

Social Venture Partners Boulder County

Report on Impact in Capacity Building, 2008

Background

Social Venture Partners Boulder County ("SVP") has a dual mission: to strengthen the organizational capacity and sustainability of local nonprofits (investees) while inspiring the philanthropy and volunteerism of our partners.

This report pertains to SVP's effectiveness in building capacity among our investees. We build capacity through cash grants, technical assistance, and connecting partners with nonprofits as volunteers. As a learning organization, SVP seeks to continually assess its progress and improve its performance. In assessing our impact in capacity building, we have prioritized these outcomes:

- Investee satisfaction with SVP
- Value-added of SVP Partners
- Impact of capacity gains on program effectiveness

In June of 2008 we administered tools to gather data on investee outcomes and received responses from 4 of 4, or 100%, of investees who are in their second, third, fourth, or fifth year with SVP. (SVP typically invests in nonprofits for three to five years.)

Methodology

The following data collection tools were used to generate this report:

- Investee Survey, administered in June of 2008 generated qualitative information related to investee satisfaction and the perceived value of volunteer assignments, and quantitative data related to the value-added of SVP partners.
- Most Significant Change Tool, administered in July of 2008, generated information about SVP's Impact on Program Effectiveness.

Limitations to the Data

The data that follows paints a meaningful and important portrait of SVP's impact in its work in building nonprofit capacity. It is nonetheless important to acknowledge several aspects of the research methodology that may impact the data, particularly as it relates to the investee survey.

- Although the information provided by investees was confidential, there is an inherent bias in surveys administered to grantees by funders. To minimize this bias, SVP administered the survey **after** re-funding decisions had been made and announced.
- The quantitative data related to calculating Value-added by SVP Partners are estimates by investees. SVPI has reviewed the investee data, but there is a degree of judgment in these numbers and they should be viewed as estimates.
- The data related to increased capacity gain and/or stories of significant change is subjective and was provided by investees without independent review or verification.

General Information about Respondents:

- Two of the four investees were in their 3rd year of funding from SVP; the other two were in their 2nd year;
- The most recent cash grant to these investees by SVP averaged approximately \$17,500.

Key Findings on Impact

A. INVESTEE SATISFACTION WITH SVP

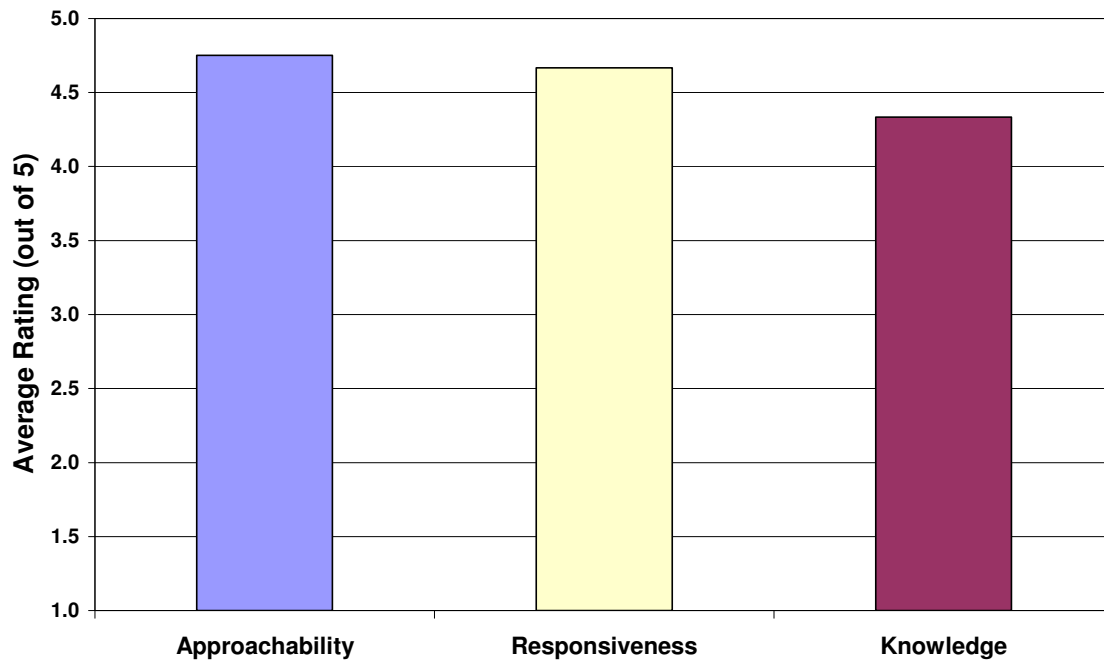
Tracking investee perceptions of SVP is important because of the relationship-intensive nature of the relationship. SVP's prides itself on its transparency with investees and its high level of engagement requires a strong foundation of trust. As such, a high degree of investee satisfaction with SVP relationship is a prerequisite for any meaningful capacity building work.

Overall Satisfaction

Overall, 100% of SVP investees characterized their relationship with SVP as excellent. Satisfaction according to the specific criteria of Approachability, Responsiveness, and Knowledge was as follows:¹

¹ Approachability – The investee staff knows how to contact the Partner/staff/lead; feels comfortable contacting; feels receptiveness to their questions or feedback
 Responsiveness – The investee staff feels that the Partner/staff/lead replies in a timely way; the response is useful or thoughtful; and that the Partner/staff/lead demonstrated openness to the investee staff's feedback
 Knowledge – The investee staff feels that the Partner/staff/lead is able to offer resources or ideas in response to their questions or request for information; that the Partner/staff/lead reflects understanding of their organization's mission and needs

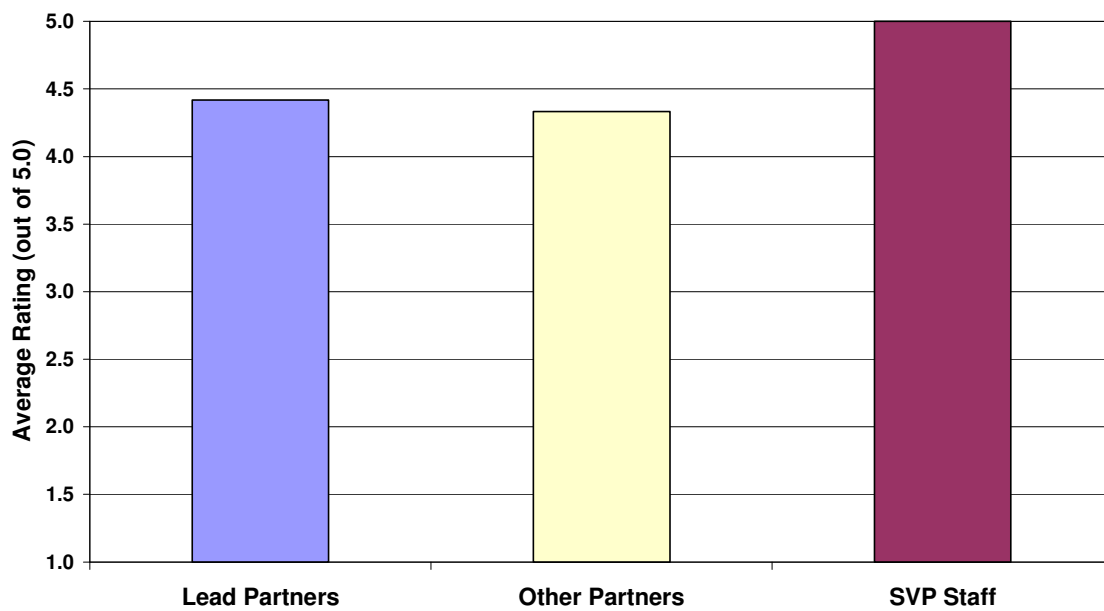
Investee Satisfaction with SVP Overall



Satisfaction with SVP Partners and Staff

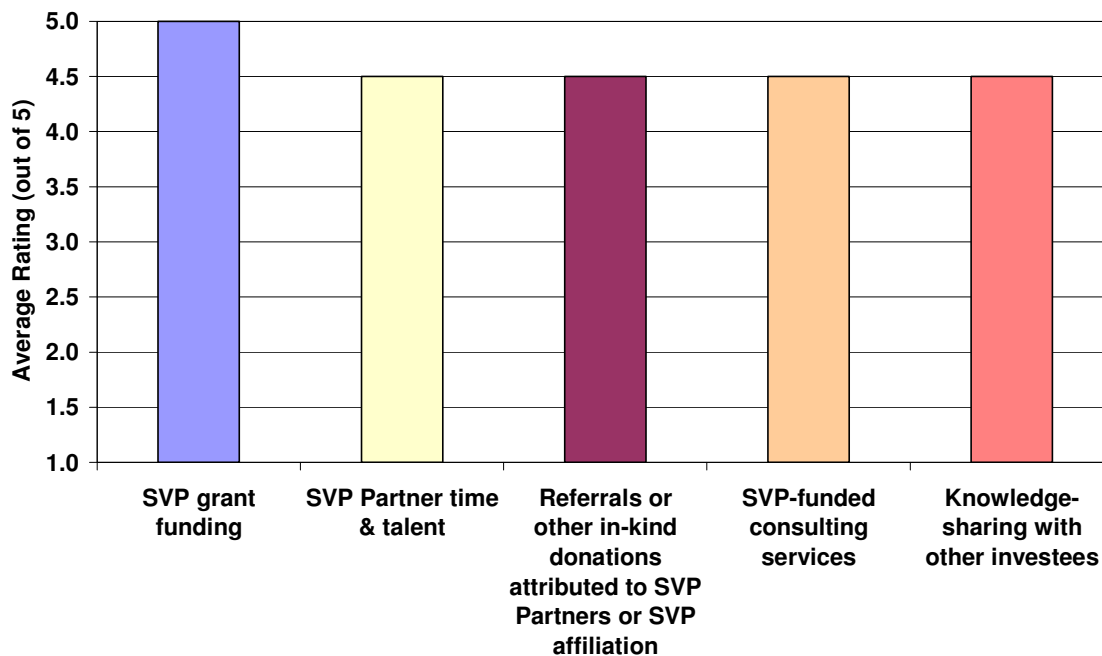
Satisfaction with SVP Lead Partners, Other Partners and Staff was as follows:

Investee Level of Satisfaction with SVP Staff & Partners



Satisfaction According to Different Forms of SVP Assistance

Satisfaction by Form of SVP Assistance



SVP asked investees for their perceptions of their relative satisfaction and value with the different forms of assistance that they received. They were asked to rank their satisfaction with the following types of assistance: 1) cash grants, 2) partner time and talent, 3) referrals or other in-kind donations by partners or through SVP, 4) knowledge sharing with other investees, connections to SVP partners and the community, and, 5) credibility/reputation as an SVP investee. Cash grants was rated highest by investees at an average rating of 5.0 and all other categories received the same average rating of 4.5.

Satisfaction with Partner Volunteers

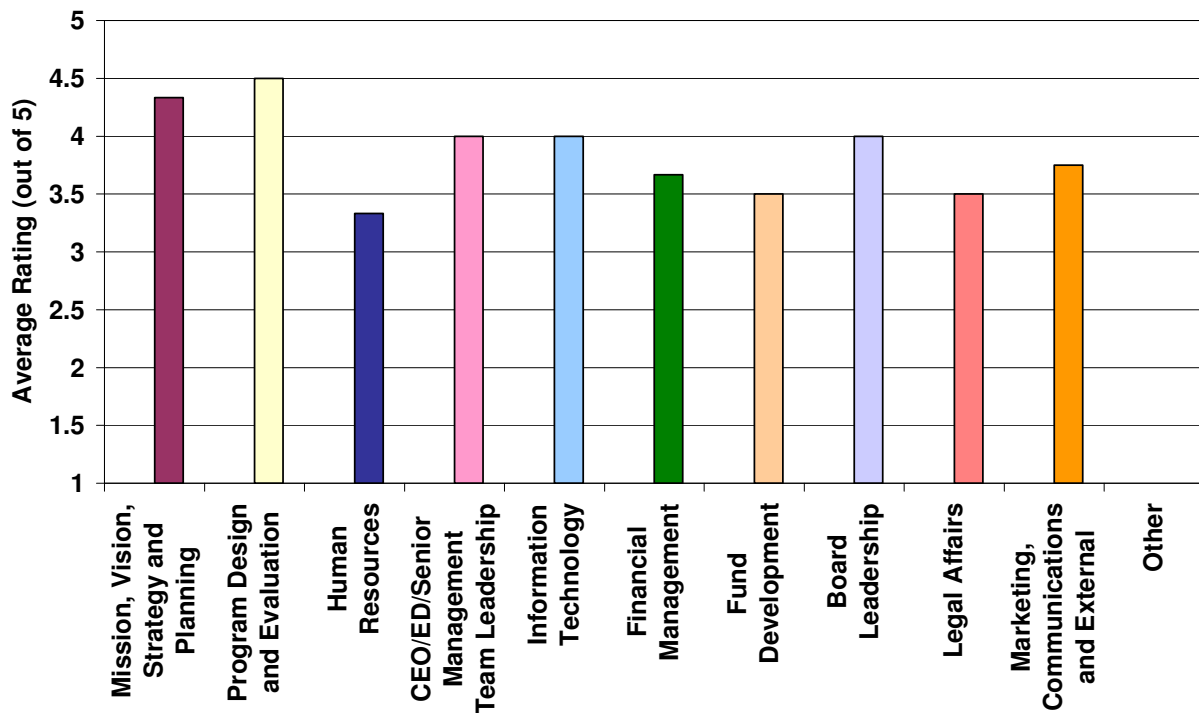
SVP works with investees to identify the particular areas of capacity it needs to develop, and then provides targeted resources to strengthen those areas. SVP asked investees for their perceptions of value of Partner support for different areas of capacity building. They were asked to rank their satisfaction with the following types of assistance: 1) Mission, Vision, Strategy, 2) Program Development/Planning, 3) Program Outcomes Measurement and Evaluation, 4) Operational Management, 5) Human Resources, 6) Fund Development, 7) Board Development, 8) Legal, 9) Financial, 10) Marketing, PR, Communications, and 11) Leadership.

SVP matched a total of 46 partners to projects that focused on strengthening these areas of capacity.

The two areas where investees reported receiving the most value were:

- Program Design & Evaluation (4.5)
- Mission/Vision/Strategy/Planning (4.35)

Satisfaction with Partner Volunteers by Capacity Area



The table included as appendix A provides more detailed information about the number of volunteer assignments and perceived value for each capacity area.

B. VALUE-ADDED BY SVP PARTNERS

SVP’s strategy for building capacity is to provide a complete package of money, professional-level volunteers (partners), consultants and networking opportunities to its investee organizations.

In fact, the cash grants are only a small portion of the value that investees gain by being part of SVP. Through the investee survey, we attempt to quantify the value-added of SVP Partners by asking investees for information about the following:

- Partner volunteer time for strategic volunteer projects² (we did not include partner time dedicated to tutoring or mentoring).
- The new cash donations made by individual SVP partners (as opposed to the organizational grant),
- The new cash donations or grants received based on referrals or contacts from individual partners
- The in-kind benefits received based on referrals or contracts from individual partners (for example, a partner used their connections to negotiate pro bono printing services valued at \$1,000)

A summary of the value-added by SVP partners across all responding investees is as follows:

Value-Added by SVP Partners	
Volunteer Time (520 hours @\$100/hr)	\$52,000
New cash contributions from individual partners	\$3,000
New cash contributions from partner referrals	\$14,000
In-kind contributions from partner referrals	\$12,500
Total	\$81,500

From June, 2007 to June, 2008, the total value-added by SVP partners was approximately \$81,500. During this same period, cash grants to investees totaled \$70,000. This means that the value added by SVP Partners was more than double the value of cash grants!

C. IMPACT ON PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY

The efforts SVP has made to strengthen the organizational capacity of its investees has led to significant improvements in program effectiveness and social benefit. Although it is not possible to quantify these social gains, we have asked investees to document stories of the most significant change that they have experienced in their organizational capacity as a

² The value was calculated using a market-based uniform rate of \$100 per hour. Although market rates vary according to type of project, we chose a single rate at the low end of the range (\$75-\$150) to maximize ease and reliability of data collection.

result of their relationship with SVP. A story that best exemplifies the type of change that SVP is trying to promote is found below:

In 2007 The Women's Wilderness Institute (TWWI) embarked on a significant expansion with the goal to introduce after-school, community-based programs. Patti Cummings, an SVP Boulder County Partner, strongly suggested that we complete a logic model process to develop these new programs and she offered to consult on the project.

Neither the executive director nor the community director of TWWI had prior experience with using a logic model. Patti's first job was to educate us on the importance of this step in the strategic planning process. She shared her experience and success with using the logic model tool and supplied us with educational articles. Patti recommended that TWWI pull together a team of stakeholders (board, staff, community members, and staff from local schools) to go through the planning process. This proved to be a very insightful and accurate way to draw diverse wisdom and knowledge into the plan.

TWWI held two meetings which were facilitated by Patti. It was amazing how much time and thoughtfulness was needed to sort through and agree on our goals, scope, and both short and long term outcomes. This process proved an excellent way to get all of the players aligned from the beginning while creating board member buy-in.

It quickly became clear that logic models are also important to external audiences. A few months later TWWI completed a large funding request for which a logic model was required. It was great to have this step of the grant application already completed!

TWWI launched a successful new after-school program called Girls on the Rise in February of 2008. As we turned our attention to the next after-school program, Girl's Action Project, we decided to use the same strategic approach. Patti had taught us so well that we knew we would be able to proceed with the process/project on our own. The executive director stepped into the facilitator role for the logic model process and led two sessions. TWWI expects to introduce Girl's Action Project in the fall of 2008.

This is an excellent example of how SVP involvement created awareness, knowledge, and new skills. It is also a wonderful example of how the SVP model supports eventual autonomy and independence for nonprofits like TWWI.

D. IMPACT OF FELLOWS PROGRAM ON INVESTEES

Since 2004, SVP Boulder County has had a Fellows Program wherein foundations and individuals may sponsor a competitively selected fellow to serve as a partner in SVP. Fellows participate fully and are involved in SVP just like any other partner. Participation in SVP includes involvement in internal and grant committees, serving as a volunteer with investees, and attending partner meetings. Fellows are selected based on both their capacity building expertise and the diversity they bring to SVP in areas of race, class, and experience. SVP had six fellows from 2007 to 2008.

Each investee surveyed received volunteer support from four or more fellows in the preceding year. When asked to rate the quality of fellows volunteer project work, three investees rated their work Outstanding and one rated their work as Great.

APPENDIX A

	Number of Volunteers	Number of Hours
Mission, Vision, Strategy and Planning	4	60
Program Design and Evaluation	5	65
Human Resources	3	40
CEO/ED/Senior Management Team Leadership	3	30
Information Technology	5	60
Financial Management	2	10
Fund Development	10	100
Board Leadership	4	30
Legal Affairs	2	15
Marketing, Communications and External Relations	4	60
Other	4	50
Total	46	520