Understanding Community Needs: Conducting Needs Assessments for your Museum

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Overview

1. Public health needs assessment
2. Overview of Projects
3. Lessons Learned + Tools Used
4. Group Activity + Discussion
5. Questions
Background of Public Health Needs Assessments

Through the Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, each state and jurisdiction conducts a comprehensive Needs Assessment every five years. This assessment helps each state to:

- Determine priorities
- Target funds to address priorities
- Report annually on progress

Data collected in the Needs Assessment is used to develop their State 5-year action plan.
Kidzu Children’s Museum - Case Study
KIDZU’S MISSION is to inspire children and the adults in their lives to learn through creative and purposeful play.

Kidzu’s vision is to become an innovator in interactive, museum-based learning for children and families, to excel at serving, celebrating and reflecting our community and to offer a model for other museums that share our commitment to creative, playful, evidence-based learning and deep community partnerships.
FRANKLIN STREET

Kidzu’s first two locations served more than 220,000 visitors from 2006 to 2013

UNIVERSITY PLACE

- Annual Attendance (pre-pandemic): 65,000 onsite + 5,000+ offsite outreach
- Average # of Active Memberships: 870+

Launch Pad I – 2014
Launch Pad II – 2015
The Reggio Emilia Approach and the Culture of the Atelier
COMMUNITY POP-UP 1.0
Orange County Spring Break 2019 @ Hillsborough Elementary School

Lead Sponsors

Willard R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust

Kodzu CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
“Available and accessible child care is a critical component of a sound basic education for our children.”
- Governor Roy Cooper
“It is of particular significance that an early educational intervention produced long-term health effects,” said FPG senior scientist emeritus Joseph Sparling, when FPG released last year's groundbreaking findings. Sparling, co-creator of the Abecedarian Approach, and colleagues have applied updated versions of it in several countries.
**Kidzu’s Early Learning Initiative**

Like the former NC statewide *More at Four* pre-Kindergarten initiative (now NC Pre-K) designed to provide high quality education programs for at-risk 4 year olds, **Kidzu’s More Before initiative** aims to raise awareness, and address opportunity gaps by prioritizing focus on the foundational brain development that takes place from birth to 3 years through accessible programming at The Nest and extensive community outreach and advocacy.
Building The Nest: Kidzu’s Early Learning Environment

Kidzu Children’s Museum has enabled thousands of children across North Carolina to access critical early childhood educational experiences within the museum and through community outreach. Now we seek to harness our experiences and collaborate with our academic and early learning colleagues to create The Nest, an early learning lab designed specifically for infants and toddlers ages 0-3. The Nest will galvanize the excellence in informal learning that Kidzu provides with the rigorous research and academic excellence of our university partners and the expertise of educators rooted in the Reggio-Emilia developmental philosophy of learning, to create an environment and accompanying programs, activities and resources that nurture critical healthy brain development, and encourage curiosity, discovery, and confidence in Kidzu’s very youngest learners.
Goals of Our Needs Assessment:

- Understand how this new early learning space could be accessible and create meaningful impact in our community
- Identify some action items that we could implement that would help us better serve our community and meet their needs
- Strengthen our partnerships
Methodology

Identify stakeholders
Focused on early childhood experts - including researchers, direct service providers, etc.

Conduct outreach
Through email and direct calling.

Collect data
First attempt: schedule an interview.
No response: send a survey.

Analyze data
Coding qualitative data using thematic coding.

Create report
Highlighted all findings in data and generated action items that we could use to inform our practices.
Interview/Survey Questions

1. Does your organization work with/serve children ages 0-3 and/or their caregivers? If so, in what capacity?

2. What do you see as the greatest need of children ages 0-3 and their caregivers?

3. How do you see Kidzu’s Nest fitting into these needs?
DISCOVERY Children’s Museum
DISCOVERY Children’s Museum

- Located in Las Vegas, Nevada
- 250,000 annual visitors
- Approximately 20% of visitors utilize Museums for All admission
- 20% of visitors are tourists
Diversity Defines our Community

- 2.2 million in the Las Vegas area
- Majority-minority demographics
- 5th largest school district with 320,000 students in urban and Rural settings
- Nearly 20% at or below the Poverty line
In 2020, DISCOVERY was . . .

- Celebrating its 30th anniversary
- Nearing a decade in our new location
- A year past the redevelopment of an exhibit to open a makerspace
- Closed to the public mid-March through June, but retained all staff
- Moving forward on a master planning process begun in late 2019
Master Planning Process

Key measures of success aligned with DISCOVERY’s mission:

● Ensure everyone feels a sense of belonging and welcome at the museum

● Focus on toddlers, middle school and homeschool students as pipeline audiences

● Increase the capacity of the museum’s exhibits through improved quality of experience
Mission

We spark a love of learning so all children can discover their wildest dreams!
Values

We believe in learning through hands-on play.

We believe in nurturing kind hearts and curious minds.

We believe in educational opportunities that are inclusive and open to all.
Vision

We will be the leaders in inventive early childhood learning.
Community Circle: A Case Study

SDCDM’s first foray into assessing community needs
Community Circle: Committee

- Visitor Experience: Director + VSA
- Education: onsite/virtual programming educator
- Philanthropy: Director + Grants/Community Engagement manager
- Marketing: Manager
- CEO: offered guidance and support
Methodology

→ Tools: online survey questionnaires, focus groups, onsite visitor surveys

→ Populations: active members, onsite daily visitors, targeted members for further analysis

→ Goals: determine areas of improvement from visitors’ perspective
Initial Data Collection

➔ of 3,851 active members, 23 respondents

➔ “Age” of membership: 1-2 years

➔ Frequency of visits: once a month

➔ Wide array of favorites
Hopeful Next Steps

➔ Where did we think we were going with this initial set of data

➔ Would focus group be called together for more in-depth study?

➔ Would we do single interviews, or have the group “meet” to talk

➔ Who would “own” this project
The Obvious

-ure

→ Survey was English-language only

→ Very low response rate: email was the only form of communication

→ Messaging: ineffective “ask” for participation?

→ Staff stretched thin, making commitment difficult
Assessing the _-ure_

➔ Revisiting our overall goals with this project

➔ Identifying new data collection tools + groups to identify

➔ Are we asking the wrong questions? Too many questions?

➔ Involving other stakeholders in community circle - active members, Board members, community liaisons
What are some programs/projects that your museum is working on that could benefit from this process?
Kidzu Children’s Museum - Case Study
**Thematic Analysis**

The goal was to identify patterns in the data that would help us identify the greatest needs of young children and how we can best serve them.

Framework utilized was *Braun & Clarke’s (2006) Six-Phase Framework for Doing a Thematic Analysis*
Thematic Analysis

Step 1 - Familiarizing yourself with the data

Step 2 - Identify preliminary key words/topics as codes
Thematic Analysis

Step 3 - Group together some keywords/topics to form themes

Step 4 - Review Themes

- Barriers to entry
  - Language
    - Some people do not feel comfortable going to places in which they will have trouble not being able to communicate across the same language
  - Cost
    - Could be better if there were days families could go in for free
  - Transportation
    - Keep prices fair
  - Not culturally affirming
    - Less access to transportation
    - Issues of trust and fear of discrimination among Black community members
Thematic Analysis

Step 5 - Define and name themes

Step 6 - Generate your final report

![Bar chart showing different barriers for entry]
WHO?
Among our 16 participants, here is how they identified:

- Early childhood educator (Pre-K/Kindergarten), current or past: 6
- Higher education educator (university professors+), current or past: 4
- Government Agency: 3
- Non-profit agency, independent organization: 3
- Early childhood researcher, current or past: 2
- Later childhood educator (1st grade+), current or past: 1
- Childhood mental health professional: 1

BARRIERS TO ENTRY

- Cost
- Formality
- Language
- Single care giver households
- Space not culturally-affirming
- Transportation
GREATEST NEEDS

Our participants identified what they believed to be the greatest needs of infants and their caregivers in Orange County. Here are those needs ranked:

#1
- Age-specific educational resources and school preparation

#3
- Opportunities for social connection and community among caregivers
- Opportunities to build parent-child connection
- Opportunities to build social connection among infants

#5
- Structured and unstructured play

#2
- Affordable learning opportunities

#4
- Access to non-English/bilingual educational opportunities/services
- Safe and creative physical environment
- Online resources

ACTION ITEMS

Action items describes, as suggested by our participants, how The Nest can better meet the needs of infants and their caregivers as we transition into our physical museum space.

1. Provide caregiver-specific training, resources, and support
2. Create a safe, welcoming, and accessible environment for all communities
3. Encourage caregiver involvement and self-efficacy
4. Provide opportunities for social interaction and support among caregivers
5. Reach out to underrepresented families (getting a van, advertise in affordable housing communities, etc.)
6. Offer bilingual services/opportunities
7. Maintain online resources post-pandemic
8. Include caregiver involvement and input
9. Offer multiple, routine events
10. Create more free/affordable opportunities
11. Trained ECE staff
12. Guided play
13. Healthy attachment activities
14. Integrate outdoor space/play
Lessons Learned

- Thematic analysis was a flexible and iterative process
- Strengthened existing partnerships and built some new ones
- Challenged our own assumptions
- Increased community buy-in on our project

- Time and effort consuming
- Continuous process
JREM.co conducted an exhibit analysis with DCM Exhibits, Learning Experiences and floor staff.

Evaluation Categories:

- Visitor appeal (dwell time)
- Supportive of learning goals
- Potential visitor capacity
- High quality, innovative and unique
- Maintenance/operational load
Exhibit Planning Outcomes

Exhibit matrix provided clear measures to identify:

- Areas of focus
- Prioritization

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<th>29</th>
<th>5</th>
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<td>3</td>
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Identifying Stakeholders

- Parents and Caregivers
  - Members
  - Repeat visitors
  - 1st time visitors
  - Grandparents

- Educators
  - Kindergarten - 3rd grade
  - 4th grade - 8th grade

- Underrepresented Communities
  - Spanish-speaking families
  - African American families
  - Asian Pacific Islander families
  - Tourist families
  - Home school parents
  - Friends, family and neighborhood care providers
  - Parents from underrepresented communities
  - LGBTQ+ families
  - Families of kids with disabilities
Stakeholder Sessions

● Five 45-minute sessions over two days
● 19 participants
● Reached out to underrepresented stakeholders through partners
  ○ DEI Advisory Council
  ○ Urban League
  ○ Library District
  ○ Minority community consultant
  ○ Homeschool groups

● Provided childcare and “stay and play” passes
● Offered an offsite location at the library (later cancelled due to COVID)
## Stakeholder Sessions

1. Have you visited the Museum before?
   - If so, how many times?
   - If more than once, how often do you visit?

2. Are you a Museum member?
   - If so, why?
   - If not, did you know about membership?

3. Are there people in your family/friend group/community that do not come to DCM?
   Do you know why that is?

4. Do you have any suggestions of how DCM could serve your family/community better?

Optional:
- Do you identify as a member of a specific racial group? If so, describe.
- Do any members of your family identify as having a disability? If so, describe.

For Educators:
- Grade level and number of children in classroom
- How often have you visited Discovery Children’s Museum with your class?
Teacher Stakeholder Sessions

- Two teacher appreciation events with 16 participants
- Consultant facilitated with introduction from CEO
- Homecoming theme and incentive raffle prizes/baskets with an educator focus
- Participants were interviewed and completed the questionnaire
Stakeholder Survey

- 764 responses across the museum’s diverse audience
  - 192 self-identified as people of color
- Qualtrics survey platform offered targeted analysis
Filter Questions

Qualtrics tools allowed the survey to present underrepresented participants with questions about belonging and feeling welcome at DISCOVERY.
Analysis & Outcomes

Sense of Belonging Report

- Visitors of color reported feeling “welcome” (78%) and “comfortable” (84%) however, 42% found it hard to think of the museum as “theirs.”
- 22% expressed that staff did not engage with them (visitors of color)
- 22% said overcrowding impacted their sense of feeling welcome
Analysis & Outcomes

Stakeholder Focus Group Findings

- 32% of participants said cost was an issue
- 37% of participants said visitor hours were a barrier to visiting with interest in early and evening hours
- 42% let their memberships lapse during COVID
- 47% expressed desire for more seating
- Educators want field trip guides aligned with Academic Standards
- Internal exhibits assessment aligned with stakeholder feedback
Learning from our Community
Who is our community?
Online Survey to Active Members

We are so thrilled to welcome you back to the Museum. It’s all about happy squeals, lots of “oohs” and “aahs,” and that joyful feeling for both visitors and staff alike. As we continue to improve our Museum, we would love your help!

Beginning this month, SDCDM is bringing together a public circle to better assess the needs of our community. We want to develop more opportunities and programs and ensure that our Museum continues to serve your needs as a leader in childhood education and development.
Online Survey to Active Members

Our members are an integral part of this discussion, so how can we better serve you?

If you are interested in working with us as part of this endeavor, please click the link below to participate in the first survey. Survey responses can be anonymous, or you can enter your contact information and be included in similar opportunities. We anticipate virtual discussion groups, subsequent questionnaires, and possible follow-up conversations with any interested members.
Online Survey to Active Members

1. How long have you been a member of SDCDM?
2. How often do you visit the museum?
3. Favorite areas/exhibits
4. How would you rate the value of your membership?
5. Opportunity for play or opportunity for learning?
6. Demographic questions
Spend some time exploring the handouts/tools. What would work best for your organization? & Why? Any ideas sparked?
Questions?
Thank you!