Learning Public Innovation

Measurement and Evaluation

Global Online Conference on Learning and Teaching Public Innovation and Entrepreneurship, October 17th 2018

Input by Lene Krogh Jeppesen, Center for Public Innovation, DK

Introduction

On October 17th 2018, the GovLab and Politics for Tomorrow convened a global expert exchange focussing on measurement and evaluation. The discussion was led with an input by Lene Krogh Jeppesen from the Danish Center of Public Innovation.

The main takeaway from the online conference on measurement and evaluation was to differentiate "numbers" and "judgement" more clearly. Many participants were interested in how to combine innovation processes with an adequate evaluation practice as soon as starting an innovation project. Furthermore it became obvious that developing evaluation skills should be part of innovation training to better understand and show the impact of our work.

The next online conference is scheduled for January 16th, 2019 and will focus on incentives for public innovation.

Hosted by Professor Beth Noveck, Director of the GovLab in the U.S, and Caroline Paulick-Thiel, Director of Politics for Tomorrow in Germany, the online conferences bring together experienced experts who are all currently working on facilitating or teaching innovation processes in the public sector, either on a city-level, national, or global scale. The purpose of these meetings to spark mutual inspiration and learning by convening a quarterly expert exchange, operating under the Chatham House Rule.

Lene Krogh Jeppesen

- works at Denmark's National Center for Public Sector Innovation (COI)
- is engaged in public sector innovation since 2010
- is excited about new international connections and exchange

→ LinkedIn Profile

Presentation
National Center for Public Innovation

Nearly all members have a background doing public sector innovation from a hands-on perspective, often from political science, humanities backgrounds

Their belief: innovation is about doing and not just about talking about ideas

There are 9 of us but 800,000 public servants. So we can convene and create tools for them to use.

Some Facts on Innovation/Evaluation

8 of 10 public sector workplaces have implemented at least one innovation in 2015-16

Numbers have a legitimizing factor, we get access to conversations, numbers really do matter

51% of public sector innovations have become the subject of an evaluation

41% by internal evaluators, 10% by external innovators

Evaluation is...

You need some knowledge of evaluation if you want proper external evaluation

A systematic assessment of an idea, completion, organization, performance, and outcome of an action

Passing systematic judgment about something that's been implemented

Whereas...

It is looking at things retrospectively and examining causality. It is typically linear and involves measuring

Innovation entails looking toward future and working in a circular manner (what's the next step, adjusting)

These are two different mindsets with some crossover

COI has co-created an evaluation toolkit with civil servants

Workshop with 30 public servants

Designed to help people actually do evaluation

Four phases when evaluating innovation:

English version will be available within weeks

1. Clarify – anchoring an innovative project is a challenge, need to engage stakeholders at the beginning
2. Plan
3. Collect, analyze, conclude (data) – use this to adjust innovation process, does this actually spur innovation
4. Use it – how can this knowledge be spread, used for learning

Framing and Direction:	Framing and direction for individuals to actually do innovation, organizational, where is the leadership
	Process and tools – you need training, networks, IT systems
Reflections on measurement vs. evaluation:	Difference: measurement is "just" measurement. It doesn't assess whether the innovation is actually what we want it to be
	Evaluation entails an assessment, it answers whether the innovation provides value
	This is important because you need different designs for different projects

Key takeaways for evaluating innovation:

- We need to evaluate better
- Doing one interview is better than none
- You can evaluate without using many resources
- Start early
- Have conversations in your organization about evaluating innovation

Questions for the discussion:

What are your biggest potentials and pitfalls when measuring and evaluating innovation?

What's needed in public sector innovation to have a better culture for evaluating and measuring?

Discussion

Selected questions and answers

How do you differentiate your evaluation when you're looking at something with more unknowns, anticipatory vs something with a lot of knowns where you're doing iterations?

Either way you need to start evaluation early. As you gather data you will gain more insights into what you need to do, and continue developing a plan

Adapting yourself to evolve is a huge challenge in public sector so that makes sense

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When you evaluate public innovation, do you measure the impact of each initiative (which

It depends on what you need the measurement and evaluation for, do you need to see if they've applied this or measure the impacts? Huge part of this is about making decisions, do we have the resources for it, are people

can be very different in each case) or you measure if the team has worked in an innovative way (applying user-centered mindset, agile methodologies, prototyping, etc.)?

interested?

In terms of measuring impact and evaluating innovation teams, that's a very difficult issue. Evaluating an innovation team is like evaluating an HR unit in the sense that it is difficult to actually assess whether they are effective and it is also very political. This is an ongoing discussion, there aren't easy answers.

I think it might be easier to measure if the team is successfully applying an innovative way of doing things. In other words, it is easier to convince stakeholders if you can measure impact of each initiative. However this is hard because you need to set a different set of metrics for each initiative.

Best approach would be to prioritize and be pragmatic, figure out what stakeholders are most interested in. Which impact are they most interested in? Put out some star projects to do special evaluations on.

What are the differences when we measure or evaluate:
To assess in order to get additional funding or make our work and the innovation process more effective? What will actually create a better culture?

Organizations sometimes do amazing work and still get shut down. If you need to find an easy way of doing base documentation that justifies the funding, that's easy to show. Sometimes just having base numbers is good. This might not necessarily create a better culture though

Copenhagen is getting shut down because of political issues even though they've done incredible work.

Focus on how can we learn something and demonstrate value

How can you create a better culture for measurement? You have this instrument for evaluating a public organization, do you evaluate before you begin the innovation process after?

As soon as you know you're doing an innovation project you should start evaluating as well. Who will read this evaluation, who will read the results, how will we measure it? It needs to be a continuous conversation.

How does your approach relate to data-driven M&E approaches, where is the connection?

It's a broader question of evolution of innovation approaches.

They can absolutely go together, Denmark just has a tradition of human-centered innovation. We should always include data as part of our evaluations and the decisions we make.

On the one hand you're trying to build these new competencies within an organization. On the other hand, based on COI's approach, the question is how to start the innovation process early. My takeaway is that evaluation should be part of this skillset.

When we were co-creating the toolkit, that's one of the discussions that kept coming up. I'm always tweaking and testing, which is an important skill, but it's not necessarily an overall evaluation. I think a lot of the tools we use for innovation can also be used for data gathering and evaluation.

A huge challenge with M&E is how it is currently used by public sector leadership and how it is framed, which can cause stifling innovation and decrease risk taking.

Have you ever encountered a situation where what the interviewee was saying was not reliable? Moreover, have you ever had an experience where you wanted to interview a team/a person and they felt threatened?
If the evaluation/measurement discussion happens alongside problem definition, does that decrease this sense of threat?

I have not had the experience of the interviewee not being reliable. The ethics of using positive methods are things you need to consider, such as reliability. Always think about where are you doing the interviews, who's doing them, is it a comfortable setting? Be very transparent about the purpose.

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Next steps

Our plan is to continue the conferences quarterly.

This documentation has been approved by the participants. Criticism, approval and commentary is all welcome.

The next call will focus on incentives. Please let us know if we should reach out to special experts and feel free to invite more public innovation educators and facilitators to the mailing list and [LinkedIn group](#).

We will send invitations and reminders in time.

Looking forward to seeing you!

Beth Noveck, Caroline Paulick-Thiel and Sam DeJohn