

Utilisation Focussed Evaluation

NGO Federatie, October 2018

Alison Napier

Adapted from presentation by Triple Line and INTRAC at UKES Evaluation Conference May 2017, 'The Politics of Utilisation Focussed Evaluation'







UFE defined by **Michael Quinn Patton**:

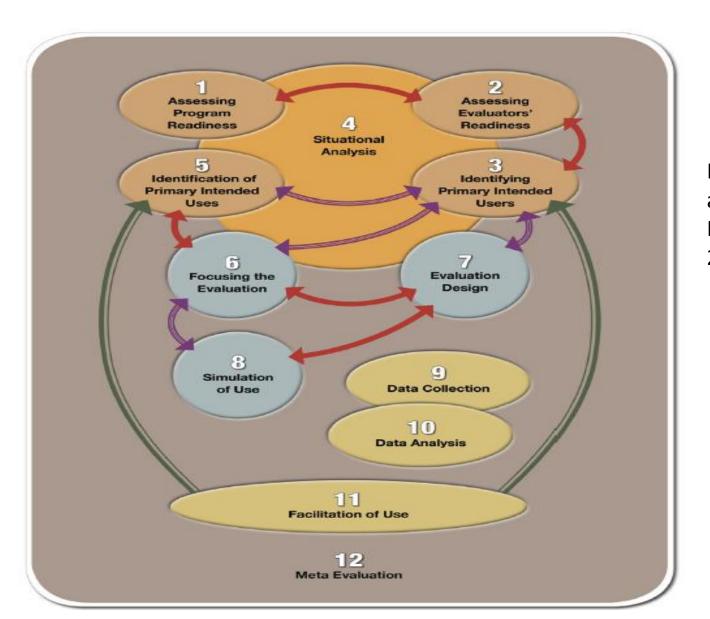
Based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users.

It emphasises the importance of:

- ✓ Defining and engaging users throughout the evaluation
- ✓ Evaluation design and the evaluation process should be driven by maximising the use of the evaluation for the intended users

Steps in Utilisation Focussed Evaluation





Ref: Ramírez and Brodhead, 2013.

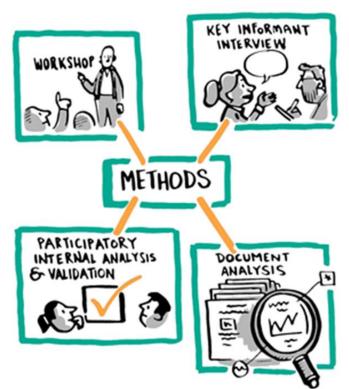
Example INTRAC & Triple Line: organisational evaluation





- Qualitative, "real-time", ensuring learning and use through the process.
- Stakeholder analysis to navigate internal politics.
- **Inception** and **validation** workshops to engage users at critical points.
- Engagement facilitated by use of live illustrator.





In deciding whether to use UFE consider:





- Is commissioning organisation ready to learn?
- Is there someone who has time and remit to support navigation of internal politics?
- Does/ how does evaluation timing weave into organisation's processes for learning?
- Does organisation/users have time
 to engage with the process?



In recruiting evaluators for UFE consider:





- Are evaluators open to close engagement with commissioning organisation/ users and to communicating findings sensitively?
- Is there flexibility and budget for evaluators to engage with stakeholders/users as needed at different points?



Learning from experience of UFE

- Evaluation inception phase critical to understand organisational culture and politics, identify users and get agreement and buy-in about purpose and value.
- Ensure evaluation timing dovetails with decision making cycles.
- Validation workshops essential to engage users in analysis of findings and tailor recommendations.







More learning:





- Acknowledge power
 dynamics. Evaluators need to
 be political, act politically to
 ensure engagement of senior
 leadership during evaluation.
- External perspective plus internal ownership and engagement helps navigate organisation and support uptake of recommendations.



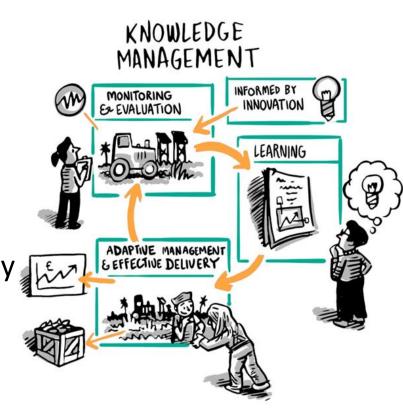
Conclusions





Learning is core focus of UFE –
 engaging internal evaluation users and
 responding to their learning priorities
 But objectivity also needed – this has
 to be understood and managed

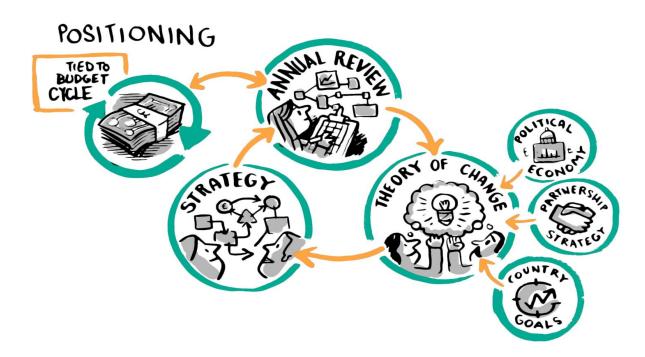
 Commissioning organisation more likely to learn from UFE and be able to use results because of their engagement But UFE more time consuming for commissioners and evaluators



More conclusions



- UFE requires evaluators to work politically and communicate sensitively, finding different strategies to engage and influence users.
- Building trust between evaluator and commissioner is key.





Questions for discussion

- Shouldn't all evaluations be user-focussed and geared towards utilisation?!
- Who are the primary intended users of your planned evaluation?
- What are their learning priorities?
- Will/ How will you engage them in the design and implementation of the evaluation to maximise the usefulness of the evaluation?