

# Un-boxed: developmental evaluation's great strength and ultimate challenge

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How do you describe a DE?

How do we know we're doing a DE?


# How might this look different in different contexts?





How do you convince  
commissioners of its value when  
you cannot know in advance  
exactly what it will entail and what  
data will be collected?





Every commissioner seems to want a DE – but the situation is not always suited

- ▶ Like any evaluation method and approaches need to be fit for purpose

## DE is appropriate where and when?

Appropriate contexts	Inappropriate conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highly emergent and volatile situation (e.g., the environment is dynamic)</li><li>• Difficult to plan or predict because the variables and factors are interdependent and non-linear</li><li>• No known solution to issues, new issues entirely, and/or no certain way forward</li><li>• Multiple pathways forward are possible, thus need for innovation and exploration</li><li>• Socially complex, requiring collaboration among stakeholders from different organizations, systems, and/or sectors</li><li>• Innovative, requiring timely learning and ongoing development</li><li>• Unknown outcomes, so vision and values drive processes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where people are not able or willing to commit the time to actively participate in the evaluation and to build and sustain relational trust</li><li>• Where key stakeholders require high levels of certainty</li><li>• Where there is a lack of openness to experimentation and reflection</li><li>• Where organizations lack adaptive capacity</li><li>• If key people are unwilling to 'fail' or hear 'bad news'</li><li>• Where there are poor relationships between management and staff and evaluators</li></ul>

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Source: Michael Quinn Patton and Kate McKegg, Developmental Evaluation Workshop for African Evaluation Association, Yaounde,

# How do you define/demonstrate rigour in DE?

## Inclusive participation

Processes for analysis, interpretation and communication include different kinds of expertise and perspectives including cultural

There has been reciprocity in the process

Whānau have had decision-making power and control over the process, what is produced and how it is shared

## Methodological pluralism

(Many different kinds of data, methods & approaches)

Methods for data collection are appropriate and culturally grounded and the process is culturally safe

There is transparency and consistency in documentation and reporting

Processes and changes in direction and decision-making are shared

## Reflexivity

(Ongoing cycles of critical learning)

The positions, values, perspectives and worldviews of those doing the work are known and accounted for

Claims that are made are appropriate and relative to the situation, methods used, data collected and evidence built

## Relevance

(Meets people where they are at)

We have been responsive to whānau and partners - and clear about our roles, responsibilities and scope of effort

The process has been ethical and beneficial for whānau from their perspective

Tikanga (protocol of the place and people) has been observed



What are the strengths & limitations of evaluator as the key tool in DE?



# What is the value of DE principles to practice?

- ❖ Developmental purpose
- ❖ Evaluation rigour
- ❖ Utilisation focus
- ❖ Innovation niche
- ❖ Complexity perspective
- ❖ Systems thinking
- ❖ Co-creation
- ❖ Timely feedback

# Audience participation

- ▶ In general - what are your thoughts about what you've heard today?
- ▶ Are there any surprises - things you haven't heard before, didn't expect to hear?
- ▶ What are you still puzzling about?

## **TASK:**

- ▶ First – on your own
- ▶ Second – in pairs share your thoughts
- ▶ Third – share your collective thoughts In a group
- ▶ Finally – generate a reflection, question or provocation for the panel to respond to