

Measuring social outcome: managing the science of indicator selection

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University-public sector & Charitable Sector partnerships

- Demonstrating impact- Mutually beneficial.
- Charities and NGO's- necessary to demonstrate multiple public benefits of services (incl. health and wellbeing, enhancing biodiversity, arts, cultural and community benefits).
- PLACE formed **Strategic Partnership** with a range of organisations (including Welsh Government; Canal & River Trust & Brecon Beacons National Park) to explore:
 - shared interest in sustainable place-making;
 - social, environmental and economic impacts.
- **Mechanisms:** Independent evaluation of programmes; devising outcomes frameworks; expert reviews; co-funded research projects and networks; & staff secondments.



Determining Social Outcomes: An Approach

- Conventional focus upon utilisation evaluation.
- Wide range of standardised approaches for exploring social benefits: incl. Theory of Change, Social Return on Investment & Results Based Accountability:
- **Capacities:** professional data collection and analysis skills, resources (time, software, etc.), training.
- Often, narrow constructs of outputs + outcomes (increasingly drawn from ever larger databases) - meaning and contexts can be disregarded.
- Long-term research **arrangements and approaches** vary in accordance to **context**;
- Scientific Consulting Research Model of participatory science (Leydesdorff and Ward 2005) –appropriate;
- **Co-research approach:**
 - **context and meaningful** insights
 - Non-generalisable.
 - Reflexive: who determines value and for what purpose? (complex and entangled questions!).

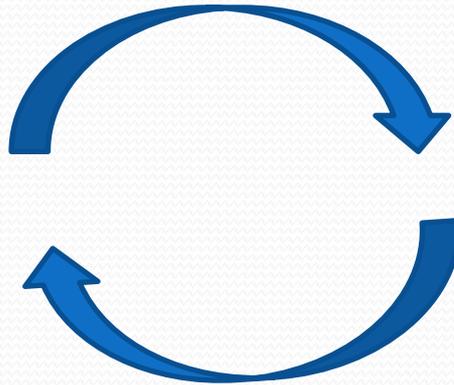


Adapted from: Cooper, C. B., Dickinson, J., Phillips, T., & Bonney, R. (2007). Citizen science as a tool for conservation in residential ecosystems. *Ecology and Society*, 12(2), 11.

Measuring social value

Why to
measure?

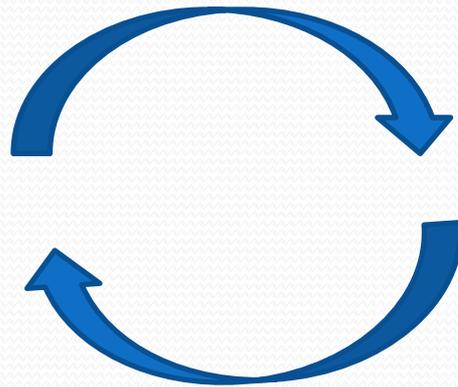
What to
measure?



How to
measure?

Measuring social value

Why to
measure?



What to
measure?

How to
measure?

Measurement Ambition(s)...?

High impact in a low number of places	High impact in a high number of places
Low impact in a low number of places	Low impact in a high number of places

Measurement Ambition(s)...?

High impact across a low number of user groups	High impact across a high number of user groups
Low impact across a low number of user groups	Low impact across a high number of user groups

Measurement Ambition(s)...?

Social

Environmental

Economic

Measurement Ambition(s)...?

Land

Water

Energy

Measurement Ambition(s)...?

- Who are the current key beneficiaries?
- What opportunities are being provided for these beneficiaries?
- How best to capture and record the benefits received?

Measurement Ambition(s)...?

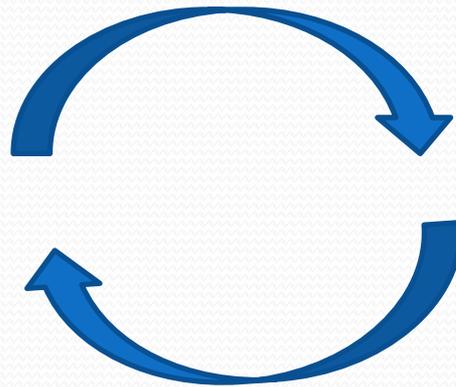
- Who are the current key beneficiaries?
- What opportunities are being provided for these beneficiaries?
- How best to capture and record the benefits received?

- Who is *not* currently benefitting?
- How could current approach to creating opportunities be revised in order that this gap can be addressed?
- How can measuring social benefit be used to inform future practice?

Measuring social value

Why to
measure?

What to
measure?

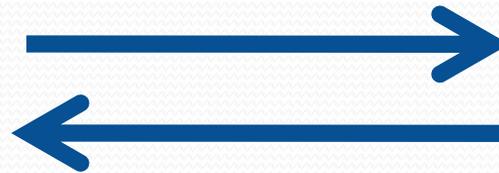


How to
measure?

Measuring social value

Intensive

(Qualitative,
in-depth)



Extensive

(Quantitative,
big data)

Multi-Method Research Programme

Stakeholder engagement

- beyond own organisation & funders.

- **Community Expertise** – expertise increasingly recognised as no longer the preserve of professionals.
- Inclusion of user groups:
 - offers valuable insights into **social outcomes** – otherwise unseen.
 - provides understanding of **how evaluation approaches will be received**.
- Means of engaging users:
 - Ideally participation in an **iterative process from the outset**, i.e. outcome indicator selection.
 - Or, once determined, **community consultation/conversation**.
- Barriers to user engagement (In addition to capacity issues mentioned previously):
 - Organisation **culture** – conservatism/ more progressive;
 - Organisation's **relations** with users – distance, historical;
 - Balance of **power** within organisations – organisation structure and governance;
- Ultimately, treating evaluations as processes of **mutual learning** can result in effective, holistic approaches to **co-management** of natural resource base.



Thank you