

A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK OF EVALUATION FOR ARTS ENGAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The emerging professional field of cultural development, that is, funded cultural activity led by individual artists, arts organisations and government, is increasingly undertaken to contribute to community wellbeing. Arts engagement, both receptive (in which participants receive the artistic process as audiences or consumers) and creative (in which participants actively make art), is a major aspect of this work. Host organisations and funders are more and more concerned to understand the impact of this work they lead or support. Yet arts leaders and those who manage their programmes experience a range of challenges in elucidating outcomes of this work comprehensively and with clarity. These challenges include the fact that outcomes are often categorised as either intrinsic or instrumental, with intrinsic outcomes frequently seen as problematic because they are considered immeasurable. Evaluation approaches largely focus on either social or economic outcomes, (often identified as instrumental outcomes), rather than taking a more holistic perspective, in which all aspects of human experience and the natural world are considered equally important and interconnected. Assessments of outcomes most often involve assumptions that activity is beneficial, with little regard given to the possibility of neutral or negative outcomes, or the proportion of benefit to costs. The perspectives of different stakeholders are frequently not reflected in the evaluation process.

This chapter proposes a solution to these dilemmas. It offers a holistic framework for evaluating the outcomes of arts engagement as an alternative to the paralysing intrinsic-instrumental binary; and opens the possibility for consideration of outcomes beyond social and economic. This framework is proposed as an effective approach for those seeking to contribute to positive community outcomes through their work, including local government professionals and arts organisations that have a community change agenda. It has particularly been developed for those who may not have specialist expertise, but who need to be monitoring and evaluating their arts engagement programmes and communicating to other non-specialists as part of quality professional services.

An outline of the literature on arts evaluation introduces the challenges in this field. This is followed by an overview of holistic models of development that offer theoretical ideas about how progress can be conceptualised. The framework for evaluation is then introduced, and its relationship to these conceptions of progress. The six outcome domains of the framework (cultural, personal wellbeing, social, economic, civic and ecological) are explained, as are the sub-domains within these, against which outcomes are considered. The process of using the framework to analyse and represent data is then discussed.

THE CHALLENGES OF EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF ARTS ENGAGEMENT

Evaluation of arts engagement is a burgeoning practice, with evaluation taking place more frequently across the spectrum from academic research to project related assessments, driven by funder requirements for accountability and increasing interest by programme hosts in effective practice. Francois Matarasso's (1996) treatise on arts programme evaluation was an early study with international resonance because it discussed the possibility of measuring social impacts of the arts that had previously been considered unassessable.

However, evaluation of arts engagement typically has a number of limitations because of practical and conceptual challenges. Scott and Soren point out the arts sectors'

[...] failure to find a framework that articulates its value in a cohesive and meaningful way, as well as by its neglect of the compelling need to establish a system for collecting evidence around a set of agreed indicators that substantiate value claims (Scott and Soren 2009, 198).

Evaluations of arts engagement are often critiqued for methodological weakness, with concerns including reliance on anecdote, small sample sizes, limited hypothesis testing, little attention to mechanisms and a lack of attention to longitudinal dimensions (McQueen-Thomson and Ziguras 2002; Mills and Brown 2003; McQueen-Thomson, James and Ziguras 2004). Recommendations for improvement include theory-based evaluation, approaches using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, longitudinal components, inclusion of participants' voice (Kelaher et al. 2007), a systematic approach and better measurement of outcomes (Hamilton et al. 2003; South 2004).

Stakeholders in arts engagement

A significant challenge for evaluation is that outcomes are often reported from the perspective of a limited sub-section of stakeholders. The perspectives of organisers have traditionally provided a major source of data for all types of arts engagement (McQueen-Thomson, James and Ziguras 2004). These are inadequate for the obvious reasons of bias. Michael Etherton and Tim Prenkti (2007, 144), for example, discuss the dilemma for people who make their living working in arts and development who may be 'understandably loath to peer too hard at the goose which lays at least silver, if not golden, eggs.'

Dunphy, K. (2015). A holistic framework of evaluation for arts engagement. I in L. MacDowall, M. Badham, E. Blomkamp & K. Dunphy (Eds), *Making Culture Count: the politics of cultural measurement*, (pp. 243-263). London: Palgrave. 3

In initiatives that focus on engagement in the arts, the stakeholders whose perspectives are most frequently considered are creative participants. In arts initiatives that focus on receptive participation, such as theatre or gallery attendance, strategies for considering impact on audiences are growing (Radbourne, Glow and Johanson 2010; Brown and Ratzkin 2012; CultureCounts 2014). However, fewer evaluation approaches apply integrated methods, where perspectives of a range of stakeholders are considered, which might include participants (the active art-makers), audience members (the receptive participants), investors, including arts leaders, other staff, funders and policy makers, and the wider community.

In other fields, awareness of the different perspectives and priorities of stakeholders has led to growth of methodologies that accord value to different worldviews. The methodology Most Significant Change (MSC) arose in the field of international development to address this issue. MSC provides a framework for systematic consideration of input from different stakeholders, from programme beneficiaries through to programme managers and funders (Davies and Dart 2005). MSC is now being used in evaluation of participatory arts programmes (Johnson and Stanley 2007; Laidlaw Foundation 2010).

What to measure and how to measure it

The next recurrent challenge for evaluation of arts engagement is the issue of what to measure and how to measure it. Evaluation strategies about arts participation have traditionally focused only on outputs, that is, the amount of opportunity provided (for example, as measured by numbers and diversity of participants), rather than outcomes, in terms of the contribution to desired goals (Matarasso 1996; Blomkamp 2011). This challenge is being addressed in other

fields as well, with growing concern to prioritise outcome over output evident, for example, in international development (Morra-Imas and Rist 2009) and local government (West and Cox 2009).

The debate about intrinsic and instrumental value

However, when outcomes are emphasised in arts evaluation, a further challenge is encountered - the complexities of measuring value and outcomes of the arts because of their perceived intangible nature. These difficulties are evident in the persistent tensions about the intrinsic versus instrumental valuing of the arts, where intrinsic value is considered to pertain to the quality of the arts experience itself and instrumental is seen as the contribution of the arts to other goals, such as social or economic progress (McCarthy et al 2004; Throsby 2001; Holden 2006).

McCarthy et al's essay, *Gifts of the Muse* (2004), on the value of the arts, continues to be influential even after more than a decade. These authors argue that there are intrinsic effects of the arts that are satisfying in themselves and therefore preclude the need for any other justification. They elaborate three types of intrinsic effects. The first are immediate benefits such as pleasure and captivation; followed by growth in individual capacities such as enhanced empathy for other people and cultures and understanding of the world that results from participation over time. Thirdly, they see benefits that accrue largely to the public, including the social bonds created when individuals share their arts experiences through reflection and discourse, and the expression of common values and community identity through artworks commemorating events significant to a nation's (or people's) experience (2004, 56). Thus, while arguing that an overemphasis on instrumental benefits undervalues

the arts, these authors are positing a range of instrumental benefits that could be classified as personal wellbeing, social, cultural and civic.

David Throsby (2001) proposes a different perspective of the intrinsic value of the arts, which John Holden (2006) confirms as a valuable conceptualisation. Although Throsby was concerned more with the value of the artworks (the product) than the experience of those viewing or making it in this categorisation, it can still provide a useful perspective for the current discussion, as there are few other such detailed explications of intrinsic value. His six categories of intrinsic value, (offered below in summary), are:

- *aesthetic value*:...properties of beauty, harmony, form and other aesthetic characteristics
- *spiritual value*:...interpreted in a formal religious context, or secularly based, referring to inner qualities shared by all human beings
- *social value*:...the work may convey a sense of connection with others, ...contribute to a comprehension of the nature of society and a sense of identity and place
- *historical value*:...how the work reflects the conditions of life at the time it was created, and how it illuminates the present by providing a sense of continuity with the past
- *symbolic value*:...embraces the nature of the meaning conveyed by the work and its value to the consumer
- *authenticity value*:...that the work is the real, original and unique artwork which it is represented to be (2001, 28-29).

A contrasting view of the benefits of arts participation is instrumentalist, in which the value of the arts is measured by agendas considered to be outside the arts, such as economic or social goals. The economic benefits generated by arts participation are seen as the most salient measure by many researchers and funders. The UNESCO Cultural Statistics framework, (UNESCO 2009) for example, largely focuses on economic inputs and outputs of cultural activity. O'Brien's (2010) comprehensive literature review commissioned by the UK government concluded that economic value is the only useful frame for evaluation of the arts as it provides a major decision point for governments. While economic valuation has been a dominant discourse for decades, and continues to be prioritised, there are growing perspectives that not all value to human beings should be measured financially.

Another prevalent view identified as instrumental considers the value of the arts in terms of contribution to social outcomes, including health, wellbeing and social inclusion (see for example McQueen-Thomson et al (2004); Barraket (2005); Barraket and Kaiser 2007).

Agencies such as the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation in Australia prioritise the social dimension of arts participation through a focus on health and wellbeing impacts. Kelaher et al. (2007) evaluated the impact of established Australian community arts companies on goals of social inclusion and prevention of discrimination and violence. They reported significant positive changes in mental health and wellbeing of participating individuals and communities. The contributions of arts participation to civic engagement goals is another form of instrumentalism explored by Stern and Seifert (2009) and Mulligan and Smith (2010), who each used qualitative methods to confirm that participation in the arts can contribute to a positive engagement of citizens with their communities.

Reframing intrinsic and instrumental value into a holistic framework

Many of the perceived challenges understanding outcomes of arts engagement relate to the category of intrinsic value, which, as discussed earlier, is perceived as intangible and therefore immeasurable. Cultural analyst Jon Hawkes responded to this dilemma by positing that intrinsic and instrumental categorisations are only necessary because the appropriate instrumental measures have not been considered. Instead, he proposed that almost all value of arts engagement is instrumental and can be categorised within one of the four domains of social equity, economic viability, environmental responsibility and cultural vitality (Hawkes 2010). He argued that arts, and all other areas of public policy and investment, should be subject to evaluation against those four domains because they are equally important aspects of a meaningful and sustainable human existence (Hawkes 2001).

While measurement of social and economic impacts of arts engagement is not new, two of the categories Hawkes posited are conceptually more recent: *environmental sustainability* and *cultural vitality*. Assessments of environmental impact are being undertaken with increasing frequency in many areas of public endeavour, as awareness of the interrelationship of the natural environment and human activity grows. While environmental considerations are not yet commonplace in arts evaluation, Hawkes argued that the environmental domain needs to be part of any assessment of outcomes, including those related to arts initiatives.

Hawkes' most significant contribution is the addition of a *cultural vitality* dimension, which he posited as an essential aspect of any holistic framework for planning or evaluation. At the time of his early writing in 2001, this was an infrequently considered domain of outcome assessment, with culture generally not considered or subsumed under other headings, such as social. While culture is increasingly being acknowledged as significant, it is still less frequently included in measurement frameworks because of the perception, (as discussed

earlier about the intrinsic value of the arts), that its intangible nature renders it immeasurable (McGillivray 2009). A second challenge, particularly prevalent within the arts sector, is the common use of ‘arts’ and ‘culture’ as interchangeable terms. This practice makes measuring the impact of arts on culture tautological, and therefore problematic.

Arguments for the intrinsic value of the arts (or any other concept) are particularly risky because of their circular nature. A proposition that a concept or activity is valuable by its very nature, that is, that arts participation is valuable because it is *arts*, must be seen as flawed. However, if the arts are seen as one dimension of a much broader dimension of culture, then it is possible to consider the cultural impact of arts initiatives. In so doing, the troubling intrinsic/instrumental dichotomy can be addressed. A strong argument for the value of any initiative can only be made against a set of shared ideas about what is valuable. What do we value, and therefore what do we need to measure, about the outcomes of arts engagement, or any other activity?

If Hawkes’ framework was applied, almost all of the concepts that Holden considered as *intrinsic* contributions of the arts could be reframed as *instrumental*. Holden’s (2001, 28-29) ‘aesthetic, spiritual, historical, symbolic and authenticity’ values could be considered within the *cultural* domain, when culture is defined broadly to include aesthetics, values and way of life. ‘Social’ value could be considered within the social domain. Aspects that McCarthy et al considered as intrinsic, such as ‘enhanced empathy for other people and cultures’, and ‘social bonds’ (McCarthy et al 2004, 56), fit the social domain well.

McCarthy et al’s (2004) ‘pleasure and captivation’, ‘expression of common values and community identity’ and ‘understanding of the world’ are not so easily categorised within

Hawkes' four pillar model. However, another model related to Hawkes', but including two additional dimensions offers a solution. Community development theorist Jim Ife offers a model of integrated community development that has six categories: the same four as Hawkes, of social, cultural, environmental and economic, but also two additional categories: civic engagement and personal-spiritual wellbeing (Ife 1995). If these two categories are added to Hawkes' four dimensions they allow for categorisation of 'pleasure and captivation' within the personal wellbeing domain, and 'expression of common values and community identity' and 'understanding of the world' within the civic engagement domain.

Holistic approaches to wellbeing

Frameworks for human wellbeing and development are increasingly holistic, connecting all aspects of human experiences and the natural world. The conception of an integrated approach to local development and planning was evident in Australia as long ago as 1993: the Integrated Local Area Planning approach recommended 'a holistic view of local areas, linking related physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural issues rather than treating them separately' (ALGA 1993, 5). The Circles of Sustainability model for assessment of cities' function currently being applied in many developed and developing countries acknowledges culture, politics, economy and ecology as interlinked dimensions within a larger framework of social sustainability (Global Compact Cities Program 2013).

Community Indicators Victoria (CIV), is a research organisation that structures its work with indicators of community wellbeing for local government in Australia within a framework of five domains. These correspond perfectly with the frameworks of Hawkes and Ife discussed above. CIV's five domains, with the social including personal wellbeing, offer the additional

advantage of a clearly explicated desired future in each policy domain. This framework measures achievements in local government towards a desired future of *culturally rich and vibrant communities* (cultural domain), *healthy safe and inclusive communities* (social domain), *dynamic resilient local communities* (economic domain), *democratic and engaged communities* (civic domain) and *sustainable built and natural environments* (environmental domain) (CIV 2014).

Influences from these broader community wellbeing frameworks are not yet strongly evident in arts evaluation. Few arts evaluation approaches take an integrated approach to outcomes measurement, where dimensions of cultural, economic, social and other values are considered. The conundrum of measurement of the values considered intrinsic, and therefore intangible and immeasurable, continue to confound systematic approaches. However, if integrated models were used to categorise outcomes of arts participation, the need for the problematic conception of intrinsic value would be eliminated. Integrated models would also connect thinking about arts participation with emerging frameworks for human progress.

One significant recent exception to the lack of integration in arts evaluation is Trudi Cooper, Susanne Bahn and Margaret Giles' (2012) report of an indigenous arts centre that considered dimensions of economic, social, artistic and personal wellbeing in making assessment of outcomes. They employed a complex set of measures to address these issues, drawing from models, including Return on Investment (ROI), which measured outcomes from economic perspectives (Giles 2009) and Indicators of Community Strength for social outcomes (Pope 2011). While these models provide theory-based methods for assessing impacts of an arts centre, the authors acknowledge the challenge of lack of interaction between the models.

Considerations about return on investment are increasingly included in policy and decision-making to provide assessment of effective use of resources (Farris et al. 2010). While traditional uses of ROI focus on economic return on economic investment, this is being challenged by wider conceptions of Social Return on Investment, which examines economic returns of social investment (Nicholls et al. 2009). Again, more integrated approaches have not yet been applied. As yet, few evaluations, in arts or any other field, consider the amount of change proportionate to investment across a range of domains.

Qualitative and quantitative data issues

In addition to all of the aforementioned challenges, a further limitation for arts evaluation is imposed by the use of qualitative data, which is most commonly used. While qualitative research provides detailed information, lack of quantification makes it difficult to determine amount of change or benefit that has occurred. The complex findings from qualitative research can also be difficult to express in ways that are accessible to those who make decisions and need concise and compelling information founded on robust data.

Dee Jupp, Sohel Ali and Carlos Barahona's (2009) model for quantifying qualitative data offers an interesting response to this dilemma, as it was developed to measure empowerment, a concept, like the intrinsic value of the arts, that is considered problematic because of its amorphous nature. Some of the strategies Jupp et al. suggest, such as development of project indicators by project participants and use of symbols to reflect direction and degree of change, may offer a way forward for arts evaluation as well. Contemporary data visualisation techniques are being used to represent data in interesting and engaging ways (see for example,

Ware 2012), and are emerging in schema for evaluating audiences' judgements about the quality of arts performances (WolfBrown 2014; CultureCounts 2014).

Considering neutral or negative outcomes

Yet another challenge for arts evaluation is that positive change is often assumed (Dunphy and Ware 2015). Few evaluations critically consider the possibility of no change, negative change, or change that occurs that is not expected (Rosenberg 2008; Galloway 2009).

Evaluation frameworks like those proposed by Linda Morra-Imas and Ray Rist (2009) for international development recommend consideration of the full range of directions: positive and negative, direct and indirect, intended and unintended change.

When these issues are combined with a lack of consideration of the experiences of different stakeholders, it can be difficult to determine as to how much change occurred for whom, or from whose perspective. This leads to difficulty in understanding whether resources were used wisely. If change occurred, but only for a small group, or only a modest amount of change, for example, questions can be asked about the adequacy of the outcome given the investment of resources. Solutions to these problems are proposed in the sections below.

A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF ARTS ENGAGEMENT

To address the challenges discussed above, a holistic framework for considering and representing outcomes of arts engagement is offered. This focus on outcomes for participants applies to many entities whose mission or governing legislation includes a quality of life mandate, such as local government in Australia (Blomkamp 2014). Participatory arts

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programmes led by individual artists and arts organisations are often supported by funding programs that seek improvement of both individual and community life experiences. For example, in Australia, the Australia Council for the Arts (2014) recognises both artistic and social outcomes of arts engagement activities funded by their Community Partnerships programme, and the US National Endowment for the Arts includes ‘the strengthening of communities through the arts’ as a priority for its funding programmes (NEA 2014).

Elements of change in the framework

The framework offers a method of representing evaluation findings across three elements of change: *perspectives of change* (who perceived and experienced the change); *dimensions of change* (what type of change occurred); and *degree of change* (how much change occurred), to arrive at an overall assessment of project outcomes.

Perspectives of change

In this framework, data is first categorised according to the *perspectives* of different stakeholders. This strategy is informed by methodologies such as Most Significant Change (Dart and Davies 2003), as discussed above, which acknowledge that different types of stakeholders, from beneficiaries to programme staff, manager and funders may all have different, yet valuable, perspectives about the outcomes they are seeking from an initiative, and that the initiative might impact them in different ways. Consequently, these outcomes and impacts should be considered in evaluations. Figure 1 below offers a pictorial representation of the different types of stakeholders and their proportionate significance in an arts initiative. A project might primarily be expected to impact participants (creative participants) and audience members (receptive participants), but investors (artistic leaders,

the host organisation and funders) and the public (wider community) may also be impacted, and each of these groups might perceive or experience outcomes differently. Before the activity, decisions could be made about which stakeholder groups the initiative is intended to impact. An image could be created with circles adjusted in size to reflect that decision.

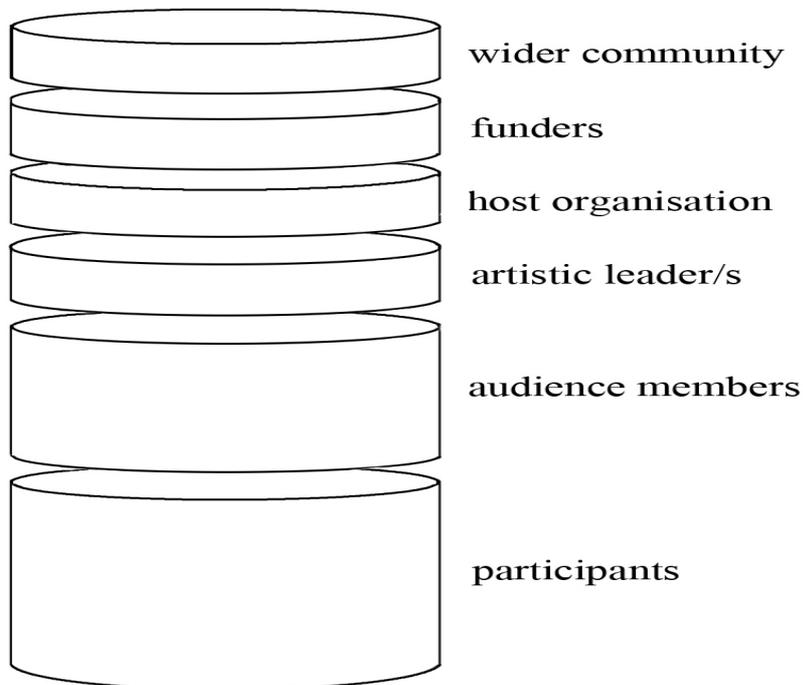


Figure 15.1: Stakeholders in arts engagement initiatives

Once the initiative has been completed and evaluation findings made, a second image might be created informed by those findings, to depict which groups the initiative actually impacted and how much impact was made. Comparisons could be made between the two images to determine how closely the initiative met its goals in terms of stakeholder groups impacted. Figure 15.2 below offers a depiction of the proportionate impact of a youth theatre project for peace-building in Timor-Leste, (documented in Dunphy 2011) on stakeholder groups. The image and accompanying excerpts from interviews show, for example, that the project made the largest impact on creative participants, that there were no funder stakeholders, and that some impact was made on people who had not attended any part of the project, such as family members of young participants.

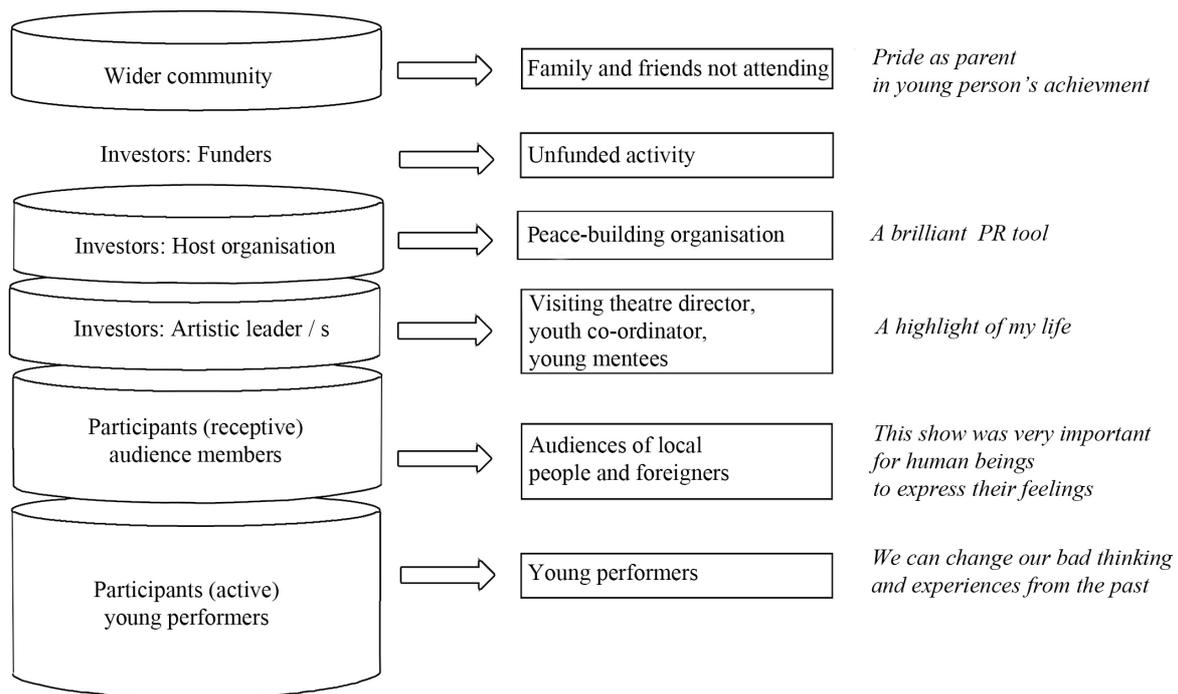


Figure 15.2: Impact of a youth theatre project on stakeholder groups

Domains of change

Next, data gathered about outcomes of an initiative are categorised within six domains: personal wellbeing, cultural, social, civic, economic and ecological. These domains are informed by all of the holistic schemas of wellbeing discussed above, but are particularly aligned with CIV's domains and specified desired futures (CIV 2014). There are also two significant differences from the CIV schema. The *personal wellbeing* domain is listed separately from the social, because of the priority on outcomes for individuals in most arts engagement initiatives. This domain has the desired outcome of *flourishing and fulfilled individuals*, as informed by wellbeing theory (see for example Seligman 2012). The term *ecological* rather than *environmental* is used to identify that domain, as recommended by the Global Cities Compact Program (2013), because it includes consideration of living creatures, including humans, as part of the natural world.

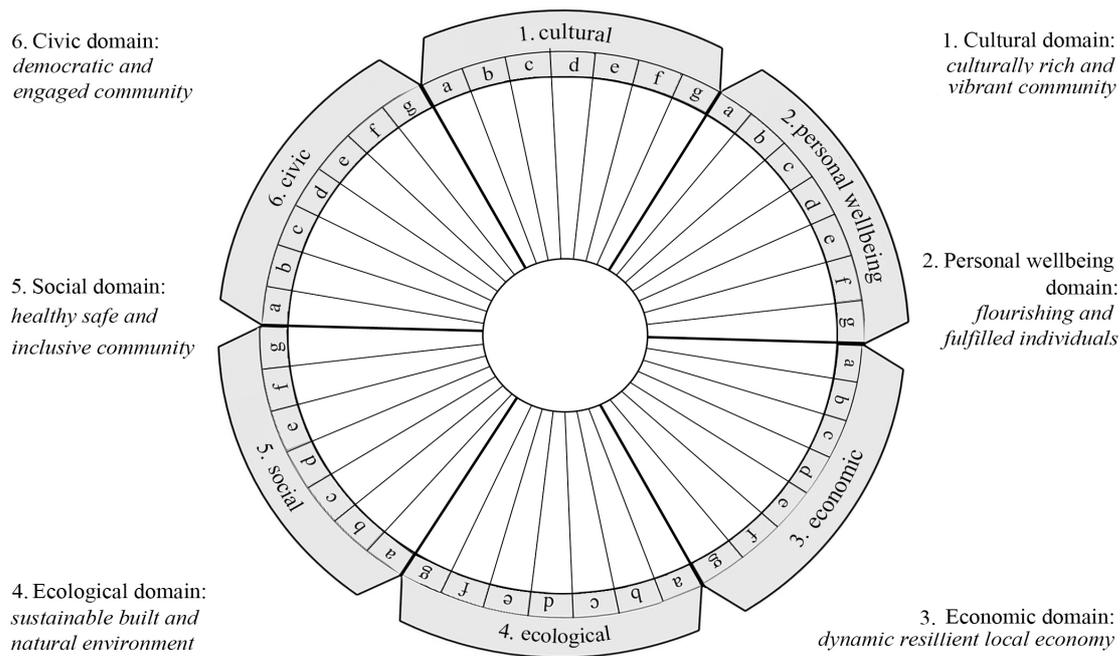


Figure 15.3: Domains of change depicted as a connected whole

These domains are divided again into seven subdomains, which cover the major types of change that might be expected from arts engagement in each area. These subdomains have been developed specifically for this framework but are informed by theory from diverse sources. The cultural sub-domains, for example, have been informed by literature about impact and value of the arts as discussed above and UCLG (2010); the personal wellbeing domain by wellbeing theory, such as Ostroff, O’Toole and Kropf (2007) and DECS (2010); the social, civic and ecological sub-domains by CIV (2014) and GCCP (2013) and the economic sub-domain by UNESCO (2009, 2014) and Statistics Working Group (2010). More detailed information about these sub-domains, including theory that underpins each one, is outside the scope of this article, but is available from Dunphy (2015). Table 15.1 below lists the six domains with the relevant desired futures and seven sub-domains for each.

1. Cultural domain: <i>culturally rich and vibrant communities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. sense of connection to past (history, heritage, identity) b. respect for diversity and difference c. aesthetic pleasure experienced d. knowledge generated and shared e. expression of communal meanings (including spiritual, transpersonal connection) f. creative stimulation engendered g. opportunity for creative or symbolic expression
2. Personal wellbeing: <i>flourishing and fulfilled individuals</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. experience of pleasure, fun b. emotional wellbeing c. sense of physical and emotional safety d. confidence in capabilities e. identity affirmation f. self-awareness g. opportunity for emotional expression
3. Economic domain: <i>dynamic and resilient local communities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. employment-enhancing skill development b. individual economic impact c. direct employment d. indirect employment e. visitor direct expenditure f. visitor indirect expenditure g. local business stimulation
4. Ecological domain: <i>sustainable built and natural environments</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. positive sense of place b. contribution to neighbourhood character c. positive connection to the natural world d. awareness of environmental issues e. carbon emissions generated f. use of resources g. priority on local resources
5. Social domain: <i>healthy safe and inclusive communities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. equality of opportunity for all people in the community b. recognition from valued others c. social capital - bonding (positive connection to like others) d. social capital - bridging (positive connection to unlike others) e. inter-generational connections (positive connection between people of different generations) f. equality of men and women in social life g. friendships developed
6. Civic domain: <i>democratic and engaged communities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. sense of community belonging b. active citizenship c. membership of local organisations and decision-making bodies d. opportunity have a say on important issues e. sense of engagement in political processes f. sense of a positive future g. collaboration between groups in the community

Table 15.1: Domains and sub-domains of change

An evaluation strategy for any initiative might consider outcomes across one or more of the domains. Impact in the cultural domain is a given as arts programmes are by their nature cultural activities, with other domains having greater or lesser significance depending on the focus of the activity. Users might select all of the sub-domains or just a selection of these against which to evaluate relevant aspects of a particular project. Additional sub-domains might also be developed by individual users to measure specific aspects of an initiative not covered by these more generic sub-domains. For example, in the youth theatre project in Timor-Leste discussed previously, the goal of trauma resolution for individual participants was a priority for project leaders and participants (Dunphy 2011). In that project evaluation, a subdomain of *resolution of trauma* was substituted for another sub-domain in the *personal wellbeing* domain, to allow for measurement of that desired outcome.

Degree of change

The next consideration is the assessment of *degree* of change: how much of what type of change occurred? The framework has a nine-point rating scale that offers the possibility of reporting change along a spectrum from *most negative*, through *neutral/no change* to *most positive change*. This offers a possibility for systematic measurement, even for questions that require subjective judgments, such as *pleasure and fun experienced*.

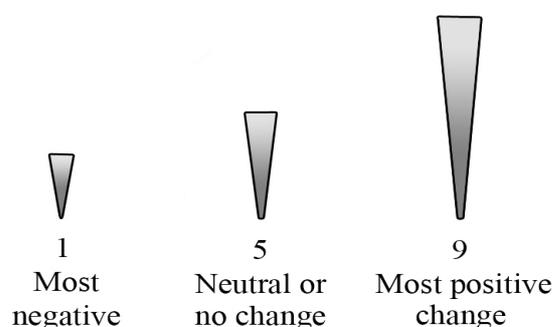


Figure 15.4: Legend: Degree of change

To obtain scores for each sub-domain, three different options are possible. The first is a standard quantitative approach of surveys or interviews with project stakeholders, using the sub-domains formed as questions. For instance, participants can be asked: ‘how much aesthetic pleasure did you experience as a result of your participation?’ Individuals can then use the rating scale to select the option that best represents their experience from 1 (*most aesthetically displeasing experience possible*) to 5 (*neutral or no aesthetic pleasure*) to 9 (*most aesthetically pleasing experience possible*).

While participants’ self-report of their aesthetic pleasure is obviously appropriate, it also methodologically sound for participants to report their experience on a range of other scores including *personal wellbeing*. Precedents for individuals’ self-report or opinions scored in a rating scale being a robust approach include clinical interviews that are well established as a method of mental health diagnosis (Groth-Marnat 2009) and self-reported symptoms judged using a rating scale that are considered valid in medical diagnosis (Treasure 2011).

Scores from individual respondents could be calculated to present an overall assessment of respondents’ experience, with options including mean (average of all respondents’ score); mode (most frequently occurring score); median (the middle of the range) and range (lowest to highest scores).

This framework also offers a second possibility, where qualitative data, for example, collected through interviews or artistic responses, can be converted into a quantitative form and represented pictorially in this framework. The judgement of experts, in this case, the evaluators familiar with the data could be used to complete this process. After deep

immersion in the qualitative data, the evaluators can choose a numerical value that best
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represents the data as they perceive it. In the theatre project documented in Figure 15.2, the artist's report that her involvement in the project was 'a highlight of the life' could be scored a 9 on the sub-domain of *pleasure and fun experienced*, even though the artist herself did not offer a numerical rating. The evaluator could also make a numerical assessment of the sum of all data provided by respondents. For example, how strong a sense of connection to past (history, heritage, identity) overall did respondents express in interviews?. This process of turning quantitative data into a numerical form is robust, a desired feature of effective evaluation, rather than anecdotal, for which much arts evaluation is criticised, because it is a systematic process, based in data and reliant on expert judgement.

A third possibility is the use of experts' assessments as data. In this form of evaluation, the mean score of assessments provided by experts offers an affordable and valid data collection process. The Global Cities Compact Program (GCCP 2013) offers a precedent for the validity of this approach, with experts' assessment used to measure a wide range of issues across a four-dimensional spectrum (culture, ecology, politics, economy within the larger domain of society) in an indicator initiative that has been implemented successfully across many countries over several years. Outcomes could be considered proportionate to the possibility offered by the project: that is, the best possible achievement for an activity of this type would be scored a 9. This decision about what would be the best achievement for a project of that type could include consideration of resources used (staff and volunteer time, financial, infrastructure, etc), as well as the particulars of the project: duration, context and skills of leaders and participants.

Base-line and post-test

This model offers the possibility of a range of measures most often missing from qualitative research. It would ideally be used in the planning phase of an activity, to identify the salient domains and sub-domains intended to be impacted through the programme. A baseline or pre-test (where we are before we start on any particular activity or initiative) could be determined using available data, or expert opinions. The prediction of intended change (where we hope to be after the initiative) could be undertaken in similar steps, thus ensuring that both intended and unintended outcomes are considered in evaluation, as recommended by Morra-Imas and Rist (2009).

Two final steps would be the assessment of the situation once the activity had occurred (outcome), and after a period of time, if assessment of longer-term change (impact) was sought. These could be measured against intended change, to determine whether or not the outcomes were as expected.

The process of specifying the type and amount of change desired prior to an activity offers the possibility that outcomes might be more clearly defined and deliberately sought. Making judgements prior to an activity could also address the challenges discussed earlier of arts projects that lack clarity of purpose and focus on desired outcomes. The process of identifying a baseline, or pre-test, and comparing that with change that is achieved, supports judgement about return on investment, with outcomes proportionate to investment. All of these practices are now commonly used in other fields and would contribute to a desired evidence-based approach in evaluating arts engagement.

Application of the framework

At the point of writing, this framework has been demonstrated and discussed with more than 400 cultural development and evaluation professionals in presentations and workshops led by this author, in three states of Australia and USA and Europe. Consistently positive responses have been received, indicating the framework's potential for addressing evaluation needs of these professionals. Recommendations for future research include the formal trialling of the system with practitioners. A trial of the consistency of numerical ratings of qualitative data between evaluators would indicate the reliability and validity of the suggested methods of quantifying qualitative data.

Figures 15.5 below show results of the application of this framework to the youth theatre project discussed previously. As demonstrated in Figure 15.2, this project achieved most of the outcomes desired by stakeholders, particularly young creative participants, but also audience members and wider community members. Positive outcomes were strongest in the *personal wellbeing*, *social* and *cultural* domains, as expected by project leaders, and depicted in this image by many closely correlated *expected* and *actual* outcomes in those domains. Several unexpected positive outcomes occurred, such as high level of *bridging social capital* (connection between Timorese participants and foreign workers and visitors in the audience depicted in sub-domain 4e) and the *work-related skill* of English language learning (depicted in sub-domain 3a).

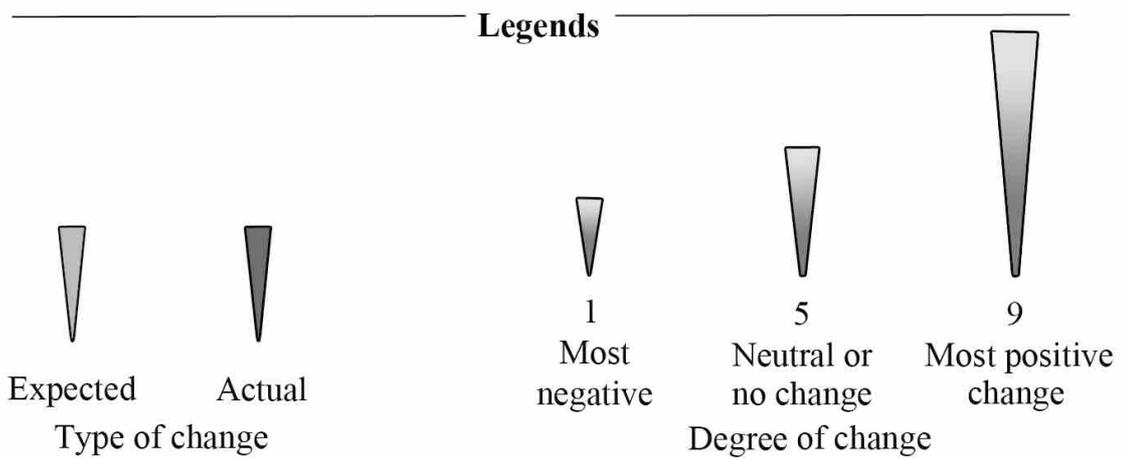
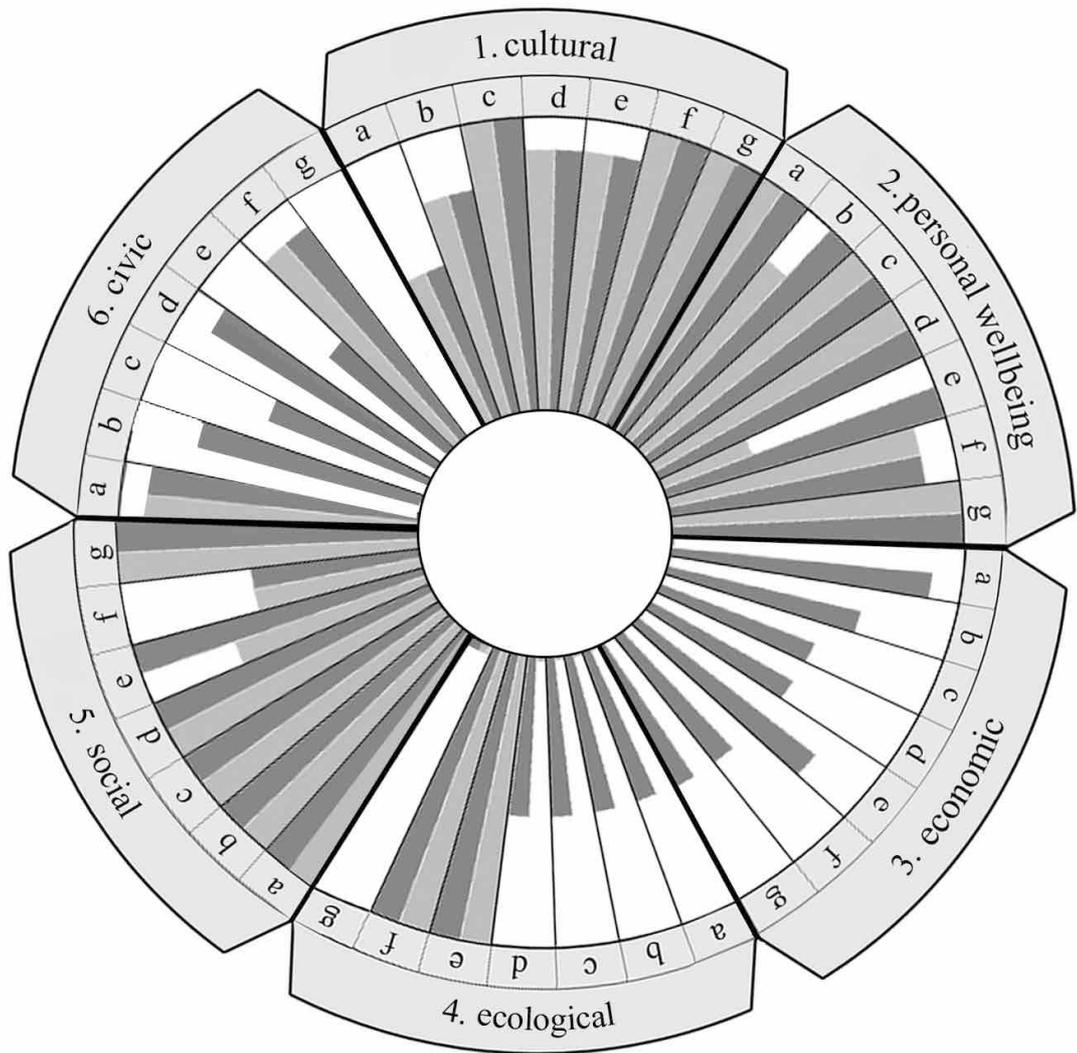


Figure 15.5: Outcomes of a youth theatre project across six domains

CONCLUSION

This chapter has addressed several of the most salient challenges in evaluation of arts engagement, particularly how value can be determined and measured. It has taken a fresh look at the ongoing dilemma of *intrinsic and instrumental* value, rejecting the classification of the value of the arts as *intrinsic* and therefore intangible, and suggesting instead that all outcomes of arts engagement can be described and measured. Drawing from holistic models of community development and sustainability including Hawkes (2001), Ife (2002) and CIV (2014), these outcomes are classified into six domains of personal wellbeing, cultural, social, economic, civic and ecological. The value of the arts often considered as intrinsic, including the aesthetic, creative, historic, symbolic and spiritual dimensions, can largely be reconsidered as cultural within this framework. Enjoyment or pleasure generated through arts participation, most often considered as an intrinsic value, is included as a measurable subdomain within the personal wellbeing domain.

The framework allows for consideration of different perspectives of a range of stakeholders, as recommended in participatory approaches to development. It also enables consideration of outcomes that are not as expected or desired, across directions of change that include positive and negative, and intended and unintended.

The framework addresses a further challenge for qualitative researchers in the need to distil easily digestible results from large amounts of data. A pictorial representation of outcomes of arts engagement offers a quantitative perspective on qualitative data. This allows complex qualitative data to be more accessible and easily interpreted. It is intended to assist managers, funders and policy makers better determine the impact of the work they support and thereby make more judicious decisions about use of resources.

Acknowledgement: The author acknowledges a scholarship from Deakin University of Melbourne, Australia and supervision from Dr Phil Connors and Dr. Max Kelly that supported the PhD research in which ideas discussed in this chapter were borne. The case study discussed was part of this PhD research as well.

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