Thinking evaluatively about social issues

The developmental context of M&E

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Outline of presentation

- Declaration
- What is evaluative thinking?
- The development context for evaluation
- Examples of evaluations in contexts
- D.A.R.E. ; Community College
- Capacity building/ training
- Barriers; Available Sources
- What to look for ... Evaluative thinking

Declaration

Evaluative thinking

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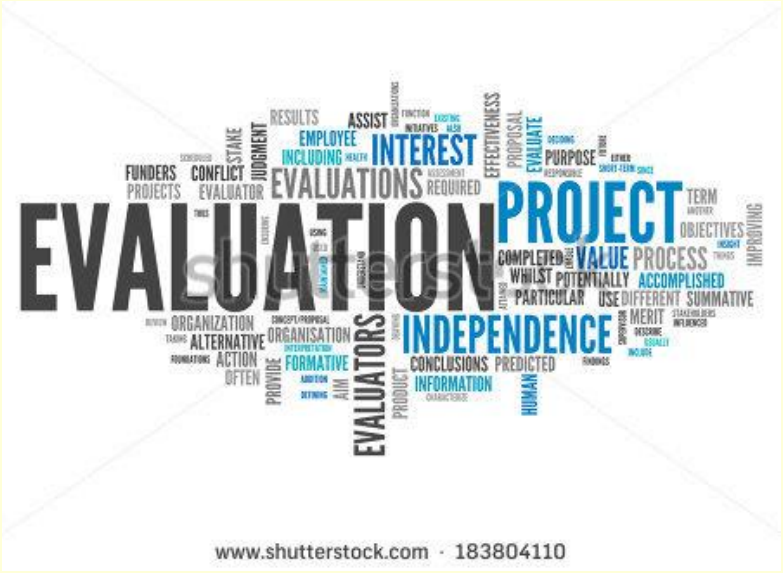
Evaluation

learning
assessment
students
evaluation
student
determine
gauge
final
teacher
standards
relation
end
throughout
grades
using
student's
understanding
judgment
teachers
concrete
form
knowledge
summative
based
feedback
teaching
information
data
time
giving
collected
progress
way
used
great
learned

impact
target
mission
change
outcomes
indicators
qualitative
soft
aim
performance
evaluation
intended
segmentation
resources
monitoring
hard
distance
money
SROI
baseline
activities
objectives
value
unintended
progress
proxies
social
milestone
input
efficiency
benchmark
quantitative
vision
well-being
outputs
travelled
Outcomes
longitudinal
forecast
framework
inputs

Evaluation without Evaluative thinking



What is evaluative thinking?

- Is an activity involving the posing of questions of substance and determining what data are needed to address the questions …

- Evaluative thinking is a type of systematic reflective practice aimed at improving performance. It involves: identifying assumptions; posing thoughtful questions; pursuing deeper understanding through evidence gathering, reflection and perspective taking; and making informed decisions in preparation for action.

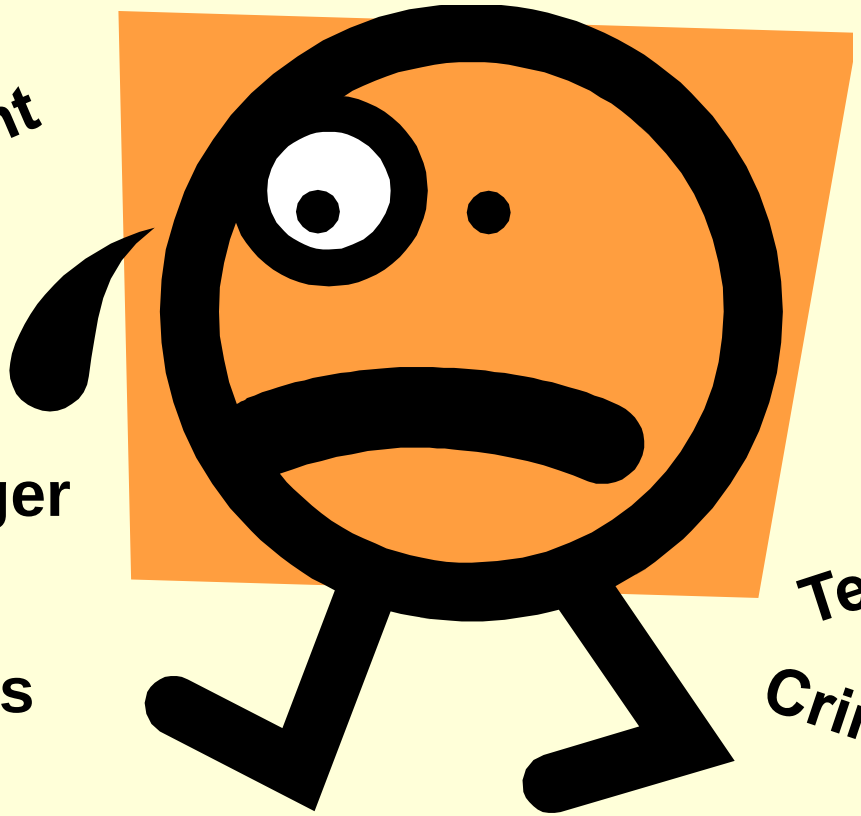
Four Guiding Principles:

- Evaluative thinking is not a born-in skill; it must be intentionally practiced, and does not depend on a certain educational background *(Brookfield, 2012; Ericsson, 1994; Perkins, 1986)*
- Evaluative thinking must be applied and practiced in multiple contexts alongside peers and colleagues *(Bransford et. al., 1999; Brookfield, 2012; Halpern, 1998; Simon 1996)*
- Evaluative thinkers must be aware of—and work to overcome—assumptions and belief preservation *(Brookfield, 2012; Lord et. al., 1979)*
- Learning to think evaluatively (and practicing ET) must be intrinsically motivated and experienced incrementally *(Bransford et.al., 1999; Brookfield, 2012; Piaget, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978)*

The developmental context

Evaluative thinking

Existing problem/ condition



Unemployment

School dropout

Racism

Poverty/hunger

Teenage pregnancy

Lack of skills

Criminal behaviour

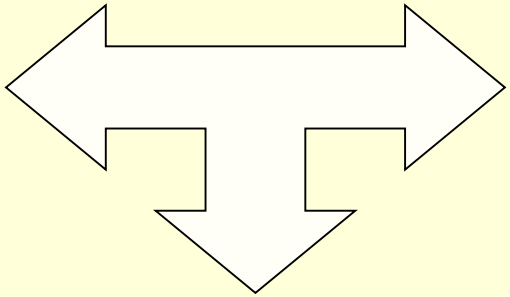
Anti-social behaviour

Drug addiction

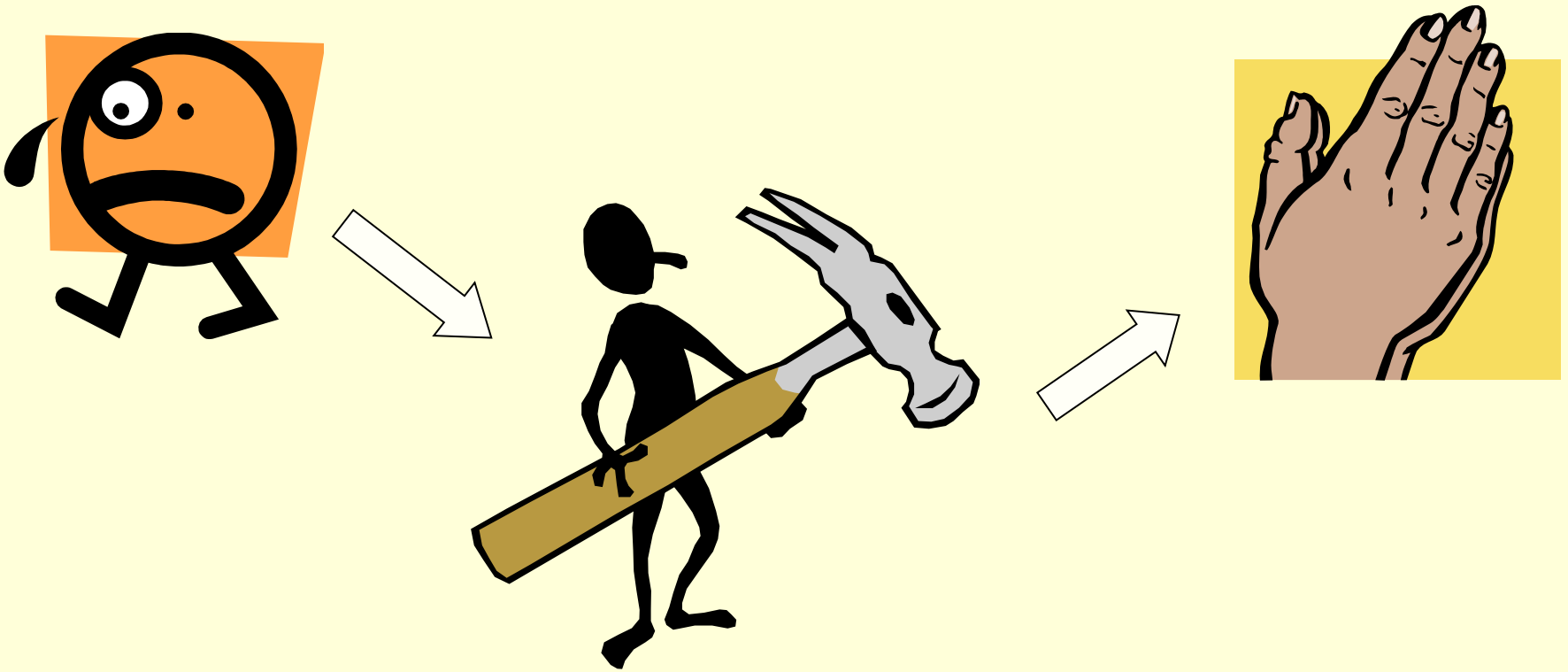
Abusive

Dysfunctional families

Brainstorm and objectives setting



Input and prayer option



Input

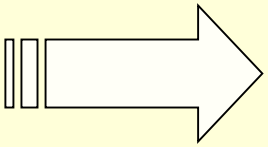
Solution

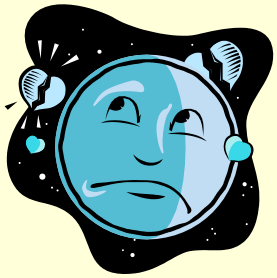
Remedy

RESULTS!!!

Problem → **Intended outcome** → **Actual outcomes**

Input

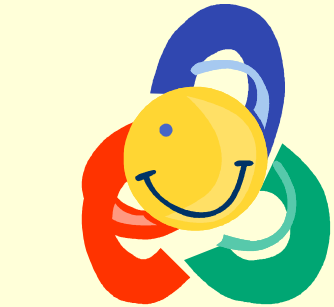


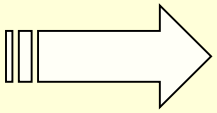


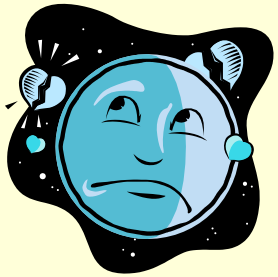
OTHER RESULTS

Problem → **Outcome** → **Impact**

Input







ADDING UP THE COST OF DEVELOPMENT

+

= R $

Trillions

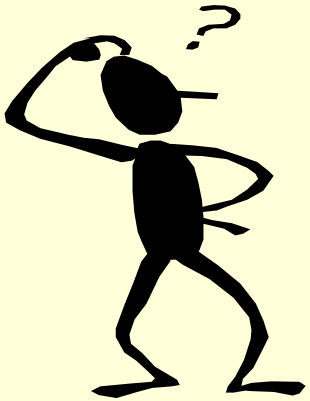
Lack of / limited / unsatisfactory results

Not sustainable

Too expensive

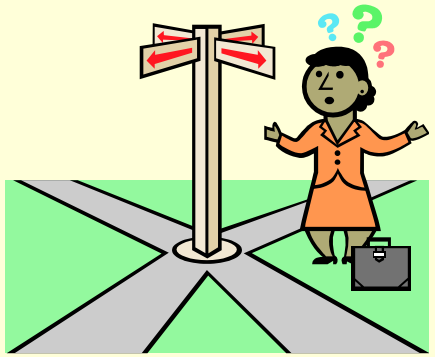
Growth in problems

Different questions being posed



How do we ensure maximum impact for minimum buck?

ACCOUNTABILITY



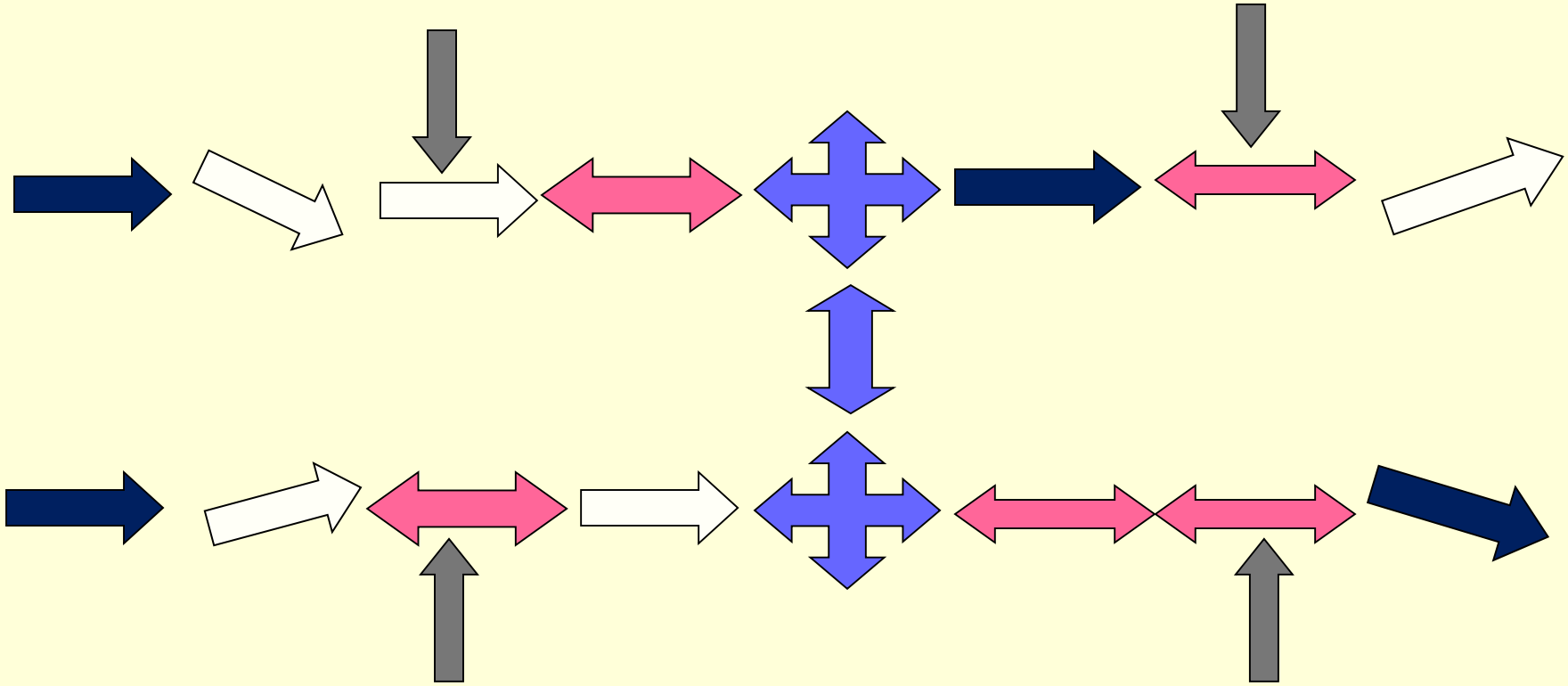
How do we make sure that we are implementing appropriate strategies?

RESPONSIVENESS

COMPLEXITY

Problem solving - The Implementation Chain

Policy Architects → → Practitioners → → Subjects



Social exclusion →→ Social mobilisation →→ Organisational →→ Programme

Examples of evaluations in contexts

- D.A.R.E. (US programme – Drug Abuse and Resistance Education)
- Established in Los Angeles in 1983.
- 75% of Schools across America
- Thirty-five million school children worldwide.
- In the US, $700 million per annum – over $2 Billion worldwide.
- Law, education and welfare
- ‘Just say no’ ... ‘Keeping it real’

D.A.R.E. Evaluation Results

- 30 + Evaluations
- No significant effects
- Increased roll-out over the years
- Change in strategies – pedagogies
- Questions about funding use
- Decrease in funding
- Slow down
- Benefits?

Community college

- Community college building
- Needs assessment
- Desired skills: farming and construction
- Capacity building – survey construction
- Pilot study findings
- New strategy, new questions, focus groups
- Pre-school and craft training centre.

Some Barriers to Evaluative thinking

- Lack of background information
- Either-or thinking
- Egocentrism (self-centered thinking)
- Sociocentrism or ethnocentrism (group/society/cultural-centered thinking)
- Inappropriate bias
- Reliance on main stream television, newspapers and other media for information.

Capacity building/ training (King et al)

- Professional practice competencies
- Systematic inquiry competencies
- Situational analysis competencies
- Project management competencies
- Reflective practice competencies
- Interpersonal competencies

Available sources:

- BetterEvaluation: www.betterevaluation.org
- AEA webinars: http://comm.eval.org.
- 3ie Impact Evaluation: http://www.3ieimpact.org.
- UNDP Evaluation: http://web.undp.org/evaluation
- Evaluative thinking Community: http://evaluativethinking.org; http://evaluativethinking.com
- *Accountability, autonomy and authenticity: Assessing the development waltz conducted to a 'kwaito' beat*. In Development in Practice, Volume 18, Number 1, February 2008.

Let me state what I look for ...: (Smith, 1994, p. 42)

- a sense that the evaluator was present over a long enough period and close enough to the action and to the participants' meanings;
- informed by some system of theoretical ideas about the social and educational substance of the program;
- adept at the ethical, political and personal relationships that qualitative methods make inevitable;
- successful in sampling widely with multitude indicators and methods; adept at forms of representation;
- oriented toward challenging standard hypotheses and assumptions;

I look for ...

- self-critical and amenable to the scrutiny of the field, peers, participants, and stakeholders;
- and able to penetrate to an understanding of the matters at hand.
- **(Smith, 1994, p. 42)**

THANK YOU

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