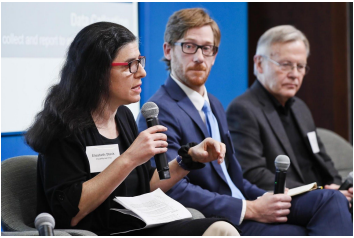


## The Next Generation of Evidence Campaign

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In my way of thinking about evidence-based policy, the single most important player is the group of people who establish and run programs that actually deliver services. All politics might not be local but all program implementation is.”

Ron Haskins, Co-chair, U.S.  
Commission on Evidence-Based  
Policymaking



Project Evident harnesses the power of evidence for greater impact. Since our founding, we have advocated for a new approach to building and using evidence in the social sector. We call this improved ecosystem “The Next Generation of Evidence” and define it as:

- **Practitioner Centric:** Practitioners – those who provide programs and services – must be empowered to drive their own evidence agendas.
- **Embracing an “R&D” Approach:** Research and Development (R&D) – a disciplined process for learning, testing and improving – must become standard practice in the education and social sectors to enable timely and relevant continuous evidence building.
- **Elevating the Voices of Communities:** Communities must have the power to shape and participate in the evidence building process of practitioners and the field.

The Next Generation of Evidence Campaign, in collaboration with the Brookings Institution, will increase knowledge about these core components and advance progress on each of them in practice. Building off of our [December 2019 convening](#), the Campaign will initially encompass 1) a *Build Me the Evidence* book project, 2) partnership and policy initiatives, and 3) convenings designed to increase public and private funder support for rigorous and continuous evidence building and use by practitioners.

### Why Evidence Matters, Even – and Especially – Right Now

In light of the coronavirus pandemic and recent events demonstrating the entrenched racism in this country, [we see a greater need to accelerate this work](#). These crises have put a stark spotlight on existing inequities in health, housing, education, and economic safety in our society that demand systematic intervention. A [stronger, more equitable data and evidence ecosystem](#) – one that centers on the voices of people and communities most directly impacted by the problems we seek to solve – can help. [Evidence helps](#) us understand the needs of communities, make decisions in times of change and scarcity, and build and do more of what works. Investing in this ecosystem now will allow us to build an increasingly resilient country that provides more equitable opportunities for all.

## Key Learnings To-Date

We held convenings in April and December of 2019, bringing together leading practitioners, funders, researchers, and policymakers. Here is what we heard:

- There was clear buy-in and energy around supporting practitioner-centric continuous evidence building.
- For researchers, this means actively partnering with practitioners to determine what questions are studied and how findings are used to strengthen programs.
- For funders, this means balancing existing support for compliance studies and point-in-time impact studies with increased investment in practitioner-centric continuous evidence building focused on learning and improvement. This includes support for the tools, strategies and expertise practitioners need to strengthen early stage work along the evidence continuum.
- For policymakers, this means that evidence building and evaluation costs should be included as allowable and direct costs in public grants. This also means that government should consider how to embrace testing and improving social and education programs more expansively. Government subsidizes private sector R&D, why not social sector R&D as well, especially given the potential social benefit?
- Finally, communities need a seat at the data and evidence table. We heard widely voiced concerns about emerging issues regarding ethical data usage, and enthusiasm about equity and inclusion in efforts that use community data.

Today, the data-for-evidence market remains skewed, with the bulk of funding going not to nonprofits for evidence building but to third-party research firms for periodic studies that evaluate programs but do not leave nonprofit providers with a sustained capacity for learning and innovation. Shifting a fraction of the multibillion research industry to see a larger proportion of grants going to nonprofits (up from .0003% in 2015) would strengthen practitioner capacity to build evidence, making them better prepared for third party evaluation. We can also accelerate learning by shifting third-party evaluations from a primarily compliance focus to a learning one.

**Click here for more facts and figures.**



“

“We get hired for hundreds of evaluations...with the bulk of them through the accountability lens. I'll know the script is flipped when we start getting calls for more through the learning lens.”

Chris Spera  
Abt Associates

## Campaign Activities

### 1) *Build Me the Evidence Book*

Working with Ron Haskins at Brookings, we will co-author a new book to build on Haskins' *Show Me the Evidence*, which highlighted the importance of prioritizing funding for programs with evidence. Our proposed *Build Me the Evidence* will focus on how practitioner-centric evidence building, in improved partnership with researchers, can lead to earlier and stronger outcomes.

A diverse group of leaders and innovators will be invited to contribute to this book and envision a possible future that flips the script and puts practitioners and communities at the center. Case studies featuring practitioners at various stages in their evidence-building journey will highlight concrete illustrations of how continuous evidence building can benefit organizations and outcomes for communities.

### 2) *Next Generation Partnerships and Policy Initiatives*

We will advance high signal value policy initiatives to increase support for continuous evidence building and move towards establishing R&D as standard practice in the social and education sectors. Continuous evidence building by practitioners should be considered a core part of operations and an allowable grant cost for private and public funders.

As a recent example, as part of a coalition effort, Project Evident provided comments on OMB's proposed changes to the Uniform Guidance in March supporting the proposed clarification that program evaluation costs are an example of a direct cost that is permissible under a Federal award. In addition, we recommended that evidence building activities also be allowable (including data infrastructure, data collection and analytics, training staff to use data for program improvement, performance management and strategic evidence planning). To minimize new funding needed for this data and evidence capacity, agencies should reallocate funds from low-impact technical assistance to support this core capacity.



"I thought [the Next Generation of Evidence Convening] was really incredible and timely. What fantastic panelists but more importantly, what an incredible audience. I was so honored to be amongst this group of both grounded and thoughtful leaders. I was so pleased to reconnect with familiar faces in this field and to make some critical new connections."

Lola Adedokun  
Doris Duke Charitable  
Foundation



"Collecting data and evidence helps us answer questions, as well as figure out the questions we haven't asked yet."

Jon Gettle  
Prosecutor Impact

In addition, we will invite **Next Generation Partnerships with funders, community partners, researchers and other stakeholders**. For example, Project Evident and Results for America are discussing how to incorporate continuous evidence building into Result for America’s [Standards of Excellence](#) and [What Works Bootcamp](#) for state leaders.

### 3) Convenings

We are planning a series of convenings to bring together practitioners, funders, researchers, policymakers, and communities to spotlight successful strategies, offer in depth learning opportunities, and generate new ideas. This will include an annual national conference at Brookings in 2021 when it is safe to do so, as well as virtual roundtables and workshops in the near-term. For example, we are planning a virtual private funder roundtable to be hosted by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation that will focus on specific steps for private funders to consider in their grantmaking. Through workshops and webinars, we will offer trainings on topics of greatest interest to stakeholders, potentially including Strategic Evidence Plans – introducing key concepts, and potentially more; and authentic conversations with communities about emerging trends in education including big data, predictive analytics, and algorithms.

Through Project Evident’s Education Practice, we can offer trainings to improve the capacity of district and state leaders to use evidence in decision making, including understanding needs, prioritizing resources, reallocating budgets, and measuring the impact of new approaches. For example, Project Evident recently worked with the Baltimore County Public School System to identify technical and career education programs for students, using student demand and regional labor market data to determine the highest value opportunities. The engagement led to the reallocation of nearly \$600,000 in resources for the upcoming school year, with a contribution to the district’s 4-year Career and Technical Education Strategic Plan.



“Most science agencies believe that research follows a ladder: exploration, development, efficacy, and effectiveness...This neat structured pattern is not reality-based. In reality the image is not one of steps in terms of evidence gathering – it’s more like a spaghetti bowl. It’s twisting and turning, forward and back.”

Mark Schneider  
Institute of Education Sciences

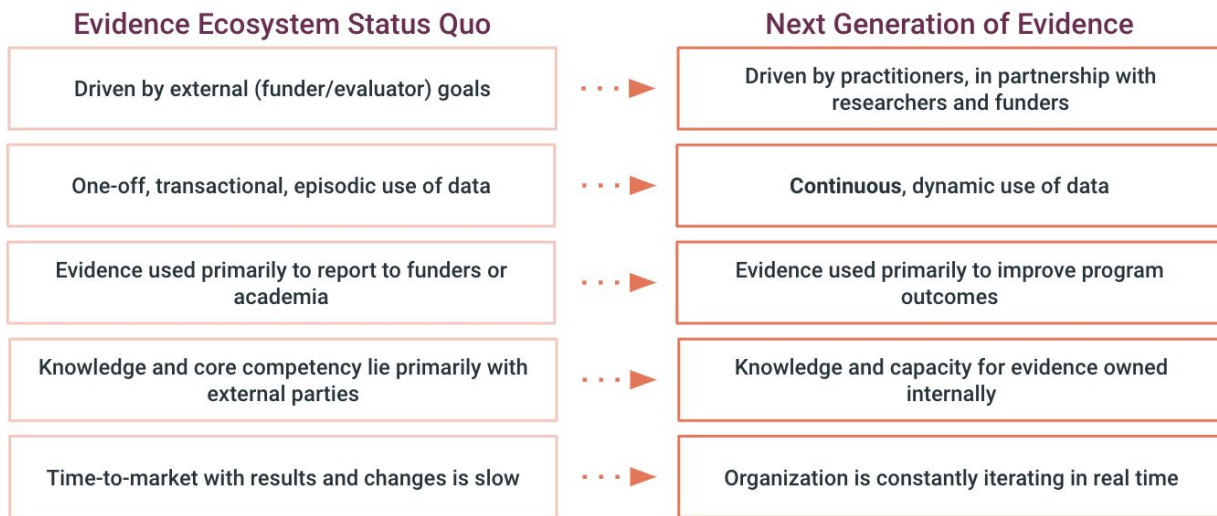


What brought me to CEO initially was that it was an organization that had embarked on a randomized control trial and had some promising evidence...but what has excited me the most the past 11 years being with CEO is the rigor of measurement, the constant innovation, the questioning of what works and what doesn’t. I came for the RCT, but I stayed for the R&D.

Sam Schaeffer  
Center for Employment Opportunities

## Who We Are

Project Evident believes that by empowering practitioners to drive their own evidence building and strengthening the surrounding ecosystem, we can increase the number of effective solutions in the social sector and scale them faster. Our work has become even more urgent with Covid-19, which has magnified the existing and widespread disparities in conditions and outcomes in our country today. At the core of Project Evident’s partnerships are the co-creation of Strategic Evidence Plans (SEPs) – roadmaps that help organizations use evidence to inform decision-making, prioritize investments and optimize operations.



We are working to fundamentally change the status quo. Together, we can develop the Next Generation of Evidence.

## Join Us

We’d love to hear from you! If you would like to learn more, have suggestions for policy or partnership initiatives, *Build Me the Evidence* case studies or chapters, or other ideas, please contact us: Tamar Bauer, Entrepreneur in Residence, at [tbauer@projectevident.org](mailto:tbauer@projectevident.org); Dustin Sposato, Communications Manager, at [dsposato@projectevident.org](mailto:dsposato@projectevident.org).

## Next Generation of Evidence Campaign Advisory Committee (in formation)

- **Lola Adedokun**, Program Director for Child Well-Being and Director for the African Health Initiative, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
- **Jon Baron**, Vice President of Evidence-Based Policy, Arnold Ventures
- **Ron Haskins**, Brookings Institution
- **Amy O'Hara**, Director, Federal Statistical Research Data Center, Georgetown University
- **Nisha Patel**, Senior Fellow, Social Policy Institute, Washington University in St. Louis
- **Marika Pfefferkorn**, Director, Twin Cities Innovation Alliance and Co-Founder, Coalition to Stop the Cradle to Prison Algorithm
- **Elisabeth Stock**, CEO and Co-Founder, PowerMyLearning
- **Vivian Tseng**, Senior Vice President, William T. Grant Foundation