



#IFADiNnovationTalk No. 13

Join us for an insightful discussion on how brain science can enhance the transformative potential of evaluations and how this is impacting IFAD.

EVALUATION THROUGH THE LENS OF BRAIN SCIENCE:

Building a humanized approach for better results

Date: Wednesday 22 March 2023

Time: 14.00-15.00 CET

Register here:

https://ifad.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qTmyjQrDSe2NGO1H0FKk8w

Background to IFAD Innovation Talk no. 13

The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) supports the impact of the Fund's operations through independent, credible and useful evaluations that promote accountability, learning and partnership. To achieve this goal, IOE assesses IFAD-funded projects and activities to ascertain what works and what does not, and to what extent policies and strategies are doing what they should – alleviating poverty in rural areas.

IOE ensures that the entire evaluation function at IFAD follows internationally recognized good standards and practices, and reflects the latest methodological breakthroughs. In this context, IOE plans to test evaluative approaches that draw from the field of brain science.

Social neuroscience investigations are already being used to great effect in the fields of crime, justice, security, child development, education, mediation, health, and social well-being and social cohesion. Stemming from this success, IOE recognizes that there may be scope for further growing and expanding this use, to apply it to the field of evaluation. Evidence suggests that doing so would likely strengthen evaluators' resilience, help them to find the mechanisms that make policies, programmes and interventions work, and enhance the impact of their communication efforts.

Seeking to further investigate the synergies between neuroscience investigations and evaluation, IOE hosted a seminar titled 'Mindset Strategies for Post-Evaluation Transformation', on 21 April 2022. Delivered by Dr. Srin Pillay, CEO of NeuroBusiness Group. The seminar discussed five myths related to performance appraisal and feedback. In his presentation, Dr. Pillay explained how each of these myths operates in the brain, and then presented the alternatives that people can seek if they want to achieve more effective transformations because of their evaluations.

About the session

This session of the IFAD Innovation Talks series will build on the aforementioned IOE seminar, by discussing how brain science can enhance the transformative potential of evaluations, and how this is impacting IFAD. During the event, Dr. Indran A. Naidoo and Dr. Srin Pillay will delve into the ramifications of building a humanized approach to evaluation. Renata Mirulla, Facilitator of the EvalForward community of practice, will moderate the session.

During the session Dr. Naidoo and Dr. Pillay will address the following questions:

- The fields of neuroscience and evaluation in development contexts would appear unrelated. What prompted IOE to recognize a potential synergy between the two?
- Can the application of neuroscience-based principles improve evaluation processes?
- Can communication approaches to evaluation that encompass neuroscience-based principles trigger transformative change?
- Is IOE planning to test the application of neuroscience principles in its work to help to improve the effectiveness of IFAD? What might be some examples?
- What are the benefits of a constructive engagement between the evaluator and the evaluand?
- Why is it important to establish a psychologically safe environment where people feel open to expressing themselves during an evaluation? How can this be done, in practice, considering the constraints we work in and the different cultural and social norms that influence our behaviours?

In preparation for this session, please see below a list of web-based resources and related publications.

SPEAKERS' PROFILES



Dr. INDRAN A. NAIDOO
Director, Office of
Independent Evaluation,
IFAD

Indran A. Naidoo is the Director of the Independent Office of Evaluation at IFAD. He brings vast global experience into the role having served as the Director of the Independent Evaluation (IEO) of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), where he led the transformation and expansion of the office during his 8 year term. Fundamental transformation milestones included entrenching independence, establishing a budget target through a new evaluation policy, new polices, advancing staff professionalization, diversifying evaluation products, dedicated IEO website, and achieving five-fold expansion of coverage and evaluation efficiency.

He also pursued innovative evaluations, advancing disciplinary boundaries with assessments of institutional effectiveness conducted with the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations. The experience was presented and documented in several publications. Indran has placed emphasis on using evaluation processes as learning and reflective opportunities, and was able to achieve this within the construct of accountability. The National Evaluation Capacity (NEC) series grew under his leadership to become the largest United Nations evaluation capacity building event by country participation, offering training and forums for thought leadership with partners over the period, which saw major co-hosting with government and evaluation partners and networks in South Africa, Brazil, Thailand, Turkey and Egypt. The NEC series engaged with participants from over 170 countries, and generated high-quality evaluation resources.

During his various tenures, he has generated presentations and courses that were selected for instruction internationally. Indran has emphasized the importance of evaluation for good governance, transparency, accountability and learning, and has been active in evaluation networks of the United Nations, as a UNEG Vice-Chair, and former Board member of the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS), and South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA). He services as academic advisor and reviewer for evaluation courses and journals, and has published extensively. At the Public Service Commission (PSC) of South Africa, where he served for 12 years, he helped design and implement monitoring and evaluation systems to measure governance pinned on constitutional values and principles for good governance. In 1995, he entered the field and set up the first monitoring and evaluation Directorate to oversee the land reform program, in post-apartheid South Africa.

Dr. Srin Pillay is known for combining “head and heart” (figuratively and literally) in an approach to personal development and goal mastery that blends science, spirituality, and horns-grabbing joie de vivre to combat the stresses faced by ambitious and high-achieving people in academia, business, and life.

Dr. Pillay is Harvard-Trained psychiatrist and brain researcher, McKinsey & Co. Think Tank member, and CEO of NeuroBusiness Group. He has been voted one of the Top 20 movers and shakers in leadership development in the world.

Dr. Pillay is involved in multiple collaborations on health-related projects. With Harvard Health, he is developing a model on mindset shifts for burnout. He is also in current collaborations with programmers from Google and MIT to develop technologies that reduce anxiety.

Dr. Pillay has also provided support to major international institutions, including the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Furthermore, he speaks and teaches throughout the US, Canada, London, Paris, Switzerland, India, Greece and Brazil, and advises Fortune 500 companies.



Dr. SRINI PILLAY
CEO of NeuroBusiness
Group



Renata Mirulla is the facilitator of EvalForward, a Community of Practice on Evaluation in agriculture, food security and rural development, jointly supported by the evaluation offices of FAO, IFAD, WFP and the CGIAR. She supports knowledge sharing and capacity development activities, highlighting good evaluation practices and enhancing the role of evaluation in decision-making. EvalForward has over 1,500 registered members and is a well-known platform in the M&E and evaluation community.

Prior to joining evaluation, Renata worked as a policy officer at the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum) in FAO, and earlier as a sustainability and environmental management expert at the Italian Ministry of Environment and in private research institutes

She holds a master's degree in political sciences from Università La Sapienza, Rome.

RENATA MIRULLA
Facilitator, EvalForward
Community of Practice,

Hosting organization

IFAD is an international financial institution and specialized United Nations agency based in Rome, the UN's food and agriculture hub. Since 1978, the Fund has provided US\$23.2 billion in grants and low-interest loans to projects that have reached an estimated 518 million people. At the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) we invest in rural people, empowering them to increase their food security, improve the nutrition of their families and increase their incomes. We help them build resilience, expand their businesses and take charge of their own development.

About NeuroBusiness Group

Neuro Business Group (<https://nbgcorporate.com/>) was founded to take the groundbreaking research in brain science, human psychology and business outcomes synthesized by Dr. Srin Pillay and use it to achieve measurable progress in business, public health, government, and organizational behavior.

About EvalForward

EvalForward (<https://www.evalforward.org/>) is a Community of Practice on Evaluation for Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development. It brings together officers and professionals to exchange experiences and to strengthen capacities for evaluation at country level. EvalForward intends to contribute to the assessment of progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

About the IFAD INNOVATION TALKS

IFAD Innovation Talks are a series of learning and knowledge sharing sessions, lasting one hour. They feature innovative approaches, tools, products and services developed by IFAD, its partners and the members of the IFAD Innovation Network in order to further the aims of the network. The Talks follow various formats: from interviews and panel discussions to TEDx talks and demonstrations of new technological tools.

About the IFAD INNOVATION NETWORK

The IFAD Innovation Network is an informal, democratic, non-hierarchical space to share ideas, good practices, tools and lessons learned on how members can use innovation to improve performance and better address the needs and challenges of our target groups and beneficiaries.

This group is open to IFAD staff, representatives of IFAD's members, fellow United Nations and Development Finance Institutions colleagues, representatives of academia, research centres, think tanks and the private sector, and those who wish to contribute to advancing innovation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Don't hesitate to get involved and share your ideas with us!

If you're not a member yet, apply to join us here: <https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/IFADInnovation>

Web-based resources

- Mindset Strategies for Post-Evaluation Transformation [[seminar - video](#)]
- Mindset Strategies for Post-Evaluation Transformation [[seminar - summary fact sheet](#)]
- Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) [[here](#)]
- NeuroBusiness Group [[here](#)]
- Performance appraisal and feedback myths debunked. Independent Magazine, issue 4 [[here](#)]

Reference publications

- Bargh, J. A., Green, M., & Fitzsimons, G. (2008). The Selfish Goal. *Social Cognition*, 26(5), 534-554 [[here](#)]
- Boyatzis, R., Smith, M., & Beveridge, A. (2013). Coaching With Compassion. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 49, 153-178 [[here](#)]
- Clemenson, G. D., Maselli, A., Fiannaca, A. J., Miller, A., & Gonzalez-Franco, M. (2021). Rethinking GPS navigation: Creating cognitive maps through auditory clues. *Scientific Reports*, 11, 7764 [[here](#)]
- Gnepp, J., Klayman, J., Williamson, I. O., & Barlas, S. (2020). The future of feedback: Motivating performance improvement through future-focused feedback. *PLoS ONE*, 15(6), e0234444 [[here](#)]
- Keller, S., & Price, C. (2011). *Beyond Performance: How Great Organizations Build Ultimate Competitive Advantage* (1 edition). Wiley.
- Naidoo, I. (2019). 'Architecture for Evaluation Effectiveness', in *Leaving no one behind: Evaluation for 2030. Proceedings from the 2019 National Evaluation Capacities Conference*. Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP, USA [[here](#)] [[video](#)]
- Schwabe, L., & Wolf, O. T. (2009). Stress prompts habit behavior in humans. *The Journal of Neuroscience: The Official Journal of the Society for Neuroscience*, 29(22), 7191-7198 [[here](#)]
- Using change management strategies to increase the odds of success | McKinsey. (n.d.).
- van Woerkom, M., & Kroon, B. (2020). The Effect of Strengths-Based Performance Appraisal on Perceived Supervisor Support and the Motivation to Improve Performance. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1883 [[here](#)]
- Wegner, D. M. (1994). Ironic processes of mental control. *Psychological Review*, 101(1), 34-52 [[here](#)]