

Planning and evaluating your work: Some definitions

(UCL Public Engagement Unit 2017)

Aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes

Project management is a huge subject and addressing it in detail in this short amount of time is impossible. However, there are some important themes that can help you to develop a community engagement project.

Aims are the changes you are trying to make. Aims tend to start with words that indicate a change – to increase, to reduce, to improve, etc. They should relate to the needs identified earlier.

Objectives are the activities that you will be doing to achieve your aims. These are often measurable in numbers.

Aims of projects, can focus on needs of the community or publics' AND organiser's needs, these could include:

- increase collaboration between different communities
- increase opportunities for people to gain skills and knowledge
- increase positive stories about a museum
- increased input to an exhibition from a community group
- change perspective of your subject area
- create networks between curators & communities

Once you've decided on a method of engagement that allows you to meet your aims, you can think about the objectives you need to carry out, for example:

- To recruit and train a team of ten local volunteer interviewers
- To organise 30 sets of interviews with local residents
- To set up procedures (e.g. CRB checks, copyright, emergency procedures) for project
- To hold ten group sessions about an exhibition
- To organise photographic record of the project,
- To produce website with photos
- Organise exhibition and launch
- To run marketing campaign for exhibition and website

After deciding on the objectives, you can break these down to **tasks** in as much detail as you find helpful. We then talked about what comes out of aims and objectives, and what can be measured.

Generally:

- Aims lead to outcomes
- Objectives lead to outputs

For monitoring and evaluation, outputs and outcomes can be predicted and measured.

Monitoring is collection of data and information in a systematic way, to capture and assess what is being done.

Evaluation is using monitoring to reflect on and make judgements about what is being done. Evaluation allows you to make changes and improvements.

So, outputs from the project should reflect the objectives, and can usually be measured very simply:

- To recruit and train a team of ten local volunteer interviewers
 - Measure: how many volunteer interviewers are there?
- To run marketing campaign for exhibition and website
 - What materials were produced? Did people come to the exhibition? Did/do people visit the website?

Outcomes from our project should reflect the aims we talked about at the start, and each can be measured in a number of ways. For example:

An increase in collaboration between different communities

-To be measured by counting bookings of the town hall by cross-cultural community groups in the six months before and after the exhibition

-To be measured by asking people if they have been involved in collaborative community activities in the six months before and after the exhibition

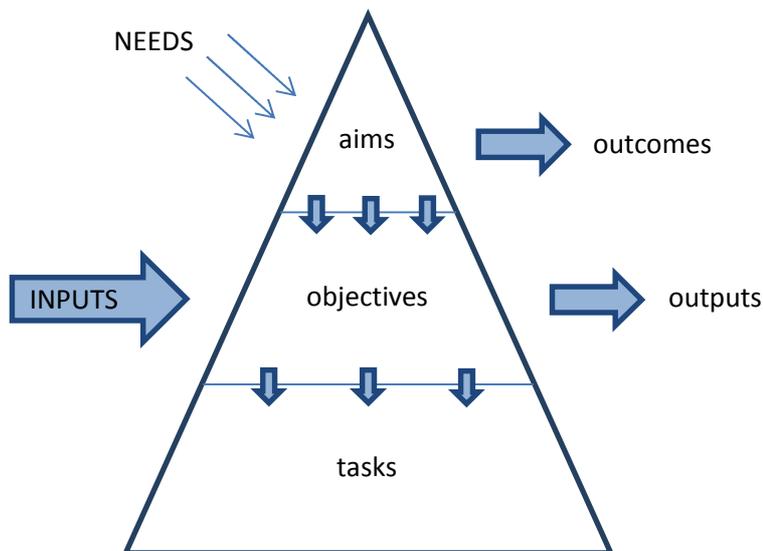
Networks created between curators & communities

-To be measured by subsequent meetings/emails/phone calls/activities/projects/funding bids between curators and public participants

It can be very difficult to “prove” that broad changes are caused by a particular project.

Evaluation is linked to project management; building in time and space to enable reflection on the project to make changes and improvements.

The diagram below summarises aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes.



Some guidance about this is also available online, including at the UK Charities Evaluation Service: <http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/tools-and-resources>