


# Evaluating Meta- Evaluations: Addressing Social Justice in Program Evaluation

AES CONFERENCE

- 
- Evaluation practitioner, teacher, and scholar
  - Teach graduate courses in program evaluation and research methodology
  - Mentor doctoral students and graduate assistants
  - Research interest is in the formal development of program evaluation as a profession, with an emphasis on evaluator competencies, professionalism, meta-evaluation, and teaching program evaluation
  - Conduct local and international evaluations at the intersection of social justice and human rights in education, public policy, gender equality, and conflict resolution
  - Conducted over 65 program and policy evaluations in more than 35 African countries
  - A member of AEA, CES, AES

# Introduction

## Dr. Sandra Ayoo (co-author)

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- Ph.D. Candidate in Educational Research Methodology, Program Evaluation Track
  - Certification in Peace and Conflict Studies
  - Research interest in Trauma-Informed Evaluation and Compassion Fatigue in evaluation

Introduction  
Stacy Huff (co-  
author)

# Introduction

- The 2015 United Nation's 'Eval Year' declaration heightened program evaluation's significance in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals
- There was a call for high-quality evaluations
- However, the field lacks consensus on both how to conduct meta-evaluation and the standards to use
- Challenges in evaluating high-quality evaluations and addressing social justice concerns in evaluation



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

# Meta- Evaluation Study


Ayoo, Sandra, Meghan Leeming, and Stacy R. Huff. "Meta-evaluation: Validating program evaluation standards through the United Nations Evaluation Quality Assessment (EQAs)." *Evaluation Journal of Australasia* 24.1 (2024): 14-39.

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# Keywords

- Meta-evaluation
- Program evaluation standards
- Quality assessment
- Quality assurance
- Social justice

# Research Methodology



- Literature review of meta-evaluation.
- Mapping of AEA's foundational documents with UNEG's Norms and Standards.
- Analysis of 62 UNFPA evaluation reports and their management responses
- The UNFPA Evaluation Quality Assurance and Assessment measures seven criteria: the structure and clarity of reporting; design and methodology; data reliability; analysis and findings; conclusions; recommendations, and gender & human rights

# What We Already Know

- Major concerns in evaluation regarding demand for high-quality evaluations and centrality of social justice in evaluation.
- Absence of consensus on standardized guidelines for meta-evaluation and addressing social justice.
- There are no one-size-fits-all guidelines for meta-evaluation and for addressing social justice in evaluations.

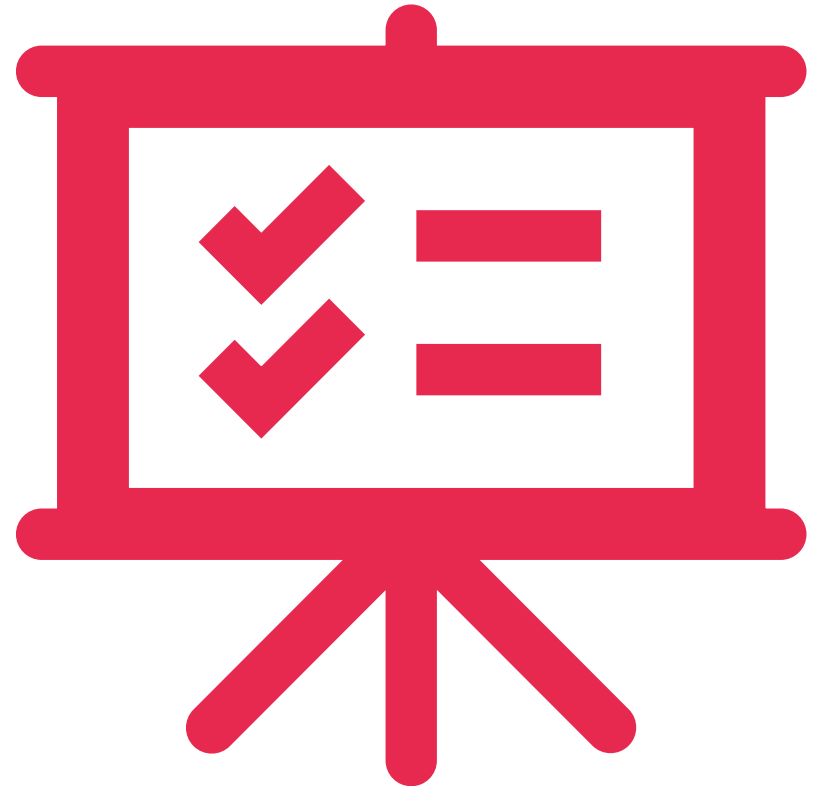


# Key Findings

- Addressing social justice in meta-evaluation is context-dependent rather than on established standards.
- The UN Evaluation Group's intentional inclusion of gender and human rights in evaluation ensured that these concerns were integrated into the evaluation design, methodology, recommendations, and management response.
- It is important for evaluators to select quality assurance tools that match the evaluation context and their professional association guidelines.

# Implications for Practice

- Both the United Nations and American Evaluation Association share a commitment to social justice in evaluation.
- Meta-evaluation is crucial for ensuring high- quality evaluations at both the formative and summative stages.
- Evaluators should prioritize social justice in evaluation design and implementation
- There is a paradoxical call for standardization and flexibility in meta-evaluation criteria
- Select quality assurance tools that match the evaluation context and professional association guidelines.
- VOPEs could learn from from the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association's integration of social justice concerns into Program Evaluation Standards and Competencies
- Training novice evaluators social justice approaches in evaluation



# Limitations of the study

- Comparing documents based on specific language used can be subjective
- Small sample size (n = 62) limited psychometric analyses

# Future Research



Need for developing a common language and definition of 'high-quality' evaluation.



Criteria for conducting meta-evaluation from a social justice perspective.

# Conclusion

- a) Can you share examples from your work where you've used evaluation approaches to intentionally incorporate social justice into your evaluations?
- b) How can the field of evaluation improve the quality of its practices to ensure that evaluations meaningfully benefit both people and the planet?





# *Thank You*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION. ANY QUESTIONS?

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