

# **INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION IN THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS FROM RECENT EXPERIENCES**



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# PRESENTATION - OVERVIEW



- Institutional Evaluation – Some Definitions
- Program Evaluation vs. Institutional Evaluation
- Frameworks
- Evaluation Issues
- Approach Methodology
- Lessons
- Challenges
- Impact of our Evaluations
- How does Institutional Evaluation help?
- Is it gaining importance?

# DEFINITIONS



- **Institutional evaluations** have been described as “processes which use concepts and methods from the social and behavioural sciences to assess organization’s current practices and find ways to increase their efficiency

(Universalis, 1993)

# DEFINITIONS



- **Institutional assessment** is a comprehensive approach for profiling institutional capacity and performance. The approach considers various factors which come to play in institutional development: external environment; institutional factors; and inter-institutional linkages

(Morgan and Taschereau, 1996)

# DEFINITIONS



- **Organizational assessment** can be defined as a systematic process for obtaining valid information about the performance of an organization and the factors associated with the performance

(Gaebler, & Osborne, 1993; Meyer & Scott, 1992)

# TERMS - LITERATURE



- Institutional evaluation
- Institutional assessment
- Organizational assessment

# PROGRAM vs. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION



- IE is more complex – lot more factors / issues to be looked at
- IE needs more time
- Stakeholder commitment, involvement and participation is important for both (but for IE it is essential) – “buy in” at all levels required for IE

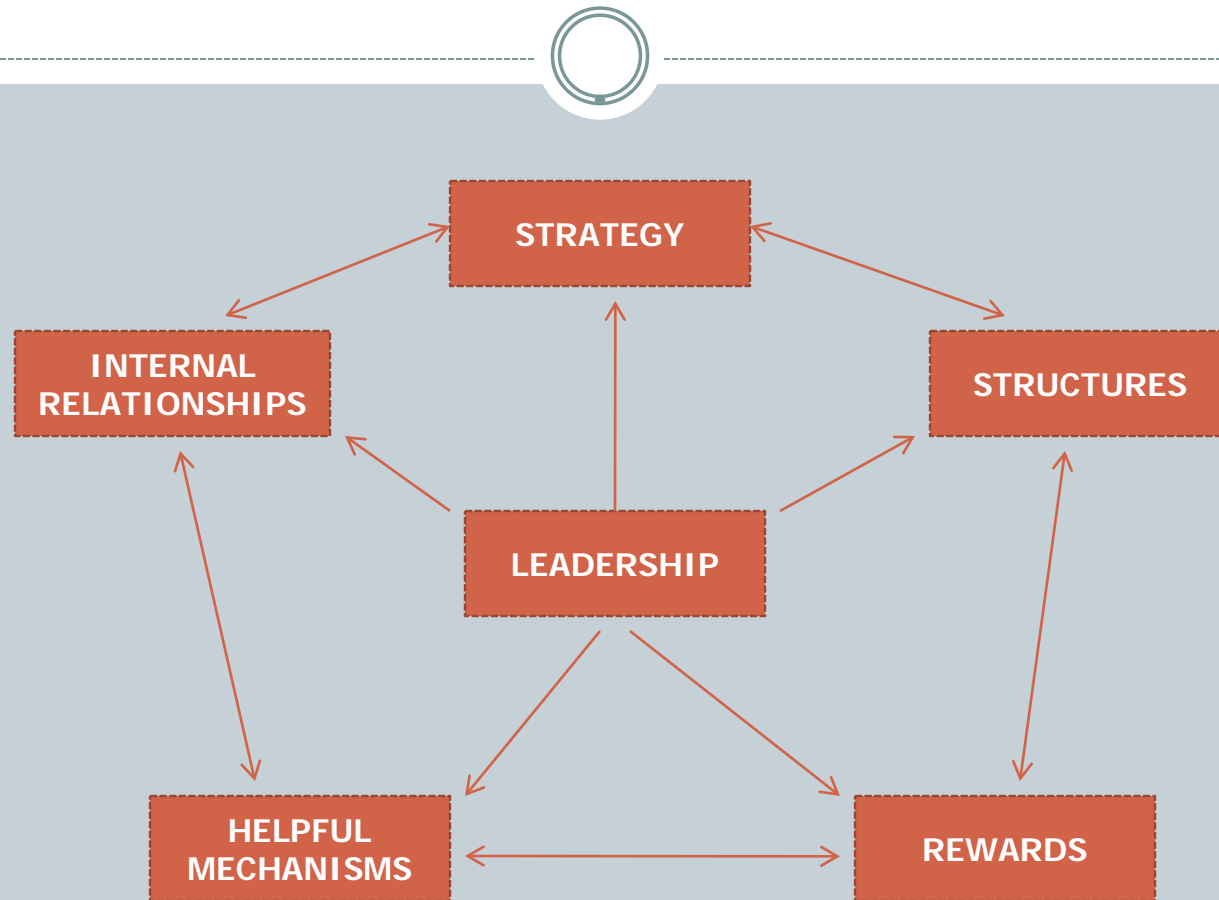
# PROGRAM vs. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION



- Performance in the context of external environment, organizational capacity and motivation (in program it is against the plan)
- IE contributes to the institution's strategy/vision/mission (PE to program strategy)
- Program / projects are driven by logic and relatively linear, where as institutions/ organizations are dynamic and changes are clustered / interactive



# FRAMEWORK - SIX BOX MODEL



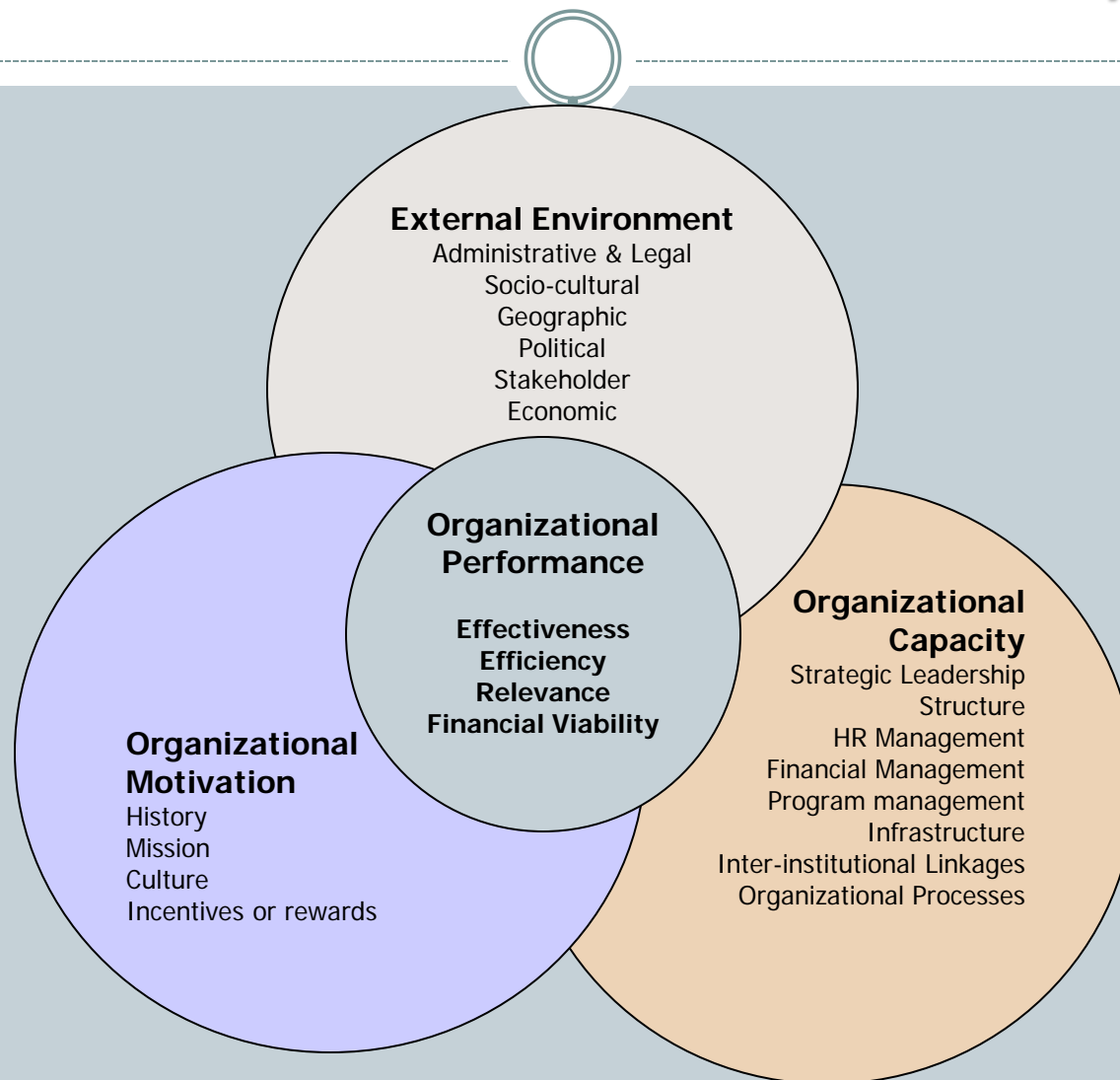
# FRAMEWORK – 7 S MODEL

## (McKinsey)



- Structure
- Strategy
- Skills
- Style
- Staff
- Shared Values
- Systems

# FRAMEWORK - UNIVERSALIA / IDRC



**“Performance is a function of  
an organization’s enabling  
environment, capacity and  
organizational motivation”**

(CIDA, 2006)

# OTHER MODELS / CONCEPTS



- Porter's – Five Forces Model
- Porter's – Competitive Advantage (cost leadership, differentiation, focus)
- Prahalad's and Hamel's – Core Competencies

No one method / framework – you can combine frameworks and / or adapt & adopt

# KEY EVALUATION ISSUES



- Depended on Funding / Grant agreement and / or requirements of main funders

## The Most Common Ones

- Relevance
- Efficiency
- Success (effectiveness / impact)
- Access / Reach

## Plus

- Cost-effectiveness

# WE ALSO LOOKED AT



- Governance
- Management – style/structure
- Processes / Mechanisms / Systems
  - Planning
  - Relationships
  - HR
  - Reporting
  - Communications – internal / external - platforms
- Project Management

# WE ALSO LOOKED AT



- Partnerships / Inter-institutional linkages
- Financial Viability / Sustainability
  - Sources of revenue - trend
  - # of donors & contribution by each donor – trend



# ALSO LOOKED AT



- External Environment
- Organizational Motivation
  - History
  - Mission
  - Incentive / Rewards
- Strengths and Weaknesses

# APPROACH / METHODOLOGY



- Initial meeting
- Evaluation Framework / Work Plan – shared with funders / institutions for inputs
- Mixed-methods approach
- Participatory (where possible) involving key stakeholders – but retaining the external reviewer's perspective

**Note:** Too much loosely structured involvement of internal stakeholders with vested interest will create conflicts over agendas, methodologies, working relationships and the wording of reports (Chelimksy & North 1997)

# APPROACH / METHODOLOGY



- **Methods used**
  - Document review
  - Key informant interviews
  - Online survey
  - Focus groups
  - Delphi Panel

# DATA



- Qualitative / Quantitative
- Rating / Ranking scale scores
- Comparisons of “similar” organizations
- Financial numbers
- Cost data
- Internal data – projects, events, partners, media etc.

# LESSONS – Points to keep in mind



- IA Frameworks can give you a lot of information – but its important to help focus on the dynamics / relationships between various factors
- It is important to keep in mind that the focus of IE / IA is on the individual institution and its environment than on a development challenge / program/initiative
- Institutional “lens”

# LESSONS – Points to keep in mind



- Data has to be contextualized and the limitation of both data and process has to be acknowledged / explained
- Avoid “insight fatigue”

# CHALLENGES



- Stakeholder commitment / involvement
  - Long-term vs. short-term
  - All levels
- Sensitive information
- Identifying leverage points of change
- Comparisons – benchmarking
- Data / information considered in isolation of context can be misleading
- Time / cost factor (how comprehensive)

# CHALLENGES



- Availability of data (reliance on perceptions of experts)
- Measuring effectiveness / impact for “policy oriented” think tanks



# **IMPACT OF OUR WORK**

## **(INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATIONS)**



- Changes in processes / systems within institutions
- Revisions in strategy – (work in progress)
- Focus on work - (narrowed) on themes
- Project / Partner identification processes
- Changes in reporting/sharing of project costs (within the organization)

# HOW DOES INSITITUTIONAL EVALUATION HELP?



- Insights for the institution – revise strategy, turning point, preparing for funding, staffing, programming, etc.
- Reveals capacities and gaps / strengths and weaknesses
- Creates an understanding of relationships among departments/units of the institution
- Develops an understanding of the inter-institutional linkages

# HOW DOES INSITITUTIONAL EVALUATION HELP?



- Facilitates capacity development / organizational change
- Feedback on governance and management
- Help institutions to get better / sustainable

# THE GROWING IMPORTANCE



- Financial resources – scarce
- Pressure to perform / deliver
- Changing (global) context
- ‘Environment’ has become very competitive
- High inter-dependency / multi-stakeholder linkages
- Holding a continued presence in the ‘market place’  
– this needs a new level of performance

Organizations / institutions have to  
be dynamic, flexible,  
accommodating and forward  
thinking

# THANK YOU



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