

# Getting in Touch with Your "Why": Articulating Arts Impact

Susannah Laramee Kidd, PhD October 27, 2025

Strategies for Impact and Evaluation: Part 1 Delaware Arts Summit

#### Introduction

Outputs vs Outcomes/Impact

**AGENDA** 

**Tools: Impact Models** 

Impact Statement Activity

Discussion

### WHO AM I?

- Evaluator and researcher who works on the social impact of the arts, especially place-based arts and culture
- Background in humanistic and anthropological research methods, but also love spreadsheets and can talk your ear off about the U.S. Census
- Based in Philadelphia, but also work in Los Angeles and nationwide

### WHO ARE YOU?

#### What arts and culture disciplines do you work in?

Performing arts

Visual arts

Literary arts

Media arts

Folk arts

Arts education/Youth development

#### How many people are involved in your work day to day?

It's just me!

Organization but no paid staff

Organization with 1-5 paid staff

Organization with 5 or more paid staff

# WHY TALK ABOUT IMPACT?

Design programs that have the desired outcomes

Get people involved who care about the same things you do

Craft compelling funding requests

Avoid mission drift and stay the course!

What else?

### WHAT IS YOUR IMPACT?

Why are you doing this? Why are you doing this \*this\* way?

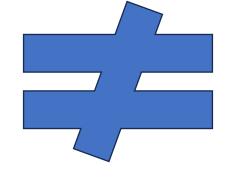
If you accomplish everything you hope to do, what will happen?

What change are you hoping to see <u>as a result of your work?</u>

### WHAT IS NOT MY IMPACT?

OUTPUT





OUTCOME

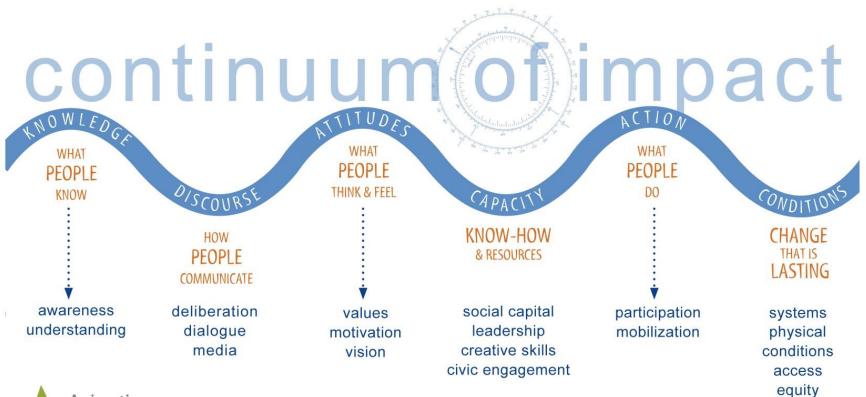


WHAT I CREATE

WHAT HAPPENS AS A RESULT

#### ANIMATE INFORM INFLUENCE EXPRESS ENGAGE

#### **ARTS and CULTURE make change happen**





### **AESTHETIC PERSPECTIVES**

#### Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change



disruption



commitment



communal meaning



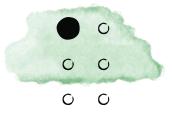
cultural integrity



risk-taking



emotional experience



sensory experience



openness





coherence



resourcefulness



stickiness

# IS IT AN OUTPUT OR OUTCOME?

Everyone had a great time

Kids are exposed to art

We get good reviews in the paper

More people came than last year

Your example

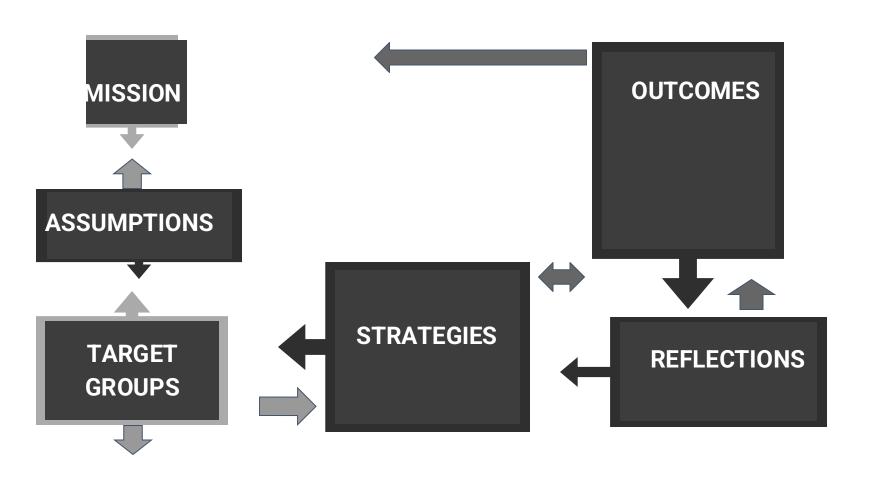
### **TOOLS: OUTCOME MODELS**

Logic model Theory of change System map

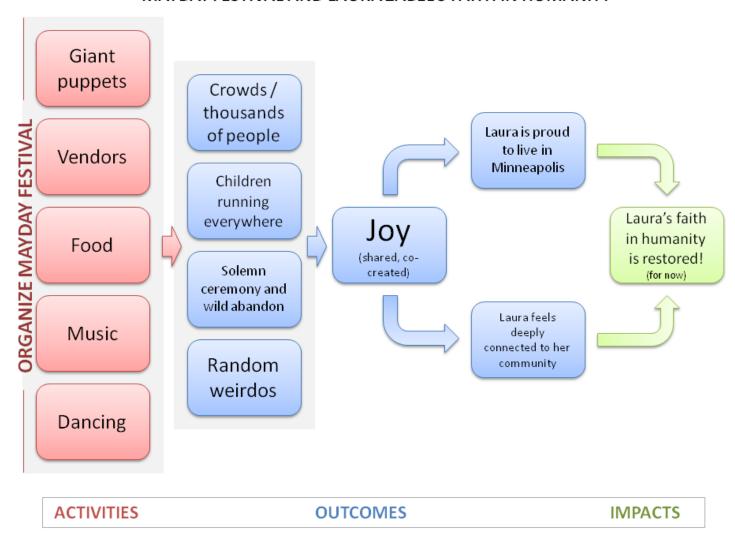
### LOGIC MODEL

RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT &	IMPACT
			LONG TERM	
			OUTCOMES	

### THEORY OF CHANGE

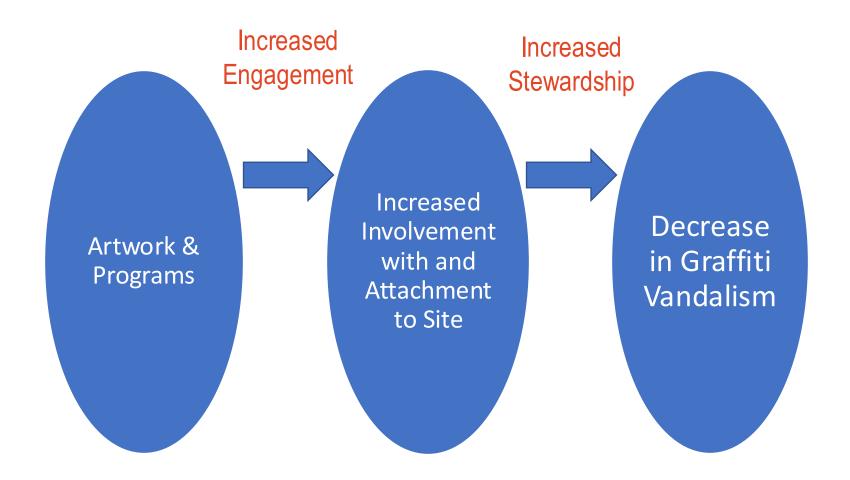


#### MAYDAY FESTIVAL AND LAURA ZABEL'S FAITH IN HUMANITY



Ian David Moss, https://createquity.com/2012/06/in-defense-of-logic-models/

### CREATIVE GRAFFITI ABATEMENT



Source: "Art as Infrastructure: An Evaluation of Civic Art and Public Engagement in Four Communities in South Los Angeles County" for the LA County Department of Arts and Culture.

### OUR TOWN: Logic Model

PROBLEM STATEMENT: American communities everywhere face a distinctive set of local economic, physical, and/or social challenges. Yet community leaders are often unaware of solutions that stem from the successful adoption and integration of arts, design, and cultural strategies.



OUR TOWN GOAL: Sustained support and recognition of arts, design, and cultural strategies as integral to every phase of community development across the United States.

National Endowment for the Arts

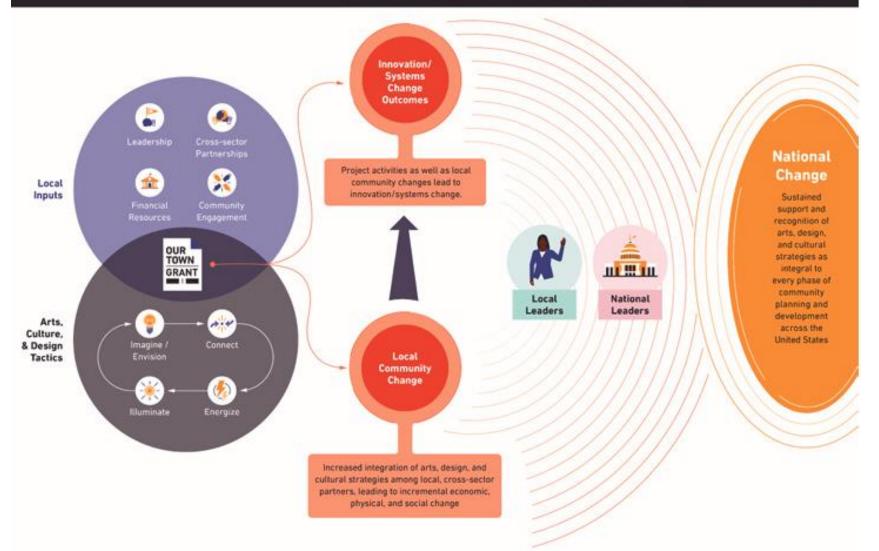


Source: "Our Town: A Framework for Understanding and Measuring the National Endowment for the Arts' Creative Placemaking Grants Program" prepared for the NEA by 2M Research Services and Metris Arts Consulting

### THEORY OF CHANGE

PROBLEM STATEMENT: American communities everywhere face a distinctive set of local economic, physical, and/or social challenges. Yet, community leaders are often unaware of solutions that stem from the successful adoption and integration of arts, design, and cultural strategies.

National Endowment for the Arts



Source: "Our Town: A Framework for Understanding and Measuring the National Endowment for the Arts' Creative Placemaking Grants Program" prepared for the NEA by 2M Research Services and Metris Arts Consulting

## Fill out the worksheet individually (5-10 mins)

### IMPACT STATEMENT ACTIVITY

1<sup>st</sup> person shares their statement and gets feedback (5 mins)

2<sup>nd</sup> person shares their statement and gets feedback (5 mins)

### SHARE YOUR IMPACT STATEMENT

What did this activity bring up for you?

What was easy and what was hard?

What questions do you still have?

### BE LIKE A TODDLER

(AND KEEP ASKING WHY!)



WHY AM I DOING THIS?



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



WHY IS \*THIS\* THE WAY I AM TRYING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

### Resources

Animating Democracy Resources (Continuum of Impact Guide and Aesthetic Perspectives Framework) <a href="https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/animating-democracy">https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/animating-democracy</a>

#### **Logic Model/TOC resources**

- Mapping Change: Using a Theory of Change to Guide Planning and Evaluation: <a href="https://grantcraft.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/theory\_change.pdf">https://grantcraft.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/theory\_change.pdf</a>
- Articulating a Theory of Change. <a href="http://animatingdemocracy.org/articulate-theory-of-change">http://animatingdemocracy.org/articulate-theory-of-change</a>
- In Defense of Logic Models: <a href="http://createquity.com/2012/06/in-defense-of-logic-models/">http://createquity.com/2012/06/in-defense-of-logic-models/</a>

#### **Logic Model/TOC examples**

- Our Town: <a href="https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/NEA-Our-Town-Resource-Guide-2.5.2021.pdf">https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/NEA-Our-Town-Resource-Guide-2.5.2021.pdf</a>
- WE-making: How Arts & Culture Unite People to Work Toward Community-Wellbeing: <a href="https://www.metrisarts.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/we-making\_theory-of-change.pdf">https://www.metrisarts.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/we-making\_theory-of-change.pdf</a>
- Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History: <a href="http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2015/03/developing-theory-of-change-part-1.html">http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2015/03/developing-theory-of-change-part-1.html</a>
- Rockwood Leadership Institute: <a href="https://www.pinterest.com/pin/494410865335292347/">https://www.pinterest.com/pin/494410865335292347/</a>
- Pillsbury House + Theatre: <a href="https://metrisarts.com/evaluations/#AddingItUp">https://metrisarts.com/evaluations/#AddingItUp</a>
- Urban Arts Partnership: <a href="https://urbanarts.org/impact/">https://urbanarts.org/impact/</a>

### **THANK YOU!**

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# Are You Achieving Your "Why"?: Evaluating Your Impact

Susannah Laramee Kidd, PhD October 27, 2025

Strategies for Impact and Evaluation: Part 2 Delaware Arts Summit

Photo: Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture

### What is evaluation?

### **AGENDA**

Key pieces of an evaluation plan

Evaluation planning activity

Discussion

# WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH EVALUATION?

- a. I'm not sure what the word means
- b. I have some idea what evaluation is
- c. I have participated in an evaluation
- d. I have commissioned an evaluation
- e. I have conducted an evaluation

### WHAT IS EVALUATION?

A systematic investigation that involves collecting and synthesizing data and then using that information to make inferences and judgements about the merit, worth, and/or significance of a project, program, or organization.

Scriven, M. (1998) Minimalist theory of evaluation: The least theory that practice requires. American Journal of Evaluation. 19(1), 57-70.

### WHY EVALUATE?



Learn what works and what doesn't work

Accountability to your community

Craft compelling funding requests

Share with people who care about the same things you do

Why else?

### **EVALUATION CONTINUUM**

REFLECTION

PRE/POST



**INFORMAL** 

**FORMAL** 

### HOW TO E VALUATE



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Framework for program evaluation in public health. MMWR 1999;48 (No. RR-11)

### EVALUATION PLAN COMPONENTS

- 1. Map the "stakeholders"
- 2. Describe your impact → write an evaluation question
- 3. Make a plan to collect evidence to answer the question
- 4. Decide how you will share your findings

### CENTERING EQUITY

- Who participates and who decides?
- How do we understand our actions within the structures and systems that create outcome disparities?
- Are we naming race when we mean race?
- Who's voice and what kind of knowledge matters as evidence?
- Are we compensating people for their time and insights?

<u>www.metrisarts.com/equity-reflection-questions</u> <u>www.equitableeval.org</u>

## WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?

**Funders** 

**Artists** 

Community members

Organizational leadership

Program manager (this could be you!)

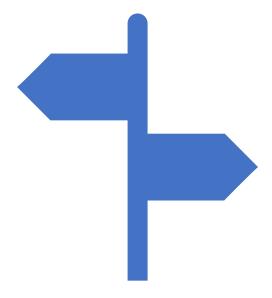
Program partners

# TURN YOUR IMPACT STATEMENT INTO A QUESTION

Are you achieving the impact you are trying to have?

What are the outcomes (not outputs) you are looking for?

### **HOW WILL YOU KNOW?**



Indicators are the signs or the evidence that you are achieving the outcomes that you are hoping for.

### METHODS TO CONSIDER

Project Documentation After-Action Reflection Surveys Interviews Focus Groups/Meetings/Discussions Participant Observation

Artist-led/Arts-based methods

### SHOULD I USE A SURVEY?

- Is this information "quantifiable"?
- Is it appropriate for a written/digital format?
- Will it be a burden to participants?
- Will I get enough responses?

### WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?

HOW WLL I SHARE MY FINDINGS?

## Fill out the worksheet individually (5-10 mins)

# EVALUATION PLAN ACTIVITY

1<sup>st</sup> person shares their plan and gets feedback (5 mins)

2<sup>nd</sup> person shares their plan and gets feedback (5 mins)

## What did this activity bring up for you?

### SHARE YOUR PLAN

What was easy and what was hard?

What questions do you still have?

### **Evaluation Resources**

#### **Evaluation Guides:**

- Resources for Evaluating the Social Impact of the Arts. Animating Democracy http://www.animatingdemocracy.org/home-impact
- Resources on Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement." National Endowment for the Arts <u>https://www.arts.gov/artistic-fields/research-analysis/program-evaluation-resources-and-performance-measurement</u>
- A Framework for Program Evaluation. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017. https://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework/index.htm
- "Equitable Evaluation Initiative <a href="https://www.equitableeval.org">https://www.equitableeval.org</a>
- "Equity Reflection Questions." Metris Arts Consulting <a href="https://metrisarts.com/equity-reflection-questions/">https://metrisarts.com/equity-reflection-questions/</a>

#### Formal Evaluation Examples (Creative Placemaking/Public Art):

- Laramee Kidd, Susannah. "Art as Infrastructure: An Evaluation of Civic Art and Public Engagement in Four Communities in South Los Angeles County," Los Angeles County Arts Commission, May 2018. <a href="https://www.lacountyarts.org/article/report-art-infrastructure">https://www.lacountyarts.org/article/report-art-infrastructure</a>
- Kraemer Tebes, PhD, Jacob, Samantha L. Matlin, PhD, Bronwyn Hunter, PhD, Azure B. Thompson, DPh, Dana M. Prince, PhD, and Nathaniel Mohatt, PhD. "Porch Light Program: Final Evaluation Report," June 2015. <a href="https://dbhids.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Community\_Mural-Arts\_Porch-Light-Evaluation.pdf">https://dbhids.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Community\_Mural-Arts\_Porch-Light-Evaluation.pdf</a>
- Gadwa Nicodemus, Anne, Rachel Engh, and Christopher Mascaro. "Adding It Up: 52 Projects by 30+ Artists in 4
  Neighborhoods." Minneapolis, MN: Pillsbury House + Theatre, January 2016.
  <a href="http://metrisarts.com/evaluations/#AddingItUp">http://metrisarts.com/evaluations/#AddingItUp</a>

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