Introductions

Name
Organization & Role

Let’s Play “Evaluation Bingo!”
Agenda

Morning: 9-12
Evaluation Basics
Theory of Change
Intro to Indicators

LUNCH

Afternoon: 1-4
Tools and Tech
View from the Real World
Culture of Learning
Goal for the Day

Our Hope: You will leave with the evaluation knowledge, tools & skills to create a culture of learning at your organization.
Evaluation:
What is it? Why do it?
American Evaluation Association

**What is it?**

*Evaluation is a systematic process to determine merit, worth, value or significance.*

**Why do it?**

- Resource allocation decisions
- Increased public confidence
- Collective reflection
- Replication

Forefront
Program Evaluation

**Definition**

Program Evaluation is the systematic process of asking questions, and then collecting and using data to help answer those questions, in order to improve your work and tell your story of change.

**What it’s NOT**

- Performance Measurement
- Professional (HR) Evaluation
- Academic Research
- Program Monitoring
Why SO tricky???
Competing Agendas – Unclear Aims

Learning

Accountability
Conflation with Performance

.... Fear that we will be held accountable for things that are out of our control; that we will not measure up
Confusing Terminology


WHAT ARE WE REALLY TALKING ABOUT???
Answering the Big Three

At the end of the day, all PROGRAM evaluation seeks to answer some variation on these questions.

- Are we making a difference?
- How do we know?
- What ingredients of our work are most crucial to this difference?
Context and Concepts
The Water We Swim In

Innovation Network’s
State of Evaluation

2012 Report
The “Meaningfulness” Gap

While 90% of organizations report doing evaluation, only 28% of this same population have “promising capacities and behaviors in place to meaningfully engage in evaluation.”

~ State of Evaluation 2012~
The Buzz: the power of shared data

Big Data Analytics
• Using large data sets to inform your work
• Example: Human Trafficking Hotline

Benchmarking Collaboratives
• Efforts for NPOs in a similar field to share and compare performance and outcome data
• Example: Chicago Benchmarking Collaborative

Collective Impact
• Cross-sector efforts to share strategies and resources toward a common set of community-level outcomes
• Example: THRIVE Chicago
FUNDERS: Naming the Challenges

- **Public**: Insatiable demand for metrics
- **Private**: The “Kramer” effect, R.O.I.
- **All**: Different outcome requests with little to no support
A Snapshot of Chicago Philanthropy
Funders are not going away, but you can make a shift...

From
• Proving
• Grading & Scoring
• Test that Follows the Work

To
• Improving
• Learning
• Clarity of Goals at the Outset
The Basics #1: Terminology

**Impact** – the long-term or aggregate changes that the program aims to produce; the desired end result.

**Outcomes** – the short or medium-term changes that an initiative or program produces. Achievement of outcomes contributes to long-term impact.

**Indicators** – measurable approximations of what a program is trying to achieve; quantitative data that will demonstrate progress towards an outcome.

**Strategies** – the specific activities, interventions, services and/or programs that serve a particular target audience.
The Basics #2: Evaluation Steps

- Evaluation Planning
- Indicators & Tools
- Data Collection
- Learning
Mapping your Work:
Building a Theory of Change
The Challenge: We Make Big Claims
(especially in our grant proposals)

IF ....

We run an OST program....
We advocate for women’s rights....
We provide legal services....

THEN

Kids will graduate from college.
Women will be safe and secure.
Disadvantaged youth will have a bright future.
What is your If/Then Statement?
If/Then: The Evaluation Problem

The BIG GAP BETWEEN

IF

Then

Good for Elevator Speeches
BUT Not for Evaluation
Solution: Create a Theory of Change

A Nuanced If/Then Statement

Aka: Evaluation Framework, Theory of Action
Some Definitions

“A Theory of Change is... an analysis of the causal chain that links your [programmatic] interventions to the goals you want to achieve.
- Money Well Spent, Brest and Harvey 2008

“A Theory of Change reflects an organization’s belief about how impact happens.” - The Bridgespan Group
Key Benefits for Evaluation (and Planning!)

- **STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT**: Discover whether your strategies and activities are aligned with your hoped-for impact.
- **REALISTIC MEASUREMENT**: Better understand your impact – what you can realistically accomplish and claim credit for.
- **LEARNING & GROWTH**: Tool for both planning & evaluation work, enables your organization to learn and improve.
Evolution of the ToC

**Academic Evaluators**
ToC emerges in late 1990s at Aspen Institute’s Roundtable on Community Change

**Foundations**
Leading philanthropies begin adopting ToC (Gates, Annie E. Casey, Hewlett, etc.)

**NPOs**
Nonprofits shift from primary use of logic model to theory of change approach

**Systems**
ToC used for measuring complex initiatives (i.e. collective impact)
Logic Model: ToC’s “Cousin”

*It takes a more narrowly practical look at the relationship between inputs and results.*  - Grantcraft

- Parent is the United Way
- Used primarily by nonprofits
- Focused at program level
- Built left to right
- Program evaluation tool only
ToC Design: Building Backwards

**IMPACT**
What does success look like? What is your vision?

**OUTCOMES**
What has to happen before this can happen?

**STRATEGIES**
What are the core strategies, activities, and values?
Pratt Richards Group Model

If we...
- Strategies & Activities
  - Planning: Focus is Here

Then...
- Immediate Outcomes
  - Engagement

Which will lead to...
- Intermediate Outcomes
  - Behavior
  - Attitude
  - Skills
  - Knowledge

Community or social change
- Long-term Impact
  - Vision of Success
Example: Domestic Violence Program

**STRATEGIES**

We provide Individual case management and group sessions for women who have been abused.

**OUTCOMES**

Women increase **knowledge of DV, awareness** of resources

Women **engaged** in DV programming

**IMPACT**

Women are safe from domestic violence
Example: Domestic Violence Program

We provide individual case management and group sessions for women who have been abused.

Women are engaged in our DV programming while at shelter.

Women increase their knowledge about DV & awareness of available resources.

Women are safe from domestic violence.

If we... Then... Which will lead to... Community or social change

Strategies & Activities

Immediate Outcomes

Intermediate Outcomes

Intended Impact
## Youth Development Program ToC

### IF WE ...
- Create a family atmosphere where youth are personally greeted and welcomed; they feel a sense of belonging and as if our organization is their “second home”
- Employ high quality staff who act as caregivers, role models and mentors, providing: Care, support, and advice; Models of positive communication and relationship building; Case management for assessing behavioral, educational and social development; Validation for strengths, progress and accomplishments; Encouragement to set goals, be challenged, rise to their potential
- Provide needed opportunities and assistance in a holistic way – programming that helps youth gain skills in fun, engaging ways in 5 core areas: Character and leadership, Education and career, Health and life skills, Arts, and Fitness and Sports
- Consistently communicate with parents and teachers to discuss youth’s development
- Provide quality referrals for youth and their families to other agencies that supplement our work
- Partner with community groups and schools to support youth; act as a voice for change within our communities
- Follow up with alumnae or individuals who have stopped attending the clubs

### THEN...

#### Youth in the programs will be:
- Safe (off the streets) and engaged in programs, as evidenced by high attendance and retention rates
- Maintaining healthy relationships with their peers and caring adults by demonstrating early changes in attitudes and behaviors, including: Respecting and tolerating others (empathy) Fostering self-reliance and self-respect Developing caring and social behaviors Making healthy choices (health and social situations) Avoiding risks
- Showing progress in the acquisition of important life skills, including: Critical thinking Leadership Communication Education and career readiness

### WHICH WILL LEAD TO...

#### Youth in the programs who are:
- Leaders - civically engaged and positively influencing others at the clubs, in their families, and in the community
- Feeling hopeful about the future, and aware of/capable of accessing opportunities available to them
- Able to articulate short and long-term goals for themselves
- Self-confident, self-reliant, and proud of their accomplishments
- Life-long learners
- Making healthy choices, and encouraging their friends and families to do the same

### IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

### INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

### LONGER-TERM IMPACT

Young people who need us most, particularly those in most challenged neighborhoods, will reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens
More Examples....

Theoryofchange.org

Strive Network
Focusing Your Theory of Change

By Program Area

By Target Audience

At the Org Level
ToC Resources

Theoryofchange.org
[Project of ActKnowledge and Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change]
Information, examples, and online tool called “TOCO”

Grantcraft.org

Ssir.org
SSIR webinar: Theories of Change that Drive Learning and Improvement (2015)
Let’s Build One!

*Please refer to Theory of Change Worksheet.*
Moving Into Measurement: Indicators
Common Oversight

Jumping straight from ToC to Tools.....
Skipping an important step: INDICATORS
What are Indicators? And Why Create Them?
What – Indicator Definition

The **information (data)** you will collect (framed as a # or %) to show progress towards the outcomes in your Theory of Change

*Aka:*
- **metric**
- **benchmark** (note: typically has target included, i.e. 75%)
- **measurable outcome**
Service Learning Example

**OUTCOME**

Students will increase their commitment to volunteering in the community

**INDICATORS**

• % of students who increase their number of volunteer hours

• % of students who find a new organization to volunteer with

• # of compelling stories of effective connection to the community
The Challenge with Indicators

• **Feels reductionist.** How can my work be boiled down to this one number or percent??

• **Feels unscientific.** How do I find the “right” indicator when there is no centralized database of NPO performance indicators??
What makes a “good” indicator?

• **Staff** “gut” reaction – strong emotional response to data or learning question

• **Board** requests for a piece of data

• Multiple **funders** asking for the data

• Relative **consistency** within a finding over 1-2 years

• Ability to **benchmark** against a larger population

*Designing indicators is an art, not a science... it often takes 2-3 years to get this right!*
Things to Remember

1. Frame as a # or %
2. Not too many: 1-2 indicators/outcome
3. Measure what is within your realm of control: Green box
Best Place to Focus Measurement

If we...  Strategies & Activities

Then...  Immediate Outcomes

Which will lead to...  Intermediate Outcomes

Community or social change  Intended Impact

Then...
Helpful Resources for Indicators

**Performwell.org** (Partnership of Urban institute, Child Trends, Social Solutions)
• Focus on human service organizations

**Strivetogther.org**
• Focus on cradle to career/ systems change

**Animatedemocracy.org**
• Focus on arts and civic organizations

**hfrp.org** (Harvard Family Research Program)
• Focus on OST programming
Indicator Case Study

Please read indicators case study, and work with a partner to complete this exercise.
Data Collection:
Tips, Tools, and Tech
Tips for Data Collection
## Start with your Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data Collection Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants will gain knowledge needed to achieve goals through program X</td>
<td># who pass assessment of knowledge taught through program X</td>
<td>Pre/Post-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants will improve attitude and motivation towards goals of program X</td>
<td># who demonstrate improved attitude and motivation</td>
<td>Participant survey (self report); Direct observation by staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants will improve academic achievement</td>
<td># who perceive improved educational achievement</td>
<td>Participant survey (self report)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Make a Plan: What, How, When, Who

**WHAT**
- Priority outcomes & indicators to track

**HOW**
- Tools for collecting this data

**WHEN**
- Timeframe for data collection & analysis

**WHO**
- Individuals responsible

EVALUATION DESIGN
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Reviewed On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set goals &amp; make action plans; Access safe new places; Practice new skills; Manage daily activities</td>
<td>100% of participants will successfully met a personal goal in one Full Life Futures area, including:</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Aggregate data from tracking tool</td>
<td>Analyze tracking tool twice yearly (July, Dec)</td>
<td>Sean will analyze tracking tool data, Program Team will review results at year's end, then share findings with staff and board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be engaged with their tutors [and improve their life skills]</td>
<td>90% of participants will have two or more sessions with their tutors per week; 75% of tutors can report a story of meaningful change</td>
<td>Participants, tutors</td>
<td>Electronic timesheet data, pre-ASC meeting survey</td>
<td>Bi-monthly once electronic timesheets are available, survey annually</td>
<td>Cynthia/Karen will gather timesheet data, Program Team will oversee surveys</td>
<td>Program Team will review surveys at year’s end, Timesheet data reviewed every two weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Keep it Manageable

Consider a “rolling evaluation”
Streamline data collection efforts
Know when to hire an external evaluator
Tools
5 Basic Tools

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Direct Observation
- Record Analysis
A Few Survey Tips

Beware Survey Pitfalls:

- Loaded/Double-headed questions
- Too many questions
- Terms that are unfamiliar to your audience
- Forgetting the upfront “demographic” data

Survey Monkey is a great, cost-effective data collection & analysis tool
Your Secret Weapons

PerformWell.org
Outcomes, Indicators, Surveys/Assessments

National Student Clearinghouse
Post-Secondary Data Tracking Services

Tools and Resources for Assessing Social Impact
Database of over 150 tools
Technology to Support Evaluation
Where are your challenges?

Storage?

Reporting and communicating?

Integrating with other software at your organization?

Other?
Technology Resources & Solutions

*Please refer to handout...*

Any experiences with these?
Recs or feedback to share?
Presenting:
Tawanna Brown, Deputy Director
Strategies for Successful Implementation
Organizational Readiness Assessment

Please complete handout and discuss:

1. How did you rate your organization? Did this surprise you?
2. What challenges do you see in rolling out (or deepening) evaluation practices at your organization?
3. What resources or steps will you need to take?
Learning Org: KEY Ingredients

- Leadership Buy-in
- Learning Orientation
- Broad stakeholder engagement
- Staff point-person
Staff Engagement Strategies

- Clear, consistent messages re: program evaluation from leadership
- Internal structures (meetings, feedback loops) for engaging with evaluation data
Evaluation Working Group

• 6-8 cross-organizational stakeholders: staff, board, community members, etc.

• Meet regularly throughout evaluation cycle

• Champions and frontline for evaluation work; vet and ensure shared responsibility
Bookends: Facilitating a ToC Discussion

Start with Blue Box/ Orange Box Conversation

**Impact** – What does success look like for each of your constituent groups?

**Strategies** – What are the core strategies and activities critical to this work?
Bookends: Making Meaning of Data

Interpreting Findings

• To what extent are you making progress towards your outcomes?
• Do the findings resonate with program staff’s gut instincts about the program?
• What are the strategic implications of this data for your programming? Are there elements to change or build out?
• What did you learn about the quality or effectiveness of your programs (i.e. process)?

Note: If the data does not seem “right”, you may want to ask a different data source (i.e. parents or teachers vs. youth)?
Working with Your Board

• Provide board education around evaluation

• Board members participate in evaluation working group (best if you bring your “squeaky wheel”)

• Engage board with data at the “right level”
## Board Reporting Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator (and corresponding outcome)</th>
<th>Actual Results</th>
<th>Strategic Questions or Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify your indicator and the outcome that you are hoping to accomplish</td>
<td>Highlight the actual results (i.e. 75% of participants reporting increased awareness).</td>
<td>Consider what this information is telling you: How might you change your program strategy or activities in the future? If the data is unclear or not telling you very much, you might consider selecting a different indicator, or asking the question differently, in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tip for Working with Funders: Use ToC

- **Use your Theory of Change** in proposals and program reports

- **Don’t be afraid to push back** if funders ask for different outcomes; consider asking them about their own ToC

- **Streamline reporting** (when possible) by providing consistent outcomes/indicators to different funders
Taking This Home

• What evaluation tips, tools or practices resonated most with you today?

• Do you plan to take anything we learned home today, and try it out at your organization?

• What do you expect to be challenging? What additional resources will you need?
Thank You!

Susie Quern Pratt & Jenny Ellis Richards
Principals, Pratt Richards Group
www.prattrichardsgroup.com