

Evaluation Resources

This list of selected resources was compiled and annotated by Tammy Horne, WellQuest Consulting Ltd., as part of a project to strengthen the capacity of FCSS-funded agencies and FCSS Liaisons for outcome measurement and evaluation. The main criteria for selecting resources were current relevance to human services evaluation and practitioner-friendliness. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather, to share some helpful exemplars.

The overall capacity strengthening project was a collaboration among WellQuest Consulting Ltd., SWM Consulting (Sharlene Wolbeck Minke), and BIM Larsson & Associates (Birgitta Larsson).

THE ESSENTIALS

Evaluative Thinking, Planning, and Capacity-building

Title: Evaluation flash cards: Embedding evaluative thinking in organizational culture

Organization: Otto Bremer Foundation

Author: Michael Q. Patton

Year: 2014

Brief Description: This resource consists of 25 one-page summaries (flash cards) of core evaluation concepts. Some are commonly addressed in other resources (e.g., evaluation questions, logic models, indicators, methods examples, various types/purposes of evaluation). However, the flash cards address other topics that are often overlooked. These include program dosage (different levels of participant involvement in a program), data disaggregation (looking at how results differ among types of participants – e.g., age groups), and denominators (e.g., are dropouts counted as % of people who register for a program, or % of people who come to at least some sessions?). Some pages clarify more common topics (e.g., difference between logic model versus theory of change). The resource also includes several pages on interpretation of data patterns (e.g., on what basis can we make a strong claim about an important finding? when we have learned ‘strong lessons’, or have sound evidence?). As with all of Patton’s work, the resource covers communicating and using findings. There are lots of clear, descriptive examples for each topic. Some examples for applying methods assume more evaluation resources than are typically available to not-for-profit organizations in Canada, the user can consider which suggestions are feasible to adopt or adapt within available resources. Pages on goals, outcomes, indicators & targets seem the least strong – due to definitions & examples that are not always consistent with more commonly-used definitions of these terms. As this resource is not intended to be a comprehensive ‘how to’ guide, users can turn to other resources to supplement this one.

Link: http://www.ottobremer.org/sites/default/files/fact-sheets/OBF_flashcards_201402.pdf

Title: Cultivating Evaluation Capacity: A Guide for Programs Addressing Sexual and Domestic Violence

Organization: VERA Institute of Justice-

Authors: Nancy Smith & Charity Hope

Year: 2015

Brief Description: This evaluation guide is geared to sexual assault and domestic violence programs in the social services sector. It has a strong focus on understanding and assessing evaluation capacity, with emphasis at both the organizational level (such as evaluation culture, readiness, and commitment) and staff level (experience with evaluation, understanding of how the program works). The Evaluation Capacity Diagnostic Tool could be informative for program managers and staff in advance of evaluating their programs. The guide then lays out sections on improving evaluation culture (leadership, champions, continuous improvement), describing the program (with emphasis on logic model), budget for evaluation, building an evaluation team (including discussion of internal and external evaluation), measuring success (feasibility, relevance, & appropriateness of outcomes and related measures). This resource also includes links to many additional online resources, and a list of useful offline resources as well. The guide includes a companion webinar series and tip sheets for each section of the guide. Overall, this resource focuses at the “front end” of the evaluation – on evaluative thinking and thorough planning.

Link: <http://www.vera.org/pubs/special/cultivating-evaluation-capacity-sexual-domestic-violence-guide>

Title: Logic Model Workbook

Organization: Innovation Network

Author: Innovation Network

Year: 2014

Brief Description: Excellent up-to-date resource that covers basics of logic modelling, with attention to broader context & ways to engage others. Innonet’s model links the “usual” model components (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes) to the bigger picture of overall program goals, rationale & assumptions. The resource notes how logic models can be useful for program planning, management, communication, consensus building, & fundraising – as well as evaluation. It covers multiple levels of outcomes beyond individual client change – family & community, & broader organizational & systems changes (including social conditions). The resource astutely picks up on numerous issues often noticed by seasoned evaluators but seldom noted in a basic resource – for example, what level of activity description is most appropriate for a logic model versus a work plan. There are worksheets at the end to guide agencies to create their own logic models, including a series of questions. This resource is stellar for engaging a group in *evaluative thinking*, from the program planning phase forward.

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Though the resource does not always clearly distinguish between outcomes and more specific indicators, and the logic model format is very simplistic, people can use this resource as a base on which to build further.

Link: <http://www.innonet.org/> (This resource accessible from home page; many other evaluation resources on this site – tailored to not-for-profit sector)

Title: Casebook on Evaluation for Learning in Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Organization: Public Health Agency of Canada

Author: Jamie Gamble & Heather McTiernan

Year: 2012

Brief Description: This resource uses six unique project cases to illustrate a range of evaluation strategies and approaches for evaluating community-based projects. Content is applicable to human service sectors beyond health. There is a focus on: the value of evaluation for learning; evaluation culture for learning/improvement; upfront evaluation planning; regular stakeholder engagement; available, useful data; shared learning and reflection. The resource includes a set of reflective questions to consider while reading the cases. The six cases are organized in a consistent format: an introduction (about the evaluation); evaluation design; implementation (how they did it), benefits of the evaluation; and lessons learned. The cases are rich in description, examples, and highlighting of key points. There is a glossary at the end of the resource, focused on terms pertaining to evaluation, evidence, and knowledge translation.

Link: <http://www.nccmt.ca/resources/search/127> National Collaborating Centre for Methods & Tools, McMaster University)

Evaluation “How To” Manuals/Guides

Title: Introduction to Program Evaluation for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs

Organization: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Authors: G. MacDonald, G. Starr, M. Schooley, S.L. Yee, K. Klimowski, & K. Turner

Year: 2001

Brief Description: Though this manual predates the other resources described in this bibliography, and has a focus on evaluating tobacco control programs, much of the information is still relevant and general enough to adapt to other types of human service programs, as well as being comprehensive regarding the steps of carrying out an evaluation. Topics include: doing needs assessment; planning a program; understanding program context; creating logic models; focusing an evaluation (process, outcome); designing an evaluation; identifying evaluation

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context and users; determining outcomes to measure; developing indicators, data sources and quantitative and qualitative methods; analyzing data and interpreting findings; making recommendations; and communicating and using the results.

Link:

http://cdc.gov/tobacco/tobacco_control_programs/surveillance_evaluation/evaluation_manual/

Title: Measuring the Difference: An Outcome Evaluation Resource for the Disability Sector

Organization: Alberta Council of Disability Services

Author: Nilima Solpol-Valias (Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Centre)

Year: 2009

Brief Description: This resource focuses on disability services, but much of the content is general enough to be relevant to other human services evaluation. The resource is presented as a series of modules that address: understanding outcome measurement and evaluation, as well as other evaluation approaches (beyond outcomes alone); creating logic models and related program theory (this guide goes into more detail on logic models than most other resources); building an outcome measurement framework (including methods, analysis, and connections to an agency's broader strategic framework); and creating an outcomes-focused organization (organizational culture). The resource also contains a glossary, a list of on-line resources plus an annotated bibliography, and information specific to the role of outcome measurement and evaluation in agency accreditation.

Link: http://www.acds.ca/PDF/Outcome%20Evaluations/MTD_Introduction.pdf This link includes a table of contents that has links to each module.

Title: What Is Program Evaluation: A Beginners Guide

Organization: Global Social Change Research Project

Author: Gene Shackman

Year: 2009

Brief Description: Brief guide to: developing evaluation questions; creating logic models; understanding advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative methods; designing an evaluation; and determining influence of a program on outcomes. Though this resource does not cover all aspects of doing evaluation, it is brief and quick to read. It also contains many links to additional resources.

Link: <http://gsociology.icaap.org/methods/evaluationbeginnersguide.pdf>

Title: [Evaluating Outcomes of Community Food Actions: A Guide](#)**Organization:** Public Health Agency of Canada**Author:** Jason Newberry & Andrew Taylor &**Year:** 2012

Brief Description: This guide was developed in the context of community food security work, but much content is applicable to broader human services sector. The introduction covers terminology, audience and participation considerations (with an eye to use/action). The first section includes levels of outcomes, related actions, and targets of change, at individual/group and policy/system levels. The authors present an evaluation framework and worksheets, along with specific project examples (in both body and appendices). The second section covers engagement for participation and buy-in, including collaboratively developing and prioritizing evaluation questions. Evidence examples in the third section, though food security-specific, are relevant other human service work -- such as indicators for partnerships and policy/system changes; planning for data gathering/measurement; and considerations for indicators and tools. The authors also suggest ways to use existing data sources. This section also includes topics not often covered in practitioner-focused evaluation guides – such as qualitative indicators, ethics, sampling, and simple evaluation designs. The final section is focused on interpretation (such as deciding in advance what counts as success, interpreting program influences, deciding on meaningful findings), and communicating and using findings (including brief communication formats and recommendations).

More details on methods and analysis are in *Measurement and Analysis Companion Details* (see second link below). The companion guide covers the basics of data collection (primarily surveys, focus groups, interviews, and routine data tracking) and both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Link: <http://www.cdpac.ca/content.php?doc=257> (for main guide, companion document, and additional worksheets)

Two archived webinars based on this guide are at <http://www.cdpac.ca/content.php?doc=288>

Analysis & Interpretation

Quantitative

Title: [Making Sense of Your Data: Tips from the Wilder Research Program Evaluation Workshop Series](#)

Organization: Wilder Research

Authors: Wilder Research

Year: 2010

Brief Description: This 2-pager briefly describes how to organize and code quantitative data, and offers several examples of types of statistics to use for analysis. It includes both descriptive statistics (such as frequencies, averages, and ranges) and inferential statistics (tests of statistical significance). There is also a brief section on interpreting findings, including a list of interpretive questions. This resource is based on a workshop; the workshop slides are more detailed and available at the second link below.

Links: (copy/paste to browser)

[www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Publications/Studies/Program Evaluation and Research Tips/Making Sense of Your Data - Tips from the Wilder Research Program Evaluation Workshop Series, Fact Sheet.pdf](http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Publications/Studies/Program%20Evaluation%20and%20Research%20Tips/Making%20Sense%20of%20Your%20Data%20-%20Tips%20from%20the%20Wilder%20Research%20Program%20Evaluation%20Workshop%20Series,%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf)

[www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Publications/Studies/Program Evaluation and Research Tips/Making Sense of Your Data - Evaluation Workshop Series, Presentation.pdf](http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Publications/Studies/Program%20Evaluation%20and%20Research%20Tips/Making%20Sense%20of%20Your%20Data%20-%20Evaluation%20Workshop%20Series,%20Presentation.pdf)

Title: [PDQ Statistics \(3rd Edition\)](#)

Organization: McMaster University, University of Toronto (Author Affiliations) BC Decker (Publisher)

Authors: G.R. Norman & D.L. Streiner

Year: 2003

Brief Description: This relatively short book (for a stats book) still has current relevance in spite of its publication date. The authors explain both basic and more complex statistical issues and tests in an engaging way -- light on math and heavy on explanations and examples. For most practitioners involved in evaluation, Chapter 1-5 and 10-11 cover the most basic of the tests. Other useful information is contained in Chapter 20 on evaluation design (such as pre-post program; whether there is a comparison group or not), and Chapter 21 on presenting data and dealing with missing data. These chapters provide a grounding in the basics. For practitioners who have someone else (a colleague or consultant) do statistical analysis, this book will enhance their discernment of what statistics are appropriate for a given situation, and strengths and limitations of analysis options.

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Link: (for preview of most of the first three chapters in Google Books)

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=huoPAHPkxVYC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Qualitative

Title: Equal Access Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit (Module 5: Doing Qualitative Data Analysis)

Organization: Collaboration between Equal Access Nepal, Equal Access International, Queensland University of Technology and the University of Adelaide, Australia.

Authors: J. Lennie, J. Tacchi, B. Koirala, M. Wilmore, A. Skuse

Year: (2011)

Brief Description: The context of this resource is international development work, but much is applicable to human services programs closer to home. Module 5 (of 6) covers reasons for doing qualitative analysis – such as deeper understanding of a program, its participants (including culture) and its context; and capturing emergent findings, including unexpected impacts. The authors emphasize the nonlinear and rich nature of qualitative analysis, including the critical, interpretive, and shared aspects of understanding the findings. The resource provides a step-by-step flowchart for organizing, managing, and analysing the data, and reporting/communicating the findings, then breaks out each step in detail with examples. The other modules (for example, on qualitative indicators and methods), plus companion materials (such as Most Significant Change guide) may also be useful to practitioners whose work has a strong qualitative emphasis.

Link: http://betterevaluation.org/toolkits/equal_access_participatory_monitoring

Further Understanding the Difference We Make: Contribution Analysis

This topic goes beyond the initial analysis and interpretation (covered in above resources). It is an approach to deepening interpretation, for practitioners who wish to take that further step. Programs operate in complex environments, where many external factors can be influencing participants. The traditional idea of attributing success to one program is often neither feasible nor relevant. Contribution analysis allows us to ask if the program has made a meaningful contribution to positive change, taking other influences as a given.

Title: Contribution analysis: An Approach to Exploring Cause and Effect**Organization:** Institutional Learning and Change**Authors:** John Mayne**Year:** 2008**Brief Description:**

This brief resource is one of the more straightforward discussions of contribution analysis, by the author who developed the concept. This resource lays out the steps of contribution analysis. Central to contribution analysis is the program's theory of change – the explanation of how the program is expected to bring about the desired results – including the program's scope of influence, assumptions/reasons that underlie the expected results, risk to achieving results, and potential non-program influences on the results. Evidence for the theory of change includes not only the observed program results, but also past research/evaluation evidence for the underlying assumptions about change, and non-program factors that may have an influence on change. From the evidence, program stakeholders assemble the “contribution story”, including its strengths, challenges, and need for more evidence to further strengthen the story.

Link:

www.outcomemapping.ca/download.php?file=/resource/files/csette_en_ILAC_Brief16_Contribution_Analysis.pdf

SPECIAL TOPICS**Community Development & Participation****Title:** Community Development Evaluation Research**Organization:** Community Waitakere (New Zealand)**Author:** Simon Harger-Forde**Year:** 2012

Brief Description: This is not a “how to do evaluation” resource. Rather, it connects existing approaches to evaluation and applied research to a community development context. The big evaluation questions posed are around how programs enhance the connections of people within their community, and positive change in a community as a whole – including at the policy level. The resource defines different evaluation purposes (formative, process, impact/outcome/summative) and includes examples of domains important to community development evaluation (health promotion/public health, advocacy and policy change). The guide then summarizes various approaches that are well-aligned with community development evaluation – including appreciative inquiry, asset-based community development, empowerment evaluation, social

return on investment, social capital, outcome-based evaluation and planning (program logic, theory of change, results-based accountability), balanced scorecards/dashboards, and developmental evaluation. There are also several tools for use with one or more of these approaches. Some of the categories mentioned are not evaluation approaches per se – for example, social capital provide a key focus and related outcomes for community development program, but is not an evaluation approach. Similarly, scorecards and dashboards could more accurately be viewed as methods for displaying evaluation findings learned through other approaches. Explanations and examples of approaches vary in detail. However, this resource is included here because it does cover how different approaches could benefit community development evaluation – an area often not covered by practitioner-focused evaluation resources. There is a good reference list, so people can explore approaches of interest in further depth.

Link: <http://ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/node/11304>

Title: Community Development Evaluation Storymap and Legend

Organization: NeighborWorks® America

Author: NeighborWorks® America

Year: 2006

Brief Description: This resource combines visual images and narrative explanations, and was developed through a participatory process with community-based practitioners, evaluators, researchers, funders, and other community development leaders. The visual story map illustrates the relationships among three evaluation focus areas: capacity assessment, performance measurement, and outcome evaluation – within the broader context of strengthening communities and their organizations. (Visual image below is from Page 2 of the document.) The process outlined in the resource starts with deciding the context and purpose of evaluation – including organizational (such as mission, visions, values, resources & capacities) and external context (such as social and economic conditions, political and funding context). Next are decisions about evaluation focus, followed by choices of evaluative tools, frameworks, and data. The resource then delves into depth for each of the three evaluation focus areas—defining each one further, benefits of applying that focus, and a chart that list relevant tools for that focus area. The chart outlines each tool, who would use it, the cost, what is measures (and from whom) and how the tool is analyzed and reported. The chart is followed by a paragraph about, and contact information for, each tool. The resource concluded with a list of websites that cover planning and evaluation. This story map and legend is mainly a conceptual model followed by an extensive inventory, so would need to be used in conjunction with other resources that cover evaluation approaches and tasks in more depth. People using this resource may also wish to search for additional tools that have been developed more recently.

deciding on internal or external evaluation, and advantages and disadvantages of each; developing methods, and pros and cons of each method; addressing ethical considerations; using evaluation findings to drive program improvement; creating logic models and evaluation plans/frameworks; standards of community engagement; examples of 'generic' evaluation tools as well as tools specific to community engagement/participation. This guide does not cover all evaluation steps in depth, but is a good brief primer on key considerations.

Link:

http://www.scottishhealthcouncil.org/publications/research/evaluation_toolkit.aspx#.UijOibX4CUm

Developmental Evaluation

Title: [What Is Developmental Evaluation?](#)

Organization: United Way of Calgary and Area

Authors: Calgary's Network for Collaborative Social Innovation Backgrounder Series #7)

Year: 2013

Brief Description: This 2-pager briefly defines developmental evaluation, when to use it, and how to know if your organization is ready for it, and the value of developmental evaluation. The resource concludes with links to other related resources.

Link: <http://www.calgaryunitedway.org/main/images/Developmental%20Evaluation%207.pdf>

Title: [DE 201: A Practitioner's Guide to Developmental Evaluation](#)

Organization: J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and the International Institute for Child Rights and Development

Authors: Elizabeth Dozois, Marc Langlois, & Natasha Blanchet-Cohen

Year: 2010

Brief Description: This resource guide outlines practices outlined based on the national YouthScape initiative (www.youthscape.ca), a 3-year comprehensive community initiative to build community resiliency through youth engagement. The guide first defines developmental evaluation (DE), outlines when it is appropriate, describes DE competencies (includes relationship building, strategic thinking, pattern recognition, servant leadership). There is then extensive discussion of the flexible process of actually carrying out a DE – entry points (including ongoing relationship building and a “learning framework” that is much more flexible than a typical performance-oriented evaluation framework); practices that focus on observation, “sense making” (collaborative interpretation), and influencing future directions of the Evaluation Resources for FCSS Website – T. Horne, November 2015

intervention). The authors emphasize that the focus of DE is on overall systems (as opposed to a narrower focus on only program participants or other specific groups), and that DE can capture emergent learning and complexity. It is iterative, rather than linear. The guide also acknowledges challenges including perceptions/biases, position of the evaluator (internal or external), the extensive time commitment of DE, and negative reactions by others to uncomfortable information. The guide includes appendices of DE readiness assessment, stakeholder analysis, examples of learning and systems analysis frameworks, and resources for data analysis.

Link: www.vibrantcanada.ca/files/development_evaluation_201_en.pdf

NOTE: This resource draws heavily from an earlier DE resource from the McConnell Foundation, *A Developmental Evaluation Primer* by Jamie Gamble (2008). The two resources both overlap and complement each other. The primer is available on a number of websites. The following link to [betterevaluation.ca](http://betterevaluation.org/resources/guides/developmental_evaluation/primer) also contains many other basic and intermediate evaluation resources.

http://betterevaluation.org/resources/guides/developmental_evaluation/primer

Value for Money: Economic Evaluation

There are several types of traditional economic evaluation to examine value for money (cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness, cost-efficiency). In the not-for-profit sector, social return on investment (SROI) appears to be more common, perhaps because it is focused on social impact, includes participatory processes, and can make use of “proxy” values when actual monetary values are not available. The following resource is a leader in the field.

Title: [A Guide to Social Return on Investment](#)

Organization: Cabinet Office of the Third Sector (Scotland)

Authors: Jeremy Nicholls, Eilis Lawlor, Eva Neitzert , & Tim Goodspeed

Year: 2012

Brief Description: This guide is both comprehensive and practical, with many examples of application for each step along the way. The authors explain that social return on investment (SROI) is a way to assign monetary value to social, environmental and economic outcomes (changes) that are important to the people who contribute to those outcomes (the stakeholders). The resource contains detailed sections on the SROI stages: Establishing the scope of the SROI and identifying key stakeholders; mapping the outcomes (including theory of change for connecting them to inputs and outputs); collecting data and valuing outcomes in monetary terms (includes outcome indicator, methods, and financial proxies when actual economic data are not available); establishing impact (separating program contribution from what would have happened anyway or are due to non-program influences), calculating the SROI to compare net benefits to the investment of resources in the program; sharing findings with

stakeholders in a responsive way and embedding SROI processes for future. An extensive appendix includes a glossary, checklist, calculation and reporting examples, sample report outline, and links to many other resources.

Links: http://socialvalueuk.org/publications/publications/cat_view/29-the-guide-to-social-return-on-investment/223-the-guide-in-english-2012-edition

A brief overview of the guide is at:

http://socialvalueuk.org/publications/publications/doc_download/75-social-return-on-investment-an-introduction

Following site has financial proxies specific to Canada, as well as other resources:

<http://www.sroi-canada.ca/financial-proxies/index.html>
