

Building Evaluation Capacity Session 9

Evaluative Capacity



Anita M. Baker
Evaluation Services



Bruner Foundation
Rochester, New York

Indicators of Organizational Evaluation Capacity

- ✓ Internal Motivation
- ✓ Competence
- ✓ Mainstream Function
- ✓ Strategic Use of Evaluation Results
- ✓ Sufficient Quantity, Good Quality
- ✓ Availability of Resources

Adapted from the Evaluation Capacity Assessment Instrument ECAI



Bruner Foundation
Rochester, New York

Anita M. Baker, *Evaluation Services*

1

Organizational Evaluation Capacity What Do You Look For?

- ✓ Internal Motivation
 - Do organization leaders want to do evaluation?
 - Do organization staff want to do evaluation?
 - Does the organization board want evaluation done?



Bruner Foundation
Rochester, New York

Anita M. Baker, *Evaluation Services*

2

Organizational Evaluation Capacity What Do You Look For?

- ✓ Internal Motivation
- ✓ Competence
- Do organization leaders and/or staff know how to do evaluation?



What is Needed to Conduct Evaluation?

- Specify evaluation questions
- Develop an evaluation design
 - Apply evaluation logic
 - Collect and analyze data
 - Summarize and share findings



Evaluation Questions . . .

- ✓ Focus and drive the evaluation.
- ✓ Should be carefully specified and agreed upon in advance of other evaluation work.
- ✓ Generally represent a critical subset of information that is desired.

Evaluation Questions: Criteria

- ▶ It is possible to obtain data to address the questions.
- ▶ There is more than one possible “answer” to the question.
- ▶ The information to address the questions is wanted and needed.
- ▶ It is known how resulting information will be used internally (and externally).
- ▶ The questions are aimed at changeable aspects of activity.

Good Evaluation Designs Include the Following

- ✓ Summary Information about the program
- ✓ The questions to be addressed by the evaluation
- ✓ The data collection strategies that will be used
- ✓ The individuals who will undertake the activities
- ✓ When the activities will be conducted
- ✓ The products of the evaluation (who will receive them and how they should be used)
- ✓ Projected costs to do the evaluation



Program Planning Includes Evaluation

1. Think about the results you want.
2. Decide what strategies will help you achieve those results?
3. Think about what inputs you need to conduct the desired strategies.
4. Specify outcomes, identify indicators and targets.**

DECIDE IN ADVANCE,
HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH

5. Document how services are delivered.
6. Evaluate actual results.



**use caution with these terms



Outcomes

Changes in attitudes, behavior, skills, knowledge, condition or status.

Must be:

- ▶ Realistic and attainable
- ▶ Related to core business
- ▶ Within program's sphere of influence



Indicators

Specific, measurable characteristics or changes that represent achievement of an outcome.

Indicators are:

- ▶ Directly related to the outcome, help define it
- ▶ Specific, measurable, observable, seen, heard, or read



Targets

Specify the amount or level of outcome attainment expected, hoped for or required.

Targets can be set:

- ▶ Relative to external standards (when available)
- ▶ Past performance/similar programs
- ▶ Professional hunches



Evaluation Strategy Clarification

- ▶ All Evaluations Are:
 - ➔ Partly social
 - ➔ Partly political
 - ➔ Partly technical
- ▶ Both qualitative and quantitative data can be collected and used and both are valuable.
- ▶ There are multiple ways to address most evaluation needs.
- ▶ Different evaluation needs call for different designs, data and data collection strategies.



How are evaluation data collected?

- ▶ Surveys
 - ▶ Interviews
 - ▶ Observations
 - ▶ Record Reviews
- ▶ All have limitations and benefits
 - ▶ All can be used to collect either quantitative or qualitative data
 - ▶ Require preparation on the front end:
 - Instrument Development and testing
 - Administration plan development
 - Analysis plan development

What Happens After Data are Collected?

1. Data are analyzed, results are summarized.
2. Findings must be converted into a format that can be shared with others.
3. Action steps should be developed from findings

Step 3 moves evaluation from perfunctory compliance into the realm of usefulness.

"Now that we know _____ we will do _____."

Organizational Evaluation Capacity What Do You Look For?

- ✓ Internal Motivation
- ✓ Competence
- ✓ Mainstream Function
- Who actually does evaluation?
 - All/any staff
 - Dedicated staff
 - External consultants
- Does leadership support or hinder evaluation?



Supportive Evaluation Environments

1. Promote evaluation capacity
 - reward learning
 - provide staff time and resources to engage in evaluation
 - conduct data collection and analysis
 - use data

Adapted from Kramer, 2007



Supportive Evaluation Environments

2. Directly engage key decision-makers
3. Involve multiple evaluation stakeholders
4. Undertake manageable and straightforward evaluation
5. Use targeted and compelling methods to communicate results

Adapted from Kramer, 2007



Bruner Foundation
Rochester, New York

Anita M. Baker, *Evaluation Services*

17

Organizational Evaluation Capacity What Do You Look For?

- ✓ Internal Motivation
 - ✓ Competence
 - ✓ Mainstream Function
 - ✓ Strategic Use of Evaluation Results
- Does evaluation inform organizational decisions?



Bruner Foundation
Rochester, New York

Anita M. Baker, *Evaluation Services*

18

Organizations with Evaluation Capacity Use Evaluation Results:

1. To report to funders.
2. To improve services or programs.
3. To get additional funding.
4. To design ongoing monitoring processes.
5. To assess implementation of a program.
6. To assess quality of a program.
7. To improve outreach.
8. To make informed decisions.
9. To train staff.
10. To eliminate un-needed services or programs.



Organizational Evaluation Capacity What Do You Look For?

- ✓ Internal Motivation
- ✓ Competence
- ✓ Mainstream Function
- ✓ Strategic Use of Evaluation Results
- ✓ Sufficient Quantity, Good Quality
 - Is evaluation done according to an organizational plan?
 - Are evaluations rigorous?



Increasing Rigor in Program Evaluation

- Mixed methodologies
- Multiple sources of data
- Multiple points in time



Organizational Evaluation Capacity What Do You Look For?

- ✓ Internal Motivation
- ✓ Competence
- ✓ Mainstream Function
- ✓ Strategic Use of Evaluation Results
- ✓ Sufficient Quantity, Good Quality
- ✓ Evaluation resources
 - Are there dedicated funds for evaluation?
 - Are there reference materials available?
 - Is there access to Technical Assistance?



What Should Thoughtful Organizations Do to Obtain Funds for Evaluation?

- ▶ Usually the cost to do good evaluation is equivalent to about 10 - 15% of the costs to operate the program effectively.
- ▶ Write evaluation costs into project development budgets. Use the money accordingly.
- ▶ Set aside funds for evaluation on a percentage basis into the organizational budget. Develop and follow a plan to use these funds.
- ▶ Obtain funds solely for the purpose of evaluation.
- ▶ Consider sharing and/or pooling resources.

Things Agencies* Should Avoid When Commissioning Evaluation Projects

- ▶ Assuming there is a standard, fixed evaluation cost regardless of program size or complexity
- ▶ Funding an evaluation that does not clarify how evaluation funds will be used
- ▶ Agreeing to fund an evaluation design that they do not understand
- ▶ Agreeing to fund an evaluation where disbursement is not attached to deliverables

More Things Agencies* Should Avoid When Working on Evaluation Projects

- ▶ Commissioning evaluation on a timetable that is inappropriate for the subject of the evaluation
- ▶ Commissioning an overly complicated evaluation design
- ▶ Commissioning an evaluation design with insufficient stakeholder involvement in its development

Working Definition of Program Evaluation

The practice of evaluation involves thoughtful, systematic collection and analysis of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs, for use by specific to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness, and make decisions.

Evaluation Capacity



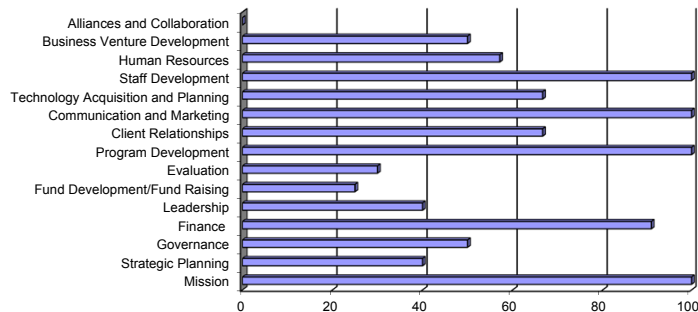
The ability to do evaluation.

Involves proficiency in:

1. asking questions
2. determining data required to answer questions
3. collecting data using appropriate strategies
4. analyzing collected data and summarizing findings
5. using and sharing findings

Evaluative Thinking

Evaluative Thinking is a type of reflective practice that uses the five key evaluation skills in areas other than programs or initiatives.



What Are Key Components of Evaluative Thinking?

1. Asking questions of substance
2. Determining data needed to address questions
3. Gathering appropriate data in systematic ways
4. Analyzing data and sharing results
5. Developing strategies to act on findings



Bruner Foundation
Rochester, New York

Anita M. Baker, *Evaluation Services*

29

Evaluative Capacity

The combination of evaluation skills and evaluative thinking.

Evaluative Capacity requires a commitment to doing and using evaluation in programs, strategies, and initiatives *as well as* a commitment to using those same skills in other aspects of organization work.



Bruner Foundation
Rochester, New York

Anita M. Baker, *Evaluation Services*

Capacity Building



30

Organizations that Regularly use Evaluative Thinking Will . . .

- ▶ Think carefully about developing and assessing programs/other actions.
- ▶ Incorporate analytical findings into planning.
- ▶ Involve significant others in planning.
- ▶ Develop written, logical plans.
- ▶ Follow plans.
- ▶ Have strategies in place to modify plans



Organizations that Regularly use Evaluative Thinking Will Also . . .

- ▶ Regularly conduct evaluations.
- ▶ Involve multiple stakeholders in developing evaluation designs, collecting and analyzing data.
- ▶ Share results of evaluations with multiple stakeholders.
- ▶ Use results of program evaluation to drive continuous improvement of programs and to modify policies and procedures.



Lastly, Organizations that Regularly Use Evaluative Thinking Will . . .

- ▶ Insure that there are key staff with evaluation expertise, whose jobs or components of their jobs are dedicated to evaluation.
- ▶ Hire evaluation consultants when needed.
- ▶ Provide or obtain training in evaluation for program staff
 - current
 - well-delivered
 - provided for enough staff members to insure that evaluation use is a standard practice



Using the Bruner Foundation Evaluative Thinking Assessment Tool

- Created in 2005 to assess the extent to which evaluative thinking is present in various organizational capacity areas.
- Grew out of the Bruner Foundation's Evaluative Thinking in Organizations Study (ETHOS).
[ETHOS Study](#)
- Automated in 2007 and updated in 2010-11 after additional study.
[Evaluative Thinking Assessment](#)



What Organizational Capacity Areas Does the Bruner Foundation Evaluative Thinking Tool Address?

- ✓ Mission
- ✓ Strategic Planning
- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Fund Development
- ✓ Evaluation
- ✓ Client Relationships
- ✓ Program Development
- ✓ Communication & Marketing
- ✓ Technology Acquisition & Training
- ✓ Staff Development
- ✓ Human Resources
- ✓ Alliances/Collaborations
- ✓ Business Development

The Bruner Foundation Evaluative Thinking Assessment Tool

ORGANIZATION MISSION		Assessment	Priority
a.	The mission statement is specific enough to provide a basis for developing goals and objectives	1	
b.	The mission is reviewed and revised on a scheduled basis (e.g. annually) with input from key stakeholders as appropriate	0	
c.	The organization regularly assesses compatibility between programs and mission	1	
d.	The organization acts on the findings of compatibility assessments (in other words, if a program is not compatible with the mission, it is changed or discontinued)	0	
Comments:			

Please proceed to the next Worksheet

Agree, Enter 1
Disagree, Enter 0
Don't know, leave it blank

1. This is a high priority
2. This is a lower priority
3. This is not a priority at all

Evaluative Thinking Assessment Tool Summary Report, by Capacity Area

	Organizational Capacity Area	Capacity Score*	Action Planning**
1	Mission	100	No action required in this area
2	Strategic Planning	40	Action required see priorities
3	Governance	50	Action suggested see priorities
4	Finance	91	No action required in this area
5	Leadership	40	Action required see priorities
6	Fund Development/Fund Raising	25	Action required see priorities
7	Evaluation	30	Action required see priorities
8	Program Development	100	No action required in this area
9	Client Relationships	67	No action required in this area
10	Communication and Marketing	100	No action required in this area
11	Technology Acquisition and Planning	67	No action required in this area
12	Staff Development	100	No action required in this area
13	Human Resources	57	Action suggested see priorities
14	Business Venture Development	50	Action suggested see priorities
15	Alliances and Collaboration	0	Action required see priorities



Evaluative Thinking Assessment Tool Summary Report Score Chart

Evaluative Thinking Scores

