

## Editorial: Policy Monitoring and Evaluation Practices in Developing Countries

The focus of this special issue is timely, given the pressure on governments (and their implementing agencies) across the world, especially those in developing countries, to deliver on their policy commitments. In the recent past, millions of citizens in developing countries are getting impatient and resorting to demonstrations to show their frustration due to non- or limited delivery of expected services. This suggests that while it is important to articulate and develop policies, its monitoring and evaluation is ever so important, if the expected goals are to be achieved. Herein lies the opportunity of this special issue on policy monitoring and evaluation in developing countries. The key objective of this special issue thus, is to present a collection of quality papers, that share learning and provide insights. It is hoped that scholars in the field both in developing and developed countries will find this edition a critical read for policy studies.

A total of 13 papers have been compiled for this special issue. These papers raise questions, proffer answers and analytically engage the subject matter. The *first* paper by Govender, Draai and Taylor (**The influence of legislation and regulation on strategy in public entities**) explores the framework of legislations and regulations within which government designs systems and processes to meet specific needs using public enterprises. They argue that policy effectiveness in public enterprises is premised on leadership, goal orientation and satisfying a multitude of identified factors in the process. This article reviews the influence of legislation and regulations on strategy in public entities, focusing on a development corporation in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, as a case study. The article concludes with a proposed normative model to enhance strategy in public entities.

The *second* paper from Okeke-Uzodike and Dlamini (**citizens' e-participation at local municipal government in South Africa**) explores the emergence of the digital revolution which has obligated governments all over the world to be more accessible, effective and accountable in the provision of public services. The South Africa government has implemented various Information and Communications Technology (ICT) enabled platforms in engaging citizens in decision-making, with a resultant effect of a high world E-government Development Index (EGDI) rating for the country. Despite the rating, authors argue that the fact that citizens have resorted to public violence as a means of communicating about unsatisfactory service delivery issues, suggests that current platforms may not be as effective. This article therefore evaluates the application of e-participation in government decision-making, using a three-dimensional framework of e-enabling, e-engaging and e-empowering. The findings show that structural challenges exist that limit the achievement of the good intentions of e-participation. The article relies heavily on existing data and focuses at local municipal level, which is considered the closest point of contact between government and citizens. The *third* paper from Ugoh and Ukpere (**Assessment and evaluation of electoral management and democratization system in Nigeria. A case of the Independent National Electoral Commission - INEC**) looks at the implementing agency for elections in Nigeria - INEC, within the context of democratization project as well as engendered debates among scholars and policy makers. This paper postulates that the electoral institution in Nigeria could be more effective. The paper concludes that policy should be reformulated to strengthen the electoral body.

The *fourth* paper from Sikhosana and Nzewi (**An overview of public sector budget monitoring & evaluation systems for gender equality: Lessons from Uganda and Rwanda**) identifies one of the socio-economic ills prevalent in Africa as the failure to channel resources towards the achievement of gender outcomes as shown by prevailing existing gender disparities across many countries in the continent. Using desktop research, this article responds to this concern by examining the extent to which identified countries (Uganda and Rwanda) have played a leading role in the implementation and mainstreaming of budget M&E to achieve specific gender outcomes. Results show that although a number of countries have transformed their budget monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, only a few have managed to align these systems to gender equality goals. The *fifth* paper is a contribution from Matsiliza (**strategies for improving capacity for policy monitoring and evaluation in the public sector**) She notes that a number of countries in the African continent have adopted government wide monitoring and evaluation system in the public sector, countries like South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Benin and Uganda. However, there are challenges with capacity required to support these systems. This article argues that monitoring and evaluation must

therefore not just measure the effectiveness and efficiency of public programmes and processes, but it must create a sustainable process whereby participants and evaluators can learn from the process. Capacity building in monitoring and evaluation must be fairly and continuously conducted to offer credible and valid information and knowledge on M&E. Lessons learnt from this article can contribute towards the existing capacity building strategies to enhance monitoring and evaluation.

The *sixth* paper from Ndaguba and Ijeoma (**Understanding poverty in South Africa: Assessing the twist and turns of measurement and conceptual misfit**) demonstrates that in South Africa, eighteen million individuals are under the social grant system (out of a population of merely over forty five million people). Millions of households and families are falling into deep poverty, and the social grant system is becoming unsustainable. This paper raises need for a new method of understanding poverty and means through which it may be approached. It also demonstrates that poverty is not just a mere measure of income or consumption, but unfulfilled desires. With the intent of understanding how government can adequately conceptual poverty, thereby leading to a more realistic approach of poverty reduction. The *seventh* paper from Ilori, Dassah and Iwu (**systems readiness for improved monitoring and evaluation with specific reference to the micro small and medium enterprises sector in Nigeria**) examines the critical element of small and medium enterprises which currently accounts for most jobs in the informal sector. The Small Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) is mandated to monitor the growth of the sector. With increasing propensity for failure of micro and small businesses, questions must be asked concerning the effectiveness of the SMEDAN's programmes and policies in revitalising, sustaining as well as growing the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector. The paper critically evaluates SMEDAN's mandate to provide support services that will transform the informal sector of the Nigerian economy using existing monitoring and evaluation systems. The paper presents lessons which can be harnessed to better reposition monitoring and evaluation for improved effectiveness through SMEDAN.

Mantzaris and Pillay's paper (**Monitoring, evaluation and accountability against corruption: A South African case study**) is the *eighth* contribution to this special issue. The article is an empirical effort to research and analyse the dialectical relationship between public sector monitoring and evaluation relations, structures and processes with corruption and accountability. The case study utilized is the Gauteng Department of Health in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. The paper presents an analysis of corruption trends within the department as identified in the latest Auditor General's report, a corruption-ridden case, insights from wide-ranging responses of the interviewees and its link with the latest evidence-based corruption Index. The *ninth* paper in this edition is a contribution from Eresia-Eke and Boadu (**Monitoring and Evaluation Preparedness of Public Sector Institutions in South Africa**). In a bid to improve service delivery in South Africa, the government has created a government-wide monitoring and evaluation system that would help gauge performance across all spheres of government. This has compelled public sector institutions to adopt and implement M&E systems mandatorily, even when they are not necessarily ready for it. The unpreparedness inevitably perforates the ability of M&E systems to credibly support performance improvement in public sector institutions and it is problematic. They note that to some extent, the practice of M&E in the public sector seems to be for purposes of compliance rather than the ideal of performance improvement. Findings reveal mixed signals of M&E readiness. For instance, the factors motivating the creation of the M&E system and the calibre of staff championing it seem to suggest M&E readiness. Conversely, the non-availability of capacity to support the system and the potential response of staff to negative information generated by M&E signal non-readiness. The impact of this is that readiness assessments specific to institutions have to be conducted as a basis for determining areas where the prerequisites for M&E are lacking. This should then inform remedial efforts that ultimately help to improve the potency of the M&E system.

The *tenth* paper from Chen, DeConing and Pretorius explores **results-based monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management approaches in government partnerships in case of the Shandong and WCG Partnership**. They argue that Government to Government (G2G) partnerships between countries in the BRICS partnerships have significantly increased and with it, the need for more effective evidence-based decision-making. In this process, improved M&E and KM has become prominent. In this context, the study investigated the need for Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), as well as knowledge management (KM) systems in partnerships. The article concluded that a need existed to establish more advanced M&E and KM systems in G2G partnerships. Mubangizi's paper is the *eleventh* contribution (**Monitoring and evaluation processes critical to service provision in South**

**Africa's rural based municipalities**) She argues that South African municipalities are at the coalface of service provision, with communities relying on municipal performance for life-impacting services. The impact of effective service delivery or the lack thereof is particularly significant for the poor who generally lack safety nets to cushion themselves against the inadequacies of poorly resourced, mainly rural, municipalities. Although municipalities are distinct entities, they rely on other levels of government for important resources and draw on the support of other non-government actors to provide public services. In such a scenario, where variously positioned actors contribute to the attainment of the public good, the role of monitoring and evaluation (M & E) is critical as it ensures compliance by each of the role-players in the effective delivery of basic services to communities. The conclusion drawn is that while current M & E process are, mainly, monitored through statutory structures; non-statutory structures formed out of *ad hoc* self-organising models can provide useful forums for monitoring municipal service provision for sustainable livelihoods.

The twelfth paper is from Legesse and Dinbabo (**An empirical evaluation of the link between women participation in Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) and poverty reduction in Ethiopia**). This paper assesses the impact of women participation in Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) on poverty reduction in Hawassa city, Ethiopia. Using a mixed research methodology, and applying propensity score matching, the study found that women participation in VSLA has a significant positive impact in increasing average monthly household income of participant woman. Besides, women participation in VSLA has a significant positive association with improvements in household diet, health, children's education, and women's involvement in household decisions. The study recommends a reinforcement of government and nongovernmental organizations in providing regular and need based capacity building training programmes. The thirteenth and last but not the least paper for this special issue is from Madumo and Koma (**Local government reform in South Africa: The quest for review and repositioning of municipal administration**) Their paper argues that there is a need to review and reposition the model of local government in order to ensure that municipalities appropriately fulfil their constitutional obligations. The research pointed to the relevance of the application and utilisation of the different categories of municipalities, thereby enabling the effective delivery of services to communities through improved M & E.

Before I end this note, I wish to thank all the scholars who sent in their papers for this issue. The interest was massive and does suggest that policy M & E is a growing field of study. I also acknowledge the numerous reviewers who assisted me to meet the deadlines. Lastly, I must thank my PhD graduate assistant and researcher – *Mr Evans Boadu*, who managed the editorial office and provided back office support. Thank you all very much. I have no doubt that this special issue will benefit many scholars, policy leaders and practitioners, interested and engaged in M & E debates.

Last but not the least, I am grateful to Emeritus Professor, Badar Alam Iqbal; Editor for Special Issues; who invited me to undertake the Guest Editorship of this special issue. I am also thankful to Prof. Dr. Fulu Netswera (Assistant Editor for Special issues), and Ms. Afsheen Atif (Publication Manager).

Enjoy the reading!



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