



Report by Barnardo's for Royal National Theatre (Education and Training)

Obliterating the limits: can arts projects raise pupil achievement and encourage participation in the process of local community change?

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Executive summary

- there is some evidence of moderate levels of transferability between arts programmes and other academic subjects in terms of enhanced skills, but the evidence base is weak.
- high levels of satisfaction are typically reported by participants in community based arts programmes; this covers areas of personal, community and economic change. However, using the most demanding standards of methodological rigour, the quality of studies is poor, though often very ambitious in an area so hard to evaluate.
- actual programme impacts are likely to be more moderate than often claimed - this is not unique to the arts. Both programme managers and funders should not demand or propose unrealistic objectives.
- dissonance between empirical models of evaluation and the artistic community is commonly encountered. Both parties must understand and respect each others methods and objectives in order for *useful* - as opposed to just accurate - results to emerge.
- arts programmes are increasingly expected to justify themselves by their capacity to improve learning outcomes in other academic subjects, or by their contribution to wider community goals. Evaluators, however, must also focus on the broader and richer quality of life experienced by individuals and communities who are enabled to participate in the full range of artistic media.
- securing the participation of young people, as opposed to adults, requires a higher level of support, both in terms of intensity and longevity. Furthermore, young people, as opposed to adults, are less likely to be motivated by objectives associated with personal, economic or community change, and more by the benefits they perceive in the 'here and now' and the opportunity to change adult perceptions of their maturity and competence. In short, young people are likely to be more interested in the contribution the arts can make to their quality of life in the present, adults to the impact on young people's careers as future citizens.

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1. *Background*

The Royal National Theatre, in partnership with the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich, Goldsmith College University of London, Lewisham Challenge Partnership and The Albany (Deptford Fund/Albany Association), are developing an SRB 6 funded programme of creative arts in Greenwich and Lewisham. The scheme has three strategic objectives:

- To enhance the employment prospects, education and skills of local people.
- To address social exclusion and enhance opportunities for the disadvantaged.
- To promote sustainable regeneration, improving and protecting the environment and infrastructure, including housing.

The scheme will target young people in the target populations, aged 7-26 years, at risk of social exclusion. Using creative activity as a catalyst, both within and outside formal education, it will provide opportunities for creative achievement, enhance the skills, understanding and commitment of parents and those who work with children as to the value of creative activity, and help revitalise the centre of the community through creative and social activity.

The scheme will be evaluated over its lifespan by Barnardo's Research and Development Team. As part of this process, a literature review has been undertaken, which has examined previous evaluations of allied schemes.

1.1. Brief for literature review

The purpose of a review of literature in the planning stages of a project is to ensure that learning from previous similar initiatives is taken into account, so that successful strategies may be replicated, unsuccessful ones avoided, and possible ideas for innovative approaches generated.

The search parameters described below were identified at the outset. We should emphasise that this is not a *systematic review*. This is a technical term referring to a much more exhaustive process which often involves detailed statistical analysis. It is a thorough review of literature which explores previous studies relevant to the scheme and provides a summary which will be helpful for planning purposes.

The review addressed the following question:

Have interventions or initiatives which utilise artistic media as a catalyst for community development and change achieved successful outcomes?

2. Aims, methodology and search strategy

In order to take into account claims of positive outcomes from arts interventions in both educational and social/economic terms, this review was structured around two central aims:

- to examine the extent to which community arts projects have encouraged participation in the process of community-based social and economic change .
- to examine the extent to which arts projects within the formal education sector have raised pupil achievement.

2.1 Criteria for inclusion in the review

Arts projects were understood as interventions which feature professional artists, art education practitioners, teachers and amateurs. The review set out to include evaluations of such projects both in the UK and elsewhere that were:

- urban-based.
- carried out over a minimum 6 month period.
- carried out within the formal education sector to raise pupil's educational achievement; or carried out with the local community within a given geographical area in order to facilitate social and economic change.

Models have been described for rigorous evaluation of arts interventions (for example, Landry *et al.* 1995). However, the criteria for inclusion of evaluations in the review, in terms of their methodology, was based on only two of the recommendations set out in the Arts Council's guide to evaluating arts education projects (Woolf, undated). It was felt that this approach would provide a balance between too demanding a set of criteria (resulting in very

little material) and too inclusive an approach (having too much anecdotal and possibly less reliable evidence). Criteria were that evaluations:

- be clear about the methodology used to gather evidence on pupil educational achievement or local community social and economic change.
- if a control group design is not used, draw on a range of stakeholder views, for example opinions of volunteers, staff, parents/carers, or other audiences/observers as well as participants

The first criterion meant that reports written in a purely narrative, anecdotal fashion were excluded from the review; although a list of those which fell into this category is included for reference in the results section. This exclusion was felt to be justifiable since without a description of evaluation methodology, it was impossible to make judgements about the validity and reliability of outcomes reported.

The second criterion is drawn from the model used in Williams (1996), an approach which 'brings together observers with different relationships to the activity' (Williams, 1995; cited in Matarasso, 1998:18). In a setting where controlled experimental approaches are often impractical, this means outcomes reported from different perspectives can be triangulated to accord findings greater reliability.

2.2 Method

The following databases were searched:

Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts (1987 – present)

International Bibliography of Social Sciences (1981 – present)

Sociological Abstracts (1963 – present)

Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC: 1966 – present).

Within the latter three databases, searches were conducted for documents where the title or abstract contained the terms 'community development' and 'arts' (or 'art', 'theatre', 'drama', 'music', 'dance', 'video', 'film').

In ERIC, a search was conducted for documents containing within their title or abstract the terms 'school' and 'child' (or 'children') and 'achievement' and 'arts' (or 'art', 'theatre', 'drama', 'music', 'dance', 'video', 'film'). Where the abstract described some form of evaluation or assessment of an arts based intervention to raise pupil standards or bring about community change a copy of the document was obtained and - using the criteria set out in the section above - a judgement made on its relevance to the review. Documents without an abstract were not considered.

Experts in the field were also approached for recommendations of relevant material. The bibliography of a forthcoming review of literature on social exclusion and the arts was kindly supplied by the Arts Council. The bibliographies of all documents obtained were hand searched for further relevant documents and an electronic search carried out for all publications produced by Comedia and the Community Development Foundation. From these sources, those titles were selected which seemed to indicate some arts based intervention around community development or pupil achievement and some form of evaluation or assessment exercise. Hand searching was also carried out in the Arts Council for England library in Westminster, whose kind assistance is appreciated.

The emphasis of the review criteria on projects aiming to raise pupil achievement and based within the formal education sector meant that only those aimed at the general population of pupils in schools – rather than children in 'specialist' groups such as 'gifted' or 'disabled' children – were included. Likewise, the specification that evaluations measure impact on pupil 'achievement' meant that only evaluations in the formal education sector

which measured academic – rather than personal or social – outcomes were included.

During the course of the review, we found it necessary to deviate from these parameters in two ways. Firstly, we have included one evaluation of an arts project that took place in a rural setting (Matarasso 1996b), as this was particularly detailed and applicable to this review. Secondly, we examined a number of studies and other sources of material that failed to meet our methodological criteria. These are discussed alongside other contextual sources, as appropriate, in sections 3-6. The key studies reviewed - those we judged the most robust - are discussed in section 7 and summarised in Tables 7.1 and 7.2. Table 7.1 summarises the conclusions of community arts project studies, Table 7.2 the conclusions of studies within the formal education sector.

Appendix 1 (from Matarasso 1997:x) summarises the outcomes of participation in the arts proposed by a range of studies.

3. The value of the arts to education and community development

Arts promotion, especially for the benefit of children and young people, has no shortage of advocates. The Arts Council of England has a remit to increase audiences for the arts by 2010. While surveying the public for their attitudes to the arts, it was found that 63% believe their lives are richer for experiencing the arts, 82% believe the arts contribute to children's education and 95% want children to have more experience of the arts at school. Partnership with local government is seen as essential in achieving this aim through the arenas of education, community well-being and cultural renewal (Clarke 2001; www.lga.gov.uk). While reactions to the arts were essentially positive in the above case, misconceptions remain. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) suggests that work still needs to be done as to why negative attitudes towards the arts persist, and how these can be overcome (Harland *et al.* 1995, cited in Shaw 1999).

International legislation promotes cultural activity:

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms that every child has the right to rest and leisure, play and recreation. At the most basic level, sports and cultural facilities enable children to play by providing stimuli, imaginative frameworks and settings.' (Department of Health 2001, www.rip.org.uk).

The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) recognises that:

Educational research has highlighted the value of the arts in developing team players and problem solving skills, raising awareness of other cultures and increasing confidence. Creative activities can also be used to overcome many of the barriers associated with learning. (www.arts.org.uk)

The NOF has made funds available to arts organisations that have, or intend to have, beneficial creative partnerships with schools. In this context of partnership promotion, the importance of a shared language and a description

of intended outcomes are crucial, though questions as to how this can be achieved effectively remain (East Midlands Arts- Moving On; www.arts.org.uk, www.nfer.ac.uk).

There is a 'growing expectation that publicly funded arts organisations should provide education programmes alongside their artistic programmes (www.nfer.ac.uk/risheets). Currently, there are new opportunities emerging in the form of:

- new funding opportunities, e.g. Arts Council of England programmes like 'New Audiences', NESTA and NOF.
- new thinking opportunities for arts organisations through the Stabilisation, National Touring and RALP programmes.
- governmental interest in the role arts can have to play in preventing and alleviating social exclusion, and their potential contribution to their life long learning agenda.
- the increasing recognition of the value of the arts in educational contexts.
- the DfEE's NACCCE Report, which advocates the development of long term partnerships between educational establishments and arts organisations (e.g. health, social services, the youth service, the prison service).
- proposals for a revised National Curriculum.
- increased opportunities for the use of drama and other arts in identified Education Action Zones.
- new technological opportunities for creative media.
- government initiatives to reduce venue costs to young people, to increase audience numbers and stimulate interest in the arts across the general population.
- a reconsideration of kinds of spaces where theatrical activities take place.

- The role of schools in combating social exclusion through developing 'the habit of participation' in arts and sports (SEU, PAT10, NFER, 2000).

The government's Social Exclusion Unit is looking towards a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal. Within this context, Policy Action Team 10 (PAT10) has reported on the role of arts, sport and leisure. Its remit was to share best practice in using the arts and sport to engage young people in deprived neighbourhoods, particularly vulnerable groups such as minority ethnic people and disaffected young people, and to suggest how the impact of government spending in these areas can be maximised. One of the key findings of the team was that the provision of services to support participation in arts and sport can aid neighbourhood renewal through improved 'performance' on indicators of health, crime, employment and education. (www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu). The report goes on to summarise action which can be taken by funding bodies, local authorities, government departments and other organisations such as the Arts Council and National Lottery, to promote arts and sports in a flexible, sustainable and effective way.

Community development has value in that is frequently identified as cumulative, that is, 'community development is a proven technique for fostering more and more effective community activity' (www.cdf.org.uk). Within the remit of 'social inclusion work', the DCMS views culture and leisure as having a role in involving both individuals and their communities (www.artscouncil.org.uk).

The capital programme should, it has been suggested, expand its definition to include more 'soft capital' (for example, access to work and performance spaces, see www.artscouncil.org.uk). At present, the National Lottery's restrictions on capital projects limits the potential value of funding to artistic interventions (Landry and Matarasso, 1996).

Cultural projects have played an increasingly important role in British urban regeneration since the mid-1980's, but recent developments have focused less on capital projects, and more on the capacity of arts activity to support community-led renewal. (Landry and Matarasso 1996)

The current Government's agenda stresses a number of important cultural dimensions, with concepts of social inclusion, lifelong learning, devolution, education and urban regeneration being discussed and promoted: 'It is about how we live, work, co-operate and communicate together' (Matarasso, 1999).

Culturally-based responses to community needs are vital because, even if the problems are universal there will be specifically local ways of perceiving, experiencing and dealing with them (Matarasso, 1999).

We can thus see that many of the factors that can potentially lead to a expansion of community based arts initiatives are in place, both in terms of available resources and positive attitudes at governmental level. However, what is also present is an emphasis, as a condition of funding, on robust evaluation and the need to ensure that public investment is both directed at specific populations held to be in need, and has returns which are commensurate with the level of funding provided.

4. The challenge of evaluation

Over zealous pursuit of scientific objectivity and the internal validity of evaluation programmes are inappropriate and unhelpful approaches to the evaluation of social programmes and especially arts projects (Matarasso 1996:24).

Applying the principles of robust evaluation widely accepted in the field of health and social care to the arts raises a number of difficulties. Large scale community arts projects are especially challenging because of the complexity of the interventions, the large numbers of stakeholders, and the multiplicity of

outcomes (as perceived by funders, performers and participants (Landry *et al.* 1995). Experimental models of research - which compare individuals of groups which have received a 'treatment' which those who have not - are often impractical, partly because of the level of complexity, and partly because of the extreme dissonance that often exists between demands for numerical accuracy and artistic temperaments. In reviewing community based arts projects, such designs are rare and where they occur, standards of methodological rigour fall below that normally demanded in other settings. In educational settings, these designs are more common and more reliance can be placed on the results. Given the particular challenges of evaluation in this field however, a substantial number of studies have explored both dimensions of the review subject, and a number of studies, particular those conducted over the past half decade, have, given the difficulty of the field, made admirable attempts to retain a high level of methodological integrity.

While many - indeed most - evaluations of community based arts projects suggest positive benefits to participants (mostly through post-scheme self reports), some reported outcomes for stakeholders - such as subsequent uptake of training or employment - cannot be attributed to the intervention with any degree of certainty. Many studies report high levels of satisfaction with no evaluative data (for example, Arts Council 1989; Scottish Arts Council 1995); Chelliah 1999). Furthermore, while post-intervention feedback from stakeholders has been largely positive, data of this type does not provide an adequate measure of whether funds used towards the arts intervention may have been deployed to even greater effect in other types of community intervention, such as sports activities (Reeves, 2001). Equally of course, such studies cannot prove that this is *not* the case. Despite the relative weakness of the evidence, self reported benefits are often substantial, though there is some evidence that communities with previously high levels of social solidarity may benefit more, and without consciously targeted provision, disproportionate levels of involvement may be enjoyed by the least disadvantaged. These factors however are not unique to the arts; they are common in many dimensions of health, education and social care provision.

Interventions in educational settings present fewer problems to the evaluator, and a range of studies were reviewed that utilise robust designs featuring control groups. While the results of interventions were mixed, and not always as substantial as the schemes may have hoped, the overall trend is largely positive, with benefits of varying degrees found in most studies reviewed (Sharp 1998) and little or no evidence of negative effects.

Kay (2000) suggest a number of factors that make an arts programme effective. Of central importance are:

- *community consultation* – meeting local needs and interests is a necessary to achieving sustainable change.
- *community involvement* - for change to be acceptable and appropriate, it needs to be driven by the community itself.
- *community ownership* – a recurring theme in the literature, with ownership an important tool in empowerment and the development of community skills and responsibilities

There are numerous ambiguities associated with collecting data on art projects. Kay (2000) discusses the collection of 'hard' and 'soft' data, and how these can be complementary, rather than serving specific and separate purposes, such as meeting funder requirements and satisfying arts practitioners respectively. Documentation of social impact has a longer history, and is more extensive especially in Australia and the Republic of Ireland, due to policy decisions to invest in arts in disadvantaged areas, and the monitoring that is entailed.

In the UK, notwithstanding the considerable volume of professional and amateur arts activity in poorer neighbourhoods, there has been no national policy decision to fund this kind of work and no imperative to measure its impact on either a systematic or long-term basis (Shaw 1999).

Arts organisations may have received government funding for specific, small-scale projects (for example, from the Home Office for work with young

offenders), but complementary evaluation has not been funded. Comedia, a research-based consultancy company have produced a series of working papers that are working towards a methodology for assessing the social impact of the arts (Shaw 1999), and these papers are an invaluable source of both methodological discussion and development. Currently, the Policy Action Team (PAT10) has found that ‘there is a lack of available evaluated information about the regenerative aspects of arts and sports community development projects’ (www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu). Reports written by arts organisations are limited at present, and where they do exist they may contain understandable elements of bias due to the financial consequences often allied to adverse findings (Shaw, 1999).

There are numerous difficulties associated with evaluating the arts. For example, Kay (2000) notes that questionnaires are unpopular and consequently other methods of consultation are vital. Self-assessment can be conducted without diminishing the role of external evaluation. The Arts Council of England acknowledges the value of ‘equipping the communities themselves to own, develop and carry out their own evaluation of the project and its impact’ (www.artscouncil.org.uk). This does not exclude external evaluation specialists, rather it emphasises a consistent theme from the literature reviewed that *ownership* is critical to successful and subsequent community development. Matarasso (1999) further emphasises the need for arts organisations and artists themselves to carry out their own evaluations.

There needs to an acknowledgement of the diversity of projects and interested parties, and regard paid to each individual project’s objectives (Kay, 2000). Evaluations at present are complicated beyond the consensus that successful outcomes can be attained through artistic interventions, by the fact that they do not cover sufficiently diverse settings, art forms or communities for these results to be claimed to be truly unanimous (www.artscouncil.org.uk). The full range of potential experiences has yet to be captured. While this review has tried to pull together what already exists, there are still substantial gaps and, as noted above, the potential scope is

evident from the literature that had to be excluded due to its lack of rigour. Rather than attempt to force arts evaluations into conventional methodological frameworks, the challenge is to develop methods of evaluation that both respect and acknowledge the unique quality of artistic endeavour, while ensuring that the returns from participation in arts based projects can be subject to a robust but fair appraisal.

One factor is timescales. The Arts Council of England, for example, support the use of studies carried out over a substantial period of time, for example, they advise a minimum three year period for evaluation.

PAT10 acknowledges this problem: 'Research and evaluation in...the arts does not always match the methodological rigour of health, crime or educational research' (Department of Health 2001). This often means that a robust evaluation of an arts project is more down to sound judgement rather than tried and tested 'best practice' methods. Perhaps more importantly, it also hinders comparability between project evaluations an essential factor if we are to become more certain that one approach 'works' better than another. PAT10 also found that there was less communication between agencies involved in urban regeneration programmes than one would expect, although there were some exceptions (Shaw, 1999). Record keeping and data collected needs to be, and to be seen to be, relevant and useful, while also including some measures of tangible outcomes, however challenging this might be (Kay, 2000).

Mason (1993) addresses the usual problems associated with quantitative data. It provides only a partial snapshot of something bigger, measuring what can be easily measured with its corresponding assumptions. This is not a minority view. 'The art of evaluation', the Audit Commission notes, 'lies in ensuring that the measurable does not drive out the immeasurable.' (Audit Commission, cited in Matarasso 1996a). Consequently, there is a need to develop and improve methods of evaluation so that they can 'reflect the co-operative and creative values of the arts' (Matarasso 1996a). We would

entirely concur with this view. Matarasso (1996a) proposes a five stage approach to developing arts projects/programmes and assessing their impact, which comprises both dimensions of this equation.

PAT10 describes the lack of long-term arts evaluations as a 'key issue'. At present these evaluations tend to be *ad hoc*, preventing a comprehensive overview from being gained. In addition, longitudinal studies are not common enough to supplement this 'whole picture' (www.artscouncil.org.uk). Such studies need to be developed, and they must be comprehensive as not to be affected by the regular turnover of board members, politicians and others

The measurement of short term impacts (and of outputs rather than outcomes) is tempting but ultimately the arts sector needs to invest in evaluating long-term impact (i.e. over ten years or more) (Shaw, 1999).

The PAT10 report makes recommendations for evaluations in the arts field. These are as follows:

- when possible, external evaluation and the process that implies should be integral to the project / programme
- criteria against which success is judged should be clear and come from the 'bottom up', i.e. defined by those potentially benefiting from the service.
- long term impacts and benefits should be sustained, and preferably measured (e.g. through cohort studies).
- evaluators need to have appropriate skills and training, and project users, namely young people, should be involved.
- evaluation reports should be made widely available.

The Arts Council for England is currently seeking to promote good practice by both carrying out, supporting and collating evaluation results and databases. This will 'demonstrate the impact that the arts can have in relation to

community development, neighbourhood renewal and regeneration' (www.artscouncil.org.uk). In addition, the Department for Culture, Media and the Arts (DCMS) is committed to 'developing, monitoring and evaluating methodologies as standard elements of social inclusion work' .

In 2000, a three year initiative was sent up entitled the 'Arts and Education Interface' which investigates the relationship between the arts and the formal education sector via action research to elicit the impact of arts on improving educational attainment and redressing social exclusion, and audits of national and international good practice (www.artscouncil.org.uk).

Landry and Matarasso (1996) found that models of success and the key factors in replication are insufficiently known at present. Successful projects tend to be localised and often known only to specialists. There needs to be a move towards allowing this information to be available to the general population and for it to be reported in a more formal, quantitative and comparable style, though this will inevitably be restricted by the 'relatively unpredictable nature of arts activity' (Landry and Matarasso, 1996). Matarasso's *Use or Ornament* report (1997) examines the plausibility of building effective evaluation systems into community-based arts development, and provides the most currently detailed description of how this may be achieved (see Appendix 1).

Matarasso (1999) defines success in an arts-based community development programme as:

- Addressing stated needs or aspirations, as defined by those involved.
- Achieving informed consent of those involved (i.e. it would be unethical to seek change otherwise).
- Partnerships holding agreement over common objectives and commitments.
- Recognising that those who identify the goals of a programme are best placed to determine whether they has been met.

- Recognising that it may not always be the most appropriate means of achieving the goals set.

He goes on to define factors that are critical to success, which are:

- The majority of a project is controlled by the community. Community ownership of projects is advantageous because it makes them more relevant and enduring, more effective, or on a wider scale to enable communities to assert themselves in what some see as an era of globalisation (Kay, 2000) and subsequent homogenisation. Local ownership is also essential to the project's long-term viability:

Any funding schemes must include a strategy for increasing the capacity (skills, knowledge, contacts, finance, motivation) of the beneficiaries of those schemes to continue once the scheme is over. (Shaw, 1999).

- Aims and motivations are clear and transparent.
- Connect action to local need (not simply transplanting proven schemes from one area to another).
- 'Work with the grain', identifying responses which are compatible with what people want and do.
- Value diversity.
- Pursue effective partnerships – including those with non-arts agencies (Shaw, 1999).
- Connect work to mainstream life to avoid simply making 'ghettos a bit less unpleasant'.
- Promote excellence. (www.voluntaryarts.org.uk)

PAT10 recognises that the arts are not the only part of community development (www.artscouncil.org.uk), rather a vital component (Landry and Matarasso, 1996). It should be noted, that like science, art is a tool which can also be put to bad use (Matarasso, 1999).

Landry and Matarasso (1996) identified limitations of existing approaches to redevelopment and regeneration through cultural or artistic media. They can be costly, time consuming, not always appropriate, not necessarily connected easily with local people and their needs, and need effort to sustain both the activity and the outcomes. Within this context a move from capital investment to cultural programmes can be seen to be preferable as they are relatively cheap and cost-effective, develop quickly in response to local needs/ideas; are flexible and have a potentially high return for low risk.

Shaw (1999) suggests that avoiding negative language usage when funding arts programmes, such as that often used in social impact evaluations, to avoid reinforcing negative impressions of a place to its residents. For example, 'social inclusion and social capital are more helpful terms than social exclusion, deprivation and disadvantage' (Shaw 1999).

5. Participation

When looking at young people's participation in urban regeneration from a more holistic perspective, as opposed to a purely arts-based one, young people and adults (usually the decision makers) were found to harbour divergent priorities (Fitzpatrick, Hastings and Kintrea, 1998). That is, adults tend to emphasise educational and vocational attainment as desired outcomes, whereas young people look to change adult perceptions (often negative) of themselves. The report concludes that there is 'fairly effective targeting of the most disadvantaged young people', although young people aged over 20 years appeared to be seen as a 'lost cause'. The majority of case studies covered came to a common conclusion; that more support was needed to gain and retain young people's involvement in comparison to that needed with adults. This has implications for the duration of initiatives, with those of a long-term nature being more conducive to the meaningful involvement of young people. Also, involvement tends to be non-strategic.

While adults may agree with the validity of young people's involvement, it can be another thing to translate this into effective practice with the changes required in areas such as language, behaviour, working practices and commitment. It is important that young people's needs are taken into account in the 'here and now', and not only in the context of their being future citizens:

there are strong signs that the Government has moved young people's needs up the agenda in its further support for youth focused regeneration schemes in SRB4, in the New Deal, and in its attention to education (Fitzpatrick, Hastings and Kintrea, 1998).

5.1 Examples of some schemes which promote the participation of young people

A number of imaginative attempts are currently being made to increase the participation of children and young people in arts based projects managed by a wide variety of institutions. The following are some examples.

- Through the Guggenheim Museum Children's Program, New York, art is 'used as a motivational strategy for learning by professional artists working in the schools with teachers and students', and through workshops. It has, it is reported, improved reading attainment levels (School Arts 1990).
- The National Network for Arts in Health (NNAH) was launched at the end of 2000, to promote the use of arts in health and social care fields (for progress see www.nnah.org.uk).
- The National Trust is currently undergoing an image change, which involves increasing accessibility to marginalised and minority groups. In some areas this is being achieved through the use of arts. For example, in London there are four groups (refugee & asylum seeking children; people with mental health problems; homeless people; mother and toddler groups) exploring the history of London through various artistic mediums.

Through arts, universal themes can be explored in a non-threatening and inclusive manner (Source: Guardian 16-05-01).

- The Dulwich Gallery houses the Sackler Centre for Arts Education and the 'Does Art Make a Difference?' initiative (funded by the DfEE) which works with a variety of young people, including those whom are socially excluded for various reasons. Reading ability and confidence is reported to be improved through participation in the scheme. (source: TES 25-05-01).
- An outreach project called Art Icebreaker is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. (see www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk, source: TES 25-05-01).
- In Gellideg housing estate, located in Merthyr Tydfil, Welsh culture, music, narrative and myth is promoted in an attempt to raise school children's self-esteem through pride in their roots. Since such an approach has been adopted, it is reported that OFSTED inspection reports have markedly improved. (Source: TES 25-05-01).
- Youth Music have invested in a £10 million programme to set up 20 Youth Music Action Zones where young people will have increased access to a variety of music-making opportunities, especially those whom live in areas of economic and social deprivation. It will tap into existing programmes of work, with financial support encouraging working together. (www.youthmusic.org.uk)
- Education Extra has developed six arts partnerships schemes for primary and secondary schools. The expected outcomes of 'Learning Through the Arts' are: increased self-confidence, improved attitude towards school and enabling young people to achieve more widely. The organisation aims to demonstrate the link between provision of after-school clubs and improving schools and to establish how after schools arts differ from those offered within the context of the curriculum (www.educationextra.org.uk)

- Art Out is another initiative of Education Extra, in partnership with other agencies, to get art students from the London Institute out into six local secondary schools to work as 'artists in residence' at after-schools arts clubs for a term. This scheme started in January 2000 and the information collected for evaluative purposes was: proposal forms for each scheme (linked to each school); pupil questionnaires; student artists' diaries; photos; observation visits; final evaluation form for student artists; and telephone interviews with support teacher. Students have been involved in defining outcomes, a teacher noting; 'The students didn't have fixed ideas about outcomes, and there were some very interesting outcomes as a result.' The average attendance across clubs was 10 pupils per club, and student artists had a 100% attendance rate. The schemes were collaborative, with high levels of team working and negotiation and experimental, which led to the taking of risks and increased independence, despite the reported initial trepidation experienced by some pupils. Pupils and teachers alike had greater confidence and skills to experiment with the arts. In terms of broader key skills, benefits such as better communication were reported. The learning relationship set up between student artist and pupil was significant because of the sharing of relevant learning experiences and introduction to new ideas and skills, developed in a kind of role model capacity. (Connecting Art Students With Schools, www.educationextra.org.uk).

We can thus see that, while robust evaluation of arts initiative provides substantial challenges, there has been considerable interest in how the outcomes of schemes can be assessed, and considerable pressure on arts organisations to do so. Young people's participation is widely accepted as essential, though this may also pose substantial challenges. What then does the current literature tell us about the success of community based and educational arts initiatives?

6. The impact of the arts

Encounters with the creative arts are frequently described in terms closer to epiphany than to a simple learning experience. We must clearly be careful here - many young people may experience a similar transformation during encounters with the natural sciences - but a special place is often claimed for the arts in terms of a capacity to break down barriers:

We know that the arts have the potential for obliterating the limits that are too often imposed upon our lives. We know that they can take anyone, but particularly a child, and transport him or her beyond the bounds that circumstance has prescribed. (Weitz 1996, cited in Lowe, 2000:358)

More prosaically however, the impacts of the arts are often described in terms of their effects on personal, communal and economic factors.

6.1 Economic

In 1988, Myerscough's study of the economic importance of the arts identified the sector to be a major contributor to productive employment and prosperity in Britain. The Policy Studies Institute Survey *'The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain'* (1988) stated that the arts was an employer of 50,000 people, and that it was the fourth biggest invisible export earner in the UK (cited in Landry and Matarasso 1996), adding weight to the claim that the returns from artistic investments are both measurable and substantial.

6.2 Social capital

However, since the evolution of the community arts movement in the late sixties, it has been widely argued that the economic benefits of arts activity are only part of the picture. Alongside educational benefits, arts interventions are increasingly credited with facilitating wider social change, often described in terms of Robert Putnam's concept of social capital: 'the capacity for mutual co-operation towards the collective well-being within a community or wider society' (Williams 1997:6). Cox describes this as generated by 'processes

between people which establish networks, norms, social trust and facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit'(cited in Williams 1997:11). Williams (1997) lists such examples as improved communication and planning skills, improved understanding of different cultures, or better consultation with government within the local community.

In July 1999, Matarasso, one of the primary sources for arts impact evaluations, gave a speech to the Culture Makes Communities conference in Swansea. He noted that 'the arts...are one of the ways, perhaps the most distinctive and powerful, through which the common culture of a social group or community is expressed, questioned, rejected or celebrated.' Art is seen as a mechanism to trigger the best in people, and people can be seen as the most important asset a community has in making it socially cohesive, attaining a high quality of life and promoting wealth generation (Landry and Matarasso 1996).

In terms of regeneration, it is suggested, the arts should be part of an overall policy, operating at varying geographical levels.

There is evidence to show that art, as a medium, can enable individuals and groups to become more employable, more involved and more active in contributing to the development of their local communities (Kay 2000).

Landry and Matarasso (1996) sum up what makes the arts special. Artistic ventures engage people's creativity, resulting in problem solving; are about meanings, leading to dialogue; encourage questioning and the imagination of possible futures; allow self-expression; and are unpredictable, exciting and fun. The arts, it is suggested, can have a significant role in changing the culture of an area, for example they may be effective in challenging the disenfranchisement and marginalisation experienced in some areas. To be successful, the arts must work with other community programmes through a holistic and people-centred approach. Factors that encourage the integration of arts programmes into a policy-led framework include embedding

programmes in existing local heritage or culture; creating a quality process and product; and being accessible and inclusive (Kay 2000).

Outcomes identified through evaluative literature span the range suggested by Landry and Matarasso (1996). They include enhancing social cohesion and local image; reducing offending behaviour; building private/public sector partnerships; promoting interest in the local environment; developing self-confidence; enhancing organisational capacity; supporting independence; and exploring visions of the future.

6.3 Education

In terms of formal education, it is widely agreed that the arts occupy a diminishing part of the curriculum (Schiller and Veale 1993). In spite of this, it is clear from the reviewed literature that educating the whole child is of value to both tangible and intangible outcomes. The notion of 'scaffolding' and its potential effectiveness has been highlighted by the Italian Reggio Emilia's approach, where expectations are not a limiting factor and children's artistic expression is actively encouraged (Schiller and Veale 1993).

Harland *et al.* (2000) have developed a model of arts education outcomes (as defined from within an educational context by their study sample of secondary school students [interviews n=237; questionnaires n=2,269] and teachers, managers and employers). This concluded that the range of outcomes associated with strong arts provision was wider than that codified in the National Curriculum and broader than the current focus on creative and cultural education. This study also claims that its findings add weight to the emerging literature that questions the influence of the arts on general academic attainment. It identifies more intangible outcomes, such as those identified by senior management teams that arts can have a positive impact on school ethos – promoting self-esteem and enjoyment. Harland *et al.* (2000) also distinguished between different perceptions of art forms within the educational sector, with art being the most likely to be perceived as having an

impact. Dance and drama covered a range of outcomes, but lack status and exposure to students. In contrast, music held a similar status to art, but registered a limited range of outcomes and was perceived to be of least impact.

7. Results reported by key studies

The inclusion criteria for this section was described in the introductory section. The following studies were judged to be the most robust and reliable, using the methodological criteria chosen.

A number of evaluations and literature reviews, despite being useful on a number of levels, were excluded because they did not include a description of their methodology (Battram and Segal 1987; Clinton 1993; Community Development Foundation 1992; Dwelly 2001; Hamblen 1993; Landry *et al.* 1996; Wolff 1978). Harland and colleagues' (1995) survey of young people's views on what they had gained from arts interventions was also excluded because views were from young people's perspectives only, and did not centre around the evaluation of a specific intervention or set of interventions.

7.1 Community based arts programmes

Table 7.1 below summarises the findings from the eligible studies on the impacts of community arts programmes.

Table 7.1 - Community arts project evaluations

| Authors | Intervention and methods | Notes |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Matarasso, F. with Chell, J. 1998 | <p>Telephone interviews with 53 local arts organisations at beginning and end of 18 month period;</p> <p>Questionnaire with participants in 14 community arts projects (n = 100);</p> <p>Six discussion groups with funders, arts professionals and participants/ community workers;</p> <p>Written documentation from projects.</p> | <p><i>Economic outcomes:</i> 125% increase in number of new jobs created in projects; 18% increase in average number of people reporting finding work through projects;</p> <p><i>Participants:</i> 53% participants started training since project and 20% felt new skills had helped get work</p> <p>In discussion groups: 92% felt project strengthens people's skills and 69% felt it encouraged people to take up training; 46% knew of cases where participants had gone on to get jobs; but 22% felt project had not supported local businesses.</p> <p><i>Social outcomes:</i></p> <p>Participants: 88% said they'd developed new friendships; 64% reported gaining understanding of other people's cultures; 72% developed communication skills and 80% team work skills; but 76% felt project made no difference to how they felt about their neighbourhood</p> <p>In discussion groups; 81% felt projects reduced isolation; 81% felt projects raised awareness of community issues; 75% felt projects increased cross community co-operation (25% strongly disagreed); but 23% felt local public facilities had not improved; and 23% described no impact on crime or fear of crime; funders especially expressed concerns about sustainability, e.g. the increasing professionalisation of voluntary activities, and increasing costs and reliance on funding</p> |

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| <p>Matarasso, F. 1998</p> | <p>Interviews/ discussions, observations, questionnaires with participants, staff, teachers, volunteers and artists; teacher assessment; written documentation from community arts projects</p> <p>Participants included pupils in over 30 schools; over 100 children in playschemes; users of social services; over 3000 people who attended exhibition celebrating ethnic diversity</p> | <p><i>Educational outcomes:</i> Teacher assessment of random sample of 119 primary pupils: 86% improved language skills, 84% improved physical co-ordination; 85% improved observation skills; 92% better creativity and imagination; 78% improved social skills. Half of participating adults felt they had acquired new skills.</p> <p><i>Social outcomes:</i> Participants: almost all said they had made new friendships. Researchers reported that projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provided a focus for bringing different groups of people together to participate in community - facilitated some new contacts and co-operation between community groups (though some doubt how far this reached the city's white community) - built community organisational capacity - facilitated consultation between local authority and residents <p>Problems in evaluation were noted: [some projects] <i>'were seen by participants to have contributing to improving understanding of marginalised groups...but the impact on its audiences of such 'mind changing' art work (house of words) resists formal measurement'</i> (Matarasso 1998:35)</p> |
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| <p>Matarasso, F. 1996b</p> | <p>Focused on three Fèisean (Gaelic festivals), but included several others.</p> <p>Interviews with fèis organisers, volunteers, participants, performers, local residents, visitors, etc.</p> <p>Questionnaire completed by 242 adults and children.</p> <p>Written submissions</p> <p>Observation</p> | <p><i>Social outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual and personal development. 78% reported that they felt more confident and 79% said they had developed new skills. - Social cohesion: 96% made new friends through the fèis (often from different regions, age groups and social backgrounds). Gives communities a focus and cause to get involved and celebrate. - Community empowerment and self-determination: 41% of respondents keen to help in local projects. Brings together dispersed communities and helps them to acquire organisational skills. - Local image and identity: Young people sometimes express newly-positive feelings about the area, Highland culture and the Gaelic language. - Imagination and vision: 93% feel that it is important that fèisean are of significance to people's sense of creativity. Encourages risk taking. - Health and well being: 43% said that they felt better or healthier as a result. 4 out of 5 felt happier. 87% would like to be involved in more work of this kind. <p><i>Economic outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of equivalent of at least 10 full time jobs in a context which is cost-effective, locally sensitive and sustainable. <p><i>Negative outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7% of children and 22% said attending fèis had had a negative impact for them, the majority relating to minor aspects of physical well being. <p>Enthusiasm can easily turn to disillusionment if it is not effectively supported and sustained.</p> <p>The impacts identified relate directly to the cultural element of the fèisean could not be secured by other forms of public policy intervention.</p> <p>Attempts to replicate the impact must heed the definitive elements of the fèisean identified by the research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - centrality of the community (volunteer commitment) - role of Gaelic - high quality of work |
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| <p>Jones, 1998</p> <p>B.</p> | <p>Interviews (n = 20) with public officials, school officials, art council members, local and resident artists. Semi-structured format, before and/or after.</p> <p>Random surveys of households (pre-residency n =24 and post-residency n = 47).</p> <p>Informal public interviews (n = 16).</p> <p>Direct observations.</p> <p>Monitoring local newspaper.</p> | <p>Pilot by state arts agency. Aimed to establish whether community arts results in the development of community activities.</p> <p><i>Four outcome areas examined:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage and symbols if enhanced. - sense of community (if increased during the project's duration. - identification with the community - as above. - participation in community affairs - <i>Positive impacts identified by all:</i> <p>Change agent – the resident artist (four weeks), e.g. developed strong personal relationships, developed artistic techniques.</p> <p>Change agent system – SE Colorado Arts Council, e.g. increased and changed capacities, learnt about community and increased stature in community.</p> <p>Action system – local arts community, e.g. increased arts exposure leading to increased support for, and participation in, the arts.</p> <p>Client system and target system – community at large, e.g. diverse groups, given chance to work together such as business, social services and arts, collective action, enhanced sense of community and capacity-building.</p> <p>In a post-residency survey 3/5 respondents wanted to see the project continued, 75% of short questionnaire respondents felt the project was a good idea and 2/3rds said it should be done again.</p> <p>17% of pre-residency respondents thought they would participate, 49% of post-residency respondents had taken part. But, participation was greatest among the higher social classes, with participation among Chicanos, renters and newcomers minimal.</p> <p>Locality was seen as important with local artists doing the work, employing local themes, for a local audience.</p> |
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| Lowe, S. S. 2000 | Observation, focus groups and evaluation reports with participants and artists in two community arts projects (n =100) | <p><i>Researcher reports:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced isolation and increased sense of 'neighbourhood identity' via new relationships and support networks between participants. - collective expression of cultural heritage and sense of 'place'. - common community concerns identified. |
| Kay and Watt 2000 | Stakeholders in four community arts projects in both rural and urban settings consulted using interviews, discussion groups or questionnaires. | Researchers report that arts projects can make a substantial contribution to regeneration when part of an integrated programme. |

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| <p>William, S., D. 1997</p> | <p>Survey of 109 community participants in 89 public funded community based arts projects plus 123 community members who had observed the projects.</p> | <p><i>Economic outcomes:</i> 45% of survey respondents felt projects had generated employment; 90% felt projects developed further work of artistic merit, 56% that they increased sales for art work or developed audiences; 61% that they attracted further resources for community arts projects.</p> <p><i>Social outcomes:</i> Respondents to survey: 90% (from both rural and urban based projects) recognised positive educational, artistic and social outcomes. 95% reported improved communication skills; 90% improved organisational skills; 80% improved understanding of different cultures or lifestyles; 64% improved consultation between government and community; 90% felt had developed community identity and 86% reduced isolation; 77% improved recreational options; 48% developed local enterprise; 50% felt improved public facilities; 90% felt raised public awareness of an issue; 57% inspired action on a social issue; 82% improved understanding of different cultures or lifestyles; 38% felt increased public safety.</p> |
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| <p>Matarasso, F. 1997</p> | <p>Reviews findings of studies in UK (8) and US (2) sites. Findings based on self reports.</p> | <p><i>Personal development</i> - 84% felt more confident, 37% took up training courses, 80% learnt new skills <i>Social cohesion</i>- 91% made new friends, 54% learnt about other people's cultures, 84% became interested in something new. <i>Community empowerment</i> - 86% wanted to be involved in new projects, 21% had new sense of their rights. <i>Local identity</i> - 40% felt more positive about where they live, 63% were keen to help local projects. <i>Imagination and vision</i>- 86% tried new things, 49% said taking part have changed their ideas, 81% enjoyed the creativity <i>Health/well being</i> - 52% felt better or healthier, 73% became happier.</p> |
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7.3 Summary

As noted above, conducting robust evaluations of community arts projects present considerable methodological challenges. Self-reports by participants of perceived changes to relatively intangible (though extremely important) environmental factors such as the quality of public services or community co-operation resulting from arts programmes lack evidential weight when judged by conventional standards. Furthermore, the studies we examined largely failed to meet the most demanding methodological criteria, being unclear, for example, how the study populations were sampled, how respondents' views were measured, how many were lost to attrition, or making substantial claims of success in some areas without corroborating evidence, such as claims of better health. However, these criticisms are commonplace to the evaluation of many community based interventions, and in relative terms, we encountered many well structured and ambitious attempts to map change in highly complex situations. As can be seen from the above summary, self-reports of positive change were present, many substantial, across the majority of studies and in the majority of areas examined. These included:

- Reports of personal change - making new friends, being happier, more creative and confident, reduced sense of isolation, more people taking up training (Matarasso 1996b; Matarasso 1997; Williams 1997; Matarasso 1998).
- Reports of social change - more cross-cultural community understanding, stronger sense of 'locality', bringing different groups together, improvement in organisational skills (Matarasso 1996b; Matarasso 1997; William 1997; Jones 1998; Matarasso 1998; Kay and Watt 2000; Lowe 2000)
- Reports of economic change - impact of number of new jobs and numbers of people finding work, improved image of community helps being inward investment, increased sales of art work and more investment in arts programmes, with corresponding impact on employment (Matarasso 1996b; Matarasso 1997; William 1997; Matarasso with Chell 1998; Kay and Watt 2000).

- Educational change - some evidence of improved school performance (Matarasso 1998).

Few unintended negative consequences were mentioned, the exception being some minor complaints from children about tiredness after some events (Matarasso 1996b). Some areas seemed less affected than others, according to respondents' reports - fear of crime and local facilities in general were examples given - but this may also be taken as a warning to arts projects not to unreasonably raise expectations about what any programme, however well resourced, planned and executed, can achieve in isolation. There were also some reservations expressed about to what extent all sections of a community are reached by community based arts programmes (Jones 1998). However, the overall verdict on the evaluations we reviewed was highly positive, according to the reports of the people who took part.

7.4 Formal education sector evaluations

Table 7.2 summarises the conclusions of the eligible studies on arts programmes in formal education settings.

Table 7.2 - Formal education sector evaluations

| Authors | Methods | Notes |
|----------------|--|---|
| Cason, H. 1993 | Pre/post test, observation. Questionnaires and interviews with students and teachers (n = 890 students and 20 staff | In reading, most children made positive gains in relation to national norms; in writing all children made gains Positive responses from both children and teachers on attitude statement questionnaires. |

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| Costa-Giomi E. 1997 | Pre/post testing Treatment group= 63 children Control group=: 54 children. | Piano instruction did not affect language skills but treatment group did significantly better than control on test of spatial ability Mathematical computation also improved. |
| Fox and Gardiner 1997 | Pre/post testing. Control group used (n=96) | Children taking part in a music and art programme had equivalent reading scores after one year, even though the treatment group had poorer reading scores at the outset. Treatment group also made better progress in mathematics than control. |
| Haanstra 1996 | Meta-analysis of research on visual art education | Art education has a small effect on visual-spatial ability, but this is too small to be considered educationally significant. |

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| Hanshumaker 1980, | Literature review of effects of arts education | Arts instruction has no negative effects on any aspect of intellectual or social development and can have significant positive effects in some areas. |
| Kardash and Wright (1987) | Meta-analysis of research on creative drama | Creative drama activities can have a moderately positive effect on attainment in some areas. |
| Luftig R. 1995 | Pre/post testing. Control group used (n=320) | One group of children taking part in an arts programme performed significantly better in reading than did the control group. But a second treatment group's reading scores did not differ significantly from those of the control. In both treatment groups mathematics results were significantly better than in the control group. |

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| Pieterse and Marais 1995, | Pre/post testing. Control used (n=56) | Children involved in music programme made significantly better progress in reading but there were no significant differences between the treatment and control group in language skills tests, handwriting, English (as a foreign language) or mathematics. |
| Rauscher <i>et al.</i> 1997 | Pre/post testing. Control group used (n=78) | Young children given singing and piano instruction did significantly better on a test of spatial-temporal ability (doing a jigsaw) than children given singing lessons only, computer lessons and no additional lessons |

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| Weber <i>et al.</i> 1993 | Pre/post testing. Control used (n= 50 classes of students) | Children's language and mathematics scores largely unaffected by taking part in an enhanced music programme despite curriculum time being reduced for language teaching in the treatment classes. |
| Zulauf 1993 | Pre/post testing. Control used (n=397) | Results mixed, but few differences between the groups after 2 years. Treatment group did better on visual test, control group better on poetry and metaphor tests. Mathematics scores unaffected. |

7.5 Summary

The evaluation of interventions in the formal educational sector raised fewer methodological difficulties for the researcher and, as expected, the studies we reviewed were much more robust. Many of the eligible studies are discussed in Sharp (1998), who explores the key question as to whether arts programmes in schools result in transferability of learning between disciplines. Findings were more variable than those of the community based studies. This is expected in areas where standardised tests are more feasible. There were problems drawing firm conclusions from the results, the artistic media used were different in many cases, and the programmes were not standardised - that is, the same amount of teaching on the same subject delivered to children in the same way. However, the main conclusions from the studies we reviewed were:

- there is mixed evidence as to the impact of music programmes on language skills, with studies showing both improvement and no change. Greater effect may be associated with a broader arts curriculum. There is some evidence that mathematical skills improve.
- Creative drama may to have positive effects across a range of academic areas.
- There is some evidence that artistic programmes may result in gains in other academic areas, but it is unclear whether this is a more effective method of learning than simply having more intensive teaching in the respective area,

Sharp's conclusion to her review of 22 studies which examined the effects of arts teaching and learning and was conducted for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority at the National Foundation for Educational Research, is probably the most authoritative currently available:

Although there are interesting indications, there is simply insufficient consistent and compelling evidence at this time that arts education will necessarily lead to positive non-arts outcomes ... the case for

the broader outcomes of arts education should, therefore, be considered not-proven (Sharp 1998:4).

'Not proven', we should emphasise, means exactly what it says - the evidential weight is insufficient to make us confident that the impacts have occurred, but equally, cannot prove that they have not.

8. Conclusion

Studies which examine the impact of health, education and social care interventions tend to obey a certain rule of thumb in one respect: the more transparent, independent and methodologically sound the study, the lower the level of benefits observed. Studies that claim very large changes to individuals or communities, especially when the 'intervention' is neither very intense or lengthy - are generally exaggerating. We can see this tendency in the two types of studies reviewed above - the less robust studies of community based projects make greater claims for personal and social change than the educational interventions, which are more easily carried out and replicated. This was most noticeable in the two meta-analyses cited above (Kardash and Wright 1987; Haanstra 1996). When the results of large numbers of studies are considered together, more extreme findings tend to cancel each other out, with the results that more moderate positive or negative conclusions are reached. In the case of these meta-analyses, positive effects were found in both reviews, but these were not found in all areas tested, and in some case the effects, while positive, failed to reach statistical significance, that is, the effect size was very small.

However, a *lower* level of impact does not mean *no* impact, and certainly does not mean that the programme can be judged to have 'failed' in any sense. It is perhaps more important that community based arts programmes - and those who fund them - retain a sense of realism about what can be achieved, and what can not be achieved.

The methods and often the emotional dispositions of artists and evaluators frequently lie at very different intellectual poles. Artists may resist, even revile, classification, enumeration and quantification (Moriarty 1997), perceiving such approaches as hostile to the creative process. Evaluators engage with these issues as part of their trade. While attempting to retain as robust an approach as possible to the question of what constitutes sound evidence, we were sensitive to the particular difficulties of applying the evaluative principles widely accepted in health and social care to creative ventures. Both the outcomes expected as a condition of the scheme funding, and the general principles of sound evaluation require attention to be paid to measurable factors. However, we are familiar with the critique of positivism contained within Blake's 'mind-forged manacles' (a phrase not infrequently encountered in the literature we examined), and have taken note of the following warning:

It would be ironic if just as researchers and practitioners in other fields (such as health or organisational developments) are confidently expressing their appreciation of the limitations and fallibilities of scientific models of evaluation and moving to the language of narrative and metaphor, artists were to be terrified into the belief that information has to be translated into numbers to have any validity...shared learning can be rooted in emotions and passions as well as facts and figures, in visions and dreams as well as historical experience. (Moriarty, 1997:11)

The founder of the Arts and Social Change program at New College of California claimed that children involved in arts in high school score more than 50 points higher on their SAT (standardised attainment test). From 1990-94, students with 4 years of arts study scored 53 points higher on the verbal, and 35 points higher on the maths portion of the SAT than students with no arts classes. While expressing satisfaction at these findings, he also noted:

The artistic experience embraces intuition, ruthless exploration of the truth, and billions of subjectivities that represent the human experience. These are the gifts the arts have to offer movements for social change, and their value must be understood on their own terms (NALAA, 1996, cited in Phillips, 1997).

While the issue of transferability of learning is a legitimate research question, we can understand the frustration felt by artists and arts administrators when it is proposed that artistic experiences for children should be justified by their

contribution to other fields of learning, and similarly justified for communities on the basis of their having a positive effect on wider social problems. We have no doubt that the outcomes of arts based interventions can and should be subjected to robust evaluation, and the examples discussed above illustrate how this can be done. However, neither the simple measurement of inputs and outputs, not indeed the reduction of outcomes to quantitative measurements of personal satisfaction or growth are always sufficient to capture the collective, as well as the individual impact, of an artistic experience. Lingayah *et al.* (1996) discuss how indicators of cultural health can be agreed by a community, assessed over time, and if necessary revised, using the example of the Sustainable Seattle report, where quality of life factors are chosen and reviewed by the community itself. Useful - as opposed to accurate - evaluation reports need to consider not just the aggregated impact of arts programmes on individuals, but also their effect, and the extent to which it can be and is sustained, on the communities in which individuals live. While the studies reviewed above are essential to this process, it is clear that a broad range of evaluative techniques are necessary to capture the depth, as well as the breadth, of the encounter between communities and the creative arts.

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Website resources:

- Local Government Association: www.lga.gov.uk/lga/culture
- National Foundation for Educational Research: www.nfer.ac.uk
- Voluntary Arts Network: www.voluntaryarts.org
- Community Development Foundation: www.cdf.org.uk
- Arts Council of England: www.artscouncil.org.uk
- Arts Council of Scotland: www.sac.org.uk
- Arts Council of Wales: www.ccc-acw.org.uk
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland: www.artscouncil-ni.org/
- Regional Arts Boards: www.arts.org.uk
- DCMS: www.culture.gov.uk
- Arts and Business: www.aandb.org.uk
- Crafts Council: www.craftscouncil.org.uk
- Allison Research Index of Art and Design: www.ariad.co.uk
- Education Extra: www.educationextra.org.uk
- National Foundation for Youth Music: www.youthmusic.org.uk
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation: www.jrf.org.uk
- Comedia: www.comedia.org.uk
- National Network for Arts in Health: www.nnah.org.uk

Appendix 1 - Social impacts of participation in the arts

(from: Matarasso 1997:x)

Participation in the arts can:

1. Increase people's confidence and sense of self-worth
2. Extend involvement in social activity
3. Give people influence over how they are seen by others
4. Stimulate interest and confidence in the arts
5. Provide a forum to explore personal rights and responsibilities
6. Contribute to the educational development of children
7. Encourage adults to take up education and training opportunities
8. Help build new skills and work experience
9. Contribute to people's employability
10. Help people take up or develop careers in the arts
11. Reduce isolation by helping people to make friends
12. Develop community networks and sociability
13. Promote tolerance and contribute to conflict resolution
14. Provide a forum for intercultural understanding and friendship
15. Help validate the contribution of a whole community
16. Promote intercultural contact and co-operation
17. Develop contact between the generations
18. Help offenders and victims address issues of crime
19. Provide a route to rehabilitation and integration for offenders
20. Build community organisational capacity
21. Encourage local self-reliance and project management
22. Help people extend control over their own lives
23. Be a means of gaining insight into political and social ideas
24. Facilitate effective public consultation and participation

25. Help involve local people in the regeneration process
26. Facilitate the development of partnership
27. Build support for community projects
28. Strengthen community co-operation and networking
29. Develop pride in local traditions and cultures
30. Help people feel a sense of belonging and involvement
31. Create community traditions in new towns or neighbourhoods
32. Involve residents in environmental improvements
33. Provide reasons for people to develop community activities
34. Improve perceptions of marginalised groups
35. Help transform the image of public bodies
36. Make people feel better about where they live
37. Help people develop their creativity
38. Erode the distinction between consumer and creator
39. Allow people to explore their values, meanings and dreams
40. Enrich the practice of professionals in the public and voluntary sectors
41. Transform the responsiveness of public service organisations
42. Encourage people to accept risk positively
43. Help community groups raise their vision beyond the immediate
44. Challenge conventional service delivery
45. Raise expectations about what is possible and desirable
46. Have a positive impact on how people feel
47. Be an effective means of health education
48. Contribute to a more relaxed atmosphere in health centres
49. Help improve the quality of life of people with poor health
50. Provide a unique and deep source of enjoyment'