

---

This item was submitted to [Loughborough's Research Repository](#) by the author.  
Items in Figshare are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise indicated.

## **A participatory framework for researching and evaluating communication for development and social change**

PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781118505328.ch18>

PUBLISHER

© John Wiley & Sons

VERSION

AM (Accepted Manuscript)

PUBLISHER STATEMENT

All rights reserved.

LICENCE

All Rights Reserved

REPOSITORY RECORD

Tacchi, Jo, and June Lennie. 2019. "A Participatory Framework for Researching and Evaluating Communication for Development and Social Change". figshare. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/23784>.

## ***A participatory framework for researching and evaluating communication for development and social change***

Submitted version of...

Tacchi, J. & Lennie, J. (2014) 'A framework for researching and evaluating communication for development and social change' In Wilkins, K, Tufte, T & Obregon, R. (Eds.) *Handbook on Development Communication & Social Change*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell. Pages 298-320.

Jo Tacchi and June Lennie, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

### **Introduction**

The growing dominance of project planning cycles and results-based management in development over the past 20 years has significant implications for the effective evaluation of communication for development and social change and the sustainability of these processes. These approaches to development and evaluation usually give priority to the linear, logical framework (or logframe) approach promoted by many development institutions. This tends to emphasize upward accountability approaches to development and its evaluation, so that development is driven by exogenous rather than endogenous models of development and social change. Such approaches are underpinned by ideas of pre-planning, and pre-determination of what successful outcomes look like. In this way, outcomes of complex interventions tend to be reduced to simple, cause-effect processes and the categorization of things, including people (Chambers and Pettit 2004; Eyben 2011). This runs counter to communication for development approaches, which prioritize engagement, relationships, empowerment and dialogue as important components for positive social change.

Alternative, participatory approaches to development, complexity theories and whole systems approaches understand social change as unpredictable and emergent. Social change is unknowable in advance, something to learn from and adapt to. The former instrumentalist approaches prioritize evaluation that is based on the categorization of abstract concepts, control of planned activities and inputs, and pre determined measures of success; the latter prioritize evaluation that captures relationships, openness, emergence, innovation and flexibility. The former are mainstream, considered rigorous, and largely based on standardized methods; the latter are alternative, considered (by proponents of the former) to lack rigour and based on a range of approaches, methodologies and methods selected according to each initiative and its context. The latter are considered most appropriate for evaluating communication for development and social change, and herein lies a double bind: On the one hand there is a need to promote the importance of communication for development and social change and demonstrate this through evaluation; on the other hand the most appropriate evaluation approaches are not well understood by mainstream evaluators whose preferred approaches are, in turn, considered inappropriate by communication for development practitioners.

The rigour of non-standardised, participatory approaches to evaluation needs to be established and the very conceptions of what rigour in evaluation means, challenged. This situation has been well rehearsed for a number of years (Chambers 2009; Guba and Lincoln 1989; Lennie 2006), and is what led us to develop a comprehensive, over-arching framework<sup>1</sup> for evaluating communication for development (Lennie and Tacchi 2013). This framework seeks to assert and demonstrate the rigour and appropriateness of alternative approaches to evaluation. It has seven key inter-related components: *participatory, holistic, complex, critical, emergent, realistic* and *learning-based*. Based on the latest thinking and research in the fields of international development, communication for development, evaluation and organizational change, the framework proposes a holistic, critical, learning-based approach to understanding development, social change, and the evaluation of communication for development.

The framework reinforces the case for effective two-way communication and dialogue as central and vital components of participatory forms of development and evaluation that seek positive social change. It highlights the need to attend to the local and wider context, gender and power relations, diversity and difference, and social and cultural norms in the evaluation process. Recent research suggests that this approach is critical for sustainable social change and development (Jallov 2012; Quarry and Ramirez 2009; Servaes et al. 2012).

In this chapter we first discuss evaluation of communication for development in relation to ideas around participation and social change, before presenting the framework for evaluating communication for development and social change, and the principles that underpin it. We then describe some of the most interesting current trends and debates in development evaluation that informed the development of the framework. In conclusion, we consider the implications for increasing the sustainability and effectiveness of communication for development and social change.

### **Evaluation and communication for development and social change**

Significant concerns have recently been raised that participation and ideas around long-term change are being overcome by an ascendance of accountancy and linear planning models (Eyben 2011; Mebrahtu, Pratt and Lönnqvist 2007; Quarry and Ramirez 2009). This is driven by agendas such as the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*, produced in 2005 at a high-level international meeting in Paris, hosted by the French Government and organized by the OECD. The declaration sets out five mutually-reinforcing principles for development: ownership, alignment, harmonization, results and mutual accountability. The premise of the Declaration was to reform how aid is delivered and managed, five years into the Millennium Development Goals' 15 year timeline. It emphasised targets and 'partnerships' between donors and aid recipients, the importance of aid effectiveness, and the need to measure and demonstrate it, with a goal of greater efficiency in the disbursement of aid funding (Conlin and Stirrat 2008). Yet, as Robert Chambers reminds us, through an analysis of the words used in the declaration, it displays a very strong underlying model of development and evaluation that prioritises things over people. The most commonly used words in the declaration include 'monitor', 'indicators', 'effective', 'performance', 'aid', 'donors', 'partners', 'manage', 'mutual harmonisation', 'programmes', 'assess', 'measure', and 'results'. Words never used include 'negotiate', 'evolve', 'agreements', 'optimize'

'outcomes', 'poor, vulnerable and marginalised people', 'interactions', 'relationships', 'trust', 'power', and 'conflict' (Chambers 2005). Evaluation becomes an exercise in accountancy whereas its function *should be* downward accountability and learning (Mebrahtu et al. 2007).

### **Participatory evaluation approaches**

For those of us working in communication for development and social change, who prioritise and follow participatory and capacity development approaches and principles, evaluation has a key role to play in ensuring that we don't ignore the lessons of the past in favour of mechanistic approaches to monitoring and evaluation (M&E), that technocratic approaches do not overwhelm participatory approaches and the involvement of those on the ground, and that innovative and creative approaches designed for learning rather than accounting are promoted. In short, evaluation and our framework can help us to be searchers rather than planners (Easterly 2006), listeners rather than tellers (Quarry and Ramirez 2009).

We define evaluative research as the way in which we determine, through systematic, regular research, the value that primary stakeholders place on development programmes and activities, and their outcomes. Evaluation is undertaken in order to improve development's effectiveness and sustainability, to help reach objectives, to make good decisions about future activities, and, in its participatory forms, as a means of engaging and empowering people in development activities and building their capacities in evaluation. In the framework, evaluation is seen as an ongoing, action learning, project development and improvement, and capacity development process. The aim is that this process becomes embedded into an organization's culture and its project planning and management processes, along with regular monitoring and critical reflection on the evaluation process. Evaluation enables mutual learning and understanding about the activities, opinions, values and experiences of diverse stakeholder groups (including community participants). It helps us to understand and identify the expected and unexpected outcomes of development activities against a clear understanding of an initiative's vision and objectives, based on community needs and aspirations, and its theory of change. Evaluation can identify and explain unexpected outcomes, and can help us learn from any failures to meet pre-planned activities to better develop new initiatives and innovations and improve relationships and future activities.

Participatory research and evaluation approaches are underpinned by interpretivist philosophy and a constructivist framework, in which evaluation is seen as leading to social action and positive change. In our framework, a participatory approach to evaluation is an essential principle. This means developing a partnership between stakeholders to collaboratively design and systematically implement evaluation processes, develop tools, set indicators (if they are used), and share concerns, experiences and learnings. This type of participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) differs from conventional M&E in attempting to include all relevant stakeholders (staff, community participants, NGOs, donors, researchers etc.) in all aspects of the process (Holte-McKenzie, Forde and Theobald 2006, 365). Our framework is congruent with new evaluation and planning approaches such as outcome mapping (Earl, Carden and Smutylo 2001), which has shifted from a focus on

assessing the impacts of a programme (defined as changes in state such as reduced conflict) towards changes in behaviours, relationships, actions and activities of people, groups and organizations. The focus of this realistic approach is on more subtle changes that nevertheless 'are clearly within a programme's sphere of influence' (Earl et al. 2001, 10).

### **Complexity-based approaches to social change**

While there are many different perspectives on social change, we consider social change as non-linear, dynamic, emergent and complex. Social change in complex systems such as communities occurs through multi-level, inter-connected, inter-dependent, non-linear and unpredictable relationships and processes (Lacayo 2007; Ramalingam et al. 2008). This means that when change happens it is often disproportionate and unpredictable, making it hard to capture in any meaningful way using evaluation approaches based on predictable and linear processes that seek measurable outcomes. Understanding the local culture and context and the relationships between people, groups and organizations in that context, is therefore vital to understanding social change. Notions of social change that encompass complexity and difference recognize that technological changes and development interventions may have complex, diverse and often contradictory effects on different communities or groups of people such as women and the very poor.

Evaluating communication for development and social change requires that we attend not only to the potential benefits and possibilities of communication, technologies and media, but on the particularities of the contexts through and in which they are shaped and experienced. Social change is contextual. Effectively understanding social change requires considering broader dimensions of the process, beyond the 'social', to encompass the political, economic and cultural (Wilkins 2009, 4). It also requires a shift in focus from the impact of particular interventions on specific groups to changes in wider social and organizational systems. This entails an open, holistic and realistic yet critical approach to development and evaluation that draws on a wide range of related theories, concepts and approaches. Such an approach allows us to raise fundamental questions about the process of development and social change, and the assumptions that underpin different approaches to development and communication for development.

### **Critical perspectives on participation**

Communication for development intrinsically links communication with participatory development, for example, by insisting that communication relates to dialogue rather than message delivery. However, participation is a contested concept (Cornwall 2011) that can be grounded in democratic theory, although what constitutes democratic participation is also contested and varied. Participation 'first hit the development mainstream' (Cornwall 2008, 269) in the 1970s, and took hold in the 1980s. For some, the practice of participation in development is considered false, simply rhetoric, and incompatible with procedures and goals of aid organizations and their positions of power (Bailur 2007; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada 1998; White 1996). It has become a development buzzword (Cornwall and Brock 2005; Leal 2007), often assumed to be essential to development, and necessarily and intrinsically good. It holds both the potential for tyranny

(Cooke and Kothari 2001) and transformation (Hickey and Mohan 2004), because it implicates the political and exists in relations of power.

In communication and media studies, particularly in the era of Web 2.0, participation is a key concept, and yet is used to mean 'everything and nothing' (Carpentier 2011, 14). Ultimately, participation is about power and control and is an inherently political process (Cornwall 2008). Carpentier (2011) grounds the concept of participation in democratic theory to highlight the importance of power, but insists that this transcends institutionalized politics to permeate all realms of society. He stresses the intimate connection between participation, power and decision-making processes, and indicates the wide range of ways in which they can be variously articulated (Carpentier 2011, 16).

In our framework, participation means engagement by a range of stakeholders at all points in the development process, including evaluation. Indeed, because of its communicative aspects, communication for development has been shown to provide a mechanism for achieving the levels of participation, voice and choice that development more broadly often struggles to achieve (Tacchi 2009). Recognizing that participatory approaches to development and to evaluation inevitably bring with them issues of power, it is important to be alert to power dynamics and issues of inclusion and exclusion, empowerment and disempowerment. Participatory evaluation of communication for development will always, to some extent, involve challenging power relationships and structures. This is because it depends on actively engaging a range of people, encouraging voice but also prioritizing effective and active listening and respecting alternative forms of knowledge (Quarry and Ramirez 2009; Servaes 2008; Tacchi 2012).

### **Participatory framework for evaluating communication for development**

Four new conceptualisations of evaluation and shifts in evaluation practice underpin the framework and are significant to understanding and evaluating communication for development:

1. Evaluation is best considered and most usefully practised as an ongoing action learning and organizational improvement process.
2. There is a shift from proving impacts to improving development practices.
3. Evaluative processes can effectively support the development of innovations.
4. There is a shift from external to internal and community accountability.

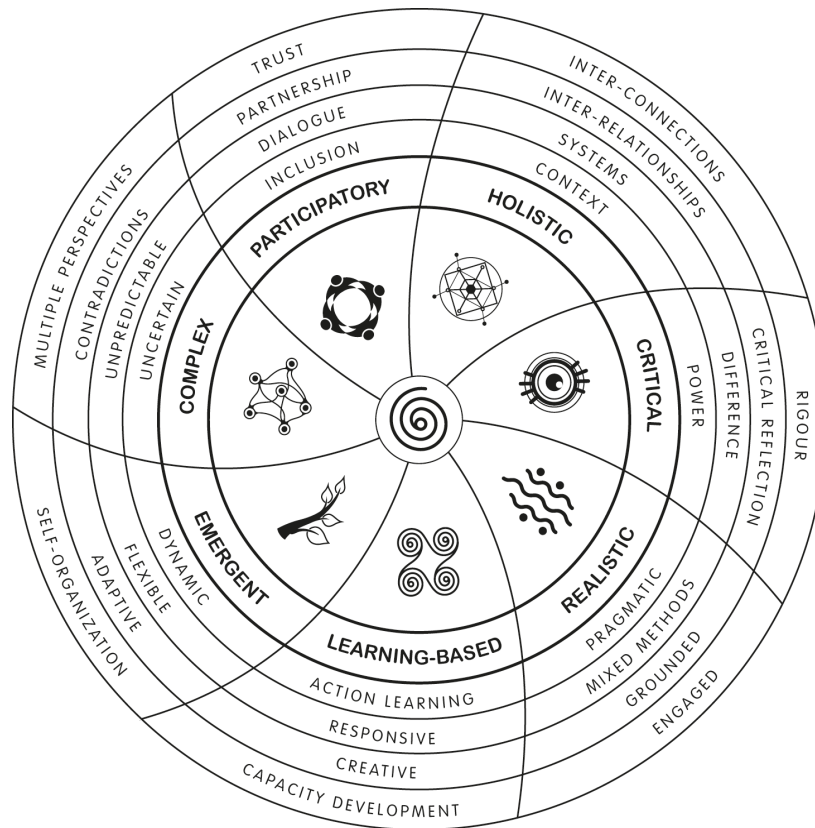
This approach focuses on outcomes rather than impacts that are measured through pre-defined, top-down indicators. This is because the complexity of communication for development and social change makes it very difficult to assess direct cause and effect impacts, and because the outcomes and ripple effects of C4D can be difficult to capture adequately using standard approaches. This approach requires keeping evaluation methodologies and systems as practical and simple as possible, and using strategies such as ongoing meta-evaluation and critical reflection to improve evaluation capacities and practices (Lennie et al. 2012).

Our framework emphasises processes, principles and values such as inclusion, open communication, trust and continuous learning. It recognises the complex, emergent nature of processes of social change and the need for a dynamic, open, flexible approach. The framework comprises seven inter-related components: *participatory, holistic, complex, critical, emergent, realistic, and learning-based*, with a set of principles underlying each component (see Figure 1). It is designed to be practically accessible and theoretically and methodologically rigorous, and draws on work that promotes innovative and creative approaches to research, monitoring and evaluation, and alternative paradigms of development.

The framework is based on concepts and principles derived from systems and complexity theory (discussed in the next section), action research, feminist and gender-sensitive evaluation methodologies, new approaches to social change, and holistic approaches to community development, organizational change, and evaluation capacity development. These approaches promote ongoing learning from and continuous listening to a broad diversity of participants and stakeholders. In this section we describe the framework and its seven key components along with some thoughts on its implementation. The framework is presented in greater detail in Lennie and Tacchi (2013).

Key purposes of the framework include to:

- Guide the ongoing development and improvement of communication for development and social change;
- Help to conceptualize communication for development in realistic ways and to clarify solutions to complex social problems;
- Enhance capacity development in evaluation within organizations and communities, from grassroots to management levels, and develop learning organizations;
- Encourage long-term engagement in evaluation processes to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of communication for development; and
- Improve mutual understanding and relationships among diverse stakeholders involved in communication for development and its evaluation.



**Figure 1: Key components and concepts in the framework for evaluating C4D**

## The seven framework components

### *Component 1: Participatory*

The concept of participation is fundamental to communication for development. A participatory approach is, therefore, central to the framework. This will help to ensure ongoing development and improvement of initiatives and policies in ways that better meet community needs and aspirations; increased evaluation capacities; greater utilization of evaluation findings and learnings; and empowerment of participants. A participatory approach is considered fundamental for effectiveness, innovation and sustainability of communication for development. The knowledge and experience of local participants is drawn on, as well as relevant experts and outsiders. This approach includes an action component to continuously develop and improve communication for development and evaluation processes.

This approach is consistent with the values, principles and aims of communication for development. Underlying principles of this component of the framework include:

- Evaluations are undertaken in partnership with community members and other stakeholders, and, wherever possible, involve long-term engagement with those groups.
- Evaluation aims to facilitate continuous and active participation in all aspects and stages of the evaluation, through dialogue, feedback and mutual learning. Creative and engaging communication methods are used wherever possible.



- Evaluations use processes that are culturally and socially appropriate, not rushed, and based on mutual trust, open communication and transparency.
- Evaluation is as inclusive as possible of a diversity of social groups and every effort is made to include a range of voices and experiences.
- Evaluation processes respect, legitimize and draw on the knowledge and experience of community members and stakeholders, as well as relevant experts and outsiders.
- Evaluations are based on an appreciation of the long-term benefits of taking a participatory and inclusive approach.

While participatory approaches to evaluation are particularly well-suited to communication for development, they may appear to cost more in time and resources than non-participatory approaches, and the political will to invest in these approaches is often weak or absent (Parks et al. 2005, 13). There are also issues with the dominance of quantitative approaches and the entrenched use of tools such as the logframe approach, which are seen by some as incompatible with alternative, participatory approaches to evaluation (Earle 2003; Joseph 2011). In this context, it is important to take a long-term view of the evaluation process and the benefits of adopting a participatory approach. In the long run, participatory approaches are often less costly when their many benefits are considered. We return to this point in our conclusion.

### *Component 2: Holistic*

In the framework, evaluation is based on an understanding of wider social, cultural, economic, technological, organizational and institutional systems and contexts within, and in relation to which the communication for development activities take place. Organizations and communities are seen as greater than the sum of their parts. This approach includes analysis and understanding of the inter-relationships, inter-connections and networks between the various organizations, groups and agents involved in an initiative, directly or indirectly. It also considers the boundaries and local communicative ecologies (see below), including communication flows and barriers, within which an initiative operates.

Underlying principles of the holistic component of the framework include:

- Evaluation recognizes that social, cultural and economic systems within which communication for development is happening are dynamic, historical and capable of continuous transformation and change.
- Evaluation aims to describe and understand how wider systems and networks operate.
- Evaluations include continuous monitoring of the local communication environment.
- Evaluation capacity development is seen as a long-term process that focuses on the whole organization and aims to improve coordination, cooperation and collaboration between internal and external agents and groups.

### *Component 3: Complex*

Complexity theory (described in more detail below) and complexity-based research and evaluation approaches such as developmental evaluation (Patton 2011) and outcome mapping (Earl et al. 2001) offer valuable alternatives to understanding how development

and social change actually occur (Byrne and Vincent 2011; Miskelly et al. 2009; Papa, Singhal and Papa 2006; Ramalingam et al. 2008). The framework recognises that social change and communication for development are complex and involve processes that are often contradictory and challenging. The evaluation process recognizes that communication for development is often undertaken in social, economic and cultural contexts with high levels of social conflict, and involves people and organizations with multiple perspectives and agendas. Impacts and outcomes, therefore, are often unpredictable or unknowable in advance. As a result, evaluation approaches need to be flexible, participatory, creative and well-planned and facilitated in order to adequately take complexity into account.

Underlying principles of the complex component of the framework include:

- Evaluation recognizes that social change is complex and that many social systems operate in ways that are non-linear, unpredictable, chaotic, disorderly and emergent.
- Evaluation takes the challenges, contradictions and paradoxes that often characterize the process of social change into account.
- Evaluation design recognizes that communication for development is often undertaken in contexts with high levels of social conflict, and involves people and organizations with multiple perspectives and agendas.
- Where appropriate, evaluation attempts to understand how and why social change happens. This includes an analysis of social and organizational norms and other contextual factors that affect the process of social change.
- Evaluation design and an initiative's theory of change are flexible and evolving and assume that outcomes are often unpredictable or unknowable in advance.

#### *Component 4: Critical*

The framework requires actively and explicitly addressing issues of gender, caste, ethnicity, age and other relevant differences, and unequal power and voice among participants. Many contemporary participatory evaluation approaches openly acknowledge and take into account the political nature of research and evaluation practices and differences between participants, particularly those related to gender, power and knowledge (Burns 2007; Hearn et al. 2009; Lennie 2005). Nevertheless, gender is in danger of slipping from the international development agenda (Newton 2011), suggesting the need for more effective evaluation approaches that focus on gender. Local social norms and the challenges, contradictions and paradoxes that often characterise the process of social change need to be critically assessed, and evaluation carried out based on an awareness of the strengths and limitations of various evaluation approaches, methodologies and methods, including participatory approaches. Being open to negative findings and learning from 'failure' are also important.

Underlying principles of the critical component of the framework include:

- Evaluation openly and sensitively addresses issues of gender, ethnicity and other relevant differences and unequal power and voice among participants.
- Evaluation data are disaggregated by gender, caste, educational levels and other relevant differences.

- Evaluation design is based on an understanding of the strengths and limitations of various methodologies and methods, including participatory methodologies and methods.
- Evaluation methodologies and methods are culturally appropriate and used in culturally sensitive ways.
- Evaluation includes processes that enable those involved to critically reflect on and learn from their experiences.

#### *Component 5: Emergent*

In the framework, social change and the outcomes of communication for development are seen as non-linear, dynamic, messy, and unpredictable processes. An emergent approach recognises the dynamic nature of communities and local contexts. Evaluation processes themselves must be dynamic, and flexible, adaptive, alert to critical incidents and tipping points. Principles and processes such as self-organization, powerful listening, and continuous feedback loops are important. The concept of emergence describes how ‘the behaviour of systems emerges – often unpredictably – from the interaction of the parts, such that the whole is different to or greater than the sum of the separate parts’ (Ramalingam et al. 2008, 8). Emergence is also about ‘giving up control, letting the system govern itself as much as possible, letting it learn from the footprints’ (Johnson 2001, in Patton 2011, 126). This emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to developing and evaluating initiatives and the significance of *self-organization* for effective social change and development (Chambers 2008; Lacayo 2006; Ramalingam et al. 2008).

Underlying principles of the emergent component of the framework include:

- Evaluation processes, tools and methods (including theories of change) are dynamic and flexible, and can be adapted to the needs of communication for development initiatives and organizations.
- Evaluation is capable of capturing unexpected, unpredictable and self-evolving changes and wider ripple effects on both intended beneficiaries and others.
- Evaluation focuses on *progress* towards social change and the *contribution* of communication for development and is alert to critical incidents and tipping points.
- Evaluation aims to contribute to developing effective, innovative and sustainable communication for development initiatives and continuously improving them through feedback loops.

#### *Component 6: Realistic*

There are often unrealistic demands, targets and timeframes for the impact assessment process. Donors often want to see results in an unreasonably short timeframe. We, therefore, identified a need to take a more realistic, long-term view of the outcomes of communication for development and its evaluation. Evaluation approaches and methods must be grounded in local realities, and based on methodological pluralism. The aim here is to increase the usefulness of evaluation results, which should focus on intended, unintended, expected, unexpected, negative and positive change. Systems and complexity theories (discussed below) can help us to conceptualise, understand, and evaluate complex

development interventions in more realistic ways. For the framework, the focus is on the actual process of development and change and the networks of relationships and complex contextual factors that influence people's behaviour, actions, emotions and decision-making (Patton 2011, 117-118).

Underlying principles of the realistic component of the framework include:

- Evaluation is based on a realistic, long-term perspective of evaluation and social change.
- Evaluation methodologies, methods and tools are as simple, practical, responsive and rigorous as possible, and grounded in local realities (because of a recognition of the complex nature of social change).
- Evaluation planning and the selection of methodologies, methods and indicators involve openness, freedom, flexibility and realism – what is achievable is considered.
- Wherever possible, evaluations use a mixed methods approach and triangulation.
- Evaluation processes produce action-oriented knowledge, consensus about further action, and agreed visions of the future.
- Evaluation processes ensure a high level of independence, integrity and honesty.

#### *Component 7: Learning-based*

Evaluation is increasingly seen as an integral component of development initiatives and a means of fostering continuous learning, evaluative thinking and an evaluation culture within organizations. Actively engaging in evaluation can often result in positive changes to an organization, including to its capacity, processes and culture (Horton et al. 2003; Patton 2008). These wider effects of evaluation are significant, given the identified need for long-term evaluation capacity development at all levels of development organizations (Bamberger 2009; Lennie and Tacchi 2013). The learning-based component aims to facilitate and encourage continuous learning, mutual understanding, empowerment, creative ideas and thinking, and responsiveness to new ideas and different attitudes, values and knowledge. This helps to develop the wide range of evaluation capacities that are required in this approach, and to create learning organizations. The process includes regular critical reflection and ongoing meta-evaluation in order to learn from experience.

Underlying principles of the learning-based component of the framework include:

- Evaluations are based on action learning and participatory action research principles and processes.
- Evaluation processes aim to foster the development of learning organizations by improving organizational evaluation systems and capacities, and contribute to the development of effective policies, strategies and initiatives that address complex development goals.
- Evaluation aims to facilitate continuous learning, mutual understanding, creative ideas, and responsiveness to new ideas and different attitudes, values and knowledge.
- Evaluation is open to negative findings and weaknesses, and learns from 'failures'.

#### **Implementing the framework**

Effectively implementing the framework requires a receptive organizational and community context and culture. Staff at all levels and relevant stakeholders and community members need to be willing to engage in constant reflection and learning in order to continually develop and improve organizational systems and communication for development initiatives in ways that meet community, organizational and stakeholder needs, goals and visions of the future. The support of management and a commitment to long-term engagement in the evaluation process is particularly important. The framework itself does not specify which methodologies and methods will be appropriate for specific evaluations, but frames an overall approach that can guide the design of evaluation, and the selection of methodologies and methods, taking a critical approach that considers their strengths and limitations.

It may be useful to conduct an evaluability assessment as part of the process of implementing the framework. This assessment helps to identify “whether a programme is in a condition to be evaluated, and whether an evaluation is justified, feasible and likely to provide useful information” (UN Women 2010). Those involved in designing the evaluation need to be aware of the key elements involved in assessing the evaluability of communication for development initiatives. These usually relate to the design of the initiative, availability of information, and the conduciveness of the context. Without these elements, an evaluation is unlikely to be useful and more work will be required to “generate all the necessary conditions to be evaluated” (UN Women 2010).

Identifying key stakeholders or boundary partners (Earl et al. 2001) is important. These are the people whose active participation is contingent to achieving the changes or outcomes that are sought from the communication for development initiative. It is also important to clarify what key participants and stakeholders (including funders) expect from an evaluation and what its purpose is. The framework should help ensure that the evaluation produces useful outcomes and learnings for all involved in the initiative. Evaluation findings and feedback should be used to develop and improve the initiative, and provide better understanding of the process of social change and the role of communication for development in bringing about change. Our critical review of the theory of change (ToC) approach and the logframe approach suggests that developing a dynamic, moving ToC is more appropriate for the evaluation of complex communication for development initiatives compared with the linear logframe approach, which is more suited to the evaluation of short-term initiatives focused on simple problems. The ToC approach is recommended as it can help us to imagine new solutions to development problems, from new perspectives, and to analyse and plan action related to transformative change, using ‘flexible thinking-action logic’ (Retolaza 2011, 4).

It is important to be realistic about what kinds of outcomes can be expected from communication for development initiatives within certain timeframes. There is also a need to consider the type of outcomes to be assessed, which groups or organizations are the focus of the evaluation, and what levels the evaluation will focus on (i.e., households, groups, organizations, whole communities). This process should be seen as open to revision as the evaluation proceeds and new learnings emerge that have implications for the focus of the evaluation.

Undertaking scoping research and/or communicative ecology research in selected communities can help build an understanding of the inter-relationships and inter-connections between various groups and organizations involved in the initiative, and the complex contextual factors that can affect outcomes. If conducted in a participatory way, this type of research can also help to generate community interest in and ownership of an evaluation. Processes such as communicative ecology mapping (Tacchi et al. 2007) enable participants and evaluators to understand and explore communication systems, patterns and issues in a community and identify barriers to information and communication access among different groups. Effective implementation of the framework also requires the establishment of good communication and feedback systems in order to communicate findings to different stakeholders and enable continuous sharing, discussion and critical reflection on evaluation learnings and outcomes. This process aims to achieve continuous learning and downward, upward and internal accountability. It also requires identifying the most effective and appropriate ways to present results to different stakeholder groups. This includes using creative or innovative methods such as digital storytelling that can enable those involved to advocate for communication for development and alternative forms of evaluation to mainstream evaluation specialists in development agencies.

The implementation process also needs to consider the many factors involved in selecting the most appropriate approaches, methodologies and methods to use. We advocate an approach that is participatory and involves openness, freedom, flexibility and realism, and is based on a good understanding of the strengths and limitations of different approaches, methodologies and methods. It is important to consider how well the approaches, methodologies and methods selected will engage primary stakeholders and audiences in the evaluation process, and which particular mix of approaches, methodologies and methods will best fit the evaluation outcomes being sought. Other factors to consider include the flexibility and robustness of the evaluation design, and the time, resources and support available.

Assessing the capacity development and support needs of organizations and key stakeholders involved in the evaluation will help to increase the effectiveness, quality and rigour of the overall evaluation process and the effective utilisation of evaluation outcomes. It is also highly beneficial to establish appropriate meta-evaluation processes to enable ongoing critical reflection and review of the effectiveness of the evaluation, and evaluation capacity development strategies. The aim here is to continually strengthen and improve these processes so that they better meet the needs of the people and organizations involved and help to create more sustainable, learning-oriented C4D organizations and initiatives.

### **Current trends in development evaluation**

There is growing interest within the development sector in using a broader range of evaluation approaches and methodologies that can more effectively meet the complex challenges and issues that evaluators face with the evaluation of development initiatives (Bamberger, Rao and Woolcock 2010; Conlin and Stirrat 2008; Stern et al. 2012). They include participatory, mixed methods, complexity, systems and theory-based evaluation

approaches. This has led to increasing tensions between the dominant, results-based management approach and emerging participatory, learning-based approaches to the evaluation of development interventions (Armytage 2011; Cracknell 2000). Divisive debates have emerged about the “paradigm war” between positivism and constructivism”, that are often centred round the logical framework approach (Armytage 2011, 268).

Current trends in development evaluation signal an interest in holistic and particular understandings of development effectiveness, paying attention to wholes and relationships rather than isolated interventions, and appreciating the need to consider the messiness of contexts with uneven and contradictory outcomes. Systems thinking and complexity theory are increasingly drawn upon, and centrally informed the development of our framework for evaluating communication for development.

Systems thinking is valuable for understanding complex or ‘wicked’ problems such as poverty, gender inequality, HIV/AIDS and domestic violence, and evaluating development activities and programmes (Burns 2007; Byrne 2009a and 2009b; Byrne and Vincent 2011; Eyben 2011; Hearn et al. 2009; Imam, LaGoy and Williams 2006; Patton 2008, 2011; Rihani 2002). Complexity theory meanwhile provides a sophisticated, realistic, effective and sustainable way of conceptualizing, implementing and evaluating development projects and initiatives (Chambers 2008; Jones 2011; Miskelly et al. 2009; Papa et al. 2006; Ramalingam et al. 2008; Rihani 2002; UKCDS 2011). Both of these approaches have significant implications for the ways in which we conceptualize, plan and implement communication for development and their evaluations. In this section we go through some of the aspects of systems thinking and complexity theory that inform the framework, and give brief examples to illustrate their relevance.

### **Systems thinking and relationships**

Systems thinking is a very broad field which includes complex adaptive systems, soft systems methodology and systems dynamics (Imam et al. 2006; Patton 2011; Rihani 2002). In contrast to linear, reductionist approaches to research and evaluation based on Newtonian thinking which tries to isolate variables and focuses more on ‘things’ (Chambers 2008, 172), a systemic perspective aims to understand the relationships between the different elements in a system and what happens when they interact and combine (Burns 2007, 29). Here, the whole is greater than the parts; the parts are inter-dependent and inter-connected through relationships (Patton 2008). Systems thinking assumes that social dynamics are not always visible through scrutinizing individual interactions because any explanation of a phenomenon cannot point to a single cause and effect (Hearn et al. 2009). Positive and negative outcomes have more to do with complex patterning of inter-relationships (Burns 2007).

As we have seen, the logical framework approach is based on a substantialist perspective in which the impacts of complex interventions are reduced to simple, linear, cause-effect processes. In contrast, from a relational perspective, individuals are embedded in relational contexts. While some development interventions, such as building bridges or schools, might lend themselves to a substantialist approach and a focus on bounded problems, where there is broad agreement on the nature of the problem and some mutual understanding of

the solution, many do not. Here, complexities of history, power and culture must be brought into the frame (Eyben 2011).

The communicative ecology approach (Lennie and Tacchi 2013; Hearn et al. 2009), for example, is based on a holistic, systems perspective. This places all modes of communication within a larger system, or ecology, with inter-relationships and inter-dependencies. In order to understand a single communicative action or channel or information flow it is necessary to understand how that action, channel or flow is situated in broader and complex communicative ecologies. The concept of the communicative ecology was developed to avoid a reductionist approach that insists on narrow focus and linear indicators and measures. This involved exploring the appropriateness of qualitative approaches to evaluating ICT for development initiatives. The location of the research was a community multimedia centre in Sri Lanka in 2002 (Slater, Tacchi and Lewis 2002).<sup>ii</sup> It was felt that the multimedia centre could only be adequately evaluated if it was understood as part of a broader and complex environment. In terms of the communication of information and ideas, this could only be understood in the broader context of all information and communication activities, channels and flows.

The multimedia centre consisted of a community radio station and an Internet-enabled computer centre. The computer centre was considered to be important as an access point for the massive amount of knowledge already available in 2002 via the world wide web. However, literacy levels, knowledge and interest in using computers, English language skills, and physical access to the centre meant that the most effective way to access and share knowledge from the web was via the radio station. Beyond this, we looked at where people usually turned for information and knowledge, and what differences there were between different ethnic groups, genders and ages. In fact, communicative ecologies' research allowed us to understand the importance of trust and face-to-face communication in the everyday lives of local people. Reaching out to excluded and marginalised communities was a lot more complicated than building a multi-media centre (Tacchi and Grubb 2007).

This tells us that in order to understand the potential and real impacts of media and communications in any situation, it is important to place this within a broader understanding of the whole structure of communication and information in people's everyday lives. A communication for development intervention takes place within already existing communicative ecologies, and how communication happens in everyday lives involves a range of media including roads, transport systems along with broadcasting, the press and telecoms. People's communicative ecologies include face-to-face communication in public and private spheres, and combine a range of different and often conflicting knowledge sources. Understanding which are trusted and relied on when people need to take action is important.

The concept of communicative ecologies can be used to emphasize the importance of understanding any communication activity within a wider understanding of the diversity, even within single locations, of people's lives, their access and use of communication technologies, and the availability of communication channels. Simple exercises in exploring how information and communication flows – who discusses what with whom, how news and local knowledge circulates – in the Sri Lankan research led to an appreciation of the



persistent dominance of face-to-face and very local flows of information and modes of communication.

Sensitivity to contextual factors, organizational norms and societal values is critical in systems-oriented evaluations (Patton 2011, 120). The critical reflection, problem solving and action learning skills that are required in systems approaches are increasingly seen as important to the effective, ongoing evaluation of development initiatives. However, at the same time, organizations that rely on funding from major donors have to contend with managerial and operational systems and processes based on the substantialist mode of thinking. Participatory forms of research and evaluation that take the wider context and inter-relationships into account such as empowerment evaluation, utilization-focused evaluation, ethnographic action research, feminist participatory communication research, and developmental evaluation have been influenced by, or can be seen as fitting well with systems perspectives (Lennie and Tacchi 2013). There are close synergies between action research and systems thinking, with both relying on a holistic and inter-connected view of the world (Burns 2007; Greenwood and Levin 2007; Hearn et al. 2009; Imam et al. 2006; Wadsworth 2010).

A systems perspective provides a valuable lens through which to understand the complex process of development and social change, helping us conceptualize development interventions realistically, to clarify messy solutions to complex social problems, and improve mutual understanding and relationships among a diversity of stakeholders (Imam et al. 2006; Miskelly et al. 2009; Ramalingam et al. 2008; Rihani 2002). As illustration, the concept of communicative ecologies takes a holistic approach, but understands that different perspectives within the same social groupings can produce different understandings because of differential social status, levels of access and engagement, and power. This encourages a focus on, and respect for, the complex inter-relationships within the local social and cultural context in which people live and the way 'each media initiative, event, and relationships will change and shift the power relations at both an individual and community level' (Hearn et al. 2009, 33).

### **Complexity theory and contexts**

Interest in complexity theory has grown rapidly in recent times. Indeed, Guijt et al. (2011, 13) suggest that it has become the latest 'buzzword' in the international development field. Development practitioners are increasingly questioning the dominance of top-down evaluation approaches based on simplistic, cause-effect models of development and change and associated 'managerial', 'results-based' methodologies which are increasingly imposed on development initiatives, often in inappropriate ways (see <http://bigpushforward.net>; Chambers 2008; Jones 2011; UKCDS 2011). The paradigm of complexity presents a major challenge to dominant approaches to development planning and evaluation that are based on linear, highly predictable systems, a sense of order and control over long-term events, top-down management, and assumptions of replicability (Rihani 2002).

Complexity theory seeks answers to fundamental questions about living, adaptable, dynamic systems. It brings together insights from a wide range of disciplines such as biology, anthropology, economics, sociology and management (Lacayo 2007). Systems are seen as

complex when they 'have large numbers of internal elements that interact locally to produce stable, but evolving, global patterns' (Rihani 2002, 6). It considers that many human and non-human systems operate in ways that are non-linear, unpredictable, chaotic, disorderly and emergent. It is not a single theory but the study of complex adaptive social systems, patterns of relationships, and how they change or remain the same. It debunks substantialist approaches to evaluation and, instead, privileges self-evolving and adaptive approaches (Papa et al. 2006).

The recent application of complexity theory to development and social change can be linked to the global interest in a range of alternative holistic, critical, feminist and postmodern perspectives, and participative and creative ways of fostering development and social and organizational change (Lennie and Tacchi 2013; Stevenson and Lennie 1995). Complexity theory can be considered as a kind of bridge between 'the naturalism of rationalism and the anti-naturalism of postmodernism', and demands a broad and open-minded approach (Geyer 2003, 15-16). It implies methodological pluralism, important for flexible and adaptive or responsive evaluation practice (Midgley 2006, 26), and is essential in the evaluation of complex development interventions.

Key concepts in complexity theory include:

- Complex systems are made up of inter-connected and inter-dependent elements which are fluid and dynamic, and characterized by change and continuous interaction. Following systems thinking, the whole is different to or greater than the sum of the separate parts.
- Interacting agents within systems respond and adapt to the system, to each other and to their environment. From these interactions, they make sense together, change and evolve over time. A system changes when it chooses to be disturbed by the information it receives and it understands the world differently.
- Complex systems are made up of non-linear and unpredictable relationships and processes. As a result, when change happens, it is often disproportionate and unpredictable. Strategies, therefore, need to be flexible enough to adapt. Small differences in the initial state of a system can lead to major differences later on.
- The free flow of diverse information is essential for a system to evolve. This means both diversity and participation are important. Feedback loops and processes affect how change happens; this process is unpredictable and non-linear.
- Under conditions of complexity, processes and outcomes are uncertain and unknowable in advance. This is due to turbulence in the environment and limits to our knowledge. The concept of emergence implies that a system must be given the freedom to govern itself as much as possible, and to learn from history and experience.
- The concepts 'chaos' and 'edge of chaos' suggest that, paradoxically, in complex adaptive systems, the more freedom there is in self-organization, the more order. In this process, order is emergent and self-organizing (Lacayo 2007; Patton 2011; Ramalingam et al. 2008; Rihani 2002).

Rihani (2002) argues that development and its underlying political, social and economic processes behave as complex, adaptive systems. This can be illustrated by an example from a project called LEARNERS<sup>iii</sup>, conducted in rural Queensland, Australia, from 2001-2004

(Lennie et al. 2004; Lennie 2005). Tara Shire was experiencing significant communication problems in the early 2000s, including poor telephone services, and no local newspaper or radio services. Most of the roads were unsealed, and public transport minimal. Many people were living in impoverished circumstances with few services and facilities. The Shire's extensive geographic area, small, scattered population and changing demographic profile had created a divided community. People were not working well together, many townships operated in isolation and there was little proactive leadership. Consequently, the area lagged behind in its development, including in the uptake of new communication and information technologies (C&IT).

A year before the project began, a new mayor and new shire councillors began providing positive leadership, instigated new community development initiatives, and actively began building a more cooperative and proactive community. Community leaders, particularly women, began generating motivation through community workshops, and successful events such as a multicultural festival. A committee of community representatives was formed to address key problems in the Shire. A number of C&IT initiatives were implemented, including a community website, public internet access, and computer and internet training and support services. Given this positive new energy and outlook, the Council expressed interest in using the LEARNERS process to help the community work more effectively together to reach its goals and to engage in more effective planning and evaluation. They hoped that the holistic and participatory LEARNERS process could help improve communication across the Shire and training and access to new C&IT.

The Council's community and economic development officer was enthusiastic about the project and used her good relationships with community organizations to generate interest and support. Following a community leaders' meeting, women and men working in diverse areas, including education, youth development and agriculture, participated in the project's first community workshop. A local project steering committee nominated the community website and IT training and access across the Shire as projects that would be evaluated using the LEARNERS process.

Local participants collaboratively planned the evaluation of these projects, analysed results of a survey of residents, and planned key actions. While some participants such as school principals understood it immediately, others found the LEARNERS process difficult to understand. Although there were some unintended and disempowering outcomes, the project helped to improve the networking, communication, and information sharing between community groups through email and the Shire website. More people began using C&IT, and new ways of using C&IT to overcome communication problems were identified. While the loss of the Council's IT Officer had a major impact on some project activities, participants expected to continue using and learning from the knowledge and capacities they had developed from engaging in the project. The LEARNERS project indicates the complex character of the Tara Shire's systems and inter-connections. It highlights the importance of pro-active community leadership, participatory planning and evaluation, and the effective use of new communication technologies in the process of community development, adaptation and change.

Systems and complexity theories have been used to understand complex interactions between people and organizations in a wide diversity of systems including agricultural extension, preventive health organizations and international development (Lacayo 2006; Ramalingam et al. 2008; Rihani 2002). The application of complexity theory to international development provides a realistic view of our world that can help us develop appropriate strategies for change. It improves our understanding of complex problems and gives us concepts and ideas that bring together old and new insights to develop new theories of change and greater appreciation of underlying processes (Jones 2011, viii). Its value is in providing a way of thinking about human relations that can help us form realistic and holistic understandings which, in turn, can lead to effective action – it makes us think about the way we are thinking (Burns 2007; Ramalingam et al. 2008).

### **In conclusion**

Communication for development proponents recognise that “without peoples’ participation, no project can be successful and last long enough to support social change” (Gumucio Dagron 2008, 70). Community participation in planning, decision-making, evaluation and implementation of communication for development, along with community ownership, are crucial for sustainability (Baulch 2008; Jallof 2012; Quarry and Ramirez 2009). Servaes et al. (2012, 102) suggest that “communication and information play a strategic and fundamental role” in sustainable development, arguing that a focus on culture and participation is crucial for sustainability. Tacchi (2009) shows how communication for development can provide a ‘mechanism’ for participation, and thus greater chance of sustainability, in development.

Participatory approaches that promote dialogue and engagement are often seen as costly, time consuming, and difficult to accommodate in well-defined plans and logframes (Balit 2010). Our framework insists that effective communication and participation is a central and vital component. While greater time and resources are often required to use participatory evaluation approaches and methodologies effectively, our framework takes the position that a critical, long-term view of the value of participatory approaches is required. Evaluation needs to be seen as an integral part of development initiatives and a means of fostering continuous learning, evaluative thinking and a culture of evaluation within organizations and communities. Local capacities for undertaking evaluation need to be developed. At the same time, it is important to be realistic, and to understand that, in practice, idealized notions of participation including and empowering everyone are not possible, and to think in terms of what Cornwall (2008, 276) calls “*optimum* participation: getting the balance between depth and inclusion right for the purpose at hand”. It is also important to recognize that participatory processes can serve to exclude people unless special efforts are made to include them (Tacchi and Grubb 2007; Lennie 2005), and that some people strategically or deliberately exclude themselves (Cornwall 2008, 279).

The framework promotes holistic, learning-based evaluation capacity development approaches, to develop learning organizations and communities. Learning organizations engage in constant reflection in order to continually develop and improve organizational systems and development activities in ways that meet community and stakeholder needs and goals, and their visions of the future (Raeside 2011). The process of engaging in well-

designed and implemented participatory research and evaluation can have significant effects in terms of the empowerment and capacity development of participants and stakeholders. It is important to critically consider issues of gender, power and knowledge to increase the effectiveness of these processes and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups. Creating sustainable communication for development that facilitates the engagement of disadvantaged groups such as poor people can be complex and time consuming. Baulch (2008) clearly demonstrates this in relation to the sustainability of community-based ICT centres in Indonesia. As Jallof (2012, 29) notes: "Sustainability is multi-faceted and complex". No participatory evaluation will be perfect (Newman 2008), but participatory approaches to the evaluation of communication for development will lead to improved and sustainable development initiatives and better long-term outcomes in terms of development and social change.

## **References**

Armytage, Livingston. 2011. "Evaluating Aid: An Adolescent Domain of Practice." *Evaluation*, 17 (3): 261-276.

Bailur, Savita. 2007. "The Complexities of Community Participation in ICT for Development Projects". Paper presented at the *9th International Conference on Social Implications of Computers in Developing Countries*, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 28-30 May 2007.

Balit, Silvia. 2010. "Communicating with Decision Makers." *Glocal Times*, 14. <http://webzone.k3.mah.se/projects/gt2/viewarticle.aspx?articleID=181&issueID=21>>. Accessed 28 May 2012.

Bamberger, Michael. 2009. *Institutionalizing impact evaluation within the framework of a monitoring and evaluation system*, Washington DC: USA: World Bank. [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTEVACAPDEV/Resources/4585672-1251461875432/inst\\_ie\\_framework\\_me.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTEVACAPDEV/Resources/4585672-1251461875432/inst_ie_framework_me.pdf). Accessed 28 May 2012.

Bamberger, Michael, Vijayendra Rao, and Michael Woolcock. 2010. *Using Mixed Methods in Monitoring and Evaluation: Experiences from International Development*. Manchester: World Bank Development Research Group.

Baulch, Emma. 2008. "Sustainability." In *Finding a Voice: Themes and Discussions*, edited by Jo Tacchi and M.S. Kiran, 93-108. Delhi: UNESCO.

Burns, Danny. 2007. *Systemic Action Research: A Strategy for Whole System Change*. Bristol, UK: The Policy Press.

Byrne, Ailish. 2009a. "Pushing the boundaries: New thinking on how we evaluate". *MAZI*, 19. Online. Available <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/mazi-articles.php?id=399>. Accessed 28 May 2012.

Byrne, Ailish. 2009b. *Evaluating social change communication*. Expert group meeting, Brighton, England: The Institute of Development Studies, Online. Available <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdfs/evaluating%20social%20change%20communication%20brighton%20may%2009%20-%20unaids.pdf>. Accessed 28 May 2012.

Byrne, Ailish, and Robin Vincent. 2011. *Evaluating social change communication for HIV/AIDS: New directions*, Discussion paper by the Communication for Social Change Consortium for UNAIDS, Geneva.

Carpentier, Nico. 2011. "The concept of participation: If they have access and interact, do they really participate?" *Communication Management Quarterly*, 21: 13–36.

Chambers, Robert. 2005. "Words, Power and the Personal in Development". In *Language and Development: Africa and Beyond*, Proceedings of the 7th International Language and Development Conference, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 26-28 October 2005, edited by Hywel Coleman, 119-129, Addis Ababa: British Council.

Chambers, Robert. 2008. *Revolutions in Development Inquiry*. London, UK: Earthscan.

Chambers, Robert. 2009. "Making the poor count: Using participatory methods for impact evaluation". In *Designing impact evaluations: Different perspectives*, edited by H White. Working Paper 4: The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation. Online. Available [http://www.3ieimpact.org/admin/pdfs\\_papers/50.pdf](http://www.3ieimpact.org/admin/pdfs_papers/50.pdf). Accessed 28 May 2012.

Chambers, Robert, and Jethro Pettit. 2004. "Shifting power to make a difference" In *Inclusive Aid: Changing Power and Relationships in International Development*, edited by L Groves and R Hinton. London, UK: Earthscan.

Conlin, Sean, and Roderick Stirrat. 2008. "Current challenges in development evaluation." *Evaluation*, 14 (2): 193-208.

Cooke, Bill, and Uma Kothari. eds. 2001. *Participation: The New Tyranny*. London, UK: Zed Books.

Cornwall, Andrea. 2008. "Unpacking 'Participation': Models, meanings and practices." *Community Development Journal*, 43 (3): 269–283.

Cornwall, Andrea. ed. 2011. *The Participation Reader*. London, UK: Zed Books.

Cornwall, Andrea, and Karen Brock. 2005. *Beyond Buzzwords "Poverty Reduction", "Participation" and "Empowerment" in Development Policy*, Overarching Concerns Programme Paper 10, Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

Cracknell, Basil. 2000. *Evaluating Development Aid: Issues, Problems and Solutions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Earle, Lucy. 2003. "Lost in the matrix: The logframe and the local picture", Paper presented at the *INTRAC's 5th Evaluation Conference: Measurement, Management and Accountability?* The Netherlands, 31 March-4 April, 2003. Online. Available <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/154/Lost-in-the-Matrix-The-Logframe-and-the-Local-Picture.pdf>. Accessed 29 May 2012.

Earl, Sarah, Fred Carden, and Terry Smutylo. 2001. *Outcome mapping: Building learning and reflection into development programs*, Ottawa: IDRC, Online. Available [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). Accessed 29 May 2012.

Easterly, William. 2006. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done so Much Ill and So Little Good*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Eyben, Rosalind. 2011. "Relationships matter: The best kept secret of international aid?" *CDRA An Annual Digest for Practitioners of Development 2010/2011*, Community Development Resource Association, Cape Town, 2011, Online. Available <[http://www.capacity.org/capacity/export/sites/capacity/documents/topic-readings/fa\\_cdra\\_digest.pdf](http://www.capacity.org/capacity/export/sites/capacity/documents/topic-readings/fa_cdra_digest.pdf)>. Accessed 5 December 2011.

Fraser, Colin. and Restrepo-Estrada, Sonia. 1998. *Communicating for Development: Human Change for Survival*. London, UK: I.B. Tauris Publishers.

Geyer, R. (2003) "Europeanization, complexity, and the British welfare state", paper presented at the *UACES/ESRC Study Group on The Europeanization of British Politics and Policy-Making*, Department of Politics: University of Sheffield, 19 September, 2003.

Greenwood, Davydd, and Morten Levin. 2007. *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Guba, Egon, and Yvonna Lincoln. 1989. *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Guijt, Irene, Jan Brouwers, Cecile Kusters, Ester Prins, and Bayaz Zeynalova. 2011. *Evaluation revisited: Improving the quality of evaluative practice by embracing complexity*, Wageningen: Centre for Development Innovation Wageningen University, Online. Available [http://capacity.org/capacity/export/sites/capacity/documents/topic-readings/110412-evaluation-revisited-may-2010\\_small-version.pdf](http://capacity.org/capacity/export/sites/capacity/documents/topic-readings/110412-evaluation-revisited-may-2010_small-version.pdf). Accessed 29 May 2012.

Gumucio Dagron, Alfonso. 2008. "Vertical minds versus horizontal cultures: An overview of participatory process and experiences." In *Communication for Development and Social Change*, edited by J Servaes. London: Sage.

Hearn, Greg, Jo Tacchi, Marcus Foth, and June Lennie. 2009. *Action Research and New Media*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Hickey, Samuel, and Giles Mohan eds. 2004. *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation*. London, UK: Zed Books.

Holte-McKenzie, Merydth, Sarah Forde, and Sally Theobald. 2006. "Development of a participatory monitoring and evaluation strategy." *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 29 (4): 365-376.

Horton, Douglas, Anastasia Alexaki, Samuel Bennett-Lartey, Kim Noele Brice, Dindo Campilan, Fred Carden et al. 2003. *Evaluating capacity development: Experiences from research and development organizations around the world*. The Hague: International Service for National Agricultural Research, Online. Available <http://web.idrc.ca/openbooks/111-6/> Accessed 29 May 2012.

Imam, Iraj, Amy Lagoy, and Bob Williams. 2006. 'Introduction', in Bob Williams and Iraj Imam (eds.) *Systems Concepts in Evaluation: An Expert Anthology*, American Evaluation Association  
<<http://preval.org/files/Kellogg%20enfoque%20sistemico%20en%20evaluacion.pdf>>.  
Accessed 24 May 2012.

Jallov, Birgitte. 2012. *Empowerment Radio. Voices Building a Community*. Gudhjem: Empowerhouse.

Jones, Harry. 2011. *Taking responsibility for complexity: How implementation can achieve results in the face of complex problems*, ODI Working Papers 330, June 2011, London: Overseas Development Institute, Online. Available <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=5275&title=complex-problems-complexity-implementation-policy>. Accessed 30 May 2012.

Joseph, Sam. 2011. "Changing Attitudes and Behaviour." In *Revolutionizing Development: Reflections on the Work of Robert Chambers*, edited by Andrea Cornwall and Ian Scoones, 217-224, London, UK: Earthscan.

Lacayo, Virginia. 2006. "Approaching social change as a complex problem in a world that treats it as a complicated one. The case of Puntos De Encuentro, Nicaragua." Master of Arts (Communication and Development) Thesis. Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

Lacayo, Virginia. 2007. "What complexity science teaches us about social change." *MAZI*, 10, Online. Available <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/mazi-articles.php?id=333>. Accessed 30 May 2012.

Leal, Pablo Alejandro. (2007) "Participation: the ascendancy of a buzzword in the neo-liberal era", *Development in Practice*, 17 (4):539-548.

Lennie, June. 2005. "An evaluation capacity-building process for sustainable community IT initiatives. Empowering and disempowering impacts." *Evaluation*, 11 (5): 390-414.

Lennie, June. 2006. "Increasing the rigour and trustworthiness of participatory evaluations: Learnings from the field." *Evaluation*, 6 (1): 27-35.



Lennie, June, Greg Hearn, Lyn Simpson, Emma Kennedy Da Silva, Megan Kimber, and Mary Hanrahan. 2004. *Building community capacity in evaluating IT projects: Outcomes of the LEARNERS Project*. Final Report, Creative Industries Research and Applications Centre and Service Leadership and Innovation Research Program. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology. Online. Available <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/archive/00004389/>. Accessed 13 February 2012.

Lennie, June, and Jo Tacchi. 2013. *Evaluating Communication for Development: A Framework for Social Change*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Lennie, June, Jo Tacchi, and Michael Wilmore. 2012. "Meta-evaluation to improve learning, evaluation capacity development and sustainability: Findings from a participatory evaluation project in Nepal." *South Asian Journal of Evaluation in Practice*, 1 (1): 13-28.

Mebrahtu, Esther., Pratt, Brian. and Lönnqvist, Linda. 2007. *Rethinking Monitoring and Evaluation: Challenges and Prospects in the Changing Global Aid Environment*, Oxford: INTRAC.

Midgley, Gerald. 2006. "Systems thinking for evaluation." In *Systems Concepts in Evaluation: An Expert Anthology*, edited by B Williams and I Imam, American Evaluation Association, Online. Available <http://preval.org/files/Kellogg%20enfoque%20sistematico%20en%20evaluacion.pdf>. Accessed 24 May 2012.

Miskelly, Clodagh, Annie Hoban, and Robin Vincent. 2009. *How can complexity theory contribute to more effective development and aid evaluation?* Dialogue at the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, London: Panos, Online. Available [http://panos.org.uk/wp-content/files/2011/03/Panos\\_London\\_Complexity\\_and\\_Evaluation\\_dialogueCK5gVc.pdf](http://panos.org.uk/wp-content/files/2011/03/Panos_London_Complexity_and_Evaluation_dialogueCK5gVc.pdf). Accessed 30 May 2012.

Newman, Kate. 2008. "Whose view matters? Using participatory processes to evaluate Reflect in Nigeria." *Community Development Journal*, 43 (3): 382–394.

Newton, Karen. 2011. "The 'problem' of gender and development evaluation in the Pacific." *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 11 (1): 26-37.

Papa, Michael, Arvind Singhal, and Wendy Papa. 2006. *Organizing for social change: A dialectical journey of theory and praxis*. New Delhi: Sage.

Parks, Will., Denise Gray-Felder, Jim Hunt, and Ailish Byrne. 2005. *Who measures change?: An introduction to participatory monitoring and evaluation of communication for social change*. New Jersey: Communication for Social Change Consortium, Online. Available [http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/who\\_measures\\_change.pdf](http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/who_measures_change.pdf). Accessed 29 May 2012.

Patton, Michael Q. 2008. *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton, Michael Q. 2011. *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Quarry, Wendy, and Ricardo Ramirez. 2009. *Communication for another development: Listening before telling*. London, UK: Zed Books.

Raeside, Ashley. 2011. "Are INGOs brave enough to become learning organisations?" In *How Wide are the Ripples? From Local Participation to International Organisational Learning, Participatory Learning and Action*, edited by H Ashley, N Kenton and N Milligan. 63: 97-102. London: The International Institute for Environment and Development. Online. Available <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/14606IIED.pdf>. Accessed 30 May 2012.

Ramalingam, Ben, and Harry Jones with Toussaint Reba and John Young. 2008. *Exploring the science of complexity: Ideas and implications for development and humanitarian efforts*. ODI Working Paper, London: ODI.

Retolaza, Inigo. 2011. *Theory of change. A thinking and action approach to navigate in the complexity of social change processes*, The Hague: HIVOS: Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation, Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.hivos.nl/%20content/download/70159/602460/version/1/file/2011RetolazaToCENG.pdf>. Accessed 22 March 2012.

Rihani, Samir. 2002. *Complex Systems Theory and Development Practice. Understanding Non-linear Realities*. London, UK: Zed Books.

Servaes, Jan. ed. 2008. *Communication for Development and Social Change*. London, UK: Sage.

Servaes, Jan, Emily Polk, Song Shi, Danielle Reilly and Thanu Yakupitijage. 2012. Towards a framework of sustainability indicators for 'communication for development and social change' projects. *International Communication Gazette*, 74 (2), 99-123.

Slater, Don., Jo Tacchi, and Peter Lewis. 2002. *Ethnographic Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Multimedia Centres: A Study of Kothmale Community Radio Internet Project, Sri Lanka*, London: DFID.

Stern, Elliot, Nicoletta Stame, John Mayne, Kim Forss, Rick Davies, and Barbara Befani. 2012. *Broadening the range of designs and methods for impact evaluation*. DFID Working Paper 38.

Stevenson, Tony, and June Lennie. 1995. "Emerging designs for work, living and learning in the communicative age." *Futures Research Quarterly*, 11 (3): 5-36.

Tacchi, Jo. 2009. "Finding a Voice: Digital storytelling as participatory development." In *Story Circle: Digital Storytelling around the World*, edited by J Hartley and K McWilliams. Oxford, UK?: Wiley-Blackwell.

Tacchi, J. 2012. "Open content creation: The issues of voice and the challenges of listening." *New Media and Society*, 14 (4): 652-668.

Tacchi, Jo and Ben Grubb. 2007. "The case of the e-tuktuk". *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, 125: 71-82.

Tacchi, Jo, Joann Fildes, Kirsty Martin, Kiran Mullenahalli, Emma Baulch, and Andrew Skuse. 2007. *Ethnographic action research training handbook*, Online. Available <http://ear.findingavoice.org/>. Accessed 30 May 2012.

UKCDS. 2011. *Note from UKCDS workshop "Exploring the potential of complexity sciences in international development."* London: Wellcome Trust, Online. Available [http://ukcds.org.uk/\\_assets/file/UKCDS%20Complexity%20Workshop%20meeting%20report.pdf](http://ukcds.org.uk/_assets/file/UKCDS%20Complexity%20Workshop%20meeting%20report.pdf). Accessed 26 May 2012.

UN Women. 2010. *A manager's guide to gender equality and human rights responsive evaluation*. New York, NY: UN Women, [http://unifem.org/evaluation\\_manual/](http://unifem.org/evaluation_manual/) Accessed 30 May 2012.

Wadsworth, Yoland. 2010. *Building in Research and Evaluation Human Inquiry for Living Systems*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

White, S. 1996. "Depoliticising development: The uses and abuses of participation." *Development in Practice*, 6 (1): 6-15.

Wilkins, Karen. 2009. *What's in a name? Problematizing communication's shift from development to social change.* *Glocal Times*, 13. <http://webzone.k3.mah.se/projects/gt2/viewarticle.aspx?articleID=173&issueID=20>. Accessed 30 May 2012.

---

<sup>i</sup> The development of our framework was informed by a number of research projects funded by a range of sources. As well as those specifically mentioned in this chapter, they included Finding a Voice, supported by the Australian Research Council (ARC), UNESCO and UNDP, Assessing Communication for Social Change, supported by ARC, Equal Access and USAID, and the development of a resource pack for research, monitoring and evaluation of communication for development, supported by a UN Inter-Agency Group and led by UNICEF. Details of these projects can be found in Lennie and Tacchi (2013).

<sup>ii</sup> This research project was funded by DFID and supported by UNESCO.

<sup>iii</sup> 'Evaluating a model to improve the sustainability and success of rural community development initiatives that use new communication technologies' (the LEARNERS project) was funded by the Australian Research Council (C00107782), the Federal Department of Family and Community Services, Learning Network Queensland, The Office for Women (Queensland) and Queensland University of Technology. The acronym LEARNERS stands for 'Learning, Evaluation, Action & Reflection for New technologies, Empowerment and Rural Sustainability'.