The Canadian CED Network
Strengthening Canada's Communities

CED Evaluation 101
Presentation in Sault Ste Marie
May 6, 2005

Introduction

While rebuilding stressed communities and supporting marginalized residents, CED practitioners will want to undertake various efforts to evaluate their own work.

In this *introductory* workshop, participants will be introduced to a brief history of CED evaluation, major features of CED evaluation, and a framework to guide the development of an evaluation scope of work.

Agenda

- Introductions
- Sharing Experiences
- Summary of Key Points
  - Why, What, How, Who, and When to Evaluate
- Introduce Evaluation Scope of Work Tool
- Case Study
- Evaluation Competencies for CED Organizations
- Resource Lists, Reflections, & Check Out

CED & Evaluation

Group Discussion

What is CED?

What is a CED organization?

What is your experience with evaluating the efforts of CED organizations?
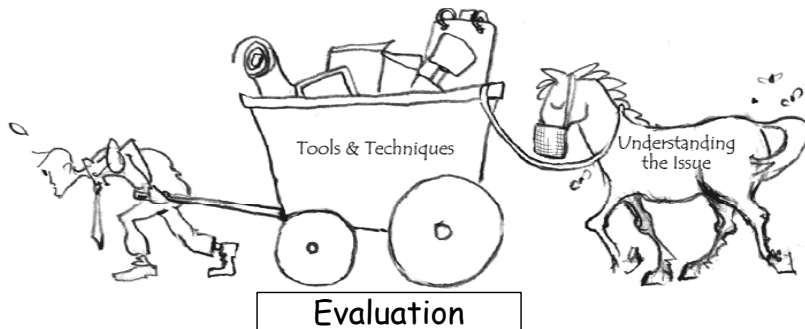
Evaluation

Evaluation

A systematic collection and review of information on activities and outcomes in order to judge the worth of the efforts, make improvements, and decide upon future directions.

Michael Quinn Patton

The Big Challenge for Practitioners

Tools & Techniques

Understanding the Issue

Evaluation

CED Evaluation: A Brief History

- 1000 BC to 1950 AD: A Simpler Time

  - The people involved in Babylonian Land Trusts, Chinese Lending Circles, Medieval Marketing Guilds, early agricultural and insurance cooperatives came to together to accomplish they could not accomplish on their own.

  - If they did not achieve what they set out to do, they tried to find a different way to go about it. If that failed, they did not do it any longer.

History cont'd

- 1960s-1970s: The Perfect Storm – The Glory of Science & the Promise of Great Societies
  - Progressive and activist governments with plentiful resources combine and massive investments made into all areas of community life.
  - Adaptation of scientific techniques in agricultural extension and pharmaceuticals industry applied to social problems:
    - Belief in turn-key "models".
    - Emphasis on using evaluation to "test" different CED models that might be "scaled up" (Community Futures).
    - Extensive use of "experimental design" research projects with very strong emphasis on quantitative methods
    - Centralized program design, CED organization as "subject" of study.

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History cont'd

- 1980s: One Wave Out, the Other One In

  - **The Great Society Wave Goes Out, Scientific Approach "Left on the Beach"**
    - Continued emphasis on expert driven, experimental design.
    - Fiscal restraint means gradual drop in experimental fervor of government.

  - **The Qualitative Wave Comes In**
    - CED organizations begin to prepare their own evaluations.
    - Greater emphasis on qualitative methods.
    - Greater involvement of organizational stakeholders and "participatory" assessment.
    - Use of "quick and dirty" research techniques (rapid rural appraisal)

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History cont'd

- 1990s: The Littered Beach
  - The Accountability Wave Roars In …
    - Loss of faith in human services and fiscal constraint prompts funders to require "outcome" evaluations.
    - Explosion of results chain and logic models.

  - … Followed by a Smaller Wave of Business Culture
    - Social Return on Investment replaces cost-benefit analysis, language of "investment" and "value-added" arrives.

  - And New Waves Ripple In
    - "Empowerment" push to counter "accountability" push
    - Emergence of "goal free" evaluation and balanced scorecard
    - Rise in "systems" and "complexity" theory
    - Growing interest in evaluating the enabling environment for CED

History cont'd

- The 21st Century: Tides of Aries and Aquarius
  - The Accountability Pressure Continues, But Confidence in Techniques Weakens
    - Accountability fervor reaches new heights on heavy – though often misguided – emphasis on outcomes management.
    - Efforts to create sophisticated management information systems grow larger.
    - Some frustration beginning to mounts with "simplistic" use of results chains and "bad feel" of evaluation.
  - Renewed Emphasis on Evaluation As Learning
    - Complexity theory, comprehensiveness, systems thinking becoming popular – mechanistic techniques unable to cope
    - Growing support for qualitative techniques, the learning organization, and approaches such as Development Evaluation

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CED Evaluation

"W5"

- *Why*
- *What*
- *When*
- *Who*
- *(W)How*

Why Evaluate?

To support ongoing learning and improvement ("formative") and help assess priorities.

To capture outcomes and account for resources used ("summative").

To build knowledge and understanding of an issue or area.

What to Evaluate

The Agent of Change	The Changes They Generate
Staff	Individual, Families and Household Level
Program Or Service	
Organization	Organizational Level
Collaboration	Community Level
Community	

How To Evaluate?

General Approaches

- Longitudinal Assessment & Performance Monitoring
- Experimental or Comparison Design
- Participatory Assessment
- Goal Free Evaluation
- Peer or Jury Assessment

Research Techniques

- Surveys & Focus Groups
- Key Informant Interviews
- Statistical Methods
- Cost-Benefit, Cost Effectiveness and Return on Investment Analysis
- Literature Review
- File Review
- Checklists

When to Evaluate?

One-Off – at the beginning and/or end of an activity or cycle of work.

Periodic – at pre-determined intervals (e.g. every 2 years).

Continually – ongoing process of monitoring (when and where ever required)

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Who Should Evaluate?
External

– Advantages
- More objective.
- May be perceived as more credible.
- May be more skilled and experienced.
- Can draw upon comparisons with other organizations.
- Might be able to access additional evaluation resources.
- Not caught up in organizational politics.

Disadvantages
- May be perceived as threat.
- People will be on their "best behaviour"
- May dismiss important nuances of organization.
- Takes valuable staff time and may disrupt normal functioning..
- May impose own values on the organization.
- Can be expensive.

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Who Should Evaluate?
Internal

– Advantages
- Know a lot about the organization
- Need less time to familiarize themselves with staff.
- Less obtrusive.
- Better position to effect changes.
- May cost less.

Disadvantages
- May feel pressure to make positive report and focus on strengths rather than weaknesses
- May not be perceived as credible.
- May not be able to focus sufficient effort on evaluation.
- May not have sufficient scope or depth of experience and competencies required.

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10 Challenges

Methodological	Logistical	Political
Measuring Outcomes	Sufficient Skills & Knowledge	Motivation for Evaluation
Time Lag for Change	Adequate Resources	Who Designs & Judges
Attribution	Time lines	How much, how fast?
		When

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Evaluation Scope of Work

➢ Identifies the subject of evaluation (e.g. project, strategy, organization).
➢ States purpose, audience and use of the evaluation.
➢ Provides a background to evaluation.
➢ Clarifies evaluation questions.
➢ Identifies evaluation method to answer the questions.
➢ Identifies existing information sources.
➢ Discusses evaluation team and participation of stakeholders.
➢ Covers procedures, such as schedules and logistics.
➢ Clarifies requirements for evaluation and dissemination.
➢ Includes a budget.

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Case Study

Abbotsfield

Review the Materials for the Abbotsfield case study. Ask clarifying and probing questions.

In small groups, try to develop the broad strokes of the Scope of Work.

Report back.

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CED Evaluation
Organizational Competencies

- Knowledge
  - Some knowledge of work or area being evaluated.
  - A broad understanding of the different types of evaluation, evaluation approaches and techniques for capturing and analyzing information.
  - Clear understanding of the context of the evaluation.

- Skills
  - Able to complete a first draft of an evaluation scope of work.
  - Ability to identify, support and manage researcher (staff and/or external consultants).

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CED Evaluation
Organizational Competencies continued

- Skills (continued)
  - Basic contract and project management skills.
  - Able to interpret evaluation findings and communicate them to stakeholders.

- Attitude
  - A willingness to "embrace" all types of evaluation findings.
  - Commitment to using evaluation findings to make decisions.

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Resource List

- A List of Helpful Tools & Resources

- Links to Websites on Evaluation

Reflections

- Have the conversations and information explored today changed the way you think or feel about evaluation? If so, how?

- Does anything from today's conversations raise have implications for your organization and/or how you evaluate its work?

- What themes or issues touched on today would you like to spend more time on?

- What new questions would you like to explore?

Thank you

For more information on our activities and membership, please visit our website:

www.ccednet-rcdec.ca

CED EVALUATION SESSION
Brainstorming Notes and Follow-up

1. Ideas for working titles – used at the beginning of the session to set the stage
   - ❑ This is NOT Tool Time, Tim
   - ❑ We're talking 'bout the horse first – leave that cart alone!

2. Outline
   a. What is the purpose(s) of evaluation / what can it accomplish
      i. Account for resources used
      ii. Improve the work
      iii. Determine if your priorities are in order
      iv. Recognize and celebrate the success of the work
      v. Attract investment to the organization / project
   b. Who should be involved in evaluation
      i. Experts / consultants
      ii. Community / organization members
      iii. Staff
      iv. Clients
      v. Academics
   c. What should be evaluated / what CAN be evaluated
      i. Incrementality
      ii. Soft/hard
      iii. Quantitative / qualitative
   d. The nature of measuring progress

3. Checklist Ideas
   a. How are you going to use the results?
      i. Internally
      ii. Externally
   b. What kinds of information do you need?
   c. When do you need the information – time of year, when in the life of the project?
   d. Where and how can you obtain the information?
   e. Are these the results you were trying to obtain / did you measure what you were trying to measure?
      i. If not, why not?
   f. What decisions are you going to make with the results of the evaluation?
   g. Who are the audiences for the results of the evaluation – who will be reviewing the work and how will they use it?
4. Resources:
   a. Making Waves Volume 11, #2 (Edition on Evaluation

5. Some quotes we might use:
    Production is not the application of tools to materials, but of logic to work. - Peter Drucker

    Every tool carries with it the spirit by which it had been created. - Werner Karl Heisenberg

    Planning is an unnatural process; it is much more fun to do something. The nicest thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise, rather than being preceded by a period of worry and depression.
    John Harvey-Jones

I like this set of principles – could we adapt them?

The Principles of Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement

An excerpt from: Jensen, D., & Nelson, R. (1996, April). *Alice in wonderland management: Vision, planning, culture, and evaluation*. Paper presented at the Western Regional Conference of the Society for College and University Planning, Portland, Oregon.

Principle I: Program evaluation should be part of the planning and change process.

Evaluation must be linked to the strategic plan and changed when the objectives or related activities change. Evaluation is not a one-time effort, but an ongoing process by which all the critical elements of an organization are routinely and systematically reviewed. Evaluation efforts should translate the concepts in the strategic plan to all levels of the organization in terms they understand and must be an acknowledged part of the management process.

Principle II: Know why you are conducting evaluations.

The ultimate purpose of evaluation efforts is to focus the organization on results. There may be several reasons for evaluating a specific program or process and some of these reasons may be at cross-purposes. One shouldn't expect that one type of evaluation will serve all of one's needs. Reasons for doing an evaluation may include:

- making modifications or improvements to a program;

- creating a sense of ownership and control for the staff;

- monitoring or documenting unit productivity;

- providing information to decision-makers;

- examining the attitudes of workers or clients;

- communicating with the public and external audiences; and

- examining the unintended effects of a process.

For example, would you design a single evaluation plan to (a) demonstrate to *The Boss* the success of a new program and (b) find out why the staff were unhappy while delivering the program? Probably not, because you need to answer different questions for different audiences. Writing down the reasons for conducting your evaluation projects will help you to (a) identify what questions should be asked, (b) plan how the evaluation should be conducted, and (c) communicate with your staff and other important audiences. The next page provides examples of the kinds of evaluation questions one might ask for the reasons outlined above.

Principle III: Evaluate systems, not their parts.

This principle applies to both units and individuals. Important processes often require the cooperation of many units. Evaluation efforts should not be limited by organizational boundaries. Similarly, most programs require the cooperation of a variety of individual workers. Individuals have responsibility for only part of the performance of a program and great care should be taken when making inferences about an individual who is part of a larger organization. A unit can not be evaluated by summarizing the performance evaluations of its members.

Principle IV: Don't take the "value" out of evaluation.

"Evaluation" implies that we will place a value on something. "Measurement" is a method by which we assign a numerical value to a property of something. Neither evaluation nor measurement can be completely objective, but evaluation *always* requires judgment. Performance measures provide an indicator of how something is performing, but someone must judge whether the news is good or bad.

Principle V: Build measurement into all processes.

Minimize the cost and disruption caused by evaluation activities by building measurement into the system. Evaluation as an add-on activity is difficult to sustain.

Principle VI: Be careful what you measure.

Improving one outcome may have adverse impacts on other, equally desirable, outcomes. Don't focus on the measures themselves; numerical goals are often achieved, even when improvement is not. Instead, work to develop a process and culture for using and revising measures to assist employees in focusing on improvement.

Principle VII: Performance measures can not stand alone.

Performance measures (including benchmark data) should be linked to organizational objectives and be part of an overall evaluation plan. These measures should translate organizational goals into concrete outcomes that directly relate to the jobs of individuals (don't use a measure just because it is easy to obtain). Performance measures usually do not have sufficient information to provide diagnostic information and must be supported by other types of evaluation.

Principle VIII: Every measure of performance has its shortcomings.

Different measures provide different perspectives and has different sources of bias. Use multiple sources of information and a variety of methods to evaluate performance (but don't over do it either). Important decisions shouldn't depend on one piece of information.

Principle IX: You can't measure everything all the time.

Evaluation costs time and money. Periodically evaluate all programs and processes, but not at the same time. During an evaluation, identify areas to evaluate that are important and that provide a balanced view (organizational goals, resources, client satisfaction, internal processes). Aim to improve the things which will make a difference and measure what employees can translate into direct corrective action. Sample when data collection is costly, intrusive, or not continually needed.

Principle X: Different audiences need different kinds of information at different times.

Evaluation findings should be routinely reported to all important audiences. The higher the audience in an organizational hierarchy, the greater the need for summarized and overview information (but not to the point that it obscures problems). The timeliness of evaluation information has a great influence on whether it will be used or not (if it isn't used, why bother?) and it has become increasingly important to produce information quickly.

Principle XI: Credibility is crucial.

Perceptions of self-interest can sabotage the credibility of evaluation efforts. Take care to assure that data can not be easily manipulated, and the analyses and evaluators are as fair as possible.

Principle XII: Plan the evaluation with key staff and clients.

The greater the participation in the process of creating an evaluation system, the greater the resulting performance change, and the greater the ease of implementation of future changes based upon the findings. If a process being evaluated crosses conventional organizational boundaries, be sure to include all affected units in the planning effort.

1. ***Who has the administrative responsibility*** for the program or process? Are the performance expectations explicit? Who are their supervisors and what are their expectations?

2. ***Who does the work?*** Do they believe the evaluation is important or useful? Does the evaluation process have credibility (were staff included in designing the evaluation)?

3. ***Who benefits from the work?*** What are the expectations of your clients? Is client satisfaction a goal? Are these factors reflected in the process goals?

4. The ***expectations of your audiences may be quite different*** and may actually be conflicting. Unless resolved, such conflicts can threaten the success of an evaluation (e.g., money-saving expectations vs. meeting expectations of users).

Principle XIII: Write down your evaluation plan.

An evaluation plan documents what you plan to do and why. The elements of a plan include the objective of the process or unit, activities designed to accomplish the objective, questions to be answered by the evaluation, methods used to collect data, who will collect the data, who will analyze the data and how, how the information will be reported, who will receive a report on the outcomes of the evaluation, how the information will be used in follow-up activities, and the resources required in the evaluation effort. The plan doesn't need to be elaborate; it should, however, be suffiently descriptive to enable people to understand what will be done. A brief outline of questions that should be answered in each part of the evaluation plan are shown in the "Evaluation Plan Checklist" on the next page.

Principle XIV: Evaluate the evaluation.

Like any other key organizational activity, the evaluation system should be examined for its usefulness and cost effectiveness. Compare the purposes and intended uses of the evaluation findings with what actually happened. Were plans changed or performance improved? Routinely check with the employees to see if the evaluation system is working as intended (acceptance of the measurement and evaluation process is essential to their success as a performance improvement tools). A complete and effective evaluation system will require years of incremental work to achieve.

Principle XV: Evaluation doesn't change systems, feedback and reward do.

Industrial and organizational psychologists have long recognized that when rewards are based on the measurement of an outcome, employees work to maximize that measure. But be careful to make a commitment to improvement-not to measurement.

Next steps: what are you going to do when you get home:

1. inventory what you are doing now with evaluation
2. use the checklist to determine what you need to work on
3.