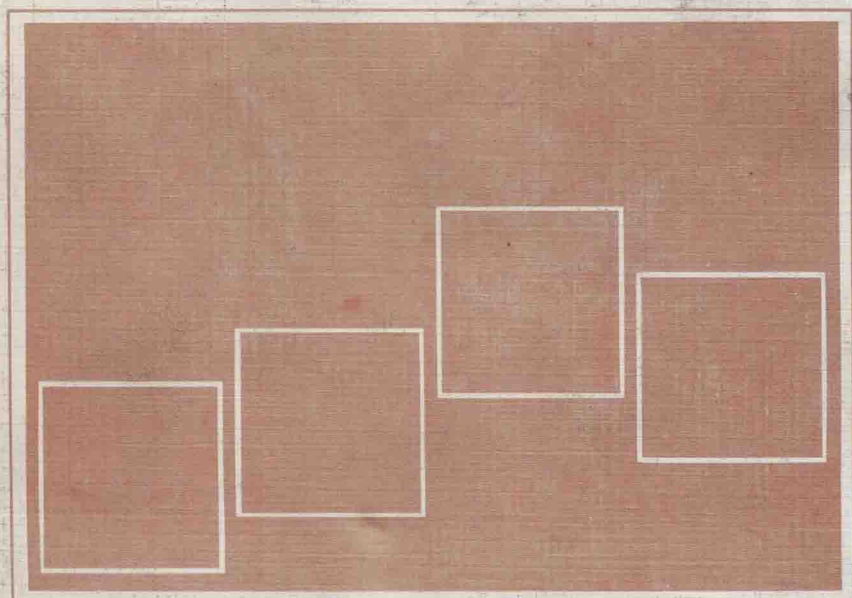


Planning Useful Evaluations

Evaluability Assessment

LEONARD RUTMAN

Foreword by JOSEPH S. WHOLEY



Sage Library of Social Research 96

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Volume 96
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London

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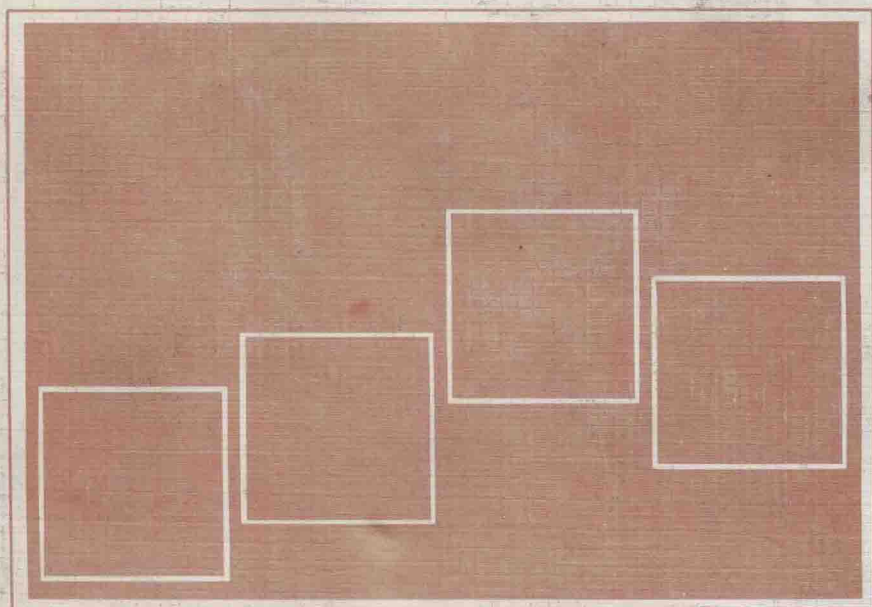
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Evaluation Research Methods

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The ideas for this book began with the difficulties I experienced in trying to implement "ideal" research procedures for "messy" programs which operated in a sociopolitical context. Further impetus came from the recognition that numerous impact or effectiveness evaluations were flawed because of the evaluators' failure to determine: (1) whether the program was structured and implemented in a manner that made it worthwhile to evaluate; and (2) if it were feasible to implement methodologies to meet the study's purposes.

Joe Wholey and his colleagues at The Urban Institute shared these concerns and pioneered an approach called evaluability assessment for carrying out a preevaluation analysis. I am indebted to Joe Wholey for introducing me to this concept. Since this introduction I have modified and adapted the evaluability assessment for planning useful evaluations. Joe Wholey has been extremely supportive of my work, and I am most appreciative of his wise advice.

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—L.R.

Ottawa, Canada

FOREWORD

by JOSEPH S. WHOLEY

My objective is to have evaluation used to improve the design and performance (efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness) of government programs. My ultimate goal is demonstrably effective programs. In today's political and economic climate, those in charge of government are expected to produce no less.

Experience suggests that evaluation is likely to be useful in improving government programs only if program managers and policy makers have agreed on realistic measurable program objectives, appropriate program performance indicators, and intended uses of information before evaluations are undertaken.

Over the last five years, U.S. and Canadian governments have become increasingly interested in a process that uses the strengths of evaluators, program managers, and policy makers to:

- document the program objectives and expectations of program managers, policy makers, and those who deliver services at the local level;
- estimate the likelihood that measurable progress will be made toward program objectives;