



## Balance, color, unity and other perspectives: A journey into the changing landscape in evaluation

Ziad Moussa

[ziad@ioce.net](mailto:ziad@ioce.net)



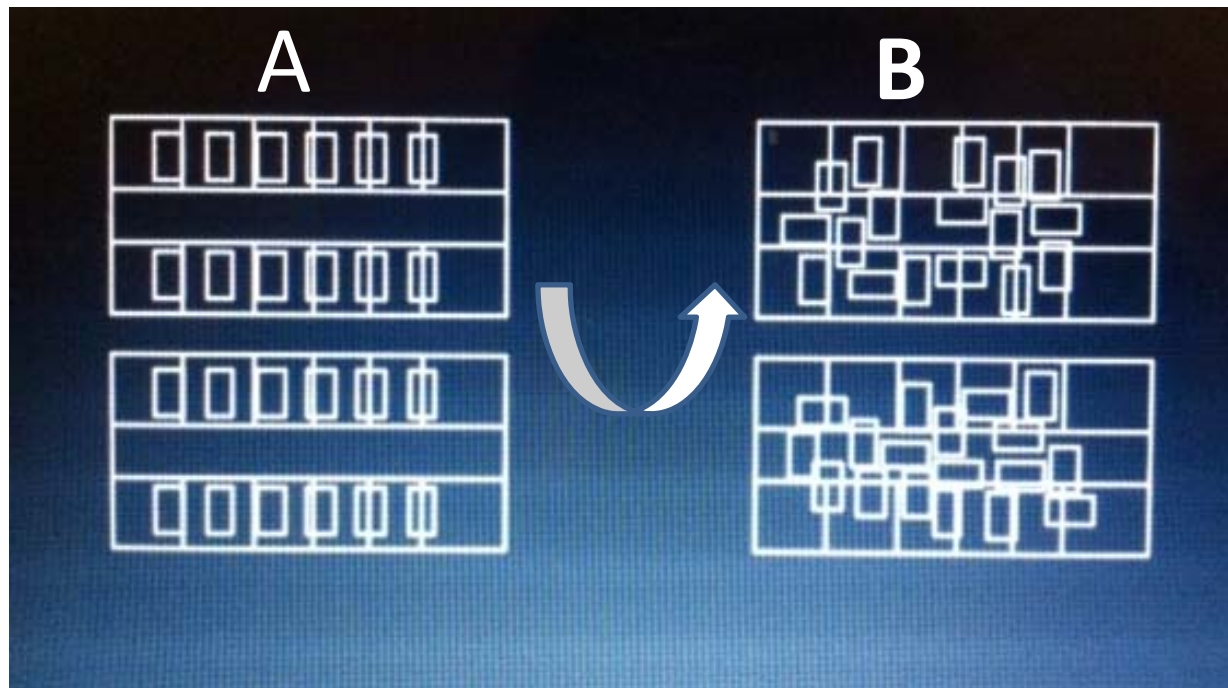


“The only real voyage of discovery exists, not in seeing new landscapes, but in having new eyes”

*Marcel Proust*

# The human interaction with natural and built landscape has always been fascinating ...

I was recently the leader of a team who was entrusted to help UNHCR solve an important riddle in Jordan:



Why “A” has spiraled into “B”



Welcome to the Zaatari camp, the second largest refugee camp in the world (and Jordan's 4<sup>th</sup> biggest "city")



# Linear designs are not “fashionable” anymore, and not only in evaluation

The riddle stems from the fact that refugees wanted to move their caravans from pre-set locations even by 10 meters just to say “I exist, I have a right, no one decides at my place, ....)  
Communal kitchens and collective toilets proved to be a nightmare for the camp administrators as well





# A whole “industry” for moving caravans mushroomed across the camp

With some SMEs specialized in this industry 😊



# A major lesson is that there is no limit to human creativity ...

... even in the harshest circumstances





**... and while INGO's were mulling over  
“job creation” and “decent work”**





# **“CHAM Elysée” braced a 10M/\$ activity every month**

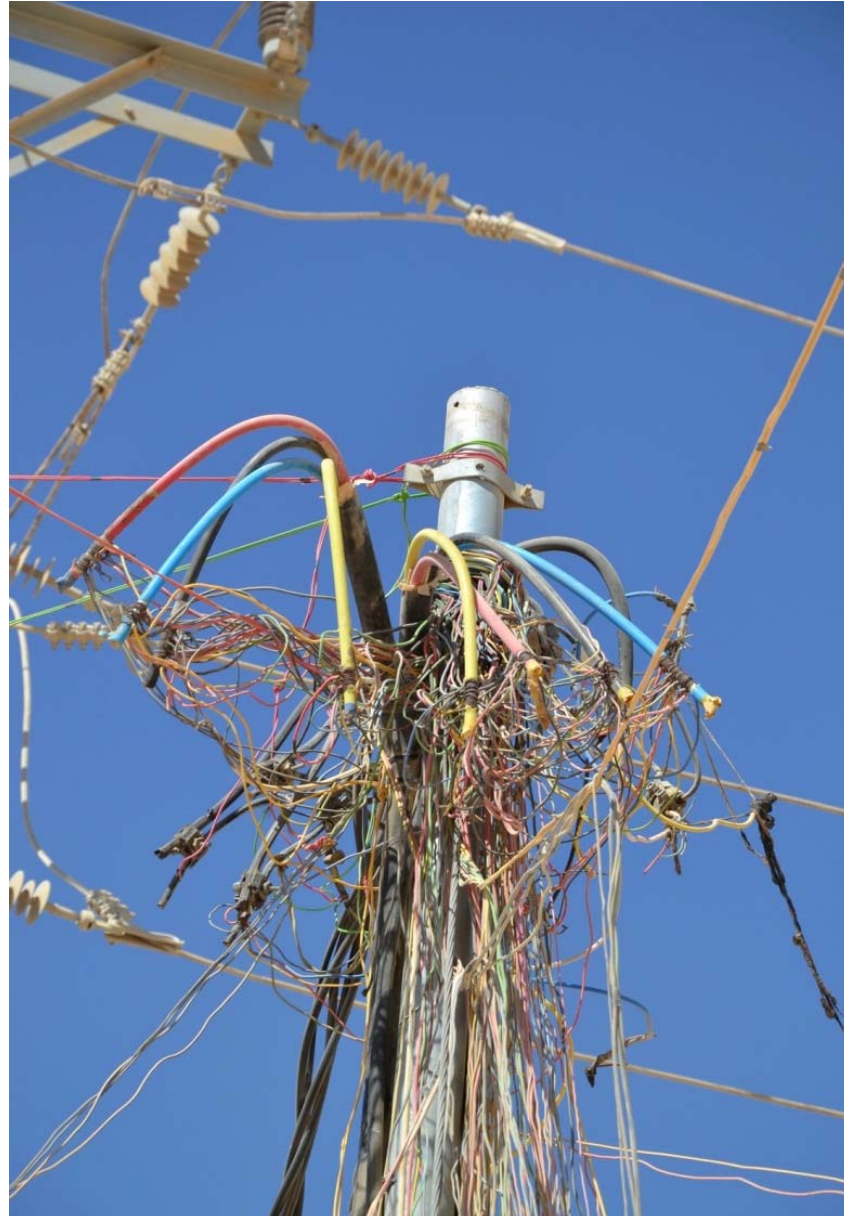


# **“Unintended negative outcomes” sometimes inspired businesses**





**Let-alone complexity-driven realities!**



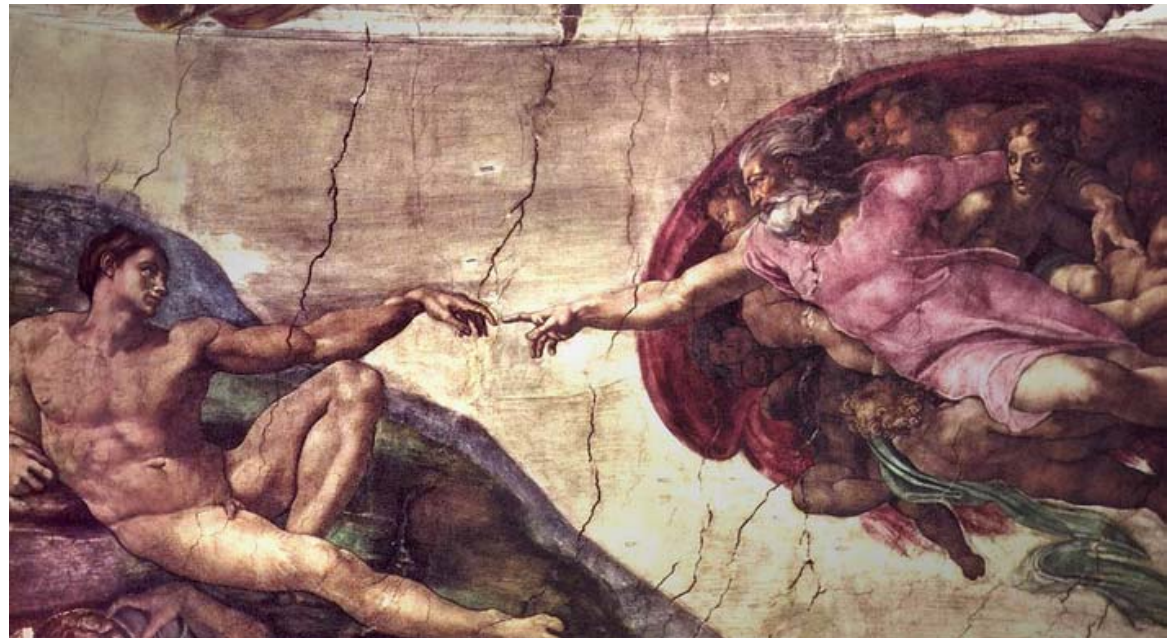
**Or even (relative) well-being...**





**If a hostile natural and “built” landscape  
can be tamed with a good dose of  
adaptiveness, creativity, and positive  
energy...**

**... then what about our global evaluation  
landscape?**



# Five elements are at the core of any attempt for understanding a landscape

1. Unity
2. Balance
3. Proportions
4. Lines
5. Colors





# Unity

**Asian**



**African**



**Native Amer.**



# **Unity is a central element in understanding a landscape. But can we talk about unity in evaluation?**

**Who is and who can be an evaluator remains a central concern.** Is it enough to have a degree in evaluation? To be a member of an evaluation association? To publish in an evaluation journal?

Are we over the good'ol debate on the difference (if any some would argue) between evaluation and social sciences research? Are we over the “prove vs. improve syndrome”? Are we a profession after all?

What about young and emerging evaluators? What about indigenous ones, and/or those without a formal academic degree? Are they evaluators or an alien breed?

In summary, **how can we manage the systemic risk of remaining inclusive and open while clearly delineating the boundaries of our profession?**





We are also witnessing a lot of commendable initiatives, mostly across the Global North, but increasingly in the Global South for the **professionalization of evaluation**. Some VOPEs are developing one or more of the following:

- Standards, principles, competencies
- Professional Designation program and Credentialing
- Mentoring
- Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review mechanisms
- UNEG, IEG and EvalNet

But would this imply that an evaluator in the Australia should be equipped differently than an evaluator in USA? What about Malaysia, Mexico or the Philippines? And Lebanon? 😊

What about financial and non-financial barriers to entry? Language and cultural specificities?



Most importantly can the evaluators and the evaluation profession continue inspiring social justice and equity and work in the shared principles of *partnership, innovation, inclusivity, and human rights*.

While I don't claim to have answers to all of the above, together with another bunch of IOCE and EvalPartners colleagues, we have a dream"







It is high time to transcend the national and regional debates into a global one and establishing once and for all two things:

- **That evaluation is a profession in its own right**
- A global road-map for professionalization, guided by the spurring initiatives but which also sets **global, inclusive, and innovative standards which will allow the profession to maintain and expand its niche**

IOCE has been “volunteered” to host and facilitate the process, but we need the convergence of the efforts of all those ahead of the curve to bring the entire profession into speed, including AES’s energy and avant-garde thinking

# Balance





## **Balance determines the attractiveness of the landscape. But is the evaluation landscape balanced?**

We are witnessing an increasing recognition that evaluation is the “core business” of evaluators, but that it has also inter-dependencies with an entire array of other stakeholders from commissioners and academics (somehow usual suspects) let alone policy and decision makers, private sector, civil society organizations, but also parliamentarians!

Our story with parliamentarians in EvalPartners, which is still in its beginnings shows a very interesting trend where – for the first time – the Global South is leading ahead of the Global North.

So far, parliamentarian forums were established in Africa, East Asia, Latin America and MENA but none in North America, Europe and Australia 😊



Surprisingly (or unsurprisingly) women parliamentarians are very active and often taking the lead in agenda setting. One of the multiplier effects has been the launch of parliamentary committees on evaluation-informed policy making in Nepal, Tunisian, Kirgizstan and Sri Lanka (and counting). This is how we open new uncharted territories for the profession.







The balancing role that VOPEs are invited to play is – more than ever – of paramount importance. The fact that **evaluation is not value neutral** has been emphasized in the global evaluation agenda and VOPEs have hence an inherent political dimension to their work, not in the partisan politics sense, but in pushing forward an evaluation agenda at the global level.

Probably the most resounding concretization of this political dimension were the efforts which led to the adoption of the UN resolution declaring 2015 the International Year for evaluation

In that regard the effort of AES is commendable as Australia was one of the co-sponsors of the resolution which was initially sponsored by Mexico, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa and Vanuatu (again with marked fingerprints of the Global South)



## General Assembly

Distr.: General  
29 January 2015

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Sixty-ninth session  
Agenda item 24

### **Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2014**

*[on the report of the Second Committee (A/69/473)]*

#### **69/237. Building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 59/250 of 22 December 2004, 62/208 of 19 December 2007, 66/209 of 22 December 2011 and 67/226 of 21 December 2012,

*Reiterating* the importance of building national capacity for the evaluation of development activities,



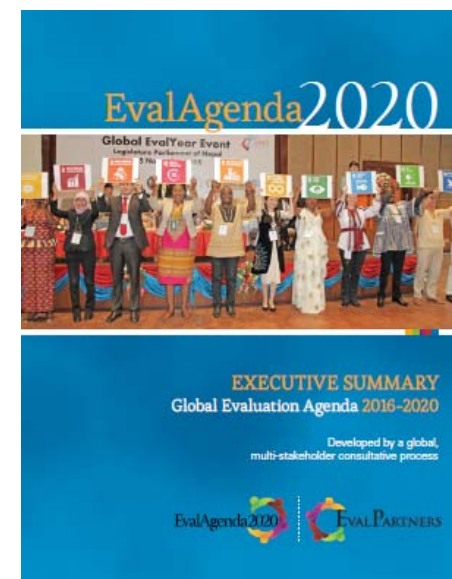


**The political positioning of evaluation** is also key in juggling with the “carrot, stick and sermon” virtuous circle (Vedung 1998), namely economic incentive “carrots”, conditionality and regulation “sticks” and advocacy and dissemination “sermons”

This has been highlighted and addressed by the Global Evaluation Agenda (Agenda’2020) which was developed across 92 online and face-to-face consultations during EvalYear’2015 and constitute a concrete effort to position evaluation across these various circles.

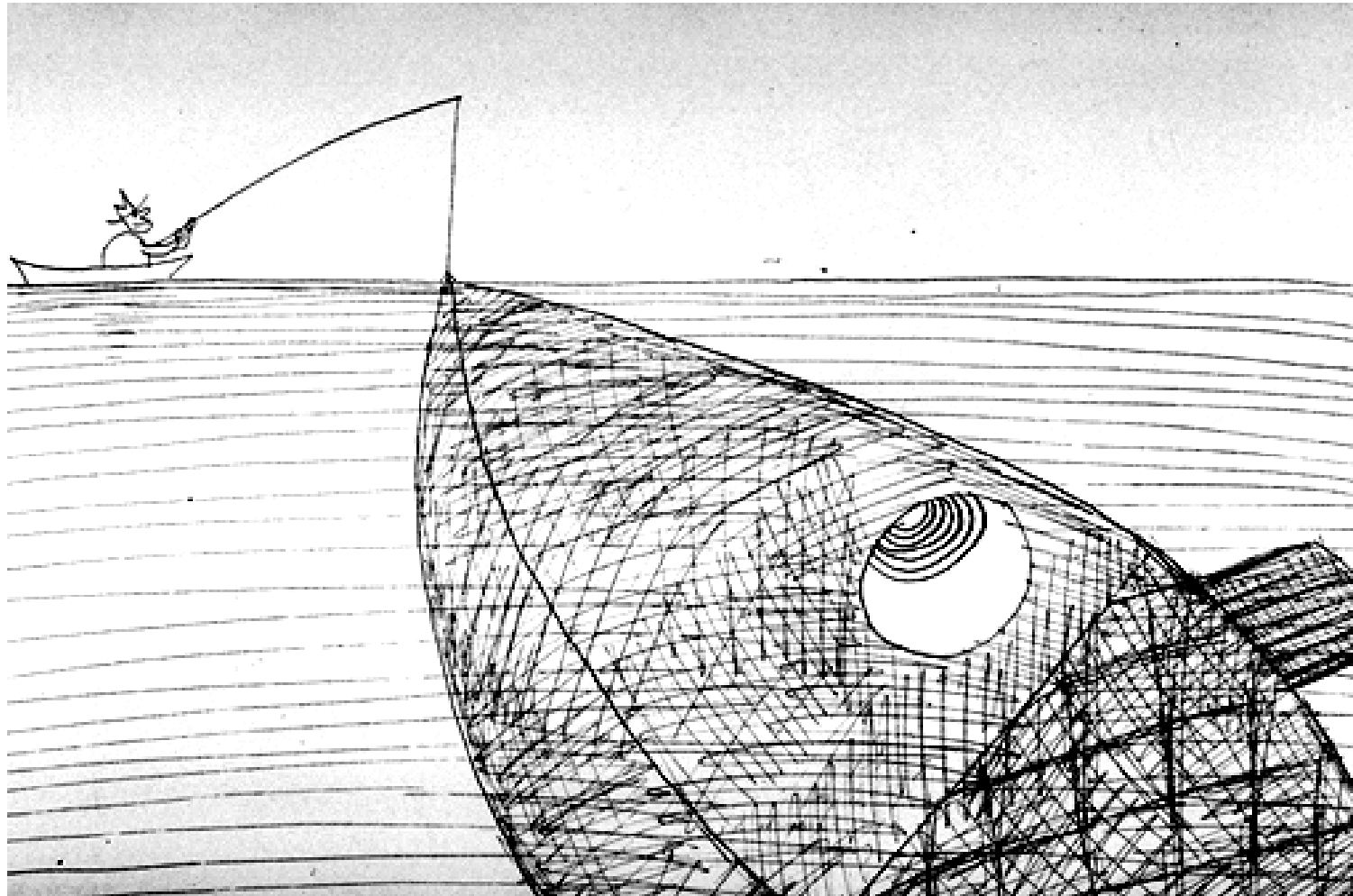
**So what bite of the EvalApple will AES take?**







# Proportions



"The Fisherman," Saul Steinberg, from The Labyrinth

**While the contribution of evaluation to “the world we want” is rather clear for us evaluators, it is far less obvious to the outside world.**

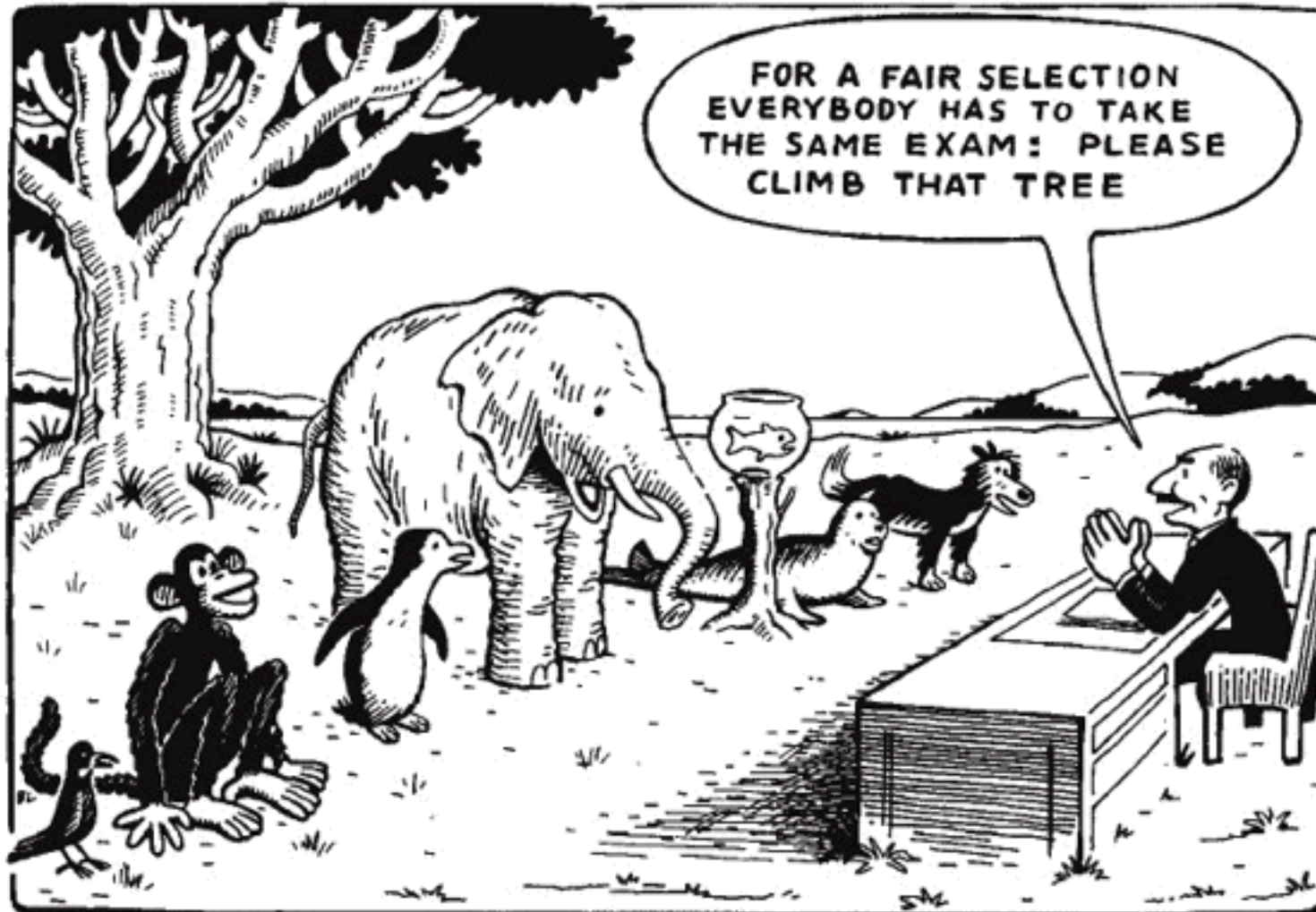
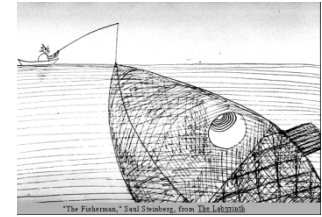
This is acknowledged in the Agenda'2020 which clearly states:

### **However, Evaluation Has Not Yet Reached Its Full Potential**

Despite its success and growing acceptance in many parts of the world, evaluation has not yet been embraced as widely as it should be. In many organizations and countries, there is inadequate appreciation of what evaluation is, how it differs from policy research, performance measurement or performance auditing, and how it can help improve on a practical level policy-making and program implementation efforts.

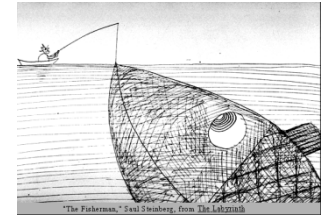
For example, and after several months of struggle across different versions, the word “evaluation” finally appeared (twice) in the SDG declaration: once under the “follow-up and review” process of the SDGs to be “informed” by country-led evaluations (Article 74.g) and under strengthening of national data systems and evaluation programs

# No one left behind?



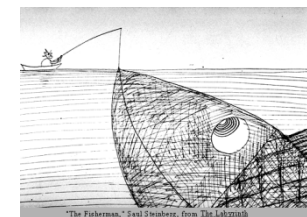


# It takes more than two to EvalTango



The consultation for EvalAgenda2020 has shown that evaluation, in order to reach its fullest potential, must combine effective methods and techniques and the values that drive policies geared to the public interest. That is, we collectively support evaluation as a value-driven tool for improved policy-making, governance, program design, program implementation and ultimately, to achieve outcomes that are more equitable, inclusive and sustainable for all people. And we are aware that in order to achieve such expectations we need to focus on both the demand and supply dimensions of the evaluation process.

# A vibrant VOPE movement is your strongest ally



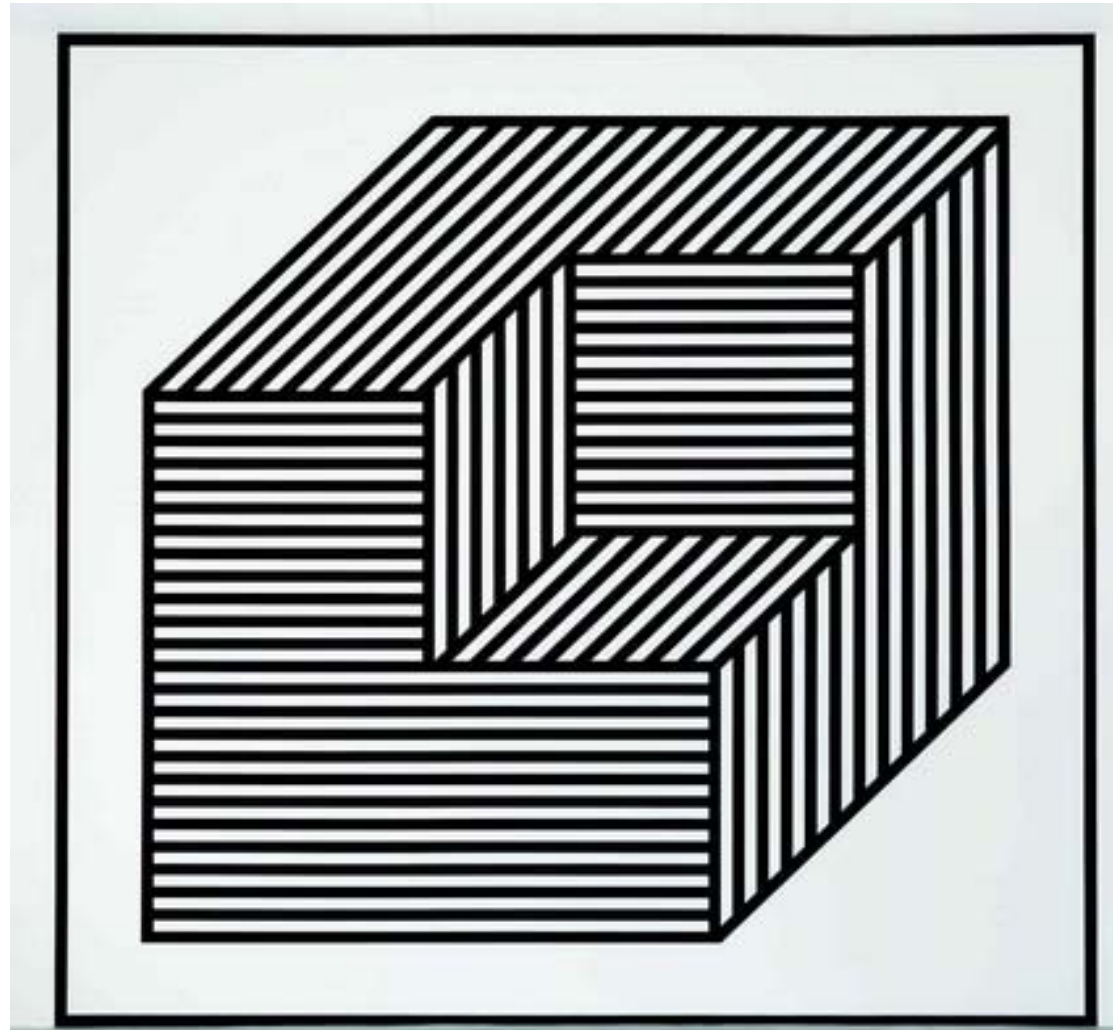
One of the mechanisms through which IOCE and EvalPartners support the contribution to the Global Evaluation Agenda is the Peer-to-Peer mechanism.

The 4<sup>th</sup> round closed on Friday 16/09 and had 62 VOPEs and 6 regional and thematic networks taking part in the call. There will be definitely some great ideas emerging and less than 25% of these ideas can be funded, especially that we do regional Ring-fencing in addition to overall merit.

An idea is to explore with older and well-established VOPEs (AEA, AES, CES, EES, ...) the possibility of taking on board some of these ideas through their International working groups

Regional distribution of countries	
Asia Pacific	14
Europe	12
Eurasia	5
LAC	10
Africa	15
MENA	3
North America	2
Australasia	1
Total	62

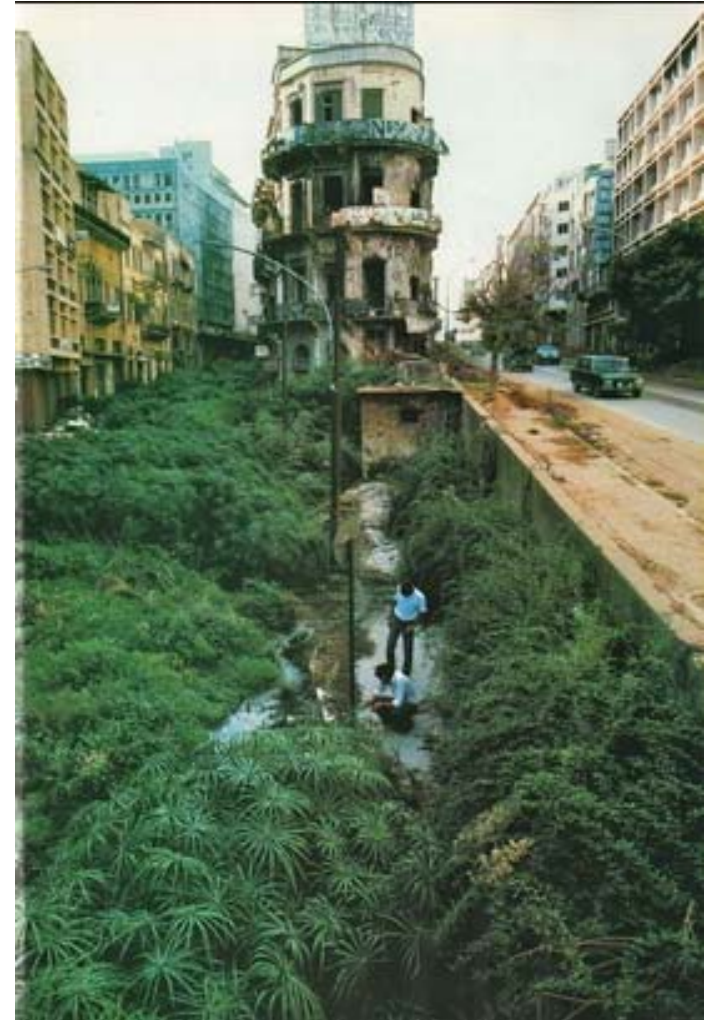
# Lines





# **“Lines” bring the landscape together, and define its inter-relations and boundaries**

Nothing is static in a landscape, and lines are constantly moving. The term “green line” sadly emerged from where I come from, in war-torn Beirut. The same can be observed after Chernobyl, Fukushima, Cyprus, ....





In the global evaluation landscape, lines are evolving rather rapidly. Sustainability, “scalability” and complexity are making their way into the evaluation discourse.

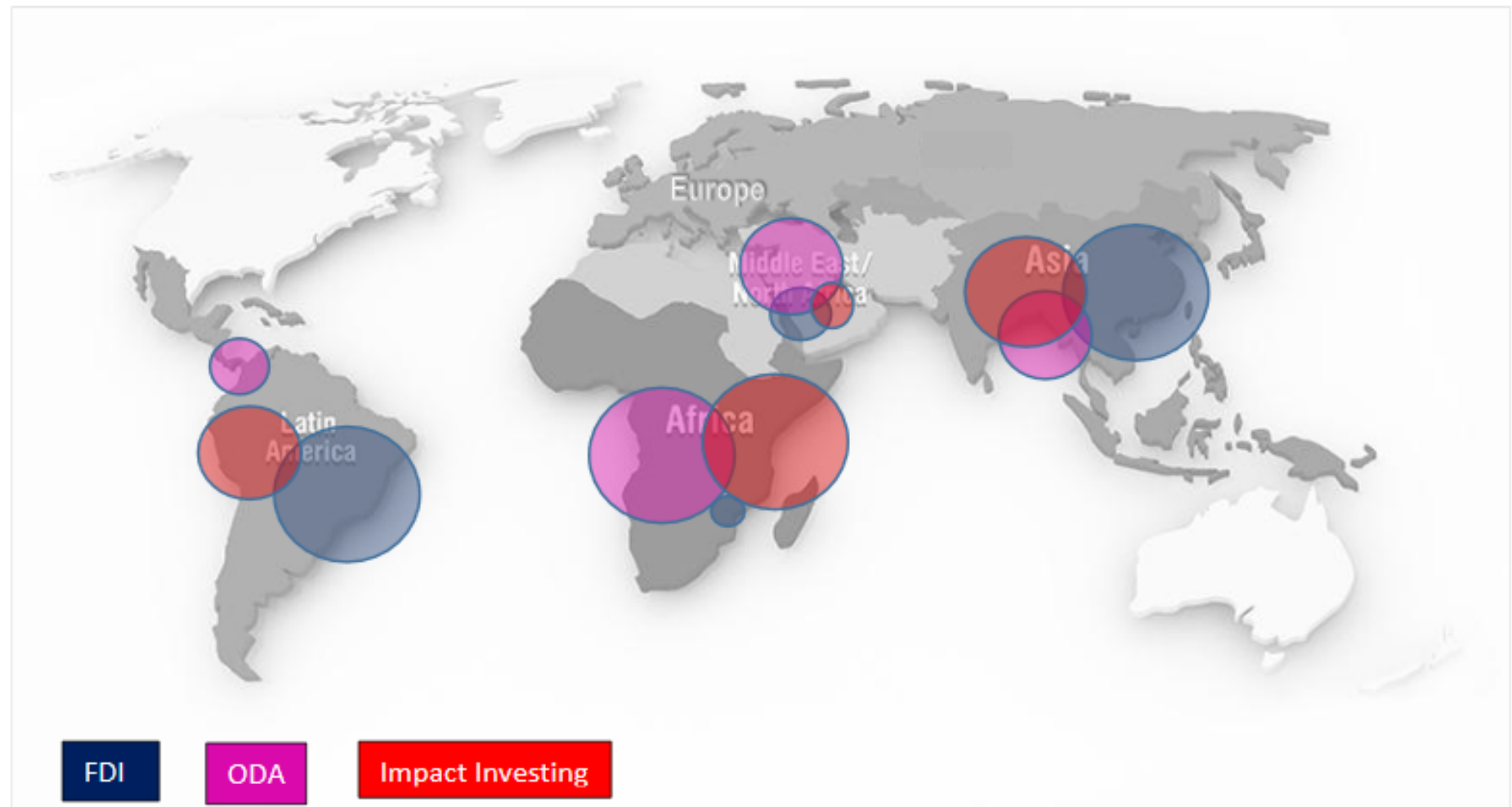
ODA – which has been our privileged nesting grounds and the impetus for the development of evaluation theory and practice, is steadily giving way to market-driven development solutions.

In Latin America, Foreign Direct Investments have taken the floor. In Africa, impact investing started to become bigger than ODA from 2012 onwards. Asia has also seen a similar boom.

This maybe why Elliott Stern predicted in front of this audience back in 2010 that evaluation is bound to slowly disappear, and so far it is still difficult to contradict him, **unless we take proactive measures to move beyond our ODA and national governments comfort zone.**



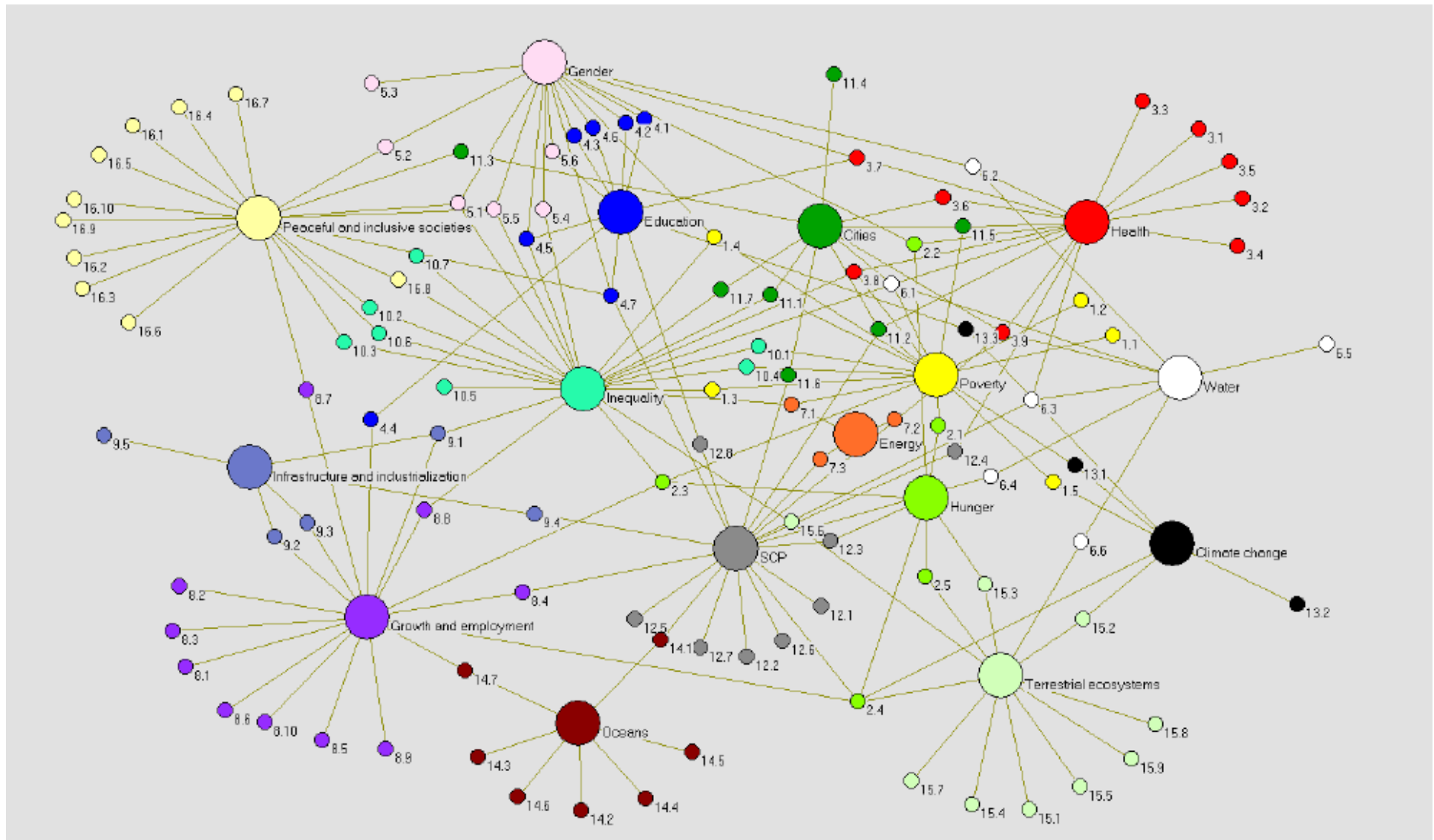
**General flow trends of Official Development Assistance (ODA), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and Impact Investing:**



*1 Based on the research results of the Center for Global Development as presented in "More than Money: Impact Investing for Development" by John Simon and Julia Barmeier (2010).*



... and – by the way – complexity will be  
the “new normal”



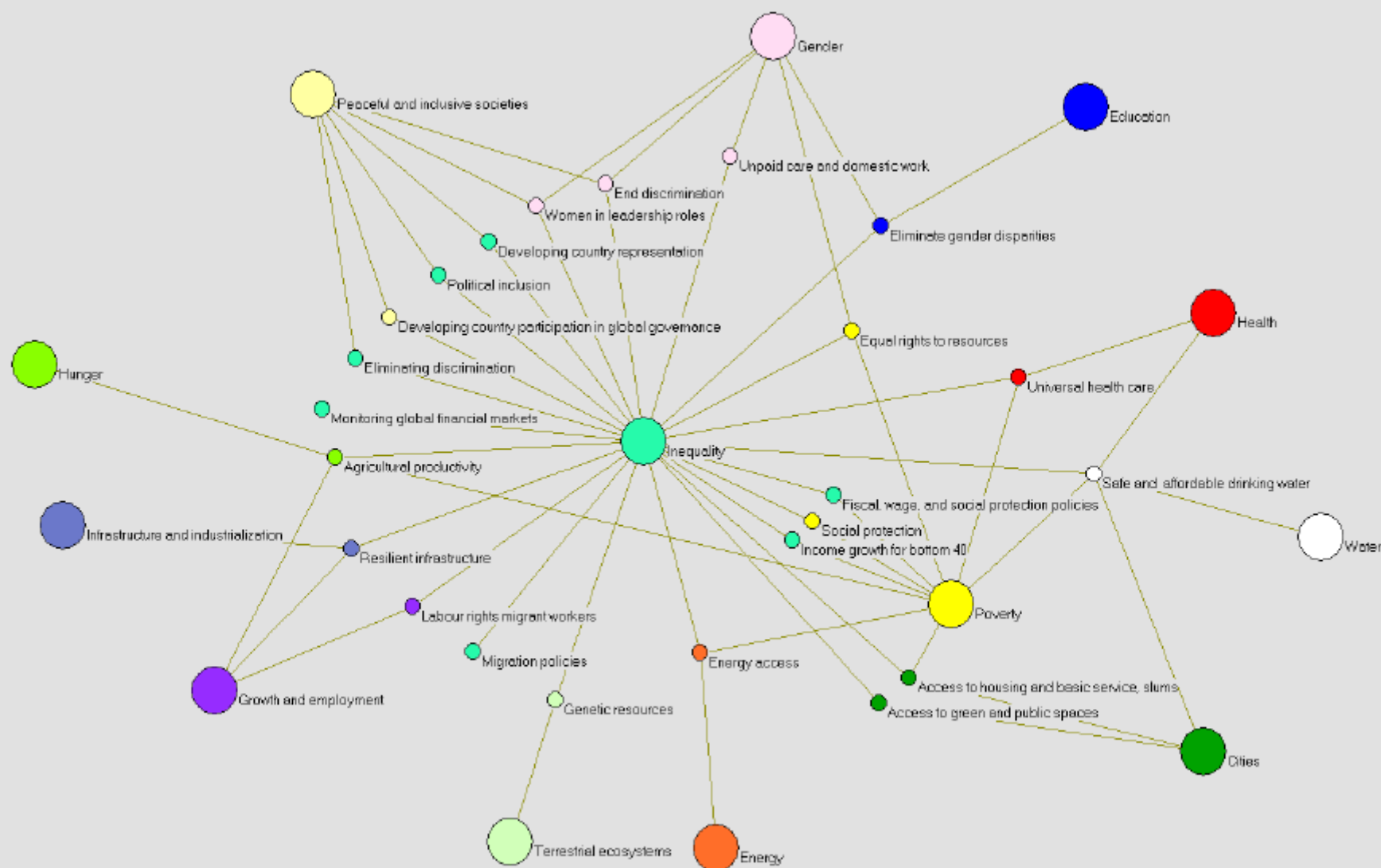


With 17 SDGs and 169 indicators, an unprecedented coalition of public and private actors are needed to track progress and – yes – evaluate policies, strategies and outcomes as the SDGs unfold

SDG12 for example (sustainable production and consumption) has very direct and concrete implications on SDG 10 on inequality . SDG 10 by itself has a wide web of inter-relations as it shows in the next slide

To feed two billion more people by 2040 and to end hunger and malnutrition, agricultural production has to increase by at least 50% over the coming 25-30 years. This will have effects on water, oceans, climate change, etc... So go figure out if SDG2 (end hunger, achieve food security, promote sustainable agriculture, etc...) will not “tickle” SDG 12 in a number of ways!

# SDG 10 and “friends”







The evaluation community has been one of the earliest champions in flagging the importance of complexity and in developing complexity aware evaluative thinking.

**If we don't develop adapt our work along these moving lines, our work runs a significant risk of falling out of context.**

# Colors





In this last section, allow me to present some “colors” to this global landscape picture derived from the work of IOCE and EvalPartners, with an open invitation to AES members to “join the fun”



Youth and young people are historically and frequently absent from evaluations of policies and programs that impact them, except as a potential source for data collection. To ensure that the profession is constantly fueled by a constantly renewed fresh (and funky) talent, EvalPartners has launched the EvalYouth initiative.

The initiative proposes capacity development, mentoring, virtual and face-to-face exchanges, joint action planning and proactive involvement of youth in the work of VOPEs





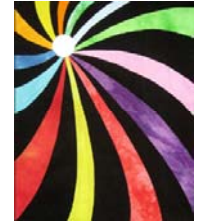
IOCE and EvalPartners have also realized the importance of recognizing the different world views and valuing the strengths of Indigenous evaluation practices will advance the contribution of Indigenous evaluation to global evaluation practice.



EvalIndigenous will attempt to inform individuals engaged in evaluation with Indigenous communities through:

- a) Documenting the evaluation and research protocols developed by Indigenous communities and organizations;
- b) Facilitating learning and sharing of experiences
- c) Promoting innovation in approaches and methods used in Indigenous evaluation and bringing evaluators from indigenous communities on board and,
- d) Disseminating information regarding 'lessons learned'.





Evaluation: adding Value and Learning to the SDGs, commonly refereed to as EvalSDGs has established itself as a key stakeholder and reference group in the ongoing debate around the SDGs.

The central paradigm of EvalSDGs is that **evaluation has the capacity to step beyond compliance into engagement** in performance assessment, learning, strengthening of accountability mechanisms, as well as feeding into policy and decision-making processes. This is is done through a four-fold action programme:

1. Promote Evaluation in relation to the SDGs
2. Act as a platform for dialogue on the role and practice of evaluation and the SDGs
3. Assist in strengthening VOPE & evaluator capacities to evaluate SDGs
4. Foster inter-linkages related to the evaluation sector and the SDGs process



# Briefing

## Policy and planning

*Keywords:*  
Monitoring and evaluation (M&E),  
Sustainable Development Goals  
(SDGs), policy



**Issue date**  
September 2016

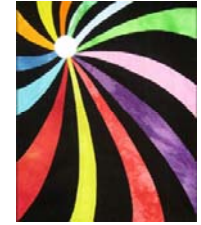
## Policy pointers

**National evaluation**  
systems need to be  
grounded in a philosophy  
and practice of evaluation  
that is consistent with the  
Sustainable Development  
Goals' interconnected  
nature

# Five considerations for national evaluation agendas informed by the SDGs

Each country sets its own national agenda and strategy within the broad contours of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yet the Agenda gives little explicit guidance on how to do this. However, there

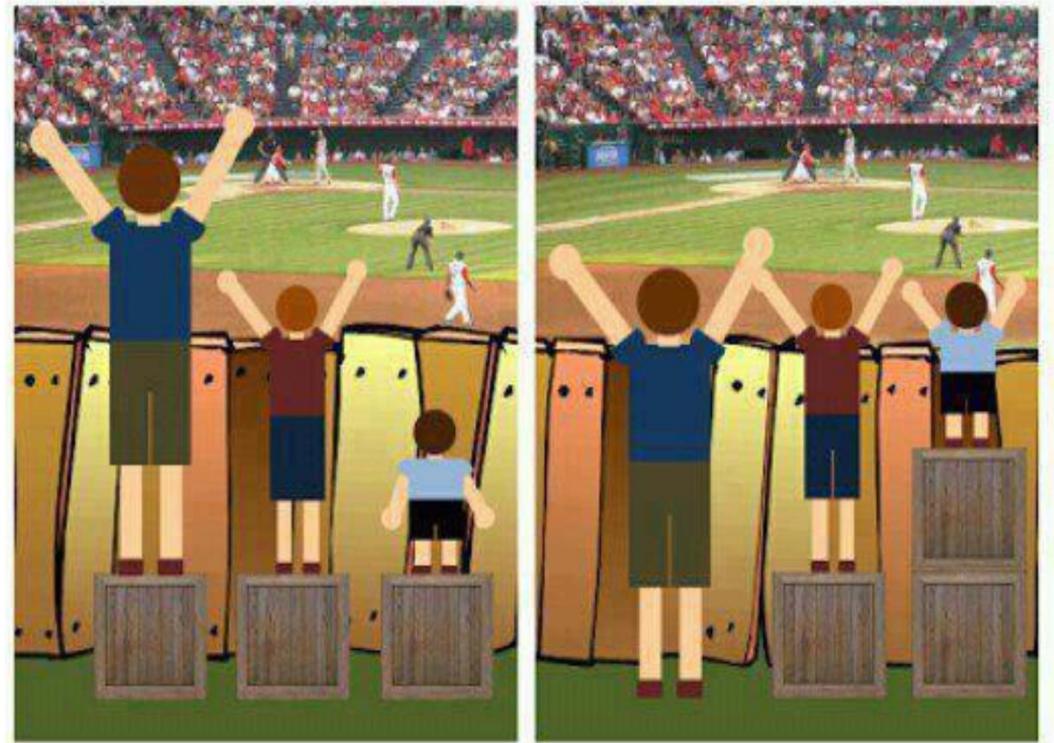




EvalGender + promotes a strong focus on equity and gender in evaluation (the “+” meaning that it encompasses more than gender alone).

The initiative has 3 action areas:

- a) Mobilization and advocacy
- b) Promoting innovation in evaluating with an equity and gender lens and:
- c) Knowledge sharing



# Thank YOU!

