

Data-driven Libraries

EVALUATION, DECISION-MAKING, AND ADVOCACY

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“An imperative for future library leaders is how we move beyond counting to measuring and evaluating. **We must ground library-centric indicators in a framework of measures of community well-being.** We need to better integrate evaluation into our operations in order to increase our impact and to better communicate how essential we are to learning and engagement in our communities.”



Goals for today

- Begin a cultural shift towards using data wisely and effectively
 - Understand the different internal and external needs and uses for data
 - Understand how data drives policy making
 - Connect library work to community/state goals
- Learn how data can be used to evaluate, plan, decide, and advocate
 - Develop theories of change and contribution
 - Identify important outcomes and indicators
 - Map potential partners and data users
 - Reflective practice
- Develop ideas about data collection
 - Understand what makes a good indicator
 - How to go from indicators to data collection procedures
 - Recycling data and reporting

Agenda

9:00-9:30	Introductions and goals
9:30-10:30	What is public value and what does it have to do with data?
10:30-12:00	Mapping the theory of change and discovering outcomes
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Indicators, metrics, and data collection
2:00-3:00	Reflective practice: using data for decision-making
3:00-4:00	Taking it to the street: using data in partnerships and advocacy

A crash course on policy making

A LITTLE THEORY GOES A LONG WAY TOWARDS
UNDERSTANDING HOW PUBLIC POLICY WORKS

Creating Public Value



Hey there. Are you ready to become a public entrepreneur?

Because government obligates citizens to pay taxes to support services, public managers must make decisions that:

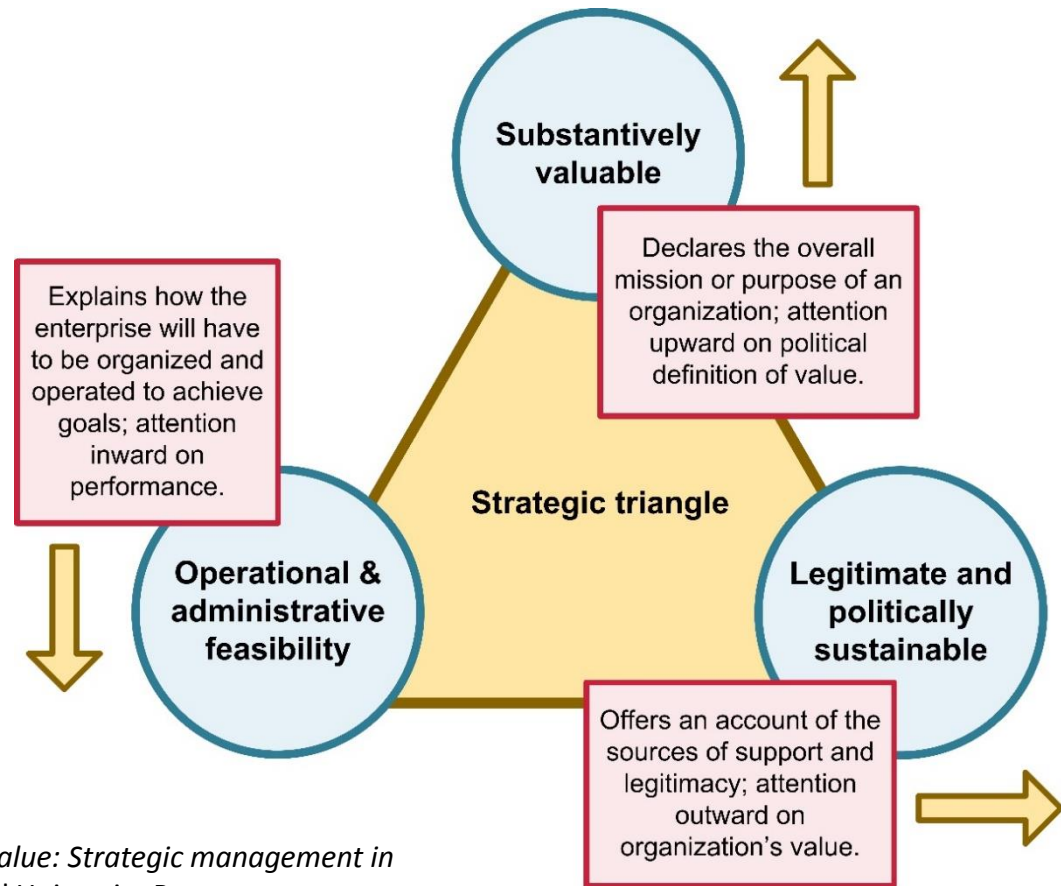
- Reflect the interests and aspirations of their communities;
- Result in substantive contributions to collective goals; and
- Ensure programs are cost-effective and manageable.

Let's Talk

Mark Moore asserts that citizens and their elected representatives are the customers. How does that change your thinking about where patron feedback fits into decision making?

The Strategic Triangle

- All purpose decision-making framework
- Attending to all three corners of the triangle is essential for creating public value.
- Each needs to be monitored continuously to ensure stable, effective, and supported services for the community.
- Not attending to one or more will surely lead to trouble eventually.



Moore, Mark. (1995). *Creating public value: Strategic management in government*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

The role of information in policy making

PROVIDING THE RIGHT INFORMATION AT THE
RIGHT TIME TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE—SOUNDS LIKE
A JOB FOR A LIBRARIAN!

The “Enlightenment Function” of data and analysis

Informing **policy makers***

- Helping them think about the issues
- Define the problem ←
- Identify important variables
- Get new ideas and perspectives
- Set the agenda for action

Let's Talk

Who are the policy makers in your environment and what are their priorities?

→ Developing solutions is the policy process and is always political, even at the hyper-local level, e.g., how many holds are patrons allowed.

Weiss, C. (1976). “Research for Policy’s Sake: The Enlightenment Function of Social research.”

Policy beliefs

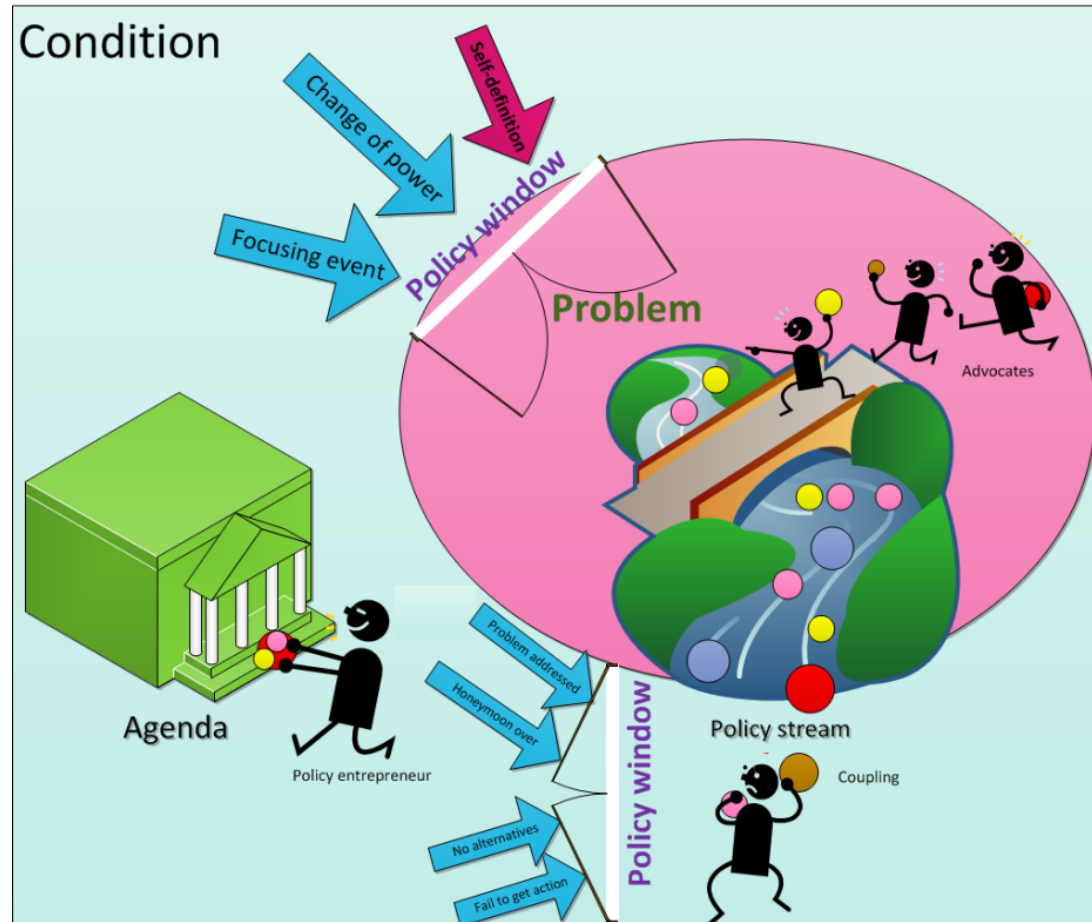
Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier and Jenkins) defines three levels of policy beliefs and how information can influence them:

- Deep core beliefs: basic orientation to the role of government
 - Hard, maybe impossible to change, regardless of information
- Policy core beliefs: preferences for types of policies
 - Resistant to change, but possible with policy-oriented learning
 - Change happens *within coalitions* to **produce strategies**
- Secondary beliefs: based on operational experiences
 - Easiest to change, informed by the nitty-gritting of operationalizing policy
 - Creates cross-coalition learning
 - Can “trickle-up” to policy core beliefs

Policy windows and process

- **Conditions** must become **problems** for policy change
- Policy windows open with new information or events
- Coalitions pitch policy solutions
- Policy entrepreneurs negotiate policy beliefs
- Act quick to get on the agenda before the window closes!

Kingdon, John. (1984). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. Interpretation by Samantha Becker.



Take-aways

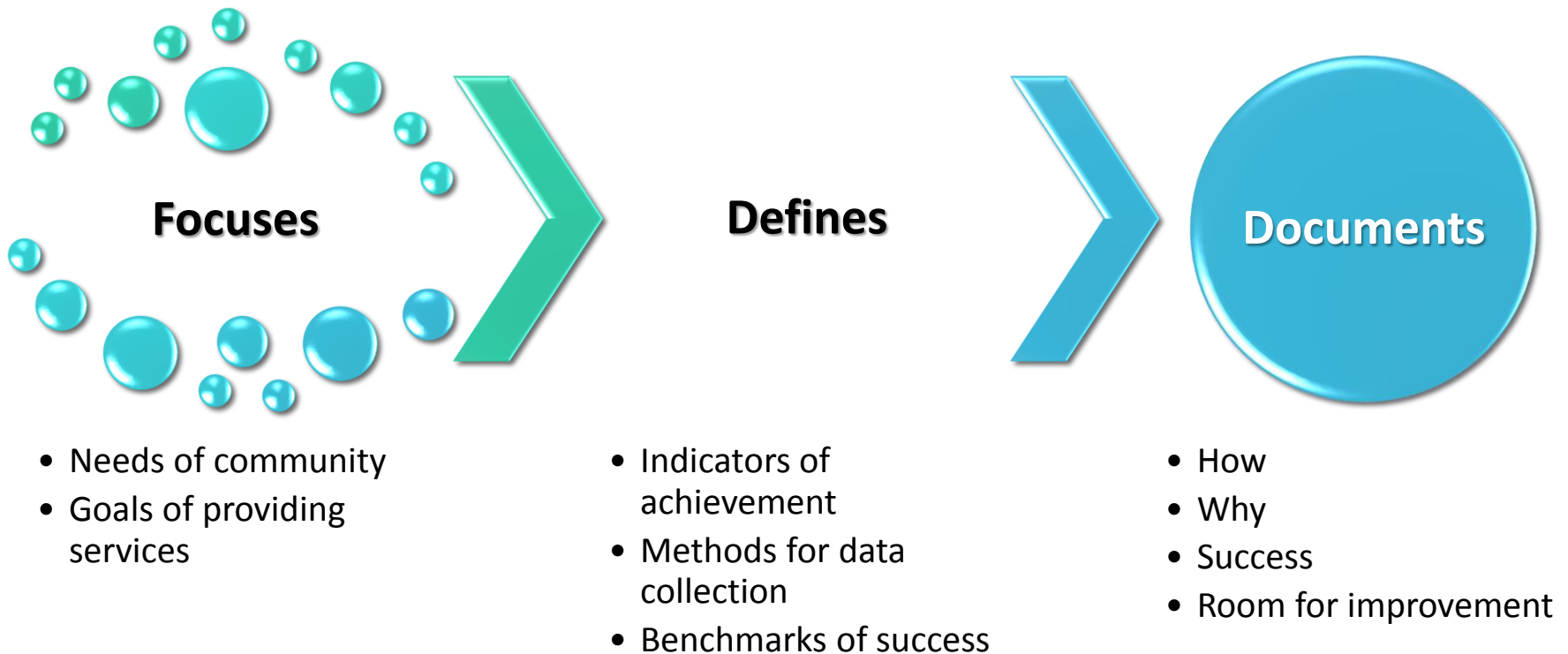
- Public services need to be substantively valuable, operationally feasible, and politically legitimate.
- Policy change happens when a condition becomes seen as problem. Focusing events, changes in leadership, and new information can open up policy windows where coalitions and policy entrepreneurs can work to change policies.
- People and coalitions involved in policy making come with deep core beliefs that are very hard to change. Information can sometimes change policy core beliefs. Working across coalitions to implement policy can produce information that changes beliefs.
- An effective public manager defines the problem for policy makers, acts as a policy entrepreneur to work across coalitions, and gathers and provides information that leads to better decision making.

Evaluation!



WHERE'S ALL THAT INFORMATION GOING TO
COME FROM?

Evaluation is policy learning



Theory of change

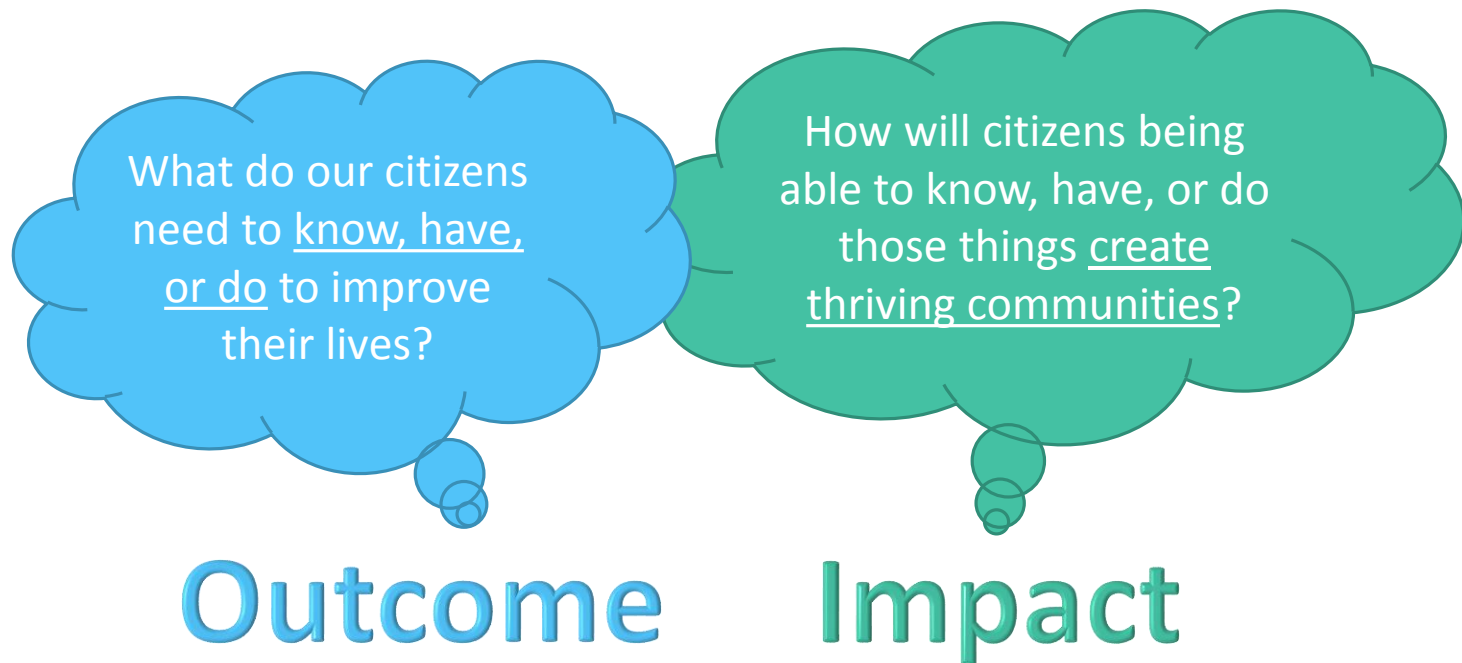
DISCOVERING AND MAPPING OUTCOMES

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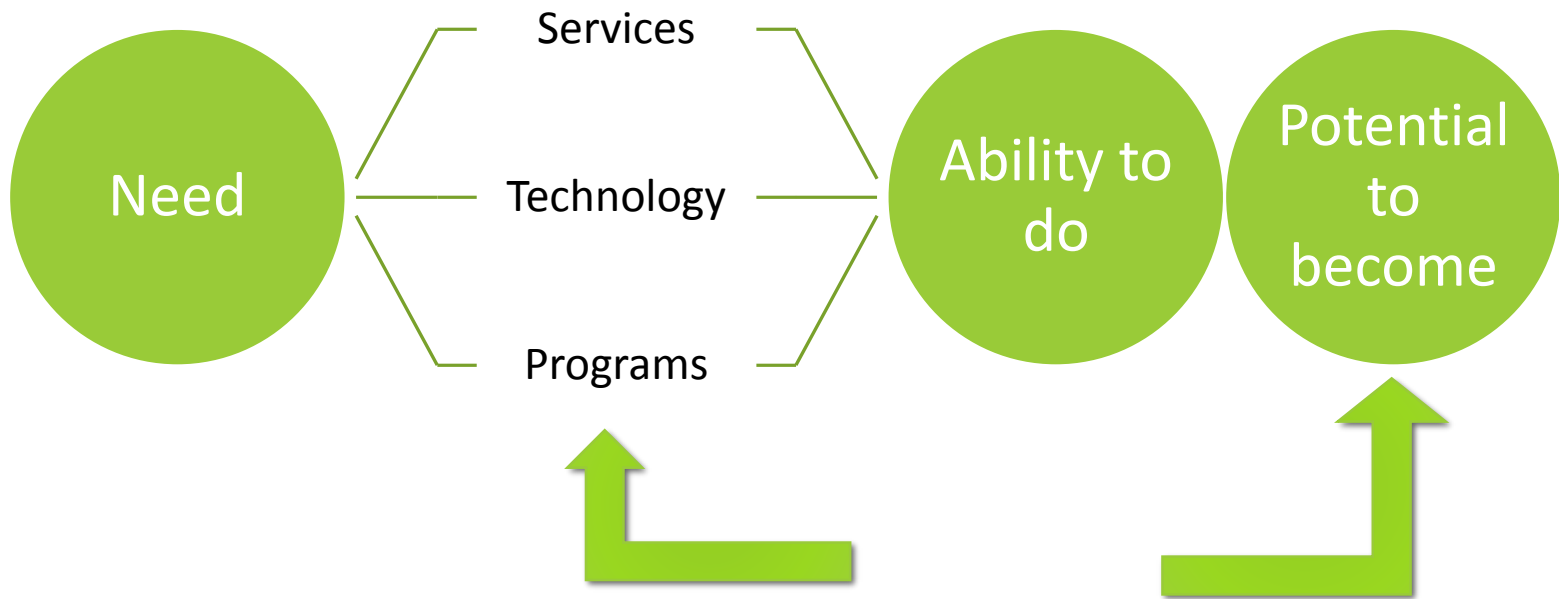
What are you trying to accomplish?

Montana's vision:

Libraries are leaders in creating thriving communities.



How do you think it works?



What do you do here...

to help your patrons get here?

Why and how do you think it helps?

Let's do this!

- Choose a program, activity, service, or resource
- List all the outcomes you can think of that might come from use or participation
 - Think about changes in knowing, being, doing
 - Take it from the first step to the last
 - Connect to the mission of the library. How does it contribute to the library's impact?
 - Think about other organizations and how your work might contribute to theirs
 - Think about outcomes as they're related to the strategic triangle
 - Keep going until you can't think of any other outcomes
- Arrange the outcomes in a logical progression starting with early outcomes and ending with impacts

Theory → Evaluation

Does the theory underlying your program make sense?

Analyze the logical reasoning

- Is there evidence (scientific theory, social theory, research, evaluation) that the program works the way you think it does?
- What are your assumptions about how program works for which you don't have evidence?

It strengthens the evaluation when your theory of change has external validation. Where you're not sure yet is where you insert evaluation.

Evaluation around theory of change should be built into program implementation.

Logic models

THE NEXT STEP IN DEVELOPING DATA

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A theory of change walks into a logic model...

We provide this..

Inputs

Activities

So that patrons can do this..

Outputs

So that patrons can know this..

Early outcomes

So that patrons can have/be this..

Intermediate outcomes

So that communities can become..

Impact!

Indicators

FIGURING OUT WHAT TO MEASURE



What should indicators do?

- Provide information to measure *how well* programs are leading to specific goals
- Focus staff and boards on valuable and achievable goals and help prevent *mission creep*
- Collect information to help better allocate resources and improve services
- Organize evidence to show the value of services to funders and other stakeholders

Designing indicators

Indicators should be:

- Valid and reliable
- Specific and unique
- Observable and measurable
- Cost effective to collect
- Understandable and relevant
- Time bound

(Hatry, 2006)



Let's do this!

- Turn the outcomes from your theory of change into indicators.
- Think about what you would need to know to know whether an outcome had occurred.
- Don't worry right now about whether you can collect data for the indicator.

E.g. Access to databases helps students complete homework.

- Number of students who access databases
- Number of students who find relevant resources
- Number of citations students use in term papers
- Grades of students who use databases for homework
- Satisfaction of teachers with the rigor of academic papers

Can you critique these indicators against the criteria?

Data collection

Choose your methods



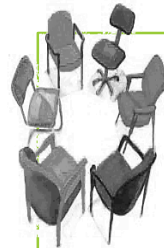
Observation



Logs



Interviews



Focus groups



Surveys

Let's talk about bias...

“I believe that the operational principle for most programs is that it is better to be roughly right than to be precisely ignorant.”

--Harry Hatry

Hatry, H. P. (January 01, 2002). Performance Measurement: Fashions and Fallacies. *Public Performance and Management Review*, 25, 4, 352-358.

Decision-making

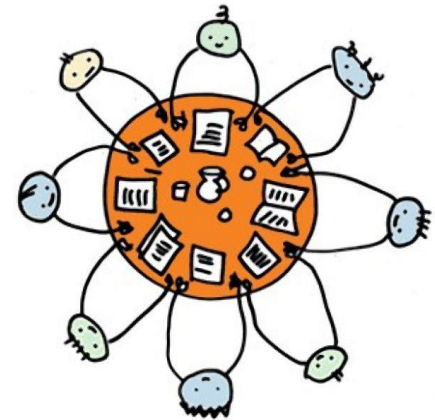
Reflective practice

Core set of questions guide the conversation

- Are we meeting or exceeding our goals? Why/why not?
- What are the programmatic implications?
- What specific recommendations does this team have for tweaking the program activities to increase our impact?

Generate results – Use what you've learned

Document discussion & decisions



Communicating with stakeholders

- Let your key stakeholders know what you've learned from your data collection and how that has informed your programming
- Let program participants know that they have been “heard”
- Demonstrate to your board and funders that your organization is a learning organization, outcomes-oriented, and strategic

Partnerships & advocacy

The situated logic model: map your change to your partners

