quinn Patton, Director of Utilization Focused Evaluation (Minnesota, US)

**\*Evaluation for transformative change: experiences from the Global South**, Adeline Sibanda, President of the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) and independent evaluator, Zimbabwe/South Africa.

### Main takeaways

The workshops and conference were informative, inspirational and challenging. Among the main takeaways were:

- The new and emerging roles of the Evaluator in a world of seemingly intractable global issues, and a mandate to work toward the SDGs. There was a strong urging that evaluators need to have more “Skin in the game”—*i.e.* not be totally independent, but rather more engaged in the outcomes of the evaluation, improving the odds that the recommendations are taken on board.
- The discussions were truly international in nature, and the discourse on the “complex” which hinder efforts to address climate change and harder still the efforts to evaluate those initiatives, were of high quality.
- The opinions and new approaches being pursued by various thought leaders forced the recognition that, as evaluators, we have to be constantly reviewing our skill sets and be proactive in filling emerging gaps. This profession is in many ways multidisciplinary or “transdisciplinary”, and each of us has to have a professional development plan, and keep abreast of emerging needs so we can take advantage of opportunities to contribute to innovation. Among the skills sets that I believe will have primacy in coming years is data visualization; innovative methods of communicating evaluation findings to more diverse stakeholders; more systems thinking to deal with complex developmental issues.

The final Keynote speech delivered by Michael Quinn Patton, was particularly memorable, as he entertained us with his evaluation songs and educated participants on his most recent Blue Marble Evaluation approach. In the past he introduced us to Developmental Evaluation; Principle Based Evaluation; and Utilization Focused Evaluation. His presentation this year described his Blue Marble evaluation which provides a framework for developing, adapting, and evaluating major systems change initiatives involving complex networks of stakeholders. His recently launched book “Blue Marble Evaluation: Premise and Principles” expands on the approach.

### CEI Follow up

This will include:

- Review and discuss the different ways in which the Commitments made under the Prague declaration can be supported by our network, particularly no 5. **Support for professionalization and capacity development** - which advocates a transformational change of evaluation itself; support for efforts to bring knowledge and capacities to commissioners, evaluators, development partners and the diversity of stakeholders who can and do contribute to the practice of development evaluation throughout the world; support for the development of an international evaluation academy to advance professionalization and promote the interaction between science, research and evaluation to enrich our profession and our efforts to support evaluation capacity at all levels.
- Continue to lobby for an international evaluation meeting to be held in the Caribbean in 2021
- Urge participation in the various Eval Partners networks e.g. EvalYouth, EvalIndigenous. Eval Earth, Eval SDGS, and also the new IDEAS Thematic Interest Group (ITIG) for “building learning and sharing knowledge about evaluation of transformational changes and for the identification of skills required in their application”. 4

1 Rob Van Den Berg, President IDEAS

2Juha Uitto, Director, IEO, Global Environment Facility

3 <https://2019.global-assembly.org/announcement/>

4 Proposed ITIG: Transformative Change and Transformative Evaluation; contacts -

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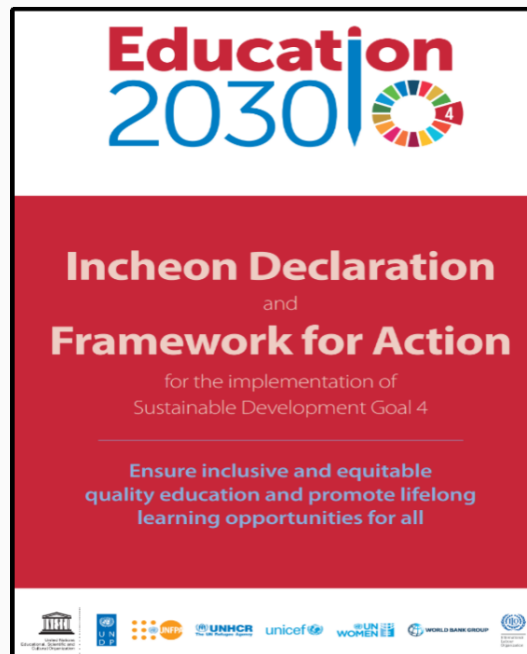
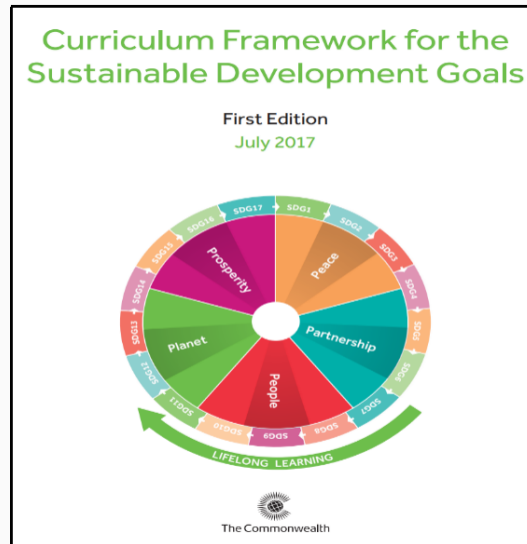
# Transformation through education: UNESCO Framework for Action (UFA) and the Commonwealth Curriculum Framework (CCF) for the SDGs complementary or conflicting?



by Lennise Baptiste, PhD,

The commitment of country leaders to achieve the Vision 2030 agenda, has not resulted in countries producing documented plans for the systematic implementation of the practices to achieve the targets identified to realise the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). Progress reports which give details about the results achieved at the country level have been questioned by in-country stakeholders, donor agencies and evaluators, especially when multisectoral approaches are uncommon, and the numbers can be ‘guesstimates’ projected from individual projects or country initiatives. This article takes a brief look at the Commonwealth Curriculum Framework (CCF) for the SDG implementation, and the UNESCO Framework for Action which also proffers implementation strategies.

The centrality of education was explained in the CCF as a key determinant of social and economic transformation, and an essential precursor to peace, tolerance and sustainability. The CCF focused on knowledge and understanding, skills and applications, attitudes and values when SDG content is integrated into national curricula, for the early childhood, primary, secondary, technical/vocational, tertiary and adult levels. The CCF focused on how education could be employed to achieve the SDG targets across the SDG goals. The UNESCO Framework proffered that education can accelerate progress towards the achievement of all the SDGs and therefore should be part of the strategies to achieve each of them. The UFA focused the SDG targets for Goal 4,



In the area of **Introduction and Visibility** – The UFA was launched in May 2015 at World Education Forum, co-convened by UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UNWomen and UNHCR. The UFA was adopted by 184 UNESCO Member Sites on November 4, 2015 in Paris after in-depth, wide-ranging, country-driven consultations. The framework was developed by the Education For All Steering

Committee convened by UNESCO. The CCF was developed by experts selected from Commonwealth Accredited Organisations, participants in the Curriculum Framework Technical Meetings, the Ministries and High Commissions of Bahamas, Fiji, Kenya, Malaysia and South Africa. While Ministers and attendees received copies of the document at the meeting of Ministers of Education in Fiji in 2017, the CCF did not have a formal launch. At the meeting of Ministers of Education in 2015, there was agreement that education would play a pivotal role in achieving the SDGs and the development of the CCF was the product of that agreement. However, there was greater country ownership of the UFA than the CCF.

On the key issue of **implementation**, the UFA proposed means of implementation and strategies, structure for coordinating, governing, monitoring, follow-up and reviewing global education efforts, examining financing options and proposing partnerships but did not provide countries with pathways to identify, design or develop activities which would to realise the Vision 2020 agenda for SDG 4: Quality Education. The CCF is non-prescriptive and countries are expected to adapt and customize the content and make it relevant to their context for the 17 SDGs. An excerpt of the CCF relevant to SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy (p. 42) is seen below. The inclusion of attitudes and values is novel for a curriculum but it can help facilitators in training programmes to focus more sharply on the behaviour change needed.

	Skills and Applications	Attitudes and Values
<b>Primary education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act as an energy monitor (including in the classroom).</li> <li>Identification and practice of actions and choices for sustainable and safe living.</li> <li>Uses of alternative energy at home, school and in the wider community (e.g. solar energy for cooking and heating).</li> <li>Application of simple calculations and analysis of different energy choices and uses (e.g. efficiency and cost analysis).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmentally sound ethics.</li> <li>Commitment to energy conservation.</li> <li>Daily living habits and behaviours for sustainable living.</li> <li>Consumptive behavioural change.</li> <li>Reuse items such as plastic bags, glass jars, plastic containers, envelopes and paper.</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of implications of lifestyle choices, and knowledge to make informed choices as energy users.</li> <li>Linking human actions and climate change (e.g. assessment of energy consumption using ecological footprint calculations).</li> <li>Analysis of per capita energy usage and variation across the world.</li> <li>Ability to assess appropriateness of energy choices in different contexts.</li> <li>Design, develop and testing of alternative energy sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Belief in anthropogenic climate change, and the responsibility of humans to address climate change and associated issues.</li> <li>Personal responsibility for sustainable life choices.</li> <li>Universal access to safe and reliable energy.</li> <li>Collective action and co-operation to drive change.</li> <li>Reduce the overall amount of electricity packaging and petrol used.</li> </ul>

The UFA proffers a report template for reporting on the high level targets.

- A (systematic) method to track and report on implementation
- Country priorities (financial) are aligned – other development issues
- Country personnel had the capacity and time to reframe the curricula
- Authority to reframe the curricula limited to pre-school and primary
- Required collaboration, co-operation across Ministries and sectors
- Stakeholder engagement - how

In most countries reframing of the curricula is easiest at the early childhood and primary levels, and countries may not have persons with the capacity to reframe the curricula. Reform of curricula would need stakeholder buy-in across sectors, and collaboration and cooperation across Ministries. With every new intervention the development priorities of countries are determined by their financial resources. If the implementation is not systematic, the ability to track and report on results will be hampered and the reports not indicative of the ‘true picture’ of progress with the implementation of the SDGs.

This author views the two frameworks as complementary and not conflicting. The UFA focuses on the

high-level targets while the CCF identifies the content associated with achieving each target. Among countries there are inequities with respect to access to resources, and even if they accept the frameworks transformation through education will be delayed.

## After Prague - considerations on what's next following the IDEAS 2019 Conference

As the closing session of the IDEAS Global Assembly 2019 wrapped up on that Friday afternoon in Prague, my mind became preoccupied with how to assimilate and integrate all these new learnings into future work. Was all of this talk of Transformational Evaluation just a new catch phrase?.. the ramblings of intellectuals who spend too much time in dark rooms or ivory towers?... or an urgent clarion call to evaluators and development practitioners, that given the dire state of global issues, new thinking and approaches have to be applied with a spirit of full-on activism by us in our work?.

Transformation refers to change that is radical, revolutionary – whether in individuals, institutions, societies, countries, (eco)systems, or the planet as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Discussions at the Conference highlighted the fact that transformational change is required for the achievement of the SDGs, and necessitates consideration of how evaluation must be transformed to evaluate transformation.

But how to transform evaluation? Evaluators are used to being required to work according to carefully, or sometimes carelessly crafted Terms of Reference (TORs), with a focus on accountability rather than assessing or influencing transformational elements in the development intervention. Invariably, evaluation TORs are guided by the OECD- DAC (Development Assistance Committee) Evaluation criteria,<sup>2</sup>(Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability) which, according to transformation evaluation advocates, do not effectively ask the important questions necessary to identify/ galvanise/ stimulate/ initiate the transformations necessary to solving complex problems identified in various development interventions.

The OECD - DAC criteria have been around since 1991 when they were established by edict of the members of the OECD seeking a standardised tool, or set of guidelines, to guide evaluations of development projects. The criteria have been consistently used by international development partners (IDPs) and public sector agencies to fashion TORs for the evaluations they commission. Several IDPs have published their own Evaluation Guidelines / Manuals/ Methodologies based on interpretations of the questions under the 5 criteria. Too often however, commissioners of evaluations have plucked questions, seemingly willy-nilly, from their guidebooks to add to evaluation questions in the TORs. The embattled evaluator then sets about answering questions which may or may not capture the essence of the intervention's critical issues. The evaluation therefore becomes a mechanical exercise and typically when the report is prepared and submitted, it is the funding agency, commissioners of the evaluation and the implementing agency that receive it. It is uncommon that stakeholders, particularly the beneficiaries receive information on the results of the evaluation. At best, they may have received a debriefing by the evaluator if time, and the TORs, allowed.

The absence of civic voices in evaluations undermine the value of the exercise particularly when these voices belong to the very targets of the development interventions, and those groups whose behaviours the intervention is intended to influence. As has been pointed out by the UNFPA, which actively promotes the Human Rights Based Approach to Development,<sup>3</sup> the word "beneficiary" is an inaccurate and rather deprecatory term as it connotes passive recipients of goods and services from a benefactor; in fact these actors, targeted by the intervention are "rights holders"<sup>4</sup> with rights and opinions as important as those of other actors involved in, and impacted by the intervention.

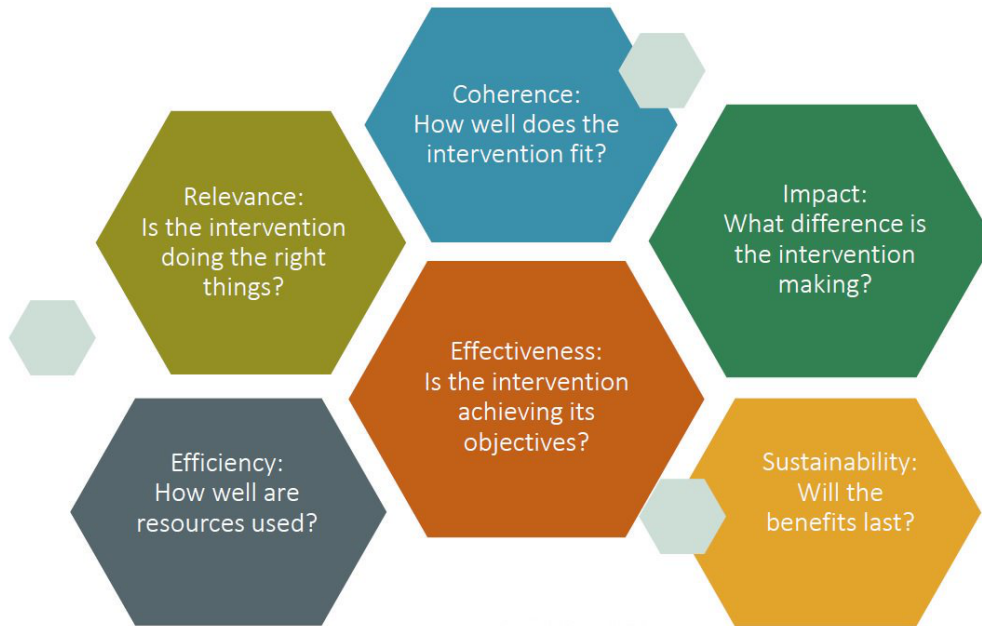
But change is in the air. In early 2018, the DAC Network on Development Evaluation started a process to



adapt the DAC Evaluation Criteria to the 2030 Agenda and the new development landscape. The various consultations with diverse practitioner groups and stakeholders have resulted in:

- New and improved definitions of the existing 5 criteria
- A new criterion - Coherence - added to better capture synergies, linkages, partnership dynamics, and complexity.
- Supporting better evaluation analysis of Equity, gender equality
- Focus on interlinkages and transformation
- Supporting use

## EVALUATION CRITERIA



OECD-DAC, 2019

The revised criteria very recently became available (December, 2019) in the document **Better Criteria for Better Evaluation, Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use**.<sup>6</sup> The new elements will go far toward urging increased thoughtfulness and rigor on the part of evaluators to ensure effective contextualisation of evaluations, give more voice to rights holders, and better evaluate interventions aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as set out in Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. It will be up to the evaluation community to contribute to their relevance, utility and applicability in our work.

1. <http://zendaofir.com/evaluation-for-transformation-part-1/>
2. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>
3. A Human Rights-Based Approach to development (HRBA) is a practical framework that integrates human rights and dignity into the plans and processes of development. A HRBA strives to place the human being at the center of decision-making over their community and resources, and it creates or rethinks activities designed to fight poverty.
4. <https://www.unfpa.org/human-rights-based-approach>
5. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>
6. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>

## Interviews - Important Considerations



Nadini Persaud, PhD, CPA, CGA, Lecturer in Project Evaluation, Department of Management Studies, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados



Interviews are a commonly used method for data collection and practically every evaluation will require some interviews. Interviews can be of two types: structured (i.e., formal) or unstructured (i.e., informal). The success of an interview is highly contingent on the interviewer's skills. Like other data collection methods, data credibility and quality are important. This means that all data collection personnel must have good interviewing skills. Thus, if several persons are involved with data collection for the same evaluation, training is definitely needed to ensure that all interviews are conducted in a similar manner. This is particularly important when unstructured interviews are being conducted, but is also a good idea when structured interviews with sensitive questions are being done.

Depending on the nature of the data collection, it may also be necessary to match interviewers with interviewees of similar demographics (e.g., sex, age, culture), so that the respondents can feel more comfortable and at ease. This will help to build rapport and the conversation may be more candid. Matching interviewers with interviewees is particularly important when sensitive interviews are being conducted.

A good interviewer needs to have several important attributes. First and foremost is professionalism. Others important attributes include good social skills, a pleasant demeanor and personality, sensitivity and empathy, and the ability to remain neutral, and be an effective listener and observer (Persaud, 2010; Persaud, in press; Persaud, Devonish, & Persaud, 2018). These skills are important to develop and build rapport and gain the trust of the interviewee.

- **Professionalism** of course must be the hallmark of an evaluator. Professionalism embodies all the important characteristics aforementioned. Additionally, it also embodies appropriate dress, punctuality, and the general manner in which the interviewer conducts him/her self during the interview.
- **Good social skills** are critical in data collection. Interviewers must be "friendly, sensitive, and genuinely interested in their participants" (Persaud, Devonish, & Persaud, 2018, p. 129). A pleasant tone of voice will generally encourage dialogue and contribute to the success of the interview. In contrast, if an interviewer comes across as being rude and/or arrogant, little will be obtained from the interview and the interviewee may even terminate the interview.
- **Impartiality and respect** are central to a successful interview. "Interviewers need to remain impartial and non-judgmental at all times" (Persaud, Devonish, & Persaud, 2018, p. 130), and be respectful of their participants or they are unlikely to gain any meaningful data.



## Are you an active listener?

### YOU ARE IF...

- You listen to replies after you speak.
- You do not interrupt when others speak.
- You try to understand what they say.
- You clarify what you hear.
- You rephrase replies to avoid misinterpretation.

- **Patience, empathy, and sensitivity** are also important since many kinds of interviews are quite sensitive in nature. Interviewers should try to not rush their participants, and should avoid the temptation to tell personal stories. This is of course different from *breaking the ice* which may be required to put the participant at ease.
- The ability to be an **effective listener and active observer** is also important. This requires much more than verbatim recording. Specifically, it requires translating the body language of the interviewee. Note that the interviewee can also observe the body language of the interviewer.
- **Building rapport** is also important to gain trust and buy-in to the interview. This may require some informal conversation on a topic that is non-controversial and unobtrusive (e.g., weather).

In conclusion, in addition to taking the above into consideration, an interviewer also needs to consider the following:

- Sequencing of questions (i.e., should be systematic/logical).
- Compliance with standard international research protocol.
- Type of interview (virtual, face-to-face).
- Venue for face-to-face interview.
- Use of open-ended vs. close-ended questions and cost implications
- How to maintain control of the interview.

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## Barbados VOPE Launched



## Barbados Voluntary Organisation of Professional Evaluators (VOPE).

# PRESS RELEASE

### CEI Barbados VOPE launched

**BRIDGETOWN, Barbados Saturday, 19 October 2019 - On Saturday, 19 October 2019** members of the Caribbean Evaluators International who are based in Barbados, held a fact-finding meeting at the UWI, Cave Hill Campus to determine the feasibility of establishing a Voluntary Organization of Professional Evaluators (VOPE) in Barbados which would also be a national chapter of the CEI. At the end of the 2 hour meeting, the consensus was that Barbados would benefit greatly from having a national VOPE, as it would promote evaluation within the national development context, thereby facilitating transparency and accountability; supporting decision making and promoting learning within a range of development initiatives

The group of 11 persons in attendance comprised practicing evaluators, students and persons interested in becoming evaluators. Valerie Gordon, CEI President, joined the meeting virtually, via zoom. In addition to bringing greetings from CEI, she also presented a very detailed and interesting outline of the work of the CEI and some highlights from the recent IDEAS Global Assembly, September 30- October 4, Prague, Czech Republic, which she attended as a part of a CEI team. One of the areas of interest for the Barbados VOPE coming out of her presentation, is the opportunity to become a part of the global Eval Youth movement which caters to evaluators under 35 years of age and /or with under 5 years experience. President Valerie shared news of the Trinidad & Tobago and the Jamaica VOPEs and their progress to date. She also shared information on membership fees and the benefits for members of the CEI.

Some of the evaluators who were present shared information on the satisfaction their work has brought them, to help projects and programme managers discover what they needed more of and/or less of and/or none of.

Mrs. Susan Branker-Greene, Vice-President, CEI, explained the importance of evaluation to development work and strongly advocated for establishing the Barbados VOPE. Dr. Nadini Persaud, lecturer in Evaluation at UWI, Cave Hill, and an evaluator herself spoke passionately about the need for us to promote a culture of evaluation, as this is a challenging issue in the region. She emphasized the link between the SDGs and evaluation. The students who attended were from her class. Dr. Marcia Brandon, Barbados VOPE lead, chaired the meeting and endorsed the need for the CEI to bring a culture of evaluation to the region, especially for the sustainable development of people and communities.

The VOPE will build structures to facilitate order and progress. The main outcomes expected are mentoring of newer practitioners by more experienced ones, and also peer mentoring, as well as team formations, networking, data-sharing, community of practice and culture development.

Barbados VOPE is set to have their Christmas gathering on December 14th, 2019.

For Further information please contact:

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🌐 <https://caribbeanevaluatorsinternational.org/>

📘 <https://www.facebook.com/CaribbeanEvaluatorsInternational/>

**#ENDS**



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## Upcoming Events



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