

Foreword

It is with great pleasure and deep appreciation that I introduce this important volume on participatory evaluation in Latin America. For over ten years, the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) has worked alongside diverse actors across Latin America to strengthen evaluation capacities, and this book represents a significant milestone in that ongoing journey.

At the outset of our Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) work in the region, diverse stakeholders called for anchoring participatory evaluation as a core methodological approach in ECD, building on the strong foundation that already existed in the region. Remarkably, this call came not only from civil society organizations but equally from academia and representatives of public institutions. This broad-based interest has, over time, grown into a community of practice whose expertise extends far beyond Latin America and whose collective knowledge is being utilized in diverse ways across the globe.

Participatory evaluation holds a special place in the field of evaluation because it fulfills evaluation's core functions—transparency, accountability, and learning—in particularly powerful ways. Most notably, it transforms learning into a shared experience. Program managers learn side by side with the intended beneficiaries of interventions. Much of this learning occurs during the evaluation process itself, rather than only after reading the final report. This real-time, collective learning is what makes participatory evaluation so vital for Evaluation Capacity Development. Throughout our years of ECD work, we have witnessed how participatory evaluation

enables sustainable learning and often leads to meaningful structural adaptations within organizations and systems. In this sense, participatory evaluation also contributes to strengthening democratic practices by broadening whose perspectives count in assessing public action.

This book is a natural continuation of *Sowing & Harvesting - Participatory Evaluation Handbook*, which provided conceptual and methodological foundations. Now, responding to the demand for concrete examples, this volume presents rich case studies from six countries, offering lessons learned, recommendations, and insights that illuminate the global debate on stakeholder involvement in evaluation processes.

This publication serves as another medium to make years of dedicated work accessible to a broad audience. I hope it will inspire many readers, that they will learn from the experiences shared here and apply these insights to their own contexts. Most importantly—in the true spirit of participatory evaluation and the collaborative work that has flourished in Latin America—I hope this book will spark further dialogue on this crucial evaluation approach, provoke new learning, and strengthen the bonds within a growing global community of practice.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all contributors and to the EvalParticipativa initiative for making this valuable resource possible.

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