

TECH3501 Community Media Leadership

Lecture Twelve – Development Evaluation Principles

1 Introduction – Planning Cycles

“The project planning cycle is currently dominant in development. The linear, logical framework approach promoted by many development institutions, along with results-based management, present an upward accountability approach to development and its evaluation that is underpinned by ideas of pre-planning, and pre-determining what successful outcomes will look like. In this approach, the outcomes of complex interventions are reduced to simple, cause-effect processes and the categorisation of things, including people” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 2) .

“Participatory approaches, complexity theories and whole systems approaches understand social change as unpredictable, unknowable in advance, emergent, and something to learn from and adapt to. The former approaches prioritise categorisation of abstract concepts, control and accountability; the latter prioritise relationships, openness, innovation and flexibility. The former are mainstream, considered rigorous, and largely based on standardised methods; the latter are alternative, considered (by proponents of the former) to lack rigour and based on a range of approaches, methodologies and methods selected according to each initiative and its context” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 2).

Table 1 Emerging Dichotomies in Development M&E

Reporting Against	Service Contracts	Or	Social Development
	Pre-agreed plans and contracts	Or	Autonomous development
	Deliverables	Or	Impacts
	Technical indicators	Or	Poverty reduction
Overall Aims	Serving the state	Or	Serving people
	Reform	Or	Transformation
	Management efficiency	Or	Impact
	Short-term gains	Or	Long-term gains
	Formalising institutions	Or	Development (socio-economic-political)
Organisational impetus	Co-option	Or	Independence
	Compliance	Or	Empowerment
	Rationalising reality	Or	Enquiry
	Short-term accountability	Or	Learning to do better
	Donor competition	Or	Sharing learning
	Creation of comfort zone	Or	Encouraging a culture of challenge

Source (Pratt 2007: 2).

“In short, evaluation and our framework can help us to be searchers rather than planners, listeners rather than tellers” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 3).

“The framework is designed to be both theoretically and methodologically rigorous as well as practically accessible. The idea is to enable a better understanding of the important contributions of C4D to the processes of development and change, and encourage continuous and active community and stakeholder engagement in C4D initiatives and their evaluation” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 3)

2 Building Capacity

“There is a stress on the need to build capacity for development communication at all levels, from community members to development specialists. It is not to be reduced to public relations or corporate communications” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 6).

“For UNESCO, enhancing universal access to information and knowledge and fostering pluralistic, free and independent media is central; for UNESCO, C4D is intrinsic to governance and social accountability. While these are not mutually exclusive, four main ‘strands’ have been identified across the United Nations; behaviour change communication, communication for social change, advocacy communication, and strengthening an enabling media and communication environment” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 7).

3 Community Media Sustainability

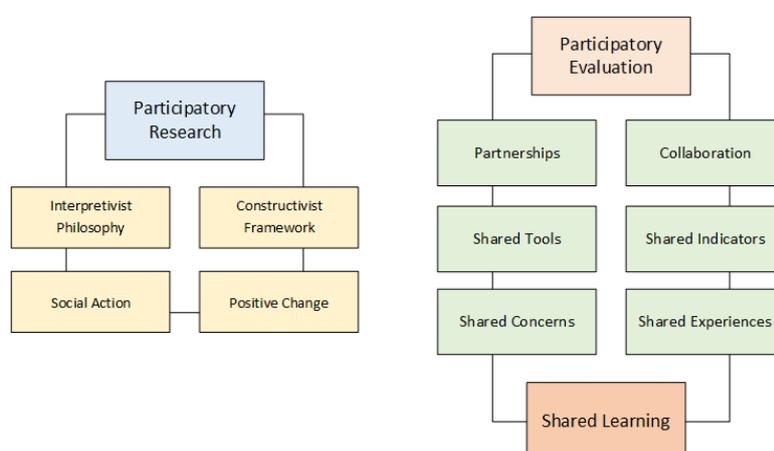
Community media, whether broadcast or online, are crucial to ensuring media pluralism and freedom of expression, and are an indicator of a healthy democratic society. As an alternative medium to public and commercial media, as well as social media, they are characterized by their accountability to, and participation of, the communities they serve. They have a greater focus on local issues of concern and facilitate public platforms for debate and discussion.

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/community-media-sustainability>

“What is central to current understandings of C4D is that it is a social process, based on dialogue. It is ‘about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change.’ Quarry and Ramirez (2009) say that rather than good communication producing good development, we should shift the emphasis to good development breeding good communication. This is development that communicates well with local communities about their development goals and solutions, rather than tells them from a policy-based, top-down approach what these ought to be. Good development by definition has good communication at its heart” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 7).

“For our framework, evaluation is seen as an ongoing, action learning, project development and improvement, and capacity development process. The aim is that this process becomes embedded into an organisation’s culture and its project planning and management processes, along with regular monitoring and critical reflection on the evaluation process” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 8)

“It helps us to understand and identify the expected and unexpected outcomes of development activities against a clear understanding of an initiative’s vision and objectives, based on community needs and aspirations, and its theory of change” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 8).



“Participatory research and evaluation approaches are underpinned by interpretivist philosophy and a constructivist framework, in which evaluation is seen as leading to social action and positive change. In our framework, a participatory approach to evaluation is an essential principle. This means developing a partnership between stakeholders to collaboratively design and systematically implement evaluation processes, develop tools, set indicators (if they are used), and share concerns, experiences and learnings” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 8).

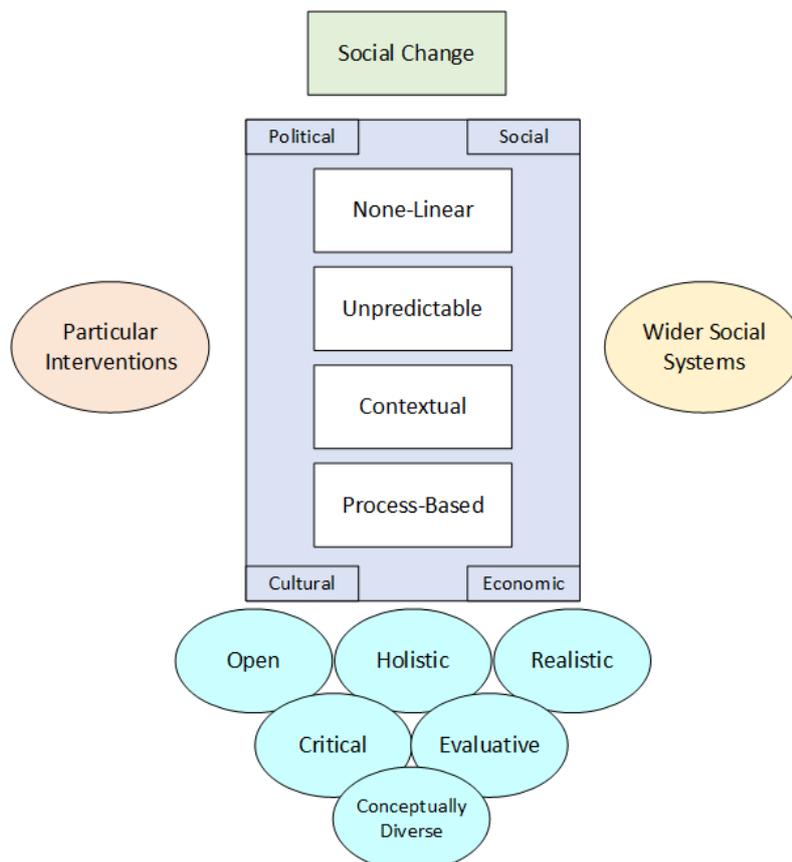
“It enables local knowledge and culturally appropriate processes to be incorporated into evaluation processes, and helps to create a clearer picture of what is happening at the grassroots level. When it is well-planned and facilitated, PM&E enables the inclusion of the diverse perspectives of women, men, young people, and various age, cast, class and ethnic groups in the data collection, interpretation and analysis process” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 8).

4 Social Change

“Social change as non-linear, dynamic, emergent and complex” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 8).

“Social change in complex systems such as communities occurs through multi-level, inter-connected, interdependent, non-linear and unpredictable relationships and processes” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 9).

“This means that when change happens it is often disproportionate and unpredictable, making it hard to capture in any meaningful way using evaluation approaches based on predictable and linear processes that seek measurable outcomes. Understanding the local culture and context and the relationships between people, groups and organisations in that context, is therefore vital to understanding social change” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 9).



“Social change is uneven, and there is a dearth of rich ethnographic, comparative studies that explore, on the one hand, the disruptive and political potential of media and information technologies, and on the other, their social and cultural rootedness” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 9).

“Social change is not linear, not predictable, and is always contextual. Effectively understanding social change requires considering broader dimensions of the process beyond the ‘social,’ to encompass the political, economic and cultural. It also requires a shift in focus from the impact of particular interventions on specific groups to changes in wider social and organisational systems. This entails an open, holistic and realistic yet critical approach to development and evaluation that draws on a wide range of related theories, concepts and approaches. Such an approach allows us to raise fundamental questions about the process of development and social change and the assumptions that underpin different approaches to development and C4D” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 9).

5 Participation

“A single definition of the concept of practice of participation in development is elusive. It is a malleable concept that can be used to signify ‘almost anything that involves people’ and encompasses a wide diversity of practices. In communication and media studies, particularly in the era of Web 2.0, participation is a key concept, and yet it is used to mean ‘everything and nothing.’ The ‘new communications environment’ can be seen to offer the conditions for a shift from vertical models of communication to horizontal models; in other words, a shift from sending messages to providing an opportunity for people to engage in dialogue, share knowledge and ask questions” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 10).

“Carpentier (2011: 24-28) puts forward six characteristics of maximalist participation in an effort to increase the theoretical foundation of the concept of participation:

1. The key defining element of participation is power.
2. Participation is situated in particular processes, locations and actors.
3. Participation is contingent and dependent on the ideological framework within which it is being used, or on how we ‘think participation.’
4. Participation is not based on populist fantasies of the replacement or overthrow of hierarchy, but on diversity and power sharing, and equal power relations in decision-making.
5. Participation is invitational and not imposed.
6. Participation is structurally different to access and interaction” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 11).

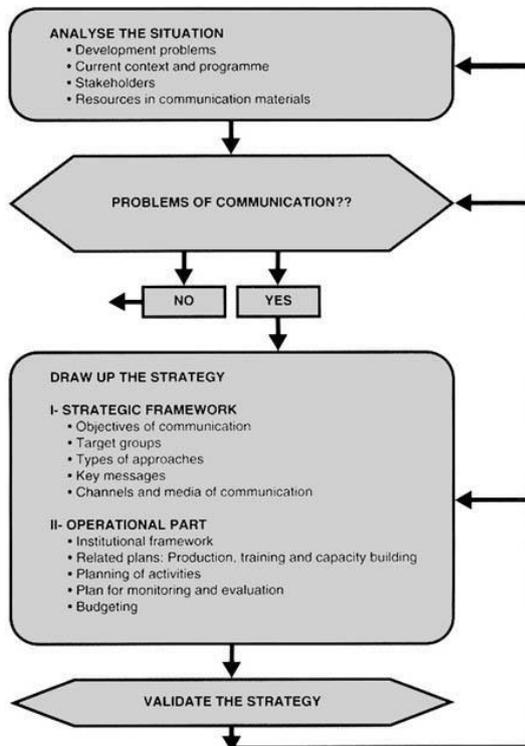
6 Participation in Context

“One thing we can be sure of in relation to participation is the importance of considering power, and the need to understand participation in context. We can gain ‘clarity through specificity’ to distinguish between different practices and understandings of participation, and spot the kind of participation that the rhetoric invokes but that has little substance, ‘from forms of genuine delegated control that enable people to exercise a meaningful part in making the decisions that affect their lives” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 11).

“Recognising that participatory approaches to development, to C4D, and to evaluation inevitably bring with them issues of power, it is important to be alert to power dynamics and issues of inclusion and exclusion, empowerment and disempowerment. C4D will always, to some extent, involve challenging power relationships and structures. This is because it depends on actively engaging a range of people, encouraging voice but also encouraging active listening across difference” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 11).

7 Two-Way Relationships

“Progressive proponents of C4D consider the participation of people on the ground in all processes and stages of development as a fundamental principle. Communication, understood as a two-way relationship that not only acknowledges the right of people to be heard, but includes prioritising effective listening, and recognising and respecting alternative forms of knowledge, is needed to achieve this” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013).

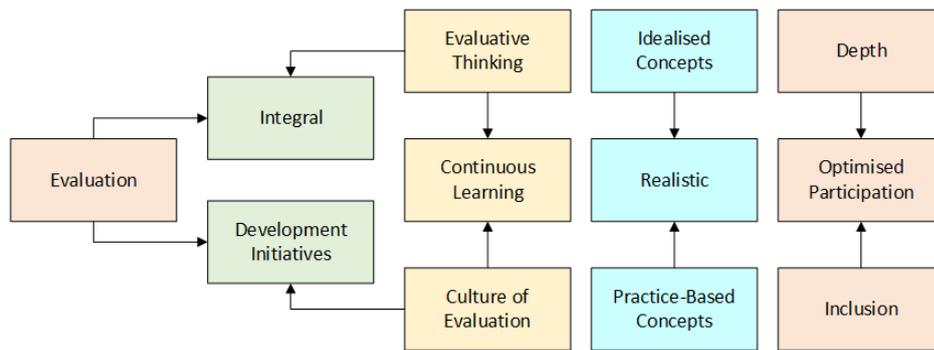


“Development programmes should include a section for communication, from the outset; the communication objectives should be realistic, precise, measurable and be expressed in a timetable. The study and segmentation of the intended audience or the target community are crucial, since the goal is to achieve change at the level of people or groups in terms of their opinions, attitudes and behaviour, and life-styles and responses to different messages vary from one group to another. From this point of view, socio-cultural research can be used here for the development of communication activities which are culturally appropriate to the situation involved.”

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/Y4334E/y4334e05.htm>

- What happens if these objectives can't be met?

“Community participation in planning, decision-making, evaluation and implementation of C4D and community ownership are crucial for sustainability. Servaes et al. (2012: 102) suggest that ‘communication and information play a strategic and fundamental role’ in sustainable development. They argue that a focus on culture and participation is crucial for sustainability” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 12).

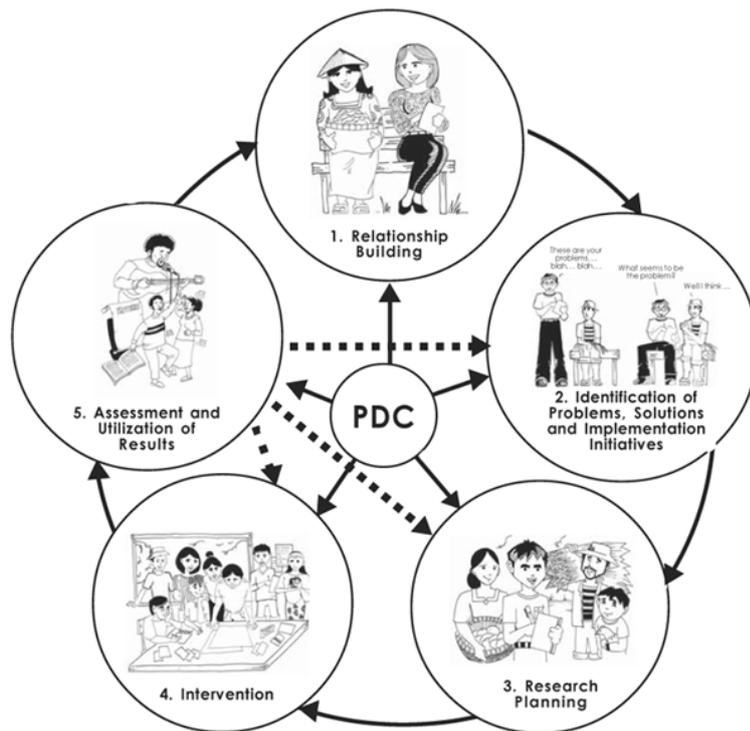


“Evaluation needs to be seen as an integral part of development initiatives and a means of fostering continuous learning, evaluative thinking and a culture of evaluation within organisations and communities. At the same time it is important to be realistic, and understand that, in practice, idealised notions of participation including and empowering everyone are not possible, and to think in terms of what Cornwall (2008: 276) calls ‘optimum participation: getting the balance between depth and inclusion right for the purposes at hand’” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 12).

“There was a sense of hype around the potential of ICTs, but little or no evidence through standard evaluation approaches. The evidence of effectiveness was through anecdotal accounts, or individual transformational stories related to connecting to market, agricultural or health information. Standard evaluation approaches were not well suited to capture the changes that ICT was felt to be achieving. The question we set out to answer was: **Can ethnography – an approach designed to understand the detail of everyday lives and how social and cultural institutions within communities fit together in meaningful ways – help to capture such changes?**” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 13).

“Thinking about the use of media technologies for information and communication purposes through the concept of communicative ecologies focussed our attention on the complexity of local communicative environments, and on how these are many information and communication channels and flows. Different places, and different people within a place, have quite different communicative opportunities and experiences, depending on many facts, including the availability of infrastructure and technological and social networks, and particularities such as age, gender, class, education, economic situation, and so on. It cannot, therefore, be assumed, that everyone in a locality will engage with an ICT4D initiative such as a community internet project, or community radio station, in the same way” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 13).

8 Participatory Research and Development (PR&D)



“PR&D has partly evolved from efforts to improve technology development and dissemination. However, field experiences show that innovations for improving agriculture and natural resource management need to address not only the technological but also the socio-cultural, political, economic dimensions such as: community structures, gender, collective action, property rights, land tenure, power relations, policy and governance.

Participatory approaches are envisioned to help agricultural R&D: 1) respond to problems, needs and opportunities identified by users; 2) identify and evaluate technology options that build on local knowledge and resources; 3) ensure that technical innovations are appropriate for local socio-economic, cultural and political contexts; and 4) promote wider sharing and use of agricultural innovations. In contrast to the linear process of technology generation-transfer-utilization in conventional approaches” <https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/openebooks/181-7/index.html>

9 General Principles Underpinning the Framework

“The framework for evaluating C4D is underpinned by some general principles. Here we divide them into four broad areas: those concerned with evaluation contexts and the social change processes; those to do with evaluation approach and design; those related to the use and selection of evaluation approaches, methodologies and methods; and finally, principles related to the outcomes of evaluations and evaluation capacity development” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 17).

9.1 “Principles related to the evaluation context and the social change process

- The evaluation seeks to understand the wider systems, networks and macro and local contexts within which the initiative operates, including communication and organisational systems. In this context, social systems are seen as dynamic, adaptive and emergent.
- Social change is seen as a long-term process that is complex, non-linear, unpredictable, and often contradictory.

- The evaluation takes this complexity into account, and includes analysis of social norms and other contextual factors (including relevant social and cultural factors) that affect the process of social change.
- The evaluation focuses on progress toward social change and the contribution of C4D” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013).

9.2 “Principles related to the evaluation approach and design

- The approach to evaluation and evaluation capacity development is participatory, inclusive, flexible and creative, involves the long-term engagement of people in all evaluation stages, and draws on local and expert knowledge.
- As far as possible, the evaluation is based on action learning and participatory action research principles and processes.
- The evaluation critically addresses issues of gender, ethnicity and other relevant differences, and unequal voice, power and control.
- Evaluation is fully integrated into organisations and the whole programme cycle.
- The evaluation design considered the strengths, limitations and cultural appropriateness of various approaches, methodologies and methods.
- The evaluation process ensures a high level of independence, integrity and honesty.
- The evaluation is open to negative findings and weaknesses, and learns from “failures” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 17).

9.3 “Principles related to the use and selection of evaluation approaches, methodologies and methods

- The selection and use of evaluation approaches, methodologies and methods involves openness, freedom, flexibility and realism.
- Evaluation approaches, methodologies and methods are as simple, practical, responsive and rigorous as possible, grounded in local realities, and able to capture unexpected changes and ripple effects” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 18).

9.4 “Principles related to the outcomes of evaluations and evaluation capacity development

- PM&E is seen as an important means of developing effective, sustainable and innovative C4D initiatives that more effectively address development goals.
- The evaluation process and ECD aims to foster the development of learning organisations. The attention here is on strengthening the whole organisation and its evaluation systems, and improving coordination, cooperation between internal and external agents and groups” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 18).

“There are many complex theoretical, methodological and ethical issues that have implications for the quality of an evaluation and the trustworthiness of findings and outcomes. They include the need to ensure stakeholder diversity and representativeness and the need to critique the concepts of empowerment and participation when assessing the impacts of participatory research and evaluation. They also include the need to invest time, energy and resources to build evaluation capacity, to plan and conduct evaluations, and to develop relationships based on trust and open communication. Finally, these issues include the need to demystify evaluation and to encourage participation to think in an evaluative way” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 19).

“As we demonstrate through numerous examples, this framework is theoretically and methodologically rigorous, practically accessible, and highly consistent with the values and principles of C4D. An important aim of this framework is to break down unhelpful dichotomies and divisions, including

those between different theoretical and methodological paradigms, which have hindered progress in this area” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 21).

“The framework places a high level of emphasis on processes, principles and values (such as inclusion, open communication, trust and continuous learning), and less emphasis on achieving specific measurable results or outcomes” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 21).

“But for values-driven social change activists and innovators, how outcomes are attained is at least as important as, if not more important than, the outcomes themselves. Process matters... given the uncertainties of complex interventions and interactions... values can become the anchor, the only knowable in an otherwise uncertain, unpredictable, uncontrollable, and complex world” (Parron, 2011: 246).

10 Seven Inter-Related Components of the Framework for Evaluating C4D

10.1 Participatory

“Evaluation is undertaken in partnership with community members, stakeholders and others, using processes that are culturally and socially appropriate, creative, and based on mutual trust, openness and transparency. This approach respects, legitimises, contextualises and draws on the knowledge and experience of local participants as well as relevant experts and outsiders. It is as inclusive as possible of a diversity of groups. The process aims to continuously and actively engage people in all aspects and stages of the evaluation through two-way communication, dialogue, feedback and mutual learning” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 22).

10.2 Holistic

Evaluation is based on an understanding of wider social, cultural, economic, technological, organisational and institutional systems and contexts within which C4D operates. Organisations and communities are greater than the sum of their parts. This approach includes analysis and understanding of the inter-relationships, inter-connections and networks between the various organisation, groups and agents involved in an initiative (directly or indirectly) and the boundaries and local communicative ecologies (including communication flows and barriers) within which an initiative operates” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 22).

10.3 Complex

“The framework recognises that social change and C4D are complex and involve processes that are often contradictory and challenging. The evaluation is based on the recognition that C4D is often undertaken in social, economic and cultural contexts with high levels of social conflict, involving people and organisations with multiple perspectives and agendas. This means that the outcomes of C4D are often unpredictable, or unknowable in advance. Evaluation approaches therefore need to be flexible, participatory, creative and well-planned and facilitated in order to adequately take the complexity of social change into account” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 23).

“The concept of gaming/simulations embodies knowledge garnered from various scientific disciplines and attempts to make these complex realities understandable.” <https://training-games.com/understanding-a-complex-environment/>

10.4 Critical

This approach seeks to actively and explicitly address issues of gender, caste, class, ethnicity, age and other relevant differences, and unequal power and voice among participants. Issues of gender, power and control are openly addressed in the evaluation and associated critical reflection processes. The evaluation focuses on local social norms and the challenges, contradictions and paradoxes that often characterise the process of social change. In addition, the design and implementation of the evaluation is based on an awareness of the strengths and limitations of various evaluation approaches and methods (including participatory approaches), and is open to negative findings and learning from failure” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 23).

10.5 Emergent

Social change and the outcomes of C4D are seen as processes that are non-linear, dynamic, messy and unpredictable. An emergent approach recognises that communities and local contexts are not static, and aims to provide a better understanding of the complex process of social change. Evaluation processes therefore need to be dynamic, flexible, adaptive, alert to critical incidents and tipping points, and based on simple principles and processes such as self-organisation, powerful listening and continuous feedback loops. They also need to be capable of capturing outcomes and ripple effects that go beyond or are different from underlying assumptions about the outcomes of initiatives and the process of social change” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 23).

10.6 Realistic

“To be most effective, evaluation approaches and methods need to be as simple, practical, responsive and rigorous as possible. They must be grounded in local realities and based on methodological pluralism. This requires openness, freedom, flexibility and realism in planning and implementing evaluation and in the selection of approaches, methodologies and methods. This approach aims to increase the usefulness of evaluation results, which should focus on intended, unintended, expected, unexpected, negative and positive change. Long-term engagement with organisations and communities will ensure effectiveness and sustainability, and a long-term perspective on both evaluation and social change” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 23).

“A communication strategy is the critical piece bridging the situation analysis and the implementation of a social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) program. It is a written plan that details how an SBCC program will reach its vision, given the current situation. Effective communication strategies use a systematic process and behavioural theory to design and implement communication activities that encourage sustainable social and behaviour change.” <https://www.thehealthcompass.org/how-to-guides/how-develop-communication-strategy>

10.7 Learning-Based

“Action learning and participatory action research (PAR) principles and processes aim to achieve good communication, cooperation, collaborations and trust between those involved. This key component aims to facilitate and encourage continuous learning, mutual understanding, empowerment, creative ideas and thinking, and responsiveness to new ideas and different attitudes, values and knowledge. Evaluation is fully integrated into organisations and the whole programme cycle and involves a diversity of people taking responsibility for research and evaluation activities. This helps to develop the wide range of evaluation capacities that are required in this approach, and to create learning organisations. The process includes regular critical reflection in order to learn from experience” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 23).

11 Summary

“Our framework therefore aims to overcome the limitations of false divisions, such as those between qualitative and quantitative methodologies or between indigenous and expert knowledge, that have hindered progress in this area. It does this through advocating a more open, flexible, creative and pluralistic approach to evaluation which involves continuously and actively engaging people in all stages of an evaluation through open dialogue, feedback and mutual learning. The aim here is to increase the utilisation of evaluation results, which focuses on intended, unintended, expected, unexpected, negative and positive change” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 43).

“The cultural turn has in recent years been supplemented by a “material turn” in the social sciences; that is, a growing interest in the importance of artefacts, natural forces, and material regimes to social practices and systems of power (Mukerji 2015). The new focus is, more specifically on “the methodological value of studying materiality for illuminating under-examined forms of social life—particularly the lives of non-literate or suppressed groups” (Ibid., emphasis added). Voice and matter hence converge in this approach, as what we choose to call the ethnographic turn” (Hemer & Tufte, 2016, p. 17). <http://www.nordicom.gu.se/sv/publikationer/voice-matter>

12 References

- Hemer, O., & Tufte, T. (Eds.). (2016). *Voice & Matter - Communication, Development and the Cultural Return*. Göteborg: Nordicom.
- Lennie, J., & Tacchi, J. (2013). *Evaluating Communication for Development*. London: Routledge.