

EVALUATION AND NARRATIVE: HOW TO IDENTIFY THE IMPACT OF YOUR WORK

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**People
Dancing**
the foundation for
community dance



Introduction

This workshop will examine:

- Potential pitfalls and how to tackle them from an organisational and freelance perspective.
- Activity to explore importance of evaluation
- Making a Difference evaluation method and case study from Community Music Wales
- Activity to explore tools of evaluation
- Qualitative and Quantitative data – Emma Beynon
- Resources

Potential pitfalls of evaluation

- Evaluation becomes a box ticking exercise
- It is only beneficial for funders
- It can be too stats based without conveying the story of the project
- It can lose sight of project purpose
- It doesn't always put the participant first
- It needs to be useful for the participants, practitioners and organisation as well as the funders
- The data isn't accurate or useful

Activity 1: Break out sessions

Make a list of all the things you think are important about evaluation including its benefits and pitfalls

In your meeting room you will have 8 minutes to share your lists and ideas. Decide amongst your group the top 4 most important things about evaluation.

Be ready to share with the rest of the Zoom group.

(Feedback notes are attached below)

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Group 1:

Evaluation takes places at three different levels: Personal, organisational and project based.

Needs to be brave and authentic, within the vision of a more connected world. You need to know why a project exists, and be brave enough to stand your ground authentically.

All the form filling can detract from the community element of the project, it often feels like a distraction.

Sometimes there is even a danger the evaluation can compromise the project. There is sometimes a tendency to forget, and leave it too late, then it becomes the thing we have to tag on to the end rather than inform the project.

Evaluation highlights the fear that the project might fail, and with funding so tight at the moment it creates a real pressure on having to demonstrate the value of the work is stress.

Group 2

It was agreed we are good at evaluating young people but it more difficult when it

comes to evaluating adults.

Warwick Edinburgh is not popular with adults.

Form filling at the beginning reminds adults of negative categories.

The definitions can be very inhibiting. Participants do not want to be categorised as having mental health issues .

Adults tend to change their language to match what they imagine the organisation and funders want to hear.

We need to think of the language and methods of evaluation we use. Does it favour white privilege?

How do you make it more scientific?

Group 3

Spin – is this a tainted word – but for the practitioners it meant picking out the relevant parts.

Evaluation gives you the chance to focus on what works or even just the challenges we all face.

Evaluation can be: an external activity or an internal one.

It can be associated with difficulty, pressure, smiley faces.

Important to remember the influence you can have upon the participants, you can really affect them.

It can be tricky when the funders request information from adults such as NI numbers, it is too intrusive..

Group 4:

Evaluation is...Rewarding, funny, constant, useful.

Recommend Brene Brown, social scientist on evaluation.

Authentic, stories and process. Interested in collecting the voices around us and the stories that we tell.

When does the point come when we challenge funders?

When does the point come when we have sufficient evidence?

When will evaluation stop being the main focus?

Struggle to see the relevance of using the smiley faces.

How can we challenge the funders collectively?

Very important to share evaluation goals with all stakeholders and participants.

Think carefully about the words and questions around the participants' behaviours and achievement?

Children in Need 'making a difference' training: Setting the intentions of the project

The 'Make a difference' method encourages at the very beginning, in collaboration with partners and/or participants, to determine the three most important differences to children's lives (outcomes) that you want your project to make.

Out of these differences two or three key indicators of success are established

These indicators clearly set what tools would be best to use to collate the data

Children in need guidelines:

What difference (Why) does your organisation want to make in the lives of the participants.

This should be a single, significant change that you can show happens within the lifetime of the grant. As a guide, we think a single significant change can be described in a short sentence or phrase, and should use the language of change, for example 'better' 'increased' 'reduced' 'fewer'.

What sort of Indicators (changes) will tell you whether you have made those differences.

These should be signs or changes in the children's behaviour, attitude, relationships or environment that will show you are making this difference. As a guide, you should use neutral language, for example 'level of' 'number of' 'how often'

What practical tools and methods you would use to collect the information you need to measure the differences you want to make

CASE STUDY: Community Music Wales Evaluation methods using the 'Make a Difference' method.

Project Uno

- **Project Demographic: Young people classified as NEET and living in areas of social and economic deprivation in the South Wales Valleys are suffering low self esteem, poor confidence and loneliness.**
- **These young people are interested in music interaction yet lack the confidence to perform or learn new things.**

Difference 1 : Our first difference will be to Increase Friendships

Indicators – What does that look like?

1. Marker one will be that the young people will work collaboratively to achieve a shared goal such as, writing a song together, or performing as a group, building trust.
2. Marker two will be that the young people regularly attend sessions and make some connections with one another outside the group.

Methods

We will carry out a baseline Questionnaire and follow it up with a final Questionnaire to determine if the young people have built friendships.

Register: We will keep a register to monitor regular attendances to ascertain how engaged the young people are in the project.

Video evidence of collaboration through song writing and/or performance

Difference 2: Our second difference will be that the young people will increase their future aspirations

Indicator

1. The first marker will monitor if the young people reach and surpass their own expected achievements during the projects. This could be through doing something that makes them proud such as performing or sharing lyrics with peers from their wider community or family.
2. In the second indicator we will monitor the change in young peoples aspirations for their own future. Including, willingness to participate in future projects, a change in future plans.

Methods

We will monitor the young peoples attendance through keeping a weekly register of activity. This will enable us to determine if their attendance changes throughout the course of the project.

We will carry out a baseline and final Questionnaire to determine if the young people have changed their future aspirations and how that made them feel.

We will develop a personal achievement plan for each participant to ascertain what makes them proud and build small steps with a bespoke journey with achievable outcomes.

Difference 3: To support the young people to increase their confidence through trying new things

Indicators

1. In the first indicator, we will measure how many young people try a musical instrument, sing or participate in song writing for the first time, which will indicate that the young people are challenging themselves to try something new.
2. In the second indicator, we will measure how many young people share their new skill with their peers. Through this, we will expect to see the young people gaining the confidence to try out a new skill through performing in front of their peers for the first time

Methods

We will set a bespoke development plan for each participant to build small achievable outcomes.

We will carry out a baseline and final Questionnaire to determine if the young people have participated in something for the first time and how that made them feel.

We will evidence this through Audio/ video recordings of the young people doing something for the first time. We will carry out video or audio interviews with the young people to ascertain how it made them feel

Activity 2: Making a difference evaluation

Based on the Children in Need model, think of the key questions you would like to ask to identify the impact of your work and what key changes would you like to make for participants in a project you are either working on or are thinking of doing.

(Project feedback in notes below)

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Q&A:

Jojo Spinks – How do you evaluate for communities and areas?

Joe Crofton – from Leicester Soft-touch.org.uk

Evaluate how young people feel, the skills they have learnt.

Involved police and schools

Local funders, lots of nagging and pestering. Funding from the DCMS, Funding from Lottery, Before the project started had someone in place to network. Joining up data. Application was a full time job for a few months. Evaluation tools: Outcome star, police evaluations, new models of evaluation developed via the Police and schools. A lot of emphasis on leg work, and research.

Activity 3: Break out session Evaluation Methods

Write a list of your favourite evaluation methods.

In break out rooms/ groups share and agree top four methods

Followed by group discussion and feedback.

(Feedback notes attached)

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Activity 3 Feedback: Evaluation tools

Group 1

Its important to use different tools to match the group so that they can relate ad eel more comfortable using it. Such as Vox pop's for young people

Evaluation methods need to be Inspired and dynamic to bring the best out of the participant

Big sister diary rooms

Peer to peer interviews, which bring forth more information and/ or new things

Group 2

Important to use a voice/ accent that the participants feel comfortable with – such as peer to peer evaluation

Can use the method that the workshop was delivered in such as dance, creative writing or music This is also useful when reporting back.

Use mapping, encouraging participants to move about as physical motion cam stimulate the mind

Making sure that language is neutral and that there are no leading questions

If working on a project – ensure that the final piece, artwork or performance forms part of the evaluation

Group 3

Ensure that the participants know what the evaluation is used for and where it is going so that they trust the process and give honest answers

Build into sessions throughout the project – make it part of the workshop such as taking to the character in the story (If creative writing)

Group 4

Encourage participants to share activities that they have done at home and learned through the workshops – see how they are doing with respect to what they are doing in sessions.

Inertia – move around the room to encourage engagement and stimulation

Peer to peer interviews – provide good equipment such as good Mic, etc and let them ask their own questions

Look at things such as word in action and Festival of ideas (resources in final pages of power point).

Case Study 2: Emma Beynon How to use evaluation to 'tell a story'.

Evaluation helps me develop a strong narrative around my practice and keeps me learning.

At the start be clear about the intention of the evaluation: Who is wants the evaluation and why

Be honest: you need to be clear about what can be evaluated.

Make sure your evaluation tool kit will collect data to answer all the stakeholder agendas.

Be honest: Funders do not want to just hear about the good news stories.

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- Evidence has been found that the process of evaluation has a positive impact/increases ownership in participants. Evaluation can be very positive.

- Use the evaluation tools you enjoy

- The art form itself:

‘Creative writing is a plane, it gets you to your destination, it makes you so happy.’

‘Creative writing is a summer dress, it has waves at the bottom, bobbling up and down.’

Emma Beynon

Quantitate and Qualitative data

There is a tension between quantitative and qualitative question question.

I have heard it described as the difference between magic realism and a logical narrative.

Never forget you know the impact of your work because you the one to witness it!

Qualitative: Reflective Diary

What went well even better if/how can I improve it

Allows me to record 'critical moments' when I witness participants begin to thrive and develop in keeping with the aims set at the beginning of the project:

'They showed patience and respect for one another's ideas. Because they were working together on one end piece, there was an authentic need for communication and collaboration which they seemed to enjoy.'

'The group has transformed from quiet and tentative to excited and very cooperative, they listen to each other carefully and respect each other's ideas''

Evidence of change.

Quantitative: Questions of degree, before & after Example 1

Film Project Impact Survey

Please could you answer these questions below on a scale where 1 = Not at All and 5 = Very much!

Please indicate how much you have enjoyed these film workshops

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What have you enjoyed about these workshops?

6 responses

seeing my friends

Dancing

Seeing friends and learning new things

Being able to see everyone, and exploring new ways of making the most of our Tuesday sessions. Although some things cannot work, it's been really lovely experimenting with what does work and learning more about Shakespeare that I hadn't heard of/ seen before.

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Evaluation Tools to help you tell your story

<http://happymuseumproject.org/resources/tools/>

Arts and Health Impact PERMS evaluation

optimistic version of Warwick Edinburgh used by a number of arts organisations in the UK

<https://www.peggykern.org/questionnaires.html>

<https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu> – Martin Seligman

Research to reinforce your case

- <https://arts.wales/about-us/strategy/corporate-and-operational-plans>
- <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/child-poverty-strategy-for-wales-report.pdf>
- <https://gov.wales/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation-full-index-update-ranks-2019>
- <https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk>
- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/epidemiology-health-care/people/fancourt>
- <https://www.artshealthresources.org.uk>
- <https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk>
- <http://creativeandcredible.co.uk>.

Thank you very much for attending and participating.

Diolch



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