Promoting Good(ness)

A guide to evaluating programmes and projects

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Prepared by Rachael Trotman
rachael.trotman@xtra.co.nz

Contents

1.0 Purpose

"Culture change doesn't happen in complex organizations through one or two training sessions... it happens with little events that happen thousands of times in the life of an organization"
(Friedman 2005 p81).

The ARC's Programmes and Partnerships team wants to foster a culture of evaluation and reflective practice. As one strand of this, this document aims to provide easy to understand and easy to use guidance on how to evaluate programmes and projects. It promotes "little events" and practices that if done consistently should have lasting positive effects.

This guide draws from a wide range of international good practice on undertaking programme evaluation. It provides a gentle introduction to the basics of programme evaluation, including a step by step approach and links to further resources. It relates to both programme and project evaluation, as the principles and tasks involved are similar.

Key goals are to support staff to:

1. Build evaluation principles and practice into their work.
2. Successfully evaluate existing programmes/ projects and design new ones.
3. Use evaluation findings to improve programmes and wellbeing.
4. Support a culture of reflective practice and evaluation.

A draft of this guide was workshopped with key staff, and some training on how to apply it will support its implementation.

A long term programme to keep evaluation central and creative in the department will also sit alongside this guide.

A review of this guide will be completed six to twelve months after the initial training occurred to assess its usefulness and uptake.

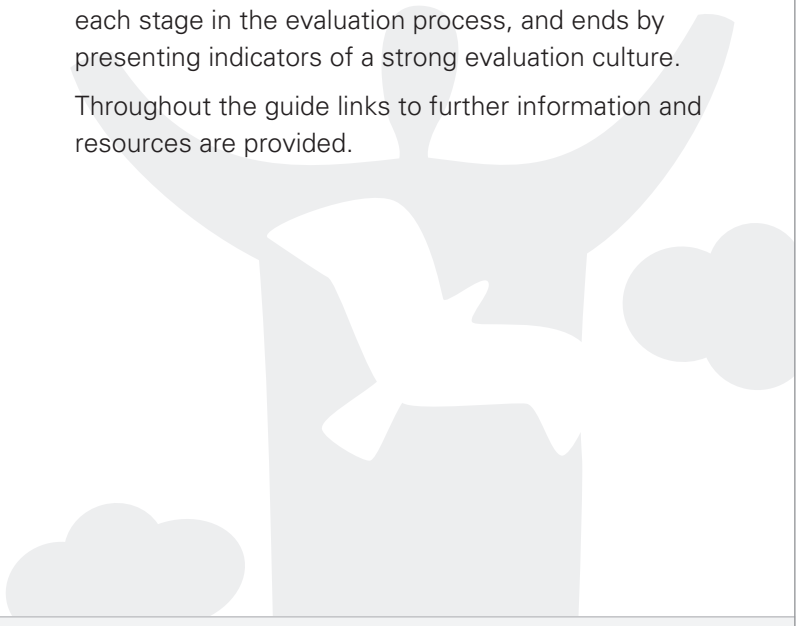
Indicators of positive culture shift regarding evaluation are also included in section 14.0, to help staff gauge whether a strengthened evaluation culture is emerging. These indicators will form part of the review of the guide.

2.0 Format

The guide begins by responding to common concerns about evaluation. It then discusses what evaluation and programme evaluation is, why it is important, main types of programme evaluation, differences between monitoring and evaluation, the classic programme planning and evaluation cycle, basic steps to plan and implement an evaluation and good evaluation practice.

The remainder of the guide steps the reader through each stage in the evaluation process, and ends by presenting indicators of a strong evaluation culture.

Throughout the guide links to further information and resources are provided.



3.0 Common concerns about evaluation[1]

The first step is to acknowledge and address common concerns about evaluation.

Table 1: Typical evaluation concerns

Evaluation concern	Response
Evaluation increases the burden for staff.	This reflects a tendency to see evaluation as an add-on rather than a normal and necessary part of your work. It is in the interests of staff and the organisation to gather information that improves their work and its impact. Evaluation related tasks and activity should be built into work plans and costed as part of annual budgeting.
Evaluation diverts resources away from the programme (or we don't have the resources to do it).	Evaluation tells you what does and does not work in a programme and should lead to more effective use of resources and greater impact. Without evaluation, you are undertaking activities with little or no evidence that they actually work! Most evaluation activities are normal project management activities that need to happen to evolve your programme and organisation to the next level.
Evaluation is too complicated and difficult.	People evaluate or assess every hour of the day, and evaluation is a practical activity. Although the technical aspects of some types of evaluation can be complex, the evaluation process itself simply systematises what most programme managers already do on an informal basis - figure out whether the programme's objectives are being met, which aspects of the programme work, and which ones are not effective. Understanding this general process will help you to be a full partner in any evaluation, even if you seek outside help with technical aspects. In general, evaluation should be kept as simple as possible.
Evaluation may produce negative results that will make the programme (and you) look bad.	Fear surrounding evaluation is a key issue to address. The discovery of problems should not be viewed as evidence of programme, team or individual failure, but rather as a positive opportunity to learn, improve or do things differently. Information about both problems and successes not only helps your programme and staff, but also helps others to learn and improve. Success is remaining open to continuing feedback and adjusting accordingly.
Evaluation is an event to get over and then move on.	Many of the activities required to carry out evaluation are activities that you are either already doing or should be doing. Evaluation is an ongoing process that takes time to develop, test and polish. While some types of evaluation (eg summative or outcome evaluation) can be a one-off event, much evaluation is ongoing, small scale and continually informs programme improvement.

[1] Adapted from http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/outcomes.htm and http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/reports/pmguide/chapter_1_pmguide.html.

4.0 What is evaluation?

Evaluation generally involves seeking to improve, refine or assess.

To "evaluate" means:[2]

1. To determine or set the value or amount of; appraise.
2. To judge or determine the significance, worth, or quality of; assess.

Evaluation involves systematic appraisal and assessment, which follows a predetermined plan. There is no single recipe for evaluation and different methods and approaches are needed for different situations. At the same time, there are clear steps to take regardless of the situation, as shown in section 8.0.

4.1 What is programme evaluation?

Programme evaluation involves collecting information about a programme or an aspect of it in order to make necessary decisions about that programme.

Dr Jess Dart[3] provides the following definition:

Programme evaluation concerns the systematic collection of information, in order to improve decision making and enhance organisational learning, with the ultimate aim of bringing about programmes that better meet needs and lead to improvements in targeted social, economic and environmental conditions.

5.0 Why do it?

Evaluation supports learning, accountability, effectiveness, positive change and capacity building. Evaluation is done in order to:

- Do the right things.
- Measure the right things.
- Make a difference and catalyse positive change.
- Find out what is and is not working.
- Channel precious energy and resources efficiently.
- Support purposeful action and joined up planning.
- Prove impact, value for money, effectiveness and worth.
- For programme validation and preservation.
- Have the right information to feed into ARC policy and practice.
- Create the Annual Plan.
- Add to existing knowledge about your type of programme.

Evaluation should be done however principally for yourself, so that you know your efforts are doing what you intend. You need to know you are being effective, and so does your organisation and the wider communities you serve.

[2] Evaluate. (n.d.). Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1). Retrieved August 2, 2007, from Dictionary.com website: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/evaluate.

[3] Clear Horizon and Patillo, Real Time Evaluation p2 (no date).

6.0 What type/s of programme evaluation to undertake and when[4]

The table below adapts Owen's five main forms of programme evaluation (as presented by Jess Dart, see footnote 4 below). Each form is related to a specific purpose and timeframe within the programme cycle, from its initial design to completion.

In a comprehensive programme evaluation framework all may be used.

The appropriate form/s of programme evaluation to use depend on the purpose of the evaluation. The table below should be used to work out what kind of evaluation needs to be undertaken depending on the main purpose. Remember that you can do more than one form at once, for example 1 and 2 or 3 and 4 (see also section 11.5), and that it's never too late to evaluate.

Table 2: Deciding what form of programme evaluation you need and when

Owen's Form	Form 1 Needs analysis	Form 2 Design clarification	Form 3 Process evaluation	Form 4 Monitoring	Form 5 Impact evaluation
Purpose	Clarifying the needs which the programme is intended to meet	Determining & assessing the logic behind the programme	Programme improvement	Accountability & learning	Describing and evaluating impact
State of the programme	Before programme is designed and starts	In development phase of a programme	When the programme is settled	Throughout the programme	When programme is settled or complete, or at the end of one phase to inform the next
Typical questions	What is our purpose? Who is it for and what are their needs? What are the expected benefits, costs, opportunities etc? What else is being done, and who else is involved and how can we collaborate?	What is the theory of action behind the programme? Are the goals clear and are they in line with the actions proposed? What assumptions are being made?	What has happened so far? How can we improve our work? Have we considered all relevant factors needed to improve? How have communities &/ or participants responded?	How many people are participating? Have we reached our milestones? Have our goals changed? Do we need to change our approach &/or performance indicators?	To what extent did the programme achieve its goals? What were the unexpected impacts? Were participant needs met? What were the returns? What have we learnt?
Typical approaches	Needs assessment, review of best practice, research synthesis, stakeholder analysis	Programme logic, accreditation, logical framework (logframe) analysis[5]	Implementation studies, action research, responsive evaluation, process evaluation	Programme monitoring, use of performance indicators over time	Outcome evaluation, needs based evaluations, impact assessment

[4] This section is adapted from Clear Horizon and Patillo, Real Time Evaluation, pp3-4 (no date).

[5] See section 11.2.1 on programme logic approaches, including logframe analysis.

7.0 Monitoring versus evaluation[6]

While the distinctions among these two terms are blurred, key distinctions are:

- Monitoring tends to be activity focused and an ongoing process for collecting information for the purpose of programme management, through record keeping and regular reporting systems.
- Evaluation is a periodic, in-depth analysis of programme or project performance. It can use data generated through monitoring as well as information gained from other sources, such as research, interviews, surveys, focus groups etc. While both involve judgements about achievements, evaluations tend to take a wider view of the whole programme and encompass a longer period of time.

Table 3: Characteristics of monitoring and evaluation[7]

Monitoring	Evaluation
Continuous	Periodic, at important milestones such as the midway point of a programme, at the end or a substantial time afterwards
Keeps track, provides an overview, analyses and documents progress	In-depth analysis, compares planned with actual achievements
Focuses on what goes in (inputs) such as resources and activities and what comes out (outputs), implementation processes, continued relevance, likely results at outcome level	Focuses on results and impacts in relation to inputs and activities, processes used to achieve results, overall relevance, impact and sustainability
Answers what activities occurred and basic results achieved	Answers why and how results were achieved, contributes to building theories and models for change
Alerts managers to problems and provides opportunities for corrective actions	Provides managers with strategy and policy options
Usually involves internal assessment by programme managers and staff, but may involve external monitoring (eg environmental monitoring)	Internal and/or external analysis by programme managers, staff, community stakeholders and/or external evaluators

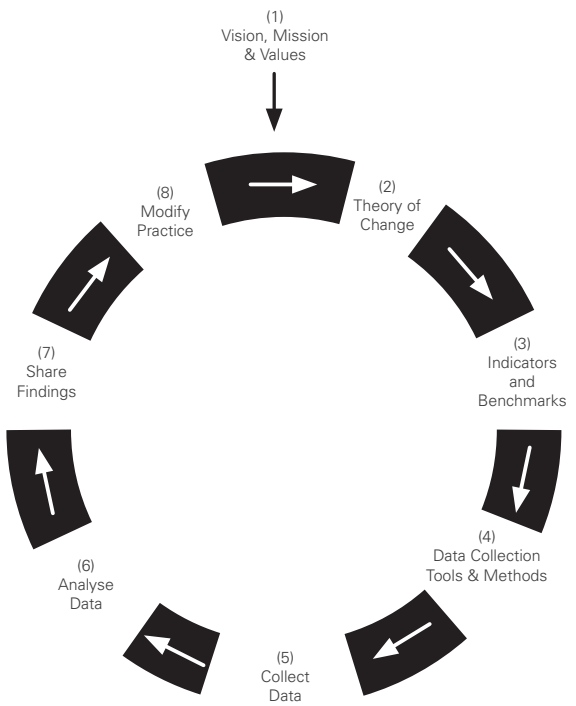
[6] Some of this section is adapted from Clear Horizon and Patillo, Real Time Evaluation p2 (no date).

[7] Source: Adapted from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Programme Manager's Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit August 2004, available at http://www.unfpa.org/monitoring/toolkit/defining.pdf.

8.0 Programme planning and evaluation cycle

The diagram below shows the basic stages and cycle of programme/project design and evaluation.[8]
Some clarifying comments in relation to this cycle:

Programme Planning and Evaluation Cycle



- Number one is about the results you want from your programme, including goals or objectives. If these are not yet in place (or need to be reviewed) then this can be done by using the seven questions in the results accountability process (see 11.1), and/or a programme logic approach (see 11.2).
- Number two involves identifying the assumptions being made as to why and how your programme will bring about its desired results (see 11.1 and 11.2).

The next section presents basic steps in designing and implementing an evaluation, before focusing on the stages above.

[8] This is adapted from a diagram available at http://www.evaluationtools.org/planning.asp

9.0 Basic steps to plan and undertake an evaluation[9]

Step 1: Assemble an evaluation team

Planning and undertaking an evaluation should be a team effort. Even if you hire an outside evaluator or consultant to help, you and key staff members must be full partners in the evaluation effort.

Step 2: Establish what is being evaluated and the purpose of evaluation

As a group, clarify the purpose of evaluation or the key evaluation questions and what you need to gain from it. What decisions do you want to make as a result of the evaluation? Establish the context for the evaluation in terms of factors that might influence the evaluation and issues to take into account when planning the evaluation. Consider the primary audience/s for the results and what they would want to know. Identify the stakeholders and who needs to be involved in the evaluation. Pay particular attention to bicultural and cultural issues and stakeholders.

If the programme has no goals as yet (i.e. is in development), then undertake processes to establish these goals (see sections 6.0, 11.1 and 11.2).

If the goals for the programme are inadequate or have changed since it first began, if possible revise the goals to reflect the reality of the programme and evaluate against these goals. If this is not possible evaluate against the existing goals, as well as what you consider to be more appropriate goals, and make the distinction clear in your process and when analysing results and reporting back.

Identify the logic and assumptions behind your programme or project (see sections 11.1 and 11.2).

Step 3: Decide the type/s of evaluation you need

Clarify what type of evaluation, including tools and methods that would best suit (using Table Two to determine the broad type of evaluation needed and section 11.9.2 for some detailed tools and methods).

Step 4: Develop an evaluation plan

An evaluation plan is a blueprint or a map for an evaluation. It details the purpose, design and methods that will be used to conduct the evaluation and analyse the findings. You should not implement an evaluation until you have completed a concise evaluation plan, and gained sign off for this plan. The web links on the last page of this guide contain examples of an evaluation plan.

Step 5: Collect evaluation information

Once you complete an evaluation plan, you are ready to begin collecting information in accordance with your chosen methods.

Step 6: Analyse your evaluation information

After evaluation information is collected, it must be organised in a way that allows you to analyse it. Information analysis should be conducted at various times during the course of the evaluation to allow you and your staff to obtain ongoing feedback about the programme. This feedback will either validate what you are doing or identify areas where changes may be needed.

Step 7: Prepare the evaluation report

The evaluation report should describe the programme or project, the purpose and methods of the evaluation and provide the results of the information analysis. The report should also include an interpretation of the results for understanding programme effectiveness and answering the evaluation questions.

Step 8: Report and disseminate findings

Report the findings to internal and external stakeholders and use them to influence programme improvement, and wider policy and practice.

[9] Adapted from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/reports/pmguide/chapter_2_pmguide.html.

10.0 Good evaluation practice

There is no "perfect" evaluation design. Don't worry about the plan being perfect. It's far more important to do something, than to wait until every last detail has been tested.

When preparing your evaluation plan through the collaborative process described above, key elements of good practice to take into account are as follows.

Authentic and good practice evaluation should:

- Care more about the quality of the project and the evaluation than saving face.
- Be focused and feasible given the situation.
- List assumptions made.
- Use transparent and defensible methods and judgements.
- Use creative design and implementation.
- Employ multiple evaluation methods and tools.
- Include some participant feedback in your evaluation methods.
- Provide a safe space for naming problems and presenting them.
- Be 'owned' by those involved.
- Go to the source to assess impact – e.g. site visits, asking those directly affected or involved.
- Make use of existing processes, such as team meetings and processes with community and external stakeholders.
- Develop organisational memory by documenting decisions.

Managers and Programme/Project Leaders can maximise the benefits that evaluation offers by following a few basic guidelines in preparing for and conducting an evaluation.[10]

Invest heavily in planning. Invest both time and effort in deciding what you want to learn from your evaluation. This is the single most important step you will take in this process. Consider what you would like to discover about your programme and its impact on participants, and use this information to guide your evaluation planning.

Integrate the evaluation into ongoing activities of the programme. Programme managers often view evaluation as something that an outsider "does to" a programme after it is over, or as an activity tacked on to please decision makers. Planning the evaluation should begin at the same time as planning the programme so that you can use evaluation feedback to inform programme improvement.

Programme Managers should participate in the evaluation and show staff they think it is important. An evaluation needs the participation of the programme manager to succeed. Even if an outside evaluator is hired to conduct the evaluation, programme managers must be full partners in the evaluation process. An outside evaluator cannot do it alone. You must teach the evaluator about your programme, your participants, and your objectives. Also, staff will value the evaluation if the programme manager values it. Talk about it with staff individually and in meetings. If you hire an outside evaluator to conduct the evaluation, be sure that this individual attends staff meetings and gives presentations on the status of the evaluation. Your involvement will encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility for the evaluation among all programme staff.

[10] The following is adapted from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/reports/pmguide/chapter_1_pmguide.html.

Involve as many of the programme staff as much as possible and as early as possible. Staff have a considerable stake in the success of the evaluation, and involving them early on in the process will enhance the evaluation's effectiveness. Staff will have questions and issues that the evaluation can address and can ensure that the evaluation questions, design, and methodology are appropriate for the programme's participants. Furthermore, early involvement of staff will promote their willingness to participate in data collection and other evaluation-related tasks.

Be realistic about the time involved. Evaluations are work. Even if your evaluation calls for an outside evaluator to do most of the data collection, it still takes time to arrange for the evaluator to have access to records, administer questionnaires, or conduct interviews. It is common for both organisations and evaluators to underestimate how much additional effort this involves. When programme managers and staff brainstorm about all of the questions they want answered, they often produce a very long list. This process can result in an evaluation that is too complicated. Focus on the key questions that provide the information you need.

Be aware of the ethical and cultural issues in an evaluation (see also 11.4 on ethics). This guideline is very important. When you are evaluating a programme that provides services or training, you must always consider your responsibilities to the participants and the community. You must ensure that the evaluation is relevant to and respectful of the cultural backgrounds and individuality of participants. Evaluation instruments and methods of data collection must be culturally sensitive and appropriate for your participants. Participants must be informed that they are taking part in an evaluation and that they have the right to refuse to participate in this activity without jeopardising their participation in the programme. Finally, you must ensure that confidentiality of participant information will be maintained.

11.0 Steps in the evaluation process

11.1 Start with the results you want to see

To evaluate you need clear and appropriate goals for your programme or project, and to know the results you are wanting from it. A good approach is to begin with the ends or results you are seeking and work backwards to the means. One way to do this is by asking the following questions (adapted from Friedman's Results Accountability approach).[11]

11.1.1 Results accountability framework

1. Who is our focus (which people), and/or what is our focus (physical environment such as a wetland, neighbourhood or region, or a social issue such as educating children about sustainability or reducing private car use)?
2. How can we measure if these people, environment or target issue/s are better off?
3. How can we measure if we are delivering our project well in relation to 1 and 2 above?
4. How are we doing on the most important measures?
5. Who are the partners that have a role to play in doing better?
6. What works to do better, including no-cost and low cost ideas?
7. What do we propose to do?

This approach helps you to see from the point of view of the people and/or environment that you are trying to influence. It also distinguishes between the broad range of factors influencing those people or environment (what Friedman calls population accountability), and what you and your organisation can do to influence these things (performance accountability).

Set up a meeting with the right people to ask these questions and see what happens – the core of your evaluation plan should result. You may want to ask someone to facilitate this process.

Friedman maintains that if these seven questions are constantly asked and answered from top management to the front line, they will profoundly affect how people think about who and what they serve (question 1), how they think about data (questions 2-4), and how they think about using data to improve performance (questions 5-7).

The results accountability approach is based on the following terms and concepts (Friedman 2005 p13).

Results: the conditions of wellbeing we want for our children, families, communities, ecology and environments.

Indicators: how we measure these conditions.

Baselines: what the measures show about where we've been and where we're headed.

Turning the curve: what success looks like if we do better than the baseline.

Strategies: what works to improve these conditions.

Performance measures: how we know if programmes and agencies are working, based on three measures: 1) How much did we do? 2) How well did we do it? 3) Is anyone better off?

The results accountability approach should hold high appeal to those with an action and implementation focus. See the websites in footnote 11 to learn more.

[11] Friedman, Mark (2005), Trying Hard is Not Good Enough: How to Produce Measurable Improvements for Customers and Communities, Trafford Publishing, Canada. See also his websites www.raguide.org and www.resultsaccountability.com.

11.2 Uncover your rationale – logic models and theories of change[12]

Programme logic is another way to get to the same place as the results accountability approach above. Logic models are a widely used accountability framework internationally, and are increasingly popular in New Zealand. They should be seen as a practical process to walk through and be kept as simple as possible. They should also be a facilitated process, preferably by someone who has experience with them and takes a pragmatic and jargon free approach (and a results focus!).

A programme logic process can occur once you have asked the seven questions in 11.1 above, or otherwise identified the outcomes and results you seek. Programme logic is not a process for setting goals or outcomes.

11.2.1 Programme logic

"All programme logic does is map out expectations" (Dr Jess Dart).

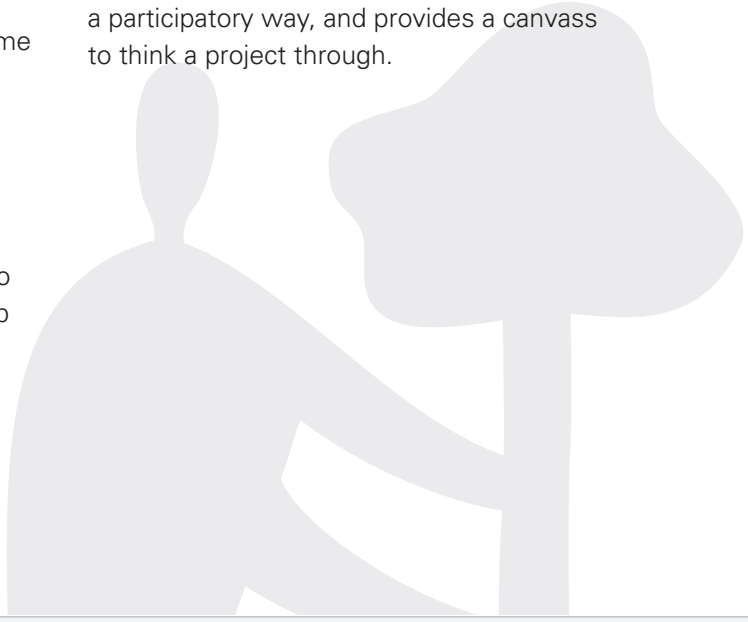
When designing a new programme or evaluating an existing one, you need to be aware of the rationale or 'logic' that underlies it. This rationale includes what you understand to be the cause and effect relationships between your programme activities and the results and outcomes you seek. Programme logic refers to this rationale. Programme logic can be referred to in a number of ways, including 'programme theory', 'theory of action' and logical frameworks or 'logframes'.

Ideally a programme logic is undertaken when a programme is first being developed, but it can also be used with an existing programme, and can help to clarify the 'theory in use'.

Doing a programme logic has the following advantages:

- It brings together in one place a statement of all the key components of a project (this is particularly helpful when there is a change of staff).
- It presents them in a systematic, concise and coherent way, thus clarifying and exposing the logic of how the project is expected to work.
- It clarifies the relationships which underlie judgments about likely efficiency and effectiveness of projects.
- It identifies the main factors related to the success of the project.
- It provides a basis for monitoring and evaluation by identifying indicators of success, and a means of quantification or assessment.
- It encourages a multidisciplinary approach to project preparation and supervision.

Logic models are not static and should be reviewed regularly, and kept at a reasonably high level, not in the detail.
Logic models are very rational yet most outcomes are unforeseen, and they help to show the difference between what people expect will occur and what actually does. Programme logic supports critical thinking early on, should be done in a participatory way, and provides a canvass to think a project through.



[12] Part of this section is adapted from Clear Horizon and Patillo, Real Time Evaluation (no date).

The table below sets out the basic steps to a programme logic, using an example.

Table 4: Programme logic for Worm Bin Project

Steps	Key questions	Example Programme goal – Increase use of worm bins in the Auckland region
Step one	Start with the high level outcomes/results sought • What is our destination? • What high level goals or results do we want to contribute to (that are influenced by many factors)?	• Reduced household waste by recycling organic matter • Increased home gardening • Increased production and use of household compost
Step two	Identify programme outcomes • What will this programme do that will directly influence these outcomes or results? • What will this programme contribute to the broader goals?	• Provide subsidised worm bins • Communicate how to use worm bins and promote availability of cheap bins • Provide education events
Step three	Stakeholder analysis 1. Who do we want to influence, help or change? 2. Who can help us do this? 3. Who needs to know about our programme?	1. Auckland region households 2. Environment and community groups, schools, environmental agencies, etc 3. Everyone in the Auckland region
Step four	Identify intermediate goals • What is needed? • What would success look like? • What collaboration and/or partnerships are needed?	• Large number cheap of worm bins • Promotional material • Education events • X bins bought by X time • X% increase in regional use of worm bins • X attendance at education events • Partner with schools and X organisations to promote and deliver the scheme
Step five	Core activities What are the main activities undertaken via this programme?	• Promotion/communication • Provision of bins • Provision of events
Step six	Resources • Funding required • Staff time involved	Set budget, eg $100,000 bins, $10,000 promotion, X FTE staff for X time

There are many ways to do programme logic; the above is an example only. Here are two links on programme logic models.

- Beginners guide to logframe analysis http://www.kar-dht.org/logframe.html
- Logic models http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html

This website from the University of Wisconsin has an example of a logic model and downloadable tools for creating a logic model in PDF, Word and Excel formats.

11.2.2 Theories of change

It is worth considering established theories of change as part of the process of developing a programme logic. Theories of change show peoples' understanding of how change occurs for a particular type of programme. For guidance on how to identify the theory or theories of change behind your programme see the following.

THEORYOFCHANGE.ORG
http://www.theoryofchange.org/

This website from the Aspen Institute has a variety of information about creating theories of change.

Theory of Change and Logic Models
http://www.evaluationtools.org/plan_theory.asp

This site from the Planning & Evaluation Resource Center is designed for practitioners in the field of youth development who are interested in undertaking an evaluation of their program. Designed to be a comprehensive tool, this website offers a wide variety of resources for all steps of the evaluation cycle.

The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change; A Practical Guide to Theory Development
http://www.aspeninstitute.org/

This guide is for planners and evaluators who are going to facilitate a process for creating a theory of change with community-based programmes and community change initiatives. The guide is in two sections. Section One answers the question "What is a theory of change?" It provides all the information needed to facilitate a theory of change process with a community group. Section Two is a resource toolbox for the theory of change facilitator.

11.3 Measuring success and performance

11.3.1 How to choose indicators

Choosing the best indicator/s to represent a desired result can be reduced to a set of criteria as follows.[13]

Table 5: Criteria for choosing indicators

Criteria	Comment
Communicate well	The indicator is in plain language, is understandable, communicates to a broad and diverse audience, is common sense, compelling
Centrally important to the result (relevant)	Says something of central importance about the result, is directly linked with it, could stand as a proxy for it
Measurable	Good reliable data is available, it can easily be measured
Practical	Reasonable in terms of data collection cost, frequency and timeliness for decision-making purposes
Timely and temporal	Data can highlight trends over time and show progress towards goals

For a useful website on sustainability measures and indicators see http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/.

11.3.2 Baselines, benchmarks and targets

Baselines generally have two functions:

1. To tell us where we have been or are starting from.
2. To forecast where we're headed if we don't do something differently, or in terms of a range of scenarios.

For evaluation, baselines or benchmarks are generally used to mean the starting point from which to measure progress.

A target is a specific desired future level of achievement for an indicator or performance measure (Friedman 2005 p88). Setting targets should be done in a fair and useful way. Unrealistic targets detract from credibility and unrealistic targets coupled with fear of punishment for not reaching them lead to poor performance, as people working within this punishment culture try to pick measures that make them look good or set targets they can easily meet. The measures are rarely the most important ones and the targets tend to be meaningless (Friedman 2005 p87).

For Friedman the key to effective use of targets is a "sense of fair play" (ibid p88). Targets should always be set in relation to a baseline; they should be achievable and there should be a way to recognise genuine progress that falls short of the target.

11.4 Evaluation ethics

Evaluation involves a set of ethics, which generally include the following.[14]

- Consideration of bicultural and Treaty of Waitangi issues.
- Only authorised persons should be supplied with information.
- Confidentiality of participants should be assured and maintained at all times, unless express individual consent is given otherwise.
- The information supplied should only be used for the purposes agreed.
- All views, however controversial should be treated with respect.
- Data held relating to individuals should be protected so as to comply with both legal and ethical considerations (for example privacy requirements).
- All participants should be aware of the aim, method, outcome and value of the evaluation.
- Informed consent should be sought for external stakeholders to take part in an evaluation.
- The integrity of the evaluation should be upheld at all times.

[13] Adapted from Friedman, Mark (2005), Trying Hard is Not Good Enough: How to Produce Measurable Improvements for Customers and Communities, Trafford Publishing, Canada, p55.

[14] Adapted from http://www.nala.ie/witcourse/lesson6/Index.htm.

[15] Adapted from http://www.cof.org/Learn/content.cfm?ItemNumber=1379.

11.5 Broad types of evaluation

As indicated in Table Two (pg 6), many evaluation projects will involve more than one of these following broad types.[15] One or more web links for further information on each type is provided.

Needs analysis

These evaluations verify and map the extent of a problem. They answer questions about the number and characteristics of those who are the targets of a programme, and what they might need to address the problem. Needs assessments can help design a new programme or justify continuation of an existing programme.

http://www.skagitwatershed.org/~donclark/hrd/needsalt.html

http://www.ceismc.gatech.edu/MM_Tools/analysis.html

Monitoring

Monitoring activities produce regular, ongoing information that answer questions about whether a programme or project is being implemented as planned, and identify problems and facilitate their resolution in a timely way.

http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/index.cfm?pg=166

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monitoring

Formative evaluation

These evaluations answer questions about how to improve and refine a developing programme. Formative evaluation is usually undertaken during the initial or establishment phase of a project, though it can also be helpful for assessing the ongoing activities of an established programme. Formative evaluation may include process and impact studies.

http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/formative_evaluation/

Process evaluation

Studies of this kind are directed toward understanding and documenting programme implementation. They answer questions about the types and quantities of services delivered, the beneficiaries of those services, the resources used to deliver the services, the practical problems encountered, and the ways such problems were resolved. Information from process evaluations is useful for understanding how programme impact and outcome were achieved and for programme replication. Process evaluations are usually undertaken for projects that are innovative service delivery models, where the technology and the feasibility of implementation are not well known in advance.

http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2000/WHO_MSD_MSB_00.2e.pdf

Impact or Outcome Evaluation

These evaluations assess the effectiveness of a programme in meeting its goals and producing change. They focus on the difficult questions of what happened to programme participants and how much of a difference the programme made. Impact or outcome evaluations are undertaken when it is important to know how well the objectives for a programme were met, or when a programme is an innovative model whose effectiveness has not yet been demonstrated.

http://www.casanet.org/program-management/evaluation/guide.htm

Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluations answer questions about programme quality and impact for the purposes of accountability and decision making. They are conducted at a project's or programme's end and usually include a synthesis of process and impact or outcome evaluation components.

http://www.nwrel.org/evaluation/summative.shtml

[15] Adapted from http://www.cof.org/Learn/content.cfm?ItemNumber=1379.

11.6 Participatory evaluation[16]

Contemporary evaluation approaches routinely promote the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, employing inclusive methods that allow for the sharing of views and lessons. Social learning and empowerment are intertwined. Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. These approaches are not just used in community projects, but are now mainstream within organisations, institutions and other agencies.

Links to more information are provided below (with hundreds more readily accessible on the Internet).

Strategic considerations in facilitative evaluation approaches

http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/alr26/parEval.html

This site from Annalisa Lewis Raymer serves as a guide and entry way to some of the many resources on the subject of participatory evaluation.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation case studies

http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/research_details.asp?Research_Content_ID=38

This New Zealand Landcare Research site provides documented examples of evaluation processes carried out in a number of environmental management settings. These include catchment management and resource use efficiency. One document provides a framework for evaluating the success of teams.

Empowerment evaluation

http://www.stanford.edu/~davidf/empowermentevaluation.html

Empowerment evaluation is the use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-determination. Its development has been pioneered by David Fetterman. Although it can be applied to individuals, organisations, communities, and societies or cultures, the focus is usually on programmes. Empowerment evaluation is designed to help people help themselves and improve their programmes using a form of self-evaluation and reflection.

Most Significant Change (MSC)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Most_significant_change

http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.htm

This evaluation technique was originally developed by Rick Davies in 1993 as a means of participatory impact monitoring. The MSC approach involves the collection and "systematic participatory interpretation" of stories of change. It has been widely used in the monitoring of aid projects throughout the developing world but its use is also expanding into government and corporate areas as the value of a dialogue based technique becomes appreciated. See The Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use, a PDF report produced by Rick Davies and Jess Dart in late 2004.

[16] This section was adapted from http://www.learningforsustainability.net/evaluation/approaches.php.

11.7 Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is based on the idea that constructing issues facing people and the planet as "problems" limits our ability to respond to them. Instead, we should focus on strengths and potential and take a positive and open approach.

As such, AI is a philosophy so a variety of models, tools and techniques come from this philosophy. For example, one AI-based approach to strategic planning includes identification of the best times during the best situations in the past in an organisation, in terms of what worked best then, visioning what people want in the future, and building from what worked best in order to work toward their vision. The approach has reportedly revolutionised many practices, including strategic planning and organisation development.

This approach is particularly useful in risk averse organisations, and where there can be some fear and apprehension around doing evaluation. Focusing on strengths and what works reduces blame and encourages experimentation and considered risk taking.

See the following for more information

Appreciative Inquiry Commons
http//:www.appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/

AI: the Quest
http//:www.appreciative-inquiry.org/

Appreciative Inquiry Resources
http//:www.new-paradigm.co.uk/ appreciative.htm

Appreciative Inquiry and Community Development
http//:www.iisd.org/ai

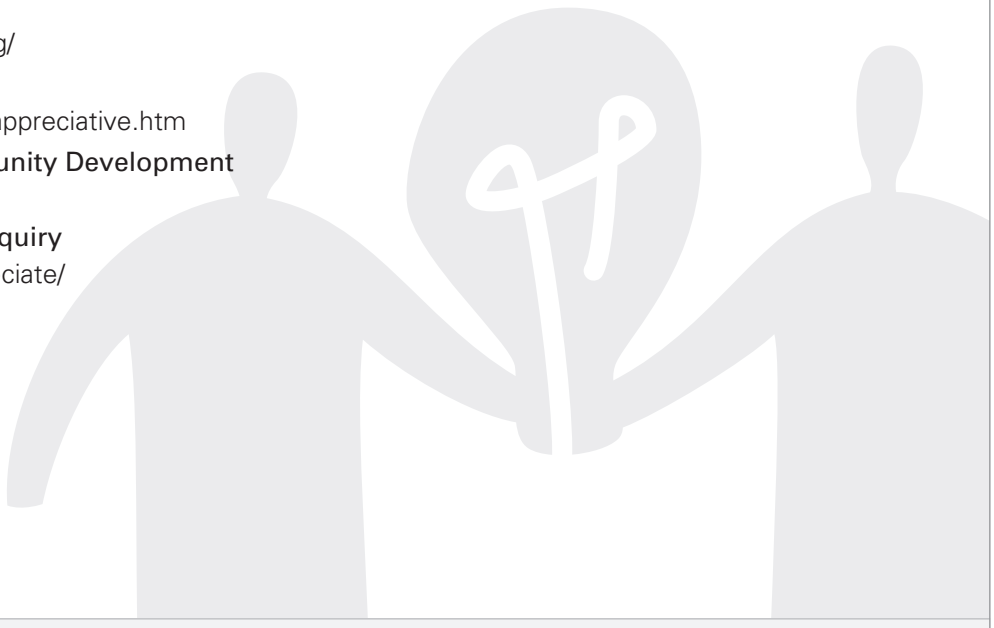
Taos Institute on Appreciative Inquiry
http//:www.taosinstitute.net/appreciate/appreciative.html

11.8 Utilisation focused evaluation

Evaluations should be judged by their usefulness and actual use. This use concerns how real people in the real world apply evaluation findings and experience the evaluation process.

Utilisation focused evaluation is a process for making decisions about evaluation purpose, methods and design in collaboration with an identified group of primary users, focusing on their intended uses of evaluation. These may be programme managers, staff, elected decision makers, the management team or a community group.

Michael Quinn Patton is a key figure in this field, see the following link for more information.
http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/ufe.pdf



12.0 Evaluation methods and tools

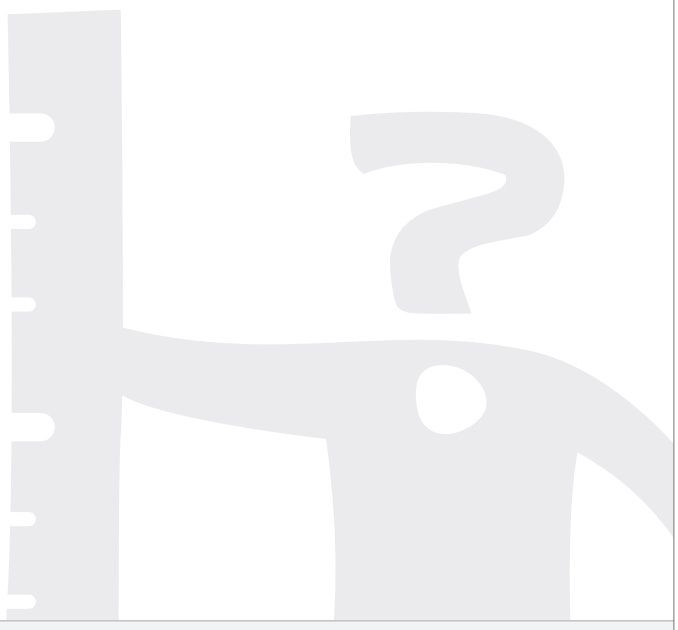
12.1 Selecting evaluation methods

Once you are clear on your basic evaluation type/s and approach, you need to choose your methods for gathering the information you need. The overall goal in selecting evaluation method(s) is to get the most useful information in the most cost-effective and realistic fashion.

Consider the following questions:

1. What information is needed to make current decisions about a programme?
2. Of this information, how much can be collected and analysed in a low-cost and practical manner, e.g., using monitoring information, questionnaires, surveys and checklists?
3. How accurate will the information be?
4. Will the methods get all of the needed information?
5. What additional methods should and could be used if additional information is needed?
6. Will the information appear as credible to decision makers?
7. Will the nature of the audience conform to the methods, e.g., will they fill out questionnaires carefully, engage in interviews or focus groups, let you examine their documents etc?
8. Who can administer the methods now or is training required?
9. How can the information be analysed?

Ideally a combination of methods will be used, for example a questionnaire to quickly collect a great deal of information from a lot of people, and then interviews to get more in-depth information from certain respondents to the questionnaires. Perhaps case studies could then be used for more in-depth analysis of unique and notable cases.



12.2 Quantitative and qualitative methods

There are two broad kinds of evaluation methods: quantitative and qualitative, and both are equally important. The table below sets out the key characteristics and differences between the two.

Ideally (and usually) both methods are used. Qualitative information can help explain and enrich quantitative data and vice versa.

Counting and measuring are common forms of quantitative methods. The results often involve numbers or statistics, presented in table, graph or other form.

Examples of quantitative methods include:

- Environmental monitoring involving counts of flora or fauna.
- Measuring water quality and soil health.
- Checklists.
- Survey questionnaires involving only 'closed' (yes/no type) response options.
- Use of formal statistics.
- Use of a control group, whereby two similar groups are involved; one receives a service or intervention and the other does not, and differences in results are compared between the two.

Table 6: Distinctions between quantitative and qualitative methods

Quantitative methods	Qualitative methods
Purpose is to generalise about phenomena	Purpose is to provide in-depth descriptions of settings, people and/or their views
Deductive – makes specific predictions based on general observations	Inductive – makes generalisations based on specific observations
Know what information you want and go and get it, eg as in a structured survey questionnaire	Approach and questions may change as you learn more, more adaptive and fewer preconceived notions
More narrowly focused and outcome oriented	More holistic and process oriented
Clear, well ordered sequence of steps	Flexible and changeable during evaluation
Tries to eliminate the influence of contextual variables Predetermined answer choices narrow the context	Tries to capture the richness of the context of the subjects and their perspectives Goal is to hear about each subject and her/his story/perspective/context
Primarily gathers numerical data, non-interactive methods Questionnaires with close-ended questions	Primarily narrative data, collected from the "field" Go to where the person is and hear their story in their own words Assume that participants' perspectives are meaningful and important to the success of a programme Assume that interpersonal contact is important
Shows patterns and breadth rather than depth	Focus on illuminating the dynamics, meanings and stories behind a situation - a framework for understanding what is happening

Examples of qualitative methods

Source http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm

The following table provides an overview of the major methods used for collecting data during evaluations.

Table 7: Examples of common qualitative methods

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Questionnaires, surveys, checklists (these can be qualitative or quantitative)	When need to quickly and/or easily get lots of information from people in a non- threatening way	• Can complete anonymously • Inexpensive to administer • Easy to compare and analyse • Can administer to many people • Can get lots of data • Many sample questionnaires already exist	• Might not get careful feedback • Wording can bias responses • Are impersonal • May need sampling expert • Doesn't get full story
Interviews	When want to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences, or learn more about their answers to questionnaires	• Get full range and depth of information • Develops relationship with client/user • Can be flexible with client	• Can take much time • Can be hard to analyse and compare • Can be costly • Interviewer can bias client's responses
Documentation review	When want impression of how programme operates without interrupting the programme; from review of applications, finances, memos, minutes, project plan etc.	• Get comprehensive and historical information • Doesn't interrupt routine in programme • Information already exists • Few biases about information	• Can take much time • Information may be incomplete • Need to be quite clear about what looking for
Observation/site visit	To gather accurate information about how a programme actually operates	• View operations as they are actually occurring • Can adapt to events as they occur	• Can be difficult to interpret seen behaviors • Can be complex to categorise observations • Can influence behaviours of programme participants • Can be expensive
Focus groups	Explore a topic in depth through group discussion	• Quickly and reliably get common impressions • Can be an efficient way to get much range and depth of information in a short time • Can convey key information about programmes	• Can be hard to analyse responses • Need good facilitator for safety
Case studies	To fully understand or depict experiences in a programme, and conduct comprehensive examination through cross comparison of cases	• Fully depicts client's experience in programme input, process and results • Powerful means to portray programme to outsiders	• Usually quite time consuming to collect, organise and describe • Represents depth of information, rather than breadth

See the following for more information

Purposes and Formats of Questions
http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/dsn_ques.htm

Developing Questionnaires
http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/questnrs.htm

Conducting Interviews
http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/intrview.htm

Conducting Focus Groups
http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/focusgrp.htm

Developing Case Studies
http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/casestdy.htm

Creative methods for gaining feedback and participation

Google the topics below for information on some of these creative evaluation methods.

- Online survey software: free programmes include Survey Monkey, Zap Survey, Zoomerang
- Digital photography and digital video
- Filesharing – Yahoo Briefcase and iDisk
- Virtual conference space
- Photovoice
- Video conferencing on the Internet
- Web broadcasting – Yahoo Webcam
- Anonymous feedback mechanisms
- Picasa – share pictures on the web
- Quicktime – video on the web

13.0 Reporting evaluation findings

The purpose of reporting is to:

1. aid in decision-making
2. provide a better understanding of the programme or project's achievements and areas for improvement
3. share lessons in order to influence others.

Reports that are not acted upon are a tragic waste of time and resources. Reports therefore need to be:

- useful and informative
- available for use by the relevant audience/s at the right time
- targeted to the particular audience (making sure they are meaningful and relevant).

That is, reports need to be timely, action-focused and disseminated to all those who need to know.

Above all, your report(s) must clearly communicate the findings to the intended audiences. This means paying attention to report structure, method of presentation, language and style used.

One way to report findings is through the structure below, called a 'Performance Story Chart'.

Table 8: Performance Story Chart reporting format

Performance Story Chart		
Programme rationale	Results accountability and/or logic model	So what (narrative, implications)
Why it exists, what does it address	Expectations Results Contribution	Achievements Lessons Unexpected outcomes Conclusions, recommendations

14.0 Indicators of an evaluation culture[17]

Table 9: Evaluation culture indicators

Goal/result	Measured by
There is management leadership and commitment to evaluation.	• Management expectations regarding programme and project planning and evaluation are clear to staff. • Management shows leadership in linking key performance indicators to goals and reporting. • Evaluation is adequately resourced. • Appropriate guidance and support relating to evaluation is available to staff. • Training and professional development opportunities are provided to improve evaluation skills and practice. • Evaluation is clearly visible within the department.
There is staff commitment to evaluation.	• Staff consider evaluation is important and necessary. • Staff feel confident in planning and implementing evaluation. • Willingness to undertake training in evaluation. • Successes are celebrated.
Evaluation is driven by appropriate and meaningful measures.	• Good processes in place to determine and measure programme and project objectives. • Evaluation measures are directly linked to programme and project goals and provide the information needed.
There is clear accountability for collecting data, evaluating and reporting on results.	• Staff are clear of their role in relation to evaluation. • Staff feel ownership of the programme/project measures and see how they relate to their work.
Adequate data, information and expertise in order to be able to evaluate.	• Staff have the information they need to evaluate or are able (and willing) to get it. • Staff feel able to undertake and/or oversee robust evaluation. • There is access to expertise in methods and subject matter to produce rigorous and unbiased assessments. • Staff know when to bring in external expertise to support robust evaluation (and are able to do this). • Staff know when to bring in external expertise to support robust evaluation (and are able to do this).
Learning, being creative and experimentation are supported.	• Staff share knowledge and lessons learned from evaluation. • Regular opportunities to share information within and across teams are provided. • Staff feel supported to be creative and to experiment.
A pragmatic and simple approach to evaluation is undertaken.	• Most evaluations undertaken are simple, informal, efficient, low cost, practical and easily understood and carried out.
A humble approach built on open self-critique.	• Limitations are openly acknowledged. • Evaluation findings are communicated honestly and openly.
An interdisciplinary approach.	• Connections between issues and aspects of wellbeing are recognised. • Interdisciplinary evaluation and research teams are developed, with outside expertise bought in as appropriate.
Forward looking.	• Where evaluation feedback is needed is anticipated rather than reactive. • Evaluation is built into work programmes.
Open, ethical and democratic.	• Data from evaluation is accessible to all interested groups. • Methods and processes used are transparent. • Open commentary and debate on results of specific evaluations is encouraged. • Where multiple parties are involved who have a stake in the results, formal opportunities for review and response are provided.

[17] Sources: http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/evalcult.php and http://www.gao.gov/htext/d03454.html.

Appendix One:

Further resources and references

Note that there are literally millions of websites and books relating to evaluation theory and practice. Below are just a few of relevance to the Programmes and Partnerships team.

Books

Bamberger, Michael J., Jim Rugh and Linda Mabry (2006), RealWorld Evaluation: Working Under Budget, Time, Data, and Political Constraints, Sage Publishing, USA.

Boulmetis, John and Phyllis Utwin, (2005)The ABCs of Evaluation: Timeless Techniques for Program and Project Managers, 2nd Edition, Jossey Bass, USA.

Combs, Wendy L. and Salvatore V. Falletta, (2000), The Targeted Evaluation Process: A Performance Consultant's Guide to Asking the Right Questions and Getting the Results You Trust, ASTD Press, USA.

Fetterman, David M (2004), Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice, Guildford Publications, USA.

Fetterman, David M (1996), Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-Assessment and Accountability
http://www.stanford.edu/~davidf/empowermentevaluation.html

Friedman, Mark (2005), Trying Hard is Not Good Enough: How to Produce Measurable Improvements for Customers and Communities, Trafford Publishing, Canada.

Hunter, Dale (2007 The Art of Facilitation: the essentials for leading great group meetings and creating group synergy, Random House, New Zealand. Contains helpful tools for group processes.

McNamara, Carter, (2002), Field Guide to Nonprofit Program Design, Marketing and Evaluation, Authenticity Consulting, USA.

Patton, Michael Quinn, (1987), Creative Evaluation, Sage Publications, USA.

Preskill, Hallie S. and Tessie Tsavaras Catsambas (2006) Reframing Evaluation Through Appreciative Inquiry, Sage Publications, USA.

Wadsworth, Yolanda, 1997, Everyday evaluation on the run, 2nd Edition, Allen and Unwin, Australia.

Web Links

Resources for Evaluation and Social Research Methods
http://gsociology.icaap.org/methods/
This site links to online books, manuals and guides about evaluation and social research methods, such as surveys, observations and others. There are also links to sites about data quality, statistical analysis, presenting statistical analysis, and free software such as statistical, office suites, spreadsheets and more.

The Program Managers Guide to Evaluation (2003)
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/index.html

Planning and Evaluation Resource Center
http://www.evaluationtools.org/planning.asp

University of Wisconsin Programme Development and Evaluation site (contains a lot of useful tips in detailed areas http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/quicktipsubject html#plan

http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/index.html

On-line resource to support learning about sustainability. Includes guidance on evaluation and reflective practice.
Source http://www.learningforsustainability.net

User Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations (1997)
http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pubs/NSF97-153/start.htm

Dr Jess Dart – participatory evaluation methods, people centred evaluation and natural resource management and evaluation
http://www.clearhorizon.com.au

Collaborative learning for environmental management
http://social.landcareresearch.co.nz

Glossary of evaluation terms
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/reports/pmguide/glossary_pmguide.html

How to evaluate collaborative efforts
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/powerpt/05aprilconfcollaboratives.ppt#13

Economic Development Association of New Zealand website on evidence based economic development, including evaluation tools, advice on indicators etc (you need to login in and set a password but this is free and easy to do)
http://www.provingit.org.nz/

Very helpful website on evaluating community projects
New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives, Vol. 2: Theory, Measurement, and Analysis Edited by Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Anne C. Kubisch, and James P. Connell. 1998. The Aspen Insitute.

Partnership Self Assessment Tool
http://www.cacsh.org/psat.html

World Bank advice on monitoring and evaluation
http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/ecd/

A tool for assessing the factors that influence a collaboration
http://surveys.wilder.org/public_cfi/index.php?startover=Yes

Paul Duignan's websites, a New Zealand evaluation practitioner
http://www.systematicoutcomesanalysis.org
http://www.outcomestheory.org
http://www.doview.org

State Services Commission guidance on outcome driven decision making and evaluation
http://io.ssc.govt.nz/pathfinder/information.asp

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