

AIM Advocacy Toolkit: Making the best use of evidence, demonstrating contribution to key outcomes

Maximising Your Impact

Jonathan Durnin, DC Research Ltd

www.dcresearch.co.uk

Why are we interested in impacts?

- Common thread of museum (and wider culture) value being assessed in terms of its contribution to other agendas (incl. economic, as well as health and wellbeing, community, environmental etc.)
- Museums are increasingly **needing to articulate and demonstrate contribution** in terms of value and contribution to wider agendas, especially the contribution that they make to the local and regional economy
- **Vital to ensure key audiences** outside the sector appreciate and **are convinced** by impact evidence and related advocacy

Evidencing museum impacts

- Debates surround evidencing impact of museums, and social impacts in particular.....
-unstated ideal is 'perfect solution' that quantifies social impacts in a similar approach to economic impacts
- Pursuing quantitative approaches to measuring social impacts present practical problems for most museums:
 - Cost and scale puts such research out of the reach of many museums
 - Studies are typically highly caveated and often inconclusive
 - Academics calling for quantified counterfactual scenarios and control groups further increases the potential scale of resources needed for such work

'So what?'

- Debates important as they shape themes / outcomes / impacts that are important to funders
- To demonstrate social impacts, you need to know which themes, outcomes and impacts are:
 - i. Important to advocacy audiences
 - ii. Which outcomes best fit the activities of your museum and experiences of your audiences
- Key challenge is finding convincing evidence demonstrating how museums generate such impacts

AIM Advocacy Toolkit

- AIM wanted a toolkit to make sense of social and environmental impacts for members...

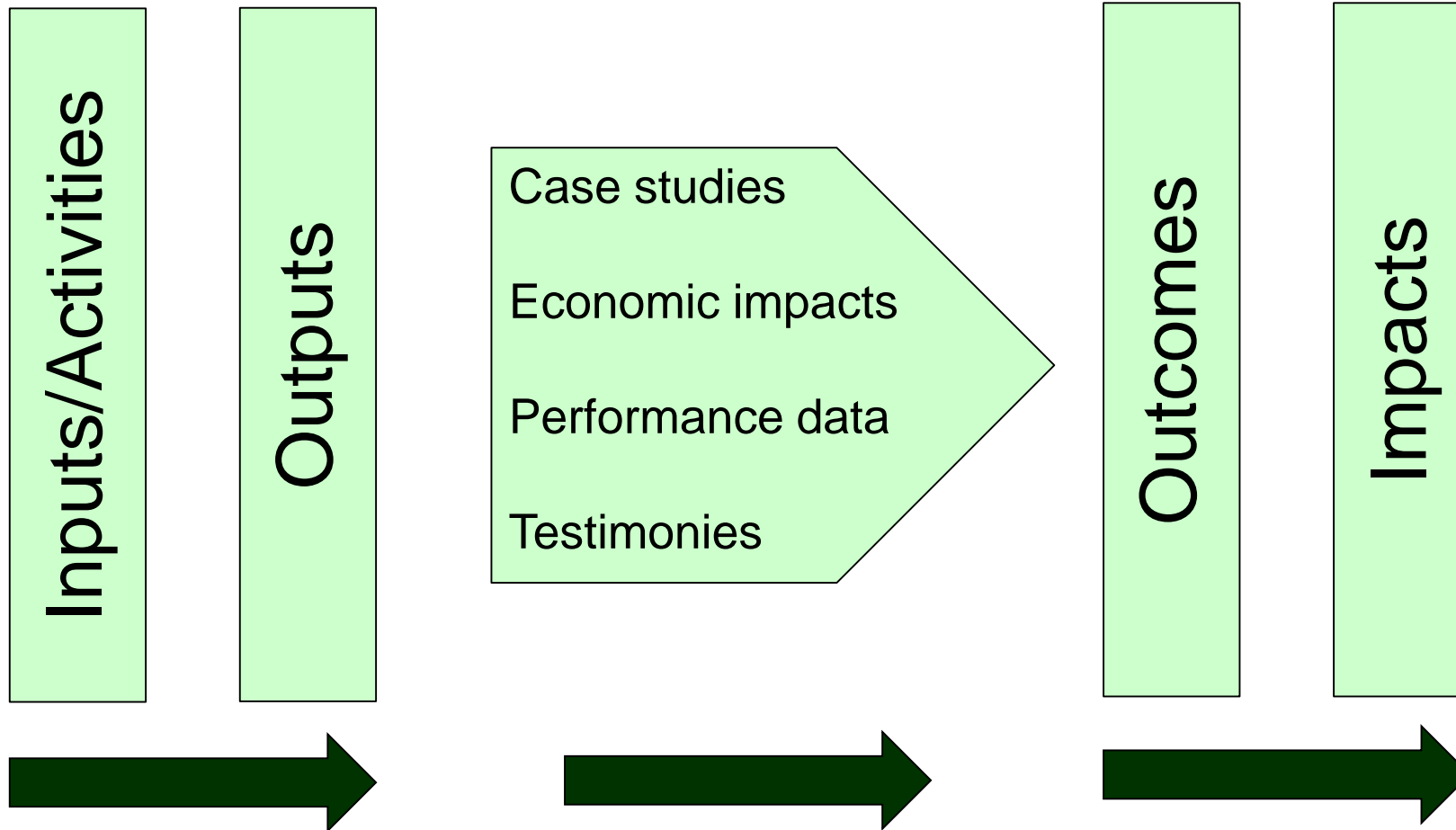
"...research the expansion of the successful and much-used AIM Economic Impact Toolkit into social and environmental questions, while remaining true to the AIM tradition of evidence-led research and policy making".

- Toolkit is an impact evaluation framework, tested using evidence from AIM members
- Toolkit themes are Health and Wellbeing; Society and Communities; Education; Economy; and Environment

Using the AIM Advocacy Toolkit

- Designed to help fill gap between activities and inputs generated, and impact contribution
- Series of wellbeing, social, educational, economic and environmental outcomes, presenting for each:
 - Example museum activities that contribute to such outcomes
 - The typical/potential strength of museum contribution to these outcomes
 - How museums can evidence their contribution
 - Examples of publicly available evidence

Bridging the gap between what you do....and outcomes/impacts



Choose your outcomes, and activities

- **Outcomes** are the starting point
- Objective is to show how your activities contribute / impact on outcomes of others
- Outcomes (of funders, decision makers, local authorities etc.) typically set out in strategy/policy and corporate documents
- You can also use generic outcome examples in the toolkit
- Select **activities** that make the strongest contribution to these outcomes
- Examples of activities can be found in the toolkit

Assess contribution to outcomes

- Important to show you understand context of outcomes, and your contribution to them:
 - **Direct Contribution:** Where a museum's contribution is direct or immediate a museum's contribution is likely (with good evidence collection) to be easily measured
 - **Supporting Contribution:** This is likely to mean the museum is one of a number of elements that will enable the delivery of improvements or progress towards an outcome
 - **Generational Contribution:** In some cases the activity undertaken by the museum is likely to contribute towards longer-term 'generational' changes rather than any immediate and direct changes

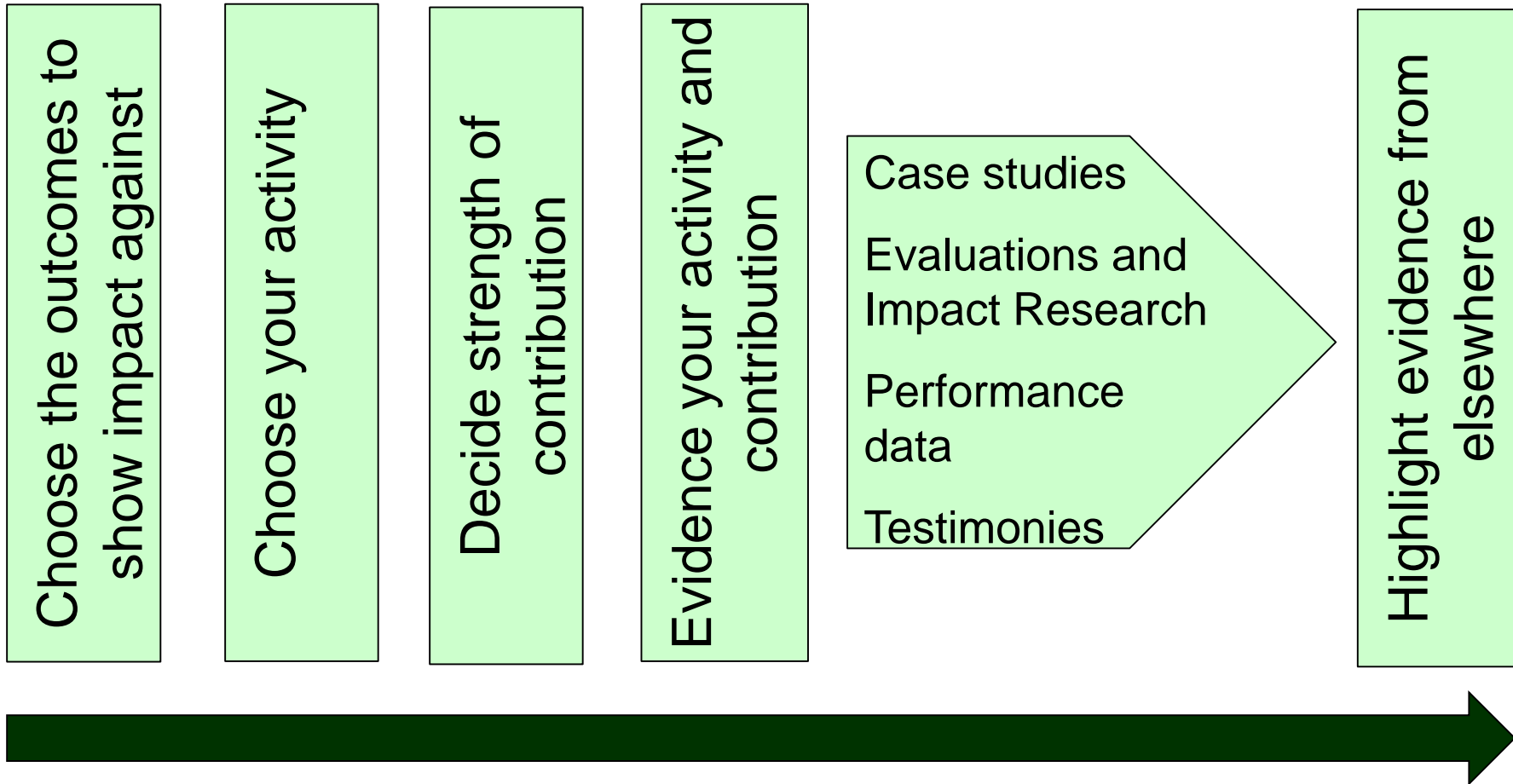
Evidence your contribution

- Back up assertion of strength/level of contribution
- Case studies, evaluations/impact research, performance data, testimonies
- If you don't have evidence yet, explain how you are going to collect it in the future
- Use examples of evidence from elsewhere that demonstrates contribution to same/similar outcomes

Use supporting evidence

- Need for evidence to convince stakeholders and funders your activities contribute
- Pointing to other sources of evidence can support your argument (and save time/effort)
- Such evidence can help link your activities to wider outcomes and impacts
- Evidence is organised by theme and outcome examples, and referenced in the toolkit

Demonstrating the relationship between museum activities and outcomes/impacts



1. Potential outcomes	2. Examples of what museums do to contribute	3. Strength of museum contribution	4. What museums can do to evidence contribution	5. Examples of evidence
Supporting cultural diversity and identity	Exhibitions on intercultural understanding Exhibitions on local traditions and cultures	Supporting and generational	Record the number of exhibitions, and number (and type) of visitors to the exhibitions Ask those engaged about their thoughts about exhibition before and after visiting	Coal, Frankincense and Myrrh, Museums Sheffield ⁱ Staying Power: Staying Power: Photographs of Black British Experience 1950s-1990s, V&A and Black Cultural Archives ⁱⁱ 100 Stories of Migration, University of Leicester ⁱⁱⁱ
Encouraging familial ties and relationships	Use collections to support families, and encourage dialogue and contact between generations	Direct	Record the number of sessions and attendees Survey attendees to find out what was discussed, and whether their attitudes to other generations have changed as a result	Engaging Teenage Parents, NML Developing and Supporting Family Learning in Museums and Galleries, Renaissance NW and NIACE ^{iv}
Tackling fear of crime and anti-social behaviour Contributing to crime prevention and reduction	Hosting sessions at museums related to addressing fear of crime and ASB Specific project based activity concerning crime prevention and reduction	Supporting	Record the number of sessions and attendees	Safety and Citizenship Programme, London Transport Museum Evaluation of NCCL's Theatre of Law ^v and I Pledge projects ^{vi}
Providing safe, inclusive and trusted public spaces	Providing space in museums and support through collections for delivery of project activity	Direct	Count the number of sessions delivered, and the number attending sessions	Any example of social, economic and environmental projects being delivered through collections or in museums. See the list of resources table at the end of this report.

Some examples

- London Transport Museum
 - Delivers TfL's **Safety and Citizenship Programme** to almost every Year 6 pupil in Greater London, as well as secondary school pupils
 - Can evidence contribution to crime reduction and prevention, and educational development of children outcomes
- The Lightbox, Woking
 - Supported people in the early stages of dementia, and their care partners with an interest in the arts through the **Art in Mind** pilot programme, to increase participant feelings of inclusion and mental wellbeing, and social engagement
 - Can evidence contribution to supporting care and recovery, and supporting older adults to live independent lives outcomes

Some examples

- Woodhorn Museum and Northumberland Archives
 - **Aspiration through heritage** testing how volunteering in cultural organisations can help people move into further training or back into work
 - Can evidence contribution to outcomes about reducing long term unemployment, and supporting target groups into learning and employment
- Coventry Music Museum
 - Can demonstrate significant contribution to a range of priorities and outcomes in Coventry and Warwickshire, including visitor economy, profile, community cohesion, provision of volunteering opportunities, and positive artistic activities for a range of groups

Bodelwyddan Castle Trust

- **Artefact: Museums and creativity for better mental health** - partnership of four museums and galleries in North Wales, led by BCT
- Delivering art sessions in museums and galleries to people with history of mental health problems or experiencing episodes of stress
- Participants responded to museum setting, with evaluation findings indicating that creative activity in museums had significant beneficial effect
- Supports two key Museums Strategy for Wales outcomes, and wider health and wellbeing outcomes in Wales and in Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd and Anglesey

Outcomes	What museum does to contribute	Strength of museum contribution	What museum can do to evidence contribution	Examples of evidence
<p>Promote healthy lives by offering opportunities that engage, enthuse and encourage participation, creating a sense of well-being. (Museums Strategy for Wales, 5.6)</p> <p>Develop partnership working to enable improved service delivery and make the most of available resources. (Museums Strategy for Wales, 5.7)</p> <p>Encouraging healthy lifestyles and contribution to physical and mental wellbeing</p> <p>Supporting care and recovery</p>	<p>Deliver the <i>Arteffact</i> project (12 week courses at four museums and/or archives for adults referred with stress, anxiety or depression).</p> <p>Train museum/archive staff (Mental Health First Aid; creative use of collections)</p> <p>Recruit and train a team of <i>Arteffact</i> artists and volunteers.</p> <p>Establish <i>Arteffact</i> project partnership across four counties with shared responsibility for management, development, funding, marketing, resources and advocacy.</p>	<p>Supporting</p> <p>Direct</p> <p>Direct</p> <p>Supporting</p>	<p>Commission an independent evaluation.</p> <p>Carry out internal evaluation.</p> <p>Develop and test an <i>Arteffact</i> project model toolkit.</p> <p>Commission a business plan and funding package towards achieving a sustainable future.</p>	<p><i>Arteffact</i> pilot programme evaluation report: Colette Neal, <i>Can Creative Engagement in Museums Improve the Mental Health and Well-being of People Experiencing Mental Distress?</i>, 2011. Available online at www.welshmuseumsfederation.org</p> <p><i>Arteffact</i> film https://vimeo.com/62269511</p>

Estimating value of volunteer time

- HLF encourages projects to count the time that volunteers give to a project as a non-cash (or an 'in kind') contribution:
 - Unskilled tasks @ up to £50 per day
 - Skilled tasks @ up to £150 per day
 - Professional tasks @ up to £350 per day
- Daily minimum wage is £48.75 for 7.5 hours day...in October it will rise to £50.25, or use the living wage (£58.88)
- Using **volunteer timesheets** in your museum is considered best practice by major funders

Presenting your evidence

- Target evidence to your intended audience by matching evidence and outcomes
 - Funders
 - Decision makers
 - Partners and stakeholders
 - Volunteers
 - Potential customers
- Be convincing!
 - Ensure that the messages are clear
 - Ensure that audiences do not require any specialist knowledge in order to understand

Using the toolkit

- Who is the target of your impact advocacy? What outcomes are important to them?
- Which of your museum's activities best contribute to these outcomes?
- Assess the strength of the contribution of these activities to your target's outcomes.
- What evidence do you have now, and what could you collect in future?
- What examples of impact contribution is available publically?

Presenting your evidence

- Assume you are in the lift with the Deputy Minister for Culture Sport and Tourism
 - What are the three key facts you would mention?
 - What is the one thing you want him to remember about the conversation?
 - What is the one thing that your museum delivers, that he is probably not aware of?
 - What is the one thing he could do for you?

Top tips

- Being robust is essential.....for both quantitative and qualitative evidence
- Some key things to remember:
 - It is always better to be conservative with impacts.....
 - Don't try to quantify things that can't be counted! Museums have lots of convincing stories around projects and personal journeys – use them
 - What is the counterfactual? What would have happened anyway?
 - Outcomes and impacts are 'what happened, what changed'... not 'what we did/delivered'

Some links

Links to AIM Advocacy and AIM Economic Impact toolkits

http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/research_papers/

More information about DC Research:

<http://www.dcresearch.co.uk/>

Contacting DC Research:

E: jon@dcresearch.co.uk

 @jonathandurnin and @DCResearchUK

0116 259 2390/07501 725 115