# What to Do When Impacts Shift but Evaluation Design Requires Stability?

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# I am Advocating for an Additional Consideration When Designing Evaluation

- Funding
- Deadlines
- Logic models
- Measurement
- Program theory
- Research design
- Information use plans
- Defining role of evaluator
- Logistics of implementation
- **Planning to anticipate and respond to surprise**

# What Does Complexity Tell Us About Predictability?

Many of the programs we evaluate live here

This is where we have a problem:

- The integrity of design must be preserved over time, but

- What the program does may change.

# Some Examples

Assist refugees to adjust to new living circumstances

Program theory 1) distress, 2) language acquisition, 3) job seeking

| Design #1 | Design # 2 | Unexpected |
|---|---|---|
| ▪ interviews when first resettled, 12 months post | ▪ validated surveys 6, 12, 18 months post | ▪ Community structure formation |

Improve R&D in a company by using Wiki technology to foster collaboration

Program theory: 1) collaboration networks, 2) viable new ideas, 3) idea creativity

| Design #1 | Design 2 | Unexpected |
|---|---|---|
| ▪ 2 year tracking<br>▪ expert judgment, creativity | ▪ design 1 + "no treatment" divisions | ▪ corporate strategy<br>▪ HR hiring priorities |

Church program to promote health behavior

Program theory: 1) eating behavior 2) exercise behavior, 3) doctor visits

| Design #1 | Design 2 | Unexpected |
|---|---|---|
| ▪ activity logs<br>▪ weight, BP | ▪ interviews of congregants | ▪ family relationships<br>▪ "spread" |

Workshops and Webinars
- Logic Models As Simple Pictures - and So Much More
- Strong evaluation designs for programs with unexpected consequences
- Workshop based on *Evaluation in the Face of Uncertainty.* Webinar, Slide deck
- Logic Models - Beyond the Traditional View: Metrics, Methods, Expected and Unexpected Change
- Integrating Agent-based modeling and traditional evaluation Demo available upon request.  Presentation/Webinar
- Conducting Program Evaluation by Combining "Traditional" Knowledge and Complex Adaptive System Understanding of how the World Works
- Integrating Evaluation into Planning for Impact: Using Computer Simulation to Aid Program Implementation and Evaluation part 1 part 2, part 3

Published Work
- Morell, J.A. (2010) *Evaluation in the Face of Uncertainty: Anticipating Surprise and Responding to the Inevitable Morell*, J.A., Guilford Press, N.Y.
- Morell, J.A., Hilscher, R., Magura, S.  and Ford, J. (2010) Integrating Evaluation and Agent-Based Modeling: Rationale and an Example for Adopting Evidence-Based Practices *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation*,  Vol. 6, No 14, 35 - 57
- Parunak H. V.D. and Morell, J.A. (2014) Emergent Consequences: Unexpected Behaviors in a Simple Model to Support Innovation Adoption, Planning, and Evaluation in Kennedy W.G., Agarwal N. and Yang, J. S. eds. *Social Computing, Behavioral-Cultural Modeling, and Prediction* 7th International Conference, SBP 2014 Washington, DC, USA, April 1-4, 2014

Blog Posts
- Complexity is about stability and predictability
- How to evaluate complex health interventions?
- Matching management systems to system behavior
- What is the relationship between path dependence and system stability? With explanation of why I care.
- Using an evolutionary biology view to connect the intellectual development of evaluation and the development of the evaluation community