The Art, Science and Art of Program Evaluation

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Material developed by
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1. **Art**: Articulate Theory of Change
   - Build Logic Model
   - Define Outcomes and Measures

2. **Science**: Plan Ahead
   - Select Methods
   - Collect Data
   - Understand Results

3. **Art**: Select Info to Share
   - Assemble Quotes and Data
   - Write the Story
Articulate Your Theory of Change

“This project aims to make art a viable living by teaching artists management practices.”

**Inputs**
- 3 Partners Meeting X/Month
- 2 Managers & 4 Instructors
- $100,000

**Outputs**
- 20 Artists (5 new)
- 15 Course Hours per Month

**Outcomes**
- 5% increase among participating artists who “strongly agree” they intend to make a living from art
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Measures
Outputs vs Outcomes

- Outputs | project results
  - Immediate | Exposure
    - Attendance
    - Participation
    - Website Traffic
    - App Downloads
    - Installations
    - Courses Offered

- Outcomes | results for people/communities
  - Short | Learning | Awareness, Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes, Intent
    - Surveys
    - Tests
    - Qualitative Interviews
  - Medium | Action | Behavior, Decisions
    - Purchase & Investment
    - Repeat Attendance
  - Long | Conditions | Well-being, Economic, Civic
    - Quality of Life
    - Jobs
    - Community Development
Surveys

▶ Sampling
  ▶ Frame: Total (hypothetical) list of possible respondents
  ▶ Randomize: Try to randomize in order to limit bias
  ▶ Size: As many as you can with as little bias as possible

▶ Questionnaire Design
  ▶ Length: Standardize with scales, only ask what you need to
  ▶ Clarity: Often questions are pretested for interpretation

▶ Collection
  ▶ Autonomous: Distribute survey and participants return it (paper/web)
  ▶ Interview: Can approach participants and verbally ask questions

▶ Analysis
  ▶ Nonresponse: Understand how much of the frame responded
  ▶ Report: Use percentages and means, compare subsamples if possible

Measuring Economic Impacts

- Gold standard for funders and public officials but *always* challenging

- Full studies require careful design, data collection, analysis and presentation
  - Need for careful interpretation and publicizing results
  - Impact of events vs tourism / placemaking

- Use existing calculators early on in a project
  - E.g., Americans for the Arts

- Early on, identify long term indicators for pre/post analysis
The Power of Qualitative Data

- Get stories and testimonials from people:
  - Participants (artists, attendees)
  - Local Businesses
  - Collaborators

- Can be generated using different methods:
  - Formal or informal focus groups
  - Formal or informal visits or interviews
  - Open ended survey questions

- Provides context and “face validity” to quantitative data and statistics (e.g., before and after pictures vs property values over time)
Backward Research

▸ **Begin with the End in Mind**
  ▸ What are the bullet points you want to be able to say at the end?
  ▸ Will the methods measure the outcomes in your logic model?

▸ **Timing**
  ▸ How will you incorporate formative data?
  ▸ Do you need summative data?

▸ **Keep it Manageable**
  ▸ Outsourcing can lead to misunderstanding
  ▸ Try to spend more time interpreting the data than collecting it
Telling the Story

- Customized based on the audience: Board, Funder, Staff
  - What few key points you want to get across?

- Share enough information to make it believable
  - Include highlights of the method for collection
  - What did you learn about what worked?
  - What did you learn about what didn’t work?
  - Demonstrating learning process

- Don’t forget the people in your projects!
  - Statistics are necessary to demonstrate the scope of impact
  - Qualitative quotes, anecdotes, testimonials make it real