

IDEAS Global Assembly, Prague, Czech Republic

30 September-4 October 2019

Evaluation for Transformative Change:

Bringing experiences of the Global South to the Global North

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 Mexico. In contrast many countries of the Global North tend to be relatively complacent concerning the SDGs and leave reporting on progress to National Bureaus of Statistics. There is no concerted effort to integrate evaluation into reporting, as several countries in the Global South aim for. Countries with economies in transition have their unique experiences to take into account, given the transformative processes they went through.

It is time the Global North becomes inspired by what is happening in the Global South and in countries in transition. IDEAS, as the only global professional association for development evaluators, has in recent years mobilised evaluation thinkers and practitioners throughout the world on evaluation of sustainable development (in the 2015 Global Assembly in Bangkok) and on evaluation for Agenda 2030 (in the 2017 Global Assembly in Guanajuato, Mexico). It has convened its Global Assemblies in the Global South since its inception in 2002 in Beijing. Conferences were held in Delhi, Johannesburg, Amman, Barbados, Bangkok and Guanajuato, Mexico. It is time IDEAS brings the richness of experiences and visions on evaluating and implementing the transformative vision of the SDGs from the Global South to the Global North and extend the South to South Exchange mechanism to the North and to and from countries in transition, which it is uniquely placed to do as global professional association.

The global exploration of experiences will include an exchange with Central and Eastern European countries, as a special stream of work on developing and supporting their capacity as well using the experience and expertise from these countries for influencing the agenda on evaluation for transformative change.

The focus of this exchange would be the challenges and solutions for evaluation as a profession to contribute to our understanding of **transformative change**. Do we have the right evaluation approaches? Does the skill set and competencies that IDEAS has identified for evaluation professionals in 2014 need to be adapted? Is our ethical guidance fit for purpose for the Sustainable Development Goals? Have we contributed to the development of relevant capacities in evaluation that are needed to evaluate transformative change?

Furthermore, the 2019 Global Assembly aims to establish a platform for various transformative initiatives to come together and work on establishing best practices and the way forward. IDEAS is collaborating with the Transformative Change Learning Partnership hosted by the Climate Investment Funds, with the Working Group on Transformational Evaluation for Transformational Development of the Transformations Forum, and the Earth-Eval community of Practice and their effort to organise a third international conference on evaluating climate change and development and the South-to-South Exchange initiative, amongst others.

The products the Global Assembly aims for are a mix of M&E systems experiences, best practices in evaluating transformative change, recognizing political aspirations and professional inspiration and inviting the North to learn from the South, and from transition experiences. They would tie into ongoing initiatives and provide them with a forum of international evaluators to support them in bringing forward their work, like the envisaged update of the DAC/OECD evaluation criteria, the South to South Exchange Initiative, the further development of competencies and credentialing leading to new capacity empowerment initiatives, ethical guidance that takes global and indigenous experiences into account, and so on.

Lastly, we need to discuss whether we can end the paradigm wars regarding impact or shift them in a direction which would be productive. Transformative change calls for multi-disciplinary evaluation paradigms, tools and methods, with a healthy infusion from natural sciences, geography, climate change, ecosystems, social entrepreneurship, behavioural economics and so on. What can we learn from the practice of new approaches in the Global South?

Five product streams are currently being prepared:

- 1) *Evaluation for Transformative Change*, with involvement of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the thematic group on Climate Change of IDEAS, as well as the Transformation Forum, building on achievements of the Evaluation & Learning Initiative at the Climate Investment Funds and aiming to raise issues beyond climate change.
- 2) The Czech Evaluation Society will coordinate a stream on *transition experiences* and best practices in the use of evaluation for systemic changes.
- 3) *Evaluation in contexts of Fragility, Conflict and Violence*, with involvement of the thematic group of IDEAS, EvalPartners and a range of VOPE partners such as PEA and CES.
- 4) *Evaluation on Gender and Equity* coordinated by the thematic group of IDEAS.
- 5) *Professionalisation*, combining various partners and initiatives regarding evaluation criteria, an International Evaluation Academy, skills and competencies, approaches, methods and tools and a revision of the IDEAS Code of Ethics.

These streams of work are open for new partners, suggestions, comments – please contact our coordinator [Yun Zhao](#) for further information.

The Bangkok conference has led to the publication of a follow-up book, “Evaluation for Agenda 2030” (<https://ideas-global.org/evaluation-for-agenda-2030/>) which was launched at the Guanajuato conference. A book inspired by the Guanajuato conference is in preparation, which would present thoughtful, inspiring and challenging essays on the issues that will be discussed at the conference. The book is scheduled to be published before the conference. Furthermore, IDEAS has developed global agreements in the evaluation profession on ethics, competencies, and need for capacity development and empowerment.

Logistics, administration & next steps

The 2019 Global Assembly will take place over two-and-a-half to three days, from Wednesday 2 to Friday 4 October, and include keynote addresses by: **Adeline Sibanda**, President ad Interim of African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) and Chair of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE); **Melissa Leach**, Director of the Institute of Development Studies in the UK; and **Oscar Garcia**, Director of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD. Furthermore, several high-level **Special Sessions** will be organised that are semi-plenary in nature (no more than 3 of these in a given time-slot), and five to six parallel sessions of presentations, panels, conversations and other innovative forms of interaction. Sessions will take 90 minutes. Proposals for presentations, panels and other forms of interaction will be solicited through the conference website (to open mid-February) and are reviewed by volunteers. Registration for the conference is also done through the conference website and is expected to open in the second half of February. IDEAS can receive payments through bank transfer or credit card.

On the Monday and Tuesday before the conference **special workshops** are organized by guest lecturers – many of them by IDEAS’ members highly renowned in the global evaluation community on topics of interest to a wide range of attendants.

The venue is the [Duo Hotel in Prague](#): conveniently situated close by a metro station with easy access to the city centre. Rooms can be booked by participants through the hotel website with a special discount (through a link to be opened up when conference registration starts). To ensure a smooth running of the conference and embedding it in the Czech evaluation culture, as well as to create a special theme of evaluation in European countries, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the Czech Evaluation Society.

A donor drive is undertaken to ensure participants from the Global South, with emphasis on the least developed countries, can receive bursaries. IDEAS strongly appeals to donors to fund participants from the Global South and thus enable their voice in the Global Assembly.

Registration fees

IDEAS aims to fully fund the Assembly from registration fees. Registration fees will cover **venue, coffee & tea breaks, and lunch** on all days from 30 September to 4 October. Registration is expected to open in the second half of February.

Workshops	
Registration fee for Youth & LDC members	\$200.00
Registration fee for 1 workshop for members	\$250.00
Registration fee for 1 workshop for non-members	\$350.00
Registration fee for 2 workshops for members	\$400.00
Registration fee for 2 workshops for non-members	\$500.00

Conference	
Registration fee LDC and youth members	\$250.00
Early bird registration fee members	\$400.00
Early bird registration fee non-members	\$500.00
Registration fee members	\$500.00
Registration fee non-members	\$600.00