



# **gLOCAL**

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# **EVALUATION WEEK**

**powered by GEI**

**CONCEPT NOTE**

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## **Evaluation and Transformational Change: Balancing Ambition and Realism**

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**3 – 7 June, 2024**

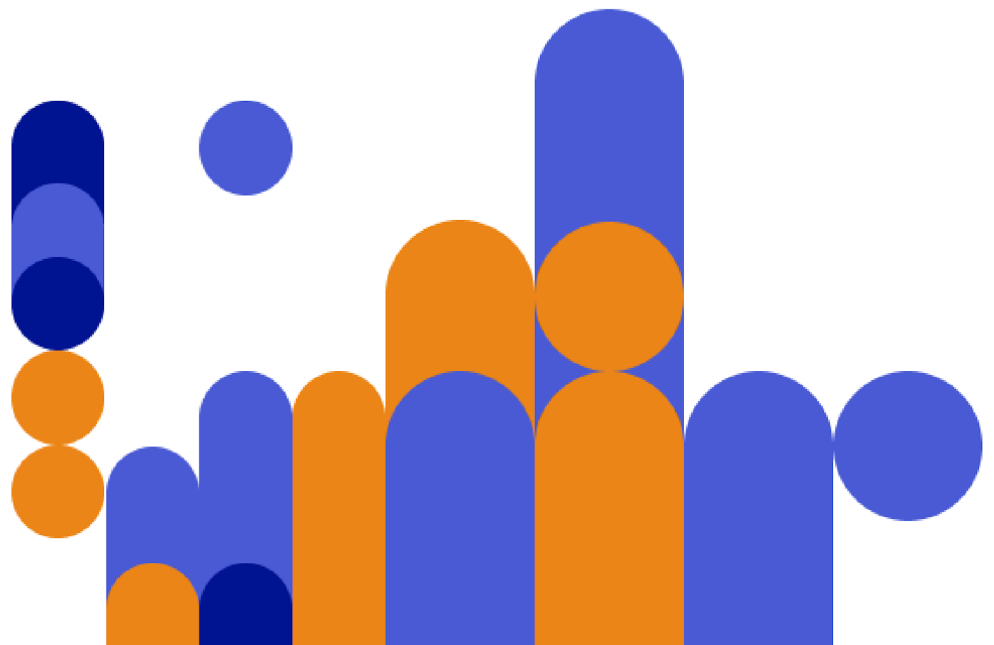
# Background

gLOCAL Evaluation Week is a unique knowledge-sharing event, connecting a global community of people across sectors and regions. Over the course of a week, participants from all over the world join events – in their neighborhood or across the ocean – to learn from each other on a vast number of topics and themes. Allowing participants insight into how their work fits in with regional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) ecosystems and the larger international M& E community, gLOCAL helps to inspire and energize a global movement – individuals and organizations who value the power of evidence to improve people’s lives.

Since its launch in 2019, the gLOCAL platform has hosted thousands of events in multiple languages across six continents. It has grown to become one of the largest M&E knowledge-sharing events in the world. gLOCAL event participants and hosts include international organizations, regional M&E bodies, (sub-) national governmental and non-governmental organizations, decision makers, commissioners, Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation, academics, researchers, and students – who all come together to connect, learn, and collaborate.

gLOCAL is convened by the [Global Evaluation Initiative \(GEI\)](#) – a network of organizations and experts that supports country governments with strengthening national M&E systems and improving the use of evidence in their countries. gLOCAL was launched by the [Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results \(CLEARs\)](#), a GEI Implementing Partner. The CLEARs continue to play an essential role in organizing regional gLOCAL events.

The GEI focuses its support on efforts that are country-owned and aligned with local needs, goals, and perspectives. Knowledge sharing is central to GEI’s mission and is the inspiration behind the annual convening of gLOCAL.



# gLOCAL 2024 Theme

## Evaluation and Transformational Change: Balancing Ambition and Realism

The world is confronted with challenges that threaten our welfare and the welfare of future generations: climate change, the destruction of ecosystems and species, poverty, inequality, insecurity and violence. These issues are more and more interconnected. To address these challenges, we cannot rely on “business as usual” scenarios and must embrace transformational change. Many voices are now calling for such efforts and the idea of – and the need for – transformational change in the context of international development is gaining traction in policy debates.

In a 2016 report, the World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) defined transformational engagements as *“individual or series of interventions that support deep, systemic, and sustainable change with the potential for large-scale impact in an area of a major development challenge. Such engagements help clients remove critical constraints to development; cause or support fundamental change in a system; have large-scale impact at the national or global level; and are economically, financially, and environmentally sustainable.”*

This aligns with other definitions of transformation change, all of which converge around the following attributes: it should be systemic, fundamental and lasting. The relationship between evaluation and transformational change has been discussed in a number of recent publications in the field of evaluation,<sup>1</sup> raising the fundamental question: Can evaluation play a role in nudging policy communities and, consequently, society on the path to transformational change? And if so, how? Addressing these questions requires thinking boldly and ambitiously. At the same time, to make a difference we should be realistic about the opportunities and challenges for evaluation to influence policies and societies across diverging and complex contexts.

This year, the gLOCAL theme will center around the two ways that evaluation can contribute to transformational change:

**1. The role of evaluation in enhancing (policy) stakeholders' understanding of processes of transformational change.** Questions to consider:

- How should evaluators look at interventions, and the systems in which they are embedded, to identify the conditions and potential for transformational change?
- What conceptual and methodological frameworks do evaluators need for this effort?
- How can issues of social justice, gender equality and environmental sustainability be better understood through evaluations to support transformational change? <sup>2</sup>

**2. The role of evaluation as a platform to advocate for policy solutions that are more likely to contribute to transformational change.** While this would ideally build on credible and useful evidence, the advocacy role is more about how evaluations can feed into decision-making and organizational learning more broadly. This includes inter alia the communication of evaluation findings through formal processes of reporting (e.g., to parliaments, boards, senior management) but also informal processes of interaction (e.g., with relevant stakeholders on the financing or implementation side of policy interventions, as well as the intended beneficiaries on the ground). Finally, this may also include the dissemination of findings to stakeholder groups outside of the organizational system such as civil society organizations, academia, or the general public. Questions to consider:

- How can the field of evaluation become more effective as an advocate for transformational change?
- How – and should – evaluators advocate for transformational change among decision-makers and other key stakeholder audiences? What is the role of Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation?
- How can we strengthen national and other evaluation systems in ways that benefit the potential for achieving transformational change?

## Sub-Themes

In addition to the special theme for 2024, event organizers can choose any M&E topic to present or discuss around: methods, evidence use or capacity development.

<sup>1</sup> Patton, M.Q. (2021) "Evaluation Criteria for Evaluating Transformation: Implications for the Coronavirus Pandemic and the Global Climate Emergency", *American Journal of Evaluation*, 42(1), 53–89. Uitto, J.I. and G. Batra (eds.) (2020) *Transformational Change for People and the Planet – Evaluating Environment and Development*, Springer. Van den Berg, R., C. Magro and S. Salinas Mulder (eds.) (2019) *Evaluation for Transformational Change – Opportunities and Challenges for the Sustainable Development Goals*, IDEAS.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Mertens, D. and A. Wilson (2019) *Program Evaluation Theory and Practice*, Second Edition, Guilford Press. The authors discuss the Transformative Paradigm in evaluation which focuses on the voices of marginalized groups in society. It interrogates existing power structures and highlights the importance of dialogue between evaluator and stakeholders as all knowledge is socially constructed. Feminist evaluation, Indigenous evaluation, Deliberative Democratic Evaluation are examples of schools of thought and practice that can be situated within this paradigm.



# Format, Dates, and Planning

Session formats can include presentations, roundtable or panel discussions, trainings, workshops, and more. gLOCAL 2024 organizers are welcome to host in-person, virtual, or hybrid events based on their target audience.

**gLOCAL 2024 will take place June 3 to June 7, 2024. The call for proposals is now open and will close by March 22nd.**

Events accepted will be communicated no later than April 26th, 2024.

Please visit [glocalevalweek.org](https://glocalevalweek.org) for general information, evaluation criteria, and other requirements.