UKFIET International Conference on Education and Development

Ways of Working Internationally

10-12 September, 2013
Learning Across Borders: Creating a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework for The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program

10-12 September, 2013
Overview of Presentation

- The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program
- The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Framework
- MEL Challenges, Solutions, and Lessons Learned
The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program
During the past decade, developing nations have achieved a remarkable expansion in educational enrollment. Despite these gains, several problems remain:

- Enrollment in secondary and tertiary education remains low, particularly among poor and rural populations.
- There are concerns about the quality and relevance of this education, even as demands for an educated workforce increases.
- Many skilled graduates migrate to higher-income countries, for better remuneration and working conditions.
The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program: Program Objectives

Through a partnership with secondary schools, universities and NGOs, The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program aims to:

- Provide access to education
- Provide comprehensive financial, academic, social, and career support
- Cultivate a commitment to go back and give back to their regions of origin
The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program: Program Components

Comprehensive scholarships that provide wrap-around support

21st century skill building

Transition support to school and to the workforce

Give-back and go-back components – mentorship, leadership development, internships

The MasterCard Foundation Scholars and alumni community
Overview of The MasterCard Foundation Scholars

The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program: Partners
The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program
MEL Framework
The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program MEL Framework: Purpose

What is a MEL framework?

- A framework that guides program-level decisions on what to monitor in partner projects, how to use program learnings, and what to evaluate

- MEL framework components:
  - Theory of change
  - Logic model
  - Learning questions
  - Broad evaluation design parameters
The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program MEL Framework: The Process
What is a theory of change?

- A set of concepts, processes, and milestones that helps to explain an outcome or the achievement of a goal
- Provides a road map for change
  - How a series of events leads to a desired outcome
  - How the change will occur
  - What assumptions, processes, and belief systems underpin the change process
The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program

Theory of Change

The Challenge:
The economic growth and social development prospects of developing nations, particularly in Africa, are impaired by a lack of access to high quality secondary and tertiary education. As a result, they lack opportunities to participate fully in economic growth and social transformation.

The Approach:
With support from the MasterCard Foundation, a global network of educational institutions and NGOs has partnered to educate and provide meaningful opportunities for 15,000 talented, socially conscious youth from developing countries. The MasterCard Foundation Scholars would form a cohort of next-generation leaders, equipped and motivated to transform their societies.
The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program Logic Model

- Provides a road map for The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program evaluation—linking inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes, and long-term impacts
- Is anchored in The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program theory of change
- Encompasses all of The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program partners
- Guides MEL plans and activities
The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program MEL Framework: Logic Model Components

**Approach and Inputs**

**Approach**
Provide Scholars with a wide range of opportunities for educational support and enrichment, give back, and leadership development

**Inputs**
Partner expertise

**Activities**
To Serve Scholars
Academic and other support

At Institutions
Revise recruitment procedures

**Outputs**
Scholars using academic and other support services

Partners disseminate lessons learned

**Impacts**
Increased academic performance

New cohort of leaders supports social transformation and economic growth, particularly in Africa

Institutionalized changes foster best practices
The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program MEL Framework: Learning Questions

The learning questions fall into three broad categories:

- Implementation
- Outcomes
- Scale-up
## The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program MEL Framework: Methods and Data Sources

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Learning Questions</th>
<th>Main Design/Methods</th>
<th>Key Data Sources</th>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td><strong>Mixed methods</strong></td>
<td>Quantitative data: Applicant and participant data</td>
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<td>(a) Quantitative analysis of applicant data and of Scholar participation data</td>
<td>Qualitative data: Project documents; interviews and focus groups with participants, administrators, and service providers; field visits</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) Qualitative analysis of implementation (facilitators, barriers, and lessons learned)</td>
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<td>Impacts</td>
<td><strong>Quasi-experimental methods</strong></td>
<td>Quantitative data: surveys</td>
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<td>(a) Quantitative analysis of participant and nonparticipant survey data</td>
<td>Qualitative data: Project documents; interviews and focus groups with students, administrators, and service providers; field visits</td>
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<td>(b) Qualitative analysis to help interpret findings</td>
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<td>Scale-up</td>
<td><strong>Mostly qualitative methods</strong></td>
<td>Qualitative data: Project documents, interviews with administrators and service providers</td>
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<td>(a) Qualitative analysis of efforts to institutionalize and disseminate approaches and best practices</td>
<td>Quantitative data: Project documents</td>
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<td>(b) Limited quantitative analysis to complement qualitative approach</td>
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MEL Framework Challenges, Solutions, and Lessons Learned
MEL Framework Challenges, Solutions, and Lessons Learned: Designing a Unified MEL Framework

Challenge:

- To evaluate The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program at the Program-level we must develop a single MEL framework
- The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program partners are diverse

Solution:

- Develop The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program MEL framework from the “ground up”, through a thorough understanding of partner projects
- Focus on the common thread of implementation that spans all partners, while allowing variations in approach from one partner to the next
MEL Framework Challenges, Solutions, and Lessons Learned: Allowing for Different Evaluation Approaches

Challenge:
- Diversity among The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program partners and of their approaches to implementation meant we could not adopt a common approach to evaluation

Solutions:
- Use a flexible approach that draws on different evaluation approaches for different partners
- Use the most rigorous design that the circumstances of each Scholars Program partner’s implementation allow
MEL Framework Challenges, Solutions, and Lessons Learned: Measurement

Challenge:

- Several key outcomes are difficult to measure
  - “Go back”. Where is “back”? The Scholar’s region, country, or community?
  - “Give back”. How? Volunteering, service-oriented career, or philanthropy?
- Observing outcomes when they happen is challenging
  - Going back and giving back—particularly giving back—may only happen several years in the future

Solutions:

- Ensure that the MEL framework articulates different ways of going and giving back, and plan for collecting these data
- Ensure that the MEL framework identifies problems and sets up plan for tracking The MasterCard Foundation Scholars over time
MEL Challenges, Solutions, and Lessons Learned: Recommendations

Build a broad MEL framework

• To be successful MEL frameworks must encompass all Program partners despite partner diversity

• We created a MEL framework that encompassed a common vision of Program goals, common linkages between Program components, and common questions for learning within the partnership

Build consensus

• The MEL framework must be the product of consultation, early and often
  • Consultation early, to capture the plans and vision of the Foundation and its partners
  • Consult often, to refine the MEL framework so that it reflects each partner
Contacts

Barry Burciul
- bburciul@mastercardfdn.org

Matt Sloan
- msloan@mathematica-mpr.com