Introduction to Developmental Evaluation

November 4, 2013
Mark Cabaj and Sam Laban

Here to There
Innoweave helps community organizations learn about, select, and implement new approaches.

Passionate leaders of successful community organizations are looking for new ways to enhance their impact and solve enduring problems.

Innoweave Modules

**IMPAKT AND STRATEGIC CLARITY**
Helps an organization use data and evidence to articulate its 3-5 year impact goals and clarify how it will achieve those goals. Then develop an action plan and a learning agenda.

**COLLECTIVE IMPACT**
Enables a group of organizations to address a major challenge by developing and working toward a common goal that fundamentally changes outcomes for a population.

**SCALING IMPACT**
Helps an organization assess options and develop a plan to expand its impact to the next level by scaling “out” its programs or scaling “up” by influencing systems.

**SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**
Enables an organization to directly advance its mission by selling a product or service.

**SOCIAL FINANCE**
Enables an organization to access repayable investments to purchase an asset, launch a new initiative, scale up, or better manage financials.

**DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION**
Helps organizations use rigorous real-time feedback to improve the design of a new initiative as it is being implemented.

**CLOUD COMPUTING**
Enables organizations to use web-based tools to work more effectively and efficiently internally and with their network.

**OUTCOMES FINANCE**
Helps organizations develop, use, fund and scale successful prevention and early intervention approaches by aligning funding with results.

**KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION**

How It Works

Innoweave helps community organizations learn about, select, and implement new approaches.

**INFORMATION**

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<tr>
<th>LEARN</th>
<th>SELECT</th>
<th>PARTICIPATE</th>
<th>CONNECT</th>
<th>ACCESS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn about an approach on innoweave.ca or on a webinar</td>
<td>Select which one(s) to explore using a self-assessment tool</td>
<td>Participate in a workshop with your leadership team to clarify your approach and determine next steps</td>
<td>Connect with an Innoweave coach to help you implement</td>
<td>Access funding to hire the coach</td>
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**IMPACT**
Implementing these approaches can help organizations generate greater impact and large scale change.

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Here to There
What is DE?
Evaluation

• Using evidence (data, interviews)

• Answer questions
  • Is it working?
  • How could it be improved?
  • Should we do x or y?
Different Contexts, Different Evaluation

**Developmental**
- Initiative is innovating and in development
- Evaluation is used to provide feedback on the creation of the initiative.

**Formative**
- Initiative is stabilizing and under refinement
- Evaluation is used to help improve the initiative.

**Summative**
- Initiative is stabilized and well-established
- Evaluation is used to judge the merit or worth of the initiative.

*Traditional contexts*
Not all forms of evaluation are helpful. Indeed, many forms of evaluation are the enemy of social innovation. This distinction is especially important at a time when funders are demanding accountability and shouting the virtues of “evidence-based” or “science-based” practice.
• The right purpose and goal of evaluation should be to get social innovators who are, often by definition, ahead of the evidence and in front of the science, to use tools like developmental evaluation to have ongoing impact and disseminate what they are learning.

Patton. Ibid.
When to use DE
#1: Pre-formative (very early stage)

The initiative is being created through a process of trial-and-error.

- Help innovators track their evolving understanding of a problem and their response.
- Support innovators develop a model so that it is ready for more traditional formative and summative evaluation.
- Identify key issues to be explored in the formative evaluation as it begins.

Example: Prototyping a Family Search Process in Child Welfare
#2: Ongoing Development of Existing Model

A project, program, policy or other intervention is being implemented in a complex and dynamic environment.

- Adapt model to changing social, political, economic, technological and demographic patterns.
- Identify key forks in the road and evidence for key decisions.
- Generate feedback on the consequences and learning's from key decisions.
- Document the ongoing adaptations to the model and “issues” for further adaptation.

Example: Leadership Development Program in Dynamic City
#3: Adapt “Model” to New Context

A project, program, policy or other intervention is being taken from one context and adapted to a new one.

- Identify relevant principles, minimum specifications of the original model and what is open to local variation.
- Provide adapters with real-time feedback on their efforts to make the model effective in the new context.
- Document the consequences of adaptations and departures and the characteristics of the adapted model.

Example: Adapting Mentoring Program from City to Rural Towns
#4: Sudden Change or Crisis

Action is needed now but what to do is uncertain and contentious

- Help crisis responders clarify their key questions and options.
- Provide timely feedback on reactions to and results of early efforts of response as they unfold.
- Assist sorting out good data from bad data.

Example: Sudden Loss of Funding & Staff in Non-Profit Organization
#5: Major Systems Change

Taking an innovation to scale and/or trying to create a tipping point in a major system

- Identify “cross-scale” factors that affect the issue of scaling.
- Scan for indications of “systems change” and/or “resistance to change.”
- Inform and track developments in the model as it adapts to cross scale change.

Example: Poverty Reduction In Hamilton
#6: Patch Dynamics

Evaluation is needed for multiple developmental, formative and summative purposes.

• A single organization or group might be engaged in more than one type of DE niche – or more traditional formative and summative evaluation – at the same time.

Example: Community Partnership to Support Vulnerable In Schools
Key DE Roles
#1: Framing The Intervention

- The challenge or problem being addressed (e.g. What is poverty?)
- The desired outcomes, changes or impacts (e.g. What does success look like?)
- The “Intervention” (e.g. emerging theory of change, key mechanisms)
#2: Testing Quick Iteration

- Identifying key evaluation questions.
- Generating real-time feedback for learning’s and ongoing development.
- Making “sense” of the feedback and using it to inform decisions.
#3: Tracking Developments

- Identifying key forks in the road or key developments.

- Describing the rationale, basis or evidence for key decisions in the development of the intervention.

- Documenting the overall evolution of the intervention (e.g. theory of change).
#4: Surfacing Tough Issues

- Providing alternative interpretations of events and data (e.g. the data might mean this).

- Pointing out when decisions are made without (or despite) considering key data (e.g. the data does not support going down this path).

- Identifying and sensitizing people to issues related to tensions, power, being stuck, etc. (e.g. there does not seem to be consensus on this decision).
Myths & Challenges
Myths About DE

Myth 1: It replaces other evaluations.

Myth 2: It’s about ‘soft methods and indicators’.

Myth 3: It’s a collection of tools and techniques or can be captured in a single ‘framework’.

Myth 4: It downplays ‘accountability’.
DE Challenges

• Challenge 1: Managing boundaries for evaluator.
• Challenge 2: Dealing with ambiguity & uncertainty.
• Challenge 3: Reconciling multiple stakeholders.
• Challenge 4: Managing the volume of data.
• Challenge 5: Keeping a results focus.
• Challenge 6: Perceptions of credibility.
• Challenge 7: Building capacity for DE.
Innoweave DE Workshop
Who Should attend?

- Organizations (or groups or orgs) that *expect to use DE* for a specific initiative
- Team (rather than individuals)
- Users of DE
  - Those making decisions about the initiative
  - Those making decisions about the (goals of) evaluation
- *Your Evaluator?*
Workshop Objectives

1. To provide an opportunity for participants to review the appropriateness and readiness of DE for their work.

2. To assist participants develop a preliminary evaluation scope of work (ESOW) for DE.

3. To assist participants identify their preferences and possible next steps for developing a budget and securing an evaluator.

4. To assist participants develop a preliminary “risk” assessment and response plan for their DE work.
Activities

• **Diagnosing** DE fit

• **Overview of DE**

• **Scoping** (Evaluation Scope of Work)

• Risk assessment and next steps
Participate in a Workshop

• Review online materials innoweave.ca

• Find a workshop in your region
  • If there isn’t one? Hosting? Deliver internally?

• Complete self-assessment on innoweave.ca

• Apply through innoweave.ca

• Complete pre-workshop questions
Pre-workshop questions

1. What is the challenge you are trying to address?
2. What types of outcomes are you trying to generate?
3. What are your current ideas/strategy/experiments on how your group will tackle this challenge and/or generate these outcomes?
4. Where is your group in the development process?
   - In discussion, no real action yet.
   - In the early stages of development.
   - In full fledged development.
5. What are your questions, uncertainties or disagreements about your work as it emerges?
Up-Coming DE Workshops

- November 14th, Calgary (applications closed)
- December 5th, Toronto
- February 11th, Montreal (in French)
Want More on DE?

Google: SIG + Knowledge Hub + Developmental Evaluation

Google: Tamarack + Michael Quinn Patton

Google: Innoweave + Developmental Evaluation