

How evaluative practice has changed organisational culture at the Zoological Society of London.

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LIVING CONSERVATION

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Workshop agenda



In 2012 the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) recruited its first evaluation co-ordinator. This session will explore:

- The groundwork and strategic development needed to secure this role.
- The co-ordinator's relationship with other departments will be explored
- How visitor studies has informed the development of exhibits, live interpretation and understanding of audiences over the last two years.
- Using a series of case studies, the session will demonstrate the process and outcome of several projects and give an insight into lessons learnt.
- Lastly, conclusions will be made on how building internal stakeholder relationships has been fundamental in changing ZSL's organisation culture towards evaluative practice and evidence based research.

ZSL vision, mission & guiding principles

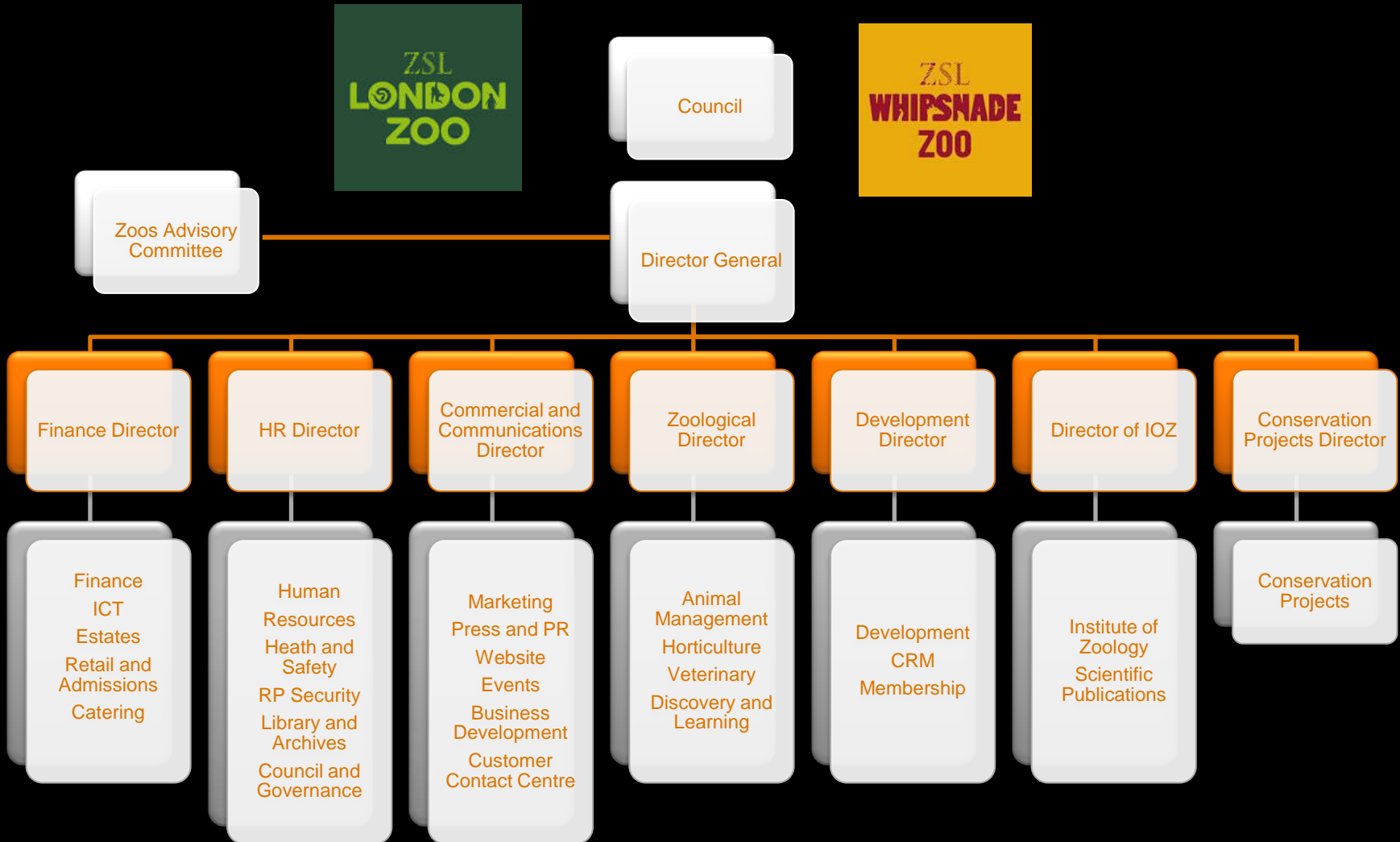


Our **vision** is a world where animals are valued, and their conservation is assured and our **mission** is to promote and achieve the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats.

Guiding principles:

- Respecting and valuing animals and the natural world
- Inspiring conservation
- To achieve excellence in our field
- Acting ethically, responsibly and sustainably
- Valuing everyone we work with

ZSL Organisational Chart



Organisational change



“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek” – Barack Obama

“If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got” – Anonymous

“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” - Charles Darwin

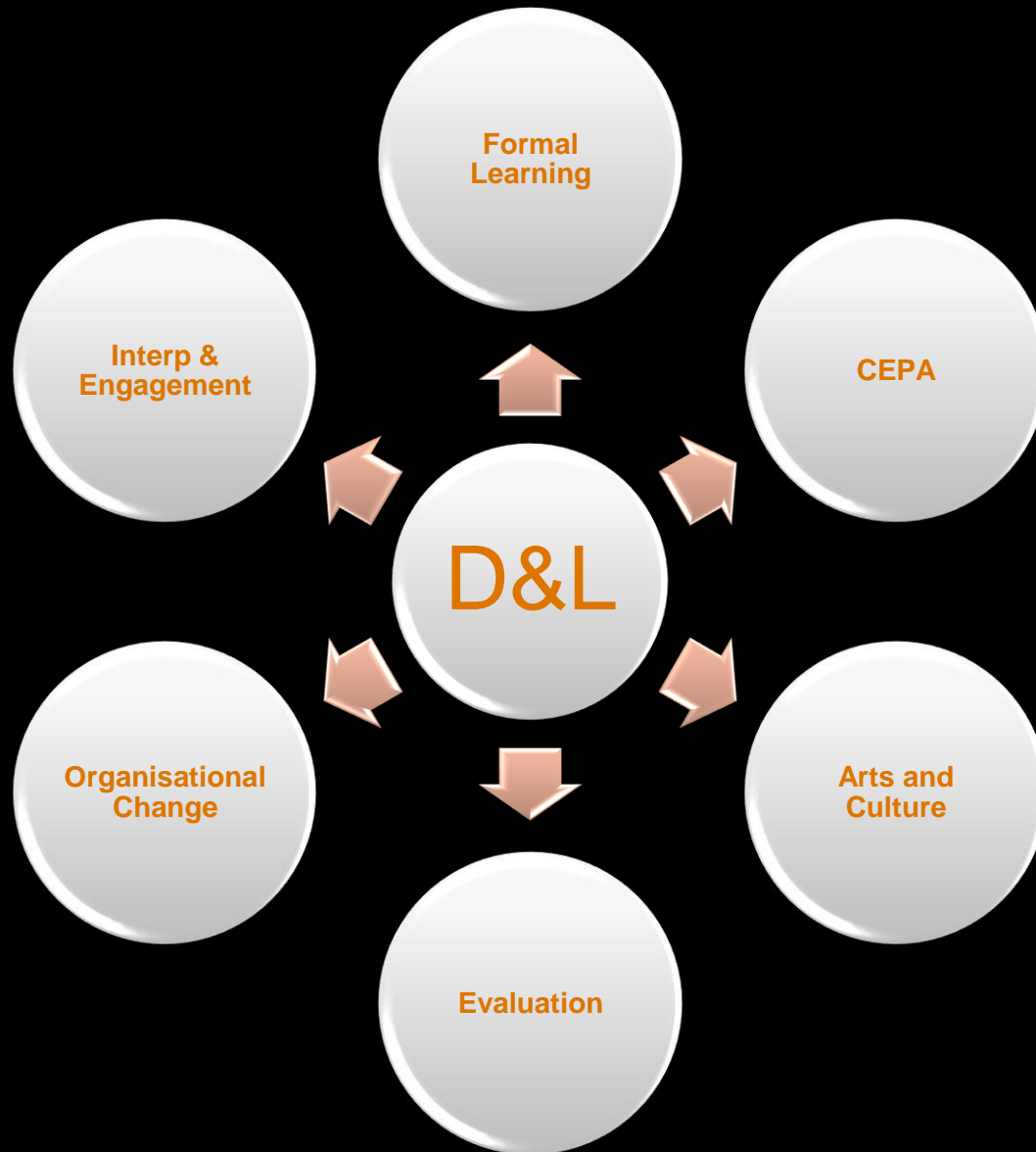
“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new” - Albert Einstein

- Non systematic approach
- Badly designed surveys
- Working in silos
- Internal capacity = low
- No long term goals
- Abstract evaluations



- “.. *But we seem to be doing OK, why do we need evaluation?*”

Discovery & Learning Strategy 2012-13



Where did we start?



Strategic aims for evaluation 2012-13

To develop evaluation and visitors studies throughout ZSL

- Build evaluation and visitors studies and incorporate into all D&L practice
- Create an infrastructure for visitor studies at ZSL

- How does your organisation view evaluation?
- What relationships do you see important in order to improve how evaluation is perceived?

First step



In 2012 ZSL employed its first internal Evaluation Coordinator



Evaluation projects since 2012



Exhibit evaluation

- Penguin Beach
- Amphibians
- Seahorses
- Gorilla Kingdom
- Tiger Territory
- Passage through Asia
- Farm
- Pygmy Hippos
- Lions

Talks

- Presenter talks
- Keeper talks

Groups

- Members
- Fellows
- Volunteers
- Students

Events

- Special Children's day
- Writers/Photography/
Architecture courses
- Zoo Lates
- Activity Den sessions

Departments

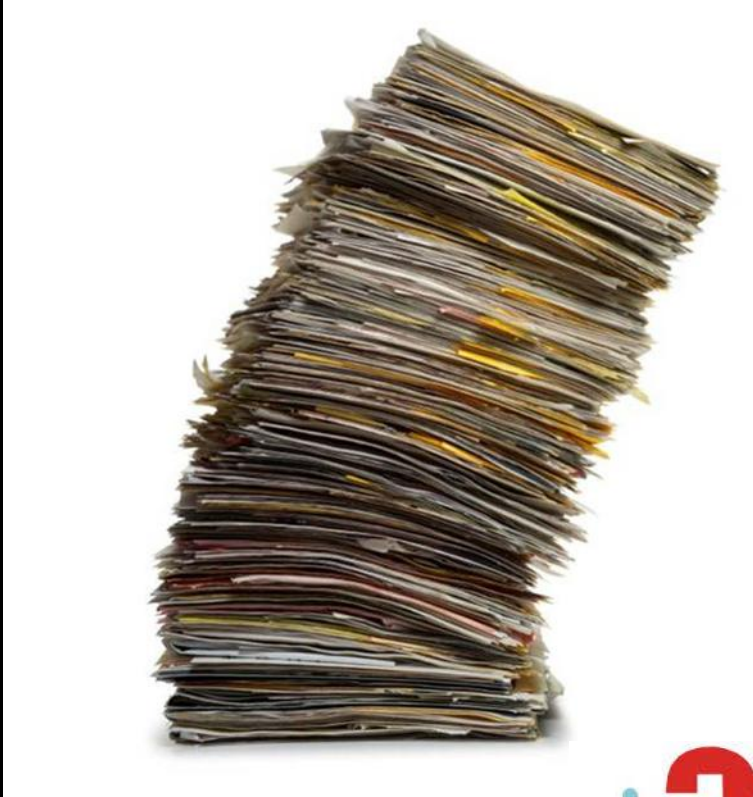
- Discovery and Learning
- Interpretation
- Conservation projects
- Development
- Communications
- Institute of Zoology

Projects

- WAZA
- Way finding
- Chagos outreach programme
- Zambia Schools programme
- Soapbox Science

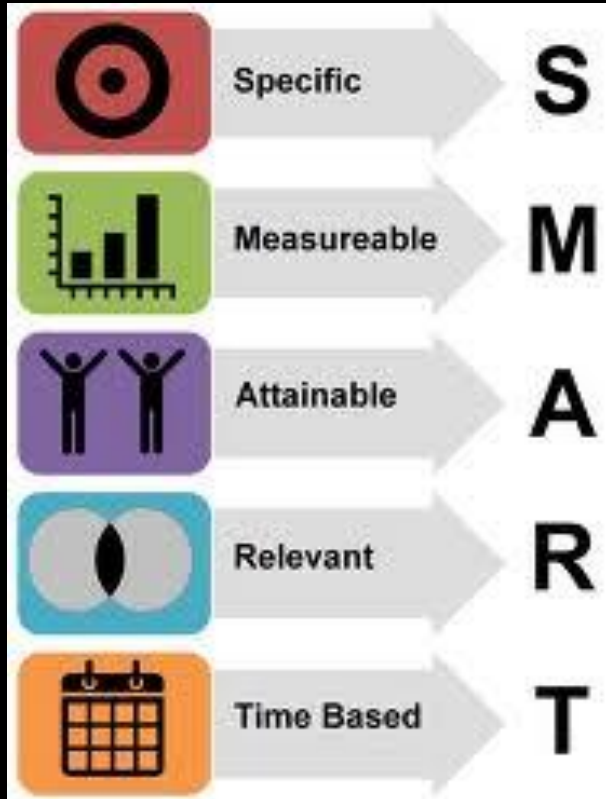
- Between staff and evaluation
- Between evaluation and outputs
- Between departments within ZSL
- Between ZSL and its audiences

Between staff and evaluation



- “How do I analyse this data?”
- Ticking boxes
- Too difficult for us to do
- Lack of understanding
- Lack of clear objectives
- Lack of evaluation skills

Between staff and evaluation



- Why do you want/need to evaluate?
- What are we evaluating?
- How are you going to do this?
- Building capacity
- Investing time
- Lending support



What is the relationship between staff and evaluation like in your organisation?

Between evaluation and outputs



- Summative
- One off
- External Consultant
- Relatively expensive



Between evaluation and outputs



Tiger Territory

- Front end
- Formative
- Summative
- Student studies



What is the relationship between evaluation and your organisations outputs?

Between ZSL and its audiences



The assumption was that for visitors...



Conservation =



Between ZSL and its audiences



Conservation =



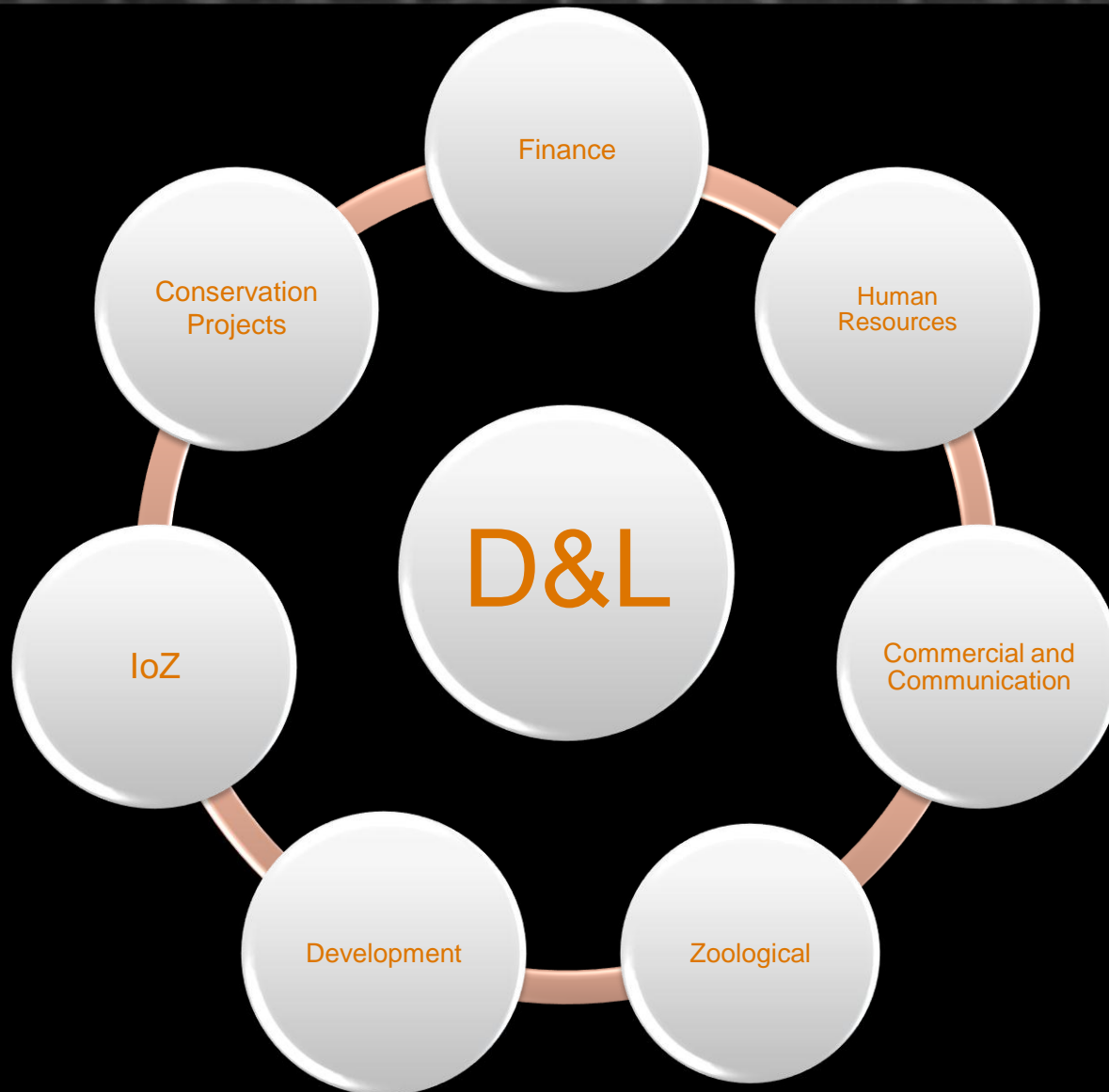
© AFP/Getty Images

What is the relationship like between your organisation and its audiences?

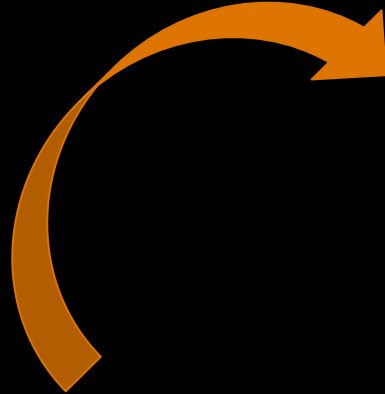
Between ZSL departments



Between ZSL departments



Example: Sealion talk



Resistance to change



Personal level

“I wasn't aware that there was a plan to develop a talk for the elephant demo' anyway? I don't remember reading any negative comments about the elephant talk.” Keeper

Department level

Development of an Evaluation Volunteer scheme was longwinded and difficult.

Director level

Start simple with visible projects

What is the relationship like between departments in your organisation?

What have we achieved so far?



Evaluative practice has changed organisational culture by:

- Improving/ establishing internal relationships
- Raising standards across the organisation
- Embedding evaluation into all D&L, Interpretation and CP activities.
- Positive shift in the profile of evaluative practice across ZSL

Which led to the acknowledgement by ZSL that evaluation has a core role in the society, permanent position granted!

“I don't know how we did it before”

“I didn't realise that it could benefit us”

“We always assumed that what we were doing was good but
great to have that evidence”

“Whatever the visitor wants we will invest in”

What else do we hope to achieve?



Strategic aims 2014-17

To further develop evaluation, visitor studies and social research at ZSL

- Integrate evaluation into all Discovery and Learning programmes,
- Build evaluation capacity throughout ZSL to enable departments outside of Discovery and Learning to perform effective evaluation of their activities.
- Establish a protocol within ZSL for student social science/visitor research, which prioritizes ZSL's research needs.
- Build links with academic institutions to help ZSL conduct and publish social research.
- Collaborate with other UK, European and International, Zoos and Aquaria and Science centres on social research projects

Any questions?

ZSL

