



## Background

Until 1999 there were few opportunities to network and share development evaluation experiences in Africa. Evaluators worked in isolation. They were seldom trained in evaluation approaches, methodology and standards, and tended to be technical specialists or management consultants who were recruited to serve as evaluation consultants, mainly for donor agencies. Although some national evaluation networks existed, they were isolated and often unable to generate the required capacities and resources to facilitate effective networking and sharing of experiences and lessons within and between African countries. Evaluation capacity building efforts were sporadic and driven by individual interests or the interests of international development aid organisations. Few attempts were made to nurture advanced level evaluation expertise, to promote training aimed at African contexts and evaluation approaches or to highlight African evaluation expertise on international platforms. Moreover, institutional and governmental demand for evaluation was considerably low; the utilization of evaluation for decision-making limited and the use of evaluation for accountability dominated mainly by accountability to donor agencies.

The African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) was founded in 1999 to address some of these challenges. It was established as an umbrella association for national evaluation associations as well as evaluators in countries without evaluation associations.

## AfrEA Goal

To promote and strengthen evaluation in Africa

## AfrEA Objectives

- To promote useful evaluations that support development in Africa.

- To encourage the development and publication of high quality evaluation practice, research and theory development based on African experiences and expertise.
- To advance the building of evaluation capacity on the continent.
- To help establish, develop and support national African evaluation associations and regional evaluation interest groups.
- To facilitate networking and information sharing on evaluation in Africa.
- To be a reference point for evaluation information relevant to Africa.
- To promote and share African evaluation perspectives and expertise at relevant regional and international forums and events.

## Highlights

- Since 1999 the number of **formal and informal national evaluation networks and associations** in Africa has increased - often established or advised with AfrEA assistance - from 6 to 18. Several more are in process. AfrEA coordinated several African contributions to the UNICEF/IOCE publication on *Creating and Developing Evaluation Organizations: Lessons Learned from Africa, Americas, Asia, Australasia & Europe* ([http://www.ioce.net/resources/case\\_studies.shtml](http://www.ioce.net/resources/case_studies.shtml)).
- AfrEA facilitated the development of the **African Evaluation Guidelines (AEG)**, adapted from the International Programme Evaluation Standards to suit African contexts. Seven African evaluation associations developed the guidelines in 2002. They were updated in September 2006 by 25 representatives from 14 evaluation associations. The

- Guidelines provide a checklist of 30 items essential for quality assurance in evaluation.
3. An AfrEA website ([www.afrea.org](http://www.afrea.org)) was established and is currently being updated. It contains *i.a.* a database with detailed skills profiles of evaluators in Africa, evaluation training materials and other evaluation resources, information about associations and networks, news and opportunities.
  4. An African evaluation information network ([afrea@yahoogroups.com](mailto:afrea@yahoogroups.com)) is operating through a listserv. It brings news and opportunities to share information, issues and queries for professional support to a growing list of several hundred subscribers from Africa and internationally (to subscribe, post a blank email to [AfrEA-subscribe@Yahoogroups.com](mailto:AfrEA-subscribe@Yahoogroups.com)).
  5. AfrEA has established funding and other forms of partnerships for its key initiatives with a total of 35 organizations, thus avoiding being beholden to one or a few selected sponsors.
  6. AfrEA has raised funds to stimulate the exposure of African evaluation specialists to international expertise. It has fully or partially sponsored more than 30 international evaluation experts to come to African evaluation events, and provided travel grants *i.a.* for:
    - 13 evaluation association leaders to the launch of the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) in Lima, Peru, in 2003. This enabled Africa to have two representatives on the IOCE Board; the AfrEA Chairperson was elected as one of the two Vice-Presidents (2003-2004). The current IOCE President is also a previous AfrEA President;
    - more than 100 African evaluators to attend the Third and Fourth AfrEA Conferences, held in Cape Town, South Africa (2004) and Niamey, Niger (2007) respectively;
    - 7 representatives to attend the annual CES conference in Canada in 2006;
    - 18 representatives to attend a workshop for evaluation association leaders in Africa in Niamey, Niger in 2007.
  7. In partnership with UNIFEM, AfrEA established a network of gender and development evaluation specialists (AGDEN) from across Africa who advise organisations and develop best practice in gender and development evaluation in Africa. Other Special Interest Groups are under consideration (e.g. in community-based evaluation, impact evaluation).
  8. AfrEA has initiated a large number of evaluation capacity building initiatives. Among others a joint UNIFEM/AfrEA workshop was held in South Africa to build Africa-wide capacity in gender and rights-based evaluation, and a roundtable in Ghana on "Understanding the Evaluation Challenge of the Paris Declaration - An African Perspective". Around 30 short courses have been organized to date in tandem with the biennial AfrEA conferences.
  9. AfrEA has represented African evaluation at a number of international forums and events, ensuring that African perspectives influence international evaluation developments. Most recently, AfrEA has delegated 5 specialists to represent Africa on the important international NONIE initiative (Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation - [www.worldbank.org/ieg/nonie/](http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/nonie/)). Two of these are now on the NONIE Steering Committee.

### **AfrEA Conferences**

**AfrEA I (1999) and II (2002), Nairobi, Kenya:** The first AfrEA conference was attended by more than 350 evaluators and development

practitioners from 35 countries; 88 papers on evaluation in Africa were presented. Michael Quinn Patton, world renowned expert in evaluation, trained the conference participants for four hours each day. The Second Conference brought together evaluators, researchers, policy makers, evaluation users and development partners from Africa, Europe, Asia, New Zealand, Colombia and the USA. Evaluation training was done by three renowned evaluation experts from New Zealand, the USA and Peru.

**AfrEA III (Dec 2004), Cape Town, South Africa:** The Public Service Commission of South Africa partnered with AfrEA in organising this conference. A total of 550 participants from 56 countries (87% from 36 countries in Africa) attended the conference with the theme *Evaluation Matters, Africa matters - Joining Forces for Democracy, Governance and Development*. Of these, 45% were women; 33% were from government; and 90% preferred English as conference language. Presentations were made in nine parallel strands, with special panels under the auspices of key partner organizations.

**AfrEA IV (Jan 2007), Niamey, Niger:** Under the theme *Evaluating Development, Developing Evaluation: A Promising Network for Africa's Future*, five parallel sessions and a number of special panel sessions were organized over three days. In spite of many logistical challenges, a total of 573 participants from 56 countries (80% from Africa) attended. Of these, 69% were Francophone and 17% from government.

**AfrEA V (Apr 2009) Cairo, Egypt:** For its fifth conference AfrEA decided to partner with the Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE) and the International Initiative on Impact Evaluation (3ie) to stimulate an interest in impact evaluation in Africa. A joint international AfrEA-NONIE-3ie Conference focusing on Impact Evaluation for Development Effectiveness will therefore be held in Cairo from 29 March -2 April 2009. Full details will be provided soon on evaluation listservs. Make sure you join [afrea@yahoogroups.com](mailto:afrea@yahoogroups.com) referenced above for further updates.

#### LIST OF PAST AFREA SPONSORS AND PARTNERS (1999-2007)

- ☛ Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)
- ☛ African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)
- ☛ African Development Bank
- ☛ Catholic Relief Services
- ☛ Canadian Institutes for Health
- ☛ Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
- ☛ CARE International
- ☛ Danish Agency for Development Assistance (DANIDA)
- ☛ Department for International Development (DFID)
- ☛ Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), South Africa
- ☛ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), South Africa
- ☛ Family Health International (FHI)
- ☛ Evalnet South Africa
- ☛ International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- ☛ International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS)
- ☛ International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)
- ☛ L'Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie
- ☛ Nelson Mandela Foundation
- ☛ NEPAD Secretariat, South Africa
- ☛ NORAD
- ☛ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ☛ OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation
- ☛ Public Service Commission (PSC), South Africa
- ☛ Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), South Africa
- ☛ UNAIDS
- ☛ UNCHS
- ☛ UNDP
- ☛ UNICEF ESARO
- ☛ UNIFEM
- ☛ University of the Free State, South Africa
- ☛ USAID through Measure Evaluation, USA
- ☛ World Bank
- ☛ World Conservation Union (IUCN)

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