

Principles-Focused Evaluation: A Brief Reference Guide



New Tactics
in Human Rights

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What are Principles?

Principles are statements of how human beings should act that apply in a wide variety of situations.¹

What is Principles-Focused Evaluation?

Principles-Focused Evaluation is an approach to evaluation created by Michael Quinn Patton that examines the principles that guide an initiative.

In evaluation, often the way in which you run your campaign does not get as much attention as the tangible changes that result from your work. However, when you are working to change society, often *how* you do the work is just as important as what is achieved. Principles-focused evaluation makes space to reflect on whether the campaign is living up to its shared principles.

Principles-Focused Evaluation is for you if...

- Your campaign is based on shared principles
- The way you conduct your campaign matters
- You want to be held accountable to your shared principles

Check all of the above?

Then Principles-Focused Evaluation is for you!

¹Patton, M. Q. (2018) *Principles-Focused Evaluation - The GUIDE*. New York: Guilford Press.

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If you're interested in Principles-Focused Evaluation, we've developed two options!

- Option 1** Try out this option if you only have a little time to give to Principles-Focused Evaluation, and just want to explore this approach.
- Option 2** Try out this option if you would like to integrate Principles-Focused Evaluation formally into your evaluation plan.

Here are the steps for each option:

Steps	Option 1	Option 2
At the beginning...		
<p>Identify and define shared principles. Work together as an organization or a campaign to decide on which principles guide your work. Examples of principles are provided on the next page, and a blank worksheet to document your chosen principles is here.</p>	✓	✓
<p>Determine time frames throughout the campaign to revisit your chosen principles. After coming to agreement on shared principles, identify times in the future for Pause and Reflect discussions to assess whether the campaign is being implemented according to shared principles. This may be at the beginning, middle, or end of each campaign phase.</p>	✓	✓
<p>Set success markers to visualize what living up to these principles will look like. See specific guidance on developing success markers here. See an example of how the Choosing Outcomes and Success Markers worksheet can be filled out for a chosen principle on p. 5 of this tool.</p>		✓
At determined timeframes...		
<p>Hold a Pause and Reflect discussion to discuss chosen principles. At your previously identified time frames, set aside time for the discussion. To ensure honest and productive conversations, these meetings must cultivate a safe space free from retaliation. See Guiding Questions for a Pause and Reflect Discussion on p. 6 of this tool for example questions that can be used to facilitate the discussion.</p>	✓	✓
<p>Track success markers and document progress. Before, after, or during the Pause and Reflect discussion, complete the Tracking Sheet to review and document progress on the success markers. It reviews the success markers developed at the start, and assesses whether any of them have been realized. A blank tracking sheet can be found here.</p>		✓

Examples of Campaign Principles

The following is a list of principles that may apply to your campaign. Definitions can be further modified to be tailored to your specific campaign. This list is not all-encompassing and allows flexibility to develop your own principles.

Choose or develop principles that are a priority for your campaign. If this is your first time doing Principles-Focused Evaluation, we recommend that you choose 1 principle to start.

Participation: We include those experiencing human rights abuses in how decisions are made regarding the protection of their rights.

Transparency: We share campaign information and decision-making processes to increase knowledge and understanding for rights-holders.

Non-Discrimination: We work to reduce inequities in power and resources.

Risks: We consider the (unintentional and intentional) harm that can be inflicted from our work.

Teamwork: We openly collaborate with one another to achieve our shared goals.

Accountability: We take responsibility for and learn from our actions.

Respect: We recognize and appreciate the contributions of everyone.

Empowerment: We know and understand our benefits and policies as staff, and there is equitable access and claims to such benefits.

On the following pages, you will find sample worksheets from **Choosing Outcomes and Success Markers** that are focused on principles-based outcomes. The outcome we selected for the example on p. 5 is participation. As a principle, participation can include things like ensuring that those who have experienced human right abuses are included in campaign decision-making and that the campaign team includes community members.

Choosing Outcomes and Success Markers for a Chosen Campaign Principle



“Design Your Own” Success Markers Worksheet



You can add your own unique words or images on the lines below to describe your success markers.

<p>Outcome Area: (Choose one from the Outcome Titles or create your own)</p>	<p>Outcome Statement: As a result of our action, we hope [target] will... [change or act in what way?]</p>
<p>Success Markers: How will you know you achieved this outcome? (pick one or more success markers) NOTE: Choose success markers for your target group for the selected outcome. Each outcome statement in your advocacy campaign has three different success markers.</p>	
<p>Success Marker 1 (a modest success for your outcome that you believe is very realistic)</p> <hr/>	
<p>Success Marker 2 (a slightly more ambitious success for your outcome that you still believe is realistic)</p> <hr/>	
<p>Success Marker 3 (a much more ambitious success for your outcome that could happen but would be exciting and surprising if it did)</p> <hr/>	

Choosing Outcomes and Success Markers for a Chosen Campaign Principle



“Modest to Ambitious” Success Markers Worksheet



Outcome Area:

(Choose one from the Outcome Titles or create your own)

Principle - Participation

Outcome Statement:

As a result of our action, we hope [target] will... [change or act in what way?]

As a result of our action, we hope that we will include women and girls, who've been denied their right to education, in how decisions are made regarding the protection of their rights.

Success Markers:

How will you know you achieved this outcome? (pick one or more success markers)

NOTE: Choose success markers for your target group for the selected outcome. Each outcome statement in your advocacy campaign has three different success markers.

“Modest” Success Marker

(a modest success for your outcome that you believe is very realistic)

The perspectives of at least three women and girls who've been denied their right to education are included in the upcoming planning process.

“Slightly more ambitious” Success Marker

(a slightly more ambitious success for your outcome that you still believe is realistic)

At least 50% of all campaign members are individuals who experienced human rights abuses.

“Much more ambitious” Success Marker

(a much more ambitious success for your outcome that could happen but would be exciting and surprising if it did)

At least 50% of the campaign leadership team are individuals who experienced human rights abuses.

Pause and Reflect Discussion Guide for Chosen Principles

The following questions are provided to help guide your discussion. Questions can be further modified to suit your preferred phrasing.

Reflect on whether principles are practiced

1. How would we rate the extent to which we practice the principle of ("_____")?
 - a. Options to collect answers from a group can include:
 - Have members vote with their fingers (1 = we are not practicing this principle at all to 5 = we are practicing this principle extremely well), and the facilitator tallies responses.
 - Create an anonymous survey through platforms like Google Forms, and have members respond prior to the meeting.
 - b. To dive deeper into why members voted a certain way, ask questions #2 and/or #3 below.

Reflect on past behavior and learn for the future

2. For the principle of ("_____"), what have we done in the past that shows that we are living up to this principle?
 - a. Ask for anecdotal examples.
 - b. Celebrate team members' roles in living up to principles.
3. For the principle of ("_____"), what have we done in the past that shows that we are NOT living up to this principle?
 - a. Ask for anecdotal examples that stray away from generalizations.
 - b. Specificity helps generate lessons learned for the future. This can be prompted by asking:
 - What could we do as an organization/campaign to better practice the principle of ("_____") in this next phase?

Reflect on the chosen principles

4. Are there any principles that are no longer relevant and should we change them?
5. Are there any new principles we would want to hold ourselves accountable to?
 - a. Only ask this question if there is capacity to include additional principles.