Formative and Real-time Evaluation

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DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH: Evaluation in itself produces learning and know-how

Essential elements

• Developmental purpose

• Innovation niche

• Complexity perspective

• Utilization focus

• Participatory

• Evaluator as co-creator

Design

• Designed to support change and learning, not only improvement

• Focuses on innovation and systems change

• Systems thinking, contextual and cultural sensitivity

• Intended users identified

• Users involved

• Advocacy, evaluation perspective, evaluative thinking, flexibility, timely feedback

Real time evaluation (RTE) design

WHY?
✓ Desire for more timely evaluation results
✓ Improve evaluability
✓ Promote learning

HOW?
✓ Takes place during the course of implementation
✓ Provides immediate (real time) feedback
✓ Internal (rather than external)
✓ Process (rather than impact)

DESIGN
➢ Formative by nature
➢ Evaluation is designed to support the development and continuous change
➢ Results are reported embedded in context (not in isolation)
Challenges

- No standard procedures
- Choosing the evaluators
- Reporting
- Resources
- Continuity

- Is it (too) close to monitoring? Consultation?
- Is it (enough) close to developmental evaluation?
- There is a tension between accountability reporting and learning
Tension between Accountability and Learning - How to find balance?
What is learning?

• What are the objectives of learning?
  • Change in behaviour?
  • Change in process?
  • Change of operational environment and culture

• What kind of learning do we mean?
  • Learning of individuals
  • learning of groups
  • learning of communities/cultural change

• Who is responsible for learning?
Current developmental oriented evaluations

- **BEAM** the Developmental Evaluation of Business with Impact (BEAM) – program with Business Finland (former Tekes = the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation) and MFA (2015 – 2019), implemented by evaluation consultant agency 4Front

- **Evaluation of national sustainable development policy (Agenda2030) in Finland** implemented by Demos (independent think tank), Helsus (Helsinki institute of Sustainable Science, University of Helsinki) and Syke (Finnish Environment Institute) (7/2018 – 2/2019)

- **MFA mid-term review: Self-assessment of the Country Strategy** Department for Africa and the Middle East and Department for The Americas and Asia (Autumn 2018 – Spring 2019)

- Evaluation on **Knowledge management**: “How do we learn, manage and make decisions in Finland´s development policy and cooperation?” (2/2018 – 9/2019)
EVALUATION TENSIONS
(Räkköläinen 2011)

INTERNAL
private, personal, local

EXTERNAL
public, general

FORMATIVE
validity, authenticity

SUMMATIVE
reliability, comparability

TRUST
local autonomy, professional skills

CONTROL
central guidance, standards
Evaluation is about **developing the future**, not only past and judgment

Thank you!

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