

Working With You to Build Legacies in Your Community



Evaluation Process and Final Report Guide

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EVALUATION INTRODUCTION

Vancouver Foundation supports innovative projects. When we award grants, we hope for success and encourage you to celebrate them. We also realize that things do not always go according to plan. We want to encourage you, and the others involved and affected by your project, to think and talk about your work. We hope that you will take the time to learn from what went right as well as the things that proved challenging and share that experience with us.

We believe that every project has strengths and insights that can be shared with other organizations in the not-for-profit sector. Writing down your experience as a final report will not only assist your future staff and board members but will also help you and us to share your stories with others who want to do similar work.

To help you with this, we have prepared the accompanying material, checklists, and resource guide to help you in planning and reporting. The guide is intentionally brief, simple, and general. Some parts may not be relevant to your project. Evaluation does not have to be complicated or expensive, but it does require careful thought and planning by the people with the knowledge and expertise – you.

Statistical information may be useful, but it is unlikely to reveal whether your project made a difference to someone's life. Words and numbers are both necessary to tell different aspects of your project's story.

We are interested in knowing what you did and how you did it. We are interested in finding out how the work that you have done has changed people's lives, has improved your ability to serve your community, and has made your organization a better place to work or volunteer. We want to know if we helped you accomplish your goals and if benefit will continue to be felt in your community. We want to hear your stories.

Evaluation is a process of assessing the results achieved by a project and using this information to draw useful lessons for the future

CHECKLIST

Vancouver Foundation offers the following checklist to help you prepare a final report on your project.

You may wish to follow this outline, or you may be required to prepare a report in a specific format for another funder. If this is the case, we will accept a copy of such a report since we do not want to add to your administrative burden. We suggest that you review this checklist and include relevant details. Submission of the report in point form is perfectly acceptable.

As demand for funding is extremely high we will not consider another request for funding until a final report has been submitted.

A 'summative' evaluation summarizes what has taken place after the fact.

A 'formative' evaluation allows for examination as the project progresses and creates a process for people involved to give input and make changes as it goes along.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Results/Achievements

- What worked and what didn't?
- To what extent did you meet the goals and objectives stated in your original funding applications/s and planning documents?
- What were the intended and the unintended results?
- What has changed as a result of the project?
- Did you alter the original objectives and activities as the project evolved?

Effect on community/organization

- What effect has the project had on the community? On your own organization?
- What can your group do better now than it could before?
- How did the project relate to your organization's long-term plans? Has the project advanced your organization's overall mission and goals?
- How will you use the project results?
- Have project participants become active in other aspects of the organization's operations (e.g. Board or advisory council members, program volunteers)?

Target group

- Did the project reach the people it was intended to serve?

Inclusiveness

- Were different points of view welcome in the planning and decision-making process?
- Did the project encourage the full participation of people from diverse backgrounds and ability levels? Did participants reflect the diversity of the community?
- Were materials and processes culturally appropriate, sensitive and accessible to all communities served?

Factors influencing outcomes

- What factors influenced the project in a positive way (supporting factors)? What were the limiting factors?
- If the project was not able to meet one or several objectives, why not? What happened?
- Was the project developed in close consultation with the community?
- What methods of outreach were used?
- If the project had a training component, how effective was it? How do you know?

Collaboration/partnership

- If it was a project undertaken in partnership with other community organizations, what were the opportunities and challenges of working this way?
- Were there any inter-organizational problems? If so, what were they and how were they resolved?

Innovation/demonstration

- Did the innovative features of this project contribute to its success?
- If you undertook an experimental or alternative approach, what did you discover?
- If this was a demonstration project to test a new method of service delivery, would you recommend that other groups replicate this model?

Publicity/media

- Did the project receive any media coverage?
- If there were difficulties in publicizing the project, how could they be overcome in future?
- Were Vancouver Foundation and/or other funders acknowledged in the media?

Evaluation process

- What approach and methods did you use to evaluate the project? Were you satisfied with the process?
- How many respondents did you target? How many actually responded? Was the response rate sufficient for you to draw valid conclusions?
- Did you incorporate any creative or unusual techniques (e.g. Children conducting interviews, etc.)?
- If you collected data from individuals what measures did you take to protect anonymity?

Advisory Committee goals

- How closely has this project met Vancouver Foundation Advisory Committee goals? (A copy of the goals is included in the application package and are also available on our website at www.vancouverfoundation.ca)

Future of project

- Do you intend to continue this project? If so, what funding sources are likely to support its activities?
- What follow-up work is necessary?
- What is needed to maintain and build on the gains?
- Has the project led to the identification of new issues, clients, or fund-raising opportunities?

Anecdotal comments

- How has the project affected the lives of individuals (in their own words)?
- Include any comments from respondents or participants that describe their project experience.

Insights/general observations

- What have you learned from this project?
- What would you do differently if you were to do it over again?
- Were there any surprises?
- What other insights can you share?

Budget

- How did the actual project expenses and income compare to the budget projections?
- Attach a financial report.

Before and after photographs

- Do you have photographs showing the difference before and after the project particularly in the case of a capital project such as a playground or building renovation)? Include some if you do.

Other attachments

- Include any relevant press clippings, photographs, audio-visual materials, comments from community agencies, or other information that you feel will enrich your report

Evaluation is a process by which one attempts to measure the degree to which a project is accomplishing it's purpose.

**Thank You for Sharing
Your Experience with Us**

RESOURCES

Backer, Thomas E. *Innovation in context: New Foundation Approaches to Evaluation, Collaboration and Best Practices*. Miami, Florida: John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, 1999. Download from: www.humaninteract.org/publications.htm#pubcurr

Berk, R.A. and Rossi, P.H. *Thinking about Program Evaluation*, 2nd Edition. Sage, 1998. Order from: www.sagepub.com

Farell, K, Kratzmann, M., McWilliam, S., Robinson, N., Saunders, S, Ticknor, J., and White, K. *EVAL: Evaluation Made Very Easy, Accessible, and Logical*. Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, 2002. Download from www.acewh.dal.ca

Kellogg Foundation, *W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook*. Battle Creek, Michigan: Kellogg Foundation, 1998. Download from www.wkkf.org

Patton, M.Q. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, 3rd Ed. Sage, 2001. Order from www.sagepub.com

Asset-Based Evaluation

Dewar, Thomas. *A Guide to Evaluating Asset-Based Community Development: Lessons, Challenges and Opportunities*. The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, 1997. Order from www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/evalwb.htm

Outcome/Performance Measurement

Coyne, Kathy, and Philip Cox. *Splash and Ripple: A Canadian Heritage Guide to Using Outcomes to Design and Manage Community Activities*. Calgary: Calgary and Strathcona Research Group, 2004. Available from the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Storytelling

Voluntary Sector Evaluation Research Project (VSERP). *Discussion Paper: Storytelling in Voluntary Sector Organizations*. Ottawa, Community Foundations of Canada, 2002. Download from www.community-fdn.ca

Additional Useful Websites

Canadian Centre for Philanthropy www.nonprofitscan.ca

Voluntary Knowledge Network: www.vskn.ca

Voluntary Sector Evaluation Research Project: www.vserp.ca