

박물관을 활용한 사회적 약자 지원 교육 프로그램 영향 평가

Using Outcome-based Evaluation to Assess the Impact of a Museum-based Program

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요약

현대사회에서 박물관은 기존의 전통적인 역할을 넘어, 지역사회와의 소통 및 교육의 공간으로서의 사회적 역할에 대한 중요성이 강조되고 있다. 박물관의 다양한 기능 중에서도 특히 사회적 약자 지원과 관련하여 “교육적 기능”이 교육 참가자 및 사회에 미치는 영향은 매우 크다. 사회적 약자를 대상으로 한 박물관 교육은 역사와 문화를 체험하는 기회를 제공함과 동시에 개인의 삶 그리고 지역사회 일원으로서의 역할에 대한 자존감을 함양하고, 나아가 긍정적인 사회 기반 구축에 기여하는 효과가 기대된다. 이러한 프로그램의 성과와 효과분석은 지속적인 평가와 개선 및 실천을 전제로 논의가 계속 되어야 하겠지만, 새로운 프로그램을 시작하고 개선 발전 시켜야 하는 초기 단계에서의 평가 또한 중요하다. 이를 위해 본 연구에서는 현재 신설, 운영되고 있는 노숙자를 대상으로 한 박물관 교육 프로그램을 질적 평가 방법을 통해 그 성과와 효과를 살펴보고자 하였다. 본 연구를 통해 박물관을 활용한 사회적 약자 지원 교육 프로그램의 평가 모델을 제시하였다. 또한 개발된 평가 모델을 실제 적용하여 프로그램을 평가하고, 그 성과를 측정 하였다.

■ 중심어 : | 박물관 활용 프로그램 | 박물관의 사회적 역할 | 성과기반 평가 | 사회적 약자 | 질적 평가 |

Abstract

Museums increasingly are expected to be accountable for effectiveness of both new and existing programs, and to broaden and diversify community members served. One approach is to expand program services beyond those for traditional on-site visitors to non-traditional more diverse populations, including at-risk populations. Program evaluators are challenged to verify achievement of such lofty goals in the short term and during early program implementation. Nevertheless, it is critical to examine impacts of newly developed programs to determine viability and to improve them. This study assessed the impacts and efficacy of an on-going, non-traditional museum program targeting transitional homeless people in the community. Results presented a strategy for conceptually framing an assessment of a collaborative museum program serving non-traditional museum clients. Also, this study showed how aspects of one program were perceived by participants, and how those perceptions correspond with program outcomes.

■ keyword : | Museum Program | Outcome-based Evaluation | At-risk Population | Qualitative Analysis |

I. INTRODUCTION

The traditional and common view is that the primary role of museums is collecting and conserving historical artifacts and holding exhibitions, making the core mission of museums to protect and display objects. However, many museums are striving to serve as learning spaces for their communities[1][2]. In the modern and urban society, museums are no longer beacons of the past, but instead they represent living and practical public places for building toward the future[3]. By connecting visitors with the past, museums and museum stewardship can encourage evolutionary changes that lead to a better future for communities[4].

Museums increasingly are expected to be accountable for effectiveness of both new and existing programs, supporting their respective missions, to bring positive benefits to their communities and to broaden and diversify community members served. One approach is to expand program services beyond those for traditional on-site visitors to non-traditional, off-site, and more diverse populations, including at-risk populations.

In particular, homeless people face many social barriers that non-homeless people may not have to confront. Apart from the fundamental issue of lack of affordable or adequate housing, there has been recognition of the critical need to provide education to the homeless population. In response to the needs of the growing number of homeless people, it is necessary to create different and diverse program approaches to address these needs[5]. The problems of urban areas are complex and complicated, so multiple approaches should be taken to address these problems [6]. In terms of education, we cannot solve social problems and achieve social enhancement without a focused effort from all sectors of society

that involves both non-traditional and traditional education[6]. Museums serve as one of many non-traditional educational institutions that can address urban problems; the educational programs and opportunities available within the museum context can be very influential.

Museum program staff, partners, and sponsors seek evidence of the impacts, or effectiveness, of their programs, such as positive changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, self-image, and self-efficacy. Program evaluators are challenged to verify achievement of such lofty goals in the short term and during early program implementation. Nevertheless, it is critical to examine impacts of newly developed programs to determine viability and to improve them. Challenges arose because the evaluation was requested and designed while the program is ongoing. Also, if the program goals are broad to achieve in the short term, and not supplemented with clear, measurable program objectives that could form the basis for evaluation. Although evaluation details are not considered to be achieved during the program, changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior of program participants resulting from program participation is expected.

This study seeks to assess the impacts and efficacy of an on-going, non-traditional museum program targeting transitional homeless people in the community. However, literature relevant to museum programs addressing specific social issues or target audiences, such as at-risk populations, is limited. No literature, theoretical framework or conceptual model assessing the impacts of a museum-based program to enhance literacy, self-value, and/or independence of homeless citizens was found. The challenge, then, was to create an alternative way to frame the program assessment using other sources. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to present an

alternative strategy for conceptually framing an assessment of a collaborative museum program serving non-traditional museum clients. Also, this study explores how aspects of one program are perceived by participants, and how those perceptions correspond with program goals.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Museum service: Traditional and emerging roles

The tradition of museums is rooted in collections of physical objects, images and documents, with simply labeled objects typically aligned like rows of tin soldiers on shelves behind glass. This approach reflects the primary role of museums until the 1970s of gathering, preserving, and studying the objects and related topics[7][8]. Public access was limited[9], and curators typically did not care if the occasional visitor understood or developed any meaningful connections with the objects[10]. The items themselves, and the relevant science conducted around them, were sufficient.

Many such museums still exist. Pressured externally and internally for indicators of relevance and accountability, museums gradually became more involved in attracting visitors and providing quality services[9]. This included delivering educational programs for visitors by utilizing artifacts. In recent decades, the museum field has been engaged in significant self-reflection and is in the process of re-engineering itself, broadening its services from purely custodial to including more socially-oriented services. Museum leaders have identified a need for museums to become more relevant to their home communities, more engaged with community members through partnerships and collaboration, and

more involved with the social, environmental and other critical issues of our current world. Although collections remain important, according to the Code of Ethics for Museums[11], museum accreditation now requires community collaboration, as illustrated in criteria for accreditable museums: the museum engages in ongoing, reflective institutional planning that includes audience and community involvement; the museum strives to be inclusive and offers opportunities for diverse populations; and the museum asserts its public service role, with education at the center.

Given this, accredited museums are required to contribute to social change as part of the informal educational system, and to become more responsive to a variety of audiences[1][9]. New journals are emerging to reflect these changes (e.g., *Museums and Social Issues*). However, literature relevant to museum programs addressing specific social issues or target groups is limited. Thus, conceptually framing an assessment of a non-traditional program based on existing literature is challenging. Nevertheless, it is important to assess on-going programs because findings can contribute to “rendering judgments, facilitating improvements, and generating knowledge”[12].

2.2 Formative assessment and qualitative analysis

This paper describes the process for developing a framework for the program’s assessment. Brinkerhoff[13] suggests choosing the word ‘assessment’ over ‘evaluation’ when a study is an investigative process that is more exploratory and developmental than confirmatory. Not only was the requested study process-oriented, so also was framing the study. Thus, the term assessment is used throughout this paper. In program assessment, the

voices of stakeholders - those having vested interests in the program being assessed - are important[14]. Stakeholders in this study are program partners, the granting organization, program participants, staff and volunteers, and researchers.

To develop a framework in the context of the non-traditional museum program, formative assessment is a useful approach. In general, assessment can be classified into two types: formative and summative. According to Scriven [15], formative assessment is used in early stages of program development to frame initial program concepts and to improve them through various pilot-testing strategies; usually it is most useful to participants and stakeholders within a program. Summative assessment is conducted most often at the end of program implementation, is more likely aimed at making a judgment about a program, often to determine if objectives have been met, and is commonly performed by external evaluators. A summative approach provides an independent program assessment by identifying success indicators that inform recommended changes by detecting problems potentially not obvious to people involved directly with a program. Generally, formative assessment is meaningful in the context of an ongoing, newly emerging program because it can be useful immediately to stakeholders to improve the program and identify actions for next steps. Additionally, results of formative assessment can frame later summative assessment.

Therefore, in this study, a formative assessment approach was used to develop the conceptual framework during the program process. The conceptual framework was employed when the Your Story and Mine (YSM) program was assessed after the program ended.

III. METHODS

3.1 Study context

The program Your Story and Mine: A Community of Hope was developed by the Michigan Historical Museum (MHM), in collaboration with Advent House Ministries (AHM), in Lansing, Michigan. From 2008-2009 the YSM program was offered to transitionally homeless clientele of AHM. Learning objectives of the project were to meet specific social studies and English language arts curriculum standards. Other broad goals were to develop in homeless adults a deeper sense of self-value and purpose through shared learning with heritage, and to sensitize the broader community to issues related to homelessness.

The YSM program goals, based on grant language, were that program participants are:

- 1) achieve a deeper appreciation of their heritage;
- 2) develop tolerance for cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic differences;
- 3) develop a sense of belonging in the community;
- 4) become conscious of their place in the community and exercise control of their lives and personal decisions;
- 5) develop critical thinking skills and the ability to produce new meanings and understandings;
- 6) appreciate past social challenges as a basis for evaluating current problems and identifying potential solutions;
- 7) develop greater independence, self-sufficiency, and understanding of their individual potentials as they transition from homelessness; and
- 8) develop greater self-esteem and a positive outlook on life.

The program itself engaged participants in once-a-week programs across eight to 10 weeks, conducted primarily at the museum, in a variety of

learning sessions (e.g., archaeology, archival records, museum purpose and collections) integrated with diverse creative self-expression activities (e.g., drawing, writing, crafting, personal timeline storytelling, collage-making) to facilitate personal storytelling and expression of feelings. This program was conducted two times, then followed with a more focused mural/art/music/creative writing program called YSM: A Community of Hope that ultimately resulted in a mural and a traveling exhibit of participant work designed to share stories of homelessness with communities throughout Michigan. Some interviewees attended more than one of the programs, with two participating in all three.

3.2 Analysis framework

A qualitative approach was used because the program evaluation request was initiated by the client and no theoretical or conceptual framework existed; thus, the first goal was to develop a program assessment framework to identify issues or problems, explore potential program outcomes, and investigate areas for program improvement. Although limited existing data sources were available, those that did exist were rich in ideas expressed by various stakeholders. Thus, qualitative analysis was deemed appropriate for conducting the formative assessment. An additional benefit was that qualitative analysis is suited to discovering the causal nature of program impacts because it focuses on obtaining information about the causes of behaviors from varied stakeholders, from relevant documents, and is based on the history of relevant events[16]. Because the program of interest addressed an emerging social issue, qualitative analysis was deemed appropriate.

As in any research, critical issues in qualitative analysis are reliability and validity. In qualitative assessment, reliability is defined as being

“independent of the accidental circumstances of the data collection process” and validity is “the degree to which the data have been interpreted in the right way”[17]. To enhance the quality of a qualitative assessment, triangulation techniques - such as combining multiple data sources, observers, analysis methods, theories, and researchers - are useful[18]. As different methods reveal different aspects of inquiry, it is suggested using some, if not all, of these techniques to achieve a more reliable and valid explanation of study results. This study used three data sources - grant language, program reports, and partner notes - from varied stakeholders.

As an alternative to reliance on existing theory or conceptual framework, this study used a four-step process: i) understanding the program context; ii) identifying relevant, valid data sources that would inform specific activities and intended program outcomes to be assessed; iii) conceptualizing a framework by adapting existing theoretical model(s) to organize the patterns and themes found through data analysis; and iv) analyzing qualitative data to identify patterns, and organizing emerging themes by conducting interviews with study participants.

3.2.1 Participatory observation for understanding the program context

Program assessment is expected to provide relevant information for judging the success of programs, facilitating program improvements, and generating knowledge among program partners and participants[12]. For delivering these benefits, one critical component of program assessment is gaining understanding of a program's nature and context. Participatory observation was one method used in this study to understand the program, its context, and the people within the program, and to establish relationships and trust with clients and program

participants, critical for both formative and summative assessment. Participatory research is an approach used to develop mutual respect among people in a study context as well as between them and the researchers[19]. Accordingly, we looked for themes and ideas in ongoing dialogues, expecting to find a direction for program assessment by working collaboratively with stakeholders.

3.2.2 Content analysis for identifying data sources and framework development:

This study used narrative data sources. Data for qualitative assessment came from three sources: the grant proposal, program reports and partner notes. One of the strengths of using such data is that they can illuminate the real-world context in an open-ended way[17]. Because documents and notes can provide expected and unexpected perceptions, as well as both positive and negative outcomes of a program, these data are important in developing an assessment framework. They are valued over results based on quantitative approaches that usually are not designed to address all issues, particularly unexpected outcomes. Another advantage to using narrative data sources is that they capture the importance of “stories” about the program[20]. This is insightful and valuable because the dialogues surrounding a program’s context are likely to reflect program values with less interference by researchers than often introduced when using quantitative measures. Content analysis used in this assessment followed the tradition of Carney’s[21] Ladder of Analytical Abstraction for developing original framework. Content analysis is beneficial for determining the psychological and/or emotional states of persons and/or groups[22]. As such, this method is useful in assessment that seeks to understand partners’ perceptions and program context.

In this study, two data sources, the grant proposal and early staff program notes, were used to develop the conceptual framework and theme codes for program evaluation. The documents were reviewed for themes and concepts related to program impacts and/or potential program improvements. These ideas were used as a basis for summarizing the data by applying codes to the emerging text themes. The content analysis followed the definitions and rules created for each code. Please see [Table 1].

3.2.3 Developing a framework by adapting Bennett’s hierarchy of outcomes:

Although data collection and the analysis processes must be open enough for discovering novel themes and findings, prior work should be used in framing and discussing a qualitative study [17]. This study adapted Bennett’s[23] Hierarchy of Targeting Outcomes, as this framework allows for monitoring changes in knowledge and attitudes of program participants and stakeholder groups. The emerging themes were clustered at three levels of the hierarchy: knowledge and awareness; attitudinal changes; and group transformation.

Table 1. Codes from content analysis

Code	Definition
Social connection	Human interaction between program participants and staff, realized through programmatic activities
Historical connection	Program activities that focus on history
Family connection	Program activities that facilitate family contact and relationship restoration
Motivation for program	Strong interest in participating in program activities
Motivation for life	Strong interest to make personal life improvement
Self-esteem	Positive feeling of self-worth
Mentorship	Personal relationship, which results in learning and personal growth
Capacity building	Improvement in ability of organization to meet client needs
Networking	Creation of multiple relationships between individuals
Program growth	Expansion and/or diversification in program offerings

3.2.4 Photo Elicit and In-depth Interview: Program Evaluation:

Based on the conceptual framework, which was designed using a formative assessment approach, the YSM program was evaluated after the program ended. To do this, this study employed an semi-structured in-depth interview with a photo-elicitation technique. In order to listen to the actual program participants' voices, in-depth interviews (tape-recorded) were conducted with six transitional homeless adults who had been regular participants in the program. Within the interview process, program photographs were used to trigger memories and elicit relevant comments. Harper[24] argued that integrating photo elicitation allows participants to respond to visual cues and provide more detailed answers than the use of verbal questions alone. The participants were asked to answer questions about: 1) their reasons for participating in the program; 2) their experiences in the program; 3) the value of the program; and 4) recommendations for the future.

3.3 Coding procedure

After making full-transcriptions, two researchers independently coded interview transcriptions, setting aside the previously developed theme codes in the framework that guided this study. This helped researchers avoid imposing a priori codes on their data, and allowed them to create, delete, and reorganize codes, as necessary[25]. This approach is consistent with Kitto and Barnett's[26] argument that codes should be refined continuously as data analysis proceeds. Thus, original labels of impacts were replaced with emerging concept labels (later comparison showed numerous conceptual similarities).

Any discrepancies in code labels or code assignment between the two researchers were resolved through discussion or, if needed, assessment

by a third researcher. The third researcher, who was involved in the YSM program at the beginning, acted as an auditor, and looked at the passages the two researchers coded. Kim and Kweon[27] argued that, for verifying the qualitative research procedure, an audit trail is helpful for both increased dependability and confirmability. Since she knew about all of the program characteristics and procedures, the third coder was qualified to be an analyst. An intercoder agreement was then developed, based on the percentage of agreement among the three researchers on the passages. It may not be suitable to approach the qualitative research with numbers, but, within a realistic stance, we made at least 70 % agreement either a yes or a no on the passages. After completion and resolution of data coding, the a priori codes were re-evaluated for appropriate level placement in the framework, and were then compared with codes emerging from interview analysis.

IV. RESULTS

Before participant interview transcripts could be analyzed, the original framework needed to better accommodate participant perspectives. Later, new theme codes and impact categories emerged, and some labels of impact categories were modified based on analysis of participant interviews[Table 2]. Figure1 provides a three-tier framework for hierarchical program impacts.

Level one impacts include new knowledge and awareness, brought about through learning experiences of program participants. This learning is reflective of "breakthroughs," or changes in the participants' cognitive states. Level two impacts are related to changes in attitudes and social interactions occurring as a result of new knowledge and insights

gained through the project. This implies, in part, the generation of a feeling of belonging, and the freedom to share affection with each other. It is, therefore, expected that these social connections provide the building blocks necessary for effectively re-engaging with the community, outside of the program. Level three impacts are related to transformations that occurred within the group, as a result of group dynamics and formation of a community of learners. This may contribute to feelings of self-empowerment and satisfaction, gained through continuing engagement both in and outside of the program.

Table 2. Theme codes for program impact assessment

Category	Theme Codes in the Original Conceptual Framework	Theme Codes Emerging through Analysis of Participant Interviews
Level One Impacts (Knowledge/Awareness Gain)	• N/A	• Learning
Level Two Impacts (Attitude and Behavior Change)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem • Historical Connection • Family Connection • Motivation for Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence to Speak Up • Creative Self-expression • Personal Growth
Level Three Impacts (Group Development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Connection • Mentorship • Capacity Building • Networking • Program Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships • Mentorship
Program Features (new category from Phase II analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation for Program Participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of Activities • Hands-on Activities • Fun Kindness of Staff

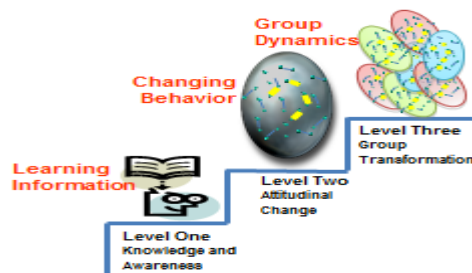


Figure 1. Framework for the program impacts assessment

Of the six interviewees, four were female, two were male; two were Caucasian, four were African American. The number of program series attended ranged from one to three. Some had earned high school diplomas, others had not. Circumstances leading to homelessness varied, and included generational welfare dependence, unsupportive or dysfunctional families, death of a child, childhood pregnancy, drug or alcohol abuse, “nasty” divorce, and wages going to gambling. [Table 2] theme codes used for program evaluation.

By using the framework for tree-tier hierarchy of evidence impacts, this study assessed the impact of the museum-based program. Level One Impacts (labeled “knowledge/awareness gain”) represent perceived participant learning resulting from program participation. Based on Bennett’s Hierarchy of Evidence[23], it is assumed that, as participants are involved in a program, particularly in a learning context, hierarchical levels of change in skills, attitudes, and aspirations ensue from a base of knowledge, which they can apply to their own living and working environments[23]. Although results show limited evidence in participant comments about “things learned,” one participant did say “I learned a lot out of it.” Nevertheless, it is assumed that learning took place that provided the foundation for personal creative expression and growth. The YSM program

was structured to provide opportunities to learn about other people, places, and history by interacting with museum artifacts, documents, and photographs. However, learning was not overtly expressed by participants as a specific program outcome.

Level Two Impacts (labeled “attitude and behavior change”) include themes coded “confidence to speak-up,” “creative self-expression,” and “personal growth.” These themes highlight growing self-awareness experienced by participants as a result of program participation and learning experiences. Irving and Williams[28] described personal growth as a gradual process of acquiring knowledge and skills to grow awareness of self, place, and a society, and personal relations within that society. Results show that the YSM program enabled participants to address personal issues and develop self-esteem by orally expressing their personal stories through art, poetry, photography, and song. Throughout the YSM program, participants gained the confidence to speak up. For example, one participant pointed out, “I used to be trapped into little circles inside my life. Now I like to be, when I’m around people, I like to be in the open. That’s a good feeling.” Results also showed that YSM participants developed skills for self-expression through activities such as painting and writing. Skill development elevated participants’ understanding of their personal value. One participant said s/he liked “to open up and express myself by drawing.” Another participant similarly recalled, “I loved writing the way I feel. Expressing my anger ... I express it.” Throughout the program, participants saw themselves changing. This quote reflected personal growth: “I was really hesitant at first. I just wanted to sit and watch everybody else because I knew that there [were] artists in that room. But I’m like, okay, I’ll go ahead and participate. This was fun, and this was good, and I was able to do it.”

Level Three Impacts (labeled “group development”) include themes coded “relationships” and “mentorship.” These themes emphasize the interpersonal aspects and interactions among participants and between them and program staff. Level Three Impacts focused on participant social interactions, both within and outside the program context. Results show that the YSM program helped develop participants’ confidence in and enjoyment of relationships and mentoring. Some participants indicated they would like to serve as mentors to future participants. They felt confident in what they had learned and that they could share the program’s values to help others benefit as much as they had. One participant mentioned, “I think that, uh, like if I came in, it would be as a speaker and as a mentor, even just, just to share with them my, you know, how I felt about it. And maybe, and actually it would be in hopes that that would spark something in them. Like there were things that I picked up that I was not aware of before.” Also, building relationships between program participants and staff while engaged in creative expression activities was a theme expressed often in the interviews. One quote reflected how one participant perceived the staff: “They were people trying to do something instead of, oh, where we gonna get the next bag of weed.”

Lastly, program features were emerged. YSM participants talked extensively about program features, which were much more tangible than the personal and group development goals hoped for by program staff. Thus, “program features” was added as a major results category even though it does not fit within the three-tier hierarchy-of-evidence framework. These features are important to include, however, because they appear to facilitate positive impacts identified in the three levels of the original hierarchical framework. Additionally, they are

important because they motivated continued program participation, through which the other outcomes were derived. Results show that participants identified four YSM program features that were attractive/interesting/important to them: program variety; the hands-on nature of the activities; fun; and kindness of and positive interpersonal relationships with project staff. One participant said, "I kept going back because of the variety." Another participant mentioned, "All the classes were interesting...everybody tried to make, make it interesting and everybody did a good job at doing that. Drawing out a map, a simple map, you know, you get some jokes and stuff like that."

V. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study showed the results of a preliminary evaluation of a museum program, Your Story and Mine (YSM), which was developed by the Michigan Historical Museum (MHM) in collaboration with Advent House Ministries (AHM). The 2008-2009 YSM program, targeting transitionally homeless AHM clients in Lansing, Michigan, was designed to strengthen participants' literacy, critical thinking, and problem solving skills by using museum resources, history, and creative expression as teaching tools. The broad program goals included developing in homeless adults a deeper sense of self-value and purpose through shared learning via the museum-based program, and sensitizing the broader community to issues related to homelessness.

This paper provided several theoretical, practical, and methodological contributions.

This paper showed that museums provide non-traditional educational curricula, programs and resources, and can serve as centers of learning for

community members, particularly at-risk populations. Museums have the ability to purposefully bring obscure or hidden past elements to a place of visibility in the present and the future[4]. A museum contains many intersections between diverse socio-economic and cultural areas in a given community[7]. Some museums offer exhibitions of historical and cultural artifacts, and also serve educational programs for community members[8]. This study emphasized that museums play a critical role in connecting people in time and place within the context of a given community.

This paper described the process followed in developing a conceptual framework for a non-traditional museum program, necessary because existing literature was limited. The process of developing the framework was built around the views of program stakeholders. Framework development used formative assessment, an effective way of monitoring and improving ongoing programs by sharing understanding among program stakeholders. Biases and weaknesses included limited narratives, the lack of a client voice (which was assessed during summative evaluation based on the framework derived in the described process), and heavy reliance on the program staff's "lens." However, this process provided a solid framework for the next phase of the program's assessment, and was used later to structure guiding questions for personal interviews with program participants.

To improve the framework, it was useful to include perspectives from stakeholders outside the program. This assessment dealt specifically with issues that ultimately need to be understood by other community members for overall program improvement to occur, and to sensitize other community members to issues faced by the program's clients, transitional homeless people, if community transformation was to occur.

Finally, several staff members pointed out that there seemed to be more potential for attitudinal change and group transformation in the final stage and. Nevertheless, we believe that this process resulted in a solid framework for assessing the program, and can be modified in the future, as needed, by emergence of additional themes.

This study evaluated the YSM program by soliciting program participants' perceptions about program outcomes and features. Knowledge/awareness gain was a fundamental program impact. Participants discovered the importance of personal histories and value through the diverse learning activities of a museum-based program. The YSM program featured varied, hands-on, and fun activities that facilitated learning-based outcomes by increasing motivation for continued participation. This is important because regular participation provided the foundation for other program outcomes. As participants continued participating and became more comfortable being with each other and program staff, they increased their confidence to speak up and improved their self-expression skills. These transitional homeless adults, the YSM program's target audience, live in personal and social situations that often limit their participation in learning programs and positive, productive social group activities. Also, homeless adults have limited opportunities to publicly express their identities and thoughts. Although long-term changes in attitude and behavior was not observed as a result of participation in a short-term program, the potential for such changes can be reflected in how program participants described their experiences with the program. Participants applied their learning and expressive experiences to their own issues, thus helping develop positive outlooks for their lives, at least in the short term. In addition, participants began engaging in

interpersonal relationships with program staff, in-class participants, and new program participants. Social relationships developed within the program facilitated group development. By sharing their experiences, thoughts, and feelings with other people, participants developed affection toward others and openness to new relationships. From this perspective, the program can be considered successful.

This paper developed a museum program evaluation framework by adapting the Bennett's[23] Hierarchy of Targeting Outcomes to monitor changes in knowledge and attitudes of program participants. This approach can be utilized for museum-based education program targeting at-risk population. Much of the literature on at-risk populations supports the idea that education can help these populations attain resilience and can encourage them to seek positive elements of their environment as an alternative to staying within negative boundaries associated with their environment [6]. Thus, museums are in a good position to provide at-risk populations with opportunities to renew their worldview and to overcome some of the barriers they may encounter.

The outcomes and impacts of this project were not easily identifiable through quantitative indicators, because program outcomes were realized over an extended time and often not easily observable. In such context, this paper employed a qualitative approach, which is grounded in the subjectivist research paradigm, holding that knowledge is generated within a given context[29]. In this paper an emergent design was used and reflected perspectives from program participants (emic perspective) as well as program providers (etic perspective). This approach allowed for detailed descriptions of participant experiences within which program outcomes and impacts were identified.

This study provided insights for programmers and

researchers about possibilities as well as limitations of evaluating impacts of a newly developed museum program based on assessing program participants' perceptions. The study indicated that homeless adults perceive positive benefits of their participation, yet these perceptions were limited to things most directly and immediately relevant to them rather than to the broader social goals identified by the grant writers. Two major study limitations are noted. First, although this is a qualitative study, the low number of interviewees limits our understanding of program impacts on the participants, particularly on those who were not regular participants. Considering the personal and social situations of homeless adults, it was difficult to contact program participants after the program ended, so subject recruitment was difficult. Second, there is possible bias in collecting information from at-risk populations. Some participants may not have had the language or conceptual awareness of some of the higher level impacts desired by program staff. More importantly those broader goals probably were considerably less relevant to them than the outcomes they expressed. To further explore short-term program impacts with homeless adults, we recommend that future studies conduct interviews as soon as possible after program completion. Adding perceptions of program staff can complement the understanding of program impacts on participants and on post-program goals such as "sensitizing the broader community to issues related to homelessness." Assessment of long-term impacts would require longitudinal studies and more complex methods. Finally, clear and measurable objectives appropriate for evaluation should be integrated into program development from the beginning rather than added as an afterthought. Program activities should be designed specifically to address the measurable objectives.

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