

Proposal

**gLOCAL Evaluation Week 2021  
May 31st – June 4th**

Date: 9 April 2021

Submitted by Itad

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9th April, 2021

RE: **Call for proposals, gLOCAL Evaluation Week 2021**

To Whom It May Concern,

Itad is delighted to submit a proposal to contribute to global discussions around bridging the M&E gap and ‘build back better’ in a more inclusive way.

With a view to fostering a ‘culture of learning’ in the development sector by engaging a new generation of evaluators, our proposed events target emerging M&E professionals and offer them the chance to engage in learning, sharing and networking opportunities.

The contact people for this proposal will be Giovanna Voltolina ([Giovanna.voltolina@itad.com](mailto:Giovanna.voltolina@itad.com)) and Fernanda Pinheiro Sequeira ([Fernanda.Pinheiro@itad.com](mailto:Fernanda.Pinheiro@itad.com)).

Yours sincerely,



Jon Cooper

**Partner**

Introduction

**Brief overview of Itad and its work**

[Itad](http://www.itad.com) is a value-driven and independent consultancy firm with a 36-year track record of providing clients with the information and insight they need to make informed, evidence-based decisions to affect development outcomes. We are a specialist evaluation company with a reputation for designing and delivering evaluations and strategic reviews that are independent, rigorous and lead to actionable conclusions and recommendations. Our partners include foundations, public and private sector organisations, governments, corporate clients and non-governmental organisations and our evaluations cover a broad array of topics ranging from health to climate change and migration.

As an independent consultancy, Itad strives for its independence and, by applying its [core values](https://www.itad.com/about/) in evaluations, seeks to contribute to change towards a more equitable and sustainable aid sector. As an expert firm in monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), Itad is constantly exploring new opportunities to learn and be innovative. This also influences the way in which the organisation sees professional development opportunities for its staff. Itad provides a structured skills development career path for entry level consultants and is committed to fostering and disseminating learning, both within the company and in the wider MEL community.

**Itad’s experience in creating the circumstances for professionals to grow and thrive in the MEL sector**

Itad is a learning organisation and is committed to fostering personal and professional development of its staff.

* The company’s efforts to build the capacities of its employees was formalised in 2019, when a **Learning and Development** manager was hired. As a result, the company has periodic training courses in MEL competencies, covering evaluation approaches, bidding techniques, project management skills and smaller sessions on specific tools like coding software and digital boards. We now have an online **Itademy** which is a portal for online learning available to all our staff.
* Itad also benefits from the work of its **Knowledge Hub**, whose job is to guarantee the quality of the company’s work, review cross-company learning on innovative topics and approaches, and disseminating knowledge both within and outside the company.
* Together with the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Sussex and the University of East Anglia (UEA), Itad established the **Centre for Development Impact (CDI)** whose objective is to foster learning and innovation in the field of impact evaluation, by using appropriate, mixed-method, and robust evaluation designs. The CDI thus contributes to broadening the range of evaluation designs and methods available to both funders and evaluators.
* As part of its knowledge and learning efforts, Itad recently doubled-down on its investment in capacity building of young researchers by establishing the **Research Analyst (RA) Pool**. The RA pool creates a space for entry-level staff to join the business and get exposure to all aspects of MEL work and a wide range of topics by rotating across departments (practices). This 12-18-month scheme is supported by a learning and development programme and, by the end of it, research analysts gain the core skills and knowledge to operate as consultants.

Background

**Closing the M&E gap**

The Covid-19 pandemic increased pressure on politicians and decision-makers to demonstrate results and value for money. It also revitalised critiques of conventional monitoring and evaluation approaches which for many reasons do not always include the hard-to-reach - who are now even harder to reach due to social distancing and the digital divide.

Now more than ever, MEL policy and practice need to take on board these lessons so that effective and inclusive user-focused MEL processes can be tested, supported, replicated and scaled.

Closing this ‘M&E gap’ requires not only generating accurate data in an inclusive way, but also finding ways to make that data meaningful to everyone involved, “from community-level planning right up to sector- and national-level policy processes”.[[1]](#footnote-2)

**Itad’s contribution to closing the M&E gap**

At Itad, we are specialised in providing high-quality evidence and insights to help partners make better decisions based on an understanding of what works, how and for whom, anywhere in the world. This means that we deal with the so-called M&E gap every day, as we address the information needs of our partners and strive to disseminate our findings and their implications in a meaningful way.

As part of our efforts to make our work more useful for donors, implementing organisations and, ultimately, the people we’re trying to help, we are increasingly adopting a utility-focused [co-creation approach](https://www.itad.com/article/recommendationsto-co-create-and-or-not-to-co-create/) in our evaluations. ‘Co-creation’ involves working with the end users of evaluations to, for instance, jointly draft recommendations and actions, based on the independently collected, analysed and presented findings. We continue to test new participatory approaches with evaluation stakeholders so that the products of our work (generated using scarce development resources) are relevant and actionable to the people who can do something about them and can make a difference in the real world.[[2]](#footnote-3)

**Creating a broader culture of learning in the development sector**

While co-creating next steps with clients is one way to address the broader challenge of fostering a ‘culture of learning’ in the development sector, involving young and emerging MEL professionals from all around the world in shaping the development sector is another one.

To this end, during the gLOCAL week 2021, Itad wants to convene two learning and exchange workshops for young and emerging evaluators from across the world. These events aim to open a space for junior M&E professionals to learn and improve existing skills, network with their peers and come up with innovative ideas that can contribute to broader thinking around ‘building back better’ with a user focus in the MEL field.

The events

Itad would like to convene two workshops for young and emerging evaluators to exchange knowledge, experience and ideas for **using participatory methods in all evaluation stages, particularly** **to work with youth in conditions in which interactions are increasingly virtual**.

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| **On-line workshop 1: inclusive and participatory *data collection***   * Itad’s experience in participatory data collection with young people: in-person and remote examples (15-20 minutes). * Description of a project situation that requires remote and participatory **data collection methods**, identifying key issues arising (15 minutes). * **Group exercise:** participants are randomly assigned to groups, with the task of making suggestions to address these data collection issues (60-90 minutes). * Groups present their solutions in plenary. Presenters should aim to demonstrate how their suggested solutions are effective, inclusive and innovative. (10-15 minutes per group). * Wrap up on key ideas and learnings emerged during groupwork and presentations. * Best groupwork is chosen by workshop organisers according to criteria of feasibility, creativity and equity. |

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| **On-line workshop 2: inclusive and participatory *data analysis, synthesis and dissemination***   * Itad’s experience in participatory data analysis and synthesis: in-person and remote examples (15 minutes) * Description of a project situation that requires remote and participatory **analysis, synthesis and dissemination methods**, identifying key issues arising (15 minutes) * **Group exercise:** participants are randomly assigned to groups, with the task of making suggestions to address these issues (60-90 minutes) * Groups present their solutions in plenary (10-15 minutes per group) * Wrap up on key ideas and learnings emerged during groupwork and presentations * Best groupwork is chosen by workshop organisers according to criteria of feasibility, creativity and equity. |

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| **Prize**   * The jury will decide which, between the two winning groups from each workshop, is the final winner * Members of the winning team will receive a **UK Evaluation Society (UKES) yearly membership.** |

**Impact**

These workshops will provide young and emerging evaluators with the opportunity to:

* reflect on the practical and methodological implications of current debates on participatory methods in a remote world;
* share ideas in a constructive and creative way;
* network with and learn from peers from around the world; and
* win a yearly UKES membership, which guarantees a year of high-quality MEL events and networking.

**Timeline/process**

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| Action | Timeframe |
| Events’ dates agreed between Itad and gLOCAL Evaluation Week organisers | By 30th April 2021 |
| Itad advertises the event:   * on the Itad website; * on the Itad LinkedIn and Twitter profiles; * through the Institute of Development Studies and Centre for Development Impact (University of Sussex) channels; * through selected university networks, particularly through Development Studies and Social Research Methods departments; * through the Pelican Initiative mailing list; * through VOPE channels. | Until day of event |
| Itad coordinates registration requests and enquiries | Until 25th May |
| Workshop 1: inclusive and participatory data collection | TBD (between 31st May and 4th June) |
| Workshop 2: inclusive and participatory data analysis, synthesis and dissemination | TBD (between 31st May and 4th June) |
| UKES memberships issued by Itad | 7th June 2021 |
| Follow-up survey and participation certificates issued by Itad | 7th June 2021 |

1. Holland, J. “Participatory statistics: a ‘win-win’ for international development” in Holland, J. ed (2013) *Who Counts? The power of participatory statistics*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. We have used this approach on multiple evaluations, including our evaluations of the [UK Public Health Rapid Support Team (UK-PHRST)](https://www.itad.com/knowledge-product/mid-point-evaluation-uk-public-health-rapid-support-team-uk-phrst-final-report/), the Wellcome Trust Drug-Resistant Infections (DRI) Programme, [Adolescents 360](https://www.itad.com/project/evaluation-of-adolescents-360/), [the Hewlett Foundation’s Strategy to Apply Human-Centred Design to Improve Family Planning](https://www.itad.com/knowledge-product/evaluation-of-the-hewlett-foundations-strategy-to-apply-human-centred-design-to-improve-family-planning-and-reproductive-health-in-sub-saharan-africa/) and [Reproductive Health in Sub-Saharan Africa and of Gavi’s Support to Civil Society Organisations](https://www.itad.com/project/evaluation-of-gavis-support-to-civil-society-organisations/), among many others. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)