**PROJECT EVALUATION: THE WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY… and HOW**

Written by: Helena Jacobs of Benozaadleyo Consulting, LLC

***Who should evaluate?***

Anyone who is looking for ways to do the following:

* Measure the impact their project is having on participants and/or the larger community;
* Determine whether their stated project objectives or goals were reached or not;
* Gain feedback on what worked really well, and what could be improved upon within the project design;
* Gather information about the needs of the community and how potential future projects could address them;
* Provide tangible data in a report to project participants, community members, funders, or others interested in learning about the project results.

***What is evaluation and why do we do it?***

Project evaluation is the assessment of an ongoing or completed project, particularly addressing its achievement of project goals, effectiveness, impact and efficiency. It captures stories and feedback, while also allowing for an exchange of information between the project designers and the project participants.

Evaluation is also a helpful tool for reflection and guiding future choices around project development. The learning opportunities captured through evaluation can lead to improvement in future activities, and contribute to a larger conversation of practitioners around “best practices.”

Evaluation is often recommended or required by funders who wish to see some tangible results illustrating the impact their investment has made in the target community. These results might be illustrated in the form of photos, videos, oral stories, written surveys, graphs, art, etc.

***When is a good time to evaluate and where can it take place?***

Collecting baseline data before the project takes place will give you a picture of the participants’ knowledge, feelings, awareness, etc. before taking part in any of the activities that might seek to increase their knowledge, affect their feelings or develop their awareness. This could be done through giving a survey before the project followed by the same survey upon completion of the project, then comparing the results. If it is not possible to collect baseline data before the project begins, collecting data while the project is ongoing and/or once the project is completed is a must.

Evaluation can happen on site where the project is taking place through surveys, questionnaires, audio and video testimonies, written observations, etc. It can also happen over the phone or online through tools such as SurveyMonkey or Google forms.

***How do I evaluate?***

Evaluation should always begin by explaining the evaluation methods to the participants and obtaining their permission to gather evaluation data. Evaluation may include such things as surveys or questionnaires, interviews, photos, videos, quotes of things participants said, and any other documented information that will contribute to the evaluation process. Release forms and participant signatures may be required.

If you develop a survey or questionnaire to evaluate the project, you may want to consider developing questions to include the following:

1. Demographic data.
2. Level of involvement in the project.
3. Questions that measure the impact of your project.
4. Questions that provide participants with an opportunity to provide feedback on what they learned, what went really well, and what could use improvement.
5. Extra space for open-ended comments and reflections.

*Demographic Data*

You may want to collect information about who participated in your project to determine if you hit your target audience or not. You could do this through including a sign in sheet with fields to collect all pertinent information at each project activity and make sure each person has signed in before beginning. You could also do this through including a section in your survey with questions to gather this information. These questions could ask for identifiers such as name and contact information, or they could allow for the respondent to remain anonymous but include general information such as gender, age range, hometown, ethnicity, etc.

*Level of Involvement in the Project*

You will want to make sure to include a question to capture how involved in the project the participant was. Receiving feedback from someone who participated in just one of five project workshops will not render the same response from someone who participated in all five workshops, and their responses cannot be weighed the same.

A sample question could be:

1. In what project workshops did you participate? (*please check all the apply*)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ☐ | The History of Wooden Masks: May 1, 2016 |
| ☐ | Making Wooden Masks, Part One: May 3, 2016 |
| ☐ | Making Wooden Masks, Part Two: May 5, 2016 |
| ☐ | Making Wooden Masks, Part Three: May 7, 2016 |
| ☐ | Presenting our Wooden Masks, A Community Art Show: May 9, 2016 |

*Questions That Measure The Impact Of Your Project*

Your project was developed with specific goals in mind, so framing your questions to be a measurement tool for these goals will link everything back to what the project aspired to do, and how well it accomplished the identified goals. The goals should be clearly listed in your project description so that the questions can reflect the goals.

Sample Project Goals

* Goal one: *Our goal is to increase the awareness of local residents about the importance of wooden masks in our culture, ceremonies and traditional practices.*
* Goal two: *Our goal is to target youth to participate in the workshops and help them to feel more connected to their culture through hands-on wood carving and mask making.*
* Goal three: *Our goal is to encourage inter-generational learning and exchange of knowledge between Elders and youth.*
* Goal four: *Our goal is to help our participants learn more of our local Native language by instructing participants in both English and our Native language.*
* Goal five: *Our goal is to provide workshop participants with new skills that will help them to self-identify as artists and feel supported in our community to make art and keep these traditions alive.*

Sample Survey Questions

1. Participating in these workshops helped me to feel more aware of the importance of wooden masks in my culture, ceremonies and traditional practices:

(*please circle one*)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither disagree nor agree | Agree | Strongly agree |

1. Through participating in these workshops, I was able to:

*(please check all that apply)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ☐ | Become more aware of the importance of wooden masks in my culture, ceremonies and traditional practices. |
| ☐ | Connect with an Elder or a youth to learn something new. |
| ☐ | Connect with an Elder or a youth to teach something new. |
| ☐ | Learn my Native language. |
| ☐ | Feel supported as an artist in my community.  |
| ☐ | Feel connected to my culture. |

1. Please describe how you will use the information you gained in these workshops:
2. Will you share what you learned with others?

(*please circle one)*

Yes No

*Questions that provide participants with an opportunity to provide feedback on what they learned, what went really well, and what could use improvement.*

Sample questions for this could include:

1. What did you like most about these workshops?
2. How could the project organizers do a better job of offering these workshops in the future?
3. How useful do you think the information is that the workshop provided?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ☐ | Very useful |
| ☐ | Somewhat useful |
| ☐ | Not very useful |
| ☐ | Not at all useful  |

1. Do you plan to register for more workshops if they become available?

(*please circle one)*

Yes No

If no, please explain why:

*Extra space for open-ended comments and reflections*

Having a combination of questions that allow for both open-ended or narrative responses and quantifiable responses such as scale rating or multiple choice can be helpful when translating this information into a report. The last question, however, can just provide some blank space to invite the participant to share whatever other feedback they have regarding their experience with the project.

**Survey samples are available below and can be downloaded, modified and used for individual project use.**

*Evaluation Using Photographs or Video*

The saying goes that a picture is worth 1,000 words, and this can be true for evaluation. If your project goals include intergenerational learning and increasing awareness of Native art and culture, you can capture this through photo and video while actively documenting your participants who provide permission to do so. A photo of an Elder teaching a young person to sew, bead, or carve is priceless and can help illustrate the activities and impact of the project in ways that words might not be able to. Selected still images can be put together to develop a story board and used to tell the story of the project. Video testimonials can be recorded where participants respond to prompts such as “what did you learn from this project?” or “describe your most memorable or positive experience from this project” and put together to complement photos or written survey response for a well-rounded evaluation.

Having a plan in place before the project activities begin for who will take photos and video, and when is recommended – do not wait until the last day to try to capture everything!

Journey to What Matters: Increased Alaska Native Art & Culture

Sample Project Survey A

1. Name:
2. Hometown:
3. Age:
4. Gender:
5. In what project activities did you participate? (*please check all the apply*)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ☐ | *List project activities here…* |
| ☐ | *Workshop One: Month, Day, Year* |
| ☐ | *Workshop Two: Month, Day, Year* |
| ☐ | *Workshop Three: Month, Day, Year* |

1. Participating in these project activities helped me to feel more aware of the importance of [*list primary activity, i.e. basket weaving, skin sewing*] in my culture and traditional practices:

(*please circle one*)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither disagree nor agree | Agree | Strongly agree |

1. Through participating in these workshops, I was able to:

*(please check all that apply)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ☐ | *List your project goals here…* |
| ☐ | Connect with an Elder or a youth to learn something new. |
| ☐ | Connect with an Elder or a youth to teach something new. |
| ☐ | Learn my Native language. |
| ☐ | Feel supported as an artist in my community.  |
| ☐ | Feel connected to my culture. |
| ☐ | Participate in a cultural activity that otherwise would not have been available to me. |

1. Please describe how you will use the information you gained in these workshops:
2. What did you like most about these workshops?
3. How could the project organizers do a better job of offering these workshops in the future?
4. Will you share what you learned with others?

(*please circle one)*

Yes No

1. How useful do you think the information is that the workshop provided?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ☐ | Very useful |
| ☐ | Somewhat useful |
| ☐ | Not very useful |
| ☐ | Not at all useful  |

1. Do you plan to register for more workshops if they become available?

(*please circle one)*

Yes No

If no, please explain why:

1. Please share any other comments about your experience with this project:

Journey to What Matters: Increased Alaska Native Art & Culture

Sample Project Survey B

1. Did you participate in all of the project activities?

(*please circle one)*

Yes No

If no, please list the activities you participated in:

1. On a scale of one to ten (0 being none and 10 being the most), how much knowledge did you have about [*list primary project activity, i.e. beading, carving*] before participating in this project?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1. On a scale of one to ten (0 being none and 10 being the most), how much knowledge do you have about [*list primary project activity, i.e. beading, carving*] now after participating in this project?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1. Through participating in these workshops, I was able to:

*(please check all that apply)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ☐ | *List your project goals here…* |
| ☐ | Connect with someone outside of my own age group. |
| ☐ | Become more aware of Native art and culture. |
| ☐ | Participate in a cultural activity that otherwise would not have been available to me. |

1. Did your access to and awareness of Native art and culture increase because of your participation in this project? Please explain your answer:
2. Please share a positive or uplifting experience you had while participating in this project:
3. What would you change about these workshops to improve them?
4. Will you share what you learned with others?

(*please circle one)*

Yes No

1. Will you continue practicing the activities you learned through this project? Please explain:
2. Do you want to participate in these types of project activities again?

(*please circle one)*

Yes No

If no, please explain why:

1. Please share any other comments about your experience with this project: