

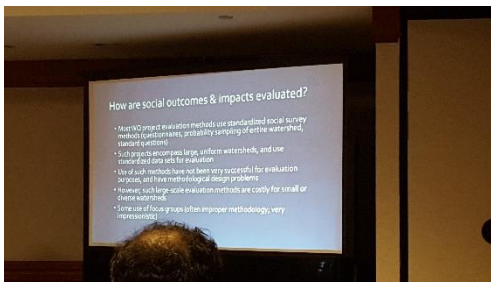
# EVALUATION

From Learning to Action  
#Eval17 2017

November 6 – 11, 2017 | Washington, D.C.

I want to begin by thanking CIERP once again for the opportunity to attend the American Evaluation Association's 2017 Annual Conference, for without their generous travel grant my attendance would have not been possible.

The American Evaluation Association is an organization dedicated to the improvement and proliferation of evaluation methods for everything from individual projects and programs to policies. Their annual conference, held this year in Washington D.C., boasted over 4,000 attendees from all over the world. From the sessions that I attended to the people that I met, this conference proved to be an amazing and worthwhile experience. Most importantly, a great deal of what I learned can be applied to improve my capstone, which is centered on a land management project in Guatemala.



**Session on the need to measure social indicators in conservation programs**

The conference featured a great deal of environmentally focused sessions, which were led by policymakers, evaluators, educators, and even ambassadors from such organizations as the World Bank, USAID, the UN, GEF, and more. From them I was able to learn about new and experimental methods that could be applied to land

management programs throughout their entire lifecycle. Such lessons and discussion pertained to everything from: new applications of geospatial science to evaluate the success of reforestation programs, and more broadly in the context of SDGs 13, 14, and 15; methods and results from projects that monitored social indicators in conservation programs; best practices in reporting project progress and evaluation results to the communities in which projects operate; and even the promising use of SMS messaging in environmental education projects, as a more cost-efficient and effective method of information sharing than face to face interactions.

A major topic at the conference was the SDGs, with one panel in particular that focused on how to best convince global leaders of the need for using evaluation to ensure the success of the SDGs. Among those that participated in this panel were the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, the Director of UNCTAD, and the Ambassador from Tanzania to the UN.

The benefits of the conference are already abundantly clear, as I am already applying much of what I have learned to my capstone. Moreover, the conference also provided me with the longer-term benefit of exposing me to a wide network of likeminded individuals with which I intend to work closely.



**Session on evaluating the SDGs**