HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE EVALUATION EXCHANGE:

Emerging Strategies in Evaluating Child and Family Services

Volume IV, Number 1 1998 Free Quarterly Newsletter

From The Director's Desk

Heather B. Weiss
Director HFRP

It has been over five years since Osborne and Graebler began the "accountability revolution" with their book, *Reinventing Government*. Since that time, the notion of results-based accountability (RBA) has reached far beyond the public sector to include foundations, nonprofits, and other community-based organizations. Early supporters and naysayers must be impressed by the extent to which RBA has taken hold.

We have learned a great deal about accountability over the years. The most important thing is perhaps that the development of RBA systems is neither one-shot nor simple. Rather, developing these systems is an iterative process which involves experimentation and continuous reassessment and revision. Further, we now know that there is no one RBA model that can be exported and adopted in all situations. RBA systems are highly contextualized, developing in response to the unique political, social, and institutional environments in which they work. We also know that while RBA systems can help make decisions more information-based, decision making in the public arena always will be in part a political process. Finally, there is the realization that the development of RBA systems is, at its core, a very human process — dependent on champions, relationships, personal credibility, and the ability to engage people who may have a stake in the outcomes of public programs in a frank discussion about what needs to be changed to improve them.

In this issue of the *Evaluation Exchange*, we present articles on RBA that are both retrospective and prospective. Our Theory and Practice article, written by Diane Schilder of HFRP's Results-Based Accountability Project, draws on case studies of eight states to provide a frank assessment of the potential and limitations of RBA systems. Our Promising Practices section highlights two important aspects of RBA systems. Karen Stanford, of the Commission on Government Accountability to the People in Florida, speaks about techniques to engage important stakeholders in the discussion about public outcomes. Janet Bittner, of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, draws on the experiences of Georgia

Published by
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 The Harvard Family Research Project gratefully acknowledges the support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Ford Foundation, The F.B. Heron Foundation, and The Pew Charitable Trusts. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the Harvard Family Research Project and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Performance Measurement

to share some insights about engaging assistance in the development of RBA systems. In our Questions and Answers section, Joseph Wholey and Harry Hatry, both of whom have been influential in the movement toward accountability at the federal level, discuss lessons learned and next steps for performance measurement. We highlight two evaluations in our Evaluations to Watch section. The first, by Jay Bell of James Bell Associates, describes the National Learning Project Evaluation of the United Way. The second evaluation, by Ruth Hubbell McKey of Ellswood Associates, Inc. and Louisa Tarullo of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, discusses the FACES study of Head Start. Our Beyond Basic Training section identifies a number of forthcoming conferences. Finally, our New and Noteworthy and Electronic Mailbox sections note important resources to help assist our readers in their accountability work.

In many ways, we are at an important crossroads in the accountability movement. We have lessons to guide us about what does and does not work. The concept of RBA has permeated many organizational layers. We are beginning to collect results data systematically, and must now think about how results information can be used responsibly — to help people "manage for results." We have little experience with this but know that it will involve creating the right incentives, melding quantitative results with good evaluation data to help explain them, and working in a spirit of cooperation. Most importantly, it will require the understanding that to get meaningful results takes time, a commitment to stay the course, and the willingness to learn from what we are doing. ✦

Read *The Evaluation Exchange* online at: http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~hfrp/eval

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Aiming for Accountability: Lessons Learned from Eight States

Introduction

To reclaim citizen trust and respect and to improve decision making of public managers and policymakers, governments are increasingly turning to new forms of accountability that provide information about the results of public investments. With the implementation of the federal Government Performance and Results Act in 1993, this new form of accountability, called *results-based accountability* (RBA), is taking hold at the federal level. In addition, the shift to RBA at all levels of government and the increased attention to results by foundations demonstrate that RBA may be here to stay.

The expectations of RBA are that it will improve the results of government programs by:

- Facilitating collaboration among stakeholders on common goals
- Empowering frontline workers
- Reducing regulation, resulting in greater local decision making
- Engaging the public in defining solutions to society's problems
- Demonstrating the results of public investments, thereby increasing public faith in government
- Allowing policymakers to budget for results.

New evidence from a recent study by the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) shows that RBA can be a powerful tool to initiate and enhance systems of continuous improvement and learning. However, many of the expectations of RBA have yet to be met because it is still in the very early stages of implementation in most states. This research shows that government policymakers, public managers, workers, and citizens can use RBA to monitor child and family services effectively, learn what is working, change strategies accordingly, and, ultimately, improve outcomes. To be a useful tool for continuous improvement, RBA efforts must include the *process* of defining a vision and articulating desired results and measures, and the *use* of results data for program improvement and accountability.

> …government policymakers, public managers, workers, and citizens can use RBA to monitor child and family services effectively, learn what is working, change strategies accordingly, and, ultimately, improve outcomes.

Our research shows that if RBA efforts are to reach their potential in improving program quality and increasing accountability, they must be carefully designed and implemented. Lessons learned from the eight states in our study can provide valuable insights to those responsible for RBA efforts.

What is the Current Status of RBA Efforts with Regard to Child and Family Services?

Most states are just beginning to design and implement RBA efforts. Even states that are touted as having the most advanced RBA efforts report that they are "about a 3 on a scale of 1 to 100."

What Factors Have Contributed to the Current Status of RBA Efforts for Child and Family Services?

- ***Expectations are overly ambitious. People compare their progress against a set of unrealistic expectations.*** Unless RBA efforts are designed to promote improvement and flexibility, they will not increase collaboration, empower workers, decentralize decision making, engage the public, or provide assurances to citizens and funders that investments are producing results. Moreover, effectively linking budgets to results is a political process requiring political compromise and negotiation, which can be very difficult. Furthermore, to be implemented effectively, RBA systems require the collection and reporting of significant amounts of data which are often difficult to obtain.

- ***RBA for child and family services is relatively new.*** In the areas of law enforcement, health, and education, many agencies have been collecting and reporting results data for at least a decade. By contrast, in the child and family services arena, results data have been collected and used mostly for research and demonstration projects. As such, RBA efforts for child and family services have had less time to develop compared to RBA in other areas.

- ***Leadership and resources must be committed to the effort.*** Sustained commitment from bipartisan leadership is essential for the successful design and implementation of RBA efforts. Leaders must allocate funds, personnel, and time to the effort. Political and financial pressures can diminish support for the efforts over time, thus reducing the chances of successful design and implementation.

- ***Changing thinking takes time.*** Those who have been held accountable for following rules and regulations for their entire careers will not change their thinking overnight to a focus on results. Likewise, many people have seen various reform efforts implemented unsuccessfully and are skeptical of jumping on the bandwagon of something that may be short lived.

- ***No single RBA model exists.*** While some states and localities have a longer history of RBA than others, there is no single model that can be replicated across states and localities. As such, it takes time to design and implement an RBA effort that is tailored to the unique political, demographic, and social context of a particular state or community.

What is the Potential of RBA for Child and Family Services?

While RBA for child and family services is relatively new, enough experience exists to suggest how it can best be used. In its ideal form, RBA can be a useful tool for learning and continuous improvement. To be used in this way, RBA efforts should be designed and used to:

In its ideal form, RBA can be a useful tool for learning and continuous improvement.

- Engage people in defining problems and solutions to them
- Help program managers and providers plan and manage
- Demonstrate results of investments in child and family services
- Promote innovation.

Challenges and solutions to the effective design and implementation of RBA efforts include the following:

- **Engaging People in Defining Solutions to Problems**

The *process* of developing an RBA effort can engage policymakers, service providers, public managers, and citizens in defining problems and solutions to them. Methods to engage citizens and relevant stakeholders in this process include public polling, citizen roundtables, community forums, and meetings with key leaders and stakeholders.

Challenge: *RBA efforts can increase fragmentation because different agencies, departments, and funders often have differing RBA requirements.*

Solution: Those charged with designing and implementing an RBA effort should assess what other efforts currently exist and what other planning efforts are underway. Policymakers, service providers, and other stakeholders should develop a strategic plan that describes a common vision and use this to establish priorities for conflicting RBA requirements. All of those involved in RBA should adjust expectations to recognize that although complete alignment will never be possible, agreement on a general framework should be an important goal.

Challenge: *Stakeholders involved in designing and implementing RBA can get "burned out" by the process since reaching consensus on goals and measures can be tedious and time consuming.*

Solution: It is important to spend time orienting stakeholders involved in RBA efforts and to set up work groups to examine technical issues. For example, Florida developed a standard set of definitions for RBA terms, and Minnesota developed training materials that translate jargon and explain the RBA process. Georgia and Ohio established work groups that discuss technical details and make recommendations to those making final decisions, rather than involving all stakeholders in technical deliberations.

- **Helping Public Managers and Service Providers with Decision Making**

The use of RBA data can help with decision making among public managers and service providers. Such data can help with monitoring progress toward achieving results. And, RBA data, coupled with program evaluation or other data, can be used to assess service strategies.

Challenge: *Training, technical assistance, and data collection and reporting capacity are often inadequate.*

Solution: Leveraging federal, state, and foundation resources can help ensure that training, technical assistance, and data capacity are available. The process of leveraging can be quite complicated, but some states, such as Iowa and Vermont, have been successful by using foundation dollars targeted to improve child and family outcomes to enhance RBA training and technical assistance efforts.

- **Demonstrating Results of Investments in Child and Family Services**

To demonstrate the results of investments in child and family services, RBA data must be coupled with cost-benefit data produced through program evaluation. Nonetheless, RBA data can be used by programs and agencies to monitor progress toward achieving results.

Challenge: *RBA data can be misused in order to hold public managers and service providers accountable for results over which they have no control.*

Solution: To prevent misuse of RBA data, documents must indicate who is responsible for achieving results and should list factors beyond the control of public managers that could affect results. Minnesota and Oregon have included such factors in their RBA reports. In addition, training people to implement the system and use the data is essential. For example, North Carolina developed a training process for those responsible for implementing RBA systems, and Florida developed a training program for policymakers.

- **Promoting Innovation**

To reach its potential as a tool for continuous improvement, RBA must be used as an incentive for innovation rather than as a punitive measure. The process of developing RBA systems can help to identify and eliminate unnecessary barriers and can promote innovation.

Challenge: *Public managers and service providers may become frustrated when charged with identifying solutions to problems that they cannot implement due to constraints of existing rules and regulations.*

Solution: Policymakers and public managers should create processes for systematically examining barriers to achieving results. Committees that regularly review such barriers can identify and eliminate unnecessary regulations, while ensuring the continuation of necessary regulations governing quality, access, and equity. Ohio and Georgia have both set up such committees to review and eliminate unnecessary barriers.

Challenge: *Political, social, and demographic factors can impede the successful design and implementation of an RBA effort.*

> While no single RBA model exists, those charged with implementing RBA efforts can learn from states and communities with similar political, social, and demographic contexts.

Solution: While no single RBA model exists, those charged with implementing RBA efforts can learn from states and communities with similar political, social, and demographic contexts. RBA efforts must be tailored to take into account state and local governance structure as well as the relative power of the governor, legislature, agencies, and county commissioners. It is important to tailor RBA efforts to the size and demographic nature of the state: What works in a small state will not necessarily work in a large state, and must be modified to ensure that key stakeholders are involved in the process.

Challenge: *Adversaries can oppose an RBA effort simply for political reasons. This lack of support can jeopardize the effort.*

Solution: Cultivate bipartisan champions at a variety of levels. Iowa and Vermont have both developed state committees composed of diverse stakeholders to oversee their respective RBA efforts.

Challenge: *Legislative budget and appropriations committees, which are categorical in nature, may not use RBA data if they are not specifically relevant to their committee.*

Solution: Target RBA reports to different audiences and ensure that those targeted toward legislators are succinct, jargon-free, and relevant to legislative committees. North Carolina has taken this into account and has tailored its RBA reports to the legislature. Make sure RBA reports are also written in a way that will be useful to constituents as they attempt to influence the legislative process. Legislators report that RBA has the greatest impact when it is referred to them by their constituents.

Challenge: *Support for the RBA effort wanes after the early implementation phase.*

Solution: Build relationships among key stakeholders in the state and establish trust and widespread support for the effort. The states in our study report different methods of building on these relationships, but all report that these relationships are critical to the success of the effort.

Conclusion

RBA efforts have great potential as a tool to engage policymakers and public managers in continuous improvement of child and family services. Significant challenges exist, however. To ensure that RBA efforts reach their potential, those responsible for designing and implementing such efforts must:

- Set realistic expectations
- Engage stakeholders at a variety of levels in defining problems and solutions
- Incorporate training of public managers, service providers, and citizens about the process
- Design reports to be used by a variety of audiences
- Create systems for eliminating unnecessary barriers and for facilitating innovation
- Cultivate bipartisan support and champions at a variety of levels. ✦

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Interview with Harry Hatry and Joe Wholey

In 1993, the United States Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), mandating that each federal agency develop a strategic plan with outcome-related goals and objectives; develop annual performance plans with output- and outcome-related goals; and report annually on progress toward achievement of these. In the almost five years since the passage of this legislation, federal agencies have been working to develop planning and measurement systems to enable them to respond to the legislation and to help them achieve better results. The focus on performance measurement has not been limited to federal agencies; it has gained currency in state and local governments as well as foundation-funded programs and nonprofit organizations. Two individuals who have played key roles in the performance measurement movement are Joseph Wholey and Harry Hatry. Joe Wholey is Professor of Public Administration at the University of Southern California and Senior Advisor on Evaluation Methodology at the U.S. General Accounting Office. Harry Hatry is a Principal Research Associate and Program Director at the State Policy Center of The Urban Institute. We asked them to reflect on some of the lessons learned from the federal implementation of GPRA and the other results-based work they have seen.

1) What have been some of the key factors influencing the success of performance measurement systems?

Wholey: Executive leadership is key. You need people who believe in setting outcome-oriented goals and who are trying to aim their organizations in that direction. This requires that they consistently demonstrate their belief and commitment to it — not just one time. Some executives hold "how are we doing" sessions which examine what the data are and what they mean and what action to take. These continually reinforce that the executive is interested.

Hatry: At the federal level, one of the unique features has been support from both the Congress and the Executive, both political parties, and the Office of Management and Budget, and the General Accounting Office (GAO). This bipartisan support is remarkable and distinguishes the current work from previous budgetary and management reform efforts. We recognize that this is not the case in many results efforts. Where bipartisan support may not exist, a law on the books is helpful, although it is no guarantee.

Wholey: People who take this seriously also start looking hard at the way organization does business. This is the concept of "alignment." Some people say that those organizations that really get into performance measurement find that

IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS ACT

Enacted in 1993, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requires federal agencies to develop strategic plans describing their goals and objectives, annual performance plans identifying measures of progress, and performance reports describing agency progress in meeting standards and measures. Agency strategic plans were submitted to Congress and OMB in September. Agency performance plans are currently being released. Agency performance reports will be released annually, beginning in March 2000.

A variety of organizations have been following implementation of GPRA and have issued reports and established Web sites to disseminate information about GPRA. These include:

American Society for Public Administration Center for Accountability and Performance, http://www.aspanet.org/cap
Includes federal case studies

The Congressional Institute, http://server.conginst.org/conginst/results
Provides ongoing information about GPRA

Freedom Works, http://freedom.house.gov/results
The Home Page of the Office of House Majority Leader Dick Armey; includes a "grading" of agency strategic plans

Government Executive Magazine, http://www.govexec.com/reinvent/
"Reinvention Center" providing information on GPRA and other government reinvention activities

National Academy of Public Administration, Center for Improving Government Performance, http://www.napawash.org/
Highlights the activities of the Performance Consortium

National Partnership for Reinventing Government (formerly National Performance Review), http://www.npr.gov/initiati/
Provides a growing collection of current documents to help people with an interest in results-oriented government

OMBWatch, http://www.obmwatch.org/www/ombw/gpra/
Offers news and analysis of GPRA

U.S. Chief Financial Officers Council, GPRA Implementation Committee, http://www.financenet.gov/financenet/fed/cfo/gpra/
Includes information on management, budgeting, and accounting related to GPRA

the current way of doing business is not the right way to do business. They find they must reexamine the organization, the functions of the organization, the way the organization manages itself, and manages its systems, such as personnel and budgeting. Who takes responsibility for data is just one of the many things that is reexamined if people say they are going to succeed in achieving outcome goals.

Hatry: If you want to embed managing by results into an organization, you really need to decentralize it. The program manager has to be responsible for outcome information. This does not mean that they themselves collect it, but they have to be responsible for those data. However, you do not want to decentralize too much. For example, I think most organizations probably need some sort of central technical group who can provide technical assistance and some quality oversight to program people. This might be the evaluation people, those who are experts in measurement. For example, a federal or state agency may have twenty programs, and each wants customer surveys. The twenty should not do it all themselves. A central group could provide advice, check the questions, and maybe even manage the administration of the surveys.

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Wholey: In some agencies "partnerships for results" are emerging. The Coast Guard is a good example of this. The agency is holding itself accountable for safety in the coastal waters. By examining data, the agency learned that the primary problem was with tugboats. Further analysis revealed that the problem with tugboats was not their equipment, but rather their operation. As a result, the Coast Guard has focused less on inspections and has formed an alliance with the tugboat industry to improve the training of tugboat operators.

2) What have been some of the key constraints that agencies have faced in designing and implementing performance measurement systems?

Hatry: Use of information has been, in general, a major weak spot. The focus to date has been on accountability and not managing for results. This is the issue Joe and I keep coming back to. Until that focus is changed, getting managers to collect information that is useful to them will not occur.

Wholey: To address this, you that need to look for opportunities to create incentives. Some United Ways are trying to do this by using multi-year grants. The hope is that funded agencies will do more reporting on results and less filling out of grant applications. Multi-year performance-based contracts with providers is another approach. In the United Way's National Learning Project Evaluation we are finding that some of the leading United Ways are focusing their training on helping people to use performance information to improve program quality and to communicate the value of the program to those outside the agency. In the public sector as well, being able to communicate the value of what programs do is a big deal, so it is important to show managers how to explain what their program accomplishes and to have actual data to show what the program accomplishes. Legislatures are properly skeptical — everyone has a wonderful program. Being able to have some evidence of what you produce is of value in the environment of tight resources we currently face.

Hatry: A major concern is what happens when the news is bad. Managers today at all levels fear the results of all of this. This is something I encounter at all levels — that program managers do not trust others to use the data properly. This is probably because they know that it is usually the negative people who don't like their program who will pick up any data they have. All of this is a two-edged sword, and somehow we have to get managers and legislators to be reasonable and constructive in the way that they handle information. That continues to emerge as one of the key problems that may occur. If the data are used only to batter the

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SIX CHALLENGES TO MAKING GPRA WORK

Remarks by Vice President Al Gore at the Government Performance and Results Act Conference

On April 23, 1998, the Council for Excellence in Government sponsored a conference on the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) at which Vice President Gore spoke about the five years since the passage of GPRA. He noted that federal government agencies have prepared strategic plans and developed measures of progress and stressed that the next challenge is to "make the act work." To do this, the Vice President suggested that:

(1) There is a need to focus oversight and management attention on outcomes and asking customers what is important, and how well they think agencies are doing.

(2) There is a need to develop a set of common visions, goals, and measures that reach across organizational boundaries and use the resources and energy of many agencies to solve complex problems.

(3) Information technology is key. Technology can deliver services across agency boundaries, provide real-time information on performance, and allow more one-stop shopping.

(4) In the long run, shared accountability means rethinking the traditional decision-making process that centers around the budget. This might mean moving to a biennial budget and focusing more of the policy debate on performance rather than budget.

(5) There is a need to create incentives so leaders aren't just required to do the right thing, they want to do it. This might mean the creation of performance-based organizations which create incentives for employees to be customer-focused and results-based and would grant agencies greater flexibility from rules in order to help them achieve results.

(6) In the long run, there is a need to rethink how the government reorganizes to deliver its services. This would mean building agencies — and a congressional committee structure — that work more on horizontal than vertical lines.

Building Support for Statewide Outcomes: Lessons from Florida

For the past five years, the Florida Commission on Government Accountability to the People (GAP), a 15-member citizen panel with four staff operating independently within state government, has produced public reports on outcomes. One report, *The Florida Benchmarks*, is a series of quantitative indicators that describe the well-being of Florida citizens across seven areas of concern: families and communities; safety; learning; health; economy; environment; and government. Its companion publication, *Critical Benchmark Goals*, identifies statewide goals for the years 2000 and 2010 for sixty of the most important indicators, including children in poverty, racial harmony, child abuse and neglect, and infant mortality.

We have worked to publicize and garner support for the measures using a variety of strategies:

- ***Public hearings:*** To give citizens an opportunity to shape the benchmarks, the Commission held public hearings in five cities around the state. Because the benchmarks were a new idea, few people attended the meetings or understood what they were to be. However, some early contacts were productive. For example, GAP worked with Joint Venture South Florida, a nonprofit organization developing a long-term economic vision with a set of measures like the benchmarks for five South Florida counties.

  In establishing goals for the critical benchmarks, we focused on involving citizen leaders and citizen groups. We used a modified Delphi approach in which we asked 95 organizations around the state to submit up to 10 names of people actively involved in one or more of the benchmark areas. We then sent out a survey to approximately 2000 of these people, providing trends and comparative data on the critical benchmarks and asking respondents to help us set a goal for where Florida should be in 2000 and 2010. We received 700 responses, some quite impassioned, particularly about education and crime. By involving people who are active in their communities in this way, we were able to increase our citizen base even more.

- ***Press conferences and editorial board meetings:*** We have used press conferences and press releases to advertise the reports. We realize, however, that even the best laid plans don't always materialize — on the day we released the 1996 benchmarks, we were trumped by singer Gloria Estefan, who made a whirlwind visit to the Capitol to advocate for boat safety. We have also developed relationships with editorial boards and have found that the quality of life measures fit nicely with the issues that editors discuss. We have written Letters to the Editor and community editorials, which have been carried in all parts of the state. We visit or call editors when we have a new report or a finding that they might find interesting. Our support comes from all political spectrums; both conservative and liberal editorial writers have praised the purpose and content of the benchmarks.

> We have also developed relationships with editorial boards and have found that the quality of life measures fit nicely with the issues that editors discuss.

- ***Widespread distribution:*** The benchmarks have been distributed widely to state elected officials and state agencies, as well as to the more than 1500 organizations that lobby the Florida legislature. In addition, the benchmarks were sent to all mayors, city councils, city managers, county commissioners, school boards, and media outlets. In 1996, the benchmarks were made available in every public library, and a poster advertising the Goals Report was sent to every library in 1997.

- ***Involvement of civic and business community:*** The idea of a GAP Commission came from the state's Florida Council of 100, a leading business organization composed of the top private sector CEOs in the state. The Council has actively supported the Commission whenever it has run into political trouble and is an important source of sustained advocacy for statewide outcomes and the reports. Our commissioners, who are from different parts of the state, have sought speaking engagements with civic and business organizations. In turn, these entities have used the benchmarks for comparative data in reaching their own organizational goals. Additionally, we have been supported by the state's Chamber of Commerce, which uses our publication in its Leadership Florida program and has given us statewide publicity through its newsletter. We have also contacted each of the major advocacy organizations in the state and requested mention in their newsletters, and in some cases, have written articles for their publications.

- ***Support for local benchmarking groups:*** We formed an early informal alliance with the Jacksonville Community Council, Inc., which has published quality of life indicators since 1985. Subsequently, we have generated at least three other local efforts in large metropolitan counties. We have provided technical assistance to them and to some smaller counties which have developed community reports. We have found that local community groups have been our most important allies in this effort, enabling us to build a political base across the state.

Legislators are much more likely to listen to their local constituents' opinions than they are to a small state government agency like GAP. Thus, the support of these local quality of life indicator publishers has been invaluable.

The Commission has worked hard to develop a multi-pronged dissemination approach and has been delighted with who uses our report and why: middle school teachers because they have nothing else current on Florida; community colleges in their grant proposals to support funding requests; nonprofits to set organizational goals for their boards; university graduate classes in performance measurement and strategic planning; and editorial boards to back up their arguments.

The greatest challenge we have faced is to garner the support of legislators and their staffs. We have found that while legislators use the benchmarks for civic club speeches and for reference during ten months of the year, during the 60 day session, their concern is with agency operations and specific assistance they can receive in making funding decisions. Social indicators seem like distant sentinels when the question is whether or not to keep an agricultural marketing program in a rural county. Indicative of this is the fact that the 1998 Florida Legislature cut all funding for the GAP Commission. An effort is underway to continue its work outside state government. ✦

Karen Stanford
Executive Director
Florida Commission on Government Accountability to the People

For further information, please visit the GAP Commission Web site: http://www.state.fl.us/eog/govdocs/gapcomm/gaphome.html

PROMISING PRACTICES

Do You Really Want to Be Accountable for Results? Musings on Georgia's Learnings

The call for accountability rings throughout every hall, from United Way Boards to county commissioners to legislatures. But, accountable for what, with what tools, and with what systems? How do we use results to inform decision-makers, whether those decisions affect policies, operations, or budgets? Many of us wander into this accountability world with uninformed optimism, engage the best thinkers in designing new tools and systems, and then wonder why we hit so many walls in trying to implement results accountability.

Georgia's experience in approaching results accountability has taught us many lessons, of which the most important has been "don't embark on this bold journey without some appreciation and readiness for the complexity of change that will be required." We have learned that you must be deliberate in planning for this journey, mapping out the route, preparing traveling partners, and selecting a pathfinder. You need to know what your destination is, and you must also be willing to engage in the work and invest in the human and financial capital required to get there. Georgia's experience has resulted in four major lessons:

> Many of us wander into this accountability world with uninformed optimism, engage the best thinkers in designing new tools and systems, and then wonder why we hit so many walls in trying to implement results accountability.

1) Ensure that there is buy-in from top leadership from the outset. The system and policy changes required will not occur without the authority required to sustain the changes. This is even more crucial if you are looking at cross-system results that require shared accountability.

2) Recruit dedicated staff to this initiative; it cannot be managed part-time or on top of full-time responsibilities. Consider the functions that need to be managed: steering, guiding consultants, implementation, and building local capacity to manage in the long term.

3) Use outside technical assistance to build local and state capacity to sustain results accountability. Approach this in a manner that teaches new skills and concepts to staff; involves governing bodies fully in designing and using the new decision systems; directs resources to this work; and increases leadership buy-in to the efforts throughout the process.

4) Understand the complexity of this endeavor. Results-based change means more than rhetoric; it goes to the core of how you operate, how you set policy, and how you make funding decisions.

If you understand the above lessons, you will be able to make informed decisions about the consultants and technical assistance to help you implement a results-based system. Georgia has been fortunate — our consultants have added significant value to the work and have helped design conceptual and operational models and new decision support systems, all within a learning environment that is patient, allows for missteps, and rewards breakthroughs.

In order to ensure strong and effective consultant partnerships, our experience shows that those involved in developing a results-based system for their state, locality, or organization must consider the following:

1) Your responsibility

Be clear about your vision for a results-based accountability system and conduct a systemic assessment of the capabilities that need to be developed. Consider the following questions:

- What is the current view of evaluation among stakeholders? Is the mindset one of after-the-fact "got-you" or is it one of developing ongoing information to improve decision making?

- What is the state-of-the-art in information systems? Is the information provided that which decision makers need in order to be accountable for results? Can cross-system information as well as individual program information be produced?

- What models exist for interpreting the data across information systems?

- What capacity exists at the local and state levels for understanding, implementing, and using results-based decision models?

- What models need to be developed that help decision makers translate new information into operational, policy, or investment decisions?

2) Consultant's competencies

Search for consultants who can design and foster new concepts. Results accountability is not a bag of tricks — it requires new thinking and new skills. Through interviews and references, determine if the consultant can:

- Jointly develop and tailor the approach with the customer. There are no standard prototypes for results accountability.

- Understand the different audiences in any one community or state that are key stakeholders in building accountability systems. These can include, among others, the boards, the executive leadership, the information systems staff, front-line workers, and audit/budget staff.

- Use the learning process to develop buy-in for the changes required. Consultants should help create an environment that fosters a willingness to modify plans as those involved in the effort learn what works.

- Understand the change process and ways of managing reactions to the threats and opportunities that develop. The consultant concurrently should be able to think holistically and systemically, recognizing the origins of current behaviors.

- Use the process to increase understanding, capacity, and ownership of shared accountability. A valued consultant partner will work with the varied personalities to build ownership.

Determining the consultant's competencies is difficult, but critical. These competencies could become part of your solicitation, by requesting the party to provide references or evidence of his or her approach to working with customers.

> Be clear about your vision for a results-based accountability system and conduct a systemic assessment of the capabilities that need to be developed.

3) Previous consultant work

A request for a proposal should also address the consultant's experience with results accountability: What has he or she done to design new models? We in Georgia have yet to identify any individual, organization, community, or state that has implemented new accountability systems that are cross-system, community-based, and user friendly. We are all in the design phase, so look for evidence of thoughtful experimentation rather than for a perfect solution.

You might want to request the following from any potential consultant:

- Models of conceptual and operational results-based accountability systems

- Examples of partnering with multiple stakeholders in fostering joint planning, assessment, and evaluation

- Examples of an ability to tailor technical assistance to political and operational realities

- Examples of tools developed to create a system of accountability

- Approaches to building capacity to sustain the changes independent of the consultant

- Descriptions of past work, including scope and role as a consultant for results accountability; publications; and, individual references from community, state, and national partners.

Since 1991, Georgia has been creating new community collaboratives willing to develop shared accountability. The communities and the state have been deliberate in being responsible for results accountability since l994, developing new conceptual models, redesigning information systems, reconfiguring governance structures, and designing new decision systems. Georgia attempts to do this within a no-blame learning environment. The Georgia partners are proud of our progress over the past years, but we also understand that we have much to learn. We welcome the knowledge, advice, and support of our many national partners in these efforts. Results accountability is no quick fix but, in the long term, it will provide a means of assessing the effectiveness of our public and private investments in better results for children and families. ✦

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National Learning Project Evaluation

Background

Primary responsibility for addressing social needs is presently undergoing a dramatic shift in the United States. Local communities — and particularly the nonprofit human service organizations within those communities — are being asked to assume an increasingly larger share of the burden. At the same time, human service programs are under increased scrutiny by government, philanthropic, and corporate funders, all of whom are demanding demonstrable results. United Ways (UW) are also being challenged to show their added value to local community improvement efforts.

Supported by a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., the United Way of America (UWA) has initiated the National Learning Project (NLP) to assess the use of program outcome information at seven UW sites that have compiled program outcome information.

NLP Sites

Asheville, NC	Minneapolis, MN
Dayton, OH	New Orleans, LA
Indianapolis, IN	Rochester, NY
Milwaukee, WI	

In addition to site selection, UWA has supported the NLP by convening the seven NLP UWs in July and December 1996; creating a private electronic board on UW Online for project managers at NLP UWs; conducting focus groups at six of the seven sites; and contracting for the development of "theories of change" or "logic models" for each of the participating UWs.

The UWs participating in the NLP expect to gain the following:

- National technical assistance and consultation based on the needs they identify
- Support for networking among themselves
- National recognition as leaders in measuring program outcomes and achieving community impact.

In particular, NLP participants expect to benefit from a national evaluation that provides — on a real-time basis — ongoing documentation of progress and sharing of lessons learned. Knowledge gained from these sites will be used to assist the larger group of UWs in advancing faster and further along the road to full implementation of an outcomes approach. In turn, the expected improvements in UW-sponsored programs will contribute to an improved quality of life in the local communities receiving these services.

Evaluation Description

To help realize useful information from the NLP, the evaluation is a qualitative assessment that embodies several operational purposes: 1) to analyze how sites differ in approaches and objectives in relation to their past progress and current environment; 2) to monitor each site's implementation of workplans, including shifts in approaches and objectives, and reasons for those shifts; 3) to assess each site's achievement of activities, outputs, and outcomes; 4) to compare the results of different strategies used to attain similar objectives; 5) to assess the role of external and internal factors that affect each UW's progress and shifts in plans; 6) to compare progress across sites to find insights that might benefit sites' efforts to advance toward their objectives; and 7) to share (transfer) the cumulative learnings with other, non-NLP UWs.

Work on the evaluation project began in May 1997, and will extend over 32 months to a completion date of December 1999. Since the seven sites are at different stages of outcome implementation, baseline reports in the form of case studies are being completed for each site, with a baseline synthesis report on all sites to follow. Over the course of the project, annual reports for each site will provide updated information on implementation progress. The evaluation will conclude with a final cross-site report that looks across all phases of the project.

Selected Points and Next Steps

At a December 1997 meeting of UWs, selected points about outcome measurement implementation experiences derived from baseline case studies across the seven NLP sites were presented. These points included the following:

- Implementation took more effort and a longer period of time than expected
- Every site employed a phased/incremental approach
- Although improvements in the results of programs and program design were undoubtedly occurring, there were few concrete examples and no systematic tallies
- NLP sites had to invent many new tools in the area of defining expected results of individual programs
- The demands placed on volunteers and staff changed dramatically
- Bridging to community impact remained an unresolved issue for sites seeking improvements in the status of the community.

At that same meeting, the following were listed as the next steps for NLP sites:

- Planning for and demonstrating community impact
- Enlisting collaboration of funding partners, especially government agencies that are the largest funders in the community priority areas
- Monitoring changes in the perceptions of UW by the community/public
- Demonstrating improvements in programs/systems (independent of whether changes in community status occur). ✦

Jay Bell
Project Director
National Learning Project Evaluation

The NLP evaluation is being conducted by Jay Bell of James Bell Associates, and Joe Wholey and John McLaughlin of the USC Washington Center. For information, contact James Bell Associates, Inc., 2111 Wilson Blvd. Suite 1120, Arlington, VA 22201.

Ensuring Quality in Head Start: The FACES Study

As the nation's premier early childhood education program, Head Start is leading the way in developing and reporting on its accountability for comprehensive services to approximately 800,000 children and their families each year. Head Start has developed an outcome-oriented accountability system, which combines scientific research with program-level reporting and monitoring, and is based on a consensus-driven set of criteria for program accountability.

The Head Start Program Performance Measures Initiative is a response to a specific legislative mandate, strategic planning for Head Start, and broader public emphasis on accountability and results-oriented evaluation. Measures were developed in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion, the Head Start Act, and the Government Performance and Results Act.

The Conceptual Framework

In 1995, Head Start undertook a consensus-building process involving Head Start program staff and parents, early childhood organization representatives, researchers, experts in the education, child development and early intervention fields, and federal officials. A conceptual framework was developed to display the linkages between process and outcome measures for Head Start children and families. The ultimate goal of Head Start is to promote the social competence of children, defined as the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. Social competence is depicted at the top of a pyramid, with five objectives supporting it:

1) Enhance children's healthy growth and development
2) Strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their children
3) Provide children with educational, health, and nutritional services
4) Link children and families to needed community services
5) Ensure well-managed programs that involve parents in decision making.

An important aspect of the pyramid is the strong empirical connection between the provision of quality services (process measures) and improvements in child development (outcome measures). Each Program Performance Measure has performance indicators that specify how the measure will be assessed. For example, the objective "Enhancing children's healthy growth and development" includes as one performance measure: "Head Start children demonstrate improved emergent literacy, numeracy, and language skills." The performance indicator for this measure is the change in the Head Start children's emergent literacy, numeracy, and language skills over the Head Start year, measured by individual child assessments and parent and teacher reports of the child's abilities. A more process-oriented measure is: "Head Start assures that children receive needed medical, dental, and mental health services." The performance indicator for this measure is the number and percent of Head Start children who received needed medical services as reported by the programs themselves. In order to provide annual progress reports on the indicators supporting each of the objectives, data will be drawn from agency level sources, such as the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) — a program-level reporting system completed by each Head Start program annually — and program monitoring reports, as well as from the classroom, teacher, family, and child level.

The Outcome Study

Most of the outcome data are being collected from the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of Head Start programs, classrooms, teachers, parents, and children examining the quality and effects of Head Start. FACES is being conducted by a team of researchers under contract to the Research, Demonstration and Evaluation Branch, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Spring 1997 field test of FACES on a national probability sample of 2400 children and families in 40 programs collected extensive information about the quality of the educational services using classroom observations and interviews with teachers and administrators. FACES measured the abilities of Head Start children on a variety of child development constructs using direct child assessment, observation, and parent and teacher reports. These measures, often with nationally normed comparison data available, tapped abilities in emergent literacy, numeracy, and language skills; general cognitive skills, gross and fine motor skills; attitudes toward learning; social behavior and emotional well-being; and physical health. In addition, parents were interviewed about their life experiences, and involvement and satisfaction with Head Start. Classrooms were assessed on scheduling, the early childhood learning environment, and teacher behavior. Research has consistently linked program quality variables such as child:adult ratio, group size, responsiveness of teacher-child interaction, and richness of learning environments to improved child outcomes. For the first time using a national sample, FACES is testing the same linkages in Head Start. It is expected that higher quality Head Start programs will have children showing higher levels of skills and, over time, displaying greater gains in developmental outcomes.

Next Steps

Because of its unique opportunity to collect longitudinal child outcome data tied to program quality, FACES continued with Fall 1997 and Spring 1998 data collections on a nationally representative sample of 3,200 children and families in the same 40 programs. These phases will allow for a pre-post comparison, assessing the effects of Head Start by examining children and parents before their exposure to Head Start and determining their status at the end of the program. The Spring 1998 data collection will also examine a cohort of former Head Start children from the original field test sample who are completing kindergarten, to determine how they have performed in their first year of school. A Spring 1999 FACES data collection will examine results after kindergarten for the Fall 1997 Head Start cohort. Analyses of the Fall 1997-Spring 1998 comparisons will be available in late 1998.

Additional efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of Head Start are also underway. A consortium of four Quality Research Centers (QRCs) was established in 1995 to collaborate with local Head Start programs and the federal Head Start Bureau to define, assess, and verify the effectiveness of high-quality program practices in Head Start programs. On January 1, 1998, revised Head Start Program Performance Standards were implemented. These regulations delineate the operations and quality of services to be offered by all Head Start programs. Concurrently, the Head Start program monitoring system is being revised to streamline the process, and promote greater consistency and reliability across HHS regions. The training and technical assistance system has also been recently redesigned. ✦

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Performance Measures Progress Reports are available on the Head Start Bureau Web page: www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb or can be requested by fax: (703) 683-5769; or e-mail: hspmc6@mail.idt.net

The evaluators for the Head Start FACES Study are Nicholas Zill and Gary Resnick of Westat, Inc.; David Connell of Abt Associates; Ruth Hubbell McKey of Ellsworth Associates; Robert O'Brien of The CDM Group. Federal project officers are Louisa B. Tarullo and Henry M. Doan of the Research, Demonstration and Evaluation Branch, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For further information, please contact Louisa B. Tarullo via e-mail: lbtarullo@acf.dhhs.gov

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

We regret that we cannot provide copies of the materials listed below. Please contact the publisher or authoring organization directly.

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. (1997). *Measuring outcomes: Practical applications for human services.* Findings, 1 (3). Saint Paul, MN: Author. This edition of the quarterly newsletter from the Wilder Foundation focuses on the practical aspects of how human services and educational organizations use outcome evaluation information to improve the effectiveness of their services. *Tel: (612) 333-4220. Wilder Research Center, 1295 Bandana Boulevard North, Suite 210, St. Paul, MN 55108.*

Ammons, David N. (1996). *Municipal benchmarks: Assessing local performance and establishing community standards.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. This book explores the design of practical performance measurement systems, the improvement of existing systems, and the establishment of local performance standards. *Tel: (805) 499-9774. http://www.sagepub.com*

Brown, Brett & Corbett, Thomas. (1997). *Social indicators and policy in the age of devolution.* Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty and School of Social Work, University of Wisconsin-Madison. This paper discusses how devolution and other changes in public administration have increased the importance of social indicators as public policy tools and how the new focus on results requires a sophisticated use of what are broadly thought of as social indicators. *http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/srlist.htm*

Friedman, Mark. (1997). *A guide to developing and using performance measures in results-based budgeting.* Washington, DC: The Finance Project. This paper addresses the challenge of how to be accountable for the best possible performance, while ensuring that performance is aligned with overall efforts to improve results. *http://www.financeproject.org/measures.html*

Hauser, Robert M., Brown, Brett V., & Prosser, William R., Eds. (1997). *Indicators of children's well-being.* New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation. Essays by experts in multiple disciplines assess how data on physical development, education, economic security, family and neighborhood conditions, and social behavior are collected and analyzed; what findings they reveal; and what improvements are needed to create a more comprehensive and policy-relevant system of measurement. *Tel: (800) 524-6401. RSF Publications Office, 112 East 64th Street, New York, NY 10021-7383.*

Koshel, Jeff. (1997). *Indicators as tools for managing and evaluating programs at the national, state and local levels of government: Practical and theoretical issues.* Washington, DC: Child Trends, Inc. This paper surveys the variety of ways indicators are used by public officials and program administrators to measure performance and discusses the characteristics that indicators should have in order to meet management and planning needs. *Tel: (202) 362-5580. Child Trends, Inc., 4301 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20008.*

McDaniel, Nancy & Alsop, Robyn. (1997). *Fifth national roundtable on outcomes measures in child welfare services: Summary of proceedings.* Englewood, CO: American Humane Association. Looking at emerging trends in child welfare and the impact on outcomes measurement, this report on the recent roundtable discussion includes information on federal requirements influencing outcomes measurement, linking interventions through research, and assessing outcomes across service systems and the community; criteria for selecting outcome indicators; and characteristics of successful outcomes initiatives. *Tel: (303) 792-9900. American Humane Association, Children's Division, 63 Inverness Drive East, Englewood, CO 80112-5117.*

Schachter, Hindy Lauer. (1996). *Reinventing government or reinventing ourselves: The role of citizen owners in making a better government.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. This book offers a new perspective on the movement to reinvent government, arguing that citizens should be viewed as owners of government rather than as customers, and demonstrating that a reinvigorated public is essential to increasing agency efficiency and responsiveness. *Tel: (800) 666-2211. Fax: (800) 688-2877. State University of New York Press, c/o CUP Services, PO Box 6525, Ithaca, NY 14851.*

United States General Accounting Office. (1996). *Executive guide: Effectively implementing the Government Performance and Results Act.* Washington, DC: Author. This report studies several public sector organizations successfully pursuing management reform initiatives and becoming more results-oriented. It discusses three key steps and important practices to implementing reforms. Document *#GGD-96-118. http://www.gao.gov/reports.htm*

United Way. (1997). *Measuring program outcomes: A practical approach.* Alexandria, VA: Author. This handbook is a complete resource for health, human services, and youth and family serving agencies, offering guidance and step-by-step strategies for specifying program outcomes, developing measurable indicators, identifying data sources and data collection methods, analyzing and reporting findings, and using outcome information. *Tel: (800) 772-0008. http://www.unitedway.org*

Wandersman, Abraham, et al. (1998, Forthcoming). *Comprehensive quality programming: Eight essential strategies for implementing successful prevention programs.* Journal of Primary Prevention. This article presents strategies that can be used to improve the practice of prevention programs, with a focus on the strategies of youth and family prevention programs. A series of eight specific strategies, referred to as Comprehensive

Quality Programming, and an overview of an effective method for using such strategies to improve programs continously are included.

Yates, Jessica. (1997). *Performance management in human services.* Washington, DC: The Welfare Information Network. Performance measurement systems have grown increasingly relevant to both government and private organizations providing child, family, and human services. This paper examines the work of several states taking the lead in managing for performance and discusses the lessons learned. *http://www.welfareinfor.org/perfman.htm* ✦

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Questions and Answers
Continued from page 6

agencies, then we have a problem. To alleviate this problem, there should be an explicit provision stating that when a performance report is provided, explanatory information must accompany it (giving the agency managers the opportunity to tell their side of the story.

Wholey: I believe we should reorient our concept of performance measurement to include three things: 1) annual (or more frequent) numerical information; 2) annual (or more frequent) narrative assessment of what is being accomplished; 3) program evaluation studies to give a fuller picture of what the program produces and to address the knotty questions of whether the program makes a difference.

3) Now that the performance measurement building blocks are in place in many agencies, what are the next steps?

Hatry: Getting managers to use the information is very important although very difficult to achieve. You need to get regular feedback into the system so managers can make changes, and this is still one of the major uncertainties we have today.

Wholey: Some of the organizations that have been collecting outcome data for some time are taking the second step, which is to begin to understand these data in terms of degree of difficulty. This is designed to discourage "creaming." One means by which they are doing this is to group programs or organizations with similar characteristics together when assessing performance. This has been done in education, where schools with similar characteristics (such as student socio-economic status) are compared with one another. Another way to do this comparison is by using a regression model; this is done in job training where local economic conditions and client characteristics are taken into account. The point is that, for those working in a tougher situation, performance scores need to be treated more kindly, while those working in less difficult situations should be held to a higher standard of performance.

Hatry: Performance partnerships, where different organizations work together to achieve results, are a promising approach. This is almost inherently necessary in human services since upper levels of government typically do not deliver direct services. The indicators that really mean something are contributed to by many different parties. A family services program may have federal, state, and local policies, monies, and community entities. Through these partnerships, people start to realize that to improve outcomes is not the responsibility of one agency or one level of government — it is shared.

Wholey: Performance partnerships have many interesting features. But, at a more technical level, there is the issue of a common set of indicators. Many funders are enthusiastic about performance-based approaches but what each wants is different. It would be useful to have some national agreement on common indicators in the human services area. To do this would require a two-step process. First, you need agreement on what the goals are. It is a mistake to go to the measures first. At this point, you can also think about how to use performance information once you have it and what kind of incentive systems you want. Second, you need agreement on sensible measures of progress.

Hatry: Another issue that is going to come up is the quality control issue, and that has not yet been faced up to — once you have a performance measurement system in place, how do you retain and oversee the quality? Will Congress trust the agencies' numbers? With a grain of salt — they will rely on GAO. It is very important to try to address data quality at all levels (program level, upper management, and legislature) once you have the system in place.

Wholey: Typically, there is going to be more than one measurement system. Managers can use less valid information because they have other clues as to what is going on. Policymakers are further away, and they typically will want more validation of the information. I have spent my whole life working on utility of performance information as more important than validity and reliability issues — both sets of issues have to be faced and ought to be faced. In Canada, the Office of Auditor General has taken the position that it wants to see managers use the information to try to improve their programs and that a lot of the other things will get worked out. If managers use the information in their work, managers become concerned with the quality of the information.

Hatry: It is extremely important that people who will be involved in this sort of thing get acclimated to it as early as possible. This begins in the universities. We need to focus on the importance of the concept of government-by-results, and results-based performance measurement in universities and inservice training. This will help people understand the outcome focus and inculcate the values and understanding needed to create the culture change required of a results-based approach.

Wholey: We can also advance things if, at a central level, we create suitable incentive systems for better results. Bonuses on the basis of results achieved is one way — the Department of Health and Human Services is experimenting with this in the context of welfare reform. But financial bonuses are not always necessary. You can do a lot with partial deregulation or more onerous supervision as rewards and penalties. I think that getting measures and using the information to try to do better is important and that the creation of intangible incentive systems is an important way to get that to happen. ✦

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American Evaluation Association
http://www.eval.org
The Web site of the professional association for evaluators, the American Evaluation Association (AEA), provides information on publications, links to evaluation Web sites, and meeting and conference dates. The AEA also runs several electronic lists, including EVALTALK, which is an open discussion list devoted to evaluation issues (subscribe to listserv@ua1vm.ua.edu); the Collaborative, Participatory, and Empowerment Evaluation TIG List (subscribe to majordomo@lists.stanford.edu with the message subscribe empowerment evaluation97@lists.stanford.edu); and the International and Cross-Cultural Evaluation TIG (subscribe to mailserv@palmer.edu).

The Benchmarking Exchange
http://www.benchnet.com
The Benchmarking Exchange is a comprehensive Web site designed specifically for individuals and organizations involved in benchmarking, and offers its users an online searchable library of benchmarking programs and literature, forums, and a list of contact organizations.

The Evaluation Clearinghouse
http://www3.sympatico.ca/gpic/gpichome.htm
The Evaluation Clearinghouse Web site, run by Government Performance Information Consultants, is a general interest site with thorough links to evaluation resources, a list of publications, and a helpful glossary of evaluation terms.

InnoNet Toolbox
http://www.inetwork.org
The InnoNet Toolbox Web site, developed and maintained by Innovation Network, Inc., offers tools and instruction for creating detailed evaluation plans, as well as program and fundraising plans. Also available is a database that provides downloadable generic surveys, interview guidelines, and tips for collecting data.

United Way Resource Network
http://www.unitedway.org/outcomes
This United Way site is a guide to resources available for measuring programs outcomes for health, human service, and youth and family service agencies. Excerpts from *Measuring program outcomes: A practical approach* are online, as are links to resources for agency staff and volunteers, organizations doing research in the area of youth development, and useful health and human service related evaluation resources. ✦

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