DE Principles - 1

DEVELOPMENTAL PURPOSE

DE illuminates, informs and supports what is being developed
identifying the nature and patterns of development, and
implications and consequences of these patterns.

Summary Commentary

In complex situations, as people are innovating, DE's purpose is to support the innovation develop by helping to:

• Identify what is emerging, as well as examining the dynamics of a situation

• Support decisions about what to carry forward, what to leave behind, what to adapt, what new things to do

• Unpack how context is affecting the development process including the degree, nature and consequences of adaptive innovation

• Track, monitor and interpret systems changes that might affect development

• Ensure real time feedback is available about emergent needs, challenges, flows of information and resources.

Reflective questions

• How comfortable is it to raise and unpack new and challenging issues with innovators and leaders?

• How prepared are we to draw on and utilise a wide range of perspectives and networks to understand different situations and contexts?

Applying the Principle

• Support for wide ranging data collection processes – broad definitions of evidence – including expertise

• Facilitation of collaborative sense-making with key initiative stakeholders in search for patterns and variation (similarities and differences) across different sites

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DE Principles - 2

EVALUATION RIGOUR

Asks probing evaluation questions; thinks and engages evaluatively; questions assumptions; applies evaluation logic; uses appropriate methods for context; stays empirically grounded; synthesises and makes meaning using shared values based frameworks and engages in deep and different ways of thinking.

Summary Commentary

• Developmental Evaluation it not evaluation lite. To ensure evaluation rigour, evaluators should have deep methodological toolkits and be flexible in their application of evaluation tools, methods and approaches to best meet the needs of key stakeholders, communities and the innovation. Evaluators need to be able to couple their choices of methods and approaches with context.

• Typically in a Developmental Evaluation, an adaptive action cycle of inquiry – What, So what, Now what – is an essential process that allows for shared emergent and iterative questioning, reflection and action.

• Evaluative reasoning and thinking is an essential part of Developmental Evaluation i.e., combining evidence and values to reach conclusions about quality and value. It is with rigorous thinking that rigour is displayed.

Reflective questions

• How comfortable is it to raise and unpack new and challenging issues with innovators and leaders?

• How prepared are we to draw on and utilise a wide range of perspectives and networks to understand different situations and contexts?

Applying the Principle

• Support strongly participative development of values based anchoring framework for use in assessment of quality and value

• Encourage discussion and debate (among key stakeholders at different levels of the system) about what will count as credible and appropriate evidence for key aspects of the DE framework

• Encourage the articulation of an agreed rating system for use in making judgements about the quality and value of development as well as more summative judgments about effectiveness

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UTILIZATION-FOCUSED EVALUATION

Pays attention to intended use from beginning to end,
facilitating the evaluation progress to ensure use by those
engaged in the social innovation.

Summary Commentary

• Engagement in evaluation should be both useful and valuable to participants and other stakeholders.

• It pays to be mindful about what utilisation looks like in people's unique contexts.

• It's important for the evaluation to be able to work with and adapt to different situations.

• Evaluation use occurs throughout the evaluation process, it's not something that should be left until the end.

Reflective questions

• How do we typically take the pulse of situations? How well does this serve us?

• How do we learn what matters to people?

• What are the different ways we might build evaluation utilisation into the current situation?

Applying the Principle

• Support development of deepening relationships with key interests in the development as the 'personal factor' is a key part of people's belief and trust of evaluation and subsequent use of process insights and other findings

• Ensure there is a process of ascertaining the kind of evidence that is considered valuable and useful for the diverse interests at different levels of the system

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DE Principles - 4

INNOVATION NICHE

The niche of developmental evaluation is the ability to support innovation and adaption, interpreting and providing feedback on the context, process and outcomes of innovation.

Summary Commentary

• Part of the developmental task is to find out what innovation and adaption means to those who are trying to bring about change, helping to identify the degree and nature of change happening and evolving.

• It's important to recognise that sometimes what seems 'innovative' is actually recognition and support of old wisdom and practice.

Reflective questions

• How can DE help track the changes in basic routines, resources and/or information flows, beliefs and behaviours in systems?

• How do we manage the tensions between innovation and learning and the push for accountability?

• How might DE balance support for innovation and emergence and also support initiatives to demonstrate their value empirically and robustly?

Applying the Principle

• Encourage reflection at different levels of the system about what is changing, as well as what is staying the same

• Encourage reflection that focuses on people's perception of the magnitude of change occuring, as well as the likelihood of actions being taken resulting in changes in knowledge, beliefs and practice.

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DE Principles - 5

COMPLEXITY CONCEPTS

Interprets development through a complexity lens, recognising that situations are often uncertain, emergent and dynamic, and evaluation is responsive to this reality.

Summary Commentary

• It is not possible to understand the world around us by only examining its parts – we live as part of patternsof relationships in a synergistic way with all the different features of our situations

• History matters – the events of the past do influence the shape of our futures

• One size does not fit all and the way change happens is dependent on the features and patterns of relationships in local contexts

• Change is emergent, the future is uncertain

• Variation and diversity provides resilience in the face of change

Reflective questions

With innovation, there will always be uncertainty and turbulence –

• How easy or difficult is it to stand quietly in inquiry when faced with a complex situation?

• What possibilities inform our thinking that we didn't know existed twelve months ago?

Applying the Principle

• Help identify and recognise those aspects that are part of the context that are respected and valued that innovation can scaffold from / as well as those things that might cause resistance to change

• Support identification of values based principles that can guide the change process – ensure resiliency of the process even amidst turbulence in the system

• Ensure diversity of perspectives and interests are part of the development and evaluation process – design, implementation and sense-making

• Support regular cycles of reflective practice to ensure that changes / system actions / influencing dynamics that affect the development are identified as they emerge – and can be taken into account

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DE Principles - 6

SYSTEMS THINKING

Thinking systemically throughout, understanding interrelationships, engaging with contrasting perspectives, and reflecting ethically on boundaries of the social system that the innovation and evaluation are being developed within.

Summary Commentary

DE explores sources of:

• motivations and values built into our views of situations and efforts to improve them

• legitimacy, i.e., the moral basis on which we expect people or the environment to bear the consequences of what we do or fail to do

• control, addressing power structures influencing what is considered to be the problem and what might be done about it

• knowledge and the knowledge basis defining what counts as relevant

Reflective questions

• Where does the sense of purposefulness and value come from in the situation?

• Where does control / authority for the situation rest? Where should it be coming from?

• What experiences and expertise are considered relevant and credible?

• What experience and expertise ought to be at the table?

• Whose interests are being served legitimately?

• Whose interests ought to be served legitimately?

Applying the Principle

• Support diverse participation of all key interests in the development and evaluation process

• Support reflection on motivations and values of those engaged in the initiative

• Support reflection by those participating in the initiative on the boundaries being drawn, and the consequences of these choices

• Support engagement and reflection processes between key stakeholders – about the nature of their relationships with each other

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DE Principles - 7

CO-CREATION

The innovation and evaluation together – interwoven, interdependent, iterative, and co-created

Summary Commentary

• In DE, it is vital to make time developing and revisiting shared understandings of values, principles, and other key concepts.

• Trusted relationships are the business of DE and the basis of the collaborative and developmental process inherent in innovation.

Reflective questions

• Do we understand the differences in power in a particular situation?

• How can we gain more insight or understanding about this?

• What responsibilities do we have in relation to this power?

• How do we acknowledge the history, experience and wisdom that exists within the current situation?

Applying the Principle

- Encourage and advocate for diverse participation of all key interests in the development and evaluation process

- Encourage an emphasis on development of deep relationships between different interests in the development and evaluation

- Support collaborative thinking processes – 'thinking together'

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TIMELY AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FEEDBACK

DE informs ongoing adaptation as needs, findings, and insights emerge, responding to the natural rhythms and cultural norms of the context the development and evaluation are happening within.

Summary Commentary

• Timeframes in Developmental Evaluation need to be matched to the rhythms of the initiative - so situational responsiveness is an imperative.

• It's important to think creatively about what an evaluation process or product might look like, taking cues and guidance from the context and situation.

• Increasing credibility and use usually requires forms of expression that map to the context.

Reflective questions

• What will 'good' delivery of feedback look like in this context?

• What will be needed to ensure feedback is culturally appropriate?

Applying the Principle

- Encourage and advocate for feedback to be timed to align with naturally occurring key decision points

- Encourage and support deepening understanding about the type / form of feedback needed and useful for different interests

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