

Evaluating Community Impact

CAPTURING AND MAKING SENSE OF COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC | OCTOBER 27-29, 2015

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Module 1:

The Dynamic Nature of Community Change



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Main Ideas

1. Moving the needle on community issues is a **complex** – not a simple -- challenge.
2. Making progress on complex issues requires **adaptive** responses.
3. The **stakes** for employing adaptive – rather than traditional — responses for complex issues **are high**.
4. Adaptive responses require an adaptive approach to **evaluation**.



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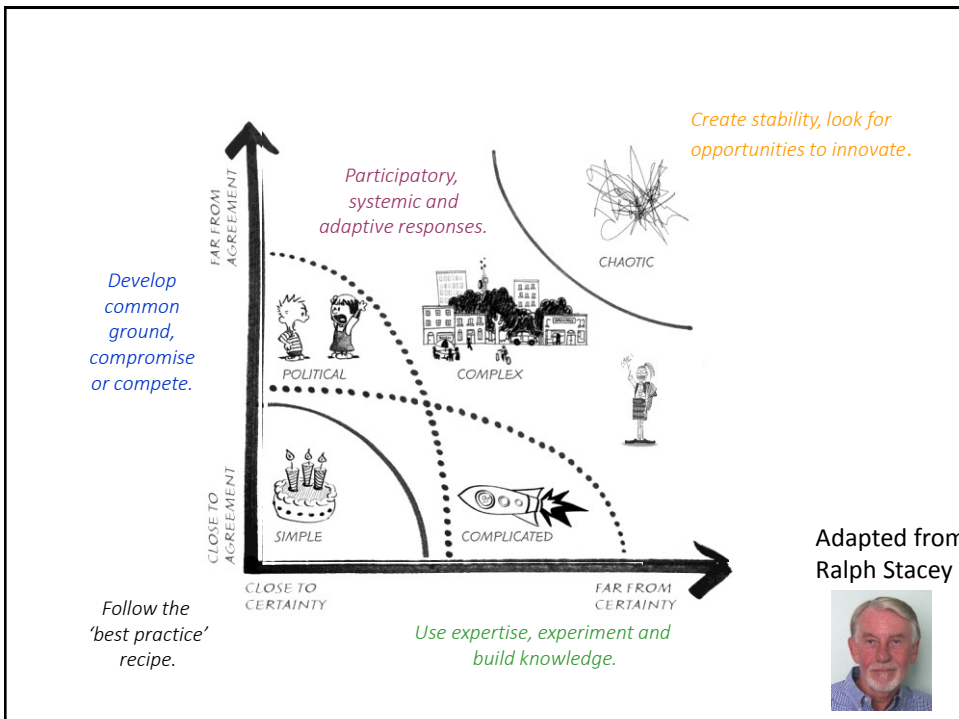


#1: Moving the needle on community issues is a **complex** – not a simple -- challenge.



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#2: Complex issues require **adaptive** responses.

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Adaptive Responses

Unique and shifting contexts require experimental & relentlessly evolving responses.



Multiple stakeholders requires participatory collaborative responses.

Inter-related, historical forces, underlying challenges requires systemic thinking and responses.

Adapted from:
 **REOS**

Participatory

- 360 degree intelligence
- Broad-scale ownership and action
- Social Justice (aka Nothing About Us Without Us)



Systemic

- Acknowledge interconnected factors
- Surface previously hidden leverage points
- Establish realistic expectations



Experimental

- Learn by doing, trial and error, iterate
- Strategy and plans emerge over time
- Adapt to endless shifts in context



#3

The **stakes** for employing adaptive – rather than traditional — responses for complex issues **are high**.

The Effects of Poor Fit to Complex Issues

APPROACH	ACTIVITIES
Simple	Serial consumer of “best practice”; fragmented and cookie cutter approaches.
Complicated	Not enough data, time, resources or expertise; perpetual planning; elaborate plans that have to be sold and unevenly implemented.
Political	Demonize the “other” stakeholders; low leverage compromises.
Chaotic	Avoid the problem altogether; try to “impose” solution



South Africa



World Bank
(Complicated Lens)

Meaningful solutions require sophisticated integrated national health care systems.

Case Study

Similar HIV Rates

Roughly same per capita income, HIV rates, health infrastructure, rural-urban split

Brazil



Brazilian Health Leaders
(Complexity Lens)

How do we build on what works already and ‘break some simple rules’ to get the outcome we want?

South Africa

- Our sophisticated, integrated national health care systems is our major tool.
- We cannot provide treatment to all when the drug costs are so high.
- We cannot afford resource to manage treatment compliance.
- With limited resources, focus more on prevention than treatment.
- It will therefore take a long time for the problem to work itself through.

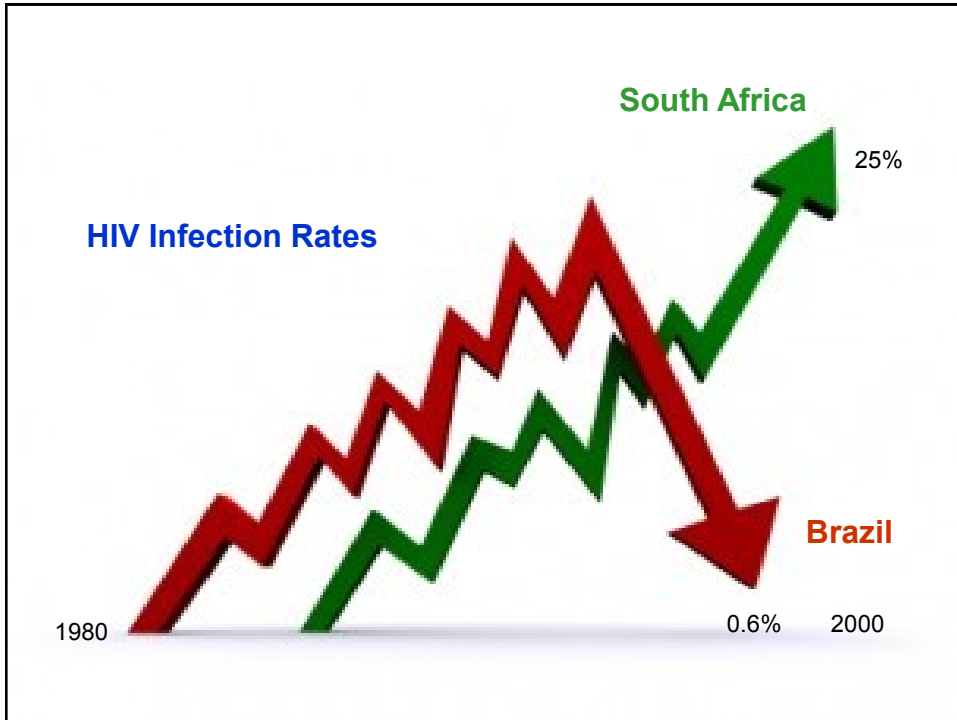
Brazil

- We need to find ways to use the resources we have – including those most affected and non-traditional stakeholders - to respond to the problem.
- How can we provide drugs to all by finding ways to reduce drug costs?
- What are some of the `rules` that prevent innovative solutions.
- Lets ensure that prevention will be part of the treatment.
- We need to focus on short and long term results.



Adaptive Responses in Brazil

- **BREAK RULES:** declared HIV a crisis, produced – and distributed for free -- “generic drugs” (cost reduced by 90%).
- **ENGAGE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS:** worked with Church clergy and alternative media to educate people about HIV and promote “safe sex”.
- **CO-DESIGNER WITH MOST AFFECTED:** created easy-to-follow drug protocols with citizen groups that allowed illiterate patients to administer own treatment with help with “local” and “trustworthy” hubs (e.g. NGO’s, etc.)



Small Group Plan | Ten Minutes

Imagine your table has been tasked to prepare a local response to the challenge described in your newspaper clipping.

Looking through the **lens of complexity and adaptive leadership**, what are some of the things your group needs to **keep in mind** as it moves forward?



#4

Community change efforts require a **developmental** – rather than traditional – approach to **evaluation**.

A Shift in Evaluation (1/3)

AREA	TRADITIONAL EVALUATION	COMPLEXITY-BASED, DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION
1 PURPOSE	Renders definitive judgements of success or failure	Provide feedback, generate learnings, support direction or affirm changes in directions
2 PRIMARY USER	Focused on and directed to external authorities and funders	Focused on providing innovators with evaluative support in their change efforts
3 RELATIONSHIP	Positions the evaluator outside the evaluation to assume independence and objectivity	Positions the evaluators as an internal, team functions integrated into action and ongoing evaluative processes
4 AUTHORITY	Evaluator controls the evaluation and determines the design based on the evaluator's perspective on what is important	Evaluator collaborates in the change efforts to design a process that matches the change group's philosophy, context and activities

A Shift in Evaluation (2/3)

AREA		TRADITIONAL EVALUATION	COMPLEXITY-BASED, DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION
5	Adaptability	An emphasis on assessing a group's fidelity to the original plan and locate blame for implementation failures	Learning to respond to lack of control and stay in touch with what's unfolding and thereby respond strategically
6	Scope	Zooms in to focus on discrete interventions (e.g. programs).	Zooms out to capture interventions and changes at multiple interconnected levels
7	Success	Measure success against pre-determined goals and criteria	Seeks to capture anticipated and unanticipated outcomes and to develop new measures and monitoring mechanisms as goals evolve
8	Design	Designs the evaluation based on linear cause-effect logic models, clear theories of change and fixed evaluation designs	Designs the evaluation to capture complex cause-effect relationships, emergent connections, shifting theories of change and evolving designs

A Shift in Evaluation (3/3)

AREA		TRADITIONAL EVALUATION	COMPLEXITY-BASED, DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION
9	Methods	Prefers quantitative methods, ideally random controlled trials	Usually mixed methods, hard and soft indicators, with a strong emphasis on obtaining 360 degree intelligence and diverse perspectives
10	Feedback	Emphasis on formal feedback mechanisms and communication channels	Acknowledges that informal or shadow feedback (e.g. gossip) can be equally useful in understanding the dynamics of a change effort, results and new learnings
11	Context	Aims to provide generalizable findings across time and different contexts	Aims to produce context-specific understandings and changes that inform ongoing innovation and adaptation
12	Spirit	Evaluators engenders fear of failure	Evaluation supports hunger for learning and data-informed adaptations to strategy

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Small Group Plan | Ten Minutes

What are your **biggest insights** about evaluating community change looking through lens of complexity and adaptive responses?

What new **questions emerge**?



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To learn more email: tamarack@tamarackcommunity.ca



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