

# The Developmental Evaluation Toolkit

## DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Developmental evaluation questions sometimes focus on the same issues as with traditional evaluation, but they can also explore many other issues and through many different frames. Questions can vary from a focus on causal connections to emergent patterns, an examination of different perspectives to building an understanding of drivers and solutions.

The attached worksheet identifies different types of developmental evaluation questions, provides examples, and gives you a place to craft your own questions. You can use this tool to further your own thinking or in partnership with key stakeholders to help them explore the types of questions they may want to answer.

***Developing DE questions with key stakeholders:*** When working with key stakeholders, the attached questions can help them to think more broadly about the types of questions that you can help them answer.

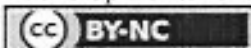
One approach to surfacing questions with stakeholders is to:

- ***Outcomes Exploration:*** Begin by asking key stakeholders to brainstorm the outcomes they are trying to achieve, both overall, but also in the next few months. Have them go through the process of thinking about why their work matters, the changes in the world they hope to see, and the first steps they can accomplish.
- ***Uncertainty Exploration:*** Ask stakeholders to talk about what feels uncertain about achieving these outcomes.
- ***Question Exploration:*** Hand out the questions list on the next page. Ask stakeholders to read through it and individually jot down questions that come to mind as they look at the examples. In small groups or a large group, report out the questions and explore them.
- ***Prioritize:*** Ask stakeholders to reflect back on their outcomes and greatest uncertainties. From there, ask them to prioritize the questions for you to answer, with a focus on which answers will do the most to decrease their uncertainties and facilitate achieving the outcomes.

The question generation process can take an hour or more of key stakeholders' time. If this time is not available, you may need to begin the question generation independently based on the information you've been collecting and bring draft questions to the stakeholders to refine and prioritize.

Are you interested in more tips and tools for developmental evaluation?

Spark Policy Institute's ([www.sparkpolicy.com](http://www.sparkpolicy.com)) interactive Developmental Evaluation Toolkit is available at [www.sparkpolicy.com/DEtoolkit](http://www.sparkpolicy.com/DEtoolkit). Please join us and share your stories about developmental evaluation, share your tools, and access the tools and ideas from other evaluators.



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## DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Type of Question	Example	What questions are emerging as part of your initiative/project?
<b>Causal Connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the drivers of the problem – known, assumed, and hidden?</li> <li>• What are the causal relationships between the strategies you try and the changes that occur?</li> </ul>	
<b>Ready, Fire, AIM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did we hit our target?</li> <li>• What else did we hit?</li> </ul>	
<b>Boundaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who/what/when is within the scope of the strategy?</li> <li>• Outside the scope?</li> <li>• What are the implications of these boundaries?</li> </ul>	
<b>Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the priority values?</li> <li>• Are the participants staying true to the values?</li> <li>• What are the consequences of staying true/not staying true to the values?</li> </ul>	
<b>Emergent Patterns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's emerging?</li> <li>• What does it mean?</li> <li>• What else should we watch for?</li> <li>• How is the context changing?</li> <li>• What is the level of uncertainty? How has this changed?</li> </ul>	
<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do relationships function?</li> <li>• How do structures for relationships function (e.g. collaboratives/coalitions)?</li> <li>• Does the structure matter? What difference does it make?</li> <li>• How do participants see themselves and their role?</li> </ul>	
<b>Perspectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the problem look like from different perspectives?</li> <li>• How do these differences affect the roles and interactions?</li> <li>• What are the consequences?</li> </ul>	

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<b>Untangling the Problem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is simple?</li> <li>• What is complicated?</li> <li>• What is complex?</li> <li>• What does this tell us about what we should do?</li> </ul>	
<b>Driving Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can (any element of the strategy, relationships, perspectives) help us to be nimble and flexible?</li> <li>• How can (any element of the problem, complexity) be harnessed to develop the strategy in new ways?</li> </ul>	
<b>Emerging Models and Approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did the approach emerge?</li> <li>• How has the context of the approach affected its design?</li> <li>• What are the sources of knowledge informing the approach?</li> <li>• How has the approach changed and why?</li> </ul>	