

AUSTRALASIAN EVALUATION SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

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***How National & International Agencies  
Create Confusion about What  
Evidence is Needed for Evaluation***

*Including a brief introduction to the ProLL Model™*

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conference presentation

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## **“Everyone Knows that...”**

- ❖ **‘Central agencies’ and ‘international donors’**
- ❖ **Publish multiple & often conflicting definitions and advice about evaluation**
- ❖ **Without giving any explanation**

## **Report to Donors from ECD meeting in SEA**

**“Assist [us] with designing M&E system that is...accepted by the government and by development partners”**

*Confirmed at week-long meeting of experienced gov't officials*

## Clues to what is happening?

1. Textbook published by Sage (2006)
2. Government & International Agency definitions:
  - a) *Meta-Evaluation*
  - b) *Summative Evaluation*
  - c) *Program Effectiveness*
  - d) *Program Output*

## Textbook – Glossary

### **meta-evaluation**

**a synthesis of existing program evaluation studies in a given area, designed to summarize current knowledge about a particular type of program.**

**Sage Publications (2006)**

## Same Textbook

### **meta-analysis**

### **the same as meta-evaluation**

**Sage Textbook on Public Administration  
& Evaluation (2006)**

## Exploratory Research

- ❖ Was there one **original** definition of meta-evaluation?
- ❖ Do other publications provide alternative definitions of meta-evaluation?
- ❖ Was the original definition of meta-evaluation **readily available** in 2006?
- ❖ Did Sage ask any evaluation experts to review this textbook before publication?

## Original definition of *meta-evaluation*?

- ❖ Michael Scriven led an Evaluation Workshop in Melbourne some years ago
- ❖ Michael described how he coined the term *meta-evaluation*

## Michael Scriven's Story

- ❖ First degree in philosophy (University of Melbourne)
- ❖ Studied linguistics
- ❖ *Meta-evaluation* based on the term *meta-language*

## Alternative definitions of meta-evaluation?

### Meta-evaluation

- ❖ evaluations designed to **aggregate findings from a series of evaluations.**
- ❖ **can also...**denote the **evaluation of an evaluation** to judge its quality and/or assess the performance of the evaluators.

**OECD (2002)**

Was Scriven's Original Definition  
Readily Available in 2006 and earlier?

Meta-Evaluation is...

the evaluation of evaluations—  
indirectly, the evaluation of evaluators

*The Evaluation Thesaurus*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition  
(Michael Scriven, 1991)

Also multiple websites

Other examples of multiple definitions of terms used in public sector evaluation?

## Yes, Many Examples

- Summative Evaluation
- Program Evaluation
- Program Output
- Efficiency
- Performance Indicator
- **Program Effectiveness**

## Effectiveness

- **OECD Glossary (2001)**
  - The extent to which...**objectives** were **achieved**, or are expected to be **achieved**, taking into account their relative importance.
- **Canada Treasury Board (2001)**
  - The extent to which an organisation, policy, program or initiative is meeting its **planned results**.

## Effectiveness

- **INTOSAI Auditing Standards (1992)**
  - The extent to which **objectives** are **achieved** and the relationship between the intended impact and the actual impact of an activity
- **New Zealand SSC (2003)**
  - The impact of the goods and services produced for the community on outcomes.



## So what about 'unexpected consequences'?

### ➤ **Appropriateness**

- Meeting needs of target populations OR
- Fits within government policy

### ➤ **Relevance**

- Meeting needs of target populations

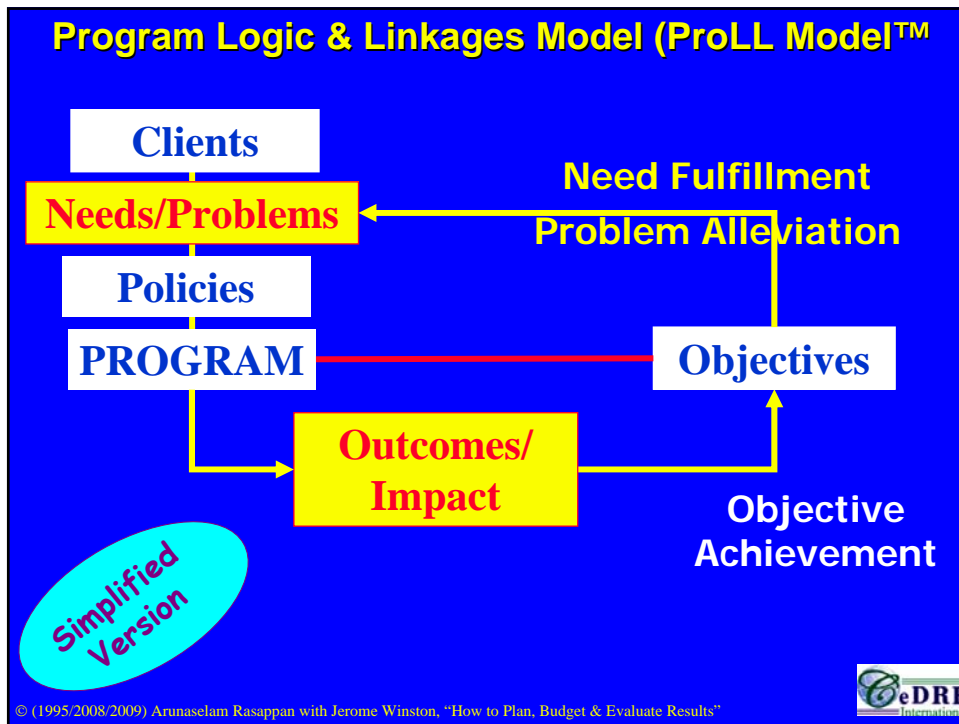
### ➤ **With effectiveness**

- Achievement of predetermined objectives

## Where are alternative public administration models being used?

### ➤ **Program Logic & Linkages Model**

- Africa
- South East Asia



- ## Exploratory Research Continues
- ✓ **Unexplained changes in definitions of evaluation terminology**
  - ✓ **View of recipients of donor funds**
  - ✓ **Links amongst audit, planning and evaluation 'islands'**
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## Public Sector

**Planning  
Island**

21

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## Public Sector

**Also  
known as**

**Result-Based  
Management  
Island**

22

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**Public Sector**

Also known as

**Result-Based Budgeting Island**

23

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**Public Sector**

Also known as

**Outcome-Based Budgeting Island**

24

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**Public Sector**

Also known as

**Outcome-Based Planning Island**

25



**Public Sector**

**Planning Island**

26

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# Public Sector Sea

**Audit  
Island**

27

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# Public Sector Sea

**Evaluation  
Island**

1

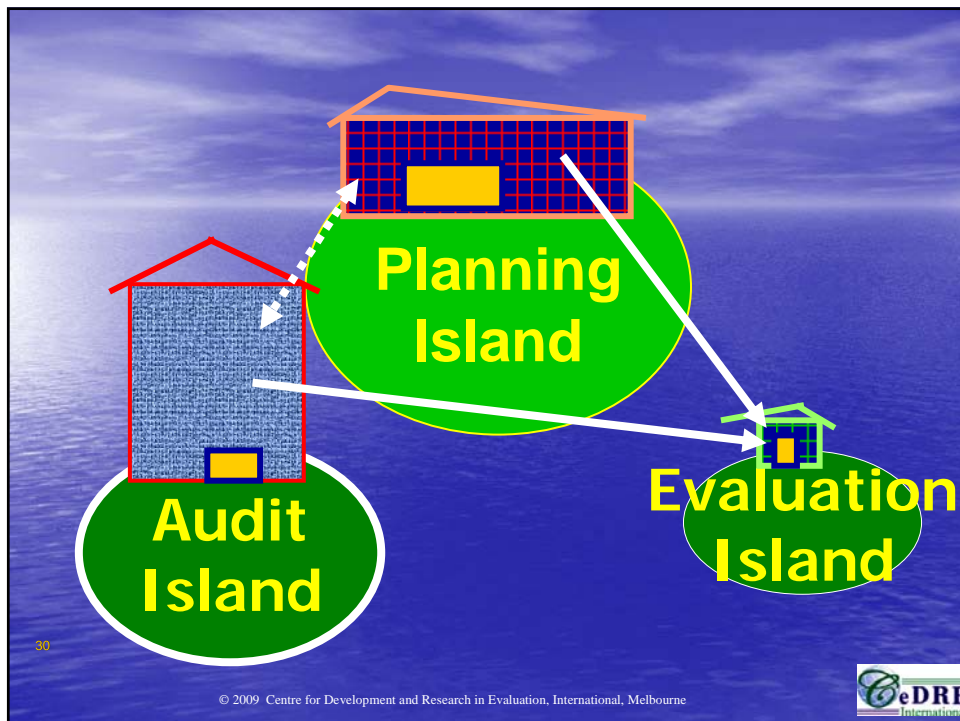
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**Warning: the tools on one island  
may not be suitable on another  
island**

29

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30

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OR

31

