DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION FOR
USAID

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION FOR

USAID

Presented on behalf of the Developmental Evaluation Pilot Activity (DEPA) under the Global Development Lab's Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning Innovations (MERLIN) program

QUICK FACTS

Tools: Embedded evaluators, emerging needs tailoring, network mapping, outcome mapping, contribution analysis

Funding mechanism: Contract (buy-in option for USAID operating units)

Partners: Social Impact (prime), Search for Common Ground, The William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan

Period of Performance: 10/01/2015 – 9/30/2019

Consortium Contact:
Gabrielle Plotkin
gplotkin@socialimpact.com

Lab Contact:
Shannon Griswold
sgriswold@USAID.gov

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE | SOCIAL IMPACT | WILLIAM DAVIDSON INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN | Search for Common Ground

MONITORING, EVALUATION RESEARCH AND LEARING INNOVATIONS PROGRAM (MERLIN)
DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION PILOT ACTIVITY (DEPA-MERL)

The Developmental Evaluation Pilot Activity (DEPA-MERL) will test the effectiveness of a developmental evaluation (DE) approach, as well as accompanying monitoring and evaluation tools and flexible contracting mechanisms, in achieving effective programming for innovative interventions, untested theories of change, and/or implementation in complex contexts.

THE CHALLENGE

For complex interventions or new innovations, traditional midterm and end line evaluations can occur too late to aid in programmatic fine tuning; and often help interventions reach their pre-defined outcomes, rather than work on systems change that may require the redefinition of outputs and outcomes.

THE INNOVATION

Traditional approaches to monitoring and evaluation focus on making existing processes, structures and systems more effective. DE seeks to improve not only program design, but takes into account the entire complex dynamic system in which the program, project or activity is taking place. DE provides an approach to evaluation that is quick, ongoing, and takes an iterative approach to data collection, analysis and feedback that contributes to timely changes throughout the project cycle and allows for system changes as well as changes in targeted outcomes.

THE APPROACH

DE evaluators are "embedded" within the program, project or activity to contribute to modifications in program design and targeted outcomes throughout implementation. DE does not prescribe a single methodological design, tool, or framework – the evaluation approach taken is based on emerging needs. Methods might include network and outcome mapping, contribution analysis, or other approaches based on information needs.

DE is a highly flexible approach and is well-suited for projects under flexible contracting mechanisms in which implementation is likely to change in response to emerging conditions on the ground. DE is particularly useful in projects with untested or incomplete theories of change and where implementers and/or program managers are "building the plane in the air."

QUICK FACTS

*   **Tools:** Embedded evaluators, emerging needs tailoring, network mapping, outcome mapping, contribution analysis

*   **Funding mechanism:** Contract (buy-in option for USAID operating units)

*   **Partners:** Social Impact (prime), Search for Common Ground, The William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan

*   **Period of Performance:** 10/01/2015 – 9/30/2019

LAB CONTACT: Shannon Griswold, sgriswold@usaid.gov

The DEPA-MERL mechanism is designed for relatively quick and easy buy-in and functions much like a Field Support Mechanism. The award is pre-competed, and thus requires NO Technical Evaluation Committee for Operating Units buying in. This feature also contributes to a low procurement action lead time (PALT), so obligation of funds and work can proceed as soon as there is agreement between the OU and the DEPA team on scope and budget for the engagement.

DECIDING ON **DE**

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION (DE)?

DE is an approach to evaluation that supports the continuous adaptation of development interventions. As a part of a DE, an evaluator or team is embedded within the program, project, or activity to contribute to modifications in program design and targeted outcomes and to document both these modifications as well as the decision-making process. Deploying various data collection activities and methods on an as-needed basis, the evaluator enables real-time, evidence-based reflection and decision-making consistent with a Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation (CLA) approach.

TRADITIONAL EVALUATION	DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION
Render definitive judgments of success or failure.	Provide feedback, generate learnings, support changes in direction.
Measure success against predetermined goals.	Develop new measures and monitoring mechanisms as goals emerge and evolve.
Position the evaluator outside to assure independence and objectivity.	Position evaluation as internal, team function integrated into action and ongoing interpretive processes.
Design the evaluation based on linear cause-and-effect logic models.	Design the evaluation to capture system dynamics, interdependencies, models and emergent interconnections.
Aim to produce generalizable findings across time and space.	Aim to produce context-specific understandings that inform ongoing innovation.
Accountability focused on and directed to external authorities, stakeholders and funders.	Accountability centered on the innovators' deep sense of fundamental values and commitment.
Accountability to control and locate responsibility.	Learning to respond to lack of control and stay in touch with what's unfolding and thereby respond strategically.
Evaluator determines the design based on the evaluator's perspective about what is important. The evaluator controls the evaluation.	Evaluator collaborates with those engaged in the change effort to design an evaluation process that matches philosophically with an organization's principles and objectives.
Evaluation results in opinion of success or failure, which creates anxiety in those evaluated.	Evaluation supports ongoing learning.

(Table originally appeared in "A Developmental Evaluation Primer," see hyperlink for more information.)

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER DE?

DE—designed to support innovative, complex programming—offers unique advantages that are highly applicable to USAID's priorities. As the new ADS 200 revisions (2016) require the use continuous learning for adaptive management, DE is a more appropriate option than ever.

- *DE enables timely, data-based decision making and adaptation*: DE makes evaluation quick, ongoing, and iterative in its approach to data collection, analysis, and feedback. This contributes to timely changes throughout the project cycle and allows for system changes in program design and modifications of outputs and outcomes as unintended results make themselves visible.

- *DE is designed to support innovative, complex programming*: USAID and other donors frequently operate in rapidly changing environments that require innovative and dynamic programming, which by nature is often unrefined and operating on untested theories of change. Traditional methods of evaluation are often not well-suited to measuring changes when environments, activities, or objectives are rapidly changing. DE assumes that such changes will necessarily occur.

- *DE focuses on learning:* DE provides an opportunity to systematically document decision-making processes and how a program, project or activity evolves over time. This documentation in and of itself is innovative and allows key policy and decision makers to create new policies and practices that draw from past experiences as they have been documented rather than relying on fading memories and "institutional knowledge."

IS DE RIGHT FOR MY PROGRAM?

Do one of the following criteria apply? My project/program/activity is...

- Operating in a rapidly changing or otherwise complex environment

- Operating with an undefined or untested theory of change

- Piloting highly innovative approaches that need further refinement

- Seeking to achieve complex outcomes that may need to change over time

- Likely to require potentially drastic modifications to its approach

If so, DE could be for you.

WHEN IS DE APPROPRIATE?

DE was created for programs that are not well-served by traditional evaluations due to changing interventions, outcomes, or environments. Favorable conditions for DE include:

- ☑ "Highly emergent and volatile situations
- ☑ Situations that are difficult to plan or predict because of interdependent or non-linear variables
- ☑ Situations where there are no known solutions to issues, new issues entirely, and/or no certain ways forward
- ☑ Situations where multiple pathways forward are possible and thus there is a need for innovation and exploration
- ☑ Socially complex situations, requiring collaboration among stakeholders
- ☑ Situations with unknown outcomes, so vision and values drive processes" (Patton et al, 2015).

WHEN IS DE NOT APPROPRIATE?

DE is not right for all situations. The success of DE depends on the conditions surrounding the program. Specifically, DE is <u>unlikely</u> to serve its intended purposes if key stakeholders:

- ☒ Lack time or willingness to participate in routine discussions with evaluators
- ☒ "Require high levels of certainty"
- ☒ Are not amenable to experimentation and/or reflection
- ☒ Have limited capacity to adapt
- ☒ Are averse to failure or negative findings
- ☒ Have low levels of trust or poor relationships between staff and the evaluator (Patton et al, 2015).

HOW DO DEs ASSURE OBJECTIVITY?

Because the evaluator(s) are not part of the implementing organization and are trained evaluators, they work to maintain objectivity through clear lines of communication, specifically designated M&E roles, and firewalls if necessary. Through DEPA-MERL, the consortium will vet and deploy evaluators and will provide them with technical assistance throughout the course of their assignment. The evaluators will be managed by the consortium and will not have any fiduciary relationship with the programs they evaluate.

HOW IS DE DIFFERENT FROM RAPID FEEDBACK EVALUATION?

Both of these approaches can contribute to real-time learning for adaptive programming. The key difference pertains to the pilot program's theory of change (ToC). Rapid is best for programs in which the ToC is clear, but for which there are two or more specific implementation modalities that could achieve the desired results. DE on the other hand, is best suited for situations in which the ToC is unclear, untested, or subject to change with the changing environment or in response to new learnings as the program evolves.

How much does DE cost?

The cost of DEs vary greatly depending on the program and the research questions. Pilots under DEPA-MERL have a range of $600K-$1.7M over two years. Key factors to consider when estimating the budget include:

- Length and complexity of the DE;
- Budget for full-time evaluator for the entire duration of the DE;
- Necessary travel expenses or allowances; and
- Technical assistance from DEPA-MERL consortium.

Wow, that seems expensive...why so much?

The cost of embedding a full-time highly skilled evaluator into the implementation team is necessarily more expensive than conducting conventional evaluations, but the benefits also reflect that cost. DE is as much program design and implementation as it is evaluation, and the cost reflects the value it provides to iterative design and implementation.

Ultimately, the outcome of DE is more responsive and hence is more effective programming. DE works through issues, even potentially misaligned activities, or incorrect theories of change, to make course corrections that ensure programs are responsive to and appropriate for their contexts. Instead of waiting for an endline to furnish evidence of an ineffective program, DEs proactively identify how programs can adapt to maximize their intended outcomes.

- ☐ Other benefits include:
  - Evidence-supported theory of change;
  - Continuous, evidence-based learning;
  - Evaluation methodology that fits the program's need at that time;
  - Recommendations for adaptive programming in response to changing circumstances; and
  - Improved capacity to contribute to M&E and evidence-based learning.

In addition, DE itself is a relatively new and untested approach to M&E. Relatively few DEs have been conducted, especially at USAID. As such, the Developmental Evaluators conducting them through DEPA-MERL will be supported by the DEPA-MERL consortium with technical assistance and as part of evaluations that will assess the feasibility and outcomes of DEs within the USAID context.

NEXT STEPS

I'm interested in DE for my project, program, or activity. What are my next steps?

Please contact DEPA-MERL COR Shannon Griswold (sgriswold@usaid.gov) or ACOR Sophia van der Bijl (svanderbijl@usaid.gov) to set up a pre-screening call to see if DE might be a good fit. If it is, the DEPA team will walk you through the process of completing an Expression of Interest form. As the success of DE is contingent on the participation and buy-in of all relevant stakeholders, we encourage you to engage various OU and IP staff as early as possible. The process map on the following page details the process by which OUs work collaboratively with the DEPA-MERL consortium to determine if DE is a good fit, and if so, procure and launch the DE.

DEPA-MERL PROCESS

LEGEND

- 🟥 More information needed
- 🟦 DEPA team action items
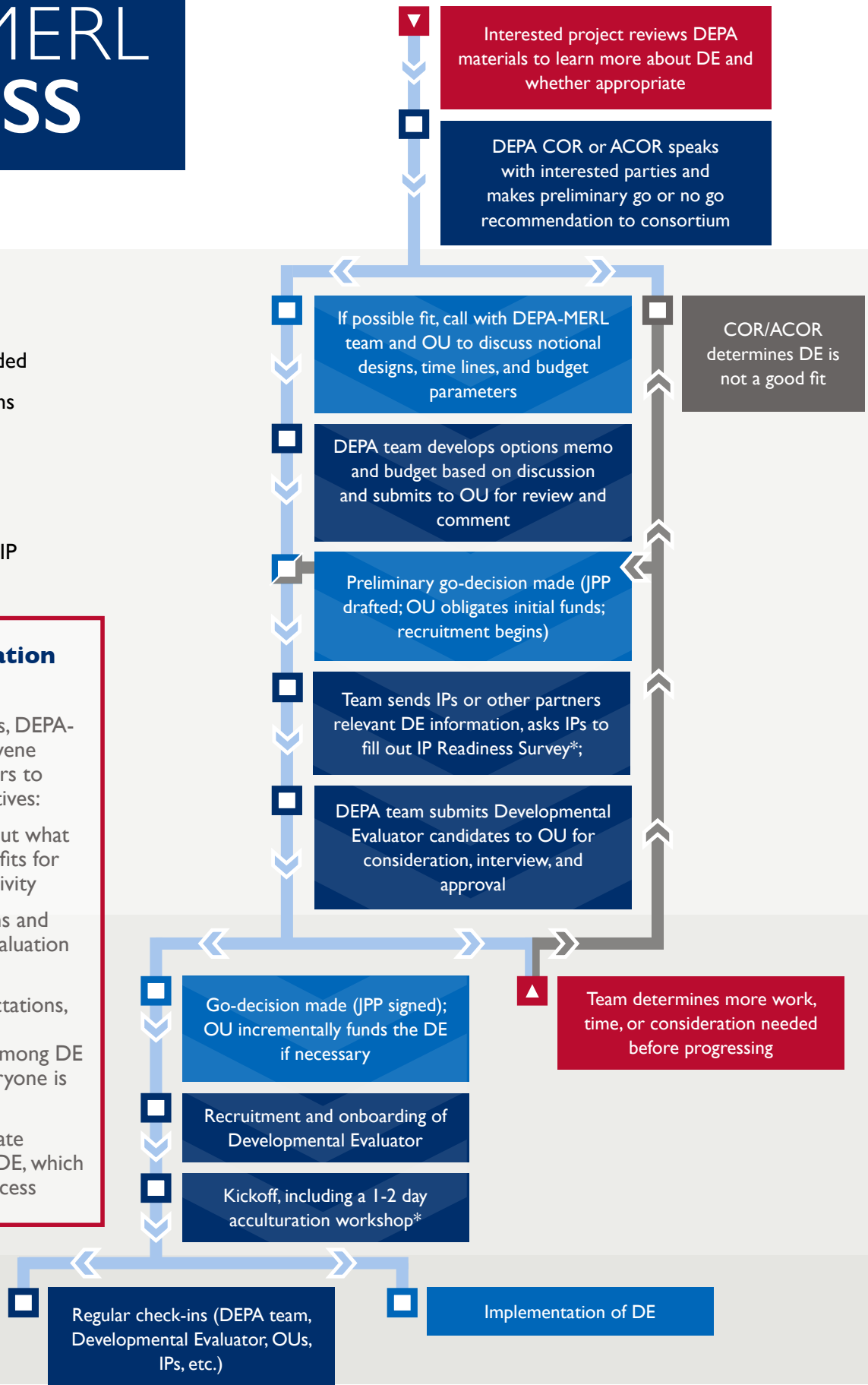- ⬛ DE stopping points
- 🟦 DE go points

* Occurs on case by case basis (i.e. will occur later if IP not yet in place)

What is an acculturation workshop?

Over the course of 1-2 days, DEPA-MERL and the OU will convene a meeting of DE stakeholders to achieve the following objectives:

1) Educate participants about what DE is and its potential benefits for the project, program, or activity

2) Refine research questions and begin development of an evaluation workplan

3) Establish common expectations, roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols among DE stakeholders to ensure everyone is on the same page

Thus, the workshops generate interest and buy-in for the DE, which is critical to its ultimate success

Interested project reviews DEPA materials to learn more about DE and whether appropriate

DEPA COR or ACOR speaks with interested parties and makes preliminary go or no go recommendation to consortium

If possible fit, call with DEPA-MERL team and OU to discuss notional designs, time lines, and budget parameters

COR/ACOR determines DE is not a good fit

DEPA team develops options memo and budget based on discussion and submits to OU for review and comment

Preliminary go-decision made (JPP drafted; OU obligates initial funds; recruitment begins)

Team sends IPs or other partners relevant DE information, asks IPs to fill out IP Readiness Survey*;

DEPA team submits Developmental Evaluator candidates to OU for consideration, interview, and approval

Go-decision made (JPP signed); OU incrementally funds the DE if necessary

Team determines more work, time, or consideration needed before progressing

Recruitment and onboarding of Developmental Evaluator

Kickoff, including a 1-2 day acculturation workshop*

Regular check-ins (DEPA team, Developmental Evaluator, OUs, IPs, etc.)

Implementation of DE

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SOCIAL IMPACT

WILLIAM DAVIDSON INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Search for Common Ground

EXAMPLES OF DE IN DEVELOPMENT

DE is a highly innovative approach to evaluation and relatively few have been done, particularly in the international development space. However, many of the DEs undertaken to date have been on human development programs. The following cases from Developmental Evaluation Exemplars: Principles in Practice (2015) describe various social programs and how DEs have benefited them.

THE PROGRAM	The Grand Rapids Community Foundation's Challenge Scholars Program (USA)	The McKnight Foundation's Collaborative Crop Research Program (South America and Africa)	The Inala Indigenous Health Service's Home-based Outreach Chronic Disease Management Exploratory Study (Australia)
THE RATIONALE	▪ The Foundation sought to improve school systems and student achievement, but indicators revealed little progress. ▪ DE was appropriate for highlighting what was and was not working in order to refine program design.	▪ The CCRP aimed to promote access to sustainably produced, nutritious food; however, its scope expanded significantly and thus became far more complex. ▪ DE needed to improve understanding of interrelatedness of systems and synthesize evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations.	▪ The study examined whether a patient-centered outreach model of chronic disease appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ▪ Competing priorities between the research and service delivery side of the program demonstrated a need for better collaboration and learning between stakeholders, necessitating a responsive, adaptive evaluation and feedback process.
THE ROLE OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATOR	▪ Developmental Evaluators worked closely with program leaders to provide timely, contextually-relevant information, especially as decisions were made and shared. ▪ Developmental Evaluators then created memos around the six key learning questions with information about what was working well, what needed attention, as well as program implementation.	▪ The Developmental Evaluator worked with the team from the initial buy-in conversation, to the development of the ToC, and throughout implementation. ▪ The Developmental Evaluator communicated evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations to stakeholders as they arose.	▪ The Developmental Evaluator became intimately acquainted with both the outreach model and the operating context, as well as the visions and values of the various stakeholders. ▪ The Developmental Evaluator was also able to serve as a "trusted outsider…and informed facilitator" to reconcile these differences.
THE RESULT	▪ The DE honed in on one of the issues preventing the success of the program, which was the lack of parental awareness of the program. ▪ Accordingly, Foundation directed their attention and resources on helping a particular profile of students, leading to the establishment of an initiative that widened the focus on students to their families. ▪ Ultimately, the DE enabled greater understanding of the needs and a more responsive and flexible program design.	▪ DE helped the program them move from developing a ToC to testing the hypothesis and its assumptions. ▪ The DE helped identify, articulate, and reinforce the scope and boundaries of the project, making the work more targeted and effective. ▪ The cross-sectional nature of the Developmental Evaluator's involvement in CCRP helped encourage consistent communication and partnerships.	▪ The Developmental Evaluator's involvement built trust among stakeholders, enabling increased engagement, understanding, and ultimately, uptake of the program model. ▪ The DE tested the study's framework and model of care, providing a systematic process for sensemaking in order to inform and iterate on the model and ultimately, to improve the quality of care.

LOG OF DEVELOPMENTAL MOMENTS

Key Dates, Key Development Episodes, and Resulting Program Decisions

Note: The following timeline and log provides an example of a series of developmental moments and key developmental episodes (KDEs) that occurred during the developmental evaluation of the (fictionalized) Relief for Impoverished Children & Households (RICH) poverty reduction initiative in Costa Brava. Although based on an actual developmental evaluation, not all the developmental moments and activities that were carried out by the developmental evaluator are listed here. Further, some episodes have been adapted by DEPA-MERL to provide an example of how KDEs (and their subsequent analysis) affect program decisions.

APRIL 2014

1.1

4-7 April
RELIEF FOR IMPOVERISHED CHILDREN & HOUSEHOLDS (RICH) COSTA BRAVA FORMED DURING 3-DAY FORUM

Relief for Impoverished Chidren & Households (RICH)– A network of organizations, with representation from 15 cities and three national sponsors– formed with a goal to systematically and holistically reduce poverty across the country. Seven cities recruited to become the RICH 'Poverty Transformers.'

1.2

10-April
CORE COMPONENTS TO RICH EVALUATION DESIGN DEVELOPED

Poverty Transformers and national-level sponsors agreed that evaluation should be central to RICH. The three core components of the RICH evaluation design: (1) a common definition of poverty, and indicators to measure poverty reduction, (2) a shared methodology for gathering, analyzing, and reporting on the effects of Poverty Transformer activities on local poverty, and (3) use of a logic model to describe and guide evaluation design.

KEY DEVELOPMENT EPISODES (KDE) ☑

KDE Outcomes — Core components of RICH evaluation design developed. Consensus built around common indicators

MAY 2014

2.1

10-May
DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATOR HIRED AND DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION (DE) OF RICH LAUNCHED

As communities worked and learned from one another, the DE evaluators and the RICH national-level sponsors would document their experience– tracking outcomes, distilling lessons learned, and drawing conclusions for local practice and policies across all sectors.

RELATED DEVELOPMENTAL MOMENTS **1.2**

2.2

2.3

13-May
VIRTUAL ACCULTURATION WORKSHOP HOSTED BY DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATOR FOR RICH TEAM

Workshop used to introduce all RICH organizations to DE approach and to establish rapport among RICH leadership and the Developmental Evaluator.

RELATED DEVELOPMENTAL MOMENTS **2.1**

14- 27 May
EVALUATOR CONDUCTED FOCUS GROUP TO BETTER UNDERSTAND RICH MISSION AND STRUCTURE

Focus group revealed divergent needs between different RICH stakeholder groups such as Poverty Transformers, the 3 national-level sponsors, and the communities participating in RICH. Evaluators worked with RICH to determine which RICH partners needed what type of evaluative feedback throughout the course of the evaluation. Evaluator determined "patch evaluation" approach fulfilled the evaluation and reporting needs of different RICH partners. "

KEY DEVELOPMENT EPISODES (KDE) ☑
RELATED DEVELOPMENTAL MOMENTS **2.2, 2.4, 2.5**

KDE Outcomes — A cross-scale, emergent, and complex change effort such as RICH had multiple users who required evaluative feedback for diverse uses. This required a patch evaluation design. The distinct, but overlapping "patches" of stakeholder groups required different evaluation and reporting methods and also the formation of a standing working group that met regularly to develop and share information across the three patches of evaluation design.

2.4

27-May
INITIAL DE RESEARCH QUESTIONS FINALIZED

Leading research questions identified for DE: (1) what is the value of the RICH approach in reducing poverty, and (2) how can we evaluate the RICH initiative in a way that helps, instead of hinders, the work of Poverty Transformers?"

RELATED DEVELOPMENTAL MOMENTS **2.2**

JUNE 2014

3.1

1-2 June
WORKSHOP HELD TO CREATE LOGICAL FRAMEWORKS (LOGFRAMES) FOR ALL RICH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Senior level leadership from 13 RICH Poverty Transformers met for a workshop to create a logic model for each organization (a core component agreed upon in KDE 1.2) that demonstrated the comprehensive poverty reduction strategy for their community, leveraging a common definition of poverty and indicators. The workshop was challenging, as organizations struggled to confine their complex programming within a logic model. Afterwards, the Developmental Evaluator emailed RICH, sharing frustration experienced during the workshop and suggested that RICH needed a new approach where evaluation of such complex, still developing RICH organizational strategies was not based on logframes.

KEY DEVELOPMENT EPISODES **(KDE)** ☑
RELATED DEVELOPMENTAL MOMENTS   **1.2**

KDE Outcomes   RICH Poverty Transformers deliberated how to constrict the complex poverty reduction strategies employed within their communities into a linear logframes. As a result of this frustration, some of the senior leaders championing DE sent an email to their fellow RICH leadership following the workshop and prompted the Developmental Evaluator to research more appropriate methods for allowing Poverty Transformers to track changes in their evolving program strategies.

3.2

3-June
DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATOR PROPOSED SWITCHING FROM LOGFRAMES TO THEORIES OF CHANGE

Developmental evaluator proposed switching from logframes to Theories of Change (ToC).

1.2, 2.3, 3.1

RELATED DEVELOPMENTAL MOMENTS

JULY 2014

4.1

15-July
SHARED PRINCIPLES DEVELOPED

Senior-level representatives from all Poverty Transformers met with Developmental Evaluator to establish five shared principles to inform the creation of individual ToCs for each Poverty Transformer.

RELATED DEVELOPMENTAL MOMENTS   **3.1**

4.2

16-July
RICH POVERTY TRANSFORMERS BEGAN TO CREATE TOCS BASED ON PRINCIPLES

Senior-level representatives from all Poverty Transformers used ToCs to conceptualize RICH's emergent umbrella strategy, as well as to serve as a marker in the evolution of the group's strategy

RELATED DEVELOPMENTAL MOMENTS   **3.3, 4.1**

NOTE: Some months removed to show delayed, yet significant, impact of KDE

JANUARY 2015

4-Jan
EVALUATORS ANALYZE KDES

KDE Outcomes   Poverty Transformers' difficulties generating logic models demonstrated that RICH needed to develop a new strategy. RICH decided to develop five shared principles, which allowed organization's more flexibility in how they worked toward achieving outcomes rather than trying to use standardized indicators that didn't fully represent the value of the organizations' work. The ToCs allowed Poverty Transformers to map out a strategy that had multiple, non-linear moving elements characteristic of complex strategies. By analyzing what strategies organizations used to satisfy each principle, RICH was able to better understand what programmatic approaches were most effective for achieving poverty reduction in different types of communities and contexts; thus, helping current and future Poverty Transformers create value more effectively.

Source: Cabaj, Mark, Eric, Leviten-Reid, Dana Vocisano, and Rawlins, Mabel J. 2016. An example of patchwork evaluation: Vibrant communities Canada. In Developmental evaluation exemplars: Principles in practice (pp.163-191). New York: NY: The Guilford Press.

EXAMPLES OF DE IN DEVELOPMENT

DE is a highly innovative approach to evaluation and relatively few have been done, particularly in the international development space. However, many of the DEs undertaken to date have been on human development programs. The following cases from Developmental Evaluation Exemplars: Principles in Practice (2015) describe various social programs and how DEs have benefited them.

☐ *Using Developmental Evaluation to Support College Access and Success*

WHAT WAS THE PROGRAM?

Poverty-stricken areas in Michigan face low educational attainment, leading to high unemployment rates, particularly for individuals without college degrees (46). The Grand Rapids Community Foundation (GRCF) supported grants to help improve their school systems and student achievement through its Challenge Scholars Program.

WHY DO A DE?

Decreases in the local school system's "enrollment, graduation rates, and standardizes test scores" revealed that the Foundation's investments were not leading to expected results (46). DE was most useful because "it would not prematurely indicate success or failure, but rather highlight what was working and what wasn't. It would provide signals that could be used in real time to refine and improve the design" (49).

HOW DID THE DE WORK?

The evaluators worked closely with the Challenge Scholars' project leaders, framing their work according to what was relevant for the project context at the time and when programmatic decisions were going to be made and shared. Ultimately, the evaluators created memos around the six key learning questions with information about what was working well, what needed attention, as well as program implementation.

WHAT DID THE DE FIND?

The DE quickly honed in on one of the issues preventing the success of the program, which was the lack of parental awareness of the Challenge Scholars Program. Accordingly, GRCF focused their attention and resources on helping "first generation, low-income students successfully complete a degree or high-quality credential (46). This led to the establishment of the Challenge Scholars Initiative – a program designed to "provide students (and their families) with the early supports needed to ensure that they graduate from high school and college" (47). Overall, the DE helped not only establish what was working and what was not, but also helped benefit the way the implementers saw and designed their project to be more responsive and flexible to the complex environment.

□ *Developmental Evaluation of the McKnight Foundation's Collaborative Crop Research Program (CCRP)*

WHAT WAS THE PROGRAM?

In response to the world food crisis, the McKnight Foundation established its Plant Biology Program to promote research on how to create greater crop yields, ultimately setting the groundwork for the establishment of the Collaborative Crop Research Program (CCRP), which aimed to promote access to sustainably produced, nutritious food.

WHY DO A DE?

CCRP's scope expanded significantly and became far more complicated and complex, with many different pieces and parts. In order to better understand the interrelated systems and encourage the synthesis of evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations, CCRP needed an evaluator that was integrated into the CCRP systems and who could then transmit this information across all levels.

HOW DID THE DE WORK?

The Developmental Evaluator worked with the team from the initial buy-in conversation, to the development of the theory of change, and through the implementation of the programming itself for about six years.

WHAT DID THE DE FIND?

CCRP found that the DE helped them move from "abstract conceptual thinking to testing assumptions and hypotheses about how change happens 'on the ground'" (159). Additionally, the DE helped identify, articulate and reinforce the scope and boundaries of the project, making the work more targeted and effective. Furthermore, the cross-sectional nature of the Developmental Evaluator's involvement in CCRP helped encourage consistent communication and partnerships.

☐ *Creating Safety to Explore – Strengthening Innovation in an Australian Indigenous Primary Health Care Setting through Developmental Evaluation*

WHAT WAS THE PROGRAM?

In order to test the acceptability, feasibility, and appropriateness of of patient-centered outreach model of chronic disease care for Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander people and their healthcare providers, an indigenous health service and a research organization carried out exploratory research, called the Home-based Outreach Chronic Disease Management Exploratory (HOME) Study. The Study helped develop and refine an innovative model of healthcare for Aboriginal people in Australia (236).

WHY DO A DE?

Competing priorities between the research and service delivery side of the program demonstrated a need for better collaboration and learning between the researchers and health services, which led to the programmatic decision to develop a responsive, adaptive evaluation and feedback process. Furthermore, given the innovative nature of the model, both the researchers and care providers knew they needed flexibility to adapt the model throughout implementation (236).

HOW DID THE DE WORK?

The DE was used to help understand and develop the new model of care within the uncertain context of an exploratory research study. A Developmental Evaluator conducted periodic interviews and workshops with stakeholders and shared findings during weekly meetings. This "provided the team with systematic processes for considering and making sense of real-time data and information to inform the iterative development of the model of care and strengthen its implementation" (239).

WHAT DID THE DE FIND?

Most importantly, the DE illuminated the need for clarification of roles and responsibilities between researchers and service providers as well as tensions that arose due to their competing priorities. Thus, the DE facilitated effective collaboration among them (243).

The following reporting logs have been adapted from real DEs. This is presented to give the reader a sense of the different formats that can be used for routine reporting and deliverables. It is important to note however, that the format and frequency of reporting must be tailored to each individual DE and as such, the Developmental Evaluator will work with the various DE stakeholders to determine an appropriate reporting arrangement for that particular DE.

DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION
MONTHLY REPORT[1]

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION

[Description of activity and rationale for DE]

I. Summary of Key Activities

Key Dates and Milestones

Date	Milestone

Major Activities

[Overview of major programmatic activities in the reporting period, as well as how contextual factors influenced them]

---

1   Adapted from a DE of UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education, and Advocacy (Myanmar)

II. Key Updates

[Discussion of framing and emergent learning, e.g. process, context, and patterns. Includes descriptions of data collection exercises; challenges, tensions, and opportunities; roads taken and not taken; and unintended consequences]

III. Key Reflection and/or Developmental Moments

[Documentation of any moments of reflection about assumptions, values, practices, etc. that occur through the process of evaluation or implementation, including unresolved questions that the team may need to revisit at a future point]

IV. Issues and Challenges

[Documentation of issues and challenges to implementation and evaluation encountered and/or anticipated]

V. Next Steps

[For program and evaluation]

Annex A: People Consulted

Annex B: Documents Reviewed

DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION
OBSERVATION AND FACILITATION LOG[2]

Date _____

Developmental Evaluator _____

Nature of the data event:

1. Reflective practice session (who's involved? _____)

2. Staff meeting (specify purpose of… _____)

3. Funder review session (details: _____)

4. Participant session (specify nature of… _____)

5. Implementation activity (details… _____)

6. Other (details… _____)

Overview of what occurred

What was developed?

Why was this important?

Interpretation/questions/cross-reference/issues

---

2   Adapted from a DE of the Paris Declaration on International Development

DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION
TRACKING TOOL³

Purpose

[Description of activity and rationale for DE]

Section One: The Initiative

Lessons about the different elements of this initiative

[The following table outlines the major program components]

Component	Purpose	Demonstrated Relevance to program	Lessons/ Observations

Lessons about implementers' role in this initiative

[The following table outlines differences in level of effort than what was originally anticipated]

Inputs	Effort required in comparison to what was anticipated	Observations

Section Two: Stakeholders

Individuals and Organizations

[The table below outlines individual stakeholders and their level of engagement]

Stakeholders	Characteristics	Level of Engagement

Observations:

Implications and Strategies:

Section Three: Foundational Outcomes

[This section outlines outcomes. For each, a definition is provided, several indicators of progress are examined, and where appropriate, available evidence and examples are provided. This is not a discussion of the ultimate effect or impact of the program, which would be premature.]

Indicator	Status	Evidence	Illustrative Examples/Cases

Observations and conclusions:

Implications for moving forward: