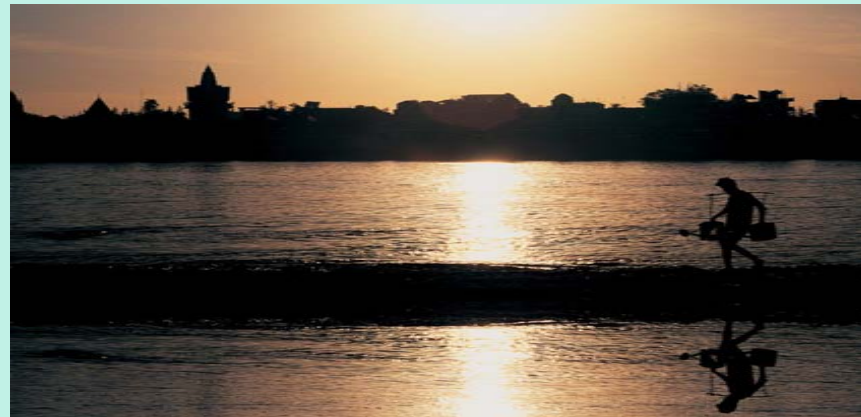# Building Networks on Sturdy Ground Through Evaluation Support

AEA Annual Conference 2011

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Building Networks on Sturdy Ground through Evaluation Support

Penny Hawkins

The Rockefeller Foundation

To 'promote the well-being' of humanity

In the 21st century – to support initiatives that help people tap into globalization's benefits and strengthen resilience to risks (e.g. climate change resilience)

Goals

More equitable growth

Interventions designed to tilt the benefits of growth and globalization towards people who are excluded

Resilience to risk

Developing the capacity of people, systems, and communities to cope more effectively with unpredictable stressors

Piloting urban-based resilience strategies through the **Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network,** US Climate Policy and Practice, African Agricultural Resilence

- Aim to develop a deeper understanding of climate resilience and the capacities and resources needed to build resilience to current and future climate risks on a large scale
- Monitoring and evaluation are an important component of the initiative

Can evaluators play a useful role in program development?

- Rockefeller Foundation Evaluation Office supported the inclusion of evaluators working with program developers to help support emerging networks and clarify their outcomes, and develop evaluation frameworks

- The provision of specific targeted advice, coaching and mentoring to RF staff and grantees at critical stages in the development of an intiative.
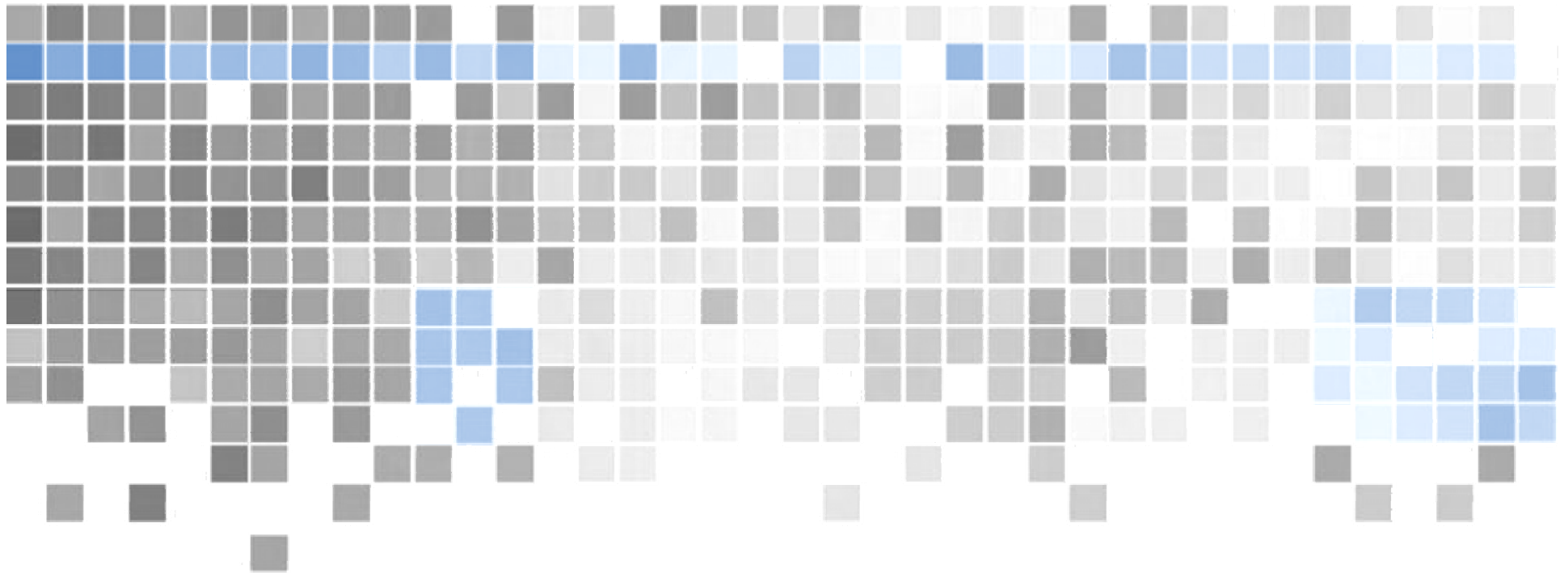
Using Evaluation in Network Development: Evaluator's Perspective

Jared Raynor

TCC Group

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TCC Group

- Founded in 1980

- Four offices: New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco

- Areas of focus: planning, implementation, and evaluation

- Three practice areas:
  - Nonprofit
  - Corporate community involvement
  - Philanthropy

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Contextualizing Network

External Environment

Network

Organization

Individual

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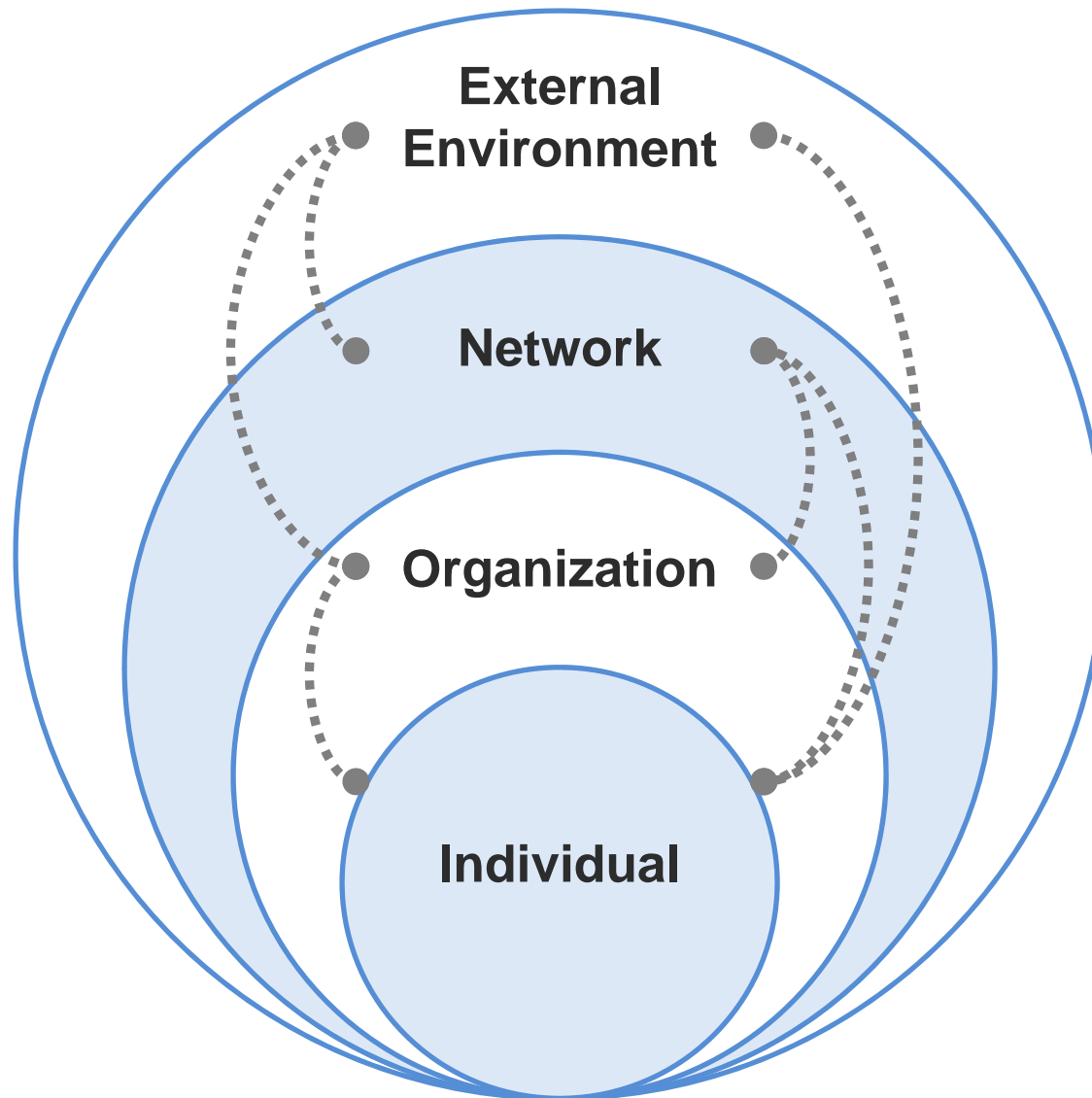
What do you Evaluate RE a Network?

Member Capacity + **Network/ Coalition Capacity** + **Outcomes**
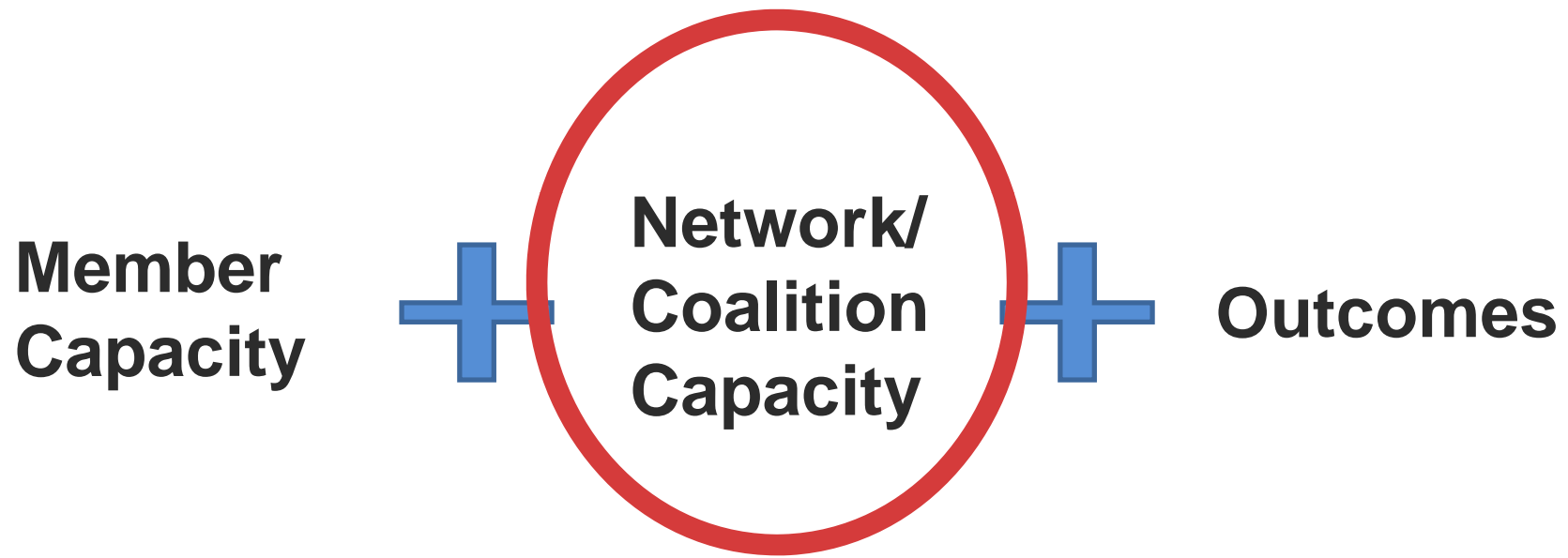
The Context: ACCCRN and CPLAN (ASAP)

ACCCRN

- Looking for interest
- Funder driven
- No clear ownership
- Strong resource base
- Demographic variance

CPLAN (ASAP)

- Looking to formalize
- Grassroots driven
- Clear ownership/buy-in
- Limited resources
- Role variance

My Role

- Evaluation Advisor
- Network "Expert"
- Help figure out what next

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As an evaluator, what did I do?

- Understand the environment

As an evaluator, what did I do?

- Understand the environment

- Develop a framework

All forms of collaboration require answering four central questions:
- What is the purpose of the network? (What is the network going to do?)
- What is the value of the network? (Who and why would someone chose to participate?)
- How will the network function? (What level of organization will guide the network?)
- What does sustainability mean for the network and is there a "disband" point?

As an evaluator, what did I do?

- Understand the environment
- Develop a framework
- Collect data—Interview or Survey
- Process data (back office)

Qualitative Interviews
Key Stakeholders

1. Below is a list of potential activities of a network. Please rank order the items, marking "1" for the most important and "8" for the least important.

[random sort]

Create linkages/relationships between individuals and groups of individuals	
Create new information through research, demonstration projects, etc.	
Collect/aggregate existing information for easier access	
Arrange, organize and/or consolidate existing information to be more easily accessible	
Move information from its current source to a user destination (information dissemination and exchange)	
Translating data/information into higher orders (e.g., meta-analysis, extrapolation, interpretation, draw implications and lessons learned)	
Joint action toward a common goal/outcome	
Detecting and interpreting signals in the environment (e.g., monitoring new developments, identifying trends, etc.)	

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As an evaluator, what did I do?

- Understand the environment
- Develop a framework
- Collect data
- Process data (back office)
- Feed back findings
  - Concept Note
  - Meeting Prep Notes

	Who Needs to Be Represented in the Network? (1=Not at all important to 5=Very Important)
4.0	Practitioners (those implementing climate adaptation activities, private, public, academic or nonprofit)
4.0	Climate scientists/researchers
3.7	Nonprofit/NGO representatives
3.6	Social scientists/researchers
3.3	Non-elected government officials
3.0	Educators
2.7	Private sector (business) reps
2.6	Elected officials
2.4	Participants from outside the United States
2.3	Interested members of the public

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As an evaluator, what did I do?

- Understand the environment
- Develop a framework
- Collect data
- Process data (back office)
- Feed back findings
- Process implications of the data (with network)
  - In-person
  - Facilitator role (making meaning)
  - Concrete questions/action steps

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As an evaluator, what did I do?

- Understand the environment
- Develop a framework
- Collect data
- Process data (back office)
- Feed back findings
- Process implications of the data (with network)
- **Evaluation planning**

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Lessons Learned

- Evaluation frameworks advance the process
- Developmental stage can't be over-prescribed (know when to let ambiguity exist)
- Facilitating conversations around data rather than presenting findings is a capacity intervention
- Tension between playing an evaluator role and a strategic planning role
- Using an evaluator up front seemed to set the stage for longer-term evaluation (but too early to know if it works)
- Evaluator needs to be sensitive to power dynamics

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Since 2007 – Growing Interest in Adaptation Planning in the US

Number of articles in U.S. print media on adaptation to climate change
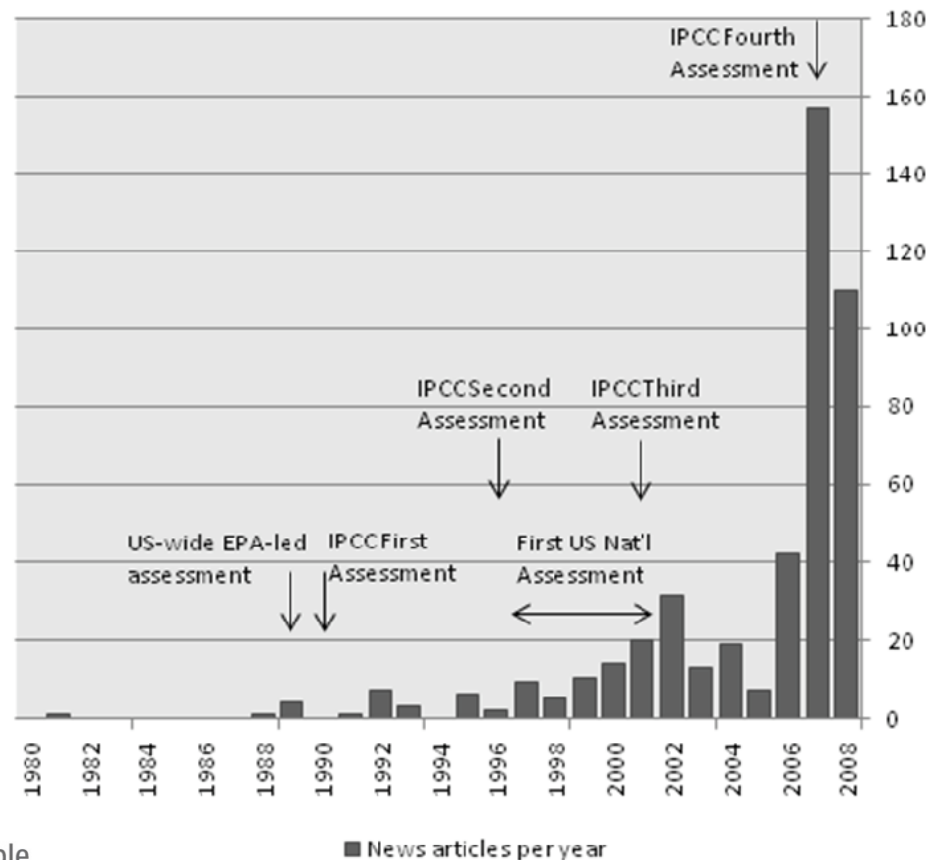
Moser (2009) analysis of US media showing explosive growth in reportage on adaptation in US media following the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report

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Humble Beginnings: Context and a Short History

- 2009: Genesis of a "practitioner network"
- 2010: Becoming an "idea in good standing"
  - First gathering – February 2010
  - Establishing early modes of communication & collaboration
  - Wrestling with our dilemmas:
    - Existential
    - Operational
    - Contextual

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2011: Network Business & Strategy Planning

- Rockefeller Foundation provided funding to crystallize the network:

  1. Develop a strategic vision for the network

  2. Develop a viable business plan for ongoing operations

  3. Develop an evaluative framework to measure network outcomes

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Network Collaboration with Jared Raynor of TCC Group

- Work Planning

- Survey

- Qualitative Interviews

- Analysis

- Network Gathering

- Final Business Planning

- Evaluative Framework

- Implementation

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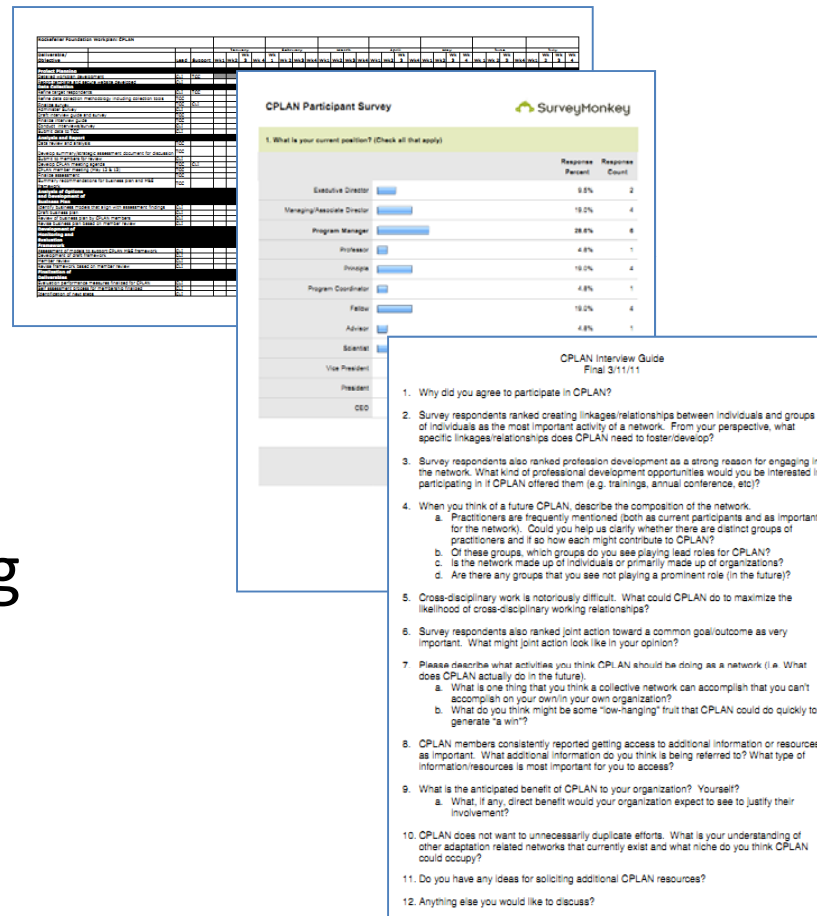
2011 Network Gathering

- Two-day Agenda led by Jared
  - First day according to plan – series of exercises to develop consensus on strategy & vision
  - The Dark Horse Session – Evening of first day
  - Second day the plan went out the door – ascendency of the Dark Horse Solution
    - Governance structure established
    - Affinity groups established
    - Consensus established

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Concluding the Project

- Working Affinity Groups
- Draft Business Plan
  - From "CPLAN" to "ASAP"
  - Test balloons
- Final Business Plan
- Evaluative Framework

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Afterward: Some Reflections

- Exposure to the networking literature & expertise invaluable

- Honest brokerage essential

- The role of a skilled & flexible third-party intermediary was crucial

- Substantive issue folk aren't often keen on process

- Sometimes form follows function; sometimes not so much

- Sometimes "good enough" is just right

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Building Networks on Sturdy Ground through Evaluation Support : Experiences from ACCCRN

Cristina Rumbaitis del Rio ~ 2011 AEA Conference

Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network
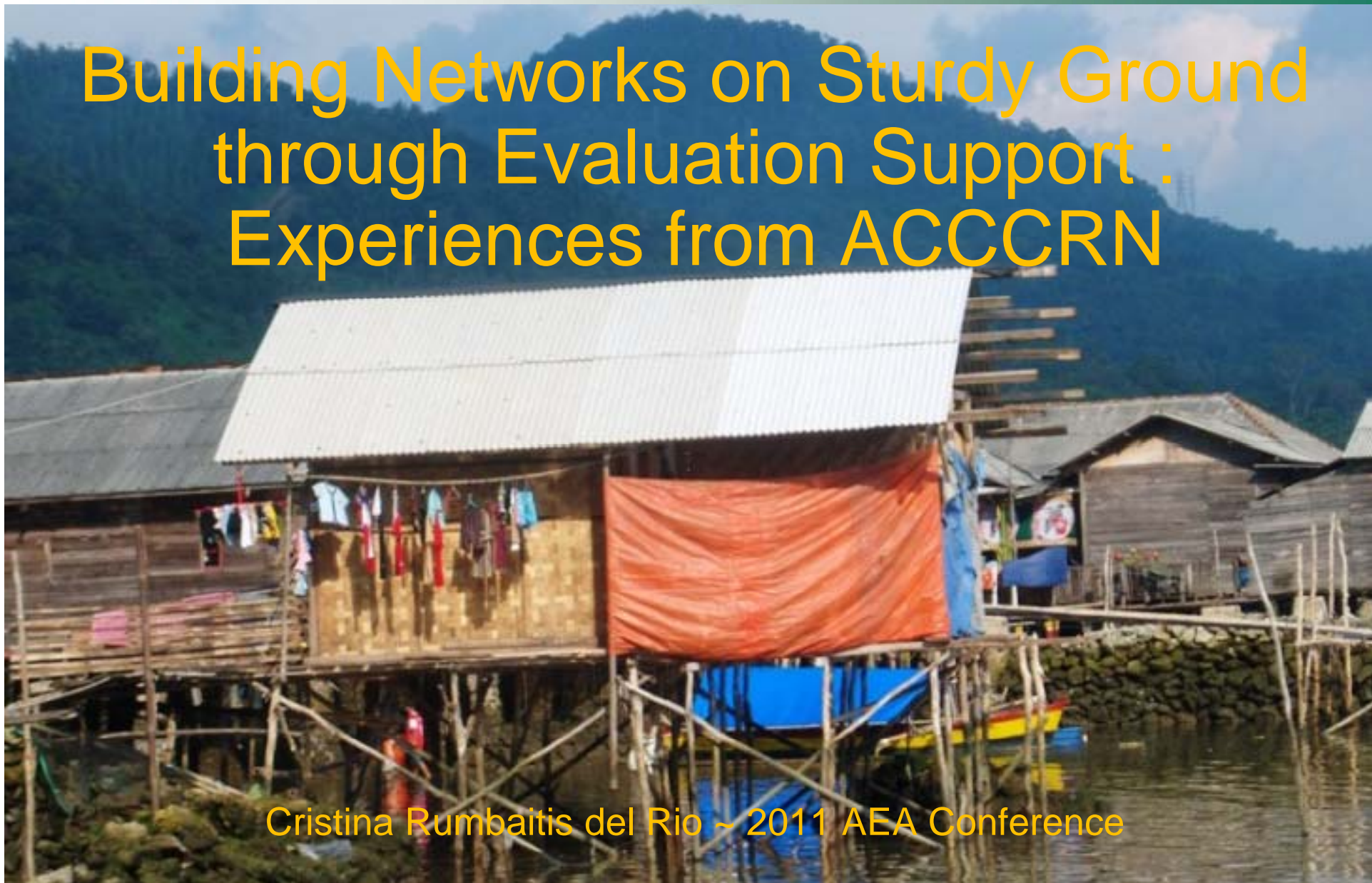
Impact

The resilience and capacity of a growing number of developing country/Asian cities in relation to current and future climate risks is enhanced, and through this work the lives of poor and vulnerable men and women are improved.

Outcomes

1. ***Capacity of Cities*** *to plan, finance, coordinate and implement climate change resilience strategies*

2. ***Network for Knowledge****, Learning and Engagement*

3. ***Expansion****, deepening of experience, scaling up*

www.acccrn.org

Urban Systems Analysis

How does the city work?

What are the direct and indirect impacts of climate change?

Vulnerability Assessment

Who is least able to respond to shocks and stresses?

Climate Change Assessment

© Arup

Learning

Local experience
Scientific study

SLDs to review lessons
revise plan

Act

Monitor, document and, using SLDs, reflect

SLDs to review lessons
revise plan

Act

Monitor, document and, using SLDs, reflect

SLDs to plan
implementation

Act

Monitor, document and, using SLDs, reflect

Time

© ISET

But what does the N stand for?

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Network Challenges:

- Donor driven
- Low understanding of purpose of a network
- No ownership or identify
- Very broad set of stakeholders

Discovering the "N"

- Initial review and interviews
- Concept note development & consultation
- Facilitated Meeting of a subset of stakeholders
- A networking grant and grantee

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1. Cities within Countries

Country

Country

ACCCRN

Country

2.Country Partners

Country

Country

ACCCRN

Country

3. Cities Web

Country

Country

ACCCRN

Country

Activities	**Short-Term Outcomes**	**Longer-Term Outcomes**

Relationship Outcomes
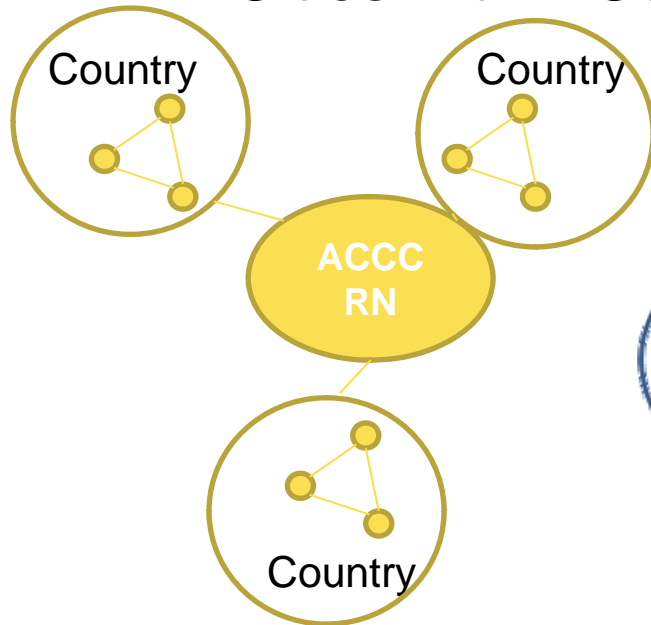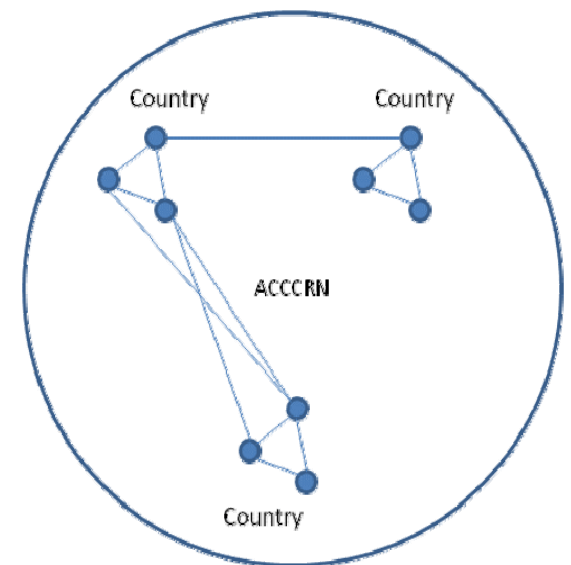
Activities:
- Create linkages/relationships between individuals and groups of individuals
- Create new information through research, demonstration projects, etc.
- Detecting and interpreting signals in the environment (e.g., monitoring new developments, identifying trends, etc.)
- Collect/aggregate existing information for easier access
- Arrange, organize and/or consolidate existing information to be more easily accessible
- Move information from its current source to a user destination (information dissemination and exchange)
- Translating data/information into higher orders (e.g., meta-analysis, extrapolation, interpretation, draw lessons learned)
- Joint action toward a common goal/outcome

Short-Term Relationship Outcomes:
- Fostering of relationships within cities
- Formation of sub-networks within countries
- Increased relationships between cities of network
- Improved country/regional coordinator motivation and interest in climate resilience

Longer-Term Relationship Outcomes:
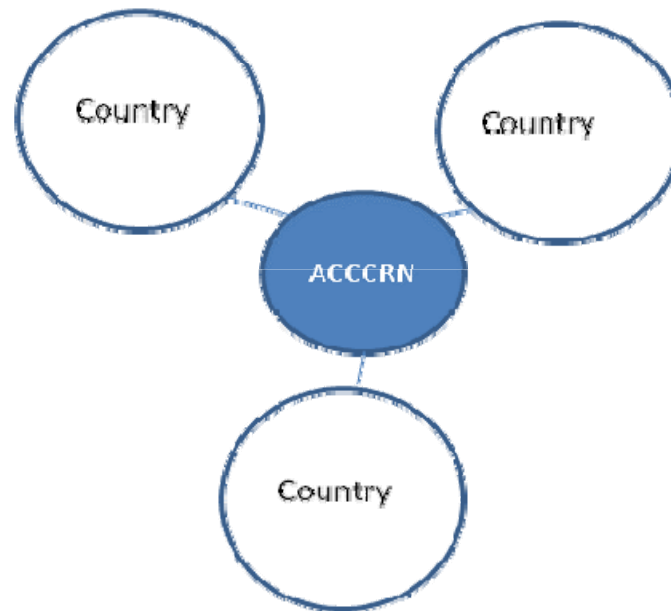- Increased empowerment of local city and CBO partners
- Improved country/regional coordinator skills
- Increased interest in formally working together on climate resilience
- Increased funding for resilience activities

Climate Resilience Outcomes

Short-Term Climate Resilience Outcomes:
- Citizen Awareness of Climate Adaptation Issues
- City Policymaker Awareness/Knowledge
- City Policymaker Motivation
- City Policymaker Skills/Ideas
- City Preparedness Groundwork (planning)

Longer-Term Climate Resilience Outcomes:
- City Preparedness Projects Implemented
- City Sustainability of Adaptive Infrastructure
- Global "Best Practice" Dissemination and Support of Others
- Global Policy Commitment and Engagement

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Key
- "Members"
- Activities
- Outcomes

Members:
- RF
- Country Partners
- ACCCRN City Practitioners
- Regional Partners
- Non-ACCCRN City Practitioners
- Other Funders
- Links to other networks, initiatives and donors

Activities and Outcomes flow:

- Support each other and draws on network support options for specific TA → Increased number of relationships and support network of peers → Increased capacity and support of city practitioners to implement CCR strategies

- Puts ideas into practice through tangible pilot project

- Highlights effective practices

- Documentation and sharing practical real-life experiences → Increased support for implementation/replication of effective CCR projects → Increased skills/capacity of those supporting CCR practitioners

- Brings together multiple stakeholders for city CCR planning → Increased use of participatory CCR plan and implementation processes

- Increased skills/capacity of those supporting CCR practitioners → Increased city adaptation practices

- Inform policy makers → Better CCR policy at city, national and/or regional level (influence policy)

- Raise/Identify resources for CCR planning, implementation and replication → Increased funding

- Increased visibility/ urgency of CCR for cities

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Draft Theory of Change Network Model for Urban Climate Change Resilience in Asian Cities

Establishment of Network

Network practitioners supporting each other

UCCR exchange, connecting those with needs to those who can help

Horizontal, peer to peer knowledge exchange

Identifies and creates champions

ACCCRN puts ideas into practice through tangible pilot projects

Highlights effective best practice

Documentation and sharing practical real-life experiences

Custodian of a credible and growing knowledge base on UCCR, which is evidenced based and peer reviewed

Links with other networks

Bringing together multiple stakeholders for city CCR planning

Increased use of participatory CCR planning and implementation processes

Increased number of relationships and support network of peers

Increased skills and capacity of those supporting CCR practitioners

Access to education and training

Targeting and engaging with policy makers at all levels

Informing opinion through thought leadership

Targeting and engaging with funder

Practitioner Capacity Increased capacity and support of city practitioners to implement CCR strategies

Raise and identify resources for CCR planning, implementation and replication

Increased support for implementation and replication of effective CCR projects

CCR cities in Asia Increased city adaptation practices

Policy Engagement Better CCR policy at city, national and/or regional level

Fundraising Increased funding available

Key

Activities

Outcomes

What worked well

- A platform for making deliberate and informed choices.

- Moved away from a bilateral model to something more like a network

- Greater buy in from partners.

What could be improved

- More participation at workshop, especially from city level

- More continuous communication with partners

- More participative approach to final networking plan.

Cristina Rumbaitis del Rio
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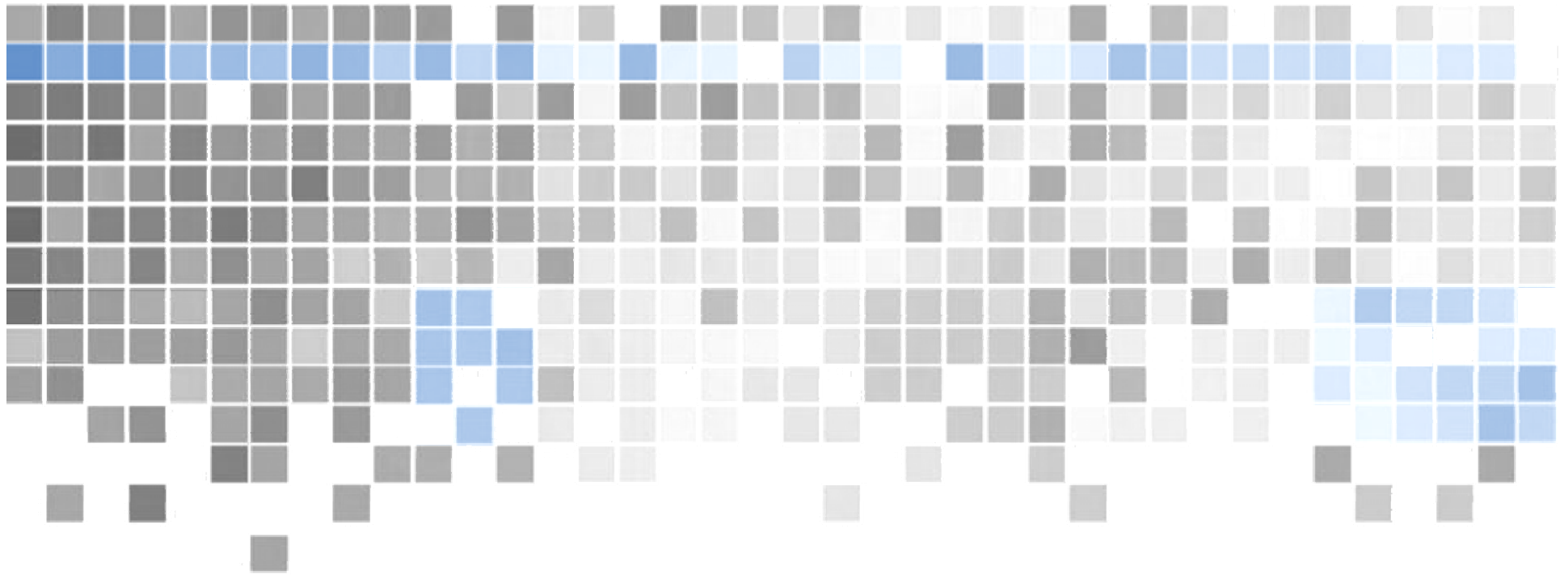
Questions

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