

The Inside Story on “Results”

Clare Thomas MBE

City Bridge Trust

www.citybridgetrust.org.uk





1995 – 2010: £237m

Grants budget approximately £15m p.a.



“Results” or Information?

Pre-Grant

- Evidence of ‘need’ – hard data, research on issue, knowledge of the context – other intelligence.
- Demonstrate how work meets priorities.
- Leadership – vision/strategy, governance, inspirational people, diverse skills.
- Financial management – systems, controls, budgeting, policy on reserves.
- Service-user engagements. Involving Volunteers – the culture.
- Carbon footprint – good corporate citizens?
- Supporting Evidence – independent evaluations, publications, track-record.



“Results”

Post-Grant – Independent Funders

- Lightish touch – proportionate, flexible monitoring.
“We favour 12 or even 18 months reporting as it’s easier to capture attitudinal or behaviour change.”
- Case Studies, photographs, YouTube.
- Self-evaluation – “Yes” but *“The truth, the whole truth (or nothing like the truth)?”*.
- M&E forms, selective monitoring visits.
“In hindsight, what would you have done differently?”
- Impact Report not *“output summaries”*.
- External evaluations, formative evaluations.
- SROI – Social Return on Investment



“Accountability & Learning” CES 2008

Key Findings

- Growth in monitoring and evaluation support.
- Funding requirements dominating monitoring & evaluation.
 - Short-term funding, unrealistic targets, over-burdensome 3rd sector.
- How useful is the data being collected?
 - Variable quality findings, unable to deal with volume - funders.
- Resources for monitoring and evaluation.
 - IT huge timesaving. Need greater emphasis on outcomes.
 - Not properly resourced.
 - 75% respondents met internal needs
 - 30% received no financial support
 - Need for sharing learning.
- Meeting accountability and learning need.
 - Need for practical models.



Recommendations

- Build monitoring and evaluation capacity.
 - IT, Web 2.0 technologies, training.
- Develop more appropriate reporting.
 - Proportionality.
- Develop third sector monitoring and self-evaluation practice, evaluative culture, integrated into JD's.
 - Capacity building, IT.
- Make evaluation more relevant.
 - Jargon busting, accessibility, “telling stories”.
- Build and sharing knowledge.
 - CBT Action Learning, Learning & Sharing strategy.
 - Joint learning – sector wide teams.



Why Does City Bridge Trust Monitor & Evaluate?

- To be accountable.
- To find out if our grant made a difference.
- To help us to learn.
- To encourage good practice.
- To improve the lives of Londoners.

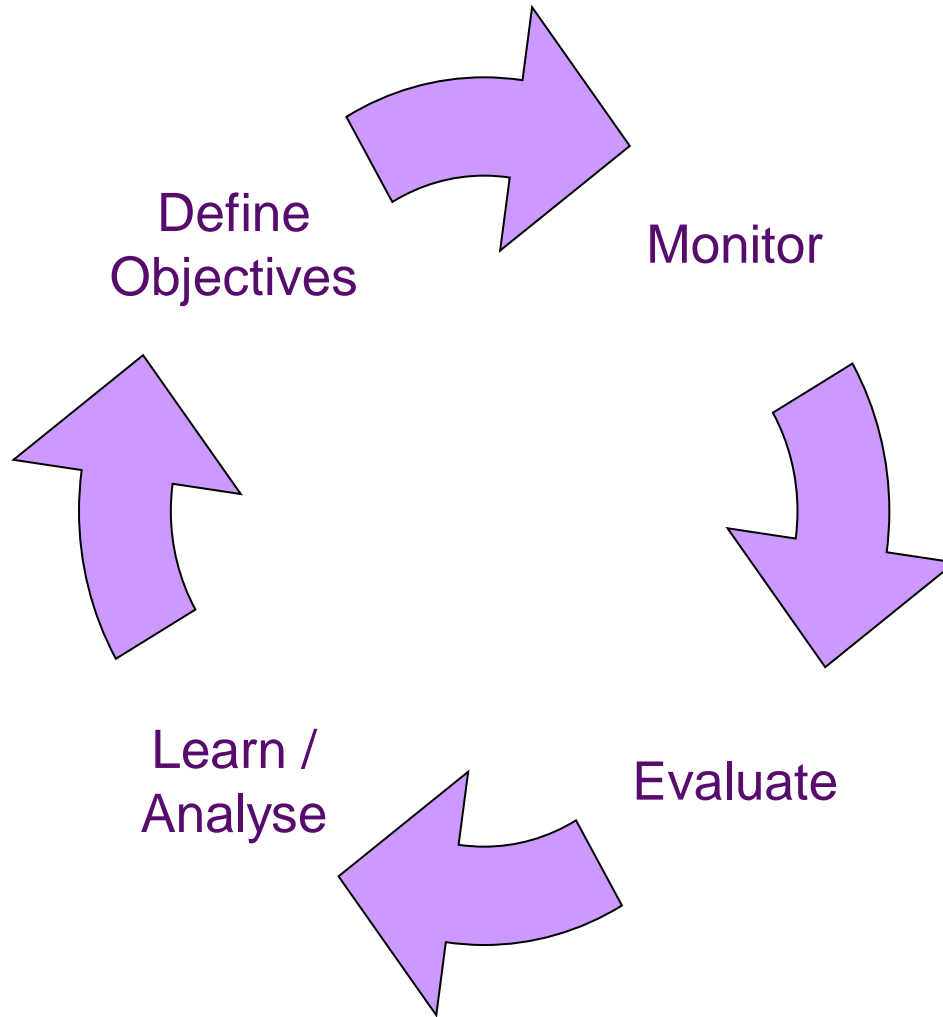


CBT's Monitoring & Evaluation Approach

- All grants – supply annual report & signed accounts.
- Grants < £10,000 – simple form.
 - £10,000 to £50,000 – more detailed.
 - > £50,000 – supporting information (e.g. user feedback), more data, how work met our objectives.
- Annual programme of monitoring visits.
- External evaluations – as and when.
- Partnership with CES.
- Programme evaluations, formative evaluations.



The Virtuous Circle



Improving Services for Older People

- **Aims:** To help small organisations improve their services to older people.
- **Objectives:** To support quality services
To improve their management by an additional grant to strengthen & sustain organisations.
- **How:** Grant of up to £20k
+ Capacity building consultancy
135 organisations, grants totalling £1.8m
6 “Expert Consultants” (£240k)



IVAR's Formative Evaluation

Key Findings

- 25% of organisations:
 - very keen on the support.
 - could identify their needs accurately.
 - engaged fully with their consultant.
 - 'step-change' in their organisational capacity.
- 50% of organisations:
 - would not have sought out support without prompting.
 - benefited from the work in varying degrees.
- 25% of organisations:
 - did not understand or welcome the support.
 - did not have the capacity to engage with the consultant.



Some Initial Findings

Practical learning from the programme:

- Understanding the meaning and purpose of 'capacity building' and the role of consultants: *'we never knew what it meant and what would happen'*
- The focus of consultants' interventions: *'she had no feel for what we do and how we do it; none of what she offered seemed to apply to us, the language made no sense to what we were doing'*
- Lack of capacity to engage: *'some just can't cope with capacity building; they just want to hire a minibus and have outings... how do you impose capacity building on an organisation that is so informally structured?'*



IVAR's Concluding Reflections for the Future

- Increased clarity about the purpose and intended outcomes of the capacity building support.
- Promotion of the possible benefits of the support.
- Greater consistency of approach across the team of consultants.
- Increased flexibility over the allocation of consultants' time.

but

“Overall organisations have benefited and had made useful changes in relation to organisational systems and policies, in governance, in promoting themselves or securing future funding.”



And Finally...

***“Not everything that counts can be counted,
and not everything that can be counted
counts.”***

Albert Einstein

and

“... there is no failure, except failure to learn.”

Fiona Ellis

Former Director, Northern Rock Foundation

