Vivid Impact™ EPPE

*E*vidence-informed *P*rogram *P*lanning & *E*valuation

A community program planning and evaluation framework for translating knowledge and evidence into action

Includes the 6 tools mentioned on our poster:
"15 Tips to Make Program Planning & Evaluation Easier & More Useful"

durlaksar

Vivid Impact

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A Word from the Author

I am proud and excited to present this resource, which freely makes available to the public, for the first time, our original, complete, coordinated set of Evidence-informed Program Planning & Evaluation (EPPE) tools and guidelines. This resource provides a robust, yet practical, framework to guide and support the efforts of non-profit workers responsible for Program Planning & Evaluation (PPE) activities.

This is one part of the free educational content that's scheduled for release over the Summer and Fall of 2021, as a prelude to the launch of our first software as a service (SAAS) product: Vivid Impact's Evidence-informed Program Planning & Evaluation (VI-EPPE), which is the vehicle we have developed for translating our EPPE knowledge into action on the social determinants of health.

We're designing VI-EPPE to be an easy to use and affordable online planning, program monitoring and program evaluation service. It will make professional PPE skills accessible to all non-profits, whether or not their staff have had formal training, because the theory behind EPPE is built into the logic of the software.

> VI-EPPE is an online community program planning, monitoring and evaluation software-as-a-service product that Durlaksar plans to launch at the end of 2021.
>
> Stay in touch to find out more details as they are released.

In addition to this resource, VI-EPPE's pre-release free educational content also includes the "15 Tips for Making Program Planning & Evaluation Easier & More Useful" poster and a 15-post blog series, which started in July 2021, that expands on each of the tips in the poster.

We have taken four years to carefully develop EPPE, incorporating what we learned, through our consulting work and independent research, about doing Program Planning & Evaluation work in the non-profit sector. Our content, products and services are developed with the intention of honouring the knowledge and lived experiences of non-profit sector workers who take on the thankless, abysmally underfunded work of shoring up the social determinants of health of all Canadians. We hope you enjoy and benefit from the resources you have helped inform.

With warm regards,

Padi

Padi Meighoo

Principal Consultant & Director, Product and Content Development,

Durlaksar Incorporated

Strength. Abundance. Wisdom.

Introduction to Evidence-informed Program Planning & Evaluation

The "Evidence-informed" Bit First…

Evidence-informed Program Planning & Evaluation represents the unification of two important knowledge translation practices. The foundational practice is Program Planning & Evaluation, which originates in public health (health promotion specifically) and is quite familiar to the non-profit[1] sector workforce. The added area of practice is Evidence-informed decision-making, which is another public health export. It is less familiar to non-profit staff, and therefore requires a little bit of explanation.

The easiest way to explain evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) is to compare it to its older sibling, evidence-based decision-making (EBDM). The concept of EBDM originates in biomedical science. Its intent is to facilitate the use of medical protocols and procedures that are backed by strong scientific evidence, instead of the use of protocols and procedures based on tradition ("the way we always do it" or "the way I learned in school 30 years ago").

EIDM is similar to EBDM in intent, but it acknowledges that public health decisions are made within a political context characterized by a wide range of perspectives and competing claims on scarce public resources. Therefore, EIDM is a way of ensuring science and evidence have a seat at the decision-making table, without looking like out-of-touch autocrats. This attribute of political sensitivity makes EIDM suitable for use in all community planning initiatives that can be improved with evidence, not just public health ones.

> What's the difference between evidence and knowledge?
>
> We see the relationship between the two concepts like this: if you think of knowledge as the human body ("knowledge is embodied"), then evidence would be the dead skin cells that naturally slough off the human body – signs that "knowledge wuz here".

[1] The term "non-profit" is used in this document to refer to charitable organizations only, and not including public sector institutions like universities, hospitals or public health departments.

Introduction to Evidence-informed Program Planning & Evaluation

Program Planning & Evaluation from a Knowledge Translation Perspective…

In biomedical science, research is the primary process used to produce evidence, and peer-reviewed journal articles are used to communicate that evidence.

Comparatively, in the non-profit sector, Program Planning & Evaluation (PPE) is the primary process used to produce evidence, and evaluation reports are used to communicate that evidence.

Both processes (research and PPE) are designed to both *use* and *produce* knowledge and evidence of various kinds. This evidence use/production capacity is well utilized in research, but not in PPE, to the detriment of people who depend on community programs.

Here's Durlaksar's perspective on PPE…

- PPE produces evidence about community programs
- Community programs can be made more effective by using the evidence produced by PPE
- Many non-profit staff already have PPE skills or familiarity with PPE concepts
- Therefore, it's time for non-profits to make full use of the evidence use/production capacity of PPE, for the benefit of those who depend on community programs.

And Durlaksar is using a knowledge translation approach to facilitate this practice improvement with the following innovations:

- explicitly incorporating EIDM in the PPE name (PPE becomes EPPE)
- solidifying EIDM theory into a practical tool with guidelines (Tool 2, see below)
- making EIDM a formalized PPE step (The 5-step Process, see below)

Let's get excited about the potential for EPPE to improve communities and people's lives with evidence, and let's get started!

General Guidelines for Using EPPE Tools and Process

A set of completed planning tools do *not* add up to a plan. Community program planning, in particular, is an exercise in using and developing knowledge – it is *knowledge translation* in action. This means community program planning is based in facts, developed through social interaction, given direction by a desire for better and given form by values like equality and inclusivity.

The EPPE framework consists of 6 planning tools and 5 planning steps organized in a logical progression that starts with evidence use and evolves into evidence production in steps 4 and 5.

The EPPE Framework "At a Glance"

Planning Step	Planning Tool	How Knowledge is Being Translated
Pre-planning**: idea generation**	Theory of Change	Use of evidence from previous evaluations
Pre-planning**: idea testing using evidence**	Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model	Gathering of evidence from various sources
Planning and Evaluation**: Committing to an evidence-informed course of action**	Logic Model	Use of diverse kinds of evidence and knowledge
Planning and Evaluation**: Documenting, monitoring and continuously improving**	Program Plan & Evaluation Plan	Development of new evidence and knowledge
Results reporting	Evaluation Results Reporting Template	Sharing of new evidence and knowledge

General Guidelines for Using EPPE Tools and Process

Tips for Using the EPPE Framework Efficiently and Effectively

- The role of planning tools is to help articulate, organize and share ideas in a standard form so they can be readily understood, critiqued, contributed to by others, and improved. These tools, because they are theoretically based, also help you approach your planning activities differently and consider new ways of thinking about things you may be taking for granted.

- Planning and evaluation are two equally important halves of a single process. Evaluation begins together with program planning, and the planning process does not end until evaluation is completed. That means these tools will be in active use for the duration of the program.

- Do not use adjectives like very, strong, etc., in planning tools. They do not add meaning and bulk up content unnecessarily, which makes the plan more difficult to understand. If the size or degree of something is important, use numbers to define it.

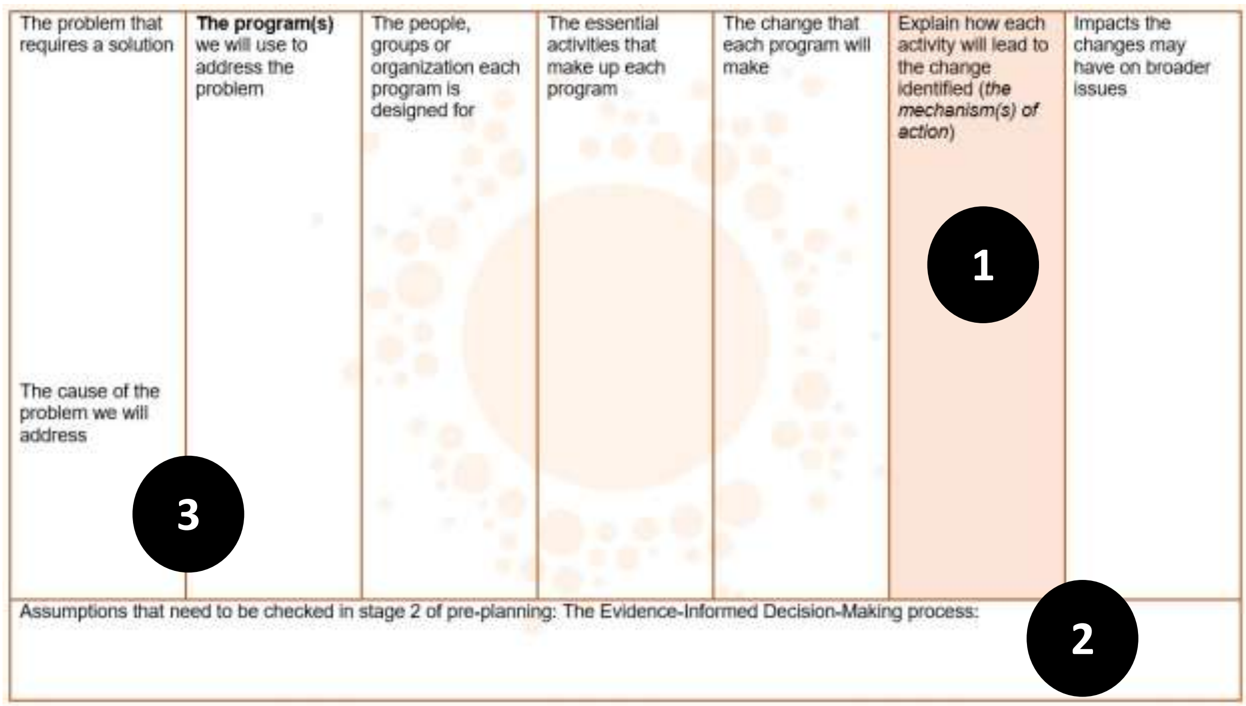
- These planning tools can be used to maintain the integrity of a program idea by copying and pasting content from the previous tool to the subsequent one, as much as possible. Re-writing ideas using slightly different words each time will cause the program logic to break down very quickly.

- Review and revise Program and Evaluation Plans at least quarterly to keep them up to date and minimize information loss due to staff turnover. Always save previous versions so that changes can be tracked over time.

- Planning is not a solitary or expert-driven activity. It is equally as important to involve the people delivering the program as it is to involve those intended to benefit from it. *Plan with people, not for them*.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Theory of Change**

Features of the EPPE Theory of Change Tool



The problem that requires a solution	**The program(s)** we will use to address the problem	The people, groups or organization each program is designed for	The essential activities that make up each program	The change that each program will make	Explain how each activity will lead to the change identified (*the mechanism(s) of action*)	Impacts the changes may have on broader issues
The cause of the problem we will address						
Assumptions that need to be checked in stage 2 of pre-planning: The Evidence-Informed Decision-Making process:						

The purpose of using a Theory of Change tool is to make our underlying beliefs and assumptions about people and how things in the world work visible to us and others, so that they can be better understood, critiqued and improved.

The EPPE Theory of Change template accomplishes that purpose with the following 3 features:

1. The 6th column (the shaded column) is one of the two main features on this template. It provides an opportunity for you to explain ***how*** you think the activities you intend to implement will lead to the changes you want to make. This explanation is called the “mechanism of action”. See the guidelines below for advice on how to develop a strong mechanism of action.

2. The text box at the bottom of the tool is the second main feature of the template and it works hand-in-hand with feature 1. This space is for writing down the

things that you are going to assume to be true for the purposes of focusing on the mechanism of action. Assumptions written in this text box do not need to be explained in the mechanism of action. This is *not* a "loophole" to avoid explaining hard things because in the next pre-planning stage, you will need to find evidence to support your assumptions. If your assumptions are not supported, you will need to start from scratch again. Assumptions include things like "staff will accept the need to attend more meetings" or "most families will support their child to be more independent". It's not worth your while to assume things that are easily verified.

3. The third feature, which is planning your project to address the *cause of the problem* (see the 1st column) is not mandatory for tool use, but highly recommended. This is not about addressing "root causes" or prevention. This is a mental exercise in taking two steps back from the usual starting point of most program plans: community needs. This feature is useful because it is easy to fall in the rut of thinking we know our community and its issues so well, that whatever we already offer is exactly what they need. But, taking a couple steps back from the well-established "need" in your mind can open up new ideas for strategies to employ and people to work with, as partners or participants.

Guidelines for Using the EPPE Theory of Change Tool

When:

As soon as you have an idea for a project or program.

Why:

- Vetting your ideas early prevents wasting time and energy on ideas that can't work because their underlying mechanism of action is weak or broken.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Theory of Change**

- Putting your ideas on paper unclutters you mind, leaving it free to think critically.
- Putting your ideas down on paper also makes it easier for people to give you feedback on them.

How:

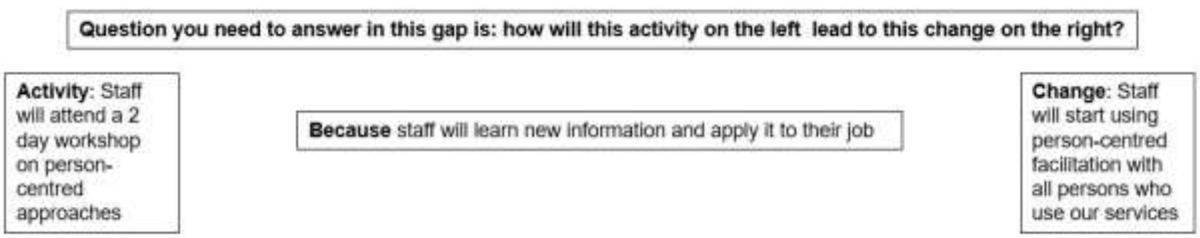
1. To use the "cause of the problem" tool feature in the 1st column (described above), write out your "need" statement on a blank sheet of paper:
    - ➢ Example need statement: *"People with disabilities need to learn new skills to be more independent in the community."*
    - Now, re-frame the above statement in your mind this way: *"That is not actually a need, that is a solution I am proposing to a problem. If that is the solution, what is the problem I am proposing it will fix?"*
        - ➢ Example answer: *"People with disabilities cannot access community programs, services and jobs."*
    - Then, ask: What are some possible causes of this problem?
        - ➢ Example answers: *"Community programs, services and jobs are not designed to be accessible by all people equally; or people with disabilities and their needs remain invisible in our community."*
    - Pick *one* cause for your project to address (don't bite off more than you can chew).

2. Fill out the next four columns of the template from your own professional experiences and ideas you come across from different sources (co-workers, people in your community, reports or research you read, presentations you see).

3. Now, focus on the 6th column (the coloured column). Drawing your mechanism of action with boxes and arrows is a good way to identify if there are any missing steps or "leaps of logic" between activities and changes:

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Theory of Change**

- Start with a pencil and a blank sheet of paper, positioned for you to write in a landscape orientation.
- On the extreme right-hand side, write one of the changes from the 5th column.
- On the extreme left-side, write all of the activities from the 4th column that lead to that one change on the right-hand side of the page (there might be only one activity, as in the illustration below)
- Now connect the activity to the change with an explanation:



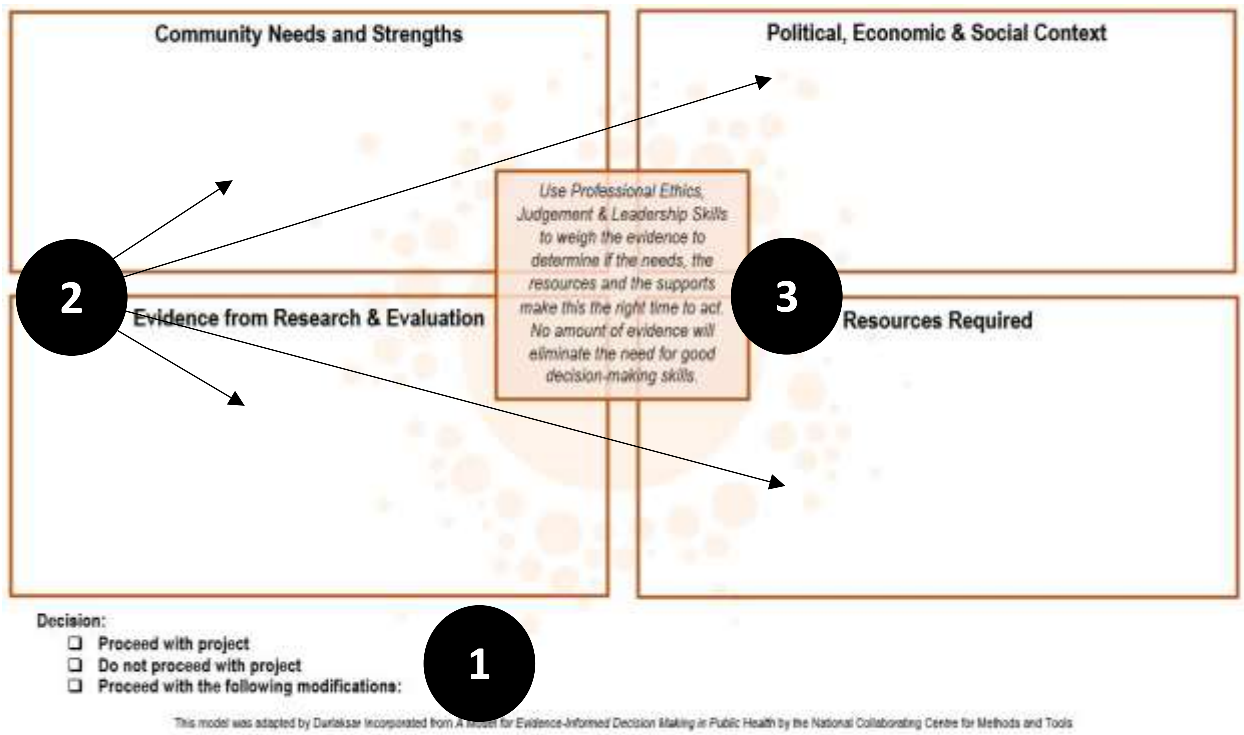
- Most people will be able to tell right away that there is a gap in the logic in the above example: giving people information is not enough for them to adopt a new practice – they also need real-life opportunities to practice their new skill, ask questions, get feedback; and the right tools, resources, policies and social/emotional/cultural support in the workplace to change their practice.
- So, to make this program work, adjust the activity or the change, or both, until you have something that makes sense.
- Every time you adjust the activity or the change, re-write your “because” sentence. Your final version of your “because” sentence (for every activity/activities-change pair) is what goes into the 6th column.

4. Finally, the 7th column is optional, but it is useful if you need to brainstorm ideas for a funding proposal. If you know what the funder’s goals are, then this is a good place to write down some conceptual links between your project and the funder’s goals (the broader issues) to use in your proposal.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use:

Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model

Features of the EPPE Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model



The purpose of completing an Evidence-Informed Decision-Making (EIDM) Model is *to guide a discussion* among decision-makers about how the project/program idea explained in the Theory of Change is likely to perform, given other factors in the environment. The discussion can also address how the idea can be nuanced to be responsive to environmental factors, and improve its likelihood of success.

Developing an EIDM model using the template and having the discussion, together form the EIDM process. In order for this discussion to be fair and productive it needs to be informed by facts about relevant issues, and have a clear purpose and guidelines.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use:

Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model

The EPPE EIDM template provides for those discussion support needs by including the following features:

1. The “Decision” box at the bottom of the template makes it clear that the purpose or end goal of the process is to arrive at a decision about whether or not the project will proceed in its present form, will proceed with modification, or will not proceed at all.

2. The four text boxes that make up the main body of the tool define the breadth of information that is required to make an informed decision about a community initiative. This same template can be used to support an evidence-informed discussion about an organizational or internal workforce development issue as well, as long as the decision-makers are willing to view the organization as a small community (more lateral than hierarchical relationships). The template will be less helpful with more hierarchical approaches to decision-making.

3. The final feature is the coloured box at the centre of the Model, which gives some very basic guidelines about using evidence to inform decisions. The key point is that no amount of evidence will make the decision for you, so there should be a reasonable limit to “going back” for more evidence. Being stuck in a cycle of repeatedly going back to clarify one more thing, in hopes that the “answer” will make itself obvious and remove the weight of responsibility from the shoulders of decision-makers is called “analysis paralysis”. Evidence is valuable in making better decisions, but people make decisions based on much more than evidence. Decisions are also based on ethics, values, beliefs, intuitions, priorities and emotions.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use:

Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model

Guidelines for Using the EPPE Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model

When:

As soon as the Theory of Change is given the "green light" as an idea worth pursuing, the next step is to test how realistic it is in the current context.

Why:

It also helps you prepare and present a wide breadth of relevant information to foster a balanced discussion and decision.

How:

1. Orient yourself to the EIDM Model: your Theory of Change provides the subject focus for collecting information. The four evidence domains (text boxes) on the EIDM Model tells you the kind of information you need to collect about that subject.

2. Start by penciling in the assumptions from the bottom of the Theory of Change on the template. Then replace assumptions with facts as you gather them. If there are assumptions you cannot verify, do not remove them from the template – present them for discussion. It may be decided that the project you are working on needs to wait until other work is done to verify the assumption(s).

3. Suggested sources of information (in the table below) include things like environmental scans and need assessments. This planning stage is focused on gathering *existing* evidence, so do not complete a community assessment for the purposes of filling in the template. Search for reports on assessments already completed among your partner agencies, local databases, government agencies, etc. The exception is if the information you need is about your own organization or staff and the data can be easily collected e.g., with a survey.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use:

Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model

4. If you are unable to find a piece of evidence, simply note that on the EIDM Model, e.g., *“A community needs assessment is required to determine the impact of this problem in our local area, but we have not been able to locate a report on one.”* Including this “knowledge gap” in the EIDM discussion may lead to the decision that the project can proceed without it, or that the project needs to remain on hold until an assessment is completed.

5. Use the following table to help you gather the information you need to complete the EIDM Model template:

Evidence Domain	What information goes in here?	How do I get this information?
Community Needs and Strengths	• The community’s needs and strengths, relevant to the problem you’re addressing, should be documented here. • Numbers help people to understand the importance of things, and to compare them to other things, so information like the number of people affected by the problem should be included.	• Collect this information from reports on community assessments such as situational and need assessments or environmental scans. • Check the websites of relevant local non-profits, public sector organizations, foundations and government agencies to see what reports, info-graphics or data-tables they have already prepared.
Political, Economic & Social Context	• The current political, economic and social context, that may have an impact on your organization, the problem or the groups you need to engage, should be documented here. • Include things like new funding programs, new government policies and initiatives, political activity like elections; economic/social trends like increasing poverty, housing costs or changing public attitudes.	• Often, this kind of information is made available to people in leadership positions, so your organization’s leaders should be able to give you leads. • Some of this information can be found in the introductory sections of the reports described above. • If no one in your agency already does so, consider investing a small amount of time in scanning the media on a weekly basis, for news relevant to your sector, from reputable sources.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use:

Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model

Evidence Domain	What information goes in here?	How do I get this information?
Resources Required	• Required financial, technological and human resources as well as specialized expertise or skills, should be documented here. Also include practical resources like work space, equipment, access to information and staff time. Identify which resources you have already, and which you need. Include a partner's resources only if you have a firm commitment.	• Find actual costs for essential and costly items like courses or software licenses, consultants' services, by contacting vendors directly. Don't take cost information from websites as there are usually many hidden costs like "set-up" and "administrative" fees. • If there is time, include costs for the ideal project as well as cheaper options.
Evidence from Research & Evaluation	• Information documented here should include the results of research studies and evaluations on the essential activities included in your Theory of Change. • Report on any results you find, not just positive ones. Most community programs will have mixed results and being transparent about that helps to build or maintain trust in relationships with partners and other stakeholders. • Good quality evidence on community programs is presented in this format: This action works for this specific group of people in this situation (also known as *"what works for whom under what conditions"*), because no one activity will work for everyone in every circumstance.	• This information is best collected from reviews, guidelines, reports, modules, etc., that combined results from several studies or evaluations, rather than single studies or evaluations. If single studies or evaluations are all that is available, still include them but make sure that fact is clearly communicated.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use:

Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model

Using the Completed Model to Guide the Discussion

1. Decide with your team who needs to take part in the EIDM discussion, and who will be facilitating it. Schedule it well in advance so that everyone can attend.

2. Keep copies of all the sources of information you used to fill in the Model, so that you can easily provide them to anyone who would like to review them.

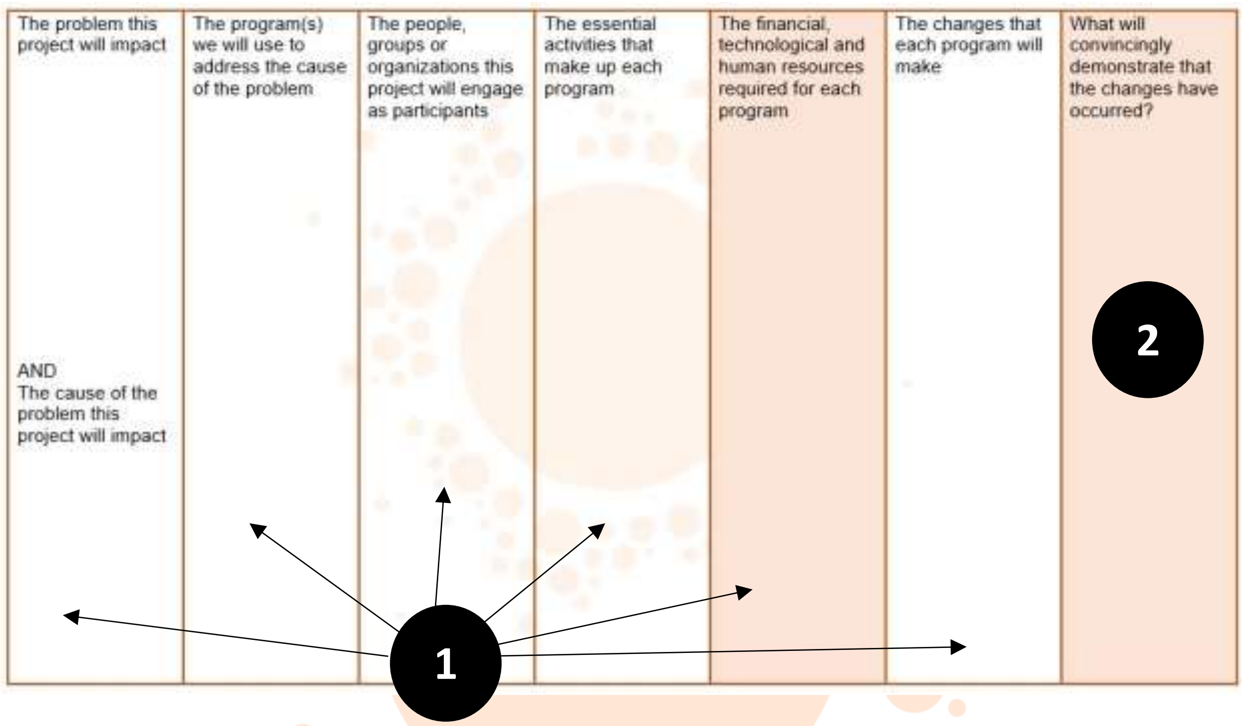
3. Provide each discussion participant with completed copies of the EIDM Model and the Theory of Change prior to the discussion so they can review them, if they wish.

4. At the meeting, present the project idea using the Theory of Change, and using the evidence on the EIDM Model to back up your proposal. Offer to provide copies of your sources to everyone. Document the decision on the EIDM Model, along with items for follow up.

5. If the EIDM process results in modifications to the project *that impact the mechanism of action* OR if you have been unable to verify the assumptions that underlie the Theory of Change then the Theory of Change template will need to be redone to account for these changes.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Logic Model**

Features of the EPPE Logic Model



The purpose of completing a Logic Model is to bring the contents of the Theory of Change (the core logic) and the Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model (the important nuances and surface details dictated by present circumstances) together into one evidence-informed plan, and decide how you are going to demonstrate the impact you are now confident you will make.

Th EPPE Logic Model helps you accomplish those things with two features:

1. The 1st six columns correspond to columns/text boxes on the Theory of Change or the Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model, to make it easy to bring forward content from those two previous tools by simply “copying and pasting”.

2. The 7th column is the only “new” one. It asks how you will *convincingly* demonstrate the change(s) made by your program(s). The purpose of evidence

goes beyond simply documenting facts. Evidence is meant to convince someone that the story you are telling is true, *so that they are influenced to act in the way you want them to*. The tool asks you to demonstrate change at the *program* level, because evaluation plans will be made to match program plans in the next planning stage.

Guidelines for Using the EPPE Logic Model

When:

After the Evidence-Informed Decision-Making process results in a decision to proceed with the project.

Why:

- The Logic Model provides a yardstick by which the validity of every choice and every action from this point on can be judged. If it's not on the Logic Model, project resources should not be expended on it (unless a change needs to be made to the program to better meet participant needs – in which case, update the Logic Model to match reality).

- The Logic Model is the high-level version of your evidence-informed plan. It can be used to communicate clearly with potential funders, partners and other stakeholders. It provides enough concrete information to let others know the problem you are addressing, how you are addressing it and the changes they can expect to see, while leaving room for them to get involved in the details of providing the service and measuring change. Always provide access to the evidence used to develop the Logic Model. This transparency will help build trust and allow people to improve your plan while setting the expectation that any proposed changes to the plan will also require evidence to back it up.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Logic Model**

Why:

1. Copy contents from the Theory of Change and the Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model into the Logic Model according to the following table:

Theory of Change		**Logic Model**
Column 1	→	Column 1
Column 2	→	Column 2
Column 3	→	Column 3
Column 4	→	Column 4
Column 5	→	Column 6
Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model		**Logic Model**
"Resources Required"	→	Column 5

2. Now, use the information from the Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model to edit, correct, and add details to the Logic Model so that you have a more concrete and specific plan.

3. Finally, focus on the 7th column:
   - There is no need to demonstrate a large number of changes when the main thing everyone wants to know is if your actions made the change they were intended to make.
   - Trying to demonstrate too many changes complicates evaluation data collection which can result in incomplete or inaccurate data, and greater risks to participants' privacy.
   - One of the statements in the 7th column should be a rewording of the problem/cause of the problem you are addressing, with the addition of a demonstrable or "countable" element to it. A demonstrable or countable

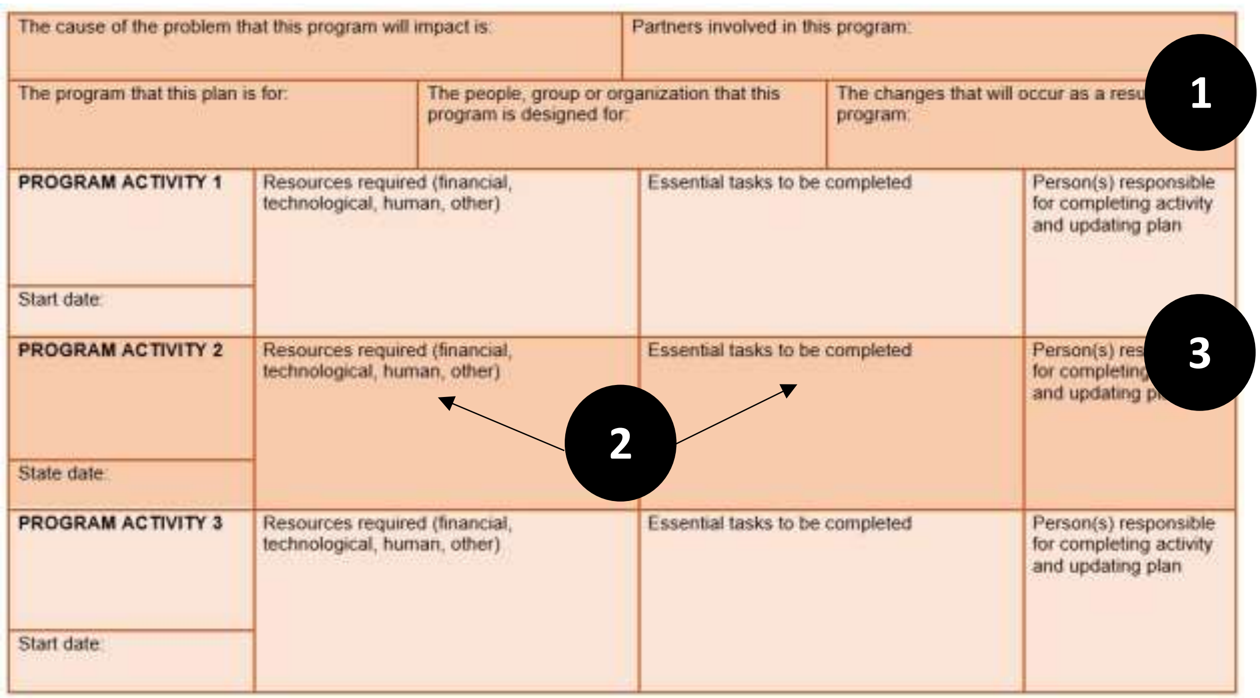
Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Logic Model**

element is either a discrete thing (like a training manual), or an amount of change over a specified period of time, for example:

- Problem/cause of the problem: Organizations in our community have not developed inclusive programs, services and job opportunities.
- What will convincingly demonstrate the change our program made? Participating organizations implemented at least <u>one new inclusive program, service or job opportunity within 6 months</u>.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Program Plan**

Features of the EPPE Program Plan



The cause of the problem that this program will impact is:		Partners involved in this program:	
The program that this plan is for:	The people, group or organization that this program is designed for:		The changes that will occur as a resu[lt of this] program:
PROGRAM ACTIVITY 1 Start date:	Resources required (financial, technological, human, other)	Essential tasks to be completed	Person(s) responsible for completing activity and updating plan
PROGRAM ACTIVITY 2 State date:	Resources required (financial, technological, human, other)	Essential tasks to be completed	Person(s) res[ponsible] for completing [activity] and updating p[lan]
PROGRAM ACTIVITY 3 Start date:	Resources required (financial, technological, human, other)	Essential tasks to be completed	Person(s) responsible for completing activity and updating plan

The purpose of completing a Program Plan is twofold:

- to communicate essential details of the project among staff so that all activities are carried out as planned
- to document plan changes that occur in response to participants' evolving or emerging needs, or unforeseen circumstances

The EPPE Program Plan helps to accomplish these communication and documentation goals with three features:

1. Completing the two rows at the top of the plan is very important to keep everyone focused on why they are doing what they are doing. Keeping them informed also gives front line professionals the opportunity to notice when a task they are doing runs contrary to the overall intentions of the plan, and allows them to actively

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: Program Plan

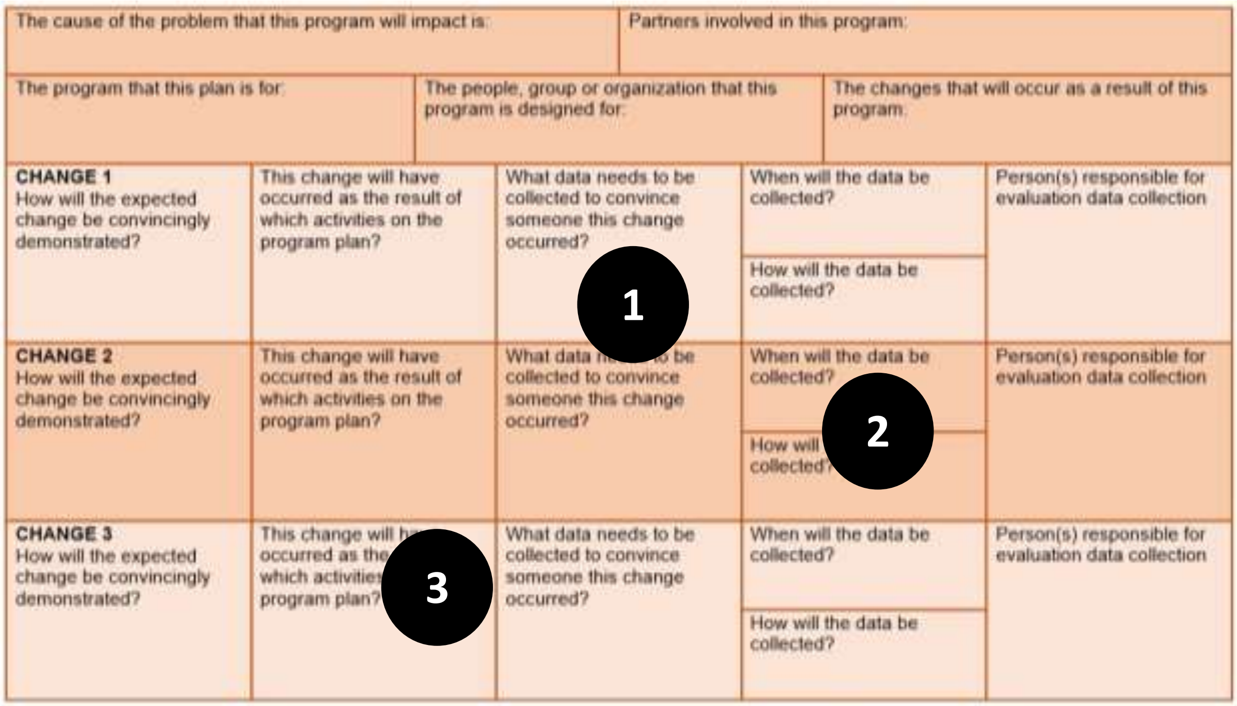
contribute to Program Planning & Evaluation activities by volunteering their observations and suggestions.

2. The template allows each activity in a program to be broken down into the resources required and the tasks that need to be performed. This level of granularity makes communication unambiguous and also makes it easier to identify when a change has been made to how an activity is being carried out.
3. Designating a person or persons responsible for each activity is very important to ensure:
    a. activities are carried out as planned
    b. changes to the plan are properly documented
    c. “person(s) responsible”, who are key plan implementers, are acknowledged as part of the planning team.

Because the EPPE Program and Evaluation Plans are used together, we will introduce the features of the Evaluation Plan before providing the guidelines for using both.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Evaluation Plan**

Features of the EPPE Evaluation Plan



The cause of the problem that this program will impact is:		Partners involved in this program:		
The program that this plan is for:	The people, group or organization that this program is designed for:		The changes that will occur as a result of this program:	
CHANGE 1 How will the expected change be convincingly demonstrated?	This change will have occurred as the result of which activities on the program plan?	What data needs to be collected to convince someone this change occurred? 1	When will the data be collected? How will the data be collected?	Person(s) responsible for evaluation data collection
CHANGE 2 How will the expected change be convincingly demonstrated?	This change will have occurred as the result of which activities on the program plan?	What data n… to be collected to convince someone this change occurred?	When will the data be collected? 2 How will … collected?	Person(s) responsible for evaluation data collection
CHANGE 3 How will the expected change be convincingly demonstrated?	This change will h… occurred as the… which activitie… program plan? 3	What data needs to be collected to convince someone this change occurred?	When will the data be collected? How will the data be collected?	Person(s) responsible for evaluation data collection

The purpose of completing an Evaluation Plan is to ensure that everyone is prepared to take advantage of data collection opportunities that occur during the course of the program. The vast majority of community programs that do not show an impact are in that position, not because they did not change important outcomes, but because *no one collected the data* needed to demonstrate the change. The opportunities to collect evaluation data need to be identified before hand, because if no plan is in place to collect the data at the time it is available, it will not be collected – and there is no going back to get it.

The EPPE Evaluation Plan template helps you capitalize on data collection opportunities with the following three features:

1. The 3rd column below the two header rows directs the planner to identify the specific piece(s) of information that needs to be collected to show the change

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Evaluation Plan**

identified in the 1st column has occurred. This is more specific and concrete than asking for an "indicator" or a "measure" of an outcome. This question is asking "what information do we *need to write down* to show the change?"

2. The 4th column below the two header rows directs the planner to identify *when* and *how* the information is going to be collected.

3. The 3rd feature is not about taking advantage of the opportunity to collect evaluation data, but it is a very important check on the integrity of the program. The 2nd column asks the planner to verify that the data staff are going to spend time collecting actually reflects a change that *can logically be linked* to the specific activities in the program. For example, if the change you are going to measure is the number of people who stop smoking, then at least one of the activities in your program needs to be an effective smoking cessation intervention (nicotine replacement therapy, motivational interviewing, etc.)

> If you take nothing else from this whole resource, remember this:
>
> What evaluation data to collect, when to collect it and how to collect it must all be planned out in detail (e.g., *the intake worker will enter the participant's employment status on the excel spreadsheet on their desktop at the time of intake*) before the opportunity to collect the data arrives, **or it won't happen.**

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Program and Evaluation Plans**

Guidelines for Using Program and Evaluation Plans

When:

After the program implementation staff (or at least roles) have been identified. It is crucial that someone with knowledge of the actual hands-on work and work environment participate in identifying the resources required, tasks involved, and when

and how data can be collected without excessive disruption to services or interference with the service provider-client relationship.

Why:

Once program implementation begins, and more passionate, energetic people get involved, great ideas grow exponentially and the program takes on a life of its own. Program and Evaluation Plans are essential for maintaining a reasonable amount of control over the activities taking place and effectively directing everyone toward making the changes that have been:

- identified through an evidence-informed planning process,
- approved by senior decision-makers,

agreed to by funders and other stakeholders.

How:

1. Fill out the top sections of the Program Plan and Evaluation Plan templates by copying the appropriate content from the Logic Model. It is important to identify any program partners because if they truly are partners, they have a role to play in these plans.

2. Fill out the 1st column of the Program Plan by copying and pasting the activities from the 4th column of the Logic Model, that are included in the program that this plan is for (remember that a Logic Model is for a whole project, which can include more than

one program, separate pairs of Program and Evaluation Plans are needed for each program in the project).

3. Fill out the 1st column of the Evaluation Plan by copying and pasting the demonstrated changes from the 7th column of the Logic Model into it.

4. Then, working together with the person(s) most directly responsible for ensuring the activities are carried out (most likely direct service professionals or coordinators), brainstorm about the resources required, the tasks involved in each activity, and the data that needs to be collected, on a blank piece of paper at first, then copy your final lists onto the Program Plan and Evaluation Plan templates.

5. Include as much detail as you feel is necessary for a third party (someone not involved in developing the plans) to understand what is being done. Do not worry about organizing all the information in chronological order on the first draft of the Program Plan. The plan's contents can slowly be organized through the process of quarterly reviews and revisions.

6. After filling in as much detail as you can, fill in the start dates under each activity in the Program Plan with the most realistic estimates you are able to make.

7. It's likely that you will identify more than one person responsible for different activities in one program. Do not create separate Program Plans or Evaluation Plans for each separate "person responsible". Create one Program Plan and one Evaluation Plan for each program, and make copies (of the pair) for each "person responsible", so that everyone can see the entire program they are contributing to.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use: **Program and Evaluation Plans**

Using Program and Evaluation Plans to Document New Knowledge

- Use Program and Evaluation Plan development as an opportunity to engage the people who will be doing the actual implementation. Collaborate with them to fill out the templates using the guidelines in the next section. Asking for and incorporating their advice into the plans will allow them to retain autonomy over their work.
- Encourage the person(s) responsible for the program and evaluation activities and tasks to take the initiative to solve small problems that arise on their own, if appropriate. They must, however, document all changes they make to the plans, along with the rationale. This can be done on blank Program and Evaluation Plan templates, which could then serve as a draft of the next version.
- Review the Program and Evaluation Plans with the person(s) responsible to go over changes they have made to ensure that everything is still on track to achieve the intended results of the program. Do this collaborative review one week, then one month into program implementation, and then quarterly after that.
- Do not erase or write over old Program and Evaluation Plans. They are an essential part of your project documentation. After each review, create new versions and date them.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use:

Evaluation Results Reporting Template

Features of the EPPE Evaluation Results Reporting Template

Participant Identifier	Participant's characteristics			Participant's uptake of activities			Participant's changes seen		
	Characteristic 1	Characteristic 2	Characteristic 3	Activity 1 from Program Plan	Activity 2 from Program Plan	Activity 3 from Program Plan	Demonstrated Change 1 from Evaluation Plan	Demonstrated Change 2 from Evaluation Plan	Demonstrated Change 3 from Evaluation Plan

The Evaluation Results Reporting Template may be used to simply share evaluation results but it can also be used as a planning tool. By filling in the top of the template with content from the Program and Evaluation Plans, and inputting “dummy” data into the rest of the template, the Program and Evaluation Plans (as well as the Logic Model they are derived from) can be tested to ensure they include all the right details needed to give you the data you need to demonstrate change.

However, the *purpose* of the Evaluation Results Reporting Template is to display the evaluation results of your program or project in a way that is person-centred and that clearly illustrates the connections between the activities included in the program and the changes they resulted in.

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use:

Evaluation Results Reporting Template

The EPPE Evaluation Results Reporting Template accomplishes that purpose with the following two features:

1. The template organizes the results by participant. Each row in the table illustrates the experience of one participant in the program: who they are, what they did while in the program, and what changes they experienced. This layout improves our understanding of the how the program worked, or did not work, for different kinds of participants. This layout also helps focus the improvement efforts that stem from these results on improving the experience of the participant, not the agency.

2. By juxtaposing data on participants' uptake of activities with participants' changes, it is possible to demonstrate that participating in the activities in the program was associated with the achieving intended changes, if that is true.

Guidelines for Using the EPPE Evaluation Results Reporting Template

When:

- *For planning*: as soon as the first version of the Program and Evaluation Plans are complete
- *For reporting*: when you are ready to compile and display your results in the final project documentation

Why:

- *For planning*: Using the template to check that implementing the Program and Evaluation Plans as they are will give you the data you need to demonstrate your

Tool Features and Guidelines for Use:

Evaluation Results Reporting Template

- program's impact, allows you to fine-tune those two plans to ensure that at the end of the 12 or 24- month project duration, the results you are able to show, are the results you needed to show.
- *For reporting*: Using a standardized format to display your results makes it easier for your peers who use the same standards to easily interpret your results at a glance.

How:

1. Copy the activities from the 1st column of the Program Plan into the second row of the table heading, under "Participant's uptake of activities". Adjust the wording so that the statements make appropriate column headings.

2. Copy the demonstrated changes from the 1st column of the Evaluation Plan into the second row of the heading, under "Participant's changes seen". Adjust the wording so that the statements make appropriate column headings.

3. Select 2 to 3 relevant participant characteristics to insert in the second heading row, under "Participant's characteristics", based on the following considerations:

    - Participants can be individuals, groups or organizations. They all deserve to have their information treated with the same level of care and consideration. For ethical reasons, do not select participant characteristics simply because they are easy to find out, are interesting, or are currently of social importance (e.g., race).
    - Select characteristics that will give you useful insights into your results. For example, if you are concerned that the activities your program includes might not be attractive to younger participants, you may want to use age as a client

characteristic to see if there are any age-related trends in participants' uptake of activities.

- Limit the number of participant characteristics you collect and report in order to maintain participants' privacy.

How to use the template for planning purposes:

- Complete the template according to the guidelines above, then use "dummy" data (that you make up) to fill in at least 5 rows of the table. The "dummy" data have to be consistent across the rows, so to create the dummy data, imagine 5 participants, then describe them, their actions and their results to tell a consistent story.

- If the plans laid out in the Program and Evaluation Plans capture doing the right things in the right sequence, and on counting the right things in the right way, filling out the Evaluation Results Reporting Template should go smoothly. However, it is very likely you will experience some confusion due to the fact that the plans contain errors that can only be spotted in hindsight. Imagining what the result of the project will look like by trying to complete this template *now* is giving you some of that hindsight.

- To "fix" the problem, adjust the headings on the Evaluation Results Reporting Template to tell a coherent, chronological story. Then, when you have everything in the right order, in the right sections and with all the right details, copy and paste the headings back into the Program and Evaluation Plans, and adjust those as needed. Then, if necessary, make adjustments to the wording on the Logic Model. If you have followed the EPPE process closely, the kinds of changes you will need to make to the plans will be limited to wording changes or clarifications.

Templates: **Evidence-informed Program Planning & Evaluation**

1. Theory of Change
2. Evidence-informed Decision Making Model
3. Logic Model
4. Program Plan
5. Evaluation Plan
6. Evaluation Results Reporting Template

The following templates can be printed out and filled in to support your EPPE work. For a single project, you will likely require several copies of the Program Plan, Evaluation Plan and Evaluation Results Reporting Tool. The first three tools are designed to accommodate information about large multi-pronged projects that may include more than one community program.

For more information and tips on using these tools to support your Evidence-informed Program Planning & Evaluation work, visit our website, www.vividimpact.ca and check out our other free PPE resources:

- "15 Tips for Making Program Planning & Evaluation Easier & More Useful" poster
- Blog post series "Practical Evaluation Tips for Non-profits"

Template 1: Theory of Change

The problem that requires a solution The cause of the problem we will address	**The program(s)** we will use to address the problem	The people, groups or organization each program is designed for	The essential activities that make up each program	The change that each program will make	Explain how each activity will lead to the change identified (*the mechanism(s) of action*)	Impacts the changes may have on broader issues
Assumptions that need to be checked in stage 2 of pre-planning: The Evidence-Informed Decision-Making process:						

Template 2: Evidence-informed Decision Making Model

Community Needs and Strengths

Political, Economic & Social Context

Use Professional Ethics, Judgement & Leadership Skills to weigh the evidence to determine if the needs, the resources and the supports make this the right time to act. No amount of evidence will eliminate the need for good decision-making skills.

Evidence from Research & Evaluation

Resources Required

Decision:

- ❑ **Proceed with project**
- ❑ **Do not proceed with project**
- ❑ **Proceed with the following modifications:**

This model was adapted by Durlaksar Incorporated from *A Model for Evidence-Informed Decision Making in Public Health* by the National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools

Template 3: Logic Model

The problem this project will impact AND The cause of the problem this project will impact	The program(s) we will use to address the cause of the problem	The people, groups or organizations this project will engage as participants	The essential activities that make up each program	The financial, technological and human resources required for each program	The changes that each program will make	What will convincingly demonstrate that the changes have occurred?

Template 4: Program Plan

The cause of the problem that this program will impact is:	Partners involved in this program:

The program that this plan is for:	The people, group or organization that this program is designed for:	The changes that will occur as a result of this program:

PROGRAM ACTIVITY 1	Resources required (financial, technological, human, other)	Essential tasks to be completed	Person(s) responsible for completing activity and updating plan
Start date:			
PROGRAM ACTIVITY 2	Resources required (financial, technological, human, other)	Essential tasks to be completed	Person(s) responsible for completing activity and updating plan
State date:			
PROGRAM ACTIVITY 3	Resources required (financial, technological, human, other)	Essential tasks to be completed	Person(s) responsible for completing activity and updating plan
Start date:			

Template 5: Evaluation Plan

<table>
<tr><td colspan="15">The cause of the problem that this program will impact is:</td><td colspan="15">Partners involved in this program:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="10">The program that this plan is for:</td><td colspan="10">The people, group or organization that this program is designed for:</td><td colspan="10">The changes that will occur as a result of this program:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">CHANGE 1
How will the expected change be convincingly demonstrated?</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">This change will have occurred as the result of which activities on the program plan?</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">What data needs to be collected to convince someone this change occurred?</td><td colspan="6">When will the data be collected?</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">Person(s) responsible for evaluation data collection</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">How will the data be collected?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">CHANGE 2
How will the expected change be convincingly demonstrated?</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">This change will have occurred as the result of which activities on the program plan?</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">What data needs to be collected to convince someone this change occurred?</td><td colspan="6">When will the data be collected?</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">Person(s) responsible for evaluation data collection</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">How will the data be collected?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">CHANGE 3
How will the expected change be convincingly demonstrated?</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">This change will have occurred as the result of which activities on the program plan?</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">What data needs to be collected to convince someone this change occurred?</td><td colspan="6">When will the data be collected?</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="2">Person(s) responsible for evaluation data collection</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">How will the data be collected?</td></tr>
</table>

Vivid Impact

Template 6: Evaluation Results Reporting Template

Participant Identifier	Participant's characteristics			Participant's uptake of activities			Participant's changes seen		
	Characteristic 1	Characteristic 2	Characteristic 3	Activity 1 from Program Plan	Activity 2 from Program Plan	Activity 3 from Program Plan	Demonstrated Change 1 from Evaluation Plan	Demonstrated Change 2 from Evaluation Plan	Demonstrated Change 3 from Evaluation Plan

Notes

durlaksar