



Draft Media Alert

600 leading experts in evaluation and development to address development effectiveness in the face of the global economic crisis

Cairo, March 29, 2009 – Six hundred well known evaluators, leading researchers, development practitioners and policy makers from around the globe are gathered in Cairo this week to share experiences on what works in development, what does not, why, and under what circumstances.

The Conference aims to take stock on lessons learned and guide political leaders in shaping and implementing development policies and programs that make a difference in poor people's lives. It is co-hosted by the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), the Networks of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE), the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

"There is an African saying that 'when elephants fight, the grass suffers most'. During the current global economic crisis the poorest nations are at great risk. This makes it even more important that national and international resources bring about change in poor societies that is real, sustained and in their best interests. Evaluation allows us to understand how to do this, and the conference allows us to pool some of the best knowledge worldwide for this purpose. And as it takes place in Egypt, we have a strong African presence. Our voice has to be heard, and our people served," says Dr Zenda Ofir, Past President of AfrEA.

The first issue of the *Journal for Development Effectiveness* will also be launched by 3ie on April 1 – this is the first journal focused on reporting evidence of the impact of projects, programs and policies in developing countries.

"Billions of dollars are spent each year on development programmes to improve the quality of life of poor people in the developing world through investments in infrastructure, health, education and institutional structures. But to achieve international development goals we need to enhance the impact of development spending. Our work is about promoting better evidence to help policy makers find better development solutions", says Dr. Howard White, Executive Director of 3ie.

New World Bank estimates for 2009 show that the spreading global crisis is trapping up to 53 million more people in poverty in developing countries.

"The global crisis is squeezing resources for all. It is an opportunity to seek innovative ways to finance development assistance and focusing resources on investments with known benefits. Impact evaluation is well situated for learning what works in development, why, why not, under which circumstances, and to what costs", says Nick York, NONIE Chair.

The Conference will be preceded from March 29 – 31 by a series of hands-on workshops and 'evaluation clinics' presented by leading experts in the field of evaluation and development. Amongst the issues to be discussed: the role of impact evaluation in

improving development effectiveness; different approaches and methods of impact evaluation; ways of institutionalizing impact evaluation; how to influence policies and development strategies; how to build capacity in impact evaluation; and early findings from innovative studies.

The event is supported by the African Development Bank, the French Development Agency, Campbell Collaboration, UK Department for International Development, Ford Foundation, Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Following four continent-wide evaluation conferences organized by AfrEA in East Africa (Nairobi, 1999 and 2002), Southern Africa (Cape Town, Dec 2004) and West Africa (Niamey, Jan 2007), it is the first conference of its kind to be held in North Africa. It is also the first organised in partnership with international organizations, including the new International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) and UNICEF.

For further information, please log onto www.impactevaluation2009.org

African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) - www.afrea.org - was founded in 1999 in response to a growing demand in Africa for information sharing, advocacy, and advanced capacity building in evaluation in support of effective development. It is an umbrella organization for more than 20 national M&E associations and networks across Africa, and a resource for individuals in countries where national bodies do not exist. AfrEA works with these national networks, partner organizations and international initiatives to nurture and build a strong African evaluation community that values local knowledge systems and high quality, ethical and useful evaluations that benefit the continent.

Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE) - www.worldbank.org/ieg/nonie - is a network comprised of the OECD/DAC Evaluation Networks, the UN Evaluation Group, the Evaluation Cooperation Group, and the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) - a network of regional evaluation associations. NONIE was formed to promote more and better quality impact evaluations. NONIE aims at providing its members with opportunities for learning, collaboration, guidance, and support for impact evaluations.

International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) - www.3ieimpact.org works to improve the lives of people in the developing world by supporting the production and use of evidence on what works, when, why and for how much. 3ie is a new initiative that responds to demands for better evidence, and will enhance development effectiveness by promoting better informed policies. 3ie will finance high-quality impact evaluations and campaign to inform better program and policy design in developing countries.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - www.unicef.org - is on the ground in 155 countries to support states and societies in developing and analyzing social and economic policies, legislative measures and budgetary allocations which fulfills the rights of women and children. Through policy advocacy and partnership, UNICEF strives to be an effective partner for advancing human rights and the Millennium Development Goals. It generates child rights oriented research and evaluations to be used in policies and programmes that foster the realization of the rights of the most vulnerable.

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