

**SUMMARY OF PANEL DISCUSSION
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH WEBINAR
1 AUGUST 2022, 2-5PM**

<p>1. Is the eventual goal of the Sector Evaluation Framework (SEF) to standardize all measures? What about the existing tools or evaluation frameworks that social service agencies (SSAs) currently use? Is there room for SSAs to use their own quantitative measures or qualitative data?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sector Evaluation Framework aims to provide a common language to consider progress and impact across NCSS-funded programmes, while allowing for flexibility at the programme level. The Framework is one which all stakeholders can use as a consistent set of measures for evaluation. • While SEF proposes to agencies a set of possible common outcome measures and related instruments, agencies are welcome to continue using their own tools even as they align with NCSS' recommendations. This can include qualitative observations to supplement the SEF measures. SEF is by no means the be all and end all of evaluating programmes. • NCSS welcomes any SSAs who are interested to be onboarded to contact us for a discussion at research@ncss.gov.sg.
<p>2. Will NCSS share the SEF data with SSAs to identify needs and/or programme gaps?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCSS is in the process of supporting onboarded agencies with the basic data cleaning and processing required for reporting of their programme outcomes. With the current data collection process, we typically work out with agencies how frequently they would require the data and extract, clean and process it as necessary for SSAs' use. We also discuss the timeline for delivery of the dataset so SSAs receive it in a timely manner for their purposes. The intent is for agencies to have better view of aggregated sector and sub-sector trends with SEF data in due time. • There will also be a range of other ways information on sector-wide needs and programme gaps will be disseminated by NCSS to the sector, such as the research pulse, online dashboards and social service sector repository.
<p>3. Do the panelists have any advice on building a research and evaluation team, given limited resourcing and need to obtain buy-in from stakeholders?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone needs to evaluate everything all the time. We suggest that SSAs prioritise and start small first with identified objectives and clearly scoped projects. Focus on showcasing your value (e.g., findings and results) to stakeholders, and resources will follow. • When first starting out, there may not be a need to invest significantly in manpower. Consider instead investing time to partner with Institutes of Higher Learning or tapping on students. However, over time you will need financial resources to sustain evaluation

and research. Consider including evaluation as a component when requesting for programme funding.

4. Do the panelists have any advice on programme evaluation? How to develop realistic impact goals? How to balance between long and short term evaluations? Is there a place for evaluating small scale projects?

- It is important to pick a sensible moment to evaluate, not too soon or too late, with reference to the programme's overall Theory of Change. Sometimes it is not realistic to expect to see changes immediately, some only manifest only years later. In the short term, you can measure the change in attitudes or proxy behaviours. We encourage SSAs to set targets which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).
- Long term evaluation may not be feasible or desirable for all programmes. They are usually supported by academics and not just one organisation. Consider what is practical and if the funder is willing to support a long term evaluation.
- There is a tendency to see large projects as working on something significant. But small scale evaluations also have their place for example, to see if you are on track to achieving your outcomes, or to produce a proof of concept. Engage donors and funders and check if they are happy to see the evaluation outcomes. You can consider suitable, simplified, easy to implement measures for small scale projects.

Thank you to everyone who participated the in panel discussion!

Should you have further questions or if your question was not adequately addressed, please write in to us at research@ncss.gov.sg.