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Chapter 1

African Rooted Paradigms, Frameworks, Methods and Tools

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ABSTRACT

The chapter explores the integration of African-rooted philosophies and frameworks into evaluation practices, advocating for methodologies that align with Indigenous ontological and epistemological perspectives. It highlights the inherent conflict between prevailing Euro-Western paradigms and the needs of formerly colonized peoples. Through a synthesis of literature and commissioned reports, the authors emphasize the significant role of African philosophies in shaping evaluation theories and practice. Key contributions to the discourse are drawn from prominent scholars in the field, promoting paradigms such as the Afrocentric and post-colonial indigenous paradigm. The chapter calls for developing evaluation frameworks responsive to African contexts, histories, and communal values, ultimately aiming to transform the evaluation landscape in Africa by centering Indigenous knowledge systems and relationality in the evaluation process to ensure social justice and ethical practice.

INTRODUCTION

How can we justly address implementation and outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals when the ontological and epistemological assumptions that drive the discipline are in conflict with Indigenous ontological and epistemological assumptions of the formerly colonized peoples of Africa and Indigenous peoples of New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and the USA? Training that continuously emphasizes Euro-western Paradigms is a threat to the growth of a MAE built on the philosophies and world views of African people and aimed at transforming evaluation in Africa. In response to the threat, a decolonization wave that is driving a call for Indigenous paradigms offers an opportunity for the growth of African-rooted evaluation and its transformative agenda. The emphasis is on evaluation that takes into account Africa's context and needs (Michelitsch, 2019). Chilisa (2020) and Chilisa and Mertens (2021) argue that the evaluation can best pay attention to the needs and context of Africans and other formerly colonized societies if it is articulated in a separate evaluation tree branch with clear philosophical assumptions that drive the evaluation process.

The discourse on the paradigms is derived from the 2015, AfrEA Commissioned report described in chapter one. The literature is triangulated and complemented by the 2022, Evalpartners Commissioned report that sought to assess the worldviews, philosophies, frameworks and principles that guide the MAE. Furthermore, a scoping review following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-analysis – PRISMA (Moher et al., 2015; Page et al., 2021) and its Extension for Scoping Reviews - PRISMA-ScR (Tricco et al., 2018) sponsored by Mastercard Foundation was conducted in 2024 to synthesis African philosophies, frameworks and tools in evaluation.

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHIES AND EVALUATION

In Africa, the role of philosophy in informing evaluation can be credited to the African Evaluation Association and its leaders. The late Sulley Gariba advocated for evaluation informed by African philosophies.

With Michael Patton he fielded the keynote address at the 4th 2007 AfrEA conference that laid the foundation for the Special Sector on Making Evaluation our Own. It was at this conference that AfrEA adopted the statement that evaluation in Africa should be informed by African philosophies, world views, experiences and history. He is one of the founding members of the MAE concept.

A synthesis of the AfrEA commissioned report (Chilisa 2015) the Evalpartners commissioned study (Chilisa 2022), and the Mastercard Foundation funded systematic review on African rooted philosophies, frameworks, and tools (Chilisa et al 2024) identified scholars who have contributed to the role of philosophy in the discourse on evaluation. The contributors are mainly from Southern and Eastern Africa. The contributors reveal how African ways of perceiving reality, knowledge systems, values, and culture inform evaluation theorising and practice in general. Assumptions about the nature of realities (ontology), knowledge (epistemology), and values (axiology). The contributors also discuss the process and methodology of how evaluation is conceptualised, from program initiation to evaluation design, analysis and interpretation, and dissemination of findings. Six African thinkers who argue for African-rooted philosophies and paradigms are highlighted as follows:

Asante (1990) proposed the Afrocentric Paradigm,
Carroll (2008) Afrikana Centered Worldview,
Muwanga-Zake, J. W, F. (2009) Ubuntu and Afrocentric paradigms,
Chilisa (2011, 2019) the Postcolonial Indigenous Paradigm,
Asante and Archibald (2023) Ubuntu, Nnoboa and Sankofa,
Kane and Archibald (2023) Ubuntu and Afrofeminism

THE AFROCENTRIC PARADIGM

The role of philosophy in evaluation started in the 1990's with Molefi Kente Asante discourse on the Afrocentric paradigm. The Afrocentric paradigm epistemology is rooted in spirituality, communalism, cooperation, and morality. He also identified Ma'at and Nommo extracted from the Nile valley civilisation as the two principles intrinsic to African culture. From Maat are derived seven principles of truth, justice, rightness, propriety, harmony, order, balance, and reciprocity. Nommo explains the production of knowledge as a vehicle to improve the quality of life of the people. Mkabela (2005) went on to build on the Afrocentric paradigm, adding that Afrocentrist argue for the pluralism of philosophical views.

Methodologies derived from the Afrocentric paradigm are developed in the context of African history, culture and philosophy, for use with Africans and people of African descent. They can also serve as reference for research and evaluation with other marginalised Indigenous people because the issues addressed are common across most societies that suffered colonialism (Baugh and Guin 2006).

THE AFROCENTRIC-UBUNTU PARADIGM

The Afrocentric paradigm continues to inform research and evaluation, for example, Muwanga-Zake J. W. F. (2009), applies the principles of the Afrocentric paradigm and the Ubuntu philosophy to the evaluation of a program. He applies the Ubuntu elements of collaboration, togetherness, cooperation and consensus building in evaluation practice. He further applies the Afrocentric core principles of holding researchers and evaluators responsible for uncovering hidden, subtle and racist theories embedded in current methodologies to evaluation practice. He maintains that researchers and evaluators should take responsibility for legitimising the centrality of African ideals and maintaining inquiry rooted in strict interpretation of place.

AFRIKANA CENTRED WORLDVIEW AFRIKANA

Also linking research and evaluation to philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge and values is Carroll (2008) whose work is intended for Africa and the Diaspora. Caroll introduced the Afrikana Centered Worldview, characterised by seven foundational assumptions guiding research and evaluation within Africana contexts. These assumptions encompass Afrikan Cosmology, Afrikan Ontology, African Axiology, Afrikan Epistemology, Afrikan Logic, Afrikan Ideology, and Afrikan Teleology, serving as indispensable constructs for researchers and evaluators when engaging with African populations. Collectively, Carroll's work recognises how people relate to the cosmos, the ontological connectedness of love and harmony that exists between people and the cosmos. Some of the issues that Carroll's paradigm asks researchers to consider include how the evaluation inquiry reflect on the interdependent and interconnected nature of the universe, compensate for the spiritual and material nature of reality, reflect the communal nature of African people, access the nonmaterial reality, reflect both/and logic, advance the interests of the African community, and contribute to the liberation of the African people.

THE POSTCOLONIAL INDIGENOUS PARADIGM

Chilisa is considered by some as a leading scholar on decolonizing research and evaluation in the global south Van den Berg (2023), while some Blaser-Mapitsa (2022) credit her with laying the foundation on the role of IKS as a body of thought that should inform research and evaluation methodologies. Chilisa's groundbreaking book Indigenous research methodologies 2011, 2019 other works Chilisa 2009, 2007, 2015, 2017, 2024, Chilisa and Preece (2005), Chilisa and Malunga 2012, Chilisa and Phatshwane 2022, Chilisa and Mertens 2021, contributed to the field of research and evaluation methodologies in four important ways. Building on Asante (1990) Baugh and Guin (2006) Chilisa's work situates IKS in Africa as a body of thought on equal footing with Western thought and

equally valuable in addressing global problems. She cites IKS as a powerful tool for inventiveness, abstract thinking, theory building and development of models and tools unique to Africa yet available and amiable for adaptation in other cultures, Western and Non-Western. She proposed a postcolonial indigenous paradigm driven by relational ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies that are derived from the ubuntu philosophy. Postcolonial theory, critical theory and race-based theory also inform the lens of a postcolonial indigenous paradigm. Chilisa has demonstrated the application of a postcolonial indigenous paradigm applying postcolonial theories and critical theory to qualitative research and evaluation methodologies (Chilisa and Phatshwane (2022) and to mixed methods (Chilisa 2024). She also proposed ethical principles based on relational ontology and epistemologies (Chilisa 2022, Chilisa and Mertens 2022).

She goes further to argue that a postcolonial indigenous paradigm shares common assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge, and values with Indigenous peoples of Canada, New Zealand, and other societies that suffered European slavery and colonisation. Building on this thinking, she proposed a fifth branch in the metaphorical evaluation tree that she called the context and needs branch. Relationality, spirituality, context, and conceptualising evaluation from the initial design of the program and applying a decolonial lens are the unique characteristics of the context needs and priorities branch. Chilisa discusses the relational ontology, epistemology and axiological assumption as follows:

Relational Ontology

Among the Bantu people, there is recognition of an I/We relationship as opposed to the I/You, which emphasises the individual at the expense of the majority. This principle is captured under the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. An *Ubuntu* philosophy expresses an ontology that addresses relations among people, relations with the living and the non-living, and a spiritual existence that promotes love and harmony among peoples and communities (Chilisa 2005, 2012). This African way of perceiving reality comes out more clearly when addressing the nature of being. The common answer on what is being comes out in the adage

I am because we are, I am a person through other persons I am we; I am because we are; we are because I am, I am in you, you are in me. The 'we' includes the living and the non-living thus an African reality includes a spiritual and a material existence (Carroll 2008). African ontology recognises peoples' relations to the cosmos, an interdependent interconnectedness that promotes peace, love and harmony. The implication for evaluation research methodology is that all areas of culture, living experience and indigenous knowledge systems must be used to conceptualise the realities to be evaluated and to come up with techniques through which these realities can be known.

Relational epistemology

A relational epistemology draws our attention to relational forms of knowing as opposed to the Euro-Western theories on ways of knowing that emphasise individual descriptions of knowing (Thayer Bacon 2003). Knowing is something that is socially constructed by people who have relationships and connections with each other, with the environment, the spirits of the ancestors and the living and the non-living. The African epistemology is oriented towards an Affect-Symbolic-Imagery such that an affective oriented evaluator studies reality through the interaction of affect and symbolic imagery (Carroll 2008). Emphasis is on the use of words, gestures, dance, song, rhythm, well-established general beliefs, concepts, and theories of particular people, which are stored in their language, practices, rituals, proverbs, revered traditions, myths and folktales to access or convey meaning (Carroll 2008, Chilisa 2012). These modes of knowing are the basis for the choice of methods for accessing a reality that has a connection with the knower and a means of verification of this reality.

Relational Axiology

Axiology refers to the nature of values and attempts to answer the question what do we value? The value system of most African societies is built around respect for others and oneself. This respect is

built around the concept '*humanness or personhood*' (Segobye 2000:3) or respect. A relational axiology that is embedded in the Ubuntu relational ontology principles of (1) I am we; I am because we are: (2) relations of people with the living and the non-living; and (3) spirituality, love, harmony and community building (Chilisa 2012). There is emphasis on values grounded in cooperation, collective responsibilities, cooperation and interdependence and interpersonal relationships among people as the highest value (Carroll 2008). From these principles, an ethical framework emerges with an emphasis on accountable responsibilities of researchers and evaluators and respectful relationships between the researchers and evaluators, and the participants that take account of the participants' web of relationships with the living and the non-living. These value orientations also influence the evaluation theory of change, criteria or standards, indicators of success or failure of projects and conclusions about the worth or merit of programs, policies or projects.

They complement these principles and add valuable dimensions emanating from African philosophical assumptions on relationality. Whereas the UNGE ethical principles emphasize the role of the individual-the evaluator, these principles, based on an I/we relationship places responsibility of a successful evaluation process on all stakeholders, including beneficiaries, funders, and commissioners.

1. RELATIONALITY: The emphasis is on belongingness, togetherness, interdependence, collectiveness, love, harmony and relationships of humans with each other and with earth-creation. There is emphasis on valuing community strength and building community relationships to inform research or evaluation intent, motive, and methodology. Implicit in this principle is the need for healing of communities. The 'hand in hand' is a method based on the principle of relationality that serves to build relationships and coalitions for working together during the evaluation.
2. RESPONSIBILITY: It is about the role of a researcher or evaluator in pursuing social, economic, and environmental

justice, resisting dominant ideologies that silence local communities and community ideologies that discriminate on the basis of gender, class, ethnicity, race, ableness, age etc.; and contributing to, unity, and harmony within the community and of all stakeholders' responsibility in playing their roles.

3. REVERENCE: Indigenous research recognizes the critical nature of spirituality and values it as an important contribution to ways of knowing. Many Indigenous people place value on sacred sites and spiritual practices. The evaluator or researcher applying a relationality lens needs to figure out what is revered, how they will participate in it and how it will inform interpretation of their findings and feed into a radical change of program development, design, planning and implementation.
4. RECIPROCITY: Whose development program is it? Who initiated it and how will they benefit from it? Who will hear and learn from it? These are fundamental questions that address the pitfall of colonial research that serves the interests of the funders and commissioners. Requiring evaluators to pay attention to who initiated the program helps to hold governments accountable to their citizens instead of serving as an easy market for projects floating in the North.
5. RESPECTFUL (representation): Respect requires that the process, from the initiation of the research, the questions asked, the methodology, the data-collection procedures, and the reporting and dissemination of the report, is guided by the community and that the community has ownership and access to the data collected. This should include the evaluator's recognition of Indigenous knowledge holders' specialist knowledge and their contribution to the knowledge production and respect for diversity (Evalparrners, 2021).
6. REFLEXIVITY: The principle of reflexivity requires evaluators and commissioners and all stakeholders to continuously reflect on their position within existing powers and ensure that the evaluation will addresses the priority needs of communities.

Radical change can happen if evaluation ethics direct donors and commissioners to reflect on current practice in Africa where evaluation too often provides performance assessment compliance and accountability functions for donors and commissioners at the expense of the learning agenda and relational knowing.

7. RESPONSIVITY: Responsiveness is the ability of researchers or evaluators to learn from the process, recognize the evolving changes, and adapt their approaches and methodologies to become the change agent, and ensure a context based, and culturally sensitive and appropriate evaluation process. South to south evaluation approaches are to play a critical role in transforming program design, planning and implementation. Evaluators under this principal question 'learning' for whom. Under the conventional model the evaluator's role main role is to provide performance assessment for funders and commissioners and perform compliance and accountability functions, not communal learning.
8. RIGHTS AND REGULATIONS: This calls for ethical protocols that accord communities the rights and opportunities to prioritize their needs, claim and guard against misappropriation of Indigenous knowledge and have the rights to confidentiality.

DECOLONIZATION and decoloniality: This calls evaluators to resist the blind borrowing of Western theories, conceptual frameworks, and methodologies, and to adapt these methodologies and theories where necessary to make them contextually and culturally relevant. When done well, adaptation leads to new method theories that are African-rooted. It calls for decolonization of self and cultivation of knowledge through the formation of coalitions See Table 1 show elements of post-colonial indigenous research paradigm.

Table 1: *Postcolonial Indigenous research paradigm*

Reason for doing the research	To challenge deficit thinking and pathological descriptions of the formerly colonized and reconstruct a body of knowledge that carries hope and promotes transformation and social change among the historically oppressed
Philosophical underpinnings	Informed by indigenous knowledge systems, critical theory, postcolonial discourses, feminist theories, critical race-specific theories, and neo- Marxist theories
Ontological assumptions	Socially constructed multiple realities shaped by the set of multiple connections that human beings have with each other, the environment, the cosmos, the living, and the non-living
Place of values in the research process	All research must be guided by a relational accountability that promotes respectful representation, reciprocity, and rights of the researched. The ethics theory is informed by appreciative inquiry and desire-based perspectives
Nature of knowledge	Knowledge is relational, as is all the indigenous knowledge systems built on relations
What counts as truth	It is informed by the set of multiple relations that one has with the universe
Methodology	Participatory, liberatory, and transformative research approaches and methodologies that draw from indigenous knowledge systems, anchored in relationship building and peoples' connectedness with each other and the environment, values the physical, the spiritual, the emotional, historical, social, and the ideological aspect of the research phenomena
Techniques of gathering data	Techniques based on relationship building and connectedness of people with each and with the environment, ethnophilosophy, language frameworks, indigenous knowledge systems, talk stories, and talk circles; songs, rituals and adapted techniques from the other four paradigms

Adapted from Chilisa B (2019) Indigenous Research methodologies, London, Sage.

OTHER PHILOSOPHIES

Ethno-philosophy, philosophic sagacity, national ideological philosophy, African logic and teleology are additional aspects of African worldviews that can enrich the articulation of a relational evaluation paradigm and its methodologies.

Ethno-philosophy: It has been described as a system of thought that articulates analysis and attempt to understand the collective worldviews of diverse African peoples as a unified form of knowledge (Emagalit, 2001; Chilisa 2005). According to this philosophy knowledge are the experiences of the people encoded in their language, folklore, stories, songs, culture, values and experiences. The language, stories, songs and folklore are the banks where the knowledge is stored and can be retrieved to inform theory and practice in evaluation for example. Easton (2012), for instance, has originated ways to contextualise five common evaluation concepts based on proverbs. Community spirit, cooperation, collectiveness, democracy and consensus building are the values espoused through this philosophy (Chilisa 2005).

Nationalistic-ideological philosophy: This is a political philosophy represented through the thinking of Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Leopold Senghor and Thabo Mbeki and more visible through the African renaissance and Africanisation concepts. The African renaissance is supposed to have originated from Mbeki's declaration in 1998 'I am an African' (Nabudere 2002) and expressed through nationalist movements such as Pan Africanism and Black Consciousness (Prah 1999, Mamdani 1999). African renaissance has been defined as a re- awakening of mind that is driven by '*an African intelligentsia that includes all those who drive creative thought and frame debates, whether in the arts or culture, whether in philosophical or social thought*' (Mamdani (1999:130). It is a search for identity, a redefinition and re-evaluation of the self and of Africa in the context of a globalising world. Makogoba, Shope and Mazwani, 1999 have defined as:

The African Renaissance as a unique opportunity for Africans to define ourselves and our agenda according to our own realities and considering the

realities of those around us. It's about Africans being agents of history and master of our destiny, Africa is in a transformation mode. The renaissance is about Africa reflection and African redefinition.

Along with the African renaissance concept is the Africanisation concept which refers to '*a process of placing the African worldview at the centre of analysis*' (Teffo, 2000: 107). It can be viewed as an empowerment tool directed towards the mental decolonisation, liberation and emancipation of Africans, so that they do not see themselves only as objects of research and consumers or borrowers of knowledge, but also as producers of knowledge capable of theorising about the production of knowledge in ways embedded in the cultures and experiences of the African peoples (Chilisa 2005).

African Teleology: A sense of directedness towards definite ends and definite purpose which in turn compels commitment to a given goal. The implication for evaluation is that the evaluation inquiry must question the relevance and functionality of a program, project or policy.

African Logic: The emphasis is on a di-unital logic as opposed to the either/or logic common in Euro-American thought.

AFRICAN ROOTED EVALUATION: COMMON PRINCIPLES

African rooted evaluation paradigms and frameworks have the following elements:

1. African Histories. These enable evaluators to understand the origins of African people and how these origins have over the years influenced how African people generate their ways of knowing and conduct evaluations in their contexts.
2. African Ontologies. These are informed by African philosophies, for example, the philosophy of Ubuntu. The philosophy of Ubuntu recognizes how African people relate

with each other, their environment and the cosmos. It promotes interdependence and interconnectedness centred on the spirit of peace, love and harmony. The ontologies guide evaluators to understand how to conduct evaluations that are relevant and promote community relationships.

3. African Epistemologies: They are also informed by African philosophies. Drawing from the Ubuntu philosophy for example, knowing is something that is socially constructed by people who have relationships and connections with each other, with the environment, the spirits of the ancestors and the living and the non-living. The epistemologies guide evaluators on what counts as knowledge and towards inclusive and more just and ethical practices in evaluation.
4. African Axiologies: They also draw from African philosophies. They focus on the values and principles that guide most African communities. The concept of humanness, interconnectedness and relationship building is at the centre of African Axiologies and inform ethical evaluation practices.
5. African Cosmology: It is rooted in African knowledge and understanding of the universe and sacred or spiritual interactions in African communities. African Cosmology should ground African evaluations to clearly understand the inner working of African communities.
6. African Ideology: It is a set of values and principles that guide African people particularly in relationship to development and evaluations in Africa. The African Renaissance ideology and Africanisation concept prioritize African-based solutions to African development challenges
7. African Teleology: It includes the incorporation of African environmental ethics in evaluations.
8. African Logic: It informs how evidence in evaluation is viewed. Evidence is more inclusive and not a search for a contrast, where it is either this or that, but a process that embraces all voices to come to a communal conclusion.

9. Contextually Relevant Evaluation. The emphasis is on ensuring that evaluators understand and implement context in their evaluation and interactions with the communities. Often the challenge is in what context entails. Context entails how a material and non-material reality is built into the evaluation process. The spirituality context framework described in this chapter features five principles, namely, the people, environment, place, space, and time as guiding factors that can lead to a holistic approach to contextualising evaluation.
10. Mutual Respect for Communities: It requires recognition and respect of the cultural values, norms, and beliefs of African communities. The recognition that cultural values, norms and beliefs exist can help to situate the evaluation in the very culture in which the project is implemented. This ensures culturally responsive and equitable evaluation.
11. Stakeholder, engagement, participation, involvement and ownership of projects. The Evaluations must be inclusive of all stakeholders. The Engagement, Participation, Involvement, and Ownership (EPIO) framework described in this chapter provides a unique Afrocentric framework for planning, managing and evaluating projects that lead to people-centered solutions, ownership and sustainability of projects.
12. African Feminist approaches: Reviewing the community through an African Feminist lens ensures that women are not included as a by-product, but it also ensures that the complexities of gender are taken into account in the evaluation.
13. Transformative Approaches: Tools, methods, frameworks and paradigms promote social justice, ethical practice and contribute to development projects that transform people's lives and lead to better livelihoods.

Source: *B. Chilisa, W. Nderitu, R. Nabbumba, B Koyabe, F. Mwaijande, J. Govender, T. Major, S. Koloi-Keaikitse, M. Ramasobana, M. Frehiwot, M. Gaotlhobogwe, Pheko, B (2024) Mapping African-rooted Evaluation frameworks and tools. Research funded by the Mastercard Foundation*

Table 2: *Africa-rooted Evaluation Frameworks*

Evaluation Framework	**The Argument**	**Key Tenants**	**Philosopher**
Responsive Evaluation	It is a framework rooted in African philosophies, theories and knowledge systems	Relational networks; Ubuntu ideals and harmony	Boadu and Ile, 2019
Indigenously Responsive Evaluation	Premised on tangible and intangible evaluative dimensions deeply rooted in cultural values and norms within the indigenous communities.	Cultural values, sayings, maxims, norms, local social patterns	Boadu and Ile, 2022
Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE)	The argument is that evaluative impulses are embedded in indigenous relational structures, values, and other cultural realities.	Relationality Cultural values Other Cultural realities	Boadu and Ile, 2023
The Ideal Community Development Evaluation	Built on five Ubuntu principles being sharing and collective ownership of opportunities, responsibilities and challenges, relationships over things, participatory decision making and leadership.	People-centric Sharing, Collective ownership, Responsibility Relationships, Participation	Chilisa and Mulunga (2012)

Table 2: *Africa-rooted Evaluation Frameworks (Continued)*

Evaluation Framework	**The Argument**	**Key Tenants**	**Philosopher**
Adaptive Evaluation Frameworks	Emphasis is on the adaptation of Western evaluation models, theories, and instruments to make them contextually relevant, culturally appropriate, and inclusive of local stakeholders and African evaluators.	Adaptation of western evaluation models, theories and instruments	Carden and Alkin (2012)
The African Evaluation Model	Focuses on restoration, revitalization, retribution, and protection of African identities and values to address historical injustices within Indigenous African communities.	Restoration, Revitalisation, Retribution, Protection of African identities and values, Decolonisation, Indigenisation and Justice	Gaotlhobogwe, Major, Koloi-Keaikitse, &Chilisa (2016)
Realist Evaluation for Made in Afr Source: Research funded by the Mastercard Foundation Ica	Considers that an intervention is effective because of the decision-making of programme participants. It illustrates and exposes the importance of the value system of the participants.	Contextual environments, Traditional belief systems and Africa-centric evaluation perspective	Mbava and Chapman, (2020)

Source: B. Chilisa, W. Nderitu, R. Nabbumba, B Koyabe, F. Mwaijande, J. Govender, T. Major, S. Koloi-Keaikitse, M. Ramasobana, M. Frehiwot, M. Gaotlhobogwe, Pheko, B (2024) Mapping African rooted Evaluataion frameworks and tools.

AFRICA ROOTED EVALUATION FRAMEWORKS

Whilst there are frameworks developed to guide evaluation in indigenous science evaluation elsewhere in the world, African philosophers have come up with frameworks which they believe are appropriate for use in African contexts. Table 2 below shows the evolution of some of the evaluation frameworks in Africa and their key argument points, as well as African scholars championing them.

Recently, the PanAfrican Indigenous Evaluation Consortium co-created, co-designed and pilot-tested five evaluation frameworks as follows:

The five frameworks that will be pilot tested are:

1. ***Spirituality Framework***: People, Environment, Place, Space, Time (PEPST). The framework contributes to the development of a holistic understanding of a contextualized evaluation rooted in the understanding of a world that is interconnected, spiritual, and seeking balance and harmony. The framework centers on five principles, namely: people, environment, place, space and time and how they should guide the meaning of context and power negotiations in project planning and evaluation to maintain balance and harmony and thus contribute to community ownership and sustainability of projects. These principles are anchored on six pillars, namely, Connectedness and Harmony, 2) Preservation of the sacred, 3) Mutual respect and humility 4) Sensitivity to cultural norms and values of any group, 5) Responsibility and accountability to and by members of the society and 6) Relational coexistence and relational power. The framework can guide project initiation, design, implementation and project monitoring and impact evaluation.
2. ***Pamoja Safarini Indigenous Theory of Practice***. The Pamoja Theory of Practice presents an indigenous theory of change informed by African philosophies, values, culture and

experiences. It has seven principles that guide the theory of change: Umoja, Sankofa, Njiani, Holistic outlook, visual depiction, Dhani, and Maono. The Theory of Practice can be applied across all the phases of any policy, portfolio, program or project. The framework promotes a design journey and process geared to achieve sustainable development and is heavily reliant on and should be informed by the community's indigenous aspirations and goals and underpinned by the triad principle of partnership, inclusion and mutual support.

3. ***The Engagement, Participation, Involvement, and Ownership (EPIO)*** provides a unique Afrocentric framework for planning, managing and evaluating projects that lead to people-centered solutions, ownership and sustainability of projects. It emphasizes social responsibility which entails fostering genuine collaboration, ensuring inclusiveness, promoting shared accountability, and empowering communities to take ownership of their development while honoring their cultural values, knowledge systems, and collective aspirations.
4. ***Ngwanake***: is a youth-empowered framework, that engages youth in merging Technology with Indigenous knowledge to facilitate better youth participation. The framework includes participatory design of project theory, monitoring and evaluation tools and methods with a focus on cultural grounding, usefulness and inclusion of youth in African programs. It focuses on youth evaluation capacity strengthening; anchored on Ubuntu Philosophical underpinnings and the integration of youth-friendly technology. The framework may be used during goals and objectives setting, project design and implementation, and evaluation execution.
5. ***Community-Based Language Evaluation Tool***: It contributes to initiating, designing and implementing projects in a manner that is aligned to the norms, beliefs and practices of African people for increased ownership, impact and sustainability

of project interventions. The CoLABEV advocates for voice, participation, inclusiveness, unity, relations, respect, connectedness and wellness in interventions. In the pilot testing phase, we shall focus on proverbs which are widely entrenched in most African communities. The framework may be used at all stages of the project evaluation cycle and more especially at project design and implementation, and evaluation execution. It enables cultural grounding of project planning, management and evaluation, helping youth and communities to build relationships and engage in collective action and promoting unity.

Source: B. Chilisa, W. Nderitu, R. Nabbumba, B Koyabe, F. Mwaijande, J. Govender, T. Major, S. Koloi-Keaikitse, M. Ramasobana, M. Frehiwot, M. Gaotlhobogwe, Pheko, B (2024)

AFRICAN ROOTED DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND TOOLS

Methods and tools within African Rooted Evaluations can be understood as processes and practices to collect and collate knowledge and information embedded within the cultural identity, beliefs, and values of African communities. While evaluations have historically applied and documented Eurocentric methods and tools within Indigenous African-Rooted Evaluations, such as standard data collection processes, there exist indigenous, culturally characterized methods and tools that are intrinsically rooted in African traditions. The methods can be expressed in four categories, namely: storytelling, conversations, decision-making and review, and spirituality. Table 3 describes the categories, and a summary of African Rooted Methods and Tools Identified is shown in Table 4.

Table 3: *Categories of African Rooted Methods*

Story Telling	Storytelling using dance, drawing and music dominates the examples shared by respondents and is frequently mentioned in the literature. However, no clear processes and examples have been curated. Most Significant Change and Impact Stories do share some guidance but are not African rooted. Storytelling can be adapted to be used for qualitative information gathering, and sourcing info on sensitive topics or those that are hard to describe.
Conversations	Methods of convening and facilitating conversations with community leaders and other key stakeholders are described as a means to engage on problems affecting the community. The processes of the Lekgotla in Southern Africa and Baraza in East Africa, is one such example of a standard practice that ensures inclusivity, structure and resolution in addressing matters of importance to the community.
Decision and review	The processes that commence marriage or other family decisions have varied practices in Africa (Itara, Magadi), but all hold a set of steps that facilitate decision-making and allow two or more parties to engage on matters related to a household. This smaller group practice may be employed in activities related to monitoring family units or householders and allows for learning and decision-making.
Phaso (expresses spirituality)	A spiritual process of communicating with the ancestors for goodwill and or expressing gratitude. Many communities in Africa have a way of welcoming visitors in this context, researchers and evaluators. There are also spiritual ways of accessing sacred places, where, for example, the intervention is located in a sacred place.

Table 4: *Summary of African Rooted Methods and Tools Identified.*

Method/Tool	Source	Description
Integrated-acquisition technique	Ajibade (2009)	Collecting farmer's cultural characteristics, perception and decision-making processes on environmental changes
Systematic harvesting protocols	Styger et al (2010)	Farming harvest monitoring measures in Mali.
Lekgotla and Magadi,	Mzondi (2022)	Southern Africa - processes leveraging the African Indigenous Knowledge System, outlining steps for describing a problem, participation, consensus and presentation
Made in Africa Evaluation in social work	Tuggle et al	Liberian social work faculty and staff, self-determination, acknowledgment and positioning of local indigenous knowledge in the evaluation process
Ethnophilosophy	Easton, P. B. (2012)	Applying ethnophilosophy, Easton originated five ways to conceptualise five evaluation concepts based on proverbs used in Nigeria, Est Africa and Senegal
Afro-centric teaching evaluation mode	Chapman S, et al (2021)	Embed African clients, students and instructors in the evaluation co-knowledge creation
Arts folktales, music, and dance and drawings	Chilisa et al (2025) Mapping African rooted frameworks and tools	Storytelling data collection. Where arts, folktales, music and dance, generational passing down of knowledge are all acknowledged and appreciated. Used in interviews to convey experiences.
Itara	J Govender (2025)	Traditionally and now the parents and close relatives of a lady usually visit the groom's family to assess if he is capable and able to sustain their daughter. In some cultures this is called "Itara" this is an example of an assessment/evaluation in marriage

Source: B. Chilisa, W. Nderitu, R. Nabbumba, B Koyabe, F. Mwaijande, J. Govender, T. Major, S. Koloi-Keaikitse, M. Ramasobana, M. Frehiwot, M. Gaotlhobogwe, Pheko, B (2024) Mapping African rooted approaches. Research funded by the MasterCard Foundation.

CONCLUSION

The chapter has highlighted African rooted philosophies and their assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge and values and how these are shaping evaluation theory and practice. A detailed discussion of a postcolonial indigenous paradigm, its philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge values is presented. The chapter further discussed emerging African rooted evaluation frameworks, methods and tools.

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THE HANDBOOK

MADE IN AFRICA EVALUATION

The Handbook on Made in Africa Evaluation is a pioneering work that redefines evaluation practices by centering African epistemologies, values, and methodologies. Developed by the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), this volume challenges dominant Western frameworks and advocates for a transformative, culturally grounded approach to evaluation.

Divided into three comprehensive sections—Epistemology and Foundations, Theory and Methods, and Case Studies—the handbook brings together leading scholars and practitioners from across Africa. It explores a range of themes, including epistemic injustice, participatory evaluation approaches, and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Through frameworks such as the African Relational Evaluation Paradigm, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and the Swahili Evaluation Approach, contributors provide alternative perspectives that reflect African contexts and realities.

Emphasizing community empowerment, contextual relevance, and ethical accountability, this handbook not only documents the evolution of Made in Africa Evaluation but also serves as a political call to reclaim African agency in development evaluation. A vital resource for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners, this work offers insights that bridge theory and practice, ensuring that evaluation in Africa remains authentically rooted in indigenous knowledge and transformative change.

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