EVALUATION PURPOSES AND USERS

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DEFINING EVALUATION PURPOSES

START AN EVALUATION WITH CARE

NOT USEFUL

There are no questions about the program.

There is not enough money, staff, time or other resources to conduct the evaluation

The program has no clear orientation, no stability, or no agreement on its goals and values

"Evaluation is a rational enterprise often undertaken for non-rational, or at least non-informational, reasons" Weiss 1972

Lesson N1. Find out who wants the evaluation and why! (for your own safety)

NOT ALWAYS ADVISABLE

(covert purposes by the contractor)

Postponement. Using evaluation to avoid decisions about the program.

*Ducking responsibility*. Using evaluation to justify or legitimise a decision already taken.

Public relations. Using evaluation to generate support (eyewashing or legitimately prove it as value for money)

Formal requirement. Mandatory evaluations for grant bureaucracy.

INTENDED USES

THE ALL-PURPOSE EVALUATION IS A MYTH:

1. To continue or discontinue the program

2. To improve its practices and procedures

3. To add or drop specific program strategies or techniques

4. To institute a similar program elsewhere

5. To allocate resources among competing programs (or parts of one program)

6. To accept or reject a program approach or theory
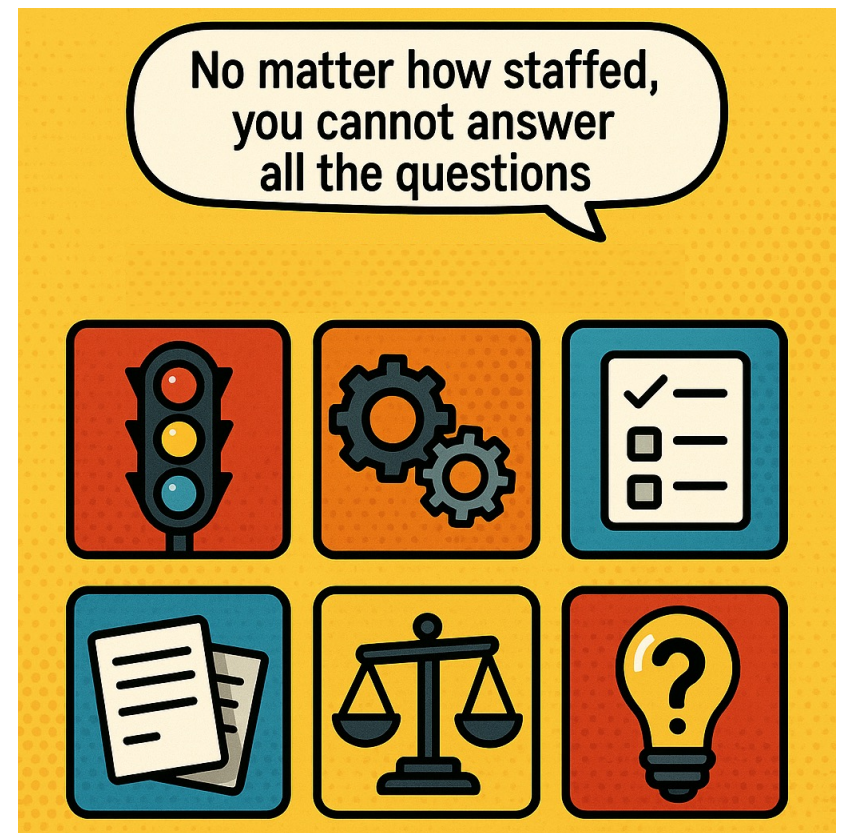
FORMATIVE VS. SUMMATIVE (SCRIVEN, 1967)

FORMATIVE EVALUATION:

Evaluation produces information that is fed back during the development of the program to help improve it. Evaluation serves the needs of program designers and implementers.

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION:

Evaluation starts after the program is finished, and provides information about effectiveness. It serves decision-makers considering adoption or termination.

HOWEVER:

- *Go/No-go* and *Live or Die* decisions are rare

- The typical use of evaluating a program is for patching it up, improving it, and trying again.

TARGETING EVALUATION USERS

RELEVANT QUESTIONS? …BUT WHO'S ASKING?

POLICYMAKERS:

Broad design issues. Should the program be continued, dropped, institutionalised, limited to a pilot program, continued as such, or modified?

DIRECTORS OF THE PROGRAM:

General implementation issues. How well is the program achieving its desired ends? Which strategies are more or less successful and/or efficient? Which features of the program are essential? Where is it working better and why?

DIRECT-SERVICE STAFF:

Day-to-day concerns. Which technique or design detail is working better? How can I treat this specific user? Is it better to target this group or another?

FUNDERS:

Broad issues about the approach or model. Is this program working effectively to solve this problem? Should money be allocated differently?

CONSUMERS / BENEFICIARIES:

Effectiveness from the beneficiary perspective. Is the program serving the goals that the intended beneficiaries value?

Lesson N2: 'They wouldn't have called us if they already knew what to do' (Bruno Dente)

AN EXAMPLE:
THE CASE OF RED CROSS SOLIDARITY MARKETS

NATIONAL RED CROSS:

Design issues for replication and mainstreaming: What are the organisational difficulties of managing the markets? Is it effective with respect to food parcels?

LOCAL RED CROSS:

Design and implementation. Should we allow users to access the market together with other people? Is the point card working in informing user choices? Do users feel at ease? How do they value our product supply? Are users satisfied with the program?

FUNDING BODY:

Funding questions. How can I prove the social impact of service? How can I prove the importance of increasing funds for societal issues such as food poverty?

RESEARCH TEAM:

Evaluation + theory questions: Is this approach a valuable tool for addressing food security? How we define security? What are the unintended outcomes? What are the conditions for replication? How relationships (organisational, funding, etc.) influence effectiveness?

EXERCISE: EVALUATION USERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Map the possible stakeholders/users of your evaluation activity.

- Who has an interest in the L36 Political Science course?

- Why? What do they want to know?

- Who could use the evaluation results?

- For what purpose?