

Complex systems and developmental evaluation. Two case studies

He Oranga Poutama: Case study applying development evaluation and systems thinking in indigenous contexts

Nan Wehipeihana, Research Evaluation Consultancy Limited, Wellington, New Zealand

This is a case of developmental evaluation and systems thinking supporting the emergence of a new and innovative program to generate meaning and learning about the key program concepts and to collaboratively co-construct appropriate measures and monitoring mechanism as the programme unfolds.

Eighteen months into a three-year developmental evaluation, there is increased understanding about the nature of outcomes, what it takes to achieve these outcomes and the development of culturally based outcome measures and evaluative rubrics to monitor programme performance.

ECOSAD case study applying a complex systems lens to monitoring and evaluation

Ricardo Wilson-Grau, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Developmental Evaluation supports the creation of innovative approaches and solutions to major social problems and needs when conditions are changing and the environment is complex and dynamic. A developmental evaluator accompanies innovators to inform on-going decision-making by generating and reflecting on data and its consequences.

This is a case of developmental evaluation supporting the creation of a M&E mechanism for the ECOSAD action research project in Lima, Perú. This is one of four ecological health projects supported by the Canadian International Development Research Center to experiment with applying systems and complexity thinking to their M&E approaches. ECOSAD aims to understand and contribute to systemic improvement in the working, environmental and health conditions of informal, non-salaried solid waste workers and their families in the Peruvian capital.

Between September 2009 and May 2010 we developed a results-oriented M&E mechanism that purposely does not attempt to track all activities and outputs of this project. Instead, it identifies and documents the outcomes, their significance for human health, the environment and urban development, and establishes how the ECOSAD project contributed to them. The outcomes are interpreted from three angles: their interrelationships, the varying perspectives on those relationships, and the boundaries of it all. Then, decisions are made for improving or modifying the research design.

Nan Wehipeihana

Nan Wehipeihana is an independent evaluator and policy advisor based in Wellington, New Zealand. Nan's work is characterised by the application of indigenous worldviews to evaluation theory. A key focus is in the area of policy and program evaluation, and the development of culturally driven evaluation outcome frameworks.

Ricardo Wilson-Grau

Ricardo Wilson-Grau is an independent organisational development consultant and evaluator based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil who commonly uses developmental evaluation in his work with international social change agencies, private development co-operation donors and other organisations such as the ECOSAD action-research project.