



TIP RESOURCE LAB

TOOLS · ACTIONS · LEARNINGS

Component 3: Monitoring, evaluation and learning using transformative outcomes

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User guide

Introduction to evaluation for transformative change

The challenges of addressing climate change and social justice while taking account of resource and species depletion are immense. The coming decades will be marked by community, company, and government initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges. The investment of time, money and effort in these initiatives will be accompanied by questions. Has the initiative addressed a social challenge? To what extent? Could we do better? Answering these questions are what evaluation is about.

Evaluation is the third key component of transformative innovation policy (TIP) theory and practise. The three key components are linked to one another. Thus, TIP Evaluation typically begins in the first component – but during the process of developing a specific contextual (localised to system and place) theory of change from generic transition theory issues of evaluation – e.g. how can a change in directionality be detected? – should be considered. A localised theory of change provides the foundation for defining and operationalising an experimental space. Component 2 explains and illustrates the process of defining and managing experimental initiatives. The evaluation-related processes discussed in this 3rd Component follow from the idea that an experiment is being conducted and that questions arise about how and to what extent this experiment is contributing to systemic change. Planning the evaluation process will also contribute to scrutinising and revising the localised theory of change.

The radical nature of transformative change makes it ill-suited for conventional evaluation methods that aim to establish accountability or value for money in the delivery of a well-specified result or output. Experimental initiatives do have outputs, but their larger purpose is one of discovery and learning about new directions and opportunities -- what we call outcomes. Outcomes of an experimental TIP initiative are changes in actions and behaviours in people, organisations that may not solely be caused by the initiative but are linked to and facilitative of change. Broadly speaking, outcomes of TIP experimental initiatives are the processes that deepen and accelerate transformative change, therefore are more important elements of the Theory of Change than outputs and more

immediate than impacts. TIP theory offers a group of bespoke transformative outcomes that provide a reference point for evaluation and should also inform the earlier stages of developing a localised theory of transformative change and defining experimental spaces.

Centring evaluation on the assessment of progress in assembling and advancing transformative outcomes that will support and accelerate system change is a dramatic change from traditional evaluation. This new type of evaluation, aimed at improving existing initiatives in transformative directions, through continuous monitoring, learning and creating new or radically revised practices is called 'formative evaluation.'

The capabilities for conducting formative evaluation differ from those used in conventional evaluation. While conventional evaluation typically employs those external to the initiative being evaluated, formative evaluation centres on those engaged in the initiative. By including those directly involved and others who might be affected throughout all parts of the process – developing a localised Theory of Change and defining and implementing an experiment -- we seek to gain different perspectives rather than 'judge' the results. Engaging those in the initiative has the additional advantage of shifting the planning and implementation of change from directive and technocratic leadership to an inclusive co-creation among the stakeholders. If done well it will lead a more active constituency of support for taking change forward.

To achieve its aim of forming new or radically revised practices, formative evaluation's central process is one of learning – a first order learning about the results of experimentation (i.e. answering questions about how to proceed and what seems to work) and a second order learning (i.e. answering questions such as why things work in the way they do and how proceeding in a certain way is more valuable than other ways). Second order learning critically examines about the assumptions and logic underlying experimentation. Second order learning is what is at the heart of TIP evaluation as radical transformative change requires questioning and revising long-held beliefs and assumptions regarding problem definition, problem solutions, dominant frames and interpretations.

There is nothing wrong or surprising to wish to evaluate initiatives and measure impact. When the initiative is experimental and aimed at radical change, the gains from evaluation depend on whether the method used for evaluation can contribute to making progress in system change. In TIP, we understand progress as involving a change in rules and practices. Such changes can be identified using the idea of transformative outcomes and these outcomes provide a foundation for what guide to use to monitor change periodically. Throughout, evaluation is also meant to contribute to learning – not only learning from the findings or output of an experimental initiative which adds to local and

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global knowledge bases, but also questioning the logics and assumptions that motivated the experimental initiative to indicate how these logics and assumptions can be challenged and improved.

The following sections provide a deeper look at TIP formative evaluation using transformative outcomes, the processes needed for effective monitoring, and the nature of first and second order learning.

The formative evaluation approach used by TIPC

TIP evaluation is based upon a localised Theory of Change (ToC). As explained in Component 1, localised theories of change are adapted to the system in which change is desired and tailored to the location from the more generic frameworks offered by transition theories such as the multi-level perspective or strategic niche management. The localised ToC is provisional, it is meant to be revisited and modified as experimentation progresses. A key feature of formative evaluation is therefore continuous adjustment throughout and from the beginning of an experiment, starting from developing a localised theory of change all the way through the ex-post, summative assessment of areas of success or scope of improvement in future experiments.

A formative approach to evaluation aims at improving the definition and implementation of TIP experimental initiatives through the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Participation and open debate should be facilitated throughout TIP activities, without overlooking conflicts of interests, power asymmetries and divergent perceptions. The groups and communities with a role in the evaluation process will be varied and have different access to resources and, even, different interests (These processes are discussed in more detail in Component 4 which considers the organisational and individual capacities that are needed for TIP and ways to develop them.) At the same time, evaluation should embrace a certain level of agility, openness and reflexivity to capture emerging trends and problems, and to incorporate new goals and actors in the evolving TIP experiment. Second order learning opportunities are pervasive, they exist everywhere. Cultivating mindfulness to the possibility of second order learning is therefore part of conceiving both localised TOC and evaluation.

In developing a localised theory of change, the transformative outcomes aid in pinning down the connection between the policy activities and the impact desired from the policy. There are twelve transformative outcomes that orient change in a system, across three broad change processes, namely: 1) building and nurturing niches, 2) expanding and mainstreaming niches, and 3) opening up and unlocking regimes. Additional transformative outcomes have been defined to capture the multisystem changes referred to as Deep Transition. Each of these outcomes are abstract goals rather than concrete indicators. TIP experiments should not view the outcomes as a checklist of “things to achieve by the end of a certain time period” as it is unproductive to count how many transformative outcomes an experiment is achieving. Instead, more attention should be paid towards how



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and to what extent each of the transformative outcomes can be achieved and the challenges of doing the same within the boundaries set by the localised transformative theory of change. Achieving these outcomes is a formative process, where the outcomes help to stretch the aspirations of current policy practises in more transformative directions. In other words, they help in avoiding transformational failures that interventions targeted at climate goals and SDGs are often prone to experience.

The experimental and participatory nature of interventions involving public sector actors provokes us to use another term – experimental policy engagements (EPE) rather than initiatives. EPEs highlight the important role of policymakers in knowledge co-creation around TIP, the continuation of transformation change beyond an initiating step of designing and conduct of an experiment and the engagement of all of the actors in the process. In addition, the use of the term ‘engagement’ helps to convey the possibility of a multiplicity of efforts exploring the experimental space or a portfolio of efforts in different geographic spaces. Some of these efforts may arise from projects based upon other theories of change (e.g. assumptions that change can be dictated). For these efforts, engagement involves considering how the project can include elements of transformative change. Evaluation of EPEs is thus about methods that can be employed at different scales and in different spaces to create synergies between learning and action, e.g how a specific local project may inform or shape other projects within a nation or globally.



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The role of “constructive monitoring”

In a formative evaluation methodology, monitoring is a means for recording and sharing the experiences of change in people and organisations behaviour and activities. A monitoring process is ‘constructed’ as part of the evaluation method, keeping in mind the transformative outcomes and localised theory of change. The development of a localised theory of change and an experimental plan provide a basis for monitoring through assessing what is meant to be learned and how this learning is intended to foster change. A reflective documentation of this process is the essence of formative evaluation monitoring. Documentation provides the reference point for assessing what has been learned and what progress has been made towards desired change. For example, a Transformative Innovation Learning History is a routine with a defined procedure, but doing this routine offers multiple opportunities to reflect on the meaning of different ‘readings’ or perspectives on what happened and what the larger meaning of events on the journey might be. Being reflective pervades the entirety of these processes. This documentation or recording is not something that can be done by a single person as participants in an EPE will have different perspectives (and interests) in the outputs and outcomes of the EPE. Broader participation in the documentation of learning and change also fosters collective understanding akin to getting on the same page as others.

As a process, monitoring can be used to increase inclusiveness of the evaluation process and foster greater equality in the involvement of actors. Quick and

effective response to insights from monitoring can improve the overall experimental process and outcomes. Some of the methods for capturing and sharing learning and reflecting on the contribution of the experiment to change include:

1. Timely interviews with participants in experiments
2. Repeated in-depth interviews with selected people to explore their thoughts and ideas as they evolve
3. Anonymous third-party observations
4. 'Reflective practice' sessions where the focus of discussion is solely on the process and not on the aims and objectives of the experiments
5. Having dedicated resources (observers and time from participants in the experiment) to observe and monitor interventions in an experiment
6. Monitoring the changes in assumptions in the different ToC, discussed by participants of the experiments



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Monitoring must also be linked to accountability. Accountability should, however, be associated with the quality of the process. It must acknowledge that results that fall short of expectations may still offer strong foundations for future development. Reflective and detailed documentation of the process is the best foundation for accountability.

A key consideration of TIP's constructive approach to evaluation of experiment is deciding what to monitor and how. This requires an explicit commitment to a method for documenting what is being monitored. Such documentation records first order learning and is an opportunity for second order learning.

Learning for transformative change

TIP aims to discover and develop radical alternatives to existing practice. Some of these alternatives already exist in niches. The development and promotion of these niches requires learning about what limits their power in challenging existing practices. As has been observed of innovation more generally, the more radical the innovation, the less well adapted it is likely to be for its ultimate effect. In other cases, the creation of new niches requires social or technological innovation aimed at overcoming dysfunctional or harmful features of current sociotechnical systems. Learning is central to any process of change, more so when it involves innovation and complex societal systems with diverse actors and rules.

Learning is the process by which humans acquire knowledge and skills that lead to change. However, as any teacher will tell you, individual knowledge is neither easily imbedded in others nor likely to be easily shared. Two humans having very similar experience are likely to take different lessons from this common experience. As a transdisciplinary pursuit, TIP requires the building of a common language and the use of this language to build shared understanding. In Component 5, the nature of the TIP knowledge commons and the communities of practice that can aid in this process are examined in more depth. Here, as part of better understanding of TIP evaluation process, it is important to distinguish between 1st and 2nd order learning.

In 1st order learning, we establish knowledge of cause and effect and knowledge about necessary conditions and superfluous corollaries. We learn about the limits

of translating imagination into reality and discover the capabilities and limitations of others in a social or organisational context. All of these types of learning occur within a body of assumptions and expectations that we inherit from our own experiences and what we have heard from others.

In 2nd order learning, we discover the limitations in our assumptions, expectations and, ultimately, our views of what is real or feasible. 2nd order learning requires critical and reflective thinking about why we believe our assumptions and are committed to particular logic. Successful 2nd order learning opens new doors of perceptions and understandings, it transforms our views about what is possible and how to achieve what was previously viewed as infeasible or only acknowledged as a possibility.

TIP Evaluation should aim to facilitate both 1st and 2nd order learning. Because we aim at radical transformation and fundamental change in the direction of system evolution, it is likely that 2nd order learning will prove more powerful in supporting transformative change as behavioural rules and behaviours are also changed. However, 2nd order learning can be an elusive target. It often occurs when least expected and indirectly as one reflects upon the limits and frustrations of existing practices. The exercises contained in this component and those in Component 4 aim to cultivate both 1st and 2nd order learning in individuals and organisations participating in TIP endeavours.

To summarise, TIP's aim of facilitating radical change requires substantial revision of traditional approaches to evaluation. Traditional approaches are based on the (often fictional) premise that outputs and outcomes can be pre-defined and achieved through concerted planned action that can be monitored for purposes of accountability. TIP focusses on outcomes related to learning that occur in the process of experimentation and the contribution of experimentation to changes in directionality (new rules) that are traceable to TIP transformative outcomes. To distinguish this approach to evaluation, we use the term formative evaluation. The resources in this component are all related to specifying and conducting formative evaluation.



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