Outcomes, Accountability and Community & Voluntary Org's: Holy Grail, Black Hole or Wholly Possible?

The winds of change:
New Public Management, Agency Theory, Contractualism, Audit Explosion
Where did Outcomes come from?

Measuring Nonprofit Performance

- Financial accounts
- Programme products and outputs
- Standards and quality assurance
- Participant characteristics
- Key performance indicators
- Client satisfaction
- Outcome measures

Plantz, Greenway & Hendricks, 1997
Impact
- Effects on society

Outcome
- Profit margins, market shares etc

Output
- What comes off assembly line

Throughput
- Processes you undertake

Input
- Raw material you need

Reported Outcomes

Impact
- Vision

Outcome
- Mission

Output
- Objectives

Throughput
- Activities

Input
- Resources
Impact
Big picture change (in society)

Outcome
Long term changes (in beneficiaries)

Output
Direct results & beneficiaries

Throughput
Things you do

Input
What you need

why?
why?
why?
how?
Don't take yourself too seriously

Displace
Drop-off
Attribution
Dead-weight

Displace

Control Group
Large sample
Long term
Input
What you need

Throughput
Things you do

Output
Direct products & beneficiaries

Outcome
Long term changes (in beneficiaries)

Impact
Big picture change (in society)

Unintended consequences

Gaming:
* cherry picking
* short cuts
* play incentives

Longer to wait
Less in control
More ambiguous
Harder to measure

More externalities
But more significant

Big picture change
(in society)

Long term changes
(in beneficiaries)

Direct products & beneficiaries

Things you do

What you need

Impact

Outcome

Input

Throughput

Not everything you can measure counts
Not everything that counts can be measured

Tell me again, what are the Outcomes of Outcome measures?
Attitudes to Outcome Measures

- **Anti-science** (we don’t like it, its dehumanising, the really important things can’t be measured)

- **Alternative technology** (its ok as long as its small scale, simple, community-based and owned)
Attitudes to Outcome Measures

- **Anti-science** (we don’t like it, its dehumanising, the really important things can’t be measured)
- **Alternative technology** (its ok as long as its small scale, simple, community-based and owned)
- **Social responsibility** (it can be used for good or bad, you just need right values to drive it)

- **Radical science** (its a product of society and just replicates power differentials, tool of oppression)
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* Hang loose and don’t impose particular Outcomes

* Give more emphasis to Theories of Change and Logic Models

* Rely more on 'accountability of 1,000 eyes'

* Support the development of learning systems

* Evaluate stable exemplars
Swimming towards the horizon
Three Useful Strands

1. Collaborative reflection
2. Grounded in people’s experience
3. Using lots of facts and figures to help ask good questions

Bullen, 1996
The 3-T Test