

# **IMPACT EVALUATIONS AND SOCIAL REALITY**

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A  
T R E A T I S E  
*with* ON THE *Aylway*  
S C U R V Y.  
IN THREE PARTS.

CONTAINING  
An Inquiry into the Nature, Causes,  
and Cure, of that Disease.

Together with  
A Critical and Chronological View of what  
has been published on the Subject.

By JAMES LIND, M. D.  
Physician to his Majesty's Royal Hospital at *Haslar*  
near *Portsmouth*, and Fellow of the Royal  
College of Physicians in *Edinburgh*.

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The THIRD EDITION, enlarged and improved.

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L O N D O N :  
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G. PEARCH, and W. WOODFALL.  
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- [http://www.jameslindlibrary.org/trial\\_records/17th\\_18th\\_Century/lind/lind\\_1753\\_commentary.html](http://www.jameslindlibrary.org/trial_records/17th_18th_Century/lind/lind_1753_commentary.html)

# Impact evaluations: 'back to the future' but also some *bad news*

- For quite some time this work has been 'marginalized';
- Other approaches (like process and implementation evaluations, compliance studies, audits etc) blossomed much more although recently serious critique on them was uttered ( not able to dissect the impact of policies; performance paradox, evaluation as management support systems etc. )

# However, despite this, the negative, sometimes damaging and rather ideological critique on impact evaluations continued

- The *'erect a strawman and kick him down your self'-action* of EES (dealing with IE in the development world);
- The *When will we ever learn-story* and George Bush, former President of the USA; nicknaming ('randomistas' );
- Crime and justice evaluations & the L. Sherman Report;
- Non use of experimental evaluations in the world of education (policies) and Tom Cook's question.



EUROPEAN  
EVALUATION  
SOCIETY

**EES Statement: The importance of a methodologically diverse approach to impact evaluation – specifically with respect to development aid and development interventions<sup>1</sup>**

*December 2007*

The European Evaluation Society (EES), consistent with its mission to promote the 'theory, practice and utilisation of high quality evaluation', notes the current interest in improving impact evaluation and assessment (IE) with respect to development and development aid. EES however deplores one perspective currently being strongly advocated: that the best or only rigorous and scientific way of doing so is through randomised controlled trials (RCTs).

In contrast, the EES supports multi-method approaches to IE and does not consider any single method such as RCTs as first choice or as the 'gold standard':

**How to bridge 'paradigms'  
and 'go for impact  
evaluations'?**



# Impact Evaluations and Development

## NONIE Guidance on Impact Evaluation

*Frans Leeuw  
Jos Vaessen*



# Six (methodological) Key issues of impact evaluations

- 1. Identify the type and scope of the intervention
- 2. Agree on what is valued
- 3. Carefully articulate the theories linking interventions to outcomes
- 4. Address the attribution problem
- 5. Use a mixed methods approach
- 6. Build on existing knowledge relevant to the impact of interventions and in stead of fighting paradigms, try to combine them.



International conferences, treaties, declarations, protocols, policy networks

*institutional level impact*

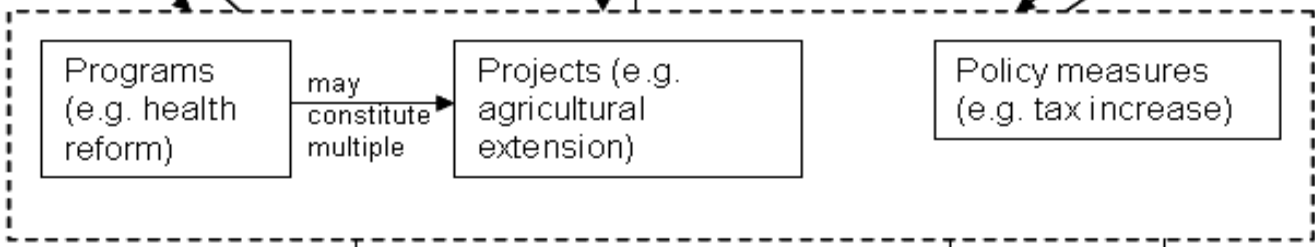
Donor capacities/policies

macro-earmarking (e.g. debt relief, GBS)

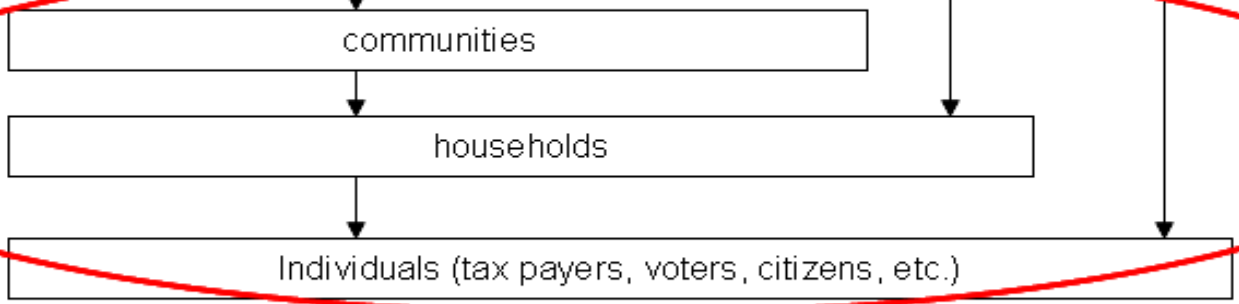
Government capacities/policies

Other actors (INGOs, NGOs, banks, cooperatives, etc.)

micro-earmarking, meso-earmarking (e.g. SBS)



*beneficiary level impact*



*replication and scaling-up*

*wider systemic effects (environment, markets, etc.)*

# Bridging aspects:

- Combining TDE & IE;
- Bridging paradigms (realist & experimentalists eg);
- The law of comparative advantages of designs
- Multimethod (multi-plus) approaches
- Standing-on-the-shoulders-of-others

**Impact evaluations and 'back  
to the future'.....**

**yes, but**

**the future is (y)ours...**