

Evaluative Thinking in Philanthropy (E-TiP)	
Project History & Context	<p>E-TiP provided funders in Rochester, New York and Hartford, Connecticut, with current, useful, and concise information about evaluation and evaluative thinking. The project addressed strategies for enhancing evaluation and evaluative thinking, systematically collecting and using data to inform funding decisions.</p> <p>The Bruner Foundation posited that If mid-sized, regional funders knew more about evaluation and evaluative thinking, and had access to quality training which helped them use this knowledge, then they would be more likely to use evaluative thinking across multiple organizational areas. It was further posited that the increased use of evaluative thinking would inform the efforts of funding organizations to: commission and participate in better external evaluations; guide or assist their grantees more effectively in the area of evaluation; do better evaluations of their own grants and funding strategies; and use evaluative thinking skills to strengthen not only grantmaking, but their organizations overall.</p>
Duration	< 6 months
Participants & Selection process	<p>11 participants from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving www.hfpg.org/</p> <p>8 participants from the United Way of Greater Rochester www.uwrochester.org</p>
Project Design	<p>Four 2-hour training sessions (8 hours total)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation design and use • Theory of change, evaluation logic (outcomes, indicators, targets) data collection strategies • Evaluative Thinking within multiple areas of the organization • Supporting and commissioning quality evaluation <p>No required evaluation design or planning project</p>
Alumni Study Group	Not Established
Funder	Bruner Foundation www.brunerfoundation.org
Costs	<p>Total investment for evaluation consultant = \$25,000 for groups at two locations (Hartford, CT and Rochester, NY)</p> <p>Administrative support & space provided by participating organizations (Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, United Way of Greater Rochester).</p>
Key Capacity Building Components	Basic Evaluation Training, Networking
Evaluation Consultants	Each session was co-led by Anita Baker, evaluator , and Beth Bruner, Bruner Foundation.

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Prior Experience with Evaluative thinking	Wide range of knowledge about evaluation and evaluative thinking.
Key Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants indicated the training caused them to change their thinking about evaluation and to change some evaluation-related practices (e.g., remembering to document implementation, planning for what is needed and why, thinking about targets for progress). • Participants found most of the training topics important to their work, and thought they would be important to other funders. • Participants reported they expected that participating in E-TiP would help them commission better evaluations, and they indicated E-TiP had already helped them guide or assist their grantees more effectively in the area of evaluation • A few respondents indicated they expected their participation in E-TiP to help them do better evaluations of their own funding decisions when needed. • Responses about specific use of evaluative thinking in philanthropic work were mixed. All participants indicated they were likely to use evaluative thinking when it came to program design and to commissioning evaluation or interacting with grantees around evaluation. They also indicated that E-TiP had helped them to do that. • Participating funders were less certain about their plans to use evaluative thinking when it came to funding decisions or when addressing marketing or communications issues, thinking about or planning staff development or making choices regarding technology acquisition.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of participant pre-assessment resulted in a participant cohort with widely different expectations, knowledge of evaluation and commitment to change. • Participants acknowledged that a specific group project, or activities focused on application of the content would have enhanced learning. They also acknowledged the obvious conundrum: they would likely have refused participation if they had been informed on the front end that more sessions, more homework and a project would be required. • Participants from both cities clarified that two modifications were needed to the E-TIP approach: leadership participation (including the board); and opportunities for practical examples from other funders. • Participants from both organizations indicated more activities would have been welcomed. • Respondents indicated there were barriers to their continued use of evaluative thinking in their organizations. Evaluative thinking was not identified as either mainstream or high priority with organizational leadership. • In retrospect, the Bruner Foundation's theory of change was identified as over-ambitious.
Evaluation Products	Read the <i>E-TiP FINAL REPORT</i>
Related Resources	Read <i>INTEGRATING EVALUATIVE CAPACITY INTO ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE</i> . Read our Five Guidebooks for Grantmakers: <i>1. BASIC CONCEPTS FOR GRANTMAKERS</i>

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2. *USING LOGIC MODELS*
3. *EVALUATION DATA COLLECTION*
4. *EVALUATIVE THINKING FOR GRANTMAKERS*
5. *SUPPORTING GOOD EVALUATION*