

BOLD THINKERS DRIVING REAL-WORLD IMPACT

Emerging Trends and Methods in International Development Evaluation

Abt Associates March 2021



Welcome to the Webinar

- Introduction: Laura Peck
- Presentation: Sebastian Lemire
- Discussion:
 - Betsy Ness-Edelstein (U.S.)
 - Mbuso Jama (U.K.)
 - Lavinia Tyrell (Australia)
- Q&A



Presentation

- 1. What are the major trends that shape evaluation practice?
- 2. Within each trend, what are the approaches and methods?
- 3. Where do we go next?



Sebastian Lemire's co-authored IEG Methods Guide on evaluation methods for international development can be found here: https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/evaluation-international-development

Sebastian Lemire & Laura Peck's co-authored article about evaluation trends can be found here:

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/psj.12387



UN Global Pulse 2012 white paper on Big Data:

https://www.unglobalpulse.org/document/big-data-for-development-opportunitiesand-challenges-white-paper/

UN Global Pulse 2014 white paper on Big Data:

https://www.unglobalpulse.org/document/integrating-big-data-into-the-monitoringand-evaluation-of-development-programmes/

Cyber Society, Big Data and Evaluation:

https://www.amazon.com/Cyber-Society-Evaluation-Comparative-Policy/dp/1412864364

First published Big data analytics application:

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1356389018804259



Future Focus: Ambiguity Datasaurus Ambiguity Imade her duck" might mean: Imade her duck Imade her duck" might mean: Imade her duck Imade her duck

Check out some of Abt Associates' work on bias in Big Data Analytics here:

https://www.abtassociates.com/insights/perspectives-blog/tackling-bias-in-machinelearning-and-child-welfare-data

https://www.abtassociates.com/insights/podcast/data-racial-equity-how-do-weeliminate-bias-from-ai-machine-learning-and-more

Megatrend Two: Complexity

Dimensions of Complexity

Design

components, how difficult these are

to manualize or deliver, and whether

they are independent or interacting.

Adaptability Variant properties of the

intervention itself, such as how many

components are unspecified or

adaptable.

Components The number of

Delivery

Implementation Variant characteristics of delivery, such as mode, duration, frequency, and setting.

Levels of intervention The number of group, organizational, community or governmental levels acted upon.

Contextual

Variant properties of settings or context that modify intervention design, delivery and processes, including cultural factors and the presence of variable supplementary programming.

Adapted fromPetticrew, Anderson, et al. (2013)

Causal pathways Nonlinear relationships, systemic changes,

interactions and dependencies, and

feedback loops.

Outcome

Outcome patterns Emerging, early/delayed, and rapid/slow decay, and tipping points



New Directions for Evaluation on casual mechanisms: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/1534875x/2020/2020/167

Approaches and Methods







Approaches and Methods





IDEAS publication on evaluation for transformational change: https://ideas-global.org/transformational-evaluation/

The AEA 365 blog can be found here: <u>https://aea365.org/blog/</u>

Future Focus: Principled Practice

Principles

To deal with the complexities of global issues and problems we need principles to guide us, not a rule book to tie us down.

Patton on Blue Marble Evaluation



Reflective Practitioners



MEAL Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning

PMERL Participatory, Monitoring, Evaluation, Reflection & Learning

MEL Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

MERLA Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Learning and Adapting

M&E Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Innovations Program (MERLIN)

PMEL Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning

MERL Monitoring, Evaluation, Research & Learning

PMEAL Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning



Betsy commented in both the March 24, 2021 9:00AM U.S./EDT and March 25, 2021 8:00PM U.S./EDT webinars.



Mbuso commented in the March 24, 2021 9:00AM U.S./EDT webinar.



DfID white paper on broadening designs for impact evaluation: <u>https://www.oecd.org/derec/50399683.pdf</u>

To what extent do these methods and approaches in evaluations address existing issues faced by Evaluators or lessen the burden?



Evaluations are helping Evaluators 'unpack the context better and deeper', improve 'effect size estimations' and adds some 'flesh' to the Pyramid of Evidence. Caution – Observe ethics and evaluation principles;



Abt – Australia

Lavinia commented in the March 25, 2021 8:00PM U.S./EDT webinar.

On Lavinia's point about evaluation as a political act, and evaluating politics, consider this:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261699760 The Evaluation of Politics and the Politics of Evaluation

Audience Q&A

• Please answer these Qs for us in the chat:

- 1. What do you think is the most important trend?
- 2. What important trends have we missed?
- 3. What would you like a future webinar to address?

Please also your questions for the panel in the chat

Among the questions, attendees inquired about Covid-19, including about examining causality in that context.

You can find some of Abt's work related to Covid-19 here:

https://www.abtassociates.com/trending/covid-19-insights

The first seven of the videos in this series focus specifically on Covid-19:

https://www.abtassociates.com/abts-ask-expert-video-series [Laura Peck's considers the causal challenge]

Our blog on MEL in Covid is here:

https://abtgovernance.com/2020/05/28/can-we-understand-covid-19-fast-enough-and-well-enough-to-make-a-difference/

And you can find the associated working paper published here:

https://abtassocgovernancesoapbox.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/200514-uncertaintyand-covid19-a-turning-point-for-merl-final.pdf

Select References

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