

# **Workshop: Innovative and appreciative evaluation**

Constructing worlds,  
August 20th 2009



**nova  
berg**  
systemisk evaluering

Telefon +45 70 27 37 87  
Email [info@novaberg.dk](mailto:info@novaberg.dk)  
Web [www.novaberg.dk](http://www.novaberg.dk)  
NovaBerg  
Karetmageraarden  
Graven 25B  
DK-8000 Århus C

# NovaBerg

- Malene Skov Dinesen – co-owner and consultant of evaluation in NovaBerg
- Consultancy work with evaluation
  - Evaluation assignments
  - Development of evaluation design for organisations
  - Open courses – next course October 2009 in Copenhagen
  - One-year education on evaluation – starting September 2009
- Focus on evaluation that develops practise



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Karetmageraarden  
Graven 25B  
DK-8000 Århus C

# MacMann Berg

- Consultant company work with strategic leadership and OD within a systemic social-constructionist thinking and practice (private, public, NGO)
- 27 employees (Aarhus, CPH, Stockholm)
- Provide Certificate, Diploma and MSc programmes in Systemic Leadership
- Process consultation, coaching, team development, conflict handling, AI, communication culture...
- Pro-valuation – a future oriented valuation and meta-reflexive organisational learning culture
- Thomas Johansen – co-owner, consultant, director



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# Workshop – Programme

- Welcome - short presentation
- Context clarification
- Associations
- What are you preoccupied by/interested in?
- Case story – Drug Abuse Center Odense
- What is the question – if evaluation is the answer?
- Innovative appreciative evaluation
- Reflections, questions and further ideas
- Associations 2.0, learning points and inspiration
- Thanks for now – see you later



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# Purpose and desired effects

- **Introduction to and insight** in appreciative and innovative evaluation – a new mental model
- **Inspiration** on how to work with evaluation that develops practise in your own organization



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# Associations – 2 minutes

- For 2 minutes - write down all your associations to the word: **'EVALUATION'**
- At the end of the workshop – we'll try again



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# Your interests and curiosities

- Individually for 3 minutes
- 5 minutes in groups of 3
- Answer the questions:
  - What made you choose this workshop
  - What are you curious about in relation to innovative evaluation?
  - If the workshop should contribute to innovate your evaluation practise what is most important new insights you would like to leave with?



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## Case: More young people in education

- Client: Rusmiddelcenter Odense (Drug and Alcohol Abuse Centre)
- Funding: The Ministry of Health (Young and healthy)
- Purpose of the project:
  - Reduce the number of drug and alcohol related drop outs in youth education programmes
  - Give the young people competences of handling drugs and alcohol
- Initiatives:
  - Implement alcohol and drug policies in all schools in Odense
  - Counselling young people about their problems
  - Education and communication
- Duration: From 2008 to 2011



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## Innovative evaluation - purpose

- To evaluate whether the project lives up to the declared purposes
- To evaluate the effects of the project
- To evaluate how the effects are generated (what works for whom under which circumstances)
- To support the project and create forward-looking input – co-create the project with the project group
- To be a disturbance
- Secure that results of the evaluation are communicated both internally and externally



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## Innovative evaluation - design

- We allocate the resources continuously throughout the project instead of primarily in the end of the project
- The project members and the evaluator have co-created the evaluation questions and design
- The dialogues have been highly prioritised to ensure direct use of the evaluation
- We use systemic theory and practise in both interviews and processes – to ensure appreciation and reflection



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# Innovative evaluation - design

- Qualitative interviews with students and staff members/leaders every 6 months
- Observation of communication/education and counselling
- Gathering of quantitative data through qualitative methods – how many students haven't dropped out?
- Processes with the project group after every evaluation iteration – what do we know, where do we want to go and how?
- Continuous evaluation in the project group



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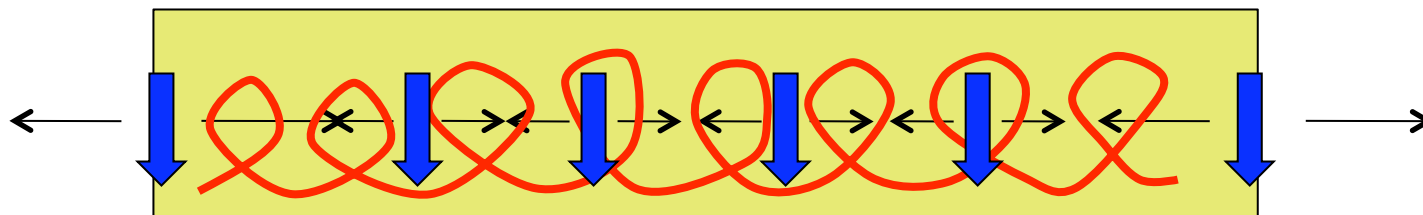
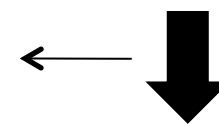
# Innovative evaluation



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Measuring before

Measuring after



↑  
Start

↑  
End

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# Evaluation

## – history and challenges (1)

- Sputnik chock, 1950 – the battle of knowledge between USSR and U.S.
- Systematically measuring and testing to develop schools, learning and educational systems
- An assumption that it is possible to develop practice and manage the future through retrospective measuring and tests
- The wave of evaluation and measuring created no sense, no meaning and an arising resistance
- Modern complex organisations and living systems are calling for a new strategy



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# Evaluation

## – history and challenges (2)

- We have never in history, in the western world, implemented and pushed through so many tests, documentations and measurements...
- At the same time we can not document any connection or coherence between the measurements and the effect of the measurements in practice
- New thoughts and practices were needed – we started NovaBerg!



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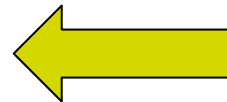
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# Innovative and appreciative evaluation

- Focus on driving innovation of practise through involvement of practitioners and supporting development
- Making evaluations that are meaningful and support the organisation's tasks
- Ensuring that evaluation is a life-giving part of the organisational tasks
- A crucial step away from the positivistic objective evaluation

## With inspiration from:

- Systemic theory and practise
- Realistic evaluation
- Evaluation capacity



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# Two paradigms

	Traditional evaluation	Innovative
<b>Approach</b>	Retrospective	Forward-looking
<b>Main questions</b>	Did we realise the goals?  What worked and why?	What works well and how can we develop it further?  What has to be adjusted, where do we want to go and how?
<b>Criteria of validity</b>	Truth	Usability and realism
<b>Task of the evaluation</b>	To identify the truth  Judge practise	To identify what works for whom under which circumstances  Develop practise
<b>Task of the evaluator</b>	To be an objective observer: describe, measure and judge	To co-create the evaluation with the practitioners: collect data, disturb, create reflection and ensure positive development
<b>Position of the practitioners</b>	Subject of the evaluation	Involved in the evaluation



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# Validity in evaluation

- **Positivistic:** "validity expresses to what extent your examination is truthful"
- **Systemic:** "validity expresses to what extent your examination contribute to use in practise"
- **Realistic evaluation:** "validity expresses to what extent your examination is realistic"



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# Inspiration from Gergen

“Everything emerges in relations” (Gergen)

- Stop striving for objective evaluation – it is impossible to achieve and isn't desirable
- As evaluators, we will always influence the relations and the relations will influence the evaluation
- Focus on desirable influence instead of no influence
- The conclusions of the evaluations are locally generated and not global truths



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# Inspiration from Gergen

- Evaluation must be co-created between evaluator and practitioners
  - The evaluation questions – what do we want to evaluate?
  - The design – who should be asked and how shall we ask them?
  - The conclusions – what is meaningful to implement in the organization?
  - The use – how shall the evaluation be used to develop practise?
- Dialogue and involvement of practitioners is crucial



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# Inspiration from Maturana

- “We develop through perturbation/ disturbances” (Maturana)
- When our goal is to develop practise, the evaluation must focus on creating suitable disturbances
- Ensure that the conclusions are focused on the context of the evaluation
- Avoid global conclusions (Rigsrevisionen 2003):
  - “Create better communication”
  - “Create better leadership”
  - ...



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# Inspiration from Maturana

“No appreciation (amor) no positive change” (Maturana)

- Be appreciative in method and approach
- Appreciate the multivers of different stories, perspectives and interests
- Be aware of the “temptation of knowing”



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# Cooperrider in evaluation

“There is great potential in the successes” (Cooperrider)

- Use the successes from the past to guide the future
- Focus on what to sustain and not just on what to develop
- Use Appreciative Inquiry in evaluation



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# Bateson in evaluation

“No contexts, no meaning” (Bateson)

- Avoid initiating evaluations that no one knows the purpose of – the context will lack meaning
  - Be transparent on purpose, approach and use of the evaluation
- Be critical of the decision of using innovative evaluation – a different approach could be more meaningful.
- Let the intentional use guide the decision of approach.



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# Realistic evaluation

- What works to whom under which circumstances?
- Quantity is not a guideline in conclusions – it is possible that only one person sees a critical connection
- Show all the different understandings and perspectives
- CMO: Context, Meaning, Outcome - a practical way to reduce complexity in the contexts



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# Evaluation capacity building

- "To work with evaluation capacity building is to work determined and persistent with organizational processes, which purpose is to develop evaluations of high quality and focus the use of evaluation" (Compton, 2002)
- Ensuring that evaluation is part of the reflective everyday practise
- Having strong evaluation capacity is a key point in being able to implement and use innovative evaluation in practise



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# Associations – again

- For 2 minutes - write down all your associations to the word: **'EVALUATION'**
- New words, thoughts and assumptions?



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# Reflections, questions and new inspiration

## Alone for 3-5 minutes

- What have been the most important learning points for you?
- In which way could it inform your own practice – tomorrow?

## In groups of 4-5 persons

- What is your most essential learning point / inspiration from the workshop?
- What could be the effects in your organisation – if you used this inspiration?
- The smallest thing you could do – to make a difference that makes a difference?



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Graven 25B  
DK-8000 Århus C

# More inspiration...

- **www.novaberg.dk** - for inspiration, articles and course descriptions
- **Cuba, Egon G. og Lincoln, Yvonna S.** (1989): *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, Sage Publications, Inc., USA
- **Foss Hansen, Hanne** (2003): *Evaluering i staten – kontrol, læring eller forandring?*, Samfundslitteratur, Gylding
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- **Pawson & Tilley** (1997): *Realistic evaluation*, Sage, London
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