

Testing and refining systemic evaluation methodology in Timor- Leste

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Inclusive Systemic Thinking consultants working globally in evaluation & research, training and organization development.

Our Mission to support individuals, communities and organizations to thrive using systems thinking, participatory and intersectional approaches.



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EoE Australasia Team

- Systemic thinking
- Principles of “Inclusive Systemic Thinking” in evaluation



- Two case studies of work in Timor-Leste
- What we have learnt about ‘doing’ IST



Systems thinking is an approach to critically analyzing multifactorial phenomena by examining the complex, dynamic and interconnected relationships between the various components that comprise the system of interest.

- It questions the boundaries of and different perspectives on a system of interest
- Is concerned with intervention to enable change
- Supports people to exploring potential systemic actions for improvement
- It includes transdisciplinary theories and methodologies
- For use with complex issues that have longer-term implications
- Situations where people have nuanced and interdependent components, high levels of uncertainty, or are characterized by misrepresentations of causality.

Inclusive Systemic Thinking (IST) is influenced by Critical Systems Thinking (CST) and various social, behavioral and environmental sciences.



Bob Williams

Senior Consultant
Systems, Evaluation, and
Action Research
New Zealand

IPB Model (Williams & van't Hof, 2016)



**Prof. Gerald
Midgley, PhD**

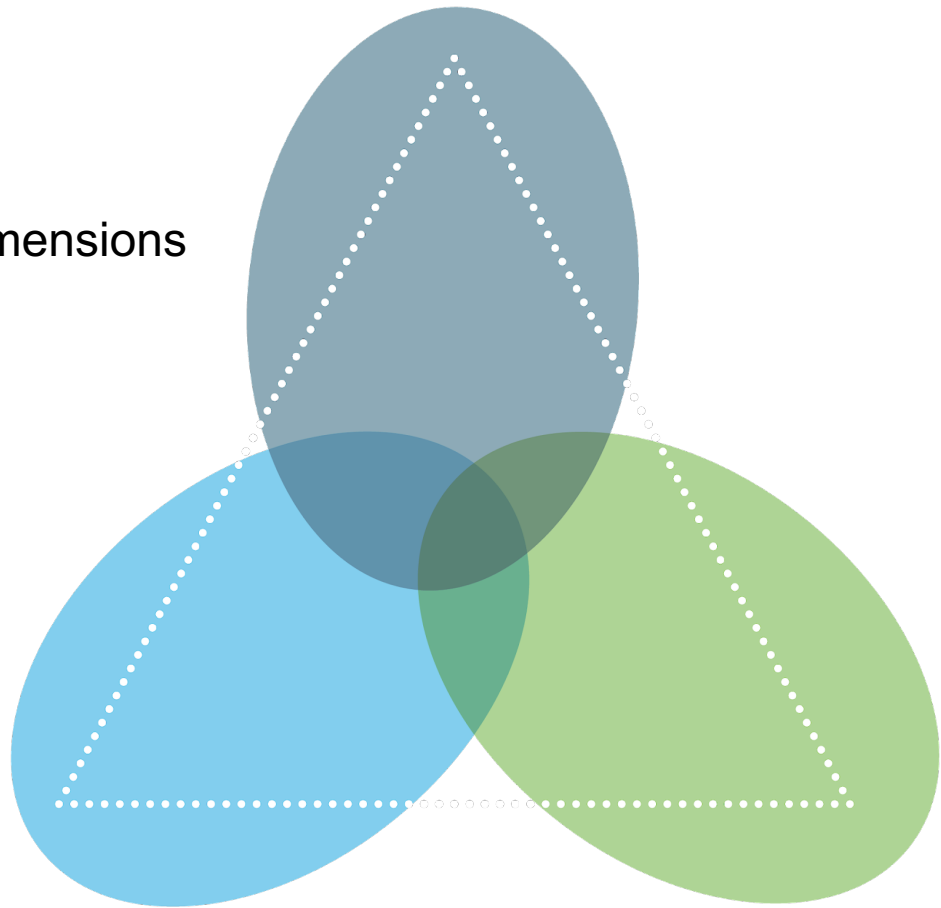
Senior Consultant
Systems Thinking
United Kingdom

Systemic Intervention (Midgley, 2010)

FST, GSA
Intersectionality, CRT and
eco-feminism

ENVIRONMENTS

Dimensions

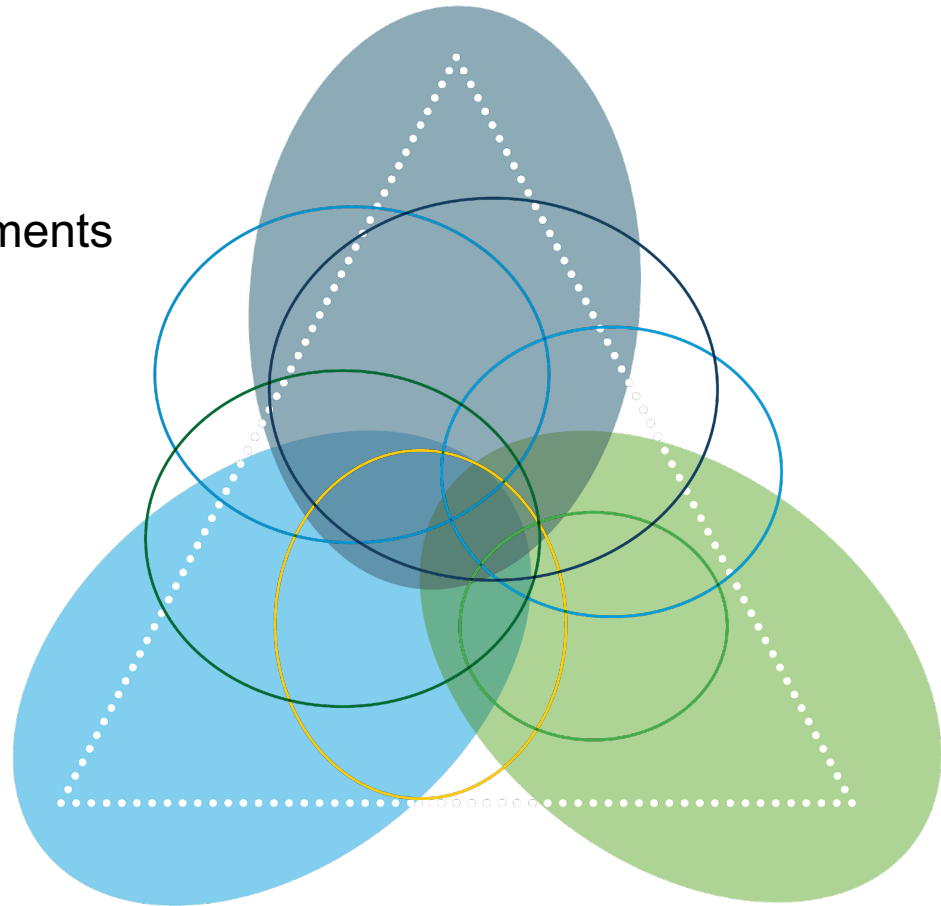


GENDER EQUALITY

MARGINALIZED VOICES

ENVIRONMENTS

Elements



GENDER EQUALITY

MARGINALIZED VOICES

Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender equality, Environments and Marginalized voices (ISE4GEMs): A new approach for the SDG era

Publication year: 2018



With the advent of the United Nations' [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its [17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), there is a call for new approaches and methodologies to understand and evaluate combinations of these global challenges, their integrated nature, and their complexities. Accordingly, the [UN Women Independent Evaluation Service](#) released a new evaluation guide in 2018 on the Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender equality, Environments and Marginalized voices (ISE4GEMs) approach.

The ISE4GEMs approach brings together innovative systemic evaluation practice with intersectional analysis. It promotes transdisciplinary evaluation methods, rethinks systemic evaluation methodology, and introduces the Gender equality, Environments and Marginalized voices (GEMs) framework.

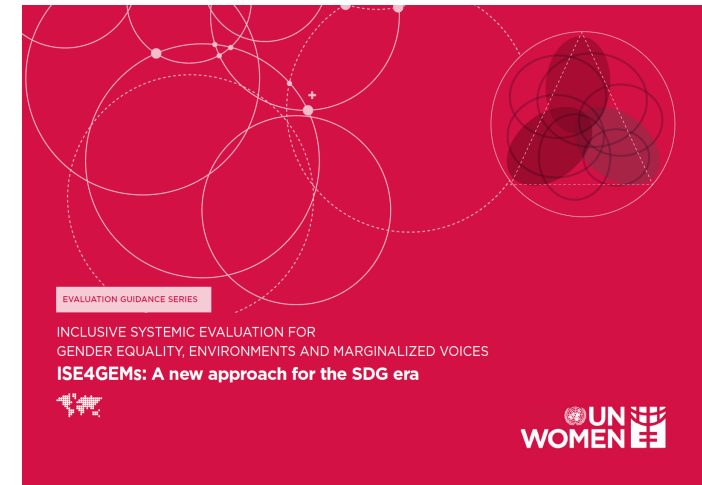
This guide provides an introduction to the new approach and includes a summary of the key theoretical concepts as well as guidance and tools for applying it in practice. It is now also available in Spanish, with the support of the Building Capacity and Bringing Together Actors in Evaluation in Latin America (FOCELAC) project/German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). The set of 11 ISE4GEMs tools are available in Word format for download.

Additional documents

- [Publication \(PDF, 3.2MB\)](#)
- [Presentation \(PDF, 2.3MB\)](#)
- [Tools \(Word, 638KB\)](#)
- [Spanish version](#)



IST is applied to systemic evaluation through our approach the 'ISE4GEMs'.



<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/9/ise4gems-a-new-approach-for-the-sdg-era>

To be a systemic evaluation, it will be governed by these **Inclusive Systemic Thinking** principles.

- **Values, Positionality and Care**: connects with others, finds common ground, reflexive, dynamic experience
- **Curiosity and Transdisciplinary**: empathetic inquisitiveness; boundary critique as continuous process, pluralistic methodologies, value existing knowledge systems
- **Elevate Different Ways of Knowing and Practice**: i.e., including artistic expression, Indigenous knowledge, norms and practices, experience and practical know-how

- **Mutual Capacity and Capability Development:** learning is two-way, look to understand one's true impact, financial, strategic, and logistical burdens not placed on participants
- **Transformative and Emergent Change:** lasting societal change, conducive for human and non-human alike, at the household, community, and institutional levels
- **Diversity is key:** Use of the GEMs to unpack intersecting inequalities, discriminations and vulnerabilities. Does not predetermine what these intersecting factors will be. Give space for them to emerge from dialogue, story- and truth-telling grounded in lived experience.

Introduction – Timor-Leste's background

context

- Timor-Leste is one of the newest country in the world having gained independence in 2002
- The country is located at Southeast Asia regions.
- Current Population of Timor-Leste is 1,3 million
- Timor-Leste's economy is predominantly based on oil and gas
- Development priorities are based on the country SDP 2011-2030



Why is systemic evaluation important in Timor Leste?

- Complex and messy problems
- Participatory & inclusivity of voices of marginalised and women
- A methodology that allows for expansion/contraction of boundary of the evaluand, because everything is constantly moving

Capitalisation Study of the TAPSA program

End-stage review to inform the planning of the second phase of the TAPSA program- Case study approach.

Collaboration of four NGOs implementing different activities to achieve a common goal – rural socio-agricultural resilience.

To what extent and how have the TAPSA stakeholders (implementing organisations and their key partners) contributed to scaling up/institutionalising the issues of agroecological transition and food sovereignty?

Tara Bandu – traditional Timorese customs that enforce peace and reconciliation through the power of public agreement to define social norms & practices.



- ✓ Values, Positionality and Care
- ✓ Curiosity and Transdisciplinary
- ✓ Elevate Different Ways of Knowing and Practices
- ✓ Mutual Capacity and Capability Development
- ✓ Transformative and Emergent Change

Review of the Safe Market and Safe City Initiative



A program review of Safe Markets in Baucau and Bobonaro between January to March 2023. The review includes the effectiveness and relevance of the initiative to inform the future planning and direction of the Safe Markets and contribution to its end of investment outcomes.

- ✓ Values, Positionality and Care
- ✓ Curiosity & interdisciplinary
- ✓ Elevate Different Ways of Knowing and Practices
- ✓ Mutual Capacity and Capability Development
- ✓ Transformative and Emergent Change
- ✓ Diversity is key

Reflections on using IST in our work

- Frame the evaluation and problem with systemic thinking, because it is complex
- Inclusivity through boundary analysis. Wide and deliberate effort to start broad and wide.
- Field work is boundaries of and different perspectives
- Genuine concern with intervention to enable change

- Supports people to exploring potential systemic actions for improvement
- Helps clients 'see' the system in new ways and to think about their structures and norms going forward – with this comes greater collaboration between stakeholders and transparency between them.
- More than evaluators. We liaise between NGOs and sponsors, intervening in colonial structures

Our learning of using IST in our evaluation approach

- Systemic thinking is new to the clients. Described in the proposal but they don't understand/care
- Resources (make it hard) technology; covid 19, donor understanding of eval and true cost
- Time (not enough)

- Engagement (sometimes hard to get close, build relationship, and spend time with beneficiaries)
- Training others (some people don't 'get' the 'systems' thinking part)
- Expectations – from clients and our own expectations
- Challenges to be inclusive – we see that in the programs and then it hard to do this in evaluation, link to time



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