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**The false promise of participatory evaluation: Experiences from the participatory evaluation of the Aboriginal and sea management program in the top end.**

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Ensuring that an evaluation is systematic and objective is the primary goal of any evaluator. Yet, conducting a participatory evaluation in a multiple stakeholder context challenges our conceptualisation of 'independence' providing instead a backdrop truncated by differing world views and sometimes differing agendas and desires for participation. If our aspiration in doing participatory evaluation is greater uptake of results, social learning and adaptive behaviour, to what extent can we achieve these in a multiple stakeholder setting? Experiences of conducting a participatory evaluation of the Aboriginal land and sea management program in the top end have raised some fundamental methodological and philosophical questions regarding objectivity and independence. Our experiences in the NT suggests that evaluations which seek to involve stakeholders as question-makers, data collectors and analysers of that information provides a false promise in terms of objectivity and ownership of a participatory evaluation process. We draw on the experience of undertaking a Participatory Evaluation in the NT to explore some of the challenges and how we have addressed them.