

Peer-learning as an M&E systems development approach and the innovation of rapid evaluation

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TWENDE MBELE



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Outline of presentation



What is Twende Mbele?

What is our understanding of national evaluation system?

Twende Mbele peer-learning approach to building individual and institutional evaluation capacities across its core countries and wider network

The adoption of rapid evaluation as capacity building and evidence source innovation

Some of our rapid evaluation engagements in the EC Province

End/Q&A

1. What is Twende Mbele



- Twende Mbele (“Going forward together” in *kiSwahili*) is a peer-learning Pan-African program among 6 African governments: Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, South Africa and Uganda
- Headquarters: University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
- Core aim: develop, strengthen and sustain public sector performance monitoring and evaluation systems that improve development policy and programme performance.
- Twende Mbele intervention areas:
 - i. building the technical M&E capacities of civil servants and managers with M&E functions;
 - ii. investing in the development of M&E frameworks (policies, plans and guidelines) for government institutions;
 - iii. sought to contribute to an enabling environment for M&E by creating peer-learning events that identify and build the capacities of M&E champions
 - iv. sharing M&E best practices (through peer-learning events like seminars, conferences, study tours, scholarship) among the six Twende Mbele core countries and its wider learning network (Malawi, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Botswana, Ethiopia, Togo, Namibia and Nigeria).

2. What is a national evaluation system?

Building national evaluation systems through capacity building and peer-learning is our core business



NES is constituted by the following elements:

Individual capacity to undertake and supply M&E information	Institutional capacity to commission and use M&E evidence in planning, policymaking, budgeting etc. (existence of M&E directorates, reporting templates, results indicators, eval guidelines)	Existence of M&E policy/legislation that mandates and assigns M&E roles in the public sector	Integration of non-govt institutions in the NES (legislatures, CSOs, HEIs)	Use of M&E evidence/information in decision-making, planning, policymaking, budgeting (requires leadership buy-in and support)
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3. Twende Mbele peer-learning approach to building individual and institutional evaluation capacities

- TM harnesses the power of peer-learning to mutually build the capacities of its core members and wider learning network
- Peer-learning platforms include frequent webinars/seminars, participation at M&E conferences, study tours
- Through TM webinars, countries reflect on best practices and challenges in building M&E systems and bridging the gap between M&E evidence and governance practices (i.e. national and sector planning, policymaking, legislative oversight and legislation formulation)
- Example, just concluded a three-part webinar series with IDEV at AfDB where IDEV shared various lessons on how to:
 - i. improve use of M&E evidence through stakeholder mapping;
 - ii. developing a dissemination plan from the beginning of an evaluation to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are mapped along with their information needs vis-à-vis an evaluand (policy/program);
 - iii. effectively packaging M&E findings to different decision-makers/stakeholders according to their evidence needs



Subsequent webinars will focus on:



Value of community-based M&E platforms such as Imbizo (RSA) and Barazas (Uganda), where national and subnational government officials discuss service delivery matters with communities and take stock of progress on various development policies/programs



Such subnational M&E platforms are a great mutual feedback mechanism for governments and communities, with such feedback key to informing government on what works and what needs to be improved





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- Plans to have KZN Provincial Government and eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality present on experiences in building a social compact on building an effective provincial evaluation system
- Reflections on how to build a subnational M&E, research and planning forum of various metropolitan municipalities, sharing emerging best practices, challenges and how this aides the municipalities to create a cadre of M&E professionals and institutional M&E capacities
- Building the NES from the grassroots



Other peer-learning platforms used by Twende Mbele

- We encourage our governments to participate in as many national, regional and global evaluation conferences as possible
- Virtue of conferences: meeting various governments and non-governmental organisations who share experiences with evaluation and how they have adopted and adapted evaluation as a tool to advance development
- Upcoming conferences (2023) to which our governments will be participating:
 - i. GLOCAL (might ask availability of ECSECC to participate);
 - ii. Benin Evaluation Conference; AEN Conference;
 - iii. 2023 AfDB Evaluation Week; African Evaluation Indaba





- We tend to sponsor government officials that attend these conferences due to the learning opportunity and potential to bring lessons back home on how to advance relevant and effective M&E practice
- Pipeline peer-learning events: we are seeking to partner with UNISWEM and FAO
- These developmental UN agencies are also in a quest to deploy evaluation as a measuring stick to gauge the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of UN agencies' development interventions in the countries they operate in
- Our governments can learn from these peer-learning partnerships, and also share best practices that can help improve the UN network's evaluative function vis-à-vis advancing development in this continent



4. Rapid evaluation as an effective innovation

Rapid evaluation has emerged as an innovation that enhances BOTH evaluative capacities & accessibility of evidence in times of crisis

Rapid evaluation= an evaluation that can produce scientific findings from **6-12 weeks** (acc to DPME), with findings promptly informing policy/programme decisions.

Based on the experiences of our governments, a safe estimate is 3-6 months (supply chain processes, availability of stakeholders, clear work plans all key factors in terms of time taken to complete a RE)

Merits of a Rapid evaluation

- REs address the need for timely performance data regarding policies and programmes, and offer recommendations for improvement
- REs offer timely data on what works and does not, and why, arming decision-makers with key evidence on which to make their decisions
- Value of REs: emergency (crisis) situations; early stages of implementation
- REs are also less costly than traditional evaluations, and can be done internally, involve an external facilitator who does the RE with internal officials; or wholly external
- DPME RE guideline (now updated based on country experiences) has been adapted by Twende governments when undertaking rapid evaluations



Designing a Rapid Eval (based on RE Guideline)

Develop	Develop a terms of reference (identify purpose, scope, type of evaluation and key evaluation questions)
Identify	Identify intended users and stakeholders of the RE
Identify	Identify the research design (research methods [ideally mixed methods for triangulation], use participatory methods)
Identify	Identify key DAC criteria you seek to ascertain
Develop	Evaluation plan (identify key deliverables; activities; data collection; analysis; validation; disseminate final report)
Prepare and adopt	Prepare and adopt RE budget and payment schedule (internal RE costs ~R100K; facilitated costs ~R400-500K; wholly external costs~R1 million +)
Establish	Establish a steering committee and the evaluation team

How do we ensure capacity building in a RE

Twende encourages facilitated rapid evaluations where a program team participates in the design, undertaking and dissemination of a RE, working with an expert facilitator (external or internal)

This is experiential learning (learn by doing)

Capacity building components of our governments' RE endeavours:

- Design workshops where the program team is trained and/or participates in developing the RE terms of reference (identifying purpose, scope, type of RE, and key Eval Questions).
- TOC workshops that map out the intervention being evaluated in terms of its rationale, problem statement, inputs, activities, results anticipated (outputs, outcomes and impact), and the various assumptions of the TOC
- TOC provides knowledge about the intervention's design, how it is supposed to be implemented and results that you will be measuring in the evaluation
- Framing the methodology
- Undertaking/quality assuring document reviews/draft reports (including recommendations)
- Planning and participating in dissemination workshops

Good practices adopted to improve use of RE findings

- i. Stakeholder inclusion in the process of developing the TORs (including identifying the evaluation matrix)
 - ii. having a steering committee to oversee the RE and brief principals (decision-makers) on emerging results
 - iii. Report dissemination
- In upcoming rapid evaluations, we will highlight the importance of developing management responses and improvement plans when countries undertake RE



Lessons learnt on how to improve undertaking and use of REs in future

Engage affected Ministries/Departments before a RE is undertaken in the sector

Procurement process for the lead evaluator/facilitator can be more efficient

Have a clear work plan for the RE and free internal staff to do the evaluation full time

Changes brought about by the RE recommendations must be tangible

Improve access to needed administrative data (cut red tape)

RE guidelines need to be more realistic (duly updated version in January 2023)

REs must be incorporated into MDA work plans + National Eval Plans





What are we doing in Provincial sphere?

- Been invited by KZN Provincial Government to serve on the Provincial Evaluation Steering Committee (multi-stakeholder technical platform)
- Been invited to co-facilitate EC design/planning workshop for the implementation rapid evaluation of the Provincial Integrated Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Mpumalanga evaluation seminar
- Through DPME, happy to work more and more at subnational level

End

- Siyabulela

