

# OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION OF THE SDGs AGENDA

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# Introduction

- The inclusion of the evaluation function to the SDGs Agenda
  - Evaluation provides judgment on the relevance, appropriateness, and effectiveness of developmental interventions
- A change of course in the implementation of the Agenda
  - The course of the implementation of the Agenda is off-track
- Challenges within the Review and Follow-up process of the implemented initiatives is one of the main challenges of the Agenda

# Existing Mechanisms

1. **High Level Political Forum (HLPF)** as the highest-level platform mandated to carry out reviewing the progress and updates on the SDGs
  - Composed of high-level member state representatives
  - **Platform for Volunteer National Reviews (VNRs)**
    - State-led and state-driven volunteer reviews
    - Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) participate in the panel meeting
2. **Thematic Reviews (TRs)**
  - Expert Group Meetings on given SDGs

# Challenges of SDGs Evaluation

## 1. **Technical Capacity:**

- Credibility
- Resources
  - Skewed priorities for evaluation within UN agencies
  - Immaturity of most UN agencies in terms of field evaluation function

## 2. **Underdeveloped Data Systems**

- Lack of data related to non-DAC countries
- Critical gaps in the existing qualitative data
- Shortfalls in assessing poverty at the global level

# Challenges of SDGs Evaluation Continued

## 3. **Political Challenges:**

- Effectiveness of Aid
- Arbitrary targets and aggregate measures
- State-centered orientation of the Agenda

## 4. **The Challenges of the New Goals:**

- Operationalizing and measuring
- Creating national and universal institutional arrangements to tackle the problems related to the new goals and targets

# Beyond the Challenges of the Evaluation Function

- Mutation of the actual picture of developing countries at grassroots levels by synchronization and standardization
- Development is stripping people from their resources, traditional knowledge, and identities/cultures
- Whitewashing the different comprehensions and the diverse picture of development based on internationally constructed and accepted methodological and procedural cascading is problematic, and misleading
- Aggregation, synchronization and standardization, instead of realizing the ‘no one left behind’ dictum of the Agenda, facilitate obscuring and unseeing many of those that have remained much behind

# Global Enterprise of Local-Knowledge on Development

- Evaluating the relevance, appropriateness, and effectiveness of implemented initiatives
- Channel knowledge from grassroots upward to policy circles at national and global levels
- Unlike the conventional method of randomizing or surveying, local educational institutions continuously engaged in collecting stories, experiences, narratives, and quantitative data on developmental interventions

# Global Enterprise of Local-Knowledge on Development

- Local educational institutions have the technical means and tools, spatial relevance, and local legitimacy
- The Sustainable Development era gives us an opportunity to reconsider our overarching assumptions, comprehension, and outlook towards development, the people and the planet



# Global Enterprise of Local-Knowledge on Development

- **Moral Ground:** The Anthropocene finally teaches us that the anthropocentric modern/technical knowledge could not solve problems, but rather facilitated a downhill journey for the planet towards unprecedented issues, challenges, and threats
- Scraping traditional knowledge and ignoring local ‘know-hows’ has been a bovine comprehension towards the people and planet
- In addition, the problem of the current age is not only underdevelopment but the unprecedented threats of climate change that have global consequences with local specificities
- Hence, a globally constructed ‘one size fits all’ prescription is losing its application

# Global Enterprise of Local-Knowledge on Development

- **Rationale:** Knowledge systems evolve with changes in environmental, social, economic, political and other spheres
- The ecological changes of the age that are more rapid, unexpected, and localized, makes local knowledge more crucial and qualified
- The transformation claim of the SDGs Agenda cannot be rationalized and realized without changing the overall nature and course of the development enterprise

# Global Enterprise of Local-Knowledge on Development

- **Assumptions:** in the current ecological age, local knowledge as human capital has intermingled with relevant cultural/traditional values and has transformed over generations. As such, local knowledge is more equipped to evaluate the relevance, appropriateness, and effectiveness of developmental interventions, in investing in the community's and the people's capacity of survival, in enhancing their resilience, and ultimately driving them towards prosperity.
- The established black and white distinctions between modern and local knowledge are biased and driven by the interests of the scientific knowledge enterprise
- Local knowledge is not populist in nature as it is not sentiment-driven
  - This paradigm of knowledge evolves in complex contexts that are shaped by specific cultural, environmental, ecological, political, social, and economic factors of the given community

Model: Global Enterprise of Local-Knowledge on Development:

