Sustainable Evaluation Systems

Stephen Porter

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NEC Conference

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Introductions

Pickup your Bingo Cards

- The idea is to complete an X or a + on your bingo card

- Go round the room introduce yourself and ask people if a specific item on the bingo card refers to them

The rules:

- Players have to get others to sign their Bingo card. Do not write another person's name for them.

- A person can only sign one box on a Bingo card

- Prizes will be awarded to the first two people to complete the pattern

Objectives

This workshop aims to provide participants with an understanding of:

1.   Issues that reduce sustainability of an evaluation system;
2.   Developing use orientated organizational evaluation systems;
3.   Tailoring quality expectations to the organizational context; and
4.   The role of networks in sustainable evaluation systems

Workshop based on articles:
Porter, S., & Hawkins, P. (2019). Achieving Sustainability Through Sustainable Organizational Evaluation Systems. *New Directions for Evaluation*, *2019*(162), 87-101.

Porter, S. (2016). A framework for improving the responsiveness of policy through development evaluation. *Evaluation*, 22(2), 245-258.

Contents

Time	Session
09:00 – 09:30	Introductions
09:30 – 10:30	Definition
	Failures of an Evaluation System
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00 – 13:00	Use – Stakeholder Matrix
	Use - Incentives
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	Options on Systems Quality
15:30-16:00	Break
16:00 – 17:15	Example of Networks
	The role of networks in evaluation systems
17:15-17:30.	Close

Define Evaluation and a Successful Evaluation System

In the handout write:
- your definition of evaluation; and
- what you think an evaluation system should achieve

Share your thoughts with the person next to you

Share with the room

Define Evaluation and a Successful Evaluation System

In this workshop evaluation is:

"The **systematic** and **objective** assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its **design, implementation and results**. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability." (OECD DAC, 2002)
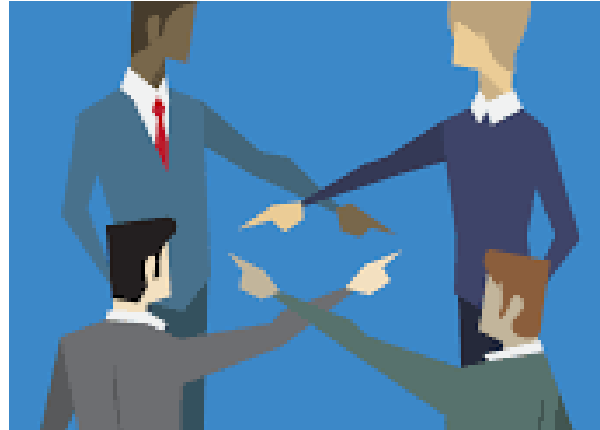
In this workshop it is argued that a successful/sustainable evaluation systems is:

- Use-focused
- Produces good quality evidenced
- Networked

What causes an evaluation system to fail?

1. An aversion to the reality of results

2. Disfigured Accountability

3. Ritualization

4. Empty Rhetoric

5. Censorship

1. An aversion to the reality of results

Reliable evidence of results can be scary, as such, there can be an *aversion to reality* in organizations.

Organizations operate with **deeply held assumptions**, which can result in them being **resistant to evidence on certain subjects**.

Without a high-quality evaluation system, evidence is less likely to come to the fore in a helpful manner
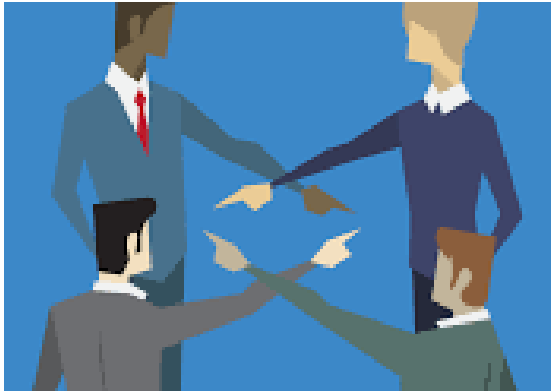
2. Disfigured Accountability

Accountability is required for organizational systems to implement strategy in a coordinated manner.

Disfigured accountability is where reporting procedures no longer allow honest reflection and discussion **because of internal and external pressure**

Knowledge flows become impeded

3. Ritualization

Evaluations are ritualized when they are provided to managers, but they are not taken into account in the actual decision process

Paper is being pushed!

Poor quality evaluation can trigger ritualization

4. Empty Rhetoric

Real champions, who demand evaluations, are required for an evaluation system to function (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

Sometimes, however, the rhetoric from ostensible champions on the use of evidence does not lead to the implementation of policies that support evaluation and is known to be a facade for other interests.

They do this to build political capital, these managers will start to talk about the importance of evidence and evaluation; however, they will not allocate resources nor actually use evidence in decision-making

5. Censorship

An organization can have clear strategy, be accountable, and able to recognize failure, but choose to restrict evidence from evaluations through censorship.

Censorship:
- Difficult approval processes
- placing evaluations on separate, hard-to-find websites,
- deletion of whole sections of reports or a
- refusal to publish reports.

Summary

Five failures that affect evaluation system sustainability.

1. an aversion to the reality of results;

2. disfigured accountability;

3. ritualization;

4. empty rhetoric; and

5. censorship.

Why do these challenge occur?

How have you managed around these failures?

Summary – Evaluation interacts with power

The commissioning of an evaluation by powerful groups who intend to use the findings in a decision is an outright act of power.

Development evaluation can also be a process that produces alternatives for a policy agenda. An evaluation can be commissioned in order to help raise an issue. The definition of alternatives "*is the supreme instrument of power, …because the definition of alternatives is the choice of conflicts, and the choice of conflicts allocates power*" (Schattschneider, 1960, p. 68)

Use of Evaluations

Use of Evaluations

- A sustainable evaluation system has products and processes that are useful.

- An evaluation system that is useful and used requires that there is demand for evaluations

What is demand for evaluation?

Stakeholders in your evaluation system

Put 2 columns on the paper…

In column 1: List the stakeholders that you engage with in that evaluation system

In column 2: Highlight the role that stakeholder plays in evaluation

Discuss - What are the main groups of stakeholders? What are the main roles played?

Evaluation Capacity Matrix

Evaluation Practice Requiring Capacity	Commissioners (Demand/ principals) (Cabinet, Parliament, political parties, Civil Society, the media, donors)	Intermediaries - Delivery and Management (Central Government (Treasury etc.) Line departments (Health etc.).	Supply – (Universities, think tanks, consultants)
User of Evaluations	**I**	II	III
Manager of Evaluations	IV	**V**	VI
Conducting evaluations	VII	**VIII**	**IX**

Who do you engage with?

Reflect on your evaluation system and populate your own matrix:

- Who are your main commissioners? What role(s) do they play?

- Who are intermediaries? What role(s) do they play?

- Who are suppliers? What role(s) do they play?

- Compare your matrix to others at our table

- Who are the main stakeholders in your evaluation system?

- Are there any gaps in practice?

- What are the challenges?

What risks can you see given evaluation is political?

Use and the Role of Incentives

What motivates stakeholders?

- Carrots

- Sticks

- Sermons

- Lights

Working across the matrix what incentives would you/have you put in place to help demand evaluation?

Incentives in Practice

| Evaluation Practice Requiring Capacity	Commissioners (Demand/ principals) (Cabinet, Parliament, political parties, Civil Society, the media, donors)	Intermediaries - Delivery and Management (Central Government (Treasury etc.) Line departments (Health etc.).	Supply – (Universities, think tanks, consultants)
User of Evaluations	Recognition of outcome reporting Evangelize on evidence-based policy	New information on project performance that can be used by other projects	
Manager of Evaluations		Ratings feed into performance reporting	
Conducting evaluations			Provide information about change or steer a project

Quality

Quiz

- What are the elements of a sustainable evaluation system?
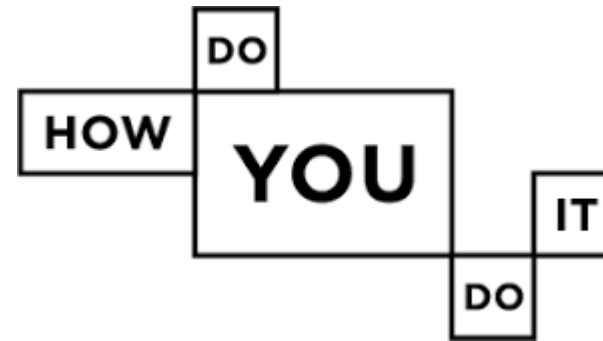
- What is a carrot?

- Why do evaluation systems fail?

Any questions from this morning?

Two main elements of system quality

Methodological Quality

"So, what do you do?"

Process Quality

HOW DO YOU DO IT
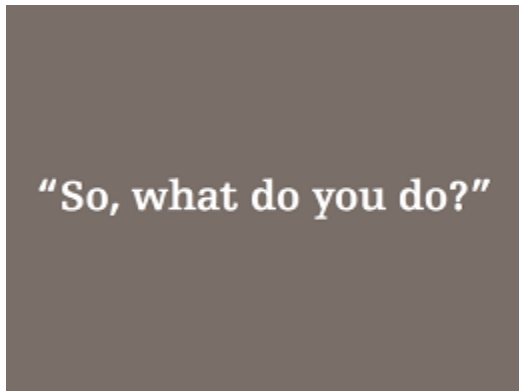
Putting Quality into Practice - South Africa

Methods - Six types of evaluation, each with its own guidance

- Diagnostic
- Design Evaluation
- Implementation
- Economic
- Impact
- Evaluation Synthesis

Putting Quality into Practice – South Africa

Process:

- Linked to AfrEA guidelines and OECD-DAC standards
- Steering Committee made up of interested parties and experts
- Work with a panel of evaluators to enable regular discussion of standards
- Reports to cabinet

Putting Quality into Practice - DFID

Methods - Three types of evaluation, each with its own guidance

- Impact evaluations establish causal attribution in relation to an intervention and its effects

- Performance evaluations evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention and its contribution to development outcomes and impacts

- Process evaluations provide deeper understanding of the quality of implementation including integrity, relevance and coherence.

Putting Quality into Practice – DFID

Process:

- Evaluation Quality Assurance and Learning System (EQuALS) rates quality against these types at ToR, Inception report and Final Draft Report (mandatory)
- Procurement against these types of evaluation
- Reference Group

IEG | WORLD BANK GROUP
World Bank • IFC • MIGA
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION GROUP

WHAT WORKS

Your experience

Review your matrix and reflect on:

- What processes do you have in place to manage quality?

- In which parts of the matrix do you have quality processes

- Anything you heard of interest?

Summary

When evidence of results challenges programs or managers wish to prevent the communication of findings, people are likely to challenge the quality of the evaluation.

Quality standards help facilitate discussions and defense of evaluation:
- Mediate arguments
- provides a clearer basis for publication
- discuss reliability of evidence.

Networks

Networks Help Address Complex Problems

Forms of networks including

- Coordination – information exchange

- Cooperation – Developing joint protocols

- Collaboration – Using budget to develop joint systems

Evaluation System Organization

- Central – IEG

- Embedded – DFID

- External – Civil Society

Networks Help Address Complex Problems

More intense forms of collaboration in an evaluation system can help to:

- Build demand for evaluation,

- Support adaptive management,

- Improve quality.

- Resist pressures, such as not discussing results or censoring findings.

Networks Help Address Evaluative Thinking

Evaluative thinking is:

- critical thinking applied in the context of evaluation,

- motivated by an attitude of inquisitiveness and a belief in the value of evidence,

- that involves identifying assumptions,

- posing thoughtful questions,

- pursuing deeper understanding through reflection and perspective taking, and I

- informing decisions in preparation for action.

Buckley, J., Archibald, T., Hargraves, M., & Trochim, W. M. (2015). Defining and teaching evaluative thinking: Insights from research on critical thinking. *American Journal of Evaluation, 36*(3), 375–388.

Experience from Colleagues

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Reviewing your matrix what have you learnt about an evaluation system?

Review

In handout four write down:

- What have you found most useful?
- What experience from another person in the room struck you?
- What are the opportunities in your context for applying these tools?

Examples in Handouts of Tools for Conducting Evaluation System Demand Diagnostics