EVALUATING SOCIAL INNOVATION

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Evaluating Social Innovation

The front edge of the philanthropic sector has spent the last decade experimenting with innovative grantmaking in the hopes of triggering significant and sustainable change. But the sector’s approach to evaluation is not keeping pace with these innovations. In many cases, traditional evaluation approaches fail to meet the fast-paced information needs of philanthropic decision makers and innovators in the midst of complex social change efforts. At worst, the application of traditional evaluation approaches to innovative change initiatives may even decrease the likelihood of success because they restrict implementers to pre-set plans that lose their relevance as the initiative unfolds.

In this paper, we explore ways that common evaluation approaches and practices constrain innovation and offer lessons about an emerging evaluation approach—developmental evaluation—which supports the adaptation that is so crucial to innovation. For what kinds of grantmaking strategies should funders consider using developmental evaluation? What organizational conditions are necessary for it to work? How can grantmakers grapple with the challenging questions that developmental evaluation raises about innovation, accountability, rigor, and adaptation? Drawing on the reflections and insights of foundation staff and evaluators who have experimented with developmental evaluation, we call on philanthropy to re-envision the role, purpose, and processes of evaluation so that social innovations have a better chance of success.

Introduction

In recent decades, the philanthropic sector’s efforts to produce bigger and more lasting results have been challenged by increasingly complex and dynamic problems with no clear path to a solution. The sector’s literature and conference agendas—increasingly populated with systems- and network-oriented perspectives on social change—signal a growing sense of disquiet that traditional programmatic grantmaking alone is not equal to the task of fixing the stubborn problems many funders seek to address. In light of this, foundations and nonprofits are experimenting with a variety of approaches such as systems building, policy advocacy, cross-sector collaboration, movement and network building, and collective impact to create, test, and/or scale promising social innovations.

A contented and stable world might have little need for innovation. Innovation becomes an imperative when problems are getting worse, when systems are not working, or when institutions reflect past rather than present problems. (Mulgan, 2007, p 9)

A parallel trend intended to improve grantmakers’ effectiveness is the sector’s attention to strategic philanthropy. Undoubtedly, the core principles of strategic philanthropy (e.g., clearly articulated goals, a plausible theory of change, well-aligned partners and grantees, attention to performance metrics, and evaluation to measure progress against desired outcomes) have led to sector-wide improvement in performance. However, we are witnessing that the practical implementation of these principles can often work against social innovation, resulting in “calcified” social change strategies as innovators become beholden to plans and metrics that don’t evolve in response to the dynamic context. This can have the unintended consequence of acting as a drag on, if not completely snuffing out, innovation.

This tension between the practices of strategic philanthropy and social innovation does not mean that grantmakers who are creating, testing, and/or scaling social innovations should abandon the principles of strategic philanthropy.
On the contrary, these principles can guide when and how funders decide whether collaborative systems- and network-oriented strategies are the best bets to trigger the change they seek. If kept alive and adaptable, theories of change can help innovators surface and test their core assumptions, as well as help to align multiple players around a shared vision. Performance metrics, when interpreted with careful attention to context, can keep everyone focused on the work's progress. Nonetheless, **innovative grantmakers must ask themselves whether and how philanthropic practices temper or nurture the spirit of trial, error, and adaptation that is at the core of innovation.**

In addition to flexible long-term funding and better collaboration, we believe that **one of the most transformative changes that grantmakers can make in support of innovation is to think about and use evaluation differently.** Although the best thinking on strategic philanthropy has always promoted evaluation as an indispensable tool for learning and mid-course correction in any type of social change effort, many funders still struggle to find an approach to evaluation that is specifically designed for social innovation. Rather than applying an evaluation approach designed to measure program impact to their social innovation strategies, grantmakers need to broaden their portfolio of evaluations to include an approach that is tailored to the unique and complex characteristics of innovation.

> Given the pace of change today, funders will need to get smarter more quickly, incorporating the best available data and knowledge about what is working and regularly adjusting what they do to add value amidst the dynamic circumstances we all face. (Fulton, Kasper, and Kibbe, 2010, p. 3)

What kind of evaluation can support adaptation and leave space for the unexpected? How can evaluation be designed to give innovators the information and data they need to discover new patterns and pathways, to rapidly test solutions and abandon the ones that fail, and to detect what's emerging in response to their efforts? Most importantly, what do foundations and evaluators have to learn and unlearn about how they design, use, and even think about evaluation in order to create the space for successful innovation? In this paper, we advocate that traditional formative and summative evaluation approaches are no match for new and innovative programs and initiatives that experiment with solutions to complex social problems. Instead, we believe that the future of evaluating social innovation lies in the use of developmental evaluation (DE). Through insights garnered from more than 70 articles and papers, interviews with 19 funders and evaluators who are testing a new approach to evaluation that supports social innovation, and three brief case studies of DE in action, we explore what it takes for foundations to put this kind of evaluation into practice.

**What Does Social Innovation Really Look Like?**

“**I**nnovation” has long been a buzzword in the philanthropic sector, applied to a wide variety of approaches and initiatives that sometimes fit one of the many definitions of innovation and sometimes do not. Our interviews demonstrated that funders do not always operate with a similar understanding of what characterizes an innovative social change approach. For our purposes, a social innovation is “a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than present solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals.”

1 Innovation can take the form of new programs, products, laws, institutions, ideas, relationships or patterns of interaction, and it is often a mix of many of these. But perhaps more importantly, the term also describes the process of generating, testing, and adapting these novel solutions, which is inherently exploratory and uncertain.

Compared to more traditional programmatic interventions, social innovation strategies often cross sectors, involve changing the dynamics, roles, and relationships between many players, and challenge conventional wisdom.

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1 Center for Social Innovation, Stanford Graduate School of Business. For discussions on the various definitions of social innovations, see http://csi.gsb.stanford.edu/social-innovation.
about the nature of the problem and its solutions. For example, the development and proliferation of "mhealth" (the use of mobile communication technologies to support the delivery of health care in hard-to-reach places) involved dislodging some long-held assumptions about how health care must be delivered and the kind of physical infrastructure it requires. Another example is the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation's YouthScape program, which tested strategies for involving excluded youth in the community development process, in part by encouraging traditionally adult-focused organizations to examine and re-design their values, structures, and processes.

Over time, some innovations may become well-formed stable programs that can be tested and replicated in new settings. Others trigger a shift in existing resources and players that are unique to the place and time but are not intended to take the shape of a distinct program or service. However, what these efforts all have in common is that they seek to address problems that are both complicated (with many moving parts) and complex (including an interdependence of variables, multiple factors interacting at once, iterative and nonlinear feedback loops, and rapid change in dynamic contexts). Moreover, the pathways to results and sometimes even the results themselves are unpredictable and emergent. When problems—or the systems from which those problems emerge—are complex, they behave in ways that make more straightforward programmatic solutions less effective. For example:

- When dealing with complex problems and solutions, the past does not necessarily predict the future. Although we can make educated guesses about what might happen, the number of different factors and influences at play in complex problems makes it less likely that repeating a set of steps will produce the same results that they did the first time.

- Small changes can create large and sometimes unanticipated effects. Because all of the interrelationships between parts and players in a system are difficult to untangle, it is impossible to know for sure how—or whether—one change will “ripple” through to other players or change overall dynamics.

- When many different independent individuals, organizations, and institutions affect a problem and its solution, it can be difficult to produce specific outcomes at a pre-determined time (e.g., by the end of a particular grant cycle when grantees or foundation staff are often expected to report results). Nor at the outset can innovators predict all possible outcomes that might occur (as grantees or staff are often asked to do in a grant application or funding proposal). Innovators simply do not have enough control over the whole scope of factors or players to orchestrate outcomes in the same way that an implementer of a well-tested, stable program intervention often can.

In short, people who test new solutions to complex problems do not have the luxury of a clear or proven path for achieving their vision. They may know generally where they want to end up, but they may not know the most efficient or effective way to get there, nor do they know exactly how long it will take to arrive. Those who are interested and willing to experiment with social innovations must be willing to take risks and accept missteps or failure. They must be willing to live with uncertainty and acknowledge that their plans, regardless of how well laid out, will likely shift as the circumstances around them change.

With uncertainty and unpredictability comes an even greater need for strategic learning as an innovation is conceptualized, designed, and implemented. As defined by the Center for Evaluation Innovation, strategic learning is the:

*Use of data and insights from a variety of information-gathering approaches—including evaluation—to inform decision making about strategy. Strategic learning occurs when organizations or groups integrate data and evaluative thinking into their work and then adapt their strategies in response to what they learn. Strategic learning makes intelligence gathering and evaluation a part of a strategy's development and implementation—embedding it so that it influences the process.* (Coffman and Beer, 2011, p. 1)
A strategic learning approach to decision-making and action acknowledges the reciprocal relationship between strategy and evaluation: that what gets evaluated should be related to and informed by the organization’s strategies, and that evaluation should feed into the development and refinement of strategy. When conceived of and implemented in this way, the organization is better able to continuously learn, grow, adapt, and change in meaningful and effective ways.

Although this learning loop is important for all kinds of social change efforts, it is an indispensable part of social innovation. Without it, decision makers and implementers lack crucial information about what patterns and pathways are emerging that require adaptation. Because innovation happens amidst uncertainty, decision makers and implementers often feel their way forward, testing an approach, reflecting on what seems to be happening, abandoning what doesn’t seem to work, and focusing in on what seems to be taking hold. But few evaluation approaches are well-suited to support this kind of trial and error, and in fact, many work against it.

**Why Don’t Traditional Approaches to Evaluation Work For Social Innovation?**

Historically, two types of evaluation have been used to understand the processes, effects, influences, and impacts of programs and initiatives. **Formative** (process or implementation) evaluations typically focus on details about how a program model takes shape; their purpose is to improve, refine, and standardize the program. Formative evaluation typically assumes that a program is or will soon become a model with a set of key activities that, if implemented correctly and with high quality, will produce a predictable chain of outcomes. The same assumption of a stable program model underlies **summative** evaluations that strive to answer questions such as, “Did the program work?” or “Should the program be continued or expanded?”

Illustrated simply, consider a common practice at the start of an initiative: foundation staff, grantees, and/or evaluators are commonly asked to provide a logic model or theory of change that illustrates the set of activities and inputs that will plausibly lead to short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes. Formative evaluation would examine whether the planned activities in that model are well implemented, how they affect target populations, and how they should be revised to better achieve the short- and intermediate-term outcomes. When program
implementers are satisfied that the core set of activities is clearly defined and could be repeated faithfully, the program is ready for summative evaluation. A summative evaluation would then test whether that well-defined set of program activities produced the desired outcomes, make judgments about the program’s effectiveness or efficiency, compare it to other programs or activities that might produce the same outcomes, and/or make conclusions about whether the model can be repeated elsewhere with the same effects.

However, as described above, social innovation is a fundamentally different approach to change than implementing program models with a known set of elements or “ingredients.” While the long-term goals of a social innovation might be well defined, the path to achieving them is less clear—little is known about what will work, where, under what conditions, how, and with whom. Instead, decision makers need to explore what activities will trigger change; and activities that successfully trigger a desired change may never work again. Further, once one change occurs, decision makers often need to take stock of the context before they decide which activities to try next. Formative and summative evaluation designs are typically not structured in a way that gives decision makers timely information or data that supports new developments where next steps are unknown. As Tim Brodhead, past-President and CEO of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation explains,

> Of course, formative and summative evaluations have an important role. But many of the McConnell foundation-funded initiatives work in uncertain territory, developing and testing their strategies as they proceed; there are no blueprints for empowering youth, attacking poverty, or promoting innovative approaches to solve entrenched social problems. What is most useful for such efforts is not an ex post facto assessment of success or failure, but constant feedback from a critical, supportive observer. (Dozois, Langois, & Blanchet-Cohen, 2010)

Foundations who apply formative and summative evaluation approaches to their investments in innovation are not only missing an opportunity to obtain actionable data that increases their chance of success; they are also working at cross-purposes with their own social change investments. When a formative or summative evaluation approach is applied to an innovation that is still unfolding, it can squelch the adaptation and creativity that is integral to success. Decision makers and innovators (often grantees) who are evaluated on how well a set of planned activities is implemented—or whether those planned activities produce the predicted outcomes—have a strong incentive to stick to those plans no matter how the environment around them or the interests of other stakeholders change. Exploration and experimentation, and perhaps even the ability to envision alternative paths, are shut down. Finally, misinterpretation of evaluation findings as conclusive judgments of an initiative’s impact when that initiative is still in a stage of development and exploration can cause funders to prematurely abandon complex efforts that may have the most promise for transformational change over the long haul.

One example in which a formative evaluation of a social innovation actually did a disservice to its constituents occurred at The Saturn School of Tomorrow in St. Paul, Minnesota, in the early 1990s. The school was considered an experimental approach for educating middle school students and was described as “high tech, high teach, and high touch.” It included a number of innovations for its time, including the following.

- There was one computer for every two students.
- The curriculum changed every nine weeks based on students’ needs and interests.
- The primary instructional strategies were collaborative and project-based learning projects.
- The school used a differentiated staffing model that included four lead teachers, a number of regular teachers, and several paraprofessionals.
- Students took multi-grade classes.
- Learning in the community was supported by the school’s location in a renovated downtown building.
The formative evaluation was designed and implemented over a three-year period, during which the evaluator spent about eight hours onsite every week observing, interviewing, reviewing documents, and conducting focus groups. It didn’t take long, however, for the evaluator to realize that a formative evaluation was insufficient for this experimental, complex undertaking. While she could anticipate and even predict some of the outcomes the school was hoping to achieve, the real-time design and implementation of those strategies meant that staff members’ needs for information on what was or was not working changed almost daily. As the formative evaluator, she was limited to gathering and analyzing data and reporting it back to the stakeholders through year-end reports. Just a few months into the school’s first year, however, the evaluator could tell that things were not going well: staff weren’t getting along, discipline problems were rampant, few school policies were in places, there were accounts of racism among the teaching staff,
and a local newspaper published multiple negative stories about the school. These issues contributed to parents’ loss of faith in the school and many parents withdrew their children.

When the evaluator expressed interest in sharing key insights from her ongoing data collection efforts with the teaching staff as they emerged, a process that often falls outside the formative evaluator’s role, the teachers insisted that she remain the “objective observer and documenter” of the school’s development and progress. The formative evaluation approach with this educational social innovation had several negative, unanticipated outcomes: 1) the lessons generated by the evaluation were delivered too late to be useful, and 2) the findings that were shared publicly in the year-end reports were used prematurely by parents, the school board, and other community members who concluded early on that the school “was not working.” This experience convinced the evaluator that there must be another way to evaluate social innovations—innovative and real-time initiatives for which there is no accepted model and/or that are in development.

What Kind of Evaluation Supports Learning and Adaptation for Social Innovation?

So what is the alternative? How can foundations and nonprofits remain committed to results and get the data they need without bringing innovation to a halt? An emerging approach called Developmental Evaluation (DE) is gaining traction among some funders who support collaborative, complex, evolving change processes. Originally conceptualized and described by evaluator Michael Quinn Patton, DE has an evolving definition:

> Developmental evaluation informs and supports innovative and adaptive development in complex dynamic environments. DE brings to innovation and adaptation the processes of asking evaluative questions, applying evaluation logic, and gathering and reporting evaluative data to support project, program, product, and/or organizational development with timely feedback. (Patton, 2011a)

The DE evaluator works collaboratively with social innovators to conceptualize, design, and test new approaches in a long-term, ongoing process of adaptation, intentional change, and development. (Patton, 2011b)

Data collected as a part of DE should be analyzed and interpreted with key stakeholders in a timely way to detect how the context is changing, affirm current practices or inform new activities, and guide programmatic and strategic questions regarding the innovation’s progress and likelihood of success.

Developmental evaluation has five characteristics that distinguish it from other evaluation approaches. These include the focus of the evaluation, the intentionality of learning throughout the evaluation, the emergent and responsive nature of the evaluation design, the role and position of the evaluator, and the emphasis on using a systems lens for collecting and analyzing data, as well as for generating insights.

Types of Questions Answered by DE

- What is developing or emerging as the innovation takes shape?
- What variations in effects are we seeing?
- What do the initial results reveal about expected progress?
- What seems to be working and not working?
- What elements merit more attention or changes?
- How is the larger system or environment responding to the innovation?
- How should the innovation be adapted in response to changing circumstances?
- How can the project adapt to the context in ways that are within the project’s control?

1. DE’s focus is on social innovations where there is no accepted model (and might never be) for solving the problem. As a result, the evaluation explores how, why, and with what effects the project is designed and implemented, and how
it is evolving, adapting, and responding to internal and external conditions.

_In the end, we want to get to outcomes, but we can't get there if we don't have a clear theory of change. We first think and develop an idea of what could work, then we develop a model. You test it to see if it works in different setting, tweaking it as you go based on feedback, and then you scale it. When the objective of the project is to develop that model, this is when you can use DE._ —John Cawley, The JW McConnell Family Foundation

2. **Continuous Learning** is intentionally embedded into the developmental evaluation process. It is a means of ensuring that all stakeholders not only take in information as the initiative unfolds, but also integrate the evaluation findings into their thinking and decision making processes, thus using their learning to refine, adapt, and change the innovation as needed. This involves providing the space, time, and resources for dialogue, reflection, questions, identifying and challenging values, beliefs and assumptions, and instituting feedback loops. It also involves the evaluation team’s involvement in ongoing sense-making activities: interpreting, synthesizing, and generating insights and recommendations using multiple forms of written and verbal communications.

_I would be open about what you can learn (as opposed to knowing what you want to learn). Is the desired outcome about learning a specific thing, or are the desired outcomes being able to learn any number of things that you don’t even know you’re going to learn until you get there?_ —Susan Patterson, Knight Foundation

3. **An emergent and adaptive evaluation design** ensures that the evaluation has purpose and that it can respond in nimble ways to emerging issues and questions. While there will often be a set of negotiated and planned evaluation questions and data collection activities at the beginning of a developmental evaluation, this plan will likely evolve and change as the innovation is designed and implemented. This might involve adding or eliminating certain data collection activities, expanding or adjusting the pool of data sources, going deeper into or rethinking some of the key evaluation questions, and/or developing new ways for communicating and reporting evaluation findings for various internal and external stakeholders.

_There is a connotation of exploration—the undertaking is complex enough and so contextually driven that we have to continue to have mechanisms to take a good look to see what's changing and what factors are at play, and to continuously modify our methods and measures to make sure we're attuned to what's happening on the ground and in the system._ —Meg Long, OMG Center for Collaborative Learning

4. **The role of the developmental evaluator** is a strategic learning partner and facilitator, which reflects a different role for most evaluators and their clients. Developmental evaluation requires that evaluators not only have basic professional evaluator competencies, but also experiences and strengths in:

- Facilitating group learning processes
- Identifying themes, synthesizing information, and generating insights in real-time
- Listening for what is being said as well as what is not being said
- Observing interpersonal and power dynamics
- Interpreting conversations and situations from different angles
- Zooming in to see the details of what is happening and zooming out to see big picture trends
- Building strong client relationships based on good rapport and trust
- Asking the right questions at the right time
- Facilitating courageous conversations and providing constructive feedback
- Being comfortable with ambiguity and change
- Using multiple forms of communications
- Being tactful and diplomatic
**Context:** Traditionally, education reform stakeholders have worked in silos to improve postsecondary outcomes from their own vantage point, resulting in a fragmented system that helps some, but fails many—particularly low-income young adults in underserved communities. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Community Partnerships portfolio posits that increasing postsecondary completion rates for low-income young adults requires the activation and coordination of a number of diverse stakeholders, including the K–12 educational system, higher education, the business community, political, civic, and community leaders, and social service providers. The goal of the portfolio’s evaluation is to understand what it really takes for a community to coalesce around a postsecondary completion goal. How does a community build a multi-tiered partnership among individuals and organizations that may never have worked together? And then, how do you get partners to change the way they do business to more effectively and efficiently support college success for low-income young adults? Answering these questions will help the Foundation structure its innovations, policy, and practice changes to increase the likelihood of successful implementation on the ground.

**Evaluation Approach:** While a Theory of Change articulated expectations within the Community Partnerships sites, that theory was very underdeveloped. There were four “buckets of work”: communities would develop partnerships, they would use data to inform their strategy, they would seek to build commitment among stakeholders, and they would tackle policy and practice change. That was essentially the extent of the “theory” behind this investment. As one of the program officers noted, you could drive an eighteen-wheeler through the holes in this theory of change, indicating just how large the gaps were in our knowledge. There was nothing to test yet; it was entirely up to the selected communities, armed with deep knowledge about their local context, to make sense of these four “buckets” and to shape the work as they saw fit. A developmental evaluation approach allowed the OMG Center evaluation team to make sense of the process alongside the grantees and the technical assistance providers (The National League of Cities and MDC). This helped a) define what the work actually looks like, b) explore how it differs under different conditions, and c) understand the factors that facilitated or impeded the sites’ progress. These factors will be critical for the Foundation to consider when pursuing future strategies that require local implementation.

**Evaluation Methods:** Developmental evaluation requires near-constant contact. The evaluation team connects directly with the grantees and their partners through interviews and site visits every three to four months. We speak with the technical assistance providers and the foundation program officer every two weeks and review documents and data from sites on a rolling basis. In most cases, we have access to document sharing websites that grantees have set up to support the work of their partnership, becoming de facto partners. We structure interviews to build off of previous conversations; this technique requires significant preparation from the evaluation team but results in a running narrative that documents in detail how the work is unfolding. Following every major data collection point, we share a rapid feedback memo with the site, the technical assistants, and the foundation team containing our observations and questions for consideration. We share a product nearly every eight weeks, and we pair most products with a debriefing call or a reflection meeting. We also have an annual Theory of Change refresh meeting that allows the evaluation, foundation, and technical assistance partners to fill in the Theory of Change as we learn more.

**Key Learnings:** The Community Partnerships portfolio was conceptualized as a systems change effort to realign stakeholder policies and practices with the ultimate goal of increased completion. The DE has allowed us to capture and synthesize an unprecedented level of nuance about how change happens in a given community—who needs to drive the agenda, who needs to support it, how they can get onboard, and what structures are needed to support the effort. DE has also helped us unearth the habitual and cultural practices and beliefs, as well as the informal systems, that exert enormous influence on how formal systemic players (e.g., school districts, higher education institutions, municipal leaders) operate. These informal systems could have been easily overlooked in a more traditional formative evaluation with a more structured framework of analysis. Such a result would have been very unfortunate, since a key lesson from the Community Partnerships portfolio is the importance of being aware of and managing both formal and informal systems in order to truly see an uptake of the postsecondary completion agenda.
If one doesn’t understand the dynamics of developmental situations, it’s very hard to communicate and operationalize developmental evaluation. It rests on embracing the uncertain, ambiguous, and emergent nature of the world and how we try to change it not only intellectually, but emotionally. In my experience, most of the challenges in DE aren’t really about the techniques of DE...they are challenges with working adaptively in a messy world.—Mark Cabaj, Here to There, and Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement

5. The developmental evaluator brings a complex systems orientation to the evaluation. The evaluation team is attuned to the complexity of social innovation and recognizes the interdependencies of variables, the importance of feedback loops, the location and amount of energy within the system, and the existing and developing boundaries, relationships, and power dynamics. The DE evaluator is also committed to identifying both expected and unanticipated outcomes of the initiative. A systems orientation acknowledges that change does not occur along a linear pathway and that even the best logic models and plans cannot fully predict the effects an innovation may have. The developmental evaluator is less interested in isolating the individual factors and effects of the innovation than she might be in a summative evaluation. Instead, she is particularly interested in the ways in which the various program elements, components, and actors interact with one another, as well as understanding how particular activities and interactions trigger changes in other dynamic parts of the system.

You don’t just look at the target of your gaze. When you have a systems thinking lens, you also step back and look at the environment, and at how things might have happened. Borrowing a phrase from the TV series “The Wire,” with “soft eyes” you step back to look at the situation in different ways. What are the boundaries here, what are the inter-relationships, and what are the different perspectives at play?—Margaret Hargreaves, Mathematica

While some formative and summative evaluations may also be characterized by a few of these principles, DE always includes all five. Without them, the evaluation cannot close the feedback loops that allow decision makers and implementers to adapt as the initiative unfolds.

What Kinds of Grantmaking Strategies Are A Good Fit for Developmental Evaluation?

Founders should consider using developmental evaluation rather than formative or summative evaluation (or worse yet, no evaluation at all) for grantmaking strategies that embody the characteristics of innovation: initiatives that attempt to address or solve a complex problem with an adaptive solution. Such efforts may have clear goals and a vision of a long term outcome, but the path to achieving these outcomes is not linear and the outcomes are not well known, agreed upon, or clear. In reality, the work is a bit of a mystery...

Malcolm Gladwell, in “What the Dog Saw,” has a great story where he makes a distinction between a puzzle and mystery. It's a nice metaphor for talking about the difference between simple, complicated, and complex. In a puzzle, if you do your homework and get more data, you will solve the puzzle. More data is better. In a mystery, it's not so much data as sense-making that's really critical. A lot of DE situations aren't puzzles, they're mysteries—like how to solve homelessness. There are multiple perspectives, there's no one truth, data are shifting. The burden of proof may or may not be high, but the data even at its best are somewhat ambiguous, so you really need great sense-making skills. —Mark Cabaj, Here to There, and Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement

There are several common grantmaking strategies that are better suited for developmental evaluation than formative or summative evaluation (Patton, 2010):
For initiatives that develop in an ongoing way and will never settle into a fixed model, such as advocacy and policy efforts or comprehensive community initiatives.
The way these kinds of initiatives unfold depends deeply on the context within which they occur, and many independent factors and actors affect progress. As a result, they will not stabilize into a fixed model and must continually adapt to the changing environment. Developmental evaluation in these contexts provides an ongoing stream of information and insights that help designers, implementers, and funders know how relationships and structures are developing, what is working well, what challenges are emerging, what unanticipated consequences are surfacing, and what level of progress emerges on desired outcomes.

When exploring the creation of a new model, the basic ingredients of which are not yet known. Even when the eventual goal is the testing, replication, or scaling of a proven model, DE is the first step in understanding what the right core ingredients might be. Similar to beta testing, the developmental evaluation would provide useful information for developing the intervention before it is fully rolled out, refined, or expanded, thus increasing confidence in its potential effects, influence, and impact.

When replicating a program in a new site, context, or population that requires adaptation. A developmental evaluation for these purposes would pay particular attention to how the guiding principles of a program are being incorporated into work practices, the systems and structures that support or impede implementation, the relationships that are developed or challenged, the ways in which the principles are adapted to fit into new cultural and social contexts, and the unexpected as well as anticipated outcomes.

For systems change initiatives that seek to trigger change across multiple systems or in a particularly complex system. When a social change effort requires major disruptions to a current system, developmental evaluation focuses on the phenomenon known as the “butterfly effect,” where seemingly small events can lead to more significant changes to the larger system. DE evaluators track and collect information on emergent patterns, relationships, feedback loops, and energy as the initiative is designed and implemented.

Understanding how the various systems interact, adapt, and change in response to the environment is critical to supporting wider scale implementation in other contexts and locations.

When decision makers need to rapidly adapt an initiative in response to a sudden crisis or change. Where the organization is interested in responding to and evaluating the effects of an unforeseen change or crisis, there

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Questions for Determining if DE Fits Your Initiative

- What is the nature of the problem we're attempting to solve? Is it truly a complex problem?
- What is the system we are trying to affect and how complex is it? (E.g., are there many organizations, actors, activities in this system?)
- To what extent is our intervention a complex or adaptive solution to this problem (e.g., exploratory and flexible, and dependent on the moves or actions of other players)?
- Is our intervention based on a model that is already developed? If yes, do we know what sequence of activities are expected to happen?
- To what extent can we predict most of the short, interim, and long-term outcomes of our intervention? If we cannot predict these, why not?
- Do we need data and feedback as we work to be able to decide next steps?

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I’ve used DE inside traditional evaluations where there is a model—for example, in home visiting models, which are very specific. Evaluations of these programs can be very traditional. There is a focus on the fidelity of implementation and on the achievement of particular outcomes. However, there can be a developmental side to those evaluations as well, looking at how those grantees are building infrastructure to support those particular implementation models. We want to know, “What kinds of infrastructure are needed to implement, sustain, or scale up those models?” The answers to those questions are much less well known. —Margaret Hargreaves, Mathematica
is usually no time to develop a model for action. Given new circumstances and uncertainty about what to do, decision makers must develop approaches in real time and need data quickly. Because developmental evaluation by definition is adaptive and responsive to arising information needs, DE evaluators are able to nimbly and quickly hone in on what information is needed by whom, when, and in what formats.

A social change effort might include a combination of the innovative components above and components that look more like a stable program that is ready for formative or summative evaluation. In these cases, some aspects of the initiative might be best served through a developmental evaluation, while other components could be evaluated using a formative or summative approach.

Deciding whether developmental evaluation is the right approach for a social change initiative requires a candid assessment of the extent to which the initiative is truly in development. Even in cases where an initiative's concept is innovative (i.e., the problem is complex and there is no model for addressing it), the culture, structure, and processes of the funder(s) and implementers may not allow for development. In other words, developmental evaluation works best for the kinds of initiatives described above as well as those in which foundations and implementers are open to and flexible enough for adaptation. While this might sound simple enough (what organization doesn’t want to think of itself as open and flexible?), we found that some of the most common practices in the fields of evaluation and philanthropy—from foundation contracting and evaluator business models to the traditional relationship between the evaluator and program implementers—are fundamentally designed around the assumption that adaptation and exploration will be kept to a minimum. For developmental evaluation to work well, foundations and evaluators both need to proactively examine how their processes and habits of interaction can support the adaptation that is necessary for social innovation.

**How Can Funders Know If They Are Ready for Developmental Evaluation?**

Developmental evaluation requires a genuine and conscious commitment to learning and change. It is grounded in a humbleness and ability to say, “We don’t quite know what’s going to happen here, but we believe that our intervention (initiative, project) can contribute to making a difference in solving this complex social problem. And, because we can’t predict all possible outcomes or how this effort will affect the people and systems with whom and within which we’re operating, we need an evaluation approach that provides us with real time questions and data so we can learn and adjust our strategy and activities along the way.”

Successful developmental evaluations require a set of conditions that ensure that DE is the right fit for what is being evaluated. In addition to first determining whether the problem being addressed and its solution fit the criteria described in the section above, the foundation, nonprofit, or team of program implementers must be ready to effectively engage in and support developmental evaluation.
Conditions for a Successful Developmental Evaluation

**CONDITION 1: The organization’s leadership is willing to take risks, be flexible, and make necessary changes to the initiative.**

Developmental evaluation often involves testing the innovation’s ability to achieve a particular strategy. Thus, it is imperative that leaders not only exhibit a high level of willingness and ability to engage in the evaluation whenever necessary, but also that they use evaluation findings to make changes in the initiative’s implementation and/or strategy. Leaders need to a) communicate, in multiple ways, the importance of the developmental evaluation; b) be willing to provide adequate time, personnel, and financial resources; and, perhaps most of all, c) be committed to using evaluation information (learnings), to make course corrections, improvements, and changes to the initiative and its related strategy.

To determine whether leadership is ready for DE, consider:
- To what extent does leadership value and use evaluation findings for programmatic and strategic decision making?
- To what extent are leaders comfortable with making changes in the initiative or the strategy as new learnings emerge?
- To what extent are leaders able to balance emergent and ongoing evaluation findings typical of developmental evaluation with the accountability demands made by the Board and external stakeholders?

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DE needs to be seen as something that’s tied closely to strategy. It needs to have strong ownership from the President or chief program officer, and has to be part of a program officer’s core responsibilities, rather than something that’s simply delegated to consultants. The team has to be involved in the design of the evaluation and think carefully through the questions... It has to be part and parcel of their job. —Mayur Patel, Knight Foundation

**EVALUATING SOCIAL INNOVATION – 13**
CONDITION 2: The organization’s values and culture support innovation, continuous learning, and adapting to its environment.

Developmental evaluation works best when an organization has an authentic commitment to learning and change. A learning organization culture supports risk taking, information sharing, trust and respect for individual and cultural differences, collaboration, asking questions, embracing and learning from failure or mistakes, and using data for decision making. Developmental evaluation can play a key role in supporting individual, group, and organizational learning under the right conditions.

The following questions may be helpful in diagnosing an organization’s culture:

• To what extent is the organization a learning organization? Where and how does it learn best?
• To what extent is there a culture of risk taking within the organization? What supports and/or inhibits staff and leaders from taking risks?
• What is the level of trust within and among the staff and leadership? What supports and/or inhibits this level of trust?
• How well does the organization adapt to change and unanticipated events or consequences?

CONDITION 3: The organization provides sufficient time, people, and financial resources for ongoing inquiry.

Evaluation of any kind is an investment in the organization’s ability to make sound operational, programmatic, and strategic decisions. Valuing evaluation means providing the necessary time, personnel, and financial resources to support evaluation activities and the use of findings. While evaluation costs vary greatly depending on how much information is needed and from how many sources, the depth of information required, and the time required to collect, analyze, and synthesize the data and findings, developmental evaluation may require more resources than some other types of evaluation. This is usually because evaluators spend more time in strategy discussions and facilitating the application of findings to decisions. The organization needs to provide sufficient resources so that the DE can be implemented in ways that provide the most meaningful and useful information.

When considering whether the organization is willing to invest the necessary resources in developmental evaluation, ask:

• What is the organization’s history in resourcing evaluations?
• To what extent is the organization prepared to allocate sufficient time, personnel, and financial resources to a developmental evaluation?
• How flexible would the organization be to changing allocations of time, personnel, and funds during the course of the developmental evaluation?
CASE EXAMPLE: The YouthScape Initiative
Provided by John Cawley, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation

Context: YouthScape was designed as part of the Foundation’s inclusion strategy and focused on young people who feel disconnected from school and other mainstream organizations led by adults. The objective was to test the assumption that engaging young people in local decision-making develops and draws upon their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In doing so, the program serves to enrich democracy in our communities. The YouthScape initiative brought together partners from different sectors at multiple sites across Canada, many of whom had different perspectives on both the rationale and strategies for engaging marginalized youth. The design and implementation of the initiative were inspired by and contributed to the development of local youth leaders, yet the real challenge was to get youth-friendly values and practices “into the water supply” of social service agencies and municipal governments. Most youth engagement experiments are either well-meaning, adult-led youth programs or youth-led projects kept at arm’s length from the core business of community organizations. YouthScape challenged mainstream partner organizations to embrace the centrality of youth participation and decision-making in their governance and operations while delivering community outcomes.

Evaluation: Approach: As the Foundation shifted its funding to complex, long-term initiatives that are not so much pre-planned as emergent, the inadequacy of conventional evaluation methods became evident. We need to know, in real time, how a cluster of complementary prototypes are doing, not whether we have arrived at a pre-determined spot, on budget, and at a specified time. Developmental evaluation overturns many of the assumptions of more traditional approaches; it is embedded rather than detached, continuous rather than episodic, and—most importantly—its goal is learning, not accountability. It provides useful information to the do-er rather than cover for the giver.

Evaluation Methods: Each of the five YouthScape communities had a part-time developmental evaluator who participated in key events, gathering feedback before and after from a range of stakeholders: young people, staff, managers, volunteers, and community partners. The data was fed back to community organizations immediately. On a monthly basis, the five community-based developmental evaluators held a conference call under the mentorship of the national developmental evaluator. This provided an opportunity to aggregate data nationally and for coaching. The national developmental evaluator formally communicated key national trends (emerging opportunities, points of tension) to the managing agency and to the funder on a quarterly basis, and more often informally.

Key Learnings: During YouthScape’s first 18 months, the developmental evaluators were able to illuminate tensions and misunderstandings that, had they gone unattended, might have undermined the entire initiative. Community organizations, the national managing agency, and the Foundation learned of design flaws, subterranean grumbling, hidden strengths, and promising breakthroughs as a result of the developmental evaluators’ ability to provide real-time feedback to the initiative implementers. Developmental evaluation allowed us to modify program designs, provide training, convene partners, and create spaces for airing concerns in ways that we could never have anticipated. In short, their contributions to the success of the initiative were significant.

CONDITION 4: The organization is committed to open communications and ensuring that information is accessible and used internally and externally.

Developmental evaluation is all about learning and using what is being learned to a) better understand contexts and situations, b) make informed decisions, and c) take action when needed. In many ways, the success of DE is grounded in the frequency, format, accessibility, and transparency of communications throughout the evaluation. To decide whether the organization’s communications practices will support DE, consider the following questions.

- What internal communications systems and supports already exist within the organization, and is there a culture of information sharing within the organization?
- How comfortable is the organization with receiving evaluation information at different times and in various formats throughout an evaluation (compared with traditional interim and/or final written reports)?
- How are lessons learned currently shared within the organization? With grantees? With the field?
The success of any evaluation, including developmental evaluations, often depends on matching the right evaluation approach to the questions and information needs at hand, as well as the readiness and willingness of the foundation and its grantees to engage in and support the various evaluation activities and learnings that it produces. While we learned from our interviews that few organizations embarking on DE have all of these conditions in place, it is important to determine which are missing and to create a plan for managing the gaps or building the organization’s readiness and commitment to sustain developmental evaluation processes.

You can’t wait until the end of a multiyear project to find out how it’s going, but at the same time, you can’t do it every month. You have to have enough time to let something actually happen. With KCIC, we have enough staggered cohorts to get some interim information along the way and I think that’s about right. It takes a while for these projects to get going. You can ask questions too soon and not really learn anything, or wait too long and it’s no longer useful. — Susan Patterson, Knight Foundation

How Can Foundations Be Ready For The Tough Questions?

Because developmental evaluation differs from other evaluation approaches in several ways, including purpose, position and role of the evaluator, and emphasis on real-time learning in the midst of uncertainty, our interviewees noted that a set of tough questions inevitably arises for both foundations and evaluators using DE. Intentionally discussing these questions up front—and revisiting them throughout the evaluation—can ultimately strengthen and enhance the overall evaluation effort.

What about accountability for impact?

Accountability in philanthropy is normally defined in one of two ways: 1) did grantees do what they said they were going to do, and 2) did the grantees or the funding strategy produce the intended outcomes? However, both of these conceptualizations of accountability can be a mismatch for innovative social change strategies, particularly early in the innovation process when the pathway to outcomes, and often the outcomes themselves, are emergent and uncertain. As a result, poorly-timed demands for traditional accountability information (whether in the form of grantee reporting against the programmatic outcomes predicted in their grant proposals or through summative evaluations designed to judge a program’s merit, worth, or value) can send program staff and grantees mixed messages about whether their funder truly expects them to innovate, adapt, and test new approaches that may or may not work.

Rather than holding themselves accountable at the wrong time for meeting pre-determined results, or for accurately charting a pathway to specific outcomes up front, social innovators (including funders) are acting accountably when they pay careful attention to what is emerging as they work and adapt accordingly. With this kind of re-framing, accountability and learning in complex social change initiatives go hand in glove. Innovators are accountable to the learning. Boards and leadership should revisit this framing of accountability in innovation at the start of a strategy, but also throughout its life. If and when a strategy transitions from innovation and adaptation into a more stable, predictable phase, a corresponding transition in evaluation approach will help answer more traditional accountability questions.

The biggest challenge is that when people think about evaluation, they think outcomes. We’ve been hard wired to automatically think outcomes when we hear the word “evaluation.” So you have to set expectations on the front end.... It’s important to be focused on learning and improvement, but as an initiative develops, people will invariably ask “Where are the outcomes? What happened to people’s lives?” That’s always going to be an impulse and actually a very good one at that. I hope the emphasis on DE would never take us away from this. — Mayur Patel, Knight Foundation
CASE EXAMPLE: The Knight Foundation’s Community Information Challenge
Provided by Mayur Patel, John S. & James L. Knight Foundation

**Context:** The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation’s five-year, $24 million initiative—the Knight Community Information Challenge (KCIC)—was designed to respond to the rapid disruptions in journalism and the decline of local, community news and information. Through more than 76 KCIC funded projects, foundations are creating and supporting new news models, online information hubs, citizen journalism activities, youth media outlets, advocacy campaigns, and civic engagement activities. The KCIC reflects a social innovation in that it aims to catalyze efforts among community and place-based foundations to creatively use media and technology to keep their communities informed in ways they have not done in the past. The initiative represents a new approach to strengthening community information by encouraging community and place-based foundations to focus on local media and news as key elements of their existing programmatic strategies.

**Evaluation Approach:** The Developmental Evaluation approach was chosen because it provides: a) continuous feedback to Knight about how the initiative is being implemented by its many grantees and its progress on moving the field, b) information about how grantees are adapting and changing as a result of their projects, and c) insights and recommendations for how Knight could think about and implement any changes in their current strategy, as well as implications for the next phase of strategy development. Some of the guiding evaluation questions include:

- **Motivators/Barriers:** What internal or external factors motivate community and place-based foundations to become engaged in addressing community information needs? What internal or external barriers prevent foundations from engaging?
- **Strategic Alignment:** To what extent are foundations’ strategies aligned with community information? How are foundations integrating (“overlaying”) information and media on top of their program-level strategies?
- **Learning:** What are grantees learning about launching, implementing, and evaluating their information projects? What lessons can grantees share with each other and the field?
- **Impact:** In what ways are KCIC projects changing the behaviors or attitudes of community members?
- **Information Ecosystems:** What community-level conditions (e.g., organizations, infrastructure, and activities) foster a healthy information ecosystem? What role might community or place-based foundations play to provide structure and support for information needs within the community?

**Evaluation Methods:** The KCIC developmental evaluation uses a collaborative, utilization-focused, and organizational learning approach and includes commonly used evaluation methods such as interviews, surveys, focus groups, observation, and document review. Evaluators pay particular attention to the ways in which grantees develop their projects and affect their local news and information ecosystems. In addition, they determine if and how the initiative is “moving the field” in the adoption of news and information as core to their organizations. As new and emerging questions and issues arise, the evaluators adjust the evaluation plan in timely and responsive ways to capture information as needed by the Knight team. After each data collection activity, evaluators analyze and synthesize the data, and then share the results with Knight in a variety of formats, including email memos, PowerPoint decks, and phone working sessions. Knight’s commitment to building the field has led the evaluators to reformat many of the evaluations’ findings for external audiences in the form of briefs, visually appealing reports, blog posts, toolkits, and webinars.

**Key Learnings:** While the developmental evaluation provided ongoing learning for Knight, which enabled it to make real time changes to the initiative’s implementation, the evaluation results and key insights are now helping inform the next iteration of Knight’s strategy. The evaluation has provided feedback on the extent to which the current initiative has penetrated the community foundation field, as well as on possible opportunities for Knight to move beyond project-based support to larger multi-year partnerships with foundations that are highly committed to supporting local news and information. Specifically, the developmental evaluation:
- Helped Knight see opportunities to connect to local leadership
- Influenced the way Knight thought about selection processes
- Helped Knight see where foundations have focused their efforts and why.

The assessment has also shed light on the factors influencing foundations’ engagement with news and information, as well as the types of support structures Knight Foundation could put in place to deepen its engagement.
Is DE rigorous?

Questions about rigor in evaluation most often focus exclusively on the evaluation’s design and methods. Yet rigor is found not only in design or methods. High quality evaluation requires rigorous evaluative and critical thinking, as well as critically examining assumptions—practices that are always integrated into developmental evaluation.

When focusing more narrowly on rigor as a feature of data collection methods, evaluators must adequately test data collection instruments, sample sufficient numbers, and triangulate data using multiple methods and sources. With most formative and summative evaluations, the data collection and analysis schedule is determined primarily by the evaluation design and methodological rigor required to establish certainty about the intervention’s effects. Yet, while methodological rigor provides greater confidence in the accuracy of findings, the trade-off is that data sometimes arrive too late to inform a tactical or strategic decision, or to illuminate a particular window of opportunity.

For evaluation data and feedback to be useful for decision making while a strategy is unfolding, they must be available to program staff at the right moment. Rarely do strategic decisions or emergent opportunities follow the predictability of the semi-annual reporting schedule dictated in many evaluation engagements. While important decision-making moments are sometimes planned from the outset (e.g., board meeting schedules when key funding decisions are made, scheduled program reviews, election cycles, partnership convenings), many are unexpected. For example, a key player or institution may enter or leave the scene, an unexpected economic or political crisis may occur, or a large new funding opportunity may appear, causing a significant shift in the dynamics of the system that requires a decision within weeks or even days.

In an innovative change strategy, it is impossible to anticipate all of these questions ahead of time. As a result, evaluators conducting developmental evaluations need to be nimble and responsive as they collect and analyze data quickly, while still maintaining a high level of quality. The evaluator and the program team must ask all along the way: How much data is enough? How certain do we need to be before we take the next step? Which changes or dynamics do we need to be most certain about and which can be left to instinct or hunch? What is truly urgent for us to know and do now? Evaluators, whose professional standards of practice call on them to be clear about the limitations of an evaluation and its findings, can include the program team in decisions about methodological rigor versus timeliness so that the group “owns” the trade-offs. And perhaps most importantly, developmental evaluators should ensure that rigor is guarded in other aspects of the evaluation, including rigorous questioning, analysis, and sensemaking.

Where is the boundary between the evaluator and program decision makers?

Evaluators are sometimes positioned as objective and somewhat distant observers, collecting and analyzing data and offering findings to others who decide whether and how to act in response. However, this role does not effectively serve developmental evaluations where evaluators must be “in the mix,” bringing observations and data to key meetings, asking tough questions, and drawing insights out of the group to increase

Trust at all levels is critical—the “do no harm” concept really applies here. Everyone has to know and trust that it’s not the intent of the evaluator to highlight the holes in the work and underscore what is not working. In developmental evaluation, you need to create space for honest conversations with the funders, the grantees, and the intermediaries to share your observations and help fine tune and improve the strategy as the work unfolds. Maintaining a rigorous methodology will help you maintain objectivity. —Meg Long, OMG Center for Collaborative Learning
understanding about how well the strategy is working, in real time. An evaluator who is too removed from the desires and hopes of those making strategic decisions will miss valuable conversations that can only be had through close connection to—or even integration within—the program team.

An evaluator who assumes this integrated role serves as a “critical friend,” coach, or technical assistance provider, which can sometimes generate confusion among grantees or tensions with other intermediaries or program staff. This tension is exacerbated when evaluators ask questions that may highlight either interpersonal problems or conflicts between funders and grantees. Balancing this tension, of course, requires significant trust between parties. Evaluators and program staff must build in (and budget for) sufficient time to create and manage this relationship. The program team must value and support the role of evaluator as critical friend, while the evaluator has to maintain integrity, professional evaluation standards, and a critical perspective.

**Does DE work for everyone?**

Many believe there are two types of individuals: those who briefly reflect on data and take action primarily based on intuition and experience, and those who mine data and explore interpretations through a process of dialogue, reflection, and questioning assumptions before taking action. For those who are more reflection-oriented, taking action on uncertain or imperfect information—a common occurrence in social innovation—can feel careless and unnecessarily risky. The developmental evaluator has to balance time spent on reflection and dialogue with time spent acting, and be prepared to deal with tensions between these two kinds of learning and decision-making styles.

While DE is specifically designed to provide data and findings in a timely manner, it can also cause a sense of information overload, particularly for action-oriented people who are unaccustomed to a robust feedback loop. Evaluators can balance the tension between reflection and action by helping the program team identify and prioritize evaluation questions and data collection activities that are pivotal to supporting action steps.

**How do we budget for DE?**

The practice of developmental evaluation is sufficiently different from most formative and summative evaluations that funders and evaluators often grapple with how to set appropriate evaluation budgets. Budgeting for DE includes anticipating the costs of the evaluator’s regular participation in strategy and/or working team discussions, as well as allotting time for facilitating frequent group reflection and learning sessions about the evaluation’s findings.

One solution to the budgeting dilemma is to develop an evaluation plan that serves as a guide and base scope of work for the evaluation team, but also to build in a retainer that can cover emergent and unexpected evaluation costs.
This amount and how it gets used can be negotiated and agreed upon by the funder and the evaluators as needs arise. Throughout the developmental evaluation, the team should take time to revisit and amend the evaluation plan and budget. Mayur Patel of the Knight Foundation offers the following advice to funders about developmental evaluation budgeting:

*My impulse with all our evaluation work is to try to get everything nailed down as much as possible before we start. In many cases, that’s the wrong impulse for a DE. You have to have so much more trust in the capacity of the evaluation team. We try to build in a minimum amount of work or set of activities that will have to be done for us to be satisfied and then create phases and “stage gates” where we say, at this juncture, we know we’re going to have to make several decisions about the direction of the work.... We think there might be a ceiling to the amount, and we’ll decide how to allocate that once we know more about how the work is unfolding.*

**Who gets to decide when and how to adapt?**

When multiple organizations are involved in an innovative strategy, the question inevitably arises: who decides what kind of adaptation is necessary, and who is expected to adapt? Some developmental evaluations are designed to support grantees’ innovation and adaptation, while others are designed primarily for the funder’s use. This can be a particularly tough balance to strike when a funder commissions and manages the evaluation but expects the grantees or a larger group of partners to adapt in response to the findings. Some grantees have reported frustration when DE is designed to inform the funder’s strategy (including whether or not the grantee will continue to be part of the strategy), yet the grantee bears the burden of providing the bulk of the evaluation data. Alternately, when grantees have limited power over or are not included in the process of making sense of the data and their implications for action, grantees can experience “whiplash,” as funders may expect them to transform their strategies too often or too early in response to developmental evaluation data.

Because DE is intended to support innovation and experimentation, those who are expected to revise their strategy in response to the developmental evaluation must play an active role in the evaluation, including helping to define what questions data collection should answer, participating in data interpretation, and deciding how to adapt in response to the data. Even when the DE is intended to inform the funder’s strategy, inviting grantees and other partners to help make sense of the data and explore its implications can enrich the funder’s strategy. At the very least, funders and evaluators should be transparent about how “sensemaking” will occur and how they will make decisions about adaptation. Additionally, the funder and evaluator can actively work to create safe opportunities and structures within which grantees can make sense of data on their own.

Developmental evaluators and programmatic decision makers can productively manage these tough issues by paying close attention to when and where they appear and then addressing them head-on as a team. In most cases, doing so will provide the team with a natural opportunity to explore questions that are important not only to the smooth functioning of the evaluation, but also to the overall strategy. Revisiting whether the team’s understanding of accountability (accountability for outcomes or accountability for learning) still applies as the innovation evolves.
can help the team identify whether their effort is stabilizing into an intervention that could be expected to produce predictable outcomes. Weighing the trade-offs between methodological rigor and timeliness of information can help team members pinpoint when they should be making key decisions and which decision points they feel least confident about. Attending to the question of who adapts and who has decision-making power about how to adapt can help the team explore and clarify the role each player has in an innovative effort. In short, these tough questions are not a reason to shy away from using developmental evaluation to support innovation. Instead, they make both the evaluation and the social change effort better.

**It’s Time To Evaluate Differently**

Developmental evaluation contributes to learning about the effectiveness, relevance, and clarity of an organization’s strategy. It helps manage uncertainty in complex and changing environments, giving foundations and nonprofits greater confidence to experiment with solutions where none are known.

> As this Foundation shifted its funding to complex, long-term initiatives that are not as pre-planned as emergent, the inadequacy of the usual evaluation methods became evident. We needed a compass, not a roadmap. We needed to know we were on the right track, not that we had arrived at a pre-determined spot, on budget, and at the specified time. —Tim Brodhead, past-President and CEO, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, quoted in, Dozois, Langlois, & Blanchet-Cohen, 2010, p. 6

The time is well past ripe for adding developmental evaluation to the philanthropic sector’s portfolio of evaluation approaches. If we are serious about finding and using innovative ideas and practices to help solve complex, deeply rooted, and pervasive social problems, then we must have access to high quality, timely, and useful information from the beginning of an innovation’s design throughout its evolution. We cannot afford to wait six months, a year, or longer to know if we had the right strategy, employed the most effective tactics, made the right investments, engaged the right stakeholders, or followed a path to achieving our desired outcomes. The benefits of engaging in and supporting developmental evaluation are fundamentally grounded in an organization’s interest in and commitment to learning and using data to inform strategic decision-making. The insights and clarity that DE provides—about the influence and effects of a social innovation—may lead to a greater likelihood that the intervention’s goals will be achieved.
References


Overview of the Research Study and Acknowledgements

Purpose:

The purpose of this study was to:

• Understand the extent to which funders who are experimenting with innovative social change strategies are using an adaptive evaluation approach.
• Make explicit how adaptive evaluation can contribute to internal evaluation approaches and systems.
• Articulate a compelling case that adaptive evaluation is imperative for innovative, systems-oriented social change efforts and is an indispensable means of strategic learning.
• Leave readers with an understanding of the organizational requirements and benefits of adopting an adaptive evaluation approach.

Our hope is that the study's results and white paper will support strategic learning for all funders—not just those with large endowments and/or evaluation staff. Developmental evaluation is about thinking and practicing evaluation differently, regardless of size, assets, or focus. To that end, foundations of all sizes would benefit from including developmental evaluations into their portfolio of evaluation approaches.

Framing Questions:

• What environmental conditions have created the need for strategic and catalytic philanthropy, and what is the parallel need for evaluation?
• What kinds of evaluation approaches are used by funders who are experimenting with innovative, systems-oriented grantmaking approaches? To what extent are they satisfied with these approaches? What are they learning and not learning from these evaluations?
• How is developmental evaluation different from other evaluation approaches? To what extent does adaptive evaluation require the evaluator to have a different set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes/beliefs?
• What does it look like to do developmental evaluation? What conditions are necessary for engaging in developmental evaluations?
• What is the role of developmental evaluation within the foundation’s portfolio of evaluation approaches?
• How must funders re-think the role of evaluation—and transform their approach to evaluation—in order to support strategic learning?
• What benefits exist for funders and nonprofits to using a developmental evaluation approach when evaluating change in complex social systems? Why should funders invest in this type of evaluation?

Data Collection Methods:

• Literature Review: We reviewed more than 70 articles, papers, books, reports, and blog posts on the topics of developmental evaluation, strategic learning, learning and evaluation in philanthropy, and complex adaptive systems.

• Phone Interviews: We conducted one- to two-hour interviews with the following foundation staff members, grantees, and evaluation consultants to better understand their experiences and perspectives on developmental evaluation. We are very grateful to these individuals, who gave freely of their time and greatly informed the thinking that is reflected in this paper. In alphabetical order, they are:

1. Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, Senior Associate, International Institute for Child Rights and Development and Assistant Professor, Concordia University
2. Mark Cabaj, President, Here to There, and Associate, Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement
3. John Cawley, Program Manager, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation
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5. Elizabeth Dozois, Principal, Word on the Street Ltd.
7. Marc Langois, Skipping Stones Consulting
8. Meg Long, Deputy Director, OMG Center for Collaborative Learning
9. Margaret Hargreaves, Senior Health Researcher, Mathematica
10. Liz Joyner, Executive Director, The Village Square, Inc.
11. Ellen Martin, Senior Consultant, FSG
12. Kate McKegg, Director, The Knowledge Institute (a member of the Kinnect Group)
14. Jenn Miller, Senior Policy and Research Analyst, Ontario Trillium Foundation
15. Mayur Patel, Vice-President Strategy and Assessment, Knight Foundation
16. Susan Patterson, Program Director, Knight Foundation
17. Michael Q. Patton, Founder and Director, Utilization-Focused Evaluation
18. Kate Sandel, Fellow, Strategic Data Project
19. Dan Wilson, Manager, Policy, Research and Evaluation, Ontario Trillium Foundation

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TANYA BEER is Associate Director of the Center for Evaluation Innovation in Washington, D.C. The Center’s mission is to build the field of evaluation in areas that are challenging to measure and where traditional program evaluation approaches are not always a good fit, such as advocacy, systems change and communications. The Center’s work is anchored in a strong belief in strategic learning, or using evaluation to help organizations learn and adapt quickly to increase their likelihood of success. For more about the Tanya and the Center, see www.evaluationinnovation.org.
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I am delighted to present our Strategic Plan.

Throughout the first half of 2007 we asked residents for their vision for Guelph over the next 20 years. Hundreds of you responded. Thank you for contributing your thoughtful, creative, and inspiring ideas to this process.

Our vision for Guelph is a remarkable one: “to be the city that makes a difference.” The Plan contains goals and related strategic objectives that provide a road map for how we can strive to achieve the vision over the long term.

The Plan is meant to inspire all of us to consider how we can make a difference, in our neighbourhoods and in the world. While the Plan’s ambitious goals won’t be reached overnight, progress will be made year by year and the City will report to residents regularly on how we are doing.

For Council and City staff, the Strategic Plan will be an important tool for setting priorities, making decisions, and managing operations for years to come.

My hope is that the impact of the Plan will extend well beyond the walls of City Hall, into every home and business in Guelph. In keeping with the Plan’s collaborative spirit, everyone in the community will have a role to play in achieving it.

I am often impressed by the tremendous passion Guelphites have for their city. That passion was in evidence throughout the strategic planning process, and it will certainly serve us well as, together, we strive to make Guelph “the city that makes a difference.”

Sincerely,

Karen Farbridge
Mayor

On behalf of the City of Guelph, the Mayor and members of Council would like to thank the many individuals and organizations that contributed to the development of the 2007 Strategic Plan. Their hard work, dedication and commitment to the strategic planning process was instrumental in the creation of this Plan.
Introduction

The City of Guelph’s long-term, community-driven Strategic Plan responds to both current and emerging trends facing this municipality and to the aspirations and realities of hundreds of community members. Included in this document is an overview of the forces of change at play, the collaborative and inclusive process that was undertaken, how the Plan will be achieved, the vision, mission, goals, and strategic objectives.

Founded on core principles of open communication and collaboration, the City’s Strategic Plan is also dependent on those same elements for the successful realization of the goals contained within. There is a role for everyone to play in its ultimate success – Council, staff, and members of the community. Every positive effort undertaken in these collective directions will help to better meet current needs and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.
Guelph:
Shaping our future

The City of Guelph was founded by John Galt on April 23, 1827 and since that day it has flourished into a model single-tier municipality with a current population of 120,000. There is great pride in the community, evident in its many heritage landmarks, world renown festivals, well maintained greenspaces, vibrant neighbourhoods and the high level of public participation and collaboration in public decision making.

Trends affecting governance structures, services, programs and the methods by which they are delivered have and will continue to influence cities and towns. Guelph, too, is subject to these ‘forces of change’ which include:

• **Growth**: Guelph has experienced steady growth in the past and this is expected to continue in the future. The city has doubled in population over the past 40 years, and now has a population of approximately 120,000 people. Guelph constitutes one part of the overall Greater Golden Horseshoe area which is expected to grow by four million people by the year 2031.

• **Environment**: Global climate change is considered by many as the primary threat facing the modern world today. In many communities there is increasing awareness of the crucial role that local governments can play in helping to ensure the sustainable management of resources and effective stewardship of the natural environment.

• **Technology**: Advances in Internet infrastructure, communications and multimedia are increasingly facilitating globalization, influencing workplaces and allowing for greater sharing of information. As part of the global community, municipalities, including Guelph, are well positioned to capitalize on international best practices and innovations.

• **Demographics**: Primary factors that will continue to influence Canada’s demographic profile include an aging population and increasing cultural and linguistic diversity. For local governments, these factors will have a substantial impact on what services are provided and the methods of delivery.

• **Politics**: The place of local governments in the Canadian intergovernmental system is being redefined and the important role that cities play in the competitive global economy is being recognized. New roles and partnerships are being forged and citizen expectations for collaborative public decision-making processes will continue to develop.

• **Economics**: Increased funding responsibilities coupled with lower provincial grants will continue to result in a challenging fiscal environment in which municipalities operate. An ongoing need exists to fund services in an accountable and fair manner.

In direct response to these trends, challenges and opportunities, the City of Guelph has created a new community-driven Strategic Plan. This plan positions the City well to:

1. ensure the ongoing effective and efficient delivery of a full range of relevant programs and services; and

2. continue on a successful path towards securing a prosperous and sustainable future for generations to come.

The Strategic Plan will be used as an integral management tool for ongoing priority setting and decision making. It will enhance organizational effectiveness and continue to demonstrate accountability to the community.
Strategic Plan process:

Collaborative and inclusive

In 1993, the City of Guelph produced its first Strategic Plan entitled, “The Royal City – Looking Ahead.” Since that time, the Strategic Plan has undergone a number of revisions under the guidance of successive Councils. The process for creating the most recent Strategic Plan incorporated the Smart Guelph principles developed in 2003 for public engagement. It allowed the city to successfully connect with hundreds of staff and community members to create a new vision, mission, goals and strategic objectives.

Designed to be cost effective, inclusive and achievable, the 2007 process took place over an eight month period. Preparation of the plan was undertaken using a collaborative and inclusive consultation approach that blended the perspectives and aspirations of members of Council, staff and the community. Survey questions were translated into many languages. Youth in the city were engaged through an artistic challenge to demonstrate their thoughts for the future. Consultation and citizen engagement took place throughout the entire process – from the formative stages of the Plan’s preparation to its approval. Full engagement with staff and the community will continue as progress related to the goals and strategic objectives is openly discussed, planned and achieved.

**Phase 1: Project initiation**
In January, Council approved the process for the 2007 Strategic Plan. In addition, a communications plan was created and the stage was set for an effective process to gather information from across the community on the future of Guelph.

**Phase 2: Strategic listening**
Public consultation took place with a wide array of individuals and groups through focus groups, telephone interviews, a youth challenge and surveys to get a sound understanding of what the City should be like in the future. All the information collected was provided to Council and the Senior Management Team for consideration prior to the development of a draft Strategic Plan framework.

**Phase 3: Developing the framework**
A draft Strategic Plan document was created by members of Council, the Senior Management Team and several community members for review by all interested parties. This document reflected the feedback collected in Phase 2. Once drafted, the plan was then subject to further staff review and reflection by the community.

**Phase 4: Validating the framework**
The draft framework was made available to the general public for review and discussion to gauge the extent to which it reflected the expectations and aspirations of the larger community. Feedback gathered through focus groups, telephone interviews and surveys served as input for refinements to the Strategic Plan.

**Phase 5: Refinement, endorsement and communication**
Once the Strategic Plan was validated, it was refined and endorsed by Council in August. The Strategic Plan will serve as the guiding document under which all City initiatives are aligned.
Achieving *our goals*

To effectively implement the Strategic Plan and achieve its goals, there are roles for everyone in the community to play. Actions undertaken by Council and staff to implement the plan and monitor progress will be critical. To this end, key priorities will be identified annually and departmental business plans will be linked directly to these priorities, the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan. Roles, responsibilities, performance measures, required resources and target dates for completion of specific projects that will work towards achieving the goals and executing the overall strategic direction will be clearly identified. Regular progress reports will be prepared for Council and the community to clearly demonstrate successes and achievements. To ensure the long term viability of the Plan it will be revisited and updated every four years to correspond with each municipal election.

*Our vision*

To be the City that makes a difference…. Acting locally and globally to improve the lives of residents, the broader community and the world.

*Our mission*

To achieve excellence through leadership, innovation, partnerships and community engagement.
Urban design and sustainable growth

Goal 1
An attractive, well-functioning and sustainable city
Strategic objectives:

1.1 A distinct community identity with leading edge, city-wide urban design policies

1.2 Municipal sustainability practices that become the benchmark against which other cities are measured

1.3 A Local Growth Management Strategy that effectively guides where and how future growth will take place

1.4 A sustainable transportation approach that looks comprehensively at all modes of travel to, from and within the community

1.5 The downtown as a place of community focus and destination of national interest

1.6 A balanced tax assessment ratio
Goal 2

A healthy and safe community where life can be lived to the fullest

Personal and community well-being
Strategic objectives:

2.1 A complete community with services and programs for children, youth and adults of all ages

2.2 Diverse housing options and health care services to meet the needs of current and future generations

2.3 The most physically and socially active residents in Canada

2.4 The lowest crime rate and best emergency services record of any comparable-sized Canadian city

2.5 Comprehensive life-long learning opportunities

2.6 A well-connected and accessible community that values diversity, multiculturalism, volunteerism and philanthropy
Goal 3

A diverse and prosperous local economy
Strategic objectives:

3.1 Thriving and sustainable local employment opportunities

3.2 One of Ontario’s top five and Canada’s top ten places to invest

3.3 The highest ratio of any southern Ontario city of people who live and work in the same community

3.4 Fair tax policies and streamlined processes across all levels of government

3.5 A diverse and skilled local workforce

3.6 The city as a tourist destination of choice
Arts, culture and heritage

Goal 4
A vibrant and valued arts, culture and heritage identity
Strategic objectives:

4.1 A designated cultural capital of Canada

4.2 Numerous opportunities for artistic appreciation, expression and development

4.3 Highest per capita use of city libraries, museums and cultural facilities among any comparable Canadian city

4.4 Intact and well managed heritage resources

4.5 Capitalize on our cultural and heritage assets to build economic prosperity, quality of life and community identity
Goal 5
A community-focused, responsive and accountable government
Strategic objectives:

5.1 The highest municipal customer service satisfaction rating of any comparable-sized Canadian community

5.2 A consultative and collaborative approach to community decision making

5.3 Open, accountable and transparent conduct of municipal business

5.4 Partnerships to achieve strategic goals and objectives

5.5 A high credit rating and strong financial position

5.6 Organizational excellence in planning, management, human resources and people practices; recognized as a top employer in the community

5.7 The highest per capita municipal election voter turnout of any city in Ontario
Natural environment

Goal 6
A leader in conservation and resource protection/enhancement
Strategic objectives:

6.1 Coordinated management of parks, the natural environment and the watershed.

6.2 Less total greenhouse gas emissions for the City as a whole compared to the current global average.

6.3 A safe and reliable local water supply.

6.4 Less waste per capita than any comparable Canadian city.

6.5 Less energy and water per capita use than any comparable Canadian city.

6.6 A biodiverse City with the highest tree canopy percentage among comparable municipalities.
Further information

If you have any comments about this document or would like to learn more about the strategic planning process and your role in helping to realize the goals, please contact Corporate Administration at 519-822-1260.

Our mailing address is:
City of Guelph
Corporate Administration
59 Carden Street
Guelph, Ontario
N1H 3A1

Website: guelph.ca
E-mail: strategicplan@guelph.ca
META-ANALYSIS OF SELECTED STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO IMPACT WELL-BEING IN GUELPH AND WELLINGTON COUNTY

PREPARED FOR: THE CITY OF GUELPH

BY: SARAH HAANSTRA

DECEMBER 2010
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Appendix A: Criteria for Inclusion
Appendix B: Other Potential Community Partners
Appendix C: Summary Template
SECTION 1 • INTRODUCTION

This report is a meta-analysis of 36 strategic documents from 21 community groups and organizations in Guelph and Wellington County. The documents that were reviewed came from three sources: The City of Guelph, local community groups and local organizations. This is one of three reports that will inform a scoping document to guide the development of a community plan on well-being for the City of Guelph.

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to identify, review and summarize key strategic reports that have the potential to inform the creation of a community plan for well-being in the City of Guelph.

The information presented in this report:

• provides a thematic understanding of local community groups’ and organizations’ areas of focus, process and structure, engagement strategies and methods to measure success and impact, as outlined in their strategic documents;
• identifies potential partners, stakeholders and key informants for engagement in the City of Guelph community plan on well-being project;
• should be used to avoid duplication of efforts, for mutual learning, and to build upon the work of existing community initiatives.

SECTION 2 • METHODOLOGY

2.1 IDENTIFICATION OF CITY OF GUELPH STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

The City of Guelph strategic documents were located with support from City of Guelph staff and a thorough review of the City of Guelph website. Some documents were identified because they were cited in other City of Guelph documents.

2.2 IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

The first step to locate community strategic documents was to identify community groups and organizations with documents that may have met the criteria for inclusion in this review.

In September 2010, The Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship completed a report titled: Community Scan of Collaborations in Wellington Dufferin Guelph\(^1\) (WDG). This report identified 48 collaborations in WDG. An attempt was made to contact all collaborations (with potential relevance to this project) listed in the report.

Using the Community Information Guelph online database, keyword searches (using words such as: collaboration and network) were done to further identify community groups and organizations.

For some organizations with mandates to broadly serve people in Guelph and/or Wellington County, searches of their websites were done and/or phone calls were made to identify relevant strategic documents.

Contact was made with two representatives from Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health Unit and information and documents were shared that were used to inform the Community Scan of Collaborations in Wellington Dufferin Guelph, as well as some documents that were located as part of the Healthy

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Communities Partnerships Community Picture project. This was an effort to share knowledge and information and to avoid duplication of work.

The second step to locate community documents was to initiate phone or email contact (including at least one follow-up) with all groups and organizations identified through the methods listed above.

When groups and organizations were identified and contact was made with group representatives, they were asked if they had strategic documents that:

- identified goals, priorities or strategic directions;
- had the potential to impact community well-being (as the concept was understood by them);
- and included an element of future-oriented planning.

A snowball sampling method was used to identify as many local community groups and organizations as possible. That is, most group representatives were also asked if they were aware, through professional or personal networks, of other community groups or organizations with strategic documents that might warrant inclusion in this report.

2.3 CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

All strategic documents were ranked against criteria for inclusion that was developed by the researcher to reflect the purpose of this report. The criteria for inclusion were different for City of Guelph and community documents (see Appendix A for an example). Reports that ranked high were included in the meta-analysis.

Some local strategic documents that may have met the criteria for inclusion were not included because they were either not received, or despite best efforts to do a thorough search, they were not identified by the researcher. At the same time, there were a number of documents that were received but did not meet the criteria for inclusion in this report. Whether or not their documents were received, there are a number of community groups that may be valuable partners as the City of Guelph embarks upon a community plan for well-being. Appendix B lists other community groups that were identified and considered for inclusion in this report and the area of focus they aligned with most (based on the researcher’s knowledge through personal correspondence, website scans and/or a high level review of documents available). This list was included to avoid the loss of information that has been gathered; it is not an exhaustive list of potential community partners.

2.4 SUMMARY AND IDENTIFICATION OF KEY THEMES

A summary template was used to extract the key points from each report (see Appendix C). A qualitative thematic content analysis was done to identify key themes. The thematic content analysis involved reading and developing codes to categorize all the information in the summary template. The coded information was then grouped into theme areas based on commonalities in terms and concepts. Due to time constraints it was not possible to ask group and organization representatives for feedback and input into the identified themes and subsequent categorization of reports. Thus, all identified themes and the categorization of reports reflects the thematic analysis of the reviewed documents and the interpretation of the researcher; in some cases, groups or organizations may describe and/or categorize their work slightly differently than is represented in this report. When that is the case, the groups’ or organizations’ understanding of their work and focus should always take precedence over and be considered more accurate than the information in this report.
The thematic content analysis revealed themes in the following topic areas: area of focus, process and structure, engagement strategies, and measurement of success and impact.

### 3.1 AREA OF FOCUS

Areas of focus were identified to categorize reports based on topic area or target population. Table 1 lists all areas of focus with a description of what is captured by each theme. There is potential overlap among many themes (for example: recreation is part of the description of the health area of focus, but it could also be included as part of art, culture and heritage, community well-being and impact, or accessibility and inclusion). Descriptions for each theme reflect the terms and ideas that were most common across the reviewed reports. Clear distinctions between each theme description were deliberate to support the categorization of the reviewed reports by the areas they focused on most. Twelve areas of focus were identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus Themes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Well-being and Impact</td>
<td>Ideas of complete communities (places were people can live and work); downtown intensification; working at a local or neighbourhood level; community identification; sense of belonging; community, social and spiritual well-being; quality of life; and/or impact at a community level (including community capacity building and community change).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility and Inclusion</td>
<td>Physical, social, and economic accessibility and inclusion; and/or respect and value placed on diversity of culture, age, ability etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art, Culture, Heritage</td>
<td>Support and promotion of access to arts, culture and heritage; and/or protection of the character of a geographic area (for example, Downtown Guelph).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy and Employment</td>
<td>Business; fiscal responsibility; local economy; employment opportunities and job creation; and/or tourism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Schools; and/or English as a second language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Reduction in energy and water use; sourcing local energy sources; land use; renewable resources; and/or protection and conservation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Mental health; physical health; physical activity; recreation; community and human health; and/or social determinants of health.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Community safety, including traffic safety and reduction of drug use and trafficking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Provision</td>
<td>General service provision including prevention and treatment; and/or service coordination and streamlined service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>Access to basic needs (Including affordable housing, homelessness prevention, food security); and/or equality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target Populations</td>
<td>These include: children; seniors; new Canadians; children and youth; and/or people with disabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Existing transportation methods; alternative modes of transportation; and/or transit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 lists each community group or organization, their reviewed document(s) and highlights the area of focus theme(s) they aligned with most. Whenever possible, only one area of focus was highlighted for a community group or organization. The highlighted area of focus was considered the most important but not necessarily the only area of focus. For 12 community documents two or three areas of focus were identified because it was not possible to identify which theme emerged as most important for those groups or organizations. For documents that were very broad in nature and touched on many areas of well-being, only the community well-being and impact theme was highlighted; in most cases these reports also focused on some or all of the other areas of focus listed.
### TABLE 2 - Categorization of Community Reports by Areas of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Groups and Organizations</th>
<th>Report Name*</th>
<th>Accessibility and Inclusion</th>
<th>Arts, Culture and Heritage</th>
<th>Economy and Employment</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Service Provision</th>
<th>Social Justice</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
<th>New Canadians</th>
<th>Children and Youth</th>
<th>People with Disabilities</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Carden</td>
<td>10 Carden - Creating Space for Change (2009)</td>
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<td>Community Energy Plan (2007)</td>
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<td>Downtown Directions (Draft) - Framework for the Downtown Guelph Secondary Plan (2010)</td>
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<td>Guelph Strategic Plan 07 and beyond (2007)</td>
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<td>Local Growth Management Strategy (all phases) (2009)</td>
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<td>Prosperity 2020 (Phase 1 &amp; 2) (2010)</td>
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<td>Recreation, Parks &amp; Culture Strategic Master Plan (2009)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Smart Guelph Building Tomorrow Today (2003)</td>
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<td>County of Wellington</td>
<td>Wellington and Guelph Housing Strategy (2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>County of Wellington</td>
<td>Official Plan (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Got Bike</td>
<td>Overview Document (un-named; n.d.*** )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growing Great Kids</td>
<td>Growing Great Kids Community Plan (2011)</td>
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<td>Guelph Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Strategic Planning (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination</td>
<td>GW PTF 2010 Community Plan; Findings from Community Researcher report (2010)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guelph Environment Leadership</td>
<td>No report available - Personal correspondence</td>
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<td>Guelph Police Service</td>
<td>Business Plan 2010-2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guelph Wellington Food Roundtable</td>
<td>GW Food Roundtable Strategy and Terms of Reference (2010)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Local Immigration Partnership Strategy</td>
<td>Local Immigration Partnership Phase 1: Final Submission Report from the City of Guelph to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2010)</td>
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<td>Guelph Wellington Seniors Association</td>
<td>Guelph Wellington Seniors Association Strategic Plan (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Groups and Organizations</td>
<td>Report Name*</td>
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<td>Accessibility and Inclusion</td>
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*Click on hyperlink to view reports available online.

**A description of each area of focus theme can be found in Table 1.

***n.d. = no date.
3.2 PROCESS AND STRUCTURE

In some strategic documents, process and structure details were included that described how groups or organizations worked together, and contextualized or responded to community needs. Three process and/or structure themes were identified that capture methods of working that seemed important in groups’ or organizations’ efforts to have impact in their area(s) of focus.

Collaboration

Most community groups and organizations identified collaboration or partnerships as part of their process or structure. This included collaboration across sectors, between community groups, organizations and community members, and more broadly, between all willing participants. Collaboration was also sometimes a goal or group direction. Often collaboration was identified as a means to reduce duplication, share resources or better coordinate services.

Example were included in: 10 Carden – Creating Space for Change, City of Guelph Strategic Plan 07 and beyond, and Guelph Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination 2010 Community Plan

Responsiveness

A number of documents highlighted how the work of the associated group or organization was responsive to changing and diverse community needs (for example: aging and diversity), the local context, provincial legislation, or global trends. Some documents highlighted how needs would be balanced (for example: the needs of the public would be balanced with the realities of implementation). Many City of Guelph documents were contextualized by local, provincial and sometimes global reports and trends.


Sustainability

Many reports identified sustainability as part of their group’s process or a goal on its own. This included the triple (environmental, social, fiscal) bottom line and sustainable growth, resources, infrastructure, development, mechanisms, change and community.

Examples were included in: City of Guelph Local Growth Management Strategy, Guelph Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination 2010 Community Plan, and Transition Guelph A Model for Fostering Resilient Community and Assembled Hopes for Guelph in 2030 (draft plan).

3.3 ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Some documents detailed plans to bring together and receive feedback from partners and stakeholders, engage people at the neighbourhood and community level, encourage civic engagement or use a grassroots approach. Other engagement methods outlined how groups built on or preserved existing community strengths, or ensured their work reflected local values/input and was community driven. Although methods varied across groups and organizations, the following common engagement methods were identified: grassroots/collective ownership, ongoing deliberate engagement and point in time deliberate engagement. A list of techniques used to inform people about, and encourage participation in, engagement opportunities is also included below.
Grassroots/Collective Ownership

Grassroots or collective ownership was evident in some community groups. In this type of engagement, the entire process was community driven. Engagement was not planned or part of a strategy, rather it was a natural part of the evolution of the group. These groups were very inclusive; they may have had no restrictions on membership; they included community voices and input in decisions; and they were usually grassroots in nature.

Examples were included in: Guelph Environment Leadership (personal correspondence), Guelph Wellington Food Roundtable Strategy and Terms of Reference, and Transition Guelph A Model for Fostering Resilient Community and Assembled Hopes for Guelph in 2030 (draft plan).

Deliberate Community Engagement (ongoing)

Ongoing deliberate community engagement involved asking people to take on a defined role in the work of the group or organization. This included: advisory committees (with citizen participation), a Mayor’s Taskforce, and community member participation on a committee. Part of this type of engagement was repeated efforts to receive input and/or feedback into priority identification, ideas and solutions. In some cases, ongoing deliberate community engagement also included a plan to communicate information back to community.

Examples were included in: City of Guelph Prosperity 2020 (Phase I and 2), Guelph In-Motion Coordinating Committee 2009 Terms of Reference, Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy Committee Part II Strategies to Reduce Substance Misuse in Guelph and Wellington County (June 2009)

Deliberate Community Engagement (point in time)

Point in time deliberate community engagement involved asking people to participate in an event that was organized to receive feedback and input. These included:

- workshops that were sector specific, with representatives from key community sectors, with youth stakeholders in high schools, and in different languages;
- surveys, including online, telephone, household, and member surveys;
- public meetings;
- open houses;
- key informant interviews;
- focus groups;
- consultations with specific stakeholders, including all levels of government, City of Guelph Council and staff, people with lived experiences related to the topic area, and business people;
- town hall meetings;
- symposiums;
- community discussions/dialogues/forums.

Examples were included in: City of Guelph Recreation, Parks & Culture Master Plan, Local Immigration Partnership Phase 1: Final Submission Report from the City of Guelph to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integrated Network Working together for a Healthier Future – Integrated Health Service Plan 2010-2013.

Other and Innovative Community Engagement Techniques and Methods

Techniques to encourage people to take part in engagement opportunities included:

- newspaper announcements;
- letters of invitation;
- facilitation in a variety of languages;
- use of existing groups (for example, neighbourhood groups, selected county residents);
• going where people already are (for example, surveys on buses, visiting libraries, shopping malls, and a mobile input centre).

Examples were included in: City of Guelph Transit Growth Strategy and Plan and Mobility Services Review Final Report and County of Wellington Wellington and Guelph Housing Strategy.

Smart Guelph Building Tomorrow Today Section 2 – understanding the SmartGuelph process outlined a number of innovative engagement strategies that included:
• a community pulse check to receive input and ideas about the growth of the City of Guelph over 25 years;
• citizen centred, community wide consultations;
• SmartGuelph TV to communicate information related to SmartGuelph initiatives to Guelph residents;
• a call for submissions and briefs;
• a mobile input centre at 8 high traffic locations;
• mayor’s tours; and
• a speaker’s panel.

3.4 MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS AND IMPACT

Identifying Directions

Many documents made some reference to measuring the success or progress of the associated groups or organizations. In some instances, the desired direction of work was identified with statements of success, objectives, strategies or goals; in other reports, targets were set. For some groups, their reports revolved around impact such as social and system level change, effectiveness, collective action, and community building; for the most part, these concepts were described more as ends, than means. For other groups, it was clear that the reports and their work were meant to guide decisions and or impart information through knowledge transfer or identification of best practices.

Examples were included in: City of Guelph Strategic Plan 07 and beyond, Guelph Wellington Seniors Association Strategic Plan 2010, and Ontario Provincial Police Wellington County Detachment Business Plan 2008-2010.

Measuring Progress

There were both commitments and plans to measure progress. Measures of progress were both quantitative and qualitative and included: identifying performance standards, measures and indicators; collecting quantitative data to measure goals; using existing measures of impact (for example: calculating ecological footprint or using a standard ratio). Others used established frameworks such as Results Based Accountability and a scorecard method to guide their actions and measurement of success. In some reports, people’s stories were considered indicators of success or progress. In some cases a commitment to measure progress was made, but the performance measure or indicator section in the document was blank or there was a note indicating that the indicators were being identified.

Examples were included in: City of Guelph Transit Growth Strategy and Plan and Mobility Services Review Final Report, Growing Great Kids Community Plan, and Workforce Planning Board Waterloo Wellington Dufferin Trends Opportunities Priorities (TOP) Report – A Lens on Local Industry in 2010.

Accountability

Methods to be accountable for success were sometimes outlined. These included: commitments to ongoing reporting (including annual reporting or monitoring), updates at City Council meetings, and service reviews (including a process to review existing services and budgets). One report described the hiring of an external researcher to evaluate success. In a few reports commitments were made to take corrective action and/or
adapt strategies if impact was not evident. Others committed to receive feedback on how well goals were met and to share best practices with the community. In a few instances, success was related to a comparison to other cities, provincial averages, or to an established baselines or benchmarks. In some reports, a commitment to a timeline was made.

Examples were included in: City of Guelph Sustainable Neighbourhood Engagement Framework, Guelph In-Motion Coordinating Committee Terms of Reference 2009, and Transition Guelph Model for Fostering Resilient Community and Assembled Hopes for Guelph in 2030 (draft plan). SmartGuelph Building Tomorrow Today gave examples of evaluation tools including: a matrix indicator, a criteria indicator, and a value framework.

Although measurement of success was addressed in many strategic reports, for the most part it was not clear whether true impact or success was actually being measured. It is an ongoing challenge for community groups and organizations to maintain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of their efforts on people’s lives and the community. Although this part of strategic documents can be the most difficult to articulate and implement, the careful outline and diligent implementation of measurement of success strategies is an essential component to ensure positive impact and change is an ongoing result of the hard work of community groups and organizations.

SECTION 4 • CONCLUSION

The search for and review of local strategic documents revealed a number of challenges and opportunities. From the outset of contact with group or organization representatives it was clear that shared terms had different meanings across groups. For example, the initial request for strategic documents elicited many requests for clarification about what constituted a “strategic” document and uncertainty about whether documents would fit the criteria for inclusion. Once documents were received it was evident that language, format and content varied greatly across reports. Local strategic documents that were associated with entities, such as the City of Guelph or a local social service agency, were often more formal, descriptive and lengthy than documents that outlined the work of community groups. For one community group, no strategic documents were available, but a representative from that group verbally shared their priorities and directions. At the same time, some community groups’ reports were very comprehensive, concise, and gave a clear picture of their focus and direction.

There are lessons to be learned from existing community groups and initiatives in Guelph and Wellington County. Across the life of the community well-being project, local community groups and organizations will be important stakeholders and/or partners for the City of Guelph. The City of Guelph has also put forth considerable effort to develop plans on topics that have great potential to impact well-being. Many of these plans will likely inform or guide the community plan on well-being. The measurement of success and impact is a challenge for community groups and organizations alike. At the same time, an understanding of the true impact of community work and efforts is incredibly important to ensure time and effort is not wasted. A thoughtful and informed process to measure the progress and success will no doubt strengthen the impact of a community plan on well-being.

The information in this report indicates that there are people in Guelph and Wellington who are coming together to improve our community in some way. Whether or not the language of community well-being is used, for all organizations and groups, it was evident that their strategic documents were meant to guide efforts to impact people and improve the community we live in. Each strategic document outlined differences in areas of focus, process and structure, engagement strategies and measurements of success. Despite differences, common themes also emerged across groups and organizations. Both the similarities and differences provide opportunities for collaboration and mutual learning. As the City of Guelph embarks upon a community plan for well-being, it is hoped that this report will guide partnership and engagement strategies, reduce duplication of efforts, and provide opportunities to learn from the work of existing community groups and organizations.
### APPENDIX A: CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION OF COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS IN META-ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group or Organization</th>
<th>Geographic area of Impact</th>
<th>Population of Impact</th>
<th>Focus area of impact</th>
<th>Partnership at Governance Level</th>
<th>Identification of Priorities/Directions</th>
<th>Neighbourhood or Community Engagement</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<td>Group 1</td>
<td>3 - City of Guelph and County of Wellington</td>
<td>3 - General population (all citizen in defined geographic area)</td>
<td>3 - High potential to improve general community well-being</td>
<td>3 - Partnership through cross-sectoral collaboration</td>
<td>3 - Priorities are clearly identified</td>
<td>3 - Clear engagement of community members in plan development</td>
<td>3 - Current and up to date</td>
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<td>2 - City of Guelph only or GW as part of a larger geographic area</td>
<td>2 - Multiple sub-populations</td>
<td>2 - Medium potential to improve general community well-being</td>
<td>2 - Partnership through single sector collaboration</td>
<td>2 - Priorities are identified</td>
<td>2 - Clear intention to engage community members</td>
<td>2 - Recently completed and still in use</td>
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<td>1 - County of Wellington only</td>
<td>1 - One sub-population</td>
<td>1 - Low potential to improve general community well-being</td>
<td>1 - Partnership through small group of agencies</td>
<td>1 - Priorities are loosely identified</td>
<td>1 - Potential opportunities to engage community members</td>
<td>1 - At least a few years old, but still in use</td>
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<td>0 - Geographic area much larger than Guelph without specific Guelph focus or not clearly defined</td>
<td>0 - Not identified</td>
<td>0 - Unclear or undefined</td>
<td>0 - No partnership</td>
<td>0 - Priorities are not identified</td>
<td>0 - No identification or intention to engage community members</td>
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### APPENDIX B: OTHER POTENTIAL COMMUNITY PARTNERS*

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*Categorization of the areas of focus of the community groups listed in this table is based on the researcher’s knowledge through personal correspondence, website scans and/or a high level review of documents available.*
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<th>Goal(s) of Report</th>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Priorities, Strategic Directions, Goals</th>
<th>Engagement Strategies</th>
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APPENDIX C: SUMMARY TEMPLATE - INFORMATION EXTRACTED FROM REVIEWED REPORTS
PROJECT DEFINITION

CORPORATE PROJECT PURPOSE:

The City has partnered with the community on the development of a Community Energy Plan, Prosperity 2020, an Economic Development Plan, but lacks a comparable plan in the realm of social/health. Issues in the social/health realm are becoming increasingly complex and inter-connected.

The well-being of a community, also known as quality of life, is defined by social, economic and environmental factors. It starts with the essentials - food, shelter and healthcare. It is shaped by our work-life balance, how we care for each other and how we respect the planet. Wellbeing means being safe, healthy, and feeling connected to the people and places around you. It’s about the quality of our neighbourhoods, parks and the natural environment. It means being able to express ourselves fully and participate in the activities that we love. It’s also about the health of our communities and relationships.

The Community Wellbeing Plan will be built through significant community engagement rooted in local values, grounded in community experience, and shaped by technical expertise. The process will allow the community to learn about and contribute to the decisions that affect their lives. Civic engagement will also be a means to inspire the community to take action and define a common vision, goals and strategies for the future. This will support the City to partner effectively with others to contribute to community wellbeing commensurate with its role and resources.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS:

1) Deeper community engagement that attracts individuals and groups who do not typically participate in traditional processes to gain a wider range of opinions and broaden partnerships;
2) Stronger commitment from stakeholders to assume responsibility and accountability for achievement of their part of the plan;
3) Rigorous monitoring and evaluation to measure progress and take corrective action as required;
4) Managing expectations, resources and focus on strategic actions that can have significant impact and are achievable in a reasonable timeframe; and
5) A strong change management process to support City staff in the implementation of the new community engagement framework.

PROJECT GOALS:

Citizens are at the centre of the CWI - how to engage them, how to serve them better and how to improve their wellbeing. The anticipated outcomes are:

• Improve our community’s wellbeing in future years;
• Encourage more interaction and sharing of ideas between community members and government to solve local issues;
• Empower the private and community benefits sectors to join the public sector to take action and participate in local solutions;
• Improve government’s understanding of the community’s values, needs and desires for the future;
• Encourage innovative approaches to delivering local services centred on partnerships with public, private and community benefit sectors.

PROJECT STRATEGY:

The project has both community based and internal corporate components that will be implemented over three phases.
**PROJECT CHARTER**

**Phase 1: (2011)**

Development of CWI work plan and a corporate community engagement framework work plan. Research paper on wellbeing index best practices.

**Phase 2: (2012)**

**Community Initiative:** The project is being led by the Guelph Wellbeing Leadership Group, a cross sector group of community leaders. They are acting as ambassadors and brokers to engage the community in the project and develop the Wellbeing action plan with the community. The action plan will be influenced by the following inputs:

a) a 12,000 household survey based on the Canadian Index of Wellbeing developed with the University of Waterloo
b) a public engagement process: online and in person conversations with individuals and small group at the neighbourhood and ward level, seminar with Don Lenihan on public engagement and a public symposium
c) community indicator report using existing community data from public health and Statistics Canada
d) Collation of themes from previous community consultations on related projects. 1st draft of plan for December 2012 identifying actions and priorities

**Corporate Initiative:**

Forty key informant interviews will be conducted across the corporation to develop an environmental scan of existing community engagement practices, challenges and opportunities. A Best Practice review of national and international community engagement conducted to develop a new corporate framework.

Council endorsement of the new Community Engagement Framework scheduled for December 2012

**Phase 3 (2013-2014)**

**Community Initiative:**

Development of implementation plan for the community plan including monitoring and evaluation framework; Implementation, adjustment and progress reporting; and Review of governance structure to support work.

**Corporate Initiative:**

Implementation of the Community Engagement Framework Development of a community engagement guidebook, tools and training for staff to support implementation. Monitoring and evaluation of Community Engagement Framework

**PROJECT PRODUCT DEFINITION**

**END PRODUCTS:**

- A Guelph Wellbeing Plan built by the community with a robust evaluation plan to measure ongoing progress;
PROJECT CHARTER

- A tested collaboration model that can be used to facilitate community solutions for local challenges; and
- A corporate community engagement framework that will improve longer term engagement with the community.

KEY INTERIM PRODUCTS:

- Best practice review on the development of community wellbeing plans and community engagement frameworks;
- Introductory educational sessions with Don Lenihan on new approaches for public engagement;
- A new community engagement process and report on results;
- Results from random household survey based on Canadian Index of Wellbeing research;
- Community Indicator Report describing wellbeing components at the local level;
- Collation of results from other corporate community consultations for complementary projects being leveraged in this initiative;
- Reports, tools posted to worktogether.ca, a collaboration site hosted by University of Guelph;
- Monitoring and evaluation framework for future Community Indicator reports; and
- Progress Reports to Council.

PROJECT SCOPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Scope Is (Includes):</th>
<th>Project Scope Is Not (Does Not Include):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement of public, private sector, community benefit sectors operating in Guelph</td>
<td>Engagement of public, private sector, community benefit sectors operating outside of Guelph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of the Guelph Wellbeing Plan</td>
<td>Implementation of new initiatives arising from the development of the Guelph Wellbeing Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New corporate community engagement framework</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tested collaboration model for future initiatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement of public, private sector, community benefit sectors operating in Guelph</td>
<td>Engagement of public, private sector, community benefit sectors operating outside of Guelph</td>
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PARAMETERS

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

SCHEDULE:
Phase 1 (2011) background research, partner identification, workplan development
Phase 2 (2012) development of leadership groups, communications materials, engagement phase, developing plan
Phase 3 (2013-2014) development of detailed implementation plan, staff training/mentoring, evaluation and monitoring plan. Implementation and monitoring

BUDGET:
$540,000 (2012-2014)

KNOWN CONSTRAINTS:

RESOURCES:
The ability to act on all that is identified through the engagement phase, requires that strategic decisions be made and priorities established
Partners may not currently have the capacity for the desired monitoring and evaluation system and
will need to develop it along with the capacity of staff to implement. Resource requirements are not known at this time

OTHER:

The desire and ability for partnership across sectors to enact the plan
Capacity of corporate staff to adopt new community engagement practices, given project/initiative cost and time constraints
Lack of Corporate Social Media Policy

BEGINNING ASSUMPTIONS:

- The city needs to partner and work with the community in different ways
- Public demands greater involvement in municipal decision making that affects their lives.
- A wider array of community engagement tools are needed and better use of social media
- There needs to a common definition and understanding across the corporation on community engagement and training and support to build engagement into the work of staff
- Complex community issues require multi sector partners to address them
- They are a wide variety of community assets and strengths that can be activated to create a well community
- Community wellbeing is a multi dimensional concept and not only about responding to community problems or deficits
- Citizens have a role to play in creating wellbeing in Guelph
- Monitoring and tracking progress are essential to success and maintaining momentum

RISK ASSESSMENT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schedule Risk:</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scheduling meetings to accommodate the calendars of busy people including the Mayor is challenging</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Probability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget Risk:</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions identified through the engagement and planning phase will need to be addressed through existing resources or securing funding</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Risk:</strong></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Risk:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Realistic expectations on the speed of progress to respond to complex community issues</td>
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POTENTIAL PROJECT PRIORITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE PROJECT</th>
<th>STRATEGIC</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL</th>
<th>LOCAL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POTENTIAL PRIORITY:</td>
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<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>LOW</td>
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USER/CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES
## PROJECT CHARTER

### Community Engagement and Social Services
- Provide meeting support to the Guelph Wellbeing Leadership Group
- Create linkages to other projects and partners (in community and corporation)
- Develop and implement the monitoring framework
- Manage consultants
- Provide program and policy analysis and research services
- Lead development of the engagement framework

### Corporate Communications
- Support communications about the project particularly through social media
- Assist with the project website
- Assist with corporate change management process to support city staff in adoption of the community engagement framework
VISION
To be the City that makes a difference... acting locally and globally to improve the lives of residents, the broader community and the world.

MISSION
To build an exceptional City by providing outstanding municipal service and value.

VALUES
Integrity  Excellence  Wellness

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS
1 Organizational Excellence  2 Innovation in Local Government  3 City Building

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
1.1 Engage employees through excellence in leadership.
1.2 Develop collaborative work teams and apply whole systems thinking to deliver creative solutions.
1.3 Build robust systems, structures and frameworks aligned to strategy.
2.1 Build an adaptive environment for government innovation to ensure fiscal and service sustainability.
2.2 Deliver public services better.
2.3 Ensure accountability, transparency and engagement.
3.1 Ensure a well designed, safe, inclusive, appealing and sustainable City.
3.2 Be economically viable, resilient, diverse and attractive for business.
3.3 Strengthen citizen and stakeholder engagement and communications.