How to Make a Data Mural

Here's a step-by-step for how to run your own data mural process. This includes specific steps to do, and things to think about.

Step 1: Identify partners/ Choose your participants

- Invite the leadership of your groups or organization
- Invite the people served by your group
- Is it useful to involve the larger community?
- Are there other stakeholders who could be part of choosing a message that's shared with the public?
- Are there other stakeholders who you've been hoping to engage?

Step 2: Identify the goals of the project

- Are you trying to reach a particular group with a message?
- Are you interested in engaging someone in a new way?
- Do you want your organization to think more creatively about data presentation?

Step 3: Find some data

- Ask yourself:
  - Do I collect any information each year?
  - What do we tell our funders about our success?
  - Have we been asking our clients or customers any questions?
- Pull the data together into something simple and read-able (choose the information that's interesting or complete)

Step 4: Hold a story-finding workshop

- Share the data with them and ask them to "find stories" that the data tell
- Have the group look at all of the stories and choose one that feels most important to tell publicly

Step 5: Hold a design workshop

- Take your group's story and help them turn it into a visual design
- Talk about ways to visualize data
- Play with "building activities"
- Use word webs to expand abstract concepts
- Use collaborative drawings activity to generate designs
- Together, take elements of the designs to turn into one mural

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Step 6: Paint the mural

- Can have participants transfer the image (grid or project)
- If time is limited, keep the design flat so that it can be painted all at once
- Can do a first pass of background color, then second pass of details, shading, etc, then third pass of text and fine detail

Step 7: Publicly unveil/present the mural

- This is a way to get press, to start conversations, to raise awareness of the issues it discusses
- Can give a "sneak peek" to one group if they agree to cover it

Step 8: Evaluate

- Do pre-post testing
- Get comments from participants as the project ends as wells as after a few months
- Other things we've thought about
    - A chalkboard section for feedback, taking photos every few days or weeks
    - A QR code so people can respond with their phones
    - A discussion session to get feedback from the public after it's been up a while

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