
A practitioner's reflections on developmental evaluation

With Kate McKegg, December 10, 2017, Tokyo



**Symposium: Evaluation that Supports Social Innovation – New Horizon
brought by Developmental Evaluation**



Ko Tararua te pae maunga
Ko Manawatu te awa
Ko Papaoiea te kainga
Ko McKegg te whanau
Ko Kate McKegg e tu atu nei



Scenario one:

“Let’s do something big and bold”

In the face of overwhelming evidence of long term, systemic educational failure for Māori and Pacific young people, a New Zealand Foundation decided it wanted to go some way towards ‘[overcoming educational underachievement in Maori and Pasifika communities](#)’ in [Auckland New Zealand](#).

The Foundation set aside substantial funds - \$20 million NZ dollars - and committed to a long-term, innovative investment approach, that they knew would be risky and challenging. They also committed to finding and supporting community lead solutions to these seemingly intractable problems.



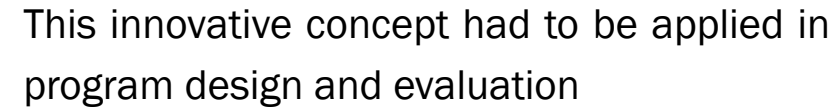
Nine projects were funded from different communities.

All were community-led projects approaching the same issue from different fields and angles; varying from early childhood to university education, and from capacity development to skill acquirement.

[The initiative’s development from the outset was highly organic and emergent. Nothing was predetermined except the focus on lifting educational achievement for Māori and Pacific young people.](#)

“The evaluation had to walk the talk and support the ‘as Māori’ vision”

The innovation started as a vision, became an idea, and took shape as a cultural transformation realized through specific ways of engaging in sport and recreation. Program design, implementation, and evaluation were interwoven together through this emergent process.



The re-visioning of the HOP program and the new strategic goal were deeply grounded in Māori principles, values and aspirations. .

Understanding the situation – some questions to ask

- Is what is being developed truly innovative i.e., is the change aimed at deep and sustained change?
- Is there a shared vision or purpose evident?
- Are there potentially multiple options and pathways to many possible outcomes?
- Is the situation complex (many inter-relationships, different stakeholders and perspectives, no clear boundaries) and emergent?
- Are there high levels of uncertainty about what to do?
- Is it difficult to plan or predict what might happen?
- How strongly do principles or values underpin the innovation?

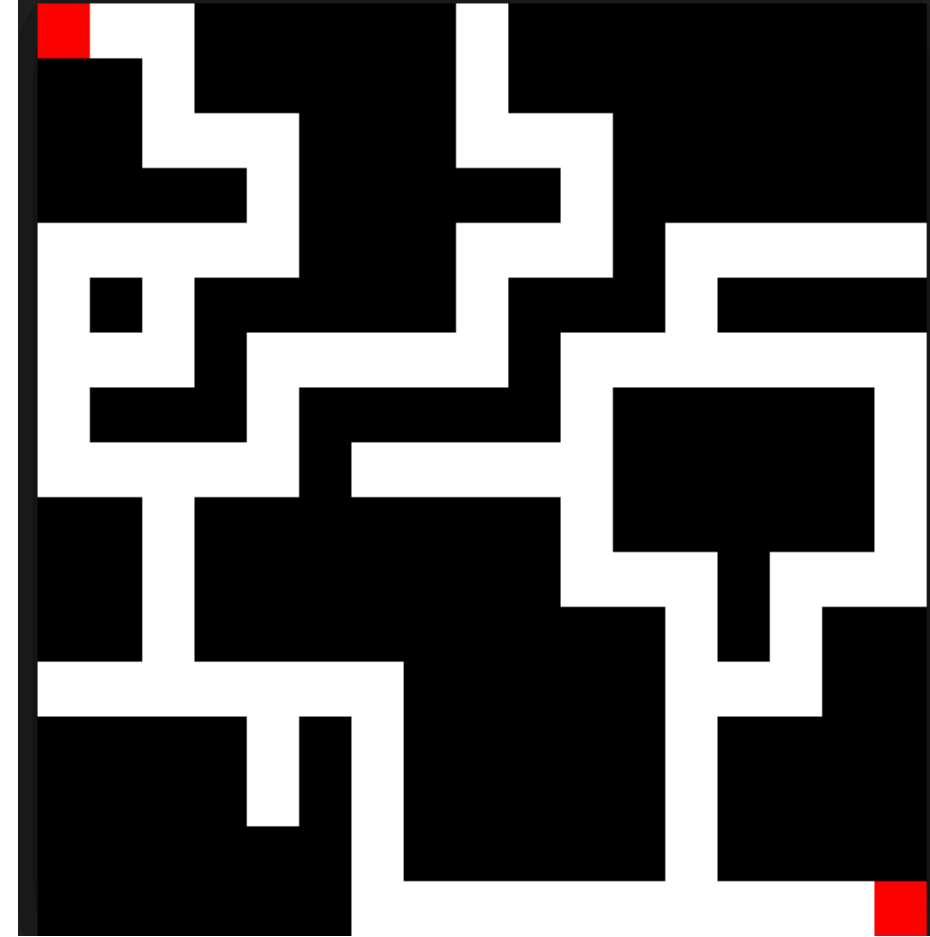


Using the DE question framework to understand the situation

	DE Question	Applied Examples
What?	What's being developed?	What is each project's understanding of the innovation's purpose? In what ways are different key stakeholders thinking about and developing actions that align with this purpose? What are the range of values and principles guiding the innovation?
What's emerging?	What sense can we make of emerging issues, evidence, data about this development?	What are the emerging issues, behaviours, attitudes, perspectives and actions of key stakeholders?
So what?	What's the value / significance / importance of what we're doing and achieving?	Whose values could or should we apply to our judgments about what's significant, important, worth doing? So what are the consequences (for different stakeholders) of us choosing specific values or criteria?
Now what?	What does this mean for how we should now act? Into the future?	How will our interpretation of what's going on affect what happens next?

DE: it's a journey of 'learning as you go'

- DE is messy – there are no rule books, there is no DE way
- To do it, we need to let go of the 'purist' in each of us to get things right
- Open to working with many different kinds of people – opening your heart as well as your mind
- Comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity
- Able to support people to path-find amidst this uncertainty.



Final questions and thoughts?

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