



Under the auspices of the Ministers and of the Mayor of the City of Prague



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic



MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CZ



IDEAS report on the:

2019 IDEAS Global Assembly

&

Third International Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development

Evaluation for Transformative Change

Bringing experiences of the Global South to the Global North

Hotel Duo, Prague, Czech Republic, 30 September-4 October 2019

Introduction

The conference on “Evaluation for Transformative Change: bringing experiences of the Global South to the Global North” took place at the Hotel Duo in Prague, Czech Republic, from 2 to 4 October 2019. The event took shape with the International Development Evaluation Association IDEAS leading a partnership with the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF, the community of practice Earth-Eval and the Czech Evaluation Society. The conference received the auspices of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Regional Development of the Czech Republic and the Mayor of the City of Prague.

Agenda 2030, adopted by the member states of the United Nations in September 2015, calls for new partnerships to work towards a sustainable and equitable future for humanity on our planet. It radically redefines development and asks for **transformative change** of our societies, our economies and how we interact with nature and our habitat. While this is most strongly emphasised in the Paris Climate Agreement and its follow-up meetings, transformative change is a cross-cutting issue throughout the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Each country needs to identify its own transformation priorities. In the Global South the SDGs have been taken up by many countries, ranging from Benin, Sri Lanka, South Africa to Uganda. Countries with economies in transition have their unique experiences to take into account, given the transformative processes they went through. The Prague Global Assembly was organized from the perspective that it is time the Global North becomes inspired by what is happening in the Global South and in countries in transition.



Pre-conference workshops

The need to focus on transformational change was evident in the pre-conference workshop programme, offered on Monday 20 September (with 143 attendees) and Tuesday 1 October (with 125 participants), with subjects ranging from “Blue Marble Evaluation” to “being a transformative evaluator today”, “transformations needed to achieve the SDGs”. The workshops were facilitated by 24 facilitators, 12 of which came from the Global South and 11 of which were women.

The conference

Four keynote speakers addressed the participants, starting with *Melissa Leach*, Director of the Institute of Development Studies in the UK, on Wednesday morning. Her address focusing on recent research and insights that could enrich evaluations for transformational change was highly appreciated for its inspiring substance. On Thursday morning *Adeline Sibanda*, President of IOCE and independent evaluator from Zimbabwe, raised Southern perspectives on global evaluation issues. Her call for “decolonisation” of the dominant evaluation paradigms was taken up in many subsequent discussions throughout the conference. On Thursday evening *Oscar Garcia*, Director of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, went into the dilemmas and challenges for evaluation for transformational change in international cooperation and in national contexts, providing food for thought for the participants. Friday morning saw the introduction of the concept of “Blue Marble Evaluation” as presented by *Michael Quinn Patton* in a highly interactive session. Michael’s book was published right after the conference and will no doubt provide additional inspiration for the global evaluation community.

Overview of sessions and themes

The conference took shape through six streams of work, one of which was shaped by the Third International Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development. Eight special (semi-plenary) sessions took place to introduce these streams of work, with two streams (transformational change and professionalisation) offering two special sessions.

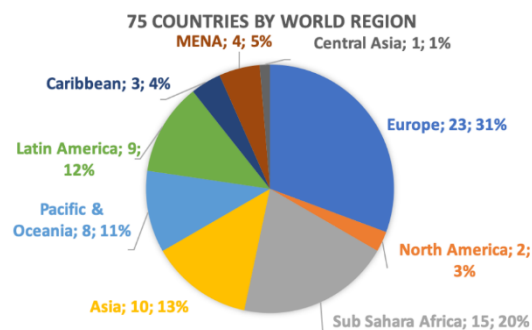
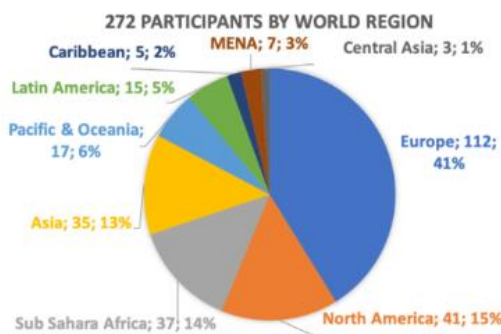
Parallel sessions were distributed as follows amongst the six streams:

Stream of work	Coordinated by	Sessions
Evaluation for transformative change	Climate ITIG IDEAS	18
Evaluating environment & development (3rd Intern. Conf.)	GEF IEO	6
Transition experiences and best practices in the use of evaluation for systemic changes	CES	5
Evaluation in contexts of fragility, violence & conflict (FCV)	FCV ITIG IDEAS	4
Evaluation on gender and equity (G&E)	G&E ITIG IDEAS	3
Professionalisation (Prof)	Prof. WG IDEAS	11

In total 290 participants were registered and attended the conference. Eighteen participants did not identify from which country they were – mostly staff of international organisations, where usually the country indication would refer to where the organisation is based. The 272 participants who could be linked to their country of origin came from 75 countries from all over the world. European countries scored highest with 41% of the participants coming from 23 European countries. North America followed with 15% of participants, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (14% coming from 15 countries) and Asia (13% from 10 countries). While most participants came from the Global North, more than 40% came from the Global South, thus fulfilling the promise that IDEAS would bring the Global South to the Global North. Special mention should be made of the delegation from Pacific & Oceania, which contributed 6% of the participants, as much as Latin America and quite astounding

giving the population density of the island states in the Pacific. The contribution of the Global South to this conference was a tribute first and foremost to the dynamic and inspiring nature of the work done in many countries, with generous support from our donors and partners for their travel arrangements! The overview of participants is as follows:

Total participants in registration system	290	% of participants	
Country of origin not identified	18	6%	
Region and country identified	272	94%	# of countries
Europe	112	39%	23
North America	41	14%	2
Sub Sahara Africa	37	13%	15
Asia	35	12%	10
Pacific & Oceania	17	6%	8
Latin America	15	5%	9
Caribbean	5	2%	3
MENA	7	2%	4
Central Asia	3	1%	1



The gender balance of participants was 54% female and 42% male, with 4% unidentified – either indicating they did not want to share gender information or because the registration system failed to register this.

Special themes cross-cutting through the streams of work were:

- Climate change through the strong support of the UK government and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade from Finland, as expressed in the transformational stream of work and in the Third International Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development.
- Young and Emerging Evaluators, especially in the professionalisation stream, but also present throughout many other sessions, strongly supported by UNFPA and the African Development Bank.
- Caribbean and Pacific sessions, which took place in the transformational change stream of work but included strong emphasis on professionalisation issues and was supported through IOB/Netherlands (Caribbean delegates), New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and GIZ (Pacific delegates). These sessions were especially appreciated because of the sharing of national experiences and knowledge.
- Many of the transformation’s sessions presented aspects of work coordinated and supported by the Transformations Forum, again including professionalisation aspects.

- IDEAS organised a meeting of its thematic and working groups (ITIGs and WG).
- A cocktail reception on Thursday evening introduced two communities of practice to the participants: Earth-Eval and Eval Forward.

Book: Evaluation for Transformational Change

The conference was accompanied by a publication of IDEAS: “Evaluation for Transformational Change: opportunities and challenges for the Sustainable Development Goals”, which emerged out of the Guanajuato conference in December 2017 and aimed to link discussions in Guanajuato to the transformational focus of the Prague conference. The eight essays were mostly written through collaborative efforts, involving no less than 30 authors. Like its predecessor (“Evaluation for Agenda 2030”) most of these authors hailed from the Global South (22) while the contribution from the Global North (8) was much lower. The gender balance was a bit in favour of the women: providing 16 versus 14 co-authors.

The book was edited by Rob D. van den Berg, Cristina Magro and Silvia Salinas Mulder and published by IDEAS as “open access”. It can be downloaded from the IDEAS website (www.ideas-global.org) and printed copies can be obtained from Amazon. A limited number of printed copies were sold at the Global Assembly and the proceeds have been put in a newly established Publication Fund of IDEAS, which will support future publications. Royalties from the printed copies through Amazon will also flow into the IDEAS Publication Fund. The book was formatted and designed by Daniella Domingues thanks to a generous contribution of Universalia (www.universalia.com).

Award Competition Evaluations for Transformational Change

An award competition was set up in the first half of 2019 by IDEAS, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD and the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank for outstanding evaluations of development interventions that are explicitly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promote or result in transformational change. The award will be biennial and will carry prize money of US\$15,000 for three rewards: of the most credible, innovative and influential evaluations, judged by an independent expert panel. The prize winners of 2019 were announced at a special session on Wednesday evening at the Residence of the Mayor of Prague.

Award for credibility

Evaluation of the CARD and UNICEF Cash Transfer Pilot Project for Pregnant Women and Children in Cambodia – Team leader: Ashish Mukherjee

Award for innovation

Mid Term Evaluation of the Global Climate Partnership Foundation – Team leader: Antonia Dickman

Award for influence

Evaluation of Transformational Change in the Climate Investment Funds – Team leader: Sam McPherson

Prague Declaration

The conference ended with the “Prague Declaration on Evaluation for Transformational Change”, unanimously adopted by the assembled participants on Friday 4 October 2019. This declaration includes strong support for further work on transformational evaluation, to be undertaken in partnership, exploring power relations and promoting inclusiveness, with respect for rights and responsibilities. The declaration calls for support for professionalisation and capacity and supports the development of an international evaluation academy to promote the interaction between science, research and evaluation. It raises attention for sustainability, supports transformational

indigenous evaluation, calls for shared responsibility for results and calls for the completion and publication of the IDEAS guide on evaluation in contexts of fragility, conflict and violence.

The declaration can be downloaded from the conference website <https://2019.global-assembly.org> and the IDEAS website (www.ideas-global.org).

Donors and partners

The conference was supported by numerous donors and partners, to whom we wish to express our most profound appreciation. Thanks to their generosity, a substantive number of fellowships for participants from the Global South became possible. They follow in alphabetical order:

- African Development Bank (Independent Development Evaluation)
- Caribbean Evaluators International
- Czech Development Agency
- Climate Investment Funds (Evaluation & Learning Initiative)
- EvalYouth
- German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)
- Global Environment Facility (Independent Evaluation Office)
- Green Climate Fund (Independent Evaluation Unit)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development IFAD (Independent Office of Evaluation)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (IOB)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade of New Zealand
- Pacific Community
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- Transformations Forum
- UK Government
- United Nations Population Fund UNFPA (Evaluation Office)
- United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF (Evaluation Office)
- United Nations Industrial Organisation UNIDO (Office of Evaluation and Internal Oversight)
- Universalia
- World Bank Group (Independent Evaluation Group)
- World Food Programme WFP (Office of Evaluation)