Design for Social Innovation Impact Evaluation Study

Preliminary Research Observations

Culture & Design for Social Innovation: A Case for Culturally Grounded Evaluation

RMIT
School of Design
Design and Creative Practice Enabling Capability Platform

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This Discussion Paper has been produced as part of the initial phase of a research project being undertaken to identify if and how cultural dimensions may inform how we measure and articulate the success of Design for Social Innovation (DSI) projects, so that we can then include such dimensions into the design of future projects. The intention is to help ensure that projects are of the greatest value they can be to the communities that they are undertaken with, and that researchers and practitioners are better able to communicate the impact of their projects.

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This research was supported through funding from the RMIT Design and Creative Practice, Enabling Capability Platform.

Recommended Citation
Hill, R & Vaughan, L., 2017, ‘Design for Social Innovation Impact Evaluation Study’ Design and Creative Practice, Enabling Capability Platform, RMIT University.

CONTENTS

KEY CONSULTATION & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What do we mean when we talk about Design for Social Innovation (DSI)? What does it involve? How best can we evaluate it?
- What do we mean by culture?
- How does culture inform and influence this type of work? How can culture effect how people come to, participate in and make sense of this work?
- What influence does culture have on "what" we need to pay attention to from an evaluation perspective and "how" best we do that?

WORK UNDERTAKEN TO DATE

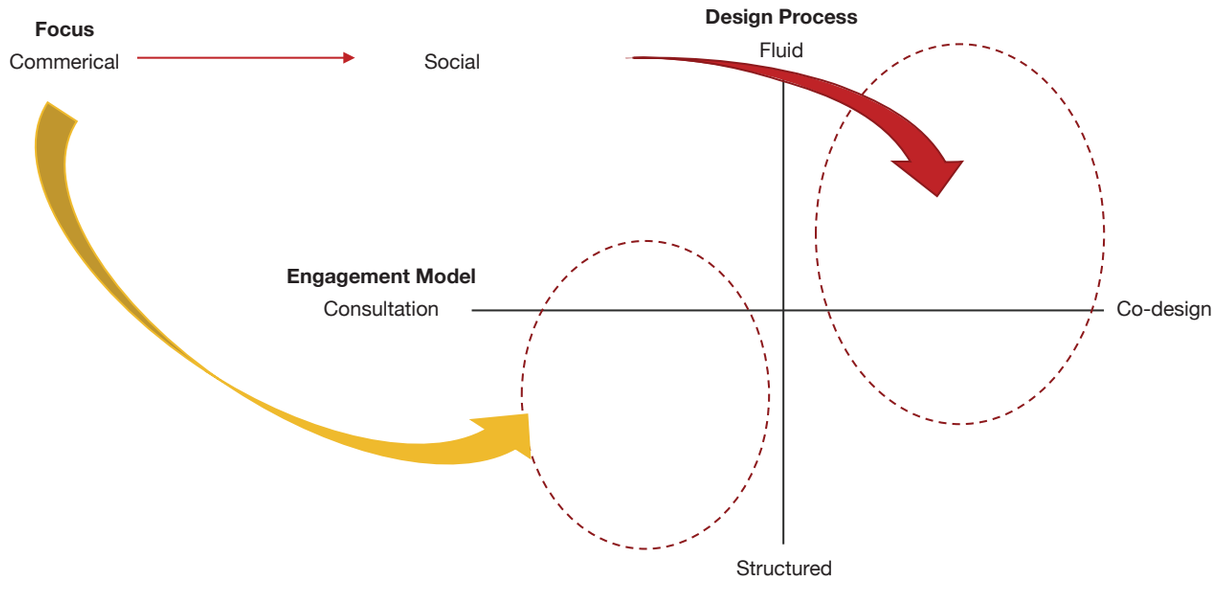
Desktop research and consultations with DSI practitioners, researchers and evaluators

Australia	Margaret Cargo	Researcher – working on STEPS Program: STrengthening Evaluation Practices and Strategies in Indigenous settings in Australia and New Zealand
	Dean Parkin	Practitioner – working in communities supporting project activity
	Tristan Schultz	Practitioner and researcher – working on Arts sector and community based projects
New Zealand	Penny Hagan	Practitioner and researcher - working on design strategy, research and methods to support participation
	Kate McKlegg	Evaluator – evaluating collaborative and DSI projects
	Angie Tangaere	Practitioner and social intraprenuer with The Southern Initiative (NZ) – working in community supporting project activity
Japan	Sayaka Watanabe	Practitioner – working in communities supporting project activity (social enterprise focus)
Thailand	Paul Apivat Hanvongse	Practitioner – working in communities supporting project activity
	Chutika Udomsinn	Practitioner – Technology and ITC application focus
The United Kingdom	Alison Prendiville	Practitioner and researcher

This Paper draws on the above work. We are grateful to all of the people who have participated in the above consultations for their time and insights.

It is relevant to note that the consultations that have informed this work draw on the experience of a diverse range of DSI practitioners. Most of the practitioners that we consulted with were working in the social innovation space focusing on helping to address complex social issues not necessarily limited to service or product redesign; a few were focused on more commercial product or service (re)design.

In general the former group tended to describe taking a more fluid approach to the design work, sticking less rigidly to a theoretical design approach or model. They also tended to engage more deeply with the communities that they worked with. They described moving beyond a consultation model (where the project was designed by the practitioner and community views were gathered and analysed by the practitioner) into a co-design model (where communities were actively involved in the definition and design of the project, as well as the work itself, including both information gathering and sensemaking processes).



SECTION 1: LITERATURE REVIEW FINDINGS

This Section summarises the key observations and insights from the high level literature review conducted as part of this project. While there is extensive literature available on DSI approaches and culturally informed research and evaluation generally, there appears to be little written specifically about how culture influences the design, implementation and evaluation of DSI projects. The following section therefore seeks to draw together observations and insights in relation to:

- Good practice evaluation generally
- The evaluation of social innovation
- Developmental evaluation and
- Culturally anchored evaluation practices.

The role of culture in evaluation: "Within an evaluation, the process of information exchange, interpretation and application of knowledge are significantly influenced by the cultures of the participants, including the evaluator."[1]

There does not appear to be a comprehensive, readily accessible resource to support the delivery of culturally anchored evaluation practices in a DSI context. While there is extensive literature available on DSI approaches and culturally informed research and evaluation generally, there appears to be little written specifically about how culture influences the design, implementation and evaluation of DSI projects.

We have not been able to locate a comprehensive, readily accessible resource or suite of resources to support the delivery of culturally anchored evaluation practices in a DSI context; although researchers, evaluators and practitioners are clearly developing tools to support them in their work and have shared some tools with us through the consultation process. The development of strong culturally informed research and evaluation practices is clearly an area of interest. This is reflected in research work being undertaken through the STEPS Program: STrengthening Evaluation Practices and Strategies in Indigenous settings in Australia and New Zealand[2] (contact https://researchprofiles.canberra.edu.au/en/persons/margaret-cargo and http://www.waikato.ac.nz/rangahau/about/board-of-directors/amohia-boulten) and the ongoing development of principles and practice tools to support culturally anchored evaluation by the Australian Evaluation Society (AES) (http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/themes/indigenous_evaluation). The principles relating to the delivery of culturally anchored evaluation outlined in this paper are consistent with the principles outlined in the above projects.

Principles of good evaluation

Although articulated in a range of ways, the principles of "good practice" evaluation are generally identified as including the following:

1. Build evaluation into your program design.
2. Base your evaluation on sound methodology.
3. Include resources and time to evaluate.
4. Use the right mix of expertise and independence.
5. Ensure proper governance and oversight.
6. Be ethical in design and conduct.
7. Be informed and guided by relevant stakeholders.
8. Consider and use evaluation data meaningfully.
9. Be transparent and open to scrutiny.[3]

It has been noted that the challenge in applying good practice is not so much in the definition of those elements, as in how they are applied in the individual context in which an evaluation takes place. This appears to be particularly true when evaluating social innovation.

The evaluation of social innovation

How evaluation can be undertaken in a way that supports, rather then inhibits, the "spirit of trial, error and adaptation that is at the core of innovation"[4] is a question that has been asked by a number of researchers and practitioners.

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1 Lee 2007, p2.

2 The STEPS project aims to strengthen the cultural safety of evaluations carried out in Indigenous settings in Australia and New Zealand.

3 Hudson 2017., p.11

4 Preskill & Beer 2012, p.2.

The literature identifies "evaluation as an indispensable tool for learning and mid-course correction in any type of social change effort" but observes that traditional formative and summative models of evaluation can stifle innovation and that there is a need to "find an approach to evaluation that is specifically designed for social innovation. Rather than applying an evaluation approach designed to measure program impact … (there is a) need to broaden … evaluations to include an approach that is tailored to the unique and complex characteristics of innovation."[5] The challenge is to do and use evaluation differently.

Good evaluation of social innovation needs to "be designed to give innovators the information and data they need to discover new patterns and pathways, to rapidly test solutions and abandon the ones that fail, and to detect what's emerging in response to their efforts", "to support adaptation and leave space for the unexpected".[6]

The evaluation needs to be designed to understand, assess and learn from both the innovation itself and the process used to generate it.

Coffman and Beer note that innovation requires a form of "strategic learning" where there is a reciprocal relationship between the activity being undertaken and evaluation. That means that what gets evaluated needs to be related to, and informed by, the activity that is being undertaken on a real time basis, and the evaluation should feed into the development and refinement of the activity itself.[7]

This has significant implications for how good practice principles of evaluation are applied in the context of social innovation initiatives, both in terms of how evaluations are undertaken and the role played by the evaluator.

It requires evaluation activity to:

- Be designed in parallel with the focus activity (rather than in advance of it)
- Match the pace of that work and
- Have a dual purpose of "information gathering and evaluation".

It also requires the evaluator to play a more integrated or embedded role, acting not so much as an independent third party assessor but more as a collaborator and critical friend. Michael Quinn Patton refers to this role as being a "partnering relationship", where the role of the evaluator is to ask "evaluative questions" and provide information and feedback to help assess and evolve the activity being evaluated.[8]
This form of evaluation has come to be described as "Developmental Evaluation".

Developmental Evaluation

Developmental Evaluation is well suited to initiatives that take place in complex or uncertain environments, particularly where there are a large number of interacting and interdependent stakeholders, which is often the case in social design for innovation initiatives. In projects of this type patterns of change emerge from rapid, real time interactions that generate learning and adaptation.

The role of the developmental evaluator is to observe and capture the important and emergent patterns, and support the evolution of the initiative by helping to frame concepts, test quick iterations, track developments and surface issues.

It is a participatory, or bottom-up (rather than top-down), form of evaluation that has a strengths based orientation and usually applies a range of methods to collect, make sense of and learn from information.

Comparison of Top-down vs Bottom-up evaluation[9]

	Top-down	Bottom-up
Approach	Evaluator as technical expert	Evaluator as critical friend Participatory / community engagement and empowerment
Orientation	Identifying achievements or gaps Problem solving / deficit focused	Strengthening capacity Supporting understanding and adaptation
Who defines the focus of the evaluation	Outside party	Community in dialogue with evaluator
Evaluation methodology	Measurement of quantifiable outcomes / delivery against specified targets	Pluralistic methods, documenting changes of importance to participating group

5 Preskill & Beer 2012, p.2.
6 Preskill & Beer 2012, p.2.
7 Coffman & Beer 2011, p.1
8 Patton 2006, p.28-29.
9 Hudson 2017, p.17.

Developmental evaluation is not "evaluation light". It involves the application of standard good practice evaluation principles. It is a distinct form of evaluation, however, and differs from more well known formative and summative forms of evaluation.

Michael Quinn Patton identifies eight essential attributes of principles of developmental evaluation:

1. Developmental purpose – to support the adaptive evolution or improvement of the initiative over time
2. Evaluation rigor – to apply a robust but flexible evaluation methodology
3. Utilisation focus – to ensure that evaluative inquiry is undertaken in a way that is useful and usable
4. Innovation niche – to support initiatives focusing on supporting innovation and change in complex environments
5. Complexity perspective – to structure activity to operate within uncertainty
6. Systems thinking – to apply systems thinking
7. Co-creation – to work collaboratively with participants to co-design and implement the evaluation approach and interpret and learn from the information that is gathered and
8. Timely feedback – to structure activity to support rapid cycles of feedback that can help evolve the work on a real time basis.[10]

The key differences between more traditional forms of evaluation and developmental evaluation are set out in the table below.[11]

Traditional evaluation	Developmental evaluation
Purpose: Supports improvement, summative tests and accountability	**Purpose:** Supports development of innovation and adaptation in dynamic environments
Roles & relationships: Positioned as an outsider to assure independence and objectivity	**Roles & relationships:** Positioned as an internal team function integrated into the process of gathering and interpreting data, framing issues, surfacing and testing model developments
Accountability: Focused on external authorities and funders based on explicit and pre-ordinate criteria	**Accountability:** Centered on the innovators' values and commitment to make a difference
Options: Rigorously options-focused, traditional research and disciplinary standards of quality dominate	**Options:** Utilization focused: options are chosen in service to developmental use
Measurement: Measure performance and success against pre-determined goals and SMART outcomes	**Measurement:** Develops measures and tracking mechanisms quickly as outcomes emerge; measures can change during the evaluation as the process unfolds
Evaluation results: Detailed formal reports; validated best practices, generalizable across time and space. Can engender fear of failure	**Evaluation results:** Rapid, real time feedback; diverse, user-friendly forms of feedback. Evaluation aims to nurture learning
Complexity & uncertainty: Evaluator tries to control design implementation and the evaluation process	**Complexity & uncertainty:** Learning to respond to lack of control; staying in touch with what's unfolding and responding accordingly
Standards: Methodological competence and commitment to rigor, independence; credibility with external authorities and funders; analytical and critical thinking	**Standards:** Methodological flexibility; eclecticism, and adaptability; systems thinking; creative and critical thinking balanced; high tolerance for ambiguity; open and agile; teamwork and people skills; able to facilitate rigorous evidence-based perspectives

Principles of culturally anchored evaluation

Culture plays a critical role in evaluation. The "process of information exchange, interpretation and application of knowledge" that form the basis of an evaluation "are influenced by the cultures of the participants (in it), including the evaluator".[12]

To be effective, evaluators need to be culturally competent; they need to understand the influence that their own culture and training has on them, and work in a culturally informed way when working with people from different cultural backgrounds.[13]

10 Patton et al 2015, p.2ff.

11 Patton 2006, p.30.

12 Lee 2007, p.2.

13 Lee 2007, p.3.

Culturally competent evaluators:[14]

- Are conscious that people are different and have their own way of thinking and behaving according to their cultures.
- Deliberately set aside time and resources in the evaluation timeline and budget to learn about differences and similarities.
- Are willing to engage in a dialogue about how culture, social identity, and privilege and power affect them personally and their work.
- Work in a culturally anchored way and design processes that take into account cultural differences and similarities among all the stakeholders and between the evaluator and the stakeholders.

The participatory nature of Developmental Evaluation, and the focus on co-creation, aligns strongly with key principles that have been identified as forming part of a culturally anchored approach to evaluation.[15]

The STEPS project (which aims to strengthen the cultural safety of evaluations carried out in Indigenous settings in Australia and New Zealand) is in the process of developing a set of good practice principles for the delivery of culturally anchored evaluations. The emerging principles that have been identified through that work are listed below:

1. Respect Indigenous people's right to self-determination
2. Actively engage the Indigenous community in the design and implementation of the evaluation
3. Be guided by existing institutional and Indigenous codes of research ethics or ethical principles
4. Respect the diversity amongst Indigenous peoples and their respective cultural protocols
5. Respect and support Indigenous cultural values, knowledge and belief systems
6. Ensure that the relationship between the evaluator and the Indigenous community is characterised by trust, respect and reciprocity
7. Demonstrate flexibility in carry out the evaluation, making sure that it is responsive to the meeds and issues raised by the community
8. Develop Indigenous capacity during the evaluation process
9. Ensure that the evaluation is relevant to the community and that the findings are communicated and used in a way that meets the needs and priorities of the community and
10. Contribute to social change.[16]

The above principles reinforce the importance of ensuring that cultural values and protocols, traditional knowledge and ways of sensemaking are respected and that evaluation approaches do not just take culture into account, but are culturally anchored in their design and implementation.

14 Lee 2007, p.4.

15 Hudson 2017, p.17.

16 STEPS 2017.

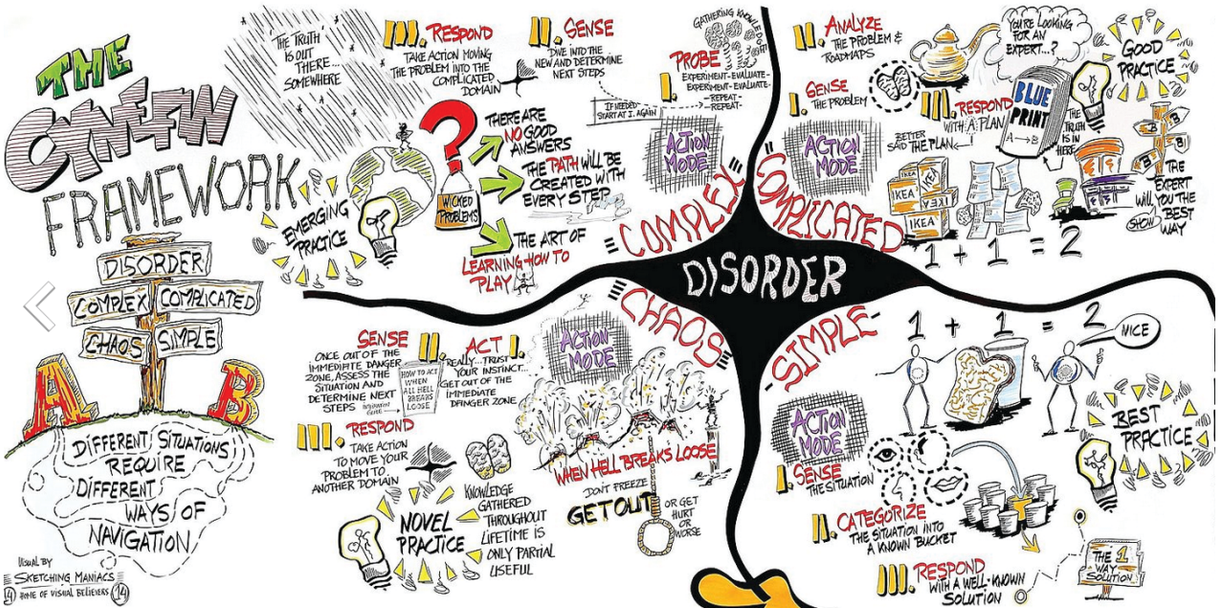
SECTION 2: DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

This Section explores what we mean when we talk about DSI. It reflects on:

- How people have described this type of work;
- The features that characterise it; and
- The form(s) of evaluation that are appropriate to apply to it.

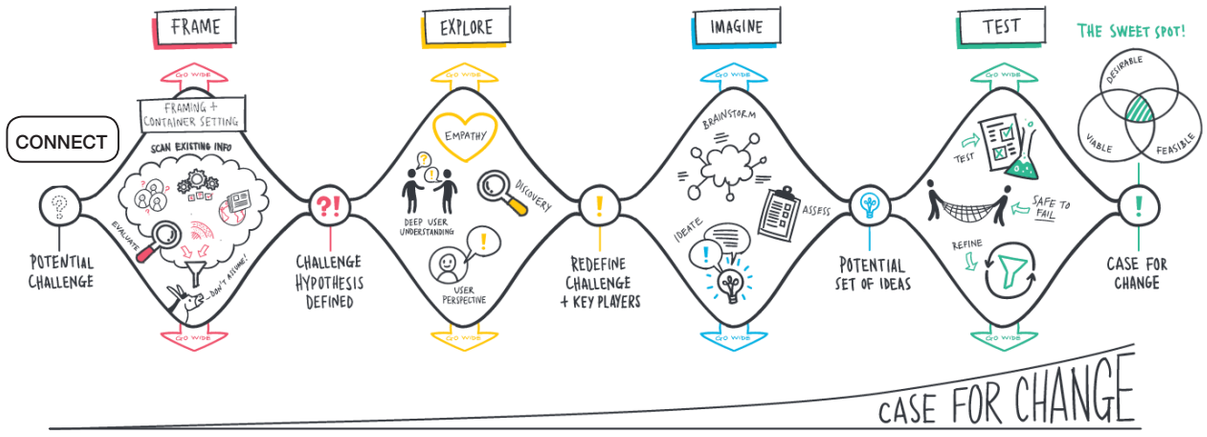
Social Innovation

Social innovation is "a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than present solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals." It includes both the Innovation and the process of generating, testing, and adapting these types of novel solution, which is inherently exploratory and uncertain.[17]



Cynefin Framework by Edwin Stoop, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cynefin_framework_by_Edwin_Stoop.jpg

DSI is an approach for working on complex social / environmental challenges. It uses design principles to explore different ways of understanding and responding to those challenges.

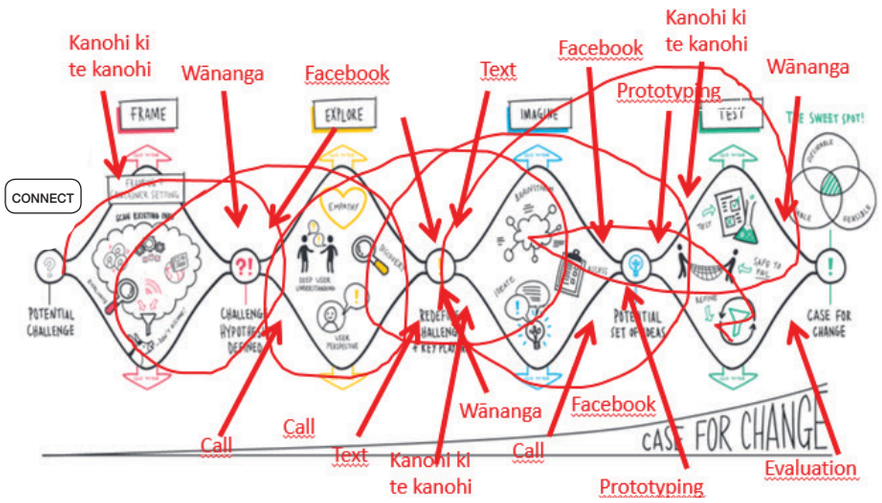


DSI Pathway: Angie Tangaere., A Whānau Centric Approach Using Co-Design., The Auckland Co-design Lab.

Schematic provided by Angie Tangaere as an example of the theoretical process applied in DSI projects. Selected as an example only of the steps of co-defining the opportunity or problem being worked on, exploring

17 Preskill & Beer 2012, p.2.

and ideating how that might be responded to and developing and testing potential responses using a fast feedback loop or prototyping style approach to work towards solutions.



Schematic provided by Angie Tangaere as an example of the theoretical process applied in DSI projects.[18] [19]

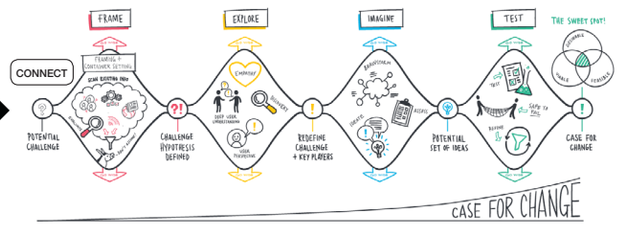
In practice, DSI work in a social innovation context:

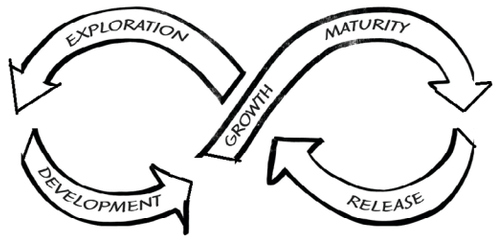
- Requires significant time and effort to build relationships and trust and
- Multiple points of connection to iterate towards a shared understanding of the opportunity / problem being worked on and how best to respond to it.

The DSI approach is grounded in a collaborative, co-design process that involves "end users" in framing the challenge and designing the response.

- Work with community members directly
- affected by the challenge that you (think you are) trying to understand and respond to
- Start from first principles:
  - (Re)frame the challenge (problem)
  - Explore what is happening
  - Identify potential solutions
  - Prototype and test solutions and learn from them.
- Iterate as the project progresses and work towards a viable solution / innovation.
- Learn both "in" (as participants) and "through" the work (reflected in the artifacts produced).

DSI Pathway[20]





Innovation Cycle[21]

18 Angie Tangaere., A Whānau Centric Approach Using Co-Design., The Auckland Co-design Lab.

19 Definitions: kanohi ki te kanohi: to speak face to face, in person, in the flesh;
Wananga: to meet and discuss, deliberate, consider. (http://maoridictionary.co.nz)

20 Angie Tangaere., A Whānau Centric Approach Using Co-Design., The Auckland Co-design Lab.

21 http://www.plexusinstitute.org/edgeware/archive/think/main_aides9.html

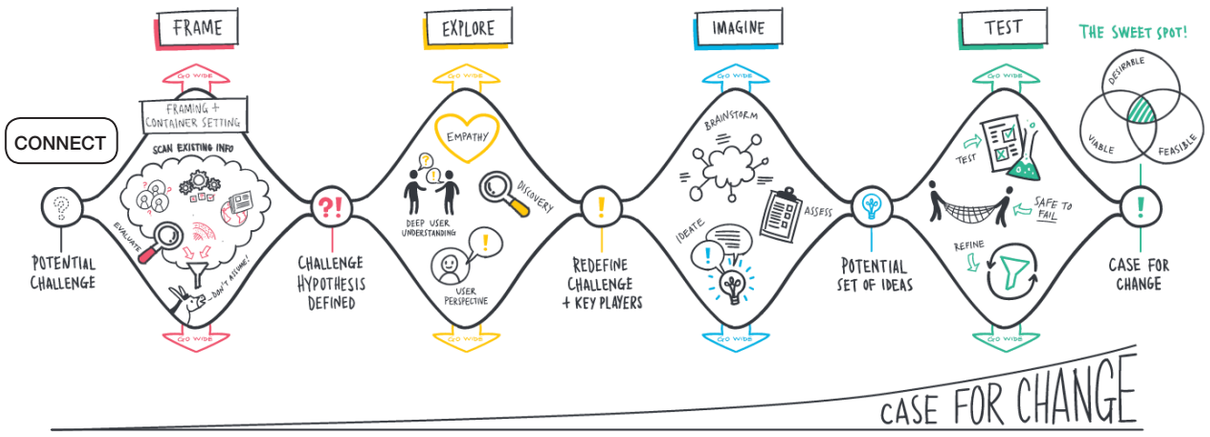
The DSI approach is characterised by a range of distinguishing attributes that have implications for how the work is done and evaluated.

Key success factors

DSI Attributes:		Implications:
It is a …	■ Strengths based ■ Collaborative ■ Emergent ■ Co-design process	■ People engage as **co-designers** not participants ■ The problem, process and outcome is not predefined ■ "Lean" into the process and "learn as you go"
It requires people to …	■ Feel comfortable to engage ■ Be able to put aside their preconceptions, biases and assumptions ■ Be prepared to share their questions and their knowledge	■ Time is invested to build **relationships**, trust and rapport ■ Different forms of **knowledge** and ways of understanding and communicating are respected, valued and applied
Which requires …	■ Respect ■ Transparency ■ Trust	■ Power (decision making) is shared ■ The right to **self-determination** is actioned

This way of working naturally aligns with many Indigenous cultures and traditions

The work lends itself towards a developmental style evaluation.[22]



Developmental Evaluation Approach

Formative & Summative

What is developmental evaluation?

Developmental Evaluation is a form of evaluation that is tailored to suit innovative initiatives. It is designed to help review and evolve initiatives that are working on complex issues, particularly at the early stage of their development (hence its name).

The purpose of Developmental Evaluation is not just to understand what is happening and what has been achieved to date, but also to provide a source of information through which those engaged in an initiative can reflect on and adapt to what they are learning and improve and innovate on a real time basis.

As such, developmental evaluation is both an assessment and a learning process. It recognises that change happens both in and through the work. It takes into account the changing context in which activities are being undertaken and the range of factors that influence and inform complex, collaborative initiatives. It is not based on the implementation of a fixed set of assessment tools, but rather involves the application of evaluative thinking and a reflective learning practice. It looks at what has been done, what has been learned and what needs to come next to progress an initiative.

It seeks to embed a reflective, action learning practice in the way that initiatives work on a day to day basis to progress their work and support adaptation and systems based change.[23]

22 Angie Tangaere., A Whānau Centric Approach Using Co-Design., The Auckland Co-design Lab.

23 Developmental Evaluation Consortium 2016.

SECTION 3: CULTURE

This Section explores what we mean when we talk about culture. It reflects on:

- The different forms of culture that can come into play when undertaking DSI projects;
- How culture can affect how people come to, participate in and make sense of this work; and
- How it can inform and influence how DSI work is done.

Culture, according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, is defined as: the beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time; A particular society that has its own beliefs, ways of life, art, etc.; A way of thinking, behaving, or working that exists in a place, system or organisation Culture.[24]

Forms of Culture

The people we spoke to as part of this research noted that the term culture can refer to a range of things.

- The beliefs and traditions of
  - a particular ethnic group
  - a social group or class
  - a government or social system
  - an organisation.

  We have focused on the first category in our research; however, the parties that we have spoken to have often noted that all the identified forms of culture often come into play in DSI projects
- People noted that culture can present itself differently in different groups and places, even those with a similar anthropological cultural background.
- In some cases they also differentiated between "traditional" and "contemporary" culture, where the latter reflects how the lived experience that community members have in relation to more dominant cultures - or as a result of dispossession, discrimination and / or disadvantage - can influence the way that traditional cultures are expressed, often becoming an amalgam of ethnic and social / class group cultures.
- In the context of how communities work with governments or service systems or engage in DSI style activities, people noted that the combined influence of culture and lived experience are both relevant when discussing culture and its influence on how people come and work on opportunities or issues together.

Influence of Culture

Throughout our lives we build up subconscious mental models or frames of reference that we use to make sense of what goes on around us.[25] Those mental models allow us to interpret what we see and help us to work out how best to respond to things.

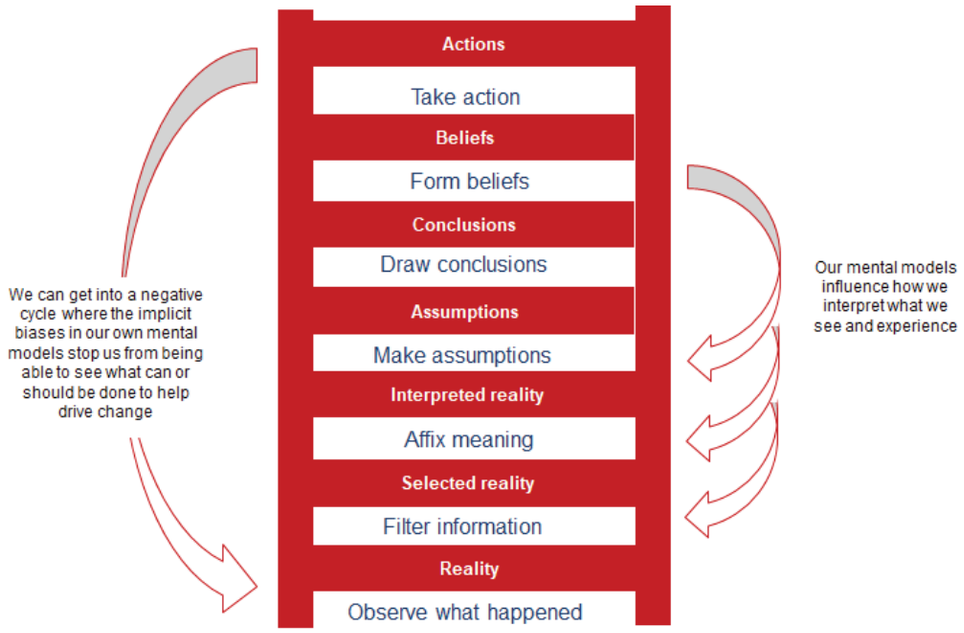
Our mental models build in what researchers refer to as "implicit bias", assumptions and perspectives that affect how we see, interpret and make sense of what is happening and so influence the actions that we take.

The "Ladder of Inference"[26] developed by social researcher Chris Argyris shows how the mental models we apply act as filters, narrowing down what we focus on, leading us to sub-consciously affix meaning to things that then takes us along an analytical path that over time often reinforces our underlying mental models, forming beliefs that influence the actions we take and the way we engage with others.

24 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture

25 Stacey, R., Strategic Management and Organisational Dynamics., Pitman: London., 1993., p.153.

26 C Argyris., "Action Science and Intervention." in The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science., Vol. 19 Issue. 2, June 1983., USA., pp. 115-135.



The "Ladder of Inference"

Culture, and the values, practices, norms and traditions that make it up, influence how people see and experience the world. In the context of DSI, these factors influence everyone involved in the work. It is critical that we work to surface and try to understand our implicit biases and be alert to the influence they can have on our work.

Culture frames (at least part of) the way we see the world. It:

- Forms part of people's identity; and
- Influences:
  - What people value, and so give primacy or priority to;
  - How people understand, find and convey meaning; and
  - How authority and power is held, who it is held by and how it is exercised.
- Our lived experience - including both our informal and formal education / learning experiences - also influences the way we see the world.

While it is nice to think that we are not affected by bias, research demonstrates that we are. Our individual preferences, culture, lived experience, education etc., all influence how we see and interpret the world.[27]

Implicit biases are pervasive. Everyone possesses them and they tend to favour the frame of reference our own group brings to a particular circumstance. Importantly, however, implicit biases can be surfaced

27 C Argyris., "Action Science and Intervention." in The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science., Vol. 19 Issue. 2, June 1983., USA., pp. 115-135.

and then put to one side or unlearned in order to try to better understand and respond to what we are seeing and experiencing.[28]

If our subconscious mental models go untested they can lead us into a negative cycle of misunderstanding and / or defensive behaviour. We can fall into the habit of making assumptions about others based on their actions and behaviours and what we assume they mean. A "negative attribution error" occurs when people observe and then judge the actions of others in a negative way without fully understanding the factors that have led to the other's behaviour (or the role they themselves might have played in generating it).1 This is particularly true where two people have had very different life experiences or come from very different cultural backgrounds (whether that relates to ethnicity, social group or organisation etc.). In this case people can often view things and interpret information, actions and behaviours in different ways. This can lead to misunderstanding and make it hard to establish rapport, build positive relationships and work through issues or opportunities together.

As researchers, practitioners and evaluators it is critical that we be alert to the influence of implicit bias – our own and that of others – in order to undertake our work effectively.

How culture influences the work:		It influences
Engaging	■ How we see, experience, understand an issue / opportunity ■ How we perceive a particular project: ■ Its relevance and importance to us ■ Whether we feel respected, welcome and safe to participate in it ■ Whether we trust it will be done "the right way" and that our voices will be heard ■ How we participate in a project, what we share, with whom, how, when	■ Timeframe ■ Relevance ■ Relationship ■ Respect ■ Power ■ Participation
Framing	■ How we understand define an issue / opportunity ■ What we value as being a desirable outcome, what we give primacy or priority to ■ How we define "the right way" of doing things, how we make decisions	■ Perception ■ Priorities ■ Decisionmaking
Sensemaking	■ What knowledge we bring and how that is conveyed ■ What criteria we apply to make decisions or determine success ■ What forms of evidence we pay (most) attention to ■ How we explore and test ideas and perspectives ■ How we manage conflicts and difference	■ Knowledge ■ Evidence ■ Analysis ■ Interpretation
Communicating	■ How we convey and share information ■ What is said, what is not said, by and to whom	■ Language ■ Meaning ….

Implications for DSI work

1. We need to be alert to the - often unconscious - biases, assumptions, perceptions and power dynamics etc. that we all bring to the work.
2. Given that the fundamental intention of DSI work is to have the end user (or community) at the centre of the design process, the approach that is taken to the work needs to be culturally anchored or grounded around that group.
3. We need to co-design an approach with community that is:
   - Culturally appropriate for that group
   - Built around their culture and lived experience
   - Strengths based, with a focus on reinforcing community self efficacy and executive functioning (skills)
   - Recognises community members as experts
   - Reinforces traditional knowledge and skills; and
   - Shares power and control.[29]
4. We need to be particularly alert to the potential tensions between a project commissioner who comes to the work with a particular frame of reference and objective that may not be aligned with that of the community.

28 P Schmitz., FSG., Community Engagement Toolkit Version 2.2., March 2017.

29 Angie Tangaere., A Whānau Centric Approach Using Co-Design., The Auckland Co-design Lab.

Example: Principles describing a culturally anchored approach

A Tikanga Māori Framework:[30]
Provided by Angie Tangaere and used as an example only of how cultural practice fits within the DSI approach. (Definitions added for clarity.)

Principle	Application for whānau centric co-design
Manaakitanga (the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others)	Hosting whānau in a way that empowers them, and removes any barriers to participation. Whānau feel welcome.
Whanaungatanga (relationship, kinship, sense of family connection, a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging)	Establishing meaningful relationships in culturally appropriate ways. Engaging whānau in a way which builds trust.
Tino rangatiratanga (self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy)	Whānau have the autonomy to decide how and when they will participate. Co-decide as well as co-design.
Mana (to be legal, effectual, binding, authoritative, valid)	Whānau are the experts in their lives. Ensuring a balance of power.
Ako (to learn, study, instruct, teach, advise)	Mutually reinforcing learning. Distributed power and control.

* Tikanga is the correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule, way, code, meaning, plan, practice, convention, protocol - the customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context.[31] Whānau is often translated as 'family', but its meaning is more complex. It includes physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions and is based on whakapapa. Whānau can be multi-layered, flexible and dynamic. Whānau is based on a Māori and a tribal world view. It is through the whānau that values, histories and traditions from the ancestors are adapted for the contemporary world.[32]

30 Angie Tangaere., A Whānau Centric Approach Using Co-Design., The Auckland Co-design Lab.

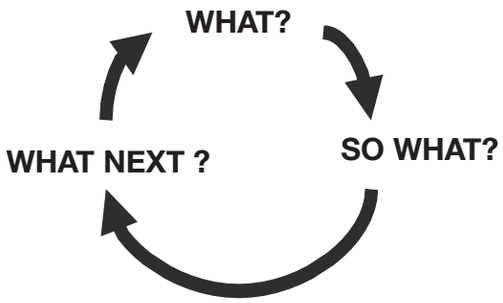
31 http://maoridictionary.co.nz

32 https://www.teara.govt.nz/en/whanau-maori-and-family/page-1

SECTION 4: EVALUATION

This Section explores how culture needs to be taken into consideration when evaluating DSI projects. It reflects on what influence culture has on:

- "What" we need to pay attention to from an evaluation perspective; and
- "How" best we do that?



Keys to a Learning Framework: Developmental Evaluation Consortium 2016.

The nature of DSI projects in themselves orient them towards certain modes of evaluation.

DSI Friendly Evaluation Attributes:

Approach	■ Developmental evaluation approach built into the project from the very beginning ■ Complemented by formative and summative evaluation through the prototyping and testing phases
Focus	■ What is learnt or developed both "in" (participant experience) and "through" (project artefact) the work ■ Look for changes at an individual, group and system level
Style	■ Participatory implementation methods ■ Tailored to encourage feedback and reflection (in a way that can feed into learning cycles embedded in the work) ■ Often embedded in the work rather than running beside the work
Evaluator's role	■ (Often embedded) critical friend supporting reflective learning process, helping to collect, collate, analyse and interpret data
Evidence	■ Draw on multiple sources of knowledge and evidence gathered through the DSI process

- Done well, the evaluation is both an assessment and a learning process. It helps both to understand and inform the work.
- In that way the evaluation forms part of the work.

For example look for:

- Shifts in participant:
  - Relationships
  - Knowledge / skills
  - Insights / understandings
  - Attitudes
  - Behaviours
  - Individual outcomes
- Activities undertaken and impacts of them
- Policy, program, funding, service and system changes

Given that, evaluation of DSI projects should share the characteristics of an effective DSI project.

Key success factors

DSI Attributes:		Implications:
It is a …	■ Strengths based ■ Collaborative ■ Emergent ■ Co-design process	■ People engage as **co-designers** not participants ■ The problem, process and outcome is not predefined ■ "Lean" into the process and "learn as you go"
It requires people to …	■ Feel comfortable to engage ■ Be able to put aside their preconceptions, biases and assumptions ■ Be prepared to share their questions and their knowledge	■ Time is invested to build **relationships**, trust and rapport ■ Different forms of **knowledge** and ways of understanding and communicating are respected, valued and applied
Which requires …	■ Respect ■ Transparency ■ Trust	■ Power (decision making) is shared ■ The right to **self-determination** is actioned

In doing that, the evaluation should recognise, respect and respond to all of the ways that culture influences and informs DSI work.

How culture influences the work:		It influences
Engaging	■ How we see, experience, understand an issue / opportunity ■ How we perceive a particular project: ■ Its relevance and importance to us ■ Whether we feel respected, welcome and safe to participate in it ■ Whether we trust it will be done "the right way" and that our voices will be heard ■ How we participate in a project, what we share, with whom, how, when	■ Timeframe ■ Relevance ■ Relationship ■ Respect ■ Power ■ Participation
Framing	■ How we understand define an issue / opportunity ■ What we value as being a desirable outcome, what we give primacy or priority to ■ How we define "the right way" of doing things, how we make decisions	■ Perception ■ Priorities ■ Decisionmaking
Sensemaking	■ What knowledge we bring and how that is conveyed ■ What criteria we apply to make decisions or determine success ■ What forms of evidence we pay (most) attention to ■ How we explore and test ideas and perspectives ■ How we manage conflicts and difference	■ Knowledge ■ Evidence ■ Analysis ■ Interpretation
Communicating	■ How we convey and share information ■ What is said, what is not said, by and to whom	■ Language ■ Meaning ….

We need to pay attention to all of these things and structure how we work to take them into account.

Observations and emerging themes

- We need to be alert to, explicit about and work through:
  - The power of commissioning parties and the tension that can exist between their objectives and perspectives and those of the community when designing and implementing an evaluation (as well as the project itself)
  - The impact of historical experience and context on community and its relationship with other groups or
  - systems
  - The existence of individual and cultural biases and assumptions that everyone brings to the DSI project and evaluation
    Note: Evaluators and facilitators in particular need to be conscious of this and actively work to avoid biasing the process. We need to try to identify our cultural blindspots, as well as the practice based blindspots we might bring to the work in our technical role.

- We need to be alert to how these factors increase complexity with regards to ethics and participation, and work to support participation in safe, culturally anchored, sustainable and legitimate ways.
- We need to build relationships before we build evaluation frameworks … and that can take time. This is consistent with the general need to build relationships as part of project design and development.
- We need to anchor our process and way of working in the culture and experience of the group that we are working with … and we need to realise that we can't do that without the knowledge and involvement of the people from that background and experience. We need to realise that "cultural knowledge" is more important than "technical knowledge", particularly in the early relationship building stages of a project.
  - ***"We need to know you care before we care how much you know."***
    (quote from an Indigenous practitioner talking about the importance of building rapport with community provided by an Interviewee)
- That means that we need to work with Indigenous colleagues when undertaking this work, or at a minimum find a way where we can work with Indigenous community members to be directed and coached on this by them.
- Some practitioners have also noted more generally that the complex, multifaceted nature of DSI lends itself to working in more complex interdisciplinary and interagency teams to draw together a range of different perspectives – community, social researchers, policy makers, philanthropists – to support the work and the evaluation of it.
- We need to ensure that we co-design evaluations with the communities that we work with. That means working through and co-defining and co-developing:

■ **Perception** ■ **Priorities** ■ **Decisionmaking**	– How we understand / define an issue / opportunity – How we define the desirable outcome, what we give primacy or priority to – How we do things and make decisions
■ **Knowledge** ■ **Evidence** ■ **Analysis** ■ **Interpretation**	– What forms of knowledge we draw on and how we do that – What criteria we apply to make decisions or determine success – What forms of evidence we pay (most) attention to – How we explore and test ideas and perspectives – How we manage conflicts or differences
■ **Language** ■ **Meaning ….**	– How we convey and share information – How we test for understanding and meaning, to make sure we are on the same page ….

- We need to realise that it takes knowledge, skill and confidence to do that – and inherently requires practitioners to be highly self-aware and reflective and be prepared to share something of themselves in that practice, which can be confronting.
- It also means that the detailed framework for an evaluation cannot be defined before the evaluator is working with the community. We need to take a developmental evaluation approach and place emphasis on action, outcomes and impact both during and after the design process.
- We also need to look to embed two way learning approaches in our work, and always look for opportunities to support community capability and capacity building as part of our reflective practice.
- We can still use contemporary tools to support evaluation; we just need to make sure that they are culturally grounded (in line with the table on the previous page).
- We need to continually test for our own understanding – to make sure that we are interpreting, understanding and conveying ideas appropriately. We can use two-way translation processes to support this.
- While researchers, practitioners and evaluators have tools to support their practice there would be real value in sharing tools and developing a suite or package of materials that can support culturally anchored practice.
- There are some natural synergies between design and evaluative thinking, and tools, that we can draw on to help strengthen how we leverage and embed evaluation in DSI work. Many "design" tools can be used as "evaluative" tools.

Examples of culturally anchored evaluation of DSI projects

There is real value in starting to draw together examples of how researchers, practitioners and evaluators are approaching this work and how culturally anchored models of evaluation in a DSI context are evolving. An example provided by Penny Hagan can be found at: https://lifehackhq.co/lifehack-resources/impact-model/ Readers are encouraged to provide further examples of this type of work.

CONCLUSION

Culture does appear to play an important role in both the design and delivery of DSI projects and their evaluation. In many ways it seems the process used to evaluate these types of projects needs to mirror the attributes of these projects themselves. Culture has implications for both what we pay attention to when we evaluate this work and how we best go about that.

We need to recognise the influence that culture has on us as evaluators and how we work and interpret things, and on the relationship we have with the communities we work with. We need to ground our evaluation approaches in the culture and lived experience of the groups we are working with and we can only do that by co-defining and co-designing the work with them. We need to be self-aware and build the knowledge, skills and confidence to do that.

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