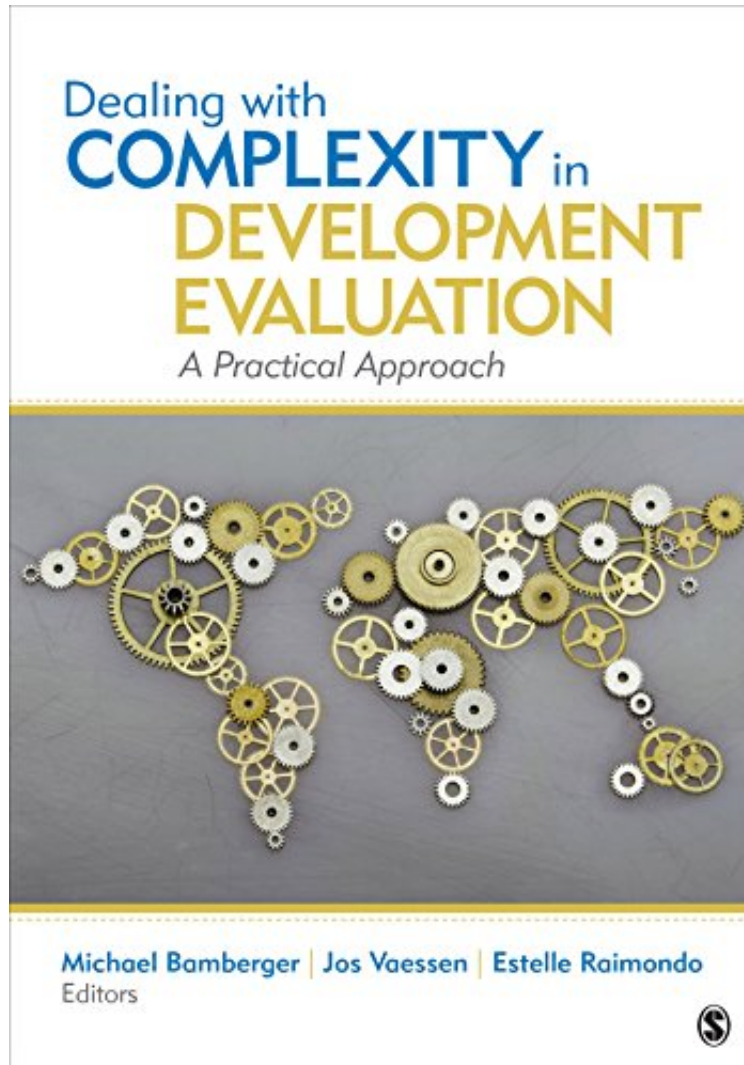


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Dealing With Complexity in Development Evaluation: A Practical Approach

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From SAGE Publications, Inc : Dealing With Complexity in Development Evaluation: A Practical Approach before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dealing With Complexity in Development Evaluation: A Practical Approach:

8 of 13 people found the following review helpful. One for the back of the bookshelf By Customer I recently attended the American Evaluation Association conference in Chicago and was anticipating the arrival of a Practical Approach to dealing with Complexity in Development Evaluation. Unfortunately, after reading this text, I'm still waiting. If evaluation serves as a shared measure of accountability and learning, its 'experts' would be wise to acknowledge that it

is a tall order to assume notions of practicality from European and North American Ivory Towers hold any weight to the real development challenges that practitioners in the field contend with on a daily basis. Evaluation practice and all of its potential have suffered from the so-called 'business of evaluation'; a lucrative field that sees specialists flying to remote locations for 1-2 weeks at a time, believing they have seen and done it all. Unfortunately I think my days mixing at elite evaluation conferences and attending obscenely priced development evaluation trainings are over - this book has reaffirmed that the world of development evaluation is an exclusive club that has little incentive to want to influence real change in the complex world of international development. I really wonder, where are the voices from the field? What are the issues that prevent evaluation from being taken up on the ground; or by those sitting in HQs who pay little credence to those speaking from the front lines? So many questions still remain, with this book offering very few answers. Evaluation jargon at its prime! If there are any evaluation practitioners out there in the field who care to share their experiences in a concise, informative and accessible manner - that would be most welcome!

Recognizing that complexity calls for innovative, conceptual, and methodological solutions, *Dealing with Complexity in Development Evaluation* by Michael Bamberger, Jos Vaessen, and Estelle Raimondo offers practical guidance to policymakers, managers, and evaluation practitioners on how to design and implement complexity-responsive evaluations that can be undertaken in the real world of time, budget, data, and political constraints. Introductory chapters present comprehensive, non-technical overviews of the most common evaluation tools and methodologies, and additional content addresses more cutting-edge material. The book also includes six case study chapters to illustrate examples of various evaluation contexts from around the world.

This volume provides useful guidance to development evaluation specialists to deal with their increasingly complex contexts and tasks.

--Mark Ginsburg The book shows, through a meticulous review of academic studies and some specific cases of real evaluations, that complex development interventions can be evaluated effectively and some of the techniques that make this possible.

--John Mathiason This is the 'nuts and bolts' book that evaluation practitioners have been waiting for. Authored by highly experienced evaluators and grounded in real life examples from all parts of the world it illuminates the core ideas of complexity theory, makes sense of abstruse systems concepts and guides the reader through the contemporary maze of program theory, mixed methods and web based information technologies. A lucid and comprehensive treatment of the evaluation state of the art it is a must-have text for emerging evaluators, advanced evaluators and evaluation managers operating in uncertain, turbulent and conflict ridden environments.

--Robert Picciotto This is an extremely useful book when managing and carrying out evaluations of the increasingly complex nature of international development. It should be required reading for everyone involved in assessing results of development cooperation.

--Per Oyvind Bastoe "This book is impressive in its breadth and depth of coverage of a topic increasingly on the minds of evaluation practitioners. It provides much needed practical guidance and valuable conceptual insights in an area that's often discussed but rarely well understood. The book will appeal to a wide range of experienced evaluation professionals, emerging evaluators and students of evaluation.

--Penny Hawkins This is one of the most important books ever published in the field of development evaluation. Dealing with complex systems is a premier challenge for evaluators working in real life situations. As a practitioner in the field I cannot emphasize the value of this book enough. The authors tackle the issue of complexity and its critical significance from both theoretical and practical points of view. They offer concrete ways in which evaluators and organizations can deal effectively with complexity. The editors, each one of them an eminent authority in the field, have put together a group of authors who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table. Highly recommended to evaluation commissioners and practitioners, as well as those with an interest in the scientific aspects of evaluation approaches and methodologies.

--Juha I. Uitto This is the first book that seeks to operationalize a complexity perspective into mainstream development evaluation, focusing on the specificities of this broad based sector, encompassing multiple objectives, institutions, contexts, constituencies and beneficiaries. The main conclusions can speak then to larger audiences of evaluators, program designers, managers, and researchers throughout the world, making a very useful contribution to evaluation culture and practice.

--Mita Marra This is one of the most important books ever published in the field of development evaluation. Dealing with complex systems is a premier challenge for evaluators working in real life situations. As a practitioner in the field I cannot emphasize the value of this book enough. The authors tackle the issue of complexity and its critical significance from both theoretical and practical points of view. They offer concrete ways in which evaluators and organizations can deal effectively with complexity. The editors, each one of them an eminent authority in the field, have put together a group of authors who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table. Highly recommended to evaluation commissioners and practitioners, as well as those with an interest in the scientific aspects of evaluation approaches and methodologies.

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evaluations, that complex development interventions can be evaluated effectively and some of the techniques that make this possible. (John Mathiason) This is the prime nuts and bolts book that evaluation practitioners have been waiting for. Authored by highly experienced evaluators and grounded in real life examples from all parts of the world it illuminates the core ideas of complexity theory, makes sense of abstruse systems concepts and guides the reader through the contemporary maze of program theory, mixed methods and web based information technologies. A lucid and comprehensive treatment of the evaluation state of the art is a must-have text for emerging evaluators, advanced evaluators and evaluation managers operating in uncertain, turbulent and conflict ridden environments. (Robert Picciotto) This is an extremely useful book when managing and carrying out evaluations of the increasingly complex nature of international development. 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(Mita Marra) About the Author Michael Bamberger has been involved in development evaluation for fifty years. Beginning in Latin America where he worked in urban community development and evaluation for over a decade, he became interested in the coping strategies of low-income communities, how they were affected by and how they influenced development efforts. Most evaluation research fails to capture these survival strategies, frequently underestimating the resilience of these communities — particularly women and female-headed households. During 20 years with the World Bank he worked as monitoring and evaluation advisor for the Urban Development Department, evaluation training coordinator with the Economic Development Department and Senior Sociologist in the Gender and Development Department. After retiring from the Bank in 2001 he has worked as a development evaluation consultant with more than 10 UN agencies as well as development banks, bilateral development agencies, NGOs and foundations. Since 2001 he has been on the faculty of the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET). Recent publications include: (with Jim Rugh and Linda Mabry) *RealWorld Evaluation: Working under budget, time, data and political constraints* (2012 second edition); (with Marco Segone) *How to design and manage equity focused evaluations* (2011); *Engendering Monitoring and Evaluation* (2013); (with Linda Raftree) *Emerging opportunities: Monitoring and evaluation in a tech-enabled world* (2014); (with Marco Segone and Shravanti Reddy) *How to integrate gender equality and social equity in national evaluation policies and systems* (2014). Jos Vaessen (Ph.D. Maastricht University) is Principal Evaluation Specialist at the Internal Oversight Service of UNESCO in Paris and lecturer at Maastricht University, The Netherlands. After completing his M.Sc. in 1997 (Wageningen University) and prior to starting his current position at UNESCO in 2011, he has been involved in research, teaching and evaluation activities in the field of international development at Antwerp University and, more recently, Maastricht University. Over the last fifteen years or so, he has worked for several multilateral and bilateral international organizations mostly on evaluation-related assignments. His fields of interest include: theory and practice evaluation, impact evaluation, rural development and environment. In addition to managing and conducting evaluations Jos regularly serves on reference groups of evaluations of different organizations. He has been (co-) author of more than 30 publications, including three books. Recent publications include: *Impact evaluations and development — NONIE guidance on impact evaluation* (2009, co-author, with F. Leeuw), *Mind the gap: perspectives on policy evaluation and the social sciences* (2009, co-editor, with F. Leeuw), *The effects of microcredit on women's control over household spending in developing countries* (2014, coordinator and first author, with A. Rivas, M. Duvendack, R. Palmer Jones, F. Leeuw, G. van Gils, R. Lukach, N. Holvoet and J. Bastiaensen, J.G. Hombrados, and H. Waddington). Estelle Raimondo is a Research Associate and a Ph.D. candidate at the George Washington University's Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration where she specializes in development evaluation. Prior to joining GWU, Estelle served as an Associate Evaluation Specialist for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In this capacity, she conducted a number of evaluations and policy reviews especially in Africa and worked closely with the United Nations Evaluation Group on integrating gender into evaluation practice.

Over the last five years or so, Estelle has worked on a number of evaluation and research assignments for a range of organizations (e.g., the World Bank, the Independent Evaluation Group, UNEG, the Polish Government, the NSF, The GW Regulatory Center). Her current research focuses on how monitoring and evaluation can contribute to organizational and strategic change in international development agencies. She is exploring issues of evaluation culture, knowledge brokering and result-based management's adequacy for organizational learning. Estelle is also researching how to adequately combine a range of methodologies stemming from different fields (e.g., quasi-experimental design, Case-based methods and systems-thinking) to address complex issues, such as gender equality. Estelle graduated summa cum laude from the Paris School of International Affairs with an M.A. in International Economic Policy. She also holds a Master of International Affairs in Economic and Political Development from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) where she studied as a Fulbright scholar.