Developmental Evaluation: An Overview

Kevin Chin, Ph.D.
Knowledge and Evaluation Officer

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Caveats

- Board of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation is supportive of experimentation
- Developmental Evaluation (DE) draws upon existing evaluative/feedback processes
- DE doesn’t focus on outcomes, but on how to get there
Preamble

- Foundation shifted funding to complex, long-term initiatives
- Initiatives exploring uncertain territory, developing and testing strategies as they proceeded
- No blueprints for attacking poverty, promoting innovative approaches to solve social problems
- No need for ex post facto assessments, but real-time feedback on how to get where you want to go
- Needed a compass, because roadmaps didn’t exist
Developmental Evaluation is...

An approach to evaluation grounded in systems thinking and that 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 Quinn Patton
Developmental Evaluation...

- Overturns many assumptions of traditional evaluation approaches:
  - Embedded, not detached
  - Continuous, not episodic
  - Goal is learning, not judging
Wide Applicability

- DE used with programs related to:
  - Youth
  - Aboriginal peoples
  - Profoundly disabled
  - Poverty reduction
  - Environmental education
Developmental Evaluation Timeline

Led by Michael Quinn Patton, 11 organizations participated in the DE training workshops, sponsored by DuPont Canada and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

*Getting to Maybe: How the World Is Changed,* by Patton, Westley and Zimmerman

DE of *YouthScape* program

2005-2006

2008

2010

2011

2012

2013

Innoweave launches DE module

*Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use,* by Patton

Surfaces lessons and insights from the *YouthScape* program (2006-2010)

DE of the Ashoka Changemakers Competition: *Inspiring Approaches to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning*

**THE J.W. McCONNELL FAMILY FOUNDATION**
YouthScape: A case study of evaluation embracing the emergent
YouthScape: An Overview

- Trustees approved youth engagement strategy to foster innovative change at both the local and national level.
- Five national partners, five communities.
- From 2006-2010, $2.1M contributed, $1.2M used to match more than $1.5M in local contributions to support young people in planning and carrying out local projects.
YouthScape: Objectives

- Create more opportunities for young people to participate in and shape the development of their communities
- Expand the number of Canadian communities actively pursuing comprehensive initiatives with a focus on youth engagement
- Link communities in a process of collaborative learning
- Test and assess the efficacy of a variety of approaches to comprehensive community initiatives and youth engagement
- Distil and document lessons learned from the initiative to share and positively influence attitudes and policies that affect young people
DE on the Ground: Practices

- Orienting: Establish mutual understanding
- Watching: Attend to key moments, group dynamics, structure, action, threats/opportunities
- Sense-making: identify patterns, integrate new information
- Intervening: Asking questions, facilitating discussion, sourcing/providing information, pausing action
## YouthScape: Results of DE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Attending to</th>
<th>Hearing</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-launch</td>
<td>Design team</td>
<td>Need more time for interaction and questions</td>
<td>Redesign on Day 2 of gathering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Launch (Y1)</td>
<td>Research and DE</td>
<td>Uncertainty about tools</td>
<td>Coaching sessions for DEs to use participatory tools</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships between IICRD,</td>
<td>Need more time to grant, delay was hindering</td>
<td>Foundation extending granting deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foundation, and organizations</td>
<td>community participation</td>
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<td>Thirst for action (Y1-Y2)</td>
<td>Youth involvement</td>
<td>Thirst for action, difficulty in linking youth to grants</td>
<td>DEs shared ideas with sites, encouraged reaching out to youth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships were strained</td>
<td>Misperceptions, discouragement, disengagement</td>
<td>DEs checked in to clarify, Foundation directly worked with sites to address issues</td>
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<td>Reinventing Structures (Y1-Y2)</td>
<td>Partner involvement</td>
<td>Thirst for action, Lack of direction for YS in some sites</td>
<td>DEs assisted in new decision-making processes, e.g., vision building, group planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positioning of DEs</td>
<td>Lack of acceptance of two DEs</td>
<td>Lead DE conducted site visits to establish common ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying relationships and support (Y2)</td>
<td>Partner involvement and youth involvement</td>
<td>Uncertainty with granting and support of grantees</td>
<td>DEs supported decision making and processes related to grant support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
YouthScape: Present Day

- Inter/national-levels
  - Partner incorporated learning into youth-centered projects taking place in Southeast Asia.
  - FSG showcased use of DE as a model for evaluating social innovation
  - Academic articles published on youth empowerment

- Municipal-level
  - Catalyzed long-lasting networks
  - Fostered change of public opinion that helped build, not break down, community

- Individual-level
  - Provided positive experiences that helped improve and sustain motivation
  - Youth benefited from increased self-confidence
Developmental Evaluation: Lessons Learned
DE Works When...

- Environment is complex and dynamic
- Feedback is needed from critical, supportive observer
- Host organization embraces a learning culture
- Stakeholders are committed to process
- Developmental evaluators are granted authority
- Developmental evaluators are embedded early
DE Doesn’t Work When...

- Its purposes are misunderstood
- Evaluators lack key skills, e.g., facilitation, listening
- Stakeholder egos and power dynamics are overwhelming
- Time, people, and money are lacking
- Organizational readiness and buy-in are missing
- Information is not collected and shared quickly
Activity: Stakeholder Analysis
(15 minutes)
# Stakeholder Analysis: Power Vs. Interest Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Power Stakeholders</th>
<th>High Power Stakeholders</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High Interest Stakeholders</strong></td>
<td><strong>High Interest, Low Power</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>National Advisory, Foundation, Community Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Interest Stakeholders</strong></td>
<td><strong>Low Interest, Low Power</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Public</td>
<td>Government</td>
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Sharing thoughts

- What kind of impact could identifying and addressing “power vs. interest” have had on projects?
Questions
(10 minutes)
Contact

1002 SHERBROKE ST. WEST, SUITE 1800
MONTREAL, QUEBEC H3A 3L6
514-288-2133

kchin@mcconnellfoundation.ca

www.mcconnellfoundation.ca