

OVERARCHING TOPICS, CONCEPTS

Complexity	
Workshop title	Dealing with complexity in development evaluation
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Affiliation	Independent consultant, UNESCO, IEG World Bank
Target level	Intermediate
Workshop content	<p>Complexity can be addressed through innovative evaluation approaches that combine a variety of methods, and build on recent progress in the field of systems thinking, as well as emergent data. Practical tools and techniques are available to assess the outcomes from a complexity-responsive perspective. Many, but not all, of the proposed approaches involve “unpacking” programs into a set of components or elements that are easier to evaluate. The challenge is then to “repack” the findings to recognize complexity and avoid simplification while addressing relevant evaluation questions. The workshop also reviews the contribution of complexity science to evaluation practice. A wide range of practical evaluation tools are discussed, and illustrated with examples from the field, including: theory-based approaches; rating systems (often based on OECD/DAC criteria); and innovative Web-based approaches.</p>
Learning outcomes	<p>Upon successfully completing this course, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be familiar with the concepts of complexity and how they apply to development evaluation. • Understand why established evaluation methodologies are not adequate (when used on their own) to evaluate the outcomes of (complex) development interventions. • Assess the level of complexity of any development program and its context and to judge whether a complexity-responsive evaluation approach is required. • Be familiar with the different approaches to complexity-responsive evaluation. • Apply the 5 step “unpacking” methodology.