

Cultural Research Network Virtual Study Group

National Center for Arts Research

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PRESENTER:

Zannie Giraud Voss, Director of the [National Center for Arts Research](#) at Southern Methodist University

FACILITATOR:

Kiley Arroyo, Deputy Research Director, [Sustain Arts](#)

PRESENTATION

- NCAR's mission is to provide evidence based insights that enable arts and cultural leaders to overcome challenges and increase their impact.
- What we aren't: We don't look at the impact of the arts on society. We aren't consultants. We do research and provide tools.
- Our target market is nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. This does not include for-profit arts and culture companies.
- NCAR doesn't collect original data, which means we rely on a lot of partners, including Cultural Data Project (CDP), National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), US Census, Theatre Communications Group (TCG), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) for data.
- Also partner with TRG Arts, Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF), and IBM (this for development of indices and dashboard creation)
- In modeling the arts and cultural ecology, we worked from the assumption that arts organizations don't work in a vacuum. We wanted to know what drives performance from within as well as the socio/demographic characteristics of the region, the competitors, complements and substitutes that influence an organization's health.
- Started out by geocoding arts and culture orgs. We have 55,000 unique arts and cultural orgs in our total dataset. For some we have multiple years of data going back to 2008.
- In geocoding, we developed a spatial model that weights all the organizations surrounding a given organization, with the closest orgs getting the highest weight. This was just a starting point.
- Reached out to experts in the field like TRG Arts and NFF, as well as arts and cultural leaders around the country, asking them *What are the important questions we should ask about what influences the health of nonprofit arts and culture orgs?*
- Came up with 184 questions in total. Categorized them into nine major categories, four of which are financial.
- Of the 184 questions, we could find existing datasets to answer 128.
- Three major categories of reporting:
 - What was performance (averages)?
 - What drives performance (driving forces)?
 - What drives high performances (key intangible performance measure, or KIPI)?
- Broke out **performance** by sector, size of organization and market cluster
- Factors that **drive performance** (either positively or negatively) include sector (e.g., museums get more attendance than symphonies than dance) as well as size, age, square, footage, number of

premieres, target audience, median age of market, % of grad degrees in the market, commute times, sports teams cinemas, large corporations, federal grants, local funding.

- Developed KIPi scores to measure what **drives high performance**, looking at things like the organization's reputation in community, ability to build relationships, the quality of work on stage.
- We did a stochastic frontier analysis for the KIPi score that calculates the distance between each org as well as where it falls relative to the high performance frontier, then normalizes that to a 0-100 scale.
- Working with IBM to use Cognos to create an interactive online dashboard. If you participate in CDP or TRG, your data is included and you can look up your KIPi score. If not, you can enter data to get your KIPi score.
- The Cognos dashboard is on track to be launched next summer. You can look at higher and lower scores to identify areas to address, and you can dig deeper to understand the statistics from your organization that make up each score.
- Our intent is to help you find where you have issues. We will send you to online resources that might be able to help you out. However, we won't do individual consulting.
- We plan to issue quarterly industry reports – first one comes out Dec 3. Instead of a final document, we're creating a website that will be updated regularly. We want to get the material to you quickly.
- Will add indices over time and more info, so it will be updated every 3-4 months. We want to make sure the online tools and templates really work for practitioners.
- Ultimately we'd like to begin offering online courses to cover content of each of the 9 indices.

- This project launched in 2012 with three years of funding. Operating structure is in place. We are continuing to add new data sources and partners, updating existing data. Want to make sure we're serving the needs of arts and cultural leaders.
- We want to be able to tie in consumption level data to community level data to understand *How does health of community impact health of arts orgs.*

- Question: How does this differ from other arts and culture data initiatives?
- CPANDA was more a collection of arts/culture databases, not a research center itself.
- Great work being done by NEA with its National Arts Index. They're more interested in cultural policy, the impact of arts and culture on society. Less granular than the line-item details we're interested in.
- Sustain Arts is working with similar datasets and we have much to learn from one another, though the scope is different. Our interest is looking at national scale, rather than going in-depth with individual markets around the country. Sustain Arts' work is complementary. Orgs outside of major metro areas are just as important to us as those in large metropolitan markets.

- Question: Will compiled dataset be available externally?
- We don't own the data, so it's not ours to share, and we have confidentiality agreements with all of our data sources. Although we have integrated it and findings are ours, we can't share the data. We encourage others to contact the original sources.

- Question: Can you explain a little more about the KIPi scores?
- We've found that for each index, a certain amount of variation in outcomes is driven by driving force factors, a certain amount by KIPi scores, but there are still random factors.
- One factor in how much variation is explained by data collection. A number of these items aren't tracked well by all organizations, or may not be tracked well.

- Question: You've looked at marketing expenses in some of your analysis. Does your analysis take into account the specific marketing strategy an organization uses?
- No. We will provide you with the numbers. You'll need to know your own qualitative choices and decisions, and use that to make meaning of the quantitative figures.

- Question: You talk about "cultural policy data," but this seems to be grantee data, not policy data.
- Correct. There's great variation from state to state on how much state money is available. This is a first way to try to capture that. We also capture all the organizational characteristics.

- Question: Have you considered the adaptive capacity of orgs to actually use this info? Do you plan to help orgs use it?
- Yes, skill building is needed, especially at the smallest orgs.
- This capacity also varies somewhat by sector/discipline. Some sectors have been trained by practice and regular surveying. Others haven't encountered or been forced to use this kind of data as much.
- CDP sees this capacity issue on a daily basis through their help desk.
- We want to help orgs to tell their own story. We expect that through dashboard and KIPs, most orgs will find things to celebrate here. It will allow them to not just look at themselves and how they did compared to sector, but how they compare to other orgs the same size or in the same geographic area.
- We'll provide short videos on site explaining how to use this. We also want to get to teaching courses.

- Question: You're not collecting primary data. Will you help the field figure out what data ought to be collected?
- By all means yes. If we're only looking at financials, then we're missing the most important data.
- It's going to take more data collection to get the additional data needed to answer all 180 questions we developed. For example, data on program activity or community engagement, these terms mean so many different things to different people. We have to be able to categorize and collect data.

- Question: How have you dealt with data quality issues?
- We spent the entire summer dealing with data issues. CDP, TCG do a great job with data collection and verification, but it's inevitable that some orgs will make errors. Some outliers are really visible. CDP and TRG catch some of those.
- There are also difficult questions to answer, like how do you capture attendance if you present public artwork? Dealing with this kind of heterogeneity is another big challenge, something we deal with daily.

- Question: What about datasets we know are useful but aren't as representative as we would like? How did you deal with those gaps?
- We went with IRS 990 data.
- We have representation of about 51% of arts and culture orgs in the US.
- When orgs get under \$20k they get hard to include, because they have so many zeros to report. How do you deal with zero has a denominator?
- We are trying to be as inclusive as possible, and are talking to additional arts service orgs to use their data and incorporate it.

- Question: Would users of the dashboard be able to refine their data or add selves to map?
- If they're not in the database, they can fill out brief form and add themselves, and they'll see the results immediately.
- In addition, you can go in and ask if my marketing expenses were X instead, what would my KIPi score be? What would it take to move the dial? Dashboard will allow that kind of interactivity.

The next CRN virtual study group will be January 13, 2013 with Johnny Saldaña', author of the classic **Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers**.

PRESENTER BIO:

Zannie Giraud Voss, PhD, is Director of SMU's National Center for Arts Research, Chair and Professor of Arts Management and Arts Entrepreneurship in the Meadows School of the Arts and Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University, and an Affiliate Professor at Kedge Business School in Marseille. Prior to joining the SMU faculty, she was a Professor at Duke University where she also served as Producing Director of Theater Previews at Duke, developing and co-producing over a dozen new plays and musicals, two of which transferred to Broadway. Before transitioning to academia, Zannie served as Managing Director of PlayMakers Repertory Company, Associate Manager of the Alley Theatre, and Assistant Director of Audience Development at the Mark Taper Forum. She has served as a consultant for the Irvine Foundation, Theatre Development Fund, Philadelphia Theatre Initiative, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Theatre Communications Group, co-authoring Theatre Facts since 1998. She has published over a dozen articles in academic and practitioner journals on research examining the strategic factors that influence organizational performance in the arts using multiple stakeholder measures. She is on the Scientific Committee of the International Association of Arts and Cultural Management, Associate Editor of the International Journal of Arts Management, and a member of the Board of Trustees of Big Thought and the Cultural Data Project. She serves as Vice Chair of Programs on the Board of Trustees of TACA and is co-author of the book *Outrageous Fortune: The Life and Times of the New American Play*, published by Theatre Development Fund.