

Understanding and Utilizing Evaluative Thinking

An Approach for Evaluators, Funders and
NGO Providers



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Evaluation Capacity Building - Israel

From July through October, 2014, Bruner Foundation consultant Anita Baker worked together with evaluation consultant Gila Melech, Tel Aviv, to develop and share Evaluation Capacity Building strategies including:

- Translation of Bruner Foundation Evaluation Manuals and Grantmaker Presentations (jointly supported by the Bruner Foundation and the Rothschild Caesarea Foundation).
- Development of a conference presentation and training materials for Israeli Evaluators, Funders and NGO professionals.

The planning work culminated in a week-long series of on-site meetings and training sessions (see following) and plans for ongoing follow-up and collaboration. This presentation highlights information presented to and feedback from NGO participants (see end).

Evaluation Capacity Building - Israel On-site Agenda, 10/20 - 10/23/2014

	Monday 10.20	Tuesday 10.21	Wednesday 10.22	Thursday 10.23
Morning	Arrive – 7:00 AM	Behaaracha Raba Conference Presentation: Evaluative Thinking	Enosh 9:00 – 1:00 12 people	Workshop for NGO's with Midot 9 – 12:30, 35 people
Afternoon	Meet with G. Melech, Israel Visit organizer final Planning, ECB – I	BREAK	Matan 3 – 6 5 people)	Reflections on ECB with professionals 3:30 – 7:00
Evening		Meet with Forum of Foundations Reps	Dinner with Visit organizer, Enosh Exec. Director	** Depart

Following are the presentation materials shared with participants at the Behaaracha Raba Conference.



Working Definition of Program Evaluation

The practice of evaluation involves thoughtful, systematic collection and analysis of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs, for use by specific people, to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness, and make decisions. (Adapted from M. Patton, 1982)

Evaluation Capacity



The ability to do evaluation.

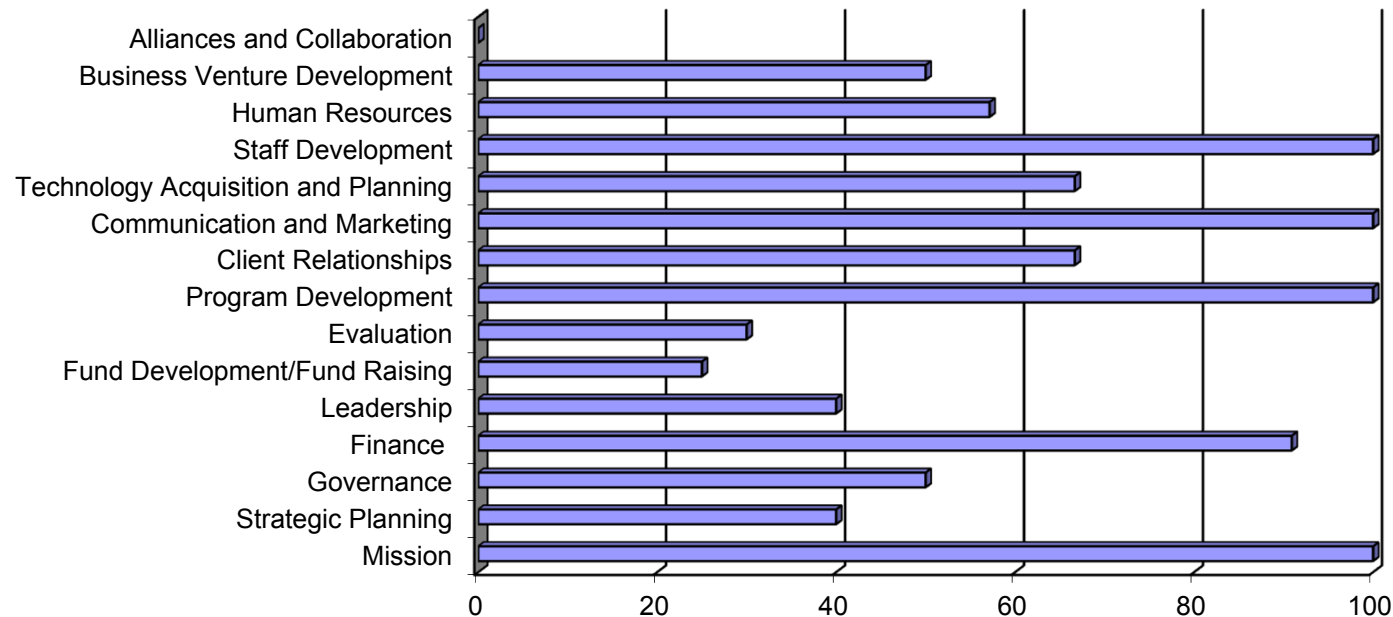
Involves proficiency in:

1. asking questions
2. determining data required to answer questions
3. collecting data using appropriate strategies
4. analyzing collected data and summarizing findings
5. using and sharing findings



Evaluative Thinking

Evaluative Thinking is a type of reflective practice that uses the five key evaluation skills in areas other than programs or initiatives.



What Are Key Components of Evaluative Thinking?

1. Asking questions of substance
2. Determining data needed to address questions
3. Gathering appropriate data in systematic ways
4. Analyzing data and sharing results
5. Developing strategies to act on findings



Evaluative Capacity

The combination of evaluation skills and evaluative thinking.

Evaluative Capacity requires a commitment to doing and using evaluation in programs, strategies, and initiatives *as well as* a commitment to using those same skills in other aspects of organization work.



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Capacity Building



Key Tenet of Bruner Foundation Investments

Evaluation capacity used well, supports programs, strategies, and initiatives that in turn lead organizations to better deliver on their missions and better meet the needs of those they serve.

The Bruner Foundation has invested in Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) for more than 20 years.



Using the Bruner Foundation Evaluative Thinking Assessment Tool

- Created in 2005 to assess the extent to which evaluative thinking is present in various organizational capacity areas.
- Grew out of the Bruner Foundation's Evaluative Thinking in Organizations Study (ETHOS).
[ETHOS Study](#)
- Automated in 2007 and updated in 2010-11 after additional study.
[Evaluative Thinking Assessment](#)



What Organizational Capacity Areas Does the Bruner Foundation Evaluative Thinking Tool Address?

- ✓ Mission
- ✓ Strategic Planning
- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Fund Development
- ✓ Evaluation
- ✓ Client Relationships
- ✓ Program Development
- ✓ Communication & Marketing
- ✓ Technology Acquisition & Training
- ✓ Staff Development
- ✓ Human Resources
- ✓ Alliances/Collaborations
- ✓ Business Development



The Bruner Foundation Evaluative Thinking Assessment Tool

ORGANIZATION MISSION		Assessment	Priority
a.	The mission statement is specific enough to provide a basis for developing goals and objectives	1	
b.	The mission is reviewed and revised on a scheduled basis (e.g. annually) with input from key stakeholders as appropriate	0	
c.	The organization regularly assesses compatibility between programs and mission	1	
d.	The organization acts on the findings of compatibility assessments (in other words, if a program is not compatible with the mission, it is changed or discontinued)	0	
Comments:			

Agree, Enter 1
Disagree, Enter 0
Don't know,
leave it blank

1. This is a high priority
2. This is a lower priority
3. This is not a priority at all

Please proceed to the next Worksheet



Example of Evaluative Thinking Indicators: Evaluation Organizations That Use Evaluative Thinking . . .

- ▶ Share results of program evaluations with leaders, staff, clients, board members and funders as appropriate.
- ▶ Use results of program evaluation to drive continuous improvement of programs.
- ▶ Insure that there are key staff with evaluation expertise and that there are staff members whose jobs or components of whose jobs are dedicated to evaluation.
- ▶ Provide or obtain current, well-delivered training in evaluation for program staff members.
- ▶ Provide training for enough staff members to insure that evaluation use is standard practice.



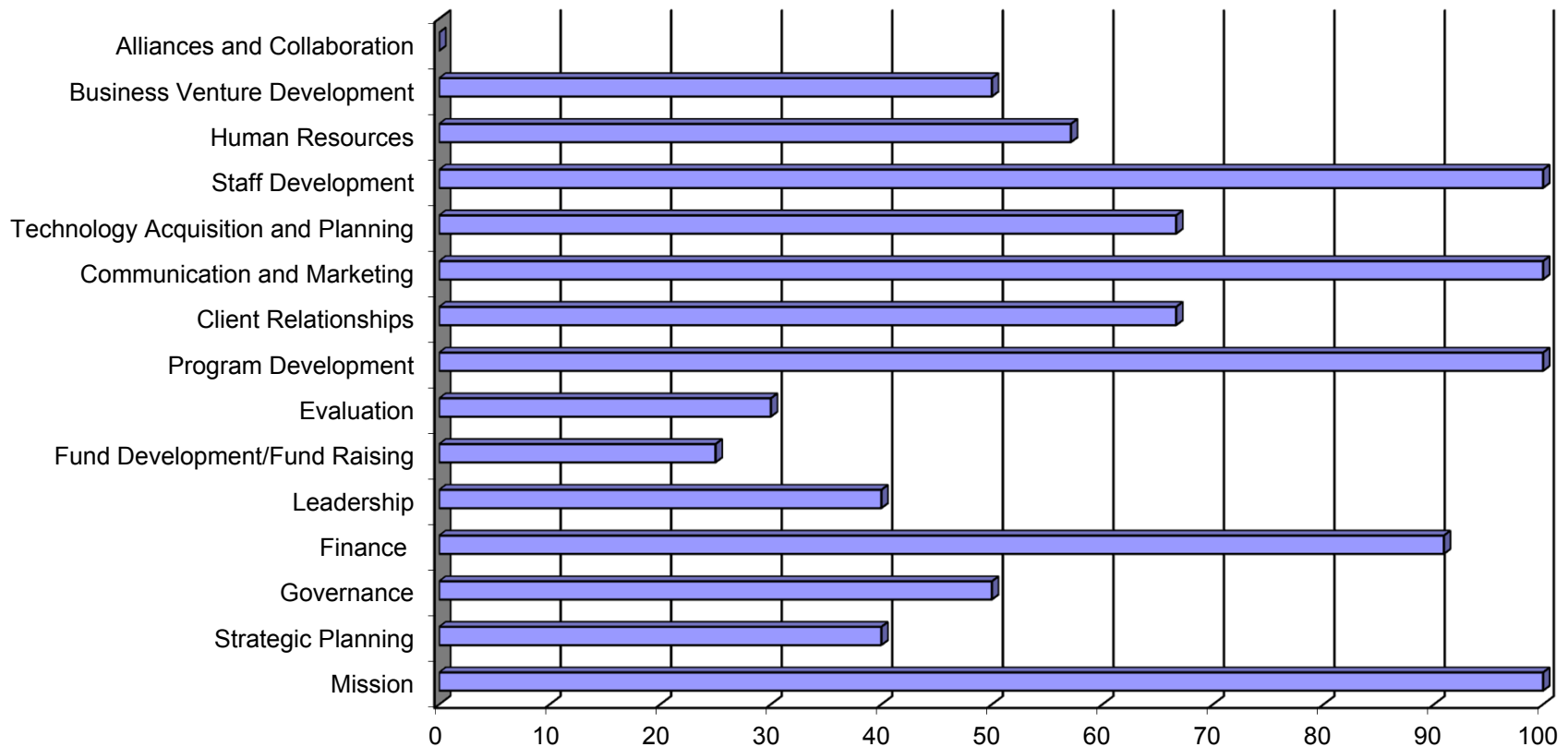
Evaluative Thinking Assessment Tool Summary Report, by Capacity Area

	Organizational Capacity Area	Capacity Score*	Action Planning**
1	Mission	100	No action required in this area
2	Strategic Planning	40	Action required see priorities
3	Governance	50	Action suggested see priorities
4	Finance	91	No action required in this area
5	Leadership	40	Action required see priorities
6	Fund Development/Fund Raising	25	Action required see priorities
7	Evaluation	30	Action required see priorities
8	Program Development	100	No action required in this area
9	Client Relationships	67	No action required in this area
10	Communication and Marketing	100	No action required in this area
11	Technology Acquisition and Planning	67	No action required in this area
12	Staff Development	100	No action required in this area
13	Human Resources	57	Action suggested see priorities
14	Business Venture Development	50	Action suggested see priorities
15	Alliances and Collaboration	0	Action required see priorities



Evaluative Thinking Assessment Tool Summary Report Score Chart

Evaluative Thinking Scores



Evaluation Capacity Building Strategies

[Bruner Foundation ECB Clearinghouse](#)

- Basic evaluation training
- Advanced evaluation training
- Applied learning
- Coaching and T.A.
- Networking - peer learning
- Alumni study groups
- Anchoring
- Funding collaboratives/shared governance



ECB Trainees Use What They Learn

Percent Who Think Participating in ECB Helped Their Organizations . . .

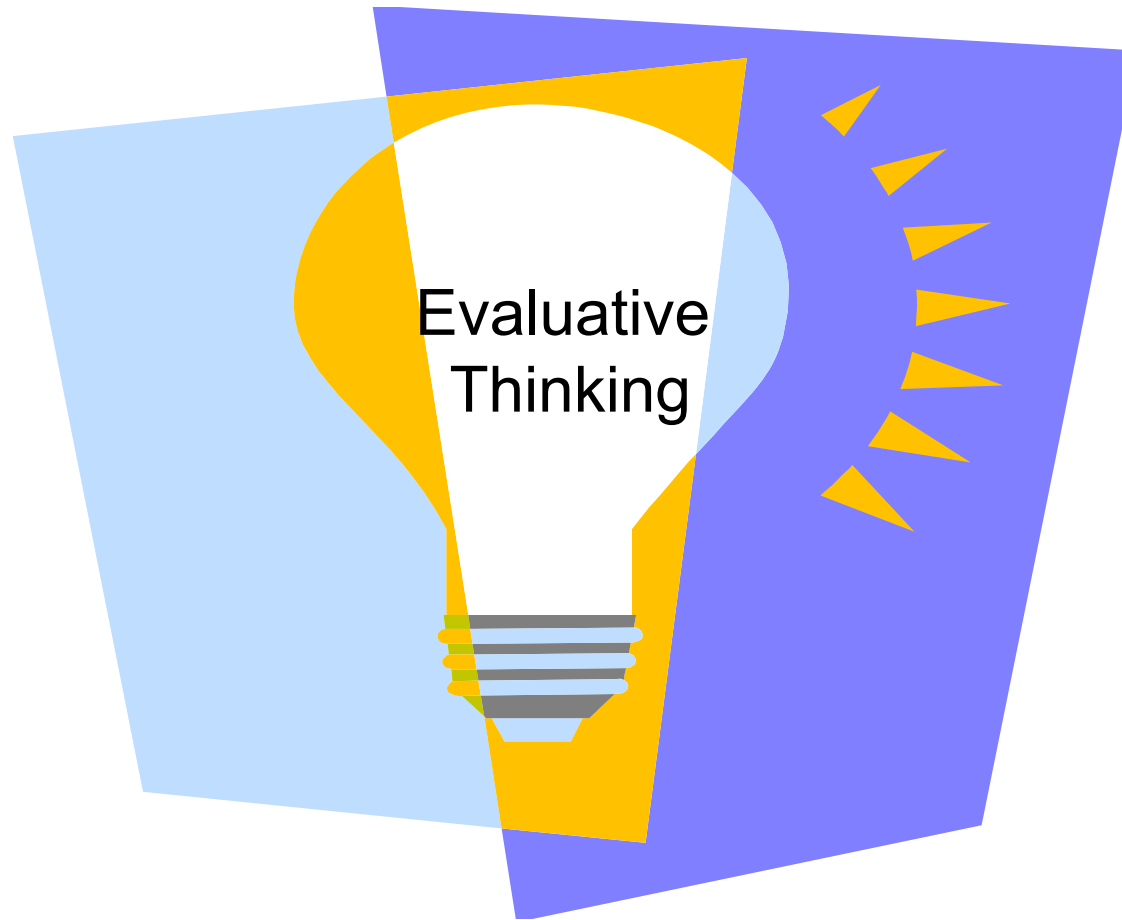
	Some	A lot	TOTAL N=97
Do better evaluations of programs	42%	57%	99%
Use evaluative thinking skills in multiple aspects of work	43%	52%	95%
Commission better evaluation	43%	49%	92%



Clarification from the Field

I think we are using an evaluative mind to determine direction of the Agency. We continuously ask questions now: What is the information we need? How do we get the information? What is the best method to use? What is the time frame to implement? When can data be available?. . . As Executive Director, I now have a team of "evaluative minds" to strategically look at areas to improve, develop, and prepare for organizational or funding opportunities.





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