EVALSDGs Dialogue #2: USING BIG DATA TO STRENGTHEN SDG EVALUATIONS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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EXAMPLES OF BIG DATA

- Satellites and Drones
- Social Media
- Radio Call-in programs
- Mobile Phones
- Text Analytics
- Internet Searches

Look into what kind of data might be used instead of what kind of data is available

DEFINING BIG DATA

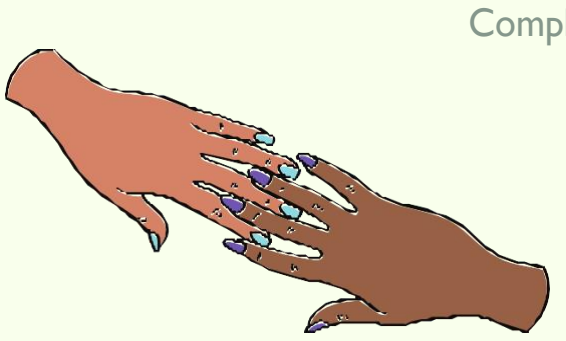
- Too large to analyse on an office computer
- Covers (almost) the total population
- Time series covering longer periods
- Generated very fast-almost real time
- Non-reactive
- Measure many kinds of data: voice, images, text, numbers, geospatial
- Can integrate multiple types of data into a single platform
- Powerful new kinds ofanalysis

BIG DATA CAN HELP

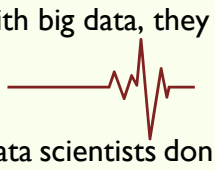
- Remote data collection in the age of COVID-19
- Faster and more economical data analysis
- Longitudinal data can be collected
- More kinds of data can be collected
- Rapid analysis and dissemination of findings
- Machine learning and AI Predictive analytics; System analysis; Complexity

CHALLENGES FOR SDG EVALUATORS

- Limitations on face-to-face data collection
- High costs of collecting data-small sample size
- Many vulnerable groups are difficult to reach
- Hard to collect longitudinal data covering many years
- Too expensive to collect data in the broader context in which the programs are operating - most evaluations ignore complexity
- Hard to monitor behavior change, process implementation and organizational systems



Data scientists think that a whole generation of evaluators are not familiar with big data, they are old-fashioned.



Evaluators think data scientists don`t understand the real change, because they are looking at linear, causal effects, without theories of change.

The need to build bridges between evaluators and data scientists, with a common language and understanding.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- People are loosing control over the data which is collected upon them.
- Big data can be very exclusive only to people with access to resources, many, and the most vulnerable, are left out.
- Power of big data: automated decision-making processes with the use of an algorithm, and with very little involvement of human beings.
- Blind faith in the power of big data might lead to serious errors in decision-making and in evaluations.

Thank you EvalSDGs for this insightful webinar! Georgina

Thank you, clearly the most interesting presentation I have attended in the last months!! Etienne

Thank you for this very informative webinar! Petra

Thank you all! This was very inspiring and I am thinking about how I can integrate more big data into my evaluation work. Maddison

Thank you so much to Dr. Bamberger and Eval-SDGs for the many valuable insights - very interesting presentation! Maria