Telling Your Library’s Story: Program Evaluation and Logic Models

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Audrey Betcher, ROCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY
Nicole MartinRogers, WILDER RESEARCH
Session overview

Part 1
Introduction to logic models
Introduction to program evaluation cycle
Activity: Developing a simple logic chain

Part 2
Designing your evaluation plan
Activity: Using evaluation for organizational learning
Aligning your evaluation with your strategic plan
Sharing evaluation results with your stakeholders
Ice breaker: Share with your neighbor (5 min.)

- Please share a story about your library that demonstrates your impact.
- Have you evaluated this program to KNOW (prove) you are having the impact you are hoping for?
- Which stakeholders have you shared your story with?
  - Board
  - Funders
  - Staff
  - Library patrons
  - Your community
Before we begin...why evaluate?

- Evaluation facilitates ongoing learning about what works (and what doesn’t work)
- Helps to identify what should be incorporated into organizational and program processes as a part of continuous quality improvement efforts
- Evaluation can also be used to:
  - Seek funding and report to existing funders
  - Guide programming decisions
  - Demonstrate impact or effectiveness
Why is Evaluation Important for Libraries?

- Libraries have a long history of counting outputs: circulation, items, titles, cardholders – So what?
- Libraries also tend to have more demands during recessions (when there is no money)
- How do you tell your story when your outputs decrease in good times (when there is money, but still competition for it)
Evaluation through the lens of story telling
Reasons to turn your data into a good story

- Memorability
- Persuasiveness
- Engagement
Evaluation cycle

1. Use and share the information
2. Describe and map your program
3. Prioritize what you need to know
4. Design your evaluation
5. Collect the information
6. Create tools for gathering information
7. Sort and analyze the information

The cycle then repeats with the arrow pointing back to the first step.
Then a miracle occurs...\[ \frac{0.5}{ms} \text{ vs. } \frac{170}{s} \]

"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

©1995
What is a logic model?

An at-a-glance depiction of:

- What you are doing
- How you are doing it
- Who is benefitting from it
- Why you are doing it
- What you hope to achieve from doing it
A logic model illustrates your program theory

IF the activity/program is provided THEN what should be the result (impact) for participants?
What ACTIVITIES needs to happen, and in what INTENSITY and DURATION, for participants to experience the desired OUTCOME?
What EVIDENCE do you have that this activity/program will lead to the desired result?
Use your logic model to...

- Communicate to key stakeholders:
  - Board
  - Funders (or grantees)
  - Staff and volunteers
  - Participants

- Share it on your website, in your annual report, on social media, in evaluation reports, in funding requests

- Design your evaluation plan
Logic models are (should be)....

- **Collaborative:** It’s less about the end product, and more about the process.

- **Flexible:** Logic models can take many forms and can be as simple or as complex as needed.

- **Evolving:** Logic models are not static – they should be revised and refined as needed to reflect the program’s reality.
# Elements of a logic model

**Purpose statement:** What we do, for whom, and for what purpose/benefit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-term outcomes</th>
<th>Intermediate outcomes</th>
<th>Long-term outcome/Overall Impact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Offer...</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>Changes in awareness, knowledge, attitude, skill, appreciation, motivation, opinions, aspirations</td>
<td>Changes in behaviors or practices</td>
<td>Change in organizations, communities, systems or society</td>
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<td>Funding</td>
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Outcomes: Consider the following...

- To what extent are the activities likely to create change? Outcomes should show directionality.
- Who is likely to be impacted? Individuals, organizations, staff, communities, etc.
- What other factors may influence whether change occurs? Consider the circumstances of participants and the context within which the program occurs.
• The journey is as important as the logic model
**Summer Playlist logic model**

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**ACTIVITIES:**

- Redesign summer reading logs for a branded and cohesive program across ages.
- Create a model for summer programs and outreach activities.
- Develop SRP budget and funding.
- SRP marketing.
- SRP evaluation.

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**OUTPUTS:**

- **SRP LOGS:**
  - Time spent reading/activities for each age group.
  - # of books distributed.
  - # of participants completing program each age group.
- **PROGRAMMING MODEL:**
  - # of off-site visits.
  - # of BookBike/ArtCart events.
  - # of attendance at off-site events.
  - # of attendance at BookBike/ArtCart events.
  - # of library card registrations at outreach events.
  - # of Bookmobile circulation.
  - # of attendance at in-house programs.
  - # of in-house programs.
  - # of topics presented.
  - # of outside performers and partnerships.
  - # of group visits to the library.
  - # of participants at self-directed activities.
- **BUDGET:**
  - Appropriation funding for program.
- **MARKETING:**
  - # of outlets used to distribute SRP information and reading logs.
- **EVALUATION:**
  - # of evaluations distributed.
  - # of evaluations returned.

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**SHORT TERM OUTCOMES:**

**SRP PARTICIPANTS HAVE:**

- Improved access to library resources.
  - INDICATORS: 60% of people participating in the summer reading program reported an increase in access to library services.

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**INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES:**

**PARTICIPANTS/COMMUNITY WILL HAVE:**

- Improved literacy skills.
  - Preschoolers and their caregivers gain early literacy skills.
  - School-age children and teens maintain pre-summer reading levels.

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**LONG-TERM OUTCOMES:**

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE:**

- Improved quality of life, equity, and community vitality.
- **Education/Literacy:**
  - Preschool caregivers understand the five early literacy practices.
  - School-age children are improved readers and students.
- **Civic Engagement:**
  - Teens and adults are more involved in the community.
  - Strong relationships:
    - All participants.

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**SUMMER PLAYLIST**
Short Term Outcome A: Improved Access to Library Resources

- **Indicators:**
  - XX% of people visiting BLANK reported increase in access to library resources.
  - XX% of people attending BLANK reported an increase in access to library resources.
  - XX% of people using BLANK (homebound services, etc) reported an increase in access to library resources.

- **Questions:**
  - Since attending BLANK, I learned about BLANK. (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)
  - Since attending BLANK, I feel more confidence using BLANK. (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)
  - Since attending BLANK, I have a greater understanding of BLANK. (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)
  - Since using BLANK, I learned about BLANK. (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)
Implementation of the Logic Model

- Program evaluation
- Measuring impact
- Data Wall
- Telling our story
  - Rochester Reading Champions
  - Leveraged funding
Activity:
Creating a logic chain
Complete the worksheet on your own or with a partner

- What is one outcome you claim for your library?
  Examples: increased literacy, increased enjoyment of reading

- What things does your library do to support these outcomes (activities)?
  Examples: summer reading program, adult literacy programs

- What things need to happen in order to reach your ultimate outcome?
  Examples: increased access to relevant reading materials might precede increased enjoyment of reading
BREAK
Evaluation cycle

1. Describe and map your program
2. Prioritize what you need to know
3. Design your evaluation
4. Create tools for gathering information
5. Collect the information
6. Sort and analyze the information
7. Use and share the information

Arrow pointing back to step 1.
### Prioritize what you need to know

#### Prioritizing Inquiry Questions

Fill in the table below for each of the broad inquiry questions that you and your team have brainstormed. Based on how useful, actionable, and feasible each question is, determine whether it is a high, medium, or low priority for evaluation. From here an evaluation plan and evaluation tool(s) can be developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry question</th>
<th>Why is this question important to your team?</th>
<th>What changes might you be able to make if you answered this question?</th>
<th>What types of information would you need to answer this question and what is the best method to collect it?</th>
<th>How high of a priority is this question? H=high, M=medium, L=low</th>
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<tr>
<td>Example: What are the needs in the community we are serving?</td>
<td>Verify our assumptions of the needs of the community</td>
<td>Allows our organization to better prioritize our intervention strategies</td>
<td>Interviews &amp; Focus Groups with community members</td>
<td>H M L</td>
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Evaluation cycle

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Arrow indicates the cycle continues.
Evaluation approaches

Initiative is innovating and in development
• Exploring • Creating • Emerging

Initiative is forming and under refinement
• Improving • Enhancing • Standardizing

Initiative is stabilizing and well-established
• Established • Mature • Predictable

Try Developmental Evaluation

➢ Implementers are experimenting with different approaches and activities.
➢ There is a degree of uncertainty about what will work, where, and with whom.
➢ New questions, challenges, opportunities, successes, and activities continue to emerge.

Try Formative Evaluation

➢ Core elements of the initiative are taking shape.
➢ Implementers are refining their approach and activities.
➢ Outcomes are becoming more predictable.
➢ The context is increasingly well known and understood.

Try Summative Evaluation

➢ The initiative’s activities are definable and well-established, and do not change significantly as time passes.
➢ Implementers have significant experience with (and an increasing sense of certainty) about what works.
➢ The initiative is ready for a determination of merit, worth, value, or significance.
Evaluation cycle

1. Collect the information
2. Create tools for gathering information
3. Design your evaluation
4. Prioritize what you need to know
5. Describe and map your program
6. Use and share the information

Flow: Collect the information → Create tools for gathering information → Design your evaluation → Prioritize what you need to know → Describe and map your program → Use and share the information → Collect the information
Data sources

Primary data sources
- Information collected specific for your evaluation
  - Surveys
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups

Secondary data sources
- Data that have already been collected
  - Existing data sets
  - Program records
  - Literature reviews
A good evaluation tool should be...

- Valid (measuring what you want to measure)
- Reliable (consistent measurement)
- Culturally appropriate
- Ethical and legal
- Sensitive to change
- Convenient and easy to use
- Accessible
- Relevant
- Focused
Evaluation cycle

1. Describe and map your program
2. Prioritize what you need to know
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Arrow indicates the flow of the process.
Evaluation cycle

1. Use and share the information
2. Collect the information
3. Create tools for gathering information
4. Design your evaluation
5. Prioritize what you need to know
6. Describe and map your program
7. Sort and analyze the information
What do your results mean?

- Are there emerging patterns/themes?
- What is surprising?
- What is consistent with other data?
- Are your findings significant?
- Do the results suggest potential program improvements?
- Do the results lead to new questions?
- When should this evaluation be repeated?
Organizational Learning and Continuous Improvement

▪ Conversations at different levels
  – Library Board
  – Administrative Team
  – Work teams

▪ How do we get better?
  – What’s working?
  – What’s not working?

▪ Are we having the right conversations?
Discussion:

Prioritizing evaluation questions that support organizational learning and continuous improvement

- What is one evaluation question you could answer for your library that would help you to improve your programs and services or better meet the needs of your patrons?
Aligning the Logic Model

Strategic Plan – Mission, Vision, Core Values, Goals

Logic Model

Action Plans
It All Comes Together

- Activity:
- Goal:
- Initiative:
- Title:
- Actions:
- Timeline:
- Lead Person:

- Lead Division:
- Outputs:
- Outcome Letter:
- Measurement:
- Indicators:
- Notes:
How Are We Different?

- Framework for Discussions
- Priorities
- Personnel evaluations
- Keeping it up-to-date
Evaluation cycle

1. Design your evaluation
2. Create tools for gathering information
3. Collect the information
4. Sort and analyze the information
5. Use and share the information
6. Describe and map your program
7. Prioritize what you need to know
Use and share the information

- How should you share your evaluation results? BE CREATIVE!
  - Who needs to know what you learned?
  - What is the best way to tell them the story?
  - Are there multiple ways to share the information?

- Formal reports
- Executive summary
- Infographics
- Dashboards
- Narrative stories
- PowerPoint
- Live presentation
- Website
- Social Media/Webinar
Use and share the information

- What did you learn about your program?
- What program elements could be changed, enhanced, or added?
- How should the evaluation be adjusted?
Resources and wrap-up
Library evaluation resources


- The Public Library Association’s Project Outcomes: [http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/performancemeasurement](http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/performancemeasurement)
General logic model and evaluation resources

- [www.wilderresearch.org](http://www.wilderresearch.org) – find evaluation tip sheets, evaluation reports on a variety of topics, and more!

- Visitor Studies Association (VSA): [http://visitorstudies.org/resources](http://visitorstudies.org/resources)


- American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) – Visitor Voices: [http://community.aaslh.org/visitorsvoices/](http://community.aaslh.org/visitorsvoices/)

More resources


Questions or comments?

Nicole MartinRogers
Senior Research Manager
Wilder Research
651-280-2682
nicole.martinrogers@wilder.org
@nmartinrogers
www.wilderresearch.org
www.mncompass.org

Audrey Betcher
Director
Rochester Public Library
(507) 328-2344
audrey@rplmn.org
@abetcher1
www.rplmn.org