

Using Theory of Change Models When Evaluating Complex Initiatives

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Factors Contributing to Complexity

- Multiple partners
 - Horizontal across a government
 - Vertical between federal/provincial/municipals jurisdictions
 - Including different disciplines
- Multiple components
 - Broad initiative with many organizations responsible for implementation
- Policies, regulations and legislation with broad goals
 - Not easily measured
- Political sensitivities
 - New government
- Time Span
 - May take years to see results e.g. Population Health

Complex Evaluation Challenges

- Understanding the Program
- Determining attribution
 - Many contributors
 - Change may take excessive amount of time

Ways to Understand the Program Theory

- Use Nested Logic Models
- Use Theory of Change Models

Theory of Change Models

- Based on sound research
- Articulates the underlying assumptions of the logic model
- Should show the dynamics among the partners

Questions to Explore

- *What are some examples where theory of change models have been developed as part of the evaluation of other complex programs? Were your expectations met?*
- *How were the theory of change models used in the evaluation?*
- *What value did use of theories of change models bring to the evaluation?*
- *What are some pitfalls to avoid?*