



Rockefeller
Brothers Fund

Philanthropy for an Interdependent World

Evaluating Program Impact

Our Approach to Performance Assessment

Elizabeth Campbell, Vice President for Programs
Hope Lyons, Director, Program Management
Rachel LaForgia, Program Assistant

Revised February 2013

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EVALUATING PROGRAM IMPACT

Our Approach to Performance Assessment

Elizabeth Campbell, Hope Lyons, and Rachel LaForgia

November 2012 (*Revised February 2013*)

Executive Summary

Discerning and communicating the impact of grantmaking and other programmatic contributions are essential to fulfilling the Rockefeller Brothers Fund's (RBF) [mission](#) as well as our commitment to stewardship, transparency, and accountability. The Fund's board and staff have found that engaging policymakers on the results and insights gained from our grantmaking, informing the public about our grantees' work, and attracting additional donors to promising institutions and approaches are key activities that help build a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world.

In order to bring additional rigor to the Fund's approach to program impact assessment, a committee of RBF trustees and staff was established in March 2012. Based on our experience, the state of evaluation in philanthropy, and a review of literature and activity in the field, the Impact Assessment Committee developed a set of principles to guide our impact assessment approach, defined terms for the purposes of RBF discussions, established several points for evaluation activities in the life cycle of a grantmaking program, and identified opportunities to embed impact assessment in the Fund's regular institutional processes. The Fund establishes its programs in fields and places that reflect its mission and the evolution of its longstanding interests, along with an analysis of the changing global context. The key elements of the RBF's approach to assessing program impact are as follows:

- The board approves [program guidelines](#) that lay the foundation for the Fund's grantmaking within a program. Guidelines include a preamble that presents the vision and rationale for each program, ambitious long-term goals, and strategies that articulate specific actions the Fund will support to achieve progress toward these goals. They provide guidance to staff and grantseekers about what the RBF is prepared to fund.
- A [program framework summary](#), derived from the guidelines, is developed for internal use and includes [indicators of progress](#). These indicators identify anticipated changes in understanding, behavior, capacity, public engagement, or public policy that would demonstrate that program strategies are contributing to realizing program goals.
- Within each program, evaluation activities occur on an ongoing basis. [Monitoring](#) of the field and of individual grants draws on regular staff engagement and grantee reporting; [program reviews](#), conducted every three to five years by program staff, provide an opportunity to engage the board in a strategic review of progress—often resulting in updated program strategies; [impact assessments](#) are conducted by external consultants after five or more years as strategies mature.
- The [annual institutional calendar](#) provides a variety of opportunities for the board and staff to discuss and review programmatic impact at different points each year and across several years.

This approach to impact assessment reflects emerging practices in the field and is consistent with the Fund's values and grantmaking approaches. The committee believes that the approach effectively supports program learning, guides program development, and enhances the impact of the Fund's grantmaking.

Introduction

Foundations exist to channel private resources to advance the public good. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund targets its philanthropic resources to expand knowledge, clarify values and critical choices, generate fresh ideas for addressing new and persistent problems, develop leaders, strengthen institutions, engage citizens, shape public policy, and foster partnerships that include government, business, and civil society.¹ Discerning and communicating the impact of the RBF's grantmaking and other contributions are essential to fulfilling the foundation's mission and commitment to stewardship, transparency, and accountability. In addition, we have found that engaging policymakers on the results and insights gained from our grantmaking, informing the public about our grantees' work, and attracting additional donors to promising institutions and approaches are also key activities in helping to build a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world.²

In March 2012, we launched a project to further refine the RBF's approach to assessing program impact as a next step in the ongoing foundation-wide performance assessment efforts. This project continued the work of the Fund's 2003 Foundation Performance Assessment Committee that provided guidance to efforts to streamline internal processes, solicit grantee feedback on the RBF's funding approach, and conduct program reviews at regular intervals to assess program impact. The Impact Assessment Committee, comprised of trustees and staff, was formed to lead the next steps on foundation performance, with a particular emphasis on program impact assessment.³ The task for the committee was to further define and embed regular program review and impact assessment activities in the Fund's institutional processes in a manner that supports its program approach and grantmaking style. The committee discussions and staff research are presented in this paper. The concepts and recommendations draw from the Fund's experience over the last several years, reflect evaluation practices in the field of philanthropy, and include a set of principles and terms to describe key elements of the approach as well as a plan to more fully integrate program impact assessment in the Fund's institutional processes and timelines.

In bringing additional rigor to the Fund's approach to assessing program impact, we aim to:

- Establish a clearer structure and process to determine if the Fund's philanthropic resources are contributing to meaningful progress in advancing program strategies and realizing program goals
- Inform program development, decision making, and knowledge-sharing processes
- Advance the Fund's commitment to transparency and accountability
- Identify opportunities to further refine institutional processes so that they support program impact assessment

¹ Excerpted from the RBF Program Statement, <http://www.rbf.org/content/program-statement>.

² Philanthropy Awareness Initiative, "Five Questions about Demonstrating Impact: How Foundations Can Show Their Value and Why They Should."

³ The committee included trustees: Anne Bartley, Wendy Gordon, Stephen Heintz, Miranda Kaiser, Wendy O'Neill, and Steven Rockefeller and staff: Elizabeth Campbell, Rachel LaForgia, Hope Lyons, Nancy Muirhead, and Geraldine Watson. The Fund's program teams also contributed their experiences and ideas as the proposed approach took shape.

Foundation Performance Assessment

“The Rockefeller Brothers Fund advances social change that contributes to a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world.”

– Rockefeller Brothers Fund’s Mission

The Rockefeller Brothers Fund is committed to being a center of philanthropic excellence. We carefully monitor the Fund’s performance—both the quality of its institutional practices and the impact of its programs. We define these two critical elements of foundation performance as follows:

- Institutional effectiveness refers to organizational culture, management of human and financial resources, and professional standards of timeliness, efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness to internal and external stakeholders.
- Program impact is the Fund’s contribution to social change achieved in pursuing program goals in light of evolving external contexts.

The 2003 Foundation Performance Assessment Committee recommended some initial steps to establish a more formal basis for assessing the Fund’s performance, including a variety of mechanisms to increase and improve the information available to trustees about the Fund’s operations and grantmaking. They also encouraged routine program updates, and that organizational and board assessments be added to further inform foundation performance assessment and generate lessons learned (See Appendix A: Foundation Performance Assessment Committee Recommendations and Follow-up).

Staff follow-up to the 2003 committee recommendations included a determined effort to develop and present regular updates on each of the Fund’s major areas of grantmaking. Between January 2004 and June 2012, the Fund produced 24 program review papers⁴ (See Appendix B: RBF Program Reviews/Impact Assessments, 2004–2012). These papers have ranged from targeted evaluations of a particular strategy to reviews of a program’s entire portfolio. Trustees were clear in their recommendations that the content of the reviews should be balanced and candid. They also felt strongly that the reviews should capture what program staff were learning from their work and identify lessons and priorities for future grantmaking.

Program review formats have varied as has authorship, with the majority (15 of 24) written by RBF staff. Staff’s close engagement with grantees and the fields in which the Fund is active was a key element in an evolving practice of monitoring and program evaluation. The primary audience for the reviews has been the board of trustees; eight of the reports have been shared publicly on the Fund’s website (www.rbf.org). The 2003 committee viewed sharing reviews more broadly as a way to enhance both grantseekers’ and the public’s understanding of the Fund’s grantmaking activities. While the initial recommendation called for program updates on each program every two years, staff and trustees quickly realized that this was too short an interval in light of the long-view characteristic⁵ of the Fund’s grantmaking. The 2012 Impact Assessment Committee concluded that these efforts had met their expectations, and that incorporating indicators of progress and standardizing selected elements of program reviews—such as timeframe, authorship, and scope—would further sharpen the Fund’s overall impact assessment approach.

⁴ In addition to these program reviews, several other program papers were written during this time, such as the Peacebuilding Program Memo presented at the March 2011 Board Meeting which proposed new program directions. The Democratic Practice-Global Governance program also prepared several positioning papers during this time.

⁵ The Fund’s grantmaking is primarily concerned with fundamental problems and is designed to contribute to the achievement of long-term goals and to make a lasting impact. <http://www.rbf.org/content/program-statement>

Impact Assessment in Philanthropy

Across the philanthropic sector, foundations wrestle with how to best understand the impact of their grantmaking—from the challenge of identifying appropriate measures to the question of what amount of staff time and financial resources should be devoted to evaluation activities. Program evaluation and impact assessment are fraught with jargon and debate that can divert significant resources from grants budgets and dilute engagement in the field. Many worry that too much attention on near-term quantitative indicators can take focus off important long-term program goals and minimize ambition.^{6,7} Nonetheless the Fund’s board and staff believe that discerning and communicating the impact of our grantmaking and other programmatic contributions are essential to fulfilling the RBF’s mission as well as our commitment to stewardship, transparency, and accountability. In addition, the Fund has found that sharing the results and insights gained from our grantmaking with policymakers, informing the public about the work of grantees, and attracting additional donors to promising institutions and approaches are also key activities in helping to build a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world.

As part of this project, staff read widely on impact assessment in the field and explored the approaches in place at other foundations. We focused our review of other foundations on a cohort of funders with similar organizational structure and/or program focus. (See Appendix C: Overview of Other Foundation Approaches). Literature in the field underscores that foundations often grapple with one or more of the following challenges regarding impact assessment:

- Lack of clarity about what they are trying to achieve through their grantmaking
- Qualms about determining causality and claiming credit
- Difficulty identifying an appropriate methodology that is responsive to their grantmaking
- Discovering that one single methodology is not appropriate across program areas
- Worry about retaining their ability to be responsive to changing contexts

In addition, while the literature is rich with methodologies for program evaluation, the documented approaches are generally more appropriate for program implementers than funders. We also found that many foundations approach evaluation as a learning exercise aimed at improving programs. The trend is to evaluate at the program level, not individual grants, and the emphasis is on long-term results. Only five of the 11 foundations in our cohort⁸ had separate evaluation staff. Most foundations employ external evaluators exclusively or primarily to prepare evaluation reports.

A wide range of materials is often found under the term “evaluation” on foundation websites, including annual reports, grantee profiles, and analyses of key issues in the fields in which they fund. There is a widely shared intention among foundations to share what they learn through evaluation. However, evaluation reports are not typically posted online and when they are posted, the reports are often difficult to locate within a foundation’s website. While not explicitly stated, it seems that there is also a concerted effort to balance the desire to share what they have learned with the recognition that a critique of an organization’s performance could potentially damage a grantee’s reputation.

⁶ “Metrics Mania: The Growing Corporatization of U.S. Philanthropy,” Bernstein, Alison R. <http://www.nea.org/home/50022.htm>

⁷ ‘Impact Assessment’ vs. ‘Evaluation’: ‘Evaluation’ is a set of activities that allows one to understand the impact of a program or line of grantmaking. As the Fund’s ultimate goal of evaluation is to assess impact, we have used the terms, ‘Impact Assessment,’ and ‘Evaluation,’ interchangeably within this paper.

⁸ Atlantic Philanthropies, David and Lucille Packard Foundation, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Principles and Conclusions to Guide the Fund's Approach to Impact

The Impact Assessment Committee developed the following principles to guide the Fund's approach to impact assessment. These principles shaped the approach presented in this paper and are addressed in more detail in Appendix D: RBF Principles Guiding Work on Impact Assessment.

- The Fund's impact assessment approach is rooted in its [mission](#) and its [program goals](#) and reflects and supports the RBF grantmaking style as captured in its [program statement](#). It must be flexible enough to work across the Fund's six programs and their respective evolving contexts.
- Given the nature of the RBF's grantmaking, a wide range of indicators and information is needed to understand the impact the Fund is having on a field or issue.
- The Fund's approach to impact assessment is action-oriented. It enables staff and trustees to better understand the effectiveness of our grantmaking in light of the context in which our grantees are working, make mid-course corrections as necessary, and identify opportunities to share our insights with external audiences.
- Impact assessments focus on the contribution of the Fund's grantmaking to a field or issue over the long term; staff monitor indicators of progress over the near and medium term.
- The impact assessment process should add value to Fund and grantee work, not create administrative and financial burdens.

With these principles in mind, the committee recommends the following approach to organizing the Fund's impact assessment efforts. It offers definitions of various terms for the purposes of RBF discussions, identifies several points in the life cycle of a grantmaking program for evaluation activities, and suggests how to best embed them in the Fund's regular institutional processes.

The RBF's Approach to Program Impact Assessment

Six programs comprise the Fund's current grantmaking focus. These programs reflect board and staff assessment of the challenges facing today's increasingly interdependent world on which strategic philanthropy and the Fund's accumulated grantmaking experience can have a meaningful impact. Three programs ([Democratic Practice](#), [Peacebuilding](#), and [Sustainable Development](#)) are global fields of work within which the Fund has identified issues of enduring global concern where breakthroughs are needed. These thematic programs typically maintain a focus on the United States along with work internationally, as appropriate, to strengthen the vitality of democracy, advance just and durable peace, and advance solutions to climate change. Three pivotal place programs ([New York City](#), [Southern China](#), and [Western Balkans](#)) pursue program goals in the Fund's three fields of interest as appropriate in these specific contexts, generating lessons and innovations of significance to their immediate regions and beyond. We believe that a combination of thematic- and place-based approaches is needed to achieve enduring change in larger systems.

Summary of Approach

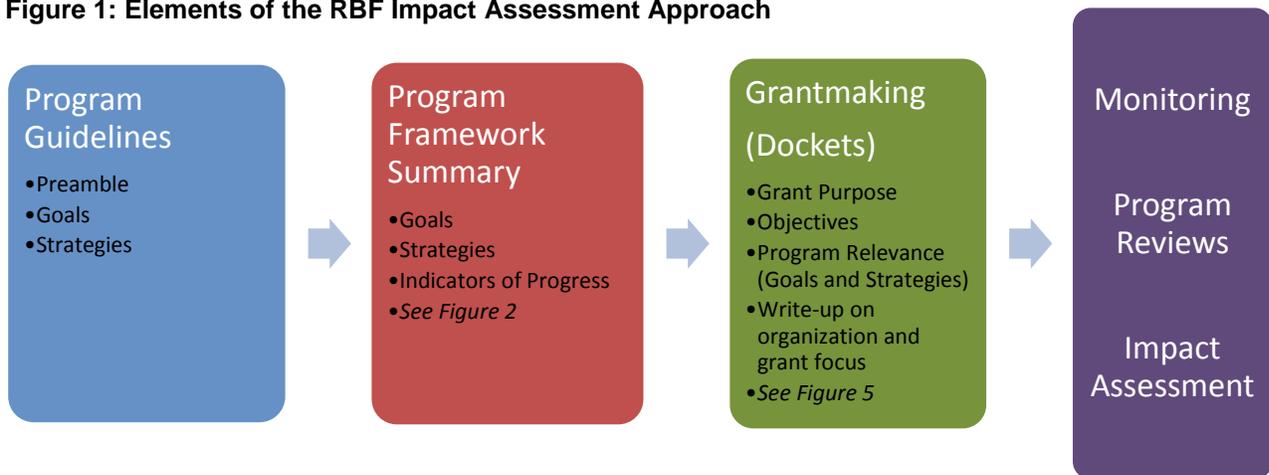
- The board approves [program guidelines](#) that lay the foundation for the Fund's grantmaking within a program. Guidelines include a preamble which presents the vision and rationale for each program, ambitious long-term goals, and strategies that articulate specific actions the Fund will support to achieve progress toward these goals. They provide guidance to staff and grantseekers about what we are prepared to fund.

- A program framework summary, derived from the guidelines, is developed for internal use and includes indicators of progress. These indicators identify anticipated changes in understanding, behavior, capacity, public engagement, or public policy that would demonstrate that program strategies are contributing to realizing program goals.
- Within each program, evaluation activities occur on an ongoing basis. Monitoring of the field and of individual grants draws on regular staff engagement and grantee reporting; program reviews, conducted every three to five years by program staff, provide an opportunity to engage the board in a strategic review of progress—and often resulting in updated program strategies; impact assessments are conducted by external consultants after five or more years as strategies mature.
- The annual institutional calendar provides a variety of opportunities for the board and staff to discuss and review programmatic impact at different points each year and across several years.

The 2012 Impact Assessment Committee discussed the importance of developing a set of evaluation-related terms for the Fund to ensure a common vocabulary among staff, trustees, and grantees. A list of RBF terms is found in Appendix E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms.

The following diagram presents the relationship among the various elements of the Fund’s approach to impact assessment. Further explanation is provided in the text that follows.

Figure 1: Elements of the RBF Impact Assessment Approach



Program Guidelines

Program guidelines are the board-approved articulation of the Fund’s vision for its programs and grantmaking. The program guidelines include a preamble that presents each program’s focus within a field or geographic area, grounding it in the ideas that motivate the Fund’s interest and grantmaking strategies, and presenting its distinct point of view. The **goals** present the Fund’s aspirations over the long term, while the **strategies** articulate the specific actions the Fund will support to achieve progress toward its program goals. The guidelines communicate the Fund’s grantmaking focus to external audiences and provide direction to staff on the areas in which they can develop and recommend grants.

Program Framework Summary

The **program framework summary** is a building block for the Fund’s approach to impact assessment. It summarizes the program guidelines and presents each program’s goals and strategies along with indicators of progress that suggest the principal changes we hope to see. In effect, this framework presents a program’s “theory of change” and its desired impact.

Indicators of Progress

The **indicators of progress** are a key element of the program framework summary. The Fund defines indicators of progress as anticipated changes—in understanding, behavior, capacity, public engagement, and public policy—within a field that demonstrate that the program strategies are contributing to realizing the program goal(s).⁹ While these five distinct categories are intended to prompt the development of indicators, an indicator may well reflect more than one type of change. Indicators of progress should be suitably ambitious given our program goals, while being realistic and responsive to a three- to five-year time frame.

Figure 2: Program Framework Summary

PROGRAM	
APPROVAL DATE/EXPECTED REVIEW DATE	
Excerpt from program guidelines preamble that captures the programs motivating ideas/concepts/aspirations.	
GOAL FROM PROGRAM GUIDELINES	
STRATEGIES	KEY INDICATORS OF PROGRESS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategy 2. Strategy 3. Strategy 	In three to five years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators of progress [associated with each strategy or multiple strategies]

Figure 3: Indicators of Progress

Indicator Focus	Definition	Sample Indicators
Behavior	People and institutions change their actions	More corporations disclosing or curtailing their political spending (Democratic Practice)
Capacity	New institutions are in place to inform and advance debates or experiment with solutions in a field; organizations are better equipped to act	Cross-disciplinary research and mapping informs policymakers and practitioners of the impact of environmental pollution on human health, gaps in risk management, and potential integrated solutions (Southern China)
Public Engagement	People and institutions take action around issues at a public level to shape society	Global advocacy learning networks influence global energy investment decisions (Democratic Practice)
Public Policy	Institutional and/or public policy or practice has changed	Civil society has secured the legal framework to allow it to thrive and develop (Western Balkans)
Understanding	The issue is defined and understood differently	Increased public belief in the urgency of taking action on climate change (Sustainable Development)

⁹ Definitions of change and indicators largely drawn from the Women’s Funding Network, “Making the Case: Five Indicators of Social Change.”

The Fund's grantmaking is part of a complex landscape that includes a myriad of institutions and individuals whose actions are not within in the Fund's control. In addition, as a funder whose grantmaking is "primarily concerned with fundamental problems and [which] is designed to contribute to the achievement of long-term goals,"¹⁰ we need to bear in mind that the change we seek is not usually immediate and what we are striving to achieve may take many years to observe. It is impossible to be precise about timeframes and the exact outcomes relating to a grantmaking strategy. Indicators, therefore, serve as milestones that measure progress along this complex path in the course of a program. They keep us focused, help to inform grantmaking choices, and enable us to communicate more clearly what we are trying to achieve in our programs.

In identifying indicators for the purposes of the program framework, staff present the likely observable changes or developments to which they hope the Fund's grantmaking will contribute. The indicators established are for internal reference and are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all the changes we expect to see in the field of work. They identify expected developments that would signal that progress is being made. Indicators that are quantitative in nature may be useful, but we recognize that it is difficult to predict or quantify results related to our organizing, advocacy, and public policy-focused grantmaking. Quantified targets can often be misleading, arbitrary, and diminish ambition for what are generally understood to be long-term goals.

As described in the next section, indicators of progress provide a reference point for the Fund's grantmaking activities, program reviews, and impact assessments. Evidence of progress come from a variety of sources—including but not limited to grantee narratives and case studies, surveys and public opinion polls, records of policies enacted, media coverage, and the general course of events (e.g., what's happening in the field and in the world). Indicators are set every three to five years, in conjunction with the start of a program or during a review process. In the course of evaluating program impact, other indications that meaningful change has occurred may be identified.

Process indicators—such as number of grants approved, dollars invested in a particular strategy, dollars leveraged, number of new grantees, number of meetings held, and so forth—are included in all program reviews. These do not necessarily give an indication of program impact, but they do provide important measures of program implementation and activities (See Appendix F: Indicators of Progress in RBF Context).

Embedding Impact Assessment within Program and Institutional Processes

Activities related to the evaluation of program impact occur within each program on an ongoing basis. The annual institutional calendar provides a variety of opportunities for the board and staff to vet, approve, and review progress in defining and achieving impact at different points in each year and across several years.

Activities within Each Program

The way in which program and grant development are organized and carried out have a significant influence on future efforts to assess impact. **Monitoring, program reviews, and impact assessments** are the mechanisms that provide insight into the impact of the Fund's grantmaking during the life of a program.

Program Development is the process of defining a strategic focus for our grantmaking programs. The resulting program focus reflects an analysis of context, RBF priorities, and board and program staff expertise in selected fields. Programs continue to evolve as staff respond to developments in the field and events present new grantmaking opportunities.

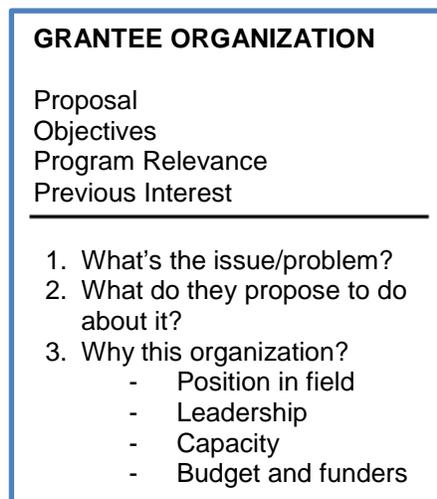
¹⁰ Excerpted from RBF Program Statement, <http://www.rbf.org/content/program-statement>.

The products of program development are **program guidelines** and a **program framework summary**, which includes indicators of progress.

Grant Development is the process of identifying prospective grantees and working with them to complete proposals that advance their organizational goals and reflect the RBF’s program priorities.

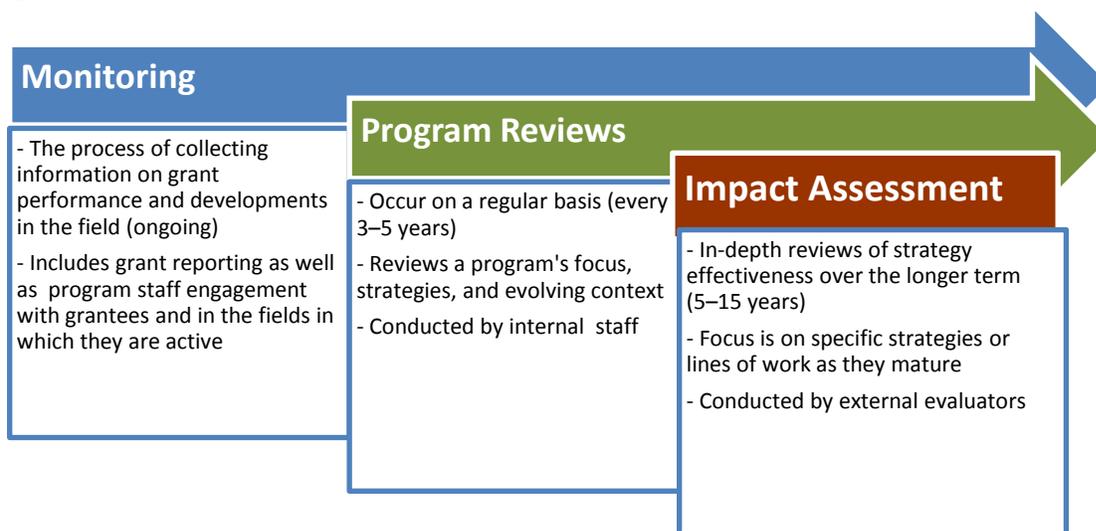
Staff draft **dockets** for each proposed grant presenting the work to be funded, including the issue being addressed, the tactics and specific activities the grantee expects to pursue, and the positioning and capacity of the organization to carry them out. The **proposal** language in the docket header briefly presents the purpose of the grant. Grantee organizations and RBF staff agree upon grant **objectives** that express the tactics, approaches, targets, or other distinctive contributions they are expected to make to advancing program strategies. The **program relevance** section notes how the grant relates to the program’s goals and strategies. Dockets for renewal grants summarize contributions and discernible impact of previously supported activities. Grant agreement letters request that grantees report annually on the agreed upon objectives as well as their own reflections on developments in the field and in their organizations.

Figure 4: Docket Template



Over the life of a program, a multitiered series of evaluation activities take place to provide insight on impact:

Figure 5: Impact Assessment Activities



Monitoring (Grant-by-Grant and Field-Level) is the ongoing process of collecting information on grantee performance during a grant and developments within a field of funding.

Monitoring includes grant reporting as well as program staff engagement with grantees and in the fields in which they are active. Close engagement with grantees allows program staff to assess progress on an ongoing basis and to identify aspects of funded activity that are making positive

contributions to advancing program **strategies** and realizing program **goals**. The indicators of progress provide staff with a roadmap for this activity.

Staff stay abreast of developments in their fields and gather information to determine if ideas, practices, and social movements are gaining momentum or acceptance. Based on all this information, staff recommend that grants be renewed, discontinued, or complemented with related grants, convenings, or other activities.

Program reviews examine a program's focus, strategies, and evolving context.

Program reviews occur on a regular basis (every three to five years) and allow staff and trustees to reflect on the program's overall direction and preliminary indications of impact, and to make midcourse corrections as needed. In general, program staff author the program reviews, with assistance from external experts as needed. Drawing on grantee reports as well as field engagement, program reviews assess context, strategies, and progress against established indicators and toward achieving program goals (See Appendix G: Draft Outline for Program Reviews and Impact Assessment).

Program reviews are the point in time at which staff revise indicators of progress in light of the changing context, strategy refinements, or other board-approved changes in program direction.

Impact assessments are in-depth reviews of strategy effectiveness over the longer term and focus on program design and the contribution of grantees and other activities to advancing specific strategies or lines of work to achieving program goals as they mature (five to 15 years).

Select strategies that warrant an impact assessment are determined by the vice president for programs and the program teams or by suggestion of the president or the board. Impact assessments follow the same general outline as program reviews, but focus in on a particular strategy or line of work over a longer period of time and are generally carried out by an external consultant.

[Pocantico](#)¹¹ conferences are another key element of the Fund's grantmaking approach. Staff support, attend, and often organize conferences with grantees and other partners to develop, review, and advance program strategies. The Pocantico Center's staff is currently assessing how to best capture the impact of its conferences. We expect to incorporate these insights into monitoring, program reviews, and impact assessments.

Tentative Program Review Schedule [Date of last review in parentheses]
November 2013: Democratic Practice-United States (2010)
June 2014: New York City (2007, 2009, 2010)
November 2014: Sustainable Development (2010)
June 2015: Western Balkans (2010)
November 2015: Southern China (2010)
June 2016: Democratic Practice—Global Governance (2011)
November 2016: Peacebuilding (2011)
<i>Years in parentheses indicate the most recent program review</i>

¹¹ The Pocantico Center is a venue for conferences and meetings on critical issues related to the Fund's mission. It also serves as a community resource and offers public access through a visitation program, lectures, and cultural events.

Annual Institutional Processes

Several institutional processes occur during the course of each year that provide a structure and opportunities for the board and staff to communicate, vet, and approve each program's strategic direction at key junctures of program development. These activities include a yearly program staff retreat, annual budget planning, docket preview meetings, and board meetings (three times per year). These gatherings provide opportunities for the board and staff to propose, approve, and monitor the program guidelines and frameworks, grantmaking, information gathering, analysis, and strategy refinement activities that comprise impact assessment. The following graphic illustrates these processes within the Fund's annual institutional calendar. Board trips, conference calls on program topics, and other board-engagement activities occur throughout the year, providing opportunities for board to learn about program development progress and provide strategic guidance to staff. The text that follows suggests how impact assessment activities are advanced in these processes and build attention to impact into the Fund's ongoing work.

Figure 6: Annual Institutional Calendar



The yearly program staff retreat is an opportunity to review program progress and strategy in light of evolving contexts and to agree upon program priorities and plans for the coming year to help shape the program narrative for the annual budget presentation.

The evolving political, social, and economic contexts, globally and in the specific countries in which we work, are an important backdrop for grantmaking strategy in pursuit of long-term goals and condition the prospects for impact. Adapting nimbly as contexts change relies heavily on program staff engagement in the field. The program staff retreat is an opportunity for staff to share insights with colleagues, revisit assumptions, and discuss priorities and plans for the coming year.

Staff highlight grantmaking priorities and other activities in light of developments in the field, giving special note to new initiatives, significant convenings, major grants, and other illustrations of how resources are likely to be allocated among program goals and strategies. Program staff also review **indicators of progress** and identify interim milestones expected to be seen during the coming year. Scheduling the annual staff retreat in September informs the annual budgeting process that commences in the fall.

The annual planning and budgeting process produces an annual budget presentation for the trustees in which a budget is proposed based on available resources, legal requirements, and Fund policy. The presentation proposes an allocation among programs in a manner consistent with the Fund's overall mission and strategic priorities. The narrative reflects staff discussion at the program staff retreat, presenting the overall direction of the Fund's program priorities and activities for the upcoming year and highlighting key anticipated grantmaking and progress expected to be seen within our fields of work. Annual budgets are presented to the board for approval in November.

Docket preview meetings provide an opportunity for program staff to finalize their preparations for the Fund's three board meetings. The agenda includes a discussion of draft program-related papers and review of grants proposed for board approval.

In reviewing key aspects of proposed grants and draft strategy papers, program staff also have an opportunity to update colleagues on new developments, strategy implementation, and noteworthy outcomes. In sharing the status and challenges each program faces, colleagues can tap resources and expertise from across programs with the aim of increasing program impact.

In addition to ongoing board engagement activities, at board meetings trustees provide expertise, strategic direction, and approval for the following, depending on the meeting's agenda:

- Program guidelines
- Large, significant, and/or risky grants
- Program reviews/impact assessments
- Other program development initiatives

Discussions explore the context and assumptions that support strategies and tactics and their likelihood of impact on understanding, behavior, capacity, public engagement, and public policy in our fields of work.

Recommendations

The 2012 Impact Assessment Committee presented the recommendations below to the RBF board of trustees. These recommendations were approved at the November 2012 board meeting.

1. The board of trustees approve the approach to impact for the Fund outlined herein
2. Staff work to implement the necessary operational changes to support this approach over the next year, including:
 - Finalize indicators of progress for each program in accordance to the proposed approach
 - Schedule the annual staff retreat in September starting in 2013 to better fit with the annual work flow

- Modify the grant agreement letter and revise the use of grant proposal and objective language to facilitate the recommended approach to impact assessment
- Refine grant coding within the Fund's database to facilitate impact analysis
- Develop a streamlined approach for staff to retain information on developments in the field; consider options within the internal knowledge and information management site currently under development (SharePoint)
- Position the Fund's approach to impact assessment visibly on the Fund's website and focus on indicators of progress within [grantee profiles](#) and other communications materials as appropriate

Conclusion

The Fund has had a longstanding commitment to impact assessment. The purpose of this project was to bring more rigor and clarity to our work in this regard and to build attention to impact more explicitly into a variety of institutional processes. This review has further clarified both what it is we are trying to achieve through impact assessment and how we describe our grantmaking approach. It enabled us to glean best practices from across the field and from the experiences of other funders, as well as to develop and refine processes that will allow us to assess impact assessment through our everyday grantmaking activities. This will ensure that it is not an isolated activity, but one that improves the overall impact of Fund's grantmaking, institutional effectiveness, and overall performance.

APPENDIX A: Foundation Performance Assessment Committee Recommendations and Follow-Up: 2003–2012

2003 Committee Recommendations		Status
<p>Annual Review of RBF Operations</p>	<p>Comprehensive annual review of the Fund's activities in order to facilitate discussion on year-to-year patterns and trends.</p> <p>Trustees and staff are the intended audience; however, may be posted on the website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published annual statistical review since 2004 Redesigned the report in 2010 to be more comprehensive and accessible Posted on the web, and with the 2010 redesign, we now have a more interactive presentation of it in addition to the full report Combined Annual Review and Statistical Review in 2012 into <i>Charting Our Progress</i> Currently published in April with unaudited figures; final version released in August with audited figures
<p>Docket Memorandum Revisions</p>	<p>Include objectives to capture as succinctly as possible the purpose of the grant to demonstrate the desired outcome.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives are part of the template Dockets routinely include information on organization and project budgets Dockets also consistently address the following: What is the context in which work is being done? What is the problem being addressed? Why is the grantee well positioned to do this work? Dockets are held to two-page limits to improve clarity and consistency Active portfolio lists with objectives are included for each grantmaking portfolio in every board book Listing of Pocantico conferences and public programs, including objectives, are now part of the board book

2003 Committee Recommendations		Status
Program Updates	<p>System of regular updates on programs and grantmaking to address status on current grantmaking—two-year intervals.</p> <p>Reviews should include a focus on lessons learned, be focused on overall grantmaking, not specific grants.</p> <p>Trustees and staff are the intended audience; however, may be posted on the website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted 24 program reviews since 2003, generally on a five-year cycle—for whole bodies of work or specific strategies • Board and staff concluded that reviews at a five-year interval was more appropriate given the body of grantmaking and the time needed to see impact within our fields of funding • Expanded information presented in the annual budget memo on program plans includes a summary of each program's plans and focus for the upcoming year • There has typically been one review paper presented to trustees per board meeting • Board books now include a map/dashboard of each program's grantmaking by strategy and a list of active grants • Added other ways for trustees to access information on program progress and focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trustee portal created, which contains delegated authority grants; program reviews, budget memos, etc. - Grants database on website
Organizational Assessment	<p>Consider staff survey on RBF work environment to identify areas that are working well and where improvement is needed.</p> <p>Build on the survey for further organizational development work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted two rounds (in 2005 and 2010) of Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) surveys of staff, grantees, applicants, and trustees on the Fund's performance • With both rounds of surveys, staff were directly involved in the review of survey findings, and the development and implementation of recommendations for improvement • The Fund also launched a diversity initiative in 2008 with a focus on organizational culture and inclusion.
Board Assessment	<p>Periodically review board performance and the role of the board of trustees.</p> <p>Take a fresh look at how board performance may be defined.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEP board survey led to a number of actions to enable the board to focus on strategic issues, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing delegated authority - Enhancing board-engagement opportunities - Encouraging a culture of authentic debate - Forming committees around strategic activities and encouraging trustees to enter discussions on guideline revisions

APPENDIX B: RBF Program Review/Impact Assessments 2004–2012

Program	Date	Title	Author	Public
Culpeper Human Advancement	June 2004	<i>Program Update: Culpeper Human Advancement Program</i>	Staff (Bill McCalpin)	
	June 2008 (May 21, 2008)	<i>The Culpeper Human Advancement Program: A Discussion Paper</i>	Staff (Elizabeth Campbell)	
	November 2008	<i>The Charles E. Culpeper Human Advancement Program Phase-Out Plan</i>	Staff (Elizabeth Campbell)	
Democratic Practice	June 2006	<i>Rocketfeller Brothers Fund Democratic Practice Review</i>	Staff (Ben Shute, Michael Conroy, Grant Garrison)	
	November 2009 (September 9, 2009)	<i>Rocketfeller Brothers Fund Youth Civic Engagement Grantmaking Strategic Review—Condensed Final Report</i>	External Evaluators (Hilary Binder-Avies, Bridgette Rouson)	Yes
	March 2006	<i>Peace and Security Program Review, 2003–2005 U.S. Global Engagement</i>	Staff (Priscilla Lewis, P.J. Simmons)	
Peacebuilding	June 2009	<i>Peace and Security Program: Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding Between Muslim and Western Societies (Review 2003–2008: Evaluation Findings and Proposed Guidelines)</i>	External Evaluator (Randa Slim)	
	March 2010 (August 3, 2009)	<i>The U.S.-Iran Track II Dialogue (2002–2008): Lessons Learned and Implications for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund Grantmaking Strategy</i>	External Evaluator (Randa Slim)	Yes
	March 2005	<i>New York City Program Review Paper</i>	Staff (Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas)	
Pivotal Place: New York City	Spring 2007 (December 2006)	<i>Making a Difference: Collaborative Organizing for School Improvement in New York City, 1996–2006</i>	External Evaluator (Ann Bastian)	Yes
	November 2009	<i>Democratic Practice Focus on Immigrant Communities</i>	Staff (Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas)	Yes
	March 2010	<i>Review of the Sustainable Development Portfolio</i>	Staff (Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas)	
	June 2012	<i>The Story of the Brownfields</i>	External Evaluator (Anita Nager)	Yes

Program	Date	Title	Author	Public
Pivotal Place: South Africa	June 2005	<i>South Africa Program Review Paper</i>	Staff (Nancy Muirhead)	
	March 2009 (January 2009)	<i>Rockefeller Brothers Fund South Africa Grantmaking Strategy Evaluation</i>	External Evaluators (Insidout Monitoring & Evaluation Specialists)	Yes
	March 2009	<i>Impact Assessment of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund HIV/AIDS Research Grantmaking in South Africa (2002–2009)</i>	External Evaluator (Kevin Kelly—CADRE)	Yes
Pivotal Place: Southern China	November 2008	<i>Southern China: Energy-Climate Report and Proposed Guidelines</i>	Staff (Shenyu G. Belsky)	
	March 2010	<i>Southern China Program Review: 2006–2009</i>	Staff (Shenyu G. Belsky)	
Pivotal Place: Western Balkans	December 2004	<i>Program Update: Pivotal Place Serbia and Montenegro Program</i>	Staff (Bill Moody, Grant Garrison)	
	June 2010	<i>Review of Regional Developments and Grantmaking 2003–2009</i>	Staff (Haki Abazi)	
Pivotal Places	June 2009 (May 21, 2009)	<i>The Rockefeller Brothers Fund Use of the Pivotal Place Concept: A Work in Progress</i>	External Evaluators (Barry D. Gaberman, Thomas V. Seessel)	
Sustainable Development	October 2005	<i>Sustainable Development Program Review Paper (2003–2005)</i>	Staff (Michael Northrop)	
	November 2010	<i>Sustainable Development Program Review, 2005–2010</i>	Staff (Jessica Bailey, Michael Northrop)	Yes
Sustainable Development: Russian Far East	October 2005	<i>Ten Years of Rockefeller Brothers Fund Grantmaking in the Russian Far East: 1995–2005</i>	External Evaluator (Michael Fisher)	

Program—Current program name in instances where the name has changed

Date—Date presented to the board; date of report, if different, appears in parentheses

Public—Denotes if a version of the report was shared publicly on our website

APPENDIX C: Overview of Other Foundation Approaches

Summary of Peer Foundations' Evaluation Approach 2012

During the summer of 2012¹, we conducted web-based research to prepare a landscape analysis of the stated evaluation practices of the peer foundations used as a comparative cohort for our 2010 Center for Effective Philanthropy surveys.² We added summaries of the Gates and Irvine foundations' approaches as they are both important models of the state of practice in the field. Learning about our colleagues' approaches to evaluation not only helped us to glean best practices, but also gave us a sense of what our grantees and peers have come to expect from evaluation activities. We were quite interested in how they described their approaches to evaluation and what evaluation-related information they shared publicly. As you will read, evaluation approaches differ significantly across our peer cohort—from the language used to describe their approaches, to what is incorporated in their reviews, to the overall purpose of evaluation and its relationship to grantmaking.

Key Takeaways

- Most of the foundations we reviewed place evaluation within a **learning framework** and state that learning is the intended purpose of evaluation.
- The trend is to evaluate at the **program level**, not individual grants. With that, the emphasis is on **long-term** results.
- There is frequently a stated commitment to **share what they learn** through evaluation, although evaluation reports as such were not widely posted online and were often difficult to locate when they were. Most (eight of 11) have some evaluation-related information in a What We're Learning tab or link in their primary (six) or secondary (two) navigation. In addition, one has Evaluation in its primary navigation and another has Impact.
- **External evaluators are commonly used to evaluate grantmaking programs/initiatives.** There are mixed results as to whether there are explicit evaluation staff/departments. (Only five foundations list explicit evaluation staff/departments on their websites.)
- A **wide-range of materials** is included under evaluation—close-ups, blogs, annual reports, program guidelines. Some also include reports of analyses of the fields and related issues they fund under evaluation activities.
- Foundation **boards, staff, and grantees** are noted as stakeholders in the evaluation process.
- Overall, foundations employ a **mix of qualitative and quantitative** evaluation methods. Those that relied more heavily on quantitative methods generally fund programs or projects that lend themselves to this approach such as direct service provision projects, education initiatives, and scientific research.

¹ The information within this appendix was gathered during June and July 2012 from a review of foundation websites; websites and information presented by the foundations in this report may have changed since.

² Peer foundations included: Atlantic Philanthropies, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, David and Lucille Packard Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Energy Foundation, Ford Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Surdna Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Due to limited information available on their websites, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Energy Foundation have been excluded from this summary.

Common Elements in Published Evaluations and Program Reviews

- Methodology
- Interviews with foundation staff, grantees, other participants/beneficiaries
- Review of program objectives and plans, field standards
- Identify key lessons and themes from reviews
- Statements/reflections from program officers (current and past)
- Statements/reflections from grantees (grantee reflections on field)
- State of the field when the body of work began; summary of work/where things are now
- Explanation of how body of grantmaking sought to address a gap/problem
- Statements/comments from experts in the field about the problem/state of the field
- Case studies featuring grantees

Summary of Peer Foundations

The information that follows was collected solely through web research and reflects only what is accessible to the public through the foundations' websites.

Financial Data: How large is their endowment? What does their annual giving look like?
Funding Areas: What areas or topics does the foundation fund?
Terms: What terms (evaluation, impact, and learning) does the foundation use to describe their approach to impact evaluation and is one term used more frequently than the others?
Public Accessibility: How much and what type of information can be found on the foundation's website pertaining to impact evaluation? How accessible is this information?
Methods: Does the foundation evaluate its work using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods?
Type of Evaluation: Does the foundation evaluate programs and/or individual grants?
Staff: Does the foundation have specific staff members solely dedicated to evaluation (e.g. an evaluation department)?
Evaluators: Who is evaluating programs or grants: external evaluators (e.g., research organizations or experts in a field) or internal evaluators (e.g., program officers, evaluation staff)
Statement on Evaluation: Excerpts from the foundation's statement on its approach to evaluation

Results at a Glance

Staff		Evaluators	
(Foundations with internal evaluation staff)	45% (5/11)	External Internal	91% (10/11) 55% (6/11)
Type of Evaluation		Methods	
Program	73% (8/11)	Qualitative	27% (3/11)
Individual Grants	36% (4/11)	Mixed	73% (8/11)
Public Accessibility			
What We Are Learning in primary navigation	55% (6/11)		
What We Are Learning in secondary navigation	18% (2/11)		
Impact in primary navigation	.9% (1/11)		
Evaluation in primary navigation	.9% (1/11)		
Evaluation related tabs in secondary navigation	.9% (1/11)		

Atlantic Philanthropies

Financial Data

Endowment: \$1.8 billion (2011); Grantmaking: \$285.1 million (2010)

Funding Areas

Ageing, Children and Youth, Population Health, Reconciliation and Human Rights

Terms

Learning (heavily emphasized), impact, evaluation

Public Accessibility

Evaluation reports are available on the website, however, the selection is limited and not very current (there is only one 2012 review posted). The What We're Learning section of the website includes reports on specific issues and grantee projects/initiatives, speeches, case studies, summaries of meetings of several grantees on specific issues, and evaluations. Reports and evaluations are also found on individual program pages.

Methods

Mixed

Type of Evaluation (Program or Grant)

Program: Two program reviews are available—a review of a grantmaking issue area in 2004 (over a six-year period) and an internal review of a program in 2009 (Review of the Children & Youth Program in Ireland and Northern Ireland)

Grant: Evaluations on the impacts of programs run by a specific grantee (Example: Experience Corps Shows Improvement in Reading Scores; First-Year Implementation of the Center for After-School Excellence Certificate Programs). Eight evaluations are found in the Evaluation section of their website (two in 2008, three in 2009: two in 2010, and one in 2012).

Staff

Director of Impact Assessment and Global Learning

Evaluators

External: External experts in the field (Example: Centre for Effective Education)

Internal: One program review was conducted internally

Statement on Evaluation

We are committed to evaluating and reporting the outcomes of our grants and other learnings. We believe in sharing information about strategies and lessons in an effort to help advance our fields of focus. Our Strategic Learning approach helps grantees assess their progress and learn from their experiences as well as for us to gauge our grantmaking efforts.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Financial Data

Endowment: \$35.6 billion; Grantmaking (including other direct charitable contributions: \$3.4 billion (2011)

Areas of Funding

Global Development, Global Health, Global Policy and Advocacy, United States

Terms

Impact, Evaluation, Learning

Public

Yes. Evaluations, found under their What We're Learning tab, are very visible and easy to find and include: progress reports on specific grants, evaluations of issues the foundation works on (conducted by staff).

Methods

Mixed

Type of Evaluation

Program: Mostly program

Grant: Progress reports on specific grants

Staff

Director of Strategy, Measurement & Evaluation Foundation Operations

Evaluators

External

Evaluation Statement

The foundation is committed to sharing the lessons we learn throughout our grantmaking process. It is crucial that we monitor our progress, consider what impact our work is having, study the findings of research and reports, and communicate the results.

Carnegie Corporation

Financial Data

Assets: \$2.531 billion; Grantmaking: \$96.7 million (2010)

Funding Areas

International Peace and Security, Islam Initiative, Higher Education and Libraries in Africa, Higher Education in Eurasia, Urban and Higher Education, and Democracy and Civic Integration

Terms

Learning (emphasized), impact

Public Accessibility

Website includes a What We're Learning section with columns, reports, annual reports, and evaluation summaries. The foundation publishes a quarterly newsletter that highlights organizations and projects that have produced reports, results or information of special note and a publication series that focuses on program areas as they come to their natural conclusion that aim to assess a cluster of grants, providing insight into how a particular program area developed, the grantmaking and people involved, and the lessons learned. Additionally, a bi-annual newsletter that acts as hub for ideas and strategies the foundation is exploring, stories that address the Carnegie Corporation's work and the broader contextual issues which inform its programming.

Methods

Qualitative

Type of Evaluation

Program: Cluster of grants or an initiative (Example: Review of African library program in South Africa); generally long term (five to eight years)

Grant: Progress of specific grantees (Example: Review of the work of a grantee, The Education Trust)

Staff

None

Evaluators

Internal: Most recent program reviews have been internal

External: One external review was conducted in 2009. Some reports indicate that external reviews of specific grantees may have been conducted by external evaluators but these do not appear to be public.

Evaluation Statement

Carnegie Corporation of New York periodically reviews programmatic investments to monitor progress, understand what has worked and what hasn't. Risk accompanies any programmatic investment. And in order to continually improve our grantmaking, we need to carefully and honestly examine the causes of success and failure and communicate those lessons so that others may also reflect on what we're learning.

Carnegie Results highlights the work of current foundation-supported nonprofit organizations as well as projects that have produced reports, results or knowledge of particular importance. Carnegie Review focuses on the impact of foundation-funded programs as they come to their natural conclusion. Carnegie Review provides insight into how a particular program developed, the grantmaking and people involved, and how the related work was carried out.

David and Lucille Packard Foundation

Financial Data

Endowment: \$6.1 billion; Grantmaking: \$234 million (2010)

Funding Areas

Conservation and Science, Population and Reproductive Health, Children, Families and Communities, Local Grants (Arts, Children and Youth, Conservation and Science, Food and Shelter, and Population and Reproductive Health)

Terms

Evaluation (emphasized); learning

Public Accessibility

Evaluation section under How We Operate tab on website; however, evaluations are not linked to this page and are not easily accessible. To find them, you need to search evaluation on their website.

Methods

Mixed (both quantitative and qualitative data through both formal and informal mechanisms)

Type of Evaluation

Program: Program and sub-program evaluations

Staff

Evaluation Program Staff: Director, Evaluation Associate, and Program Assistant

Evaluators

External: Evaluation experts and field experts (example: Global Training Research and Evaluation Services, Harvard Family Research, California Environmental Associates)

Internal: Only when scope of work does not necessitate an external evaluation

Evaluation Statement

At the Packard Foundation, we believe that evaluation is as important in grantmaking as it is in business or government.

Our evaluation approach is guided by three main principles:

- Success depends on a willingness to solicit feedback and take corrective action when necessary.
- Improvement should be continuous and we should learn from our mistakes.
- Evaluation should be conducted in partnership with those who are doing the work in order to maximize learning and minimize the burden on the grantee.

Over the past several years, the cornerstone of a cultural shift within the Foundation has been to move from evaluation for proof or accountability (“Did the program work?”) to evaluation for program improvement (“What did we learn that can help us make the program better?”). Evaluation for proof reflects the more traditional practice of collecting data retrospectively after grantmaking strategies already have been implemented, or of reporting back only when all data has been collected and analyzed.

In contrast, evaluation for program improvement reflects an approach we refer to as “real-time” evaluation or RTE. At the Packard Foundation, real-time means balancing monitoring and evaluation to effectively support learning and continuous improvement as our grantmaking strategies are implemented.

In practice, this approach extends beyond evaluation, and represents our overall strategy to develop an appropriate monitoring, evaluation, and learning system for each subprogram. We integrate real-time monitoring and evaluation to regularly facilitate opportunities for learning and bring timely evaluation data—in accessible formats—to the table for reflection and use in decision making. Rather than focus solely on evaluation, we have been encouraging a culture that “thinks evaluatively” throughout the grantmaking lifecycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, assessment, and course correction.

Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

Financial Data

Assets: \$1.6 billion (2010)

Funding Areas

Arts, Child Abuse Prevention, Environment, Medical Research, African Health Initiative, Public Understanding of Muslim Societies through Arts and Media

Terms

Evaluation (emphasized)

Public Accessibility

What We're Learning portion of website includes information and analyses of their fields of work. There are a few program reviews from 2005 to 2010 posted on the website. They are not easy to locate, need to search for them.

Methods

Mixed

Type of Evaluation

Program: Reviews of programs, initiatives, and clusters of grants (3–5 years); external program reviews conducted by external panel of experts every five years

Grants: Through ongoing process of monitoring, grantee meetings, etc.

Staff

None

Evaluators

Internal: Internal staff works with external consultants and field experts to review initiatives and clusters of grants

External: Experts in field as well as evaluation firms (Example: WolfBrown, Wolf, Keens, and Co.)

Evaluation Statement

The foundation conducts evaluation of its grants and programs in an ongoing cycle of assessment and program refinement. DDCF's evaluation objectives are two-fold:

- To help the foundation determine whether its grants are meeting their objectives
- To inform future decision-making and to guide the foundation's work

The DDCF employs three main evaluation strategies that build on and inform each other over time. The foundation's programs tailor each of the three strategies as appropriate to accommodate their diverse grantmaking approaches.

- Monitoring and Assessment (grant-level; staff)
- Evaluation of initiatives (program, cluster level; staff and/or external; three to five years)
- External program review (program and field level; external expert/evaluator every five years), conducted by panel of experts

If program evaluations conducted by the foundation yield information that may be useful to DDCF-supported fields, the foundation will post its findings under the appropriate News & Publications section on this website.

The Ford Foundation

Financial Data

Assets: \$10.3 billion (2011)

Funding Areas

Democratic and Accountable Government, Economic Fairness, Educational Opportunity and Fairness, Freedom of Expression, Human Rights, Metropolitan Opportunity, Sexuality and Reproductive Health and Rights, Sustainable Development

Terms

Learning (emphasized), impact

Public Accessibility

Web site has an Impact section. Reviews are published on website on *Learning* and *Library* pages; however, they are not easily accessible. No reports are linked to the impact page: to find them you need to use the site map. The most recent report is from 2011. Evaluation statement suggests that they will share their work with the nonprofit sector, government and business leaders, and fellow funders.

Methods

Mixed (depending on the initiative being reviewed)

Type of Evaluation

Program: Program and initiative (generally over a five- to 10-year period)

Staff

Director of Impact Assessment, Senior Project Manager for Impact and Assessment

Evaluators

External: 3 of 4 reviews conducted between 2001 and 2007 were conducted by external reviewers, one did not specify.

Evaluation Statement:

At every stage of our work, we ask ourselves: Are the foundation's strategic initiatives, approaches and grants achieving the maximum impact they can? Are there adjustments we can make to our strategies or the activities we are supporting that could yield better results? We ask ourselves:

Implementation: What activities and projects are being completed? Which are most meaningful for assessing our progress?

Effectiveness: Are these projects and activities achieving the goals articulated in the grant? Are we leveraging our partners as effectively as we can?

Social Change: Is the work Ford is funding contributing to positive change as defined by the overall strategy?

We engage in continuous learning and improvement—rather than waiting until an initiative ends to begin evaluation. Our assessment approach reflects this idea: with all of our grant-making strategies and throughout each stage of the process, we assess, learn and then make course corrections as needed.

We use a combination of tools to assess whether our initiatives are having an impact on social change. How we evaluate depends on where an initiative is in its life cycle. We do not believe that the only choice is between simple quantitative measures of impact and no assessment at all. We believe that sophisticated methods of qualitative and quantitative evaluations, when used appropriately, can provide insight into whether we are being effective in delivering impact to the communities we serve.

James Irvine Foundation

Financial Data

Assets: \$1.6 billion; Grantmaking: \$65 million (2011)

Funding Areas

Arts, California Democracy, Youth

Terms

Evaluation

Public Accessibility

Website is extremely well organized and easy to navigate. All evaluations are posted under the Evaluation section. There are currently 19 evaluations available online. Information is also available about evaluations currently underway.

Methods

Mixed

Type of Evaluation

Program: Program/initiatives (Time periods ranging from one to nine years)

Staff

Manager for Research and Evaluation

Evaluators

External: Mostly external

Internal: Only in cases where staff have the necessary skills to conduct reviews

Evaluation Statement

In philanthropy, evaluation is defined rather broadly as the systematic gathering of information and research about grantmaker-supported activities. Evaluation is used by grantmakers, and Irvine in particular, to measure the effect of the activities supported by their grantmaking, to demonstrate results and to help illuminate effective strategies for achieving those results.

Evaluation advances our mission in four ways:

- It informs our work—Evaluations provide knowledge about what works and what doesn't, thus enhancing our programmatic efforts and informing our decisions.
- It improves understanding in philanthropy—Evaluations allow our colleagues to benefit from our grantees' experiences and improvements.
- It demonstrates accountability and transparency—Evaluations allow others to hold us accountable and understand our work by providing a direct source of information about the impact of our grantmaking.
- It strengthens organizations—Evaluation helps our grantees identify, sustain and improve promising practices. This makes them stronger and more effective by encouraging self-reflection and organizational improvement.

Most of our grantmaking initiatives include rigorous evaluation procedures. We also conduct an annual foundation-wide assessment to measure our progress against our organizational goals.

The following principles guide our evaluation design:

- Evaluations should inform organizational and program decisions and be integrated into our planning processes.
- Evaluations and programs are more effective if you have clear goals and a theory about how to reach them.
- Where appropriate, evaluation should be participatory and collaborative. We aim to involve grantees in evaluation planning and implementation so that they better understand and commit to the process.
- Evaluations should measure progress toward the accomplishment of clear, measurable goals, but they also should increase understanding about the impact of specific activities and processes.
- Evaluation designs should consider the intended use of the evaluation by the Foundation, the grantees, and others who could learn from it.

Irvine usually contracts with external evaluators. In cases where specialized research skills are not needed, Irvine staff conduct the evaluations. These evaluations may include site visits, observation, interviews, surveys, review of grantee reports, and dissemination of findings.

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Financial Data

Assets: 5.7 billion; Grantmaking and Program-Related Investments: \$239.9 million (2011)

Funding Areas

Arts & Culture in Chicago, Community & Economic Development, Conservation & Sustainable Development, Digital Media & Learning, Girls' Secondary Education in Developing Countries, Higher Education in Russia & Africa, Housing, Human Rights & International Justice, International Peace & Security, Juvenile Justice, Media, Migration, Policy Research, Population & Reproductive Health

Terms

Learning (emphasized), Impact, Assessment

Public Accessibility

Yes, very clear and linked to their page on impact, which is a portion of their What We're Learning tab. External evaluations can be found under the Assessments and Research and Results section of website. They also have a

section on Research and Results which is largely comprised of research their grantees have undertaken on specific issues within the field of work (but do not assess the foundation's role). Evaluations are very current; however, there are two from 2012.

Methods

Mixed

Type of Evaluation

Program: Program or initiative within a program. Most external reviews are of a specific initiative over a five-to 10-year period.

Staff

None

Evaluators

External: External evaluation firm and experts in the field (Example: MDRC, team of independent consultants with expertise in different areas, Harvard Family Research Project).

Evaluation Statement:

We are committed to sharing the results of our grantmaking and the lessons we learn as we carry out our work. We believe it is important to assess impact regularly, study the findings of research and reports generated with our support, and communicate the results with those in the field and with the public.

In our learning, we are guided by questions such as:

- What is the evolving nature of the problem or opportunity in which we aim to have an impact?
- What is the context and environment in which we are working?
- What is the Foundation's role and strategy for making a difference?
- Who are the best partners and grantees to effect change?
- What are we accomplishing together?
- Who are we impacting and in what way can we broaden or deepen our impact?
- In what ways could we better leverage our resources?

The Foundation generally makes our learning assessments and evaluations publically available. We do so in the interest of field building, transparency of activities, and accountability.

Rockefeller Foundation

Financial Data

Assets: \$3.5 billion (2010)

Funding Areas

Developing Climate Change Resilience, Strengthening Food Security, Protecting American Workers' Economic Security, Promoting Equitable, Sustainable Transportation, Linking Global Disease Surveillance Networks, Transforming Health Systems, Enabling Environment: Innovation, Harnessing the Power of Impact Investing

Terms

Learning and evaluation

Public

Website has a What We're Learning section under its Who We Are tab. One evaluation is posted under the Publications topic.

Methods

Qualitative

Type of Evaluation

Program: Program evaluations plus evaluations of issues in the field (that are not specific to RF's impact).

Staff

Team of four staff members led by a Managing Director

Evaluators

External (based on one program review found on website)

Evaluation Statement

We measure and monitor our work as it progresses, rather than waiting to evaluate this work only at its conclusion. A regular cycle of evaluations helps us determine whether we are achieving our intended results and impact. We continually consider feedback from our staff, grantees, partners and beneficiaries. This enables us to seize unanticipated opportunities, shift tactics when necessary and recalibrate our approach when a problem demands shorter- or longer-term investment. Together with our grantees, we focus on achieving outcomes, implementing performance measurement, and supporting learning and transformative change.

The Surdna Foundation

Financial Data

Endowment: \$846.5 million; Grantmaking: \$42.9 (2011)

Funding Areas

Sustainable Environments, Strong Local Economies, Thriving Cultures

Terms

Impact

Public Accessibility

Yes, although it is not well-defined on the website. Evaluations can be found in the What We're Learning tab, on the Publications and Resources page on the website under the Commissioned Reports section. There are nine commissioned reports posted, three of which could be considered evaluations. An additional evaluation conducted in 2002 is not posted on this section but can be found by conducting a search for evaluations on the website.

Methods

Qualitative

Type of Evaluation

Program: Evaluations of programs and initiatives (Example: Evaluation of High-Impact Arts Programs for Teens, Evaluation of Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program, an initiative within a program)

Staff

None

Evaluators

External: Evaluations available online were conducted by external evaluators (Emc.Arts, Independent consultants). Evaluations were long term (five to 15 years).

Internal: One evaluation was conducted through a collaboration of a program officer and an external consultant who was an expert in the field.

Evaluation Statement

Surdna is committed to measuring its effectiveness, where possible and within reasonable costs, to ensure high quality in the Foundation's grantmaking and other processes and to chart our progress in pursuing our goals. We measure our effectiveness:

- to establish benchmarks for continuous improvement
- to communicate the value of our work - and our grantees' work
- to encourage other potential funders to join us in supporting particular groups and causes, and
- to provide information about our performance as a way of being accountable to the public (which subsidizes our efforts through tax exemption).

Board and staff continue to improve how we capture and manage information; monitor, measure and evaluate our work; and regularly report out on the Foundation's effectiveness.

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Financial Data

Assets: \$7.29 billion; Grantmaking: \$202,844,000 (2011)

Funding Areas

Education, Environment, Global Development and Population, Performing Arts

Terms

Evaluation, Learning

Public Accessibility

One program evaluation is posted on their website. They do have a Learning section, but evaluations are not posted there.

Methods

Mixed

Type of Evaluation

Program: Long-term strategy reviews (every 7 years); reviews of entire bodies of work (over 20 year period)

Grant: Formal grant reviews every other year.

Staff

None

Evaluators

External: Researchers/experts in the field

Evaluation Statement

It is not possible to predict the future. Philanthropic interventions have consequences—both positive and negative—which often cannot be known at the time a grant is made. In order to learn and make better decisions in the future, we have to construct a feedback loop to help us know what happened.

We think of two types of feedback: feedback on a particular strategy and feedback on how an organization does its work. The first asks, for example, "If girls in poor communities play organized sports after school, do their chances of graduating from high school increase?" The second category of feedback might ask, "How many girls participated in the Oakland Girls Play's two-year project to offer after-school sports for girls? What did their teachers say about how it influenced the girls' behavior?" These two approaches are sometimes known, respectively, as summative and formative evaluation.

Outcome-focused grantmaking establishes consistent metrics and targets for outcomes at every level of grantmaking from the earliest days of a strategy. These metrics and targets can be designed hand-in-hand with grantees, which fosters a trusting relationship based on honest inquiry. Then they can be used to provide consistent longitudinal data and real-time monitoring of progress. Monitoring plans also recognize that strategies are based on assumptions, and testing those assumptions is an important part of improving a strategy over time.

Evaluation plans determine how and when a program will assess whether its strategy is working as predicted. This may involve assessing the soundness of the plan or its implementation. Potential triggers may be identified for a more formal evaluation of activity clusters, the program as a whole, or individual grantees. Plans also help ensure that evaluation resources are used effectively, focusing for example on larger and riskier grants.

Although program staff continuously monitors grants informally and review progress reports from grantees, they also follow a monitoring and evaluation plan that includes three types processes scheduled for different points in the life of the strategy. Annually, progress reports feed into the strategy charts and sliding scales included in the board's budget materials. Every other year, formal grant evaluations are scheduled to inform possible course corrections. Finally, at the end of the seven years covered by the strategic plan, outside reviewers will evaluate overall progress.

APPENDIX D: RBF Principles Guiding Work on Impact Assessment (expanded)

The 2012 Impact Assessment Committee developed the following principles to guide the Fund's approach to impact assessment. The principles emerged from committee and staff discussions of the Fund's previous experience with evaluation, the state of evaluation in philanthropy, and literature in the field, as well the Fund's approach to grantmaking and our expectations for evaluation going forward.

- **The Fund's impact approach is rooted in its mission and its program goals and reflects and supports the RBF grantmaking style as captured in its Program Statement.¹ It must be flexible enough to work across the Fund's six programs and their respective evolving contexts.**

Guided by the Rockefeller family's philanthropic legacy and led by a board that values engagement and closely monitors evolving contexts, the Fund has developed a distinctive style of grantmaking that reflects its sense of how it can best deploy its resources (grant budgets, staff expertise and networks, The Pocantico Center, reputation, etc.) to achieve long-term goals. To that end, in addition to providing financial support, staff often work closely with grantee organizations to help strengthen their capacity and advance their work, at times initiating the development of projects that it supports. Fund staff frequently convene groups of diverse stakeholders and facilitate collaboration among government agencies, corporations, and nongovernmental organizations to build support for new ideas and institutions and leverage the strengths across sectors. Staff also look for connections among the activities the Fund supports in the fields of democratic practice, sustainable development, and peacebuilding, both within and across thematic programs and in specific geographic locations (pivotal places). Impact assessment efforts should draw on this engagement for insights about impact, look at contributions beyond the grants made, and avoid compromising the Fund's nimble, proactive style of grantmaking.

- **Given the nature of the Fund's grantmaking, a wide range of indicators and information is needed to understand the impact the Fund's grantmaking is having on a field or issue.**

The Fund's overriding concern is to observe changes in the understanding, public engagement, institutional capacity, behavior, and public policies in the fields in which it invests its grantmaking and staff resources. The organizing, advocacy, and public policy development we often support does not lend itself to a metrics-based approach in the way that direct service delivery activities do as it is challenging to quantify the number of beneficiaries associated with these efforts. We therefore use a wide variety of information to inform our understanding of the impact the Fund's grantmaking is having. We expect that program reviews and impact assessments will rely on a mix of quantitative and qualitative data.

¹RBF Program Statement.

- **The Fund’s approach to impact assessment is action-oriented. It enables staff and trustees to better understand the effectiveness of our grantmaking and the context in which our grantees are working, make mid-course corrections as necessary, and identify opportunities to share our insights with external audiences.**

A key objective in impact assessment is to improve grantmaking—we want to understand if our grantmaking is making a contribution toward realizing our program goals, and to adjust our grantmaking strategies and tactics as needed. This interest in learning and understanding should therefore be coupled with responsive planning and follow-up. The trustees and staff recognize that the fields in which the Fund works are constantly evolving in ways that we can neither control nor predict and that mid-course corrections will inevitably be needed. As we review lines of work and portfolios, we are committed to sharing our findings with peer foundations, grantees, and the general public as appropriate.

- **Impact assessments focus on the contribution of the Fund’s grantmaking to a field or issue over the long term; staff monitor indicators of progress over the near and medium term.**

The Fund’s programs focus on complex issues and fields of work that require long-term attention, capacity building, and the combined efforts of many partners to make and sustain progress in evolving contexts. As such, the Fund is not looking to establish causation or attribute dollars to specific results. Rather the aim is to discern whether the Fund is contributing to a collective effort that is moving in the right direction. To that end, staff are attentive to milestones achieved that suggest progress is moving in the right direction and work to identify forces that improve the prospects for success and those that inhibit it as part of grantmaking strategy development.

- **The impact assessment process should add value to Fund and grantee work, not create administrative and financial burdens.**

Program impact assessment is critical to accountability, learning, and decision making. However, the Fund places a priority on maximizing resources to support grantee work and has decided not to establish a separate monitoring and evaluation unit. Instead, program monitoring and evaluation activities are woven into the regular work of program staff, with the support of consultants as appropriate for specific assignments. Selected information needed for monitoring, program review, and impact assessment is embedded in annual institutional and program planning, budgeting, and grantmaking cycles and requirements.

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

Rockefeller Brothers Fund's Terms

RBF Terms	Definition	Related Terms
Foundation Performance		
Foundation Performance	A foundation's capacity and progress toward realizing its mission. Institutional practices and program impact are two primary drivers of foundation performance.	
Institutional Effectiveness	Organizational culture, management of human and financial resources, and professional standards of timeliness, efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness to internal and external stakeholders.	
Program Impact	Contribution to social change achieved in pursuing program goals in light of evolving external contexts. Evaluation of program impact may occur at different points in time and is intended to support program development, decision making, and knowledge sharing.	
Foundation Performance Assessment	A wide range of analytical and information gathering activities relating to institutional practices and program impact used to sharpen and focus the Fund's work to carry out its mission of helping to build a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world.	<i>Evaluation</i>
Programs and Grantmaking		
Program Statement	Introduction to the Fund's grantmaking guidelines which presents the Fund's overall grantmaking approach and style. Hallmarks of the Fund's grantmaking include: engaged grantmaking, long-term view and commitment, collaboration with other partners, and an understanding of the importance of convening (Pocantico). See: http://www.rbf.org/content/program-statement	<i>Theory of change</i>
Field	A set of people, institutions, and organizations working in a variety of ways to develop knowledge, practices, and policies that advance social change in a given domain. The Fund works in the fields of democratic practice, peacebuilding, and sustainable development in a variety of different geographic contexts. As a practical matter, fields are a domain of work to which we devote substantial staff and monetary resources over a long period of time.	<i>Program Theme</i> <i>Community of practice</i>
Program Guidelines	The board-approved articulation of the Fund's vision for its programs and grantmaking. With the program architecture in mind, the program guidelines include a preamble that presents each program's focus within a field or geographic area, grounding it in the ideas that motivate the Fund's interest and grantmaking strategies, and presenting its distinct point of view. (See Goal and Strategy below.)	<i>Program Framework</i>
Goal	The Fund's long-term aspirations within a field of work that focus and catalyze strategic allocation of program resources. <i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Advance solutions to climate change (Sustainable Development)</i> • <i>Mitigate environmental pollution and its impact on public health (Southern China)</i> 	<i>Purpose</i>

RBF Terms	Definition	Related Terms
Programs and Grantmaking (continued)		
Strategy	<p>The specific actions the Fund will support to achieve progress toward its program goals. Strategies reflect an analysis of context, challenges, solutions, and tactics, as well as the resources that the Fund can bring to bear. Resources include grantmaking as well as other Fund-supported activities, such as Pocantico conferences and consultancies.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Building public and policymaker understanding of climate change and support for a range of actions to address the threat (Sustainable Development)</i> • <i>Building knowledge, capacity, and cross-sector, cross-discipline collaborations (Southern China)</i> 	Approach
Program Framework	<p>An internal structure for articulating a program's strategic focus and aspirations within a field or geographic area, grounding it in the ideas that motivate the Fund's interest, its point of view, and its desired impact given available resources. Includes a brief preamble statement, program goals and strategies funded, and indicators of progress.</p> <p>Anticipated changes—in behavior, capacity, public engagement, public policy, and understanding—within a field that would demonstrate that program strategies are contributing to realizing the program goal(s). The Fund establishes qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress over three to five years to guide grantmaking and impact assessment.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increased media coverage on climate science and climate impacts</i> • <i>Center on philanthropy established to serve as a philanthropy innovation hub for southern China; capacity of business leaders enhanced as effective philanthropists</i> 	Theory of change Logic model Program guidelines
Indicators of Progress	<p>The process of defining a strategic focus for RBF grantmaking programs that reflects an analysis of context, RBF priorities, and program staff expertise in selected fields. Following the formulation of a program, program development continues as staff respond to developments in the field and events present new grantmaking opportunities.</p>	Benchmarks Outcomes Milestones Empirical evidence
Program Development	<p>The process of identifying prospective grantees and working with them to complete proposals that advance their organizations goals and the RBF's strategies.</p>	
Program Evaluation		
Monitoring	<p>The ongoing process of collecting information on grant performance. Monitoring includes grant reporting as well as program staff engagement with grantees and in the fields in which they are active.</p>	
Program Review	<p>Reviews of a program's focus, strategies, and evolving context. Program reviews occur on a regular basis (every three to five years), and allow staff and trustees to reflect on the program's overall direction and preliminary indications of impact, and make midcourse corrections as needed.</p> <p><u>Program reviews include:</u></p> <p><i>Sustainable Development Program Review, 2005–2010</i></p> <p><i>Pivotal Place: Southern China Southern China Program Review 2006–2009</i></p>	
Impact Assessment	<p>In-depth review of strategy effectiveness over the longer term. Impact assessments focus on specific strategies or lines of work as they mature (five to 15 years).</p> <p><i>See: The Story of Brownfields: A Story in Five Parts by Anita Nager (June 2012)</i></p>	

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

Evaluation Terms: A Scan of the Field

Below is a sampling of terms and definitions related to evaluation and impact assessment drawn from across philanthropy and the fields in which we fund.

Activities

What the program does with its resources....the processes, tools, events, technology, and action that are an intentional part of the program implementation. These interventions are used to bring about the intended program changes or results.

—*W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

Actions taken or work performed through which inputs such as funds, technical assistance, and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs.

—*United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*

A specific action or process undertaken over a specific period by an organization to convert resources to products or services to achieve results.

—*USAID*

Assessments

Process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, and beliefs.

—*Widely used and accepted definition. See wikipedia.org*

Assessment is defined as data-gathering strategies, analyses, and reporting processes that provide information that can be used to determine whether or not intended outcomes are being achieved.

—*Foundation Coalition*

Benchmarks

A process used in management and particularly strategic management, in which organizations evaluate various aspects of their processes in relation to best practice, usually within their own sector. This then allows organizations to develop plans on how to adopt such best practice, usually with the aim of increasing some aspect of performance. Benchmarking may be a one-off event, but is often treated as a continuous process in which organizations continually seek to challenge their practices.

—*Ministry of the Environment, New Zealand*

A standard against which results are measured.

—*USAID*

Reference point or standard against which progress or achievements can be assessed...the performance that has been achieved in the recent past by other comparable organizations, or what can be reasonably inferred to have been achieved in similar circumstances.

—*UNFPA*

Cluster Evaluation

An evaluation that looks across a group of projects or grants to identify patterns, as well as factors that might contribute to variations in outcomes and results across the sample.

—*Grantmakers for Effective Organizations*

Allow funders to review a series of grants across single program areas (e.g., primary school education) and compare the results.

—*Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors/Credit Suisse*

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

Contribution

Impacts are usually the product of a confluence of factors for which no single agency or program can realistically claim full credit.

—*Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict*

Whether our presence in the field matters, not what our money bought for us with each grant.

—*From Insight to Action: New Directions in Foundation Evaluation, Mark Kramer et al.*

To what extent observed results (whether positive or negative) are the consequence of the policy, programme, or service activity.

—*The Scottish Government*

Data/Evidence

The information presented to support a finding or conclusion. Evidence should be sufficient, competent, and relevant. There are four types of evidence: observations (obtained through direct observation of people or events); documentary (obtained from written information); analytical (based on computations and comparisons); and self-reported (obtained through, for example, surveys).

—*United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services*

Specific quantitative and qualitative information or facts.

—*UNFPA*

Emergent Learning

Learning that happens in the course of an initiative or project, when goals and outcomes are not easily defined. Using "emergent" or "developmental" evaluation methods, a grantmaker can generate feedback and learning as work unfolds to refine or change strategies over time.

—*Grantmakers for Effective Organizations*

Learning about, from, and within the work itself about how to improve future practice and impact.

—*A Compass in the Woods: Learning Through Grantmaking to Improve Impact, Marilyn J. Darling*

Empirical

Derived from or relating to experiment and observation rather than theory.

—*Dictionary.com*

Based on practical experience rather than scientific proof.

—*World English Dictionary*

Pragmatic, practical, reasonable.

—*Dictionary.com*

Evaluation

A wide range of analytical and information-gathering activities to support program and strategy development and improvement, decision making, and the measurement of outcomes and impact.

—*Foundations and Evaluations: Context and Practices for Effective Philanthropy, Marc T. Braverman et al.*

Systematic information gathering and research about grantmaker-supported activities that informs learning and drives improvement.

—*A Compass in the Woods: Learning Through Grantmaking to Improve Impact, Marilyn J. Darling*

Simply, evaluation is learning with a purpose. And, specifically, it is a structured, cost-effective process that produces reliable answers to important questions and then uses those answers to help make better decisions.

—*Grantmakers for Education*

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

Systematic gathering of information and research about grantmaker-supported activities.
—*James Irvine Foundation*

Set of methods for answering questions related to program performance.
—*The Colorado Trust*

A thoughtful means to understand what has changed from our work.
—*Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors/Credit Suisse*

The systematic investigation of the worth, merit, or effectiveness of a program or organization. As such, evaluation serves to advance the Foundation's mission by supporting Irvine's efforts to identify and sustain promising approaches, effective solutions, and strong organizations. Overall, evaluation activities enhance the Foundation's role as a responsible, accountable, and effective grantmaker.
—*James Irvine Foundation*

A systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, program or policy. Evaluations are undertaken to (a) improve the performance of existing interventions or policies, (b) assess their effects and impacts, and (c) inform decisions about future programming. Evaluations are formal analytical endeavors involving systematic collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information.
—*USAID*

A time-bound exercise that attempts to assess systematically and objectively the relevance, performance and success, or the lack thereof, of ongoing and completed programmes. Evaluation is undertaken selectively to answer specific questions to guide decision-makers and/or programme managers, and to provide information on whether underlying theories and assumptions used in programme development were valid, what worked and what did not work and why. Evaluation commonly aims to determine the relevance, validity of design, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of a programme.
—*UNFPA*

The systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data for the purpose of determining a program or policy's value decision making. Evaluation is the comparison of actual project outcomes to agreed-upon strategic plans. In simpler terms, evaluation looks at what we have set out to do, what we have accomplished, and how we accomplished it.
—*David and Lucile Packard Foundation*

The systematic gathering of information and research about grantmaker-supported activities.
—*James Irvine Foundation*

Fields

Vibrant fields of work embrace diverse perspectives, reflect multiple entry points and methods for addressing practical problems and policy barriers, and encourage the new voices and leaders needed to sustain attention on persistent problems of poverty and injustice. The more we and other actors in these fields develop common vocabularies, a literature that articulates ideas and solutions, shared goals and standards, and a repertoire of tools, the more likely we are to leverage comparative perspectives and experiences from across the globe to achieve large scale impact. We also increase the likelihood of creating an enduring infrastructure that sustains the work of these institutions over time. And, when these elements and gaps are understood and creatively addressed in diverse contexts, we can be more strategic in our grantmaking.
—*Ford Foundation*

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

A set of people and institutions (organizations) working in a variety of ways on a common problem. The field recognizes, develops, and provides knowledge, practices, and policies for solving problems of poverty and injustice. This includes a wide range of issues, questions, policies and debates, and the communities/groups affected by the field. As a practical matter, fields are a domain of work to which we devote substantial staff and monetary resources over a long period of time.

The people and organizations working in a field share some general characteristics that enable us to identify emergent and developed fields. Among those characteristics are:

- They share some values, vocabulary, information, a literature, objectives and a repertoire of tools
- They develop knowledge, individual and organizational capacities, and systems for professional development, standards, and best practices
- They provide a "zone of comfort" for activists and dissidents

As we think about our role as field builders, we should keep two broad goals in mind:

- 1) Strengthening existing fields
- 2) Assisting in the emergence of new fields.

—*The Asset Building Framework: Perspectives and Tools for a Global Program, Melvin Oliver*

Formative Evaluation

An assessment carried out while a program is under way to provide timely, continuous feedback as work progresses. Sometimes called "real-time evaluation" or "developmental evaluation."

—*Grantmakers for Effective Organizations*

An evaluation conducted during the course of project implementation with the aim of improving performance during the implementation phase.

—*USAID*

A type of process evaluation undertaken during programme implementation to furnish information that will guide programme improvement. A formative evaluation focuses on collecting data on programme operations so that needed changes or modifications can be made to the programme in its early stages. Formative evaluations are used to provide feedback to programme managers and other personnel about the programme that are working and those that need to be changed.

—*UNFPA*

Taking place during the life of a project with the intention of improving the strategy or project function.

—*David and Lucile Packard Foundation*

Strengthen or improve the object being evaluated—they examine the delivery of the program or technology, the quality of its implementation, and the assessment of the organizational context, personnel, procedures, and inputs.

—*David and Lucile Packard Foundation*

Goals

A goal is a measurable statement of the desired long-term, global impact of the program. Goals generally address change.

—*United States Department of Justice*

Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG): Medium- to long-term organization goal; audacious, likely to be externally questionable but not internally regarded as impossible.

—*Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies, Jim Collins*

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

Impact

Fundamental intended or unintended change occurring in organizations, communities, or systems as a result of program activities within 7 to 10 years....impact often occurs after the conclusion of project funding.

—*W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

The ultimate changes in social and physical lives and conditions.

—*Annie E. Casey Foundation in Evaluation Framework for Social Justice Philanthropy: A Review of Available Resources, Max Niedzwiecki*

Fundamental lasting long term change occurring in organizations, communities, or systems that [an] organization wants to create.

—*Independent Sector website*

Hit with force.

—*Dictionary.com*

The overall difference made: the sum of the outcomes both positive and negative.

—*Evaluating Philanthropy, Lisa Jordan and Barry Knight*

A results or effect that is caused by or attributable to a project or program. Impact is often used to refer to higher level effects of a program that occur in the medium or long term, and can be intended or unintended and positive or negative.

—*USAID*

Indicators

Quantitative or qualitative variable that provides a simple and reliable basis for assessing achievement, change, or performance...Indicators are what we observe in order to verify whether—or to what extent—it is true that progress is being made towards our goals, which define what we want to achieve.

—*United Nations Development Program*

What the organization measures as a basis for assessing the extent to which it is achieving its goals.

—*Independent Sector*

Proxies of measurement

—*GrantCraft*

A quantitative or qualitative measure of programme performance that is used to demonstrate change and which details the extent to which programme results are being or have been achieved....it is important to identify indicators that are direct, objective, practical and adequate, and to regularly update them.

—*UNFPA*

A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

—*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*

Indicators (of Capacity)

Decision-making structures, advocacy agenda, organization's commitment to resources for advocacy, advocacy base, advocacy partners, advocacy targets, media skills, infrastructure, advocacy strategies, and knowledge, skills and systems to implement strategies.

—*Evaluation Framework for Social Justice Philanthropy: A Review of Available Resources, Max Niedzwiecki*

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

Indicators (of Progress)

A quantitative or qualitative variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure results or to demonstrate changes connected to a specific intervention.

—*Grantmakers for Effective Organizations*

S Specific—precise meaning

M Measurable—practical

A Achievable—clear direction

R Relevant—owned; results-oriented

T Trackable—data is available; time bound

—*United Nations Development Program*

S Subjective

P Participatory

I Interpreted and communicable

C Cross-checked and compared

E Empowering

D Diverse and disaggregated

—*SmartToolkit.net*

Indicators (Outcomes)

Empirically verifiable units of evidence that demonstrate that changes, which are relevant in terms of the operating theory of change, are occurring, and that they are attributable to the project activities.

—*Guthrie et al. in Evaluation Framework for Social Justice Philanthropy: A Review of Available Resources, Max Niedzwiecki*

Specific—unique, unambiguous;

Observable—achievable, practical, cost effective to collect, measurable;

Understandable—comprehensible;

Relevant—measure important dimension, valid, appropriate, related to program, of significance, predictive, timely;

Time bound; and

Reliable—accurate, unbiased, consistent, verifiable

—*The Urban Institute*

Assess progress against specified outcomes.

—*United Nations Development Fund*

Indicators (Process)

Measurement of an organization's activities or efforts to make change happen. Generally, process indicators lie largely within an organization's control.

—*Guthrie et al. in Evaluation Framework for Social Justice Philanthropy: A Review of Available Resources, Max Niedzwiecki*

Inputs

The resources initially invested in an activity, ranging from grants to product donations to consulting services.

—*Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors/Credit Suisse*

Resources needed to address the situation or problem. This covers staff and volunteer time, design, skills, knowledge, and experience, funding and tangible resources such as building and premises.

—*Center for Research and Innovation in Social Policy and Practice*

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

The financial, human, material, technological, and information resource provided by stakeholders (i.e., donors, program implementers, and beneficiaries).
—UNFPA

Knowledge Sharing

Dissemination of results, both positive and negative, to inform the field as a whole, letting other foundations, nonprofits, or government agencies benefit from the foundation's learning and experience to improve the effectiveness of their own decisions.
—*Foundations and Evaluations: Context and Practices for Effective Philanthropy*, Marc T. Braverman et al.

Learning

Adjusting thinking in order to be able to do better in the future to articulate an outcome, predict the challenges inherent in a situation, draw on past experience, choose the right approach give that situation, translate that into an actionable plan, enact it, and assess whether or not it achieved the expected results.
—*A Compass in the Woods: Learning Through Grantmaking to Improve Impact*, Marilyn J. Darling

The process by which reflection actually results in improved future practice and, ultimately, impact.
—*A Compass in the Woods: Learning Through Grantmaking to Improve Impact*, Marilyn J. Darling

Logic Model

Takes a more narrowly practical look at the relationship between inputs and results. It is often presented as a table listing the steps from inputs or resources through the achievement of a desired program goal.
—*GrantCraft*

A conceptual picture or "road map" of how a program or intervention is intended to work, with program activities and strategies linked to specific outcomes and desired results.
—*Grantmakers for Effective Organizations*

A systematic and visual way to present and share your understanding of the relationships among the resources you have to operate your program, the activities you plan to do, and the changes or results you hope to achieve.
—*W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

Milestone

A specific point that is critical for your organization to reach to ensure that you are on course to achieve your desired outcomes. Once your organization has decided what indicators to track, a milestone provides an interim target based on that indicator. Milestones may range from near term to long term as an organization charts its progress between now and accomplishment of long-term goals.
—*Independent Sector*

A project milestone is defined as the end of a project stage and marks the completion of that phase. Milestones can be used not just to highlight that key deliverables have been delivered, but also to indicate a key decision (or key investment) point within the project.
—*Expert Program Management Website*

A significant point in development.
—*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

A stone marker set up on a roadside to indicate the distance in miles from a given point.
—*American Heritage Dictionary of English*

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

A significant event in the project, usually completion of a major deliverable.
—*University of South Australia*

A significant point or event in the project where “event” is defined as something that happens, an occurrence, an outcome.
—*Project Management Institute*

Monitoring

An ongoing process throughout the lifecycle of the grant...it allows grantees to keep funders abreast of the successes and challenges of programming throughout the process, and help inform course corrections along the way.
—*Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors/Credit Suisse*

The performance and analysis of routine measurements to detect changes in status.
—*USAID*

A continuous management function that aims primarily at providing programme managers and key stakeholders with regular feedback and early indications of progress or lack thereof in the achievement of intended results. Monitoring tracks the actual performance against what was planned or expected according to pre-determined standards. It generally involves collecting and analysing data on programme processes and results and recommending corrective measures.
—*UNFPA*

The ongoing collection of information during the subprogram's life cycle [that] generally takes place at the grant level. It is based on targets set and activities planned during the initial phases of the work. It is also used to meet our legal and accounting compliance standards. Monitoring helps us to determine whether the resources we have allocated are sufficient and are being well used, whether the capacity grantees have is adequate and appropriate, and whether we are doing what we planned to do. Monitoring is generally carried out by our program officers, grantmaking operations, and legal compliance staff.
—*David and Lucile Packard Foundation*

Through site visits, grantee consultations, and review of annual progress reports, staff determines compliance with grant agreements and assesses initial outputs, outcomes and indicators that are likely to correlate with the future impact of the grant. Ongoing process conducted by internal staff and, as needed, outside consultants.
—*Doris Duke Charitable Foundation*

Objective

An objective is a specific, measurable statement of the desired immediate or direct outcomes of the program that support the accomplishment of a goal.
—*United States Department of Justice*

A statement of the condition or state one expects to achieve.
—*USAID*

Organizational Learning

The process of asking and answering questions that grantmakers and nonprofits need to understand to improve their performance and achieve better results
—*A Compass in the Woods: Learning Through Grantmaking to Improve Impact, Marilyn J. Darling*

Outcomes

The broader changes or benefits resulting from a program, as measured against its goals (e.g., an X percent reduction in emergency room visits).
—*Grantmakers for Effective Organizations*

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

Changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups and organisations with whom a programme works directly. Shift in social norms; strengthened organizational capacity; strengthened alliances; strengthened bases of support; improved policies.
—*Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict*

The observable results of programs.
—*GrantCraft*

The specific changes in program participants' behavior, knowledge, skills, status, and level of functioning.
—*W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

The changes to end beneficiaries resulting from the given activities, and may be short term or long term in nature.
—*Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors/Credit Suisse*

Differences made. Outcomes relate to the achievement of program goals. The changes, benefits, learning and other effects that result from what the project, organization or program makes, offers or provides.
—*Center for Research and Innovation in Social Policy and Practice*

The effect of an organization's action, activity, or program. A description of an organization's results should reach beyond the outputs of its activities to encompass changes in conditions, behaviors, or attitudes designed to contribute to the lasting impact the organization seeks. These results are both accomplishment of milestones and changes that indicate progress toward the organization's long-term goals.
—*Independent Sector*

A result or effect that is caused by or attributable to the project, program or policy. Outcome is often used to refer to more immediate and intended effects.
—*USAID*

Output

The direct products of a program, usually measured in terms of actual work that was done (e.g., meetings held, reports published).
—*Grantmakers for Effective Organizations*

The steps you follow to make change.
—*GrantCraft*

The direct and tangible results from an activity.
—*Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors/Credit Suisse*

Relate to the achievement of program objectives. Deliverables, which are things that you can touch and count. Product, services, events, workshops, visits, or facilities that result from activities.
—*Center for Research and Innovation in Social Policy and Practice*

The direct, concrete product of program activities, in terms of volume of work completed or services delivered.
—*Independent Sector*

Plan

Defining intended outcomes and articulating what actions and resources they think it will take to achieve those outcomes and why.
—*A Compass in the Woods: Learning Through Grantmaking to Improve Impact, Marilyn J. Darling*

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Resources (Inputs)

Include the human, financial, organizational, and community resources a program has available to direct toward doing the work.

—*W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

Social Change

Broad-based structural change in social relations...social change is nonlinear, complex, and affected by multiple dimensions, actors, and factors.

—*Forging Alliances North and South*

Social change includes both policy change and advocacy but is focused far more broadly on changes in physical and/or social conditions. Changes of this nature are measured on the level of individual and population elements—whether it is human lives or ecological species.

—*Reisman et al. in Evaluation Framework for Social Justice Philanthropy: A Review of Available Resources, Max Niedzwiecki*

Social change philanthropy specifically invites people to invest in transforming some component of their world for the better...Structural or institutional change, and cultural changes; on various levels of scale (from micro to macro).

—*Puntenney in Evaluation Framework for Social Justice Philanthropy: A Review of Available Resources, Max Niedzwiecki*

The alteration of mechanisms within the social structure, characterized by changes in cultural symbols, rules of behaviour, social organizations, or value systems.

—*Encyclopedia Britannica*

Social change refers to an alteration in the social order of a society. It may refer to the notion of social progress or sociocultural evolution, the philosophical idea that society moves forward by dialectical or evolutionary means. It may refer to a paradigmatic change in the socioeconomic structure, for instance a shift away from feudalism and towards capitalism. Accordingly it may also refer to social revolution, such as the Socialist revolution presented in Marxism, or to other social movements, such as women's suffrage or the civil rights movement. Social change may be driven by cultural, religious, economic, scientific, or technological forces.

—*Wikipedia*

Strategy

The means or broad approach by which a program will achieve its goals. Useful strategies capitalize on program strengths or opportunities, or reduce the influence of program weaknesses or threats.

—*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Summative Evaluation

An evaluation that assesses the overall impact of a project after the fact, often for an external audience such as a grantmaker or group of grantmakers.

—*Grantmakers for Effective Organizations*

An evaluation that assesses the overall impact of a nonprofit project after the fact, often for a funder.

—*Grantmakers for Effective Organizations*

A framework for decision making that is: 1) focused on the external context in which the foundation works and 2) includes a hypothesized casual connection between the use of foundation resources and goal achievement.

—*Center for Effective Philanthropy*

APPENDIX E: Foundation Performance Assessment Terms

Evaluation of an intervention or program in its later stages or after it has been completed to (a) assess its impact (b) identify the factors that affected its performance (c) assess the sustainability of its results, and (d) draw lessons that may inform other interventions.

—USAID

A type of outcome and impact evaluation that assesses the overall effectiveness of a programme.

—UNFPA

Drawing from a strategy that has ended to assess its results or outcome...they describe what happens subsequent to delivery of the program or technology, assess whether the object can be said to have caused the outcome, determine the overall impact of the causal factor beyond only the immediate target outcomes, and estimate the relative costs associated with the object.

—David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Theory of Change

Describes a process of planned social change, from the assumptions that guide its design to the long-term goals it seeks to achieve.

—GrantCraft

A systematic assessment of what needs to happen in order for a desired outcome to occur, including an organization's hypothesis about how and why change happens, as well as the potential role of an organization's work in contributing to its vision of progress.

—Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

A statement or flowchart or plan that explains how an organization's intended impact will actually happen—the cause-and-effect logic by which organizational and financial resources will be converted into desired social results.

—Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

Addresses the set of linkages among strategies, outcomes, and goals that support a broader mission or vision, along with the underlying assumptions that are relevant to these linkages.

—Reisman et al. in *Evaluation Frameworks for Social Justice Philanthropy: A Review of Available Resources*, Max Niedzwiecki

Existing situation + strategies to change the situation + accelerators (factors to advance progress) + inhibitors (factors that slow or stop progress) = expected and or unexpected social change results.

—Women's Funding Network in *Evaluation Frameworks for Social Justice Philanthropy: A Review of Available Resources*, Max Niedzwiecki

A model of how grants will make long-term change happen.

—Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors/Credit Suisse

APPENDIX F: Indicators of Progress in RBF Context

The Fund defines indicators of progress as anticipated changes—in behavior, capacity, public engagement, public policy, and understanding—within a field that demonstrate that program strategies are contributing to realizing program goal(s). The Fund establishes qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress over three to five years to guide grantmaking and program development.

Process

Indicators of progress are set every three to five years, in conjunction with the start of a program or during the program review process. The indicators of progress are not meant to be an exhaustive list of all the changes one expects to see in a field of work. Rather they are a sampling of changes that would signal that progress is being made toward advancing a program's strategy and making meaningful contributions toward realizing the program goal(s). Additional indications of progress will most certainly be identified in conducting program reviews.

Caveats

The Fund's grantmaking is part of a complex landscape that includes a myriad of institutions and individuals whose actions are not within the Fund's control. In addition, as a funder whose grantmaking is "primarily concerned with fundamental problems and [which] is designed to contribute to the achievement of long-term goals,"¹ we need to bear in mind that the change we seek is not usually immediate and what we are striving to achieve may take many years to observe. It is impossible to be precise about timeframes and the exact outcomes relating to a grantmaking strategy. Indicators, therefore, serve as milestones that measure progress along this complex path in the course of a program. They keep us focused, help to inform grantmaking choices, and enable us to communicate more clearly what we are trying to achieve in our programs.

Similarly, as a funder focused on social change, we are necessarily pushing boundaries with our grantmaking, and as is inherent with such risk, there will undoubtedly be strategies that do not work as intended as well as indicators that are not realized. This is not a measure of failure, but rather a signal that we need to recalibrate our grantmaking strategies.

Therefore, when identifying indicators of progress, staff should reflect on the ambition of the program, the context in which they are working, and the grants they envision making. The exercise of selecting indicators should not limit the vision of the program for the sake of having indicators that are attainable. Staff should not feel pressured to develop indicators that are quantitative in nature (e.g., "Three states adopt policy X") as it is both quite difficult to predict or quantify possible results related to our organizing, advocacy, and public policy focused-grantmaking, and such numbers can be misleading, arbitrary, and diminish ambition for what are generally understood to be long-term goals.

¹ Excerpted from the RBF Program Statement, <http://www.rbf.org/content/program-statement>.

Types of Indicators²

Indicators of progress fall within five categories—understanding, behavior, capacity, public engagement, and policy. While these five distinctive categories are intended to prompt the development of indicators, they often overlap in nature and an indicator may well reflect more than one category. Depending on where a program is within its life cycle, it may have more of a particular type of indicator. (For example, a more mature program’s indicators may focus less on “understanding” and “capacity” and more on “public policy.”)

Indicator Focus	Definition	Sample Indicators ³
Behavior	People/institutions change their actions	More corporations disclosing or curtailing their political spending (<i>Democratic Practice</i>) A 10 percent increase in the number of homeowners that retrofit their one-to-four-family homes using government incentive programs such as on-bill recovery financing (<i>New York City</i>)
Capacity	New institutions are in place to inform and advance debates or experiment with solutions in a field; organizations are better equipped to act	Cross-disciplinary research and mapping informs policymakers and practitioners of the impact of environmental pollution on human health, gaps in risk management, and potential integrated solutions (<i>Southern China</i>)
Public Engagement	People and institutions are taking action around issues at a public level to shape society	Global advocacy learning networks influence global energy investment decisions (<i>Democratic Practice</i>) Progress on creating a more equitable water-sharing policy in Israel and Palestine and delinking this aspect from two-state solution negotiation processes (<i>Peacebuilding</i>)
Public Policy	Institutional or public policy or practice has changed	Civil society has secured the legal framework to allow it to thrive and develop (<i>Western Balkans</i>)
Understanding	The issue is defined and understood differently	Increased public belief in the urgency of taking action on climate change (<i>Sustainable Development</i>)

In addition, at times, the maintenance of past gains is often essential to understanding progress in a field; programs should continue to monitor this as they feel appropriate, however they do not need to explicitly design indicators focused on maintaining past gains.

² Definition of change and indicators largely drawn from the Women’s Funding Network, “Making the Case: Five Indicators of Social Change.”

³ From RBF program frameworks

Process Indicators

In general, the indicators of progress should have an outward focus and reflect progress expected in the field of funding. However, staff should feel free to develop internally focused indicators of progress outside of the program framework at either the program design or review stage. An example of this would be, “Increase grants to organizations that represent diverse communities.” Process indicators—such as number of grants approved, dollars invested in a particular strategy, dollars leveraged, number new grantees, number of meetings held, and so forth—are included in all program reviews. These do not necessarily give an indication of program impact, but they do provide important measures of program implementation and activities.

Crafting Indicators of Progress

Program staff identify indicators of progress during the program development and program review processes. Staff aim to have a manageable number of indicators within a program. While there is no maximum or minimum, there should be at least two indicators per strategy for within the Democratic Practice, Peacebuilding, and Sustainable Development programs; and a comparable number of indicators for the Pivotal Place programs (New York, Southern China, and Western Balkans), which tend to have multiple goals with corresponding strategies.

Evidence and measures of progress should come from a variety of sources which are commonly used within the field. They should be suitably ambitious in consideration of our programmatic goals, while being realistic and responsive to a three- to five-year time frame.

In light of our funding approach, we expect that staff will likely develop indicators that are more qualitative in nature. Staff may use quantitative indicators, however, if they feel it is appropriate and more reflective of trends in their fields and/or the work of our grantees. Staff should not feel pressured to develop ‘countable’ indicators if it is not relevant to the strategy. While an indicator of progress may be qualitative in nature, when reporting on progress, staff may well find that quantitative data is the most appropriate manner to report on it.

Suggested Steps to Develop Indicators of Progress

Using the five indicator focus areas—behavior, capacity, public engagement, public policy, and understanding—staff should reflect on the following questions to design indicators of progress.

Step 1: Reflect on the landscape

- What would progress look like?
- What different actors are involved?
- What results do you hope to see from the funding you expect to recommend?
- What do our grantees consider to be progress? How do they understand, monitor, and reflect on impact?

Step 2: Fund's entry points

- What types of efforts do you anticipate funding?
- What clusters of grantmaking do you anticipate?
- Who will be doing what?
- Where will activities be happening?
 - o Geography
 - o Government levels

- Sectors
- What does the timeframe look like? When will things be happening?
 - Is there an anticipated sequence?

Step 3: Monitoring and verification

- How will you know that change is occurring?
- What sources of information would you use to ascertain progress on an indicator?
- Sources should be:
 - Reputable and relevant to the field
 - Varied—ranging from anecdotal reports of grantee experience to public opinion polls

Working with Indicators of Progress

In our routine business and annual planning and retreat activities, indicators of progress provide a reference point for staff's general grantmaking activities, program reviews, and impact assessment. The indicators are set to be reviewed at three- to five-year intervals during the program review process; in the interim, staff should be attentive to them, but they are revised only through the program review process.

The annual program staff retreat will present staff with an opportunity to reflect on the progress they have seen in their fields and note advancements related to their indicators of progress.

In monitoring grantees and the field, staff should also be mindful of other indications that meaningful change has occurred. In the coming year we will work with staff to develop a straightforward mechanism for tracking indicators of progress and gathering information related to them.

APPENDIX G: Draft Outline for Program Reviews and Impact Assessments

PART ONE: Staff Cover Memo

- I. Reflections on the Report and Work
- II. Recent Developments in the Field
- III. Lessons Learned
- IV. Recommendations and Priorities (Trajectory for the Work)

PART TWO: Evaluation Report

- I. Executive Summary
 - a. Key Findings
- II. Introduction
 - a. Purpose of Review
 - b. Purpose of Program
 - c. Methodology
- III. Background on Fund's Work in the Field
- IV. Context and Trends that Shape RBF Work in the Field/Topic
 - a. Politics
 - b. State of the Field
 - c. Other Developments
 - d. Philanthropy's Interest and Role of the Fund
 - e. Advocacy
- V. Program Grantmaking During a Five-Year Period
 - a. Program Budget
 - b. Grantmaking Dollars by Strategy (grants and appropriations)
 - c. Types of Grants
- VI. Program Impact: By Strategy (What happened)
 - a. Rationale and Results Summary
 - b. Sample Grants
 - c. Unexpected Results/Developments
- VII. Program Approach (Why?)
 - a. Grantmaking Style/Approach (e.g., re-granting, general support)
 - b. Pocantico Meetings
 - c. Building New Organizations and the Field
 - d. Philanthropic Collaboration
 - e. Relationship with Other RBF Programs
 - f. Diversity
 - g. Other Relevant Strategies

- VIII. Emerging Issues in the Field
- IX. Recommendations for Next Steps and Revised Indicators of Progress
- X. Implications for Future RBF Work

PART THREE: Appendices (as applicable)

- Timeline comparing grantmaking with relevant milestones and events
- Listing of other foundations working in the field, with grantmaking detail if available
- Evolution of program
- Select grantee successes
- Summary of Pocantico conferences
- Guidelines

GENERAL GUIDANCE ON PROGRAM REVIEWS

- Assessing the evolving context and approach to grantmaking is as important to understanding the results and impact
- Greater focus and clarity in program guidelines provides a stronger framework for review and facilitates sharper data analysis
- Stories of grantee activities, and quotes from grantees, bring the work to life
- External evaluators can bring an added degree of objectivity and credibility to the review
- Graphics and photos, as well as maps (when applicable) bring further meaning to the text and aid in generating an understanding of the work
- Good lead time for the production of the report (three to six months) yields a solid product with minimal stress on staff and evaluators

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