

What did we discover about evaluation in this sector?

National survey of 1,665 voluntary organizations and 322 funders (Hall et al., 2003):

- 77% - conducted *some type* of evaluation in the previous year.
- **BUT broadly defined: any type of activity that “helps organizations assess organizational performance” (p. 10)***
- little time is spent on this evaluative activity
- does not involve full-scale, systematic program evaluation

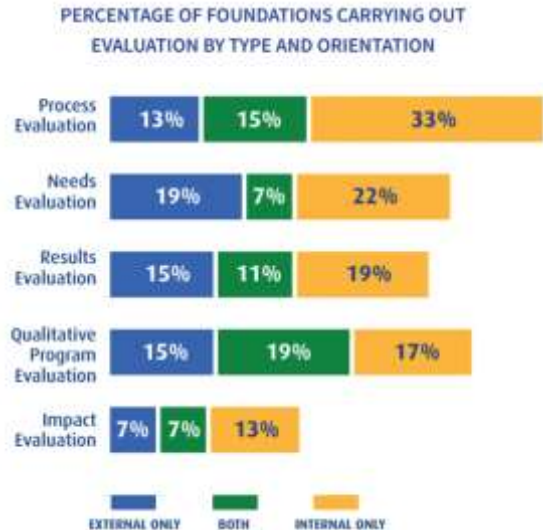
(Hall, Phillips, Meillat & Pickering, (2003). *Assessing Performance: Evaluation Practices & Perspectives in Canada’s Voluntary Sector*



What did we discover about evaluation in this sector?

- Evaluation in this sector varies somewhat due to the differences between foundations and other organizations
- Overall, evaluation tends to be internal, process evaluation for learning purposes
- Collaborative and participatory

Philanthropic Foundations Canada. (2017, September). *A Portrait of Canadian Philanthropy*.



What did we discover about evaluators in this sector?

- Hall et al., (2003):
- **Conducted primarily by internal staff:**
 - 75% reported that internal staff had conducted their organization's most recent evaluation
 - 15% used volunteers
 - external evaluators were used in only 8% of organizations.



What did we discover about evaluators in this sector?

Cousins et al. (2014)*:

- over 50% of individuals who worked in the voluntary sector indicated that the percentage of time spent on evaluation was less than 25%.
- Evaluators in the voluntary sector were more likely to:
 - self-identify as *generalists* than in the government sector, where respondents identified as *evaluators*
 - self-report lower levels of knowledge about evaluation theory and practice

*Cousins, J. Goh, Elliott, Aubry, & Gilbert, N. (2014). Government and voluntary sector differences in organizational capacity to do and use evaluation. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 44, 1-13.



What did we discover about evaluators in this sector?

Interviews with several subject matter experts.

- *Very few foundations have enough internal capacity to hire their own evaluators on staff....Evaluation itself is really more about learning and understanding impact. (Personal correspondence, May 8, 2017).*
- *It is a systemic problem because funders don't want to pay overhead or administrative costs. What's overhead? Training for Eval, good data systems, etc....all would make it easier for organizations to do better work. (Interview, September 14, 2017)*



What did we discover about evaluators in this sector?

CES membership data (2017):

- Evaluators in this sector are less likely to see themselves as professional evaluators and to view evaluation as their primary responsibility

Percentage of CES members, by Employment Category, that possess CE Designation, 2017 (n = 323 active designations)			
Employment Sector	Total CES members in category	Number with CE designation	% in category with CE designation
Federal government	245	30	12.2%
Provincial/Territorial Government	292	47	16.1%
Municipal Government	100	8	8.0%
Private firms	195	61	31.3%
Self-employed	261	70	26.8%
Academic	321	33	10.3%
NFP/Foundations	172	5	2.9%
Other (including no selection made and prefer not to answer)	158	69	43.7%
TOTAL	1744	323	18.5%



- Less resources, more competition and more informed public
- Long-term, broader and sector-wide measurement
- Focus on formative evaluation, developing evaluative thinking and learning cultures
- Acceptance of the complexity of social impact
- Use of developmental evaluation, yet unclear what that means

One trend in particular that interests us is the discussion of developmental evaluation in this sector

1. What does developmental evaluation* look like *in practice* in this sector?
2. How does the complex sectoral environment constrain and promote this idea of (developmental) evaluation?
3. What are the strengths and challenges of this perspective for evaluators in this sector?
4. How, if at all, can it be used/adapted in “collective impact” studies?
5. Are there any examples of how it is being used effectively?

* Patton, M. Q. (2006). Evaluation for the way we work. *Nonprofit Quarterly*, 13(1), 28-33.

Next steps

1. Return to interviewees to further probe about developmental evaluation
2. Survey with 22 NFP organizations about how they perceive evaluation
3. Follow-up interviews with NFP organizational leaders about how they perceive evaluation
4. Case study with an organization to provide in-depth understanding



Questions, comments, suggestions?

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