

# Sector-led Benchmarking. An Introduction.

Updated version of presentation given  
to AUK Summit in March 2011

This version: 25 May 2011

# A Bit of Background

- Audience Data UK set up a series of benchmarking pilot groups which Miranda Jacobs & Kate Sanderson supported until last year
- Mainly CEOs, mainly looking at organisational/operational/financial data plus a bit of marketing. Focus was on organisational needs. Bottom up approach.
- Proved it works and is useful, but varying capacities within the groups to continue the work independently
- And some issues about how to apply it – Organisations need support to turn data into information...

# Key Benefits from Pilots

- UK-wide nature of the projects
- Opportunity to network, meet peers, share information and learn from one another
- Face to face was important
- Lobbying & advocacy – more confident in relationships with key stakeholders
- Identified key areas of difference between peer organisations
- Demonstrated areas where organisations could improve their own business models
- Increased control & confidence

# Benefits for arts organisations

- Value as a lobbying tool: identifying key successes
- Value as a planning tool: identifying areas of operation that can be improved
- Value in audience development: better understanding audiences
- Value in being able to enable a meaningful check on progress
- Value in reducing costs
- Value in increasing income

# What Now?

- Audiences UK working with key industry bodies (Era 21 Group), with ACE funding, on the development of a National Arts Benchmarking Service
- Work will be undertaken by Miranda Jacobs, Kate Sanderson (Indigo Ltd), Cultivate and Audiences South
- UK-wide advisory group including representatives from arts organisations and those with relevant specialist knowledge
- Informed by a number of UK initiatives, but also Cultivate's work with Nick Crosson at the Greater Philadelphia Alliance, which runs a large and well established benchmarking service

# Era 21 Partners include:



# Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance

- A major benchmarking project. Key successes include:
- Arts organisations taken more seriously by business leaders – increased level of support from corporate & private foundations
- GPCA analysis not only used by arts orgs in other states (Chicago/LA) but also by social services & government agencies
- Publications of results and analysis in academic policy journals and cited in national reports on philanthropy
- Defeating the proposed “Arts Tax”
- Nick Crosson from GPCA has agreed to act as a ‘Critical Friend’ to advise the UK project

# Key aims of the Project

1. To enable arts organisations to collect, share and make sense of useful data about their businesses and that of other organisations which will help them towards a stable future
2. To enable umbrella and national organisations to establish trends and gain information to support the industry and lobby for increased support and influence
3. To ensure the process towards these are clear and non-nonsense

# Project Stages

## Stage 1: Set Up (Funding in place)

- Create a 'basket' of indicators from existing lists
- Consult with the sector on indicators
- Final indicators, practical usage guidelines & scenarios agreed
- Online data storage & analysis system set up

## Stage 2: Rollout (AUK in discussions re funding)

- Support arts organisations to change their practice by utilising the potential of the database
- Work with agencies/bodies to embed the project in the sector and use it to support the sector

# Development of Indicators

- ADUK projects developed a series of indicators and tested definitions
- Currently combining these with other indicators in use by the sector, including:
  - Arts Councils' annual submission data
  - Audiences London benchmarking projects
  - TMA figures
  - Derby Benchmarking Group
  - Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance Benchmarking Programme

# Development of Indicators

- A 'definitive' set of indicators, or a series of 'baskets' aimed at particular art forms or types of organisation and with a common set of core indicators
- Primary focus is on organisational benchmarks and business performance rather than on audience benchmarking. Key areas:
  - Financial
  - Programming and Operational
  - Marketing and Audience
  - Staffing and Volunteers

# Consultation

- An ongoing process as we develop the indicators plus consultation on the suggested ‘baskets’ and core indicators with:
  - DCMS
  - ACE, ACW, Creative Scotland, ACNI
  - ERA21 organisations (including Museums Association, Crafts Council, TMA, ITC, Dance UK, VAGA, ABO)
  - Audience Development Agencies
  - Advice from Nick Crosson in Philadelphia as a ‘Critical Friend’

# Report & Scenarios

- Consultation on the suggested indicators will help us to create
- Final indicators
- Sub-sets of those, which could be used by different types of organisations e.g. An arts centres list, a small-scale galleries list
- Examples of usage, with scenarios & FAQs

# Report & Scenarios

- Led by Audiences South
- Will enable organisations to run reports on their own data against amalgamated data from similar organisations across the UK
- Will enable top line data reports to be run
- At no cost to individual arts organisations

# Timeline

Draft Definitions reviewed by Advisory Panel	May 2011
Broader Consultation	June 2011
Final set of definitions & report/ scenarios	July 2011
Online data hub live for testing	August 2011



audiences uk

WORKING TOGETHER TO INCREASE CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

**DAVID BROWNLEE**

Chief Executive

Office +44 (0)8456 809 246

Mobile +44 (0)7753 815110

Email [david@audiencesuk.org](mailto:david@audiencesuk.org)

Web [www.audiencesuk.org](http://www.audiencesuk.org)

audiences uk

WORKING TOGETHER TO INCREASE CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT