

Frame for Thinking about Transformative Evaluation

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Author's note 2014. While working as Director Evaluation for World Vision International I wrote several papers about framing TE to organize my thinking about transformative evaluation. I used this material in workshops but it was not distributed beyond workshop participants. I have reworked those papers here, the latest one written in 2009, to present a coherent single paper about framing transformative evaluation. The way that World Vision International describes transformational development has evolved since 2009. I have not revised the features of transformational development described in this paper since they are still relevant for illustrating features of transformative evaluation.

In 2011 Myers revised *Walking with the Poor*. I had the privilege of working with him as he revised his discussion of evaluation. Together we agreed that in transformational community development practice in general program monitoring is undersold, program evaluating focused on impact is oversold, and reflecting as a dialogical activity is ignored.

But reflection is more helpful than traditional m&e for understanding change in individuals and communities that is transformative. Explore chapter 9, "Learning toward transformation," in Myers (2011).

I have discussed some topics more thoroughly on www.EvalFrank.com. This is indicated in the Notes.

What is transformative evaluation (TE)?

TE is a special type of transformational development evaluation. The evaluandⁱ for *transformational development evaluation* is a transformational community development (TD) program. At its best a TD program

- Enables individuals and groups to confront sin and injustice experienced in the community,
- Creates opportunities for repentance in culturally appropriate but godly ways,
- Celebrates a life-style based on loving God and neighbor in practical ways.

TD evaluation examines changes in individuals and communities that occur in the context of facilitating holistic community development by Christians. The primary desired development program outcomes are increased love of God and neighbor.

TE includes the objective of *renewing the minds of stakeholders* regarding what really matters in transformational development. Throughout the evaluation exercise stakeholders are challenged to think and rethink about what makes development transformational. It is evaluation FOR transformation of people associated with the program as well as the evaluator. The modifier “transformative” is used to signify evaluation FOR transformation in the thinking of stakeholders and evaluation team members, while “transformational” is used to signify evaluation OF holistic change.

To understand transformative evaluation you must understand transformational development evaluation and holistic evaluation. Since each approach is defined in terms of the other two approaches, you must think about each several times from different perspectives before the concepts become clear.

This paper is organized into four sections as shown in this Chart of Contents.

Chart of Contents

A primary purpose of transformative evaluation is to renew stakeholders’ minds about what is important in transformational development.	
A. Understanding a conceptual frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key elements worthy of attention • Classify elements to facilitate systematic investigation • Highlight what is valued • Describe a metaphor
B. Clarifying community development theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and goals • Processes of change • Sustainability
C. Focusing on the community development agent/facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of modernity attitudes • View of the biblical story • View of poverty • Holistic thinking
D. Applying the frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cookingham’s interpretation of Myers’ community development theory • Jayakumar Christian’s questions for holistic evaluation • Myers’ evaluation questions

A. The nature of a conceptual frame

Frame reflection is a mode of dialectical inquiry. *Dialectical inquiry* in the field of philosophy is dialogue that examines the meanings of a concept and its opposite, which can lead to a more meaningful view of the concept. Frame reflection is used where people are in conflict because they have opposing views.

In frame reflection people explore how their own actions may worsen contention, contribute to stalemate, trigger extreme pendulum swings, or move toward pragmatic solution. It was developed by Schon and Rein (1994) as a way of resolving intractable policy controversies. Frame reflection applied to various approaches to evaluation is helpful in deciding what really matters in evaluation and the inquiry approaches that will be most helpful.

I first applied the principles of frame reflection to evaluation while consulting with World Vision staff in Rwanda regarding monitoring and evaluating efforts for peace building and reconciliation following the genocide in 1994. The heart of the process involved discussing present realities in Rwanda against desired program outcomes, and what inputs and processes could lead to those outcomes. The result is shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Frame for Planning Evaluation of Reconciliation Work

The beginning of a frame developed by WV Rwanda Reconciliation and Peace Building Department and WVI Evaluation Director, Frank Cookingham, Kigali, January 14-16, 1998. Revised in April based on comments to Frank by Warren Nyamugasira in January and April, and Frank's reading of draft #4 of the foundation paper by the WV Reconciliation Commission. Revised in November 1998 during meetings in Rwanda between Cookingham and the World Vision Reconciliation and Peace Building Department with Advisor John Stewart.

Rwandan Realities	Inputs	Processes	Outcomes
Everyone is deeply wounded inside, but they do not want to talk about it.	1. Some WV staff are healing -- they are important for enabling healing in others.	WV staff living sacrificially according to guidance of God's indwelling Spirit. Staff acknowledgment of own failures to accept God's gift of reconciliation.	Emotional wounds are healed. People are released from the pent up emotions that they could not talk about.
The cruelest acts (hacking people to death in the presence of their families) have caused revenge and hatred to run deep. There is a need for justice.	2. WVI mission and core values [other guiding principles?]	Walking alongside, empathizing, with compassion and persistence.	Relationships that build people up. Changed attitudes toward kingdom values.
	3. Word of God.	Worshiping God; war faring against evil forces; proclaiming the good news.	Churches acting in unity and fellowship. People calling others to be reconciled to God.
Culture realities [need to be identified]. There is a history of conflicts, not yet resolved, that cannot be ignored. Destructive messages were part of the culture and schooling for many years.	4. Opportunity for community members to tell the truth about what one saw, what one did.	Creating safe settings in which people can tell the truth.	Personal integrity, sense of wholeness.
What the international community, including superpowers, did and did not do affects what can be done to reconcile groups today.	5. Management expertise.	Networking with government and other agencies to inspire them to provide essential services.	Rejection of that which divides [ethnic or doctrinal], in favor of unity in Christ [diversity without divisiveness]
Many who fled their homes and lived in various camps of displaced persons are perceived to be accomplices in the genocide, regardless of what they did or did not do.	6. Partnerships with people and organizations.	Discerning God's will step by step. Facilitating expressions of hope, discoveries of common ground.	People embrace parts of the process to promote reconciliation.

Rwandan Realities	Inputs	Processes	Outcomes
Influential people outside the country still affect attitudes and events inside the country.	7. Technical knowledge and skills.	Training that empowers participants to accept responsibility for managing their own development.	Grassroots attitude and movement that challenges the negative influences.
	8. Material resources necessary to achieve goals.	People working together to achieve goals.	Everyone's basic needs met, especially in vulnerable groups.

The following table extends the reconciliation frame by adding ideas about indicators for each row in the frame. At this point there was no attempt to specify a reliable monitoring system around those ideas. The purpose of the exercise was to organize ideas into something that program planners and implementers could agree would guide designing a monitoring system or evaluation around what really matters in this type of development work.

Exhibit 2. Examples of indicators for reconciliation frame.

Realities	Inputs	Processes	Outcomes	Indicators
				The evidence, information, observations that will convince you that outcomes are achieved, or alert you to the fact that they are not being achieved.
	1.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *People who did not smile now smile. *"The feelings of hatred are gone." *People say that they sleep better. *People are making friends. *People let go of their ill feelings. * People express a vision for the future that is not divisive. * People search for those who have wronged them to express their forgiveness. * People say that they have positive life goals, and that they are making long-term plans.
	2.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Expression of recognition and appreciation for others, especially when there is disagreement. *Positive feedback and encouragement. When someone has some trouble, or bad situation, people come to support. *Enable someone who hates God ("God is a killer") to reconcile his or her faith in God. * People say that they feel more secure where they live and work. * People provide support to others without diminishing their dignity. * People are willing to live in relatively dangerous settings to work for long-term development (sacrificial living). * People let go of the need for personal revenge or personal retribution. * Justice is sought in ways that encourage repentance rather than inflict punishment.
	3.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Peace building committee (representatives from different denominations) is functioning. *To resolve a dispute, Pastors called people in conflict to work out a solution.

Realities	Inputs	Processes	Outcomes	Indicators
				The evidence, information, observations that will convince you that outcomes are achieved, or alert you to the fact that they are not being achieved.
	4.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *People in groups describe some wrongdoing as part of process of repenting. *Expressions of regret. *Actions are consistent with speeches and words. *"I feel more complete." * "Feelings of emptiness have disappeared."
	5.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *People make friends with people from other groups. * The number of violent incidents decreases. * Acknowledgement of legitimate guilt by church leaders, church groups. * People of diverse groups express common dreams for families, communities.
	6.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The mayor called churches together. "What do you have to contribute to reconciliation in Rwanda? Ten months later: "You see that churches do have a contribution to make". * There are deliberate attempts to establish communication between representatives of parties in conflict. * There is participation in long-term development planning and implementation. People are working toward a better future. * People pray for reconciling work. They pray for people that are bearing heavy burdens from the past. * People attend to the needs of those who are different from them.
	7.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *A group is told to separate so that some can be killed, but the members of the group refuses to separate. * There are acknowledgments of other groups' right to exist, and to be different. * There are discussions of human experiences that are common to all groups. * There are discussions of accurate histories. People refuse to perpetuate false histories of different groups. * There are public accounts of incidents that portray the truth from different perspectives.
	8.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Development plans include work to benefit the more vulnerable groups. * Monitoring and evaluation work includes reconciliation indicators.

The frame describes program elements that are worthy of attention. Note especially the column of processes in Exhibit 1. In a typical logical framework this would be a column of activities to transform inputs into desired outputs and a column for the outputs. In this program healing processes are valued more than completing specific projects.

The frame also includes a column of realities that will influence everything else in the frame. The function of the frame is to systematically organize the rest of the information around these basic realities.

The following discussion is about the purpose and function of a frame, the things valued in a frame for evaluating transformational development, and a metaphor associated with transformative evaluation.

The purpose of a frame --

-- is to describe selected things worthy of attention. Within any complex situation every person is ready to pay attention to selected things rather than others. Many things influence each person's readiness to attend to selected things. Adoption of a frame deliberately influences one's readiness to see some things and not others in a complex situation.

There are two frames to be considered in TE. There is the evaluation frame that identifies what is to be attended to in the evaluation exercise (evaluation objectives, methods for achieving objectives, roles to be played by evaluation team members and others, etc.). Then there is the frame for the evaluand, a TD program, which identifies aspects of planning and implementing the program that are to be given special attention to achieve transformational outcomes.

Facilitating transformational development (TD) is complex. The frame described in this paper identifies things worthy of attention for monitoring and evaluating key elements within TD. Of course, other things could have been selected. The purpose of a frame is to single out things for attention to overcome intellectual paralysis that may occur when no selection is done. There can be different frames designed to achieve the same evaluation objective. Within each frame there can be different evaluation designs for a specific program (evaluand).

The elements selected for the TE frame are based on Myers' frame for TD, four key principles of TD, and the essential characteristics of a development agent who seeks to enable transformation (Myers, 1999, *Walking with the Poor*).

The function of a frame for TD --

-- is to classify things so that someone can organize and process information about them systematically. In a useful frame the categories have ideas or experiences associated with them that are relevant to the frame's content, allowing the user of a frame to achieve his or her ends more effectively. World Vision has emphasized three themes in its approach to TD. These themes are highlighted in the frame for TE.

First, TD is child focused.

Some, not all, implications of this include:

- Development activities are planned knowing how they will involve and affect the survival and well-being of children.
- Meeting needs of children is given priority, especially for health, basic education, spiritual and emotional nurture, and earning a future livelihood with dignity.
- Children are viewed as precious unique persons to be nurtured as they develop. They are not a source of income, nor are they a nuisance. They must be protected from abuse and exploitation.

- Children can be agents of transformation.

Children are included specifically in the evaluation frame as an important group of people.

Second, TD is community based.

In TD people manage their own development by participating in the processes of visioning, designing long-term development strategies, planning interventions, implementing activities, and monitoring and evaluating results against the vision. The primary implication of this for TE is that participatory processes should be included in the exercise as much as it is practical to do so.

Third, TD is sustainable.

A holistic view of sustainability is described by Myers (1999) in four categories (physical, mental, social and spiritual). Programming is planned to foster change that moves the community toward each category of sustainability. The evaluation frame highlights this.

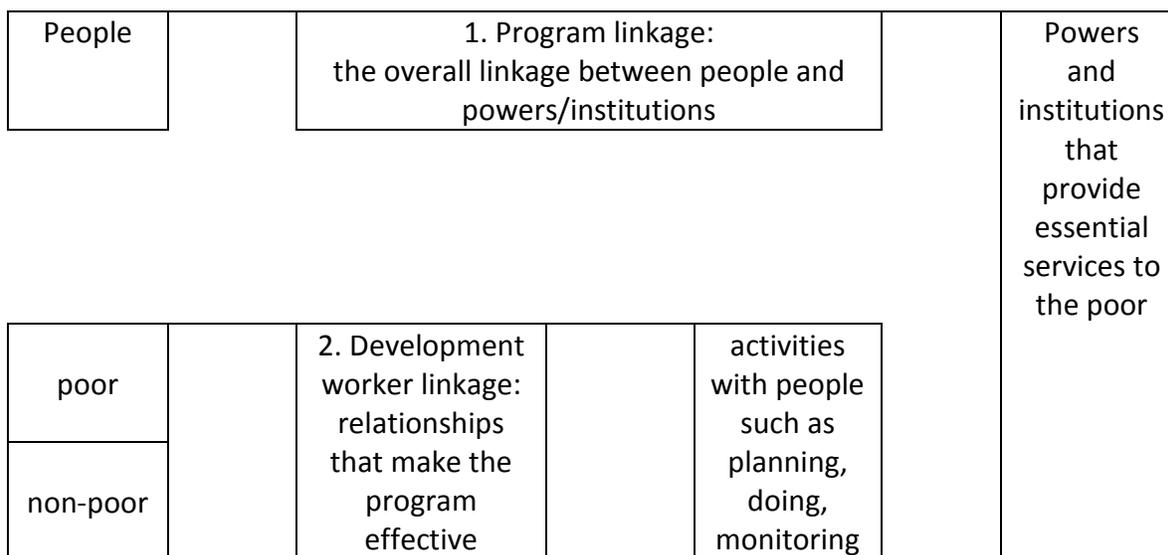
This frame for evaluating TD is organized by salient transformational development principles combined with people, program and institutions. A development program links people to institutions that provide essential services or perform essential functions.

- In this frame the key *people* are the development workers, the groups of non-poor related to the project, and the groups of poor in the project area. Emphasis is given to children and women in the project area because in World Vision TD is child-focused. Other agencies may have less emphasis on women and children; in that case the TE frame can be modified as appropriate.
- The *development worker* is the link between people and program functions. Of course they are people themselves, but they have a special role to play, so they are highlighted in the frame. Myers describes three sets of characteristics of the development worker that are essential for facilitating transformational development: holistic thinking, professional behavior, and disciplined spiritual and professional formation.
- The key aspects of the development *program* include the research that provided information for designing the program, the program design, the planning processes, the implementation processes, and the monitoring and evaluation processes. These are examined in relation to the four aspects of sustainability described by Myers (physical, mental, social and spiritual), and the change that is required to move toward sustainability.
- The key *institutions* are the church, government services, development agencies, and those social organizations that constitute civil society.

TD frame shows linkages

A simple frame outline is shown in Exhibit 3. The program includes the development workers who are on staff and the functions that lead to development activities. The development worker and the program functions are in the middle of the diagram to show that they are the link between people and institutions.

Exhibit 3. Simple TD Frame with Two Linkages



There are two different kinds of linkages that are especially important in TD. The overall program is a linkage that connects the people with the institutions that provide essential services for their well-being. The program is a link between the poor living in an area and the powers that exist for their well-being, but for a variety of reasons are not functioning effectively. Through this linkage evil forces are confronted and overcome so that conditions in the community can be improved in ways that are just. Conflicts will be resolved so that peace prevails within the community and between the community and other communities. A primary objective of TE is to examine the nature of this linkage, particularly its strengths and weaknesses.

Within this overall linkage is the development worker linkage. The relationships between the development workers in the program and the people in the area served by the program characterize sustainable community-based TD. Through a life style based on holistic professionalism (see section C below) the development worker enables and encourages people to enhance their capacity to manage their own development by participating in the various program functions (planning, doing and monitoring development activities in an action-reflection manner). The development worker connects people to program activities in ways that strengthen their character individually and strengthen their capacity to work together for the common good.

This linkage of relationships involving community members, development workers, and service providers will determine the effectiveness of program activities in improving conditions that affect the quality of their living in the community. The nature of the connection between the development worker and people involves enabling people to know their true identity and true vocation as children of God. Meyers (1999, p. 116) describes a poor person’s true identity as “believing they are made in the image of God and are God’s children.” A non-poor person’s

identity involves “laying down their god-complexes and believing that they are made in God’s image and are not, themselves, gods.” A poor person’s true vocation involves “believing they have gifts to contribute and that they are called to be productive stewards of creation.” For the non-poor person the true vocation is “believing that their gifts are for sharing, not control, and that they are to lead as servants, not masters.”

Another primary objective of TE is to examine relationships within the development worker linkage.

Exhibit 4 extends the simple TD frame to highlight the implications for TE.

Exhibit 4. Expanded TD Frame

people		Program linkage: the overall linkage between people and powers/institutions			Powers and institutions that provide essential services to the poor	
Poor children and others		development worker linkage:		activities with people including		
non-poor children and others	<i>enable people to know their true identity and true vocation</i>	holistic thinking, professional behavior, and disciplined spiritual formation to transform people		initial research, program design, planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation	<i>restore just and peaceful relationships, confront evil in principalities and powers</i>	church, government services, development agencies, social organizations

- Evaluate how community residents and service providers have changed through their relationships with development workers.
- Evaluate how people have changed as they participated in the range of development activities: what do they believe about their value and worth; what do they believe are the most important things they do.
- Evaluate confrontation of evil in the community and institutions.
- Evaluate restoration of peaceful relationships.

This frame is further expanded by adding Myers' four key principles of development (1999, chapter six).

- First, focus on the community's story.

To what extent do the development workers listen to and understand the community story?

To what extent have power relationships been identified within the community story?

To what extent have implications for powerlessness been identified?

Have all three levels of meaning been identified in the community story and the development workers' story – formal religion, folk religion, folk science?

Has the survival story of the community been told and understood?

Do development workers respect indigenous knowledge?

Do development workers know the part that children play in the community's story?

- Second, monitor values that are actually practiced against kingdom values, and the distance between present conditions and the vision for a better future.
- Third, enable authentic community participation because it may be the most essential element of transformation.

Who is participating in formulating the vision, formulating strategies for moving toward the vision, planning activities consistent with strategies, implementing activities consistent with kingdom values, and monitoring and evaluating consequences as well as changes in conditions?

What difference is community participation making in the way that institutions perform their functions or provide their services?

Is participation integrated into all program functions?

- Fourth, build community by being good neighbors.

To what extent do community members view development workers as good neighbors?

What importance is given to being a good neighbor by the development worker when it takes time away from completing tasks in the job description?

The expanded TD frame is shown in Exhibit 5. To use the frame for planning TE, think about collecting relevant evidence for each cell in the diagram.

- For example, what are the worldviews (as suggested by the stories that are told or believed but not told) of the development workers, groups of poor and groups of non-poor in the project communities?
- How do the worldviews converge?
- How is information about worldviews used by the development workers?

Due to various constraints the final plan for an evaluation may not include all of the cells in the frame. Consideration of all of them, however, will enhance the potential for transforming stakeholder and evaluator views about TD.

Exhibit 5. Frame for exploring TE information needs.

	children, non-children	development worker	programming for sustainability	institutions
<i>enable people to know their true identity and true vocation, restore just and peaceful relationships, confront the evil in principalities and powers</i>	poor, non-poor	holistic thinking, professional behavior, disciplined formation	research, design, planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation	church, government services, development agencies, social organizations
principle 1 listen to stories to appreciate worldviews				
principle 2 monitor values practiced, and distance from vision				
principle 3 enable participation that is essential for empowerment				
principle 4 nurture relationships that build community				

A frame values certain things over other things.

Using a frame helps people to reflect on what is most important in a complex situation. A frame will change over time as people using it reflect on their experiences. Such reflection may lead to changes in their thinking, and consequently an adjustment in what they believe should be valued most.

Within this frame for TE information needs the characteristics of a Christian development worker are central to preparing a program evaluation design. They are central both in deciding the scope for the evaluation, and determining methods of data analysis and collection.

A frame provides a metaphor –

-- that organizes ideas and associates them with a familiar constellation of ideas. The metaphor for a frame for TE is Jesus as observer and interviewer embodying truth for all cultures in all eras of history. Jesus as observer is described in the story about the widow’s contribution to the temple in comparison with the contributions of others (Mark 12:41-44). Jesus as interviewer is described in the account of his conversation with a Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42). A person who has not accepted Jesus as Savior or who does not appreciate the

undergirding truth about life in these two stories cannot appreciate the value of transformative evaluation.

A fundamental implication of this metaphor is that the transformative evaluator must know himself or herself in relation to Jesus. Myers (*Walking with the Poor*, p 169) described the importance of self-knowledge in enabling communities to do social analysis. Those elements of self-knowledge also apply to the transformative evaluator.

- What do I believe about how the world works and about what is good and bad? How has my own culture influenced these beliefs?
- What do I believe about spirituality? How has my own experience in a Christian tradition influenced these beliefs? How much do I know about views of spirituality within other Christian traditions?
- What is my view of a better future? What is the basis for that view?
- What process for change do I believe is best for moving toward a better future? What is the basis for this?
- What needs do I have for development? What is the basis for these needs?

Another implication of this metaphor is that the character of the transformative evaluator determines the influence that the evaluation will have. In the scripture passage, Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus tells the disciples that they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The person who is salt prevents corruption from spreading; he or she provides opportunities for goodness to prevail. The person who is light reveals the truth about living with meaning and purpose in relation to all of history and all of creation. A transformative evaluation reveals sources of corruption in the community and where salt is present to prevent it from spreading; it reveals where both light and darkness are present in the community, and encourages people to explore how they may walk in the light. This will have no influence unless the evaluator is both salt and light in the manner that the evaluation is performed.

B. Implications of development theory

Myers' (1999) description of transformational development theory, summarized in chapter five, is the basis for planning transformative evaluation of transformational development programs. The following interpretation of the theory framework diagram (*Walking with the Poor*, 1999, p.136) shows implications for evaluation planning.

Vision and goals

The best human future is the kingdom of God as it is emerging in the world and as it will be in the end time. Two essential goals of transformation are changed people who know their true identity and their true vocation, and changed relationships that are just and peaceful.

vision and goals
implications for evaluation design

Examine evidence about the ways in which the development agency and the community clarify

their visions of the future. Where do they converge? What are the implications if there is great divergence?

Examine evidence about the relationship between the prevailing vision for the future and the concepts of shalom and abundant living.

Examine evidence related to what people believe about their identity and vocation.

Examine evidence in the program design for enabling people to know their true identity and vocation, and evidence regarding implementation of relevant activities.

Examine evidence related to the typical nature of relationships in the community: individuals with God, individuals with enemies, individuals with individuals for building community, individuals with self, and individuals with the environment (stewards rather than masters). How does the program design deal with facilitating just and peaceful relationships?

Processes of change

The goals of transformational development are achieved by facilitating holistic processes of change with these features.

- The change process belongs to the people, not the development agency.
- Right relationships are at the core of the change process, not completing planned projects on time and within budget.
- The change process confronts personal and social evil by promoting truth telling, righteousness and justice. From a biblical perspective, history is a collage of moral dilemmas, moral judgments and moral consequences. Holistic change processes are centered on this perspective.
- The change process seeks to do no harm, and to enhance local capacities for peace.

“The fulcrum for transformational change is no longer transferring resources or building capacity or increasing choices, as important as these things are. But these things count only if they take place in a way that allows the poor to recover their true identity and discover the vocation that God intends for them” (Myers, 1999, p.116).

processes of change implications for evaluation design

Examine evidence related to who accepts responsibility for positive and negative change that has occurred. Pay particular attention to the attitudes of the development agency and representatives of key groups in the community.

Examine evidence related to the connections between development activities and right relationships. Examine evidence related to the ways in which development activities reinforce harmful relationships.

Examine ways in which development activities enhance local capacities for peace.

Examine evidence related to the extent to which the non-poor related to the community are giving up their god-complexes and are working more for the well-being of the

community.

Examine stories about personal and community histories: what moral concerns are included in the stories, and what common moral concerns are not included?

Sustainability

Sustainability is defined as the community accepting responsibility for extending the transformational development process by growing and learning into the future. There are four aspects of sustainability.

- Physical sustainability involves meeting basic needs for food, water, health, and economic production while being good stewards of the environment.
- Mental sustainability involves healing the marred image of the poor, and assisting people in learning how to learn.
- Social sustainability involves enhancing civil society so that it can confront the evil inherent in large social systems.
- Spiritual sustainability involves supporting the church as the place where persons come to understand the whole story and the whole gospel message, and are empowered through the reconciliation dynamic to live by kingdom values in their community.

sustainability implications for evaluation design

Examine evidence about community understanding of keeping a balance among meeting physical needs, protecting the environment, and enhancing right relationships.

Examine evidence about images of self, stories told by people about themselves.

Examine evidence about who is regarded as the enemy, the characteristics attributed to the enemy, and the stories told about the enemy.

Examine evidence about attitudes toward learning, and learning activities taking place.

Examine evidence about groups that are a bridge between micro- and macro-level development.

Examine evidence about knowledge in the community about the evil in large social systems, and how they believe they can confront it.

Examine the role of the church in the community.

Examine the values exhibited by church members and non-church members, and implications for transformational development strategy.

C. Attitudes and behavior of the development worker

Ultimately the effectiveness of transformational development depends on the attitudes and behavior of the development workers. As threatening as it may be, transformative evaluation of transformational development must include intensive self examination and disclosure by the development workers in the program being evaluated. This is one of the critical areas where dualistic thinking about objectivity and subjectivity creates a barrier to appropriate evaluation.

In this evaluation frame, “objectivity” refers to two processes. First, an objective evaluator discloses fully evidence and how it was obtained to qualified persons for critique. Second, the objective evaluator respectfully listens to the critique with an open attitude, ready to revise his or her conclusions through dialogue about the trustworthiness of the evidence used to support those conclusions.

Presence of modernity attitudes

The evaluation should include documentation of workers beliefs and attitudes related to the blind spot of modernity, which is the view that material and spiritual dimensions of life are independent aspects of reality. Writing responses to the questions like those that follow, and then discussing them in a probing interview, should be a key feature of the evaluation. *(The evaluator should periodically respond to similar questions and discuss the responses with a knowledgeable colleague.)*

- What is the relationship between Christian witness and social action? What is your responsibility in this area? How well are you doing?
- Give examples of word, deed and sign in your work. What questions do you have about the role of word, deed and sign in development work?
- Describe how sin affects people’s lives in your development project. What can be done about this?
- What knowledge is most important for doing development effectively? What do you do to deepen your understanding of this knowledge?
- Describe the contributions of science and technology to development work. Describe how reliance on science and technology can create barriers to transformational development, and what can be done to avoid creating such barriers.

View of the biblical story

The breadth of the worker’s view of the biblical story should be examined in a comprehensive evaluation of transformative development. *(To do this, the evaluator must have a comprehensive view of the biblical story.)*

- This could be done by asking workers to identify their favorite stories in the Bible, identifying gaps and asking what they know to fill in the gaps.
- Workers can be asked to outline the story of God’s activity in the world. Responses can be compared to the outline in Myers (1999), chapter two in *Walking with the Poor*, or some other similar outline that shows the activity of God from *Genesis to Revelation*.
- Workers can describe what they do to deepen their understanding of the Bible.
- Workers can describe examples of how they base their work on scriptural principles.
- Development workers can describe a biblical view of economics and politics, and contrast it with the view of economics and politics that seems to prevail in their nation and the project communities.
- Describe the biblical view of key concepts such as covenant, relationship, stewardship, identity, vocation, sin, grace, salvation, redemption, church.
- Describe what God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit means to you.

- Describe what walking with Jesus means for you personally and for the way that you facilitate development.
- Describe the nature of the kingdom of God, and how development work is related to it.

Understanding of poverty

Workers need to understand their own biases that impede building relationships in the community that encourage transformation. *(The evaluator also needs to examine his or her biases that impede understanding transformative aspects of a development program.)*

- One exercise that could be used is to ask workers to describe all the ways that they can think of that they are different from community members, and how those differences affect their ability to facilitate development effectively.
- Another evaluation exercise is to have workers describe major causes of poverty and what they believe will overcome those causes. Responses can be compared to different frameworks for describing poverty, and gaps in holistic thinking can be identified.

Holistic thinkingⁱⁱ

Practitioners have a holistic view, or a habitual way of thinking that guides development planning and implementation. This view includes an understanding of the whole biblical story, the whole gospel message, the central importance of relationships for vocational living, and the eternity of time.

holistic thinking
implications for evaluation design

Examine the program design and articulated development strategy for evidence of the four aspects of holism.

Interview development practitioners to determine how the aspects of holism influence the development planning and the way that they relate to people in the community.

D. Applications of the frame

The implications of transformational development theory discussed in the previous section are organized into the frame for transformative evaluation in Exhibit 6.

Exhibit 6. Transformative Evaluation Questions and Topics

	children, non-children	development worker	programming for sustainability	institutions
<i>enable people to know their true identity and true vocation, restore just and peaceful relationships, confront the evil in principalities and powers</i>	poor, non-poor	holistic thinking, professional behavior, disciplined formation	research, design, planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation	church, government services, development agencies, social organizations
principle 1 listen to stories to appreciate worldviews	Is there a common vision for the future among community members? To what extent are vision elements expressed by community members consistent with shalom? What kinds of stories do people tell about themselves? What do people say causes problems in the community, or impedes development?	Is there a common vision for the future in the community among the development workers? Are the common elements in development worker visions similar to common elements in community member visions? To what extent are development workers versed in the four aspects of holism? What do they say are implications of each aspect of holism for facilitating development?	To what extent did stories in the community influence the program design?	What do church leaders say about the relationship between the community and the church? What is the relationship between what they say about the role of the church in community development and what the church actually does?
principle 2 monitor values practiced, and distance from vision	What common descriptors are used by people to refer to themselves? What do people say is the purpose for their lives? Identify priorities of people for development, and describe the degree to which there is a balance	Describe the views of development workers about sin and ways that facilitating development can help people deal with sin.	What elements of the program design focus on people's identity and vocation? What program activities encourage people to know their true identity and vocation? Is there a balance in	Describe the extent to which development activities enhance local capacities for peace. Identify similarities and differences in values expressed by church members and other community members.

	children, non-children	development worker	programming for sustainability	institutions
	among meeting physical needs, protecting the environment, and nurturing right relationships.		program elements among meeting physical needs, protecting the environment, and seeking justice?	
principle 3 enable participation that is essential for empowerment	Who do people identify as the ones most responsible for positive change in the community? What do people say about evil in social systems, and how they can confront it?	Describe the views of development workers on the relationship between community participation and evil in social systems.	Describe what people have learned about community development. What processes are in place for people to learn about development matters?	In what ways has the program encouraged community residents to confront injustice in social systems?
principle 4 nurture relationships that build community	In what ways do people describe their relationship with God? With others? With themselves? With the environment?	Describe development worker views on nurturing relationships, and nurturing practices that they employ.	What elements in the program design will nurture right relationships? How do staff and community members watch for harmful program effects?	In what ways has the program confronted evils in social systems?

A separate study can be made of donors and child sponsors to explore changes in their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors regarding the poor that they attribute to their association with this program.

Two other sets of evaluation questions are organized into the frame for transformative evaluation to illustrate applications of the frame. The first set includes the questions for holistic evaluation posed by Jayakumar Christian, while the second set includes questions posed by Bryant Myers.

Jayakumar Christian's questions

Jayakumar Christian has proposed a frame for the holistic evaluation of TD programs in India (Myers, 1999, p.201). Guidelines for planning a TD evaluation can be based on Christian's frame. Six questions constitute the frame.

Do our transformational development programs show a conscious attempt to ...

... heal the marred image of the poor?

- Affirm consistently that the poor are made in the image of God?
- Clarify the identity of the poor as God's children with gifts and skills?
- Enable the poor to see God in their history?
- Initiate hope-based action for change?
- Enable the poor to deal with structures, systems, values and interiorities?

...deal with the god-complexes that ensnare poor and non-poor alike?

- Reverse the god-complexes that keep the poor in their poverty?
- Transform power relationships?
- Prophetically proclaim the truth that power is God's?
- Reorder the relationship between truth and power (power does not equal truth)?

...counteract the deception by principalities and powers?

- Establish the rule of God; announce that Jesus is Lord?
- Declare the deceptions of the principalities and powers?
- Unmask the ultimate powerlessness of the principalities and powers in the face of God's rule?

...change inadequacies in worldview?

- Analyze the worldview of the poor and non-poor?
- Challenge the various aspects of reality that perpetuate poverty?
- Enable the poor to imagine a different future?
- Create hope in the midst of despair?
- Redefine power?
- Teach from the word; link the word to the context; allow the word to critique worldview?

...restore just and peaceful relationships?

- Proclaim the truth within poverty relationships?
- Establish the truth in public life?
- Build covenant communities?

- Develop win-win relationships?
- Promote reconciliation; heal broken relationships?

...use Christian development practices?

- Be highly professional?
- Use prayer and fasting as tools of social action?
- Use the gifts of the Spirit as tools for development action?
- Enable staff to wear the full armor of God?

These questions can be put into the transformative evaluation frame diagrammed above as shown in Exhibit 7. This provides a starting point for planning transformative evaluation.

Exhibit 7. Example of Transformative Evaluation Frame

Adaptation of Jayakumar Christian's Questions for Holistic Evaluation

	children and non-children	development worker	programming for sustainability (proclamation)	institutions (principalities, powers)
<i>enable people to know their true identity and true vocation, restore just and peaceful relationships, confront the evil in principalities and powers</i>	poor, non-poor	holistic thinking, professional behavior, disciplined formation	research, design, planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation	church, government services, development agencies, social organizations
principle 1 listen to stories to appreciate worldviews	Does the program affirm consistently that the poor are made in the image of God? Does it enable the poor to see God in their history?		Does the program analyze the worldview of the poor and non-poor? Does it enable the poor to imagine a different future? Does it teach from the Word of God; link the Word to the context; allow the Word to critique worldview?	Does the program reorder the relationship between truth and power (power does not equal truth)? Does it establish the rule of God; announce that Jesus is Lord? Does it unmask the ultimate powerlessness of the principalities and powers in the face of God's rule? Does it challenge the various aspects of reality that perpetuate poverty?
principle 2 monitor values practiced, and distance from vision	Does the program clarify the identity of the poor as God's children with gifts and skills? Does it enable the poor to deal with values and interiorities?	Does the program support highly professional work? Does it enable staff to wear the full armor of God?	Does the program use prayer and fasting as tools of social action? Does it use the gifts of the Holy Spirit as tools for development action? Does it create hope in the midst of despair?	Does the program declare the deceptions of the principalities and powers? Does it enable the poor to deal with structures and systems?
principle 3 enable participation that is essential for			Does the program initiate hope-based action for change?	

	children and non-children	development worker	programming for sustainability (proclamation)	institutions (principalities, powers)
empowerment				
principle 4 nurture relationships that build community	Does the program develop win-win relationships? Does it promote reconciliation; heal broken relationships?		Does it proclaim the truth within poverty relationships? Does it prophetically proclaim the truth that power is God's?	Does the program reverse the god- complexes that keep the poor in their poverty? Does it transform power relationships? Does it build covenant communities? Does it establish the truth in public life?

TD evaluation per Myers (1999)

Since this frame is based on a term, “transformative evaluation,” introduced by Myers in his treatise on transformational development, I want to examine the relationship between my frame and his discussion of appreciative inquiry (1999, pp 174-179) and evaluation (1999, pp 181-189) in *Walking with the Poor*. Then I

Essence of appreciative inquiry, an alternative to problem solving mentality

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) emerged in the organizational development literature as an approach to action research. It is an alternative to the rationalistic problem-solving frame that has guided development planning in developed countries, and by extension in developing countries assisted by development agencies from developed countries.

The approach is based on the belief that an organization or a community that is alive and functioning represents an amazing miracle. Serious reflection on the ultimate mystery of being engenders a reverence for life that compels the researcher to look for the things that generate life and give energy to an organization or community. Planning begins with visioning, which begins with describing those things that create value. Affirming what gives value is educative and motivating in a community in ways that move the community in that direction. With this knowledge and motivation and direction, it is more likely that any problems or obstacles encountered will be overcome. Beginning with problem analysis deprives the community of vision and motivation based on appreciation of future potential, whereas beginning with affirmation and appreciation inspires energy for moving into the future by extending what already gives value to living.

I believe that AI is helpful in bridging the gap between reason and revelation. As Myers notes, it is consistent with a worldview that is based on God’s redemptive work in the life of any community, and a desire to be a part of that work. That is, it is a worldview that is consistent with the aims of transformational development.

The AI approach to planning can be diagrammed as a cycle of four phases. (See Johnson and Ludema, 1997).

- Discovery. Exploring what gives life in this community, and what people see as the best features about living in this community.
- Dream. Envisioning what might be if we understood what God is calling forth from this community.
- Dialogue. Discussing together, with give and take, the ideals to guide us in constructing what this community should be like.
- Delivery. Deciding how to build upon what is working in the community.

Myers suggests that the appreciative perspective can be extended to evaluation. I agree that evaluation that begins with a focus on positive outcomes and energy and excitement is important to achieve the objective of encouraging and enabling stakeholders to focus on what really matters in transformational development. ⁱⁱⁱ

I also agree with Myers' clarification that evaluation based on AI should face problems squarely after a climate has been created that is filled with energy and appreciation for the things that are life-giving in the community. Emphasis on the contrast between appreciative inquiry and problem solving may obscure this. Transformative evaluation should provide relevant information for identifying and addressing obstacles to transformation, but within a worldview that affirms God's redemptive activity in every situation.^{iv}

Purpose of evaluation

According to Myers an evaluation of a community development program serves three primary groups.

- It provides evidence of accountability to donors and supporters.
- It provides evidence of results achieved to the development agency.
- It provides the developing community with knowledge about what works and what does not work. This is the group that should be served best, but often the other groups are served at the expense of the developing community.

The traditional purpose of evaluation is to compare actual program implementation against planned implementation on various dimensions. Expanding on Myers' discussion, typical evaluation questions are:

- Which planned activities were implemented, and how well? Which planned activities were not implemented, and why?
- Which goals and objectives were achieved on time within budget? Which were not, and why?
- What problems are there in alleviating the needs that the program was designed to alleviate? How can the program be modified to resolve such problems?
- Taking into account the current needs to be met, the resources available, and strengths and weaknesses of the program, what should the next phase of the program look like?

As discussed in the previous section, appreciative inquiry can enrich the evaluation process by identifying what is working well, and what is creating energy.^v

Myers (1999) poses a number of evaluation questions in his discussion of evaluation. In Exhibit 8 they are organized in my frame for transformative evaluation. This provides another example of applying the frame.

Exhibit 8. Evaluation Questions Posed by Myers (1999)

Organized by Cookingham’s frame for planning transformative evaluation
 Questions are based on Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, pages 181-189
 (Myers poses many other relevant questions elsewhere in his book)

	children and non-children	development worker	programming for sustainability (proclamation)	institutions (principalities, powers)
<i>enable people to know their true identity and true vocation, restore just and peaceful relationships, confront the evil in principalities and powers</i>	poor, non-poor	holistic thinking, professional behavior, disciplined formation	research, design, planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation	church, government services, development agencies, social organizations
principle 1 listen to stories to appreciate worldviews	What are people learning about themselves? What is their understanding of who they are, where they have come from, and what they are here for? How has people’s view of the future changed? How has their worldview changed? What or whom do they fear? To whom do they pray? How do they explain cause and effect? To what or whom do they attribute success? Are they telling their story any differently? Are people more open to hearing	Are development workers prepared and willing to answer questions to which the gospel is the answer?	What are the messages that people hear as they participate in development interventions? Are people more aware of the activity of God?	What are the prevailing views of key social institutions toward the poor? How do they view their obligations to the poor? Are people coming to faith in Christ? What is the presence of the church like?

	children and non-children	development worker	programming for sustainability (proclamation)	institutions (principalities, powers)
	to the gospel, and being in the presence of Christians? What elements of the prevailing worldview are against life, or diminish life?			
principle 2 monitor values practiced, and distance from vision	What do people mean when they say that they are saved? How do people describe the relationship between living in the kingdom of God and living in their culture? How whole is the gospel that is being preached and that is being heard? In what ways are people loving God and neighbor? In what ways are they not?		How effective is the program in building a foundation for physical sustainability, mental sustainability, social sustainability, and spiritual sustainability? Which planned activities were implemented, and how well? Which were not implemented, and why? Which goals and objectives were achieved on time within budget? Which were not, and why? What problems are there in alleviating the needs that the program was designed to alleviate? How can the program be modified to resolve such problems? Taking into account the current needs to be met, the resources available, and strengths and weaknesses of the program, what should the next phase of the program look like?	What differences are there between the intentions and motivations of the development agency? Did the development agency have the capacity to do something that it did not do? Does the development agency know what it should know to do the kind of work that it does? Did the development agency seriously consider the full range of options for action before it acted? Did the development agency take mitigating steps against the worst effects of its actions?
principle 3 enable participation that is essential for empowerment	Are the poor beginning to act like stewards who have something to contribute? Are they seeking ways to make that contribution? What is the voice of women in the community? What is the response	Are development workers willing to be evaluated by community members?	How are people learning what works and does not work as they participate in development activities?	

	children and non-children	development worker	programming for sustainability (proclamation)	institutions (principalities, powers)
	of people when women speak? What is the voice of children in the community? What is the response of people when children speak?			
principle 4 nurture relationships that build community	Has the marred identity of the poor showed signs of liberating recovery? Have the poor begun to discover the gifts that God has placed in their culture and in them as people? Are the non-poor acting like people who care and share? Are the non-poor less willing to play god in the lives of the poor? Are the non-poor becoming aware of the poor's identity as children of God? Do non-poor recognize that the poor have been given gifts to use for their own development?			

Another perspective

This paper has described different ways to frame TE. As my thinking about framing evaluation from a transformative perspective has evolved I have looked for different ways to describe the essence of this approach. After studying material on experiencing God by Blackaby, Blackaby and King (1990), five principles emerged that are a backdrop for me throughout an evaluation exercise.^{vi}

The first principle is that truth is a person, not a set of propositions. For the Christian evaluator Truth is Jesus Christ, not a set of empirically verified cause-effect relationships in the world. Truth is experienced in personal relationship with Jesus; Truth guides the evaluator in deciding how to use knowledge about cause-effect in the world to increase love for God and neighbor. This is the most challenging aspect of TE for an evaluator trained within a scientific worldview.

The second principle is that TE is more about engaging the will of program stakeholders than adding to their knowledge. Seeing what God is inviting people to do here and now in his emerging kingdom is more important than knowing how well project plans were implemented.

The third principle is that analysis of information collected during the evaluation exercise is guided by spiritual discernment.^{vii} The evaluation team prays for guidance from the Holy Spirit, and then organizes the information. The team prays for wisdom and re-organizes the information. The team prays for courage to be obedient to God's will for this program, and talks about the collected data in terms of what God is revealing about his nature, his purposes, or his ways in this setting.

The fourth principle is that transformative recommendations describe adjustments that stakeholders need to make to align program work with what God is already doing. Critical reflection and discernment are central to implementing this principle.^{viii}

The fifth principle is that both evaluation technical expertise and spiritual maturity determine the competence of a TE evaluator. Also, the ability to help others deepen their understanding of complex concepts in practical ways is critical.

I look forward to being in conversation with anyone about framing TE, for I have much to learn.

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Notes

ⁱ An evaluand is a convenient term that signifies what is being evaluated. In this discussion it is a transformational community development program.

ⁱⁱ More detailed discussions of holistic thinking are available at www.EvalFrank.com.

ⁱⁱⁱ Myers (2011) included a reference to Elliot's (1999) excellent introduction to appreciative inquiry. Studying Elliot's work has challenged some of my thinking about TE and inspired me to view data analysis in a different way.

^{iv} I have posted on www.EvalFrank.com a hypothetical illustration of using a provocative propositions exercise based on evaluation conclusions and recommendations to guide strategic thinking in the agency beyond the particular program that was evaluated.

^v Myers (2011, p. 290) notes that an appreciative perspective on evaluation will include consideration of shifting program resources away from what is not working to what is working. This can be the basis for TE in a particular setting.

^{vi} These five principles are described in greater detail in my paper, "Five Principles for TE", which is available at www.EvalFrank.com.

^{vii} Myers (2011, pp 231-234) added a section on incarnational spirituality that describes being present to God in everyday living. I recommend exploring this section and references that he cites for developing a mindset and skills to implement this principle.

^{viii} There are posts on www.EvalFrank.com that explore this aspect of TE.