

Digging deeper into adult learning projects

- what makes a project successful?

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Structure of presentation

- Challenges for educational projects?
 - Balancing between quality and innovations?
- Different evaluation models
 - Examples:
 - Identifying "best practices" (Success factors): NVL Competence project
 - Developmental Evaluation –model
- Some observations about Icelandic projects



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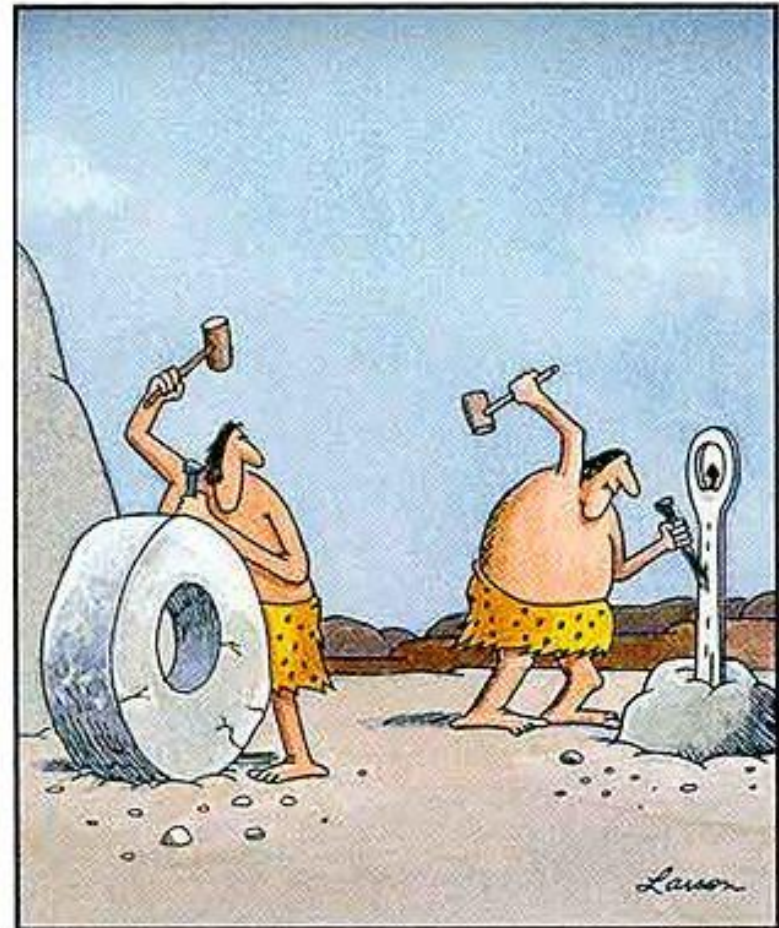
Challenge for adult educators

- Society, regions and individuals face **new kind of problems**
 - → adult educators **should provide effective and innovative solutions** on these problems
- Creation of new solutions and innovations **require risk taking, non-traditional actions and new ways of doing things**
 - → traditional evaluation methods and quality systems do not serve this kind of projects
 - → new evaluation methods needed



Definition of innovation

- **“Innovation** is the implementation of a new or significantly improved idea, good, service, process or practice which is intended to be useful”



Challenge: innovations require rule breaking



"I'll be happy to give you innovative thinking. What are the guidelines?"

Current situation

- 1) There is a rather wild jungle of “pop up” projects and programs, where the aim is to seek for innovative and effective solutions for **wicked** (Conklin 2006) individual, regional, structural, economical and social **problems**
- 2) There is a need to monitor, evaluate and support these projects, in order **to recognize** the few pearls of innovation and other successful practices, and **to help** practitioners to develop better models and ideas.

→ Need for different evaluation models



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General characteristics of educational development projects

- Deal with “wicked” problems, which...
 - are difficult to clearly define.
 - have many interdependencies and are often multi-causal.
 - are often not stable.
 - usually have no clear solution.
 - are socially complex.
 - hardly ever sit conveniently within the responsibility of any one organisation.
 - involve changing behaviour.
- Involve different actors and stakeholders, who want to have a broader understanding about the outcomes
- Are often quite complex

(<http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications07/wickedproblems.pdf>)
(Arnkil 2010; Conklin 2006)



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Common challenges...

- Need to change the organizational culture
- Need to develop **and** implement new practices
- Need to learn new skills, methods and theoretical perspectives
- Need to change attitudes and working habits
- Need to change roles
- Need for new multiprofessional cooperation
- Need for new regional cooperation
- Need to create new networks
- Resistance to change
- Sustainability of the results



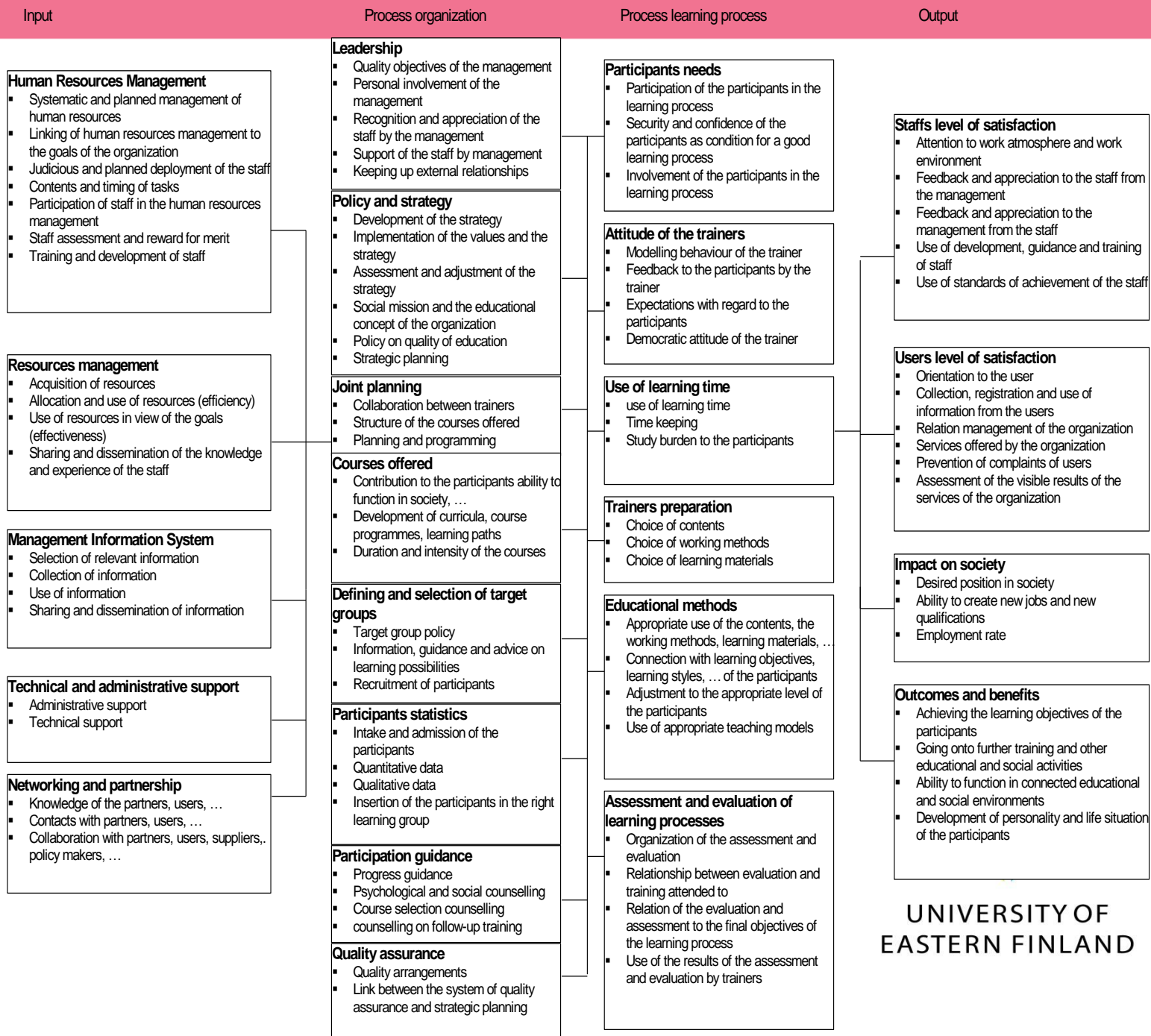
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Some evaluation models

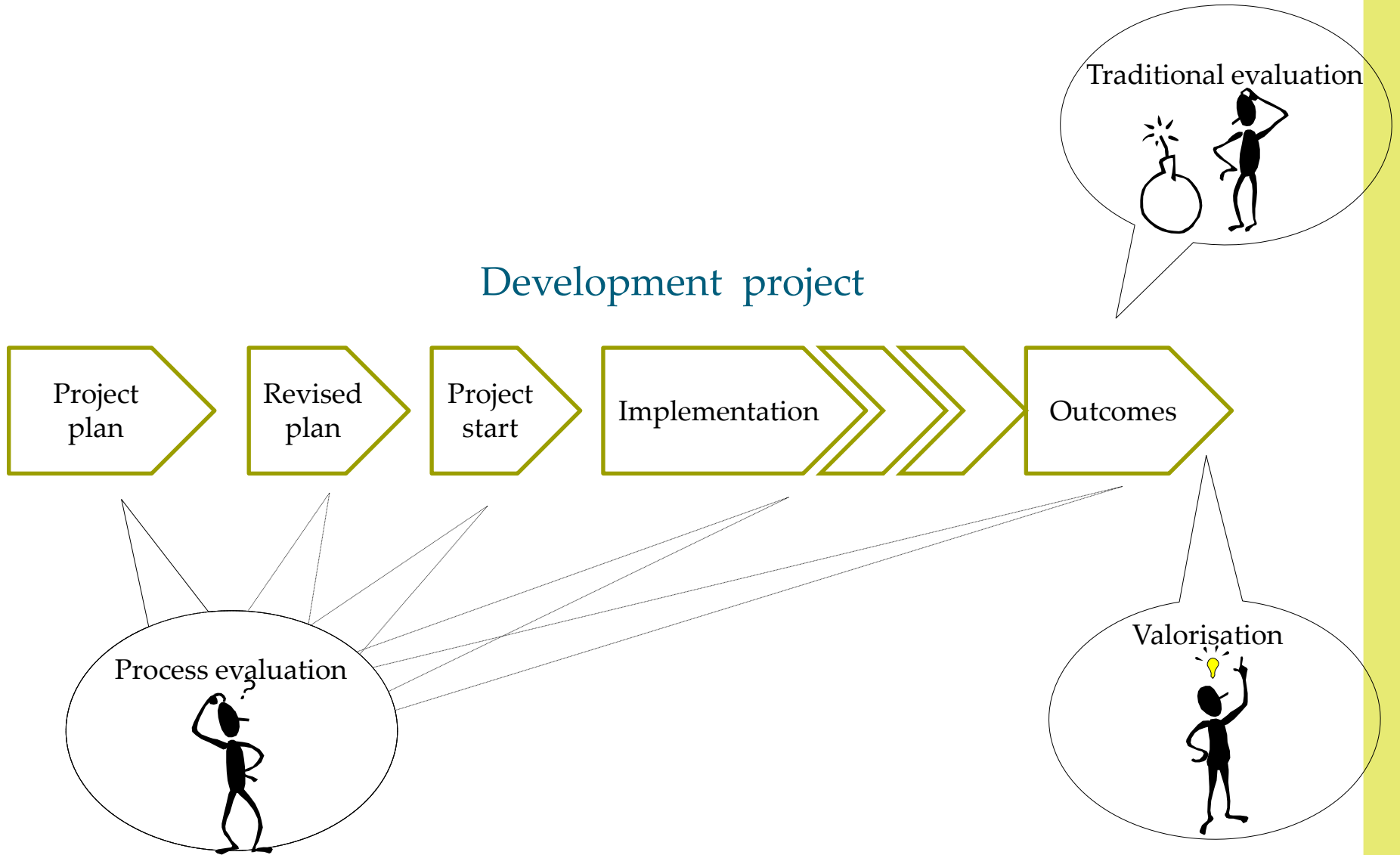
1. Traditional evaluation
2. Process evaluation
3. Developmental evaluation
4. Valorisation of innovations
5. Analysis of project effectiveness or best practices
 - NVL competence project, “success factors”

(6. Quality systems?)





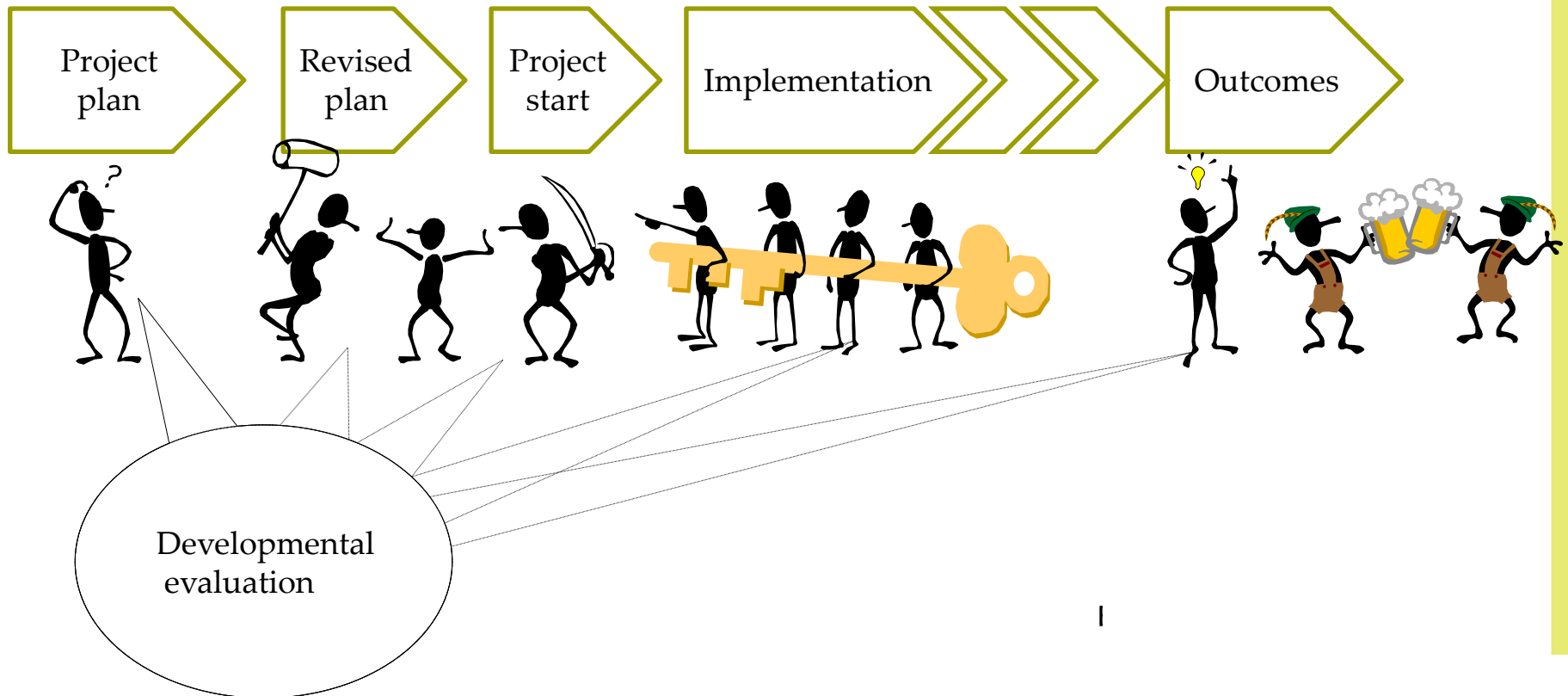
Different evaluation models...



Different evaluation models...



Development project



Example #1 (The model used in NVL Competence project)

HUNTING FOR BEST PRACTICES OR "SUCCESS FACTORS"



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Search for “success factors”

- The aim was to find a “fresh” and qualitative perspective on project evaluation.
- The analysis was focused on the elements which seem to make adult education programmes and projects more successful.
- None of the traditional elements of project effectiveness were analysed
 - There are no descriptions on whether the projects were managed in a novel way, finished on time, met the objectives or spent the money wisely.
- Instead, the aim was to find relevant, interesting and special elements which have made the projects successful by reading the project descriptions “with open eyes”.



First set of project data: project and program descriptions,
materials and additional information
(33 projects)



First qualitative analysis

- * Exploration of tentative success factors
- * Development of project description form



Second set of project data: descriptions in pre-defined project description form,
other materials and additional information
(33 projects)



Second qualitative analysis

- Definition of preliminary success factors (14)
 - in-depth analysis of 21 projects



Third qualitative analysis

- Re-definition and modification of success factors
→ 8 success factors identified



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Success factors

| | |
|---|---|
| Networking | <i>Planning, implementation and development of the programme is based on networking of various - and even unexpected - organizations and players/participants.</i> |
| Flexibility | <i>Programme offers flexible access and participation, individualized content or individualized study methods (ICT)</i> |
| Focus on needs | <i>Programme has focus on authentic regional, sectorial or individual needs and problems, which are recognized and systematically analysed providing tailor-made solutions.</i> |
| New role for institutions | <i>Programme includes innovative new roles for training organizations which have traditionally been working on different fields of education.</i> |
| Getting new target groups involved | <i>Programme motivates new groups of participants, who have usually been non-participants, or are a new target group for the training organization.</i> |
| Process Evaluation | <i>Documentation and analysis of results is integrated into the project, Process evaluation & Action Research</i> |
| Community as a pedagogical strategy | <i>The pedagogical design of learning interventions aims at creating a sense of community between participants.</i> |
| New structures and practices, which are sustainable and innovative | <i>The project has challenged organizations and players/participants to develop new structures and practices which continue to develop after the project has ended.</i> |

Example #2

DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION



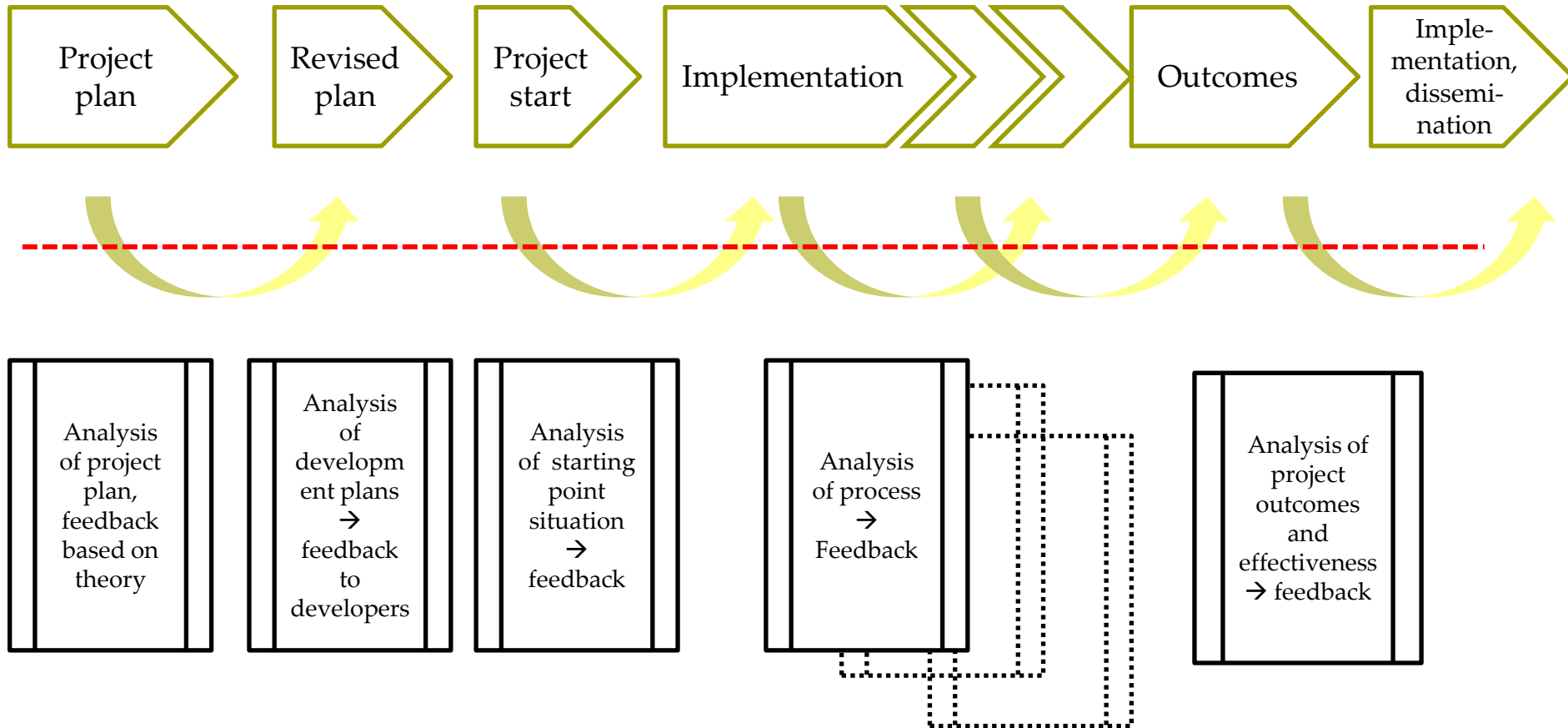
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Developmental evaluation -model

(Kauppi 1992; Manninen & Kauppi 2008)

- As compared to traditional (“summative”) evaluation, developmental evaluation is...
 - Process evaluation model – follows the process from the start to an end
 - Gives all results immediately to practitioners and developers – helps to develop
 - Participatory – researchers participate actively
 - Empowering – practitioners have better ownership of the development process
- Is nowadays required in all large scale programs financed by Ministry of Education and Culture, since it has proved useful in several projects (Manninen & Luukannel 2008; Manninen 2008; Atjonen, Manninen, Mäkinen & Vanhalakka-Ruoho 2011).

Development project



Developmental evaluation

Developmental evaluation -model

(Kauppi 1992; Manninen & Kauppi 2008)

- Usually applies both qualitative and quantitative data and methods, but is more open to “social construction of reality” and multiple perspectives. Therefore it has adopted many principles from qualitative methodologies (for example, Guba & Lincoln 1989)
- Developmental evaluation is therefore a rather complex process in itself, making often use of the following principles:
 - evaluation is considered also as a learning process for the community of actors
 - actors and participants actively participate in the evaluation process
 - cultural diversity and pluralism is accepted
 - evaluation and doing are closely integrated
 - evaluation is contextual

Theoretical and "intellectual" family

- **Developmental work research and Activity Theory** (Engeström 1987; 2005)
 - research as a development tool
- **Action Research** (Lewin 1946)
 - research as an intervention
- **Process evaluation** models, especially CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product; Stufflebeam 1985)
- **"Rolling Feedback"** –model (Brown & Evans 1990)
 - evaluation results are instantly given back to the project actors, so that they can modify the running program respectively.
- **Illuminative** evaluation (Parlett & Hamilton 1976)
- **Participatory** evaluation (King 1998; Cousins & Whitmore 1998; Garaway 1995)
- **Stakeholder** evaluation (Ayers 1987)

Higher education development projects, where Developmental evaluation have been used

| | Open Learning Environments –project | Opintoluotsi- project (Study pilot) |
|----------------|---|--|
| Aim | To develop new teaching and learning practices for university continuing education (Open LE for academic job seekers) and Open Virtual University | To produce a comprehensive user friendly on-line study information and guidance service for all citizens seeking for post-16 educational opportunities |
| Scope | University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education; 20 – 45 members in development teams | 15 members in the development team + Network of developers |
| Duration | 1995 – 2000 | 2000 – 2008 |
| Role of the DE | Participatory process evaluation + Action Research supporting product development | Participatory process evaluation + recommendations for future development |

National school development projects, where Developmental evaluation have been used

| | School democracy – project | Flexible Basic Education (Jopo®) | Guidance and counselling development program |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| Aim | To develop pupil's participation in decision-making and representational democracy in schools and municipalities | To reduce dropout using new individual learning methods (small group teaching, on-the-job learning, different learning environments, etc.) | To develop study guidance and counselling system at schools and regions |
| Scope | 90 schools and municipalities | 65 schools and municipalities | 151 participating projects (= schools, municipalities and regional networks) |
| Duration | 2005 – 2007 | 2006 – 2008 | 2008 – 2010 |
| Role of the DE | Participatory process evaluation for the whole program | Evaluation of the planning phase and first year of implementation; recommendations for future development | Process evaluation of the development program; support for actors and project management |

How DE benefits developers and practitioners?

- Makes development projects more “professional” and research based
- Brings research closer to the practice
- Enables “tailor made” utilisation of relevant theories in practice
- Gives immediate feedback about the development process
- Helps to modify objectives and means if necessary
- Reveals, if necessary development areas are neglected
- Helps to anticipate and avoid problems and booby traps
- Makes evaluation and development process visible
- Develops reflection skills by providing theory, research & evaluation results and forums for common discussion

Epilogy

CHANGE ORIENTATION IN ICELANDIC CASES

Learning and education is commonly seen as a reactive tool, helping to adapt in changes:

- “... improve everyone’s capacity and ability to **cope with life**” (LLL-policy, Estonia)
- Financial **education can help workforce adapt** to a changing economy (www.hrmagazine.co.uk/hro/features/1019910/how-help-workforce-adapt-changing-economic-landscape)
- “... an increased burden is imposed on individuals **to adapt their skills in order to remain prepared for future changes**” (Council of the European Union (2008). *Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies*)
- “Access to up-to-date information and knowledge [...] are becoming the key to strengthening Europe’s competitiveness and improving the **employability and adaptability of the workforce**” (Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, Commission of the European communities 2000)

However...

- “Main thinkers” in Adult education theory see adult education as a transformative, change oriented activity
 - Eduard Lindeman: AE as **a tool for change**
 - bell hooks: **teaching to transgress**
 - Jack Mezirow: **transformative learning, critical consciousness and change of meaning perspective**
 - Paolo Freire: **“conscientization” → change in society**
 - Yrjö Engeström: **expansive learning**

(Adult) education can relate to change as...

- (1) a reactive activity

- helping adults and organisations to adapt in the changes that has already taken place,

- (2) a proactive activity

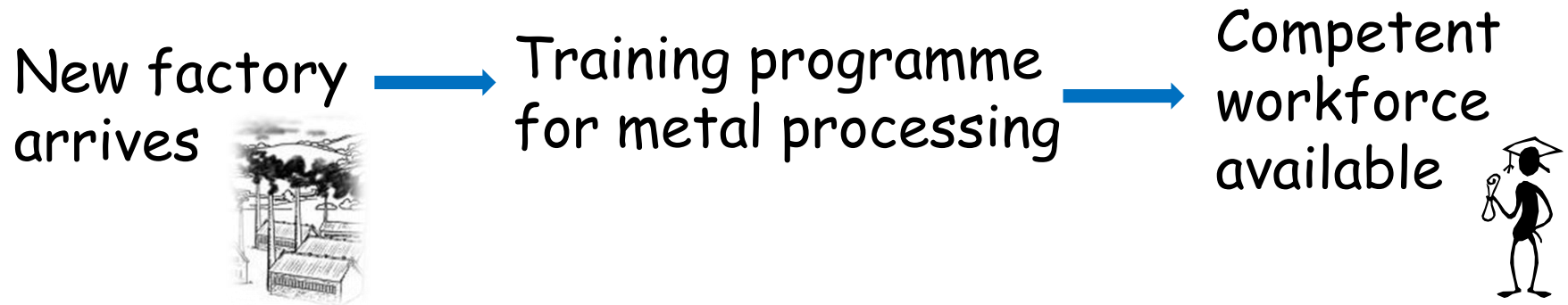
- helping adults and organisations to anticipate future changes, trends and situations,

- (3) a change oriented activity

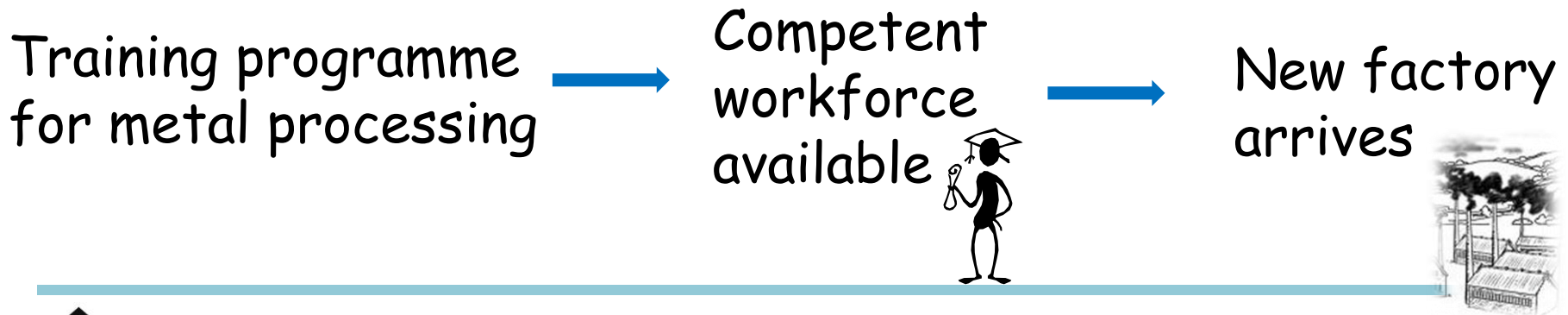
- helping adults and organisations to create change by creating knowledge and competencies which are a necessary condition for any change and/or development to take place.

Practical example:

Traditional reactive way to do it:



Change oriented way to do it:



Adult education can...

- (1) help job seekers (or regions, companies) **to compete** with others in the same situation
 - courses on career planning skills and on how to write an CV and job application
 - adults who have received the training, are in better position in the competition of the existing jobs
 - support programme for one company or village may just lead into unhealthy competition and problems in the next company of village.
- (2) **develop new skills**
 - courses providing new professional skills and competencies, so that the competence level of the work force in the area becomes higher
- (3) **develop new jobs**
 - courses usually organized for larger communities (village, networks) or companies, where the aim is to generate and support new “business” and open up new opportunities for income in the region.

“Imaginary” case example...

- A region where the main employer (Nato Air Base) is closed down
- No alternative jobs available
- It is expected that in a few years time that region will become well known tourist attraction because of it's natural beauty... this brings some hope for the region
- At the moment almost all inhabitants are moving out or unemployed
- What should adult educators do?

(compare: Suðurnes)

Alternative training and development programmes?

| | REACTIVE | PROACTIVE | CHANGE ORIENTED |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| COMPETITION | (1) Job centre training job search and career planning skills <i>Suðurnes</i> | (2) Guidance on how to prepare for new forms of employment and income | (3) Encouragement of entrepreneurship & financial support for new business <i>New path</i> |
| NEW SKILLS | (4) Training filling the existing skill gaps (for example, workers for moving companies) | (5) Training anticipating future trends (for example, tourist guides) | (6) Change agents & 'Chaos pilots': training on totally new and innovative topics <i>Stronger community Prisma ETSC</i> |
| CREATION OF NEW JOBS | (7) Development programmes to meet the current needs of the labour market (support for new moving companies) | (8) Development programmes anticipating future trends (Wildlife experience business development programme) | (9) Innovative development programmes: business innovation networks, new lifestyle region... <i>Vincent (Sweden)</i> |

Alternative policy strategies?

TRAINING FOR JOBS

- "reactive or proactive"
- Change defined as:
 - stability or peaceful development, slow developmental changes which are easy to anticipate
- objectives:
 - to meet the current or future needs of the employers and the working life
 - to train narrow, task related skills
 - to secure availability of trained workforce and flexible access to available jobs

LEARNING FOR CHANGE

- "change oriented"
- Change defined as:
 - radical and continuous change, structural changes which are difficult to anticipate
- objectives:
 - to help individuals and companies to manage change in a fast changing late modern society
 - to learn general life skills
 - to secure development of the society and of the working life

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