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IDEAS
KNOWLEDGE. CAPACITY BUILDING. NETWORKING

Evaluation in evaluation ecosystems

Ian Goldman
30 September 2022

1

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Summary

1. The **development paradigm** has failed – trickle down, consumerism, 'modernization' is destroying the planet, fuelled by vested interests
2. There are **regenerative models**, but we need to move beyond exploitation to apply **head/heart and hand** to make a regenerative world happen, now
3. All too often the **evaluation field has been complicit** in the development failure
4. To be part of the solution **evaluation needs to be transformed**, from what worked to what will work
   - **Evaluative practice** needs to be **contextually relevant**, embedded in local systems, taking a wider **systemic perspective** include climate, ecosystems and equity, and in demand by policy makers
5. To systematize and use the evidence we need **transformed evaluation (eco)systems**, with evaluation integrated into management and decision-making

2

2

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1.

The development paradigm has failed – trickle down, modernization.....

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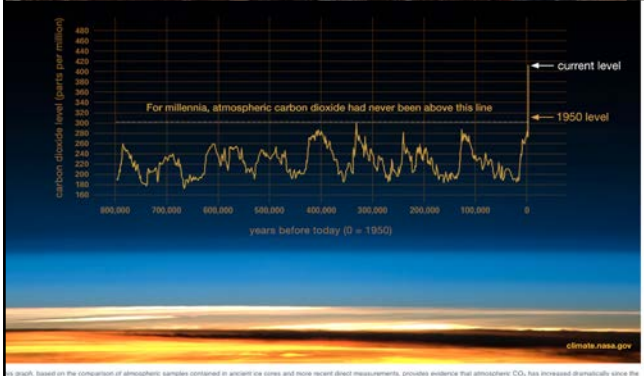

The Continent
ISSUE 89: JUNE 15 2022

News

South Africa

Another major SA city runs out of water

The country's fourth largest city, Gqeberha, is about to run out of water after drought and long-term mismanagement of its water resources.

Gqeberha is a key node in South Africa's economy. The city's car-making industry exports parts and vehicles around the world. It is in the heartland that birthed the ruling African National Congress's greatest leaders. Now its taps are running dry, with emergency boreholes, water tankers and the army deployed to help manage the crisis.

Climate change projections for the region are for more variability in the weather, with droughts – already common enough – becoming more intense.

Previously, a chain of dams, rivers and canals was able to bring in an emergency top-up from Lesotho, which has surplus water thanks to its massive mountains and deep dams that catch snow melt and rainwater, which it sells to South Africa.

But one of the tunnels collapsed several years ago and the water stopped flowing. When the state failed to repair this infrastructure, drought spread in earnest. Now the dams that supply the metro are empty or near-empty.

Good governance is in short supply, with control of Gqeberha constantly swapping hands between coalitions of competing parties. Amid the squabbling, decisions on solving the looming water crisis were simply not made.

Gqeberha also uses a lot of water – 500 megalitres a day. Cape Town, with four times the population, was using 300 megalitres when its taps ran dry a few years ago. Much of this is thanks to a lack of maintenance: South Africa loses at least a third of its tap water through leaks.

In the face of its own failures, the city has been left with few options other than to pray for rain. ■

Dam nation: Drought and mismanagement have led to another water crisis.

Fires rage at Longmore Forest in Knysna on 7 June 2017. More than 10 000 people were forced to flee their homes overnight as fires fuelled by storm winds ripped through the Western Cape coastal town. (Photo: Gallo Images / Die Burger / Werner Hills)

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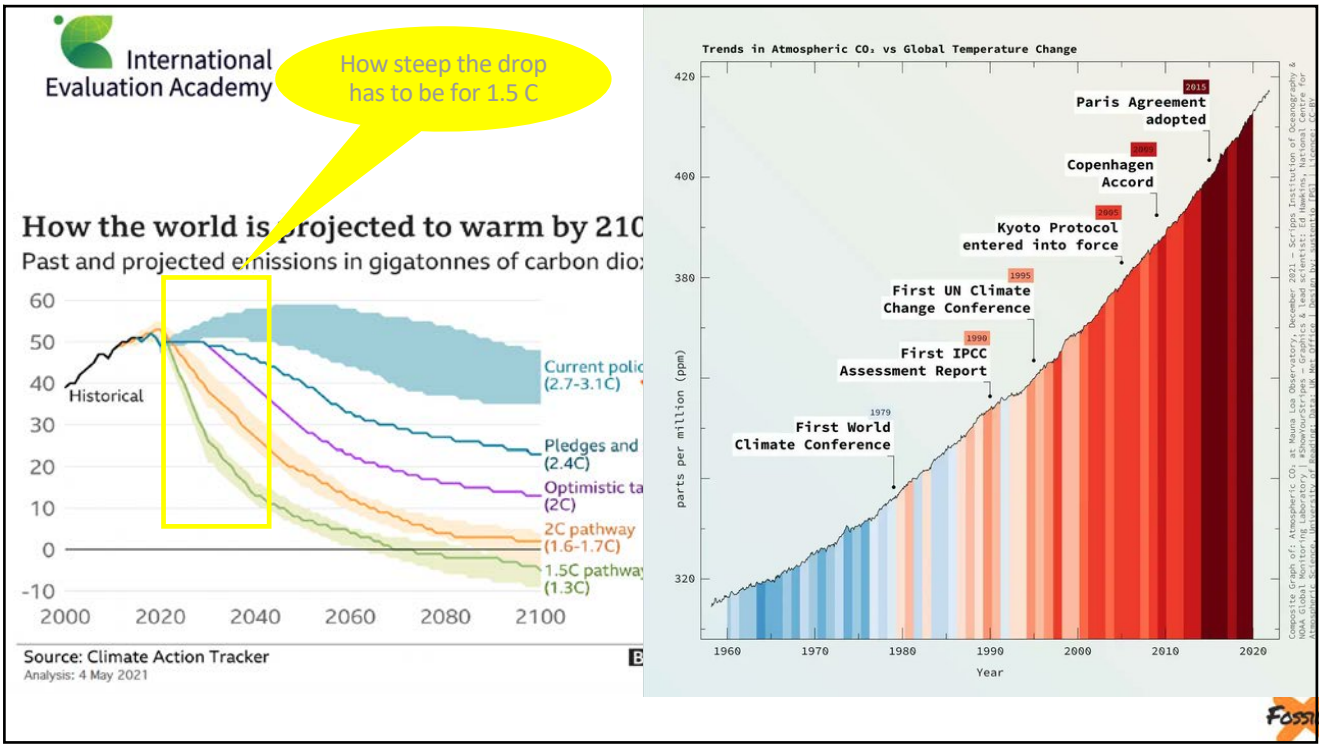

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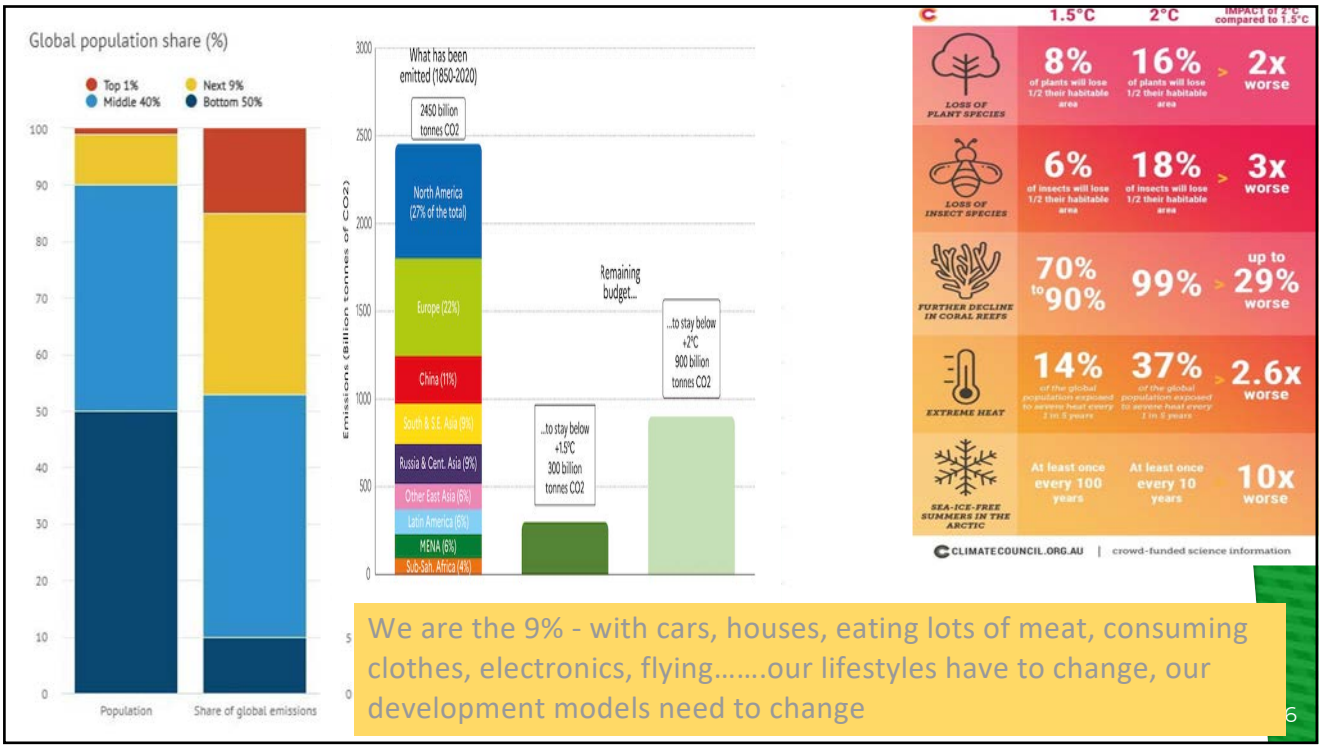

We are the 9% - with cars, houses, eating lots of meat, consuming clothes, electronics, flying…….our lifestyles have to change, our development models need to change

6

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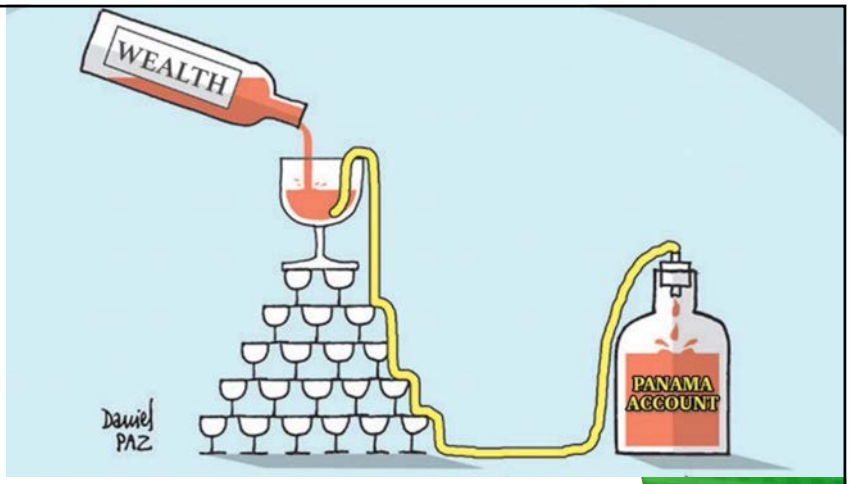

The trickle down model does not work

7

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Where has the Western mindset got us?

- The world has been colonized, not just economically, but in our mindset
- Above all turned into materialists and consumers – not people who relate to others (ubuntu) or to the sacredness of the world around us
- Everything is to be exploited for the benefit of humans, and a few at that
- Taught that is normal, inevitable, and that benefits will trickle down
- And where has that got us

Figure 2: ***Wealth distribution in South Africa***

Interpretation: *In 2021, the wealthiest 10% of the population own 87% of total household wealth. Household wealth is the sum of all financial assets (e.g. stock, bonds) and non-financial assets (e.g. housing), net of debts.*
Sources and series: *wir2022.wid.world/methodology.*

8

8

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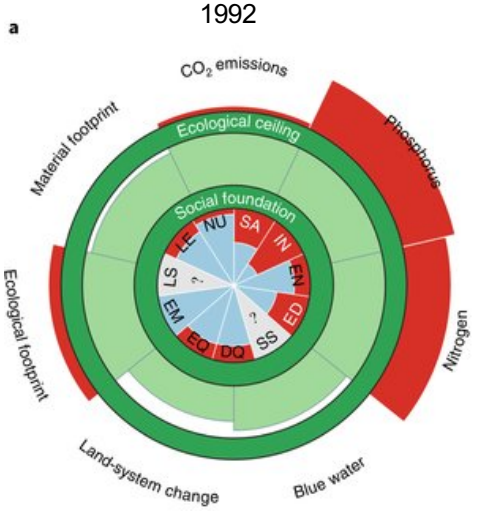
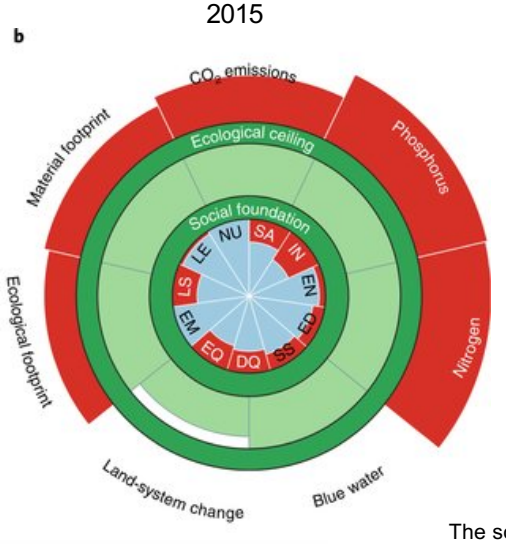
The ‘doughnut’ - planetary boundaries, and social foundation

1992



2015



LS	Life satisfaction	IN	Income poverty	DQ	Democratic quality
LE	Life expectancy	EN	Access to energy	EQ	Equality
NU	Nutrition	ED	Secondary education	EM	Employment
SA	Sanitation	SS	Social support		

The social shortfall and ecological overshoot of nations
DOI: 10.1038/s41893-021-00799-z

9

9

10

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From fake news to science

Feeling the urgency From exploitation and fear to relationship to people and planet

From anomie to collective action – we have the answers – do it, now

Head • Heart • Hands

Using evidence.
What have we learnt?

What do we feel?
How do we relate?

What do we need to do?

https://www.wells.edu/files/styles/720x320/public/head-heart-hands-event.png?itok=CC8TOC3L

11

11

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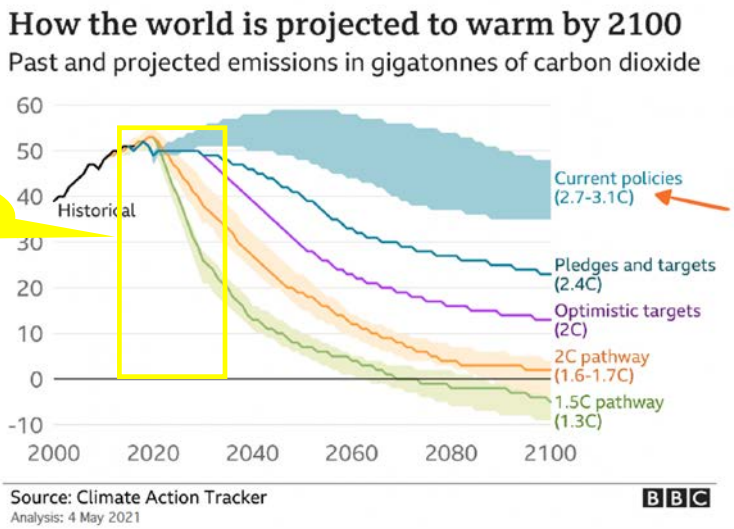
How steep the drop has to be for 1.5 C



Southern Africa is warming at double the global rate. So we are headed for 6 degrees of warming by 2100.

12

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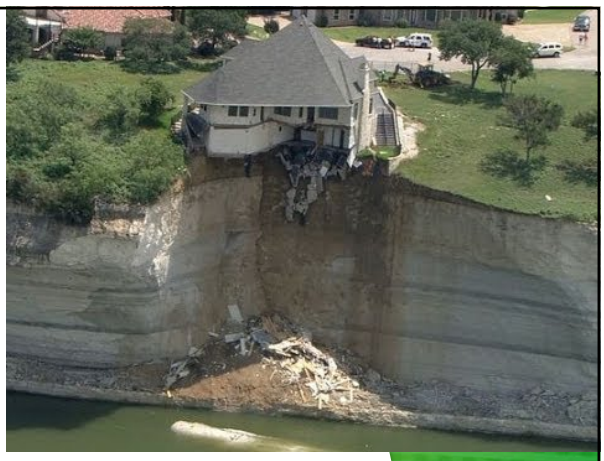
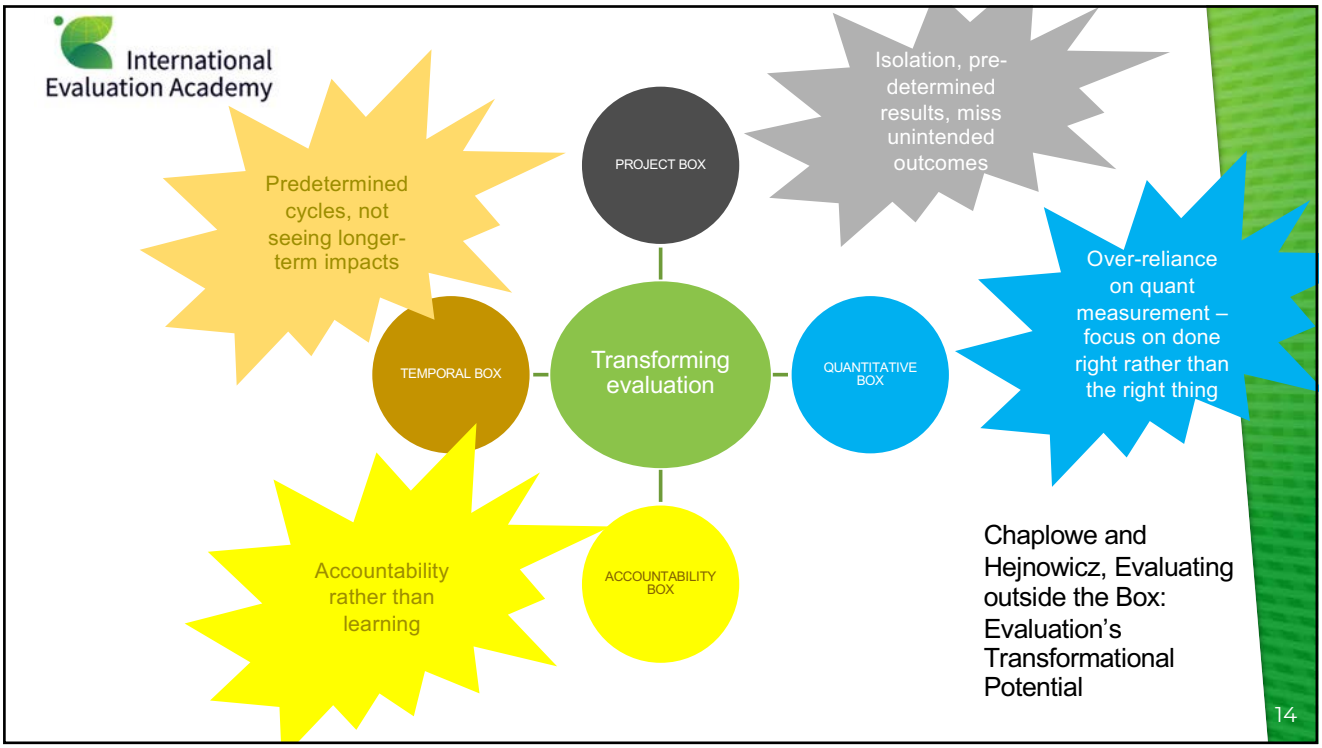


3.

Has the evaluation field been complicit.....

13



14

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4.

Evaluation needs to be transformed.....

15

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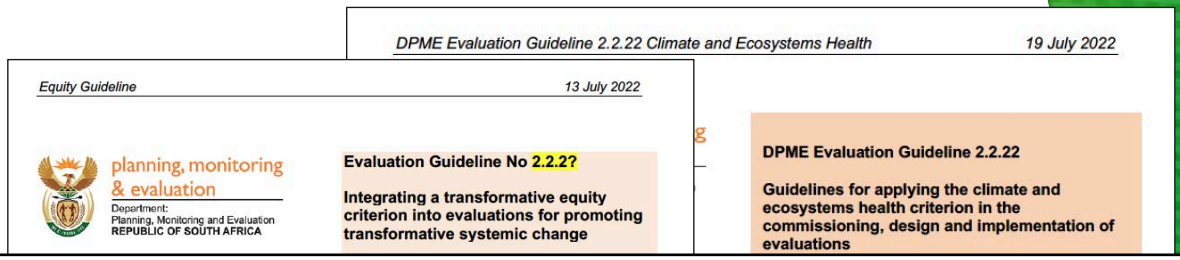
Role of evaluation

- Traditionally role in querying **what is working/not and why**
- needs to consider **what will work** in the future, taking into account more complex systems than we are used to looking at, unintended outcomes of interventions and contributing to foresight
- Must consider issues of climate/ecosystems and equity



16

16

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Prague Declaration on
Evaluation for Transformational Change
Adopted on Friday 4 October 2019

We commit to evaluations that help us learn, understand and support the transformational and systemic changes needed in our countries and the world, as agreed upon in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A sustainable balance between the social, economic and environmental domains is crucial in light of the existential threats of the climate crisis, mass extinction of species, growing local and global inequity, and ultimately unsustainable use of the resources of the planet.

It also needs using a broad understanding of evaluative practice with a diversity of tools which feed into adaptive management, are adaptive and rapid, and linked to decision-making.

17

17

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Importance of context

- for evaluation to contribute it needs to be contextually relevant, embedded in local systems, and in demand by policy makers

Significance of the policy challenge/ question	Commitments made to international or regional agreements
	High levels of financial investments
	Legal requirement for legislative review
Catalysts of change	Crises
	Pressure from development partners
	Pressure from civil society
Broader political and socio-cultural environment	Timing, for example, proximity to election period
	Space for public participation and civil society engagement
	Level of interest and engagement of stakeholders
Institutional environment	Systems and processes
	Evidence champions
	Leadership
	Mandates and capacities
	Culture – Learning and accountability
	Linkages and relationships

Goldman and Pabari, Evidence Use in Policy and Practice – lessons from Africa

18

18

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Some ideas for evaluations which go beyond the plumbing to state of the house

- Expand the **scope**: look further than short-term results and immediate accountability, towards generational accountability, what will work.
- Seek to evaluate **outside traditional silos**: across issues/sectors; across funding streams/donor priorities; across thematic areas and SDG objectives.
- Ensure **diversity of perspectives** and experiences in evaluation teams, and in methods used.
- Require evaluations to **identify, recognize and map the environment** in which programmes and evaluation operate. Identify the climate, environment and equity implications linked to that place.
- Look at problems through a **global lens and re-value local solutions**, including ancestral ones. Advocate for programmes to systematically consider ancestral indigenous knowledge and support them in embedding potential solutions in interventions and systems

Adapted from ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH FOR GENERATIONAL IMPACT August 2022 | Lamia Renaud

19

19

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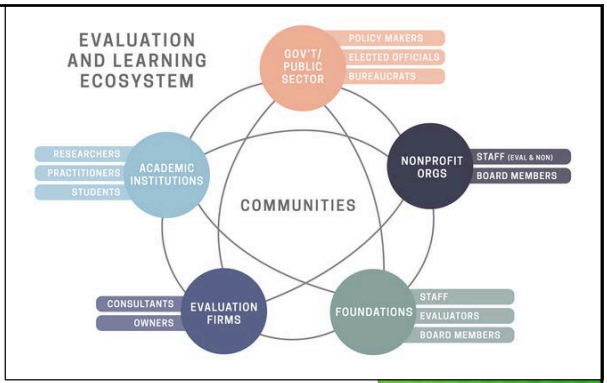
5.

To systematize evidence we need evaluation ecosystems



https://aea365.org/blog/evaluation-as-an-ecosystem-building-our-ability-to-collaborate-effectively-by-liz-gordillo-rory-neuner-leah-josephson-and-lauren-beriont/

20

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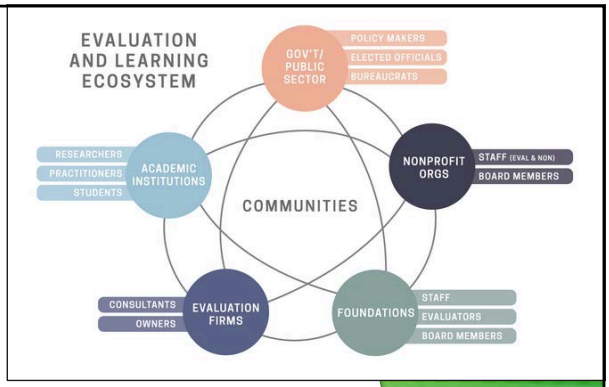
Ecosystem and system

- An **ecosystem** is a community of organisms/ organisations interacting with each other and with their environment.
- A **system** is a collection of organized things; a whole composed of relationships among its members.



What do we mean by an M&E System?

When we talk about GEI's focus on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) "systems" we do not mean just the feedback systems that may guide program implementation or discrete evaluation studies that may be done.

What we mean is a country's overall ecosystem around M&E – all the structures, attitudes, incentives, approaches, policies, laws, behaviors, skills and abilities that contribute to whether robust monitoring, evaluation and evidence use happens.

GEI Global Evaluation Initiative

21

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So not ad-hoc – structured and systematically bringing evidence into decision-making

National/sectoral systems, ones that are locally relevant

- System exists when evaluations are no longer commissioned and conducted on an 'ad hoc' basis but through **more permanent arrangements**, which aim to guarantee, in advance, the **supply of evaluative information**... [and] at the same time, the **evaluations conducted are put to suitable use**" (Furubo and Sandahl 2008)
- Associated with a particular political and **administrative system**
- Intertwined with **values**, practices and institutions

Evaluation systems recognise:

1. An ability to provide sound evidence (the **supply side**)
2. Capacity within the system for individuals and institutions to use information (the **demand side**)
3. Role of intermediaries like M&E units who broker demand and supply of evidence, and sometimes co-creation (**knowledge brokers**)
4. Other elements eg training (unis), evaluators, advocacy (eg VOPEs, CSOs)….

22

22

System Type	Possible elements
Formalised/ informal systems	• The system is either recognised or not recognised through formalisation of a policy/practice • Mexico formalised, Zambia informal
Centralised/ decentralised	• Central institution coordinating the whole system • Or decentralisation of the system • Or no control and system fragmented. • SA – centralised institution but degree of decentralisation to provinces and sectors • Ghana - fragmented
Sectoral evaluation systems	• Often sit within the broader system systems. • Common in education and health eg South Africa, Kenya, and Zambia
Project systems	• 3ie
Organisational systems	• donor systems

23

23

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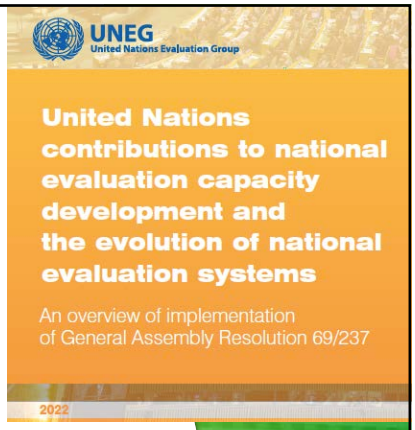
We need systems fit for the future

- adapted to address emerging development challenges, e.g climate and ecosystems breakdown and equity, and to question failing developmental models
- From doing things right to doing the right thing?
- Variety of evaluative tools, for different timescales:
  - Evaluative thinking models for rapid inputs, throughout the programme cycle
  - Rapid evaluations
  - Longer more rigorous where needed
- And agencies need to support these systems, not undermine them



http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/3053

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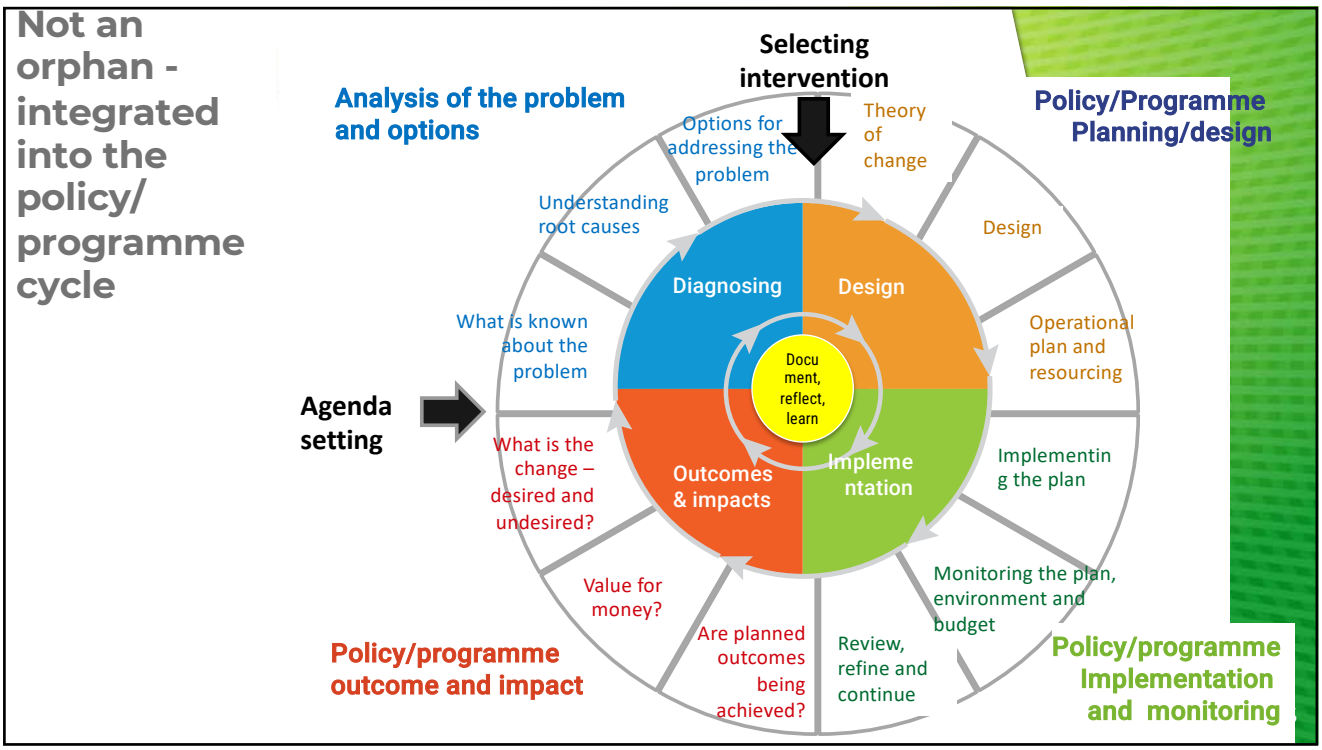
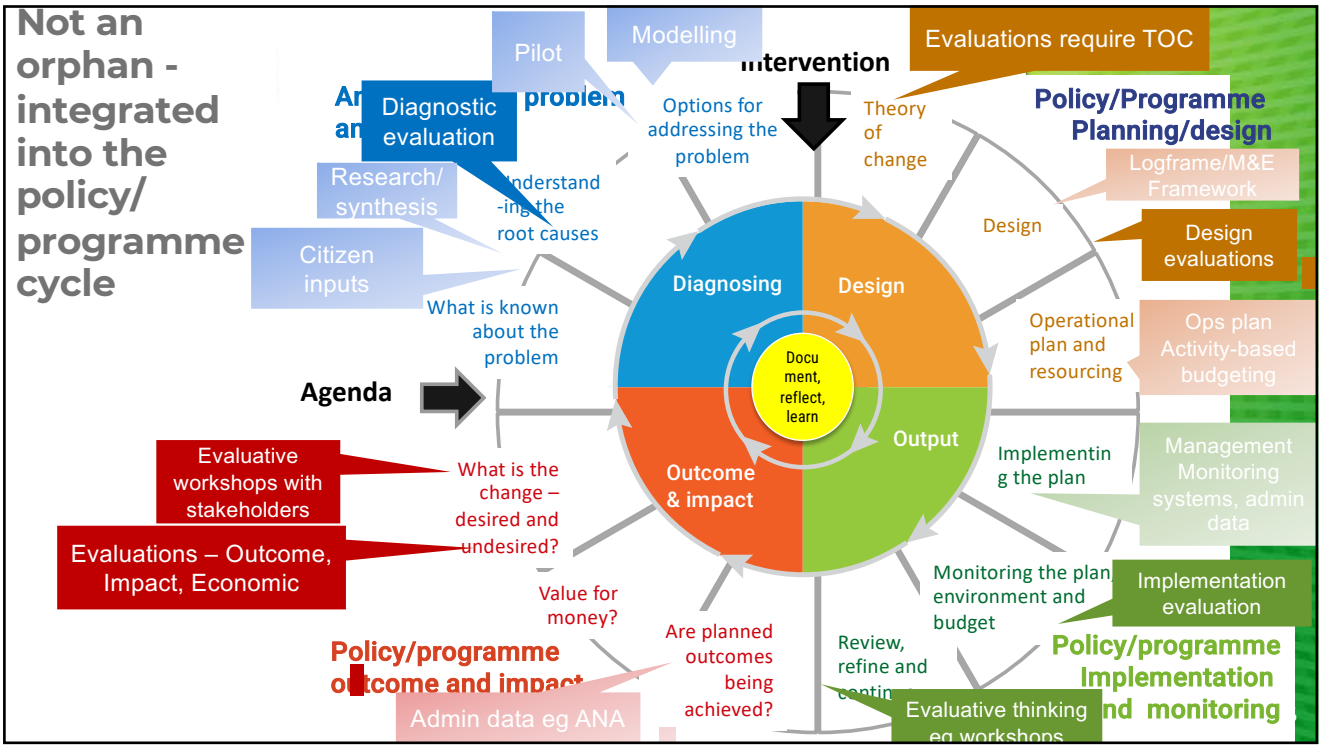

Not an orphan - integrated into the policy/ programme cycle
Selecting intervention
Analysis of the problem and options
Policy/Programme Planning/design
Options for addressing the problem
Theory of change
Understanding root causes
Design
Diagnosing
Design
What is known about the problem
Operational plan and resourcing
Docu ment, reflect, learn
Agenda setting
What is the change – desired and undesired?
Outcomes & impacts
Impleme ntation
Implementin g the plan
Value for money?
Monitoring the plan, environment and budget
Are planned outcomes being achieved?
Review, refine and continue
Policy/programme outcome and impact
Policy/programme Implementation and monitoring

25


Not an orphan - integrated into the policy/ programme cycle
Pilot
Modelling
Evaluations require TOC
Diagnostic evaluation
Options for addressing the problem
Theory of change
Policy/Programme Planning/design
Research/ synthesis
Logframe/M&E Framework
Citizen inputs
Design
Design evaluations
Diagnosing
Design
What is known about the problem
Operational plan and resourcing
Ops plan Activity-based budgeting
Docu ment, reflect, learn
Agenda
Output
Evaluative workshops with stakeholders
What is the change – desired and undesired?
Outcome & impact
Implementin g the plan
Management Monitoring systems, admin data
Evaluations – Outcome, Impact, Economic
Monitoring the plan, environment and budget
Implementation evaluation
Value for money?
Are planned outcomes being achieved?
Review, refine and
Policy/programme Implementation and monitoring
Admin data eg ANA
Evaluative thinking eg workshops

26

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6.

Summary

27

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28

28

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We are living in a mass 'delusion of normalcy' that is socially transmitted. Everyone is acting normal so it must all be ok so I'll just go with the flow. How do we intervene in this 'delusion of normalcy'?

Margaret Klein Salamon

We must question our practice now and start making the changes

- which conference will I not go to?

29

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30