

THE  
**PEW**  
CHARITABLE TRUSTS

## EVALUATION

Delaware Valley Grantmakers

Fundamentals of Smart Grantmaking

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Planning & Evaluation

The Pew Charitable Trusts

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# Session Purpose

- Participants gain knowledge about:
  - How evaluation can strengthen grantmaking
  - Tips for designing, funding, managing and utilizing evaluations
  - Convincing your board that funds for evaluation are well spent
- Share best practices and tools for using an “evaluation mind-set” in grantmaking
- Encourage dialogue and questions

# Session Topics

- Context – philanthropy/evaluation at Pew
- What is Evaluation and Why Do It?
- Creating a Culture of Evaluation
- Evaluation with Limited Resources
- Designing an Evaluation
- Evaluation by Consultant
- Using and sharing evaluation findings
- Funding useful and useable evaluations for grantees
- Evaluation Resources



## Context: Philanthropy at Pew

- Pew was founded in 1948 by Sun Oil heirs
- 2004, transition from foundation to nonprofit public charity
- Total staff ~550: Philadelphia, Washington, DC offices, & staff in Brussels, Australia, New Zealand and across the US
- Currently, \$4.2B in assets
- FY 2009: Pew's board approved \$118M for 31 operating projects and \$71M in grants to 97 organizations. Pew raised \$62M from donor partners
- Philanthropic approach: proactive, "corporate," focused on achievement of measurable goals
- High premium placed on learning from our work.

## Context: Evaluation at Pew \*

- Planning and Evaluation (P&E) unit: eight professional staff, three administrative staff. Evaluation = 3 FTEs.
- We are internal consultants partnering with program staff on:
  - Planning: strategies and program initiatives, annual plans
  - Evaluation: mid-course progress assessments, impact evaluations. Initiated by program, P&E, CEO and/or board.
- Evaluations focused on answering Pew's questions about strategy design and management of initiatives. Client is Pew, not grantee.
- P&E staff design, contract for, manage and report out on evaluations. Consultants refine plan and carry out data collection and analysis.

\* SEE HANDOUTS

# What is Evaluation?

- Systematic, rigorous data collection and analysis which:
  - Unpacks the hypotheses and assumptions that guide our work (if we do X, Y will result )
  - Addresses critical questions about process and impact
  - Yields “actionable knowledge”
  - Examines work of grantee and grantor
  - Can contribute to capacity building (funder, grantee, field)

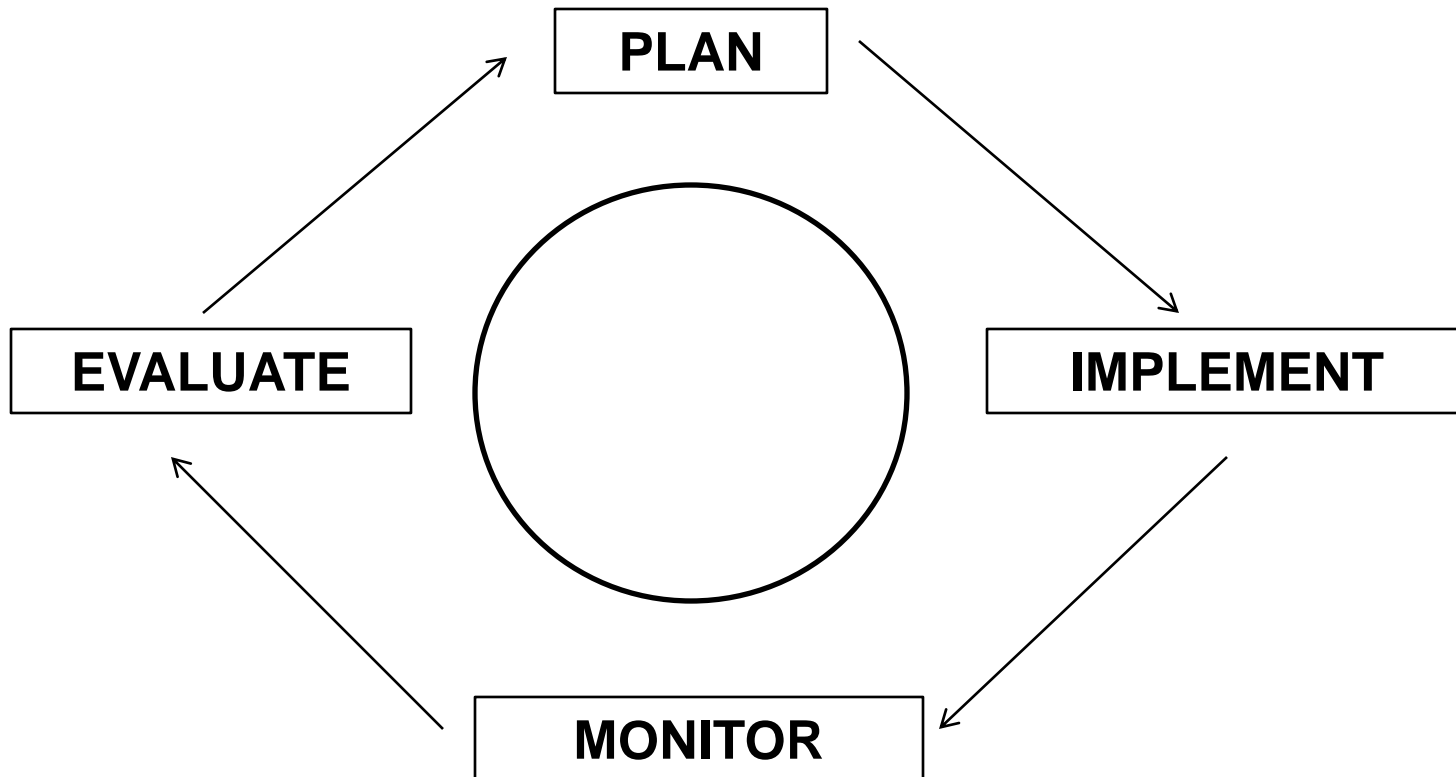
# Why Evaluate?

- Generate knowledge in order to:
  - Improve program or organizational effectiveness
  - Inform decisions about program direction and viability
  - Assess Return on Investment (ROI)
  - What else?

## Evaluation as a Tool for Effective Stewardship

- Rigorous planning results in tighter strategies with measurable goals. Measurable goals = we can evaluate.
- Creating a “data rich culture” helps us learn from our work and figure out why successes happened and why failures occurred, and (most importantly) how we can do better.
- Mid-course corrections: we can make more effective investments if we understand progress toward our goals. This requires clarity in defining goals and the steps necessary along the way (thus the importance of a rigorous planning process).
- Impact: evaluation helps us understand if our grants made a difference in the ways we hoped they would (+ unintended consequences). Ultimately, positive social impact is our bottom line.

# Creating a Culture of Evaluation



# Creating a Culture of Evaluation

- Guiding principles
  - Data-based decision-making as integral to effective stewardship
  - Leadership: building CEO/board support
  - Integration of planning and evaluation: “virtuous cycle”
  - Clear goals, focus: define success so you’ll know it when you get there
  - Judicious use of evaluation: capacity to integrate and utilize data (grantor and grantees)

## Evaluation with Limited Resources \*

- Rigorous planning: measure twice, cut once (logic models, rigorous review of strategies).
- Guidelines: move toward focus, clarity
- Proposals: ask the “right” questions
- Grant agreements: clarify deliverables and benchmarks
- Tracking: build support for data-based decision-making, but don’t overwhelm.
- Consultants can extend capacity, but management/oversight is critical

\* SEE HANDOUTS

## Strategy/Proposal Questions (evaluation mindset)

- Does the strategy address the root causes of a well-defined problem?
- Is the goal of the program clear, feasible, and measurable?
- Is the logic underlying the program sound?
- Are the strategy's key assumptions and risks identified and addressed?
- Are there reasonable milestones to measure progress?
- Is the scope and scale of the program manageable and commensurate with the proposed resources?

# Designing an Evaluation \*

- Clarify purpose, goals & target audience
- Clarify evaluation timeline (inform a renewal?)
- Involve stakeholders to increase their ownership
- Describe the intervention to be evaluated (logic model)
- Does project have clear and measurable goals?
- Develop evaluation questions w/stakeholders and goals in mind
- Clarify budget (more \$ = greater depth and certainty)
- Match questions with data collection methods and sources
- Clarify deliverables (interim and final).

\* *SEE HANDOUTS*

# Evaluation by Consultant

- Theme: “It’s our fault” – if we select, instruct, manage, and pay, we have the capacity to exercise control over the process (but not the findings)
- Steps in the process:
  - Determine skill/expertise needs
  - Consultant search
  - Negotiate scope of work, deliverables, timeline, budget
  - Manage the process (but don’t meddle)
  - Report out to stakeholders
  - Determine implications for grantmaking
  - Debrief on the process and how to do it better next time

## Hiring Evaluation Consultants \*

- Be explicit about what you want, to serve what purposes, by when, and for whom
- Clarify hiring requirements up front
- Network, network, network
- If hiring from a firm, look carefully at who will be doing the work
- The “shotgun marriage:” assembling a team
- RFP versus “direct hire”
- Academics versus consultants
- Conflict of Interest

\* SEE HANDOUTS

# Evaluation Utilization

- Think about utilization when designing evaluation to ensure attention to stakeholder information needs.
- Useful evaluation findings inform decisions, clarify options, identify strengths/weaknesses, and point the way toward program improvements.
- “Sensitivities” – obstacles to using evaluation findings.

# Disseminating Evaluation Findings

- Internal (staff, ED, Board) and/or external (grantees, field)
- Sharing relevant & “useable” findings can build capacity among grantees and in the field. But.....
- Evaluators may “pull their punches” if their report will be broadly shared
- If external dissemination is desired, consider developing two reports (internal/external)
- External dissemination – consider “pilot test” with a few grantees to assess impact on expectations in the field
- Communications plan for dissemination:
  - Purpose
  - Target audiences
  - Information needs
  - Communication vehicles

## Funding Useful & Useable Evaluations for Grantees

- Clarify evaluation purpose: program improvement, capacity building, accountability, etc. Choice will impact design and reporting.
- If you want grantees to evaluate, include time/money to do the job right in their grant budget
- Capacity to collect data, understand implications and act on them is critical
- Power dynamics: creating space for learning

## Evaluation Resources

- *W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook* (January 1998).  
<http://www.wkkf.org/knowledge-center/Resources-Page.aspx?q=evaluation+handbook&x=29&y=7>
- *W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide* (January 2004)  
<http://www.wkkf.org/knowledge-center/Resources-Page.aspx?q=logic+models&x=38&y=7>
- *The Logic Model Guidebook*. (2009). Lisa Wyatt Knowlton & Cynthia Phillips.
- Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. <http://www.geofunders.org>
- The Center for Effective Philanthropy. <http://effectivephilanthropy.org>
- American Evaluation Association. [www.eval.org](http://www.eval.org). See Nonprofit and Foundations Topical Interest Group (TIG). Les Baxter (Pew) and Helen Davis Picher (William Penn Foundation) are TIG co-chairs.
- Delaware Valley Grantmakers. <http://www.dvg.org>

## Index Card

- 1) 1-2 useful take-aways from the session
- 2) How can I improve the session?



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