

Personal Motivation Statement-Florence Etta

The twin elements of opportunity and challenge propel me to seek this position of service as co-vice chair of EVALSDGs.

The history of the creation of the four global networks in Kathmandu, Nepal in November 2015 is one that has been told by some, forgotten by others, and lived by others; I belong to the latter category. Present as a founding member of both EVALSDGs and EvalGender+ on that occasion, I have remained steadfast to EVALSDGs' purpose, objectives and modus operandi. My commitment to the cause in Kenya specifically started in Kathmandu, before the sun set on the global forum, where I took the opportunity to initiate conversation with the Kenyan member of Parliament about bringing the message and actions of the forum to Kenya. These conversations were pursued relentlessly for five years with different executive and legislative offices until 2019 when an EvalPartners grant allowed us to work with the Parliamentary Caucus on Evidence Informed Decision Making. This engagement resulted in the creation of a national network of monitoring, evidence, and evaluation champions in February 2020 to continue the work.

My commitment to action in the service of the SDGs was not restricted only to Kenya. Acting individually or under the banner of the Africa Gender and Development Evaluators Network (AGDEN) among others, I have invested energy and resources, financial and others, to advance understanding for and action on evaluation of the SDGs by offering workshops in Nigeria (2016), Uganda (2017), Greece (2018), Nairobi (2019-2020) as well as creating SDG promotional print materials for easy access and portability.

I have diligently attended EVALSDG and Guidance Working Group monthly meetings since their commencement and, along with other members of the Guidance Working Group, supported the creation and publication of 8 EVALSDG Insights (formerly Pop Up Notes). Three more are currently in advanced stages of production. This has been the result of dedicated, voluntary, and free service of authors and reviewers along with members of the Guidance Group.

As the Network enters a new era with less than 10 years left to the target date of the SDGs, the challenge is to work in ways to attract and engage individuals who will be committed to reach more actors, in order to extend and expand not just the demand and use of evaluation but the growth of a culture of evaluative thinking, always and everywhere.

The current global Corona virus pandemic has reaffirmed and reestablished the value of evidence for action and decision making and so reasserted the importance of evaluation. If EVALSDGs needed a call to action, this is it! But the pandemic has created more uncertainty, making evaluation that much more necessary, more urgent, more virtual, and more challenging!

As an independent evaluation consultant located in Africa, my vision for the Network is one in which there is a multiplicity of voices, engaging with and airing the realities of development action and their evaluations everywhere, and ensuring that the experience of no group is excluded from the mainstream. I make this personal commitment to be a gatherer and door opener, as opposed to a gatekeeper, and to bring in new and relevant actors currently outside this space and network as much possible. As a member of 3 of the global evaluation networks (EVALSDGs, EvalIndigenous, Evalgender+) and a handful of other global, continental, regional and national evaluation associations, it is possible to address this challenge.