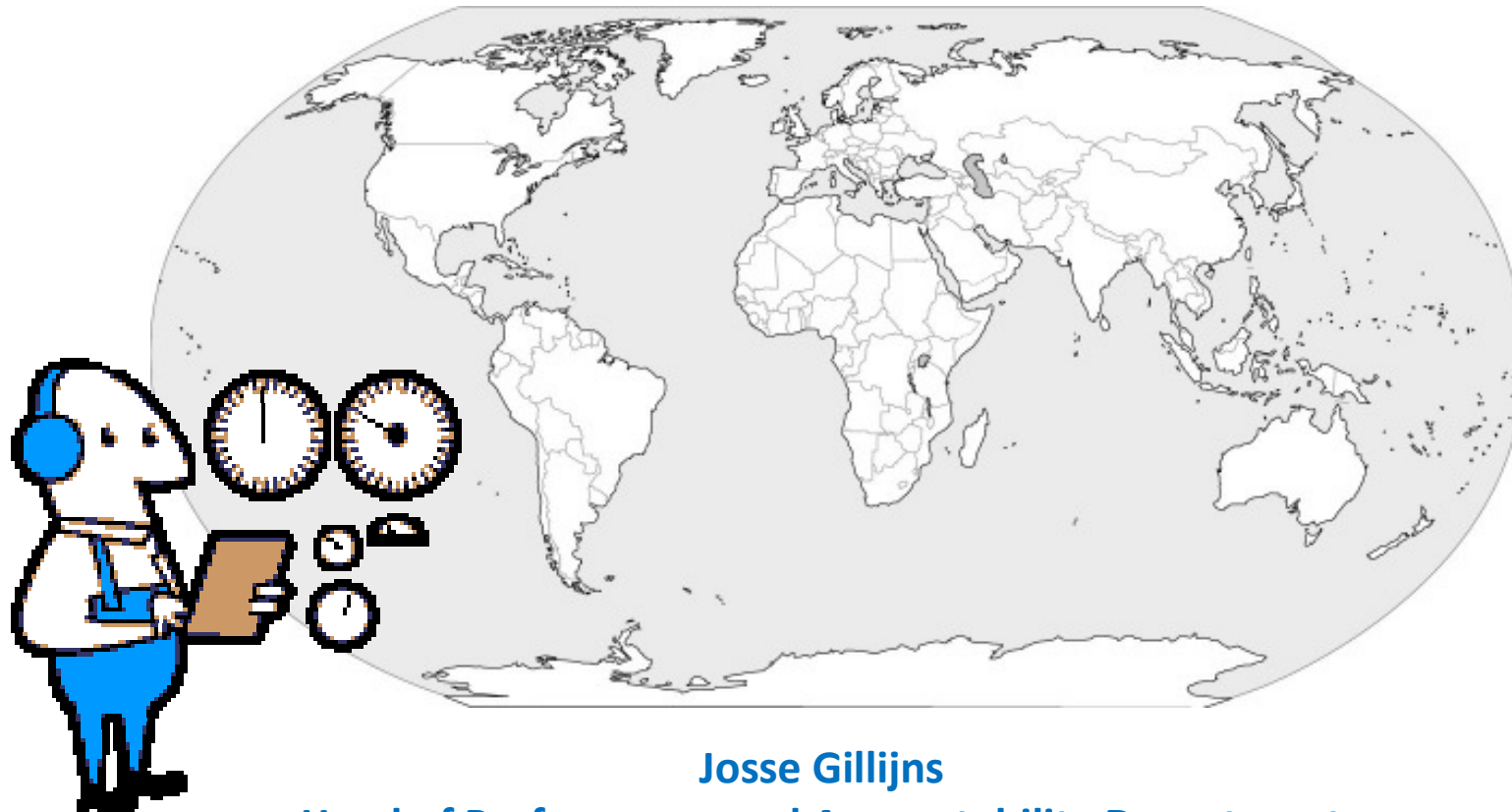


# Do we learn from evaluations?



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Answer = yes we learn, but there is ample evidence that

we do not learn

we do not apply the learning

we miss out on learning

and we forget...

Why?

Look at purpose for evaluations:

1. to monitor
2. to be accountable
3. to promote/celebrate our work
4. to build knowledge
5. to measure impact

**Two issues stand out when we look at evaluation practice:**

1. tension between accountability and learning
2. lack of evidence based learning

## **1. Tension between accountability and learning**

- Very apparent in some types of evaluations (eg RTE)
- Stakeholders' interest will determine level of learning (eg institutional donor review)

## **2. Lack of evidence based learning due to...**

### **lack of rigorous impact evaluations**

- most evaluations look at process/performance
- not at outcome (impact)

**Look briefly at reviews of 3 large operations:**

**Rwanda (1994) / tsunami (2004) / Haiti (2010)**

- ❑ a lot of recommendations on performance, several coming back each time (eg accreditation system,...)
- ❑ often the evaluation makes the case for impact evaluations, without being one (eg. rebuild society, build back better,...)

**What can an organisation do to increase learning that improves the impact of humanitarian action?**

1. have an organisational strategy that values learning
2. open to new ideas and critical information
3. senior management lives up to accountability principles
4. make funding available for learning and research
5. share results in transparent way
6. build local capacity for learning
7. use modern technology

## **What are impact evaluations?**

“analyses that measure the net change in outcome for a particular group of people that can be attributed to a specific programme using the best methodology available, feasible, and appropriate to the evaluation question that is being investigated and to the specific context “ (3ie, 2008)

## A practical proposal for Haiti

**Question? *Does the combined reconstruction effort in Haiti contribute to recovery of people and improve the quality of their life?***

Total affected population = 3,000,000 people

Determine representative sample  
+ counterfactual (not affected by disaster)

Select at random

Determine set of key indicators for impact assessment  
(focus on shelter, health, education, livelihood,...)

## **A practical proposal for Haiti (cont.)**

Collect baseline in situ + provide mobile phone

Team of local enumerators call every x months using survey questions of the baseline

Continue for at least 2 to 3 years

Results can feed straight into improvement/adjustment of recovery programmes and provide data for assessment of impact.

*Thanks to Alison Buttemheim (3ie) and Brian Dillon (Cornell University)*

# Thank you!

