



We'd like to know...



Please write your ideas on a post-it note.

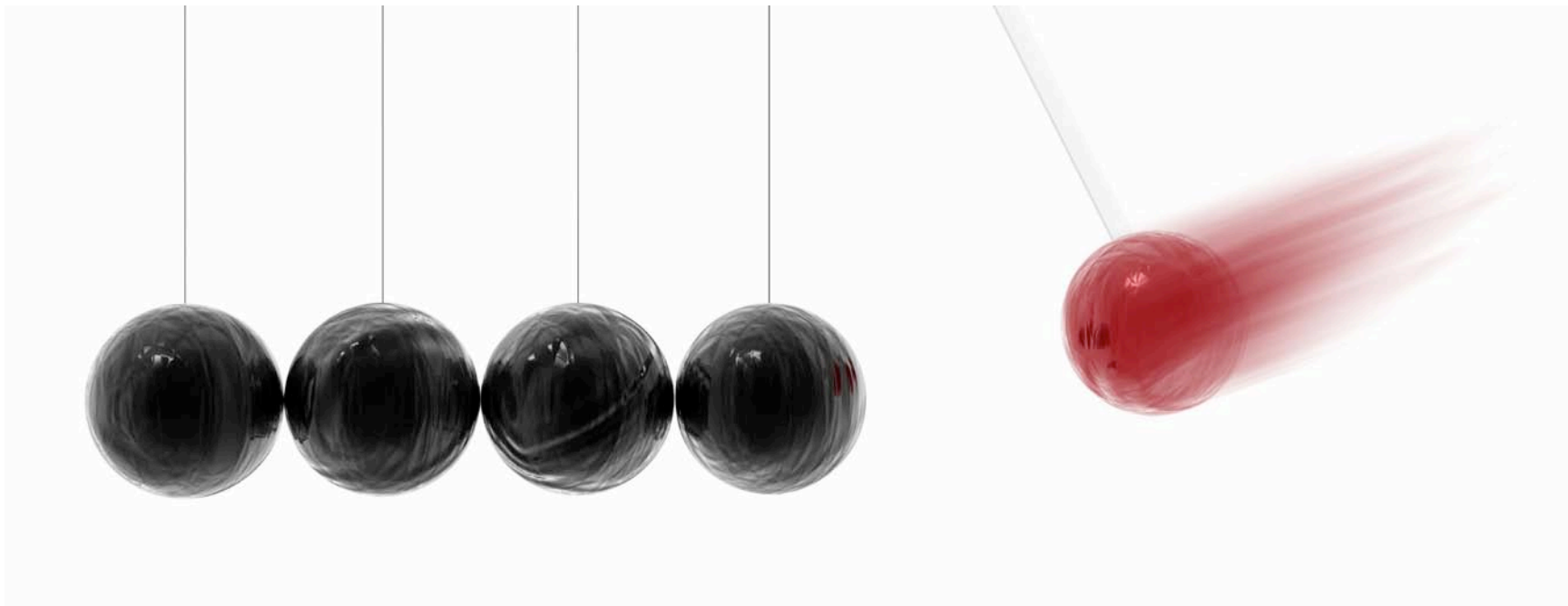


# Planting the Seeds of Sustainability: *How evaluation can help programs take root*

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What is **program impact**?



# About This Session



## During the workshop we will:

- explore the idea of **program impact**
- “re-think” how evaluation can **promote program sustainability**

# We'll do this through:

1. A **case study** and debrief
2. **Sharing insights** from our recent evaluation process and **best practices**





## Field of Flowers Education Program A Case Study



**In your group please discuss:**

- 1) What **kind of impact** would you try to measure?
- 2) **How** would you do this?
  - a) What kinds of questions would you ask?
  - b) Who would you ask?
  - c) What evaluation tools would you use?
- 3) How would you **integrate what you learned**?

**You will have 15 minutes.**



# Your ideas on measuring impact





# What was our evaluation challenge?



A foundation agreed to continue to support our program for one more term, but only if we promised to:

1. **deepen the scope** of our evaluation
2. reflect on what evaluation results could tell us about **critical success factors, program uptake, and scaling up**
3. make changes to program design and implementation to **encourage transfer of ownership and long term sustainability** in communities



Play it

Fair!

equitas

A human rights education program for 6-12 year olds that promotes non discrimination, respect for diversity, and peaceful conflict resolution in existing children's programs (non-formal sector).

## Program Components

- Educational Toolkit
- Training for staff
- On-going collaboration, follow-up and evaluation
- National events (*Play it Fair! Day*, National Child Day)



Play It

Fair!

equitas


## Partners in 22 communities

- Municipal agencies
- CBOs (including immigrant serving orgs  
Aboriginal orgs, recreation orgs, libraries)
- Schools

## Previous funders include:

- Vancouver Foundation
- Winnipeg Foundation
- Foundation of Greater Montreal
- J. W. McConnell Foundation
- Telus Community Boards
- TD
- City of Montreal





# Broadening our understanding of program impact

Past *PIF!* evaluations focused on asking questions to count numbers of:

- children participating in activities
- partners nationally
- staff trained in the *PIF* Toolkit and participatory approach
- frequency of *PIF* Toolkit use by front-line workers
- conflicts, behaviour issues with children, and increases in inclusion, teamwork and acceptance from Toolkit use



# In our most recent evaluation we **also** looked at:

## Individual changes

- perception of the role of front-line staff
- shifts in the **way front-line staff work** with children and each other

## Organizational changes

- program administration
- **organizational buy-in** (training, support structures, time and budget allocations)
- **organizational culture, policies and practices** (staff meetings, hiring policies, local organizing committees, parent engagement)
- the **role of local champions** and what they do to encourage *PIF!* uptake

## Community-level changes

- **community-wide collaboration** around children's rights and participation





# Now we ask questions about:

- Why partners use *PIF!* and how it fits with other programs they offer?
- What their partnership expectations are?
- How *PIF* changes their work? For example:
  - a) Has the capacity of front-line workers increased? And how?*
  - b) Are partners more likely to promote children's rights and participation in their community?*



- What **supports** do partners have in place for front-line workers and which **Equitas supports** do they most value?
- What **advice** would they give to a new organization considering using *PIF*?
- What **role do champions** play in program uptake?



# Changes in **who** we asked and the **tools** we used



**Partners:** community-based organizations and municipalities

**Front-line Workers:** Day camp and after-school staff who use *Play it Fair!* activities in their programs

**Senior Administrators:** Executive Directors, Program Directors and Coordinators at key partner organizations

- **structured questionnaire** (email) with a sample group of program coordinators and local *PIF* coordinating committees
- **site visits** and **focus groups** with a sample group

- **on-line survey** completed by 223 front-line staff
- **follow-up reminders** from Equitas staff

- **structured interviews** (45min) with senior administrators
- **6 key partner organizations** across Canada (BC, MB, ON, QC, NB)





What did we learn?



Why does it matter?

# Critical Success Factors for *PIF!*

1. A **home** for *PIF!* (CBOs and municipalities with existing summer and year-long programs for children)
2. Partnership **intentionality**:
  - a) a link to partners' mission and values
  - b) alignment with partners' program objectives, priorities and staff learning agendas





# Core Program Components (additional critical success factors)

1. The role of **capacity building**, educational resources (Toolkit) and training
2. The **champion** effect
3. Management **buy-in**, **support mechanisms**, internal policies
4. **Equitas-led** follow-up, coaching, communication and evaluation
5. The strength of a **participatory approach** leading to individual, organizational and community-level **social change**





# What we learned about evaluation



# What we learned about evaluation

- The right kind of evaluation can inform ongoing program design and lead to a better more **sustainable program**
- Asking the **right people**, the **right questions** using the **right tools** is critical
- Evaluation can **re-engage partners**
- Having an **outside perspective** helps thinking outside the box
- **Insights are transferrable** to other Equitas programs



# How community foundations can play a role





## You can play a key role:



- Share **expectations** with grantees about impact and evaluation **early** on
- **Coach** grantees through the development of a focused and realistic **evaluation plan**
- Share **tools and provide the space** for grantees to try new approaches
- Encourage open dialogue, and **learning from mistakes** for greater possibility of growth and success





# Take Homes

## Ours (Equitas):

- Re-thinking impact focused on sustainability
- Increased creativity in our evaluation strategy
- Lessons learned transferred to other Equitas programs

**What are yours?**



# Additional Resources

Go to [www.equitas.org](http://www.equitas.org) to download

- this presentation!
- the *Play it Fair!* Toolkit and User Guide
- Evaluation Handbook: *Evaluating human Rights Training Activities* (Equitas and OHCHR, 2011)



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[www.equitas.org](http://www.equitas.org)