

Evaluation Report – Executive Summary



Evaluation of Breakfast Club of Canada's Support Models

Introduction

In 2019, Breakfast Club of Canada commissioned Credo, a social impact agency, to conduct an extensive evaluation of its main support models. Credo's evaluation focuses on the relevance and effectiveness of the Club's role and approach in supporting school breakfast programs across Canada.

More specifically, it allows the Club to complement existing research by understanding the **extent to which the Club is successful in providing the support needed by school communities**, as well as what could be improved in the Club's approach. Since the Club collaborates with a variety of stakeholders to support the development and sustainability of each school's breakfast program, it makes attributing program outcomes to individual actors and/or factors difficult. For that reason, the evaluation measures the **Club's contribution** to the programs' success and impacts, rather than the cumulative impacts of the programs. It also provides clarity on the collaborative pathway to social impact. **Reflection, learning and improvement** are at the core of this process; this knowledge will allow the Club to fine-tune its practices and be even more effective in its support roles.

Aspirational Impact – A Definition of Success

The Club's **ultimate goal** is that all children and youth in Canada, up to 18 years of age, have access and are accustomed to having a nutritionally balanced meal at the start of their educational day, throughout the school year.

The Club's definition of success is twofold:

- 1. Cause recognition and advocacy work:** The importance of a healthy breakfast is widely recognized and acted upon across Canada.
- 2. Capacity-building work:** All schools have the capacities to implement and sustain universal and quality breakfast programs, which also provides larger benefits to the school communities.

Evaluation Report – Executive Summary

Methodology Overview

Prior to the evaluation, Credo consulted internal and external stakeholders to clarify the Club's aspirations:

- ▶ In terms of the **logic model**: What is the change we seek to create and what activities are necessary to get there?
- ▶ In terms of the **approach**: How do we conduct those activities and what guiding principles do we follow?

Then, **an evaluation method was designed to compare the current situation with the ideal situation.**

The evaluation covered two aspects:

1. Capacity-building: What in the Club's approach has contributed most to effective capacity-building and what hasn't?

Ten capacities that schools and support actors need to work on in order to achieve success were identified **before** the evaluation.

Schools

1. Capacity to implement and sustain universal and quality breakfast programs
2. Capacity to create inclusive and destigmatized safe spaces
3. Capacity to promote nutrition literacy and healthy lifelong habits
4. Capacity to create engagement around the programs within the schools
5. Capacity to mobilize the larger community around the programs
6. Capacity to obtain funding and support for food and equipment, human resources and administrative costs

Support actors

7. Capacity to support the development of high-impact breakfast programs
8. Capacity to raise funding and resources and allocate them to local school communities¹
9. Capacity to onboard stakeholders around the programs, promote their benefits and contribute to destigmatizing them
10. Capacity to be an advocate for the cause and push the agenda forward

¹ School communities include schools and their community partners such as external volunteers, partner organizations, etc.

Evaluation Report – Executive Summary

2. Distance to the Club's Principles of Effectiveness: What is the gap between the current way of working and the desired way of working?

The Club's team and Credo collaborated to design the Club's **6 Principles of Effectiveness**², which are guiding statements the Club commits to follow in order to be effective in its support role and in meeting the capacity-building needs expressed by its stakeholders:

1. Establish proactive, collaborative, adaptive and trust-based, long-term relationships with stakeholders
2. Help each program achieve its full potential with coordinators acting as allies focused on social impact³ first
3. Direct funding in a transparent manner toward the needs prioritized by the communities (rather than those of financial/other partners)
4. Leverage national influence and partnerships locally and transfer privileged access for the benefit of stakeholders
5. Proactively facilitate knowledge transfer (within the Club, between the Club and stakeholders, and between stakeholders)
6. Empower grassroots voices by actively engaging them and amplifying them in advocacy efforts

Stakeholders at the school level and at the support level (school boards, community and provincial organizations, corporate funders) participated in the evaluation activities. Those include internal and external evaluation methods such as interviews, surveys, workshops, document reviews, etc.

² Principles of Effectiveness: A principle of effectiveness is a statement that provides guidance about how to think or behave toward some desired result (either explicit or implicit), based on norms, values, beliefs, experience and knowledge. The statement is a hypothesis until evaluated within some context to determine its relative meaningfulness, truth, feasibility and utility for those attempting to follow it.

³ When talking about social impact, we consider four elements: the value created through a person's activity; the value seen by the beneficiaries and all others involved; an impact that includes both positive and negative effects; and an impact judged against a benchmark of what the situation would have been without the proposed activity.

Evaluation Report – Executive Summary

Main Findings

1. Capacity-Building Evaluation

1.1. The evaluation showed that what **schools** and **support actors** value the most in the Club's capacity-building work is:

Schools

- ▶ The Club's ability to deliver food and equipment
- ▶ The accessibility, availability and allyship with coordinators
- ▶ The Club's contribution to the creation of local links and awareness among stakeholders
- ▶ The adaptability and flexibility demonstrated by the Club
- ▶ The opportunity to have access to a consistent, stable and less demanding source of funding
- ▶ The provision of educational, awareness and inspirational tools

Support actors

- ▶ Being guided by the same ultimate objectives as the partners
- ▶ Being a major ally and advisor in concerted mobilization and awareness work around programs
- ▶ The Club's ability to advance the cause
- ▶ Equitable knowledge sharing among partners
- ▶ Funding flexibility that allows partners to direct resources to priority community needs
- ▶ The Club's ability to recognize, respect and even reinforce different support approaches

1.2. **Schools** and **support actors** identified areas where the Club could improve:

Schools

- ▶ Funding for human resources (e.g., Wages for local supervision)
- ▶ Better support for schools in their ability to offer diverse and culturally appropriate food
- ▶ More consistency in the depth of its support across schools
- ▶ More involvement and presence on the part of the Club, as well as more stability from the coordinators

Support actors

- ▶ More consistency in knowledge sharing, specifically in allowing partners to direct resources to priority needs and in recognizing and reinforcing different support approaches
- ▶ Advancing the cause in a more collaborative way

2. Principles of Effectiveness Evaluation

2.1. Elements in the Club's current approach most aligned with its aspirations:

- ▶ Sharing expertise with school communities and being able to support the implementation of quality programs
- ▶ Helping to promote the benefits of the programs, onboarding stakeholders as well as advancing the cause
- ▶ Listening to the stakeholders' needs and being proactive in creating new projects and partnerships
- ▶ Allyship posture during the pandemic
- ▶ Potential influence on social norms and policies, thanks to brand recognition, legitimacy, national reach, privileged access to information, decision-making circles and public platforms.

2.2. Elements in the Club's current approach that cause the most distance with its aspirations:

- ▶ Tension between supporting and leading roles, and between quality control and empowerment
- ▶ Inconsistency between support models and geographies (i.e., the Club's consistency in regard to its principles of effectiveness is higher in Quebec than in the rest of Canada)
- ▶ Lack of strategic clarity and clear success metrics for capacity-building and the support role
- ▶ Lack of flexibility in terms of funding human resources for program coordination
- ▶ Stakeholder engagement often remains limited to information and consultation and rarely translates into co-creation
- ▶ Lack of transparency and collaboration with local community support actors during fundraising endeavours
- ▶ Reluctance to share different types of power, more specifically information, contacts, access and decision-making processes.

Evaluation Report – Executive Summary

Recommendations

The evaluation's results and insights lead to several key recommendations for the Club:

- 1. Success and strategic clarity:** Revisit the definition of success. Increase transparency about how the Club measures its success. Further clarify the strategy behind achieving universality, the nature of the relationships and the power dynamics.
- 2. Assume specific roles:** Better identify and distinguish: 1) what's needed so that school communities can feed children; 2) what the corresponding capacity-building role of the Club is.
 - ▶ **For the support role:** Move from a quality control role to a coaching and empowerment role to support communities according to the needs of the field.
 - ▶ **For the advocacy role:** Move to an advocacy role that demonstrates the needs of communities and their strengths in promoting the common mission of feeding children. Move from a logic of universal standards to a logic of universal support. Adopt a more collective approach to advocacy.
- 3. Focus on relevance:** Keep elements of the new posture that has been adopted during the pandemic. Allow funding to finance what's most needed. Help school boards, schools and community organizations find and access other sources of funding.
- 4. Keep sharing power:** Move to the next level of engagement and co-creation. Be more audacious in the sharing of information, contacts, access and decision-making processes.
- 5. Lead on knowledge exchange:** Use technological tools to advance multi-directional knowledge exchange and eventually to facilitate the collective documentation of the advancement of the cause across Canada.

Learnings and insights from the evaluation will be incorporated into the Club's short- and long-term objectives. Ongoing evaluation will allow monitoring progress and improvements.

All stakeholders are able to review the full evaluation report and presentation upon request. The Club offers its thanks to the internal and external stakeholders who took the time to contribute to the findings of the evaluation report.

