

Strategies for Engaging Staff in Program Evaluation

OLE Conference

May 7, 2009



Presentation Goals

- **Discuss common barriers to staff engagement in evaluation**
- **Identify strategies for addressing those barriers and for engaging staff in evaluation activities**
- **Provide examples, tools and resources to support efforts to engage staff in evaluation**

Word Association

***When I say, “Evaluation,”
you say...***

Common Barriers

Barriers with Roots in Board/Executive Leadership

- **Lack of an organizational culture of inquiry and learning**
- **Mixed messages / negative tone from leadership**
- **Lack of context for program evaluation efforts**
 - How programs fit into the big picture
 - Evaluation's role in overall organizational effectiveness

Common Barriers

Barriers with *Some* Roots in Individual Staff

- **Staff do not make evaluation a priority (competing priorities for staff time)**
- **Lack of understanding of evaluation concepts**
 - Social service v. social science
- **Fear of repercussions (how results will be used)**
 - Punitive v. celebratory

Building a Culture of Inquiry and Learning

Requires:

- **Demonstrated commitment to learning by the board and executive leadership**
- **Shared frameworks that clarify assumptions and hypotheses**
 - Culture is reflected in the rituals we engage in and the language we use.
- **An internal champion (preferably manager or line staff)**
- **Information: Access, Analysis and Action**



ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Access requires an openness and commitment (time and resources) to learning

ACCESS

Definition

The process of acquiring new information from existing/ external sources as well as from own data collection, experiences and tacit (and/or explicit) knowledge.

Sample Indicators/Evidence of Achievement :

- Audit/review of needs for information
- Internal feedback mechanisms/reflective practices
- Needs and performance are measured
- Knowledge management systems are in place

Analysis requires systems of inquiry, meaning-making and feedback

ANALYSIS

Definition

The process of making meaning of available information – turning information into knowledge.

Sample Indicators/Evidence of Achievement:

- Staff at all levels engage in processes to understand new information and implications
- Analysis systems are in place
- Reports/memos are produced and shared with implications of new info.

Action requires accurate identification of problems/issue areas, options for possible courses, and thoughtful steps for instigating change

ACTION

Definition

The process of implementing the necessary steps to make change, take strategic action and implement learnings for organizational renewal and resilience.

Sample Indicators/Evidence of Achievement:

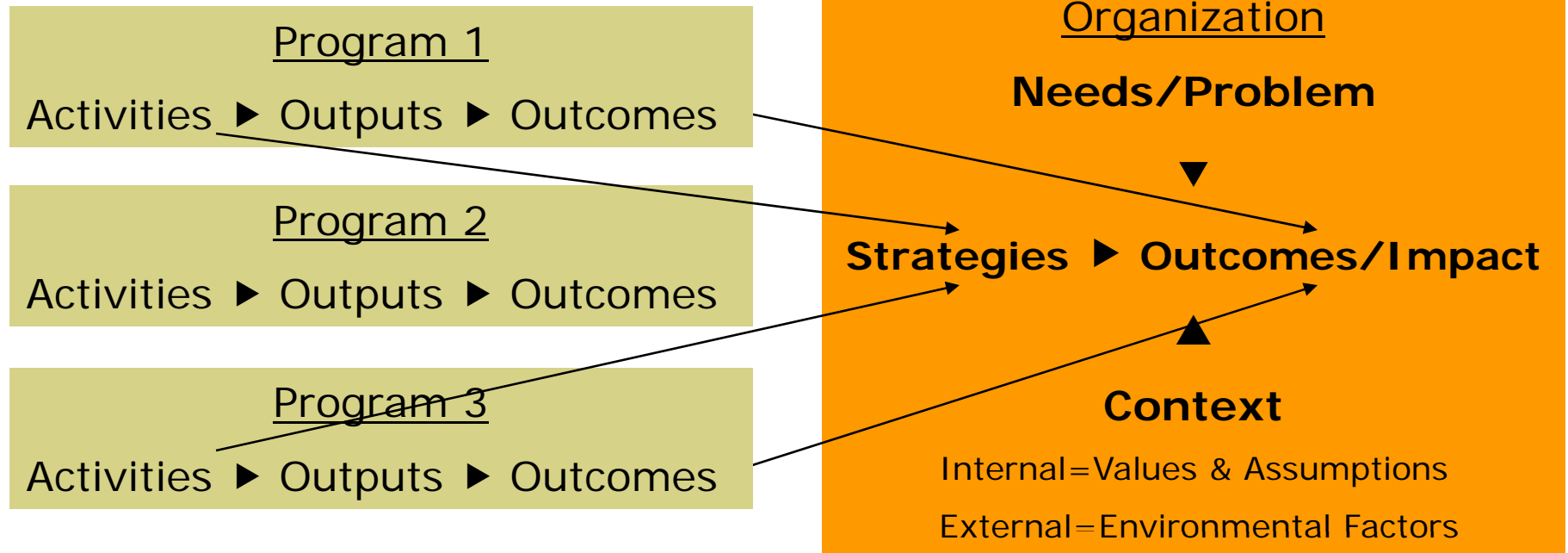
- Change in organizational attitudes
- Change in internal organizational practices
- Change in type of programs/services offered

Providing Context for Program Evaluation

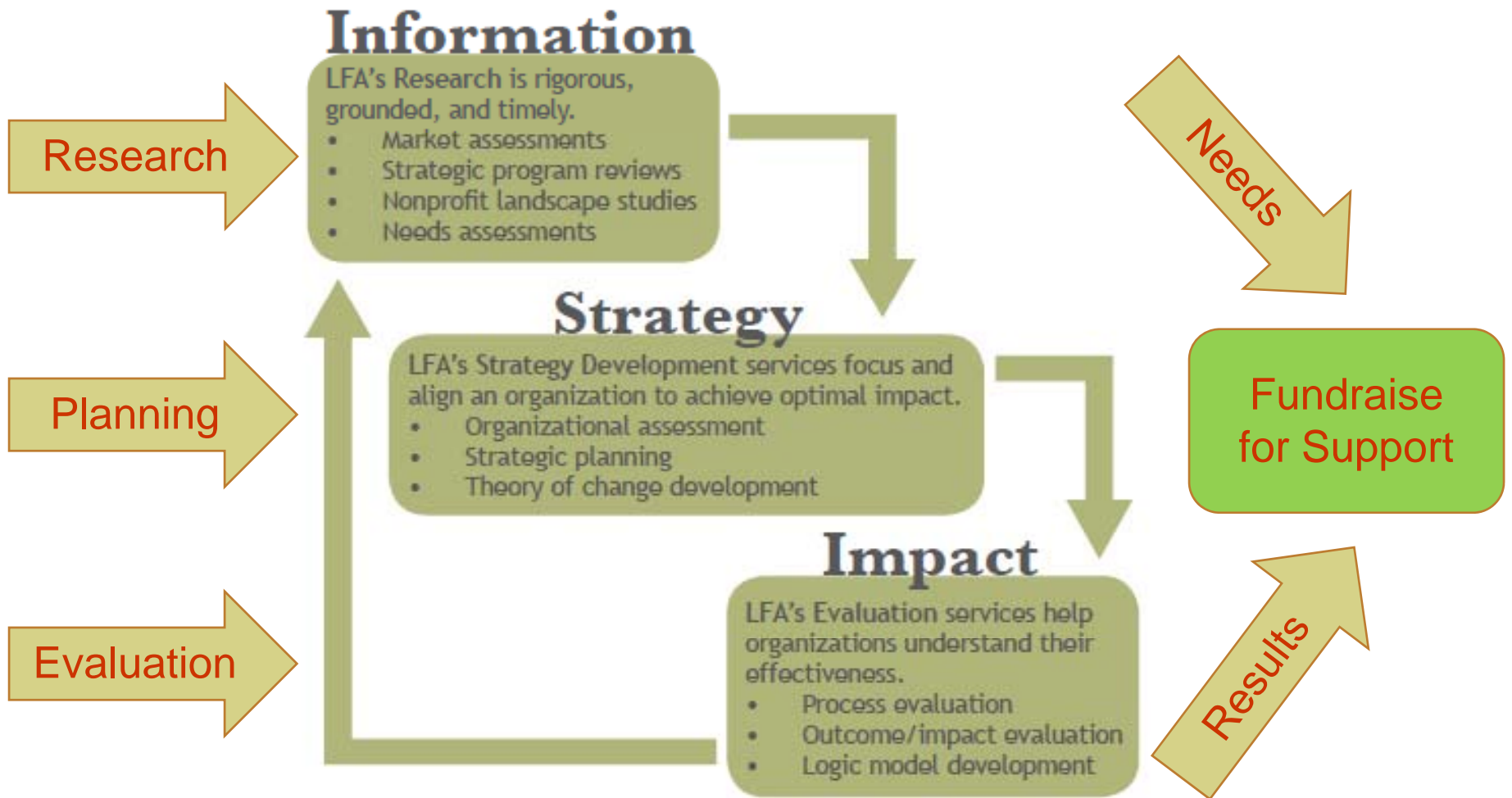
Strategy: Linked Theory of Change and Logic Models

Logic Models
(Programs, Initiatives)

Theories of Change
(Initiatives, Organizations)



Providing Context for Program Evaluation



“If a Tree Falls in the Forest” and Other Strategies

Learning for Action



GROUP

- Engage staff early in the process
- Select an evaluation consultant carefully
- Share with staff the impact of not engaging in evaluation activities
- Share evaluation information with staff regularly
 - Program/team meetings
 - All staff meetings
 - Email updates

- **Share evaluation results with staff at all levels**
- **Discuss implications of areas for development, and...**
- **...Celebrate accomplishments!**



Questions?

Thank you!

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