



TWENDE MBELE

POST EVENT REPORT

11th Africa Evaluation Association (AfrEA) Conference 2024

18 – 22 MARCH 2024, KIGALI, RWANDA



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THE 11TH AFREA CONFERENCE 2024

The African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), in partnership with the Rwanda Monitoring and Evaluation Organization (RMEO), hosted the 11th AfrEA International Conference. The conference was held in Kigali, Rwanda between March 18 – 22, 2024.

In the past, various participants from Africa and around the world have submitted and presented papers and posters, chaired panels, and facilitated professional development workshops. The conference serves as a platform to promote and support AfrEA's "Made in Africa Evaluation" approach and enables the sharing of knowledge, collaboration, and networking with a diverse range of international organizations and individuals.

The conference was themed "Technology and Innovation in Evaluation Practice in Africa: The Last Nail on the Coffin of Participatory Approaches?" The 11th AfrEA conference aimed to:

- To strengthen VOPEs to work with national Governments to advance the evaluation agenda, especially on policy formulation based on evidence.
- To provide space for sharing experiences to enhance national evaluation capacities
- To showcase the use of evaluative evidence in Africa
- To contribute to the development of Young and Emerging evaluators

In addition, the 2024 conference goal was to raise awareness, build capacity, and strengthen partnerships between AfrEA, Voluntary Organisations for Professional Evaluations (VOPEs), evaluation stakeholders, and national Governments on the institutionalisation of evaluation in Africa.

KEY LESSONS AND ACTION POINTS FROM CONFERENCE SESSIONS

In the Opening Presidential Strand of 20 March 2024, the now former President of AfrEA, Ms Rosetti Nabbumba Nayenga, highlighted that there are over 600 registered participants in attendance from 45 countries, from Africa, Latin America, Asia, Australasia and the Pacific, North America and Europe. This significant attendance demonstrates the world's interest in the growth of evaluation practice in Africa, a developing region that remains seized with key development challenges: unemployment, poverty, cycles of political instability and violent extremism, economic stagnation, economic growth that is slow to translate into social change that can uplift millions out of the claws of poverty.

A Special Address by Prof Prof Omotade Aina of the University of Ghana emphasized Africa's time bomb of a youth bulge, high unemployment, poverty and development thinking that is not localised. The key proposition of this Special Address was for the African evaluation community/coalition to take decolonisation seriously

beyond rhetoric, and position evaluation as a key tool to address governance challenges and unrealized development potential across Africa.



Key takeaways from ‘Technology & Innovation in African Evaluation’ session: evaluators must use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools responsibly by verifying data articulated by evaluations for use by policymakers. Evaluators need to ensure technology use is not at the expense of those without access to smart phones and other information and communications technologies (ICTs). These are important points to note because AI needs to be used responsibly to avoid misinformation and disinformation, which would render evaluations as unreliable sources of information for gauging policy performance and implementation. Likewise, the digital gap in Africa means that the use of ICTs in evaluation should not leave the significant percentage of Africans who do not have access to ICTs such as smartphones and the associated software applications. There is therefore a need for evaluators in Africa to continue making use of traditional methods of data collection and dissemination, such as physical interactions with development stakeholders, and post-evaluation briefings. This is the essence of responsive evaluation in Africa that personifies the proverbial “leave no one behind” principle.

IMBIZOS

The first panel session involving Twende Mbele participants was the Made in Africa Evaluation theories strand. Mr Thabo Makhosane from the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (South Africa) provided a presentation on the indigenous performance appraisal mechanism known as the “Imbizo”, which is an engagement between the government and citizens on the performance of policies and delivery of basic services. This is a pre-colonial government-citizen accountability mechanism that embodies that aspirations of what the *Made in Africa Evaluation* school of thought and philosophy seeks to achieve in the African evaluation space. The primary aims of an Imbizo are:

- i. Direct engagement with communities on their needs and quality of government service;
- ii. A platform for Political Principals and officials to articulate government plans for addressing identified challenges;

- iii. Jointly derive solutions with communities in the form of implementation plans regarding development of their areas;
- iv. Hands-on monitoring;
- v. Monitor implementation of key programmes and facilitate responses from Departments;
- vi. Implement and provide progress updates to the Principals and communities regarding actions taken to address implementation challenges vis-à-vis government policies and programmes, and delivery of basic services.



THE USE OF M&E EVIDENCE IN PUBLIC SECTOR PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Dr Nadege Djossou (Director of Public Policy Evaluation, Ministry of Development and Coordination of Government Action) was another Twende Mbele panellists at the continental Conference. Djossou presented on key lessons learnt by the Government of Benin through a [diagnostic study](#) on the use of M&E evidence in public sector planning and budgeting. One of the key barriers highlighted by the Study is that evaluation recommendations are not targeted and difficult to operationalise for decision-makers in the public policy, programme and project environments. A supplementary [Guideline](#) has been developed with key recommendations on how to improve use of M&E evidence by policymakers and stakeholders involved in the budget formulation process in Benin. Some of the key interventions currently under way to address challenges in using M&E evidence in planning and budgeting include the review of Benin's National Evaluation Methodological Guideline (currently being undertaken with support from Twende Mbele and UNICEF Benin), as well as the recent passing of legislation that promotes public policy evaluation in Benin. These are important steps in promoting the use of evaluation to help improve public policy implementation and ensure their optimal performance vis-à-vis intended development outcomes.



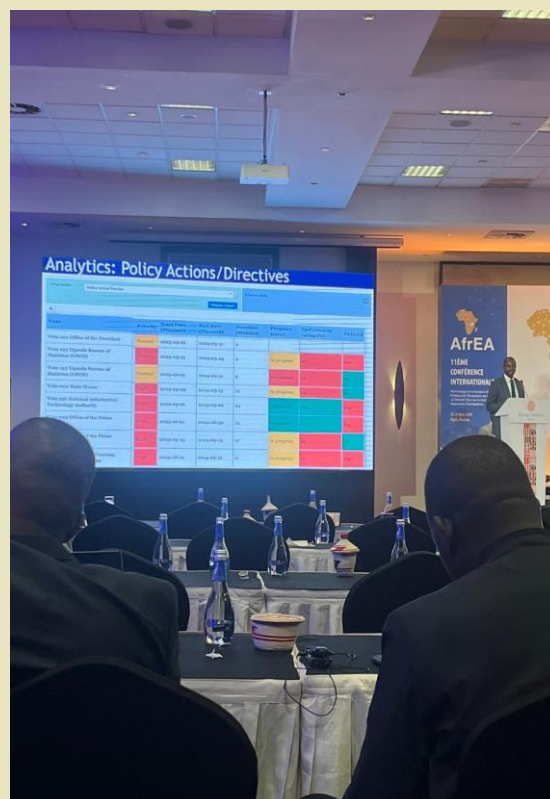
EVIDENCE GENERATIONS AND USE

In the Strand *Evidence generation, use and application in African political governance systems*, Twende Mbele was represented by Mr Daniel Amofa (Principal Planning Analyst at the National Development Planning Commission, Ghana) and Mr Roland Bless Taremwa (Principal Evaluation Specialist, Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda).

Presentation by Mr Amofa focused on the monitoring and evaluation done by Ghana's Metropolitan Municipalities and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to track the implementation of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 development aspirations. To this effect, 10 Metropolitan Municipalities and District Assemblies are producing Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) for the 2025 Ghana Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report on SDG attainment. It is important to note that the NDPC mandates MMDAs and national ministries to report on outcome indicators so as to demonstrate the extent to which government policies and programmes are meeting their intended socio-economic transformation objectives, and the extent to which services are delivered. The NDPC is also petitioning Twende Mbele to support some of the NDPC and MMDA preparations for the VLRs. In the context of the [UN General Assembly Resolution 77/283](#) (calling for evaluation to be used by UN member states as a tool for assessing and achieving the 17 SDGs).



Mr Taremwa's presentation focused on the integrated government-wide digital M&E system of Uganda. Digital M&E reports track key results on defined results frameworks (with pre-defined outcome and impact indicators) of the 18 National Development Plan (NDP) Programmes, which is a key mechanism that allows programme decision-makers to be able to access timely information on the performance of NDP programmes. The digitalisation of monitoring and evaluation reports is a key step in addressing the gap where performance evidence has proven to be difficult to access among decision-makers due to the prevalent nature of manual reports that are not easily accessible. The digital M&E system of Uganda emerged as a key innovation of interest among panel participants as well as some of the Twende Mbele member nations. **Key follow-up discussions** have been identified by certain member nations of Twende Mbele, who are interested in studying the Uganda whole-of-government digital tracker of NDP programmes. Study tours and webinars have been proposed to this effect.



STRATEGY FOR INSTITUTIONALISING M&E EVIDENCE-USE ACROSS NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Twende Mbele's fifth (5th) panel discussion that was meant to present the Twende Mbele *Strategy for Institutionalising M&E evidence-use across national and subnational public institutions*, did not occur. The keynote presenters were **Prof Kwaku Appiah-Adu (Senior Policy Advisor to the Vice-President, Office of the President, Ghana)** and **Mr Abdoulaye Gounou (Managing Director of the Directorate-General for Evaluation and Observation of Social Change, Ministry of Development and Coordination of Government Action, Benin)**. This panel session has been moved to the GLOCAL Week from 2-7 June 2024 (virtual). In the meantime, the Twende Mbele Secretariat is disseminating the Strategy which has been formulated through a widely consultative process with current and former public officials at national and subnational institutions across Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, South Africa and Uganda via a multi-country workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 7-9 November 2023. Various drafts of the Strategy have been revised by the said officials, and credits have been provided at the end of the final Strategy document.

CONFERENCE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

- Twende Mbele is to upload the presentations of its representatives in its [website](#) as part of its own version of Conference proceedings.
- This Report serves as a key reflection tool as well as Action Plan to follow-up on key opportunities highlighted.
- Through its Conference Exhibition Stand and networking, the Twende Mbele Secretariat was approached by representatives from the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and UNICEF Nigeria, who displayed keen interest to join the Twende Mbele network to learn and share on evaluation practice. Nigeria was a key sponsor of UN General Assembly Resolution 77/283 mentioned earlier, and is a key undertaker of SDG evaluations.
- Twende Mbele Secretariat met with the [German Institute for Development Evaluation](#) (DEval) to discuss possible areas of collaboration in the evaluation peer-learning space in Africa. The National Evaluation Capacities Index (INCE Index originating from Latin America) was discussed as a possible starting point. The Secretariat is to report back to the Management Committee for a decision. There has already been collaboration between DEval and Twende Mbele, including a [Policy Brief](#) on championing greater use of evaluative evidence in VNR development. DEval, CLEAR-AA and Twende Mbele also contributed a presentation on the Policy Brief at the recently concluded 11th Africa Evaluation Association Conference in Kigali, Rwanda.
- Twende Mbele has also agreed to collaborate with [CLEAR-Lusophone Africa and Brazil](#) (CLEAR-LAB) at GLOCAL (the institutionalisation Strategy session). This could be important given Angola's expression of interest to join the Twende Mbele Programme, received by the Chairperson and Programme Manager respectively.



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www.twendembele.org

TWENDE MBELE is a multi-country peer-learning partnership centred on country government priorities for building national evaluation systems in an effort to improve government performance and accountability to citizens.

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