



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA

FONDATIONS
COMMUNAUTAIRES
DU CANADA

BUILDING COMMUNITY VITALITY TOOLKIT

MEASURING YOUR PROGRESS:

Assessment, Measurement and Evaluation

To help you find what you need faster, the 20 resources listed in the Measurement section of “Resources You Can Use” are listed in this document according to four categories:

Four Categories:

1. “How To” – practical, useful tools to get you started in measuring or assessing a project, a program or a piece of work
2. Foundations sharing their experiences with evaluation – many foundations have deep and wide experience with trying – some with success, others less so – to measure our impact. These resources offer the benefit of what they are learning about how to continually improve our ability to measure and assess the impact of what we do
3. Different Approaches to Evaluation – there are different types of evaluation: outcomes measurement, matrix evaluation, etc. These resources provide you with different ways of measuring what you do, depending on what you are doing, how, and the capacity you have for measurement.
4. Reflections on measurement and evaluation – some of the leading thinking about how we can improve measurement of impact and improving our ability to assess what we do

Start here if this is new



Using this icon, we have identified the resources we think are the best ones to start with, if this process is new for you.

1. “How To”: practical, useful tools to get you started in measuring or assessing a project, a program or a piece of work:

- » Hanleybrown, Fay. Winter 2003. **The Foundation Performance Dashboard - Vital Statistics for Social Impact**. FSG Perspectives on Corporate Philanthropy. Foundation Strategy Group.
<http://www.fsg-impact.org/ideas/section/273>

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A way for foundations to develop a clear, concise, cost-effective, and integrated picture of foundation performance.

- » Grantcraft, 2006. **Mapping Change: Using a Theory of Change to Guide Planning and Evaluation**. GrantCraft.
<http://www.grantcraft.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageID=808>

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"What are we doing, and why do we think it's going to make a difference? Are we being effective?" Grant makers ask evaluation questions like these of their grantees and themselves. This brief guide explains why grant makers use theories of change to guide their questioning, unearth assumptions that underlie their work, establish common language, and develop strong action plans. Contributors to the guide also describe how a theory of change sets the stage for evaluation by clarifying goals, strategies, and milestones.

- » Saul, Jason. 2004. **Benchmarking for Nonprofits: How to Measure, Manage, and Improve Performance**. Fieldstone Alliance.
<http://www.fieldstonealliance.org/productdetails.cfm?SKU=069431>

AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE ONLINE

Includes exercises and worksheets that illustrate the process. With bibliographical references.

2. Foundations sharing their experiences with evaluation:

- Kramer, Mark, Rebecca Graves, Jason Hirschhorn, & Leigh Fiske. 2007. **[From Insight to Action: New Directions in Foundation Evaluation](http://fsg-impact.org/app/content/ideas/pdf/488_FromInsighttoAction_NewDirectionsinFoundationEvaluation.pdf)**. Boston, MA: FSG Social Impact Advisors.
http://fsg-impact.org/app/content/ideas/pdf/488_FromInsighttoAction_NewDirectionsinFoundationEvaluation.pdf

Based on nearly 100 interviews with foundation leaders and evaluation experts, this report identifies a fundamental transition in the way grantmakers use evaluation. The study was funded by the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, and conducted in collaboration with the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers. The authors determined that foundations are moving beyond traditional third-party outcome studies toward more performance-centered approaches that can provide current information and lead to realistic practices, based on actual examples.

- Peterson, Kyle, Laura Loker, & Matthew Clark. 2003. **[When Success is Only an Intermediate Goal](http://www.fsg-impact.org/app/content/ideas/pdf/358_WhenSuccessisOnlyanIntermediateGoal.pdf)**. Foundation Strategy Group.

http://www.fsg-impact.org/app/content/ideas/pdf/358_WhenSuccessisOnlyanIntermediateGoal.pdf

How Swiss-based Medicines for Malaria Ventures developed a new approach to performance measurement.

- Graves, Rebecca & Henry Culbreath. 2003. **[The Evaluation of Capacity Building Grants - Key Learnings for a Successful Program](http://www.fsg-impact.org/ideas/pdf/359_TheEvaluationofCapacityBuildingGrants-KeyLearningsforaSuccessfulProgram.pdf)**. Foundation Strategy Group.

http://www.fsg-impact.org/ideas/pdf/359_TheEvaluationofCapacityBuildingGrants-KeyLearningsforaSuccessfulProgram.pdf

A review of FSG's work with the Maine Community Foundation to assess the effectiveness of its capacity building efforts.

- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. 1998. **[Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook: Philosophy and Expectations](http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub770.pdf)**. Battle Creek, MI: W. K. Kellogg Foundation.
<http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub770.pdf>

Part one outlines the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's expectations for evaluations by grantees, and part two delineates the steps in project evaluations, and provides examples. With bibliographic references.

→Backer, Thomas E. 1999. **Innovation in Context: New Foundation Approaches to Evaluation, Collaboration and Best Practices.** Encino, CA: Human Interaction Research Institute.

Offers descriptions of several innovative ways foundations are approaching evaluation, which include involving the community, collaboration between larger and smaller philanthropies, and establishment of best practices models.

- » Jagpal, Niki. 2009. **Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best: Benchmarks to Assess and Enhance Grantmaker Impact.** National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.
http://www.ncrp.org/files/paib-fulldoc_lowres.pdf

The Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best: Benchmarks to Assess and Enhance Grantmaker Impact is the first ever set of measurable guidelines that will help foundations and other institutional grantmakers operate ethically and maximize the impact of their dollars. It attempts to answer the questions: What differentiates an exemplary foundation from the rest of its peers? What can foundations do to improve its relevance to nonprofits, the economically and socially underserved Americans and society as a whole?

3. Different Approaches to Evaluation:

- » McGarvey, Craig. 2006. **[Making Measures Work for You: Outcomes and Evaluation](#).** New York, NY: GrantCraft.
<http://www.grantcraft.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageID=835>

An outcomes-based approach to evaluation works, proponents say, because it uses straightforward metrics to assess actual impact. How else to know if the work you're supporting is leading to the desired changes? Other grant makers counter that outcomes measurement should be approached with care. Hasty assumptions or over-confidence in the idea that program impacts can be translated into hard data can skew not only the evaluation but the work itself. This guide looks at tensions that drive the debate about outcomes measurement, as well as common questions about its potential risks and rewards.

→Kramer, Mark. 2004. **The Evaluation Matrix - Perspectives on Community Foundations.** Foundation Strategy Group.
<http://www.fsg-impact.org/ideas/section/273>

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"Evaluation is one of the most confusing topics in philanthropy – in part because it embraces multiple definitions that are often jumbled together. Evaluation refers to at least three different kinds of measures, each of which can be assessed a three different levels – and for a community foundations, there is a fourth level relating to its donors. Combining these measures and levels produces a twelve-part matrix that shows more precisely some of evaluation's varied meanings."

→Peterson, Kyle, Marc Pfitzer, Laura Herman, Patty Russell, Mike Stamp, Mike, & David Zapol. 2007. **Toward a New Approach to Product Development Partnership (PDP) Performance Measurement**. Foundation Strategy Group.
<http://www.fsg-impact.org/ideas/section/273>

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Major corporations, philanthropic organizations, governments, and social sector organizations have joined forces to develop health products for neglected diseases. At the center of these multi-sector collaborations are innovative organizations, known as product development partnerships (PDPs). With funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, FSG completed a comprehensive review of the state of performance measurement among PDPs and developed a working paper to establish a common approach to performance measurement among PDPs and donors.

→Vibrant Communities. 2005. **[Learning and Evaluation for Trail Builder Initiatives in Vibrant Communities](http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/TBpackage.pdf)**. Vibrant Communities.
<http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/TBpackage.pdf>

Learning and evaluation is one of the key components of the Vibrant Communities initiative. The twin goals of the learning and evaluation process are to ensure accountability and to identify lessons that help build the capacity of Vibrant Communities' partners and others interested in the work of community-based poverty reduction. A Learning and Evaluation Working Group was formed to guide the Trail Builder learning and evaluation process. A draft Guide to Trail Builder Reporting and Data Collection has been approved by the Working Group. It will serve as a foundation for the Trail Builder learning and evaluation process and will be revised periodically as the work evolves.

→Cox, Phillip, Sherry Kozak, Louise Griep, & Lisa Moffat. 2002. **[Splash and Ripple: Using Outcomes to Design and Guide Community Work](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/alt_formats/pacrb-dgapcr/pdf/finance/contribution/splash-ricochet-eng.pdf)**. Net Limited.
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/alt_formats/pacrb-dgapcr/pdf/finance/contribution/splash-ricochet-eng.pdf

An extended metaphor used to introduce the central ideas behind Outcome Measurement and involve people in outcome measurement framework techniques.

4. Reflections on measurement and evaluation:

→Kramer, Mark. 2005. **Measuring innovation: evaluation in the field of social entrepreneurship**. Palo Alto, CA: Skoll Foundation.
[http://www.skollfoundation.org/media/skoll_docs/Measuring%20Innovation%20\(Skoll%20and%20FSG%20Report\).pdf](http://www.skollfoundation.org/media/skoll_docs/Measuring%20Innovation%20(Skoll%20and%20FSG%20Report).pdf)

Based on interviews with funders, social entrepreneurs, and scholars, this report provides a portrait of this emerging field and an evaluation of performance that documents current practices. Kramer notes that the term "social entrepreneur" has at least three different definitions, but for purposes of this document, he presents this meaning: "a social entrepreneur is one who founded and leads an organization, whether for-profit or not, that is dedicated primarily to creating large scale, lasting, and systemic social change through the promulgation of new ideas, attitudes, and methodologies."

→Kania, John. Winter 2004. "**Benchmarking Philanthropy**". FSG Perspectives on Corporate Philanthropy. Foundation Strategy Group.

<http://www.fsg-impact.org/ideas/section/273>

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This article argues that benchmarking an organization's social impact against that of its peers is a powerful tool to justify activities.