Evaluation
A Systematic Approach

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Chapter 6:
Impact Evaluation:
Isolating the Effects of
Social Programs in the Real World

The Nature and Importance of Impact Evaluation
(1 of 2)

- Program effect
- Highly valued by stakeholders and evaluators
- Cause and effect

The Nature and Importance of Impact Evaluation

- Additional impact questions
  - Unanticipated effects
  - Variable program effects
  - Dose-response analysis
  - Fidelity

When Is an Impact Evaluation Appropriate?
(1 of 3)

- Pilot programs
  - Demonstration program
  - Efficacy trial
  - Proof of concept

When Is an Impact Evaluation Appropriate?

- New programs
  - Scale up after initial evaluation
  - Sponsors of innovative programs

When Is an Impact Evaluation Appropriate?
(3 of 3)

- Ongoing programs
  - Modified to enhance its effectiveness
  - Accommodate revised program goals
  - Reduce costs.

What Would Have Happened Without the Program?
(1 of 2)

- Counterfactuals
  - One of the greatest challenges
  - People will change in some way without participating in a program.
  - Cannot control the environment

What Would Have Happened Without the Program?
(2 of 2)

- Selection bias
  - Participation is typically voluntary.
  - Participants may be more motivated on measured outcomes.

The Logic of Impact Evaluation: The Potential Outcomes Framework

(1 of 2)

- Aids in understanding

- Helps us identify the assumptions needed

- Guides evaluators efforts

The Logic of Impact Evaluation: The Potential Outcomes Framework
(2 of 2)

Table 6.1. **Possible Potential Outcomes**		**If Exposed to Program**	
		Success	Failure
If Not Exposed to Program	Success	A bulletproof	C backfire
	Failure	B bull's eye	D out of range

The Fundamental Problem of Causal Inference
(1 of 3)

- Unavoidable missing data

- No data on counterfactuals

- Will always be an estimate

The Fundamental Problem of Causal Inference

- Estimation of missing counterfactual outcomes
  - Group level estimates
  - Program effect

The Fundamental Problem of Causal Inference

(3 of 3)

- Validity of program effect estimates
  - Sample of program participants
  - Internal validity
  - External validity

Peter H. Rossi and Gary T. Henry, Evaluation: A Systematic Approach 8e. SAGE Publishing, 2019.

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