

Prague Declaration on Evaluation for Transformational Change

Adopted on Friday 4 October 2019

We, the evaluators, commissioners, parliamentarians and other evaluation users, gathered in the IDEAS Global Assembly and the Third International Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development, recognize the need and urgency of systemic change from local to global levels to address the global crises endangering our future. Having discussed the role of evaluation in promoting learning, systemic and transformational change, we agree on the following statements.

1. Promote Transformational Evaluation for the Sustainable Development Goals

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.

2. Work in partnership

We will promote partnerships among evaluators, based on applied ethic codes and professional standards, and on mutual trust.

At the same time, we commit to engage and recognize new evaluators and collaborators from many different disciplines and fields of work, including young and emerging evaluators, students and interns in evaluation teams whenever possible, in order to promote mutual learning and to discover and leverage new views and skills.

3. Explore power relations and promote inclusiveness

We will deal sensitively and effectively with the unequal power relations that are apparent throughout intervention and evaluation processes. We commit to applying approaches that include the marginalized, and to respecting the need to engage local stakeholders in consultations about the purpose of evaluations, evaluations questions, and preliminary conclusions and recommendations. Looking towards a connected future of evaluation, we commit to co-designing and co-conducting evaluations that include indigenous and local ways of knowing with conventional and transformational methodologies.

4. Respect for rights and responsibilities

In all our approaches, communications and deliverables, we commit to respecting privacy, equity, gender equality, minorities and indigenous peoples, the dignity of people and environmental integrity. We commit to respecting and advancing human rights and responsibilities, as well as the rights of societies and of nature.

5. Support for professionalization and capacity development

We advocate a transformational change of evaluation itself. We will support efforts to bring knowledge and capacities to commissioners, evaluators, development partners and the diversity of stakeholders who can and do contribute to the practice of development evaluation throughout the world.

We support the development of an international evaluation academy to advance professionalization and promote the interaction between science, research and evaluation to enrich our profession and our efforts to support evaluation capacity at all levels.

6. Focus on sustainability

In all our evaluations, we commit to evaluating for social, environmental and economic sustainability and transformation, including by assessing contextual factors and systemic changes. We commit to assessing and highlighting, in all evaluations, unintended negative social, economic and environmental effects.

7. Focus on fragility, conflict and violence (FCV)

We commit to understand and work on the dividers and connectors of conflict and violence and apply evaluation approaches that are gender and conflict-sensitive and based on the principles of “Do No Harm” as described in the IDEAS Guide on Evaluation in Fragility, Conflict and Violence, as discussed during the Global Assembly.

8. Support for transformational indigenous evaluation

We commit to value and support the strengthening of and learning from indigenous evaluation by and for indigenous peoples.

9. Shared responsibility for results

We fully understand that the real result of an evaluation is not the evaluation itself but the use that is made of the evaluation in all of its phases. We commit where possible to work with the potential evaluation users, including on possible solutions for problems identified.

10. The challenge ahead

The discourse on evaluation for transformational change is challenging for evaluators working in systems, contexts and circumstances that are not yet open to or sufficiently enabled to commit to transformational evaluation, and challenging for commissioners, users and stakeholders. We continue to discuss and to deepen our understanding of the changes required for evaluation to contribute to tackling the crucial problems of our time.