



## TUPAC Technical Assistance

### Sustainable Change

In March of 2013, TUPAC contracted with *Nonprofit Impact* to assist the Program and its contractors develop greater capacity for sustainability. In addition to providing training, as part of their technical assistance to the TUPAC Program, *Nonprofit Impact* developed the Sustainability Plan Toolkit, which is available, by request, to TUPAC contractors.

The dominant funding and delivery model followed by most evidence-based programs includes: securing the majority of funding from one or two sources; working with local organizations and agencies to implement the program; and gathering data, learning lessons, and building infrastructure. This model serves to get the program implemented and delivers measurable results.

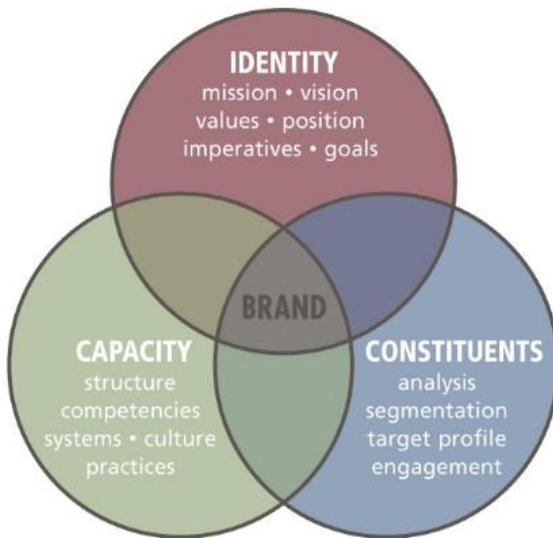
However, the current model fails to deliberately, methodically plan for long-term sustainability. Instead, the model seems to assume that sustainability will be a naturally occurring side effect: demonstrate results and a private funding source will emerge, partners will raise needed funds locally, or an organization will build the program into its annual budget. Unfortunately, most practitioners have a great deal of evidence to the contrary.

*Nonprofit Impact* has found that the root of the problem lies with a core misunderstanding about the very nature of program sustainability: that sustainability equals money.

Sustainability and funding are not the same thing. Program sustainability is about much more than money. This mis-definition of sustainability neglects important variables like operating environment, leadership, political support, human capacity, and technological and organizational infrastructure. Instead, *Nonprofit Impact* defines sustainability as:

*“Having the human, financial, technological, and organizational resources to provide services to meet needs and attain results towards mission on an ongoing basis; and requiring the organizational and programmatic infrastructure to carry out core functions independent of individuals or one-time opportunities.”*

*Nonprofit Impact’s* Integrated Strategy for Success and Sustainability training offers an alternative model for sustainability—one that considers all aspects of a program as a cohesive whole rather than singling out funding as the key to sustainability. The model shows that a program needs a strong, clear identity, a base of engaged constituents, and capacity that is aligned to deliver the results promised by its identity and meet the needs of its constituents in order to be sustainable.



Integrated Strategy for Success and Sustainability © 2010 Nonprofit Impact

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## The Three Steps

The three steps of the path to program stability offer a powerful, practical, and proven way to address sustainability. The key to program sustainability is not what worked in another state, how a funder expects you to structure your partnerships, or a new funding source – instead it lies in the following three steps and answering:

1. What *exactly* are we trying to sustain?
2. How much will sustaining it cost?
3. Does the environment support sustainability?

Answering these questions deliberately, objectively, and thoroughly will determine if sustainability is feasible, and if so, will inform the design of a sustainability model that fits.

## The Sustainability Plan Toolkit

The Sustainability Plan Toolkit is a step-by-step guide to develop sustainable programs and organizations. The toolkit was developed by *Nonprofit Impact* for TUPAC and is available to TUPAC contractors, upon request.

*This Technical Assistance sheet is adapted from supporting materials provided by Nonprofit Impact. Other booklets and articles available from Nonprofit Impact can be downloaded from their website at [www.nonprofitimpact.com](http://www.nonprofitimpact.com).*