Introduction

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Sustainable development is back center stage on the international agenda. After the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, sustainable development seemed in vogue for a while but lost ground to a more pragmatic perspective in the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, which embodied practical goals and targets that could be met in 15 years' time by the international community and by countries. However, the increasing urgency of climate change and related environmental crises such as biodiversity loss and the growth of chemical and other waste throughout the world caused a recalibration of development processes. This led to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), incorporated into Agenda 2030, which were accepted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. In October 2015, two evaluation conferences took place in parallel in Bangkok, Thailand: one organized by the Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the other by the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS). These two conferences focused on sustainable development: the UNDP conference on what the newly adopted SDGs meant in terms of development of national capacities, mainly for governments, whether they had the capacity to contribute to understanding progress toward the SDGs, and whether the policies were in place to enable evaluation to play its proper role. The IDEAS conference, on the other hand, focused on the concept of sustainable development and how it could be evaluated, and aimed at bringing best practices and innovation from all over the world to be discussed in Bangkok.

The UNDP conference—the Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities (NEC)—led to the publication of its proceedings in June 2016. IDEAS does not publish proceedings, but has, since its Global Assembly in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2009, presented the most challenging and promising perspectives emerging from its conferences in a book. The three books that followed were edited by Ray C. Rist, Marie-Helene Boily, and Frederic Martin. After Ray Rist retired as president of IDEAS, he presented the continuation of the series as a challenge for the new president:

Rob D. van den Berg. A new editorial committee was established by Rob, with Indran Naidoo, former board member of IDEAS and currently director of the Independent Evaluation Office of the UNDP, and Susan D. Tamondong, vice president of IDEAS. The aim was to publish a follow-up book of the Bangkok conference, focusing on some of the themes and on new and promising developments in the field of evaluation of sustainable development.

The present volume thus should be placed in the tradition of the three IDEAS's books on the Global Assemblies in Johannesburg (2009), Amman (2011), and Barbados (2013). It diverges from that tradition, as the book includes many perspectives that were explored with the NEC conference in joint sessions, including perspectives of governments, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and academia. Issues discussed included policies and capacities, as well as evaluation methodology and the difficulties for the evaluation profession to find its place between academia and (international) bureaucracies.

Part I of the book comprises further developments of the keynote addresses at the two Bangkok conferences. Vinod Thomas (chapter 1) provides an overview of the main challenges with which evaluators are confronted when evaluating sustainable development. His chapter discusses the various evaluation methods for assessing sustainability: cost-benefit analysis, impact evaluation, green accounting methods, social impact analysis, and safeguard compliance mechanisms. The chapter argues for rigorous frameworks for evaluation, but at the same time underscores the need for innovation and further development of methods. Vinod urges capacity development in countries that need to apply these methods in their evaluations of country-led initiatives.

In chapter 2, Marco Segone and Florencia Tateossian have developed Marco's keynote address from a United Nations' perspective, advocating for equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations at the national level, enabled by sufficient national evaluation capacity and a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that includes all national and international partners. Mallika Samaranayake and Asela Kalugampitiya further develop the former's Bangkok keynote address on the importance of participatory evaluation in chapter 3. In a world where equity concerns are widespread and increasingly seen as behind the rise of populist movements, participatory evaluation can provide evidence to policy makers on what could be done to ensure that "no one (is) left behind," to quote one of the overarching themes of the SDGs.

Part II focuses on capacities and capabilities. Indran Naidoo and Ana Rosa Soares discuss UNDP efforts to support countries in their development of evaluation capacity and national systems for evaluation (chapter 4). They also incorporate lessons from implementation of the Millennium Development Goals to inform how the SDGs should be evaluated, as well as the capacity that countries need to develop and enable their M&E systems. In chapter 5, Linda Morra Imas focuses on the professionalization efforts that were discussed at the Bangkok conference and what has happened since. While much has been accomplished, Linda calls for new efforts to ensure core competencies reflect the SDGs and inform the development of national capacities.

The paradigm shift from capacity building to capacity development is discussed by Michele Tarsilla in chapter 6. After a discussion of contextual and process-related factors that need to inform capacity development, Michele highlights the contribution of IDEAS to the ongoing discourse on evaluation capacity. Lastly, in chapter 7, a group of authors around Awuor Ponge discuss their experiences as "young and emerging evaluators" and the specific barriers and obstacles they face to find their place in the global and national evaluation communities. To tackle these barriers, Ponge, Adesobo Taiwo Peter, Ahmed Tamman, and Tara Devi Gurung advocate for mentoring programs that support young and emerging evaluators.

Regional perspectives are brought to the reader in Part III. Juha I. Uitto, Jeremy Kohlitz, and David Todd highlight the challenges that the small island developing states (SIDS) in the Caribbean and Pacific face to develop national capacities for evaluation of sustainable development (chapter 8). These range from limited human and institutional capacities to low priorities for evaluation in government policies. They argue that these challenges are best addressed by crafting M&E systems that are appropriate for a variety of SIDS contexts, that are country led, and that are supported by external agencies in a coherent manner. In chapter 9, Ana Luisa Guzmán and Warren Crowther tackle the recent development of evaluation standards in Latin America, as proposed by the regional network Latin American and Caribbean Network of Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization (ReLAC) on the basis of a series of innovative evaluations undertaken in Costa Rica. Their focus is on applying ethics in evaluation and on basic principles such as relevance, viability and trade-offs between evaluation and decision making.

Sonia Ben Jafaar and Awny Amer in chapter 10 discuss regional developments in the Middle East from the perspective of the call for greater accountability of governments to their peoples. The Arab Uprising, also known as the Arab Spring, has initiated a new paradigm on the role of evaluation that promotes national capacities and national M&E systems in which local professionals are valued and supported and contribute through evaluations to the development of their countries and the region. Chapter 11 provides a similar perspective on three South Asian countries: the call for evaluation to contribute to good governance. Rashmi Agrawal, Asela Kalugampitiya, Jigmi Rinzin, and Kabir Hashim reflect on recent initiatives and efforts in Bhutan, India, and Sri Lanka. In India and Sri Lanka, these efforts focus on tackling corruption in public service delivery; in Bhutan, the role of evaluation in promoting good governance and increasing Gross National Happiness is discussed.

Chapter 12 is devoted to feminist approaches and evaluation in India, written by Rituu B. Nanda and Rajib Nandi. Based on a program implemented by the Institute of Social Studies Trust in India, the chapter aims to contribute to a better understanding of how evaluations can support changes in gender-based inequalities and power dynamics. The last chapter of this part, chapter 13, deals with evaluation cooperation in West Africa. Abdoulaye Gounou discusses the capacity and impact evaluation program in West Africa as supported by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), focusing on the countries of the West African Economic Monetary Union. Of great interest is Abdoulaye's discussion of the new program Twende Mbele, which

partners Benin, South Africa, and Uganda in developing appropriate M&E and exchange of experiences.

Part IV aims to discuss the role of evaluation in preventing negative impacts. It starts with a historical overview of environmental and social safeguards in India by Shekhar Singh and highlights that recent political developments have led to reduced priority for these safeguards (chapter 14). Evaluations were essential to bring attention to the detrimental effects of ignoring these safeguards, and Shekhar's chapter develops proposals on how evaluation can continue to play this role in the future. For the next chapters in this part, we turn to resettlement issues—often accompanied by negative impacts of development displacement, which have led to the adoption of social safeguards on resettlement. In chapter 15, Inga-Lill Aronsson provides an anthropological and historical perspective on resettlement, and indicates that heritage and memories tend to be neglected in projects, to the detriment of outcomes. Given this lack of a historical perspective, current resettlement models are insufficient to grasp the longitudinal consequences of resettlement. A consideration of heritage and memory could lead to improvements.

Marife Ballesteros, in chapter 16, focuses on the assessment of benefits and costs of resettlement projects implemented by the Philippine government using a quantitative methodology. The study compares resettlement modes, in-city and off-city, and determines which mode provides greater efficiency and best socioeconomic outcomes. The author discusses areas for improvement that the government can undertake, bearing in mind trade-offs and recommendations for a more efficient resettlement resulting in improved welfare. The last chapter in this part, chapter 17 by Susanna Price, compares international policy perspectives and evaluation outcomes in Asian countries to see how livelihoods are affected, addressed, and evaluated. She argues that livelihood issues are often neglected in laws and regulations concerning resettlement. Furthermore, livelihood risks, livelihood support, and livelihood outcomes in evaluations are rarely seen. The author presents some approaches that may provide a way forward in building the knowledge base on livelihood success and sustainability through evaluation at the country level.

Part V concerns evaluation of impact in its broadest sense and focuses on sustainable development issues. In chapter 18, Chris Barnett and Rachel Eager further develop a contribution of Chris's to the Bangkok conferences in a special session on the new frontiers for evaluation. While new initiatives take shape to achieve sustainable development—and especially new partners from the private sector engage in forms of "impact investing" and social corporate responsibility—the challenge is how evaluation can provide evaluative evidence within these often complex, interconnected, and rapidly changing contexts. They argue for a bolder evaluation agenda, in which evaluators recognize their potential role in contributing to change: to act not just as providers of evidence for others to use, but to proactively engage in an ethical obligation to society, and to stimulate deliberation and re-examination of evidence by a broader range of citizens—citizens who can be emboldened to use such evidence to improve their situations, as well as to call others to account.

In chapter 19, Adinda van Hemelrijck reflects on the Participatory Impact Assessment and Learning Approach (PIALA), a systemic theory-based and participatory mixed method for addressing the challenges of impact evaluation in complex development contexts. On the basis of fieldwork in Vietnam and Ghana, Adinda concludes that inclusiveness and rigor can reinforce each other, even more so at scale, with sufficient capacity. Methodological complementarity and consistency, extensive and robust triangulation, and cross-validation are important attributes. Investing in research capacity may help reduce costs over time, while enhancing the value of impact evaluation and the uptake of its findings.

Takaaki Miyaguchi in chapter 20 synthesizes findings from eight different climate change mitigation projects in five different Southeast Asian countries, using the Theory of No Change approach developed by Christine Wörlen. Almost all the projects studied addressed barriers of ignorance and lack of expertise for all agent groups (consumers, supply chain, policy makers, and financiers); none of the projects has specifically addressed the barrier of cost effectiveness, and only a few projects specifically focus on harnessing the interest and/or motivation of relevant agent groups. Emmanuel Jimenez and Jo Puri also synthesize findings from various sources to identify gaps in evidence on education and climate change/environment interventions (chapter 21). They discuss the "wicked problems" that evaluators encounter when aiming to bridge the gaps; their analysis points out why the gaps persist and how future evaluations might address them.

Lastly, Gwendolyn Wellman's chapter reports on impact evaluations of the development efforts of a mining company in Ghana (chapter 22). While the company was not primarily interested in measuring the impact of its community/societal development program, the government of Ghana required it to evaluate what it had done. Gwendolyn reports on the process that evolved, and discusses to what extent the evaluation commissioned was able to come up with findings. The chapter concludes with an exploration of "the way forward" for impact evaluations of the development activities of big corporations.

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Given the variety and depth of topics in this book, we hope that it provides an overview of some of the important issues in the global evaluation community:

- how to take sustainability into account;
- how to leave "no one behind" when evaluating sustainability;
- what capacities and capabilities are needed to undertake these evaluations;
- how this is taking shape in regions and countries and incorporated into country-led evaluation systems;
- whether the negative consequences and impacts of interventions are sufficiently taken into account and what the role of evaluation can be in highlighting these issues; and

- whether evaluation of impact is sufficiently developed to tackle the growing demand for evidence, including new initiatives and the increasing involvement of the private sector and civil society as partners in development.

Increasingly, evaluation is becoming a truly global issue and concern. While in the past most of the chapters in a book like this would have been written by gray-haired old men from the developed world, this book contains the work of 38 authors, 26 of whom are from the Global South!

Reading this book will certainly lead us to acknowledge that much still needs to be done. But it is better to stand at the beginning of a new road, knowing that this is where we—as an evaluation community—need to go, than to sit down in recognition of where we have failed so far. If one thing may be concluded from this book, it is that the evaluation community is intellectually alive and kicking and aiming to improve further in the coming decades.
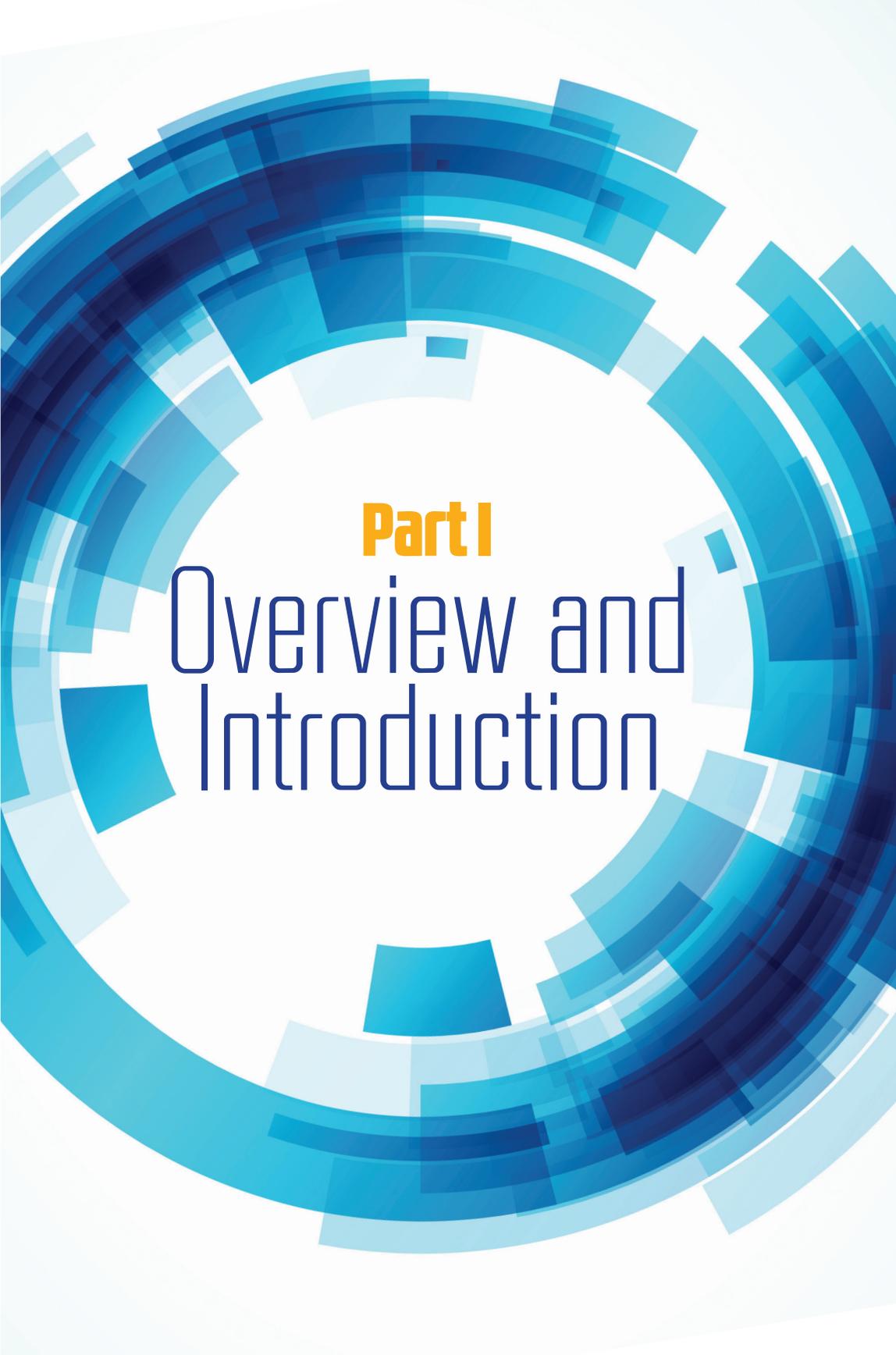
Part I
Overview and Introduction