

# Evaluating Community Arts & Community Well Being

AN EVALUATION GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY ARTS PRACTITIONERS

Prepared by **EFFECTIVE CHANGE** Pty Ltd  
for Arts Victoria; Darebin City Council; City of Whittlesea and VicHealth



**ARTS  
VICTORIA**



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This guide is available from the following websites:

Arts Victoria	:	<a href="http://www.arts.vic.gov.au">www.arts.vic.gov.au</a>
VicHealth	:	<a href="http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au">www.vichealth.vic.gov.au</a>
Effective Change	:	<a href="http://www.effectivechange.com.au">www.effectivechange.com.au</a>
Darebin City Council	:	<a href="http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/arts/publications.html">www.darebin.vic.gov.au/arts/publications.html</a>
City of Whittlesea	:	<a href="http://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/evaluatingcommarts">www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/evaluatingcommarts</a>

### Evaluating Community Arts and Community Well-Being

*An Evaluation Guide for Community Arts Practitioners*

*Evaluation research; Evaluation indicators; Community arts; Community well-being; Community development; Community capacity building*

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### Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the support of the organisations which commissioned this work and the commitment of the staff from those organisations to this guide:

- Maria Katsonis and Judy Morton (Arts Victoria)
- Susan Ball (VicHealth)
- Mark Wilkinson (Darebin City Council)
- Judy Turner, Kath Melbourne and Sarah Poole (City of Whittlesea)

I also wish to acknowledge and thank of the broad range of community arts practitioners, managers and participants who were consulted in the development stages; commented on drafts or actually piloted the guide with their own community arts projects. Your contributions have been invaluable.



# A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

The arts engage, provoke, amuse and excite us but, above all, the arts reflect and shape our sense of community identity and helps build social cohesion.

As Minister for the Arts, I am passionate about spreading the word that participating in the arts and cultural activities is a rewarding and creative experience, on both an individual and community level.

We need a balanced understanding of the role and worth of the arts in our society – one that embraces their aesthetic, cultural, economic and social values.

One of the challenges facing governments and the arts sector is finding rigorous research to demonstrate the positive social impact of arts involvement, rather than relying on anecdotal evidence.

With the release of Evaluating Community Arts & Community Well Being, we have a user-friendly tool that allows community arts practitioners to document and assess the social outcomes of their projects and programs comprehensively and systematically.

The widespread use of this Evaluation Guide will increase knowledge and understanding of the benefits of arts involvement, leading to more, and more effective, arts programs in Victoria's diverse communities.

I strongly commend the guide.



The Hon Mary Delahunty MP  
Minister for the Arts



## FOREWORD

I am pleased to commend this evaluation guide to you. Evaluation is important, not only for proving what you do is effective but also for improving programs and contributing to better outcomes.

VicHealth is an active supporter of community arts through a range of funding schemes developed within our Arts for Health Program. We regularly observe important health and community well-being outcomes through community arts projects, however, we find that organisations have limited capacity to provide evidence of this beyond the anecdotal. This in turn limits all of our ability to showcase successes; to learn from failures; and to reflect on the range of achievements.

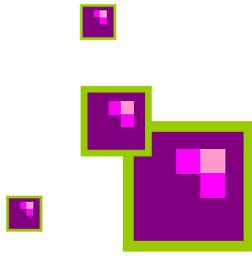
I understand that many people face evaluation with some trepidation. It is hoped this evaluation guide will ease that fear and be a welcome resource which provides the framework and the necessary tools. It has been developed in close consultation with the sector, responding to the need for both a short 'Express' guide and a more comprehensive version which has the capacity to be used as is, or adapted to your specific needs. We have ensured that the resource is widely distributed and readily available– the document is on the websites of the five project partners.

We thank our project partners, Arts Victoria, Darebin City Council and the City of Whittlesea for their commitment to the project. We thank Clare Keating of Effective Change for producing such a high quality document. We hope it helps you to show the difference community arts can make to health.



Dr Rob Moodie  
Chief Executive Officer





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# PREFACE

## COMMUNITY ARTS PRACTITIONERS ...

Would you like to have your next funding application ready before you've finished your current project?

- Would you like to be able to plan future projects?
- Would you like to develop stronger partnerships in the community?

Evaluation is a process which can help in all of the above.

- Have you ever asked participants whether they enjoyed a community arts project?
- Have you ever asked a partner in a community arts project what they thought of the experience?
- Have you ever asked the public what they thought of a performance or piece?

If you answered yes, then you have undertaken at least a basic level of evaluation. Let's face it, most community arts workers do this all the time – it's a natural practice for most people involved in the community arts. It's easy, it's fun, it's interesting and it keeps you involved and striving for new goals and new projects.

- But, do you then sit down and consider the feedback?
- Do you think about what you need to do before commencing another project?

Yes? Then, you are undertaking some level of continuous improvement, through evaluation. This might be a bit harder and have some pitfalls. Often, there is no incentive to do this and no time to do it systematically. You probably have already experienced some direct benefits from this approach though, and you're keen to keep going. But...

- Do you have a plan ready now to evaluate your next project?
- Have you thought about who to speak to? When? What will you ask them? How?
- How would you recognise and prevent a looming disaster?
- If you documented the project outcomes, how would you report, and to whom?

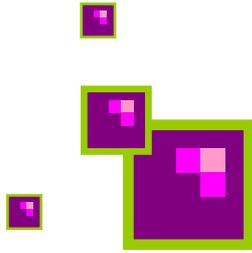
If you don't have a plan ready NOW for evaluating your next community arts project, this guide is for you. Recognising time constraints in the community arts, the guide is simple, straightforward and ready to use. The guide is organised around the stages of evaluation. At the back of the guide are tools for each stage of the evaluation which can be used as they are, or adapted. The evaluation model recognises the importance of the *process* as well as the *outcome* in community arts and helps you to identify achievements in each area. The model is designed as a resource, with all the tools provided to help you evaluate, report and improve. Hopefully, with the evaluation planned out for you, community arts practitioners will have support to evaluate, reflect and improve. The guide is in two formats – a summary version called the Express Guide and a comprehensive version, which includes the Express Guide.

Both versions of the guide are available from any of the following websites:

Arts Victoria	<a href="http://www.arts.vic.gov.au">www.arts.vic.gov.au</a>
VicHealth	<a href="http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au">www.vichealth.vic.gov.au</a>
Effective Change	<a href="http://www.effectivechange.com.au">www.effectivechange.com.au</a>
Darebin City Council	<a href="http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/arts/publications.html">www.darebin.vic.gov.au/arts/publications.html</a>
City of Whittlesea	<a href="http://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/evaluatingcommarts">www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/evaluatingcommarts</a>

It is recommended that you access both versions. *Good luck!*





## INTRODUCTION

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### PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to provide a resource for community arts practitioners to use when they evaluate community arts projects. It is designed to be as flexible as possible, so that it can be used by the wide variety of organisations involved in the community arts and so that it can cover the range of community arts projects. The guide provides a comprehensive base for undertaking evaluations. The process outlined in the guide can be followed through sequentially. Alternatively, the process, tools and suggestions can be amended and refined to suit the specific needs of various projects and organisations. The guide also aims to help build a body of evidence about the work of the community arts sector, by using a consistent and structured research framework.

### BACKGROUND

A consortium of organisations has been involved in the development of the guide. The project was funded by Arts Victoria; Darebin City Council and the City of Whittlesea. Arts Victoria and VicHealth have funded the final production of the guide and making them available on-line. Together the project partners recognised that:

- within the community, increasing value is being placed on community activities which have positive impacts on the community;
- there is a growing recognition of the social and community well-being outcomes of community arts projects, yet
- there is a gap in the resources available to community arts practitioners to assist them in identifying; collating and reporting on the positive outcomes achieved through community arts projects.

The purpose of this guide is therefore to address that gap and to serve as a resource for community arts practitioners.

The guide has been prepared and developed by Effective Change Pty Ltd, a Melbourne-based consultancy company. In researching the guide, relevant literature was consulted and a range of key informants were interviewed.



**WHO IS THE GUIDE FOR ?**

The guide is for community arts practitioners, rather than specific organisations, as community arts projects can be located across a variety of organisations.

**HOW SHOULD IT BE USED ?**

The guide essentially ‘talks’ to a generic community arts project worker and assumes that this person will drive the evaluation. However, it can be used in a range of ways. For example, all participants in a community arts project could share roles in undertaking an evaluation. Or it could be used an external student or consultant to undertake an independent evaluation.

**COMMUNITY ARTS – NOT JUST COMMUNITY, NOT JUST ARTS**

This guide recognises the unique place of community arts within community and cultural activity. Case stories abound of community arts projects producing stunning and lasting creative achievements. There are also numerous examples where extraordinary life changes occurred for participants while the creative outcomes were less memorable. Other times, community arts projects have contributed enormously to their local community, through a range of strategies, such as engaging disenfranchised members of the community, or producing valuable resources for a particular community. Sometimes exceptional community arts projects produce extraordinary results across all areas. Other times, people just feel good by being involved and taking risks. This guide has been developed to work across all areas – from the creative output, to the creative journey, to the individuals and communities involved. This model of evaluation will allow you to identify the areas of achievement and success. It works even when, in conventional terms, the project may not appear to be that successful. It will also allow you to recognise extraordinary achievements across this range of factors when they do occur.

The diagram below shows the key elements to be evaluated, using this model of evaluation.

**Diagram 1: Key Elements of Community Arts Projects to be evaluated**

	<b>participants</b>	<b>project/ organisation</b>	<b>community</b>	
<b>process</b>	how participants are involved in the project	how the project is managed	how the community is involved in the project	<b>process</b>
<b>impact</b>	what happens to, or for, participants through the project	what happens as result of the project	what happens to or for the community through the project	<b>impact</b>
<b>outcome</b>	what happens to, or for, participants in the long term as a result of the project	what happens in the long term, as a result of the project	what happens to, or for, the community in the long term as a result of the project	<b>outcome</b>
	<b>participants</b>	<b>project/ organisation</b>	<b>community</b>	



Remember that you probably won't be able to consider all the above factors, all of the time. This guide provides a comprehensive approach – it is up to you to select the parts that are relevant to your project, your organisation and your resources. You may only have the resources to focus on one key aspect of the project. Most commonly, you will focus on the impact of the project - *What happened as a result of this project?* Positive answers to this question in particular yields useful information for promoting the project; promoting the organisation; that the participants can use; that can be used in funding applications or program expansion applications and so on. And when you want to evaluate a project in greater depth – when you're clear that you have the resources; there's a good case for evaluating the project and the organisation supports the evaluation - the guide's simple framework and ready resources will enable you to collect the information and help you articulate the elements that go to the heart of community arts projects, but are too often left unsaid.

## STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

The guide is structured chronologically. It guides the evaluator through the stages of evaluation from preparing the ground through to reporting on the evaluation. The six stages are:

- **Stage 1: Prepare for an evaluation**
- **Stage 2: Plan the evaluation**
- **Stage 3: Determine evaluation indicators**
- **Stage 4: Collect the data**
- **Stage 5: Analyse the data**
- **Stage 6: Prepare the evaluation report and improve on current practice**

Each stage is presented as a worksheet for you to complete and:

- takes you through the decisions you need to make
- asks trigger questions to focus your thoughts
- highlights the issues you are likely to encounter
- provides a checklist
- refers you to tools you can use and adapt if you wish
- refers you to the full text for further detail.

The Overview diagram on the next page is a summary of the complete process.

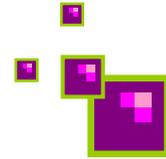
In the comprehensive guide, each Stage contains:

- an introduction;
- discussion on the rationale behind the particular step of the process;
- discussion on research methods and issues;
- practical issues – outlining the tasks to be done, and
- refers you to the tools to use.

There are sample tools at the end of the guide, ranging from sample surveys to a draft evaluation report outline which can be adapted for your own project. The tools are numbered to correspond with the relevant stage of the process.



# EVALUATION OVERVIEW



<p>STAGE 1 Prepare for the Evaluation</p>	<p><b>DECIDE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Project aims and objectives</b></li> </ul>
<p>STAGE 2 Plan the Evaluation</p>	<p><b>DEFINE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Purpose of evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why is the evaluation being done?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Evaluation Audience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who will receive and use the information?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>STAGE 3 Determine Evaluation Indicators</p>	<p><b>DETERMINE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Process</b></li> <li>• <b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who will manage the evaluation? How? How will it be funded?</li> <li>- Which stakeholders will be involved? How?</li> <li>- What are the timelines?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>STAGE 4 Collect Data</p>	<p><b>DESIGN</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Data collection and analysis tools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the key research questions?</li> <li>- How will data be collected? From whom?</li> <li>- How will the data be analysed?</li> <li>- How will confidentiality be guaranteed?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>STAGE 5 Analyse Data</p>	<p><b>COLLECT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Evaluation data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing research, records, files, interviews, surveys, focus groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>STAGE 5 Analyse Data</p>	<p><b>ANALYSE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Data collected</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reduce</li> <li>- check</li> <li>- identify findings and conclusions</li> <li>- discuss and report</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>STAGE 6 Report and Improve</p>	<p><b>REPORT ON</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Findings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Process</li> <li>- Impact</li> <li>- Outcomes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>STAGE 6 Report and Improve</p>	<p><b>IMPROVE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Processes</b></li> <li>• <b>Practices</b></li> </ul>



# STAGE 1: PREPARE FOR THE EVALUATION

SET

## Project aims and objectives

Why are we doing this project? What are our short, medium and long term aims?

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## What are the aims for participants?

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## What are our organisation's aims?

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## Define your 'community' target for this project – the local community? a particular group in the community – young people? men? women?

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## What are the aims for our community target group?

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## How will we do the project?

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ISSUES

## Look at your answers –

What do they mean for the evaluation?

Have you planned the project well?

Do you have enough resources (people included!) to manage the project?

How important will the evaluation be?

Investing about 10% of a project budget on an evaluation is a common practice.

What sort of investment can your organisation realistically make?

STAGE 1  
CHECKLIST

**Have you:** defined aims and objectives for the project?

considered aims and objectives for participants?

the project / organisation?

and the local community?

considered

the *process* (how you will do the project);

the *impact* (what you would like to happen in the medium term)

and the *outcome* (what you would like to happen in the long term)?

MORE  
INFORMATION?

Refer to: *Stage 1: Preparing for an evaluation* in the full text version

*Sample Tool 1.1: Setting project aims*



## STAGE 2: PLAN THE EVALUATION

<b>DEFINE</b>	<b>the purpose of the evaluation</b> <i>Why are we evaluating this project? Do we usually evaluate our projects? Will this evaluation be any different? How? Why?</i>
<b>DEFINE</b>	<b>the audience for the evaluation</b> <i>Who will we report to? (a funding body? project partners? the community? our board of management?) Do we have an internal or external focus? or both?</i>  <i>How can we use the evaluation results? (Consider: future funding applications; improving practice; keeping this project on track; feedback to participants...)</i>
<b>DETERMINE</b>	<b>the process for evaluation</b> <i>How will we manage the evaluation? What suitable structures exist? Do we need a committee / group – or an individual?</i>  Will we need an internal or external evaluator? Who is available; able and capable of managing the evaluation? Are there any conflicts?
<b>DETERMINE</b>	<b>the resources available for the evaluation</b> What resources (time; money; materials; equipment; records) can we allocate to the evaluation? Can we afford / justify an external evaluator?
<b>ISSUES</b>	<b>Look at your answers –</b> Are you clear about why you want to do the evaluation? Are you clear about how much time and effort can be put into the evaluation? Remember, if you reflect on your practice now, you already evaluate! What are the potential benefits of an evaluation? e.g. a new funding application, leading to more money, more time, more people? Apart from money, what are the potential costs to consider? e.g. political issues? Can you write one evaluation report and modify it for various audiences? How can you be creative with resources? e.g. Are there local university students willing / appropriate / able to take on the evaluation for their course work? How can you integrate standard practices? e.g. project photos? project journals?
<b>STAGE 2: CHECKLIST</b>	<b>Have you:</b> clarified the reasons for undertaking the project? <input type="checkbox"/> decided how the evaluation will be managed? <input type="checkbox"/> decided on the level of resources to be allocated to the evaluation? <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>NEED MORE INFORMATION?</b>	Refer to <i>Stage 2: Planning an evaluation</i> in the full text version <i>Sample Tools 2.1: Planning the evaluation</i> <i>2.2: Indicative evaluation timeline</i>



## STAGE 3: DETERMINE EVALUATION INDICATORS

### DETERMINE Key evaluation indicators

*Broadly, what will tell you that the aims and objectives of the project have been achieved? (e.g. participants were recruited from the target group; participants were involved in the creative process; we aimed to develop a play and we reached playreading stage...)*

*Using the model of evaluation in this guide, it is recommended that you break down the project into key parts. So, firstly list the stakeholders involved – e.g.:*

participants	organisation	target / community

*Then, break the project down into its parts and how far you are ‘thinking’ into the future and list below. For example, process is particularly important for community arts projects. Do you also have medium or long term aims?*

<i>process (short term aims)</i>	
<i>impact (medium term aims)</i>	
<i>outcomes (longer term aims)</i>	

*Then, think about what you hope to achieve for each group of stakeholders – both in terms of doing the project, and as a result of the project and put the two parts together in a grid. Keep this simple – for example:*

	participants	organisation	.....
<i>process (short term)</i>	<i>enjoyed socialising in group</i>		
<i>impact (medium term)</i>	<i>felt more confident shared feeling of achievement</i>		
<i>outcomes (long term)</i>	<i>involved in other groups / activities</i>		

### ISSUES

#### Look at your answers –

Are you clear about what will tell you you have achieved your aims / done a good job? These are your evaluation indicators.

Evaluation indicators are a tool – not an aim! Your aim is to do the community arts project well – challenging; mentoring; supporting; skilling participants in a creative process that they enjoy and that they can be proud of!

Effective evaluation indicators are a tool to keep you on track. Use them to help you articulate the achievements of the project.

### STAGE 3: CHECKLIST

**Have you:** decided on evaluation indicators for the project?

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Refer to *Stage 3: Determining evaluation indicators* in the full text version (recommended)

*Sample Tools* 3.1: *Determining evaluation indicators*  
3.2 – 3.4: *Sample evaluation indicators*



## STAGE 4: COLLECT DATA

### DESIGN

#### data collection methods

*What are the key questions to be answered through the evaluation? Tip: turn your evaluation indicators into questions.*

---

*What data collection methods will you use? (e.g. focus group discussions; written surveys; structured interviews). Match methods to key research questions; available time; resources and to the stakeholders involved. Think creatively e.g. project journals; surveys with pictograms; videos; photos*

---

*When will you collect data? throughout the project? at the end? months after the project finished? List below **how often** you will collect data, **from whom**.*

---

### DESIGN

#### data collection tools

*What data collection tools do you need to design? e.g. survey using pictograms; focus group outline. Tip: design each around your key research questions.*

---

### COLLECT

#### evaluation data

*What existing data can be used in the evaluation? e.g. original funding application; waiting lists; project archives...*

---

*What issues do you need to consider in collecting the data? e.g. research ethics; keeping people informed; planning best use of everybody's time; storage of data*

---

### ISSUES

#### Look at your answers –

The key to efficient data collection is focussed key research questions – limit yourself to about ten. When this basic framework is right, designing surveys or focus groups to suit different groups of people is straightforward. Don't try to collect too much information – make it manageable.

Consider the ethics of the research *before* asking questions.

Think about collecting information efficiently as you go - it may only take 15 mins extra on rehearsal or meetings for a discussion or to complete a survey.

### STAGE 4: CHECKLIST

<b>Have you:</b>	considered the ethics of the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	identified the existing records and material to be collected?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	identified the new information to be collected?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	decided on your key research questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	decided on the most appropriate research methods for the evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	planned how often people will be surveyed/ interviewed etc?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	developed appropriate communication strategies for the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Refer to *Stage 4: Collecting the data* in the full text version

*Sample Tools 4.1: Participant evaluation survey*

*4.2: Generic interview structure / focus group outline*

*4.3: Project journal guidelines*

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## STAGE 5: ANALYSE DATA

### ANALYSE

#### evaluation data

*How can you reduce the data into manageable chunks? Read through the data and identify the key themes coming through; use tables and graphs for quantitative responses*

---

---

*How do I check the data against the evaluation indicators? Test the data against the evaluation indicators e.g. If the evaluation indicator is: Participants were recruited from the target group – analyse the data to see if this is the case.*

---

---

*Who should the data be discussed with? Consider confidentiality or other sensitivities.*

---

---

*What are the key findings at this stage?*

---

---

*Who should we report draft findings to?*

---

---

### ISSUES

#### Look at your answers –

Are you clear about how to reduce the data into meaningful chunks?

Are you clear about who is involved in collating; reducing and analysing data? Consider confidentiality issues when analysing data.

Consider whether you will be producing an internal or public document.

If appropriate, it is often useful to discuss draft findings with a range of people, preferably in a group. You can test the clarity of the report with these people.

What will you do if the findings are either not very good or mediocre? How will this impact on the organisation or on individuals?

### STAGE 5: CHECKLIST

#### Have you:

collated the data you collected into manageable and logical chunks?

checked the data against the evaluation indicators?

discussed the data with some relevant people?

developed draft key findings?

presented or discussed the key findings with appropriate people?

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Refer to Stage 5: *Analysing the data* in the full text version

*Sample Tool 3.2 – 3.4: Sample evaluation indicators*

*5.1 Analysing evaluation data template*

---



## STAGE 6: REPORT AND IMPROVE

### REPORT

#### evaluation findings

*What did you find in relation to the process? (for participants; for the project, or the organisation; for the community)*

---

*What did you find in relation to the impact of the project? (for participants; for the project, or the organisation; for the community)*

---

*What did you find in relation to the outcomes of the project? (for participants; for the project, or the organisation; for the community)*

### IDENTIFY

#### project outcomes

*What did we achieve in relation to this project? Think about achievements from the range of stakeholder perspectives.*

---

*Who do we need to tell about the project outcomes and achievements? Think about participants; funding bodies; the community; partnership organisations*

#### potential improvements

*What do we need to improve?*

### ISSUES

#### Look at your answers –

After an evaluation, you may need to take care that the information is interpreted appropriately by all – some staff may feel their work has been highlighted negatively. Ensure that you use the evaluation as an opportunity to turn the situation around to ensure everybody learns from the experience and improvements are implemented.

If the evaluation has highlighted areas of serious concern, e.g. underperformance; inappropriate performance etc – ensure that the issues are discussed at the appropriate management level of the organisation and your decisions and strategies are carefully thought through and documented. You also need to plan how you improve areas that were identified as requiring improvement. and even to start thinking about your next evaluation!

### STAGE 6: CHECKLIST

<b>Have you:</b>	developed a draft evaluation report?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	answered the key research questions in the evaluation report?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	collected feedback on the draft?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	finalised the report and prepared an executive summary?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	distributed the executive summary to the appropriate parties?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	linked the evaluation results into an improvement process?	<input type="checkbox"/>

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Refer to Stage 6: *Reporting on the data and improving current practice* in the full text version

Sample Tools    *6.1: Sample evaluation report*  
                           *6.2: Improving current practice*



# STAGE 1: PREPARING FOR AN EVALUATION

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## INTRODUCTION

This section is about preparing the ground for an evaluation. It concentrates on how to set aims and objectives for the community arts project, and why you need to do this before attempting to evaluate the project.

## WHY EVALUATE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

There is enormous value to be gained by community arts practitioners through evaluating community arts projects. An evaluation provides the opportunity for all participants to measure and compare where they were before the project started, and where they reached by the project's end. Evaluation results also provide valuable information for project staff, including creative staff, volunteers, mentors and so on.

Evaluation information can be useful across a range of areas. For example, a project evaluation can help feed into the organisation's own planning and evaluation processes. It can provide useful information for future funding applications. It can provide a useful record for measuring progress with community arts projects, and helping to develop and extend the work of the organisation. The information can help shape future promotion and recruitment strategies for new projects.

On a broader scale, when community arts projects evaluate and document their achievements, the community arts sector begins to accumulate a body of evidence that provides meaningful information about the contribution of the sector to the wider community. On the other hand, if the outcomes of community arts projects are not documented with rigour and consistency, the sector is left without a record of its history or achievements. In addition, project evaluations contribute to the collective practice wisdom of the sector. Evaluation results can provide valuable lessons and insights for practitioners in other places, new organisations and so on. Building sector-wide information also supports opportunities for cross-sector work. The more that is known about community arts and its work, the greater the opportunities to form partnerships and links with, for example, the youth sector; the health sector; aged care sector and so on.

One of the key aims of this manual is to therefore support the undertaking of evaluations in the community arts sector, using a *consistent and structured* research framework. This in itself will contribute to the sector developing a body of evidence which can help with the sector-wide and cross-sector developments. The table below provides a summary of the benefits of community arts projects evaluations.



**SOME BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECT EVALUATIONS**

<b>Participants / Group</b>	<b>Project / Organisation</b>	<b>Community</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>documents progress / development of individuals</li> <li>documents progress / development of the group</li> <li>documents skill achievement / development</li> <li>opportunity to reflect on the process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opportunity to reflect on, and improve, community arts practice</li> <li>strategic planning</li> <li>future project ideas</li> <li>preparing funding applications</li> <li>promotion – to participants; mentors; creative workers; rehearsal / performance space; other community organisations, e.g. schools</li> <li>recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence documenting contribution of community arts</li> <li>historical record</li> <li>inspiration for other communities / other sections of community</li> <li>opportunity to engage with / form partnerships / plan / work with other sectors of the community</li> </ul>

**PRACTICAL ISSUES:**

**If you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you get there?**

Evaluation is not something to think about at the end of the project. It needs to be considered at the same time as planning the project. Having project aims and objectives is fundamental to being in a position to evaluate the project. As the heading says, *if you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you get there?* Setting aims for the project provides a goal to work towards, and it provides a benchmark that you can use at the completion of the project to measure whether you achieved what you set out to achieve. If you didn't, you have the chance to reflect on that –

- why didn't you achieve your goal?
- did you achieve something unanticipated?
- did you have unrealistic expectations?
- did something outside your control prevent you achieving it?
- did you fail or mismanage the project in some way?
- and if so, how can this be avoided in the future?

In setting project aims and objectives, it is useful to consider all the elements of the project, and from the perspective of the main stakeholders. The table below summarises these considerations.

	<b>participants</b>	<b>project/ organisation</b>	<b>community</b>	
<b>process</b>	what do we want to happen in doing the project?	what do we want to happen in doing the project?	what do we want to happen in doing the project?	<b>process</b>
<b>impact</b>	what do we want to happen, as a result of the project?	what do we want to happen, as a result of the project?	what do we want to happen, as a result of the project?	<b>impact</b>
<b>outcome</b>	what do we want to happen in the long term, as a result of the project	what do we want to happen in the long term, as a result of the project	what do we want to happen in the long term, as a result of the project	<b>outcome</b>
	<b>participants</b>	<b>project/ organisation</b>	<b>community</b>	



## TOOLS TO USE

To assist you in setting project aims for:

- *the process* – from the perspective of participants; the project and the community;
- *the impact* – from the perspective of participants; the project and the community and
- *the outcome* – from the perspective of participants; the project and the community.

refer to **Sample tool 1.1: Setting project aims.**

### QUICK TIP

You may not have the time or resources to evaluate all aspects of the project, and it may not be necessary, depending on the audience for the evaluation report. Is it simply an internal document to help with future planning and projects? In that case, you will probably want to focus on the process and impact, from the perspective of participants and the project or organisation. However, it is recommended that you balance 'short, sharp focussed' evaluations with broader, and longer term evaluations.

### CHECKLIST:

Have you:

- defined aims and objectives for the project?
- considered aims and objectives for participants; the project / organisation and the local community?
- considered the process; the impact and the outcomes?



## STAGE 2: PLANNING THE EVALUATION

---

### INTRODUCTION

Now you've decided to evaluate your community arts project, this section help you plan the steps. This is probably the most important phase of your whole evaluation, and it is worth spending the time planning the process properly.

### ISSUES TO CONSIDER

There are numerous issues to consider in the planning phase. Your organisation will need to be clear on issues such as the following:

- why are we undertaking the evaluation?
- who will manage the evaluation?
- what resources can be allocated?
- how long will the evaluation take?
- how will the evaluation work in with the actual project?
- how will the evaluation integrate with other systems in the organisation?
- who will the evaluator report to? when? how often?
- how will the following people be involved in the evaluation - participants? staff? volunteers? the community? audiences?
- what issues do I need to consider for participants, e.g. confidentiality; unwillingness to participate; language, literacy or other communication issues; privacy issues?
- what does the organisation plan to do with the evaluation report?

There is scope to undertake the evaluation using a number of different approaches. However, before proceeding the following should be clear:

- **the reason for undertaking the evaluation**
- **the management process**
- **the resources available to the evaluation**

Typically, these decisions will be determined by factors such as:

- the importance of undertaking the evaluation to the organisation;
- available resources: time; money; staff; infrastructure;
- capacity to cope with interruptions during the community arts project, and
- the reaction of participants to an evaluation.

With clarity on the above issues, the organisation can determine the scope of the evaluation. It is important to remember that there are levels of evaluation. They can range from a comprehensive, independent evaluation to an evaluation conducted using in-house resources. This manual provides the tools for organisations to conduct their own evaluations, and to ensure that the cost of undertaking an evaluation is not prohibitive.



Following is an example of the rationale for evaluating a puppetry project, for a small community based organisation and the process to be used.

- **the reason for undertaking the evaluation**

*For example:*

*We are evaluating the puppetry project, to find out if we are meeting our aim of engaging young people with disabilities in the outer suburbs. We need to identify if we are using the most effective methods of recruitment, and if the partnership with NGO 123 is working well. We also want to know if there is scope to further develop this work for the statewide puppetry festival to be held in two years.*

- **the management process**

*For example:*

*The Board has commissioned the evaluation, and it takes overall responsibility for the evaluation. The Performance Arts Sub-Committee will act as the steering committee for the project, and will report regularly to the board. Jane Smith will take day to day management of the evaluation and will report regularly to the steering committee, and will present the draft evaluation report to the Board. Any issues or difficulties should be raised with the steering committee.*

- **the resources allocated**

*For example:*

*Jane Smith will work an average of two days per week on the evaluation over the course of the project, and full-time in the final two weeks, in order to prepare the report. Jane will be able to undertake interviews and discussions with people during work time, and other time will be time in lieu. Jane is to liaise with the creative staff, in order to plan access to participants etc.*

## TOOLS TO USE

To assist in determining the scope of the evaluation, a worksheet is provided in the tools section. It is important to remember, that an effective evaluation can be conducted, even with limited resources and the opportunities for reflection and improvement should not be overlooked.

refer: **Sample tool 2.1: Scoping the evaluation.**

A sample workplan is also provided for a project of approximately three months duration. The tasks and timelines could be adjusted to suit the scope of specific evaluations.

refer: **Sample tool 2.2: Indicative evaluation timeline**

## CHECKLIST:

Have you:

- clarified the reasons for undertaking the project?
- decided how the evaluation will be managed?
- decided on the level of resources that can be allocated to the evaluation?



## STAGE 3: DETERMINING EVALUATION INDICATORS

### INTRODUCTION

Determining indicators to monitor and evaluate the community arts project is part of the preparing and planning phase of the evaluation. This section is dedicated to this task, because this is such a critical part of the whole evaluation. Sample indicators are provided for you to use; select from, or adapt to suit the needs of the particular project being evaluated. The indicators focus on the qualitative aspects of community arts projects which can be difficult to identify and measure.

### WHAT ARE EVALUATION INDICATORS?

In research terms, an indicator provides “*data that measures or indicates success or failure in meeting your objectives*”<sup>1</sup>. An evaluation indicator, therefore, provides data that will tell you, and demonstrate to others, that you are achieving, or have achieved the project’s aims. Evaluation indicators are simply a tool in the evaluation process.

For example, imagine your project’s aim is:

*To establish a choir for socially isolated older women in our community which provides opportunities for participants to be involved in cultural activities in a social setting*

What will tell you, and demonstrate to others that you achieved this? To identify your indicators, break down your aims and objectives into their component parts. What would indicate to you, or to someone else, (*another community organisation; a funding body; a local council; a local newspaper...*) that the project achieved its aims and objectives. The following table provides an example of this process.

Ask yourself	Possible Evaluation indicator
Did you recruit participants from the target group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants were recruited from the target group</li> </ul>
How many participants were involved? Did you achieve a workable group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A workable group was established</li> </ul>
How involved were the participants in the choir?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants attended rehearsals, performances, meetings etc</li> </ul>
In what ways were participants involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants were involved in the activities offered through the project</li> </ul>
How involved were participants creatively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants were involved in the creative process, such as selecting songs / music; suggestions about the musical arrangements; vocal arrangements etc</li> </ul>
How did you achieve a social setting for participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The group worked together well</li> <li>Participants enjoyed being involved</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> *An Evaluation Resource for Healthy Living Centres* Jayne Meyrick and Paige Sinkler, Health Education Authority p. 10



## WHAT EVALUATION INDICATORS CAN BE USED FOR COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECTS?

When developing evaluation indicators for community arts projects, you will need to return to the aims and objectives you set for:

- *the process* – from the perspective of participants; the project and the community;
- *the impact* – from the perspective of participants; the project and the community and
- *the outcome* – from the perspective of participants; the project and the community.

What were your aims for each of the above? Then, you need to consider *What will tell you (and others) that the project achieved these aims?*

### QUICK TIP

Remember, you may not need to consider all the above factors. This manual provides a comprehensive approach, which allows you to select the parts that are relevant to your project and resources. However, you may only have the resources to focus on a key aspect of the project. Most commonly, you will focus on the impact of the project - *What happened as a result of this project?* Positive answers to this question in particular yields useful information for promoting the project; promoting the organisation; that the participants can use; that can be used in funding applications or program expansion applications and so on.

### FOR EXAMPLE:

Most community arts projects would hope to be able to show that the following occurred, as a minimum.

	participants	project/ organisation	community
process	<p>participants enjoyed being involved in the project</p> <p>there were positive / constructive group dynamics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the rationale and need for the project were clearly recorded</li> <li>• a project plan was developed and implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the project met its aims about community involvement in the project</li> <li>• the project met its aims about community management of the project</li> <li>• the community was consulted about the project</li> </ul>
impact	<p>participants felt good about what they achieved through the project</p> <p>participants experienced positive emotions about themselves, as a result of being involved in the project (felt good; felt proud; felt hopeful...)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the aims and objectives of the project were monitored and evaluated</li> <li>• the project produced a reasonable quality creative product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the project was positively received in the community</li> <li>• the project provided a positive focus for the community</li> </ul>
outcome	<p>participants confidence and self esteem has been raised as a result of the project</p> <p>participants learnt new things about themselves as a result of the project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the project was consistent with the organisation's long term strategic aims</li> <li>• the project contributed positively to the organisation's reputation</li> <li>• the project contributed positively to partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the project contributed to long term benefits for the community</li> </ul>
	participants	project/ organisation	community



## AND WHEN THE EXTRAORDINARY HAPPENS?

Community arts practitioners emphasise that at times, projects can achieve extraordinary results – either in the creative and artistic field, and/or for participants, and/or in the local community. A sample of evaluation indicators is included in the tools section which you can use to evaluate whether minimum levels of success have been exceeded. It is important that you can identify and articulate the exceptional successes that occur. On the other hand, it is also important for the sake of participants (and staff) that realistic aims and objectives are set for the project.

## PRACTICAL ISSUES

Your task now is to determine what evaluation indicators you will apply to gather *data that measures or indicates success or failure in meeting your objectives* for the particular project. To set appropriate indicators, you need to be clear about:

- the purpose and scope of the evaluation, and
- the aims and objectives of the project.

## TOOLS TO USE:

To assist you in determining the evaluation indicators, refer to **Sample tool 3.1: Determining evaluation indicators**.

To assist in determining if minimum levels of achievement have been exceeded, refer to **Sample tools 3.2 – 3.4: Sample evaluation indicators**. This tool provides a comprehensive range of sample evaluation indicators, for:

- *the process* – from the perspective of participants; the project and the community;
- *the impact* – from the perspective of participants; the project and the community and
- *the outcome* – from the perspective of participants; the project and the community.

The sample evaluation indicators have been developed in the following three levels:

- minimum level of success      this (or appropriate equivalent) indicates what should happen, as a minimum - alarm bells should ring if this (or equivalent) is not occurring / did not occur
- reasonably successful            indicates that more than the minimum has occurred
- ideal / extremely positive        indicates that something outstanding has occurred.

You can either use these indicators directly, or use them as a springboard to develop indicators for your own project.

## CHECKLIST:

Have you:

- decided on the most appropriate evaluation indicators for the project?



## STAGE 4: COLLECTING THE DATA

---

### INTRODUCTION

This section is about collecting the data for your evaluation. It provides advice on planning how to collect data for the evaluation; discusses issues associated with collecting information for the evaluation and describes some of the methods you can use to collect information.

### PLANNING DATA COLLECTION

Before collecting any data for the evaluation, it is strongly advised that you invest some time and effort planning this process. While you will analyse some records and written material, most of the data you collect will come from people – participants; volunteers; committee members; staff; audiences and so on. You will be asking people to allocate some time to this research, for example, by completing surveys or participating in a focus group. Most people are willing to do this, but only if they can see that their opinions, time and contribution is valued.

The fundamental purpose of an evaluation is to find out if the original aims and objectives of the project are being achieved. Evaluations can be broader than this, and long term, or they can be much more focussed and short term. Once again, it is vital to emphasise that you need to be clear about why you are doing the evaluation before you start collecting data. If the audience is internal, and the purpose is to identify improvements in arts practice, you will design your data collection in a particular way. However, if you are conducting the evaluation for an external audience – perhaps you think the organisation is working in particularly innovative way and you want to demonstrate that to the outside world, or you are trying to interest other funding sources, you will design the research with different emphases.

When you are clear about the purpose, scope and audience for the evaluation, you can identify the data you will need and plan how you will collect it.

### PRACTICAL ISSUES

To start with, you need to consider the following:

#### **What existing information do I need to collect?**

Don't overlook existing reports, records and data in your evaluation. This information can often provide a useful context to the research, and you should have easy access to it within your organisation or networks.

Existing information of use to the evaluation could include:

- previous evaluations (your organisation, or others nearby)
- local government reports profiling the local community
- if you are working with a specific target group, reports from appropriate community or advocacy groups
- internal records – numbers of people involved in previous projects; records of waiting lists; audience numbers; numbers of volunteers, staff etc involved
- project records – e.g. project committee minutes; rehearsal / attendance records
- What other records will be useful for the evaluation?



### **What new information do I need collect?**

To answer the above, you need to be clear about who (or what) can tell you that the project is achieving, or achieved its aims?

Irrespective of the purpose, scope or audience – *all* evaluations should include project participants. Participants are the key group able to let you know if the project is working, whether it was appropriately designed, whether it was enjoyable / interesting / challenging to be involved; whether they would ever contemplate getting involved again; how being involved affected their lives; what they learnt; what they didn't like, suggestions for improvements and so on.

Depending on the purpose, scope or audience for the evaluation, you will also need to collect information from some or all of the following:

- staff – project, organisation
- volunteers
- partner organisations
- audiences

If you wish to conduct a comprehensive evaluation, you may also want to collect information from:

- local community organisations, community leaders
  - other arts organisations
  - relevant established artists, practitioners
  - other people connected to the participants with the permission of the participants – see *research ethics below*.
- ***Is there anyone else who can legitimately tell you whether the project is achieving its aims and objectives?***

### **What questions do I need to ask?**

Developing a set of appropriate research questions is a critical aspect of the data collection. Through the research you will want to address broad questions, such as the following:

- Were the project aims and objectives achieved?
- How were they achieved?
- Were they achieved for all involved?
- What were the outstanding achievements of the project?
- How well was the project, and the process, managed?
- What lessons were learnt?
- What was the experience like for participants, the organisation and the community?
- What were the impacts for participants, the organisation and the community?
- How did the project contribute to individuals, partnership organisations, the community?
- What unanticipated outcomes occurred (positive or negative)?



As this manual is specifically designed to help community arts practitioners evaluate and articulate the positive impact the arts can have on individual and community well-being, it is important that the evaluation seeks this information.

- ***Are there any other key research questions which should be included?***

The most effective approach is to develop a set of key research questions, such as the above. These broad questions can then be tailored to suit the various people you speak to through the research.

**FOR EXAMPLE:**

When you're asking a young participant questions, you will need to phrase your questions differently and use a different style to the type and style of questioning you use with staff from partner organisations.

To find out what lessons were learnt through the process, you might ask a young person questions like:

*If your best friend said they wanted to get involved in a similar project, what advice would you give them? If the project officer asked for your advice on planning another project, what would you say?*

Whereas you might ask a partner organisation questions like: How well do you think we worked together? What could we do differently and better?

### **What about research ethics?**

It is imperative that you are clear about the ethics of your research before you start collecting information.

For example,

- You **must** tell participants that you are conducting an evaluation and you **should** explain the purpose, scope and audience for the report.
- You **must** explain the implications of the research – for example, Will photos be taken? Who will the final report be sent to? Will the evaluation be a public document? Can people provide comments anonymously? Can people drop out of the project? the evaluation?
- If participants are uncomfortable, you **must** provide opportunities to discuss this before the research, and you **must** give them choices about continuing, and/or discuss ways the research could best be conducted.
- You **must** ask permission to quote, photograph or otherwise identify a participant in a report.
- You **must** ask permission of the participant if you wish to talk to another person about them – for example, you may wish to seek a comment from school, family, etc about the impact of the project and if refused you **must not** seek comments from those sources.
- You **should** provide genuine, meaningful, appropriate and non-threatening opportunities to participate. For example, it is not ethical to expect a group of participants from another language background to complete a written survey in English, and then to claim participants were consulted. Nor is it ethical to only provide opportunities for people to provide information in a group discussion if people are shy or have any difficulties communicating in that setting.



- You ***should*** decide what happens to the data, after the project. You may have a lot of information including confidential information and participants are entitled to know what will happen to recordings; photographs and other records. Options include: the organisation looking after the records, as they would other confidential records for a specified period of time; destroying the records after the research; offering the records to participants. The most important consideration is that the privacy and confidentiality of participants is respected and maintained.

### **How will I collect the information?**

When you are clear about the ethics of the research, you need to determine the most appropriate methods for consulting the people involved.

Standard information collection techniques include:

- written surveys – which can include open and closed questions; use of rating scales; use of pictograms etc
- focus group discussions
- structured, or semi-structured interviews – taped or not taped
- exit polls

Most evaluations include some level of surveying and interviewing. Some sample surveys and interviews are included in the sample tools section. These have been structured around the key research questions, using both closed and open questions. If you have additional key research questions, you will need to adapt the tools accordingly.

In order to decide if these standard methods are appropriate for the people participating in the evaluation, or whether you need to supplement these methods, think about issues such as:

- Are there literacy issues? Is English the participant's first language? Are participants comfortable reading and writing? How long should a written survey be? Will people need help to complete it? Will participants think it is too daunting, like work or homework? Remember – literacy problems are quite common, you can't assume that people can read and write confidently.
- Are participants comfortable speaking in a group? What are the group dynamics like? Do you need an interpreter? What sort of environment will encourage discussion? How will you deal with people dominating the discussion or not participating?
- Will participants feel uncomfortable in a one-to-one interview? Can someone else be present?
- How can participants time best be used?

If it is not appropriate for people to participate using conventional research tools, a range of broader, more creative methods are also appropriate, particularly with new technologies, such as scanning images into computers or video recording.

#### **FOR EXAMPLE:**

- You can use a project diary or scrapbook – with clear guidelines on who can make entries, how it is tied to the creative process; when to use etc.
- You can use photographs – with participants' permission. Photos can be of the creative work and/or of participants during the project and can be used as evidence to support key findings



- You can use drawings, or other visual records.
- You can audio or video recordings – with participant’s permission.

**What is the difference between quantitative and qualitative data?**

Quantitative data usually answers ‘*how many / much* questions?’ It provides you with the numbers about the project – for example:

PROJECT	How many participants? How much money – was received? was spent?
PROCESS	How many – rehearsals; workshops; sessions were held? How many events – festival days; productions; exhibitions?
COMMUNITY	How many audience members? How many community members on the management committee?

Qualitative data answers the *Why? How? In what way...? To what extent...?* questions of a project. It is particularly good for understanding why certain things did or did not happen within the project. This information which cannot be quantified like quantitative data, such as written or spoken comments. Themes can be drawn out and this can also provide excellent source of case studies, which can be very powerful.

Both types of data have advantages and disadvantages. Quantitative data can be quite dry– you may still want to know why people answered in a particular way. On the other hand, it can be relatively easy to collect; you can gather a lot of information from a lot of people; you can make comparisons and you can identify statistically significant variations, if you wish to go to that level of analysis. Qualitative data provides you with lots of quotes, ideas and stories – but you can end up with a lot of information and you will still need to extract the key themes. And you will still need the numbers!

Both qualitative and quantitative data are needed to undertake a balanced and effective evaluation.<sup>2</sup>

- ***Ask yourself, are there any other appropriate research methods needed for the evaluation?***

**How often will I collect information?**

As with all aspects of the research design, this question can only be answered in the context of your specific evaluation. As a minimum, you will need to collect information from participants at least once, at the completion of the project. At that point, participants can make some comment about the project and their experience in being involved. This would produce a fairly limited evaluation report. However, it may be all that resources allow, and all that you need to do. If this is the case, *make sure you ask the right questions, because you’ve only got one chance!*

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<sup>2</sup> ref: Hawe, Penelope; Degeling, D and Hall, J (1990) *Evaluating Health Promotion: A health workers’ guide* Sydney: MacLennan and Petty Publishing (ref: Chapter 6 Impact and Outcome Evaluation) p. 105



If you are able to ask questions of participants at the beginning and the end of the process, you are immediately in a stronger position because you can compare participants' perceptions and views from the beginning to the end. Similarly, with staff, mentors, artists, volunteers, it is useful to ask before and after questions. This is preferable to asking people to recall the time before the project started. You will have some data that clearly indicates the difference made (or not made) by the project.

If there was support for a longer term evaluation, you could arrange to follow up participants after some time had elapsed. This allows you to find out from participants the influence of the project on their lives over a longer timeframe. This is easier if participants are likely to return to your organisation – maybe it's a youth centre of some sort, and people keep coming back. Tracking participants provides really useful and interesting information about the influence of the project, however this can be costly and time consuming therefore you need to consider the cost benefits of this too.

### **How do I let people know about the evaluation and encourage them to participate?**

Ideally, you will have decided on your research approach, at least in broad terms even before the project starts. This way, you can talk to participants and others at the commencement of the research. You can discuss and even negotiate the best research strategies, and you can encourage people to be involved from the outset. When you are clear about the purpose of the evaluation, you can 'sell' the benefits to participants –

- You can have a record of the report for...school, your employer, application to training course etc
- We're hoping to use the results in our next funding application
- We're hoping to encourage the local youth centre to come on board
- We're hoping to encourage the disability program to contribute some funds
- We're hoping to use the results to convince the board we need a full-time worker
- We're hoping to use the results for an article in the local paper to encourage more Vietnamese women to become involved in our group
- We're hoping to use the results to apply for mentoring funds
- We're hoping to use the results to see if we could become a training provider....

There are potentially significant benefits for participants as well as organisations. If participants are:

- informed about the purpose of the evaluation;
- consulted about the research methods;
- given adequate notice of activities involving them – forthcoming surveys, interviews etc;
- involved in the research design;
- provided with choices about how to contribute;
- consulted in non-threatening and respectful ways, and
- informed about progress along the way and on completion

you will find that most people are more than willing to be involved.



Remember – you need to consider who needs to know about the evaluation and the best ways to keep them informed. Other organisations in your networks may be interested; other sections of your own organisation; new community arts groups; established community arts groups. It is useful at the start of the evaluation to prepare an information sheet with a short outline of the evaluation, which you can distribute as required.

## COLLECTING THE INFORMATION

When you have completed the above planning and preparation, you need to finalise your research tools. There is a range of sample research tools included with the manual for your use. These surveys, focus group outlines, interviews and diary guidelines can be used directly with some minor identifying information from your organisation, or they can be adapted to suit the specifics of the project.

Other issues you need to consider are:

- How much information is enough?
- How many people will you survey? – everyone? random selection?
- How will you survey them? – fill it in at rehearsal? mail it to their home address? leave copies around?
- How often will you survey them? beginning? middle? end?
  
- Who will be invited to focus group discussions?
- When?
- Who will facilitate?
- Who will take notes?
  
- The role of the evaluator – who evaluates? how are their observations recorded and collected?

## TOOLS TO USE

- Sample tools**
- 4.1: Participant evaluation survey**
  - 4.2: Generic interview structure / focus group outline**
  - 4.3: Project journal guidelines**

### CHECKLIST:

Have you:

- considered the ethics of the research?
- identified the existing records and material to be collected?
- identified the new information to be collected?
- decided on your key research questions?
- decided on the most appropriate research methods for the evaluation?
- planned how often people will be surveyed/ interviewed etc?
- developed the most appropriate communication strategies for the project?



## STAGE 5: ANALYSING THE DATA

### INTRODUCTION

Stage 5 provides some guidelines to help you reduce the amount of information to a manageable amount and then, to make some sense of it.

### REDUCING THE DATA

Once the information for the evaluation has been collected, you will need to start grouping and compressing the information. For example, you will need to:

- collate survey responses (manually or by data processing for large numbers)
- analyse the written responses to open-ended questions
- identify key themes from written surveys; focus groups and/or interviews
- collate the information gathered from existing material

In order to make sense of the data, it needs to be organised into a manageable size and structure. Use a grid of the key factors being evaluated and record the research results there.

See **Sample Tool 5.1 Analysing Evaluation Data template**.

	participants	project/ organisation	community
process			
impact			
outcome			
	participants	project/ organisation	community

### ANALYSING THE DATA

Once you have ordered the data, you need to analyse it: what does this information mean?

For example:

- What does it tell us about the project?
- What does it tell us about what happened through the project – to participants? the organisation? the community?

To analyse the data, you need to apply your evaluation indicators and then interpret the results. For example, the following are provided as minimum level evaluation indicators for participants (see Stage 3). To analyse your information, you need to turn the indicators around and ask questions such as *Did we find any evidence of this happening?*



	participants	Ask Yourself
process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants enjoyed being involved in the project</li> <li>there were positive / constructive group dynamics</li> </ul>	Did we find evidence of this occurring? Yes / No / Inconclusive
impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants felt good about what they achieved through the project</li> <li>participants experienced positive emotions about themselves, as a result of being involved in the project (felt good; felt proud; felt hopeful...)</li> </ul>	If yes, from what information sources? Is there evidence from more than one source? What proportion of respondents reported this... most participants / about half / less than half...?
outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants confidence and self esteem has been raised as a result of the project</li> <li>participants learnt new things about themselves as a result of the project</li> </ul>	Did we find evidence of something contrary occurring?

Working through this process, you will identify the key themes and findings of the research. It is useful to do this as a group, or with someone else. You will find that you need to discuss and think through some of the issues, to really get to the core information. It is worth talking about your interpretations together, and testing each other's thinking. Beware of issues such as:

- jumping to conclusions without supporting evidence
- not wanting to include or identify negative findings
- not wanting to include or identify mediocre findings

Once you have worked through and analysed the data, it is worth summarising this to a set of key findings. Develop this as a draft to use for discussions – for example, with the evaluation committee if there is one; managers; participants; partnership organisations and so on. Building in a step in the process about discussion of key findings provides a valuable opportunity for further refinement of your thinking and presentation of the data.

#### TOOLS TO USE

To assist in analysing the data, return to the evaluation indicators. Work through the questions in the example above, to ask yourself what evidence you collected. Remember, you will only need to use the evaluation indicators appropriate to the particular evaluation.

**Sample tools**            **3.2 – 3.4: Sample evaluation indicators**  
**5.1: Analysing evaluation data template**

#### CHECKLIST:

Have you:

- collated the data you collected into manageable and logical chunks?
- checked the data against the evaluation indicators?
- discussed the data with some relevant people?
- developed draft key findings?
- presented or discussed the key findings with appropriate people?



# STAGE 6: REPORTING ON THE DATA AND IMPROVING ON CURRENT PRACTICE

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## INTRODUCTION

This section provides guidelines on reporting on the evaluation.

## HOW DO YOU PREPARE AN EVALUATION REPORT?

Essentially, the evaluation report will want to answer your key research questions. The examples provided are:

- Were the project aims and objectives achieved?
- How were they achieved?
- Were they achieved for all involved?
- What were the outstanding achievements of the project?
- How well was the project, and the process, managed?
- What lessons were learnt?
- What was the experience like for participants, the organisation and the community?
- What were the impacts for participants, the organisation and the community?
- How did the project contribute to individuals, partnership organisations, the community?
- What unanticipated outcomes occurred (positive or negative)?

How you structure, write and present your report will depend on the evaluation audience. If the report is to be distributed outside your organisation, it should be formal and well-presented. If it is for an internal audience, it can be much shorter – you won't need to provide as much context and background – and more relaxed.

As with the draft findings, it is useful to prepare and distribute the report in draft form first. This gives opportunities for people to contribute to the process; to correct inaccuracies; to improve expression and presentation and to refine the analysis.

## WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM AN EVALUATION?

A rigorously conducted evaluation will provide the organisation with a wealth of information. Ensure that tight, achievable and constructive recommendations are developed from the report.

Consider the range of people who may be interested in the findings of the evaluation – other organisations; recruits; funding bodies; philanthropic organisations; other program areas and so on. If you think a range of people will be interested, it is useful to prepare an executive summary. This should include some background information, the key findings and recommendations. The executive summary can then be distributed to interested parties, and the full report can be available if requested.



Ensure that a process is developed to consult further on the recommendations, if necessary. If there is clear support, develop a process to implement the recommendations. Any evaluation – whether short and snappy or comprehensive should provide information to improve the community arts practice of the organisation.

#### TOOLS TO USE

There is a sample tool provide to assist with structuring the report. This tool assumes that the report is being prepared for an external audience.

refer to **Sample tool 6.1: Draft evaluation report structure**

There is also a worksheet to assist you identify what improvement need to be made.

refer to **Sample tool 6.2: Improving Project Aims and Outcomes**

#### CHECKLIST:

Have you:

- developed a draft evaluation report?
- answered the key research questions in the evaluation report?
- collected feedback on the draft?
- finalised the report and prepared an executive summary?
- distributed the executive summary to the appropriate parties?
- linked the evaluation results into an improvement process?



## FURTHER READING

Fiske, Edward B. (2000) *Champions of Change: The Impact Of The Arts On Learning*. Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

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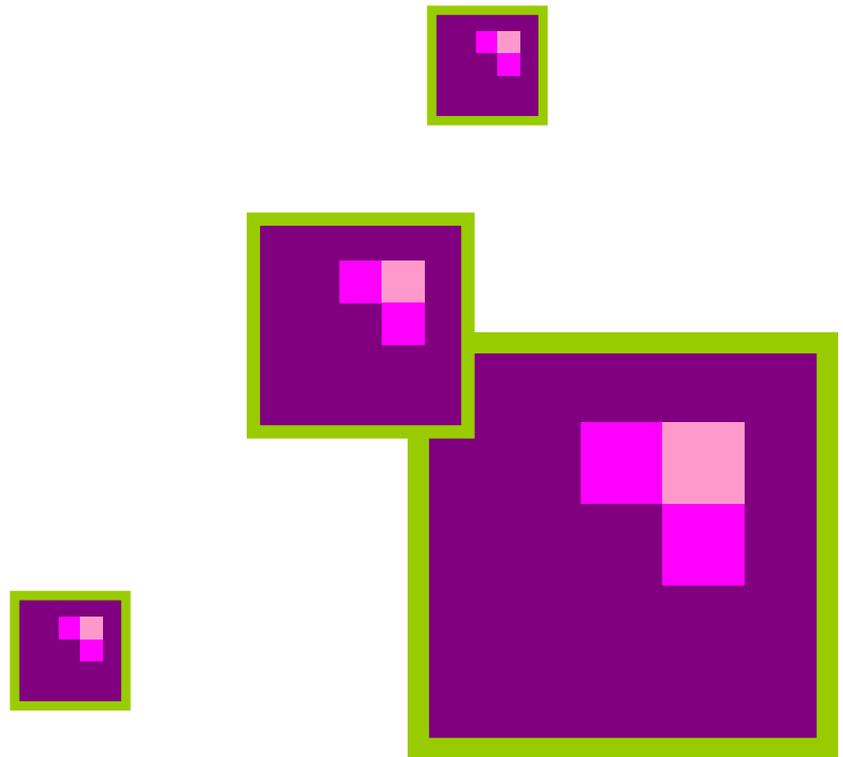
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Wadsworth, Yoland (1991) *Everyday Evaluation on the Run*, Action Research Issues Association Inc., Melbourne.

Williams, Deidre (1997) *How the Arts Measure Up: Australian Research into Social Impact* Gloustershire: Commedia (Social Impact of the Arts Working Paper No.8

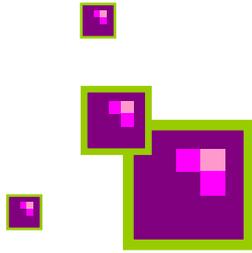




# Evaluating Community Arts & Community Well Being

AN EVALUATION GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY ARTS PRACTITIONERS

# Tools



## SAMPLE EVALUATION TOOLS

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This section contains the following tools for use in evaluating a community arts project.

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<b>Sample Tool 4.1:</b>	<b>Participant Evaluation Survey.....</b>	<b>36</b>
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<b>Sample Tool 6.1:</b>	<b>Draft Evaluation Report Structure.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Sample Tool 6.2:</b>	<b>Improving Project Aims And Outcomes.....</b>	<b>42</b>



## SETTING PROJECT AIMS

### What are the project aims for:

	PARTICIPANTS	PROJECT / ORGANISATION	COMMUNITY
<p><b>PROCESS</b></p> <p><i>Short term</i></p> <p><b>How do we want to conduct the project?</b></p>	<p>How do we want to conduct the project?</p> <p>How will participants be involved?</p> <p>Why involve participants in [specify] this way?</p> <p>What do we / participants want to happen in doing the project?</p>	<p>How will we manage the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as a project?</li> <li>• as a creative process?</li> <li>• as an organisation?</li> <li>• as a partnership?</li> </ul> <p>What do we want to achieve through the management of the project?</p>	<p>What do we mean by 'community' for this project? Do we mean the local community? a particular age group? men? women?</p> <p>How do we involve the community in the project?</p> <p>How do we involve the community in the management of the project?</p>
<p><b>IMPACT</b></p> <p><i>Medium term</i></p> <p><b>What do we want to happen as a result of the project?</b></p>	<p>What do we want to happen for / to participants, as a result of the project?</p> <p>What do we want participants to achieve as a result of the project?</p>	<p>What do we want to happen as a result of the project, for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this project?</li> <li>• future projects?</li> <li>• creative processes?</li> <li>• the organisation?</li> <li>• the partnership?</li> </ul>	<p>What do we want to happen in the community, as result of the project?</p>
<p><b>OUTCOME</b></p> <p><i>Long term</i></p> <p><b>What do we want to happen in the long term, as a result of the project?</b></p>	<p>What do we want to happen in the long term to / for participants as a result of the project?</p>	<p>What do we want to happen in the long term as a result of this project?</p> <p>What do we want to happen in the long term as a result of this project for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• future projects?</li> <li>• creative processes?</li> <li>• the organisation?</li> <li>• the partnership?</li> </ul>	<p>What do we want to happen in the long term to / for the community, as a result of this project?</p>



## PLANNING THE EVALUATION

ISSUE	RESPONSE
<p><b>Why are we undertaking the evaluation?</b></p> <p>Why this project? Are we clear about the aims and objectives of this project?</p> <p>How does it fit in with overall plans of the organisation?</p> <p>How does it fit with other projects? Why now?</p> <p>What are the critical questions we would like answered?</p> <p>How do we anticipate using the information? Who is the report for?</p>	
<p><b>How will we undertake the evaluation?</b></p> <p>Will it be external or in-house?</p> <p>Who will be involved from the organisation?</p> <p>What level of resourcing can we allocate to the project?</p> <p>What level of reporting do we want? How will we use the report?</p> <p>How will participants be involved? others?</p>	
<p><b>Determine roles and responsibilities</b></p> <p>Where does overall responsibility for the evaluation lie?</p> <p>Who will manage the evaluation?</p> <p>How will decisions be made?</p> <p>What are the potential problems, e.g. conflicts, difficulties and how are they best managed?</p>	
<p><b>Who needs to know about the evaluation, and how will we keep them informed?</b></p> <p>How will we let our key stakeholders know about the evaluation?</p> <p>Who is responsible for communication? How often do we need to communicate?</p>	



SAMPLE TOOL 2.2:

## INDICATIVE EVALUATION TIMELINE

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>Preparation</b>															
clarify reason(s) for undertaking evaluation															
decide process for managing the evaluation															
decide roles and responsibilities															
decide scope of evaluation															
develop key evaluation questions															
design data collection tools															
- participant interview / survey															
- significant other interview / survey															
- project staff interview / survey															
- creative staff interview / survey															
- audience exit polls															
- other groups															
develop communication strategy															
prepare and distribute information for stakeholders															
<b>Collecting the data</b>															
collect existing information – reports; records etc															
collect new information															
- decide: who; when; how often															
- distribute surveys															
- conduct interviews															
- conduct focus groups															
- conduct exit polls															
- resurvey / interview if necessary															
<b>Analysing the data</b>															
reduce data – identify key themes															
present key themes; findings															
<b>Reporting on the data</b>															
draft report on the evaluation															
finalise report on the evaluation															
<b>Improving on current practice</b>															
discuss implications for improving current practice															



## DETERMINING EVALUATION INDICATORS

What tells us that we are achieving our aims for:

	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>PROJECT / ORGANISATION</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
	WHAT WILL TELL US THAT...	WHAT WILL TELL US THAT...	WHAT WILL TELL US THAT...
<p><b>PROCESS</b></p> <p><i>Short term</i></p> <p><b>How was the project conducted?</b></p>	<p>we successfully met our aims about participant's involvement in the project?</p> <p>we were successful in involving participants? in engaging participants?</p>	<p>we successfully met our aims about managing the project?</p> <p>managing / conducting the project contributed to the aims of the organisation?</p> <p>managing / conducting the project contributed to the aims of the partnership?</p>	<p>we successfully met our aims about community involvement / management in the project?</p> <p>we were successful in involving the target community in the project?</p> <p>we were successful in involving the target community in the management of the project?</p>
<p><b>IMPACT</b></p> <p><i>Medium term</i></p> <p><b>What was the impact of the project?</b></p>	<p>we / participants successfully achieved what we / they wanted to happen as a result of the project?</p> <p>the project had a positive impact on participants?</p>	<p>we successfully met our aims about what we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wanted to happen as a result of the project?</li> <li>• wanted to happen within our organisation as a result of the project?</li> <li>• wanted to happen within our partnership, as a result of the project?</li> </ul> <p>the project had a positive impact on future projects (the possibility of future projects; the management; the quality; the range and scope; the artistic involvement of future projects)?</p> <p>the project had a positive impact on the organisation?</p> <p>the project had a positive impact on the partnership?</p>	<p>we successfully achieved what we wanted to happen within the target community as a result of the project?</p> <p>the project had a positive impact within the target community?</p> <p>the project contributed to the likelihood of future projects within the community?</p>
<p><b>OUTCOME</b></p> <p><i>Long term</i></p> <p><b>What happened as a result of the project?</b></p>	<p>we / participants successfully met long-term aims?</p> <p>in the long term, what happened to / for participants as a result of the project was positive?</p>	<p>we successfully met our long-term aims for the organisation? for the partnership?</p> <p>in the long term, what happened to the organisation as a result of the project was positive?</p> <p>in the long term, what happened to the partnership as a result of the project was positive?</p>	<p>we successfully met our long-term aims for the target community?</p> <p>in the long term, what happened to the community as a result of the project was positive?</p>



**SAMPLE EVALUATION INDICATORS OF A SUCCESSFUL PROCESS FOR:**

	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>PROJECT / ORGANISATION</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
<b>minimum level of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants enjoyed being involved in the project</li> <li>there were positive / constructive group dynamics</li> <li>participants attended rehearsals as required (apologised for non-attendance etc)</li> <li>participants participated in final productions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the rationale and need for the project were clearly recorded</li> <li>a project plan was developed and implemented (with aims and objectives; clear roles and responsibilities for staff; committees; partnership organisations)</li> <li>funding body requirements were met</li> <li>appropriate and transparent financial management; recording and acquittal processes were established and implemented</li> <li>appropriate support was provided for the creative process (e.g. support of artists; appropriate space; appropriate rehearsals scheduled etc)</li> <li>the group dynamics were appropriately managed to provide fair opportunities for all participants</li> <li>a safe environment was provided for participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the project met its aims about community involvement in the project</li> <li>the project met its aims about community management of the project</li> <li>the community were consulted about the project</li> </ul>
<b>reasonably successful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants were appropriately challenged and extended by being involved in the project</li> <li>participants developed (personally, talents, skills) by being involved in the process</li> <li>participants were easily recruited</li> <li>participants indicated wanting to be involved again in a similar project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>difficulties and challenges within the group were managed appropriately</li> <li>quality of, and focus on, creative activity was not compromised through the process</li> <li>appropriate debriefing was provided if required (e.g. for issues raised through the creative process)</li> <li>a range of potential supports which may be required through the project were arranged and available (e.g. health workers)</li> <li>partnership relationships were well-managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the project exceeded its aims about community involvement in the project</li> <li>the project exceeded its aims about community management of the project</li> <li>the idea and rationale for the project originated from the community</li> </ul>
<b>ideal / extreme positive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants were significantly happier as a result of the way the project was conducted</li> <li>participants experienced improvements in the factors known to facilitate good health (reduced social isolation; feelings of connection/ belonging, improved self esteem) as result of the way the project was conducted project</li> <li>participants were significantly better resourced to undertake further activities as a result of the way the project was conducted</li> <li>there was a waiting list of potential participants</li> <li>significant skill and talent was identified during the process (in individuals; within the group)</li> <li>there was significant positive external interest in the conduct of the project</li> <li>external commentators reported that the process was positive for participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>potential improvements were identified and implemented</li> <li>the findings of the project evaluation were analysed for strategic implications (e.g. for the organisation; the community; the sector)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>community representatives were involved in all stages of the project (initiation through to review and discussion about future projects)</li> <li>processes were in place to ensure skills developed / people involved through the process would be available for future projects (e.g. as community reps, or as mentors etc)</li> </ul>



SAMPLE TOOL 3.3:

**SAMPLE EVALUATION INDICATORS OF SUCCESSFUL IMPACT FOR:**

	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>PROJECT / ORGANISATION</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
<b>minimum level of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants felt good about what they achieved through the project</li> <li>participants experienced positive emotions about themselves, as a result of being involved in the project (felt good; felt proud; felt hopeful...)</li> <li>participants enjoyed working with the group</li> <li>participants can do new things as a result of the project</li> <li>directors / producers / significant others have observed that participants can do new things as a result of the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the aims and objectives of the project were monitored and evaluated</li> <li>the project produced a reasonable quality creative product</li> <li>the project contributed to the strategic aims of the organisation</li> <li>the project contributed to establishing / maintaining productive partnerships and collaborations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the project was positively received in the community</li> <li>the project provided a positive focus for the community</li> </ul>
<b>reasonably successful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants experience improvements in the factors known to facilitate good health (reduced social isolation; feelings of connection/ belonging, improved self esteem) as result of the project</li> <li>participants feel positive about what they may achieve in the future, as a result of being involved in the project</li> <li>participants improve established skills as a result of the project</li> <li>experts / recognised artists acknowledge the skills of the participants</li> <li>participants clarify which field they wish to work in / study / be involved as a result of being involved in the project</li> <li>participants get involved in other / similar projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the aims and objectives of the project were monitored and evaluated, and fed into the organisation's quality improvement process</li> <li>the project contributed significantly to the strategic aims of the organisation</li> <li>the project produced a high quality creative product</li> <li>the project contributed significantly to establishing / maintaining productive partnerships and collaborations</li> <li>staff skills developed, as a result of the project</li> <li>the organisation / partnership is well-positioned to repeat the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the community gained positive benefits as a result of the project</li> <li>the community's reputation was enhanced as a result of the project</li> <li>choices and opportunities were widened for members of the community as a result of the project</li> </ul>
<b>ideal / extremely successful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants establish friendships and networks as a result of the project</li> <li>participants develop new, general skills as a result of the project (public speaking; organisational)</li> <li>participants develop new, specific skills, as a result of the project (singing; acting; technical production skills)</li> <li>participants chose to continue working in the artistic field, either in a community project; study; or employment</li> <li>participants able to mentor / support / recruit new participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the project gained a significant reputation as a successful project within (community / arts; arts sector(s)/ local community / general community)</li> <li>other funding bodies expressed interest in the project outcome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the community is well-placed to continue / extend / develop / replicate the work undertaken</li> </ul>



**SAMPLE EVALUATION INDICATORS OF SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES FOR:**

	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>PROJECT / ORGANISATION</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
<b>minimum level of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants confidence and self esteem has been raised as a result of the project</li> <li>participants learnt new things about themselves as a result of the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the project was consistent with the organisation's long term strategic aims</li> <li>the project contributed positively to partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the project contributed to long term benefits for the community</li> </ul>
<b>reasonably successful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>long term friendships and networks developed as a result of the project</li> <li>knowledge and skills improved or increased as a result of the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the project contributed to long term benefits for the organisation (e.g. opened new areas of funding opportunities; revenue raising; increased profile in the community, sector etc)</li> <li>the project contributed to long term benefits for the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the project provided opportunities for long term benefits</li> </ul>
<b>ideal / extremely successful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>significant talents or skills which continue to be used were identified as a result of the project</li> <li>significant talents or skills which continue to be used were developed as a result of the project</li> <li>participants identified and/or pursued a career or life pathway as a result of the project</li> <li>participant / s are able to make significant contributions to the artistic field as a result of their involvement in the project</li> <li>the quality of participants skills are recognised by significant members of the artistic community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the project contributed significantly to the strategic aims of the organisation</li> <li>the project contributed significantly to the organisation's capacity to produce new work</li> <li>the project established / developed / enhanced the reputation of the organisation</li> <li>the project contributed significantly to the evolution of the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the community gained long term positive benefits as a result of the project</li> </ul>



## PARTICIPANT EVALUATION SURVEY

1. Why did you get involved in this project?

I've been involved before	<input type="radio"/>	Good opportunity	<input type="radio"/>
Curiosity	<input type="radio"/>	Something to do	<input type="radio"/>
I felt it was time to try something new	<input type="radio"/>	I wanted to learn, to practice	<input type="radio"/>
I am interested in [ <i>the subject area</i> ]	<input type="radio"/>	Friends were involved	<input type="radio"/>
Have some fun	<input type="radio"/>	To find new friends	<input type="radio"/>
To become involved in the community	<input type="radio"/>	I don't know	<input type="radio"/>
Other reasons:			
Were your expectations met?	Yes		No

2. What is the most important thing that has happened for you since starting this project?

One example only please

.....

.....

3. Did you enjoy being involved in the project?

1 Yes, loved it       2 Liked it       3 Neutral       4 Didn't enjoy it       5 Hated it

.....

4. Did any of the things from the following list happen through being involved in the project?

tried something new	<input type="radio"/>	challenged myself	<input type="radio"/>
took a risk and survived	<input type="radio"/>	did something I am proud of	<input type="radio"/>
created good / interesting art	<input type="radio"/>	made friends, social connections	<input type="radio"/>
explored interests, talents	<input type="radio"/>	worked with a group on a project	<input type="radio"/>
learnt new things	<input type="radio"/>	developed my confidence	<input type="radio"/>
felt proud of myself	<input type="radio"/>	felt happy	<input type="radio"/>
felt well, healthy	<input type="radio"/>	learnt about other people; other cultures	<input type="radio"/>
learnt new skills	<input type="radio"/>	developed skills for employment	<input type="radio"/>
learnt specific skills e.g. painting; acting	<input type="radio"/>	developed skills for studying, training	<input type="radio"/>
did something positive for myself	<input type="radio"/>	did something positive for the community	<input type="radio"/>

5. What *didn't* you enjoy or like about the project?

.....

.....

6. Would you like to be involved in another project?

1 Never again       2 I don't think so       3 Maybe       4 Yes, if possible       5 Definitely

7. How can we improve our community arts projects?

.....

.....

.....

**THANK YOU**



## GENERIC INTERVIEW STRUCTURE / FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE

Interview / Focus Group with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of participants: \_\_\_\_\_  
Project name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Select the questions you wish to focus on *before* the interview / focus group. Add your own as well. As an indication, it takes about one hour to cover 10 questions well – but this will vary depending on the size of the group and the people involved.

- Were the project aims and objectives achieved? How were they achieved?
- Were they achieved for all involved?
- What were the outstanding achievements of the project?
- What were the key strengths of the project?
- What were the key weaknesses of the project?
- How well was the project managed?
- How well was the process managed?
- What was the experience like for participants?
- What was the experience like for the organisation?
- What was the experience like for the community?
- What were the impacts for participants?
- What were the impacts for the organisation?
- What were the impacts for the community?
- How did the project contribute to individuals?
- How did the project contribute to partnership organisations?
- How did the project contribute to the community?
- What unanticipated outcomes occurred (positive or negative)?
- What lessons were learnt?



# COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECT EVALUATION

## Project Journal Guidelines

**Project name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Every time:** Date each entry  
Record the project stage, e.g. beginning; recruiting participants; practice;  
development stage; rehearsal etc

**Purpose of the journal entry:** *To provide an on-going record of the project*  
*To assist with information collection during the evaluation*

The following list provides a *guide* of the areas of interest for an evaluation. You may well want to make other comments. The list provides some *triggers* for your thoughts.

KEY AREAS TO COVER	POSSIBLE ISSUES TO COVER
<b>Project management</b>	How is the role of project officer going? What management issues are there at the moment? How well is the project working within your own organisation How well are timelines and milestones being achieved?
<b>Project objectives</b>	Does it seem like the project is achieving its objectives? Are your original objectives changing in any way? Were you too ambitious? not ambitious enough? What are your shorter term aims?
<b>Project participants</b>	How well are things going with participants? Have you recruited all the participants? How are participants feeling about the project? What are some of their hopes and expectations? How are participants relating to each other? How is the group developing?
<b>Significant events</b>	What is particularly significant at the moment? How does it compare to previous entries? How does the group feel about this?
<b>Community connections</b>	What connection is the project making with communities? How is this progressing? What supports are being provided? What supports are needed?
<b>Impact of the project</b>	What impact is the project having on the participants? What impact is the project having on the target community? What impact is the project having on the local community?
<b>Unintended outcomes</b>	Are there any unintended outcomes of the project at this stage? What are they? Are they positive? Are they negative?
<b>Other key issues</b>	Are there any other key issues? What is the significance of the issue?



SAMPLE TOOL 5.1:

## ANALYSING EVALUATION DATA Template

In order to make sense of the evaluation data, organise it a manageable size and structure. Use this grid of the key factors being evaluated to record the research results.

	PARTICIPANTS	PROJECT/ ORGANISATION	COMMUNITY
PROCESS			
IMPACT			
OUTCOME			



## DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT STRUCTURE

This tool provides a draft outline of a generic evaluation report. It is written around a reasonably formal structure, suitable for other organisations, funding bodies or public record.

### INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the report briefly e.g.
- This report is an evaluation of the ..... project. The evaluation was undertaken by ..... for ..... Information for the evaluation was collected from a range of stakeholders involved with the project. This evaluation presents the findings from that and other information and provides some recommendations for the future.

### BACKGROUND

#### *The Project*

- The [community arts project] originated from.... [original ideas for the project]
- involved: [participants; community artists; organisations; other parts of the community]
- model of working [e.g. community development approach etc]

#### *The Evaluation*

- The rationale for evaluating the project
- Brief statement about the evaluation

### METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was overseen by the [Committee]. [...] managed the day to day tasks of the evaluation....It was conducted over a six week period, running in conjunction with the project.

The evaluation was conducted in six stages: [insert more detail as required, and any significant aspects to the stages]

- Preparation
- Planning
- Determining Evaluation Indicators
- Collecting Data
- Analysing Data
- Reporting on the findings

### THE PROJECT

Provide more detail here about the project –

Aims and objectives

Did it stick to original plans?

What changes were there along the way – e.g. staff turnover; participant turnover?

What were the key challenges and achievements?

### KEY FINDINGS

**About the project – this is the key section of the report and provides the most important information to your readers**

- Start with general, overview findings and maybe some of the surprises
- “The project achieved a significant number of its original aims and received positive feedback from the community”
- “The participation of 12 young males, aged between 14 – 18 exceeded our expectations of involvement from this group.”
- “The project achieved a number of positive outcomes between our organisation and [other organisations]...”

Provide more detail about how / whether the project achieved its aims / the unintended outcomes



### **How we Involved Participants**

What were your aims about involving participants?

Did you achieve your aims? Indicate if you did / did not / exceeded...

Describe the evidence for your findings e.g.

- All participants reported in focus groups and surveys that they enjoyed the rehearsals
- About 50% indicated in the survey that their only concern was running overtime, as parents were concerned about this.

Participant reports: All saying similar things? Report general feedback. Take care not to identify individuals who had a different experience. What did participants enjoy or not enjoy? Often this might be the support of other participants / the support of creative staff / the place / food and other incentives! / the routine...

### **How we Managed the Project**

What were your aims about managing the project?

Did you achieve your aims? Indicate if you did / did not / exceeded...

How well did this go? What were the challenges and what went well? Records; resources; planning; organisation... How well did you stick to your targets – such as timelines; production details and so on...

### **How the Community was Involved**

What were your aims about involving the community?

Did you achieve your aims? Indicate if you did / did not / exceeded...

How well did this go? What were the challenges and what went well?

Records; resources; planning; organisation... How well did you stick to your targets – such as timelines; production details and so on...

### **The Outcomes**

What has happened as result of the project? for participants? your organisation? the community?

Describe as much as possible the outcomes of the project.

If too early to tell – indicate how you will keep an eye on this...

### **Implications of the Evaluation**

What are the key issues arising from the evaluation? – Remember: the audience for this report.

Are there implications for:

recruitment of participants

working with community artists

producing a work

publicity

participant needs / supports / resources

communication with others

working with community organisations

funding

management

### **How can we Improve our Practice?**

Record here what the organisation intends to do to improve practice, following the evaluation. Remember: to keep this in draft status, until discussed through the organisation's management structures!

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Include about 5 – 6 recommendations at most – ensure that the recommendations are 'achievable' and supported.



## Improving Project Aims and Outcomes

How do we improve....for:

	PARTICIPANTS	PROJECT / ORGANISATION	COMMUNITY
<p><b>PROCESS</b> <i>Short term</i></p> <p><b>How can we improve the conduct of the project?</b></p>	<p>How can we improve the conduct of projects for participants?</p> <p>How can the experience be [more] positive for participants?</p> <p>How can we improve the way participants are involved in the project?</p> <p>How can we improve what happens for / to participants through the project?</p> <p>What can we assist participants achieving through the process? (setting sights higher / setting more realistic goals / challenging more / more / less involvement in creative activity...)</p>	<p>How can we improve the management of the project: as a project? as a creative process? as an activity of the organisation? as a partnership activity?</p> <p>What can we achieve through the management of the project? (more / more realistic / better / more focused / more ambitious)</p>	<p>How can we improve the way we involve the target community in projects?</p> <p>How can we improve the way we involve the target community in the management of projects?</p> <p>How can the process be improved for the target community?</p>
<p><b>IMPACT</b> <i>Medium term</i></p> <p><b>What will be the impact of the project?</b></p>	<p>How can the results of the project be more positive for participants? How can we improve the results of the project for participants?</p> <p>How can we improve the achievements of / for participants, as a result of the project?</p>	<p>How can the results of the project be [more] positive for: this project? future projects? creative processes? the organisation? the partnership?</p> <p>How can the experience be [more] positive for projects or for the organisation?</p> <p>How can we improve the results of the project through: the organisation? the partnership?</p>	<p>How can we improve what happens in the community, as result of projects?</p> <p>How can the experience be [more] positive for the community?</p>
<p><b>OUTCOME</b> <i>Long term</i></p> <p><b>What do we want to happen as a result of the project?</b></p>	<p>How can the long term outcome for participants be improved?</p> <p>How can we better ensure positive outcomes for participants in the long term?</p>	<p>How can the long term outcomes be improved for: this project? future projects? creative processes? the organisation? the partnership?</p>	<p>How can the long term outcomes be improved for the community?</p>

