

# Practical Application of Systems to Conduct Evaluation: Cases and Examples

2015  
Webinar  
Series

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**4.669...**  
Evaluation & Planning



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# Soft Systems Methodology: The Use of Rich Pictures in Evaluation

Speaker: Judy Oakden



- ▶ Independent evaluation consultant
- ▶ Based in Wellington, New Zealand
- ▶ A member of the Kinnect Group
- ▶ Uses methods and approaches that engage with complexity including systems thinking methods in her evaluations

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# The use of Rich Pictures in Evaluation

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**Judy Oakden**

Director, Judy Oakden Consultancy



Why rich  
pictures?



# Rich pictures are useful if you need to ...

- isolate key issues quickly
- avoid being overwhelmed
- manage emerging or changing circumstances
- represent a wide range of stakeholders
- understand interconnections
- understand ‘problematical’ situations



# Rich pictures help get you on track fast



# Rich pictures can be easily merged into existing evaluation practice



Aren't rich  
pictures  
hard to do  
well?



# Why bother?



Oakden, J. (2015). The use of rich pictures in evaluation.

# Set up



# Address context and dynamics when working in groups

- consider the group dynamics
- consider confidentiality
- consider power dynamics





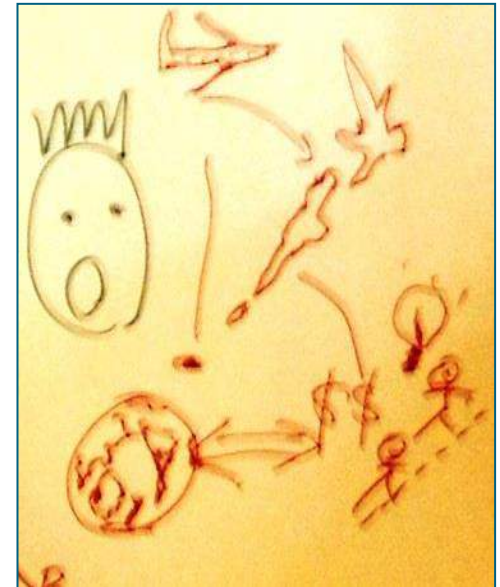
# Set expectations of ambiguity



- trust in the process
- set expectations ambiguity ok
- provide reassurance and timely feedback during the process.

# Looking for ideas not perfect drawings

- messy drawing is fine!
- want good ideas not a perfect drawing



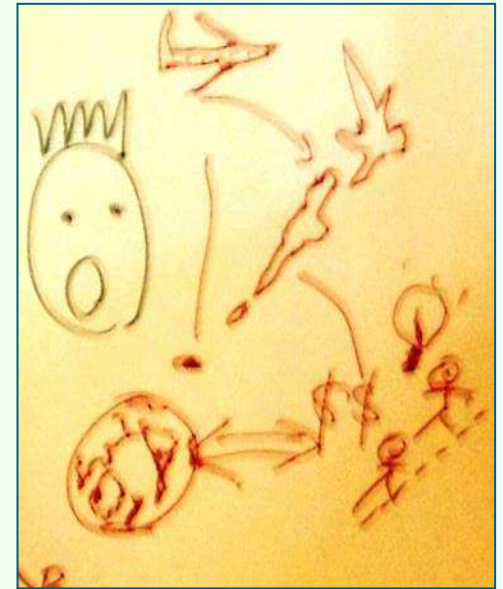
# Ride through the uncertainty

- reassure during the process
- anticipate participants feeling overwhelmed



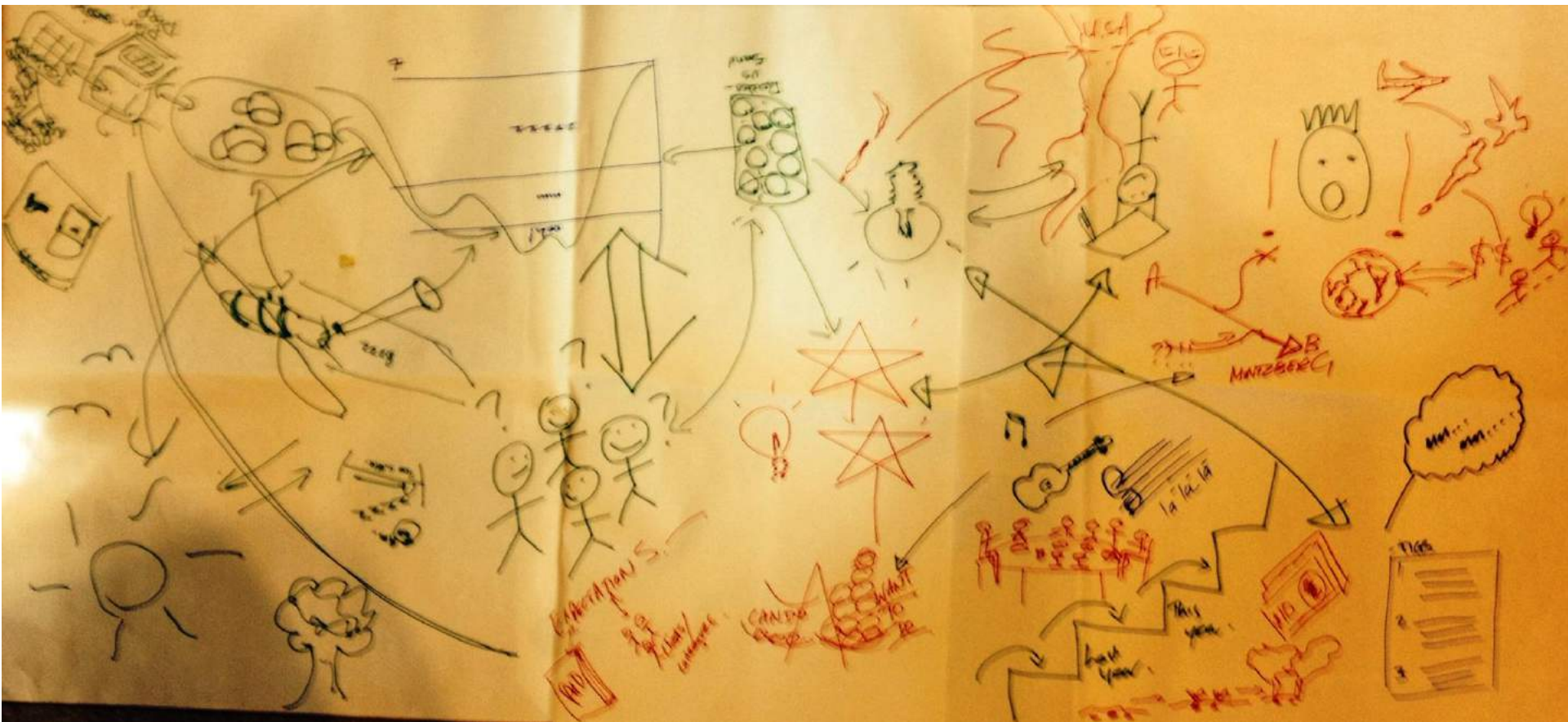
Photo: Tongariro River Rafting.  
<http://www.trr.co.nz/rafting/white-water-rafting>

# Analysis



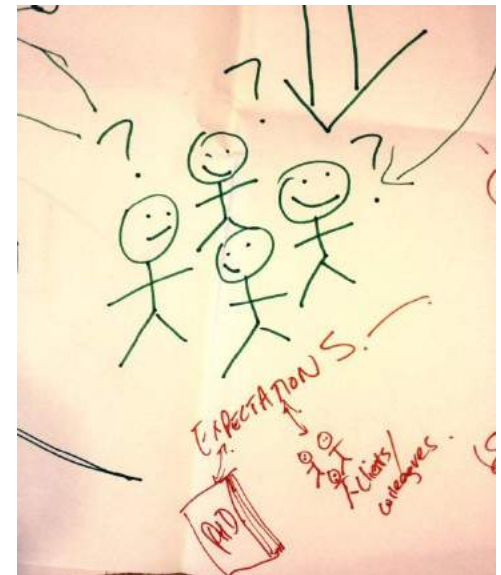


# Here's one we prepared earlier



# Get participants to explain their picture

- this is where the magic happens
- real learning for the participants hearing each others descriptions.



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# A picture can paint a thousand words...give rich pictures a try



**“Leave the door open for the unknown, the door into the dark. That’s where the most important things come from. ... to be lost is to be fully present ... and to be capable of being in uncertainty.  
*Rebecca Solnit***

# thank you

## **Contact information**

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# References

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**Rich pictures are not easy to do well (Berg & Pooley, 2013).**

**However, with a bit of planning they are a useful tool for an evaluator, particularly one with strong existing facilitation skills.**