AEA Conference: Evaluation in Complex Ecologies

Description

Tweet

Relationships, Responsibilities, Relevance
26th Annual Conference of the American Evaluation Association
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
Conference: October 24-27, 2012
Workshops: October 22, 23, 24, 28

â??Evaluation takes place in complex global and local ecologies where we evaluators play important roles in building better organizations and communities and in creating opportunities for a better world. Ecology is about how systems work, engage, intersect, transform, and interrelate. Complex ecologies are comprised of relationships, responsibilities, and relevance within our study of programs, policies, projects, and other areas in which we carry out evaluations.

Relationships. Concern for relationships obliges evaluators to consider questions such as: what key interactions, variables, or stakeholders do we need to attend to (or not) in an evaluation? Evaluations do not exist in a vacuum disconnected from issues, tensions, and historic and contextualized realities, systems, and power dynamics. Evaluators who are aware of the complex ecologies in which we work attend to relationships to identify new questions and to pursue new answers. Other questions we may pursue include:

- Whose interests and what decisions and relationships are driving the evaluation context?
- How can evaluators attend to important interactions amidst competing interests and values through innovative methodologies, procedures, and processes?

Responsibilities. Attention to responsibilities requires evaluators to consider questions such as: what responsibilities, inclusive of and beyond the technical, do we evaluators have in carrying out our evaluations? Evaluators do not ignore the diversity of general and public interests and values in evaluation. Evaluations in complex ecologies make aware ethical and professional obligations and understandings between parties who seek to frame questions and insights that challenge them. Other questions we may pursue include:

- How can evaluators ensure their work is responsive, responsible, ethical, equitable, and/or transparent for stakeholders and key users of evaluations?
- In what ways might evaluation design, implementation, and utilization be responsible to issues pertinent to our general and social welfare?

Relevance. A focus on relevance leads to evaluations that consider questions such as: what relevance do our evaluations have in complex social, environmental, fiscal, institutional, and/or programmatic ecologies? Evaluators do not have the luxury of ignoring use, meaning, of sustainability; instead all evaluations require continual review of purposes, evaluands, outcomes, and other matters relevant to products, projects, programs, and policies. Other questions we may pursue include:

- How can evaluators ensure that their decisions, findings, and insights are meaningful to diverse communities, contexts, and cultures?
- What strategies exist for evaluators, especially considering our transdisciplinary backgrounds, to convey relevant evaluation processes, practices, and procedures?

Consider this an invitation to submit a proposal for Evaluation 2012 and join us in Minneapolis as we consider evaluation in complex ecologies where relationships, responsibilities, and/or relevance are key issues to address.â?•

Category

1. Conferences
2. Types of Events

Tags

1. AEA
2. complexity
3. ecology
4. relationships

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