How to Measure the Impact of Programs

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Introduction

• Measuring the impacts of arts programs
  – *one of the most essential activities for any organization*
    • especially for arts organizations
  – *without careful measurement, we’re blind (or delusional)*
  – *to make the case that your organization matters, you need evidence*
Introduction

• How do we do it?
  – Plan ahead (ideally)
    • Design the evaluation into your programs
  – Collect data or evidence (always)
    • Use what you already have, and get even more
  – Analyze it (properly)
  – Leverage the results for improvements
Outline

- A primer on program evaluation
  - Why ... and why not
- Steps to evaluation
- The “Textbook”
  - Design
  - Data
- 5 Lessons
- Examples
The motivation

• Why bother?
  – Wouldn’t it be nice to know:
    • Is your organization achieving success?
    • How effective are particular programs?
  – Do your stakeholders expect or demand evidence of impacts?

• Great power, ability to steer your ship if you know doing A leads to B

• Purposeful, systematic measurement beats steering blindly or using your gut
The pitfalls

• Weak metrics/measures
  – Perfection is rare. But some metrics
    • miss the mark too far (imprecise, unrelated)
    • capture other influences (bias)

• Weak design
  – selection bias, omitted variables

• Making or picking winners?
  – Happy people listen to jazz which makes people happy...
The approach

• Design
  – Most pitfalls avoided with forethought
  – Most good designs cost something

• Collect

• Analyze

• Report
The approach

• **Design**
  – Most pitfalls avoided with forethought
  – Most good designs cost something

• **Collect**

• **Analyze**

• **Report**

Make it part of the org.’s planning!
The textbook

• Inputs
• Activities and Outputs
  – Results of the inputs; org. directly controls
  – The “what?”: factual, easily measured
• Outcomes
  – Effects and effectiveness of the outputs
  – The “so what?”: subjective, indirect effects
• Impacts
  – Think of these as longer-term goals
  – They’re dynamic; they can change years after a program ends
Inputs

Activities

Outputs

Outcomes

Impacts

Things you control

Results (intended and unintended)
Some impacts

- increase people’s confidence and sense of self-worth
- extend involvement in social activity
- give people influence over how they are seen by others
- stimulate interest and confidence in the arts
- provide a forum to explore personal rights and responsibilities
- contribute to the educational development of children
- encourage adults to take up education and training opportunities
- help build new skills and work experience
- contribute to people’s employability
- help people take up or develop careers in the arts
- reduce isolation by helping people to make friends
- develop community networks and sociability
- promote tolerance and contribute to conflict resolution
- provide a forum for intercultural understanding and friendship
- help validate the contribution of a whole community
- promote intercultural contact and Cooperation
- develop contact between the Generations
- help offenders and victims address issues of crime
- provide a route to rehabilitation and integration for offenders
- build community organisational Capacity
- encourage local self-reliance and project management
- help people extend control over their lives
- be a means of gaining insight into political and social ideas
- facilitate effective public consultation and participation
- help involve local people in the regeneration process
Some impacts

- facilitate the development of partnership
- build support for community projects
- strengthen community cooperation and networking
- develop pride in local traditions and cultures
- help people feel a sense of belonging and involvement
- create community traditions in new towns or neighbourhoods
- involve residents in environmental improvements
- provide reasons for people to develop community activities
- improve perceptions of marginalised groups
- help transform the image of public bodies
- make people feel better about where they live
- help people develop their creativity
- erode the distinction between consumer and creator
- allow people to explore their values, meanings and dreams
- enrich the practice of professionals in the public and voluntary sectors
- transform the responsiveness of public service organisations
- encourage people to accept risk positively
- help community groups raise their vision beyond the immediate
- challenge conventional service delivery
- raise expectations about what is possible and desirable
- have a positive impact on how people feel
- be an effective means of health education
- contribute to a more relaxed atmosphere in health centres
- help improve the quality of life of people with poor health
- provide a unique and deep source of enjoyment
Some common impacts

• **Organizational** impacts
  – Attendance, membership, profits, recognition
  – Organizational health, sustainability

• **Personal** impacts
  – Satisfaction
  – Awareness, perceptions, understanding
  – Other takeaways

• **Social** impacts
  – Economic impact
  – Social capital, networks, community strength
  – Neighborhood vitality, livability, aesthetics
LOGIC MODEL: THEORY OF CHANGE

SITUATION

INPUTS
What we invest!
- Time
- Money
- Partners
- Equipment
- Facilities

OUTPUTS
What we do!
- Performances
- Exhibits
- Recordings
- Workshops

Who we reach!

OUTCOMES

Short
- Change in:
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Attitude
  - Motivation
  - Awareness

Medium
- Change in:
  - Behaviors
  - Practices
  - Policies
  - Procedures

Long
- Change in:
  - Environment
  - Social conditions
  - Economic conditions
  - Political conditions

Measurement of Process Indicators

Measurement of Outcome Indicators
Some common data

• Internal recordkeeping
  – Transactions data, turnstiles, memberships
  – Website traffic, FourSquare, etc.
  – New data(!), observations

• Surveys*
  – Audiences, membership, et al.
  – Intercept, mail, phone, email, etc.
  – Focus groups, interviews

• Public datasets
  – Permits, traffic, tax receipts, demographics
  – Newspapers, community calendars

* Much harder than it looks. Specialized workshops...
Some common techniques

• Experimental designs
  – Pre- / post-
  – (Quasi) random assignment

• Non-designs
  – Self-reporting and self-assessing
  – Expert opinion
  – Anecdotes
Using the results

• Analytics
  – There is help out there
  – Simplicity can work best.
  – Basics, like means and “t-tests” are powerful and harder to muck up

– The key is the **counterfactual**
  *What would things be like if we hadn’t done it?*
  • Careful, objective thought goes a long way here
    – How much of these outcomes would have occurred anyway?
  • Often, our best is to assume a “worst” (conservative) case
Using the results

• Presenting your results matters
  – *Another* day-long workshop
  – Presenting qualitative results can be potent
  – Anticipate obtaining evidence on impacts; use it strategically
    • Timing for info release
    • Use it to adjust programming? Ask for more funds?
    • Put your best foot forward:
      track where you anticipate biggest and best impacts
Key lessons

• Five key lessons for managers
  1. Beware of bias
     ➢ survey questions, samples, comparison groups, etc.
Key lessons

• Five key lessons for managers
  1. Beware of bias
  2. Correlation is not causation; causation is hard
     ➢ A more compelling case than just “cream skimming”
Key lessons

• Five key lessons for managers
  1. Beware of bias
  2. Correlation is not causation; causation is hard
  3. Think on the margins
     ➢ Some people, on “free days,” would have attended anyway
Key lessons

• Five key lessons for managers
  1. Beware of bias
  2. Correlation is not causation; causation is hard
  3. Think on the margins
  4. Be creative (with quantifying impacts)
     ➢ Be brave
     ➢ Get good at this!
Key lessons

• Five key lessons for managers
  1. Beware of bias
  2. Correlation is not causation; causation is hard
  3. Think on the margins
  4. Be creative (with quantifying impacts)
  5. Plan ahead and integrate measurement into implementation
     ➢ Be mindful *before* it’s too late
     ➢ Get help
In practice...

• Offer a “free day”?  
  – Track turnstile, gift shop, memberships, etc.  
  – Survey visitors on regular and free days

• Have a new exhibit in your museum or a new public art installation?  
  – Track (geotagged) photos/tweets related to the area before vs. after

• Have an educational program?  
  – Randomly vary content/audience
Does watching *Food, Inc.* change your life?

- Impact is very tricky here: selection bias
- Johanna Blakley at the Norman Lear Center (USC) got creative

- Watch the video here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb0FZPzzWuk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb0FZPzzWuk)
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PROPENSITY SCORE MATCHING (PSM)

Phase One:
- Find Factors that predict the likelihood of a subject being exposed to the intervention
- Create a model based on those predictors

Phase Two:
- Assign propensity scores
- Compare exposed to unexposed
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  - Deliberately nonrandom: got lots who saw the film, and lots who didn’t
  - Statistically created “twins” (separated at the box office?)
    - Those who did see the flick ultimately differed...
FOOD, INC. VIEWER

DEMOCRAT
FAST FOOD NATION
I SUPPORT FOOD SAFETY
FAN OF SOCIAL ISSUE FILM & DOCS
CHILD FREE!
INCONVENIENT TRUTH
FILM IMPACTS BEHAVIOR, ATTITUDES & MEDIA
FOOD SAFETY ON TV
EDUCATION JOB
HUNGRY FOR CHANGE
RADIO
NEWS SITES
SUSTAINABLE AG

SPEA
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
Encourage friends, family & colleagues to learn more about food safety
Shop at their local farmers markets

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Shop at their local farmers markets

Eat healthy food

Encourage friends, family & colleagues to learn more about food safety
Another example

• Sapphire Theatre has been embedded in today’s presentation.
  – What are its impacts?
  – How might we measure them?