

Building Evaluation Capacity

Beatriz Chu Clewell, Patricia B. Campbell

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The text below is an excerpt from the complete document. [Building Evaluation Capacity Guide 1: Designing a Cross-Project Evaluation](#) and [Guide 2: Collecting and Using Data in Cross-Project Evaluations](#) are available in PDF format.

Abstract

This two-guide set for evaluators and others interested in evaluation grew out of a National Science Foundation funded effort to improve cross project evaluations. Guide 1, *Designing a Cross-Project Evaluation*, focuses on evaluation design including identification and operationalization of program goals, building of logic models, and selection of indicators and appropriate measures for these indicators. Guide 2, *Collecting and Using Data in Cross-Project Evaluation*, lays out multiple issues involved in data collection, strengths and weaknesses of different data collection formats, and methods for ensuring data quality, confidentiality, and the protection of human subjects.

Introduction

The national trend toward increasing accountability of the public sector, which gave rise to the enactment in 1993 of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), has placed added emphasis on the ability of public agencies to report accurately and consistently on performance and results. The more recent No Child Left Behind Act, with its calls for scientific evidence in education research, and the current Campbell Collaborative, which seeks to improve social science research through a focus on random assignment in studies in social, behavioral, and educational arenas, indicate this trend is growing. Evaluation capacity building (ECB), as a system for enabling organizations and agencies—both public and private—to develop the mechanisms and structure to facilitate evaluation to meet accountability requirements, is a concept whose time has come.

One important way ECB differs from mainstream evaluation is that ECB is continuous and sustained rather than episodic. Other characteristics are that it is contextdependent; operates on multiple levels; is flexible in responding to multiple purposes, requiring continuous adjustments and refinements; and requires a variety of evaluation approaches and methodologies (Stockdill, Baizerman, and Compton 2002).

The goal of this project was to develop a model to build evaluation capacity in three organizations: the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the GE Foundation. More specifically, the project's intent was to test the feasibility of developing models to facilitate the collection of cross-project evaluation data for programs within these organizations that focus on increasing the diversity of the STEM workforce. To facilitate the standardization of the model, we chose programs with a similar goal: increasing the participation and success of underrepresented groups¹ in STEM fields of study and careers. A description of each program used to test the model appears in appendix A.

(End of excerpt. [Building Evaluation Capacity Guide 1: Designing a Cross-Project Evaluation](#) and [Guide 2: Collecting and Using Data in Cross-Project Evaluations](#) are available in PDF format.)

Author's Recommendations

- [Performance Measurement: Getting Results, Second Edition](#)
- [Building a Common Outcome Framework To Measure Nonprofit Performance](#)
- [Developing Community-wide Outcome Indicators for Specific Services](#)

Other Publications by the Authors

- [Beatriz Chu Clewell](#)
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