Susanne Bosch
Introduction Evaluation Workshop
9 February 2012
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Evaluation criteria – How to measure art and culture projects - Workshop -

10.45 – 12.00 Thursday, 9th

The evaluation of art and culture projects for social development is an important and challenging task. Funders demand proof of the impact of initiatives based on the idea that "measurable outcomes" in the form of figures can reflect the wider, long-term, and sustainable effects on society. Moreover, proving the outcome, impact, and sustainability of projects has become a necessity to secure further funding and support for cultural policies. However, the usual evaluation methods were not designed for the art and culture fields, and thus they are difficult to utilise. Furthermore, there are still discussions about the measurable outcomes of these projects and how the long-term impacts can be assessed. This workshop gives an opportunity to discuss already existing evaluation practices and specific approaches to the art and culture sector based on research and practitioners' experiences, thus contributing to a more critical engagement between project managers, artists, and donors.

Speakers:
Gregor Barié and Maria Paula Prada (GIZ, Cooperación entre Estado y Sociedad Civil para el Desarrollo de la Paz (CERCAPAZ), Colombia)
Antanas Mockus (former mayor of Bogota, Colombia)
Tina Lierheimer (Goethe-Institut, Evaluation & Quality Management)

Moderator:
Susanne Bosch (Artist, Art in Public, Belfast/Berlin)

Evaluation Criteria - How to measure arts and culture projects?

Indroduction Susanne Bosch

The arts are subject to the attentions of a large number of social institutions such as schools, universities, government departments, the ceative industries, further museums, galleries, festivals, theatres, ... journalism, but lately also NGOs, civic society organisations and peace forces.

The frequently expressed idea about art is that art has the capacity to transform the lives not just of individuals but of whole communities. „The transformative power of art would create community, nuture cultural identity, promote leadership and consciously develop critical agents of change"[1] (Canada Council for the Arts 2007) There is a certain orthodoxy amongst advocates of the arts around the world. They all claim the same power for the arts.

We discuss the value of art so publicly here because it is receiving public/ government funding. „Arts occupy a particularly fragile position in public policy, on

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[1] Belfoire Eleonora and Bennett, Oliver, *The Social Impact Of The Arts. An Intellectual History*. Palgrave MacMillan, Hampshire, 2008, p 3

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account of the fact that the claims made for them, especially relating to their transformative power, are extremely hard to substantiate."[2]

Since the 1990th, we have evidence–based policies worldwide. ‚Whatever works best' has to be proven by hard data. Most valued is what can be measured. Transformation is complex in itself, art is an intrinsic experience, so how do you evaluate an art project that engages in social transformation, how do you measure impact and therefore transformation through the arts?

With social impact, one can name the four key areas where art is expected to contribute to governmental strategies: health, crime, employment and education. What is measured here, is the instrumental social and economical values of the arts, but not the intrinsic values that make art matter.

The result: we need to acknowledge that evidence-based policy-making has significant limitations in relations to the arts, when built on a narrow range of easily measurable indicators.

The evaluation of art and culture projects for social development is an important and challenging task. Funders demand **proof of the impact** of initiatives based on the idea that "measurable outcomes" in the form of figures can reflect the wider, long-term, and sustainable effects on society. Moreover, **proving the outcome, impact, and sustainability of projects has become a necessity to secure further funding and support for cultural policies**. But it also exists to

- To make more objective judgments, learn about the work and improve practice
- To determine which criteria for artistic and social transformation quality are important
- To contribute to a better cultural policy
- To determin the walue and worth of arts activity FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES or a socially engaged art practice
- To act resourcefully and to make sense
- To improve and develop a language that allows to talk about the transformation through a socially engaged art practice
- To develop a sophisticated qualitative analysis and a theoretical generalisation of the field to explore how transformation takes place, who engages, how they engage, in what circumstances, and to what end
- To heightening awareness among artists of the ways in which their work affects individuals and communities
- To develop an empirically grounded and well theorised framework of how transformation occurs
- To fullfill the need of various cross-disciplines to understand the position of art in relation to individuals, institutions, communities and wider societal structures

So, when it comes to evaluation, we are in a dilemma: there is a difficult field between art advocats trying to keep the arts alive by finding ways to deliver proof to the evidence-driven system, but there is few space for critical, open-ended interrogations of what the real value or impacts of the arts by might be?

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[2] ibid

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Interestingly enough, this discussion of the worth of art as functional tool with transformative effects is as old as the arts per se.

However, the usual evaluation methods were not designed for the art and culture fields, and thus they are difficult to utilise. This workshop gives an opportunity to discuss **already existing evaluation practices** and **specific approaches to the art and culture sector** based on **research and practitioners' experiences**, thus contributing to a more critical engagement between project managers, artists, and donors.

Jean Paul Lederach ranks art up high as the right tool for conflict transformation, as it has the ability to capture the essence and to create the new and unexpected that a stuck and conflicted situation is longing for. It is the door into the unthinkable.[3]

We come across key phenomena:
1. The missing common language for socially engaged arts practice between practitioners, partners, funders, and policy makers to talk about it!
2. Cross-sectoral influences between art, education, community development, political activism, entertainment and leisure, cultural tourism, regeneration, environmentalism, psychotherapy, the health sector and social care.
3. The current understanding of *how* transformational processes operate is surprisingly elusive.

In a very practical sense, we need to look at current methods of evaluation. It starts with the humanness of the process: Is it internally done or is there an external evaluator? Who is it, how is that perosn related to the site, context and project? When does the evaluation take place and how much time and resources exist for it? Then, what is going to be evaluated, the process, the outcome or the people involved? For what is it evaluated?

Before we get started, this is how the workshop will function as this will be a workshop:

We consider you an audience that is here, because you have a passion for this topic. Otherwise we would not really know why you intend to spend 1.15 h of your life-time on this. We also believe you are an expert audience, an audience of experienced, as this is the nature of this gathering.

So, we plan to keep the presentations short to 5 min where our experienced speakers introduce one model of best practice.

We then move on to the collaborative part. You all sit on a table now. It does not mean you will stay there.
Once done with the presentations, please look at the quesitions on every table you can to work on all of them or one of the questions. If you feel you can contribute to a discussion, stay there. So either learning or contribution are great drivers. If

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[3] Lederach, Jean Paul, *The Moral Imagination, The Art and Soul of Building Peace,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005

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nothing is happening, please visit another table and join their discussion. Use the law of mobility!

You will find yourself on a table with a question, a number of other people and one speaker. You will need to choose a table host who keeps time and sums-up at the end. You will have 20 min to discuss the matter together. Please use the table cloth and the markers to scribble, mind map your conversation or write the protocol. That way, you create transparency and info for others who are not at your table.

After the discussion phase, we will have each table report for 5 min on the findings. It leads us to a final round to summarize, to phrase questions and potentially an outlook together.

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Table discussion 2 © Susanne Bosch, 2012

Table discussion 3 © Susanne Bosch, 2012

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Presentation of findings © Susanne Bosch, 2012

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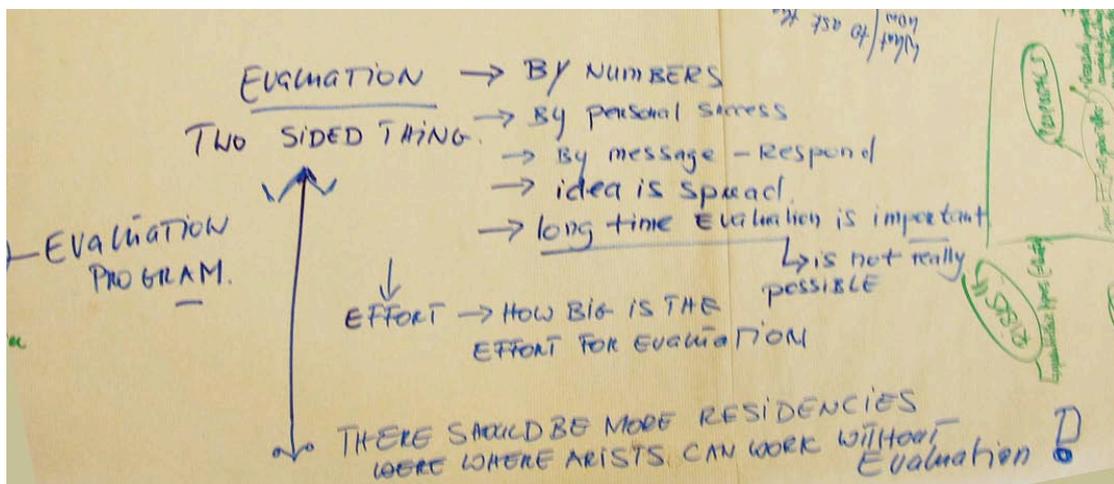Introduction Evaluation Workshop
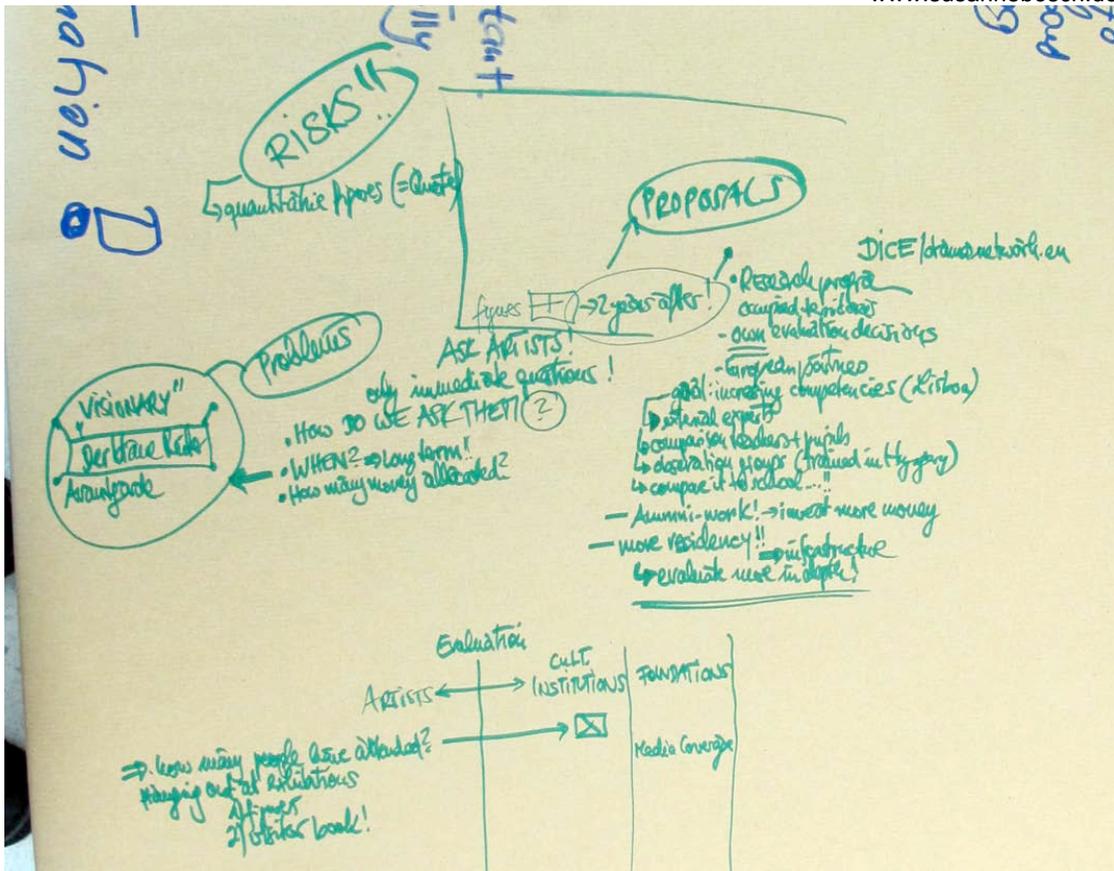9 February 2012
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Media Response:
Schattenblick -> INFOPOOL -> KUNST -> REPORT
BERICHT/012: Gefesselte Kunst - Im Joch der Verwertung (SB)
Workshop "Evaluation criteria - How to measure art and culture projects"
http://www.schattenblick.de/infopool/kunst/report/kurb0012.html

Druckausgabe:
www.schattenblick.de/da/2012/03/sb_120317_schattenblick_druckausgabe.pdf

Audio: There exists a recording of the session, susbosch@web.de