FBF Model for Youth Development

Purpose

This model positions the Field Band Foundation M&E approach within a framework derived from our Theory of Change (ToC) and guides the development of the M&E plan. Additionally, this document will be disseminated to all relevant departments to ensure alignment of all related activities within our ToC. It will also help us to continually assess and refine our operational systems to ensure that they effectively enable the desired changes within our communities.

Organisational Background

The Field Band Foundation (FBF) is a non-profit company established in 1997. In over two decades of operation, our programmes have evolved with the overall aim to foster holistic development targeting various economic and social issues faced by South African youth. We utilise arts (in the form of marching bands) as a catalyst to stimulate an empowered, self-confident and healthy community of band members and staff alike.

FBF's Theory of Change (ToC)

Our ToC is the developmental model in which we situate our activities. It depicts the causal pathway between the capacity building of staff and members and the goal of empowered and healthy young people able to contribute to a vibrant society. FBF activities are designed to positively influence the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours of staff to enrich their social and professional skillsets. This empowers them to create an environment that fosters a heightened commitment to self-development and improved emotional resilience for themselves and the band members. These empowered individuals are then able to contribute towards stimulating similar positive changes within their communities.

Three major assumptions inform our approach:

1. Capacitating tutors will transfer pertinent skills, knowledge and behaviours to members (Desimore, 2009).
2. The band environment (consisting of the relevant change constructs for youth development detailed below) will provide protective factors to mitigate socio-economic risks and enable improved *commitment to self-development* and *resilience* (Sheck, 2012; Barrett, 2015).
3. Music education, life skills and the resulting enhancement of resilience and self-development competencies contribute to overall improved health and well-being (MacDonald, 2013; Sheck, 2012)

(See Appendix 1 for a glossary of terms used by FBF)

Constructs of Change

We have adopted our change constructs (see Box 2 of *Diagram 1)* from the Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective. The origins of this perspective dates to the 1900's, when scholars and practitioners in Child Psychology and Prevention sciences collectively advocated for and implemented a shift in the youth development approach (Lerner, 2005). This shift emphasised engagement with youth strengths and talents rather than a deficit-centred youth development approach (Sheck, 2012). Evidence-based reviews have attributed positive developmental shifts to the affiliation with and commitment to a group, which is the band in the FBF context. The band environment must be created in such a way as to foster fundamental change constructs and provide a safe space for people to practice and reinforce new/alternative learnt skills and beliefs. The change constructs are therefore the bedrock concepts for FBF strategies, M&E planning as well as tool development.

Diagram 1: FBF's Constructs of Change for human development
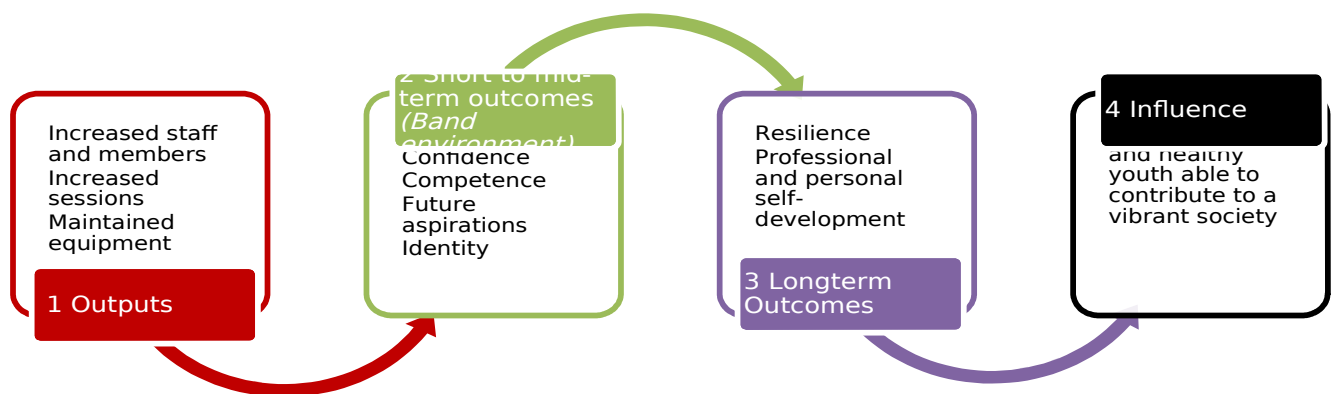
M&E Approach and Assessment Tools

Our M&E approach is thus based on measurement of various indicators that reflect the holistic human development constructs we have chosen to define the nature of our work and overall aims. Seeing as our assessments cannot be reduced to solely quantitative measures, we apply a mixed methods approach. Qualitative data portrays individual and community level influence in the form of content analysis of narratives from the field and responses to certain surveys. Quantitative outcomes are measured with a predominantly experimental study design, utilising pre and post-tests with open cohorts and fixed tools. We emphasise the continuous review of methods and a feed-back loop of information into strategic planning and activity programming. FBF has therefore developed 9 different assessment tools, varying in design and frequency of application. It is the combination of these that assists us to assess our progress towards our desired outcomes on the individual, interpersonal and organisational levels.

Long-term Outcomes and Impact

Through triangulating improved levels of knowledge, attitudes and skills of staff and members with observed behaviour changes and eventual self-reported wellbeing, FBF aims to demonstrate positive levels of influence within the bands, post-interventions and over time. These findings then inform our measurement of resilience and commitment to self-development levels, skills crucial in overcoming societal challenges. With our programmes currently empowering over 6,000 staff and members in 7 out of 9 South African provinces and their consequential contributions to their own communities, FBF believes that we can see our influence extending from the bands to the communities in the form of our long-term outcome and impact goals over time.

Appendix 1 – Definitions and Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Capacity Building	The process in which staff, members and FBF communities are provided improved technical and soft skills in a way they are empowered to use the skills, knowledge, tools and equipment within the bands, towards their careers and in bettering their social standing and their societies on a whole.
Competence (Behavioural)	The ability to combine and utilise learnt cognitive, moral and social skills to engage in positive normative behaviour and in make beneficial choices emphasising proactive forward-thinking such as resisting peer pressure, taking ownership of one's responsibilities and dedication to furthering one's future: socially, professionally and academically.
Competence (Cognitive)	The ability to process and individualise complex decisions through rational, critical and creative thinking.
Competence (Moral)	The ability to engage in ethical discernment to exhibit altruism, compassion and the confidence to enforce justice.
Competence (Social)	The ability to build fruitful relationships of all kinds through improved interpersonal skills such as communication, assertiveness, conflict resolution, and negotiation.
Confidence	The belief in one's own abilities compounded with the conviction that one can utilise these skills to reach goals and over-come obstacles as best as possible.
Emotional Resilience	The successful adaptation to life tasks in the face of social disadvantage or adverse conditions (Sheck, 2012). In FBF there are four main elements used to described emotional resilience – mastery, belonging, meaning and motivation
Empowerment	The process in gaining the skills, strength and confidence to take control of one's own life and claiming their rights towards reaching their future ambitions.
Future aspiration	Hope and optimism, including valued and attainable goals, positive appraisal of one's capability and positive expectancies of the future.

Holistic Development	A comprehensive learning system encompassing physical, social, emotional and mental growth
Identity	Building of self-esteem and exploration and commitments in positive self-definition (Sheck, 2012).
Member	Band participants aged 7-35 who attend two rehearsals a week
Positive Norms	Clear and healthy standards, beliefs, and behavioural guidelines which promote prosocial behaviour coupled with events and activities promoting their practice
Self-Development	The provision of the agency of positive decision-making through heightened access to resources, opportunities and capacity that enables successful engagement within society. This supports the drive towards the realisation of social, personal and professional goals.
Staff	While staff consists of all FBF employees, this document refers particularly to those in the field in direct contact with band members: Programme Officers, Band co-ordinators, Social Officers and tutors.
Health and Wellbeing	State of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 1948)

References

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