demonstrating the value of arts in criminal justice

Arts ALLIANCE

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This booklet draws on other materials developed by Charities Evaluation Services, including *Assessing Change: Developing and Using Monitoring Tools*.

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Momentum at Dance United London Academy | Photo © Stephanie Sian Smith

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All Walks of Life, Art workshop group, HM Prison, Peterborough | Photo courtesy of Koestler Trust

Foreword

The Arts Alliance believes that art has the power to transform lives and help people in our criminal justice system turn away from crime and lead purposeful lives back in the community. Working alongside Charities Evaluation Services we aim to enable arts practitioners to tell those stories of transformation. This will help organisations explain, develop and increase the quality of their services.

More and more the work that the voluntary and community sector undertakes is being scrutinised by government departments, academic institutions, independent funders and the general public. Arts organisations are increasingly asking, 'What are we achieving?' and 'What makes this work?' Importantly, they are also asking, 'How can we improve what we do?'.

As well as the expert advice provided by Charities Evaluation Services we have involved local arts organisations in developing this guide. Clinks is thankful to the Ministry of Justice, Arts Council England and the Monument Trust for their funding, advice and support all of which made this guide possible. We know this will give local organisations a useful resource when thinking about how to collect evidence of their service's true value.

Nathan Dick | Arts Alliance Manager | Clinks

Charities Evaluation Services has been helping voluntary and community organisations to monitor and evaluate their work for 20 years. We know that, with few resources and little time, people struggle to fill in forms and collect information if they feel their efforts will be of little value.

This is why we feel that monitoring and evaluation should always start by making explicit the information that will be useful to those collecting it and be based in an understanding of how monitoring and evaluation will benefit them and their users. We also argue that there should be clarity between those providing the service and those investing in it about what is possible for a project or programme to achieve within the scope of its activities and what sort of assessment methods are realistic and credible.

We have seen the benefits to organisations as they have developed their own self-evaluation and been better able to reflect on their own work and to communicate their achievements externally. Only too often arts organisations are collecting data but failing to put it together, to analyse it and to use it. This publication, read together with Clinks' *Demonstrating Effectiveness*, will provide guidance and encouragement for arts organisations working in the criminal justice system to develop a more systematic, coherent and useful approach to their monitoring and evaluation.

Andy Gregg | Chief Executive | Charities Evaluation Services

This guide

Arts-based projects have a successful record of working with offenders in prison, and with ex-offenders and those at risk of offending in the community; there is a growing body of research suggesting that arts projects can have a positive effect on offenders – on their emotional and psychological well-being, on their ability to control anger and aggression, on their engagement with further education and training and potentially reducing their risk of offending.[1] Many voluntary organisations continue to be better at describing what they do than the difference they are making in people's lives. But now, more than ever, individual arts organisations need to provide robust evidence of their own clarity of purpose and their effectiveness. This will equip them more convincingly to demonstrate the value of their work to government, funders and philanthropic givers.

The Clinks publication, *Demonstrating Effectiveness*,[2] provides an introduction to the systems and approaches required to monitor and evaluate the services offered, and the changes brought about, by voluntary sector organisations working in the criminal justice system. This publication builds on, and should be read together with, that guide. It provides practical tips to help organisations move from making their desired effect explicit to developing methods of capturing and demonstrating achievements; this includes how to analyse, interpret and use the data collected to make a convincing case.

The primary audience for this guide is arts organisations that are working in a criminal justice system setting, although its principles and guidance will be useful for other voluntary sector organisations both in the criminal justice system and outside it. It will be particularly useful for those who have responsibility for self-evaluation – for developing methods of data collection, for carrying out monitoring and evaluation and for using the information both internally to improve services and externally for reporting to funders and investors. It will also be useful for organisations that carry out internal monitoring as part of an external evaluation, or that work collaboratively with an external consultant to evaluate their work.

1. Research has shown that arts projects can be used to engage and deliver across the seven pathways identified by NOMS in reducing reoffending. See Caulfield L, Wilson D and Wilkinson D, *Continuing Positive Change in Prison and the Community*, Birmingham City University, Birmingham.

2. Cupitt, S (2010) *Demonstrating Effectiveness*, Charities Evaluation Services for Clinks, York.

Monitoring and evaluation

This guide emphasises the key differences between monitoring and evaluation, and how they work together.

Monitoring is about collecting information that will help you answer questions about your project. It is important that this information is collected in a planned, organised and routine way. You can use the information you gather to report on your project and to help you evaluate.

Evaluation is about using monitoring and other information to make judgements about your project. It is about giving a value to your work.

These links can be seen in a number of ways:

- A monitoring report presents collated information with limited analysis or interpretation; an evaluation report contains sufficient evidence to provide findings against critical questions and to demonstrate and interpret processes, progress or success.
- Monitoring should rest on a clear understanding about what you want to know – so evaluative questions need to be clear from the start.
- Monitoring information loses value if it does not relate to evaluation questions.
- The strength of your evaluation will depend on the quality of your monitoring.
- When you bring together your monitoring data as part of an evaluation, in order to develop or interpret the data, you may need to collect more data, for example through reflective interviews with participants, sessional artists, project staff and volunteers.

In order to learn from your work and improve what you do, and to effectively demonstrate the value of your programmes and to share good practice, you will need to evaluate – rather than simply to monitor.

From the exhibition *Inside out* by the Irene Taylor Trust 'Music in Prisons | © Lizzie Coombes.

The contents of this guide

This guide is written in two parts.

Part One details good practice that will help you reflect on your work and deliver convincing evidence of your value. This includes:

- Focusing your evaluation around key questions and indicators, with a specific reference to outcomes, to illustrate the difference you are making
- Getting better evidence through credible data collection methods, using a mix of methods and tools, and improving your response rate
- The ethical issues that need to be addressed in collecting, storing and using your data
- Drawing your data together, analysing it and reporting it effectively.

Part Two provides some useful resources:

- Examples of tools that have been used to good effect and how organisations have used them
- Appendices illustrating evaluation approaches mentioned in Part One
- Information about sources of further help and information
- A reading list
- A glossary of terms.

Part One

A Just Act – A Clean Break production, March 2010 | Photo © Ian Cuthbert / www.cuthbertdesign.com

1.1 Focusing your monitoring and evaluation

Your monitoring and evaluation activities should have an explicit focus, guided by your own needs and the requirements of the agency commissioning the project and your funders. A number of questions will clarify the information that is most important for you to collect. You may need to know:

- How participants experience the project
- About the quality or excellence of the work that you are doing
- Individual progress data about each participant to help you to work with them more successfully
- What changes or benefits the project brings about
- How the work you do supports or works together with other interventions.

Do you want *qualitative* data? Will you be able to do your work more effectively if you gather narrative, descriptive data about the effects of your work on users? Will this information be convincing to your funders?

Do you want *quantitative* data? If so, should that data relate to Ministry of Justice outcomes and targets, such as reoffending rates, employment or stable accommodation? Or are you looking to put numbers to less tangible changes, such as more confidence, a different perspective, or more self-esteem, which may contribute to reducing re-offending?

Qualitative data is descriptive, most often used for experiences, feelings, impressions or reactions.

Quantitative data is numerical, answering questions such as 'how many?' 'how much?' or 'how often?'

You may wish to report across a programme of work. This will still mean clarifying the information required at individual project level, but it will be useful to have compatible monitoring tools across your projects, so that information can be compared between them, so that broader themes can be explored and numbers aggregated across the programme.

1.2 Clarifying monitoring and evaluation questions

With a greater focus for your monitoring and evaluation, you can define your evaluation questions more specifically:

- How well do participants engage with the project?
- How can we improve what we are doing?
- Do our activities change how participants see themselves?
- Does our work open up new perspectives for participants?
- Do we have evidence of new behaviours as a result of what we do?
- Are there longer-term benefits of our work for individual users or for the prison? Are changes sustainable?
- If benefits are sustainable, what are these?
- What value are we giving for the money invested?

These separate questions may require you to collect different sorts of information, possibly in different ways or over varying timescales. They imply a need for evidence about 'how?' 'to what extent?' and 'in what ways?'

1.3 Being clear about aims

The questions you ask will depend in part on the type of work you do, the context in which you are working, how long you work with people, and most important, on the changes you are trying to bring about – your project aims.

It is important that you set specific aims that are consistent with the scale and focus of your project. What you aim to achieve will also relate to the level of participation in a project. For example, a community initiative with continuing contact with participants may aim to develop transferable skills and move people into employment, while the aims of a two-week art project in prison may be more realistically set around developing motivation, or inspiring self-expression, or creating new interests.

Some projects may aim to bring excellent art to an excluded audience and may not focus on changed behaviours; others may aim to change public perceptions of prisoners or attitudes to sentencing. It is important that these aims are shared and agreed with the agency commissioning the project and your funders and provide the foundation on which you build your monitoring and evaluation.

1.4 Prioritising outcomes

With clear and agreed specific project aims, you will be better able to decide appropriate outcomes for project activities.

Outcomes are the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of your work.

Outcomes are distinct from **outputs**, which are the products and services you deliver as part of your work, such as workshops, productions or exhibitions.

Arts organisations working with offenders and ex-offenders may wish to see a range of outcomes, some more immediate and shorter-term and some longer-term. For example:

Shorter-term outcomes

- Increased self-esteem
- Increased motivation
- Improved communication skills
- Reduced levels of stress
- Reduction in self-harm
- More positive attitudes
- More pride in self.

Longer-term outcomes

- Greater employability
- More settled life-style
- Decreased drug or alcohol dependency
- Reduction in offending.

The questions to be asked are:

- Are these outcomes appropriate and realistic for the type, scope and scale of our project?
- Which are the most crucial outcomes?
- How are we going to measure them?
- At what intervals will we measure them?
- Where can we find evidence of change?
- Will we need longer-term follow up? If so, how can we do that?

A useful starting point is to agree who you want to affect, as your outcomes may not just be for your service users. You might aim to increase the experience and skills of volunteers or to develop good practice for arts in a criminal justice setting.

Your funding source will be one important factor in determining what outcomes you need to measure. A programme funded by the Ministry of Justice or bought in by the prison, probation service or youth offending team is likely to be looking for more direct evidence that an intervention can demonstrate an effect on re-offending rates, or have a clear effect on risk factors for offending, such as substance use or employment prospects. A trust may have a greater interest in public attitudes or in access to arts. The funder for one dance project with young offenders, for example, asked for evidence of change in audience perceptions of offenders.

If you are aiming for outcomes that will contribute to a reduction in re-offending, it will be useful to make your 'theory of change'[3] explicit. Referring to existing research may help you set intermediate and longer-term outcomes and indicators relating to risk factors. (These different levels of outcomes are discussed in Clinks' *Demonstrating Effectiveness*.)

Identifying these anticipated outcomes when you develop your programme is important. Getting convincing evidence about outcomes needs a systematic approach to collecting and analysing data. This is discussed in Part One | 2 and 3.

3. A theory of change explains the theory underlying social projects and programmes, showing the relationship between outputs, intermediate outcomes and ultimate desired long-tem outcomes.

2.1 The function of a monitoring and evaluation framework

Most organisations do some level of monitoring, but it is sometimes difficult to see the overall picture or what the gaps are. A helpful way of being more systematic is to put together an evaluation framework. This is a plan that is informed by your key evaluation questions and sets out the following:

- What you aim to achieve – your aims, objectives, outcomes and outputs
- What you will assess to demonstrate your achievements – your indicators[4]
- Your data collection methods
- The sources of your data
- Who will collect the data
- Your data collection timetable.

You can also include in your framework a plan for assessing key issues about your processes – how you do things. These might be important for understanding what worked well and what helped you to achieve your outcomes. You might want to assess whether your activities were pitched in the right way, or how well you worked with other support agencies for ex-offenders, for example.

A worked example of part of a monitoring and evaluation framework relating to outcomes is shown in Appendix 2, page 43.

2.2 The importance of indicators

Your planned outcomes will relate directly to your aims, as shown in the example below, which might be relevant to theatre projects working with ex-offenders or young people at risk of offending.

EXAMPLE: Indicators

Overall aim: To reduce the likelihood of offending behaviour.

Specific aim: To improve social skills.

Outcomes: Increased confidence; increased motivation; increased listening skills; greater ability to see another perspective; stronger group cohesion.

A common mistake is to try to measure the outcomes directly. The important step is to decide what observable measures will show the extent to which those outcomes are being achieved – **the indicators** of success.

For example, how motivated a project participant **feels** is only one indicator of motivation. Indeed, it may be difficult to measure motivation directly, so you are looking for proxy indicators. These could be:

- Level of participation in the activity
- Take up of other courses and activities (in a prison setting)
- Different choices or changed lifestyle
- Positive steps to find employment (in the community).

A monitoring and evaluation framework

Aims What you will change	Outcomes	Indicators	Data collection methods	Who will collect data?	When?
Objectives What you will do	Outputs	Indicators	Data collection methods	Who will collect data?	When?
Processes The way you do it	Processes	Indicators	Data collection methods	Who will collect data?	When?

4. Clinks' *Demonstrating Effectiveness* provides a good introduction to outcomes, outputs and their indicators.

Getting evidence on one or a number of these indicators may help you to assess whether motivation has increased.

The indicators you choose will relate not only to the type of work you are doing, but whether you are measuring immediate effects, the changes you can assess as your project ends, or longer-term outcomes. Finding out if the effects of a project are sustained over a longer period of time can be important and raises questions about how you can do this. This is discussed further on page 21.

An essential part of developing your monitoring and evaluation framework will be deciding on the methods and tools to use for collecting data. Your information needs, your project type and context, and your resources all need to be considered. This is discussed in Part One | 3.

Music in Detention workshops at Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre | Photo © John Carey

This chapter discusses why it is important to get robust evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of your work. It describes different methods of collecting data and their advantages and disadvantages in a criminal justice setting, recognising the real difficulties you may experience in getting access to some of the data that might be useful. It also discusses some of the issues to consider when designing your own tools.

There are a number of criteria that will influence the methods and tools you choose. Methods should:

- Be robust
- Be credible
- Provide sufficient evidence
- Fit well with the way you work
- Be appropriate for your participant group.

3.1 The need for good evidence

CES research has shown that funders and commissioners frequently find self-evaluation reports lacking in adequate evidence.[5] Your start point for better evidence is the methods and tools you use to collect data:

- They should get information clearly relating to what you want to know. Your choice of indicators, the appropriateness of the tool and quality of the data are all important.[6]
- They should ask the right people relevant questions.
- They should give you reliable data. This means that if different people were using the same tool, or if the exercise were repeated with the same person or group, you would get a consistent result.

"It is important to ask the right questions, of the right people, at the right time and to regularly re-evaluate our techniques and methods of gathering data."
Artistic Director, Music in Prisons

The data you collect should provide you with information that you can use to improve your project. It also needs to tell a convincing story. Who are your important audiences? The Ministry of Justice? Funders and philanthropists? Other arts organisations? Some audiences value narrative stories of change. Others may look for a more 'objective' approach and verifiable statistics.

In most project-based activities you should look to evidence your effectiveness by comparing the 'before' and 'after' situation, using indicators that really measure what they intend to measure. Purely quantitative approaches and 'scientific' approaches such as comparison studies using a control group[7] are not obvious methods for self-evaluation in a criminal justice setting. However, some evaluations commissioned by arts organisations from third parties have used control groups. For example, an evaluation commissioned by TiPP (Theatre in Prisons and Probation – www.tipp.org.uk) and Manchester and Bury Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) of their theatre project 'Blagg'[8] compared reconviction data from Blagg participants with reconviction data drawn from a control group of matched young offenders from Manchester and Bury YOTs.

There is more on data collection methods on pages 14 to 20. Part Two has some examples of tools that have been used effectively by arts organisations, and you may be able to adapt these to suit your own work.

3.2 Getting better evidence

Whether you have enough and good enough evidence relates in part to how appropriately you choose your indicators, and also in part to the perceived credibility of your data collection methods. Getting information from different perspectives and sources will also help. Quantitative data that is backed by illustrative narrative, for example, will be more convincing.

For example, theatre, music or needlework projects with prisoners might ideally do the following:

- Carry out a test through a ratings scale at the beginning and end of the project
- Take observation notes on engagement and participation
- Interview participants four weeks after the project

5. Ellis, J with Gregory, T (2008) *Accountability and Learning: Developing Monitoring and Evaluation in the Third Sector*, Charities Evaluation Services, London, page 63.

6. The concept of 'validity' is important – the extent to which a tool measures what it intends to measure, and how far findings reflect reality.

7. The control group should have the same characteristics as the group receiving the intervention. In a randomised control group individuals from a single defined group are randomly assigned to either receive a service or not receive it (as in a drug trial).

8. Hughes, J (September 2003) *The Impact of Blagg on Challenging and Reducing Offending by Young People: An evaluation of a drama based offending behaviour workshop*, Centre for Applied Theatre Research, University of Manchester..

- Review records of serious incidents in the prison or compliance to a community programme
- Review records of participation in other activities and educational courses before and after the project.

This means that it is important to get good baseline data – that is, facts about the characteristics of individual participants and of other situations you want to change, for example the number of disturbances on the wing or the number of self-harm reports.[9] Remember to always compare, as far as it is possible, like for like when using data for comparison – for instance, offenders serving similar sentences or displaying similar needs.

However, in practice, there may be real difficulties in getting access to some of the official data. You may have to ask someone to provide a summary of the data you need. Many voluntary organisations working in the criminal justice sector experience official reluctance to provide it, but clarity about what you need and when you need it, and good collaboration with the police, courts, prison, probation or other youth offending services may help you overcome these problems.

These limitations are discussed further on page 22. The specific requirements of working with data in a criminal justice setting are also discussed in the section on *Ethical considerations* on page 22.

If your project is aiming to enable change (and not all are), ideally you need sufficient indication of its occurrence, and to be able to make a plausible connection between the change or benefits and your intervention, rather than to 'prove' cause and effect. There may have been other influences apart from your project, so it may be helpful to ask participants and other people how important they perceived your project work to be in the change. Finally, it is helpful to find out about those other potential influences and to acknowledge them, as your work will be part of a bigger picture of intervention and support.

3.3 Choosing data collection methods

There are three main sources of data:

- Documentary sources
- Direct report from individuals
- Observation.

Documentary sources. These could include individual assessments of offenders, probation or youth offending team case files, prison incident records or offending statistics.

Direct report from individuals. These could include participants, creative practitioners, facilitators and leaders, prison staff, youth offending team or other staff working with your participants. The most common ways of doing this are through:

- Self-report tools, including questionnaires, forms and diaries, scales and tests
- Interviews
- Samples of records and notes
- Using creative tools to gather feedback – such as graffiti walls – or arts practices themselves, such as drama, writing, video or drawing.

Observation. Data collected from an independent observer can be obtained through written accounts or observation forms.

Fit with your work and participant group

The characteristics of how you work will be a major factor, not just in what information you look for, but how you collect it. For example:

- In mainly performance-based or exhibition-based work, a focus group of your audience may be appropriate.
- Different prison settings or project types might suggest focus groups[10] or interviews as the most appropriate method for getting face-to-face feedback.
- If you are working closely with individuals over a period of time, you might have structured periodic observation exercises as well as keeping more regular notes.
- For work in a resettlement context, it might be important to look at tangible evidence about employment or reoffending among your target group.

9. If you can access the information, this could also include a participant's past convictions, behaviour towards staff, engagement in education or compliance with the terms of a community service.

10. There is more on collecting data using group activities and focus groups in CES' *Assessing Change: Developing and Using Outcomes Tools* (www.ces-vol.org.uk/assessingchange).

Some external evaluation projects have been able to access relevant official data, such as:

- Sections of the OASys (Offender Assessment System) to monitor behaviour
- Data on reconviction rates in the PNC (Police National Computer).

However, such access would require a full research proposal to the Ministry of Justice well in advance of the project, and this data is unlikely to be within the scope of a voluntary sector evaluation, unless part of a larger research project. Access to data and Ministry of Justice and Prison Service conditions and requirements are further discussed in the section on *Ethical considerations* on page 23.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are good for collecting information about people's opinions, attitudes and behaviours in a quantifiable way, often using scaled questions.[11] They have an advantage that you can combine questions about how participants enjoyed the project, what worked well and not so well, and information about outcomes in a single exercise.

Organisations have learnt to use simple and clear language. However, even simple tick-box questionnaires require literacy skills, and project staff should be on hand to make sure that they are completed and to help people give their feedback. An alternative may be to complete a questionnaire as the core part of an interview, so that you can explore in greater depth how participants are assessing themselves against a scale.

Questionnaires have other limitations; for example, participants may find it difficult to complete questions that look for responses about emotion. You can find out more about developing questionnaires in CES' *Assessing Change: Developing and Using Outcomes Tools* (www.ces-vol.org.uk/assessingchange).

Gaining this information, whether through interview or questionnaire will have time and resource implications.

"All prisons now 'lock down' every Friday afternoon which means that we have to gain information in the short timeframe between the end of the gig and the lockdown. The timeframe involved, coupled with the fact that participants are often in a state of exuberance after the performance and may have family and friends present, means that sitting down with a questionnaire is the last thing on their minds."

Source: The Irene Taylor Trust 'Music in Prisons' Funders Progress Report: 2009-2010

Tests and scales

Some external evaluators working with arts organisations use psychometric tests or other scales across a range of behavioural or emotional dimensions, which are applied before and after the project. It may be helpful to look at these. For example, in their study of the Good Vibrations (www.good-vibrations.org.uk) gamelan in prisons project, Birmingham City University[12] used a simple five-point Likert scale to assess: levels of anger; anxiety; boredom; calmness; contentment; feelings of depression; happiness; loneliness; moodiness; sadness; shyness; and stress.[13] This is illustrated for one element in this excerpt.

"This week I generally feel..."

Calm
❑ Strongly disagree
❑ Disagree
❑ Neither agree nor disagree
❑ Agree
❑ Strongly agree

The advantage of using a recognised scale is that there is likely to be evidence of its reliability and validity (discussed above on page 13). The University of Birmingham describes using such a scale – the General Perceived Self Efficacy Scale – in a study of Geese Theatre Company's (www.geese.co.uk) Inside Talk programme, aiming to improve listening and speaking skills for offenders.[14]

11. Note that you will not be able to generalise from small sample sizes and you should always make clear your response rate to questionnaires and individual questions.
12. Caulfield, L, Wilson, D and Wilkinson, D (June 2010) *Continuing Positive Change in Prison and the Community*, Centre for Applied Criminology, Birmingham City University.
13. Geese Theatre Company (www.geese.co.uk), Superact – a music organisation (www.superact.org.uk) and others also use Likert scales in their participant questionnaires.
14. Harkins, L, Haskayne, A, Beech, AR, and Sweeney, C (December 2009) *Evaluation of Geese Theatre's Inside Talk Programme*, University of Birmingham. This was a 10-item scale created to assess a general sense of perceived 'self-efficacy' – a person's belief in their abilities and capacity to cope with challenges and life events.

Psychometric testing depends on collecting repeat data at intervals to assess knowledge, abilities, attitudes and personality traits using measures that have been developed and tested for their reliability and validity.[15] A number of academics have used or adapted psychometric tests; however, note that they can be quite complex, and adaptation and the sample you use may reduce their validity.

EXAMPLE: Use of psychometric testing to evaluate role playing in drama

The Playing for Time theatre group based at the University of Winchester (www.playingfortime.org.uk) used three psychological measures at the start and end of a nine-week drama production at the West Hill Prison in Winchester in March and April 2010. The evaluation offered an opportunity to explore whether role playing in drama could have a positive motivating effect on an offenders' ability to change. The three measures were:

- **The Oyserman Possible Selves Questionnaire** (www.sitemaker.umich.edu/daphna.oyserman/home) was used to explore whether taking part in the drama production changed their views about 'the future possible selves' that they 'expect' to be in a year's time and the selves that they want to avoid being in a year's time.
- **The Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index** (www.eckerd.edu/academics/psychology/iri/php) contains four sub-scales exploring perspective-taking, fantasy, empathic concern and personal distress.
- **The Kruglanski Need for Closure Scale** (http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~hannahk/index1.html) was included to explore the rigidity of thinking styles and whether taking part in the drama production made participants' thinking styles less rigid.

These measures were used together with some interview data at the start and end of the production to collect more qualitative data.

The researcher also had a control group of prisoners who were not doing the project and carried out interviews and questionnaires with them. Even with a control group, questions still remained about how far changes could be attributed to the drama project. Some of the prisoners taking part were also engaging in a project looking at the impact of crime on victims and some were completing a drugs awareness course. It would be difficult to isolate the effects of these initiatives on those doing the drama, or the effect of other influences on the control group.[16]

Interviews

Participants may find interviews simpler than completing a test or questionnaire, and people often enjoy discussing their experience. Interviews may take more time than questionnaires and they require a quiet, private space to maintain confidentiality, but they allow you to:

- Ask people directly about how things have changed for them
- Collect in-depth information about changes in attitudes, feelings and perceptions
- Collect data from people who are not literate
- Respond to unexpected information and probe further.

Be focused in your interviews; you may have to fit interviews with musicians or other facilitators into lunch breaks. Your time limitations may mean that you interview only a sample of your participants, to back up other test or documentary evidence. Remember to bring within your sample people with a range of different profiles. Age group, gender, length of time in prison, previous uptake of activities, and risk level may all affect outcome, and you may want to include those different perspectives in your sample if you can get access to the data.[17]

If you are working with young people in the community, for example, use existing contact opportunities to interview them. Phone interviews can be time-saving and a more efficient way of contacting people, but don't assume that everyone will have a phone. Send text messages before to remind them that you will be phoning them and try to speak to them on first contact rather than rearranging the interview. Clean Break (www.cleanbreak.org.uk) aims to do follow-up interviews with past participants on education and training programmes. However, project workers have found that the regularity with which people change

15. The concepts of reliability and validity were discussed on page 13. For a more detailed discussion of reliability and validity, see Kumar, R (1996) *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, Sage Publications, London.

16. The data analysis for this evaluation is not yet complete, but preliminary findings show interesting changes in the IRI scores for the prisoners and students involved in the drama production not shown for the control group.

17. As with getting access to data from records, getting approvals for carrying out interviews and interviews in prisons may take time and need to be agreed well in advance of the project.

mobile phone numbers means that keeping up-to-date records on contact telephone numbers is a challenge.

The ideal way to capture an interview is to take comprehensive notes and record the interview as well, if you have the participant's consent. Type up your notes as soon as possible after the interview. Transcribing recordings is laborious, but you can best use them to check gaps in your notes, get more detail on specific elements of the interview and obtain accurate quotes.

Observation

Observation can be carried out in a more or less structured way. Structured observation means recording notes against a framework, prompts or specific questions. It can ask for information about the quality of the group interaction, the effectiveness of certain activities, or individual responses and behaviours. Even unstructured observation will be led by basic questions about what is happening, and how things change and why.

Observation runs a greater risk of subjectivity than some other methods. Prompts or scales against which to record the outcomes data will focus the observation. You should also provide clear guidance on carrying out the observation, even if this is being done as part of project activities, and give instructions on how to record it. You may have volunteers working closely with a project who can complete an observation sheet at the beginning, middle and end of a project for each individual, while other project staff complete notes on group dynamics at each session, or the end of each week. In some projects, observations can be written up during breaks or at the end of the day.

There are some cautions relating to this method. Participants may adapt their behaviour when they know that they are being observed. In an offender context, participants may react negatively if they feel that they are being assessed. It will be important to be open from the start about what is being observed and the purpose of note-taking, and to gain permission. (*Ethical considerations* are discussed further on page 22.)

18. See Adams, B *The Art of Engagement: A Handbook for Using the Arts in Pupil Referral Units*, Doncaster Community Arts. (www.thepoint.org.uk/PDFs/The_Art_of_Engagement_Sample_pages.pdf). Also Hurst E, and Robertshaw D (2003) *Breaking the Cycle of Failure: Examining the impact of art activity on young people attending pupil referral units in Doncaster*, Doncaster Community Arts (www.thepoint.org.uk/PDFs/Breaking_the_Cycle_of_Failure.pdf).

EXAMPLE: Helix Arts observation tool

Helix Arts has developed a Distance Travelled observation framework tool based on the Doncaster Community Arts Engagement Matrix.[18] The tool is completed by artist facilitators and youth offending staff to record observations on individual participants to track their involvement and engagement over a number of sessions. Observations are recorded through a series of tick boxes across five core sets of behaviours: Disengagement and Disaffection; Curiosity; Involvement; Positive Engagement; Success. There are also spaces for explanatory observations to be recorded. The observed behaviours provide a picture of the complex nature of young people's participation in each session, and inferences can be drawn about the extent to which they are engaging with the creative aims of the programme, and their personal development outcomes.

This is an extract from the tool allowing for change to be recorded around Positive Engagement:

4. Positive engagement	YOT	Artist
Completed tasks		
Accepted feedback		
Met new challenges		
Offered advice to others		
Initiated ideas & tasks		
Received comments from peers		
Demonstrated new skills		
Suggested improvements		
Enjoyed activities		
Positively contributed to group dynamic		

A person initially exhibiting behaviour falling in the 'disaffection' category may later in the programme start to complete tasks, accept feedback, initiate ideas and offer advice to others. From this it is possible to infer that he or she has progressed towards 'positive engagement' with the creative processes of the programme, and is showing key social and team-working skills.

The participant may have demonstrated these skills previously and the tool cannot throw light on this but, used together with other evidence, it can build up a picture of the way people exhibit certain skills and behaviours in given situations.

Diaries

Diary records can give insight into an individual's development or emotions over a period of time, but a video or audio format might work better than a written one for many participants. Diaries kept by artist facilitators are also a good way of recording what does and doesn't work and for reviewing and improving practice within a team. Music in Prisons' (www.musicinprisons.org.uk) musicians working in prisons keep daily diaries. Extracts from the diaries are used in project reports given to each prison but also serve as a record of processes, what worked well, any challenges and how these were overcome, so the team can learn tips for future projects. In a drama project, one evaluation found initial participant resistance to writing notes or a diary gradually give way and the diaries themselves were useful in contributing to changed attitudes about writing, even though it provided limited evidence.[19]

You are likely to get a better result if you give clear and precise information to participants about how the data will be used and provide prompts or questions relating to your indicators to focus their stories. Before you commit to asking for diary information, think about whether you will have sufficient skills and resources to extract information from them and to use it effectively.

Using creative tools

You may also be able to capture outcomes information using your own artform and integrate it into the project itself. For example, photographs, drawings or videos can be used to provide evidence of change, allowing a vivid impression of people's views and experiences, particularly for people who might not respond so well with traditional data collection methods. Music in Prisons and Good Vibrations already record the music that participants create during the course of projects. You could use drama or dance to provide feedback; for example, TiPP worked with Manchester University on an action research project so that some of the drama tasks were repeated at the end of the session but were used to gather feedback; in this way the evaluation became part of the process of the project.

19. TiPP (2006) *What's the Point: Using Drama to Engage Young People at Risk*, Arts Council England. (www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/phptVOzlB.doc)

Think about how you will use creative evidence to demonstrate change, and whether your stakeholders will value it. You will need to interpret the visual images or other creative and participatory feedback and include the analysis in your findings. You may need to explore further with participants what it shows or what it means. This is a critical step that is often missed out when using creative methods for evaluation.

"Through evaluation, we have learned that qualitative feedback such as letters, drawings and verbal feedback are also extremely useful and valid methods of assessment."

Artistic Director, Music in Prisons

Integrating feedback into your activities

You may be able to work more light-touch feedback into your activities by incorporating discussion that will give you evidence on your outcome indicators into your sessions. For example, after a drumming session you could ask, 'How did you feel when you came into the session? How do you feel now?'

You may need to be flexible in your methods. If one thing does not work and is not giving you the information you need, you may need to try something else.

Using case studies

Case study evaluation is a narrative approach to evaluation that can allow you to demonstrate the effectiveness of your activities and approaches through individual stories, or by focusing on a particular event or location. This is distinct from brief case examples, which you might use to illustrate a text. Case study evaluation allows you to describe specific successes and difficulties, and to show how individual circumstances, life experiences and other interventions can influence change or hold it back. It can be important to understand the circumstances in which you get negative results as well as positive ones.

Case studies emphasise the complexity of situations rather than trying to generalise. They also allow you to demonstrate the links between specific ways of working and subsequent results – useful both to demonstrate effectiveness and to illustrate good practice.

Although you may also be able to provide separate quantitative information, each case study should stand alone, so the data for case studies needs to be as complete as possible. At the same time, if there are a number of case studies or stories to tell, it will be possible to compare and contrast them (possibly across work in different prison environments, or contrasting work in a prison or community environment) and to pull out any common themes. This is likely to make the findings more compelling.

3.4 Using off-the-shelf tools

Once you have selected your methods, you can explore two options:

- Are there existing tools that would be suitable or that could be adapted?
- Do you want to design your own tools?

Using an off-the-shelf outcomes monitoring tool may save you time. Also, you may find a previously tested or validated tool, or one that is widely recognised. It will be useful to find research that tells you how it was developed and has been used. Above all, be careful that there is a good fit with your project activities, your participants and your own outcomes indicators to avoid trying to measure change that could not reasonably be associated with your work.

The Geese Theatre Company (www.geese.co.uk) adapted a self-assessment tool produced by CES for a Clinks/DfES publication.[20] (See Part Two, which contains examples of tools that have been used effectively by arts organisations working in a criminal justice context.)

3.5 Designing your own tools

Part of the process of developing or choosing a tool involves thinking about:

- How it will be used for collecting baseline data – at the start of your project
- How it will be used to assess progress at different points in time
- How different tools can complement or supplement each other. It is often helpful to use different methods and sources to strengthen outcomes data. You may find that different indicators will require different methods and data sources.

If you can, budget to get the help of someone experienced in designing and analysing questionnaires or tests. (There is contact information of organisations on page 44.) He or she can help you make sure that data can be easily processed, and think through how to link different bits of data together, such as outcomes data and data about participants, or specific information about how the project was delivered. For example, the venue used for workshops, previous interaction between group members, the amount of time allowed for practice, might all affect outcomes.

Getting the questions right

Your outcome indicators are the starting point for your questions, as they are for the prompts in an observation tool or diary. You may need a number of questions to provide information about an indicator. For example, if you want to find out if people have more positive attitudes, you might ask:

- Did you enjoy working in the group? (Yes/No/Not sure)
- If yes, what did you enjoy most?
- What have you learned about yourself in working with the group?
- How will this experience change things for you now?

Putting the questions in order

Make sure that your questions have a logical flow, whether in an interview or a questionnaire, thinking carefully about where to place the most sensitive ones. The general rule is to allow the interviewee to feel comfortable to start with and make sure that you have ended in a safer zone, and not leave on the more challenging issues. Starting with questions about the project can relax the interviewee before you ask them outcomes-related questions, but still provide you with useful information. For example:

'What did you expect to get out of the project when you first started?'

'Looking back now, what would you list as the three main benefits for you?'

20. Astbury, R and Williams, P (2004), *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Voluntary Organisations delivering Educational Services in Prisons*, Charities Evaluation Services for Clinks and the DfES.

Starting out like this captures what is most important to the participant and may evidence unexpected outcomes. If the responses cover the later questions based on specific indicators, you can adapt or miss them out. For example, when they start with a group, a drama project asks each individual participant for their expectations, main challenges and what they hope to achieve. At the beginning of end-of-project interviews they revisit these questions, asking them if those same expectations and challenges were met, and expected achievements were obtained. There may be evidence about core outcomes from this process, but it also allows information about other unexpected outcomes.

Types of questions

It is helpful to think about how you can use different types of questions effectively. Often a mixture of open and closed questions will be useful.

Open questions, such as 'What did you gain most from taking part?' or 'How do you think you have changed since you started on the project?' allow people to respond freely.

Closed questions result in yes/no answers or may allow people a multiple choice or scales to complete in a questionnaire. It is easier to quantify and analyse the responses to closed questions. You can use scaled questions in an interview situation, which will give you some quantitative data, but will also allow you to prompt further about the reasons and experiences behind the responses.

Prompts and probing questions can be used in questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. Prompts can also be phrased as open questions. For example, in an interview you might ask, 'Can you tell me more about that?' or 'How would you describe the difference?'

Make sure that you ask only one question at a time. Take this example:

'What have been the positive and negative aspects of taking part in the project?'

These are really two questions, so ask about positive and negative aspects in two separate questions. Make the question more personal and use more user-friendly language:

- What was the best thing about the project?
- What did you get most out of?

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- What did you like least?
- How did the project affect you at the time?
- What should we change if we do it again?

For more about asking good questions and about scales, see CES' *Assessing Change: Developing and Using Outcomes Tools* (www.ces-vol.org.uk/assessingchange).

3.6 Testing methods and tools

Whatever methods and tools you choose, you should test them out in advance. For example, you can try out a questionnaire or interview format on a small sample first before finalising it. This will help you check if they:

- Can be used easily
- Collect the data you need
- Give you the data in a format that is accessible and not too complicated to analyse.

You may also need to adjust and review your tools from time to time to suit different situations or just to improve them.

This chapter has described the careful preparation required to get the best evidence you can. Part One | 4 examines some of the key issues to be considered when collecting data.

4.1 The monitoring timetable

Monitoring and evaluation is often done too late in the day. Ideally, an organisation should think about evaluation from the start, so that baseline data can be gathered, and so that monitoring can be carried out with evaluation in mind.

Monitoring data will need to be collected at various points in the development of your organisation and your projects or activities.

At the beginning

When organisations want to show progress, change or development over time, baseline data will be needed. Information should be about those characteristics – the indicators – that have been identified as likely to show whether the planned change takes place. Questions about these characteristics can then be asked again at a later point.

Collecting data regularly

Ideally, outcome data will be collected at least twice, at a start and an end point. However, it may be appropriate to collect outcome information at regular points in time if the organisation wants to track changes in an individual. This might be part of the way that you work with them.

There are a number of issues to bear in mind to ensure that data can be compared:

- The core questions should be addressed each time, in a way that can be directly compared
- The source of the data should be the same or be comparable
- Data should be collected in the same way
- Data should be recorded in the same way.

At the end of the project

Over a project timescale of ten weeks, you could take a baseline measurement at the start of the project, a second measurement mid-way through the project, and further measurement at the end of the project. This end point may also be an opportunity to gather additional data, for example, to interview participants and others about how they experienced the project, or to collect official data. You may also want to collect information from others likely to benefit from your project, such as prisoners' families, or who may have observations about the effects of your work, such as prison, probation or hostel staff. Practical difficulties in getting this data are discussed further on page 22.

Tracking change over time

Your project may result in participant enthusiasm and intentions to change behaviours in the short term, but this may disappear. To capture more lasting effects, you may consider contacting participants in your project some time after their involvement, to see what has happened in the longer term. This may be important for funders to demonstrate value. However, it may not be possible to get contact details for offenders that are leaving prison or have been transferred to another one. Many researchers report difficulties in contacting participants for follow-up after they have taken part. This is particularly problematic in a prison setting as organisations are not able to keep contact details of prisoners. But this can also be the case in community settings.[21]

A Birmingham City University study and other evaluations indicate that a 12-month follow-up may make it difficult to track even those you have contact details for.[22] Follow-up at four or six months may mean that it is easier to track them and easier for participants to remember the project. Asking them first to talk through their experiences of taking part will allow them to think about it and remember what was important.

Remember that over a longer period of time your participants are likely to be affected by a number of other interventions and contexts, both positive and negative, and it may be difficult to determine exactly how your project has influenced the longer-term outcomes.

Clean Break (www.cleanbreak.org.uk) uses a 'student tracker form' to track women who have left its courses. The tool is included in Part Two, page 39.

21. Small project teams are likely to find it difficult to resource long-term follow-up themselves, but this may be more feasible with a budget that allows for an external research component.

22. Caulfield, L, Wilson, D and Wilkinson, D (June 2010) *Continuing Positive Change in Prison and the Community*, Centre for Applied Criminology, Birmingham City University.

4.2 Getting a good response

Even when collecting data on projects delivered in different settings over a period of time, the numbers engaged in arts projects are still likely to be small. It is therefore important to get a high level of response in order to provide convincing evidence, whether from participants or third parties. This may need a number of different approaches to overcome potential obstacles.

Participants

The issues are:

- Sensitivity about personal information
- Reading and writing skills
- Unfamiliarity with the medium used for monitoring and evaluation (such as a questionnaire)
- Tracking people after the end of the intervention.

Third parties

You may want feedback on changed behaviours, or hard data on education levels, or numbers of adjudications. This data may be available but difficult to get hold of. Issues include:

- Sensitivity of the material and data protection issues
- The importance attached to the project or the evaluation by third parties
- Turnover of staff and the time involved tracking data.

It will help to provide both participants and third parties with information about why you will be monitoring and evaluating and get their commitment when you start the project, explaining why it is important. (See also *Informed consent* below). You may also need to allow significant time – many weeks – for necessary permissions to be obtained. Let people know in advance when you will be contacting them. Participation and response rates can be considerably improved by personal reminders. This is discussed further in Clinks' *Demonstrating Effectiveness*, page 30.

Your project time is limited, so integrating monitoring and evaluation activities into your core project activities will help you to obtain consistent and complete information. Don't ask participants for factual information that could be obtained from accessible documentation. If your monitoring and evaluation approaches and tools feel simple enough, relevant and appropriate, this will also help get a good response.

4.3 Ethical considerations

Your primary consideration when monitoring and evaluating will be principles common to more general research – respecting the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants. The main principles relate to:

- Informed consent
- Confidentiality
- Data protection.

Informed consent

You will need to make sure that the people you involve in your evaluation are given an opportunity in advance to make an informed decision about whether to participate. If you are collecting information from a minor, you will also need to gain consent from their parents or carers. When carrying out any research, informed consent involves providing information about the following:

- The nature of the research and the type of information you will collect
- That their participation is voluntary
- That they can participate or withdraw without personal consequences
- Privacy issues (for example in focus groups)
- Confidentiality
- How information will be recorded and stored
- Incentives and other payments or reimbursements.

You should also obtain a signed agreement to participate where this is possible.

Confidentiality

Your organisation should have a confidentiality policy that will provide guidance. There are some key principles:

- Be prepared to deal with sensitive information that could be disclosed. In any group activities, people should feel free to share experiences and opinions freely, but should also be aware of personal issues that might cause distress to others.

- Participants should be clear of the imperative of keeping any private information shared in a group confidential.
- Make it clear to participants that, while respecting individual privacy, you may be obliged to share certain information with authorities. For example, you will be obliged to disclose to the Prison Service behaviour that is against prison rules and can be adjudicated against, illegal acts and behaviour that is harmful to individual participants.

Reassure participants that when personal information is presented to others it will nearly always be collated and presented for the whole project or programme, not as information about individual people. The exception is when information is used in illustrative case examples, or in case study material. When information is used in this way, it is usually anonymous, with all identifying information removed, unless permission has been given otherwise. If you are working with small numbers, be aware that you may disclose identity accidentally. For the same reason, care should be taken when reporting quantitative data from very small samples.

Data protection

All information that can be personally identified should be stored securely during the data collection stages and destroyed after it has been used for analysis purposes and the evaluation completed.[23] Be clear about how long you will store all audio, video, word-processed and hardcopy data. Access to the raw data should be strictly limited and you should protect identification by allocating a code to each individual, which can be used to record all subsequent references to them, for example interview transcripts.

Note the standards expected by the British Society of Criminology's *Code of Ethics for Researchers in the Field of Criminology* (www.britsoccrim.org/ethical.htm) and the Social Research Association's *Ethical Guidelines*. (www.the-sra.org.uk/documents/pdfs/ethics03.pdf).

Responsibilities under the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act include that data can only be used for its intended purpose. If personal information is kept about individual service users, users should know exactly what data is being kept and why, that they can have access to it to check its accuracy, and that confidentiality will be preserved.

If you are going to collect any personal information (such as names, addresses or dates of birth), make sure that your organisation or project is registered with the Data Protection Commissioner and complies with Data Protection regulations. The *Guide to Data Protection* gives practical advice and looks at the principles of the Data Protection Act. It is available on the Information Commissioner's website: www.ico.gov.uk/for_organisations/data_protection_guide.aspx

It should be noted that if your project requires approval as a local Effective Regime Intervention by the regional area psychology team, it will need to meet specified conditions in terms of data collection, monitoring and evaluation.

Access to official Ministry of Justice data

Requests for data from the PNC (Police National Computer) will need to be made through completing the official form through the Justice Statistics Analytical Services Unit (JSAS) of the Ministry of Justice. This can be requested only if participants have given specific consent for their criminal history information to be supplied. The request will also require full details of the research and confirmation of the conditions for secure management of the data. Approval or rejection of the request takes two to three months.

Where there is no specific consent, applications can be made for aggregate data. Agreement to this will depend on the resources involved, the soundness of the methodological approach, and how the data will be used.

Many organisations collect a lot of data but don't use it. This can mean ineffective use of resources, be discouraging to those involved in monitoring and evaluation, and also represent a lost opportunity. Part One | 5 and 6 discuss using the data you collect to demonstrate the value of your work and to improve it.

23. You should have regard to the sensitivity of any data that may be collected, particularly to matters such as age, race/ethnicity, nationality, disability, religion, gender, sexual orientation, personal medical records and political beliefs.

Monitoring data can be used simply for reporting or for marketing and promotion purposes. However, once you start to analyse the data and attach some meaning to it, you are beginning to evaluate. It is this evaluation process and the findings that you report that will provide insights into your work and give it value. The quality of your evaluation will depend to a large extent on the quality of your data analysis.

5.1 Inputting data and making sense of it

It is important to think about how you are going to analyse the data when you decide on methods and tools for collecting it, and on the size of interview samples, for example. Many organisations collect data but don't use it effectively because they lack the systems to analyse it. Investing in IT systems and training staff in data management and analysis can greatly increase the quality of your evidence. But if your resources are limited, and a large amount of data is being handled, it may be useful to get this done by a student or a research body.

5.2 Quantitative data analysis

Data collected using quantitative methods can be analysed statistically for patterns, for example percentages and averages – showing the frequency of responses.

Most quantitative data can be easily analysed using common spreadsheet software. For example, you can organise data in Excel in columns according to the question asked and the respondent. Excel can then calculate averages and percentages and can be used to produce graphs and tables. It is good practice in tables to show the actual numbers (the frequencies) as well as the percentages. This is particularly important when quantitative data is being collected from a small number of respondents, as small numbers will reduce the statistical significance of results. The numbers involved in arts programmes in criminal justice settings are often small, but collating responses from projects over a year or more can increase the statistical significance of findings.[24]

It is also good practice to make the response rate to each monitoring and evaluation exercise (or to any given question) clear in your analysis and reporting.

5.3 Qualitative data analysis

You may find analysing qualitative data more difficult, and this can result in important data remaining unprocessed and unreported. However, developing skills and allowing time to carry out this analysis can help you build compelling evidence.

Use a simple coding (using a number or a few key words) to categorise your notes into recurring topics or themes that seem relevant to your evaluation questions. You can decide these codes in advance, or allow themes to emerge from your data. Cut and paste sections of your notes to bring together data that relates to particular themes.

Once the themes or patterns have been established and the data categorised accordingly, it is possible to show the trends emerging in the responses, and to illustrate the themes or particular responses by providing more detail and quotations as illustration.[25]

5.4 Linking up your information

This is the stage when you think about what lies behind the data, that is, you interpret it, asking what the results mean in relation to your evaluation questions, and looking for patterns and themes through your analysis. In this way, for example, information can be obtained not just about overall outcomes, but about who benefited or did not receive benefits, and in what circumstances – and what can be learned from that.

Looking behind the data

Questions can be asked about the factors that influenced or prevented change, whether there were unexpected outcomes, and whether planned benefits were those most valued by your participants. Were the results affected by the way a group or workshop was run, for example its informality, or the involvement of participants in the development of, or decisions about, a performance? What were the particular

24. See for example Bryman, R and Cramer, D (2005) *Quantitative Data Analysis for SPSS 12 and 13*, Routledge. Significance testing is likely to be appropriate only in larger-scale evaluations in the context of an external evaluation or when working with quantitative research specialists.

25. You can find out about CES' monitoring and evaluation training covering qualitative data analysis (www.ces-vol.org.uk). See also Bryman, A (2008) *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press.

activities that allowed participants to develop social skills, or a realisation that they could work with others? What were the elements in your work that developed a sense of achievement? Diary records from facilitators can be useful in recalling how participants were involved.

Simple calculations of average improvements or change may hide important differences in progress. If you are analysing results on a scale, by analysing according to individual start points, you may find that those who had placed themselves at the bottom end of a scale of confidence, for example, had progressed most, and those who had placed themselves at the top initially showed little movement.

Is there a difference in results relating to the age of different participants, their involvement in other projects or agencies, or in male or female prison environments? When you ask different people the same question, do you get different answers? If so, why is that? In order to do this analysis you will need to have included questions that will collect other essential information, such as:

- Participants' details, such as their age, gender or ethnicity, language skills, length of time in prison[26]
- Level of engagement with the project
- How much they enjoyed the project
- Involvement in other activities or level of support in the community.

These factors may have affected how well participants benefited from your project. For example, the length of time in prison might be an important variable because people have spent longer in working through personal issues and development needs. Or they may have spent less time in prison and been released without resettlement support or supervision in the community.

An analysis of outcomes of increased confidence according to age of participants can be shown be shown in the table below.

Once you have done this analysis, the differences in results between age groups may or may not be worthy of note. Ideally for research, you would want subgroups of at least 25 for meaningful analysis; nevertheless, breaking down your data in this way, even with small numbers, can raise questions.

Putting findings in context

There are other contextual issues that you may not be able to apply in a standardised way, but which you could explore in participant interviews, and include in illustrative case examples or through more extensive case studies. You might want to look at individuals' particular life experiences, for example, and how this has affected their response to the project.

Remember to put your outcomes information into a broader context, and acknowledge in your report the possibility of other interpretations. When you look at longer-term benefits, you may be looking at finding an association between participants' responses to the project rather than a direct cause and effect. For example, changed attitudes and behaviours might be a stepping stone to choices about further education and subsequent life style.

It is not always easy to get a sense of the significance of different findings when you first look at the data – you may lose the most important point in studying and presenting the detail, or overemphasise minor findings. So try to stand back from your findings and look at the broader picture before finalising your report.

26. If you are using these details as categories for analysis and reporting, take care that this does not disclose the identity of individuals.

Indicator: Level of confidence shown across three projects, according to age

	Increased a lot	Some increase	No increase	Total numbers participating
Totals across age groups	21 (32.3%)	32 (49.2%)	12 (18.4%)	65
60 years and over	1 (14.2%)	5 (71.4%)	1 (14.2%)	7
35-59 years	8 (32%)	14 (56%)	3 (12%)	25
Under 35 years	12 (36.3%)	13 (39.3%)	8 (24.2%)	33

5.5 Learning lessons

This stage of interpreting your findings is an important one. Establishing 'value' is about giving meaning to your data. This means asking whether your assumptions about what would happen were borne out. Did participants, or your facilitators have different perspectives on what worked? If so, why was that? Did you get different results in different environments? What does that mean for future planning? Do you need to think again about the timescale you are working in?

Your evaluation should show which elements of your projects are working, for what people and in what circumstances, and also give clear information about what needs to be strengthened. Sharing findings within your organisation and across projects will help you to become a learning organisation and to improve what you do. Positive feedback will help your staff and practitioners to appreciate the value of the work they do, but it is just as important to establish a culture that welcomes new ideas and challenging feedback. The evaluation may give you information to feed into the training you provide your staff, facilitators and volunteers.

"The practical information helps us to refine our workshop activities where necessary and the evidence of the outcomes helps us to show our funders that what we are doing is effective."

Director, Good Vibrations

Good monitoring and evaluation will provide information for your next year plan, and should be considered in longer-term strategy. You may find that you are not obtaining the outcomes you expected. This may mean considering whether your project activities are the right ones to bring about the intended benefits. Or you may need to rethink where your real value lies.

How you report your findings is going to be important in demonstrating your value to the institutions commissioning your projects and to your funders and investors. Taking time at the report stage will be worthwhile, and this is discussed further in Chapter 6. You may also consider how your evaluation findings relate to or complement existing research; placing your evidence in that wider context is likely to make your results more compelling. Think also how you can communicate your own learning to other arts organisations and different agencies working in a criminal justice setting.

5.6 Measuring social value

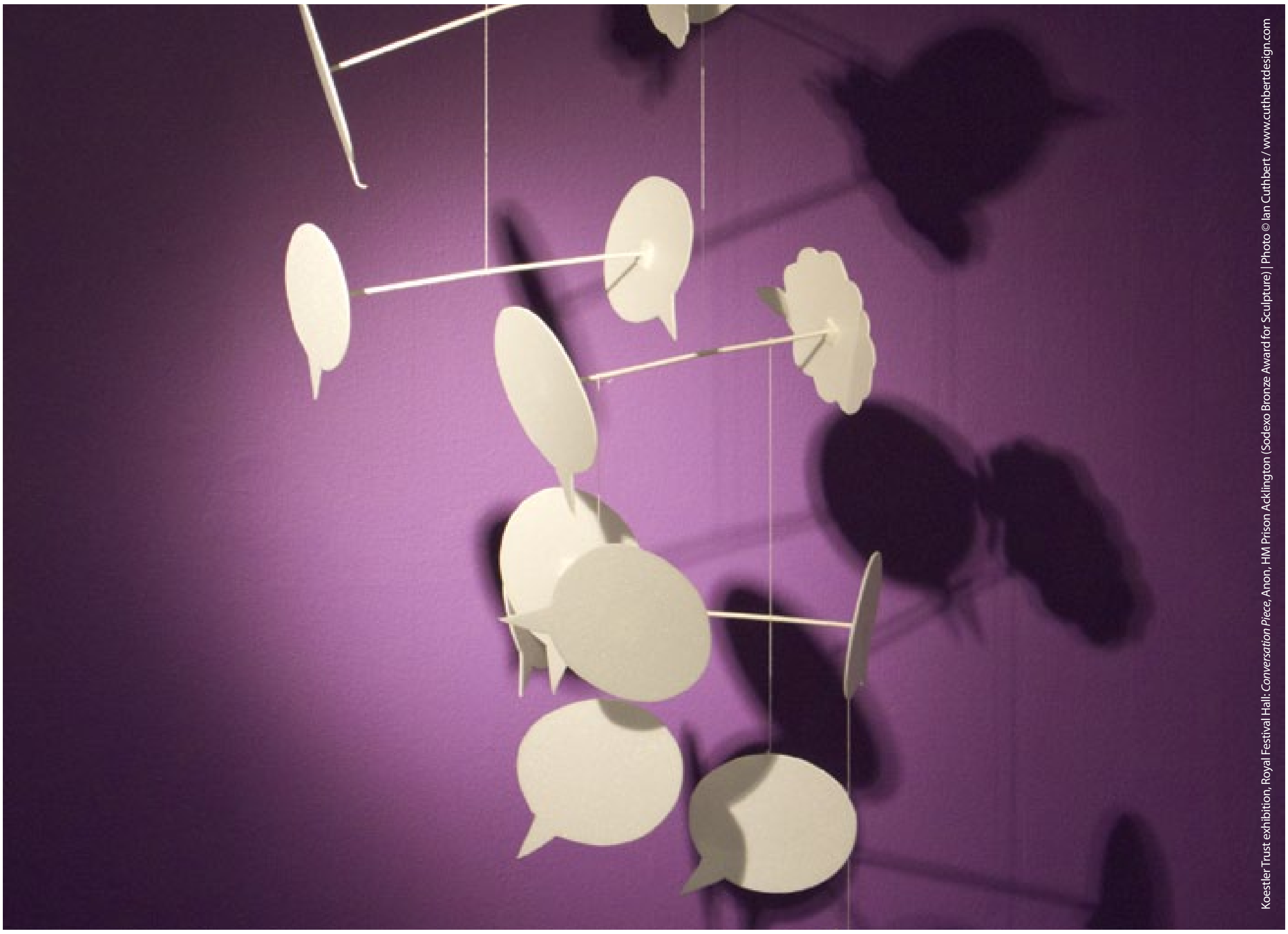
Arts organisations share with other voluntary organisations an increasing pressure to demonstrate their social value, and to estimate how investment in them now will result in social benefits and savings in the future. For example, in 2010/2011 the Ministry of Justice is trialling a new Social Impact Bond (www.socialfinance.org.uk/services/index.php?page_ID=15), together with St Giles Trust, which will invest in resettlement services that can demonstrate specified improved social outcomes. The focus is on the social value that service providers can offer, rather than on the cost of services alone. As funding for the arts becomes increasingly scarce, projects working with offenders and ex-offenders will increasingly need to look at suitable methodologies to present an economic case for funds. The proliferation of 'payment by results' models of funding will also demand more in the way of proving outcomes.

In a cost-benefit analysis, you measure costs and outcomes in monetary terms. If you divide the project costs by project benefits, this will give you the cost-benefit ratio. Costs are the various inputs, both direct and indirect, needed to set up and run a project or programme.

Social Return on Investment

The social return on investment methodology (SROI) was developed from traditional cost-benefit analysis and from social accounting. The methodology puts a monetary value on the social and environmental benefits of an organisation relative to a given amount of investment. The process involves an analysis of inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts leading to the calculation of a monetary value for those impacts, and finally to an SROI ratio or rating. For example, an organisation might have a ratio of £4 of social value created for every £1 spent on its activities.

SROI studies have been carried out showing how work with ex-offenders can produce social returns, for example by helping ex-offenders into employment, where benefits can be seen as clients cease to receive benefits and start to pay taxes, all of which result in savings to the public purse. A number of different models have been used to carry out SROIs. Frontier Economics applied a social return on investment approach in their study of the Through the Gates project, run by St Giles Trust (which aims to



Koestler Trust exhibition, Royal Festival Hall: *Conversation Piece*, Anon, HM Prison Acklington (Sodexo Bronze Award for Sculpture) | Photo © Ian Cuthbert / www.cuthbertdesign.com

substantially reduce re-offending rates, for example through temporary or permanent housing or benefit support), demonstrating a cost-benefit ratio of at least 10:1.[27]

There can be variations in the way that people carry out these studies, so it is important to document and to be transparent in the assumptions and judgements that are made at various points in calculating the ratio. Carrying out the study can also be quite complex and time consuming. You will need:

- A good foundation of outcomes information
- Available skills in evaluation and accountancy
- Access to external support.

27. Frontier Economics, St Giles Trust's *Through the Gates: An analysis of economic impact* (December 2009), Probono Economics, London. (www.stgilestrust.org.uk/s/stats-and-info/p518/evaluation-reports-on-st-giles-trust-services.html) The study compared Through the Gates re-offending rates with national re-offending rates – finding these at 40 per cent lower than the national re-offending rate. It estimated the cost savings associated with reducing re-offending and applied these to the benefits. An estimate of re-offending avoided that was due to other factors was subtracted from the calculation and a cost-benefit ratio was calculated at £10.4 million ÷ £1.05 million (10:1).

Thames Valley Partnership engaged a researcher to carry out an SROI for its Urban Beatz project. The process and result of this study is described in Appendix 1.

We have seen in this chapter that there are different phases in the monitoring and evaluation process, all of which are important to the quality of your evidence of effectiveness. However, the process is not complete until you have reported and used your findings. This is discussed in Part One | 6.

6.1 Presenting your findings

If done well, self-evaluation can offer a greater potential for learning and improvement than external evaluation, as project personnel themselves are drawn into looking at the information and drawing conclusions from it, exploring how processes and user experiences can be improved. Clinks' *Demonstrating Effectiveness* (page 38) shows the self-evaluation cycle, which results in refining delivery and sometimes reformulating aims. This learning and improvement will be more likely if you are open to exploring unexpected outcomes and to information about what has not worked as well as your successes. Some funders are adopting a learning approach as good practice.

Many arts organisations rely on external evaluations to provide evidence of effectiveness of specific projects and programmes. This need not exclude maintaining good internal monitoring systems, which can provide you with the potential for demonstrating your cumulative impact across your work – essential to demonstrating your value in an increasingly competitive climate.

If you are presenting outcomes within a standard report format for funders, you should support your findings with clear evidence. You should provide:

- Information about the methods you used
- The numbers of participants involved and response rates
- The details of results against different indicators.

You might also include information about lessons you have learned.

If you are writing your own full self-evaluation report, you will normally include the following:

- An introduction, which may include the project's aims and objectives
- The aims and objectives of the evaluation, including the main evaluation questions
- How the evaluation was carried out
- Findings
- Conclusions and recommendations.

Put together a framework for your findings section based on your evaluation questions and other themes that emerge, rather than presenting findings from different data collection methods separately.

How you present the report will have an important bearing on your credibility, so consider what the evaluation report will look like before you put together your findings. The style of reporting and level of detail will vary according to your audience. Will your audience prefer evidence in the form of tables, charts and graphs, or case examples?

The report should be easy to read, with clear headings and subheadings. Consider using lists and bullet points, boxes and shaded areas to highlight or separate content, and footnotes for extra information. Make your numbering system as simple as possible. You want the information to be accessible and easy to understand.

6.2 Using quantitative and qualitative data

It is helpful to provide both quantitative and qualitative information to make a convincing case about your effectiveness. Levels of engagement in the project could also be assessed numerically. However, this evidence may come alive by illustrating it with some case examples. In order to do this you will need to decide in advance that project workers will observe and take notes about participation as the project develops.

For example, you should be able to give numbers of those who showed signs of 'increased motivation' (the outcome), and illustrate this further with numbers of those who had taken up other classes and activities, or taken steps to find employment (the evidence of motivation). Numbers demonstrating change can also come alive if you can illustrate that change through stories gleaned through diaries or interviews, telling how participants and others were affected by your project.

Using qualitative data to show trends

Coding also allows you to show trends in your qualitative data. (Coding was discussed on page 24.) For example, this can help you understand what issues, over your sample, are being raised consistently and what issues may just be a 'one off'. When you write your report, you can illustrate the differences among and within each category of response by providing more detail of responses and some quotations to illustrate them.

6.3 Using case examples

Case examples describe a particular event, activity or personal history. They are intended to illustrate, demonstrate and explain evaluation findings, but should not be used instead of analysis. They can bring an evaluation to life, but it is helpful to explain the main point you are illustrating in the main narrative.

6.4 Using quotations

Quote what people have said in their interviews, or on questionnaires or feedback sheets, to illustrate your findings. Don't use too many quotations or simply list them, and be careful that you don't use quotations instead of interpreting your data.

Remember that individual respondents and their views must not be identified in a case example or quotation, or elsewhere in the report, unless they have given written permission. Remove or change identifying material from your findings, and be particularly careful when you have a small number of respondents from a particular group, where it may be easy to identify them.

6.5 Drawing conclusions

Conclusions do not just repeat information, but should link clearly with the evidence presented. Avoid generalising from a particular finding and make clear in your report the difference between facts, participants' views and your interpretation.

If your report is short, you might summarise your conclusions at the end of the findings section. In a longer report, summarise your conclusions on one section of your findings before reporting on the next topic.

6.6 Making recommendations

Recommendations are based on the conclusions; be wary of making recommendations if you do not have enough evidence. It is helpful to be clear about where you are able to propose a course of action and where further information or consideration may be necessary. Be careful not to mix findings or conclusions with recommendations, although recommendations should follow clearly from the findings.

An evaluation need not always lead to recommendations but, if they are being made, there are some points to remember. They should:

- Be based on sound evidence
- Be realistic and made in way that will increase the chances of action being followed through
- Be clear about which recommendations are most important and those less significant
- Give a timescale and plan for implementation, wherever possible.

Part One has given an overview of the main components of an effective self-evaluation and illustrated these with the 'coal face' learning from arts organisations working in criminal justice settings. To help you develop your own approaches, Part Two provides examples of tools used by four of those organisations, with detail about how their tools have been developed and used.

Part Two

This section of the guide provides four examples of different types of tools used by arts organisations as part of the monitoring and evaluation of their activities.

The table below provides a summary of who the tools collect data from, the settings in which they are used, the types of data collected and the evidence produced.

	Offenders in prisons and mental health settings (with support if needed)			Type of questions asked			Analysed data provides		
	Offenders in prisons and mental health settings (with support if needed)	*Ex-offenders and those at risk of offending in community settings (with support if needed)*	*Course facilitators or project staff*	*Questions about participant outcomes and changes brought about by participation*	*Questions about how participants feel about the activities and the process*	*Questions about routes and progress since leaving the programme*	*Statistics demonstrating improvements and change*	*A wider understanding of the changes brought about*	*Learning for the organisations to reflect on and improve practice*
EXAMPLE 1 Geese Theatre Company: *Self assessment questionnaire*	✔	✔		✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
EXAMPLE 2 Music in Prisons: *Pre- and post-project questionnaire*	✔			✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
EXAMPLE 3 Good Vibrations: *Course facilitator feedback template*			✔	✔			✔	✔	✔
EXAMPLE 4 Clean Break: *Student tracker form*			✔			✔	✔	✔	✔

Photo: Courtesy of Koestler Trust, featuring *Busted!* by Patrick John Craggs, HM Prison Ashwell, Rutland

Case example 1
Geese Theatre Company: Self Assessment Questionnaire

Geese Theatre Company, Self Assessment Questionnaire

Name of Establishment……………………….Project………………………. Date……………

Thank you for taking part in this project. We hope you found it enjoyable. This form helps us assess how useful it has been. We would be very grateful if you could you tick the boxes below to show how much you agree or disagree with the statements and then answer the questions which follow. Please feel free to say what you think as your name is not on the form.

As a result of this project:	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
I have more confidence					
I have a better understanding of my behaviour					
I take more responsibility for my behaviour					
I want to make some changes					
I have noticed changes in my behaviour already					
I have learnt new skills which I will use					
I enjoyed the project					
Using theatre and drama has made the project more memorable					
I would recommend the course to someone else					

How do you feel about the work you did with Geese?
Which elements of the work did you find most useful / memorable?
Which elements did you find least useful / memorable?
How did you feel about the way Geese staff interacted with you?
Do you have any other comments?

Thank you very much for your participation and for taking the time to give us your feedback. Occasionally, we use direct quotes from participants as part of our publicity material. If you would be happy for us to use your comments anonymously, please could you tick the box below.

☐

Geese Theatre Company is a leading UK theatre company specialising in work within the criminal justice sphere. The Geese team of actors and group workers devise and perform issue-based plays and conduct workshops, group work programmes, staff training and consultations in prisons, young offender institutions, probation offices and related settings. Their inputs range from one-day experiential theatre-based group work to longer-term programmes which might be delivered over a two to 16 week period. Each project is tailored to the particular client group and setting and designed in close consultation with staff from the commissioning agency.

The company has a core team of six practitioner staff, all of whom have completed Geese's internal six-month training in the use of theatre and drama in group work with offenders and young people at risk of offending. The company also employs a number of freelance practitioners, who are all previous full-time company members and who have received the same training.

When staff first start with Geese, and for the first six months, they complete a monitoring form on every piece of work they deliver, analysing their own work and the overall efficacy of a particular session or project, which embeds reflective practice. This reflection is continued through a process of internally 'reviewing' all projects and sessions. Each practitioner involved is invited to consider what they feel they did well and what they would do differently, and to positively critique other people's practice. Significant learning taken from these reviews is noted by the lead practitioner and written up.

Geese is committed to gathering feedback on the quality and effectiveness of its programmes from all those involved, both the core client groups (offenders and young people at risk of offending) and project leaders, as well as prison staff, probation officers, youth offending team workers and other stakeholders.

"Monitoring and evaluation is at the very core of our work, it is vital to know when something is working or not."
Artistic Director, Geese Theatre Company

The company uses a flexible mix of data collection tools according to project and expected outcomes. These include feedback from group facilitators, gathered through tools such as the Participant Session Record, which is completed after every session and which provides an overview of individuals' progress on the programme. Questionnaires and interviews are used with staff and self-assessment questionnaires (shown here) with participants. The company carries out self-evaluation for most projects, but for larger-scale projects often commissions independent, academic research.[28]

Developing the self-assessment questionnaire

Geese Theatre Company's self-assessment questionnaire is based on the Self-Assessment Checklist produced by the Department for Education and Skills and Clinks in 2004.[29] The original checklist tool suggests 15 statements and programme participants are asked to rate how much they agree or disagree with each. The statements aim to provide an indication of the change in attitude, behaviour and skills as a result of participation in a project.

Since first using the checklist in 2005, the company has learnt which statements provide the most useful information and has adapted the list of statements for each of its projects. Reducing the number of quantitative questions asked – to focus on particular outcomes – has made the questionnaires shorter and less time-consuming to complete, while still giving sufficient hard (quantitative) evidence. Adding in open-ended (qualitative) questions gives participants the opportunity to comment on how they feel about their involvement in the programme. This provides not only useful quotes that can be used in publicity and to bring the statistical evidence to life, but also a more rounded understanding of the participants' impressions of the programme and what works well.

Using the self-assessment questionnaires

The questionnaires are handed out to participants at the end of each project. Project staff are always on hand to provide assistance with completing the questionnaire when needed.

Geese Theatre Company usually only collects end-of-project feedback as staff are reluctant to ask participants to do too

28. To date, research articles by the University of Birmingham's Forensic Psychology Department into four Geese projects have been published in peer reviewed journals.

29. Astbury, R and Williams, P (2004) *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Voluntary Organisations Delivering Educational Services in Prisons*, Charities Evaluation Services for CLINKS and the DfES.

much form filling before the project, which may turn them off at the start. However, an adapted version of the questionnaire could also be used before the start of the programme to provide a baseline against which progress could be measured.

Analysing the data and using the evidence

The data gathered through the self-assessment questionnaires is entered into a spreadsheet for each project, with the number of participants ticking each box on the form entered into the spreadsheet accordingly. See the example below.

Adding the total number of agree and strongly agree responses in each row gives the positive response against each question and responses can be compared to show where activities are having the most impact. Adding all positive outcome totals and analysing against the total number of responses gives the percentage of overall positive statements (agree and agree strongly) and negative statements (disagree and disagree strongly). The evidence this provides is used in reporting to partners – the prisons and secure mental health settings, the youth offending teams and probation teams. The company also uses the evidence in its funding applications and includes information on its website about the outcomes achieved by the projects.

"The self-assessment form provides a good combination of statistics and comment. We find that people like a bit of both – they want to hear from service users directly but they also like to know what difference a project is making on a larger scale than just the voice of one or two people. The form can also be used to consider our effectiveness across a range of projects which can be very useful when it comes to end of year / annual report, etc."

Artistic Director, Geese Theatre Company

As a result of the project...	Strongly disagree ☹☹	Disagree ☹	Neither agree nor disagree 😐	Agree ☺	Strongly agree ☺☺	Total agreeing and strongly agreeing (positive outcomes)
I have more confidence	1	0	3	5	1	6

Case example 2

Music in Prisons: Pre- and post-course questionnaires

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE - PRE-PROJECT

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. All of your answers will be anonymous. These questions are just for us to measure the impact of the project on the people that take part.

First name: ....

Have you ever taken part in an arts project before (inside or outside prison)? If you have, what kind of project was it?

....

....

How much do you enjoy:

	Not at all					A lot	
Listening to music	1	2	3	4	5	6	Never done it
Performing music	1	2	3	4	5	6	Never done it
Writing music	1	2	3	4	5	6	Never done it

How confident do you think you are?

Not at all					Very
1	2	3	4	5	6

How much do you enjoy group work?

Not at all					A lot
1	2	3	4	5	6

What aspect of group work are you most looking forward to in this project?

....

....

....

Is there anything that worries you about working in a group?

....

....

....

PTO

How well do you get on with?

	Not at all					Very well
Family/friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other prisoners	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prison staff	1	2	3	4	5	6

Would you agree or disagree with the following statements:

"I have hope for the future."

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

"I feel motivated to take part in educational and arts activities in this prison."

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

"I am able to do things as well as most other people."

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Which of these best describes how you feel right now?

Angry Happy Shy Sad Excited Nervous Confident

Do you have any other comments?

....

....

....

....

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE - POST-PROJECT

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. All of your answers will be anonymous. These questions are just for us to measure the impact of the project on the people that take part.

First name: ....

What do you think you got out of the project?

....

....

....

How much do you enjoy:

	Not at all					A lot
Listening to music	1	2	3	4	5	6
Performing music	1	2	3	4	5	6
Writing music	1	2	3	4	5	6

How confident do you think you are?

Not at all					Very
1	2	3	4	5	6

How much did you enjoy working in a group?

Not at all					A lot
1	2	3	4	5	6

Please describe any changes that you noticed in yourself after completing the project.

....

....

....

Please describe any changes that you noticed in the other participants during the project.

....

....

....

PTO

How well are you getting on with?

	Not at all					Very well
Family/friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other prisoners	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prison staff	1	2	3	4	5	6

Would you agree or disagree with the following statements:

"I have hope for the future."

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

"I feel motivated to take part in educational and arts activities in this prison."

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

"I am able to do things as well as most other people."

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Which of these best describes how you feel right now?

Angry Happy Shy Sad Excited Nervous Confident

Do you have any other comments?

....

....

....

....

The Irene Taylor Trust, operating as **Music in Prisons** (MiP), runs intensive music projects for small groups of offenders in prisons and other secure facilities. The Trust works throughout the UK to provide positive experiences for prisoners and to help in the process of rehabilitation, education and the development of transferable life skills. Most MiP projects are run over five consecutive days, culminating in a performance by participants of the music they have created. The work is performed to prison staff, family members and members of the public and a CD is produced.

MiP has a small core team of two full-time and one part-time staff and 11 freelancers. Since its launch in 1995, projects have been run in over 60 secure institutions with more than 2,000 inmates – men, women and young people. Projects are funded by a 10 per cent contribution from the prisons, matched by funding raised by MiP from trusts and foundations and individual donors.

Short evaluation reports are produced for each project, with data collected through leader daily observation diaries, participant pre- and post-questionnaires and, where possible, prison staff feedback questionnaires.

"Through effective monitoring and evaluation we are able to demonstrate why we do what do and provide tangible evidence that our projects deliver positive outcomes for participants, prisons and the wider society. External evaluation made us realise the possibilities of the results we could demonstrate through our own monitoring."

Artistic Director, Music in Prisons

Developing the pre- and post-participant questionnaires

Over the years, MiP has become increasingly aware of the need to have 'hard facts' – statistics to show what impact the work is having. When the participant questionnaires were first developed they were used only at the end of a project and they focused on the process aspects of recruiting and retaining participants, asking questions such as 'How did you find out about the project?' The questionnaires were regularly reviewed and questions were added to find out about skills that participants were developing. Earlier versions asked for self-assessment against a 1-5 scale. But MiP found that most people placed themselves in the middle of the scale, so a 1-6 scale was introduced, forcing people to think more about how to rate themselves. After an external project evaluation by the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge, questions were added about motivation, hope for the future and ability compared to others, to reflect the outcomes that had been assessed by the external evaluation.

"Allowing participants to 'speak for themselves' is part of the ethos of the Trust, so giving participants a voice through the use of range of feedback methods is also of great importance, not only because it provides them with the very real sense that their thoughts and opinions matter and are of value, but also because it helps us bring the projects to life for our funders and other stakeholders."

Artistic Director, Music in Prisons

Analysing the data and using the evidence

The questionnaire responses are entered into a spreadsheet to allow for analysis of outcomes project by project and over a whole year of projects. The total number of improvements against each criterion is recorded and an overall percentage of improvements for the project can be calculated for the whole year or for one specific project.

An individual project report is also sent to the specific funders of that project, and if requested, to the prison involved. This provides summary statistics demonstrating achievement against the core outcomes. For example, they might report:

- *"60% recorded an increase in how much they enjoyed working in a group*
- *80% recorded an increase in how well they got on with prison staff*
- *20% of participants felt more motivated to take part in education."*

The statistics are supported by quotes from the participants, staff and summaries of the project leader's diary provide descriptions of the project, the process and what worked well and less well.

Cumulative statistics showing totals of outcomes across all projects for the year are included in annual reports to funders to support the summary analysis and description of project outcomes for the year.

"Project leaders, prison staff and the participants themselves possess a wealth of useful information which can demonstrate the effectiveness of our work. For us, effective evaluation is an on-going process of learning how best to harness this information within the confines of the prison environment."

Artistic Director, Music in Prisons

Case example 3

Good Vibrations: Course facilitator feedback template

GOOD VIBRATIONS **_INSTITUTION:_** **_MONTH:_** **_DATE:_**

Individual feedback table

Please score how much each completing participant has improved over the course of the project (1 (very little improvement) – 5 (huge improvement)).

Please also score individuals' starting point for each skill: H/M/L.

So each box will contain 2 scores eg H/1 (= improved just a little bit from a high starting point)

Name	Communication/ influencing skills	Listening skills	Co-op. behaviour/ team-working	Problem-solving	Concentration and application	Self-confidence	Creativity	Short report on individual's improvements/developments

Good Vibrations is a small charity helping prisoners, secure hospital patients, ex-prisoners and others in the community develop life and work skills, through participation in intensive gamelan (Indonesian bronze percussion) courses. Projects are typically week-long residencies for groups of 15 to 20 participants. Most participants have not done anything musical before and at the end of the week the group puts on an informal performance. Each performance is recorded and a CD produced, a copy of which is given to everyone who has taken part.

Projects are funded through contributions from the institutions 'commissioning' the workshops, with match funding raised by Good Vibrations from Arts Council England and a range of charitable trusts and foundations. Youth Music supports some of the projects with young offenders.

Good Vibrations has one full-time member of staff and 11 freelance project staff. Since its launch in 2003, Good Vibrations has monitored and evaluated its work as part of a process of review and improvement but also to gather evidence that what they do is working. Good Vibrations uses a range of tools to collect feedback and data from different project stakeholders. The facilitator feedback template is used in combination with participant pre- and post-questionnaires, prison staff questionnaires, course facilitator observations and feedback from focus groups with different stakeholders, to provide a full picture of the courses and their outcomes.

"Although we initially thought the information gathered through the form would be of interest to prisons, sometimes it seems that a prison hasn't much interest in the progression of individual prisoners along the path to addressing their offending behaviour and reducing reoffending. To date, information gathered through the form has mainly been used by us, as part of all data collected using a range of tools, as a way of assessing how much impact the course has had."

Director, Good Vibrations

Photo © Nikki Kemp/Good Vibrations

Developing the facilitator feedback template

The facilitator feedback tool was first developed to capture quantitative and qualitative feedback from course facilitators about individual participants and their progress during the course. The seven core areas that facilitators are asked to score against are the core outcomes that Good Vibrations expect to see from their programmes. The first version of the form did not include a starting point for each participant, so on analysing the data there was no baseline against which to compare progression. To allow for a more effective measure of distance travelled the 'starting point' score was added.

The short report box allows for additional comments and a more descriptive narrative on participants' progression.

Using the facilitator feedback tool

Facilitators are urged to complete the form immediately after the last session of the course. Some find it easier than others to complete, but the importance of obtaining the full completed record of scores and observations is continually impressed upon the facilitators. Having to make a judgement and 'score' participants is a challenge for some of the facilitators.

Analysing the data and using the evidence

The analysis of the data is very 'low tech', with numbers and scores added and compared manually. Good Vibrations is looking to develop a system to capture and analyse its quantitative data more efficiently, using an Excel spreadsheet in the first instance.

Evaluation reports are produced for every project, combining the data collected from all the different tools. The first section is a summary of key participant statistics, including the numbers taking part, ethnic breakdown, whether they have done any music before and number of sessions. The next section is a summary of the project objectives and evidence of how they have been met taken from the analysis of data collected from the different tools. There are short sections on what went well and what didn't go so well, the report ending with recommendations for Good Vibrations and the prisons.

A first draft of the report is sent to the facilitators, then it is sent to the prison contact with any additions or amendments from the facilitator. Sending a draft to the prison staff can help to 'flush out' further responses to staff questionnaires and helps to build the relationship and make the staff feel part of the process. A final copy of the report goes to the Prison Governor, prison staff and sometimes the funders, but funders tend not to want individual project reports, preferring annual summaries across all projects summarising the outcomes.

"In evaluating our programmes we have been able to learn some key things about our work, both practical and about the outcomes. For example, practical things such as that younger groups require a greater range of activities. And, within reason, the number of participants doesn't seem to affect impact on individuals. In terms of outcomes we seem to have most effect on communication skills, listening skills and confidence. A high proportion of participants also report improved relationships with others."

Director, Good Vibrations

Case example 4

Clean Break: Student tracker form

STUDENT TRACKER FORM	
Student Name:	
Leaving Date:	
Record of Attempts to Contact: Date: Notes:	
Date: Notes:	
Date: Notes:	
Type of contact: Tel / Person	Date of Contact:
Current Contact Details: Same / Update Email address:	
If new contact details, staff member to update the database.	

Student Destination – please circle		
Full Time Employment	Part Time Employment	Self Employment
Voluntary Work	Further ed, training, other govt. program	Unemployment
Economically Inactive	Other (give details)	Not Known

Details of Student Employment / Voluntary Work:

Name and address of employer :

Job Title and Role:

Length of Employment:

Details of Further Education / Training:

Name of training provider:

Name of Course:

Any other useful information e.g. reasons for unemployment? Future plans?

Evidence of Destination:	
Please tick if you have asked student to provide written evidence	
Please tick when the student has provided evidence If no evidence provided explain why	

Current Student Circumstances	
Physical Health	Mental Health
Drug/ Alcohol Use	Offending?

Is the student in contact with support agency? YES / NO

If yes, detail below:

Does the student need/want support? YES / NO

If YES, please arrange appointment with student support to discuss referral options if appropriate.

Is there anything that the student would like to say about how Clean Break has impacted upon their:

- self esteem/confidence
- employment/further training opportunities
- health and well being
- other………………..

Future Contact with Clean Break

Is student interested in further study at Clean Break? YES / NO

If YES please detail below

If appropriate, would the student consider returning to Clean Break or off site events to share their experiences of Clean Break with other parties? YES / NO

Any other comments?

Name of staff member completing form:

Signature:

A Just Act – A Clean Break production, March 2010.
Photo © Ian Cuthbert / www.cuthbertdesign.com

Clean Break is a theatre, education and new writing company working with women whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system. The company was set up in 1979 by two women prisoners and now works with over 70 women every year from its centre in North London. Courses at the centre include national Open College Network (NOCN) accredited programmes of eight to 12 weeks in drama and performance and a year-long Access to Higher Education Diploma (Theatre), as well as short and extended writing courses, personal development courses and short courses in other performance-related skills such as make up, technical theatre and costume design. The company also runs off-site training, working regularly with women's prison resettlement units, education departments and juvenile units for young women. The aims of all the courses are to develop confidence and help the women gain creative skills and qualifications. Clean Break productions tour nationally to theatres, arts venues and women's prisons. The company has 18 members of staff, many working part time.

The student tracker form is used as the basis for a follow up with students three and six months after they finish studying at Clean Break. The tool provides valuable data on the progress and routes that students take once they leave Clean Break. Monitoring and evaluation data is also collected through evaluation forms completed by students at the end of each course. These collect feedback on the course, the teaching and personal outcomes, including confidence, new networks and skills. On enrolling with Clean Break each student also works with a member of the education team on a learning plan that is reviewed periodically. Exit interviews are also held with students.

"It is hugely helpful for us to have a range of communication channels with students to enable us to get their feedback and improve our services – recognising that not all students will want to fill out a form."
Head of Education, Clean Break

Developing the student tracker form

The student tracker form was first developed for a European Social Fund project that was specifically focused on progression to work and/or further training. However, the increasingly outcome-focused nature of funding generally and the desire of Clean Break to stay in contact with students and consider the longer-term impact of courses meant they found this initially externally imposed tool a useful one.

The 'current student circumstances' and 'future contact with Clean Break' sections were added to provide additional information that the Clean Break team could use to make sure ex-students were getting any additional support they needed and could be invited to return to Clean Break if appropriate.

Using the student tracker form

While the student tracker form is a useful tool for gathering evidence that can be used to help demonstrate effectiveness, making contact with the women is a challenge. Firstly, contact details change. Even within a relatively short period of three months after course completion, mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses change. Students are told about the follow up in their exit interview and asked if they can let Clean Break know of any change in contact details, but this rarely happens, unless they are looking to come back and do further courses.

Follow up also draws on the capacity and resources of a small team, and follow up is now written into support workers' job descriptions. It is not considered appropriate for volunteers or untrained people to make this contact; it was identified during the early use of the tracking tool that some of the women were in need of emotional advice and support when contacted and people doing the follow up needed to have the skills and be equipped to deal with this. Clean Break recognises the value of follow up, but the demands on support workers' time by current students does limit the extent to which they can do it. It is rare to make contact on the first attempt and usually only three attempts are made.

Through the use of the follow-up tool, the Clean Break team have been able to gain new evidence and understanding of the routes students follow on leaving Clean Break. They have also been able to provide additional support to ex-students and bring students back to do further courses, something that would have been unlikely to happen without this follow-up contact.

Analysing the data and using the evidence

A basic analysis is carried out to calculate the percentage of those they were able to contact going into employment or training. From the follow up, Clean Break can say that 70 per cent of those contacted have moved on to a positive outcome – employment, volunteering or further training. The statistics are presented in reports to existing and potential funders.

"Having the evidence to show what has been successful really helps with funding."
Head of Education, Clean Break

Appendix 1: **Social return on investment: an example**

The *Guide to Social Return on Investment*, developed through the government's Monitoring Social Value project, identifies six stages in an SROI study.[30] These involve:

- Clarifying the work within the scope of the study
- Mapping the relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes
- Collecting outcomes evidence and giving them a monetary value
- Calculating net impact by deducting change that would have happened anyway
- Calculating the social return on investment ratio
- Obtaining verification of the report, sharing the findings with stakeholders and embedding good outcomes processes.

SROI IN PRACTICE: Urban Beatz

In May 2007, Thames Valley Partnership undertook an SROI of one of its projects, Urban Beatz, as part of a pilot project testing out the methodology. The work was done on Thames Valley Partnership's behalf by a researcher. Thames Valley Partnership is a small organisation and could not have done the work without this help.

Urban Beatz was a small arts project carrying out dance workshops in Buckinghamshire, with the Beaconsfield School being one of 8 participating groups. Thames Valley Partnership felt that Urban Beatz was an appropriate subject for SROI because it was a small discrete project within the school and because the school was happy to be involved and was used to collect data.

Identifying outcomes was an important step. To do this, a simple theory of change was identified, whereby inputs (including teacher time and fees for dance teachers) led to outputs (including young people attending dance workshops and putting on a performance), resulting in outcomes. Urban Beatz' intended outcomes were that pupils would:

- Improve their school attendance
- Behave better in class (measured in effort grades)
- Participate in more extra curricular activities
- Be less likely to be excluded.

The SROI also identified unintended outcomes of the project. For example, two users of the project enjoyed it so much they successfully applied for funding to repeat the process.

The researcher then collected data from school records and the pupils themselves, on inputs and outputs:

- The total cost of the project was found to be £5,747 (the inputs).
- Twenty year nine pupils attended the project and all completed the project (the outputs).

Data on a range of outcomes was also collected. For example, the researcher found that authorised and unauthorised absences among service users were reduced during the lifetime of the project. This was sustained beyond the lifetime of the project, although to a lesser extent. The researcher also assessed the extent to which each outcome was due to the project, or might have happened anyway.

Each outcome was then assigned a monetary value. For example, previous research by the new economics foundation (www.neweconomics.org) found that truancy costs educational welfare services £706 per pupil per annum.

Calculation of social value

To calculate the SROI, the researcher calculated the value created by each outcome. For example, she calculated that of the 20 users of the service, 10.2[31] achieved the outcome of improved attendance as a direct result of the project. She calculated the value of this outcome as follows:

£706 x 10.2 = **£7,201**

This process was then repeated for each outcome and totalled, resulting in a total value of **£22,627.57**

Calculation of the SROI ratio

To calculate the SROI ratio, the total value was divided by the total inputs, as follows:
£22,627.57 ÷ £5,747 = **£3.94 : £1**

This meant that for every £1 invested in the project, almost £4 of social value was created.

Thames Valley Partnership found it hard to get to grips with this complex methodology at first, and found it time-consuming and costly. However, staff have found it to be a powerful tool for justifying funding. Thames Valley Partnership has disseminated the report to stakeholders and found it to be good publicity, especially as it was part of a 'trailblazing' project. The school itself has also used the report in publicity.

30. Nicholls, J, Lawlor, E, Neitzert, E and Goodspeed, T (2009) *A Guide to Social Return on Investment*, The SROI Network for the Cabinet Office, Office of the Third Sector, London. (www.thesroinetwork.org/component/option,com_docman/task,cat_view/gid,29/Itemid,38/).

31. This figure was derived from the following calculation: Of the 20 users, 12 showed an improvement in attendance. 85% of that change was estimated as due to Urban Beatz. 85% of 12 provided the figure of 10.2.

Support on SROI

A Guide to Social Return on Investment: www.thesroinetwork.org/component/option,com_docman/task,cat_view/gid,29/Itemid,38/

The SROI Network website: www.thesroinetwork.org

The SROI Project website: www.sroiproject.org.uk

Appendix 2: **Monitoring and evaluation framework: an example for a music programme**

An arts organisation implemented a creative music programme in eight prison settings. The sessions were held for three days per week over a three-week period, delivering a live performance in the final session. (This is a hypothetical programme and framework, not relating to the actual organisation or evaluation.)

Aims	Outcomes	Indicators	Data collection methods	Who will collect data	When
To improve the well-being of prisoners	Increased self-esteem	▪ Level of self-confidence ▪ Level of belief in own creative abilities ▪ Extent of expressed pride in achievement	▪ Brief scaled questionnaire ▪ Project leader diaries	Researcher Project leaders	Before/after the project
	Increased self-discipline	▪ Attendance level at workshops ▪ Amount of practice time	▪ Attendance records ▪ Brief scaled questionnaire ▪ Interviews with facilitators	Project leaders Project leaders Researcher	Throughout project End of project Towards end of project
	Improved coping mechanisms	▪ Stress levels ▪ Level of feelings of anger ▪ Level of feelings of depression	▪ Interviews with participants	Researcher	After the project
To develop new skills	New interests developed in music	▪ Extent of previous experience of music ▪ Level of engagement in workshops ▪ Amount of practice time ▪ Numbers expressing an intention to continue to learn or play a musical instrument ▪ Numbers continuing to play a musical instrument ▪ Numbers developing other arts or skills-based interests	▪ Brief scaled questionnaire ▪ Project leader diaries ▪ Brief scaled questionnaire ▪ Brief scaled questionnaire ▪ Interviews with participants ▪ Brief scaled questionnaire	Project leaders Project leaders Project leaders Project leaders Researcher Researcher	Before the project Throughout the project Before/after the project After the project After the project After the project
To enhance peer relationships	Development of new social relationships	▪ Extent to which participants feel socially isolated ▪ Extent to which new relationships maintained	▪ Interviews with participants	Researcher	After the project
	Increased ability to work in a group	▪ Group dynamics ▪ Interaction between participants	▪ Project leader diaries	Project leaders	Throughout the project

Note 1: This represents a section of an example evaluation framework focusing on outcomes. The framework would also address objectives and outputs, their indicators, and how output data would be collected. The framework could also usefully include process indicators, for example, to indicate the information to be gathered about which elements of the workshops worked well and what was most enjoyed or valued, and what worked less well. The questionnaires, diaries and interviews would then also contain questions delivering this data.

Note 2: Ideally, the interviews would be carried out by someone not delivering the activity itself, and it might be helpful to budget for an external researcher to contribute to your self-evaluation in this way.

Arts Council England

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development agency for the arts. ACE encourages arts organisations to carry out self-evaluations and in July 2010 published a self-evaluation framework to provide flexible, development tool to support organisations to evaluate their own performance and to help inform their future planning.

14 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3NQ
www.artscouncil.org.uk

Charities Evaluation Services (CES)

CES is an independent charity offering training and consultancy in monitoring, evaluation and quality systems. CES produces a range of publications, including the quality system PQASSO. The CES website has extensive resources on monitoring and evaluation.

4 Coldbath Square, London EC1R 5HL
020 7713 5722
www.ces-vol.org.uk

Clinks

Clinks is an umbrella organisation supporting voluntary and community organisations that work with offenders and their families.

25 Micklegate, York YO1 6JH
01904 673970
www.clinks.org

Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS)

ESS works with voluntary organisations and funders so they can measure the impact of their work. It produces a range of support guides on evaluation.

5 Rose Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PR
0131 243 2770
www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

New Philanthropy Capital

New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) is a consultancy and think tank dedicated to helping funders and charities achieve a greater impact. NPC carries out research and charity analysis and develops tools to support charities and funders to measure impact.

3 Downstream, 1 London Bridge, London SE1 9BG
www.philanthropycapital.org

The Arts Alliance

The Arts Alliance is the national body for the promotion of arts in the Criminal Justice Sector. It represents a coalition of arts practitioners and organisations working in prison and the community, providing them with a voice through which to influence policy and a forum to exchange views. The Arts Alliance highlights the value of the arts, and the evidence of its effectiveness and best practice.

www.artsalliance.org.uk

The new economics foundation

Nef (the new economics foundation) has a consultancy team that provides advice to the private, public and third sectors on impact evaluation, working with a range of performance and evaluation tools, including Social Return on Investment (SROI).

3 Jonathan Street, London SE11 5NH
www.neweconomics.org

The SROI network

The SROI website has general information about the SROI methodology, related publications and information about accredited practitioners.

www.thesroinetwork.org

The University of Essex

The University of Essex has a survey question bank with questions that are tested and validated by research organisations.

http://surveynet.ac.uk/sqb/

Cupitt, S (2010) *Demonstrating Effectiveness*, Charities Evaluation Services for Clinks, York.

Ellis, J (2008) *Practical Monitoring and Evaluation: A Guide for Voluntary Organisations*, 3rd edition, Charities Evaluation Services, London.
CES: 020 7713 5722 or www.ces-vol.org.uk

Evaluation Support Scotland, *Using Interviews and Questionnaires to Evaluate Your Project*
www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/downloads/SupportGuide2.2Interviews&QuestionnairesJuly09.pdf

Evaluation Support Scotland, *Using Qualitative Information for Evaluation*
www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/downloads/SupportGuide3.4qualyinfoJuly09.pdf

Evaluation Support Scotland, *Using Technology to Evaluate Your Work*
www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/downloads/SupportGuide2.4technologyJuly09.pdf

Evaluation Support Scotland, Visual Approaches,
www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/downloads/SupportGuide2.3VisualapproachesJuly09.pdf

Nicholls, J, Lawlor, E, Neitzert, E and Goodspeed, T (2009) *A Guide to Social Return on Investment*, The SROI Network for the Cabinet Office, Office of the Third Sector, London.
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Parkinson, D and Wadia, A (2008) *Keeping on Track: A Guide to Setting and Using Indicators*, Performance Hub, Charities Evaluation Services, London.
CES: 020 7713 5722 or www.ces-vol.org.uk

Parkinson, D and Wadia, A (2010) *Assessing Change: Developing and Using Outcomes Monitoring Tools*, National Performance Programme, Charities Evaluation Services, London.
CES: 020 7713 5722 or www.ces-vol.org.uk

Voluntary Arts Network, (July 2004) *Monitoring and Evaluation: A general guide, VAN Briefing Paper 80*
www.voluntaryarts.org/uploaded/map1500.pdf

Voluntary Arts Network, (March 1998) *Evaluation: how was it for you? VAN Briefing 24*
www.voluntaryarts.org/uploaded/map322.pdf

Voluntary Arts Wales (date unknown) *Tear up your tick boxes - a guide to the creative evaluation of participatory arts projects*
www.voluntaryarts.org/cgi-bin/website.cgi?tier1=wales&tier2=vaw%20publications&tier3=other%20publications#4574

Wood, C and Leighton, D (2010) *Measuring Social Value*, Demos, London.

Analysis
The process of questioning the information you have collected to find out what it reveals about progress towards your outcomes. Analysis can be done manually or electronically using software packages such as SPSS.

Baseline
A starting point for making comparisons. Baseline data are facts about the characteristics of a target group, population and its context, before the start of a project or programme.

Data
Facts, statistics and other raw material gathered for a specific purpose. Data needs to be interpreted to give it meaning.

Evaluation
The process of using monitoring and other information to make judgements on how an organisation, project or programme is doing. Evaluation can be done externally or internally. (See also Self-evaluation, below.)

Impact
There are different interpretations of impact. It is often seen as the change, effect or benefit that results from the services or activities at a broader or higher level than an outcome. Others use it to mean the same as outcome.

Indicator
A sign or signal that can be assessed to determine whether a given thing has occurred or has been achieved (for example, an output or an outcome).

Monitoring
The routine, systematic gathering and recording of data. This may be done to check quality, change or progress.

Outcomes
The changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of services and activities provided by an organisation or project.

Outputs
The activities, services and products provided by an organisation or project.

Pilot test
A way of testing out the effectiveness of a new system by applying it to a small group and getting feedback on the process.

Process
The method, or step-by-step description, of how a task or activity is to be done.

Qualitative data
Data that is primarily descriptive, for example, of events, experiences or views.

Quantitative data
Data that is can be counted or expressed numerically.

Reliability
The extent to which the same result will be given each time the tool is used.

Response rate
The proportion of people asked to take part in evaluation activities who actually participate. Non-response is when individuals in a sample do not participate at all, or do not answer some questions.

Sampling
The process by which you reduce the total number of possible participants for an evaluation activity to a number which is practically feasible and theoretically acceptable (the sample).

Self-evaluation
When an organisation uses its internal expertise to carry out is own evaluation; evaluation is integrated into project management.

Stakeholders
The people or groups who are affected by or who can affect the activities of an organisation. This can include staff, volunteers, users, customers, suppliers, trustees, funders, commissioners, donors, purchasers, investors, supporters and members.

Validity
The extent to which a tool measures what it intends to measure and how well your findings reflect the reality.

Notes

Arts ALLIANCE

www.artsalliance.org.uk