



Social Impact Consultants



Center for
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Reinventing Evaluation for Social Innovation and Change

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Reactions?

Curiously, people often argue that when you're doing an intervention for the first time, you might want to invest heavily in a big evaluation to understand outcomes. Instead, you might want to invest heavily in the process of how the thing unfolded and what you might learn to do it better next time. You didn't know what the thing was going to look like until you got it implemented, so what's the point in designing a very structured, systematic evaluation? *Mayur Patel, Knight Foundation*

Discuss your reactions to this quote with one or two others near you

Philanthropic Trends

- **Systems change**
 - **Advocacy & policy**
 - **Catalytic approaches**
 - **Collective impact**
 - **Networks**
 - **Social movements**
 - **Community-driven/
place-based**
- **The path to change is unknown**
 - **Conditions are unstable**
 - **Multiple players act independently**
 - **Outcomes are unpredictable**
 - **Next steps are context- dependent**
 - **No replicable models apply**
- Strategic learning is
indispensible!**

Forms of Inquiry

Form of Inquiry	Example Questions
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the variables/conditions that might affect the program/initiative's success? • What framework/models describe/explain what works? • What can we learn from others who have implemented similar programs or initiatives?
Developmental Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is developing or emerging as the innovation takes shape? • How is the larger system or environment responding to the innovation? • What seems to be working and not working as the innovation unfolds? • How should the innovation be adapted in response to changing circumstances?
Monitoring & Performance Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is the program adhering to accountability requirements? • What are key indicators (metrics) of the program/initiative that reflect progress towards meeting the program's/initiative's intended goals and outcomes?
Process Evaluation (Formative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the program/initiative being implemented? • To what extent is the program/initiative making progress on achieving its goals? • What is supporting or hindering success? • What changes or refinements are needed?
Impact Evaluation (Summative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the impacts and long term effects of the program/initiative? What has contributed to this impact? • To what extent can the impact be attributed to the program/initiative?

Defining Developmental Evaluation

an evolving definition

An approach to evaluation that is grounded in **systems thinking** and supports **innovation** by collecting and analyzing **real time data** in ways that lead to informed and ongoing **decision making** as part of the design, development, and implementation process.

-Michael Q. Patton

The definition itself is developmental!

Developmental Evaluation Asks Specific Kinds of Questions

- What is ***developing or emerging*** as the innovation takes shape? What variations in effects are we seeing?
- What do the ***initial results*** reveal about expected progress? What seems to be working and not working? What elements merit more attention or refinement?
- How is the ***larger system or environment responding*** to the innovation?
- How should the innovation ***be adapted*** in response to changing circumstances? How can the project adapt to the contexts in ways that are within the project's control?

When to Use Developmental Evaluation

- ✓ **Ongoing development** of an innovating approach
- ✓ **Pre-formative** stages of a program
- ✓ Adapting effective general principles to **a new context**
- ✓ Major **systems change** and cross-scale initiatives
- ✓ Developing a rapid response in a face of a **sudden major change or crisis**

Characteristics of Developmental Evaluation

Focus

Evaluating change strategies where there is no accepted model (and might never be)

Continuous Learning

Continuous, right-time feedback informs strategy and learning processes are embedded throughout

Evaluation Approach and Design

Design is flexible, responsive, emergent, dynamic and generates emerging insights into the initiative's strategy and execution

Evaluator Role

Evaluator is a team member who **helps facilitate strategic learning** to inform decision-making

Systems-Orientation

Evaluator is attuned to the **complexity of the social innovation**, interdependencies of variables, importance of feedback loops, and inability to predict all possible outcomes

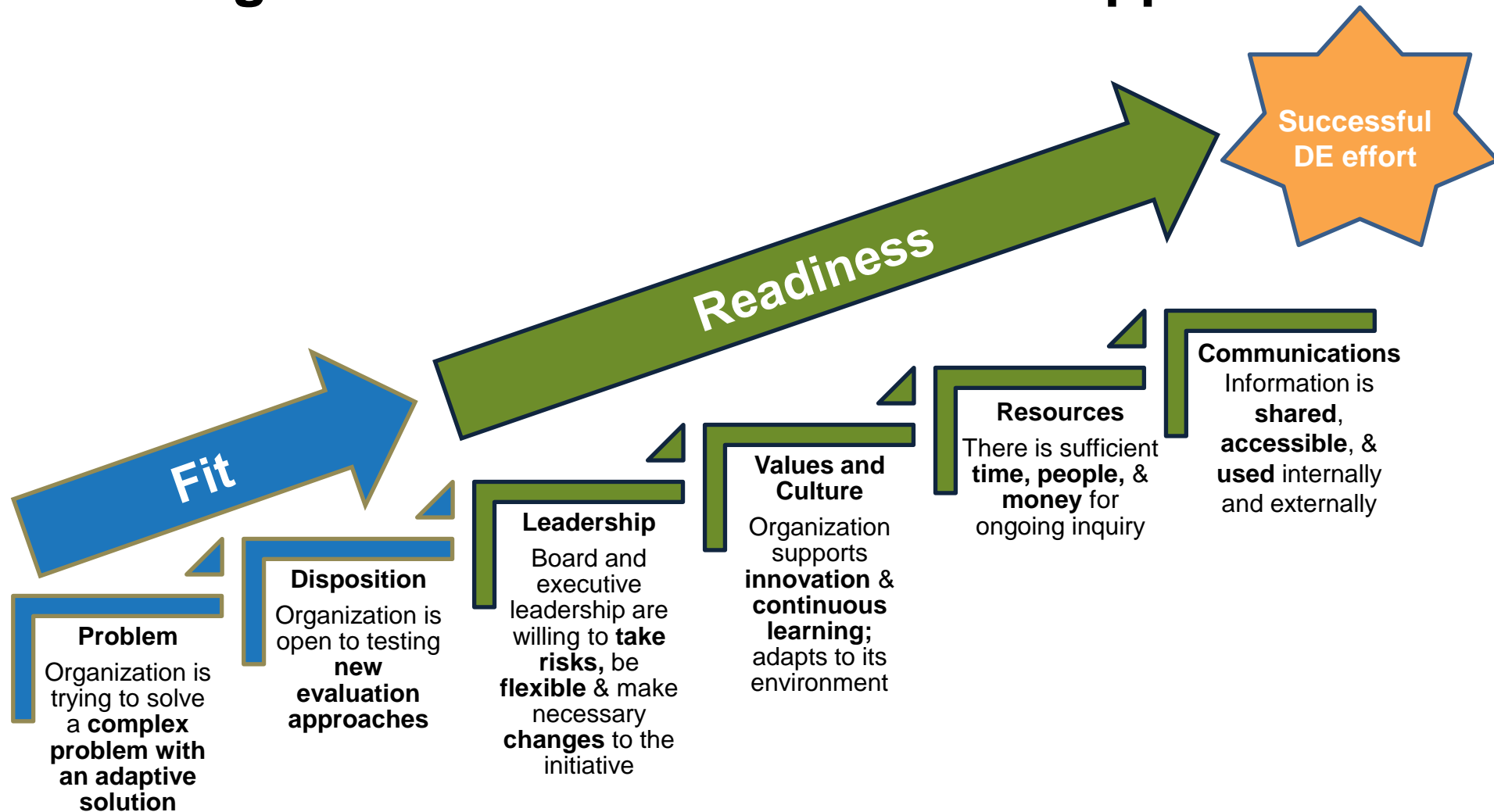
The Role of the Developmental Evaluator



- Facilitator
- Listener
- Observer
- Synthesizer
- Data Collector
- Sense-maker
- Coach
- Communicator
- Historian
- Scout

“The DE role extends well beyond data collection and analysis; the evaluator actively intervenes to shape the course of development, helping to inform decision-making and facilitate learning.” Dozois, Langois, & Blanchet-Cohen

Organizational Conditions that Support DE



Sometimes an initiative can be a good fit for DE, but organizations need to be willing to assess and develop their readiness

Benefits of Developmental Evaluation

- Contributes to learning about the **effectiveness, relevance, and clarity** of an organization's strategy
- Helps **manage uncertainty** in complex and changing environments
- Increases the **usefulness of evaluation information**
- Contributes to building a **culture of learning, innovation, and risk-taking**
- Helps build **relationships and connections** between people, programs, and organizations

Instructions for World Café

1. Form groups of 4; sit knee to knee.
2. Invite one person to be the host. The host will stay in the same seat for the duration of the exercise.
3. Discuss the question and generate insights for 12 minutes while host takes notes on the 4x6 card.
4. When bell rings, **everyone but the host** moves to a new group of 4.
5. The host welcomes the new group, provides highlights of the previous discussion, and begins conversation on new question.
6. Hosts will present highlights from their conversations during the large group report out.

World Café Round 1

- Think about an occasion when evaluation activities resulted in real-time data or findings that informed strategy and innovation.
- What ***factors*** contributed to the successful application of data and findings to decision-making ***in support of innovation?***

World Café Round 2

- What ***benefits*** might Developmental Evaluation offer your organization?
- What ***concerns*** might you have about this approach?