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AUGUST 2014

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Social Impact Measurement – why and
how to measure what matters

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Session Overview

- Social impact measurement: what is it and why do it?
- Approaches to social impact measurement
- Developing a theory of change
- Practical considerations
- Questions & comments



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Social Impact Measurement: what it is and why do it?

- Evaluation:
 - A systematic approach to assessing the relative value of a process, program or organisation
 - Micro/meso analysis
- Social Impact Measurement:
 - Focused on longer term changes or macro effects
 - Evaluation may form part of impact assessment, but
 - Impact assessment is more likely to be longitudinal and/or meta-level



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Why do it?

- Political drivers
- Research evidence



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Approaches to Evaluation and SIM


- Method-led approaches
 - Program Logic
 - Social Return on Investment
 - Social accounting and audit
 - LM3...
- ...to name a few!






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Principles-based Approach

Principle	Principle
Stakeholder involvement	Indicators
Materiality	Ethics
Theories of Change	Transparency
Counterfactualty	Verification/assurance

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Once upon a time at “Employment 'R Us!”, program manger Jo, calls head of evaluation, Bron...



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Developing A Theory of Change



I THINK YOU SHOULD BE MORE SPECIFIC HERE IN STEP TWO

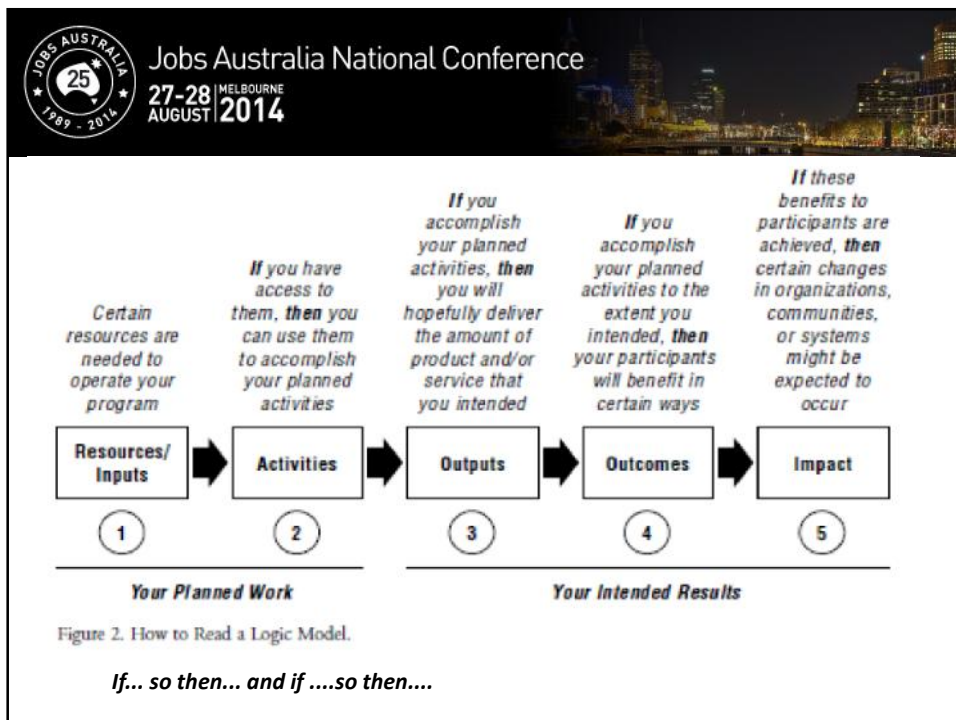
THEN A MIRACLE OCCURS...


J. Harris


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What is a Theory of Change?

- **How** and **why** an initiative works
- Articulating a theory of change at the outset and gaining agreement on it by all stakeholders reduces problems associated with **causal attribution of impact**.
- Ensure you are delivering the **right activities** for the **desired outcomes** – based on evidence!





GROUP ACTIVITY (5min ish)

- Pick one (real or imagined) program/ intervention per table
- State Theory of Change at the top
- Complete the template on your table




THEORY OF CHANGE:

Resources	Activities	Outputs	Short & Long-Term Outcomes	Impact
<i>In order to accomplish our set of activities we will need the following:</i>	<i>In order to address our problem or asset we will conduct the following activities:</i>	<i>We expect that once completed or underway these activities will produce the following evidence of service delivery.</i>	<i>We expect that if completed or ongoing these activities will lead to the following changes in 1-3 then 4-6 years:</i>	<i>We expect that if completed these activities will lead to the following changes in 7-10 years</i>



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Bron's 10 Do's and 10 Don't's of measuring impact




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10 Do's of measuring impact


1. **Do** invest pre-program. Develop specific research interpretation/synthesis capacity so as to [develop evidence-based programs](#). AND Introduce the evidence based programs! Be prepared to change! [Evidence-based programs](#) are more likely to produce positive evaluations, greater returns and more sustainable funding
2. **Do** clarify project aims - develop theory of change and use program logic models & align evaluations methods to program aims
3. **Do** budget for evaluation of programs (5-10%)




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5. **Do** collect base line data – the story is in the journey travelled
6. **Do** develop research advisory committees, ethics committees, panels for research consultancy (through EOI, often pro-bono)
7. **Do** develop evaluation capacity in-house. **Know what quality looks like!** Invest in evaluation training ie include in Position Description for staff for long term cost-effectiveness. At least for effective partnership with evaluation consultants. **Don't get ripped off !**




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8. **Do** utilise external data (e.g. ABS census, government reporting, review papers, systematic reviews and best-evidence syntheses, etc...) to strengthen evaluation claims
9. **Do** develop, maintain and integrate relevant organisational data bases:
 - utilise technology to capture data efficiently
 - link and ANALYSE organisational data-bases
 - coordinate research through systems monitoring incl research notification systems (FANCY☺)
 - good both for evaluations and for ongoing research analysis and monitoring (in line with annual reporting?)
10. **Do** THINK ABOUT WHY YOU ARE EVALUATING! Consult and work with and think about the requirements of the...






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Top 10 Don'ts of measuring impact

1. Don't agree to all the grunt work .. And mindful of ethical implications of front line workers interviewing clients – “we did a good job didn't we?”
2. But don't farm out EVERYTHING (current practice?). Using existing Human Resources may lift HR benefits.
3. Don't ignore existing organisational or external data bases.
4. Don't believe in “organic development” of your project (i.e. “Oh yes, Robyn from accounts is interested in doing that...”) evaluation is a technical skill)
5. Don't ignore the [national statement on ethical research](#) and relevant government ethics approval processes



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6. **Don't** let consultants/contractors write their own contracts, own IP and publish freely. Be wary in contractual arrangements as in usual business
 - write specifications
 - payment on deliverables!
7. **Don't** set and forget – keep monitoring
8. **Don't** hesitate to consult experts and ask for pro-bono assistance (academics in some cases will work for publication alone)
9. **Don't** dismiss opportunities to network and collaborate with other bodies... Collective impact!
10. And finally No. 10 is....



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