



# IDEAS Conference 2022 - Power of evaluation: Influencing decision making for a better and more equal world

## Operationalizing Feminist Evaluation: Lessons from Global Affairs Canada's Experience



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## **Feminist Evaluation - Global Affairs Canada's Journey**

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## Let's break the ice....

*If we say « feminist evaluation » what words come to mind?*



# GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA'S JOURNEY TOWARDS FEMINIST EVALUATION

We took an incremental and paced approach to integrating feminist evaluation in our practice

FIAP



## Colombia Evaluation

Leveraging feminist researchers in country, we used feminist practice – including participatory practices, alternative ‘storytelling’ techniques (videos) and learning focus – for some case study work.

## Women’s Voice and Leadership Evaluation

First ‘fully feminist’ evaluation.

## Gender Empowerment in the Middle East Evaluation




Developed **Gender Empowerment Measurement Tool** in partnership with Canadian academics and local researcher to measure and define empowerment outcomes (and unintended impacts). Also developing **Privacy Protection Tool** for conducting ethical evaluation with vulnerable populations.

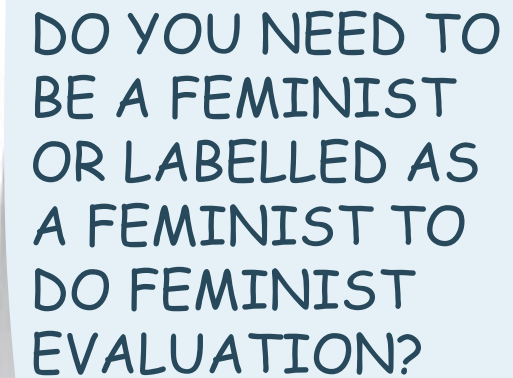
## Knowledge sharing and mainstreaming

We are developing guidance and sharing learning on our feminist journey. We are also working with our teams to integrate feminist evaluation principles in a diversity of evaluations.

# HOW IS FEMINIST EVALUATION DIFFERENT?

A feminist evaluation approach is grounded in **three core feminist beliefs:**

-  1 There should be equity among humans
-  2 Gender inequity leads to social injustice
-  3 Gender-based inequalities are systemic

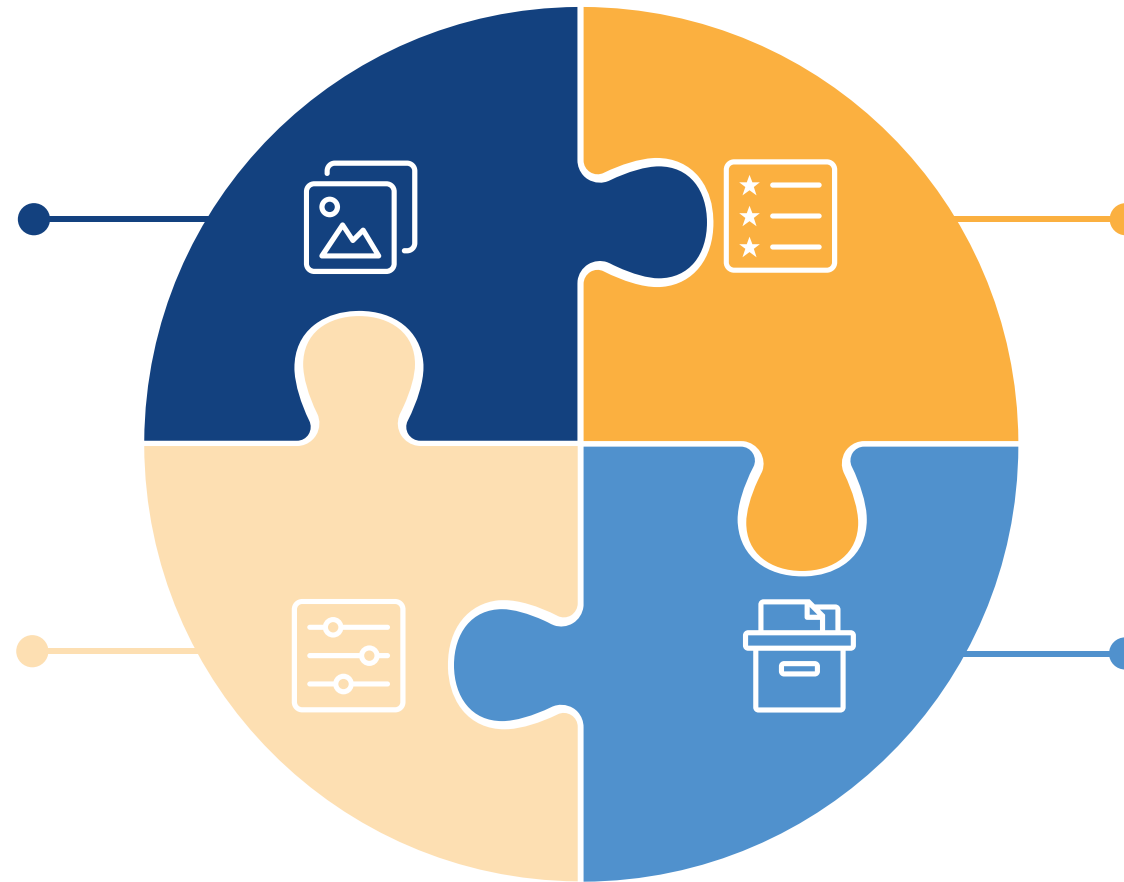


DO YOU NEED TO  
BE A FEMINIST  
OR LABELLED AS  
A FEMINIST TO  
DO FEMINIST  
EVALUATION?

# HOW IS FEMINIST EVALUATION DIFFERENT?

FE provides **a way to think** about the evaluation, not a predetermined set of methods and tools

FE values the evaluation **process** as much as the findings



FE encourages **reflective, empowering, collaborative** and **participatory** processes that actively support **social justice** agendas

FE aims to provide a **platform to women's voices** and others who are often unheard

FE takes an **activist stance!**

# FEMINIST EVALUATION PRINCIPLES



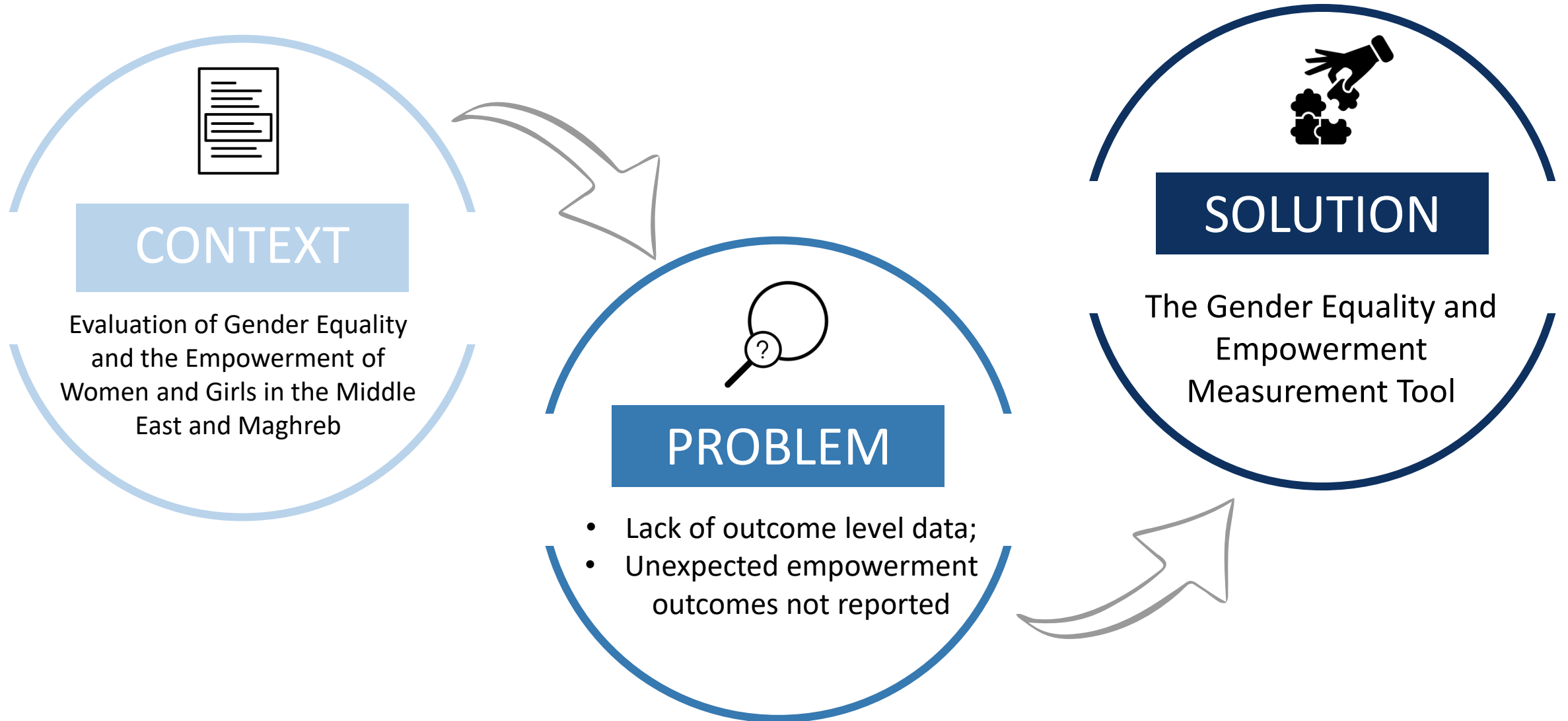
1. Acknowledge and take into account that **evaluation is a political activity**; evaluator's personal experiences, perspectives, and characteristics come from and lead to a particular political stance.
2. Frame **gender inequities** as one **manifestation of social injustice**. Discrimination cuts across race, class, and culture and is inextricably linked to all three.
3. Examine how **discrimination** based on gender is **systemic** and **structural**.
4. Act on **opportunities to create, advocate and support change**, which are considered to be morally and ethically appropriate responses of an engaged feminist evaluator.
5. Be cognizant that **research methods, institutions and practices are social constructs**.
6. **Contextualize evaluation** because knowledge is culturally, socially and temporally contingent. Knowledge should be a resource of and for the people who create, hold, and share it.
7. Generate and use **knowledge as a powerful resource** that serves an explicit or implicit purpose.
8. Respect **multiple ways of knowing**. Some ways are privileged over others.

## **Operationalizing Feminist Evaluation – The GEM tool and the Women’s Voice and Leadership Formative Evaluation**

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# How did the idea come about?



## The GEM Tool

# What is the GEM Tool?






- ✓ Uses feminist methodology to capture information and data about gender equality and empowerment outcomes of development programming.
- ✓ Emphasizes an intersectional approach to data collection.
- ✓ Prioritizes project participant's voices.
- ✓ Gathers information on the barriers and supports for gender equality and empowerment in the project environment.
- ✓ Can be used through virtual platforms or in-person interactions.

### OUR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT JOURNEY

What does gender equality and empowerment look like?

#### Gender impact rating scale

 No gender impacts    Negative gender impacts    Mixed gender impacts    Positive gender impacts

 Economic	 Knowledge	 Physical Security	 Self-Confidence	 Social

#### Barriers and supports for empowerment

	
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# DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A FEMINIST EVALUATION: THE WOMEN'S VOICE AND LEADERSHIP FORMATIVE EVALUATION

A feminist program...



Participation

Inclusion

Empowerment

...needs a feminist evaluation.

# A FEMINIST EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Feminist Evaluation principles (Podems, 2018)	How does this look like in practice? HOW / WHAT WE DO?	How does this look like in practice? WHY / FOR WHOM?	How doable/ applicable is this?
1. Acknowledge and take into account that evaluation is a political activity (...).			
2. Frame gender inequities as one manifestation of social injustice (...).			
3. Examine how discrimination based on gender is systematic and structural.			
4. Act on opportunities to create, advocate and support change (...).			
5. Be cognizant that research methods, institutions and practices are social constructs.			
6. Contextualize evaluation because knowledge is culturally, socially and temporally contingent (...).			
7. Generate and use knowledge as a powerful resource through explicit or implicit purpose.			
8. Respect multiple ways of knowing. Some ways are privileged over others.			

Brainstorming phase

Application phase

Evaluation phases/ components	What are we doing to integrate feminist evaluation principles in WVL formative evaluation?	Relevant feminist principles	Existing opportunities/ resources	Potential limitations/ challenges
1. Team set-up, evaluation management and governance				
2. Planning phase (scoping and design)				
3. Data collection				
4. and analysis phase				
5. Interpretation phase				
6. Report writing phase				
7. Knowledge sharing and use phase				

# KEY FEMINIST FEATURES OF THE WVL FORMATIVE EVALUATION



**Expanded scoping and design consultations**



**Self-reflexive spaces**



**Inclusive governance**



**Deep dives: locally-led feminist case studies**



**Diverse data**



**Participatory sense-making and recommendation development**



**Participant-driven evaluation products and extended knowledge sharing**



# Questions? Comments?



# REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION ROOMS



Leaving no one behind: what it means and what it takes to be truly inclusive and participatory

Who can be a feminist evaluator? Positionality and localization in evaluation teams

How can evaluators be activists? And should they?

# IN CONCLUSION - WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

## THE ADDED VALUE OF FEMINIST EVALUATION



- **It can lead to stronger findings:** it allows evaluators to better see, hear and understand different perspectives.
- **It can contribute to more useful evaluations:** It makes evaluation products more useful for a diversity of evaluation stakeholders in their different contexts
- **It can lead to transformational change:**
  - It allows evaluators to better contribute to change through the means available to them
  - The evaluation process can be transformative in itself for the actors involved

## A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO FEMINIST EVALUATION



- **Feminist evaluation is not the gold standard...**it's important to choose the best evaluation approach in each context.
- **There is no need to be dogmatic** about applying feminist evaluation principles... feminist evaluation can take many different forms.
- **There is no need to use the label « feminist »** to conduct a feminist evaluation.



## WE ARE STILL LEARNING - Questions Moving Forward

How can this approach be adopted for programs that are not feminist or gender focused?

How do we 'keep the spirit' but be more time and budget sensitive?

Where else can the boundaries be pushed?

How can this approach be integrated more widely across our evaluation practice, process and systems?

# Questions? Comments?

**Thank you!**

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