Event Brief
Bi-weekly Webinar:
Developmental Evaluation
May 27, 2020

Purpose

This KDE Hub webinar introduced developmental evaluation and its potential relevance to MHP-IF projects. It offered participants a sense of what developmental evaluation looks like, how it is done as well as tools to implement developmental evaluation and where to find them.

Participants

The webinar was hosted by the KDE Hub Secretariat, with participants from 15 MHP-IF projects, the KDE Hub Leadership Team and PHAC MHP-IF. The presenter was Jamie Gamble, a leading developmental evaluator and KDE Hub consultant.

Meeting structure

- After introductory remarks, Jamie Gamble delivered a presentation on developmental evaluation

- Participants were invited to ask questions using the chat function and to endorse others' questions if they also had the same question; audience polls were used during the session to share real-time feedback on the topic and session

- The presentation concluded with an open opportunity for questions and answers as well as discussion

- The webinar was recorded so that the recording could be posted to the KDE Hub website for reference and to share with projects or team members unable to be on the call

Developmental evaluation (DE) is an evaluation approach that brings together evaluative thinking and evidence to those developing and implementing innovative initiatives in complex situations. It is an approach that sits alongside and supports emergent, innovative and transformative development and on-going adaption. (Patton, 2012)

What did we learn?

- Developmental evaluation (DE) is especially useful when dealing with complexity, innovation, and contextual shifts; strategy adjustments made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are one example of a situation where DE would be suitable

- It differs from classic evaluation in its purpose but not in its rigor; DE focuses on a cycle of do-learn-adjust and is tightly linked to strategy

- It is useful for those who: want to try a different solution to a persistent problem, value rapid, real-time feedback, are propelled into action more by vision than by specific outcomes, know that disrupting systems leads to unexpected actions and reactions, and want an evaluation approach attuned to complexity

- Prototyping is a way to get started with DE that is quick, learning-rich, and includes experimentation with promising approaches; it provides feedback on the desirability, feasibility, and viability of ideas

- Using a DE approach, a theory of change will likely undergo continuous refinement as an initiative moves from initial hypotheses to clearer understanding

- Framing key concepts explores the diversity of understanding of the nature of the problem/underlying concepts within stakeholder groups

- Sensemaking activities are often part of the DE cycle and address 'what,' 'so what,' and 'now what' questions as interventions are adjusted to reflect new learning

- DE resources that may be of use:

    - *A Developmental Evaluation Primer* (Gamble)
    - *Evaluating Social Innovation* (Hallie Preskill and Tanya Beer)
    - *Developmental Evaluation* (Better Evaluation Org)
    - *Developmental Evaluation Exemplars* (Patton, McKegg and Wehipeihana)
    - *Innovation as Ethical Practice* (Gamble, Hagen, McKegg and West)

How will learnings from this event be used?

➢ The KDE Hub will build on the interest expressed in DE during the webinar with additional supports; participants were especially interested in annotated resources and blog posts with some additional interest in online forums and mentoring

➢ A support being developed by the KDE Hub related to ethics review will be informed by the questions and comments during the webinar