



# VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM 2023

DISCOVERING HOW, WHY, AND WHEN OUR STRATEGIES MATTER

## Post Event Resources

### Day 1 - Being Inspired: Exploring what becomes possible when causal pathways are made visible

Resource Title	Short description	Author(s)
<a href="#">Causal Pathways - A shared understanding</a>	This document articulates a shared understanding of the concept of "causal pathways" in evaluation and strategy.	Heather Britt, with contributions from Carlisle Levine, Steve Powell, Giel Ton, Marina Apgar, Rick Davies, Sarah Stachowiak, James Copestake, and Jewlya Lynn.
<a href="#">Lost Causal: Debunking Myths About Causal Analysis in Philanthropy</a>	When philanthropy seeks to drive change — especially in messy, complex, and dynamic systems — it can feel like strategy development and implementation takes place in the proverbial "black box." We select ideas that are promising, have reasonably high confidence that positive short-term outcomes will occur, and then hold out hope that the strategy will eventually add up to more than the sum of its parts.	Jewlya Lynn, Sarah Stachowiak, Julia Coffman

## Day 2 - Getting practical: Exploring what it takes to explore causal pathways

Resource Title	Short description	Author(s)
<a href="#">Learning through and about Contribution Analysis for impact evaluation</a>	The article from the Institute of Development Studies discusses the Centre for Development Impact's five-year journey in innovating and understanding Contribution Analysis as a primary method for impact evaluation, emphasizing the complexities and challenges of new evaluation techniques and introducing the concept of 'causal hotspots' to navigate these complexities.	Marina Apgar & Giel Ton
<a href="#">Finding and using causal hotspots: a practice in the making</a>	This article from the Institute of Development Studies is the second in a series discussing the use of Contribution Analysis (CA) for impact evaluation. It delves into the concept of 'causal hotspots' as focal points in the theory of change (ToC) for evaluation research, illustrating the application of CA in diverse settings, particularly in participatory research interventions, and provides a detailed example from the Child Labour Action Research Innovation in South and Southeast Asia (CLARISSA) programme.	Marina Apgar & Mieke Snijder
<a href="#">The Book of Why. The New Science of Cause and Effect. Pearl, Judea, and Dana Mackenzie. 2018. Hachette UK. JMDE Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation, 13, 47-54.</a>	Journal article: Book review - Attempt to explain "reclaiming causal" from the perspective of a very influential statistician and thinker	Pearl, J & Mackenzie, D (2018).
<a href="#">Monitoring and evaluation for thinking and working politically</a>	This article explores the challenges of monitoring and evaluating politically informed and adaptive programmes in the international development field. We assess the strengths and weaknesses of some specific evaluation methodologies which have been suggested as particularly appropriate for these kinds of programmes based on scholarly literature and the practical experience of the authors in using them. We suggest that those methods which assume generative causality are particularly well suited to the task. We also conclude that factoring in the politics of uncertainty and evidence generation and use is particularly important in order to recognize and value diverse experiential knowledge, integrate understandings of the local context, accommodate adaptation and realistically grapple with the power relations which are inherent in evaluation processes.	Tom Aston, Chris Roche, Marta Schaaf & Sue Cant

<a href="#">Cracking Causality in Complex Policy Contexts</a>	Blog post on the challenge of making credible causal claims and discussing experiences from developing the Qualitative Impact Assessment Protocol	James Copestake
<a href="#">Does our theory match your theory? Theories of change and causal maps in Ghana</a>	What do the intended beneficiaries of international development programmes think about the drivers of change in their livelihoods and lives? Do their perceptions match up with the theories of change constructed by organizations trying to support them? This case study looks at an entrepreneurship programme aiming to economically empower rural women smallholders in Ghana. We report on an evaluation of the programme that used the Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP) to gather stories of change from the programme participants. These stories were coded, analysed and visualized using a web application called Causal Map.	Powell, S., Larquemin, A., Copestake, J., Remnant, F., Avard, R.,

### Day 3 - Digging in: Choosing the methods, practices, and processes that help you learn about causal pathways

Resource Title	Short description	Author(s)
<b>How do I pick and combine methods?</b>		
<a href="#">The Art and Craft of Bricolage in Evaluation</a>	This paper provides a framework based on a review of 33 methods to support evaluators to be more intentional about bricolage and to combine the component parts of relevant methods more effectively. It discusses two cases from practice to illustrate the value added of taking a more intentional approach. It further argues that navigating different forms of power is a critical skill for bricolage, and that doing so can help to ensure rigour.	Tom Aston & Marina Apgar
<a href="#">Qual versus quant impact evaluation. Same ballpark, different ballpark?</a>	Quant and qual impact evaluation approaches are different ballparks because quant approaches attempt to estimate the strength of causal effects. Whereas qual approaches either don't use numbers at all or only do calculations about the evidence for the effects, not about the effects themselves and in particular we don't estimate strength of effects.	Steve Powell

<a href="#">Choosing Appropriate Evaluation Methods: A Tool for Assessment &amp; Selection</a>	<p>While unsuitable and unfeasible under many real world circumstances, the rigid “gold standard” hierarchy—which placed experimental and quasi-experimental evidence at the top and qualitative evidence at the bottom—had the (illusory, some might say) benefit of being simple and of leading to clear choices. Now that some policy fields and institutions have expanded their horizons, recognising that the “best” method or combination of methods is dependent on the evaluation questions, intended uses and attributes of the intervention and evaluation process, we are struggling to make and justify choices.</p> <p>The tool presented in this paper is an attempt to improve this situation and support the process of methodological selection, by helping users make an informed and reasoned choice of one or more methods for a specific evaluation.</p>	<p>CECAN</p>
<a href="#">Broadening the range of designs and methods for impact evaluations</a>	<p>Highly influential study prepared for UKAid in 2012 by Elliot Stern. Demonstrating that interventions cause development effects depends on theories and rules of causal inference that can support causal claims. Some of the most potentially useful approaches to causal inference are not generally known or applied in the evaluation of international development and aid. Designs need to build on causal inference approaches each of which have their strengths and weaknesses, one of the reasons that combining designs and methods – so called ‘mixed methods’ – are valuable. The study has concluded that most development interventions are ‘contributory causes’. They ‘work’ as part of a causal package in combination with other ‘helping factors’ such as stakeholder behaviour, related programmes and policies, institutional capacities, cultural factors or socio-economic trends. Designs and methods for IE need to be able to unpick these causal packages.</p>	<p>Elliot Stern et al.</p>
<p><b>Causal link monitoring</b></p>		
<a href="#">Causal link monitoring brief</a>	<p>This step-by-step guide to Causal Link Monitoring (CLM) illustrates how this iterative design and monitoring approach contributes to improved understanding of complexity in causal pathways and supports evidence-informed adaptive management of projects. An example illustrates how to build a complexity-aware theory of change and design MEL activities to track uncertain, contested, emergent and dynamic aspects of causal</p>	<p>Heather Britt, Richard Hummelbrunner, Jackie Greene</p>

	pathways.	
<a href="#">Iterative design and monitoring for adaptive management: How causal link monitoring can help</a>	This blog describes how the authors used CLM to design a project monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system. They conducted a 3-day participatory workshop with project and donor staff to refine the project's theory of change, identify monitoring and evaluation priorities based on the predicted logic model and the staff's information needs, then streamlined the MEL system to focus on where the project's causal pathways were most sensitive to influence from the context and prepares the project to support evidence-informed adaptation.	Heather Britt, Richard Hummelbrunner, Jackie Greene
<b>Outcome harvesting</b>		
<a href="#">Outcome harvesting (approach overview)</a>	This approaches page on BetterEvaluation.org briefly describes outcome harvesting, where it comes from, when it can be used, who should be involved, and how it should be done. It also includes links to key outcome harvesting resources.	Ricardo Wilson Grau
<a href="#">Outcome harvesting (brief)</a>	This brief introduces outcome harvesting's key concepts and describes how to use the approach (published by the Ford Foundation in May 2012; revised in Nov 2013).	Ricardo Wilson-Grau and Heather Britt
<b>Causal map</b>		
<a href="#">Causal mapping on one page</a>	A one-page introduction to causal mapping	Causal Map Ltd
<a href="#">Causal Map</a>	Causal Map is an online research tool, a way to code, analyse and visualise fragments of information about what causes what. Use it to make sense of what interviewees tell you in social science research. Use it to visualise stakeholders' experiences of how a programme or intervention is working and create collective empirical 'theories of change'.	Steve Powell
<a href="#">Causal Mapping for Evaluators</a>	Evaluators are interested in capturing how things causally influence one another. They are also interested in capturing how stakeholders think things causally influence one another. Causal mapping – the collection, coding and visualisation of interconnected causal claims – has been used widely for several decades across many disciplines for this purpose. This article re-introduces causal mapping for evaluators. It argues that causal maps can be best understood neither as models of	Steve Powell James Copestake Fiona Remnant

	beliefs about causal pathways nor as models of causal pathways per se but as repositories of evidence for those pathways.	
<b>Redefining rigour</b>		
<a href="#">CLARISSA's Quality of Evidence Rubrics</a>	This document details what the CLARISSA project means by 'high-quality evidence' and how we, as a programme, assess this for our evaluation research and thematic research. It provides a set of rubrics that attend to rigor bringing a participatory and systemic change lens.	Marina Apgar et al.
<a href="#">Quality of Evidence Rubrics</a>	This document provides guidance on rubrics that can help in assessing the quality of evidence when exploring causal pathways. It covers five rubric: plausibility, uniqueness, triangulation, transparency, and independence	Tom Aston
<a href="#">Principles of rigour: Four potential principles for rigour in complexity</a>	An extract from the "Design and Evaluation for Impact" event on July 23rd, 2019, the paper discusses the principles of rigor in complexity. Four main principles are highlighted: Inclusive Participation, Methodological Pluralism, Reflexivity and Relevance.	Kate McKegg
<a href="#">Rethinking Rigor: Increasing Credibility and Use</a>	This document emphasizes the importance of rigor in producing credible and reliable evaluation results. It outlines four key dimensions of rigor: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Each dimension is further elaborated with specific criteria and questions to guide evaluators in their work.	Jewlya Lynn & Hallie Preskill
<a href="#">Innovating for inclusive rigour in peacebuilding evaluation</a>	This blog post emphasizes the importance and complexity of inclusive and rigorous peacebuilding evaluation. The piece discusses the challenges of peacebuilding evaluation and highlights innovative methodologies that focus on participatory and adaptive practices, aiming to understand and evaluate the processes and outcomes of peacebuilding interventions in dynamic contexts.	Marina Apgar et al.
<a href="#">Credible Explanations of Development Outcomes: Improving Quality and Rigour with Bayesian Theory-Based Evaluation</a>	Introduces an innovative methodology for theory-based evaluations (TBEs) of development interventions. This method, known as Bayesian Process Tracing, combines the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative methods, aiming to explain outcomes in single case studies while ensuring traceability, repeatability, and increased reliability of findings by associating them with explicit levels of confidence.	Barbara Befani



<a href="#">Monitoring and evaluation for thinking and working politically</a>	<p>This article explores the challenges of monitoring and evaluating politically informed and adaptive programmes in the international development field. We assess the strengths and weaknesses of some specific evaluation methodologies which have been suggested as particularly appropriate for these kinds of programmes based on scholarly literature and the practical experience of the authors in using them. We suggest that those methods which assume generative causality are particularly well suited to the task. We also conclude that factoring in the politics of uncertainty and evidence generation and use is particularly important in order to recognize and value diverse experiential knowledge, integrate understandings of the local context, accommodate adaptation and realistically grapple with the power relations which are inherent in evaluation processes.</p>	<p>Tom Aston, Chris Roche, Marta Schaaf &amp; Sue Cant</p>
<p><b>Contribution analysis</b></p>		
<a href="#">Contribution Analysis for Adaptive Management</a>	<p>This note is designed to share guidance on using contribution analysis for adaptive management by examining how the approach enables programmes to work with theories of change in a practical, reflexive way, and how its findings can inform programme adaptation. Contribution analysis is a theory-based approach that helps users arrive at conclusions regarding the contribution that programmes have made to particular outcomes. This note examines how and to what extent contribution analysis can enable adaptive management (CM4AM). Through the use of interviews with stakeholder, it evaluates four programmes that adopted elements of CM4AM in their practices. The note concludes by arguing that the combination of contribution analysis and adaptive management can help facilitate the collection of, and reflection and use of high-quality data and analysis in adaptive decision-making.</p>	<p>Marina Apgar et al.</p>
<a href="#">Contribution Analysis in Policy Work: Assessing Advocacy's Influence</a>	<p>A brief exploring the methodological application of contribution analysis to advocacy and offering guidance for evaluators considering this approach</p>	<p>Robin Kane, Carlisle Levine, Carlyn Orians, Claire Reinelt</p>
<a href="#">Contribution Analysis: A promising method for assessing advocacy's impact</a>	<p>An article exploring contribution analysis as a nonexperimental impact evaluation method for testing and validating contribution claims in a policy context with multiple actors and influences</p>	<p>Robin Kane, Carlisle Levine, Carlyn Orians, Claire Reinelt</p>
<a href="#">Tools and Tips for Implementing Contribution Analysis</a>	<p>This learning brief offers practical lessons on applying contribution analysis to advocacy impact evaluations. It focuses on lessons learned and practical management of the approach.</p>	<p>Laura Hopkins</p>

<a href="#">Contribution Analysis and Estimating the Size of Effects: Can We Reconcile the Possible with the Impossible?</a>	<p>This paper explores how contribution analysis can be stretched so that it can give some sense of the importance of a contribution in a quantitative manner.</p>	<p>Giel Ton, John Mayne, Thomas Delahais, Jonny Morell, Barbara Befani, Marina Apgar, and Peter O'Flynn</p>
<a href="#">Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis: A Combined Approach to Generative Causal Inference for Impact Evaluation</a>	<p>This article proposes a combination of contribution analysis with process tracing. Both are grounded in generative causality and take a probabilistic approach to the interpretation of evidence. The proposed procedure shows that established Bayesian principles and Process Tracing tests, based on both science and common sense, can be applied to assess the strength of qualitative and quali-quantitative observations and evidence, collected within an overarching CA framework; thus shifting the focus of impact evaluation from 'assessing impact' to 'assessing confidence' (about impact).</p>	<p>Befani, B. and Mayne, J</p>
<a href="#">Introduction: Contribution, Causality, Context, and Contingency when Evaluating Inclusive Business Programmes</a>	<p>Building on real-world experiences with theory-based evaluation in inclusive business programmes, this IDS Bulletin discusses approaches and methods for meaningful impact evaluation. It examines how these evaluations provided information that made programmes accountable to the donors while also helping the implementing agencies to learn and adapt their programme</p>	<p>Giel Ton &amp; Sietze Vellema</p>
<p><b>Process tracing</b></p>		
<a href="#">Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis: A Combined Approach to Generative Causal Inference for Impact Evaluation</a>	<p>This article proposes a combination of contribution analysis with process tracing. Both are grounded in generative causality and take a probabilistic approach to the interpretation of evidence. The proposed procedure shows that established Bayesian principles and Process Tracing tests, based on both science and common sense, can be applied to assess the strength of qualitative and quali-quantitative observations and evidence, collected within an overarching CA framework; thus shifting the focus of impact evaluation from 'assessing impact' to 'assessing confidence' (about impact).</p>	<p>Befani, B. and Mayne, J</p>
<a href="#">Process Tracing Innovations in Practice: Finding the Middle Path</a>	<p>This CDI Practice Paper draws on comparative learning from applying three different types of process tracing in international development initiatives. It argues in favour of a 'middle path' of applying evidence tests and rubrics to structure evaluative judgements rather than formal Bayesian updating or looser forms of process tracing. It also calls attention to the potential added value of taking</p>	<p>Tom Aston and Alix Wadeson</p>



	a participatory approach, offering practical recommendations for how to do this effectively.	
<a href="#">How to do Process Tracing: A Method for Testing “How Change Happened” in Complex and Dynamic Settings</a>	This brief explains a series of six practical steps for using the process tracing method in the context of complex systems-change efforts using participatory approaches, providing illustrative examples from our work and lifting up key considerations and potential pitfalls throughout. These steps are organized into three phases.	Jewlya Lynn, Sarah Stachowiak, Jennifer Byers
<b>QuiP</b>		
<a href="#">Attributing Development Impact: The qualitative impact protocol case book</a>	Free e-book download: Substantiating cause and effect is one of the great conundrums for those aiming to have a social impact, be they an NGO, social impact investment fund, or multinational corporation.  Attributing Development Impact brings together responses to this challenge using an innovative impact evaluation approach called the Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuiP). This is a transparent, flexible and relatively simple set of guidelines for collecting, analysing and sharing feedback from intended beneficiaries about significant drivers of change in their lives.	James Copestake, Marlies Morsink, Fiona Remnant
<a href="#">Save the Children QuiP Case Study: QuiP in action</a>	QuiP case study: Evaluation of Save the Children health & nutrition projects in Tanzania, Mozambique & Zimbabwe	Bath SDR
<a href="#">Case study: Using QuiP to evaluate Tearfund’s church and community transformation programme</a>	Tearfund's Church and Community Transformation (CCT) programme, aims to mobilize churches to address community needs across various countries. The study evaluates the impact of the CCT programme using the QuiP methodology, focusing on understanding causal pathways and the program's influence on community relations and overall wellbeing.	Tearfund
<a href="#">QuiP used as part of an evaluation of the impact of the UK Government Tampon Tax Fund (TTF)</a>	This document is about the evaluation of the UK Government's Tampon Tax Fund (TTF), established in 2015, which allocated £86.25 million from sanitary product taxes to support women and girls. The evaluation assessed the fund's impact using methods like a grantee survey, bid review, public data analysis, case studies, and evidence synthesis from project-level M&E data.	Kantar Public

<a href="#">Case study: QuIP &amp; RCT to evaluate a cash transfer and gender training programme in Malawi</a>	<p>The document discusses the Concern Worldwide 'Graduation' programme, a 22-month intervention aimed at addressing extreme poverty in Malawi. The programme provided consumption support, skills training, access to financial services, and a larger capital transfer. The research focused on the role of gender in the Graduation model, incorporating three distinct treatment arms and utilized both RCT and QuIP methodologies to evaluate the impact, especially concerning income generation, intrahousehold relationships, and gender dynamics.</p>	<p>Concern Worldwide</p>
<p><b>Realist evaluation</b></p>		
<a href="#">Realist impact evaluation an introduction</a>	<p>This document introduces the concept of realist evaluation as a theory-based approach to assess the impact of programs and policies. It emphasizes understanding the underlying mechanisms and contexts that influence outcomes, rather than just observing the outcomes themselves. The document provides insights into the philosophy of realism, its implications for evaluation, and how realist evaluation can be applied to understand the effectiveness of interventions in various contexts.</p>	<p>Gill Westhorp</p>
<a href="#">Realist evaluation</a>	<p>This blog from Better Evaluation is an introduction to <i>Realistic evaluation</i>. Realist evaluation is a theory-driven approach that seeks to understand "what works, for whom, in what respects, to what extent, in what contexts, and how?" Developed by Pawson and Tilley, it emphasizes the importance of context and underlying generative mechanisms in determining outcomes. The method examines how interventions work by analyzing how actors respond to them, considering the influence of the surrounding social reality.</p>	<p>Sara Van Belle Gill Westhorp Bruno Marchal</p>
<a href="#">Reality Bites: Making realist evaluation useful in the real world</a>	<p>This CDI Practice Paper presents lessons from four large, multi-country realist evaluations of complex interventions. It argues that realist evaluation can add value by enhancing the clarity, depth, and portability of findings, helping evaluators deal with context and complexity in pragmatic ways, and providing helpful tools and lenses for implementers to critically appraise their programmes and generate learning. However, novice realist evaluators face a number of potential pitfalls, especially in large-scale evaluations. This paper shares lessons on how to navigate these.</p>	<p>Melanie Punton, Isabel Vogel, Jennifer Leavy, Charles Michaelis and Edward Boydell</p>

