European Commission

evaluation support service

Cycle of conferences

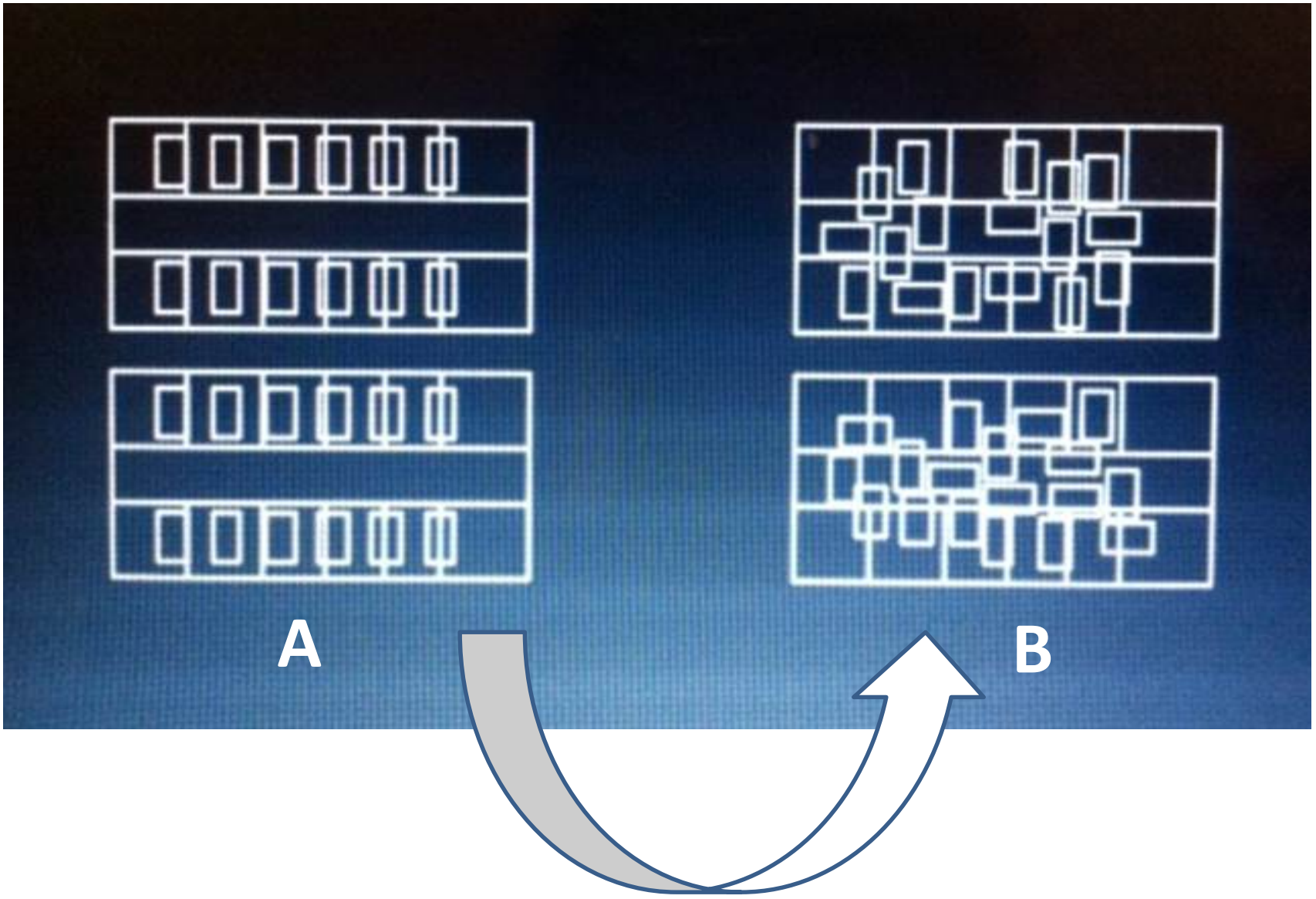
Evaluation in hard-to-reach areas

Evaluation in Hard-to-Reach Areas:

New frontiers for Ethical Standards and codes of conduct?

Ziad Moussa

On new frontiers and ethical standards…



Welcome to the Zaatari camp, the second largest refugee camp in the world (and Jordan's 4th biggest "city")

The riddle stems from the fact that refugees wanted to move their tents and caravans from uniform pre-set locations… While there are some practical reasons for such a decision, it is widely interpreted as a bold statement by refugees to say **“I exist, I have a right, no one decides at my place, ….”**

Obviously, this has complicated the lives of the planners and aid workers alike, since its makes service delivery very tedious

… especially when compared to its tidier big brother Azrak

A whole “industry” for moving caravans mushroomed across the camp

With some SMEs specialized in this industry ☺

A major lesson is that there is no limit to human creativity …

… even in the harshest circumstances

… and while the development community was mulling over “job creation” and “decent work”

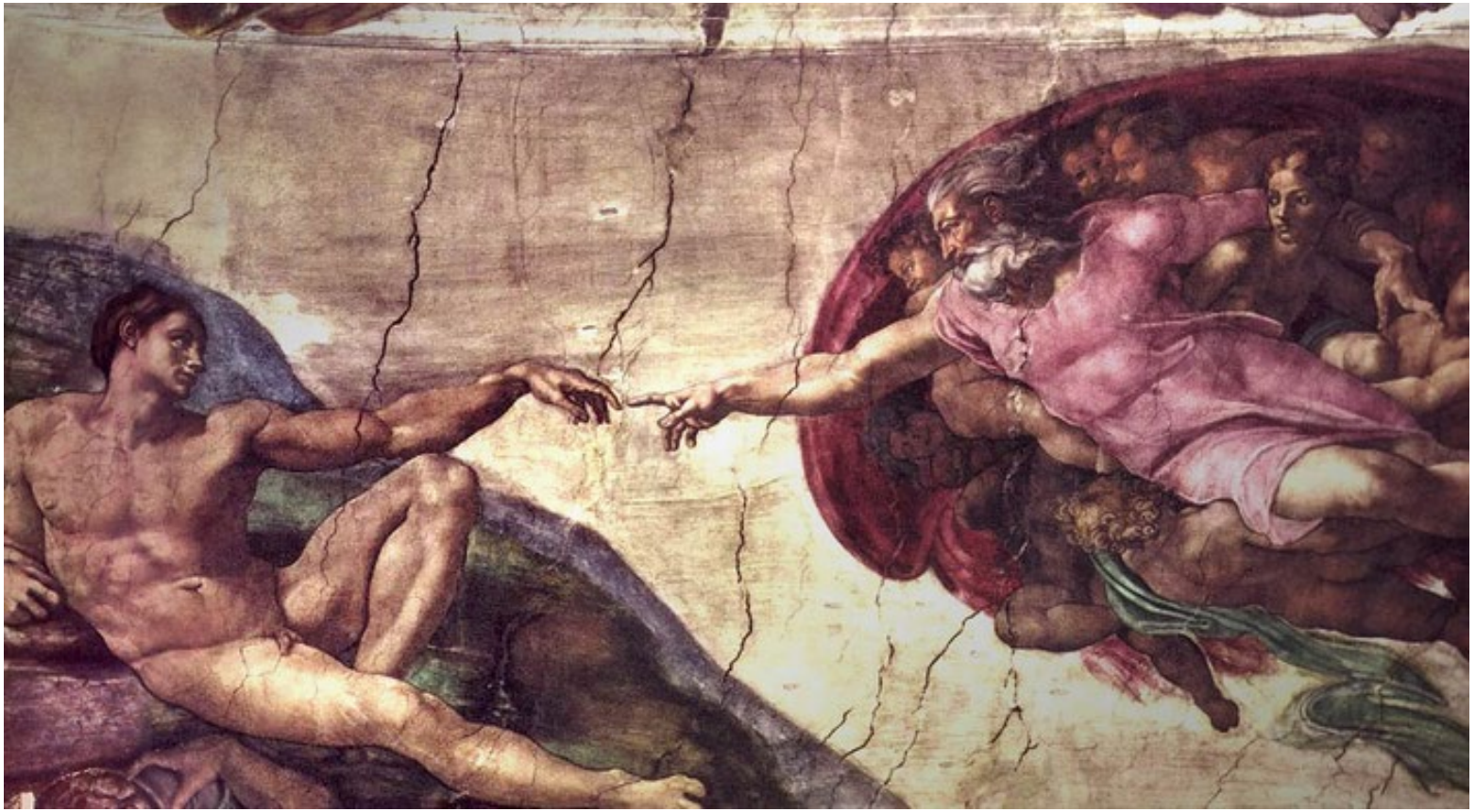
“CHAM Elysée” braced a 10M/$ activity every month

“Unintended negative outcomes” sometimes inspire businesses

Let-alone complexity-driven realities!

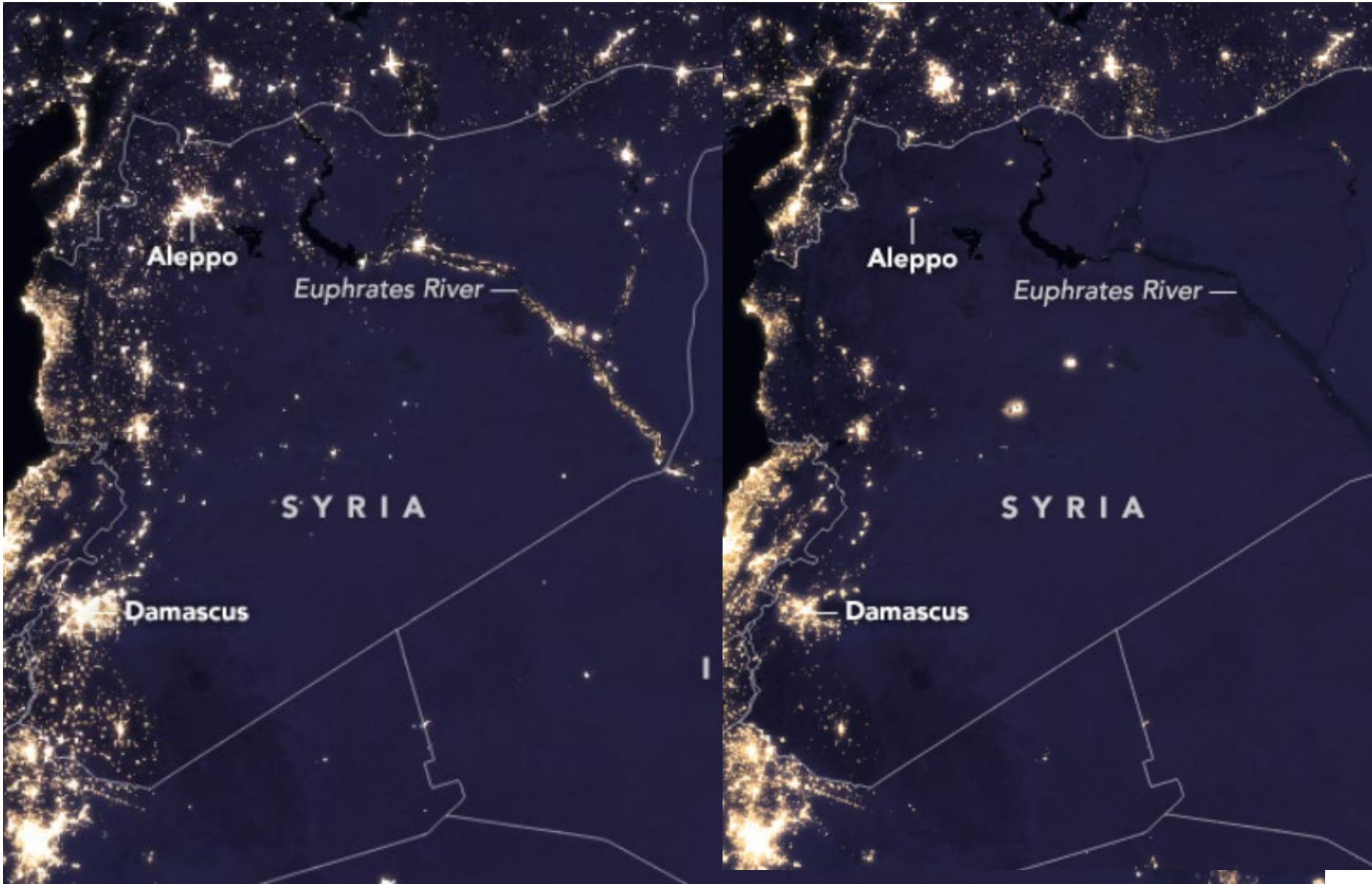
Or even (relative) well-being…

Modern technology to the rescue?



Sometimes yes… (such as participatory GIS)

… or satellite imagery



And sometimes no…

1. Intended USES by intended USERS should be the primary driver

In hard-to-reach areas, we often forget about the **main uses** of our M&E system. Accountability is a primary concern but there is a long list about other uses:

- Promoting Accountability
- Feedback on progress
- Improving effectiveness
- Informing decisions
- Tracking resources
- Demonstrating impact
- Identifying lessons learned
- Etc….

1. Intended USES by intended USERS should be the primary driver

It becomes even more complicated if we look at the **chain of users** of monitoring data and how the collect, analyze and report the data.

Lets take as an example water trucking to a besieged and/or hard to reach area

Local supplier

Local supplier

Local supplier

Local NGO

Local NGO

Local NGO

Cross Border Hub

Cross Border Hub

Cross Border Hub

Cross Border Hub

Regional HQ

Water Supply for besieged areas

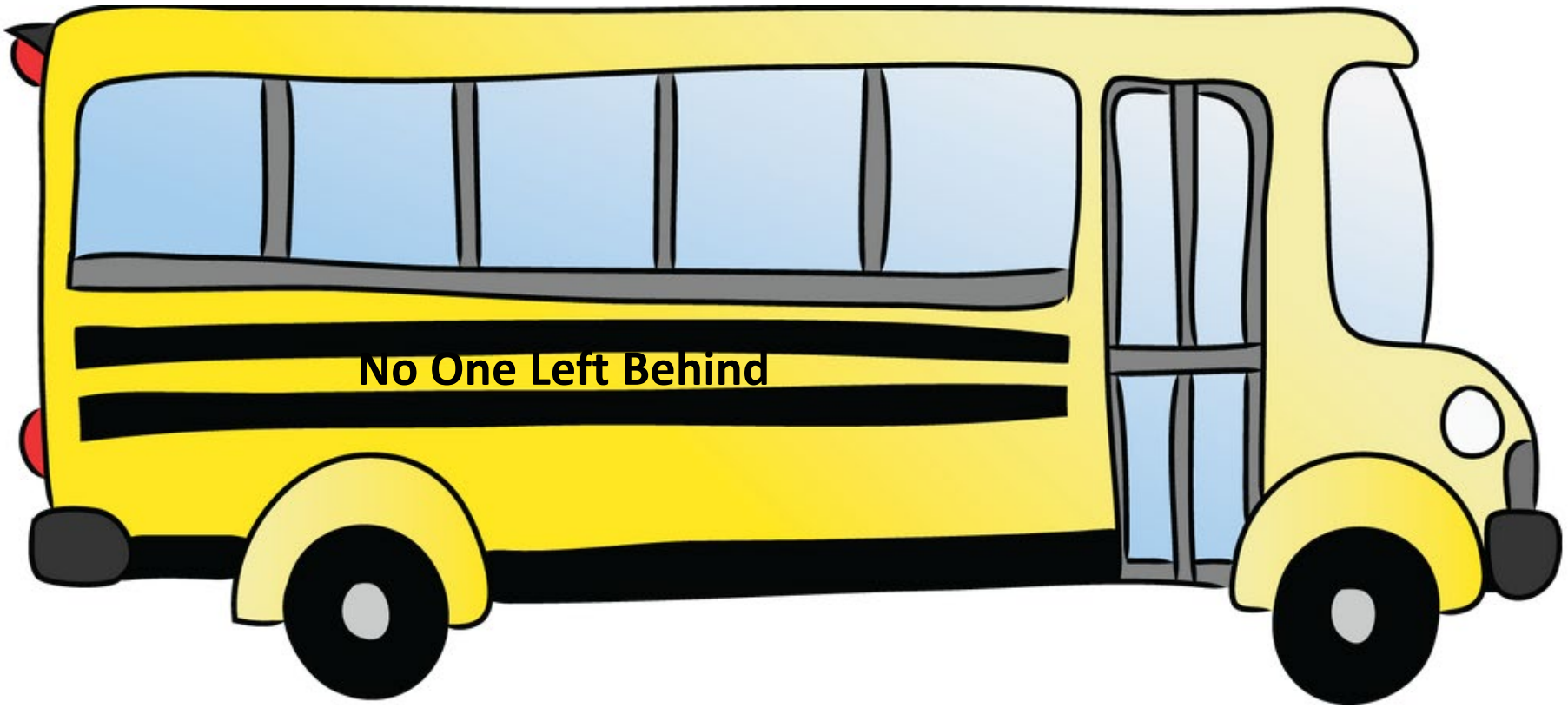
2. Monitoring overkill can be counter-productive

The different layers of the accountability chain entail a resource-intensive process, which is often concentrated at the “corporate” end of the chain in charge of reporting and fundraising.

There is a clear added value in strengthening the processes at the end of the chain that is closer to the field for three main reasons:

- Increasing the validity and reliability of the data, by addressing issues such as double counting and data inconsistencies.
- Achieving a better data disaggregation. Age, gender and geographic location can tell a lot, but will never show if the entire cohort is the extended family of the district leader, or if people with disabilities were left out of the process.
- Harmonizing the tools at the level that is closest to the field, so that different data sets can be comparable.

2. And monitoring should make sure that no one is left behind…



3. M&E from a "Do No Harm" lens

The "do no harm" principle is based on six assumptions:

1. Whenever an intervention of any sort enters a context it becomes part of the context;
2. All contexts are characterized by Dividers and Connectors;
3. All interventions interact with both, either making them worse or making them better;
4. Actions and Behaviors have Consequences, which create impacts;
5. The details of interventions matter and;
6. There are always Options.

The question hence is whether our monitoring approaches and tools are able to capture this COMPLEXITY… and this is where evaluation can be of great help (in addition to a sound conflict sensitivity approach)

3. Do no harm and conflict sensitivity in practice

Actions	Definitions	Conflict Insensitive Examples	Conflict Sensitive Examples
Distribution Effects:	Distributing resources, information, services, water etc. along the lines of an existing tension or division.	e.g. providing support only to IDPs or refugees and overlooking host community.	Recognizing that host community vulnerability has increased with IDP/refugee presence and supporting host community as well.
Legitimization Effects:	Giving legitimacy to a group or leader by working with them	e.g. using a beneficiary list from a tribal or political leader or security forces rather than having transparent and neutral selection criteria.	Cross checking distribution lists from different leaders to assure equal representation.
Market Effects:	Changing local markets with an influx of outside resources	e.g. providing resources from outside the region can alter market prices, value change and labor patterns.	Using or building local markets to benefit from resource and labor demands of IDPs and refugees.
Substitution Effects:	Replacing existing functioning systems or structures	e.g. providing trucked water to an area where services are present but weak, rather than strengthening government capacity.	Working with community water and sanitation authorities to improve basic services to benefit IDPs as well as host community.
Theft/ Diversion:	Fueling the conflict or division with stolen or diverted resources	e.g. portions of distributions/ resources are provided to security staff or tribal members as "repayment" for assistance	Maintaining clear distribution policies including tracking or resources, complaints mechanisms, and resource inventories.

Source: A Principled Approach to Conflict Sensitive Do No Harm Programming in the context of Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region

4. NOTHING replaces EVALUATION

The is an increasing trend to prioritize “compliance”, “quality” and “information management” (among others) over evaluation, and where the evaluation function becomes diluted within a broader institutional construct.

In simple terms, this can be compared to building and equipping a hospital (including all support staff) but without doctors.

5. Taking Accountability to Beneficiaries seriously

What questions come to your mind when you see this picture? (from the perspective of the boy standing on the truck)

6. Taking photos in funerals

Because we can learn as much (if not more) from what does not work in hard-to-reach areas than the permanent success narratives

Thank YOU!