Learning and Accountability: Evaluating CFS Hub Projects, 2013-2014

A Webinar

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Carleton University
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FSC
Food Secure Canada

Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement

Part I - Evaluation: An Overview

* What is evaluation?
* What is monitoring?
* What types of evaluations can be undertaken?
* What do evaluations evaluate?
* Participatory monitoring and evaluation
* Results chain
* Results grid
* Mixed methods for data collection and analysis

What is Evaluation?

* “the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or program.” (OECD, 2000)

* Evaluation is undertaken during an intervention or after its completion, on a periodic basis, with a focus on assessing its short-term outputs, medium-term outcomes and long-term impacts.

What is Monitoring?

* Continuous assessment of the inputs, activities and outputs of an intervention, and provision of feedback to enable management to adapt and improve the intervention as it proceeds.

What Types of Evaluations Can Be Undertaken?

* *Formative:* Undertaken during an intervention, to improve performance and learning.
* *Summative:* Undertaken at the end of an intervention or phase, to determine the extent to which outcomes were produced.
* *Participatory:* Engages stakeholders in planning, implementing and taking action on the evaluation.
* *Impact:* Assesses the long-term results, positive and negative, intended and unintended, of an intervention.
* *Developmental:* Collaborative process supporting innovation and learning in emerging and complex interventions (Morra-Imas & Rist, 2009; Jackson, 2005; Quinn Patton, 2011).

What Do Evaluations Evaluate?

- *Relevance:* The extent to which an intervention is relevant to the needs of its primary stakeholders and its context.
- *Effectiveness:* The extent to which an intervention attains its objectives.
- *Efficiency:* The ratio of outputs (immediate results) in relation to inputs (costs), comparing alternative approaches.
- *Impact:* The long-term changes produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, positive or negative, intended or unintended.
- *Sustainability:* The extent to which the net benefits of an intervention are likely to continue after the intervention is completed, and their resilience to risk (Morra-Imas & Rist, 2009).

Results Chain

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Financial, human and material resources	**Tasks that transform inputs and outputs**	**Products and services produced / delivered**	**Behavioural or institutional changes, intended and unintended**	**Long-term, widespread improvements in society**

(Morra Imas & Rist, 2009; OECD, 2000)

Results Grid

LEVEL	TYPE		
	Output	Outcome	Impact
Macro (Policy)			
Meso (Institution)			
Micro (Community, Enterprise, Group, Household, Individual)			

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

* An approach to performance review in which stakeholders in an intervention (local citizens, policy makers, funding agencies, and non-governmental organizations) work together to decide how to assess progress, conduct data collection and analysis, and take action on their findings.

* The *primary stakeholders* in an intervention can co-direct the evaluation through a steering committee or working group, as well as participating in data collection and analysis (Jackson, 2005).

Mixed Methods: Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative Methods

* **Document, file and literature review**
* **Open-ended qualitative interviews with key persons**
* **Focus groups/community meetings**
* Participant observation/ethnography
* **Case studies**
* Organizational assessments/self-assessments
* Network and stakeholder analysis
* Policy influence analysis
* Social media analysis
* Outcome mapping
* **Most significant change**
* Social analysis system (SAS) tools
* Participatory rapid appraisal
* Stakeholder task forces/working groups
* Appreciative inquiry
* Gender-sensitive tools

Quantitative Methods

* Randomized clinical trials
* **Closed-ended quantitative (online) surveys**
* **Cost-benefit analysis (basic)**
* Econometric studies
* Social return on investment

Balancing Learning and Accountability

- Negotiating *shared outcomes* among stakeholders.
- Sharing new *evaluation knowledge* as a public good.
- Embedding processes that are *transparent, ethical and culturally-informed.*
- Amplifying *voice and choice* by the least powerful actors.
- Empowering *communities of practice* to share findings and dialogue on joint action (Rodin and MacPherson, 2012).

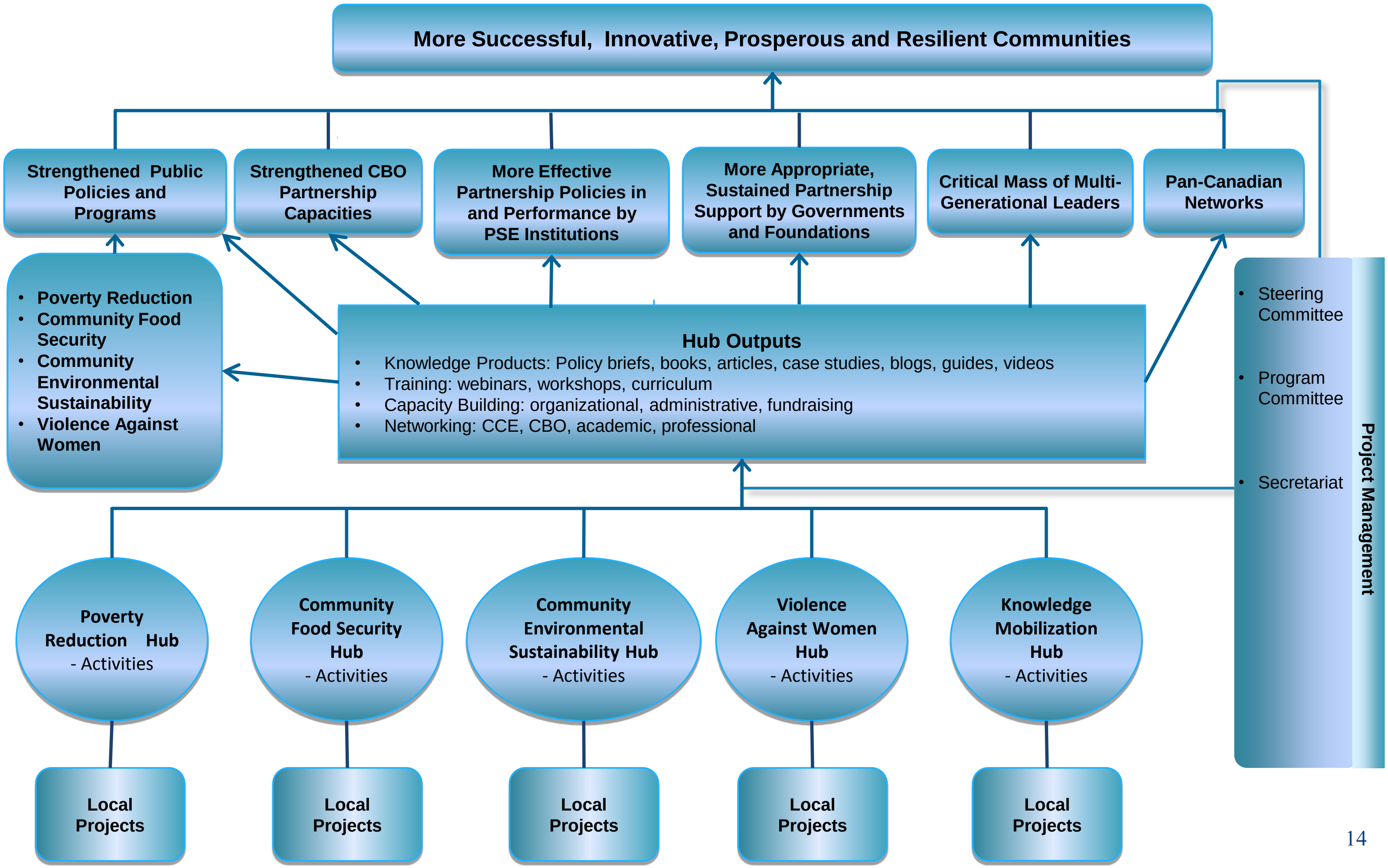
Part II – Theory of Change and Contribution Analysis

- What is *theory of change*?
- Example: The CFICE theory of change
- Interrogating the ToC in evaluations
- Theory of change worksheet
- What is *contribution analysis*?
- Six steps in contribution analysis

What is Theory of Change?

* *A model that specifies (usually visually) the underlying logic, assumptions, influences, causal linkages and expected outcomes of an intervention (policy, program, project)*
* Through the collection and analysis of performance data, this model can be tested against the actual process experienced, and results attained, by the intervention.
* "Blueprint of the building blocks needed to achieve the long-term goals of a social change initiative."
* Also known as "program theory" (Funnell and Rogers, 2011; Rogers, 2008, Weiss, 1998).

CFICE Theory of Change



Interrogating the Theory of Change in Evaluations: Key Questions (“TWE-ET”!)

* To what extent is the theory of change valid, appropriate, relevant and accurate?
* TWE does change actually occur in the ways the intervention proponents expected?
* TWE are there other change dynamics or pathways at work?
* TWE are there unforeseen actors and factors that promote or constrain change?
* TWE are there obstacles that stymie—that render ineffective—the theory of change?
* How can those obstacles be minimized or eliminated altogether?

Theory of Change Worksheet

Source: Kellogg Foundation 2004

What is Contribution Analysis?

* An approach to assessing causal questions and inferring causality in interventions that have been completed.
* Can and should be used in conjunction with an articulated theory of change; it helps to confirm or revise the ToC.
* Addresses the attribution issue by building a “contribution story,” and subjecting that story to critical analysis.
* Best used in assessing downstream impacts

  (Mayne, 2008; *Better Evaluation*, 2012).

Six Steps in Contribution Analysis

1. Set out the attribution problem to be addressed.
2. Develop the intervention’s theory of change and the risks to it.
3. Gather the existing evidence on the theory of change.
4. Assemble and assess the contribution, or performance, story, and challenges to it.
5. Seek out additional evidence.
6. Revise, and where additional evidence permits, strengthen the contribution story.

Part III – Evaluating CFS Hub Projects: Twelve Steps

1. Clarify links to CFICE research *sub-questions*.
2. Construct and interrogate *theory of change*.
3. Engage *stakeholders* in design and implementation.
4. Build a list of 10-15 key *questions*.
5. Identify 10-15 key *indicators*.
6. Select appropriate data collection *methods*.
7. Develop a feasible *work plan* for the evaluation.
8. Prepare *ethics* application.
9. Upon ethics approval, *collect* data.
10. *Analyze* data.
11. Prepare draft and final *reports*.
12. *Present* findings and lessons.

Clarify Links to CFICE Research Question and Sub-Questions

* *Overall:* How can community-campus engagement (CCE) be designed and implemented to maximize value for non-profit community-based organizations?
* *Sub-Questions:*
  * Scale and replication
  * CBO definition, evaluation and use of CCE
  * CBO control or shared control of the process
  * University governance, evaluation, feedback, course design
  * Measuring impacts for CBOs
  * Ethical issues

Apply Theory of Change to CFS Hub Projects

* Level 1:To the *overall non-profit intervention, organization or network* within which the community-campus partnership/CCE has been formed.

* **Level 2: To the *community-campus project/partnership/CCE* itself. *This is the primary focus of the evaluation exercise.***

* Interaction between L1 and L2: To the *contribution* of the partnership to the goals of the non-profit organization and other features of that *relationship.*

Interrogate the Theory of Change

Key Questions for the Theory of Change

* TWE was there an explicit/implicit ToC?
* TWE was the ToC valid, appropriate, relevant, accurate?
* **How did the partners judge success – what were their indicators?**
* **TWE did change occur in the ways proponents/partners expected?**
* **TWE were there other change dynamics/pathways?**
* **TWE were there unforeseen actors and factors?**
* **TWE were there obstacles that rendered the ToC ineffective?**
* How could those obstacles have been minimized or eliminated altogether?
* **What other lessons, insights or issues arose from this partnership?**

Engage Stakeholders

* *Clarify* roles of Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators, CFS Hub and other actors.
* *Establish* evaluation committee, working group or project team comprising representatives of key stakeholder groups (non-profit partners, policymakers, scholars, students, etc.).
* *Train* RAs and other personnel in data gathering and collection techniques.
* Submit draft reports to committee/working group/project team for *review and comment*.
* Facilitate stakeholder discussion on *action* arising from the findings and recommendations of the evaluation.

Select Appropriate Methods

* Document, file and literature review.
* 10-15 Open-ended qualitative interviews with key persons (interview protocol with10-15 questions, clear sampling strategy, consent form).
* Online surveys (20-30 respondents).
* 2-3 focus groups/community meetings.
* 1-2 case studies of significant/innovative results.
* Participant observation at 2-3 events/activities.
* Basic cost and benefit analysis (cash, in-kind).
* Optional: Most Significant Change, SAS2, SROI.

Indicators I

Results Grid: Output Indicators

LEVEL	TYPE		
	Output	Outcome	Impact
Macro (Policy)	#, type of meetings held #, type of participants #, type of food-security policies reviewed #, type of reports, papers, blogs produced		
Meso (Institution)	#, type of partnership/network meetings held #, type of participants #, type of institutional practices and systems reviewed #, type of visits to partnership website(s)		
Micro (Community, Enterprise, Group, Household, Individual)	#, type of student RA assignments completed #, type of blog postings, other social media #, type of participants engaged #, type of participants trained		

Indicators - II

Results Grid: Outcome Indicators

LEVEL	TYPE		
	Output	Outcome	Impact
Macro (Policy)		• Food-security policies critiqued/developed # affiliation of downloads of policy documents	
Meso (Institution)		• Collaboration networks strengthened • Partnerships started/developed • Cash, in-kind contributions to partnership, versus costs • Institutional policies, practices and systems created/improved • Programs/projects designed/implemented/monitored • Services and products delivered • Additional resources obtained # affiliation of downloads of organizational outputs	
Micro (Community, Enterprise, Group, Household, Individual)		• Individual knowledge and skills gained • New responsibilities taken on by participants • Post-project employment by participants	

Indicators -III

Results Grid: Impact Indicators

LEVEL	TYPE		
	Output	Outcome	Impact
Macro (Policy)			• Food-security policies adopted/adapted by governments
Meso (Institution)			• Strengthened networks/partnerships take on new initiatives • Institutional partnership policies are adopted/adapted
Micro (Community, Enterprise, Group, Household, Individual)			• Citizen access to healthy, local, affordable food increased • Citizen access to democratic decision-making on food expanded

Develop Work Plan

* Project summary.
* Links to CFICE questions.
* Data collection tools/methods.
* Participant/stakeholder involvement.
* Ethical issues in interviews, focus groups, surveys.
* Data storage and access.
* Responsibilities for collecting/analyzing data.
* Expected outputs and audiences.
* Other ethics approval processes.
* Project timeline.
* Updated budget.

What is CFICE Seeking from the CFS Project Evaluations?

- Your findings, insights and recommendations with respect to our *research question and selected sub-questions. Final reports should be 10-15 pages.*
- *Quotes* from interviewees and focus-group participants that will give texture to and humanize the analysis.
- Quantitative information on the *cash and in-kind* contributions (the value of volunteer and/or staff time; use of facilities and equipment, etc.) to the partnership/CCE.
- Documentation of medium-term *outcomes* and longer-term *impacts* of the project/partnership/CCE.

Conclusion

* Evaluation seeks to achieve both learning and accountability at the same time.
* Stakeholder engagement and theory of change are useful strategies to achieve these objectives efficiently.
* The CFS Hub and the CFICE Secretariat are available to support your efforts in evaluation.
* Thanks for your participation in this webinar!

Resources

* Better Evaluation Website www.betterevaluation.org

* Canadian Evaluation Society www.evaluationcanada.ca

* The readings cited here are available on request.