



# Evaluation on the Edge

**Here there be dragons...**

*or are those just  
icebergs?*



Michael Quinn Patton  
Canadian Evaluation  
Society

June 8, 2016

# COLLABORATION





Collaboration  
is like teenage sex



# STORYTELLING



# Paul McAleavey: Mountain or Everest?

Why was the VW corruption discovered in the USA rather than Europe?



He proceeded to compare the US/EPA with the European Environmental Agency.



# How A Little Lab In West Virginia Caught Volkswagen's Big Cheat



# CORRUPTION

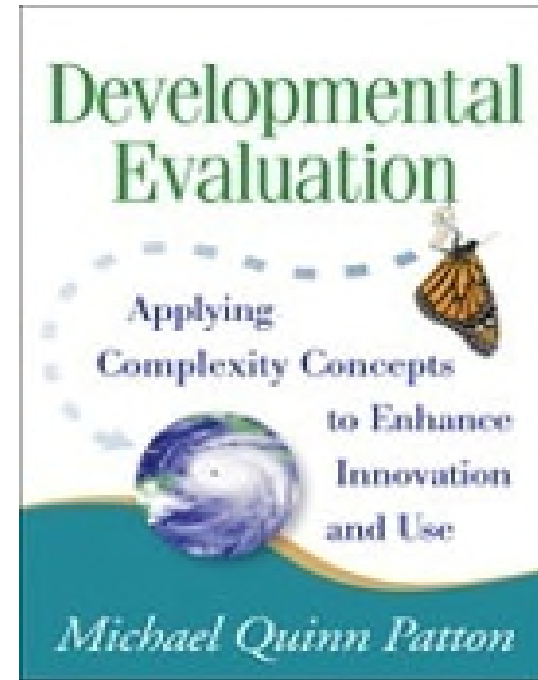
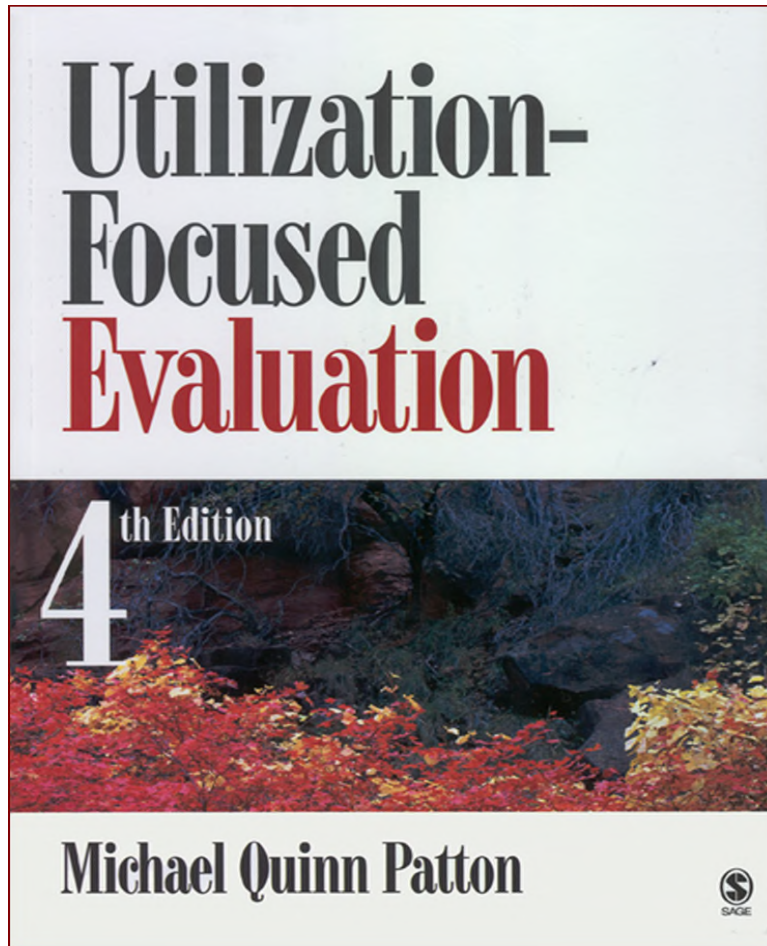
- Panama Papers
- Catholic Church abuse of children
- Financial corrupt practices (2008 melt-down)
- Flint Michigan contaminated water
- Exxon, BP and other oil spills
- Abu Ghraib

# Why we need Truth & Reconciliation

Why we need investigative  
& accountability evaluation



# Collaboration





# **General Accounting Office's (GAO)**

## **Program Evaluation and Methodology Division (PEMD)**

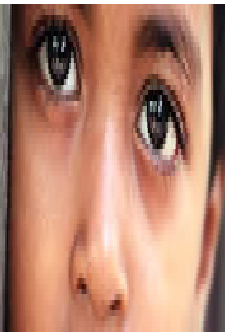
# Eleanor Chelimsky

## Among the things that must be anticipated:

Attempts by those in power to hide needed data from evaluators, and therefore the public. Or to suppress government evaluation findings by classifying reports as top secret. So...evaluators will have to learn to deal with secrecy even as it expands to grotesque levels and even, as happened to us, they are faced with the bizarre situation in which their report is classified so high that they, the evaluators who wrote it, are no longer allowed to read it. (p. 25).





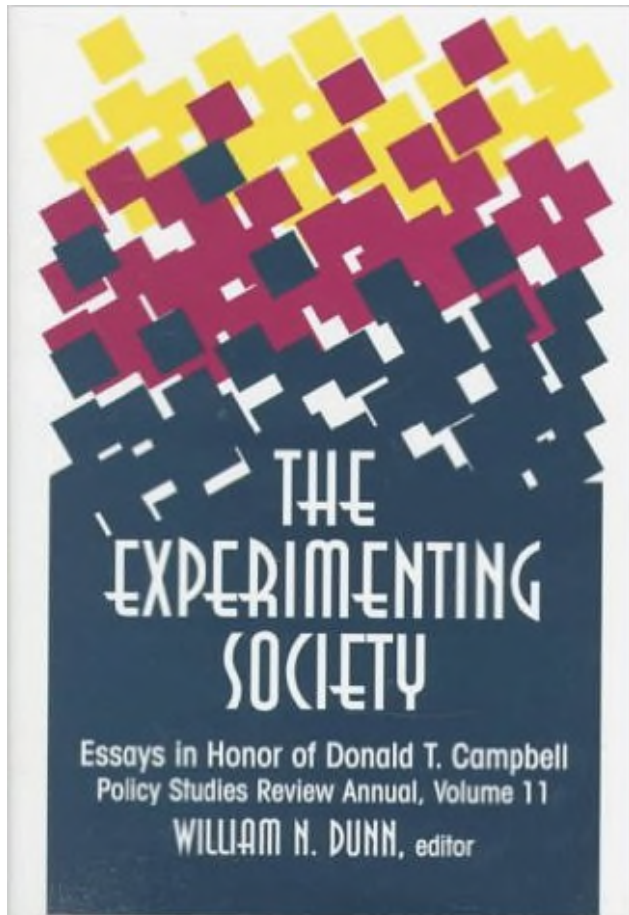


# The International Development Research Centre



# Methods for the Experimenting Society

## Donald T. Campbell



# Campbell's Law





# Our Kryptonite

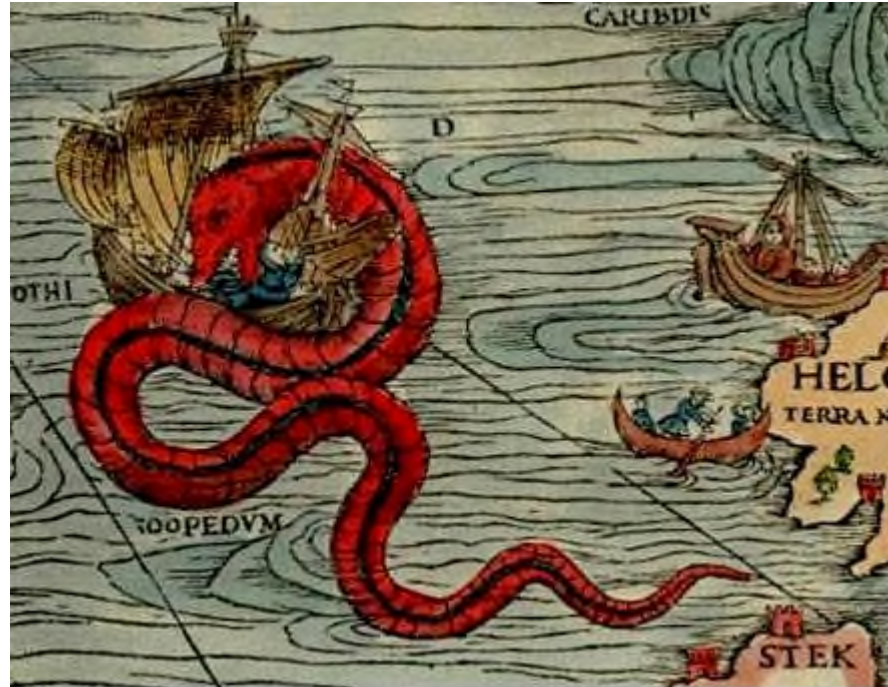
- ✓ Our naiveté
- ✓ Our timidity
- ✓ Yielding to demands for certainty
- ✓ Our narrow perspectives
- ✓ Our silos



Which brings us to dragons



*Beyond here there be dragons...*



or are those just  
icebergs?





# Here be dragons!

"'Here there be dragons,' [is] a very interesting sentence," said Thomas Sander, editor of the *Portolan*, the journal of the Washington Map Society. "In early maps, you would see images of sea monsters; it was a way to say there's bad stuff out there."

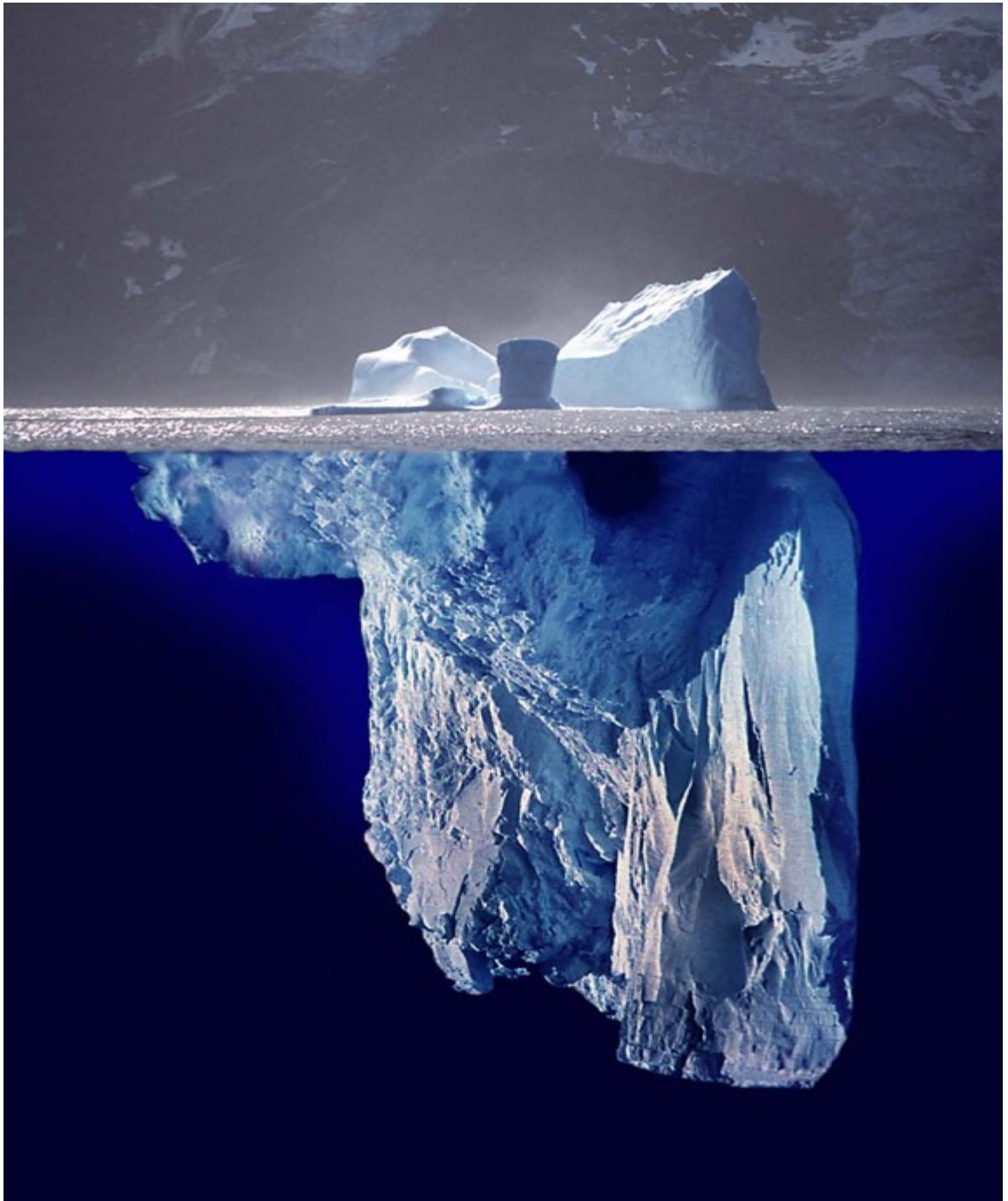
Which brings us to icebergs...



# Archimedes's Principle applied to Icebergs

Because the density of pure ice is about  $920 \text{ kg/m}^3$ , and that of seawater about  $1025 \text{ kg/m}^3$ , typically only one-tenth of the volume of an iceberg is above water. The shape of the underwater portion can be difficult to judge by looking at the portion above the surface.







# Tip of the Iceberg

A problem or difficulty that is only a small manifestation of a larger problem.

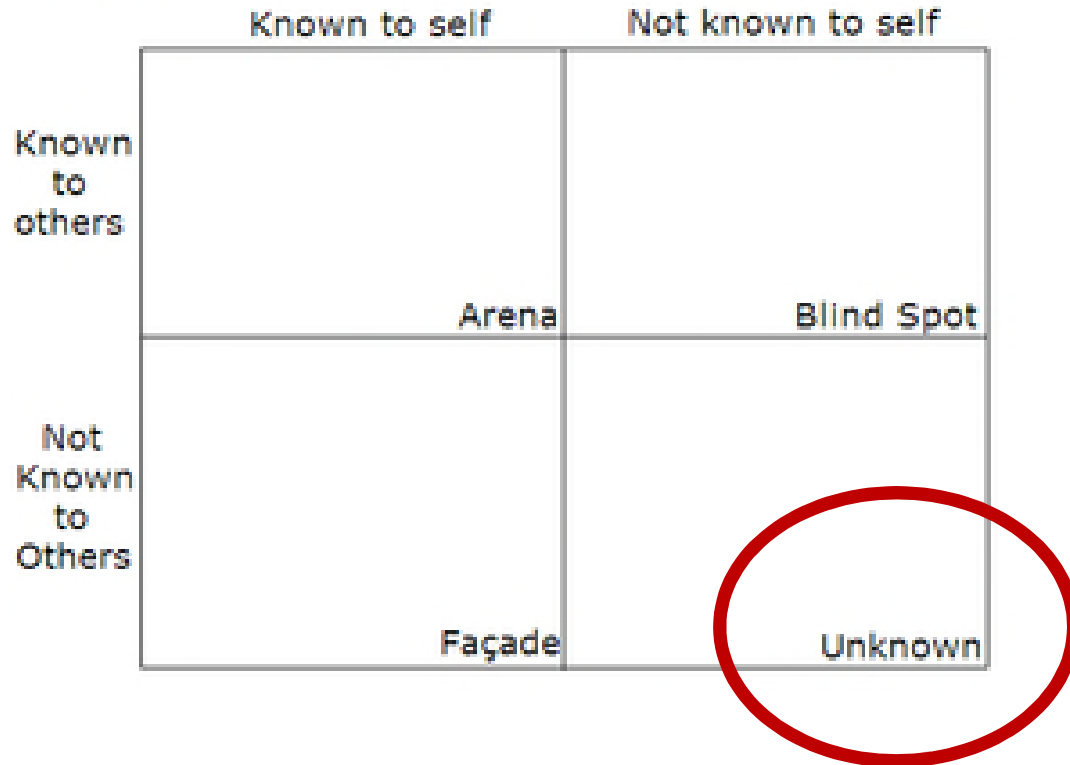




## Levers for System Change



## Johari Window



Created by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham in 1955.

There are known knowns.  
These are things we know  
that we know.

There are known unknowns.

That is to say, there are things that we know we  
don't know.

But there are also unknown unknowns.

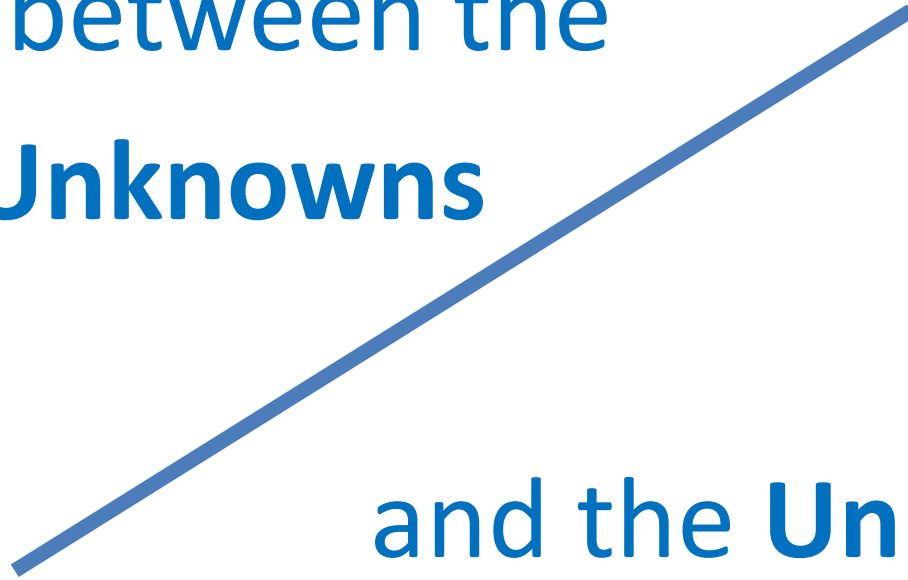
There are things we don't know we don't know.





# The EDGE

The line between the  
**Known Unknowns**



and the **Unknown  
Unknowns**

# The Future of Evaluation



What's  
below  
the  
surface?

KKs



*Known  
Unknowns*



UUs

What's out there?



# 1) Reflections from the edge

- Sharing lessons learned from our practice. Exploring challenges as well as opportunities and ways to move forward.

# Types of Icebergs

THE HUFFINGTON POST

June 24, 2014

**Iceberg In St. John's, Newfoundland Is Massive**





# *Evaluation's Kks & KUs*

## **Traditional Kks**

### Evaluating...

- Logic models
- Projects & Programs
- Accountability
- Goal attainment
- Outcomes & indicators
- Implementation

### Generating...

- Lessons
- Recommendations

## **Nontraditional & New Directions**

### Evaluating...

- Mission fulfillment
- Strategy
- Values
- Advocacy campaigns
- Policy change
- Systems Change
- Complex dynamic interventions

# Innovations & Challenges:

## *Evaluating...*

- Community impacts
- Regional initiatives
- Environmental ecosystem sustainability
- Networks and collaborations
- Inclusiveness and diversity
- Innovation
- Collective impact
- Scaling

# Innovations & Challenges:

## *Evaluating...*

- Valuing alternative ways of knowing
- RIGHTS
- PRINCIPLES
- GLOBAL SYSTEMS CHANGE

# Global Systems Change Evaluation





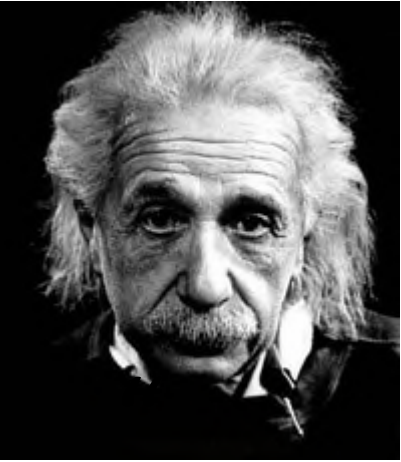
# Eval ||

The international movement to strengthen national evaluation capacities



# Translating the MDGs into country programs through country-based model

- WBG strategies emphasized primacy of country ownership
- Country focus supported by
  - ✓ Organizational changes initiated in the 1990s – decentralization
  - ✓ Instruments: PRSP, HIPC, MDR
- WBG country strategies
  - ✓ MDG themes, if not MDG terms, substantially incorporated
  - ✓ Stable use of MDG indicators in results matrices
- MDG focus in WBG country programs
  - ✓ Significant variability; no evidence MDGs less relevant in FCS or MIC
- IEG: tension between responsiveness to client needs & global/sectoral priorities



“We can not solve our problems  
with the same level of thinking that  
created them.”



# WORLD MAP





# Let's start with perspective

- ❖ You can't see the Earth as a globe unless you get at least twenty thousand miles away from it.
- ❖ Only 24 humans ever went that far into outer space -- the three-person crews of the nine Apollo missions that traveled to the moon between 1968 and 1972.

# THE BLUE MARBLE SHOT

- ❖ But only the 3 in the last Apollo mission saw a full Earth and took *the first complete photo of Earth*, **December 7, 1972**



# Taking a Blue Marble Perspective

Elder Albert Marshall:

“We have a responsibility to the Earth.”

“Get beyond jurisdictions.... Get out of cubicles and look at the vastness of Earth.”

“Face *global issues* for the next 7 generations.”

“We are interconnected and interdependent.”



# The Circle: Without Edge



# Compare images



National boundaries: the result of war, colonialism, enslavement, exploitation, genocide, oppression, greed, politics, religious persecution

# Global problems transcend national and agency boundaries

- Climate change
- Economic turbulence
- Refugees
- Virulent infectious diseases
- Dying oceans
- Global cyber-terrorism
- International drug cartels
- Human trafficking
- Weapons trafficking
- Poverty and inequality
- Multi-national corporate collusion

# Global problems....

- The definitions of the problems are disputed
- The “facts” are a matter of intense debate
- Politics and special interests dominate:
  - national interests (Rick Williams on  
Scotland)
  - multi-national corporate interests
  - agency agendas
  - competition for resources
- The stakes are huge.



# Four Potential Dimensions of Global Evaluation Competence

1. Global Perspective: *The Blue Marble Lens*
2. World Systems knowledge
3. Global systems analysis skills
4. Global systems change network connections

## 2) Building on our edge

Sharing tools for building evaluation skills that transcend boundaries. Reaching more practitioners.

**CONSEQUENCES**

# CONSEQUENCES on the EDGE: UNKNOWN UNKNOWNNS

- Unanticipated consequences
- Consequential validity

# Race Background questions

## 1. Census definitions

## 2. How we ask the question

- **What is your race? (Check the box)**
- **Given that society has created racial categories to distinguish among people, in what box do you generally find yourself categorized?**
- **In what category do you prefer to place yourself?**



CANADIAN EVALUATION SOCIETY  
SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE D'ÉVALUATION

AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION  
ASSOCIATION AMÉRICAINE D'ÉVALUATION



Carl Doucette

Sharon Rallis

Brad Cousins

MQP

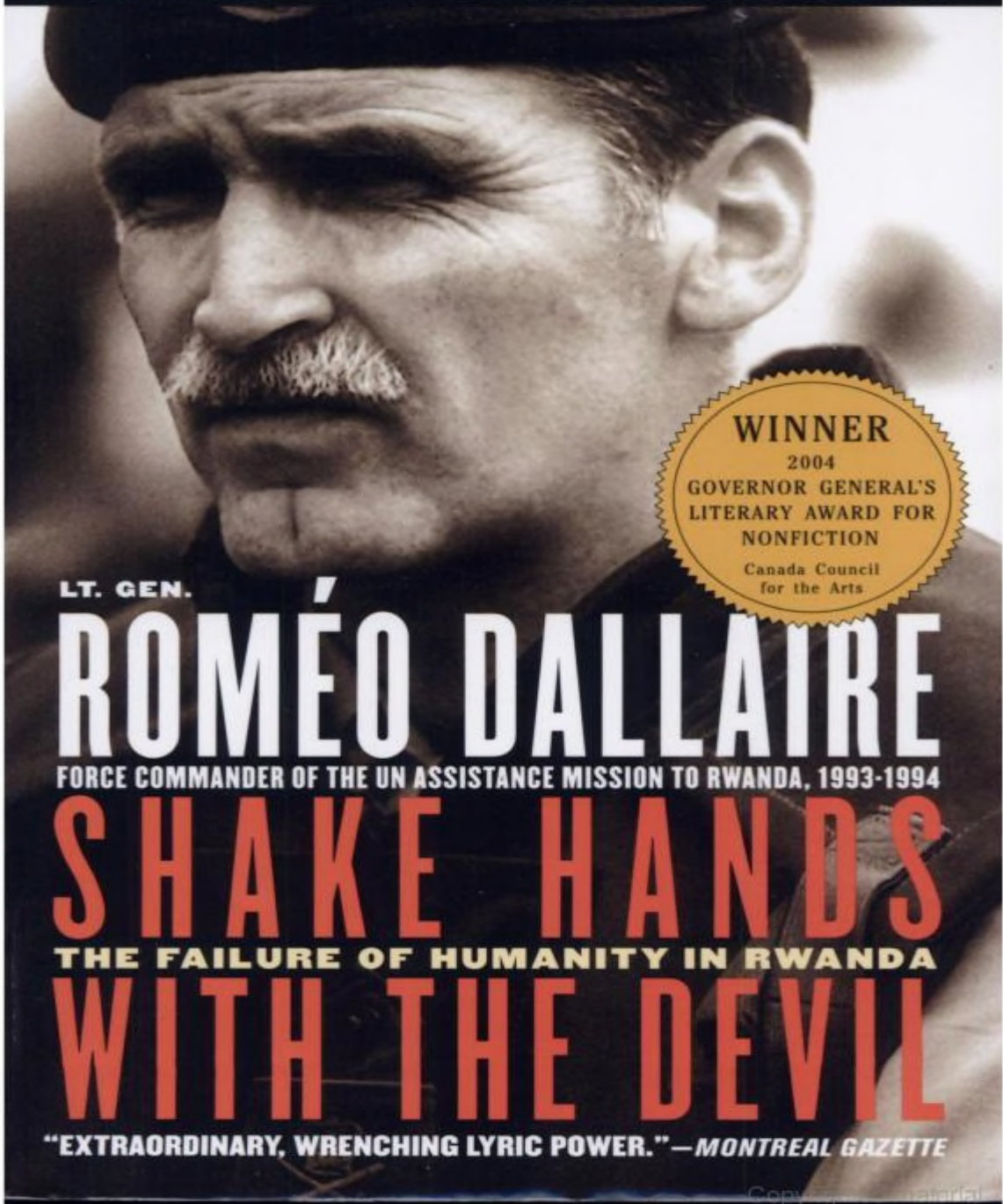
**Crossing Borders,  
Crossing Boundaries**  
**2005 Joint CES/AEA Conference**

**Franchir les frontières,  
repousser les limites**  
**Congrès conjoint SCÉ/AEA 2005**

# *Speaking truth to power*



FOREWORD BY SAMANTHA POWER



LT. GEN.

**ROMÉO DALLAIRE**

FORCE COMMANDER OF THE UN ASSISTANCE MISSION TO RWANDA, 1993-1994

**SHAKE HANDS**

THE FAILURE OF HUMANITY IN RWANDA

**WITH THE DEVIL**

WINNER  
2004  
GOVERNOR GENERAL'S  
LITERARY AWARD FOR  
NONFICTION  
Canada Council  
for the Arts

"EXTRAORDINARY, WRENCHING LYRIC POWER."—MONTREAL GAZETTE

# HUMAN RIGHTS QUARTERLY **The Necessity and Challenges of Establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Rwanda**

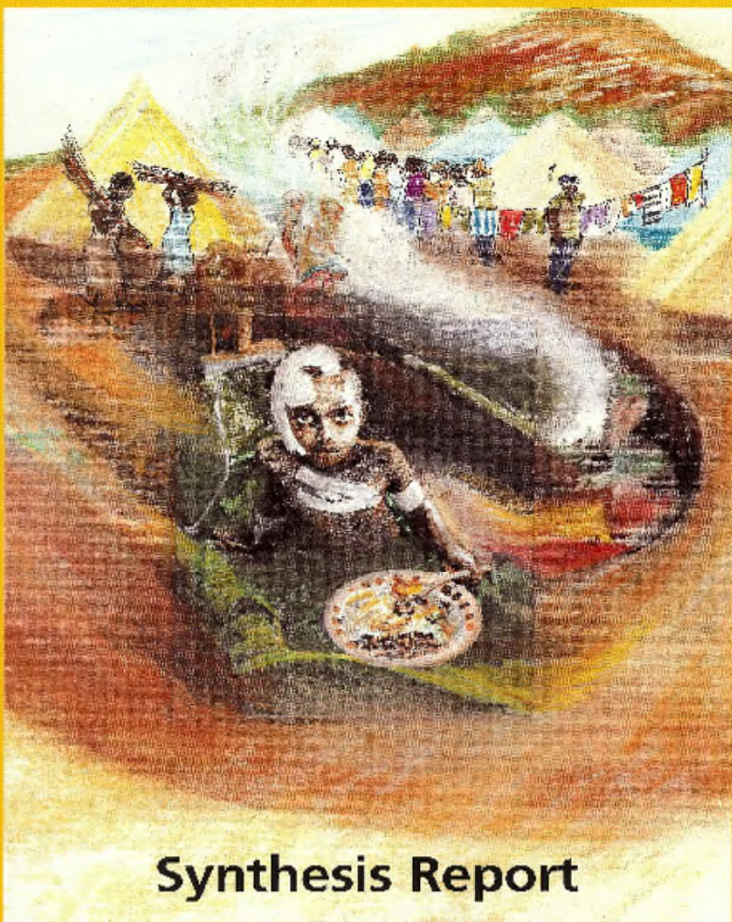
Jeremy Sarkin

In countries emerging from periods of great political turmoil, particularly turmoil associated with gross violations of human rights, the question of how to deal with the past has been a crucial part of the transformation process. The issue is: how does a society return to any sort of normality when two neighbors living side by side are, respectively, victim and perpetrator of heinous crimes?

Perhaps nowhere else in the world is this question more vital or more difficult than in Rwanda, the small, 'poor, rural, inland African state that became the site of one of the bloodiest genocides ever known. As many as a million people died in the Rwandan genocide of 1994, and many others were killed subsequently.



The International Response  
to Conflict and Genocide:  
Lessons from the Rwanda Experience



**Synthesis Report**

Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda



The International Response to Conflict and Genocide:  
Lessons from the Rwanda Experience

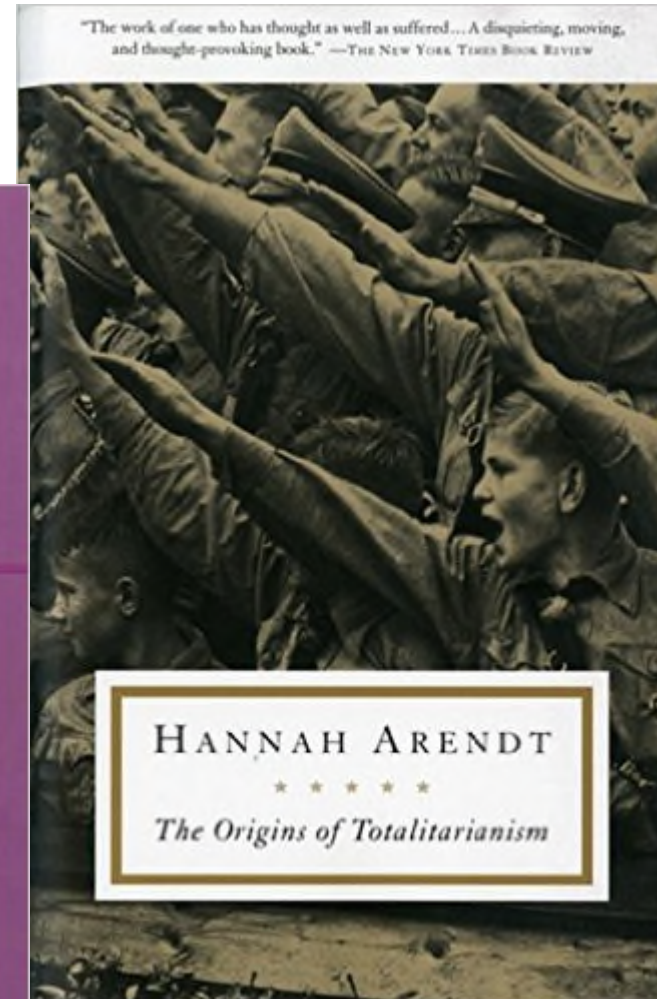
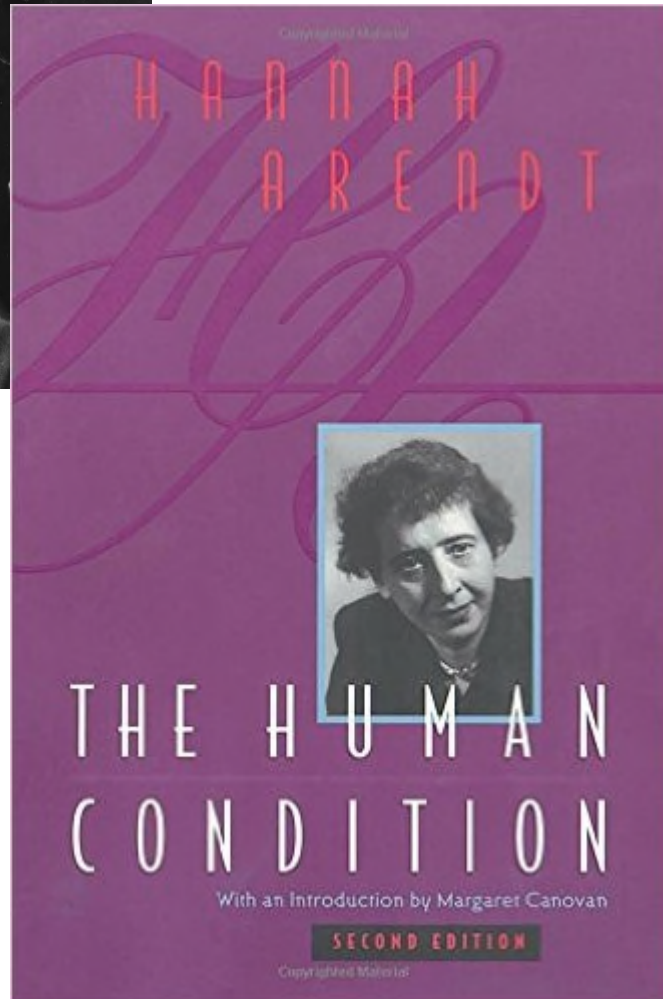


# JOINT EVALUATION

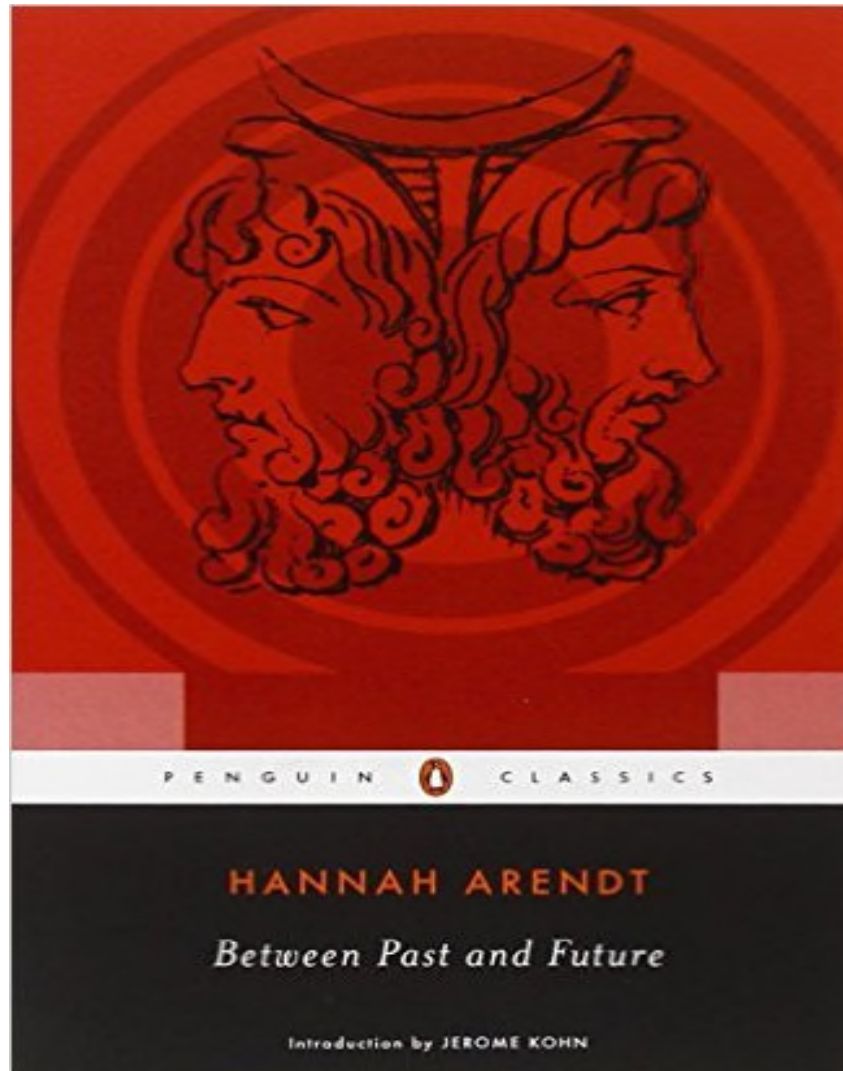
Collaboration among all those  
affected on all sides

## **3) Re-thinking our edge**

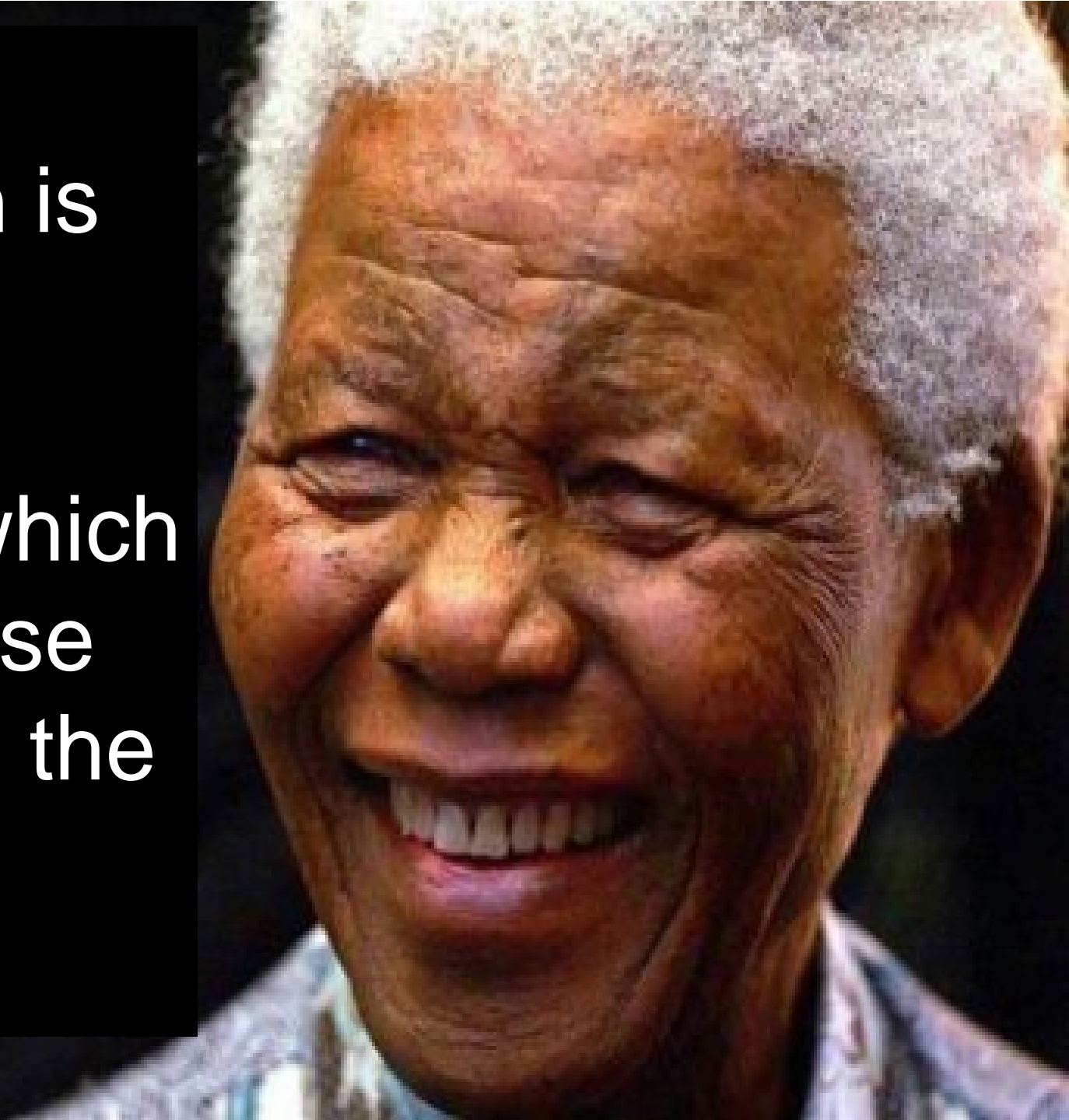
Breaking the mold through innovation and experimentation. Sharing new and radical approaches and methods for evaluation.



# Evaluative Thinking



Education is  
the most  
powerful  
weapon which  
you can use  
to change the  
world.





# ***Evaluation***

is a powerful  
weapon you  
can use to  
change the  
world –  
when  
evaluation is  
used and  
educates.



## **4) Perspectives from beyond the edge**

Hearing how non-evaluators are using evaluative thinking to advance their organizations.

Catherine Courage: Individual fear of failure

# Afraid to Fail





## 5 Years of Failure Reporting

### Learning from our mistakes

A collection from Overseas Volunteer Staff



National Conference 2009





Learn. Innovate. Build Resilience.

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FAIL FORWARD **TOOLKIT**

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visit [failforward.org](http://failforward.org)

## **Failure is strength**

It is always the strongest organizations with the most effective programs that are able and willing to speak openly about their failures.





2015  
International  
Year of  
Evaluation



**EXEMPLARY EVALUATIONS**

IN A MULTICULTURAL WORLD

**EVALUATION 2015**  
NOVEMBER 9-14  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS USA

**Learning from Exemplary**

**Evaluation...**

***Failures***

# Learn from Failure





## Comparing failures

“I make mistakes like the next man. In fact, being-- forgive me--rather cleverer than most men, my mistakes tend to be correspondingly huger.”

Author J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter series*



# Evaluation on the Edge

- 1) Reflections from the edge**
- 2) Building on our edge**
- 3) Re-thinking our edge**
- 4) Perspectives from beyond the edge**

# Where is YOUR EDGE?

- What is the EDGE for YOU?
- Who is at the EDGE with YOU?
- How do you recognize the EDGE?
- Why does the EDGE matter to YOU?
- When are YOU at the EDGE?
- What have YOU learned about the EDGE in your world, your work, your relationships, your life?
- What has emerged for you at this conference about **Evaluation on the Edge?**



What are you taking away about

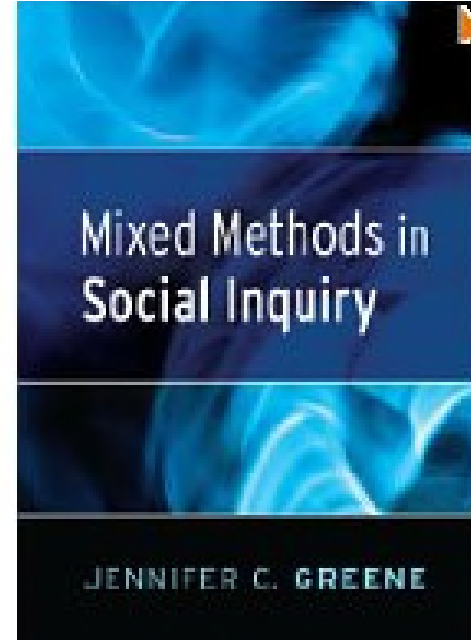
Evaluation on the EDGE?

# Future of Evaluation Top 10

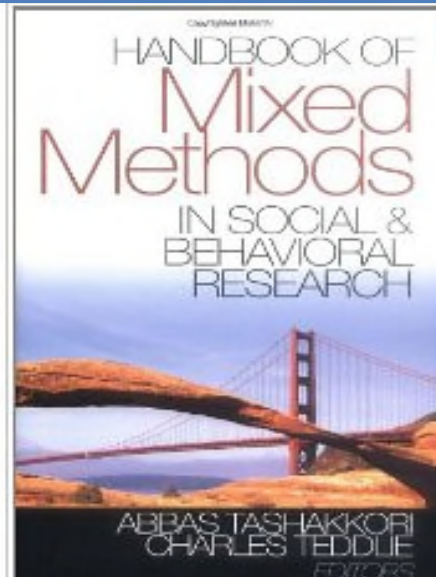




*No numbers  
without stories,  
No stories without  
numbers*



## 10. Mixed Methods



# Parallel Play



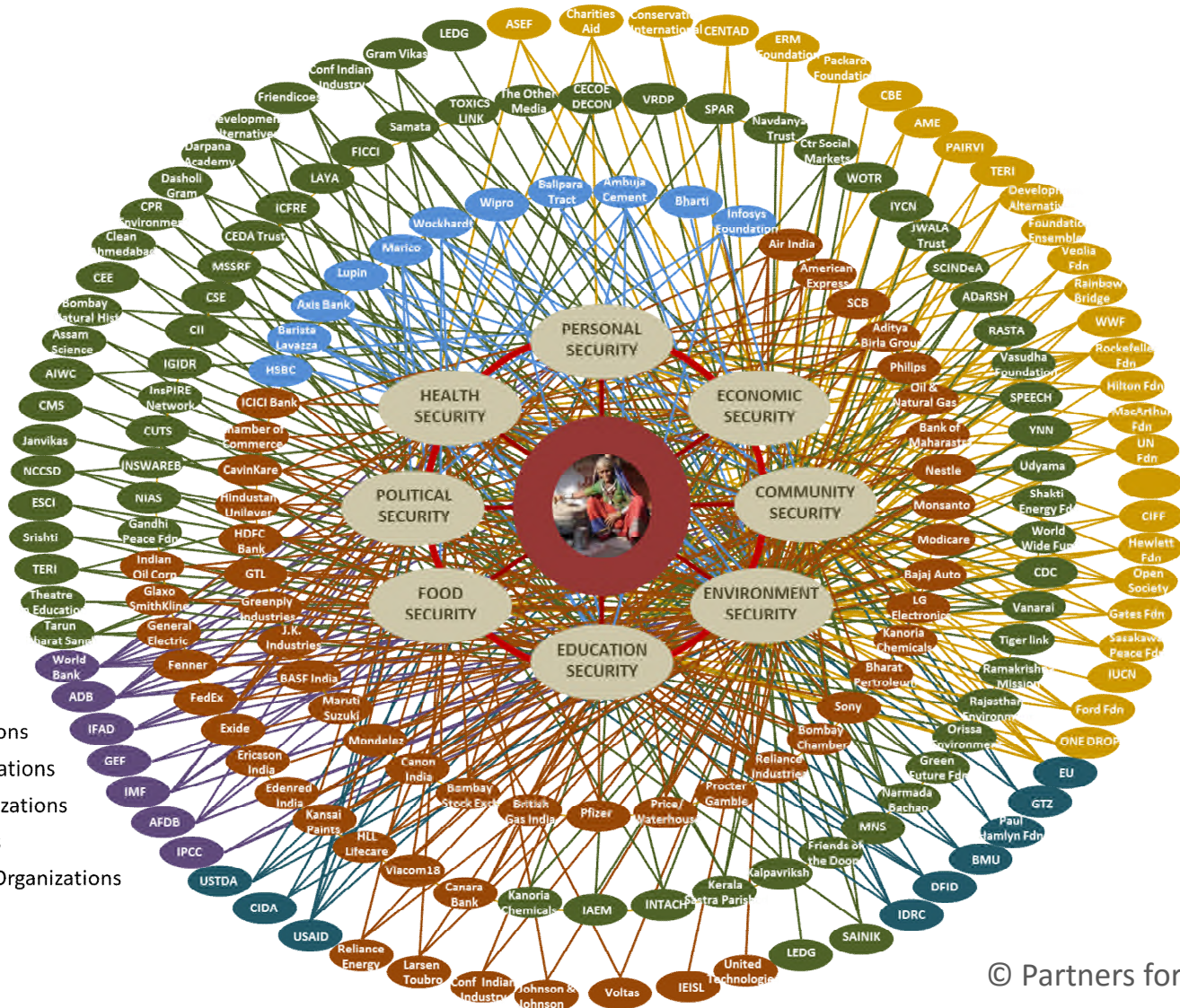


# 9. DATA VISUALIZATION



MAP

Stakeholders







**8. Social media as data --  
for data collection –  
and sharing findings**



# 7. Learning what doesn't work

## Learn from Failure



# Prospective Evaluation: Knowing what doesn't work

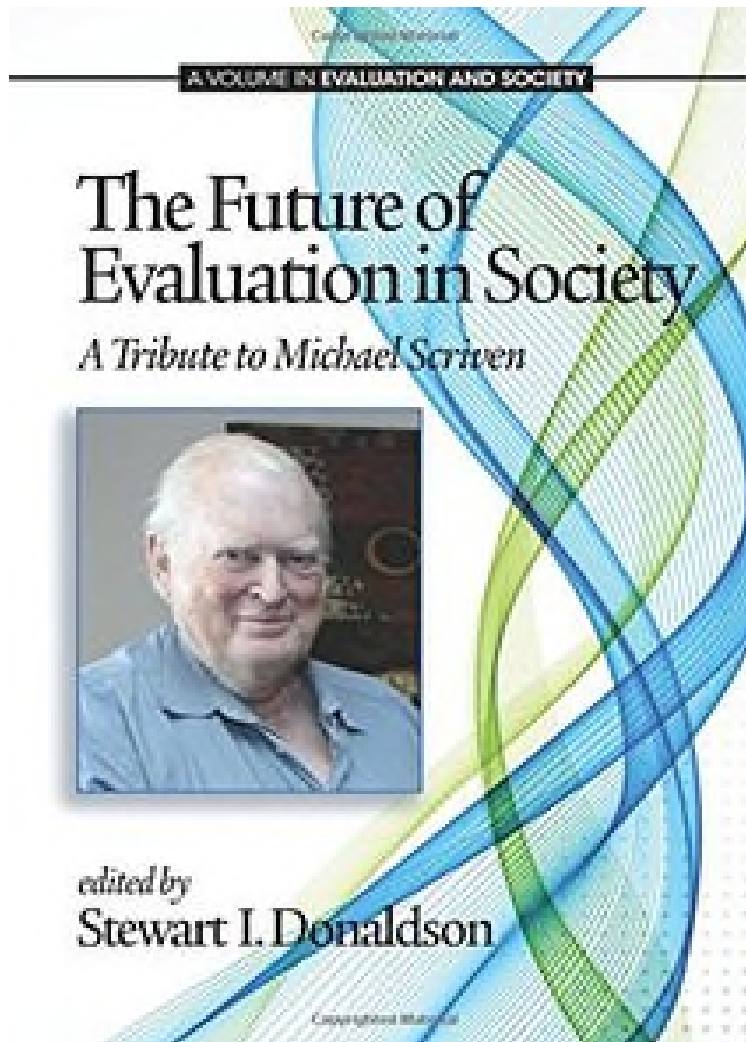


# 6. Getting serious about *Unanticipated Consequences*





# 5. Evaluation as the Alpha Transdiscipline

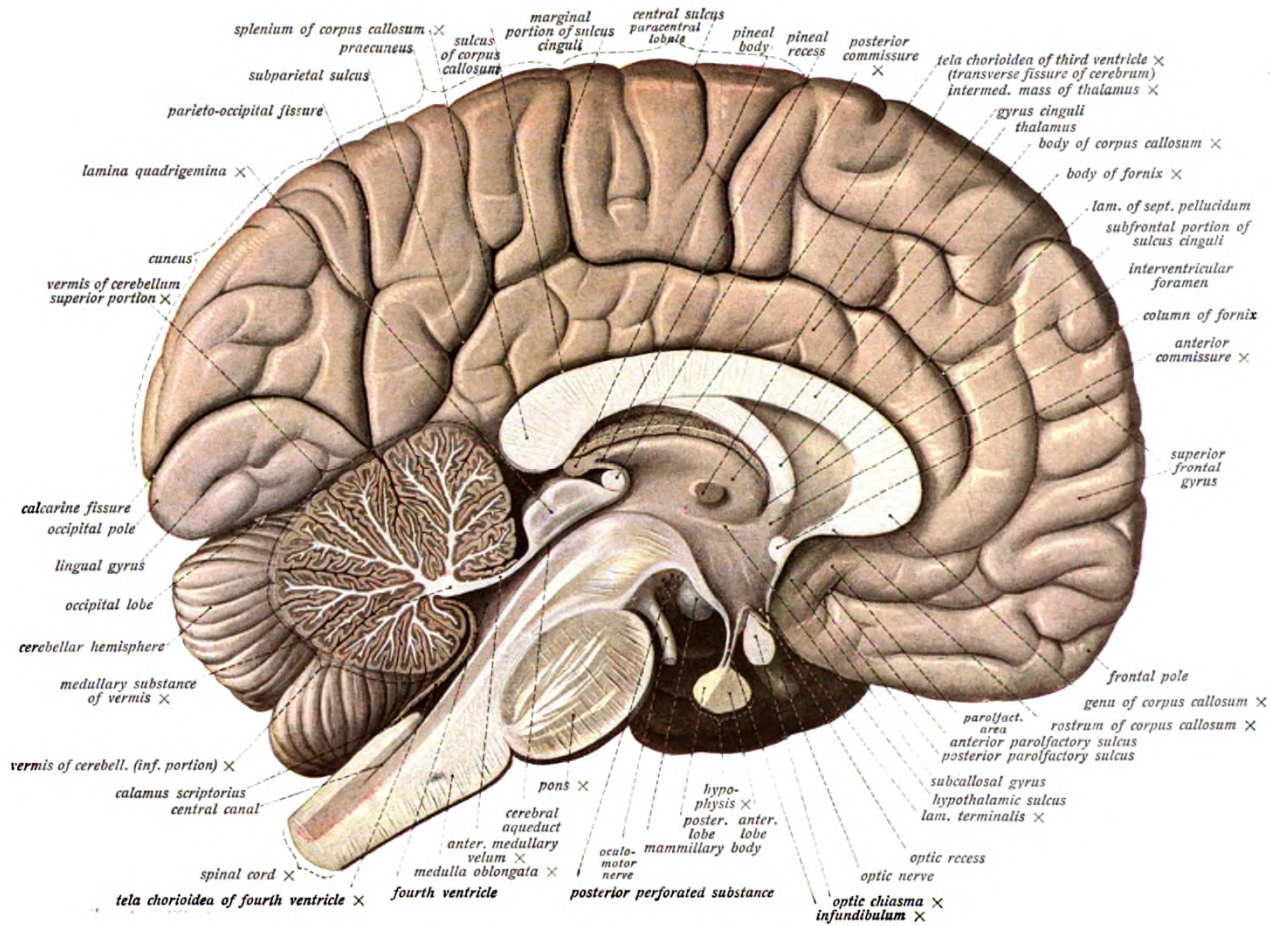




# Transdisciplinary Inquiry Frameworks

- Philosophy of science (epistemology and ontology)
- Statistics
- Evaluation
- Observation (Natural and Qualitative)

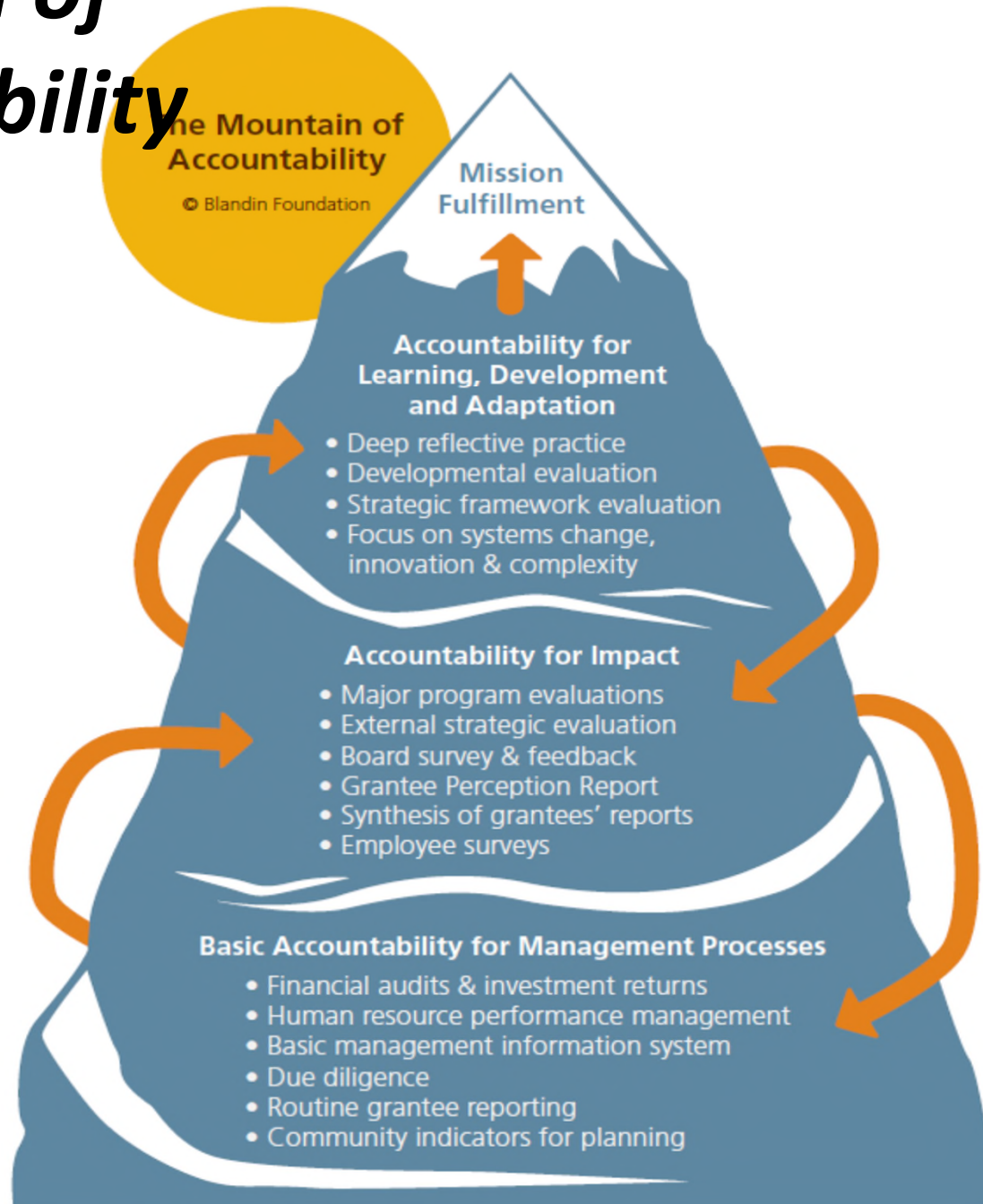
# Evaluative Thinking



4. Comprehensive, integrated,  
holistic, multi-dimensional,  
systems and complexity-oriented  
evaluation in programs and  
organizations

Mountain or Everest?

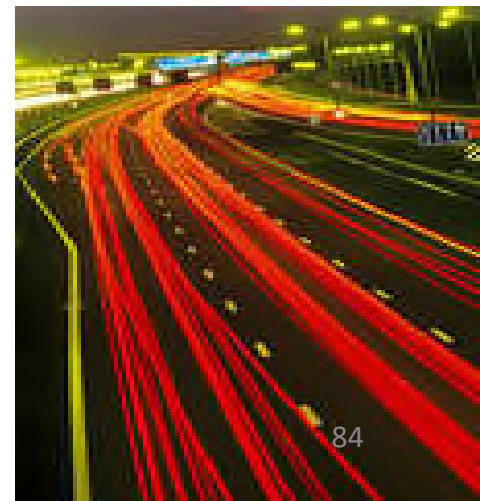
# Mountain of Accountability



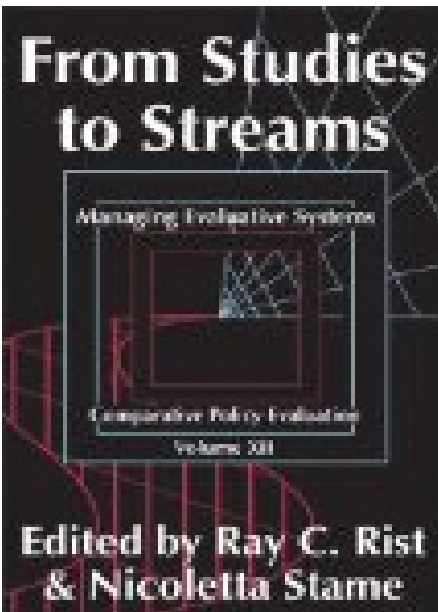


### 3. Learning in a

*Fast-Paced, Real-Time World*







# From Studies to Streams



## 2. *Speaking truth to power*



I evaluate;  
therefore, I am.



v. Stan.

# Jesting is Serious Business

because

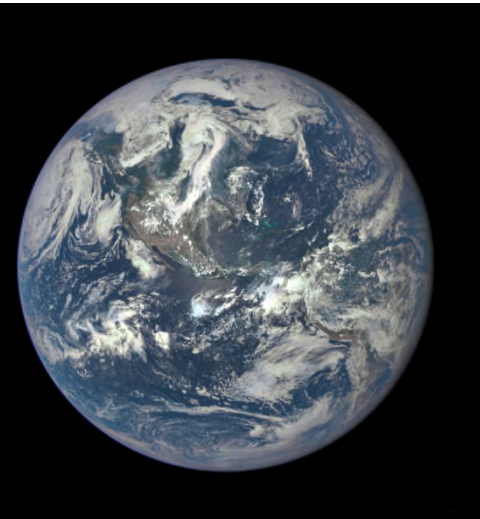
**Speaking TRUTH to Power  
is serious business**

**AND**

***Speaking Truth to Each  
Other  
Is No Less Serious Business***



# 1. Global Systems Change Evaluation





# Puff the Magic Dragon

Puff, the magic dragon lived by the sea  
And frolicked in the autumn mist  
In a land called Honnah Lee  
Little Jackie Paper loved that rascal Puff  
And brought him strings and sealing wax and  
other fancy stuff, oh!

# Edge the Magic Dragon

Edge, the magic dragon, lived by the sea  
And frolicked on the icebergs there  
Evaluation-free.

Big ole Andy Rowe, he loved that rascal Edge,  
And gave him training day and night  
A credential he did pledge, Oh

Together they would travel evaluating all.

Andy kept a lookout perched on Edge's tail so tall.

Noble kings and princes would flee whenever they came,

For speaking truth to power was a scary dragon game, Oh

E-val-u-a-tion on the Edge was proving tough,  
Skeptics told Big Andy that the world had had  
enough.

With climate change the icebergs grew,  
Making na-vi-ga-ting tough,  
Edge was worried what he'd do,  
But Andy called their bluff, Oh

He organized a conference right there beside the sea,

*Evaluation on the Edge*, his dragon filled with glee.

Edge invited Puff, who came from Honnah Lee  
And everyone smoked a little dope to gain more clarity.



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