Support for People Community Programs Evaluation Project

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POLICY QUESTION

How should Triangle Community Foundation (TCF) evaluate effectiveness of the strategy implemented through the Support for People portion of its discretionary[1] grantmaking, and how should that evaluation be implemented?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Triangle Community Foundation (TCF) is located in Durham, NC and serves a four county area. TCF assets of more than $175 million are spread among over 750 funds. The Foundation awards grants to nonprofit organizations that total about $14 million a year. The amount that is available for the Foundation's discretionary grantmaking, however, is less than $1 million a year. TCF has created a Fund for the Triangle, meant to attract donors to give more to the Foundation's discretionary grantmaking efforts, with the rationale that these dollars will be used in a more strategic way. In order to support the claim of the discretionary grantmaking being a way to have a more strategic impact on the community, the Foundation needs a way to evaluate and continually improve the effectiveness of this new approach. Additionally, given that discretionary grantmaking still has a limited pool of resources to draw from, it is even more important that TCF's staff is able to maximize the impact of their grants.

Based on interviews with experts in the field and TCF stakeholders, including Foundation staff, board members, and grantees, the researcher was able to identify an evaluation framework [pgs. 19] that will support the Foundation's strategic plan. These interviews also provided insight into the challenges and benefits of evaluation that the researcher should consider in designing the framework [pg. 11]. These efforts resulted in an evaluation vision and framework for the Foundation's discretionary grantmaking activities. This vision [pg.18] and framework are aligned with the values of the TCF strategic plan, and encourage positive funder-grantee relationships, and continuous learning on the part of all stakeholders.

The framework begins with the recommendation that TCF staff create a theory of change for the discretionary grantmaking, and present that theory of change to grantees in one-on-one meetings or to the entire cohort in a group presentation. If the Foundation chooses to present the theory of change in one-on-one meetings, TCF staff could use the opportunity to complete the next step in the framework, getting feedback from current grantees individually. The framework continues by following the timeline of the current grant cycle, providing the vital information (the evaluation question, data collection method, main activities, person(s) responsible, date to be completed, and frequency) needed to complete each step. Each step of the framework is described in more detail in the pages that follow the framework tables [pgs. 21].

This vision and framework represent a first step of evaluation planning for the new grantmaking approach. The dates in the timeline, for example, will need to be adjusted as more information is available. Other parts of the vision and framework will also need to be adjusted and improved upon as the Foundation moves forward and learns from its grantmaking activities.

[1] See glossary in Appendix A for definition.

BACKGROUND

Triangle Community Foundation (TCF) is located in Durham, NC and has been in existence since 1983. The Foundation serves a four county area made up of Chatham County, Durham County, Orange County, and Wake County. TCF has more than $175 million in assets and granted out over $13 million to community organizations in fiscal year 2012-2013. As a community foundation, TCF assets are spread among over 750 funds that range in size, from $10,000 to $7 million. During fiscal year 2012, about 80% of the Foundation's grantmaking was done in a non-competitive way, awarded to area nonprofits on the recommendation to TCF of individual donors to be paid from their donor advised funds. Since 2007, however, TCF has awarded over $3 million to over 100 nonprofits through a competitive process, the Community Grantmaking Program (CGP). This program awarded these grants from field of interest and unrestricted funds.[2] These grants were awarded in the areas of youth leadership and development, and civic engagement (Cohen 2013).

Since 2012, when the Foundation commissioned and released a Community Report that examined the impact of the CGP, the Foundation has been engaged in a process of reflection and evaluation. The impact assessment gathered available data on grants that had been awarded by the CGP from 2007 to 2012. Due to data limitations, however, this report had limited reach in evaluating the outcomes of individual grants, programs, or strategies. Also in 2012, the foundation commissioned research to identify strengths and needs for Triangle-area nonprofits.

In 2013, TCF convened a taskforce, made up of 65 community leaders and experts, to ensure that the Foundation focuses on the community's most pressing needs, in the most effective way, as it moves forward. Additionally, the Foundation developed a set of indicators, and gathered baseline data for the new focus areas.[3] This data reinforced the recommendations made by the task force, and provided a stronger rationale for narrowing the Foundation's focus areas to just a few of the most pressing.

Based on the nonprofit survey, the recommendations made by the taskforce, and the indicator research, TCF identified new focus areas for its competitive grant program. The newly named "Support for People and Places Community Programs" draws funds from the Foundation's discretionary funds, and focuses on "People" and "Places." The "People" portion will launch first and will award grants to nonprofits that work in community development and youth literacy. The goal of community development grants will be to support organizations that increase access to employment, housing, and healthcare services in the Triangle. The goal of youth literacy grants will be to support organizations that help children reach reading proficiency by the end of third grade.

This cycle will launch in a phased approach. Phase one grantees were announced in January of 2014. In this phase, the Foundation selected 22 nonprofit organizations to receive grants to fund organizational assessments. Additionally, these grantees are a part of learning cohorts and are required to attend a series of convenings, intended to encourage collaboration while contributing to the grantees' understanding of organizational capacity. Phase two of this grant cycle will be available only to phase one grantees, and will provide grantees with capacity building assistance in areas of need identified by the assessments. Since the "Places" portion of this new approach is still in the planning process and will likely have a different format, this report will exclusively focus on Support for People Community Programs (SPCP).

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[2] See glossary in Appendix A.

[3] See Appendix B for indicator baseline data.

As mentioned above, only a small proportion of TCF's annual grantmaking comes from its discretionary funds. TCF awards almost $14 million a year in grants, but the average annual amount in grants from the CGP from 2007 to 2012 was only about $600,000 a year. The Foundation has invested in identifying focus areas and a new approach for SPCP, and they believe that it has the potential to have significant impact in the Triangle. To that end, TCF has created a Fund for the Triangle, meant to attract donors to give more to SPCP, knowing that these dollars will be used in a more strategic way. In order to support the claim of SPCP being a way to have a more strategic impact on the community, the Foundation needs a way to evaluate and continually improve the effectiveness of this new approach. Additionally, given that SPCP still has a limited pool of resources to draw from, it is even more important that TCF's staff is able to maximize the program's impact.

METHODOLOGY

For this project, the researcher gathered existing data and conducted original research on the evaluation practices that are common among foundations. This was initially done through a comprehensive review of the literature on foundations and evaluation. The researcher continued this process through interviews with consultants with foundation evaluation experience, foundation staff, and nonprofit staff who have clear and strategic evaluation practices. The researcher conducted four interviews with national foundation program evaluation officers, and two interviews with staff at organizations that specialize in technical assistance for capacity building.

The researcher also analyzed TCF documents on past evaluation efforts. Not a great deal of evaluation was done during the five years (2007-2012) of the CGP, but a program impact report was put together by Foundation interns during the summer of 2012. The researcher analyzed the results of this report, along with a program evaluation report that was done by an intern in 2008. According to the program officer in charge of SPCP, not many of the recommendations from the 2008 report were adopted during the life of the CGP. The report recommendations were general in nature and did not provide any sort of plan for implementation. Nevertheless, some of the local level data collected on TCF and area nonprofits have been useful in the crafting of recommendations in this current program evaluation project.

The researcher narrowed my focus to the local environment by gathering data specific to program evaluation practices in the Triangle-area. The researcher completed one interview with the director of the North Carolina Center for Nonprofits, and one interview with the former executive director of the North Carolina Network of Grantmakers. The researcher continued to narrow the focus specifically to TCF by examining Foundation records on current grantees. In the phased approach that TCF is taking in this grant cycle, phase one grantees are the only nonprofits eligible for a phase two grant. The researcher analyzed data provided by phase one grantee proposals during the application process, which has provided me with an idea the type of data collection these nonprofits are already conducting, and also the ability these grantees may have to collect additional data on their programs. Based on this analysis, the researcher identified three grantees from the youth literacy side of SPCP, and three grantees from the community development side. For each area, The researcher attempted to identify one grantee that does extensive evaluation, one that evaluates minimally, and one that falls somewhere close to the middle, between the two extremes. From the six grantees that the researcher contacted, he was able to interview four. These interviews provided this project not only with a better picture of the type of evaluation done by grantees, but also provided some insight into the types of reporting requirements that are more or less convenient for them to fulfill.

In order to learn more about TCF motivations for program evaluation, intended use of evaluation results, and capacity to carry out evaluation, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with Foundation stakeholders.[4] The researcher interviewed the staff in charge of the Community Programs, which includes TCF's president, and two program officers. The researcher also interviewed members of TCF's management team, which includes the directors of the development, donor engagement, and planned giving departments. Lastly, the researcher interviewed members of the board that also serve on TCF's Community Engagement Committee, to further understand the Foundation's priorities for evaluation and intended uses of evaluation results. These interviews have helped me develop a clear picture of the vision that TCF has for

[4] See appendix C for TCF stakeholder interview protocol and questions.

the use of evaluation results, which has been vitally important in identifying the most appropriate methods of evaluation.

The researcher recorded interviews with the local-level experts, TCF staff, board, and grantees. The researcher did not record the earlier interviews conducted with the national foundation program officers. These conversations, however, mainly served to help the researcher get acclimated to the topic, and did not contribute directly to the results or recommendations in this report. Recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed, using qualitative data analysis software, NVivo. The transcripts were initially coded for many broad themes that the researcher noticed while conducting the interviews. These broad themes were eventually narrowed into distinct coding categories that will be discussed later in the results section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Trends in Foundation Evaluation

Foundation evaluation can encompass a wide variety of activities. The William and Flora Hewlitt Foundation define it as "an independent, systematic investigation into how, why, and to what extent objectives or goals are achieved" (Twersky and Lindblom, 2012). Even this definition omits much of what serves as evaluation in foundations across the U.S. Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO) defines foundation evaluation in much more flexible terms, as "any activity that informs learning and drives improvement" (GEO, 2011). In a briefing paper, the organization goes on to describe "good" evaluation as "a cycle that begins with planning; is informed by data collection; and leads to analysis and reflection and then action and improvement – and then begins again" (GEO, 2011).

In addition to academic literature on foundation evaluation, an abundance of non-academic articles, reports, and how-to guides from foundations, think tanks, consulting firms, and other organizations have been created to examine further the topic of foundation evaluation. Most of the academic literature on evaluation is from the perspective of the nonprofit organization, as opposed to foundation evaluation of grantmaking programs and strategies. Consequently, much of the literature on evaluation methods was created in more general terms and does not focus on the unique circumstances of foundations.

One reason for this gap in literature is that evaluation traditionally has not been utilized by foundations. Many foundations have very few stakeholders that they are accountable to in any formal capacity. Organizations in other sectors must answer to voters, shareholders, financial markets, and government agencies. Foundations, on the other hand, have very few official stakeholders to which they must provide performance-related information. The effect of this lack of accountability is public attitudes that range from ignorance of the existence of foundations, to strong skepticism and suspicion of foundation activities and effectiveness (Fleishman, 2007).

While many nonprofit organizations that receive government funding have been forced to provide more evaluation results as a result of changes in government regulations, the adoption of more accountability has been more voluntary in the philanthropic world (Fleishman, 2007). Over the past 20 years, philanthropic funders have put an increasing emphasis on impact and measureable outcomes (Carman 2007; Braverman, et. al., 2004; Easterling, 2000; Behrens and Kelly, 2008). This emphasis, however, does not usually translate to action. The literature suggests that most foundations gather data for the purpose of ensuring compliance to the terms of the grant, and that actual outcomes are rarely identified and tracked (Graddy and Morgan, 2006; Watts, 2011).[5]

One of the most common ways that foundations have answered this call is through outcome measurement. Outcome measurement offers a method that allows for organizations to set defined goals in advance of making a grant and clearly identify whether those goals were reached or not at the conclusion of the grant (McGarvey, 2006). Both foundations and grantees have come to rely on outcome measurement as a way to assess the impact of their programs (The Hewlett Foundation, 2009; Wells, 2007; Letts, 2003). Outcome measurement can be a rigorous process, but is often carried out in ineffective and incorrect ways by both foundations and nonprofits (Gueron, 2005; Easterling, 2000).

Much of the literature on philanthropic program evaluation asserts that randomized control trials (RCT) offer the most convincing evidence on impact. These types of experiments

[5] See Appendix A for glossary of terms.

are expensive, however, and are typically not feasible for any but the largest foundations (Braverman, et. al., 2004; Frumkin, 2006). For example, an RCT that examines the impact of an organization that distributes books would have to find a way to track recipients of the books over time. An RCT in this example could mean years of costs, as researchers track down and collect data from poverty-stricken populations that are notoriously transient. Also, community-oriented organizations often balk at the thought of randomly assigning an intervention that they truly believe helps community members.

Furthermore, the literature suggests that another weakness of the use of RCTs in foundations is that it offers fewer opportunities for continuous quality improvement. Since a randomized control trial is typically summative, it focuses on assessing the success or failure of a project. Much of this literature advocates for evaluation that is more formative than summative. Since formative evaluation is an ongoing effort over the life of a program, this type of evaluation helps foundations identify the most and least effective aspects of programs and adjust accordingly (Tierney & Fleishman, 2011; Festen, et. al., 2006; "Evaluation in Philanthropy").

The Gates Foundation released a report, "A Guide to Actionable Measurement" in 2010 that promoted formative evaluation, and has become a very popular trend. This guide proposes that foundations and nonprofits should plan their evaluation so that they can learn from data and improve program strategies based on what they learn. Moreover, the guide suggests that if data cannot serve the purpose of improving program strategy, then it should not be collected. This plan encompass many of the more recent trends in the literature (mostly from non-academic sources) on evaluating grantmaking. Through this type of evaluation, program theory and logic models are used to measure inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes (Twersky, et. al., 2010; York, 2005; Braverman, et. al., 2004; Frumkin, 2006; Morino, 2011; Woodwell, 2005).[6]

As previously mentioned, true measurement of impact through experimental methods is out of the reach of many foundations and nonprofits. Foundation use of logic models to evaluate nonprofits developed during the 1980s and 1990s as a logical way to acknowledge assumptions and connect measureable inputs and outputs, to the harder to measure outcomes and long term impact of grantee activities (Behrens and Kelly, 2008).

Evaluative Learning

A common theme in the literature on the evaluation of capacity building is the opportunity for learning that evaluation creates. Particularly, the literature suggests that evaluation is an effective way to encourage an ongoing learning process that improves nonprofit and foundation impact. Some of the literature suggests that a foundation (as opposed to a nonprofit organization) has more to gain by amassing knowledge from the experiences of all of its grantees, and using this knowledge to inform future grantmaking (Mott, 2003; York, 2003). Like participatory evaluation, evaluative learning is a form of formative assessment that fosters collaboration and can make the grantmaking process more efficient and impactful (York, 2003; McGarvey, 2004). Spurred by a number of publications that provide guidance on the topic of evaluative learning, a number of funders have incorporated the philosophy into their evaluation approach (Darling, 2012).

One area where evaluative learning is utilized is in foundation self-assessment. This form of evaluation is different in that it focuses more on evaluating the effectiveness of the foundation and its activities, as opposed to evaluating the impact of grantee activities. The James Irvine Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation both use a form of foundation self-

[6] See glossary of terms in Appendix A.

assessment to evaluate their own performance. The Irvine Foundation partly does this by assessing the effectiveness of its grantmaking strategies, but also uses self-assessment to evaluate the level of leadership the Foundation exhibits, how the Foundation is perceived by key stakeholders, and measures of financial health and organizational effectiveness (Canales and Rafter, 2012). The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) conducts an annual "Assessment Report." The report is largely focused on perception feedback from key stakeholders, and helps the Foundation assess the relevance of their focus areas in the community, the impact of their grantmaking, and how RWJF performance compares to other foundations (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2011). While these two organizations offer comprehensive information on their approaches to self-assessment, there are not many other examples of formal self-assessment in the current literature. This project will contribute specifically to this literature as it will be a plan for self-assessment for a community foundation.

Community Foundation Evaluation and Grantmaking

The literature on evaluation at community foundations is similarly scarce. Community foundations' effectiveness has traditionally been assessed in terms of asset size and actual evaluation of grantees or interventions has been cursory at best (Ranghelli, et. al., 2006). One of the best ways to determine "best practices" in community foundation evaluation is through interviews with community foundation leaders and evaluation consultants. A few larger community foundations have published documents on their own evaluation practices, but there is no way to assess the effectiveness of these approaches.

Due to a large concentration of donor advised funds at relatively new (since the 1990s) community foundations, meaningful evaluation is more difficult. Creators of donor advised funds often give for personal reasons and are not interested in having their grants evaluated. Additionally, the sheer number of donor advised funds makes evaluation a logistically difficult endeavor (Watts 2011). This project will provide Triangle Community Foundation with a plan that is, in part, based on practices of other community foundations. This plan, however, will also rely heavily on data collected locally, and will be specifically tailored to TCF priorities and local community realities.

Capacity Building Grantmaking

Evaluation of capacity building pulls foundations away from what has become more commonplace, which is the evaluation of grantee programs. Evaluating capacity building requires a different approach and has not been extensively researched. The literature on foundation evaluation of capacity building grants is scarce on all fronts. The literature that does exist focuses on evaluating capacity building by setting clear process-based goals at the beginning of the intervention in order to measure organizational effectiveness. It also stresses that stakeholders in the organization benefitting from the capacity building identify these goals. These efforts are often measured through logic models or needs/strengths assessments before and after the capacity building intervention (Alliance for Nonprofit Management, 2003; Connoly and York, 2003; Naim, et. al., 2011; Schuh and Leviton, 2006; Connoly, 2007).

There has been more research that has been done with the purpose of assessing the impact of capacity building activities by nonprofit organizations. Evaluation of capacity building often utilizes a form of evaluation, participatory evaluation, developed by Michael Quinn Patton (Patton, 1997). This form of evaluation engages stakeholders in evaluation activities, encouraging collaboration and creating additional outcomes among the participants. Throughout the available literature, participatory evaluation is shown to be a powerful and formative evaluation tool used to inform organizational learning and decision-making (Cousins and Whitmore, 2004). Participatory evaluation is more of an approach to evaluation, rather than an evaluation method. The literature shows that it can incorporate many different tools to evaluate, including surveys, logic models, interviews (Soebeck and Agius, 2007; Dageid and Duckert, 2007; Atkinson, Wilson, and Avula, 2005; McGarvey, 2007).

Range of Evaluation Scale and Intensity

Within the existing literature on foundation evaluation, a few factors continually surface in decisions on how much rigor to apply to evaluation in a foundation setting. One of the most common considerations is foundation size. Larger foundations, those with more assets, often have more staff capacity and financial resources with which to conduct evaluations. Larger foundations tend to have larger operating budgets and are able to dedicate more staff time to evaluation activities. Even if staff are not able to conduct evaluations, these larger foundations are able to hire independent evaluators. Smaller foundations, however, may not have the resources to hire staff with sufficient evaluation expertise. There is also an issue of grant size that comes into play in evaluation conversations for foundations with smaller pools of resources. Experimental methods like randomized control trials are not appropriate in the case grants that are small or grants that constitute only a small portion of a grantee's overall budget (Behrens and Kelly, 2008; Mark and Beery, 2004).

RESULTS

Connection to Strategic Plan

Through the interview data, the researcher discovered that the vision that TCF has for its future is heavily rooted in the organization's strategic plan. In the TCF's 2013 Annual Report, the Foundation described this vision:

> *We are now charged with partnering with donors to create charitable funds and invest in causes they care about, to be a source of funding for nonprofits, to serve as a major philanthropic resource for our community, and to raise awareness about critical needs through research and convenings. To do this important work, we continue to strengthen our strategies and look for innovative, entrepreneurial and collaborative ways to make a difference in the Triangle now, and for the future.*

Evaluation is the common thread that connects all of the pieces of the strategic plan to that vision. TCF staff interviews, in particular, repeatedly referred to the four focus areas of the strategic plan: **leadership, impact, sustainability, and stewardship**. These principles are referenced directly or described indirectly 32 times throughout the data.

TCF staff members often focused specifically on the Foundation's **leadership**, describing it as a responsibility that will bolster TCF's relevance in the philanthropic community.

> *I think that if one of the ways that we have a higher profile – and that was one of the charges in the strategic plan, was that we are supposed to increase our visibility and become a thought leader, and the organization that people turn to when there's a question about (community issues) – then we have to evaluate.*

This particular interviewee explicitly cited evaluation as a way, not only to achieve the goals, but to answer an imperative set out in the strategic plan. Through interviews with grantees, the researcher also found that TCF has already set itself apart as an innovative leader in the community with the decision to redesign its grantmaking in SPCP. These grantees expressed the sentiment that a well thought out evaluation would serve to support and strengthen that initial step.

The portion of TCF's strategic plan that refers to **impact** seems to use the amount of money that is distributed to the community through grants as a proxy for a result of grantmaking that the Foundation does not yet have the capacity to measure. (Development, or fundraising, is also referred to indirectly in the **sustainability** portion of the strategic plan) TCF staff and board members discussed the value of evaluation results in attracting donors in every interview. In particular, TCF interviewees expressed a desire to attract more donor-advised-fundholders to give to SPCP.

> *I would love it if evaluation could stimulate donor-advised-fundholders to participate in the Community Programs. So that by showing the capacity of people working together or by showing that there was an impact in those organizations, it would stimulate fundholders to invest and give back to their community through the Community Programs.*

When TCF staff and board spoke explicitly about impact, however, they often used a more traditional definition – as the social benefit created by grants given to nonprofit organizations. This points to a desire on the part of the board and staff to be able to do more to capture the impact of the Foundation's investments. One TCF board member talked about impact in this way while considering whether or not evaluation is a priority for the rest of the board.

> *We have invested heavily, in terms of staff work, on the Community Programs. What's the return? In which way did it make TCF more visible? Did we get more donations? Did we get an impact? Did it make the Triangle a better place to live?*

In many instances the term impact, defined as the effects of the work done by grantees, and defined as distributing more grant dollars, seemed to be used interchangeably. One TCF staff member, however, seemed to sum up how the two are interrelated for the Foundation.

> *As foundations grow, at a certain point, there are expectations that foundations become more intentional about doing something. The community foundation has been entrusted, stewarded with this immense amount of capital. We're at about $180 million. You read about large community foundations that, at some point, had to take very seriously their convening responsibility in the community. And they began to have an asset size where they could focus on making an impact.*

Stewardship, another aspect of the Foundation's strategic plan, is implicitly referred to in the above quotation. TCF staff and board expressed the need to be accountable not only to donors, but also to the community, by keeping donors and nonprofits informed, and by distributing grants so that they effectively benefit the community.

Evaluation Practices at the Triangle Community Foundation

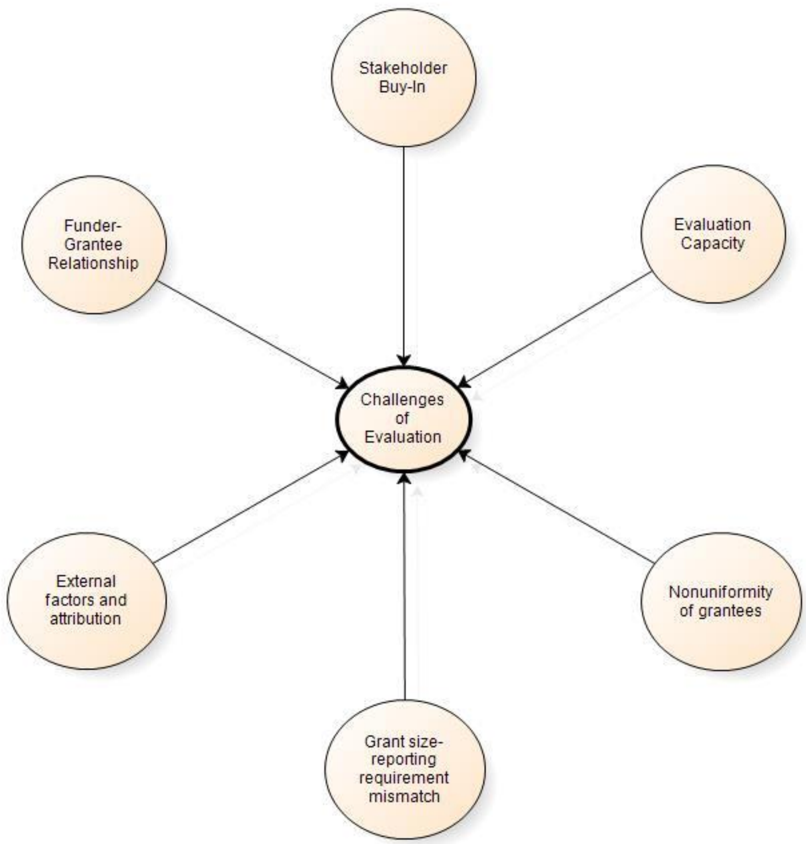
There is unanimous agreement among the seven TCF staff interviewees and two TCF board interviewees that evaluation at the Foundation is lacking. The consensus is that TCF has not done much to evaluate its work in the past, and that no actions have been taken to use the results from the minimal evaluation that the Foundation has implemented. Evaluation has been conducted through an end of year report and mostly anecdotal. The only functional purpose of this evaluation seems to have been in ensuring grant agreement compliance. Additionally, the Foundation's past evaluation efforts were not consistent with the strategic plan. It's clear from the vision mentioned above that evaluation should advance the strategic plan, and move TCF toward the vision that stakeholders have for the Foundation's future.

TCF stakeholders all recognize that past evaluation efforts have come up short, and want more extensive evaluation that can measure impact. The strategic plan, in which TCF's vision for the future is rooted, mandates that the Foundation evaluate. All of this begs the question of why. Considering these factors, why has TCF not implemented an evaluation plan to address them? The short answer: it's difficult. There are a number of challenges that get in the way, many of which are even more pronounced because of TCF's status as a community foundation with more than 750 funds, most of which are donor advised funds.

TCF Evaluation Challenges

The Foundation's desire not to overburden grantees was a reoccurring theme that the researcher noticed while interviewing TCF stakeholders. TCF grants from discretionary funds have traditionally been small, and the Foundation has been sensitive (perhaps overly sensitive) to the possibility of reporting requirements that unduly overwhelm grantees. While grantees state that the minimal reporting required by TCF is convenient (as stated in grantee interviews), this type of reporting is inconsistent with the aforementioned parts of the Foundation's strategic plan.

In addition to the need to **match grant size and the size of reporting requirements**, there are many other problems that TCF faces in attempting to evaluate its work. The researcher separated the interview responses that described the "challenges of evaluation" into categories and organized them in a model (below).



The challenge that the researcher saw most frequently was in the "**evaluation capacity**" category. This category was referred to by all seven TCF staff member interviewees, both board members who were interviewed, and by one of TCF's grantees. This lack of capacity is in reference to both TCF and its grantees. This category is characterized by a lack of time, expertise, or funds to devise and properly conduct evaluation. One staff member highlighted the unique position that TCF is in with relation to how its funding structures affect the Foundation's capacity to evaluate discretionary grantmaking.

> *Staffing has been the main problem. It's been capacity. The Foundation is a nonprofit, even though from outward appearances it is a very rich nonprofit, because it has a $178 million of community assets. But we only have a budget of $2 million. So when you do the math in terms of salary and rent, etc., there's not that much money that gets spent on the Community Programs. That's not a surprise when you look at the work that has been*

done by the Foundation and you realize that the Community Programs are an infinitesimal fraction or share of the work that we do. When we send $13 million into the community and less than $1 million of that is community programmatic, whether it's Support for People and Places or CGP or anything else, why would the board or a president assign any resources to that work?

The second half of that quote brings us to another aspect of challenges that TCF faces in evaluation: "**stakeholder buy-in**." As in the above quote, this category mainly stresses the importance of the Board making evaluation a priority.

I just don't think there has ever been staff that there was their job description or focus…I think it takes top to bottom commitment. It has to be the board that also says that.

The next category of evaluation challenges is labeled "**funder-grantee relationship**." The responses in this category show how much funders and grantees depend on each other in the grantmaking process. Additionally, interviewees often implied, and often directly referred to the challenges inherent in the funder-grantee relationship. Grantees are very cautious around funders, for fear that something they say or do could affect their organization's funding possibilities. This type of relationship prevents grantees from comfortably providing real and honest feedback to funders in most cases. One TCF staff interviewee provided an example where an ineffective funder-grantee relationship negatively affected evaluation results.

I think that what was most disappointing in this case is that the nonprofit didn't come and say, "yes we asked for this, and we couldn't meet our goal, so let's figure out how we can do it differently." So, I think that [we need to] provide a feedback loop with nonprofits where they can be honest about what's working and what's not.

The above quote also indirectly refers to the "**nonuniformity of grantees**," another category of evaluation challenges for TCF. All of the members of the staff and board that were interviewed at TCF are grappling with how to make sense of any potential evaluation data when each grantee will be focusing on a different aspect of their organization for capacity building.

How do you say, for all of our grantees, this many achieved this and this many achieved that? And [how do you] tell our story in a way that isn't, you know, one organization did this, and one organization did that? How can you paint a big picture for capacity building?

There do not seem to be any easy answers. Even a local expert in technical assistance for capacity-building considered the same issues: "it's hard to do a blanket questionnaire. It's almost like you have to ask every single agency. How would you know that you've built capacity?"

Lastly, TCF is also grappling with the difficulties inherent in accounting for external factors that impact the focus areas, as well as how to assign attribution when looking at outcome data. In the "**external factors and attribution**" category responses, TCF staff, board, as well a local expert, all weigh the issue of how to measure in a meaningful way when focus areas, like education, are so complex. One TCF staff interviewee considered these issues specifically when it comes to attribution

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With some of our programs, it's hard to come down to specific indicators of what we're doing. We're trying to deal with such broad issues -- we're just a small part of the change that can happen.

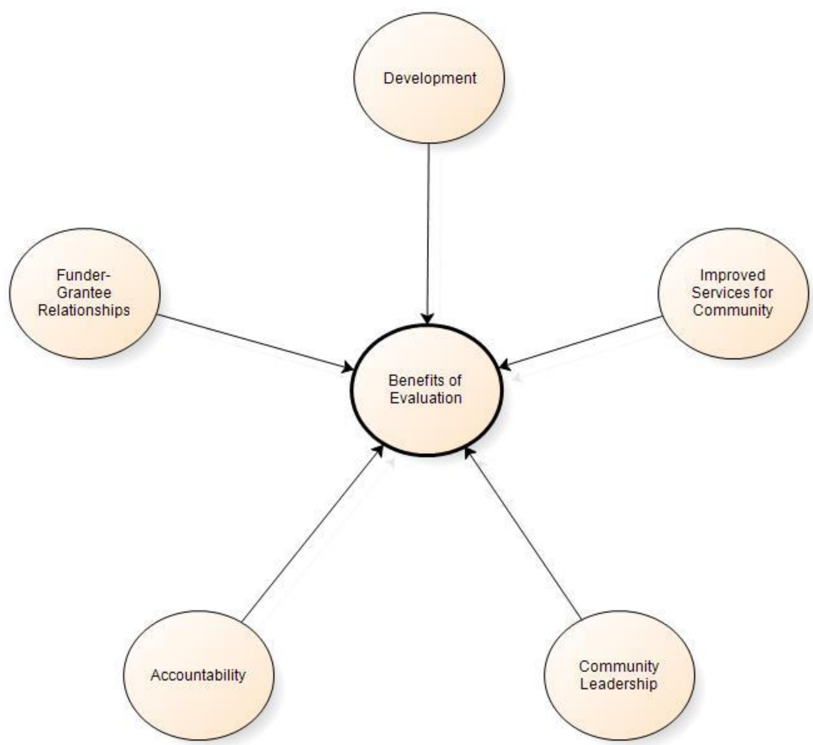
Another staff interviewee considered the in-built challenges of addressing complex problems.

Also, there are external or environmental factors, like politics, that we have to deal with. Just with youth literacy, there's schools, teachers' unions, politicians cutting programs and costs, school testing policy. You're dealing with human being environmental issues. Single-parent families in tough neighborhoods with crime and drugs. Transportation -- it's just complicated.

It is important to consider the challenges that the Foundation faces in trying to conduct evaluation. With these challenges in mind, the researcher was able to identify evaluation strategies that either solve or circumvent them. This approach to identifying evaluation strategies will help TCF avoid some of the pitfalls of the Foundation's prior evaluation efforts.

TCF Evaluation Benefits

All of the TCF staff, board, and grantee interviewees spoke excitedly about the potential benefits that they would like to see result from evaluating the Foundation's discretionary grantmaking. They all had a clear idea of what they believed evaluation could do for the SPCP and the Foundation on the whole. The researcher separated the interview responses that described the "benefits of evaluation" into categories and organized them in a model (below).



The benefit that the researcher found most often was "**improved services to the community**." In general, all respondents wanted to improve grantmaking practices in order to have a greater impact in the community. One board member spoke specifically about the impact that evaluation could have, not only for the foundation, but also for its grantees.

> *Your evaluation needs to change something in the nonprofit organization or in the Community Programs. It needs to add something that will make a change. Because if it's to evaluate just to evaluate, the job will have been done and it doesn't change anything…Your evaluation needs, in itself, to have an impact.*

Some of the categories for the "benefits of evaluation" are linked. For example, the "**improved services**" category shares five of the same references with the "**accountability**" category. This is logical, since one way to improve services could be to take actions that make the Foundation more accountable to its donors and the community. One staff interviewee connected the two categories as she spoke about being accountable for making TCF's grantmaking more efficient.

> *It's important so that we make sure we're supporting organizations in the most efficient way, or that we're supporting the community in the most efficient way. If we're creating programs that don't make any sense, or if we're not supporting the most impactful issues, you know, that's not ideal.*

One could argue that all of the categories that make up "benefits of evaluation" contribute to an increased "**community leadership"** presence. TCF staff talk about leadership most explicitly, however, when they refer to their role as a convener in the community, using Foundation knowledge gained through evaluation to inform the community.

> *I think it's so much more important now to have credibility in the focus areas because we've chosen focus areas. Being able to say why we care about things, and that we want to understand the needs with the community. It's not just us commissioning research and keeping within the walls here. But being very transparent and open, we want to learn how things are going.*

TCF staff members in charge of development definitely had ideas for how evaluation could help draw monetary resources to the Foundation. They proposed that this could be done through a combination of accountability, and using high level data collection of indicators to express need in the focus areas. It was a board member, however, who connected the "**development**" category and the "**funder-grantee relationship**" category.

> *For the people that work on the committees and go out to make the site visits, I'm telling you, that really turns you on. You go out and talk to a good organization -- one that's really doing the job --- and I'm telling you, you really have a different perspective on this whole business. Many times I've gone out, and I've talked to nonprofits, and tried to understand how they're doing. I not only want them to get a grant, I want to give them some of my own money.*

TCF grantees discussed having the opportunity to present their evaluation results to TCF donor-advised-fundholders, and other foundations as a way to fulfill reporting requirements. One grantee described successful experiences where this type of presentation led to more funding the nonprofit.

> *And positive relationships have also been relationships where funders introduce (our organization) to other funders. Knowing that for (us) to be successful, it has to be sustainable, and they won't be able to fund it themselves forever. So this way, it's not an exclusive project, and they're not trying to put their stamp on the program where they want exclusivity.*

It was extremely important for the researcher to identify TCF's desired benefits of evaluation. These benefits will increase the effectiveness of SPCP, thereby increasing the impact of the SPCP grantees. These benefits connect evaluation to the Foundation's strategic plan, and if realized, will lead to the achievement of the TCF stakeholders' vision:

> *We are now charged with partnering with donors to create charitable funds and invest in causes they care about, to be a source of funding for nonprofits, to serve as a major philanthropic resource for our community, and to raise awareness about critical needs through research and convenings. To do this important work, we continue to strengthen our strategies and look for innovative, entrepreneurial and collaborative ways to make a difference in the Triangle now, and for the future.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Support for People Community Programs **Evaluation Vision**
The purpose of this plan is not to quantify and measure impact. The purposes are: 1. To continuously improve the Community Programs grantmaking process so that the Foundation's impact in the community continuously increases. • In order to successfully fulfill this purpose, TCF must take advantage of every opportunity to not only learn from grantmaking successes and failures, but also to transform those lessons learned into action items to improve that grantmaking. In this way, the Foundation will be able to use data collection to inform a system of continuous quality improvement that will ultimately create greater impact in the Triangle. 2. To demonstrate leadership and good stewardship through increased transparency and grantmaking accountability. • In order to successfully fulfill this purpose, TCF must create a culture of transparency in order to shed light on a process that is often viewed by outsiders as confusing and suspicious. Greater transparency will combat the confusion over the work that the Foundation does, and will place TCF as a philanthropic leader in the community.

The following evaluation framework (below) focuses on increasing the effectiveness of the Community Programs, as opposed to demonstrating the impact of the grantmaking program. Through the use of logic modeling and a clear theory of change, TCF will be able to demonstrate how the increased effectiveness of the Community Programs will result in greater impact from grantee programs.

- TCF should begin each phase and cycle of the Community Programs by designing a theory of change that explicitly acknowledges any assumptions inherent in the grantmaking strategy.[7] The theory of change should include an outcome map and a list of assumptions about the change you expect in SPCP.[8]
- Many of the recommendations for the Community Programs Support for People are in an effort to create a learning culture within the program. The Foundation should institute a system of using collected data to formulate lessons learned and strategies to turn those lessons into improved practices. If successful, this learning culture would spread to all stakeholders of the Foundation, including board, staff, grantees, and donors.

- The framework (below) is a guide that provides possible evaluation activities based on the TCF grant cycle, and includes the tentative date that the activity should be completed. The first step for TCF will be to create a theory of change for SPCP, then share that theory of change with

[7] See Appendix for glossary.

[8] See the Annie E. Casey Foundation's "Theory of Change: A Practical Tool For Action, Results and Learning." http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/cc2977k440.pdf

grantees through one-on-one meetings or a presentation to the entire cohort of grantees. The step of presenting the theory of change could coincide with TCF hosting one-on one meetings to receive feedback from grantees on phase one of the current grant cycle.

Support for People Community Programs Evaluation Framework					
Evaluation Question	**Data Collection Method**	**Activities Needed**	**Person Responsible**	**Due Date**	**Frequency**
What is the SPCP strategy? What will this strategy help SPCP achieve?	TCF Staff Brainstorm	Create a SPCP theory of change	Libby, Gina, and TCF Staff	Late May/Early June	At the beginning of every grant cycle/phase
How can we improve the experience of grantees during phase 1?	One-on-one meetings with grantees	Conversation between grantee and funder on what went well and what could have been better	Libby & Gina	Start of Phase 2 (July 1?)	At the end of every grant cycle/phase
As SPCP stakeholders, do grantees understand the strategies behind program?	One-on-one meetings with grantees OR presentation to cohort	Presentation of SPCP theory of change to grantees	Libby & Gina	Start of Phase 2 (July 1?)	At the beginning of every grant cycle/phase
How will grantees know if they are successful?	One-on-one meetings with grantees	Grantees take the lead in setting goals and metrics for phase 2 technical assistance grant agreements	Libby & Gina	Start of Phase 2 (July 1?)	At the beginning of every grant cycle/phase
How can we improve the grantees' experience during phase 2? Has grantee made progress towards, or reached goal(s)? Does goal or metric need to be adjusted?	Grantee site visits	Check-in meeting with grantee	Libby, Gina, Community Engagement Committee members, donor-advised-fundholders	October 1	3 months after start of grant cycle/phase

Support for People Community Programs Evaluation Framework (continued)					
Evaluation Question	**Data Collect Method**	**Activities Needed**	**Person Responsible**	**Due Date**	**Frequency**
Are we communicating Foundation goals and strategies effectively? What do grantees find most helpful and frustrating about working with TCF?	Grantee Perception Report	Contact Center for Effective Philanthropy to conduct report.	Libby & Gina	Make contact with CEP during summer so that report can be administered late December/early January	Mid-year, once a year
Did grantees reach their goal(s)? Did grantee reach unexpected goal(s)? What did they learn? How have beneficiaries been affected?	Grantee showcase presentations to fundholders and local foundations	Plan showcase and invite attendees	Libby, Gina, Sandra, Jess	April 1 – May 31	Once a year near end of grant cycle/phase
Are our focus areas still the most important place to focus our efforts? Are we approaching these areas in the most strategic way (ex. should we adjust and focus only on programs that serve children under 5 years old)?	Update indicator data	Review any new literature pertaining to focus areas and gather up-to-date data from public sources	Shannon St. John Fellow	May 31 – Aug. 1	Once a year

Framework Guidance

The sections below provide further guidance for the above framework. The sections offer guidance on the evaluation of capacity building grants, the grantee perception report, SPCP indicators research, and formalized learning opportunities.

Evaluation of Capacity Building Grants

- The researcher recommends that evaluation of the specific capacity-building grants be driven by grantees and tailored to the capacity needs of each individual organization. Nonprofits that apply for funding for technical assistance should set their own goals and metrics as part of the grant agreement for Phase 2.
- SPCP staff should make clear that goals are not set in stone and can be altered on an as needed basis. To that point, SPCP staff and/or Community Engagement committee members should conduct a 3-month site visit and check-in with the grantees. During this visit, grantees will have the opportunity to discuss progress towards goals, unanticipated internal factors, and unanticipated external factors. These factors may contribute to the need to alter goals for the grant. The site visit also provides SPCP staff and/or committee members to observe grantee work in action and interview beneficiaries.
- SPCP staff, along with Donor Engagement staff and Development staff will plan a SPCP showcase event where grantees have the opportunity to present the results of their work to interested donor-advised-fundholders, and other local foundations.
- At the end of grant cycle, grantees would submit a final report to TCF. TCF would be able to get an overall picture of grantee success by assigning a designation of "met goal," "exceeded goal," or "did not meet goal" to each individual grant. Overall results can be expressed in terms of number or percentage of grants that fell into each category.

(Note: An essential part of creating a culture of learning at the Foundation is changing the way stakeholders look at failure. In this framework, failure is simply an opportunity to learn and improve. If results show that 90 percent of grantees did not meet their goals, it simply means that a closer examination of available data is needed in order to find the lessons and areas for improvement.)

- Over time (if capacity-building remains the focus of the SPCP), TCF could track success of goal attainment along with other grantee data in order to create a profile on common characteristics of grantees that have experienced success in this model.

Grantee Perception Report

- TCF should contract with the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP), or another independent agency like CEP, that has a proven record of producing high quality grantee survey results, to conduct an annual grantee perception report. Two of the experts interviewed by the researcher cited CEP as having a good reputation for providing extensive and clear results from grantee surveys. This report will allow TCF to evaluate the Foundation's interaction with grantees and make improvements that will strengthen the foundation-grantee relationship. It is important that the survey of grantees be conducted by an entity other than the foundation, which will allow for more honest and open feedback.
- SPCP staff and committee members should formulate lessons learned and action items for improvement based on grantee perception report results.

- The report should be made available to TCF staff and board. Lessons learned and action items should be presented to board and staff.
- It is also important, for the sake of transparency and building trusting relationships, that the lessons learned and action items be made public on TCF website and shared directly with grantees.

Indicators

- The researcher recommends that TCF conduct an annual re-examination and update of the focus area indicators. In addition to expressing need, however, it is important to provide knowledge on solutions that are being developed in the Triangle. TCF should add an indicators page to website that links key indicators to initiatives by Triangle nonprofits (especially, but not limited to, TCF grantees) that are a part of the solution.

Learning Opportunities

- ➢ Staff Learning
  - Monthly lessons learned meetings held by Community Programs staff (other members of Foundation staff are invited, but not required to attend). For each lesson learned, staff should decide if there is a way to turn the lesson into an action for improvement. Action items should be written down and a plan formulated for implementing each action item.
  - A select number of lessons learned and action items should be shared during staff meetings
- ➢ Board Learning
  - Knowledge sharing time scheduled into every board meeting. Foundation staff or Community Programs committee members can share lessons learned from latest evaluation results, and present possible changes to make or areas to strengthen in order to translate learning into practice.
  - Coordinate board member convenings with other foundations that are doing similar work. These convenings would present the opportunity for board members to share TCF lessons learned, as well as learn from the experiences of board members at other foundations.
- ➢ Grantee Learning
  - The end of the grant cycle would bring an exit meeting with grantees and Community Programs staff and/or committee members. This meeting would be conducted similar to the check-ins, meaning that it would entail a discussion of progress towards goals, including internal and external factors that contributed to or detracted from the attainment of the agreed upon goals. This discussion should contribute to the identification of lessons learned and action items that the grantee could implement to improve as the organization moves forward.

LIMITATIONS

The most important aspect of the above recommendations is that it is a framework. It is not meant to be a plan that anticipates every eventuality. It is not meant to be final and followed exactly as written. It is meant to be a living and breathing document, which contributes to, and is affected by what TCF learns through its grantmaking and evaluation activities. This project was completed in a limited time span, with limited resources, and as such, has its limitations. The results of this project would certainly benefit from more extensive interviewing. Specifically, the recommendations could be improved through more interviews with experts in the field, more TCF board members, and more of TCF's grantees. For this reason, certain aspects of the recommendation will surely need to be amended as the Foundation moves forward. Moreover, while the recommendations are presented in certain terms, the aforementioned limitations and uncertain nature of nonprofit work, ensure that success cannot be guaranteed by any approach.

Additionally, the project does not completely deal with the issue of limited time and staff capacity to carry out the recommendation. The above framework may represent more hours of work than is currently available among the current staff members at the Foundation. This is another example where the framework may have to be adjusted. A better option, however, would be that this project will prompt more stakeholder buy-in, and encourage evaluation capacity building within the Foundation. This could consist of additional hiring of new staff and/or regular evaluation trainings for current staff.

Another issue of buy-in will be in conducting the Center for Effective Philanthropy Grantee Perception Report. If time had allowed, the researcher would like to have included more information on the logistics of carrying out this report (mainly time and cost considerations). Lastly, the researcher designed many of the details of the framework with the current capacity building model of grantmaking in mind. There may be changes that have to be made to the details when, and if, the Foundation moves forward into other types of grantmaking.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Community Foundation Terms

Designated Fund – a fund created by a donor to provide ongoing support to one or more nonprofit organization(s) or government agencies for a set period of time in perpetuity
Donor-Advised-Fund – a fund created by a donor with as little as $10,000, allowing that donor to personally choose which nonprofits to support
Field of Interest Fund – a fund that allows donors to designate that grants go to general areas of interest, giving the foundation the ability to selects specific organizations to receive support.
Undesignated Fund (unrestricted fund) – donations made to foundation that have no instructions for how they are to be used, giving the foundation a fund made up of funds that the foundation can spend on any day-to.
Discretionary grantmaking – grants awarded from field of interest and undesignated funds

Evaluation Terms

Outcome – the medium or long term results of an intervention (ex. long-term outcome for a youth literacy intervention might be increased lifetime earnings)
Output – the short or medium term measurement of activity in an intervention (ex. number of people served)
Qualitative data – data that can be observed, but not measured in terms of numbers
Quantitative data – data that can be measured, like length, height, or weight

Appendix B – Indicator Data (only Community Development data, as an example)

Support for People Success for Families and Communities					
Key Indicators	**Chatham County**	**Durham County**	**Orange County**	**Wake County**	**North Carolina**
Percent of population below the poverty level (2011 estimate)	11.3%	19.5%	17.0%	11.6%	17.8%
Percent of children (< 5) below the poverty level (2009-2011 estimate)	16.7%	29.1%	25.0%	17.4%	28.7%
Percent of children (< 18) below the poverty level (2011 estimate)	18.9%	27.2%	16.8%	16.4%	25.4%
Supporting Indicators					
Unemployment rate (March 2013 - not seasonally adjusted)	6.2%	6.9%	5.6%	6.9%	8.5%
Average annual unemployment rate (2012 - not seasonally adjusted)	7.4%	7.6%	6.2%	7.5%	9.5%
Percent of population (0-64) with no health insurance coverage (2010-2011)	18.8%	18.1%	16.4%	16.2%	18.9%
Percent of children (< 18) with no health insurance coverage (2010-2011)	8.9%	9.1%	8.2%	8.1%	9.4%
Percent of births with very late or no prenatal care (2011)	7.3%	10.6%	5.4%	6.2%	5.4%
Percent of low birthweight births - all races (2011)	9.1%	9.3%	8.2%	8.3%	9.1%
Non-Hispanic White	9.6%	7.1%	7.9%	6.4%	7.5%
Non-Hispanic African American	15.3%	13.8%	13.5%	13.4%	14.1%
Other Non-Hispanic	14.3%	6.4%	5.4%	8.8%	9.3%
Hispanic	6.0%	6.9%	6.6%	7.0%	6.9%
Percent of population with SNAP benefits in the past 12 months (2009-2011 estimate)	6.2%	12.1%	8.0%	6.3%	12.9%
Point in Time homeless population count (night of 1/25/2012)	9	698	110	1132	13,602
Point in Time homeless population count (night of 1/30/2013)	21	759	123		
Point in Time homeless children population (<18) count (night of 1/25/2012)	0	79	15	181	3,312
Point in Time homeless children population (<18) count (night of 1/30/2013)	14	118	16		
Percent of homeowners with a mortgage experiencing housing-cost burden (2009-2011 estimate)	31.6%	31.2%	28.8%	29.1%	33.7%
Percent of renters experiencing housing-cost burden (2009-2011 estimate)	45.9%	53.3%	54.2%	46.4%	52.1%
Suicide rate per 100,000 population (2007-2011)	13	8.3	12.8	8.9	12.1
Average number of mentally unhealthy days reported in the past 30 days (2005-2011)	3.7	2.9	2.8	2.6	3.4

Appendix C – Interview Protocols

Stakeholder Interview Protocol
Interviews were done with TCF stakeholders:
Lori O'Keefe – TCF President
Robert Naylor – TCF CFO
Foundation staff in charge of the Community Programs
 Libby Richards – Senior Community Programs Officer
 Gina Anderson – Community Programs and Scholarships Officer
TCF Board members and Community Engagement Committee members
 C. Perry Colwell
 Cecile Noel
Jessica Aylor – TCF Director of Development
Robin Barefoot – TCF Director of Planned Giving
Sandra Rodriquez – TCF Director of Donor Engagement

The interviewer will take minimal notes by hand, so the interviews will be recorded.

<u>Interview Introduction:</u>

I want to thank you for meeting with me today. As part of my coursework, I'm required to do a project on a policy-related question. I'm really excited to have the opportunity to work with you all here at TCF as my client in the project. I've already learned so much about TCF and I'm looking forward to producing a useful report that will continue to be valuable for the foreseeable future.

The purpose of my project is to help the Foundation by designing a way to evaluate the effectiveness of the new Community Programs strategy and develop a system that will allow the Foundation to make improvements to that strategy over the course of a grant cycle. I'm here with you today in order to learn from you. You're an integral part of what the foundation does and the success of the evaluation plan depends on its incorporation by you and other stakeholders here at TCF.

There are no wrong answers. I'm interested in hearing your thoughts and experiences, both positive and negative, that you may have had around program evaluation. I will be recording this interview, if you don't mind. I want to make sure that I don't miss any of your comments. I'll be taking some notes, but I won't be able to get everything in taking notes by hand.

If you're ready, we'll begin now. If you would, please describe your role with the Foundation.

<u>Interview Questions for TCF President, staff, and board members:</u>

1. How would you define program evaluation?
2. Could you describe what evaluation currently looks like at TCF?
3. Do you believe that program evaluation is important for TCF? Why or why not?
4. Are there challenges associated with evaluating the work that TCF does? If so, could you tell me more about them?
5. Are there benefits associated with evaluating the work that TCF does? If so, could you tell me more about them?

6. How important or unimportant is evaluation in your role with the Foundation?
7. Would evaluation results be useful to you in your role with the foundation? If so, please describe how they would be useful. If not, please elaborate on why they would not be useful.
8. If evaluation results would be useful to you, do you have a sense for the type of evaluation results that would be useful? If so, please describe them.
9. What do you believe are the aspects of TCF activities that need to be evaluated?
10. Is there anything we should have talked about, but didn't?

Area Expert Interview Protocol

Interviews were done with experts in the fields of philanthropy, evaluation, and capacity building:
Bobbi Hapgood – former Executive Director, North Carolina Network of Grantmakers
Trudy Smith – Executive Director, Executive Service Corps of The Triangle
Trisha Lester – Vice President, N.C. Center for Nonprofits

The interviews will range from 30-60 minutes in length. The interviewer will take minimal notes by hand, so the interviews will be recorded.

Interview Introduction:

I want to thank you for meeting with me today. I'm a 2nd year graduate student in the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University. As part of my coursework, I've opted to complete a client-based, policy-related project. Triangle Community Foundation (TCF) was gracious enough to partner with me as my client for this project.

As you may know, TCF has changed how it awards grants to community organizations. The purpose of my project is to help the Foundation design a way to evaluate the effectiveness of this new strategy and develop a system that will allow the program staff to make improvements to that strategy as they go along. I'm currently conducting research that will help shape and inform this plan. As part of that research, I'm interviewing experts in the field of philanthropy and evaluation.

There are no wrong answers. I'm interested in hearing both positive and negative thoughts or experiences that you may have. I would like to record this interview, if you don't mind. I want to make sure that I don't miss any of your comments. I'll be taking some notes, but I won't be able to get everything in taking notes by hand.

If you're ready, we can begin. Could you please state your name, organization, and role at your organization?

1. How would you describe evaluation at foundations?
2. Do you have any personal experiences with evaluation at foundations? If so, could you describe them?
3. Do you know of foundations that do self-evaluation?
    a. If so, what are the challenges associated with this type of evaluation?
    b. What are the benefits?
4. Do you know of any organizations that do process-oriented evaluations? If so, can you describe what that looks like?

5. Does your organization do capacity building, and if so, could you describe any evaluation you conduct of that capacity building.
6. Do you know of any examples of other organizations that have attempted to evaluate capacity building?
7. Do you have any advice for how an organization (foundation or nonprofit) should go about learning and improving based on evaluation results?
8. Is there anything else that we should have talked about?

Grantee Interview Protocol
Interviews will be done with phase one grantees that were awarded organizational assessment grants:
Katie Wyatt – Executive Director, Kidznotes
Ginger Young – Executive Director, Book Harvest
Betsy Emerson – Associate Director of Outreach Development, The Hill Center
Maggie West – Program Coordinator, Community Empowerment Fund

The interviews will be about 30 minutes long and will be done with grantees in person or by phone. The interviewer will take minimal notes by hand, so the interviews will be recorded.

<u>Interview Introduction:</u>

I want to thank you for meeting with me today. My name is Darryl Childers and I am a 2nd year graduate student in the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University. As part of my coursework, I've opted to complete a client-based, policy-related project. Triangle Community Foundation (TCF) was gracious enough to partner with me as my client for this project.

As I'm sure you all know, TCF has changed how it awards grants to community organizations. The purpose of my project is to help the Foundation design a way to evaluate the effectiveness of this new strategy and develop a system that will allow the program staff to make improvements to that strategy as they go along. I'm here with you today in order to learn from you. You all are TCF's new partners in this initiative; any plan for evaluation needs to consider the thoughts, attitudes, and capacities of the organizations in this room.

I welcome all points of view. There are no wrong answers. I'm interested in hearing both positive and negative thoughts or experiences that you may have had around program evaluation. You may have noticed the recording device, and this interview will be recorded. I want to make sure that I don't miss any of your comments. I'll be taking some notes, but I won't be able to get everything in taking notes by hand.

If you're ready, we can begin. Could you please state your name, organization, and role at your organization?

1. Do you evaluate any of the work that your organization does? If so, could you describe what evaluation looks like at your organization?
2. Could you describe any reporting requirements that you might have? How many different funders do you report to? When and how often do you report to them?
3. What are the challenges that you face in reporting evaluation results to funders?

4. In your experience, have you been able to identify any aspects of reporting evaluation results that makes it particularly difficult?
5. In your experience, have you been able to identify any aspects of reporting evaluation results that makes it more convenient?
6. Have you had an experience where the process of reporting evaluation results actually improved your organization and the services you provide? If so, could you describe this experience?

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