Understanding the Changing Cultural Value of the British Council

“the creative, communicative and connective benefits of the BC’s interactions with its global audiences and users”

Marie Gillespie, Simon Bell, Colin Wilding

The Open University

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The Cultural Value Project

Aim: To produce a Cultural Value Framework

• Part of an Arts & Humanities Research Council funded research programme
• Draws on OU archive of research on the BC
• Conducts new archival/historic analysis
• Develops new digital case studies
• Organises stakeholder workshops
Research Questions

- Is BC a public good?
- Which publics does and should the BC serve?
- Do commercial and public service values co-exist in conflict or in creative tension?
- Can BC do cultural relations and public diplomacy work at the same time?
- What is distinctive about the BC?
- What role do new technologies and platforms play in changing how the BC operates and is valued?
To Understand Value: Value Analytics

- BC users are changing
- New, more competitive platforms
- Impact analysis is limited
- VA – mixed and mobile methods
- Avoids goal-driven performance targets
- Opens up new components of value for users and for BC.
Understanding the contexts of Cultural Value
The structure of CVF emerges
BC Cultural Value Framework

Funders and Stakeholders

- Components of cultural value:
  - Sustainability
  - Partnerships
  - Transnational
  - Development
  - Diplomatic

- Each quadrant contains different groups

Users, Publics, Customers

- Four quadrants
  - Components of cultural value:
    - Utility
    - Relevance
    - International
    - Quality
    - Participation

- The labels of the components of cultural value in each quadrant are different

Strategy, planning and market development

- Components of cultural value:
  - Reputation
  - Mutuality
  - Leadership
  - Technological
  - Quality

Producers, teachers, cultural workers

- Components of cultural value:
  - Engagement
  - Cultural Citizenship
  - Cosmopolitan
  - Creative
  - Professional
Allows us to produce a snapshot

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Illustrative

Intuitive

Evaluative

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Strategy, planning and market development

Producers, teachers, cultural workers

In this example we might say that the organisation is performing well in CV terms for the internal communities but is underperforming for Funders.
The CVF diagram emerges from a collaborative process – which is as important as the final product. It’s a collective representation of diverse perspectives and mixed sources of empirical data. It’s **illustrative**, evaluative and intuitive.
South Asia Season
We would like to have your views

• What do you find most intriguing/interesting about the CVF?

• What is least clear?

• What should we be focusing on in order to improve the CVF?