Leaders’ Influence in Evaluation Capacity Building: A Framework and Strategies for Cultivating Commitment and Action

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Leaders’ Influence in Evaluation Capacity Building: A Practice Framework and Theory of Change

Albertina (Aly) Lopez, Senior Associate
We need to be more explicit and strategic in developing leaders and leveraging leadership to make ECB stick.
I created the **ECB Leadership Framework** to help us develop explicit strategies for leaders.

- **Factor in organizational and environmental context.**
- **Plan for how foundation leaders (evaluation, program, C-suite, board) can incentivize attention to ECB.**
- **Build capacity of foundation leaders to commit to and shape ECB and cultivate followership.**
- **Monitor, evaluate, and learn about the influence of leaders on our efforts.**
I used literature from multiple disciplines and mixed-methods to develop, explore, and test the ECB Leadership Framework.

**Literature Review**
Reviewed the **leadership literatures** in ECB, organizational learning, and organizational change

**Study 1**
**Interviews** with 13 foundation evaluation leaders who do ECB and expert ECB consultants

**Study 2**
**Survey** of 167 American Evaluation Association (AEA) members who do ECB
The ECB Leadership Framework

ECB Leadership
- Identifying
- Communicating
- Implementing
- Driving & Sustaining
- Involving
- Planning

ECB Followership
- ECB Commitment
- ECB Behavior

ECB Goals
- Sufficient individual or group evaluation knowledge, skills, and attitudes
- Organization design that effectively integrates doing and using evaluation

Organizational and Environmental Influencers
ECB leadership is the process of facilitating organizational change and learning in evaluation capacity as well as influencing others to build and sustain the organization’s ability to do or use evaluation.
The ECB Leadership Framework

ECB Followership

ECB followership is people’s desires to support and their actions in ECB that occurs from interacting with leaders.
**ECB goals** are intended learning and change outcomes in individuals, groups, and organizations about how to do or use evaluation.
**The ECB Leadership Framework**

- **Organizational** factors included organization design, culture, size, life cycle, time, and resources.

- **Environmental** influencers involve the fields of evaluation, philanthropy, nonprofits, and leader development as well as reputation considerations and accountability requirements.
We need to use higher leverage points like leadership to get philanthropy to learn how to do and use evaluation.

*This model was produced in the article “What will it take for philanthropy to learn,” which adapts Donella Meadows’ systems change work.*
Building Evaluation Capacity at the Kauffman Foundation amid Organizational Transition

Matthew Carr, Director of Evaluation
Education

Entrepreneurship

KC Civic

Annual giving ~ $120M
~100 FTE
The evaluation department was created in spring 2015
In the beginning

1. Clarify the purpose and role of evaluation with staff – Focus on learning vs accountability; support orientation

2. Align vision of the department with CEO

3. Build relationships with senior leadership team
In the beginning, part 2

1. With program areas – go deeper on strategic plans
   Theory of change and logic model diagrams

2. Develop initial set of strategy indicators and dashboards

3. Build grant-level measurement into new grants management system

4. Provide training to staff
Our initial evaluation model & guide

- Strategy level evaluation
- Deep program evaluation
- Grant level evaluation
- Dashboards and snapshot summaries
- Third-party portfolio
- Grant evaluations
The Foundation has increased impact because it consistently engages with actionable evidence and applies learning to adapt strategies.

Evaluation is producing actionable evidence about the Foundation’s grants, programs, and strategies:

- Rigorous: Evidence meets the highest standard possible.
- Meaningful: Evidence applies directly to the work of program areas.
- Timely: Evidence is provided in time to inform decisions.
- Accessible: Evidence is presented in ways that facilitate staff engagement.

Staff are engaged in reflection and learning that produces valuable insights into their grants, programs, and strategies.

Kauffman is viewed by grantees and other foundations as a leader in this field.
The ECB Leadership Framework

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ECB Commitment
ECB Behavior

ECB Goals

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Organizational and Environmental Influencers
The ECB Leadership Framework
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The ECB Leadership Framework

ECB Goals

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Choices and trade-offs

- Learning vs accountability mindset
- Top-down vs bottom-up engagement
- Internal vs external capacity
- Fast vs slow development
What’s next

Attending to culture more intentionally

Improving internal communication and engagement

Connecting the strategy, evaluation, and learning pieces more closely

Building the capacity of our external partners
Building Organizational, Staff, and Board Evaluation Capacity at the Barr Foundation

Yvonne Belanger, Director of Learning & Evaluation
• The Barr Foundation invests in human, natural, and creative potential, serving as thoughtful stewards and catalysts.

• Founded in 1997 and based in Boston, Barr invests regionally and selectively engages nationally. Over $1 billion invested in charitable causes since its founding.

• Three focus areas: Arts & Creativity, Climate, Education.

• Six core values: Excellence, Humility, Leadership, Long-Term Perspective, Risk-Taking, Curiosity

• 2019: $90 million grantmaking budget, ~36+ FTE
Evaluation Function at Barr

• First Director of Learning & Evaluation hired in 2017, works across all program areas to support ECB and operations. Reports to VP.

• Key Mindsets that influence evaluation at Barr:
  • Strategic philanthropy
  • A learning organization that values continuous improvement
  • A belief that social change is achieved by dynamic strategies informed by emergent learning
  • An organization that values partnership, strong relationships, and takes a long-term perspective
  • A philosophy that evaluation should be meaningful, actionable, and manageable for the foundation and its grantees
ECB Leadership at the Barr Foundation

ECB Leadership
- Identifying
- Communicating & Involving
- Implementing
- Planning
- Driving & Sustaining

Organizational and Environmental Influencers

ECB Followership
- ECB Commitment
- ECB Behavior

ECB Goals
- Barr’s vision: Meaningful, Actionable, Manageable
- Building sustainable infrastructure
- Increasing impact
Tanya’s Takeaways

Q&A

Thank you!

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