

# 10 Reasons to Evaluate!



It's a new year and perhaps time to consider what you'll do differently or better than last year. Is evaluating your project or programs on that list? Of course, we all know that we can evaluate projects to report back to our funders and check that evaluation tick box, but there are many other (and maybe better!) reasons to evaluate.

<b>1. JUDGMENT</b>	Budgets are tight. How do you decide, which, if any, programs need to be cut and which ones are the most important to keep? Program evaluation can help to make judgments about programs to determine the value of the program, how to improve outcomes, cut costs, enhance quality, or perhaps help you to make that keep or cut decision.
<b>2. LEARNING</b>	You have a program that's been running smoothly for a while. What was it that worked so well? Or conversely, your program seems to have been waning with interest and engagement, what went wrong? Evaluation can help you learn about your program. What exactly is happening, and what can I do about it?
<b>3. RESOURCE ALLOCATION</b>	Your program is running well and achieving the desired outcomes, but it's a high-budget item! Can you cut resources and maintain the effectiveness you're seeing? What is a critical enabler vs a nice-to-have? Evaluation can help you determine this resource allocation.
<b>4. MONITORING</b>	Your well-established program is a large part of what you do. Your board, boss, and funders want to keep track of key performance indicators. Monitoring is a form of routine evaluation that allows you to keep an eye on leading indicators before things get off track.
<b>5. NEEDS ASSESSMENT or DEVELOPMENT</b>	Your team is ready to grow and stretch. You have no shortage of out-of-the-box ideas to test out! But how do you know what's going to work in what setting? Is this the right time? An evaluation can help to explore the environment to decide if this is the right time to try something new. As well, evaluation can help to shape and flesh out those new ideas. A <a href="#">Developmental Evaluation</a> can work alongside design and implementation providing real-time data for quick decision making.
<b>6. IMPROVEMENT</b>	You feel confident that your program can reach its target, you just need to make a few tweaks. But where? Evaluation can help to unearth opportunities for improvement – what works well, in what conditions. Where is there room for improvement?
<b>7. IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY</b>	You've just received a grant for a new program and you're about to start planning and designing. Formative evaluation conducted concurrently with implementation can help to ensure that you're staying the course, that your activities are doing what you planned for them to do, and that you're on target to meet your goals.
<b>8. KNOWLEDGE GENERATION</b>	You have a program that runs well and achieves desired outcomes. You think. Your anecdotal reports are no longer cutting it, and you need to come up with evidence to prove that your program does what you say it does. Program evaluation provides you with that evidence, and maybe uncovers some things you didn't know!
<b>9. ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	You have a program. You measured some change. Are the two related? Can you be sure that your program is responsible for the changes you see? Evaluation can help with contribution analysis to show your stakeholders that the program is accountable for positive change.
<b>10. OUTCOME ASSESSMENT</b>	You ran your program through to completion. While your funder may want to know what happened, you're probably also curious about what you achieved. A summative evaluation will help you answer "What happened? Was it any good? Did you solve the problem you were trying to solve or meet your participant's needs?"

**What are your reasons for evaluating? I challenge you to find a new one!**