

# IF THEY CAN'T DO ANY GOOD, THEY SHOULDN'T COME

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# BACKGROUND,...

- Sri Lankan
- Working in conflict affected countries for last 20 years
- Conducting research and evaluation in conflict affected communities in Asia, Africa and the Middle East

# THE ADVERTISEMENT,...

- MSc Disaster Management and Sustainable Development
- Largely based on global research and evaluation on disaster and development issues for more than 150 years - Our Team
- Training future academics, policy makers and practitioners

# EVALUATION AS,...

- Evaluation as pass-time: The evaluator;
- Evaluation as tick-box: The process
- Evaluation as ineffective : The outcome

# CURRENT AID,...

- Delivered by western agencies to non-western communities
- Lack the involvement of affected communities in planning and management
- Largely a top-down process

# ETHICS IN EVALUATION,...

- Research Vs Evaluation: Evaluation as research.
- Research ethics frameworks: Autonomy, beneficence and justice
  - to protect research participants, doing good and prevent harm.
- Evaluators are expected to be honest, loyal and keep their promises.

# ETHICS IN EVALUATION,...

- “Do no harm”: protect individuals from exposure to the risk of harm.
- Professional principles and frameworks: American Evaluation Association (AEA) Guiding Principles for Evaluators (2004), Australasian Evaluation Society’s (AES) Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations (2010), Canadian Evaluation Society Guidelines for Ethical Conduct (2012), African Evaluation Guidelines - AfrEA (2002), French Evaluation Society’s Charter of evaluation guiding principles for public policies and programmes (2003), OECD-DAC’s Quality Standards for Development Evaluation (2010), and United Nation Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines (2008).

# THE PROBLEM,...

- Largely western values (e.g.: in contrast to mothers as evaluators).
- Discounted and marginalized non-Western systems of knowing (e.g.: Institution).
- Legacies of colonisation and imperialism (new form of colonialism in evaluation?).



# THE PROBLEM,...

- OECD-DAC's evaluation criteria (2010) – impact, efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability: there are two challenges
  1. To evaluate a project through these criteria requires time; and,
  2. The quality, validity, or utility of data may be questionable if the necessary relationships of trust do not exist between the evaluator and the evaluation's “subject” or stakeholder.

# THE CRITICAL (OFTEN) MISSING CRITICAL INGREDIENT – CULTURAL HUMILITY,...

*“Cultural humility assumes that individuals’ life experiences and multiple affiliations (e.g. racial/ethnic group, gender group, age cohort, region, religion, and leadership roles) interact in complex ways to shape their views. This approach assumes that the political and economic position of the group from which an individual comes, their life experiences, as well as the larger national culture shape perspectives and behavior”*

(Reynoso-Vallejo, 2012)

# NAVIGATING VULNERABILITIES,...

*“Compliance with codes for vulnerable groups. Where the evaluation involves the participation of members of vulnerable groups, evaluators must be aware of and comply with legal codes (whether international or national) governing, for example, interviewing children and young people”*

(UNEG 2008 p.7)

# NAVIGATING VULNERABILITIES,...

*“My dear son, we may be poor, we may be illiterate and living in difficult conditions, but we are not stupid and not a bunch of idiots.”*

Elderly person from Peshawar, Pakistan

(Personal Discussion with the Author), August  
1998

# COMMON SENSE,...

- Organisation for the Blind in Kenya  
(Bottom-up)

# IF THEY CAN'T DO ANY GOOD,...

*“No one within our community requested these International organisations to come and help us. We have been surviving the conflict since the 1980s and disasters since the 1950s. Before 1990, we were helping each other and the few organisations in our area were listening to us. Now, it is different – all these foreigners and their assistant Sri Lankans who come in Land Cruisers with questionnaires only want our information. Then they disappear and a new group comes. I think that if they can't do any good, they shouldn't come.”*

A farmer from conflict affected Eastern Sri Lanka (Direct Discussion with the Author), October 2005

# WE NEED A FRIEND,...

*“We need outside help for analysis and understanding of our situation and experience, but not for telling us what we should do. An outsider who comes with ready-made solutions and advice is worse than useless. He must first understand from us what our questions are, and help us articulate the questions better, and then help us find solutions. Outsiders also have to change. He alone is a friend who helps us to think about our problems on our own.”*

(Wignaraja, 2005, p.1)

# LOOKING FORWARD,...

- Academic frameworks.
- Policy formulation.
- Implementation strategies.



# REFERENCES

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