



# Building a Culture of Evaluation

## **Building Evaluation Culture Among Partners – a Federal Perspective**

David Kurfurst, Director, Evaluation and Performance Measurement, Head of Evaluation, IRCC

## **Making Evaluation Useful**

Rich Janzen, Executive Director, Centre for Community Based Research

## **The Role of Training in Building Evaluative Capacity**

Margerit Roger, Principal, Eupraxia Training

## **The Story of ISANS' Evaluation Journey so far...**

Nabiha Atallah, Advisor, Strategic Initiatives, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)



# Building an Evaluation Culture – *A Federal Perspective*



- Outcomes and results reporting has increasingly been a priority for IRCC and Govt of Canada
  - Evaluation is central to this
- Overview of Evaluation in IRCC
- Values of an evaluation culture
  - Timely, credible evidence and data
  - Demonstrates accountability
  - Creates a learning and outcomes-focused organization
  - Enables ability to tell meaningful *results* stories
  - Many more!

**David Kurfurst**

Director, Evaluation  
IRCC

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# Building an Evaluation Culture – *A Federal Perspective*



- Whose culture of evaluation?
  - Federal department / funders / service providing organizations / others
- IRCC contributes to an enabling environment of evaluation and outcomes
  - Roles
  - Sharing tools, knowledge,
  - Engagement and capacity-building
  - Expectations, limitations

*Examples:*

- **SDI**
- **Settlement Outcomes Report**
- **CFP**



# Building an Evaluation Culture – *How ?*

- Think about outcomes and articulate them!
- The IRCC Settlement and Resettlement Program logic models → a starting point!
  - However, can be adapted, tailored, layered upon
  - Look for **alignment** with IRCC outcomes... 'see yourself' and situate your program, intervention
- Focus on understanding impacts and **results** for clients and program/pilot/initiative
  - What is working well, areas for improvement
  - Understanding results for different populations (refugees, gender, etc)
  - Scalable results / broad applicability
  - Connection to IRCC outcomes and reporting requirements



# Building an Evaluation Culture – *How?*


- A performance measurement foundation for a strong evaluative culture
- Start → build → iterate
- Dedicate resources towards PM and evaluation and data collection; develop/retain expertise
  - Training, tools are out there!
- Seek partners and collaboration opportunities



<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations.html>

- For meaningful evaluations, some key principles to carry forward:
  - Objective, evidence-based analysis and assessments
  - Robust approaches
  - Reliable data





Rich Janzen,  
Executive Director,  
Centre for Community  
Based Research  
(CCBR)

# MAKING EVALUATION USEFUL

BUILDING A CULTURE OF EVALUATION IN  
SETTLEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

NOV 21, 2023

[rich@communitybasedresearch.ca](mailto:rich@communitybasedresearch.ca)

# CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

- Non-profit organization on the University of Waterloo campus
- Balancing academic excellence with community relevance since 1982
- 450+ projects on a range of societal issues including (re)settlement
- A mission to collaboratively and equitably build responsive and supportive communities



CENTRE FOR  
COMMUNITY  
BASED RESEARCH

# THE DRIVERS OF EVALUATION

## REACTIVE

- In response to funder accountability

## PROACTIVE

- For healthy organizational development
- For adaptive management in response to shifting contexts

## USEFUL EVALUATION

- Not only **does** evaluation
- But proactively thinks about how to **use** evaluation results





# A CULTURE OF EVALUATION

## STRATEGIC LEARNING

- Keeping focused on strategic directions
- Providing opportunity for reflective practice

## ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

- Real-time evidence to guide decision-makers
- Usefulness in stimulating innovation

## USEFUL EVALUATION

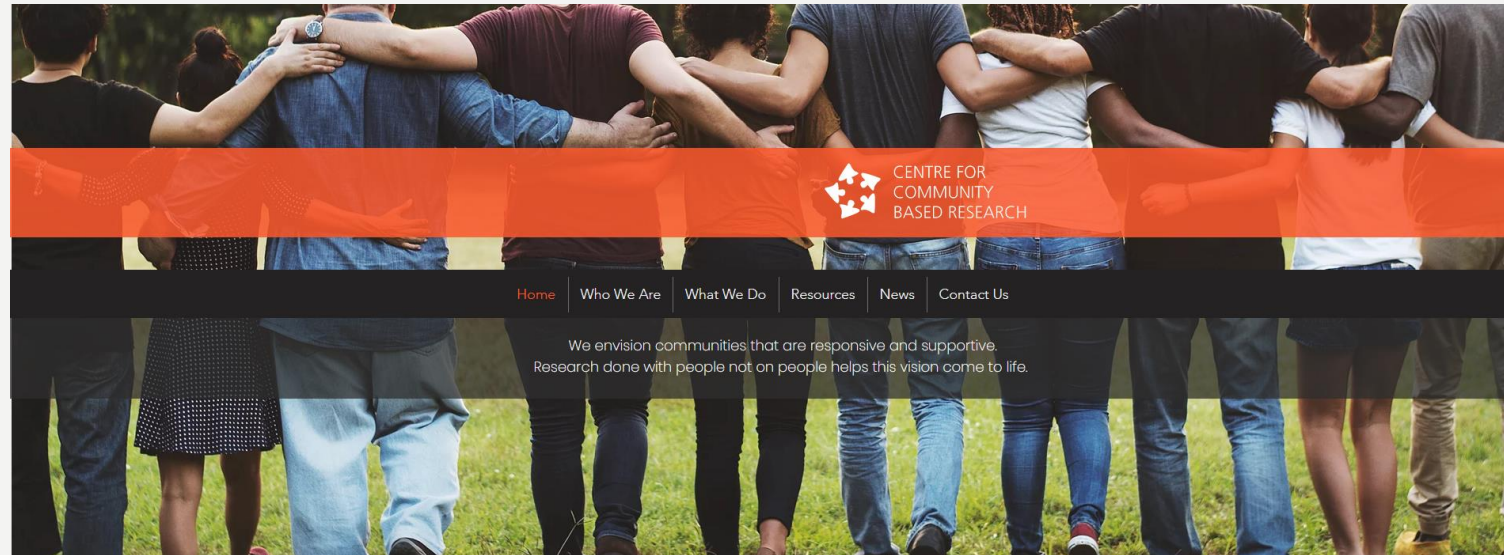
- Helps organizations to adapt to the current context
- Keeps organizations focused on their strategic mission



# A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

**Main Message:** A community-based approach to evaluation helps evaluation to be more useful.

- How is community-based evaluation different from other approaches to evaluation?

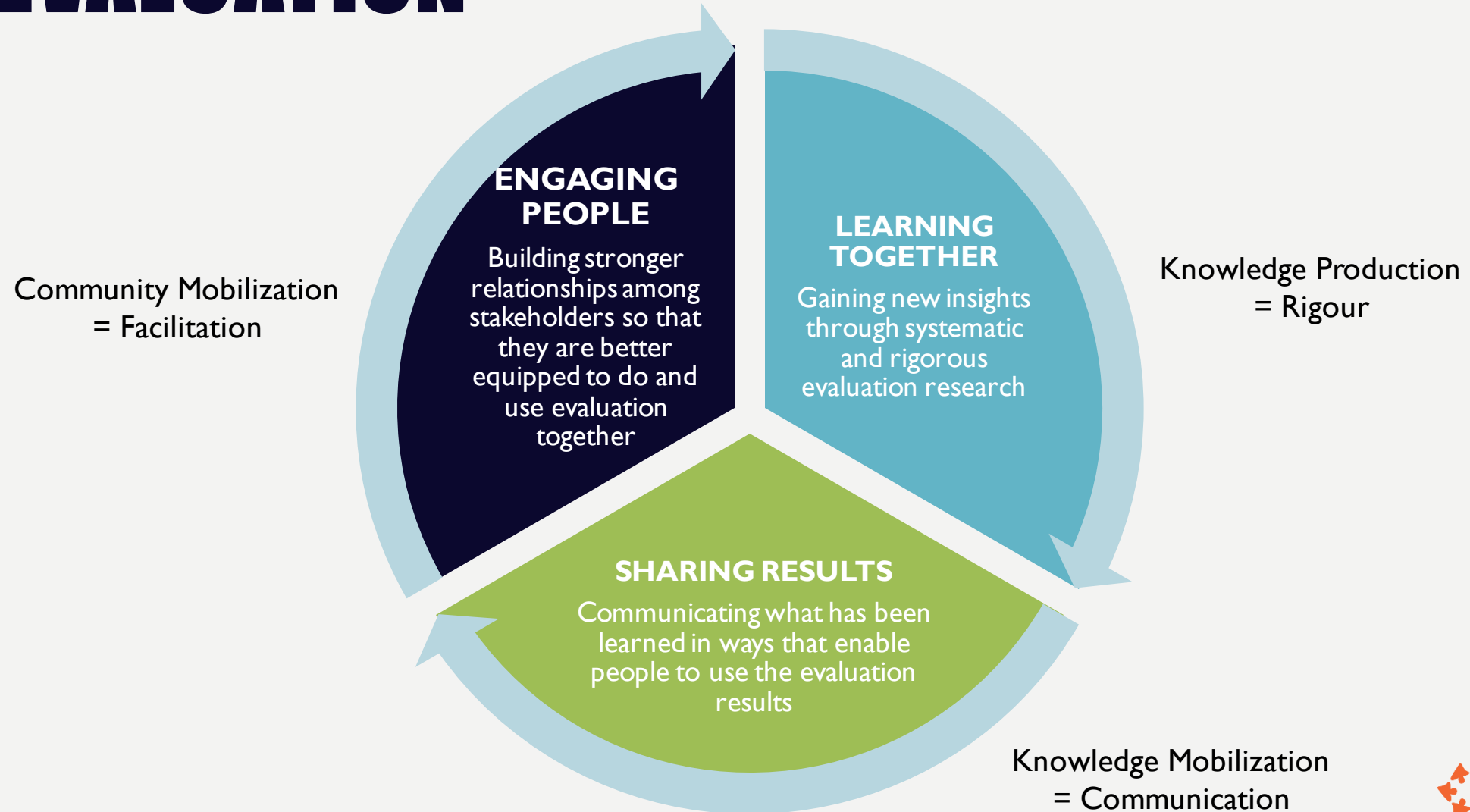


# THREE HALLMARKS OF COMMUNITY-BASED EVALUATION

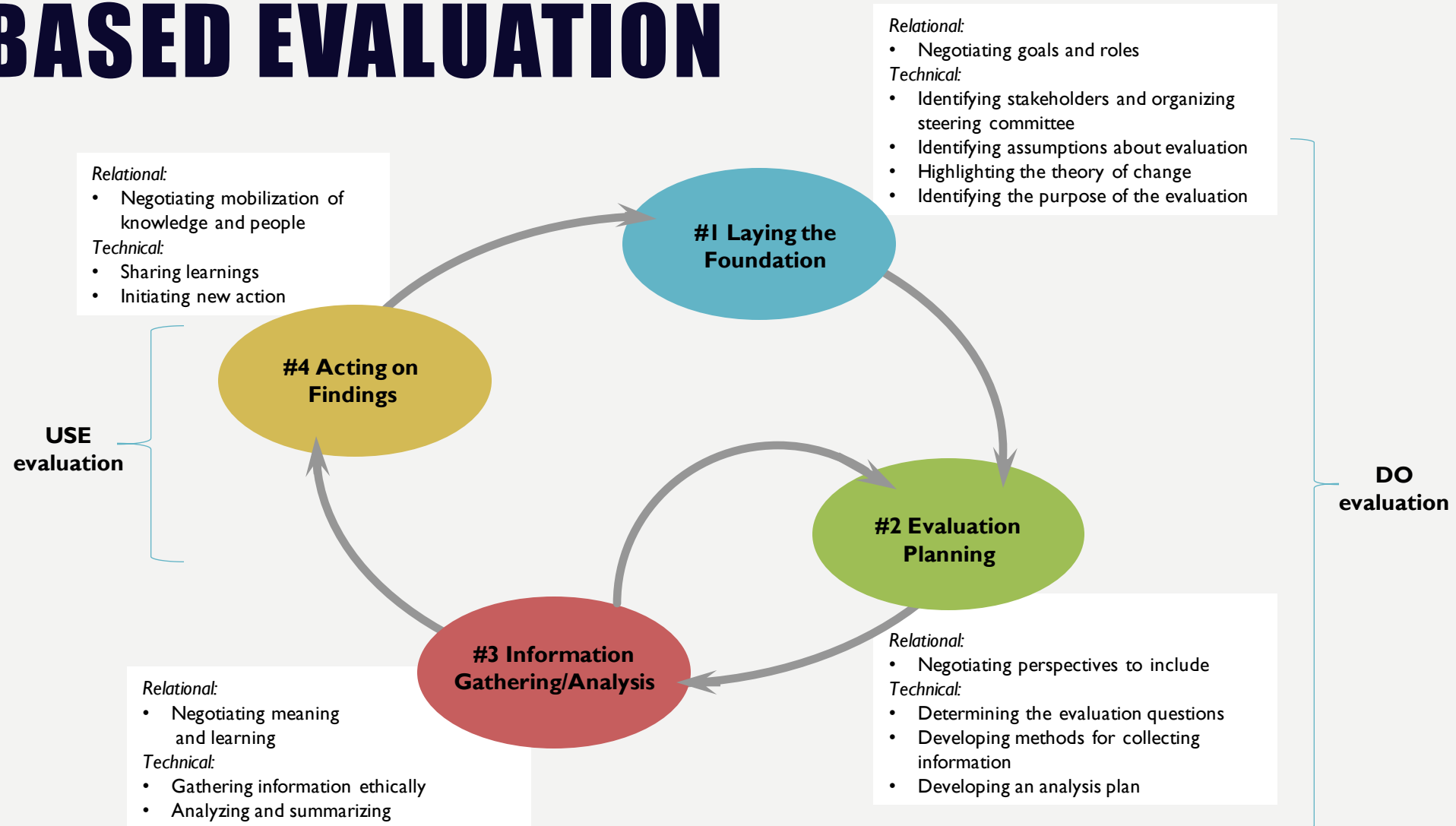
## EVALUATION THAT STRIVES TO BE...

Community-Driven	Ensure that the evaluation is practically relevant to stakeholders and is driven by the program's unique theory of change
Participatory	Program stakeholders and researchers equitably share control of the evaluation agenda through active and reciprocal involvement in the evaluation design, implementation and dissemination
Action-Oriented	The evaluation process and results are useful to stakeholders in making improvements to the program and contribute to equitable communities where everyone is supported and belongs

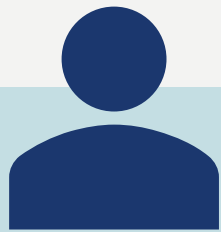
# THREE GOALS OF COMMUNITY-BASED EVALUATION



# THE FOUR PHASES OF COMMUNITY-BASED EVALUATION



# TWO GENERAL APPROACHES TO EVALUATION



## Expert-Based

One person/group has expertise that is prescribed



## Community-Based

The collective has different kinds of expertise that is emergent



...it centers lived experience and focuses on equity

# SUMMARY DEFINITION

A community-based approach is...

“A research approach that involves active participation of stakeholders, those whose lives are affected by the issue being studied, in all phases of research for the purpose of producing useful results to make positive changes.”

Nelson, Ochocka, Griffin & Lord, 1998, p.12



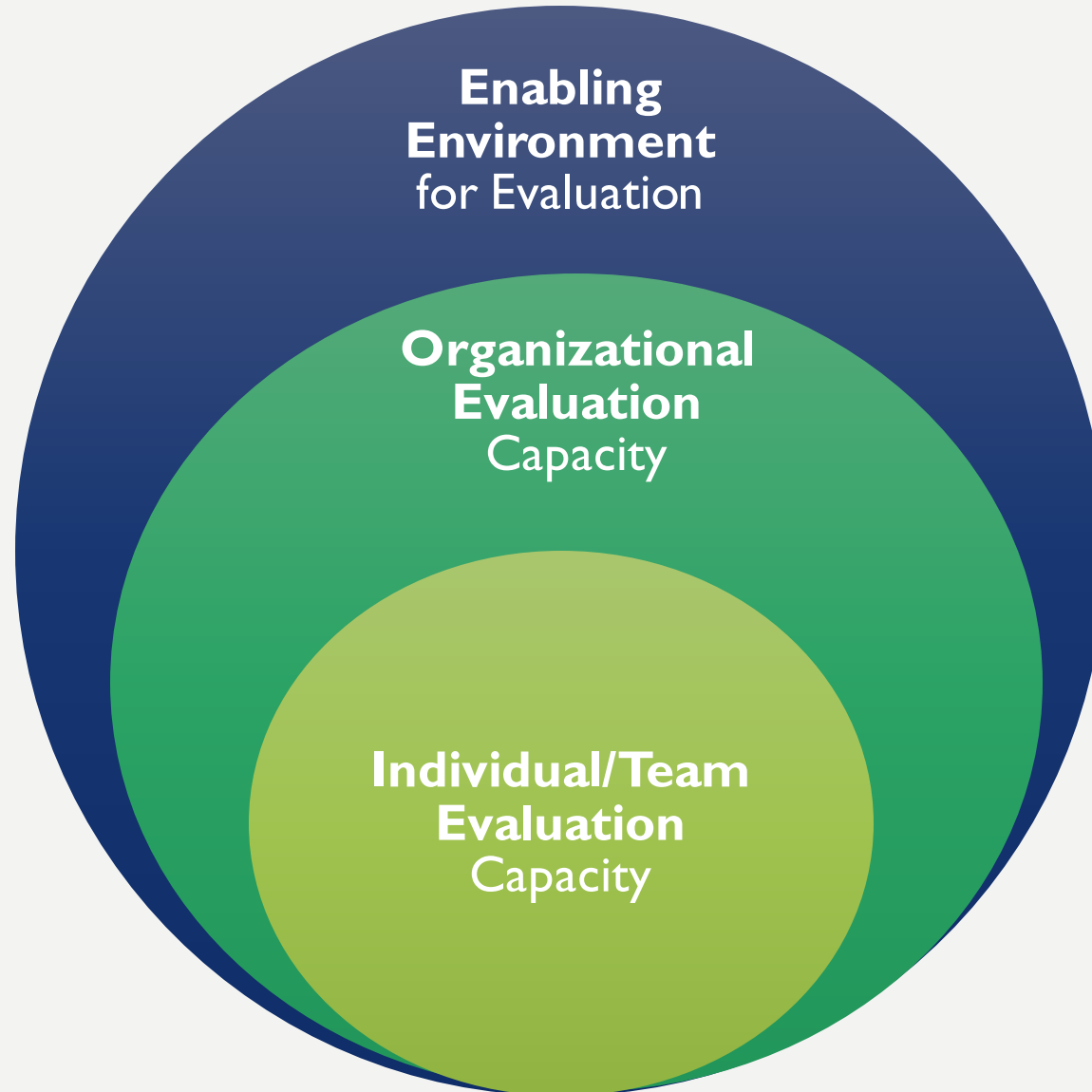
# COMMON MECHANISMS

- Diverse research team (doers)
- Cross stakeholder steering committee (guiders)
- Ongoing feedback
- Open forums
- Annual cycles





# EVALUATION CAPACITY-BUILDING



# CAPACITY-BUILDING TOOLS

## GET STARTED...

- Video toolkit
- Readiness assessment
- Ethics supports

## GO DEEPER...

- Workshops
- Webinars/Live events
- Mentorship
- Outcome inventory

HOME ABOUT START LEARNING GO DEEPER BEGIN EVALUATING

# Evaluating Refugee Programs

CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH  
EVALUATION CAPACITY NETWORK

A website to build the community-based evaluation capacity of the refugee resettlement sector in Canada.

NEW! SAH Evaluation Toolkit

EQUIP YOURSELF!

Developed with funding from:  
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada / Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

[www.eval4refugee.ca](http://www.eval4refugee.ca)

# SOURCES

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- Janzen, R., Ochocka, J., & Stobbe, A. (2016). Towards a theory of change for community-based research projects. *Engaged Scholar Journal: Community-Engaged Research, Teaching, and Learning* 2(2), 44-64.
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# The Role of Training in Outcomes-Based Evaluation

Margerit Roger, M.Ed.

Eupraxia Training/Looking for the Ripple Effect

P2P Conference 2023



**Eupraxia Training**  
Program Development and Evaluation

# Evaluation “Capacity-Building”

- More staff, new technologies, more time?
- More support from external specialists?
- New methodologies?
- More skills training?
- A shift in evaluation culture?
- All of the above?
  
- Training is only one of the puzzle pieces.



# Why more capacity?

- Deeper insights into the work we do
- More informed decision-making
- More efficient data collection
- Better evidence of the effectiveness of our work
- More comprehensive narrative about the changes that result from the work in the settlement sector
- More confident and engaged staff
- Stronger impact arguments
- Stronger connections to partners and other stakeholders

# Developing Training

Effectiveness depends on ...

- **content** (applicability)
- **approach** (engagement and customization)
- **accessibility** (cost, ease of use, flexibility, support)



**Ideally: develop a culture of evaluative thinking**

# Looking for the Ripple Effect

## Modules

### Preparing for Outcomes-Based Evaluation

**Module 1:** Getting Started (Expand the definition of “success” for programs and services)

**Module 2:** Stakeholder Mapping (Create a stakeholder map and matrix)

**Module 3:** Theory of Change (Answer five questions to create a Theory of Change chart)

**Module 4:** What Changes and Why Does it Matter? (Identify key domains of change)

**Module 5:** Live Outcomes Lab (Brainstorm outcomes for a program stream as a small group)

### From Fundamental Concepts to Strategy

**Module 6:** Looking for the Ripple Effect (Choose the strongest outcomes for tracking and monitoring)

**Module 7:** Tools and Timelines (Develop tools and timelines for collecting feedback)

**Module 8:** Working with Data (Analyze and interpret your data)

**Module 9:** Creating an Impact Argument (Report on outcomes in reports and proposals)

**Module 10:** An Annual Evaluation Strategy (Document your strategy)

### Purpose of the Modules

The hope is that after working with the modules, Settlement SPOs will feel more confident about strategically gathering outcomes and impact data. The hope is further that SPOs will produce more powerful impact stories for use in proposals, communications, and narrative reporting. The work of the settlement sector is vitally important not just to individual newcomers and their families but to communities, systems, and Canada’s future.

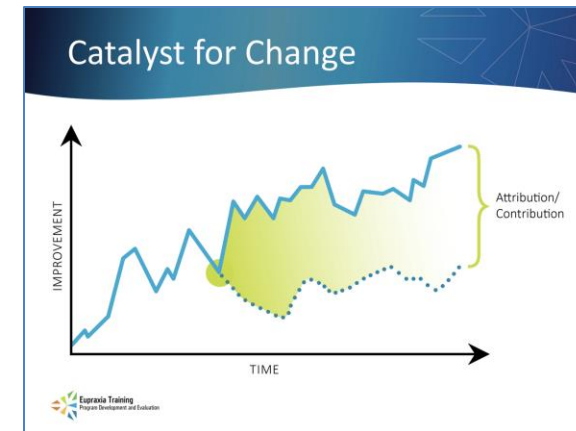
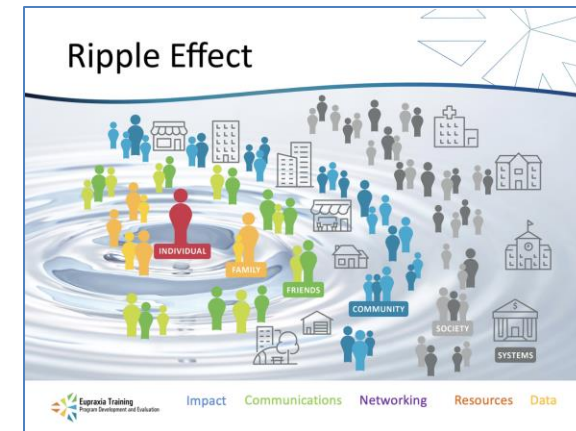


# Most Effective Features

- 1) Free (IRCC-funded)
- 2) Online (Moodle-based platform)
- 3) Training comes from within the sector.
- 4) Training is flexible, but participants are never left to flounder.
- 5) Transfer of learning to participants' context is actively encouraged (customization).
- 6) Team discussions are actively supported.
- 7) Recognition of learning is provided for those who would like that.

# The Impact of the Training

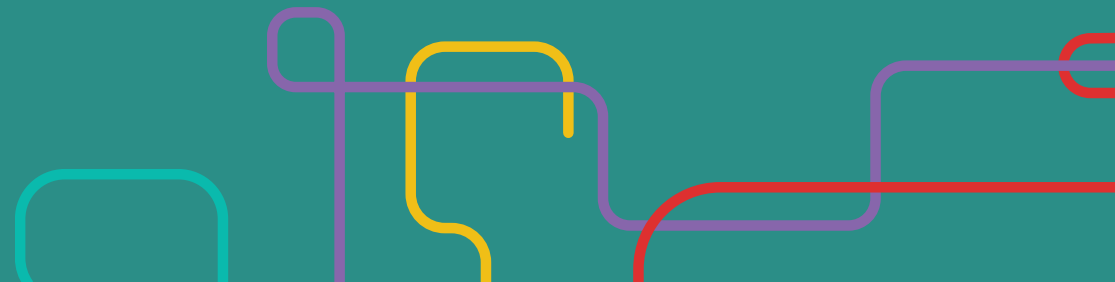
- Knowledge and skills development
- Analytical and critical thinking
- Transfer of learning and creativity (innovation)
- Shared meaning-making within organizations and the sector
- New insights
- Connecting evaluators who work in the settlement sector
- Identifying leaders and role models





# BUILDING A CULTURE OF EVALUATION - ISANS' Journey

Nabiha Atallah  
P2P 2023



# ISANS Today

- Celebrating 43 years of serving immigrants
- Serving over 15,000 clients per year
- Over 350 staff coming from over 60 different countries and speaking over 70 languages
- Multi-service organization





## Stage 1

ISANS grew quickly from 2016-2018, with staff number doubling and services expanding

- We recognized our need for more processes and **decided to standardize evaluation forms – this didn't work**

# Stage 2

IRCC began to talk more about outcomes measurement and to provide opportunities for learning:

P2P Workshop 2019

CCBR-SDI project: Evaluation Capacity-Building for Refugee Resettlement

2019 – ISANS decided to adopt the CBR approach and to create an Evaluation Framework – **we were unsure how to begin**



Rather than trying to build a whole framework and then start evaluating, following advice from CCBR, we chose to begin parallel processes and created two parallel committee structures:



**Advisory committee** - to oversee whole framework development



**Steering committee** – for each specific project

Engaging stakeholders was/is more difficult than expected

## Stage 3

IRCC funded Evaluation Training

2021-22 Through ARAISA (umbrella org)  
13 people from 6 teams

2023 Looking for the Ripple Effect  
26 people from 7 teams  
43 more people currently participating



Participation is not consistent across teams – some simply don't have the time, especially those in Resettlement





# Building a Culture of Evaluation

Staff engagement through training that is practical, relevant and responsive to our needs, led to a new stage.

*“The evaluation course was time well-spent! The course materials were engaging, and the instructor provided invaluable feedback throughout. The course content was well-structured and easy to follow, making complex evaluation concepts accessible to all. It's a course that has a lasting impact on my career.”*

Staff worked together on assignments directly related to their work, sometimes across teams.





# Channelling Enthusiasm

Expanded our Evaluation Framework Committee, engaging more teams, managers and frontline colleagues

Created Evaluation Ambassadors Group, consisting of all who have taken training. This group meets monthly online to discuss evaluation-related issues, and share specific experiences and learning

Began developing vision for a Culture of Evaluation

This is slow work, step by step. Focus has been on project evaluation. We are still learning every stage of CBE



# Building a culture of evaluation

**Building  
capacity**

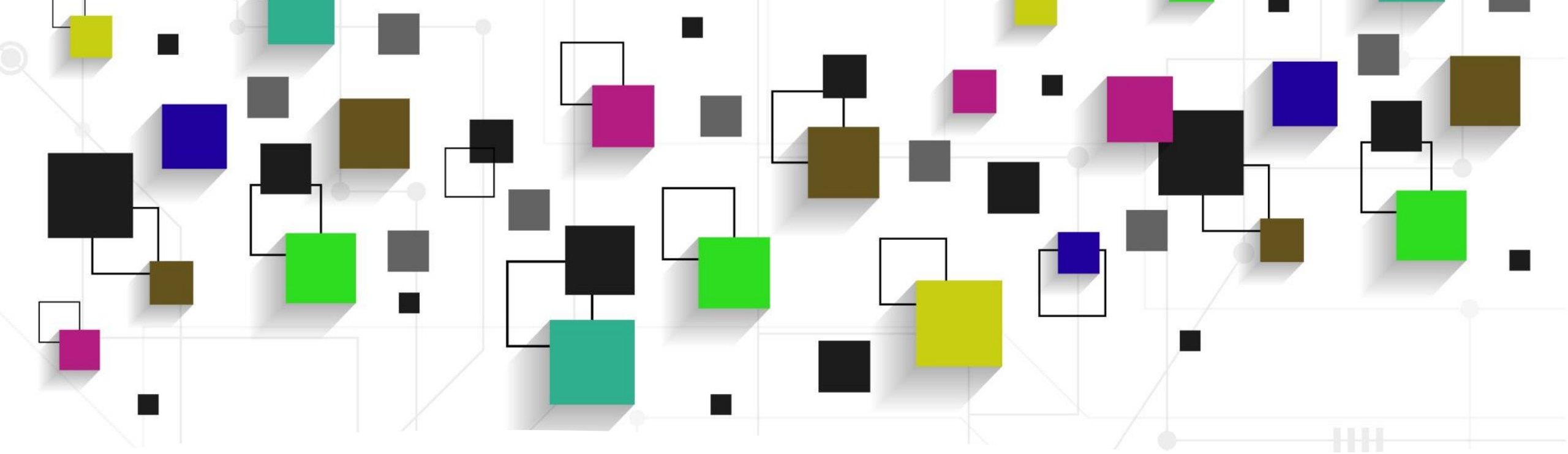
**Evaluation  
Training**

**Evaluation  
Ambassadors**

**Communications/  
orientation**

**Lessons  
Learned**

**Database and  
Evaluation**



## Aspects to Integrate

### Setting Expectations

- Job descriptions
- Hiring process
- Orientation
- Performance management

### Training + Resources

- Community-based Evaluation
- NewOrg database

### Communications

- Intranet
- In teams
- Staff meetings

# Key Messages

## Being client-centred

- Thinking about outcomes
- What is success?

## Being a learning organization

- Focus on learning together, rather than on individual assessment
- Tracking our work
- Reflective practice - learning from each other

