

Evaluation Climate

Where do community-based organizations get their money?

- Private donors
- Corporate donors
- Foundations
- Government



Why do these agencies / donors give money?

Shift in Giving Philosophy

(1) Corporate and Private donors give because they want to make an investment NOT charity. (Source, James Lord, *The Raising of Money*.)

- Your agency needs to emphasize that the money secured will be used to meet the needs of **people**, and addresses what people want, community potential, and community aspirations.
- Your agency does not have **needs**, rather, your agency has **solutions**. One urban university emphasized they act as “an instrument for the advancement of society”
- There is a shift in giving, there needs to be a shift in how you ask.
“Men [People] take only their needs into consideration, never their abilities.”
-Napoleon
- Consider fund-raising as “the law of the farm,” you need to cultivate long-term donor relationships. Start by nurturing the soil, laying a foundation for growth.

(2) Foundations give because there is a desire to contribute to the social well being of a community, this is referred to as Social Justice Grantmaking. (Source, Community Foundations of Canada.)

- Canadian foundations are interested in more than providing Band-Aid solutions, rather, they are seeking to provide funding to address root causes.
- Many foundations want to facilitate social change. A survey of Canadian community foundations conducted in 2001 revealed a “strong appetite for exploring and supporting social justice activities.”
- Foundations want to build community-capacity, to enable agencies to help themselves.
- Social Justice has a number of definitions. While 40% of the foundations surveyed acknowledged they were involved with some level of social justice, most did not use the term specifically. Social justice is a “loaded,” politically charged term. Community-based agencies should keep the politics of the foundation in mind when asking for funding.

Why do these agencies / donors give money?

- (3) Government agencies give money in an attempt to fulfill needs identified by the electorate.
- The main goal when giving is to be accountable to tax payers.

All sources of giving want you to be accountable in return for the funds provided; this is where evaluation comes in. The challenge for community-based agencies is striking the balance between providing what funders want, and considering the capacity and resources available in-house to conduct evaluation.

What is evaluation?

- Course of action used to assess the value or worth of a program.

Three types of evaluation

- Process evaluation
 - is designed to assess the extent to which program procedures were carried out according to a written plan.
 - is ongoing.
 - helps an agency to understand:
 - what and how things are being done.
 - what needs to be changed or improved.
- Impact evaluation
 - is designed to assess whether the program has had an immediate influence on participants':
 - awareness
 - knowledge
 - skills
 - attitudes
 - behaviors
- Outcome evaluation
 - is designed to assess whether the program has achieved long-term objectives.

Two broad approaches to conducting an evaluation.

(1) External Evaluation Model

An external evaluation involves having an independent consultant working with your agency for the duration of the evaluation.

PROS

- Provides objective perspective, utilizing both quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (interviews, or focus groups) data.
- A “scientific” paradigm is used that focuses on the **quality** of the data collected. An evaluation is considered **valid** if it meets standards of methodological rigor.

CONS

- An external evaluation is expensive, and may not enhance “in-house” ability to conduct independent evaluations in the future.

(2) Participatory Evaluation Model

A participatory evaluation involves all stakeholders in the process. Program staff develop and implement the evaluation.

PROS

- Increases “in-house” knowledge and skills, and the likelihood that the evaluation findings will be used to refine programs.
- A participatory evaluation is less costly.

CONS

- Provides a less objective perspective.

Empowerment evaluation has emerged as a form of participatory evaluation. The goal of this evaluation approach is to guide participants, including program providers and clients, through a critical self-evaluation and reflection to enable people to help themselves and improve their programs.

At the onset of conducting empowerment evaluation, an evaluation consultant might be hired to facilitate the process and work with the group until they are able to maintain the momentum of the evaluation independently. If you would like more information about empowerment evaluation, please refer to page 11 of the EVAL manual.

Now that you have a sense of the evaluation climate in Canada, we’ll move on to how to **position** yourself to conduct an evaluation, and finally we’ll go through the **stages** of conducting an evaluation.