Principles-Focused Evaluation

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And
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MESI
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The Niche of Principles-Focused Evaluation

- Unit of analysis (evaluand)
- Approach to programming
- Way to navigate complex dynamic systems
- Approach to evaluation
- Fundamental to Developmental Evaluation
Evaluation

Traditional
Evaluating...
• Grants
• Projects & Programs
• Clusters of grants
• Goal attainment
• Outcomes
• Implementation
Generating...
• Lessons
• Recommendations

Nontraditional & New Directions:
Evaluating...
• Mission fulfillment
• Strategy
• Advocacy campaigns
• Policy change
• Systems Change
• Complex dynamic interventions
Innovations & Challenges:

Evaluating...

• Community impacts
• Regional initiatives
• Environmental ecosystem sustainability
• Networks and collaborations
• Leadership
• Inclusiveness and diversity
• Innovation
• Collective impact
• Scaling
• PRINCIPLES
Principles-driven programs and interventions

• Vibrant communities
• Project Spirit
• Global Alliance for the Future of Food
• Paris Declaration for Development Aid
• Programs serving homeless youth
• Centre for Global Pluralism
• Peacekeeping and conflict mitigation
Effectiveness Principles

An effectiveness principle is a statement that provides guidance about how to think or behave toward some desired result (either explicit or implicit), based on norms, values, beliefs, experience, and knowledge. The statement is a *hypothesis* until evaluated within some context to determine its relative meaningfulness, truth, feasibility, and utility for those attempting to follow it.
How are principles useful?

1. Principles inform choices at forks in the road.
2. Principles are grounded in values about what matters to those who develop, adopt, and attempt to follow them.
3. Principles provide direction, but not detailed prescription, so they offer opportunities to adapt to different contexts, changing understandings, and varied challenges.
4. Principles must be interpreted and applied contextually and situationally to ensure their relevance.
5. Principles are the rudder for navigating complex dynamic systems.
What difference do principles make?

6. Principles, when based on experience, knowledge, and evidence about how to be effective, can enhance effectiveness.

7. Principles require judgment in application so their effectiveness is somewhat dependent on the quality of decision-making and judgment-rendering in applying and evaluating them.

8. Principles have opposites that point in a contrary direction, so they force consideration of alternative courses of action based on comparing competing principles.

9. Principles point to consequences, outcomes, and impacts.

10. Principles can be evaluated for both process (implementation) -- and results so that their hypothetical effectiveness and relevance can be tested.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation purpose</th>
<th>Principles-focused evaluation questions</th>
<th>Concrete Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Formative evaluation</td>
<td>A principles-focused formative evaluation: How can the program’s adherence to principles be improved?</td>
<td>The evaluation shows that staff in a program for homeless youth are interpreting the principle of “trauma-informed care” in different ways. Staff training to improve shared adherence to the principle is recommended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Accountability</td>
<td>A principles-focused evaluation for accountability: Is the program following principles as specified in funding and policy mandates?</td>
<td>A major housing renovation project in a low income community mandates community consultation on playground and green space design. The evaluation documents the nature, extent, and types of community consultation and reports the findings in a public accountability report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Knowledge-generating evaluation</td>
<td>A knowledge-generating principles-focused evaluation: What can be learned about the effectiveness of principles?</td>
<td>An online course following principles of online student engagement conducts an evaluation to gather and analyze feedback from faculty and students to generate lessons about the effectiveness of the online course principles that can be used in future online courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Summative evaluation</td>
<td>A summative principles-focused evaluation: Are the principles currently being followed relevant and effective? Should they be maintained, changed, or dropped altogether (and replaced with “best practices”)?</td>
<td>An innovative higher education program follows learner-centered principles that give students major control over the curriculum. The evaluation gathers data from graduates and their employers about whether students learned what they needed to succeed with the findings used to judge if the learner-centered approach is working in the employment marketplace, or if a more employer-focused program should be designed and implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Developmental evaluation</td>
<td>A principles-focused developmental evaluation: How are principles being applied in adaption of an innovation to new locations?</td>
<td>A microfinance program based on women’s empowerment principles is evaluated to document how the principles of empowerment are being adapted in different cultures and among women with different characteristics: younger, older; married/unmarried; with and without children; with varying degrees of education.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Your ????
GUIDE
For Effectiveness Principles
SMART Goals

Note: R is sometimes Relevant rather than Realistic; T is sometimes Time-bound, not Timely.
GUIDE Framework
RECIPE vs PRINCIPLES

**REPLICATION RECIPE**

Add 1/4 teaspoon of salt

**ADAPTIVE PRINCIPLE**

Season to taste & situation
Managing email

“Wow! I’ve got one from someone I know!”
Exercise

Rule:
30 minutes of aerobic exercise each day

Principle:
Exercise regularly at a level that supports health and is sustainable given your health, life style, age, and capacity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investing</th>
<th>For individual small investors, own only three diversified mutual funds and no more than 10 individual stocks, which is all a small investor needs and can manage.</th>
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<td>For individual small investors, own as few or as many mutual funds and stocks as you can understand, regularly monitor and reasonably manage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff meetings</td>
<td>Start each week with a staff meeting of no more than one hour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hold staff meetings at regular intervals and as needed based on the nature of the staff and the purpose of staff meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Every primary school-age child should read at least 15 minutes a day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children should read regularly and consistently based on their interest and ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Engage in 30 minutes of aerobic exercise every day.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Create a regular exercise regimen that is sustainable to meet your fitness and health goals given your age and lifestyle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Deliver the final report by the date specified in the contact or terms of reference.</td>
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Guiding.

A principle is prescriptive. It provides advice and guidance on what to do, how to think, what to value, and how to act to be effective. It offers direction. The wording is imperative: *Do this*. The guidance is sufficiently distinct that it can be distinguished from contrary or alternative guidance.
U-FE Principle

Focus on Intended Use by Intended Users

**Utilization-focused evaluation principle:**

*Focus on intended use, by and with intended users,*

*in every aspect of, and at every stage of, an evaluation.*

Now let's examine that principle against the five GUIDE criteria.
The utilization-focused evaluation principle prescribes identifying intended users from the beginning and involving them in determining how an evaluation will be used, then designing the evaluation accordingly. Alternative and contrary principles are: Design an evaluation to be credible to scholars. Attend to use when you have findings to be used. Worry about accuracy not use. Identifying and articulating alternative possible principles clarifies a particular principle’s guidance.
A high quality principle is useful in informing choices and decisions. Its utility resides in being actionable, interpretable, feasible, and pointing the way toward desired results for any relevant situation.

The purpose of the utilization-focused evaluation principle is to enhance actual use of an evaluation by those for whom and with whom it is being done. It can be applied to any evaluation situation. The principle advises focusing on use throughout the evaluation, from the beginning, not just at the end when findings are ready. That's useful advice; not easy, but doable, interpretable, and actionable.
Principles are values-based, incorporating and expressing ethical premises, which is what makes them meaningful. They articulate what matters, both in how to proceed and the desired result. That should be inspirational.

The utilization-focused evaluation principle values use. Valuing use is both an ethical and pragmatic stance. It implies that evaluations should not be done as a matter of compliance or window dressing, but should be conducted so as to be useful -- and actually used. This, the principle asserts, is the evaluator's calling. This is what makes evaluation worthwhile, meaningful, and a contribution to solving societal problems and improving lives. To behave otherwise is wasteful and unethical. The desired result is enhanced use of the evaluation by those for whom it is intended for social betterment. For evaluators who care about a better world, use is the vehicle for realizing that noble vision, so the principle is hopefully inspiring, both in the vision it offers and the implication that the desired result (greater evaluation use) is possible by following the principle.
Principles-focused strategy and evaluation should inspire as well as provide direction.

Outcomes should be inspirational

When asked about the bottom line for not-for-profit organizations, the great management guru Peter Drucker said:

"The end results are people with changed lives."

Outcomes should specify how lives will be changed.
The developmental nature of a high quality principle refers to its adaptability and applicability to diverse contexts and over time. A principle is thus both context sensitive and adaptable to real-world dynamics, providing a way to navigate the turbulence of complexity and uncertainty. In being applicable over time, it is enduring (not time-bound), in support of ongoing development and adaptation in an ever-changing world.
The utilization-focused evaluation principle applies to any context in which an evaluation is being conducted. It applies across levels from local, to regional, to state, national, and international. It applies as an intervention, change initiative, policy or program develops and on through its implementation. It provides guidance for any number of intended uses, and applies to different purposes for evaluation (accountability, program improvement, strategy analysis, overall summative judgments of merit and worth, monitoring, or knowledge-generation).
Principles

“I am a man of fixed and unbending principles, the first of which is to be flexible at all times.”

U.S. Senator Everett Dirksen
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Implications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Ongoing development</td>
<td>Implemented in complex &amp; dynamic environment</td>
<td>No intention of becoming fixed; identifies effective principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Adapting effective principles to new contexts</td>
<td>Innovative initiatives: Develop ‘their own’ version</td>
<td>Knowledge interpreted, adapted to context through DE.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
DE Principles

1. Developmental purpose
2. Evaluation rigor
3. Utilization focus
4. Innovation niche
5. Complexity perspective
6. Systems thinking
7. Co-creation
8. Timely feedback
Transformative social movements were problem-focused and principles-driven.
Evidence-based Practice

Evaluation grew up in the “projects” testing models under a theory of change that pilot testing would lead to proven models that could be disseminated and taken to scale:

The search for best practices and evidenced-based practices
Fundamental Issue: How the World Is Changed

Top-down scaling of “proven models” with *Fidelity Evaluation*

versus

Bottoms-up adaptive management and *Developmental Evaluation*
Models vs. Principles

Identifying **proven principles** for adaptive management
(bottoms-up approach)

*versus*

Identifying and disseminating **proven models**
(top down approach)
CONTEXTUAL SCALING

• Options by context
• Principles-based adaptation
• DE documents and assesses adaptation

versus

HIGH FIDELITY REPLICATION
Evaluable

A high quality principle must be evaluable. This means it is possible to document and judge whether it is actually being followed, and document and judge what results from following the principle. In essence, it is possible to determine if following the principle takes you where you want to go.

The utilization-focused evaluation principle can be evaluated by following up with intended users to find out if the evaluation was used in intended ways, and to get their feedback on the extent to which their involvement affected how they used the evaluation. There is a substantial literature reporting on evaluation of the utilization focused evaluation principle (Patton, 2008, 2012).
Three kinds of evidence-based interventions

- **Summative evaluation** of a single program, grant, or model.

- **Meta-analysis** of results for several programs/grants using the same model aiming at the same outcomes.

- **Synthesis of effective principles**: *Diverse interventions adhering to shared evidence-based principles.*
"Principles are like prayers. Noble, of course, but awkward at a party."

Lady Crawley, the Dowager Countess, Downton Abbey
Principles...

• Unit of analysis (evaluand)
• Approach to programming
• Way to navigate complex dynamic systems
• Approach to evaluation
• Fundamental to *Developmental Evaluation*
Guiding
- Prescriptive -- provides advice and guidance
- Directional -- specifies direction and informs priorities
- Effectiveness-oriented (active verb wording) -- "Do this..." to be effective
- Distinctive from its opposite or alternative
  - Points toward desired results
  - Describes how to be effective
  - Supports making choices and decisions
  - Utility resides in being interpretable, doable, feasible, and actionable

Useful
- Values-based, ethically grounded
- Meaningful
- Is important, evokes a sense of purpose

Inspiring
- Context sensitive
- Complexity adaptable
- Enduring (not time-bound)

Developmental
- Can document & judge whether it is followed
- Can document & judge what results
- Can determine if it takes you where you want to be
Your ????
ChildFund International

Distinguishing Overarching Principles from Operational Principles

Operation Shoestring - provides year-round academic, social and emotional support to elementary, middle and high school children in Jackson, Mississippi.
• In the development of principles “many youth seemed inspired by the idea that they were rights holders.”

• Youth Civic Engagement Defined

ChildFund defines civic engagement as an organized action by a person or group that benefits the community and leads to the realization of youth rights and youth leadership as having and using skills to organize or influence a group of people to reach a common goal.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Overarching Principle defined</th>
<th>Operating principles to implement overarching principles</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1. Youth vision principle | Support youth to dream of a better reality for themselves, their community and the world. | • Provide young people with opportunities to reflect on and explore their own identity, situation and community.  
• Support skills and competence in meaningful and inspirational vision statements.  
• Create an inclusive process that ensures broad representation of youth from different backgrounds and a feedback loop where a core group of youth takes back their ideas and plans to larger group of youth. |
| 2. Youth voice principle | Support youth to develop and express their own perspective and voice. | - Create spaces for young people to associate and develop their voice.  
- Build community openness to and valuing of youth perspectives.  
- Create interactive opportunities for the community to hear from youth people  
- Ensure that young people have the opportunity express their unique needs and interests and speak as a group distinct from adults |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Youth authentic inclusion principle</th>
<th>Create opportunities for active and meaningful participation of young people in the daily life of the community.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create a community environment that includes and values the involvement and contributions of youth.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Promote authentic and ongoing inclusion of youth in any process or institution that affects their lives or that of their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support youth to identify and take action to benefit themselves and their community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Community valuing youth principle</td>
<td>Promote a view of youth as assets to the community who can make a positive contribution towards social change.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure young people have access to information to enhance their civic knowledge and inform their participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create opportunities for youth and adults to build relationships based on mutual understanding and respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Youth development principle</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for youth to develop knowledge and skills for effective civic participation and leadership that will benefit them throughout their lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART GOAL CRITERIA</td>
<td>SMART GOAL EXAMPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific -- precise outcome</td>
<td>Eradicate polio worldwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurable -- quantitative, statistical precision</td>
<td>By 2017 no children will be paralyzed by the wild poliovirus. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports at least three years of zero confirmed cases due to indigenous circulation of wild poliovirus any place in the world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Achievable -- a logic model or theory of change can be created to show how the goal will be achieved | **The four key strategies for eradicating poliomyelitis are:**  
   1) routine immunization of infants with OPV in the first year of life;  
   2) supplementary immunization activities, national immunization days and sub-national immunization days (NIDs and SNIDs), during which all children under five years of age are vaccinated, regardless of whether they have been vaccinated before;  
   3) mop-up campaigns, to ensure that every child is vaccinated and to break the final chains of transmission; and  
   4) effective disease surveillance for acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) to find and investigate every newly paralysed child to determine if poliomyelitis is the cause of the paralysis.  
| Relevant/Realistic-- results can reasonably be expected to be achieved with the inputs and activities specified in the logic model | Detailed WHO plan supported with WHO and philanthropic funding, e.g., The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).) |
## GUIDE PRINCIPLE FRAMEWORK APPLIED USING POLIO ERADICATION EXAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GUIDE PRINCIPLES CRITERIA</th>
<th>GUIDE PRINCIPLE EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guiding</strong> -- provides direction and informs priority-setting</td>
<td>Take a holistic approach to the polio eradication campaign. (Educate, support appropriate policy changes, and build health system capacity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Useful</strong> -- Informs decision-making; interpretable, feasible, and actionable.</td>
<td>Conduct the campaign so that communities value what has been provided in the immunization initiative and the lessons of effective immunization are captured and adapted for other health and development initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspiring</strong> -- values are explicit, motivational, and meaningful for ongoing, long-term engagement</td>
<td>Ensure the quality of the immunization campaign. Quality is as important as quantity (number vaccinated) for effectiveness long-term, therefore emphasize the quality of interactions with children and families in the eradication campaign to deepen their understanding and cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental</strong> -- Context and complexity sensitive, enduring not time bound.</td>
<td>Adapt the campaign to local contexts by being aware of and sensitive to religious, cultural, economic, political, and social issues that can affect cooperation in the eradication campaign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluatable</strong> -- use mixed methods understanding that both qualitative and quantitative data will require interpretation &amp; judgment</td>
<td>Focus on the countries where paralytic poliomyelitis due to wild poliovirus type 1 is endemic, e.g., Afghanistan and Pakistan; evaluate that the vaccinations are voluntary (not imposed) and that the campaign is holistic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of Principles

Science
Evaluation
“Science isn't about authority or white coats; it's about following a method. That method is built on core principles:

• precision and transparency
• being clear about your methods
• being honest about your results, and
• drawing a clear line between the results, on the one hand, and your judgment calls about how those results support a hypothesis.”
American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles For Evaluators

Resulting Principles. Given the diversity of interests and employment settings represented on the Task Force, it is noteworthy that Task Force members reached substantial agreement about the following five principles. The order of these principles does not imply priority among them; priority will vary by situation and evaluator role.
Evaluation Principles

- AEA guiding principles
- Participatory evaluation principles
- Utilization-Focused Evaluation principles
- Culturally competence evaluation principles
- Indigenous peoples’ research and evaluation principles
Principles

• Provide direction but not detailed prescription
• Are grounded in values about what matters
• Are based on evidence about how to be effective
• Must be interpreted and applied contextually,
• Require judgment in application
• Inform choices at forks in the road
• Are the rudder for navigating complex dynamic systems
• Point to outcomes and impacts
• Can be evaluated for both process (implementation) -- and results
Vibrant communities, Canada

In April 2002, fifteen communities and the three national sponsors met for a three day forum in Guelph, Ontario to create Vibrant Communities. They jointly developed an experiment designed to test a “new” way to tackle poverty in a way that acknowledged the complex nature of poverty and the challenge of achieving scale in poverty reduction efforts. The new way was not a model, but rather a set of five core principles that local communities agreed to follow in mounting locally unique campaigns:
Each community was represented by someone from the private, public and non-profit sector, as well as someone with experience living in poverty.
Principles

1. **Poverty Reduction** – a focus on reducing poverty as opposed to alleviating the hardships of living in poverty

2. **Comprehensive Thinking & Action** – addressing the inter-related causes of poverty rather than its individual symptoms

3. **Multisectoral Collaboration** – engaging individuals and organizations from at least four key sectors – business, government, non-profit and persons who’ve experienced poverty – in a joint effort rather than one sector

4. **Community Asset-Building** – building on community strengths rather than focusing on its deficits

5. **Learning & Change** – embracing a long term process of learning and change rather than simply undertaking a series of specific interventions
Māori
He Oranga Poutama Initiative
Māori Health Initiative Example

The story of *He Oranga Poutama*, evaluators Kate McKegg and Nan Wehipeihana

TO Māori

WITH Māori

AS Māori

- DE book, pages 274-279
Overarching Principle

Engage in health and recreation
AS Māori
Core principles were developed and adapted in various local settings along with a system of national coordination and support to facilitate local effort.

HOP initiative set out to develop a practical, grounded understanding of what *as Māori* looks like in diverse activities.
What was developed
AES Best Evaluation Policy and Systems Award

2013 Award Winners: Nan Wehipeihana, Kate McKegg and Kataraina Pipi of Research Evaluation Consultancy Limited (a member of the Kinnect Group), and Veronica Thompson from Sport New Zealand) for Developmental Evaluation – He Oranga Poutama: what have we learned?
Your ????
Principle: Nurture committed connections
Reflective practice:
Senior leadership team

*How does being a committed connector inform and affect the Foundation’s work in local communities?*

• Strong committed connections cases
• Weak committed connections cases
• Cross-case analysis
• Examined pending program and initiative proposals through the lens of committed connections.
• Board reflective practice
• All-staff reflective practice
• High dosage/high impact partners RP
Lessons: 2013 Report to the Board

Principle: Nurture committed connections.

• “What we learned was that in each of our strong committed connections, the relationship with the Foundation was key. Where staff were more deeply engaged, connections were stronger and impacts were greater.

• Another insight learned was that while contributing funds was very important, it wasn’t always about the money. In other words, there were a number of successful committed connections, for which funding was minimal, that yielded positive impacts, as well as where financial contributions were significant.”
Key insights gained that help inform our work on committed connections

• Committed connections are core to the Foundation’s work.

• Connections of the Foundation can take many forms, and the most impactful are those that are committed – those that last. For example:
• Connecting people to each other (individually, small groups)
• Connecting people to networks
• Connecting people to knowledge
• Connecting people to issues
• Connecting issues to issues (breaking down silos between issues)
• Connecting people to resources
• Connecting people to opportunities
• Connecting people to action (from talk to action)
• Connecting people to organizations
• Connecting organizations to each other
• Connecting people to communities
• Connecting communities to each other
• Connecting communities to regions
• Disconnecting people from ineffective or dysfunctional connections
Committed connections insights

4. Bringing people together doesn’t necessarily lead to committed connections.

5. Being an effective connector is a pre-requisite for the Foundation to be effective at inclusion.

6. Committed connections is BOTH PROCESS and OUTCOMES, and the two are linked
7. The internet offers emerging opportunities for virtual connections:

• This is an important area for future development and developmental evaluation already underway with the Broadband Initiative and Foundation communications and information systems infrastructure. Inquiry questions going forward include: What are the opportunities for committed connections using web platforms? Youth virtual communities? Social media? Connecting former Itasca residents to home area? BCLP alums? How does Blandin continue to stay on top of these new developments and directions?
8. In addition to engaging in deep reflection (developmental evaluation) on our external work, we also conducted reflective practice on how we could get better at connecting with each other as the Senior Leadership Team in order to share learning and better leverage our work. Our focusing question was:

“What is shared learning?”
Committed connections insights

• We learned that we only know something when we know it together. As a result of this we committed to regular check-ins at SLT meetings to cross-fertilize connections being made and knowledge being gained.

• We asked ourselves what we needed to know together and decided that we needed to watch for trends and themes emerging in common from our separate spheres, and to better capture impacts as they occur. One way to do this is develop some simple processes for “after action reviews.”

• Monitoring these issues together is a core part of strengthening the team’s development.
The Mountain of Accountability

Mission Fulfillment

Accountability for Learning, Development and Adaptation
- Deep reflective practice
- Developmental evaluation
- Strategic framework evaluation
- Focus on systems change, innovation & complexity

Accountability for Impact
- Major program evaluations
- External strategic evaluation
- Board survey & feedback
- Grantee Perception Report
- Synthesis of grantees’ reports
- Employee surveys

Basic Accountability for Management Processes
- Financial audits & investment returns
- Human resource performance management
- Basic management information system
- Due diligence
- Routine grantee reporting
- Community indicators for planning
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Your ????
9 evidence-based, guiding principles to help youth overcome homelessness

February 2014

Developed by the Homeless Youth Collaborative on Developmental Evaluation
Technical Assistance by Michael Quinn Patton, PhD and Nora F. Murphy, PhD
Supported by the Otto Bremer Foundation
• Three emergency shelters
• Two drop-in centers
• One street outreach collaborative
• Two counties in the Twin Cities metro
Principles-focused evaluation

1. Identified principles in draft form
2. Collaboratively identified fourteen youth
3. Interviewed youth, reviewed their case file, interviewed a nominated staff person
4. Synthesized information and wrote case stories
5. Reviewed stories with the youth
6. Analyzed stories, looking for principles and emergent themes
True caring by staff is profoundly important to youth.

Build relationships by interacting with youth in an honest, dependable, authentic, caring and supportive way.
And you be like, “Okay, I have all this on my plate. I have to dig in and look into [the choices I’m making] to make my life more complete.” And I felt that on my own, I really couldn’t. Not even the strongest person on God’s green Earth can do it. I couldn’t do it. So I ended up reaching out to [the youth shelter], and they opened their arms. They were like just, “Come. Just get here,” and they got me back on track.

-Pearl
If I was to sit in a room and think about, like, everything that happened to me or I’ve been through, I’ll get to cryin’ and feelin’ like I don’t wanna be on Earth anymore—like I wanted to die. When I talk to somebody about it, it makes me feel better. The people I talk to about it give me good advice. They tell me how much they like me and how [good] I’m doin’. They just put good stuff in my head, and then I think about it and realize I am a good person and everything’s gonna work out better.

-Maria
• [Rahim’s] not going to send me to the next man, put me onto the next person’s caseload. He just always took care of me. [...] I honestly feel like if I didn’t have Rahim in my corner, I would have been doing a whole bunch of dumb shit. I would have been right back at square one. I probably would have spent more time in jail than I did. I just felt like if it wasn’t for him, I probably wouldn’t be here right now, talking to you.

- Thmaris
How this is different

The opposite of this principle (trusting adult-youth relationships) is to;

focus on the transaction (ex: help with GED preparation, help with resume writing, help applying for housing) while minimizing opportunities for relationships to develop.
Journey Oriented

Interact with youth to help them understand the interconnectedness of past, present and future as they decide where they want to go and how to get there

The opposite
Immediate outcomes focus: housing
Trauma-Informed

Recognize that most homeless youth have experienced trauma; build relationships, responses, and services on that knowledge.

The opposite
Standards of behavior; compliance with rules.
Non-Judgmental

Interact with youth without labeling or judging them on the basis of background, experiences, choices or behaviors

Harm Reduction

Contain the effects of risky behavior in the short-term and seek to reduce its effects in the long-term

The opposite: Zero tolerance
Your ????
2001

PRINCIPLES

2012
“It is critical to get the principles of action right before acting.”

*Wise executives tailor their approach to fit the complexity of the circumstances they face.*
Introducing Evidenced-Based Principles to Guide Collaborative Approaches in Evaluation.

Whitmore, E., Shulha, L.M., Cousins, J.B., Gilbert, N., Al Hudib, H.

Introduction

Three years ago, our team began to consider the value of capturing the foundations of collaborative approaches in evaluation and transforming these into a useable resource for evaluators.
Why Principles?

The Oxford Dictionary definition of *principles* has guided our work. We have conceptualized them as a “foundation for a system of belief or behaviour or for a chain of reasoning.”
The principles presented here have been derived empirically. They stem from the experiences of evaluators who have engaged in collaborative approaches in a wide variety of evaluation settings and from the lessons they have learned.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Clarify Motivation for Collaboration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation purpose</td>
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<td>Evaluator/sponsor expectations</td>
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**Principle: Develop a Shared Understanding of Program Characteristics and Contexts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Contributing Factors</th>
<th>Quotations (S- came from description of a successful collaborative approach; U- came from description of an unsuccessful collaborative approach)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Program</td>
<td>1. Opportunities are built in for clarification and description of the program.</td>
<td>1. (i) S- Stakeholders and evaluator participated in conceptualizing the project, before it was even funded. As a result, project goals, objectives, implementation, and corresponding evaluation went smoothly/ (ii) S- Evaluator helped project leaders articulate their program objectives and learning outcomes for participants at the start of the program / (iii) S- Conducting interviews with program participants allowed funder stakeholders to understand how the program worked.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Substantive program knowledge is acquired and used in decision making.</td>
<td>2. (i) S-Evaluator was not an &quot;expert&quot; in the program content area and absolutely needed stakeholders to provide clarity about how the data would be used and what the boundary conditions were for asking questions of intended beneficiaries / (ii) S-Stakeholders are closer to the program - important to leverage their knowledge in evaluation design / (iii) S- The stakeholders valued our relevant prior experience on very similar projects. They knew we had a reputation at NSF for doing good work on this type of project. They were very open and eager to work with us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Organizational Culture</td>
<td>1. Forces creating organizational and program stability/instability are identified, monitored and, if possible, addressed.</td>
<td>1. (i) U- Significant organizational turnover occurred at the dissemination and use phase, so new leadership wanted to follow a new vision rendering the work irrelevant/ (ii) U- Program was in transition and difficult to find a consistent thread/voice among program participants.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Organizational buy-in and capacity for evaluation is assessed, monitored and optimized.</td>
<td>2. (i) S-Excellent program manager who was intent on making sure that her program was successful, constantly improving and had the documentation to prove it/ (ii) S-Supervisors supported program developers, implementers and front-line staff to have time to work on evaluation / (iii) U- A mid-project change in administration decreased political support for the project, decreasing the motivation for stakeholders to participate.</td>
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### Principle: Monitor the Degree to which Evaluation is Valued

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<td>Evaluation culture</td>
<td>1. Evidence-informed decision making is held in high regard at all levels of the organisation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Evaluation activities are prioritized by the organization.</td>
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<td>3. The value of the evaluation is made explicit by program leaders or evaluation champion(s).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Quotations (S- came from description of a successful collaborative approach; U- came from description of an unsuccessful collaborative approach)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. (i) S- The stakeholders believed in the value of using a rigorous evaluation design and data collection/analysis procedures (ii) U- The culture of the group receiving the evaluation was not one that fostered data use. They saw the evaluation as being for &quot;someone else&quot; or as a &quot;proof of concept&quot; to justify expenditures/ (iii) S- Program administrator was committed to collecting data and using information for program improvement, accountability and future funding purposes (iv) U- Funder did not emphasize data-based improvement or evaluation/ (iii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (i) S- The organization/stakeholders put evaluation on the top priority. Willing to spend time on it/(ii) S- Agency leadership supported and encouraged all levels of staff to participate (iii) S Evaluation was a frequent topic during staff meetings/ (iv) U-stakeholder did not really want an evaluation in the first place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (i) S- The evaluation had the buy in of agency management and staff at all levels / (ii) S- Key champions among stakeholders for evaluation, particularly within funder organization / (iii) S- Inclusion of the program recipients in the data collection was deemed necessary by the program sponsors and stakeholders/ (iv)U- Lack of basic understanding about evaluation activities amongst clients/ (v) U-Stakeholders did not understand the need for and cost of an external evaluation/ (vi) U-Funder used the evaluation to “force” collaboration not only among stakeholders in this project, but also demanded collaboration with four other collaborative evaluations.</td>
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Principle: Ensure Adequate Resources

Principle: Practice Participatory Processes

Principle: Foster Collaborative Relationships

Principle: Ensure Evaluation Technical Quality

Principle: Follow Through to Promote Desired Evaluation Consequences
Your ????