

Approaches to planning and evaluation for local cultural development

Workshop August 2013

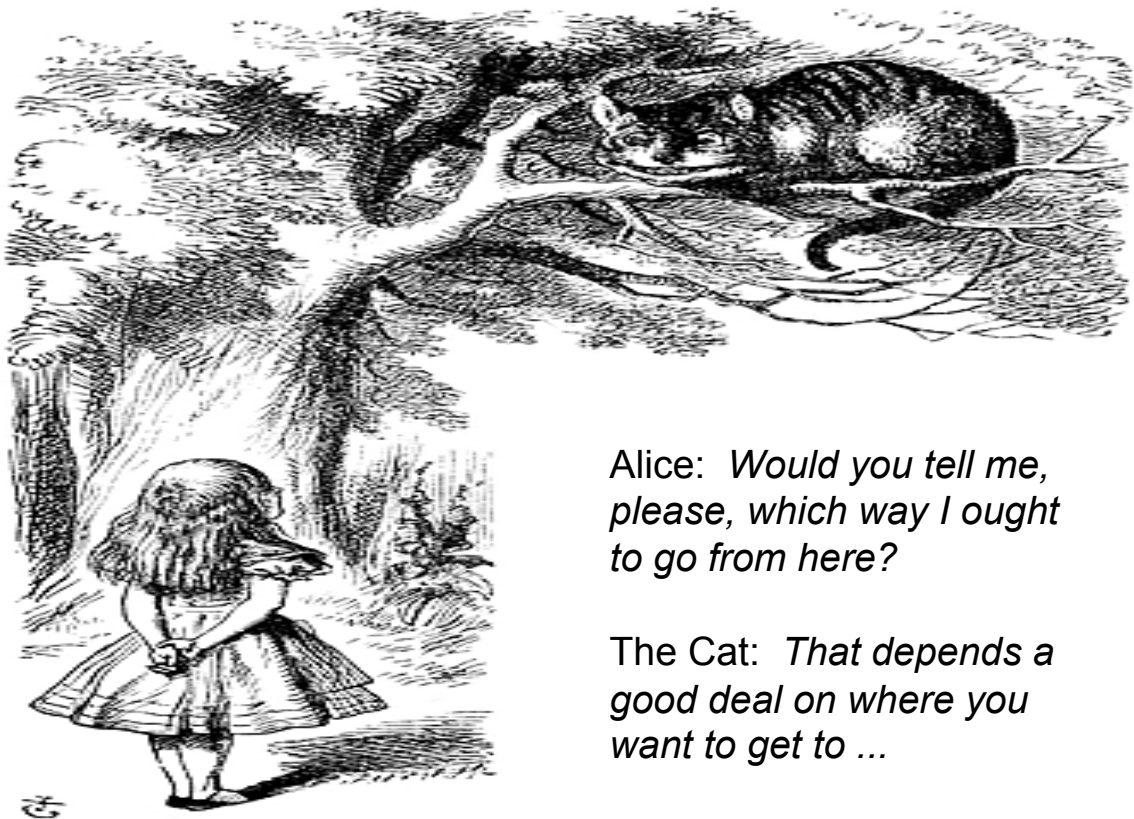
Presented by the Cultural Development Network and Murray Arts

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*Alice: Would you tell me,
please, which way I ought
to go from here?*

*The Cat: That depends a
good deal on where you
want to get to ...*

Planning for local cultural development

Discussion questions:

How do you currently determine values and goals for your organisation?

How do you make decisions about what activities you will undertake?

What strategies do you use to connect ideas with action and desired outcomes?

Can you identify a strength of your current approach?

Can you identify a weakness of your current approach?

Program Logic model

The Program Logic approach helps create a shared understanding of program goals and methodology between stakeholders, relating activities to projected outcomes. It demands systematic thinking and planning to better describe programs. Effective evaluation and program success rely on clear stakeholder assumptions and expectations about how and why a program will address a particular issue, generate new possibilities, and make the most of valuable assets.

What is a theory of change?

A theory of change helps you to understand and convey the way your program works. It encourages cultural workers and key stakeholders to collectively play out and test their assumptions about how a program operates and contributes to social change. It isn't exactly a program plan, but it helps you design more realistic program plans and evaluation. A theory of change takes a wide view of a desired change and helps you to articulate exactly what propositions and assumptions you're testing, and therefore what you should be assessing in your evaluation plan. The term can be used to describe "anything from a broadly stated outline of change to a detailed map. The term **logic model** is often used interchangeably with theory of change, although some distinguish a logic model as a flow chart that explicitly diagrams relationships between resources (or inputs), activities, and results. (Animating Democracy, 2013).

Theory of change: What is the relationship between our values, goals and actions?

Theory of action: How will our actions help us achieve our goals?

Program logic model for planning cultural development activities

Our ideas

Values:	What matters to us?
Goals:	What are we seeking to achieve?
Evidence-base:	What has been effective previously? How can this information help us?
Theory of Change:	What is the relationship between our values, goals and actions?: How will our actions will help us achieve our goals?

Outcomes we seek

Considering success:	What will we consider as success?
Indicators:	How can we measure success, or progress towards it?
Data collection:	How can we find out what happens in our program?
Target:	What are we aiming for: how much, when, for whom?

Preparing for action

Baseline:	Where are we now?
Resources:	What resources do we have?

Action: Therefore, what will we do?

Our ideas

Values:

What matters to us?

Goals:

What are we seeking to achieve?

Evidence-base:

**What has been effective previously?
How can this information help us?**

Theory of Change:

**What is the relationship between our values,
goals and actions?:**

**How will our actions will help us achieve our
goals?**

Outcomes we seek

Considering success: What will we consider as success?

**Indicators:
towards it? How can we measure success, or progress**

**Data collection: How can we find out what happens in or as a
result of our program? (existing data source or
new data required?)**

**Target: What are we aiming for: how much, when, for
whom?**

Preparing for action

Baseline:

Where are we now?

Resources:

What resources do we have?

Action:

Therefore, what will we do?

Evaluation for local cultural development

Discussion questions:

What are your current practices around evaluation?

Why is evaluation undertaken in your organisation?

Are there any methodologies you use that have been particularly helpful or unhelpful?

Can you identify a strength of your current approach/es?

Can you identify a weakness of your current approach/es?

Definition

Evaluation is a systematic determination of a subject's merit, worth and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards. It can assist an organization, program, project or any other intervention or initiative to assess any aim, realisable concept/proposal, or any alternative, to help in decision-making; or to ascertain the degree of achievement or value in regard to the aim and objectives and results of any such action that has been completed. The primary purpose of evaluation, in addition to gaining insight into prior or existing initiatives, is to enable reflection and assist in the identification of future change (del Tufo, S. (2012). "What is evaluation?". *Evaluation Trust*. The Evaluation Trust. Retrieved 13 May 2012.

A good evaluation process is one that engages stakeholders in what matters to them and which provides evidence that is understandable and credible to an outsider (IXIA, 2013).

Types of evaluation

Two main types of evaluation: *process* evaluation and *outcome* evaluation

Process (or formative) evaluation aims to assess how policies are put into practice, how delivery is managed, what happens when, and how policies are meant to work.

Outcome (or summative) evaluation aims to identify the final impact of a project/program – how far did it achieve what it set out to achieve and were there any unexpected impacts?

Defining inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts

- *inputs* are the resources used to produce outputs
 - *outputs* are the things you do during a programme or project – for instance spend money and create works. This does not usually provide data for meaningful evaluation
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- *outcomes* are the consequences directly attributable, at least in part, to the programme or project in question and are usually measured at, or shortly after, completion
- *impacts* are generally seen as intended or unintended changes in organisations, communities or systems at a broader level and often over a longer timescale, usually sometime after a project has been completed.

However these terms are used interchangeably in different fields.

Discussion question: Re inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts

In your situation, what are

- inputs:
- outputs:
- outcomes:
- impacts:

Some reasons for conducting evaluation

- provides a framework in which objectives are set in relation to specified targets
- allows progress towards the achievement of objectives to be monitored
- gives funders assurance that investment is being put to effective use
- allows you to reflect upon and improve project delivery
- helps you modify strategies and policies throughout the lifetime of a project
- enables you to record of the outcome and impacts of a project in a credible way
- provides feedback for people working on the project (IXIA, 2013)

Evaluation as part of a learning cycle

Good evaluation is part of the learning cycle that is at the heart of all good management models. Evaluation stages:

- understanding the scope and objectives of the project
- monitoring and reporting progress
- capturing project issues
- reporting on fulfillment of project objectives
- post-project review
- reporting lessons learned.

Methodologies

- Quantitative- surveys
- Qualitative – interviews, focus groups
- Participatory- Most Significant Change- use stories as a methodology
- Arts-based- using arts as a response
- Mixed methods
- Quantifying qualitative data

The question of data: what do we need and how can we get it?

Discussion point:

where do you go for data to inform your planning and evaluation?

Finally, some key messages:

- Be clear about what, why and for whom you are evaluating
- Be clear about who is responsible for managing the overall evaluation process
- Be realistic and focus on quality
- At the end of the project, be sure to feedback your findings to your key stakeholders.

To find out more about arts evaluation

Spectres of Evaluation Conference,
Melbourne, VCA-MCM, February 2014
vca-mcm.unimelb.edu.au/spectresofevaluation

Recommended reading:

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Leading American arts funding organization promotes theory of change.

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Cultural economists talk about evaluation.

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Further information:

Presenter: Kim Dunphy is the Research Program Manager of the Cultural Development Network, Victoria. CDN works to promote the cultural vitality of communities throughout Victoria and Australia, largely through support of cultural development professionals. CDN's new research program and previous publications offer cultural development professionals relevant and accessible tools to assist effective practice.

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The Cultural Development Network is grateful for the support of major sponsors: Australia Council for the Arts, Arts Victoria and Global Cities Institute, RMIT University

