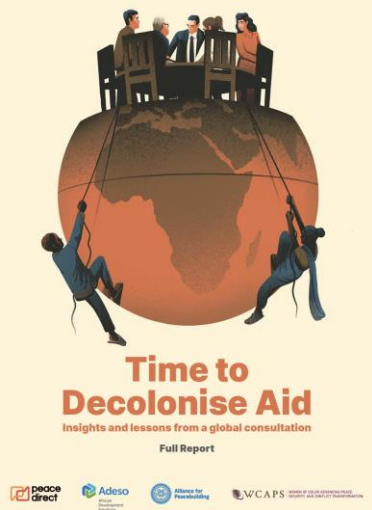# Deepening Participatory Evaluation

Marina Apgar

DeGEval Working Group for Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid

Spring Conference, June 21, 2023

Shifting Power in Hu...
Review of 15 NGO Go...

> **DOWNLOAD PDF**

by **Rose Worden** and **Patrick Saez**

JUNE 22, 2021

Time to Decolonise Aid

Insights and lessons from a global consultation

Full Report

peace direct · Adeso · Alliance for Peacebuilding · WCAPS

Intersecting Crises are Impeding the UNs Sustainable Development Goals, Threatening Peace & Security

OPINION by Stefan Shweinfest (United Nations)

Friday, July 08, 2022

Inter Press Service

K ey fi...

Humanitarian aid recipients have limited scope to affect the decisions made by the nonprofit organizations that they rely on for basic needs and often bear the cost of organizational failures. In a survey of 15 governing boards of prominent international

Decolonise Aid

Understanding how change happens is plural and contested!
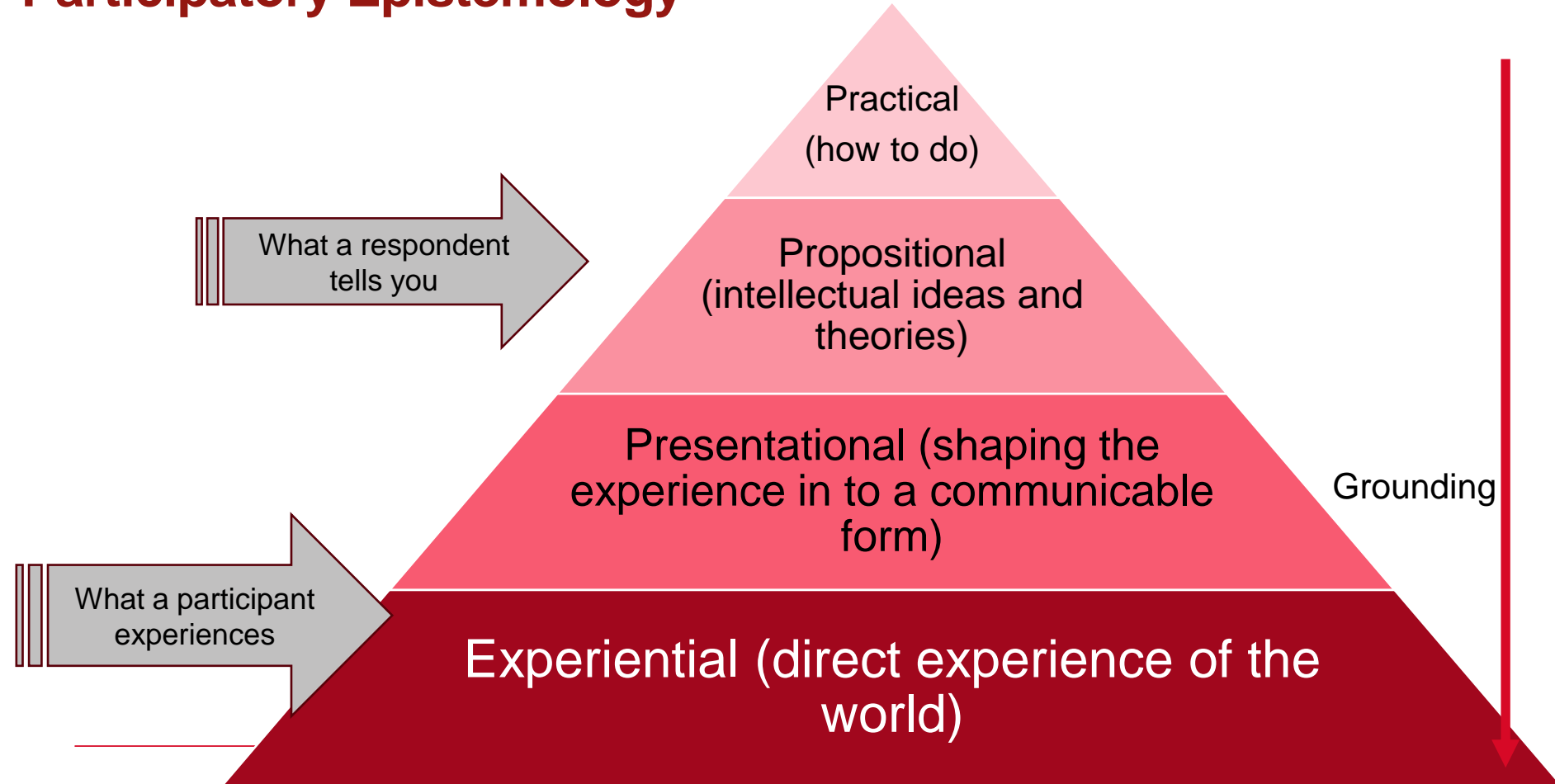
Programming addressing systems in crises

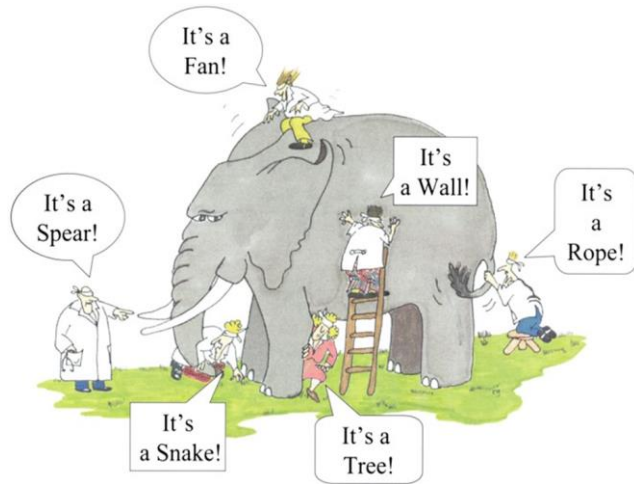# How do we ensure quality and rigour in Participatory Evaluation?

"

PM&E aims to involve *stakeholders* in *defining*, *tracking* and *measuring* the progress of social change initiatives, such that they can respond and *build ownership* of the results (Estrella and Gaventa, 1998)

Participatory Epistemology

Heron and Reason, 1997

Practical
(how to do)

Propositional
(intellectual ideas and theories)

Presentational (shaping the experience in to a communicable form)

Experiential (direct experience of the world)

What a respondent tells you

What a participant experiences

Grounding

Risk of homogenisation & co-option

Critical differences within collective categories such as 'the poor' or 'the community' are ignored

Questions of representation and legitimacy are overlooked

The very focus on instruments, guidelines and techniques that came to dominate the concerns of those engaged in mainstreaming participation in development served ***to render technical what were essentially political problems*** (Cornwall, 2000 p.45)

How to support quality in Participatory Evaluation?

Purpose and type of participation in M&E – WHO & WHY

Spaces of participation

Forms of power

Participatory methods and practices

Collective sensemaking methods and learning

Defining the WHO

Funders, agencies or commissioners

Programme staff

Intermediaries and partners

Key groups (and invidivuals) impacted by the programme

Reflecting on levels of participation

From: Sowing and Harvesting: Participatory Evaluation Handbook
https://evalparticipativa.net/en/resources/participatory-evaluation-guides-and-manuals/sowing-and-harvest/

Arnstein's ladder 1969

Defining the level in relationship to purpose

Level	Purpose in M&E process
Instrumental	Efficiency and **accuracy** of evaluation findings – requires light involvement of a number of different stakeholders
Representative	To ensure findings **reflect views of** relevant stakeholders – opens space for **stakeholders to influence** findings and use (programme design, decisions etc.)
Transformative	Empowerment - to **increase agency** of people in decision making around programmes and findings - shift underlying **power dynamics**

Adapted from: White's 1996 typology

How to support quality in participation spaces?

Spaces of Participation

Claimed Spaces

How to engage with power?

Purpose and type of participation in M&E - WHO

↓

Spaces of participation

↓

Forms of power

↓

Participatory methods and practices

↓

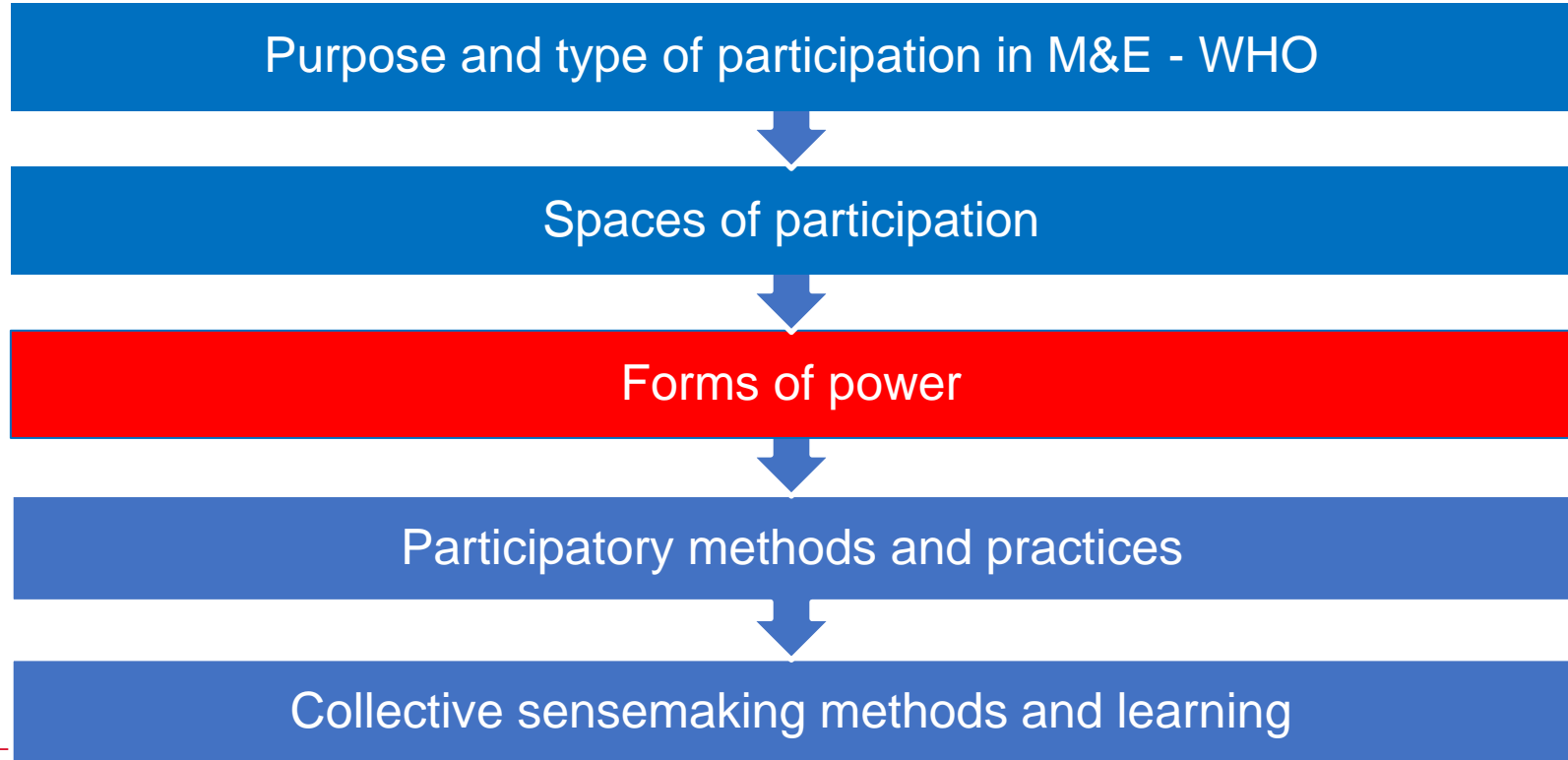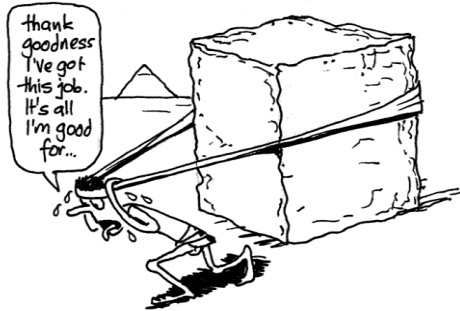Collective sensemaking methods and learning

Visible, Hidden and Invisible Power

Visible power is held by people and organisations through formal rules, laws or institutions.

Hidden power is held by people and organisations who are able to set the agenda behind the scenes such that can exclude certain people or stakeholders from decision-making processes in the first place.

Invisible power is not necessarily held by people or organisations. It is shaped by dominant beliefs, ideologies, values and behaviours that pervade society and influence how we think, feel and behave.

https://www.powercube.net/

Which methods are appropriate?

Purpose and type of participation in M&E - WHO

Spaces of participation

Forms of power

Participatory methods and practices

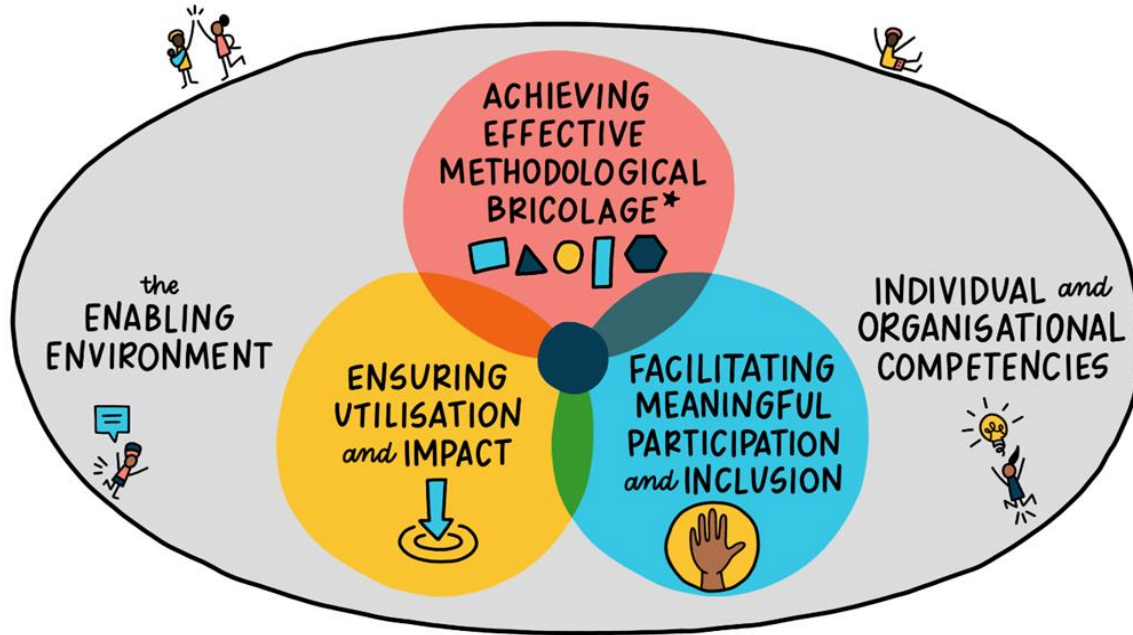Collective sensemaking methods and learning

There are many methods!

- Reflexive use of Theory of Change
- Outcome Harvesting/Evidencing
- PhotoVoice
- Most Significant Change
- SenseMaker
- Collaborative Outcomes Reporting
- ImpreS
- PIALA

➢ Storytelling –rich understandings of experience of change in context
➢ Allow us to see emergent causal pathways
➢ Emphasise process alongside content

Apgar et al. 2022

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